Empedocles Lexicon

A Reading Companion to the Poems and Fragments

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Introduction

Empedocles calls the four enduring constituents of things **roots**, *rhizōmata*. Fire, water, earth, and air combine and separate under Love and Strife; what people call birth and death is the making and unmaking of their mixtures. This lexicon follows that vocabulary through the supplied bilingual edition, giving the physical account, the divine names, the poetry of perception, and the language of exile and purification their own space. Its 202 articles are intended for close reading rather than a replacement for the fragments.

Roots before Plato

The crucial place is B 6, where the four roots are named Zeus, Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis. The elemental list is explicit in B 17.18. Matching every god to an individual root is another matter: the ancient reports disagree, and modern interpretations remain divided. Nestis is most securely associated with water. The articles on the roots and each divine name retain the uncertainty rather than printing an apparently definitive key.

Empedocles precedes Plato. Aristotle later credits him with specifying four material constituents, against a background of earlier thinkers who had proposed other originating principles. Calling them roots preserves Empedocles' own attested expression; calling them elements uses a later technical vocabulary. This does not mean that Plato merely renamed the same theory. In the *Timaeus*, Plato gives the four bodies geometrical structures and permits transformations among fire, air, and water; Empedocles' roots remain themselves through their changing combinations. The comparison belongs to

the history of reception, not to a concealed Platonic definition of Empedocles.[1]

What the references mean

A reference such as **B 17.18–24** means fragment B 17, lines 18–24, in the supplied text. The traditional full designation is DK 31 B 17: 31 identifies Empedocles in Diels–Kranz and B identifies the quotation series. The fragments are preserved quotations or reports, not chapters that Empedocles numbered. The order of surviving pieces and their allocation to poems are editorial questions. Even a B-number does not guarantee verbatim verse: the reports at B 92, B 94, B 151–153a require particular caution.

The passage index supplies the relevant physical PDF pages of the supplied bilingual edition, counting its cover as page 1. These are source-file page numbers, not the pagination of this companion. Greek and English usually occupy facing pages. The fragment references remain the principal locators for readers using the reflowable Markdown edition.

Every article has five parts. **The word** explains the expression and its historically relevant sense. **In Empedocles** follows its work in the surviving text. **The places** gives annotated passages. **In this edition** identifies a translation choice, an uncertainty, or a distinction between verse and editorial explanation. **See also** connects related articles. The original-form and alias index accepts Greek spellings, transliterations, and English alternatives; the passage and thematic indexes

[1] Aristotle's attribution is a historical judgment, not proof that Empedocles originated every discussion of elemental principles. Primary translations are available in Aristotle Metaphysics Book I and Plato Timaeus. The history of technical *stoicheion* is debated; this companion makes no claim that Plato invented the word itself.

offer different routes through the same material. Links work in the digital editions, with checked print-page references in the PDF and Word indexes. Word page locators are fixed to the delivered layout; edits or font substitutions can change pagination.

The supplied edition and its limits

The PDF cover reads *Empedocles of Acragas: The Complete Fragments*, a bilingual edition with the Greek text of Hermann Diels and a new English translation. Its companion Markdown metadata calls it *Empedocles of Acragas — Volume I: The Poems*. The translator is unnamed in the supplied files. This lexicon identifies its evidence by those files and their B-numbers; it does not attribute the new English to Diels.

The supplied text retains a Diels-based Greek text and numbering while arranging the fragments under a proem, three books of *On Nature*, *Purifications*, and uncertain placement. Its introductory discussion itself warns that this arrangement is interpretive. The label “complete” on the cover should not be understood as completeness of the modern corpus: the edition explicitly excludes the Strasbourg and Cairo papyrus texts and most testimonia, and it omits B 154–157 while including the doubtful B 158. Articles discussing these absences concern the edition’s apparatus, not unprinted lines of the poet.

The commentary is useful but is not infallible. Where its generalizations conflict with the printed fragment, this companion distinguishes the two. For example, B 57 describes heads without necks, whereas the introduction reverses the image; the translation policy for *mētis* is not followed consistently; and the introduction’s claim about a uniquely plural witness for B 115 is contradicted by other source lists in the same book. These are reader-

facing cautions, not a newly constituted critical text. The five-part articles preserve corruptions, supplements, uncertain attributions, and the difference between a witness's interpretation and the quoted words.

Greek forms are given with transliteration for access. Historical meanings do not license speculative etymologies, modern scientific identities, or the assumption that a poetic personification has an independently recoverable biography. In particular, *daimōn* is not silently made into Plato's immaterial soul, Love and Strife are not reduced to modern forces, and the surviving images of generation are not treated as a statement of Darwinian evolution.

Sources for the historical comparison

The primary frame is the supplied Greek and English fragments and their individual ancient-source notices. For the explicitly marked comparison with Plato and Aristotle, consult Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A 3–4, especially 984a8–11 and 985a31–33, and Plato, *Timaeus* 31b–32c, 48b–c, and 53c–57c. These passages support the contrast without assigning a Platonic geometrical system to Empedocles.

Lexicon

Acragas and the civic audience

Ἀκράγαντος (Akragantos); ὦ φίλοι (ō philoi); ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες (xeinōn aidoioi limenes)

The word. Akragantos is the inflected name Acragas in the opening of B 112. Philoi means friends or dear ones. The citizens are praised as “havens for strangers”: limenes, literally harbours, becomes a social image for the welcome offered to visitors.

In Empedocles. The opening of B 112 locates a public voice in the heights of a city beside yellow Acragas. The speaker first praises the audience’s good works and hospitality, then announces his own honoured, garlanded passage among them as an immortal god. The compliment to the hearers forms part of the relationship that makes the extraordinary self-presentation possible. The geographical name is therefore not merely a biographical label; it belongs to the poem’s staging of reception.

The audience broadens within the same passage. Men and women in flourishing cities follow the speaker, some asking for oracles and others seeking a healing utterance. Their question concerns a path to benefit, profit, or advantage. The language need not reduce their needs to money: the following requests make bodily suffering and divination central. At the same time, a claim made in the poem about crowds and divine status cannot automatically become a verified account of the historical Empedocles’ public career.

B 114 again addresses friends, this time warning how difficult truth will be to accept. Civic acclaim and

resistance to conviction thus coexist in the surviving addresses. The difference from the intimate teaching of Pausanias is real at the level of rhetorical form, but it cannot alone decide whether there were separate poems. The introduction identifies Acragas with later Agrigentum and modern Agrigento; those geographical explanations belong to the editor's account.

The fillets and flourishing garlands worn by the speaker make his claimed honour visible. They belong to his presentation as a revered divine figure among people; the verse does not specify a separate coronation ceremony or make the adornments proof of a civic office.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 112.1–12. Greeting, civic praise, divine self-presentation, and requests for help form one audience scene.

B 114.1–3. Friends are warned that conviction is difficult to receive.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The modern introduction identifies the ancient city and summarizes contested biographical material.

In this edition. The phrase "by the yellow Acragas" should not be flattened into an unqualified statement that the city itself is yellow. The Greek address and local setting are preserved; the site's later names are supplied only by the introduction.

See also. Pausanias and Anchites; Trust and persuasion; Remedies and extraordinary powers; Paths and channels of speech.

Affection

στοργὴν (storgēn); στοργῆι (storgēi); καταστόργοις (katastorgois)

The word. Storgē is affection or love. The word can bring a sense of attachment and fondness to the power elsewhere called Philotēs. A related adjective in B87 describes Aphrodite's rivets, rendered "of affection." The noun in B109 is not capitalized in the printed Greek or English.

In Empedocles. B109 closes the sequence of like-known-by-like with love recognized by love and strife by baleful strife. Affection thus participates in the account of cognition rather than appearing only as an emotion among persons. The line does not explain whether this knowing is a separate faculty; it places the two powers alongside earth, water, aither, and fire in a common formula.

B87 supplies a different use of the same attachment-language. Aphrodite works with rivets of affection, making a fastening image carry the binding force of love. The metaphor is especially apt because joining and emotional attachment reinforce one another without requiring a modern psychological mechanism. The introduction groups Storgē among Love's names; the verses substantiate a close relationship, while their varied capitalization and context should remain visible.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 109.3. Affection is known by affection in the closing line of the like-by-like formula.

B 87. Aphrodite's rivets are characterized through affection.

In this edition. B109 translates storgē as lowercase “love,” while Philotēs is usually capitalized elsewhere. A lexicon can identify the connection without falsely presenting “Storgē” as a fully elaborated separate deity in these lines.

See also. Love; Aphrodite; Like perceives like; Harmony.

Aidoneus

Ἀιδωνεύς (Aidōneus)

The word. Aidōneus is the divine name printed in the four-root announcement, familiar as a form associated with Hades. In B 6 it occurs without an epithet. “The unseen one” is an interpretation discussed in the introduction through Hippolytus’ explanation; it is not an English translation supplied by Empedocles within the verse.

In Empedocles. The absence of a clarifying epithet makes the physical identification especially dependent on other evidence. The introduction reports an earth identification in Aëtius and an air identification in other ancient accounts. In the latter case Hippolytus explains air as that through which other things are visible while it itself remains unseen. The same introduction discusses a modern argument for fire, involving the range of aither and the underground setting of fire in Sicily. The short root list cannot adjudicate among these arguments.

B 52’s underground fires show why a purely spatial equation “underworld equals earth” is not compulsory. They do not, however, mention Aidoneus. Conversely, the Hades named in the promise of B 111 and in the damaged B 142 is not automatically a covert reference to whichever root a reader has selected for B 6. Those passages concern bringing back a dead person’s strength and exclusion

from divine dwellings, respectively. Reading them requires attention to their own wording and transmission.

Aidoneus should therefore function as a point where the lexicon makes disagreement visible. The root's divinity is explicit; its material identification remains an interpretive problem rather than a solved vocabulary exercise.[2]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 6.2. Aidoneus is the third named divinity, without an accompanying epithet.

B 52. Underground fire offers a comparison relevant to some interpretations, but Aidoneus is not named.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The introduction distinguishes earth, air, and a modern fire interpretation.

In this edition. The translation transliterates the name instead of rendering it "earth," "air," or "fire." The spelling Aidoneus should not be confused with aidēlon, the epithet of fire in B 109: resemblance in English transliteration does not establish identity.

See also. Roots; Hera; Earth; Air; Fire; Subterranean fire; Hades.

Air

ἠέρος ἄπλετον ὕψος (ēeros apleton hypsos); ὑγρὸς ἀήρ (hygros aēr); ἀέρα (aera); ἀέρος ὄγκος (aeros onkos)

The word. Aēr appears in epic inflections as well as the nominative printed in B 38. It is "air" in the translation, but its poetic descriptions are more informative than a

[2] The introduction supplies only a summary of the testimony. Its source reports are not printed in full as A-fragments in this volume.

modern atmospheric definition: its height is vast, it can be moist, and it is called a cloud-gatherer. The surviving vocabulary should be read alongside aither, not assigned in advance to the later sharply separated terrestrial and celestial substances.

In Empedocles. B 17 includes the boundless height of air in the fourfold list. B 38, however, speaks of moist air and also aither in a compressed account of the origins of what is visible. Whatever reconstruction one favours, this wording makes a simple interchangeable English label unreliable across every passage. B 149's isolated "cloud-gatherer" gives air the traditional dignity of a divine epithet and emphasises its connection with weather.

The clepsydra comparison in B 100 offers a more local description. An internal mass of air obstructs the entry of water; elsewhere in the same comparison aither and breath occupy the corresponding explanatory roles. The word onkos marks an effective bulk, not an empty region. This is especially significant beside the denial of void: air need not be visible to count as something present which can impede water.

The introduction reports that some ancient witnesses interpreted Aidoneus as air, using its invisibility to explain the name, while another tradition connected air with Hera. That disagreement belongs to the history of interpreting B 6. Neither the label "cloud-gatherer" nor the clepsydra passage independently resolves it.[3]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.18. The boundless height of air completes the physical list.

[3] The mass of air in B 100 is described within an analogy; it should not be recast as a quantitative modern gas law.

B 38.3–4. Moist air appears beside earth, sea, and the difficult Titan/aither wording.

B 149. Air receives the epithet “cloud-gatherer” in a short isolated quotation.

B 100.9–21. The mass of air prevents water entering a stopped vessel; other lines use aither and breath.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). Ancient identifications of air with Hera or Aidoneus are reported as conflicting interpretations.

In this edition. The translation preserves “air” and “aither” rather than making them automatically synonymous. This is a textual distinction, not a guarantee that Empedocles adopted a later systematic separation between the two. B 149 contains an ellipsis, so the original syntax and surrounding account are missing.

See also. Aither; Roots; Hera; Aidoneus; Void and plenum; Respiration; Clepsydra; Iris.

Aither

αἰθήρ (aithēr); αἰθέρι παμφανόωντι (aitheri pamphanoōnti); αἰθέρα δῖον (aithera dion); αἰθέριον (aitherion)

The word. Aithēr is retained as “aither” in much of this translation. Its associations with radiance, divinity, and the upper regions matter, but its Empedoclean range is wider than the modern expression “upper atmosphere.” The adjective aitherion in B 115 becomes “of the upper air.” The exact forms also occur in passages about mixture, breathing, and what lies below earth. Transliteration helps prevent a later philosophical meaning from being silently substituted.

In Empedocles. Aither is one of the named ingredients from which the forms and colours of mortals arise in B 71. B 98 mixes all-shining aither with Earth, Hephaestus, and rain to produce blood and flesh. B 109 locates divine aither both in the recogniser and in what is recognised. These are substantial roles in embodied life, not merely ornamental references to a remote sky.

Its spatial appearances are equally varied. B 38 gives it a circling, enclosing function in this edition's translation, which joins "Titan" to "aither." The Greek coordinates the two with "and," so reading Titan and aither separately must remain a live alternative. B 54 sends it beneath earth with long roots. B 100 uses it for the medium passing through bodily channels and participating in the water-catcher analogy. The latter alternates aither, air, and breath in a way that prevents a rigid one-word, one-altitude scheme. B 37's statement that aither increases aither instead stresses continuity of kind amid the changes.

The exile narrative also makes aither active: its force drives the wanderer to sea and its eddies receive him again from the sun. B 135 extends what is lawful through wide-ruling aither and light, using the cosmic reach of the term to express the scope of a norm. Neither passage defines aither as the substance of the travelling daimon.

The introduction reports interpretations in which Zeus corresponds to air or aither, as well as other mappings. These remain interpretations. One must especially resist reading aither here as a securely distinct fifth element. The four-root account is Empedoclean; the later

terminology and classifications associated with Plato and Aristotle are not its unspoken key.[4]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 98.1–5. Shining aither participates in the near-equal mixture which produces blood and flesh.

B 54. Aither extends down beneath earth with long roots.

B 100.1–25. Aither enters and leaves bodily passages and plays the corresponding role in the clepsydra comparison.

B 115.9–12. Aither is an agent and region of the wanderer's expulsion.

B 135. Wide-ruling aither marks the uninterrupted cosmic extension of what is lawful.

B 38. The English joins "Titan aither," while the Greek has the coordinating "and"; a separate Titan and aither reading must remain visible.

In this edition. The edition's retention of "aither" is a warning against overtranslation, not a precise scientific definition. B 38 prints Τιτὰν ἠδ' αἰθὴρ, coordinating "Titan and aither," whereas the English gives "the Titan aither." The translation therefore makes a syntactic decision which should not be treated as a secure identity. Reading Titan separately does not by itself establish a fifth root.

See also. Air; Roots; Zeus; Boundlessness; Whirl and eddy; Respiration; Clepsydra; Universal law.

[4] A later theory may use the same Greek word while giving it a different technical role. Lexical continuity alone does not establish doctrinal continuity. Titan is retained here as a lookup label because the supplied translation attaches it to aither. The coordinated Greek permits a separate referent; identifying that referent more precisely requires interpretation beyond the English rendering.

Alien tunic of flesh

σαρκῶν ἀλλογνῶτι (sarkōn allognōti); περιστέλλουσα χιτῶνι (peristellousa chitōni)

The word. Chitōn is a tunic, here made of flesh. The adjective allognōs, represented by the printed form allognōti, conveys foreignness or unfamiliarity. The feminine participle peristellousa describes wrapping or clothing. The metaphor makes embodiment an act of envelopment rather than supplying a literal garment.

In Empedocles. B126 places the detached word daimōn before a phrase about wrapping in an alien tunic of flesh. The translation supplies “them” to make English sense, but the quotation does not preserve an explicit object. It would consequently be too confident to identify a fully recoverable scene in which a named goddess clothes named souls.

The image can illuminate the estrangement in B115 and B118: flesh is a covering experienced as alien, and mortal forms are stages in the exile’s movement. Yet it cannot by itself prove a complete body–soul dualism, the worthlessness of all bodies, or the material independence of the wearer. Empedocles also explains bodily flesh as a mixture under Cypris in B98. A lexicon should keep both idioms visible rather than allowing the clothing metaphor to cancel the physical account.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 126. The fragment supplies the flesh-tunic image with a detached daimōn.

B 98.1–5. Flesh is also described as a compound formed in Cypris’s harbours.

B 115.5–8. Repeated mortal shapes provide a context for interpreting embodiment.

In this edition. The phrase is incomplete and the participle is feminine. The English object “them” is supplied by the translation’s syntax; it is not a separately attested noun in the Greek quotation.

See also. Daimon; Transmigration; Flesh; Cypris.

Altar

βωμός (bōmos)

The word. Bōmos is an altar, the focal object named in B128’s account of worship. The word occurs in the statement that it was not drenched with the slaughter-blood of bulls. The presence of an altar distinguishes the scene from a simple abandonment of cult.

In Empedocles. The community under Cypris offers images, scents, incense, and honey, while its altar remains free of bulls’ blood. The contrast is ethically decisive: taking life in order to devour limbs is the greatest defilement there. The altar’s proper use is therefore reimagined through restraint rather than abolished.

The passage does not give its location, construction, dimensions, or consecration ritual. Nor does it say that the honey was poured upon it; that offering is directed to the ground. A careful reading distinguishes the named ritual site from the particular destination of each offering. It also avoids treating “unmixed blood” as a loophole permitting blood diluted with another liquid. The concluding condemnation concerns the killing and eating itself.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.7–10. The altar is not soaked with bulls’ blood, and killing for consumption is condemned.

In this edition. The negative sentence is about this portrayed community. It supports an ideal of nonviolent worship, not a historical survey proving that no other altar was bloodstained.

See also. Sacrifice; Golden age; Honey libations; Murder and bloodshed.

Aphrodite

Ἀφροδίτην (Aphroditēn); Ἀφροδίτηι (Aphroditēi); Ἀφροδίτη (Aphroditē); Ἀφροδίτης (Aphroditēs)

The word. Aphrodite is a divine name that the fragments place directly within the vocabulary of Love. B17 says that mortals call the inborn power responsible for friendly thought and deeds of joining both Gladness and Aphrodite. The name retains recognizable associations with attraction and generation while acquiring an explicit role in bodily construction.

In Empedocles. The physical passages repeatedly present Aphrodite as a maker. In B22 she makes things alike so that they are held dear by one another and suited to blending. B71 attributes the fitting together of the forms and colours of mortal things to her. B86 calls her divine and credits her with fashioning eyes; B87 gives her rivets of affection. These are images of deliberate craft applied to a material process, not a choice between a “religious” and a “scientific” explanation.

B66’s cloven meadows of Aphrodite invite a sexual or reproductive reading, though the quotation is only a phrase and does not name an anatomical referent. The goddess’s name therefore spans sexual generation, affinities among ingredients, and the assembly of an organ. Her association with Life-giving in B151 is supplied

through Plutarch's report of an epithet, not a surviving full description of her actions.

The explicit naming statement in B17 supplies the strongest bridge to Love. Even so, preserving Aphrodite rather than translating each occurrence as Love matters. It retains the agent's identity and the particular images that make the power intelligible. Equally, it does not justify importing every familiar myth about Aphrodite into Empedocles. The fragments themselves choose which aspects of her range become relevant.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.20–26. Aphrodite is a mortal name for the power present in limbs and acts of joining.

B 22.4–5. She makes blendable things alike and dear to one another.

B 71.1–4. Forms and colours arise through her fitting together.

B 86. Divine Aphrodite fashions eyes.

B 87. She works with rivets of affection.

In this edition. The translation keeps "Aphrodite" rather than replacing the name with an abstract attraction. B66 remains a broken metaphor; B151 is a single reported epithet whose referent is identified in the quoting author's prose.

See also. Love; Cypris; Harmony; Gladness; Affection; Life-giving; Eye; Cloven meadows.

Apples

μῆλα (mēla); ὑπέρφλοια (hyperphloia)

The word. The edition renders the μῆλα of B80 as apples and their adjective as “full of sap.” They accompany late-born pomegranates. The phrase directs attention toward a fruit’s bodily fullness, not merely its colour or outward shape.

In Empedocles. The surviving line begins with a conclusion marker, so the apples’ condition once answered to an explanation given earlier. That causal context is missing. It would be unwarranted to supply a precise theory of excess water, bark thickness, ripeness, or sweetness solely from the translated adjective.

The fruit is nevertheless a meaningful physical example. Empedocles can characterize plant products by an internal quality just as he characterizes animal tissue by density, moisture, or mixture. The apple’s fullness and the pomegranate’s timing are different observations placed side by side, suggesting a range of features to be explained rather than one generic category of fruitfulness.

Wine, described as water transformed within wood, offers another botanical passage in which internal fluid is central. The comparison helps a reader see the poet’s attention to plant materials; it does not establish that the sap-filled apple and wine result from an identical process. The entry therefore preserves the tangible quality stated in B80 while leaving its lost explanation unfilled.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 80. Apples are characterized as full of sap in the same verse as late-born pomegranates.

B 81. The account of wine gives a distinct example of fluid transformed within plant material.

In this edition. The fruit identification and the phrase "full of sap" follow this edition's choices. The bare verse does not warrant a precise modern cultivar, a chemical analysis, or a practical claim about ripeness.

See also. Pomegranates; Wine; Trees; Hardening and texture.

Appointed turns

ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι (en de merei krateousi); ἐν μέρει αἴσης (en merei aisēs); ἀμοιβαῖος (amoibaios)

The word. The phrase "in turn" is built from meros, a part or share; B 26 also invokes aisē, an allotted portion. B 30 calls the time amoibaios, alternating or reciprocal. These words give change an order of succession rather than portraying cosmic dominance as an unrestricted victory once and for all.

In Empedocles. B 17 states that the sources have distinct offices and prevail by turns as time comes round. B 26 closely repeats the claim but makes the cycle explicit and describes waning into one another and renewed growth in the allotted turn. The vocabulary of shares connects duration and predominance: a constituent or power has its scope without being the sole explanation of all things permanently.

B 30 intensifies the relation through the broad oath. Strife rises to honours when its time is fulfilled. The text does not name an external legislator here or set out a list of numerical phase lengths. What it supplies is the assurance that a change of dominance occurs within an established alternating order.

The short B 16 supports the endurance of the two powers, as understood from the quoting context. Together these passages make it unsafe to equate a period of dominant Love with the irreversible abolition of Strife. The opposed power may be excluded from a particular condition or region without ceasing to belong to the account as a whole.[5]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.27–29. Distinct offices and characters coexist with successive predominance.

B 26.1–2. The cycle and allotted turn govern waning and renewed increase.

B 30. An alternating time established by oath governs the rise of Strife.

B 16. The quoted assurance of enduring duration is conventionally applied to both powers.

In this edition. “Turn appointed” renders a phrase of share or allotment in B 26. It does not add the precise schedule reported from later materials in the introduction. The oath in B 30 should also not be automatically identified word for word with the decree in B 115.

See also. Cycle; Time and lifetime; Character and office; Strife; Love; Oath; Necessity.

[5] The alternation has an ethical and political resonance through office, honour, and oath, but the fragments do not prescribe a corresponding constitution for a human city.

Ares

Ἄρης (Arēs)

The word. Ares is the divine name opening B128's list of powers absent from the community's worship. His conventional martial associations are reinforced locally by the immediately following Battle-Din. The fragment names him rather than giving an etymology or a physical definition.

In Empedocles. The verse says that there was no god Ares among those people; instead, Cypris was queen. Together with the exclusion of Battle-Din and the refusal of bloody sacrifice, this places the community under an order in which the usual signs of violence are displaced. The passage does not assert that Ares does not exist anywhere, or provide a separate argument against the traditional gods.

Nor should Ares be automatically identified with the cosmic Strife. Their martial and separating associations allow comparison, but B128 does not make that equation. The careful reading keeps the local theological arrangement in view: the names characterize the community's allegiance and mode of life. Ares is a figure whose absence matters in that portrait.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.1–3. Ares is first among the gods not present among the people ruled by Cypris.

In this edition. "Among them" is essential to the negative claim. Omitting it would convert the scene into an unrestricted denial of Ares and misrepresent the scope of the surviving statement.

See also. Battle-Din; Cypris; Golden age; Strife.

Backbone

ῥάχιν (rhachin)

The word. Ῥάχιν is the inflected word rendered “the backbone.” B97 preserves no accompanying verb, adjective, or numerical account. The original sentence is not available in the supplied fragment.

In Empedocles. The survival of this anatomical item is a reminder that the evidence is uneven. Bone receives a full four-line account of its proportional mixture; the backbone survives here as one word. It is tempting to connect the two, since a spine is a particular organization of bone, but that reasonable anatomical association does not recover the lost Empedoclean explanation.

The witness is Aristotle’s Parts of Animals, an appropriate setting for discussion of bodily structures. Without the surrounding argument printed in the book, however, the citation does not entitle the lexicon to attribute a specific developmental mechanism, purpose, or critique to this word alone. The distinction between the ancient author’s larger discussion and the text actually reproduced is crucial.

The entry is therefore a reliable point of lookup rather than a reconstructed theory of vertebrae. It directs the reader toward bone for the securely preserved compositional account, joint for the language of binding parts, and isolated limbs for the question of bodily articulation. Those comparisons define a field of interpretation while leaving this fragment’s lost proposition open.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 97. The edition prints only the word for backbone, citing Aristotle, Parts of Animals I.1.

B 96. Bone's mixture is explained in a fuller, separate passage.

In this edition. Do not quote B97 as though the book supplied a complete sentence about the spine. Its brevity is part of the evidence and should remain visible even in a comprehensive lexicon.

See also. Bone; Joint; Isolated limbs.

Barley-meal and water

ἄλφιτον (alphiton); ὕδατι (hydati); κολλήσας (kollēsas)

The word. B34 preserves a participial phrase about gluing barley-meal with water. The substance being joined is granular meal, and the joining agent is water. The vocabulary emphasizes cohesion rather than simply wetness.

In Empedocles. The example gives a familiar material basis for thinking about compounds. Water can help separate grains become a connected mass; the process is presented through a verb also appropriate to glue. It thereby makes visible how one material can alter the relations among portions of another.

The fragment is too short to identify its subject or the main argument to which the participle belonged. The source reference to the fourth book of the Meteorology transmitted under Aristotle's name locates its preservation, but the book does not reproduce a complete discussion there. A particular Empedoclean recipe or cosmic application should not be invented from that citation.

Its strongest comparisons are internal to the surviving poem. Fig-juice binds milk; Harmonia's gluings fit bone;

Cypris moistens earth before fire hardens forms. In these examples moisture, fit, and hardening cooperate in different ways. B34 contributes the specific case in which water itself supplies a joining effect. It does not entail that all water always binds or that water is simply identical with Love in every context.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 34. The whole fragment describes gluing barley-meal with water.

B 33. Milk is bound through fig-juice in another short material comparison.

B 96. Bone's cohesion is described through gluings.

B 73. Cypris moistens earth before fire hardens the forms.

In this edition. The incomplete participial grammar should remain visible in paraphrase: someone or something has glued the meal, but the agent and larger proposition are absent. The word "glue" is an explanatory image, not a claim about a separate manufactured adhesive.

See also. Fig-juice and milk; Hardening and texture; Bone; Mixture.

Battle-Din

Κυδοιμός (Kydoimos)

The word. Kydoimos is battle-noise or warlike tumult, personified in the list at B128. "Battle-Din" keeps the sound and disorder of combat audible. It is a different name from Quarrel, Wrath, or the cosmic Strife, even though their semantic fields overlap.

In Empedocles. The name follows Ares in the declaration that these powers were not gods among the community

over which Cypris was queen. Their adjacency makes a compact picture of war and its tumult. The subsequent contrast between fragrant worship and blood-soaked altars gives the absent power an ethical setting without assigning it an independent speech or action.

Kydoimos is not part of the B122/123 catalogue, and the two lists should not be collapsed merely because both use personification. In B128 the form of the assertion is negative: Battle-Din is excluded from a particular community's order. The fragment provides no genealogy, cult practice, or allocation of one of the roots to the figure.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.1–3. Battle-Din stands beside Ares among the absent gods.

In this edition. The transliteration "Kydoimos" and translation "Battle-Din" are lookup alternatives for the same printed noun. It should not be silently substituted for Neikos in the physical cycle.

See also. Ares; Quarrel; Wrath; Golden age; Cypris.

Baubo

βαυβώ (baubō); κοιλίαν (koilian)

The word. Βαυβώ is the word indexed under B153. Hesychius' gloss first identifies Baubo as Demeter's nurse and then adds that the word also signifies belly or womb, as in Empedocles. Κοιλίαν is the explanatory word in that lexicographical gloss, not a second preserved Empedoclean verse-word in this fragment.

In Empedocles. The important distinction is between a name and the bodily sense explicitly assigned to Empedocles. A reader who sees "Baubo" may reasonably

expect a mythological figure. The supplied evidence instead directs the Empedoclean occurrence toward the belly or womb. It does not preserve a story involving Demeter's nurse, a speech spoken by her, or a ritual scene in which she appears.

This does not require denying any wider associations the word may have had. It requires keeping the claim proportionate to the witness. Hesychius offers a lexical equivalence and cites Empedocles as an example; the line that established that equivalence is lost. The precise distinction between abdomen and reproductive womb therefore remains unresolved here.

The bodily sense makes the fragment relevant to the surviving material on generation, especially B67's male-bearing belly. Yet the shared domain does not prove that B153 came from that passage or that the poet used the two terms interchangeably. It is a lexical survival with a useful gloss, not a recoverable anatomical chapter.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 153 (report). Hesychius distinguishes the mythological name from the belly/womb meaning exemplified by Empedocles.

B 153 (editorial discussion). The edition supplies the lexicographer's wording and warns by context against treating the isolated item as a full verse.

B 67. The male-bearing belly offers a related anatomical context, without identifying the missing setting of B153.

In this edition. The edition prints lowercase βαυβώ and translates "baubo (belly)." The broader "belly or womb" comes from its explanation of Hesychius. An entry headed Baubo should not transform the lexicographer's first definition into evidence that Empedocles narrated the nurse's myth.

See also. Sexual differentiation; Birth-caul; Warmth and cold in generation.

Beans

κνάμων (kyamōn)

The word. Kyamos is a bean; the printed plural genitive belongs to the command to keep one's hands away. The surviving verse names no botanical variety. "Bean taboo" is a conventional description of the prohibition, not a separate term found in it.

In Empedocles. B141 sharply addresses its audience as wretched, doubly emphasizing the reproach before telling them to keep their hands from beans. The force of the command is clear, but its reason is absent. It cannot be securely explained from this line through digestion, sexual symbolism, political voting, or the beans' supposed relation to the dead.

The introduction places the prohibition in a Pythagorean context. That is a historical comparison made by the modern discussion, not a statement by the verse that Pythagoras issued this rule or that Empedocles studied under him. The book itself warns against overconfident master-and-pupil biographies. The useful connection to the other food fragments is narrower: abstention extends beyond killing and eating animals to at least one named plant food, so the ethical regimen cannot be summarized as a simple permission to eat anything vegetarian.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 141. An emphatic rebuke introduces the command to keep hands from beans.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The introduction treats the bean prohibition as evidence of a Pythagorean connection while questioning direct discipleship.

In this edition. The whole surviving line is a command without a supplied reason. Any confident symbolic or medical explanation would require evidence not printed in this book.

See also. Laurel; Meat-eating; Purification and fasting; Wealth of understanding.

Bed and Waking

Εὐναίη (Eunaiē);Ἔγερσις (Egersis)

The word. Eunaiē is rendered "She-of-the-Bed," while Egersis is awakening or rising. The first name evokes lying down or the bed rather than explicitly supplying the noun "sleep." The second names the transition into wakefulness or activity.

In Empedocles. The pair stands between Growth and Decay and Movement and Immobility in B122/123. "Sleep and waking" is a useful interpretive lookup phrase, since a bed and rising naturally suggest that contrast. Still, the edition's more literal "She-of-the-Bed" preserves a breadth that "Sleep" would suppress: a bed can also imply repose or a sexual setting.

Nothing in the isolated catalogue decides among all those associations. It supplies neither a physiology of sleep nor an instruction for ritual incubation. Nor does it connect the figure directly with the bodily reproductive "meadows" of Aphrodite elsewhere. The strongest account is lexical and local: two feminine names personify contrasted conditions of lying down and arousal or rising.

Their neighbours invite comparisons among natural opposites without explaining a full classification.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.5. She-of-the-Bed and Waking follow Growth and Decay.

In this edition. The English rendering deliberately leaves Eunaiē as a name associated with the bed. Replacing it silently with a fully developed sleep-goddess would be more definite than the supplied text.

See also. Growth and Decay; Movement and Immobility; Aphrodite.

Being

ἐὸν (eon); ἐόντος (eontos); αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα (auta gar estin tauta)

The word. The forms eon and eontos belong to the verb “be” and designate what is. B 12 contrasts what is with what in no way is; it does not introduce a new proper name for an entity called Being. Repeated statements that “these very things are” then place the abstract denial of annihilation within the concrete account of roots and mixtures.

In Empedocles. B 12 makes two claims: nothing can arise from what does not exist, and what exists cannot be utterly destroyed. Its final image of always being there wherever one presses it emphasises persistence, though the fragment does not furnish a developed theory of physical pressure. B 11 states the same objection polemically against short-reaching thought.

B 17 applies it to the All. Nothing can be added from elsewhere, nothing can disappear into a region empty of

the constituents, and these same things run through one another to become different things. There are therefore two legitimate scales of description: a compound changes or ceases, but the sources of its composition endure. The apparent contradiction between becoming and always being is addressed by that qualification, not by denying that the poet describes a moving world.

B 15 extends the warning to the boundaries of mortal lifetime. It is unwise to say that mortals are nothing before being compacted and after being loosened. The verse leaves the relevant continuity to be interpreted through the surrounding doctrine, rather than explicitly defining an immortal personal soul. The introduction situates this reasoning in engagement with Parmenides; that historical comparison is the modern introduction's framing, while the positive mixture-language belongs to the quoted verses themselves.[6]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 12. The explicit impossibility of generation from non-being and destruction of what is.

B 11. The same assumptions are attacked as foolish and insufficiently reflective.

B 17.30–35. No addition or loss is possible; persistent constituents become different combinations.

B 15. Mortal lifetime does not delimit all existence of what is compacted and loosened.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The engagement with the Eleatic argument is identified in modern apparatus.

[6] "Conservation" is a helpful broad analogy only if it does not imply that Empedocles formulated a modern conservation law with measured mass or energy.

In this edition. “What is” is more faithful here than a capitalised, self-standing “Being” as if the fragment had announced another deity. The source of B 12 is the pseudo-Aristotelian On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, not a direct manuscript of Empedocles.

See also. Roots; Birth; Death; Void and plenum; Ungenerated; One and many; Mortal things.

Bell and fleshy sprig

κώδων (kōdōn); σάρκινος ὄζος (sarkinos ozos)

The word. The two memorable expressions in B99 are a bell and a fleshy sprig or shoot. Their combination brings an artifact and an organic growth into the account of hearing. The book prints them together for lookup, while its note shows that they come from different parts of Theophrastus’ explanatory prose.

In Empedocles. The bell provides a model for sound inside a bounded object. The witness describes corresponding echoes or ringing within the ear. The image’s explanatory emphasis is therefore acoustic behaviour rather than the outward silhouette of the whole head. It should not be read as a claim that the ear contains a literal metal bell.

The fleshy sprig points instead to the character of a bodily structure: it is organic, small or projecting in the imagery, and made of flesh. “Sprig” continues the poem’s crossings between botanical and anatomical vocabulary, comparable to human shoots and sprouting heads. Its precise anatomical referent is not named in the supplied material.

The juxtaposition is especially valuable for understanding Empedocles’ explanatory style. A single

sense may be clarified through more than one comparison, each capturing a different feature. Combining them into a modern labeled diagram would obscure the limits of what is preserved. The secure achievement is a pair of concrete models, transmitted through a later discussion, rather than a complete dissected ear.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 99 (report). The headword materials are the isolated bell and fleshy-sprig expressions.

B 99 (editorial discussion). The printed surrounding words of Theophrastus distinguish a bell comparison from the naming of the fleshy structure.

B 62. Human shoots offer a separate use of plant-growth vocabulary for anatomy.

In this edition. The source note prints both Theophrastus' comparison and his verb of naming. This distinction is more informative than treating every word under a B-number as equally secure verbatim verse.

See also. Hearing; Flesh; Night-born shoots; Lantern; Clepsydra.

Birth

φύσις (physis); γένεσις (genesis); γενέσθαι (genesthai); φύεσθαι (phyesthai)

The word. Physis is rendered "birth" in B 8, where the immediate issue is whether mortal things come to be absolutely. The related vocabulary includes genesis, coming-to-be, and forms of the verb "grow." Their shared concern is how a thing arises, but one English translation should not be imposed on every occurrence. In B 63 physis concerns the divided formation or constitution of

limbs; in B 110 it concerns each thing's nature or characteristic development.

In Empedocles. B 8 denies birth and terminal destruction, then states the positive account: mixture and interchange of what has been mixed. Human beings call that process birth. B 9 extends the explanation to the appearance of humans, animals, plants, and birds, and allows the poet to speak by ordinary custom while marking its inadequacy. The point is explanatory correction, not an inability to discuss familiar events.

B 17 accordingly continues to speak of the twofold birth of mortal things. It can use the ordinary vocabulary while immediately qualifying the level at which it applies. Compounds come to be and lack a steadfast lifetime; the constituents remain through their unceasing interchange. Denying absolute birth does not erase the distinction between a formed living body and its separated ingredients.

This distinction makes the contextual meaning of physis especially important. Reading B 8 as "nothing has a nature" would turn a claim about origin into an indiscriminate denial of constitution or character. B 110, by contrast, positively speaks of the physis of each, and B 63 describes a physis of limbs distributed in reproduction. The work-title On Nature is neither a definition of the word in each verse nor proof that all fragments once occupied the present editorial sections.

Birth-language also reaches the roots' equal age in B 17 and the growth of mortal from formerly immortal in B 35. These expressions need interpretation in light of the permanence argument. They should not be used to

smuggle a first production of the roots out of nothing into a doctrine which explicitly rejects it.[7]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8. Physis names the absolute birth being denied and the conventional name applied to mixture.

B 9. Human and animal generation is redescribed as mingling; ordinary names remain usable.

B 17.3–13. The poem speaks of mortal generation while distinguishing cyclic persistence.

B 63. Physis has a local bodily and reproductive sense rather than the identical polemical sense of B 8.

B 110.4–5. Each thing is said to grow according to its own physis.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The translator explicitly warns against “nature” in B 8.

In this edition. The edition’s “birth” at B 8 is a contextual decision, not a glossary rule that physis always means birth. B 9’s “say” and its negative “not” are editorial supplements. The supplied words affect how sharply the poet criticises ordinary naming and should remain visible.

See also. Mixture; Separation; Death; Being; Mortal things; Naming and convention; Character and office; Ungenerated.

Birth-caul

ἀμνίον (amnion)

The word. Ἀμνίον survives as a single anatomical word, rendered “birth-caul.” A caul is a membrane associated

[7] The lexicon distinguishes the source word physis from the later philosophical histories built around it. Those histories may illuminate reception but cannot replace the local contrast in each fragment.

with birth. The fragment gives no sentence explaining its formation, function, or relation to the developing offspring.

In Empedocles. Its preservation is nevertheless useful. It shows that the vocabulary gathered under Empedocles' name extended from sweeping accounts of animal origins to a particular structure of reproduction. Rufus of Ephesus, the source cited here, transmits it in a work concerned with the names of bodily parts. That setting explains why a bare term could survive after the surrounding verse was lost.

The word should be read beside, rather than absorbed into, the other reproductive fragments: divided formation of limbs, thermal sex differentiation, and the report of embryonic completion in seven weeks. None of those passages restores the missing proposition in B70. They establish a relevant domain, not a recoverable definition in Empedocles' own voice.

The membranes of the eye in B84 perform a different function and use different vocabulary. Their common status as enclosing tissues does not warrant identifying them with the birth-caul. The distinction matters in a lexicon because anatomical analogy is frequent in the poem, but an analogy still has to be evidenced.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 70. Rufus preserves the isolated word in a nomenclature of bodily parts.

B 153a (report). A separate later report concerns embryonic completion, not the caul.

In this edition. "Birth-caul" is the edition's accessible English label. The survival of a word recognizable in later anatomy does not authorize importing the full modern

anatomical definition or developmental account into this one-word fragment.

See also. Seed; Seven weeks; Baubo; Pupil and membranes.

Blackness and shadow

niger (niger, Latin); color (color, Latin); umbra (umbra, Latin)

The word. B94 is printed in Latin rather than Greek. It describes black colour at the bottom of a river arising from shadow and likewise visible in hollow caves. The forms here are accordingly labeled Latin; no missing Greek colour-word is reconstructed for the reader.

In Empedocles. The two settings share a condition of darkness without being the same kind of place. A river bottom is seen through water, while a cave is a hollow recess. In both, shadow accounts for a black appearance. The fragment thus directs attention to the conditions under which a colour is seen, not only to an object's supposed intrinsic material hue.

That observation is relevant to the account of perception but remains local. The couplet does not declare all colours unreal, describe a full theory of illumination, or explain how an eye discriminates black from other colours. It is an example connecting visible appearance with the arrangement of light and shelter.

The linguistic mediation is decisive. Because the book provides a Latin rendering through the cited Plutarchan material, the exact original Greek phrasing cannot be quoted from this edition. A lexicon can nevertheless index the physical claim and the imagery, provided that it marks the layer of evidence. The blackness of river depths and

caves is transmitted Empedoclean content here; these Latin words are not Empedocles composing in Latin.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 94 (report). The Latin couplet attributes the river-bottom black colour to shadow and compares hollow caves.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The introduction explicitly identifies B94 as an exceptional Latin rendering rather than printed Greek verse.

In this edition. The absence of Greek is a substantive source-critical fact, not a typographical inconvenience to repair with an invented lemma. The form field therefore gives the actual Latin forms and identifies their language.

See also. Eye; Lantern; Form and shape; Painters and colours; Eclipse.

Blessedness

ὄλβου (olbou); ὄλβιος (olbios); μακάρων (makarōn); ὀλβίου (olbiou)

The word. The fragments use more than one word-family for blessedness. Olbos and olbios express a fortunate or flourishing condition; makar and its forms name or qualify the blessed, especially divine beings. The English overlap should not erase this lexical distinction. Neither term is reducible to a modern passing feeling of happiness.

In Empedocles. B119 breaks off in an exclamation about the honour and height of blessedness from which departure has occurred. Its scale makes the loss immense without specifying a literal altitude. B115 gives the complementary relation: the offending daimon must

wander far from the blessed. Together these passages set moral exile against a remembered or excluded condition of flourishing.

B132 makes blessedness relevant to understanding. The person who acquires the wealth of divine understanding is blessed, while one troubled by a dark opinion about gods is wretched. The contrast ties flourishing to the quality of theological knowledge rather than merely to possessions or public success. B131's prayer for a good account of the blessed gods gives a related poetic task.

B147 portrays release through sharing the immortals' hearth and table without human griefs. This is a social and affective picture of the desired condition. The fragment does not, however, narrate every step from the lament of B119 to that fellowship. B158 adds the expression of being deprived of a blessed age, but the introduction expressly marks its attribution as doubtful. It can be indexed for readers without becoming the foundation for a doctrine.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 119. The speaker evokes lost honour and a great extent of blessedness.

B 115.5–8. Exile is distance from the blessed.

B 132. Divine understanding distinguishes the blessed person from one with dark beliefs.

B 147. Fellowship with immortals is characterized by freedom from human grief.

B 158. A doubtful fragment speaks of deprivation of a blessed age.

In this edition. B158's local note marks its unusual numbering, while Introduction VII adds the stronger warning that it is doubtful. The entry preserves that

qualification. The different Greek families behind “blessed” are not automatically technical synonyms.

See also. Exile and wandering; Long-lived gods; Divine ascent; Shared hearth and table; Trust and persuasion.

Blood

αἷμα (haima); αἵματος (haimatos); τέρεν αἷμα (teren haima)

The word. Αἷμα is blood. Empedocles gives it several connected roles: it is a compound produced by a near-equal mixture, a moving fluid involved in breathing, and, around the heart, the bodily reality identified with thought. “Soft blood” emphasizes its fluid, yielding behaviour in the respiration passage.

In Empedocles. In B98 earth meets Hephaestus, rain, and shining aither in roughly equal quantities, with small departures from exact equality allowed. Blood and forms of other flesh result. The recipe places blood within the general account of compounded mortal substances. It is not an additional root, nor is it given a mysterious material origin separate from flesh.

B100 then describes what blood does. As it withdraws inward from the bodily passages, aither enters; when blood surges back, breath is expelled. The alternating movement, rather than a modern account of oxygen exchange or circulatory anatomy, is the mechanism made visible by the clepsydra comparison. In both body and vessel, a fluid’s movement is coordinated with the movement of air. The description is rhythmic, and the final line specifies an equal return of breath.

B105 is more concentrated and more startling: the blood surrounding human hearts is thought. The preceding image is of seas of blood leaping to and fro. This

joins cognition to the same active bodily material that the respiration passage sets in motion. It would be misleading to retain only the locative paraphrase “thought is in the heart,” since the verse explicitly names the surrounding blood.

Blood also appears in the vocabulary of killing and defilement elsewhere in the book. Those ethical and ritual uses should not erase the physiological specificity of B98, B100, and B105. A single substance participates in several explanatory domains; the lexicon must keep their contexts legible rather than assume that every occurrence makes the same claim.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 98. Blood and the forms of other flesh arise from near-equal contributions.

B 100.1–8, 22–25. The inward and outward movement of soft blood governs the alternating movement of breath.

B 105. Pericardial blood is identified with human thought.

B 150. The liver is described as blood-rich.

In this edition. The English “blood” represents αἷμα in these physiological passages but φόνον at B100.4; the Greek terms are distinct. The central physiological statements should be cited by their full local argument: the identification of blood with thought is precise for B105 but is not a summary of every use of blood in the poem.

See also. Heart and thought; Respiration; Flesh; Blood-rich liver; Bone.

Blood-rich liver

πολυαίματον ἧπαρ (polyaimaton hēpar)

The word. B150 consists of a noun and its adjective: the liver is "blood-rich." The compound characterizes the organ by an abundance of blood. No verb survives to say what the organ does.

In Empedocles. The phrase is a small but distinct anatomical observation. It associates an identifiable part with a conspicuous bodily material, and it belongs beside the fuller accounts of blood's mixture, movement, and relation to thought. Those connections make the fragment relevant to physiology without allowing it to carry all the claims of the better-preserved blood passages.

In particular, the liver is not identified here as the seat of thought. B105 makes its explicit cognitive statement about blood around the heart. Nor does B150 assign the liver a role in making blood, filtering substances, predicting events, or determining temperament. Those are possible subjects in other anatomical traditions, but none is supplied by these two words.

Plutarch's Table Talk is named as the witness. Since the edition gives no expanded local argument, the surviving result remains descriptive rather than explanatory. A granular lexicon can respect that limit while making the phrase findable for readers interested in the range of organs Empedocles actually names.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 150. The two-word fragment describes the liver as rich in blood.

B 105. A different passage explicitly associates thought with blood around the heart.

In this edition. The adjective's force is abundance, not a measured proportion. It should not be converted into the precise near-equal recipe given for blood in B98 or into a modern account of hepatic function.

See also. Blood; Heart and thought; Flesh.

