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Empedocles in the *Aetna*?

Abstract: The author discusses one unnoticed echo of Empedocles in the pseudo-Vergilian poem *Aetna*. The allusion opens a long periodic sentence (224–250), the end of which describes the pleasure of understanding natural phenomena through vocabulary borrowed from Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. The allusion to Lucretius is certainly deliberate, and so is probably the allusion to Empedocles. The connection between understanding, divinity, and pleasure in Lucretian and Empedoclean intertexts enhances the meaning of the *Aetna* passage and puts it in a proper perspective. In addition to this, Vergil's *Georgics* 2.475–502 confirms that, in a poem on natural phenomena, both Empedocles and Lucretius are likely to be associated with this particular nexus of ideas.
Key Words: *Aetna*, Empedocles, Lucretius, Vergil's *Georgics*, intertextuality, assimilation to god, intellectual pleasure.

Encouraging his friend Lucilius to write a poem on Mount Etna despite the fact that the topic had already been treated by several other poets, the younger Seneca wrote: "the most recent author has the best advantage, for he finds ready at hand the words, which, arranged differently, present a new appearance."[1] The *Aetna*, the minute poem from the *Appendix Vergiliana*, illustrates Seneca's observation remarkably well. Even in its rather corrupt state, the text of the poem is clearly replete with the echoes of Lucretius, Vergil, Germanicus, and Manilius.[2] The poet, whoever he was, was evidently a careful reader of his predecessors and a master of the literary form of *Naturgedicht*.[3]

Not surprisingly, the work on the poem's intertextuality has for a

[1] *Praeterea condicio optima est ultimi: parata uerba inuenit, quae aliter instructa nouam faciem habent* (Sen. *Ep*. 79.6).

[2] I use Goodyear's text (1965 = Clausen et al. 1966). For *loci similes poetarum*, see the *apparatus priores* in Sudhaus 1898, Richter 1963, and de Vivo 1987.

[3] For *Naturgedicht*, or poetry *de rerum natura*, as a (quasi-)genre, see Volk 2005b; for the place of the *Aetna* within this tradition, see in particular 169–171.

long time been centered on identifying the words "ready at hand" for the purpose of restoring the badly mutilated text. But the focus of scholarly study did not remain exclusively fixed on the concerns of *Wortphilologie*. Questions related to broader literary problems, such as the complex process of negotiation by which the discourse of the *Aetna* secures its own place in the line of its literary predecessors, have not been neglected.[4] Explorations of the *Aetna*'s intriguing intertextual mosaic increased the poem's legibility and made an active contribution to the construction of its meaning, putting beyond doubt the fact that, as "the most recent author" in the line, its poet was a careful reader of his literary models. In order to expand the already rich poetic background against which the *Aetna* should be read, I would like to discuss here one hitherto unnoticed echo of Empedocles.

In the middle of the poem, following the tradition of Lucretius' and Vergil's *proemi al mezzo*,[5] the poet embedded a second programmatic proem which extols his theme—the volcanic eruptions of Mount Etna. To inquire into natural phenomena is the highest pleasure of the human soul, he claims, but to explore the sky and neglect what is before our feet is sheer madness (219–256); one should not turn one's mind to the earth in order to gain profit, as people commonly do, but in order to gain the knowledge that eliminates fear from terrestrial phenomena, such as the eruptions of the Etna (257–281). In the opening periodic sentence the poet claims for himself a prize worthy of the immense toil of composing a poem on a difficult subject and pauses for a moment to define the reward that awaits every student of natural phenomena:

Non oculis solum pecudum miranda **tueri**
more **nec** effusos in humum graue **pascere** corpus, 225
Nosse fidem rerum dubiasque **exquirere** causas,
ingenium **sacrare** caputque **attollere** caelo,
scire quot et quae sint magno natalia mundo
principia †occasus metuunt ad saecula pergunt
et firma aeterno religata est machina uinclo, 230

4 For the polemics against Manilius, see Lühr 1971; for the polemics against Vergil, see Di Giovine 1981; for Vergil and Manilius as sources of inspiration, see De Vivo 1992; for Lucretius, see Lassandro 1993. See also the discussion in Volk 2005a, 82–90.

