DEATH BY PHILOSOPHY



Death by Philosophy



The Biographical Tradition in the Life and Death of the Archaic Philosophers Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS
Ann Arbor

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Published in the United States of America by
The University of Michigan Press
Manufactured in the United States of America
♾ Printed on acid-free paper

2007 2006 2005 2004 4 3 2 1

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A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Chitwood, Ava, 1953–
Death by philosophy : the biographical tradition in the life and death of the archaic philosophers Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus / Ava Chitwood
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-472-11388-7 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Empedocles. 2. Heraclitus, of Ephesus. 3. Democritus. 4. Philosophy, Ancient. I. Title.

B218.Z7C47 2004
182—dc22
[B] 2004048051

To my mother and my father

θυμῶι μάχεσθαι χαλεπόν· ὅ γάρ ἄν θέληι, ψυχῆς ὠνεῖται.

Heraclitus

Acknowledgments



I would like to acknowledge the help generously given by the following people: to Mary Lefkowitz, Diskin Clay, and Robert Wagman, my first readers, I owe more than I can say; any excellence this book achieves is largely due to them. I am grateful to my two students, Olya Novozhilova and Joe Coleman, for their help with research and bibliography. Mary-Anne Eaverly was a bright and steady light through the dark days of revision, and I am greatly in her debt. I offer sincere thanks to a remarkable friend and scholar, Joanne Waugh, for her unstinting encouragement and optimism; this book would never have reached press without her, and she continues to inspire me every day.

Contents



Introduction 1

ONE Empedocles 12

TWO Heraclitus 59

THREE Democritus 94

Conclusion 141

Index of Citations, Fragments, and Anecdotes 147

Notes 153

Bibliography 191

Index 201

Contents



Introduction 1

ONE Empedocles 12

TWO Heraclitus 59

THREE Democritus 94

Conclusion 141

Index of Citations, Fragments, and Anecdotes 147

Notes 153

Bibliography 191

Index 201

Introduction



According to Diogenes Laertius, Empedocles died by jumping into Etna—and by hanging, by drowning, by falling, by traveling, and not at all: he simply vanished into thin air. Why so many and such varied deaths? What connection do these multiple deaths have to the life and work of Empedocles, as presented by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*? What is the connection between the historical life and philosophical work of Empedocles, and Diogenes Laertius' biographical account of them?

These were the questions that launched the present work, which examines the biographies of three archaic philosophers, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus, by tracing the direct and correlative relationship that exists between the biographical data in the work of Diogenes Laertius and the extant fragments of these philosophers. Nowhere does the correlation between biography and philosophy occur more clearly than in the use of anecdotal material; nowhere in the anecdotal material is the correlation more striking than in Diogenes Laertius' use of various deaths to illustrate and exemplify his subjects' philosophy, morals, beliefs, idiosyncrasies, and foibles. This approach to philosophical biography yields three

important results: a method by which to analyze and interpret the interplay between biography and philosophy; a suggestion that a reevaluation of Diogenes Laertius is due; and a system by which to classify and study the mechanics of ancient biography in general.

The study of biography is not new ground for the classical scholar, although the notion of a direct correlation between biography and literature has not always, or even generally, been accepted. In 1981, however, Mary R. Lefkowitz broke new ground with her book, *Lives of the Greek Poets*. Her methodology yielded fresh and compelling interpretations of both biographers and poets, winning widespread support for the new biographical theory.

Lefkowitz argues that the poets' lives are taken from their poetry, which is read by the biographers as a series of personal statements. That is, the ancient biographer analyzes the subject's work in an autobiographical manner, a reading frequently aided by use of the first person ("I") by the poet. The biographer's reaction to those (seemingly personal) statements leads to the formation of a favorable or negative biographical tradition, which is illustrated in the poet's life by the use of anecdotes set in schematized patterns and formulas. For instance, in the biographical tradition that exists for Sappho, the poet throws herself over a cliff to her death in despair over her unrequited love for a handsome young man. Lefkowitz demonstrates that the story of Sappho's suicide reveals unfavorable reaction to her first-person lesbian references, negates those references, and punishes the poet for them.

However, Lefkowitz's work, like most other studies of this kind, is restricted to poetry and the poets. Fortunately, Alice S. Riginos' 1976 *Platonica: The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writing of Plato,* has gone far in demonstrating a similar approach in the biography of Plato. In the *Platonica* Riginos successfully argues that Plato's biography, especially in the use of anecdotal material, adheres to these reaction formations and formulaic schema. The many anecdotes that speak of Plato and Dionysus of Syracuse, for example, fall into a well-established category that contrasts "philosopher" (free, intellectual, Greek, civilized) with "tyrant" (slavish, uneducated, barbarian, uncivilized). It is an anecdote, as we will see, that exists for almost every philosopher who has a biography.

The present work, then, examines the lives of three archaic philosophers as compiled and written by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. The method, the identification of anecdotes and patterns that correspond to the philosophy of the subject, is a fascinating

revelation of the ancient biographical mind at work. For instance the lives of Empedocles and Heraclitus, and indeed the lives of many other philosophers, bear some resemblance to each other, given that ancient biography runs along schematized patterns and forms. Both Heraclitus and Empedocles, for example, are asked by their fellow citizens to rule, and both refuse to do so. But there the similarity ends. Empedocles is celebrated by the biographers as an ardent democrat for his refusal, while Heraclitus is denounced as a misanthrope for his. Obviously, the refusal to rule is being used in completely different ways: Empedocles is glorified, Heraclitus vilified. Why is the same anecdote used to such different ends in the two lives?

To the biographers, the philosophers, like the poets and especially those who wrote in the first person, were never simply writing philosophy. To be sure, the archaic philosophers were not writing philosophy in the modern sense of writing philosophy. For modern thinkers, philosophy is the expression not of personal beliefs but of the conclusions that any rational being would arrive at after abstract, that is, impersonal reflection. In what follows, I will use "philosophy" in the modern sense, although it is by no means clear that the ancients thought of philosophy as an "impersonal, abstract" affair. Rather, especially for biographers such as Diogenes Laertius, philosophical works were also, and sometimes even primarily, read as autobiography. Philosophy, like poetry, was seen as a collection of personal or autobiographical statements, to which the biographer responds in kind. For example, in the course of his philosophical work, Heraclitus compares men to apes and children. The biographer, interpreting these remarks as personal rather than philosophical convictions, saw an ugly misanthropy at work and perhaps even one that applied to him personally. The biographers' reaction to Heraclitus and to his work was, in fact, generally unfavorable and manifests itself in an unusually hostile biography; hence Heraclitus' refusal to rule becomes another example of the philosopher's misanthropy. Empedocles, on the other hand, in his work addresses his fellow citizens as "friends" and says that the "best men" become political leaders. His philosophical statements therefore impressed the biographers in a favorable manner and result in a generally favorable biographical tradition; his refusal to rule glorifies the philosopher as a selfless, sympathetic, and democratic fellow citizen. So within any philosophical biography, a single anecdote can work in quite different ways according to the biographical tradition that exists for the individual philosopher. That biographical tradition, favorable or hostile, arises from the

subject's philosophy, but even more so from the biographers' reaction to the subject's philosophical work, read in a personal manner as autobiography and not as philosophy.

The method discussed here imposes its own limitations. Consider, for example, Parmenides, who has considerable extant philosophical work, but no biography to speak of. Then again think of Pythagoras, who has a long and fascinating biography and no extant philosophy. The first requirement of the methodology then (an existing biography and extant philosophical work) is also the first limitation. Simply put, there must be a fairly detailed biography and enough extant philosophical work to realize, within honest intellectual boundaries, a working knowledge of the subject's philosophy. Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus all meet the criteria suitably. All three have wonderful lives and deaths, filled with sex and scandal and suicide, with books and tyrants and temples, a perfect balance of reverence and the irreverent. Fortunately, all three also have enough extant philosophy to find and interpret the correlation between their lives and their works, to see how their biographical traditions came about, and to determine how anecdotal material is used for each one.

And there are sources that fit these parameters. Fortunately, scholars have collected and compiled archaic philosophical material from varied sources, including Diogenes Laertius, who often quotes or paraphrases his subject's work. For the philosophical fragments that exist for Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus, I rely upon the most authoritative and accepted collection of archaic philosophical material, the sixth edition of Diels' *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, as revised by Walther Kranz. Included with the philosophical fragments are all the biographical elements that have been collected for the philosophers, the greatest part of which comes from Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes Laertius, however, is a problematic character. Even the dates of his life, ironically enough, are uncertain, although it is believed he lived sometime in the third century CE. This means, practically speaking, that Diogenes Laertius lived and wrote at a considerable distance from his subjects, some five to six hundred years in fact, since we usually date Empedocles to the late sixth century and Heraclitus and Democritus to the early fifth century BCE. If the lateness of Diogenes Laertius' dates inspires no great confidence in his knowledge of his subjects, neither, unfortunately, does his writing, which includes both the sublime and the ridiculous, usually presented side by side, from the same open-eyed and admiring authorial stance. Philosophical and even literary evaluations of Diogenes Laertius' contribution to the history

and interpretation of philosophy have not been positive. However, here too things are changing, and a secondary aspect of the study is a contribution to the reevaluation of the literary and/or philosophical value of Diogenes Laertius. His work, the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, is after all the source for almost all of our biographical information; as such, it has had a profound, if unacknowledged, influence upon philosophy interpretation. After nearly a century of neglect (since Nietzsche's *Beiträge zur Quellenkunde und Kritik des Diogenes Laertius*), Diogenes Laertius is once again the object of scholarly interest, as J. Mejer's 1978 *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background*, M. Gigante's 1987 *Vite dei Filosofi*, and B. Gentili's and G. Cerri's 1988 *History and Biography in Ancient Thought* show.

Catherine Osborne's 1987 *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy* admirably demonstrates the role of biographers in Greek thought and Diogenes Laertius' influence on or importance to philosophical thought specifically. Osborne persuasively argues that a wealth of new information is available to the modern philosopher/interpreter when a new method of philosophical retrieval, a "rethinking" of writers such as Hippolytus and Diogenes Laertius, is employed. To date, the misleading practice of examining philosophical fragments in isolation has led to a confusion in philosophical interpretation. Osborne convincingly argues the need to examine the fragments in the biographical or scholarly context in which they were preserved. A similar appraisal of Diogenes Laertius emerges in this work, supporting Osborne's theory and suggesting that Diogenes Laertius can, with proper interpretation, serve as an important and even respectable source for the modern scholar.

The third aspect of this book is the identification and categorization of standard themes (*topoi*) and anecdotes as revealed by comparison of philosophical statement with biographical material. In this way the reader is introduced to the mechanics of ancient biography. While the identification and classification of anecdotes and topoi into a coherent system is, in itself, crucial to our understanding of the ancient biographical mind, there is to date no systematic and comprehensive approach to the use of anecdotal material and topoi for the study of ancient biography. Here, then, is a beginning of that work in detailed and accessible form, which I hope will provide at least a reference and model, and at best, the basis for future research and interpretation for scholars in the field.

In this work, anecdotes are categorized by the way in which they are used; topoi by the standard theme they present. The request to rule, for

example, that we saw earlier in the lives of both Empedocles and Heraclitus is a standard theme or *topos* that occurs in the lives of many philosophers. In the life of Empedocles, as we saw, it is used positively to glorify the philosopher; in the life of Heraclitus, it is used negatively to vilify the author. These topoi are given color and veracity in anecdotes that are used in various ways to characterize the subject or his philosophy. They may present the philosopher in a realistic or unrealistic manner or in a comic, flattering, or hostile light. Furthermore, anecdotes may float freely from philosopher to philosopher, with details changed to personalize their use in the lives of several different philosophers, or they may be created for and adhere to one philosopher alone. My initial identification and categorization of anecdotes and topoi are as follows:

ANECDOTES

1. Illustrative. Illustrative anecdotes illustrate some aspect of the philosopher's work or personality. Heraclitus' misanthropy is illustrated by several anecdotes in which he either scorns or insults someone or "the people" as a whole or refuses to rule.
2. Concrete. These anecdotes make concrete or give physical form to some aspect of the philosopher's work. For example, the biographers that attribute certain laws to Solon the Athenian make these laws concrete (physical in form) by describing the actual physical form in which Solon presented them. The term *concrete* was suggested by Finley (1975, 47), who remarks that "the distant past was concretized and personalized, exactly as it had been in myth and legend."
3. Transferred. These anecdotes, which attach themselves to one philosopher after another, were termed "transferred" by Fairweather (1974, 263); I prefer the term *free floating*. Request to rule is a common theme for many lives and is shaped into an anecdote, hostile or favorable, as required.
4. Rebound. In this type of anecdote, the philosopher's beliefs, doctrines, work, or a popular interpretation of beliefs, doctrines, and work, rebound on the philosopher to comic or tragic effect. Death by rebound is a popular biographical device.
5. Representative. Anecdotes of this kind bring together representatives of schools, politics, beliefs, and cultures without regard to chronology or plausibility, simply because the people meeting represent opposites

or extreme types. For example, the meeting between Croesus and Solon is a representative anecdote used to contrast Solon, who represents all things Greek, civilized, moderate, wise, and western, with Croesus, who represents all that is barbarian, immoderate, foolish, and eastern.

TOPOI

1. Association with Athens. Athens, as the home of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and various philosophical schools and movements, plays a special place in philosophical biography. Many anecdotes are set there, even when it is unlikely for their subjects to be in Athens; association with the "home" of Greek philosophy confers special honor on the philosopher in question. The association, which often exists in opposition to chronological and doxographical records, has created a great deal of confusion.
2. Athletics. While many of Diogenes Laertius' subjects are associated with games or sports, making the topos a common one, the use of athletics in philosophical biography is ambiguous. An association with sports, even on the Olympic level, most often forms part of a hostile biographical tradition; this hostility stems from the contempt with which Stoic and Cynic philosophers and biographers viewed sports. In a few lives, however, the association with sports demonstrates favorably either an "everyman" tradition for the philosopher or elevates the philosopher in a uniquely Greek manner, an elevation that the hostile tradition sometimes parodies. A very few philosophers are distinguished by the biographers as Olympic victors, although this probably results from a confusion between similar names. As discussed in chapter 1, this is likely the case in the life of Empedocles. As we will see, the biographies of those philosophers who attend or compete at the games showed a marked resemblance to the life of Pythagoras. Pythagoras' own association with the Olympic Games is based equally upon a saying attributed to him ("Life is like the Great Games, to which some go to compete for prizes, some with wares to sell, but the best go as spectators.") and upon his Sicilian citizenship, through civic association with Hieron and Theron, Sicilian rulers celebrated by Pindar for their Olympic victories. On the other hand, the ultimate source of the topos may well be the life of the archetypal

philosopher Thales, whose life and death, embodies almost all the biographical topoi that exist, for Thales dies while watching the Olympic games. What happier death could there be?

3. Bon Mot. Philosophers always have the last word and the last laugh (at least when the tradition is favorable.) Their quick wit and repartee usually reflects their philosophical system in miniature.
4. Book Burning. Philosophers seem constantly to burn each other's books or have theirs burned by irate citizens. Destruction of their work (which occurs in other forms as well) symbolizes a philosopher's or philosophical school's antipathy to another philosopher or school, as perceived and personalized by the biographer.
5. Characteristics (Physical). Philosophers are single, although rarely celibate, pale, unkempt, and often dirty, and they live to very old ages despite their often trying lives. Their physical characteristics reflect the hostile tradition, albeit usually presented in a comic way, from whence many of these portraits derive and reflect the popular interpretation of asceticism or philosophy in general.
6. Characteristics (Emotional). Philosophers are crazy. Most are melancholy, if not downright depressed. A few exhibit manic traits such as laughing uncontrollably. They can also be very absent-minded and tend to fall into wells and pits with some frequency. They commonly share an abusive, hateful character and manner that was notorious in the ancient world. Since as a group they disdain the life of the senses, they blind themselves or punish the flesh in quite imaginative ways. All these emotional characteristics, like the physical ones, reveal the comic or popular view of the life of the mind; perhaps there is solace here for those of us who lead such lives in this ancient and revered tradition of the absent-minded professor.
7. Child Prodigy. The childhood of the philosopher, like that of the poet, is a portent of his adult life, character, and sometimes philosophy; the child is the philosopher writ small.
8. Contempt for Wealth. The philosophers are quite contemptuous of the material world, as befits their ascetic nature. Usually they are born to great wealth and eminence, which they invariably cast off, democratic (or misanthropic) to a man. Their disdain for wealth can manifest itself physically, in a lack of proper clothes and hygiene, in a withdrawal from society, and in complete disdain for those who have power, especially when it is absolute. This last is used to special purpose in contrasting philosophers and tyrants.

9. Deification. Philosophers do, occasionally, become gods after their death; such an honor obviously comes of a favorable biographical tradition and may perhaps reflect a literary form of the hero-cult as practiced in early Greece. Deification is further discussed under the topos of Posthumous Honors.
10. East and West. One of the more common of philosophical topoi, in which the philosopher comes into contact with a representative of the east who is usually but not always a tyrant. The philosopher represents Greece and the west and all that is good, including education, sobriety, moderation, caution, justice, peace, democracy, civilization, and the rational in general. The tyrant or other eastern character represents the east and all that is bad, including barbarism, ignorance, luxury, injustice, and immoderate, uncivilized, and irrational behavior in general. The best-known example of this topos is the meeting between Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, and Croesus, the madly rash and unlucky king of Lydia. This meeting is further discussed under the topos of Philosopher and Tyrant.
11. Epiphany. Epiphanies, the appearance of the god or the god's representative, are rare but not unknown in philosophical biography. Bees, the standard emissaries of the gods in the lives of the poets, visit some philosophers such as Plato, while the gods themselves appear to a few lucky others. Some emissaries are more welcome than others, as we will see.
12. Exile. Almost all of the philosophers undergo or undertake some kind of exile, which can be voluntary, forced, political, or intellectual, as well as geographical, and can take the form of withdrawal, sleep, or silence also. Exile, in all its forms, symbolizes the philosopher's alienation from and/or rejection of his own physical or intellectual community.
13. Family. The philosopher's family background, as we saw previously is one of wealth, power, and prominence. The philosopher, however, typically rejects this background to embrace poverty, simplicity, democracy, exile, madness, or death. The philosopher's family, when it exists, seems to do so only to exasperate and torment the philosopher or to explain gaps and missing pieces in his work.
14. Feuds. Philosophers engage in and carry on feuds and contests with other philosophers and/or their disciples and schools, when they are not actually burning each other's books. Such behavior symbolizes intellectual disagreement between different philosophical schools,

which is perceived and expressed in terms of bitter personal enmity by the biographers.

15. Inventions and Being First. All of the philosophers invent something, be it rhetoric, machines, or beliefs, and are the first to do something such as map making, teaching, or traveling to a distant place. Here the biographers give a concrete form to a philosophical expression or cover and fill chronological or doxographical gaps, such as the tradition that makes Gorgias, known for his rhetoric, the student of Empedocles, who, according to the biographers, invented it.
16. Laws and Lawgivers. Most of the philosophers actively engage in politics by giving laws, framing constitutions, and generally helping the civic body, or atypically by shunning or criticizing civic concerns. Philosophers advocate democracy and shun tyranny and political office. The very few exceptions to this topos demonstrate an extremely hostile biographical tradition.
17. Lost Works. Quite often the biographers list works written by the philosophers that are otherwise unknown to us and then explain why the work no longer exists. Most often, missing or lost work has been destroyed by a (usually) female family member. The actual destruction may be intentional or accidental and occur with or without the philosopher's consent. Otherwise missing work is due to intentional book burning by a rival or a disturbed citizen body or the accidental burning of a storage place. "Lost" works, however, are more usually those mistakenly attributed to an author, for example, the tragedies written by a different Empedocles, but attributed to the philosopher and thus "lost."
18. Philosopher and Tyrant. A constant in philosophical biography, this topos opposes west and east, democracy and tyranny, freedom and slavery, education and ignorance, civilization and barbarism, simplicity and wealth, philosopher and tyrant. In such encounters, the tyrant often makes a request to the philosophers (that they visit him, explain their work, teach him, or simply obey him, sometimes offering wealth and recognition in return), which the philosopher refuses. This set piece owes much to the standard topics of rhetoric.
19. Philosopher Triumphant. Occasionally, even the philosopher triumphs over social and biographical expectations of impracticality and absentmindedness and emerges triumphant, sometimes even making a profit. These rare occasions illustrate the favorable tradition and

actively refute hostile biographical readings of the philosopher's work and perceived character.

20. Plagiarism. Philosophers are commonly accused of stealing one another's work, or even that of a god's, and claiming it for their own. This is either a hostile interpretation of philosophical influence, as discussed further in the topos of student and teacher, or an attempt to deny the subject's own philosophical importance.
21. Ptheiresis. Death by ptheiresis (lice disease) occurs more often in philosophical biography than one would imagine. However, it does not afflict those unkempt philosophers described earlier, as one might expect, but is reserved for those considered impious or at least unorthodox in their religious beliefs.
22. Student and Teacher. The student-teacher relationship in philosophical biography is most often presented in terms of a love affair between one philosopher and another, a relationship to which chronology seems no bar. In general, the biographers make any information about their subjects concrete and personal, and philosophical influence becomes a love affair, much as philosophical differences become a feud. The terms and their implications (*paides/erastes*) owe much to Plato's "exploitation of the Athenian homosexual ethos as a basis of metaphysical doctrine and philosophical method" (Dover 1972, 16).

ABBREVIATIONS

Note: Standard works are abbreviated in the text as follows:

DK H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* rev. W. Kranz (Berlin, 1954)

DL R. D. Hicks, ed., *Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1925)

LGP M. R. Lefkowitz, *Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981)

ONE

EMPEDOCLES



EMPEDOCLES OLYMPIAN

Empedocles' dive into Etna has fascinated scholars, poets, and artists from ancient to modern times. Diogenes Laertius was so taken with it, in fact, that he gives two versions of the event. Biographically speaking, the story becomes even more fascinating as it becomes ever more clear that Empedocles was destined to leave the world precisely in this manner, his fate determined by biographers and historians and ultimately through his own writing. Empedocles' philosophical works, the *Purifications* and the *Physics*, were considered raw autobiographical data fit for the gleaning, and the manner in which Empedocles' philosophy was transformed into his biography reveals more about ancient biographers, such as Diogenes Laertius, than it does about Empedocles. Out of the philosophy itself grew a legend that has haunted and intrigued us through the years.

There was a tendency in the ancient world, by no means restricted to the biographers, to approach any given text as biographical.[1] The poets were favorite subjects of this approach: Homer's life was pieced together

from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey;* Aeschylus was presumed to have fought at Salamis because he describes that battle in his *Persians*.[2] The same is true of the philosophers in general, and for Empedocles and other archaic philosophers specifically, because of their use of the first-person "I" in their work. For our purposes, the pursuit of a biographical tradition that emerges from a philosopher's work, the life of Empedocles is particularly instructive. First, because Empedocles was such a popular figure for the biographers, they have given us an enormous amount of biography to work with. Second and fortunately, a great deal of Empedocles' own philosophy is still extant, so that the two bodies of work, biography and philosophy, are available for comparative work to illustrate the method. Keeping in step, then, with Empedocles' biography as it occurs in Diogenes Laertius, we begin with his origin and background, all of which lead, inexorably, to that fateful final jump.

The Philosopher at the Games

The archaic philosopher Empedocles was a famous man from a famous town. A citizen of Acragas in Sicily, Empedocles flourished in the early middle of the fifth century BCE, during the great age of Sicilian tyrants, Hieron of Syracuse and Theron, also of Acragas.[3] Acragas (modern-day Agriegento) was prosperous and strong, as was most of Sicily during this era; the tyrants Hieron and Theron were as celebrated for their beneficent and prosperous rule as for their victories in the Olympic Games on the Greek mainland.[4] The association between Empedocles' fellow Sicilians and the Olympic Games led to an association between Olympia and Empedocles himself. This has caused a great deal of confusion when it comes to determining Empedocles' family in the biographies and, to a certain extent, in attribution of his work.[5]

According to most ancient sources, Empedocles was the son of a man named Meton. The philosopher's grandfather and son were also named Empedocles; it was common practice for the ancient Greeks to name sons and daughters for grandparents. A dissenting view, however, gives Exaenetus as the name of Empedocles' father and of his son. The presence of different family names are not unusual in these biographies; several different names are given for Heraclitus' and Democritus' fathers as well. Variant family names do suggest, however, variant purposes, one other than biography. For example, we could expect the name Exaenetus to appear somewhere in Empedocles' philosophical works, just as the name Cleis,

which occurs in one of Sappho's poems, is sometimes considered Sappho's daughter by the biographers and later, as the biography takes on a life and a tradition of its own, "Cleis" was given as the name of Sappho's mother, thus imposing traditional nomenclature practice for a biographical purpose.[6] Biographical motives are also at work in different names given for members of Empedocles' family. The several sources that give these different names were collected by Diogenes Laertius in his life of Empedocles, and presented to the reader as follows:

1. Empedocles [the philosopher], according to Hippobotus, was the son of Meton and the grandson of Empedocles of Acragas. Timaeus says the same in the fifteenth book of his *Histories,* and that the grandfather of the poet [philosopher] was a man of distinction. And Hermippus agrees with this also. So too Heraclides in his work, *On Diseases,* [says] that Empedocles was from a distinguished family and had a grandfather who kept race horses. And Eratosthenes in his records, *Olympic Victories,* says that Meton's father was the winner in the Seventy-First Olympiad, and uses Aristotle as his reference. Apollodorus the grammarian in his *Chronology* tells us that he [the philosopher] was the son of Meton . . . and he says that the victor in the horse-riding in the Seventy-First Olympiad was this man's namesake and grandfather. (DL 8.51–52)

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς, ὥς φησιν Ἱππόβοτος, Μέτωνος ἦν υἱὸς τοῦ Ἐμπεδοκλέους Ἀκραγαντῖνος. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ Τίμαιος ἐν τῇι πεντεκαιδεκάτηι τῶν Ἱστοριῶν [fr. 93 FHG I 215] <λέγει προσιστορῶν> ἐπίσημον ἄνδρα γεγονέναι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα τὸν πάππον τοῦ ποιητοῦ. ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἕρμιππος [fr. 27 FHG III 42] τὰ αὐτὰ τούτωι φησίν. ὁμοίως Ἡρακλείδης ἐν τῶι Περὶ νόσων [fr. 74 Voss], ὅτι λαμπρᾶς ἦν οἰκίας ἱπποτροφηκότος τοῦ πάππου. λέγει δὲ καὶ Ἐρατοσθένης ἐν τοῖς Ὀλυμπιονίκαις [FGrHist. 241 F 7 II 1014] τὴν πρώτην καὶ ἑβδομηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα [496] νενικηκέναι τὸν τοῦ Μέτωνος πατέρα, μάρτυρι χρώμενος Ἀριστοτέλει [fr. 71]. (52) Ἀπολλόδωρος δ' ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν τοῖς Χρονικοῖς [FGrHist. 244 F 32 II 1028] φησιν ὡς ἦν μὲν Μέτωνος υἱός . . . ὁ δὲ <τὴν> μίαν καὶ ἑβδομηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα νενικηκὼς κέλητι τούτου πάππος ἦν ὁμώνυμος . . .

2. But Satyrus in his *Lives* says that Empedocles was the son of Exaenetus and himself left behind a son named Exaenetus. And he says that in the same Olympiad Empedocles was victorious in the horse race and his son

in wrestling or, as Heraclides in his *Epitome* has it, in the foot-race (DL 8.53)[7]

Σάτυρος δὲ ἐν τοῖς Βίοις (fr. 11 FHG III 162] φησίν, ὅτι Ἐμπεδοκλῆς υἱὸς μὲν ἦν Ἐξαινέτου, κατέλιπε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸν Ἐξαίνετον· ἐπί τε τῆς αὐτῆς ὀλυμπιάδος τὸν μὲν ἵπποι κέλητι νενικηκέναι, τὸν δὲ υἱὸν αὐτοῦ πάλαι ἤ, ὡς Ἡρακλείδης ἐν τῇι Ἐπιτομῇι [fr. 6 FHG III 169), δρόμωι.

Diogenes Laertius, as is his habit, gives the reader these different biographical accounts, without indicating which he finds more believable, probable, or accurate. In the first version, the philosopher descends from a distinguished grandfather named Empedocles, who kept race horses and in fact won a horse race at Olympia; the passage further states that the philosopher's father, Meton, also enjoyed a victory there, in an unspecified event. In the second version, the philosopher's father and son are both named Exaenetus, and the philosopher Empedocles and his son Exaenetus enjoy victories at Olympia, at the same meet but in different events (the philosopher wins in the horse race and the son in wrestling or in the foot race.) The only common theme in the different biographical accounts is that Empedocles and his family (grandfather, father, and son) have a strong connection with the Olympic Games. But is this connection a valid one, or simply one of association?

In the lists of Olympic winners mentioned previously,[8] we do in fact find an Empedocles, the son of an Exaenetus, who wins the horse race in the Seventy-First Olympiad, an account that agrees with several of the versions in the first citation, and with the name of Empedocles' father as Exaenetus in the second citation. Furthermore, the victorious Empedocles of the Seventy-First Olympiad had a son named Exaenetus, who won in the Ninety-First and Ninety-Second Olympiads in wrestling, one of the two possibilities listed in the second citation.[9] Therefore, it is not the philosopher himself, but his grandfather Empedocles who wins in the Seventy-First Olympiad, and Exaenetus, the grandfather's son (not the philosopher's), who wins in wrestling in the Ninety-First and Ninety-Second Olympiads. Empedocles himself has no Olympic victory in any event in any year. Why then do the biographers present him as an Olympic victor?

The biographers, it seems, have either fallen prey to a double confusion or misused their sources to biographical purpose.[10] The victory of

Empedocles' grandfather was transferred to the philosopher, and the grandfather's son (Exaenetus) became the philosopher's son. This brought to the story a tradition of a father and son triumph there, in the sort of coincidence enjoyed by biographers. So while the family has a specific association with Olympia, Empedocles himself does not. And yet Diogenes Laertius insists upon and even emphasizes the association, as the following citations show:

3. I myself [Diogenes Laertius] found in Favorinus' *Memorabilia* that Empedocles feasted the sacred envoys at Olympia on a bull made of honey and barley-meal. (DL 8.53)

ἐγὼ δὲ εὗρον ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι Φαβωρίνου [fr. 3 FHG III 578], ὅτι καὶ βοῦν ἔθυσε τοῖς θεωροῖς ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐκ μέλιτος καὶ ἀλφίτων.

4. It is said that Cleomenes the rhapsode recited these same verses [of Empedocles], *The Purifications* at Olympia; so too says Favorinus in his *Memorabilia*. (DL 8:63)

αὐτοὺς δὲ τούτους τοὺς Καθαρμοὺς [ἐν] Ὀλυμπίασι ῥαψωιδῆσαι λέγεται Κλεομένη τὸν ῥαψωιδόν, ὡς καὶ Φαβωρῖνος ἐν Ἀπομνημονεύμασι.

5. At the time when Empedocles visited Olympia, he demanded excessive attention, so that no one was so mentioned in the meeting as was Empedocles. (DL 8.66)

καθ' ὃν δὲ χρόνον ἐπεδήμει Ὀλυμπίασιν, ἐπιστροφῆς ἠξιοῦτο πλείονος, ὥστε μηδενὸς ἑτέρου μνείαν γίγνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς ὁμιλίαις τοσαύτην ὅσην Ἐμπεδοκλέους.

According to Diogenes Laertius and his sources, then, not only does Empedocles win at Olympia, he entertains sacred envoys there, has a recitation of his work the *Purifications* there, and demands excessive attention from all who attend. If these five citations have any thematic link beyond placing Empedocles at Olympia or speaking of his rather boorish behavior, it is not immediately apparent. But how credible are each of these citations?

Of the four big athletic events in Greece, the Pythian games at Delphi were second only to the Olympic ones and included musical and poetic contests in which a poet or philosophers could compete. And, even

though there were no similar official events at Olympia, any number of unofficial literary and poetic recitations and events took place there alongside the official athletic contests.[11] Therefore a recitation of Empedocles' work, with or without his presence, is quite possible. Moreover, the fame and power attributed to Empedocles' grandfather in the first citation might well account for the philosopher's role as host to "sacred" ambassadors or envoys. The term *sacred* could mean nothing more than "official," since all who attended the games did so under terms of a sacred truce between various powers; "sacred envoys" could simply be official representatives of a city or state. On the other hand, the term *sacred* could allude to the "sacred" quality of the *Purifications*, which was often interpreted as a religious work. And perhaps the victory mentioned in citations **1** and **2,** or the recital in citation **4** went to Empedocles' head, making him act in an unpleasant, demanding, and conspicuous way. All these things could be true even if, taken all together, they begin to sound more and more improbable.

There is, in fact, a much simpler explanation for the tradition of Empedocles at Olympia, if we regard the citations as biographical flourishes rather than historical fact. The first two indicate, or force, a biographical association among well-known men of Sicily and a well-known event, the Olympic Games.[12] Because Empedocles is from Acragas and therefore a fellow citizen of the famous tyrant Theron, he shares Theron's association with Olympia and the games. The tyrants are known to us for their place in history, but they were best known to the ancient world as Olympian victors, a status widely published in Pindar's *Olympian Odes*. Six of the fourteen odes address Sicilian victories; the first three were written for Theron and his cousin and fellow Sicilian tyrant Hieron. Victory lists and biographical material were manipulated, then, to strengthen the association between Empedocles and Olympia, to strengthen the association between Sicily's famous sons, Theron, Hieron, and Empedocles. The importance of the association between Empedocles and Olympia is further emphasized by the three other citations that place him there without an athletic victory: as a poet (citation **4**), as a host to sacred envoys (citation **3**), and as a demanding and much-talked-about visitor (citation **5**). The link between all these aspects of Empedocles' association with Olympia is seen in a single biographical anecdote and are, in fact, used to explain or elaborate upon it.

6. Empedocles of Acragas was victorious in the horse race at Olympia and being a Pythagorean and therefore avoiding animate sacrifice, shaping a

bull from myrrh and frankincense and costly perfumes, he divided it and distributed it to those at the festival. (Athenaeus 1.5.e = DK 31 A11)

ὁ Ἀκραγαντῖνος ἵπποις Ὀλύμπια νικήσας Πυθαγορικὸς ὢν καὶ ἐμψύχων ἀπεχόμενος ἐκ σμύρνης καὶ λιβανωτοῦ καὶ τῶν πολυτελεστάτων ἀρωμάτων βοῦν ἀναπλάσας διένειμε τοῖς εἰς τὴν πανήγυριν ἀπαντήσασιν.

Here the disparate elements of Empedocles at Olympia are united: the horse race, the victory, the sacrifice, and the banquet.[13] And citation **6,** with its mention of Pythagoreanism, the shunning of animal sacrifice, and especially the details of a proper, inanimate sacrifice, allows us to link the whole tradition of Empedocles at Olympia to the *Purifications,* which is likely the starting point for the anecdote that places him there.

7. Then Ares was not god among them, nor yet was Din of Battle,
Zeus was not king nor Kronos, nor yet Poseidon—
but Kypris then was Queen.
Her men earnestly appeased with good and pious offerings,
with painted figures and sweet oil, their fragrance cunningly made,
with unmixed myrrh and gifts of sweet smelling incense,
and libations of honey flowing to the ground.
Nor did the altar flow with the unspeakable slaughter of the bull,
though this defilement still is greatest among men,
to bereave the animal of his life to eat his limbs. (fr. 128)

οὐδέ τις ἦν κείνοισιν Ἄρης θεὸς οὐδὲ Κυδοιμός
οὐδὲ Ζεὺς βασιλεὺς οὐδὲ Κρόνος οὐδὲ Ποσειδῶν,
ἀλλὰ Κύπρις βασίλεια.
τὴν οἵ γ' εὐσεβέεσσιν ἀγάλμασιν ἱλάσκοντο
γραπτοῖς τε ζώιοισι μύροισί τε δαιδαλεόδμοις
σμύρνης τ' ἀκρήτου θυσίαις λιβάνου τε θυώδους,
ξανθῶν τε σπονδὰς μελίτων ῥίπτοντες ἐς οὖδας·
ταύρων δ' ἀκρήτοισι φόνοις οὐ δεύετο βωμός,
ἀλλὰ μύσος τοῦτ' ἔσκεν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστον,
θυμὸν ἀπορραίσαντας ἐ<ν>έδμεναι ἠέα γυῖα.

Here Empedocles speaks of sacrifice as it occurred during the rule of Love, when humans had not yet fallen from grace by practicing blood-

shed. While bloodshed of any type is a transgression against Empedocles' moral code, it is the slaughter of animals, and especially bulls, that Empedocles emphasizes here. He then lists the appropriate inanimate offerings: statues or figurines, oil, myrrh, incense, and honey. The basis of this code may be a belief in the transmigration of the soul (which Athenaeus in his anecdote calls Pythagorean). Whatever its origin, the prohibition itself is strong and clear. The biographers, then, have made what is abstract and philosophic in the *Purifications* (Empedocles' prohibition against blood sacrifice) into a concrete sacrifice in the anecdote, one in which Empedocles offers a bull-shaped figure made of myrrh, frankincense, and costly perfumes. Empedocles' specific mention of a bull makes the anecdote all the more appropriate to Olympia, where the best and most common offering of the victorious athlete was a bull sacrificed to Zeus, followed by a communal meal or banquet. In terms of biographical logic, Empedocles has to make the sacrifice because he describes it in his work and has to make it somewhere. His familial and Sicilian association with Olympia, where bulls are the typical sacrifice, makes Olympia the perfect place.

This set of citations and anecdotes exemplify the biographical mind at work and shows how best we should approach it. All ancient biographers start with their subject's work, gleaning from it statements and experiences that seem autobiographical. For example, as discussed earlier, the biographers make the Cleis mentioned by Sappho her daughter and then, by the conventions of nomenclature, make it the name of Sappho's mother as well. Empedocles' use of the first-person "I" greatly enhanced this practice, giving the biographers freedom to interpret every statement on a personal and autobiographical level. Thus the proper sacrifice described in philosophical and metaphorical expression becomes an actual sacrifice in the biographers' interpretation; the abstract thought expressed in the philosophy is made concrete in the anecdote. (How "abstract" this abstract thought was in archaic philosophy may be debated, but for the purposes of this study, we may assume that biographical authors took the "phenomenomical words" to be stating or expressing abstract thought.) The anecdote of the sacrifice can thus be characterized as both concrete and illustrative, since it serves to illustrate Empedocles' ethical or religious thoughts. Finally, the biographers give the anecdote greater veracity by setting it at Olympia, a site with a strong and ready association for the philosopher. They even supply a reason for the sacrifice (Empedocles' victory in the horse race). The anecdote then finds agreement and support for its details

in the general tradition that surrounds Empedocles and Acragas, horse races and Olympian winners, tyrants and philosophers.

Empedocles' anecdote of sacrifice is one of the most perfect examples of philosophical biography, the biographers' methods, and the method used in this study. Different material and types of material, however, call for different approaches. The number and concrete quality of the details in citation **6,** for example, encourage us to turn directly to Empedocles' text, while the lack of details in citations **3, 4,** and **5** requires that we consider biographical motive and use of the material. Citation **3,** for example, speaks not only of the association between Empedocles and Olympia, but also rather casually illustrates Empedocles' religious beliefs; only knowledge of the preferred Olympic sacrifice for victory (a bull) allows the citation full significance. Citations **4** and **5** also demonstrate the association with Olympia but are used otherwise, to introduce the greater topos of the philosopher at the games. While this particular topos does not occur for all the philosophers, it does occur often enough (in the lives of Plato and Pythagoras, for example),[14] to be classified as free floating or transferred. It drifts from subject to subject, generally indicating a doxographical tradition, a sort of genealogy[15] of philosophers and schools as teachers and students, which will be discussed later. Here, citation **5** is specifically used to introduce Empedocles' personal character, to which we now turn our attention.

Empedocles: Divine Character and Manner

In citation **5,** we learn that when Empedocles visited Olympia, he demanded "excessive attention," so much so that he drew the attention, and the talk, of all present. Using the biographers' methods, we can adduce behavior that was selfish, egotistical, and arrogant, which in fact agrees with their depiction of Empedocles generally. Just before citation **5,** in fact, Diogenes Laertius calls Empedocles boastful and selfish; others describe him as a braggart given to theoretical arrogance and eccentric dress.

8. And he would put on purple robes and over them a golden belt, as Favorinus says in his *Memorabilia,* and bronze sandals and a Delphic [laurel] wreath. He had thick hair and was accompanied by a train of boy attendants. And he was ever grave in his manner and appearance. Thus he would go forth and the people, meeting him, saw in him something worthy of a king. (DL 8.73)

διὸ δὴ πορφύραν τε ἀναλαβεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ στρόφιον ἐπιθέσθαι χρυσοῦν, ὡς Φαβωρῖνος ἐν Ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἔτι τ᾽ ἐμβάδας χαλκᾶς καὶ στέμμα Δελφικόν. κόμη τε ἦν αὐτῶι βαθεῖα καὶ παῖδες ἀκόλουθοι· καὶ αὐτὸς ἀεὶ σκυθρωπὸς ἐφ᾽ ἑνὸς σχήματος ἦν. τοιοῦτος δὴ προήιει, τῶν πολιτῶν ἐντυχόντων καὶ τοῦτο ἀξιωσάντων οἱονεὶ βασιλείας τινὸς παράσημον.

9. For Empedocles, fastening a fillet of deep purple around his hair, walked proudly around the streets of the Greeks, composing hymns to prove that he had become a god. (Philostratus VA 8.7 = DK 31A18)

Ε. μὲν γὰρ καὶ στρόφιον τῶν ἁλουργοτάτων περὶ αὐτὴν [σψ. τὴν κόμην] ἁρμόσας ἐσόβει περὶ τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀγυιὰς ὕμνους ξυντιθείς, ὡς θεὸς ἐξ ἀνθρώπου ἔσοιτο.

