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METAPHOR AND THE CONCEPT OF NATURE IN PINDAR AND EMPEDOCLES

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Introduction

In the well-cultivated fields of classical philology, real progress is rare; mostly the work being done is the rearrangement of known materials with the hope of bringing out some more convincing picture.

— Walter Burkert¹

I. Introduction

This dissertation is a study of the relationship between the concept of nature and vegetal metaphors in late archaic and early classical Greece, focused on the work of two poets of that period, namely Pindar of Thebes and Empedocles of Acragas (and so on the combined period of their poetic activity, c. 500–430). This was an era of innovation in practically all domains, but for our purposes here the two most important developments are that the concept of nature became one of the most important and most contested concepts across all genres of literature, and that authors of all sorts were attending more closely to the possible roles of metaphor and other imagery. Although conceived with an eye to those larger developments, this dissertation is structured around case studies of Pindar and Empedocles, two poets of tremendous influence on both the poetical and the philosophical traditions that followed. Both are known for their bold metaphors, including ones drawn from the realm of plants; and each offers some of the most illuminating evidence for the early history of the concept of nature under the term φύσις, which both authors use, or φυά, which is Pindar's preferred term. Both authors are often cited in support of claims about the relationship between the Greek concept of nature and vegetal images, and rightly so: as we will see, their vegetal metaphors are subtly coordinated in various regards with their conceptions of φύσις or φυά, and also anticipate later representations of the human mind in its union with a universal Nature.

¹ Burkert (2013) 85.

Yet in both authors the relationship between the concept and the metaphors in question is not so straightforward as it may appear at first glance: this “fruit of the mind” is no *simple* fruit. In Pindar, we will see that the relationship is structured around a carefully variegated poetics, manifesting itself in different ways in different poems, in accord with the ideological demands of the commission: the more distinct connections between the concept and the metaphors, as in the phrase “well-blossoming nature,” seem to be generally reserved for more progressive patrons, while other metaphors seem to belong to a more traditional elitist discourse, such as “blossom of hymns” and “fruit of the mind.” In the ardently progressive Empedocles, on the other hand, while many plant metaphors attest to a recognition of the rhetorical and explanatory power of novel metaphor, there is a notable delicacy in the use of vegetal metaphors for the mind and the cosmos: I argue that this belongs to Empedocles’ concerted critique of imagery and of the very concept of φύσις, even as he presents a positive vision of the human subject growing together with the quasi-vegetal cosmos. Through these idiosyncratic appropriations and innovations upon phytomorphic imagery, both authors illustrate the subtle ways in which vegetal metaphors could function in connection with and in advance of the concept of nature.

II. Project Overview

In recent scholarship on the history of φύσις it is common to stress the word’s derivation from φύω/φύομαι (usually “grow,” but also “be born,” “come to be”), and the implications this has for the word’s original meaning and persistent connotations.² So Pierre Hadot writes, “The primitive image evoked by this word seems to me to be that of vegetal growth: it is

² For studies of φύσις that emphasize the vegetal, see esp. Patzer (1993 [1945]), Macé (2012).

simultaneously the *shoot* that *grows* and the *shoot* that has finished *growing*.”³ Likewise, adapting the association between nature and vegetation to Pindaric diction, R. Drew Griffith asserts, “From the name he gave them, the Greek perceived the expression of nature in leaves, of φύά in φύλλα.”⁴ Such attractive claims about the historical connection between the concept and an imaginative vision of vegetal growth can be easily substantiated, especially by reference to later authors.⁵

Yet the generalization seems less secure when we turn our attention to Pindar and Empedocles. Most prominently, the link between φύω/φύομαι and its deverbal nouns is of surprisingly little help in examining the vegetal imagery of Pindar and Empedocles. Neither corpus shows any marked relationship between φύά/φύσις and φύω/φύομαι in the application to vegetal growth that seems so primary in other authors (esp. Homer): φύω/φύομαι is in fact never used of literal plant growth in Pindar or Empedocles. Nor does φύά/φύσις seem to attract any metaphors from the array of its cognates such as φυτόν (“plant”) or the apparently associated φύλλον. Nevertheless, numerous passages and broader thematic configurations can leave no doubt that the concept(s) of φύά and φύσις were dynamic ones, conceived and poetically represented with the regular assistance of plant imagery. Since so many passages show vegetal metaphors being employed to figure human and animal heredity, birth, and development, we can safely conclude that they had some relationship. But again, it is exceedingly rare that

³ Hadot (2006 [2004]) 17.

⁴ Griffith (1999) 55 with n. 11 notes that Greeks appear to have perceived an etymological connection between φύλλον and φύω, even if we now trace them to separate roots, and cites Chantraine (1980) 1232 on the likelihood that φύλλον developed by analogy with φυτόν, etc. To judge from Buck (1949) 8.53 and 8.56, it would seem that Greek is peculiar among the Indo-European languages in the development of a word from the root **bhel-* (φύλλον) that became phonetically associable with those from the root *bhū-*. Perhaps the phonetic association also reinforced the vegetal associations of φύω/φύομαι.

⁵ See esp. Patzer (1993 [1945]).

φυά or φύσις is brought into proximity with vegetal metaphor in these authors. A closer analysis is necessary to determine the precise character of the connection in both Pindar and Empedocles.

This dissertation's contribution lies fundamentally in the detailed study of the concept and metaphors as they feature in the two individual corpora. Prior studies have illuminated the long history of that relationship in Greek literature, but, in doing so, they have offered generalizations that merit closer scrutiny, both because those generalizations are often based on syntheses of scattered images in diverse authors, and because that synthetic work has (understandably) tended to rely upon standard interpretations of the relevant texts, which are perhaps not beyond question themselves. The interpretive task is approached here in two steps: first, a fresh philological examination of the evidence aimed at a clarification of the concept and its role in the individual corpus (Chapters 1 and 3); second, an analysis of vegetal metaphors in their relationship with that concept (Chapters 2 and 4). In each chapter I hope to have made a useful contribution to the scholarship, but I also hope that the value of the whole is greater than that of the parts. As I studied them, the two corpora came to seem still more complementary and mutually illuminating, in ways that I will now sketch before summarizing the arguments of the individual chapters.

In pursuing a better understanding of the semantics of φύσις and φυά in the two corpora, an understanding burdened as little as possible by the later use and discussions of the term, I found myself in each case led to the conclusion that the words may not be so polysemic in these authors as is usually assumed. One is easily struck by the polysemy in the relevant dictionary entries, but even in the scholarship on these two authors the meanings continue to range widely,

from “physique” to “natural enthusiasm” to “essence” to “birth” to “genesis” to “seed.”⁶ Indeed, debate about the meanings has marked the scholarship on both authors for the past century and more. For my part, I suggest (at the risk of appearing obtuse or obstinate) that the words in these two authors may have approximately one meaning, roughly translatable, after all, as “nature.” Which is to say, “nature” in the sense of something’s (or someone’s) hypostatized set of innate characteristics, which are manifest through appearance, behavior, and development, and which belong to it as something constituted through sexual reproduction (as is always the case for Pindar) or through universal processes of mixing and exchange (as theorized by Empedocles). This is not to say that more precise subdefinitions are useless; rather, it is to insist that in no instance do the texts of Pindar and Empedocles demand that we restrict the meaning of the word to, e.g., “physique” as opposed to “nature (with an eye especially to someone’s visible form),” or “seed” as opposed to “nature (qua body transmitted in reproduction).” A basic meaning, especially of so capacious a concept, easily accommodates more particular applications.⁷ I would also note that a distinction such as one finds in Slater’s *Lexicon to Pindar*, s.v. φύά, which separates “nature” from “bodily nature, stature,” runs the risk of being anachronistic for these authors, who were no dualists.

Beyond such general points, the hypothesis of a unified meaning contributes to my interpretation of Pindar in Chapter 1, and is central to my argument about Empedocles in Chapter

⁶ See the discussions with citations in Chh. 1 and 3.

⁷ In pushing this point, I hope not to seem insensitive to the phenomenon of polysemy, or to the fine discussions of it by e.g. Bréal (1991 [1913]) 157 or Benveniste (1974) II.98. Instead of the terms used above, one could perhaps follow the nomenclature of Koselleck (2011 [1972]) 20: “A word may have several possible meanings, but a concept [*Begriff*] combines in itself an abundance of meanings. Thus a concept may be clear, but it must be ambiguous.” But, to be clear, on my account the ambiguity in these authors may derive only from the wide range of characteristics subsumed by a “nature” that can be selectively highlighted in a given context.

3. In both cases, I argue that there is a greater semantic unity than is usually posited, and that it is with respect to that basic meaning that the several instances of the terms can be analyzed most precisely. In Pindar, this means differentiation in terms of the sorts of claims that the concept is used to articulate in different poems for different audiences; in Empedocles, it means that all instances of the word are to be read in light of his esotericism, linguistic conventionalism, and a single theoretical account of what the word φύσις actually designates.

Another important result of my study of the concept of nature in these authors concerns its relationship with the concept of craft or τέχνη/τέχνα, which demanded consideration as the primary concept against which φύσις came to be defined. The result can be stated in a general form: contrary to our expectations and scholarly opinion, φύσις and φυά are not presented in these corpora in opposition to τέχνη/τέχνα. In other words, nature has not been strictly delineated from craft as a distinct mode of production with its own patterns of transmission. Scholars working on the history of τέχνη have already reached the same conclusion regarding earlier sources, but the opposition between the two concepts that crystallized in later authors has nevertheless continued to be retrojected upon Pindar and Empedocles and to structure analyses of their imagery.⁸ Yet, as we will see, Pindar's τέχνα is the preserve of the divine and divinely endowed families, and as such even appears to be subsumed by φυά. Instead of being contrasted with τέχνα, Pindar's φυά is repeatedly contrasted with learning or human instruction (which of course became principal aspects of τέχνη in other authors), although in some poems the two are allowed to be more complementary. Empedocles, for his part, uses τέχνη only once, in describing painters who are knowledgeable about their τέχνη on account of their μῆτις, or “cunning,” and their painting is presented as an illustration of how the elements mix and take

⁸ See the discussion in Ch. 1 for references.

shape in mortal organisms (B23); we will see further evidence that Empedocles' conception of craft did not involve its opposition to nature. Even more interesting is how Empedocles effectively dissolves the Pindaric opposition between nature and learning by conceiving learning to be in fact constitutive of nature—or so I will argue. Similarly, the strict contrast between φύσις and νόμος (“custom” or “convention”) that has been judged anachronistic in application to Pindar, who seems to ground νόμος in φύσις or φύά,⁹ is also misleading for the interpretation of Empedocles, who seems to reverse the Pindaric position, by grounding the validity of the concept of φύσις in νόμος, but who also validates νόμος by reference to how Aphrodite is “implanted” within us (ἔμφυτος, B17.22)—but again these contentious claims remain to be argued.

The preceding point, that nature is not contrasted with craft in these authors, is important for my analysis of the metaphors in question. Whereas the uses of the terms φύσις/φύά and τέχνη/τέχνα do not reveal a conceptual opposition, there are in both authors demonstrable discrepancies in the use of what we would label phytomorphic and technomorphic imagery. On a related question, Hans Blumenberg, whose work will be discussed further below, writes of some patterns of metaphors falling “within the parameters of a certain typology, [which] is most likely to occur where a prior decision between *opposed* kinds of metaphors—between *organic* and *mechanical* guiding ideas, for example—has been made.”¹⁰ As Blumenberg's differentiation among organic and mechanical metaphors from Lucretius to the Enlightenment illustrates, “[t]he dualism of the organic and the mechanical is [. . .] not something with which we can operate

⁹ Payne (2006) esp. 169-72.

¹⁰ Blumenberg (2010 [1960]) 63.

unreflectively in the history of thought.”¹¹ Indeed, one remarkable feature about both Pindar and Empedocles is that, although there are some distinct patterns in the use of phytomorphic and technomorphic metaphors, those patterns seem not to have been motivated by a “prior decision” between the *concepts* labelled by φύσις/φυά and τέχνη/τέχνα. In Pindar, the most patent craft metaphors seem coordinated not with τέχνα but with the concept of learning: the use of poetological craft metaphors is largely restricted to poems for patrons who are also distinguished by their apparent receptivity to praise of learning. Thus the ideological alignment of technomorphic metaphor (with a more positive stance toward learning) anticipates the conceptual realignment of τέχνη visible in later authors (such that it presupposed human learning). In turn, Empedocles’ craft metaphors for the activity of Love or Aphrodite are not applied to the goddess’ role within the cosmos at large (which is represented by a mixture of vegetal and anthropomorphic images, among others), but are only applied to her role in the formation of organisms, and even there they intermingle with organic metaphors in an ambiguous manner. The technomorphic is thus mixed with and subordinated to the organic and more particularly the phytomorphic in a corpus that shows no interest in explicitly coordinating the concepts of τέχνη and φύσις, let alone in setting them up as polar opposites. While Pindar’s craft metaphors seem to betoken a positive attitude toward learning, Empedocles’ craft metaphors may suggest a bolder stance: that craft is only a special development of the learning that constitutes the cosmos and the individual φύσις.

Yet the most important general result of the “metaphorological” chapters is that both authors use vegetal metaphors in ways that anticipate the further expansion of the concept of φύσις, from the nature of a discrete body (as a member of a family or other category) to the

¹¹ Blumenberg (2010 [1960]) 64.

whole of Nature. One strategy the two authors share is the development of poetological and psychological plant imagery, certain forms of which are familiar from Homer and Hesiod. Again, metaphors are seen to do preparatory work for the more strictly conceptual, terminological development. Since a clearer picture of that dynamic requires a clear account of what φύσις and φυά mean in these authors, we begin in each case with the analysis of the concept.

In Chapter 1, while suggesting that φυά and φύσις have a shared basic meaning, I argue that Pindar's apparently inconsistent use of φυά and φύσις are best understood as being in fact the product of divergent claims aimed at different audiences. In this chapter and the next, I follow Boris Maslov's "stratification" of the Pindaric corpus, whereby the epinikia are differentiated in terms of sociopolitical orientation and the poetical strategies and tropes tailored to it, with these strategies and tropes also being correlated to other genres, including those of the extant Pindaric fragments. The stratification will be introduced further below; suffice it for now to say that, through this differentiation, Maslov divides the epinikia into "dynast" odes (for tyrants and their ilk), "intermediate" odes, and "civic" odes (which show the greatest interest in asserting the victor's modest membership in a civic community). One particularly intriguing result of a stratified reading of the relevant passages here is that φύσις occurs only in *civic* odes, suggesting that the more elite circles had a preference for φυά. Stratification also supports the conclusion that the strongest claims about the power of φυά (and its contrast with learning) should be taken at face value; qualifications should not be added in order to render them consistent with softer claims. When Pindar speaks of the one who "knows many things by φυά" in contrast with "learners," we should understand this as being on a par with Phemius' claim (at *Od.* 22.347) to be αὐτοδίδακτος or "self-taught." Such claims may sit uneasily with our knowledge of bardic training, but that did not prevent them from being made by either the

fictional character of Phemius or the author Pindar or numerous other historical persons. To describe the function of such claims, I borrow Irene de Jong's designation of them as "camouflage"— without presuming to draw the line between willful belief and deliberate self-aggrandizement. An important secondary argument of this chapter (sketched above) is that φύά is not contrasted with τέχνα as most scholars have claimed: τέχνα is largely conceived in an archaic-heroic manner as a gift of the gods and even a part of one's hereditary endowment. Instead, φύά is pointedly contrasted in some odes with human instruction, which is nevertheless made the subject of praise in a small group of odes that are arguably marked by more progressive ideologies. Pindaric φύά and φύσις may have the same basic meaning, but they are used to articulate a range of positions.

Chapter 2 takes up what one might call the "camouflage" of Pindaric vegetal metaphors. The main argument is that they are also distributed unevenly throughout the corpus, and in ways that reveal subtle modulations akin to those of φύά and φύσις; and further, that the very connection between vegetal metaphors and φύά and φύσις seems to fluctuate in a way illuminated by a stratified reading. Some vegetal metaphors, such as the καρπὸς φρενῶν or "fruit of the mind," are easily seen to be a privileged means of asserting a connection with the divine. At the same time, against the common assertion that Pindaric plant metaphors are generally intended to evoke a transcendent union with a divinized natural order, I emphasize that plant metaphors sometimes represent failure or some sort of discontinuity. However, such metaphors (and kindred comparisons) cluster primarily in civic odes: most intriguingly, two of the most extended vegetal images that express some discontinuity in the victor's family occur in the two odes that contain the word φύσις.

To assess these patterns more precisely, Pindaric metaphors are analyzed here in terms of meaning and structure, distinguishing not only the image (e.g. fruit or field) but also the structure of the image, seen most obviously perhaps when one juxtaposes one-term metaphors and extended metaphors. Extension may also be related to conceptual orientation, by considering the extent to which the images are coherently developed according to an analogy. A final aspect considered here also falls under the rubric of conceptual orientation: a metaphor's connection with relatively abstract terms, as in a Pindaric fragment that speaks of "culling an imperfect fruit of wisdom (σοφία)," combining the use of an abstraction (which clarifies the tenor) with an extension of the metaphor. I argue that simple (often one-term) and positive vegetal metaphors tend to dominate among the dynast odes, whereas extended and negative metaphors are commonest in the humbler civic odes. Further, the association of vegetal imagery with φύα or φύσις seems to be ideologically correlated: the only direct application of a vegetal metaphor to φύα occurs in an ode to Hieron (*O.* 1), known for the intellectualism of his court and marked by his receptivity to praise of learning; and the closest association of φύσις with a vegetal image (a syntactically unique comparison) occurs in the exceptionally didactic opening of a civic ode (*N.* 6). Attending also to certain generic features of the odes in question, I suggest that the extension and conceptual orientation of certain images may be in part a function of the influence of didactic hexameter and elegy; in *N.* 6 in particular, we may see the results of a cross-pollination of such generic precedents along with the early discourse concerning φύσις. That ode may therefore represent the closest rapprochement between the Pindaric and the Empedoclean poetics of nature.

Chapter 3 turns to Empedocles' concept of φύσις. The word appears just four times, distributed over three fragments. As with Pindar, I argue that all Empedoclean instances of the

word have the same basic meaning. But I focus in this chapter on the most important of those fragments, B8, which uses φύσις twice, first to say that there is no φύσις of any of the mortal things, and then to say that φύσις is a name given by human beings to the underlying processes of mixture and exchange of the four elements. The textual and interpretive difficulties presented by this one fragment demand a lengthy treatment. I begin with a critical analysis of the text that leads to a defense of variant readings that are usually disfavored. Based on this restored text, my interpretation consists of two claims: first, that in denying the existence of φύσις, Empedocles takes up an ontological stance against the hypostatization of φύσις as something with its own separate existence; second, that his remark about φύσις as a name, when correlated with other fragments (esp. B9), is a sign of linguistic conventionalism, such that he accepts the conventional name and its basic meaning while nonetheless insisting that its referent is in fact the mixture and exchange of elements. This affirmation of convention or νόμος as the basis for our use of φύσις is important for the argument of the following chapter.

Chapter 4 correlates the account of Empedoclean φύσις with certain patterns of vegetal metaphors, first at the level of the elements and their cosmic interactions, and second at the level of the human mind; it is further correlated with Empedocles' explicit critical restraint in the use of certain images, and the fact that numerous vegetal metaphors are more subdued than one is led to believe in much of the scholarship. The imagistic restraint is discussed in terms of the historical context of prior philosophical critiques of imagery, but is also connected to the anti-substantialism discussed in the prior chapter. In this chapter, the concept of learning which played such a prominent role in the interpretation of Pindar returns in a new capacity, as the learning which Empedocles favorably describes at the level of human cognition as well as at the level of cosmic formation. At both levels, that learning is directly connected to the notion of

growth in a quasi-vegetal manner: just as learning causes the human mind to increase, so the four elements or roots are said to learn to grow together. Most recent scholarship on Empedocles has focused instead on the craft imagery for Love's activity, even concluding (against all prior tradition) that Love is the Demiurge of a teleological cosmos. Against this, I observe that craft metaphors are restricted to Love's activity in the formation of organisms, and after reviewing Empedocles' treatment of craft otherwise, I hesitantly propose that the use of technomorphic imagery may be taken to imply a notion of the development of organismic φύσις as a product of learning after the manner of (a post-Pindaric) τέχνη. The Demiurgic interpretations also focus on several Empedoclean similes, which illustrate physical principles by way of vivid descriptions of the construction and manipulation of craft objects; returning to prior interpretations, I argue against the recent readings of these similes as allegories for the activity of Love. As we will see, there are numerous regards in which vegetal imagery appears more fundamental to the conception of the world articulated in Empedocles' fragments, and anticipates the later, universal extension of the concept of φύσις and its relation to vegetal metaphors.

III. Methodology

The methods employed in this dissertation can be described in two main categories. Firstly, the texts studied here, but especially Pindar's, present special methodological challenges in and of themselves. Secondly, attention to the historical development of the concept in its interaction with the metaphors demands further considerations regarding the historicity of both concepts and metaphors and their study.

One prominent source of the interpretive methods employed here has already been mentioned, namely Maslov's stratification of the Pindaric corpus, which is central to my

approach in Chapters 1 and 2, but also influences my reading of Empedocles in Chapters 3 and 4. Maslov's three-fold stratification of the epinikia of Pindar (and Bacchylides)¹² categorizes the odes by reference to elements that track both generic interplay and, in large part by means of that interplay, the subtle ideological manoeuvring between the demands of the individual victors (of varying status) and those of their communities (of diverse constitutions).¹³ Positing a derivation of the genre of epinikion from an initial mixture of monodic erotic praise poems with cultic hymns to victorious divinities such as Heracles,¹⁴ and its use in the celebrations of victorious tyrants and the like,¹⁵ Maslov argues for a rapid hybridization involving features from other genres as well. Especially important is the absorption of the humbler genres of *enkomia* and *threnoi*, in praise of mortals either live or dead respectively, as well as the simpler communal ritual song. This generic blending involved a concomitant variegation of tropes, including the softening of some tropes less suited to the less self-aggrandizing *laudandi*, who adapted the form for more civic-minded celebrations in their home *poleis*. The ideological range within which Pindaric epinikia operate is delimited then by two poles: on the one hand, the most elitist and individualist rhetoric (for the tyrants), and, on the other, the (relatively) most humble and "middling."¹⁶ By reference to such features as the prominence of the *laudandus* together with the individuated authorial ego or "author function," as opposed to that of a choral first person sometimes singing the praise even of the trainer, Maslov has systematically divided the corpus

¹² Following Maslov, I also include Bacchylides as the primary source of comparanda, which is however very slim when it comes to the concept and metaphors in question.

¹³ The most important precedent to Maslov's analysis is Kurke (1991); see Maslov (2015) 105-7 for discussion and other references.

¹⁴ Maslov (2015) 277-9, 300.

¹⁵ Maslov (2015) 109-10 and ch. 4 sect. 3. On hymn in epinikion, see also Bremer (2008).

¹⁶ The term "middling" was apparently established in classical scholarship by Ian Morris, but has been used since the seventeenth century for those of moderate means and their activities and estate; see *OED* s.v. "middling" 5, and Maslov (2015) 68 on Morris' use of the term.

into “dynast” odes, “intermediate” odes and “civic” odes.¹⁷ Another important feature is meter: the familiar dactylo-epitrites are to be associated with enkomia and threnoi as “the proper meter for poems in praise of mortals,”¹⁸ and as such are widely employed in the corpus, but predominant among the intermediate odes¹⁹; yet epinikia also make use of simple aeolic meters, which can be correlated with communal cult song and are found chiefly among the civic odes and not at all among the dynast odes,²⁰ and, finally, the elaborations of aeolic meters that mark some of the most lavish.

These divisions, as Maslov himself emphasizes, are not absolute—straddled as they are by some of the odes—, but are meant to assist in the analysis of an “evolving set of conventions” correlated with similarly evolving demands.²¹ I would hasten to add that the fundamental features on which the analysis is based have long been recognized: one cannot fail to notice that some odes are written to more powerful individuals who were victors in more prestigious events and at more prominent games, that some are longer, more exultant, of greater metrical complexity, more expressive of local traditions, etc. Such distinctions have always played some role in the scholarship, and they have even become paramount in the most fruitful scholarship of the last few decades, especially in the wake of Leslie Kurke’s influential New Historicist work of 1991, *The Traffic in Praise*, which is perhaps foremost in the scholarly genealogy of Maslov’s study. What had not been done before was to analyze those features so precisely and systematically and

¹⁷ Maslov (2015) 105-16.

¹⁸ Maslov (2015) 311; see also 75, 80-1 and 112-3.

¹⁹ Dactylo-epitrites are used in nine of nineteen civic odes (*O.* 8, *O.* 12, *P.* 9, *P.* 12, *N.* 1, *N.* 8, *N.* 10, *I.* 3 and 4); in nine of fifteen intermediate (*O.* 3, *O.* 7, *O.* 11, *O.* 13, *N.* 5, *N.* 9, *I.* 1, *I.* 5, *I.* 6); and in five of ten dynast (*O.* 6, *P.* 1, *P.* 3, *P.* 4, *I.* 2).

²⁰ According to Maslov (2015) 112-3 those odes are *P.* 7, *N.* 2, *N.* 7, *I.* 7 for the civic class, and *O.* 9 and *P.* 8 among the intermediate.

²¹ Maslov (2015) 106.

in correlation with the marks of generic hybridity. The usefulness of this stratification of the odes (or anyway my competence to employ it) is tested here in an attempt to discern the nuances in Pindar's use of φύσις and φύά as well as his vegetal metaphors. With regard to Empedocles, whose corpus likely consists of the remains of only one or two poems, the same degree of stratification is out of the question; but, because the fragments are marked by an esotericism that assumes two audiences (probably for two separate poems), and because of the apparent hybridity of his tropes, the orientation of a stratigraphic reading has left its mark on Chapters 3 and 4 too.

To turn our attention to the problem of metaphor, it will be helpful to consider more closely the important contribution of Kurke, whose scholarship has had a direct influence on my own study. Working in the context of New Historicism, which took inspiration and methods from symbolic anthropology and sociology (among other disciplines), Kurke argued that the genre of epinikion must be seen as managing competing ideological claims by means of imagery drawn from various spheres of activity, including gift-exchange and *megaloprepeia* or lavish public display (which will be taken up in the discussion of Pindar's craft metaphors in Chapter 2). In the final sentences of her first book, Kurke offers a summation of her analysis:

In Pindar's odes we can observe in miniature the contest of paradigms of the late archaic period, always mediated by the poet himself. Indeed, much of the notorious difficulty of Pindar's poetry is attributable to the constant flux, overlap, and shift of the symbolic systems that inform his language and imagery. The text shimmers with multiple patterns of meaning which operate simultaneously, each pointing to a different segment of the poet's social world.²²

The symbolic anthropology of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner that inspired New Historicist critics including Kurke (who quotes Turner on metaphors just before the above quotation), shares some of its ancestry with another aspect of Maslov's study that bears more directly on the

²² Kurke (1991) 262.

problem of the historical relationship between metaphor and concept. Within the Russian tradition of Historical Poetics that informs Maslov's work in numerous regards, Maslov singles out the classical philologist Olga Freidenberg for her approach to the history of figuration in early Greek literature, and more precisely for her account of the development of poetical metaphor proper (as opposed to unconscious linguistic metaphor or dead metaphor) in tandem with an increasing attention to abstractions.²³ Freidenberg, like her better known contemporary Mikhail Bakhtin, was strongly influenced by Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms,²⁴ which also seems to lie behind some of the most influential formulations regarding symbol and metaphor in Geertz and Turner.²⁵

In brief, Cassirer developed a neo-Kantian philosophy of culture as comprised of so many spheres of symbolic forms, originating primarily in the intense semantic concentration of sensuous mythological imagery, with individual forms of thought developing historically within the channels marked out by the features of mythological symbols.²⁶ Concept and image are liberated from that mythic sensuality in parallel, as "words are reduced more and more to the

²³ Maslov (2012) and (2015).

²⁴ For an introduction to Freidenberg and an account of her studies and career, see also Perlina (2002). For a study of Bakhtin's debt to Cassirer, see Poole (2004).

²⁵ That is, Cassirer, in part by way of Susanne Langer, whose *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) cites Cassirer as its primary influence, and who translated Cassirer's *Language and Myth* (1953), which is a particularly accessible, condensed version of his main philosophical project. It is possible to trace Turner's approach to metaphor as having descended in part from Cassirer through Nisbet (1969), discussed prominently by Turner (1974) esp. 24-5; Nisbet in turn draws upon Wheelwright's widely read *Metaphor and Reality* (1962), cited by Nisbet (1969) 4; and Wheelwright (1962) in turn upon Cassirer and Langer (see Wheelwright's index, s.nn.). Geertz (1973) 91 cites Langer as the source of his definition of the dominant term "symbol." Of course, more detailed argument would be necessary to substantiate these connections, and perhaps the exercise would prove more illuminating than this sketch, which is offered as one provisional result of my attempt to grasp the history of theories of metaphor beyond what I have gleaned from Ricoeur (1977 [1975]) and other discussions including those in Maslov (2012) and (2015).

²⁶ Perhaps in this short account one can see the resemblance of Bakhtinian genre theory.

status of mere conceptual signs” and as the image “is recognized not as a mythico-magical form, but as a particular sort of *formulation*.”²⁷ Intervening, then, between myth and pure abstraction, poetry—especially lyric—serves as a medium wherein the “aesthetically liberated” word and image “grow into a vehicle of thought.”²⁸

Following Cassirer, Freidenberg approached the early history of Greek literature with particular attention to the development of poetic metaphor in its conceptual role, such that the “aesthetically liberated” poetic metaphor illustrates the same abstraction of qualities from comparable things (e.g. the freshness of song and blossom) that drives the formation of abstract concepts (e.g. freshness).²⁹ Like Cassirer again, Freidenberg saw this as beginning in earnest in lyric poetry, although, as I discuss in Chapter 2, her opinion of Pindar in this regard varied over her career. Another aspect of her account that I consider in both Chapters 2 and 4 is that allegory is treated as a later development of metaphor in its conceptual role, since it presupposes the extended subordination of the image to an articulated concept.

Freidenberg’s account, I think, contains an insight into the particular historicity of image and concept as they feature in both Pindar and Empedocles, and, in Chapters 2 and 4, I attempt to demonstrate its hermeneutic value. However, some qualifications are in order.

One regard in which my approach differs from Freidenberg’s is that I am not persuaded that such a stadal scheme can be preserved so neatly: as I discuss in Chapter 2 in particular, it

²⁷ Cassirer (1953) 97, 98.

²⁸ Cassirer (1953) 98. Cf. the discussion of Vico on poetry in Cassirer (1953) I.149-50.

²⁹ Freidenberg’s theory has a close relative in Hedwig Konrad’s once influential *Étude sur la métaphore* (1939), which was also influenced by Cassirer and is discussed at length by Ricoeur (1977 [1975]) esp. 104-10. Note for instance the resemblance in this statement by Ricoeur (1977 [1975]) 107: “But [on Konrad’s account] metaphorical classification itself also has differential traits that locate it midway between logical classification based on a conceptual structure and classification based on isolated features like that which Cassirer [theorizes].”

seems to me that we must allow for individual authors such as Pindar to have had an array of strategies for poetical imagery, and that some of the more extended analogical images, which Freidenberg would posit as a later product, seem to draw rather from prior didactic poetry even as they also look forward to subsequent developments. Nevertheless, I do think that such a processual view, especially in light of the unquestionable development of certain abstract concepts such as φύσις, provides a helpful framework for thinking about how metaphors can do preparatory work for abstract concepts, and how those concepts, once articulated, can exert a reciprocal influence on the use of metaphors.

Secondly, it may seem that Freidenberg's approach (and therefore to some extent my own) to the history of image and concept comes too close to notorious accounts of an evolution in Greek thought "from *mythos* to *logos*."³⁰ To counter that impression, it is worth quoting Freidenberg at length:

[W]e must show that both concepts and images are not constant, but historically differing phenomena. The mythological image and the poetic image differ sharply. But poetic images too change their structure depending on the historical epoch. And concepts? Concepts too are changeable. They change not only in content (with this all have agreed a long time ago), but also structurally, in their ability to reveal deeper and newer sides and connections of phenomena. This is where the basic problem lies. It is usually said that concepts were inherent in man from the beginning, that posing the question of the historical appearance of concepts would lead us to the false idea of 'prelogical thought.' And we are terribly afraid of arguing 'from labels.' But let us leave the term 'prelogical' thought alone—we have shown more than once the arbitrary character of this term, which does not at all mean thinking without logic (if it were 'pre-formal-logical' everything would be all right).³¹

³⁰ See esp. Nestle (1940) and Snell (1953 [1946]), along with the critical appraisals of Nestle in Most (1999) 26-31 and of Snell in Lloyd (1971) 5, Pelliccia (1995) esp. 16-27, Holmes (2010) esp. 5-9; see also the appreciation of some of the merits of Snell's study in Payne (2014) and below in Ch. 4.

³¹ Freidenberg (1991b [1946]) 30. Compare the similar remarks of Lloyd (1966) 6 on how "dissatisfaction with [the] concept of a 'pre-logical' mentality may prompt both the anthropologist and the classical scholar to attempt to give a more adequate account of the informal logic implicit in [. . .] archaic thought."

Seen in this light, the approach to the questions pursued here is perhaps more tractable.

Furthermore, apart from larger questions about the general proliferation of abstract concepts and the increasing interest in formalized argument, one might draw attention to the transitional status of this period in terms of the concept of nature alone. It was an era in which φύσις, together with its cognate and synonym φυά, had only recently become what Reinhart Koselleck terms a “basic concept” (or *Grundbegriff*), being used in a wide array of contexts as an essential point of articulation for diverse notions about human life.³² As Empedocles shows, its very status as a concept even received polemical attention. But that concept was still very much in formation, and not just in the sense that it was assuming different roles in different conceptual systems, as indeed it has continued, incessantly, to do. The φύσις and φυά of Pindar’s and Empedocles’ days were—most importantly—not used for a collective “Nature.” Empedocles’ denial of φύσις was not yet Derrida’s “Il n’y a pas de nature.”³³ This has consequences for our interpretation of vegetal imagery in these authors. We are so accustomed to seeing vegetation (especially when encountered within the “great outdoors”) as the prime representative of Nature that assertions of the connections in Pindar and Empedocles between vegetal metaphors and φύσις are assuringly self-evident. As I hope to show, that self-evidence obstructs our view of the real dynamic in these texts between the concept and metaphors in question.

³² Koselleck (2011) 32: “[. . .] once a concept has been placed within a historical context, it becomes possible to call it a ‘basic concept’ if and when all contesting strata and parties find it indispensable to expressing their distinctive experiences, interests, [. . .]. Basic concepts come to dominate usage because at a given juncture, they register those minimal commonalities without which no experience is possible, and without which there could be neither conflict nor consensus. A basic concept thus comes into its own at the precise point when different strata and parties must interpret it, in order to provide insight into their respective conditions [. . .].”

³³ Derrida (1991) 215. For a related argument about how “the thought world of archaic Greece—Greece, that is, before the invention of philosophy” “lacks any master discourse or master narrative in which its own self-understanding is embedded,” which I take to include a universal notion of φύσις, see Payne (2006) and 161 for the quotations.

Although my interpretation of both authors emphasizes their liminal position (as I understand it), I do not pretend to illuminate the birth of reason from myth or the like. As I explain in Chapters 2 and 4, in both cases my interpretation runs counter to regular (but mostly older) portrayals of Pindar and Empedocles as archaic, mythical thinkers, whose conceptions of the world were wholly dominated by mythic symbols of, e.g., the earth goddess, Gaia.³⁴ In both cases, I focus not on their dependence upon mythological symbols, but on how these two authors, in synthesizing bold accounts of the world that would go on to exert tremendous influence over later poets and philosophers alike, employed the contested concept of “nature” together with a host of innovative, and even highly idiosyncratic, metaphors. That said, I also argue, following Freidenberg and Maslov, that these authors are best understood as approaching figuration in a historically contingent manner, which, for instance, does not include the sort of allegory that recent Empedocles interpreters would see in certain fragments.

On the topic of metaphor itself, my method can perhaps be seen as a combination of Freidenberg’s (and Maslov’s) philological approach to the historicity of metaphor, and the work of yet another philosopher influenced by Cassirer, namely Blumenberg, whose discussion of organic and mechanical metaphors was cited above. In his *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie* (or “Paradigms for a Metaphorology”), Blumenberg offers several case studies of recurring metaphors as signs of (more or less explicitly thematized) paradigms, such as that of the organic as opposed to the mechanical. One clear difference between Blumenberg’s metaphorology and Freidenberg’s is that the former is less interested in evolution and the derivation of paradigms from myth and religion. Although I have tried to acknowledge sufficiently the derivation of some

³⁴ As is noted in Chh. 2 and 4, Freidenberg herself (over-)emphasized such aspects of both Pindar and Empedocles. The clearest example of both being treated in such a way is Motte (1973).

of the metaphors considered below—and indeed the profoundly traditional identification of human beings with plants—I have aimed to emphasize the creative manipulation and extension in these authors of even the most traditional metaphors.³⁵

It remains to say something focused about the notion of metaphor presupposed here. To oversimplify a problem with a vast, and still growing, body of literature,³⁶ I take metaphor to be the use of a word (or more than one) that seems to belong to one sphere (e.g. agriculture) in a separate sphere (e.g. poetic composition), either by substitution of a word that would be more appropriate to the latter (e.g. to harvest a song) or by explicit identification with it (e.g. song is blossom or, more ambiguously, blossom of song). This can be unconscious or not; either way, it can have discernable consequences for patterns of thought. What it involves is the more or less condensed or extended comparison of one thing with another through the identification of the two. The transfer becomes particularly interesting when the “tenor” (or the subject to which the metaphor has been applied) interacts with the “vehicle” (the metaphorical term or terms) such that the conception of the tenor becomes demonstrably shaped by the semantics of the vehicle—and vice versa. It becomes more interesting still when such interaction spreads far beyond the limits of a single utterance, suggesting the activity of a larger paradigm or schema. In this study, the larger paradigm in question is of course that of vegetation, a profoundly traditional source of metaphors and comparisons for human life and other phenomena, but also one from which bold new metaphors were created by both of the poets considered here. The analysis is not restricted to self-conscious metaphors, although that is the emphasis. In addition, as the summaries of the

³⁵ My perspective on the problems of imagery in Pindar especially was also shaped by Silk (1974) and Pelliccia (1995); and on imagery in Empedocles especially, by Iribarren (2018).

³⁶ Ricoeur (1977 [1975]) remains, in my experience, the most useful and thorough overview of theories of metaphor. For more recent theory, including especially conceptual metaphor theory, and its (typically overlooked) affinities to earlier ones such as Blumenberg’s, see Jäkel (1999).

arguments above have revealed, the scope of this study is not strictly confined to metaphors, but also considers related similes and comparisons in order to better assess the roles of the paradigms that find expression in metaphor, and the strategies of each author regarding the structure of images in their conceptual function.

Finally, it should be noted that my approach to the study of the concept here is almost entirely semasiological, which is to say that it is focused on discerning the meaning(s) of the term φύσις and its cognate and synonym φυά; a greater onomasiological emphasis, looking at other terms that refer to or bear upon the same concept(s), would certainly be worthwhile, but it could not be accomplished to any significant extent within the limits of this study. To provide some background to my accounts of φύσις and φυά in Pindar and Empedocles, a short prehistory of those words is offered in the next and final section of this Introduction.

IV. A Brief Prehistory of φύσις and φυή/φυά

The use of φύσις in Pindar and Empedocles and Pindar's use of φυά have clear precedents that demand some discussion. The early history of φύσις, however, has been plowed over again and again, and I have nothing new to offer on its broader history before Pindar and Empedocles.³⁷ Accordingly, that history will not be repeated at any length here; but still it will be useful to mark a few important aspects of it, to better grasp Pindar's and Empedocles' contexts and their own contributions. On the other hand, more can be said about φυή/φυά, I think, than has been said by previous historians of φύσις: in what follows, I argue that in the prior use of φυή there are several anticipations of Pindar's preference for φυά as the label for a "nature" that

³⁷ Among recent work on φύσις I rely especially upon Heinemann (2001) and Macé (2012); further citations can be found in Chh. 1 and 3.

encompasses even the source of one's knowledge, and which reinforce the impression that it was the more poetical alternative of the two.

In all of Homer, φύσις is used only once, and of a plant.³⁸ The φύσις first seen in the extant sources is that of the famous moly.³⁹ In the story told by Odysseus to the Phaeacians, which leads up to the sole Homeric use of the word, Hermes addresses Odysseus, saying:

τῆ, τόδε φάρμακον ἐσθλὸν ἔχων ἐς δώματα Κίρκης
ἔρχεο, ὃ κέν τοι κρατὸς ἀλάλκησιν κακὸν ἦμαρ.
πάντα δέ τοι ἐρέω ὀλοφώια δῆνεα Κίρκης.
τεύξει τοι κυκεῶ, βαλέει δ' ἐν φάρμακα σίτω.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὡς θέλξει σε δυνήσεται· οὐ γὰρ ἔασει
φάρμακον ἐσθλόν, ὃ τοι δώσω, ἐρέω δὲ ἕκαστα. (*Od.* 10.287-92)

Here, go to Circe's home while having this good drug, which will keep the evil day from your head. And I will tell you all the destructive plans of Circe. She will make a potion for you, and will cast drugs in the food. But she will not be able to bewitch you: for the good drug, which I will give you, will not let her, and I will tell you everything.

Ten lines later the voice of Odysseus returns, and describes the remainder of their encounter:

ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας πόρε φάρμακον ἀργειφόντης
ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας, καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.
ρίζη μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἵκελον ἄνθος·
μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί· χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι, θεοὶ δὲ τε πάντα δύνανται. (*Od.* 10.302-6)

Having spoken thus Argeiphontes gave the drug, after he drew it from the earth, and he showed me its φύσις. It was black in the root, but the blossom was like milk; moly the gods call it: it is difficult for mortal men to dig up, but the gods can do all things.

Several features of the context are worth noting: Odysseus, “going through the sacred glens” (l. 275: ἰὼν ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσας), meets Hermes disguised as a youth “with new beard grown, which is the most graceful time of young manhood” (l. 279: πρῶτον ὑπηνήτη, τοῦ περ χαριστάτη ἦβη), and receives a φάρμακον from him which makes the mind in his breast

³⁸ The word φύσις does not appear in Hesiod, who does, however, have a very interesting use of αὐτοφυής (*Th.* 813), which does not occur in Homer.

³⁹ On the identity of moly see e.g. Amigues (1995) and Clay (1972).

uncharmable (l. 329: ἐν στήθεσσιν ἀκήλητος νόος). To condense the image: in sacred glens, a blossoming youth strengthens the hero's mind with a magical herb, the φύσις of which is shown to him.

The temptation to overburden this instance of the term, and even to read this folkloric, magical episode as an allegory of sorts for later ἱστορία περὶ φύσεως (“inquiry concerning nature”), is considerable. Many scholars have resisted the temptation with perhaps too much self-restraint, reducing φύσις to a mere “appearance,” while some, such as Gerard Naddaf, would insist on a rather imaginative extension of it to include the entire life-cycle of the plant and its power. Concluding his account of the Homeric passage, Naddaf writes, “To make use of the plant's magical power, it is likely that Odysseus must understand why the gods created it, an understanding that requires that he comprehend its *phusis*—that is, the whole process of the growth of the moly plant from beginning to end.”⁴⁰ Then, abandoning any talk of likelihood, Naddaf asserts,

In Homer, *phusis* designates the whole process of growth of a thing from its birth to its maturity. [...] This characterization of *phusis* clearly corresponds with the attempt to describe the process through which the present world order comes about which we see expressed in the earliest philosophical cosmogonies.⁴¹

Given the context and the later use of the term, it is safer to conclude with Macé that φύσις refers to the sum of its characteristics as a result of its growth.⁴²

In contrast with φύσις and its single use in all of Homer (and Hesiod), φυή occurs nineteen times (four in the *Iliad*, six in the *Odyssey*, four in the *Hymns*, five in Hesiod and the

⁴⁰ Naddaf (2005) 14.

⁴¹ Naddaf (2005) 34-5.

⁴² Macé (2013) 50, where however the name and the difficulty for mortals of digging it up are also included. See also Patzer (1993 [1945]) 252.

Hesiodic fragments), almost always of human beings,⁴³ “always valued positively,”⁴⁴ always in the accusative, usually combined with other terms of physical description (sc. δέμας, μέγεθος, εἶδος),⁴⁵ and apparently treated as more or less synonymous with them.⁴⁶ When used without those apparent synonyms in the statement that Odysseus is φυῖν οὐ κακός (“not base in respect of his φύη,” *Od.* 8.134), the description of his limbs and strength which immediately follows makes it likely that φυῖν denotes his body’s most visible and tangible composition as a result of his growth—in a word, his *physique*. Furthermore, elsewhere in Homer, and in two of the five instances in Hesiod, φυῖν is used in apparent contrast with psychological terms;⁴⁷ and on the only occasion of an apparent synonym being used in such a contrast, that word, δέμας, is still paired with φυῖν.⁴⁸ That said, already in *Il.* 3.208 the context suggests a *possible* extension of meaning beyond mere physical appearance when Antenor says, “I came to know the φυῖν of both, and their close counsels” (ἀμφοτέρων δὲ φυῖν ἐδάην καὶ μήδεα πυκνά).

Epic diction offers a thin foundation for interpreting Pindar’s φυά; and yet it is always only the Homeric φυῖν that, along with the φύσις of other authors, is compared with the Pindaric term.⁴⁹ The result is that Pindar is everywhere presented as “der einzige Dichter, bei dem φυά in

⁴³ The exceptions are: in the Hymn to Hermes, when Hermes addresses the χέλυς (“tortoise”), calling it φυῖν ἐρόεσσα (“lovely,” l. 31), and when Zeus describes Hermes as παῖδα νέον γεγαῶτα φυῖν κήρυκος ἔχοντα (“a child new born having the φυῖν of a Herald,” l. 331); and in the Hymn to Apollo, when the leader of the Cretans, addressing Apollo who has come in the guise of a man, says that he does not look like mortals, οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυῖν, ἀλλ’ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν (l. 465).

⁴⁴ *LfgE* s.v. φυῖν.

⁴⁵ So *Il.* 1.115, 2.58, 22.370; *Od.* 5.212, 6.16, 6.152, 7.210, 8.168; *Hymn in Ven.* 201.

⁴⁶ *LfgE* s.v. φυῖν, where note esp. the “semantically pregnant occurrences.”

⁴⁷ *Op.* 129, *Sc.* 88 (on which see below).

⁴⁸ According to Caspers, *LfgE* s.v. φυῖν, δέμας “needs φ[υῖν] make a meaningful contrast.”

⁴⁹ See e.g. Beardslee (1918) 6-7, Heinimann (1945); but Burger (1925) 85 does also cite Tyrnt. 12.5 (οὐδ’ εἰ Τιθωνοῖο φυῖν χαριέστερος εἶη).

diesem Sinn zu finden ist.”⁵⁰ Lying between those two corpora, however, are two surviving but neglected instances of φύη which better presage what one finds in Pindar.⁵¹

In a fragmentary iambic poem, found on a papyrus published in 1954 and not yet addressed by any scholarship on φύσις, Archilochus is supposed to have written:

ἴτις ἀνθρώπου φύη,
ἀλλ’ ἄλλος ἄλλωι καὶρδίην ἰαίνεῖται.
[...]
τοῦτ’ οὐτις ἄλλ]ος μάντις ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ εἶπέ σοι·
ἴγ]αρ μοι Ζεὺς πατήρ Ὀλυμπίων
ἔ]θηκε κάγαθὸν μετ’ ἀνδράσι
οὐ]δ’ ἂν Εὐρύμας διαψέγοι. (fr. 25 W ll.1-2, 5-8)

ἴany(?) φύη of a human being,
but different things warm different people’s hearts.
[...]
This no oth]er seer but I said to you;
ἴ for Zeus the Olympians’ father
made me a ... among men and a good one
nor could Eurymas blame (me).⁵²

If this is soundly attributed, then it is the sole instance in all surviving Archaic and Classical Greek of φύη in the nominative.⁵³ The Homeric usage seems already far behind, and the Pindaric

⁵⁰ Tugendhat (1960) 407 n. 2.

⁵¹ In addition to the two that follow, there is a third but very doubtful case of φύη meaning more than “physique” among Pindar’s predecessors and contemporaries: Cratinus 236 K.-A., in which φύην in the phrase δεινοῦ φύην μελανούρου has been taken by some to denote intelligence; cf. LSJ s.v. φύη 2.II and the comments of K.-A.; Storey in the recent Loeb translates “flesh.”

⁵² Tr. West *GLP*, modified; it was originally published as P. Oxy. 2310, ed. Edgar Lobel.

⁵³ Excepting, that is, the young woman named Φυή in Herodotus (1.60.4-5); for commentary on that figure, see Nagy (1990) 338. As for the Archilochean fragment’s authenticity, see West’s *app. crit.* for citations of the second line, which only begin with Sextus. It seems that West, who does not relegate it to the *spuria*, would take it as authentic on the basis of the citations.

Following West, Burnett (1983) 65-6 does not consider the possibility of its being inauthentic. For my part, I have not yet seen any compelling argument in favor of its being archaic. I cannot agree with Bartol (1990) 83 that “i primi due versi del carne non deviano né dalle componenti tematiche tradizionali né dalle strutture verbali usate nella poesia arcaica.” Granted, the second line has parallels in Homer *et al.* (*Od.* 14.228, *O.* 1.113, etc.), but the use of φύη in the nominative in this sense and in this application (reminiscent of Empedocles B8) suggest to my

usage—in which we will see a marked association between the mantic and φύα—surprisingly near.⁵⁴ But with the first line so truncated, the sentiment and with it the precise meaning of φύή are obscured. West offers a plausible supplement in his translation: “There is no single kind of human nature.”⁵⁵ If West is correct on both the sense and the authenticity of this fragment, one must conclude that already in the seventh century φύή had come to mean some of what φύσις would (or perhaps already did),⁵⁶ and may have also become associated with the activity of some sort of μάντις.⁵⁷

Back in the accusative again, φύή turns up in the notorious Semonides 7, which, unlike the prior text, has been well-known for a long time, since it was preserved by Stobaeus. Nonetheless, it likewise remains untouched in the general literature on φύσις. Concluding his account of the woman made from the sea, Semonides says:

mind that it could be quite late; and although φύή does become less common, and increasingly restricted to vegetal growth, cf. e.g. μερόπων φύή, *APL*. 4.183.7, which establishes the possibility of its being post-Classical as well. Nevertheless, for now I tentatively follow the scholarly consensus. For an argument about Archilochus’ σῶμα at least as being an anticipation of pre-Socratic and Hippocratic ideas, see Hawkins (2016).

⁵⁴ The Eurymas mentioned in line 8 is taken to refer to father of the long-time μάντις of the Cyclopes, Τήλεμος Εὐρυμίδης (*Od.* 9.509), and therefore as “the ur-mantic” by Burnett (1983) 65; on the fictionality of these figures in the *Odyssey*, see Heubeck ad loc.

⁵⁵ Some proposed supplements, including West’s, are collected by Bartol (1990) 83 n. 15.

⁵⁶ A question remains: Does the second line necessitate that the first be a contradiction of the claim, “There is a universal human nature”? or need we only assume claims about separate types of φύή? The latter is the more probable in a period in which, by all our other evidence, no universalizing claims of φύή or φύσις had been made. (But again this may raise doubts about its authenticity.) The second line, quoted repeatedly in antiquity, was sometimes compared with the following from Homer: αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ τὰ φίλ’ ἔσκε τὰ που θεὸς ἐν φρεσὶ θήκεν / ἄλλος γὰρ τ’ ἄλλοισιν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτέρεται ἔργοις (*Od.* 14.227-8, “But for me those things were dear which I suppose a god put in my mind; / For different men delight in different deeds”). Such relativizations were thus old and familiar, and, like Bacchylides’ ὄργαι μυσταί (cf. fr. 34), Archilochus’ statement need not be interpreted as a response to an assertion of a universal φύή.

⁵⁷ The poet could already be presented as a sort of μάντις, without φύή being linked to the appropriation of that role, but the connection between φύα and the mantic in Pindar, which will be explored below in Ch. 1, suggests a possible connection in Archilochus, too.

ταύτη μάλιστ' ἔοικε τοιαύτη γυνή
ὀργήν· φυὴν δὲ πόντος ἀλλοίην ἔχει. (7.41-2 W)

This especially does such a woman resemble
in humour; the sea has an alterable φύη.⁵⁸

Here φύη may still denote the physique, as it were, or the dynamic form, of the sea; but next to ὀργή (“temper” or “humour”), which incidentally also derives from a vegetal metaphor,⁵⁹ it seems to be justifiably translated, as by Lloyd-Jones and Hubbard, as “nature.”⁶⁰ Moreover, as both Hubbard and Fränkel have argued,⁶¹ there are grounds to believe that this account of the psychological effects of one’s elemental constitution (in the figures of the woman made from the sea and the one described before, made of mud) bears the influence of early natural philosophy.⁶² In Hubbard’s judgement, the influence is strong enough to down-date the poem to the late sixth century (whereas normally Semonides is dated to the mid-seventh). In any event, there is a good case to be made that Semonides’ φύη is no longer limited to one’s “physique” or form, but denotes one’s characteristics more generally, or one’s “nature.”

Even if only the Semonidean text is secure, it indicates that probably in the seventh century, and at the latest by the end of the sixth (if Hubbard is right), φύη may have already come to enjoy much of the extension of meaning that φύσις would come to have (and possibly

⁵⁸ The interpretation of this line, and particularly φυὴν, is vexed. I translate contra West (1993), but following Lloyd-Jones (1975) on φυὴν and his translation of ἀλλοίην—which strangely does not match his discussion of it in his comments ad loc. On the textual problems of this passage see Lloyd-Jones (1975) 72-3 and Renehan (1983) 11-15; note also the similar phrase ὀργήν δ’ ἄλλοτ’ ἀλλοίην ἔχει (l. 11). Hubbard (1994) seems to interpret the ἀλλοίην in the same way as I have (see esp. p. 182), as does Fränkel (1975) 206, but neither offers a translation.

⁵⁹ See LSJ s.v. ὀργάω.

⁶⁰ See note above. Incidentally, one even wonders if it could have been, among other things, such similes, where a psychological disposition is likened to something described in terms of φύη, that the meaning of φύη was originally augmented.

⁶¹ Hubbard (1994); Fränkel (1938) 332-3 and (1975) 205-6.

⁶² But cf. *Il.* 16.33-5, where Patroclus admonishes the hard-hearted Achilles as being born of the sea and the cliffs.

already did).⁶³ And if the fragment attributed to Archilochus is in fact from the seventh century, then φύη definitely enjoyed an extended meaning well prior to our best evidence for φύσις, and it would therefore deserve still more primacy in the *Begriffsgeschichte*. Contrary, then, to the judgement of prior scholarship, Pindar was almost certainly not unprecedented when “für das, was die Ionier mit dem Worte [φύσις] benennen, die innere, angeborene Art, braucht er φύά.”⁶⁴ But after Pindar, the term seems to have generally fallen out of use as a synonym of φύσις, although there are a few comparable uses of φύη in later authors.⁶⁵

Much to the chagrin of the conceptual historian, φύσις is not found again after Homer in any securely attributed text until Heraclitus, for whom it is already a manifestly pregnant term, enjoying a peculiar significance within his thought. Suffice it to say that the texts of Heraclitus show φύσις to have gained tremendously in import by the turn of the fifth century, and to be approaching the center of intellectual debate.⁶⁶ Of course, this is also borne out by many another fifth century author, including Pindar and Empedocles.⁶⁷

⁶³ Hubbard does not note the Archilochus fragment; if it is authentic, then at least the ostensibly extended meaning of φύη in Semonides 7 finds a clear parallel in the seventh century, which gives us at least one consideration against Hubbard’s down-dating.

⁶⁴ Heinimann (1945) 99. See also Macé (2012) 62.

⁶⁵ Excepting the Pindaric corpus, then, the history of φύη and φύσις would seem to be a perfect demonstration of Kuryłowicz’s Fourth Law of Analogy, discussed by Nagy (1990) 57, according to which the newer of two competing forms may come to dominate (as φύσις so overwhelmingly did), the older form being reduced in range.

⁶⁶ See Heraclitus B1 and B123; see also Parmenides B10 and B16; for commentary on the use of φύσις in these authors, see e.g. Kahn (1979), Hadot (2006 [2004]), Curd (2015), Most (2016).

⁶⁷ To pick only one other instance, and one deserving of much more attention, I think, than it has received: βασιλεὺς οἶνος ἔδειξε φύσιν (Ion of Chios fr. 26.12 W, “King wine shows [one’s] nature,” where the fuller import of the phrase is revealed by the following lines); for discussion of the theme of showing one’s nature, with a focus on Soph. *Ph.*, see Buccheri (2016).

V. Note on Texts and Translations

Unless otherwise noted, for Pindar I have cited Snell-Maehler's Teubner edition; for Empedocles, Diels-Kranz's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. All other editions that have been consulted and cited are listed in a separate section at the beginning of the Bibliography. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted; other translations of Pindar and Empedocles that have been cited are also listed in the Bibliography.

Chapter 1: Φύσις and Φυά in Pindar

... fire burns, a horse does the deeds of a horse, and human beings each do their own things as they are disposed by nature, and different persons different things. —Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.3.1

... A Reason in nature much stronger to find
Would puzzle the depth of a Pindaric mind.
—Peter Pindar, “Tabby to Pindar”

I. Introduction

In the Pindaric corpus, the conceptualization of “nature” is demonstrated far less through φύσις than through its cognate φυά, the dialectal equivalent in choral lyric of epic-Ionic φύη. Whereas the Pindaric φύσις may seem to demand only the sense of “stature” or the like (i.e. the sense usually given to φύη) and the same may be true of half of the instances of φυά, the latter undoubtedly has a key role in the conceptualization of heredity and individual expression of hereditary traits, assuming in addition a psychological and even epistemological role. As such, φυά has long been proclaimed to be a—if not *the*—central principle of Pindar’s thought, and often translated without hesitation as “nature.”¹ This state of affairs is perhaps only natural for a poet who, in the vast majority of the extant verses, was occupied with the praise of athletic

¹ See esp. the strong statement by Rose (1974) 152: “Pindar’s aristocratic vision, conveniently summed up in the term *phya*, has either been ignored, distorted, or explicitly downgraded by the scholars under consideration.” Particularly stimulating and wide-ranging is the discussion in Gundert (1935) 15-19. For Bremer (1976) 232, “Die Leitbegriffe sind: angelegte Wuchsform (φυά), Bestheit und Bestleistung (ἀρετά), Sieg, Ruhm und Lied.” Athanassaki (2009) 408 similarly remarks on Theron’s “irresistible appeal to the poet for whom *phya* is paramount.” So Race, in his introduction to the Loeb *Pindar*, I.3, gives a list of “some key terms,” the first three of which are, in the order in which he presents them (and with his glosses): ἀρετά (“the realization of human excellence in achievements”), φυά (“one’s inborn nature”), θεός (“the divine component of all human achievement”). For a rare exception, see Stuligrosz (2002) who classifies Pindar’s gnomes by recurring keywords that do not include φυά. On the search for such central concepts and its relationship to the tradition of *Grundgedanke* in Pindaric scholarship, see esp. Young (1970) 65-6, 69, 89 et passim, and also Patten (2009) 89-104.

victors. Yet Pindar’s φύα labels, at least sometimes, much more than physical prowess or beauty. After all, commissioning an ode from a poet of Panhellenic renown attests in itself to a desire to be known as well for more “spiritual” attainments—that is, for σοφία, the wisdom expressed in artful song.

It is indisputable (and never has been disputed) that φύα plays an important role in this corpus. Yet this emphasis, in my estimation, is somewhat exaggerated, most likely as a result of the distorting lens of later φύσις discourse and its repeated invocation of Pindaric φύα, which makes the term more conspicuous and more convenient for the analysis of Pindar’s thought than, *ceteris paribus*, it would appear to be. In Pindar’s diction, the word has many competitors. Other words in its semantic field, such as the comparably frequent adjectives συγγενής and σύγγονος,² denote more patently perhaps than φύα the innate or genetically related; others are used much more frequently, such as γένος and γενεά, not to mention such closely related keywords as ἀρετά, σθένος, σοφία, or the πόνος whereby virtue is proven. Indeed, even the τέχνα that is said to be so uncomfortable a notion for Pindar’s aristocrats is used more often than φύα!³ Moreover, the concept was, it seems, not yet so important as to appear in the nominative, being found only in the oblique cases, and only in the dative in the instances that unmistakably demand the sense “nature.”⁴ Instead of saying, “Nature (φύσις) is best,” as Euripides would later,⁵ Pindar says that

² Each is used nine times; see Slater s.vv.

³ It is used twelve times. τέχνα in relation to φύα is taken up below in §II. For a particularly strong statement about the problematic status of τέχνη in Pindar, see Nicholson (2001); as discussed below, Nicholson (2005) observes how skill is absorbed into claims of inheritance, rather than being contrasted with natural talent as an acquirement of learning.

⁴ Pindar is not unique: in all extant archaic and classical Greek literature, it is only in Archil. fr. 25 West—if at all—that φύή appears in the nominative; Hes. fr. 113.1 is an unlikely additional instance. There remains, however, the young woman named Φυή in Herodotus, on whose indirect connection with Pindar (by way of Heracles and tyranny) see Nagy (1990) 338.

“What is by nature (τὸ φύᾱ) is strongest in every respect.”⁶ Again contrast γενεά and γένος, both of which appear in the nominative, although never in such an assertive maxim.⁷ The chief purpose of the foregoing caveat is to call attention to the wide semantic field which a thorough study of the concept would have to treat, but which cannot be canvassed here, especially as our focus is on Pindar’s more detectable position within the history of the concept of φύσις.

On the subject of the manner of conceptualization at play in this poetic corpus, there is a revealing contrast with terms such as τύχα, ἔλπις, ἡσυχία, etc., which are employed after the fashion of (or are directly borrowed from) Hesiod’s apotheosized abstractions. Never trotted out as the semi-personified subject of a sentence, φύᾱ is not quite so prominently thematized as other Pindaric keywords: contrast, for instance, εὐφροσύνα in the gnome Ἄριστος εὐφροσύνα πόνων κεκριμένων / ἰατρός (*N.* 4.1-2: “Joy the best doctor of travails that have passed the crisis”).⁸ Pindar’s φύᾱ is thus not quite so “pregnant” as τύχα, for instance, nor so magnificently “archaic” in its mode of conception.⁹ One might instead regard φύᾱ as a visible part of the conceptual substructures of the Pindaric corpus, largely taken for granted and subordinated to other concepts, even as it is employed in a phrase so momentous as εἰδὼς φύᾱ.¹⁰

⁵ Eur. fr. 810 Nauck: μέγιστον ἀρ’ ἦν ἡ φύσις· τὸ γὰρ κακὸν / οὐδεὶς τρέφωεν εὐ χρηστὸν ἄν θεῖη ποτέ.

⁶ *O.* 9.100, discussed below. (Perhaps this phrase is evidence that φύᾱ was still felt to be too individualizing to function on its own in such a generalization; compare the use of τὸ συγγενές in *P.* 10.12 and *N.* 6.8 and the single instance of συγγένεια in *Πα.* 4.33.)

⁷ For the use of γενεά in the nominative see *N.* 6.31 and fr. 190; for its use in a comparable maxim, *N.* 11.38. For γένος, see e.g. *N.* 6.1, *N.* 10.54, fr. 213.

⁸ On the construal of κεκριμένων, see Slater s.v. κρίνω.

⁹ Cf. Strohm (1944) and Maslov (2015) 121-2.

¹⁰ See e.g. Maslov (2015) 149 on how “epinikion is less concerned than the Theognidea with defending the rule of the aristocracy against an onslaught of the demos; according to the epinician ideology, such a rule is validated by nature and needs no supplementary conceptual buttressing.” Similarly Bremer (1992) 399: “Pindar bezeichnet die Art, wie einer ist, als φύᾱ und meint damit das natürliche Wesen, in dem der Dichter wie auch der Sieger zur Erscheinung

Nevertheless, the Pindaric use of φύα demonstrates a rich conceptualization, as it comprises the earliest evidence of the exaltation of either φύή/φύα or φύσις as a normative principle both ethical and epistemological.¹¹ Of course, φύσις had already attained some prominence (apparently even being foregrounded in the nominative) in philosophers such as Heraclitus.¹² But it had not yet—so far as we know—been comparably exalted by anyone as an evaluative term for such a range of human behavior. Moreover, through its marked role in his pious, aristocratic rhetoric—and what was long perceived as a peerless *furor poeticus*—, Pindar’s φύα took on a special character, and as such has had a rather unique afterlife.¹³ That said, one cannot treat Pindar, however much a “genius,” as being wholly *sui generis*, and the possibility that his use of φύα (and vegetal metaphor) was influenced by those philosophical

kommt. ... Dieser Aspekt eines Natürlichen, das vom Göttlichen nicht geschieden ist, weist auf einen unverfügbaren Begründungshorizont, in dem das schöne Werk des Dichters wie des Siegers fundiert ist.”

¹¹ Both aspects are anticipated, however, at least by Heraclitus, B1 and B123, and the ethical side may be anticipated by Archil. fr. 25 W, discussed in the Introduction.

¹² In addition to the Heraclitean fragments just cited, see also Parm. B10.1 and B16.3.

¹³ One measure of this is that, in the phrase σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ of *O.* 2 and the τὸ φυᾶ κρᾶτιστον of *O.* 9, his φύα seems to have been the only φύή/φύα to be absorbed by later discourse on φύσις while nevertheless retaining its association with a particular author. Of the few later uses of φύή/φύα not connected to Pindar, most come from the oft-cited, perhaps Semonidean, skolion, referenced first (without φύαν) in the *Gorgias*; a rare exception is Luc. *Pod.* 96, where φύα is used in an extended sense in a choral passage without apparent reference to Pindar. One might also note the false attribution of that Pindaric phrase to Hesiod by Gennadius Scholarius, *Ep.* 5.494.10. Most striking perhaps is the way that Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, *Encomium* 1.1057, addresses Χριστός with the words ὦ σὺ μόνος φυᾶ τὰ πάντα εἰδὼς. A clearer, and more human illustration of the continued association of the phrase with Pindar can be seen in the words ἀνδρὶ φυᾶ σοφῷ, κατὰ Πίνδαρον, from the Byzantine princess Irene Chumnaena, *Ep.* 8.27, who, in her fascinating fourteenth-century correspondence, otherwise uses only φύσις, and even just lines above the citation of Pindar, *Ep.* 8.19; noteworthy also is the prominence in her letters of the theme of natural wisdom, as seen for instance in the opening of her first letter, *Ep.* 1.7-10, where she self-deprecatingly speaks of her μικρὰν δύναμιν εἰς τὸ νοεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μεγάλης δωρεᾶς ... τοῦ ποιητοῦ ... καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης παιδεύσεως. On this topic, see also Gregory Palamas, *Ep.* 4.15. As this suggests, the peculiar reception of Pindar by the Byzantines complicates the matter; on this, see the discussion of Eustathius below.

developments as well as prior and contemporary poetry should not be dismissed. Indeed, in giving any pronounced role to the term, Pindar seems to have been in the avant-garde: even the rather sophisticated Simonides and his nephew Bacchylides offer nothing remotely comparable,¹⁴ and only in the writings of the Hippocratic, the tragedians, and later philosophers such as Empedocles does one observe a φύσις moving much beyond Pindar’s φύά in its prominence and semantic range.¹⁵

Several instances of φύά reveal the predictable interest in the athletic body, but the most impressive and most often cited instance is in the gnome, σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φύᾱ (*O.* 2.86: “Wise [is] the one who knows many things by φύά”), which is then immediately juxtaposed with derogatory remarks about “learners” (μαθόντες). Even such a bombastic claim aligns readily enough with parallels involving the more familiar φύσις. The vast majority of Pindar’s readers and interpreters have therefore had little difficulty with this maxim or with the others involving φύά. Only in the second half of the last century were any real doubts about the role and meaning of the term publicized, doubts centered in fact on that passage from *O.* 2 and the tension between it and less derogatory remarks about learning in other odes; but these doubts were also symptomatic of a general reaction against prior scholarship and its Romantic biases in particular.¹⁶ On the topic of φύά, nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship tended to treat the term in ways that have since been spurned as anachronistic, as undercut by post-Romantic

¹⁴ Neither φύσις nor φύή/φύά occurs in Simonides, except perhaps in the skolion attributed to him by Clement *Strom.* 4.5.23.2 and *sch. Gr.* 451e (see also *Carm. Conv.* 7). In his nephew Bacchylides, φύσιν occurs once (fr. 20C.36), φύάν once (5.168); see below and Rose (1974) 153; note in this regard the typical contrast between them and Pindar in Gardiner (1910) 109.

¹⁵ In Aeschylus, φύσις appears in the nominative only in the *Supp.* 496 and in fr. 36b Mette (from the *Argo*, of uncertain date, but on this basis alone perhaps best dated relatively late); likewise only in late plays such as *Phil.* and *OC* does Sophocles begin to dwell upon φύσις in a very prominent way; see Hajistephanou (1975).

¹⁶ See below; on the general reaction against Romantic influence, see Lloyd-Jones (1982) 145.

influence of one sort or another but especially through misapplication of a later concept of nature.¹⁷ On the other end, however, one finds more recent scholarship on Pindar's *φύα* that is vitiated by the extremes to which its anti-Romanticism compelled it. So Elroy Bundy, whose influence on recent Pindar studies is tremendous, claims that *φύα* is absolutely nothing like the “natural, unschooled, unconscious genius of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” but rather stands for the entire lived—and learned—tradition in which Pindar and his audience participate, or even just the “natural enthusiasm” which the dutiful poet shows for praising his patron.¹⁸ Such readings, although not entirely unfounded, cannot be sustained any more than those of an irrationalist Pindar.

Like many before them, the Romantic readers whom Bundy targeted provide at the very least a useful reminder that, whatever the inclinations of twentieth-century classicists, such “unreasonable” claims of reliance upon “nature” have often been made, and have often enough been bolstered by invocation of the reverend Theban. Assessing Pindar's conception of *φύα* by way of appeals to what would be “reasonable” for him to claim is, to my mind, just as misguided as doing so with Homer's Phemius, for instance. As preposterous as it may seem for Phemius to proclaim himself *αὐτοδίδακτος* or for Pindar to sing of knowing by *φύα* devoid of learning, and however much one may want to temper such testimony by appeals to the historical realities of a bardic tradition of intense training, nevertheless it must be objected that neither Phemius nor Pindar utter a word about that training. Their testimony demands, I think, to be understood as evidence of a well-attested habit or convention in many cultures, namely the masking of such dependencies and historical contingencies by absolute claims to divine inspiration and self-

¹⁷ This problem is taken up in more detail in Ch. 2.

¹⁸ So Bundy (1962) 4 with n. 11, which will be discussed below.

sufficient insight. The Romantic nature-genius that lurks behind so much older Pindar scholarship is simply one familiar form of this wider phenomenon—as is Pindar’s φύά of *O.* 2.

Granted, then, that it is all but impossible to avoid the shadows (or the lights) of Romanticism in interpreting Pindar, my purpose here is to pursue some scrutinized middle-ground in reconsidering the nexus of φύά and the vegetal in Pindar. The difference of my analysis will, I hope, become clear already in this chapter, as the shortcomings of prior scholarship on nature and metaphor in Pindar must be addressed first and foremost by a more careful analysis and contextualization of Pindar’s φύά.

In this chapter, I argue that Pindar’s concept of “nature,” as labelled primarily by the word φύά, but probably also by φύσις, shows both more unity than typically thought, and yet more diversity. Unity, because there are good reasons to suspect that “nature” is a passable translation for each and every instance of the words, and because there are shared thematic connections that illuminate the concept’s role in the corpus, including Heracles and mantic divination. Diversity, because the particular configurations into which either word is put in the different poems have a specificity which ought to discourage the reader from abstracting a general Pindaric doctrine about human nature and, *inter alia*, its relationship to learning. The main claim of this chapter, then, is that Pindar’s uses of φύά and φύσις are spread across a range of assertions as to the powers and most importantly the self-sufficiency of “nature.” These assertions, I argue, cannot be unified except in a Procrustean bed: in their original contexts, the generalizations show no sign of the qualifications necessary to render them fully compatible, such as an opposition between the one wise “by nature” and “mere learners” (the gloss given by

many scholars), instead of the unqualified “learners” that we find instead.¹⁹ In the fifth century, divergent claims about natural power and its relationship to education were being made, and the range of Pindar’s statements itself bears witness to the divergent positions of the broader debate.

The problem of their incongruity is addressed here by considerations of the genre of epinikion, especially its occasionality and thus the different audiences and patrons for which the odes were composed, along with its hybridity as a genre, which is to say the variegated tropes and elements that are unevenly distributed within the genre’s instantiations. In Pindar scholarship it has become increasingly clear that the epinikia demand to be read not as expressions of a single coherent system, but as more or less localized articulations of diverse traditions and ideological preoccupations. Which is not to say that they do not share many fundamental assumptions and generic conventions, but that they may adopt divergent stances vis-à-vis that shared background and the range of generic markers available. One mark of Pindar’s mastery is to have accommodated that array of interests within a body of poetry that spoke—if with some real tensions, contradictions and ambiguities—to a wide audience, and that continues to do so today, as even the scholarship reveals.

The chapter begins with an initial survey of the instances of φύσις and φυά in Pindar, combined with a survey of the reception and interpretation of Pindar’s use of the terms, which culminates in modern scholarship on the topic. A critical assessment of the latter shows that the main lingering problem lies in the tension between the different Pindaric positions on φυά; this leads to a proposal to analyse them as expressive of divergent conceptions. Methodological questions are then taken up in section III, followed by a re-examination of the evidence in section IV.

¹⁹ For “mere” learners, see e.g. Gundert (1935) 18, Marg (1938) 81 and 83, Vogel (2019) 61.

II. Overview of Evidence and Prior Interpretations

Pindar has long featured in discussions of the idea of nature in Greek poetry, in part because he was judged to have a feeling for the beauty and sublimity of nature that distinguished him among his contemporaries²⁰—but “especially as it was a favourite opinion of Pindar’s, that all excellence is a gift of nature.”²¹ As we shall soon see, this judgement had pervasive effects on the interpretation of the extant verses, and even on how some fragments were reconstructed. In the last century or so, however, philological scruple gradually cut back at the accretions of later semantic developments. The current consensus, with rare outliers, is that φύσις in Pindar denotes only “stature” or “bodily form,” and that φύά remains synonymous with that φύσις in half of the instances, while also designating in the remaining half a more capacious “nature,” the precise import of which remains debated.

Φύσις appears just twice, and in both instances it is now almost always taken to mean “stature” or the like.²² Slater, for example, in the *Lexicon to Pindar* that will be our representative authority, defines φύσις with the words “nature (of the body): bodily form.” Yet the emphasis in most interpretations, starting in fact with some ancient scholia, falls squarely on the latter half of that definition. The distinction is sharpest in Beardslee’s account, where Pindar’s φύσις (just as the φύσις of Homer and Aeschylus) is said to designate only the “outward

²⁰ Such characterizations were once exceedingly common. “Pindar’s sympathy with external nature was deeper and keener than is often discernible in the poetry of his age,” one reads in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ¹¹1911, Vol. XXI, 620. “In his attitude toward external nature, Pindar shows himself to be singularly objective,” according to Fairclough (1930) 105. See also Biese (1882) I.32-5, Jebb (1893) 167.

²¹ Müller (1858) I.295, citing *O.* 9.100; see also id. 285-6 for an extended characterization.

²² For exceptions and some doubts, see below, section III.

physical character,” with no implication whatsoever of birth, growth, or innate qualities.²³

Beardslee’s stricture is unusual, but the distinction might as well hold wherever “bodily form or appearance” is opposed to “nature,” and where the possibility of a reference to the innate is not explicitly considered; and such is the case with many treatments of either instance. A sense strictly limited to a person’s appearance is readily accepted in *I.* 4, when it is said that one victor (in lines that must be somewhat jesting) “was not allotted an Orionian φύσις, but is shameful to look at, yet heavy to fall in with at the peak of his strength” (*I.* 4.49-51: οὐ γὰρ φύσιν Ὀρειωνεΐαν ἔλαχεν· / ἀλλ’ ὄνοτός μὲν ιδέσθαι, / συμπεσεῖν δ’ ἀκμᾶ βαρύς).²⁴ The victor may not *look* like the gorgeous and enormous Orion, but surely he has some semblance of heroic strength and courage—in other words, a laudable “nature.”²⁵ In the other instance, when Pindar assures his audience that, in spite of our human frailty, “we nonetheless bear some resemblance to the immortals either in great mind or in φύσις” (*N.* 6.4-5: ἀλλά τι προσφέρομεν ἔμπαν ἢ μέγαν / νόον ἤτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις), the term is again readily accepted as referring to physical appearance: here, the radiant physique shared by panhellenic victors and the anthropomorphic Olympians whom they emulate.²⁶ Surely—or so the reasoning seems to go—a mortal “nature”

²³ Beardslee (1918) 8-9: “None of these examples contains any specific reference to the fact that the qualities mentioned are innate or original.”