Bone

ὀστέα λευκὰ (ostea leuka); χοάνοισι (choanoisi); κόλλησιν (kollēisin)

The word. The "white bones" of B96 are the outcome of a measured combination, formed in "broad-breasted crucibles" and fitted by Harmonia's gluings. The words bring together colour, bodily substance, numerical proportion, and the language of manufacture.

In Empedocles. Bone is the clearest surviving example of a particular tissue explained through a quantitative composition. Earth receives two portions out of eight of Nestis' gleam and four of Hephaestus. The familiar interpretation assigns the remaining two portions to earth. The text expressly states the two and four, while earth's remainder is inferred from the total eight and the role of earth as subject. That distinction is worth retaining even when the resulting recipe is summarized as two parts earth, two water, and four fire.

The divine names remain active in the description. Nestis and Hephaestus are not discarded as poetic ornament once a physical reading is available. This edition preserves their names, and the wider uncertainties over divine identifications should not be suppressed by an apparently transparent modern formula. Bone is at once a compounded material and the result of divine fitting.

The crucibles and glue do different explanatory work. A crucible provides a bounded place in which materials are brought together; glue explains their cohesive articulation. Neither image licenses the idea that a literal workshop stood outside the world to manufacture every skeleton. They make the relation between constituents, proportion, and stable structure vivid.

Comparison with B98 is particularly illuminating. Blood and flesh are formed from an approximately balanced mixture, allowing small variations, whereas bone is associated with a strikingly uneven numbered share. Differences between tissues are thus differences in combination, not evidence that each tissue possesses its own eternal substance. The fragment does not supply a modern chemical formula, and its numerical precision should not be mistaken for modern experimental quantification.

The colour word also deserves attention. Bone is white in the resulting body, while its named materials are introduced through gleam, earth, and divine fire. The poem can therefore move from an invisible proportional explanation to a familiar visible character. B71 asks generally how mixture yields the forms and colours of mortal things; B96 supplies one especially concrete tissue whose colour and texture are part of its recognizable identity. The fragment does not isolate whiteness as a fifth ingredient or offer a separate pigment theory.

The “broad-breasted” description of the crucibles similarly works at two levels. A receptacle is given a bodily shape just as bodies elsewhere are described through vessels, pipes, and rivets. The account does not divide a purely technical explanation from a merely decorative poetic surface. Its bodily and craft vocabularies help convey receptivity, proportion, and fitting. Reading

the image closely is therefore part of understanding the explanation, even while a literal furnace or workshop remains unasserted.[8]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 96. The whole fragment gives the eight-part mixture and the white bones fitted by Harmonia.

B 98. Near-equal contributions produce blood and other flesh, offering a contrasting mixture.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The introduction explains fitting and joinery as central to its rendering of Harmonia.

In this edition. The local note restores the standard identification B96 against an inconsistent read-back number. References should therefore use B96. The two parts conventionally assigned to earth are an inference from the verse's arithmetic, whereas the two of Nestis and four of Hephaestus are stated.

See also. Blood; Flesh; Backbone; Harmony; Mixture; Hardening and texture.

Boundlessness

ἀπείρων (apeirōn); ἀπείρονα (apeirona); ἄπλετον (apleton); ἄσπετος (aspetos)

The word. Several Greek expressions become "boundless," "without limit," or similar expansive English wording. Apeirōn in the Sphere description is not the same word as apleton for the height of air or aspetos for time. Their shared English rendering can suggest a

[8] B71 explicitly makes both forms and colours outcomes requiring an account through mixture. It supplies a useful general setting for the white appearance named in the bone recipe.

uniform technical theory of infinity which the surviving vocabulary does not establish.

In Empedocles. B 28 describes the rounded Sphere as equal from all sides and wholly without limit. Roundedness and limitless extent present an interpretive tension. One may consider an absence of distinguishing boundaries or an emphatic completeness, but the fragment does not explicitly supply such a gloss. It is safer to preserve the difficulty than to force an infinite geometric sphere with a measurable surface.

B 39 challenges talk of boundless depths of earth and ample aither, attributing that confident speech to people who have seen only a little of the All. The opening conditional and fragmentary end mean the full argument is missing. Nonetheless, the passage plainly criticises an ungrounded cosmological assertion; it cannot be cited as Empedocles' straightforward affirmation that earth extends infinitely downward.

B 17's boundless height of air and B 16's boundless time occur in different settings. The former characterises a vast constituent or region; the latter denies a future empty of the two powers. B 135 extends law through aither and boundless light. These uses give the language of scope several functions, quantitative, temporal, and normative, rather than one settled mathematical definition.[9]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 28. The rounded Sphere is called altogether without limit.

B 39. A conditional challenge criticises claims about boundless depths of earth and ample aither.

[9] The word apeirōn here should not be silently identified with another early philosopher's named first principle merely because English handbooks use "the boundless" for both.

B 17.18. The height of air is called boundless.

B 16. Boundless time will not be emptied of the two powers.

B 135. Boundless light expresses the uninterrupted reach of what is lawful.

In this edition. The same English word covers different Greek expressions. The entry therefore records the actual forms and avoids converting all of them into a single doctrine of the Infinite. B 39 should retain its questioning or conditional force.

See also. Sphairos; Equality; Air; Aither; Earth; Time and lifetime; Universal law; Void and plenum.

Bronze and tin

τῶι καττιτέρωι (tōi kattiterōi); τὸν χαλκόν (ton chalkon); μειχθέντα (meichthenta)

The word. B92's metal example describes what the edition calls bronze when mixed with tin. The Greek words are preserved within Aristotle's prose account of Empedocles' explanation of seed mixture. This is a reported analogy, not an independently quoted verse about metallurgy.

In Empedocles. The analogy answers a specific explanatory challenge: how can two soft reproductive contributions yield something dense or hard? The metal example makes a change of texture on mixing familiar. It supports the possibility that a resulting compound differs qualitatively from its separate components.

The comparison should be followed at that level rather than expanded into a detailed metallurgical recipe. The report gives neither a proportion of tin nor a sequence of

heating and working. Its purpose is to make altered hardness intelligible, while the surrounding seed explanation supplies a spatial mechanism in which hollows and dense portions fit together.

The edition's rendering "bronze" also calls for care. An English reader may already associate bronze with an alloy, but the ancient material word in this reported comparison is not a modern chemical specification. The useful point does not depend on silently replacing the translated metal with a more narrowly defined industrial substance. The entry records the book's terminology and the limited role the example plays.

This analogy differs from the bronze clepsydra. There the metal makes a vessel with openings capable of controlling fluid exchange; here altered material texture is the subject. Shared material vocabulary does not mean a shared explanatory task.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 92 (report). The hardening example closes Aristotle's report of the seed-mixture explanation.

B 100.8–21. Bronze belongs to the construction of the water-catcher in a different physical analogy.

In this edition. The wording should always be introduced as Aristotle's reported analogy. The translation's "bronze" is retained, while the entry avoids a modern chemical formula or an unsupported correction to the ancient claim.

See also. Mule sterility; Seed; Hardening and texture; Clepsydra.

Calliopeia

Καλλιόπεια (Kalliopeia)

The word. Calliopeia is the name by which the immortal Muse is addressed in B131. “Calliope” is the familiar English form, but the translation keeps the longer form present in the Greek. The proper name specifies the addressee of the renewed prayer rather than introducing a second Muse within the same four lines.

In Empedocles. The speaker asks Calliopeia to stand by him as he brings to light a good account of the blessed gods. His mortal condition is contrasted with her immortality through the description of humans as creatures of a day. The opening looks back to an earlier occasion when his studies passed through her thought, though the clause is partly supplemented.

The passage frames theological speech as both study and prayer. It does not state that every claim in the poem is dictated word for word by a deity, nor does it describe the physical mechanism of inspiration. Its position under Purifications in this edition is editorial; the subject matter alone cannot certify a separate religious poem. The words themselves support a precise conclusion: at this point the poet renews his appeal to a named immortal helper for an account concerning divine beings.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 131.1–4. Calliopeia is asked to assist the present account of the blessed gods.

In this edition. The invocation reads “now once more,” which establishes renewal but does not identify which surviving invocation came first. The missing words supplied in line 2 must remain part of the entry’s source-critical caution.

See also. Muse; Piety; Blessedness; Long-lived gods.

Cave

ἄντρον ὑπόστεγον (antron hypostegon)

The word. Antron is a cave or cavern; hypostegon characterizes it as covered or roofed. The surviving phrase is spatial and architectural. Its meaning should not be replaced without argument by a technical term for the body or material universe.

In Empedocles. B120 says that "we" came into this roofed cave. That first-person plural suggests a shared arrival, but the quotation breaks off immediately. It does not identify the travellers, say from where they came, or name the cave's location. In the surrounding arrangement it follows laments of exile and precedes the catalogue of personifications. This invites a reading of the cave as an image of mortal existence, but the arrangement itself cannot prove that setting.

The quotation is transmitted by Porphyry in a work about a cave. That source is important evidence for ancient reception, yet its allegorical interests should not become unmarked statements by Empedocles. Nor should Plato's later cave image be imposed retroactively. Empedocles' few words are compatible with an evocative scene of entry and enclosure without supplying the particular epistemological drama familiar from Plato.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 120. A first-person plural announces entry into a roofed cave.

In this edition. The ellipsis leaves the sentence incomplete. B94 also mentions caves in this book, but only

in a Latin rendering about shadow and colour; that optical context does not explain B120's cave.

See also. Unfamiliar place; Exile and wandering; Alien tunic of flesh.

Chance

Τύχης (Tychēs); συνέκυρσε (synekyrse); συνέκυρσεν (synekyrsen)

The word. The noun Τύχης is printed with a capital in B103, where things have thought by the will of Chance. Related encounter-language appears in B53 and B59, which describe things running or falling together as they happen to meet. The exact noun and the encounter verbs are related in explanatory interest but are not identical wording.

In Empedocles. B53 emphasizes contingency by adding that the conjunction was so on one occasion and often otherwise. A particular result does not exhaust the possible arrangements. B59 applies encounter to the assembling scene associated with early organisms: as divinity mingles more widely with divinity, things fall together wherever each happens to meet. The line does not make chance a substitute for every other power. It expressly places the encounters in a setting of divine mingling.

B103 is more compressed. It attributes thought to the will of Chance. Its personifying idiom should not be turned automatically into a fully individuated goddess with a separate narrative or cultic role, but neither should the named agency be erased from the translation. The nearby B104 describes loose assembly, suggesting that

arrangement matters to the larger lost discussion; the exact causal sequence is not fully preserved.

Chance thus marks the importance of encounters and variable configurations within a world whose constituents and opposed powers endure. It need not mean absolute lawlessness, creation without materials, or a modern statistical mechanism. Nor do the composite creatures by themselves prove an ongoing Darwinian process. The source gives contingency in combination and a striking phrase about thought; the rest requires reconstruction.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 53. The conjunction occurred so then, but often otherwise.

B 59. Parts meet and fall together within the scene of greater divine mingling.

B 103. All things have thought by the will of Chance.

B 104. Loose coming-together survives beside the thought passage in the cited witness.

B 61. Unfamiliar combinations illustrate the range of forms, without themselves stating a selection mechanism.

In this edition. The edition separates B103 from an inherited heading that had grouped it under B104. Capitalizing Chance reflects the printed Greek's Τύχης; it should not settle every question about how literally to understand the personification.

See also. Zoogony; Composite creatures; Hardening and texture; Changing thought; Love.

Changing thought

τὸ φρονεῖν (to phronein); ἀλλοῖα (alloia); μῆτις (mētis)

The word. Τὸ φρονεῖν is the activity of thinking in B108. It is associated with becoming different and with different thoughts presenting themselves. B106 uses μῆτις, translated there as “wisdom,” in a statement about growth according to what is present.

In Empedocles. The pair of short quotations joins cognition to changing circumstances or constitution. B108 does not depict thinking as an invariant power whose products are entirely detached from the thinker. As the beings in question become different, their thinking changes correspondingly. Since the quotation begins mid-argument, the precise antecedent and the kinds of difference intended are not fully specified.

B106 is similarly compressed. Men’s mētis grows in relation to what lies before them or is present. The line can guide attention toward the conditions of understanding, but the isolated wording does not decide whether those conditions are principally immediate objects, bodily constituents, or a wider present situation. That limit is important because Aristotle preserves the verses in an argumentative context of his own, not as an unbroken chapter on Empedocles’ psychology.

Read beside B105 and B107, the fragments strengthen the case for thought as dependent on embodied and material conditions. They do not reduce the poem’s epistemology to the claim that every passing appearance is true. Questions of trustworthy inquiry and disciplined attention are addressed elsewhere and should not be pre-empted by these physiological lines.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 106. Mētis grows with what is present; Aristotle is the quoted witness.

B 108. Difference in beings is accompanied by difference in thinking.

B 105. The identification of thought with heart-blood provides a related bodily context.

B 107. Thinking and feeling operate by the constituents from which things are fitted together.

In this edition. The printed B108 repeats “does” in English across its two lines; this is a translation blemish, not an extra Greek assertion. The introduction describes mētis as practical cunning or contrivance, whereas B106 renders it “wisdom.” That local difference should remain visible rather than be flattened into one modern faculty.

See also. Heart and thought; Pleasure and pain; Metis; Understanding and inward thought.

Character and office

ἦθος (ēthos); τιμῆς (timēs); μέδει (medei)

The word. Ēthos is rendered “character,” while timē is “office” in B 17 and “honours” in other settings. The verb medei describes having charge or governance. Together these words make each enduring source more than a quantity: it has a distinctive way of being and a domain or share of activity.

In Empedocles. B 17 places this differentiation immediately after equality and equal age. That sequence is the central point. A plural account of the world does not require one constituent to be ontologically older or more real than another, but it does require distinct effects and

capacities. The warm sun, cold rain, and solid things from earth in B 21 illustrate how such differentiation can become perceptible.

Office also has a temporal dimension. The sources prevail in turn as time comes round, and B 30 makes Strife rise to its honours at the appointed fulfilment. Office is therefore not simply a fixed location allotted once for all. Its exercise belongs to the cycle's changing predominance.

B 110 brings ēthos into the account of what the listener cultivates in thought: the things under discussion grow into their own character according to each one's physis and may depart towards their own kind. The wording is deliberately continuous with the physical account. It does not require choosing between a wholly literal cargo of objects in the mind and a wholly detached metaphor. It does show that characteristic tendency remains meaningful in an account built from common constituents.[10]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.27–29. Equality is accompanied by a different office and character for each.

B 21.3–8. Contrasting visible qualities provide evidence for differentiated sources.

B 30. Strife rises to its honours when its time is fulfilled.

B 110.4–9. Things develop into their own character according to each one's nature.

In this edition. Rendering timē as "office" in B 17 makes its functional sense clear but obscures its verbal link with divine and human "honours" elsewhere. The lexicon

[10] The vocabulary combines rank, function, and disposition. No one modern category of physical property captures all three.

restores that link without treating every social honour as a technical phase in the cosmic cycle.

See also. Equality; Roots; Appointed turns; Time and lifetime; Birth; Keeping the teaching.

Chieftains

πρόμοι (promoi); ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι (anthrōpoisin epichthonioisi)

The word. Promoi are those who stand foremost, hence leaders or chieftains. The phrase specifies their place among humans living on earth. The translation does not call them kings, and the word need not imply one constitutional form.

In Empedocles. Chieftains conclude B146's list of the last human roles, following seers, hymn-singers, and physicians. Their presence makes leadership part of the passage's honoured human achievement. The next line says that from this condition beings grow up as gods highest in honours.

No political programme is stated. The fragment does not tell whether these leaders are elected, hereditary, military, or civic, nor what qualifications distinguish them. It also does not establish that office alone guarantees divine ascent. The category belongs to an eschatological description whose prior moral conditions are not fully preserved. Connecting it to the biographical stories of Empedocles' political activities may be suggestive, but those stories cannot supply the missing definition of promoi within the verse.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 146.1–3. Chieftains are the final named human role before the declaration of growth into gods.

In this edition. “Rulers” is a broader lookup label. “Chieftains” follows the edition and avoids importing the more specific title basileus, which appears elsewhere for Zeus but not here.

See also. Divine ascent; Seers; Hymn-singers; Physicians; Honour.

Clepsydra

κλεψύδρηι (klepsydrēi); διειπετέος χαλκοῖο (dieipeteos chalkoio); ἀέρος ὄγκος (aeros onkos)

The word. Κλεψύδρηι names the bronze vessel in B100’s extended comparison. The edition renders it “water-catcher.” Its relevant features are a controllable passage and close-set holes, through which the movements of air and water can be coordinated.

In Empedocles. The demonstration has two complementary parts. In the first, the girl sets the pipe’s passage against her hand and lowers the vessel into water. Water does not enter because the air already inside opposes it. Once the obstruction is released, air gives way and an appropriate amount of water enters. The second begins with water in the vessel. With the passage closed by the hand, external air helps hold the water in place at the lower opening; release allows air inward and water outward.

The actions are simple enough to visualize, but the explanation is not trivial. Air is treated as a space-occupying mass capable of excluding water, and the

human hand changes the available routes. The comparison makes the unseen constituent effective through visible outcomes. It is therefore a physical argument carried by an ordinary manipulation of an object, not just an ornamental simile.

The child or girl also matters to the presentation. The verse depicts play, allowing a domestic and familiar activity to carry a serious explanatory burden. The repeated bodily language of neck, gates, passage, and flesh then brings vessel and organism into close relation without claiming they are identical structures.

At the end the analogy returns to blood. As blood withdraws into the body's interior, aither enters; as blood rises again, breath goes out. The vessel's water corresponds functionally to the moving bodily liquid, but the text should not be forced into a one-to-one match for every part. It does not identify a particular bone as the vessel's bronze or a particular organ as the girl's hand.

The result is an account of alternating admission and exclusion. Calling the object a water-clock would distract from the action actually described: no measurement of elapsed time occurs in the passage. Whatever the broader range of uses of such vessels, this one is introduced to show how closing and opening a route changes the relation of air and water.[11]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 100.8–15. A girl plays with the bronze vessel; the first sequence excludes and then admits water.

B 100.16–21. The reverse sequence retains and then releases water.

[11] The comparison repeatedly substitutes rain or aither for the vessel's water and air. Retaining that vocabulary helps preserve the connection between familiar materials and the poem's wider physical idiom.

B 100.22–25. The analogy returns to the blood-and-aither alternation in the body.

In this edition. “Water-catcher” is a context-sensitive rendering. “Water-clock” is a common modern association with the Greek name but would imply a function absent from this fragment. The edition’s “girl” draws a human figure from the surrounding grammar; the noun παῖς itself is the brief introduction to the demonstrator.

See also. Respiration; Passages; Blood; Lantern; Bronze and tin.

Cloven meadows

σχιστοὺς λειμῶνας (schistous leimōnas); Ἀφροδίτης (Aphroditēs)

The word. The phrase combines a landscape noun, meadows, with an adjective meaning split or cleft, and attaches it to Aphrodite. The edition gives “cloven meadows.” The bodily or sexual interpretation draws on the goddess’s name and the image’s shape; the surviving phrase does not itself name a particular organ.

In Empedocles. B66 is only a broken phrase with a supplied preposition, “into.” It invites the reader to hear a landscape as an image of bodily generation or sexual union. Such imagery is consistent with Aphrodite’s broader association with attraction and the formation of living bodies, but the sentence around it is lost. We cannot confidently identify the speaker, the object entering the meadows, or the exact operation being described.

The metaphor should also be kept distinct from Ruin’s meadow in B121. Both use a familiar landscape noun, but their modifiers and divine associations produce very different effects. A lexicon benefits from registering that

range rather than assigning a single secret meaning to every meadow. Here the most secure reading is an evocative spatial figure with likely sexual force, whose precise anatomical explanation remains uncertain in the evidence supplied.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 66. The fragment names the cloven meadows of Aphrodite, with an editorially supplied “into.”

B 121. Ruin’s meadow offers a lexical comparison with a quite different ethical landscape.

In this edition. The angle brackets around “into” mark a supplement. The phrase’s placement among reproductive fragments assists a reading but does not independently establish its original context; that arrangement is editorial.

See also. Aphrodite; Cypris; Ruin; Sexual differentiation.

Composite creatures

ἀμφιπρόσωπα (amphiprosōpa); ἀμφίστερνα (amphisterna); βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωιρα (bougenē androprōira); ἀνδροφυῆ βούκρανα (androphyē boukrana); εἰλίποδ’ ἀκριτόχειρα (heilipod’ akritocheira)

The word. The surviving descriptions are compounds of conspicuous bodily features: faces on both sides, breasts on both sides, ox-kind with a human “prow,” and human growth with ox-heads. The shorter B60 adds a shambling-footed creature with hands beyond counting. “Composite creatures” is a descriptive heading rather than the translation of a source noun meaning monster.

In Empedocles. These forms bring the assemblage of an organism into view by presenting combinations that

violate familiar bodily plans. A head can be joined to an alien trunk, fronts can be doubled, and traits associated with male and female bodies can be mingled. The prow image is especially pointed: the front of a creature is described through the projecting front of a vessel, so a recognizable anatomical part becomes a fitted leading component.

B59 supplies the nearby language of encounters: the things fall together wherever each happens to meet. It does not use the later language of a breeding population. Nor does B61 itself declare that every composite dies. The introduction reports an Aristotelian survival account and a debate over natural-selection readings, but the quotation preserves a catalogue of combinations, not that argument in full.

The words at the end of B61 are rendered “shadowy parts.” Since the excerpt offers neither a definition nor an explanatory continuation, they should not be made to certify a precise reproductive anatomy. The safer emphasis is the text’s unmistakable crossing and doubling of forms. B60 and B61 together show that the range of early combinations exceeds the present inventory of ordinary animals, while leaving their exact place in a cosmic history open.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 60. A minimal description emphasizes extraordinary feet and an indefinite multiplicity of hands.

B 61. The main catalogue includes doubled fronts, human –bovine composites, and mixed sexual characteristics.

B 59. Chance encounter belongs to the nearby account of combination.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The survival and natural-selection discussion is supplied in modern exposition.

In this edition. “Monster” can be an effective lookup word, but it adds a classificatory and evaluative term absent from these quotations. The printed B61 is transmitted by Aelian; its infinitival wording is retained as a fragment within a later author’s quotation.

See also. Isolated limbs; Zoogony; Whole-natured forms; Chance; Wing-faring boats.

Craft and fitting

τέχνης (technēs); παλάμῃσιν (palamēisin); συναρμοσθέντ’ (synarmosthent’)

The word. Technēs is an inflected form of technē, craft or trained skill. Palamēisin refers to palms or hands in the work of Cypris. Synarmosthent’ describes things fitted together. These words belong to a broad productive vocabulary rather than a single modern theory of design.

In Empedocles. The painter simile states the value of trained craft explicitly: its makers are taught through mētis and proportion their materials. Elsewhere the language of making is transferred to Aphrodite or Cypris. Forms are assembled, moist earth is worked and hardened by fire, and constituents meet within divine palms. Eyes are fastened with rivets of affection and bone is secured through Harmony’s gluings. These images emphasize effective connections between materials, proportions, and resulting structures.

It would be misleading to treat the craft language as a separate decorative covering laid over an otherwise nonfigurative physical theory. The verbs of binding,

fitting, hardening, and shaping are part of how the explanation is made intelligible. Conversely, they do not authorize an unrestricted inference to an external craftsman acting upon a universe from outside. The named divine powers are themselves involved in the described processes.

The human analogue is especially useful for readers: one can see how glue, a rivet, a mixture, or fired damp earth produces a result without assuming that every case uses the same mechanism. The individual comparisons therefore retain their distinctiveness. Coagulating milk is not chemically equated with painting; a joint is not identical to a divine power. Each supplies a familiar way of thinking about how otherwise separate materials can hold a form.

B 3's use of palamē for a faculty of observation creates an additional link between making and knowing. The same bodily vocabulary can describe the artisan's handling and the learner's grasp. The poem repeatedly makes its reader move between these senses, instead of choosing once for all between an entirely physical and an entirely mental idiom.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 23.1–5. Painters exhibit trained craft and proportionate handling.

B 71.1–4. Mortal forms and colours are described as fitted by Aphrodite.

B 73. Cypris works moistened earth into forms and gives it to fire to harden.

B 87. The anatomical making is expressed through rivets of affection.

B 96. Bone arises in crucibles and is fitted through Harmony's gluings.

In this edition. The introduction warns that Harmonia's language is fitting and joinery rather than necessarily musical harmony. The divine name and each particular craft image are treated in their own entries. This overarching article does not replace those local explanations.

See also. Metis; Painters and colours; Harmony; Rivets of affection; Joint; Bone.

Cronos

Κρόνος (Kronos)

The word. Cronos is a proper divine name in the list at B128. The edition uses the spelling Cronos; Kronos is the corresponding transliterated lookup form. The text does not use the word for time in this occurrence.

In Empedocles. Cronos appears between Zeus as king and Poseidon among the powers not present in the community whose queen is Cypris. The point is the displacement of familiar divine rulers or authorities by Cypris within this particular portrayal. The line gives Cronos no action and describes no succession myth.

The modern phrase "golden age" can create a special trap here. Whatever associations a reader brings from other traditions, this fragment explicitly excludes Cronos from the community rather than making him its ruler. The article should therefore be indexed under that broader scene while preserving the difference. It cannot establish a separate Empedoclean age of Cronos, an allegorical equation with time, or a chronology of divine generations.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.2–3. Cronos is named among the absent powers in the community ruled by Cypris.

In this edition. The proper name Kronos is not chronos, time. Similarity in English spelling must not create an etymological or doctrinal identification that the passage never states.

See also. Golden age; Cypris; Zeus; Poseidon.

Cycle

κύκλον (kyklon); κύκλοιο (kykloio); περιπλομένοιο (periplomenoio); ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον (akinētoi kata kyklon)

The word. Kyklos can name a circle or a recurring circuit. In B 26 the cycle comes round, while the same phrase of coming round modifies time in B 17. B 35 also speaks of the outer limits of a circle in a spatial account. The verbal and nominal echoes connect recurrence with circulation without ensuring that every “circle” denotes precisely the same object.

In Empedocles. B 17 and B 26 supply the main surviving statements of alternation. At one time the constituents come together through Love; at another they are carried apart through Strife. Each prevails in turn. The constituents are said to be forever unmoved throughout the cycle, even while they continually interchange. “Unmoved” cannot be detached from this context and made a simple denial of the movements the same passage describes. The stable identity or enduring regularity is contrasted with the impermanent lives of particular compounds.

The Sphere, the growth of Strife, and Love's advance through an incompletely mixed world supply important phases or scenes. Their exact relations are partly reconstructed because they survive as quotations in different sources. The editorial sequence does not itself establish a complete timeline. The double birth and failing of mortals in B 17 is especially important evidence, but does not, without argument, settle every proposed double or single world-formation scheme.

The introduction describes the long-running dispute between accounts with two cosmogonies and accounts with one. It also reports a later timetable from Byzantine scholia and an interpretation of its numbers. Those matters are modern apparatus discussing evidence not printed as Empedoclean verses here. They should not be converted into exact durations for the cycle in this lexicon.

What remains firm is the combination of permanence and recurrent transformation: the sources persist, their dominance changes, and mortal compounds arise and fail through the processes. That is a substantial doctrine even where the chronology of every cosmic scene remains open.[12]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.1–13, 27–35. Alternation of Love and Strife and the qualified claim of cyclic permanence.

B 26.1–12. The cycle comes round and the sources grow and wane by appointed turns.

B 30. The rise of Strife is timed and oath-bound.

[12] The physical cycle and the wanderer's many seasons in B 115 are related by recurring divine and temporal language, but no supplied verse gives a secure numerical conversion between them.

B 35. Love advances while Strife's retreat remains incomplete.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The one/two-cosmogony debate and later timetable are discussed rather than settled.

In this edition. The translation's "unmoved throughout the cycle" preserves a difficult expression; explaining it should not mean silently replacing it with a smoother invented line. The numbered fragments are units of collection, not chapters of the original cosmic history.

See also. Time and lifetime; Appointed turns; Love; Strife; Sphairos; One and many; Whirl and eddy.

Cypris

Κύπρις (Kypris); Κύπριδος (Kypridos)

The word. Cypris is a name of Aphrodite. This edition preserves it wherever it occurs rather than reducing every divine agent of joining to "Love." Its local imagery ranges from skilled hands and safe harbours to royal authority over a community's worship.

In Empedocles. In B73 Cypris moistens earth with rain, works at the forms, and gives them to fire for hardening. The practical sequence resembles shaping and firing a material, but the fragment does not name a potter's workshop. B75 and B95 place bodily growth and texture in her palms. B98 changes the craft image to a nautical one: earth and the other constituents meet in near-equal measure, anchored in Cypris' perfect harbours, producing blood and flesh. Hands and harbours alike evoke a place in which combination can be held securely.

B128 gives Cypris a different scale of agency. She is queen among people who do not have Ares, Battle-Din, Zeus as king, Cronos, or Poseidon. Their offerings include images, perfumes, incense, and honey, and their altar is not soaked with slaughter-blood. Cypris' reign accordingly gathers the power of joining into an ethical and ritual picture of a nonviolent community.

The same name across these settings makes an important connection: the power that constructs bodily life also presides over a form of worship that does not tear such life apart. The poem does not, however, identify a specific historical kingdom or date this scene relative to every phase of the cosmic cycle. Calling it a golden age is a useful interpretive label, not a phrase in the Greek.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 73. Cypris moistens earth, works at forms, and gives them to fire to harden.

B 75. Different bodily density is associated with dampness in her palms.

B 95. First growing-together occurs in Cypris's palms.

B 98.1–5. The constituents of blood and flesh are anchored in her harbours.

B 128.1–10. Cypris alone is queen over the community described as practising bloodless worship.

In this edition. "Cypris" and "Aphrodite" are retained as different names in the English. Their interchangeability as divine designations should not obscure the different actions and metaphors attached to each occurrence.

See also. Aphrodite; Love; Harmony; Golden age; Sacrifice; Flesh; Harbours.

Daimon

δαίμονες (daimones); δαίμων (daimōn); δαίμονι (daimoni)

The word. Daimōn names a divine being or power. Its range in these fragments cannot be reduced to a single technical substance. B115 uses the plural for beings allotted a long life, one of whom becomes an exile after wrongdoing. B59 uses the same noun in the physical account of mixture, where the translation gives “divinity.” B126 prints a detached daimōn beside the image of flesh as a tunic. None of these occurrences licenses the Christian sense of an evil demon. Nor is the noun simply the later philosophical “soul.”

In Empedocles. The fullest account begins with a law rather than a definition. The daimones of B115 possess a long-duration life and a relationship to the blessed; bloodshed or false swearing brings an enforced wandering through mortal forms. The first-person speaker identifies himself with their number and confesses trust in raving Strife. His claim makes the cosmological poem’s voice implicated in the ethical disorder it describes. The four successive agencies of upper air, sea, earth, and sunlight reject the wanderer. This gives the punishment a cosmic extent, but does not explain the exile’s material constitution or how identity persists through the changes.

B117 supplies a complementary autobiographical catalogue: the speaker has been a boy, girl, bush, bird, and fish. It makes continuity across human sexes and across kinds of living thing explicit in the narrative voice, although it does not use daimōn. The moral argument against slaughter becomes intelligible in that light: changed form can conceal a relative. Yet it remains important to separate the evidence for the continuity of

an “I” from a fully articulated psychology. The fragments do not describe an immaterial container of memory, the mechanism of transfer, or a separable Platonic soul.

The other occurrences prevent the reader from assigning every daimōn to the same narrative. In B59 divinity mingles with divinity while bodily combinations arise. The local account concerns assembly, and the referents are not named there. Reading it as an explicit encounter between the exiled individuals of B115 would add a connection the fragment does not state. B126 is also grammatically incomplete: the feminine participle associated with wrapping flesh does not furnish a complete definition of the wandering self. Together these passages show divine language operating in both bodily formation and accounts of moral fate.

The introduction reviews incompatible modern proposals about what a daimon is made of and acknowledges that no surviving fragment reconciles transmigration with complete cosmic mixture or separation. That acknowledgment should govern interpretation: the poems offer powerful links among physical processes, divine agency, kinship, and guilt, but the missing mechanism must remain missing.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.1–14. Long-lived divine beings fall under the decree; the speaker calls himself one of them.

B 59.1–3. Divinity mingles with divinity during bodily formation; the referents are not expressly identified.

B 126. The detached noun accompanies the fragmentary tunic-of-flesh image.

B 117.1–2. The speaker recalls forms across human, plant, bird, and fish lives.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The introduction distinguishes daimon from a Platonic soul and acknowledges unresolved material and cosmological questions.

In this edition. This translation uses “spirits” at B115, “divinity” at B59, and “a spirit” at B126. Those choices reflect different contexts of the same Greek noun. B138 does contain psychē, translated “life,” but it is not a name there for the transmigrating self. The arrangement that places B115–126 in the proem is editorial, not proof of their original sequence.

See also. Transmigration; Exile and wandering; Necessity; Alien tunic of flesh; Kin-murder; Long-lived gods.

Death

θανάτοιο (thanatoio); θάνατον ἀλοίτην (thanaton aloitēn); ἀπόλειψις (apoleipsis); δυσδαίμονα πότμον (dysdaimona potmon)

The word. The death vocabulary ranges from thanatos to failing, disappearance, and ill-starred doom. B 10’s isolated expression calls death avenging; B 8 makes it accursed. Such epithets preserve the human and poetic gravity of death even while the argument rejects absolute annihilation. They should not be taken as exceptions cancelling the doctrine.

In Empedocles. B 8 denies a terminal destruction of what exists and substitutes the rearrangement of things already mixed. B 11 attacks the belief that anything is utterly destroyed. B 15 rejects the thought that mortal beings are nothing before compaction and after loosening. These statements protect the continuity of the constituents; they

do not straightforwardly promise the unchanged survival of every individual personality.

B 20 describes a body's limbs wandering apart at the breakers of life. That bodily disintegration is a consequential event in the poem, however one qualifies the everyday name "death." Similarly, the language of birth and failing remains in B 17's account of mortal compounds. What ceases to be is a particular organised form, while the explanatory sources persist.

The wider corpus also speaks of death in exile, slaughter, and the promise to bring back a dead person's strength. Those contexts should not be forced into a single technical gloss. In particular, the ethical horror of killing in B 136–137 is not undone by the claim that no root vanishes. A theory of rearrangement supplies no permission to treat the destruction of a living body as insignificant.[13]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8.1–4. Accursed death has no absolute ending; mixture and interchange provide the alternative account.

B 10. The isolated epithet describes death as avenging.

B 11. Complete perishing is rejected together with coming-to-be from what was not.

B 15. Compaction and loosening cannot bound all being to a single mortal lifetime.

B 20.1–5. The breaking apart of limbs describes the end of bodily coherence.

In this edition. The English varies "death," "failing," and "doom" with the Greek. B 10 is only a phrase, not a

[13] The permanence of constituents and the fate of a transmigrating self are different questions. The supplied fragments do not justify resolving the second merely by repeating the first.

separate explanation of divine punishment. B 15's "after" is supplied, and the passage's positive theory of personal identity remains unstated.

See also. Birth; Being; Mortal things; Separation; Daimon; Murder and bloodshed; Hades.

Desire

Πόθος (Pothos); δι' ὄψιος (di' opsios); ἀμμιμνήισκων (ammimnēiskōn)

The word. B64 gives Πόθος, Desire or longing, as something that comes upon a recipient and reminds him through sight. The source prints the name with a capital. The fragment connects an affective impulse, visual encounter, and an act of reminding.

In Empedocles. The small line is unusually rich in relations. Desire comes upon someone rather than simply being chosen; sight mediates its arrival; and the verb of reminding makes the response depend on something beyond the immediate bare visual event. What is remembered, however, is not stated. The passage cannot by itself certify a particular memory of a former life, a theory of prenatal wholeness, or an elaborate psychology of erotic recognition.

Its place among the reproductive fragments makes erotic attraction an appropriate context. The nearby material concerns divided generative contributions, sexual differentiation, and Aphrodite's cloven meadows. Yet the B-number order does not reproduce a guaranteed continuous account. The line's own referent, introduced only as "him," remains unidentified.

Desire should also be distinguished from the cosmic power of Love without treating them as unrelated. Both

can draw separated things toward one another, but B64 describes a sight-mediated experience of a recipient, whereas the great Love passages explain conjunction at much larger scales. The specific perceptual wording gives this entry its independent value. It is not merely another interchangeable name to substitute into every occurrence of Philotēs.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 64. Desire arrives and reminds through sight; the recipient and object of reminder remain unstated.

B 66. Aphrodite's cloven meadows give a neighbouring erotic image.

B 63. The nearby generation fragment describes division in the formation of limbs.

B 17.20–26. Love operates in mortal bodily association and in the larger physical process.

In this edition. The verb of reminding is preserved, but its missing object should not be supplied from a preferred reconstruction. The capitalized name follows the Greek presentation without proving a separate narrative about a deity of Desire.

See also. Sexual differentiation; Eye; Aphrodite; Love.

Divine ascent

ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ (anablastousi theoi); θεὸς ἄμβροτος (theos ambrotos); εἰς δὲ τέλος (eis de telos)

The word. "Divine ascent" gathers a group of images, not an exact technical expression in the text. B146 says that the beings "spring up" or grow into gods; its verb carries the language of sprouting. B112 calls the speaker an

immortal god, no longer mortal. Neither phrase alone specifies a spatial route into heaven.

In Empedocles. B146 identifies a last human stage: seers, hymn-singers, physicians, and chieftains. From there they grow into gods highest in honours. The four occupations are named together; the verse does not make them four consecutive incarnations or rank one above another. Their shared prominence plausibly reflects forms of knowledge, healing, song, and leadership, but the exact rule admitting an individual to each role is not given.

B127's lions and laurels can be read as privileged earlier embodiments, yet their relative placement and complete relation to B146 are not preserved. Calling the passages a ladder is helpful only if the missing rungs and uncertain order remain visible. B147 gives a picture of the result through common hearth and table with immortals and exclusion from human grief.

B112 brings divine status into the speaker's present public appearance: crowned, honoured, and approached for oracles and healing, he declares himself immortal. This is a claim made by the poetic speaker, not an independently verified historical apotheosis. It also creates a fruitful tension with the speaker's confession of exile in B115. The surviving fragments do not give a securely ordered narrative that tells exactly when or how one status superseded the other.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 146.1–3. Final human roles are followed by growth into gods.

B 127. Lions and laurels provide possible privileged stages, without an explicit ordered ladder.

B 147. The resulting fellowship is portrayed through hearth, table, and absence of grief.

B 112.4–12. The speaker publicly claims to be an immortal god.

B 115.13–14. The speaker also calls himself a present exile.

In this edition. “Spring up” retains a growth-metaphor that a flat “become” would lose. The printed order of the quotations cannot by itself reconcile the immortal speaker of B112 with the exile of B115.

See also. Seers; Hymn-singers; Physicians; Chieftains; Lion; Laurel; Shared hearth and table.

Dooms

Κηρῶν (Kērōn)

The word. The plural Kēres denotes dooms or destructive death-bearing powers. The surviving form is genitive after “tribes.” The translation’s capitalized “Dooms” gives them the status of personified presences within the scene rather than treating doom as an abstract prediction.

In Empedocles. B121 places Murder and Wrath beside the tribes of other Dooms in a joyless region. The word “other” groups destructive presences together, but it need not determine a rigid mythological classification. They range through darkness across Ruin’s meadow. Multiplicity is important: the place contains whole populations of affliction, not just one death figure.

Nothing in the quoted lines describes the Dooms’ bodies, genealogy, individual names, or a distribution of particular punishments among them. Nor is the scene explicitly located in Hades. The fragment is most useful as evidence of the poet’s vocabulary for a world experienced as sorrowful and dangerous. Its connection with the

exile's story is a plausible reading of related fragments, not a preserved explanatory sentence.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 121. The joyless region holds tribes of Dooms who roam through darkness.

In this edition. "Dooms" translates a plural noun. The excerpt is broken into two cited portions, so the printed layout must not be taken for a complete continuous description of an underworld court.

See also. Ruin; Murder and bloodshed; Wrath; Unfamiliar place; Hades.

Earth

γαῖα (gaia); χθὼν (chthōn); αἴης (aiēs); Χθὼν (Chthōn)

The word. The source uses several poetic words for earth: gaia, aiē, and chthōn in their various inflections. They can designate the constituent, the ground, a region inhabited by living things, or personified Earth. The alternation does not by itself mark separate roots. Capitalisation in the printed Greek and English sometimes foregrounds the personification, especially in the account of blood and flesh.

In Empedocles. Earth is explicitly listed in B 17 and is visible through the solid, rooted things which stream from it in B 21. B 76 offers a concrete bodily instance: earth occupies the outermost flesh of shelled creatures and tortoises. In B 96 it is kindly and furnishes broad-breasted crucibles for the making of bone. B 98 instead places Earth among the near-equal ingredients of blood and other flesh. These contexts distinguish earth's characteristic contribution without confining it to lifeless matter.

Earth is also a place and a cosmic body. The whole-natured forms of B 62 rise out of it; aither sends long roots below it; fires burn underneath; and its interposition makes night. The sea is called its sweat. Each image gives earth a different explanatory relation, and together they make a simple modern “solid state” translation inadequate.

In B 115 the earth receives the wandering divinity from the sea and casts him towards sunlight. B 148 describes earth as wrapping mortals round. These expressions link bodily habitat and cosmic exposure, but neither proves a fixed correspondence with Hera or Aidoneus. The introduction’s reports on those names disagree, and B 6 itself names no earthy equivalent for either.[14]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.18. Earth is one of the four named physical constituents.

B 76. The hard outer coverings of sea creatures and tortoises visibly manifest earth.

B 96.1–4. Earth is personified as kindly and as the site of the mixture that becomes bone.

B 48. Earth makes night through interposition against light.

B 115.9–12. Earth receives and passes on the exiled wanderer.

B 148. Earth is described as encompassing mortals.

In this edition. The English “earth” can conceal differences among gaia, aiē, and chthōn; the entry records actual printed forms rather than inventing a single underlying label. The corrected B 96 heading must be

[14] “Earth” as a root and “earth” as the ground of an event are not mutually exclusive senses; neither should automatically erase the other.

used for bone even though the local note reports that its source heading was read as B 85.

See also. Roots; Hera; Aidoneus; Sea; Night; Subterranean fire; Nestis; Bone.

Earth-Maid

Χθονίη (Chthoniē)

The word. Chthoniē is a feminine name related to the earth. “Earth-Maid” makes its personal character intelligible in English; “maid” is an interpretive rendering of the feminine name, not a separately printed word for a girl.

In Empedocles. Earth-Maid begins the catalogue at B122/123 and is followed by far-glancing Sun-Maid. Their juxtaposition sets an earthly presence beside a solar one. The subsequent pairs show that the catalogue repeatedly places unlike qualities or conditions together, but the first line does not itself explain the relationship between its two figures.

The word should not silently become another unambiguous name for a root-deity in B6. Chthoniē is not the same printed form as Chthōn, Earth, in the physical account of blood and flesh at B98. Their lexical relationship invites comparison, while the difference of context prevents certainty about identity. The fragment gives neither a separate cult nor a genealogy of Earth-Maid. What can be said securely is that an earthly quality has been made a feminine presence in a crowded, highly figurative catalogue.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.1. Earth-Maid opens the catalogue beside far-glancing Sun-Maid.

B 98.1–5. Earth acts in the mixture producing blood and flesh; this is a related word in another setting.

In this edition. The combined heading B122/123 is this edition's presentation. It must not turn the introductory "there" into a securely identified geographic location or fix the original poem's scene.

See also. Sun-Maid; Earth; Quarrel; Harmony.

Eclipse

ἀπεστέγασεν (apestegasen); αὐγάς (augas); ἀπεσκνίφωσε (apeskniphōse)

The word. The supplied eclipse passage does not print a technical noun meaning eclipse. It describes actions: cutting off rays and darkening the earth. The headword therefore names the event explained by B 42, while the actual Greek forms record the poem's verbs and object.

In Empedocles. The moon interrupts the sun's rays for the duration of its passage and darkens a region of earth described by comparison with the moon's breadth. Read with B 43 and B 45, the account distinguishes the moon's received light from its capacity to obstruct light reaching elsewhere. It is a physical relation among bodies and illumination, conveyed through the personal pronouns and gray-eyed epithet retained in the translation.

B 48 gives a related explanation of ordinary night: earth stands in the way of light. The mechanisms share interposition, but they are not the same event or the same blocking body. Preserving that distinction prevents the

whole astronomical cluster from being flattened into an undifferentiated statement about darkness.

The quotation's ancient geometrical claim should be reported as such. No distances, angular measurements, or complete account of shadow cones is supplied. It would therefore be misleading to turn the passage into an exact modern diagram and treat every labelled quantity as the poet's own.[15]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 42. The moon cuts off rays and darkens a stated breadth of earth.

B 43. Light strikes the moon, supplying a related illumination context.

B 45. The moon's circulating light is not its own.

B 48. Earth's interposition explains night and provides a comparison, not another description of the eclipse.

In this edition. "She" and "his" in B 42 clarify the presumed lunar and solar referents of the compressed Greek. The explanation is not a quotation of a standalone noun "eclipse." The isolated extract's wording should remain distinct from any later exposition in Plutarch.

See also. Moon; Sun; Reflected light; Night; Earth.

Effluences

ἀπορροαί (aporrhoai)

The word. Ἀπορροαί names outflows, conventionally rendered "effluences." B89 asserts that there are

[15] The descriptive comparison with the moon's breadth is evidence for Empedocles' account, not a measurement which this lexicon endorses as modern astronomy.

effluences of all things that have come to be. The word's flowing image is important: a thing can be present to a perceiver through something proceeding from it.

In Empedocles. The universal range in B89 is striking, but its precise wording should be preserved. It concerns things that have come to be, a formulation naturally linked to the compounded beings of the physical account. The fragment itself does not enumerate particle sizes, state a frequency of emission, or name the organs that receive them.

B101 gives a concrete scene that can illuminate this general principle. Nostrils track small fragments left by beasts from their feet in soft grass. The originating animal is no longer directly present at the point of investigation, yet a bodily trace can guide perception. The verse thus renders smell as contact with something materially left behind, rather than as knowledge acquired without a medium. Calling every trace an effluence in a strict technical sense remains an interpretive connection, since B101 uses "fragments," not the noun from B89.

The introduction supplies the fuller explanatory framework: outflows fit the passages of sense organs, and such fitting produces perception. It also says that additional papyrus material bears on effluences and pores while explicitly excluding that text from the edition. These are useful notices about the limits of the book, not additional verses that the lexicon may quote as though printed here.

The distinction between surviving sentence and reconstructed system matters especially for vision. B84 emphasizes the eye's fire passing outward through its tissues. B89 does not by itself explain how all object-effluences and ocular fire interact in a single optical

sequence. A careful account can recognize the common concern with routes, material qualities, and encounter while refusing to hide the gaps in transmission.

Effluence is accordingly a central organizing concept with a very short direct attestation in this corpus. Its importance exceeds the length of its quotation, but that importance is established by comparison and reported context, not by multiplying the words of B89 into a lost treatise.

Outflow also changes what it means for an object to be absent. The beast of the tracking scene can have gone elsewhere while a trace remains available to investigation. Perception can thus depend on a sequence of contacts, rather than a perceiver simply standing immediately beside an intact object. This is a grounded comparison between the fragments, not a claim that the surviving verse spells out every intermediate stage. It helps explain why small residues and open routes can matter as much as the large visible forms of things.

Nothing in the isolated B89 describes the emitted material as originating from nothing or as an independent fifth constituent. Read within the book's physical account, effluences belong to the transformations and movements of what already exists. The source nonetheless leaves their exact relation to the changing size or stability of an emitting body unexplained here. A universal claim of outflow is not yet a complete account of how every emitter is maintained.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 89. The direct assertion concerns effluences from all generated things.

B 101. Material traces left by beasts provide a concrete olfactory comparison.

B 84.7–11. The eye description supplies a distinct outward process through channels.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The introduction summarizes perception as effluences fitting passages.

Introduction III (editorial discussion). The book mentions further papyrus evidence concerning effluences and pores but does not print it.

In this edition. The translation introduction deliberately retains “effluences” and asks the reader to hear its flowing metaphor. Its broader prose summary about continually emitted particles should be cited as exposition, not attributed word-for-word to B89.

See also. Passages; Smell; Scent-tracking; Eye; Like perceives like.