These depictions, like the sacrifice at Olympia, doubtless owe their existence to a philosophical statement couched in the first person, which was to provide the biographers a rich vein of material that is generally used to comic, if not satirical, effect.

10. Friends, who dwell in the great town above tawny Acragas,
upon the city's citadel, busy in your good works,
You who are reverent harbors for strangers and strangers to evil,
Greetings. I go among you an immortal god, no longer mortal,
but honored among all men, appropriately,
wreathed in ribbons and fresh garlands.
I am honored by men and women. They follow me
by the thousands, seeking the advantageous way,
some desiring prophecy, others, against all sorts of diseases,
ask to learn a well-pointed saying,
having suffered too long in their painful distress. (fr. 112)

ὦ φίλοι, οἳ μέγα ἄστυ κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος
ναίετ᾽ ἀν᾽ ἄκρα πόλεος, ἀγαθῶν μελεδήμονες ἔργων,
ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες, κακότητος ἄπειροι,
χαίρετ᾽· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα,
ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.
τοῖσιν † ἅμ᾽ † ἂν ἵκωμαι ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα,
ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξί, σεβίζομαι· οἳ δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἕπονται

μυρίοι ἐξερέοντες, ὅπηι πρὸς κέρδος ἀταρπός,
οἱ μὲν μαντοσυνέων κεχρημένοι, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ νούσων
παντοίων ἐπύθοντο κλυεῖν εὐηκέα βάξιν,
δηρὸν δὴ χαλεπῆισι πεπαρμένοι <ἀμφ' ὀδύνηισιν>.

Here, Empedocles uses his customary first-person address to describe the soul's triumphant final state in its journey toward spiritual and physical perfection; the chains of mortality are broken and the speaker, reborn, goes forth garlanded and acclaimed, aiding others in their journey.[16] In discussing the fragment, I have been careful to designate the first-person "I" as the speaker, as befits the allegorical nature of the verse. The biographers, however, immediately identified the "I" as Empedocles himself.[17] We see their reading of the fragment in citations **5** and especially in **8** and **9,** where Empedocles is depicted as a pompous and self-proclaimed god dressed in liturgical garb, proclaiming prophecies and cures. The ribbons and garlands of the original work become the purple robes, golden belt, and the laurel wreath of the citations, his thousands of attendants whittled down to trains of boy attendants, and there is more than a hint of effeminacy and self-indulgence in the description.[18] The claim to divinity is belittled as mere boastfulness;[19] remarks on his always formal, grave behavior (repeated several times in his biography) suggest an exaggerated view of his own importance.[20] A further indication of this boastful, selfish behavior, as Diogenes Laertius characterizes it, occurs in his demand for excessive attention, undue reverence, we might say, when he visits Olympia.

Empedocles' biographical character results from what seems to the biographers a vainglorious boast, the declaration that Empedocles has become a god ("I go among you an immortal god, no longer mortal.") His association with Olympia, discussed in the previous citations, supports this elevated status (as Pindar so often remarks, Olympic victors outrank the common run of mortal men; in the citations, Empedocles seems to present himself as far above mere mortal status) and also provides a concrete grounding for his actions there. Hints about his character and his demand for attention are now also evident in the earlier citations; selfishness, boastfulness, and theatricality will be the routine charges laid at Empedocles' door. His perceived character, then, is little more than a parody of his work. His god-like nature, attitude, and appearance, concretized and elaborated in the anecdotal examples of his actions, character, and dress, are the result of a philosophical statement interpreted biographi-

cally. The use of various topoi, which also play their part in these characterizations, are discussed in the remaining sections in this chapter.

Empedocles' Teachers

Part of the blame for Empedocles' eccentricity can be attributed to the teachers Diogenes Laertius assigns him, although, if our only source for ancient philosophy were the biographers, we would have to conclude that there was little or no independent thought in the ancient world. Rather, as the doxographies show, there was a neat, observable, and carefully delineated progression of schools, philosophers, and teachers, in which one philosopher or school of thought carefully and ponderously followed another. The teachers are especially important, because mistakes and new theories alike can be laid at their door, depending on the biographer's view of his subject or of the subject's teacher within the doxographical tradition. Given a hostile biographer and a hostile tradition of biography, the subject steals his ideas from his teacher and may even betray him. In a favorable tradition, the student rebels and finds a new teacher or founds a new school of thought. Only the most hostile tradition admits neither student nor teacher.

Empedocles shows a generally favorable tradition, in that he has several teachers. According to the biographers, Empedocles' theatrical manner and appearance is to be attributed to both Anaximander and Pythagoras, while his research methods imitate those of Anaxagoras (Alcidamas *ap*. DL 8.56).[21] Diogenes Laertius further notes that Empedocles imitated Parmenides' verse (Theophrastus *ap*. DL 8.56), and another source tells us that Empedocles either turned from Parmenides to Anaxagoras and Pythagoras, or that he imitated Xenophanes, with whom he is said to have lived.[22]

Some of these reports can be eliminated on purely chronological grounds: Anaximander as a teacher can quickly be ruled out, since he probably died a good fifty years before Empedocles was born.[23] The report that Empedocles studied with Anaxagoras is doubtful also, even given the notorious problem of Anaxagoras' dates. Assuming, as most do, that Anaxagoras' dates are ca. 500–428 BCE and Empedocles' are ca. 495–35 BCE, a relationship of contemporaries rather than student and teacher seems more probable, if a relationship between the two indeed existed.

Because there is no historical logic to the pairing of Empedocles, Anaximander, and Anaxagoras as student and teacher, we must seek a biographical one. The relationship that existed between these philosophers, if it did

exist, was of necessity a matter of intellectual, rather than personal, influence. An intellectual relationship, however, was too abstract for the biographers, who were eager to find (or to invent) personal references and relationships in the philosophy. Their insistence on the personal results in concrete anecdotes about philosopher X as the student/teacher of philosopher Y; the resulting student/teacher tradition constitutes one of the most common biographical topoi.[24]

Intellectual similarities between philosophers can be enough to link them as student and teacher. The fact that Anaxagoras and Empedocles both independently sought to rework Milesian philosophy in response to Parmenidean philosophy may lie behind the personal relationship attributed to them.[25] Aristotle, in fact, represents Anaximander as Empedocles' teacher by their theories of condensation and rarefaction, common theories which each held, but had each independently reached.[26]

The same student/teacher topos informs reports of Parmenides and Xenophanes as teachers who further influenced Empedocles' literary style. This much is true: all three wrote in verse, Parmenides and Empedocles use the same metrical form, and Xenophanes influenced Parmenides' philosophical views (which is why Xenophanes and Parmenides are universally described in their own biographies as teacher and student.) However, it is unlikely, if not chronologically impossible, for Empedocles himself to have studied with either Parmenides or Xenophanes (Parmenides was born ca. 515 BCE, while Xenophanes' dates are 570–475 BCE). However, if we substituted the word *influence* for *teacher,* the mists begin to clear. Xenophanes certainly influenced Parmenides' philosophical views. Empedocles, in his response to Parmenides' views, was therefore indirectly influenced by Xenophanes as well.[27] So not only does the biography make an abstract, philosophical, intellectual, or literary influence concrete, it also neatly orders or suggests a more linear doxographical tradition, the generation of teachers, students, and philosophies. Parmenides and Xenophanes, like Anaxagoras and Anaximander, are called Empedocles' teachers because of their philosophical influence or because of similar or shared philosophical theory and interests. The biographical tendency to equate philosophical or even literary influence with an actual student/teacher relationship translates, in the biographies, into a personal, concrete student-teacher relationship, which can be traced through the philosophic generations.

Several sources make Empedocles the student of Pythagoras, or of his son Telauges, or of other named or unknown Pythagoreans.[28] As we saw in citation **6,** Athenaeus ascribes the choice of inanimate offerings at

Olympia to Empedocles' Pythagorean beliefs, and Diogenes Laertius cites Empedocles' work to support Pythagoras as Empedocles' teacher, writing that, "Empedocles himself mentions Pythagoras, saying,"

11. There was a man among them of rare wisdom,
possessed of the greatest wealth of knowledge.
(DL 8.54; cf. Empedocles' fr. 129)[29]

ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς,
ὃς δὴ μήκιστον πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον.

Empedocles himself, however, even in the larger fragment 129 from which Diogenes Laertius here quotes, never names this man of rare wisdom, nor, I would argue, had he a real individual in mind. Rather, I believe, the fragment speaks of the pure and ideal soul of potential existence in its unique state of complete wisdom. The biographers, in contrast, clearly desired a more concrete and possibly autobiographical reference for the fragment, and their first choice was Pythagoras.[30] As described in their biographies, there are striking similarities of dress and behavior between Empedocles and Pythagoras. Both wear long hair and purple robes, both compete at Olympia,[31] both attract great attentions there, both are dignified in manner,[32] both are solemn in demeanor, and, most important of all, both claim to have become gods.[33]

The association between Empedocles and Pythagoras, evident in these conflated characteristics of eccentric dress, solemn behavior, and the claim to have become a god, is the result of their shared philosophical belief in metempsychosis, the transmigration or rebirth of the soul into various states of purification through various types of life and death experiences, a belief which was almost universally attributed to Pythagoras. Although the theory of metempsychosis was fairly common in and around Empedocles' time and location,[34] ancient authors, like some modern ones, almost unanimously attribute the theory to Pythagoras and imply, if they do not explicitly assert, that Empedocles simply elaborated or altered a uniquely Pythagorean doctrine.[35] Pythagoras' work does not now exist, save in brief quotation;[36] we cannot, therefore, directly trace descriptions of his dress and manner or those anecdotes in which he returns from the dead or claims to be a god to his own statements on metempsychosis.

However, we do have Diogenes Laertius, who groups Empedocles and Pythagoras thematically, ends his life of Pythagoras by announcing that he

will now move on to noteworthy Pythagoreans, and immediately begins his life of Empedocles, whom he seems to consider a student of Pythagoras. Given this biographical link forged between the two philosophers, this shared biographical tradition of student-teacher, having marked physical and personal similarities, is not surprising. The original link between the two was their shared belief in metempsychosis that the biographers made concrete by similar dress and manner. Through the theory of metempsychosis, Empedocles and Pythagoras are further linked by accusations of fraudulent claims to divinity (divinity is, of course, the logical philosophical outcome of metempsychosis, rebirth into a higher form) and by deaths which punish the philosophers for their implied claims to divinity. Pythagoras is accused of hiding in the earth under a rock and telling his disciples of his trip to the underworld and back, and his death occurs when he refuses to cross a bean field (DL 8.38, 41; 8.39, 40 and 45). Beans, of course, symbolize rebirth, and one of the Pythagorean maxims that Diogenes Laertius quotes advises his followers to strictly avoid them (DL 8.19, 33, 34).

Linked through personal and philosophical similarities, Pythagoras' biography becomes a template for the life of Empedocles.[37] Differences in biographical detail, however, are easily traced to Empedocles' philosophical work. Citation **7,** for example, speaks of the soul's fall from its high state by the sin of bloodshed in sacrifice, which inspires the biographers' anecdote of the honey and barley bull offered at Olympia. Empedocles describes the triumph of metempsychosis and the soul's elevated state in citation **10,** which in turn forms the basis for both his claims to divinity and the extravagant characterization in citations 8 and **9.** The shared belief in metempsychosis is explained by the biographers in terms of a student-teacher relationship; in his work, Empedocles expands upon the doctrine taught to him by Pythagoras. That imitation is extended further by the many similarities in their anecdotal traditions: both compete at the games, attract attention, and claim to be gods. The theory of metempsychosis that Empedocles presents in his work, then, enables the biographers to characterize him merely as a student or imitator of Pythagoras.[38] The evidence of citation **10** enables them to fill in the picture with the philosopher's own words.

THE CAREERS OF EMPEDOCLES

Empedocles' careers, like his character, are the result of a biographical reading of his work. The same biographical process which resulted in the

different aspects of his personal character also results in his different careers. Philosophers, in the biographies, are rarely just philosophers; most achieve notoriety in other fields as well. Many are statesmen, some are physicians, several produce literary works, and some make predictions. Empedocles achieves renown in all these fields.[39] In the lives of those philosophers also known as statesmen or poets, the biographers drew on philosophical works that discuss politics or literature. Many of Solon's biographical achievements, for example, are elaborations of his political verse, while Plato's criticism of poetry and poets created a tradition that he wrote poetry before turning to philosophy. In Empedocles' case, the biographers' task was greatly simplified; they had only to turn to his work and an autobiographical reading of the following fragment.

12. Finally, then, prophets and poets and physicians
and princes among mortal men are they wont to be,
blossoming forth from this state to become gods, greatest in honor.
(fr. 146)

εἰς δὲ τέλος μάντεις τε καὶ ὑμνοπόλοι καὶ ἰητροί
καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται,
ἔνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῆισι φέριστοι.

In this single citation, the biographers had Empedocles' own assessment of the careers that are "best for men;" we cannot really be surprised, then, to find anecdotes that speak of Empedocles' engagement in politics, poetry, medicine, and prophecy.[40]

The motive of philosophical biography, like poetic biography, is to flesh out the bare philosophical or poetic outlines that exist in the subject's work with concrete physical detail. The motive behind each particular anecdote, however, varies from subject to subject, and an anecdote's favorable or hostile intent depends upon the biographer's interpretation of the subject's work. For example, works that seem to express impiety or arrogance result in hostile anecdotes, while works that express or at least seem to express piety and humility result in approval and favorable anecdotes. The biographies of two poets show these two traditions clearly: Aeschylus, whose work seemed to praise and to sanction the traditions of religion, society, and the state, enjoys a biographical tradition full of approval and is almost completely favorable. Euripides, on the other hand, whose work seemed dangerously radical when it came to traditional religion, society,

and the role of the state, has a biographical tradition that is extremely punitive and hostile (which is why he ends up exiled and murdered.)[41] Aeschylus and Euripides are extreme examples, however, and usually the two biographical traditions, hostile and favorable, are usually mixed in any given life. Reactions to and depictions of Empedocles' careers vary, just as his character was described as either vain and theatrical or dignified and lordly, according to either a hostile or a favorable reaction to his work.[42] An almost completely favorable tradition informs his political career, the first to be examined.

Empedocles the Politician

Diogenes Laertius, in his discussion of Empedocles' background, tells us that Empedocles was a member of a wealthy and politically prominent family of Acragas. In other words, Empedocles has the standard biographical background for a philosopher.[43] However Empedocles, like other philosophers, was able to overcome the twin handicaps of wealth and birth. His rejection of them constitute another topos of philosophical biography, as it does for several others, for Empedocles, like Solon and Heraclitus, refuses the city's highest office when it is offered to him.[44]

Although refusals such as these fall into a general category, their function differs from biography to biography or subject to subject. The same act can inspire praise for one philosopher and condemnation for another. For example, Solon's refusal of the Athenian tyranny glorifies the philosopher and is part of the favorable, democratic tradition of his biography. His refusal, like the constitution he creates, helps the people and promotes their democracy.[45] Heraclitus, on the other hand, who refuses an inherited kingship, is characterized by that refusal as a surly misanthrope who hates the people; his refusal even to govern indicates his scorn and hatred for his fellow citizens and is part of the hostile tradition that vilifies him.

To determine how the topos functions in the biography of Empedocles, we turn first to his political life as given by Diogenes Laertius.

13. Aristotle too declares him to have been a champion of freedom and averse to rule of every kind seeing that, as Xanthus relates in his account of him, he declined the kingship when it was offered to him, obviously because he preferred the frugal life. With this Timaeus agrees . . . (DL 8.63)

φησὶ δ' αὐτὸν καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης [fr. 66]
ἐλεύθερον γεγονέναι καὶ πάσης ἀρχῆς ἀλλότριον, εἴ γε τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶι διδομένην παρητήσατο, καθάπερ Ξάνθος ἐν τοῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγει, τὴν λιτότητα δηλον ότι πλέον ἀγαπήσας. τὰ δ' αὐτὰ καὶ Τίμαιος [fr. 88a FHG I 214] εἴρηκε . . .

According to the biographers, Empedocles' reason for refusing the kingship is a preference of the simple life, a preference shared by Heraclitus, as we shall see. Other than the fact that both philosophers refuse a kingship, the two have nothing in common, and even their shared refusal functions differently in their biographies. Heraclitus' refusal is proof of his misanthropy, but Empedocles, like Solon, is presented as a democratic champion whose various political acts, such as refusing the kingship, benefit the people. In the biography, Diogenes Laertius uses this refusal to introduce various other examples of Empedocles' political actions: he defeats several tyrants, destroys an oligarchy, and staunchly and publicly defends freedom. And so the political tradition that exists for Empedocles is almost entirely favorable; the anecdotes that make up and support this favorable tradition, however, are entirely unbelievable. This is where we see the real weakness of the biographers' methods. Despite their best efforts, they find few fragments to support their reading of citation **12,** for neither the *Purifications* nor *On Nature* readily lend themselves to political interpretation.

Given this scarcity of material, the biographers were forced to rely on schematized patterns and established topoi to provide a political career for Empedocles. The following anecdote illustrates the type of material the biographers used to provide evidence for his political career; in Diogenes Laertius' text, it follows the refusal of kingship.

14. With this [the refusal of kingship], Timaeus agrees, at the same time giving the reason why Empedocles favored democracy, namely that, having been invited to dinner with one of the officials, when the dinner had gone on some time and no wine was put on the table, although the other guests kept quiet, Empedocles, becoming indignant, ordered wine to be brought. Then the host confessed that he was waiting for the servant of the senate to appear. When he came, he was made master of the banquet, clearly by the arrangement of the host, whose design of making himself tyrant was only thinly veiled, for he ordered the guests either to drink the wine or have it poured on their heads. For the time being, Empedocles was reduced to silence; the next day he impeached both of them, the host and

master of the banquet, and secured their condemnation and execution. This, then was the beginning of his political career. (DL 8.64)

τὰ δ' αὐτὰ καὶ Τίμαιος [fr. 88a FHG I 214] εἴρηκε, τὴν αἰτίαν ἅμα παρατιθέμενος τοῦ δημοτικὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα. φησὶ γὰρ ὅτι κληθεὶς ὑπό τινος τῶν ἀρχόντων, ὡς προβαίνοντος τοῦ δείπνου τὸ ποτὸν οὐκ εἰσεφέρετο, τῶν [δ'] ἄλλων ἡσυχαζόντων, μισοπονήρως διατεθεὶς ἐκέλευσεν εἰσφέρειν· ὁ δὲ κεκληκὼς ἀναμένειν ἔφη τὸν τῆς βουλῆς ὑπηρέτην. ὡς δὲ παρεγένετο, ἐγενήθη συμποσίαρχος, τοῦ κεκληκότος δηλονότι καταστήσαντος, ὃς ὑπεγράφετο τυραννίδος ἀρχήν· ἐκέλευσε γὰρ ἢ πίνειν ἢ καταχεῖσθαι τῆς κεφαλῆς. τότε μὲν οὖν ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἡσύχασε· τῇ δ' ὑστεραίαι εἰσαγαγὼν εἰς δικαστήριον ἀπέκτεινε καταδικάσας ἀμφοτέρους, τόν τε κλήτορα καὶ τὸν συμποσίαρχον. ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐτῶι τῆς πολιτείας ἥδε.

And a strange beginning it is. The anecdote comes to us from Timaeus, a historian and compiler generally hostile to philosophers (as this anecdote might suggest) and therefore generally unreliable. That such a man is one of the very few named sources for Empedocles' political career does little to strengthen the credibility of the tradition.[46] The anecdote is especially inauspicious for one whose moral code prohibits bloodshed, especially when it stems from Empedocles having to wait for wine or being threatened with having it poured on his head. The anecdote seems to be nothing more than a comic invention, although several interpretations of it have been offered by various scholars. Most, while quick to point out that the story is obviously untrue, see in it nonetheless a valid indication of Empedocles' role in Acragas' transformation from tyranny to democracy, although no other evidence for such a role can be found.[47] Others more properly suggest that the story originated in comedy, a not unusual source for the biographies of philosophers as well as poets,[48] and the anecdote certainly presents Empedocles in a potentially comic light. Biographically speaking, banquets are frequently used to display character,[49] and Empedocles' behavior and response to his tyrannical host also suggest the very common topos of philosopher and tyrant.[50] A similar example of the topos is preserved for us elsewhere by Diogenes Laertius, where he tells of a banquet given by Dionysus, tyrant of Syracuse, that Plato and Aristippus attend. According to Diogenes Laertius, when the wine was brought, Dionysus ordered everyone to put on purple robes and dance; Plato refuses and Aristippus agrees. On one hand, the anecdote contrasts the wild (uncivilized), imperious behav-

ior of Dionysus with Plato's calm dignity and on the other, illustrates Plato's indifference to power and wealth, by his opposition to Aristippus who literally dances to the tyrant's tune. Thus the anecdote works on several different levels: it demonstrates the difference between philosopher and tyrant and between two different philosophers and their characters and schools. The anecdote of Empedocles at the banquet is also used several different ways, although it indicates a greater amount of ambivalence toward its subject. Empedocles' quite reasonable request favorably contrasts to the unreasonable demands of the would-be tyrant. Yet, while the setting and the threat to have wine poured on his head are laughable, his actions in securing the men's execution are not. For even if his intent is noble (Empedocles seeks to end the tyranny before it begins), his actions are ridiculous and again speak of his exaggerated sense of self-worth; worse, they are out of keeping with his philosophical beliefs as stated in the *Purifications* and discussed earlier in this chapter: how can a man who prohibits bloodshed execute two men for withholding wine or threatening to pour it on his head?

In philosophical biography, the setting of the banquet is a standard means of illustrating character, and the details here are vague enough to place the anecdote during any time of civic unrest, a condition common to most of Greece most of the time. Finally, the anecdote's source is telling; although Diogenes Laertius presents the anecdote favorably, there is no evidence that his source Timaeus did. Timaeus' hostility toward philosophers does not strengthen the anecdote's credibility and intent and in fact by suggesting that it began in this manner, seriously weakens the notion that Empedocles had a political career at all.

Diogenes Laertius' other attempts to flesh out Empedocles' political career are not much more convincing: he mentions the destruction of an oligarchy, a political exile, a speech that defeats a tyranny, and a speech about freedom. Our information about the first of these, the destruction of an oligarchy, is especially vague. Diogenes Laertius tells us only that Empedocles destroyed an organization called the "Thousand" some years after its birth and that, by its destruction, Empedocles proved he favored the popular cause.[51] Our ancient sources, including Diodorus Siculus, makes no mention of the Thousand or any similar organization, and our modern sources tend to depend on Diogenes Laertius for their information. In short, nothing is known about the organization, its beginning, or demise.[52] The anecdote is probably nothing more than a vague reference to political change in Acragas after Theron and Thrasydaeus, tied to

Empedocles by a lost comic portrayal or an attempt to link a famous son to important events at home. Like the traditional refusal to rule, this does little more than demonstrate a standard biographical topos of the philosopher's democratic sympathies, which the next anecdote also (and also rather oddly) portrays.[53]

15. Again, when Acron the physician asked the council for a site on which to build a monument to his father, who had been eminent among physicians, Empedocles came forward and forbade it in a speech in which he enlarged upon equality, and in particular put the following question: "But what inscription should we put upon it: Should it be, 'Acron the eminent physician of Acragas, son of Acros/ is buried beneath the steep eminence of his most eminent native city?'" Some give the second line as, "Is laid in an exalted tomb on a most exalted peak." Some attribute the verse to Simonides. (DL 8.65)

πάλιν δὲ Ἄκρωνος τοῦ ἰατροῦ τόπον αἰτοῦντος παρὰ τῆς βουλῆς εἰς κατασκευὴν πατρώιου μνήματος διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἰατροῖς ἀκρότητα παρελθὼν ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐκώλυσε, τά τε ἄλλα περὶ ἰσότητος διαλεχθεὶς καί τι καὶ τοιοῦτον ἐρωτήσας· τί δὲ ἐπιγράψομεν ἐλεγεῖον; ἢ τοῦτο· 'ἄκρον . . . ἀκροτάτης" [B 157]; τινὲς δὲ τὸν δεύτερον στίχον οὕτω προφέρονται· 'ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς τύμβος ἄκρος κατέχει.' τοῦτό τινες Σιμωνίδου φασὶν εἶναι.

Diogenes Laertius himself admits that the epigram may have been wrongfully attributed to Empedocles.[54] The details of the anecdote, as well as Diogenes Laertius' placement of it, make it seem a reference to political activities. This is the speech Empedocles makes "about freedom;"[55] it comes just after the anecdote of the banquet and before that of the Thousand. A politically necessary oratorical ability may also be suggested, and the anecdote may serve a dual purpose by demonstrating Empedocles' rhetorical as well as political prowess.[56] However, since Empedocles and Acron are linked in the *Suda* as having studied sophistry together in Athens, their implied competition here, as well as a certain sophistry evident in the epigram, may suggest an oratorical battle, with or without political overtones and intentions. The speech "on freedom," like the epigram that floats from subject to subject (here, Empedocles and Simonides), suggests that the biographers, with no solid evidence from other work to illustrate the political career that Empedocles praises in citation **12,** were forced to depend upon a topos. However, when the biographers

came to their last proof of Empedocles' political career, the tradition of Empedocles' exile, they were on firmer ground.

In the previous discussion, we have seen that Empedocles' political career follows a standard scheme: a love of democracy and a hatred of tyranny as demonstrated by several topoi: refusal of kingship, opposition to tyrants and tyranny, and the destruction of an oligarchy. The next anecdote, which discusses Empedocles' exile, also remains within the limits of standard or schematized philosophical biography. Diogenes Laertius concludes his discussion of Empedocles' political career by remarking that,

16. Later, when he [Empedocles] was away from Acragas, the descendants of his enemies opposed his return and because of this, he went off to the Peloponnessus and died. (DL 8.67)[57]

ὕστερον μέντοι τοῦ Ἀκράγαντος οἰκιζομένου ἀντέστησαν αὐτοῦ τῇι καθόδωι οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἀπόγονοι· διόπερ εἰς Πελοπόννησον ἀποχωρήσας ἐτελεύτησεν.

Citation **16,** which ends Diogenes Laertius' discussion of Empedocles' political career and begins discussion of Empedocles' deaths (one of which occurs in exile), allows no other interpretation than political exile brought about by political enmity. In any case, the biographical tradition demands it: many, if not most, philosophers undergo exile at some point during their lives.[58] Political exile is, of course, appropriate for a democratic reformer, and Empedocles' exile is plausible within the scheme of his biography.[59] Other sorts of exile, however, are plausible for other philosophers and for any variety of reasons. Thus the philosopher's exile became a standard topos serving either the favorable or hostile tradition. For example, Solon's exile was voluntary and noble, symbolizing and enhancing his political actions; Heraclitus was driven, by his misanthropic nature, to voluntary but quite ignominious exile; Democritus' exile illustrates and strengthens the tradition of his madness.[60] Empedocles' exile is voluntary, political, and favorable, as is appropriate to the generally favorable tradition of his political career. Diogenes Laertius presents the exile neutrally and rather casually.[61] Since, according to biographical reasoning, Empedocles spoke of it himself in his own work, Diogenes Laertius may have felt no other comment was necessary.

17. I wept and wailed, looking upon the unfamiliar land . . . (fr. 118)

κλαῦσά τε καὶ κώκυσα ἰδὼν ἀσυνήθεα χῶρον . . .

18. From such honor and so great a happiness . . . (fr. 119)

ἐξ οἵης τιμῆς τε καὶ ὅσσου μήκεος ὄλβου . . .

Although Empedocles speaks metaphorically in citations **17** and **18** about the soul's exile from the gods during the rule of Strife,[62] a literal and very personal interpretation—Empedocles' reaction to his own exile—was easily adduced by the biographers. The only other evidence we have for an exile, political or otherwise, comes from Timaeus, whom we have no reason to trust, and from Pliny, who characterizes Empedocles' travels as "more like an exile."[63] This final part of the political tradition, like the other anecdotes examined, has very little historical credence; moreover, it can be directly traced to extant philosophical material, which suggests that biographical invention was at work throughout.

Had Empedocles a political career at all? The evidence produced by Diogenes Laertius, as we have seen, is extremely weak. The career itself follows a schematized pattern and most of the anecdotes have been revealed as biographical topoi. The weakness of the tradition seems to bother even some of the biographers. It must have been difficult to reconcile the democratic reformer of the anecdotes with the philosopher who, by way of greeting, announced his immortality. It is Timaeus, as Diogenes Laertius records, who noted the contradiction.

19. At any rate, Timaeus in his eleventh and twelfth book, for he mentions him often, says that Empedocles seems to have an opposite view in his politics, whereas in his verses he appears boastful and selfish, for he says, "Greetings. I go among you an immortal god, no longer mortal," and so on. (DL 8.66)[64]

ὅ γέ τοι Τίμαιος ἐν τῆι ια καὶ ιβ (πολλάκις γὰρ αὐτοῦ μνημονεύει) φησὶν ἐναντίαν ἐσχηκέναι γνώμην αὐτὸν <ἔν> τε τῆι πολιτείαι <καὶ ἐν τῆι ποιήσει· ὅπου μὲν γὰρ μέτριον καὶ ἐπιεικῆ> φαίνεσθαι, ὅπου δὲ ἀλαζόνα καὶ φίλαυτον [ἐν τῆι ποιήσει]· φησὶ γοῦν· 'χαίρετ' . . . πωλεῦμαι' καὶ τὰ ἑξῆς.

The contrast between the democratic activist of the favorable political tradition and the braggart of Empedocles' biographical character is bluntly juxtaposed here, the incongruity of the two portraits illustrated with a quotation from Empedocles' work. Timaeus' aim was not historical veracity (rather, his words suggest another of his attempts to disparage Empedocles

by drawing attention to this discrepancy), and yet his point is well taken. Empedocles' characterization as arrogant and attention-seeking, as discussed earlier, simply does not correspond to his career characterization of democrat and tyrant-slayer. Naturally not: in the political career we have disparate topoi and a few biographically interpreted fragments welded together into a schematized, favorable political biographical career, not a historical survey of an actual one.

Empedocles' personal character, while created by the same method, draws upon different fragments than those used to create the political career. In terms of character, the biographers' interpretation of the fragments was hostile and derivative; the result is the boastful, selfish, and rather foppish Pythagorean poseur. The two traditions (democrat and would-be god) make for an uneasy biographical alliance, a democratic champion with delusions of divinity. The political anecdotes examined previously, intended to characterize Empedocles as a reformer and champion of the people, are ultimately not convincing. Given the nature of Empedocles' work and language—and the scarcity of work that allows a political reading—the biographers were forced to depend instead upon comic allusions and standard topoi, resulting in anecdotes that, upon investigation, weaken the political career they were meant to prove or discuss. The weakness of the anecdotes illustrates the biographer's lack of appropriate material to flesh out Empedocles' political career as among those listed in citation **12.** As we have seen, the biographers themselves had reservations about the dual nature of Empedocles' character, questioning the inherent contradiction of their own creation. With the tradition of Empedocles' political career now laid to rest, we move to the second of those careers which Empedocles praised as "most worthy for men."

Empedocles the Poet

Empedocles' poetic talent is beyond dispute.[65] Ancient and modern commentators, excepting one, have praised the poetic form in which Empedocles presented his philosophic theories. Bury calls him a born poet; Guthrie praises the ease and naturalness with which Empedocles transforms theory into verse; Lucretius calls his poetry immortal; and Plutarch's remarks are worth full quotation: "It is not his habit to decorate his subject matter, for the sake of fine writing, with epithets like bright colors, but rather to make each one the expression of a particular essence or potency."[66] The

exception to this nearly unanimous praise is Aristotle, despite the favorable way in which Diogenes Laertius presents his comments.

20. In his work *On Poets,* he [Aristotle] says that Empedocles was of Homer's school and powerful in diction, being great in metaphors and in the use of all other poetic devices. (DL 8.58)[67]

Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ . . . ἐν δὲ τῶι Περὶ ποιητῶν [fr. 70] φησιν ὅτι καὶ Ὁμηρικὸς ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ δεινὸς περὶ τὴν φράσιν γέγονεν, μεταφορητικός τε ὢν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς περὶ ποιητικὴν ἐπιπεύγμασι χρώμενος.

Aristotle's comments elsewhere give a distinctly different impression.

21. Empedocles has nothing to do with Homer except meter; the first should be called a poet, the other rather a scientist. (Aristotle *Poet.* 1.4447b 17 = DK 31 A22)

οὐδὲν δὲ κοινόν ἐστιν Ὁμήρωι καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ πλὴν τὸ μέτρον· διὸ τὸν μὲν ποιητὴν δίκαιον καλεῖν, τὸν δὲ φυσιολόγον μᾶλλον ἢ ποιητήν.

22. [On the requirements of good Greek] . . . The third requirement is to avoid ambiguity, unless indeed the ambiguity is deliberately sought, as it is by those who pretend they have something to say when they have not. Such people usually say it in verse, like Empedocles. Elaborate circumlocutions deceive people who are impressed, as most people are impressed, by prophecies, so that they assent to ambiguous oracles, like, 'If Croesus crosses the river Halys, he will destroy a great kingdom.'[68] (Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.5.1407a31 = DK 31A25)

τρίτον μὴ ἀμφιβόλοις· ταῦτα δέ, ἂν μὴ τἀναντία προαιρῆται, ὅπερ ποιοῦσιν ὅταν μηθὲν μὲν ἔχωσι λέγειν, προσποιῶνται δέ τι λέγειν. οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ἐν ποιήσει λέγουσιν ταῦτα οἷον Ἐμπεδοκλῆς. φενακίζει γὰρ τὸ κύκλωι πολὺ ὄν, καὶ πάσχουσιν οἱ ἀκροαταὶ ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ παρὰ τοῖς μάντεσιν. ὅταν γὰρ λέγωσιν ἀμφίβολα, συμπαρανεύουσιν Κροῖσος Ἅλυν διαβὰς μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καταλύσει.

Either Aristotle was inconsistent in his views, or Diogenes Laertius was mistaken in his interpretation.[69] The possibility of misinterpretation leaves Diogenes Laertius' other statements on the matter in doubt as well.

23. [Aristotle] says that [Empedocles] wrote other poems, in particular on the invasion of Xerxes and a hymn to Apollo, which a sister of his (or, according to Hieronymus, his daughter) afterwards burnt. The hymn she destroyed accidentally, but the poem on the Persian War deliberately, because it was unfinished. And in general terms Aristotle says Empedocles wrote both tragedies and political discourses. But Heraclides, the son of Sarapion, attributes the tragedies to a different author. Hieronymus declares that he had come across forty-three of his plays, while Neanthes tells us that Empedocles wrote these tragedies in his youth, and that he, Neanthes, was acquainted with seven of them. (DL 8.57–58)

καὶ διότι γράψαντος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄλλα ποιήματα τήν τε Ξέρξου διάβασιν καὶ προοίμιον εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα, ταῦθ' ὕστερον κατέκαυσεν ἀδελφή τις αὐτοῦ (ἢ θυγάτηρ, ὥς φησιν Ἱερώνυμος [fr. 24 Hiller]), τὸ μὲν προοίμιον ἄκουσα, τὰ δὲ Περσικὰ βουληθεῖσα διὰ τὸ ἀτελείωτα εἶναι. (58) καθόλου δέ φησι καὶ τραγωιδίας αὐτὸν γράψαι καὶ πολιτικούς· Ἡρακλείδης δὲ ὁ τοῦ Σαραπίωνος ἑτέρου φησὶν εἶναι τὰς τραγωιδίας. Ἱερώνυμος δὲ τρισὶ καὶ τετταράκοντά φησιν ἐντετυχηκέναι, Νεάνθης [FGrHist. 84 F 27 II 197] δὲ νέον ὄντα γεγραφέναι τὰς τραγωιδίας καὶ αὐτῶν ἑπτὰ ἐντετυχηκέναι.

According to Aristotle, then, Empedocles wrote not only the two extant philosophical works that we possess, but also a hymn to Apollo, a poem on Xerxes, political works, and tragedies; elsewhere Diogenes Laertius tells us that Empedocles also wrote a medical treatise (DL 8.77). The tragedies were known to two other authors but in differing numbers: Hieronymus knew some forty-three of them, while Neanthes knew only seven and characterized them as a youthful work. Heraclides, on the other hand, attributes the tragedies to another author altogether.

Several incidental details make this report of these otherwise unknown works highly suspect. First, the destruction of work, accidental or intentional, by a family member, was a convenient and popular way to explain gaps or inconsistencies in an author's work and constitutes a topos in poetic and philosophical biography. For example, the biographers tell us that Heraclitus' book perished in a fire and that Homer's daughter lost or destroyed his *Cypria*.[70] And, although there have been a few attempts to validate the existence of two lost works of Empedocles' (the hymn to Apollo and the poem on Xerxes), the reports of other works are generally considered unreliable. The tradition of a hymn to Apollo most likely

reflects the religious nature of the *Purifications* and Empedocles' poetic and allegorical use of traditional religious terminology, as, for example, in *On Nature,* "Hear, then, the four roots of things, Bright Zeus and life-bearing Hera and Aidoneus and Nestis . . ." (fr. 6).[71]

Reports of Empedocles' recitations at festivals would further enforce the idea of a hymn to Apollo. For example, contests at the Pythian festivals, the site of musical and poetic contests would include hymns to Apollo. On the other hand, the poem on Xerxes, like Empedocles' Olympic victories, results from the association of Empedocles with Acragas and Theron. While Xerxes was preparing his campaign against Greece ca. 480 BCE, the Carthaginians were preparing to move against Sicily. Inevitably, the two invasions became intertwined: it was greatly to Xerxes' advantage that the great cities of Sicily, Syracuse and Acragas in particular, were prevented from sending aid east to the allied Greek forces. In 480 BCE, Hamilcar the Carthaginian general attacked the Syracuse troops of Gelon at Himera; the day turned in Sicily's favor when Theron, tyrant of Acragas, joined the attack.[72] Theron and Acragas, then, played a vital part in the defense of Sicily and indirectly in the defeat of Xerxes. Once again, Acragas' glory was redirected or transferred to its most famous son, Empedocles, whose most plausible inclusion in the event would be to write about it. Discussing the battle of Himera, Bury remarks: "But [the wealth and power of] Acragas brought less glory to Theron than to the name of the most illustrious of her sons, the poet and philosopher Empedocles."[73] Theron's role at Himera, considered a deciding factor in Xerxes' defeat, was symbolically transferred to Acragas' most famous citizen in his role as a poet. Empedocles' alleged poem on Xerxes symbolizes and preserves Acragas' moment of greatness.[74]

As for the other works, the political treatise simply corroborates the tradition of Empedocles as a politician, and the medical works (discussed later in this chapter) function in the same way. Empedocles' tragedies, on the other hand, result from the same type of misidentification that made Empedocles an Olympian victor. In this case, as in the misidentified Olympic victories, we are fortunate to have an outside source that identifies another Empedocles, grandson of the philosopher, as the author of some twenty plays. The tragedies, disputed in number as well as existence, are then most likely the work of the philosopher's grandson; their attribution to the philosopher is due either to honest biographical confusion or an equally honest desire to flesh out Empedocles' literary career.[75]

In conclusion, the attribution of these other works is highly question-

able. The poem on Xerxes, the hymn to Apollo, and the political and medical works are all simply different versions of the same impulse that made Empedocles a politician in the biographies: to flesh out and make concrete careers mentioned in citation **12.** The various works all corroborate one of those careers (poet, politician, physician), while their alleged destruction accounts for their loss. The very neatness of the scheme, one work for each career, added to the destruction for the works in question, argues against their existence.[76]

The only credible transition of Empedocles as a poet, then, rests upon his extant works, the *Purifications* and *On Nature*. There is no need for further proof of his poetic skill. These two works, in which Empedocles effortlessly employs unusual and striking similes, flowing metrical phrases, and which communicate, with a seamless, natural style, philosophical theory, demonstrate all by themselves a poetic genius that has been admired and praised through the ages. The reports of his other works, like those of his other deaths, have been greatly exaggerated.

Empedocles the Physician

In citation **12,** we saw that Empedocles praises four careers: statesman, poet, physician, and prophet. In the preceding sections, we have seen the evidence in Diogenes Laertius for two of those careers, along with the evidence from Empedocles' extant work to support the biographical interpretation of the citation. Empedocles' career as a physician, although better attested than either politician or poet, is yet more complicated through its conflation with his career as a prophet. Most of the anecdotes classified as medical can also be regarded as miraculous, and so, rather than make an artificial division, I will discuss them together in the following section. First, the evidence for the medical career: in Diogenes Laertius, Empedocles is called a physician by Heraclides of Pontus (8.61) and by Satyrus (8.65). Sources outside Diogenes Laertius make Empedocles a physician of the Italian school (Galen), an empirical scientist/physician (Pliny), a famous healer (Celsus), and a skilled practitioner (Iamblichus). Two ancient medical authorities speak of Empedocles: *Ancient Medicine*, with its attack on those who mix the principles and methods of medicine and philosophy, and *Sacred Diseases*, with its discussion of charlatans and miracle workers; Empedocles' inclusion in this discussion is not accidental, but very telling.[77]

From the biographical reports, we would expect Empedocles' work to

reveal medical statements, or at least allusions to medicine, and in this we are not disappointed; some fragments of the *Physics* are, in fact, concerned with respiration and embryology. Despite those interests, however, Empedocles was not a physician but a philosopher, even though ancient and modern authors misleadingly speak of his "enormous influence on medicine."[78] While the inference may be valid, given the nature and stature of early philosophical work on all fields of science, accounts of Empedocles' medical practice are not.[79] Empedocles' interest in natural science, especially in respiration and embryology, and the few fragments that record his interest were elaborated by the biographers into medical theory and practice and given concrete anecdotal form. While this practice exists for the philosophers in general, the anecdotes that illustrate Empedocles' medical work are unusual in both their number and their claims. Furthermore, biographical motives and bias add to the confusion between Empedocles' "medical career" and that of prophet or *mantis*. Empedocles is described by one biographer as physician and healer, by another as magician and miracle worker, and modern opinions on this point are still divided.[80] Because the next anecdote describes Empedocles equally as a physician and as a magician, it bridges the gap between this section and the next, which discusses the fourth and last of Empedocles' careers. Diogenes Laertius uses Satyrus' statement to introduce this section; it may serve as our starting point as well.