²⁴ The sense and text of ἀκμᾶ, which could refer to the peak of the victor’s strength or the peak of the contest, is questionable: see Slater s.v. and cf. Willcock (1995) ad loc., who prefers the codd. reading αἰχμᾶ, perhaps “in the fight.”

²⁵ This is my own attempt to justify the interpretation. “Beauty” is preferred by Schol. ad *I.* 4 83a Drachmann (but cf. the objection of Schol. 83b, discussed below when we return to the passage); and, among modern scholars, almost everyone (citations below). Those who translate it as “nature” here are extremely few: Pfeiff (1997) 136, Mandruzzato (2010) 531.

²⁶ This also begins with the scholiasts: despite asserting that there is one common γένος of both gods and men (Schol. ad *N.* 6 1 Drachmann), the scholiasts only apply φύσις to εὐφυΐα τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τὰ κάλλη (see 7a and cf. 1 and 7b). So also Boeckh (1819) II.404 prefers “statura et forma corporis,” and is followed by Moore (1822) 95, Fennell (1883) 59, Myers (1892) 123, Jurenka (1899) 350 (who argues that it is a polemical response to Xenophanes B30), Farnell

does not resemble an immortal.²⁷ One ancient reader, however, seems to have taken the line to refer to “nature,” and incidentally read φύάν instead of the φύσιν found in the direct tradition of the epinikia.²⁸ Indeed, among modern readers that φύσις has often been interpreted as denoting a common “nature,”²⁹ but clear evidence for this interpretation is not found before modern Pindar-reception, and again this does not correspond to the prevalent view among Pindarists today. That prevalence notwithstanding, when we return to these passages in section IV, I will argue that although the contexts may encourage it, they certainly do not require the interpretation of φύσις as mere “physical appearance” or “stature,” and that the possibility of its denoting in both places a more dynamic “nature” should be taken seriously. That said, whatever doubts one might have about these passages, it must be agreed that they can provide no incontrovertible evidence of φύσις as a “nature” that grounds all of one’s hereditary traits.

Nevertheless, even such an expansive meaning of φύσις as “natural order” was read into Pindar since Plato at the latest. At first, however, this seems to have been done *not* by way of

(1930) 191, Gerber (1999) 43, 46-7, Henry (2005) 56 (who curiously writes, “Nothing is gained by understanding ‘character’ (so Mezger), a sense first attested in the fifth century”), Maslov (2012) 364, Le Meur-Weisman (2015), Šćepanović (2016).

²⁷ This is again my own attempt to explain the preference.

²⁸ The line is cited, in somewhat altered form, in a scholium on Eur. *Med.* 1224 (ii.207 Schwartz): in order to contrast the judgement that mortal affairs are a shadow (σκιά) with what “some of the wise” had said in praise of human power (μεγάλα δύνασθαι) and reason (λόγισμος), the scholiast cites *N.* 6.5 (with no mention of the σκιᾶς ὄναρ of *P.* 8.95!), but reading φύάν instead of φύσιν (and with the order of the two items inverted); the phrase μεγάλα δύνασθαι suggests that φύά is taken to refer not to the “form” but to a dynamic body if not a “nature.” Citations of the opening of *N.* 6 began in antiquity but otherwise did not include l. 5; for citations and discussion see Pépin (1971) 36-8 and Gerber (1999) 45. That said, given the tendency among those who cite it to read the opening of *N.* 6 as asserting the common origin of gods and men, one might reasonably surmise that they read φύσις as “nature,” but so far as I know there is no direct evidence.

²⁹ So Greene (1778) 165, Lee (1810) 411, Mommsen (1852) 142, Albani (1862) 176, Mezger (1880) 415, Bury (1890) 104, Dornseiff (1921) 191, Gundert (1935) 20, Pépin (1971) 38, Mandruzzato (2010) 417, Lourenço (2011) 67, 70-1, Vogel (2016) and Vogel (2019) 107.

Pindar’s own usage of φύσις, but rather through his use of νόμος, as refracted in turn by the later sophistic treatment of νόμος and φύσις. In the *Gorgias*, the Pindaric dictum νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς (“νόμος the king of all”),³⁰ which Pindar illustrates through the figure of Heracles the violent civilizer, is quoted by Callicles to support his claim that it accords with nature (κατὰ φύσιν or φύσει) for the stronger to rule over the weaker by means of the νόμος which they wilfully establish.³¹ As Mark Payne has shown, Callicles’ conception of the naturally superior man, and particularly the almost epiphanic self-sufficiency of his nature, resonates considerably with Pindar’s portrayal of the demi-god; we return to this below.³² The reference to φύσις here and in other citations of and allusions to that phrase led some scholars to conclude that Pindar himself had used a form of φύσις in the lines preceding.³³ Indeed, in Hesychius the maxim comes with φύσις tacked on to the end: νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν.³⁴ Some reference to “nature” might also be justified (or at least motivated) by Pindar’s illustration of the gnome by way of Heracles, who is nothing less than paradigmatic for the conception of nature in Pindar and others, as we will see below. Nonetheless, subsequent scholarship has rejected the addition,

³⁰ The opening phrase of fr. 169a had already been quoted by Herodotus, 3.38.4, and would be quoted again many times; for other citations, see Snell-Maehler’s app. crit. on fr. 169a.1-8.

³¹ *Gorg.* 484b; see Dodds ad loc. See also esp. *Leg.* 3.690b-c and England’s comments ad loc., and Robinson (1936) 107. For discussion and recent bibliography, see Hornblower (2004) 65-6. For the prior citation of fr. 169a.1 by Herodotus (3.38) and a penetrating account of Herodotus’ interpretation, see now Kingsley (2018).

³² Payne (2006) esp. 167-71.

³³ So e.g. the edition of Mommsen (1864) 475, fr. 48, reads: “. κατὰ φύσιν . . . / νόμος κτλ.”; see also LSJ s.v. φύσις, III (“the regular order of nature”), where the text given is “κατὰ φύσιν ‘νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς.’” But it was first inserted into the preceding lacuna by Boeckh (1819), according to Beardslee (1918) 6 n. 6.

³⁴ Hesych. s.v. νόμος; cf. Gigante (1956) 76 n. 1.

and so this has become the least consequential of the “Platonizing” interpretations we have to consider here—but it is still noteworthy for being the first.³⁵

Just as it apparently ignored Pindar’s use of φύσις, pre-modern Pindar-reception neglected the passages in which φυά is less freighted, where it seems to require only a meaning like “physical appearance.” There is minimal disagreement among scholars about this applying to five of the ten instances. Echoing his definition of φύσις, Slater glosses these five with the phrase “bodily nature, stature,” where again the latter dominates in the scholarship; and, as if to underline that preference, Slater adds the more restricted “body, frame” for one instance.³⁶ This last occurs when a goad is applied to the εὐριπλεύρω (“broad-ribbed”) φυᾶ of two oxen (*P.* 4.235)³⁷; it is perhaps the least significant of the uses, except insofar as it is rare early evidence of the extension of the term to the non-human.³⁸ The epithet εὐριπλεύρω and the concreteness of the applied goad seem to have motivated the restriction to “body, frame.”³⁹ In a similar case, Heracles prays that Telamon’s son will have an “unbreakable φυά, just as this beast’s skin now roams around me” (*I.* 6.47-8: ἄρρηκτον φυάν, ὥσπερ τόδε δέρμα με νῦν περιπλανᾶται / θηρός).⁴⁰ If we follow closely the analogy with the δέρμα θηρός, the most obvious meaning is that the boy should have a tough exterior, and this impression is strengthened somewhat by the addition,

³⁵ φύσις was also supposed to have been used by Pindar in another fragment, on the basis of a citation in Theodore Metochites, now also neglected; see Humpel s.v. φύσις (Slater does not mention it s.v. φύσις, and Slater’s *index locorum* does not include that passage).

³⁶ Slater’s construals are supported by the scholia, except in the case of *P.* 4.235 (see below) and *Pae.* 20.12, which is not discussed by the scholia.

³⁷ So Seymour (1904) ad loc. (“huge-sided frame”), Duchemin (1967) ad loc. (“corps”), Kirkwood (1982) ad loc. (“flanks”), Segal (1986) 65 (“strong-flanked form”), Liberman (2004) 117 (“les flancs”).

³⁸ See other evidence listed by LSJ s.v. φυή A.2.

³⁹ This is the only instance where Slater parts ways with the scholia, where the words are merely paraphrased: sch. 419. ἐριπλεύρω φυᾶ: τῇ μεγαλοπλεύρω φύσει τῶν ταύρων.

⁴⁰ I have tried to preserve what appears to be a fairly bold metaphor in περιπλανᾶται, which evokes, I suspect, a living and prowling creature.

θυμὸς δ' ἐπέσθω (“and let his heart follow,” 49).⁴¹ Likewise, there would appear to be a simple contrast between physical appearance and inner character in the assurance that a victor “leads an ἀρετὰ no more shameful than his φύα” (*I.* 7.22: ἄγει τ' ἀρετὰν οὐκ αἴσχιον φυᾶς).⁴² And it is again easily taken to refer to bodily appearance when the infant Heracles “cast with a hand the dappled swaddling-cloth from his limbs and revealed his φύα” (*Pae.* 20.11-2: χειρὶ μελέων ἄπο ποικίλον / σπάρ]γανον ἔρριψεν ἕαν τ' ἔφανεν φυάν), which is the only instance of either term that does not occur in an epinikion.⁴³ Finally, the same meaning may apply in the phrase πρὸς εὐάνθεμον ... φυάν (*O.* 1.67: “toward well-blossoming φύα”), which occurs within the clause “when ... downy hairs were covering his dark cheek” (1. 67-8: ὅτε ... / λάχλαι νιν μέλαν γένειον ἔρεφον): most narrowly and concretely interpreted, the metaphor may suggest that the first beard is the bloom of the body’s exterior—not of the boy’s “nature.”⁴⁴ As before, the strictest interpretation is that of Beardslee, who insists that φύα is not used here “in any sense in which the meaning might be derived from ‘origin’ or ‘birth,’ but [is used] of outward physical characteristics.”⁴⁵ Beardslee’s stricture has again not been shared, but neither is it explicitly excluded by other interpreters. In sum, the consensus is that these instances of φύα, just as those of φύσις, employ the same sense as the Homeric φυή, which seems to designate only stature or appearance; and this conclusion is plausible enough. On the other hand, as we have seen in the Introduction, it is possible that even the epic and lyric φυή sometimes denotes more particularly

⁴¹ See Fennell (1883) ad loc., Bury (1892) ad loc., Kirkwood (1982) ad loc.

⁴² Slater s.v. αἰσχρός remarks on this instance: “interp. dub.: ? a distinction that is no worse a thing than, just as noble as, his form.” See also Schol. ad *I.* 7 30a and 30b, and Bury (1892) ad loc., Fennell (1883), Young (1971) 18-9, Willcock (1995) ad loc.

⁴³ Contra Slater s.v., Rutherford (2001) 400 translates this instance with “nature,” although in the following commentary, 401, we find the paraphrase “reveals his physique.”

⁴⁴ Most commentators (and this ode has received more commentaries than any other) are in fact silent on the semantics of φύα here, but cf. e.g. Verdenius (1987) and Gerber (1982) ad loc.

⁴⁵ Beardslee (1918) 7.

the living body in its dynamic capacities or in its status as the result of growth. With Pindar, that possibility is demonstrably greater, I think, for all instances of φύα: as with φύσις, I will argue again for a shift of emphasis toward the first half of Slater’s definition, “bodily nature,” or even “nature.”

Before those five instances, Slater lists another five under the simple lemma “nature.” With these the sense demanded indisputably surpasses that of the Homeric φύή: “We each differ by φύά, having been allotted a means of life” (*N.* 7.54: φυᾶ δ’ ἕκαστος διαφέρομεν βιοτὰν λαχόντες)⁴⁶; “It is necessary to strive by φύά, walking in straight paths” (*N.* 1.25: χρῆ δ’ ἐν εὐθείαις ὁδοῖς στείχοντα μάρνασθαι φυᾶ)⁴⁷; “By φύά the noble will stands out / from fathers in sons” (*P.* 8.44-5: φυᾶ τὸ γενναῖον ἐπιπρέπει / ἐκ πατέρων παισὶ λῆμα).⁴⁸ These three gnomes suffice to show that the term can designate a hereditary principle that determines one’s characteristics, and as such patently carries normative weight, just as we find φύσις doing elsewhere. The final two, one of which we have already seen above, are more problematic, being exceptionally forceful and tendentious claims about such a principle. The more generalizing is this: “What is by φύά is strongest in every respect; but many by taught virtues of human beings strive to win glory” (*O.* 9.100-2: τὸ δὲ φυᾶ κράτιστον ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ διδασκαῖς / ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλέος / ὄρουσαν ἀρέσθαι). The more famous passage, although similar in substance, is focused on intellectual power: “Wise is the one who knows many things by φύά; but learners [or

⁴⁶ The few commentators who have taken up this ode have said little about the word here, but cf. Fennell (1883) ad loc.: “The natural constitution, φύά, is regarded as the means by which variation is produced, fate as the cause; hence the aorist λαχόντες.” See also Carey (1981) ad loc.

⁴⁷ Commentators are essentially unanimous on the meaning of φύά here, but there is considerable disagreement about whether it should be opposed to the preceding τέχνηαι, discussed below.

⁴⁸ The scholarship on this is unanimous—when it does not pass over it in silence as something self-evident. For interesting discussions, see Boeckh (1819) II.2.313 and Pfeijffer (1999).

“ones who have learned”] like boisterous tell-all crows chatter unfulfilled against Zeus’s divine bird” (*O.* 2.86-8: σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ· μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι / παγγλωσσία κόρακες ὧς ἄκραντα γαρυέτων / Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον).⁴⁹ As the boldest claims, and ones that are also in tension with other maxims and evaluations found in Pindar’s poems, these last two passages have dominated the discussions of Pindaric φυᾶ from the earliest citations to the present.

In fact, when we turn to the reception, we find that it focuses upon those last two dicta from the outset and is also, as with φύσις, rather Platonizing, albeit not in the Platonic corpus. When first quoted with the φυᾶ preserved,⁵⁰ the two gnomes are employed together by Aelius Aristides in his defense of rhetoric against Plato’s critique (*Or.* 2). Because Aristides’ treatment of Pindar anticipates much of what comes later, it merits some discussion. Defending his profession against the broadside of the *Gorgias*, etc., Aristides effectively grants Plato’s polemical claim from the *Ion* that good poetry is not produced by τέχνη, but by a conflation of φύσις and θεία μοῖρα (“divine allotment”).⁵¹ That premise, however ironical, finds an important parallel in the celebration of artless and divine μανία in the *Phaedrus*,⁵² and of course many other texts, and so Aristides’ strategy is to defend rhetoric by saying that it too involves such a noble enthusiasm. In addition to quotes from Homer, Hesiod and others, the φυᾶ maxims of *O.* 2 and 9 are cited as further support—and, as Aristides is quick to remark, support from an authority whom Plato himself regards highly.⁵³ The rhetor then responds: It being agreed that φύσις and

⁴⁹ My translation of παγγλωσσία and ἄκραντα is not the most precise, but is intended to convey the force of the original.

⁵⁰ Numerous allusions esp. to *O.* 2 can be found that substitute φύσει for φυᾶ, as e.g. Philo, cited below, n. 266; see also Leeuwen (1964) ad loc.

⁵¹ See esp. *Or.* 2.113.

⁵² Aristid. *Or.* 2.52-60 dwells on *Phaedr.* On the *Ion* and *Phaedr.*, see e.g. González (2011).

⁵³ *Or.* 2.109-10: Ἔτι τοίνυν ἐνὸς ποιητοῦ τῶν ἀπὸ Βοιωτίας καὶ Ἑλικῶνος παρασχίσσονται μαρτυρίαν, ᾧ καὶ Πλάτων αὐτὸς τὰ πλείστου, φασίν, ἄξια χρῆται. οὗτος δέ, ὧ θεοί, καὶ

divinity are superior to human τέχνη and learning, this can only establish the supreme value of poetry—and as rhetoric, on the Platonic account, also relies on natural talent and a “knack” rather than τέχνη, so it too has a share of that value, *pace* Plato.⁵⁴ Aristides thus inaugurates the use of Pindar’s φυά in the late antique rhetorical tradition.⁵⁵ The sort of Platonizing interpretation put forward, which reads Pindar’s φυά anachronistically as the polar opposite of a Platonic-sophistic τέχνη, has persisted into the present.⁵⁶

μάλ’ ἀποκαλύψας καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως καὶ Μούσης ὡς ἀληθῶς βοᾷ Στεντόρειον εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὥσπερ σιωπῆν κηρύξας [*O.* 2.86-8]. κοράκων φησὶν εἶναι φωνὰς τὰς τῶν μαθόντων καὶ παρ’ ἄλλων εἰληφότων πρὸς ἀετὸν γιγνομένης τὸν φύσει νικῶντα καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ ῥήτορα καὶ σοφόν. ἐτέρωθι δ’ αὖ βραχύτερον μὲν, γνωρίμως δ’ οὐχ ἦπτον διαμαρτύρεται [*O.* 9.100-2]. σφόδρ’ ἀκολούθως ἀμφότερα ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀντιτέθεικε τῷ κρατίστῳ τὸ [πολλῷ] χεῖρον διὰ τοῦ τῶν πολλῶν ὀνόματος, ὡς ἐκείνο μὲν παντάπασιν τινων ὀλίγων ὄν, τοῦτο δὲ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀφικνούμενον. καὶ ἔτι πρὸ τούτων «Ἄγαθοι δὲ φύσει καὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ δαίμονα ἄνδρες ἐγένοντο.» [cf. *O.* 9.28-9] ὅμοιον καὶ τοῦτο τῷ ἐτέρῳ ῥήματι καὶ ταῦτόν λέγων. οὐ μὲν γὰρ διδασκαίς εἶπεν ἀρεταῖς, προσέθηκεν ἀνθρώπων, οὐ δὲ τὴν φύσιν πρεσβεύει, κατὰ δαίμονα, τούτους εἶναι τοὺς τῷ ὄντι ἀγαθοὺς καὶ σοφοὺς. For discussion of this particular passage in the larger context of Aristides’ engagement with Pindar, see Gkourogianis (1999) 167-180. Regarding Aristides’ exceptional fondness for Pindar, whom he cites much more than any other poet (after Homer and Hesiod) see Bowie (2008) 17. For contextualization of Aristides’ treatise in the broader discourse on rhetoric and philosophy in the Second Sophistic, see Fowler (2011).

⁵⁴ *Or.* 2. 113. Aristides nevertheless goes on to argue that φύσις should serve as mistress, and τέχνη as handmaid, *Or.* 2.115; and then that there is in fact a properly technical (or “scientific”) component to oratory, *Or.* 2.135-77.

⁵⁵ The next extant citation pairs Pindar with Epicurus on rhetoric: Syrian. in *Hermog.* [265, 23] ‘κράτιστον μὲν γὰρ εἰ καὶ τὰ τῆς φύσεως συλλαμβάνοιτο’ ἀρχὴ γὰρ οἰονεὶ καὶ κρηπὶς καὶ χρηστὸν ὄργανον ψυχῆ πρὸς τὰ βέλτιστα χωρεῖν ἐπειγομένη δεξιὰ φύσις· διὸ καὶ Πίνδαρός φησι ‘τὸ δὲ φυᾶ κράτιστον ἅπαν’. ὁ δὲ γε Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ περὶ ῥητορικῆς αὐθαδέστερον οἶμαι λέγων φησὶν αὐτὸς μόνος εὐρηγένας τέχνην πολιτικῶν λόγων· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀποσκορακίζων ῥήτορας ἐαυτῷ πως μαχόμενος λέγει ‘φύσις γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ κατορθοῦσα λόγους, τέχνη δὲ οὐδεμία’. (This passage is not included in Usener’s *Epicurea*, but cf. p. 114 of that work) Compare Diogenes Laertius’s report that Epicurus’ treatise *On Rhetoric* demanded “nothing other than clarity” (10.13), and that Epicurus insisted he was self-taught (*ibid.*). In the next extant citation, *O.* 2 and 9 are scrambled into κράτιστον τὸν φυᾶ σοφόν by Nicephorus Basilaca, *Orat.* B1, 20. Many follow.

⁵⁶ This problem is discussed at length below in this section.

At the same time, there is an interesting tension between Aristides' willingness to read Pindar (and others) as claiming an absolute reliance upon φύσις over against τέχνη and μάθησις, and, on the other hand, his appropriation of such claims for his account of rhetoric, wherein divine inspiration and φύσις are ultimately cast as the source of the orator's "invention" (εὔρεσις),⁵⁷ with plenty of room left for erudition and technical mastery. In this way, although Aristides' Pindar is superficially an absolutist about nature over against art and learning,⁵⁸ he is far from an irrationalist. As soon as Aristides applies the Pindaric wisdom to oratory, the opposition between nature and learning is converted into one between original writers and plagiarists, which of course weakens it considerably.⁵⁹ In some twentieth-century scholarship one meets again this tendency to reduce even the most superlative claims about φύσις to mundane assertions about the need for rhetorical originality or "natural" simplicity.⁶⁰

Finally, it is noteworthy that after those two quotations from Pindar, Aristides promptly asserts that the poet speaks entirely consistently (σφόδρ' ἀκολουθῶς).⁶¹ Although no one else, so far as I know, has ever registered any possible conflict between these two gnomes, Aristides' insistence suggests that other readers had already called attention to the apparent inconsistency of Pindar's talk of φύσις and its development. As noted above, that broader inconsistency came to the fore in the last century or so; but Eustathius summed up the problem many centuries ago:

⁵⁷ See especially the droll discussion at *Or.* 2.91, which begins, πῶς οὖν αἱ Μοῦσαι διδάσκουσιν; ἄρα γε ὡσπερ οἱ γραμματισταὶ διδασκαλεῖον ἀνοιξάμενοι; οὐκ ἔστιν.

⁵⁸ Note also how Aristides primes his reader for Pindar in *Or.* 2.104-8, starting with a question that alludes to both *O.* 2 and 9: ποῦ γὰρ ἄν τις καὶ κράτιστον θεῖη τὸν μαθόντα καὶ πῶς; Thus Aristides himself starkly juxtaposes the learner with his natural superior.

⁵⁹ *Or.* 2.111.

⁶⁰ The primary examples come from Bundy, discussed below.

⁶¹ *Or.* 2.110. The threat of inconsistency that Aristides perceives comes from the possibility that the generalization in *O.* 9 about πολλοί using διδασκαλαὶς ἀρεταῖς applies also to those who have natural talents: Aristides insists that the use of πολλοί entails a strict contrast with the ὀλίγοι who are strongest by nature.

He (sc. Pindar) will be found also to be a braggart in many places in a rather over-eager manner, and derisive of his rivals in art by similar reasoning; and contradictory in not a few places: indeed he sometimes praises natural genius (εὐφυΐα) and the self-learned (τὸ αὐτομαθές), as if even he himself knows many things by means of φουά, but elsewhere [he praises] the things taught through learning.⁶²

Eustathius' discussion here is marked by another important feature, which harkens back less to Plato than to archaic poetical tropes. Indeed, already in antiquity, and to some extent even in Aristides himself, but more clearly in Eustathius, we find an interpretative move in another direction: that is, construing Pindar's φουά chiefly by reference to the likes of Hesiod's *Dichterweihe* and Homer's Phemius αὐτοδίδακτος, so that it smacks less of a strict φύσις-τέχνη polarity than of old and conventional claims to the possession of poetical skill and knowledge solely through divine and natural endowment.⁶³ As I will argue below, this line of interpretation deserves to be renewed.

Far more definitive for most Renaissance and modern reception of Pindar's "nature"—and of the corpus as a whole—was Horace's vatic Pindar, whose torrential profundity (as depicted in *Carm.* 4.2) was fatefully linked with the ubiquitous commonplace of the *furor poeticus*.⁶⁴ Among other elements, the widespread misunderstanding of Pindar's meters (which Horace also promotes in that same poem) encouraged a caricature of the poet as an unbridled and artless enthusiast.⁶⁵ The ensuing tradition is vast and does not need to be retraced here⁶⁶; yet one

⁶² *Pro.* 22.2-3: εὐρηται δὲ καὶ περιαιτολόγος ἐν πολλοῖς φιλοτιμότερον καὶ σκωπτικὸς δὲ τῶν ἀντιτέχνων ὁμοίῳ λόγῳ· καὶ ἀμφίγλωσσος δὲ ἐν οὐκ ὀλίγοις· ὅς γε πῆ μὲν τὴν εὐφυΐαν ἐπαινεῖ καὶ τὸ αὐτομαθές, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ, πῆ δὲ τὰ κατὰ μάθησιν διδάσκει· For the text, see A. Kambylis' edition of 1991; for analysis, see also the separate monograph by same Kambylis (1991) esp. 92-5 on this particular chapter, and id. ch. 4 for a consideration of Eustathius in connection with *die neuzeitliche Pindarforschung*.

⁶³ See Eustath. ad *Il.* 1.265.19-22, 2.451.24, and ad *Od.* 1.39.31, as well as Scholia, and Stephanus, in *Rh.* 278 (where the citation of Phemius' speech is especially clear).

⁶⁴ See e.g. Tigerstedt (1970).

⁶⁵ Cf. esp. *Carm.* 4.2.11-12.

last portion is crucial for our analysis. In the eighteenth century, this vatic Pindar was swept up in a “perfect storm” of pre-Romantic obsessions, quickly becoming the favored ancient exemplar of “natural genius,” especially for the poet and critic Edward Young.⁶⁷ One testimony will suffice, from Joseph Addison’s essay “On Genius”:

Among great geniuses those few draw the admiration of all the world upon them, and stand up as the prodigies of mankind, who by the mere strength of natural parts, and without any assistance of art or learning, have produced works that were the delight of their own times and the wonder of posterity. [...] I cannot quit this head without observing that Pindar was a great genius of the first class, who was hurried on by a natural fire and impetuosity to vast conceptions of things and noble sallies of imagination.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ See Revard (2001), Hamilton (2003).

⁶⁷ For Pindar in the discourse on poetic madness in the eighteenth century, see e.g. Burwick (1996). In spite of that trend, even Young, who played an important role in the popularization of such a caricature of Pindar in the Romantic period (being read extensively by e.g. Goethe), offers at times a much more complicated portrait of Pindar and indeed the entire category of the natural genius. So Young (1798) III.221, 222: “Pindar, who has as much logic at the bottom as Aristotle or Euclid, to some critics has appeared as mad, and must appear so to all who enjoy no portion of his own divine spirit. ... Pindar’s muse, like Sacharissa, is a stately, imperious, and accomplished beauty; equally disdain[ing] the use of art and the fear of any rival; so intoxicating that it was the highest commendation that could be given an ancient that he was not afraid to taste of her charms ...” See also Young (1774) IV.288, 289: “A star of the first magnitude among moderns was Shakespeare; among the ancients, Pindar; who, as Vossius tells us, boasted of his no-learning, calling himself the eagle, for his flight above it. ... Of genius there are two species, an earlier and a later; or call them infantine and adult. An adult genius comes out of nature’s hand, as Pallas out of Jove’s head, at full growth and mature: Shakespeare’s genius [and therefore Pindar’s] was of this kind: on the contrary, Swift stumbled at the threshold, and set out for distinction on feeble knees. His was an infantine genius; a genius, which, like other infants, must be nursed and educated, or it will come to nought.” (Young’s rhetoric becomes notably more paradoxical with the following, op. cit. 51-2: “The minds of the schoolmen were almost as much cloistered as their bodies; they had but little learning and few books; yet may the most learned be struck with some astonishment at their so singular natural sagacity and most exquisite edge of thought. Who would expect to find Pindar and Scotus, Shakespeare and Aquinas, of the same party?” Indeed, these schoolmen of “but little learning” reveal just how arbitrary and exaggerated the category of the unschooled natural genius was, at least in Young.)

⁶⁸ Addison (1811 [1711]) 328, 329.

This portrait of Pindar persisted—only slightly softened—well into the twentieth century.⁶⁹ The comfort with which an arch-Romantic could talk of natural genius was matched again and again in the scholarship, often supported by invocations of Romantic poets and critics.⁷⁰ Identifications of Pindar’s *φύα* with Plato’s divinely inspired *φύσις*, a crucial forerunner and companion of Romantic inspiration, have been even more persistent.⁷¹ Following, then, upon the robust tradition of a simple equation of Pindar’s *φύα* with *φύσις*, and of reading a more or less Platonic theory of *τέχνη* and inspiration back into Pindar, many commentators have read the relevant passages in a way that others would now dismiss as anachronistic.

In the last century and a half, however, there have also been many qualifications of that approach, compelled by Pindar’s own praise of practice and teachers in other odes, along with the patent erudition and daedalian craftedness which marks the corpus of epinikia and the fragments. Faced with that tension, some have been content to note that in *O.* 2, for instance, Pindar cannot have meant to repudiate all learning, but was only emphasizing in that, as in other passages, the necessity of natural endowments.⁷² Herwig Maehler, for one, proposed a developmental thesis, such that Pindar was only led to claim knowledge “by nature” after mastering his craft and being forced to defend himself against his competitors.⁷³ Other scholars came to insist that it is not a matter of occasional blinkered emphasis, but of a rather extenuated conception of *φύα*, such that the dative *φύᾳ*—the only case used when it demands to be read as the source of moral character, etc.—does not trace any process or trait to a permanent “nature,”

⁶⁹ See e.g. Trevelyan (1941) 79, but cf. also the balanced remarks of 53-6; cf. also Bowra (1964).

⁷⁰ So e.g. Robinson (1936) 48 (echoing Gildersleeve ad loc.): “Pindar is the man of genius (l. 86), the true poet who with proud complacency (as Landor would say) knoweth many things by nature (σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φύᾳ), following Ruskin’s first rule, ‘be born with genius.’”

⁷¹ For a recent example, see Hummel (1999).

⁷² E.g. Gildersleeve loc. cit.

⁷³ Maehler (1963) 94 n. 2.

but looks rather to a person's origin, rather vaguely conceived. This interpretation was formulated most forcefully by Ernst Tugendhat in the following influential sentences:

In Pindar-research there is general talk of “the *phua*.” This is not entirely correct, since Pindar, the only poet in whom $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ is to be found in this sense, uses this word—in all five passages in which it does not mean something like growth and shape, but rather this being anchored in one's origin [*dieses Einbehaltensein im Ursprung*—in the dative, and also where this cannot be explained by its accidental position in the sentence. *Phua* is thus for Pindar not a Something, but a How [*nicht ein Etwas, sondern ein Wie*]. (The substantive fixed in the dative amounts to an adverb.) $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ then is not a predisposition conceived materially as planted in the human being, but all the living and striving of the human being, insofar as it remains determined by its origin and presents itself as its [viz. the origin's] unfolding. Thus with $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ neither the beginning nor the present is meant, but the present *as* something released from its origin and anchored in it.⁷⁴

“To strive by $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$,” then, as Pindar enjoins in *N.* 1.25, would not be to rely upon one's fixed “nature,” but to strive in a manner that is somehow “authentic,” or “anchored” in the origin of one's being. This generous conception certainly opens up the relevant phrases to less polarizing interpretations. Reminiscent of Tugendhat is, e.g., Pfeijffer's claim that, for Pindar, capacities are only “‘learned’ to the extent that they are alien to one's $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$. [...] $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\alpha}$ here [in *N.* 3] does

⁷⁴ Tugendhat (1960) 407 n. 2: “In der Pindarforschung wird allgemein von »der Phua« gesprochen. Das ist nicht ganz zutreffend, weil Pindar, der einzige Dichter, bei dem $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ in diesem Sinn zu finden ist, dieses Wort an allen 5 Stellen, an denen es nicht so etwas wie Wuchs und Gestalt, sondern dieses Einbehaltensein im Ursprung meint, im *Dativ* gebraucht, auch dort, wo dies nicht aus der zufälligen Stellung im Satz erklärt werden kann. Phua ist also für Pindar nicht ein Etwas, sondern ein Wie. (Das im Dativ verfestigte Substantiv ist so viel wie ein Adverb.) $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ ist dann nicht eine dinglich vorgestellte in den Menschen gelegte Anlage, sondern alles Leben und Trachten des Menschen, insofern es vom Ursprung bestimmt bleibt und sich so als dessen Entfaltung darstellt. Mit $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ ist so weder der Anfang noch das Gegenwärtige gemeint, sondern das Gegenwärtige *als* ein aus dem Ursprung Entlassenes und in diesem Einbehaltene.” Cf. Marg (1938) 81: “[...] so geht es bei Pindar um das ‘Wie’ der Arete, um die echte und die nur scheinbare.” Tugendhat's statement is cited as “important” by Young (1970) 638 n. 24; on this topic, Young is challenged by Rose (1974) 154 n. 22. Regarding the vaguely Heideggerean tenor of Tugendhat's description of $\varphi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$, one might note e.g. Tugendhat's *Habilitationschrift, Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, Berlin 1967; in fact, he was Heidegger's pupil.

not imply a rejection of learning *tout court*.⁷⁵ Provided that one is “born” for something, then developing that capacity through learning should not prevent one’s use of it from still being $\phi\upsilon\tilde{\alpha}$.⁷⁶ (A question these scholars do not address is whether such a genealogical claim would in fact preclude the acknowledgement—or even conception—that something is “learned,” or would only prevent one’s virtues from being *derided* as “learned” in an exaggerated opposition.) The fact that it only occurs in the dative when the sense demanded is “moral” or “psychological” is certainly an important explanandum. Yet in light of the evidence from other authors unnoted by Tugendhat,⁷⁷ along with the definite possibility of the extension of meaning operating even in the other cases, I would suggest that the apparent restriction may be, to some extent, an accident of transmission, and that those parallels make it still more implausible that $\phi\upsilon\tilde{\alpha}$ could ever designate only *ein Wie*, as Tugendhat puts it.

Others, finally, would see an even broader scope for $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$, such that the strongest assertions of its power would be less about any familial heredity, than about all the cultural inheritance that by and large remained the preserve of aristocratic families—including, of course, the mantic and bardic traditions (although this hereditary elitist aspect is decisively neglected by the authors in question). The most influential advocate for this was Elroy Bundy, who, with his *Studia Pindarica* of 1962, revolutionized Pindaric studies by focusing upon the formal aspects of

⁷⁵ Pfeijffer (1999) ad *N.* 3.40.

⁷⁶ Tugendhat was followed also by Dieter Bremer (whose academic pedigree, through Wolfgang Schadewaldt, puts him in the same circles), most explicitly in Bremer (1976) 261-2. In his later translation of the epinikia, Bremer repeatedly renders $\phi\upsilon\tilde{\alpha}$ with “aus dem, wie er ist” (~“from the way one is”): see Bremer (1992) 23 (on *O.* 2), 77 (*O.* 9), 223 (*N.* 1), 265 (*N.* 7, where the formula is slightly modified into “Aus dem, wie jeder ist”); with the exception of *O.* 1, all of the other instances, together with both instances of $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, are translated by Bremer as *Wuchs*. See also Bremer (1992) 404 on $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\upsilon\eta$, $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$, and $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$. In connection with this, it is also interesting to see how Bremer translates *P.* 2.72 ($\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota$, $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\acute{\iota} \mu\alpha\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$ as he punctuates it): “Komm zur Kenntnis, von welcher Art du bist!” See his further remark on the passage, 402.

⁷⁷ See the Introduction and the discussions below.

the odes and basing his analyses on the assumption that all of the features of every epinikion must be analysed as so many conventional elements, all coordinated with the overarching rhetorical goal of praising the victor. Within this framework, many elements had to be reconceived by reference to that goal and its self-conscious rhetoric. Accordingly,

Pindar's *φύα* has nothing to do with the natural, unschooled, unconscious genius of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but denotes schooling by experience in the truth of words and actions in a living tradition; the “learning” he speaks of in these passages is mere rote imitation of things not understood. You must not, he means, apply systems of method but elicit your method from the thing to be investigated; do not, armed with a detached system, go in search of a subject, but, having chosen a subject, refusing to bury it under an avalanche of terms, allow it to reveal the unity in its manifold as you “draw together the strands of many matters in brief.”⁷⁸

So we must abandon the Romantic Pindar for—the systematically empirical?⁷⁹ This exchange of one anachronism for another becomes still more strained when the “way of *φύα*” is described elsewhere by Bundy as the “natural enthusiasm” which the successful poet must have for the praise of the *laudandus*.⁸⁰ In another statement on the topic, he writes that the *φύα* maxims

exemplify Pindar's use of this rhetorical motive [= motif], in which the laudator, disdaining all device, makes his straightforward confidence and enthusiasm the measure of the *laudandus*' worth. In all such contexts, Pindar himself is hidden behind the conventional mask of the laudator; yet they are regarded by critical opinion as personal to the poet, often in embarrassing senses.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Bundy (1972) 90 n. 113. As a measure of Bundy's influence, this particular passage has been endorsed by e.g. Nagy (1990) 9-10 and 338.

⁷⁹ Cf. Eur. fr. 809 Nauck: *πείραν οὐ δεδοκότες, / μάλλον δοκοῦντες ἢ πεφυκότες σοφοί*.

⁸⁰ Speaking of *N.* 4.41–3, Bundy (1972) 4 n. 11 writes, “Here the way of *φύα* (natural enthusiasm) is preferred to the way of *τέχνα* (mechanical praise)”; and of course not without some justification: see id. 29–31. The phrase “natural enthusiasm” is an interesting choice of two well-worn concepts which, if it were not for their over-use, would make Bundy's gloss of *φύα* with that phrase precisely equivalent to the interpretations which he resists; and anyway it can confidently be asserted that the two words place his gloss within that long tradition in a way which he seems otherwise to be at such pains to avoid.

⁸¹ Bundy (1962) 32; cf. id. 71 n. 91: “A frequent object of such misinterpretation is the *praeteritio* of *O.* 2.91–97, in which the *laudator* informs us that his quiver is full of arrows that speak only to the *συνετοί*. Far from doctrinaire is his subsequent refusal to employ them on the ground that a plain blunt vaunt (*φυσῆ*) is more truly sentient (*σοφός*) than are the ways of art.

One can see from this excerpt too how Bundy’s theoretical framework, and especially the committed alignment of Pindar to the later rhetorical tradition (as in Aristides), compels the reconceptualization of φύξις from a principle of hereditary virtue generalizable over the poet, the victor, and others, to a term somehow synonymous with both ἀτέχνως (“artlessly” or “frankly”) and the medico-philosophical κατὰ φύσιν (“according to nature [viz. the nature of the object of study]”). Bundy, finally, is not the only scholar who has insisted upon a more down-to-earth and egalitarian Pindar, but his is still the most outstanding attempt to declaw Pindar’s φύξις.⁸²

To be fair, the excesses of prior appropriation and commentary make Bundy’s reinterpretation of the concept a still more understandable component of his overall approach.⁸³ But of course that does not make it valid. Critiquing it, Peter Rose argued forcefully for a return to an interpretation centered on “the aristocratic concept of inherited excellence.”⁸⁴ Enumerating at

[...] The σοφός φύξις (the plain blunt man) is in this passage *contrasted* with συνετοῖσιν (men of art).” This is another result of the misapplication to Pindar of a φύσις/τέχνη dichotomy, discussed in greater detail below.

⁸² Note again Young (1970) and the criticism of Rose (1974). A recent demonstration of this impulse is found in Miller (2019) 22-24 and passim in his comments on the translations, but esp. 24: “The notion that Pindar exalts natural ability and depreciates mere ‘learning’ has long been a truism among his commentators, who have tended to link it with a supposed ‘aristocratic’ bias toward heredity. The evidence of the corpus as a whole, however, points to a more complex and nuanced understanding of the issue, and one more in keeping with the poet’s own conception of his mission as combining the roles of praiser and preceptor. ... The paradoxical injunction addressed to Hieron at *Pythian* 2.72—‘Become what you have learned you are’—is *pertinent to anyone* who recognizes his own best self in the interwoven fabric of particular facts, general truths, and mythic paradigms that constitutes an epinician ode” (italics added).

⁸³ Note especially the contrast with Bowra (1964), one of the most egregious examples of the tendencies Bundy denounces: e.g. 11-2, “Once the Muse begins to work on Pindar, he notes her activity at various stages and finds his own words for it. [...] Once Pindar has been caught by a theme which appeals to his imagination and obsesses his whole being, he feels that he has within himself unlimited resources to develop it and make the most of it.”

⁸⁴ Rose (1974) 152.

some length all the evidence for the concept's centrality to be found in "the uniquely rich variety of terms with which [Pindar] insists relentlessly on the genealogical principle,"⁸⁵ Rose adds,

if then full consideration were given to the imagery of plants and fields fused with imagery of human reproduction, one might begin to get some sense of the unique impress of this doctrine. Surely if one looked at the way all these elements are combined in the odes, one could only be amazed at Bundy's explication of the term *φύα* as the 'natural enthusiasm' of the *laudator* for his theme, the *laudandus*.⁸⁶

All consideration of Rose's claim about vegetal imagery will be postponed until the next chapter, but this is a convenient point to briefly note how the scholarship that has studied that imagery in this connection has not undertaken an adequate analysis of *φύα*.⁸⁷ Two scholars, both of whom Rose might have cited, will serve as our examples here: Jacqueline Duchemin and André Motte, who built upon Duchemin's analysis. After quoting Duchemin, who on *O.* 2.86 had asserted that "le mot [*φύα*] signifie tout au moins qu'il y a en lui comme un élan vital, une poussée (cf. *φύσις*) de connaissance qui ne lui vient pas du dehors,"⁸⁸ Motte then asks, "Que peut être en effet cet élan vital qui anime le poète sinon le prolongement en lui de la *φύα* universelle?"⁸⁹ And of course this *φύα universelle* is symbolized by plants. Suffice it for now to say that a *φύα universelle* is not present in Pindar, and that the *élan vital* which Duchemin and Motte discern is a concept borrowed from the influential French vitalist, Henri Bergson.⁹⁰ As Nadine Le Meur-Weisman has recently and rightly insisted, there is no *φύσις* or *φύα* in Pindar that is not that of a

⁸⁵ Rose (1974) 152, where Rose also presents a useful list of relevant terms.

⁸⁶ Rose (1974) 153; repeated, with modifications and two more citations, in Rose (1992) 161.

⁸⁷ Rose's own treatment of the concept in his published work does not attend enough to the variation between uses, being keener on establishing that it is in fact a term of aristocratic blood theory; in personal correspondence Rose has assured me that his published work conveys the substance of his 1960 dissertation on *Φύα in Pindar*, which I have not been able to consult.

⁸⁸ Duchemin (1955) 37.

⁸⁹ Motte (1973) 304.

⁹⁰ On Bergson's dependence upon Romanticism, see e.g. Lovejoy (1913) esp. 459.

concrete individual or group of individuals.⁹¹ For a precise account of how vegetal metaphors relate to the concept of “nature” as it actually functions in Pindar, the later collective concept of φύσις and other anachronisms must be carefully excluded. At the same time, the sensitive and imaginative studies of Duchemin and Motte do help to draw our attention to an important feature of the Pindaric corpus, which this chapter and the next aim to highlight: through certain aspects of the use of φύά—and vegetal metaphors and other imagery—Pindar helped to lay the foundation for later conceptual and tropological developments that did undeniably involve or imply such a *prolongement de la φύά universelle*. This anticipation, I would argue, is what has encouraged the anachronistic interpretation.

Whereas the studies of Pindar’s vegetal metaphors have not attended to the tension between the different φύά maxims, the resolution of that tension has been central to most discussions of Pindar’s φύά since Rose. The most thorough and most influential of these is Thomas Hubbard’s structuralist synthesis in *The Pindaric Mind*. Pursuant to the structuralist fixation on the binary, Hubbard presents an account of a φύά over against which all τέχνη⁹² and learning and training and culture are arrayed; yet this opposition is complicated by a “polyvalent associativity” and a “fundamental ambivalence”:

In conclusion, we can say that *phya* uncontaminated by the training of *technē* (whether the poet’s or the athlete’s) is just as ineffectual as learning (*technē*) without inborn aptitude (*phya*). The fact that Pindar may polemicize against the latter imbalance more than against the former only reflects the nature of his intellectual opponents; some sophists may have claimed the universal possibility of education (regardless of birth or class), but no one—not even the

⁹¹ Le Meur-Weissman (2015).

⁹² N.B. that Hubbard, just as the others who draw a sharp distinction, prefers to speak of τέχνη in his analysis of Pindar, instead of the dialectal form τέχνα, which highlights a certain willingness to ignore the peculiarities of Pindaric usage.

most self-conscious aristocrat—would claim that birth alone was sufficient for achievement, regardless of training.⁹³

Since Hubbard’s contrast between *φύα* and *τέχνη* is the most forceful and continues to command the most authority, this is an opportune point to mount an objection to that polarity, the correction of which will be crucial for the argument of this chapter and the next.

It cannot be denied that *φύα* and related terms (e.g. *συγγενής*) are repeatedly opposed to *μανθάνειν* and *διδάσκειν* and their derivatives.⁹⁴ One might assume that *τέχνα* belongs to that latter category: after all, the *φύσις-τέχνη* dichotomy is so self-evident. Yet it is worth stressing that this self-evidence is historically conditioned. Semantic histories of *τέχνη* have long concluded that the pre-sophistic, pre-Platonic concept—especially as it features in Homer and Hesiod—is a complicated one that cannot be opposed to a notion of native ingenuity or the like, but on the contrary tends to be subsumed by it.⁹⁵ At the same time, these historians of *τέχνη* have unfortunately tended to follow the Pindar scholars in assimilating Pindar’s *τέχνα* to the sophistic-Platonic use.⁹⁶ Against this consensus, I would argue that the Pindaric conception is in fact closer

⁹³ Hubbard (1985) 108-9. This conclusion is endorsed by e.g. Stenger (2004) 330, and with some qualification by Pfeijffer (1999) 325, who remarks, “One may object against the all too easy equation of *τέχνη* and *διδασκία*”; on this objection, see below. It is also endorsed by Patten (2009) in spite of his being keen to call the *νόμος-φύσις* dichotomy into question in his deconstructive reading of the corpus; cf. esp. 20 and 234.

⁹⁴ In addition to *O.* 2 and 9, note esp. *N.* 3.40-2.

⁹⁵ So, e.g., on the Homeric-Hesiodic *τέχνη*, Kube (1969) 15: “Das Wort hat in sich noch ungeschieden alles, was später als *φύσις* (*φύα*), *μελέτη* (*ἄσκησις*, *ἐπιμέλεια*, *ἐμπειρία*) und *τέχνη* (*διδασχία*, *παιδεία*, *ἐπιστήμη*, *μάθησις*) auseinandertritt, und wenn daher von jemandem gesagt wird, er arbeite mit *τέχνη*, so ist gemeint, daß er geschickt und sachgemäß vorgehe.” Hubbard (1985) 107 acknowledges the possibility of Pindar’s *τέχνα* differing from the later sophistic conception, but only as being less abstract; Hubbard does not refer to any studies of the historical semantics of *τέχνη*.

⁹⁶ So, e.g., Kube (1969) 34-6. For one exceptional, but rather fleeting treatment that keeps Pindar’s *Kunst* archaic, see Bremer (1989).

to Homer's.⁹⁷ In the first place, τέχνα in Pindar repeatedly requires only “cunning” or the like.⁹⁸ In the second, in the majority of instances where it refers or seems to refer to an art or craft, τέχνα is almost entirely the possession of gods,⁹⁹ or the gift of a god.¹⁰⁰ Even the τέχνα of Midas of Akragas, victorious αὐλητής (~“flautist”), is emphatically described twice as the invention of Athena, with no hint whatsoever of the training that Midas must have undertaken.¹⁰¹ But the linchpin of this argument must be *N.* 1.25, where we find the maxim “It is necessary to strive by φυά, walking in straight paths” (χρῆ δ’ ἐν εὐθείαις ὁδοῖς στείχοντα μάρνασθαι φυᾶ), which is immediately preceded by the gnome “Different τέχνα belong to different persons” (ibid.: τέχνα δ’ ἐτέρων ἕτεραι). Again, the historians of τέχνη have followed most of the Pindarists in seeing a contrast here between τέχνα and φυά.¹⁰² Yet Braswell, Carey, and Pfeijffer have raised doubts about this interpretation, and I follow them: as the more detailed treatment below will seek to

⁹⁷ Dickson (1986) esp. 124 and 135-7 makes the same point, as does Nicholson (2005) esp. 206, citing Dickson. Both Dickson and Nicholson take it to be a self-conscious tactic, with Nicholson emphasizing the investment of the aristocracy in obscuring any admission of humanly-acquired skill. Perhaps it is a deliberate, ideologically driven archaism, perhaps a lingering testimony to older patterns of thought; compare the conclusion of Maslov (2015) 196 concerning the representation of the craft of the mantis or μαντική (a word not used by Pindar): “Pindaric *mantikê* is thus rooted in the heroic age and resolutely removed from the contemporary world.”

⁹⁸ Under this lemma Slater lists *P.* 2.32, *P.* 4.249, *N.* 4.58 and *I.* 4.35 (where some prefer to see a stronger notion of “artfulness,” as discussed below).

⁹⁹ *O.* 7.35 (Ἀφαίστου), *O.* 9.52 (Ζηνός), *Pae.* 9.39 (Μουσαίαις).

¹⁰⁰ *O.* 7.50 (given by Γλαυκῶπις), *P.* 12.6 (invented and given to men by Παλλὰς Ἀθήνα).

¹⁰¹ *P.* 12.6 (τέχνα, τάν ποτε / Παλλὰς ἐφεύρε) and 22 (εὖρεν θεός); for the inclusion in the poem of “some not unfamiliar reflections on moil and toil,” see Gildersleeve ad *P.* 12. For historical context, see Power (2010) 477-8, and contrast with Power’s illuminating discussion of the politics of the Homeric hymn to Hermes and its dramatization of musical teaching, 468-75.

¹⁰² Schaerer (1930) 4, Kube (1969) 35, Hieronymus (1970) 23. Likewise even Dickson (1986) 135-6, despite his stance on Pindaric τέχνα otherwise; Dickson writes there that Pindar is not “unaware of the issue” of a traditional as opposed a rationalist notion of τέχνη, saying that τέχνη does feature sometimes in the odes as a “human and thus ‘learned’ . . . [in opposition to] inborn, ‘natural’ knowledge.” In support Dickson cites only *N.* 1.25 and then *O.* 2.86f., *O.* 9.100-4, and *N.* 3.40-2, none of which contain the word τέχνα. If *N.* 1.25 cannot be used as proof of this (as I argue above), then the conceptualization of τέχνα in Pindar must be strictly “traditional.”

establish, the passage is better interpreted as asserting the dependency of the different τέχνη upon a universalizing and subsuming concept of human φύσις, and even as indicating the reality of “inborn” skill (σύγγενες κτλ., *N.* 1.27-8). This brings us to another pointed piece of counterevidence: the noun-phrase συγγόνους τέχνηαις (*P.* 8.60: “connate arts”). These σύγγονοι τέχνηαι are employed in divination by Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaraus and scion of the mantic clan of the Melampodidae. Tellingly, Hubbard and others who insist upon a φύσις-τέχνηαι dichotomy have entirely neglected this phrase.¹⁰³ And in a rare case where both *P.* 8.60 and *N.* 1.25 are cited in support of the usual alignment of Pindar’s with the sophistic conception, the confusion is rather damning: commenting on Athena’s gift of πᾶσα τέχνηαι (*O.* 7.50) to the Rhodians (no inspired individual, then, but “une collectivité”), René Schaerer writes,

L’art n’est plus divin que par son origine ; pour le reste il est entièrement humain ; il est même, comme l’indique un autre passage (*Pyth.*, VIII, 60), héréditaire.

Et cet art, devenu humain, Pindare l’oppose pour la première fois à une autre notion abstraite, aux « qualités naturelles » qui représentent alors la force capable de donner à l’individu sa ligne de conduite: [*N.* 1.25]¹⁰⁴

We are given to understand therefore that τέχνηαι is not divine but human, because τέχνηαι can be hereditary—and yet it can also be opposed to what is hereditary. Contradictions aside, Schaerer neglects one of the most fundamental claims of Pindaric religion: good birth is not an “entirely human” affair, but is to a great extent guaranteed by divine favor.¹⁰⁵ Τέχνηαι, the possession and

¹⁰³ I did not see it discussed in the text and it does not appear in Hubbard’s *index locorum*. See also des Places (1964), who neglects it despite the monograph’s focus upon συγγενεία.

¹⁰⁴ Schaerer (1930) 4.

¹⁰⁵ See e.g. *O.* 9.28-9, *P.* 1.41-2, *P.* 5.12-3. The conflation of (good) nature with divine favor is fundamental to the worldview of the epinikia. Therefore, although Le Meur-Weisman (2015) para. 25 n. 47 is not, strictly speaking, incorrect in saying that “Pindare insiste sur le fait que la φύσις seule ne saurait suffire à assurer le succès,” i.e. “sans effort et sans l’aide des dieux” (para. 43), I would insist that Pindar’s poems do not countenance the possibility of a complete separation between φύσις and divine favor—and I would also suggest that effort may only be the

gift of the gods, can apparently also be transmitted through birth, which is governed likewise by the divine. Thus, on the basis of the σύγγονοι τέχνηαι of *P.* 8.60 together with a non-antithetical reading of τέχνηαι and φύα in *N.* 1.25, one must conclude at the very least that the φύσις-τέχνη polarity is not an all-encompassing structural element of this corpus, even if it might not “puzzle the depth of a Pindaric mind.”¹⁰⁶

At the same time, one must not lose sight of the fact that the stark polarities of *O.* 2 and 9 are not so stark elsewhere: some learning and teaching are in fact endorsed in other odes, though the oppositions in *O.* 2 and 9 are never mitigated elsewhere in precisely the same terms (e.g. in a reference to φύα requiring the civilizing function of διδασκτά, as Hubbard insists). This raises a host of questions about what exactly is being opposed to φύα and the innate, questions which cannot be thoroughly answered here, but must be broached at least in sketch.

To start, τέχνηαι is never the object of διδάσκειν or μανθάνειν, or even closely associated with those processes.¹⁰⁷ In three of the four uses of διδάσκειν (or its derivatives) where the activity is characterized favorably,¹⁰⁸ the teacher is always Cheiron, the pupil either Asclepius or Jason.¹⁰⁹ Positive appraisals of human learning and teaching—as distinct from the vague talk of “rearing” or “nourishing” that one might take to imply them—are rare in Pindar.¹¹⁰ The sparse praise of trainers, which is often cited as proof of Pindar’s recognition of the value and necessity

expression of superior φύα (as is most plainly seen in the case of Heracles). Of course, the full measure of divine favor manifest in, e.g., Olympic victory, is something one must court.

¹⁰⁶ See the second epigraph to this chapter for the citation.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. also Slater s.vv. πύθομαι, πυνθάνομαι, which are used in a less notable way.

¹⁰⁸ Recall that διδασκτός is used disparagingly at *O.* 9.100 and *N.* 3.41.

¹⁰⁹ *P.* 3.45 (Asclepius being taught to cure diseases), *P.* 4.102 (Jason bears the centaur’s διδασκαλία), *N.* 3.55 (Asclepius is taught τὸν φαρμάκων ... μαλακόχειρα νόμον). διδάσκω is also used of testing gold on a touchstone in fr. 122.16.

¹¹⁰ Slater s.v. τρέφω; see also e.g. *O.* 10.20 for the use of θάγειν (“to whet”) combined with φύω in the striking phrase θάξαις δέ κε φύντ’ ἀρετᾶ, and see Gildersleeve ad loc.

of learning, is itself generally fashioned, as Anne Pippin Burnett and Nigel Nicholson have shown, after the mould of Cheiron or Heracles, “initiation masters” who help “to activate [a boy’s] inherited strength and ambition.”¹¹¹ Indeed, the rarity of these admissions and their general suppression of any technical aspects or explicit mention of learning or teaching has just as often helped to compel the opposite conclusion, namely that Pindar’s praise of trainers is begrudging and marked by “tones of shame or hostility.”¹¹² That conclusion is untenable, but it is undeniable that such praise stands in contrast to the attitudes expressed in other odes. Moreover, as Catherine Morgan has noted, reference to trainers is mostly reserved for Aiginetans (in six of eight odes); most are for youths (five of eight); and of the three adult victors whose trainers are mentioned, two are from Aigina, the third from Thebes, and in each case their trainers are noted in connection with their recent boyhood.¹¹³ All eight odes celebrate victories in combat sports.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Burnett (2005) 53, who recognizes that Pindar “expands the trainers’ role through mythic figures,” but does not remark on the pervasive suppression of “the actualities” (ibid.). Burnett also argues, 51 with n. 25, that Pindar does not show hostility toward teachers of virtue, claiming that “the plain point” of *O.* 9.100 “is not that training is bad,” and neglecting *O.* 2; I appreciate her suspicion, which I think is completely justified for the Aiginetan odes, but am not prepared to grant that all of the odes are expressive of a consistent attitude toward the question of teaching. While also arguing for such a heroic model of training in Pindar in his ch. 9, Nicholson (2005) took up the positions 1) that *all* of Pindar’s patrons nonetheless shared an ostensibly aristocratic anxiety about trainers and the like, and 2) that the exceptional instances in which trainers are mentioned are the result of special factors such as the (hypothetical) demand of certain famous trainers to be mentioned. See further discussion in the following note.

¹¹² Burnett (2005) 52, characterizing prior interpretations in offering a very useful and skeptical discussion with relevant citations. Such an assumption about a universal aristocratic distaste for trainers and the like governs the arguments of Nicholson (2001) and (2005). In addition to Burnett, see Fisher (2015) for a skeptical argument, which in my opinion goes too far in asserting, contra Nicholson, that Pindar only ever dismisses *mere* learning, and “[t]he difference between Pindar’s expressions and modern assumptions [viz. about natural talent and the necessity of training] are not as great as is here [by Nicholson] supposed” (p. 246). Nicholson’s assumptions about aristocratic ideology may be mistaken when applied uniformly across all of the corpus, but I think they are far less questionable when it comes to odes such as *O.* 2 and 9.

¹¹³ *O.* 8 (a boy wrestler from Aigina, trained by the Athenian Melesias), *O.* 10 (a boy boxer from Western Locri), *N.* 4 (an Aiginetan wrestler who was trained by the same Melesias as a boy), *N.*

It is also noteworthy that in only one of these odes that mention a trainer is there explicit discussion of learning or teaching: in *O.* 8.59-60, a pair of gnomes about learning and teaching demand to be applied to the boy victor and his trainer, their concern being the ἔργα and τρόπος necessary for victory. Elsewhere, one may learn a bit of foreknowledge, or the γενεά of an Aiginetan victor's grandfather, but no other human being is said to learn such pertinent and pragmatic things as in *O.* 8, or skills of any sort, let alone any general or totalizing knowledge or wisdom.¹¹⁵ No one is pronounced wise for “knowing many things by *learning*.” Especially striking is how, among the odes written for sovereigns, learning receives a positive evaluation only in two odes for Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse and patron of a famously erudite court, who “learned” a proverb “from men of former times”¹¹⁶ and—most famously and paradoxically—learned what sort of man he himself is (γένοι' οἷος ἐσσῑ μαθών, *P.* 2.72).¹¹⁷ The only other positive discussion of learning in an ode for a sovereign is in *P.* 4, where the striking plea to the

5 (a youth pancratiast from Aigina, trained by the Athenian Menander), *N.* 6 (another Aiginetan boy wrestler trained by Melesias), *I.* 4 (for a Theban pancratiast who heeded his trainer's advice as a boy), *I.* 5 (an Aiginetan pancratiast who was trained by his brother), *I.* 6 (a boy pancratiast from Aigina, trained by his father). For discussion, see Morgan (2007) 226, where I believe there is some confusion of *I.* 6 and *I.* 8; see also Hubbard (1985) 116, Nicholson (2005) 123, Maslov (2015) 112, and Fisher (2015) 239-40.

¹¹⁴ On this point, see Nicholson (2005) ch. 6 and esp. 121-2, and Fisher (2015) 239-41.

¹¹⁵ Foreknowledge: *O.* 7.44, *N.* 7.17 (which does have some general significance), *N.* 11.46, *I.* 1.40; grandfather's γενεά: *I.* 5.56; see also *O.* 9.75, *P.* 2.25,72, *P.* 3.80, *P.* 4.284, *P.* 8.12, *N.* 7.68, *Pae.* 13c.5.

¹¹⁶ *P.* 3.80: εἰ δὲ λόγων συνέμεν κορυφάν, ἴερον, ὀρθὰν ἐπίστα, μανθάνων οἶσθα προτέρων. Gildersleeve ad loc.: “The lesson is ever before him. It is a proverb.”

¹¹⁷ Gundert (1935) 15: “Überall liegt in der Phya der Anspruch des „nobless oblige“ und der Geist des berühmten γένοι' οἷος ἐσσί.” The contrast in *O.* 2 between the σοφός φυῆ and the μαθόντες encouraged some editors, such as Bergk, to construe the μαθών of *P.* 2.72 with the following clause instead (about the pretty monkey), so that learning is again depreciated in contrast with an ostensibly noble essence (οἷος ἐσσί); it was on the basis of such reasoning and Bergk's edition that Nietzsche (and Rohde) appropriated the phrase as “Werde der du bist” *vel sim.*, as I argue in a paper not yet published.

victor Arkesilas, king of Cyrene, to allow the return of an exiled nobleman, includes the reassurance that this outcast “learned to hate the hybrist” (ἐμαθε δ’ ὑβρίζοντα μισεῖν, 284).

In sum, the language of learning and teaching is remarkably restricted throughout the Pindaric corpus, and not in coordination with τέχνα.¹¹⁸ One thus gets the impression that, unlike the Aiginetans, most of Pindar’s patrons were too proud to share their glory by acknowledging the role played by subservient persons, whether trainer or jockey, and that most were too proud to admit to having to learn anything—or at least that such admissions were not conducive to the sort of praise deemed fitting for their victory celebrations. Hieron’s enlightened attitude toward learning, unusual as it would appear to have been among Pindar’s most powerful patrons, is still rather restrained.¹¹⁹ And even the Aiginetans were apparently not keen on celebrating a boy’s acquisition of particular techniques, etc.¹²⁰ Yet, to repeat, Pindar’s patrons as a whole were not at all categorically uncomfortable with τέχνα—provided, at least, that τέχνα was presented in a rather old-fashioned and heroic manner.¹²¹

What can we make of all this for the purposes of the present analysis? Morgan steers us towards a possible approach in her contrast of the Aiginetan odes, which embrace training and learning, with the odes that denigrate those activities, such as *O.* 9—a contrast which Morgan

¹¹⁸ As we will see in Ch. 2, however, there is some apparent coordination of the praise of learning with the use craft metaphors.

¹¹⁹ See Hubbard (2007) 195, contra Stenger (2004) 275-88, on how “the inclusion of such gnomic wisdom [as appears also in Bacchylides’ odes for the tyrant] helps position Hieron not only as a patron of the arts, but as an open-minded and accessible friend of σοφοί.”

¹²⁰ On the further question of why the Aiginetans in particular should have been willing to name their trainers, consider perhaps the claim of Hubbard (2003) 74 that their odes “function as ‘public relations’ advertisements” and the evidence that they might have desired to curry favor with Athens in particular, discussed by Fearn (2011) 212 who doubts explanations like Hubbard’s but fails to address the peculiar eagerness of Aiginetans to advertise their trainers.

¹²¹ See again Dickson (1986) esp. 135 and cf. Nicholson (2001) and (2005) 205-6 et passim.

leaves standing, as if highlighting distinctive features of the odes.¹²² Indeed, we can immediately reinforce Morgan’s generalization with the observation that when *φύά* is used in Aeginetan odes, it does not feature in such exclusionary gestures.¹²³ This interpretive move, to delineate (and ultimately explicate) the linguistic-conceptual and other elements of the epinikia by reference to the distinct features of the different odes or different groups of odes, features such as localized audience and patron, and not to seek to harmonize all those elements as the expression of a single *Weltanschauung*, has come to dominate the study of the epinikia of Pindar and Bacchylides in the last few decades.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, Morgan’s suggestive observations have yet to be met by a more thorough delineation of Pindaric *φύά* and *φύσις* along these lines. When Jan Stenger, for instance, turns to the Pindaric *φύά* as a comparandum in his recent analysis of Bacchylides, in which the use of gnomes in Bacchylides’ epinikia is subtly delineated in precisely such a manner, Stenger nevertheless asserts a single Pindaric doctrine of *φύά* that is almost a direct translation of Hubbard’s pithiest formulation (the one quoted above).¹²⁵

It is hoped that after this initial review, the range of Pindar’s *φύά* seems a promising object of study for such a differential approach—provided that we do not still want to insist that

¹²² Morgan (2007) 226: “The Aeginetan corpus contains nothing to match the praise of natural talents over taught skills at *O.* 9.100-7.” On this particular contrast, there is some precedent in e.g. Gildersleeve’s recognition that not every occasion would call for praise of the trainer; what Gildersleeve did not allow for is the possibility that these contrasting treatments of nature and learning are the result of real cultural difference determining the expressions of the relevant odes.

¹²³ Those odes are *P.* 8, *N.* 7 and *I.* 6.

¹²⁴ For a recent, succinct statement, see Lewis (2020) 2-3; for a longer one, Patten (2009) 115-20.

¹²⁵ Stenger (2004) 329-30, and esp. 330: “Natur und trainierte, mithin gelernte Fertigkeiten stehen also eher in einem komplementären Verhältnis zueinander, insofern *φύά* ohne Training ebenso wirkungslos bleibt wie bloßes Lernen ohne das Fundament der Natur.” Note also Stenger’s contrast (330) between Pindar’s general emphasis on *Naturanlage* and Bacchylides’ statement about acquired wisdom, and cf. Bacchylides fr. 5 and Jebb (1905) 413.

Pindar is never really so extreme in his conception of φύα as he seems to be in *O.* 2, etc.¹²⁶ What I will pursue in the next section is an analysis of the relevant passages which attends to their distinctive features and contexts. The main argument of the following section is that the use of φύα and φύσις reveals a variety of stances on “nature,” ranging from moderate to immoderate or “unreasonable.” The several statements were written to speak most immediately to and for the several patrons and their communities, some of whom were apparently more liberally minded (or wanted to appear such) about training and “learning” than were other patrons, who apparently preferred to have their “nature” praised as being divinely bestowed and heroically self-sufficient. At the same time, it is hoped that the following analysis will show that the basic semantics of the two terms are probably more unified than usually supposed, and thus also show that a restricted lexical analysis of φύα along the lines of Slater’s, positing a strong divide between the two sets of five passages, is at least somewhat misleading.¹²⁷ Moreover, in attending more closely to the different contexts in which the words are used, we can discern certain conventional associations of φύα, especially with Heracles, who is paradigmatic of natural power, and with the mantic, paradigmatic of an innate and intuitive connection with the divine, often established through “natural” phenomena or features of the landscape. Through the varying degrees of proximity to the Heracleian and the mantic, this set of associations helps to put in relief the disparate presentations of what “nature” can achieve.

¹²⁶ Pace Vogel (2019), who has argued that Pindar’s thought shows “eine erstaunliche Konstanz” (114) in this regard, and that this consistency reveals “Pindars Leistungsethik als Ausdruck eines common sense” (113) and as an anticipation of Aristotle’s views on ethical development.

¹²⁷ The recent analysis by Le Meur-Weissman (2015) follows Slater’s categories as well as the synthesis of Hubbard (i.e. φύα is superior but requires training), with the result that her sensitive readings and useful overview (complete with up-to-date bibliography) leaves the consensus unchallenged on both regards.

Finally, through the assumption that the odes may employ divergent rhetorical stances and strategies, one fundamental element of Bundy’s analysis (and others’) is retained here: the insistence upon the “conventional mask.” While Bundy, as we saw, views this particular mask as bespeaking a rhetorician’s “straightforward confidence” or “natural enthusiasm,” I argue that the pretentious *φύα* statements of *O.* 2 and 9 assert precisely what they seem to assert: a superiority by means of *φύα* that simply does not require learning or teaching in order to achieve excellence in wisdom or whatnot. Like the divine enthusiasm of other authors, it is a conventional mask, concealing everything that a more determinedly realistic appraisal reveals; it can thus be placed squarely among other Pindaric poetological strategies, such as the personal Muse,¹²⁸ or the “oral subterfuge” (or “scripted spontaneity”) that presents a song as being composed spontaneously in performance.¹²⁹ Insofar as the *φύα* maxims of *O.* 2 and 9 bear upon the status of the poet-composer, they belong to a rich tradition of such claims to poetic authority; as statements about certain victors, they foster the egregious lionization of certain men, who thereby join the ranks of those, like Thucydides’ Themistocles or a certain self-proclaimed swordsmith in Xenophon, who lay claim to an untaught and heroic “nature.”¹³⁰ A Heracles, in short, stands in no need of the new learning, or indeed any learning at all: even as a newborn he “showed his *φύα*.”

As discussed in the Introduction, this chapter and the next attempt to build upon the framework elaborated by Maslov’s “stratification” of the *epinikia* into *dynast*, *intermediate*, and

¹²⁸ See Lefkowitz (1991) and Maslov (2016b).

¹²⁹ For “oral subterfuge,” see Carey (1981); for “scripted spontaneity,” Kurke (1991).

¹³⁰ Thuc. 1.138.3 (esp. οἰκεία γὰρ ζυνέσει καὶ οὔτε προμαθῶν ἐς αὐτήν οὐδὲν οὔτ’ ἐπιμαθῶν); Xen. *Cyr.* 3.10, where the speaker is Pheraulus, Cyrus’ crony, who is notably marked as a commoner (3.7) shortly before he proclaims his fully instinctive grasp of swordsmanship (esp. οὐδὲ παρ’ ἑνὸς οὐδὲ τοῦτο μαθῶν ὅπως δεῖ λαμβάνειν ἢ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως, ὡς ἐγὼ φημι). For an exceptionally interesting and relatively neglected comparandum, see the study of female peasant poets of the eighteenth century and their claims and practices that were influenced by Romantic theories of natural genius, in Kord (2003), esp. chh. 1 and 2.

civic odes. In both chapters I aim to show how useful that stratification can be for analyzing the Pindaric corpus. To give a foretaste, some immediately apparent results are that no civic ode presents a φύα that is sharply opposed to teaching or learning, nor does any ode in dactylo-epitrites (the meter more closely associated with epic and *enkomia*): these claims are only found in a dynast ode (*O.* 2) and an intermediate ode (*O.* 9).¹³¹ Conversely, as we saw above, the only positive use of διδάσκειν for human teaching (as opposed to Cheiron’s instruction of Achilles and Asclepius) occurs in a civic ode (*O.* 8); and, on the subject of Pindar’s preference for φύα over φύσις, it is noteworthy that while φύα is evenly distributed in each category, φύσις appears only in civic odes. This last result both highlights the neglected problem of Pindar’s preference for φύα and suggests a line of interpretation to be taken up below, however speculative it must remain due to the paucity of evidence. The distribution in Bacchylides, while also exceedingly slight, can only give a stronger impression that the ideology of “nature” was the special preserve of the elite, if not necessarily an archaizing elite, since φύα occurs just once (perhaps with an emphasis on the body), in a dynast ode for the tyrant Hieron, and φύσις (in an indeterminable sense) only in a fragment of a poem for the same.¹³²

Still more suggestive in this regard is the repeated association of φύα with Heracles and the mantic. Four of the five odes which are agreed by all to employ φύα as “nature” also mention Heracles by name¹³³; in the only other ode that includes a reference to him and an instance of φύα, the word is spoken by Zeus’s son himself, who in the same scene is said to speak “like a

¹³¹ Also intermediate is *N.* 3, which contains in lines 40-2 the similarly stark opposition between συγγενής εὐδοξία and διδάκτα.

¹³² φύα appears only in an epinikion to Hieron (*B.* 5), and φύσις only in a fragmentary poem that is also addressed to Hieron (fr. 20C), and is possibly an *enkomion* (see Maehler ad fr. 20A-20G).

¹³³ See *O.* 2.3, *O.* 9.30, *N.* 1.33, *N.* 7.86. Note also that Heracles appears at *N.* 3.21, some twenty lines before the contrast noted above between συγγενής εὐδοξία and διδάκτα.

seer,” and it is an intermediate ode (*I. 6*); in the only Bacchylidean instance, moreover, it is spoken by Heracles to Meleager in Hades, again in a dynast ode (*B. 5*). In the only other Pindaric use of $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ in direct speech, it is “riddled” by the prophet Amphiaraos in an intermediate ode (*P. 8*). None of these instances in *oratio recta*, then, occurs in a civic ode. Finally, in what may be a paean,¹³⁴ as we saw above, Heracles as a newborn “revealed his $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$.” This hitherto unnoted association in Pindar (and Bacchylides) of $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ with both Heracles and the mantic will feature in the analysis, and will also be seen in the next chapter to connect with vegetal imagery in a remarkable way.

In other regards, too, the Pindaric sentiments involving $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ are simply more elitist in the more elitist odes; this is underlined somewhat by the fact that they are not composed in the relatively humble dactylo-epitrites.¹³⁵ As we saw in the previous section, the resulting tension, combined with the unpalatable elitism, has caused considerable difficulties for many of Pindar’s interpreters. Yet once it is granted that the compositions vary in the degree of elitism and individualism they voice, then the varying claims involving $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ may be reassessed, and any inconsistencies potentially resolved, not by a unified reading of them all as the expression of a single doctrine, but by a stratified reading. After all, as a term of differentiation which continues

¹³⁴ The generic identification of *Pae. 20* fr. 52u is contested, as noted above. But since it is not an epinikion, it cannot be analyzed according to the stratification, except insofar as one can perhaps expect it to accord more with the hymnic grandiosity seen in the dynast odes.

¹³⁵ *O. 2* is, on the innovative analysis of Itsumi (2009) 155, “an extreme case of freer D/e [viz. dactylo-epitrite] composition.” *O. 9* is an interesting case of mostly simple aeolic meter employed for a restrained grandeur that culminates in the denunciation of teaching (100-2); Itsumi (2009) 171-2 emphasizes the metrical strangeness of the epode especially in contrast with the simple strophe and antistrophe, a contrast which I call attention to below in the discussion of *O. 9.100-2* in section IV. The only other intermediate ode to employ such a meter is *P. 8*, where Amphiaraus speaks in a less exclusionary way about the noble will from fathers shining forth $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ in their sons (44); on the “deceptive” simplicity of the aeolic meter of *P. 8*, see Itsumi (2009) 245. Dactylo-epitrites are used, however, in *P. 4, N. 1*, and *I. 6* (three of the ten odes which use $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$), and also *N. 6* and *I. 4* ($\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$); see the discussion of the last two in Ch. 2.

to denote particulars or restricted collectives, φυά might be put to very different ends: on average, one's φυά may require teaching and the supplement of art, but a particular φυά—such as Heracles'—may not require any additional prerequisite to heroic achievement, or to wisdom. This vision of a rare and self-sufficing nature, a vision that has held so many Greeks and others in thrall, may well be the ideal reflected also in ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυῶν.

Compatible though they may be in such a hierarchical scheme, it must be stressed that the separate statements about nature and learning, etc., remain inconsistent. In *O.* 2, for instance, there is nothing to soften the contrast between the one who knows many things by nature and the learners: there is no admission of a universal human need of learning at least some things, nor any qualification of the learners as “*mere* learners,” as so many commentators and translators have put it; knowing by nature and knowing by learning are starkly opposed. Yet, once it is granted that the different statements may carry different intentions for different audiences, and when it is recognized that such extravagant claims were in fact made by other Greeks, both in earnest and in jest, then the impulse to ameliorate the texts with conciliatory insertions can be checked, and the distinctive rhetoric of the separate passages can be better understood.

Finally, to glance ahead briefly at the second chapter: greater clarity about φυά in these regards will illuminate in turn the relationship of that concept to Pindar's vegetal imagery. As we will see, much of the vegetal imagery in Pindar reveals the familiar ideal of a life which enjoys immediate and spontaneous beneficence from the order of things, a life of—to borrow a phrase from Hegel—“immediacy in a natural unmediated mode.”¹³⁶ As I will argue, such immediacy *vis-à-vis* the vegetal is a key expression of power, particularly in relation to σοφία, and is likewise “stratified”: the highest praise is reserved for the one who himself plucks the ripe fruit

¹³⁶ Hegel (1974) II.108.

of σοφία—in more abstract terms, perhaps, ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ. Before assessing the significance of Pindar’s vegetal metaphors with respect to φυά, let us reconsider the role of φυά and φύσις, over against prior usage and with minimal reference to the phytiform. In this way the core of the conceptual and philological problem will become clear, and along with it, I hope, the desirability of extending the analysis and revisiting the relationship between φυά and vegetation.