Elder and linen

βύσσωι (byssōi); κόκκος (kokkos); γλαυκῆς (glaukēs); ἀκτῆς (aktēs)

The word. B93 says that a grain of gray elder is mingled with fine linen. The components are a small plant product and a textile material. The fragment preserves the fact of mingling but gives no explicit account of what effect the mixture is meant to produce.

In Empedocles. The line belongs among the poem’s concrete images of combination, alongside milk bound by fig-juice and barley-meal glued with water. It differs from them in the absence of an expressly named resultant texture. “Mingled” is secure; hardening, softening, colouring, or strengthening is not specified in the excerpt.

The material names still make the example distinctive. A grain is a small, bounded item; linen is a fibrous or

woven material; the adjective attached to elder provides a visible character. Their juxtaposition shows how particular substances, not only abstract roots, can appear in an argument about mixture. The missing context prevents deciding whether this line was an everyday analogy, a recipe-like example, or part of a more specialized discussion.

Plutarch's On the Obsolescence of Oracles is the cited witness. Its subject does not by itself establish that the Empedoclean line concerns divination. The fragment's physical vocabulary should remain the starting point, and the broader quoting work should be used as provenance rather than as permission to invent the original application.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 93. The entire line names the elder grain, fine linen, and their mingling.

B 33. Fig-juice and milk provide a comparison where binding is explicitly stated.

B 34. Water and barley-meal provide a comparison where gluing is explicitly stated.

In this edition. The botanical and textile identifications follow the edition's "gray elder" and "fine linen." A more specialized botanical species or manufacturing process is not established by the supplied line.

See also. Fig-juice and milk; Barley-meal and water; Wine and oil; Mixture.

Equality

ἶσά (isa); ἥλικα (hēlika); ἴση (isē); ἶσος (isos); ἀτάλαντον (atalanton)

The word. The fragments use several expressions of equality: equal status or extent, equal age, and balanced disposition. They should not all be reduced to numerical equality of amounts. In B 17 the powers have spatial descriptions, the enduring sources are equal and coeval, and their different offices remain explicitly affirmed.

In Empedocles. The claim that all these are equal and of like age protects the plurality of the explanatory sources. No root is said to be the original substance from which the others were subsequently created. Yet equal standing does not make their characters interchangeable. B 17 immediately assigns different offices and characters and lets them prevail in turn.

The same vocabulary marks the Sphere's uniformity: it is equal to itself from every side. This is a different application, describing a condition without articulated limbs or distinguishable cosmic regions. Love's equal length and breadth and Strife's balance in every direction similarly describe their reach, not a measured equation of Love's quantity with one root's quantity.

B 98's near-equality of ingredients in blood and flesh belongs to another level again, that of a specific mixture. Its permitted slight excesses and deficits should not be read as contradiction of B 17's equality. The poem can give sources equal fundamental standing while making individual compounds with unequal proportions, as the bone mixture demonstrates.[16]

[16] "Equal" does not mean "identical." The text expressly maintains differentiated characters beside equality.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.18–29. Love and Strife receive spatial descriptions; the sources are equal and coeval but possess distinct offices.

B 28. Equality from every side characterises the Sphere.

B 29. The unarticulated Sphere is equal to itself.

B 98.1–4. Near-equality and small departures from it belong to a particular bodily mixture.

B 96. The different shares in bone demonstrate that not every mixture has equal parts.

In this edition. The repeated English "equal" preserves a useful echo but can conceal different functions. "Of like age in their birth" in B 17 should be read with the denial of absolute generation, not converted into a narrated creation date.

See also. Roots; Measure and proportion; Character and office; Sphairos; Love; Strife; Ungenerated.

Everlasting leaves and fruit

ἐμπεδόφυλλα (empedophylla); ἐμπεδόκαρπα (empedokarpa); πάντ' ἐνιαυτόν (pant' eniauton)

The word. The paired compounds in B77.78 describe steadfast leaves and steadfast fruit. "Everlasting" in the headword is a convenient lookup label for enduring presence; the verse's explicit temporal measure is the whole year, not an abstract claim of eternity.

In Empedocles. The couplet depicts flourishing growth marked by abundance rather than by bare survival. Leaves and fruits remain, and fruits fill the air throughout the year. The parallel compounds bind vegetative covering and reproductive production into one sustained

condition. A tree that merely kept its leaves would be a narrower image than the one printed here.

This matters when the fragment is placed beside B80's late-born pomegranates and sap-filled apples. The source is interested in differences of timing and fullness among plant products, but it does not preserve the connecting argument between these passages. One should not assume that the year-round trees are the pomegranates and apples or that their different temporal descriptions can be reconciled by an invented climate.

The editorial location under the Purifications may encourage a reading of idealized abundance. That possibility remains distinct from a demonstrated original setting. The quoted lines themselves name no age of Cypris, no paradise, and no moral qualification for access to the fruit. Their secure content is a vividly continuous flourishing.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 77.78. The full couplet describes enduring foliage and fruit with abundance throughout the year.

B 80. Another botanical verse singles out fruit timing and sap, without supplying a continuous context.

In this edition. The initial words meaning "and trees" are supplemented in angle brackets. The B77.78 label is the edition's combined heading and should be retained in references; it does not mean that two independently complete botanical poems survive.

See also. Trees; Leaves; Pomegranates; Apples; Cypris.

Exile and wandering

φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης (phygas theothen kai alētēs); ἀλάλησθαι (alalēsthai)

The word. Phygas is an exile or fugitive; alētēs a wanderer. The phrase theothen locates the speaker's estrangement in relation to divinity, rendered "from god" here. The infinitive alalēsthai describes the wandering imposed by the decree. Together the expressions make displacement an enduring condition rather than a single departure.

In Empedocles. B115 gives exile both a temporal sentence and a physical itinerary. The offender must remain far from the blessed for thrice ten thousand seasons, growing into many mortal shapes. Upper air drives him into the sea; the sea spits him onto earth; earth casts him toward sunlight; the sun sends him into the aither's eddies. The agencies receive him from one another while all reject him. Thus passing somewhere new brings no settled refuge.

The closing confession changes the register from a general decree to personal testimony. The poet's "I" is presently among the wanderers because he trusted raving Strife. The surrounding fragments in this edition amplify loss through an unfamiliar place, a cave, and a remembered height of blessedness. These images may illuminate exile, but their editorial adjacency does not establish the continuous itinerary of an original poem. Nor can the sentence be securely converted into a historical duration in years: the text counts seasons.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.6–14. The sentence specifies wandering and changing paths of life; the final two lines identify the speaker as an exile.

B 118. Weeping accompanies sight of an unfamiliar place.

B 119. A broken exclamation recalls lost honour and blessedness.

In this edition. “Exile from god” retains the singular expression of B115. It need not identify a particular named god or establish departure from a spatially defined heaven. The quoted fragment supports estrangement more securely than a map of the other world.

See also. Daimon; Transmigration; Unfamiliar place; Cave; Blessedness.

Eye

ὄμματ’ (ommat’); ὄμματά (ommata); ὄψ (ops)

The word. The eye appears as an isolated organ, a product of divine construction, and a structured instrument of vision. B88’s short statement adds that one vision comes from both, although the paired contributors are not named in that surviving line.

In Empedocles. B57 first detaches eyes from their expected bodily home: they wander alone, lacking foreheads. That image makes the ordinary fit between organ and body a problem to be explained. B86 and B87 then attribute the making and affectionate riveting of eyes or associated structures to Aphrodite. Because those short fragments begin or end within a sentence, their exact original conjunction should not be assumed from their editorial proximity alone.

B84 supplies the fullest structural image. Primeval fire is enclosed by membranes and fine tissues in the rounded pupil, as a traveller's lamp is screened against wind. The tissues keep surrounding water back while allowing finer fire outward. The process is selective: not everything crosses the boundary, and the difference in fineness is central to what does.

This outward-moving fire must be read alongside the general statement about effluences from things in B89. The introduction presents the broader theory of effluences fitting perceptual passages. The quoted eye fragment itself principally explains the eye's internal fire and enclosing structures; it does not give a complete continuous account reconciling every incoming and outgoing process. A source-grounded lexicon should expose that division of evidence rather than turn the lantern into a modern optical model.

B88 may naturally attract an interpretation in terms of two eyes or two contributions to vision. The local quotation only says that one vision arises from both. Its witness is Aristotle's Poetics, so the line's preservation is not itself a complete physiological exposition. The identity of "both" should remain a question wherever the surrounding argument is not supplied.

The eye's importance also has limits within the poem. B3 refuses to privilege sight automatically over hearing and other faculties; B133 denies ordinary sensory access to the divine subject there described. Physiological attention to the eye therefore does not amount to an unrestricted claim that all knowledge is simply visible.

The eye examples also illustrate the difference between an organ's presence and its functioning within an arrangement. A wandering eye in B57 is recognizable as

an eye even though it lacks the surrounding forehead. B84, by contrast, dwells on enclosing materials and the differentiated passage of fire and water. Between those two scenes lies the explanatory problem of how a named bodily member becomes part of an organized perceiving creature. The verses do not solve that problem in a single continuous stretch, but their complementary concerns are clear.

The adjectives attached to sight are likewise significant. The eyes fashioned by Aphrodite are “unwearying,” while the lamp sends unwearying rays outward. These recurrent descriptions give physical processes persistence and force. They should not be treated as clinical assertions that eyes cannot tire or as measurements of a ray’s energy. They are ways of characterizing the activity of a successfully formed organ and its analogue within the poem’s elevated diction.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 57. Eyes exist without their customary foreheads in the isolated-member scene.

B 84. The lamp comparison describes the eye’s fire, membranes, and selective outward passage.

B 86. Aphrodite fashions unwearying eyes.

B 88. One vision comes from both, with the referents left unexpressed in the excerpt.

B 3.9–13. Sight is not to be trusted automatically above other faculties.

In this edition. The edition’s “one vision” for ὄψ should not be expanded into a detailed theory of binocular fusion without acknowledging the missing referent of “both.” Its eye passages preserve several distinct explanatory moments, not one uninterrupted text.

See also. Lantern; Pupil and membranes; Effluences; Passages; Isolated limbs; Rivets of affection.

Faculties and evidence

παλάμαι (palamai); πάσηι παλάμηι (pasēi palamēi); δῆλον (dēlon); νόει (noei)

The word. Palamai are the means of grasping distributed through the limbs in B 2; the related singular phrase in B 3 is rendered "with every faculty." The same word-family can refer to literal palms, as in the hands of Cypris. Dēlon means clear or manifest; noei is an instruction to understand or attend with thought.

In Empedocles. B 3 gives one of the most explicit surviving accounts of how the listener should inquire. The imperative is comprehensive: observe by every available means, and understand each thing in the way in which it becomes clear. Sight is not to receive an automatic privilege over hearing; hearing is not to overwhelm the evidence associated with the tongue; no other bodily avenue to understanding is to be denied its appropriate trust. The body supplies differentiated access, not one undivided and infallible channel.

The passage is sometimes easy to misread as either wholesale confidence in sensation or a rejection of it in favour of pure thought. Neither follows from its wording. The warning in B 2 concerns restricted capacities and the inflated conclusions people draw from their encounters. B 3 answers with disciplined use of the faculties. B 17 then directs the hearer to see Love with mind rather than sit staring in amazement. Such intellectual attention does not have to contradict B 3: a power whose operations are evident through relations may require a mode of recognition different from looking at a visible object.

B 21 adds a vocabulary of witness. The sun's warmth and brightness, rain's dark chill, and earth's solidity are offered as evidence for a preceding account. Familiar experience serves an explanatory argument. In B 133 the standard highway of human persuasion, sight and touch, cannot bring the divine subject within reach. The limitation applies to that subject; the fragment does not invalidate the faculties in every inquiry.

The range of palamē helps maintain the connection between knowing and handling. The hearer grasps by faculties; Cypris shapes in palms. It would be excessive to deduce an entire theory from this lexical relation, but it shows why a translation that turns all bodily language into abstract "reason" would lose something important. Understanding is repeatedly instructed through limbs, inward parts, attention, and skilled practice.

Astonishment itself has different roles. B 17 warns against merely staring in amazement, while B 35 calls the emergence of varied mortal forms a wonder to behold. The difference is between amazement that leaves the hearer uncomprehending and a spectacle encountered through an explanatory account; wonder is not rejected wholesale.[17]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 2.1–2. Means of grasping are narrow and dispersed through limbs.

B 3.9–13. Every faculty must receive trust according to its distinctive evidence.

B 17.21–26. The listener is instructed to recognize Love with mind.

[17] A quotation selected by a writer interested in a criterion of truth need not preserve the full setting of its original pedagogical argument.

B 21.1–6. Visible and felt phenomena are presented as witnesses to the argument.

B 133. The divine subject is inaccessible by ordinary sight and touch.

B 35.16–17. The diversity emerging through mixture is called a wonder to behold.

In this edition. “Faculty” is an interpretive English rendering, not an abstract Greek noun identical in every use. The verse’s tongue may evoke speech, taste, or evidence given through that organ; this edition’s “plain evidence of the tongue” does not by itself settle the question. Its “channel for understanding” also retains the bodily image of poros.

See also. Mortal limits; Trust and persuasion; Understanding and inward thought; Sacred mind; Craft and fitting.

Fairest and Foulest

Καλλιστώ (Kallistō); Αἰσχρή (Aischrē)

The word. Kallistō is a feminine name built on the superlative of beauty; Aischrē expresses ugliness or shamefulness. The edition renders the pair “Fairest and Foulest.” English makes both names parallel superlatives, while the Greek forms are not morphologically identical in that respect.

In Empedocles. The pair occurs in B122/123 after Quarrel and Harmony and before Swift-One and Slow-One. It extends the catalogue from conflict and concord into evaluative qualities of appearance. “Foul” can also carry moral colouring, but the name alone does not tell whether the contrast is chiefly visual, ethical, or deliberately both.

There is no action, genealogy, or separate doctrine attached to either figure in the surviving line. Kallistō should not be identified with a familiar mythological bearer of that name merely because the spelling coincides. The context treats the names as part of a sequence of personified contrasts. The entry's interpretive limit is consequently important: the catalogue establishes that these opposed qualities have been given personal names, not how they operate in mixture or where they stand in a hierarchy of beings.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.3. Fairest and Foulest are juxtaposed in the catalogue's third line.

In this edition. "Foulest" is the local English choice. It should not be silently narrowed to moral depravity, nor used to claim a Greek superlative where the printed form is Aischrē.

See also. Swift-One and Slow-One; Harmony; Greatness and Squalor.

False swearing

ἐπίορκον (epiorkon); ἐπομόσσηι (epomossēi)

The word. The wording describes swearing falsely while in error. "Perjury" is a useful lookup term, but its modern association with sworn testimony in a courtroom is narrower than the fragment. The offence concerns a violated sacred pledge or false swearing; no legal proceeding is narrated.

In Empedocles. B115 places false swearing alongside the pollution of one's limbs through killing. The decree accordingly treats truthful commitment and restraint

from bloodshed as matters with consequences for a long-lived divine being. Language is not ethically secondary to action: a false oath can belong to the error that sends the offender through mortal lives.

The printed fourth line contains an editorial supplement naming Strife. That supplement is reflected in the English as “or, following Strife.” A discussion must therefore distinguish the secure presence of false swearing from the supplemented syntactical connection to Strife in that line. The closing confession of trust in Strife is separately present at the end of the fragment. Nothing in the passage establishes a procedure for absolution after a particular false oath.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.3–4. False swearing occurs in the statement of the offences governed by the decree.

B 115.13–14. The speaker confesses his reliance on raving Strife.

In this edition. The supplied reference to Strife in line 4 is bracketed in Greek and translation. The entry does not erase that qualification or treat the precise conjunction of bloodshed and perjury as textually unproblematic.

See also. Oath; Necessity; Murder and bloodshed; Piety.

Feathers

οἰωνῶν πτερὰ πυκνά (oiōnōn ptera pykna)

The word. B82 names the dense or close-set feathers of birds. The word translated “plumage” is placed within a list of bodily coverings, alongside hair, leaves, and scales. Its local emphasis is on a covering’s formation, not an explicit explanation of flight.

In Empedocles. The comparison identifies a material continuity across forms that look and behave differently. Bird plumage belongs to the same physical field as a plant's foliage and an animal's hair or scales. Within Empedocles' account, a limited set of constituents can yield many structured appearances. This is a stronger claim than a loose decorative resemblance, but it is not a modern evolutionary derivation of feathers from another tissue.

The adjective rendered "close" or "dense" adds texture. The feathers are not merely present; they form a packed covering on stout limbs. Density elsewhere can determine how bodies are built or how passages receive and exclude things. The fragment itself does not develop those possible connections into a precise recipe for feathers.

B20's "wing-faring boats" gives birds an entirely different figural treatment, emphasizing movement through a medium. The two passages are complementary: one views the bird as a constructed surface and the other as a moving whole. Keeping the entries distinct prevents the vivid flight metaphor from replacing the more specific comparison of coverings.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 82. Bird plumage is compared with hair, leaves, and scales.

B 20.6–7. The phrase wing-faring boats characterizes birds by locomotion.

In this edition. "Plumage" is an idiomatic collective rendering of the plural feathers. The article's wing-related lookup label should not imply that B82 itself explains the mechanics of flying.

See also. Hair; Leaves; Scales; Wing-faring boats.

Fig-juice and milk

ὀπὸς (opos); γάλα λευκὸν (gala leukon); ἐγόμφωσεν (egomphōsen)

The word. B33 compares something to fig-juice binding white milk. The edition's "riveted" translates a verb of fastening and makes the transformation unusually tangible. A liquid is described as acquiring cohesion through another material's action.

In Empedocles. The comparison begins "as when," so the surviving line is explicitly an analogy. Its principal target is missing. The reader can identify the visible process being invoked without deciding whether the original argument concerned a particular tissue, a cosmic combination, or another form of cohesion.

The pairing illustrates more than simple addition. The result is that the milk becomes bound, a change in the behaviour and texture of the mixture. This makes it a natural comparison for other passages in which joining produces a stable form from materials that separately have different properties. B92's two soft seeds yielding a dense mixture and B34's water binding barley-meal offer related but distinct cases.

The fastening verb also connects it with Aphrodite's rivets in B87. That link is lexical and explanatory: a craft operation can describe a material's cohesion, not merely an artisan's act on a manufactured object. It does not prove that milk is literally held by metal pins or that every Empedoclean mixture uses the same process.

The entry preserves the ordinary material scene because it is the basis of the analogy's persuasive force. Its use here is historical and interpretive, not a food-preparation instruction.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 33. The simile gives fig-juice binding and riveting white milk.

B 87. Aphrodite's rivets provide a related fastening image.

B 34. Water glues barley-meal in another short material example.

B 92 (report). A later report describes altered texture on mixing two soft seeds.

In this edition. "Curdling" is a helpful lookup label, but the printed line emphasizes binding and riveting. Since the target of "as when" is lost, the entry does not attach the simile to a particular organ as though that connection were preserved.

See also. Rivets of affection; Barley-meal and water; Hardening and texture; Seed.

Fire

πῦρ (pyr); πυρὶ πῦρ ἀίδηλον (pyri pyr aidēlon); φλὸξ ἱλάειρα (phlox hilaeira)

The word. Pyr is the ordinary Greek word for fire, used without a divine-name substitute in the root list of B 17. The corpus also speaks of flame, blazing fire, heat, and the sun. These words overlap in physical imagery but should not be collapsed into a claim that every occurrence names exactly the same cosmological object. The epithet aidēlon in B 109 is rendered "destroying," while the flame of B 85 is "gentle": fire's diction is not uniformly hostile.

In Empedocles. Fire is both a persistent constituent and a differentiated participant in compound formation. B 17 coordinates it with water, earth, and air. In B 62, separating fire raises earth-born forms because it seeks its

like. That desire is expressed as purpose in the poem; it does not require the reader to convert the event into modern combustion, convection, or natural selection. In B 73 Cypris gives moistened earth to swift fire for hardening, and B 96 invokes Hephaestus in a measured account of bone. Fire can therefore assist the construction of organised bodies even when separation is involved.

B 84 supplies a particularly elaborate small-scale application. Primeval fire lies enclosed in the eye's tissues, while finer fire passes through channels, as light escapes the screens of a lamp. The analogy makes fire active in vision without making the whole perceptual system identical with ordinary burning. B 109 then says fire is recognised by fire, placing the constituent in both perceiver and perceived.

The line about many underground fires expands fire's location beyond the sky. It is important evidence against treating fire as confined to a single celestial layer, but not sufficient by itself to identify Aidoneus as fire. Similarly, the description of Strife and fire as equivalent in Plutarch's framing of B 19 belongs to that later argument. The fragmentary quotation must not override the explicit distinction of fire and Strife in B 17.[18]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.18–20. Fire is the first item in the fourfold physical list.

B 62.1–6. Separating fire raises the forms and seeks to reach its like.

[18] A material can contribute to joining in one context and separating in another. The fragments do not justify a permanent moral equation "fire = evil."

B 84.1–11. The lamp and eye comparison distinguishes enclosing membranes from the fine fire which passes outward.

B 52. Many fires burn beneath the ground.

B 109.2. Fire in the perceiver recognises fire; its epithet is "destroying."

B 19 (editorial discussion). The equation with Strife occurs in Plutarch's explanation, not in the two-word Empedoclean phrase.

B 85. A gentle flame meets a scant portion of earth; the short fragment gives a mixture without specifying the resulting organ.

In this edition. "Fire," "flame," "sun," and "Hephaestus" remain distinct renderings in this edition. Zeus-as-fire is one interpretation of B 6, not the text of that fragment. The corrected heading B 85 identifies the "gentle flame" line; the local note records a numbering error in the source arrangement.

See also. Roots; Hephaestus; Sun; Subterranean fire; Like and unlike; Eye; Lantern; Strife.

Fish

ἰχθῦς (ichthys); καμασῆνες (kamasēnes); ὑδρομελάθροις (hydromelathrois); ἄμουσον (amouson)

The word. The book preserves both the familiar fish-word and the less familiar καμασῆνες, rendered "fishes." Their descriptive language stresses nourishment or habitation in water and a lack of song. These features make fish a distinct case within repeated catalogues of living forms.

In Empedocles. In B21 and B23 fish stand beside trees, men, women, beasts, birds, and gods. The recurring list

gives breadth to the claim that common constituents can produce the entire visible range of beings. In the painters' comparison, fish are among the forms created by mixing a restricted stock of pigments; in the physical assertion, they are among the compounds generated from the roots.

B20 calls fish water-housed, emphasizing habitat through the image of a dwelling. They share with bushes, beasts, and birds the alternating pattern of bodily association and separation. B72 places tall trees beside sea-fishes in a broken announcement of an explanation, again crossing the ordinary boundary between plant and animal topics.

The "songless tribe" in B74 gives fish a more individual lexical profile. Its participle, "leading," has no securely recovered subject in the fragment itself. One should therefore preserve the image of a guided, widely scattered aquatic multitude without inventing the missing agent. Songlessness is the stated feature; a modern account of whether fish can produce sound would be a different question.

The fish among previous incarnations in B117 belongs to the daimon's history. It demonstrates the poem's ability to reuse an animal across physical and religious contexts, but the present entry concerns the fish's place in the account of living form.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.9–14. Water-nurtured fish are among the products of the common constituents.

B 20.6–7. Water-housed fish share the bodily association-and-separation pattern.

B 72. Tall trees and sea-fishes are paired in a fragmentary announcement.

B 74. Fish are a widely scattered, songless tribe.

B 23.5–8. The same fish category appears among the painters' representable forms.

In this edition. The edition renders καμασῆνες simply as fishes. Its "songless" keeps the contrast in ἄμουσον without expanding it into an empirical claim that all aquatic animals are incapable of sound.

See also. Zoogony; Trees; Wing-faring boats; Scales; Transmigration.

Five springs

κρηνάων ἄπο πέντε (krēnaōn apo pente); ἀτειρέι χαλκῶι (ateirei chalkōi)

The word. The phrase names five springs and enduring or unwearying bronze. Krēnai are springs or sources; the Greek participle tamont' belongs to the language of cutting, though the English renders the action as drawing from the springs. The quotation breaks off before its full setting becomes clear.

In Empedocles. B143 is preserved by Theon of Smyrna. In this edition the English has someone drawing from five springs into bronze, but the preposition translated "into" is an editorial supplement. The object drawn or cut is not identified in the surviving phrase. Neither the number five nor the metal supplies enough evidence to reconstruct the operation.

It would be possible to imagine bodily openings, senses, streams, or ritual liquids behind the springs, but the fragment as printed names none of them. Its position among the Purifications does not settle the question, since the section assignments are editorial. The safest lexical

record preserves the concrete combination of multiple sources and bronze while leaving the action's domain open. This is an instructive limit-case for a lexicon: registering a meaningful image need not pretend to solve it.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 143. Five springs and bronze occur in a broken phrase with a supplemented preposition.

In this edition. The angle-bracketed "into" is not secure transmitted wording. The difference between the printed Greek participle and the flowing English "drawn" is worth retaining rather than silently using the translation to invent a definite vessel or ritual.

See also. Water and rain; Sacrifice; Purification and fasting.

Flesh

σαρκός (sarkos); σαρκῶν (sarkōn); σάρκινος (sarkinos)

The word. Flesh is a compound bodily material whose different forms are produced by mixture. The adjective "fleshy" also names or describes a component involved in hearing. The word does not simply mean the whole living person, although it can stand for embodied life in other contexts.

In Empedocles. B98 gives blood and the forms of other flesh a common compositional account. The phrase "other flesh" places blood close to, or within, the broader category of soft bodily substances, instead of treating solid tissue and fluid as unrelated kinds. Small variations around equal shares help explain plurality within the category.

In B100 flesh is organized into pipes near the body's extremities. These structures are scant of blood, keep blood within, and allow aither a route through. Flesh is consequently not an undifferentiated mass: its configuration matters to its function. The hearing fragment similarly preserves "fleshy sprig," a phrase whose organic image identifies a small structured part rather than generic meat.

B76 presents another bodily arrangement, with earth uppermost over flesh in shells. Here the placement of materials is as important as their presence. Flesh can therefore be considered by composition, passage structure, and position relative to harder surfaces. These are complementary explanatory questions, not interchangeable definitions.

The alien tunic of flesh in B126 belongs to the discussion of embodiment and daimones. It gives the material a different evaluative and figural role without supplying a second physiological recipe. The distinction prevents the physical account from being either reduced to metaphor or isolated from the poem's broader language of embodied life.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 98. Mixture produces blood and the forms of other flesh.

B 100.1–5. Flesh is arranged in pipes relevant to breathing.

B 76. Earth lies at the outermost parts above flesh in shelled creatures.

B 99 (report). The fleshy-sprig expression is preserved in a report on hearing.

In this edition. "Flesh" can sound narrowly muscular in contemporary English. The linked passages require a

broader bodily-material sense, and B98 expressly permits different forms. No modern tissue classification is supplied.

See also. Blood; Skin; Shells; Hearing; Alien tunic of flesh.

Form and shape

εἴδεα (eidea); μορφὴν (morphēn); τύποι (typoi); ἰδέηισιν (ideēisin)

The word. The source's several shape-words do not all have one function. Eidea can denote forms or kinds of appearance; morphēn is the shape that has been changed in B 137; typoi names the first whole-grown forms in B 62; ideēisin describes the varied shapes in B 35.

In Empedocles. B 21 explains why the same enduring constituents can appear different: blending changes what things look like. Forms belong within an account of transformation. B 23's painters make likenesses of visible things from proportioned pigments, and B 71 explicitly asks how mortal forms and colours arise from mixed water, earth, aither, and sun. None of these passages introduces a separate realm of immutable Forms.

The emergence of organisms gives the vocabulary further specificity. B 62 speaks of whole-natured typoi rising from earth before the familiar configuration of limbs, voice, and the male member is manifest. "Forms" there names a stage of the bodies described, not a fully developed species definition. B 35 ends with countless mortal tribes fitted out in every sort of shape, a spectacle of the diversity produced through combination.

The ethical fragments give visible shape another role. B 137's child has changed morphē and therefore goes unrecognized by the sacrificing father. Form is not

sufficient to identify the familiar being concealed in an altered appearance. B 125 likewise speaks of exchanging living things and dead shapes, though its latter clause is supplemented. These passages make appearance consequential without supplying a full metaphysical theory of personal identity.

The modern reader must resist the temptation to import Plato's technical Forms into similar-looking Greek words. Empedocles is earlier than Plato, and these verses explain visible and embodied variety through composition, change, and recognition. This does not make every shape-word reducible to a purely optical surface; it means that its local use must be established before assigning it a later philosophical role.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.13–14. Blending explains difference in appearance.

B 23.4–8. Painters make shapes resembling many kinds of beings.

B 62.4–8. Whole-natured forms emerge before familiar anatomical differentiation.

B 71.1–4. Forms and colours are explained through mixed constituents.

B 137.1–2. Changed shape prevents recognition of the sacrificial victim.

In this edition. "Form" is an English convenience spanning several Greek nouns. Capitalizing it as "Form" in the Platonic technical sense would create a doctrine not stated here. B 125's supplied final clause must remain visibly distinct from the transmitted first line.

See also. Painters and colours; Mixture; Birth; Whole-natured forms; Kin-murder; Naming and convention.

Fragments and Diels numbering

The word. A fragment here is a numbered unit gathered by editors from a later witness, not necessarily a broken piece of a physical manuscript or an original unit of composition. Diels-Kranz B references are stable identifiers used for the putative words of Empedocles; A references conventionally organize reports about him.

In Empedocles. The supplied text exemplifies the unevenness concealed by one numbering system. B 17 is a long continuous quotation, B 7 a word accompanied by a supplied subject, B 153 a lexicographer's citation, B 92 Aristotle's prose paraphrase, and B 153a a reported statement. The letter B is therefore not a guarantee of verbatim hexameters. Each entry in a lexicon must identify what sort of evidence it has actually received.

The boundaries of a quotation reflect a witness's purpose. A later author may preserve only the clause needed for an argument or the word needed for a grammatical example. Modern editors then choose how to delimit and number that material. An opening or closing row of dots often means the quotation stops within a larger sentence, not that a complete standalone aphorism was written in that form.

Numbers likewise do not supply order. In this edition B 24 and B 25 appear in the proem; B 17 opens Book I; B 14 is printed among fragments of uncertain placement; and the combined headings B 77.78 and B 122/123 preserve more than one standard identifier. These features are deliberate signals that reading sequence and reference identity serve different purposes.

The introduction says the A testimonia are omitted, but the apparatus and prose items within the B series necessarily retain reports. This is not a reason to erase

them. It is a reason to avoid presenting the entire book as uninterrupted Empedoclean verse. The doubtful B 158 is included while B 154–157 are omitted, again showing that inclusion and numbering do not by themselves certify authenticity.

For citation, the strongest practice is to give the B identifier, a line span when secure, and a short account of the evidence. A number locates a passage; it does not settle its authorship, wording, original place, or doctrinal role.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

Introduction II (editorial discussion). Selection, delimitation, and arrangement are explicitly distinguished.

Introduction VII (editorial discussion). The editor states the textual basis, exclusions, and status of marginal items.

B 92 (report). The B-labelled item is a prose report by Aristotle.

B 153a (report). The B-labelled embryological notice is a report, not verbatim verse.

B 158 (editorial discussion). The local note explains its anomalous position; the introduction also calls it doubtful.

In this edition. The supplied edition attributes its numbering to Diels and preserves editorial combinations and subdivisions such as 27a and 153a. This lexicon retains those identifiers rather than renumbering the poem into an invented consecutive original order.

See also. On Nature and Purifications; Witnesses and reception; Supplements, corruption, and gaps; Papyri and the unprinted text.

Gladness

Γηθοσύνην (Gēthosynēn)

The word. Gēthosynē is gladness or joyfulness. The word is a name used for the power inborn in mortal limbs, explicitly paired with Aphrodite in B17. Its pleasurable colouring is part of how the power is recognized in human life.

In Empedocles. B17 asks the addressee to behold Love with the mind, then explains that mortals already acknowledge her within their limbs. Through her they think friendly thoughts and perform works of joining, calling her Gladness and Aphrodite. The step from familiar experience to cosmic recognition is important: an existing human name for the power is recruited to explain its wider activity among the constituents.

This does not make Gladness an additional independent force. Nor should it be read as a promise that all mixture is pleasant to the resulting creature. The local point is about the familiar names and effects of Love, while other passages describe mortal pleasure and pain more broadly. Preserving "Gladness" keeps the poem's affective route into physical understanding audible.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.20–26. Gladness and Aphrodite are the names mortals use for Love within bodily life.

In this edition. The English capitalizes Gladness because the word is functioning as a name. It is not a separate occurrence of the verb for the Sphere's rejoicing in B27–28.

See also. Love; Aphrodite; Affection; Sphairos.

Golden age

Κύπρις βασίλεια (Kypris basileia); κτίλα πάντα (ktila panta)

The word. “Golden age” is the introduction’s interpretive label for the community portrayed in B128 and B130. The verses do not use a Greek expression for a golden age. Their defining language is Cypris’ queenship, bloodless worship, tame animals, and kindliness.

In Empedocles. B128 identifies the community first through absence: Ares and Battle-Din are not gods among its members, nor are Zeus as king, Cronos, and Poseidon; Cypris is queen. The verses then describe a worship that uses images, scents, incense, and honey. Bulls’ blood does not soak the altar, and killing to eat limbs is treated as the greatest pollution. B130 adds beasts and birds that are gentle toward humans, with kindliness blazing. Together these fragments portray a peaceful relation between human and nonhuman life.

The portrait is not simply secular innocence. Divine authority and deliberate ritual remain, but their forms do not involve the slaughter condemned elsewhere. Nor is this a foodless or bodiless state like the fully unified Sphere: it has people, animals, offerings, and an altar. That distinction makes it hazardous to identify the scene outright with the cosmic extreme of Love.

The fragments do not provide a date, named country, institutional constitution, or preserved transition out of this condition. Their narrative “among them” points to a lost antecedent. The introductory label helps gather the ethical picture, but should leave its exact place within cosmic history open.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.1–10. Cypris reigns over a community whose offerings are bloodless and whose altar excludes slaughter.

B 130. Beasts and birds are gentle toward humans, and kindliness flourishes.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The modern introduction gathers these passages under the term golden age.

In this edition. The chapter's printed order does not prove that B128, B130, and B129 were consecutive in the original poem. "Golden age" is a navigational heading, not an exact Empedoclean quotation.

See also. Cypris; Kindliness; Sacrifice; Altar; Cronos; Sphairos.

Grace

χάρις (charis)

The word. Charis has the range of grace, favour, and gracious benefit. The fragment prints the noun in lower case; the English capitalizes "Grace," inviting personification. This is the subject that loathes Necessity, not a description of a Christian sacramental power.

In Empedocles. The surviving words are extraordinarily compressed: Grace, with a gap after it, loathes hard-to-bear Necessity. They give an affective opposition without explaining its occasion. Read alongside B115, the hostility may suggest the painful character of a compulsory order, but the fragment does not identify Grace with an offender, a saviour, or Love. It also does not explain whether the utterance is cosmic, ethical, or part of a more limited illustration.

The useful lexical fact is that Empedoclean divine language can express an antagonism through a familiar quality named as an actor. Its emotional colouring matters: Necessity is not simply named, but characterized as difficult to endure. Beyond that, the loss of context should be allowed to restrict interpretation.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 116. The sole surviving clause opposes Grace to hard-to-bear Necessity.

In this edition. The ellipses in B116 are essential. “Grace loathes Necessity” summarizes the extant relation but is not evidence for a complete preserved sentence or an independently documented goddess’s role.

See also. Necessity; Gladness; Piety.

Greatness and Squalor

Μεγιστώ (Megistō); Φορύη (Phoryē)

The word. Megistō is a feminine name associated with greatness; the catalogue qualifies her as much-garlanded. Phoryē is rendered “Squalor.” The pair sets an honoured or imposing presence beside a degraded one, although the surviving words give no narrative cause for either condition.

In Empedocles. The catalogue carries Greatness from the end of its sixth line into the juxtaposition with Squalor at the start of the seventh. Garlands provide the positive figure with a visible mark of distinction. They may be compared with the flourishing garlands of the speaker’s honoured appearance in B112, without asserting that the same ceremony or status is intended.

The names alone do not establish a class hierarchy, an ethical judgment on material poverty, or a formula by which ritual adornment secures divine ascent. Such interpretations would turn the descriptive contrast into a doctrine not preserved here. The pair is most informative as part of the catalogue's range: alongside natural processes and movements, the poet personifies conditions of splendour and abasement.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.6–7. Much-garlanded Greatness is followed by Squalor across the line break.

B 112.4–6. The speaker's garlands provide a comparison for visible honour, without identifying the personification.

In this edition. The title follows the edition's "Greatness" and "Squalor." The epithet "much-garlanded" belongs to Greatness, not to both names or to the entire catalogue.

See also. Fairest and Foulest; Blessedness; Divine ascent; Silence and Utterance.

Growth and Decay

Φυσώ (Physō); Φθιμένη (Phthimenē)

The word. The feminine names Physō and Phthimenē are translated "Growth" and "Decay." They invoke growing or emerging and fading or perishing. Their grammatical presentation as names is different from a general statement that something comes into being or passes away.

In Empedocles. In B122/123 the pair opens the fifth line, immediately before She-of-the-Bed and Waking. The names place processes familiar from living things among the catalogue's opposed conditions. They do not

independently assert that anything can arise from nothing or cease into nothing. Empedocles elsewhere denies those absolute processes and explains mortal birth and death through mixture and separation.

That physical doctrine can help prevent misreading, but it does not authorize us to say exactly which mixtures Physō or Phthimenē controls. The catalogue contains no verbs of action for the figures beyond their being "there." The pair therefore exemplifies how conventional words for life-processes can remain available in a poetic language whose explanatory account is more qualified. It is not a miniature second cosmogony.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.5. Growth and Decay are named as adjacent figures.

B 8.1–4. The physical account qualifies the language of birth and death through mixture and interchange.

In this edition. "Decay" interprets the name Phthimenē. It should not make the personification evidence for ultimate annihilation, nor should Physō be conflated with every occurrence of physis.

See also. Birth; Death; Mortal things; Bed and Waking; Mixture.

Hades

Ἀίδαο (Aidao); Ἀΐδεω (Aideō)

The word. The two forms are genitives of the name Hades. In B111 "out of Hades" can designate the abode or sphere of the dead, while B142 imagines a roof associated with Hades. The name is related to the divine name Aidoneus in the root catalogue, but these passages do not

automatically inherit any disputed elemental identification of that catalogue.

In Empedocles. The climactic promise of B111 is to lead out of Hades the strength of a dead man. It comes after remedies, mastery of winds, and changes between drought and rain. The line presents extraordinary command over the boundary of death as part of the teacher's promise. It does not specify a medical technique or establish that an actual resuscitation occurred. The introduction explicitly warns that later miracle biographies may derive from this poetry.

B142 preserves a damaged contrast: neither Zeus's roofed halls nor Hades's roof receives an unnamed person. The subject's exclusion is intelligible, but his identity and the completed syntax are not. B121's joyless place and meadow of Ruin may sound underworld-like; nevertheless, that fragment never calls the place Hades. Combining these items into a detailed geography of the afterlife would exceed the surviving words.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 111.9. The speaker promises the addressee that he will lead a dead man's strength out of Hades.

B 142. A broken passage names a roof of Hades alongside the halls of Zeus.

B 121. The joyless place provides a comparison, without explicitly naming Hades.

In this edition. The version "strength," for menos in B111, matters: the translated promise is not the recovery of an explicitly named disembodied soul. B142's brackets mark substantial textual loss.

See also. Aidoneus; Daimon; Unfamiliar place; Physicians; Divine ascent.

Hair

τρίχες (triches); λαχνήεντες (lachnēentes)

The word. Τρίχες names hair in the comparison B82 makes with leaves, bird feathers, and scales. B67 describes men as more shaggy or hairy. The terms link a familiar surface growth both to cross-species comparison and to an account of sexual bodily difference.

In Empedocles. B82 says that hair and the other listed coverings are "the same things." Its boldness lies in finding continuity among forms normally classified by different organisms: a plant's leaves, a bird's feathers, and a hairy or scaled animal's surface are brought under a common explanation. The verse does not offer the modern claim that these structures are anatomically identical in every respect. In the setting of a mixture theory, sameness concerns shared material or formative explanation while visible forms remain diverse.

B67 approaches hairiness through temperature. The warmer male-bearing region is followed by a description of men as darker and hairier. This ancient causal association belongs to the specific reproductive theory of that fragment. It should not be converted into a rule for modern individuals or used to validate bodily stereotypes.

The hedgehog's bristles in B83 provide a vivid special case of surface growth. Their pointed, erect quality is explicitly described, but the poem as printed does not connect them by an argument to the particular temperature claim about men. Shared bodily vocabulary encourages comparison without making every explanation universal.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 82. Hair is placed beside leaves, plumage, and scales.

B 67. Greater hairiness appears in the warmth-based explanation of male characteristics.

B 83. The pointed bristles of hedgehogs illustrate a distinctive surface covering.

In this edition. The edition's "the same things" should be retained as the strong comparative claim it is, while avoiding the modern technical vocabulary of evolutionary homology, which the fragment does not supply.

See also. Leaves; Feathers; Scales; Hedgehog bristles; Warmth and cold in generation.

Harbours

λιμένες (limenes); λιμένεσσιν (limenessin); ὁρμισθεῖσα (hormistheisa)

The word. Limenes and limenessin are forms of the word for harbours. Hormistheisa describes being brought to anchorage. The image is used once of civic hosts and once within an account of bodily mixture.

In Empedocles. In B 112 the friends of Acragas are praised as reverend havens for strangers. A harbour receives travellers and offers a place of refuge; the comparison turns civic hospitality into a spatial relation of welcome. It prepares the friendly relation between the speaking poet and the community he greets.

B 98 gives the image a cosmological and physiological setting. Earth meets the other constituents in approximately equal proportion, anchored in the perfect harbours of Cypris, and blood and flesh result. The harbour is no longer a literal civic institution but a figure for the secure coming-together achieved within the

domain of the joining power. It makes mixture intelligible as arrival and accommodation.

The recurrence is a useful reminder that technical explanation and social address draw on a shared poetic world. The same image can describe welcoming persons and receiving constituents without asserting that those operations are identical. It would go too far to identify the harbours with anatomical vessels, pores, or an otherwise unnamed physical structure: the fragment does not make that equation. Likewise, “perfect” need not establish a geometrically specified basin.

The imagery carries a constructive aspect of Love’s work that the abstract English “attraction” would obscure. Things arrive, find a place, and are held in a fitting relation. At the civic opening, comparable welcome is attributed to the listeners before they in turn receive the poet.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 98.1–5. The meeting of constituents is anchored in Cypris’ perfect harbours.

B 112.1–3. The citizens are addressed as havens for strangers.

In this edition. Both uses retain a nautical figure in the translation. B 98 gives no explicit anatomical referent for the harbours, and the hospitable epithet in B 112 should not be turned into a literal claim about a seaport on the city’s heights.

See also. Acragas and the civic audience; Craft and fitting; Blood; Flesh; Aphrodite; Cypris; Paths and channels of speech.

Hardening and texture

κρατῦναι (kratynai); πυκνά (pykna); μανὰ (mana); πλάδης (pladēs); ἀραιότατα (araiotata)

The word. Several fragments explain bodily differences through hardening, density, looseness, and moisture. B73 uses a verb of making firm; B75 contrasts dense interiors with loosely compacted exteriors; B104 names an especially loose coming-together. These are relations of organization and texture, not additional roots.

In Empedocles. B73 provides a compact sequence of craft-like operations. Cypris first moistens earth in rain and then gives the forms to swift fire to harden. The account requires both the pliability supplied by moisture and the firmness associated with fire. Assigning a single universal function to each constituent would miss the sequence through which a workable material becomes a structured body.

B75 describes beings dense within and loose outside, attributing this state to a particular dampness encountered in Cypris' palms. Interior and exterior can therefore differ within one compound. The fragment does not identify the beings in its surviving words, so a specific tissue or species must not be inserted without additional evidence.

B104 contributes another brief measure of arrangement: things came together most loosely as they fell. Its connection with the neighbouring thought statement B103 in the quoting source makes texture potentially relevant to cognitive organization, but the book does not provide a full continuous argument explaining the relation. It is safer to retain the claim about loose assembly than to declare that it is a proven recipe for superior or inferior intelligence.

Together these passages supplement the numerical account of bone and the near-balanced account of flesh and blood. A body can be described by proportion, by its sequence of formation, by the disposition of dense and loose regions, and by the way material is fitted. Empedocles' physical vocabulary is consequently richer than a list of ingredients alone.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 73. Moistened earth is given to fire to harden into forms.

B 75. Dense interiors and loose exteriors are related to dampness in Cypris' palms.

B 104. A fragment describes the loosest coming-together as things fall.

B 96. Bone supplies a contrasting, explicitly proportional account.

B 98. Blood and flesh arise from approximately balanced contributions.

In this edition. B104 must remain distinct from B103 despite their shared source location and the edition's note about an earlier heading conflation. Their adjacency does not remove the missing grammatical and explanatory context.

See also. Bone; Flesh; Seed; Cypris; Barley-meal and water; Chance.

Harmony

Ἁρμονίη (Harmoniē); Ἁρμονίης (Harmoniēs); ἁρμονίῃι (harmoniēi)

The word. Harmoniē denotes a fitting or joining, and can name the power that effects or maintains it. The practical force of the word matters: a successful fit binds parts into

a working whole. It should not be confined to musical consonance or a vague pleasant agreement.

In Empedocles. The different settings specify the same joining language at distinct scales. B23 says that painters mix their pigments in harmony, more of one and less of another, to make images resembling many things. Here the word characterizes a proportioned operation. B96 names Harmony as the agent whose gluings fit together white bones. The resulting tissue is a material construction with measured constituents, so divine agency and artisanal process are expressed together rather than assigned to rival explanations.

At the scale of the whole, B27 places the Sphere in Harmony's close covert. Solar, terrestrial, and marine differentiations are no longer discernible there. The image emphasizes secure enclosure and unity. In B122/123 Harmony becomes a grave-eyed figure beside bloody Quarrel, translating the opposition of joining and conflict into a pair of presences. Plutarch's account attached to B18 explicitly associates the name with Empedocles' beneficent principle, but that statement is the quoting author's report, not an additional complete Empedoclean line.

The recurrence gives good grounds for reading Harmonia among Love's expressions. It does not mean that every lowercase occurrence of fitting is a full invocation of a separate goddess, or that musical ratios supply the hidden key to the system. The local work of the word is more concrete: fitting pigments, fitting bone, and securing the divine whole.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 23.1–5. The painters mix their pigments in harmony, in unequal proportions.

B 96.1–4. Harmony's gluings fit the components into white bone.

B 27.1–4. The Sphere rests within Harmony's close covert.

B 122/123.2. Grave-eyed Harmony is paired with bloody Quarrel.

B 18 (editorial discussion). Plutarch's accompanying report associates grave-eyed Harmony with the beneficent principle.

In this edition. The introduction announces a preference for the language of fitting rather than musical "harmony," yet the English verses retain "Harmony" in several named occurrences and "harmony" in B23. The variation should be reported as it stands, not regularized into a translation the edition does not print.

See also. Love; Aphrodite; Cypris; Quarrel; Bone; Painters and colours; Sphairos.

Hearing

ἀκουήν (akouēn); ἀκοὴν ἐρίδουπον (akoēn eridoupon); κώδων (kōdōn); σάρκινος ὄζος (sarkinos ozos)

The word. Hearing is named directly in B3, which calls it loud-echoing and places it beside sight and the tongue's evidence. Its physiological vocabulary survives more fragmentarily in B99: a bell and a fleshy sprig, preserved with a later author's explanation of sounds inside the ear.

In Empedocles. B3 is chiefly an instruction about the use of faculties. It refuses to rank sight above hearing automatically, and likewise refuses to let hearing override the clear evidence of the tongue. The acoustic epithet is vivid, but the passage does not itself explain the ear's mechanism.

For that mechanism, B99 must be read with its transmission setting. Theophrastus says that sounds arise within the ear and compares the ear to a bell ringing with corresponding echoes; he also reports the expression “fleshy sprig.” The edition prints those small lexical items and explains his surrounding prose. The resulting evidence is a mixture of attributed wording and reporting, not a lost two-word hexameter that explains the whole process unaided.