The Holy Fool

24. Satyrus in his Lives says that [Empedocles] was both a physician and an outstanding orator . . . he says that Gorgias of Leontini himself was present when Empedocles performed miraculous deeds. And he says that Empedocles claims this and more . . . (DL 8.58–59)

φησὶ δὲ Σάτυρος ἐν τοῖς Βίοις [fr. 12 FHG III 162], ὅτι καὶ ἰατρὸς ἦν καὶ ῥήτωρ ἄριστος. Γοργίαν γοῦν τὸν Λεοντῖνον [82 A 3] . . . αὐτοῦ τοῦτόν φησιν ὁ Σάτυρος λέγειν, ὡς αὐτὸς παρείη τῶι Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ γοητεύοντι. ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν διὰ τῶν ποιημάτων ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι τοῦτό τε καὶ ἄλλα πλείω . . .

In this passage, we see Empedocles described not only as physician and orator, but as γοης, one who bewitches, fascinates, or plays the wizard; this is not a complimentary characterization, as Wright points out.[81] The most

striking of these "miraculous deeds" occurs in a story known to Hermippus and Heraclides, and told to us by Diogenes Laertius.

25. At all events, Heraclides testifies that the case of the woman in a trance was such that for thirty days Empedocles kept her body alive without breath or pulse. (DL 8.61)

τὴν γοῦν ἄπνουν ὁ Ἡρακλείδης [fr. 72 Voss] φησὶ τοιοῦτόν τι εἶναι, ὡς τριάκοντα ἡμέρας συντηρεῖν ἄπνουν καὶ ἄσφυκτον τὸ σῶμα·

26. Hermippus says that Empedocles healed Pantheia, a woman of Acragas, whom the physicians had given up. (DL 8.69)

Ἕρμιππος [fr. 27 FHG III 42] δέ φησι Πάνθειάν τινα Ἀκραγαντίνην ἀπηλπισμένην ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν θεραπεῦσαι αὐτὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν θυσίαν ἐπιτελεῖν·

27. Heraclides, when speaking of the woman in the trance, says that Empedocles became famous for sending away living a woman who had been dead. . . . (DL 8.68)

Ἡρακλείδης [fr. 76 Voss] μὲν γὰρ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἄπνου διηγησάμενος, ὡς ἐδοξάσθη Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἀποστείλας τὴν νεκρὰν ἄνθρωπον ζῶσαν. . . .

The details gleaned from these three accounts are sketchy: the woman is called Pantheia and is healed by Empedocles after the local physicians had given up (Hermippus). She remained in a deathlike trance for thirty days, without pulse or breath, until Empedocles restored her and sent her away, for which he became famous (Heraclides). Satyrus, whose statement in citation **24** introduces Empedocles as a magician, strengthens his claim with a quotation from Empedocles' work, when he continues:

28. (And Satyrus says that this man himself [Gorgias of Leontini] was present when Empedocles performed his miraculous deeds.) And he says that Empedocles claimed this and more in his poems, in which he says: (DI 8.58–59)

τοῦτόν φησιν ὁ Σάτυρος λέγειν, ὡς αὐτὸς παρείη τῶι Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ γοητεύοντι. ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν διὰ τῶν ποιημάτων ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι τοῦτό τε καὶ ἄλλα πλείω, δι' ὧν φησι·

29. You will learn medicines of all kinds and against old age, a remedy hear—
since for you alone will I complete this tale of many charms.
You will stop the force of the tireless winds, as they sweep across the earth
shattering crops with their destructive blasts.
Then, should you wish it, you will bring back these winds requited.
From murky rain, you will bring a seasonable time
for men and from burning drought, make now the streams that
nourish trees, streams that dwell in the pure upper air.
You will bring back from Hades the strength of a man who has perished. (fr. 111)

φάρμακα δ᾽ ὅσσα γεγᾶσι κακῶν καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ
πεύσηι, ἐπεὶ μούνωι σοὶ ἐγὼ κρανέω τάδε πάντα.
παύσεις δ᾽ ἀκαμάτων ἀνέμων μένος οἵ τ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν
ὀρνύμενοι πνοιαῖσι καταφθινύθουσιν ἀρούρας·
καὶ πάλιν, ἢν ἐθέλησθα, παλίντιτα πνεύματ(α) ἐπάξεις·
θήσεις δ᾽ ἐξ ὄμβροιο κελαινοῦ καίριον αὐχμόν
ἀνθρώποις, θήσεις δὲ καὶ ἐξ αὐχμοῖο θερείου
ῥεύματα δενδρεόθρεπτα, τά τ᾽ αἰθέρι ναιήσονται,
ἄξεις δ᾽ ἐξ ᾽Αίδαο καταφθιμένου μένος ἀνδρός.

When we began, we saw that Satyrus listed Empedocles' careers as physician and orator, a statement that is immediately followed by the further assertion that Empedocles performed miraculous deeds, that is, that Empedocles was a magician (citations **24** and **28**). Satyrus then presents as his proof lines from Empedocles' philosophical work *On Nature* (in citation **29**).

The citation from *On Nature* promises, among other things, that Empedocles' pupil (or addressee) will learn to control the winds, rain, and drought and how to bring back from the underworld the strength (μένος) of someone who has perished (καταφθίσθαι). The same word (μένος) describes the strength of both the winds and the dead, and the verb that speaks of the destructive tendency of the wind (καταφθινύθουσιν) is a related form of the verb used of human destruction (καταφθιμένου). The citation suggests that both respiration and the winds can be controlled and made to return at will and that, if breath is returned to the body, so is life. Furthermore, the citation suggests that the speaker has the power to control these natural forces through his knowledge of them.

According to the citation, moreover, neither life nor death is a permanent, fixed state. Instead there exist only subtle alterations between two similar states. This is further suggested by Empedocles' remarks on the mutability of the elements, the alternation between the destructive force of the winds and their necessary (requited) presence, between wet and dry, life and death.

This reading takes on still greater force if read, as is proper, in conjunction with other parts of Empedocles' work.

30. And I will tell you something else: creation exists for no mortal thing
whatsoever, nor is there any end in destroying death.
Rather, there exists only the mingling and the separation of things joined,
and the name applied to this by man is nature. (fr. 8)

ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενὸς ἔστιν ἁπάντων
θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένου θανάτοιο τελευτή,
ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξίς τε μιγέντων
ἔστι, φύσις δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.

31. But when the parts are mingled together in a man and come into the light,
or into the family of wild animals or shrubs,
or into birds, this, then, they call creation,
as when they separate, this they call ill-fated death.
Themis does not call it so but even I, through convention, apply this term. (fr. 9)

οἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν κατὰ φῶτα μιγέντ' εἰς αἰθέρ' ἴ<κωνται>
ἢ κατὰ θηρῶν ἀγροτέρων γένος ἢ κατὰ θάμνων
ἠὲ κατ' οἰωνῶν, τότε μὲν τὸ <λέγουσι> γενέσθαι,
εὖτε δ' ἀποκρινθῶσι, τὸ δ' αὖ δυσδαίμονα πότμον·
ἣ θέμις <οὐ> καλέουσι, νόμωι δ' ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός.

32. The fools. For they have no long-reaching thought
but believe something not existing before comes into being,
or that something dies away and perishes utterly. (fr. 11)

νήπιοι· οὐ γάρ σφιν δολιχόφρονές εἰσι μέριμναι,
οἳ δὴ γίγνεσθαι πάρος οὐκ ἐὸν ἐλπίζουσιν
ἤ τι καταθνήισκειν τε καὶ ἐξόλλυσθαι ἁπάντηι.

These three fragments, like citation **29,** deny the existence of absolute life and death. Most people are aware only of the outward signs of regeneration and decay and so speak of life and death as fixed and absolute states. Having no deeper or more real knowledge of these forces, they cannot control them. The speaker, on the other hand, sees beyond appearances into the changing and interrelated nature of all things and has and can teach control of these elements.

In the discussion of these citations, I have been careful to designate the first-person "I" of citation **29** as the speaker; the biographers, however, would immediately identify the "I" as Empedocles himself. Their methods, which first require an autobiographical reading of the fragment, next require a concrete anecdote to flesh it out, as the Pantheia anecdotes bear out. There, only Empedocles can bring the woman back to a "living state." The other physicians, ordinary men who cannot recognize the subtle gradations between life and death but by their inability perceive only two absolute states of life and death, have given up. Empedocles, according to the biographers, because of his greater knowledge, is able not only to see the connection between the two states, but to control them (just as he can control the winds through his knowledge of them) and thus control life and death itself. He has, in fact, brought back the "necessary force," the μένος, of one who has perished, "καταφθιμένου." Diogenes Laertius follows the Pantheia anecdote with more of Heraclides' comments on Empedocles and another quotation to bolster Heraclides' point.

33. At all events, Heraclides testifies that the case of the woman in a trance was such that for three days he kept her body [alive] without breath or pulse; and for that reason Heraclides calls him not merely a physician but a holy man (i.e., μαντις] as well, deriving the titles from the following line also: (DL 8.61–62)

τὴν γοῦν ἄπνουν ὁ Ἡρακλείδης [fr. 72 Voss] φησὶ τοιοῦτόν τι εἶναι, ὡς τριάκοντα ἡμέρας συντηρεῖν ἄπνουν καὶ ἄσφυκτον τὸ σῶμα· ὅθεν εἶπεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἰητρὸν καὶ μάντιν, λαμβάνων ἅμα καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν στίχων·

Friends, who dwell in the great town above tawny Acragas,
upon the city's citadel, busy in your good works,
you who are reverent harbors for strangers and strangers to evil,
Greeting. I go among you an immortal god, no longer mortal,
but honored among all men, appropriately,
wreathed in ribbons and fresh garlands.
I am honored by men and women; they follow me
by the thousands, seeking the advantageous way,
some desiring prophecy, others, against all sorts of diseases,
ask to learn a well-pointed saying,
having suffered too long in their painful distress.
(fr. 112 = citation **10**)

ὦ φίλοι, οἳ μέγα ἄστυ κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος
ναίετ᾽ ἀν᾽ ἄκρα πόλεος, ἀγαθῶν μελεδήμονες ἔργων,
ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες, κακότητος ἄπειροι,
χαίρετ᾽· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα,
ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.
τοῖσιν † ἅμ᾽ † ἂν ἵκωμαι ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα,
ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξί, σεβίζομαι· οἳ δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἕπονται
μυρίοι ἐξερέοντες, ὅπηι πρὸς κέρδος ἀταρπός,
οἳ μὲν μαντοσυνέων κεχρημένοι, οἳ δ᾽ ἐπὶ νούσων
παντοίων ἐπύθοντο κλυεῖν εὐηκέα βάξιν,
δηρὸν δὴ χαλεπῆισι πεπαρμένοι <ἀμφ᾽ ὀδύνηισιν>.

As we saw earlier, this fragment provided the biographers with ample proof of Empedocles' career as physician, with its promises of remedies and cures. However, it also provides proof of other powers and another career mentioned by Empedocles in fragment 112, that of μαντις, which I translate as "holy man" in an attempt to preserve the word's ambiguity. Mantis means "diviner," "prophet," or "seer." Heraclides perhaps uses the term favorably in citation **33** to credit Empedocles with marvelous skills in healing, again suggesting the link between the natural philosopher and the medical man.[82] In citation **24,** however, when Satyrus describes Empedocles as an orator and physician who "perform[s] miraculous deeds," he uses the verb γοητεύω, which is much less favorable, meaning to "beguile," "bewitch," or "to play the wizard." Moreover, the biographers' combination

of orator and physician, unlike seer and physician, or prophet and physician, typically indicates a charlatan.[83] Diogenes Laertius, certainly, means this part of the biography to illustrate Empedocles' career as a wizard or magician, as his next anecdote in this section reveals.

34. Timaeus too, in his eighteenth book of the *Histories,* says that Empedocles was admired on many grounds. For example, when the etesian winds began to blow violently and damage the crops, he ordered donkeys flayed and their skin made into sacks. He stretched them here and there on the hills to catch the winds, and because he stopped it, was called the 'wind-stopper.'[84] (DL 8.60)

φησὶ δὲ καὶ Τίμαιος ἐν τῇι ὀκτωκαιδεκάτηι [fr. 94 FHG I 215] κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους τεθαυμάσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα. καὶ γὰρ ἐτησίων ποτὲ σφοδρῶς πνευσάντων ὡς τοὺς καρποὺς λυμῆναι, κελεύσας ὄνους ἐκδαρῆναι καὶ ἀσκοὺς ποιῆσαι περὶ τοὺς λόφους καὶ τὰς ἀκρωρείας διέτεινε πρὸς τὸ συλλαβεῖν τὸ πνεῦμα· λήξαντος δὲ κωλυσανέμαν κληθῆναι.

We have already seen that Empedocles' belief in metempsychosis prohibits bloodshed; citation **7,** in fact, explicitly warns against the slaughter of animals. Yet here we have an anecdote in which Empedocles not only kills animals but flays them for their skins. Not surprisingly, the anecdote comes from Timaeus, whom we have identified as a hostile, and therefore probably unreliable, source. If this were the only record of such an act, we could perhaps dismiss it, but other anecdotes, in which Empedocles uses his control of the elements to save cities from plague, crops from destruction, and women from miscarriage, must give us pause.[85] The details of these cures through control of wind and water, like the description of Empedocles as holy man and magician, are obviously taken from his words in citation **29;** in each of these miraculous acts, Empedocles uses his knowledge of the elements to control them, for the benefit of the people. His knowledge and power, in these several anecdotes, once more imply Empedocles' control over the forces of life and death, as symbolized by his rescue of the people from potentially deadly states. In the smaller details of these accounts (the barren women, miscarriages, winds) we see once more Empedocles' interest in embryology and respiration, constant symbols of life and death.[86] Finally, these heroic, god-like actions by which the philosopher saves his fellow citizens make up a common topos in the favorable tradition of philosophical biography. A quite similar anecdote occurs for

Democritus: having saved his fellow citizens from plague and destructive winds, he is honored as a god.[87] (An honor much like this is offered Empedocles for similar reasons, as we will see.) The ability to control the elements is frequently attributed to the early philosophers. Their interest in the physical world and especially in meteorology is translated into magical powers over natural forces. Quite often they are deified for these powers. The very frequency with which such anecdotes occur, however, argues against their credibility in any individual case.[88]

The tradition of Empedocles' career as physician and "prophet," as demonstrated, comes from Empedocles' own words examined earlier in citation **12.**

Finally, then, prophets and poets and physicians,
and princes among mortal men are they wont to be,
blossoming forth from this state to become gods, greatest in honor.
(fr. 146)

εἰς δὲ τέλος μάντεις τε καὶ ὑμνοπόλοι καὶ ἰητροί
καὶ πρόμοι ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισι πέλονται,
ἔνθεν ἀναβλαστοῦσι θεοὶ τιμῆισι φέριστοι.

Empedocles' career as physician, like his other careers, originates in this fragment. His medical interests, shared by other early philosophers and indicated by those fragments that speak of respiration and embryology, were elaborated into anecdotes in which Empedocles "heals" Pantheia and saves "the people." In some instances, the anecdotes form a favorable tradition that speaks of Empedocles as a physician whose knowledge and power benefits the people. In other instances, interpretation of citation **12** was colored by a hostile reaction to those fragments in which Empedocles was thought to claim divine status and prerogatives. This hostile reading results in the unfavorable tradition that makes Empedocles a charlatan and magician. Empedocles' own use of mantis in citation **12** allowed Satyrus to label him a magician and Timaeus to produce anecdotes which negated Empedocles' stated philosophic and religious beliefs. Diogenes Laertius' placement of his material provides an illustrative structure: in 8.58 (citation **24**), Satyrus says Gorgias was present when Empedocles performed miraculous deeds. In 8.59 (citation **28**), Satyrus says Empedocles claimed these magic powers and more in his philosophy, to prove which he quotes citation **29.** In 8.60, Diogenes Laertius presents Timaeus'

anecdote about the winds (citation **34**). In 8.61 (citation **25**), we have Heraclides' report of Pantheia and Diogenes Laertius' explanation of Heraclides' use of the term mantis "at all events, Heraclides testifies that the case of the woman in a trance." Diogenes Laertius then includes Empedocles' own words in citation **29** as proof. Clearly, the biographers intend to show Empedocles not as a holy man but as a magician. The tradition of Empedocles as physician has become hopelessly confused with anecdotes of Empedocles the magician, based on control of natural elements and forces such as wind and water, life and death. Empedocles' last two careers, prophet and physician, like those of politician and poet, are nothing more than the biographers' embellishment of the professions listed in citation **12,** colored by reactions to citation **10** ("I go among you an immortal god. . . .")

THE DEATHS OF EMPEDOCLES

Now that we have examined the various aspects of Empedocles' family, character, and career, we must consider his various deaths. His spectacular descent into Etna is the best known of his several deaths, but by no means the only one: the biographers have given us several deaths to choose from, and all have more or less merit. But no matter how banal some deaths seem compared with Etna, all deserve our attention, for even the variant deaths go back to Empedocles' work. Our analysis of them provides insight into biographical reaction and interpretation of the philosophical work. In Empedocles' case, as one might suspect, the belief in metempsychosis and the denial of death as an absolute state underlie the various necrologies. The various deaths are presented by Diogenes Laertius as follows:

35. Demetrius of Troezen in his work *Against the Sophists* says that Empedocles, as Homer puts it, 'fastening a steep noose from a lofty dogwood, / let fall his neck and sent his soul to Hades.' (DL 8.74)

Δημήτριος δ' ὁ Τροιζήνιος ἐν τῶι Κατὰ σοφιστῶν βιβλίωι [FHG IV 383] φησὶν αὐτὸν καθ' Ὅμηρον [I 278] ἁψάμενον βρόχον αἰπὺν ἀφ'ὑψηλοῖο κρανείης αὐχέν' ἀποκρεμάσαι, ψυχὴν <δ'> Ἀϊδόσδε κατελθεῖν.

36. Later, when he was traveling in a carriage to a festival in Messene, he fell and broke his hip. Becoming ill from this he died, at age seventy-seven. His tomb is in Megara. (DL 8.73)

ὕστερον δὲ διά τινα πανήγυριν πορευόμενον ἐπ᾽ ἀμάξης ὡς εἰς Μεσσήνην πεσεῖν καὶ τὸν μηρὸν κλάσαι· νοσήσαντα δ᾽ ἐκ τούτου τελευτῆσαι ἐτῶν ἑπτὰ καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα. εἶναι δ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ τάφον ἐν Μεγάροις.

37. In Telauges' letter, he says that Empedocles' fell into the sea and drowned, because of his age. (DL 8.74)

ἐν τῶι προειρημένωι [C 14 53, 55] Τηλαύγους ἐπιστολίωι λέγεται αὐτὸν εἰς θάλατταν ὑπὸ γήρως ὀλισθόντα τελευτῆσαι.

It is not unusual for a philosopher to have more than one death; death was a favorite topic for the biographers and entire collections were devoted to famous or unusual deaths.[89] Biographical death, however, is always telling, because it is always drawn from the subject's work, and indicative of the biographers' reaction to that work.[90] The biographers' hostility seems especially to emerge in the death stories; rarely does death glorify its subject.

Biographical death in general shows more malice than anecdotes that discuss the living, but their ultimate source is the same, the philosophical thoughts and beliefs that are expressed in the subject's work. These philosophical statements are then interpreted personally and autobiographically. For the biographers, death was the ideal and ultimate opportunity to refute and negate all that the subject expressed in his work.[91] Examples of the biographical tradition are well known from poetry. Even "good" authors are fair game for the parody of death. Aeschylus, for example, dies when a tortoise shell falls on his head (the tortoise shell was used in antiquity for the lyre on which Aeschylus would have composed or sung his work). For "bad" poets like Euripides, death is a fearful thing: he is torn apart by dogs (as becomes a heretic) or by women (angry at his portrayal of them in the *Medea* and elsewhere). Many of the philosophers' deaths are frankly hostile, such as the death of Heraclitus who, almost universally regarded as misanthropic, dies like an animal, buried in dung.[92] Pythagoras, who admonishes his disciples to stay away from beans, dies as a result of his refusal to cross a bean field. Empedocles' several deaths are also peculiarly appropriate to him, although the allusions are less obvious. The most malicious of Empedocles' deaths is that of suicide, which clearly arises from a desire to refute and punish Empedocles for his "claim," in citation **10,** fragment 112, "I go among you an immortal god." In similar manner, more than one biographer slyly suggests that Empedocles was

driven by his own arrogance to prove his immortality by jumping into Etna, as later interpretation will show.

In the tradition of Empedocles' suicide, we have a perfect example of a hostile biographical reaction to a philosopher's work, expressed in anecdotes that at once negate the work and punish the author.[93] In Empedocles' case, suicide further punishes Empedocles for his boast of a unique understanding of the cosmos and control over its forces, as discussed in citations **28** and **33.**[94] It certainly negates his stance against killing and mocks his belief in metempsychosis.[95] All of Empedocles' deaths function in this manner: words are taken from his philosophy, turned against him, and made the instrument of his death. For example, citations **36** and **37** further punish Empedocles by ridiculing his claim to divinity. It is not a god but an all too humanly fragile man who drowns or falls and breaks his hip and dies. So much for immortality.

The death by drowning seems odd, until we consider certain fragments that the biographers must have found particularly ludicrous and are therefore worth of special attention.

38. For by now I have been boy and girl,
plant and bird and mute sea-fish. (fr. 117).

ἤδη γάρ ποτ᾽ ἐγὼ γενόμην κοῦρός τε κόρη τε
θάμνος τ᾽ οἰωνός τε καὶ ἔξαλος ἔλλοπος ἰχθύς.

Another fragment, similar in language and perhaps in intent, shows that the different incarnations are an integral part of the cosmic cycle and that all existing forms share the same origin.

39. . . . for from these [elements] all things exist, that were and are and will be,
the trees burst forth, and men and women,
beasts and birds and mute sea-fish,
and the gods, long-lived and highest in honor.
for these [elements] alone exist but by running through one another become different; to such a degree does mixing change them.
(fr. 21.9–14)

. . . ἐκ τούτων γὰρ πάνθ᾽ ὅσα τ᾽ ἦν ὅσα τ᾽ ἔστι καὶ ἔσται,
δένδρεά τ᾽ ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες,
θῆρές τ᾽ οἰωνοί τε καὶ ὑδατοθρέμμονες ἰχθῦς,

καί τε θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες τιμῆισι φέριστοι.
αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι᾽ ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
γίγνεται ἀλλοιωπά· τόσον διὰ κρῆσις ἀμείβει.

Citation **38,** divorced from a biographical interpretation, announces various incarnations, male and female, plant and animal, that befall a soul in its cycle. Citation **39** also lists different forms, trees, men, women, birds, beasts, and fish, that share a single origin. Citation **39** goes further, however, in that it mentions the gods as also having burst forth from the common pool of elements in their various transformations. The inclusion of the gods in citation **39** argues for their (philosophical and implicit) inclusion in citation **38** as well; the similarity in thought and expression in the two fragments is obvious. Together the two fragments give a further clue to our understanding of citation **10** and the biographers' reaction to it: "Greetings. I go among you an immortal god, no longer mortal." To a well-read biographer, the next step in the procession of forms in citation **38** would be that of citation **39,** from mortal to immortal. Clearly, to their way of thinking, it was a step Empedocles claimed to have taken. Death by drowning, then, is a wonderfully appropriate death for a philosopher who claimed to have been not only a god but a fish as well.

These three deaths have in common then the desire to punish Empedocles for his claim to divinity or for some part of his philosophy: his denial of death, his control over the elements (significantly lacking in his fall to earth and drowning), the transmigration of the soul into various forms, or the prohibition against violence and killing. Since Empedocles has now died by land, by sea, and by suicide, we turn towards Etna. Diogenes Laertius offers us several versions of this famous death.

40. Hermippus tells us that Empedocles cured Pantheia, a woman of Acragas who had been given up by the physicians, and this was why he [Empedocles] was offering sacrifice, and that those who had been invited were about eighty in number. Hippobotus, again, says that when Empedocles got up, he set out on his way to Etna; then, upon reaching it, plunged into its fiery craters and disappeared, his intention being to confirm the report that he had become a god. Afterwards, the truth was known, because one of his sandals was thrown up in the flames; it had been his custom to wear bronze sandals. (DL 8.69)

Ἕρμιππος [fr. 27 FHG III 42] δέ φησι Πάνθειάν τινα Ἀκραγαντῖνην ἀπηλπισμένην ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν θεραπεῦσαι αὐτὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν

θυσίαν ἐπιτελεῖν· τοὺς δὲ κληθέντας εἶναι πρὸς τοὺς ὀγδοήκοντα. Ἱππόβοτος [Heraclides fr. 77 Voss] δέ φησιν ἐξαναστάντα αὐτὸν ὠδευκέναι ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν Αἴτνην, εἶτα παραγενόμενον ἐπὶ τοὺς κρατῆρας τοῦ πυρὸς ἐναλέσθαι καὶ ἀφανισθῆναι, βουλόμενον τὴν περὶ αὑτοῦ φήμην βεβαιῶσαι ὅτι γεγόνοι θεός, ὕστερον δὲ γνωσθῆναι, ἀνερριπισθείσης αὐτοῦ μιᾶς τῶν κρηπίδων· χαλκᾶς γὰρ εἴθιστο ὑποδεῖσθαι. πρὸς τοῦθ' ὁ Παυσανίας ἀντέλεγε.

41. Diodorus of Ephesus says that . . . the people of Selinus suffered from a plague because of the miasma of the nearby river, and that the men perished and the women died in childbirth, and so Empedocles thought of diverting two rivers, at his own expense, and so, by mixing them, made the water sweet. When the plague had vanished and the people of Selinus were feasting on the river bank, Empedocles appeared. The people, rising up, worshipped and prayed to him as a god. And he, wishing to confirm their belief, leapt into the fire. (DL 8.70)

Διόδωρος δ' ὁ Ἐφέσιος φησὶν . . . τοῖς Σελινουντίοις ἐμπεσόντος λοιμοῦ διὰ τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ παρακειμένου ποταμοῦ δυσωδίας, ὥστε καὶ αὐτοὺς φθείρεσθαι καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας δυστοκεῖν, ἐπινοῆσαι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα καὶ δύο τινὰς ποταμοὺς τῶν σύνεγγυς ἐπαγαγεῖν ἰδίαις δαπάναις· καὶ καταμίξαντα γλυκῆναι τὰ ῥεύματα. οὕτω δὴ λήξαντος τοῦ λοιμοῦ καὶ τῶν Σελινουντίων εὐωχουμένων ποτὲ παρὰ τῶι ποταμῶι, ἐπιφανῆναι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα· τοὺς δ' ἐξαναστάντας προσκυνεῖν καὶ προσεύχεσθαι καθαπερεὶ θεῶι. ταύτην οὖν θέλοντα βεβαιῶσαι τὴν διάληψιν εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἐναλέσθαι.

The common elements in the two anecdotes are immediately apparent; both speak of a cure, a feast, and a sacrifice. The common hostility of the two accounts is also immediately apparent in Empedocles' desire to prove himself a god; it is this desire that, in both accounts, leads to his final act of grandstanding and propels him into Etna.[96] The "cures," as we have seen, illustrate and make concrete Empedocles' interest in respiration, embryology, and the curative powers that result from control of the elements. They further embody several strands of Empedocles' philosophy and biography, his refutation of death as an absolute state (citations **30, 31,** and **32**); his control over wind and water (citation **29**); and his career as a physician/magician/champion of the people (citations **13, 14, 15, 24,** and **28**). It also provides for, and ridicules, his "fifth" career; we remember

that in citation **12,** after being prince and poet, prophet and physician, the best men go on to become gods, greatest in glory. Both accounts of his death at Etna emphasize Empedocles' determination to prove that he has reached this state. In a theatrical, vainglorious attempt to prove himself a god, he throws himself into the flames of Etna. The anecdotes of his death, then, continue to deride Empedocles' character when they speak of this desire, while they ridicule his claim in citation **10,** of having reached the final state of divinity.[97] Diogenes Laertius' epigram on the subject distills the hostility of the biographers which occasioned the story.

42. And you, Empedocles, did purify your limbs with quick
flame and drank fire from immortal bowls.
I do not say that you willingly jumped into Etna's streams,
but that, not wishing to be found out, you jumped in. (DL 8.75 = *AP* 7.123)

καὶ οὐ ποτ', Ἐμπεδόκλεις, διερῇ φλογὶ σῶμα καθήρας
πῦρ ἀπὸ κρητήρων ἔκπιες ἀθανάτων·
οὐκ ἐρέω δ' ὅτι σαυτὸν ἑκὼν βάλες ἐς ῥόον Αἴτνης,
ἀλλὰ λαθεῖν ἐθέλων ἔμπεσες οὐκ ἐθέλων. (DL 8.75 = *AP* 7.123)

With the tradition of Empedocles' jump into Etna, its method and motive compressed in Diogenes Laertius' epigram, a curious pattern begins to take shape. We have seen, in various citations, Empedocles' boasted (biographical) control over the elements. In the previous anecdotes, we have seen death by water, by earth, and, with Etna, by fire. Turning to Empedocles' work, we find a fragment that seems uncannily appropriate to these deaths. In Diogenes Laertius' text, the epigram appears shortly before his introduction to Empedocles' theory of the four elements, or roots, of all things.

43. For hear, first of all the roots of all things—
Zeus and bright-shining Hera and Aidoneus who gives life,
and Nestis too who, with her tears, moistens the mortal stream.
(fr. 6)

τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·
Ζεὺς ἀργὴς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἠδ' Ἀιδωνεύς
Νῆστίς θ', ἣ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον.

The four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, which Empedocles poetically designates using traditional divine names, are in Empedocles' system the four roots or sources of all things that exist.[98] The elements are acted upon by the opposing forces of Love and Strife; they are moved and changed and have their existence according to which force is ascendant. Another of Empedocles' fragments speaks of the changes that occur under the rule of Strife and (metaphorically) about the changes that it brings for the soul.

44. There exists Necessity's decree, an ancient resolution of the gods,
timeless, immortal, made fast by broad oath,
that, whenever one in sin defiles his limbs with bloodshed,
who quarrels and in error, makes falsely sworn his oath,
then the daimons, who have as their portion long-lasting life,
make him wander, far from the blessed gods, for thrice a thousand seasons,
being born in all sorts of mortal shapes throughout this time,
changing in turn the grievous paths of living.
For the strength of the air chases him into the ocean,
and the ocean, in its turn, spews him forth onto dry land; the earth
into the rays of glowing sun, and aether next hurl him deep into the vortex.
One after another, in turn they receive him, but all hate him.
I now am one of these, a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer,
having put my faith in mad Strife. (fr. 115)

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
ἀίδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις·
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίῃσι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μιήνῃ,
<νείκεῖ θ'> ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἁμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσῃ,
δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἴδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὖδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἠελίου φαέθοντος, ὁ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

In this fragment, the heat and fire combine to thrust the sinful wanderer deep into the vortex. In citations **40** and **41,** Empedocles' desire for divinity thrusts him deep into the heat and fire of Etna. In the deaths by land and water, citations **36** and **37,** we see that the other elements deny Empedocles' control over them and, as in citation **44,** exert their power over him; he is forced into the ocean where he drowns and to the ground where he breaks his hip and dies. In short, the elements that he describes in citation **44,** and over which he is supposed to have control in citation **29,** drive him pitilessly, as in citation **44,** to his death. What, then, of the fourth element, air? At least one biographer anticipated the question.

45. And Heraclides, after telling the story of the woman in the trance, and that Empedocles became famous for sending away living a dead woman, says that he was offering sacrifice near the field of Peisianax. Then after the feast, when some of the friends who had been invited apart to rest, some under trees in a nearby field, some where they chose, Empedocles himself remained there on the spot where he had feasted. And when it became day, he could not be found. A search was undertaken and the servants questioned, but they hadn't seen him, and then someone said that in the middle of the night he had heard a loud voice calling Empedocles. Then he had gotten up and had seen a light in the sky and a glittery flame, but nothing else. All those who heard this were amazed at what had happened, and Pausanias came down and sent the people out searching. Later, though, he ordered them to trouble themselves no more, saying that something worthy of prayer had happened, and that they ought to sacrifice to Empedocles, since he had become a god. (DL 8.67–68)

῾Ηρακλείδης [fr. 76 Voss] μὲν γὰρ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἄπνου διηγησάμενος, ὡς ἐδοξάσθη ᾽Εμπεδοκλῆ ἀποστείλας τὴν νεκρὰν ἄνθρωπον ζῶσαν, φησὶν ὅτι θυσίαν συνετέλει πρὸς τῶι Πεισιάνακτος ἀγρῶι. συνεκέκλητο δὲ τῶν φίλων τινές, ἐν οἷς καὶ Παυσανίας. εἶτα μετὰ τὴν εὐωχίαν οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι χωρισθέντες ἀνεπαύοντο, οἱ μὲν ὑπὸ τοῖς δένδροις ὡς ἀγροῦ παρακειμένου, οἱ δ᾽ ὅπηι βούλοιντο, αὐτὸς δὲ ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου ἐφ᾽ οὗπερ κατεκέκλιτο. ὡς δὲ ἡμέρας γενηθείσης ἐξανέστησαν, οὐχ ηὑρέθη μόνος. ζητουμένου δὲ καὶ τῶν οἰκετῶν ἀνακρινομένων καὶ φασκόντων μὴ εἰδέναι, εἷς τις ἔφη μέσων νυκτῶν φωνῆς ὑπερμεγέθους ἀκοῦσαι προσκαλουμένης ᾽Εμπεδοκλέα, εἶτα ἐξαναστὰς ἑωρακέναι φῶς οὐράνιον καὶ λαμπάδων φέγγος, ἄλλο δὲ μηδέν· τῶν δὲ ἐπὶ τῶι γενομένωι ἐκπλαγέντων καταβὰς ὁ Παυσανίας ἔπεμψέ τινας ζητήσοντας.

ὕστερον δὲ ἐκώλυεν πολυπραγμονεῖν, φάσκων εὐχῆς ἄξια συμβεβηκέναι καὶ θύειν αὐτῶι δεῖν καθαπερεὶ γεγονότι θεῶι.

This story, like the Etna anecdotes, occurs after a feast and sacrifice that celebrate one of Empedocles' miraculous cures. It lacks, however, the motivation offered in those anecdotes; here there is no mention of Empedocles' unworthy desire to prove himself a god. Rather, the people rise up in spontaneous worship of him when he appears. We have not vanity but apotheosis: a loud voice calling from heaven, a light in the sky, Empedocles' disappearance.[99] He has, in fact, been taken up into his fourth, bright, shining element, air, the realm of pure spirit and mind. Empedocles' philosophical system has destroyed and delivered him, and his fifth career, that of a god, has begun.

A few details make the anecdote particularly appropriate, and pleasing. His "student" Pausanias is present, the man whom Empedocles addresses in the opening statement of his work.[100] This is the man to whom Empedocles promises wisdom and understanding which far surpasses that of ordinary men, a promise fulfilled when Pausanias alone understands what has happened to his teacher. The student has taken Empedocles' lessons to heart, especially that of citation **12,** which makes the transition from mortal to immortal the final step of the five-part progression. He alone understands that Empedocles has passed into a higher sphere and is now due the honors of a god. Empedocles' disappearance into the ether gloriously asserts his refutation of death and gives new force to his theory of the mutability of the elements and the soul's progression in transmigration. His apotheosis, which glorifies the philosopher and negates the vain and theatrical gesture of the Etna anecdotes, completes the biographers' use of the four elements. Empedocles dies by water, by earth, by fire, and by air; his elemental death, like his soul's progression, is complete.

Needless to say, neither his apotheosis nor his more famous death in Etna were acceptable or even believable to all. That the strongest censure should come from the ever hostile Timaeus is no surprise. Diogenes Laertius presents Timaeus' objections and his own, which are again couched in epigrammatic form.

46. Timaeus contradicts these stories and stoutly asserts that Empedocles left for the Peloponnesus and never returned; this is the reason, he says, that he died in some obscure manner. He answers Heraclides, whom he mentions by name, in his fourteenth book: Peisianax was a citizen of

Syracuse and had no land at Acragas. Furthermore, if this story were circulating, Pausanias would have set up a monument to his friend, as to a god, in a statue or shrine, for he was a wealthy man. "How came Empedocles," says Timaeus, "to jump into the craters, when he never once mentions them, although they were not far away? He must, therefore, have died in the Peloponnesus. It is not at all surprising that his tomb is not found, the same is true of many men." (DL 8.71)

τούτοις δ' ἐναντιοῦται Τίμαιος [fr. 98 FHG I 218] ῥητῶς λέγων ὡς ἐξεχώρησεν εἰς Πελοπόννησον καὶ τὸ σύνολον οὐκ ἐπανῆλθεν· ὅθεν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν ἄδηλον εἶναι. πρὸς δὲ τὸν Ἡρακλείδην καὶ ἐξ ὀνόματος ποιεῖται τὴν ἀντίρρησιν ἐν τῇι ιδ· Συρακόσιόν τε γὰρ εἶναι τὸν Πεισιάνακτα καὶ ἀγρὸν οὐκ ἔχειν ἐν Ἀκράγαντι· Παυσανίαν τε μνημεῖον <ἂν> πεποιηκέναι τοῦ φίλου, τοιούτου διαδοθέντος λόγου, ἢ ἀγαλμάτιόν τι ἢ σηκὸν οἷα θεοῦ· καὶ γὰρ πλούσιον εἶναι. ἵπῶς οὖν, φησίν, εἰς τοὺς κρατῆρας ἥλατο ὧν οὐνεγγυς ὄν των οὐδὲ μνείαν ποτὲ ἐπεποίητο; τετελεύτηκεν οὖν ἐν Πελοποννήσωι. (72) οὐδὲν δὲ παράδοξον τάφον αὐτοῦ μὴ φαίνεσθαι· μηδὲ γὰρ ἄλλων πολλῶν.'

47. And there is a story told of Empedocles' death, that from a carriage he fell and broke his right thigh.
But if he lept into the fiery craters and drank in life,
how is it that his tomb is shown in Megara? (DL 8.75)

ναὶ μὴν Ἐμπεδοκλῆα θανεῖν λόγος ὥς ποτ' ἀμάξης
ἔκπεσε καὶ μηρὸν κλάσσατο δεξιτερόν,
εἰ δὲ πυρὸς κρητῆρας ἐσήλατο καὶ πίε τὸ ζῆν,
πῶς ἂν ἔτ' εν Μεγάροις δείκνυτο τοῦδε τάφος;

The tomb in Megara is also mentioned by Favorinus in citation **36** and speaks once again of the historical importance of the Sicilian tyrants with whom Empedocles is so strongly associated. Megara played an important part in Sicilian history, due to Gelon's repopulation of Syracuse, ca. 491 BCE. Gelon's recruitment of settlers from Megara led to its fame as an "outpost of Sicily."[101] The Megarians, no doubt, were eager to claim, and probably to show, the tomb of Sicily's most famous son. The carriage fall also mentioned in citation **36** may allude to Empedocles' "exile," as does Timaeus' claim that Empedocles died "somewhere in the Peloponnesus."[102] But Timaeus' purpose in making this statement is openly hostile. By suggesting that Empedocles' place of death in unknown, he diminishes

Empedocles' importance, especially when he reduces Empedocles to the rank of "many other men;" extraordinary men do not die "obscure deaths." Timaeus' other objections to the Etna story are petty, if valid, as Wright points out.[103] Peisianax was from Syracuse, and not from Acragas, Timaeus tells us. A valid point, but one that emphasizes the transfer of famous place names and bits of Sicilian history to the life of Empedocles. His rich student Pausanias did not set up a memorial, as would have been appropriate and expected.[104] As to the craters of Etna, Strabo long ago settled the practical question of Empedocles' immolation: it would have been impossible for Empedocles even to have approached the crater, much less have jumped into it. Timaeus' statement that the craters were not far off is rather surprising, since Etna is located some seventy miles from Acragas.[105] It is Timaeus' final objection, however, that gives the game away, revealing the biographical method at work: "How came Empedocles to jump into the craters, when he never once mentioned them?" Or, to put it another way, if Empedocles had any intention of jumping into Etna, he certainly would have mentioned Etna in his work. Since he never mentions Etna, he could not, therefore, have chosen to die there.[106] Here we have biographical logic in a nutshell: philosophers, and especially those who use the first-person "I," are in fact writing about themselves and all their statements are to be regarded and interpreted autobiographically. Therefore their deaths, every bit as much as their lives, must be apparent, discernable, and personally referenced in their work.

Empedocles, in short, lives and dies at the hands of his biographers. Every aspect of his life, and various deaths, was drawn from his philosophical works, interpreted in a biographical manner, and given concrete and anecdotal form in a biography that proceeds through standard topoi: meeting with tyrants, defending democracy, refusing to rule, helping the people, dying a suitable death. In dealing with the life of Empedocles, we, and he, are fortunate that his form of expression, poetic and highly metaphorical, allowed for a generous and usually benign interpretation and resulted in a favorable biographical tradition. Heraclitus, as we will see, was not so lucky.