III. A Stratified Reading of Pindaric Φύσις and Φυά

It will be useful to reiterate briefly some general details before we dive in. The dialectal equivalent of φυή in Pindar’s *Kunstsprache*,¹³⁷ φυά shows a marked development from almost all prior extant use of φυή; a development, that is, from the constitution of a body to that of an entire person, from an apparently straightforward evaluative term to a fundamental principle of an aristocratic worldview. Pindar’s φύσις, on the other hand, remains the insignificant of the two, in spite of—and perhaps also because of—its increasing use at the hands of the φυσιόλογοι (“natural philosophers”).¹³⁸ In this way Pindar’s use of the words predictably follows the epic emphasis on φυή, and all the more predictably for an author as given as Pindar is to archaism. Even so, his relative neglect of φύσις and exaltation of φυά are together a remarkable aspect of Pindaric diction which demands more attention than it has received.

In spite of its common usage and that commonality of conception, φύσις remains neglected by Pindar, occurring, as we have seen, only twice in the corpus, and in both instances

¹³⁷ On the dialect features of choral lyric traditionally labelled as “Doric,” including the “most obvious dialect feature of the choral idiom,” namely the alpha instead of eta as in φυά (= φυή), see Maslov (2013) esp. 4, and Maslov (2015) 77-90, who traces it instead to Common Greek. On the features of Common Greek, see Filos (2014).

¹³⁸ That is, I suspect that Pindar’s limited use of φύσις may betray some resistance to the prominence of the term in contemporary sophisticated and philosophical discourse.

apparently not requiring a meaning other than that of the epic φύς (and the Homeric φύσις); like that φύς, it is used in comparisons and only in the accusative. Yet, from its usage, however sparing—but also precisely because it is so sparing—, I would argue that one cannot regard φύσις in Pindar as an unproblematic synonym of any instance of φύά (recalling that half of the instances of that word are thought to mean “stature” *vel sim.*).¹³⁹ For there are certain intriguing features that unite those two instances of φύσις, among them the fact, noted above, that they are both in civic odes, and, unlike all of the instances of φύά, they are both used in comparisons between the human and superhuman.¹⁴⁰

Our first instance, in a comparison with the semi-divine, is found in *I.* 4,¹⁴¹ an ode for a fellow Theban, Melissos, victor in the pancratium at the Isthmian games of perhaps 478, and thus possibly well into Pindar’s career.¹⁴² The larger context is especially crucial here: not long after a bold observation that “the skill (τέχνα) of inferior men brings a stronger man down for a fall,”¹⁴³ the reader’s expectations are further upset by the following:

τόλμα γὰρ εἰκώς
 θυμὸν ἐριβρεμετᾶν θηρῶν λεόντων
 ἐν πόνῳ, μήτιν δ’ ἀλώπηξ, αἰετοῦ ἅ τ’ ἀναπιτναμένα ρόμβον ἴσχει·
 χρῆ δὲ πᾶν ἔρδοντ’ ἀμαυρῶσαι τὸν ἐχθρόν.

¹³⁹ It is commonly presented as synonymous, but with no explanation offered as to how they might differ; as usual, no one is so explicitly severe as Beardslee (1918) 6, who claims that “there is apparently no difference between the meanings of the two words.” Of course, most scholars now, like Slater, take φύά to be synonymous with φύσις in only half of its instances. I mean to call even this equivalence into question.

¹⁴⁰ There is the additional parallel feature of a comparison of the victor’s family with the *inconsistent* production of fruit (*N.* 6) or flowers (*I.* 4), and these are the only two such comparisons in the odes; perhaps this could be related in some way to the use of φύσις. This will be taken up in the next chapter.

¹⁴¹ The question of the relationship of *I.* 4 to *I.* 3 is irrelevant to my argument, but the metrical and thematic correspondences seem to require at least that *I.* 4 be intended as a continuation of *I.* 3; see e.g. Segal (1998) 230.

¹⁴² Farnell (1930) ad *I.* 4; the earliest dated ode is *P.* 10, written in 498.

¹⁴³ *I.* 4.34-5: καὶ κρέσσον’ ἀνδρῶν χειρόνων / ἔσφαλε τέχνα καταμάροψαισ’.

οὐ γὰρ φύσιν Ὀριωνεῖαν ἔλαχεν·
 ἀλλ' ὄνοτός μὲν ιδέσθαι,
 συμπεσεῖν δ' ἀκμᾶ βαρύς.
 καί τοί ποτ' Ἀνταίου δόμους
 Θηβᾶν ἄπο Καδμειᾶν μορφᾶν βραχύς,
 ψυχὰν δ' ἄκαμπτος, προσπαλαίσων ἦλθ' ἀνήρ ... (I. 4.49-53)

For he [sc. Melissos] resembles the boldness of loudly roaring lions in his heart during the struggle, but in cunning he is a fox, which rolls on its back to check the eagle's swoop. One must do everything to diminish one's opponent. For he was not allotted an Orionian φύσις, but is shameful to look at, yet heavy to fall in with at the peak of his strength. And you know once to Antaios' home from Kadmeian Thebes a man [sc. Heracles] short in form, but unbending in soul, came to wrestle ...

Unanimous in taking this φύσις to mean “stature,”¹⁴⁴ scholars have troubled primarily over the mocking tone and especially ὄνοτός (“shameful”), but also the connection between the fox's μῆτις and the inferior men's τέχνα.¹⁴⁵ The surprising characterization of Heracles as μορφᾶν βραχύς is hint enough that any jesting is not at the victor's expense.¹⁴⁶ If φύσις means only “stature,” referring here to the giant Orion's famous height and beauty, then the passage may

¹⁴⁴ So e.g. Mommsen (1852) 174 (“Orions schöne Gestalt”), Bury (1892) ad loc. (“growth, stature”), Albani (1862) 209 (“Ei non sortiva d' Oarion le membra”), Fennell (1883) ad loc. (“physique”), Myers (1892) 156 (“stature”), Dornseiff (1921) 63 (“den Wuchs Orions”), Farnell (1930) 255 (“goodly stature”), Willcock (1995) ad loc. (“physique”), Pfeiff (1997) 157 (“Gestalt”). “For he no vast Oarion port / Displays, of outward stature mean and short,” is the translation of Moore, cited in Keble (1912) I.109.

¹⁴⁵ The comments of earlier scholars are the most amusing and perhaps also the most helpful: see e.g. Lee (1810) 470, who glosses the phrase with “Orion's size,” and then notes, loc. cit. n. 4, “The great delicacy of the moderns about personal peculiarities was not known to the ancients, nor even in Europe till very late times; thus Pepin le Bref was the appellation of a great prince.” Norwood (1945) 172 makes it more comical and even cynical—and rejects the authenticity of *I.* 3/4. For the more recent interpretation of this passage, see Young (1971) 19 with n. 61, where the repeated theme of matching “looks and deeds” is discussed, concluding with the remark that “it is probably (an apparently playful but accurate) inversion of this theme that lies behind the famous *Isthm.* 4.49-55 and the problem of the little Heracles.” But for a different solution to that “problem” see the intriguing discussion of the shortness of the Theban Heracles in Krummen (2014) 71-2, who notes that a short Heracles was peculiar to Thebes; see also below on *I.* 7. The topic is also treated at some length by Boeke (2007) 111-30, and Ivanov (2010) 143-53.

¹⁴⁶ I would like to propose incidentally that perhaps some of this jesting has to do with the relationship between the victor's name, Μέλισσος, and μέλισσα (“bee”).

perhaps be regarded as a comic inversion of the Pindaric topos that a victor's looks match his deeds.¹⁴⁷ In that case, perhaps the choice of φύσις over φυά was motivated by the semantic extension of the preferred term (φυά), which, if used in this context, would suggest—at least within Pindar's corpus—something rather less flattering than that the victor does not have the *physique* of the largest and most beautiful of the giants.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, when one considers the fact that this was written for a fellow Theban, whose homeland never proved particularly receptive to natural philosophy and who was therefore less likely than some of his contemporaries to speak its jargon, the use of φύσις here seems unlikely to carry precisely the same connotations as φυά. That said, I submit that this φύσις could just as well apply not only to stature but also to strength and even character: Orion was not only famously big and beautiful; he was, as Pindar records, also notoriously hubristic, a rapist of the daughter of a ξένος (fr. 72), who would have raped Pleione (fr. 74) or her daughters, the Pleiades (*N.* 2.10-12), had they not escaped him.¹⁴⁹ “It is possible, then,” Roman Ivanov concludes, “that in the context of the poem the name of Orion is

¹⁴⁷ See Ivanov (2010) 144-5 for discussion and citations. On the vexed question of whether there is any humor in Pindar, see Kurz (1974), Jurenka (1986), Kabiersch (1999), and Newman and Newman (1984), who read Pindar with Bakhtin. Suffice it to say that I sympathize with those who see *some* room for comical elements.

¹⁴⁸ On Orion as greatest in stature and most beautiful, see esp. *Od.* 11.309-10 (οὖς δὴ μηκίστους θρέψε ζεῖδωρος ἄρουρα / καὶ πολὺ καλλίστους μετὰ γε κλυτὸν Ὠρίωνα). On the phrase φύσιν Ὠαριωνεῖαν, which (esp. with the likes of Parmenides' αἰθερίαν φύσιν, B10.1) may seem new-fangled, compare στάλαισιν ... Ἡρακλείαις (*I.* 4.12), Ἡρακλείους γοναῖς (*I.* 7.7), and also the epic βίη Ἡρακλείη, a favorite phrase of Hesiod's, occurring nineteen times in Hesiod (indeed there is only one possible Hesiodic instance where βίη is modified by another such adjective, fr. 135.7), and seven times in Homer (with three parallel phrases with different adjectives, *Il.* 4.386, *Od.* 11.290, 296). Detienne (1960) 44 would connect the epic phrase with the Pythagorean conception of Heracles as the power of nature, the latter being “une variation sur le thème βίη Ἡρακλείη,” to which topic we will return in the second chapter. Perhaps the audience was expected to contrast φύσιν Ὠαριωνεῖαν immediately with βίη Ἡρακλείη; anyway the following comparison with Heracles encourages the suspicion.

¹⁴⁹ See Gantz (1993) 213-4, 271-3. According to later tradition, Orion was killed after Gaia sent a giant scorpion to slay him; see Gantz (1993) 272. If this had earlier sources, it would add further to the contrast with Heracles in his defeat of Antaios, son of Gaia.

suggestive not only of gigantic stature but also of hybristic behavior, which serves as a foil for the qualities of Melissus.”¹⁵⁰ Although opting for a mere “appearance” to gloss φύσιν, Ivanov has given us good reason to suspect that Melissos’ not being allotted “an Orionian φύσις” reflects well upon both aspects of his resemblance of Heracles, μορφὴν βραχύς, / ψυχὰν δ’ ἄκαμπος. The latter aspect, finally, should be identified with the τέχνα earlier in the ode by way of the fox’s μητις—which is surely not the most apt symbol for *acquired* skill—and which makes it at least possible that τέχνα here is being used as elsewhere in the corpus, and not to refer disparagingly to merely human craft acquired through teaching.¹⁵¹ The “inferior men,” in turn, could be simply an anticipation of the (perhaps) ironical ὀνοτός.

Φύσις is used a second time, in likening mortals to the divine proper, in *N.* 6. The poem was written for one Alkimidas of Aigina, perhaps sometime in the 460s.¹⁵² In the opening lines of that ode, one reads:

ἔν ἀνδρῶν, ἐν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
 ματρὸς ἀμφοτέρω· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
 δύναμις, ὡς τὸ μὲν οὐδέν, ὁ δὲ χάλκεος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἔδος
 μένει οὐρανός. ἀλλὰ τι προσφέρομεν ἔμπαν ἢ μέγαν
 νόον ἦτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις,
 καίπερ ἑφαμερίαν οὐκ εἰδότες οὐδὲ μετὰ νύκτας
 ἄμμε πότμος
 ἄντιν’ ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν. (*N.* 6.1-7)

One of men, one of gods the race; from one mother we both draw our breath. Yet the allotment of a wholly different power separates us, for the one race is nothing, whereas the bronze heaven remains a secure abode forever. Nevertheless, we do somewhat resemble

¹⁵⁰ Ivanov (2010) 152.

¹⁵¹ On this point, see Ivanov (2010) 150, who agrees that “there is no need to assume that in either passage the lion and the fox embody the contrast between natural ability and acquired skills: cf. Bundy (1962) i 29-32 corrected by Race (2004) 93.” Yet Ivanov then distinguishes, in my opinion unnecessarily, between τέχνη and μητις as “a prerequisite for acquiring τέχνη.”

¹⁵² Farnell (1930) ad *N.* 6 gives 458; Figueira (1993) 210 suggests the 460s (but cites also Wade-Gery’s 484 and Gaspar’s 447), on the grounds that it “seems closer in spirit to Nemean 4,” which he dates to “the late 470s or 460s,” arguing (p. 209) that it was written before the fall of Aigina.

the immortals, either in great mind or φύσις, although we do not know by day or in the night what course destiny has marked for us to run.

Interpretation of this rather philosophical opening has focused on the first sentence, and the question of whether there is one common γένος of both men and gods, or a contrast between one γένος and the other; without wading into the debate, I would stress the shared genealogy “from one mother.”¹⁵³ How then does φύσις fit in the passage? The pairing with νόος recalls the contrastive use of φύη and e.g. νόημα in Hesiod,¹⁵⁴ on the basis of which one might assume the same contrast to be operating here; in the words of André Burger, “L’opposition est nette: φύσις représente « l’être physique ».”¹⁵⁵ As noted above, many have nonetheless taken this φύσις to mean “nature,” but among Pindar scholars “physical appearance” has become the commoner gloss.¹⁵⁶ On that reading, I would suggest that, just as in the prior instance, φύσιν may have been chosen instead of φυάν on account of the latter being the preferred term for a more expansive notion of “nature.”¹⁵⁷ There is the further possibility that, as the ode concludes with praise of the illustrious Athenian Melesias, who served as trainer or mentor to a number of Aiginetans,¹⁵⁸ it may breathe of some Athenian intellectual influence, especially in combination with the preceding δύναμις.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the prior opposition between φύη and νόημα *vel sim.* may be misleading: it has not yet been noted in connection with this passage that in the other extant fifth-century juxtapositions of φύσις and νόος, all of them Athenian, it is plain that φύσις

¹⁵³ See the citations above, n. 26. I suspect that the ambiguity is intentional.

¹⁵⁴ See e.g. *Op.* 129 with West ad loc., *Sc.* 88, as well as Xenoph. fr. 23.2 DK for a similar pair.

¹⁵⁵ Burger (1925) 27.

¹⁵⁶ See again the citations above, n. 26.

¹⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that the scholium on Eur. *Med.* 1224 that quotes these lines (noted above, n. 29), garbles the order somewhat and replaces φύσιν with φυάν.

¹⁵⁸ Melesias is also mentioned *O.* 8.54-66 and *N.* 4. On the identity of Melesias, see Figueira (1993) ch. 8, and Athanassaki (2011) 291-2.

¹⁵⁹ That is not to say that δύναμις is comparably restricted in Pindar; see Slater s.v. δύναμις.

is no mere “appearance,” but must be a “nature” as a source even of moral qualities, while νόος in contrast must be either “understanding” or “purpose.”¹⁶⁰ The shared genealogy “from one mother” in *N.* 6.1 also seems to obviate any objection that φύσις as “nature” could not connect the human and the divine in this poem in a more substantial way.¹⁶¹ If the topic is in fact the weakness of human “nature” despite its genealogical relation to the divine, then the proem also connects especially well with the opening of the first antistrophe, in which the victor “gives proof of ... what is innate to him,” or what belongs to his γένος (l. 8: τεκμαίρει ... τὸ συγγενές).

Thus the choice of φύσις in both instances may have been motivated by the priority and pregnancy of φύά, and the occasional need to utilize only the most basic acceptance, to which φύσις may have been confined in this author. This hypothesis may find further support from the fact, to be established below, that the same cannot be said of the use of φύά when it requires only “stature” or the like, for each case also permits the construal “nature” without the sort of possible complications considered above for *I.* 4 and *N.* 6.¹⁶² On the other hand, if φύσις in these passages refers to one’s “inborn nature,” as I suspect it does, then the reasons for the choice of φύσις over φύά may have other causes, such as contemporary φύσις discourse being accommodated within the jesting *I.* 4 and the Athenian-influenced *N.* 6.

¹⁶⁰ In Soph. *El.* 1023, Electra defends herself saying that in the past, her φύσις was the same but she was inferior in νόος; in Ar. *Av.* 371-2, the politic hoopoe assures the other birds that the approaching Athenian men τὴν φύσιν μὲν ἐχθροὶ τὸν δὲ νοῦν εἰσιν φίλοι, / καὶ διδάξοντές τι δεῦρ’ ἤκουσιν ὑμᾶς χρήσιμον; finally, we meet a Euripidean collective Nature in Eur. *Tr.* 886, where Zeus is skeptically addressed as being εἴτ’ ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν.

¹⁶¹ The weakness of human νόος and φύσις as “nature” would both be pointedly addressed in the following lines (6-7) on our ignorance (νόος) of our allotment (φύσις).

¹⁶² Similarly, Bacchylides’ single use of φύά in 5.168 requires only the basic meaning, usually being taken to refer flatteringly to Meleager’s body; the loss of the context of φύσιν in fr. 20C.36 makes it impossible to judge its meaning or motivation there.

The disparity between φύσις and φύά deserves more comment at this point. Burger did more than any scholar to address it, when, after listing the uses of φύά in a “moral” sense, he wrote, “On voit que φύά peut prendre les valeurs qu’aura φύσις en attique. C’est un archaïsme, sans doute, mais non pas un pur artifice poétique.”¹⁶³ Pindar’s prioritization of φύά was perhaps somewhat overdetermined: however fundamentally valid the explanation of it as an archaism—but, as Burger adds, not a purely artificial one—there may be more involved than Burger observes. As the Archilochean and Semonidean passages suggest, φύή for some time had been no mere “physique,” but had been used in an extended sense by authors who, so far as we know, did not employ φύσις at all, and one of whom probably wrote not long before Pindar began. At the outset, then, of Pindar’s career (around the start of the fifth century),¹⁶⁴ φύή/φύά had already been extended semantically just as—and perhaps prior to—the eventually more freighted φύσις, and had apparently still been the preferred alternative for non-philosophical poets like Semonides.¹⁶⁵

Even so, it is puzzling that this Pindaric stronghold of φύά constitutes our only evidence that the word remained a viable alternative in the fifth century, when φύσις was by far the favored term.¹⁶⁶ Again, except for those neglected archaic texts, there are no helpful comparanda. The Bacchylidean use, as we saw, is exceedingly slight in comparison, and demands no extended sense (but does allow it). The Attic tragedians overwhelmingly favor

¹⁶³ Burger (1925) 85; his claim that it was not just a result of poetic artifice is substantiated only by citations of διαφύή in Pl. (*Phaed.* 98c; but see also *Plt.* 259d, X. *An.* 5.4.29 and Thphr. *Lap.* 63, and other late authors cited by LSJ s.v. διαφύή) and ἀμφιφύα in Thphr. *H.P.* 3.7.1.

¹⁶⁴ The earliest dated ode is *P.* 10, composed for a victory in 498.

¹⁶⁵ After all, we have no extant poetical texts which use φύσις between Homer and Heraclitus. Parmenides and Empedocles both use φύσις in their poetry, but never φύή.

¹⁶⁶ Another factor to consider is that there is a general rise of nouns in –σις, discussed with a focus on Sophocles by Long (1968).

φύσις; Aeschylus uses φῦή just once, requiring only “stature”;¹⁶⁷ Sophocles neither φῦή nor φυά; Euripides only φυά, only once, in a choral ode, again requiring only “form” or the like.¹⁶⁸ Aeschylus in particular offers an illuminating contrast: for all his solemn archaizing, he nonetheless neglected φῦή/φυά and in contrast was willing to use, e.g., the apparently medical term ἀρχαία φύσις (“original [viz. prior to disease] nature”).¹⁶⁹ Indeed, the tragedians’ use must be related to the special role of Athens in the intellectual climate of the day. In the course of the late sixth and early fifth century, φύσις became associated with no one so much as the natural philosophers and medical authors, and with them the so-called sophists who were putting the new theories to more practical, political ends, and above all in Athens. It was from precisely that “heterogeneous group of intellectuals” that Pindar and many of his patrons would have perceived “the clearest and deepest threats to aristocratic ideological hegemony.”¹⁷⁰ And of course it was not in Athens alone. A poet in the courts of the Sicilian tyrants such as Hieron, who was moving in elite circles throughout the Greek *poleis* from Athens to Libya, could hardly have remained unaware of the philosophical developments of the era, including those burgeoning in southern Italy and Sicily under the influence of Pythagoreanism, the sect that even trickled into Pindar’s Thebes.¹⁷¹

On the basis, then, of Pindar’s certain exposure to those developments, one can safely assume that φύσις was just as familiar a *nomen actionis* of φύω as φῦή/φυά. Yet the latter

¹⁶⁷ εὔμορφον φῦήν, fr. 154a.8.

¹⁶⁸ φυάν Γοργόνοϛ ἴσχειν, *El.* 461, where φύσιν would fit metrically; cf. *Hipp.* 1276 where φύσιν is used in a choral ode.

¹⁶⁹ *Choe.* 281; see Garvie ad loc. for discussion and references.

¹⁷⁰ Rose (1992) 148.

¹⁷¹ As displayed for instance in the fragments of Empedocles. Note also the use (possibly spurious) of φύσις by the Sicilian Epicharmus (fr. 172.6), another contemporary of Pindar’s. For the slight presence of Pythagoreanism in Pindar’s own Thebes, see Demand (1982) ch. 5.

predictably remained the choice alternative to a word neglected, on the one hand, by Homer, Hesiod and the earlier lyric poets, and touted, on the other, by the new intelligentsia. Thus in some measure attributable to archaism, Pindar's use of *φύα* also displays a revolutionary extension of its meaning in the same direction as *φύσις* went in other, especially later authors (i.e. an ethical and epistemological direction), and at the same time a scanty employment of *φύσις* that does not patently require the extended meaning, and certainly does not valorize the word as a fundamental concept of the most assertive aristocracy, as *φύα* so clearly does. For all that, one might apply in this regard too the remark of Alfred Croiset, that "Pindar himself, who lauds the old ways and deplores the new, in reality followed the latter."¹⁷²

To these considerations it must be added that while *φύα* is found in three of the civic odes (and one "paean"),¹⁷³ the two supposed synonyms never occur together within any poem, and *φύσις*, to repeat, only occurs in those two civic odes.¹⁷⁴ Pindar's use of the otherwise more popular term may consequently be seen not only as a metrically and semantically convenient avoidance of his favored term, but also, perhaps, as a gradual, begrudging concession to popular usage, perhaps even as a deliberate diminution, in *I. 4*, of the intellectuals' catchword.¹⁷⁵

There is the further peculiarity that these two odes contain otherwise unparalleled comparisons of the victor's family to *inconsistent* or *interrupted* plant growth. "We may recall here," said Rose on another point,

¹⁷² "Pindare lui-même, qui vante l'ancien usage et blâme le nouveau, suivait en réalité celui-ci," Croiset (1914) v. 2 p. 359 [this citation, from Detienne (1996) 195 n. 5 and the original French of Detienne (1967) 106 n. 5, is incorrect; I have not been able to determine the correct citation].

¹⁷³ See below.

¹⁷⁴ For their categorization, see Maslov (2015) 112-3.

¹⁷⁵ If it is the case that Homer used *φύσις* for the moly plant since *φύη* was restricted to the human (so Caspers, *LfgE* s.v. *φύη*), perhaps one might suggest that Pindar generally refused to use *φύσις* because of the degradation of the human perceived.

that scholars tracing the trajectory of *phusis/phuē/phua* have regularly singled out Pindar's heavy emphasis on the term. Following these approaches, we may say here that on this linguistic level the originality of Pindar seems to have consisted in grafting onto the Presocratic notions of reliability, fixity, and normality the aristocratic pride in special birth/growth from a specific ancestry. But simply to focus on the single word is to miss the extraordinary richness and amplification that *phua* and associated notions gain in context from Pindar's entwining them in a uniquely rich network of kinship/birth/begetting terminology and vegetative and sexual imagery with which he insists on the genealogical principle.¹⁷⁶

Seen against these otherwise helpful remarks, Pindar's use of φύσις seems all the more curious. For φύσις, to recast this in Rose's terms, appears only in poems in which the "notions of reliability, fixity, and normality" sustain a pride in a "specific ancestry" that is subject nonetheless to the *vagaries* of the harvest.¹⁷⁷ Are these households undeserving of the word of especially aristocratic pride? Why would the poet, in consoling these families, resort to the vocabulary of increasingly popular intellectuals? The small sample size and the lack of direct connection in either ode between φύσις and the images in question make any explanations necessarily speculative. Nonetheless, the fact that φύσις is used only in odes less marked by elitist rhetoric and more acknowledging of genealogical irregularity seems significant, especially when combined with Pindar's unparalleled preference in the fifth century for φύά. At the very least, he thereby reveals an unusual, partial resistance to the new doctrines of φύσις,¹⁷⁸ even as he seems to participate in their development through his use of φύά to designate an exceptionally powerful "nature." Whatever the correct explanation, aristocratic ideology (or ideologies) seems to have found some expression in Pindar's remarkably slight use of φύσις.

¹⁷⁶ Rose (1992) 161.

¹⁷⁷ We will of course return to that imagery in Ch. 2.

¹⁷⁸ If φύσις in *N.* 6 is "nature," then one might read this as a very interesting response to the arguments of the natural philosophers.

Let us return to *φυά*, which, along with Pindar’s vegetal imagery, spans the entire range of his epinicians, although, to repeat, there is no poem in which both *φυά* and *φύσις* appear. *Φυά* occurs in ten surviving verses, half of the time more or less equivalent to epic *φυή*, or so we are told by Slater et al., but otherwise it undoubtedly reaches beyond the *φυή* even of Archilochus and Semonides. For all of the claims that it is ever simply equivalent to epic *φυή* or *φύσις*, Pindaric *φυά* is never so simple.

By all accounts the simplest instance is in *P. 4*, where Jason, the protagonist of the extensive myth of this dynast ode, plows a field with some fearsome oxen, *ἐμβάλλων τ’ ἐριπλεύρω φυᾶ / κέντρον αἰανῆς* (*P. 4.235-6*: “thrusting into their strong-ribbed *φυά* / a nagging goad”). Yet the syntax, i.e. the dative with *ἐμβάλλων*, and the application of the compound adjective are simply unprecedented before Pindar, and applications to animals are unusual. Furthermore, *φυά* does not feature in a simple description, but in a dynamic situation in which it is by his goading the grammatically singular *φυά* of two animals that their strength is utilized, so that it seems to point beyond the bounds of *φυή* as a concrete, individual physique. Thus even in its apparently simplest use, Pindar’s *φυά* is at least poised for a notable departure from prior usage.¹⁷⁹

A slightly more complicated case is that of *I. 7*, of uncertain date (but possibly 454),¹⁸⁰ written for Strepsiadas, a Theban and another pancratiast. Unlike Melissos (the Theban pancratiast of *I. 4* whose *φύσις* is not Orionian), this Strepsiadas is

σθένει τ’ ἔκπαγλος ἰδεῖν τε μορφάεις, ἄγει τ’ ἀρετὰν οὐκ αἴσχιον φυᾶς.

φλέγεται δὲ ἰοπλόκοισι Μοίσαις,

¹⁷⁹ But note *II. 3.208*, which is the only prior instance of a singular *φυή* applied to a plural (genitive) subject.

¹⁸⁰ Willcock (1995) 61.

μάτρωί θ' ὁμωνύμω δέδωκε κοινὸν θάλος ... (I. 7.22-4)

both striking in strength and shapely to look at, and leads a virtue no more shameful than his φυά. He is set ablaze by the violet-haired Muses and has given his maternal uncle, his namesake, a shared scion¹⁸¹ ...

Race translates the clause (ἄγει ... φυᾶς) with the simple “his success is no worse than his looks.”¹⁸² Along the same lines, Young, invoking the support of Thummer, includes this phrase in a catalogue of “the ‘looks and deeds’ doublet.”¹⁸³ But to assimilate φυά entirely to the “looks” which dominate the prior phrase (and a host of other Pindaric passages, as Young reminds us) is, to my mind, unacceptable. The second phrase I would take as no mere recapitulation of the first, but a parallel formulation. Nowhere else does Pindar use φυά for *Schönheit* (Thummer’s gloss). I would note that Pindar elsewhere acknowledges the possibility of a gap between inherited and achieved excellence,¹⁸⁴ and therewith the possibility that this φυά may be not only “physique” contrasted with “virtue,” but also “nature” contrasted with “success” or achieved excellence. The *laudandus* has lived up to the nature displayed by his namesake.

Similarly complicated is *O.* 1, written for Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, victor in the single-horse race of 476.¹⁸⁵ It was written therefore in same year as *O.* 2, the source of εἰδὼς φυᾶ. In the much-discussed central myth of the ode, Pelops, cast out of Olympus after his father Tantalus’ crime, bethought himself of marriage,

¹⁸¹ On the meaning of θάλος in this “extraordinarily bold usage,” see Kurke (1994) 76-7, who, contra Slater s.v. θάλος, argues that it cannot refer to a victory garland, but rather a metaphorical offspring that preserves the memory of the victor and his uncle.

¹⁸² Willcock (1995) ad loc. offers “he practices courage no less nobly than good looks”; Privitera (1982) ad loc., “usava il *valore* in modo non inferiore ... alla *prestanza*: era *forte* non meno che *bello*.”

¹⁸³ Young (1971) 19 with n. 61; Thummer (1968) 39.

¹⁸⁴ See esp. *I.* 3.13-4: ἀνδρῶν δ’ ἀρετᾶν / σύμφυτον οὐ κατελέγχει (the subject is again Melissos); see also the famous *P.* 2.72, and the comments of Heinimann (1945) 100.

¹⁸⁵ Race ad *O.* 1.

πρὸς εὐάνθεμον δ' ὅτε φυάν
λάχλαι νιν μέλαν γένειον ἔρεφον... (O. 1.67-8)

when, toward well-blossoming φυά, wooly hairs were wreathing his dark chin...

Significantly, one finds φυά modified here by the Pindaric *hapax* εὐάνθεμος, which will return in the next chapter; for now, note the close connection established here between ἦβα (“youth”) the proverbially blossoming¹⁸⁶ and its apparent substitute, φυά.¹⁸⁷ The use of πρὸς here has troubled some commentators, but the basic sense seems clear enough.¹⁸⁸ As for the meaning of φυά in this passage, since the moment which Pelops had reached is noted as one of not only physical maturation,¹⁸⁹ but also psychological, φυά again seems to straddle the line between “body” and “nature.” In any case, this φυά, it seems, is conspicuously developing; it is no static result or physical appearance, and certainly not some cultural heritage.

That leads us to the two remaining instances that allegedly show the word in its more basic, concrete acceptance, but also show it in some of its most profound Pindaric associations, including the one just glimpsed. I would stress in particular the nexus of the heroic and divine, especially in the figure of Heracles and his Olympian bride Ἥβα, deified Youth, the mantic through the representation of Heracles and Amphiaraios, and φυά. Through the centripetal force of Heracles, “the archetypal ἀθλητής,”¹⁹⁰ and the centrality of youthful vigor and inborn

¹⁸⁶ Recall the familiar phrase ἄνθος ἦβης noted above.

¹⁸⁷ Note that this is the sole instance classed under “flower or prime of age” by LSJ s.v. φυή III.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Verdenius (1987) ad loc.: “Towards the time of” (Ge[rber]) is a misleading translation: πρὸς can be used in a temporal sense, but only in connection with temporal notions (e.g. Π. 9, 25 πρὸς ἀῶ, N. 9, 44 πρὸς γήρας), and φυά (‘stature’) is a corporeal, not a temporal, notion. The meaning therefore must be ‘in accordance with’: cf. O. 4, 5 ἔσαναν αὐτίκ’ ἀγγελίαν ποτὶ γλυκείαν, P. 6, 45 πατρῶαν ... πρὸς στάθμον, LSJ C III 5.”

¹⁸⁹ Slater, e.g., glosses this instance with “physical maturity.”

¹⁹⁰ The pleasantly alliterative iambic formula is from Robbins (2013) 20 n. 60.

excellence to the praise which Pindar offers, the collective associations of this set of figures and concepts will be seen to ramify elsewhere.

The first of the two remaining is in the so-called *Paean* 20,¹⁹¹ about which we sadly know nothing, except that it, like the first Nemean,¹⁹² relates how Hera's serpents entered in vain into Alcmena's bedchamber, wherein lay the infant Heracles:

ὄφιδες θεόπομπ[οι
... ζ . . ἐπὶ βρέφος οὐρανίου Διός
... .] . [.]νθ', ὁ δ' ἀντίον ἀνὰ κάρτα τ' ἄειρ[ε
... .] χειρὶ μελέων ἄπο ποικίλον
σπά]ργανον ἔρριψεν ἔάν τ' ἔφανεν φυάν
... ὀμμ]άτων ἄπο σέλας ἐδίνασεν. (*Paean* 20, fr. 52u.9-13)

the heaven-sent snakes

... against the child of heavenly Zeus

... but he was lifting up his head to face them

... with his hand threw from his limbs the elaborate
swaddling cloth and revealed his *φύα*

... from his eyes he whirled a flash.

One encounters here nothing less than a paradigmatic vision of heroic *φύα*: the semi-divine Heracles, newly emerged into the light,¹⁹³ himself re-unveiling the only just clothed, superhuman strength already patent in his newborn limbs. His *φύα* is revealed immediately, without the aid of rearing, culture (symbolized by the swaddle?) featuring as the slightest of props for his untoddlng feat.¹⁹⁴ The fragmentary state of the text precludes a decisive interpretation, but the requirements of the story strongly suggest that the point cannot be simply that he revealed his body, but that he also revealed what his body could already do. Consequently, while the sense of

¹⁹¹ See Rutherford (2001) 401-2 and 406.

¹⁹² *N.* 1.35-50. Recall that *φύα* appears in l. 25 of the same.

¹⁹³ Compare the treatment of Heracles' birth and struggle with the snakes in *N.* 1.35-56; and recall the familiar association of *φύνα* with entering the light, as in *Thgn.* 425-6; on this association see Bremer (1976) and Payne (2006).

¹⁹⁴ See the similar characterization in *N.* 3.43-52 of Achilles' childhood exploits; for a comic variation on the same, see *Ar. Nub.* 877-85.

“physique” may seem to dominate in this passage, I would insist that “nature” could dominate just as well.¹⁹⁵

The last, but probably the earliest, ode to which the meaning “physique” is applied by Slater et al. is *I. 6*, an intermediate ode written for Phylakidas of Aigina, winner of the boys’ pancratium in perhaps 480.¹⁹⁶ The context is noteworthy, and especially in connection with the last passage: Heracles, come to fetch Telamon for a battle in Troy, raised the first toast, praying that Telamon, his host, would have a worthy son,

‘τὸν μὲν ἄρρηκτον φυάν, ὥσπερ τόδε δέρμα με νῦν περιπλανᾶται
θηρός, ὃν πάμπρωτον ἀέθλων κτεϊνά ποτ’ ἐν Νεμέᾳ·
θυμὸς δ’ ἐπέσθω.’ ταῦτ’ ἄρα οἱ φαμένῳ πέμψεν θεός
ἀρχὸν οἰωνῶν μέγαν αἰετόν· ἀδεῖα δ’ ἔνδον νιν ἔκνιζεν χάρις,

εἶπέν τε φωνήσαις ἄτε μάντις ἀνὴρ
ἴσσεταί τοι παῖς, ὃν αἰτεῖς, ὦ Τελαμών·
καὶ νιν ὄρνιχος φανέντος κέκλευ ἐπώνυμον εὐρυβίαν Αἴαντα, λαῶν
ἐν πόνοις ἔκπαγλον Ἐνυαλίου.’
ὥς ἦρα εἰπὼν αὐτίκα
ἔζετ’ . ἐμοὶ δὲ μακρὸν πάσας <ἀν>αγήσασθ’ ἀρετάς·
Φυλακίδα γὰρ ἦλθον, ὦ Μοῖσα, ταμίας
Πυθέα τε κώμων Εὐθυμένει τε· (*I. 6.47-58*)

“one unbreakable in his φυά, just as this hide now wrapped around me from the beast I once slew in Nemea as the very first of my labors; and may he have a heart to match.” Then, after he had said this, the god sent him the king of birds, a great eagle. Sweet grace within goaded him, and he spoke out like a seer and said, “You shall have the son you request, O Telamon; and call him, as namesake of the bird that appeared, mighty Aias, awesome among the host in the toils of Enyalios.” After speaking thus, he immediately sat down. But it would take me too long to recount all their deeds, since I have come, O Muse, as steward of the revel songs for Phylakidas, Pytheas, and Euthymenes.

¹⁹⁵ See Payne (2006) 171-2.

¹⁹⁶ On the date, see Farnell (1930) ad *I. 6*. In line with Slater: Fennell (1883) ad loc. (“physique”), Bury (1892) ad loc. (“in bodily strength stalwart”); Schol. in *Lycophronem* 455a Leone refers to this without mentioning φυά, speaking instead of a σώμα ἄτρωτον.

The comparison with the Nemean Lion's skin,¹⁹⁷ together with the following contrasted imperative about his θυμός,¹⁹⁸ guarantees that the sense is still focused upon his body. But the immediately following quasi-mantic utterance¹⁹⁹ puts this φυά squarely within the intriguing pattern of that connection, seen already in the Archilochus fragment, and to be seen again below. However, since Heracles is only compared with a μάντις, this identification has rarely been treated as significant.²⁰⁰ The importance of both Heracles and prophecy for Pindar's conception of φυά encourages a brief consideration.²⁰¹

What is the extent of the comparison? To begin, one might compare the assertion of Athena (in the guise of Mentès speaking to Telemachus), μαντεύσομαι ("I shall prophesy," *Od.* 1.200), followed by the admission that she is not in fact a μάντις, so that the assertion is rather of a momentary, but nonetheless presumably valid, assumption of the role.²⁰² Helpful as this may be for grasping the broader cultural context, there are more particular implications for the figure of Heracles. Interpreting that simile, Segal remarked, "Heracles feels the thrill of joy or favor (*charis*) at this confirmed connection with divinity and with his own high paternity."²⁰³ As the

¹⁹⁷ Perhaps this curious comparison alludes to the etymology of Telamon's own name?

¹⁹⁸ Note the rhyme of θυμός with the likewise line initial θηρός, which aurally strengthens the linking of his lion's hide with his lion's heart, and note the epithet λεοντόθυμος used of Heracles in the title of the Homeric hymn to the same.

¹⁹⁹ The prayer which includes φυά and the comparison are, unlike the following prediction, not explicitly marked as mantic, but Heracles' "using highly convoluted syntax" is perhaps some ground for including that opening prayer in the "mantic fit," so Maslov (2015) 158; still, Heracles is only *compared* with a *mantis*: see id. 162-3 where ἄτε μάντις ἀνήρ is discussed and translated as "speaking up in the manner of a *mantis*."

²⁰⁰ Privitera (1982), for instance, has only this to say ad loc.: "Eracle, quasi fosse un indovino (ἄτε non è causale, ma comparativo, come sempre in Pindaro), ne spiega subito il senso."

²⁰¹ The two are also related to prominent descriptions of plants in the corpus (see esp. *O.* 3, *O.* 6, and *Dith.* 4 = fr. 75), but not so much to vegetal metaphors proper or comparisons.

²⁰² This passage is strangely neglected in the recent scholarship on seers and prophecy, as e.g. Flower (2008).

²⁰³ Segal (1998) 120.

son of Zeus, Heracles enjoys a connection with him almost as intimate as that of Apollo, “prophet of Zeus his father.”²⁰⁴ Heracles never equalled his half-brother in mantic authority. Yet there is a minor tradition of Heracles in an oracular role, particularly in his homeland of Boiotia, as well as in Sicily.²⁰⁵ To be sure, this Pindaric passage is better evidence for the conclusion that by the mid-fifth century Heracles’ “prophetic activities,” whatever they may have been, “were reduced to insignificance by the growth of Apollo’s oracle.”²⁰⁶ Yet our other sources indicate that for Pindar’s audience this quasi-mantic Heracles would probably have brought to mind, at the very least, his mythic attempt to assume oracular authority, if not his treatment as a legitimate and permanent μάντις.²⁰⁷ Of interest here since it strengthens the connections being drawn within Pindar, this is otherwise an aspect of the *Heraklessagen* that has received too little attention: surely few would not be surprised to hear of Heracles as some sort of *mantis* or sage.²⁰⁸ Insofar as he can be drawn into that role, he may be able in turn to pull Pindar still closer to the wisdom

²⁰⁴ Aesch. *Eum.* 19, Διὸς προφήτης δ’ ἐστὶ Λοξίας πατρός.

²⁰⁵ Pindar is our earliest textual evidence for this, but see the discussion and citations at Parke (1956) I.342 with n. 11 (*addenda*: Hdt. 2.83, Soph. *Phil.* 1409, Xen. *An.* 6.2.15, Arr. 2.18.1); of those Parke lists note esp. IG 7 1829, a Boiotian (*prope Leuctra*) inscription involving, it would seem, Heracles having appeared in a dream, which also occurs in Diogenes Laertius (1. 11 = Pherekydes fr. 16 Schibli) and Arrian (*loc. cit.*, of Alexander the Great). Much more extensive archaeological evidence in the form of visual culture that may go back to c. 700 shows that by the middle of the sixth century the myth of Heracles’ attempted theft of the Delphic tripod had become widely known, and was even celebrated on coinage in the mid-fifth; see Gantz (1993) 438 and Demand (1984) 2. Parke (1956) I.342 observes, “As a neighboring god to Delphi, he [sc. the Theban Heracles] must once have come into conflict with the worship of Apollo. The story of the plundering of the tripod points to this conclusion, and can be further interpreted as a sign that Heracles once set out to rival Apollo as a giver of oracles.” In Sicily, if Pausanias can be trusted, there was a temple of Heracles Mantiklos founded by the Messenian seer Mantiklos upon the colonization of Sicily following the Messenian Wars.

²⁰⁶ Parke (1956) I.343.

²⁰⁷ To address the question of whether or not this can be extended to an Aiginetan audience, note that in *N.* 4, Pindar seems to assume on the part of his Aiginetan audience familiarity with the Theban Herakleion, which is more prominently described for a Theban audience in *I.* 4.

²⁰⁸ Much of the relevant material is neglected now, and has very rarely been brought into contact with Pindar; but see the following footnote.

tradition more determinately associated with the other author considered here, Empedocles, especially through the development visible in, e.g., the late-fifth century mythographer Herodorus of Herakleia's claim that Heracles became not only a μάντις, but also a φυσικός, a natural philosopher!²⁰⁹ If Detienne is right, Herodorus' and all the other celebrations of Heracles as φιλόσοφος and μουσικός stem from an early Pythagorean adoption of the hero-god, involving, e.g., a prescription to pour a libation before meals to Heracles as the δύναμις φύσεως (“power of nature”).²¹⁰ For my part, I would prefer to rely less on the shaky Pythagorean material. The further spiritualization, as it were, of Heracles the culture-hero was widespread, and within the broader trends one can more safely posit the Pythagorean and the Pindaric Heracles as parallel, and *perhaps* plaited strands. The chief purpose, then, of displaying these tantalizing relata is to throw into relief an underappreciated aspect of Pindar's Heracles, who is a figure essential not only to the basic theology and agonistic heroics of the epinikia, but also, it seems, to the authority dramatized and assumed by Pindar as a self-proclaimed σοφός.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Clem. *Strom.* I.73.2 = Herodor. *F. Gr. Hist.* 31 F 13: Ἡρόδωρος δὲ τὸν Ἡρακλέα μάντιν καὶ φυσικὸν γενόμενον ἱστορεῖ παρὰ Ἄτλαντος τοῦ βαρβάρου τοῦ Φρυγῶς διαδέχεσθαι τοὺς τοῦ κόσμου κίονας, αἰνιττομένου τοῦ μύθου τὴν τῶν οὐρανίων ἐπιστήμην μαθήσει διαδέχεσθαι. Likewise id. *F. Gr. Hist.* 31 F 14: ἐγέννησε δὲ Ζεὺς καὶ ἕτερον υἱὸν ὀνόματι Ἡρακλῆ μετὰ Ἀλκμήνης τῆς Θηβαίας, ὃς ἐκλήθη τριέσπερος. οὗτος Ἡρακλῆς κατέδειξε τοῦτο· φιλοσοφεῖν ἐν τοῖς ἐσπερίοις μέρεσιν ἤτοι τοῖς δυτικοῖς. The possible connections between this celebration of Heracles by philosophers (cf. the further citations in Jacoby's comments ad loc.) and the epinikian and Hesiodic material have not been adequately studied; but see Detienne (1960) esp. 34. The sources which relate Heracles to the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Muses also need to be studied more closely in this connection. With all this in mind, it hardly seems accidental that Sophocles' *Phil.*—to cite just one more text—contains both a searching treatment of φύσις and an epiphany of a prophetic Heracles.

²¹⁰ Detienne (1960) 43-4; the source for that prescription is Iambl. *V.P.* 155.

²¹¹ I explore this material further in an as yet unpublished paper, “Pindar and the Imitation of Herakles among Poets and Philosophers,” delivered in May 2017 at the Third Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Heritage of Western Greece, at Fonte Aretusa, Siracusa.

To return to Heracles' role in *I.* 6, of more immediate relevance is the one instance of *φύα* in Bacchylides, which, as noted above, also occurs in the mouth of Heracles, this time in a conversation during his *katabasis*.²¹² Curiously, both *I.* 6 and *B.* 5 also contain the only references to Hesiod by name in the two authors.²¹³ I would venture the hypothesis that this pertains in some way to the fact that, of the five instances of *φύη* in Hesiod (and pseudo-Hesiod), the sole instance in direct speech is again in the mouth of Heracles, coming to the aid of Delphic Apollo (!), and speaking of how he and his mortal brother were born οὔτε φύην ἐναλίγκιοι οὔτε νόημα (*Sc.* 88: “neither in *φύη* alike nor in thought”).²¹⁴ These passages together hint that an element of the ideology of the Panhellenic contests was the celebration not only of a Heracleian *φύη/φύα*—a Heracles, that is, who is the apotheosized embodiment of the concept—, but also of a Heracleian intelligence, a discerning judge of *φύα*, and even, as in Pindar, a quasi-mantic authority.

That “quasi-” must be stressed, for the carefulness of Pindar's description of Heracles is paralleled in Pindar's poetics of prophecy: Pindar (or the poetic or choral speaker) never directly asserts that he himself (or she herself) is a μάντις. This is not the time to delve into the vexed

²¹² Although Heracles' utterance in *B.* 5 is far from mantic, the scene (i.e. his *katabasis*) is a significant one and may perhaps be linked with the tradition of his participation in mysteries such as the Eleusinian, on which see Colomo (2004); moreover, through the commonness of *katabaseis* in tales about σοφοί, this may offer a very indirect link with the early wisdom tradition; see Kurke (2011) 114-5. One might also note that the scene does involve a marked mental state, insofar as Heracles' weeping is explicitly marked as entirely uncharacteristic (*l.* 155); and that the response in which *φύα* occurs begins very strikingly with the “Wisdom of Silenus,” i.e. the gnome “Not to be born (*φῦναι*) is best.”

²¹³ See *I.* 6.67 and *B.* 5.192.

²¹⁴ This passage is cited above in the discussion of the pair *φύα*–*νόος*. Of the remaining four, one comes in the line above (an admittedly reconstructed) Ἡ[ρ]ακλῆϊ πολλοί[πρόθωι (fr. 229.17 W) in an account of his apotheosis from the Catalogue of Women. But it is a reasonable reconstruction, esp. as the epithet is applied elsewhere to Heracles.

question of how the language of prophecy functions in Pindar.²¹⁵ For now, I would note that the poet often seems tacitly to assume the role or some of the authority of a seer, by means of more or less explicit identification. In *I.* 6, in fact, a noteworthy association is effected through the juxtaposition of Heracles, suddenly falling silent after his mantic moment and taking his seat, with the poetic speaker, who thereupon abruptly ceases the mythic narrative in favor of a return to the task of praise. The image evoked is not without dramatic charm: Heracles, lost in thought with his drink in his hand, yields the floor as it were to the poetic persona, who, nearly mimicking the hero's sudden silence, seems drawn into the same heroic and sympotic space. Granted, here there is only a hero speaking *like* a seer, and a poet speaking rather like that hero. One must look elsewhere for more assertive parallels, such as in the following text, the first to be discussed that undeniably requires an extended meaning for *φυά*.

The instance that most succinctly demonstrates the transition from “growth” or “physique” to “hereditary principle of growth” or “nature” is also found in a strikingly marked context. It is in *P.* 8, an intermediate ode written for the Aiginetan wrestler Aristomenes, probably performed in 446, and probably the very last datable ode.²¹⁶ The central myth is introduced with the remark to Aristomenes that he “carries the word” (λόγον φέρεις, 38) which the legendary seer Amphiaraos once “riddled” or “prophesied” (αἰνίξατο, 40).²¹⁷ Several lines later Amphiaraos' prophetic speech begins:

φυᾶ τὸ γενναῖον ἐπιπρέπει
ἐκ πατέρων παισὶ λῆμα. (*P.* 8.44-5)

By *φυά* the noble will from fathers shines forth in sons.

²¹⁵ But cf. Maslov (2015) 188-201.

²¹⁶ See esp. Pfeijffer (1999) 425.

²¹⁷ The connection between “nature” and prophecy here, in the mouth of Amphiaraus, recalls Aeschylus' description of the same prophet; see below in section three.

This uncomplicated gnome is followed by a prognostication seemingly in need of no unriddling. “Some scholars,” Pfeijffer records, “have been concerned about the fact that there is nothing dark or puzzling in Amphiaraos’ speech.”²¹⁸ Gildersleeve, who is not among them, wrote, “This is nothing more than an oracular way of saying τὸ δὲ συγγενὲς ἐμβέβακεν ἴχνεσιν πατρός ([‘By the connate he has stepped in the tracks of his father,'] *P.* 10, 12). Amphiaraus recognizes the spirit of the warriors of his time in his son and his son’s comrades....”²¹⁹ Precisely what makes this way of saying that oracular, save its abstract vagueness and the speech act in which it figures, is not explained; Gildersleeve himself, alas, inclined to the Delphic.²²⁰ However, especially after the association seen in the preceding passage and in Archilochus, the prominence of the initial φῦξ in what is presented as a prophetic utterance makes the association worth contemplating further. Amphiaraus was said to have died in Thebes,²²¹ where there was an oracular shrine in his name,²²² was also said to have competed in Pelias’ funerary games,²²³ and, according to a later source, to have founded the Nemean.²²⁴ In sum, we have an even clearer image of a heroic μάντις associated with Thebes and absorbed into the culture of the Panhellenic contests; inferior to Heracles as an athlete, of course, but of firmer status as a μάντις. Like Heracles, he is

²¹⁸ Pfeijffer (1999) ad loc. with citations.

²¹⁹ Gildersleeve ad loc. On the syntax of the Greek quoted, note the use of ἐμβαίνω “with acc. of means of motion,” LSJ s.v. I.7. In contrast with Gildersleeve et al., Tafel (1824) II.863-5 and Mezger (1880) ad loc. construe φύξ here as “stature” (*staturâ* or *corpore*) and “growth” (*Wuchs*), with Tafel insisting, “De iis loquitur Amphiaraus, quæ videt.”

²²⁰ But cf. Boeckh (1819) ad loc.: “oracula non res ipsas eloquuntur, sed tecte significant (αἰνίττονται) verbis vel ambiguis vel obscuris, quæ egeant interprete” (note the echo in that final phrase of *O.* 2).

²²¹ *Od.* 15.243-55.

²²² Hdt. 1.46.2, 1.52, 8.134. Toward the end of the fifth century another oracular shrine was established “in the vicinity of Oropus,” according to A. Schachter in *Brill’s New Pauly* s.n.

²²³ Stesich. fr. 179 PMG.

²²⁴ Apollod. 3.66.

portrayed as one who speaks prophetically about the inheritance of φῦά, and in this case that inheritance is named as λῆμα (“will” or “determination”). The word also occurs in *N.* 1, when Amphytrion marvels at the infant Herakles’ ἐκνόμιον / λῆμα τε καὶ δύναμιν (“extraordinary / will and power,” 56), before summoning the seer Teiresias to interpret the portent.²²⁵ The inheritance in question is thus undoubtedly more than merely physical, and is not reducible to a particular intention.²²⁶

While φῦά is not employed here as an epistemological principle (as in εἰδῶς φῦά), one may glimpse its role as precisely that. The prophet Amphiaraus proclaims what happens (and will happen) φῦά; being himself one of the sources of that λῆμα, the father of one of the sons through whom his prophecy will be fulfilled—and in whom the mantic Melampodid line is continued²²⁷—his link to that φῦά is a most intimate one. And although the bond is not so direct for Heracles, nor his authority more than *quasi*-mantic, the dynamic is remarkably similar in *I.* 6. Both odes plainly imply that perceiving what occurs or will occur φῦά is the province of those who are themselves distinguished φῦά.²²⁸ This is indicated in other terms later in *P.* 8, when the hereditary power of seers is underlined by way of personal anecdote. Pindar—that is, the poetic

²²⁵ On λῆμα in Pindar more generally, see Rose (1972) 161. And on the intriguing use of ἐκνόμιον for Heracles’ λῆμα, compare Orph. fr. 121.2 Kerns, where one finds φύσιν ἐκνομίην; the adjective is otherwise only found in Ar. *Pl.* 981, 992.

²²⁶ I cannot follow Pfeijffer (1999) ad loc. in taking this λῆμα to be specifically the determination to sack Thebes, although that is undeniably to be taken as a manifestation of this inherited “resolve” or “wilfulness.”

²²⁷ On Melampus and his descendants such as Amphiaraus, see Flower (2008) 42-3.

²²⁸ Consider Flower (2008) 38: “It must have been common for seers to represent themselves as having inherited an innate capacity for divination, which entailed a supranormal understanding of nature and a susceptibility to divine inspiration.” Like other scholars on prophecy, however, Flower does not consider the use of φύσις or φύή/φῦά in this connection.

persona it seems (and not the chorus)²²⁹—proclaims that Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaraus, was his “neighbor” (l. 58: γείτων), and that once on his way to Delphi he visited this Alcmaeon, who thereupon “employed his inborn skills in prophecy” (l. 60: μαντευμάτων τ’ ἐφάψατο συγγόνιοι τεχνάις).²³⁰ It seems best to take this legendary “neighbor” as present in the form of a neighboring oracular shrine—but perhaps also through an epiphany.²³¹ By presenting himself as the personal neighbor of a legendary prophet, and not just a visitor to his shrine, the poetic speaker is drawn into the heroic circles of privilege and authority where one also finds Teiresias, the “foremost prophet of highest Zeus, straight-talking seer,” whom Pindar introduces as the “neighbor” (*N.* 1.60: γείτονα) of Amphitryon.²³² The principle of inheritance is potentially complicated here, as elsewhere in Pindar,²³³ and in this case by the word τεχνάις. Yet, as we saw above, Pindar’s τεχνά need not denote craft proper (as opposed to “skill” or “craftiness”), nor a craft acquired by teaching. Moreover, Maslov has shown how Pindar’s portrayal of seers is decisively archaizing, focused on intuitive divination and suppressing the more technical forms that in fact predominated in his day.²³⁴ Pindar’s μάντις thus falls in line with the broader tradition (largely legendary) of innate, hereditary mantic skill, summed up for a different and later

²²⁹ See Pfeijffer and Race ad loc.; but see Currie (2005) 58-9 for the view that here the first person refers rather to the victor, along with some supporting and dissenting citations.

²³⁰ It is intriguing that φύα is employed in an “aenigma” in the same ode which some lines later contains σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος (note preceding image). In Pindar, for all his exaltation of φύα, even natural cycles are repeatedly said to be (or implied to be) unreliable, but, as Ch. 2 will show, this unreliability is itself stratified.

²³¹ Cf. Currie (2005) 58-9, Maslov (2015) 196.

²³² This is a fairly common Pindaric strategy; cf. e.g. *N.* 7.61, 86, and the remarks of Segal (1998) 201 and Maslov (2015) 194-6.

²³³ In this regard another crucial passage, which will come up again, is *N.* 3.40-2, where συγγενεὶ εὐδοξία is usually interpreted as referring to hereditary glory, so that the contrast drawn between that and learning is not as straightforward (as it would be if εὐδοξία were to mean “good judgment”).

²³⁴ Maslov (2015) 188-201.

audience in the Herodotean phrase ἔμφυτος μαντική (viz. τέχνη), which is to say “innate mantic skill.”²³⁵ Such, then, would seem to be the web of connections with φυᾶ in *P.* 8.

Much the same conceptual relations emerge again, although slightly subdued, in an ode that may have been composed almost three decades prior: *N.* 1, written for Chromios of Aitna, the tyrant Hieron’s crony, victor in the chariot race sometime after 476.²³⁶ Straddling the second strophe and antistrophe are a gnome and its explanation:

τέχναι δ’ ἐτέρων ἕτεραι· χρῆ δ’ ἐν εὐθείαις ὁδοῖς στείχοντα μάρνασθαι φυᾶ.

πράσσει γὰρ ἔργῳ μὲν σθένος,
βουλαῖσι δὲ φρήν, ἐσσόμενον προῖδεῖν
συγγενὲς οἷς ἔπεται.
Ἄγησιδάμου παῖ, σέο δ’ ἀμφὶ τρόπῳ
τῶν τε καὶ τῶν χρήσιες. (*N.* 1.25-30)

Various men have various skills; but one must, travelling in straight paths, strive by means of φυᾶ. For strength achieves its result through action, and intelligence through counsels, for those upon whom attends a congenital ability to foresee what will be. But, son of Hagesidamos, by virtue of your way²³⁷ there are uses for both of them.

The phrasing, highlighted at the very end of the longest line of the stanza, is bold. μάρνασθαι, a fairly common verb in epic, used ten other times by Pindar without innovation,²³⁸ sometimes appears *cum dativo instrumenti*, but elsewhere only of a weapon. So it is used to less effect in *O.* 6, when Amphiaraus—with whom the victor is there notably compared—is said to be “good both as a μάντις and at striving with the spear” (l. 17: ἀμφοτέρων μάντιν τ’ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δουρὶ

²³⁵ Hdt. 9.94. On this passage, see Flower (2008) 37 with n. 40; and for the broader tradition, Flower (2008) 37-9. On this usage of ἔμφυτος, compare Empedocles’ discussed in Ch. 4.

²³⁶ Kirkwood ad *N.* 1.

²³⁷ Cf. Kirkwood’s suggestion ad loc. that “τρόπος is not so much character as the way in which Chromios uses what he has φυᾶ, roughly equivalent to the modern notion of a ‘life style.’”

²³⁸ *O.* 5.15, *O.* 6.17, *P.* 2.65, *P.* 8.43 (note juxtaposition of μαρναμένων / ‘φυᾶ), *P.* 9.21, *N.* 5.47, *N.* 10.86, *I.* 4.31, *I.* 5.54, fr. 52b.39.

μάρνασθαι).²³⁹ Rather weaponized, then, in *N.* 1, φυά is credited as a source of both strength (σθένος) and intelligence (φρήν), the latter elaborated by the remarkable phrase ἐσσόμενον προΐδειν / συγγενὲς οἷς ἔπεται (l. 27-8).

Tempting as it may be to join Carey in seeing in that clause an exclusive reference to μαντεία,²⁴⁰ Braswell is probably right in rejecting that possibility, citing *N.* 9.37-9, where “Pindar emphasizes Chromios’ ability to devise plans in war and his courage to carry them out.”²⁴¹ However, Braswell neglects to note that Carey’s focus on μαντεία is motivated by the myth that follows, in which, in the first place, Heracles’ strength even as an infant is displayed in the slaying of Hera’s snakes, and, in the second, Teiresias, responding to that portent, prophesies the child’s future labors and apotheosis. Strength in action (in the figure of Heracles) could not be more clearly juxtaposed with its complement, intelligence through *mantic* counsels (in Teiresias). Consequently this “foresight” cannot be restricted to the victor’s less than mantic capacity, but must be generalized to include both—and indeed the speaker’s as well—, in order to register the victor’s being favorably compared with both Heracles and Teiresias, with whom the poetic speaker is also implicitly compared.²⁴²

Whether properly mantic or not, seeing what will happen is proclaimed as a gift of those striving by means of superior φυά. Thus one salient feature of this passage is that, unlike the φυή of the Archilochean lechers and the Semonidean sea, φυά is here, as in three of the remaining

²³⁹ This phrase was taken from the cyclic epic *Thebaid* according to sch. 26, and echoed verbatim in the fourth century grave stele of Cleobulos, uncle of Aeschines; see Flower (2008) 94-7, esp. 96 (on Cleobulos) and 97 (on Pindar).

²⁴⁰ So Bury (1890) and Carey (1981) ad loc.

²⁴¹ Braswell (1992) ad loc.; cf. also e.g. *I.* 1.40, *N.* 7.18-9, *O.* 2.56.

²⁴² On the association of the speaker with Teiresias, see Segal (1998) 161-2. In *N.* 9, too, there is a clear comparison of Chromios with Amphiaraos the seer, and again a subdued comparison of the speaker with the latter.

four passages, presented as a principle that grounds or even subsumes the sundry τέχνηαι.²⁴³

However, although in serving that grounding function it is something of a universal (insofar as each person must strive by means of it), it is, as a principle of inheritance, a principle not only of individuation, but of rank-ordering.²⁴⁴ The ode, for all that, is still deservedly classed as a civic ode, and the generosity of the sentiment in l. 25 runs counter to the exclusionary gestures of the more elitist odes.²⁴⁵

In *N.* 7, a civic ode for the Aiginetan boy pentathlete Sogenes, victor in 461,²⁴⁶ the sentiment is almost identical:

φυᾷ δ' ἕκαστος διαφέρομεν βιοτὰν λαχόντες
ὁ μὲν τὰ, τὰ δ' ἄλλοι· τυχεῖν δ' ἔν' ἀδύνατον
εὐδαιμονίαν ἅπασαν ἀνελόμενον· οὐκ ἔχω
εἰπεῖν, τίνι τοῦτο Μοῖρα τέλος ἔμπεδον

ὄρεξε. Θεαρίων, τὴν δ' εἰκότα καιρὸν ὄλβου
δίδωσι, τόλμαν τε καλῶν ἀρομένῳ
σύνεσιν οὐκ ἀποβλάπτει φρενῶν. (*N.* 7.54-60)

By φυᾷ each of us is allotted a life that sets him apart: one person has this, others that, and it is impossible for one man to succeed in winning complete happiness: I cannot name any to whom Fate has given such a prize that lasts. But, Thearion, to you she gives fitting measure of prosperity, and although you have won boldness for noble deeds, she does not harm your mind's understanding.

Even Pindar's more middling rhetoric leaves plenty of room for the celebration of lineage, of a φυᾷ brought into relation with Μοῖρα ("Fate"): as Fennell says, "The natural constitution, φυᾷ, is

²⁴³ Recall also συγγόνιοι τεχνῆαις, *P.* 8.60. Note Carey (1981) ad loc.: "Radt II 162² refutes the view of Didymus, Bury and Fraccaroli (522³) that φυᾷ must contrast τέχνηαι: Pindar speaks of σύγγονοι τεχνῆαι *P.* 8.63. The context here suggests that μάρνασθαι φυᾷ consists in the use of one's τέχνη; 'each man has his own method; but (the important thing is that) one must walk the straight path (i.e. in using one's τέχνη) and contend using one's inborn resources.'"

²⁴⁴ Cf. *I.* 5.54-5.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Maslov (2015) 111.

²⁴⁶ On the date of *N.* 7, see Kirkwood (1975) 89 n. 47, who suggests that it may be relatively early, but argues against Wilamowitz's 485 (accepted by Snell and Turyn).

regarded as the means by which variation is produced, fate as the cause; hence the aorist *λαχόντες*.²⁴⁷ Reading *φυᾶ* as a dative of means or instrument seems best, and unites it with the last passage and even the most elitist expressions.²⁴⁸ There is, however, a common feature of both of these passages from civic odes that subdues the possible tension between the otherwise middling rhetoric and the exaltation of *φυά*: the emphasis on a variety of skills or possessions, which, in spite of the concluding praise of the *laudandi*, remains more egalitarian than it might be, more indeed than it is elsewhere in Pindar. This will become more apparent in contrast with what follows.

There is a ringing amplification of Pindar's rhetoric in the remaining two poems. It is particularly obvious in the first, as it is so close in sentiment to the two just discussed. The poem is *O. 9*, an intermediate ode written for one Epharmostos of Opous, champion wrestler in 468. After a catalogue of the man's victories in the sport, including his winning "as a boy in Athens" (*παῖς δ' ἐν Ἀθάναις*, 88), Pindar proclaims:

τὸ δὲ φυᾶ κράτιστον ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ διδακταῖς
 ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλέος
 ὤρουσαν ἀρέσθαι·
 ἄνευ δὲ θεοῦ, σεσιγαμένον
 οὐ σκαιότερον χρῆμ' ἕκαστον· ἐντὶ γὰρ ἄλλαι

ὁδῶν ὁδοὶ περαιίτεραι,
 μία δ' οὐχ ἅπαντας ἄμμε θρέψει
 μελέτα· σοφίαι μὲν
 αἰπειναί· τοῦτο δὲ προσφέρων ἄεθλον,
 ὄρθιον ὤρουσα θαρσέων,
 τόνδ' ἀνέρα δαμονία γεγάμεν
 εὐχειρα, δεξιόγυιον, ὀρῶντ' ἀλκάν,
 Αἴαν, τέον τ' ἐν δαιτί, Ἰλιάδα, νικῶν ἐπεστεφάνωσε βωμόν. (*O. 9.100-11*)

²⁴⁷ Fennell (1883) ad loc.

²⁴⁸ But see Hummel (1993) 131 para. 138, where this instance is classed under *datif de point de vue*; unfortunately Hummel does not analyze the other instances of *φυᾶ*; but presumably *datif instrumental* or *de manière*; cf. 252 para. 316.

What is by φυά is altogether best: many men with taught virtues strive to win fame; but without a god, each deed is no worse for being left in silence; for some paths are longer than others, and no single object of concern will develop us all. The ways of wisdom are steep, but when you present this prize boldly shout straight up²⁴⁹ that with divine help this man was born with quick hands, nimble legs, determination in his look; and at your feast, Aias, son of Ileus, the victor has placed a crown upon your altar.

The enjoyment of divine favor (the inverse of being ἄνευ θεοῦ) is thus manifest in τὸ φυᾶ, just as φυᾶ and Μοῖρα are related in *N.* 7.²⁵⁰ But in this poem the emphasis from the first is not on there being many virtues, but on *many* employing “taught virtues”²⁵¹; within the plurality of ways, the victor’s virtues from birth are forcefully contrasted with those “taught virtues,” and there is no universalization of a need for teaching, but only of a need for μελέτα (“object of concern,” “diligence,” or “practice”).²⁵² Epharmostos’ boyhood victory is noted, yet without any hint of a trainer such as one finds in the Aiginetan odes discussed above. And again, no such repudiation

²⁴⁹ This is usually construed as “straight out” or “straightforwardly,” and Bundy (1986) 16 even draws a contrast between this shouting as another “plain blunt vaunt” contrasted here with the steep “ways of wisdom,” discussed along the same lines by Patten (2009) 69-70. This seems to me to be a misreading of the passage; I suggest that the shouting is to go straight up to reach the position of the victor, who is appropriately advanced upon those steep ways by means of his nimble limbs and determination. In this regard it is interesting to note the sophisticated meter of the epode, and the transition then from the metrically simpler antistrophe with its repudiation of learned virtue to the epode with its metrical sophistication and exaltation of the steep ways of wisdom.

²⁵⁰ If the scholiast cited approvingly by Gildersleeve is correct, the adverbial δαίμονιά is short for δαίμονιά μοίρα, and here again φυά and μοίρα are intimately related.

²⁵¹ One almost hears οἱ πολλοί in this use of πολλοί; but Pindar did not use the word so.

²⁵² Cf. the use of μελέτα in e.g. *I.* 5.28, and see the discussion in Hieronymus (1970) 12; cf. also the use in Empedocles B110, discussed in Ch. 4. Along the lines of my argument above concerning τέχνα etc., I would argue that Pindar’s diction should make us wary of assuming that μελέτα is so closely linked with διδάσκω as we might think, and therefore of seeing this admission as tantamount to the acceptance of the need for some teaching in spite of what precedes.

of teaching is to be found in the civic odes: this passage is paralleled only by one in *N.* 3, which is also an intermediate ode,²⁵³ and exceeded only by the one remaining instance of *φυά*.

In 476, the same year in which he wrote of the *εὐάνθεμος φυά* of Pelops, Pindar also wrote *O.* 2, the sole dynast ode in which *φυά* has an undeniably extended meaning.²⁵⁴ It more than makes up for that imbalance by offering what is both the most momentous and the most markedly elitist use of the word. Written for Theron, victor in the chariot race and tyrant of Akragas (home *polis* of Empedocles), this “is a poem for one who stands on the solemn verge beyond which lies immortal, heroic life.”²⁵⁵ Solemn verge indeed, for it contains the celebrated account of possibly Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology²⁵⁶ culminating in a description—full of vegetal imagery—of the Isle of the Blessed, where Rhadamanthys sits beside Kronos and Rhea.²⁵⁷ Several heroes are added to this list of the Blessed, the last mentioned being Achilles, a

²⁵³ The passage is *N.* 3.40-2, mentioned above and to be discussed further below; cf. again in contrast the praise of teaching and learning in the civic ode *O.* 8.

²⁵⁴ Recall that *φυά* also occurs in dynast odes at *O.* 1.67 and *P.* 4.235, where it has always been taken to denote only its basic meaning (but see above for contrary suggestions).

²⁵⁵ Gildersleeve (1885) 142.

²⁵⁶ Pindar used to receive more attention in the scholarship on Orphism and Pythagoreanism, as in e.g. Nilsson (1935), von Fritz (1957) and Guthrie (1993 [1952]). Contrast Burkert (1972) 125 who refers to the problem only to drop it, and Zhmud (2012) 120. Edmonds (2013) is a recent exception, although his conclusion on *O.* 2 is that it is not particularly Orphic (87); Catenacci (2014-15) has also reconsidered the problem more narrowly, concluding that Pindar borrowed the ideas of apparently Orphic or Pythagorean provenance for the sake of this ode after travel to Sicily, against which cf. Nilsson (1935) and Edmonds (2013) on the wider diffusion of such ideas. Comparison of *O.* 2 with Orphic and Pythagorean teachings has focused on the doctrine of reincarnation, and neglected the topic of innate knowledge raised by *O.* 2.86; yet these possibilities could bear upon our historical assessment of *O.* 2.86, although no recent scholar has been so confident about the Pythagorean provenance of Plato’s innate ideas as e.g. Walter Pater in his essay on “Plato and Platonism.” Whatever the case may be, it is clear from, *inter alia*, *O.* 9.100, which shows no sign of such a provenance, that the notion expressed in *O.* 2.86 cannot be confined to Orphic or Pythagorean circles.

²⁵⁷ Rhadamanthys, incidentally, was said to be the second husband of Heracles’ mother Alkmene, in a tradition traced back to Pherekydes; see Davidson (1999) esp. 248.

familiar catalogue of whose victims then begins.²⁵⁸ At this point, what might have been a typical Pindaric *Abbruchformel* (“break-off formula”) instead breaks apparently new ground.²⁵⁹

πολλά μοι ὑπ’ ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη
ἔνδον ἐντὶ φαρέτρας
φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμανέων
χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυᾶ· μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι
παγγλωσσία κόρακες ὡς ἄκραντα γαρύετον

Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον·
ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ· τίνα βάλλομεν
ἐκ μαλθακᾶς αὐτε φρενὸς εὐκλέας ὀιστοῦς ἰέντες; (*O.* 2.83-90)

I have many swift arrows under my arm in their quiver that speak to those who understand, but in general they need interpreters. Wise is he who knows many things φυᾶ; but learners, boisterous and long-winded, are like a pair of crows that cry in vain against the divine bird of Zeus. Now aim the bow at the mark, come, my heart. At whom do we shoot, and this time launch from a kindly spirit our arrows of fame?

The larger context charges this with associations seen also in the other poems considered, since the ode begins with the grouping of Theron with Zeus and his son Heracles, and makes another implicit comparison of Achilles, great-grandson of Zeus, with Theron, whose lineage is likewise traced back to Zeus; through both Heracles and Achilles, the conception of a hero who required no learning to display heroic capacity surely bulks large.²⁶⁰ Unlike the other passages, moreover, this one presents a wisdom that is neither plural nor relativized in any way. The strangeness of the phrase ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυᾶ is compounded by the claim to the esoteric and the preceding exposition of eschatological doctrine,²⁶¹ along with the subsequent analogy that links the ὄρνις θεῖος with ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυᾶ.

²⁵⁸ Cf. *I.* 5.39-42.

²⁵⁹ See e.g. Pfeijffer (1989) ad loc. for an analysis of the passage as a typical *Abbruchformel*.

²⁶⁰ Regarding the emphasis on common descent from Zeus, see e.g. Nisetich (1988) esp. 15.

²⁶¹ On this topic see e.g. Van Leeuwen ad loc. and Edmunds (2009).

As Glenn Most argued, the image of the quiver of arrows handled by the heart may evoke the speaker's rich interiority,²⁶² which, presumably bolstered by the echo of πολλά etc., has been regularly transferred to whatever is designated by εἰδῶς φυᾶ. To know by one's nature would then also be to know "in one's heart" or the like. The likelihood of that implication and the strangeness of the phrase εἰδῶς φυᾶ become still more apparent when one observes the peculiarity of the construction, which is more impactful even than μάρνασθαι φυᾶ. Although a dative with οἶδα is common already in Homer, it is always of an organ of thought or emotion, the sense of the dative being an uncertain combination of means and location.²⁶³ Pindar's postponed φυᾶ must have been a strategic surprise,²⁶⁴ and must have remained striking even to later audiences: even φύσει is not found with a form of οἶδα until Philo!²⁶⁵ Among the earlier passages that may assist our interpretation of Pindar, one involves a θεοπρόπος, ὃς σάφα θυμῷ / εἰδείη τεράων (*Il.* 12.228-9: "prophet, who clear things in his heart / knows of omens"); another is Penelope's remark to Odysseus, ἔστι γὰρ ἡμῖν / σήμαθ', ἃ δὴ καὶ νῶϊ κεκρυμμένα ἴδμεν ἀπ' ἄλλων (*Od.* 23.109-10: "For we have / signs, which we know in our mind hidden from others"). Common as that construction is in Homer and other authors,²⁶⁶ in Pindar this is the sole instance of twenty-eight forms of οἶδα that has a dative complement; that the other instances of φυᾶ in a

²⁶² Most (1986) 312 with n. 49.

²⁶³ See e.g. φρέσιν ... εἰδῶς, *Od.* 2.231; εὖ φρεσὶ μῆδεα οἶδε, *Od.* 11.445; σὺ δὲ φρεσὶ πάντ' εὖ οἶδας, *h.Herm.* 467; note also that there are many similar expressions with prepositions, such as τόδε ἴδμεν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, *Il.* 2.30.

²⁶⁴ Such is suggested in particular by the Aeschylean fragment often cited in connection with this (fr. 390 N), which shows that they were both participating in the long and vigorous debate over what constitutes wisdom; see e.g. Guthrie (1962) I.415.

²⁶⁵ The intriguing phrase which he uses is εἰδότες ἀδιδάκτω τῇ φύσει, *De decalogo* 59.4, which is plainly a combination of Pindar and Homer's Phemius. Other comparable constructions do of course occur in the interim. After Philo the next author to use φύσει with οἶδα is Longinus, echoing Pindar alone with the phrase σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φύσει, *Ars rhet.* 570.4.