5 For "proems in the middle" in Latin poetry, see Conte 1976 (1992).

solis **scire** modum et quanto minor orbita lunae,
haec breuior cursu ut bis senos peruolet orbes,
annuus ille meet, quae certo sidera currant
ordine quaeue suos seruent incondita motus,
scire uices etiam signorum et tradita iura 235
(sex cum nocte rapi, totidem cum luce referri), 235b
nubila cur caelo, terris denuntiet imbres,
quo rubeat Phoebe, quo frater palleat, igni,
tempora cur uarient anni, uer, prima iuuenta,
cur aestate perit, cur aestas ipsa senescit
autumnoque obrepit hiems et in orbe recurrit, 240
axem **scire** Helices et tristem **nosse** cometen,
Lucifer unde micet quaue Hesperus, unde Bootes,
Saturni quae stella tenax, quae Martia pugnax,
quo rapiant nautae, quo sidere lintea tendant,
scire uias maris et caeli praediscere cursus, 245
quo uolet Orion, quo Serius incubet index,
et quaecumque iacent tanto miracula mundo
non congesta **pati** nec aceruo condita rerum,
sed manifesta notis certa **disponere** sede
singula, <u>diuina est animi ac iucunda uoluptas</u>. 250

Not cattle-like to gaze on the world's marvels merely with the eye, not to lie outstretched upon the ground feeding a weight of flesh, but to understand the proof of things and search into doubtful causes, to hallow genius, to raise the head to the sky, to know the number and character of natal elements in the mighty universe, do they dread extinction and go on through the ages [?], is the mechanism fixed secure with everlasting chain, to know the limit of the sun's track and the measure by which the moon's orbit falls short thereof, so that in her shorter course she flies through twelve rounds while he has a yearly path, to know what stars run in constant order and which stray irregularly from their true orbit, to know likewise the changes of the zodiac-signs and their immemorial laws (that six are taken away during night and as many return with the dawn), to know why the moon announces clouds for heaven and rain for earth, what is the nature of her red and her brother's pallid fire, why the year's seasons vary, why does spring, its youthful prime, die with the advent of summer, why does summer itself turn old, why does winter creep upon autumn and return in the season's cycle, to know the axle of Helice, to discern the ill-omened comet, to see on what side gleams the Morning-Star, where the Evening-Star, and whence the Bear-Keeper, and which is Saturn's steadfast star and which the warlike star of Mars, under what constellation the sailor must furl or spread his sails, to know the paths of the sea and learn in advance the courses of the heavens, whither Orion is hastening, over what land broods Sirius with warning sign, and to refuse

> to let all the outspread marvels of this mighty universe remain piled up in a heap, but to arrange them each clearly marked in the appointed place—all this is the mind's divine and grateful pleasure.[6]

The monumental architecture of the period effectively conveys its argument. The mindless *gazing* of domestic animals (224–225) is replaced by the lofty prize of studying a remarkably amplified list of (increasingly celestial) natural phenomena:[7] the pleasure of *understanding* (226–250). The adjective *diuina* at the end of the passage (250) provides a counter-point to the animal-like gaze described in the opening lines (224–225). These opening lines allude to the well-known philosophical tenet according to which the defining feature of our nature is *notre verticalité*, the fact that we stand upright. Although we should duly note that the comparison between the humans who lack understanding and cattle is a traditional one and can be found in Heraclitus and Plato,[8] we should also observe that the *Aetna* poet does not continue to conclude his sentence with the typically Platonic-Aristotelian and Stoic point that the purpose of our upright nature is to observe the sky.[9] The point is made by Manilius,[10] whose subject-matter, the stars, the *Aetna* poet is about to reject in a moment. Instead, the *Aetna* poet concludes his programmatic sentence describing *understanding* or *knowledge* as a *diuina* and *iucunda uoluptas* (250).

The strong contrast between *gazing* on one hand and *understanding* on

[6] Translation J. W. Duff and A. M. Duff, modified.

[7] For such lists in Latin poetry see Goodyear 1965 ad 224 ff. Of course, they can be traced back to the lists of Parmenides D.-K. 11 and Empedocles D.-K. 38 (they are notably absent from the poems of Aratus and Nicander).