TWO

HERACLITUS



Heraclitus has been a favorite subject for both ancient biographers and modern scholars, so there is a special need to separate the mysterious, dark philosopher from his mysterious, dark biography. The key point to keep in mind when considering the life, and especially the death, of this profound philosopher is the extraordinary antipathy, even hatred, that he roused in his readers and biographers. Their hostility, evident to a certain degree in the lives of all the philosophers, reaches unprecedented heights when Heraclitus dies buried in dung. To understand this death, the traditional biographical reaction to Heraclitus must be reviewed in detail, for it is the biographers' reaction to and interpretation of Heraclitus' work that account for this singular, and singularly hostile, death.

DATE AND BACKGROUND

For Heraclitus, most scholars accept the traditional floruit as given by Diogenes Laertius, from Apollodorus, as in the Sixty-Ninth Olympiad, 504/3–501/0 BCE.[1] Heraclitus was a native of Ephesus in Asia Minor, and

Diogenes Laertius gives his father's name as Bloson or Heracon.[2] Traditionally, Heraclitus was considered a member of the local ruling family through his father (DL 9.1; Strabo 14.25) but was said to have renounced his inherited kingship (DL 9.6). For this information, Diogenes Laertius draws upon Antisthenes of Rhodes, who cites the renunciation as proof of Heraclitus' "μεγαλοφροσύνη." Hicks translates this as "magnanimity;"[3] however, I doubt very much that magnanimity is what either Antisthenes or Diogenes Laertius had in mind.[4] In the earlier section of the biography, Diogenes Laertius paired μεγαλόφρων with ὑπερόπτης, which suggests a more pejorative meaning to the use of μεγαλοφρσύνη in 9.6 that Hicks supplies. "Arrogance" or "superciliousness" comes closer to the mark.[5] Diogenes Laertius is at pains throughout to illustrate that trait—call it pride, arrogance, superciliousness, haughtiness, or simple contempt—that was, to him and to others, most characteristic of Heraclitus and that was to culminate ultimately in complete misanthropy. Indeed, as Mouraview shows, the whole passage can be taken as a character study in arrogance.[6] To explore the motives of this characterizations, then, will be our first step in understanding traditional reactions to Heraclitus and to the biography these reactions produced.

THE DARK ONE OF EPHESUS

In his lives in general, Diogenes Laertius supports his biographical statements with illustrative quotations taken from his subject's work.[7] To determine the validity of his characterization, we must first determine whether the quotations he selects are accurately used and germane. He begins his life of Heraclitus as follows:

1. Heraclitus, son of Bloson or, as some say, of Heracon, was an Ephesian. He was at this height in the Sixty-Ninth Olympiad. He was arrogant beyond all men, and contemptuous, as is clear from his writings, in which he says: (DL 9.1)

Ἡράκλειτος Βλόσωνος ἢ, ὥς τινες, Ἡράκωντος Ἐφέσιος. οὗτος ἤκμαζε μὲν κατὰ τὴν ἐνάτην καὶ ἑξηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα μεγαλόφρων δὲ γέγονε παρ' ὀντιναοῦν καὶ ὑπερόπτης, ὡς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ συγγράμματος αὐτοῦ δῆλον, ἐν οἷι φησι . . .

2. Much learning does not teach wisdom, or else it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras and then again Xenophanes and Hecateus. (fr. 40) [Diogenes Laertius continues: For he has it that,]

πολυμαθίη νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὖτίς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖον.

3. A single thing is wisdom, to understand knowledge, that which guides everything everywhere (fr. 41), [and that,]

εἶναι γὰρ ἓν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὁτέη ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων.

4. Homer deserves to be chased from the [poetic] contests and beaten with a stick, and Archilochus too. (fr. 42)

τόν τε Ὅμηρον ἔφασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως.

Diogenes Laertius thus opens his biography of Heraclitus with a very general statement about Heraclitus' father and dates and moves immediately to a character study of his subject. To illustrate Heraclitus' personality and its dominant trait, arrogance, he selects three seemingly unrelated Heraclitean statements to support his opening remarks.[8] By these citations, he means to establish Heraclitus' character (his arrogance) firmly in his reader's mind. Citations **2** and **4** both censure well-known poets and philosophers; to the biographical mind, Heraclitus reveals his arrogance in these statements by showing his contempt for Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Hecateus, Homer, and Archilochus. The reason for his contempt is given in citation **3:** all these men have fallen short of the Heraclitean standard of true wisdom.[9] To Heraclitus, true wisdom, which guides the universe, lies in understanding knowledge and not merely possessing it. Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus fall short in that they had much learning rather than true knowledge. Homer and Archilochus also fall short of this standard. Heraclitus further suggests that they should be expelled from the ranks of honor that they falsely hold.

Thus it is a biographical interpretation of these fragments and their implications for Heraclitean personality, and not their philosophical intent, that interests Diogenes Laertius. He begins his biography by announcing that Heraclitus was an arrogant man (citation **1**). Proof is given through illustrative quotations. Heraclitus insultingly dismisses several well-known and highly regarded men of letters (citations **2–4**) and sets himself up as arbiter of true wisdom (as opposed to mere erudition) and sole possessor of it (citation **3**). But what of the Heraclitean and philosophical intent of these statements? If we do not, automatically, accept

this traditional characterization based on traditional, biographical interpretation of these fragments, we must instead reconstruct the thought and philosophy that underlies them. Other fragments may provide the clues for Heraclitus' thought. Since citations **2** through **4** deal with poets and philosophers, let us see what Heraclitus says elsewhere about such men.[10]

5. Of those whose discourse I have heard, none arrives at the realization that wisdom is set apart from all else. (fr. 108)

ὁκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα, οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο, ὥστε γινώσκειν ὅτι σοφόν ἐστι πάντων κεχωρισμένον.

6. For what intelligence or understanding have they? They believe in the bards of the people and use the mass as teacher, not knowing that, "Many are bad, few are good." (fr. 104)

τίς γὰρ αὐτῶν νόος ἢ φρήν; δήμων ἀοιδοῖσι πείθονται καὶ διδασκάλωι χρείωνται ὁμίλωι οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι 'οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἀγαθοί'.

Citation **6** records Heraclitus' dissatisfaction with the people, who rely upon and believe in poets and popular wisdom, without distinguishing the few good teachers from the many that are bad. Citation **5** speaks of his disenchantment with other philosophers, none of whom have arrived at the separate nature of wisdom (a statement that recalls the definition of wisdom in citation **3**). Citations **5** and **6,** then, explain the censure of poets and philosophers in citations **2** and **4.** Such men not only fail to grasp the nature of wisdom, but compound their failure by leading the people away from true wisdom (since the people cannot distinguish by themselves between good and bad poets and philosophers.)[11] The sentiments recorded in citations **2** and **4** have their basis not in arrogance, as Diogenes Laertius would have us believe, but in philosophy. Heraclitus reproaches these men for their philosophical failings and for teaching false wisdom to the people. The separate nature of wisdom (i.e., wisdom that is personal and unique, separate from popular or cultural belief),[12] defined in citation **3** and elucidated in citation **5,** is his example of one way in which they fail. Heraclitus speaks not from contempt or arrogance, as Diogenes Laertius would have us believe, but from a philosophical and perhaps even didactic point of view. An objective reader, one who has no traditional or popular view to uphold, could as easily find in these fragments concern for the people, as contempt for others.

Diogenes Laertius continues his characterization of the arrogant philosopher by more illustrative quotation in the next section, 9.2, which begins:

7. Insolence, more than a fire, must be extinguished (fr. 43) [and]

ὕβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν.

8. The people should fight for their laws, as for their walls (fr. 44)

μάχεσθαι χρὴ τὸν δῆμον ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου ὅκωσπερ τείχεος.

Heraclitus, as an arrogant man, here censures other people's insolence, further proving Diogenes Laertius' characterization. Citation **7** thus fits nearly into the scheme so far; people in their insolence think to possess the truth and even lead others astray with their version of it and for this they should be censured. It does, however, require some leap in thought from the personal and specific of the preceding citation **4** (Homer and Archilochus should be beaten and banished) to the impersonal and general of citation **7** (insolence really should be done away with.) But what of citation 8? The relationship that Diogenes Laertius makes between arrogance, insolence, and the defense of one's walls is not immediately apparent; it seems neither particularly applicable to the people of citations **2** and **4,** nor logically or philosophically to fit with the thought of citation **7.** It is, nonetheless, important for Diogenes Laertius' characterization, for citation **8** brings in the first suggestion of the misanthropy for which Heraclitus was notorious. The citation thus broadens the characterization and paves the way to demonstrate Heraclitus' arrogance and contempt for the common people as well as for men of letters.[13] The fragment, with its explicit concern for the law, is read as an implicit criticism of "the people" (in that the people were thought to dismiss or ignore the law[14]), and so is included by association with Heraclitus' arrogance rather than by any logical or philosophical context.[15] There is no real relationship between citations **7** and **8,** despite the way Diogenes Laertius connects them, save the association, based upon Heraclitus' arrogance, that exists in his own mind and that he obliquely presents to the reader.[16]

Heraclitus, as it happens, was said to have enjoyed bad relationships with a specific group of common people, his fellow citizens the Ephesians. Diogenes Laertius introduces the philosopher's antipathy towards them as 9.2 continues. Immediately after citation **8,** he tells us that

9. And he also attacks the Ephesians for banishing his friend Hermodorus, where he says (DL 9.2):

καθάπτεται δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἐφεσίων ἐπὶ τῶι τὸν ἑταῖρον ἐκβαλεῖν Ἑρμόδωρον, ἐν οἷς φησιν . . .

10. All the Ephesians, from the young men upward, should hang themselves, and leave the city to the beardless youths, those who banished Hermodorus who was the best man among them, saying, "Let there be none among us who is best, and if there should be such a one, let him go elsewhere and live with others." (fr. 121)[17]

ἄξιον Ἐφεσίοις ἡβηδὸν ἀπάγξασθαι πᾶσι καὶ τοῖς ἀνήβοις τὴν πόλιν καταλιπεῖν, οἵτινες Ἑρμόδωρον ἄνδρα ἑωυτῶν ὀνήιστον ἐξέβαλον φάντες· ἡμέων μηδὲ εἷς ὀνήιστος ἔστω, εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλη τε καὶ μετ᾽ ἄλλων.

Now, to assess Diogenes Laertius' assessment of Heraclitus' relationship with the Ephesians, we must reconstruct that relationship as far as possible. Traditional sources tell us that Heraclitus was a member of the local ruling family at Ephesus and that he renounced his hereditary kingships in favor of his brother.[18] Renouncing a kingship might indicate disdain for one's subject and so arrogance or misanthropy, but as a biographical topos that occurs for several other philosophers as well,[19] it cannot be taken as evidence either for an actual renunciation, because of Heraclitus' dislike of the Ephesians, or for his arrogance generally. Even if one assumes that Heraclitus did play some part in his city's political life, as, again, so many other philosophers are said to have done,[20] it is still unnecessary to consider citation **10** as factual in regard to the political life of the city or Heraclitus' personality.[21] While I do not think we need accept either Diogenes Laertius' remarks or the fragment itself as proof of Heraclitus' antipathy for the Ephesians, I do think Diogenes Laertius had a particular purpose for including both, as we will see.

After indicating Heraclitus' contempt for his townspeople in citations **9** and **10,** Diogenes Laertius gives an anecdotal example of it.

11. And being asked to make laws for them, he scornfully refused, because the city was already ruled by a bad constitution. Withdrawing to the temple of Artemis, he played knucklebones with the children. Then, to the Ephesians who had gathered around him, he said, "Why, worst of all men,

do you marvel? It is not better to do this than to play politics with you?" (9.3–4)

ἀξιούμενος δὲ καὶ νόμους θεῖναι πρὸς αὐτῶν ὑπερεῖδε διὰ τὸ ἤδη κεκρατῆσθαι τῆι πονηρᾶι πολιτείαι τὴν πόλιν. ἀναχωρήσας δὲ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος μετὰ τῶν παίδων ἠστραγάλιζεν· περιστάντων δ' αὐτὸν τῶν Ἐφεσίων, 'τί, ὦ κάκιστοι, θαυμάζετε;' εἶπεν· 'ἢ οὐ κρεῖττον τοῦτο ποιεῖν ἢ μεθ' ὑμῶ πολιτεύεσθαι;'

A good story, like so many in Diogenes Laertius: witty, a bit malicious, and wonderfully to the point.[22] But the better the anecdote, the more guarded our response to it should be, for they usually are too good to be true. Given our basic premise, that the biographers systematically create biography from their subject's philosophy, we expect to find the source of this story somewhere in Heraclitus' work. And, in fact, his collected statements contain not one but several fragments suitable for such an incident.

12. Time is a child playing dice; the kingdom is in the hands of a child. (fr. 52)

αἰὼν παῖς ἐστι παίζων, πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἡ βασιληίη.

13. Children's playthings are men's conjectures. (fr. 70)

παίδων ἀθύρματα νενόμικεν εἶναι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δοξάσματα.

The citations have in common a single motif, children, with whom men and their actions are unfavorably compared.[23] Heraclitus suggests that the very substance of the people's concerns is childish and impermanent (citations **13**), as does his disparaging analysis of political matters and of those who participate in them (citation **12**). The Ephesians' concerns about politics specifically seem dismissed as the ephemeral sport of children.

Diogenes Laertius intends this anecdote to be the summary and demonstration of all his earlier statements about Heraclitus' arrogance.[24] He began with general examples of Heraclitus' character, by quoting citations **2** and **4,** Heraclitus' censure of poets and philosophers, and then by citation **3,** Heraclitus' claims to a unique understanding of the nature of wisdom. In the next sections Diogenes Laertius became less general; he broadened his characterization of Heraclitus as arrogant with citation **7,**

and used citation **8** to demonstrate Heraclitus' contempt for 'the people,'[25] and also to introduce the trait of misanthropy, which he then directs, quite specifically, towards the Ephesians in citations **9** and **10.** To his mind, Diogenes Laertius has provided evidence not only for his characterizations through illustrative quotations, but also context for his anecdote, by citation **8,** which concerns law, and citation **10,** with its diatribe against the Ephesians. The associations behind citations **7** and **8** is then clear; they are intended to supply the background for the anecdote which he gives as summary. But before all these came citations **12** and **13;** it was the work of Heraclitus which provided the initial impetus for the anecdote.

Using citations **12** and **13** as their starting point, the biographers created this spiteful, if amusing little story of children and the law, which Diogenes Laertius uses to concretize his discussion of Heraclitus' personality by presenting this final example of the philosopher's arrogance and hateful pride.[26] The anecdote gives yet another example of the biographical method and the biographer's knack for turning philosophy into biography. Like the material that precedes it, however, it contains little, if any evidence for the actual character or life of Heraclitus.[27]

Melancholy, like arrogance, was much associated with Heraclitus; by the Roman period he was known as the "weeping philosopher."[28] This gloomy reputation was the result of a slow but steady stream of genuine misinterpretation, genuine and deliberate misunderstanding, and genuine, if hostile frustration. His sobriquet has been deemed "completely trivial"[29] by modern scholars, but it was a favored biographical and satirical characterization, not least because it fit so well with Heraclitus' other generally admitted biographical traits of arrogance, misanthropy, willful obscurity, and obdurate silence.[30] Heraclitus' morose reputation is, of course, his own fault; it stems from various reactions to a single one of his notorious propositions:

14. For, it is impossible to step twice in the same river. (fr. 91)

ποταμῶι γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι δὶς τῶι αὐτῶι.

The fragment is typically Heraclitean in that a profound truth is couched in everyday language. The mundane image of the river makes the thought at once extraordinary and familiar, a (common)sense perception that can be apprehended only by a knowledgeable soul.[31]

Here Heraclitus speaks of the change or flux that both governs and

defines existence. The river is at once changing and the same, embodying both flux and permanence. The water changes (exchanges its water) yet retains its identity as the river. The river's existence or identity persists through its change, as Kirk points out, in this carefully balanced, measured exchange of water.[32]

Other philosophers, both early and late, play an integral part in the misrepresentation of philosophical thought leading to biographical characterizations of Heraclitus. An important early misinterpretation of the statement (citation **14**) was Plato, who seems here as elsewhere to have deliberately misrepresented Heraclitus' intention.[33] His error, if we may call it that, was one of emphasis; his paraphrase of the fragment, that "everything flows," stresses movement and change, but loses sight of the permanence and identity inherent in the original statement.[34] In this Platonic interpretation, the Heraclitean statement on change and identity becomes one of change alone, that all things flow like rivers. In the *Cratylus,* where Plato plays upon and with the idea of Heraclitean flux, he uses humor to disparage the idea by comparing flux, and those who believe in it, to people suffering the symptoms of catarrh. Catarrh, an inflammation of the mucous membranes, manifests itself in a runny nose and watering eyes, the same symptoms associated with crying. Presumably both eyes and nose are flowing like rivers.[35] Thus Heraclitus, his theory, and his followers, are all humorously dismissed, likened to men crying.

The next step in Heraclitus' rather dismal reputation was provided by another philosopher, Aristotle's[36] student Theophrastus who, frustrated by either Heraclitus' text or its content,[37] declared the work to be the result of "melancholy." He did not, however, mean the depressed state that some modern and many ancient readers associate melancholy, but rather the nervous excitability or impetuous temperament that Aristotle describes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. "Melancholics" are those who "by their impetuousness cannot wait on reason, because they pursue their imaginative fancies."[38]

Heraclitus' reputation for despondency and weeping, then, depends first upon a Platonic misunderstanding of citation **14,** which introduces the idea of the flux, and even more strongly upon the deliberate, albeit humorous, misinterpretation of the same citation, in which believers of the flux are compared to people with catarrh, in which "everything flows." This characterization was augmented and furthered by Theophrastus. Given Plato's comic image of the "flowing" (weeping) philosopher and Aristotle's comments on the effects of melancholy, Theophrastus' statement

was too good for the biographers to pass up. Heraclitus as the "weeping philosopher" worked all too well. Not only did it fit with Diogenes Laertius' general assessment of his character, it also made an easily identifiable caricature, one that would serve as a perfect foil to the other extreme, the "laughing philosopher" Democritus.[39] This simplification and characterization, the making of "types," was an integral part of the biographical approach and typically finds humorous expression. The biographers, working for comic effect and from intellectual hostility, seek to reduce philosophers and whole philosophical systems to a series of comic caricatures.[40]

Heraclitus' biographical character, once firmly established, was further projected onto his working methods and his work itself. The tradition of a morose and misanthropic Heraclitus goes hand in hand with a reputation for obdurate silence. His silence is the subject of two anecdotes from three authors, Plutarch, Themistius, and Diogenes Laertius. Plutarch and Themistius contribute the story of Heraclitus' advice to the Ephesians who, despite Heraclitus' adverse feelings towards them, constantly seek him out. Here, they ask Heraclitus' opinion on unity in wartime. In reply, Heraclitus mixes together barley and water, stirs it thoroughly, and drinks it, without once uttering a word. Plutarch tells us that this was to demonstrate to the other Ephesians both the need to put aside their desire for wealth and the importance of unity of the city. Furthermore, the anecdote was to demonstrate to Plutarch's readers the viability of nonverbal communication.[41]

This rather odd anecdote shows how cleverly the biographers combined original sources with ready-made motifs and models. First, the biographers drew upon the well-established topos of the philosopher who helps his city during a time of crisis,[42] which they then individualized using Heraclitus' own work. There is an odd little fragment that states:

15. The mixed drink separates, too, if not stirred. (fr. 125)

καὶ ὁ κυκεὼν διίσταται <μὴ> κινούμενος.

The "mixed drink," the *kykeon,* is an offering of wine, grated cheese, and barley. It separates into its component parts and loses its unity unless swirled or stirred together. The fragment was obviously taken and made concrete to produce the anecdote about Heraclitus and the Ephesians. As Kirk points out, stirring the drink is irrelevant to the story but specifically mentioned by Plutarch to further make his point.[43] The anecdote further

emphasizes Heraclitus' contempt and hostility to his fellow citizens for their desire for wealth, a point that has no part of the original fragment, but again, stems from the topos by which all philosophers must disdain wealth and earthly goods and that, again, is emphasized by Plutarch. A second rather suspect fragment that speaks pointedly about the dangerous wealth of the Ephesians also comes into play.

16. May wealth not desert you, men of Ephesus, that you be convicted of your wrongdoing. (fr. 125a)

μὴ ἐπιλίποι ὑμᾶς πλοῦτος, ἔφη, Ἐφέσιοι, ἵν' ἐξελέγχοισθε πονηρευόμενοι.

The fragment is all too pointed. Biography, in this case, has provided more than a reaction to the philosopher's work; it has augmented the work by creating a false fragment.[44] We are used, by now, to seeing biography that is generated from the text, but here we see the reverse process: text has been generated from the biography. At some point, this anecdotal, biographical statement ("May wealth not desert you.") crept into the text and became accepted, an addition that authors such as Kirk and Wilamovitz later questioned and rejected.

Once we put the pieces of the mixed-drink anecdote together, two points emerge. First, by combining biographical elements of Heraclitus' work and character (such as reference to an authentic fragment, citation **15;** Heraclitus' general contempt for his fellow citizens; and his refusal to speak generally or to those citizens specifically or to take their concerns seriously) with several biographical topoi ready to hand (such as the philosopher's disdain for wealth; the philosopher who aids the state in time of crisis; and a silent version of the philosopher's bon mot),[45] we see how easily an illustrative anecdote is built upon a single fragment. Second, once the anecdote and its foundation fragment of the mixed drink were in place and accepted, an elaborated, second statement against wealth found its way into the text, winning at least limited acceptance.

Heraclitus' silence, his refusal to speak, found great play in the biography. Diogenes Laertius gives us a second anecdotal example of it as follows: When a man asked why Heraclitus was silent, Heraclitus replied, "So that you may chatter" (DL 9.12). For a quiet man, Heraclitus was surprisingly adept at repartee; in fact, philosophers in general had a gift for one-liners that Aristophanes himself would envy. These clever retorts are

so typical of philosophical biography that they make up the topos of the philosophical bon mot.[46] Philosophers, inevitably, say the right thing at the right time and Diogenes Laertius makes it a point to include as many as these remarks as possible. Often even he admits that such replies are attributed to more than one philosopher, which brings them close to the type of free-floating or transferred anecdote. The example here would certainly fit many philosophers and many situations.[47] In other instances, such remarks and gestures specifically reflect a particular aspect of the philosopher's work, as does Heraclitus' symbolic gesture, or Anaxagoras' remarks about his "native land."[48] Both the anecdotes about Heraclitus, while falling generally into the bon mot topos, also specially emphasize a particular aspect of Heraclitus' character, his refusal to speak, which supports other reports of his churlish, morose behavior and, like arrogance and misanthropy, is inferred from his work. The fragments that make this character trait possible are the following:

17. They know neither how to listen or how to speak. (fr. 19)

ἀκοῦσαι οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι οὐδ' εἰπεῖν.

18. Let us not, about the greatest things, conjecture at random. (fr. 47)

μὴ εἰκῆ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων συμβαλλώμεθα.

19. The foolish man, at every work, is apt to be a-flutter. (fr. 87)

βλὰξ ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ παντὶ λόγωι ἐπτοῆσθαι φιλεῖ.

20. The eyes are more exact witnesses than the ears. (fr. 101a)

ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες.

In each of these fragments, Heraclitus rebukes idle (philosophical) chatter and indicates the inadequacy of speech and hearing.[49] The biographers, however, saw in these fragments stern reproaches from a silent, misanthropic man, and shaped his biographical character, and the anecdotes that illustrate it, accordingly.[50] The anecdotes themselves, however, should not be taken as evidence for either a habitual refusal to speak or for a nonverbal method of communication, teaching, or composition.[51] Like the report of his melancholy, these two anecdotes of willful, critical silence were created from his work and probably for a comic as well as illustrative effect. Both,

under closer scrutiny, fall into pieces and reveal nothing about Heraclitus, but a great deal about the biographical method and its dangers.

This biographical method was extended not only to Heraclitus' personal character, but to the character of his work as well.[52] Not surprisingly, his methods and motives in writing are also seen to proceed from arrogance and misanthropy, and pertinent fragments are twisted to yield their biographical evidence. Diogenes Laertius begins his discussion of Heraclitus' work, theories, and method of investigations, with the passage that begins:

21. He was exceptional from childhood, for when he was young, he declared he knew nothing, but when he was old, that he knew everything. He was no one's pupil, but said that he had searched himself (fr. 101) and learned everything from himself. Sotion, however, says that some people say he was Xenophanes' pupil. . . . (DL 9.5)

γέγονε δὲ θαυμάσιος ἐκ παίδων, ὅτε καὶ νέος ὢν ἔφασκε μηδὲν εἰδέναι, τέλειος μέντοι γενόμενος πάντα ἐγνωκέναι. ἤκουσέ τε οὐδενός, ἀλλ' αὑτὸν ἔφη διζήσασθαι καὶ μαθεῖν πάντα παρ' ἑαυτοῦ. Σωτίων δέ φησιν εἰρηκέναι τινὰς Ξενοφάνους αὐτὸν ἀκηκοέναι·

Several biographical topoi come into play here. First and generally, the phrase that Heraclitus was "exceptional from youth" is a telling one in the biographical world, for signs of adult genius are almost always manifested in the subject's biographical youth. These tokens of future greatness are typical of philosophers as well as poets; bees sat upon the lips of Plato as upon Pindar's.[53] Further, the biographer typically uses childhood or youth to characterize the subject's adult nature. In this case, Heraclitus, having been exceptional in youth, would naturally be exceptional as an adult.[54]

Next, in this passage Diogenes Laertius veers from his usual track to emphasize the unusually misanthropic nature of his subject; his routine standard now calls for a discussion of the subject's teachers.[55] Here, however, the only discussion is Diogenes Laertius' insistence that Heraclitus had no teacher, a statement we will consider in depth. Diogenes Laertius makes only a casual mention of another source that makes Heraclitus the student of Xenophanes. In this reputed relationship, we see a further example of the biographical method, the equation of literary or philosophical influence with an actual student/teacher relationship.[56] The assertion of such a relationship stems from the general biographical tendency to make

the intellectual concrete, in a particularized manner. In some rare cases, the assertion may seek to promote the legitimacy of the student by his association with a famous teacher.[57] In most cases, however, the assertion seeks to demolish the legitimacy[58] of the student, the teacher, or both, by either invalidating the philosophical claims of one or suggesting a rather more intimate relationship between the two. A collaborative intellectual/literary relationship is sometimes suggested, but the more common allegation is that a romantic relationship existed between the two.[59] In Heraclitus' case, the assertion is most certainly not romantic.[60] Yet Heraclitus' philosophical legitimacy could neither be enhanced nor weakened by association with Xenophanes. Heraclitus, as man and philosopher, occupied a unique and solitary place in the ancient world. However, in terms of literary and philosophical influence, Heraclitus and Xenophanes are connected through their criticism of Pythagoras, Homer, and Hesiod,[61] which most likely accounts for the biographical bond between them. The bond, however, is intellectual and not personal. Xenophanes' work may indeed have influenced Heraclitus' work (in criticism of metempsychosis, popular mythology, traditional theology, and religious practice),[62] but it is almost impossible that Heraclitus studied with Xenophanes in person. Their shared criticism, then, is the basis of their rumored association, and the tradition of Heraclitus as Xenophanes' student, weak to begin with, is more than adequately explained by this common philosophical bond.

Diogenes Laertius, on the other hand, is quite insistent that Heraclitus was no one's student, a point well worth noting; his solitary and teacherless state is further proof of his eccentricity, egotism, arrogance, and misanthropy.[63] Furthermore, the claim of being no one's student arises from the extraordinary statement that as a child Heraclitus said he knew nothing but as an adult claimed to know everything.

Here, in quite specific manner, the biographers are playing upon Heraclitus' frequent comparisons of men and children (see citations **12** and **13,** for example), by comparing his childish wisdom in knowing nothing to his adult folly of claiming to know everything. With this statement, Diogenes Laertius again reverses a standard topos, that the subject's childish nature reveals in embryo his adult character. Heraclitus has, in fact, fallen from his childish state of grace, in which he was aware that he knew nothing, by his arrogant adult claim in knowing everything. Diogenes Laertius thereby emphasizes the unusual, indeed unnatural, character of his subject by this statement. He compounds Heraclitus' arrogant nature by implicit and immediate comparison with the greatest and most humble

of philosophers, whose greatest claim to wisdom, knowledge, and virtue was to know that he did not know.[64] The claim to know everything, on the other hand, reinforces the portrait of Heraclitus as a man completely molded, motivated, and finally blinded by arrogance. The words that Diogenes Laertius quotes and by which he condemns Heraclitus deserve our special attention.

22. I searched into myself. (fr. 101)

ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν.

Although the fragment, as we have seen, is first used to prove that Heraclitus had no teachers and is given as further evidence of his arrogant and misanthropic nature, Heraclitus, of course, had something quite different in mind. He was, in fact, speaking about his method of philosophical speculation and inquiry, which leads directly to his work and its composition.

The source of Heraclitean cosmic wisdom does not lie in "random speculation" or "idle chatter," as we saw from citations **17, 18,** and **19.** Nor can it arise from knowledge that comes secondhand from others, as we saw from Heraclitus' distrust of poets and other philosophers, in citations **2** through **6.** Nor, surprisingly (given Diogenes Laertius' many assertions of his subject's arrogance), does it arise from Heraclitus himself, for as he tells us:

23. Having listened not to me but to the Logos, it is wise to agree that all are one. (fr. 50)

οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι.

Although here Heraclitus emphatically disclaims to be the source of wisdom, he does indicate how those who seek it must proceed. For Heraclitus, the path to wisdom is at once obscure, mundane, and mystically, profoundly simple: true wisdom is the result of personal enlightenment, which alone can achieve illumination of mind and soul. Wisdom consists of knowledge not of the common or wide-ranging kind that Heraclitus condemns, but of a specific kind: understanding of the Logos. This knowledge comes only to an enlightened, wakened soul,[65] and in citation **22,** "I searched into myself," Heraclitus indicates how to pursue it.

He cannot, however, explain it. Knowledge can come only from within. Secondhand knowledge, even if it were to come from Heraclitus and not from Pythagoras, Hesiod, Homer, or any other of the accepted teachers, would still be secondhand and therefore worthless. As philosopher and teacher, Heraclitus can only hint at or allude to the Logos and how one finds it; to explain the method is to destroy all chance of attaining its reward. The necessity of personal investigation is put forth in citation **22** and the source of cosmic wisdom is stated in citation **23.** Both, furthermore, speak of Heroclitus' opposition to traditional, taught wisdom and traditional methods of philosophical investigation.[66] Citation **22,** "I searched into myself," far from reinforcing Diogenes Laertius' portrait of Heraclitus as an arrogant man, brings to light a vastly different man, one of strict intellectual and personal honesty, and his earnest, if necessarily limited, attempt to help others achieve true knowledge and understanding of the Logos.

Diogenes Laertius does return briefly to the arrogance with which he began his characterization, but he does so in order to introduce Heraclitus' work. It is therefore to his introduction, and Heraclitus' work, that we now turn.

THE DARKENED PATH

Like so much else in his life, information about Heraclitus' philosophical work is clouded by obscurity and legend. Diogenes Laertius presents his knowledge of "the book"[67] and some general comments on the work.

24. The book which passes as his is, to judge from its content, 'On Nature.' It is divided into three parts: one of the universe, one political, and one theological. (DL 9.5–6)

τὸ δὲ φερόμενον αὐτοῦ βιβλίον ἐστὶ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ συνέχοντος Περὶ φύσεως, διήρηται δὲ εἰς τρεῖς λόγους, εἵς τε τὸν περὶ τοῦ παντὸς καὶ πολιτικὸν καὶ θεολογικόν.

25. Among these [commentators on the work], Diodotus the grammarian says that the work is not on nature, but a political work, the natural parts serving only as example and illustration (DL 9.15)

τῶν δὲ γραμματικῶν Διόδοτος, ὃς οὔ φησι περὶ φύσεως εἶναι τὸ σύγγραμμα, ἀλλὰ περὶ πολιτείας, τὰ δὲ περὶ φύσεως ἐν παραδείγματος εἴδει κεῖσθαι.

26. Diodotus [calls it] "a rudder unerring for the rule of life," while others, a guide for the conduct for the [whole] world, for one and all alike. (DL 9.12)

Διόδοτος δὲ ἀκριβὲς οἰάκισμα πρὸς στάθμην βίου, ἄλλοι γνώμον' ἠθῶν, τρόπου κόσμον ἕνα τῶν ξυμπάντων.

The title of the book given by Diogenes Laertius in citation **24,** *On Nature*, was a general, catch-all title for early philosophical treatises of all sorts; as a title for Heraclitus' work, it means little or nothing.[68] The three divisions of the work given in citation **24** (cosmological, political, and theological) are mere standard subdivisions of Stoic philosophical categories and depend upon literary canons established long after Heraclitus was active.[69] Diodotus' characterization of the work as a "guide for the conduct . . . for one and all alike,' (citation **26**), recalls and probably simply paraphrases Heraclitus' characterization of wisdom as a "single thing . . . which guides everything everywhere" (citation **3**). Clearly the function, and even the category of the work (physics, logic, ethics, or politics?) perplexed readers early on.

The title, divisions, function, and character of the work, as Diogenes Laertius presents them, does little to clarify knowledge of the work. Reactions to Heraclitus' work, which he also includes, are perhaps more revealing.

27. Seleucos the grammarian says that a person named Croton relates in his book *The Diver* that Crates first brought Heraclitus' book into Greece. And he says that it needed a Delian diver not to be drowned in it.[70] Some title it, 'The Muses,' others, 'On Nature,' and Diodotus calls it 'a rudder precise for the rule of life,' and others, a guide for behavior, a rule for [all] the world, for one and all alike. (DL 9.12)

Σέλευκος μέντοι φησὶν ὁ γραμματικὸς Κρότωνά τινα ἱστορεῖν ἐν τῶι Κατακολυμβητῆι Κράτητά τινα πρῶτον εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα κομίσαι τὸ βιβλίον). καὶ εἰπεῖν Δηλίου τινὸς δεῖσθαι κολυμβητοῦ, ὃς οὐκ ἀποπνιγήσεταιἐν αὐτῶι. ἐπιγράφουσι δὲ αὐτῶι οἱ μὲν Μούσας, οἱ δὲ Περὶ φύσεως, Διόδοτος δὲ ἀκριβὲς οἰάκισμα πρὸς στάθμην βίου, ἄλλοι γνώμον' ἠθῶν, τρόπου κόσμον ἕνα τῶν ξυμπάντων.

28. Theophrastus says that it is because of impulsiveness that some of what he wrote is half-finished, while other parts are mixed this way and that. (DL 9.6)

Θεόφραστος δέ φησιν ὑπὸ μελαγχολίας τὰ μὲν ἡμιτελῆ, τὰ δὲ ἄλλοτε ἄλλως ἔχοντα γράψαι.

29. This book he deposited in the temple of Artemis and according to some, deliberately made very obscure, so that [only] those able might approach it, and that it might not, by mass reading, be held in contempt. Timon writes of him also, saying, 'Among them arose cuckoo-ing, mob-hating Heraclitus the riddler.' (DL 9.6)

ἀνέθηκε δ' αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερόν, ὡς μέν τινες, ἐπιτηδεύσας ἀσαφέστερον γράψαι, ὅπως οἱ δυνάμενοι [μόνοι] προσίοιεν αὐτῶι καὶ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ δημώδους εὐκαταφρόνητον ᾖι. τοῦτον δὲ καὶ ὁ Τίμων [fr. 43 D.] ὑπογράφει λέγων· 'τοῖς δ' ἔνι κοκκυστὴς ὀχλολοίδορος Ἡράκλειτος αἰνικτὴς ἀνόρουσε'.

Seleucos' comment in citation **27,** that the book needed a skilled (i.e., Delian) diver not to drown in it, refers quite obviously to the celebrated obscurity of Heraclitus' work. Attribution of the remark to these two sources, Crates and Socrates, suggests a comic source for the remark; its iambic meter supports a dramatic origin.[71] The ultimate source of the joke, of course, is to be found in Heraclitus' work, and most likely to the fragment that states:

30. You could not in your going find the ends of the soul, though you traveled the whole way; so deep is its Logos. (fr. 45)

ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο, πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.

The metaphor of the Delian diver, then, would be a periphrasis of the unplumbable depths of souls and the Logos, its imagery, like that of Diodotus' helm or rudder, an illusion to Heraclitus' constant association with water.[72] This association, the result of the widespread influence of the flux of citation **14,** also underlies the remark about the Delian diver, while its dual attribution and iambic meter speak to a comic source. For while nothing is now known about Croton or his book *The Diver,* their mention here, along with Seleucos and Crates, may provide context and connection to Heraclitus' theory of the flux. This Seleucos is perhaps not the Seleucos Homericus who wrote about philosophers and whom Diogenes Laertius quotes elsewhere, but rather that Seleucos of Seleucia who,

in opposition to Crates, wrote a reply to a Crates of Mallos, in which he discussed the movement of the tides.[73] Strabo tells us that in this work, Seleucos examines the inequalities in flux and reflux that he had discovered in the Red Sea.[74] It seems quite likely that, in a book about water, tides, and flux, Heraclitus' theories would have come into play and that pertinent quotations of the work may have played a part.[75]

The remark about the Delian diver, here attributed to Croton, however, is also attributed by Diogenes Laertius to Socrates. In 9.22 in his life of Socrates, Diogenes Laertius tells us that it was Euripides who gave the work to Socrates who, besides making the remark about the Delian diver, is also said to have said, "That which I understood is excellent, and, I think, that part too, which I didn't." Euripides' gift, and especially Socrates' playful opinion, are also telling reactions to the work and must be discussed.

Euripides was the poet most often and most typically associated with philosophers,[76] and so his gift of a philosophical text, especially that of Heraclitus, as we will see, is well in keeping with his biographical tradition. Here, the association between a conflated Socrates/Plato figure and Heraclitus, as discussed earlier in connection with citations **21** and **22,** leads to a representational anecdote, in which stock characters meet as representatives of literary genres or philosophical schools.[77] Thus the literary/philosophical ties between Plato (via Socrates) and Heraclitus are neatly explained and given concrete form, the poetry meets philosophy through Euripides' gift. Socrates' opinion is characteristic and telling, not only for reactions to Heraclitus' work, but also for his own biography, where the comment is in fact placed. For Socrates, in a neat play on words,[78] confesses both to what he knows and to what he does not, an apt statement for one whose fame rests, in part, on what he does not know. Citation **27,** moreover, provides a further link in the association between Heraclitus and Socrates/Plato, with the alternative title of Heraclitus' book as *The Muses.* The title comes from a passage in Plato's *Sophist,* in which he discusses archaic philosophy and refers to the theory of the unity of opposites, first put forth by an "Ionian Muse."[79]

Moving to citation **29,** the act of depositing or dedicating a book cannot be taken as proof of either the book's existence or of the act, for such dedications comprise another biographical topos; similar stories are recorded for both Crantor and Hesiod, for example.[80] The imputed motives of this particular dedication, however, arise from Heraclitus' particular biographical character and speak both of his alleged hostility toward

the people and of the studied obscurity of his style. Kirk translates ὅπως οἱ δυνάμενοι [μόνοι] as "so that only those in power" and interprets it to mean "only those upper classes might have access to it." Furthermore he suggests that the idea of making it inaccessible to the common people is a reaction to those fragments in which Heraclitus treats "the people" with contempt,[81] a charge that we, however, must continue to evaluate. Kirk also points out that there may have been an etiological motive to the story: the 356 BCE fire that destroyed the temple would also have destroyed the book, thus explaining the lack of a complete text.[82]

On the other hand, the charge of deliberate obscurity in citation **29** is found by many to be incontestable.[83] And if by obscure, commentators meant that Heraclitus deliberately employed "riddles, paradoxes, wordplay, ambiguity, and analogy,"[84] to produce, "linguistic density . . . and resonance,"[85] to deliberately provoke the reader to greater exertion in a manner often deemed prophetic or oracular, then with this I agree.[86] However, Heraclitus' style, even if we admit its obscurity as here defined, is not the result of either misanthropy, as citation **29** suggests, or of melancholy, as citation **28** asserts.[87] Although fragments examined earlier may enable Heraclitus' reader to believe that the stylistic devices arose directly from his dislike of humanity, I think rather that Heraclitus deliberately perfected the mysterious, gnomic style he praises in the following fragment.

31. The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor hides, but indicates. (fr. 93)

ὁ ἄναξ, οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.

Heraclitus not only admires the oracular style of delivery, but recommends it; this studied ambiguity is, I think, celebrated and alluded to in the Delian diver comment. For just as the prophecies of the Delian or Delphic god are at once obscure and darkly clear, so too are the workings of the Logos and Heraclitus' remarks on it.[88] And therefore citation **31,** like citation **30** that speaks of the unplumbable depths of the soul, played its part in the formation of the Croton-Seleucos-Crates remark of citation **27** and gives us both model and motive for Heraclitus' style.

It seems, then, that at least one part of Diogenes Laertius' report on Heraclitus' book in citation **29** is correct, that he "deliberately made [it]

very obscure." Correct, that is, in its substance, but mistaken in its imputed motives, for Heraclitus' aim was not to keep it, intellectually or physically, from "the people." The work is deliberate and ambiguous, at once simple and profound, lucid and dark, obscurely shining. Heraclitus deliberately speaks with the cryptic half-light of oracular pronouncement, the better to emulate the oracular style he admires.

Finally, Timon's remarks in citation **29** reflect the hostility, discussed in earlier sections, that Heraclitus' work awoke in so many of his readers and critics. The description of him as "mob-hating" is drawn from those fragments that refer to humankind in less than flattering terms, quite in line with Diogenes Laertius' characterization of him as proud and arrogant. The term *riddler* quite clearly refers to Heraclitus' chosen oracular style, and Timon gives voice to what was clearly the common reaction to Heraclitus and his work.