The bell-image makes resonance or ringing accessible through an artifact; the sprig-image identifies an organic structure through growth. Together they suggest that an account of hearing needs both a bodily part and the way sound behaves within it. They do not specify a modern eardrum, ossicle system, or cochlea. Assigning the fleshy sprig to one of those structures would require evidence not given in the book.

The entry therefore distinguishes an epistemic role for hearing from its reported physiology. Both belong to Empedocles’ attention to the body’s means of apprehension, but neither can replace the other.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 3.9–13. Hearing is compared with sight and the tongue’s evidence.

B 99 (report). The isolated bell and fleshy-sprig expressions are printed from Theophrastus.

B 99 (editorial discussion). The note summarizes his account of inner sounds and bell-like echoes.

In this edition. The punctuation joining bell and fleshy sprig is editorial presentation of fragments from a report. The words are not evidence for a single continuous Empedoclean phrase “bell-fleshy-sprig.”

See also. Bell and fleshy sprig; Eye; Passages; Understanding and inward thought.

Heart and thought

περικάρδιόν (perikardion); νόημα (noēma); αἵματος ἐν πελάγεσσι (haimatos en pelagessi)

The word. The adjective περικάρδιόν means around the heart in the phrase identifying human blood with νόημα, thought. The formulation is more specific than a general claim that the heart is the seat of mind: blood surrounding it is named as thought itself.

In Empedocles. B105 first evokes something nourished amid seas of blood that leap back and forth. The grammatical beginning is incomplete: the feminine participle translated “nourished” lacks its explicit subject in the surviving excerpt. The final line, however, makes a clear assertion about human thinking. Its force should not be weakened into a mere metaphor for warm feeling, but neither should the missing opening be supplied as a fully recoverable organ description.

The moving blood connects cognition with the poem’s physiology. B98 accounts for the material’s near-balanced composition, and B100 portrays its oscillating movement in respiration. These passages make it possible to understand how a general mixture theory and a localized account of thought belong together. Yet the source does not spell out every causal link between exact blood proportions and particular mental abilities. The often repeated full reconstruction of Empedoclean psychology reaches beyond the verses printed here.

B107 states that the same constituents by which things are fitted together enable thought, pleasure, and pain.

B108 associates changes in beings with changes in their thinking. Such statements support an embodied account in which cognition depends on the arrangement or condition of the thinker. They do not establish that the individual thinker is a modern brain-like machine or that the daimon can simply be identified with heart-blood. The two explanatory questions have to be kept distinct.

The phrase also matters stylistically. “Seas” enlarges a small bodily interior through the language of landscape and fluid movement. It belongs with the many passages in which the cosmos is articulated through bodies and bodies through elemental scenes. Here the image of a sea does not replace anatomy; it intensifies the blood’s abundant, active presence.

The scope of the assertion is explicitly human: the excerpt twice marks the relation to human beings. That specificity should be held beside the broader claims in B103, B107, and B110 that thought or a share of intelligence belongs to all things. The two sorts of statement do not automatically contradict one another. One may describe a particular human realization of thinking while the other makes a more encompassing claim about the capacities of compounds or constituents. The preserved text, however, does not give a full classificatory scheme assigning a distinct cognitive organ to every kind of being.

A related caution concerns the modern word “mind.” The blood passage says thought, and it identifies that thought with a bodily material in a stated region. It does not divide the person into a spatial organ plus an independently defined mental substance. Conversely, the sacred mind of B134 is described without a human head, limbs, or sexual organs. Treating both descriptions as if they were interchangeable would flatten an important

contrast between human bodily thought and the nonhuman divine subject of that passage.[19]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 105. The excerpt culminates in the identification of blood around human hearts with thought.

B 98. A near-equal mixture accounts for blood's composition.

B 107. The constituents of bodily formation also enable cognition and feeling.

B 108. Changes in beings accompany differences in their thinking.

In this edition. "Thought" translates νόημα in B105. The edition's opening "nourished" must not be treated as a complete sentence with an expressly named heart. The most secure anatomical statement is the final line, whose surrounding-blood qualification should be retained.

See also. Blood; Changing thought; Pleasure and pain; Like perceives like; Daimon.

Heaven and Olympus

οὐρανὸς (ouranos); μέγαν οὐρανὸν (megan ouranon); Ὄλυμπον (Olympon)

The word. Ouranos names heaven or the sky, while Olympus supplies a divine and elevated destination in B 44. The words are not presented here as interchangeable scientific labels for a set of nested shells. Their immediate relations, circling, flashing back, and friendship with dispersed parts, determine what can safely be said.

[19] B134 describes a divine subject as sacred mind without ordinary human limbs. This is an illuminating contrast with B105, not a second anatomical statement about the human heart.

In Empedocles. B 22 places heaven beside the beaming sun, earth, and sea, saying these are friendly with their own parts even when dispersed among mortal things. The list participates in the account of affinity; it is not an explicit fifth-root announcement. Comparing it with the physical list in B 17 can show the poem's variation in naming without yielding a fixed celestial taxonomy.

B 41 describes a gathered masculine subject circling great heaven. B 44 sends a flashing return towards Olympus, with the reflecting subject left unstated in the extract. These are genuine spatial indications, but too little survives to derive a complete set of heavenly orbits or material layers from them.

The source contains no independent star-specific verse in this group. An account of stars supplied from later reports would therefore belong to a different evidential layer, not to a newly invented lexical article based on these words. The sky vocabulary establishes a cosmic setting while leaving much of its detailed astronomy outside this volume's quoted evidence.[20]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 22.1–5. Heaven participates in the list of kinds friendly to their own dispersed parts.

B 41. A gathered subject moves around great heaven.

B 44. A flashing return is directed towards Olympus, but the subject is not named.

In this edition. The edition renders ouranos as "heaven" and retains "Olympus" as a proper name. Neither should be silently replaced by "aither" merely to regularise the

[20] A list of sky, sea, earth, and sun can correspond broadly to a fourfold physical picture without each noun being an invariant technical synonym in every context.

four-root list; the wording is part of the evidence being interpreted.

See also. Aither; Air; Sun; Moon; Reflected light; Like and unlike; World-order.

Hedgehog bristles

ἐχίνοις (echinois); ὀξυβελεῖς χαῖται (oxybeleis chaitai)

The word. B83 gives hedgehogs sharp-pointed bristles standing on their backs. The epithet ὀξυβελεῖς suggests pointed projectiles or darts; the same printed adjective appears with the sun in B40. Χαῖται is rendered as bristles here, giving the covering the force of a specialized kind of hair.

In Empedocles. The short fragment concentrates on texture, position, and posture. The bristles are pointed, dorsal, and raised. Its opening “but” shows that it once contrasted with something before it, although that contrasting description has not survived. The line can therefore be identified as a distinctive bodily image without reconstructing a complete catalogue of animal defenses.

B82’s equation of hair, leaves, feathers, and scales supplies an appropriate comparison. A hedgehog’s conspicuous surface makes the diversity of such growths visible. Nevertheless, B83 does not state the proportions that produce the bristles or explicitly explain their usefulness. The fact that Plutarch preserves it in On Fortune should not be made to fill those omissions with an inferred original argument.

The shared dart-like epithet with the sun also shows how bodily and cosmic descriptions can draw on the same physical vocabulary. Pointedness belongs to a bristle as a

shape and to the sun as the force of rays. This is a lexical parallel, not proof that bristles contain a special excess of solar fire.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 83. The hedgehog's pointed bristles stand upon its back.

B 82. The neighbouring covering comparison includes hair.

B 40. The same dart-like adjective is applied to the sun.

In this edition. The English "bristles bristle" makes the raised covering emphatic. It is a feature of this rendering, not evidence for a duplicated Greek noun. The animal identification follows the supplied translation.

See also. Hair; Scales; Feathers; Sun.

Hephaestus

Ἡφαίστοιο (Hēphaistoio); Ἡφαίστωι (Hēphaistōi)

The word. The source names Hephaestus in two inflected forms, in the accounts of bone and of blood and flesh. The conventional association of the god with fire helps explain his place in those mixtures, but the verses continue to call him by a divine name. He is not one of the four names announced in B 6.

In Empedocles. In B 96 four of eight portions belong to Hephaestus, beside Nestis' two and the earth which receives them; white bones result through Harmony's fitting. B 98 instead joins Hephaestus, rain, shining aither, and Earth in a near-equal mixture from which blood and other flesh arise. Read together, the two passages show how a stable ingredient can have different proportions and produce different bodily outcomes.

The divine name also keeps the imagery of skilled making close at hand. Bone is formed in crucibles and joined; flesh is made in the harbours of Cypris. Nevertheless, one should not invent a scene in which Hephaestus personally forges a skeleton: the quoted construction assigns him a portion in the mixture, while other agents and images do the explicit fitting.

His occurrence is useful for the root-mapping debate precisely because it shows that the poem's divine vocabulary is not limited to a single canonical set of four names. It supports reading fire divinely without proving that Zeus or Aidoneus must be fire in every other fragment.[21]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 96.1–4. Four of the eight portions in the bone recipe belong to Hephaestus.

B 98.1–5. Hephaestus is one of the partners in the near-equal mixture forming blood and flesh.

In this edition. The translation preserves Hephaestus rather than substituting "fire." This makes the variation from B 6 visible. The B 96 numbering correction is particularly important, since the nearby B 85 also speaks of flame meeting earth but is a different quotation.

See also. Fire; Roots; Nestis; Bone; Blood; Cypris; Harmony.

[21] The names of fire and of a fire-associated god can be read together without assuming that the physical poem systematically replaces every god with a material term.

Hera

Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος (Hērē te pheresbios)

The word. The epic form Hērē is accompanied in B 6 by pheresbios, rendered “life-bearing.” The epithet emphasises the capacity to sustain or bear life. It does not specify by itself which one of earth and air is intended, and the transmitted line contains no explanatory gloss after the name.

In Empedocles. Hera’s place in the four-root list is secure; her physical assignment is not. The introduction reports that Aëtius makes Hera air, while the other ancient accounts discussed there make her earth. These are rival interpretations of the name, not two different Greek readings of B 6 supplied by this book. The epithet can be brought into either account, since earth nourishes living things and air also belongs to their life, but that interpretive plausibility is not an independent proof.

For a reader moving through the physical fragments, the consequence is practical. One may compare Hera’s life-bearing epithet with earth’s productive and bodily roles, or with the air needed in breathing, while keeping both comparisons provisional. The detailed mixtures in B 96 and B 98 do not use Hera’s name and therefore cannot simply settle the mapping by substitution.

Hera also illustrates why the divine-root language is not best treated as a code to be discarded after decoding. The poem explicitly asks its listener to hear divine names. Their epithets are part of the explanation’s poetic force,

even while the surrounding corpus independently identifies four familiar physical constituents.[22]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 6.2. The sole printed root-name occurrence gives Hera the life-bearing epithet.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The modern introduction reports conflicting ancient assignments of Hera to air or earth.

In this edition. The English retains “Hera” and “life-bearing.” No editorial note attached to B 6 gives a secure mapping. The introduction’s reported count of witnesses should not be mistaken for a demonstration that a majority establishes Empedocles’ intended sense.

See also. Roots; Earth; Air; Aidoneus; Zeus; Nestis.

Holy speech

ὁσίων στομάτων (hosiōn stomatōn); καθαρὴν (katharēn); ὁσίης (hosiēs); γλώσσης (glōssēs)

The word. Hosios concerns what is holy or religiously right. B 3 applies its inflected forms both to mouths and to the permissible extent of speaking. Katharēn, pure, describes the spring the gods are asked to channel; glōssēs refers to the tongue.

In Empedocles. The opening of B 3 turns the problem of unreliable human thinking into a prayer about speech. The gods are asked to avert madness from the speaker’s tongue and to send a pure spring through holy mouths. The source of instruction is imagined as flowing water,

[22] A helpful lexicon distinguishes what a divine epithet suggests from what it proves. This entry therefore preserves the disagreement rather than printing a definitive four-name table.

but the bodily outlet remains a mouth. The figure makes purification, communication, and access to truth interdependent without reducing one to a decorative metaphor for another.

The following appeal to the Muse specifies what creatures of a day may lawfully hear. Public honour can tempt a speaker to exceed that measure and then claim the heights of wisdom. The passage therefore places an ethical constraint on authoritative teaching. It does not praise unlimited boldness merely because the speaker invokes divinity.

The second half of the same fragment turns to observation through every faculty. That transition is especially important: religiously regulated speech introduces a discipline of evidence rather than replacing it. B 4 similarly pairs the Muse's assurances with an account sifted through the inward parts. B 131's prayer for help with a good account of the gods renews the connection between speech, study, and divine assistance.

B 5 offers a different restraint, the sheltering of teaching within a speechless breast. The exact object is supplemented, and the line's original context is lost; it may illuminate careful retention without proving a universal command of secrecy. Across the relevant fragments, holy speech is an economy of what may be received, what may be said, and how the speaker should withstand the attractions of acclaim.

The spring-image reaches beyond speech. Nestis moistens the mortal fountain in B 6, and B 23 denies another spring or source for the manifest mortal things. B 143 mentions five springs in an enigmatic operation involving bronze. These uses make sources and issuing flows a recurrent figure, while their differences prevent

one fixed interpretation of every spring as an organ, root, or divine fountain.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 3.1–13. Prayer purifies the tongue and limits speech before directing the hearer toward evidence.

B 4. Muse-supported assurance accompanies inward consideration.

B 5. A fragmentary injunction concerns sheltering something within a speechless breast.

B 131. Prayer seeks help in presenting a good account of the blessed gods.

B 6.3. Nestis moistens the mortal spring, a different use of source imagery.

B 23.9–11. The argument denies another source for the manifest mortal things.

B 143. An enigmatic five-springs image is distinct from the spring of holy speech.

In this edition. The edition's pure spring and chariot are figures in the verse, not descriptions of a documented ritual performance. The names Muse, Calliopeia, and Piety deserve their own entries; this article concerns what their invocation does to the practice of speaking.

See also. Muse; Calliopeia; Piety; Logos; Faculties and evidence; Learning and attentive study; Nestis; Painters and colours; Five springs.

Honey libations

σπονδὰς μελίτων (spondas melitōn); ξανθῶν (xanthōn)

The word. Spondai are libations, poured offerings. The substance in B128 is honey, described with the colour adjective translated "yellow." The phrase belongs to the

worship of Cypris; it is not a surviving instruction to pour wine.

In Empedocles. The community casts the honey libations onto the ground among its other pious offerings. The direction is explicit, while vessel, quantity, spoken formula, and occasion are not. Honey's inclusion helps make the positive ritual scene concrete: bloodless worship uses a material that can be offered rather than merely abstaining from a prohibited act.

The following line contrasts the altar with one drenched in bulls' blood. A reader may accordingly see a replacement of violent pouring with a gentler gift, but the poem does not explicitly say the honey was poured onto the altar or assigned as a one-for-one substitute for blood. It says ground. Preserving that distinction keeps an evocative interpretation from becoming a fabricated ritual detail.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.7–8. Yellow honey is poured to the ground as libations.

In this edition. The English colour is "yellow," not "golden," and should not be used to make the modern heading Golden age a literal phrase in the verse. The plural "honeys" of the Greek is rendered idiomatically as honey.

See also. Incense and perfumes; Sacrifice; Altar; Cypris.

Honour

τιμῆς (timēs); τιμάς (timas); τιμῆισι (timēisi); τετιμένος (tetimenos)

The word. Timē is honour, standing, or an allotted prerogative; the source prints several inflected forms. Tetimenos describes being honoured. Its range extends from public esteem to the offices and conditions attributed to divine powers.

In Empedocles. B 17 says that the enduring constituents and powers differ in the honour each governs, while each has its own character and takes a turn in dominance. The edition renders this as a different office. The point is not a hierarchy in which one root is intrinsically more real: the passage has just called them equal and of like age. Difference of prerogative exists alongside that equality.

B 30 turns the noun into a dramatic event. Strife, nourished in the limbs, leaps to its honours when its allotted time is fulfilled. Its standing belongs to the temporal order of the cycle, not an arbitrary promotion. B 119 presents the other direction, lamenting departure from honour and blessedness. Although its immediate subject is not fully preserved, honour here describes a condition that can be lost.

At the civic level, B 112's speaker passes among people honoured as is fitting, visually marked by fillets and garlands. His claimed divine standing is enacted in public reception. B 3 cautions that flowers of glorious honour can tempt a speaker toward unholy excess, so esteem is not an unqualified measure of truth. The same value can be a rightful due or a dangerous inducement.

Finally, the recurring description of gods as highest in honours appears both in catalogues of beings and in B

146's culmination of a trajectory from exceptional human roles to gods. Honour thus helps connect a cosmic distribution of powers, divine status, and the recognition of a teacher. The connections deserve attention without making every occurrence name the same institutional rank.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.27–29. Equal and coeval principles nevertheless govern different offices or honours.

B 30.1–3. Strife rises to its honours at the completion of the appointed time.

B 119. The fragment laments lost honour and blessedness.

B 112.4–6. The speaker claims public honour appropriate to divine status.

B 146.1–3. The culmination is divinity highest in honours.

In this edition. "Office" at B 17 and "honours" elsewhere translate related forms of the same word. A reader who follows only one English rendering will miss the relation. The language is not an explicit constitution of civic magistracies or a fixed table of divine ranks.

See also. Acragas and the civic audience; Holy speech; Cycle; Strife; Blessedness.

Hymn-singers

ὑμνοπόλοι (hymnopoloi); ὕμνων (hymnōn)

The word. Hymnopoloi are makers or performers of hymns, rendered "singers of hymns" here. Their activity belongs to a valued verbal art. The expression is more specific than simply naming anyone who produces sound, yet the verse does not identify an institution or repertoire.

In Empedocles. B146 includes hymn-singers among the final human roles from which beings grow into gods. Song is thus placed beside divination, healing, and leadership in the account of honoured life. The poem's own voice helps explain why song matters: B35 describes a return to the path of hymns while resuming a physical argument, and the Muse invocations frame inquiry as elevated poetic speech.

These correspondences allow the singer's art to encompass teaching about the world rather than restricting it to praise detached from knowledge. They do not prove that every hymn-singer performs Empedocles' poem or that a particular metrical technique effects liberation. The surviving lines establish honour and a connection with divine ascent, while the conditions of practice remain unstated.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 146.1–3. Singers of hymns belong to the last human stage.

B 35.1–2. The speaker calls the resumed course of physical explanation a path of songs or hymns.

B 131. The named Muse is invoked for a good account of the gods.

In this edition. The English "singers of hymns" retains the specific activity. Translating only "poets" would be a broad explanatory gloss rather than the edition's wording.

See also. Divine ascent; Muse; Calliopeia; Seers.

Incense and perfumes

μύροισί (myroisi); σμύρνης (smyrnēs); λιβάνου (libanou)

The word. The catalogue of offerings names perfumes, myrrh, and frankincense. The perfumes are elaborately or subtly scented; myrrh is unmixed; frankincense is fragrant. These precise sensory qualities belong to the text's positive presentation of worship.

In Empedocles. In B128 such materials are offered to Cypris alongside pious images and honey libations. The lines call the fragrant offerings sacrifices, proving that this vocabulary can describe something other than an animal's death. Their rich smell and careful preparation make the alternative worship substantial and attractive rather than merely a deprivation.

The contrast with bulls' slaughter-blood is explicit in the next lines. Yet the fragment does not describe a recipe, the quantities used, the handling of each substance, or whether all the named materials were burned. Frankincense naturally evokes incense, but the surviving wording should not be expanded into a full ritual reconstruction. It is enough to observe that the poem can replace destructive offerings with objects and substances that please through form and scent.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.4–8. Perfumes, myrrh, and frankincense are among the offerings made to Cypris.

In this edition. "Unmixed" qualifies myrrh in line 6; a related adjective qualifies bulls' blood in line 8. Repetition does not imply that dilution would make animal killing permissible.

See also. Sacrifice; Honey libations; Painted offerings; Cypris; Golden age.

Iris

Ἶρις (Iris); ἄνεμον (anemon); μέγαν ὄμβρον (megan ombron)

The word. Iris is the name printed in B 50. It can evoke the rainbow and a divine figure, and the translation deliberately retains the proper name. The single line links her to a wind or a great rain brought from the sea. Neither a descriptive spectrum nor an account of coloured rays survives here.

In Empedocles. The line combines weather with a personal agent: Iris brings something. A reader can recognise the connection between a visible weather phenomenon and impending wind or rain, but the fragment does not explicitly state whether it is offering a prediction, a causal mechanism, or an extended divine image from a lost context. Its modest extent should govern the interpretation.

The sea is the point from which the wind or rain comes. This makes the fragment a useful companion to air as cloud-gatherer in B 149 and to the rain vocabulary used among the roots. It does not turn Iris into a fifth root or prove that rain has one exclusive cosmological source. B 111's promise of weather-control employs related winds and rains in a different rhetorical setting and provides no missing continuation of B 50.[23]

[23] The fragment does not provide an account of rainbow refraction. A modern explanation would be separate background, not a recovery of these lost verses.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 50. Iris brings wind or great rain from the sea.

B 149. Air as cloud-gatherer supplies a related but separately transmitted weather image.

B 111.3–8. The weather-control promise uses wind and rain in an independent context.

In this edition. “Iris” preserves the Greek name; translating it only “rainbow” would emphasise the phenomenon while muting the personal action. The citing source is Tzetzes’ Homeric Allegories, whose title alone cannot establish how Empedocles framed the line.

See also. Air; Water and rain; Sea; Wind-staying; Roots.

Isolated limbs

μουνομελῆ (mounomelē); γυῖα (gyia); κόρσαι ἀναύχενες (korsai anauchenes); βραχίονες (brachiones)

The word. The phrase μουνομελῆ τὰ γυῖα describes limbs or bodily parts that are still “single-membered”: they have not yet become members of a larger articulated creature. B57 specifies neckless heads, naked arms deprived of shoulders, and solitary eyes lacking foreheads.

In Empedocles. The strangeness of the passage rests on a reversal of ordinary part–whole relations. An eye is usually identified through the head in which it functions; here the eye exists first and wanders in need of its customary setting. The parts are not inert items in a workshop. They sprout and roam. The language of deprivation makes their separateness especially forceful: the arm is “widowed” of its shoulder, while the eye is poor in or wanting a forehead. These are bodily deficiencies expressed through human social and economic experience.

B58 confirms that the separate condition is a phase: the parts are “still” single-membered. B59 then allows a connection with their falling together as encounters occur, although the fragment boundaries do not preserve an uninterrupted account. The reader can securely infer the importance of assemblage without supplying a detailed chronology of which organs arise first or how long they remain apart.

The passage is also a useful counterpoint to B20, where the limbs of a flourishing body unite through Love and separate through Quarrels. The two scenes share a vocabulary of bodily association and wandering separation. They need not describe the same event: an early formation of organisms and the dissolution of an existing body remain distinguishable uses of the pattern.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 57. The three examples are heads without necks, arms without shoulders, and eyes without foreheads.

B 58. The words “still single-membered” characterize the condition of the wandering parts.

B 59. The encounter-and-assembly scene follows in the editorial sequence.

B 20.1–5. Living bodily unity and separated wandering parts appear as effects of Love and Quarrels.

In this edition. B57 says heads without necks, not headless necks. “Limbs” is convenient but can sound too narrow in English, since the passage includes eyes and heads as well as arms. The headword accordingly covers bodily members more broadly.

See also. Zoogony; Composite creatures; Eye; Flesh.

Joint

ἄρθρον (arthron); δύο δέει (dyo deei)

The word. B32 states that a joint binds two. The joint is defined by a relation between parts: it makes a connection possible precisely where two items are distinguishable. The short expression has an anatomical sense but is preserved in an argument about divisibility.

In Empedocles. The edition supplies the context of the work transmitted under Aristotle's name, On Indivisible Lines. There the joint is discussed as a kind of difference or division-point between parts, and the Empedoclean wording is brought in to show its fastening function. That duality is the expression's interest: a joint marks a distinction and enables a unity.

The same pattern is central to the poem's account of organisms. A flourishing body has limbs united through Love; the isolated members of early generation display the problem of parts without their usual connections. B32 does not reproduce either larger argument, but it provides a compact image for their structural issue.

The fitting language of bone and Aphrodite's affectionate rivets offers further comparisons. The joint, glue, and rivet are not synonymous objects. Each makes a particular relation visible: articulation between two parts, cohesive fitting of material, or fastening that holds an arrangement together. Attending to their difference helps avoid turning every joining image into a vague invocation of harmony.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 32. The short quoted wording says that the joint binds two.

B 32 (editorial discussion). The local note explains the later divisibility argument in which the words are preserved.

B 20.1–5. Body-forming limbs meet into one through Love.

B 96. Bone is fitted by Harmonia's gluings.

In this edition. The source is a work attributed to Aristotle, marked by square brackets in the edition. The later author's use of the quotation is not necessarily its original Empedoclean setting.

See also. Bone; Rivets of affection; Isolated limbs; Harmony.

Keeping the teaching

στεγάσαι (stegasai); φρενὸς ἔλλοπος (phrenos ellopos); ἐρείσας (ereisas)

The word. Stegasai means to shelter or keep covered. B 5 puts that shelter inside a speechless breast, phrenos ellopos. Ereisas in B 110 concerns fixing or securing the objects of instruction within the hearer's understanding.

In Empedocles. B 5 is a small but concentrated image of inward safekeeping. What matters is not only hearing teaching in public but keeping it inside oneself. The breast is speechless: it can hold what the tongue does not immediately repeat. This gives an important counterpoint to the recurrent imperatives to speak and listen.

The surviving phrase does not, however, preserve its own object. The edition inserts "the doctrines" in angle brackets. The reader can reasonably interpret the line in relation to teaching, but must not quote that supplied noun as securely transmitted Empedoclean terminology.

Nor does a command to keep something inward by itself establish a universal oath of secrecy.

B 110 offers a more developed picture of retention. Carefully attended things remain with the learner through life, grow according to their character, and give rise to further acquisitions; distraction makes them depart. Their persistence therefore demands more than storage. The learner must sustain a favourable and pure mode of attention. The two fragments illuminate each other as images of keeping, while leaving unresolved the original setting and exact referent of the shorter line.

This inward silence is distinct from the personified Silence named beside Utterance in B 122/123. The shared English lookup word should not make them one figure or one doctrine.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 5. The secure words concern sheltering within a speechless breast; the object is supplied.

B 110.1–9. Attentive retention is contrasted with the loss caused by distraction.

In this edition. Angle brackets around ‹τὰ δόγματα› are decisive. “Doctrines” supplies a modern editorial completion of the broken quotation and cannot support an independent claim about the poet’s exact technical vocabulary.

See also. Learning and attentive study; Understanding and inward thought; Holy speech; Supplements, corruption, and gaps; Silence and Utterance.

Kin-murder

πατὴρ φίλον υἱὸν (patēr philon huion); φίλας κατὰ σάρκας (philas kata sarkas); ἀλλήλους (allēlous)

The word. “Kin-murder” is an interpretive heading, not a compound noun quoted from the fragments. B137 names father, beloved son, mother, and children, then describes the eating of their own or dear flesh. B136’s “one another” makes the violation reciprocal.

In Empedocles. The transformed son of B137 is still the sacrificer’s son even though his outward form has changed. The father raises him, prays, and kills him, deaf to the cries around the sacrifice. The poem does not ask the reader merely to imagine that animals are like family: within the narrative of altered forms, the familial relationship is actual. The son’s altered shape and the father’s failure to understand generate the horror.

The second half reverses and multiplies the scene. A son seizes his father; children seize their mother; they tear out life and eat the flesh of their own. Such reversibility gives the passage a general moral force. B136’s brief rebuke supplies its cognitive diagnosis: mutual devouring occurs in heedlessness of mind. Recognition of continuity across forms would make the practice appear differently.

B138’s phrase about drawing off psychē with bronze can be compared to this violent removal of life, although its original sentence is lost. Here psychē is translated “life,” and the quotation survives because Aristotle discusses figurative language. It must not be used to smuggle a fully developed theory of an immortal soul into B137 or B115. The ethical argument is vivid and specific even where its psychological mechanics remain unstated.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 137.1–6. Changed form conceals family relations across reciprocal scenes of slaughter.

B 136. The audience devours one another through mental heedlessness.

B 138. Drawing off life with bronze offers a related image, without a complete scene.

In this edition. The edition's B137 leaves the agents of the cries and supplications less transparent than a fully continuous narrative would. The family relations at the opening and close are clear; the intermediate scene should not be expanded with invented speakers or victims.

See also. Transmigration; Sacrifice; Murder and bloodshed; Meat-eating; Death.

Kindliness

φιλοφροσύνη (philophrosynē); προσηνῆ (prosēnē)

The word. Philophrosynē is friendly feeling or kindliness. Prosēnē characterizes creatures as gentle or approachable toward humans. In B130 these words describe relations across species, not merely courtesy within a human community.

In Empedocles. The couplet says that all were tame and gentle toward people, specifying beasts and birds, and that kindliness blazed. The fire-image gives peaceful attachment vigour: friendliness is not a passive absence of motion. It is portrayed as an active condition spreading through relations among living things.

Read beside Cypris' bloodless reign in B128, the line supports the picture of a community in which humans

and animals do not stand in the usual relations of fear and slaughter. Nevertheless, the surviving couplet neither names Cypris nor explains the physiological cause of tameness. Its connection with the preceding scene in this edition is interpretively fruitful, but not a preserved statement that every word belongs to one continuous speech. The fragment also supplies no modern zoological claim that all animals can become safely tame.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 130. Beasts and birds are tame toward humans, while kindliness is imagined as blazing.

In this edition. The verb translated “blazed up” is a metaphor in this ethical setting. It should not be converted into an assertion that kindliness is literally the root fire.

See also. Golden age; Cypris; Love; Zoogony; Meat-eating.

Lantern

λύχνον (lychnon); λαμπτῆρας ἀμοργούς (lamptēras amorgous); φῶς (phōs)

The word. The λύχνος of B84 is a lamp prepared for a journey on a winter night. The edition describes linen screens that protect the fire from winds while allowing finer light to pass outward. “Lantern” names the screened lamp functioning in the comparison.

In Empedocles. The traveller does not simply light a flame. He equips it with a protective structure, and that structure discriminates between what must be excluded and what must emerge. Blowing wind is scattered; light leaps out and shines across the threshold. The relation between protection and passage gives the image its explanatory force.

The eye is then described in parallel. Primeval fire is enclosed within membranes and fine tissues in the pupil. Surrounding water is kept back, while finer fire passes outward through channels. The comparison therefore concerns an enclosed luminous source with a selectively permeable covering. It should not be rewritten as a camera analogy, in which the principal image would be light entering through a lens.

The practical setting contributes to the philosophy. A person arranging a familiar object can grasp how a covering both safeguards a source and permits its activity. The crafted artifact provides a model for the fit of parts in an organism, just as the clepsydra makes alternating bodily flows visible. Yet neither model proves that organisms are manufactured by a human artisan. The craft image clarifies arrangement and function within the poem's own account of divine fitting and physical mixture.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 84.1–6. The traveller's lamp is screened against wind while emitting light.

B 84.7–11. The eye is described through the same pattern of enclosure and selective passage.

B 100. The clepsydra offers another extended artifact-based bodily analogy.

In this edition. The edition varies lamp, flame, light, and fire according to the Greek. Preserving those distinctions helps prevent the comparison from being treated as a single modern technical statement about optical radiation.

See also. Eye; Pupil and membranes; Clepsydra; Passages.

Laurel

δάφναι (daphnai); δάφνης (daphnēs)

The word. Daphnē is the laurel. B127 has the plural for a kind of tree in which certain beings become embodied; B140 has the singular genitive in a prohibition concerning its leaves. The two uses connect plant identity with ritual restraint without giving a botanical description.

In Empedocles. B127 juxtaposes lions among beasts with laurels among fair-leaved trees. The subject that becomes these forms is not named in the quoted couplet. Within an account of progressive release from mortal lives, the laurel is naturally understood as a privileged plant embodiment. The introduction indeed reads it as the highest plant form. Yet that rank is an interpretation of the passage's setting, not an explicit superlative in the verse.

B140 enjoins complete abstention from laurel leaves. The translation expands the expression as keeping hands from them; the Greek gives the object from which one is to hold back. The fragment itself does not explain the prohibition. Reading it together with B127 yields a plausible connection between privileged life and restraint, but it remains a connection the reader supplies. It does not prove a ban on every use of laurel wood or establish a ritual procedure involving garlands.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 127.1–2. Laurels are singled out among fair-leaved trees beside lions among beasts.

B 140. The quoted prohibition concerns laurel leaves.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The introduction interprets the laurel as highest in plant life and uses that to explain the taboo.

In this edition. “Because it stands at the head of plant life” belongs to the introduction’s explanation. The article retains the distinction between that rationale and the unelaborated command of B140.

See also. Lion; Transmigration; Beans; Purification and fasting; Trees.

Learning and attentive study

μάθη (mathē); μελέτησιν (meletēisin); μελέτας (meletas); πεύσεαι (peuseai)

The word. Mathē denotes learning in B 17. Meletē appears in forms rendered studies or attentive practice in B 110 and B 131. Peuseai, “you shall learn,” addresses the recipient in B 2. The vocabulary concerns an activity to be sustained, not merely possession of information.

In Empedocles. The invitation to listen in B 17 is justified by a promise that learning enlarges the mind. The statement is placed inside a repeated exposition: the return to the double tale is part of the process by which the hearer becomes capable of grasping it. Repetition is not an accidental defect that a philosophical paraphrase ought to remove.

B 110 makes a much more demanding claim. What has been learned must be fixed beneath the hearer’s close-packed understanding and contemplated with goodwill and pure studies. If attended to, “these things” remain through the hearer’s life and yield further acquisitions. If the mind reaches after distracting human concerns, they depart, wishing to return to their own kind. The passage therefore treats knowledge as something that can grow, remain, and withdraw. Its final assertion that all things

have a share in thought prevents reducing that language to a merely decorative description of memory.

The antecedent of “these things” is not supplied by the quotation. They may be taken as teachings, the realities taught, or entities whose presence makes understanding possible; the surviving text does not settle the relation. A responsible reading preserves the active, almost reciprocal connection between learner and learned without inventing a precise mechanism. B 5 similarly speaks of sheltering something within a speechless breast, but “the doctrines” is an editorial supplement, not an independently preserved object.

B 131 brings studies into an address to the Muse. The speaker asks Calliopeia to stand by his present account as she has attended his efforts before. Human preparation and divine assistance occur together. Across these fragments, good learning demands receptivity, persistence, careful inward handling, and a restraint of distraction. It is neither passive submission to a slogan nor a modern programme of detached analysis.

The vocabulary of learning also extends to the processes taught. The supplied line at B 17.9 and its transmitted parallel in B 26 say that the one has learned to grow from many, and B 35 speaks of things that had learned to be immortal. Such expressions give processes a habitual or acquired manner of being. They should be compared with the human hearer’s learning, while preserving the difference between a formula describing how things behave and an explicit account of instruction.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.14–17. Learning is said to enlarge the mind as the exposition restarts.

B 110. Attentive study enables retention and further acquisition; distraction causes loss.

B 5. The surviving phrase concerns inward safekeeping, with its object supplied editorially.

B 131. Studies and prayer to the Muse accompany an account of gods.

B 26.8. A process is said to have learned to grow from many into one.

B 35.14–15. Learning vocabulary describes an earlier condition of immortality.

In this edition. The reading “pure studies” in B 110 should not automatically be modernized into a particular meditation technique or course of initiation. Neither is the passage evidence for an effective contemporary cognitive practice. Its referents remain ancient and partly unrecoverable.

See also. Pausanias and Anchites; Repetition and the double tale; Understanding and inward thought; Holy speech; Fragments and Diels numbering.

Leaves

φύλλα (phylla); ἐμπεδόφυλλα (empedophylla)

The word. Φύλλα are leaves. The compound ἐμπεδόφυλλα in B77.78 describes trees with steadfast or enduring leaves. The simple noun also participates in the striking comparison of plant and animal surface structures in B82.

In Empedocles. B82 does not isolate plants as a wholly different order of material being. Leaves are set beside hair, feathers, and scales and declared the same things. The statement makes plants available for a common

physical account of growth and covering. It does not say that leaves have all the functions of feathers or that plants are animals in ordinary classification.

B77.78 presents a different aspect of foliage: persistence through the year in trees that also continue to bear abundant fruit. Here the adjective joins temporal steadiness to flourishing. It is not merely a label for a contemporary botanical group. The surviving couplet says more about the continued presence of leaves and fruit than about their internal structure.

These physical uses should be distinguished from the prohibition on handling laurel leaves in B140. A leaf can be a comparable bodily formation, a sign of abundant growth, or the object of a ritual restriction. The shared noun does not dissolve those contextual differences. The present entry centers on the first two functions.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 82. Leaves are declared the same things as hair, plumage, and scales.

B 77.78. The supplemented trees flourish with enduring leaves and fruit through the year.

In this edition. The edition places B77.78 under the Purifications, but the section heading is an editorial arrangement. That location alone does not identify the trees as belonging to a reconstructed golden age or determine the physical cause of their enduring leaves.

See also. Hair; Feathers; Scales; Everlasting leaves and fruit; Laurel.

Life-giving

ζείδωρος (zeidōros)

The word. Zeidōros is rendered “life-giving,” with “grain-giving” recorded as a related sense in the accompanying note. The preserved item is an epithet, not a complete verse. Its referent is supplied by the quoting author’s sentence: Aphrodite.

In Empedocles. Plutarch reports that Empedocles aptly named Aphrodite life-giving, and compares Sophocles’ different epithet for her. That report gives the word a definite divine attachment. It fits the surviving Aphrodite and Cypris passages in which the goddess joins constituents into living forms, but it does not tell which lost passage originally contained the epithet.

The agricultural resonance of the alternative “grain-giving” broadens the image of productive life. It should not become a proof that Empedocles describes a particular crop ritual or treats Aphrodite as the same figure as every agricultural goddess. The word’s value for the lexicon is precise: it adds a compact characterization of the generative goddess, transmitted through an explicit ancient attribution rather than a continuous fragment of her activity.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 151 (report). Plutarch attributes the epithet to Empedocles and identifies Aphrodite as its referent.

B 71.2–4. Aphrodite’s joining of mortal forms supplies a relevant comparison.

B 73. Cypris works on forms and sends them to fire for hardening.

In this edition. The comparison with Sophocles belongs to Plutarch, not Empedocles. The entry must not combine both poets' epithets into a fabricated Empedoclean verse.

See also. Aphrodite; Cypris; Trees; Mixture.

Like and unlike

πρὸς ὁμοῖον (pros homoion); ὁμοιωθέντ' (homoiōthent'); ἄρθμια (arthmia); ἀήθεα (aēthea)

The word. The expressions concern likeness, friendship or fitting, and unfamiliarity. B 62 makes fire seek its like; B 22 calls things friendly with their own parts and describes others as unused to joining. These are relational words, not a statement that every pair of superficially similar objects must combine in the same way.

In Empedocles. B 22 deliberately includes two kinds of affinity. Sun, earth, heaven, and sea are friendly with their own parts, including those dispersed in mortal things. Things better suited to blending are also made alike by Aphrodite and held dear by one another. Similarity is therefore not always a fixed prerequisite untouched by mixture: the joining power can itself produce likeness or compatibility.

The opposite case involves things far apart in birth, mixture, and moulded form, which are hostile and unfamiliar with joining under Strife's promptings. Those several measures of difference matter. The fragment does not reduce affinity to a single resemblance of colour or temperature.

B 37's growth of earth by earth and aither by aither, and B 62's fire seeking like fire, show how gathering by kind participates in cosmic differentiation. B 90 extends

similar meeting to sweet, bitter, sour, and hot. Its brief pairing does not disclose every surrounding mechanism.

The perceptual formula in B 109 is a related application, but has a different immediate question: how the knower recognises what is outside. The present article concerns combining and separating; the epistemological use deserves its own treatment rather than being assumed to solve every problem of mixture.[24]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 22. Affinity of a kind with its own parts is placed beside compatibility for mixture through Aphrodite.

B 37. Earth and aither increase their own kinds.

B 62.1–6. Separating fire seeks its like and raises emerging forms.

B 90. Matching taste and heat qualities meet in a short sequence.

B 109. The corresponding recognition formula is a distinct perceptual use of likeness.

In this edition. “Made alike by Aphrodite” in B 22 is important: it should not be paraphrased as a rule that Love joins only things already identical. The supplied words in the hostile clause mark a textual intervention which the smooth English might otherwise conceal.

See also. Mixture; Separation; Love; Strife; Fire; Like perceives like; Sweet, bitter, sour, hot.

[24] B 22 uses friendship-language for relations among constituents and forms. This can be meaningful without turning each object into a human-like deliberating agent.

Like perceives like

γαίηι μὲν γὰρ γαῖαν (gaiēi men gar gaian); στοργὴν δὲ στοργῆι (storgēn de storgēi); ὁμοῖον (homoion)

The word. “Like perceives like” is a compact explanatory heading for B109’s paired formulation: earth by earth, water by water, aither by aither, fire by fire, love by love, and strife by strife. The grammatical repetition places the material or power used in apprehension beside its corresponding object.

In Empedocles. The statement reaches beyond the four roots. Love and Strife also enter the relation, which makes it inadequate to paraphrase the passage simply as four material detectors recognizing four kinds of object. The perceiver’s resources are continuous with what is perceived. This is why the physical account of what a being contains matters to the account of what it can apprehend.

The verb translated “see” should not automatically reduce the claim to the anatomy of the eyeball. Love and Strife are not presented elsewhere as ordinary coloured objects, and B17 explicitly directs attention to Love with the mind rather than astonished eyes. B109 therefore bears on apprehension more broadly even though it uses a strongly visual verb.

The relationship also has physical analogues. In B62 fire drives early forms upward because it seeks its like. B90 describes sweet approaching sweet and other corresponding qualities meeting one another. These comparisons show the reach of like-directed relations, but their exact processes remain distinct: a material’s movement, a quality’s association, and a thinker’s perception are not necessarily one identical event.

B107 supplies another essential connection by making the constituents of a compound the means of its thought, pleasure, and pain. B105's heart-blood account can then be approached as a particular bodily realization, without forcing a complete mental taxonomy from a few surviving lines. The principle is powerful, yet the source leaves open many details of organ structure and perceptual discrimination.

The line's balanced syntax is itself explanatory. Repeating each item on both sides of the apprehending relation lets the hearer follow the correspondence without an intervening technical definition. The addition of epithets then prevents the formula from becoming colorless: aither is divine, fire destructive, and strife baleful. The objects of cognition remain the poem's active materials and powers, complete with their characteristic force.

Including Strife is especially important. The passage does not say that likeness operates only through harmonious or morally admirable states. Apprehending strife also involves a corresponding capacity or constituent in the apprehender. That statement is not an ethical instruction to cultivate hostility, any more than knowing fire requires the reader to burn something. It belongs to the account of how recognition is possible. The poem's practical and moral treatment of Strife must be sought in its own contexts.

Equally, the principle does not remove the need for routes and organs. Correspondence describes what makes apprehension possible at one level; the eye's membranes and the nostrils' investigation describe how particular bodily encounters occur. The surviving evidence is strongest when those levels are allowed to complement

one another rather than when one is used to erase the other.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 109. The complete sequence pairs each constituent and both opposed powers with its like.

B 107. The constituents of formation also support thought and feeling.

B 62.4–6. Fire seeks its like in the emergence of whole-natured forms.

B 90. Corresponding sensible qualities approach one another.

B 17.21–26. Love is to be seen with the mind rather than with astonished eyes.

In this edition. The translation retains the different word στοργή as lowercase love in B109 rather than silently replacing every expression with Philotēs. The entry title is a traditional summary, not a separate surviving maxim in precisely those English words.

See also. Effluences; Passages; Heart and thought; Sweet, bitter, sour, hot; Love; Strife.

Lion

λέοντες (leontes); ὀρειλεχέες χαμαιεῦναι (oreilechees chamaieunai)

The word. Leontes names lions. The accompanying epithets describe them as lying in the mountains and bedding on the ground. These are concrete features of the animal's setting and posture, not explicit titles of sovereignty.

In Empedocles. B127 singles out lions among beasts and laurels among trees as forms in which an unnamed plural subject becomes embodied. The fragment is often read as marking elevated animal and plant lives in an ascent toward divinity; the introduction adopts that reading. The surviving couplet itself, however, does not say “highest,” identify the earlier lives, or state the order in which lion and laurel are reached.

The animal therefore belongs to the poem’s moral account of transformations as well as to its wider inventory of living things. The mention does not imply that predatory behaviour is being prescribed for humans, or that the lion functions as an emblem of political power. Nor is it a zoological statement about how lions originate. What the fragment preserves is a selected kind of embodiment, whose probable privilege must be distinguished from an explicit rank or a complete ladder of rebirth.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 127.1–2. Lions are selected among beasts and paired with laurels among trees.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The introduction reads lion and laurel as the upper animal and plant stages.

In this edition. The translation does not call the lion “king of beasts.” That familiar phrase would introduce an image and hierarchy not present in the printed couplet.

See also. Laurel; Transmigration; Divine ascent; Zoogony.

Logos

λόγοιο (logoio); λόγου στόλον (logou stolon); λόγου λόγον (logou logon); ἀγαθὸν λόγον (agathon logon)

The word. Logos in these fragments is an account, argument, or articulated discourse. The forms printed here are inflected rather than dictionary headwords. The phrase logou stolon in B 17 is rendered the “course” of an argument, giving discourse a directed movement.

In Empedocles. B 4 presents logos as something to be sifted through the listener’s inward parts before it becomes knowledge. The Muse’s pledges accompany that work, so reasoned account and divine authority are not opposed categories in the fragment. B 17 describes the exposition as an undeceiving course of argument after explaining that Love is to be recognized with mind. The account offers a means of reaching what a dazzled gaze alone has not grasped.

B 35 makes a second material image of exposition: one logos is channelled from another. The speaker turns back to an earlier path of songs before resuming the account of cosmic mixing. That movement is simultaneously poetic and explanatory. Logos is not a prose genre defined by the absence of metre, divine names, or figurative language. In B 131, finally, the poet prays to Calliopeia while making manifest a good logos about the blessed gods.

These passages do not support a historical story in which Empedocles replaces mythos with logos as false myth with true reason. He uses both vocabularies for his own instruction, sometimes within the same extended fragment. The important local qualifications are that an account is undeceiving, good, sifted, or explanatory. Its reliability must be considered from how it is offered and what it establishes.

The English word “argument” can suggest a chain of explicit premises more formal than the surviving passage provides. “Account” can sound too neutral to capture its directed persuasive force. Reading the translations together with the Greek keeps both functions in view: logos tells how things are and asks the hearer to follow the telling.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 4.2–3. An account must be inwardly sifted.

B 17.21–26. The course of argument is declared undeceiving.

B 35.1–2. One account is channelled out of another as the song returns.

B 131.3–4. Prayer introduces a good account concerning the blessed gods.

In this edition. The edition alternates “argument” and “account” according to context. Neither rendering makes logos a later technical name for a cosmic rational principle; no such identification is stated in these cited lines.

See also. Mythos; Trust and persuasion; Paths and channels of speech; Holy speech; Repetition and the double tale.

Long-lived gods

θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες (theoi dolichaiōnes); θεοὺς δολιχαίωνας (theous dolichaiōnas); θεῶν μακάρων (theōn makarōn)

The word. The phrase dolichaiōnes theoi describes gods of long duration or long life. The qualifier matters: it is not the same grammatical claim as declaring the four roots ungenerated. The verses also use “immortal” and

“blessed” in divine contexts, so their local wording must be read carefully rather than normalized to one definition.

In Empedocles. B21 includes long-lived gods among everything arising from the constituents, beside plants, human beings, beasts, birds, and fish. B23 repeats that inventory within the painters’ analogy. The gods are thus not excluded from the explanatory range of mixture merely because they receive the highest honours. The texts leave unspecified which familiar gods are included in this class.

B115 similarly describes daimones with a long allotment of life, but does not simply identify every daimon with every god of B21. B146 announces that beings at the final human stage grow up as gods highest in honours; its formula links release to divine standing. B147 describes sharing the life of other immortals. These passages make divine status, endurance, and honour central, while leaving their exact relation to the cosmic extremes unresolved.