[8] Heracl. D.-K. 29 = 95 Marcovich, and Plat. *Resp*. 9, 586a are often adduced (for example, Sudhaus 1898 ad loc. and Lassandro 1993, 326 n. 28). Commonly adduced Roman parallels include Sall. *Catil*. 1.1 and Cic. *Leg*. 1.26. (for example, Giuliese 2001, 113).

[9] Contemplation of the heavens and their motor, the divine intellect, as the purpose of human life is a concept developed in Plato's late works (*Timaeus* and the *Laws*; cf. Ps. Plato's *Epinomis*) and Aristotle's early, exoteric works (*Eudemus*, *Protreptic*, and *On Philosophy*). In the 1st cent. CE the view becomes ubiquitous (see, for example, Ov. *Met*. 78–86 and Ps. Longin. *De sublim*. 35). For *contemplatio caeli* in antiquity, see Pfeiffer 2001, 27–69.

[10] *Manil*. 4.896–910. For a survey of possible philosophical influences on Manilius' passage see Volk 2009, 226–51.

the other may perhaps strike the reader as odd in a poem which often appeals to the evidence of the former in order to gain the latter.[11] Seneca's *Quaestiones naturales* 6, a text that has much in common with our poem, contains a similar thought in a similar context: we find some things unusual, says Seneca, "because we grasp nature by our eyes and not by our reason" (*Quare autem quicquam nobis insolitum est? quia naturam oculis non ratione comprendimus*).[12] While the possibility of the influence of Seneca on the *Aetna* author cannot be ruled out, it is very likely that the two texts share at least one common source.[13] Whatever the identity of the source,[14] it is worth pointing out that a call for priority of the reason over the impression of the eyes can also be found in Empedocles' poem known as *On Nature* or the *Physics*. Empedocles puts the mind as a source of human knowledge on a par with seeing and hearing[15] and often wants his addressee to test the claims made in the poem by gazing at the visible physical phenomena.[16] Yet he also claims that the evidence obtained from the senses has its limits; only the mind can grasp the nature of divinity.[17] In a passage devoted to the understanding of Love (Φιλότης) Empedocles clearly emphasizes the precedence of the mind over vision. In fact, the *Aetna*'s *non oculis solum pecudum miranda tueri* | *more … nosse fidem rerum* (224–226) conveys exactly the same thought as Empedocles D.-K. 17.21:

τὴν [sc. Φιλότητα] σὺ νόωι δέρκευ, μηδ' ὄμμασιν ἧσο τεθηπώς

[11] For sensory evidence as the basis of inferences about unseen phenomena, see, for example, lines 135–45, 191–3, 329–31, 448–454, 548. For Epicurean character of the method, see De Lacy 1943, 171–173. Garani 2009, 104–105 n. 5 points out that the method does not appear to be foreign to Posidonius, but this should not be pressed too far. Le Blay 2006, 336–341 attempts to make the same point for the Stoics in general, totally misinterpreting Sen. *Q. Nat.* 6.3.2.

[12] *Q. Nat.* 6.3.2.

[13] See Goodyear 1984, 348–353.

[14] The main Greek candidates include Posidonius and Theophrastus. See Garani 2009 (who argues for Theophrastus).

[15] D.-K. 2.7–8.

[16] E.g., D.-K. 26.

[17] D.-K. 133. See Wright 1995 on D.-K. 3.7–8.

And you, gaze on her [sc. Love] with your understanding, and do not sit with stunned eyes.[18]

Although the question of whether the allusion is intentional or not cannot be answered with certainty, we can at least examine the hypothesis that the *Aetna* poet quoted Empedocles deliberately. If the assumption is correct, the syntax of the opening period of the second proem can be seen as a corrective statement (i.e., "not A, but B")[19] the first part of which is Empedoclean, and the second part Lucretian: *diuina est animi ac iucunda uoluptas*. This combination would suggest that the connection between the ideas of understanding, divinity, and pleasure is something that, in the eyes of the *Aetna* poet, Empedocles and Lucretius share and stand for. To begin from Lucretius—the key passage that the poet of the *Aetna* calls to our attention in line 250 makes exactly this connection. In the proem to *DRN* 3 Lucretius describes the effect of Epicurus' teaching on his mind:

nam simul ac ratio tua coepit uociferari
naturam rerum diuina mente coorta
diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi
discedunt, totum **uideo** per inane geri res.
apparet diuum numen sedesque quietae,
quas neque concutiunt uenti nec nubila nimbis
aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina
cana cadens uiolat semperque innubilus aether
integit, et large diffuso lumine ridet.
omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla
res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.
at contra nusquam **apparent** Acherusia templa,
nec tellus obstat quin omnia **dispiciantur**,
sub pedibus quaecumque infra per inane geruntur.
his ibi me rebus quaedam diuina uoluptas
percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua ui
tam manifesta patens ex omni parte retecta est.