DEATH BY DUNG

We come at last to the death of Heraclitus, succinctly presented by Diogenes Laertius.

32. Finally, he became a misanthrope and going apart by himself in the mountains, lived feeding on grasses and herbs. When, however, this gave him dropsy, he went back down to the city and in riddling manner asked the physicians if they could, after heavy rains, create drought. When they did not understand, he buried himself in a cow-shed, hoping that the heat of the dung would draw out the water. Achieving nothing by this, though, he died, having lived for sixty years . . . and Hermippus says that he asked the doctors if one could, by emptying the intestines, make water pour out. However, when they said this was impossible, he stretched himself out in the sun and ordered boys to plaster him over with dung. He stayed there, stretched out, and the next day died and was buried in the agora. And Neanthes of Cyzicus says that, unable to tear away the dung, he remained there and, unrecognized because of it, was devoured by dogs. (DL 9.3–4)

καὶ τέλος μισανθρωπήσας καὶ ἐκπατήσας ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι διητᾶτο, πόας σιτούμενος καὶ βοτάνας. καὶ μέντοι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο περιτραπεὶς εἰς ὕδερον κατῆλθεν εἰς ἄστυ καὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν αἰνιγματωδῶς ἐπυνθάνετο, εἰ δύναιντο ἐξ ἐπομβρίας αὐχμὸν ποιῆσαι· τῶν δὲ μὴ συνιέντων, αὐτὸν εἰς βούστασιν κατορύξας τῆι τῶν βολίτων ἀλέαι ἤλπισεν ἐξατμισθήσεσθαι.

οὐδὲν δὲ ἀνύων οὐδ' οὕτως ἐτελεύτα βιοὺς ἔτη ἑξήκοντα. Ἕρμιππος [FHG III 42 fr. 28] δέ φησι λέγειν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἰατροῖς, εἴ τις δύναται τὰ ἔντερα κεινώσας <τὸ> ὑγρὸν ἐξερᾶσαι· ἀπειπόντων δὲ θεῖναι αὑτὸν εἰς τὸν ἥλιον καὶ κελεύειν τοὺς παῖδας βολίτοις καταπλάττειν· οὕτω δὴ κατατεινόμενον δευτεραῖον τελευτῆσαι καὶ θαφθῆναι ἐν τῇι ἀγορᾶι. Νεάνθης δ' ὁ Κυζικηνός [FGrHist. 84 F 25 II 197] φησι μὴ δυνηθέντα αὐτὸν ἀποσπάσαι τὰ βόλιτα μεῖναι καὶ διὰ τὴν μεταβολὴν ἀγνοηθέντα κυνόβρωτον γενέσθαι.

Here, Diogenes Laertius gives three versions of a single story: his own, that of Hermippus, and that of Neanthes. Let us first see which elements are unique to each version and which are common to all.

Diogenes Laertius' version includes events prior to the disease, the cause and name of the disease, the attempted cure, and the death.[89] Hermippus adds that Heraclitus was buried in the agora, and Neanthes the grisly detail that Heraclitus was eaten by dogs. The three versions share a single element, that Heraclitus smeared himself with dung. Clearly, it was the most popular element of the story and the one to which we'll first turn our attention.[90] Having seen throughout this chapter the many and varied charges of arrogance, pride, and hatred of humanity, we could be tempted to dismiss the story as so much facile nonsense. However, as Fränkel first pointed out,[91] there is much more to the story than meets the eye and to dismiss it would be to miss both the scholarship and the malice that went into its making. The story and all its details—misanthropy, eating grasses and herbs, riddles, doctors, dung, dogs, and children—are all brilliantly lifted from Heraclitus' work. Systematically, detail by detail, we shall see how Heraclitus unknowingly wrote his own obituary.

"*Finally, he became a misanthrope and going apart by himself in the mountains, lived feeding on grasses and herbs . . .*" Now, there are three main categories of fragments by which Heraclitus was, by his biographers, proved a misanthrope. First are the fragments that speak of Heraclitus' impatience with the people for their failure to see or to understand the Logos that surrounds them. An important fragment tells us that:

33. The existing universal law [the Logos] notwithstanding, people are forever without understanding, both before they hear it and having heard it for the first time. For although everything happens in accordance with this principle, people seem unacquainted with it, although they experience both word and deed of the kind of thing that I myself set out in

detail, distinguishing each thing according to its nature and showing how each thing is. But what other people do escapes them, just as they let escape them what they do while asleep. (fr. 1)

δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει. τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα χῦδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.

Another fragment further discusses the nature of the Logos[92] and people's inability to see it.

34. From the Logos, which they associate most, and which governs all, they are apart and, even as those things they daily meet, seems to them most strange. (fr. 72)

ὧι μάλιστα διηνεκῶς ὁμιλοῦσι λόγωι τῶι τὰ ὅλα διοικοῦντι, τούτωι διαφέρονται, καὶ οἷς καθ' ἡμέραν ἐγκυροῦσι, ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ξένα φαίνεται.

A second category of fragments reveal Heraclitus' impatience with the people's basic foolishness and intellectual inadequacy.

35. For what intelligence or understanding have they? They believe in the bards of the people and use the mass as teacher, not knowing that, 'Many are bad, few good.' (fr. 104)

τίς γὰρ αὐτῶν νόος ἢ φρήν; δήμων ἀοιδοῖσι πείθονται καὶ διδασκάλωι χρείωνται ὁμίλωι οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι 'οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἀγαθοί'.

36. Human character has not the means of knowing, but the divine one has. (fr. 78).

ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνώμας, θεῖον δὲ ἔχει.

37. One man to me is worth the multitudes, if that one is best. (fr. 49)

εἷς ἐμοὶ μύριοι, ἐὰν ἄριστος ἦι.

38. And having heard, they are without understanding, like dumb animals. The proverb bears witness to them, 'Present but absent.' (fr. 34)

ἀξύνετοι ἀκούσαντες κωφοῖσιν ἐοίκασι· φάτις αὐτοῖσιν μαρτυρεῖ παρεόντας ἀπεῖναι.

A third category openly compares people to either animals or children.

39. Children's playthings are human conjectures. (fr. 70)

παίδων ἀθύρματα νενόμικεν εἶναι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δοξάσματα.

40. A man hearkens to a god as a child to a grown man. (fr. 79)

ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός.

41. The wisest of all men, compared to a god, seems an ape in wisdom, in beauty, and in all else. (fr. 83)

ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πίθηκος φανεῖται καὶ σοφίαι καὶ κάλλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν.

42. For the best choose a single thing rather than all that exists, fame everlasting among mortals. Most, however, are satisfied like beasts. (fr. 29)

αἱρεῦνται γὰρ ἓν ἀντὶ ἁπάντων οἱ ἄριστοι, κλέος ἀέναον θνητῶν· οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ κεκόρηνται ὅκωσπερ κτήνεα.

In short, there was material enough and more from which to adduce Heraclitus' contempt for the common run of mortals, if not for the entire human race, a contempt that grew to hatred and culminated, in the biographers' minds, to complete misanthropy and voluntary exile from others.

Heraclitus' exile to the mountains must be considered apart from the rest of his death, since it belongs more to the tradition of biography and the topos of exile than to the biographical tradition of Heraclitus himself. Almost all philosophers undergo some form of exile, voluntary or involuntary, physical or intellectual, fortuitous or importune.[93] Like the related topos of travel[94] that occurs for most philosophers also, or a visit from the Muses that occurs to only a few,[95] exile makes concrete and physical the philosopher's intellectual and social alienation, attributed to him by the biographers as a sign that he is set apart.[96] In the case of Heraclitus, the theme of voluntary exile and misanthropy go hand in hand with the larger scheme of Heraclitus' life and death.

For Heraclitus, in particular, the exile demonstrates not only the biographers' hostility, but their intellectual ingenuity as well. By making Heraclitus turn his back on the people he was so commonly assumed to despise,[97] the biographers reduce him to animal status, just as, in their view, he had so often reduced "most people." Heraclitus, in short, is now one of the common herd, the beasts to whom he compared the people.[98] Previously we saw fragments that expressed the comparison; the next set of fragments have a more particular bearing on his exile and bestiality.

43. If happiness lay in the pleasures of the body, then we would call cattle happy, for they find fodder to eat. (fr. 4)

Si felicitas esset in delectationibus corporis, boves felices diceremus, cum inveniant orobum ad comedendum.

44. Asses prefer garbage to gold. (fr. 9)

ὄνους σύρματ' ἂν ἑλέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ χρυσόν·

45. All animals are driven to pasture by blows. (fr. 11)

πᾶν γὰρ ἕρπετὸν πληγῆι νέμεται.

Heraclitus' personal contempt for the pleasures of the body and of society, found by the biographers in these fragments, now rebound upon him; like the animals he speaks of, he too is driven to pasture and to the eating of fodder. Not knowing, himself, how to distinguish good from bad and hating everyone indiscriminately, he acts like a brute beast himself, lives in solitude, and feeds upon grasses and herbs. Finally, his own arrogance and contempt for the people have driven him to these extremes.

Diogenes Laertius continues his account, "when, however, this [diet] gave him dropsy . . ." Dropsy, or edema, an overabundance of water in the body tissues,[99] is the obvious disease for a philosopher so much associated with water. Equally important are those fragments which speak of water and its relationship or effect upon the soul.

46. A dry soul is wisest and best. (fr. 118)

αὐγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη.

47. For souls, it is delight or death to become water. (fr. 77)

ψυχῆισι τέρψιν ἢ θάνατον ὑγρῆισι γενέσθαι.

48. For souls, it is death to become water; for water, it is death to become earth: from earth comes water, from water, the soul. (fr. 36)

ψυχῆισιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή.

49. Souls that perish in battle are purer than those that perish in disease. (fr. 136)

ψυχαὶ ἀρηίφατοι καθερώτεραι (σο) ἢ ἐνὶ νούσοις.

Heraclitus has now himself fallen prey to his philosophical beliefs; his theories and precepts, which first led to his exile and diet, have now destroyed him. By his own beliefs, as seen in citations **47** and **48,** Heraclitus' soul, through an overabundance of water in the body, has met its death and will soon return to earth. Furthermore, since he achieved a wet death in disease, and not a fiery one in battle, he had, according to citations **46** and **49,** neither the wisest nor the best soul.

Diogenes Laertius then brings Heraclitus down from the mountains, *"he went back down to the city and in riddling manner asked the physicians if they could, after heavy rains, create drought. When they did not understand . . ."* Earlier, we saw numerous references to the obscurity of Heraclitus' work, charges that he deliberately made it obscure and inaccessible, and Timon's description of Heraclitus as a "riddler." Here, Heraclitus is made to pay for these sins by posing his question in this enigmatic way. His arrogance is again seen in his attempt to cure himself; his disdain for the medical profession occurs in another fragment.

50. For the physicians, cutting and burning and trying all sorts of remedies, torture their patients, asking in addition a fee which they don't deserve, since they accomplish the same thing as the disease. (fr. 58)

οἱ γοῦν ἰατροί, τέμνοντες, καίοντεσ, πάντηι βασανίζοντες κακῶς τοὺς ἀρρωστοῦντας, ἐπαιτέονται μηδὲν ἄξιοι μισθὸν λαμβάνειν παρὰ τῶν ἀρρωστούντων, ταὐτὰ ἐργαζόμενοι, τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰς νόσους.

The physicians (and the biographers) now have their revenge; unable to understand Heraclitus' riddle, they are unable to treat him. At the same

time, they are embodying a standard Heraclitean lament, that people are unable to see what is right in front of them.[100]

Diogenes Laertius continues, *"he buried himself in a cow-shed, hoping that the heat of the dung would draw out the water. Achieving nothing by this, though, he died . . ."* Clearly, Heraclitus' bizarre treatment is drawn from his words in the following fragments.

51. Swine prefer mud to clean water. (fr. 13)

ὗες βορβόρωι ἥδονται μᾶλλον ἢ καθαρῶι ὕδατι.

52. Pigs wash themselves in mud, birds in dust or ash. (fr. 37)

sues caeno, cohortales aves pulvere vel cinere lavari.

53. Corpses are more worthy to be thrown out than dung. (fr. 96)

νέκυες γὰρ κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι.

Nor was the treatment without a redeeming aspect of sound medical practice; dung, in fact, was a general cure-all in the ancient world and, in cases of dropsy, was applied externally.[101] Folk medicine and revenge, then, are combined here in a grotesque parody to cover Heraclitus with dung. The treatment is another of the rebound anecdotes in which the philosopher's own words rebound upon him. Heraclitus is like the swine who prefer mud in citations **51** and **52.**[102] Heraclitus' words on the worthlessness of the body after death, in citation **53,** is reflected in the contemptible treatment of his own body.[103] Further, this degrading death would be thought appropriate for one whose religious beliefs lay outside the realm of traditional belief, as is discussed later in this chapter.

The death story, however, involves even more of Heraclitus' work, for the biographers were men of some knowledge, if only of the wide-ranging sort. That they were possessed of erudition, if not understanding, is evident from their use of the less obvious, more cosmological parts of Heraclitus' work, as well as the more obvious fragments mentioned previously.

We saw, in the discussion of citations **14, 27, 28,** and **46** through **49,** the many fragments that led to an association of Heraclitus and water. Less apparent are those Heraclitean statements about fire and water and the Heraclitean theory of the unity of opposites. Theophrastus, following Aristotle's lead, was eager to reduce Heraclitus' philosophy to a strict and

even simplistic material monism.[104] Accordingly, Heraclitus was singled out as the early philosopher who identified fire as the single material from which and through which the cosmos had been derived.[105] Diogenes Laertius, who takes his account of Heraclitus' theories from Theophrastus,[106] explains the influence of fire upon water, in the resultant statement of Heraclitus' theory of exhalations.[107]

54. For fire, by contracting turns into moisture, and this condensation turns into water; water again when congealed, turns into earth . . . then again, earth is liquefied, and thus gives rise to water, and from water the rest of the series is derived. Heraclitus reduces nearly everything to exhalations from the sea. (DL 9.9)

Πυκνούμενον γὰρ τὸ πῦρ ἐξυγραίνεσθαι συνιστάμενόν τε γίνεσθαι ὕδωρ, πηγνύμενον δὲ τὸ ὕδωρ εἰς γῆν τρέπεσθαι· πάλιν τε αὖ τὴν γῆν χεῖσθαι, ἐξ ἧς τὸ ὕδωρ γίνεσθαι, ἐκ δὲ τούτου τὰ λοιπά, σχεδὸν πάντα ἐπὶ τὴν ἀναθυμίασιν ἀνάγων τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης·

Heraclitus' own statement, from which this account had first been interpreted by Theophrastus, summarized by Diogenes Laertius above, is expressed in the fragment as follows.

55. Fire's changes: first sea, and of sea the half is earth, the half-lightening flash. (fr. 31)

πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ.

It is Theophrastus and Diogenes Laertius, in fact, who reduce "nearly everything" to a series of exhalations.[108] In the death story, Heraclitus is made once more to act out his theories as they were understood by others: the heat of the dung, according to their interpretations, will produce exhalations from the water in the body, and thus produce the demanded drought after rain; thus we have yet another of the anecdotes in which the philosopher's theories ironically, and this time fatally, rebound upon him.[109] Moreover, the anecdote also refers to Heraclitus' theory of opposites, a theory which greatly contributed to his death.

Heraclitus' theory of opposites speaks of the essential unity that exists in the interplay or hidden connective tension between seeming opposites

that, in reality, are the opposed extremes of a single entity. Night and day, for example, although they seem like opposites, are in reality the opposed extremes of a single entity of time measured within a twenty-four-hour framework. It is the tension between the two extremes that creates their essential reality and unification into a single unity, the twenty-four-hour day. Therefore, states that seem like polar opposites, such as day and night, young and old, or living and dead, by their tension, form an essential unified entity, a twenty-four-hour day, the living portion of a human life, and the complete cycle of a human life. If we consider the fragment of Heraclitus that states:

56. And the same thing exists in us living and dead, and waking and sleeping, and young and old: for these things changed around are those, and those changed around are these. (fr. 88)

ταὐτό τ᾽ ἔνι ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς καὶ [τὸ] ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ καθεῦδον καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν· τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι κἀκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.

we find in this statement the expression of unity between opposed states. Their supposed opposition is simply the result of a limited, subjective (unenlightened)[110] viewpoint. Further, states such as living/dead or young/old, taken to be polar opposites by "most men," instead form a totality of human life whose essence is a single unity.

The theory of opposites, so called, has long caused problems in Heraclitean scholarship.[111] We can, in fact, trace the problem as far back as Aristotle, who took the theory to mean that opposites were identical and the same. For example, Aristotle interpreted Heraclitus to say that opposites such as good and bad are the same and identical.[112] This in turn led Theophrastus and others to believe that Heraclitus denied the law of contradictions,[113] falsely attributing to him the identical nature of opposites, rather than their connective tension and essential unity. With this and the mistaken and common belief that fire was Heraclitus' first or principal material in mind, we see why Heraclitus was the only philosopher to die covered with dung. In the death anecdote, Heraclitus depends upon his principal material, fire, to draw out its opposite, water, by exhalation. The physicians, no more able than most men to see what is right before them, also cannot synthesize or associate Heraclitus' theory of opposites with his condition. Heraclitus, characteristically obscure, cannot resist

living up to his nickname and puts the problem to them in a riddle, which results in his death.[114]

Diogenes Laertius concludes his version of Heraclitus' death with an epigram of his own creation, to be discussed later in this section. He then adds Hermippus' version of Heraclitus' death, which adds only that Heraclitus was buried in the agora or marketplace. This small addition brings up an interesting point, however, for public burial may indicate another biographical topos, that of posthumous honors. Several other philosophers are (at least biographically) so honored after their death, Plato, Pythagoras, and Epicurus among them,[115] and Diogenes Laertius gives us several hints that this may be the case for Heraclitus also.

First, burial in the agora often indicates cult or heroic status, such as Homer achieved after his death and to which Heraclitus' burial has been compared.[116] Second, in his discussion of Heraclitus' work, Diogenes Laertius remarks (9.7) that the fame of his work was such that a sect of Heracliteans was founded after his death. Philosophers, like other authors,[117] often experience this contradiction in their biographies; hated and scorned while alive, they are loved and respected after they die. This reversal, which became a biographical topos, stems from the peculiarly ambivalent attitude of ancient Greeks for their "great men," an envy and hatred expressed in the hostile biographical tradition toward the living subject that allows for a reverential turnabout once the subject is safely dead.[118] Heraclitus, toward whom an almost exclusively hostile tradition exists, nonetheless acquires, to a limited extent, heroic status after his death.[119]

Neanthes, whose account agrees with that of Hermippus as given by Diogenes Laertius, adds one essential point: that Heraclitus, covered with dung and unrecognizable because of it, was torn apart by dogs. Here we have another example of the inability (this time on the part of dogs!) to see something for what it is; once again, Heraclitus' words are turned back upon him. The detail of the dogs comes, in part, from yet another fragment.

57. For dogs bark at those whom they don't know. (fr. 97)

κύνες γὰρ καταβαΰζουσιν ὧν ἂν μὴ γινώσκωσι.

This fragment, besides its immediate common sense, has a deeper, more philosophical undertone, human hostility toward new ideas.[120] The fragment may even refer to the hostility that Heraclitus' ideas encountered,

and his regret, expressed elsewhere, that most people prefer to blindly follow popular thought and popular teachers. That hostility, ultimately, was turned against Heraclitus.

In another fragment, Heraclitus remarks that,

58. And yet, they purify themselves by defiling themselves with more blood, as one might, by stepping into mud, wash themselves of that mud. And he would be thought mad, if some other would see him acting this way. (fr. 5)

καθαίρονται δ' ἄλλωι αἵματι μιαινόμενοι οἷον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῶι ἀπονίζοιτο. μαίνεσθαι δ' ἂν δοκοίη, εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιφράσαιτο οὕτω ποιέοντα.

Heraclitus' new intellectual direction affected his view of religion as well as philosophy; indeed, the universality of the Logos demands integration of the two. In citation **58,** we see criticism of traditional religious practice that, according to most scholars, contributes significantly to the final detail of the death story, being eaten by dogs. West, however, sees in Heraclitus' death by dung and dogs allusion to Zoroastrianism; a purification ritual in the *Avesta* calls for the polluted man to rub himself with bull urine and for a dog to watch him as he dies.[121] Fairweather, justly critical of this interpretation, demonstrates that Heraclitus, as a nontraditional religious thinker, died the death reserved for the enemies of traditional religion, atheists, and heretics alike. Other examples of the topos occur in the death of not only the mythical Acteon, but the philosopher Diogenes and the playwright Euripides as well.[122] Statements such as citation **58** with its criticism of cult practices may well have given the biographers the means to cast Heraclitus as an enemy of religion and thus inspiring his death by dogs.

I agree with Fairweather here; Heraclitus' statement in citation **80** ("For dogs bark at those they don't know.") presented the biographers with too neat and ready-made an opportunity to resist, especially if it fit with an already established death for those who stray from the paths of orthodoxy. And the gradual build-up of details in the entire death story—withdrawal, vegetarianism, dropsy, doctors, riddles, children, dung, dogs—strongly suggests a composite tale, carefully selected, elaborated, and perfected into a speaking death, composed by Heraclitus but orchestrated by his biographers.

However logical the explanations, the story of Heraclitus' death remains one of the most grotesque and malicious on record, without a single redeeming factor in it. And yet one is forced to admire the collaborative cleverness with which the biographers combined so many different facets of Heraclitus' work to create the coherent whole. That cleverness is not always so apparent, especially when it comes to Diogenes Laertius' epigrams. But even these may reveal how Diogenes Laertius' interpretation of his subject's philosophy should be analyzed. For Heraclitus, Diogenes Laertius gives three epigrams: his own, which follows his account of the death, and two others given later in his chapter. We will deal with these latter ones first.

59. Heraclitus am I. Why do you drag me up and down, uncultured boors?
It was not for you that I labored, but for those who understand me.
One man is worth thirty thousand, but the countless mass is as Nothing. This will I proclaim, even in Persephone's domain.
(DL 9.16 = *AP* 7.128)

Ἡράκλειτος ἐγώ· τί μ' ἄνω κάτω ἕλκετ' ἄμουσοι;
οὐχ ὑμῖν ἐπόνουν, τοῖς δ' ἔμ' ἐπισταμένοις.
εἷς ἐμοὶ ἄνθρωπος τρισμύριοι, οἱ δ' ἀνάριθμοι
οὐδείς. ταῦτ' αὐδῶ καὶ παρὰ Φερσεφόνηι.

The poem by now holds no real surprises, lifted as it is from Heraclitus' work. The germane fragments are the following.

60. The way up and the way down are one and the same.[123] (fr. 60)

ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή.

61. For what intelligence or understanding have they? They believe in the bards of the people and use the mass as teachers, not knowing that, 'Many are bad, few good.' (fr. 104)

τίς γὰρ αὐτῶν νόος ἢ φρήν; δήμων ἀοιδοῖσι πείθονται καὶ διδασκάλωι χρείωνται ὁμίλωι οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι 'οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἀγαθοί'.

62. To me, one man is worth multitudes, if he is best. (fr. 49)

εἷς ἐμοὶ μύριοι, ἐὰν ἄριστος ᾖι.

63. When he is there, they arise and become watchful guardians of the living and the dead. (fr. 63)

ἔνθα δ' ἐὸντι ἐπανίστασθαι καὶ φύλακας γίνεσθαι ἐγερτὶ ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν.

The appropriateness of citations **60, 61,** and **62** to the epigram are immediately clear. The implication of the last citation, **63,** that there is an afterlife, of some sort and at least for certain souls, may have suggested to the epigrammist Heraclitus' proclamation from the underworld. Originality, we should remember, was not an essential or even highly regarded quality in the ancient world; the epigrammist is playing upon well-established rules in drawing so obviously upon his subject's work. Of interest to us, rather, is the demonstration of biographical methodology, how the author drew upon his own knowledge (and interpretation) of Heraclitus' work to create a speech characteristic of his subject. Note, too, that in citation **59,** Heraclitus' work takes on his characteristic snobbish and insulting tone, when it speaks to the "uncultured boors" and the "countless mass" who wrongfully handle it.

The next epigram is more subtle in sense and more laudatory in tone.

64. Don't unroll too hastily to the winding stick the book
Of Heraclitus the Ephesian. It is indeed an almost inaccessible road.
Darkness and gloom without light are there. But should an initiate
Guide you, it shines more openly than sunlight.[124] (DL 9.16 = *AP* 9.540)

μὴ ταχὺς Ἡρακλείτου ἐπ' ὀμφαλὸν εἵλεε βύβλον
τοὐφεσίου· μάλα τοι δύσβατος ἀτραπιτός.
ὀρφνὴ καὶ σκότος ἐστὶν ἀλάμπετον· ἢν δέ σε μύστης
εἰσαγάγηι, φανεροῦ λαμπρότερ' ἠελίου.

In this epigram we also see allusion to the difficulty and obscurity of Heraclitus' work and, in the second sentence, a second allusion to citation **60,** the road or way of Heraclitean thought and metaphor. Kirk considers

the epigram of "higher poetic quality, and the imagery from the Mysteries (in which the novice was led from darkness into the brilliantly lit scene of revelation) is effective: the suggestions, too, that beneath the obscurity of Heraclitus' style a clear and penetrating thought is concealed, is not a common one."[125]

With this second epigram, then, we get the sense that Heraclitus' philosophy and its rendering was indeed difficult, but not impossible. It hints that the mystery of his thought, once revealed, would reward the reader's hard work with its revealed wisdom.[126] It further suggests that some readers, at least, could appreciate the thought inherent to the style and recognize the brilliance behind it. The epigram reminds us, then, that not all chose to dismiss Heraclitean philosophy as merely a source for derisive anecdotes and that epigrams too, if we let them, tell us a great deal about their subject and the attitude of the epigrammatist toward their subject.

Diogenes Laertius' own epigram, which follows his account of Heraclitus' death, presents different problems. However, in addition to the usual reference to the obscurity of Heraclitus' work, we find an idea worth pursuing.

65. Many times did I marvel at Heraclitus, how having drained his life
To the dregs, he died in this ill-fated way:
For a foul disease flooded his body and water, quenching the
Light in his eyes, brought on darkness and gloom. (DL 9.4 = *AP* 7.127)

Πολλάκις Ἡράκλειτον ἐθαύμασα, πῶς ποτε τὸ ζῆν
ὧδε διαντλήσας δύσμορος εἶτ᾽ ἔθανεν·
σῶμα γὰρ ἀρδεύουσα κακὴ νόσος ὕδατι φέλλος
ἔσβεσεν ἐκ βλεφάρων καὶ σκότον ἠγάγετο.

The first two lines are obviously another reference to the barley-drink that Heraclitus "drains" in citation **15** above and to the water imagery so strongly associated with Heraclitus. The second two lines refer to Heraclitus' assertion in citations **47** and **48** that it is death for souls to become water and indeed demonstrate how strongly the idea of light and sight were associated with thought and knowledge in the philosophy of Heraclitus. Without them, there is only darkness, gloom, and death.[127]

And there we have it: a difficult philosopher and a difficult philosophy,

but not an impossible one, nor one grounded in arrogance or misanthropy. Heraclitus hints rather than reveals, makes unremitting demands on our intellect, patience, and efforts, and refuses to easily yield the extraordinary brilliance and individuality of his thoughts, rapt in their oracular expression. On the other hand, to label Heraclitus as moody, melancholic, and misanthropic because of the difficulty of his style is to give the biographers the last word. And in spite of their best efforts, Heraclitus won from them the prize that he himself declared best in citation **42,** fame everlasting among mortal men.

THREE

DEMOCRITUS



1. His character can be seen from his writing. (DL 9.38)

δῆλον δὲ κἀκ τῶν συγγραμμάτων οἷος ἦν.

2. Men remember one's mistakes rather than one's successes. . . . (fr. 265)

θρωποι μεμνέαται μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν εὖ πεποιημένων.

Research into the life and work of Democritus, best known of the Greek atomists, is sadly hampered by the one-sided nature of his extant writings; a fair amount of his ethical work remains, but his scientific theories are known only from secondhand sources.[1] The relationship between his work and his biography, therefore, can only partially be recovered, although the secondary sources do, in many cases, amply reveal the biographical mind at work. We begin with his early life.

DATE, TEACHERS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Democritus himself gives us some indication of his age and era. In his *Lesser World System,* Democritus says he was forty years younger than Anaxagoras, giving himself a birth date of about 460–57 BCE. This agrees with the Eightieth Olympiad birth date given by Apollodorus and is generally accepted.[2]

Democritus is almost universally regarded as a native of Abdera,[3] and his father's name is given as either Hegesistratus, Athenocritus, or Damasippus.[4] From the biographies, we can infer that, as usual, his father was a man of wealth and influence, further said to have entertained Xerxes (DL 9.34–36). Traditionally, it was through his family friendship that Democritus received his early training; the biographers tell us that Xerxes left behind Magi and Chaldaeans who taught Democritus astronomy and theology. The story seems to have originated with Valerius Maximus for, although Diogenes Laertius in making the statement (9.34) refers his readers to Herodotus, he gives no specific citation.[5] The passages of Herodotus generally thought germane are 7.109, which discusses Xerxes' route toward Greece, including Abdera, and 8.120, which speaks of Xerxes' possible return route to Persia, again through Abdera. Perhaps Diogenes Laertius assumes that it was during one of these marches that Xerxes left the Magi and Chaldaeans behind in the household. However, the dates are rather problematic, given that Xerxes' war on Greece is dated to 480 BCE; given Democritus' accepted birth date (460–57 BCE), the Magi and Chaldaeans would have had to linger in the household some twenty-five years for Democritus to have benefited by their presence.[6] There is, in fact, little support for the story of Democritus' eastern tutors, especially when, as we will see, they are used to support questionable stories of Democritus' magic powers. Furthermore, the tradition of teachers from the east amounts to a general topos common in the lives of the philosophers, in which east meets west. In the life of Pythagoras, for example, Diogenes Laertius, discussing Pythagoras' travel and education (8.3), states that after a sojourn in Egypt, Pythagoras visited the Magi and Chaldaeans. This reoccurring topos, of archaic philosophers who learn from eastern wise men, is also seen in the life of Thales, Plato, and Pyrrho, among others. It should be regarded not as biographically true, but rather as anecdotally popular, part of the larger east-west topos common in the

lives of the philosophers, although more applicable for some philosophers than for others.[7]

We have little reliable information about Democritus' training or teachers, although Diogenes Laertius gives us a wealth of information on these subjects, albeit in confused and confusing fashion. Summarily put, from Diogenes Laertius we have reports that Democritus was a student of Leucippus (9.34), of Anaxagoras (9.24), of Pythagoras or of "Pythagoreans" (9.38), and of Oenopides (9.41), whom "he mentions."

Diogenes Laertius, with his vague allusion to Oenopides, immediately alerts us to the characteristic methodology of biographers and their sources, which is to invent a relationship between their subject and any person mentioned in the subject's work, as we saw for Empedocles and his "student" Pausanias.[8] As we will see, the dangers of this method increase when forgeries and false attributions of the subject's work abound, as they do for Democritus.[9] In the works of Democritus now considered genuine, however, there is no mention of Oenopides. The tradition of Oenopides as Democritus' teacher, therefore, may have originated with a pseudo-Democritean text that mentions Oenopides, just as the name of Plato's teacher, Dionysus, was derived from the pseudo-Platonic *Amatores*, which mentions Dionysus as a teacher.[10]

Conversely, the identification of Oenopides as Democritus' teacher may reflect a different direction in methodology and in the biographical tradition that exists for Democritus. In the biographies, Oenopides is frequently linked with Pythagoras, whose astronomical and mathematical theories he is said either to have stolen or to have agreed with.[11] One source links Pythagoras, Oenopides, and Democritus as philosophers who traveled east to gain mathematical and astronomical knowledge, particularizing the east-west topos in the lives of these three philosophers, explaining the identification of Oenopides as Democritus' teacher in Diogenes Laertius, and linking three philosophers not usually associated, by their eastern travels.[12] The other similarities in the lives of Pythagoras and Democritus that result from the use of Pythagoras' life as model for Democritus are discussed later in this chapter.

Another philosopher "mentioned" by Democritus, according to Diogenes Laertius, was Protagoras (9.41). Elsewhere, Democritus is said to be Protagoras' teacher: as the story goes, Democritus was so taken with Protagoras' skills as a porter that he adopted Protagoras as a student.[13] The association of Democritus and Protagoras probably stems not from philosophical similarities or shared doctrines, but from shared citizenship, as

both were from Abdera.[14] It was not uncommon in the biographies for the fame of one citizen to reflect upon a fellow citizen, as indeed we saw in the shared fame of the fellow Sicilians Empedocles, Hieron, and Theron.[15] Otherwise, the account of a student-teacher relationship between Democritus and Protagoras has little to recommend it.

As Diogenes Laertius continues his account, he tells us that Democritus also mentions Zeno and Parmenides and their doctrine of the One. He explains that "they were the most talked about people of his day" (9.41). Typically, it is their notoriety, and not their philosophy, that Diogenes Laertius emphasizes. Such notoriety, if it did exist and was of interest to Democritus, would rest in their philosophical doctrine of the indivisible One, which neither comes into being nor changes, a belief that other philosophers, including atomists such as Democritus, would henceforth of necessity address.[16] If Democritus did indeed mention Zeno and Parmenides, either personally or as the spokesman of the Eleatic school associated with them, those remarks are now lost to us. We can only posit their philosophical influence on Democritus as on other philosophers of the era. There is not, however, any necessity, other than biographical, to adduce a personal relationship between them, as does Diogenes Laertius.[17]

However, Diogenes Laertius' account still functions usefully as an example of biographical method in general and of the topos in which philosophical influence is elaborated into a personal relationship in particular. For in the next report, we find that Anaxagoras is also mentioned as one of Democritus' teachers and that this relationship is also complicated by a series of overlapping biographical conventions. As we begin to separate teachers and biographical traditions, we find that several variations of the student-teacher topos exist in the life of Democritus for several different reasons. So far, we have seen that mentioning someone (and, as we will see, not mentioning someone) was acceptable grounds for assuming personal or professional relationships (Oenopides as Democritus' teacher, for example) that shared citizenship could be elaborated into a student-teacher relationship (Democritus as Protagoras' teacher), and that a student-teacher relationship could be inferred from philosophical beliefs or reactions to other philosophical beliefs (e.g., Democritus' atomic theory in reply to Parmenides and Zeno on the doctrine of the indivisible One becomes a biographical tradition of Parmenides as Democritus' teacher).

Many of these relationships, as noted, are introduced by vague phrases, such as "others mention" or "it is said," and here too, we find Diogenes Laertius using similar phrasing. Diogenes Laertius tells us that Democritus

"met" Anaxagoras and Leucippus, two philosophers who, again, are not usually associated by location, dates, or philosophical beliefs.[18] Anaxagoras, unfortunately, is notoriously hard to date and cannot be ruled out on chronological grounds alone, although I follow Kirk and Raven[19] in assigning him dates of ca. 500–428 BCE, with a floruit of ca. 480 BCE, which places his birth date roughly forty years after that of Democritus. So while it is not chronologically impossible for the two to have met, there is no real evidence for it, even if we assume, as many do, that Democritus traveled to Athens at least once (a rather dubious fragment, discussed later in this chapter, states that "I came to Athens and no one knew me.") Furthermore, the association of Anaxagoras with Leucippus in Diogenes Laertius' account leads us to believe that the impetus behind reports of a meeting are philosophical in nature, rather than personal, a meeting of minds rather than of persons. With this meeting, we have representatives of the philosophers and philosophies most concerned with a response to the idea of the Eleatic school. Anaxagoras, according to the extant fragments of his work we now possess, responded to Parmenides and the Eleatic school, as did atomists such as Democritus and Leucippus, but in rather stronger terms. Anaxagoras challenged the Parmidean doctrine of the indivisible One by positing an indefinite number of elemental ingredients or "numberless seeds." Furthermore, this last phrase, if it belongs to the vocabulary of Anaxagoras himself (or to scholastic periphrasis, i.e., the scholiast on Gregorius Nazianzenus who preserved the argument[20]), may have suggested use of the characteristic atomic vocabulary to the biographers and thus strengthened the notion of an association between Anaxagoras and Leucippus to combat the Parmenidean doctrine of the One. However, Anaxagoras' reputed relationship with Democritus, as we will see, is not an easy one to catalogue.

In any case, Diogenes Laertius so often introduces his less credible discussions of students and their teachers by alleging that one philosopher "heard" or "met" or "followed" another that his phrasing supports the notion that such relationships should be understood as one of intellectual, rather than personal, influence. The motives behind establishing such a relationship, as we have seen, are variable.[21] They may be purely biographical, an honest attempt to identify the subject's teachers or students[22] or they may be doxographical, an attempt to establish chronological and philosophical links between generations and schools of philosophers, to, as Fairweather has it, "replace the complications of historical reality with a semblance of order."[23] Here, Democritus chronologically and philosophi-

cally follows Anaxagoras, as Protagoras follows him. Such reports may, however, be an attempt to exalt or diminish one philosopher at the expense of another, as the report that Democritus derived his philosophy from Pythagoras seeks to exalt Pythagoras at the expense of a diminished Democritus.[24] Or the report may attempt to defame both parties, often by the suggestion of a rather more intimate relationship between the two, as in the case of Plato and Aster, a student of astronomy.[25] Elsewhere, the report of one philosopher as the student of another is used specifically to refute some aspect of either philosopher's work.

The last motive is part of a larger biographical topos, that of the feud or contest. Feuds, literary, philosophical, or intellectual, exist as far back as the lives of Homer and Hesiod. They are often supported by false or suspicious evidence, such as the *Certamen* or Contest between Homer and Hesiod or the letters between Thales and Pherycedes;[26] by confrontational anecdotes,[27] as in the several personal scenes of confrontation recorded for Plato and Aristippus; or by the many reported instances of book burning and charges of plagiarism that occur in the biographies as, for example, in the many reports of Plato's philosophical thefts from Pythagoras, works which he then claimed as his own.[28] Within the framework of the feud, different schools may feud against each other, using a representational spokesman, or the feud may represent doctrinal differences between philosophers that have been elaborated into personal, hostile relationships.[29]

This latter example seems to have occurred in the reported feud between Democritus and Anaxagoras, to which Diogenes Laertius devotes a special section (9.35). After introducing Anaxagoras as Democritus' teacher, Diogenes Laertius questions that report: How, he asks his readers, could this be the case, when Democritus criticized Anaxagoras for having a "spite" against him because Anaxagoras did not "take" to him? Philosophically speaking, Democritus' resolution of the Eleatic controversy in ways different from Anaxagoras[30] would, biographically, account for the feud between them, just as his reworking of Pythagorean theory to resolve that controversy would account for the tradition of his study with Pythagoras.[31] Diogenes Laertius' hesitation to accept the tradition of Anaxagoras as Democritus' teacher rings true, even if his reason (spite) does not. The tradition is not any more convincing to the modern reader: Diogenes Laertius could not reconcile rumors of their personal enmity with a student-teacher relationship; we cannot imagine a student-teacher relationship based either upon a feud or upon a philosophical response to theory.

What we have seen, so far, is the biographical danger of one philosopher meeting or mentioning another. Democritus meets Anaxagoras and Leucippus and becomes their student; he mentions Oenopides and becomes his. As it turns out, however, not meeting or not mentioning a philosopher is an equally hazardous experience, at least in the biographical world.

For between Diogenes Laertius' discussion of Democritus' relationship with Anaxagoras in 9.34–35 and his discussion of Democritus' relationship with Oenopides, Protagoras, Parmenides, and Zeno in 9.41–42 come several anecdotes that deal with the relationship between Democritus and Plato. It quickly emerges that their relationship is one of hostility, even bitterness. Citing Aristoxenus as his source, Diogenes Laertius tells us that Plato wanted to collect all of Democritus' work to burn it. Diogenes Laertius further tells us that there is "clear evidence" for Plato's hostility, which he finds in the fact that, although Plato speaks of almost all the early philosophers, he never mentions Democritus. To clarify matters and to further emphasize his point, Diogenes Laertius (9.40) tells us that, in fact, Plato deliberately excluded any mention of Democritus so he would not have to match wits with Democritus, the "prince of philosophers."