This range also prevents a facile claim that Empedocles either rejects all gods or treats every divine name in exactly the same way. The roots bear divine names; Love acts under divine names; compound gods are long-lived; the speaker can claim divine standing. The surviving uses have to be distinguished before they can be reconciled.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.9–14. Long-lived gods occur among beings formed from the constituents.

B 23.5–8. The painter analogy repeats their inclusion among represented kinds.

B 115.5–8. Daimones have long-duration lives.

B 146. A last stage of human lives issues in gods of highest honour.

B 147. The released share hearth and table with other immortals.

In this edition. “Long-lived” is more exact than silently substituting “eternally indestructible.” The edition’s description of physical mortality and divine longevity is not a complete resolution of their relation to the eternal roots.

See also. Daimon; Divine ascent; Blessedness; Roots; Mixture.

Love

Φιλότης (Philotēs); Φιλότητι (Philotēti); Φιλίη (Philiē); σχεδύνην Φιλότητα (schedynēn Philotēta); στοργὴν (storgēn)

The word. Philotēs is the principal name translated “Love.” Its ordinary associations with affection and intimate attachment remain active in the poem’s account of joining. B 18 preserves Philiē, “Friendship,” in Plutarch’s discussion; B 19 preserves the phrase “clinging Love”; B 109 uses storgē, love or affection. These variations are not modern synonyms inserted to tidy the system. The corpus itself moves among several names and personifications, including Aphrodite and Cypris. Reading them together is useful, while preserving what each quoted passage actually says.

In Empedocles. B 17 gives Love a cosmic reach: she is among the roots and equal in length and breadth, while Strife is apart. The passage then connects this presence with familiar embodied affection. Mortals regard her as inborn in their limbs; through her they think friendly

thoughts and accomplish works of joining, calling her Gladness and Aphrodite. The poet asks the listener to discern her with the mind. This is not simply an appeal to abandon perception, since visible mixtures and living bodies become evidence in the following fragments. Rather, the power's full operation cannot be reduced to an immediately visible object.

B 20 makes bodily coherence an instance of the same principle. At flourishing life's height, the limbs allotted to a body come together through Love; their dispersal is attributed to evil Quarrels. B 22 adds a more complicated account of affinity: parts of the same kind are friendly, and things fitted for mixture are made alike by Aphrodite. Love's joining therefore operates across distinctions, not by erasing all characteristics before any compound can exist.

B 35 narrates an uneven advance. Love comes to the middle of the eddy; things join gradually rather than all at once; Strife still holds some apart. As Strife departs, Love's immortal onrush advances, and many forms of mortal life emerge. This mixed scene is essential. Living compounds require a structured plurality; their production occurs while the opposed powers have different but concurrent local effects. Total union in the Sphairos is a limit of the account, not simply the fullest version of an ordinary living organism.

The positive epithets are conspicuous: Love is kindly-hearted and blameless. Yet the statement in B 17 that coming-together both produces and destroys mortal things prevents a crude moral story in which every act of union preserves every creature. If all constituents unite into one, differentiated compounds cannot continue just as they were. The poem can value concord while acknowledging consequences at different scales.

The surviving cosmic account should also be distinguished from later classifications. Plutarch calls Love the benefactive principle in his framing of B 18, and his framing of B 19 associates it with the moist element. Those are valuable reception contexts, but neither author gives permission to replace Love by water throughout the corpus. B 17 separately names water and Love. “Attraction” may suggest one aspect of her effect, but loses the divine, social, and bodily language the poem deliberately retains.[25]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.7–8, 18–26. Love is located among the roots, linked with embodied friendship, and named Gladness and Aphrodite by mortals.

B 20.1–7. The joining of limbs at life’s height gives a visible bodily instance of her work.

B 35.3–17. Love advances through an incompletely mixed world while Strife withdraws.

B 18 (report). The isolated name Friendship is transmitted inside Plutarch’s classification of opposed principles.

B 19. The surviving phrase means clinging Love; the water identification is supplied by Plutarch’s framing.

B 109.3. Storgē appears in the formula of recognising like by like.

In this edition. The edition capitalises Love and keeps the changes to Aphrodite, Cypris, and other names rather than translating all of them uniformly. Its introduction

[25] The phrase “these two” in B 16 is ordinarily related to Love and Strife by the context of its quotation. The isolated two lines do not themselves repeat the names. The explanation that Love joins should not be extended into a claim that the poem teaches a modern force law, or that affection is merely a decorative substitute for one.

expressly rejects “Attraction” as a replacement. B 18 is a transmitted name in a report, not a recovered hexameter or a new continuous passage of the poem.

See also. Strife; Roots; Mixture; Sphairos; Aphrodite; Cypris; Harmony; Gladness; Like and unlike; Mortal things.

Measure and proportion

τὰ μὲν πλέω, ἄλλα δ’ ἐλάσσω (ta men pleō, alla d’ elassō); μερέων (mereōn); ἴση (isē); ἶσον (ison)

The word. The relevant vocabulary is concrete: more and less, parts, near equality, and an equal amount. The supplied verses do not assemble these expressions into a single abstract treatise on ratio. Their recurring use nonetheless makes quantitative arrangement an important part of how a limited set of sources produces differing outcomes.

In Empedocles. The painters in B 23 take more of some pigments and less of others to generate varied likenesses. Proportion is therefore integral to the explanatory analogy, not an optional embellishment. B 96 then gives a specific eight-part mixture: two parts of Nestis’ contribution and four of Hephaestus in the earth’s crucibles. Reading the remaining two as earth yields the familiar two–two–four account, but the arithmetic completion must be distinguished from the words explicitly assigning the named shares.

B 98 describes a different case. Earth meets Hephaestus, rain, and aither in near-equal measure, with slight variations permitted; blood and other flesh result. This is not a universal requirement that every successful

compound have exactly equal quantities. It is a local explanation of bodily materials.

The water-catcher passage uses measure dynamically. As air or aither enters, a due measure of water moves, and the body's outgoing breath is said to equal what enters. The comparison makes balanced replacement intelligible without furnishing a modern equation or experiment. Taken together, these passages show why proportion is distinct from the equal standing of the roots and from mixture considered only as a process.[26]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 23.3–8. Painters vary the amounts of pigments to produce many forms.

B 96. The bone account names two of eight parts for Nestis and four for Hephaestus; earth supplies the remaining ingredient.

B 98. Near-equal ingredients with small variation produce blood and flesh.

B 100.15–25. Due measures and equal outgoing breath organise the water-catcher and bodily comparison.

In this edition. The edition renders the numerical words plainly and does not call the account stoichiometry. The eight-part total makes a remainder calculable, but "two parts earth" should be presented as an interpretation of the recipe rather than an additional verbatim clause.

See also. Mixture; Equality; Bone; Blood; Painters and colours; Respiration; Clepsydra.

[26] The fractions of B 96 belong to the ancient explanatory account. They are not a reliable statement of modern bone composition or a recipe to reproduce biologically.

Meat-eating

βορᾶς (boras); δάπτοντες (daptontes); ἐνέδμεναι (enedmenai); ἔδουσιν (edousin)

The word. The poems' verbs emphasize devouring and eating rather than a neutral dietary category. Borā names food or the act of devouring; in B139 it belongs to cruel deeds contrived around the lips. "Vegetarianism" is a useful modern label for the resulting prohibition, but is not an Empedoclean word in this text.

In Empedocles. B128 joins the removal of life to the eating of limbs and calls that practice the greatest defilement among the people described. B136 directly rebukes an audience for devouring one another, while B137 brings the accusation into a family feast. Killing and consumption are consecutive parts of one ethical wrong, not independent topics.

B139 introduces remorse in the first person. The speaker wishes that a pitiless day had destroyed him before he devised cruel acts of devouring at his lips. The intensity of the regret matters: the poem's teacher does not always speak from a position of uncomplicated past innocence. This confession can be compared with the exile's admission of trust in Strife, though the fragments do not identify a single recoverable episode behind both utterances.

These passages strongly support abstention from slaughtered flesh. They do not establish that every plant may be eaten, since laurel and beans receive their own prohibitions. Nor do they supply a complete menu or modern health rationale. The foundation presented in the surviving moral poetry is the continuity of life and kinship across altered shapes, together with the pollution of violent acts.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.8–10. Tearing out life and eating limbs is condemned.

B 136. Devouring one another is charged to heedlessness.

B 137.1–6. The sacrificial killing becomes a feast on relatives.

B 139. The speaker laments his earlier cruel devising of devouring.

In this edition. B139 is printed amid physical fragments in this edition. The residual Latin notices about Strasbourg-papyrus lines are apparatus-like placeholders, not four additional translated verses that can be interpreted as present evidence.

See also. Sacrifice; Kin-murder; Laurel; Beans; Purification and fasting.

Metis

μῆτις (mētis); μήτιος (mētios); μητίσασθαι (mētisasthai)

The word. Mētis names resourceful intelligence, cunning, or practical contrivance. The introduction stresses a craftsman's intelligence rather than a generalized virtue called wisdom. The source also prints an inflected noun in the painter simile and a related verb for contriving an action.

In Empedocles. B 23 is the clearest local guide to the word. Painters are well taught in their craft through mētis: they choose and proportion pigments to produce likenesses. Their intelligence is active and productive, embodied in trained handling of materials. The simile makes that skill relevant to the explanation of how many

apparent things can arise from a limited stock of constituents.

B 2 speaks of the extent to which mortal mētis has risen. Here it is a capacity of human inquiry, bounded by the limits set out in the fragment. B 106 connects its growth with what is present to human beings. The line is too brief to establish whether present experience, bodily condition, or what lies before a thinker has exclusive priority, but it clearly resists treating intelligence as completely independent of circumstances.

The related verb in B 139 provides a moral counterweight. The speaker regrets having contrived cruel acts of devouring around his lips. Resourceful activity can produce something grievously wrong. The fact that painters use mētis does not make every product of cleverness good; the act, its object, and its consequences matter.

These uses are linked by competent or inventive engagement, not by an abstract possession of timeless truths. Yet “cunning” in modern English can sound merely deceptive, whereas the painter simile carries no necessary accusation. “Practical intelligence” keeps the positive capacity visible while allowing the darker use in B 139. A lexical article must also leave room for poetic extension: Empedocles can speak of inquiry using the same resourceful vocabulary as craft without saying that all understanding is a manual trade.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 2.9. Mortal intelligence marks the reach of the hearer’s promised learning.

B 23.1–4. Painters possess craft acquired through resourceful intelligence.

B 106. Human mētis grows in relation to what is present.

B 139.2. A related verb describes regretted contrivance in acts of devouring.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The introduction explicitly distinguishes mētis from generic wisdom.

In this edition. The introduction says mētis is not "wisdom," but the translation uses "wisdom" in B 2 and B 106, while B 23 has "skill." This local inconsistency should be visible to the reader; the English variation is not evidence that the Greek employs unrelated concepts.

See also. Craft and fitting; Painters and colours; Mortal limits; Wisdom and folly; Learning and attentive study.

Mixture

μίξις (mixis); κρῆσις (krēsis); κιρναμένων (kirnamenōn); μισγομένων (misgomenōn); ἄμεικτ' (ameikt')

The word. The vocabulary of mixing is varied: mixis names mixture, while krēsis and related forms name blending; participles make the process audible as things mingling or being blended. The poem also marks what remains unmixed. These are descriptions of how constituents enter different configurations, not a single modern technical distinction between solution, compound, and mechanical mixture.

In Empedocles. B 8 makes mixture the correct account of what people call birth. The rejection concerns absolute coming-to-be, not the reality of every transformation. B 21 says blending alters appearance so greatly that trees, animals, humans, and gods arise from the same enduring sources. The painters in B 23 show how "more of these and less of those" can generate a diverse visible world. The analogy supplies a principle of proportional combination without specifying one recipe for everything.

Particular bodily passages then make proportions important. B 96 gives an eight-part account of bone, and B 98 near equality with permissible variation for blood and flesh. The poem can therefore recognise differences of structure and proportion within one ontology of persistent constituents. B 71 makes forms and colours depend on the mixing of water, earth, aither, and sun.

B 35 is the strongest warning against imagining mixing as a single instantaneous event. Some things join while others remain unmixed, and Strife has not fully departed. The new mortal forms emerge from this uneven transition. The end-point of complete union is different from any one of those forms.

“Mixture” consequently explains both continuity and novelty: the ingredients endure, while their visible forms, bodily capacities, and organised lives change. It should not be reduced to a denial that anything meaningful happens. The fragmentary corpus also does not licence a detailed modern particle mechanism where none is stated.[27]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8. Mixture and interchange replace literal birth and final destruction as the explanation of mortal change.

B 21.9–14. Blending changes the appearance of the same constituents into many kinds of things.

B 23. The proportions of pigments model multiplicity from a finite stock.

B 35.5–17. Mixed and still-unmixed things coexist during Love’s advance.

B 96. Bone receives a specified proportioned mixture.

[27] A source-marked “unmixed” substance need not be called simple in the later Aristotelian sense; the verse’s immediate opposition is what matters.

B 98. Blood and flesh arise from an approximately equal mixture, with variation.

In this edition. The translation alternates “mixture,” “mingling,” and “blending” in response to the Greek. They need not denote three formally defined chemical operations. B 92 is a useful additional report on mixture and hardness, but it is Aristotle’s prose, not a surviving recipe in Empedocles’ own verse.

See also. Roots; Separation; Birth; Mortal things; Love; Like and unlike; Measure and proportion; Bone; Blood; Painters and colours.

Moon

σελήνη (selēnē); σεληναίης κύκλον εὐρύν (selēnaiēs kyklon euryn); γλαυκώπιδος (glaukōpidos); μήνης (mēnēs)

The word. Selēnē and mēnē are the moon-words printed in these extracts. The descriptions combine shape and personification: a broad circle, gentleness, a gray-eyed appearance, and a gaze directed towards a lord opposite. The words do not force a choice between an observed luminous body and poetic divine language.

In Empedocles. B 40 contrasts the gentle moon with the sharp-darting sun. B 43 describes a ray striking the moon’s broad circle, and B 45 calls the circling light not its own. Together these lines make derivative illumination a substantive part of the lunar account. B 47 expresses the corresponding orientation personally, as a gaze towards the holy circle of a lord opposite. The language points to a relation, while the single line leaves the complete geometry unstated.

B 42 describes the moon cutting off rays and darkening a portion of earth. Its diction is active, but the eclipse

depends on interposition and light rather than a narrated attack on the sun. The stated breadth of the darkened region belongs to the ancient description and should not be silently certified as an exact modern calculation.

B 46 adds a chariot comparison which is too corrupt for confidence. The printed daggers surround the nave and rim wording. A reconstruction may propose an orbital analogy, but the damaged quotation cannot securely establish exact distances, the mechanical attachment of the moon, or a complete model of concentric spheres.[28]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 40. The gentle moon contrasts with the sharp-darting sun.

B 43. A ray strikes the broad lunar circle.

B 45. Borrowed light circles around earth.

B 47. The lunar subject gazes towards an opposite lord's holy circle.

B 42. The moon interrupts rays and darkens earth.

B 46. The chariot/nave comparison is extensively daggered and cannot sustain precise reconstruction.

In this edition. The translations "her" and "she" make the lunar referent explicit in several otherwise short extracts. B 46 must retain its daggers as an admission of corruption. The English there is a representation of damaged Greek, not a secure prose explanation of lunar motion.

See also. Sun; Reflected light; Eclipse; Night; Heaven and Olympus; Whirl and eddy.

[28] The fragment numbers B 40–49 group related astronomical material editorially. They do not demonstrate a continuous surviving lunar chapter.

Mortal limits

βροτείη μῆτις (broteiē mētis); ἐφημερίοισιν (ephēmerioisin); ὠκύμοροι (ōkymoroi)

The word. Broteiē mētis is mortal intelligence or resourcefulness. Ephēmerioisin designates beings of a day, the short-lived recipients of a divine message. Ōkymoroi, rendered “swift-fated,” stresses the brevity of the human opportunity to look and learn.

In Empedocles. B 2 joins bodily, temporal, and intellectual limitation. Human means of grasping are narrow and distributed through limbs; distracting troubles blunt reflection; each person encounters only a little of life before disappearing like smoke. The failure is not simply that sensations exist, but that limited encounters are mistaken for possession of the whole. The boast of total knowledge is the target of the account.

The invitation to the hearer nevertheless survives. After declaring that these matters cannot straightforwardly be seen, heard, or encompassed by mind, the speaker says the listener will learn, within the reach of mortal intelligence. That turn prevents a simple reading of the fragment as a cancellation of all inquiry. Its precise force remains difficult: the missing context does not tell us whether the promise is a correction, a qualified exception, or the appropriate answer to the preceding diagnosis. B 3 supplies a complementary practice, asking the hearer to employ every faculty according to the clarity available to it.

The religious vocabulary of limitation is equally important. B 3 requests only what it is lawful for creatures of a day to hear and rejects acclaim bought by speaking beyond what is holy. A limit on human knowledge is also a discipline governing the teacher’s tongue. B 39 returns

to the danger of cosmic pronouncements issued by mouths that have seen little of the All. B 113, by contrast, asks why superiority to much-perishing humans should count as a great achievement. These passages give mortal limitation several rhetorical uses; they should not be forced into one uniform declaration of modesty.

The doctrine of ungenerated roots does not erase this finite standpoint. Human compounds may be made of enduring constituents while human lives and access to evidence remain brief. The poem asks for disciplined enlargement of understanding within that condition.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 2.1–9. The shortness of life and narrowness of faculties expose claims to know the whole.

B 3.1–8. Divine teaching is bounded by what short-lived hearers may lawfully receive.

B 39. Large assertions about earth and aither are contrasted with seeing little of the All.

B 113. The speaker questions the significance of surpassing perishing humans.

In this edition. The ending of B 2 is translated with “mortal wisdom,” although the introduction distinguishes mētis from wisdom. The limitation belongs to mortal capacity; it need not establish the modern position called scepticism merely because Sextus Empiricus preserves the passage.

See also. Faculties and evidence; Metis; Smoke; Holy speech; Wisdom and folly.

Mortal things

θνητῶν (thnētōn); θνητῶν γένεσις (thnētōn genesis); θνέτ' (thnet')

The word. The adjective for mortal, thnētos in its inflected forms, can refer to human beings but has a broader explanatory role in the physical passages. "Mortal things" names what is formed and dissolved through the mixing of enduring constituents. The introduction explicitly warns against restricting the category to human mortals or even to animals.

In Empedocles. B 8 denies an absolute birth or death of any mortal thing, and B 17 says their generation and failing are twofold. This is not the claim that compounds never form or break up. The poem explains why the ingredients' persistence and a compound's bounded existence can both be asserted. Mortal things lack the steadfast lifetime of their enduring sources, but their contents do not vanish.

B 35 makes the transition vivid: things previously described as immortal grow mortal as the constituents mix, and countless kinds pour forth. The phrasing refers to the production of destructible formations out of what persists. It need not imply that each root stops existing and is replaced by a numerically new mortal root.

B 21's catalogue includes trees, humans, beasts, birds, fish, and long-lived gods. It shows that the generated world is broader than the human contrast between mortal and divine. The gods in such lists should not automatically be identified with the eternal roots or with every use of "immortal" elsewhere. Conversely, bones and flesh are particular products of mixture even though they are not separate whole animals. The technical reach of mortality

depends on formation and dissolution, not simply on a creature's name.[29]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8. All mortal things fall under the denial of absolute origin and final destruction.

B 17.3–13. Mortal generation and failing are qualified by constituent persistence.

B 35.14–17. Mortal formations arise from previously immortal, unmixed sources.

B 21.9–14. The generated catalogue extends through living kinds to long-lived gods.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The translator explains why the physical use is broader than human mortals.

In this edition. This edition uses "mortal things" to preserve the broad scope. Its introduction's mention of stones as well as bones is an explanatory example, not a quoted additional line. The elided form in B 35 is printed with an apostrophe; the entry records it as a textual form, not a separate lemma.

See also. Roots; Mixture; Birth; Death; Being; Long-lived gods; Bone; Blood.

Movement and Immobility

Κινώ (Kinō); Ἀστεμφής (Astemphēs)

The word. Kinō evokes movement, while Astemphēs means unshaken or immovable. The edition translates their names "Movement and Immobility." The second

[29] "Immortal" and "long-lived" must be distinguished. The latter can describe an immensely durable generated being without establishing ungenerated existence.

expression emphasizes resistance to displacement as well as simple inactivity.

In Empedocles. The pair begins the sixth line of B122/123, after Bed and Waking. Their juxtaposition gives motion and steadiness personal form. It is a different opposition from Swift-One and Slow-One earlier in the catalogue: slow motion is still motion, while immobility names its absence or refusal.

The poem's physical fragments also describe both ceaseless change and stable continuity at different explanatory levels. Those claims offer useful intellectual context, but this line does not say that Kinō or Astemphēs is the personified Sphere, the cosmic cycle, or one of its phases. Assigning such identities would require more evidence. The article therefore records the pair's exact local contribution without turning an evocative catalogue into a systematic mechanics.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.6. Movement and Immobility open the sixth line.

In this edition. "Immobility" is the chosen English abstraction for an adjective-name meaning unshaken. It does not by itself state that the figure lacks life, thought, or power.

See also. Swift-One and Slow-One; Bed and Waking; Sphairos; Cycle.

Mule sterility

τῶν σπερμάτων (tōn spermatōn); πυκνὸν (pyknon); σκληρὸν (sklēron)

The word. The heading comes from the edition's explanation of Aristotle's context for B92. The prose report itself describes a dense or hard mixture produced from two individually soft seeds. The word "mule" is not part of the printed Greek excerpt and should not be invented as an Empedoclean lemma.

In Empedocles. The reported explanation turns on the fit between unlike regions in the two contributions. The hollow portions of each meet the dense portions of the other, producing a compact result. The failure of further generation is therefore attributed to how materials combine, rather than simply to the absence of either contribution.

This is a particularly useful test of the mixture theory because combination does not always yield an ordinary fertile organism. A material process may produce a stable or dense result whose reproductive consequences differ from those of its sources. The comparison with metal hardened by tin reinforces the point that a mixture can acquire a quality not present in the same way in either ingredient.

The report must not be promoted into a directly quoted Empedoclean poem. Aristotle is paraphrasing an explanation for a particular problem, and the edition adds the mule context in its note. The evidence therefore supports a historically attributed account of sterility, not the exact original language of that account. It also does not support a modern treatment or general biological law for infertility.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 92 (report). Aristotle reports the complementary fitting of two soft seeds into a hard mixture.

B 92 (editorial discussion). The local apparatus identifies mule sterility as the explanatory target.

In this edition. All Greek forms in this entry are from Aristotle's report. The animal heading is warranted by the supplied contextual note, whose status is marked separately from the reported wording.

See also. Seed; Bronze and tin; Hardening and texture; Sexual differentiation.

Murder and bloodshed

Φόνος (Phonos); φόνωι (phonōi); φόνοιο (phonoio)

The word. Phonos names killing or bloodshed and, by extension, the blood associated with slaughter. B121 capitalizes Murder as one of the inhabitants of the joyless place. The ethical contexts must nevertheless be distinguished from B100, where a form of the same word occurs in the description of blood retained within bodily passages.

In Empedocles. In B115 the offender pollutes his own limbs through bloodshed. The damage therefore does not stop with the victim: it changes the killer's standing and brings exile. B136 turns the charge into an urgent appeal to the audience to stop slaughter. Its next line explains why the act is cognitively as well as ethically disordered: people devour one another without understanding what they do. B137 dramatizes this claim in the father who slaughters his transformed son.

Personified Murder in B121 gives the same violence a place in the landscape of suffering, alongside Wrath and the tribes of Dooms. Conversely, in B128 the altar under Cypris is free of bulls' slaughter-blood, and the tearing out of life is called the greatest defilement. The contrast is between forms of action and worship, not between having physical blood and being morally impure. Blood is a normal constituent of living bodies elsewhere in the poem, and the vocabulary's range should prevent that confusion.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.3. Killing defiles the offender's own limbs.

B 121. Murder appears as a named actor in the joyless region.

B 136. The audience is commanded to cease slaughter.

B 128.8–10. The undrenched altar contrasts with killing and devouring.

B 100.4–5. The same lexical family denotes blood contained in the body, without a moral accusation.

In this edition. B128 translates the plural phonoi as "blood" in the phrase about bulls. This does not erase the association with slaughter. It is distinct from haima, the more ordinary blood-word prominent in the physiological fragments.

See also. Kin-murder; Sacrifice; Meat-eating; Blood; Dooms; Wrath.

Muse

Μοῦσα (Mousa); Μούσης (Mousēs)

The word. Mousa names the divine patron addressed by the poet. In B3 she is a much-remembering, white-armed

maiden; B131 specifies Calliopeia. Her presence gives the poem a divine source and audience without dispensing with argument, observation, or the limits placed on mortal knowledge.

In Empedocles. The invocation of B3 follows a prayer that the gods restrain madness of the tongue and channel a pure spring from holy mouths. The Muse is asked to bring what creatures of a day may lawfully hear, driving a well-reined chariot from Piety. The imagery makes inspiration controlled and ethically bounded. Fame must not induce speech beyond what is holy. Immediately afterward the addressee is urged to use every available faculty and to judge each thing by the mode in which it becomes clear. Inspired speech and discriminating inquiry are therefore neighbours within the same passage.

B4 speaks of the Muse's pledges and of an argument sifted through the inward parts. Divine authority does not remove the listener's work of receiving and testing the account. B131 renews the prayer, asking Calliopeia to stand beside the speaker as he discloses a good account of the blessed gods. The renewal indicates a continuing poetic relationship; it does not by itself prove where the invocation belonged in an original composition.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 3.1–13. The Muse is invoked within a programme of holy speech and disciplined inquiry.

B 4.2–3. The Muse's pledges accompany an argument received inwardly.

B 131. The immortal Muse is addressed as Calliopeia in a renewed prayer.

In this edition. The chariot's departure "from the house of Piety" renders a Greek phrase literally meaning from or

beside Piety; no separate word for house is printed there. B131 includes a supplement in its account of the Muse's earlier welcome.

See also. Calliopeia; Piety; Trust and persuasion; Seers.

Mythos

μύθων (mythōn); μῦθον (mython); μῦθος (mythos); μύθοις (mythois)

The word. Mythos is a telling, speech, or utterance. The edition renders its various forms as words or tale. Its occurrence is not an instruction to classify a passage as a modern "myth" opposed to factual explanation.

In Empedocles. The double exposition of one and many in B 17 is introduced as something to hear, with the bounds of the speaker's mythoi made clear. That same fragment soon calls the instruction an undeceiving logos. Both words belong to the poet's explanatory undertaking. Their coexistence is stronger evidence than any modern expectation that myth and argument must be separate.

At the close of the painter simile in B 23, the listener is told to know clearly because the mythos has been heard from a god. The utterance is a vehicle of authority and insight. B 62 likewise qualifies its tale as neither wide of the mark nor unknowing while introducing an account of the emergence of human forms. Truth or error therefore depends on the tale and its speaker, not on an inherent unreliability of the noun.

B 114 makes the point explicit by asserting that truth is present in the mythoi the speaker will utter. The problem is how humans receive conviction. B 24, finally, figures a course of words as a path joining summits. Here mythoi have arrangement and progression. The isolated

quotation does not disclose all of the speaker's intended route, but it preserves reflection on the way a teaching is composed.

For this lexicon, mythos names part of Empedocles' vocabulary of communication. It does not settle whether the modern reader should endorse the cosmology, theology, or powers described. Nor should the term be used as a shortcut for deciding which fragments belong to a supposed religious poem.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.14–17. The cosmological exposition is repeatedly called words or a tale.

B 23.9–11. The painter simile ends with a tale heard from a god.

B 62.1–3. An account of human emergence is declared neither inaccurate nor unknowing.

B 114. Truth is said to inhabit the speaker's forthcoming words.

B 24. The arrangement of words is figured as a path among summits.

In this edition. "Tale" in this translation preserves the poetic manner, but should not be heard as "mere fiction." Conversely, the statement that a tale comes from a god is the poem's claim to authority, not an external authentication of its contents.

See also. Logos; Trust and persuasion; Paths and channels of speech; Repetition and the double tale.

Naming and convention

ὀνομάζεται (onomazetai); καλέουσι (kaleousi); νόμωι (nomōi); κικλήσκεται (kiklēsketai); ἐπώνυμον (epōnymon)

The word. Onomazetai means is named; kaleousi means they call. Nomōi in B 9 is rendered “by their custom.” These expressions mark a distinction between what a process is and the words people habitually use for it.

In Empedocles. B 8 does not merely give a new definition of birth. It argues that mortal things have no absolute coming-to-be or final extinction: mixture and interchange occur, and humans attach the name birth. Naming is thus part of the philosophical problem. Ordinary experience of a new organism or object is not denied, but its familiar verbal interpretation must be examined.

B 9 extends that distinction by describing combinations in human, animal, bird, and plant forms. People call the compound’s appearance birth and its separation an ill-starred doom. The speaker admits that he too uses customary language, even as the printed text says that the customary designation is not right. The admission is a valuable reading rule: a later reference to something being born need not revoke the argument against creation from nothing. One must ask whether the language describes a compound or its enduring constituents.

Naming is not always error. B 17 identifies Love through the names Gladness and Aphrodite used among mortals, making ordinary recognition a route into a larger account. B 105 names thought in relation to the blood about the heart; its report of what humans call thought accompanies a positive explanatory claim. Thus the vocabulary of calling can distinguish, connect, or qualify rather than merely expose falsehood.

The poem's own lexical variety matters. Divine names, familiar objects, and terms of bodily life communicate relations that an artificially uniform modern terminology would suppress. The introduction's warning about physis is exemplary: in B 8 its sense is birth, while in B 63 and B 110 the local wording invites a different emphasis on formation or constitution. Translation must follow usage rather than assign one English word mechanically.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8.1–4. Birth is expressly identified as a human name for mixture and interchange.

B 9.1–5. The speaker accepts customary expressions while qualifying their correctness.

B 17.22–24. Gladness and Aphrodite are names through which Love is recognized.

B 105.1–3. The phrase about what humans call thought accompanies a physiological identification.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The editor explains why physis at B 8 is translated as birth.

In this edition. B 9 contains important supplements, including ‹λέγουσι› and the negative ‹οὐ›. The printed qualification of customary naming is therefore not secure letter-for-letter transmitted wording. Its agreement with B 8 is philosophically illuminating but does not remove that textual qualification.

See also. Birth; Logos; Mythos; Fragments and Diels numbering; Supplements, corruption, and gaps.

Necessity

Ἀνάγκης (Anankēs); Ἀνάγκην (Anankēn)

The word. Ankē denotes necessity or constraint. In B115 the genitive identifies the authority behind a decree, immediately described as an ancient ordinance of the gods. In B116 Necessity is explicitly hard to bear and is the object of Grace's aversion. Capitalization in the translation allows the force to appear as a named power without supplying a mythological genealogy.

In Empedocles. The decree binds acts to consequences. A divine being who pollutes his limbs by bloodshed or errs through false swearing must undergo lengthy separation from the blessed. Its antiquity, permanence, and sealing by oaths emphasize that exile is ordered rather than an accidental mishap. The passage does not say whether Necessity is identical with any one root or with either Love or Strife. Strife is named as the allegiance in which the offender goes wrong, not straightforwardly as the issuer of the sentence.

The cosmic "broad oath" of B30 provides a significant comparison: alternating divine honours are also governed by an established term. Both passages make temporal change answerable to obligation, although the shared oath-language does not prove that they describe exactly the same decree. B116 complicates any bland notion of a providential order. Grace loathes a Necessity that is difficult to endure. Because that fragment is only a broken clause, it supplies neither the occasion for the hostility nor a complete opposition between two cosmic principles.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.1–8. An ancient everlasting decree of Necessity is sealed with oaths and governs the punishment.

B 116. Grace is said to loathe hard-to-bear Necessity.

B 30.1–3. A broad oath fixes the alternating time when Strife reaches its honours.

In this edition. “Decree” translates chrēma in this context, followed by the more explicitly institutional “ordinance,” psēphisma. The wording does not require a separate legislative assembly or a mechanical law of nature in the modern sense.

See also. Oath; False swearing; Grace; Exile and wandering; Strife.

Nestis

Νῆστίς (Nēstis); Νήστιδος αἴγλης (Nēstidos aiglēs)

The word. Nestis is the fourth divine name in B 6. Unlike the preceding names, she receives a small action: with tears she moistens the mortal spring. In B 96 the genitive Nēstidos accompanies “bright gleam.” These are the source’s two substantial contexts; the surviving verses offer no account of her genealogy or cult.

In Empedocles. The moistening action makes the identification with water more direct than the disputed assignments of Hera and Aidoneus. The introduction accordingly presents Nestis–water as the point of broad agreement. Yet the translator keeps the divine name, preserving the tears and spring as active poetic language rather than replacing them with an explanatory formula.

B 96 places her in a measured recipe for bone. Earth receives two parts out of eight of Nestis’ gleam and four of Hephaestus, and the resulting white bones are fitted by Harmony. The line names a bright contribution from the watery goddess; it does not cancel the chilling or dark

character of rain in B 21. Different descriptions serve different mixtures and settings. The recipe also shows why water should not be treated as the opposite of every hard bodily formation: its contribution remains present in bone.

Nothing in these two fragments warrants a confident derivation of the name from a fasting term or an identification with another goddess. Such proposals would require evidence outside the supplied verses. The safest lexical description combines the secure watery function with the continuing significance of the divine personification.[30]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 6.3. Nestis moistens the mortal spring with tears.

B 96.1–4. Two of the eight parts in the bone mixture are assigned to the gleam of Nestis.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The water identification is distinguished from the more disputed mappings.

In this edition. The edition preserves “Nestis” and renders aiglē as “bright gleam.” It does not translate the proper name into water. B 96’s note corrects a source-heading error and matters when locating this second occurrence.

See also. Roots; Water and rain; Hera; Hephaestus; Bone; Harmony.

[30] The eight-part account is a specific explanation of bone. It should not be generalised into the proportion of all compounds or into a universal ranking of the roots.

Night

νύκτα (nykta); νυκτὸς ἐρημαίης ἀλαώπιδος (nyktos erēmaiēs alaōpidos); ἐννυχίους (ennychious)

The word. Nyx appears in inflected forms for night; B 49 gives it the personal epithets lonely and blind-eyed. Ennychious in B 62 describes the emerging shoots as night-born. These uses share darkness-language but need not identify a single cosmic goddess or one technical condition everywhere.

In Empedocles. B 48 gives the direct physical explanation: earth makes night by interposing against light. The cause is a body's relation to illumination. B 49 instead preserves an epithetic phrase without its sentence, allowing the poetic character of night to be heard but not a complete narrative to be reconstructed.

The lamp comparison of B 84 places a human traveller in a wintry night. Darkness provides the familiar situation against which the lamp's screened and escaping fire becomes intelligible. It is part of the analogy's practical force, not an additional cosmological principle opposed to a root of light.

B 62's night-born shoots arise from earth as fire separates out. Their epithet belongs to the account of initial bodily formation and should not be used alone to date an entire cosmic epoch as a universal nighttime. The fragment makes the forms' emergence its subject, and the broader phase sequence remains disputed.[31]

[31] Darkness elsewhere can concern ignorance, grief, or a joyless place. Such uses do not automatically identify those experiences with the astronomical night of B 48.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 48. Earth's obstruction of light produces night.

B 49. Night is called lonely and blind-eyed in an isolated phrase.

B 84.1–6. Wintry night is the setting for the lamp analogy.

B 62.1–6. Night-born shoots appear within the account of forms rising from earth.

In this edition. The translation preserves the distinction between a physical explanation and a poetic epithet. Neither the fragmentary B 49 phrase nor the adjective in B 62 should be expanded into an unattested theology of Night.

See also. Earth; Sun; Reflected light; Eclipse; Eye; Lantern; Whole-natured forms.

Night-born shoots

ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας (ennychious horpēkas)

The word. The "night-born shoots" of B62 are shoots associated with men and women, not a separate botanical species. Ὄρπηκας is growth-language transferred to the first emergence of human forms. The adjective rendered "night-born" contributes darkness or nocturnal emergence without a surviving explanation of its precise physical cause.

In Empedocles. Empedocles announces that he will explain how separating fire brought these shoots upward. The next lines describe whole-natured forms rising from the earth. Read together, the images make human generation visibly continuous with sprouting: a hidden beginning pushes up from earth before familiar human distinctions appear. The same poem can describe neckless

heads as sprouting and trees as bearing eggs, so the movement between botanical and animal vocabularies is systematic rather than exceptional.

The text nevertheless does not equate a human form with an ordinary seedling in every respect. These forms have shares of water and heat, and their upward movement is attributed to fire's search for its like. The plant image makes emergence intelligible while the constituent account specifies the process. A lexicon should preserve both levels.

"Night-born" does not establish that darkness is itself a generative root or that the passage concerns reincarnation during sleep. Nothing of that sort appears in the fragment. Its interpretive value lies in the image of obscure beginnings becoming emergent form.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 62.1–6. The poet announces the upward emergence of human shoots and then describes whole-natured forms.

B 57. Heads also receive the verb of sprouting.

B 79. The description of olives as eggs transfers reproductive language in the opposite direction.

In this edition. The edition's "night-born" is a compact interpretive rendering. Since the preserved excerpt does not explain the adjective, it is preferable to retain it rather than invent a story of a particular night or gestational season.

See also. Whole-natured forms; Trees; Olives as eggs; Zoogony.

Oath

ὅρκοις (horkois); ὅρκου (horkou)

The word. Horkos is an oath, the binding pledge invoked to guarantee an arrangement. Both surviving contexts qualify it with an adjective translated “broad.” The image stresses the force and reach of a commitment; the verses do not specify a ritual object or an oath-taking ceremony.

In Empedocles. In B115 broad oaths seal Necessity’s ancient ordinance. The seal makes the rule durably authoritative before the poem describes the offence and punishment. Oath thus operates at two levels in the same passage: divine oaths guarantee the law, while a transgressor’s false oath violates the truthfulness such a guarantee presupposes.

B30 places a broad oath within the physical account. As the prescribed time is fulfilled, Strife rises to its honours, and the period has been driven or assigned for the powers in turn by that oath. The connection of temporal alternation with sworn obligation gives cosmic regularity a juridical and divine expression. It is tempting to treat this as a fully specified constitution of the cycle, but the fragment breaks off and supplies neither the original speakers of the oath nor its entire terms. Its comparison with B115 is evidentially strong at the level of language, less decisive at the level of a reconstructed narrative.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.1–4. Oaths seal the ordinance whose breach includes false swearing.

B 30.1–3. The alternation of time and honours is placed under a broad oath.

In this edition. B115 has plural oaths, B30 a singular oath. The translation preserves both. A lexicon should not silently merge them into a single quoted treaty with recoverable clauses.

See also. Necessity; False swearing; Time and lifetime; Strife.

Obscurity

Ἀσάφεια (Asapheia)

The word. Asapheia is lack of clarity or obscurity. Its personification is described as dark-haired. The word concerns what is unclear; it does not necessarily mean deliberate deception, error, or an absolute absence of knowledge.

In Empedocles. B122/123 pairs dark-haired Obscurity with lovely Truth-Unerring. Her epithet turns an abstract quality into a visible figure and may reinforce the sense of darkness, but the line does not spell out an allegorical decoding of hair colour. It is safer to preserve the striking description than to make it a physiological claim about dark bodies or their mental powers.

The opposition belongs to a catalogue containing bodily, temporal, affective, and verbal contrasts. That setting makes the contrast broadly intelligible without proving a single underlying scheme for all the pairs. Obscurity should therefore not be assigned an independent causal office beside Love and Strife. Nor does this isolated name establish that Empedocles rejected sensory observation: other fragments explicitly urge the careful use of multiple faculties. Here the poet supplies a personified condition of unclear disclosure.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.4. Dark-haired Obscurity stands beside lovely Truth-Unerring.

In this edition. The translation “Obscurity” preserves the privative sense of the name. It should not be replaced with “Falsehood,” since that would collapse lack of clarity into a more specific ethical and epistemic fault.

See also. Truth-Unerring; Trust and persuasion; Faculties and evidence; Silence and Utterance.

Olives as eggs

ὠιοτοκεῖ (ōiotokei); ἐλαίας (elaias)

The word. The verb ὠιοτοκεῖ describes egg-bearing or egg-laying, here assigned to tall trees. The named products are olives. The line does not merely compare an olive’s appearance to an egg; it applies the reproductive verb directly to the tree.

In Empedocles. This transfer of animal language into botany is one of the clearest expressions of continuity across living kinds. The tree produces a distinct, bounded generative object, and the egg-image makes that object intelligible as part of reproduction. It fits the poem’s movement in the other direction, where heads and human forms sprout like plants.

The precise object of “first” is less fully secured by the isolated line. The edition gives “first bear eggs — the olives,” but the missing context prevents reconstruction of a complete chronology: the word could have had a role within an argument no longer present. The verse should not be made to assert a documented historical priority of olive trees over every other plant.

Aristotle's Generation of Animals preserves the fragment. That witness makes the reproductive comparison especially apt, but the book does not reproduce an extended Aristotelian explanation here. What is directly available is the Empedoclean formulation of olives as the egg-like products of trees, not a complete theory of plant fertilization or seed structure.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 79. The single verse assigns egg-bearing to tall trees and names olives.

B 57. Sprouting language is applied to animal parts.

B 62. Early human forms are called shoots.

In this edition. The English dash makes the appositional relation between eggs and olives easy to grasp. A paraphrase that merely says trees bear fruit loses the most distinctive lexical claim of the line.

See also. Trees; Seed; Night-born shoots; Leaves.

On Nature and Purifications

Περὶ φύσεως (Peri physeōs); Καθαρμοί (Katharmoi)

The word. Peri physeōs is the conventional title On Nature; Katharmoi means Purifications. They appear as work titles and section headings in the supplied edition. Their status differs from a word encountered within a securely quoted verse.

In Empedocles. The edition divides its contents among an On Nature proem, three books, Purifications, and fragments of uncertain place. Those divisions are reading aids and hypotheses about the original work. They must not be treated as recovered tables of contents. Diels fragment numbers identify passages across scholarship;

they do not prove where the passages belonged or in what order an original audience heard them.

The introduction surveys arguments for one poem, two poems, and two coordinated works. It also explains why a simple division by subject matter is unsafe: material concerned with forbidden food and punishment appears in the physical-poem papyrus evidence it describes. Physical explanation and ritual or ethical teaching cannot therefore be sorted automatically into different works. This does not by itself prove that there was only one poem.

The printed arrangement deserves particular care. The introduction calls it the arrangement of Diels, yet also states that placing B 115–126 in the proem rather than Purifications reflects an editorial judgement. The safe description is that the edition uses Diels-based text and standard identifiers within its stated grouping. Following numbering and reproducing an original or standard arrangement are different claims.

A named work can sometimes be attested by a witness. Theon's report printed as B 153a explicitly places its embryological statement in the Katharmoi. That is stronger placement evidence than a modern inference from subject matter, but it is still Theon's report, not the surviving title of a continuous Empedoclean manuscript. It also shows why the title Purifications cannot be used to exclude material concerning bodies.

Readers should use the section divisions to navigate and the local witness information to judge evidence. A dispute over titles does not make the individual verses unusable; it changes what can responsibly be inferred from their juxtaposition.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

Introduction II (editorial discussion). The editor explains indirect survival, fragment boundaries, and differently scoped ancient length reports.

Introduction III (editorial discussion). The described papyrus evidence complicates a subject-based division.

Introduction IV (editorial discussion). The edition surveys the one-poem/two-poem controversy and states its grouping.

B 153a (report). Theon explicitly attributes the reported embryological statement to the Katharmoi.

In this edition. The Greek titles are printed editorial/work-title forms. They are not surviving opening verses. Neither the On Nature title nor the physis vocabulary should be translated mechanically into a modern contrast between secular science and private religion.

See also. Fragments and Diels numbering; Papyri and the unprinted text; Witnesses and reception; Pausanias and Anchites; Acragas and the civic audience.

One and many

ἓν (hen); πλεόνων (pleonōn); πλέον’ (pleon’)

The word. The opening of B 17 uses a stark numerical contrast: one grows out of many, and many grow out of one. These words are not presented as names of two substances. They describe opposed configurations of the same persistent sources and establish the double structure of the exposition. The language of growing also links cosmic transition with the poem’s recurrent images of organic formation.

In Empedocles. The contrast works at more than one scale. B 17 speaks broadly of the change from multiplicity to unity and back, while B 20 makes a body's limbs come together into one at the height of life. B 26 calls the coming-together a single order and also looks towards the All grown together as one. Those expressions should not all be treated as equivalent names for one stable intermediate world.

The famous double account of mortal birth and disappearance in B 17 is deliberately difficult: gathering can produce and destroy, and growing apart can likewise sustain and dissolve. The one–many pattern is therefore not a simple equation of one with life and many with death. A mortal organism is one composed of many, whereas complete cosmic union removes the differentiation by which such organisms exist.

The numerical language also does not imply that the roots lose their identity and become a new fifth substance when united. The passage insists that these same things continue through the changes. At the other extreme, plurality is not the creation of being from nothing. The double account is an attempt to think change alongside the permanence of its constituents.[32]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.1–17. The repeated one–many formula frames the double explanation of birth and disappearance.

B 20.1–5. A living body is a local example of limbs coming into one.

B 26.1–12. The sequence includes a single order, the All grown together, and enduring cyclic interchange.

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[32] "One" has no capital letter establishing it as a separate divine proper name in the quoted formula. A later metaphysical One should not be imported merely because the same English word is convenient.

B 27. The Sphere lacks distinguishable sun, earth, and sea, showing what complete union entails.

In this edition. The line repeating the one-from-many formula at B 17.9 is supplied in the printed Greek. B 26 preserves a closely corresponding line without brackets. The duplication is useful evidence, but should not be concealed by printing a reconstructed seamless discourse.

See also. Sphairos; Mixture; Separation; World-order; Roots; Birth; Mortal things; Cycle.

Painted offerings

εὐσεβέεσσιν ἀγάλμασιν (eusebeessin agalmasin); γραπτοῖς τε ζώιοισι (graptois te zōioisi)

The word. Agalma, represented here by the plural agalmasin, can name an object of honour or delight; the edition renders it “images.” The following phrase specifies painted zōia, rendered “figures.” It should not be silently narrowed to a modern category of paintings or expanded into a fixed medium such as wooden panels.

In Empedocles. B128 places pious images and painted figures among the ways people propitiate Cypris. The surviving line does not determine whether the two expressions name separate classes of gift or whether the second elaborates the first. In either case, made representations belong to the affirmative picture of bloodless worship, together with perfumes, incense, and honey.

B23’s comparison with painters decorating votive objects makes a useful parallel: art is already a model for the formation of many visible shapes out of a few mixed ingredients. The ritual and physical images should not be merged into a single workshop scene, but both credit

crafted representations with serious explanatory or devotional work. The text does not condemn images as deceptive merely because they are made; their piety or usefulness depends on their context.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.4–5. Images and painted figures are offered to Cypris.

B 23.1–8. Painters working on votive objects supply the physical analogy of diverse forms from mixed pigments.

In this edition. “Images” and “figures” are the translation’s choices. They do not establish that every object depicts an animal, a divine statue, or a substitute sacrificial victim. The material and precise subjects remain unspecified.

See also. Painters and colours; Sacrifice; Cypris; Piety.

Painters and colours

γραφέες (graphees); πολύχροα φάρμακα (polychroa pharmaka); ἀναθήματα (anathēmata); εἴδεα (eidea)

The word. Graphees are painters. Polychroa pharmaka are the many-coloured materials they handle, translated pigments. Anathēmata are offerings, here understood as votive tablets to be decorated. Eidea are the forms or visible likenesses the painters make.

In Empedocles. B 23 offers a sustained analogy for the production of diversity from a limited material stock. Trained painters take pigments, mix some in greater and others in lesser amounts, and produce likenesses of trees, human beings, animals, fish, and gods. The list matches the range of living and divine forms described elsewhere in the cosmological account. The painter’s activity gives

the hearer an intelligible example of how visible variety need not require a separate source for every kind of thing.

Proportion is crucial. The passage does not simply say that colours touch each other; more of one and less of another yield different appearances. This makes the analogy relevant to mixtures such as the recipe for bone and the near-equal constituents of blood and flesh. Its endpoint is explanatory confidence: the hearer must not be deceived into supposing another source of the manifest mortal things.