For as soon as your reasoning begins to proclaim the nature of things revealed by your divine mind, away flee the mind's terrors, the walls of the world open out, I see action going on throughout the whole void: before me appear the gods in their majesty, and their peaceful abodes, which no winds ever shake nor clouds besprinkle with rain, which no snow congealed by the bitter frost mars with its

[18] Translations from Empedocles are by B. Inwood, slightly adjusted.

[19] For such statements in Lucretius see Marković 2008, 126–128.

> white fall, but the air ever cloudless encompasses them and laughs with its light spread wide abroad. There moreover nature supplies everything, and nothing at any time impairs their peace of mind. But contrariwise nowhere appear the regions of Acheron; yet the earth is no hindrance to all being clearly seen, whatsoever goes on below under our feet throughout the void. Thereupon from all these things a sort of divine delight gets hold upon me and reverent shuddering, because nature thus by your power has been so manifestly laid open and uncovered in every part.[20]

Although in terms primarily associated with vision, the passage describes the bliss of understanding:[21] it is by studying the writings of Epicurus that Lucretius reaches the "point of view" comparable to that of a god. The phrase *diuina uoluptas* in line 28 echoes the phrase *diuina mente*, which described the mind of Epicurus in line 15. The shared adjective foreshadows the later explicit reference to Epicurus as a god (*deus ille fuit*).[22] As a result of his discoveries, Epicurus was able to enjoy the pleasure of an undisturbed mind. This enabled him to lead a life that approximated the life of a god and to promise the same to his followers.[23] The proem to book 3 thus contains a typically Epicurean version of the Platonic assimilation to god.[24]

The passage is crucially important for Lucretius' intellectual project and its Epicurean orthodoxy should be beyond doubt. Lucretius' *uoluptas* in 3.28 is the Latin equivalent of Epicurus' ἡδονή and stands for the Epicurean version of the idea of blessed life (τὸ μακαρίως ζῆν).[25] Although not often emphasized, intellectual pleasure looms large in Epicurus' teaching.[26] Epicurus inherited this concept from Aristotle and

[20] Translations from Lucretius are by M. F. Smith, slightly adjusted.

[21] Cf. Giancotti 1989, 57 and 60, who correctly explains *uideo* in 3.17 in terms of the Epicurean concept of ἐπιβολὴ τῆς διανοίας, or, in Lucretius' words, *animi iactus*.

[22] Lucr. 5.8.

[23] Ζήσῃ δὲ ὡς θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις, "and you shall live as god among men" (*Ad Men*. 135).

[24] Giancotti 1989, 71–73. For assimilation to god, ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, as the Platonic τέλος, see *Theaetet*. 176a8–b3, *Resp*. 613a7–b1, *Tim*. 90c7–d7, and also D.L. 3.78.

[25] *Ad Men*. 128: τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος λέγομεν εἶναι τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν. Cf. Farrington 1952.

[26] For a recent account, see Warren 2014, 79–82.

adopted it for his own purposes.[27] While for Aristotle the pleasure of the intellect is connected with its activity, Epicurus, who also recognizes the benefit of the activity itself (a sentence from the Vatican Collection claims that in philosophy μάθησις and ἀπόλαυσις occur simultaneously),[28] is ultimately interested in the way in which philosophy produces a desirable *state* of the mind. Epicurus' ἡδονή describes the states of ἀταραξία and ἀπονία.[29] In a passage from the *Letter to Menoeceus* Epicurus dissociates the term from the common ideas of corporeal pleasure and claims that a truly pleasant life is a result of purely mental activities (131–132). In the *Letter to Herodotus* he also speaks of the bliss resulting from knowledge (79). Other sources support this scant evidence. Cicero's Epicurean Velleius, for example, talks about the *uoluptas* of contemplating divinity.[30]