²⁶⁶ One noteworthy exception is Aeschylus, in whom it never occurs.

necessarily extended sense are also in the dative may help to explain this. What is perhaps the most relevant Pindaric comparandum is also quite suggestive: in *Pythian* 3, no less a prophet than Apollo is described as κοινᾷ παρ' εὐθυτάτῳ γνώμαν πιθῶν, / πάντα ισάντι νόῳ (l. 29-30: “persuading [or trusting] his judgement in the presence of his straightest companion, / his all knowing mind”).²⁶⁷ As Thomas Jahn has shown, in Homer the adverbial addition, to verbs of seeing, knowing, etc., of terms from the semantic field of psychic activity intensify and interiorize the action.²⁶⁸ The fact that φυᾷ is here used after the manner of those terms, combined with the air of esotericism and the notion of inner resources in the image of the quiver, justifies the conclusion that here—if anywhere—φυά denotes an emphatically *innere, angeborene Art*.²⁶⁹ At the very least, such parallel constructions reveal why φυά has been and must be interpreted as more pregnant in *O.* 2 than anywhere else—and why this passage has caused the most ink to be spilled.

Again, what is particularly striking about σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ is the focused employment of φυά as a source of knowledge. As we saw above, confusion about the concept of “nature” at play here has even led to the misinterpretation that the phrase refers to knowing “by [observation of] nature.” Not only would this be at odds with all of the other instances of the word in Pindar (and even the contemporary usage of φύσις), but it would also seem to require an anachronistic interpretation of μαθόντες as referring to persons of mere book or school learning

²⁶⁷ Cf. also εἰδότηι τοι ἐρέω, *P.* 4.143.

²⁶⁸ Jahn (1987) B.III, beginning with ἴδε θυμῷ (*Od.* 8.450) where “der Zusatz θυμῷ hat keineswegs den Charakter eines sprachlichen Petrefakts, sondern kann als produktives Element der lebendigen Sprache dem Dichter eine beachtliche Nuancierungsmöglichkeit an die Hand geben,” Jahn (1987) 212. For another precedent to Pindar, note also Jahn’s analysis of τῶν δ’ ἄλλων τίς κεν ἦσι φρεσὶν οὐνόματ’ εἶποι (*Il.* 17.260) and interpretation of it as “aus sich selbst heraus sagen,” which he contrasts with the invocation of the Muses at *Il.* 2.484.

²⁶⁹ Recall the association of φύῃ with καρδίην ἰαίνεται in Arch. fr. 25, and with ὀργή in Semonides 7.

(like our “learned”).²⁷⁰ Also anachronistic, but more interesting, is the attempt to link this *φύα* with a universal Nature, as in Motte’s analysis. For, as was arguably implied in the case of Amphiaraus and Chromios, the *φύα* by which one knows is a *φύα* through which one can be fundamentally linked with heroic ancestors and, through them, with the divine—and in *N. 6* at least, our common mother, the Earth. The exalted *φύα* in *O. 2*, just as in *O. 9*, ostensibly draws its self-sufficient power and authority from such a privileged connection to the forces which guarantee not only the noble families but also the seasons and harvests, etc.

Yet this absolutist *φύα* which does not admit of *διδασκία* is not the only *φύα* in Pindar. As we have seen, others odes are much less exclusionary in their claims about *φύα*, and some even give a positive role to some of the learning so starkly dismissed in *O. 2* and *9*. Some odes, moreover, use *φύα* in ways that do not clearly deploy its expanded meaning, although, as I have argued above, every instance of *φύα* and *φύσις* does in fact allow for it. Throughout all of the odes, moreover, there is an unmistakable emphasis on the inherited superiority of the victor: even Chromios, in the civic ode which admits of various *τέχνηαι*, is still aligned with Heracles and Amphiaraus the *μάντις*; and in *O. 8*, the civic ode that is exceptionally favorable toward learning and teaching, the Aiginetan victor is still proudly said to descend from Zeus.²⁷¹ The pervasive connections between *φύα* (and *φύσις*) with Heracles and the mantic, which seem to build upon

²⁷⁰ *O. 2* can be usefully compared with e.g. Heraclitus fr. 17 (... οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν ...) along with fr. 40 (πολυμαθίη νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει ...) and fr. 55 (ὄσων ὄψις ἀκοή μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω), which show that Heraclitus may have derided the empty or excessive “learning” of some (unlike Pindar, who targets learning and teaching per se and not false or excessive learning), but still valorized learning (*μάθησις*) more than Pindar ever did, to judge from the extant verses. For comments on Heraclitus, see Kahn (1979) 102-10.

²⁷¹ See *O. 8.15-6*, and note the preceding liberal platitude about the “many paths of success,” which parallels that in *N. 1* about *τέχνηαι*.

generic preferences attested in Bacchylides too, help to illuminate the particular framework within which these ideologies of φύά were articulated.

IV. Conclusion

In Pindar, one encounters a conception of individual or group “nature”—at most, perhaps even a human “nature” (φύσις) which resembles the divine (in *N.* 6)—a “nature” which was not only corporeal and characterological, so to speak, but in some cases epistemological, denoting however not the knowledge based on careful observation of Nature but knowledge which one possessed simply as a result of one’s φύά. Especially insofar as it bears upon the poetical persona, this φύά had thus managed to appropriate what had been the role of a god or a Muse—or, in the case of Phemius, what had been the confused collaboration of his own self (compare αὐτοδίδακτος) and the god who “planted (ἐνέφουσεν) manifold paths of song in [his] mind.”²⁷² In *O.* 2 and 9, φύά has apparently been so transformed conceptually that it can now designate, in its two syllables, what Homer said in those two rich hexameter lines.

While the less extravagant uses of φύά and φύσις can be assessed accurately enough as expressions of a fairly “common-sensical” (if still aristocratic) attitude toward the necessity of natural talents, the uses in *O.* 2 and 9 in particular thus demand a different analysis. The severity of the claims can be better appreciated—without being forcibly softened—when seen in the light of other linguistic and conceptual trends, such as Pindar’s general avoidance in the epinikia of discussions of learning and teaching, or the rather antiquated role given to τέχνα. The most cogent explanation, I think, is that such polemical claims about φύά also belong to the array of

²⁷² *Il.* 22.347-8.

“camouflage” employed by certain poets on their own behalf and on behalf of their patrons.²⁷³ In this regard, Pindar’s manifold rhetoric can be usefully contrasted not only with the sophistic pedagogy that emphasized the importance of learning,²⁷⁴ but also with the poetry that was more open about the role of teaching in the acquisition of τέχνη, for instance.²⁷⁵ Although the Pindaric corpus gives voice to a range of positions on the relationship between φυά and παιδεία, it always celebrates a legendary or aristocratic φυά. As we will see in the next chapter, vegetal metaphors are likewise used in a range of applications with various implications; but in numerous instances it is clear that vegetal metaphors, too, count among this poet’s “camouflage.”

²⁷³ As noted above, I borrow the metaphor of “camouflage” from de Jong (2001) 6, 539: “The Muse’s cooperation guarantees the ‘truth’ of his story ... and her teaching/gift of song camouflages the tradition and training which must in fact be the basis for his song”; likewise “Phemius explains his talents as a singer in terms of double motivation: he is both self-taught and taught by a god (for teaching by a god, cf. Demodocus in 8.481 and 488). This ‘autodidacticism’, even more prominently than the Muse-invocations, camouflages a singer’s actual training by other singers ...”

²⁷⁴ Summed up by Rose (1976) 54: “The sophists’ egalitarian perspective and their pragmatic analysis of the socialization process — education in the broadest sense of the term — often led to a marked disparagement of the claims of the aristocracy to inherited excellence”; see *ibid.* with n. 20 for references and discussion, and for contrast between the sophists and Pindar.

²⁷⁵ An especially interesting example of the celebration of τέχνη and the teaching of it is the Homeric hymn to Hermes, the historical position of which is illuminated by Power (2010) 468-75, who shows how one can “detect in the *Hymn* the outlines of an originally Peisistratean musico-political agenda, one aimed at opening up a self-entrenched aristocratic culture to the influence of the civic *mousikê* patronized most conspicuously by the tyrants themselves.”

Chapter 2: Pindar's Fruit of the Mind

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laisser parfois sortir de confuses paroles ;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.
—Baudelaire, "Correspondances"¹

Hombre, árbol de imágenes,
palabras que son flores que son frutos que son actos.
—Octavio Paz, "Himno entre ruinas"²

I. Introduction

In the Pindaric corpus, some connection between vegetal metaphors and the concept(s) of φύα/φύσις is undeniable. The metaphors unquestionably count among the means of representing human φύα in all its aspects, and help prove that concept to be a dynamic one, albeit with a general emphasis on source and result, and less on the process of growth. This chapter's central argument, however, is that vegetal metaphors in this corpus are modulated in ways that reflect the same concerns as the similarly modulated use of φύα and φύσις examined in the last chapter. In more elitist odes, in line with the exaggerated self-sufficiency of elite φύα, the metaphors tend to indicate a greater continuity and immediacy vis-à-vis a person's hereditary endowment and its divine guarantors; in less elitist odes, they show a contrary tendency to indicate (or at least countenance) a less immediate, less continuous relationship with the same. Some differentiation can also be seen in the structure of the images: the more extended vegetal metaphors tend to appear in the more middling odes, where again they more frequently indicate some discontinuity; the more traditional and elitist φύα, on the other hand, seems to have an affinity with bold and

¹ "Nature is a temple where living pillars / sometimes let confused words slip; / man there passes through forests of symbols / which observe him with familiar regard."

² "Man, tree of images, / words that are flowers that are fruits that are acts."

simple plant metaphors that countenance no such discontinuity or impermanence. Vegetal metaphors and φύα/φύσις seem to work in tandem in subtle yet important ways.

In addition, a stratigraphic reading of Pindaric plant metaphors reveals a range of strategies for the structure of metaphors in their conceptual orientation—strategies that are, arguably, both ideologically and generically motivated. One might distinguish, for instance, between a simple and relatively intuitive metaphor, such as Sappho’s “roses of Pieria,”³ and a more analytic, conceptual orientation to metaphor, such that its extended articulation is clearly motivated by conceptual concerns distinct from the intrinsic semantics of the image—as in Aeschylus’ description of Amphiaraus “harvesting from the deep furrow through his mind from out of which trusty counsels sprout.”⁴ These passages and others will be useful comparanda for thinking about Pindar’s poetical strategies. In this corpus, certain simpler images, namely the “flower of song” and the “fruit of the mind,” seem to belong to a rather hymnic register and, as such, to praise of the less humble. As we will see in much greater detail below, metapoetic flowers appear only in a dynast ode (*O.* 6), an intermediate ode (*O.* 9), a paeon (*Pae.* 12) and a dithyramb (*Dith.* I, fr. 70a). The “fruit of the mind,” in turn, is closely linked to the victor in a dynast ode (*P.* 2) and attributed to the poetical speaker in an intermediate ode (*O.* 7), whereas when it appears in a civic ode (*N.* 10) it is allotted to two heroes at some remove from victor and poet; the closest parallels to the image are from Aeschylus’ Amphiaraus and Aristotle’s hymn to Virtue. In contrast, there are three extended vegetal metaphors and similes, which conceive the vagaries of human existence by analogy with interrupted cycles of vegetation; these images have their most illustrious predecessors in Homer’s leaves simile and in elegy, and, within the corpus,

³ fr. 55.2-3: βροόδων / τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας.

⁴ *Sept.* 593-4: βαθειαν ἄλοκα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος, / ἐξ ἧς τὰ κεδνὰ βλαστάνει βουλεύματα. This is discussed again below.

are paralleled only by a riddle about an oak tree in a dynast ode, which is clearly aimed at currying the victor's liberality. Those three comparisons are found in relatively humble odes, and, most intriguingly for our purposes here, two of them are used in the two civic odes that use the word φύσις (*N.* 6, *I.* 4). The more "rationalistic" discourse of φύσις thus seems to be conjoined—however tenuously—with some of Pindar's most patently analogical and extended vegetal imagery. That imagery could bear the influence of epic as well as sympotic and didactic elegy, but it could also highlight the continuity between, e.g., Hesiod and Theognis and early natural philosophers such as Xenophanes or Empedocles.

It is also worth noting from the outset that craft metaphors too appear to be distributed in ways that corroborate the analysis. The poetological use of τέκτων ("builder"), for instance, is found only in an ode for Hieron (*P.* 3.113) and one for an Aiginetan (*N.* 3.4)—which is to say, precisely the same set of patrons whose commissions were seen to be friendliest to forthright praise of learning.⁵ Techno- and phytomorphic metaphors, although not strictly separated (and sometimes even intermingling), appear to be somewhat coordinated with the approval of learning and an emphasis on φυά, respectively. The distribution of certain metaphors therefore suggests an implicit contrast between the natural and the artificial that is not reflected in the Pindaric usage of φυά and τέχνα.⁶ Images seem not to correspond to concepts exactly as we would expect.

In sum, what especially distinguishes Pindar, on the interpretation put forward here, is his deployment of such differentiated discursive strategies regarding the concept(s) as well as the metaphors in question. Vegetal metaphors do bear upon the conception of φυά and φύσις, but

⁵ See Ch. 1. Pindar's use of τέκτων and other craft metaphors are discussed below in §II.

⁶ Thus, although the use of τέχνα does not bear out the later contrast between τέχνη and φύσις (as argued in Ch. 1), it seems that such a contrast did, to some extent, inform preferences for metaphors drawn from crafts.

they do not do so in the same ways throughout the corpus. The complex relationship between them is presented here as further evidence of how the Pindaric corpus “straddles the border between the Archaic and the Classical period.”⁷

II. Overview of Evidence and Prior Interpretations

To better comprehend the prior interpretations of Pindar’s plant metaphors, it is necessary to consider them somewhat in context, among other interpretations of Pindaric metaphor as it was made to bear on the concept of nature.⁸ The following telescopic survey is therefore aimed at some representative moments of the wider context as well. A secondary goal of this section is to illustrate the historicity of interpretations of metaphor, in order to offer some further incidental support for the hypothesis of the historicity of the role and structure of metaphors as employed in any given text. One of the reasons that Pindar’s metaphors have posed particular challenges for interpreters, I suggest, is that they display a remarkable variety of poetical strategies, from the bold, brief and enigmatic to the fantastically mixed to the more subdued and even the extended and didactic. Some clarity about that variety can be found again through the sort of stratigraphic reading pursued in Ch. 1, the features of which in this regard are discussed toward the end of this section and will occupy us for the rest of the chapter.

Pindar’s metaphors have always found an audience. The force alone of many of them attests to the attention which composer and patrons must have paid: consider, for instance, how the poetic speaker says, “I cultivate a choice garden of the Graces” (*O.* 9.26: ἐξάϊρετον Χαρίτων νέμομαι κᾶπον), or how honey is called “the blameless venom of bees” (*O.* 6.46–7: ἀμεμφεῖ / ἰῶ

⁷ Maslov (2015) 129.

⁸ This section owes much to Patten (2009) for his analysis of the interpretation of Pindaric metaphors from Boeckh’s edition onward, as well as to Maslov (2015).

μελισσᾶν).⁹ Similarly easy to collect is evidence of the influence of such Pindaric metaphors, as in the portrait of poets in Plato’s *Ion*: “. . . culling from honey-flowing streams out of some gardens and glens of the Muses, they bring their songs to us just like the honey bees.”¹⁰ All of the elements of that characterization have close parallels in Pindar.¹¹ According to Socrates in the *Ion*, such metaphors are proof that poets are good not from craft (οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης) but from irrational, divine inspiration.¹² Τέχνη is not contrasted with φύσις in that text, but of course the same basic conclusion was later reached by interpreters of Pindar who did use those terms in contrasting such “natural” imagery with craft metaphors, as we will see. Attention has also been given to Callimachus’ Pindaric metapoetics, one element of which, the plow, will be touched on below.¹³ Most famously, however, and as we saw in Ch. 1, Horace presented Pindar as a swollen torrent, borrowing from Pindar’s own poetological waters; the image which Horace offers in contrast, as the more apt for his own poetry, is the industrious bee—which nonetheless appears in Pindar too.¹⁴ In fact, two of the ancient biographies of Pindar include an auspicious encounter

⁹ For a discussion of Pindar’s softening of some metaphors, see Keith (1914) 79; see also id. 81 on how “Pindar’s consciousness of the metaphor is shown by the frequency with which he sustains it.” See also Silk (1974) 238-9 and passim for observations regarding Pindar’s imagery.

¹⁰ *Ion* 543b1–2: ἀπὸ κρηνῶν μελιρρύτων ἐκ Μουσῶν κήπων τινῶν καὶ ναπῶν δρεπόμενοι τὰ μέλη ἡμῖν φέρουσιν ὥσπερ αἱ μέλιτται. For the influence of Pindar and Plato together, see e.g. Worman (2015) generally. These semi-Pindaric κήποι Μουσῶν, which so far as I know never appear in those words in any poet, seem to be echoed indirectly by Himerius, *Or.* 48.387-8 and *Or.* 66.56-7, and then more directly by Libanius, *Epp.* 18.3, 85.1, 1197.4, and centuries later in a couple Byzantine authors. Meanwhile, the passage from the *Ion* was quoted directly and at length by Stobaeus, 2.5.3. For later echoes of the Pindaric κάπος Χαρίτων, see below.

¹¹ Pindar and others too, of course: see e.g. Murray ad *Ion* 543b1-2.

¹² *Ion* 533e. It is curious, and perhaps deserves more comment, that φύσις is not used in the *Ion*.

¹³ See below; for a broader comparison of Pindaric and Callimachean metapoetics, see e.g. Kampakoglou (2019) 228–36; on Callimachus’ possible debt, in fr. 1.25 Pfeiffer, to Pindar *Pae.* 7b.10, see Snell (1961) 57.

¹⁴ For the bee in Pindar, see esp. *P.* 10.54 and *P.* 4.60. On “Biene und Honig als Symbol des Dichters und der Dichtung in der griechisch-römischen Antike,” see Waszink (1974). Hamilton (2003) ch. 5 argues that the Horatian bee is itself derived from certain aspects of Pindaric

with bees that either built a honeycomb in his mouth or simply alighted on his lips as he slept upon the earth, thereby christening him a poet.¹⁵ Poetological metaphors thus motivated certain bits of hagiography, providing further testimony that, on the whole, Pindar’s ancient readers associated him with distinctly “naturalistic” metaphors.¹⁶ Finally, Pindar’s fondness for the metaphorical animation of trees and woodland in particular seems to be reflected in the *Epitaph for Bion*, in which the longing of all cities and towns for Bion is contrasted with the longing of “Boeotian woods for Pindar.”¹⁷

In spite of such attention to particular Pindaric metaphors, and for all the praise of Pindar as *princeps lyricorum*,¹⁸ little was said on Pindaric metaphor as such by ancient authors—in marked contrast, as we will see, with Empedocles. Only Hermogenes singled him out as one who uses many metaphors (and in “rather tragic style,” τραγικώτερον), but the rhetorician says nothing more specific.¹⁹

poetics. For an argument about the influence of Pindaric architectural metaphor on Horace and other Roman poets, see Bitto (2019).

¹⁵ In the *Vita Ambrosiana*, the encounter occurs when Pindar as a boy is out hunting on Helicon, and falls asleep; the same life also records that some say it was in a dream that bees filled his mouth with wax and honey. The *Vita metrica*, 6–8, reports that once, when his mother had placed him upon the ground as he slept, a bee hovered about his lips.

¹⁶ The only conspicuous exception of which I am aware is the description of Pindar as Πιερικῶν σάλπιγγα, τὸν εἰσέων βαρὺν ὕμνων / χαλκευτάν (“Pierians’ trumpet, the heavy metal-smith of pure hymns”), *Anth. Pal.* 7.34.1–2 (Antipater of Sidon).

¹⁷ [Moschus] 3.88 Gow: Πίνδαρον οὐ ποθέοντι τόσον Βοιωτίδες ὕλαι. Numerous other poets are contrasted likewise in the context (ll. 87–93), but all of them missed by their cities: Pindar is the only one missed by a feature of the natural environment. On the anonymous poem’s engagement with Pindar, see Spelman (2018).

¹⁸ See Quintilian *Inst. Or.* 10.1.61, who does include *figuris* among the respects in which Pindar surpasses the rest of the lyric poets.

¹⁹ Herm. *Id.* 1.6, where the term used is αἱ τροπικαὶ λέξεις, not μεταφοραί. The rhetor suggests that, unlike the sophists who ineptly imitate the poets, Pindar and the tragedians can be defended for their use of bold metaphorical words, but that defense is deferred to another discussion which we do not possess.

In the Pindar scholia, metaphors often receive comment, but mostly in the form of simple paraphrases or glosses: on one use of ἄνθεα (“flowers”), for instance, a scholion simply gives νίκας (“victories”).²⁰ Throughout, the scholiasts treat metaphors as rhetorical ornament or, at most, riddling allusion, and they are not particularly prone to relate any metaphors or other tropes to the poet’s φύσις. The great exception is the comparison in *O.* 2 of the learners and the one who knows by φυά with the crows and eagle: this attracted much comment in antiquity (as in modern scholarship), but mostly on the question of whether the crows represent particular opponents of the natural-born “eagle,” Pindar.²¹ By contrast, a metapoetic image of a sea-wave is said to be allegorical for Pindar’s δύναμις (“power”); natural endowment may be implied, but the scholiasts give no indication.²² When φύσις does appear, it is not as we might expect it.²³ Concerning the image of cultivating a garden of the Graces (*O.* 9.26), the scholia are particularly revealing. One offers a paraphrase concluding with the claim, “I do not force [the garden] contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν),” but the scholiast does not say what this “garden” is or what φύσις is at issue. The closest the scholia come to associating this metaphor with the poet’s φύσις is when another explains that the poet “knows himself to be writing in a naturally-clever way (εὐφυῶς),” whereas others gloss the image as referring to the art of poetry (ἡ ποιητική); another still says only “garden: the poetical” (κᾶπον· τὸν ποιητικόν).²⁴ Regarding the extended metaphor

²⁰ Schol. ad *O.* 2.91. For examples of the discussion of metaphor in the scholia, see esp. Drachmann’s Index XVI s.vv. ἀλληγορία, μεταφορά, τροπή.

²¹ See Schol. ad *O.* 2, 157a–158d. For recent discussion of that passage and Pindar’s bird imagery otherwise, see Pfeijffer (1994), Steiner (2007), and Poltera (2018).

²² Schol. ad *O.* 10, 13a,e.

²³ One especially curious instance is found in the interpretation of the metapoetic image of a πόμ’ ἀοίδιμον (roughly “poetical drink”) made of honey and milk (*N.* 3.76-79): one scholiast (131a) refers the honey to the poet’s πόνος and the milk to his φύσις.

²⁴ See Schol. ad *O.* 9, 38a–39c and 33.

of “turning up the plow-field of glancing-eyed Aphrodite or the Graces” (*P.* 6.1–3),²⁵ no scholiast refers to nature in any sense: one takes the image as referring to the victor’s city;²⁶ another reports that “some understood the plow-field . . . to be the art of poetry, from which Pindar reaps his songs.”²⁷ By contrast, in the scholia on Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, we find the repeated comment that “poets reasonably liken their own natures (φύσεις) to meadows or rivers or bees, and their poetry to garlands.”²⁸ But in the Pindar scholia seen above, it is τέχνη, rather than the poet’s φύσις (or φυά), that is more frequently represented as the source of metaphorical fruits. This rather anti-Platonic conclusion is precisely the opposite of what many (influenced no doubt by Plato) have determined since.

While generally sharing the rhetorical orientation of the scholiasts, the twelfth-century scholar Eustathius struck a somewhat different note in this regard. Concluding the proem to his otherwise lost commentary on Pindar, Eustathius wrote:

Then that which has been proposed is a not uncustomary survey, gathering together what is serviceable from the Pindaric epinikia, for the sake of useful knowledge for those desiring both to write and otherwise to understand, and this [will be done] not in the manner of an interpretative commentary [?], but for the sake of flower-gathering from a very broad meadow as much as would not be trampled underfoot or otherwise scorned by those who love beauty and know the plants with which the Muses’ garlands are made.²⁹

²⁵ *P.* 6.1–3: Ἀφροδίτας / ἄρουραν ἢ Χαρίτων / ἀναπολίζομεν.

²⁶ The use of κάπος to refer apparently to a city is found in *P.* 9.53.

²⁷ Schol. ad *P.* 6, 1c: ἔνιοι δὲ ἄρουραν . . . τὴν ποιητικὴν ἤκουσαν, ἀφ’ ἧς δρέπεται τὰ μέλη ὁ Πίνδαρος. The next scholion, 1d, first suggests that the field is Acragas, but then concedes, “But Pindar is also able, by speaking allegorically, to mean his own poetry, since from it he harvests his songs” (δύναται δὲ καὶ ἀλληγορῶν ὁ Πίνδαρος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ποιήσιν λέγειν, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐκαρπούτο τὰ μέλη).

²⁸ Schol. ad Eur. *Hipp.* 73 Schwartz, 13.19–20: ἐπεικῶς οἱ ποιηταὶ τὰς μὲν ἰδίας λειμῶσιν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ μελίσσαις εἰκάζουσι, τὴν δὲ ποιήσιν στεφάνοις; for a nearly identical comment, see Schol. ad Eur. *Hipp.* 78 Schwartz, 16.5–6.

²⁹ *Pro.* 38: ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὸ προκειμένον ἐπέλευσις οὐκ ἀσυνήθης τὰ ἐκ τῶν Πινδαρικῶν ἐπινικίων συλλέγουσα χρήσιμα εἰς εἶδησιν εὐχρηστον τοῖς καὶ γράφειν καὶ ἄλλως δὲ πῶς νοεῖν ἐθέλουσι, καὶ τοῦτο οὐ κατὰ ὑπομνηματικὴν ἐξήγησιν, ἀλλ’ εἰς ὅσον ἐκ πλατυτάτου λειμῶνος ἀνθολογήσαι ὅσα οὐκ ἂν πατοῖτο ἢ ἄλλως ἐξαθερίζοιτο τοῖς γε

On the basis of this, one can be reasonably sure that Eustathius included Pindar’s more striking vegetal metaphors in his lost commentary; and, looking also to his Homeric commentaries, one notes how Eustathius’ repeated use of Pindar’s φυά to bolster his interpretation of Phemius’ metapoetic “planting” in the *Odyssey* (such that Phemius’ φύσις is strictly ἀποδίδακτος) suggests that he would have offered a similar interpretation of Pindar’s poetological vegetation.³⁰ But of course we cannot know. More certain is that Eustathius’ imagery here, cliché as it is (and already had been for nearly two millenia),³¹ bears witness to a common impulse among Pindar’s later interpreters, an impulse to see vegetal and especially flower imagery everywhere in the corpus, sometimes even when it is not in the text. In this regard, Eustathius anticipates much of the later Pindar-reception, especially in the Renaissance and among the Romantics.³²

As we saw in the first chapter, a Pindaric “nature” figured prominently in Romantic poetics, due in part to the persistent influence of neo-Platonism. Predictably, the Romantic preoccupation with the vegetal among other natural phenomena drew upon Pindaric metaphors, in particular the κῆπος which Plato already seems to have cited, to cast the poet in an even more

φιλοκάλοις καὶ εἰδόσι τὰ τῶν Μουσῶν στεφανώματα. For στεφανώματα as “plants used to make garlands,” see LSJ s.v. I.4 with citations; selecting that particular meaning here seemed pardonable at least. On the long prehistory of the tropes which Eustathius here uses (meadow, garlands, etc.), see e.g. Worman (2015). For Eustathius’ remarks about Pindaric “allegoresis,” Hermogenes, and the inimitable difficulty of Pindar’s tropes, see *Pro.* 17. For discussion of Eustathius’ study of Pindar, see Kambylis (1991), Negri (2000), and Neumann-Hartmann (2020).

³⁰ See esp. his comments ad *Od.* 22.347.

³¹ See e.g. Van Hook (1905) 17–18.

³² For the sake of space, I have left out a longer discussion of Byzantine and Renaissance material. For further information on Pindar in Byzantium, see e.g. Pontani (2012). On possible echoes of Pindar’s “garden of the Graces” in Byzantine art and literature, see Maguire (1989). For Pindar-reception in the Renaissance, in which Pindar continued to be associated primarily with natural and pastoral imagery, see Revard (2001) and esp. 292, 304, and 324 for possible Pindaric gardens in Pontano, Soowtherne, and Cowley, respectively; for Ronsard’s apparently Pindaric gardening, see Silver (1985) vol. II pt. II, 15-16, 78, 128-9.

horticultural role.³³ The original formulation seems to have been by Joseph Addison, whose remarks on Pindaric natural enthusiasm were quoted in Ch. 1. In an essay in *The Spectator* from 1712, which incidentally led the fashion in what would come to be known as English gardens, Addison plays on the tradition of the Muses' garden, and compares styles of poetry with styles of gardening.³⁴ He writes that his own "Compositions in Gardening are altogether after the *Pindarick* Manner, and run into the beautiful Wildness of Nature without affecting the nicer Elegancies of Art."³⁵ Wild vegetation was seen as an apt embodiment of Pindaric "nature," and the supposedly wild, natural poet's metaphorical gardening thus helped to inform a rather "poetical" approach to actual gardening, and with material consequences.³⁶ Indeed, Addison's "gardening after the Pindaric manner" was even cited or alluded to in later books on horticulture: so Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, in *Art Out-of-Doors: Hints on Good Taste in Gardening*, warns of "wild Pindaric local strains" that can dominate a site.³⁷ The eighteenth and nineteenth

³³ On the vegetal among Romantic theorists, see Abrams (1953) esp. ch. VIII.

³⁴ One noteworthy precedent in the English tradition is *Bel-vedere or the Garden of the Muses*, a commonplace book (or anthology) of English poetry printed in 1600, newly studied by Erne & Singh (2020).

³⁵ For further discussion of the context of Addison's remarks on gardening, see Elioseff (1963) ch. 5, esp. p. 116. On the relationship between Romantic poetic form and Pindaric gardening, see now Nersessian (2020) ch. 1, "Parataxis; or, Modern Gardens."

³⁶ Of course, this is not to make Pindar responsible for this development in the history of gardening. For Addison's influence on landscape gardening, see Batey (2005), or, more concretely, numerous parks "after the English manner" in Chicago and elsewhere, such as the "Grandmother's Garden" in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago—which is overseen, however, by a statue of Shakespeare, not Pindar, while a statue of Schiller overlooks the tidy French garden across the street from "Grandmother's"; on Schiller's fashionable distaste for French gardens in favor of the English, see Benn (1991).

³⁷ Van Rensselaer (1897) 48, after a quotation from Young on 47. See also Smee (1872) 591. Through Addison's wide influence perhaps, Pindar's delight in plants would also be invoked to inspire readers of a textbook on botany: regarding the *Parnassia*, a genus of flowering plants named for Mt. Parnassus, B. Maund (1835–6) *The Botanic Garden*, Vol. VI, 550, writes, "These associations of plants are by no means the least gratifying portion of botanical pursuits. Who can look, with feeling of apathy, on a plant which ancient Grecians, perhaps Pindar himself, may

centuries were almost certainly the height of the influence of Pindar's vegetal (and garden) metaphors, operating in the most intimate connection with his poetics of φύα. More importantly, the association has had a lasting legacy in Pindaric interpretation as well as in horticulture.³⁸

Another essential aspect of that Romantic legacy is encapsulated in the words of the poet Emanuel Geibel: "Pflückt' er [sc. Pindar] doch seinen Gesang vom blühenden Baume des Mythos" ("He plucked his song from the blossoming tree of myth").³⁹ The "archaic" and "pious" Pindar easily fit the mould that was formed by Romantic poetics (loosely defined), which celebrated anew the archaic mythopoetic as the ideal mode of poetry, wherein the poetical subject expresses some sort of transcendental union with a divine Nature, and metaphor is no mere ornament, but rather an essential symptom of that union and the more "originary" or "primitive" mentality that perceives it.⁴⁰ This conception, and its affinity to flowery or otherwise vegetal metaphors like Geibel's, continues to inform scholarship on Pindar.⁴¹

Returning then to Pindaric scholarship proper,⁴² we find that it nonetheless took some time for Pindar's plant metaphors to get special attention—despite heavy idealist influence, focused study of Pindaric metaphor more generally, and regular appreciation of his "feeling for

have lingered over on the very brink of the Castalian spring. Here, beside the Parnassia, he may have courted the Muses, fanned his poetic flame, and gathered that fire from the heights of Hyampea, which still shines in his inimitable Lyrics." I suspect that Addison lies behind this passage too, though his Pindaric gardening is unmentioned.

³⁸ I have not seen many traces of this association in later poetry. In Peter Pindar, for instance, I found just one relevant garden, in a poetological simile; see Pindar (1835) 98.

³⁹ From "Distichen aus dem Wintertagebuche" of 1870, cited by Gildersleeve (1920) 201.

⁴⁰ On this feature of Romantic theories of metaphor, see e.g. Maslov (2015) 137-9.

⁴¹ For one exceptional echo of this, which however neglects vegetal imagery in favor of abstract talk of "creative energies" and invocations of both Mircea Eliade and Wallace Stevens, see Segal (1986) 185.

⁴² For what follows I rely chiefly upon the surveys of Pindaric scholarship in Young (1970) and in Patten (2009), which focuses upon changing attitudes to metaphor.

Nature.”⁴³ Boeckh, in his foundational edition of Pindar, sought to ground his hermeneutics in an intuitive grasp of, *inter alia*, the poet’s metaphors,⁴⁴ and somewhat evocatively glosses the “blameless fruit of the mind” of Rhadamanthys (*P.* 2) as “consilia proba, quae in animo nascuntur,”⁴⁵ yet entirely ignores the metapoetic application of the same image (*O.* 7),⁴⁶ and, echoing the scholia, says, “Χαρίτων κᾶπος est poesis, quam Pindarus colit et exercet.”⁴⁷ Further, in Goram’s Latin dissertation on Pindaric metaphors and similes of 1859 (*Pindari translationes et imagines*), the common fixation on the metaphorical animation of the inanimate (or abstract) predominates,⁴⁸ and in the section devoted to plant metaphors,⁴⁹ the most substantive comments only relate the metaphors to themes of happiness and love, saying nothing about *natura*.⁵⁰ Yet the dearth of scholarly interest in Pindar’s plant metaphors is displayed most pointedly toward

⁴³ So e.g. Jebb (1893) 156 on how “the sense of beauty which possesses his [Pindar’s] mind ... differs from the ordinary Greek type in a deeper sympathy with external nature.” See also Fairclough (1930) 104–8 as one relatively late culmination of this tradition.

⁴⁴ See the discussion of Boeckh’s edition in Patten (2009) 72–95.

⁴⁵ Boeckh (1819) 252.

⁴⁶ See Boeckh (1819) 168.

⁴⁷ Boeckh (1819) 188. Boeckh was perhaps too committed to a rational and artful poet to interpret such metaphors otherwise.

⁴⁸ Particularly interesting for questions about the status of craft in Pindar is Goram (1859) 250–51, a section on anthropomorphized artifacts, with the heading *Rebus manu factis corpus atque animus porrigitur*. The fixation on metaphorical transfers from animate to inanimate and vice-versa is established already in Quintilian, 8.6.9–11.

⁴⁹ Goram (1859) 259–65.

⁵⁰ Goram (1859) 260: “Etenim *opes et res secundae* . . . multo crebrius plantarum speciem induunt”; and 261 on how “in primis rebus venereis metaphora accommodatur.” Likewise, Thomas, writing in 1891 “on the historical development of metaphor in Greek” (*Zur historischen Entwicklung der Metapher im Griechischen*), judges the idiosyncrasy of Pindaric metaphor outstanding, but considers only one plant metaphor (φυτεύω), and without substantial comment. For remarks on Pindaric metaphor generally, see Thomas (1891) 7. Thomas documents the semantic changes by metaphor of a host of words, without theorizing about the historical development of metaphor more generally. But for other sections of some interest for the broader themes under discussion here, see Thomas (1891) 21–2 (ἀρμόζω and ἀρμονία), 27 (ἀσκέω), 48 (κρύπτω), 68–70 (ὀρθός and ὀρθόω).

the end of the nineteenth century by Gildersleeve, who remarks, “It has been noticed that Pindar draws few of his figures from the world of plants.”⁵¹

Over forty years later Gildersleeve was corrected by McCracken’s catalogue of Pindaric plant metaphors, which remains a regular reference in the scholarship. Building upon McCracken’s tally, one can say that in the surviving verses of Pindar there are in fact “no fewer than one-hundred and five”—and, by my count, at least twenty more—“figurative uses of words which connote plants, some part of them, or some act connected with them.”⁵² Surprisingly, among the ones which McCracken did not include are some of the most striking and poetological, such as that of cultivating a garden of the Graces. Still, his catalogue has served as a useful stimulus and reference point for subsequent scholarship.

Prior to McCracken, however, and not cited by him, other scholars were busy cementing the approach to Pindar’s plant metaphors that would become predominant. In 1894 already, Fraccaroli had offered a sustained interpretation of Pindar as a natural, unconscious genius, describing this doctrine sometimes with vegetal metaphors like *frutto*, although neglecting to

⁵¹ Gildersleeve ad *O.* 12.15. To be fair, he seems to be somewhat uncritically citing prior scholarship, as the sentence begins with “It has been noticed,” and neither I nor McCracken (1934) found a prior relevant notice within his own commentary; perhaps Gildersleeve was thinking of some of the *Naturgefühl* scholarship. Gildersleeve himself hinted at the contrary truth by adding in his commentary vegetal imagery not present in the Greek: see e.g. Gildersleeve (1885) xxxix and xlii, cited by McCracken (1934) 340. See also Gildersleeve’s subject index, s.v. Metaphors, for proof that he did not ignore all plant metaphors.

⁵² This is according to my own count, built upon the list in McCracken (1934), which is, admittedly, somewhat liberal, including e.g. all the instances of σπέρμα when it does not mean the seed of a plant, and counting by individual metaphorical words, so that numerous instances of metaphors sustained by more than one term (e.g. ὄζαν φυτεύσασθαι, *P.* 4.15) are counted more than once; I have nevertheless followed McCracken in this, and noted a few others including the gardening and plowing imagery. (While plowing is not directly “plant” imagery, surely the metaphorical garden of the Muses is; and anyway plowing ought to be included on the basis of its intimate relation to plants.) At the same time, I have neglected other closely related phenomena, such as the στέφανος (“garland”) and related terms which must connote vegetation to some extent, along with that of bees, honey and dew, which would add considerably to the list.

collect or analyze Pindar’s metaphors in support of his interpretation (to which end Fraccaroli prefers the more straightforward statements about $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ and the Muse, etc.).⁵³ The fuller potential of Pindaric vegetal metaphor within such a Romantic scheme was realized by Dornseiff in 1921.⁵⁴ Echoing Fraccaroli, Dornseiff describes Pindar as emphasizing “das Irrationale, das Schöpferische, Göttliche, das geheimnisvolle Geschenk der Musen.” Further, he states that Pindar provides “the first clumsy step toward a psychology of poetry to be seen in antiquity. His art is his $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$ [“by nature”], not something made, but a creation, grown like a good prize-fighter or an olive tree, . . . no artifact.”⁵⁵ Here we see another manifestation of vegetation as a primary organic paradigm for a Romantic psychology of poetry, and within a clear formulation of the sort of interpretation that came to dominate.

The most forceful articulations of such an approach were further colored by interests in anthropology and the history of religion.⁵⁶ The first was from Jacqueline Duchemin,⁵⁷ who dwelt

⁵³ Fraccaroli (1894) 55: “La creazione artistica un fenomeno naturale, del quale alle nostra coscienza non può venire che una parte, e la meno essenziale.” Also revealing are statements found on p. 124: “Io intendo di mostrare solo che Pindaro ha composto secondo le norme naturali, perchè avea natura di poeta, e non ha combinato frasi e parole sopra alcun modulo convenzionale”; and on p. 309: “il che vuol dire, come Pindaro dice sempre, che la sua poesia era frutto d’ispirazione e non di studio, che era un dono divino . . .”—where nothing is cited in support of this combination of the “fruit of the mind” that is the “gift of the Muses” and the rhetoric against learners of *O.* 2 etc. For a favorable discussion of Fraccaroli, see Young (1970) 31-6. A similar approach is taken by e.g. Untersteiner (1951).

⁵⁴ See the discussion of Dornseiff in Patten (2009) 105-7.

⁵⁵ Dornseiff (1921) 60: “der erste ungelente Schritt nach einer Dichterpsychologie im Altertum zu erblicken. Seine Kunst ist ihm $\phi\upsilon\acute{\alpha}$, nichts Gemachtes, sondern Schöpfung, gewachsen wie ein guter Preiskämpfer oder ein Ölbaum, . . . kein Kunstprodukt.” For the somewhat surprising *Ölbaum*, Dornseiff even more surprisingly cites Soph. *O.C.* 698, $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\eta\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\nu\ \alpha\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\omicron}\nu$. But Dornseiff then provides a partial catalogue of Pindaric plant metaphors.

⁵⁶ It is tempting to relate this from the start to the wide influence of Frazer’s fixation on agricultural fertility gods in *The Golden Bough*, but Duchemin (1955) does not cite Frazer; but Motte (1973) refers to several of Frazer’s works. Incidentally, Frazer did not dwell upon Pindaric vegetal symbolism in any of his publications (from what I have seen), although citing Pindar and the scholiasts occasionally in *The Golden Bough*, as for instance on the topic of the Eleusinian

upon “l’extraordinaire abondance des images, auxquelles il donne si visiblement valeur symbolique, empruntées à la vie végétale,” whereby one is compelled “à voir dans l’emploi par Pindare d’une pareille floraison d’images bien plus qu’un procédé de style. Il y a là nécessité de nature. L’image, pour le moins, symbolise le réel.”⁵⁸ Pindar, as Duchemin rightly notes, is “nullement un primitif,”⁵⁹ but, it would seem, some sort of vitalist, as “le mot [φύα] signifie tout au moins qu’il y a en lui comme un élan vital, une poussée (cf. φύσις) de connaissance qui ne lui vient pas du dehors.”⁶⁰ Likewise, Detienne says that “when Pindar and Bacchylides write of fame growing or taking root, it is no mere literary image. Speech is truly conceived as natural reality, a part of *physis*.”⁶¹ Building on Duchemin and Detienne, André Motte found a prominent place for Pindar in his wide-ranging history of the symbolism of “prairies et jardins.”⁶² Quoting Duchemin on how φύα signifies “un élan vital,” Motte asks, “Que peut être en effet cet élan vital qui anime le poète sinon le prolongement en lui de la φύα universelle?”⁶³ Motte then goes on to make the following representative remarks on vegetal symbolism and the concept of φύα/φύσις:

games and their connection with the mysteries, and on the traces of Orphism: see Frazer (2012) Vol. 7, ch. 2, *passim*. In fact, the only passages I have found in which Frazer remarks upon Pindaric plant imagery comprise two letters to Gilbert Murray regarding the interpretation of the oak riddle in P. 4 (on which see below), published in Frazer (2005) 82–4.

⁵⁷ In addition to Duchemin (1955), see the anticipations of that treatment in Duchemin (1954) e.g. 286: “On pourrait écrire de longs développements sur la prédilection de Pindare pour les images empruntées à la végétation et aux fleurs.”

⁵⁸ Duchemin (1955) 233.

⁵⁹ Duchemin (1952) 53–4, on a different topic: “Notre poète, qui n’est nullement un primitif, a reçu de ses devanciers, et sûrement aussi des traditions rituelles, la richesse des attributs sans nombre qui traduisent tant d’épithètes éclatantes composées en l’honneur des dieux.”

⁶⁰ Duchemin (1955) 37.

⁶¹ Detienne (1996) 72 = Detienne (1967) 101: “Quand Pindare et Bacchylide parlent d’une gloire qui grandit, d’une gloire qui prend racine, ce n’est donc pas pure image littéraire. La parole est véritablement conçue comme une réalité naturelle, une partie de la *physis*.”

⁶² See e.g. the appreciative remarks of Bremer (1975) and the festschrift for Motte, entitled *Κήποι*, Aubriot-Sévin (2001).

⁶³ Motte (1973) 304.

It is with Pindar, in fact, that there appears for the first time, here [in *O.* 2] and elsewhere, the outline of what will become among the philosophers the theme of an opposition between φύσις and τέχνη. But for the poet, φύά depends even more upon the image than the concept, and there is no better illustration of his vigorous expression than the favorite evocations with which his entire œuvre is strewn. Pindar receives his poetic knowledge and exercises it in the feminine microcosms of nature, organs of all birth and abodes of the divinities of his inspiration. ¶ The poet is in essence a gardener, a plowman, a harvester, or even a water-diviner.⁶⁴

These evocative claims will be taken up more fully below. Suffice it for now to repeat the criticism of Ch. 1, namely that a universal φύά is not present in Pindar, and that the *élan vital* which Motte and Duchemin perceive is a concept borrowed from the vitalist philosopher Henri Bergson.⁶⁵

Motte's marvelous synthesis is a culmination of certain tendencies traced above, tendencies that have persisted into the present—if not always formulated so forcefully.⁶⁶ A

⁶⁴ Motte (1973) 304–5: “C’est chez Pindare, en effet, qu’apparaît pour la première fois, ici et ailleurs, l’ébauche de ce qui deviendra chez les philosophes le thème d’une opposition entre φύσις et τέχνη. Mais pour le poète, φύά relève davantage encore de l’image que du concept, et il n’est meilleure illustration de sa formule vigoureuse que les évocations favorites dont son œuvre entière est parsemée. Sa connaissance poétique, Pindare la reçoit et l’exerce dans les microcosmes féminins de la nature, organes de toute naissance et séjours des dieux de son inspiration. ¶ Le poète est par essence un jardinier, un laboureur, un cueilleur, ou bien encore un sourcier.”

⁶⁵ On Bergson's dependence upon Romanticism, see Lovejoy (1913) esp. 459.

⁶⁶ Another strong statement comes from Carne-Ross (1976) 43–4, in an appendix entitled “Root, tree, flower: a Pindaric path of thought”: “. . . much that we take to be metaphorical or ‘poetic’ may for Pindar be very nearly literal, for his poetry is grounded in the archaic sense of the unity of being, a unity that embraces living and dead and sees man’s single life as part of the whole life of nature. We would have little hope of understanding something so remote from our culture were it not that this archaic vision has emerged, spontaneously and as though in answer to a need that is beginning to be felt, in modern poetry.” Particularly noteworthy is Nagy (1990) 278 n. 21: “. . . it is as if song were a thing of nature, not a thing of culture, of artifice. In the poetics of Pindar, the genius of song is presented as natural, not artificial. To the extent that the natural is perceived as ‘realistic,’ unlike the artificial, we may again apply the dictum: the more the realism, the greater the artifice.” Nagy then refers the reader to his and Steiner’s discussions of “the vegetal symbolism of aphthito-,” but it is worth noting that Pindar does not use ἄφθιτος to modify κλέος or in any remotely poetological way; see Slater s.v. ἄφθιτος. For more recent

restricted focus on human heredity, for instance, is found in Rose (as we saw in Ch. 1), who notes how “the imagery of plants and fields fused with imagery of human reproduction” is prominent evidence of “the unique impress of this doctrine [sc. of φύά].”⁶⁷ But the Romantic strains become prominent again in the most sustained discussion of Pindaric metaphors, both vegetal and not: Deborah Steiner’s *The Crown of Song: Metaphor in Pindar*. Steiner’s emphasis falls squarely on how vegetal metaphor presents both men and songs as parts of φύσις, and how it is the role of song nonetheless to immortalize the fleeting blossom of the victor in an idealized realm of unceasing vegetation.⁶⁸

Over against these generalizations about Pindar’s natural genius, and amid the steady proliferation of studies of Pindaric metaphor,⁶⁹ there is another strand of interpretation, which has focused instead upon craft metaphors as the definitive programmatic metaphors of the corpus. This approach seems to have taken hold especially under the influence of Bundy’s emphasis on Pindar as technician, and his opposition to the portraits of Pindar the irrationalist. But perhaps the most influential interpretation of Pindaric craft metaphors is that of Jasper Svenbro, who (independently of Bundy) argued that they reflect the self-conscious technique of a

traces, see e.g. Le Meur (1998) 38, where Duchemin, Motte, and Steiner are cited, and also Boeke (2007) 46-54 and esp. 49-50.

⁶⁷ Rose (1974) 153; repeated, with slight modifications and two more citations in Rose (1992) 161. Note however Rose’s concluding emphasis on Pindar’s “deeply integrative imagination” and transcendence, Rose (1974) 183-4.

⁶⁸ For passages particularly reminiscent of Motte, see Steiner (1986) 37 and 39. Motte however is not cited in Steiner’s chapter focused on plant imagery, and only appears in the following chapter on “Truth and Beauty,” p. 43 n. 6, as a reference for “the meadow as a place of birth and generation.”

⁶⁹ This seems as good a point as any to note other studies devoted to Pindaric metaphor but not discussed here: Bernard (1963), Simpson (1969), Péron (1974), Stoneman (1981), Most (1987), Krummen (2014 [1990]), Pelliccia (1995), Lattmann (2010), Calame (2012), Hutchinson (2012), Fröhlich (2013), Kirichenko (2016), Eckermann (2019).

craftsman-for-hire, intent upon calling attention to the mode of production.⁷⁰ Other scholars have agreed.⁷¹ “The singer,” says Steiner, “is also a ποιητής, a fabricant. He no longer looks to the Muses to furnish him with the material of his verse, but creates songs which stand as autonomous feats of personal art and technique.”⁷²

A promising line of response to this craft-centered stance was initiated by Kurke, whose work marked an important turning point in Pindar studies. Kurke analyzed sets of metaphors for their coherent ideological functions in appealing to different segments of society while nevertheless serving the generic program of praising the victor—or, as Kurke formulates it, reintegrating the victor (to varying degrees) into his polis.⁷³ *Contra* Svenbro, Kurke argued that metapoetic craft images should be understood not as Pindar’s celebrations of the process of poetic composition, but rather as arguments for the odes’ status as *agalмата* and *anathemata*, i.e. as precious objects to be appreciated by the entire civic community.⁷⁴ “The purpose of this imagery,” Kurke states, “is to glorify not the poet but the product of his craft, the *poem*, and thereby to enhance the status of the victor who commissioned it within his community.”⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Svenbro (1976).

⁷¹ See also Kuhlmann (1906), Bernardini (1967), Loscalzo (2003), Athanassaki (2011). Auger (1987) grants that the poetological craft metaphors are important but argues that they are outweighed by other metaphors, especially those drawn from the sphere of athletics. The desire to find reflective significance in craft imagery has been exercised upon other Greek authors too, of course: see esp. Iribarren (2018), discussed with regard to Empedocles in Ch. 4.

⁷² Steiner (1986) 53, at the start of the fifth chapter, titled “Craftsmanship.” Steiner nonetheless goes on to assert that in Pindaric poetics artifice is balanced with nature, and she does not consider the possibility of different odes expressing distinct approaches.

⁷³ Kurke (1991), discussed usefully by Patten (2009) 115-20.

⁷⁴ Kurke (1991) ch. 7, esp. 192-4.

⁷⁵ Kurke (1991) 193-4. Kurke’s argument is supported by Ford (2002), and the same approach is pursued with closer attention to material culture in Neer and Kurke (2019).

Kurke’s argument can be strengthened somewhat, I think, by the stratigraphic reading pursued here, following Maslov’s Kurkean interpretation.⁷⁶ While granting, *pace* Kurke, that *some* of Pindar’s poetological craft metaphors do seem to emphasize technical construction in a manner that contrasts with more traditional metapoetics, I would note that such imagery is significantly restricted in its distribution in the corpus—as suggested perhaps by Kurke’s emphasis upon how craft imagery pertains to the community.⁷⁷ Much has been made, by Svenbro and others,⁷⁸ of the metapoetic use of τέκτων (“builder”), which has been said to represent a traditional bit of Indo-European poetics.⁷⁹ If it does, however, it seems not to have retained its appeal for all communities, as witnessed not least by the fact that it appears in no extant Greek

⁷⁶ For discussion see Ch. 1. Similarly, Maslov (2015) 111 noted e.g. how the intermediate odes “use images that reveal the agency of the speaker qua craftsman and outsider.”

⁷⁷ Under this heading I have not included all of the metaphors that may be taken (or have been taken) to be significantly technomorphic, but exclude e.g. the metaphors drawn from athletics, chariots, weapons, which (to my mind) do not manifestly relate to—or do not plainly emphasize—the crafted construction of the poem; but cf. e.g. Iribarren (2018) on chariot metaphors in Pindar and other Greek poetry as technomorphic. A somewhat more contentious case is that of *P.* 6.7-14, where a ὕμνων / θησαυρός built in the Apollonian valley has been taken to refer to *P.* 6 itself; see Greengard (1980) 84. But, esp. given the immediately preceding metapoetic plowing (discussed below), it seems to me that the ode is not itself a θησαυρός, nor even meant to be presented as if drawn from the θησαυρός: for the view that the ode is not itself a θησαυρός, see Schroeder ad loc. and Gildersleeve ad loc., and, on the θησαυρός as the occasion for praise, not the text, Maslov (2015) 241-2, but cf. Kurke (1991) 190 and Neer (2001) 287.

⁷⁸ Svenbro (1976) 189-9; see also Loscalzo (2003) ch. 3. Other studies encompassing Pindar and others are listed in the following note.

⁷⁹ On τέκτων and related terms in Greek and in other Indo-European poetical traditions, see Meusel (2020) 466-71, West (2007) 39, Louden (1996) esp. 295, Kurke (1991) 192. Athenians may have been particularly fond of the metapoetic use of the word and its cognates, as in e.g. τεκτόναρχος μούσα, Soph. fr. 159 (see Jebb ad loc., where prior interpretations that the Muse is here made “patroness of carpenters” are discussed and dismissed), and τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων, Ar. Eq. 530 (= Cratinus fr. 70 Kock). On the appeal of such metaphors for citizens of Athena’s city, see Nicholson (2005) 180-1. But see also Alc. 13a.8–10, where τέκτωνι is a possible reconstruction, and the discussion of Nünlist (1998) 102. The broader metadiscursive function of the image should be noted in this connection too, esp. in the phrase ψευδῶν τέκτονας of Heraclitus B28 DK.

texts before Pindar. In Pindar, moreover, there are τέκτονες of song only in a dynast ode for Hieron (*P.* 3.113, referring to poets) and an intermediate ode for an Aiginetan (*N.* 3.4, referring to the performers).⁸⁰ Even the non-poetological use of τέκτων is restricted to a civic ode for a Kyrenaean (*P.* 5.36) and an Aiginetan civic ode (*N.* 5.49), where it features tellingly as a metaphor for the victor's Athenian trainer.⁸¹ Furthermore, the images that emphasize craft construction—most prominently several extended metaphors and similes drawn from sculpture and architecture—are likewise found in odes for Hieron's circle, Aiginetans, and in a civic ode for an Athenian.⁸² Metaphorical weaving is likewise used for Hieron's friend Hagesias and two Aiginetans, with the addition of a civic ode for Midas the Agrigentine aulos-player, in which Athena herself does the weaving of song.⁸³ In sum, the more distinctly technomorphic images in the corpus are almost entirely confined to odes written for precisely the same groups of patrons who appear to have been friendlier to forthright praise of learning.⁸⁴ These results reinforce the

⁸⁰ See Maslov (2015) 299 contra West (2007) 39.

⁸¹ For a discussion of this trainer as τέκτων, see Nicholson (2005) ch. 8.

⁸² *O.* 6.1-4 (for Hagesias of Syracuse, friend of Hieron; see also *O.* 6.82), *P.* 1.4,86 (for Hieron), *P.* 7 (for an Athenian), *N.* 7.77-9 (for an Aiginetan), *N.* 8.20,46-7 (for an Aiginetan). The opening of *P.* 6, for Xenocrates of Acragas, brother of Theron, is a complicated case for its combination of agricultural tropes (discussed below) and architectural metaphors that may bear upon the ode itself, but may not, as noted above. The opening of *N.* 5 (again for an Aiginetan) contains the particularly interesting case of a claim that the poet is precisely not a sculptor of statues, which has received much discussion; see e.g. Auger (1987) and Athanassaki (2011).

⁸³ For weaving, see *O.* 6.86 (for Hagesias, friend of Hieron), *N.* 4.94 (for an Aiginetan), *N.* 7.77-9 (for an Aiginetan), *P.* 12.8 (for Midas).

⁸⁴ Again see Ch. 1. It is perhaps noteworthy that in the extant fragments too technomorphic metaphor is rare: see the architectural metaphor of fr. 194 (a song of unknown genre for Thebans); for weaving, *Pae.* 3, fr. 52c.12 and fr. 179 (of unknown genre); and for carpentry, fr. 241 (of unknown genre), which is discussed again in Ch. 4.

conclusion that we should not speak of a single overarching poetical program, but a repertoire of metapoetic tropes, among which craft metaphors are notably restricted.⁸⁵

That restriction, in turn, suggests an ideological explanation: more traditional aristocratic circles, which tended to celebrate a divinely endowed and self-sufficing φούά, were perhaps more inclined to the sort of “organicist” or “inspirationist” poetics familiar from Homer and Hesiod et al., while others, especially Hieron’s circle of sophisticates and the merchant families of Aigina, were more eager to celebrate human learning, human craft, human commerce.⁸⁶ Although the traditional insistence upon natural endowment and inspiration holds for much of the corpus, even the emphasis on craft may after all help us to better understand a portion of the odes—and with it, the full panoply of Pindar’s poetical strategies. The tension between the two modes in this corpus may thus be addressed to a considerable extent by a stratigraphic reading.

At the same time, there is, as noted above, some overlap and interaction between craft imagery and vegetal imagery that obstructs a neat opposition. In one fragment, for instance, we read that “god, building all things for mortals, / also plants grace in song” (fr. 141: θεὸς ὁ πάντα τεύχων βροτοῖς / καὶ χάριν ἀοιδᾶ φυτεύει). *O.* 6, which begins with the grandest architectural metaphor of the corpus and is uniquely loaded with other poetological metaphors from various domains, concludes with the prayer that Poseidon “make my hymns’ pleasant blossom grow” (*O.* 6.105: ἐμῶν δ’ ὕμνων ἄεξ’ εὐτερπέες ἄνθος). “Sometimes,” as Steiner observed, “Pindar places

⁸⁵ Kurke (1991) 260: “Such social turbulence [as marked the period in which he worked] demands sophisticated poetic strategies. Pindar responds with a densely layered text that simultaneously evokes many different, even competing, symbolic systems and ideologies.” See also Kurke (1991) 262, and the summary remarks of Maslov (2015) 286, 304, building on a study by Freidenberg that has not been translated apart from some excerpts translated by Maslov and printed in the cited section of Maslov (2015).

⁸⁶ On the broader development, in late archaic and early classical Greece, of craft metaphors and craft terminology in application to poetry, see esp. Ford (2002).

his metaphors of craft in complementary relation to his images of flowers and wreaths, juxtaposing the two sides of his art.”⁸⁷ In this connection it is worth stressing again that technomorphism, especially that which draws attention to human agency, is not correlated with the use of the word τέχνα: τέχνα is apparently not conceived in this corpus as a craft of secular invention acquired through learning, since the expected contrast is not drawn between φύά and τέχνα, but between φύά and human instruction. Instead, it is the selective employment of craft images that more clearly—but not entirely—anticipates the polarity as it came to be formulated in other authors.

This brings us back to the problem of the relationship between the concept(s) of φύά/φύσις and vegetal metaphors. If craft metaphors do not seem to be correlated with τέχνα, can we be so sure that such “naturalistic” metaphors as “fruit of the mind” are correlated with the concept of φύά? And what can we say more generally about the relationship in Pindar between image and concept?

As we saw above, it has long been common to assert that Pindar’s vegetal imagery implicates the notion of φύά or φύσις. More precisely, it has been commonly claimed that Pindar’s plant metaphors (as many other Pindaric metaphors) indicate a union with φύσις, where φύσις is presented in the unmistakable guise of a collective and transcendental Nature; and, according to interpreters such as Motte, this union is expressed as well in σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυῶν.⁸⁸

In response to that claim (or set of claims), the position taken here is twofold. The first point is that because such a notion of Φύσις (or “φύά universelle”) is not found in Pindar and in

⁸⁷ Steiner (1986) 64.

⁸⁸ See above for discussion and citations.

fact appears to be anachronistic for the era otherwise, our analysis must be more precise in that regard. If we want to grasp the Pindaric φύά and φύσις in their distinct configurations within the conceptual and symbolic economy of the corpus, we cannot resort to a quasi-anthropological analysis of a Nature that encompasses plants and animals, φύά and φύσις, etc.; at most we might speak of configurations that anticipate such a conceptual relation. The second point is that Pindar’s vegetal metaphors are not adequately understood as a mass of simple, traditionalistic expressions of a quasi-pantheistic communion with a divine “Nature.” Included among them are some highly innovative and idiosyncratic metaphors, which indicate a wide range of more and less perfect relationships with life cycles overseen by the divine. The poet, for instance, may enjoy the “fruit of the mind,” while certain others only “harvest an unripe fruit of the mind.” And although “fruit of the mind” may not sound particularly bold, the dearth of parallels suggests precisely the opposite. Further, in between the laudatory and the disparaging, there are subtle modulations of plant imagery that obstruct any generalizations about vegetal metaphor as an expression of transcendent union. Pindar’s plant metaphors are not simply traditional evocations of a transcendent order.

For this second point, which runs counter to the general tendency of studies of Pindaric metaphor,⁸⁹ I draw upon another aspect of Freidenberg’s history of image and concept in Greek literature.⁹⁰ As Maslov has emphasized in his discussion of Freidenberg’s distance from Idealist or Romantic theories (and their echoes in recent scholarship), Pindaric metaphors are sometimes

⁸⁹ Particularly outstanding in their emphasis on the unifying force of metaphor are Hoey (1965), Lattmann (2010), Kirichenko (2016), and Baxter (2019), but the emphasis in almost all the scholarship is (understandably) on metaphor as a device for making connections that heighten the praise, etc. A particularly strong and succinct formulation is given by Finley (1955) 40: “Nearly every poem of Pindar is a metaphor, the terms of which are the victor and the heroes.”

⁹⁰ See esp. Freidenberg (1991b [1946]) 30, 34, with discussion and amended translations of the relevant passages by Maslov (2015) 144-46.

of a “lowly register” and have even seemed indecorous to some scholars.⁹¹ Among the vegetal metaphors, one might think of the remark that, had a certain victor not been forced away from home, the “honor of [his] feet would have shed its leaves inglorious” (*O.* 12.15: ἀκλεῆς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε(ν) ποδῶν).⁹² This example happens to come from a civic ode, the categorization of which should raise the question: In what manner are the homelier metaphors distributed in the corpus? Which is to say, does a stratigraphic analysis reveal any patterns here? As I will argue below, it is in civic odes especially that we encounter a disproportionate number of seemingly indecorous plant images, images that express some failure or discontinuity.

Returning to the first point, regarding the relation between metaphor and concept, I draw on a more prominent topic in Freidenberg and Maslov, namely the development of poetical metaphor proper and its relationship to more abstract, conceptual habits of thought. Although Freidenberg had, in an earlier work, spoken of rampant metaphor as a distinguishing feature of Pindar’s style,⁹³ in *Image and Concept* Pindar had become more mythopoetic: Pindar “may seem to us overburdened by metaphors,” but what appear to be metaphors are deemed to be rather “archaized mythological images.”⁹⁴ Insisting, *pace* Freidenberg’s later judgement, that even Pindar employed innovative literary metaphors, Maslov has pursued Freidenberg’s theory of the development of poetic metaphor in its conceptual relation by comparing Pindar’s genealogical

⁹¹ For discussion of Steiner (1986) in this regard, see Maslov (2015) 145 n. 83.

⁹² This example follows (in the same sentence) immediately upon the comparison of the victor with an “infighting rooster” (*O.* 12.14: ἐνδομάχας ἅτ’ ἀλέκτωρ), which Maslov (2015) 146 uses in support of the claim that metaphors are not strictly “elevating” but “strive, first and foremost, for conceptual lucidity that is aided by imagistic vividness.”

⁹³ Freidenberg (1991a) 15: “[. . .] the process of metaphorization is only just beginning in Greek lyrics. Its development is in Pindar and in the tragedies. [. . .] in Pindar, and in the melos of tragedy, [. . .] there are almost no similes, but instead many metaphors.” Cf. Maslov (2015) 174 with n. 177.

⁹⁴ Freidenberg (1997) 67; the essay on Metaphor is dated to 1951.

metaphors with Hesiod's and Plato's. In short, Maslov shows that Pindar's genealogical metaphors are used for ad hoc conceptual articulations that are unlike Hesiod's insofar as they show less interest in larger theological narrative, and are not so extended and precise as the sort of allegories one sometimes finds in Plato.⁹⁵ Among other things, these metaphors in Pindar “forge a firm conceptual link between poetic production, individual poet-composer, and divine agency.”⁹⁶ The same sort of analysis is applied here, partly by way of similar comparison with other authors, but also by comparisons within the corpus—the stratified corpus.

To further situate the combined approach taken here, it is helpful to consider one additional aspect of Maslov's study: the analysis of Pindaric similes on Freidenbergian lines. Maslov's tabulation and analysis of the similes suggests, on account of their disproportionately poetological use, that “the poetic work of meaning making through figuration is performed, first and foremost, in the interest of the speaker.”⁹⁷ One might readily build on this by stratifying the results. The poetological similes, plentiful as they are, show a remarkably uneven distribution: the only ones found in dynast odes are for the familiar pair of Hieron (*P.* 1.43, *P.* 2.80) and his friend Hagesias (*O.* 6.2), along with the famous flitting bee in an ode for Hippocles of Thessaly (*P.* 10.54). Further, Maslov contrasts the traditional comparisons applied to the victor and his family, such as those involving vegetation, with the metapoetic similes that are said to be “memorably Pindaric, stemming from the domain of athletics, symposium, and architecture.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ It may accord with the argument of this chapter that what Maslov (2015) 151 presents as “the single most baroque genealogical metaphor in Pindar” is in a civic ode, *P.* 5.27-9.

⁹⁶ Maslov (2015) 155.

⁹⁷ Maslov (2015) 166; for the tabulation, see p. 165, Table 2.

⁹⁸ Maslov (2015) 166.

Indeed, none of the metapoetic *similes* involve comparisons with vegetation.⁹⁹ However, I propose that a different, but complementary, perspective can be gained by considering vegetal metaphors from this standpoint.¹⁰⁰

As the varied tradition sketched above attests, to many prior readers the most memorably Pindaric images included the Graces' garden and other vegetal or otherwise "naturalistic" metaphors; and, again, even the simple metaphors of the "blossom of hymns" and the "fruit of the mind" were by all appearances quite unique. When we look at Pindar's vegetal metaphors, therefore, we see significant innovation upon traditional tropes in numerous regards, including metapoetics. One particularly interesting pattern emerges, which aligns with the distribution of vegetal similes: vegetal metaphors demonstrate, on average, a more distinct conceptual orientation and a greater extension in odes marked by more "progressive" ideologies. In fact, vegetal metaphors even seem to be more closely coordinated with φύά and φύσις in such odes (esp. *O.* 1 and *N.* 6). The aim, then, of the remainder of this chapter is to demonstrate these patterns by combining the Freidenbergian analysis, so to speak, with the Kurkean: to examine, that is, how the stratification of vegetal metaphors reveals not only a varied selection of images, but also a varied approach to their structure and to their orientation to φύά/φύσις. After a brief overview of Pindaric vegetal metaphor from this perspective (§III), we turn to the most extended

⁹⁹ Notably, the closest the poetological similes come to vegetal imagery is at *N.* 8.40-3, where ἄρετά among the wise (σοφοίς) is like a growing plant refreshed by dews, which is arguably metapoetic—but song (as elsewhere) would be dew, not plant; see below.

¹⁰⁰ The apparent innovation even in some of the metaphors that belong rather to "the kômastic rhetoric of scripted spontaneity" than the presentation of "the text as precomposed with the aid of the poet's Muse" may suggest a qualification of Maslov's hypothesis that "the former elements – conventions of choral performance and kômastic rhetoric – are inherited, . . . whereas the latter are innovations," Maslov (2015) 285.

vegetal images in the corpus (§IV), followed by ploughing and gardening metaphors (§V) and then the blossoms of song and the fruit of the mind (§VI).

III. An Initial Stratified Reading of Pindaric Vegetal Metaphor

One token of how suffused this corpus is with plant metaphors is that many otherwise cautious interpreters have translated Pindar's ἄωτος (~"choicest part") as "flower," and some have continued to do so in spite of McCracken's terse correction and a thorough refutation by Silk.¹⁰¹ The translation is understandable: as the object, e.g., of δρέπεσθαι ("cull" or "reap"), ἄωτος has been repeatedly assumed to carry its own particular vegetal connotations.¹⁰² As one scholiast suggests, ἄωτος itself in that passage could be seen as a sort of metaphor for ἄνθος.¹⁰³ This problem highlights the difficulty of assessing the full extent of Pindar's vegetal metaphors. As always, it is too easy for a non-native speaker to see a vivid metaphor in any apparently transferred term. One might wonder whether θάλλω ("to blossom"), for instance, should necessarily be read as evoking flowers any more than "to flourish" does, or ἄνθος ("flower") so much more than "flour." That said, it is not our purpose to justify the inclusion of each and every passage in the tabulation mentioned above. As Eustathius declared and McCracken and others have demonstrated, it is all too easy to gather flowers large and small from this broad meadow. A thorough examination would swell far beyond the bounds of this chapter; instead we will focus on select illustrations of Pindar's more conspicuous metaphorical vegetation, and especially ones that may pertain to the conceptualization of φύα/φύσις.

¹⁰¹ McCracken (1934) 341-2; Silk (1974) 239-40; e.g., Segal (1998) rendered it "flower."

¹⁰² Cf. *P.* 4.130, *N.* 2.9, and the cautious and sensitive remarks by Duchemin (1955a) 234.

¹⁰³ Schol. ad *O.* 1, 20i: ἄωτῳ δὲ τῆς ᾠδῆς ἄνθει, τουτέστιν ἐν ταῖς ᾠδαῖς. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἕτερον ἢ μουσικῆς ἄνθος αἰ ᾠδαί. See also *O.* 8.75, *O.* 9.19, and esp. *P.* 10.53; and see also the remark of Goram (1859) 259.

Particular images are of course especially charged with significance in the epinikia, and above all the leafy garland. But the associations in epinikia, just as in the fragments from other genres, are myriad, and this has not always been adequately stressed. “It is a characteristic mark of the power of Bundy’s influence,” Rose noted, “that D. Steiner begins her discussion of the metaphor of plant life by assuring us that ‘it emerges naturally from the context of the Games, suggested by the crown of leaves which the triumphant athlete wore’.”¹⁰⁴ One could perhaps improve upon this by claiming that the entire symbolism of the genre of epinikion is distilled in Bacchylides’ γέρας / . . . καὶ δένδρα . . . (fr. 28.5-6: “prize: / . . . and trees . . . ”); the coveted prize was, after all, typically taken from sacred trees, and the cultural authority and symbolic power of both garland and tree were tremendous. Rose has a point, however: like φούά, Pindar’s vegetal metaphors were overdetermined, and not only by prior tropes, but by the crowning and throwing of leaves and flowers and fruit at the games and at symposia, by the happy garlanding one reads about in even the most casual festivities, the groves and gardens which surrounded the sanctuaries, not to mention the intimate familiarity with a host of related imagery enjoyed by those whose economies are largely agricultural (which was especially true, incidentally, of Pindar’s Thebes and Sicily). Following these manifold channels, vegetal imagery regularly radiates out from the focal points of the odes: consider, e.g., Delphi, the “navel of well-fruited earth” (fr. 215b12: εὐκάρπ[ου χθον]ὸς ὀ[μ]φαλόν). It is otiose to justify the prominence of vegetal metaphor in Pindar by reference to specific generic factors. Only particular metaphors may be said to bear such precise connections, and even the victor’s garland could be made to highlight associations reaching far beyond its use in crowning the victor.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Rose (1992) 161 n. 26, citing Steiner (1986) 28.

¹⁰⁵ See esp. the central myth of *O.* 3.

At the same time, there is an element of Steiner’s argument that, *pace* Rose, stands to be corrected by Bundy’s emphasis: this is the suggestion that Pindar’s flowers, like the Homeric generations of leaves or Sappho’s fleeting blossoms, should be universally seen as “evoking the transient character of any beauty or brilliance at its peak.”¹⁰⁶ I would argue that the associations in Pindar are, on the whole, less aimed at pathos, just as one might expect from praise poems which speak of the immortal glory symbolized by the olive and its leaves. Thus Pindar’s ἦβα, for instance, has little in common with the like of Aphra Behn’s “fickle faithless youth . . . like Flowers,”¹⁰⁷ and usually seems to participate instead in the glory of the eternally flowering Ἥβα, Olympian bride of Heracles.¹⁰⁸

It must be noted, however, that Steiner’s characterization of fleeting vegetation can be seen as reflecting a closely related aspect of Bundy’s approach: the insistent contrast between praise and “foil,” e.g. in the form of negative mythic exempla. Steiner has a point in this regard: some vegetal images do emphasize transience in contrast with the permanence of the victory’s glory and its praise. Yet, whereas happy vegetation is found throughout the corpus, this foil of negative imagery is rare and much less evenly distributed. In the civic *O.* 12, the victor is consoled with the thought (cited already above) that, had he not been forced from his homeland by stasis, “the honor of [his] feet would have shed its leaves inglorious” (l. 15: ἀκλεῆς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε(ν) ποδῶν). In the intermediate *P.* 8, just before the well-known lines about man as a “dream of a shadow” (l. 95: σκιᾶς ὄναρ), it is said that “In a brief time the delight of mortals

¹⁰⁶ Steiner (1986) 30.

¹⁰⁷ Behn (1915) V.264. Cf. also Nussbaum (2001) 1.

¹⁰⁸ See esp. *N.* 1.71, θαλερὰν Ἥβαν ἄκοιτιν; also *O.* 6.7-8, χρυσοστεφάνοιο . . . / καρπὸν Ἥβας. But note the contrast between old age and the ἄνθος ἦβας in *P.* 4.158 (in dialogue within a mythic narrative), and also that between the short life of mortals and the εὐάνθεμον φυάν of *O.* 1.67 (in mythic narrative).

waxes; but thus also it falls to the ground, having been shaken by an averting thought” (l. 92-4: ἐν δ’ ὀλίγῳ βροτῶν / τὸ τερπνὸν αὖξεται· οὕτω δὲ καὶ πίτνει χαμαί, / ἀποτρόπῳ γνώμα σεσεισμένον). The image is subdued but perhaps somewhat vegetal. Finally, in the also intermediate *I.* 8, an image of vegetal decay is negated in an assertion of the authority of Themis, whose “words’ fruit did not waste away” (l. 46-6a: ἐπέων δὲ καρπός / οὐ κατέφθινε). By my lights, the only other vegetal images that plainly emphasize some fragility or failure of growth are the four extended images treated below (§IV): two of them are in civic odes, the third is in an ode that is not properly an epinikion but has most in common with the civic category, and the fourth is a riddle in a dynast ode, which bears not upon the victor but upon another, who desires the victor’s pity.

Similar difficulties present themselves when we try to ascertain where precisely the metaphors and the concept(s) connect. The only instance of the direct application of a vegetal metaphor to φυά (or φύσις) occurs in the phrase εὐάνθεμον φυάν (*O.* 1.67: “well-blossoming nature”).¹⁰⁹ As we will see, it is perhaps not accidental that this phrase occurs in an ode for Hieron. The verb φύω, which often reveals a link between vegetal growth and the notion of φύσις, is of no use in that capacity here, and it is in fact used very sparingly otherwise. Given the abundance of vegetal imagery and the prominence of φυά, it is all the more surprising that φύω and its derivatives are not employed as much as one would expect on the basis of prior usage. There is, for instance, none of the perfect forms familiar already from Homer and so common later.¹¹⁰ Instead, one only finds four aorist forms and one present middle form, all of which are

¹⁰⁹ φυά otherwise gets epithets only in *P.* 4.235 (ἐριπλεύρω) and *I.* 6.47 (ἄρορηκτον). Contrast these three concrete epithets with *I.* 4.67’s φύσιν Ἰαριωνείαν.