The analogy also has limits. A painted animal is a likeness, and the Greek explicitly marks resemblance. The fragment does not say that natural beings are lifeless pictures or that a human-like painter stands outside the whole world creating it. The stated lesson concerns the relation between constituent material and resulting diversity. The divine claim at the ending belongs to the authority of the telling.

Two aspects of the vocabulary connect this scene to other parts of the poems. The image-makers work on offerings rather than necessarily on modern autonomous works of art; and pharmaka is the same word translated remedies in B 111. The local context determines whether it refers to colouring materials or healing agents. That breadth should be preserved without inventing a hidden pharmacological explanation of painting.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 23.1–11. The complete painter analogy links trained mixing, proportion, likeness, and confidence in a common source.

B 21.9–14. The catalogue of trees, humans, animals, fish, and gods parallels the images made by painters.

B 71.1–4. Forms and colours are explicitly a problem for the explanation through mixed constituents.

B 111.1–2. The same noun used for pigments appears for remedies in a different context.

In this edition. “Votive tablets” is the edition’s concrete rendering of anathēmata. It gives the scene a plausible object but should not be expanded into an independently documented painting workshop. “Pigments” and “remedies” translate different uses of pharmaka, not two unrelated Greek words.

See also. Metis; Craft and fitting; Mixture; Remedies and extraordinary powers; Naming and convention.

Papyri and the unprinted text

The word. Papyrus witnesses are ancient copies on the writing material papyrus. Unlike most of the quotations in this edition, the Strasbourg and Cairo remains discussed by the introduction come from the poem’s own book-roll tradition. Their modern arrangement, restoration, and interpretation remain editorial work.

In Empedocles. The introduction describes the Strasbourg material as parts of a roll reused in a funerary object, identified in the twentieth century and published by Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi in 1999. Some of its lines overlap text otherwise known through Simplicius. Such overlap allows a direct comparison between a later quotation and a separate ancient copy; it does not make either witness automatically free of error.

The structural evidence discussed in the introduction includes a stichometric mark, a count of verses, relevant to locating passages within a book. This is a different sort of evidence from arranging fragments by subject matter.

Its implications still require interpretation. In particular, placing the opening of B 17 around verse 232 does not alone demonstrate that all preceding verses were a proem: a line-number location and a literary division are not identical facts.

The introduction also reports ethical or dietary material in the physical-poem papyrus context, complicating a strict division of subject matter between On Nature and Purifications. It acknowledges that this does not finally decide the number of poems. The more recent Cairo publication, P. Fouad inv. 218, preserves remains of approximately thirty additional verses and is described as belonging to the same roll and hand. These are fragmentary remains, not thirty securely complete new lines.

Neither modern papyrus text is printed in this book. B 139 is followed by residual Latin notices referring to Strasbourg papyrus verses, but those notices are not the missing Greek verses themselves. A lexicon of the supplied text can report the introduction's account and explain its bearing on interpretation; it cannot manufacture a vocabulary of unprinted passages or pretend to collate readings absent from the file.

The papyri therefore matter twice: as substantive evidence for the wider study of Empedocles and as a boundary on what this particular edition contains. Their absence should be stated clearly whenever a claim depends on the completeness of the corpus.[33]

[33] Independent bibliographic check: Nathan Carlig, Alain Martin, and Oliver Primavesi, L'Empédocle du Caire (P. Fouad inv. 218), 2025. The publisher's catalogue describes remains of thirty verses from the same roll.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

Introduction III (editorial discussion). The introduction describes the Strasbourg and Cairo finds and their significance.

Introduction IV (editorial discussion). Papyrus evidence is invoked in the debate over poem division.

Introduction VII (editorial discussion). The editor expressly excludes the modern papyrus texts.

B 139 (editorial discussion). Residual Latin notices mention papyrus verses without supplying their Greek text.

In this edition. The historical descriptions are modern apparatus, not words of Empedocles. This article does not endorse every reconstruction stated in the introduction, and it distinguishes a verse-count position from a demonstrably bounded proem. Lexical entries remain grounded in passages actually supplied.

See also. On Nature and Purifications; Fragments and Diels numbering; Witnesses and reception; Supplements, corruption, and gaps.

Passages

πόρος (poros); πόροιο (poroio); διόδοισι (diodoisi); σύριγγες (syringes)

The word. A πόρος is a way through or passage. The edition prefers “passages” and “channels” to the narrower modern English association of pores with tiny skin openings. Its bodily descriptions also employ pipes, ducts, and perforated channels, which should not all be treated as interchangeable Greek words.

In Empedocles. B100 gives the richest concrete evidence. Pipes of flesh terminate near the bodily exterior, and perforations allow aither a route while blood is retained. Within the vessel comparison, a controllable passage permits or prevents the exchange of air and water. The important property is functional access: whether a given material has a way through under the conditions described.

B84 presents selective transmission in the eye. Fine tissues are pierced with channels that hold water back and let finer fire pass outward. The two examples show that a passage is intelligible through the relation between its structure and the material moving through it. An opening is not explanatory merely because it exists; its ability to admit some things and exclude others matters.

The introduction generalizes this relation into the perceptual doctrine of effluences fitting the passages of an organ. That summary is broader than any single quoted line. The reader should distinguish its systematic formulation from the particular pipes and membranes directly described in B84 and B100.

B3 gives the vocabulary an epistemic reach: wherever there is a passage for understanding, trust is not to be withheld from the relevant bodily faculty. The image is bodily and cognitive at once. It does not mean that intellectual understanding can be mapped onto a set of modern microscopic pores, nor that all ways of knowing must have the identical anatomy. Passage is a flexible but concrete explanatory relation between a source, a route, and an activity.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 100.1–5. Bodily ducts provide a route for aither while retaining blood.

B 100.9–21. The vessel's passage can be stopped by a hand and released.

B 84.7–11. Pierced tissues discriminate between surrounding water and outward fire.

B 3.9–13. A passage for understanding accompanies the injunction to use each bodily faculty.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The translator explains the choice of passages or channels over pores.

In this edition. "Pores" remains a useful lookup term for scholarship, but using it throughout would prematurely narrow the imagery to skin. The source has a family of related route-words whose local physical functions deserve separate attention.

See also. Effluences; Respiration; Clepsydra; Pupil and membranes; Understanding and inward thought.

Paths and channels of speech

ἀτραπὸν (atrapon); πόρον ὕμνων (poron hymnōn); ἐξοχετεύων (exocheteuōn); ἁμαξιτὸς (hamaxitos)

The word. Atrapos is a path; the source prints its inflected form atrapon. Poron hymnōn is a passage or path of songs. Exocheteuōn describes channelling out. Hamaxitos is a broad roadway, translated a highway in the account of persuasion.

In Empedocles. The poet often imagines instruction as directed movement through a route. B 24 fastens one summit to another while referring, negatively, to completing a single path of words. Because the fragment begins and ends within a larger utterance, the exact reason for the negative cannot be reconstructed. It preserves an image of arrangement, not a complete manifesto that the poem must be nonlinear.

B 35 is clearer. The speaker turns back to a previously recounted path of songs and channels one account from another. The same passage describes streams of mortal beings emerging from mixture. The resemblance of expository and physical movement is striking, but it need not mean that every feature of the discourse duplicates a cosmic event. It is enough that the poetry gives teaching a material direction, continuity, and controlled flow.

B 133 changes the scale to a highway of persuasion entering human thought through sight and touch. Access to the divine subject is blocked along that ordinary road. B 112 provides another path, the route to benefit sought by those following the speaker. The latter is the audience's practical question rather than the poet's map of his own exposition.

These different roads should be kept distinct. Some belong to the formation of a speech, some to the ways of knowing, and some to the desired outcome of consultation. Together they show why the rendering of poros as channel or passage matters: a way through can organize knowledge as well as bodily transport. The poem's routes remain relational and purposeful, rather than interchangeable ornaments.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 24. Summits and a path figure the arrangement of words.

B 35.1–2. Return and channelling describe the renewal of an argument.

B 133.2–3. A highway carries ordinary persuasion into the mind.

B 112.8–11. Followers ask for a path toward benefit.

B 3.12–13. A channel of understanding connects the road-image with faculties.

In this edition. “Path of songs” translates a phrase with hymnoi, and should not be restricted to a surviving independent hymn. The fragmentary negative of B 24 requires special restraint: the edition does not restore a complete sentence explaining the abandoned or multiple path.

See also. Repetition and the double tale; Logos; Mythos; Trust and persuasion; Passages.

Pausanias and Anchites

Παυσανίη (Pausaniē); Ἀγχίτου (Anchitou); δαΐφρονος (daiphronos)

The word. Pausaniē is the vocative form of Pausanias: the name as spoken to its bearer. Anchitou is the genitive of Anchites, identifying Pausanias as his son. The father’s epithet, daiphronos, is translated “wise-hearted.” These are the complete personal particulars supplied by the single surviving line.

In Empedocles. B 1 makes teaching a personal address. The imperative to hear is directed to someone named, with a family connection, rather than to an anonymous reader. This miniature scene gives particular force to the recurrent “you” of the didactic fragments: the listener must attend, distinguish, learn, and retain what is taught. The singular address also matters beside B 112, whose opening greets a plural body of friends in Acragas. The fragments preserve more than one way of constructing an audience.

It is reasonable to connect the singular recipient in B 111 with Pausanias within the presentation of this edition; the introduction does so. The verse itself, however, does not repeat his name. Its promise that the speaker will

accomplish the instruction for “you alone” therefore strengthens the intimacy of instruction without independently proving the order or original adjacency of the passages. Nor does B 1 establish that Pausanias was a physician, a ritual initiate, an historical collaborator, or the addressee of every fragment now printed under On Nature. Such identifications need evidence beyond this line.

The small amount of surviving text is itself significant: a poem that may have had an extensive introduction is represented at its opening by a single vocative and command. The edition’s location of the line at the head of the proem is a useful reading arrangement, not a recovered continuous opening.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 1. Direct address names the hearer and his father.

B 111.1–2. The unnamed singular hearer is promised exceptional instruction.

B 112.1–3. The plural civic greeting provides a different audience scene.

In this edition. The translation retains both names and interprets the paternal epithet without adding a biography. B 1 is quoted by Diogenes Laertius VIII 60; the quotation does not preserve the surrounding original verses.

See also. Acragas and the civic audience; Learning and attentive study; Remedies and extraordinary powers; On Nature and Purifications.

Physicians

ἰητροί (iētroi); εὐηκέα βάξιν (euēkea baxin)

The word. Iētroi are physicians or healers. B112 describes a healing utterance sought by people afflicted with disease, and B111 promises knowledge of remedies. The words place care for illness among forms of valued knowledge without preserving a complete medical method.

In Empedocles. B146 names physicians among the last human roles before growth into divinity. Their inclusion gives healing an ethical and honorific prominence alongside seers, hymn-singers, and chieftains. B112 depicts men and women coming to the speaker after prolonged pain, hoping to hear a healing word. The verse emphasizes suffering, reputation, and the voice of the healer rather than clinical detail.

B111 extends the claim of expertise to remedies against illness and old age, control of destructive weather, and leading a dead man's strength out of Hades. These promises illuminate the scope of the speaker's self-presentation, but do not supply demonstrations of efficacy. The introduction warns that later miracle biographies may be derived from such verses. A lexicon should accordingly explain the ancient claim without recommending Empedoclean procedures as contemporary treatment or presenting resurrection as an established historical achievement.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 146.1–3. Physicians appear in the final human stage before divinity.

B 112.9–12. The sick seek a healing word after prolonged suffering.

B 111.1–9. The teacher promises remedies and extraordinary powers.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The introduction distinguishes miracle stories from independent historical evidence.

In this edition. “Healing word” is what the translation gives, not a record of a named drug or treatment. The fragment’s claims remain literary and historical evidence about a healer’s role.

See also. Divine ascent; Seers; Remedies and extraordinary powers; Hades; Pausanias and Anchites.

Piety

Εὐσεβίης (Eusebiēs); ὁσίων (hosiōn); καθαρὴν (katharēn); εὐσεβέεσσιν (eusebeessin)

The word. Eusebeia is piety or reverence. B3 personifies it as the place or company from which the Muse’s chariot comes. The related adjective in B128 characterizes the images offered to Cypris as pious. Other nearby words distinguish holiness and purity: they support a shared ethical register without being exact synonyms.

In Empedocles. B3 makes piety a condition of good discourse. Holy mouths are to release a pure spring, and the Muse is asked to bring only what ephemeral hearers may lawfully hear. Ambition for honour must not push speech beyond holiness. The movement into methodological advice shows that reverence here is compatible with careful use of evidence; piety is not defined as refusing to examine appearances.

B128 embodies the same word-family in worship. Pious images, perfumes, incense, and honey please Cypris

without the killing condemned later in the fragment. B137 exposes the contrary possibility: a father may utter a prayer while doing something appalling because he does not recognize his transformed son. The external form of prayer therefore does not guarantee right action. Piety in this vocabulary must be read with knowledge, restraint, and the character of the offering, not simply with the presence of religious ceremony.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 3.1–8. The Muse comes from Piety; speech is bounded by holiness and purity.

B 128.4–10. The offerings to Cypris include pious images and exclude slaughter-blood.

B 137.1–4. A prayer accompanies the father's unrecognized kin-murder.

In this edition. "House of Piety" is the translator's spatial expansion of the Greek phrase; the personified name itself is secure. The connection between the two passages rests on the shared word-family, not proof of an organized cult called Piety.

See also. Muse; Sacrifice; Purification and fasting; Kin-murder; Painted offerings; Holy speech.

Pleasure and pain

ἥδοντ' (hēdont'); ἀνιῶνται (aniōntai); φρονέουσι (phroneousi)

The word. B107 places being pleased and being pained beside thinking. The verbs describe what constituted things do through the same constituents from which they are fitted and compacted. No separate noun naming a faculty of feeling occurs in the fragment.

In Empedocles. The two-line passage is compact but philosophically wide-reaching. The physical account does not stop at explaining the shape of an organism. The very materials through which things are formed also account for cognition and affective experience. Pleasure and pain are therefore not appended as unexplained events after the body has been built.

The demonstrative “these” depends on a context not fully reproduced within the fragment. The surrounding physical account makes reference to the constituents natural, but the two lines alone do not enumerate them. Likewise, “all things” must be handled at the scale of the statement, without inventing a detailed ranking of which particular substances experience pleasure in which way.

B109’s knowing of like by like and B105’s thought-bearing blood provide closely related points of entry. Neither supplies a complete account of the causes of particular pleasures or pains. The book preserves a general commitment to shared material conditions for formation and experience, not a catalogue of sensations or a modern neurological mechanism.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 107. Bodily composition, thinking, pleasure, and pain are linked in the same statement.

B 109. Like-by-like apprehension also links cognitive activity with physical constituents.

B 105. Thought is identified with blood around the human heart.

In this edition. The fragment is quoted by Theophrastus in On the Senses. That provenance is useful, but it does not make the two verses a verbatim summary of everything in his report about Empedocles.

See also. Heart and thought; Changing thought; Like perceives like; Mixture.

Pomegranates

σίδαι (sidai); ὀψίγονοί (opsigonoi)

The word. The pomegranates in B80 are qualified as late-born. The adjective describes timing through the language of birth, continuing the poem's habit of making plant production legible in reproductive terms. The noun and its descriptor survive within one short line.

In Empedocles. The opening "wherefore" signals an explanation whose earlier premise is lost. Empedocles was not simply naming attractive fruits; the line presents the pomegranates' lateness as a consequence of something already said. The lexicon can identify the result, but not the missing cause.

The adjacent apples are described by fullness of sap rather than lateness. That contrast preserves two different kinds of botanical observation in a single verse: time of appearance and internal abundance. It is unnecessary to force both fruits under one unsupported seasonal or thermal theory. Elsewhere the book does connect warmth with bodily formation, but that does not supply the particular explanation missing here.

The enduring fruit of B77.78 offers a useful comparison because it too makes time important to botanical description. Neither passage gives a planting calendar or practical horticultural instruction. The pomegranate's role is a local example of explained natural difference, whose causal frame has been clipped by transmission.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 80. The single verse calls pomegranates late-born and begins with an inferential “wherefore.”

B 77.78. Year-round fruit provides a separate temporal description of plant growth.

In this edition. The rendering “late-born” retains the birth-image. A modern season label would be more specific than the supplied evidence, which does not state a month, region, or comparison crop.

See also. Apples; Everlasting leaves and fruit; Trees; Olives as eggs.

Poseidon

Ποσειδῶν (Poseidōn)

The word. Poseidon is the final divine name in B128’s list before the declaration of Cypris’ queenship. His name remains a name in the translation, not a gloss for the sea or for the water-root.

In Empedocles. The community described does not have Poseidon among its divine powers, just as it lacks Ares, Battle-Din, Zeus as king, and Cronos. The next line supplies the positive counterpart, Cypris as queen. This local reordering of divine allegiance belongs to the portrait of bloodless worship and peaceful life.

The fragment gives no further description of Poseidon and does not explain why each excluded deity is named. A reader may recognize familiar associations with the sea, but should not treat them as a stated Empedoclean root mapping. The four-root catalogue in B6 uses different names, including Nestis, and its identifications are

disputed. B128 neither resolves those disputes nor introduces a fifth root under Poseidon's name.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.2–3. Poseidon concludes the list of gods absent among Cypris's people.

In this edition. The negative statement concerns "them," a community with a lost antecedent. It does not say that the sea ceases to exist or that Poseidon is universally denied.

See also. Cypris; Golden age; Nestis; Sea; Cronos.

Pupil and membranes

κύκλοπα κούρην (kyklopa kourēn); μήνιγξιν (mēninxin); λεπτῆισίν (leptēisin); ὀθόνηισι (othonēisi); χοάνηισι (choanēisi)

The word. The eye passage locates primeval fire within the rounded pupil and describes enclosing membranes and fine tissues. The tissues are pierced with channels. These are concrete anatomical and textile-like expressions, not a single abstract term for a sense organ.

In Empedocles. The structure has two complementary functions: it holds surrounding water back and permits finer fire to pass out. The covering is therefore neither a sealed wall nor an unrestricted opening. Its particular organization explains why one component remains enclosed while another can cross. This is a local instance of the importance of fit and passage in Empedoclean physical explanation.

The fire is said to lie in ambush. That personifying expression gives the enclosed active constituent a readiness to emerge; it need not imply a small conscious

person living inside the eye. The membranes and tissues, by contrast, receive the language of controlled enclosure and perforation. The description combines active material with a structured route.

The immediate comparison with a screened lamp limits the most secure interpretation. Just as a protective screen separates blowing wind from issuing light, the bodily covering separates surrounding water from issuing fire. The passage does not name a retina, explain a lens, or identify the tissues with a complete modern anatomy of the eye. Its technical specificity is real, but it belongs to its own model.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 84.7–11. The pupil contains enclosed fire; perforated tissues retain water while passing finer fire.

B 84.1–6. The first half supplies the lamp-and-screen comparison.

In this edition. The connective beside “fine tissues” and the relative pronoun beginning the next line are supplied in the printed Greek. The words should not be treated as though every detail of the syntax survived without editorial help. The individual tissue words are attested even where their connection is editorially restored.

See also. Eye; Lantern; Passages; Birth-caul.

Purification and fasting

Καθαρμοί (Katharmoi); νηστεῦσαι κακότητος (nēsteusai kakotētos); καθαρῆισιν (katharēisin)

The word. Katharmoi means purifications and appears as a work-title in the editorial headings and in Theon’s report at B153a. It is not a word spoken in a surviving

verse under that heading. B144's more concrete phrase is "to fast from wickedness": an abstention word transfers the language of food-discipline into ethical conduct.

In Empedocles. The command at B144 is brief enough to resist a detailed reconstruction of ritual practice. It tells the reader what to refrain from, wickedness, rather than naming a duration without food, a washing, or a sacrificial ceremony. Its figurative force is especially pointed in a corpus that also prohibits slaughter, meat-eating, laurel leaves, and beans. Restraint can concern both particular substances and destructive behaviour more broadly.

B145 adds that those distracted by grievous wickedness will not ease their hearts of sorrow. It makes ethical disorder and suffering mutually relevant, but supplies no procedural promise that a particular rite will immediately remove pain. B3's pure spring of holy speech and B110's pure studies show that purity-language also belongs to speaking and learning. A regimen of purification in this corpus is therefore wider than diet, even though no complete manual survives.

The title cannot be used to quarantine all these themes in one original religious poem. This edition explicitly treats the allocation of fragments as editorial and discusses the uncertainty of the one-poem/two-poem question. B153a is especially instructive: a later author associates embryological material with the Purifications. The work-title does not guarantee a modern division between bodily explanation and ritual teaching.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 144. The surviving phrase enjoins fasting from wickedness.

B 145. Wickedness is connected with continuing sorrow.

B 3.1–8. Purity and holiness characterize proper speech.

B 110.1–5. The student is to contemplate with pure studies.

B 153a (report). Theon attributes an embryological hint to the work called Purifications.

In this edition. Katharmoi is an attested reported title, not proof that the printed section reproduces an original continuous work. B144 is a fragmentary phrase; it does not establish a prescribed fast of any specified length.

See also. Piety; Meat-eating; Beans; Laurel; Necessity; Transmigration.

Quarrel

Δῆρίς (Dēris); δῆρις (dēris); Ἐρίδεσσι (Eridessi); ἐρίδων (eridōn)

The word. Dēris means strife or contention, and Eris belongs to the same field of quarrelling. They are lexically distinct from Neikos, the principal cosmic name translated “Strife.” The translation’s “Quarrel” and “Quarrels” lets related imagery remain recognizable without flattening the words into a single proper name.

In Empedocles. Bloody Quarrel appears beside grave-eyed Harmony in B122/123. That adjacency gives the clearest pair of conflict and fitting-together in the personification catalogue. B27a says that no faction or unseemly quarrel is present in the divine body’s limbs. The absence of contention corresponds to an undivided condition, but the fragment does not name the speaker or describe a civic institution.

B20 applies the plural Erides to the cutting apart of living limbs. It contrasts their action with Love’s gathering

of the body at its flourishing peak. B124 laments the mortal race's birth from strifes and groanings, again making conflict a condition of suffering. Across these places, contention belongs simultaneously to bodily separation and ethically charged experience. The overlap with Neikos is functional and poetic; the texts do not require several independent cosmic principles for each near-synonym.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.2. Bloody Quarrel is paired with grave-eyed Harmony.

B 27a. Quarrel and faction are absent from the divine limbs.

B 20.1–5. Wicked Quarrels cut apart bodily limbs.

B 124. Mortals are lamented as born from strifes and groanings.

In this edition. Dēris, Eris, and Neikos are not interchangeable spellings. This article keeps the first two as a lexical family of contention while directing the central two-power doctrine to Strife.

See also. Strife; Wrath; Harmony; Isolated limbs; Mortal things.

Reflected light

ἀλλότριον φῶς (allotrion phōs); αὐγὴ (augē); ἀνταυγεῖ (antaugei); ἀκτίνεσσιν (aktinessin)

The word. Allotrion phōs means light belonging to another, rendered "a light not her own" in B 45. Augē is a ray or radiance, and antaugei in B 44 describes flashing back. These related words concern luminosity and its

direction, but do not form a single stated theory of reflection applicable to all visible things.

In Empedocles. The clearest astronomical linkage is lunar. A ray strikes the moon's broad circle in B 43, and B 45 makes the borrowed light circle around earth. B 42 shows light being blocked in an eclipse. Together, they distinguish a luminous source, a receiving body, and an interruption of rays without requiring a later optical vocabulary.

B 44 says something flashes back towards Olympus with an undaunted face. The printed line leaves its subject unnamed. It supplies a reflection-like action and direction, but cannot by itself settle which celestial body is intended or establish all details of an ancient solar-reflection theory. That would require the surrounding source or further testimony not printed here.

At the bodily scale, B 84 compares the finer light escaping a lamp's screens with fire passing outward through the eye's tissues. This is a distinct use of rays in an account of vision. It should be compared with the celestial lines without reducing the whole perceptual explanation to ordinary reflected sunlight. B 135's boundless light, finally, helps express the universal reach of law, showing how physical radiance can also mark comprehensive scope.[34]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 43. A ray strikes the lunar circle.

B 45. The light circling earth is described as belonging to another.

[34] Reflection, emission, illumination, and recognition are distinguishable questions. A shared vocabulary of light does not prove that Empedocles explained all four in exactly the same way.

B 44. An unnamed subject flashes back towards Olympus.

B 84.1–11. Light escapes lamp screens in rays, providing the comparison for fire in the eye.

B 135. Boundless light marks the extent of what is lawful for all.

In this edition. The translation's "not her own" supplies a natural lunar reading, but B 44's "it" preserves an unresolved subject. The lexicon should not silently merge the two fragments into a single unbroken statement about one reflector.

See also. Moon; Sun; Eclipse; Night; Eye; Lantern; Fire; Universal law.

Remedies and extraordinary powers

φάρμακα (pharmaka); γήραος ἄλκαι (gēraos alkai); εὐηκέα βάξιν (euēkea baxin); μένος ἀνδρός (menos andros)

The word. Pharmaka in B 111 are remedies or potent agents against ills. Alkai are defences or protections, here against old age. B 112's euēkea baxin is a healing utterance sought by sufferers. Menos andros names a man's strength or vital force in the final promise of B 111.

In Empedocles. B 111 promises knowledge with extraordinary practical scope. The hearer will learn remedies against illness and defences against ageing, stop and restore winds, turn rain into seasonable dryness and summer drought into tree-nourishing streams, and lead the strength of a dead man out of Hades. The series connects human vulnerability, agriculture, weather, and the boundary of death. It is a programmatic assertion of power, not a surviving manual of techniques.

The exclusive address, “for you alone,” makes the promise part of a privileged relation between teacher and hearer. It does not disclose the means of transmission or demonstrate an institution of initiation. The statement that the hearer will learn and the statement that the speaker will accomplish these things are both present; their relation should not be flattened into a modern claim that one person gives another an experimentally established medical treatment.

B 112 presents the public counterpart: visitors seek oracles or a healing word after long suffering. That scene explains why the teaching would matter to its audience while also staging the poet’s prestige. B 146 places physicians alongside seers, hymn-singers, and leaders near the culmination of the return to divine honour. Healing belongs within a wider religious and social field.

The introduction warns that later stories of wind control and revival may have been fashioned from B 111. The resemblance between legend and verse is not independent corroboration. The lexical relation to B 23 also deserves attention: pharmaka there are pigments. The noun’s broad material range prevents the reader from assuming that every occurrence concerns medicine. Nothing in these fragments establishes present-day efficacy or authorizes attempts to reproduce the promised powers.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 111.1–9. A series of promised powers begins with remedies and ends with leading a dead man’s strength from Hades.

B 112.9–12. Crowds seek a healing utterance against disease.

B 146.1–3. Physicians are named with other honoured human roles.

B 23.3. Pharmaka refers to painters' colouring materials.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The editor treats miracle anecdotes as possibly derived from the poem.

In this edition. The final object of B 111 is menos, rendered "strength," not an occurrence of psychē or daimōn. "Defences against old age" is a poetic promise, not a modern medical recommendation. The edition provides no recipe or procedure by which the claims could be tested.

See also. Wind-staying; Pausanias and Anchites; Acragas and the civic audience; Painters and colours; Sunset of life.

Repetition and the double tale

δίπλ' ἐρέω (dipl' ereō); καὶ δὶς (kai dis); παλίνορσος (palinorsos)

The word. The phrase dipl' ereō means "A double tale I shall tell." Kai dis means "even twice," in B 25's endorsement of saying what needs saying again. Palinorsos in B 35 marks the speaker's turning back.

In Empedocles. B 17 begins by promising a twofold telling and then returns to the formula within the same quotation. The account concerns one growing from many and many separating from one, with the mortal processes of generation and destruction explained through the opposed movements. Its verbal return helps the hearer hold together processes that must be distinguished but understood relationally.

B 25 states the pedagogical principle in a single line: what needs saying can rightly be said twice. That line is preserved by a scholiast, not transmitted as a heading explaining B 17. The connection is interpretative, but unusually well grounded in the actual repetitions of the longer fragment. B 35 also announces a return to a previously told path, channelling one argument from another. The poem itself acknowledges recapitulation as a means of moving its exposition forward.

The presence of repetition must nevertheless be separated from the work of reconstruction. B 26 repeats lines or formulations also known in B 17, and the edition places the quotations in its own sequence. This does not prove that an original reader encountered them in exactly that order, or that every repeated surviving line represents an independently located passage rather than the way different witnesses excerpted the text. The unit called a B fragment is an editorial unit.

Equally, “double tale” should not become automatic proof of two original poems or of every detail of a symmetrical cosmic cycle. It introduces a twofold relation in the surviving account. Questions about how many world-formations or organism-formations the complete poem contained require further argument. A lexicon can illuminate the formal vocabulary without converting it into a shortcut through the central scholarly controversies.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.1–17. The opening formula is repeated within one continuous witness quotation.

B 25. The isolated line explicitly commends saying a needed thing twice.

B 35.1–2. The speaker returns to an earlier path of song.

B 26.8–12. The quotation repeats formulations also found in B 17.

In this edition. The Greek text uses a straight apostrophe in δίπλ’ ἐρέω; typography should not be mistaken for a distinct form. The repeated presentation is preserved rather than silently compressed. It should not be used to infer the composition order from Diels numbers.

See also. Learning and attentive study; Paths and channels of speech; Fragments and Diels numbering; On Nature and Purifications; Cycle.

Respiration

ἀναπνεῖ (anapnei); ἐκπνεῖ (ekpnei); σαρκῶν σύριγγες (sarkōn syringes); λίφαιμοι (liphaimoi)

The word. B100 opens by promising how all things breathe in and out. The principal bodily terms are pipes of flesh, scantness of blood, openings or ducts, and soft blood moving to and fro. Respiration is presented as an alternating material process, not as a separate immaterial power of animation.

In Empedocles. The first movement is blood’s withdrawal from the outer region. Aither then rushes inward through available passages. When blood returns, breath is driven outward. The surface must therefore admit one material while retaining another: the openings keep blood enclosed but provide a way through for aither. Movement and selective passage, not merely the presence of organs, explain the process.

The long clepsydra comparison allows the audience to follow the alternation in a familiar vessel. A girl closes an opening with her hand, immerses the bronze object, and releases the closure. Trapped air can stop water from

entering; when the air is permitted to leave, water enters. Conversely, a closed upper passage can keep water from running out until air is admitted. The body is then revisited: blood retreats, aither comes down, blood advances, and an equal quantity of breath goes back out.

The comparison works because the constituents occupy space and their movements constrain one another. The poem does not say that air is a weightless absence. It calls the air inside the vessel a mass and gives the entering aither pressure-like, surging activity. These are legitimate observations about the ancient explanation; a modern physiological equivalence would go further. The passage neither describes oxygen uptake nor supplies a complete lung-and-heart circulation.

There is also an important anatomical caution within this edition. Its opening speaks of pipes at the outermost body, but the next lines translate the pierced ends as nostrils. A reader should not resolve that tension by silently deciding that the entire passage is exclusively cutaneous or exclusively nasal. The printed wording securely attests passages, blood containment, and alternation with aither; a fuller determination requires interpretation beyond its plain English.

B102 connects breathing with smell. That brief statement helps explain why the respiration passage matters to perception as well as bodily maintenance. It does not make the clepsydra an all-purpose model for every sense. The eye and ear receive different images appropriate to their particular activities.

The movement is also expressed through strikingly different scales of imagery. Minute bodily passages are described with the language of pipes and furrows, while incoming aither behaves like a raging surge. In the vessel,

an opening becomes a gate and its narrow connection a harsh-sounding neck. These figures organize the reader's attention: the smallness of a route does not prevent a materially effective flow through it. The argument repeatedly alternates between the bounded structure and the moving constituent.

The final equality is another feature worth preserving. The outward movement of breath answers the inward movement, rather than being a second independent episode. This gives the process a balanced, reciprocal form. It does not amount to a numerical respiratory measurement, because no units, rate, or experimental series are stated. The poem instead establishes the intelligibility of recurrent exchange through a comparison whose successive states the listener can mentally follow.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 100.1–8, 22–25. The bodily mechanism frames the vessel comparison.

B 100.9–21. The clepsydra sequence displays the reciprocal movement of air and water.

B 102. Breathing and smells are jointly allotted to all things.

B 101. Nostrils investigate material traces left by beasts.

In this edition. The translation's "water-catcher" identifies the illustrative vessel without treating it as a timekeeping clock. Its bodily "nostrils" also deserves notice beside the phrase "outermost body"; neither wording should be omitted to make the physiology look simpler than the source.

See also. Clepsydra; Blood; Passages; Skin; Smell; Aither.

Rivets of affection

γόμφοις (gomphois); καταστόργοις (katastorgois); ἀσκήσασα (askēsasa)

The word. B87 describes Aphrodite as having worked something with rivets of affection. The plural fastenings receive an adjective of attachment or fondness. A material craft operation and the language of love are deliberately brought into one expression.

In Empedocles. The fragment makes joining a structured activity. A rivet does not erase every distinction between the pieces it fastens; it holds them together in a workable arrangement. This is a useful image for an organism whose parts remain different while belonging to one body. The neighbouring eye-making verse B86 makes an anatomical application plausible, but the object of the verb is not expressed within B87 itself.

The epithet is as important as the rivet. Aphrodite's fastening is affectionate or binding through attachment, so the mechanical and personal meanings reinforce one another. Translating the phrase simply as physical attraction would strip away the artisan and the affective relation that the verse keeps together.

The milk simile B33 uses a cognate fastening verb for fig-juice binding milk. That parallel shows that the craft language can describe cohesion within a substance as well as the assembly of discrete parts. Bone's gluings and the joint that binds two provide further variations. The images overlap in their concern with stable connection but should not be collapsed into a literal inventory of tools used to build creatures.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 87. The whole fragment attributes the affectionate riveting to Aphrodite.

B 86. Aphrodite's fashioning of eyes is preserved nearby by the same witness.

B 33. The fastening verb describes fig-juice binding milk.

B 32. A joint is said to bind two.

In this edition. The English pronoun "them" supplies an object for readability. The Greek excerpt itself does not name it, so "rivets of the eyes" should be treated as a contextual association rather than the fragment's full explicit wording.

See also. Joint; Eye; Fig-juice and milk; Harmony; Aphrodite.

Roots

ῥιζώματα (rhizōmata); τέσσαρα (tessara)

The word. Rhizōmata is the plural printed in B 6: the four "roots" of everything. It belongs to the vocabulary of rooting and growth, and the image remains audible when the poem makes trees, bodies, and even gods grow from its permanent constituents. "Root" therefore identifies what compounds arise from without treating that source as inert stuff. The numeral is explicit; the four divine names that follow are not a later commentator's addition to the verse. The ordinary word for a plant-root also appears in B 54, where aither sinks beneath earth with long roots. The recurrence gives the cosmological metaphor a physical, penetrating reach, although it does not make every root-image a technical enumeration of four substances.

In Empedocles. The secure starting points should be separated from the disputed ones. B 6 names four roots, Zeus, Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis. B 17 names fire, water, earth, and the height of air, and then Strife and Love. These two lists support the familiar account of four permanent constituents whose combinations constitute the visible world. They do not, by themselves, supply a name-by-name concordance between every god and every constituent. Nestis is the least disputed identification, because she moistens the mortal spring with tears and reappears as an ingredient in bone. The other assignments require interpretation or testimony beyond B 6. The introduction records conflicting ancient identifications of Hera and Aidoneus and a modern alternative which also reassigns Zeus. None should be concealed in a translation.

The roots are permanent through the making and unmaking of particular things. B 17 does not say that all observable objects survive unchanged. It says that these very constituents remain, running through one another, while their combinations become different things. B 21 makes the contrast especially clear: trees, humans, animals, and long-lived gods derive from the same sources, but blending changes how they look. B 23's painters use differing quantities of existing pigments to produce many forms. This analogy concerns multiplicity from a limited stock; it is not proof that the roots themselves are pigments, particles of one uniform size, or chemical elements in the modern sense.

The roots also have differentiated characters and offices. Equality and equal age do not erase the contrast between warming fire, chilling rain, and solid earth. Nor does the doctrine reduce every root to one basic substance: earth can increase earth and aither aither, while the mixture which constitutes blood brings distinct

ingredients together in approximately equal measures. Love and Strife affect how the roots meet, separate, and dominate in turn. Their inclusion beside the four in B 17 is important, but does not turn the announced four roots into a list of six roots. The poem can coordinate constituents and powers without supplying the later categories of material and efficient cause.

Divine vocabulary is integral to this account. B 98 places Earth, Hephaestus, rain, and shining aither in Cypris' harbours; B 109 names divine aither and recognises love by love. These usages prevent a simple split between a literal physical doctrine and disposable mythological decoration. Yet names vary with setting, and not every occurrence of Zeus, Hades, sun, or sea is a substitution cipher for a root. The roots enter cosmology, embodied life, perception, and the exile narrative together, without the surviving text fully explaining how those domains fit.

The important historical limit is equally clear. Empedocles precedes Plato. Calling the roots "elements" can be a useful modern shorthand, but it must not import the later technical vocabulary or the geometrical construction of bodies associated with Plato. This book's deliberate "roots" preserves the poet's own growth-language and allows his divine names to remain genuinely interpretive questions.[35]

[35] The masculine Sphairos and the roots named as gods are distinct kinds of divine language; recognising both does not establish a single hierarchy of Empedoclean gods. The introduction reports ancient and modern debates, while the edition omits the full A-testimonia and papyrus texts. An argument requiring those materials cannot be completed from this volume alone.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 6. The explicit fourfold announcement and divine-name list; no individual root-to-god identifications are supplied in the three lines.

B 17.18–35. The physical list, the two opposed powers, equality, distinct offices, and the persistence of the constituents across changing compounds.

B 21.3–14. Visible qualities and the catalogue of living things and gods show what mixture makes from the persistent sources.

B 23. The painter analogy explains diversity through different proportions of existing ingredients.

B 7. The word “roots” is supplied editorially; the surviving adjective is “ungenerated.”

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The competing divine mappings and the distinction from later element-language are modern explanatory apparatus.

In this edition. The translation consistently chooses “roots,” not “elements.” Its introduction’s reconstruction is helpful context, but must not be mistaken for additional Empedoclean verses. In particular, B 7 does not independently transmit a complete statement “the roots are ungenerated”: the noun is bracketed. The headings and B-number order likewise do not establish where B 6 originally stood relative to B 17.

See also. Fire; Air; Aither; Water and rain; Earth; Zeus; Hera; Aidoneus; Nestis; Love; Strife; Mixture; Being; Birth.

Ruin

Ἄτης (Atēs); λειμῶνα (leimōna)

The word. Atē can express ruinous error, delusion, or disaster. Here the genitive makes a meadow the domain

of Ruin. Leimōn supplies the meadow image, ordinarily a place of growth, which the surrounding darkness and destructive figures make unsettling.

In Empedocles. B121 describes Murder, Wrath, and the tribes of Dooms wandering in darkness through Ruin's meadow. The name joins an ethical register of disastrous error to a landscape of suffering. Unlike a prose definition, the image allows place and condition to reinforce each other: the travellers are in a region characterized by what ruins life.

The surviving line does not say that Atē is an additional elemental force, explain whether she governs the inhabitants, or tell how someone escapes the meadow. Comparison with the exile caused by wrongdoing in B115 is useful, but a causal statement connecting those scenes is absent. Nor should the meadow be confused with Aphrodite's "cloven meadows" in B66, whose local bodily context is quite different. A repeated landscape noun need not signify one shared location.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 121. Ruin gives her name to the dark meadow traversed by destructive presences.

B 115.1–8. The decree offers a related moral narrative of error and suffering, without naming Ruin.

In this edition. The English capitalizes Ruin as a name. The Greek genitive identifies an association with the meadow; it does not alone resolve whether Ruin is imagined as its owner, ruler, or defining condition.

See also. Dooms; Unfamiliar place; False swearing; Aphrodite.

Sacred mind

φρὴν ἱερὴ (phrēn hierē); ἀθέσφατος (athesphatos); φροντίσι (phrontisi)

The word. Phrēn hierē is a sacred mind. Athesphatos is rendered unutterable; the translation emphasizes what cannot be adequately expressed. Phrontisi, thoughts, describes the swift activity through which the divine subject ranges through the ordered whole.

In Empedocles. B 134 defines its subject first by exclusion. He has no human head upon limbs, no branches projecting from his back, no feet, swift knees, or hairy sexual organs. The positive statement then identifies him as sacred mind alone, darting through the entire ordered world with swift thoughts. This is an unusually forceful resistance to a human-shaped image of divinity.

B 133 gives a related epistemic restriction: the subject cannot be brought within reach of human eyes or grasped by hands, the ordinary highway by which persuasion reaches the mind. The two passages are placed together in this edition, but are quoted by different ancient witnesses. They should be interpreted together with that qualification, not silently presented as one continuously preserved speech.

The resemblance between B 134's bodily denials and B 29's description of the Sphere invites comparison. Both refuse arms, feet, knees, and generative organs. The resemblance does not by itself establish that the sacred mind is the Sphere or resolve how a divine mind relates to the world across the cosmic cycle. B 134 does not name its subject in the surviving lines. An identification with one named god, or with the sole divine being of the system, requires evidence and argument beyond this quotation.

The word phrēn also belongs to human understanding elsewhere in the poems. Its use here neither turns the divine subject into a human anatomical organ nor proves a wholly incorporeal substance in a later philosophical sense. What is clearly asserted is the rejection of the listed human features and a swift, comprehensive activity of thought. The grandeur of that thought should be read alongside the limited sensory reach of humans, without inventing a complete theology from five preserved lines.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 134.1–5. Negative anatomy gives way to a positive identification as sacred mind.

B 133. Ordinary visual and tactile access to the divine subject is denied.

B 29.1–3. The Sphere is described through a closely comparable rejection of limbs and sexual organs.

B 132. Knowledge concerning gods is contrasted with dark opinion.

In this edition. The edition's "unutterable" is one interpretative choice for the epithet, not a proof that no true statement about the subject can be made. B 134 is preserved by Tzetzes and B 133 by Clement; their joint placement under Book III is editorial rather than a continuous transmitted passage.

See also. Understanding and inward thought; Faculties and evidence; Wealth of understanding; Sphairos; On Nature and Purifications.

Sacrifice

θυσίαις (thysiais); θύοντας (thyontas); σφάζει (sphazei)

The word. The fragments distinguish offering or sacrifice from slaughter. B128 calls myrrh and frankincense offerings "sacrifices"; B137 uses a verb for sacrificing alongside an explicit verb for killing. The English category "sacrifice" should therefore not be defined in advance as the ritual killing of an animal.

In Empedocles. B128 supplies a positive model of propitiation under Cypris. Its worshippers offer pious images, painted figures, perfumed substances, myrrh, frankincense, and honey. The altar remains free of bulls' slaughter-blood. The point is not a rejection of all relations with divine powers: the queen is still honoured and propitiated. The rejected act is tearing out life and eating limbs, which the poem calls a grave defilement.

B137 makes sacrificial killing a catastrophe of recognition. The father raises and slaughters a beloved son whose form has changed, praying as he does so. The ritual setting gives the killing an appearance of religious propriety while the concealed kinship makes its true character horrifying. The passage then reverses family positions, extending the charge beyond one exceptional father.

Read together, the fragments distinguish a worship that sustains a nonviolent relation to life from a ritual that masks violence. They do not preserve a complete sacrificial manual or show that every community followed the poet's prescription. They also leave historical questions about practice open. What survives is a forceful poetic contrast with specified materials and acts.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 128.4–10. The poem names fragrant offerings as sacrifices while condemning bloody consumption.

B 137.1–6. A father slaughters his transformed son with a prayer; the family roles then reverse.

B 136. The appeal to stop slaughter explains it as mutual devouring.

In this edition. “Sacrifices of unmixed myrrh” is an important lexical counterexample to equating sacrifice with animal killing. B136–137 depend here on quotations transmitted through Sextus, whose setting is not a full surviving Empedoclean ritual handbook.

See also. Cypris; Kin-murder; Meat-eating; Incense and perfumes; Honey libations; Altar.

Salt

ἅλς (hals); ἐπάγη (epagē); ῥιπῆισιν (rhipēisin)

The word. Hals is printed in B 56 and translated “salt.” The line describes compaction: salt was fixed or congealed, driven together by the sun’s beatings. Its force is more specific than a general assertion that the sun warms the sea, but the single verse preserves no quantitative or sequential explanation.

In Empedocles. The passage shows how a formed material can arise by an action on what already exists. Its language fits the broader account of compaction and rearrangement rather than production from nothing. The solar beatings also give the sun a causal role in terrestrial formation, beyond its role as a visible witness to warmth and brightness.

Comparison with earth's sweat, the sea, is tempting because the fragments are adjacent in the edition and both concern familiar watery or mineral things. Yet their numbering and placement do not establish continuous original order. One should not claim that B 55–56 together supply a complete theory of sea-salt formation. Nor does the short description support a modern chemical identification of the ingredients or a reliable experimental recipe.[36]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 56. Salt is compacted through the sun's driving beatings.

B 55. The separate sea-as-sweat expression offers a related material context, without an established textual join.

B 21.3–6. Solar warmth and brightness are visible physical witnesses.

In this edition. The unusual breathing in the printed ἅλς is retained as source typography. "Salt" is the supplied translation's choice; an independent lexical discussion of hals should not silently replace the edition's reading with "sea."

See also. Sun; Sea; Earth; Mixture; Being.

Scales

λεπίδες (lepides)

The word. Λεπίδες are scales, the last item in B82's list of corresponding surface growths. They occur "upon stout limbs," alongside the comparison with hair, leaves, and

[36] The fragment is preserved by Hephaestion in a work on metre, an instance of how formal rather than doctrinal interests can determine which physical verse survives.

dense feathers. No specific scaled species is named in the line.

In Empedocles. The force of the example is comparative. Scales, like feathers and hair, can be recognized as a distinct bodily form, yet the poem states that the listed structures are the same things. This is intelligible against the wider insistence that apparent diversity arises from mixture and arrangement of common constituents. The fragment does not provide a separate set of ingredients peculiar to scales.

It is useful to resist two opposite simplifications. The structures are not merely unrelated ornaments selected for a poetic list; the emphatic sameness asks for a common physical explanation. But they are not therefore interchangeable in every feature or function. A scale's visible form remains a scale even when its materials have a shared origin with other coverings.

The shelled animals of B76 give a neighbouring example of external bodily material, explicitly placing earth above flesh. That passage describes a hard outer arrangement, whereas B82's scale line does not specify an earthy proportion. Connecting the examples can illuminate the interest in bodily surfaces without borrowing a recipe from one and assigning it to the other.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 82. Scales complete the comparison of animal and plant coverings.

B 76. Hard outer coverings in shelled creatures provide a separate material-position example.

In this edition. The edition does not add "fish" to the scales in B82. Fish are plausible readers' associations, but

the line should not be narrowed to them when its Greek leaves the bearer unspecified.

See also. Hair; Leaves; Feathers; Shells; Fish.

Scent-tracking

κέρματα θηρείων μελέων (kermata thēreiōn meleōn); μυκτῆρσιν ἐρευνῶν (myktērsin ereunōn); ἀπαλῇι περὶ ποίηι (hapalēi peri poiēi)

The word. The fragment speaks of “fragments of the limbs of beasts” investigated with nostrils. Its final words place the traces in soft grass, where the beasts have left them through their feet. The perceiving subject is not named in the surviving excerpt.

In Empedocles. The scene gives olfaction a material pathway. A moving animal leaves something of its body behind, and another creature can use those remains as evidence of its passage. The language of investigation is active: the nostrils are not simply struck by an unexplained smell but participate in a search.

The bodily fragments need not be imagined as visibly severed pieces of limb. The scale is not specified, but their use in scent-tracking encourages the interpretation of small residues. This makes the passage relevant to effluences without requiring the word “particle” as a verbatim ancient description. The grass also matters: the trace is deposited in an intervening surface, so the scene is more particular than an abstract claim that objects emit continuously into open air.