And yet, as the *Aetna* poet seems to suggest, the connection between the themes of understanding, divinity, and pleasure can also be seen as essentially Empedoclean. In the proem to *DRN* 3 Lucretius replaces the poetic guidance of Venus, which he sought in the proem to book 1, with that of Epicurus.[31] Empedocles, on the other hand, seems to remain a devotee of Aphrodite throughout: for him sex, growth, poetic inspiration and creativity,[32] and acquisition of knowledge are all governed by the principle he associates with her; the pleasure of knowledge unifies one with the world.[33] The particular line I quoted above comes from our

[27] In book 10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle arrives at the conclusion that complete human happiness is found in the activity of observation, i.e., the proper activity of the intellect, the highest and the most divine element in us. Happiness is mixed with pleasure, and the activity of wisdom is the pleasantest of all activities; therefore, philosophy offers wonderful pleasures. See Arist. *NE* 10.7 1177a and cf. n. 9 above with Iambl. *Protr*., p. 51 Pistelli.

[28] *SV* 27. Cf. *SV* 41, and see Giancotti 1989, 7 ff.

[29] Fr. 7 Arrighetti: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀταραξία καὶ <ἡ> ἀπονία καταστηματικαί εἰσιν ἡδοναί.

[30] *Nat. deor*. 1.49. See Giancotti 1989, 100.

[31] See Duban 1982.

[32] If we understand the divinity in D.-K. 23.11 as Aphrodite: ἀλλὰ τορῶς ταῦτ' ἴσθι, θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας ("but you know this clearly, since the account you have heard is from divinity").

[33] See Bollack 1965, 1.262–266.

longest and philosophically most important fragment of Empedocles. It describes the role of Aphrodite (as the personified force of attraction) as crucial for the process of understanding (D.-K. 17.14–26):

ἀλλ' ἄγε μύθων κλῦθι, μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας **αὔξει**
ὡς γὰρ καὶ πρὶν ἔειπα πιφαύσκων πείρατα μύθων,
δίπλ' ἐρέω· τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἓν **ηὐξήθη** μόνον εἶναι
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ' αὖ διέφυ πλέον' ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι
πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα καὶ ἠέρος ἄπλετον ὕψος
Νεῖκός τ' οὐλόμενον δίχα τῶν, ἀτάλαντον ἁπάντῃ,
καὶ Φιλότης ἐν τοῖσιν, ἴση μῆκός τε πλάτος τε·
τὴν σὺ νόῳ δέρκευ, μηδ' ὄμμασιν ἧσο τεθηπώς
ἥτις καὶ θνητοῖσι νομίζεται ἔμφυτος ἄρθροις,
τῇ τε φίλα φρονέουσι καὶ ἄρθμια ἔργα τελοῦσι,
Γηθοσύνην καλέοντες ἐπώνυμον ἠδ' Ἀφροδίτην
τὴν οὔ τις μετὰ τοῖσιν ἑλισσομένην δεδάηκε
θνητὸς ἀνήρ· σὺ δ' ἄκουε λόγου στόλον οὐκ ἀπατηλόν.

But come! Hear my words; for learning will expand your thought organs. For as I said before, in revealing the limits of my words, I shall tell a double tale. For at one time [they] grew to be one alone from many, and at another, again, [they] grew apart to be many from one – fire and water and earth and the boundless height of air; and destructive strife apart from these, like in every respect, and love among them, equal in length and breadth. And you, gaze on her with your understanding and do not sit with stunned eyes. For she is deemed even by mortals to be inborn in [their] bodies [lit. joints] and by her they think loving thoughts and accomplish works of unity calling her by the names of Joy and Aphrodite. Her no mortal man has perceived whirling among them [i.e., the roots]. But you, hear the undeceptive expedition of my account.