¹¹⁰ See Cunliffe and LSJ s.v. φύω.

used of human birth or growth.¹¹¹ Within the epinikia, φύω is used only in a civic ode (*O.* 4.25), an intermediate ode (*O.* 10.20), and a dynast ode for Hieron (*P.* 1.42). The use of derivatives is similarly sparse. Φυτόν, the normal generic word for “plant,” occurs only three times, none of them metaphorical, and only in civic odes and a fragment of a dithyramb.¹¹² Three derivative adjectives appear, once each: ἐμφυές (~“innate”),¹¹³ used in an intermediate ode, of the unchangeable ἦθος of foxes and lions (*O.* 11.19-20); σύμφυτος (~“connate”), in a civic ode, of the ἀρετά that the victor has not disproven (*I.* 3.13-4); and finally αὐτόφυτος (“self-grown”), of the sores that Asclepius heals (*P.* 3.47-8), in another dynast ode for Hieron. Φυτεύω (“plant”) is more common, but it is never used of planting *plants*, and indeed the metaphor is only enlivened in *P.* 4, which is the only dynast ode that uses the word, but which uses it all of four times, and all of them before the riddle of the pitiable tree.¹¹⁴ In sum, φύω and all of its derivatives (apart from φυτόν and some instances of φυτεύω) show no clear affinity to plant growth. Pindar was

¹¹¹ The aorist forms are all significantly connected to claims of virtue and wisdom, and the first two involve an interesting tension, in imagery and then in the causal claim: “Honing someone born for excellence . . .” (*O.* 10.20: θάξαις δέ κε φύντ’ ἀρετᾶ); “For from the gods come all the means for human achievements, and men are born wise, or strong of hand and eloquent” (*P.* 1.41-2: ἐκ θεῶν γὰρ μαχαναὶ πᾶσαι βροτέαις ἀρεταῖς, / καὶ σοφοὶ καὶ χειρὶ βιαταὶ περίγλοσσοὶ τ’ ἔφυν). The other two aorist forms appear in fragments: “For it is impossible that he will search out the god’s / plans with a mortal mind, / since he was born from a mortal mother” (*Pae.* 21 f. 61: οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ’ ὅπως τὰ θεῶν / βουλευμάτων ἐρευνάσει βροτέα φρενί / θνατᾶς δ’ ἀπὸ ματρὸς ἔφυν); and “from the ground [or from the bottom] they grew” (fr. 334a.4:]πεδόθεν ἔφυν[), where there is a real possibility that a vegetal image was involved, but the fragmentariness prevents decision. Finally, there is a middle form in *O.* 4, where Pindar observes, “Even on young men gray hairs often grow before the fitting time of their life” (*I.* 25-7: φύονται δὲ καὶ νέοις / ἐν ἀνδράσιν πολιαὶ / θαμάκι παρὰ τὸν ἀλκίας εἰοικότα χρόνον).

¹¹² *P.* 5.42 (wooden statue made of μονόδροπον φυτόν), *P.* 9.58 (fruit-bearing plants), fr. 75.15 (nectareous plants, in a dithyramb).

¹¹³ It reappears again only in Julian, *Ep.* 180, where it means “engrafted.”

¹¹⁴ See *P.* 4.15 (where a metaphorical “root” is planted), 69, 144, 256; see also *P.* 9.111 (civic), *N.* 4.59 (intermediate), *N.* 5.7 (intermediate), *N.* 7.84 (civic), *N.* 8.17 (civic), *I.* 6.12 (intermediate). Regarding the liveliness of the metaphor, consider its Homeric and Hesiodic use as shown in LSJ s.v. See §IV below for the tree riddle of *P.* 4.

apparently not keen to employ this word-family in order to display connections between his otherwise pervasive vegetal imagery and the conceptualization of human development and φύά—or of φύσις. The fact that the verb and all of its other derivatives occur in no dynast odes except a few for Hieron and *P. 4* is suggestive. *P. 4*'s repeated use of φυτεύω may be an epic touch,¹¹⁵ and may also relate to the important tree riddle. Regarding Hieron, one again recalls the relatively progressive intellectualism of his odes: I hesitantly suggest that, for many of Pindar's more conservative audiences, φύω and its other derivatives smacked somewhat of such intellectualism. Whatever the reasons, these words are not used to anchor an analogy between plants and φύά or φύσις in this corpus.

Instead, we must look to other diction and other patterns of imagery. Two more particular points of comparison between the concept and the metaphors in question are exhibited here. First, the usage of φύά/φύσις and that of plant metaphors display a comparable preoccupation with the source and the result of growth, but not the process: we hear mostly of roots and seeds, blossoms and fruit. To some extent this must be a result of epinikian poetics, aimed as it is at celebrating a victor's achievement and origins; but it is noteworthy that by far the most conspicuous image of individual vegetal growth (excluding blossoming) is found in a civic ode, *N. 8*, where we find the famous passage comparing the growth of ἀρετά with the growth of a δένδρεον.¹¹⁶ Second, φύά and φύσις and the metaphors in question are comparably stratified across the corpus. Just as Pindar's employment of φύά and φύσις appears to have been modulated according to the ideologies of different patrons, so the use of numerous vegetal metaphors is notably modulated across the corpus. Vegetal metaphors, and especially

¹¹⁵ Again see LSJ s.v. φυτεύω, and for the epic character of *P. 4*, see Gildersleeve's introductory remarks on the ode, and the remarks below (§VI).

¹¹⁶ *N. 8.40-2*.

poetological ones, are, as we will see below, more prominent in more elitist odes and in cult songs, in which they also assert a more immediate and permanent access to metaphorical fruits and their sources. When comparable metaphors appear in less elitist odes, they may portray relationships of less immediacy and less regularity, and even countenance the possibility of vegetal decay. The rhetoric of vegetal metaphor in the humbler odes is itself relatively humble; and in some cases, too, it is more didactic and analytic. We turn now to a set of images that illustrate these last aspects particularly well.

IV. The Complication of the Image and the Articulation of the Concept

The four most extensive vegetal tropes in the corpus all intimate some sort of discontinuity with regard to one's inherited "nature," and thus illustrate particularly plainly how Pindaric vegetal metaphors (and comparisons) are not restricted to simple expressions of transcendent union. In these passages the phytomorphic is used to assert or at least presume continuity despite discontinuity, and in the articulation of that dynamic we see the conceptual work of the images in question. Homeric reminiscences seem possible in each case; in fact, each of the odes is written in dactylo-epitrites, which gives us further reason to suspect some generic influence from hexameter in particular. We begin with the riddle of the oak tree in *P.* 4, and then turn to three comparisons, concluding with the two that appear in the only odes containing φύσις.

Toward the end of the magnificently long *P.* 4, the dynast ode for the king of Kyrene, which contains the oxen's φῶά (l. 235), the audience is presented with an αἴνιγμα or riddle,¹¹⁷ i.e. an extended metaphor with the tenor deliberately suppressed:

¹¹⁷ The term αἴνιγμα is not used in the ode, but is used in the scholion on it; it also appears in Pindar fr. 177 in reference to the Sphinx. For αἴνιγμα as an extended metaphor or combination of metaphors, see Arist. *Poet.* 1458a and *Rhet.* 3, 1405a-b.

γνώθι νῦν τὰν Οἰδιπόδα σοφίαν· εἰ γὰρ τις ὄζους ὄξυτόμῳ πελέκει
ἐξερείψειεν μεγάλας δρυός, αἰσχύνοι δέ οἱ θαητὸν εἶδος,
καὶ φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα διδοῖ ψᾶφον περ' αὐτᾶς
εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πῦρ ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον,
ἢ σὺν ὀρθαῖς κίονεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν ἐρειδομένα
μόχθον ἄλλοις ἀμφέπει δύστανον ἐν τείχεσιν,
ἐὸν ἐρημώσασα χῶρον. (l. 263-9)

Know now the wisdom of Oedipus: for if one with sharp-cutting axe should chop off the branches of a great oak, and shame its wonderful form, even with its fruit withered it would submit to a vote regarding itself if ever it should come at last to a wintry fire, or planted with straight lordly columns it enjoys wretched toil¹¹⁸ in foreign walls, having abandoned its own place.

The basic political import of this riddling parable is shown by the context and by the admixture of one metaphorical expression that hints at the tenor: διδοῖ ψᾶφον (l. 265: “submit to a vote,” perhaps as if to establish one’s citizenship).¹¹⁹ Otherwise the figure is developed with remarkable clarity and consistency. Nonetheless, the precise significance of its details has never been settled, although all scholars agree that it refers somehow to Damophilus, an exile on whose behalf a special plea for mercy is given at the end of the ode (l. 279-99): the exile must be the oak. Regarding the remainder, for which numerous precise historical explanations have been proposed,¹²⁰ Gildersleeve asks, “Are all these accessories of fire and column mere adornments? Or is ‘the fire insurrection and the master’s house the Persian Empire?’ Is this an Homeric comparison, or a Pindaric riddle?”¹²¹ Doubts may persist about the exact meaning of the fire and

¹¹⁸ See Slater s.v. on the use of μόχθος esp. for athletic toil.

¹¹⁹ See Aeschines *Tim.* 77 with the comments by Burton (1962) 169 and Braswell (1988) ad loc. Gildersleeve ad loc. gives the same basic construal. For further possible intrusions in the imagery, see the comments of Silk (1974) 144-5.

¹²⁰ See again the correspondence between Frazer and Murray cited above, as well as the discussion and citations in Braswell (1988) 361.

¹²¹ Gildersleeve ad loc.; taking it to be “a parable of Oedipus in exile,” he explicates it by way of the story of Oedipus, who is identified in turn with the position of Damophilus. This has the merit of taking into account the attribution of the riddle to Oedipus.

the building, but I submit that the former stands for an untimely death (perhaps in war)¹²² and the latter for a useful role in another polity.¹²³ The Pindaric riddle’s details seem to be more precisely analogical than the average Homeric simile. At the same time, this riddle may well show the influence of Homer, who is in fact cited by name in the following strophe in another connection (l. 277): it has been plausibly suggested that the riddle draws from Achilles’ description of the scepter (Il. 1.235-8).¹²⁴ I would suggest in addition some reminiscence of the numerous Homeric comparisons of a falling warrior with a falling tree, which seem even more pertinent to the analogy here.¹²⁵ The riddle’s didacticism, finally, is underlined by a concluding emphasis on learning: Damophilus “has learned to hate the hybrist” (l. 284: ἔμαθε δ’ ὑβρίζοντα μισεῖν) and “has come to know [the opportune moment] well” (l. 286: εὖ νιν ἔγνωκεν).¹²⁶

Next, trees appear together with plowlands in *N.* 11, written to celebrate the appointment of Aristagoras of Tenedos as a πρύτανις or civic magistrate; it is not a proper epinikion therefore, but it bears some resemblance, and in particular to the civic odes.¹²⁷ Athletic prowess is noted; Aristagoras’ parents’ caution is given as the cause of his not having competed at Delphi or

¹²² Compare the “harsh storm of war” and “wintry gloom” in *I.* 4, discussed below.

¹²³ Not registering these simple possibilities, Braswell (1988) 361 asserts that the riddle is “basically a simple comparison,” with only two points of correspondence: the stripping of branches (= civic rights and property) and dislocation: “The rest, e.g. εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πύο ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον, which can only apply to a tree, is there simply to provide graphic details.” Burton (1962) 170 silently foregoes any further allegoresis, although puzzling over “whether the oak-tree is supported on upright pillars to form an architrave or set vertically on the ground in company with others.”

¹²⁴ See Schroeder ad loc., Burton (1962) 169-70, and Braswell (1988) 361.

¹²⁵ *Il.* 4.482, 13.178, 389-90, etc. On these similes in Greek and Vedic see Durante (1976) 121. Perhaps cf. also Odysseus’ comparison of Nausicaa with a palm tree, *Od.* 6.160-9.

¹²⁶ See καιρός in l. 285. Further, Damophilus, who likely commissioned the ode, is first mentioned in the statement that Kyrene and the Battidai “have recognized Damophilus’ just mind” (l. 279-81: ἐπέγνω . . . δικαίαν Δαμοφίλου πραπίδων).

¹²⁷ This ode, together with the fragmentary *I.* 9, is excluded from the categorizations of epinikia proper by Maslov (2015) 107 n. 207, but *N.* 11 is seen to bear some resemblance to civic odes in particular, as one might expect given the occasion: Maslov (2015) 113.

Olympia, where, the speaker swears, Aristagoras would have proven his illustrious, if distant, ancestry (l. 17-37). Against this background of Aristagoras' and his family's recent obscurity comes a gnomic passage:

ἀρχαῖαι δ' ἀρεταί
ἀμφέροντ' ἀλλασσόμεναι γενεαῖς ἀνδρῶν σθένοσ·
ἐνσχερῶ¹²⁸ δ' οὔτ' ὦν μέλαιναι καρπὸν ἔδωκαν ἄρουραι,
δένδρεά τ' οὐκ ἐθέλει πάσαισ ἐτέων περόδοισ
ἄνθος εὐὼδες φέρειν πλούτῳ ἴσον,
ἀλλ' ἐναμείβοντι. καὶ θνατὸν οὕτωσ ἔθνοσ ἄγει
μοῖρα. (l. 37-43)

Ancient virtues yield strength alternating by generations of men: black plowlands do not indeed give fruit continuously, and trees do not desire in all revolutions of the years to bear fragrant blossom equal in wealth, but they vary. And thus fate manages the mortal race.

The consolation is strengthened by the twofold analogy: both fields and trees observe a similar irregularity as marks human generations.¹²⁹ Properly speaking, however, there is only implicit comparison (until the οὔτωσ): the three separate phenomena are listed nearly in parallel, all evidence of fate—or rather the irregularity of crops is given as explanation or illustration of the gnome about ἀρεταί.¹³⁰ Humankind's connection with the earth was asserted in still more somber tones earlier in the ode: “Let him remember that he clothes mortal limbs, about to clothe himself last of all with earth” (l. 16-7: θνατὰ μεμνάσθω περιστελλῶν μέλη, / τελευτὰν ἀπάντων γὰν ἐπιεσσόμενοσ).¹³¹ That relationship with earth, which will return prominently in *N.* 6, is of course

¹²⁸ Following Turyn; see the comments of Verdenius ad loc. and cf. Henry ad loc.

¹²⁹ On the power of vegetation to offer such consolation, see Payne (2018). Fränkel (1975) 473 n. 9 claims, regarding this passage, that “fruit-trees bear a heavy crop only every other year,” but cf. Henry ad *N.* 11.37-43, and perhaps note, e.g., the far greater irregularity of the two apple trees on the Promontory Point in Hyde Park.

¹³⁰ This is not to ignore the δ' οὔτ' ὦν (l. 39), only to emphasize the lack of ὅτε *vel sim.*

¹³¹ Incidentally, I agree with Verdenius ad loc., contra Hubbard (1985) 58-9, that the following lines should not be taken to imply a φύσις-τέχνη contrast—although the preceding is certainly concerned with φύα/φύσις (under the terms τὸ θαητὸν δέμασ ἀτρεμίαν τε σύγγονον, as well as μορφᾶ and βίαν, l. 12-14).

a familiar basis (among many) for the analogy between human beings and vegetation. Yet it has also been suggested that those lines may allude to Xenophanes fr. 27: ἐκ γαίης γὰρ πάντα καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾷ (“For from earth all things [come] and into earth all pass away”).¹³² This suggestion, at the least, draws our attention to the proximity of the ideas. More likely, I think, is a reminiscence in this comparison too (as in *N.* 6 below) of the Homeric leaves simile, which pairs the φύλλων γενεή with the ἀνδρῶν γενεή, echoed perhaps in Pindar’s phrase γενεαῖς ἀνδρῶν.¹³³ Where Pindar differs from Homer, of course, is in attending to the irregularity within those cycles.

In *I.* 4, the civic ode for Melissos of Thebes (whose φύσις is not Orion’s, l. 67), another image of interrupted growth appears, but this time subsumed within the change of the seasons.

The image is foreshadowed early on in the ode:

Κλεωνυμίδαι θάλλοντες αἰεὶ
 σὺν θεῷ θνατὸν διέρχονται βίτου τέλος. ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλοῖος οὔρος
 πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐπαΐσσω ἐλαύνει. (l. 4-6)

The Kleonymidai always blossoming with a god arrive at the mortal end of life. But at different times different winds rushing upon all human beings drive them.

Further praise of the family’s prosperity ensues, yet with the following qualification:

ἄλλ’ ἀμέρα γὰρ ἐν μιᾷ
 τραχεῖα νιφὰς πολέμοιο τεσσάρων
 ἀνδρῶν ἐρήμωσεν μάκαιραν ἐστίαν·
 νῦν δ’ αὖ μετὰ χειμέριον ποικίλα μηνῶν ζόφον

¹³² Verdenius ad loc. The reminiscence does not seem likely to me.

¹³³ So Lefkowitz (1979) 54, 56, who suggests connections with other vegetal imagery within the ode as well. Without explicitly asserting a relationship between the two texts, Verdenius ad loc. supports the construal of ἀνδρῶν with γενεαῖς (“by generations of men”) rather than with σθένος (“strength of men” as others have had it) by referring to *Il.* 6.149, the final line of the leaves simile: ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεῆ ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ’ ἀπολήγει. Note also the reworking of the comparison of fields with the φορὰ . . . ἐν τοῖς γένεσιν ἀνδρῶν, Arist. *Rhet.* 2, 1290b, noted as a parallel to *N.* 11 by Fränkel (1975) 473 n. 9; Fränkel also refers to Pl. *Rep.* 8, 546a, where a similar comparison occurs.

χθὼν ὅτε φοινικέοισιν ἄνθησεν ῥόδοις
δαιμόνων βουλαῖς. (l. 34-7)

But in a single day a harsh storm of war deprived a blessed hearth of four men: but now again after months' wintry gloom, dappled is the earth just as it blossoms with crimson roses by divinities' counsels.

The translation is meant to preserve the effect of the postponed ὅτε (“just as”) and the lack of a corresponding subject: until ὅτε, the sentence seems to contain an implicit comparison, and after it one searches in vain for an explicit subject to compare with χθών. Perhaps a better translation would be ‘just as the dappled earth blossoms etc.,’ or ‘dappled just as the earth it [the hearth? the family?] blossoms etc.’¹³⁴ We have either an extended comparison with the earth (but with comparatum only implicit in the clause), or an extended metaphor with an imbedded comparison (i.e., ‘like the earth’). This uncertain structure recalls the blending of other Pindaric metaphors and similes.¹³⁵ Syntactic difficulties aside, the basic significance is plain: the family flourishes again just like the earth after even an unusually harsh and stormy winter. Here the consolatory image does not verge so much on didacticism, and the image is notably more positive about the fruitfulness of the earth. One might call it a happier adaptation of the leaves simile; and on this point, note how Homer is mentioned by name in this ode too (l. 55) and given credit for a hero’s fame spreading πάγκαρπον ἐπὶ χθόνα (l. 59: “over the all-fruited earth”). Just as the Kleonymidai are θάλλοντες αἰεὶ (l. 22), so the earth is πάγκαρπος; Melissos’ φύσις is fundamentally affirmed.

¹³⁴ The sentence is somewhat difficult, since ὅτε could govern χθών alone or ἄνθησεν and the clause with it. Willcock ad loc. provides no assistance. Bury ad loc. takes ἐστία as the subject of ἄνθησεν, and instead of ποικίλα reads ποικίλων with the MSS, as do Privitera and Willcock. Privitera (1982) translates: “ora però è rifiorito, dopo la bruma invernale dei mesi / mutevoli, come la terra fiorisce di rose purpuree / per divino volere.” Race: “it is as if the dappled earth had blossomed with red roses by the gods’ designs.” For ὅτε after the first word of the comparison, see *N.* 7.62, 71, 93; and compare also the use of ὡς in fr. 94a.5, μάντις ὡς τελέσσω.

¹³⁵ See Maslov (2015) 172-3.

In the final specimen, which comes from *N.* 6, the civic ode for Alkimidas of Aigina, the comparison is more clearly articulated and also more conceptually oriented. On the other hand, it is unexpectedly introduced by an apparently unparalleled use of the preposition ἄγχι (“near” or “close [to]”), instead of ὅτε vel sim; this feature will receive more comment momentarily. Here the general uncertainty of human life (in contrast with the divine) motivates the comparison at first, with a clearer application to the victor’s own family coming only later, with the mention of his grandfather (not father, l. 16). In the meantime,

τεκμαίρει δὲ καὶ νῦν Ἀλκιμίδας τὸ συγγενὲς ἰδεῖν
 ἄγχι καρποφόροις ἀρούραισιν, αἵτε ἀμειβόμεναι
 τόκα μὲν ὧν βίον ἀνδράσιν ἐπηετανὸν ἐκ πεδίων ἔδοσαν,
 τόκα δ’ αὐτ’ ἀναπαυσάμεναι σθένοσ ἔμαρψαν. (l. 8-11)

Alcimidias gives proof to see that the connate [or “the inborn”] is close to fruit-bearing plowlands, which alternating at one time give abundant sustenance for mankind from the plains, and at another time resting [or “lying fallow”?] ¹³⁶ in turn gather strength.

The focus on the articular neuter substantive τὸ συγγενές (“the connate” or “the inborn”) maintains the abstract speculation of the ode’s beginning. ¹³⁷ After such a “rationalistic” opening,

¹³⁶ See LSJ s.v. ἀναπαύω II.2.b and A.5. Henry ad *N.* 11.37-43 clarifies that he takes it to be a question only of lying fallow. Gerber (1999) ad loc. is not altogether clear on the point, but disagrees with Stoneman (1979) 77, who wrote: “The point here is not that crops are alternated, but simply that one has to wait upon the pleasure of the stock for results. Human nature is analogous to the enduring order of nature, and sooner or later will bear fruit: but only the gods know when.”

¹³⁷ So e.g. Fränkel (1975) 472-3. Henry ad loc. takes this to refer only to Alcimidias’ heredity. If the comparison is less generalizing than that of *N.* 11, having scope only over Alcimidias’ lineage, then it is not much consolation; moreover, here (unlike in *N.* 11) the image follows on a gnome about the uncertainty of human life as such. τὸ συγγενές appears again in *P.* 10.12, where the article admittedly has less generic force; see the discussion in Ch. 1. On articular substantives in Pindar, see Hummel (1993) 185 and Lattmann (2010) 52-3. For comparison, consider the use of neuter substantives with the article as a mark of Thucydidean style as discussed by Joho (forthcoming), and see the more general remarks of Snell (1953) ch. 10, where the possibilities of Pindar’s usage are overlooked and it is claimed that the use of the generic article only becomes clear in the philosophers.

the introduction of the comparison by ἄγχι (“close [to]”) deserves comment.¹³⁸ With the possible exception of a Pindaric fragment,¹³⁹ no other text seems to use ἄγχι to express resemblance. The superlative forms, ἄγχιστα and ἀγχοτάτω (perh. compare “closest”), are so used in other authors, especially Herodotus,¹⁴⁰ but Pindar uses the superlative only of physical proximity,¹⁴¹ and this is by far the commonest use of the superlative elsewhere and, to repeat, the only other attested use of ἄγχι. Understood as “close (to),” ἄγχι arguably has a parallel earlier in the ode, in the verb προσφέρωμεν (l. 4), which would normally mean something like “bear to” or “set before,” but here is construed with ἢ μέγαν / νόον ἦτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις (*N.* 6.4-5): “we bear either great mind or nature to the immortals” or, as it is usually understood, “we resemble the immortals in etc.”¹⁴² Just as προσφέρωμεν could, according to its normal use, suggest an approach in space to the immortals, I suggest that ἄγχι presents the comparison less as an abstract analogy than as an observation of intimate proximity and dependency, almost as if τὸ σύγγενες were itself another

¹³⁸ The strangeness of the construction is usefully compared with the wide variety of comparative constructions in Pindar as collected by Maslov (2015) 157.

¹³⁹ Slater s.v. ἄγχι lists also *Pae.* 7.10 (fr. 52g) as having this meaning, but the line only reads Χαρίτεσσί μοι ἄγχι θ[. Given the common claims of divine presence in Pindar, I suspect that physical proximity is more likely at issue here.

¹⁴⁰ Henry ad loc. compares “the Homeric ἄγχιστα with verbs of likeness (*Il.* 2.58, 14.474, *Od.* 6.152, 13.80).” Likewise Gerber (1999) ad loc., who compares in addition the use of ἀγχοτάτω “closest (to)” = “most like” in Herodotus, 7.91. Indeed, Herodotus’ use of ἀγχοτάτω (c. gen. or dat.) is the closest parallel: see 7.64, 73, 74, 80, 89, 91 (all in Book 7; I have found no instances of the use in the other books). Herodotus also uses it of kinship, it seems: οἱ ἀγχοτάτω προσήκοντες, 4.73; otherwise he only uses it of physical proximity, as at 7.176. Perhaps consider also the obscure phrasing of οἱ ἄγχιστα (“the closest”) in a Delphic oracle in Herodotus, 5.79. For the comparable use of “close,” see *OED* s.v. close, 18 and s.v. closely, 5; and note esp. the common phrase “the closest thing to” (of resemblance), which is well attested already in the nineteenth century but overlooked by the *OED*. See also *OED* s.v. near, adv. 2, 2.

¹⁴¹ See *P.* 9.64, *N.* 9.55, *I.* 2.10, fr. 146.2.

¹⁴² For this rare use of the verb, see *LSJ* s.v. προσφέρω A.III and B.I.5, and compare the instance of it in the Theognidean advice of Pindar fr. 43.3; cf. esp. Bury ad *N.* 6.4.

feature of the landscape.¹⁴³ “We both breathe,” said Pindar, “from one mother,” i.e. Gaia (*N.* 6.1-2), and the victor shows how τὸ σύγγενες remains “close to” earth’s fields, the features of which bear an implied family resemblance to human heredity.¹⁴⁴ Observe, however, that it is “close,” not “closest.” The construction has a delicacy that a more straightforward comparison would not. Regarding the image, there is disagreement as to whether it concerns unpredictable harvests or fallow fields, but considering that fields lie fallow from human providence, the simile would then seem to require that destiny is the family’s farmer (cf. πότμος, *l.* 6b); this is perhaps a possibility, but no overseeing agency is indicated in the image. Both fields and families may fluctuate unpredictably.¹⁴⁵ Again Pindar offers a variation on the leaves simile, stressing precisely the irregularity of life. At the same time, the analogy between plant and human is founded here on an explicit derivation of the human—and the divine—from earth, which builds upon Hesiod and the Homeric corpus, etc.¹⁴⁶ In fact, deference to the epic tradition is expressed toward the end of the ode,¹⁴⁷ which concludes with praise of the Athenian trainer, Melesias.

Despite the individual problems posed by each of these four images, all have in common an extension and consistency otherwise unusual for vegetal imagery in the corpus. While the riddle of the dynast ode *P.* 4 revolves around the fate of just one tree, the three comparisons in the ode for Aristagoras and the civic odes all compare the laudandus’ family with interrupted

¹⁴³ Perhaps compare the Homeric use of ἄγχι in landscapes, e.g. *Od.* 6.291, *H. Hym.* 3.385. One might also think of Antaeus, who incidentally appears in *I.* 4.70 and *P.* 9.106, and whose memory would be appropriate enough in *N.* 6 too, since it is for a wrestler.

¹⁴⁴ Fränkel (1975) 473 n. 9: “Here the notion is refined: ‘Like the earth which nourishes him, so the nature of man himself sometimes fails.’”

¹⁴⁵ See citations above on the relevant line of my translation, and see also Bernard (1963) 57-8.

¹⁴⁶ For the role of Gaia, see esp. Hes. *Theog.* 106, *H. Hymn* 30.1, and Gerber (1999) ad *N.* 6.1-2 for further citations.

¹⁴⁷ *l.* 53-4: καὶ ταῦτα μὲν παλαιότεροι / ὁδὸν ἀμαξιτὸν εὐρον· ἔπομαι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔχων μελέταν. Here the poetical speaker follows in their tracks. As Gerber (1999) ad loc. notes, the only clear allusion would seem to be to the Aithiopsis.

harvests that nevertheless demonstrate renewed fertility in the present. As noted above, each of these odes is written in dactylo-epitrites,¹⁴⁸ and all four give indications of possible Homeric influence. The oak riddle in *P.* 4, for one, may recall in addition the use of hexameter for riddles, such as the Sphinx’s riddle that Oedipus solved.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, when juxtaposed with the array of responses to the Homeric leaves simile in particular, all the clearest examples of which occur in hexameter or elegy,¹⁵⁰ the three comparisons in the civic odes belong more clearly to a tradition of extended vegetal analogies that dwell in varying ways upon the impermanence of human life.¹⁵¹ It is especially intriguing for our purposes here that the only two Pindaric instances of φύσις are found in two of these three odes. In *N.* 6 in particular we find, in close association at the beginning of the ode, both a prominent use of φύσις and a memorable “comparison with the irregular productiveness of the earth [that] serves to characterize the changing and unreliable nature of man.”¹⁵² The ideological bent of elegy is combined there with the extended and didactic imagery of elegy and hexameter, as well as the nascent discourse of φύσις. In *N.* 6, that imagery also echoes in the poetological metaphor of plowing, to which we now turn.

¹⁴⁸ *P.* 4, *N.* 11, and *I.* 4 are unanimously analyzed as such; Snell took *N.* 6 to consist of “aeolica, dimetra, choriambica ad dactylos vergentia,” but Gerber (1999) 36 announced that Itsumi had persuaded him that it consists primarily of freer dactylo-epitrites, which was the published judgement of Itsumi (2009) 301; see also Henry (2005) 52.

¹⁴⁹ Recall how the riddle is introduced at *P.* 4.263 with the phrase τὰν Οἰδιπόδα σοφίαν. The canonic version of the Sphinx’s riddle is in hexameter, Asclepiades of Tragilus, *FGrH* 12; for discussion of this riddle and the linguistic features of Greek riddles generally, see Katz (2013).

¹⁵⁰ See esp. *Il.* 21.464-6 (and note ἀρούρης καρπὸν, l. 465), Mimnermus 2, Musaeus 97 F (B5), Simonides fr. 19, 20; and for further discussion and citations, Sider (1996). Compare also the use of vegetal analogy in *Theog.* 535-8.

¹⁵¹ On this note one might recall that dactylo-epitrites are commonly used for *threnoi*, as noted in the Introduction and Maslov (2015) 311.

¹⁵² Fränkel (1975) 473.

V. Metapoetic Plowing and Gardening

Pindar offers what may be the earliest extant poetological plowing and gardening metaphors, and certainly offers more of them than any other poet: three plowings and one garden.¹⁵³ Although not strictly vegetal, these metaphors are included here for their intrinsic relationship to more distinctly vegetal imagery, seen particularly clearly in *N.* 6. The possible role of the tropes within the poetical tradition will be considered briefly here, but for our argument the most important points are three: first, that in each ode the plowing or gardening seems to resonate with other images that reinforce some connection to the larger theme of *φυά/φύσις*; second, that the plowing is connected with *ῥυμος* in all three instances; and third, that the plowing image is made to suggest much greater immediacy in a dynast ode (*P.* 6) than in the two civic odes where it also appears (*N.* 6 and 10). Pindar’s gardening, finally, is said to be done by the poetic speaker only in the rather grand intermediate ode *O.* 9, which, as we saw in Ch. 1, contains one of the strongest formulations concerning *φυά*. We resume with *N.* 6, then take up *N.* 10 and *P.* 6, before turning finally to *O.* 9.

¹⁵³ I do not include the *ἀμπολεῖν* (perhaps “to turn up,” “turn over”) of *N.* 7.104 as a proper plowing metaphor, as the context in the ode and the usage of the verb elsewhere do not suggest to my mind that it should be translated as “to plow,” contra e.g. Nünlist (1998) 137, Carey ad loc., and Race (who expands the alleged figure considerably as “to plow the same ruts”). The difficulty of taking it as “to plow” is brought out by Teffeteller (2005) 88 n. 55: “clearly, the metaphor here depends on precisely what type of ploughing is in question. Since the ploughing of fallow land is properly done multiple times [. . .], and since Pindar obviously intends a metaphor which indicates *pointless* (*ἀπορία*, 105) activity, the reference here must be to the *ploughing of a furrow* for sowing: once is enough.” If it only makes sense for a particular sort of plowing, yet there is no better cue that such a particular sort is to be envisioned, then perhaps it does not refer to plowing. Further, the use of *ἀναπολέω* in Soph. *Phil.* 1238 and Pl. *Phileb.* 34b, the only other instances of the verb in classical authors, does not suggest any metaphorical force; as far as I know the simplex *πολεῖν* is used of plowing only in combination with *ἄρουρα*, as at Hes. *Op.* 461-2 and Nic. *Al.* 245—likewise in *P.* 6.1-2 *ἀναπολίζομεν* takes *ἄρουραν*.

In *N.* 6.32–4, the victor’s family is said to be “capable of providing to the Pierides’ plowmen much hymn¹⁵⁴ on account of lordly deeds” (Πιερίδων ἀρόταις / δυνατοὶ παρέχειν πολὺν ὕμνον ἀγερώχων ἐργμάτων / ἔνεκεν). The image of plowing is not developed at all, but the ground, as it were, had been prepared by the comparison, discussed above, of the victor’s heredity with “fruit-bearing plowlands” (l. 9: καρποφόροις ἀρούραισιν).¹⁵⁵ “Poets,” writes Bury ad loc., “are called *the ploughmen of the Muses* . . . because the family of Alcimidas has been compared in l. 9 to a tilled field. In choosing Πιερίδων Pindar had a thought of its connection with *πίερα* [fertile].” As we will see with the other two instances, such factors are hardly necessary causes for the reference to the Pierians’ plowmen. Yet the preceding comparison is somewhat recast by this passage, which picks up the image of the plowland while abandoning the notion of its irregularity, thus reinforcing the praise of the victor’s family.

The Muses themselves are supposed to do the plowing in *N.* 10, which begins however with a prayer asking the Graces to hymn Argos (l. 2: ὑμνεῖτε); the ode celebrates a victory at games there,

Οὐλία παῖς ἔνθα νικάσαις δις ἔσχεν Θεαῖος εὐφόρων λάθαν πόνων.
 ἐκράτησε δὲ καὶ ποθ’ Ἑλλανα στρατὸν Πυθῶνι, τύχα τε μολῶν
 καὶ τὸν Ἴσθμοῖ καὶ Νεμέα στέφανον, Μοῖσαισὶ τ’ ἔδωκ’ ἀρόσαι,
 τρὶς μὲν ἐν πόντοιο πύλαισι λαχῶν,
 τρὶς δὲ καὶ σεμνοῖς δαπέδοις ἐν Ἀδραστείῳ νόμῳ. (l. 24-8)

where Oulia’s son Theaeus having conquered twice held forgetfulness of well-borne¹⁵⁶ labors. And he conquered once the Hellenic host at Pytho, and with fortune coming [he conquered]¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ See Maslov (2015) 306 for a discussion of this passage and Pindar’s use of ὕμνος.

¹⁵⁵ One might wonder, additionally, whether the context could make ἐργμάτων (l. 33) recall ἔργον as “tilled land”; and whether the image is faintly echoed in the following mention of an ancestor honored by a sacrifice of oxen (ll. 39–40) and crowned by “the lion’s herb” (βοτάνα . . . λέοντος, l. 43).

¹⁵⁶ Perhaps “fruitful” (so Mezger ad loc. and Bury ad loc., who would see a continuation of this metaphor in the plow image to come), but see Henry ad loc.

the crown at the Isthmus and Nemea, and gave the Muses to plow,¹⁵⁸ receiving [the crown] thrice in the gates of the sea [at the Isthmus], thrice also on the august grounds in the tradition of Adrastus [at Nemea].

Juxtaposed with the victor's "forgetfulness of labors" won upon the wrestling grounds, the Muses' plowing may evoke the happy forgetfulness of choral music at the site of the games.¹⁵⁹

The passage is also notably preceded by the single instance in a civic ode of the metaphor φρενῶν καρπός ("fruit of the mind," discussed below); that metaphor is not metapoetic here, but resonates perhaps in the agricultural metaphor of plowing, and in this context more than the others it plainly bears upon heredity. The victor has given the Muses to plow; the relationship between that plowing and the song is unspecified.

In contrast with the two other odes, *P.* 6 begins with a bold composite:

Ἀκούσατ' ἢ γὰρ ἐλικώπιδος Ἀφροδίτας ἄρουραν ἢ Χαρίτων
ἀναπολίζομεν, ὀμφαλὸν ἐριβρόμου
χθονὸς ἐς νάϊον προσοιχόμενοι· (l. 1-3)

Listen! For indeed glancing-eyed Aphrodite's plowland or the Graces' we are turning up again, to the templed navel of loud-bellowing earth [i.e. Delphi] approaching.

The synaesthesia (to listen to the plowing) draws immediate attention to the metapoetic import of the image, made more explicit through the Graces. Aphrodite adds a curious element, possibly

¹⁵⁷ See Slater s.vv. κρατέω and μολεῖν, and Henry ad loc.; this is not such a stretch of the usage of κρατέω as Henry supposes: see, in addition to Slater, LSJ s.v. κρατέω IV.2.

¹⁵⁸ The syntax of the sentence has been a source of disagreement, with some taking στέφανον to be the object of ἀρόσαι: so Schol. ad *N.* 10, 49a and Mezger ad loc.: "er gab den Kranz den Musen zum Bearbeiten, d. h. Besingen — die Metapher ist kühn, darf aber nicht beanstandet werden." Stoneman (1981) contra Mezger criticized "ploughing a garland" as paradigmatic of Pindar's imagistic confusion. On δίδωμι with infinitive, see LSJ s.v. δίδωμι A.4, and for the parallel in English, *OED* s.v. give II.6.b.

¹⁵⁹ On the forgetfulness of song, see e.g. *P.* 1.5-10.

calling to mind the erotic use of plow metaphors.¹⁶⁰ In Pindar, Aphrodite and the Graces appear together again only as recipients of a prayer from the singer, “spokesman of the Muses,” in *Pae.* 6, a paean for Delphi.¹⁶¹ Consequently, some have held *P.* 6 to be related to *Pae.* 6: as Burton notes, ἀναπολίζομεν could suggest a repeated plowing, thereby alluding to a prior performance in Delphi.¹⁶² Such a reference would fit a pattern observable in other authors’ plow metaphors, as we will see; but the important point here is that Aphrodite and the Graces as a group were linked with cultic hymn at Delphi. Moreover, the reference to Delphi as the ὀμφαλὸς χθονός (“navel of earth”) puts this plowing in a rather cosmic context. Yet this quasi-cosmic agriculture promptly gives way to a metaphorical repurposing of Delphic architecture: “a treasury of hymns has been built in the gold-filled Apollonian glen” (*P.* 6.7/8-9: ὕμνων θησαυρὸς ἐν πολυχρύσῳ / Ἀπολλυνία τετείχισται νάπα).¹⁶³ Organic imagery is, as usual, not scrupulously maintained. At the end of the ode, however, it is agricultural metaphor that is renewed for Thrasybulus, the victor’s son and yet the primary laudandus:

νόῳ δὲ πλοῦτον ἄγει,
 ἄδικον οὔθ’ ὑπέροπλον ἦβαν δρέπων,
 σοφίαν δ’ ἐν μυχοῖσι Πιερίδων·

¹⁶⁰ For erotic plowing, see e.g. *P.* 4.254-5 and Theognis 581-2. An inference from Aphrodite’s presence to an erotic intent on the part of the poet was suggested by Wilamowitz (1922) 137, who connects this with Pindar’s possible affection for Thrasybulus; cf. Rutherford ad *Pae.* 6.

¹⁶¹ Kurke (1990) 87 notes how the combination of Aphrodite and the Charites is also found in Ibycus fr. 7 (288 Page), a fragment of an erotic poem, and Pindar fr. 123, an encomium. Both fragments also have comparable vegetal or horticultural imagery: Ibycus’ addressee was nursed ῥοδέοισιν ἐν ἄνθεσι (l. 3), and Pindar fr. 123 begins with talk of ἐρώτων δρέπεσθαι; note also the bees in fr. 123.11.

¹⁶² Burton (1962) ad loc. For the repetition possibly denoted by ἀναπολίζομεν, compare the ἀμπολεῖν of *N.* 7.104, discussed above.

¹⁶³ Gildersleeve ad loc.: “Pindar goes a-ploughing, and finds in the field of Aphrodite, or of the Charites, treasure of song.” The image of the treasury is central to recent arguments about the prominence of architectural and craft imagery in Pindaric poetics; see above. On the use of the image in this poem, see Shapiro (1988), Neer (2001). For a rich discussion of treasuries in Pindar with a focus on *O.* 6, see Neer & Kurke (2019) 240-54.

[. . .]
γλυκεῖα δὲ φρήν
καὶ συμπόταισιν ὀμιλεῖν
μελισσᾶν ἀμείβεται τρητὸν πόνον. (*P.* 6.47-9, 52-4)

He manages wealth with intelligence, reaping a youth neither unjust nor insolent, and [reaping] wisdom in the nooks of the Pierides. [. . .] Sweet [is] his mind and in company with complotors [it] requites the honeybees' perforated work.¹⁶⁴

Thus the choral plowing for Aphrodite and the Graces is answered by the young man's gentle and secluded harvest of ἦβρα and σοφία. And the vegetal image implicit in δρέπων ("reaping") persists as an undercurrent of the comparison with honeycomb at "the close of this excessively sugary poem."¹⁶⁵ Particularly noteworthy in this ode is how the harvest image of δρέπων shows a distinct conceptual orientation by governing ἦβαν (rather than its blossom or fruit!) as well as σοφίαν, even if it is a σοφία found ἐν μυχοῖσι Πιερίδων. The clever blend of agricultural and architectural metaphors is unusual for a dynast ode.¹⁶⁶ Further, the immediate involvement of the choral speakers in the plowing,¹⁶⁷ mirrored by the direct harvesting by the laudandus, set this ode apart from the other two.

In sum, Pindaric plowers are always plural, and they are closely affiliated with Aphrodite, the Graces, and the Muses (who plow in *N.* 10), and the plowers' activity is tied more or less directly to ὕμνος. *P.* 6 may perhaps employ the trope to refer to prior performance, but all three of Pindar's plow metaphors seem remarkably conservative in contrast with the comparanda from

¹⁶⁴ See Gildersleeve ad loc. For the translation of ἀμείβεται, generally rendered as "surpasses" (for which it is the sole instance given by LSJ and Slater), instead as "requites," see Kurke (1990) 100-1. On the comparison with honeycomb, see also Schroeder ad loc. and fr. 152: μελισσοτεύκτων κηρίων ἐμὰ γλυκερώτερος ὀμφά.

¹⁶⁵ Gildersleeve ad loc.

¹⁶⁶ But cf. *O.* 6 for a similar combination, and contrasting opening and closing images.

¹⁶⁷ Compare on this point the remarks of Eckerman (2014) 28: "The audience hears 'we are plowing' (ἀναπολίζομεν, 1.3), and they thereby become a part of the inclusive 'we' of the first-person plural subject [. . .]."

other authors, all of which, even the two from his contemporary Pratinas, are more openly programmatic and literary.¹⁶⁸ It is possible that the original significance of the trope is to be found in the dancing of the chorus, and it is plausible that choreography is at least part of the point in these Pindaric passages.¹⁶⁹ But it is also tempting to see an engagement with the Hesiodic legacy in particular, whatever one takes Hesiod's plow to symbolize.¹⁷⁰ This would be

¹⁶⁸ The only certain parallels of which I am aware come from Pratinas fr. 710, 712 Page (= fr. 5,6 Snell), Anon. 923.4 Page, and Callimachus *Hymn* 3.170–82; perhaps also Archilochus, according to Bing (1984) 2 n. 4. Pratinas was probably Pindar's senior, but their careers overlapped considerably, and relative dating of the relevant passages is impossible; see Wolkow (2005) 33. Pratinas 710 Page (5 Snell): οὐ γὰν ἀύλακισμένην ἀρῶν, ἀλλ' ἄσκαφον ματεύων ("not plowing furrowed land, but seeking undug [land]"). As quoted by Athenaeus (11.461e) this is metadiscursive, but Wolkow 264–5 argues that it contains a contrast between plowing and viticulture, and then, 271–6, argues on that basis that it is from the chorus of a satyr play, and is not metapoetic. The image caps a priamel in Pratinas 712 Page (6 Snell): μήτε σύντονον δίωκε / μήτε τὰν ἀνειμένην / μουσαν, ἀλλὰ τὰν μέσαν / νεῶν ἄρουραν αἰόλιζε τῷ μέλει ("Neither the tight pursue, / nor the loose / muse, but the middle / plowland tilling, aiolize in your song"). For discussion, see Wolkow (2005) 278–320, esp. 300 on νεῶν ἄρουραν and how "Pindar is not the only poet capable of sublime and sudden shifts of imagery," then 307–8 for focused comparison of this fragment with Pindar. The anonymous fr. 923.4 Page uses the trope to urge poetic originality: ἀλλοτρίαις δ' οὐ μίγνυται μουσαν ἀρούραις. For discussion of this fragment, see Bing (1984) 2. The passage from Callimachus is too long to quote here, but see Bing (1984), who argues that Callimachus' plowing derives from Pindar (see p. 2) but that it also alludes critically to Homer and favorably to Hesiod.

¹⁶⁹ Callimachus uses a developed plow image set within a scene of nymphs dancing for Artemis, but otherwise the comparanda show no clear reference to dancing; but in Pratinas 710 Page it may refer to dance, according to Wolkow (2005) 271 n. 789. Perhaps too much is made of the possible choreography by Eckerman (2014) 27: "The haptic connection that Pindar first develops through the image of plowing a field . . . fades away as the audience realizes that the chorus plows a metaphorical field, that is, constructs poetry. Nonetheless, the image of plowing may have been chosen to relate to the choreography of the ode, because, on occasion, Greek dances mimicked agricultural acts. If *Pythian* 6's choreography included dance moves that mimicked plowing, the dance creates a further tactile relationship with the land, as the chorus mimics cutting into the land (ἄρουραν, l.2) with their plows." See also Bernardini et al. (1995) 540.

¹⁷⁰ For an ethical-poetological approach to that symbolism, see Marsilio (2000) esp. ch. 5, and for a focus on the possibility that this ethical-poetological plow is, already in Hesiod, a symbol of Hesiodic hexameter as opposed to Homeric, see Beall (2004), where Pindar makes a brief appearance on p. 28.

particularly appropriate for *P.* 6, which bears marks of careful engagement with the genre of Hesiodic *hypothekai*.¹⁷¹

In this respect, however, it is remarkable that the closest parallel in the corpus, and the only passage which applies such an image of agricultural labor to the individual poetical speaker, is one that has nothing to do with a plow or plowland, but rather a garden, *κᾶπος*. In the passage of *O.* 9 cited above, the garden appears at the end of a spectacular array of imagery, worth quoting at length. The victor's hometown of Opeus

θάλλει δ' ἀρεταῖσιν
σόν τε, Κασταλία, πάρα
Ἄλφειοῦ τε ῥέεθρον·
ὄθεν στεφάνων ἄωτοι κλυτὰν
Λοκρῶν ἐπαείροντι ματέρ' ἀγλαόδενδρον.

ἐγὼ δέ τοι φίλαν πόλιν
μαλεραῖς ἐπιφλέγων ἀοιδαῖς,
καὶ ἀγάνορος ἵππου
θᾶσσον καὶ ναὸς ὑποπτέρου παντᾶ
ἀγγελίαν πέμψω ταύταν, εἰ σὺν τινι μοιριδίῳ παλάμα
ἐξάριετον Χαρίτων νέμομαι κᾶπον·
κεῖναι γὰρ ὄπασαν τὰ τέρπν'· (l. 16-27)

blooms with virtues beside your stream, Castalia, and Alpheus'; whence the finest of garlands exalt the Locrians' famous mother splendid-in-trees. But I, lighting up the dear city with raging songs, more swiftly than a heroic horse and a winged ship shall send this message everywhere, if with some ordained skill [or "palm"] I cultivate a choice garden of the Graces: for they grant the delightful things.

Again, what may sound somewhat cliché to a modern reader was apparently not.¹⁷² In its immediate context too, following the other poetological metaphors and comparisons, the garden

¹⁷¹ Kurke (1990); see also Spelman (2018a) 97-8 on the Hesiodic themes of the description of Thrasybulus, *P.* 6.47-9.

¹⁷² The garden of the Graces does not reappear until a Pindaric citation by Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 30.16: πῶς δ' οὐχὶ τοῦ σωτήρος αὐτοῦ τὸ πρέμνον, καὶ μάλ' ἐν ἀκηράτοις Χαρίτων κήποις . . . ; (referring to his pupil, the laudandus of the oration); Pindar is cited here in combination with the famous image from Euripides' *Hippolytus*, in a manner perhaps

of the Graces stands out for its gnomic extension and its horticulturalism, which recalls the vegetal imagery applied to Opous in the lines at the start of the quotation. The totalizing power of the Graces may perhaps leave the metaphor's tenor all the more opaque; at the same time, shortly afterward the κᾶπος is itself recalled by the phrase ἄνθεα ὕμνων (l. 48, discussed below), which is readily coordinated with the poetical κᾶπος.¹⁷³ Considering in addition the statement toward the end of the ode (l. 100-4) about how all that is by nature (φύᾳ) is best and also marked by divine favor, it is all the more remarkable that the scholiasts, as we saw above, did not interpret this κᾶπος in terms of φύᾳ. To be sure, the two passages are far apart, and there is no indication that the κᾶπος corresponds to the poet's "cultivated" φύᾳ, although the Charites are clearly made responsible for that as well; but it is probably not coincidental that the only agricultural metaphor that foregrounds an individual poet occurs in an ode with such an emphatic dictum about φύᾳ.

reminiscent of the passage from Plato's *Ion* cited above; see the discussion of Aristides' use of this (among all his other citations of Pindar) by Gkourogiannis (1999) 132-7. Pindar's image may also ultimately lie behind the still more Platonic passage in Himerius, *Or.* 48.387-9: τὰ δὲ ὕμνων περὶ Μοῦσαι μὲν ἔφυσαν ἐν Μνημοσύνης κήποις, ἔθρεψαν δὲ Ὠροὶ καὶ Χάριτες, ἐκ πηγῶν ἀληθείας ἐπάροδουσαι. The Graces' garden returns in Himerius' pupil, Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigr.* 8.129.4 = *Anth. Gr.* 8.129.4: κῆποι Χαρίτων εἰς ἐν ἀγειρομένων. Graces appear in other gardens in Nonnus, *Dion.* 31.204 and 33.4; in the Nonnian hexameters of John of Gaza's *Tabula Mundi* 2.273; and in several Byzantine authors.

¹⁷³ Gildersleeve ad loc.: "The condition is merely formal. This is the key-note of Pindar's poetic claims. Here he is tilling the garden of the Charites. The flaming darts of song are changed into flowers (ἄνθεα ὕμνων, v. 52), with which the keeper of the garden of the Charites pelts his favorites [. . .] as he showered arrows before." Like some of Pindar's Romantic readers in particular, some scholars have been quick to assume that the κᾶπος is, in Gildersleeve's estimation, the "key-note": see Silver (1985) II.2, 16, and also Gkourogiannis (1999) 134. But I think Gildersleeve must have (reasonably) meant that the key-note is the polite presumption of divinely granted skill: had that sentence instead followed upon the third ("Here he is tilling . . ."), then Gildersleeve would have been somewhat exaggerating this unique passage's role in the corpus; but cf. Motte (1973), and the discussion of his interpretation above.

Finally, although I have found no clear parallels—apart from Plato’s “gardens of the Muses”—before Aelius Aristides’ citation of the Pindaric line, it may be that Pindar borrowed his poetical garden from his senior rival, Simonides:

Simonides used to say that Hesiod was a gardener (κηπουρός), and Homer a garland-weaver, the former as having planted the mythologies about gods and heroes, the latter as having woven from them the garland of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹⁷⁴

This is the only evidence I have seen for a possible direct precedent, and it suggests that even Pindar’s κᾶπος may have contained some Hesiodic allusion. If so, this would give further basis for an argument about Pindar’s appropriation of Hesiodic authority by way of agricultural and other rural imagery.¹⁷⁵

As much as the Hesiodic legacy could unify the four passages considered here, the differences among them remain. In the civic odes, the Pierians and their plowmen are referred to in the third person, their activity not brought to bear directly upon the odes; in the intermediate ode, the poetical speaker conditionally boasts of cultivating a garden of the Graces; in the dynast ode, it is announced that “we are turning up the plowlands of Aphrodite or of the Graces” with unparalleled immediacy. In the civic *N.* 6, the metapoetic plowmen seem to belong to a larger symbolic complex, encompassing the descent of gods and mortals from earth, the comparison of human heredity with plowlands, and the comparison of mortals with gods in νόος and in φύσις; in the intermediate *O.* 9, a garden of the Graces is a potent if ambiguous image of the life that is superior φυῶ.

¹⁷⁴ *Gnomol. Vat. Gr.* 1144 = Hesiod T 18d Jac.: Σιμωνίδης τὸν Ἡσίοδον κηπουρὸν ἔλεγε, τὸν δὲ Ὅμηρον στεφανηπλόκον, τὸν μὲν ὡς φυτεύσαντα τὰς περὶ θεῶν καὶ ἡρώων μυθολογίας, τὸν δὲ ὡς ἐξ αὐτῶν συμπλέξαντα τὸν Ἰλιάδος καὶ Ὀδυσσεΐας στέφανον.

¹⁷⁵ See esp. Worman (2015) ch. 2.

VI. Blossoms of Song and the Fruit of the Mind

In this final section we turn to that which might be thought to grow within that garden or within the human mind, whether the poet's or another's. We begin with the strictly poetological blossoms of song, and then turn to the fruit of the mind.

There are of course many metaphorical blossoms throughout the corpus, but the poetological use of ἄνθος is rare and circumscribed.¹⁷⁶ Hence, as with the “fruit of the mind,” what may seem a simple cliché is almost certainly not. Certain patterns emerge, moreover, which are echoed by the closest comparanda, coming from Bacchylides. However slim, the evidence from both authors suggests a limited borrowing of this metaphor from cult song for the purpose of grander odes. Although the trope is not distinctly connected with φυά, it is a particularly striking example of the prioritization of certain vegetal metaphors along the lines of the other tropes examined here.

Both Pindar and Bacchylides use ἄνθος for grand epinikia and paeans. Pindar's poetological ἄνθεα (“blossoms”) are always linked to ὕμνος (“hymn”),¹⁷⁷ appearing with the genitive ὕμνων (“of hymns”) in two epinikia, namely *O.* 6 (the dynast ode for Hieron's friend Hagesias)¹⁷⁸ and *O.* 9 (the intermediate ode for Epharmostus of Opous),¹⁷⁹ and then appearing

¹⁷⁶ For precedents in flower imagery, but not in the use of ἄνθος, and for related “flowery” or “flowering” things in Pindar, see Nünlist (1998) ch. 9.

¹⁷⁷ On the semantics of ὕμνος in Pindar and beyond, see Maslov (2015) 286-94, and esp. 293 for its distribution within Maslov's categories of the odes. In Pindar, ὕμνος attracted a variety of metaphors, such as we see in the phrases ὕμνων θησαυρὸς (*P.* 6.7, seen above), αὐξίης οὐρόν ὕμνων (*P.* 4.3), and ἀνοιξαι πίθον ὕμνων (fr. 354).

¹⁷⁸ *O.* 6, as noted above, begins with the grandest architectural metaphor, and also contains numerous other poetological metaphors besides: see *O.* 6.82,86,91.

¹⁷⁹ *O.* 9.47-9: ἔγειρ' ἐπέων σφιν οἶμον λιγύν, / αἶνει δὲ παλαιὸν μὲν οἶνον, ἄνθεα δ' ὕμνων / νεωτέρων (“Rouse for them [a clear path of song, / and praise old wine, but blossoms of newer hymns”).

with ὑμνήσιος (“of hymning”) in a fragment judged to be from a paeon (fr. 52m).¹⁸⁰ The latter generic association seems to have suggested a reconstruction of a fragment, *Pae.* 1, to read Παιὰ]ν δὲ λαῶν γενεᾶν δαρὸν ἐρέπτοι / [σαό]φρονος ἄνθεσιν εὐνομίας (ll. 9-10: “May Paian wreath the race of [Thebes’] peoples with the flowers of temperate lawfulness”).¹⁸¹ The personification of the genre itself bestows flowers, although they are not flowers of ὕμνος *vel sim.* A more certain association with paeon is shown by Bacchylides’ poetological ἄνθεα. In a dithyramb about Heracles, we read of παιήνων / ἄνθεα (“blossoms of paeans”);¹⁸² and in what we know was a paeon, there are αἰοιδᾶν ἄνθεα (“blossoms of songs”).¹⁸³ In the only other Bacchylidean parallel, the poet offers an ἄνθεμον Μουσᾶ[ν Ἰ]έρων[ι (fr. 20C.3: “a blossom of the Muses for Hieron”), akin to Pindar’s ὕμνων ἄνθος in *O.* 6 for Hieron’s friend, Hagesias. Aside from two citations of Pindar,¹⁸⁴ ἄνθος does not reappear with ὕμνος before Synesius (fourth to fifth century),¹⁸⁵ and after Bacchylides, ἄνθος is not combined with αἰοιδῆ again until

¹⁸⁰ On whether Pindar fr. 52m is a paeon, see Rutherford (2001) 365: “The Apollonian theme of the song is a strong reason for supposing that it might have been from a παιάν.” The association of ἄνθεα with παιάν in Bacchylides would be consistent with that categorization. Cf. however Maslov (2015) 292 on how ὕμνος does not appear to be applied to, or feature in Pindaric paeon; ὑμνήσιος would have to be an exception. There is in addition one pertinent ἄνθεμον (also “blossom”), which features in a well-known image of the Muse making a crown in a civic ode (*N.* 7); its interpretation is problematic, since “blossom of marine dew” is an obscure phrase taken usually to refer to coral, but it may refer to rosemary (*ros marinus* or “marine dew” being a possible calque of πόντια ἔέρσα) according to Egan (2005).

¹⁸¹ *Pae.* 1.9-10 = fr. 52a = D1 Rutherford. The reconstruction is from D’Alessio (1988), followed by Rutherford and by Race in the Loeb. In place of Παιὰ]ν, Snell-Maehler and Turyn read only τὰ]ν.

¹⁸² Bacchylides 16.8-9.

¹⁸³ fr. 4.63, where the fragmentary papyrus is supplemented by a quotation (=fr. 3 Jebb) from Stobaeus, 55.3.

¹⁸⁴ *O.* 9 (see text below) is cited by Athenaeus 1.47, and Eustathius ad *Od.* 1.66.

¹⁸⁵ *Hymn* 4.5: στεφανώσομεν σοφοῖς ἄνθεσιν ὕμνων.

Christodorus (fifth to sixth century).¹⁸⁶ So it seems that the trope was unusually favored by these two authors, and that in both it had strong associations with cult song.

The Pindaric instances show little inclination to extend the metaphor. In *O.* 6, which in fact concludes with the word ἄνθος, the speaker prays that Poseidon will “make the pleasant blossom of my hymns grow,” (l. 105: ἐμῶν δ’ ὕμνων ἄεξ’ εὐτερπὲς ἄνθος).¹⁸⁷ In *O.* 9.48-9, “the blossoms of newer song” (ἄνθεα δ’ ὕμνων / νεωτέρων) are praised in juxtaposition with “old wine” (παλαιὸν μὲν οἶνον), but not raised or harvested as vegetation. However, they do appear some twenty-one lines after the poetical speaker has boasted of the “garden of the Graces” (*O.* 9.26).¹⁸⁸ The two images are of course readily coordinated into an extended metaphor, and may even demand to be seen as such within the poem and within the schema elaborated historically (and piecemeal) through related tropes. However, I would stress that they are not directly coordinated in this or any ode, and that in their separation they show a markedly different approach than would a synthesis of them within a single passage. In the third instance, the blossoms are the object of an appropriate verb, where a divinity (it seems) is addressed: “you [perhaps Asteria] cull the blossoms of such hymning” (*Pae.* 12 fr. 52m.4-5 : ἄν]θεα τοια[ύτας /

¹⁸⁶ *Epigrammata* 2.1.366 (in an epigram for Menander): μελίφρονος ἄνθος ἀοιδῆς (“blossom of honey-minded song”). In an epigram attributed to Simonides, *AP* 7.20 (= fr. 127), Sophocles is called ἄνθος ἀοιδῶν (“blossom of poets”), which is wrongly interpreted as a metaphor for Simonides’ own poetry by Worman (2015) 30. ἄνθος does not appear with any form of ἔπος in any pagan author; nor have I found any other parallels—setting aside the ἄνθη of the anthologists (see e.g. LSJ s.v. ἄνθος II.1).

¹⁸⁷ Some manuscripts read δέξ’(ε) (“receive”) instead, which Bergk for his part preferred.

¹⁸⁸ Scholars have noted the resonance with other vegetal imagery in the ode, especially pertaining to Iamus; see Rubin (1980) 83 and Stern (1970) 339-40.

ἵμνησιος δρέπη).¹⁸⁹ In Pindar, then, it seems that only a divinity was explicitly portrayed as harvesting these metaphorical blossoms.

The associations with both ὕμνος and paean underscore the limited distribution of these blossoms, and suggest the hypothesis that an original use in cult song may have been transferred to epinikia. Just as ὕμνος and related words are more common and more prominent in the grander odes of Pindar,¹⁹⁰ so the poetological ἄνθος seems to be reserved for the more elite in both Pindar and Bacchylides. Although the data are again too few to draw firm conclusions, the patterns suggest a preferential application of this metaphor as well, either to hymn a god or to celebrate in hymnic register how “from god a man blossoms with wise mind” (*O.* 11.10: ἐκ θεοῦ δ’ ἀνήρ σοφαῖς ἀνθεῖ πραπίδεσσιν).¹⁹¹ Incidentally, even this generalizing gnomic statement is, in its context (in an intermediate ode), most directly metapoetic: in the epinikia, this, the sole instance of ἀνθέω in a psychological application, is thus aligned with the metaphorical ἄνθος, which is never used of a person’s mind more generally, but only of hymns.

We come at last to the *fruit* of the mind, either φρενῶν καρπός or καρπὸς φρενός.¹⁹² Pindar employs the metaphor three times, along with two comparable phrases with negative valuation (i.e., *bad* fruit). One might reasonably presume that the phrase was a cliché then just as “fruit of the mind” is now, and in fact it has generally gone unexamined in the scholarship. Yet the precise combination appears in no other extant Greek text, and comparanda centered upon a

¹⁸⁹ ὕμνησις does not appear again until the Septuagint, *Ps.* 70.6 (ἐν σοὶ [θεῶ] ἡ ὕμνησίς μου διὰ παντός) and 117(118).14 (ἰσχύς μου καὶ ὕμνησίς μου ὁ κύριος), and Diodorus Siculus 4.7 (on the etymology of the name of the Muse Polymnia). For the identification of the addressee as Asteria, see Rutherford ad loc.

¹⁹⁰ Maslov (2015) 293.

¹⁹¹ The citation omits the final troublesome word, ὁμοίως; see Gildersleeve ad loc.

¹⁹² On the use of singular φρήν and plural φρένες, and other aspects of the word’s usage in Pindar and other authors, see Darcus (1979).

metaphorical καρπός are surprisingly rare.¹⁹³ The closest parallels in other authors are notably found in Aeschylus' lines about Amphiaraus reaping fruit, or καρπούμενος, from the deep furrow through his φρήν,¹⁹⁴ then in Aristotle's hymn to a personified Aretē (Virtue), who "throw[s] a καρπός as good as immortal into the φρήν" of those "whom the Muses will cause to wax (αὐξήσουσι) immortal,"¹⁹⁵ and finally in a long, homey analogy from Epictetus.¹⁹⁶ In all instances of the positive use in Pindar and in those three authors, the image celebrates human beings whose wisdom is granted or guaranteed by the divine. These parallels will help to illuminate Pindar's usage, which again appears to be subtly stratified across the corpus. In this case, the stratification is less manifest in the variable extension of the image than in its relationship to the speaker and the addressee. Yet as we will see at the end, in the least flattering version of the image, being a fragment of uncertain genre, the unique elaboration seems to suit the patterns observed above, thus supporting (however slightly) the fragment's authenticity.

In *N.* 10, a civic ode for an Argive wrestler, the phrase is used with the least direct connection to laudandus and laudator. Amid praise of Argos and its inhabitants, we hear of Amphiaraus, the Argive μάντις whom "earth (γαῖα) received in Thebes, thunderstruck with

¹⁹³ ἐπέων καρπός is found again only in the Pindar scholia! The closest parallels to this that I have found are the καρπός of Loxias' oracle in Aesch. *Th.* 618 and the false λόγοι that do not bear καρπός according to Sophocles (fr. 833 Radt). I have been unable to find further instances of καρπός with other terms for "organs of cognition," e.g. πραπίδων. But I have not done an exhaustive search for e.g. metaphorical καρπός with verbs of cognition, or for καρπώω applied to cognition. The broader metaphorical extension of καρπός as "produce" or "product" seems to have been contemporaneous with Pindar, especially as seen in Herodotus and Aeschylus.

¹⁹⁴ *Sept.* 593, discussed below. See also Aesch. *Th.* 618 and *Eu.* 831.

¹⁹⁵ Arist. fr. 675.7,18, discussed below.

¹⁹⁶ Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.15. In addition to the Stoics, Jewish and Christian authors make metaphorical fruits more common, as in e.g. the Septuagint, *Proverbia* 12.14: ἀπὸ καρπῶν στόματος ψυχὴ ἀνδρὸς πλησθήσεται ἀγαθῶν; and John Chrysostom, *In Psalmum 118*, 696.39: φιλοθέου γνώμη . . . καρπός, which was echoed by later authors; but compare Chrysostom's with the passage from Epictetus, cited below. For the image among Roman authors, see e.g. Quint. 5.11.24, discussed by Silk (1974) ix.

Zeus’s bolts”; next, of Zeus’s pursuit of Alcmena, mother of Heracles, and Danae, mother of Perseus; and then of how Zeus “joined together (συνάρμοξεν) fruit of the mind (φρενῶν καρπὸν) with straight justice (δίκῃ) for the father of Adrastus and Lynceus.”¹⁹⁷ The scholia reasonably take φρενῶν καρπὸς to be λογισμὸς (“reason”) or δίκαιος νοῦς (“just thought”).¹⁹⁸ The verb συνάρμοξεν, which may carry connotations of “joinery,” could perhaps contrast slightly with the organic image of καρπός;¹⁹⁹ but what is certain is that the verb does not extend the vegetal image.²⁰⁰ The heroes who possessed this φρενῶν καρπός are surrounded by other figures such as Amphiaraus and Heracles (the former named by his patronymic alone, the latter alluded to through his mother but named shortly after the quoted lines); as the victor’s compatriots, they all reflect well upon him, but there is no pointed comparison here.

A grand beginning full of sympotic imagery contains the instance of the phrase in *O.* 7, an intermediate ode:

Φιάλαν ὡς εἶ τις ἀφνειᾶς ἀπὸ χειρὸς ἐλών
 ἔνδον ἀμπέλου καχλάζοισαν δρόσω
 δωρήσεται
 . . . προπίνων
 . . .

¹⁹⁷ *N.* 10.8-12: γαῖα δ’ ἐν Θήβαις υπέδεκτο κεραυνωθεῖσα Διὸς βέλεσιν / μάντιν Οἰκλείδαν, . . . / . . . / Ζεὺς ἐπ’ Ἀλκμήναν Δανάαν τε . . . / πατρὶ δ’ Ἀδράστοιο Λυγκεῖ τε φρενῶν καρπὸν εὐθείᾳ συνάρμοξεν δίκῃ. Race prefers to understand Argos as the subject of συνάρμοξεν; I follow Bury ad loc. and a scholiast (see below) in taking Zeus as the subject, but the difference is immaterial for my argument here.

¹⁹⁸ Schol. ad *N.* 10, 21a. καρπὸς δὲ φρενῶν ὁ λογισμὸς. τίς δὲ συνήρμοσεν; ὁ Ζεὺς. Scholion 21b glosses it with δίκαιος νοῦς.

¹⁹⁹ συναρμόζω, like ἀρμόζω, is sometimes used of joining things as in construction, but in Pindar it does not appear again, and Pindar’s use of ἀρμόζω rarely seems to activate such a connection: in *P.* 3.114 the τέκτονες or builders ἄρμωσαν (“joined”) the words; see also *P.* 4.129. The possible technomorphic connotations of ἀρμόζω and related words is discussed again in chapter 4.

²⁰⁰ The εὐθείᾳ δίκῃ may recall Theognis’ ἰθεῖα γνώμη στήθεσσιν ἐμπεφύη (396: “straight thought springs up in the breast”), which serves to show how easily Pindar could have made the vegetal imagery stronger in this passage. See also Onians (1951) 30.

καὶ ἐγὼ νέκταρ χυτόν, Μοισᾶν δόσιν, ἀεθλοφόροις
ἀνδράσιν πέμπων, γλυκὸν καρπὸν φρενός . . . (l. 1-8)

As when one, taking from his rich hand a drinking bowl bubbling with the vine's dew, presents it . . . while raising a toast . . . so too I, sending to prize-carrying men poured nectar, gift of the Muses, sweet fruit of the mind . . .

The purple passage culminates in the γλυκὸς καρπὸς φρενός, together with which the νέκταρ and ἀμπέλου δρόσος (“vine's dew”) evoke the further concrete qualities of a sweet fruit, juicy and freshly picked from a vine or other plant. It may also be noteworthy that καρπός was metaphorically applied to wine in the *Iliad*, in the phrase οἶνον εὐφρονα, καρπὸν ἀρούρης (*Il.* 3.246: “gladdening wine—or wine that makes the φρήν glad—, fruit of the plowland”). Elsewhere in Homer the phrase καρπὸς ἀρούρης (“fruit of the plowland”) refers to grain, etc. Whereas the Homeric wine, fruit of the earth, gladdens the mind (εὐφρων), Pindar's wine-like song is the mind's sweet fruit.²⁰¹

The third instance, in the dynast ode *P.* 2 for Hieron, is the one linked most closely with the victor. Here the φρενῶν καρπός is allotted to the legendary figure Rhadamanthys, with whom Hieron is implicitly identified in notorious lines worth quoting here:

γένοι', οἷος ἐσσι μαθῶν. καλός τοι πίθων παρὰ παισίν, αἰεὶ
καλός. ὁ δὲ Ῥαδάμανθυσ εὖ πέπραγεν, ὅτι φρενῶν
ἔλαχε καρπὸν ἀμώμητον, οὐδ' ἀπάταισι θυμὸν τέρπεται ἔνδοθεν,
οἷα ψιθύρων παλάμαις ἔπετ' αἰεὶ βροτῶ. (l. 72–5)

May you prove to be the sort you have learned you are. A monkey you know is beautiful among children, always beautiful. But Rhadamanthys has done well, because the mind's blameless fruit he received, nor does he delight his heart within with deceits of the sort that, by whisperers' wiles, always follow a mortal.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Compare also the description later in the poem of Rhodes as πολὺβοσκον γαίαν ἀνθρώποισι καὶ εὐφρονα μῆλοισι (*O.* 7.63: “much-nourishing earth for humankind and gladdening for herds”).

²⁰² Regarding the much-debated first two sentences of this quotation, I would argue (as I do in an as-yet unpublished paper) for a different interpretation. But here I only note that γένοι'(ο) is, on

Whatever one makes of the beautiful monkey, it is clear that Rhadamanthys is upheld as a paragon for the addressee, Hieron, whose essential character has just been praised in an extraordinary turn of phrase. Again, the scholiasts say that φρενῶν καρπός stands for λογισμός.²⁰³ Within *P. 2*, this is the only distinct vegetal metaphor.²⁰⁴

In its focused use of the image amid a preoccupation with *esse quam percipi* (“being rather than seeming”), this last passage in particular bears close comparison with that of Aeschylus’ *Amphiaraus*.²⁰⁵ Aeschylus’ baroque image is introduced by the same concern: *Amphiaraus* “desires not to seem, but to be the best, / harvesting the deep furrow through his mind, / from out of which trusty counsels sprout.”²⁰⁶ As in Pindar, the metaphor of fruit is clearly employed to represent that which proceeds from the person’s essence or nature, although in none of these texts is φύσις or φυά used. Whereas Aeschylus extracts the conceptual and even phenomenological potential of the image, Pindar’s three positive uses of the image are simple enough to have concealed their (probable) force from many readers.²⁰⁷

my interpretation, better translated as an optative expression, and not a (polite) imperative, as in the familiar “Become who you are.”

²⁰³ Schol. ad *P. 2*, 133c: ὁ Ῥαδάμανθυς . . . ἄψεκτον τῶν φρενῶν εἶχε τὸν καρπὸν, τουτέστι τὸν λογισμὸν . . . ; a longer explanation is found in the *Scholia recentia* 135 Abel: Καρπὸν ἀμώμητον] ἤγουν ἄριστα καὶ ὡς ἐχρῆν περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐλογίζετο· ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτω ποιῶν τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκείνῳ ἀξιοθήση τιμῆς.

²⁰⁴ In fact, the only other possible vegetal metaphor that I detect is in the εὐανθέα . . . στόλον (“well-flowered . . . prow”) of l. 62, depending on how precisely one construes στόλον there, which is “prow” according to Gildersleeve ad loc. and LSJ s.v. στόλος, and so εὐανθέα might simply refer to festive garlands upon a ship.

²⁰⁵ As noted already by Gildersleeve ad loc.

²⁰⁶ *Sept.* 592-4: οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ’ εἶναι θέλει, / βαθείαν ἄλοκα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος, / ἐξ ἧς τὰ κεδνὰ βλαστάνει βουλευματα.

²⁰⁷ Compare also the earthy didacticism of the image in Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.15: Οὐδέν, ἔφη, τῶν μεγάλων ἄφνω γίνεται, ὅπου γε οὐδ’ ὁ βότρυς οὐδὲ σύκον. ἂν μοι νῦν λέγῃς ὅτι “θέλω σύκον,” ἀποκρινούμαι σοι ὅτι “χρόνου δεῖ.” ἄφες ἀνθήσει πρῶτον, εἶτα προβάλη τὸν καρπὸν, εἶτα πεπανθῆ, εἶτα συκῆς μὲν καρπὸς ἄφνω καὶ μᾶ ὥρα οὐ τελειοῦται,

The Pindaric “fruit of the mind” bears a greater resemblance to what we find in Aristotle’s Hymn to Virtue (or Song for Hermias),²⁰⁸ which echoes numerous Pindaric elements emphasized above: “O Virtue of much toil for the mortal race . . . such fruit (καρπὸν) you cast upon the mind (ἐπὶ φρένα), [fruit which is] equal to immortal and more powerful than gold and ancestors and soft-gleaming sleep.”²⁰⁹ Heracles, as it happens, immediately follows (l. 10), and as the poem concludes it is promised that the dedicatee, Hermias, will be “sung of for his deeds, and the Muses, daughters of Memory, will make him grow (αὐξήσουσι) immortal.”²¹⁰ In his study of the poem, Ford has rightly noted how “vegetal tropes [as in καρπός and αὐξήσουσι] run very deep in the traditional vocabulary of glorification,” and has additionally suggested that this fruit-throwing might recall Atalanta or perhaps Heracles and the apples of the Hesperides.²¹¹ Given the lack of specific cues for either of those images, and the scarcity of verbal parallels noted above, a Pindaric allusion—and revision—is likelier: this καρπός in the φρήν, *contra* Pindar one might say, is said to be greater even than ancestors.²¹² Aristotle’s image of a personified divinity throwing something into one’s mind, common from Homer on, obstructs the

γνώμης δ’ ἀνθρώπου καρπὸν θέλεις οὕτως δι’ ὀλίγου καὶ εὐκόλως κτήσασθαι; There is a much simpler version of this also in Hipp. *Lex*, 2: ἡ μάθησις ἐμφυσιωθείσα δεξιῶς τε καὶ εὐαλδέως τοὺς καρποὺς ἐξενέγκηται.

²⁰⁸ On the debated question of the genre or rather generic mixture of the poem, see esp. Ford (2011), who carefully delineates various generic influences, and also argues persuasively for the poem’s authenticity (as a composition of Aristotle’s).

²⁰⁹ fr. 675.1,6-8: ἀρετὰ πολύμοχθε γένει βροτείῳ / . . . / τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις / καρπὸν ἰσαθάνατον χρυσοῦ τε κρείσσω / καὶ γονέων μαλακαυγήτιοῦ θ’ ὕπνου.

²¹⁰ Ford (2011) 210 n. 19 compares Aristotle’s phrase only with Pindar’s ἐπέων καρπός (I. 8.48). There are no comparisons with Pindar on this point in Bowra (1938).

²¹¹ Ford (2011) 125, where Pindar is cited for examples of similar tropes.

²¹² But perhaps one should think of a sort of “second nature.” In either case, the passage is remarkably anti-Pindaric in its message. At the same time, the compound ἰσοθάνατον, which as Ford (2011) 125 notes has been seen as rather dithyrambic, could be further indication of Pindaric allusion.

obvious implication of the fruit's growth from the mind as a product of natural endowment.²¹³

Aretē's καρπός, on this account, is distinct from and more powerful than Pindaric φυά.