Such rivalry between philosophers, explicit in the later statement about matching of wits, is a common topos in the biographies, and Plato is quite often at the heart of them. The feud between Plato and Democritus, in truth, greatly resembles that between Plato and Xenophon and is a common feature of both their biographies. In Diogenes Laertius, the two are characterized as bitter rivals, and, as here, evidence for their feud is found in the fact that neither philosopher mentions the other. The report of their rivalry and hostility was treated so seriously that some of each man's work was taken as a critical, philosophical response to the other. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia,* for example, was considered to have been written to criticize Plato's *Republic*.[32]

Should we find it odd or telling that Plato fails to mention Democritus? Not at all, according to Riginos, given the different interests of the two philosophers.[33] Riginos attributes the report of their rivalry in Diogenes Laertius to the "malicious fabrications" of Diogenes Laertius' source, Aristoxenus, a malice that traces back to the feud between Plato and Aristippus and their rival theories on the highest good.[34] Their feud, then, originates in intellectual or philosophical differences that were then elaborated into personal quarrels and vendettas. Plato's desire to burn Democritus' books is a striking example of a further elaboration of the

topos, an attempt to give it concrete, physical form. However it is by no means unusual in feuds of this sort. For although few books, if any, were actually burned, the biographers give us a wealth of philosophers reputedly driven to this extreme: Aristotle wanted to burn Plato's works, Protagoras wanted to burn Plato's and Democritus' work, and the Athenians wanted to burn his.[35]

In the life of Democritus, Plato is thwarted in his desire for a book burning by the Pythagorean philosophers Cliteas and Amyclas, who argue not in terms of right and wrong, but of utility. There is no use in burning the works, they declare, because they have already been widely disseminated and discussed. Their intervention and the fact that it is Pythagoreans who intervene introduce a further, doxographical, almost genealogical, aspect to the feud. Democritus' use of Pythagorean theory (which amounts to a biographical vindication of Pythagoras, if a slight diminishing of Democritus) perhaps led later Pythagorean writers to anecdotally claim and defend Democritus while addressing the famous feud between Plato and Pythagoras. Plato was often accused of stealing Pythagorean theory and presenting it as his own. Their rivalry often led to anecdotal confrontations between the two schools, usually informed by later literary and philosophical attempts to prove Plato as good or as competent a philosopher as Pythagoras.[36] Plato's desire to burn Democritus' work emphasizes the tradition of Plato's jealousy of Democritus, as does the "evidence" found in the fact that Plato never mentions him.[37]

In short: in biographical terms, Democritus could not have been Anaxagoras' student because he criticized Anaxagoras, but he could have been a Pythagorean, because he admired Pythagoras. In fact, another source, Thrasyllus, rather wistfully remarks that, had it not been for chronological differences, Democritus could have been Pythagoras' student. (Apparently, there were some chronological problems that not even the biographers could explain away.) In the case of Oenopides and Plato, we find reasoning of a similar sort: Democritus could have been the student of Oenopides because he mentions Oenopides; he engaged in rivalry with Plato, because Plato does not mention him. So bitter was their rivalry, so intense was Plato's jealousy, in fact, that Plato had to be restrained from burning Democritus' work by certain Pythagoreans, who may have been defending Pythagoras or at least attacking Pythagoras' rival (Plato) by defending Plato's enemy (Democritus). Protagoras, sometimes presented as Democritus' student, at other times wished to burn Democritus' work too, for reasons as yet unknown. In conclusion, we may simply say that, in

discussions of philosophical succession and relationships between philosophers, the more sensational the account, the better, as far as the biographers were concerned. The most we can hope for as readers is a hint here and there of the philosophical influence one philosopher's theories had upon another, and even that is too often colored by sensationalism to be truly helpful. But it does make for a good read.[38]

Having finished the reports of Democritus as the student of Anaxagoras, Pythagoras, Pythagoreans, and Oenopides, we are left only with the tradition of Leucippus, whom Democritus is also said to have met, as his teacher. Given what we know of the work and chronology of these two early atomists, this is the only tradition that makes sense, and only if, once again, we understand "teacher" to mean intellectual and philosophic influence. Leucippus, a slightly older contemporary of Democritus, whose floruit we date to ca. 440 BCE, is almost universally regarded as the originator of atomic theory, expounded in the work known as the *Greater World System* and perhaps elaborated by Democritus in his own *Lesser World System*. Leucippus too was forced to respond to the Eleatic question, specifically on the existence of change and movement, which he found in the arrangement and rearrangement of atoms, and which accounts for change in the greater world. Leucippus and Democritus are mentioned almost in the same breath by ancient writers, and it is hard indeed to distinguish between the two in terms of their contributions to atomic theory. It is perhaps only by chronology that Leucippus, as the elder, is thought to be Democritus' teacher. The relationship between the two, if indeed it existed, is now impossible to comment on.

TRAVEL AND FAMILY

Democritus, according to Diogenes Laertius, purposefully continued his education through travel.[39] By tradition and according to Diogenes Laertius, Democritus traveled extensively: to Egypt, to learn geometry; to the Red Sea and Persia, to learn from the Chaldaeans; to India, to learn from the gymnosophists; perhaps even to Ethiopia, for studies unspecified. Although travel, especially to the east, is a standard part of the biographical scheme for philosophers, Democritus' travel is unusual in its extent.[40] When one turns to Democritus for work that might reflect his travel, we predictably find several statements, or at least titles, to support his characterization as world traveler.

3. I, of all the men during my time, have traveled most on earth, and inquired into things most distant, and have seen the greatest number of climates and lands, and listened to the greatest number of learned men, and in compositions to display my findings, no one has ever surpassed me, not even those called Arpedonaptae in Egypt. With these, I lived some eighty years on foreign soil. (fr. 299)

ἐγὼ δέ τῶν κατ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνθρώπων γῆν πλείστην ἐπεπλανησάμην ἱστορέων τὰ μήκιστα καὶ ἀέρας τε καὶ γέας πλείστας εἶδον καὶ λογίων ἀνδρῶν πλείστων ἐπήκουσα καὶ γραμμέων συνθέσιος μετὰ ἀποδείξεως οὐδείς κώ με παρήλλαξεν οὐδ᾽ οἱ Αἰγυπτίων καλεόμενοι Ἀρπεδονάπται· σὺν τοῖς δ᾽ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἐπ᾽ ἔτεα † ὀγδώκοντα ἐπὶ ξείνης ἐγενήθην᾽.

4. On Meroe. (fr. 299a)

Περὶ τῶν Μερόη

5. Circumnavigation of the ocean. (fr. 299b)

᾽Ωκεανοῦ περίπλους

6. An account of Chaldaea. (fr. 299d)

Χαλδαϊκὸς λόγος

7. An account of Phrygia. (fr. 299e)

Φρύγιος λόγος

Here, one thinks, is proof of Democritus' extended travel, although Diogenes Laertius (9.49) is oddly hesitant in introducing it, remarking, "Some include as separate items in the list of his works the following (citations **3–7**) from his notes." In fact, these particular fragments come to us from work now considered doubtful if not downright spurious and are not part of the work considered genuine.[41] Of the entire (genuine) Democritean corpus, a collection of some 298 fragments, only two speak of travel to foreign lands and only in the most general, axiomatic manner.

8. Life in a foreign land teaches self-sufficiency, for bread and a mattress of straw are the sweetest cures for hunger and fatigue. (fr. 246)

ξενιτείη βίου αὐτάρκειαν διδάσκει· μᾶζα γὰρ καὶ στιβὰς λιμοῦ καὶ κόπου γλυκύτατα ἰάματα.

9. To a wise man, the whole earth is open. For a good soul, the entire cosmos is his native land. (fr. 247)

ἀνδρὶ σοφῶι πᾶσα γῆ βατή· ψυχῆς γὰρ ἀγαθῆς πατρὶς ὁ ξύμπας κόσμος.

Citations **8** and **9** are, as stated, considered genuine; need they, however, speak of or from personal experience? An argument might be made for the personal validity of citation **8** although its moral, like that of citation **9,** is gnomic in nature, a universal and timeless reflection not tied to specific location, time, or event. However, the evidence of the spurious fragments, taken with the genuine ones, suggests a different conclusion, that statements and fragments had to be found (or produced) as evidence for Democritus' travel since it did not exist in his genuine work. We could, of course, accept all the fragments as genuine proof for the tradition of extensive travel, although few scholars have been willing to do so. If we reject the fragments, may we not also reject the tradition that they support?[42] To my mind, the tradition of extensive travel is as doubtful as the spurious fragments and exists only as examples of biographical and methodological elaboration of the biographical tradition for Democritus, couched anecdotally and by topoi such as travel to the east.

The topos of travel, especially that of travel to the east, surfaces here in the life of Democritus in the form of concrete anecdotes, those that give body and substance to some facet of the subject's work. Such anecdotes are by no means uncommon and often function in just this circular manner, as we see in the life of Solon. First, biographical inferences are drawn from Solon's extant work, for example, when Solon speaks of himself as a defender of Athens. This statement and its inferences then establish and strengthen the tradition of Solon as a democratic reformer. Next, the biographers attribute to Solon specific political actions and reforms. Finally, they support those attributions by reference to the original work from which the statement and the inferences were drawn.[43]

My argument here, concerning Democritus' travel and the false fragments that support it, is that the biographical process may also function in reverse. That is, the tradition may generate the text, rather than the text the tradition, as usually happens. We have seen at least one instance of

the phenomenon, in the life of Heraclitus.[44] There, the biographers began with a strongly established tradition of Heraclitus' misanthropy inferred from the genuine fragments, a few of which specifically mentioned the Ephesians. So strong and accepted was that tradition that a pseudo-Heraclitean fragment scolding the Ephesians crept into the accepted text and was, for many years, accepted as genuine.

This is the case also for Democritus and the false fragments that speak of his travel. The fragments are used to support the tradition of that travel. The methodology is the same, but a part of the puzzle, the origin for the tradition of the philosopher's extensive travel, is missing. A topos, after all, cannot be inserted into a life at random. The explanation, as always, is to be found in the subject's (genuine) work.

Turning to those genuine extant fragments of Democritus' work, we are immediately struck by a paradoxical contrast between our view of the work and that of ancient authors'. While modern scholars accepted Democritus as the author of the *Lesser World System*, Leucippus is considered the author of the slightly earlier *Greater World System*. The exact opposite, however, was true in the ancient world; Diogenes Laertius and Antisthenes both speak of Democritus as the author of the *Greater World System*.[45] The ancient attribution results from another tendency of biography, which is to make the elaborator or perfector of a system or theory its inventor. Since Democritus perfected and elaborated Leucippus' atomic theory as set forth in the earlier *Greater World System*, he was credited with its authorship as well.[46]

At this point, a further pre-existing and well-established topos of biography comes into play, the philosopher who travels to pursue his education and training. The tradition of the travelling philosopher had become a standard part of the philosophical biography and could be drawn upon at will to round out a subject's life. Given this topos and the titles of the *Greater* and *Lesser World System*, the biographical conclusion was obvious. Biographers and commentators began with the attribution of the *Greater World System* to Democritus, an attribution which rests upon the topos of perfector as inventor. Then, since according to the biographical mind, a philosopher's work always reflects personal experience, Democritus must have had experience with the greater world and then, like all philosophers, according to another topos, he must have traveled. In fact, he must have traveled more and indeed traveled the known world, as the title of his work implies. (One cannot, of course, write a work called the *Greater* or even the *Lesser World System* unless one has traveled that world.) And

surely there must be more statements or titles to support the notion of travel. These are indeed found in citations **3, 4, 5, 6,** and **7.** Where do these spurious fragments come from? Simply from the biographical desire to give concrete form to philosophical theory, so often observed in the anecdotes, characterizations, and even text. In short, the tradition and the spurious fragments illustrate, quite wonderfully, the circular thought and logic of biographical methodology: the transformation of philosophical thought into physical reality has occurred by transforming the "author" of the *Greater World System* into a world traveler, with works and an autobiographical statement to prove it.

From travel, we turn to Democritus' family background. From Diogenes Laertius' account, we learn that the philosopher comes from a well-to-do, politically prominent family, as is usual in the biographies.[47] What is unusual is his account of the division of Democritus' paternal estate.

10. Being the third son, Democritus possessed his share of the family property. Most say he chose the smaller fortune, which was in money, for travel; besides, his brothers were crafty enough to see that this would be his choice. Demetrius estimates Democritus' share at over one hundred talents, the whole of which he spent. (DL 9.35–36).[48]

τρίτον τε ὄντα ἀδελφὸν νείμασθαι τὴν οὐσίαν· καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείους φασὶ τὴν ἐλάττω μοῖραν ἑλέσθαι τὴν ἐν ἀργυρίῳ, χρείαν ἔχοντα ἀποδημῆσαι, τοῦτο κἀκείνων δολίως ὑποπτευσάντων. ὁ δὲ Δημήτριος ὑπὲρ ἑκατὸν τάλαντά φησιν εἶναι αὐτῷ τὸ μέρος, ἃ πάντα καταναλῶσαι.

The first point to note about this anecdote is its etiological aspect; it does not simply support the tradition of extensive travel, but explains how travel was possible from a practical point of view.[49] Next, Democritus, as noted, comes from a privileged background. In the anecdote, he properly relinquishes both money and position for the sake of his work and research through travel. However, the anecdote cannot, strictly speaking, be identified as the usual topos of the philosopher's disdain for wealth,[50] since he does accept his share of the estate. Rather, his practical and research-oriented acceptance of the means to travel, are the concrete embodiment of sentiments expressed in his work.

11. He who chooses the values of the soul chooses things more divine, while he who chooses those of the body, chooses things more human. (fr. 37)

ὁ τὰ ψυχῆς ἀγαθὰ αἱρεόμενος τὰ θειότερα αἱρέεται· ὁ δὲ τὰ σκήνεος τὰ ἀνθρωπήϊα.

12. Fame and wealth without understanding are not secure possessions. (fr. 77)

δόξα καὶ πλοῦτος ἄνευ ξυνέσιος οὐκ ἀσφαλέα κτήματα.

13. Evil gains bring loss of virtue. (fr. 220)

κακὰ κέρδεα ζημίαν ἀρετῆς φέρει.

14. Hope of evil gains are the beginning of loss. (fr. 221)

ἐλπὶς κακοῦ κέρδεος ἀρχὴ ζημίης.

Another fragment speaks even more specifically to the situation at hand and further illuminates the anecdote. Here, Democritus talks about family finances and the problems entailed in settling an estate; the biographers, of course, took the statement as autobiographical.

15. For children, it is most necessary to divide property as far as possible, at the same time, to attend to them, so that they don't do some ruinous thing, from having it in their hands. For they become more miserly and more acquisitive, and compete with each other. And payments made in common don't distress as much as individual ones, nor the income cheer, but far less so. (fr. 279)

τοῖς παισὶ μάλιστα χρὴ τῶν ἀνυστῶν δατεῖσθαι τὰ χρήματα, καὶ ἅμα ἐπιμέλεσθαι αὐτῶν, μή τι ἀτηρὸν ποιέωσι διὰ χειρὸς ἔχοντες· ἅμα μὲν γὰρ πολλὸν φειδότεροι γίγνονται ἐς τὰ χρήματα καὶ προθυμότεροι κτᾶσθαι, καὶ ἀγωνίζονται ἀλλήλοισιν. ἐν γὰρ τῶι ξυνῶι τὰ τελεύμενα οὐκ ἀνιᾶι ὥσπερ ἰδίηι οὐδ' εὐθυμεῖ τὰ ἐπικτώμενα, ἀλλὰ πολλῶι ἧσσον.

Democritus' father, alas, seems to have acted without the benefit of his son's advice, and Democritus' prediction has come true. In the anecdote, his brothers have become more miserly and acquisitive; their "craftiness" manifests the truth of Democritus' statements.[51] The brothers' anecdotal greed was suggested to the biographers, no doubt, by those of Democritus' statements that address enmity within the family.

16. The hatred of kinsmen is far more painful than that of strangers. (fr. 90)

ἡ τῶν συγγενῶν ἔχθρη τῆς τῶν ὀθνείων χαλεπωτέρη μάλα.

17. Not all relatives are friends, only those who agree about what is advantageous. (fr. 107)

φίλοι οὐ πάντες οἱ ξυγγενέες, ἀλλ' οἱ ξυμφωνέοντες περὶ τοῦ ξυμφέροντος.

In the anecdote about division of the estate (citation **10**), the biographers show Democritus tricked and cheated out of his fair share by his brothers. This suggests not only his brothers' guile, but a certain impractical, abstract, or vague trait in Democritus' character; he did, after all, let himself be cheated, even if for a more glorious, less mercenary, end. These traits are brought out even more strongly in the next anecdote, which is also set among his family.

18. Democritus was so industrious that, appropriating a little house in the garden, he shut himself away there. Once, although his father led in a bull for sacrifice and tied it up in that very spot, Democritus was not aware of it for a considerable time, until his father, rousing him for the sacrifice, told him about the bull. (DL 9.36)

λέγει δὲ ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἦν φιλόπονος, ὥστε τοῦ περικήπου δωμάτιόν τι ἀποτεμόμενος κατάκλειστος ἦν· καί ποτε τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ πρὸς θυσίαν βοῦν ἀγαγόντος καὶ αὐτόθι προσδήσαντος, ἱκανὸν χρόνον μὴ γνῶναι, ἕως αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνος διαναστήσας προφάσει τῆς θυσίας καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν βοῦν διηγήσατο.

This industry or zeal for research and work is remarked upon several times in the biography. Diogenes Laertius takes the anecdote of citation **18** from Demetrius of Magnesia, and follows it with a second story from the same source.

19. It seems, Demetrius says, that Democritus went to Athens and was not eager for recognition, because he despised fame. And he knew of Socrates, but was not known to him, for as he says, "I went to Athens and no one knew me." (fr. 116 *ap.* DL 9.36)

δοκεῖ δέ, φησί, καὶ Ἀθήναζε ἐλθεῖν καὶ μὴ σπουδάσαι γνωσθῆναι δόξης καταφρονῶν. καὶ εἰδέναι μὲν Σωκράτη, ἀγνοεῖσθαι δὲ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· "ἦλθον γάρ, φησίν, εἰς Ἀθήνας καὶ οὔτις με ἔγνωκεν.

The connection between the two anecdotes is not immediately apparent and Diogenes Laertius' pairing of them has been criticized; his life of Democritus has been singled out as rambling and disjointed. Mejer describes it as "a series of excerpts: although the Life is rather long, it does not give a continuous biography of Democritus, but goes from one self-contained section to another . . . and it is not unreasonable to assume that this life, if any, illustrates Diogenes' working method and ability as a writer."[52] Elsewhere, unkind remarks have been made about "that scrapbook that goes by the name of Diogenes Laertius."[53] While it is true that Diogenes Laertius seems quite often to lump his material together without discernible connection (the pairing of citations **18** and **19** would seem to prove that point), the charges are not always justified. In this instance at least, Diogenes Laertius may have been guilty of a logical, connective lapse or, on the other hand, he may have assumed a better informed readership than he now possesses. The connection between the two anecdotes does, in fact, exist; we must simply turn to another source, Valerius Maximus, to find it. When this source speaks of Democritus' visit to Athens, he speaks not of Socrates and whether or not the two philosophers knew or knew of one another.[54] Instead, he tells us that Democritus was so busy with philosophical study and research that he forgot he was in Athens at all; the same scholarly zeal that led Democritus to overlook the bull in his garden study has led him to forget his situation in Athens as well. The point of both anecdotes, and Diogenes Laertius' joint presentation of them, is the philosophical devotion to work that precludes ordinary life and its mundane urban and rural realities. That the two anecdotes immediately follow Diogenes Laertius' story of the division of the estate further establishes Democritus' impractical or naive character. His use of them is neither random nor sloppy, but purposeful and associative; they further flesh out the character of Democritus as presented in the initial anecdote.[55]

Diogenes Laertius continues his exploration of the single-minded and intellectually zealous Democritus in his next passage, which introduces material from Thrasyllus to put forth his own estimation of Democritus' scholarly traits.

20. "If the *Rivals* is the work of Plato," Thrasyllus says, "then Democritus would be the unnamed character, different from those associates of Oenopides and Anaxagoras, when they talk with Socrates about philosophy, to whom he says that the philosopher is like the pentathlete. And he truly was a pentathlete in philosophy, for he had [trained in] not only the natural sciences and ethics, but also mathematics and the regular subjects and was an expert in arts." (DL 9.36)

εἴπερ οἱ Ἀντερασταὶ Πλάτωνός εἰσι, φησὶ Θρασύλος, οὗτος ἂν εἴη ὁ παραγενόμενος ἀνώνυμος, τῶν περὶ Οἰνοπίδην καὶ Ἀναξαγόραν ἕτερος, ἐν τῇι πρὸς Σωκράτην ὁμιλίαι διαλεγόμενος περὶ φιλοσοφίας, ᾗι φησίν, ὡς πεντάθλωι ἔοικεν ὁ φιλόσοφος [Anterast. p. 136A]. καὶ ἦν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν φιλοσοφίαι πένταθλος· τὰ γὰρ φυσικὰ καὶ τὰ ἠθικὰ <ἤσκητο>, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μαθηματικὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐγκυκλίους λόγους, καὶ περὶ τεχνῶν πᾶσαν εἶχεν ἐμπειρίαν'.

Democritus' intellectual industry and training seems to have made quite an impact upon all the biographers; the last three citations and their various authors all emphasize this trait. Turning to Democritus' work, we find several fragments that speak of the development of character, wisdom, and virtue through discipline, devotion, and application.

21. Toils undertaken willingly make the endurance of those done unwillingly easier. (fr. 240)

οἱ ἑκούσιοι πόνοι τὴν τῶν ἀκουσίων ὑπομονὴν ἐλαφροτέρην παρασκευάζουσι.

22. Continuous labor becomes easier through habit. (fr. 241)

πόνος συνεχὴς ἐλαφρότερος ἑαυτοῦ συνηθείηι γίνεται.

23. More men become good through practice than through nature. (fr. 242)

πλέονες ἐξ ἀσκήσιος ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται ἢ ἀπὸ φύσιος.

There is, of course, a price to be paid for the eulogy that Democritus almost universally achieves for his intellectual effort. Three of the anecdotes gently satirize his devotion to work by presenting its absurd consequences: Democritus, through his zeal to travel and study, accepts a lesser

share of the inheritance, does not notice he is sharing quarters with a bull, and forgets that he is in Athens.[56] Democritus, even for a philosopher, is unusually absentminded. His much praised intellectual zeal also allows the biographers to elaborate in their anecdotes on a favorite biographical topos, that of the absentminded philosopher.

This topos is widely used to characterize philosophers as unworldly, impractical, distracted men whose great knowledge has no practical grounding and that, in fact, often leads to absurd and sometimes dangerous situations: Thales falls into a well while gazing at the stars; engaged in the same pursuit, Anaxamines falls to his death.[57] And while the topos doubtless originates from the more hostile tradition of biography, the tone is satirical rather than condemnatory. At times it is a tone of affection or a gentle mocking, a far cry from a philosopher covered with dung.[58] Happily, these anecdotes are balanced by those of the philosopher's revenge, in which these great and impractical thinkers turn their knowledge into practical, material gain. Both Thales and Democritus are to confound their (biographical) critics by turning their abstract meteorological knowledge into concrete gain: they predict a bumper crop in olives, monopolize the presses, and corner the market in olive oil.[59] For all scholars who have fallen, at least metaphorically, into wells and over cliffs, the revenge is sweet indeed.

Democritus' absentmindedness, presented here as the result of his scholarly zeal, places him into more serious difficulties when he returns from his travels, however. As Diogenes Laertius tells us, the problems begin when Democritus returns to the family estates.

24. Antisthenes says that, returning from his travels, Democritus lived in a desperately poor way, because he had used up all his property. He was kept, during his poverty, by his brother Damasus. . . . According to existing law, no one who had squandered his inheritance could receive burial within his homeland. Antisthenes says that Democritus, hearing this, and to avoid becoming vulnerable to jealous and slanderous people, read to them the *Greater World System*, which surpassed all his other works. He was honored with five hundred talents and not only with that, but with bronze statues also and when he died, they buried him at public expense, having lived over a century. (DL 9.39–40)[60]

ἐλθόντα δή φησιν αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀποδημίας ταπεινότατα διάγειν, ἅτε πᾶσαν τὴν οὐσίαν καταναλωκότα· τρέφεσθαί τε διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν ἀπὸ

τἀδελφοῦ Δαμάσου . . . νόμου δὲ ὄντος τὸν ἀναλώσαντα τὴν πατρώιαν οὐσίαν μὴ ἀξιοῦσθαι ταφῆς ἐν τῆι πατρίδι, φησὶν ὁ Ἀντισθένης, συνέντα, μὴ ὑπεύθυνος γενηθείη πρός τινων φθονούντων καὶ συκοφαντούντων, ἀναγνῶναι αὐτοῖς τὸν Μέγαν διάκοσμον, ὃς ἁπάντων αὐτοῦ τῶν συγγραμμάτων προέχει· καὶ πεντακοσίοις ταλάντοις τιμηθῆναι· μὴ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαλκαῖς εἰκόσι· καὶ τελευτήσαντα δημοσίαι ταφῆναι. βιώσαντα ὑπὲρ τὰ ἑκατὸν ἔτη.

The anecdote continues to elaborate on the theme of absentmindedness introduced by Diogenes Laertius earlier, for Democritus' devotion to work, travel, and study have once again led him into a perilous, and this time potentially humiliating, position. This anecdote introduces another variant of the topos, in which the consequences of the philosopher's ideas rebound against him to devastating effect. Not only is Democritus reduced to depending upon his brother, he may even be denied proper burial for having wasted or squandered his inheritance, which mocks Democritus' words of warning (citation **15**) on the perils of inheritance. Other fragments warned of the evils of money for its own sake and advised the laying up of spiritual, rather than material, gain. Democritus' words have now rebounded upon him with a vengeance.[61] Other of his fragments tell of the danger good men encounter from lesser, envious men and the proper response to them.

25. When lesser men find fault, the good man makes no reply. (fr. 48)

μωμεομένων φλαύρων ὁ ἀγαθὸς οὐ ποιεῖται λόγον.

26. It is better to question one's own mistakes than those of others. (fr. 60)

κρέσσον τὰ οἰκήϊα ἐλέγχειν ἁμαρτήματα ἢ τὰ ὀθνεῖα.

27. The law would not prevent each man from living according to his inclination, unless individuals harmed each other; for envy creates the beginnings of strife. (fr. 245)

οὐκ ἂν ἐκώλυον οἱ νόμοι ζῆν ἕκαστον κατ᾽ ἰδίην ἐξουσίην, εἰ μὴ ἕτερος ἕτερον ἐλυμαίνετο· φθόνος γὰρ στάσιος ἀρχὴν ἀπεργάζεται.

Democritus' strictures against the envious and the unjust have obviously come home to roost. Worse, he is made to betray his own notion of

the good man (citation **25**) by responding to the threat. He does manage, however, to act in accordance with his notion of the intelligent man, as the following shows.

28. It is the work of intelligence to guard against a threatened injustice, but the mark of insensibility not to avenge it when it has occurred. (fr. 193)

φρονήσιος ἔργον μέλλουσαν ἀδικίην φυλάξασθαι, ἀναλγησίης δὲ [τὸ] γενομένην μὴ ἀμύνασθαι.

Democritus manages to defeat the unjust, the unscrupulous, and the jealous, yet in a way that negates much of his ethical code, not least his philosophical insistence upon the spiritual and ethical, rather than the material, world. Much that is negative is implied here: Democritus' squandering of his inheritance (itself a standard topos of abuse[62]), his panic at the possibility of prosecution, the "selling" of his greatest work in return for legal and material considerations, and, as we will see, an unseemly concern for the disposition of his physical remains. Yet, in another sense, we see again that the absentminded and impractical philosopher has managed to turn his abstract thought into concrete gain, with here even a promise of posthumous honors.[63] This latest anecdote, then, falls ultimately into the larger, more favorable tradition of biography and the tradition of the philosopher's revenge. But here too we must note the unusual emphasis on financial details that plague all these anecdotes and Democritus' biography in general.[64]

No other early philosopher is so burdened with anecdotes that revolve around his financial state; certainly, no other philosopher accepts money in return for his philosophy, as does Democritus for the reading of "his" work.[65] The biographers might be able to accept Democritus' inherited wealth as an explanation for his extended travel (a squalid means to a noble end) and he does, after all, mention estates and their division in his work in statements that beg for autobiographical interpretation. What the biographers cannot accept, however, is a philosopher openly concerned with finance, a concern indicated in the fragments previously mentioned. Democritus' practical and, to us quite proper, concern for finance, inheritance, and income, runs counter to the well-established biographical notion of noble poverty (rendered even more noble since it occurs by choice and not necessity, as in the life of Heraclitus and Empedocles). Democritus, in his work, does not

display the traditional contempt for money the biographers demanded from their philosophers, but a rather more commonsense approach to the matter, which apparently the biographers found both notable and impossible to forgive. In citation **24,** therefore, he is punished by threats of ostracism and public disgrace, a pariah's death, an expatriate burial, and prostitution of his philosophical work. It is a minor triumph, indeed, when the favorable tradition buys him rescue, when his abstract knowledge turns practical and allows him revenge over his enemies.

The next anecdote reveals more about Democritus' reputation as a philosopher than his family, although it too takes place in connection with his brother Damasus. While reporting Antisthenes' account of Democritus' life after traveling, Diogenes Laertius interrupts his account to include certain other events that took place at or about the same time.

29. Because Democritus foretold certain future events, his estimation rose, and finally he was held by the people as worthy of the honors of a god. (DL 9.39)

ὡς δὲ προειπών τινα τῶν μελλόντων εὐδοκίμησε, λοιπὸν ἐνθέου δόξης παρὰ τοῖς πλείστοις ἠξιώθη.

Diogenes Laertius does not, at this point, tell us what those predictions were, but we may assume that they were of benefit to the whole community, since it was the whole community who honored him. Hicks suggests that "future events" were weather or seasonal predictions, in which case they could then be those same predictions that allowed Democritus to corner the olive market.[66] On the other hand, a similar group of stories, not mentioned by Diogenes Laertius, suggests other predictions and other reasons for honor.[67]

In the first, Democritus (once again) resides with his brother Damasus as the time for harvest approaches. Noting the unusually hot and heavy wind, Democritus urges Damasus to harvest his crops immediately. Damasus follows his advice and saves his harvest just before a terrible storm breaks. In a second story, Democritus' hometown of Abdera is beset with plague and Democritus, by charming the wind, cleanses the city.

While the predictions made in either story could be enough to increase Democritus' reputation and therefore lead to public honor, the first story refers to benefits conferred only upon his brother, while the second speaks of benefits for the community. Predictions such as these, while common

33. Kahn 1979, 243–58; Kirk 1962, 14–16, 378.

34. Plato *Cra.* 401D, 402A = DK 22A6; see also *Theat.* 160D.

35. In this passage, Socrates and Cratylus discuss the theory and the flux, and Socrates sums up his opinion as follows: "[Such men who think] that there is nothing sound, but that all things flow like leaky pots, are just like people suffering from a cold and a runny nose who believe that things are in their condition, and that everything is subject to rheum and dripping" (*Cra.* 440C).

36. Aristotle himself reacted to this interpretation of the fragment and made explicit, as Kirk remarks, its implicit problems: our own common sense and visual perceptions argue against a universe where stationary objects are seen to be immobile and not in a state of change. See Aristotle *Phys.* 8.3, 253b9; G. S. Kirk, "Natural Change in Heraclitus," in *The Pre-Socratics,* ed. A. P. D. Mourelatos (New York, 1974), 189–95 and 1961, 109; Dilcher 1995, 161.

37. Kahn (1979, 21) believes Theophrastus' frustration comes from his problems with the content, that is, with the argument itself, while Kirk and Raven (1981) think the problem may lie with the state of the manuscript. See also K. Reinhardt, "Heraklits Lehre vom Feuer," *Hermes* 77 (1942): 24.

38. Aristotle *E. N.* 7. 8, 1150b25; see Kirk 1962, 8; K. Deichgraber, "Bermerkungen zu Diogenes' Bericht über Heraklit," *Philologus* 93 (1938): 12 and 21. There is little discussion of melancholy in the ancient world before Aristotle. One of Hippocrates' very few remarks on the subject points out the effect of summer drought on the bilious. The onset of melancholy, which, from his remarks, seems a fairly rare occurrence, is accompanied by dry eyes and lengthy bouts of severe fever. This seems more akin to the brain storm or intellectual flightiness that Theophrastus describes than despondency or depression (Hippocrates *Aer.* 10). Manic/depressive states, then as now, were often associated with genius; Aristotle probed the link between genius and madness in *Problemata* 30. Empedocles, Plato, and Socrates were all considered melancholy-mad, while Democritus was considered a manic type. See B. Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, 1978), 151, n.49, 229, and 322, n.11. We should also note that distinctive character traits, such as misanthropy, melancholy, or arrogance, were considered grounds for fame by Diogenes Laertius and as such would be eagerly included and discussed; see Hope, 1930, 149–50.

39. This characterization of Democritus will be discussed in chapter 3. For Heraclitus' characterizations as "gloomy," see A. M. G. Gomez, *The Legend of the Laughing Philosopher and its Presence in Spanish Literature* (Cordoba, 1984), iii; Kahn 1979, 1 and n.16; C. E. Lutz, "Democritus and Heraclitus," *Classical Journal* 49 (1954), 313. See also Lucian's comic description of his meeting with Heraclitus, which satirizes both Heraclitean thought and character, *Vit. auct.* 15 = DK 22C5. A similar process of biographical simplification took place in the life of Euripides, see Lefkowitz 1981, 89. On this point and for the contrasting characterization of Democritus, see Gomez 1984, 2–18; Bell 1978, 58; A. Buck, "Democritus ridens et Heraclitus flens," *Wort und Text: Zeitschrift fur Fritz Salk* (Frankfurt, 1963), 169–80.

40. For the tendency toward comic caricatures, see Bell 1978, 58; Wehrli 1973, 208; Momigliano 1971, 84. For biographical lives written to fit into schematized patterns, see Bell 1978, 56. That the preferred material within these schematized lives are sensational and negative, see Lefkowitz 1981, 100; M. Delcourt, "Biographies

anciennes d'Euripides," *Antiquité Classique* 2 (1953): 286. For the tendency toward philosophical mockery, see Z. Stewart, "Democritus and the Cynics," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958): 185; Stuart 1967, 139–40; G. C. Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace* (Madison, 1929), 158–60, 229.

41. Plutarch *de. garr.* 17, 511B; Themistius *de virt.*, both = DK 22A3, b. For this anecdote, see S. N. Mouraview, "The Moving Posset Once More: Heraclitus' fr. 125B in Context," *Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996) 34–43.

42. Kirk 1962, 13; K. Freeman 1966, 105. Naturally, the topos is reversed here to show Heraclitus as the philosopher who refused to help his state. The reversal emphasizes the extreme misanthropy of Heraclitus' character and the hostility of the biographers.

43. Kirk 1962, 13.

44. Kirk 1962, 51.

45. These philosophical topoi are discussed at greater length later in this chapter. K. Freeman (1966, 105) notes that the anecdote about the mixed drink is a typical story of the wise man who helps his country during the war as, for example, in Diogenes Laertius, do Thales (DL 1.25), Solon (DL 1.46), and Pythagoras (DL 8.40); the war in question was with Persia. I take the anecdote as a hostile inversion of the standard theme. For discussion of the topos generally, see R. Lattimore, "The Wise Advisor in Herodotus," *Classical Philology* 34 (1939): 24–28.

46. Kindstrand 1986, 219.

47. Fairweather 1974, 266–68. We have, for example, Anaxagoras' response to his death sentence, "Long ago nature condemned both my judges and myself to death." This is a statement also attributed to Solon and to Xenophon; see DL 2.13.

48. Diogenes Laertius 2.7: "Anaxagoras, known for his theories on astronomy, as he grew old, retired from public life and gave himself up to his physical speculation. When someone asked if he had no interest in his native land, he replied that he was greatly interested in it and pointed to the sky." Remarks of this sort can either be ethical in import (Wehrli 1973, 206) or summarize, as here, the speaker's philosophical doctrine (Bell 1978, 46 n. 55).

49. Speech and hearing, like sight, are useless without the interpretation of a wise and knowledgeable soul; see Kirk 1962, 376; H. D. Rankin, "Limits on Perception and Cognition in Heraclitus' Fragments," *Elenchos* 16 (1995): 241–52. The silent philosopher probably makes an analogue to the excessively serious, sober philosophical types such as Pythagoras, Empedocles, Zeno of Citium, and Plato; see Hope 1930, 150; DL 7.18 and 3.26. Plato's sobriety and an alleged preference for solitude are based at least partly on the biographical figure of Heraclitus; see Riginos 1976, 151.

50. H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Baltimore, 1935), 356. Although Cherniss speaks specifically about Aristotle, the method was used by both critics and biographers as well.

51. A. M. Battegazzore (*Gestualita e oracolarita in Eraclito* [Genoa, 1979], 43) uses this fragment (fr. 125, citation 15) to suggest that Heraclitus worked, i. e., composed and taught, as a mime, a theory which has not been well received; see M. Marcovich, "Battegazzore," *Gnomen* 54 (1982): 380.

52. The work itself will be discussed in a separate section in this chapter.

53. Riginos 1976, 15–21; Hope 1930, 146; Stuart 1967, 215. The rubric of an

unusual childhood may conform to a schema drawn from preestablished patterns of heroic lives; see Lefkowitz 1981, 93.

54. Wehrli 1973, 195; Stuart 1921, 216. Diogenes Laertius also reverses this topos to emphasize the eccentricity of Heraclitus' character, see further in this chapter.

55. Hope 1930, 99; Delatte 1922, 46. See, however, the view that proper interpretation of the Heraclitean fragments depend on this (biographical) misanthropy, a view that, among other things, denies abstract thought to Heraclitus, G. Moyal, "On Heraclitus' Misanthropy," *Revue de philosophie ancienne* 7 (1989): 131–48.

56. Fairweather 1974, 263.

57. Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 203; Fairweather 1974, 262.

58. Lefkowitz 1981, 77; Cherniss 1935, 320–24; Stuart 1967, 174.

59. Socrates and Archelaus (DL 9.19) and Empedocles and Pausanias (DL 8.60), are only a few of the figures so linked; see Owens 1983, 17; Stuart 1928, 149.

60. Within such a hostile biographical tradition, it may seem surprising that no use at all is made of this most common form of biographical abuse. Heraclitus, however, was perceived as too much the misanthropic loner for such an assertion to fit within the lines of his biographical character. Szegedy-Maszak (1978, 202) demonstrates the logical consistency that exists within the biographical scheme, even in cases such as this.

61. For Xenophanes' criticism of Pythagoras, see DL 9.19 = DK 21B7; for Heraclitus, see citation **2,** within which, however, he also criticizes Xenophanes. Both philosophers were critical of Homer and Hesiod (Xenophanes, DK 21B11; Heraclitus, citations **2** and **4**). Finally, both Heraclitus and Xenophanes share a free-floating anecdote of the bon mot kind: Xenophanes, when asked by the Eleans if they should sacrifice to the white goddess and whether they should lament or not, advised them that if they considered her a god, they should not lament and that if they considered her mortal, they should not sacrifice (Aristotle *Rhet.* B 26 1400 b 5 = DK 22A13; Kirk and Raven 1981, 166).

62. Barnes 1982, 83; H. Cherniss, "The Characteristics and Effects of Presocratic Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1951): 334; Burnet 1945, 112.

63. Heraclitus shares this state only with Thales (DL 1.27), that is, only with the philosopher who by virtue and necessity of being Greece's first philosopher could not have had a teacher.

64. Kirk (1962, 6) notes that Heraclitus' statement that he "knew nothing" was later in fact associated with Socrates; see Plutach *adv. Col.* 1118C, where Heraclitus' fr. 101, citation **27,** is compared to the Delphic "know thyself," and to Socrates' inquiry into the nature of man. Fr. 50, citation **23,** must also have played some part in its formation, as would his biographical arrogance to know everything in his adult state.

65. See the discussion of fr. 41, citation **3.** See also Dilcher 1995, 45; H. D. Rankin, "Heraclitus on Conscious and Unconscious States," *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica* 50 (1995): 77–78; and E. Hussey, "Heraclitus on Living and Dying," *The Monist* 74, no. 4 (1991): 522–24.

66. See Pritzl 1985, 308; S. Scolnicov, "I Searched Myself," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 7 (1983): 1–13; and Kirk and Raven 1981, 212–14, for agreement on interpretation of fr. 101, citation **22,** but see also Kahn 1979, 116. Kahn sees in the fragment a

statement of personal alienation and the importance of self-knowledge, rather than knowledge of the Logos that comes from within.

67. The problems of Heraclitus' book, and indeed its very existence, have occasioned much debate, ranging from no book at all, to Battagazorre's belief that Heraclitus wrote no book because he was a mime (note 48 in this chapter), and Kirk (1962, 7), who conjectures a series of gnomic orally delivered statements, to Diels (*Herakleitos von Ephesos,* 2nd edition. [Berlin, 1909], viii) who hypothesizes a commonplace book in which Heraclitus jotted down random thoughts, to Kahn (1979, 3–9), who supports a deliberate literary composition, stylistically comparable to the work of Aeschylus and Pindar. Like Kahn, I believe the book to have been a deliberate, structured work, the internal, thematic logic and unity of which can be demonstrated through examination of the fragments that are themselves the result of a deliberately ambiguous and quite beautiful style; see notes 85–87.

68. D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca, 1983), 82 and n.1; Kirk 1962, 7. Diogenes Laertius' own introduction to the work seems hesitant and vague; Hicks' translation is just right: "in the work that passes as his . . ."

69. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedly, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1987), 326; Deichgraber 1983, 18–20. Kahn, who disagrees with Deichgraber and thinks Diogenes Laertius' remarks are a valid description of the work, feels that a better sense of it is rendered by translating it as, "the work falls naturally into three discourses, on the universe, on politics [and ethics], and on theology." Kahn (1979, 8–9) argues that there exists no Stoic classification which could combine the three subclassifications of politics, physics, and theology, and that politics must instead be understood to include ethics as well. See also S. N. Mouraview, "Titres et Articulations du Texte dans les Oeuvres Antiques," *Collection des Études Augustiniennes* 152 (1994): 35–53.

70. In 9.22, this remark is attributed to Socrates. The dual attribution is discussed later in this section.

71. Lefkowitz 1987, 153; Kirk, 1962, 8–10.

72. Kirk 1962, 10. See the discussion of citation **14** and note 32 in this chapter and the discussions of citations **46–49**. For Heraclitus' death by "drowning," see Diogenes Laertius' epigram upon his death, citation **65.** The fact that it needed a Delian diver may also have had special significance; see the discussion of citation **31.**

73. *Oxford Classical Dictionary,* ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (New York, 1996): 972.