The passage suggests that the role of Aphrodite in the acquisition of knowledge parallels her role in the cosmic cycle. Just as one grows out of many under the guidance of love (ηὐξήθη, line 16), so learning makes one's thought organs grow (αὔξει, 14). By love, inborn in human bodies, humans have loving thoughts and produce deeds that fit together (ἄρθμια ἔργα τελοῦσι, 23)—a fitting that parallels the fitting in the natural world, where the sun, earth, sky, and sea, after they were made alike by Aphrodite and have come to love each other, were fitted together from their own parts (ἄρθμια, D.-K. 22.1). Both the mixture of elements that leads to the unity of the whole and the process of understanding guided by Aphrodite are characterized by harmonious proportion reflected in the vital elements of the human body. For Empedocles,

both pleasure and knowledge occur by the action of like on like.[34] In D.-K. 110 the poet recommends his teaching to his addressee, Pausanias, saying that, once implanted in thinking organs and cultivated with kindness and purity, his words lead to the acquisition of many other things (i.e., truths); on the other hand, Pausanias is warned that reaching out for different things that blunt thoughts will result in being abandoned by the truth. True teaching is thus for Empedocles a physical entity, and "truth literally feeds, or adds itself to, its counterpart in the body."[35] Since we know like by like, we come to know the nature of divine not through our senses but through a divine element in us.[36] Knowing the divine is to be assimilated to it.

The adjective *diuina* in Lucretius' phrase *diuina uoluptas* has been connected above with the Epicurean version of the idea that the knowledge of truth puts one on a par with gods. Epicurus and Lucretius have a predecessor in Empedocles, who was also liberated from the causes of human suffering within his lifetime and, as a result, claimed for himself a divine status.[37] Empedocles' divinity might be as puzzling as that of Epicurus, as we can see from the explanation offered by Sextus Empiricus, one of our sources for the two Empedoclean fragments quoted above. Sextus argued that, while a teacher of grammar can easily misunderstand Empedocles' claim to divinity, a man who possesses scientific knowledge, familiar with Empedocles' physics, "will understand that Empedocles called himself a god because he alone, having preserved his mind pure from evil and unpolluted, by means of the god in him perceived the god without."[38] This is presumably why Lucretius also refers to Empedocles as a man *diuini pectoris… | ut uix humana uideatur stirpe creatus*.[39] Just like the divinity of Epicurus, the divinity of

[34] See Guthrie 1965, 228–231 and 242.

[35] Long 1966, 270.

[36] D.-K. 133 and 134. See also Guthrie 1965, 256–257.

[37] See D.-K. 112.4–6 and D.-K. 113.1–2.

[38] Συνήσει ὅτι ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς θεὸν ἑαυτὸν προσηγόρευσεν, ἐπεὶ μόνος καθαρὸν ἀπὸ κακίας τηρήσας τὸν νοῦν καὶ ἀνεπιθόλωτον τῷ ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεῷ τὸν ἐκτὸς θεὸν κατείληφεν (SE *Adv. Math*. 1.302).

[39] Lucr. 1.731–733. Giancotti 1989, 102 n. 74 points out that, inasmuch as it is connected with *ratio*, the divinity of Epicurus in 3.14–15 is different than the divinity of Empedocles.

Empedocles can be understood only within the frame of a redefined concept of divine. The importance of keeping the purity of the mind is also a prominent theme in Lucretius.[40]

The poet of the *Aetna* defined the divine pleasure of the mind in line 226 as *nosse fidem rerum dubiasque exquirere causas*. Editors and commentators observe that the line evokes a line from Vergil's *Georgics*, namely 2.490: *felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas* ("Blessed is he who was able to learn the causes of natural phenomena"). In this well-known passage (*Georg.* 2.475–502) Vergil first asks the Muses to show him the secrets of nature, presented in the form of a list of typical *naturales quaestiones*. But if that is not possible, continues the poet, he will be satisfied with the countryside, a subject that brings no glory. The passage continues with the praise of the author who understood the *rerum causae*, on account of the liberating effect that this knowledge offers, and places right next to this author the one who offers the knowledge of the divinities of the countryside. The first author is commonly identified as Lucretius.[41] We are justified in seeing Lucretius as an example of *the type* that Vergil refers to, but we should also note that the type is Empedoclean just as much as it is Lucretian.[42] This interpretation is supported by two notable allusions to Empedocles in this same passage.[43] First, the very line that praises the poet of natural phenomena (2.490) could be seen as an Empedoclean allusion:

> ὄλβιος ὃς θείων πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον,
> δειλὸς δ' ὥι σκοτόεσσα θεῶν πέρι δόξα μέμηλεν. (D.-K. 132)
>
> Blessed is he who obtained wealth in his divine thinking organs, and wretched is he to whom belongs a dark opinion about the gods.