In sum, in the civic *N.* 10, the image of the mind's fruit is most distant from laudator and laudandus; in the intermediate *O.* 7, we find it in a lavish sympotic context applied directly to the ode itself as the poet's "gift of the Muses"; and in the dynast *P.* 2, it is closely connected to the laudandus. The distribution suggests a certain care in the application of this vivid metaphor; and along with it some restraint in the development of the image, the greater potential of which is so manifest by contrast in Aeschylus (and Epictetus), and partially obstructed by Aristotle.

For the negative use of metaphorical καρποί in Pindar, it is necessary to turn to the fragments.²¹⁴ Here Pindar appears to have exploited the potential of the image both for the sort of unhappy vegetal determinism familiar from Aeschylean psychology,²¹⁵ and for the sort of censure appropriate to the likes of what one modern author dubbed "the vile and absurd fruits of the encyclopedists."²¹⁶

The first is a particularly close parallel to φρενῶν καρπός, in the phrase κακόφρονα ἄμφαν(εν) καρπὸν πραπίδων (fr. 211: "showed malignant fruit of the mind").²¹⁷ The limit of the Pindaric image and, at the same time, its persistent vividness is seen in the quotational context, where Plutarch uses it to crown a series of metaphors: he writes of vice "sprouting," "spreading out," "coming to light," and then revealing its κακόφρονα καρπὸν πραπίδων.²¹⁸ The phrase not

²¹³ See e.g. *O.* 7.43-4: ἐν δ' ἀρετάν / ἔβαλεν καὶ χάσματ' ἀνθρώποισι προμαθέος αἰδώς.

²¹⁴ In a third fragment, fr. 6b, that speaks of "watering with songs" (ἄρδοντ' αἰοδαίς, f.1) there is a tantalizing juxtaposition of the phrase καρπὸν δρέποντες (f.3) with φροντίδες (g).

²¹⁵ See Micheline (1978). See also *Ag.* 502: αὐτὸς φρενῶν καρποῖτο τὴν ἀμαρτίαν.

²¹⁶ From the nineteenth-century author A. N. Pypin, as cited and translated in Zhivov (2008) 354.

²¹⁷ The fragment is also included in Laks-Most, Vol. II, T39b.

²¹⁸ *Mor.* 19.561E-62A: βλαστάνουσαν . . . ἀναφυομένην . . . ἐκχυθείσα . . . ἐμφανῆς γένηται, [fr. 221], ὡς φησι Πίνδαρος. This can be compared with the negative use of the image

only presents the opposite of Rhadamanthys' blameless fruit of the mind (*P.* 2), but (if the text is sound on this point) adds a noteworthy element in ἄμφαν(εν): although Pindar's usage of ἀμφαίνω does not support an imagistic construal of this as "brought to light," it nevertheless expresses a dynamic of display which was absent in the positive uses of the image, and which, as Plutarch shows, serves effectively to extend the metaphor.

Finally, we come to the most extended of Pindar's metaphorical καρποί, and one with its own sort of conceptual orientation. The first to attribute it to Pindar, Stobaeus writes, τοὺς φυσιολογοῦντας ἔφη Πίνδαρος ἀτελῆ σοφίας καρπὸν δρέπειν (fr. 209: "Pindar said that the natural philosophers 'cull an imperfect fruit of wisdom'").²¹⁹ Through δρέπειν ("cull") the metaphor is developed beyond what we saw with the other καρποί,²²⁰ and through the replacement of φρενῶν with σοφίας the scope is broadened from an individual mind to a master concept. The phrase, rendered somewhat more comical, had been quoted already by Plato, but without attribution and in a context that does not align precisely with Stobaeus' representation of the object of Pindar's ridicule.²²¹ But after Stobaeus it appears again twice, first as the

in the Aeschylean phrase φρενῶν καρποῖτο τὴν ἀμαρτίαν (*Ag.* 501: "may he harvest the fruit of his mind's blunder"), where again Aeschylus prefers a form of the denominal verb καρπῶω ("harvest [the fruit]").

²¹⁹ *Anth.* 2.1.21. The title of this section of his anthology is Περὶ τῶν τὰ θεῖα ἐρμηνευόντων, καὶ ὡς εἴη ἀνθρώποις ἀκατάληπτος ἢ τῶν νοητῶν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἀλήθεια ("Concerning those who explain divine matters, and how for human beings the essential truth of the intelligibles is incomprehensible"). The use of φυσιολογοῦντας follows directly upon the ἀστρονομοῦντας whom Bion is said to have mocked in the preceding entry.

²²⁰ For ἀτελής in this fragment, the translation "unripe" (so Race and others) is tempting but misrepresents the semantics of ἀτελής, since it is otherwise not applied to unripe vegetation, but to incomplete or imperfect things; compare e.g. *Arist. Pol.* 1256b21, ἡ φύσις οὐθὲν ... ἀτελὲς ποιεῖ ("nature makes nothing imperfect").

²²¹ *Rep.* V. 457b: ὁ δὲ γελῶν ἀνὴρ ἐπὶ γυμναῖς γυναιξί, τοῦ βελτίστου ἕνεκα γυμναζομέναις, ἀτελῆ τοῦ γελοίου σοφίας δρέπων καρπὸν, οὐδὲν οἶδεν ... This ἀνὴρ shows no sign of being a φυσιολόγος.

concluding item of a list of apophthegms appended to the *Vita Ambrosiana*, where Stobaeus is repeated verbatim,²²² and again in Eustathius, whose testimony is more noteworthy. He writes,

If according to the ancients Pindar said that those who philosophize ‘cull unripe fruit of wisdom’ (Πίνδαρος ἔφη τοὺς φιλοσοφοῦντας ἀτελῆ σοφίας δρέπειν καρπὸν), may this bring blame upon him of the sort that has been inflicted upon the Comedian [i.e. Aristophanes], who somewhere mocks the philosophers, on account of their being uninvolved in business and politics, as being lazy.²²³

Eustathius echoes Stobaeus and the apophthegm in framing the quote as directed at philosophers,²²⁴ but the order of Pindar’s purported words echoes Plato’s version instead (with καρπὸν after δρέπειν instead of before). Eustathius therefore may have relied on other witnesses (note the vague plural τοὺς παλαιούς), or at least combined the three prior citations available to us. In any event, all of the versions share a core of entirely Pindaric diction in those four words (ἀτελῆ σοφίας δρέπειν καρπὸν). That Pindar should have targeted natural philosophers in particular (by whatever designation) is perhaps less plausible than that he was deriding some competitors in σοφία. After all, the use of vegetal tropes in claims to authority was so widespread that the phrase would remain forceful in a more general application. But of course the image gains in rhetorical power if it is aimed precisely at those who were exploiting more systematically the power of extended vegetal (and other) analogies for the theorization of φύσις. And if the argument above concerning the stratification of more extended and conceptually-oriented vegetal images is correct, then we have further reason to think that this image could well

²²² The text is printed in Drachmann’s *Scholia Vetera* I.4. Πίνδαρος is omitted from the line, but otherwise the repetition is verbatim.

²²³ *Proem.* 33: εἰ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιούς Πίνδαρος ἔφη τοὺς φιλοσοφοῦντας ἀτελῆ σοφίας δρέπειν καρπὸν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε εἰς ψόγον ἂν ἐμπίπτει, ὁποῖος καὶ τῷ Κωμικῷ προστέτριπται, ὅς που τοὺς φιλοσόφους διὰ τὸ ἀπράγμονας εἶναι σκώπτει ὡς ἀργούς.

²²⁴ Note however that he refers to φιλοσοφοῦντας rather than φυσιολογοῦντας. One would think that if Eustathius had only encountered this fragment as directed against φυσιολόγοι, who could be distinguished from φιλόσοφοι, then he would not have presented it as he does.

be Pindar's derision of just that sort of discourse from the σοφοί who were focused on φύσις. On this point, in fact, one might think of the Empedoclean sphragis in the compound ἐμπεδόκαρπος ("constant-fruiting"), to be taken up in Chapter 4.

VII. Conclusion

Vegetal metaphors are clearly brought to bear on the conceptualization of human nature in this corpus, and, as further evidence of this, their deployment seems to reflect the same sort of modulation of claims and concerns as we saw in our study of φυά and φύσις. As much as Pindaric metaphors seek unity and transcendence of a sort, we have seen numerous cases in which the varied relationships and the uneven distribution of metaphors in the corpus reveal that a simple unifying and heightening impulse was not followed indiscriminately, but was carefully modulated. Few enjoy the fruit of the mind, few a blossom of hymns. At least with regard to vegetal imagery, a poetics of bold and brief metaphors seems to be more conspicuous in more elitist odes. In contrast, extended metaphors and other images that articulate a more complicated relationship with sources of growth are concentrated in the civic odes, with the most conspicuous exception being the oak tree riddle in *P.* 4. The thematization of vegetal metaphor or comparison in connection with φυά or φύσις is rare, and most prominent in *O.* 1, for Hieron, and in *N.* 6, for Alcimidas of Aigina. Moreover, in both *N.* 6 and *I.* 4, for Melissus of Thebes, two of the most elaborate vegetal images in the corpus, both of which concern the victors' families, happen to occur in odes that also contain the word φύσις; here it was hypothesized that the combination reflects a confluence of more didactic poetry and relatively progressive φύσις discourse. However, the relationship between the concept(s) and metaphors in question is not revealed so much in any coordinated use of φυά/φύσις and φύομαι as denoting or connoting plant growth or

otherwise; φύομαι and its other derivatives are themselves restricted in the corpus in a manner that may suggest a similar filiation. As we saw in Chapter 1, both φυά and φύσις seem to connote growth, but neither is regularly linked with metaphors demonstrating a particular preoccupation with the vegetal paradigm: neither term is illustrated by a bold vegetal image after the fashion of τὸ συγγενές in *N.* 6. At the same time, as McCracken and Steiner and others have shown, many vegetal metaphors are applied to human birth, heredity, virtue and wisdom, so there can be no question that they belong to the means of representing and conceiving human nature. On account of his attention to various plants and his marked deployment of select vegetal metaphors and comparisons, when φυτά came to be seen as not only an illuminating paradigm for human nature, but as the chief paradigm for a universal Φύσις, that scheme was all too easily retrojected onto Pindar. To be sure, καρπὸς φρενῶν, along with many of Pindar's other vegetal metaphors, paints the virtue and wisdom which he praises and professes with all the beauty and necessity of a fruit or blossom, all the validity of "nature." Conversely, those who do not uphold the same values are implicitly "unnatural." Yet Pindar does not speak, as later authors would, of anything being "contrary to nature," παρὰ φύσιν or παρὰ φυάν. The closest Pindar comes to this is in the negative use of the fruit metaphor, and especially in the "unripe fruit of wisdom" that was ostensibly culled by the natural philosophers—which brings us to our next author, Empedocles.

Chapter 3: Φύσις in Empedocles

I. Introduction

Empedocles' use of φύσις is essential evidence for the history of the concept, as a glance at any such history will show. Yet it has been treated all too superficially in the vast majority of such histories, and also handled lightly or even ignored, both in many attempts to systematize his thought on its own and in studies of Empedoclean metaphor and analogy. The primary cause, I suspect, is a consensus cemented over a century ago, that one oft-cited fragment, B8, employs φύσις in the sense of the process of growth or coming-to-be, or a φύσις that is synonymous with γένεσις in its primary philosophical acceptance.¹ This is opposed to a long tradition, rooted in Aristotle, that takes B8 to be concerned primarily with φύσις as “being” or “nature,” which is of course the far more conventional sense of the word in all ancient Greek literature—however much one must distinguish between the precise nuances within that conception. (Here, “conventional sense” will always refer to this meaning: the persistent, underlying source of one’s development, or one’s “nature.”) The consensus on B8 thus refuses to read the conventional sense in at least that one fragment. But the consensus has its own forebear in Plutarch, whose supposedly self-evident reading of B8 is echoed often. Meanwhile, no such consensus has formed around the other two fragments in which the word occurs, B63 and B110, both of which are often left unmentioned, and both of which are more easily read as being concerned with such a “nature.” Of those who do treat the lot, few conclude that φύσις also means γένεσις in either

¹ I follow the widespread convention of referring to the fragments by their categorization and numeration in Diels-Kranz (DK), who list testimonia for each author in an A section, followed by the ostensibly ipsissima verba in a B section. For fragments discussed in any detail I also cite the corresponding numeration of the increasingly standard Loeb series on Early Greek Philosophy edited by Laks-Most (L-M), who list the fragments in D sections; as well as the numeration of the standard, separate edition of Empedocles by Wright (W).

B63 or B110, and fewer still so construe it in all three fragments.² Yet almost all leave the resulting dissonance unaddressed.

One reason for this state of affairs is that B8 actually claims that there is no φύσις of any mortal thing. Some have taken this to imply that there is a φύσις of the elements; but more thorough study has revealed that φύσις was not yet used, by Empedocles or his contemporaries, for the fundamental principles of the world.³ Others have been quick to accept Plutarch's reading of B8, so that the denial of φύσις can be reconciled with its use in B63 and B110 on the grounds that the fragments employ at least two different senses. The consensus on B8 thus continues to obscure the difficulties presented by Empedocles' use of the term in the other two fragments, as well as in B8 itself. Furthermore, by impeding the basic interpretation of Empedoclean doctrine, the consensus on B8 has also impeded the study of Empedoclean metaphor and analogy, particularly in its focus upon the problem of teleology or the lack thereof: if φύσις meant only γένεσις, then it necessarily played a rather different role in any quasi-teleological scheme (i.e., by focusing upon the constant growth of a plant as opposed to its persistent character or its attainment of form). For all of these reasons, the material demands to be reconsidered on its own before we turn to an exploration of Empedoclean imagery.

The conclusion that I have reached, and will argue for in this chapter, is that Empedocles' use of φύσις in B8 and the other two fragments consistently employs not the sense of "growth" or "birth," i.e. γένεσις, but what was by all accounts the more conventional notion, namely that of "nature," the hypostatized principle of growth and inherited characteristics.⁴ There is a φύσις of no single mortal, he says in B8: there is, he avers, no irreducible "nature" over and above the

² See below for citations.

³ See esp. Heinemann (2001).

⁴ See the discussion in the Introduction above.

elements' interaction that constitutes an individual organism, no "nature" that comes-to-be as a result of that interaction. But the term is useful, conventional shorthand for the persistent but dynamic compound that underlies and characterizes each mortal, as Empedocles shows in B63 and B110. This φύσις, moreover, is crucially a "nature" that implies growth and coming-to-be. Its application is restricted to temporary compounds of the elements or roots, i.e. θνητά, "mortal things" or "mortals." Although it may designate whatever particular elemental combination underlies and defines each compound substance, as one sees in Parmenides' sparing use of the word,⁵ Empedocles' fixation seems to be on the φύσεις of mortal organisms. Yet, since B8 in particular seems to invite universalization over all temporary compounds, I will generally use "mortals" to refer to that entire set of apparent entities that are produced by the interaction of the roots, whether this entity be mud, a perfectly tempered blood,⁶ or Empedocles' "whole-natured forms" arising from the mud primordial.⁷ In this corpus, φύσις is not yet extended to the permanent being of the elements, let alone the generative essence of the All conceived as One.

The chief obstacle to this view is the *communis opinio* concerning B8. That fragment will accordingly be the focus of this chapter. The other fragments, B63 and B110, will be considered relatively briefly here, in order to show both how easily the meaning of "nature" fits in those fragments, and how the three fragments cohere together. The chapter begins with an overview of Empedocles' use of φύσις and related words, including a review of prior scholarship and other general background for the theses put forward here (§II). The main aim of that section is to show how the consensus on B8 is the chief source of the tension and confusion in most interpretations

⁵ See Parmenides B10.1.

⁶ See esp. B98 and for discussion Guthrie (1965) II.213; the topic is also taken up in Ch. 4 below.

⁷ The problem of the οὐλοφυεῖς τύποι or "whole-natured forms" of B62 and their bearing on Empedocles' zoogony and embryology will not be taken up here, but deserve to be treated in a fuller consideration of φύσις and related forms in this corpus.

of Empedocles' φύσις, and that an attempt to bring B8 into harmony with the other instances is worthwhile. I will then turn to a focused discussion of B8 (§III). The inherent difficulty of that fragment, together with its prominent role in the history of philosophy and Empedoclean commentary, demands a much more detailed treatment. I will begin by laying out the problems with the text as it is normally read, which is essentially the Aëtian version, and with the interpretations based on that reading. I will argue that even if one prefers the Aëtian B8, there are still good reasons to suspect that the consensus stands on shaky ground. It becomes still shakier when we consider a different reading of the text of B8, which was preserved in Plutarch. The Plutarchan B8, as we will see, is both the superior text and, strangely enough, the one that best militates against Plutarch's interpretation and therefore the consensus. Simply put, the Plutarchan B8 provides the best grounds for construing φύσις in that fragment, too, as "nature." The defense of that text will lead into an account of how φύσις as "nature" functions both in B8 and in Empedocles' larger conceptual scheme. To corroborate the conventionality of this usage, even within the particular dynamic of B8, we will turn briefly to the roughly contemporaneous Hippocratic text *On the Nature of Man*, which shows a remarkably similar conceptual scheme, but one that lacks the philosopher's scruples about whether or not the φύσις in question actually is or comes to be. Finally, we will address the further significance of the final line of B8, in which Empedocles says that φύσις is a name used among human beings. At this point, a focused attack will be made on Plutarch's broader interpretation of Empedocles, and in its place I will argue again for my own proposal, that one should see Empedocles as a consistent conventionalist who used φύσις each time in its conventional sense, i.e. "nature."

II. Overview of Evidence and Prior Interpretations

The term φύσις occurs just four times in Empedocles' surviving fragments: twice in B8, once in B63 and once again in B110. But it is used in such varying contexts and with such ambiguity as to allow significantly divergent readings.⁸ The occurrences of two rarer nominalizations of φύεσθαι, namely φύμα (“growth”) and an apparently personified and therefore capitalized Φυσώ (perh. “Growth”),⁹ have received little attention, and if noted at all are invoked to reinforce the consensus on B8.¹⁰

Although there have been a few attempts at a unified definition of the term in Empedocles, none has gained much influence. Without question, that is to a great extent the result of the fact that the semantics of φύσις are revealed in our other sources to have rapidly expanded, and, by the end of the fifth century at the latest, included some of the other senses considered by Empedoclean scholars; and of course Aristotle and Plutarch, for their part, had still more senses available to them when attempting to make sense of the fragments.¹¹ As a result, many have been content to accept polysemy in Empedocles. But prior and contemporary evidence of the semantic range that many would see in Empedocles is lacking: instead, the lamentably sparse evidence indisputably suggests that its customary meaning was “nature,” and

⁸ If Janko (2017) is correct, then there is a fifth instance of the term, in the (corrupt) first line of B9, which Janko reconstructs to include the phrase φύσις γαίης, “the nature of earth,” understood as a periphrasis for γαῖα. Since this is not consistent with Empedocles' use of φύσις (on my interpretation), smacking instead of later usage (as the appeal to Epicurus' usage p. 4 indicates), and requires what I take to be an implausible corruption of φύσις to φῶς, I do not take Janko's reconstruction into account.

⁹ Φυσώ, a *hapax legomenon*, appears in B123.1; φύμα appears in *P. Strasb.* a (ii) 27, the only instance of the term in which it is a paroxytone, the meter demanding a short first syllable, whereas it is otherwise a properispomenon, i.e. φῶμα.

¹⁰ See citations below.

¹¹ See e.g. Morel (2007) on φύσις in Democritus, whose fragments unquestionably display some polysemy of the term.

not “growth” or “genesis”—hence the decisive role of B8 for the early history of the concept.¹² The combined weight of that other evidence provided some of the impetus for the reading put forward here. Even with that other evidence set aside, if Empedocles, “whom one might expect to speak especially in agreement with himself,”¹³ is charitably assumed to be consistent in this regard too, then one can all the more easily discern in his verses a coherent and compelling notion of φύσις as “nature.”

The notion, however, is one that must be taken somewhat esoterically, as coming from a sort of conventionalist, who denies the ultimate validity of certain terms which he nevertheless employs, κατὰ νόμον, “according to convention”—to use a familiar phrase which Empedocles himself does not.¹⁴ In other regards, Empedocles’ words demand not to be taken at face value, and esoteric meaning must be read back into numerous, apparently contradictory formulations.

In this regard, my argument hinges upon the interpretation of another fragment, B9, which, it has been plausibly suggested, followed immediately upon B8 in Empedocles’ poem on nature.¹⁵ The two are certainly of the most intimate connection. In B8, Empedocles denies φύσις and death to mortals, and then says that φύσις is a (mere) name used by human beings. Similarly, in B9, after casting doubt upon the validity of the common names for life and death,

¹² See again Heinemann (2001).

¹³ Arist. *Met.* B 1000a25-6: ὄνπερ οἰηθείη λέγειν ἄν τις μάλιστα ὁμολογουμένως αὐτῷ, Ἐμπεδοκλής.... For a positive assessment of this remark in the context of Aristotle’s response to Empedocles more generally, see O’Brien (1969) 73. Without wishing to suggest that Aristotle did not intend to compliment Empedocles, one wonders if there is also a gentle jest in the description of Empedocles, theorist of Harmonia, as being “precisely the one whom [to emphasize the ὄνπερ] one might expect to speak especially in agreement with himself.”

¹⁴ The phrase does however appear already in Hes. *Th.* 417; see West ad loc. and ad 66.

¹⁵ See van der Ben (1978), where the two are printed as a continuous text (which incorporates B10 by way of a reconstructed line within B9, and then goes on to include B11 and B15). The impression gained of all the fragments in combination is, I think, undeniably compelling, and the argument I advance here would perhaps gain from an analysis of them in that form.

Empedocles then grants his assent to νόμος (“convention”),¹⁶ and hence may be characterized as a sort of nominalist or conventionalist *avant la lettre*.¹⁷ B9 is quoted by Plutarch shortly after B8 in his lively response to the Epicurean Colotes, who had claimed that Empedocles makes it impossible to live by his philosophy since he abandoned the notion of φύσις, as B8 suggests. Plutarch retorts at first that B8 can hardly trouble anyone trying to live, as it only denies φύσις in the sense of absolute coming-to-be; but he then uses B9 to mount a conventionalist reading such that Empedocles still employs the conventional notion of “nature,” even though he also denies actual being to any concrete individual’s φύσις as “nature.”

Many scholars have followed Plutarch in this as well—and, like Plutarch, apparently without noting the tension in his interpretation. As a result, one Empedoclean instance of φύσις, that in B110, is often permitted to mean “nature,” and only slightly less often so is the one in B63. Furthermore, for his explanation of the retained concept of “nature,” Plutarch, now in agreement with Aristotle, predictably looks to the unique compound of elements that constitute a concrete individual. Modern scholarship has been quick to follow them, as will I. Where I differ is in attempting to realize the full potential of a conventionalist approach, labelling this persistent compound with φύσις in all of its Empedoclean uses. In other words, I aim to reconcile the interpretation of Aristotle, with his assumption that Empedoclean φύσις *always* means “nature,” and that of Plutarch, with his emphasis on B9 and Empedoclean conventionalism.

¹⁶ See B9 and below.

¹⁷ Perhaps no scholar has described this aspect of Empedocles’ thought so pointedly and satisfactorily as Mansfeld (1972) esp. 28-9: “Once we have understood that the *reference* of a ‘name’ such as γένεσις is different from its *meaning* which has to be rejected in view of the Parmenidean ontological argument accepted by Empedocles, we may continue to use this ‘name’ as a kind of marker.” Unfortunately for my purposes, Mansfeld concurs with Plutarch on the interpretation of B8 (cf. p. 27), thereby neatly absorbing B8 into his nominalist reading of γένεσις in B17. Mansfeld did not take up the problem (tangential to his argument) of how the other two instances of φύσις would fit his interpretation.

By building on this aspect of the corpus, the approach taken here is a “stratified” one, akin to that taken above for the Pindaric corpus. But the kinship is not that of twins. In Pindar, whose corpus is much more complex, we saw that the deployment of φύά and φύσις, just as many other elements of his poems, demands more elaborate differentiation that in *some* cases involves considerations of occult meaning and engagement with philosophical discourse. In Empedocles, whose entire corpus may well comprise the remains of only one or two poems, matters are simpler: the usage of φύσις is defined by a single dominant division, between the esoteric and the exoteric. For the majority of Empedoclean scholarship, this division has corresponded to the parceling out of the fragments between περὶ Φύσεως (“on Nature”) or τὰ Φυσικά (roughly “the Physics”), a natural philosophical poem with a single addressee, and οἱ Καθαρμοί (“the Purifications”), a poem of a more distinctly moral and religious bent, addressed to all the citizens of Acragas. That traditional division, which I accept with some qualifications, remains valid and useful. However, in this chapter it will not feature prominently, as the fragments that contain the word φύσις are predictably attributed to the περὶ Φύσεως, and even the verb φύεσθαι has an uneven distribution, appearing in only one fragment allotted to οἱ Καθαρμοί. That said, the stratification pursued here is intended to span the divide in the corpus, as even within the fragments soundly attributed to the περὶ Φύσεως, there are elements that demand, both explicitly and implicitly, that we not take certain central words, such as φύσις, at face value. One example that we will see again is that of the birth or death of the elements, which Empedocles explicitly characterizes elsewhere as being unborn and imperishable.¹⁸ In point of fact, the separation of Empedocles’ verses into an exoteric and an esoteric layer remains a well-

¹⁸ On the so-called birth or death of the elements, see esp. B17; but on their being in fact unborn and imperishable, cf. B7, B11, B12, B16.

recognized hermeneutic necessity, prominent even among the most recent attempts to unify the fragments within a single poem.¹⁹ But the consequences of that stratification have not been followed in every detail, whether strictly conceptual or metaphorical. The role of stratification in the latter will be demonstrated in the next chapter; our focus in this chapter is on a stratified but coordinated reading of φύσις.

Empedocles, to reiterate my main claim, uses φύσις each time in its conventional sense, but to designate something that he explains in other, more fundamental terms. This “nature,” I will argue, refers on the Empedoclean account to nothing other than the result of the growing-together of some combination of the four ῥιζώματα or “roots” into a concrete and persistent compound, the particular characteristics of which determine its subsequent development and behavior, as in the case of an organism that arises from such a compound. The qualitative features of this φύσις are defined, as we see in certain fragments and testimonia, by the relative proportions of whatever elements are present in the mixture, their interaction being invoked to explain various aspects of organic development.

One precedent in this approach is Aristotle. In describing Empedocles’ notion of φύσις, Aristotle refers to a λόγος τῆς μίξεως, or “ratio of the mixture.” Although neither Empedocles himself nor any other notable commentator employs the phrase,²⁰ it has understandably been the entry point of much prior scholarship into an account of a persistent “nature” in Empedocles;²¹ I will also use the phrase as a sort of short-hand for interpretation, the limits of which will be

¹⁹ See e.g. Trépanier (2003).

²⁰ The phrase only appears in Aristotle when he is discussing Empedocles, even at *Met.* 1092b22 where Empedocles (not named) is related to the Pythagorean number theory under discussion; but Theophrastus uses the phrase without any apparent reference to Empedocles at *HP* 9.6.4.5 and *CP* 6.3.5.4; it seems not to have caught on, appearing exceedingly rarely even in the Aristotelian commentary tradition, where it does not appear before Sophonias, *In de An.* 26.11.

²¹ See the useful remarks by Guthrie (1965) II.211.

addressed later, in connection with the subsidiary problem of how Empedocles theorized the constitution and persistence of a φύσις. Another phrase that I will utilize in close connection with this is also borrowed from Aristotle's remarks on Empedocles, where the φύσις of B8 is said to refer to a πρώτη σύνθεσις, or "primary composition." This will likewise serve as a convenient marker, for the sort of fundamental growing-together of the roots that operates behind Empedocles' use of φύσις.

Of the fragments that contain φύσις, B8 is by far the most important. It carries its weight openly, being a forceful, programmatic statement in which Empedocles rejects φύσις as being a mere name, asserting that what is named by φύσις is in fact only mixture and exchange of what is mixed. Here is the entire text of the fragment as I prefer it:

ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενός ἐστιν ἐκάστου
θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένη θανάτιο γενέθλη,
ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μιγέντων
ἐστί, φύσις δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.²²

Something else I will tell you: of no single one is there φύσις among mortal things, nor is there a baleful stock (or birth) of death, but only mixture and exchange of things mixed exist, and φύσις is a name given to them by humans.

The explication and justification of this, the Plutarchan version, which differs at some crucial points from the consensus text that is based primarily on Aëtius' reading, will be taken up below. But this and every proposed reading of the fragment cannot but convey the forcefulness of its negation, as well as its stark reduction of φύσις to "mixture and exchange of things mixed," however the details remain to be spelled out, and however one understands its φύσις.

Some, *in primis* Aristotle, have understood this instance of φύσις to be roughly equivalent in meaning to οὐσία ("essence") and therefore translatable as "nature," while others,

²² Cf. D53 = 12W.

most importantly Plutarch, have seen it rather as γένεσις or the process of coming-to-be, as opposed to its static origin or result. Empedocles therefore is taken to have denied either that any mortal thing has a static “nature,” or that any mortal thing has a proper “genesis.”

Between Aristotle and Plutarch, the sides of the modern debate were established, and at the start of the last century it was vigorous. The vigor derived primarily from the pivotal role of B8 in a larger debate about the conceptual preoccupations of early natural philosophy. Lovejoy, enlisting the authority of Aristotle and then with the backing of Burnet and others, insisted that the driving notion was that of an underlying and permanent essence, and read B8 accordingly.²³ Arrayed opposite was a band led by Woodbridge, who (along with many others, including Burnet prior to his switching sides) had taken B8 to be the principal evidence that φύσις also meant γένεσις early in its history: and it was this concept that Woodbridge had posited as the real standard of the revolution in thought, and as operating in every Empedoclean instance of φύσις.²⁴ The consensus about B8 was already strong enough to repulse Lovejoy’s attack, as Woodbridge happened to have the support of every single editor of Empedocles—at least as far as B8 was concerned. Since then, the hold on B8 has proven unshakeable,²⁵ even as Woodbridge’s attempt to make *every* instance synonymous with γένεσις has been silently abandoned by the majority,²⁶ with only a couple solitary outposts remaining.²⁷

²³ Lovejoy (1909); Burnet, having followed Plutarch in the prior editions of his influential work, *Early Greek Philosophy*, was persuaded by Lovejoy to alter his stance in the fourth edition (1930) 244 with n. 114.

²⁴ Woodbridge (1901). Woodbridge’s arguments will not be dealt with in much detail below, and have for the most part been abandoned. On B110 in particular, Woodbridge’s construal, “whatever origin each may have,” while comfortingly egalitarian, has never been endorsed, being indefensible: ὅπη cannot be translated as a concessive indefinite “whatever.”

²⁵ It seems the list of those who endorse the consensus view could be expanded indefinitely, as it includes all of the editors and translators, and therefore everyone reliant upon them.

²⁶ It is noteworthy that already e.g. Beardslee (1918), coming to Woodbridge’s defense on the

The few who have since sought to renew the opposition on B8, namely Bollack, Hölscher, van der Ben and Owens, have had little to no effect on the scholarship.²⁸ Of the still proliferating anthologies of early Greek philosophy, only one bears any sign of opposition, and bears it rather quietly.²⁹ Otherwise, the past century has seen only the solidification and spread of the consensus, most evident perhaps in the many citations of B8 that register no difficulty whatsoever in taking φύσις as “birth” or “growth.”³⁰ Indeed, even amid the recently renewed interest in φύσις and Empedocles’ language more generally, the consensus on B8 has gone wholly unexamined. The conclusion that Empedocles is concerned in B8 with the problem of growth or birth has led to the further conclusion that the problem of the stable nature of an

subject of B8, says nothing about B63 and B110.

²⁷ Since Woodbridge, the only scholars to my knowledge who have similarly employed γένεσις (in some sense) for every instance are Gemelli Marciano (2007) (*Geburt, Ursprung, Wachsen*; cf. Gemelli Marciano (2005) where B8 receives “birth” and B63 “generation”) and Montevicchi (2010) (*nascita, generazione, nascita spirituale e intellettuale*). Willi (2008) neglects B63 but translates B8 with *Werden* and B110 with *Entwicklung*; see pp. 214, 244, 259.

²⁸ Whatever the causes may be, their arguments have not been well received. To speculate nonetheless: Bollack, perhaps because his translation (*naissance*), as I will discuss below, is misleading for the interpretation he elaborates; Hölscher and van der Ben, because of their unusual rejection of the widely shared interpretation of Empedocles’ cosmic cycle (in place of which they offer only a biological cycle); and Owens, perhaps because his article represents a fairly rare foray into Presocratic studies, and indeed his only publication focused on Empedocles. There are signs that Primavesi may be prepared to mount an attack: see the following.

²⁹ I should note first that I have only consulted the translations into English, French, German and Italian; I would like to add others. The only exception noted so far is the Reclam *Die Vorsokratiker* by Mansfeld and Primavesi, who leave φύσις untranslated in B8 (their fr. 53), but bias their reader by providing as testimonium only Aristotle’s discussion in *Met. Δ*; note also that they translate φύσις with *Entstehungsgrund* in B63 (fr. 169) and simply *Natur* in B110 (fr. 125), and cf. the choice of γένεσις for B8 by Mansfeld (1972), but Primavesi’s preference for “nature” seen most clearly in M-P p. 55 (see discussion below), and more quietly again in Primavesi (2016) 20 with n. 67, where “genetic inheritance” would seem to gloss the φύσις of B63, and Primavesi (2008a) 265 with n. 131, where “beings” in a loose paraphrase of B8 suggests the same preference. I should also note that Freeman’s now neglected *Ancilla*, a translation of the fragments collected in DK, is exceptional for its use of “substance” for every instance of the term—excepting the very first in B8, which is rendered “creation of substance.”

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Hankinson (1998) 46, Hadot (2006) 10, Sassi (2018) 131.

individual organism is not at the forefront of his thought—and that he has no account of one in any event.³¹ Even if the first conclusion were correct, the second would not necessarily follow.

It has been allowed to follow nonetheless, on account of the disproportionate focus on B8, even to the complete exclusion of the other instances of φύσις in B63 and B110, let alone the other nominalizations of φύεσθαι. Together, these fragments complicate matters considerably.

B63 is quoted by Aristotle, who takes its φύσις to be a corporeal “nature.” The entire fragment is a single hexameter line:

ἀλλὰ διέσπασται μελέων φύσις· ἡ μὲν ἐν ἀνδρός³²

But torn asunder is the nature of the limbs: the one in the man’s ...

This usage takes its place readily enough in the history of embryology, and the most plausible interpretation follows Aristotle in taking φύσις as a concrete mixture, here embodied in the seed to be contributed by either parent.³³ It has also been taken to speak abstractly of the “origin” being divided between the two parents,³⁴ and more recently to the contribution from each parent of separate but somehow conglomerated φύσεις (or *plural* natures) of individual “limb-substances.”³⁵ Yet the commonest interpretation is the most compelling on the basis of our evidence, and is also the one which best fits the unified definition being proposed here.

Arguably even more consonant with the conventional usage is B110, an oft-cited guarantee of the power of his teachings, in the middle of which Empedocles seems to add the

³¹ See Sassi (2015) 15; cf. Trépanier (2013), which, although positing a notion of “substance” in Empedocles (behind the word δαίμων), does not address the use of φύσις.

³² B63 = D164 = 56 W.

³³ On Empedocles’ embryology see esp. De Ley (1978).

³⁴ DK, Gallavotti, Montevicchi, Gemelli Marciano (2005) and (2007); Woodbridge (1901) takes this construal to the extreme as well, translating, “the origin of the members is diverse.”

³⁵ The latter is the claim of Trépanier (2013) 200, taken up below.

qualification that the φύσις or “nature” of each person will determine the precise effects. The fragment is preserved by Hippolytus,³⁶ whose brief remarks contains no hint as to his construal of the term. It appears there in the fifth line:

αὐτὰ γὰρ αὖξει
ταῦτ' εἰς ἦθος ἕκαστον, ὅπη φύσις ἐστὶν ἑκάστῳ.³⁷

For these themselves wax into each character, according to the nature of each.

This fragment presents more interpretive difficulties than B63, but the strongest case to be made is for taking φύσις again as the individual elemental mixture that constitutes each individual person.³⁸ On the other hand, it has also been taken to refer to the “nature” of individual doctrines³⁹ or even to the “permanent substance” of the elements.⁴⁰ Finally, proponents of the dynamic conception such as Woodbridge apply it to the origin of each person or the distinctive “coming-to-be” of the teachings.⁴¹ But the most plausible reading, I would argue, is again the standard “nature (of each person).” And again it is the one which best fits the definition proposed here.

Very few discussions of Empedocles’ φύσις consider the cognates. Modern scholars have always known of the Φυσώ (“Growth”), paired with Φθιμενή (“Perishing”) in a list of personified forces in B123, and it has infrequently been invoked to show that Empedocles heard

³⁶ The final line of the fragment is also quoted by Sextus, but we rely on Hippolytus for the preceding nine lines.

³⁷ B110.4-5 = D257 = 100 W.

³⁸ Cf. esp. Guthrie (1965) II.230, 352. Others who take this stance include DK, Freeman, McKirahan and now L-M.

³⁹ This is most clearly spelled out by Wright ad B110 (100 W), followed by Graham (22 [F5]). Those, such as Gallavotti, who leave the translation speaking vaguely about “the nature of each,” presumably mean to leave the options open between the human subject and the “words which are themselves well constituted of the four roots,” as Wright puts it in her comment on B110.1.

⁴⁰ This seems to be the interpretation of e.g. Mansfeld and Primavesi (fr. 125).

⁴¹ So e.g. Woodbridge (1901), Schwabl (1956), Willi (2008) 259.

in φυ- more the process than the product.⁴² I would counter that the personification suggests rather the hypostasis of a power that governs growth, and could offer therefore a better parallel to a static “nature.”

A recent addition to our short catalogue is the φύμα (“growth”) of *P. Strasb. a (ii) 27*,⁴³ where it occurs in the curious phrase ἀνθρώπων δίδυμον φύμα (“twofold growth of humans”). M-P, noting Lucretius’ faithful borrowing in the phrase *hominum geminam prolem*,⁴⁴ translate the Greek with *la double descendance* as well as “the twofold offspring”; “growth” as result (not as process) does seem the likely meaning, especially given the generally observed distinction between the suffixes -σις and -μα, denoting process and product respectively. Of course, that pattern when applied to Empedocles’ φύσις and φύμα has made the papyrus a convenient corroboration of the consensus on B8.⁴⁵ That would make Empedocles the only author to observe that distinction between these two terms. As we saw in the cases of B63 and B110, and will see in the case of B8, there are good reasons to believe that Empedocles did not observe it strictly, if he observed it at all.

However we should interpret them, those two other terms reveal that Empedocles was unusually bold in forming nouns from φύεσθαι, and may consequently reinforce the impression that he used φύσις rather freely. Indeed, all the relevant fragments together present difficulties that one might prefer to gloss over by not citing the others at all, as in fact many of the most

⁴² See below on Schumacher.

⁴³ Of course, because of its only recent discovery and publication, the evidence from the Strasbourg papyrus cannot have been included in the majority of the scholarship under consideration.

⁴⁴ *DRN* 2.1082.

⁴⁵ So Willi (2008) 214, 244.

noteworthy historians of the term have done.⁴⁶ However, even when the others are neglected, polysemy has regularly been asserted, as it was already in Plutarch.

Among the scholars of Empedocles who do touch upon all three of the fragments, the more common solution is to assume that at least two different meanings of φύσις are at play in the fragments. Some have even seen two meanings operating within B8 itself: “birth” in l.1, and “nature” in l.4.⁴⁷ Most conclude however that B8, according to the consensus, has “genesis” in both instances, and that one or both of the other fragments have “nature.” Yet the range of meanings has been surprisingly nuanced. Considering all three fragments, one finds translations ranging from “birth” to “origin,” “nature” to “material seed.” Perhaps the greatest range is endorsed by Traglia, who takes φύσις as *nascita* (“birth”) in B8, *natura* (sc. of each person) in B110, and then as the basis of an insignificant periphrasis in B63 (such that μελέων φύσις, “nature of the limbs” = μέλεα “limbs”).⁴⁸ Three distinct construals are also found for instance in Holwerda and Guthrie.⁴⁹ The most frequent combination is simpler: “growth” (*vel sim.*) in B8 and “nature” in the remaining two (sometimes with slight distinctions between the senses required).⁵⁰ The second most frequent is a dynamic reading of both B8 and B63 alongside a static reading of B110, as offered by DK, Gallavotti and now also L-M.⁵¹ As for the range of referents, “mortals” dominate: B8 and B63 have always been restricted to “mortals,” with the occasional

⁴⁶ One looks in vain for comments on the other fragments in Beardslee (1918), Burger (1925), Hardy (1884), Heinemann (1945), Lovejoy (1909), Naddaf (2005), Patzer (1993 [1945]).

⁴⁷ DK, Freeman (“creation of substance,” “substance”), M-P (*naissance, nature*, p. 55).

⁴⁸ Before Traglia, Bignone reached the same conclusions.

⁴⁹ Holwerda (1955) has γένεσις, the droll *globus horribilis*, and *natura* as product of education (the latter two will be discussed below); Guthrie (1965) has “birth,” “semen,” and “nature.”

⁵⁰ So e.g. Biès (2010) and all the standard English translations of Empedocles, namely Graham, Inwood, McKirahan and Wright.

⁵¹ DK have *Geburt, Ursprung*, and *Natur*; Gallavotti, *generazione, generazione, natura*; L-M, “birth,” “birth,” “nature.”

suggestion that B8 may imply that it is valid to speak of the φύσις of the elements;⁵² a few have insisted that φύσις in B110 may refer to the permanent nature of the roots,⁵³ but again most confine the term in that fragment to human beings, as either “growth” or “nature.”⁵⁴ Amid this welter of options, whatever precise combination is given, the polysemy is almost always left unaddressed.

One neglected exception is Schumacher’s 1941 article, “Der Physis-Begriff bei Empedokles.” It is, to my knowledge, the only work devoted to a coordinated study of all instances of φύσις in Empedocles, complete with a footnote, however brief, on the Φυσώ of B123.⁵⁵ Beginning with an acknowledgment of the force of Hardy’s assertion that Empedocles denied the term any authority in its popular sense, i.e. “nature,”⁵⁶ Schumacher nevertheless ignores that force completely when taking up B8, asserting, “What is to be understood in this fragment under the term φύσις, follows unambiguously from the corresponding θάνατος”;⁵⁷ the evident meaning is of course *Entstehen* or γένεσις.⁵⁸ Schumacher then observes that the denial of φύσις should be extended to φύσις *als Wesen* (“essence,” sc. of a thing) as well, although he does not claim that this is explicit, but claims that it is to be inferred from Empedocles’ doctrine

⁵² So e.g. Schumacher (1941) and Lovejoy (1909). This goes back at least to Asclepius of Tralles, *in Met.* 311.31, who expands B8.4 into the phrase φύσις δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις τοῖς στοιχείοις ὀνομάζεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

⁵³ This is the first option suggested by Schwabl (1956) 52.

⁵⁴ Schumacher (1941) 185 has *Wachsen*; Schwabl (1956) 53 likewise concludes that it must refer to the *Wuchs* of a mortal being; Willi (2008) 259 translates *Entwicklung*.

⁵⁵ I have found no other work that focuses on it as Schumacher’s does; the dissertation of Vandercoilden (1945) on “Empedocles and his conception of nature,” in fact fails to take up the problem of φύσις at all, only dealing with Empedocles’ basic doctrines concerning what we would call the “order of nature.”

⁵⁶ Hardy took it to mean “nature” in B8, but, as noted in a footnote above, is among those scholars whose survey of φύσις failed to include B63 and B110.

⁵⁷ Schumacher (1941) 182: “Was in diesem Fragment unter φύσις zu verstehen ist, ergibt sich eindeutig aus dem entsprechenden θάνατος.”

⁵⁸ Schumacher (1941) 182.

that nothing other than the elements and Love and Strife enjoy a permanent essence.⁵⁹ He goes on to consider other meanings that might have been known to Empedocles: first, φύσις as a collective term, i.e. *Naturordnung*, on which he ends in *aporia*; second, φύσις not as *essence*, but in the sense of ὅπως ἔχει (“what it’s like”), borrowing a phrase from Heraclitus.⁶⁰ It is this last meaning that he finds promising, especially in the more dynamic sense of a thing’s qualitative development during birth or growth more generally, and Schumacher then applies it to B63 and B110 with subtle tweaks in each. His concluding paragraph is worth quoting in full:

Empedocles rejected φύσις in the sense of “becoming” (the influence of Parmenides); he cannot take it as the “being” (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) of things, since eternal, actual being is only in store for the elements and Love (and Strife). The question of whether he knew φύσις as “creation” or “natural order” had to remain undecided. On the other hand, Empedocles knew φύσις as the ὅπως ἔχει of things and also — at least for the present period of the coming-to-be of things — as “birth” and “growth.” He knew furthermore the objective side of φύσις, which could be equated with the λόγος τῆς μίξεως.⁶¹

Schumacher thus comes close to arguing that all four instances are synonymous with γένεσις, uniting the fragments around a dynamic interpretation of φύσις, so that each one speaks of an event or process of growth. However, in view of B8’s denial, which he interprets in complete accord with the consensus, he would salvage φύσις only as the qualitative description of a thing in its development: on Schumacher’s view, although Empedocles denies φύσις in the sense of a coming-to-be that is productive of real being, Empedocles can still use the term elsewhere to designate that qualitative description of a thing, explicable by way of Aristotle’s abovementioned

⁵⁹ Schumacher (1941) 182.

⁶⁰ See Heraclitus DK 22 B1.

⁶¹ Schumacher (1941) 196: “Empedokles lehnte φύσις in der Bedeutung „Entstehen“ ab (Einfluß des Parmenides); als „Wesen“ (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) der Dinge kann er sie nicht nehmen, weil nur den Elementen und der „Liebe“ (und dem „Streit“) ewiges, wirkliches Sein zukommt. Die Frage, ob er die Physis als „Schöpfung“ und als „Naturordnung“ kannte, mußte unentschieden bleiben. Dagegen kann Empedokles die Physis als das ὅπως ἔχει der Dinge und ebenso — wenigstens für die derzeitige Periode der Dingwerdung — als „Geburt“ und als „Wachsen.“ Er kannte weiter die objektive Seite der Physis, die dem λόγος τῆς μίξεως gleichgestellt werden konnte.”

equation of Empedoclean φύσις with a λόγος τῆς μίξεως. Schumacher, as others, assumes that the rejection of φύσις in B8 is compatible with the use of φύσις in B63 and B110 only if those fragments employ a different sense of the term. This is mistaken.

Empedocles likewise denies the absolute validity of conventional ideas of birth and death in B9,⁶² and yet uses the conventional words for these processes elsewhere without qualification, in what is by all appearances their normal use.⁶³ This is precisely what the poet himself leads the reader to expect from B9, by saying at the conclusion of that fragment, νόμῳ δ' ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός (“but to custom even I myself assent”). Since B8 contains no such affirmation, it has never been carefully considered that Empedocles may nonetheless assent to the conventional meaning on display in B8. Thus Schumacher and others who have followed Plutarch on B8’s φύσις have also followed him in an incomplete application of the conventionalism which he himself stresses perhaps more than any other interpreter.

Both sides of the debate have been guilty of this, however. Van der Ben, for instance, also selectively applies a conventionalism to Empedocles’ verses. First, he insists that φύσις “is used here [sc. in B8] strictly in the sense in which the elements can be said to have a φύσις,” that is, a “substantial being.”⁶⁴ This conventionalism van der Ben then applies only to B63 and B110, in both of which he takes φύσις as “the sum total of man’s substance, man’s constitution as a whole,” according to “normal Greek usage.” “So the statement νόμῳ δ' ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός,” he concludes, “seems to apply also to the word φύσις.” Just as Schumacher, then, van der Ben neglects to include B8 in the conventionalist reading.

⁶² An alternative reading of the obviously corrupt line has been proposed by M-P: γενέθλη (“birth” or “stock”); see below in connection with the alternative reading γενέθλη of B8.2.

⁶³ The same can be said of γενέθλη; see below.

⁶⁴ Van der Ben (1978) 199.

On either approach, Empedocles' usage has repeatedly been taken to mark the acceptance of convention in B63 and B110, and the denial only of a more technical sense of the term in B8. The obvious possibility that all instances can be combined in a conventionalist reading has been neglected on account of the readiness with which most of Empedocles' readers have assumed a polysemous φύσις.

To be sure, "nature," like "being," is said in many ways,⁶⁵ and it is no lapse in judgement to assume that Empedocles' usage is no exception to the rule, especially when almost every other interpreter has done so. Yet if any attempt to establish the unity and coherence of his fragments is worthwhile, then it is worthwhile at least to consider the maximal possible coherence of so central a term as φύσις.

The task is made all the more pressing by the fact that, although no successful attempt has been made to argue that every instance in Empedocles should be taken as synonymous with γένεσις, that approach has been quietly spreading to the other fragments. It has not been adequately noted that in order to translate any other Empedoclean instance of φύσις as "birth," one must make the same assumptions of conventionalism. What I propose is to articulate those assumptions as clearly as possible and assess their compatibility with the three fragments considered together and in light of the entire Empedoclean corpus. And the conclusion of my research, to repeat, is that a single meaning does in fact operate in all four instances—but instead of the highly unconventional "growth," it is the most conventional: "nature."

It will be useful at this point to consider two other ancient discussions of Empedocles' φύσις and of its status within contemporary conventions. Both reveal the assumption of a simpler and conventional usage in Empedocles. Let us begin with what is likely the strangest.

⁶⁵ Compare Arist. *Met.* Δ 1003a33.

The view that Empedocles did *not* prominently employ φύσις in the sense of “nature,” may at first seem to be supported by the following remarks:

[I]t is much more difficult for him [sc. Empedocles] to give an account of coming-to-be according to nature (γενέσεως τῆς κατὰ φύσιν). For the things which come-to-be naturally (γινόμενα φύσει) all come-to-be, either always or generally, in a particular way, and exceptions or violations of the invariable or general rule are the results of chance and luck. What, then, is the reason why man always or generally comes-to-be from man, and why wheat (and not an olive) comes-to-be from wheat? Or does bone come-to-be, if the elements are put together in a certain manner? For, according to Empedocles, nothing comes-to-be by their coming together by chance but by their coming together in a certain proportion. What, then, is the cause of this? It is certainly not Fire or Earth; but neither is it Love and Strife, for the former is a cause of ‘association’ (σύγκρισις) only and the latter of dissociation (διάκρισις) only. No: the cause is the substance of each thing (ἡ οὐσία ἢ ἐκάστου) and not merely, as he says, ‘a mingling and exchange of things mingled’ (B8.3: μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μγέντων); and chance (τύχη), not proportion (λόγος), is the name applied to these happenings:⁶⁶ for it is possible for things to be mixed by chance. The cause, then, of things which exist by nature is that they are in such-and-such a condition (τὸ οὕτως ἔχειν), and this is the nature of each thing, about which he says nothing. So he says nothing ‘concerning nature’ (περὶ φύσεως). And yet it is this which is the excellence and good of each thing (τὸ εὔ τοῦτο καὶ ἀγαθόν), whereas he praises the mingling (μίξις) alone.⁶⁷

So Empedocles—in contrast with the likes of Pindar?—“praises” not φύσις, but rather μίξις, and indeed “says nothing about nature.” This criticism has been used to support the conclusion that Empedocles was not particularly interested in “nature” in the sense of “essence.”⁶⁸ But Aristotle is surely being somewhat unfair in his humor, attacking Empedocles for lacking a notion

⁶⁶ NB the parody of B8.4, as noted by Joachim ad loc., who also corrects the text on the basis of B8.4: “According to Empedokles, ... what is supposed to be *coming-to-be* or *death* is really ‘only a mingling and a divorce of what has been mingled : but it is called *coming-to-be* amongst men’. Aristotle is here *parodying* the last line of this fragment, φύσις δ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν. He reminds us of the original by the mere sound of the phrase (ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται), of which he has entirely altered the construction and the meaning. ‘And *chance*, not *proportion*, is the name given to these occurrences’, viz. to μίξις and διάλλαξις μγέντων.” (Joachim ad GC B. 6 333b15-16) Cf. Karsten (p. 190): “Invertit ibi Empedocles rationem, pro Φύσις in qua λόγος est, ponens τύχην, in qua nullus est λόγος.”

⁶⁷ GC II.6, 333b3-20, trans. Forster (Loeb), modified.

⁶⁸ Karsten (ibid.): “non probandus Aristoteles, quum Metaph. IV, 4, Φύσιν hoc loco interpretatur *propriam rerum naturam* sive *essentiam* [...]. Immo hoc sensu Empedocles περὶ Φύσεως nihil dixit, ut ipse animadvertit de Gener. et Corr. II, 6.”

comparable to his own φύσις as οὐσία. Remarking, in an unmistakable parody of B8.4, that “chance, not proportion (λόγος), is the name applied to these,” Aristotle echoes his interpretation elsewhere (cited above) that B8 indicates that any given φύσις is explicable in terms of ὁ λόγος τῆς μίξεως. As he explains, Aristotle finds this explanation unsatisfactory insofar as the mixture is not itself causally subordinated to a separate principle particular to each organism and comparable to the Aristotelian formal cause. Consequently, Aristotle objects in this passage that it is really chance, and not proportion, that Empedocles relies upon in his explanation of φύσις. Thus, even as he spurns Empedocles’ explanation of those proportions, Aristotle reveals that he still takes Empedocles to be talking about stable mixtures of varying proportions.

This basic conception is also on display in a passage that has sometimes troubled commentators. In the philosophical lexicon of *Met. Δ*, Aristotle uses some very pregnant phrasing when he remarks, “Again in another sense φύσις means the substance of natural objects (ἡ τῶν φύσει ὄντων οὐσία); as in the case of those who say that the φύσις is the primary composition (τὴν πρώτην σύνθεσιν) of a thing, or as Empedocles says: [B8.1, 3-4].”⁶⁹ The phrase ἡ πρώτη σύνθεσις introduces new terminology into his interpretation of Empedocles, but not, it seems, a concept foreign to his own thought: elsewhere Aristotle says, “There being three types of composition (συνθέσεων), one may posit as the first (πρώτην) the composition from some of the so-called elements, such as earth, air, water, fire.”⁷⁰ (The second synthesis is that of the homoeomerous bodies, or those bodies which were taken to be of uniform composition, such as flesh and bone; the third synthesis is that of the anhomoeomerous, “as face and hand and such

⁶⁹ *Met. Δ* 1014b35-1015a2.

⁷⁰ *PA* 646a12-14.

parts.”)⁷¹ I submit that the prime candidate for Empedocles’ explanation of what really lies behind the conventional notion of φύσις is precisely this reductionist account of φύσις as a πρώτη σύνθεσις of the elements as determined by a particular λόγος τῆς μίξεως.

Finally, it is also noteworthy that in his close engagement with and criticism of Empedocles, Aristotle consistently approaches Empedocles’ φύσις as “nature,” never “coming-to-be.” This has been a matter of some debate, however, since Aristotle once cites B8 as denying the reality of γένεσις,⁷² and indeed the Aristotelian commentators repeatedly do the same.⁷³ But Owens has conclusively shown, to my mind, that no Aristotelian citation of B8 suggests that Aristotle understood its φύσις as γένεσις.⁷⁴ I will not repeat the details of his argument here, but only observe that, unlike Plutarch, neither Aristotle nor his commentators ever explicitly claim that B8’s φύσις means γένεσις, and reiterate that the denial of the φύσις of a mortal creature—which as such comes-to-be and passes away—also entails the denial of that creature’s coming-to-be. Citing the very memorable B8 as proof that Empedocles also denied becoming still allows for an understanding of B8 as denying, in the first place, “nature.”

Another important source for the ancient response to Empedocles is found in the Hippocratic authors who comment on or echo the poet. The second witness I would mention here is the author of *On Ancient Medicine*, who delegates the question of “what a human being is” (ὅ τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος) “to those, just as Empedocles or others who have written concerning φύσις, [about] what a human being is from the beginning, and how one first comes to be and from what

⁷¹ *PA* 646a20-24.

⁷² *GC* 314b7.

⁷³ See Wright ad B8 (12 W) for citations.

⁷⁴ Owens (1976).

one is compounded.”⁷⁵ In this brief remark one sees clearly enough, I hope, that the notion of φύσις being attributed to Empedocles is one of a “nature” that is created by the mixing of elements, and a “nature” that determines the subsequent behavior of the creature in question—and a “nature” that answers the question of what a human being *is*. Another Hippocratic text, discussed later in this chapter, will corroborate further the claim that it is precisely this conventional notion of φύσις as “nature” that can be seen to operate in every instance of the term in Empedocles, including B8. Where Empedocles distinguishes himself from his contemporaries, such as these early Hippocratic authors, is not in the meaning he apparently gives to φύσις, but in his scrupulous, post-Parmenidean denial of the real existence of any φύσις. What bears repeating is that in this text we see again an early response to Empedocles which assumes that he was concerned with the conventional sense of φύσις as “nature,” and that no ancient author other than Plutarch unmistakably indicates that Empedocles used φύσις to mean anything other than this.

In addition to these ancient interpreters, my argument also has its precedents in modern scholarship, particularly in the work of Jean Bollack, whose stance on this point has not always been appreciated for what it is: unfortunately, Bollack misleadingly translated φύσις in three of the four instances as *naissance* (“birth”), while simultaneously explaining each instance as denoting “une force inhérente à la chose, une faculté qui lui est propre (d’où le sens de nature, essence).”⁷⁶ While Bollack’s translation seems to accord with the consensus, his commentary

⁷⁵ VM 20: τείνει δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ λόγος ἐς φιλοσοφίην, καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἢ ἄλλοι οἱ περὶ φύσιος γεγράφασιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὃ τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὅπως ἐγένετο πρῶτον καὶ ὀπόθεν συνεπάγη.

⁷⁶ Bollack ad B8 (53 Bollack); cf. also the commentary to the same effect ad B63 (641 Bollack), and the puzzling decision to translate B110 (699 Bollack) with “Ils font croître / Toute chose en sa nature, selon la force donnée à chacune,” where “nature” translates ἦθος and “force” φύσις.

subverts it with something more appropriate to the Neoplatonic interpretation of Empedocles for which he has repeatedly been faulted. Bollack's single definition that verges on "nature, essence" is, however, the best precedent for my argument in Empedoclean scholarship.

That said, the Aristotelian scholar Owens, in his analysis of Aristotle's treatment of B8, both proves (as noted above) that Aristotle always understood that fragment's φύσις as "nature," and offers a compelling reading of B8 in support of Aristotle. However, because of his limited treatment of the evidence, he appropriately hesitates to pronounce on Empedocles.⁷⁷ Still, Owens provides important support for my analysis.

In what follows, I will combine a unitary analysis with a stronger emphasis on Empedocles' status as a sort of conventionalist. In B8, we see Empedocles rejecting, as a mere name used by mortals, what appears appropriately enough to have been the most conventional meaning of the term; in both B63 and B110, we see Empedocles using the word nonetheless, in its familiar acceptance. There is a φύσις of no single mortal, he says in B8: there is, he avers, no irreducible "nature" over and above the elements' interaction that constitutes an individual organism, no "nature" that comes-to-be as a result of that interaction; yet the term is useful, conventional shorthand for the persistent but dynamic compound that underlies and characterizes each mortal compound, as Empedocles shows in B63 and B110. If one assumes consistency through a conventional application of φύσις, one is led to a compellingly tidy conclusion. That said, it is hoped that this unified account will have an appeal beyond that of the cleanliness of Ockham's razor. Its real value must lie in an increased clarity and unification of Empedocles' thought, and with that the illumination of the relationship between his concept of φύσις and his employment of certain metaphors.

⁷⁷ B63 and B110 are briefly treated by Owens (1976) 97 n. 22.

III. Fragment B8 and the Denial of Φύσις

B8 has been quoted and discussed with unusual frequency since Aristotle at the latest. Assessing the meaning is made all the more difficult since, in the opening line of that fragment, Empedocles does not define it or use it in a particularly revealing way, but rather proclaims that there is a φύσις of no single mortal. For clues to its meaning one must read further. Two quotations offer a second line in which Empedocles denies θάνατος (“death”) in some way as well (in precisely which way remains to be seen). All citations include the third line, which states, in effect, that the explanatory principles to be used instead are μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μγέντων (“both mixture and exchange of things mixed”); and some citations include only this portion. The rejected pair φύσις and θάνατος would seem to be correlated with μίξις and διάλλαξις, which suggest processes; and since death may be conceived as an event or process in the life of the organism, φύσις surely stands for the opposite event or process, namely birth. Accordingly, many have followed Plutarch in assuming that what is being contested is the validity of concepts of certain processes, so that φύσις in contrast with θάνατος can only denote γένεσις or more precisely the process of coming-to-be, and that μίξις is meant to supplant φύσις and διάλλαξις θάνατος. Finally, a number of quotations contain a concluding stricture, that φύσις is a name used by human beings ἐπὶ τοῖς (“for these”), where τοῖς has almost always been taken to refer to the preceding line’s μίξις and διάλλαξις μγέντων. No quotation, I would stress, gives any hint of Empedocles returning to θάνατος at the end of the fragment. It would seem an obvious solution to the problem, but against Janko’s recent reconstruction of the beginning of a fifth line with <καὶ ‘θάνατος’>,⁷⁸ there are sufficient reasons to assume that the programmatic statement concluded with the fourth line’s nominalistic claim about φύσις.

⁷⁸ Janko (2017) 2; see below for further discussion.

Consequently, one of the main, inescapable problems for the interpretation of B8 lies in that return to φύσις alone and the implicit application of φύσις to “both mixture and exchange of things mixed.” The problem is not avoided by Aëtius’ reading, which substitutes, as we will see momentarily, δὲ βροτοῖς (“to mortals”) for ἐπὶ τοῖς; nor by reading ἐπὶ τοῖς (“to these”) as referring to the mortals (θνητῶν) of 1.2. If the name is applied to mortals, which are constituted by mixing and exchange alone, then φύσις still remains to be explained in terms of mixing and exchange. But if, on the more popular reading, φύσις is to be identified with μίξις, and θάνατος in turn with its presumed opposite, διάλλαξις, then how might φύσις be understood as a name applied to both processes? Is φύσις then the same as θάνατος in some sense, or does it somehow include or imply it? One might—and, I think, must—respond affirmatively to these questions, regardless of one’s stance on φύσις as either “nature” or “genesis.” A deliberate confusion of φύσις and θάνατος is unavoidably suggested by the asymmetry of the text in its return to φύσις alone.

This is made even plainer if one accepts a variant reading which has Empedocles deny not θανάτοιο τελευτή, the “end of death,” as Aëtius and all of Empedocles’ editors have it, but rather θανάτοιο γενέθλη, the “stock (or birth) of death,” the reading found in Plutarch. First, this alternative reading diminishes the apparent contrast between φύσις and θάνατος as process, thereby lending greater plausibility to φύσις as “nature.” But this “nature” must be understood as a principle that determines both the birth of an organism and its further development, including the exchanges that constitute the organism’s own death. The inclusion of the latter has too often been ignored or treated as an unsolved puzzle. Even those who are not persuaded to accept “nature” in B8 should note that a simple but too often neglected solution to the riddle is at hand, a solution that was already given with unsurpassed clarity by Simplicius, who wrote of every

organic “corruption” constituting another organic “generation.”⁷⁹ (To illustrate with an old favorite: from a carcass, spontaneous bees.) All of these considerations, it is hoped, will make this more riddling version of B8 seem more familiar.

However, there is a subsidiary problem that complicates that explanation, and lies in διάλλαξις. Since Aristotle, who seems to regard it as a synonym of διάλυσις (“separation”), διάλλαξις has often been taken to be the precise opposite of μίξις, viz. “separation.” Yet because it does not seem to mean “separation” in any other text, but means “(attempt at) reconciliation” in Plato’s seventh letter, and because the verb from which it derives, διαλλάσσω, likewise does not mean “separate,” but usually “exchange”—as it does in Empedocles himself—, some have preferred to translate it “exchange.” This translation has been chosen by a number of the most influential scholars, including DK (*Austausch*),⁸⁰ but it is only recently that extensive efforts have been made to read this “exchange” as being somehow not synonymous with διάλυσις. So Palmer has argued that it is in fact the substantial interchange of the elements consequent to their mixture;⁸¹ and Gulley that it is rather the single fundamental process of exchange of unchanging elements.⁸² Like others before, Palmer insisted that separation cannot be designated by φύσις, since φύσις, in short, is not θάνατος.⁸³ Gulley has countered that θανάτοις remains in the text, and cannot be neglected by an analysis of the fragment as a whole or its use of διάλλαξις in particular. Yet Gulley’s conclusions about διάλλαξις also want correction.

⁷⁹ See Simpl. *In phys.* I 4, 178.14-15, 21-23, and below for more discussion.

⁸⁰ So now also L-M (“exchange”).

⁸¹ Palmer (2009) 285-9 and (2016) 43-4.

⁸² Gulley (2017) ch. 3 sect. 4.

⁸³ Cf. Palmer (2016) 32: “It is incomprehensible how mortal creatures could be born from the dissolution of the elements or perish from their coming together, and there is no evidence elsewhere in the fragments for such an incoherent notion.”

For a different approach to διάλλαξις we will return to Simplicius' discussion of Empedoclean γένεσις. Yet, for my interpretation of φύσις as “nature,” the greater help is to be found in the analysis by Martin and Primavesi (M-P) of διάλλαξις as *redistribution*, in close connection with the Empedoclean phrase ξυνοδόν τε διάπτυξιν τε γενέθλης (“both the coming together and the unfolding of the stock”).⁸⁴ In the end, I will suggest that διάλλαξις denotes the interchanging motion of things mixed. This interchange encompasses the articulation of organic development that M-P see in διάπτυξις (“unfolding”), along with the exchange between bodies in the form of effluences, whether as isolated elements or as compounds, the latter including the exchange involved in sexual reproduction and the interchange that is daimonic transmigration—the interchange, in other words, of a mixed thing, which unites in an obvious way both θάνατος and φύσις in whatever sense. To be sure, following Empedocles' varied attributions of being, becoming, and ceasing-to-be, it seems that one can say that any change, by bringing about an alteration of the arrangement of elements, is both a genesis and a destruction, a birth and a death. But it is a subsidiary aim of this section to unfold more precisely the possible modes of διάλλαξις as constitutive of φύσις.

We turn at last to a closer analysis of the text and its difficulties. First, the text as preserved by Aëtius, the *variae lectiones* (vv.11.) of which are followed by most editors:

ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενός ἐστιν ἀπάντων
 θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένου θανάτιο τελευτή,
 ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μίγντων
 ἐστί, φύσις δὲ βροτοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.⁸⁵

Something else I will tell you: of nothing is there φύσις, among all mortal things, nor is there any end of baleful death, but only mixture and exchange of things mixed exist, and φύσις is a name given by mortal humans.

⁸⁴ P. Strasb. a (ii) 24, 30; M-P's analysis is found in the commentary ad loc.

⁸⁵ B8 = D53 = 12W; compare also 53 Bollack, 2.1-4 Gallavotti, 21 Inwood.

Because death is denied here with such pleonasm, viz. “end of baleful (or “destructive”) death,”⁸⁶ many readers have understandably concluded that φύσις is starkly contrasted with θάνατος, and therefore to be translated as either “birth” or “growth.”⁸⁷ Needless to say, this Aëtian text is more convenient for the consensus interpretation of B8 that derives from Plutarch—although it is not the text Plutarch himself seems to have read, and Aëtius did not enter the debate, regrettably neglecting to gloss the term. The substituted concepts in the third line are usually taken to correspond to birth on the one hand and death on the other, the mixture into a new form and the dissolution of said form. Thus far, the correspondence is tidy and altogether plausible. Mixing and separation are familiar substitutes for coming-to-be and passing-away, as in Anaxagoras and Democritus,⁸⁸ as well as in Empedocles himself. To note just one other fragment, B9 plainly aligns the mixing of elements into an organism with what people call birth,⁸⁹ and separation with death.⁹⁰ The dichotomy, corroborated on many sides, may seem unquestionable. Nonetheless, two closely related doubts have been raised.

The main source of doubt is focused in I.4, which would seem to be the end of the

⁸⁶ While alternatives have been proposed, the phrase θανάτοιο τελευτή “end of death,” is usually and most plausibly explained as employing the appositional or explanatory genitive, so that it might be paraphrased as “the end that is death” (cf. M-P “(fin) consistant en une funeste mort,” p.55) and not as designating absolute cessation of existence or a cessation of death, *i.e.* a cessation of the cycles of death and rebirth, as claimed by Lovejoy (1909) 376; see Owens (1976) 90 with n. 10.

⁸⁷ This approach begins with Plutarch, *adv. Col.* 1111F-1112A, who however seems to have had a text that did not draw such a stark contrast, since it replaced τελευτή with γενέθλη. Most recent editors and commentators follow suit. But see Owens (1976) 95 for an argument against taking θανάτοιο τελευτή to require the contrast, while retaining τελευτή (on which see below).

⁸⁸ See e.g. DK 59B17, *Simpl. in Phys.* 163; and also e.g. O’Brien (1969) 165 with n. 3 for some other references.

⁸⁹ Cf. μᾶζεν, I.1; γενέσθαι, I.3 (or γενέθλην, “stock” or “lineage,” as I prefer to read the corrupt line, following M-P’s suggestion, on which see below).

⁹⁰ Cf. ἀποκρινθῶσι, I.4; δυσδαίμονα πότμον, *ibid.*, and θάνατον ... ἀλοίτην, I.4.

sentence;⁹¹ certainly there is nothing to leave one expecting a continuation—excepting, that is, the crucial imbalance. For the fragment, to repeat, says that there is neither φύσις nor θάνατος, but only μίξις and διάλλαξις μιγέντων—and yet only φύσις is named in the fourth line, as if θάνατος were no longer a concern. As a result, many interpreters, and most recently Palmer, have focused on φύσις to the neglect of θάνατος, taking φύσις alone in application to μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μιγέντων. The notion that φύσις is here identified with both, and that this is the only identity of real interest, is not at all new, and in fact dominates the ancient tradition. It will suffice to note that all of Aristotle’s citations of the fragment omit the second line, and his commentators almost always do the same; the sole exception is Simplicius, who paraphrases 1.2 in two of his four citations of the passage.⁹² As noted above, no ancient commentator gives any indication that Empedocles’ sentence went on to include a clause about θάνατος, and almost everyone who cites the fragment fixates on the identification of φύσις with μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μιγέντων. It is not surprising then to see some modern scholars following suit. Hardy, for instance, without mentioning θάνατος once, states that φύσις in B8 is being given the new meaning of *Verbindung und Trennung*.⁹³ Despite (or perhaps because of) its ancient pedigree, this approach has met significant resistance, for instance by Millerd, who said that Hardy “can hardly be right.”⁹⁴ According to Millerd and others, there can be no overlap whatsoever between

⁹¹ Van der Ben (1978) presents B8 as following directly into B9, which would then begin a new sentence, and the sense produced is good.

⁹² Simplicius, ignoring the φύσις of 1.1, is the most careful in this regard: on two of the four occasions on which he cites B8, he has Empedocles denying both generation and destruction: *in Cael.* 7.306.5 and *in Phys.* 9.161.19, where he speaks of γένεσις and φθορά; but elsewhere Simplicius applies the third verse to γένεσις alone: *in Phys.* 9.180.30 and 9.235.23. Alexander, who cites it just once, and Philoponus, who cites it six times, only have Empedocles denying φύσις or γένεσις.

⁹³ Hardy (1884) 21; for another, see Long (1966) 268.

⁹⁴ Millerd (1908) 19 n. 4. NB that Millerd’s translation of 1. 4 does not present a clear solution to

φύσις and θάνατος.

To dispel any suspicion of overlap, the dichotomy has sometimes been reinforced by way of the above-mentioned textual problem in 1.4, where one may choose between the readings δὲ βροτοῖς (“by mortals,” modifying ἀνθρώποισιν) and δ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς (“to them”); the former is found in Aëtius alone, while the latter is found in three texts, including Aristotle and Pseudo-Plutarch.⁹⁵ By preferring βροτοῖς, or by taking the referent of τοῖς to be θνητῶν (“mortals”) rather than the nearer and far more likely nouns of 1. 3, some have thought to obviate the problem.⁹⁶ But neither move eliminates the imbalance, and the return to φύσις alone should leave the attentive reader wondering why θάνατος does not reappear and thus maintain the apparent parallelism. The ending would smack at least somewhat of paradox, which is so familiar in the early Greek philosophers, not least Empedocles.⁹⁷ Which is to say, perhaps the reader is meant to contemplate some quasi-Heraclitean interplay between φύσις and θάνατος.⁹⁸ One finds further reason to suspect as much in the version of B8 found in Plutarch.

Plutarch quotes a more difficult version of B8.⁹⁹ We have just encountered one *v.l.* that it offers, ἐπὶ τοῖς 1.4, which is corroborated by Aristotle and is consequently the only *v.l.* from Plutarch preferred by most editors. The other two are more challenging. In the first line, one

the problem (“but by men *it* is called ‘becoming.’”).

⁹⁵ See the *app. crit.* in DK.

⁹⁶ See e.g. van der Ben (1978).

⁹⁷ That said, it must be granted that the prioritization of φύσις in natural philosophical discourse generally does help to explain its prioritization here, regardless of one’s interpretation of the fragment.

⁹⁸ Cf. e.g. Heraclitus B62: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες (“Immortal mortals, mortal immortals, living their death and dying their life”). For comparison with Empedocles see van der Ben (1978) 200 and Kahn (1979) 219-20 (within his commentary on the Heraclitean fragment).

⁹⁹ The unanimity of the Plutarchan tradition on this passage counts for little, as this particular treatise is preserved in only two codices, E and B; see the discussion in Pohlenz-Westman’s Teubner edition of the *Moralia*, vol. VI fasc. 2, p. X.

finds ἐκάστου (“of each”) instead of Aetius’ ἀπάντων (“of all”); much more importantly, in the second line, instead of Aetius’ οὐλομένου θανάτιο τελευτή, “end of baleful death,” one finds οὐλομένη θανάτιο γενέθλη, “baleful stock (or birth) of death.”¹⁰⁰ All three are seen together in the following text, which is the one found in the manuscripts of Plutarch:

ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενός ἐστιν ἐκάστου
θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένη θανάτιο γενέθλη,
ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μίγντων
ἐστί, φύσις δ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.

Something else I will tell you: of no single one is there a φύσις among mortal things, nor is there a baleful stock (or birth) of death, but only mixture and exchange of things mixed exist, and φύσις is a name given to them by humans.

While it must be granted that the source text does not inspire complete confidence—and indeed the failure of Plutarch’s interpretation is crucial to my argument—, this version of B8 has much more in favor of it than has been recognized even by its strongest advocate, van der Ben.¹⁰¹ In this form, the fragment takes on a greater conceptual and poetical unity. In order to demonstrate that, it will be useful to begin by defending the other readings that it offers.

The neglect of Plutarch’s version rests, as van der Ben noted, on a questionable preference for the *lectio facilior*. So ἀπάντων 1.1 is preferred—even by van der Ben himself—over ἐκάστου, and τελευτή 1.2 is preferred over γενέθλη by everyone else. To the extent that they were not already biased by the consensus reading, most scholars would seem to have been persuaded to discount Plutarch’s version due to the shabby state of B9, which Plutarch quotes

¹⁰⁰ Although the agreement of the adjective is not significant for our argument, we will treat the two *vv.ll.* as one. They are unanimous on the other *vv.ll.* as well.

¹⁰¹ Compare the corruptions in the preservation of B9 in the same text, and see van der Ben (1978) 198 on the topic of Plutarch’s reliance upon the possibly altered text presented by Colotes; but recall that van der Ben prefers Plutarch’s reading of B8.2.

shortly after B8,¹⁰² combined with the warnings of some of those who have studied Plutarch's reliability as a citator and doxographer.¹⁰³ Moreover, Plutarch's source has been called into question. Plutarch quotes B8 in the process of challenging the Epicurean Colotes' polemical interpretation of it, and says that Colotes misinterpreted both it and B9, which Colotes allegedly quoted as well. Consequently, some have concluded that Plutarch probably copied directly from Colotes' text. Since Colotes was obviously not the most careful scholar, his quotations cannot have been trustworthy; therefore neither can Plutarch's.¹⁰⁴

So, with respect to each *v.l.*, we are asked to assume that Plutarch either copied unquestioningly or mistakenly introduced a more difficult reading (or that it was introduced by a later copyist). This is unconvincing, and for the following reasons. First and most broadly, we have evidence that Plutarch knew Empedocles exceptionally well and most probably had easy access to his poems.¹⁰⁵ Second, *pace* van der Ben, Plutarch in this very work seems to quote B11 and B15 as counterevidence that had been *neglected* by Colotes.¹⁰⁶ This is evidence that while

¹⁰² B8 is quoted at *adv. Colot.* 1111F, B9 at 1113A-B.