It is tempting to supply a hunting dog as the subject. The book’s printed Greek, translation, and local citation do not name one. Retaining the anonymous tracker respects the fragmentary evidence while leaving its

recognizable behavioural setting vivid. The exact point of perception is the nostrils' encounter with what the feet have left, not an unsupported taxonomy of especially keen-smelling animals.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 101. The complete fragment describes investigation by nostrils of traces left from beasts' feet in grass.

B 89. Effluences provide a broader, separately stated outflow principle.

B 102. Smell is linked with breathing in a general verse.

In this edition. The word translated "living" is supplied in angle brackets. It should not become the basis of an elaborate distinction between living and dead emissions. Neither the named species of tracker nor a precise particle size is preserved.

See also. Smell; Effluences; Fish; Passages.

Sea

θάλασσα (thalassa); πόντος πολυκύμων (pontos polykymōn); ἱδρῶτα τῆς γῆς (hidrōta tēs gēs)

The word. Thalassa and pontos name the sea, with different poetic forms across the fragments. B 38 calls it many-billowed. B 55 gives the memorable phrase "sweat of the earth," while the word identifying the sea is supplied in brackets. The bodily image makes a relationship between earth and sea vivid, but the surviving phrase does not spell out its complete physical mechanism.

In Empedocles. The sea functions as a major differentiated region. It is absent as a discernible thing in the Sphere, friendly with its dispersed parts in B 22, and

one of the visible presences named in B 38. These occurrences can be compared with water's place among the roots without treating the entire sea as a modern sample of a chemically simple element.

Calling it earth's sweat suggests emergence or secretion from earth. That suggestion is stronger than a neutral label but weaker than a complete theory of evaporation, mineral dissolution, or salinity. B 56's compaction of salt by the sun is a separate fragment and should not be seamlessly attached as the next sentence of B 55.

In B 115 the sea receives the exile from aither and spits him onto earth. Here it is a vigorous personal agent within the wandering itinerary. The verbs continue the poem's embodied cosmic imagery, while the element's role is expulsion rather than nourishment or mixture. This plurality of roles is part of the sea's lexical significance.[37]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 55. The sea is called earth's sweat; its explicit identifying noun is supplied.

B 27.1–4. Sea cannot be distinguished in the Sphere.

B 22.1–5. Sea is friendly with its own parts scattered through mortal things.

B 38.2–4. The visible regional list includes the many-billowed sea.

B 115.9–12. Sea receives and expels the wanderer.

In this edition. B 55 is a short transmitted expression, not a whole hexameter presented with a developed argument. Its bracketed "sea" is editorially provided. The translation

[37] The corpus often treats regions as agents. Such personification can contribute to an explanation without requiring literal human anatomy for the sea or earth.

preserves the bodily metaphor rather than replacing it with a guessed physical process.

See also. Water and rain; Earth; Salt; Iris; Sphairos; Daimon; Roots.

Seed

σπερμάτων (spermatōn); γονῆς (gonēs); τὸ μεῖγμα (to meigma)

The word. The words for seeds, generative material, and mixture in B92 belong to Aristotle's prose report of Empedocles, not to a surviving hexameter. They name two soft contributions that produce a dense or hard mixture. The plural matters: the explanation depends on contributions from both sides.

In Empedocles. The report describes hollow portions of one contribution fitting dense portions of the other. A resulting mixture can therefore possess a texture different from either starting material. The comparison is with metal hardened by the addition of tin. The edition's note identifies Aristotle's context as the sterility of mules; the argument is not an unqualified account of every successful conception. Its explanatory goal is to show how a generative mixture can become unsuitable for further generation.

This passage connects reproduction with the wider Empedoclean importance of fit, proportion, and texture. Bone, blood, and flesh also arise through distinctive combinations. In the seed report, however, complementary shape and density are foregrounded rather than a numerical recipe of the roots. The body produced or affected by a mixture need not simply average the properties of its sources.

B63, a genuine verse fragment, says that the formation of the limbs is divided and begins to locate one part in the man. It offers a limited point of contact for the dual contribution reported in B92. Because the rest of B63 is missing, it should not be expanded into a detailed doctrine about which parent supplies each organ or characteristic. Theon's seven-week report concerns embryonic completion, a different question again.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 92 (report). Aristotle reports a dense mixture produced from two soft seeds and an analogy with tin and bronze.

B 92 (editorial discussion). The local note identifies mule sterility as the question being explained.

B 63. A broken verse concerns the divided formation of limbs.

B 153a (report). The seven-week statement is a later report about embryonic completion.

In this edition. B92 is an exception within the B-series: its Greek is a testimonium in prose. Its "seed" vocabulary cannot automatically be assigned to Empedocles' own wording, and its mule context should not be erased by quoting only the physical analogy.

See also. Sexual differentiation; Seven weeks; Bone; Passages; Mixture.

Seers

μάντεις (manteis); μαντοσυνέων (mantosyneōn)

The word. Manteis are seers or diviners. B112's related noun refers to the oracular guidance sought by some of those who approach the speaker. "Prophet" is a possible

lookup term, but may bring later institutional assumptions not specified in these fragments.

In Empedocles. Seers head the list of final human roles at B146, followed by hymn-singers, physicians, and chieftains. Their placement gives divinatory expertise an honoured place in the passage toward divine status. It does not establish a formal priesthood, an initiation procedure, or the kind of signs a seer interprets.

B112 supplies a more active setting: people follow the crowned speaker, some needing oracles and others seeking a healing word against illness. His public role therefore connects specialized knowledge with practical requests from a community. The fragment reports the poetic speaker's reception and claims; it is not proof that particular predictions came true. Reading the two passages together makes the honoured final roles intelligible without inventing a biography for every member of the category.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 146.1–3. Seers are among the last human roles before growth into gods.

B 112.7–12. Some followers approach the speaker in need of oracular guidance.

In this edition. The verse lists several roles without ordering them as successive stages. "Seer" should not be generalized into an assertion that every person with divinatory claims attains divinity.

See also. Divine ascent; Hymn-singers; Physicians; Muse.

Separation

διάλλαξίς (diallaxis); ἀποκρινθῶσι (apokrinthōsi); διαφυομένων (diaphyomenōn); κρινόμενον πῦρ (krinomenon pyr)

The word. Empedocles has more than one way of describing separation. Things grow apart, are borne apart, are cut apart, or are separated out. Diallaxis in B 8 is rendered “interchange,” preserving a sense of changed arrangement rather than making it a fixed noun equivalent to total disintegration. The verbal variety helps distinguish a cosmic tendency from the many local events it can explain.

In Empedocles. B 17 alternates one growing from many with many growing from one. B 9 says that when the constituents separate, humans call the event ill-starred doom. These statements treat dissolution as a rearrangement of what exists, not its passage into nothing. The death of a compound may still be real at the compound’s level; the enduring constituents are not thereby annihilated.

The physical consequences of separating are not uniformly negative. In B 62 separating fire raises forms from earth in seeking its like. B 37 makes earth increase its own frame and aither aither, showing aggregation by kind. These processes can be related to differentiation without being confused with a fully restored world-order. Conversely, in B 20 the cutting apart of limbs ends a living body’s coherence. The same general movement must be evaluated at the scale and stage actually described.

The fragments do not support a neat modern formula in which Love only mixes unlike particles and Strife only attracts like particles. They do give evidence that separation, kinship, and regrouping are interconnected. A

lexicon can identify those relationships while leaving the exact cosmic sequence disputed.[38]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 8.3–4. The noun diallaxis concerns what has been mixed, translated here as interchange.

B 9.4–5. What humans call doom is described as the separation of previously mixed constituents.

B 17.1–13. The one–many account repeatedly describes growing apart.

B 20.4–5. Living limbs are cut apart by Quarrels.

B 62.1–6. Fire being separated out raises forms and seeks its like.

In this edition. "Interchange" in B 8 should not be silently corrected to one universal technical English noun. B 9 contains several supplements, including the negative in the criticism of ordinary naming, so its exact wording is less secure than an unmarked paraphrase suggests.

See also. Mixture; Strife; Death; One and many; Like and unlike; Being; Fire.

Seven weeks

ἐν ἑπτὰ ἑβδομάσιν (en hepta hebdomasin); βρέφος (brephos)

The word. "In seven weeks" is the phrase around which B153a is organized. The Greek βρέφος, here rendered "embryo," appears in Theon of Smyrna's report. Neither the surrounding sentence nor its embryological terminology is presented as an intact Empedoclean verse.

[38] A change of state in the poem is not automatically a phase transition in the modern physical sense. The permanent/compound distinction is the relevant textual framework.

In Empedocles. Theon says that an embryo seems to reach completion in seven weeks, as Empedocles hints in the Purifications. His context, identified by the edition, is a discussion of the power of seven. That setting matters: the surviving evidence is a later author's use of Empedocles within a numerical argument. The cautious verbs "seems" and "hints" are part of what has been transmitted, not dispensable hesitation to be replaced with a categorical biological assertion.

"Completion" is also underdetermined. The report does not specify which structures are complete, what criterion of development is intended, or whether the statement concerns every pregnancy. It cannot responsibly be turned into a modern claim about viability, personhood, or the timing of all organ formation. The secure historical finding is that Theon attributes a seven-week developmental significance to Empedocles.

The naming of the Purifications is unusually valuable evidence of ancient attribution to a work. Even so, it does not prove where within that work the material occurred or settle the broader one-poem/two-poem dispute. The fragment's placement among pieces of uncertain location in this edition suitably distinguishes the transmitted report from a recovered run of verse.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 153a (report). Theon reports apparent embryonic completion in seven weeks and attributes the hint to the Purifications.

B 153a (editorial discussion). The local note explicitly distinguishes reported content from a verbatim Empedoclean quotation.

B 68. A separate verse names the tenth of an eighth month; it does not identify the same developmental milestone.

In this edition. A B-number does not guarantee direct quotation. The form βρέφος and the full Greek sentence belong to Theon's report. Even the seven-week phrase is reported Empedoclean content, not independently preserved verse.

See also. Seed; Birth-caul; White discharge; Sexual differentiation.

Sexual differentiation

γυναῖκες (gynaikes); ἄρρενα (arrena); μελέων φύσις (meleōn physis); γυῖον (gyion)

The word. The fragments express sexual difference through men and women, male offspring, bodily members, and the division of the formation of limbs. They do not preserve a single technical heading equivalent to the modern phrase "sexual differentiation." In B62 γυῖον, ordinarily a member or limb, is rendered the member native to men.

In Empedocles. B62 places the absence of the male member beside the absence of articulated limbs and voice. Sexual organization is thus something that appears within the formation of familiar human bodies. B63 then describes the formation or nature of the limbs as divided, with one part in "the man's" before the quotation breaks off. It supports a divided contribution to reproduction but does not on its own preserve a full account of paternal and maternal inheritance.

The most explicit causal statements concern temperature. B65 says that some poured material

becomes women after encountering cold; the opposed male-and-heat clause is supplied editorially. B67 independently associates the male-bearing belly with a warmer region and links this with bodily darkness and greater hairiness. These are ancient explanatory claims, not reliable tests of fetal sex or modern medical propositions.

The role of desire appears alongside this physiology. B64 has Desire arriving through sight and reminding its recipient, while B66 names Aphrodite's cloven meadows. Neither broken excerpt can safely supply every missing step between sight, intercourse, conception, and embryonic formation. Together they show that the account embraces both bodily conditions and the experience that draws differentiated creatures toward one another.

The modern introduction makes sexual reproduction the fourth phase of zoogony. That is a reconstruction informed by reports not printed as continuous verse. The secure local evidence concerns differentiation, divided generative contribution, thermal conditions, and erotic attraction; the exact narrative history joining those topics is not recovered merely by reading consecutive B-numbers.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 62.7–8. The early forms have no male member.

B 63. The formation of limbs is divided; the excerpt ends after naming the male side.

B 65. Cold accompanies the production of women; the male-and-heat counterpart is supplied.

B 67. The warmer male-bearing belly is associated with darkness and hairiness.

B 64. Desire acts by sight in a separate short fragment.

In this edition. The printed translation's "nature" in B63 should not automatically become a theory of immutable sexual essence. The phrase occurs in a fragment about bodily generation, and its continuation is lost. The supplements in B65 must remain visible in any summary.

See also. Seed; Warmth and cold in generation; Whole-natured forms; Baubo; Desire.

Shared hearth and table

ὁμέστιοι (homestioi); αὐτοτράπεζοι (autotrapezoi); ἀτειρεῖς (ateireis)

The word. Homestioi denotes sharing a hearth; autotrapezoi sharing the same table. These domestic and commensal words picture inclusion in a common life. Ateireis adds the condition of being unwearied or unbroken.

In Empedocles. B147 describes fellowship with the other immortals through hearth and table, followed by having no share in human sorrows. The scene presents release positively as belonging, not only as escape from a hostile place. It contrasts naturally with the daimon whom every region rejects in B115: reception by a stable company answers endless expulsion.

The fragment does not name foods served at the table, locate the hearth, or describe an actual banquet ritual for living worshippers. Its ethical resonance with the evil family feast of B137 is strong, but the words do not explicitly stage the two meals as consecutive episodes. The surviving expression should remain an image of divine fellowship rather than a source for a menu or sacramental procedure.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 147. The released share hearth and table with immortals and are free of human grief.

B 115.9–14. Repeated rejection of the exile provides a contrasting condition of non-belonging.

B 137.4–6. An evil feast supplies a contrasting image of destructive commensality.

In this edition. The beginning of B147's second Greek line is marked corrupt. The edition prints an intelligible English sense, but the transmitted wording cannot be treated as wholly secure.

See also. Blessedness; Divine ascent; Long-lived gods; Exile and wandering; Kin-murder.

Shells

κόγχαισι (konchaisi); θαλασσονόμων βαρυνώτοις (thalassonomōn barynōtois)

The word. B76 speaks of heavy-backed shells belonging to sea-dwellers. The heaviness and the back-like exterior locate the material on a creature's upper or outer surface. The point of the example is made explicit: earth can be seen dwelling uppermost over flesh.

In Empedocles. The shell offers a readily visible case in which the constituents of a body have unequal spatial arrangements. It is not enough to say that an organism contains earth and other materials; one must ask where each is located. In these creatures earth is externally conspicuous, giving a hard covering to softer living material.

The poem invites direct attention with "you will see." The example supports an explanatory claim through an

ordinary visible object. That is different from using a shell merely as an emblem for protection or confinement. Its back, weight, and relation to flesh all belong to the physical argument.

Whelks and tortoises follow as further examples, extending the pattern beyond a single shell type or habitat. The text does not state that every shell has the bone recipe of B96. Bone's ratio and the shell's external earth are different sorts of evidence: the former specifies composition, the latter emphasizes position. A careful lexicon keeps both available without combining them into a formula the poem never gives.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 76. The full fragment presents shells, whelks, and tortoises as visible instances of outer earth above flesh.

B 96. The separate bone account specifies a numerical mixture rather than this external arrangement.

In this edition. The phrase "uppermost parts of the flesh" preserves the edition's spatial language. It should not be flattened into the claim that shells are simply pure earth, which the surviving lines do not assert.

See also. Whelks; Tortoises; Skin; Flesh; Bone.

Silence and Utterance

Σωπή (Sōpē); Ὀμφαίη (Omphaiē)

The word. Sōpē names silence, while Omphaiē evokes voice or utterance. The latter has associations with voiced pronouncement, but the line does not specify prophecy. The edition makes the opposition clear through two capitalized English abstractions.

In Empedocles. Silence and Utterance close the surviving catalogue of B122/123. Its ending is open, so the pair cannot be assumed to have been the conclusion of the original list. Their juxtaposition brings language itself into a series that already includes growth, movement, and knowledge-related contrasts.

Other fragments praise holy speech, warn against overreaching language, and describe a speaker who gives healing or oracular words. Those themes make this verbal pair pertinent to Empedocles' poetics, but there is no explicit identification of Omphaiē with the Muse or of Sōpē with an initiatory vow. A reader should therefore resist turning the names into a prescribed discipline of sacred silence. The surviving evidence supplies opposed personified modes of expression, not a rule governing when disciples may speak.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.7. Silence and Utterance appear at the surviving end of the list.

In this edition. The trailing ellipsis is meaningful. The printed pair is the last surviving one here, not demonstrably the final pair composed by Empedocles.

See also. Truth-Unerring; Obscurity; Muse; Seers.

Skin

χρωτὸς (chrōtos); χροΐ (chroi); ῥινῶν (rhinōn)

The word. The source's surface vocabulary includes χρωτὸς, rendered "flesh" in B76, and χροΐ, rendered "human flesh" in the clepsydra passage. B100 also contains ῥινῶν, translated there as "nostrils." The English

headword gathers bodily covering and contact rather than pretending these forms are identical in sense.

In Empedocles. In B76 earth occupies the uppermost part of a shelled creature, above its flesh. The point is positional: a harder earthy material can lie outside softer bodily material. The examples of shells, whelks, and tortoises keep that surface arrangement concrete.

B100 makes the body's outer region functionally important in a different way. Pipes of flesh reach the extremities, and close-set perforations permit aither a route while retaining blood. In the illustrative vessel, a person's flesh closes the opening. The hand thus becomes a temporary seal; its contact allows the analogy to display what happens when a passage is closed or released.

The physiology should not be silently modernized into a description of skin pores as presently understood. The edition itself alternates between the outermost body and the nostrils in rendering the opening lines. That wording leaves a question about the extent and location of the process, even before any fuller reconstruction from other ancient reports is attempted. The secure image is a selectively permeable boundary, not an exact map of a modern organ system.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 76.1–3. Earth is uppermost over flesh in shelled creatures.

B 100.1–5. The body's extremities and perforated passages regulate blood and aither.

B 100.16–21. Human flesh stops the clepsydra's passage.

In this edition. "Skin" is an organizing English label. Readers should check the local renderings: B76 says flesh, B100 says human flesh at the hand and nostrils in its

opening description. The entry does not erase those choices by imposing a single modern anatomical term.

See also. Flesh; Shells; Respiration; Passages.

Smell

ὀσμῶν (osmōn); πνοιῆς (pnoiēs); μυκτῆρσιν (myktērsin)

The word. B102 links an allotted share of breathing with a share of smells. B101 names nostrils investigating traces. The vocabulary places smell within bodily exchange and contact rather than treating it as an inexplicable awareness of distant things.

In Empedocles. The general statement in B102 begins “in this way,” pointing back to an explanation not fully present in its one surviving line. The nearby respiration passage offers an intelligible comparison: aither moves inward and outward as blood recedes and returns. The edition’s sequence encourages the reader to connect breathing and smell, but does not preserve an uninterrupted transition proving the exact order of these fragments.

B101 supplies a concrete perceptual situation. The animal being tracked has moved on, leaving tiny bodily remains through contact of its feet with grass; nostrils investigate them. The perceived object reaches the perceiver through material traces, which makes a comparison with B89’s effluences especially fruitful. The word for effluence does not occur in the scent-tracking line, so the connection should be acknowledged as an interpretive relation rather than a repeated term.

The scope of “all things” in B102 also deserves restraint. It is a broad claim in the poet’s physical idiom, not a list of modern biological classes with experimentally established

olfactory abilities. The fragment preserves an encompassing account of participation in breath and smell, while the precise distribution of organs or degrees of sensitivity remains outside the quoted evidence.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 102. Breathing and smells are allocated together in a general statement.

B 101. Nostrils investigate bodily fragments left by beasts in grass.

B 89. Universal effluences offer a related account of material outflow.

B 100. Alternating aither movement supplies the fuller breathing mechanism.

In this edition. Theophrastus is the witness for B102, but the edition prints only the one verse here. Its broader theory of smell, as summarized in other contexts, should not be quoted as though it were part of this line.

See also. Scent-tracking; Effluences; Respiration; Passages.

Smoke

καπνοῖο δίκην (kapnoio dikēn); ἀπέπταν (apeptan)

The word. Kapnoio dikēn means in the manner of smoke, the simile's explicit comparison. Apeptan describes flying away. The picture occurs within the diagnosis of human limitation in B 2.

In Empedocles. People have looked on only a small part of life before being lifted up like smoke and flying away. The image is not an isolated lament: it explains why experience cannot automatically become comprehensive knowledge. Human life is short, movement is

uncontrolled, and the observer disappears before surveying the whole he claims to have found.

The simile brings the passage's argument into visible form. Smoke can be present to the eye yet unable to maintain a stable shape or location; the verse stresses rising and departure, not a durable store of observation. The following description of people driven in every direction continues the emphasis on partial and contingent encounter. The modest scale of what they have seen contrasts with the ambition of their conclusions.

Nothing in the line says that a transmigrating daimon is literally smoke or that a human self becomes a cloud after death. Nor does the comparison explain how smoke is physically composed. It functions here as an image of fleeting mortality and the short interval available for inquiry. Reading it beside the poem's stable constituents can sharpen the distinction between a mortal life and what endures through mixtures, but the simile alone does not supply that ontology.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 2.3–6. The smoke simile connects short-lived observation with disappearing human lives.

In this edition. "Lifted like smoke and fly away" preserves the simile as a comparison. It should not be converted into an unmarked doctrinal statement about the material of souls.

See also. Mortal limits; Faculties and evidence; Sunset of life.

Sphairos

Σφαῖρος κυκλοτερὴς (Sphairos kykloterēs); σφαῖρος (sphairos); μονίῃι περιηγέι γαίων (moniēi periēgei gaiōn)

The word. Sphairos is the masculine form printed for the rounded being in B 27–29. The accompanying adjective means rounded or circular, and the being is described as rejoicing in encircling solitude. The masculine grammatical form and personal predicates matter. They make "Sphere" more than a diagrammatic shape in this context, though morphology alone would not establish every detail of a divine biography.

In Empedocles. B 27 begins by denying that sun, earth, and sea can be distinguished there. It then describes the Sphairos as held fast in Harmony's close covert. The absence of distinguishable cosmic regions is central: the passage is about a condition of complete union, not merely a spherical outline around a familiar world. B 28 adds equality from every side and the difficult expression "altogether without limit." B 29 denies protruding arms or branches, feet, knees, and generative organs. The deity has a bodily vocabulary while refusing the articulated human form.

The short B 27a adds the absence of faction and unseemly quarrel within the limbs. Its independent transmission should remain visible: its placement among the Sphere fragments is editorial, even though the wording fits that setting. Likewise B 31's shaking of the god's limbs is naturally read with B 30's growth of Strife, but the surviving quotations do not constitute a single uninterrupted scene as printed. The broad account of transition is supported without allowing reconstructed joints to masquerade as continuous text.

Calling the Sphere divine does not make it a disembodied mind. B 134 also denies familiar human parts and speaks instead of sacred mind, but its subject is not explicitly named Sphairos in the quotation. The verbal resemblance invites comparison; it does not conclusively identify the two passages' subject or function. Nor should a later Platonic account of a cosmic body or soul be read backwards into these lines.

The Sphere presents a limit-condition for the mixtures that constitute ordinary things. Mortals emerge as differentiated combinations, whereas the Sphere conceals the distinctive limbs of sun, sea, and earth. The fragments leave open how to reconcile that complete union with the transmigrating career described elsewhere. The introduction candidly records the interpretive problem. A lexicon should preserve it rather than invent an invisible chamber in which personal identities are said to survive.[39]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 27. No distinct sun, earth, or sea can be discerned; Harmony holds the rounded being in solitude.

B 28. The Sphere is equal from all sides and described as wholly without limit.

B 29. The being lacks articulated human limbs and organs; one phrase is editorially supplied.

B 27a. An independently transmitted line denies conflict within the limbs.

B 31. A god's limbs are shaken; its connection with the Sphere's disruption is contextual.

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[39] "Without limit" beside "rounded" is a real interpretive tension. It need not be solved by assuming that the Sphere has an infinite measurable radius. Descriptions of the Sphere survive in several later authors. The numerical sequence B 27–31 is an editorial grouping, not proof that all five quotations followed each other in the original poem.

B 134. The non-anthropomorphic sacred mind provides a comparison, not an explicit identification.

In this edition. The introduction says Sphairos is treated as a name, but the actual English varies: capitalised “Sphere” in B 27–28, lower-case “a sphere” in B 29. This inconsistency should remain visible rather than be reported as a perfectly uniform translation policy. B 29 supplies “from every side,” and B 28 supplies “was.” Personification is grounded in the surrounding verse, not solely in the noun’s gender.

See also. One and many; Love; Strife; Harmony; Equality; Boundlessness; Sacred mind; Cycle.

Strife

Νεῖκος (Neikos); Νεῖκός τ’ οὐλόμενον (Neikos t’ oulomenon); Νείκεος ἔχθει (Neikeos echthei); Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι (Neikei mainomenōi); νείκεϊ λυγρῶι (neikei lygrōi)

The word. Neikos names strife or contention and functions as a cosmic power. Its epithets and associated words are consequential: destructive in B 17, baleful in B 109, and raving in B 115; separation occurs through its hostility or hatred. The poem also uses Wrath and Quarrels in related contexts. These words belong to a field of conflict without becoming interchangeable copies of one abstract technical label.

In Empedocles. The explicit contrast in B 17 is between coming together through Love and being borne separately through Strife. Strife stands apart from the four physical constituents and is balanced in every direction. This position is not a warrant to imagine a permanently external force which never enters bodies. B 30 says it is

nourished within the limbs before rising to its honours, and B 35 says some remains within limbs while some has already departed. Spatial language changes with the phase and local conditions being described.

Strife's action is connected to differentiation. B 21 makes things distinct in form and apart in Wrath; B 22 attributes the extreme mutual unfamiliarity of some constituents or forms to Strife's prompting. Conversely, B 35's emergence of myriad mortal kinds occurs during Love's advance and Strife's incomplete retreat. Both passages resist the simplest opposition between creation by Love and absolute destruction by Strife. The foundational distinction is among unchanged constituents, changing combinations, and the disappearance of particular organised forms.

B 30 places the rise of Strife under a fulfilled time and a broad oath. Its dominance is therefore described as an appointed turn, not an unexpected accident breaking an otherwise permanent state of Love. The account leaves difficult questions of the cosmic sequence unresolved: the surviving fragments do not by themselves dictate one universally accepted timetable or number of world-formations.

The ethical dimension becomes explicit in B 115, where the speaker calls himself an exile who trusted raving Strife. The poem's negative language is unmistakable, but one must not deduce from it that Strife is an extraneous evil which could simply be removed from the account of an enduring cosmos. B 16, as conventionally interpreted through its context, says time will never be emptied of the two powers. Nor does the speaker's relation to Strife give a complete definition of the daimon's substance.

The edition's modern introduction notes the epic resonance of "destructive." That intertextual observation can illuminate the tone; it does not turn the quotation into an allegory of a specific Homeric character. The strongest reading keeps conflict's cosmic, bodily, and ethical registers in view together.[40]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.7–8, 18–20. Strife separates things and is distinguished from both the roots and Love.

B 30. Strife grows within the limbs and rises to its appointed honours when time is fulfilled.

B 35.3–13. Its withdrawal is incomplete, leaving different regions or limbs differently affected.

B 36. As things join, Strife stands at the furthest edge.

B 115.13–14. The exiled speaker identifies himself as one who trusted raving Strife.

B 109.3. Strife is recognised by baleful strife.

In this edition. "Strife" retains the personified and contentious force of the name. "Repulsion" loses too much, while "Hate" narrows the sense to psychology. The adjective oulomenon in B 17 belongs to the verse's hostile tone; it does not supply a separate definition which makes Strife wholly external to the recurring order.

See also. Love; Separation; Wrath; Quarrel; Cycle; Appointed turns; Sphairos; Daimon; Mortal things.

[40] Strife is not identical with fire simply because Plutarch associates the two in his explanation of B 19. The explicit physical list and the power-list remain distinct in B 17.

Subterranean fire

ἔνερθε οὔδεος (enerthe oudeos); πυρὰ καίεται (pyra kaietai)

The word. B 52 says that many fires burn beneath the ground. The plural fires and the locative expression are the entire surviving statement. They establish a physical setting and multiplicity, without naming a volcano, an eruption, or an individual subterranean deity.

In Empedocles. The line matters because it prevents a reader from confining all fire to the visible sun or an outer heavenly region. Fire can occur below earth while retaining its identity as a constituent. B 54 similarly sends aither beneath earth with long roots; comparing the passages shows that the poem's spatial descriptions need not fit a simple stack of impermeable layers.

The introduction reports a modern interpretation of Aidoneus as fire which makes use of Sicilian geological context. B 52 is relevant evidence for underground fire, but does not itself pronounce the divine identification. It also gives no support to the biographical legend of Empedocles leaping into Etna: a physical statement and a later death-story are distinct kinds of evidence.

No further mechanism of the fires' origin, fuel, or eruption can be recovered from the isolated line. Its value lies in the explicit location which survives, not in a complete theory inferred from a modern volcanic map.[41]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 52. Many fires burn below ground.

B 54. Aither also extends beneath earth, offering a comparison in spatial language.

[41] The name Etna is absent from B 52. The introduction's account of death legends should not be used to supply it as a missing word.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The underground-fire setting is relevant to a reported modern divine-root interpretation.

In this edition. The verse is quoted by Proclus in his commentary on Plato's Timaeus. That later setting transmits an earlier poet; it does not make the statement dependent on Plato or evidence that Empedocles adopted Platonic elements.

See also. Fire; Earth; Aidoneus; Aither; Roots.

Sun

ἠέλιον (ēelion); ἥλιος ὀξυβελὴς (hēlios oxybelēs); Ἠελίοιο (Ēelioio); ἠλέκτωρ (ēlektōr)

The word. The corpus uses several poetic forms of the sun's name and the word ēlektōr, rendered "beaming sun" in B 22. Its epithets emphasise brightness, warmth, and darting rays. B 40 pairs the sharp-darting sun with the gentle moon, giving the contrast both a physical and a personal register.

In Empedocles. The sun serves as a visible witness in B 21: it is warm and bright, set beside rain's darkness and chill and the solidity of things from earth. In B 71 it joins water, earth, and aither in an explanation of mortal forms and colours. These passages allow solar fire to participate in the fourfold account without proving that the visible sun is identical to the entire root fire in every context.

In the Sphere, by contrast, the sun's swift limbs cannot be distinguished. The loss of a distinct sun is one way of stating the absence of articulated cosmic regions. B 41 speaks of a gathered masculine subject circling great heaven; in the astronomical grouping it is naturally related to the sun, but the isolated line does not itself

name him. Such fragmentary evidence cannot carry a fully detailed theory of his composition and motion.

The moon's relation to solar light is more concretely described by the rays striking its circle and the eclipsing body cutting off the rays. B 56 also makes the sun's beatings compact salt, and B 115 casts the exile from earth into its blazing rays. The sun consequently appears as a source of physical effects, a visible region, and an agent in divine wandering, with none of these uses reducible to the modern idea of a star.[42]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.3–6. The sun's warmth and brightness provide visible support for the previous doctrine.

B 40. The sun and moon receive contrasting epithets.

B 27.1–4. The sun's limbs are no longer distinguishable in the Sphere.

B 41. A gathered masculine subject circles great heaven; its precise referent depends on context.

B 71.2–4. Sun appears beside water, earth, and aither in the list of mixed ingredients.

B 56. Solar beatings drive salt together.

In this edition. The edition keeps "sun" instead of routinely translating it "fire." Nor do its printed verses establish a modern stellar classification. The astronomical extracts omit much of the surrounding ancient discussion which might explain unnamed subjects.

See also. Fire; Roots; Moon; Reflected light; Eclipse; Salt; Sphairos; Heaven and Olympus.

[42] B 44's unnamed reflecting subject should not automatically be made the moon or the sun without inspecting the citing context. This volume prints only the one line.

Sun-Maid

Ἠλιόπη ταναῶπις (Hēliopē tanaōpis)

The word. Hēliopē is a feminine solar name. The attached epithet tanaōpis is rendered “far-glancing,” emphasizing a long-reaching look. The English “Sun-Maid” interprets the name transparently instead of simply transliterating it.

In Empedocles. In B122/123 Sun-Maid stands beside Earth-Maid in the catalogue’s first line. Her epithet adds a visual characteristic to a list whose figures are often named only. The association of the sun with wide-ranging sight is appropriate to this language, but the fragment does not describe an actual act of seeing or a theory of vision.

The name belongs to a personified scene, while other solar fragments discuss heat, light, rays, and the visible heavenly body. These can be compared without assuming that every solar expression is the same divine individual under an alternative name. In particular, the fragment does not identify Sun-Maid with the masculine sun of other verses or with a specific root deity. It supplies a paired image, not an independently elaborated solar theology.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.1. Far-glancing Sun-Maid accompanies Earth-Maid at the catalogue’s opening.

In this edition. The translation preserves the feminine character of Hēliopē through “Maid.” It should not be used as evidence that a separate word for maiden occurs in this line, or that the solar body has a fixed female gender throughout the poem.

See also. Earth-Maid; Sun; Harmony.

Sunset of life

γῆρας ἡμέρας (gēras hēmeras); δυσμὰς βίου (dysmas biou)

The word. Gēras hēmeras is the old age of the day; dysmas biou is the sunset or setting of life. Both phrases belong to an analogy relating the end of a day to the latter part of a human life.

In Empedocles. B 152 is preserved inside Aristotle's explanation of metaphor by analogy. Evening stands to day as old age stands to life; terms can be transferred across the corresponding relations. The result is more than a decorative synonym for old age. A familiar daily decline makes a phase of human life imaginable through another temporal pattern.

The lexicon must distinguish this intelligible analogy from certainty about the Empedoclean wording. The note states that the position of Aristotle's phrase identifying Empedocles is textually disputed. Accordingly, the exact allocation of the two expressions to Empedocles is uncertain. Diels includes the larger Aristotelian passage under the fragment number. The compact pair printed above the translation should not be treated as two securely consecutive lines from a lost poem.

The image can be read fruitfully beside the smoke simile of B 2 and the defences against old age promised in B 111. These are genuine thematic comparisons, not proof that they came from the same original passage. Sunset's relation to a day concerns a phase in a patterned duration; smoke's dispersal emphasizes fleeting existence. Their differences help keep the poet's images from dissolving into one generalized statement about mortality.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 152 (report). The expressions survive within Aristotle's account of analogical metaphor, with disputed attribution.

B 2.3–4. Smoke offers a different image for the brevity of human life.

B 111.1–2. Old age is named among the conditions against which defences are promised.

In this edition. The source note records the disputed placement of the attribution and the dictionary tradition associating "sunset of life" with Empedocles. The reader should retain that uncertainty rather than present both metaphorical phrases as verbatim Empedoclean verses.

See also. Smoke; Mortal limits; Remedies and extraordinary powers; Witnesses and reception; Supplements, corruption, and gaps.

Supplements, corruption, and gaps

The word. A supplement is wording added by an editor to repair or complete the surviving text; corruption is a judgement that transmitted wording is damaged or unacceptable. A gap can result from a broken witness or from quotation that begins or stops partway through an original utterance.

In Empedocles. The edition signals supplements with angle brackets, problematic readings with daggers, and incompleteness with dots. These marks are part of the evidence. A reader who removes them may accidentally turn an editor's proposal into an ancient claim. At B 7 "roots" is supplied around the preserved adjective ungenerated; at B 5 "the doctrines" supplies an object to a phrase about inward shelter. Both completions can be

intelligible without being securely quoted Empedoclean nouns at those places.

The effects can be doctrinal. B 9’s negative “not” is supplied in the statement about customary naming. B 65 supplies the clause concerning males and heat, while B 125 supplies the reverse movement from dead things to living. These passages should be interpreted with the printed completions visible, especially when an argument depends on the opposed pair being exactly symmetrical.

Daggers serve a different purpose: they mark trouble rather than solve it. B 46’s chariot-related lines are heavily obelized, so their image cannot support a confident reconstruction of the moon’s motion. At B 147 the note identifies a metrical problem in the transmitted word printed under daggers. The translation smooths the sentence into intelligible English, but readability is not the same as recovered wording.

B 142 displays a more visibly shattered quotation with bracketed surviving or restored letters and missing stretches. Its named halls of Zeus and Hades can be discussed, but the identity and fate of the rejected subject are not fully given. B 152 poses yet another issue: a disputed position of the witness’s attribution changes which metaphor belongs to Empedocles.

The practical rule is to match an interpretation’s precision to the text’s condition. A supplied subject, doubtful negative, or missing antecedent is not a reason to avoid the passage, but it must limit what the passage can prove.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

Introduction VI (editorial discussion). The editor explains the principal signs.

B 7 (editorial discussion). The roots are supplied as the subject of ungenerated.

B 9 (editorial discussion). The wording about customary naming includes supplied words and a negative.

B 46 (editorial discussion). Daggers mark the chariot-related text as corrupt.

B 147 (editorial discussion). The local note identifies a metrical objection to the obelized word.

In this edition. This edition deliberately does not provide a full record of manuscript variants or later conjectures. Its visible signs show where a problem exists, but not every competing solution. The lexicon preserves those qualifications rather than making smooth English the sole measure of certainty.

See also. Fragments and Diels numbering; Witnesses and reception; Keeping the teaching; Naming and convention; Sunset of life.

Sweet, bitter, sour, hot

γλυκὺ (glyky); πικρὸν (pikron); ὀξὺ (oxy); δαερὸν (daeron)

The word. B90 pairs each quality with its like: sweet with sweet, bitter with bitter, sour with sour, and hot with hot. The repeated terms are made active by verbs of seizing, rushing, going, and riding. The fragment gives qualities a dynamic relation rather than merely listing them.

In Empedocles. The passage is relevant both to physical association and to perception. Similar qualities encounter or join one another, a pattern comparable to B109's apprehension of like by like. Yet B90 does not explicitly name a tongue, a taste organ, or a perceiver. Calling it a complete theory of taste would add an apparatus that the lines do not supply.

The changes of verb prevent the list from becoming a static classification. Sweetness catches its counterpart, bitterness rushes toward its own, and heat rides upon heat. These actions resemble the poem's broader animation of constituents and powers. They make directed association vivid without positing four little persons corresponding to the qualities.

The final pairing also warns against narrowing the whole passage to modern taste categories. Hot, in the edition's rendering, is not simply another taste beside sweet and bitter. The sequence joins different sensible characters through a common structure of affinity. Its most secure contribution is therefore the like-to-like relation, while the exact lost physical situation in which these meetings occur remains open.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 90. The whole couplet personifies the meeting of four paired sensible qualities.

B 109. Apprehension by corresponding constituents supplies a closely related but distinct formulation.

B 22. Compatibility in blending offers a broader physical context.

In this edition. "Sour" and "hot" follow this translation's choices for ὀξὺ and δαερὸν. Those local renderings should be retained rather than silently aligned with a later fixed catalogue of tastes.

See also. Like perceives like; Mixture; Wine and oil; Pleasure and pain.

Swift-One and Slow-One

Θόωσά (Thoōsa); Δηναίη (Dēnaiē)

The word. The two feminine names are rendered as swiftness and slowness embodied: Swift-One and Slow-One. The first draws on the language of speed; the second evokes lingering or duration. The translation conveys the contrast without pretending that the names are a technical table of measured velocities.

In Empedocles. B122/123 places this pair immediately after Fairest and Foulest. Their naming adds a temporal or kinetic contrast to the catalogue's more visibly evaluative contrasts. The fragment does not show either figure moving, however, and supplies no explanation of whether they govern natural processes or characterize modes of life.

The later pair Movement and Immobility should remain distinct. Speed versus delay is not the same contrast as moving versus being unmoved. Keeping the separate entries prevents an apparently redundant English list from obscuring different Greek names. Conversely, it would be unwarranted to invent a systematic taxonomy of motion from these adjacent words. What survives is a poetic catalogue whose paired arrangement is clear but whose explanatory context is lost.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.3. Swift-One and Slow-One follow Fairest and Foulest.

In this edition. The accented form Θόωσά is copied as printed before the following particle. The transliteration identifies the name without converting the edition's feminine personification into an impersonal physical quantity.

See also. Movement and Immobility; Fairest and Foulest; Time and lifetime.

Time and lifetime

χρόνοιο (chronoio); αἰών (aiōn); αἰῶνος (aiōnos); ὥρας (hōras)

The word. The poem uses chronos for time and aiōn for a span of life or duration. The translation consequently ranges from time to lifetime rather than treating aiōn everywhere as a technical timeless eternity. Hōrai, seasons, supplies the counted duration in the wanderer's exile. The differences matter when cosmic permanence, individual life, and successive incarnations are compared.

In Empedocles. B 16 says boundless aiōn will never be emptied of "these two," understood from its setting as the opposed powers. B 17, however, says compounds do not possess a steadfast aiōn, even while their sources persist through interchange. The contrast is between enduring recurrence and an unstable particular lifetime, not a change in the word's spelling to a wholly separate metaphysical substance.

Chronos comes round in B 17 and B 110. In the first it accompanies successive dominance; in the latter things cultivated by the listener may remain through a lifetime or depart as time passes. B 30 describes a time fulfilled under an alternating oath. These expressions give time structure through events, turns, and completion without making Chronos a named independent god in the quoted lines.

B 115 measures wandering by thrice ten thousand seasons and describes growth through time into mortal forms. Nothing in the fragment establishes that those

seasons are identical to ordinary solar years or provides their ratio to a complete cosmic cycle. B 129's ten and twenty human lifetimes belong to a claim of exceptional understanding, another use of embodied duration rather than a timetable of world-formation.[43]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 16. Boundless duration will not be emptied of the two powers.

B 17.11–13, 27–29. Compounds lack a steadfast lifetime; the sources prevail as time comes round.

B 30. Strife's rise occurs as an appointed time is fulfilled.

B 110.3–9. Cultivated things may remain through a lifetime or depart as time comes round.

B 115.5–8. Wandering is counted in seasons, while successive mortal forms arise through time.

B 129.4–6. Ten and twenty human lifetimes measure the scope of extraordinary understanding.

In this edition. The edition's "time," "lifetime," and "seasons" should not be silently normalised into years or eternity. B 158 also has aiōn, but its doubtful attribution makes it a poor foundation for a general doctrine; this entry relies on the more secure printed fragments.

See also. Cycle; Appointed turns; Mortal things; Being; Daimon; Wealth of understanding; Character and office.

[43] A vast number in a religious account need not be converted into an exact modern calendar date. The source offers no warranted conversion.

Tortoises

χελύων (chelyōn)

The word. The inflected plural χελύων names tortoises in the edition's translation of B76. It appears at the end of a list concerned with hard external coverings. There is no further description of the animal's habits or internal organs.

In Empedocles. The tortoise makes the shell argument travel beyond the initial sea-dwellers. Shells, stony-skinned whelks, and tortoises all present an exterior in which earth occupies a conspicuous position above flesh. The comparison is anatomical and material, rather than a claim that the animals share one ordinary biological kind.

This is an especially clear example of why Empedocles' short animal references should not be treated as decorative filler. An animal familiar to ordinary observation supplies a test case for the account of how roots are positioned in a compound. The shell can be seen and felt; the reader is invited to understand a living arrangement through that visible contrast between hard outside and flesh within.

At the same time, the verse's brevity sets a limit. It does not explain the shell's growth, specify a numerical composition, or discuss the tortoise's birth. Those topics cannot be borrowed from other fragments simply because they concern animal generation. The meaningful lexical result is the animal's role in a particular physical demonstration.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 76.1–3. Tortoises close the list of examples for earth situated on the exterior of flesh.

In this edition. “Tortoises” follows the supplied English. The isolated noun provides no basis for a finer modern taxonomic distinction among shelled reptiles.

See also. Shells; Whelks; Skin; Flesh.

Transmigration

παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἴδεα θνητῶν (pantoia dia chronou eidea thnētōn); μορφὴν (morphēn)

The word. “Transmigration” is a convenient modern heading for the passage through different living forms. It is not a translation of a technical noun printed in these verses. The relevant language speaks of growing into forms, changing a shape, and exchanging paths of life. Such expressions leave bodily change prominent rather than naming a fully defined soul-substance.

In Empedocles. B115 imposes repeated mortal embodiment as a consequence of wrongdoing by a long-lived divine being. B117 presents continuity through the first person: the speaker has already been male and female human, plant, bird, and fish. The catalogue crosses kinds rather than merely distinguishing successive human lives. B137 supplies the ethical consequence of that hidden continuity: the creature carried to sacrifice is the slaughterer’s own son after a change of shape. The kinship persists although recognition fails.

B125 gives a related but much less secure image of exchanging living things for dead shapes. The reverse movement from dead to living is supplied editorially in the printed text. It cannot independently establish a complete doctrine of reciprocal reincarnation. B146, by contrast, expressly gives a last human stage in honoured roles and a subsequent growth into gods. These passages

make transformation, punishment, and release mutually relevant, but they do not preserve a complete order of embodiments.

The process should not be equated with the mere survival of the roots after bodily dissolution. Empedocles' physical arguments deny absolute generation and destruction; transmigration adds identity, guilt, and recognition across forms. How those claims fit together is a genuine problem, not a problem solved simply by substituting "soul" for daimon. Nor does the source explain how such identity survives the cosmic extremes.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 115.5–8. Offenders grow through time into various mortal shapes.

B 117. The speaker enumerates former human and nonhuman forms.

B 137.1–6. Changed shape hides a son from his sacrificing father.

B 125. Exchanging living and dead shapes; the reverse clause is supplemented.

B 146. A final human stage is followed by growth into gods.

In this edition. The English heading is interpretive; metempsychōsis is not a technical noun quoted in this source. B125's reverse movement from dead to living is supplemented, so it cannot carry the same evidential weight as the transmitted account of changed forms. Assignment of these fragments to different poem headings does not settle whether the ethical and physical material belonged to separate works.

See also. Daimon; Kin-murder; Divine ascent; Lion; Laurel; Birth; Death.

Trees

δένδρεα (dendrea); θάμνοισι (thamnoisi); μακρὰ δένδρεα (makra dendrea)

The word. Trees and bushes recur in Empedocles' catalogues of generated beings. The repeated adjective "tall" lends trees a recognizable bodily form. The book gives them leaves, fruit, eggs in the form of olives, and internally transformed water that becomes wine.

In Empedocles. Plants share the material account applied to animals. B21 includes them among the beings that have come and will come from the enduring constituents; B23 makes their visible forms producible through the painters' mixed pigments. B20 gives bushes the same general pattern of bodily joining and division as fish, beasts, and birds. This continuity is central: plants are not introduced as products of an independent principle of life.

The biological fragments develop the continuity through transfers of vocabulary. Trees bear eggs in B79, while human and bodily forms sprout in B57 and B62. B82 places leaves alongside animal coverings. These formulations allow different kinds of living growth to illuminate one another without making a tree indistinguishable from an animal.

Individual plant processes remain specific. Olives are figured as eggs; pomegranates are late-born; apples are full of sap; wine is water transformed within wood. The couplet B77.78 describes enduring leaves and fruit throughout the year. Together they show a range of botanical questions: shape, reproduction, timing, fluid transformation, and persistence.

The edition's distribution of these fragments across Books I and II and the Purifications must not be mistaken

for a complete ancient botanical order. In particular, the location of B77.78 under the latter heading does not itself prove the historical or cosmic setting of its trees.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.9–14. Trees share the constituent origin of human beings, animals, and gods.

B 20.6–7. Bushes exemplify the general association and separation of living parts.

B 72. Tall trees and sea-fishes are named together.

B 79. Olives are described as trees' eggs.

B 82. Leaves are physically compared with animal coverings.

In this edition. "Trees" is a useful broad entry, but the source distinguishes tall trees, bushes, and named fruits. The individual entries retain those distinctions instead of absorbing all plant language into an undifferentiated category of nature.

See also. Olives as eggs; Everlasting leaves and fruit; Pomegranates; Apples; Wine; Leaves.

Trust and persuasion

πίστει (pistei); πίστιν (pistin); πιστώματα (pistōmata); πειθοῦς (peithous); ἀληθείη (alētheiē)

The word. Pistis is trust, confidence, or conviction; the source prints several inflected forms. Pistōmata are pledges or assurances. Peithous is the inflected form of persuasion in B 133. These words describe both the reliability ascribed to evidence and the listener's response to an account.

In Empedocles. Trust in Empedocles is a task of discrimination. B 3 tells the hearer how to distribute it among the faculties: neither an exaltation of sight nor distrust of every bodily avenue is appropriate. In B 4 the assurances of the Muse accompany an argument that has to be sifted inwardly. The divine guarantee does not remove the listener's work of receiving and assessing speech.