In addition to this, Vergil describes the possible reason that might prevent him from understanding the natural phenomena as cold blood around his heart.[44] Empedocles taught that we think with blood and that the seat of human understanding is the heart; the existing fragment does

[40] E.g., Lucr. 5.18, 5.43, 6.24.

[41] See for example Lühr 1971, 141; Effe 1977, 218–219; and Leach 1981.

[42] For skepticism regarding the identification with a single individual cf. Thomas 1988, *ad loc*.

[43] See Erren 2003, *ad loc*.

[44] 2.483–484.

not mention the role of heat in the process of thinking, but it does make clear the fact that Vergil's lines allude to it.[45]

In D.-K. 132 Empedocles was exploiting the language of mystical initiation for his own purposes and borrowing the formula from a model such as lines 480–482 of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.[46] The quotation from Vergil shows how Empedocles himself later became associated with the bliss of understanding natural phenomena. The presence of another allusion to Empedocles in the close proximity of *Georg.* 2.490 suggests that with this line the Roman poet was consciously repeating the gesture of his Presocratic predecessor. In other words, Vergil's μακαρισμός casts Lucretius as a typically *Empedoclean* poet. The link between the two poets can also be supported by Cicero's well-known letter to his brother Quintus which associates the *poemata* of Lucretius with the *Empedoclea* of one Sallustius.[47]

Did Empedocles discuss volcanic phenomena in his poem *On Nature*? If so, to what extent? One extant fragment of the poem does mention subterranean fires[48] and later *testimonia* suggest a certain number of lines devoted to the interconnected questions of hot springs and volcanic eruptions—both subjects being native to the island of Sicily.[49] Does this indicate the possibility of a more direct influence of Empedocles on the *Aetna*? As M. Garani put it, "the fact should not go unobserved that Empedocles, whose name is strongly associated since antiquity with the volcano of Aetna owing to his legendary fatal jump into it […], stands behind all of *Aetna*'s main scientific intertextual target texts (i.e., Theophrastus' *Metarsiologica*, Lucretius' *DRN*, Seneca's *Nat. Quaest.*; *cf.* also Ovid's *Met.* 15.340–55)."[50] Further research will hopefully put us in a better position to determine the extent and the nature of the influence of

[45] D.-K. 105. Cf. Cic. *Tusc*. 1.19.

[46] The formula implies a divine bliss as the attribute of the transmitted knowledge: Ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων· | ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὅς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίων | αἶσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι. For μακαρισμός in Greek poetry, see Gladigow 1967.

[47] Cic. *Ad Q. fr*. 2.9.3.

[48] D.-K. 52.

[49] See Kingsley 1995, 31–35 and 71–78.

[50] Garani 2009, 121 n. 53.

Empedocles on the *Aetna* poet. The discussion above approached the problem from the angle of poetics rather than that of science, but, as Greco-Roman poetry on natural phenomena constantly reminds us, the two should not always be sharply separated.[51]

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Empedokle u *Etni*?

Apstrakt

Autor diskutuje jedan do sada nezapažen odjek iz Empedokla u pseudo-Vergilijevom spevu *Etna*. Aluzija na Empedokla stoji na početku dugačke periodične rečenice (224–250), na čijem kraju pesnik opisuje božansko zadovoljstvo razumevanja prirodnih fenomena koristeći reči pozajmljene iz Lukrecijevog speva *De rerum natura*. Kao i aluzija na Lukrecija, aluzija na Empedokla verovatno je svesna. Ovu tezu potvrđuje činjenica da uočavanje veze između procesa razumevanja, ideje božanstva, i osećanja zadovoljstva koju Lukrecijev i Empedoklov intertekst uspostavljaju produbljuje i izoštrava naše razumevanje pasusa iz *Etne*. U prilog tezi govori i pasus iz Vergilijevih *Georgika* (2.475–502) koji ilustruje paradigmatičan status Empedokla i Lukrecija kao predstavnika pomenute veze u poeziji o prirodnim fenomenima.

Ključne reči: *Etna*, Empedokle, Lukrecije, Vergilijeve *Georgike*, intertekstualnost, saobraženje sa božanskim, intelektualno zadovoljstvo.