74. Strabo 3.5.9.

75. There is a further problem, however. Crates of Mallos lived some centuries after Heraclitus and so could scarcely have introduced the book into Greece, although he might well have quoted from it. Probably, either Croton or Diogenes Laertius himself is confusing Crates of Mallos with the Athenian comic poet Crates, giving us a perfect comic source for the remark. The confusion between men of the same name is by no means uncommon in biography; see, for example, the tragedies attributed to Empedocles the philosopher but actually written by his grandson discussed in chapter 1, citations **1** and **23.**

76. Lefkowitz 1987, 153–59.

77. J. Fairweather, "Traditional Narratives, Influence, and Truth in the Lives of the

Greek Poets, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 4 (1983): 256; on the tendency to portray doctrines as individuals, see Lefkowitz 1981, 128 and van Groningen 1965, 48.

78. Although they are a standard rubric of his biographies, Diogenes Laertius collects an unusually large number of such bon mots for Socrates, reinforcing the notion that much of his material was collected with as much an eye toward entertainment as education. For example, when Socrates' wife Xanthippe complains that he suffers unjustly, Socrates replies, "Why, would you have me suffer justly?" (DL 2.35) For jokes as a standard part of Diogenes Laertius' biographies, see Hope 1930, 172–74; Delatte 1922, 56. For entertainment values in the biographies, see Lefkowitz 1981, 100; Wehrli 1973, 208; Delcourt 1933, 286.

79. Kirk 1962, 10; Plato *Soph.* 24D = DK A10.

80. DL 4.24. Kahn, however, finds the story plausible precisely because there are so many parallels to the story (1979, 2 and n.4). See, on this point, Fairweather 1974, 251–52, for discussion of the association of famous men with famous towns and temples. For the dedication of books, a discussion of the topos, and a list of other famous offerings, e.g., Xenocrates dedication of his calculations for the height of a mountain, see W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge, 1902), 64.

81. Kirk 1962, 8. I think that the comment reflects intellectual abilities, rather than socioeconomic ones. Otherwise, I agree with Kirk in finding the comment, as he does the biography as a whole, a reaction to the work.

82. Kirk 1962, 8.

83. Kirk and Raven (1981, 184), for example, find the charge valid, as does Kahn (1979, 99), although for different reasons. See, however, J. Mansfeld, "Insight by Hindsight: Intentional Unclarity in the Presocratic Proems," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 40 (1991): 226. Mansfeld argues that archaic philosophers (specifically Empedocles and Heraclitus) blended the proem purposes identified by Aristotle *Rhet.* g. 1415a22–23 (an announcement of the subject or theme, and as a means to influence or attract the public) and thus were criticized as obscure or unclear.

84. Pritzl 1985, 304; see also Guthrie 1962, vol. 1, 419; Kahn 1979, 92 and n.51, 270–71; E. Hussey, *The Presocratics* (London, 1972), 57–59.

85. Pritzl 1985, 303 and n.4.

86. As does Dilcher 1995, 14–20; see also Mansfeld, 225–32; 133–36. For the archaic, as opposed to classical, nature of the Heraclitean statements, see Reinhardt 1916, 53–64; F. Dornseiff, *Pindars Stil* (Berlin, 1921), 66; B. Snell, "Die Sprache Heraklits," *Hermes* 61 (1926): 357.

87. See the discussion of Heraclitus' "melancholy" and his reputation as the "weeping philosopher" earlier in this chapter.

88. Kahn 1979, 123–24; Kirk 1962, 118; Cherniss 1951, 331. See also Mansfeld 1991, 231, with words that specifically comment upon the proem of Parmenides, perfectly describe Heraclitean intent, as discussed elsewhere in his article, "Why not just admit that these lines are intentionaly obscure and can only be understood, if at all, by someone who has understood the doctrine of the proem as a whole?"

89. Of course, these details may also have occurred in Hermippus and Neanthes and Diogenes Laertius simply chose not to repeat them.

90. DK 22A1a substitutes sand for dung; see citations **73–75.**

91. H. Fränkel, "A Thought Pattern in Heraclitus," *American Journal of Philology* 59 (1938): 309–37.

92. For interpretations of the Logos, see E. L. Minar, "The Logos of Heraclitus," *Classical Philology* 34 (1939): 324–41; Kirk 1962, 62; W. Schadewaldt, *Die Anfänge der Philosophie bei den Greichen* (Frankfurt, 1978); E. Kurtz, *Interpretationen zu den Logos-Fragmenten Heraklits* (Hildesheim, 1971); Dilcher 1995, 45.

93. In Diogenes Laertius, exile (involuntary and voluntary) occurs for Thales (1.22), Aeschines of Sphettus (2.63), Stilpon (2.116), Plato (3.3), Theophrastus (5.38), Diogenes (6.20), Empedocles (8.52 and 57). Epimenides enjoys a rather unique form of exile; he slept for over fifty years (1.109). For exile and travel as topoi, see Lefkowitz 1981, 95 and 128; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202; Riginos 1976, 161; Fairweather 1974, 268. For the connections, allegorical and philosophic, of sleep and death in Heraclitus, see Hussey 1991, 518; H. Granger, "The Other Kingdom: Heraclitus on the Life of the Foolish and the Wise," *Classical Philology* 95 (2000): 260–81.

94. The philosophers in Diogenes Laertius who travel include Solon (1.50), Epicharmus (8.78), Xenophanes (2.49), Plato (3.5), Democritus (9.53), Bion (4.53), Aristotle (5.1), Pythagoras (8.2), Eudoxus (8.86).

95. Exile or some sort of withdrawn solitude, physical, intellectual, or medial (sleeping), also gives a god or muse the chance to appear, as when Athena visits Zaleucos in a dream (Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 205). Democritus prayed for such visits and wandered around remote places hoping to receive them, see citations **40, 41, 42** in chapter 3 in this volume. Plato was visited by the emissary of the Muses, the bees who sat upon his lips; Riginos (1976, 17–18) notes that this "portent of poetic eloquence" is transferred from poetic to philosophic biography.

96. Fairweather 1974, 268; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202.

97. See Owens 1983, 15, for the notion that hatred of one's city or of the people constitutes a standard means of abuse for the philosophers.

98. Could the biographers have also had in mind Aristotle's definition of human as social animals (*Politics* 1.1253)? In view of Theophrastus' importance to the biographical tradition, and both Theophrastus' and Aristotle's less than objective attitude toward earlier philosophers, I think it not unlikely. On their influence, see J. B. McDiarmid, "Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes," in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, ed. R. E. Allen and David Furley (London, 1973), 178–328; Diels 1979, 1–25; Kirk 1962, 19–30; Cherniss 1935, 347–74. Certainly, the dogs seem to mistake him as such; see the discussion of citation **32** later in this chapter.

99. For symptoms, discussion, and treatment of edema in ancient medicine, see E. D. Phillips, *Greek Medicine* (London, 1973), 154. See also Caelius Aurelianus, *Chronic Diseases* III, 8.122; Celsus *de medicina* III, 21; Galen XVIII, A 39K. For Diogenes Laertius' language here, see Kirk 1962, 6–7.

100. Citations **32–65.**

101. R. Muth, "Der Forschungsbericht Herakleitos," *Anzeiger fur die Altertumswissenschaft* 7 (1954): 87 discusses both the medical treatment and Heraclitus' death; M. L. West, however, is very critical of the theory, see *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford, 1971), 198.

102. Fairweather 1974, 238.

103. Kirk 1962, 5; Kirk and Raven (1981, 183) believe the story to be based on fr. 96, citation 53, Fränkel (1938, 310) believes it to be based on the theory of exhalations. West (1971, 198–99) criticizes both these interpretations. For Diogenes Laertius' discussion of the theory of exhalations, see the discussion of citation **54** in this chapter.

104. The same reductionism occurs for other early philosophers also. For example, water was identified as Thales' principle material, as was air for Anaximenes, see Aristotle *Met.* A3 983b-984a; Theophrastus *Phys. Opin.* fr. 1 *ap.* Simplicius *Phys.* 23, 33, both = DK 22A5. See also Cherniss 1935, ch. 7; 1951, 321–31; Dilcher 1995, 161.

105. See Kahn 1979, 141, 137; Kirk 1962, 19–20, 270–77; Dilcher 1995, 182.

106. Kahn 1979, 314; McDiarmid 1979, 174–84; Kirk 1962, 314.

107. For arguments for and against *ekpyrosis* in Heraclitus, see Reinhardt 1942, 163–80; Kirk 1962, 245; Kahn 1979, 134; Dilcher 1995, 57; see also Aryeh Finkelberg, "On Cosmology and Ecpyrosis in Heraclitus," *American Journal of Philology* 119 (1998): 195–222. For the death of a watery soul, and the confusion between cosmic elements and those of the human body, see Dilcher 1995, 182ff. See also Mouraview 1999, T1–8 and T153–65.

108. See Kahn 1979, 45–47 for text and translation, 138–44 for interpretation; Kirk 1962, 194; 1962, 325–27 for text and translation, 329–35 for interpretation.

109. Riginos 1976, 195, n.8, and see note 67 in this chapter.

110. See the discussion of fr. 58, citation **50.**

111. Discussion of the theory and problems of interpretation are found in Osborne 1987, 143–53; Kahn 1979, 148–50; Kirk 1962, 89–96; Cherniss 1951, 331–33.

112. Kahn 1979, 94; 1985, 241–43.

113. Aristotle criticizes Heraclitus for denying the law of contradictions in *Top.* 5, 155b30; *Phys.* A2, 185b19; *Met.* G 3, 10005b23; see also Hippolytus frr. 57, 58; Simplicius *Phys.* p. 50, 10; p. 82, 20 Diels.

114. The reason for this is twofold. First, the material necessary for his death existed only in his philosophy; second, no other philosopher seems to have antagonized the biographers to the extent that Heraclitus did, see I Nareki, "Heraclite d'Ephese dans la legende antique," *Roczniki humanistyczne* 31 (1983): 19. Other philosophers do share similar deaths: Stilpon, Arcesilaus, and Chrysippus die from overindulgence of wine, while Plato, Speucippus, and many, many others die of ptheiresis, lice disease. Plutarch compiled a list, in fact, of famous men who died of lice disease (*Sulla* 36, 5–6). See also Riginos 1976, 194–97; Hope 1930, 162–68.

115. Apollonius of Tyana, Epictetus, Ameinias, and Diogenes all enjoyed cult status after death, see Nock 1933, ch. 11.

116. Lefkowitz 1981, 97 n.46; Kirk 1962, 6. Heraclitus' burial in the agora and his cult status depend in part on his descent from a royal family (Kahn 1979, 1–2); see also Strabo 14.25; Pindar (*Pythean* 5.93) tells us that the kings of Cyrene were buried in the agora also. For posthumous cult status and worship for philosophers and others, see J. P. Dumont, "Les modeles de conversion a la philosophie chez Diogene Laerce," *Augustinus* 23 (1987): 175–76; G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1981), 221; H. Lloyd-Jones, "Modern Interpretations of Pindar: The Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973): 197; W. Burkert, "Das Prooimium des Parmenides," *Phronesis* 14 (1969): 27.

117. For the reversal of public opinion that occurs in the lives of Homer, Aeschy-

lus, Sophocles, and Euripides, which may reflect the influence of Greek heroes' lives, see Lefkowitz 1981, 97. Philosophers who undergo this reversal are listed in note 108 in this chapter.

118. For this tendency in the live of poets and philosophers and the ambiguous attitude of the biographers, see Lefkowitz 1981, 97; Riginos 1976, 199 and n. 5.

119. The few exceptions to the hostile tradition of Heraclitean biography are seen in citation **65,** discussed at the end of this chapter, and in the alternate sanitized version of his death that occurs in the *Suda* (= DK 22A1a); there, Heraclitus is buried not in dung but in sand. The anecdote told of Heraclitus by Aristotle, discussed subsequently, may be favorable, or at least neutral. For discussion of the hostile and favorable traditions and a tentative explanation for both, see Nareki 1983, 19.

120. See Kahn 1979, 175; but see the rather different use Plato makes of the sentiment in the *Republic* 2.375A.

121. West 1971, 196–202.

122. J. Fairweather, "The Death of Heraclitus," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 114 (1973): 233–39. See also Lefkowitz 1981, 90; Kindstrand 1984, 159; Kahn 1979, 10–21.

123. For Stoic and Perpatetic interpretations of this fragment and on the danger of an inattentive reading of Diogenes Laertius, see the discussion in Dilcher 1995, 164–68.

124. For the attribution of the epigram, and the discussion of it as a typical Stoic allegory, see the discussion in Dilcher 1995, 191–94. For Heraclitean allegory in the context of archaic literature, see Tate 1934, 105–14; see also "Allegory I," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* ed. J. Geffken, 327–31 (Edinburgh, 1980).

125. Kirk 1962, 12; Dilcher 1995, 182.

126. Dilcher 1995, 15.

127. See the discussion in Dilcher 1995, 183, for the approximation of the elements of the physical cosmos to the humors of the human body.

CHAPTER THREE

1. The most accessible introduction to Democritus' text and its problems is found in K. Freeman 1966, 293–99. Many consider the best introduction to the problem of the fragments still to be found in the discussion in P. Natorp, *Die Ethica des Demokritos, Text und Untersuchungen* (Marbug, 1893). See also Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 238; C. Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (Oxford, 1928), 2–12; W. Schmid and O. Stahlin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Munich, 1929), 353.

2. Democritus, like Empedocles and Heraclitus, uses the first person in his writing, which contributes immensely to the biographical data generated from his work. See Lefkowitz 1981, 25, 31, 49, 57; Gentili and Cerri 1988, 73. For Democritus' self-dating, see DK 68B5 = DL 9.41. For the date given by Apollodorus, see Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 386 n.2, for although Guthrie agrees with this date, he finds it "suspiciously Apollodorean," in that Apollodorus liked to space generations of philosophers at forty-year intervals. See also Barnes 1982, 306–7; Kirk and Raven 1981, 400–404.

3. The few sources that speak of him as Milesian no doubt reference his intellec-

tual origins as Ionian; see Kirk and Raven 1981, 401; Bailey 1928, 109. For a similar attempt in the life of Leucippus, see McDiarmid 1973, 178–28.

4. DK 68A2, 3, 4b, 6, and 7; DL 9.34.

5. Valerius Maximus 8.7.4. For the problems with dating, see Bailey 1928, 110. There is, in fact, little support for this story, although some would gloss the chronological inconsistencies by the early influence of the Magi on a young and impressionable mind. Most often, however, the tradition of the Magi and Chaldaeans is used to support stories of Democritus' magic powers, as we will see.

6. For the problem with dating, see Bailey 1928, 110.

7. Fairweather 1974, 267. For the influence, real or imagined, of the east upon the archaic philosophers, see Kirk and Raven 1981, 77; West 1971, 3.

8. See the discussion of Empedocles and Pausanias in chapter 1 (DL 8.60–61); on this topic, see also Gentili and Cerri 1988, 72; Lefkowitz 1981, 131; Bell 1978, 62.

9. Kirk and Raven 1981, 404 and n.1; K. Freeman 1966, 290. The problem was even acknowledged by Diogenes Laertius; at the end of his life of Democritus, Diogenes Laertius states that some are compilations and not genuine. On this matter, see Aulus Gellius *NA* 10.12.

10. Note that in the *Amatores*, 132A, Dionysus is not specifically mentioned as Plato's teacher, but simply as a teacher; see Riginos 1976, 40 and n.8. The tradition of Oenopides and Democritus could easily arise from this same text for, in the dialogue, Socrates converses with Anaxagoras, Oenopides, and an "unnamed character," who Diogenes Laertius identifies as Democritus. He bases his identification on Socrates' comparison of philosophers and athletes; the characterization of Democritus as athlete occurs in 9.37 and is discussed in citation **20.**

11. Aetius 2.12.2, 2.32.2; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.17.31; all = DK 41A7.

12. Diogenes Laertius' phrasing here is extremely suspicious; he is rather more vague than usual, stating that, "and indeed he mentions him" (9.41). For the association of Democritus, Oenopides, and Pythagoras, see Diodorus 1.98.2; DK 41A7; for Democritus' biographical association with Pythagoras, see Cole 1961, 155; Q. Cataudella, "L'Anonymus Iamblichi e Democrito," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 10 (1932): 22.

13. In the life of Protagoras, Democritus is given as Protagoras' teacher in 9.50 and the explanatory story in 9.54.

14. On this point, see J. Warren, *Epicurus and Democritean Ethics* (Cambridge, 2002) 14–18.

15. J. A. Davison ("Protagoras, Democritus, and Anaxagoras," *Classical Quarterly* 47 [1953]: 38) suggests that the story of Democritus' adoption of Protagoras may be a biographical attempt to reconcile the chronological difficulties of the story, which stem from Protagoras' birth date as ca. 490 BCE, making him some thirty years older than Democritus and therefore a biographically awkward candidate as Democritus' student. However, the shared tradition that Protagoras, like his fellow citizen Democritus, studied with the Magi, suggests that this was an association, based upon citizenship, that the biographers were eager to strengthen by all possible means.

16. Barnes 1982, 354; Kirk and Raven 1981, 222–24, 409; Aristotle *Met.* 1039a9 = DK 68A42.

17. For an example of influence construed as an actual student-teacher relationship, see the discussion of Anaxagoras as the teacher of Euripides and Archelaus in

V. Alfieri, *Atomos Idea* (Florence, 1953), 228, and in Kirk and Raven, 1981, 364 and n.1. In the report that Democritus mentioned Zeno and Parmenides, another characteristic of biographical writing should be considered: the tendency to project what was most likely to have happened, often further influenced by a taste for the sensational, negative, or bizarre. Absence of data often generates this kind of report as well, as Szegedy-Maszak (1978, 203) and Finley (1974, 18–20) point out. Dover (1976, 33) speaks of the type of projected scholarship that occurs when an author reports what he thinks most likely happened.

18. For an example of this type of phrasing, see DL 8.55. Democritus "meets" Anaxagoras and Democritus in DL 9.34. Such phrasing is, of course, open to the widest possible interpretation; see Hope 1930, 99.

19. Kirk and Raven 1981, 404.

20. Kirk and Raven 1981, 368–70.

21. Fairweather 1974, 263; Lefkowitz 1981, 77; Stuart 1967, 174.

22. Fairweather 1974, 256. We should note that the biographers, like nature, abhor a vacuum; as Dover (1976, 28–31) points out, to the biographers, false information is preferable to no information; see also Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 203; Finley 1975, 16–26.

23. 1974, 261. For attempts to establish philosophical and/or chronological successions, see G. L. Huxley, *The Early Ionians* (New York, 1966), 101–2; Finley 1975, 22; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 203; Lefkowitz 1981, 77; Warren 2002, 31; see also J. Barns, "A New Gnomologium: With Some Remarks on Gnomic Anthologies," *Classical Quarterly* 44 (1950–51): 126–37. When Anaxagoras is involved, there may be a further emphasis of attempts to date this dateless philosopher; see Dover 1976, 33.

24. Lefkowitz 1981, 77 and 87; Fairweather 1974, 263; Stuart 1967, 174.

25. For example, the suggestion that Empedocles and Pausanius (DL 8.60), Socrates and Alcibiades (DL 2.23), and Plato and Aster (DL 3.29) were romantically as well as intellectually involved; see Owens 1983, 17; Wehrli 1973, 193; Hope 1930, 152; Leo 1901, 102.

26. For contests and feuds in general, see Lefkowitz 1981, 57; Holford-Strevens 1988, 198; Wehrli 1964, 196; P. Friedlander, "Hypothekai," *Hermes* 48 (1938): 558; for the contest between Thales and Pherecydes and the false letters that attest to it, see DL 1.14 and Lefkowitz 1981, 34; Schibli 1990, 13; C. Mulvany, "Notes on the Legend of Aristotle," *Classical Quarterly* 20 (1926): 156.

27. Lefkowitz 1981, 33 and 122–28; Holford-Strevens 1988, 198; Riginos 1976, 108–10; Dover 1976, 39.

28. For charges of plagiarism (or collaboration, for the biographical motives are the same, defamation of one's talent), see Lefkowitz 1981, 99 and n.58; Fairweather 1974, 258; Owens 1983, 8. See also the spurious Heraclitean fragment (DK 68B129) that accuses Pythgoras of plagiarism, or Theophrastus' charge that Plato stole from Aristippus, Antisthenes, and Byson, ap. Athenaeus 2.508 c–d; see also the topos of book burning, citation **20,** discussed later in this chapter.

29. Hope 1930, 101 and 154; Stuart 1967, 139; Fiske 1920, 158–60.

30. Or, as Guthrie puts it, "to rescue the reality of the physical world from the fatal effects of Eleatic logic" (1962, vol. 2, 389–93); see also Barnes 1982, 364; Kirk and Raven 1981, 388 and 404. See also DL 2.14 for the reports of hostilities in the life of Anaxagoras.

31. Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 389–92, 427–30; E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen,* ed. W. Nestle (Leipzig, 1923), 211 and n.1.

32. Xenophon mentions Plato once (*Mem.* 3.6.1). Diogenes Laertius recounts the rivalry between Plato and Xenophon in 2.57 and 3.34. See Hope 1930, 154; also Dover 1976, 182; Fairweather 1974, 260.

33. Riginos 1976, 108.

34. Riginos 1976, 102 and especially n.12, 166–71.

35. For Aristotle, see the discussion in Riginos 1976, 130 and 167, and the evidence of Eubulides in I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (New York, 1987), *Test.* 58F = Eubulides *ap.* Eusebius *PE* 15.2.5. For Plato, see DL 9.40; for Protagoras, see DL 9.52. For the Athenians, see Timon fr. 5 Diels *ap.* Sextus Empiricus M.9.56.

36. Riginos 1976, 14 and 66. Many of the anecdotes transferred from Pythagoras to Plato reflect this later literary or philosophical rivalry; see note 12 in this chapter.

37. Riginos (1976, 165) points out that this anecdote reflects the dual tradition that existed for Plato, one favorable and one hostile: the favorable tradition presents Plato as a bibliophile, the hostile one answers with an anecdote in which Plato burns books.

38. For a preference among biographers for the sensational, see J. Mansfeld, "Diogenes Laertius on Stoic Philosophy," *Elenchos* 7 (1986): 302; Bell 1978, 58; Wehrli 1973, 208; Momigliano 1971, 84; Lefkowitz 1981, 100.

39. Travel for the sake of education is a common theme in the lives of the early lawgivers and philosophers, and occurs, for example, in the life of Solon (Plutarch *Solon* 2.1; Herodotus 1.29) and Lycourgos (Plutarch *Moralia* 345e); on the importance of this topos, see Lefkowitz 1981, 13 and 21; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202; F. Voros, "The Ethical Theory of Democritus: What Is the 'Criterion'?" *Platon* 27 (1975): 24–26.

40. There is a long tradition of philosophers who travel to the east; in Diogenes Laertius, besides Democritus, we find Plato (3.6), Thales (1.27), Solon (1.50), Pythagoras (8.23), Cleobulus (1.89), Eudoxus (8.87), and Pyrrho (9.61). For discussion of the topos, see Riginos 1976, 64 and n.16; see also Warren 2002, 58. Hope (1930, 158 and 187) remarks on the unusual extent of Democritus' travel; see also Fairweather 1974, 268.

41. See Diels' discussion of the fragments (1952, 154). The ancient evidence is further weakened by Woodbury's conjecture, that "On Phrygian Theory" was actually the work of Diagoras of Melos, and transferred to Democritus by the shared tradition of travel; see note 5 in this chapter. The Epicureans (although not Epicurus himself) claimed Democritus as their intellectual ancestor and sought to glorify Democritus at the expense of other philosophers, often at the expense of chronology and fact; see Davison 1953, 38. Diogenes Laertius' own hesitation in introducing the doubtful fragments is a further indication of their spurious nature, although not one usually noted.

42. Opinions differ, of course, and more traditional scholars argue for a more traditional view. Bailey, for example, thinks the tradition of Democritus' travel plausible and offers citation **4** and **6** in support. In addition, he mentions Democritus' habit of living in tombs, a practice that, according to Bailey, "may well be derived from

Eastern sages" (1928, 110). Democritus' (biographical) propensity for tombs, citation **40,** is discussed later in this chapter. Guthrie (1962, vol. 2, 386) comes to much the same conclusion, by using much the same evidence, and adds to it citation **3.** Kirk and Raven (1981, 404) think there may be some basis for the tradition of Democritus' travel, but do not admit these fragments as proof, nor do they consider them genuine. On arguments for and against the genuineness of the citations themselves (especially citation **3**), see Zeller 1923, 431 n.1 and Alfieri 1936, 278.

43. See Lefkowitz 1981, 48; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 200. For the mechanics of the method in general, see Lefkowitz 1981, 88; Kindstrand 1986, 232; Riginos 1976, 132; Momigliano 1971, 78; Finley 1974, 44; Stuart 1921, 225; A. Podlecki, "The Peripatetics as Literary Critics," *Phoenix* 39 (1969): 114–37; Leo 1901, 577.

44. See chapter 2, citation **16.**

45. Diogenes Laertius does mention one school of alternative thought, represented by Theophrastus, who considered Leucippus the author (DL 9.39, 46); Diogenes Laertius represents the more commonly held view. Democritus' travels were a commonplace among ancient authors; see, for example, Strabo 15 = DK 68A12 and Cicero *de fin.* 5.50.10 = DK 68A13, which speak in concrete terms of his extensive travel undertaken for wisdom's sake; see also Philo *de vita contempl.* 4.49 CW; Dio 54.2, p. 113, 21 Arn.; Cicero *de fin.* 5.19.87; Horace *Ep.* 1.12.12 (all = DK 68A15), which speak of Democritus' travel in rather more metaphysical terms, suggesting intellectual as well as physical quests.

46. Fairweather 1974, 265; see also DL 8.57, where Empedocles is said to be the inventor of rhetoric and DL 1.23–24 where Thales seems to have been the first to do everything. On the topos of inventions and firsts, see Kleingunther 1933, 106 and 111.

47. Those who enjoy aristocratic birth and background in Diogenes Laertius are Heraclitus (9.6), Empedocles (8.51), Thales (1.22), and Anaxagoras (2.6); see also Hope 1930, 115–18. Happily, second-century literature and early Roman historiography allow philosophers to triumph over their privileged birth by further refusing kingships, disdaining wealth, and championing democracy. Their admirable efforts are in accord with the literature's ethical didacticism and "reversion to the past," (Holford-Strevens 1988, 2), which celebrates an earlier (largely imaginary) time whose frugality and simplicity are contrasted with the debauched standards of the present time. See also Gentili and Cerri 1988, 46; Mejer 1978, 56; Bowie 1970, 3; van Groningen 1965, 46–50.

48. This anecdote and that in citation **18** are taken by Diogenes Laertius from Demetrius of Magnesia, who may have quoted Demetrius of Phalerum, see Mejer 1978, 20; Leo 1901, 39–41; see also note 55 in this chapter.

49. For another example of the etiological anecdote, see chapter 2 and the discussion of citation **29,** the biographical account of Heraclitus' deposit of his book in the (later destroyed) temple of Artemis of Ephesus. The anecdote is interpreted by Kirk (1962, 8) as a biographical attempt to explain the lack of a complete Heraclitean text.

50. A topos that seems to have developed in the fourth century BCE (see O. Murray, *Early Greece* [London, 1980], 274; see the discussion of Riginos' anecdote #56, pp. 105–106; Dover 1974, 289; Woodbury 1970, 210; C. Habicht, "False Urkunden zur Geschichte Athens im Zeitalter der Perser Keiege," *Hermes* 89 [1961]:

35), and was further elaborated and emphasized in second-century literature; see note 47 in this chapter. Many of the philosophers in Diogenes Laertius display a proper contempt for money: Thales (1.27), Socrates (2.31), Heraclitus (9.14), and Empedocles (8.63). For discussion of the topos itself, see Gentili and Cerri 1988, 46; Bell 1978, 48–50; Slater 1972, 234; K. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (London, 1972), 141; H. Brühler, *Beitrag zur Erklarung der Schrist vom Erhabenen* (Gottingen, 1964), 18. Lefkowitz (1981, 50) points out an interesting analogue in the life of the poets, who become more avaricious and parasitical in their biographies; see, for example, the lives of Simonides and Pindar.

51. The further prediction, that the children will do some "ruinous thing" also becomes true, as we will see in citation **24.**

52. Mejer 1978, 19.

53. Burnett 1945, 33.

54. Valerius Maximus = DK 68A11. The tradition of Democritus in Athens is extremely problematic. In DL 9.37, Demetrius of Magnesia states that Democritus was unknown to Socrates, because of Democritus' "horror of fame" and quotes citation **19** as proof ("I went to Athens and no one knew me.") Valerius Maximus agrees, although his reason for Democritus' statement in citation **19** is Democritus' zeal for work. Demetrius of Phalerum, whom Diogenes Laertius also cites in 9.37, disagrees with both accounts and states that Democritus was never in Athens at all. Diogenes Laertius explains Demetrius of Phalerum's statements as follows: Democritus, he says, preferred not to win fame from Athens, but to make a place famous himself, which Diogenes Laertius further characterizes as the larger claim. Although we may never know the truth of the matter, each version has strong biographical implications. Demetrius of Magnesia praises Democritus by placing him among those philosophers who, like Plato, exhibit modesty and shun fame (see Riginos 1976, 154), while Valerius Maximus once again emphasizes Democritus' devotion to his work. Demetrius of Phalerum's remarks, which occurs in his *Defense of Socrates*, according to Diogenes Laertius are perhaps the most realistic; Diogenes Laertius' interpretation of it is discussed subsequently. The common thread to all the anecdotes is a lack of contact with Socrates that, biographically speaking, probably seeks to explain the exclusion of Democritus in Plato's work and has nothing to do with Socrates per se. As regards chronology, both Anaxagoras and Democritus are assigned only potential dates, and can be of little help here; see notes 6 and 29. As regards Democritus' exclusion from the Platonic corpus and the feud that is often alleged for the exclusion, both are explained if Democritus never came into contact with Socrates: then, biographically speaking, Plato would have no reason to know him or feud with him. If, on the other hand, he was in Athens but failed to contact Socrates, then Plato has good grounds for his hostility (the slight to his teacher; see the discussion of their feud earlier in this chapter). Dover (1976, 31) sums up the problem rather well when he remarks that if Demetrius of Phalerum's statement is true, then Democritus is lying or the fragment is spurious, a point well made.

55. Mejer himself admits the point (1978, 16–29). See also the discussion of citations **2, 4, 7,** and 8 in chapter 2, grouped together by Diogenes Laertius although they too, at first seem to have no logical or literary connection.

56. The fourth anecdote, in which Democritus is compared to a pentathlete, and

the continuing emphasis on Democritus' intellectual zeal and constant training are discussed subsequently in this chapter in connection with citation **41.** The comparison depends, at least in part, on Democritus' fr. 179, which speaks of the necessity of work and training in order for children to learn letters, music, and gymnastics, see Freeman 1966, 319. The association of athletics and philosophy is ambiguous; the usual attitude toward athletes and contests is one of contempt; see, for example, Xenophanes DK 21B2, Euripides fr. 184N; Seneca *Ep.* 15.2–3; Epictetus 2.18.22; M. Ant. 11.2; Pliny *HN* 9.6.1. However, the Stoics and Cynics put the example of athletes and contests to good moral use; see also Seneca *Ep.* 80.3; Epictetus 3.310.6, 3.25.2–3. Nor should we forget that Thales died while watching an athletic contest (DL 1.39), or Plato's skills as a wrestler (DL 3.4–5); see Holford-Strevens 1988, 202–4; Hope 1930, 148.

57. The story of Thales occurs in Plato *Theat.* 174A; that of Anaximenes in DL 2.4; see also Kirk and Raven 1981, 79. This particular topos, which Horace (*AP* 455–60) uses to characterize the philosopher as a victim of heaven-sent madness may have originated with the statement attributed to both Pythagoras and to Anaxagoras, that the purpose of human existence is to contemplate the heavens, Iamblichus *Protr.* c. 19, p. 51.6ff. Pistelli. For the internal logic applied by the biographers in the characterization of their subjects, see Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202.

58. For the hostile tradition and its expression in biographical literature, see Lefkowitz 1981, 26, 33, and 94; Delcourt 1933, 287; Owens 1983, 19; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 200; Riginos 1976, 167–70; Dover 1976, 34; Wehrli 1973, 202; Woodbury 1970, 210–15; F. E. Adcock, "Literary Tradition and the Early Greek Code-Makers," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 2 (1927), 95–109; Stuart 1921, 229. The hostility toward philosophers is most obviously displayed, perhaps, in the biographies of Lucian, as, for example, in the *Demonax* or the *Nigrinus.*

59. Wehrli 1973, 202. Thales' killing on the oil market is reported by Diogenes Laertius in 1.26. This set of anecdotes must be carefully distinguished from that which contemns the philosopher for wealth, see Bell 1978, 39; Slater 1972, 234; Brühler 1964, 18.

60. Diogenes Laertius interrupts his report from Antisthenes with another report on a related event, discussed separately later in this chapter. At the end of the passage (and the anecdote of the public reading), Diogenes Laertius cites other sources who disagree with the story in its incidental details: Demetrius of Magnesia and Hippobotus agree that it was not Democritus himself who held the reading, but his relatives, and that the award was not five hundred, but one hundred, talents. In the anecdotes we see again the commonly held ancient opinion that it was Democritus who wrote the *Greater World System,* rather than Leucippus.

61. For the rebound-type anecdote, see Fairweather 1974, 238; for another example, see Pythagoras' death, which occurs crossing a bean field: this from a man who reportedly said "Stay strictly away from beans" (DL 8.39–40).

62. Owens 1983, 14; Süss 1910, 274.

63. Burial at public expense and a statue indicate such honors; see Lefkowitz 1981, 79; Riginos 1976, 167–70; Burkert 1969, 27; Farnell 1921, 421–36.

64. At the end of the passage, for example, Hippobotus and Demetrius quibble about the amount of money to be rewarded.

65. Typically, in Diogenes Laertius, philosophers refuse payment and hold wealth

in great contempt, as seen in the lives of Thales (1.27), Socrates (2.31), Heraclitus (9.14), Empedocles (8.63). See also Dover 1974, 141.

66. Hicks 1979, 488.

67. Given Diogenes Laertius' determination to exclude Roman sources, he may have known the stories, or assumed his reader's knowledge of them, and decided that an allusion to them would be sufficient. See Mejer 1978, 56; Hope 1930, 110.

68. For examples of predictions and prophecies that can confer such privileges in Diogenes Laertius see note 69 in this chapter; both result in divine status for the philosophers. On the topos in general, see Hope 1930, 99, 118; Wehrli (1973, 201) notes that actions that benefit the people as a whole are typical of the early philosophers' lives; Hope (1930, 130) draws attention to a similar aspect of the lives of the early philosopher-sages.

69. These honors are different from the posthumous honors and cult worship other philosophers receive after death; Democritus, like Empedocles, receives worship during his lifetime.

70. Timon fr. 94 *FHG* 1.215 *ap.* DL 8.60 = DK 31A1.10.

71. In Diogenes Laertius, similar recognition or deification occurs after "marvelous acts" in the life of Epimenides (1.110), Menedemus (6.102), Pythagoras (8.14 and 21), Empedocles (8.62). Pherecydes also performs miraculous acts, but is not deified for them (2.116). See Schibli 1990, 5–7; Holford-Strevens 1988, 74; C. Kahn, "Empedocles among the Shamans," *Archive fur Geschichte der Philosophie* 42 (1960): 30–35; Dodds 1951, 135; Hope 1930, 121.

72. Freeman 1966, 176; Farnell 1921, 416. Epimenides also receives the title of wind-stayer after he frees Athens from plague (DL 1.110).

73. Theophrastus' *de Sensu*. 49–83 = DK 68A135.

74. This is, of course, a gross oversimplification but one that will suffice for our purpose and was probably sufficient for the biographers also. For a more complete explanation of Democritus' theory of vision, see McKim 1983, 281–89; Barnes 1982, 477; Kirk and Raven 1981, 421; K. von Fritz, "Nous, Noein, and their Derivatives in Pre-Socratic Philosophy (excluding Anaxagoras)," *Classical Philology* 40 (1974): 12–34; Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 441–46.

75. The importance and familiarity of Democritus' work in these areas is brought out more fully later in this chapter, with the discussion of citation **40** and following. The two earlier anecdotes are in fact combined and transferred to Agathion's meeting with Herodes Atticus (Philostratus *VS* 2.554). There, Agathion refuses to drink the milk offered him; it is "impure" because drawn by a woman. Herodes Atticus then marvels at Agathion's "superhuman" powers of perception.

76. See, for example, Theophrastus' comments in *de Sensu* = DK 68A139–65. Guthrie, from the titles of books attributed to Democritus and Theophrastus' commentaries on them, conjectures work that "rivaled Aristotle in comprehensiveness and attention to detail" (1962, vol. 2, 465); Zeller (1923, 254) discusses Democritus' theories on plant growth and the origin and development of the fetus and its considerable ancient commentary. Democritus' biographical life and death may include an unusual number of women because he, like Empedocles, allows them an equal role in the creation and development of the embryo; see Aristotle *Gen Anim*. 4.1.746a6; Censorius *Die. Nat*. 5.4; Plutarch *Placita* 5.3.6; Lloyd 1983, 87; I. M. Lonie, *Ars*

Medica, vol. 4 (Berlin 1981), 62, 115, and n.101; E. Lesky, *Die Zeungungs und Verberungslehre der Antiker und ihr Nachwirten* (Wiesbaden, 1951), 52–57.

77. The meeting between Democritus and Hippocrates relies, in part, on the biographers' fondness for arranging meeting, friendships, or letters between authors and others with similar interests (see Fairweather 1974, 261) and partly on the particular relationship that exists between Democritus and Hippocrates, discussed later in this chapter.

78. Athenaeus 46 e–f = DK 68A29.

79. Fairweather 1974, 238.

80. Women and children are commonly used to contrast the philosopher's wildly theoretical and intellectualized behavior with the dictates of sanity and common sense, see note 87 in this chapter.

81. Theophrastus *CP* 6.7.2 = DK 68A132; see also DK 68A33.5 = DL 9.46, which lists Democritus' work, "On Flavor"; Zeller 1923, 254. See, on this point and for this anecdote, Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 439 n.1. Finally, compare DK 68A68, in which Aristotle speaks of Democritus' views on chance and casualty.

82. See Warren 2002, 193ff.

83. Cicero *Tusc.* 5.39, 114; Aulus Gellius *NA* 10.17; Himerius *Ecl.* 3.18; Tertullian *Apolog.* 46; Plutarch *de curios.* 12 p. 521D; see DK 68A22–27.

84. Aulus Gellius, Cicero, and Plutarch take the anecdote factually, but speak as apologists, finding in Democritus' quest for knowledge a palatable reason for the blinding.

85. Empedocles, for example, fails to prove his divinity when Etna belches out his sandal or when he commits suicide by hanging. Heraclitus is punished for his unorthodox views and misanthropy with a death both contemptible and degrading, being covered with dung and torn apart by dogs. For the hostility of the biographers toward their subjects, see Riginos 1976, 117; Lefkowitz 1981, 98. A similar anecdote is told of Plato, or rather of his students, that they put out their eyes so as not to be distracted from their studies. Riginos (1976, 129) notes that the story exemplifies the extreme nature of the philosopher's devotion to study and to the avoidance of worldly concerns. We should also remember that blindness is often the price for superhuman gifts in ancient literature, as for example, in Homer's case; see G. Casertano, "Pleasure, Desire, and Happiness in Democritus," *Proceedings of the First International Congress on Democritus* 1 (1983): 350.

86. In Democritus' philosophy, pleasure and the passions must be dominated and controlled by soul, never by the body. See Hussey 1983, 351; 1985, 120; J. Dudley, "The Ethics of Democritus and Aristotle," *Proceedings of the First International Congress on Democritus* 1 (1983): 381.

87. For examples of gluttony and excessive drinking, see Bell 1978, 31; for the role of women in similar anecdotes, see Lattimore 1939, 29; P. Munz, "History and Mythology," *Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1956): 6.

88. Democritus is, in fact, slave to and destroyed by the last woman he sees; see the discussion of citations **51–53** later in this chapter.

89. The verb ἀσκεῖν occurs in Julian's *Epistle* 201 B–C (= DK 68A20), discussed in citation **43** and in Diogenes Laertius 9.30. It also occurs in two of Democritus' own statements, frr. 53a and 65.

90. Hicks 1979, v. 2, 440.

91. In Lucian *Demonax* 25, Demonax himself is asked to restore the φαντασία, the ghost or shade of one who is dead, just as Democritus had done. Democritus' ability to raise the dead, and his conflation with Demonax, are discussed later in this section, with citation **43.**

92. For Democritus' use of εἴδωλα, see D. McGibbon, "The Religious Thought of Democritus," *Hermes* 93 (1965): 390–92. In conjunction with DL 9.38 and 42 and Democritus' characterization as a holy man, see D. Clay, "An Epicurean Interpretation of Dreams," *American Journal of Philology* 101 (1980): 344.

93. Diogenes Laertius, on the other hand, mentions only the *Greater World System* read on that occasion; see citation **24.**

94. Athenaeus 4.168B = DK B30.

95. Philodemus *de morte* 29.27 = DK B1a; the passage also urges the reader not to delay writing one's will in an attempt to evade death; see the discussion of citation **54–56** in this chapter.

96. In theory, glimpses of the unseen world are vouchsafed to one whose senses are keen enough to apprehend them, see Guthrie 1962, 203. On the appearance of ghosts or spirits to living men, see D. McGibbon 1965, 392, and compare Plato *Phdr.* 81c–d. W. Burkert (*Greek Religion* [Cambridge, Mass., 1985], 195) notes that once the soul/breath leaves the body, it becomes εἴδωλα, a phantom image (like that in a mirror, transparent and without substance), whether of a dream or a ghost that, on appropriate occasions, appears to the living.

97. Democritus' link with the divine otherworld has already been established in those anecdotes that told of his predictions and control of the elements, which led to his own suprahuman status. Furthermore, he is mentioned as a diviner in at least one source (Cicero *de div.* 1.3.5 = DK 68A138) and often appears in the role of shaman, prophet, or magician. See citation **30** in this chapter.