B 71 describes belief that might still be wanting in substance about how forms and colours arise from mixed constituents. The teacher anticipates incomplete conviction and resumes explanation. It is revealing that inadequate belief is figured in material terms: instruction must supply what the listener's grasp lacks. B 114 presents a stronger conflict. The speaker knows truth to be in his words, yet the movement of conviction into men's minds is hard and unwelcome. Difficulty of acceptance is not the same as obscurity of the claim to the speaker.

B 133 supplies a spatial image for persuasion: a highway entering the human mind through seeing and touching. The divine object under discussion cannot be reached by those ordinary means. Persuasion therefore depends on the relation between subject matter and available access, not on one universally sufficient kind of proof.

These several uses caution against translating pistis with the modern opposition between "faith" and "reason." The word can accompany sense evidence, instruction, Muse-supported speech, and resistance to truth. Moreover, trust can be misplaced: B 115 describes reliance on raving Strife. Confidence has no automatic moral or cognitive value apart from what it is directed toward.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 3.9–13. Trust is assigned among bodily avenues to understanding.

B 4. Pledges of the Muse accompany an inwardly sifted account.

B 71.1–4. The teacher addresses belief still lacking substance.

B 114. Truthful words meet resistance to conviction.

B 133. Sight and touch form the ordinary highway of persuasion.

In this edition. This edition uses “trust,” “belief,” “pledges,” “persuasion,” and “conviction” in different contexts. The differences illuminate the range of the Greek rather than identify unrelated doctrines. The subject and circumstances of B 4 remain fragmentary; “those who prevail” should not be made into a securely identified social group.

See also. Faculties and evidence; Logos; Mythos; Holy speech; Wisdom and folly.

Truth-Unerring

Νημερτής (Nēmertēs)

The word. Nēmertēs means unerring or unfailing. In the catalogue it is a feminine personification qualified as lovely. The translation “Truth-Unerring” makes explicit the epistemic sense it hears in the name; no separate noun for truth accompanies the Greek name.

In Empedocles. In B122/123 lovely Truth-Unerring stands opposite dark-haired Obscurity. The pair makes an intelligible contrast between assured disclosure and what remains unclear. Yet the fragment does not assign Truth-

Unerring a speech, identify her with the Muse, or equate her with the poem's speaker. Her loveliness is part of the scene's personifying detail.

This entry should also be distinguished from a general article on truth or conviction. B114's claim that truth belongs to the speaker's words and B3's advice to examine what is clear can illuminate the poem's epistemic interests, but neither says that the named figure Nēmertēs is responsible for those operations. The secure evidence is the deliberate naming and characterization of a figure in a paired catalogue. The lost context restricts any stronger theological conclusion.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 122/123.4. Lovely Truth-Unerring is paired with dark-haired Obscurity.

In this edition. "Truth" in the English compound is interpretive expansion of the adjective-name. It should not be cited as proof that the Greek word alētheia occurs in this line.

See also. Obscurity; Trust and persuasion; Muse; Piety.

Twice-bearing

δίγονοι (digonoi)

The word. Δίγονοι is an isolated plural adjective. The edition chooses "twice-bearing," emphasizing a repeated or double generative relation. No noun is printed with it, and the excerpt does not say what beings or structures it qualifies.

In Empedocles. The term invites connection with Empedocles' many double patterns: twofold generation in the cosmic account, two contributions to seed, or repeated

reproductive activity. Its very brevity makes such connections hazardous. The source as supplied gives only Proclus' Republic commentary as witness; it supplies no explanatory setting that decides among those possible associations.

The proper lexical result is accordingly modest but positive. A word of double generation or bearing belongs to the transmitted Empedoclean vocabulary, and its plurality must be retained. It is not evidence by itself for two embryos, two pregnancies, a particular animal's breeding season, or a complete theory of reincarnation. Those are propositions requiring additional words.

The entry also illustrates a general distinction between a secure word and an insecure doctrine. There is no need to omit a small fragment simply because it cannot sustain a large interpretation. Recording the translation, grammatical shape, and missing referent gives the reader what this edition can actually establish.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 69. The whole printed fragment is the adjective, cited from Proclus.

In this edition. Alternative English lookup labels can help locate the fragment, but "twice-born" must not silently replace the edition's "twice-bearing." The present excerpt does not contain enough context to adjudicate the reproductive direction implied by the compound.

See also. Sexual differentiation; Seed; Zoogony.

Understanding and inward thought

φρένας (phrenas); φρενὸς (phrenos); πραπίδεσσιν (prapidessin); σπλάγχνοισι (splanchnoisi); νόωι (noōi)

The word. The poem's words for understanding retain bodily associations. Phrenas and phrenos belong to phrēn, rendered in different contexts as mind or breast. Prapidessin is another inward term translated as wits or understanding. Splanchnoisi means inward parts; noōi is the inflected form used for mind in B 2 and B 17.

In Empedocles. Empedocles does not present a single technical mental noun with one English equivalent. B 4 asks the hearer to know an account once it has been sifted through the inward parts. B 5 shelters what the editor calls doctrines within a speechless breast. In B 17 learning increases the phrenes, while Love must be looked on with noos. B 110 asks that the objects of instruction be secured beneath the prapides. These several images make understanding an inward reception and transformation of what is heard.

They also frustrate a sharp modern division between bodily metaphor and literal mental theory. Elsewhere, B 105 identifies thought with blood around the heart, and B 107 associates thinking, pleasure, and pain with the constituents out of which things are formed. The linguistic evidence here should be read beside that physiology, but not collapsed into it: a mention of prapides is not a concealed exact name for cardiac blood, and every invocation of phrenes is not an anatomical proposition.

The imagery can rise to divine knowledge. B 129 praises a man for wealth of understanding and his capacity to reach across many human lifetimes. B 134 calls its non-anthropomorphic divine subject a sacred phrēn, whose thoughts dart through the ordered whole. The same

general field thus accommodates human inwardness and divine comprehensiveness without proving that their modes of knowledge are identical.

For a reader moving among fragments, the safest procedure is to ask what the mental term is doing locally: receiving an argument, holding teaching, recognizing a power, or naming the divine subject. An English index under “mind” alone would conceal that variety; an insistence that every Greek term names an entirely distinct faculty would impose a system not stated in the surviving verses.

A further distinction is essential. B 103 says all things have thought, B 107 says the fitted constituents enable thinking, pleasure, and pain, and B 110 ends by assigning all things a share in thought and intelligence. These are wider claims than B 105’s location of human thought in blood around the heart. Their scope should not be narrowed to human minds, but “all things” also does not supply a detailed account of the experience of every stone, plant, or root. Modern labels for universal consciousness can indicate a question; they cannot substitute for what the verses actually specify.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 4.2–3. The account is sifted through inward parts.

B 5. Safekeeping takes place within a speechless breast.

B 17.14, 21. Learning enlarges the mind and Love is recognized with mind.

B 110.1–2. Instruction is to be fixed beneath close-packed understanding.

B 134.4–5. The divine subject is called a sacred mind.

B 103. Thought is ascribed to all things in a statement involving Chance.

B 107. Fitted constituents are linked with thinking, pleasure, and pain.

B 110.10. The final line assigns all things a share in thought and intelligence.

In this edition. “Mind,” “wits,” “understanding,” “breast,” and “inward parts” translate an overlapping vocabulary. These English words should neither erase the Greek’s bodily register nor import a separable Platonic soul. The physiological claims of B 105–108 require their own contextual treatment.

See also. Learning and attentive study; Faculties and evidence; Wealth of understanding; Sacred mind; Heart and thought.

Unfamiliar place

ἀσυνήθεα χῶρον (asynēthea chōron); ἀτερπέα χῶρον (aterpea chōron)

The word. Chōros is a place or region. B118 calls it unfamiliar; B121 calls a place joyless. Neither surviving expression literally says “birthplace.” That heading sometimes serves as an interpretation of the exile’s arrival in mortal life, but should not be mistaken for the Greek wording.

In Empedocles. In B118 the first-person speaker weeps and wails at the sight of an unfamiliar place. The response makes strangeness an experience of suffering. B121 presents a joyless region inhabited by Murder, Wrath, and other Dooms, who wander in darkness through Ruin’s meadow. These pieces resonate with B115’s forced passage into mortal forms and B119’s cry over lost honour. Such resonance supports reading mortal existence through estrangement and loss.

It does not, however, determine a precise moment of birth or identify the location as a subterranean Hades. The fragments survive as quotations and their ordering is editorial. Even the two pieces grouped as B121 are visibly discontinuous in this edition. The sound interpretation preserves the shared emotional landscape while declining to manufacture a continuous travel narrative.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 118. The speaker reacts to an unfamiliar region with weeping and wailing.

B 121. A joyless region contains destructive personifications and darkness.

B 119. The fragment evokes the contrast with former honour and blessedness.

In this edition. “Unfamiliar” and “joyless” are distinct descriptions. The present grouping does not certify that both refer to exactly the same location, and neither is the ordinary word for birth.

See also. Exile and wandering; Cave; Ruin; Hades; Blessedness.

Ungenerated

ἀγένητα (agenēta)

The word. Agenēta means ungenerated or not come into being. B 7 preserves this adjective in a lexicographical citation from Hesychius. The noun “roots” preceding it in this edition is an editorial supplement, explicitly marked with angle brackets. The difference between the secure word and its supplied subject is central to using the fragment responsibly.

In Empedocles. As interpreted with the other physical fragments, the adjective suits the enduring constituents: B 11–12 deny coming-to-be from what was not, and B 17 denies addition to or loss from the fundamental stock. This larger context supports the account of permanent roots without requiring B 7 to carry the whole doctrine unaided.

The term also helps qualify language which might otherwise sound genealogical. B 17 calls the constituents equal and of like age “in their birth,” and repeatedly says things grow from one another. These expressions need not describe an original creation of the roots. Their varying combinations arise and pass away while the account insists that the sources remain.

The fragment supplies no cosmological birthday, creator, or timeless realm outside the cycle. “Ungenerated” is a negative claim about origin; what follows positively must be gathered from other passages. Nor does the source equate the adjective with a later Platonic distinction between intelligible being and generated sensible things.[44]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 7. The adjective survives; the printed subject “roots” is supplied.

B 12. Coming from non-being and perishing into it are ruled out.

B 17.27–35. Equal age and enduring identity must be interpreted together.

[44] The edition reproduces editorial supplements but has no full critical apparatus. A discussion of the history of the supplement would require evidence not printed here.

In this edition. The typography matters more than the fragment's brevity might suggest. Writing "Empedocles says, 'the roots are ungenerated'" without brackets would overstate what this specific witness transmits. The surrounding doctrine supports the paraphrase, but the quotation does not contain a complete sentence.

See also. Roots; Being; Birth; Equality; Time and lifetime.

Universal law

πάντων νόμιμον (pantōn nomimon); ἠνεκέως τέταται (ēnekeōs tetatai)

The word. Nomimon denotes what is lawful, customary, or established by rule. In B135 it is qualified as belonging or applying to all. The accompanying verb imagines it as continuously stretched through the wide-ruling aither and boundless light.

In Empedocles. The two lines give the rule a scope greater than a particular city's ordinance. Its extension through cosmic space makes the universal reach vivid. That reach is relevant to the surrounding ethical questions, especially whether the bounds of human convention exhaust obligations toward living things. Yet the fragment begins with a connective and a pronoun-like expression whose full antecedent is missing. It does not itself state the rule's content.

Accordingly, one should not cite these lines alone as a complete command against killing, a theory of modern natural rights, or a constitution binding every named kind of being in an identical way. B136–137 can illuminate an ethical reading, and B115 supplies another universal-seeming decree, but neither comparison restores the lost preceding sentence. The passage securely preserves the

image of an all-embracing norm; identifying its precise application requires interpretation.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 135. What is lawful for all stretches continuously through aither and light.

B 115.1–8. Necessity's ordinance provides a related, but separately stated, binding law.

B 136. The rebuke of slaughter provides an ethical comparison, without supplying B135's missing antecedent.

In this edition. Aristotle transmits B135 in the Rhetoric. The source citation identifies the witness, but the edition does not print the entire surrounding Aristotelian argument. "Universal law" is an explanatory heading for the surviving expression, not its full missing context.

See also. Necessity; Oath; Piety; Kin-murder; Aither.

Void and plenum

κενεὸν (keneon); κενεόν (keneon); ἔρημον (erēmon); τοῦ παντὸς (tou pantos)

The word. Keneon means empty, and B 13–14 deny that any part of the All is empty. "Plenum" is a convenient descriptive label for this fullness; it is not a Greek technical noun quoted in these fragments. B 17 uses erēmon, empty or deserted of these constituents, in the related argument against complete disappearance.

In Empedocles. B 13 joins two denials: no part of the All is empty, and nothing is superfluous. B 14 asks where anything could come from if the All has no empty part. B 17 develops the point by denying both growth of the whole through external addition and its loss through

annihilation. The scope is total: the rearrangements of constituents occur within what already is.

A crucial source distinction appears in B 14's note. The pseudo-Aristotelian author cites Empedocles in an argument for a continuous plenum and against motion into something else. That use does not license attributing a universal denial of motion to Empedocles. His own quoted passages repeatedly describe constituents running through one another, circulating, joining, and leaving. The witness's inference and the poet's surviving claim must therefore be kept separate.

The no-void doctrine should also not be used to erase bodily passages in B 84 or B 100. A channel can be available for the passage of fire or air without being an absolute region of non-being. The clepsydra's mass of air is an especially clear reminder that the apparently unfilled can still contain something effective.[45]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 13. No part of the All is empty or superfluous.

B 14. A second denial of emptiness is accompanied by a question about external entry.

B 14 (editorial discussion). The local note explains the citing author's anti-motion use of the quotation.

B 17.30–35. The All can neither acquire something from elsewhere nor lose its constituents absolutely.

B 100.9–21. Air occupies and obstructs a vessel, illustrating why an apparently empty region need not be nothing.

[45] The polemic against void in the source should not be assimilated to modern vacuum physics, in which "vacuum" has technical meanings unavailable to the poem.

In this edition. “Plenum” is the lexicon’s explanatory heading, while “empty” is the translation’s actual word. B 14 is printed under uncertain placement; moving it mentally next to B 13 is a comparison of related evidence, not a recovery of original order.

See also. Being; Roots; Mixture; Air; Passages; Whirl and eddy; Boundlessness.

Warmth and cold in generation

ψύχεος (psycheos); θερμοῦ (thermou); θερμοτέρωι (thermoterōi); τοκὰς ἄρρενος (tokas arrenos)

The word. B65 names cold and, in an editorial supplement, heat; B67 uses the comparative “warmer” for the region associated with a male-bearing belly. The terms describe conditions in generation, not separate generative substances additional to the roots.

In Empedocles. The surviving sequence suggests an explanation of bodily differences through the thermal circumstances of development. Some material, poured into “pure places,” becomes female after meeting cold. The supplied counterpart makes male development depend on heat. B67 then gives an independent statement about the warmer male-bearing region and follows it with darkness, manliness, and increased hairiness.

That account is important as an instance of Empedocles’ search for continuous physical explanation across conception, bodily form, and visible surface qualities. It should not be converted into contemporary biological advice. The poem is explaining an ancient pattern of sex difference through hot and cold; the fragment is not evidence that a person’s temperature reveals or determines fetal sex in the way asserted.

The direction of explanation also differs from B62. There separating fire raises the first undifferentiated forms toward its like. Here thermal variation belongs to differentiation in reproduction. Similar physical vocabulary need not mark an identical event or one immediately adjacent step in the original poem.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 65. Cold is preserved in the account of women; the male-and-heat clause is bracketed as supplied.

B 67. The male-bearing belly is placed in the warmer region, followed by a description of male bodily traits.

B 62.1–6. Fire explains upward emergence of whole-natured forms, a distinct generative episode.

In this edition. The strongest caution is textual: B65's neat hot/male versus cold/female balance is partly restored by an editor. B67 supports a link between warmth and male development, but it does not recover every missing word of B65.

See also. Sexual differentiation; Hair; Seed; Whole-natured forms.

Water and rain

ὕδωρ (hydōr); ὄμβρον (ombron); ὕδατος (hydatos)

The word. Hydōr is water; ombros ordinarily names rain or a shower. Empedocles varies the terms where he describes the watery constituent, and the translation preserves that variation even when "rain" appears inside a vessel or in a bodily mixture. It therefore matters to distinguish the physical role from the immediate meteorological image. The named goddess Nestis is a further way in which water is presented, rather than a reason to suppress the other words.

In Empedocles. B 17 explicitly lists water among the roots. B 21 characterises rain as dark and chilling and makes it a visible witness to the doctrine. In B 98 rain mixes with Earth, Hephaestus, and aither, while in B 73 Cypris uses it to wet earth before the forms are hardened. Water is thus an ingredient, a wetting medium, and a term in the contrasts by which the constituents can be recognised.

B 100 deliberately brings water close to ordinary experience. The girl dips a bronze vessel into a soft, silvery body of water; the poem also calls the water trying to enter or leave it "rain." What matters in the analogy is the alternating occupancy of the vessel by water and air or aither. "Rain" cannot there be restricted to falling weather. B 81 similarly identifies wine as water transformed within wood, though the isolated statement does not furnish a general chemistry of fermentation.

Water's connections with joining must also be read cautiously. The surviving phrase "clinging Love" in B 19 is embedded in Plutarch's argument about water binding and fire separating. That later framing is useful testimony to an interpretation, but it is not a surviving Empedoclean equation that abolishes the distinction between Love and a root.[46]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 17.18. Water is included explicitly in the physical four.

B 21.5. Rain is presented as dark and chilling.

B 98.1–5. Rain belongs to the constituent mixture of blood and flesh.

B 100.9–21. Water and "rain" name the liquid in the water-catcher comparison.

[46] Darkness and cold are contextual qualities in B 21; the passage is not a universal modern definition of the physical properties of water.

B 19 (editorial discussion). The equation of moist element and Love belongs to Plutarch's local argument.

In this edition. "Rain" is a deliberately literal rendering even outside weather contexts. One should not convert every ombros into a separate fifth substance, or assume that hydōr alone is technical. Nestis' presence in B 96 is left as a divine name rather than translated into a silent ingredient label.

See also. Roots; Nestis; Sea; Iris; Mixture; Love; Respiration; Clepsydra; Wine.

Wealth of understanding

πραπίδων (prapidōn); πλοῦτον (plouton); θείων (theiōn); σκοτόεσσα (skotoessa)

The word. Plouton is wealth, used metaphorically of understanding. B 129 speaks of the wealth of prapides; B 132 calls it divine. Skotoessa, dark, qualifies the contrasting opinion about gods in B 132.

In Empedocles. B 129 praises an unnamed man whose knowledge, understanding, and wise works exceed those of others. Whenever he reaches out with all his understanding, he can look upon each of the things that are across ten and twenty human lifetimes. The passage represents exceptional cognitive range in the language of acquired riches and extended vision. It does not explain how that capacity works.

Porphyry preserves the lines in his Life of Pythagoras, which gives the identification of the remarkable man an obvious ancient setting. The quoted verses themselves do not name him. "Pythagoras" is therefore an important lookup connection, but the reader should be told whether it comes from the witness's context or from Empedocles'

surviving words. Nor should the number of lifetimes be turned into a precise schedule of recollected incarnations: the lines emphasize extraordinary reach, without narrating a numbered sequence of earlier lives.

B 132 employs the same wealth-image in an explicitly evaluative contrast. Blessed is the person who possesses divine understanding; wretched is the one absorbed in dark opinion about gods. Cognition has consequences for the condition of a life, and the difference between knowledge and inadequate belief is figured as abundance versus obscurity. This passage does not itself identify the possessor with the man of B 129.

The acquisitive metaphor also connects to B 110, where attentive study lets a learner gain further things from what is already held. The accumulation is generative rather than a static hoard. Together these passages enlarge the poem's account of learning beyond the initial limitations of mortal perception, while leaving the grounds of the most exceptional claims partly obscure.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 129. An unnamed man has abundant understanding and extraordinary reach across human lifetimes.

B 132. Divine understanding is blessed wealth; dark opinion about gods is wretchedness.

B 110.1–5. Carefully retained instruction makes further acquisition possible.

In this edition. The attribution of B 129 to Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras is apparatus evidence for its reception. It is not a surviving vocative or name inside the Empedoclean quotation. B 132's "divine" can characterize the understanding without requiring one predetermined doctrine of possession by a god.

See also. Understanding and inward thought; Learning and attentive study; Wisdom and folly; Sacred mind; Mortal limits.

Whelks

κηρύκων (kērykōn); λιθορρίνων (lithorrhinōn)

The word. The whelks of B76 are described as stony-skinned. The adjective makes their hard exterior intelligible through stone-like texture, while the noun is the animal-name given by this edition. The fragment does not provide a zoological classification beyond its example.

In Empedocles. Whelks follow the heavy-backed shells in an argument about the placement of earth on the outer side of flesh. They thus sharpen an already concrete claim: an animal's exterior can have the hardness of earth while flesh lies beneath. The compound "stony-skinned" fuses the tactile properties of a material with the anatomical place it occupies.

The diction should not be mistaken for a modern mineralogical identification. It does not specify calcium compounds or a process of shell secretion. What it securely gives is a material and spatial analogy within Empedocles' root-based account: the harder earthly character is perceptible on the outside.

The adjacent tortoise broadens the comparison to a different kind of creature. That juxtaposition makes the shared bodily arrangement more important than membership in a narrowly defined animal class. The lexical detail is therefore worth retaining independently even though the general argument belongs under shells: the animal-name and its stone-skin epithet show exactly how the physical example is made vivid.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 76.3. Whelks, qualified as stony-skinned, supplement the shell example.

In this edition. The translation identifies κήρυκες as whelks. A reader should not infer a precise modern species from this English convenience, or take “stony” as a claim that the exterior is literally an ordinary rock.

See also. Shells; Tortoises; Skin; Earth.

Whirl and eddy

δίνης (dinēs); στροφάλιγγι (strophalingi); δίναις (dinais); καρπαλίμως δ’ ἀνόπαιον (karpalimōs d’ anopaion)

The word. Dinē and strophalinx are words for whirling or eddying motion; B 35 prints their inflected forms in an account with depths, a middle, and an outer boundary. B 115 again has eddies of aither. The vocabulary is dynamic and spatial, but it does not supply a modern mathematical vortex model.

In Empedocles. B 35 puts Strife at the lowest depth of a whirl and Love in the middle of an eddy. Things then join from different quarters; some remain unmixed because Strife still restrains them; its retreat to the outermost circle is incomplete. The geometry is therefore inseparable from an evolving process. One should not take a single line’s location and impose it as the permanent address of a power throughout the system.

B 36’s brief outward placement of Strife agrees with the broad movement of withdrawal, without proving exactly where that independent quotation belongs in B 35’s continuous scene. B 31’s shaking limbs describe disturbance, while B 51’s “swiftly upward” preserves only

a direction and speed. The latter has lost its subject and cannot responsibly furnish a complete account of ascent by a specified root.

In B 115 the eddies receive the exile after successive expulsion through aither, sea, earth, and sunlight. The repeated motion connects the wanderer's experience to cosmic regions. It does not by itself identify that itinerary with the entire sequence of world-formation, or define an orbital path for a soul.[47]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 35.3–13. Whirl, depth, centre, and outer circle frame the incomplete retreat of Strife and advance of Love.

B 36. Strife stands at the extreme edge as things come together.

B 31. The limbs of a god are shaken in sequence.

B 51. An isolated phrase preserves only swift upward motion.

B 115.9–12. The wanderer is flung into the eddies of aither.

In this edition. The translation's "whirl" and "eddy" preserve lexical variation. B 51 is only an adverbial fragment, so an inferred subject should never be inserted as if transmitted. Circular vocabulary here is not automatically interchangeable with every temporal use of "cycle."

See also. Cycle; Love; Strife; Aither; Separation; Sphairos; Daimon.

[47] The relative positions in B 35 are among the problems a reconstruction must explain. A neat labelled cosmic diagram would settle more than the surviving lines do.

White discharge

πύον (pyon); λευκόν (leukon)

The word. B68 names a white πύον, translated “discharge,” and dates its appearance to the tenth of the eighth month. The substance is described by colour and by a developmental time, but the excerpt does not name the body or organ from which it comes.

In Empedocles. This miniature fragment is strikingly specific about timing and strikingly incomplete about its subject. Aristotle’s Generation of Animals is given as the witness, placing the quotation within an ancient discussion of generation. The source reference is relevant evidence about transmission; it is not a substitute for the omitted sentence surrounding Empedocles’ line.

The responsible interpretation preserves that asymmetry. The verse attests an attempt to assign a bodily process to a definite point in a sequence of months and days. It does not, as printed here, tell the reader from what event the months are counted. Calling the fluid semen, milk, or a dental secretion would therefore go beyond the supplied wording and local apparatus.

The seven-week report provides another example of developmental timing, but it survives through a different author, in prose, and with a different claim. The two numbers should not be reconciled by assuming that they describe the same event. A lexicon records both without building an unsupported embryological calendar.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 68. The single verse gives the time and whiteness of an otherwise unnamed discharge.

B 153a (report). Theon reports seven-week completion of an embryo, a separate timing claim.

In this edition. The English “discharge” leaves the fluid’s identity open. That restraint is worth preserving: neither the fragment nor the book’s note supplies a narrower physiological identification.

See also. Seven weeks; Seed; Blood.

Whole-natured forms

οὐλοφυεῖς (oulophyeis); τύποι (typoi)

The word. Οὐλοφυεῖς qualifies τύποι, the forms or mould-like shapes that first rise out of earth in B62. The edition renders the compound “whole-natured.” Its force is best approached through the contrast in the passage: these are wholes, yet they do not display the differentiated bodily equipment of ordinary humans.

In Empedocles. The forms possess a share of water and heat. Fire sends them upward because it seeks its like. Their appearance is therefore explained through the behaviour of their constituents rather than through an independently acting embryo or a completed parent animal. Earth supplies the place from which they arise, and the emergence is expressed with the same sprouting vocabulary used elsewhere for plants and limbs.

Their wholeness must not be mistaken for anatomical completion. The closing lines explicitly deny a lovely frame of limbs, voice, and the member characteristic of men. A form can consequently be whole in one sense and still incomplete in the organization or differentiation of its parts. That combination is what makes the adjective important. It distinguishes this episode from B57–58,

where recognizable bodily parts are present without a whole organism.

The introduction treats this as a third phase before sexual reproduction. The surviving fragment supports the contrast with fully differentiated human bodies; it does not by itself settle whether the episode follows the composite creatures in one sequence or belongs to a different direction of cosmic change. The account of separating fire makes that larger question especially consequential, but reconstructing it requires evidence beyond the quotation.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 62.4–8. The forms rise from earth, share water and heat, and lack limbs, voice, and a male member.

B 57. Separately existing organs offer a contrasting mode of early formation.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The placement in a four-stage zoogony belongs to the introduction.

In this edition. The unusual “whole-natured” keeps the adjective visible instead of silently replacing it with “complete organisms.” The latter would contradict the explicit lack of recognizable human organization in the following lines.

See also. Night-born shoots; Zoogony; Isolated limbs; Sexual differentiation; Like perceives like.

Wind-staying

ἀκαμάτων ἀνέμων (akamatōn anemōn); παλίντιτα πνεύματ’ (palintita pneumat’); καίριον αὐχμόν (kairion auchmon)

The word. The winds in B 111 are akamatoi, tireless, and destructive when their blasts ruin ploughland. Returning or requiting breezes are called palintita pneumata. Kairion auchmon is dryness suited to its time, a seasonable drought rather than drought treated as invariably harmful.

In Empedocles. The promised mastery is bidirectional. The hearer will be able to halt damaging wind but also restore breezes if desired, produce dry conditions from dark rain, and bring nourishing moisture in summer drought. The ideal is not a world without wind or water. It is the timely ordering of environmental forces in relation to human and agricultural needs.

The passage’s qualification “if you wish” is part of the claim to intentional control. It distinguishes the promise from the general accounts of rain, sun, and air elsewhere in the poems. No engineering method is stated. The verse does not describe bags, barriers, river-diversion works, or a specific ceremony.

The introduction relates the later story that Empedocles stopped winds around Acragas with ass-hide bags and acquired the epithet kōlysanemas, wind-stayer. It explicitly warns that B 111 is likely a source of the legend rather than confirmation of an independently documented feat. The epithet is supplied in transliteration by the introduction, not printed as a Greek word in the poem.

Read within the larger sequence of B 111, weather control links the cure of bodily trouble with the protection of cultivated land and the prospect of return from death. Its force is to display the scope of instruction. It remains a historical claim made by the poetic speaker, without modern verification or practical instructions.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 111.3–8. Control of wind and rainfall is articulated in both destructive and beneficial directions.

Introduction I (editorial discussion). The wind-stayer legend and epithet are explained as potentially dependent on the verse.

In this edition. The edition's "requiting breezes" preserves the unusual retaliatory or returning force of the adjective instead of silently making all restored winds gentle. The agricultural standard is explicit in the damaged ploughlands and tree-nourishing streams.

See also. Remedies and extraordinary powers; Acragas and the civic audience; Air; Aither; Water and rain.

Wine

οἶνος (oinos); σαπὲν ἐν ξύλωι ὕδωρ (sapen en xylōi hydōr)

The word. B81 calls wine water from the bark, rotted or altered within wood. The vivid predicate relates a familiar drink to water undergoing change in a plant. B91 uses wine in a different setting, as a liquid more willing to unite with an unnamed partner than oil is.

In Empedocles. The wine statement brings botanical transformation under the general economy of enduring constituents and changing compounds. What seems to be a distinct substance can be explained through a prior

material and the circumstances of its alteration. The phrase “in the wood” locates the process inside the living plant rather than treating wine as a substance with an independent origin.

The edition’s “rotted” is deliberately rough and should not be replaced without notice by the modern technical word fermentation. The printed line provides no yeast, sugar chemistry, or account of a winemaker’s procedure. Its significance is the explanation of a plant product through transformation of water.

B91 concerns compatibility instead of production. Whatever its missing subject is, it joins more readily with wine than with oil. That comparison cannot be used to conclude that B81 supplies a full molecular explanation of wine’s miscibility. The two fragments support a broader interest in how qualities and relations change when materials are mixed or processed, while addressing different local questions.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 81. Wine is described as water from bark, altered within wood.

B 91. Wine and oil serve as contrasting partners for an unnamed substance.

In this edition. The English “rotted” retains the force of σαπὲν. A modernizing gloss should be clearly marked as a comparison, not substituted for the ancient claim; this entry accordingly leaves the line’s physical language intact.

See also. Wine and oil; Trees; Apples; Mixture.

Wine and oil

οἴνωι (oinōi); ἐλαίωι (elaiōi); ἐνάρθμιον (enarthmion); οὐκ ἐθέλει (ouk ethelei)

The word. B91 contrasts greater union with wine and unwillingness to unite with oil. The subject of that contrast is missing. “More in union” renders a term of fitting or accord, while “it will not” gives incompatibility the language of will.

In Empedocles. The fragment preserves a difference between possible partners rather than a universal rule that all liquids combine. One and the same unnamed substance has a stronger affinity for wine than for oil. Such a difference matters to a philosophy in which mixture produces new mortal forms: not every contact has the same outcome, and a merely indiscriminate attraction would not explain the diversity of combinations.

B22 provides the broader language of things better fitted for blending and others standing far apart in their mixtures and forms. B91 can be read as a concrete instance of that kind of selective association, but its missing subject prevents a fully specified experiment from being recovered.

The description of wine as transformed water in B81 is relevant but not decisive. It explains how the poem characterizes wine’s origin, not which substance is comparing its relations with wine and oil in B91. A familiar modern demonstration involving water and oil may come to mind, yet the printed text should not be silently completed with water as its subject.

The anthropomorphic “will not” is typical of the poem’s active material language. It marks a disposition or

incompatibility without requiring the reader to imagine an isolated conscious decision by the liquid.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 91. The short fragment preserves the contrast in affinity but not its subject.

B 22. Some things are better fitted for blending, while others are hostile in mixture and form.

B 81. Wine receives a separate account as water altered within wood.

In this edition. The ellipsis after wine is significant. The verse is not a complete sentence saying “water mixes with wine but not oil,” even if that is a tempting reconstruction. The entry retains the unidentified participant.

See also. Wine; Mixture; Like perceives like; Sweet, bitter, sour, hot.

Wing-faring boats

πτεροβάμοσι κύμβαις (pterobamosi kymbais)

The word. The phrase rendered “wing-faring boats” names birds through a vessel image in B20. The compound emphasizes movement by wings; the noun turns the moving animal into a small craft. No ordinary word for bird appears in this particular phrase.

In Empedocles. The image concludes a list of living forms: bushes, water-housed fish, mountain-lying beasts, and the wing-faring boats. Each receives a sharply characterized setting or mode of life. Fish have watery dwellings, beasts lie in mountains, and birds travel through their medium like vessels. The phrase is therefore both an identification and a miniature account of how the animal moves.

The larger argument concerns bodily unity through Love and disaggregation through Quarrels. The list extends the pattern beyond human limbs. A bird is not exempt because its mode of travel looks different from that of a terrestrial beast; its distinctive body is another compound subject to joining and separation.

The nautical metaphor also gives a useful counterpart to the “human prow” in B61’s hybrid creatures. There the front of a body is described as a vessel’s leading part; here the whole bird becomes a craft. Neither passage implies that animals are artificial machines. The shared vocabulary exposes the poet’s interest in functional arrangements of parts while keeping the beings vividly alive.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 20.6–7. The phrase closes the catalogue extending bodily joining and division across living kinds.

B 61. A human prow characterizes one sort of composite creature.

B 82. Birds’ feathers receive a distinct material comparison.

In this edition. “Wing-faring” is deliberately unusual English. Replacing the entire phrase with “birds” would identify the referent but lose the concrete craft metaphor that makes the expression worth indexing.

See also. Fish; Feathers; Composite creatures; Love; Strife.

Wisdom and folly

σοφὸς (sophos); σοφίης (sophiēs); νήπιοι (nēpioi); μέγα νήπιος (mega nēpios)

The word. Sophos means wise or skilled according to context; sophiēs is the form translated wisdom in B 3. Nēpioi and the singular nēpios designate fools, with the force of immature or uncomprehending people. The contrast concerns what people understand and how they act.

In Empedocles. B 11 calls fools those who expect what did not exist to arise or what exists to be completely destroyed. Their thinking is not far-reaching enough. B 15 states the complementary standard: a wise person would not imagine that mortals exist only during the span called a life and are sheer nothing before their composition or after their dissolution. Wisdom here requires going beyond habitual descriptions of birth and death to consider what persists through change.

The same severe language of folly enters the sacrificial scene in B 137. A father lifts and kills his transformed son while praying, unaware of the identity within the altered form. The insult does not merely mean a lack of cleverness: failure to understand has become an act of kin-killing. B 136 similarly locates mutual devouring in heedlessness of mind. Cosmological and ethical error are therefore connected in the surviving vocabulary, even if the fragments do not provide a single deductive system joining every claim.

B 3 complicates the ideal of wisdom by mocking the position of someone who would claim its heights through unholy overstatement for public honour. Being acclaimed wise is not equivalent to speaking responsibly. B 129, by contrast, associates wise works with an extraordinary

range of understanding. The collection thus distinguishes several conditions: skilled accomplishment, adequately extended thought, right recognition of others, and the seductive social appearance of expertise.

None of these passages licenses a modern division under which natural philosophy is rational wisdom and ritual exhortation mere credulity. The poem deploys wisdom and folly on both sides of that later boundary.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 11. Folly is inability to think through the impossibility of absolute generation and destruction.

B 15. The wise person rejects sheer nonexistence before composition and after dissolution.

B 3.6–8. A claim to the heights of wisdom can be tied to unholy ambition.

B 137.1–4. A sacrificing father is called a great fool because the victim is his transformed child.

In this edition. The translation's "divine" in "would not divine" at B 15 is a verb for imagining or pronouncing in the heart, not a statement that every wise judgement is an oracle. Sophos should also be distinguished from mētis, despite the English "wisdom" sometimes used for the latter.

See also. Metis; Naming and convention; Mortal limits; Wealth of understanding; Kin-murder.

Witnesses and reception

The word. A witness is the author or document through which an Empedoclean passage reaches us. The witness's own wording, interpretation, and reason for quoting must be distinguished from the words attributed to the poem. Reception is the later use made of those words.

In Empedocles. The supplied corpus is predominantly indirect. Simplicius preserves long explanatory passages while discussing Aristotle; Sextus preserves important epistemological and anti-sacrificial lines; Clement and Hippolytus quote within theological arguments; Plutarch draws on Empedocles in philosophical and literary discussions. These interests explain the survival of particular passages without guaranteeing that their preserved proportions mirror the original poems.

A witness can make a short quotation appear to support a larger doctrine. The note to B 19 says Plutarch associates separating fire with Strife and cohesive moisture with Love. That is valuable evidence for how he reads Empedocles, but it should not be silently substituted for a complete Empedoclean identification of each principle. B 14 is quoted in an argument about a plenum and movement; the witness's conclusion must likewise be kept separate from the isolated verse. Aristotle's B 152 citation preserves a metaphor inside a theory of metaphor rather than a continuous account of ageing.

Some items are reports rather than quotations. Aristotle's explanation at B 92 and Theon's statement at B 153a require that label; Theophrastus' surrounding account is indispensable for interpreting the lexical scraps at B 99. Multiple witnesses can help, but only where they preserve comparable material. The introduction overstates the uniqueness of B 115 as a plural-witness

fragment: its own citation for B 27 lists Plutarch and Simplicius, and B 6 also has two named sources.

The PDF's final source index is useful for navigation but cannot replace the local citations. It says all witnesses are listed, yet B 115 appears under Plutarch without its locally cited Hippolytus, and B 6 under Tzetzes without Aëtius. It also separates spelling or abbreviation variants such as Plut and Plutarch. Its parenthetical totals are therefore index-entry counts, not an independently reliable census of witnesses.

Keeping these layers distinct gives the reader more usable evidence, not less. The poem supplies one kind of statement; an ancient interpreter supplies another; the modern introduction and index supply a third. Each can inform an interpretation if its provenance is kept visible.[48]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

Introduction II (editorial discussion). The introduction explains the dominant witnesses and their selective interests.

B 19 (editorial discussion). Plutarch's interpretation connects the phrase with fire and moisture.

B 99 (report). Theophrastus' report supplies the hearing context of the lexical fragments.

B 115 (editorial discussion). The local citation lists both Plutarch and Hippolytus.

Source index (editorial discussion). The PDF index separates author aliases and omits some second witnesses despite its introductory claim.

[48] The B 110 book correction can be checked in Hippolytus, Refutation, Book VII. The older English chapter numbering differs from the conventional modern subdivision.

In this edition. Ancient source notes are not a full critical apparatus of manuscript variants. A further local correction is needed at B 110: the supplied citation prints Hippolytus, Refutation VI 29,26; the passage belongs to Book VII in the standard book division. The quoted text and B identifier remain unchanged.

See also. Fragments and Diels numbering; Supplements, corruption, and gaps; Papyri and the unprinted text; Sunset of life; On Nature and Purifications.

World-order

κόσμον (kosmon); ἕνα κόσμον (hena kosmon); κόσμον ἅπαντα (kosmon hapanta)

The word. Kosmos is translated “order” in B 26 and “ordered world” in B 134. The range matters: the word can emphasise an arranged whole without, on its own, specifying a modern universe of a particular size or a complete list of celestial contents. The fragment’s local predicate tells more than an automatic translation “cosmos” would.

In Empedocles. B 26 describes constituents coming together through Love into one kosmos, then being carried apart through Strife, within a passage that also reaches towards the All grown together as one. Whether this “single order” is an intermediate ordered world or should be aligned more closely with complete union is part of interpreting the sequence. The word alone does not decide the reconstruction.

B 134 describes sacred mind darting through the whole ordered world in swift thoughts. Here the scope of intelligent activity is foregrounded rather than the mechanical arrangement of regions. The subject is not

named in the surviving quotation, so the passage should not be made into a complete cosmology of a world-soul or automatically identified with the Sphairos.

The associated “All” in B 17 and the void fragments makes the totality comprehensive and closed against addition from elsewhere. Yet kosmos and All are not therefore interchangeable in every sentence. One concerns order, the other total scope; the distinction permits questions about how the enduring totality becomes differently organised.[49]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 26.5–12. Love brings the constituents into a single order in a passage of cyclic alternation.

B 134.4–5. Sacred mind traverses the whole ordered world with thoughts.

B 17.30–35. The All cannot gain from outside or be emptied of its enduring sources.

In this edition. “A single order” and “the whole ordered world” are the edition’s context-sensitive renderings. The title World-order combines them for lookup without pretending that the poem supplies a formal definition of kosmos.

See also. Cycle; One and many; Sphairos; Sacred mind; Void and plenum; Roots.

[49] The later language of a Platonic world-soul is not present in these quoted occurrences of kosmos.

Wrath

Κότος (Kotos); Κότωι (Kotōi)

The word. Kotos is wrath or enduring resentment. It occurs both as a named inhabitant of a grim region and as a power under whose influence things are separate. Its emotional vocabulary is part of the poem's physical language, not a reason to restrict it to a human psychological episode.

In Empedocles. B21 says that in Wrath things are different in form and apart, whereas in Love they come together and desire one another. Within that explicit contrast, Wrath performs the separating role associated elsewhere with Strife. The expression nevertheless deserves its own lexical notice because Empedocles has chosen a different word and a different emotional emphasis.

B121 gives Kotos a place beside Murder and the tribes of other Dooms. That company underlines the destructive and afflictive character of wrath. It does not provide a separate biography of the personification. The two uses may illuminate one another, but the catalogue should not be converted into a catalogue of additional eternal substances beside the roots and Love and Strife. The text's use of named affects is more flexible than such an expanded inventory would suggest.

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.7–8. Wrath makes things separate and unlike, in direct contrast with Love.

B 121. Wrath inhabits the joyless place beside Murder and the Dooms.

In this edition. The translation preserves “Wrath” in both places rather than silently substituting “Strife.” This retains the lexical variation while allowing the physical function in B21 to be compared with Neikos.

See also. Strife; Murder and bloodshed; Quarrel; Dooms.

Zeus

Ζεὺς ἀργὴς (Zeus argēs); Ζεὺς βασιλεὺς (Zeus basileus); Διὸς (Dios)

The word. Zeus is one of the four divine names in B 6, with argēs, “shining,” as his distinguishing epithet. The same god’s name appears in the genitive Dios in the damaged B 142 and as “Zeus as king” in B 128. These are actual uses of the name; they should not be replaced in advance by a single physical noun.

In Empedocles. In the root announcement, Zeus’ brightness naturally invites comparison with fire and the sun. The introduction describes the familiar identification Zeus–fire, but also a modern interpretation which takes Zeus as air or aither and assigns fire elsewhere. The verse itself does not finish the argument for either. “Shining” is significant evidence, not a complete lexical equation.

B 128 supplies a different setting. The people described there recognise Cypris as queen, with no Zeus as king among them. This is an account of divine rule and worship in a particular order of life, not an explicit denial that the root named Zeus in B 6 exists. A term can bear cosmological and cultic force without every use being mechanically interchangeable.

B 142 sets Zeus’ roofed halls alongside the roof of Hades in a very damaged exclusion statement. The identity and fate of its subject cannot be fully recovered from the

printed lines. The fragment consequently supports the cosmic reach of the divine contrast more securely than it supports any precise map of the roots.[50]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 6.2. Shining Zeus is the first divine name in the four-root list.

B 128.1–3. Zeus as king is absent from the order ruled by Cypris.

B 142. The damaged quotation contrasts the halls of Zeus and the roof of Hades.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The Zeus–fire mapping and a Zeus–air/aither alternative are discussed in modern apparatus.

In this edition. Keeping "Zeus" avoids deciding a disputed mapping inside the translation. The introduction's survey is not itself a fragment, and its assessment of a modern interpretation must not be presented as ancient unanimity.

See also. Roots; Fire; Air; Aither; Hera; Aidoneus; Cypris; Hades.

Zoogony

ἐβλάστησαν (eblastēsan); φύεσθαι (phyesthai); οὐλοφυεῖς (oulophyeis)

The word. Zoogony is the modern organizing headword for the coming-to-be of living creatures. It is not a Greek noun quoted in this book. The verses use a vocabulary of sprouting, growing, mixing, coming together, and being fitted into forms. The headword therefore gathers a

[50] The divine name does not entitle the reader to import Plato's later ordering of gods or physical bodies into Empedocles.

problem treated through several different images rather than translating one technical term.

In Empedocles. Empedocles makes the production of organisms intelligible within the same account of mixture that explains the rest of the world. Trees, men, women, beasts, birds, and fish are repeatedly listed together as products of the enduring constituents. Their variety comes from combination; living things do not require an additional material origin. The great passage B35 describes countless mortal tribes pouring forth as Love advances, while some constituents remain unmixed under Strife. This is an account of formation during a changing balance of powers, not a picture of a craftsman creating life from nothing.

The short biological fragments preserve sharply different scenes. In B57–58 parts exist separately and wander without the bodies in which readers ordinarily expect to find them. In B59 they encounter one another; B60–61 depict unusual combinations, including doubled bodies and human–bovine composites. B62 instead describes whole-natured forms rising from earth under the impulse of separating fire, still lacking differentiated limbs, voice, and the male member. These scenes must be distinguished before they are arranged into a history. The numerical order of the fragments cannot establish their original narrative sequence.

The introduction summarizes a four-phase scheme, ending with sexual differentiation and reproduction. It also reports both the ancient survival explanation associated with Aristotle and modern disagreement over reading it as an anticipation of natural selection. Those statements belong to the edition’s reconstruction and reception history. The quoted verses vividly attest separate parts, fortuitous encounters, strange

combinations, and undifferentiated forms; they do not themselves lay out a continuous four-stage timetable or a recurring mechanism of inherited variation and selection.

The most secure interpretive result is therefore plural: Empedocles asks how living arrangements arise, uses both assembly and growth to explain them, and treats present bodily organization as something needing an account. He does not simply take the familiar organism as the starting unit. This makes the isolated arm, the unframed eye, and the sexually undifferentiated form philosophically consequential rather than decorative curiosities.

The language of birth also has to be read against B8–9. There the poet denies absolute birth and destruction and allows ordinary birth-language for the mixing of constituents into men, beasts, bushes, and birds. A zoogony consequently explains the arrival of organized mortal arrangements, not the creation of their ultimate materials. This distinction allows the strange early bodies to be genuinely new as compounds while their constituents remain continuous with what preceded them. The category “mortal things” is broader than animals, so the biological scenes belong within a general theory of transient formations.

B35 makes that perspective especially vivid by saying that what had been immortal grew mortal. The immediate argument concerns previously unmixed things entering mixture. It need not be converted into a literal biography in which every eternal root dies. What becomes perishable is the arrangement, a point that also helps

distinguish the formation of a living body from the separate question of a daimon's passage through bodies.[51]

The places. Selected annotated passages.

B 21.9–14. Trees, human sexes, animals, and gods appear in one catalogue of generated compounds.

B 35.3–17. Mixture under advancing Love produces countless mortal tribes of many shapes.

B 57. Separate heads, arms, and eyes provide the most vivid evidence for generation from disjoined parts.

B 62. Whole-natured forms supply a different scene of early human generation.

Introduction V (editorial discussion). The four-phase scheme and the discussion of selection are modern exposition, drawing on testimonia not printed as a separate corpus.

In this edition. The editorial Book II heading and the B-number sequence are finding aids, not proof of original composition order. The introduction's phrase "necks without heads" reverses B57: the printed Greek and translation give heads without necks. Neither this local mistake nor the introduction's synthesis should displace the quoted evidence.

See also. Isolated limbs; Composite creatures; Whole-natured forms; Sexual differentiation; Love; Mixture.

[51] The catalogue in B9 names men, wild beasts, bushes, and birds as cases in which people customarily say that mixed constituents have been born. That usage explains why generation-language persists after the denial of absolute coming-to-be.

Greek forms and English aliases

Greek expressions, transliterations, and English lookup terms lead to the articles that explain them. Related labels sharing an article are not necessarily synonyms.

A fragments. Fragments and Diels numbering, 116

abstinence. Purification and fasting, 230

abstinence from flesh. Meat-eating, 179

account. Logos, 171

Acragas. Acragas and the civic audience, 13

Acragas and the civic audience. Acragas and the civic audience, 13

addressee. Pausanias and Anchites, 221

aēr. Air, 17

aer. Air, 17

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