¹⁰³ Giving the least critical general account, Fairbanks (1897) 82 also stands out in his confidence about Plutarch's citations in *adv. Colot.* Hershbell (1971) focuses on Empedocles; Marshall (2002) includes Plutarch's citations of Plato as a test case for assessing his reliability in citing and interpreting Empedocles. But cf. the more generous account of Kechagia (2011).

¹⁰⁴ It is surprising to see van der Ben, who defends γενέθλη so eloquently, agree that Hershbell (1971) 164 "is probably right in saying that many of the quotations in the *Adversus Colotem* have the appearance of having been copied by Plutarch from a text."

¹⁰⁵ See Marshall (2002) for a useful and balanced consideration of the evidence for Plutarch's familiarity with Empedocles, including two separate testimonia which both claim that he wrote a ten (10) book commentary on Empedocles, apparently focused upon his relationship to mystery religions.

¹⁰⁶ On his probable access, see again Marshall (2002). Van der Ben (1978) 198 suggests that all of the fragments were copied from Colotes by Plutarch, since Plutarch derides Colotes for not realizing the import of B9, which Plutarch claims Colotes quoted, but B11 and B15 are presented, to repeat, as further counterevidence, and although it would clearly suit his rhetorical purposes, Plutarch nowhere indicates that either was cited by Colotes, on the basis of which (and Marshall's analysis) I conclude that Plutarch most likely had access to a separate text of

composing the work Plutarch most probably had access to Empedocles' verses apart from those presented by Colotes. Finally, one *v.l.* is stranger Greek, and the other is the weaker support for Plutarch's own interpretation of Empedocles. I conclude that neither *lectio difficilior* should be dismissed. In what follows, both will be defended, as the defense of ἐκάστου will both strengthen that of γενέθλη and contribute to our reading of the entire fragment.

Of lesser importance, ἐκάστου can be treated quickly. No editors have preferred it, no one has defended it, and the few who have bothered to criticize it say little more than that the combination “wirkt sprachlich ungelenk.”¹⁰⁷ It is, to be sure, rather unusual and even ungainly, but it is not an impossible construction, and the disjointedness may be emphatic. There are, in fact, previously unnoted parallels in Plato and Plotinus,¹⁰⁸ and on the basis of those two passages alone one could insist that the phrase simply emphasizes the conceivable individuation of φύσις, asserting that no *single* one of mortals—not even a Pindar?—enjoys a φύσις.¹⁰⁹ So the real possibility of an emphatic οὐδεὶς ἕκαστος is established by Plato and Plotinus—even if it is not

Empedocles' poems while composing *Adv. Col.*

¹⁰⁷ Westman (1955) 244. Wright ad loc. (12W) comments only that “the variant ἐκάστου reflects a frequent confusion, cf. 8(17).8, 19 and 51(59).2.” As is apparent from a more thorough app. crit. than Wright's, there is indeed a repeated confusion of forms of ἅπας and ἕκαστος occurring at line-end, in the lines cited. But the confusion in the other three lines never involves a confusion of number, so that the confused terms are mostly effectively synonymous, unlike the confusion here between ἐκάστου and ἅπαντων.

¹⁰⁸ The closest parallel that I have found is in the famously awkward stylist Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.1.6.27-9: ἕκαστόν γε ἄτοπον λέγοντα εἶναι τι ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μὲν μὴ διδόναι σύστασιν αὐτῷ, μετὰ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ὁμοῦ, οὐδενὸς ἐκάστου ὄντος. But Plato also combined them, in an emphatic construction where the strain is mitigated, however, by the distance between the terms, in *Crat.* 384d5-6: οὐ γὰρ φύσει ἐκάστῳ πεφυκέναι ὄνομα οὐδὲν οὐδενί, ἀλλὰ νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει τῶν ἐθισάντων τε καὶ καλούντων (the speaker is Hermogenes).

¹⁰⁹ I suspect, *pace* van der Ben (1978) 199, that this interpretation is obscured behind Einarson and de Lacy's translation for the Loeb, “No nature is there of a mortal thing.” If Archilochus fr. 25 West is genuine, and West's interpretation and reconstruction correct, then we would have an intriguing precedent for this denial of nature; while Archilochus seems to deny that there is a single common φύσις of humankind, Empedocles denies that there is a φύσις even of a single individual. The two together may indicate a trend of the stepping-up of such claims.

quite well attested, it is at least attested. One small and final point in its favor is that ἐκάστου with the enjambéd partitive genitive θνητῶν has Homeric precedents.¹¹⁰

The introduction of ἐκάστου by a later hand would seem harder to explain than its having been used by Empedocles. As van der Ben says, “It is difficult to see how Colotes himself expected us to take the strange collocation οὐδενὸς ἐκάστου.”¹¹¹ And yet, following Einarson and de Lacy, he assumes that Colotes is responsible for it. In the introduction to their translation for the Loeb series, Einarson and de Lacy assert that, among other misdeeds, Colotes “modifies the text of Empedocles (ἐκάστου 1111 F) to force a parallel with Democritus.”¹¹² Unfortunately they do not explain how exactly it would force a parallel. If I have guessed correctly, they mean that Colotes inserted ἐκάστου to mislead his readers into thinking that Empedocles mounted a general epistemological attack by first denying the existence of a φύσις of any *individual thing*, just as Democritus was cast by Colotes as saying that “each and every *sense-object* is no more this than that.”¹¹³ To be sure, it *is* Plutarch’s claim that Colotes was wrong, that Empedocles did allow for a sort of φύσις of individual mortals, and that he only denied φύσις in the sense of γένεσις, or becoming. But replacing ἀπάντων with ἐκάστου hardly forces the parallel, which remains, if a bit less forcefully, in φύσις οὐδενός. It does not help Einarson and de Lacy’s interpretation that Plutarch objects to Colotes not by opposing the application of φύσις to individuals, but by claiming that φύσις in B8 does not have the sense that Colotes assumed.

To conclude, I find it implausible that Colotes or Plutarch or anyone at all should

¹¹⁰ E.g. ἔλε δ’ ἄνδρα ἕκαστος / ἡγεμόνων at *Il.* 4.428-9 and 5.37-8.

¹¹¹ van der Ben (1978) 199.

¹¹² Einarson and de Lacy (1967) 163.

¹¹³ Einarson and de Lacy (1967) 162.

substitute a term, ἐκάστου, that produces a possible yet highly unusual and potentially confusing construction that does not decisively support any interpretation of the fragment.¹¹⁴ By contrast, the Aëtian ἀπάντων is the much easier reading, recalling Aristotle’s simplification of the entire enjambed phrase to φύσις οὐδενός ἐστὶν ἐόντων (“there is a φύσις of none of the things that are”).¹¹⁵ Aëtius’ is therefore by far the more probable “slip of the memory in a rote citation.”¹¹⁶ But the superiority of ἐκάστου, encouraging as it may be for our trust in Plutarch’s reading, is much less important than that of γενέθλη.

Having denied that there is a φύσις of any single individual mortal, Empedocles then adds, “nor is there any baleful stock (or birth) of death.” The reading of B8 as paradox obviously finds support in this: there could hardly be a clearer clue to some imbrication of φύσις and θάνατος than the phrase “stock (or birth) of death.” Yet whatever Plutarch himself read, he apparently took it as an unremarkable periphrasis for θάνατος, since he insists—as we saw above—that the contrast with θάνατος proves that φύσις in B8 is synonymous with γένεσις. Plutarch seems to have had no trouble then with θανάτοιον γενέθλη. Modern scholars have been more skeptical, if almost entirely “behind closed doors.”¹¹⁷ To date, in fact, the only open

¹¹⁴ It seems to me that a switch from ἀπάντων to ἐκάστου in this case cannot be adequately explained as “reflect[ing] a frequent confusion,” as Wright ad loc. (12 W) writes, because in the other cases Wright cites the confusion between forms of ἅπας and forms of ἕκαστος does not produce any syntactic irregularity.

¹¹⁵ On this quotation, found in Met. Δ 4.1014b36, see esp. van der Ben (1978) 199.

¹¹⁶ Westman (1955) 244: “Gedächtnisfehler beim auswendigen Zitieren.” There is a further benefit (for our argument at least) in that the loss of ἀπάντων softens the enjambment with θνητῶν, so that one has still less reason to suspect that Empedocles was countenancing the idea of the four elements each having a φύσις. As an additional point of curiosity, which is not intended to cast doubt on the well-formedness of ἀπάντων θνητῶν, we note that ἅπας combined with θνητός is surprisingly rare: the only contemporaneous use is by the author of Hipp. *De flat.* (4.10; VI.96.4.10 L); otherwise the pairing does not occur again until Philo (*De cherubim* 66.6) and Clement (*Protrepticus* 12.120.3.3).

¹¹⁷ Van der Ben (1978) 201.

criticism has come from Plutarch's editor and commentator, Westman. After dismissing ἐκάστου as the first sign of the inferiority of Plutarch's text, Westman attacks the second line:

Where the very strange reading comes from is difficult to say. Regarding it I can only point out that Empedocles probably here also refers to a name of the πολλοί for death In any event one will write θανάτοιο τελευτή with Aëtius, but perhaps οὐλομένη would be noted as a variant next to οὐλομένου.¹¹⁸

Westman rightly notes that B8 must be coordinated with B9,¹¹⁹ which again encourages the assumption that Empedocles is combating popular conceptions in conventional terms. And there can be no doubt that the more familiar phrase is θανάτοιο τελευτή, which has many parallels, including an exact one in Hesiod,¹²⁰ all of which are apparently mere periphrases for θάνατος.¹²¹ That said, however striking the entire phrase in Plutarch's reading may be, it too can be justifiably read as a periphrasis for θάνατος.

Indeed, οὐλομένη θανάτοιο γενέθλη is not so strange as to be rejected out of hand, and yet is strange enough to be the more poetical and interesting text. Nonetheless, the only scholar who has argued for it is van der Ben,¹²² who defended it primarily as the *lectio difficilior*. His

¹¹⁸ Westman (1955) 244. "Woher die sehr sonderbare Wendung stammt, ist schwer zu sagen. Ich kann nur darauf hinweisen, dass Empedokles wahrscheinlich auch hier auf einen Namen der πολλοί für den Tod Bezug nimmt. Jedenfalls wird man mit Aëtios θανάτοιο τελευτή schreiben, aber vielleicht wäre οὐλομένη neben οὐλομένου als Variante zu beachten." van der Ben (1978) 201 notes that the only other comment he found on the reading is the "strange expression" of Hershbell (1971) 164, who echoes Westman when he says, "The origin of this strange expression is almost impossible to determine, though probably it was in the text used by Plutarch."

¹¹⁹ His reference to this is in a parenthesis which I deleted from my quotation.

¹²⁰ θανάτοιο τελευτήν, *Scut.* 357; θανάτοιο τέλος or τέλος θανάτοιο can be found again and again in Homer (*Il.* 5.553, 9.411, 9.416, 11.451, 13.602, 16.502, 16.855, 22.361; *Od.* 17.476, 24.124), and in Hesiod fr. 25.24 W (where it is however West's conjecture) and Theognis 768. Close parallels can also be seen in e.g. θανάτου τέλος, *Aesch. Sept.* 905; θανάτου τελευτάν, *Eur. Med.* 153; πείρας ... θανάτου *Pind. O.* 2.31.

¹²¹ So Guthrie (1965) II.140 n.1 is certainly right to reject the suggestion of Lovejoy (1909) that θανάτοιο τελευτή could mean "cessation of death," i.e. a point at which death ceases to occur.

¹²² I also note that Plutarch's version is preferred by Macé (2013) 233 with n. 734, but without argument and without citation of van der Ben. In addition, Trépanier (2013) 183 n. 20 insists that

reasons will be expanded upon momentarily. Further evidence for our expanded defense, which van der Ben could not have adduced in 1978, is the repetition of γενέθλη in a different but demonstrably related phrase in the Strasbourg papyrus.¹²³ Our latest evidence thus firmly establishes that the word was in Empedocles' lexicon, and gives a strong clue as to its acceptance in this author.¹²⁴ This is no surprise given the regular appearance of γενέθλη(ς) in prior hexameter, where it occurs always at line-end and often preceded by a genitive, particularly of the name of a god or hero whose "stock" or lineage is at issue.¹²⁵ Thus its appearance in B8.2 has a firm basis in both epic tradition and Empedocles' own usage.

For all that, it is definitely the *lectio difficilior*. At the subtlest level, as van der Ben observed, the Aëtian version eliminates the hypallage in "baleful x of death," producing the more

Plutarch's version of B8.2 be treated as genuine, but again without support. While agreeing that it should be accepted, I hesitate to agree entirely with Trépanier, who seems to suggest that B8.2 alone should be regarded as a separate fragment. Its sole appearance in a quotation that is so close to the Aëtian version of B8 seems to make this unlikely; and the likelihood that Empedocles repeated all four lines with these variations likewise seems slim. M-P, the editors of the Strasbourg papyrus, also seem to prefer Plutarch's γενέθλη at least; see footnote below.

¹²³ *P.Strasb. gr.* Inv. 1665-1666 a(ii) 24: [π]ρωτον μὲν ζύνοδόν τε διάπτωξίν τε [γενέθλης], reconstructed from a(ii) 30: ὄψει γὰρ ζύνοδόν τε διάπτωξίν τε γενέθλη[ς] (M-P *ad loc.*: "Le voici maintenant attesté de manière assurée"); note also the possible instance at g 2: γενέθ[λη]. In van der Ben (1999) there is no discussion of γενέθλη.

¹²⁴ In connection with this, a further consideration in favor of γενέθλη seems to be offered by M-P (1999) 246 with n. 3, where, if I have understood correctly, it is suggested that the reading γενέθλη in B8.2 may be corroborated by Simplicius' association of B8.3 (μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μύγντων) with a(ii) 30 (ξύνοδόν τε διάπτωξίν τε γενέθλης), and that perhaps γενέθλην should also be read instead of γενέσθαι in B9.3: M-P (*ibid.*) write, "It may not be indifferent that this verse immediately precedes Fr. 8 D. 3, associated with a(ii) 30 in the presentation of Simplicius. – We do not exclude further that it is necessary to look for a form of γενέθλη behind the aberrant infinitive γενέσθαι which closes fr. 9 D., 3. The corruption would be partially comparable to that which, between a (ii) 30 and the quotation from Simplicius, has transformed γενέθλης into γενέσθαι αἴης." ("Il n'est pas peut-être indifférent que ce vers précède immédiatement le fr. 8 D., 3, associé à a(ii) 30 dans l'exposé de Simplicius. — Nous n'excluons pas en outre qu'il faille rechercher une forme de γενέθλη derrière l'infinitif aberrant γενέσθαι qui clôture le fr. 9 D., 3. La corruption serait partiellement comparable à celle qui, entre a(ii) 30 et la citation de Simplicius, a transformé γενέθλης en γενέσθαι αἴης.")

¹²⁵ Van der Ben (1978) 200; see also M-P *ad* a(ii) 30 for comment and citations.

predictable “x of baleful death”;¹²⁶ the hypallage of the Plutarchan reading has some instructive Homeric precedents.¹²⁷ Aëtius, van der Ben goes on to note, can also be seen as having eliminated the more poetical word, γενέθλη, which is indeed more frequent in epic than τελευτή;¹²⁸ moreover, with the discovery of the Strasbourg papyrus, we now know that γενέθλη was used elsewhere by Empedocles in a comparable context. The final point made by van der Ben is that “the phrase θανάτοιο τελευτή is much the easier one to understand.”¹²⁹ The substitution of τελευτή, as infrequent as the word is, and therefore in one regard at least the less likely substitution, does produce the very familiar pleonasm, “end of death.” By contrast, θανάτοιο γενέθλη, “stock (or birth) of death,” is jarring and oxymoronic, although perhaps not *much* the more difficult, *pace* van der Ben. Again, one might read it, as van der Ben himself

¹²⁶ Van der Ben (1978) 201. The suggestion that οὐλομένου θανάτοιο rather than οὐλομένη γενέθλη would be expected makes some sense *a priori* (the balefulness of death being more obvious than that of birth, although Silenus would disagree). It is also born out by epic usage: cf. esp. μοῖρ’ ὀλοῆ ... τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο, *Od.* 3.236; e.g. πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή, *Il.* 5.83 and 20.477, τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο, *Il.* 8.70 and 22.210, θάνατος χύτο θυμοραϊστής, *Il.* 13.554 and 16.414 and 16.580, θανάτοιο δυσηχέος, *Il.* 16.442 and 18.464 and 22.180 (cf. Emp. 136.1), θανάτον τε κακὸν καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν, *Il.* 21.66, λευγαλέω θανάτῳ, *Il.* 21.281, θάνατος κακός, *Il.* 22.300; cf. also γῆρας τ’ οὐλόμενον καὶ θανάτοιο τέλος, Theognis 768, στυγερώι θανάτῳ, Aesch. *Ch.* 1008 and τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο, Aesch. fr. 205a l. 3.

¹²⁷ Cf. θανάτου δὲ μέλαν νέφος, *Il.* 16.350 and *Od.* 4.180, over against μέλανος θανάτοιο, *Il.* 2.834, 11.332, 16.687, *Od.* 12.92, 17.326; ἡμετέρου θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος, *Od.* 24.124, over against θάνατος κακός, *Il.* 22.300; and finally θανάτοιο βαρείας χεῖρας, *Il.* 21.548.

¹²⁸ The epic use of τελευτή is noteworthy in this connection. It appears only three times in Hesiod (one of which is *Scut.* 357 cited above; less interesting are *Theog.* 657, *Op.* 333); of the five instances in Homer, two appear in the phrase βιότοιο τελευτή, which is apparently synonymous with θανάτοιο τελευτή, designating the end of an individual’s life at *Il.* 7.104 and 16.787 (the remaining instances are μύθοιο τελευτή, *Il.* 9.625, and οὔτ’ ... στυγερόν γάμον οὔτε τελευτήν, *Od.* 1.249 and 16.126). Bollack ad 53 Bollack (= B8), having accepted Lovejoy’s interpretation of θανάτοιο τελευτή as involving a subjective genitive (and therefore meaning “end of death,” i.e. a point at which death ends), looks to βιότοιο τελευτή for the background to Empedocles’ phrase, noting that it too involves a subjective genitive. To put such weight on a distinction between the explicative and subjective in these instances, is in my opinion mistaken. Both phrases would be synonymous; but then I prefer γενέθλη.

¹²⁹ Van der Ben (1978) 201.

does, as “in effect equivalent to οὐδέ τι θάνατος γίγνεται [‘nor does death come-to-be at all’].”¹³⁰ And the coming-to-be or occurrence of death, van der Ben notes, is not unprecedented in ancient Greek texts: already in the *Odyssey* there are collocations of the terms.¹³¹ More relevant perhaps is the occasional paradoxical play on the relation between death and coming-to-be, most memorably in Heraclitus.¹³² Indeed, Empedocles himself plays upon the very same in B17, where the γένεσις and ἀπόλειψις (“desertion” or “failing” and therefore “death”) of mortal things are taken up:

δοιὴ δὲ θνητῶν γένεσις, δοιὴ δ’ ἀπόλειψις·
 τὴν μὲν γὰρ πάντων ξύνοδος τίκει τ’ ὀλέκει τε,
 ἢ δὲ πάλιν διαφυσόμενων θρεφθεῖσα διέπτῃ.
 καὶ ταῦτ’ ἀλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει ...¹³³

Double is the genesis of mortal things, double the desertion: for the coming together of all things both gives birth to and destroys the one, and the other in turn, with them growing apart, nourished flies apart (?).¹³⁴ And these never cease exchanging continuously ...

Without wading into the debate over these riddling lines, one can uncontroversially observe that γένεσις is said to be born and destroyed, which is to say that at some point the genesis of mortals begins, and that at some point it is terminated.¹³⁵ So there is an adequate parallel for θανάτιο γενέθλη as a poetical periphrasis, as the “birth” or occurrence of death. Yet this is not the only option.

This brings us to the semantic problem, hinted at in the previously unexplained

¹³⁰ Van der Ben (1978) 200.

¹³¹ Cf. e.g. θάνατον ... γενέσθαι, *Il.* 19.273 (cited by van der Ben); but also ἀτελὴς θάνατος μνηστῆρσι γένοιτο, *Od.* 17.546, οὔτ’ ἀνελεύθερον οἶμαι θάνατον τῷδε γενέσθαι, Aesch. *Ag.* 1521, as well as ὁ μετὰ ῥώμης καὶ κοινῆς ἐλπίδος ἅμα γιγνόμενος ἀναίσθητος θάνατος, Thuc. 2.43.6.3.

¹³² Cf. esp. Heraclitus B62, cited above with further references.

¹³³ B17.3-6 = D73 = 8 W.

¹³⁴ See Wright ad loc. for a succinct discussion of the textual difficulties of this line.

¹³⁵ See e.g. van der Ben (1984) on the difficulties with these lines.

parenthesis in the translation “stock (or birth).” The word γενέθλη in Homer and Hesiod and elsewhere seems plainly to designate the “stock” or “lineage” or “family,” and thus the product of the coming-to-be designated by the stem. Chantraine nonetheless listed the word as the first example of “quelques noms d’action” formed with the suffix -θλ(ο)-, but not entirely without reason, since some instances may be found that support this.¹³⁶ The question therefore is whether γενέθλη in B8 refers to the action of birth, or a substantive stock to which one belongs by birth. On the first reading, which van der Ben preferred, θανάτοιο γενέθλη would mean “birth of death,” or van der Ben’s “coming-to-be of death,” a somewhat riddling phrase that is not so difficult to parse. This is especially convenient if, unlike the unorthodox van der Ben, one takes Empedocles to be teaching of a cosmic cycle, at distinct points in which the generation of mortals begins — points at which death is, as it were, born.¹³⁷ Thus the phrase may designate not just the occurrence of death but also the onset of death, as an event in the cycle.

Since the discovery and publication of the Strasbourg papyrus, we have fresh evidence that offers another solution. In that papyrus, one finds the following lines:

[δεί]ξω σοι καὶ ἀν’ ὄσσ(ε) ἵνα μείζονι σῶμ[ατι κύρει,]
 [π]ρώτον μὲν ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυσίν τε γενέθλης]
 ὄσ[σ]α τε νῦν ἔτι λοιπὰ πέλει τούτοιο τ[όκοιο,]
 τοῦτο μὲν [ἀν]θηρῶν ὀριπλάγκτων ἀγ[ρότερ] εἶδη,]
 τοῦτο δ’ ἀν’ ἀ[νθρώ]πων δίδυμον φύμα, [τοῦτο δ’ ἀν’ ἀγρῶν]
 ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα καὶ ἀμπελογάμ[ονα βότρυν·]
 ἐκ τῶν ἀψευδῆ κόμισαι φρενὶ δείγματα μ[ύθων·]
 ὄψει γὰρ ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυσίν τε γενέθλης.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Chantraine (1933) 375, citing only “Homère, etc.” The only citation under this definition in LSJ is Call. *Aet.* 1.178.7 (incorrectly cited as 1.1.7), where however the dynamic sense is not at all required: ἦν δὲ γενέθλην / Ἴκιος (“he was by birth / Ician”). The only instance I have seen that requires this sense is in δυσωδίνοιο γενέθλας (*AP* 6.272.3-4, cited by M-P ad a(ii) 30).

¹³⁷ Van der Ben (1978), defending instead the life cycle interpretation first proposed by Hölscher (1965), has good reason to let the phrase be simply a periphrasis for “death.”

¹³⁸ P.Strasb. a(ii) 23-30, with the reconstruction of M-P.

I will show you to your eyes too, where they (i.e. the elements) [find] a larger body: first the coming together and the unfolding of the stock, and as many as are now still remaining of this [generation], on the one hand among the [wild species] of mountain-roaming beasts, and on the other hand among the twofold offspring of men, and in the case of the produce of root-bearing [fields] and of the [cluster of grapes] mounting on the vine. From these accounts convey to your mind unerring proofs: for you will see the coming together and the unfolding of the stock.¹³⁹

As M-P explain in their commentary (ad a(ii) 30), there are two options. Nouns formed with the suffix -θλ(o)- typically designate an action,¹⁴⁰ but the predominant meaning of γενέθλη is rather the result of action, namely “stock” or “race.” If one were to read these instances also as “birth,” then one could construe γενέθλης as “un génétif explicatif,” and the larger phrase as “la réunion et le déploiement en quoi consiste la naissance.” If, on the other hand, one prefers the more conventional meaning, then the phrase manifestly means “la reunion et le déploiement de ce qui a été engendré.” Unfortunately, van der Ben (1999) did not comment on this in his article on the papyrus.¹⁴¹ M-P, as their translation above reveals, argue that it is “raisonnable de prêter au mot dans le papyrus son sens le plus fréquent en grec,” and so give us “stock.”

Returning, then, to B8, the second possibility has γενέθλη in its usual acceptance, and θανάτοιο γενέθλη therefore as the “stock of death.” I propose that this could be understood as designating a class of entities born of the “death” (by mixture) of the immortal elements, which is of course to say mortals, or perhaps better, simply that class of entities whose own emergence entails the emergence of “death” (in a stronger sense than that of the “death” of the elements, i.e. the destruction of compounds).¹⁴² The two characterizations are not mutually exclusive: what

¹³⁹ Trans. M-P.

¹⁴⁰ Chantraine (1933) 375, cited by M-P, p. 246 with n. 4.

¹⁴¹ Printing M-P’s text and translation, van der Ben (1999) 532-3 did not take up the question of the word’s meaning here, let alone its application to his account of B8.

¹⁴² For Empedocles’ application of “birth” and “death” to the —properly speaking— immortal elements, see B26.8-10, and the repetition of the same lines at B17.9-11.

matters only is that a “race” or “stock” of death is produced when “death” enters the fray. In favor of this, I would hazard a few considerations. First, recall that the poet’s use descends from the regular appearance of γενέθλη(ς) at line-end in epic, often preceded by a genitive, particularly of a god’s name. Add to this the familiar personification of Θάνατος as a divinity belonging to a genealogy as either offspring or parent,¹⁴³ and with that Empedocles’ habit of divinizing things in an allegorical mode.¹⁴⁴ “Stock of death” could refer then to things produced by “death,” i.e. mortals of whatever description; and ll.1-2 can in turn be translated, “There is a φύσις of no single individual / among mortals, nor is there any stock of death.” In other words, there is no special “nature” of any particular mortal, nor is there even any special category of mortals, or “stock of death.” The denial of the existence of such a stock still implies the denial of death, although its focus remains on the notion of a race or species of mortals. A decision between the two meanings is therefore unnecessary for the main problem at hand, the meaning of φύσις, but, as we will see now, the second meaning offers an intriguing possibility for how to relate the two.

One necessary result of Plutarch’s version of B8 is some diminution of the contrast between φύσις and θάνατος. Even on what seems to have been Plutarch’s reading the two are more plainly intertwined through “birth (of no single one) of mortals” and “birth of death.” That said, the usual stark contrast between an event that is death is entirely excluded by taking γενέθλη as “stock.” On that interpretation, the emphatic individualization of l.1 underscores a contrast, not between “birth” and “death,” but between life conceived as grounded in individual φύσις and life conceived as having its basis in a more general category of mortal creation. But

¹⁴³ See Hes. *Th.* 758-9, Hom. *Il.* 14.231, Soph. *Tr.* 833-4.

¹⁴⁴ See e.g. B6, B123.

the phrases “nature of each among mortals” (φύσις ... ἐκάστου / θνητῶν) and “stock of death” (θανάτοιο γενέθλη) remain to be read in light of B8.3-4: What is the relationship of μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μίγντων to the conventional terms in the first two lines? In this section, we will consider that relationship first under the assumption that both φύσις and γενέθλη mean “birth,” and then, building on that, turn to the proposed substantive or static readings, “nature” and “stock.”

The interaction and even identification of birth and death can be more easily explained than most Empedoclean scholars have supposed. While raising the possibility of some intertwining of φύσις and θάνατος, O’Brien claimed that the strict correlation favored by some modern scholars was also endorsed by the ancients—with no exception noted.¹⁴⁵ But no one, in my opinion, has measurably improved on Simplicius. Concerning Empedoclean coming-to-be, Simplicius commented, “Since of things generable and perishable some are generated and some perish, the destructions (φθοραί) of the prior things suffice as principles (ἀρχαί) of the coming-to-be of the others,” where the Greek has the tight juxtaposition φθοραὶ ἀρχαὶ (“destructions principles”).¹⁴⁶ Birth and death, mixture and separation, can name, from two vantage points, the same exchange of elements between mortal compounds, as has been recognized by numerous scholars. O’Brien’s doubt about the strict correlation is validated, along with doubt about its corollary, i.e. the impossibility of both φύσις and θάνατος being applied to both μίξις and διάλλαξις.

¹⁴⁵ O’Brien (1969) 165-6: “It is doubtful, however, how far the exclusive correlation of death and separation is genuinely Empedoclean. The correlation need not be implied in fr. 8, despite the ancient authorities, who understand the lines to that effect [...]. [Likewise fr. 9] does not make it at all clear that on his own principles Empedocles believes that mixture is the cause only of birth and that death is always the result of separation.”

¹⁴⁶ Simplicius. *In phys.* I 4, 178.21-3: ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν γεννητῶν καὶ φθορῶν τὰ μὲν γεννᾶται τὰ δὲ φθείρεται, ἀρκούσιν αἱ τῶν προτέρων φθοραὶ ἀρχαὶ ἄλλοις γενέσεων εἶναι.

This brings us to the second main source of doubt about the consensus on B8, the word *διάλλαξις*. As noted above, Palmer and Gulley have done much to draw attention to and even to solve the semantic problem of this term: they point out that its analysis must be coordinated above all with the two Empedoclean instances of the verb from which it derives, *διαλλάσσω*.¹⁴⁷ The present participle *διαλλάσσοντα* is used absolutely in B17, at the end of the portion quoted above, where Empedocles asserts that, although the elements in some sense are born and die,

ἦ δὲ διαλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,
ταύτη δ' αἰὲν ἔασιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον.¹⁴⁸

But to the extent that they never cease exchanging continuously, to that extent they always are, unmoveable in a circle.

Here the context strongly suggests the translation “exchanging,” or even, as L-M render it, “exchanging their places.” It would be hard to explain this as denoting dissolution. Instead, the context demands that it refer to motion that may be alternately unifying and dissociative: as Wright puts it ad loc., “the permanence of the exchange from many to one and from one to many in a circle (or cycle) of time ensures the permanence of the roots.” This squares well with the meaning of the second instance, an aorist participle in B35, which also deals with the elements:

αἶψα δὲ θνήτ' ἐφύοντο, τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ' εἶναι,
ζωρὰ τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα, διαλλάξαντα κελεύθους.
τῶν δέ τε μισγομένων χεῖτ' ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν,
παντοίαις ιδέησιν ἀρηρότα, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι.¹⁴⁹

Straightway what earlier learned to be immortal grew mortal, and blended those that earlier were unmixed, exchanging paths. And with them being mixed, myriad tribes of mortals streamed forth, fitted with all sorts of forms, a wonder to behold.

¹⁴⁷ As Gulley (2017) has amply shown, there are other words and phrases too in Empedocles that need to be taken into account for a full treatment of this problem, particularly *ἀλλάσσω* (which occurs in B17.6, which line is repeated verbatim but for the substitution of *διαλλάσσω* at B17.12; and again at B26.11 and B137.1) and *μεταλλάσσω* (see B115.8).

¹⁴⁸ B17.12-13 = D73 = 8 W.

¹⁴⁹ B35.14-17 = D75 = 47 W.

A minor ambiguity is introduced here by the position of the participial phrase, which may in principle expand upon τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα (“those that earlier were unmixed”), and so explain only the means to their becoming unmixed. The participle could then be translated “dissociating.”¹⁵⁰ Yet the context motivates a construal of the participle as explaining how the elements come to be blended as well, and because διαλλάσσοντα in B17 must refer to general motion that is either unifying or dissociating, it seems that the exchange of paths is likewise neutral. Both Palmer and Gulley rightly conclude from these passages that the sense demanded is not “dissolution” or “separation,” but “exchange.”

The precise meaning of “exchange” is not so easy to determine. The primary reason is that even those who have wanted to understand διάλλαξις as “exchange” have typically insisted that it must at least *include* dissolution. These scholars do, after all, have the support of Aristotle and others, who plainly took the word in B8 to mean dissolution. And, although the other Empedoclean evidence does militate against this, I would like to register a defense of Aristotle et al. The recent dismissal of the ancient authorities’ treatment of διάλλαξις has been too quick and uncharitable. In all of the many pre-modern citations of this passage, it seems that the meaning of διάλλαξις is assumed to be “separation” or the like. Such is the meaning Aristotle gave it, and the Aristotelian commentators, who provide most of the remaining citations, naturally do not differ from their master; nor for that matter does Plutarch. There are few other instances of the word, just ten in the entire TLG corpus, the majority of which seem to have a technical sense that I find difficult to determine, as for instance in the only Hippocratic use, where it appears in a

¹⁵⁰ But on the possibility that διαλλάσσοντα here means “dissociating,” see O’Brien (1965) 3-4.

long and unilluminating list of medical jargon.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, it seems likely that the semantics of that instance and others could be influenced by some well-attested meanings of διαλλάσσω which neither Palmer nor Gulley notes: namely, “to differ” or, in the passive, “to be different.”¹⁵² Given the familiar contrast noted above between mixing and separation, it is easily conceivable that the ancient authorities took διάλλαξις to mean “differentiation” or the like, where “differentiation” would of course include (or simply be) the dissociation or separation of elements from a given mixture. To complicate matters, there is even some incontrovertible evidence that διαλλάσσω was perceived to mean “separate”—by a millennium or so after Empedocles at least: Hesychius’ glosses of certain forms of διαλλάσσω must abolish any doubt that, for that lexicographer at least, διάλλαξις could have easily been taken to be, *inter alia*, a synonym of διάλυσις or any other word meaning “separation.”¹⁵³

Be that as it may, Empedocles’ own use of διαλλάσσω, as Palmer and Gulley insisted and as we just observed, strongly suggests “exchange,” and not “differentiate.” When it comes to defining this “exchange,” however, I part ways with both Palmer and Gulley. Palmer’s larger argument, about the actual transformation of the four Empedoclean roots into one another, leads to his extreme interpretation of διάλλαξις as designating only that substantial interchange or transformation of the roots (such that earth may become water, and so on). This is arguably

¹⁵¹ *De diaet.* i.10.17 ψυχῆ, νοῶς, φρόνησις, αὔξεισις, κίνησις, μείωσις, διάλλαξις, ὕπνος, ἐγρήγοροις, most recently translated by L-M, *EGP* VI.331, “mind, thought, growth, decrease, motion, change of place, sleep, waking.” The Hippocratic use of διαλλάσσω may provide some clues. There are eleven instances of the verb in the entire Hippocratic corpus; the commonest meaning is “differ,” then “change” (cf. *De morb. sac.* XVI.29), and in the one instance in *De diaet.* (the text in which διάλλαξις occurs), although Jones in the Loeb translates διαλλάσσει ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων (I.vi.29) as “separates itself,” and LSJ q.v. II.4 “be discordant,” I would suggest rather “differ [collective singular subject] from one another.”

¹⁵² Cf. LSJ q.v. II.4, IV, V.

¹⁵³ See Hesychius s.v. διάλλασσε, glossed with διάλυε; cf. also διαλλαγῶ· διαχωρισθῶ and διαπεπλίχθαι· διηλλάχθαι τὰ σκέλη.

incompatible with sound evidence for Empedocles' doctrine, and also strains the apparent meaning of διαλλάσσω in the passages we have seen.¹⁵⁴ Gulley's interpretation is nearer my own. According to him, "interchange" is the fundamental process of any exchanging movement of the elements whatsoever, *including mixture*. This goes too far, however, in its generalization of διάλλαξις, ignoring the role of Love in the production of mixture as well as the modifying genitive μγέντων ("of mixed things"). Mixture is not merely a species of elemental movement for Empedocles, but requires additionally the presence and special activity of Love.¹⁵⁵ The redundancy in μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μγέντων that would follow from Gulley's interpretation is not a desirable result; μίξις and διάλλαξις μγέντων must be distinct processes.

If one were to adhere as closely as possible to the common approach to B8, so that μίξις τε διάλλαξις τε μγέντων designates the coming together of isolated elements into a mixture and then the exchange of again isolated elements from said mixture, one could hardly improve upon Simplicius, as noted above. Along the same lines, M-P have asserted that διάλλαξις may be the constant *redistribution* that renews *les mélanges*.¹⁵⁶

It is possible that the standard approach, which is particularly apparent in Gulley's universalization of διάλλαξις μγέντων to any and all exchange of the isolated elements, falls short in its assessment of μγέντων. To be sure, Empedocles' use of διαλλάσσω does suggest that διάλλαξις alone may denote the exchanging movement of elements *simpliciter*, and therefore all elemental motion that is not μίξις. But in B8, the genitive of the substantive participle, μγέντων, crucially restricts διάλλαξις. The "exchange of things mixed," I submit, is

¹⁵⁴ What would it mean then to διαλλάσσειν κελεύθους?

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. Plutarch *adv. Col.* 1112A-B.

¹⁵⁶ "La nature résulte en fait d'un réaménagement constant des éléments." M-P (1999) 55, which precedes a translation of B8 in which διάλλαξις is *redistribution*.

not equivalent to the “exchange of mixable things” or even the “exchange of things that have (at any point) been mixed,” i.e. the “exchange of elements.” Φύσις, whether process or product, cannot be adequately explained by a simple combination of the mixture of separate elements and the exchange of *separated elements between discrete mixtures*. That is, it cannot consist only of the mixture of isolated elements and then the separation of isolated elements from that mixture. The exchange of things mixed, if it is to include all the activity that is attributed to φύσις, must include more.

For a consideration of what this διάλλαξις μιγέντων might be, we return to Simplicius. Although assuming that διάλλαξις is synonymous with διάκρισις (“dissolution”), and also arguing for a Platonic interpretation of Empedocles (contrasting νοητά and αισθητά, knowables and perceptibles), he nonetheless offers some useful commentary on B8. The Greek text presents some difficulties that warrant full quotation:

τὰ δὲ αισθητὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ νείκους κρατηθέντα καὶ ἐπὶ πλεόν διασπασθέντα ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὴν κράσιν γενέσει ἐν ἐκμακτοῖς καὶ εἰκονικοῖς εἶδεσιν ὑπέστησαν τοῖς νεικεογενέσι καὶ ἀήθως ἔχουσι πρὸς τὴν ἔνωσιν τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα. ὅτι δὲ καὶ οὗτος κατὰ σύγκρισίν τινα καὶ διάκρισιν τὴν γένεσιν ὑπέθετο, δηλοῖ τὰ εὐθύς ἐν ἀρχῇ παρατεθέντα
 τότε μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἠϋξήθη μόνον εἶναι
 ἐκ πλεόνων, τότε δ' αὖ διέφυ πλεόν' ἐξ ἐνός εἶναι¹⁵⁷
 καὶ ἐκείνο μέντοι τὸ τὴν γένεσιν καὶ τὴν φθορὰν μηδὲν ἄλλο εἶναι,
 ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξιν τε διάλλαξιν τε μιγέντων¹⁵⁸
 καὶ “σύνοδον διάπτυξιν τε γενέθλης.”¹⁵⁹

The perceptible things controlled by Strife and torn apart further in the genesis according to mixture, in their molded and iconic forms support things Strife-generated and are

¹⁵⁷ B17.1-2 = D73.233-4 = 8.1-2 W.

¹⁵⁸ B8.3, but with the case of μίξις and διάλλαξις altered to suit Simplicius' syntax.

¹⁵⁹ The last quoted phrase is found twice, *P. Strasb.* a(ii) 24, 30 (294, 300) = D73.294, 300. The passage from Simplicius is in *Phys.* I 4, 161.11-20. I follow M-P in emending the MS reading γενέσθαι αἴσης to γενέθλης on the basis of the papyrus, taking the full phrase as another Empedoclean quotation. (It is less pressing, but perhaps one might correct to ξύνοδόν τε as well (cf. *loc. cit.*)?) For discussion of this text in light of *P. Strasb.*, see M-P (1999) 242-3 and also Janko (2010) 410.

unaccustomed to union with each other. And that this one [sc. Empedocles] also posited coming-to-be through some mixing-together and separation is made clear by the things set out right at the beginning:

for at one time they grew to be only one from many, and then again they grew apart to be many from one
and that [statement that] coming-to-be and perishing are nothing else,
but only mixture and exchange of things mixed
and “the coming-together and unfolding of the stock.”

Plainly this is of value even if one desires to retain the meaning “separation” for *διάλλαξις*.

From Simplicius’ description of perceptible things being “torn apart further in the genesis according to mixture,”¹⁶⁰ one can get a sense of how *διάλλαξις μίγντων* might involve the exchange not only of previously mixed and now isolated elements, but also of things that remain mixed during their exchanging motion—for instance, a seed.

Furthermore, one should note Simplicius’ correlation here of the final two phrases, so that, all told, *σύγκρισις = μίξις = σύνοδος* and *διάκρισις = διάλλαξις = διάπτυξις*. We have seen the final phrase before, apropos of the meaning of *γενέθλη*; as noted there, *ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυσιν τε γενέθλης* (“the coming together and unfolding of the stock”) makes a double appearance in *P.Strasb*. In their commentary on the papyrus, M-P have decisively shown that *διάπτυξις* is not synonymous with *διάκρισις*,¹⁶¹ and concluded less decisively that the “unfolding” it denotes is the articulation of organisms.¹⁶² M-P go on to assert that Simplicius was also mistaken to draw the correlation *φθορά = διάλλαξις*, but not because *διάλλαξις* and *διάπτυξις* are correlated—rather, because they follow the standard interpretation of *διάλλαξις*

¹⁶⁰ This seems to be an allusion to B63 (see above). For Simplicius’ knowledge of Empedocles’ poems, see O’Brien (1965) 276-86.

¹⁶¹ M-P (1999) 243-6. Nor, contra LSJ and Bollack (1969) III.55 n. 1, can it be given the meaning *enlacement*; see M-P (1999) 245.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* and particularly 246: “À nos yeux, le mot *διάπτυξις* est pratiquement synonyme de *διάρθρωσις*, composé comme lui à l’aide du préverbe *δια-*: les créatures du «monde B» ne se réduisent pas à l’état d’ébauches rudimentaires que produirait le seule *ξύνοδος* des éléments, mais, grâce à la *διάπτυξις*, elles *se déploient* dans leur plein développement.”

as an exchange that is still a simple separation from a mixture, although they stress that this separation is one of “les deux aspects du cycle de la vie.”¹⁶³ Without taking up their arguments in further detail here, I would like to suggest that our conception of διάλλαξις μινύτων be taken in the direction of διάπτυξις per M-P, as encompassing the exchange involved in the articulation of compound organisms.

If φύσις were to have the meaning “growth,” which, in the case of the articulated bodies of plants and animals, must involve more than simple mixture, and if, per B8, it is to be explained by μίξις and διάλλαξις μινύτων alone, then διάλλαξις must encompass i) the exchange of things mixed which comprises the development and articulation of the vegetal or animal body, or what M-P refer to διάπτυξις, as well as ii) the exchange of things mixed between said bodies. The latter, in turn, must include not only the exchange of isolated elements, but also the exchange of portions of mixture, as it occurs for instance in the consumption of other organisms, in the shedding of skin or hair,¹⁶⁴ and in reproduction.¹⁶⁵ In this way, the mixing and movement of isolated elements or mixtures within the plenum—their exchange of place, whether within a contiguous body or between separable bodies—can best be seen as the processes that would define the interplay between growth and death.¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, if φύσις is best translated as “nature,” then what sense does it make to say that φύσις is a name applied to mixing and the exchange of things mixed? And further, what

¹⁶³ M-P (1999) 246. Their point seems to be that Empedocles in B8 is offering alternative principles for the explanation of two aspects of the life cycle, and not an exhaustive list of the processes which the elements can undergo. See also Primavesi (2008) 22 and 56-7.

¹⁶⁴ See B101.

¹⁶⁵ See again B63.

¹⁶⁶ This is not the place to enter into the debate about Empedocles’ δαίμων, but one might at least note the possibility that, if the δαίμων should involve an elemental mixture, this account of διάλλαξις may also extend to the daimonic exchange which some take to constitute the transmigration at the center of Empedocles’ teaching.

sense does it make in Plutarch’s reading of B8? B8, as I understand it, is a response not only to ontological, but also medical and moral claims, claims that sought to ground human beings and other phenomena in permanent and heritable “natures.” Empedocles proclaims that this supposed φύσις does not properly exist over and above the roots which comprise it and which truly are. Nothing exists beyond them, and nothing comes to be in addition to them. True being is granted to the four roots and Love and Strife alone; the “nature” of a mortal, on the other hand, is comprised of a mixture that, however stable and persistent, remains dynamic throughout the lifetime of the changing organism. Further, the processes which one might suppose to *supervene* upon a given φύσις, e.g. the mixing and exchange of things mixed in the metabolism of food and drink, are in fact *constitutive* of that φύσις at all levels of analysis—above that of the roots. There is, to repeat, a φύσις of no single individual among mortal things. Nor, for that matter, is there any stock of death: our category of mortal beings is itself only a human “name,” with no proper being of its own. Whether one is concerned with the constitution of an individual, or a species, or the entire category of “mortal things,” one cannot find an irreducible, constitutive principle over and above the four roots. These four alone actually are,

τῶν δέ τε μισγομένων χεῖτ’ ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν,
παντοίαις ιδέησιν ἀρηρότα, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι.¹⁶⁷

and with them being mixed, myriad tribes of mortals stream forth, fitted in all sorts of forms, a wonder to behold.

The patterns observable in both species and individual belie the fact that those forms have no true being of their own, and are only the temporary manifestations of the periodic growing-together of the roots.

¹⁶⁷ B35.16-17 = D75 = 47 W.

IV. Conventionalism in Empedocles and Hippocrates

At this point I would like to register a separate piece of supporting evidence for several of the arguments laid out so far, those arguments being: first, that even in the Aëtian reading the contrast between θάνατος and φύσις does not necessitate that φύσις means γένεσις; second, that whatever contrast remains does not require an exclusive correlation between φύσις and μίξις, θάνατος and διάλλαξις, however one understands the last term; and third, that a definition of φύσις as “nature” in B8 is perfectly compatible with a reductionist explanation of “nature” in terms of “mixture and exchange of things mixed.”

Perhaps only a generation or two after Empedocles, a medical author of the Hippocratic school composed a piece entitled *On the Nature of Man* (*Nat. Hom.*). At the beginning of the treatise, the basic constitution of the human organism is taken up: its nature consists of a mixture of four elements—not identical with Empedocles’ elements, but comparable—and in fact all animals, the author says, have such a nature. There is, however, one conspicuous feature that predictably distinguishes this later author’s use of φύσις from Empedocles’: whereas the latter does not demonstrably use φύσις to characterize the four roots, the Hippocratic author explicitly uses it for the four elements from which all creatures are composed. Excepting that, the treatise contains echoes of Empedoclean theory that are illuminating for our purposes. What I would note above all is the relationship between φύσις, γένεσις, and death, here designated by the verb τελευτᾶν (“to end” or “to die,” whence τελευτή):

Accordingly it is necessary that, the nature (φύσις) both of all other things and of humans being such as it is, the human being is not one, but each of the things contributing to coming-to-be (γένεσις) has in the body precisely the power that it contributed. And in turn it is necessary that each thing withdraw to its own nature with the human’s body dying (τελευτῶντος), the moist to the moist and the dry to the dry and the hot to the hot and the cold to the cold. Such is the nature (φύσις) also of animals, and of all other things: all things come-to-be (γίνεται) and die (τελευτᾶ) similarly; for the nature (φύσις) of them is composed

from all the abovementioned things, and according to what was said each thing ends (τελευτᾶ) in that from which it was composed.¹⁶⁸

For those who still prefer the Aëtian reading of B8.2 (οὐλομένη θανάτοιο τελευτή), this passage provides further evidence that a contrast between φύσις and θάνατος by no means suffices for the assumption of a strict contrast between “birth” and “death.” Φύσις alone, understood as the “nature” of a mortal organism, is apparently a finite, temporary mixture, permanent for the life of the organism, but delimited by its constitution upon birth and its dissolution in the organism’s death. To deny the φύσις of a mortal is at once to deny the presumed substance and the creation or transmission of that substance through generation, as this Hippocratic author shows. The Aëtian B8 in particular could easily follow upon the passage quoted above, as one can see if they were to be combined as follows:

For the nature (φύσις) of them is composed of all those things I have mentioned above, and each thing, according to what has been said, ends (τελευτᾶ) in that from which it was composed. [B8:] But I will tell you another thing: there is a nature (φύσις) of no single individual among mortals, nor any end (τελευτή) of baleful death...

But the comparison is equally valid for the interpretation of the Plutarchan B8. To repeat, the pairing of φύσις with death does not at all demand that φύσις mean “birth”—while it does draw out the possible implications of generation and mortality carried by the term.

The author then enumerates the four elements that comprise the body of a human being, saying summarily that “these are for the human being the nature of the body, and through them a human experiences pain or health” (ταῦτ’ ἐστὶν αὐτῷ ἡ φύσις τοῦ σώματος, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἀλγεί καὶ ὑγιαίνει).¹⁶⁹ The emphasis on the multiplicity of any φύσις comes very close to the denial that any φύσις actually is. Although he is not quite so preoccupied with predications of

¹⁶⁸ *Nat. Hom.* 3.13-29. For comment on this, see Galen *De elementis ex Hippocrate* 1.476.

¹⁶⁹ *Nat. Hom.* 4.2-3.

being as Empedocles was, for this Hippocratic as well, it is clear that there is no unitary principle over and above the elements in their combination.

After the passage quoted above, there follows a description of the entailed theory of health and disease: health is the maintenance of the original mixture (in all its subtle differentiation within the organism), disease the failure of some aspect or other of that mixture. The causes of disease considered are revealing: there is pain when, in any part of the body, some elemental imbalance is created, whether through separation and isolation of an element within the body, or through separation and evacuation from the body. The “nature” of the body, persistent though it may be, is very plainly a dynamic mixture, constantly regenerated and reconstituted amid processes of mixture and exchange of things mixed—“and φύσις is a name applied to these by human beings.” The author of the Hippocratic *On the Nature of Man* thus demonstrates the conventionality of Empedocles’ use of φύσις, and—by a generation or so later—the growing conventionality of his account of what a φύσις really is.

Having considered the problems with the prior readings of B8 and their possible solution through the acceptance of the Plutarchan version of the fragment, let us return to two prominent aspects of Plutarch’s argument in *Adv. Col.*: Empedocles’ conventionalism and his retention of a notion of φύσις as “nature,” in spite of his allegedly using φύσις to mean “genesis” in B8. The tension between those two aspects and Plutarch’s interpretation of B8 has rarely been noted, in spite of the fact that Plutarch himself is plainly aware of it and even offers a weak defense.¹⁷⁰ The obvious solution to that tension is to reject Plutarch’s reading of B8 and instead take it to deny that any stable “nature” actually exists, i.e. to deny the validity of the conventional sense, “nature,” which Empedocles nonetheless accepts, along with other terms, as a useful convention.

¹⁷⁰ As noted above, the only exception to my knowledge is Owens (1976).

My critique, sketched above already and applied to Schumacher and van der Ben, will now be applied in more detail to Plutarch. An examination of Plutarch's text and its problems will lead to a reiteration of my proposal of a stronger form of Empedoclean conventionalism vis-à-vis φύσις, rooted in B8 but covering B63 and B110 as well.

The eponymous opponent of Plutarch's work is Colotes of Lampsacus, a disciple of Epicurus who distinguished himself as a polemicist. In the treatise to which Plutarch is responding (and for which Plutarch is our sole witness), Colotes had declared that Empedocles makes it impossible to live according to his philosophy because he lacks a notion of "nature." As proof, Colotes had apparently cited B8. Plutarch counters that B8 cannot possibly give anyone any trouble, since it obviously only rejects φύσις as γένεσις, indeed as the generation of the non-existent, and he then makes the familiar claim that γένεσις is a name for the σύνοδος ("coming together") of the elements, and θάνατος a name for their διάλυσις ("dissolution"). If those who are committed to these principles "do not and cannot live," continues Plutarch, "what else do those [Epicureans] do?"¹⁷¹ Plutarch's objection has a point: such principles were, after all, part and parcel of atomism.

Yet this alignment of Empedocles with Epicureanism leads into a puzzling line of argument mingled with equivocation. Plutarch goes on to assert that, in contrast with the Epicureans, Empedocles actually retains a relatively workable notion of φύσις. At first he is notably hesitant in his formulation: "And yet Empedocles, on the one hand, cementing and joining the elements together by the operation of heat and softness and moisture, somehow or other (ἀμωσγέπως) grants them a mixture (μίξιν) and a unitary connotation (συμφυΐαν

¹⁷¹ *Adv. Col.* 1112A.

ένωτικὴν).¹⁷² Epicureans, on the other hand, have no recourse whatsoever to a principle of such “mixture” or “connation” beyond their lifeless, solid atoms interacting in the void, and therefore they would seem to leave no room for “φύσις and ψυχή (“soul”) and ζῶον (“a living thing”).¹⁷³ Nonetheless, the Epicureans retain these concepts “in their manner of speaking, in word, by affirmation, by pretending, by naming things that by their ultimate principles and tenets they abolish.”¹⁷⁴ Plutarch fancifully depicts Epicurus himself quoting Empedocles B9.5, saying, νόμῳ δ’ ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός (“and even I myself assent to custom”). Indeed, Empedocles did the very same, Plutarch maintains, “having taught that φύσις is nothing besides τὸ φυόμενον (“the growing thing”) nor θάνατος anything besides τὸ θνήσκον (“the dying”).¹⁷⁵ In this regard, Empedocles is cast as an exemplar of sensibility:

So far was Empedocles from calling the world into question (ἐδέησε τοῦ κινεῖν τὰ ὄντα) and battling appearances that he did not even banish the expression (τὴν φωνήν) from common speech, but removed only the harmful misunderstanding that it causes about the things named and then restored to the terms their current use (τοῖς ὀνόμασι τὸ νενομισμένον) in these lines: [B9] Though Colotes cites these lines himself he fails to see that Empedocles did not abolish men, beasts, plants, and birds—since he says that they are produced by the mixture of the elements—but rather, once he had informed those who go further and use for this combination and separation the terms φύσιν and πότμον δυσδαίμονα and θάνατον ἀλοίτην how they go wrong, he did not disallow the use of the current expressions about them.

Yet Empedocles seems to me not to be calling this expression into question (μὴ τοῦτο κινεῖν τὸ ἐκφορικόν) but, as I said earlier, to be controverting a point of fact, generation from the non-existent, which some call φύσις.

The attentive reader, as Plutarch evidently realizes, is wondering why this simple scheme is not more straightforwardly applied to B8; he assures his reader that Empedocles is not “calling this

¹⁷² *ibid.*: καίτοι ὁ μὲν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς τὰ στοιχεῖα κολλῶν καὶ συναρομόττων θερμότησι καὶ μαλακότησι καὶ ὑγρότησι μίξιν αὐτοῖς καὶ συμφύϊαν ἐνωτικὴν ἀμωσγέπως ἐνδίδωσιν. The phrase “unitary connation” is my own calque for συμφύϊαν ἐνωτικὴν.

¹⁷³ *Adv. Col.* 1112C; the discussion seems to trade on a confusion between the senses of φύσις.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Adv. Col.* 1112F-1113A.

expression into question,”¹⁷⁶ is not, one must understand, denying the *normal* meaning of φύσις in B8. For Empedocles, as Plutarch has maintained, retains a conception of φύσις, of a meaningful if somewhat vaguely conceived growing-together (συμφυΐα, “connation”) of the elements into a mortal being; in B8 he is not clarifying his explanation of the retained sense, but rather entirely discarding a rare and presumably technical sense of the term.¹⁷⁷ And yet, according to Plutarch, Empedocles does require that even the normal sense be reconsidered in light of his doctrine.

To repeat, Plutarch insists, in opposition to Colotes, that there is a workable notion of φύσις as “nature” in Empedocles, who assents to custom even when he denies the absolute validity of a term—except in the case of the rare technical meaning of φύσις as γένεσις *ex nihilo*.

Contra Plutarch, it seems to me that Empedocles is precisely “calling the expression into question” in B8 as well. The fragment’s concluding line suggests as much: “φύσις is a name given to these by human beings.” That said, Empedocles is also making a factual claim: he asserts that no φύσις actually exists, and that what human beings designate with that term is in fact the result of the mixture and exchange of the mixed elements that alone have real being. B9, again, encourages one to assume that φύσις too was accepted by Empedocles, and precisely in the manner that Plutarch suggests. Had Plutarch scrupled to cite and discuss Empedocles’ use of

¹⁷⁶ This difficult expression is translated as “not here bringing up a point about verbal expression” by Einarson and De Lacy in the Loeb, and for τὸ ἐκφορικόν LSJ offer “*the power of expressing oneself in words*,” citing this passage. It seems preferable to me to take the neuter substantive as referring to an “expressible,” i.e. an “expression,” and to read this κινεῖν in line with the preceding κινεῖν τὰ ὄντα, and in a rather different sense than that offered by Einarson and De Lacy (except for the preceding instance, which they translated “upsetting”), but a sense that is well-documented; cf. LSJ s.v. κινέω A.II.1.

¹⁷⁷ NB that an indefinite “some” (τινὲς) are said to use φύσις in this sense.

φύσις elsewhere, it seems the solution would have been all the more apparent. As we have seen, the two other fragments containing the term are much more easily read as employing that conventional notion.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the consensus on B8 must be abandoned. Even on the basis of the standard, Aëtian text, the definition of φύσις as γένεσις is far from necessary, as the apparent contrast with death is complicated in ways that prevent it from demanding an opposition between “birth” and “death.” Yet the Aëtian B8 must be rejected in favor of the Plutarchan. The latter, I have argued, is the superior text, both with regard to ἐκάστου 1.1, which emphasizes the individuation of the φύσις in question, and with regard to the more significant γενέθλη 1.2, which, with the added evidence of the Strasbourg papyrus, demands a new interpretation of B8.2. When so restored, the first two lines seem to deny rather the existence of a “nature” of any individual among mortals, as well as any general category of mortals: “There is a φύσις of no single one / among mortals, nor any baleful stock of death.” The “mixture and exchange of things mixed” in B8.3 are, on my account, the only principles necessary to explain the occurrence of the patterns observed by human beings in individual organisms and in entire species. No irreducible φύσις subtends the individual organism, but only a persistent mixture and further processes of mixture and the exchange of things mixed, which themselves underlie the reproduction of species: “φύσις is a name applied to these by human beings.” As we see in Aristotle and certain Hippocratic treatises, most ancient readers encountered no difficulties in reading Empedocles’ φύσις in its conventional sense, “nature,” and not “growth” or “genesis.” *On the Nature of Man* reveals the conventionality of Empedocles’ usage particularly well. With

that in mind, when one returns to Plutarch's contorted interpretation of Empedocles, one can see all the more clearly the faults of Plutarch's otherwise helpful interpretation.

To conclude, Empedocles was classed as a φυσικός, a natural philosopher, and not for nothing. From what remains of his thought, in fragments and in testimonia, one can perceive a simple notion of φύσις as the persistent, hypostatized "nature" of a thing, which answers the question of what a thing is. That basic notion takes modified form in this corpus as a "nature" that is theorized as consisting of some combination of the four roots, mixed and persisting in that mixture under the influence of Love. In this concept, Empedoclean biological and psychological doctrines find a convenient center. In particular, the four instances of φύσις, brought together under this one meaning, take on a simple and compelling unity. B8 denies the absolute reality or irreducibility of any φύσις, and points to a new explanation of the phenomena that other human beings explain by reference to a "nature." A generous conventionalist, Empedocles deploys that term again in B63, where the creation of a new φύσις by the recombination of those of the parents is considered, and then again in B110, where the role of one's φύσις in education provides a cautious qualification—albeit one far from the Pindaric strictures about learning and φύς. Empedocles' φύσις, by contrast, is a φύσις of custom.

Chapter 4: Empedocles the Constant-Fruiting

Now I am immortal, and am pleased at it, and now again I become mortal, and I weep; then, again, I get dissolved into atoms, I become water, become air, become fire; thereafter ... one makes me into a wild beast, another makes me into a fish, ... I swim, fly, creep, run, sit. And now and then Empedocles even makes me into a shrub. —Hermias¹

Thus things are reflected ever more clearly: gradual freeing from the all too anthropomorphic. / *For the plant the entire world is a plant*, for us a human being. —Nietzsche²

I. Introduction

This chapter analyses the role of metaphor with respect to the conception of φύσις presented above, and shows that a paradigm of autonomous plant growth is fundamental to both that conception of φύσις and the conception of the entire “natural order,” which is importantly not yet labelled by φύσις. Yet the common conception of an individual φύσις and the cosmos is one of the “growing together” of the ῥιζώματα or “roots” under the immanent influence of Aphrodite, where this growth is explicitly marked as a process of learning and habituation.³ Among various competing metaphors including anthropomorphic and technomorphic ones, the phytomorphic (or plant) demonstrably dominate in certain respects, and especially with regard to

¹ Hermias, *Irrisio Gentilium Philosophorum 4* (= *Satire des philosophes païens*, ed. R. P. C. Hanson, Paris 1993, 100): [speaking of the hypothetical transformations demanded by a survey of philosophical positions] νῦν μὲν ἀθάνατός εἰμι καὶ γέγηθα, νῦν δ' αὖ θνητὸς γίνομαι καὶ δακρῶω· ἄρτι δὲ εἰς ἀτόμους διαλύομαι, ὕδωρ γίνομαι, ἀήρ γίνομαι, πῦρ γίνομαι· εἶτα ... θηρίον με ποιεῖ ἰχθύν με ποιεῖ. ... νήχομαι ἵπταμαι ἔρω θέω καθίζω. Ἔστι δὲ ὅτε Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ θάμνον με ποιεῖ. Translation adapted and extended from that of Cleve (1969) II.393, who read a slightly different text at the start of the last sentence (ἔτι δὲ ὁ).

² NF 1872, 19[158]: “So spiegeln sich die Dinge immer reiner: allmähliche Befreiung vom allzu Anthropomorphischen. / Für die Pflanze ist die ganze Welt Pflanze, für uns Mensch.”

³ One will recall that the elements are said to be sentient; see esp. B110.10.

the formation of the human subject and the formation and deformation of the cosmos.⁴ Whereas the craft metaphors are restricted to the production of organisms and their parts and therefore cannot warrant the increasingly common assertion that Empedocles' Aphrodite is a provident demiurge, the plant metaphors are much more widespread.

The metaphors that apply to the subject and the All may be regarded as "absolute metaphors" in Hans Blumenberg's terms, as they are applied to the internal and external limits of human experience and theory (beyond which lies *das Absolute*), and thus "give structure to a world, representing the nonexperienceable, nonapprehensible totality of the real," and also help to "provide the theoretically unanswerable question of man's place in the universe, and his relationship to everything else that exists, with a point of orientation."⁵ Indeed, they have more in common than their "absoluteness": the metaphors at both levels are intimately analogous in the thought of this author, and help to conceptualize both human development and the All in a way that eschews anthropomorphism to a considerable extent, and in part by way of vegetal metaphors that reveal a unifying, if somewhat obscure, vision of spontaneous and sentient plant growth. According to Empedocles, one grows and learns together with—or as one particular mixture of—the cosmic roots.

However, just as there are decisive limits to the other imagery, so the relevant phytomorphic metaphors are in crucial regards more subdued and complicated than the scholarship has represented them to be. Unlike the pervasive vegetal metaphors, which assert the

⁴ The sense of *κόσμος* in Empedocles is debated. The word appears twice, in fr. 26.5 and 134.5, arguably to refer to the perfect "order" that is the perfect mixture of the *sphairos* under Love, as Finkelberg (1998) 112 would have it; but others have preferred to understand it as the world order of the present, as e.g. Guthrie (1962) I.208 n. 1. I follow Finkelberg in using *cosmos* to refer to the perfection of the *sphairos*, but also speak throughout, with some conscious anachronism, of the micro- and macrocosm.

⁵ Blumenberg (2010 [1960]) 14, 115.

kinship of all organisms and their common origin in the earth, the metaphors we are most interested in here almost belong rather to the category which Blumenberg analyzes as “background metaphors,” by reference to which the “higher-order semantic unity” of scattered individual terms may be understood, and which reveal the imaginative core that keeps a given system “in vital orientation, whereas academic routine uproots concepts and suspends them in an idiosyncratic atomism.”⁶ This will be seen most clearly with regard to the ῥιζώματα or “roots,” a designation for the elements that occurs only once, and in a passage of chaotic imagery, but is nonetheless treated as if it were fixed and prominent terminology in Empedocles scholarship. The image, as we will see below, is not so clear or sustained as most scholars have claimed. An adequate analysis of Empedocles’ metaphors must account for this restraint.

It is explained here by reference to two intimately related factors. The first is the anti-substantialist position on φύσις laid out above (and discussed again below), which seems to have further motivated the eschewal not only of anthropomorphism, but also of all excessive reliance upon familiar figuration (which is of course also an impulse Empedocles inherits from his predecessors such as Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Parmenides). The second is the transitional status of the Empedoclean corpus with respect to the dynamic relations between image and concept in early philosophico-poetic discourse. The concept of φύσις is being given a new role in these texts, yet the role of the concept is not such as to determine precisely all the structural features of the imagery applied in metaphor and simile: that is, the use of imagery does not display the comfort (or compulsion) of later thinkers in the more systematic development of allegorical imagery driven by a conceptual apparatus. More simply put, not all of the details and possible implications of Empedocles’ plant metaphors (or those of his craft metaphors and

⁶ Blumenberg (2010 [1960]) 62-3.

similes) are significant for the reconstruction of his doctrine, and to think otherwise is to be misled by later allegoresis.

Nonetheless, significance will be sought in the subordination of the techno- to the phytomorphic within the conceptual scheme presented here: if every φύσις, like every stage of the cosmic cycle as a whole, is in fact something learnt, then Aphrodite's occasional crafting of our tissues and organs may not represent a contrasting schema so much as a subordinate one that implies a corollary to that conception of φύσις, namely the derivation of τέχνη from the gradual learning of technique and accidental invention. One might even infer a theory—with ample parallels in other ancient authors—to the effect that all art is itself another contingent growth of the same principles that, in this author, gradually “learn” to form human nature and the cosmos as a whole.⁷ The apparent tension between the techno- and phytomorphic can thus be resolved by the subordination of the former to the latter by way of this conceptual scheme. In the bold vision of Empedocles, nature and craft, or plant and machine, are not opposed, and the measure of the world is taken as if by a sentient plant, which sees in all processes the ramifications of its own intelligence.

II. Overview of Evidence and Prior Interpretations

In this section I attempt to unfold the main claims somewhat and relate them both to the argument of the preceding chapter and to prior scholarship in order to set up the interpretations that follow.

⁷ See Cole (1990) esp. 48-59 on various presentations of “the accidental and empirical character of the inventive process and the collective character of human achievement” (58), which he traces back to Democritus; see also Guthrie (1957) and Boys-Stones (2001).

In the preceding chapter, it was argued that Empedocles' use of φύσις is restricted to mortals (human and otherwise), and that in all four instances in the corpus (twice in B8, once each in B63 and B110) the word is to be understood never as synonymous with γένεσις (i.e. as “coming-to-be”), but always as denoting an individual organism's “nature,” which Empedocles however denies to have substantial reality (B8). Each φύσις, it was argued, is to be conceived instead as a persistent mixture (μίξις) of the four elements in the presence of Φιλότης or Love—persistent, that is, yet not absolutely constant, but constantly subject to change through the exchanging movement (διάλλαξις) of the elements, pure or still mixed, both within the organism and without. The regularity of φύσις, a problem of Empedoclean interpretation to which Aristotle drew critical attention, was left unexplained.

With regard to that mixing and exchange of the elements, Empedocles' readers have long observed the fundamental analogy between his conception of the organism and his conception of the cosmos. The status of that analogy is unassailable. Yet there are two crucial discrepancies that emerge from the extant verses. The first, noted above and in Chapter 3, is that φύσις is not used of any of the four elements, nor of τὸ πᾶν, the All.⁸ The four elements and Love and Strife alone have being, properly speaking; φύσις is not yet applied to being proper, but only to that which “comes to be” or “grows.” As for the cosmic results of their interaction, it seems that one also cannot speak of the φύσις of the All in Empedocles, despite the changes of the cosmic cycle. And yet, among the words which Empedocles metaphorically applies to the elements, such as γίγνεσθαι (“become”), one finds the prominent use of φύεσθαι (“grow”). Thus the verb from

⁸ To repeat, some have concluded that Empedocles applied φύσις to the elements, but the fact remains that in the extant verses it is not; see the preceding chapter for further discussion.

which φύσις derives anticipates the later semantic range of the noun by way of its metaphorical application.

The second discrepancy, also noted above, is that whereas organisms and their tissues and organs are repeatedly—but inconsistently—cast as artifacts of Aphrodite, such imagery is *never* applied at the higher levels of analysis.⁹ The tribes of mortals pouring forth, as Empedocles describes them, may indeed be θαῦμα ἴδεσθαι (“a wonder to behold”) like Homeric armor,¹⁰ but Empedocles’ cosmology is strictly depicted as one of four divine but barely personified ῥιζώματα, four “roots” that “grow together” and “grow apart”—indeed, that *learn* to grow thus. This is intriguingly expressed in forms of φύεσθαι and μανθάνειν (“learn”), and yet the latter have received surprisingly little comment.¹¹ In spite of the concerted study of the correspondences between micro- and macrocosm in this author, and particularly of “the process of perception and sensation as analogous to his universal theory of the interaction of the elements,”¹² no one to my knowledge has attempted to correlate Empedocles’ discussions of human learning with his cosmological use of μανθάνειν (“learn”). An attempt will be undertaken here to correlate the two with each other and with Empedocles’ conception of φύσις—and all by way of reference to vegetal metaphor.

⁹ There is no basis then for speaking of Love as the “artisan de l’Un,” as Bollack does, unless perhaps one abandons the interpretation of the cosmic cycle in favor of a platonizing interpretation like Bollack’s; Bollack seems to use that phrase only in the index, although the concept is certainly at play throughout the volumes of his *Empédocle*.

¹⁰ Cf. B35.17 and e.g. *Il.* 5.725 and *Th.* 575, and the comments of Bollack ad loc. (= 202 Bollack), “la nature de l’Amour se substitue aux divinités artisanes qui, dans la *Théogonie*, fabriquent Pandore comme un ouvrage d’art qui étonne.”

¹¹ Following the usual summary treatment and translation of Empedoclean μανθάνειν as “to be accustomed” *vel sim.*, Snell (1924) 72 n. 2 places Empedocles’ use among a few others which he takes to have that meaning (rather than “to learn”). For a more suggestive translation but no comments, see e.g. 68, 201 Bollack (= B26, B35); for more suggestive remarks on how this learning may be related to Empedocles’ “panpsychism,” see Trépanier (2003) 32, 191.

¹² Windelband (1956) 78.

The central thesis of this chapter, as stated at the outset, is that at the heart of the analogy between micro- and macrocosm lies a conception of a quasi-vegetal growth, a “vegetal subject,” as it were, constituted temporarily by the growing-together of the sentient elements under the unifying and immanent influence of Φιλότης. The human subject, especially as represented by Empedocles’ addressee, is said to grow by learning or learn by growing in what is now a perfectly familiar manner; less familiar to this day is how this subject finds its analogue, through clear verbal echoes, in the elements that are said to learn to grow.¹³ Through this link, Empedocles’ extended use of μανθάνειν and φύεσθαι demands to be seen in light of the contemporary debate over the relationship between φύσις and μάθη, discussed with regard to Pindar above. When correlated with that cosmological “learning to grow” and other statements that touch on the learning and nature of the mortal subject, Empedocles’ denial of φύσις in B8 can be seen to indicate a theory of the constitution both of any φύσις and of the entire cosmos by means of “learning.”

In contrast then with the likes of Pindar, who could assert the self-sufficiency of an elite φύά over against the learning required by inferior talents, Empedocles can be seen as positing that each and every φύσις is learned—and that, in addition, not only is the immediate sphere of human activity something learned (or, in a word, νόμος, “custom”), but even τὸ ὅλον, or the Whole, is defined by an ongoing, cyclic process of learning on the part of the divine elements that body it forth. If this is correct, it has several important consequences for our understanding of Empedocles’ thought and its historical role. The first is that it would cast in a new light Empedocles’ willingness to use φύσις in spite of his critique of it in B8, along with his

¹³ But as for this notion’s being unfamiliar, see the note below.

affirmation of νόμος in B9.¹⁴ The second is an explanation of the regularity of φύσις according to Empedocles' conception: the patterns of organismic development, as the patterns of the entire cosmos, become explicable (if not so scientifically) as habits or customs acquired, periodically, by the elements.¹⁵ The third consequence is that it would reveal Empedocles to have anticipated the atomism of Democritus in yet another regard: for Democritus famously proclaims that “teaching ... makes nature (φυσιοποιεῖ).”¹⁶ While never quite so pointed, Empedocles' coordinated statements arguably amount to much the same doctrine. On the other hand, unlike Democritus, Empedocles extends that conception from the formation of an individual φύσις to the formation of the cosmos, and displays an imagination far more gripped by growth. After all, one might surmise that a hylozoism which denies individual essences and shuns the more obvious anthropomorphisms is naturally compelled toward the phytomorphic.

On the subject of his shunning anthropomorphism, that denial of φύσις is crucial in another way to the interpretation of Empedoclean metaphor offered here. As with the word φύσις, so Empedocles utilizes many givens of the linguistic and more particularly generic traditions available to him, employing among other things a fantastic array of vegetal metaphors—while at the same time calling their validity into question, both explicitly and implicitly.

¹⁴ On B9 see Ch. 3.

¹⁵ One might compare Francis Bacon's *consuetudines naturae*, or the passing remark by Santayana (1910) 69: “If there are no atoms, at least there must be habits of nature . . .” (where Empedocles is not under discussion), or indeed the more significant parallels in Schelling, Nietzsche, Bergson, Peirce, and Whitehead, as well as more marginal thinkers like Rupert Sheldrake. Empedocles would thus be an intriguing precedent to certain modern ideas. Of course, it is hoped that the awareness of such possible parallels has not produced any vitiating anachronisms.

¹⁶ Democritus B33 = D403: ἡ φύσις καὶ ἡ διδαχὴ παραπλήσιόν ἐστι· καὶ γὰρ ἡ διδαχὴ μεταρυσμοὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, μεταρυσμοῦσα δὲ φυσιοποιεῖ.

Explicit criticism is concentrated in passages that deal with the transcendence of the divine, both in the form of the Σφαῖρος, the perfect mixture of all elements at the acme of Love’s influence in the cosmic cycle, and also in the guise of the divine more generally. But one of the most memorable and pertinent series of lines, always placed toward the beginning of the Φυσικά, comes to an arresting focus on τὸ ὅλον, “the Whole”:

στεινωποὶ μὲν γὰρ παλάμαι κατὰ γυῖα κέχυνται,
 πολλὰ δὲ δεῖλ’ ἔμπαια, τὰ τ’ ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας·
 παῦρον δὲ ζώησι βίου μέρος ἀθρήσαντες
 ὠκύμοροι καπνοῖο δίκην ἀρθέντες ἀπέπταν,
 αὐτὸ μόνον πεισθέντες, ὅτῳ προσέκυρσεν ἕκαστος 5
 πάντοσ’ ἐλαυνόμενοι. τὸ δ’ ὅλον <τίς ἄρ’> εὔχεται εὔρειν;
 οὔτως οὔτ’ ἐπιδερχτὰ τὰδ’ ἀνδράσιν οὔτ’ ἐπακουστά
 οὔτω νόῳ περιληπτά.¹⁷

For narrow devices stream along limbs and numerous [are] the miserable things bursting-in, which also dull [their] cares; Having observed in [their] lifetimes a little portion of life, quick-doomed like smoke lifted up they fly away, trusting in this alone, whatever each one has chanced upon, being driven in every direction. But <who then> prays to have discovered the whole? Thus these things are neither to be seen by men nor to be heard nor to be grasped by the mind.

These words would seem to reveal great attention to the ways in which what has been seen is deployed to understand what has not, and what eludes even the mind’s grasp. The other moment of explicit criticism that I would note here comes in the negative description of the aforementioned Σφαῖρος. In the following, we can see that that perfect fruit of Φιλότης is supposed to be devoid of all familiar organismic features:

οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ νότωιο δύο κλάδοι ἀίσσονται,
 οὐ πόδες, οὐ θοὰ γούν’, οὐ μήδεα γεννήεντα,
 ἀλλὰ Σφαῖρος ἔην καὶ <πάντοθεν> ἴσος ἑαυτῷ.¹⁸

¹⁷ B2.1-8 = D42 = 1 W.