98. Simon (1978, 148) notes that for the ancient Greeks, imagination was strongly visual, as the various terms of φαντασί suggest, and that the Greek stereotype for madness thus emphasized visual distortion. McGibbon (1965, 392) demonstrates that Cicero, in *de deor nat.* 1.12.20 and 1.43.120, as a good Epicurean deliberately introduces confusion into Democritus' use of εἴδωλα to belittle his theories. McGibbon makes several other key points in his discussion: Democritus uses εἴδωλα not only in a strict technical sense to indicate the films that emanate from all objects, including gods, but also to indicate the gods themselves. The gods, then, could and did communicate with mortals, although not indiscriminately. They visited those mortals who had trained their minds to a level that transcends the usual rational plane, as Democritus himself suggests in fr. 18: Whatever a poet writes with enthusiasm and divine inspiration, is most beautiful. In this context, citation is quite reasonable.

99. O. Temkin, "Hippocrates as the Physician of Democritus," *Gesnerius* 42 (1985): 456; Kindstrand 1984, 154 and 167; H. D. Voigtländer, *Der Philosoph und die Vielen* (Wiesbaden, 1984), 32–54.

100. Democritus tells us that a certain divine madness is essential for noble work; see note 97 and fr. 18 in this chapter. Horace approved Democritus' attitude and summed it up as follows: "Democritus excludes the sane poets from Helicon" (*AP* 296); for further discussion of the "considerable exaggeration" to which the fragment gave rise, see Bailey 1928, 111.

101. See, for example, Dio Cassius' portrait of Domitian, 67.1–3. During the night, Domitian visited people when they were completely alone and placed beside them a miniature tombstone engraved with that person's name. Then, naked slaves painted black entered like ghosts (like εἴδωλα) and danced about.

102. Once again, we see the importance of not underestimating the biographers' knowledge of the philosophers; Antisthenes used ἀκεῖν, to train or practice, to introduce his idea; ἀκεῖν, of course, is a key element in Democritus' theory of education, virtue, and speculation. See citations **21–23** in this chapter, which speak of the necessity of training. For the claims of training over nature in Democritus' philosophy, see McKim 1983, 288; Hussey 1985, 123; L. Couloubaritsis, "Pensées et action chez Democrite," *Proceedings of the First International Congress on Democritus* 1 (1983): 333.

103. Here too we see that Diogenes Laertius' ordering of his selections reveals a greater coherence than is usually granted: in the passage immediately following, Diogenes Laertius records one of the few hostile anecdotes that exist for Democritus, the squandering of his inheritance and his prosecution, which also comes from Antisthenes. The placement of the two anecdotes thus reveals that their coherence, for Diogenes Laertius, both are hostile and as such should be presented together.

104. Letters 10–17 speak of Hippocrates' visit, letters 18–21 report the conversation between Democritus and Hippocrates, see E. Littre, *Oeuvres completes d'Hippocrates,* vol. 9 (Amsterdam, 1983). On the tradition and authenticity of the letters, see D. T. Sakalis "Beitrag zu den pseudo-hippokratischen Briefen," in *Formes de pensée dans la collection hippocratique: Actes du IVième colloque international hippocratique* (Geneva, 1983), 499–515; J. Pigeaud, *La maladie de l'âme* (Paris, 1981), 441–47; R. Philippson, "Verfasser und Abfassungzeit der sogenannten Hippokratesbriefe," *Rheinisches Museum fur Philologie* 77 (1982): 293–328; L. Edelstein, "Hippocrates," *Realencyclopadie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* Suppl. 6 (1935): cols. 1309–4.

105. Letter 10. See also Temkin 1985, 455–56.

106. Some of the details of the anecdote are uniquely Democritean, such as the allusion to his natural studies in the dissected animals, while others follow the typical image of the philosopher, see Hope 1930, 148, and see, for example, the unwashed Socrates in Aristophanes' *Birds* 1554, or barefoot (*Ra.* 1491), as dirty, unkempt, verminous, and pale (*Clouds* 103, 119, 198, 694). Thales himself advises others not to pride themselves upon outward appearance but to study to become beautiful in character (DL 1. 37), words all too easy to parody in a group who seemed so unconcerned with the mundane matters of daily life. Temkin (1985, 459) finds the pastoral setting strongly reminiscent of the setting of Plato's *Phaedrus,* 230b.

107. The meeting occurs in letter 17L. Temkin (1985, 460) notes that Hippocrates' deliberations revolve around the pseudo-Aristotelian discussion of genius and melancholy in *Problemata Physica* 30.1, which concludes with a strong correlation between the two states. Simon (1978, 229) makes the important distinction in the passage that "melancholy" denotes not madness or a mental disorder such as schizophrenia or manic-depressive states, but temperament, a distinction often overlooked by modern as well as ancient authors.

108. Edelstein 1935, cols. 1303–4; Temkin 1985, 461; Gomez 1984, 1–40. Myson, a philosopher famous for misanthropy, is also presented as laughing alone by himself in a solitary spot, DL 1.108.

109. As, for example, at the meeting of Solon and Croesus; see Wehrli 1973, 202 and note 77 in this chapter. Hippocrates' figure takes on special meaning in letters and anecdotes that bear his name, because physicians and medicine take on unprecedented importance in second-century literature. This is due in part to the rise of the sophistic movement at that time and the "old nexus between philosophy, oratory, and medicine" (Bowersock 1969, 64–66). See also Holford-Strevens 1988, 224–26; Kindstrand 1984, 155; Simon 1978, 148. Philostratus certainly emphasizes the role of physicians in the intellectual/philosophical world; he tells us, for example, that Polemo's teacher Timocritus wanted to be both physician and philosopher and was well versed in the theories of Hippocrates and Democritus (*VS* 5436). Hippocrates and Democritus were, of course, linked by a shared interest in physiology and anatomy.

110. Freeman 1966, 319. That withdrawal becomes a part of the necessary ascetism for the philosopher, see the portrait of Plato as the "ideal holy man," Riginos 1976, 161; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202.

111. One of the Abderites' proofs of Democritus' madness is his neglect of his property; Hippocrates shows that the fault lies with their own sordid preoccupation with money and land (Temkin 1985, 460); compare Pliny *HN* 18.48 = DK A17. See also Owens 1983, 15; Freeman 1966, 322; Zeller 1923, 213.

112. 68B1. Incidentally, Philodemus adds that, according to Democritus one should not put off writing one's will in an attempt to ignore death, reminding us once more of the attention given to Democritus and worldly goods. Gottschalk gives an excellent commentary of the text, the title of which is given variously by Proclus as *Letters about Death (or the Afterlife)* or by Diogenes Laertius (in 9.46) and Athenaeus as *About Death (or the Afterlife)*.

113. Beauty, like pleasure, plays an important part in the theory of Democritus and the two are often linked; beauty is that which gives the highest delight, and to contemplate and to admire the beauties of nature and the beautiful outcome of human genius is the greatest source of delight. See Casertano 1983, 352; Dudley 1983, 378; compare with DK 68B194.

114. The φαντασία, in fact.

115. In atomic theory, the soul atoms, like those of the body, simply disperse and thus death does not entail either punishment, pain, or the dreaded, shadowy afterlife. Despite, or rather because of the relative unimportance of death in atomic theory, later writers insist on a Democritean preoccupation with death and the decay of the body.

116. Cicero *Tusc.* 1.34; Tertullian *de an.* 51; Plato *Pol.* 10.614 (who cannot, of course, refer to Democritus by name); all = DK A160; Alex. aphrod. *Top.* 21.21; Aet. 4.4.7, both = DK A117. See also Barnes 1982, 440.

117. For Empedocles, see DL 8.67 and citation **27;** for Pythagoras, see DL 8.14; for Demonax, see Lucian *Demon.* 25. See also Pliny's rather contemptuous remark that Democritus promises men that they will live again and then doesn't even do so himself, (*HN* 7.1.89).

118. Besides the two examples given here, see also Galen *Phil. Hist. prolegomena* = *Doxographi Graeci* 255; Horace *Ep.* 2.1.182–200; Lucian *VA* 13–14; Seneca *Tranq.* 155.2–3; Juvenal *Sat.* 10.28–53; Cicero *de orat.* 2.58, 235; DK A21; Sotion *ap.* Stobaeus *Flor.* 3.20.53.

119. Diogenes Laertius, who usually makes it a point to include the nicknames of his subject (Delatte 1992, 54), oddly makes no reference at all to this part of Democritus' character. The name and characterization finds its earliest expression in Cicero's *de oratore,* which Diogenes Laertius may have excluded in his aversion to Roman sources; see note 70 in this chapter. Stuart (1946, 187) however, believes that the characterization and nickname are the result of Cynic and Stoic influences and arose in a separate tradition of which Diogenes Laertius was unaware. See also Gomez 1984, 1–40; Kindstrand 1984, 151–64; Lutz 1954, 309.

120. Dudley 1983, 381; Casertano 1983, 351; A. E. Taylor, "On the Date of the Trial of Anaxagoras," *Classical Quarterly* 11 (1917): 86; Bailey 1928, 193.

121. Cicero *de fin.* 5.8.23 (= DK A169) speaks of εὐθυμία and εὐεστώ; Stobaeus 2.7.3 = DK A167, of ἀταραξία. For further discussion of these terms, see Barnes 1982, 532 and Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 492. Εὐθυμία in Democritus and its place in his ethical theory have been the subject of much debate, see B. Wisniewski, "Plaisir et Valeur chez Democrite et Hippias," *Les Etudes Classique* 55 (1987): 399; Casertano 1983, 347; Voros 1975, 20. Guthrie (1962, vol. 2, 489) represents the more traditional view, that there is no connection between Democritus' atomic theory and his ethical theory (although Guthrie doubts the existence of an ethical theory, as do many others; see, for example, Alfieri 1953, 193). Natorp (1893, 23) alone saw a coherent ethical system in Democritus' work and one bound up with his atomic theory. Natorp's theory has most lately been taken up by G. Vlastos (1945): 578; earlier, K. von Fritz (*Philosophie und Sprachliche Ausdruck bei Demokritos, Platon, und Aristoteles* [New York, 1935], 32) supported Natorp's view; the assumption that a coherent ethical system did exist and was related to atomic theory underlies all later arguments about pleasure and its value in Democritus.

122. Casertano 1983, 351; Dudley 1983, 374; Bailey 1928, 189 and 193.

123. On this point, see Lutz 1954, 310.

124. Riginos 1976, 151.

125. See the excellent discussion of the laughing philosopher in J. Salem's *La légende de Démocrite* (Paris, 1996), 82–114.

126. Sotion *ap.* Stobaeus *Florilegium* 3.20.53; See Osborne 1987, 209; Kindstrand 1984, 155; Lutz 1954, 309.

127. After Plato, of course, and his image of the rheumy or flowing Heraclitean philosophers. See note 35 in chapter 2.

128. Seneca (*Tranq.* 15.3 and *de ira* 2.4.4–7) also presents the contrast between the two philosophers and their responses.

129. Seneca's portrait of the sadistic Democritus does not seem to agree with his earlier characterization of the philosopher, see Gomez 1984, 5–8. Juvenal (*Sat.* 10) presents a Democritus who sneers and laughs at the human foibles and vanities and who defies fortune with an obscene gesture; see Gomez 1984, 12–15.

130. See Gomez 1984, 21. Stewart (1958, 185–87) demonstrates that by this time Democritus had become a hero of both Cynic and Skeptic schools, while Heraclitus had been adopted and lionized by the Stoics. Stewart argues that Lucian, himself influenced by Stoic writers, was the first to connect the laughing and crying of the two philosophers to their philosophies, and in such a way as to emphasize the Stoic

propensities of Heraclitus. Kindstrand (1984, 149) argues against Heraclitus' "Cynic qualities."

131. As does Aristippus of Cyrene, whose extravagant tastes has scared off buyers. Socrates, of course, gets the highest price, followed by Pythagoras, Aristotle, Chrysippus the Stoic, Pyrrho the Skeptic, and Diogenes the Cynic.

132. H. W. Fowler, *The Works of Lucian,* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1905), 190.

133. Two points in passing: first, Democritus does not laugh at the stupidity of the human race, as he does in Juvenal (and in some of Seneca's portraits); rather, he laughs at the futility or emptiness of the human state, which, in itself, is a further criticism of atomic theory. Second, Heraclitus' tears are those of compassion; he does not despise his fellow men, as in Diogenes Laertius' life, but despairs for them.

134. And, of course, on the reader's recognition of them. Compare the pseudo-atomic ravings of the philosophical cook in Damoxenus *ap.* Athenaeus *Deipnos.* 3.102b–e = DK 68C1.

135. Besides Democritus' remark that everything is atoms and the void, there is detailed allusion to Heraclitus' work: the world destroying conflagration is the theory of *ekpyrosis,* attributed to him by the Stoics. This "thunderbolt" or cosmic fire of his fragment 64, is thought by some to indicate the eventual destruction of the world through fire (Kirk 1962, 349–61; see also chapter 2 and citation **60** in this book). As to the other statements Heraclitus and the Buyer make, we see that "pleasure and ignorance, great and small" alludes to the theory of opposites as seen, for example, in citation **61;** "the way up and down" to citation **60;** the riddles of time and children to citation **13;** "gods and mortal men" to fr. 62 ("immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal"); Heraclitus as a "veritable oracle of obscurity" refers to citation **27** and in general to Heraclitus' reputation for obscurity.

136. Gomez 1984, i; Lutz 1954, 310. Stewart (1958, 185) remarks that the desire to ridicule Democritus shaped the entire anecdote.

137. Other examples of the philosopher-tyrant relationship are Solon and Croesus (DL 1.50); Simonides and Hiero (Pl. *Ep.* 2.311a; Athen. 656d; Ael. *VH*); Plato and Dionysus (DL 3.18); and Apollonius of Tyana and Nero (Philostr. *VA* 25–26).

138. Riginos 1976, 74; Wehrli 1973, 204; Munz 1956, 6.

139. Bell (1978, 50) mentions Socrates who refused the gifts of Archelaus, Scopas, and Eurylochus (DL 2.25), Diogenes who refused Craterus (DL 6.57), and Stilpo who refused Ptolemy Soter (DL 2.115); Heraclitus, of course, refused an offer to live at Darius' court (DL 9.14).

140. Bell (1978, 74) speaks of this tendency, as does Lattimore (1939, 24).

141. Dumont 1987, 87; Kindstrand 1984, 164; Bell 1978, 34; Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 201; F. Wehrli, *Hauptrichungen Griechischen Denkens* (Zurich-Stuttgart, 1964), 30. Women, children, and slaves, on the other hand, are used to show by their contrast, the impracticality, absentmindedness, or sheer silliness of the philosophers.

142. Kindstrand 1984, 151; C. W. Willink, "Prodikos and Tantalos," *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983), 30; Stuart 1967, 127 and 159. For the related contrast between leader and philosopher, see Marcus Aurelius *Med.* 8.3, who contrasts Alexander, Gaius, and Pompey with Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates. See also the three blessings of Thales, sometimes attributed to Socrates: to have been born human, male, and Greek, not beast, female, or barbarian, DL 1.33–34.

143. Lefkowitz 1981, 111; Finley 1974, 55; Wehrli 1973, 204.

144. Dumont 1987, 178; Bell 1978, 39; Riginos 1976, 170; Dover 1972, 41.

145. For the old age of philosophers, see Boas 1948, 450.

146. See Burkert 1985, 242; H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London, 1977), 188. See also Diodorus Siculus 5.5.2; Callimachus *Cer.* 6.19; Servius *in Verg. Aen.* 4.58; Schol. *Luc.* 275.23–276.28 Rabe.

147. Burkert 1985, 244; Ael. *Fr.* 44 = *Suda a* 4329, *th* 272, *s* 1590, 1714; Pausanias 4.17.1; Herodotus 2.171 (who says that the festival comes from Egypt, brought by those "notorious men-killers," the Danaids); Aristophanes *Thesm.* 627ff.

148. Fairweather 1974, 235. In a variant story, Democritus, like Plato, Speusippos, and Homer, dies of ptheiresis (lice disease) Plut. Marc. *Anton.* 3.3. Riginos (1976, 196) remarks that death by lice was "obviously a favored form of calumny." Lefkowitz (1981, 162) notes that degrading deaths of this sort were often allotted to authors considered impious. For a list of those who died of lice disease, see Plutarch *Sulla* 35.5–6. Lucretius, on the other hand, says that Democritus committed suicide because his mind was failing (3.1039 = DK 68A24) making a further characterization of Democritus as one who lived solely for intellectual pursuits. Suicide, too, is a common death in philosophical biography, and occurs for Pherecydes (DL 1.118), Empedocles (DL 8.74), Anaxagoras (DL 2.13–14), Euclides (DL 2.112), Menedemus (DL 2.142), and Speusippos (DL 4.3). If Democritus' death in citations **49** and **50** is to be considered suicide, Democritus becomes one of many who choose to starve themselves to death, including Pythagoras (DL 8.40), Zeno (DL 7.31), and Cleanthes (DL 7.176). On these deaths, see Schibli 1990, 8; Willink 1983, 28; Fairweather 1974, 260.

149. Doubtless, statements made at an earlier state of life. Note too that Democritus has achieved the old age of which he spoke. For the old age of the philosopher as another topos, see Boas 1948, 450.

150. Athen. 46 3–f = DK 68A29; *Acut. morb.* 2.37 = DK 68A28. Caecilius Aurelianus suggests an infusion of barley, bread, vetch, and myrtle, which sounds either very Heraclitean or very Eleusian; the *kykeon,* or sacred ritual drink of Eleusis, consisted of barley, water, and mint. Heraclitus, of course, mentions the drink in fr. 125, see citation **15** in chapter 2. For interpretation of the various fragments and their importance to Democritean philosophy as a whole, see Warren 2002, 36–39.

151. Varro, *Sat. Men.* fr. 81 Beuch. = DK 68A161; see Lucretius 3.891; Freeman 1966, 308.

152. Arist. *de anima* A 2.404a18.

153. I follow Hicks' translation (1907, 11, 23) for the excerpts from Aristotle's *de Anima.* For the notions that life is maintained by breathing in atomic theory, see Guthrie 1962, vol. 2, 434; Bailey 1928, 158; Zeller 1923, 259.

154. Guthrie remarks that "it is most interesting to notice how once again an old and popular belief (in this case the connection of soul with air) is retained and given scientific clothing" (1962, vol. 2, 434).

155. Casertano (1983, 349) also shows that disease is due only to the soul and that the soul, therefore, must find measure and impose it on the body.

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Index



Abdera, 95, 97, 114, 125
Acragas, 31–32, 157n. 47. *See also* Empedocles
Acron, 32, 161n. 78
Aeschylus, 13, 27–28, 49
Against the Sophists (Demetrius of Troezen), 48
Amatores, 96
Anaxagoras, 70, 95, 110, 169nn. 47, 48. *See also* Democritus: feud, student/teacher; Empedocles: student/teacher
Anaxamines, 111, 174n. 104
Anaximander, 23, 24
Ancient Medicine, 39
Anecdotes. *See* Philosophical biography
Antisthenes, 60, 105, 111, 114, 164n. 4
Apollo, hymn to, 37–39, 160n. 71
Apollodorus, *Chronology,* 14, 95
Archilochus, 61, 63
Aristippus, 30–31, 100
Aristophanes, 69, 135
Aristotle, 7, 14, 28, 85, 87, 101, 142, 175n. 119
  on atomism, 138–39
  Nicomachean Ethics, 67
  On Poets, 36
  See also Empedocles: poet
Atheneus, 19, 24–25, 117, 123
Athenodorus, *Walks,* 116
Athens, 166n. 21. *See also* Democritus
Atomism. *See* Democritus

Bees, 9, 71, 173n. 95
Bull of honey and barley, 16, 17–19, 26

Certamen, 99
Chronology (Apollodorus), 14, 95
Cicero, 130
Cleis, 13–14, 19
Crantor, 77

Crates, 76, 77
Crates of Malos, 77, 171n. 75
Cratylus (Plato), 67
Croesus, and Solon, 7, 9
Croton, *The Diver,* 75–77
Cynics, 7, 130. *See also* Democritus
Cyropaedia (Xenophon), 100

Darius, 126–28, 132
Death, biographical, 49. *See also* Democritus; Empedocles; Heraclitus
Delian diver, 75–78
Delphi, 16, 78
Demetrius of Troezen, *Against the Sophists,* 48
Democritus, 1, 4, 13
  Athens, 98, 108–11, 121, 180n. 54
  atomism, 94, 105, 117, 131, 140, 143
    Aristotle on, 138–39
    blinding, 119–21, 140
    death, atomic theory of, 124–26, 128
    Doctrine of the One, 97–98
    Eleatic controversy, 97–99, 102
    Greater World System, 102, 105
    Lesser World System, 102
    Leucippus, 98, 102
    numberless seeds, 98
    Parmenides, 97, 98, 100
    perceptive powers, 116–17, 118
    respiration, theory of, 134, 135, 138–39
    taste, theory of, 118–19, 138
    vision, theory of, 117–19, 123
    Zeno, 97, 100
    See also Athenaeus; Athenodorus; Democritus: madness: tombs and solitude; Hippocrates; Sextus
  blinding, self, 119, 120, 140
    Diogenes Laertius on, 120–21
  book burning, 100, 101, 142
  character, 116
    absentmindedness, 108, 109, 111–13, 116, 121, 125–26; Diogenes Laertius on, 111, 112 (*see also* Antisthenes)
    images/ghosts, 122
    zeal for work, 108–11, 116–19, 121; Diogenes Laertius on, 108–9, 121
    Thrasyllus on, 109–10, 121
    See also Democritus: madness; Valerius Maximus
  Cynics, 125–26, 187nn. 119, 130
  on death, 116, 124
    afterlife, 124–25, 127, 140
    Darius, 126–28
    Julian on, 127–28
    restoration of the dead, 126, 128
    tombs, 127–28
    See also Democritus: atomism, magic powers; Philodemus; Proclus
  death of, 134–40, 142, 143
    Diogenes Laertius on, 134, 138
    soul, 138–40
    suicide, 140
  deification, 47
  Diogenes Laertius on, 1, 111–12, 114–17, 140
  east/west, 133–34
  exile, 33
  family, 95, 106–8, 113–15, 135
    Abdera, 95, 97, 114, 125
    Valerius Maximus on, 95, 109
    Xerxes, 95
  feud/contest
    with Anaxagoras, 99–102
    Diogenes Laertius on, 99–101
    with Plato, 100–101
  god-like actions, 47
  Greater World System, 105–6, 111, 181n. 60
  Hippocrates, 125–26, 183n. 77, 186n. 109
  honey, 117–18, 138
  intellectual zeal, 108–11, 121, 125–26, 185n. 107, 186n. 109
  laughing philosopher, 68, 125, 126–30
    cheerfulness vs. hedonism, 130
    Diogenes Laertius on, 129
    Lucian on, 130–31
    tranquility, 126, 129–30, 132

and weeping philosopher (Heraclitus), 129–32
See also Cicero; Cynics; Hippocrates; Seneca
Lesser World System, 95, 105
Leucippus, 96, 100, 102
madness, 33, 121–28
Antisthenes on, 121–22, 124, 125
Diogenes Laertius on, 121–22, 124–25
images/ghosts, 122–25, 140
laughter, 125
"On the Next World," 123
perception, 122
tombs and solitude, 121–26, 143
See also Hippocrates; Philodemus; Sextus
magic powers (holy fool or wizard), 95, 115, 176n. 5
Chaldeans, 95, 102, 176n. 5
natural forces, control of, 114–15, 128, 138
philosopher/tyrant, 132–34
See also Darius; Xerxes
philosopher's revenge, 111, 112, 115
posthumous honors, 112, 115
rebound of ideas, 112, 118, 120, 137
Socrates, 108–9
student/teacher, 95–102, 176nn. 10, 13, 15
Anaxagoras, 97, 99–102
Diogenes Laertius on, 95–99
eastern tutors, 95
Leucippus, 102
Oenopides, 96, 97, 101, 102
Protagoras, 96, 97, 99–101
Pythagoras, 96, 99–102
Thrasyllus on, 101, 109–10, 121
travel, 102–6, 113, 126, 178n. 41
Diogenes Laertius on, 102–3
east, 102–3
Lesser World System, 105
Leucippus, 105
women, 117, 120–21, 135–36, 182nn. 75–76, 183n. 88
See also Apollodorus; Epicurus; Philosophy: biography inferred from
Diels, H., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* 4
Diodorus of Ephesus, 52
Diodorus Siculus, 31
Diodotus, 74–75
Diogenes Laertius, 7, 70, 89, 141, 168n. 38
Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, 1, 2, 5, 115, 125, 143–45
reevaluation of, 2, 5 (*see also* Osborne, Catherine)
windstayers, 115
See also Democritus; Empedocles; Heraclitus
Dionysus of Syracuse, 2–4, 30–31, 96
The Diver (Croton), 75–77
Doctrine of the One. *See* Democritus: atomism

Eleatic controversy. *See* Democritus: atomism
Empedocles, 4, 10, 96, 97, 113, 144
Acragas, 13–14, 17, 20–22, 28, 30–32, 38, 58
careers (*see* physician; poet; politician; prophet)
character/manner, 18, 20, 22, 154n. 18
arrogance, 34–35, 50
death, 1, 26, 48–58
apotheosis, 55–56
deification, 49, 50–53, 55
Diogenes Laertius on, 51, 53
drowning, 50–51, 55
Etna, 1, 12, 50–53, 55–58, 154n. 18, 183n. 85
four elements and, 53–57
Heraclides, 55, 56
Megara, tomb in, 48, 57
Pausanias, 55, 56–57, 58, 162n. 84, 176n. 8
Peisianax, 55, 56–57, 58
Peloponnesus, 56, 57
suicide, question of, 49–50, 51

Empedocles (*continued*)
death (*continued*)
Telauges on, 49, 154n. 7
Timaeus on, 56–58
See also Diodorus of Ephesus
deification, 21, 22, 25–26, 35, 47, 49, 50–53, 55, 154n. 18
Diogenes Laertius on, 1, 12, 14–16, 20, 22, 34
elements or roots (four), theory of, 53–54
family, 28
Exaenetus, 13–16
Heraclides on, 14, 15
Meton, 13–16
Satyrus on, 14–15
god-like act, 46, 55–56, 115
metempsychosis, 25–26, 46, 48, 50–51
Olympic Games, 7, 13–22, 25, 26, 38, 154n. 14
sacrifice, bull of honey and barley, 16, 17–19, 26
On Nature, 29, 38, 39, 42
philosopher and tyrant, 29–31, 33, 35
physician/magician, 38–40, 45, 47–48, 144
Diogenes Laertius on, 39, 40
Physics, 12, 40
Sacred Diseases on, 39
See also *Ancient Medicine;* Satyrus
Physics, 12, 40
plagiarism, 156n. 30, 157n. 35
poet, 35–39, 48
Acragas, 38
Apollo, hymn to, 37–39, 160n. 71
Aristotle on, 36, 37
Diogenes Laertius on, 36, 37
lost works, 10, 37, 39
Xerxes, poem on, 37–39
See also Heraclides, son of Sarapion; Lucretius; Plutarch; Theron
politician, 28–35, 48
Acragas, 30–32
Acron, 32, 161n. 78
democracy, favorable to, 3, 29, 33–35
Diogenes Laertius on, 28–34
exile, 33–34
the "Thousand," 31–32, 158n. 52
Timaeus on, 28–31, 34
See also Aristotle; Xanthus
prophet (holy fool or wizard), 39–48, 128
Diogenes Laertius on, 41, 44, 46–48
Gorgias of Leontini, 40–41, 47
Heraclides on, 41, 44, 48
life/death, mutability of, 42–44, 46, 52
mantis, 40, 45, 47, 48
natural forces, control of, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50–52, 115
Panatheia from Acragas, 41, 44–45, 47, 48, 51, 128
Satyrus on, 40–42, 45, 47
Timaeus on, 46, 47–48
See also Hermippus
Purifications, 12, 16–19, 29, 31, 38, 39
request/refusal to rule, 3, 6, 28–29, 33
Sicilians and, 13, 17–19, 161n. 74
student/teacher
Anaxagoras, 23, 24
Anaximander, 23, 24
Atheneus on, 24–25
Diogenes Laertius on, 23, 25–26
Gorgias of Leontini, 10, 159n. 56
Parmenides, 23, 24, 160n. 67
Pausanias, 96, 162n. 85
Pythagoras, 23–26, 157n. 35
Telauges, 24
Xenophanes, 23, 24, 160n. 67
travel, 34, 162n. 85
women, 162n. 86, 182n. 76
See also Antisthenes; Eratosthenes; Hermippus; Hippobotus; Timaeus
Ephesians. *See* Heraclitus
Epicurus, 88, 130
Eratosthenes, *Olympic Victories*, 14
Etna. *See* Empedocles: death
Euripides, 27–28, 49, 77, 89
Exaenetus, 13–16

Favorinus, *Memorabilia*, 16

Gelon, 38, 57
Gorgias of Leontini, 10, 159n. 56
Greater World System. *See* Democritus
Gregorius Nazianzenus, 98

Hamilcar the Carthaginian, 38
Hecateus, 60–61
Heraclides
  Epitome, 15
  On Diseases, 14
  See also Empedocles: death, prophet
Heraclides, son of Sarapion, 37
Heraclitus, 4, 13, 37, 105, 113, 144, 187n. 130, 188n. 135
  character/manner
    arrogance, 71–74, 80, 83–84, 93, 142; Diogenes Laertius on, 60–68, 71–74, 79; Ephesians, 63–66, 105; Homer on, 61, 63; philosophy inferred from, 62, 63, 70 (*see also* Archilochus; Hermodorus)
    contempt for wealth, 68–69
    Diogenes Laertius on, 60–71
    melancholy, 60, 66–67, 78, 93; Dark One of Ephesus, 59; philosophy inferred from, 68, 144; Theophrastus on, 67–68; weeping philosopher, 66–68, 129–32 (*see also* Aristotle; Plato: *Cratylus*)
    misanthrope, 3, 28–29, 33, 49, 64, 71–73, 78–88, 93, 142; philosophy inferred from, 68, 70, 105, 144
    riddler, 76, 78–80, 84–85, 88, 131; Diogenes Laertius on, 83, 84 (*see also* Heraclitus: death; Timon)
    silence of, 68–70; Ephesians, 68–69; philosophy inferred from, 68, 70
  childhood, 71, 72
    Diogenes Laertius on, 72–73
  death, 49, 79–93, 142, 143
    agora, buried in, 79, 80, 88
    devoured by dogs, 79, 80, 88–89
    Diogenes Laertius on, 79, 80, 84–85, 88–93
    dung, buried in, 59, 79, 85–89
    Neanthes of Cyzicus on, 79, 80, 88
    water, 83–87
    Zoroastrianism, 89
    See also Hermippus
  Delian diver, 75–78
  Ephesians, 64–66, 69, 91, 105, 142
    Diogenes Laertius on, 63–64
    mixed drink (*kykeon*) anecdote, 68–69
    See also Heraclitus: silence; Hermodorus
  exile, 33, 82–83
  family, 60–61, 64
  flux (change), 66–67, 77
  law, 64–65, 66
  Logos, 73–74, 76, 78, 80–81, 89
  lost works, 37
  metempsychosis, 72
  On Nature, 74–76
    Crates, 76, 77
    Croton, 75–77
    Delian diver, 75–77, 78
    Diodotus on, 74–75
    Diogenes Laertius on, 74, 75, 78–79
    Seleucos on, 75–78
    Timon on, 76, 79
    See also Euripides; *The Muses;* Plato: *Sophist;* Socrates; Theophrastes
  philosophical method, 68, 73–74
  Plato/Socrates, 77
  request/refusal to rule, 3, 6, 28, 29, 64, 157n. 44
  student/teacher, 73
    Diogenes Laertius on, 71–72
    Xenophanes, 71–72
  theory of exhalations, 86, 87 (*see also* Heraclitus: death)
  unity of opposites, 85–87
    Diogenes Laertius on, 86
    law of contradictions, 87
    Theophrastes on, 85–86
    See also Aristotle

Heraclitus (*continued*)
water, 77, 92
fire and, 85–87
See also Heraclitus: death
wisdom, 62, 65, 73–75, 92
Diogenes Laertius on, 62, 73
Hesiod, 60–61
Pythagoras, 60–61
Xenophanes, 60–61
See also Archilochus; Hecateus; Homer; Philosophy: inferred from biography
work, 74
See also Philosophy: inferred from biography; Plutarch
Hermippus, 14, 41, 51, 79, 80, 88
Hermodorus, 64, 166n. 21
Hesiod, 60–61, 72, 74, 77, 99, 145
Hicks, R. D., 124
Hieron of Syracuse, 7, 13, 17, 97
Himera, battle of, 38
Hippobotus, 14, 51
Hippocrates, 125, 126, 130, 183n. 77, 185n. 107, 186n. 109
Problemata Physica, 185n. 107
Hippolytus, 5
Holy fool. *See* Democritus: magic powers; Empedocles: prophet
Homer, 12, 48, 72, 74, 88, 99, 145, 183n. 85
Cypria, 37
on Heraclitus, 61, 63
Iliad, 13
Odyssey, 13

Iliad (Homer), 13

Laughing philosopher. *See* Democritus
Lefkowitz, Mary R., *Lives of the Greek Poets,* 2, 143, 144
Lesser World System. *See* Democritus
Leucippus, 102
Greater World System, 102, 105
See also Democritus: atomism
Lives of Eminent Philosophers (Diogenes Laertius), 1, 2, 5, 115, 125, 143–45
Lives of the Greek Poets (Lefkowitz), 2, 143, 144
Logos. *See* Heraclitus
Lucian, *Vitarum Auctio (The Auction of Doctrine),* 130–31
Lucretius, 35, 140

Mantis, 40, 45, 47, 48
Medea (Euripides), 49
Meno (Plato), 159n. 56
Metempsychosis, 156n. 34. *See also* Empedocles; Heraclitus
Meton, 13–16
Milesian philosophy, 24
The Muses, 75, 77
Mysteries, 92

Neanthes of Cyzicus, 79, 80, 88
Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle), 67
Nietzsche, F., *Beiträge zur Quellenkunde und Kritik des Diogenes Laertius,* 5
Numberless seeds, 98

Odyssey (Homer), 13
Oenopides, 96, 97, 101, 102
Olympic Games, 13, 14, 16–17, 22, 156n. 32. *See also* Empedocles: Olympic Games; Sicilians
One, Doctrine of the, 97–98
On Nature. *See* Empedocles; Heraclitus
"On the Next World" (Democritus), 123
Opposites, theory of. *See* Heraclitus: unity of opposites
Osborne, Catherine, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy,* 5, 143, 144

Panatheia from Acragas. *See* Empedocles: prophet
Parmenides, 4, 24, 97–98. *See also* Democritus: atomism; Empedocles: student/teacher
Pausanias, 96. *See also* Empedocles: death, student/teacher
Persians (Aeschylus), 13
Pherycedes, 99
Philodemus, 123

Philosophical biography, 1, 5, 13, 20, 27, 31, 141
anecdotes, 142, 143
comic, 70–71
concrete, 19, 40, 44, 52, 58, 68–69, 100–101, 104, 138
disdain for wealth, 68–69
free-floating, 6, 20, 70
philosopher at the Olympic Games, 20
rebound, 83, 85
sacrifice, 20
use of, 1–3, 5–7, 26–28, 65
comedies as source, 30
favorable or hostile, 3, 7, 8, 28–29, 33, 68, 141, 143, 156n. 30, 178n. 37, 181n. 58
Democritus, 111, 114, 119–20, 126, 180n. 54, 185n. 103
Empedocles, 31, 46, 47, 53, 57–58, 142, 154n. 18, 183n. 85
Heraclitus, 59, 79, 83, 88, 142, 183n. 85
methodology, 2, 33, 44, 91, 96, 97, 105, 132, 138, 141, 165n. 16
topoi, 5, 7–11, 77, 142, 143
absentmindedness, 8, 10, 111, 133 (*see also* Democritus: character)
Athens, 7, 32, 166n. 21
banquet, 30–32
blinding, 8 (*see also* Democritus)
bon mot, 8, 70, 172n. 78
book burning, 8, 9, 10, 100–101, 142, 178n. 36 (*see also* Democritus)
career (*see* Empedocles)
character, 8 (*see also* Democritus; Empedocles; Heraclitus)
childhood, 8 (*see also* Heraclitus)
competition, 32
contempt for wealth, 8, 106, 179n. 49 (*see also* Heraclitus: character/manner)
death, 1, 58
deification, 9, 182n. 68 (*see also* Democritus; Empedocles)
democracy/tyranny, 10, 58, 133 (*see also* Empedocles: philosopher and tyrant, politician)
dung, philosopher covered with, 111 (*see also* Heraclitus: death)
east, travel to/tutors, 95, 102, 178n. 40 (*see also* Democritus: travel)
east/west, 9, 10, 96, 126, 133, 144–45 (*see also* Democritus)
epiphany, bees and, 9, 71, 173n. 95
exile, 33, 82–83, 159nn. 58, 63
family, 9 (*see also* Democritus; Empedocles; Heraclitus)
feud/contest, 9, 99–101
god-like actions, 46–47, 55–56, 115
invention (being first), 10, 105, 159n. 56
law/lawgiver, 10, 64–65, 66
life/death (power over), 126, 128, 133
lost works, 10, 37, 39
Muses, 82
natural forces, control over, 115, 162n. 84 (*see also* Democritus: magic powers; Empedocles: prophet)
Olympic Games, 7, 8, 156n. 32 (*see also* Empedocles)
philosopher and tyrant, 2, 8, 9, 10, 30–31, 158n. 50 (*see also* Democritus: magic powers; Empedocles)
philosopher's revenge, 111, 112, 115
philosopher triumphant, 10, 142
plagiarism, 11, 156n. 30, 157n. 35, 177n. 28
posthumous honors, 88, 112, 115, 142
ptheirsis (lice), 11, 174n. 114, 189n. 148
rebound of ideas, 181n. 61 (*see also* Democritus)
refusal to rule, 3, 5–6, 28–29, 33, 58, 64, 141–42, 157n. 44, 166n. 19
renunciation of all work but philosophy, 161n. 76

restoration of the dead, 126, 128
student/teacher, 97, 157n. 38, 159n. 56, 176–77n. 17 (*see also* Democritus; Empedocles; Heraclitus)
travel, 82, 104, 133 (*see also* Democritus; Empedocles)
withdrawal from society, 8, 186n. 109
Philosophy
biography inferred from, 3–4, 22–23, 65–66, 94, 97, 104–6, 142, 164n. 8
inferred from biography, 68–70, 73, 104, 105, 144
Physics (Empedocles), 12, 40
Pindar, 7, 22, 145
Olympian Odes, 17
Plato, 88, 142, 144, 161n. 76, 178n. 36, 180n. 54, 183n. 85
athletics, 180–81nn. 56–57
biography, 2
careers, 27
Cratylus, 67
feuds, 99–101
Heraclitus' influence on, 166n. 17
Meno, 159n. 56
philosopher/tyrant, 30, 133
Republic, 100, 161n. 76
Rivals, 102
Sophist, 77
student/teacher, 11, 95, 96
Platonica: The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writing of Plato (Riginos), 2, 100, 144
Plutarch, 35, 68–69
Proclus, 128
Protagoras, 96, 97, 99–101, 176n. 5
Purifications. *See* Empedocles
Pyrrho, 95
Pythagoras, 4, 23, 72, 74, 88, 128, 178n. 36, 181n. 61
death, 49
deification, 25–26
feud/contest, 99–101
Olympic Games, 7, 20
travel (to the east), 95–96
See also Democritus: student/teacher; Empedocles: student/teacher; Heraclitus: wisdom
Pythagoreanism, 17–19, 25, 154n.18
Pythian festivals, 38
Pythian Games, 16

Republic (Plato), 100, 161n. 76
Riginos, Alice S., *Platonica: The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writing of Plato*, 2, 100, 144
Rivals (Plato), 102
Sacred Diseases, 39

Salamis, 13
Sappho, 2, 14, 19, 145
Satyrus, *Lives*, 14. *See also* Empedocles: family, prophet
Seleucos Homericus, 76
Seleucos of Seleucia, 75–78
Seneca, 130
Sextus, 122–23, 125
Sicilians, 13, 38, 57, 97, 157n. 47
Olympic Games and, 7, 17
See also Empedocles; Hieron of Syracuse; Pythagoras; Theron
Simonides, 32
Socrates, 7, 76, 102, 108–9
Solon the Athenian, 6, 27, 28–29, 104
and Croesus, 7, 9
Sophist (Plato), 77
Sotion, 130
Stoics, 7, 75, 187n. 130, 188n. 135
Strife, 34, 54

Telauges, 49, 154n. 7
Thales, 99, 170n. 63, 174n. 104, 180–81n. 56–58, 185n. 106, 188n. 142
eastern tutor, 95
Olympic Games, 8
philosopher's revenge, 111
Themistius, 68
Theophrastus, 75, 117, 118
Theron, 7, 13, 17, 31, 97, 157n. 47
defeat of Xerxes, 38

Thesmophoria, festival of, 135
The "Thousand," 31–32, 158n. 52
Thrasyllus, 109–10, 121
Thrasydaeus, 31
Timaeus, *Histories,* 14
Timon, 84
Topoi. *See* Philosophical biography

Valerius Maximus, 109

Walks (Athenodorus), 116
Waugh, J., 144
Weeping philosopher, 66–68, 129–32
Women, 10, 49, 132, 138, 162n. 86, 183n. 80. *See also* Democritus; Empedocles

Xanthus, 28
Xenophanes, 24. *See also* Empedocles: student/teacher; Heraclitus: wisdom
Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* 100
Xerxes, 37–39, 132

Zeno, 97–98, 100
Zoroastrianism, 89