¹⁸ B29 = D92 = 22 W. The main fragments on the Sphairos are: B27 (= 21 W), 28, 29 (see 22 W = 29/28); on the imperceptibility of the divine otherwise see also: B133 (= 96 W) and B134 (= 97 W), but NB this last is regarded by L-M to pertain to the Sphairos, as D93.

For from [his] back two branches do not rise up, no feet, no quick knees, no genitals productive, but he was Sphairos and <from every side> equal to himself.

The κλάδοι (“branches”) may well be a metaphor for arms, or, according to Berg and Picot, for wings (as of an Eros), but in either case it would remain a very striking metaphor, being apparently the only such use of κλάδος extant, and would suggest an intention to exclude a vegetal form as well.¹⁹ The Σφαίρος is most definitely not a man, but neither is it a plant: “having grown-together as one, the All is submerged” (ἐν συμφύντα τὸ πᾶν ὑπένερθε γένηται).²⁰

There is another moment of criticism, which is not explicitly concerned with imagery, but which, I suggest, bears upon that too, while also bearing upon the stratification of this corpus. Corresponding to the distinction between the exoteric Καθαροί and the esoteric Φυσικά,²¹ one finds in the former an endorsement of public honor with the familiar image of “blossoming garlands,” and in the latter a repudiation with reference to the “flowers of honor.” First, consider the following address, which would be rather Pindaric in tone if only the speaker himself were not the subject of apotheosis:

χαίρετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος οὐκέτι θνητός
πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πάσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικεν,
ταινίας τε περίστεπτος στέφесίν τε θαλείοις·
τοῖσιν ἅμ' εὐτ' ἄν ἴκωμαι ἐς ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα
ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξὶ σεβίζομαι ...²²

Greetings! I among you an immortal god no longer mortal go about honored by all, as is seemly, crowned with ribbons and with garlands blossoming; whenever I come to flowering towns by men and women I am honored ...

¹⁹ “Arms” is the usual interpretation; for wings (as of Eros), see Picot (2012) 10-11 and now also Picot & Berg (2018).

²⁰ B26.7 = D77b = 16 W. On the interpretation of ὑπένερθε γένηται, see Wright ad loc.

²¹ For further discussion, see the preceding chapter and the Introduction.

²² B112 = D4 = 102 W.

That may be contrasted with the following, which is addressed instead to his singular pupil:

μηδέ σέ γ' εὐδόξιο βιήσεται ἄνθεα τιμῆς
πρὸς θνητῶν ἀνελέσθαι, ἐφ' ᾧ θ' ὀσίης πλέον εἰπεῖν
θάρσει, καὶ τότε δὴ σοφίης ἐπ' ἄκροισι θοάζει.
ἀλλ' ἄγ' ἄθρει πάση παλάμη πῆ δῆλον ἕκαστον,
μήτε τιν' ὄψιν ἔχων πίστει πλέον ἢ κατ' ἀκούην
ἢ ἀκοὴν ἐρίδουπον ὑπὲρ τρανώματα γλώσσης,
μήτε τι τῶν ἄλλων, ὀπόση πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι,
γυίων πίστιν ἔρυκε, νόει δ' ἦ δῆλον ἕκαστον.²³

Nor let [this]²⁴ compel you to carry off flowers of glorious honor from mortals, so as to speak more than piety in boldness, and then indeed to sit upon wisdom's peaks. But come, perceive by every device by which each thing is clear, neither holding some vision fuller in trust than sound nor thundering sound over the tongue's clarifications, nor hold your faith back from any of the other limbs, in whatever way there is a pore for thinking, but think in the way in which each thing is clear.

Whereas the author presents himself as a proudly garlanded god among the people, here his disciple is warned that the “flowers of honor” must not obstruct a careful and synaesthetic empiricism. With the aid of the botanical metaphor, an entire value system is repudiated—and perhaps also its reliance upon certain value-laden imagery; ἄνθος, as it happens, does not reappear in the extant verses.

More implicit criticism is also to be found, although it is of course difficult to distinguish from what may be unintentional signals of the instability of the image. Yet a deliberately critical stance is arguably expressed in instances of mixed and subdued imagery, the most condensed being the declaration of the four ῥιζώματα and their identification with mostly familiar divinities, which will be taken up in detail below. But the entire corpus is one of densely mixed images: in addition to novel developments of Homeric and Hesiodic imagery such as that of the “roots,” Empedocles seems to bear numerous other generic influences in this regard, and to

²³ B3.6-13 = D44 = 5 W.

²⁴ On the uncertainty of the subject, see Wright ad loc.; I find the interpretation of L-M unlikely.

combine them in puzzling ways. For instance, one encounters an apparently lyric vegetal metaphor in the connection between Love and “blossoming life” (βίου θαλέθοντος),²⁵ and on the other hand the exceptionally tragic description of how “separating fire led up [sc. from the earth] nocturnal shoots (έννυχίους ὄρπηκας) of men and much-weeping women,”²⁶ who are elsewhere said to “roam in shadow along the meadow of Atē (Ἄτης ἀν λειμῶνα)”²⁷ This is indeed another regard in which one might conclude, “Nel pensiero di Empedocle confluiscono senza trovare perfetta armonia diversi orientamenti di pensiero.”²⁸ Deploying diverse, traditional vegetal metaphors for their analogical worth and rhetorical power, and also developing novel ones, Empedocles has often confounded his readers.

One of the aims of this chapter then is to display some of those riches of Empedoclean imagery while also attending to the limits and destabilization of even the most fundamental plant imagery. For it is crucial to the argument of this chapter that Empedocles does not employ elaborated metaphors of any sort, nor are certain crucial ones so sustained as one might expect or desire. This is another explanandum that arose from my study of the corpus.

As stated above, it is explained here by a closely related pair of factors. First is the critique of imagery openly undertaken by Empedocles himself in light of his anti-substantialism and with the aim of increased abstraction, as displayed in the passages on the Σφαίρος and τὸ ὄλον. The second has to do with the precise way in which he pursues that aim, which may be explained by reference to his position within the nascent philosophical tradition: amid the emerging allegorical mode and the mounting critique of anthropomorphic and other imagery in

²⁵ B20.3 = 26.3 W. On this phrase, now attested in slightly different form (βίου θηλοῦντος) in P.Strasb. = *Physika* I.304 = D73.304, see Primavesi (2008) 70.

²⁶ B62.2 = D157.2 = 53.2 W.

²⁷ B121.4 = D24.3 = 113.4 W.

²⁸ Bonetti (1960) 75.

favor of universalizing abstractions, Empedoclean imagery is destabilized and complicated, and yet the articulation of concepts does not, it seems, dictate the structure of the image in a precise manner such as one finds in allegory. Empedocles does not, for instance, develop the image of the ὄιζώματα in a way that reveals any attachment to a larger schema into which the roots would fit, such as that of a cosmic tree.

The argument of this chapter finds its most convenient foil in the recent work of Leopoldo Iribarren, who has presented the strongest and subtlest argument for the dominance of technomorphic metaphor in Empedocles.²⁹ Building on the growing interest in Empedocles' craft metaphors and similes and their possible implications for a reconstruction of his doctrine, Iribarren has presented Empedocles as the heir of craft metaphors that indicate a technomorphic paradigm for both reflexive activity (i.e. poetry and philosophy) and cosmogony, and as combining the two in such a way as to show that art and nature are one. In my opinion, Iribarren's is the most interesting and philologically careful of the teleological-technomorphic interpretations, but even he has strained the evidence, at points which will be examined below.

My opposition to Iribarren ultimately amounts, however, to what might seem a mere shift in perspective. For I agree with Iribarren that, on some level, "l'origine du monde coïncide avec l'origine de l'art."³⁰ Yet, whereas Iribarren maintains this thesis within a broader one about the dominance of the technomorphic scheme in Empedocles' cosmogony, epistemology and metapoetics, I insist that that scheme is subordinated to the phytomorphic in each of the three areas. To judge from the observable range of technomorphic imagery in Empedocles, the origin of Aphrodite's art coincides more precisely with the origin of mortal organisms (and organs),

²⁹ Iribarren (2018).

³⁰ Iribarren (2018) 210.

which are however depicted more often as the product of chance and automatic sprouting from the earth. That these and all other processes are uniformly and more fundamentally depicted by way of vegetal metaphor, establishes the dominance of a paradigm of automatic and disorganized growth. As noted above, there is no properly cosmological technomorphic imagery to be seen. Empedocles' epistemology, moreover, is nothing like Vico's *verum est factum*, in which "only the creator knows what he has created himself."³¹ As we shall see, Empedocles does not depict the acquisition of knowledge as a mechanical construction but rather as an organic growth: as Iribarren himself put it in an earlier article, the prominent concept of πίστις ("faith" or "proof") appears "dans le poème d'Empédocle en tant que phénomène organique,"³² and is notably modified by λιπόξυλος, or "lacking-in-wood," apparently an Empedoclean coinage. Likewise, within the welter of metapoetic imagery, there may be some notable technomorphism, as of the Muse's chariot,³³ but there is, for instance, no technomorphic *sphragis* to compete with ἐμπεδόκαρπος ("constant-fruiting") and ἐμπεδόφυλλος ("constant-leafed"). In sum, there are many signs that a quasi-vegetal organicism pervades Empedocles' poetry and subtends all the spectacular technomorphism.

Nonetheless, through the conception of φύσις in its relation to learning we are enabled to find a resolution to the apparent tension between Empedocles' techno- and phytomorphic images. For the combination can be readily situated by way of what Pierre Hadot described as the "crucial theme ... where human art is ultimately a mere special case of the original and fundamental art of nature."³⁴ In Empedocles, human art, just as Aphrodite's art in fashioning

³¹ Auerbach (1958) 31.

³² Iribarren (2006) 64.

³³ See B3 = D44 = 2 W.

³⁴ Hadot (2006) 23.

tissues etc., would seem to be ultimately a special case of the “learning” of the four roots to come together under the influence of Love.

Yet it must be stressed again that, as with craft imagery, the dominance of the phytomorphic and its structuring role has been overestimated by its proponents. There are pervasive indications that Empedocles is attempting to transcend even that imagery in preference to the new reign of abstractions. One might say that vegetal metaphors are the metaphorical traces of the familiar imagery which Empedocles is attempting to eliminate. What the minimal language of “growing together” and “growing apart” crucially preserves is the life of the “roots,” and a vision of their interaction that resembles the growth of plants more than that of any other organism. Together, that diction constitutes what Arnaud Macé argued to be a universalization of the Hesiodic image of the roots.³⁵ Extending Macé’s argument, this chapter will show how that scheme is mirrored in Empedocles’ psychology and poetics, so that one might even speak of the internalization of the Hesiodic guarantee of the harvest.

III. Aristotle on Empedoclean Metaphor

In approaching this set of problems in Empedocles, it is worthwhile to consider again what Aristotle has to say. As discussed in the preceding chapter’s account of φύσις, much of our knowledge of Empedocles and his extant verses derives from Aristotle and the Aristotelian commentators. The modern interpretation of Empedocles has therefore been largely determined by Aristotle’s accounts, whether through loyalty or rebellion, and this holds true for Empedoclean metaphor as well. A brief examination of that history will also help to focus the problem of the role of metaphor vis-à-vis conceptualization in this author. In addition, as with his

³⁵ Macé (2013) 235-45.

treatment of Empedoclean φύσις, Aristotle’s response to Empedoclean metaphor contains certain resources that have been neglected in the scholarship. So, at the risk of seeming too dependent upon “the Philosopher,” it will be useful to take our bearings here from Aristotle’s portrait of a “metaphorical” Empedocles.³⁶

Through Aristotle, Empedocles enjoys a special place in the history of the study of metaphor, although it has gone somewhat underappreciated—again thanks to Aristotle. The best-known appraisal of him is unquestionably that of the *Poetics*: “Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common except the meter, so it is right to call the former a poet, the latter a natural philosopher rather than a poet.”³⁷ What has appeared to many to be a summary condemnation is misleadingly categorical.³⁸ Empedoclean verses, tossed in among those of authors whose status as poets proper cannot be questioned, are cited several times later in the same treatise to illustrate various topics of poetical art, the first being metaphor.³⁹ Indeed, the whole Aristotelian corpus shows a remarkable predilection for Empedoclean metaphor. Yet it remains a neglected fact that in all surviving Greek literature the one and only person said to be μεταφορικός, or

³⁶ For the use of “metaphorical” in English to mean “prone to or apt at using metaphor,” just as the two Aristotelian uses of μεταφορικός (see below), cf. e.g. C. Johnson, *The Country Lassess: Or, the Custom of the Manor*, London 1753, Act V Scene I, where, after a speech laden with metaphor, the speechifier is addressed as a “metaphorical prigster” (citation from OED s.v.).

³⁷ *Poet.* I, 1447b17-20: οὐδὲν δὲ κοινόν ἐστιν Ὅμηρῳ καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ πλὴν τὸ μέτρον, διὸ τὸν μὲν ποιητὴν δίκαιον καλεῖν, τὸν δὲ φυσιολόγον μᾶλλον ἢ ποιητὴν.

³⁸ This is not to say that Aristotle does not criticize Empedocles, only that he does not criticize him as a poet; for some of Aristotle’s criticism of Empedocles as a φυσιολόγος, see below and also the preceding chapter. Doubt about the supposed condemnation in the *Poetics* was first planted in my mind by Mark Payne.

³⁹ Metaphor: 21, 1457b, where the precise details of the citation are debatable. It has long been thought that χαλκῶ ἀπὸ ψυχῆν ἀρύσας and τεμῶν ταναήκει χαλκῶ, which Aristotle quotes without attribution, were also fragments of Empedocles (B138 and B143), but the attribution has been successfully challenged by Picot (2004). The other topics for which Empedocles is cited are: poetic contraction (of ὄψις to ὄψ in B88) at 21, 1458a5; and punctuation as a solution to problems of interpretation (of B35.14-15) at 25, 1461a23ff.

“metaphorical” in the sense of being prone to or apt at using metaphors, is Empedocles: according to Diogenes Laertius, “Aristotle ... in *On Poets* says that Empedocles was Homeric and powerful in diction, being μεταφορικός and utilizing the rest of the successful poetical devices.”⁴⁰ This (assuming the diction in question derives from Aristotle) is one of the just two pre-Hellenistic instances of the word μεταφορικός, and together they are the only instances which seem to have that meaning; the other instance (which supports the authenticity of the first) is in the *Poetics*, where we read,

It is important on the one hand to aptly employ each of the abovementioned things, including double nouns and loan words, but the most important thing by far is being μεταφορικός (τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι). For this alone cannot be gotten from another, and is a sign of a gifted nature; for to metaphorize well is to perceive the similar.⁴¹

⁴⁰ D.L. 8.57, fr. 70 Rose, ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΩΝ fr. 1 Ross: Ἀριστοτέλης ... ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ποιητῶν φησὶν ὅτι καὶ Ὀμηρικὸς ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ δεινὸς περὶ τὴν φράσιν γέγονε, μεταφορικός τ' ὢν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς περὶ ποιητικὴν ἐπιτεύγμασι χρώμενος. (This and the passage from *Poet.* are nicely juxtaposed by LM as R1a,b.) NB in the MS tradition of D.L. the best attested reading is μεταφορικός, which is printed by e.g. Huebner and Cobet (D.L.), and Rose and Ross (Arist.); two codd., B and P¹, read μεταφορητικός, which no one has preferred; and finally two others, W and Co, both apparently derived from P¹ (cf. Marcovich, Praefatio XVIII), read μεταφορητικός, a *hapax legomenon* which anyway seems to require the same sense as μεταφορικός, a word which, as we saw, Aristotle uses elsewhere (DK: “Aristoteles schrieb jedenfalls das letztere [viz. μεταφορικός]”); for reasons obscure to me, Long, Marcovich, DK, Dorandi and L-M print μεταφορητικός (cf. Marcovich’s app. crit. for the fullest list, which includes three witnesses to μεταφορικός, whereas e.g. Long and Dorandi give only one), which would seem to demand that the μεταφορικός in the other instance also be doubted. The two Aristotelian uses constitute the entirety of the evidence before Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and to judge from the LSJ s.v. and a study of the TLG results, no other author uses the word with the sense “apt at metaphor”; and it seems the borrowed *metaphoricus* was never given that sense (see DMLBS s.v.).

⁴¹ *Poet.* 1459a4-8: ἔστιν δὲ μέγα μὲν τὸ ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰρημένων προπόντως χρῆσθαι, καὶ διπλοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ γλώτταις, πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ’ ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἐστι· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστιν. Cf. *Poet.* 1455a32-4 (on εὐφυΐα), *Rhet.* 1394a5 (on τὸ ὅμοιον ὄραν, ὅπερ ῥᾶόν ἐστιν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας), 1405a8 (on not being able to acquire the gift) and 1412a10 (again on metaphor, philosophy, and τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν). In this connection one might also note that Empedocles is the first of the non-legendary persons listed as having been melancholic (the next two being Plato and Socrates), *Prob.* 30.1.953a; for some pertinent comments see Lucas ad *Poet.* 1455a32-4.

To judge from Aristotle’s extant words, then, Empedocles would be the exemplar of the most important quality in a poet—apparently also important in a philosopher—viz., being “metaphorical.”

Elsewhere Aristotle attends to particular Empedoclean metaphors, some of which bear directly on the arguments of this chapter. On the topic of some plants’ producing the analogue not of semen but of a foetus, Aristotle writes,

And this Empedocles says well in his verse, ‘thus tall trees lay eggs; first the olives ...,’ for just as the egg is a foetus, from some part of which the animal arises, and the remainder nourishment, so too the growing [plant] comes from part of the seed, but the rest becomes nourishment for the shoot and the first root.⁴²

Here Aristotle preserves one of the best pieces of evidence for Empedocles’ exploration of the value of analogical morphology by way of metaphor. To be sure, he also criticizes Empedoclean metaphor according to the same criteria, and indeed the focal point of prior discussions of Aristotle’s response in this regard has been the following critique:

It is equally absurd for anyone to think, like Empedocles, that he has made an intelligible statement when he says that the sea is the sweat of the earth. Such a statement is perhaps sufficient for poetry, for metaphor is poetical, but it does not suffice for knowing the nature [sc. of the phenomenon].⁴³

⁴² GA 1.731a4-9: καὶ τοῦτο καλῶς λέγει Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ποιήσας· οὕτω δ’ ὄφοτοκεῖ μακρὰ δένδρεα· πρῶτον ἐλαίας ... γὰρ ὄφον κύημα ἔστι, καὶ ἔκ τινος αὐτοῦ γίγνεται τὸ ζῶον, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τροφή, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος ἐκ μέρους γίγνεται τὸ φυόμενον, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τροφή γίγνεται τῷ βλαστῷ καὶ τῇ ῥίζῃ τῇ πρώτῃ.” See also Theophrastus *CP* I, 7, 1, and Bremer (1980) 366.

⁴³ Aristotle *Meteor.* 2.357a24-8: ὁμοίως δὲ γελοῖον κἂν εἴ τις εἰπὼν ἰδρῶτα τῆς γῆς εἶναι τὴν θάλατταν οἶεται τι σαφὲς εἰρηκέναι, καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς· πρὸς ποιήσιν μὲν γὰρ οὕτως εἰπὼν ἴσως εἴρηκεν ἰκανῶς (ἢ γὰρ μεταφορὰ ποιητικόν), πρὸς δὲ τὸ γνῶναι τὴν φύσιν οὐχ ἰκανῶς. On the basis of this DK reconstructed a fragment, B55: γῆς ἰδρῶτα θάλασσαν; but e.g. L-M refrain and print some of Aristotle’s words, D147a.

Aristotle thus evaluates some of Empedocles’ metaphors for their analogical import for natural philosophy, and by that criterion one is found seriously wanting, while another is praised.⁴⁴ But it seems that Aristotle also values some of them not so much for analogical aptitude, as for their rhetorical and imaginative power. One example is especially pertinent: three times Aristotle quotes the Empedoclean line, ἢ πολλὰ μὲν κόρσαι ἀναύχενες ἐβλάστησαν (B57.1: “there many neckless heads sprouted up”).⁴⁵ In one instance the fragment appears in a critique of Empedocles’ embryology, which involves the tearing-asunder in each parent of the μελέων φύσις (B63) and the parts then growing together (συμφύεσθαι) in the womb.⁴⁶ In another it illustrates the (criticized) theory of the chance combination of disorderly elements into “the bodies constituted according to nature” (τὰ κατὰ φύσιν συνιστάμενα σώματα).⁴⁷ But the third shows Aristotle employing the image in a striking simile:

Therefore the thinking of indivisibles occurs in those things concerning which there is no falsehood, whereas in those in which there is both the false and the true, some synthesis then occurs of the thoughts as if they were one—just as Empedocles says, “there the neckless heads of many⁴⁸ sprouted up,” and then were put together by Love, so also these separate things are put together ...⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Aristotle’s treatment of Empedocles’ metaphors has been analyzed by way of Cassirer and Blumenberg and others by Bremer (1980) and now also by Zatta (2018), who engages with Bremer but not with the theorists he discusses. Bremer (and Zatta after him) argues that for Empedocles, “der Erkenntniswert einer Metapher” is much more than analogical; and so Aristotle failed to appreciate him. One might note incidentally that such analysis was not restricted in Aristotle to the would-be-philosophers, since Aristotle also attributed the use of “proportional” or “analogical” metaphor to Homer: *Rhet.* 3.11.1412a.

⁴⁵ The remainder is preserved by Simplicius *in Cael.* 586.7; see B57 = D154 = 50 W.

⁴⁶ *GA* 1.722b21. The following sentences are also noteworthy: τρόπον δέ τινα ταῦτα συμβαίνει καὶ ἐν τοῖς κεχωρισμένον ἔχουσι ζώοις τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν. ὅταν γὰρ δεήση γεννᾶν, γίνεται ἀχώριστον, ὡσπερ ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς, καὶ βούλεται ἢ φύσις αὐτῶν ἐν γίνεσθαι· ὅπερ ἐμφαίνεται κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν μίγνυμένων καὶ συνδυαζομένων.

⁴⁷ *Cael.* 3.2.300b.

⁴⁸ Here Aristotle has apparently misquoted slightly, altering the πολλὰί to πολλῶν.

⁴⁹ *de An.* Γ, 6.430a26-31: Ἡ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἀδιαιρέτων νόησις ἐν τούτοις περὶ ἃ οὐκ ἔστι τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐν οἷς δὲ καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἀληθές, σύνθεσις τις ἤδη νοημάτων ὡσπερ ἐν ὄντων—καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἔφη “ἢ πολλῶν μὲν κόρσαι ἀναύχενες ἐβλάστησαν”,

The apparent appreciation of the quasi-vegetal image of these “neckless heads” sprouting up independently and growing together, and the spontaneous application of that image to a cognitive process being analysed in otherwise unpoetic terms, together underline an aspect of considerable interest in another text—which will be our last from Aristotle. In his discussion of ἀκροασία (“weakness of the will”), a parallel is drawn between the weak-willed and those who are “sleeping and insane and drunk”:

Speaking the words from knowledge is no sign [of really possessing the knowledge]: for those who are in these states of mind [esp. drunkenness, one assumes] utter proofs and verses of Empedocles, and the ones who have just begun learning may string the words together, but they do not yet know: for it is necessary to grow together [συμφυῆναι], and that needs time.⁵⁰

Such a metaphorical use of συμφύειν is, it seems, unparalleled in Aristotle, who otherwise uses it primarily for the concrete growing-together of e.g. tissues or graftings.⁵¹ But in Empedocles, as we will see, the verb is not so uncommon, being central in fact to the vegetal metaphors of the growing and learning cosmos.

Although his treatment of Empedocles contains some precious clues, Aristotle left it to others to analyse Empedoclean metaphor in its possible bearing upon the Empedoclean cosmos.⁵²

ἔπειτα συντίθεσθα τῇ φιλία, οὕτω καὶ ταῦτα κεχωρισμένα συντίθεται ... Wright ad loc. (50 W) calls Aristotle’s citation here “a mild joke.”

⁵⁰ EN 7.3.1147a19-22: τὸ δὲ λέγειν τοὺς λόγους τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης οὐδὲν σημεῖον· καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι τούτοις ὄντες ἀποδείξεις καὶ ἔπη λέγουσιν Ἐμπεδοκλέους, καὶ οἱ πρῶτον μαθόντες συνείρουσι μὲν τοὺς λόγους, ἴσασι δ’ οὐπω· δεῖ γὰρ συμφυῆναι, τοῦτο δὲ χρόνου δεῖται.

⁵¹ Bonitz (1955) s.v. Among the verb’s derivatives, it seems only σύμφυτος has a comparable range in Aristotle.

⁵² Cf. the stimulating but somewhat excessive remarks of Borgmann (1974) 33: “Aristotle does not explicitly relate metaphor to that ground and unity of the world that the Presocratics called φύσις or λόγος. But the relation still prevails obliquely. Aristotle insists repeatedly that the use of metaphor cannot be derived from something else. ... Metaphors must ἀρομύπτειν, i.e. exhibit the pervasive harmony of the universe. This they do if they proceed ἀνάλογον, i.e. according to the λόγος.”

Unfortunately, his broader attention to phytomorphic metaphors in particular has generally gone unacknowledged. Instead, his influence upon subsequent analyses has derived from his critique of Empedocles' ambiguity and failure (by Aristotle's lights at least) to develop a proper teleology. In modern scholarship, two main interpretive tendencies emerged, and are worth characterizing briefly before we turn to the survey of Empedoclean metaphor. (NB: the following characterizations are rather schematic, and are not meant to provide definitive and mutually exclusive categories, but only to orient the discussion that follows; in at least one case—that of Reiche—the two are combined in a single interpretation.) The first tendency was to accept Aristotle's criticism of Empedocles' ambiguous metaphors and lack of teleology, and explain that ambiguity by reference to a mythopoetic mindset which had yet to cast off all the traces of anthropomorphism that unintentionally obstructed a mechanistic (non-teleological) explanation of the cosmos. The second has been to contradict Aristotle on both points and insist that Empedoclean imagery contains a consciously and expertly employed system of hints at a rather robust teleology, most clearly displayed in his craft similes and metaphors. To recapitulate: Empedoclean metaphor is mostly presented as being either a vestige of "pre-rational" thought, or a marker of sophisticated philosophical allegory.

In an age of greater charity toward the formerly "primitive" or at least "naïve" author, the allegorical approach has come to dominate the scholarship, and especially where the emphasis falls on the technomorphic. But the former approach has remained appealing for arguments both about the undeniable anthropomorphism that remains in Empedocles, and about his place in early Greek experiences of pantheistic connectedness and the union with vegetal nature. In the next section we will see how these tendencies have characterized prior approaches to the diverse metaphors in Empedocles' texts.

In contrast to those approaches, the one taken here lies somewhere in between: Empedocles employed a variety of traditional and novel metaphors in a largely self-conscious way, yet not in such a way that precise and systematic conceptual correlates are to be securely extrapolated from every detail. That is, Empedocles did not scatter hints of coordinated allegory, nor was he alive to all the conceptual implications and distinctions which his later readers brought to bear upon his images. Yet he did choose images with care, and critically: neither the techno- nor the phytomorphic holds sway over the Empedoclean imagination as much as some scholars have argued, but are both used within remarkable limits.

In this regard I am again drawing upon the work of Freidenberg. However, Freidenberg's own characterization of Empedocles, like her later portrayal of Pindar, stresses the way that mythical images still structure Empedocles' thought. Whatever we want to say about such mythical images in this author, something interesting is happening in Empedocles' use of images of all sorts, and something more complicated, I think, than Freidenberg suggests in her discussion of Empedocles.⁵³ More promising, I think, are her insights as developed in application to Pindar by Maslov (as discussed in Chapter 2). Empedocles, as we will see momentarily, shares what Maslov characterizes as Pindar's lack of "interest in narrative expansion of genealogical metaphors,"⁵⁴ but goes further, by avoiding those metaphors almost categorically.⁵⁵ In Empedocles, the more startling and condensed imagery is drawn from plants and craft, where in

⁵³ See below.

⁵⁴ Maslov (2012) 57.

⁵⁵ Cf. Maslov (2012) 68: "While Hesiod's *Theogony* is notably adroit in its uses of genealogy, these are still part of an overarching mythic-aitiological narrative. In Pindar, this function is no longer present; the genealogy is operating as a tool for concept formation. Yet Pindar is also not using extended allegories, as these (Freidenberg shows) presuppose a more advanced stage in the development of analytic thought."

each case the images often appear somewhat destabilized and critically employed, and, like Pindar's genealogical metaphors, Empedocles' are rarely extended.

In addition to this Freidenbergean explanation, my analysis of Empedocles' restraint and its imperfections also seeks to connect it to the anti-substantialist and nominalist position sketched above, and for reasons that bear repeating. First, because it reveals a desire to abstract beyond the familiar—and apparently “essential”—figuration of whatever organism, human or animal or plant, which is to say the conventional subjects of φύσις, which has been denied to have substantial reality. And second, because the subtle tension between the techno- and phytomorphic can be resolved as the imagistic expression of a radical correlary to that denial of φύσις: the constitution of any φύσις is in effect said to occur by means of “learning,” and thus the status of every τέχνη (a word Empedocles uses just once)⁵⁶ is that of another outgrowth, as it were, of the selfsame processes that underlie all phenomena.

IV. Metaphors in Strife

Among the welter of metaphors in the fragments of Empedocles, there are three categories of the greatest significance for our purposes here: the phytomorphic, the anthropomorphic, which may encompass the so-called sociomorphic or nomomorphic (i.e. of socio-political form) and indeed also the technomorphic, although that will be treated separately.⁵⁷ For each category we will consider its positive role in Empedocles as well as its

⁵⁶ B23.2, discussed below.

⁵⁷ “Sociomorphic” is the more common term, but since it and “nomomorphic” seem to have the same meaning, and “nomomorphic” is the better formation (i.e. not a hybrid of Latin and Greek), the latter is preferred hereafter. Regarding other competing metaphors, one might also talk, for instance, of the “hygromorphic” or metaphors of liquids, which enjoy a prominent and conventional metapoetic function (cf. esp. B2.2) in addition to their role in descriptions of the interaction of the elements (and not only water) and perception, via the ἀπορροαί of B89, etc.

notable limits. We begin with the most traditional and most obviously limited, namely the non-technological anthropomorphic, then turn to the technomorphic; the following section takes up phytomorphic metaphors separately.

Reaching behind Aristotle for a moment, we observe that the criticism of Empedocles' "absolute metaphors" began with Plato at the latest.⁵⁸ In the *Sophist* a memorable passage clearly alludes to Empedocles among others, in a succinct and historically synoptic mockery of anthropomorphic and nomomorphic metaphor: criticising "Parmenides ... and everyone who ever pursued a critical definition of the things that are, as to how many and of what sort they are," the Stranger explains,

Each of them seems to me to tell some myth (μῦθόν τινα) to us as if we were children, one that the things that are are three, and some of them sometimes war with each other, but sometimes becoming friendly they undertake marriages and childbirth and the rearing of their offspring; another, saying that they are two, wet and dry or hot and cold, unites them and gives them in marriage; the Eleatic band among us, starting from Xenophanes and even already before, go through their stories about the so-called many being one. But some Ionian and Sicilian Muses later understood that it is safest to weave both together and say that what is is both many and one, maintained by hatred and love. "For differing always it agrees," say the more severe of the Muses; the softer ones loosened the principle that things are always so, and say that in turn sometimes the all is one and friendly under Aphrodite, sometimes many and hostile to itself on account of some sort of strife (τοτὲ μὲν ἐν εἶναί φασι τὸ πᾶν καὶ φίλον ὑπ' Ἀφροδίτης, τοτὲ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ πολέμιον αὐτὸ αὐτῷ διὰ νεϊκός τι).⁵⁹

Similar criticism of Empedocles (and the rest) has often been repeated, but of course with the charge typically modified from speaking as if to children to speaking in the infancy of thought. This is the usual explanation of the anthropomorphism present in Empedocles' treatment of the elements and Love and Strife as immortal gods. Such mythical models were easy recourse for scholars especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, because the consensus then was

⁵⁸ Later Platonists took Empedocles' entire cosmogony to be metaphorical, à la Plato's *Timaeus*; on this topic see e.g. Dillon (2005).

⁵⁹ *Sophist*, 242c4-243a1.

that Empedocles was a precursor rather of Democritus than of Plato: any regards in which his doctrine fell short of a mechanistic explanation of the natural order could be explained as the unintentional, residual effects of the “mythy mind” (to borrow a phrase from Wallace Stevens).

Valid as the complaints about such anthropomorphism may be, the Stranger’s criticism of those “softer” Muses, among whom Empedocles’ Muse must number, is notably silent on the most obvious image that one might expect a theorist of cosmic love to employ. Prior to Empedocles, the dominant cosmogonic and theogonic metaphor was unmistakably that of procreation, of anthropomorphic genealogy. The prominence of this in Homer and Hesiod is too familiar to rehearse in any detail, and already makes Empedocles’ avoidance of such metaphors surprising, given how indebted he is to both authors, and how reliant he is still on their poetical diction. When we note in addition the productivity of such metaphors in Greek intellectual history, for instance in the work of Pindar and Plato,⁶⁰ as well as the prominence of sexual imagery even in the sparsely preserved Parmenides,⁶¹ then Empedocles’ relative avoidance of it becomes very striking, and all the more so because of the role in Empedocles’ thought of Aphrodite, and his use of two male and two female names (including those of Zeus and Hera!) to designate his four elements.⁶²

The contrast with Parmenides is particularly worth observing, since there can be little doubt about his tremendous influence on Empedocles. Describing the role of the “daimōn who steers all things,” Parmenides certainly did not attempt to subdue the sexual connotations of μίγνυσθαι (“to mix” or “to mate”) and its derivatives, when he wrote that “she initiates hateful

⁶⁰ Maslov (2012) and (2015); also Lloyd (1966).

⁶¹ See esp. Solmsen (1963) 475-6.

⁶² See below for the full text of B6 and further citations.

birth (τόκος) and mating (μίξις), sending female to mate (μυγήν) with male and male with female.”⁶³ By contrast, as Solmsen observed,

In Empedocles too there is erotic and sexual imagery but we can see clearly to what point he carried it. The power responsible for the mixing of the elements is called in his poem Aphrodite, Philotes, Cypris, Harmonie, names definitely suggestive of sexual relations. Where Empedocles introduces his audience to the central role of this goddess in the physical world he makes emphatically clear that she is familiar to everybody from his personal experience. But [. . .] he does not, as far as we can tell from the preserved fragments, use the symbolism of “mating” to a degree comparable with Parmenides’ description of the *daimon*’s action. Nor does he refer to the mixtures or the products of the mixing as “births” or “offspring.”⁶⁴

Solmsen surprisingly ignored the Empedoclean fragment which most resembles the Parmenidean one in question, and yet proves his point:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μείζον ἐμίσητο δαίμονι δαίμων,
ταῦτά τε συμπίπτεσκον, ὅπη συνέκρυσεν ἕκαστα,
ἄλλα τε πρὸς τοῖς πολλὰ διηνεκῆ ἔξεγένοντο.⁶⁵

But when *daimōn* mixed (or “mated”) more greatly with *daimōn*, these things were falling together where they severally chanced to come together, and many others in addition to these were continually springing up.

Thus Empedocles, while possibly alluding to Parmenides, anyway does not follow his master in availing himself of the sexual imagery offered by ἐμίσητο.⁶⁶ And it is otherwise undeniable that the extant poetry of Empedocles neglects what has been called “the traditional epic symbolism of procreation.”⁶⁷

One might of course see other forms of anthropomorphism still operating in Empedocles by way of other mythical paradigms. Thus Freidenberg would discern the myth of Dionysus’ dismemberment in the cyclic destruction of the divine Σφαίρος:

⁶³ Parmenides B12.3-5.

⁶⁴ Solmsen (1963) 476.

⁶⁵ B59 = D149 = 51 W.

⁶⁶ But note ἐκγίγνομαι was also used of birth, including from Zeus, e.g. *Il.* 5.637.

⁶⁷ Solmsen (1963) 476.

Love and Hate divide the world into parts (Hate) and then unite it into one (Love). By means of a pure myth Empedocles achieves conceptual generalization. This he does by giving the mythological images in his system the function of concepts: the cosmic “sparagmos” and “henosis” are the form of a content that turns them into “disintegration” and “unification” of elements of the real cosmos.⁶⁸

It is not an implausible suggestion: the theme of the dismembered god whose parts are distributed into the forms of this world is widespread, and serves to situate Empedocles’ cosmic cycle within a tradition of remote antiquity.⁶⁹ Yet it does not offer much for an explanation of the peculiar features of Empedocles’ thought on its own terms. Although his teaching is undeniably founded upon a conception of somewhat anthropomorphic divinities, it is patently marked by resistance to the more familiar anthropomorphism in its account of the genesis of things and of their persistence. For these purposes, other images are far more pronounced, and the two categories that have received the most attention are, of course, the technomorphic and the phytomorphic. It was, after all, these two domains that ultimately provided the dominant options for philosophical images of the creation or genesis of the cosmos, as being either the work of a transcendent and provident creator, or developing autonomously in the manner of a plant—or some combination of the two. But in Empedoclean criticism the transition to the former came far more easily, especially since it was primed, as it were, by the commentators who had struggled with Empedocles’ imperfect anticipation of Plato’s demiurge.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Freidenberg (1997) 99.

⁶⁹ See also Lincoln (1986) and Motte (1973).

⁷⁰ Compare the remarks of e.g. Simplicius in *Cael.* 528-520 with Symonds (1879) I.232-3: “He often uses such expressions as these, ‘So they chanced to come together,’ and describes the amorphous condition of the first organisms in a way that makes one think he fancied a perfectly chaotic origin. Yet ‘the art of Aphrodite,’ ‘so Cypris ordained their form,’ are assertions of designing intelligence. In fact, we may well believe that Empedocles, in the infancy of speculation, was led astray by his double nomenclature. When talking of Aphrodite, he naturally thought of a person ruling creation; when using the term ‘Love,’ he naturally conceived an innate tendency, which might have been the sport of chance in a great measure. It also appears probable

Empedocles’ craft metaphors and similes were not always treated as valid evidence for the reconstruction of his thought: Aristotle’s account of the role of chance and the absence of any coherent teleology held too much sway to allow that. But as scholars in the twentieth century attended more to the assembled fragments of Empedocles—and gained some distance from Aristotle’s dominion over the historiography of early Greek philosophy and from the other hermeneutic preoccupations of the *fin de siècle*, more notice was taken of Empedocles’ metaphors and similes, the most elaborate of which are as picturesque as any in Homer, but unlike Homer’s are focused upon artifacts. In each case the artifacts are being formed or manipulated by human agents: in one that has understandably never been central to the arguments, we find a whimsical analogy between the function of the lungs and a child playing with a copper device for transferring water;⁷¹ in another, an analogy between the structure of the eyeball and a lantern being fashioned by a man headed out into a snowstorm;⁷² and, last and most important, the famous “painters simile,” in which the mixture of the elements into myriad things is likened to the mixing of paints with which skilled painters make images of the same myriad.⁷³ The mode of these similes is echoed in numerous metaphors: bones are fitted together “by the gluings of harmony (ἀρμονίης κόλλησιν),”⁷⁴ “divine Aphrodite fashioned (ἔπηξεν) untiring

that, when Empedocles spoke of ‘Chance’ and ‘Necessity,’ he referred to some inherent quality in the elements themselves, whereby they grew together under certain laws, and that the harmony and discord which ruled them in turn were regarded by him as forces aiding and preventing their union.”

⁷¹ B100 = D201 = 91 W. But for an allegorical interpretation of this see Picot (2009).

⁷² B84 = D215 = 88 W. For criticism of the common allegorical treatments of this simile, see esp. O’Brien (1970), but also Primavesi (2016) 10, which hints at a larger argument developed by Primavesi in an unpublished paper presented in the conference “Early Greek Philosophy” held at the University of Chicago in January 2018.

⁷³ B23 = D60 = 15 W.

⁷⁴ B96.4 = D192.4 = 48.4 W.

eyes,”⁷⁵ “Aphrodite fitted them with rivets of mutual affection (γόμφοις ἀσκήσασα καταστόργους Ἀφροδίτη),”⁷⁶ etc. Understandably, the combined weight of these images made many readers inclined to perceive in them “assertions of designing intelligence.”⁷⁷

At first, the doxographic tradition was entrenched enough to make scholars deny the possibility altogether, and their objections are worth noting. Bruno Snell, in *The Discovery of the Mind*, argues that “Empedocles, in his similes, makes use of the category which helps him to construe nature with the minimum of anthropomorphic interpretation: as inanimate nature. His aim is a mechanical explanation of the world.”⁷⁸ The vision of the man lighting the lantern, for instance, is “a poetic cocoon which his simile has not yet cast off.”⁷⁹ And in a curious and almost completely ignored piece of scholarship, Harald Reiche (a student of Werner Jaeger) writes that “Empedocles ... like the Hippocratics admires the possible analogies between nature and human technology ... But he refuses to think of these analogies as anything more than metaphors ...”⁸⁰ Reiche, following Jaeger in his *Paideia*, emphasizes instead the paradigm of a voluntarily law-abiding community, i.e. the “nomomorphic,” which he takes to entail an immanent teleology, even an “unconscious (non-anthropomorphic!) purposiveness.”⁸¹ We will return to this suggestion later, but note for now that Reiche, like Solmsen and Snell, refused to take Empedocles’ craft imagery as indicating any demiurgic activity on the part of Love.

⁷⁵ B86 = D = 85 W.

⁷⁶ B87 = D214 = 86 W.

⁷⁷ Symonds (1879) 232.

⁷⁸ Snell (1953) 216.

⁷⁹ Snell (1953) 214.

⁸⁰ Reiche (1960) 38. The comparison with the Hippocratics is an avenue of research that I do not have the space to develop here. It would be instructive to analyze Empedocles’ craft imagery alongside that of the Hippocratics and Aristotle, among others.

⁸¹ Reiche (1960) 38.

Other scholars eventually insisted otherwise. Particularly noteworthy is the treatment by Bollack, whose Platonizing interpretation aligns Empedocles' Aphrodite with Plato's demiurge by way of the repeated image of "l'atelier d'Aphrodite."⁸² Another early proponent was Rosemary Wright, in whose 1981 commentary on Empedocles one encounters numerous comments to the effect that the world is "a product of Love's craftsmanship."⁸³ Others followed suit. A representative statement of the *status quaestionis* at the end of the last century is found in a helpful passage from Walter Burkert:

Heraclitus, for one, seems to develop the 'biomorphic' model into a 'phytomorphic' model, the principle of growing according to inner laws, as plants do; this is *phusis* And yet hardly any of Heraclitus' successors can do without the concept of creator: Parmenides introduces a female daimon who 'governs everything', and creates divine powers such as Eros ... ; Anaxagoras gives a similar function to Nous, 'Mind', the leading power for all differentiation; Empedocles has 'Love' constructing organs and organisms in her workshop...⁸⁴

Many have made similar claims about Empedocles,⁸⁵ but this line of interpretation was first pursued in concerted detail by David Sedley, who goes so far as to assert that "Love's creations both of organic materials and of single organs and limbs are emphatically intelligent, purposive acts. They enable her to advance her agenda of harmonizing the world ..."⁸⁶ Indeed, according to Sedley, we should even see Empedocles' incomplete and malformed "first creatures as prototypes from Love's workshop, meant all along for combination into the complex organisms" of a later stage.⁸⁷ Sedley's arguments have been followed in the main and extended by Leopoldo

⁸² Bollack (1969) III.2.313.

⁸³ Wright (1981) 39.

⁸⁴ Burkert (1999) 96-7. Compare Burkert (2004) 64-5.

⁸⁵ See e.g. Trépanier (2003), discussed below.

⁸⁶ Sedley (2007) 60.

⁸⁷ Sedley (2007) 339.

Iribarren, whose interpretation, as noted above, will serve here as the representative of the teleological-technomorphic interpretations.

Due to the limits of this chapter, we will also focus here on the keystone of all of such interpretations, B23, the so-called painters simile:

ὡς δ' ὅποταν γραφῆες ἀναθήματα ποικίλλωσιν
ἀνέρες ἀμφὶ τέχνης ὑπὸ μήτιος εὖ δεδαῶτε,
οἴτ' ἐπεὶ οὖν μάρψωσι πολύχροα φάρμακα χερσίν,
ἀρμονίῃ μείξαντε τὰ μὲν πλέω, ἄλλα δ' ἐλάσσω,
ἐκ τῶν εἶδεα πᾶσιν ἀλίγκια πορσύνουσι, 5
δένδρεά τε κτίζοντε καὶ ἀνέρας ἠδὲ γυναῖκας
θῆρας τ' οἰωνούς τε καὶ ὕδατοθρέμμονας ἰχθύς
καὶ τε θεοὺς δολιχαίωνας τιμήσι φερίστους·
οὔτω μὴ σ' ἀπάτη φρένα καινύτω ἄλλοθεν εἶναι
θνητῶν, ὅσσα γε δῆλα γεγάασιν ἄσπετα, πηγῆν, 10
ἀλλὰ τορῶς ταῦτ' ἴσθι, θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας.⁸⁸

As when painters diversely adorn ornaments,⁸⁹ men well-learned in art on account of cunning, and when they thus take up many-colored pigments in their hands, mixing them in harmony, some more, others less, out of these they arrange forms similar to all things, creating both trees and men and women, and wild beasts and birds and water-nourished fish and long-lived gods, the greatest in honors; thus let not deception overcome your mind, that from elsewhere is the spring of mortals, as many as become manifest, innumerable, but know these things distinctly, having heard the account from a god.

The main point of the passage is clearly to illustrate the plausibility of all things being composed of only four elements which become indistinguishable within the compositions. But Aphrodite's role as *artifex* elsewhere makes a further comparison enticing. In order for the details of this simile to bear fully upon our understanding of her role, one must address the fact that the painters are plural, and therefore harder to analogize with a singular Demiurge. In this regard, one crucial feature of the text is the threefold use of the dual, in the participles δεδαῶτε (l. 2), μείξαντε (l. 4), and κτίζοντε (l. 6). Prior scholars either emended the forms, or, more often, explained them

⁸⁸ B23 = D60 = 15 W.

⁸⁹ ἀναθήματα may be translated (as by L-M) as “sacrificial offerings,” but other evidence and the Homeric especially seems to go against that restricted sense in this fragment.

away as further examples of the rare and much-debated Homeric use of dual forms for plural (to which we will return momentarily). As for B23, it does seem that the dual forms must be kept.⁹⁰ No current scholars disagree, but in contrast with the earlier consensus, all of those who have written on the subject in recent decades think that they are not in fact mistaken dual for plural forms.

The recent allegoresis of the simile began when Simon Trépanier asserted that the duals indicate that the painters are two, and that they are two because they refer to Love and Strife.⁹¹ This was endorsed by Sedley, who nonetheless emphasized the role of Love and admitted that imparting a properly demiurgic function to Strife as well seemed unacceptable.⁹² Sedley's caution was justified, since there is no Empedoclean evidence that portrays Strife as a craftsman. To avoid that incongruity, another interpretation has now been put forward by Iribarren, who argues that the dual painters correspond instead to the handy Aphrodite's παλάμαι or "palms," which appear in two fragments.⁹³ The first is certainly compatible with a representation of Aphrodite as an anthropomorphic craftworker, although it does not demand it:

τῶν δ' ὅσ' ἔσω μὲν πυκνά, τὰ δ' ἔκτοθι μανὰ πέπηγε,
Κύπριδος ἐν παλάμησι πλάδης τοιῆσδε τυχόντα⁹⁴

of them, however many are dense within, and which are formed loose outside, having chanced upon such moisture in Cypris' palms [or "devices"]

⁹⁰ The manuscript tradition is unanimous in providing them, although not always for the same participles. Nonetheless the only plausible solution is to read at least two duals, namely μεῖζαντε and κτίζοντε, where the plural would not fit the meter; and for consistency within the passage, one might as well follow the textual tradition that makes δεδαῶτε dual as well. Accordingly, three dual participles are found in the text established by Diels and every editor since.

⁹¹ Trépanier (2003) 35-6.

⁹² Sedley (2007) 59 n. 88.

⁹³ For a precedent in this interpretation of the παλάμαι, see Picot (2009) 80 n. 2.

⁹⁴ B75 = D200 = 70 W.

I would underline the difference between a fairly literal rendering (as offered above) and e.g. the translation of *τυχόντα* by L-M (“having received from Cypris’ hands”). The second, reportedly from a description of the formation of eyes, is even less straightforward as an instance of the technomorphic:

Κύπριδος ἐν παλάμησιν ὅτε ξὺμ πρῶτ’ ἐφύοντο⁹⁵

when in Cypris’ palms [or “devices”] they [viz. the elements] first grew together⁹⁶

This would seem to combine a slight personification of Aphrodite with a bare vegetal image, vaguely suggestive therefore of agriculture or perhaps magic, but not of mechanical craft. It is not clear that the reader should imagine e.g. a personified Cypris with two cupped hands, as opposed to the elements just growing together under a sort of numinous, tutelary presence, in what might be called an inversion of Homeric warriors clashing ὑπ’ Ἄρηος παλαμάων (“at the hands of Ares,” *Il.* 3.128). While this is not a decisive objection to Iribarren’s interpretation, it pointedly raises the fundamental problem to which we will return: namely, just how Aphrodite’s role is to be conceived.

The more immediate objections to Iribarren’s interpretation of B23 by way of the *παλάμαι* are linguistic. First, Empedocles’ use of *παλάμη* elsewhere is never of “palms” or “hands,” but always of mental resources, as in B2.1 (*στεινώποι μὲν γὰρ παλάμαι κατὰ γυῖα*

⁹⁵ B95 = D217 = 87 W.

⁹⁶ Since the fragment is said to pertain to the genesis of the eyes (by Simplicius, who preserves it, *in Cael.* 529.26), it is possible that we should understand eyes to be the subject of the fragmentary sentence; but since the creation of organs is always analysed as a coming-together of the elements, it is more likely that the elements (or portions of them) should be understood as the subject, following Wright *ad loc.*

κεχύνται).⁹⁷ The word's basic meaning may still be used, of course, but it makes such focused personification less plausible; Empedocles does not write anywhere of Love's χεῖρες, dual or plural. Moreover, for a few dual participles in the elaborate simile to somehow "focalize" two palms, when the painters' hands are not the subject and are not in the dual (cf. χερσίν, l. 3), seems unlikely.⁹⁸

More decisively, on the basis of my study of the broader evidence both in Empedocles' fragments and elsewhere, the dual forms in B23 almost certainly have no significance whatsoever, unless one is interested in the demise of the Greek dual. Suffice it to say that mistaken dual for plural forms of participles in -αντε or -οντε occur in the only other instance of the dual in Empedocles (if the text is sound),⁹⁹ and also in the *Iliad*, the *Hymn to Pythian Apollo*, Hesiod, Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, Aratus and Oppian.¹⁰⁰ This evidence was not amassed, and so the pattern was not observed, by the grammarians against whose authority Iribarren and others have asserted the significance of the apparently dual forms.¹⁰¹ If the duals of B23 are false, as I think they must be, then we are left with the plural painters who offer no easy

⁹⁷ The other instance is in the enjoiner to empiricism which enumerates the senses and says, ἄθρει πάση παλάμη πῆ δῆλον ἕκαστον ("observe by every παλάμη by which each thing is clear," B3.4). This cannot be "palm." Cf. again the Homeric and other usage LSJ s.v.

⁹⁸ Iribarren (2018) 190: "Le modèle technique déployé dans cette partie de la doctrine focalise l'attention de l'auditoire vers ce qui arrive dans les paumes de la déesse, tout comme dans l'analogie des peintres les duels mettent en relief des procédés qui impliquent directement les mains des artisans ..."

⁹⁹ B131.6 ἀπορραΐσαντε, where the MSS read the non-grammatical ἀπορραΐσαντα, and in fact the scholar who emended it to the dual, Karsten, intended it to be a proper dual, and it is only subsequent scholars who have generally treated it as another dual for plural; I intend to offer a fuller account of this in an article on B23.

¹⁰⁰ *Il.* 5.487, *h.Ap.* 487, *Hes. Op.* 186, (ps.-)Theoc. 25.72,137, *Ap. Rhod.* 1.384, 3.206, *Arat.* 968, *Opp. C.* 2.260, etc. Unfortunately these parallels have never been all collected elsewhere or brought to bear upon Empedocles. They are not the only instances of dual for plural, but they do constitute an undeniable pattern into which Empedocles' usage would readily fit.

¹⁰¹ See e.g. Wackernagel (2009) 107-8 for what has long served as a standard discussion of the dual; and for the questioning of the grammarians' authority, see e.g. Wright ad loc.

makes it likely that all of the words were kept.¹⁰⁴ Confining our observations to B21 alone, we can see that in Empedocles' direct description of the production of trees and other organisms, there is no trace of an external agent analogous to a painter. Iribarren then concedes, “Le verbe κτίζω est le pendant « technique » de βλαστάνω ... qui du côté du *comparandum* désigne le devenir naturel.”¹⁰⁵ What Iribarren does not concede is that there is still a very conspicuous metaphor at play, and it is of course the phytomorphic, which “désigne le devenir naturel.”¹⁰⁶

To be sure, in the lines preceding we read that “under Love (ἐν Φιλότητι) they come together and desire each other.” Nonetheless, there is nothing distinctly demiurgic about her role in the passage. I would argue that we must conclude the same about her role in the remainder of the corpus. It must be stressed that what is at issue is whether Love functions as a provident and external creator. Although Empedocles sometimes uses words, or in B23 an entire simile, that suggest external and artful manipulation of inert material on the part of Aphrodite, there are passages that much more clearly indicate otherwise. This brings us to another prominent feature of Iribarren's argument, where it draws from another passage of the utmost importance for my own argument. It is a lengthy portion from what we can now, on the basis of the Strasbourg Papyrus and its colometric markings, place precisely within the first book of the *Φυσικά* (hence the two sets of line numbers):

ἀλλ' ἄγε μύθων κλύθι· μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὔξει·	[245]
ὥς γὰρ καὶ πρὶν ἔειπα πιφάσκων πείρατα μύθων,	15
δίπλ' ἐρέω· τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ηὑξήθη μόνον εἶναι	

¹⁰⁴ The lines are D73.271-4 = P.Strasb. a(i)-(ii).271-4 as reconstructed by Martin and Primavesi:

[δένδρεά τ' ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες] ἠδὲ γυναῖκες,
 [θ]ῆρες τ' οἰνοπόι [τε καὶ] ὑδατοθρ[έμμονες ἰχθύς]
 [κ]αὶ τε θεοὶ δολιχαί[ων]ες τιμήσι φέριστοι.

¹⁰⁵ Iribarren (2018) 189.

¹⁰⁶ Compare Bollack ad loc. (= 64 Bollack): “L'opposition des verbes (faire – croître) et le changement de construction accusent la différence entre φύσις et τέχνη.”

ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ' αὖ διέφυ πλέον' ἐξ ἐνὸς εἶναι, πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα καὶ ἠέρος ἄπλετον ὕψος, Νεϊκὸς τ' οὐλόμενον δίχα τῶν, ἀτάλαντον ἀπάντη,	[250]	20
καὶ Φιλότης ἐν τοῖσιν, ἴση μῆκός τε πλάτος τε· τῆν σὺ νόῳ δέσκει, μηδ' ὄμμασιν ἦσο τεθηπῶς· ἦτις καὶ θνητοῖσι νομίζεται ἔμφυτος ἄρθροις, τῆ τε φίλα φρονέουσι καὶ ἄρθμα ἔργα τελοῦσι, Γηθοσύνην καλέοντες ἐπώνυμον ἠδ' Ἀφροδίτην·	[255]	25
τῆν οὐ τις μετὰ τοῖσιν ἐλισσομένην δεδάηκε θνητὸς ἀνήρ· σὺ δ' ἄκουε λόγου στόλον οὐκ ἀπατηλόν. ταῦτα γὰρ ἴσα τε πάντα καὶ ἤλικα γένναν ἔασι, τιμῆς δ' ἄλλης ἄλλο μέδει, πάρα δ' ἦθος ἐκάστω, ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο.	[260]	30
καὶ πρὸς τοῖς οὐτ' ἄρ τι ἐπιγίγνεται οὐδ' ἀπολήγει. ¹⁰⁷		

But come, listen to [my] words: for learning will make your mind grow. For as I said even before, showing the boundaries of [my] words, I will speak twofold [things]: for at one time they waxed to be only one from many, at another time again they grew apart to be many from one, fire and water and earth and the boundless height of air, and baleful Strife separate from them, equal everywhere, and Love among them, equal in length and in breadth. Look you upon her with your mind, nor sit astonished by your eyes — she who is conventionally recognized by mortals as implanted in their joints, and through whom they think loving things and accomplish friendly works, calling her ‘Joy’ as surname and ‘Aphrodite’; not any mortal man acknowledges her whirling among them [sc. the elements]. But you, listen to the undeceitful journey of my account. For these [sc. the elements] are both all equal and of the same age, but one rules over one honor, another over another, according to the character of each, and in turns they dominate as time goes around. And in addition to these nothing comes to be nor ceases.

Iribarren cites this for the phrase ἄρθμα ἔργα (l. 23), translated above as “friendly works,” but by e.g. L-M as “deeds of union.” Because ἄρθμα, cognate with e.g. ἄρμα (“chariot”) and ἁρμονία (another of Love’s names), is derived from ἀραρίσκω, which is often used of a mechanical sort of “fitting” or “furnishing,” Iribarren draws the adjective into a web of verbal echoes which, he claims, establish the dominance of the technical scheme; and he accordingly concludes that ἄρθμα ἔργα designate “toutes les activités démiurgiques, à savoir les « œuvres

¹⁰⁷ B17.14-30 = D73.245-261 = 8.14-30 W.

de jonction ».”¹⁰⁸

Against this conclusion, I would first emphasize the previous phrase, φίλα φρονέουσι (“they think loving things”), together with the line that immediately follows, which, through the names of Joy and Aphrodite, plainly suggests social and sexual “assemblage.” The same is indicated by the other instance of the adjective in Empedocles, where the elemental masses (sun and earth and sky and sea) are said to be “all ἄρθμα to the parts of themselves . . . that, wandering away, have grown among mortals” (ἄρθμα . . . ἐαυτῶν πάντα μέρεσσιν / . . . / ὅσσα φιν ἐν θνητοῖσιν ἀποπλαχθέντα πέφυκεν).¹⁰⁹ There can be no question of these masses being joined after the fashion of an artifact: they and their parts are disposed to agglomerate into homogeneous masses, and those that do not currently belong to such masses “wandering away have grown among mortals.” Finally, this interpretation of ἄρθμος is also consistent with the broader use of the word, which is always of persons who like to join each other’s company or are united by bonds of friendship, and not of joiners or their carpentry.

Of greater weight still is the line that precedes the ἄρθμα ἔργα: “she who is conventionally recognized by mortals as implanted in their joints” (ἦτις καὶ θνητοῖσι νομίζεται ἔμφυτος ἄρθροις, l. 22). At this point my criticism of Iribarren leads more directly into my counterargument in favor of the phytomorphic. While extending the web of αῤ- words that Iribarren rightly dwells upon, this line more importantly establishes a conception of Φιλότης as ἔμφυτος, as “implanted” in the microcosm even as she is “whirling” (ἐλίσσομένην, l. 25) throughout the macrocosm. And this description tellingly occurs in what seems to be another affirmation of νόμος (as in B9.5) in the word νομίζεται. The shared vegetal metaphors and the

¹⁰⁸ Iribarren (2018) 194; see also 27, 176.

¹⁰⁹ B22.1-3 = D101.1-3 = 25.1-3 W.

direct comparison of the micro- and macrocosm in this passage are further established through a verbal echo in the phrase μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὔξει (“for learning makes your mind grow,” l.

14). This is a manifest echo of the opening of the fragment, not quoted above, where we read:

δίπλ' ἐρέω· τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἔν ηὐξήθη μόνον εἶναι	1
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ' αὖ διέφυ πλέον' ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι.	
...	
<οὕτως ἦ μὲν ἔν ἐκ πλεόνων μεμάθηκε φύεσθαι>	[240a]
ἦδὲ πάλιν διαφύντος ἑνὸς πλέον' ἐκτελέθουσι,	10
τῆ μὲν γίνονται τε καὶ οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰών·	
ἦ δὲ διαλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,	
ταύτη δ' αἰὲν ἔασιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον. ¹¹⁰	

Double will I speak: for at one time they wax to be only one from many, and then again they grow apart to be many from one. ... <Thus to the extent that they have learned to grow as one from many> and in turn, the one having separated, they end up being many, to that extent they come-to-be, and for them there is no constant life; but to the extent that they never cease exchanging continuously, to that extent they always are, immovable in a circle.

The elements wax (or “increase”) into one from many (l. 1) and in fact *learn* to grow as one from many (l. 9).¹¹¹ The addressee’s φρένες, in turn, will grow (or “increase”) as a result of learning (l. 14, at the start of the prior quotation), and more specifically, by learning about the way that Love, “implanted” within the individual, acts within the elements of the world at large. Briefly put, just as the elements learn to grow through the immanence of Aphrodite, so the human mind, in which her immanence is a fact recognized by νόμος, will grow by learning. Love then appears as an immanent force, which, in league it would seem with the sentient elements, enables them to learn to grow into new configurations.

As a further note on the limits of the technomorphic in Empedocles and its inferiority to an organicist and particularly phytomorphic model, I would like to dwell briefly on an

¹¹⁰ B17.1-2,9-13 = D73.233-34,240a-244 = 8.1-2,9-13 W.

¹¹¹ That line, taken from B26.8, is missing from the fragment as preserved by Simplicius, but was inserted in order to restore sense, and on the basis of the verbatim repetition of ll. 10-13 in B26.9-12 (verbatim save one word).

observation of Solmsen's: "There is nothing in his poems to suggest that the crafts were to his mind a model of purposeful or clearly articulated activity."¹¹² To illustrate the validity of this observation and its connection with the view put forward here, I would call attention to two other sets of evidence.

The first is a pair of fragments that demand to be juxtaposed: in one of the clearest depictions of Aphrodite *artifex*, one reads, γόμφοις ἀσκήσασα καταστόργους Ἀφροδίτη ("Aphrodite having fitted [them] with rivets of reciprocal affection").¹¹³ That fragment finds its closest verbal parallel in a description of the curdling action of juice upon milk: ὡς δ' ὅτ' ὀπὸς γάλα λευκὸν ἐγόμφωσεν καὶ ἔδησε ("as when juice rivets and binds white milk").¹¹⁴ No one would conclude from the metaphors of the latter fragment that juice is the demiurge of curds.¹¹⁵ Craft metaphor need not imply either external action or craftiness.

The second set of evidence is centered around Empedocles' theory that the human mind or νόημα is to be identified with the pericardiac blood.¹¹⁶ Blood, so the theory goes, is—when perfect—a perfectly harmonious mixture of the four elements: the potency of the νόημα therefore depends upon the perfection of the mixture. But intelligence, if not precisely νόημα, is not restricted to the blood around the heart. In Theophrastus' discussion of Empedocles' theory of perception, he describes a remarkable aspect of the theory:

Those who have a moderate mixture in one part [or another of their bodies] are severally wise in that regard: on account of this some are good speakers, some artisans, since for the latter

¹¹² Solmsen (1963) 477.

¹¹³ B87 = D214 = 86 W.

¹¹⁴ B33 = D72 = 61 W.

¹¹⁵ Cf. the remarks of Solmsen (1963) 478.

¹¹⁶ αἷμα γὰρ ἀνθρώποις περικάρδιόν ἐστι νόημα, B105.3.

the mixture is in the hands, for the former in the tongue; and the like holds for the other capacities.¹¹⁷

The explanation of the artisans' excellence as deriving from the mixture of the blood in their hands shows that his notion of a craftsman was not one of a central designing intelligence, but, perhaps more appropriately, focused upon considerations of skilled bodies, innate talents, and cultivated instincts.¹¹⁸ This is a far cry from Plato's craftsman consulting an abstract plan.

As Solmsen remarked, then, the evidence, apart from the few similes,¹¹⁹ strongly suggests that Empedocles did not share the later fixation upon the conscious manipulation performed by a planning craftsman. That said, one cannot ignore the ascriptions of some measure of intelligence to Love and the elements that learn to grow together under her sway. For my part, I am not claiming that the craft metaphors are *mere* metaphors, pace Snell and Reiche. But I would still insist that those metaphors (and the related similes) have their limits, and that one cannot infer from them that Aphrodite's *modus operandi* is that of a provident creator, let alone an omniscient creator as depicted by Sedley. If the Empedoclean Aphrodite is indeed a sort of demiurge, she is perhaps one who has learned her craft gradually and proceeds now by memory and instinct, as if in a combination of early Greek anthropological theory and the immanent demiurge that would be conceptualized by the Stoics.¹²⁰ But even to grant her that measure of agency is misleading,

¹¹⁷ *De Sensibus* 11 = A86 = D237: οἷς δὲ καθ' ἓν τι μόριον ἢ μέση κράσις ἐστὶ, ταύτη σοφοὺς ἐκάστους εἶναι· διὸ τοὺς μὲν ῥήτορας ἀγαθοὺς, τοὺς δὲ τεχνίτας, ὡς τοῖς μὲν ἐν ταῖς χερσὶ, τοῖς δὲ ἐν τῇ γλώττῃ τὴν κράσιν οὖσαν· ὁμοίως δ' ἔχειν καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις. Iribarren does not refer to this testimonium.

¹¹⁸ Bollack (1965) I.254 writes, "Pour Empédocle, les différences techniques se réduisent à des dispositions physiologiques et ne s'acquièrent pas." I do not agree with the last claim, as there is nothing to suggest that Empedocles did not allow for the acquisition of technical skills. But I do agree with Bollack's further remarks, *ibid.* n. 4, "Il explique la technique par la nature ; en ce sens les deux règnes forment une unité. La classification n'en marque pas moins les frontières."

¹¹⁹ Again note especially the use of τέχνη in B23.2.

¹²⁰ On the anthropology, see again Cole (1990). On the Stoic demiurge, Sedley (2007) ch. 7.

since it leaves out the role of the autonomous growth and the learning of the elements. “Implanted” among them in the mortal forms that they take on, Love’s “gentle impulse” gradually fosters in them the learned habits that take tangible but ephemeral shape in the “myriad tribes of mortals” that sprout up from the earth. With that, we turn to a closer consideration of Empedoclean plant metaphor.

V. Learning Plants

Alongside the scholarship on Empedocles’ craft imagery, a growing body of literature emphasizes instead the role of vegetal metaphors in this corpus. Through a number of texts, many already cited above, it becomes clear that such metaphors were exceptionally prominent, and underpinned by some explicit identifications of vegetal and other organismic growth. Yet the focus here is on the more subdued vegetal metaphors for the constitution alike of the cosmos and of the human subject. To repeat, the preference at all levels is decidedly for the phytomorphic. Yet there are crucial limits even to some of the most suggestive instances in this category. My claim again is that the anti-substantialist position, upon which this view of the constitution of the cosmos and individual nature is predicated, also finds expression in Empedocles’ critically subdued and destabilized images, including the phytomorphic. Nonetheless, the vegetal metaphors remain fundamental to the conception of φύσις as being nothing more than a persistent “growing-together” of the “roots” in the presence of Love, and of the stages of the cosmos being likewise. Furthermore, the knowledge which Empedocles claims to impart to his disciple is plainly conceived to take root, as it were, in a quasi-vegetal manner, which is underlined by three of the most striking and surprisingly neglected of Empedocles’ coinages: λιπόξυλος, or “lacking in wood,” which is used to characterize what Empedocles’ teaching aims

not to be; and the even more unusual ἐμπεδόγαρπος (“constant-fruiting”) and ἐμπεδόφυλλος (“constant-leafed”), which, although employed literally as epithets of plants, amount to a double *sphragis* unrivalled by anything pertaining to craft. On the other hand, when Empedocles had the opportunity to develop such vegetal rhetoric in application to learning and φύσις in B110, he left it undeniably subdued where other and especially later authors would almost certainly have spoken, as some Empedoclean scholars now do, of seeds and planting and fruit and harvest. The vegetal figuration of the subject and the cosmos remains decisively cautious and sparing, just as the employment of φύσις.

We begin at the “roots.” Discussions of Empedocles’ vegetal metaphors are always founded upon the fact that, where later Greeks (i.e. after Plato) would probably have spoken of στοιχεῖα (“elements”), Empedocles used the word ῥιζώματα, conventionally translated as “roots.” The word appears in the opening line of one of his most frequently quoted fragments, when he tells his disciple to “hear first the four ῥιζώματα of all things.”¹²¹ A striking command, it has attracted much attention in recent years, and not only in the sort of doxographic writings that quote it repeatedly in antiquity and modernity alike.¹²² In fact, through these “roots,” Empedocles has recently been put at the very origin of Western ecological thinking and the far-

¹²¹ B6.1; see below for full quotation and further discussion.

¹²² One exceptional remark is that of Giuseppina Grammatico (2007) 54-5: “Perché ‘ascoltare’? Ascoltare le radici? [...] Eppure qualcosa dentro mi dice - ci dice - che Empedocle ha usato il termine appropriato, perfetto. «Ascoltare l’erba che cresce» dice Maffesoli nel suo volume “L’ombra di Dioniso”. È un ascolto intimo, profondo, tutto interiore.” The reference to the work of Michel Maffesoli, a sociologist who has focused his attention upon the imaginary (note Grammatico’s title, “L’immaginario empedocleo”), is to Maffesoli (1993) 14: “... a new manner of situating oneself and understanding the world is never born brutally; it takes its support from positions that already exist and are often well-expressed by individuals who in their time have known how to ‘hear the grass grow.’” The use of ἀκούω does not support a connection between Empedocles and Maffesoli: one can just as well “hear” the subject of the statement heard, as e.g. “virtue” (ἀρετή) in Pindar, *P.* 5.101.

reaching history of root and “rhizomatic” metaphors.¹²³ Our scope here is smaller, of course. But even when situated more narrowly among the ancient poetical and philosophical use of related words for roots, as by Repici and Macé,¹²⁴ the term can easily seem to be charged with metaphorical meaning—and a meaning that invites coordination with the other vegetal metaphors in Empedocles’ verses. Where there are cosmic “roots,” one naturally looks for the rest of the cosmic tree.¹²⁵

While aiming to reinforce the view that the ῥιζώματα are in fact a sign of the broader role of vegetal metaphors in this author, I will also argue that—as with the other imagery—there are notable limits to their role, and that Empedocles thus shows a certain wariness and restraint or indeed a lack of interest in employing them. The example at hand shows this particularly well: in spite of the impression one may get from many treatments of Empedocles in this regard, he demonstrably neglects to develop the root image as he might have done. This is seen in the *single* passage, just quoted in part, in which ῥιζώματα is applied to the elements:

τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·
 Ζεὺς ἀρχῆς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἠδ’ Αἰδωνεύς

¹²³ See especially the chapter on Empedocles in Macauley (2010), entitled “The Flowering of Ecological Roots: Empedocles’ Elemental Thought,” and this representative quotation (p. 72): “Empedocles is the first philosopher to thematize the four elements as necessary and sufficient agents to explain the entire world order, and by ostensibly [?] using the terminology of roots, he sets the tenor and trajectory of later thinking about them. The language of roots is significant because it continues to function in philosophy in the sense of something elemental, grounded or foundational, including even etymological ‘roots.’” It is also noteworthy that Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the rhizomatic is applied to Empedocles by Macauley (2010) 108; but I know of no references or allusions to Empedocles in Deleuze and Guattari. For Empedocles via Macauley (but far less insistently) in a more extended metaphorology of the root, see also Wampole (2016) 234: “Empedocles’s fifth-century elemental iteration of rootedness is an early instance of the connection between what is *basic* to our cosmos, in terms of both cause and composition, and what burgeons distantly from an original event.”

¹²⁴ Repici (2000) 51-6 and Macé (2013) 236-7. See also Kahn (1960) 158.

¹²⁵ Cf. Kingsley (2003) 476 et passim.

Νῆστις θ', ἣ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον.¹²⁶

For hear first the four roots of all things:
Bright Zeus and lifebearing Hera and Aidoneus
And Nestis, who with tears wets the mortal spring.

It cannot be ignored that we have no evidence that the word ῥιζώματα reappeared anywhere in his poems, nor any citations of this fragment before the common era,¹²⁷ nor any unquestionable allusions to his use of ῥιζώματα in any of the classical authors (whether Greek or Roman) who otherwise engage with him.¹²⁸ This indicates at least that it was not a favorite, let alone a technical, term in the corpus.¹²⁹ While that also suggests that the metaphor is less likely to have been effaced, at the same time it suggests that whatever metaphor it involved was not at all prominently sustained in connection with this passage or elsewhere.

What can we conclude then about the denotational and connotational meanings of the term in its single Empedoclean instance? The most precise analysis was offered by Primavesi: “Il maestro in un passo li indica come i quattro *rizomi* (ῥιζώματα), metafora che – a differenza di ῥίζα – rimanda alla *totalità* delle radici di una pianta.”¹³⁰ Primavesi seems to have built his interpretation upon the accepted (LSJ) definition of ῥιζωμα, in its use by Theophrastus, as “*the*

¹²⁶ B6 = D57 = 7 W. The precise identification of the four named gods (and indeed the original identity of Nestis) with the four elements is intensely debated: see e.g. Kingsley (1995) and Picot (forthcoming). B6 is quoted by: [Ps.-]Plutarch, *De placitis* 878A5; Sextus, *adv. Math.* 9.362.4 and 10.315.5; Clement, *Stromata* 6.2.17.4.2; Eusebius, *Preparatio evangelica* 14.6.4; Stobaeus, *Anthol.* 1.10.11a.2; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.29.4.6 and 10.7.3.2 and again immediately at 10.7.4.6; Philoponus, *In phys.* 16.88.5; [Ps.-]M. Valerius Probus *in Buc.* 6.31 (since lines 31ff. concern a cosmogonic song of Orpheus about the *semina* (NB) of the four elements).

¹²⁷ It is aptly described by Mansfeld (1995) 115 as having once been rather “recherché.”

¹²⁸ Regarding possible allusions to Empedocles in Latin literature, I would extend the skeptical approach of Farrell (2014) to the argument of Nethercut (2017) that Lucretian *radices* allude to Empedocles; anyway none of the *radices* in Lucretius are the *radices omnium*.

¹²⁹ See e.g. Wright ad loc (7 W).

¹³⁰ Primavesi (2001) 18.

mass of roots of a tree,”¹³¹ along with a juxtaposition of B6 with the following fragment:

αιθήρ <δ’ αὖ> μακροῖσι κατὰ χθόνα δύετο ῥίζαις¹³²

Aether <in turn> with long roots sank down through the earth.

The ῥιζώματα such as αιθήρ would then each contain ῥίζαι; Primavesi, it seems, would have us imagine Empedocles’ world as composed of four root masses (ῥιζώματα), which periodically send out their roots (ῥίζαι) into one another. Compellingly tidy and picturesque as it may be, this interpretation faces considerable difficulties.

In the first place, the Theophrastan ῥιζωμα, which, to my knowledge, is the only instance of the word that has been construed as “*the mass of roots* of a tree,” does not at all demand that meaning, but arguably denotes instead a vague “rooting,” and not specifically the totality of its plural results.¹³³ And this would be consonant with the other evidence for the semantics of ῥιζωμα. The most striking parallel, and one often noted, is from the Pythagorean Oath, which describes the tetractys as παγὰν ἀενάου φύσεως ῥιζώματ’ ἔχουσιν (“the fount holding the

¹³¹ LSJ s.v.; see also Montanari s.v., where likewise in the first entry one reads, “proper. *root structure or mass of roots* of a plant,” with again only the one citation from Theophrastus.

¹³² B54 = D108 = 30 W.

¹³³ CP 3.3.4: συμβήσεται γὰρ οὕτω, θεομῆς οὔσης ἐν βάθει τῆς γῆς κατὰ τὴν αὐξησιν κατακλειομένην εἰς τὰς ῥίζας ἰέναι· πλείονος δ’ ὄντος καὶ ἰσχυροτέρου τοῦ ῥιζώματος, πλείων ἢ βλάστησις ἔσται καὶ καλλίων. Greater and stronger rooting results in greater and finer shooting (βλάστησις); the juxtaposition of ῥιζωμα and βλάστησις seems to support my reading. Theophrastus does not use the word again in his extant writings. There may, however, be some support in Galen, who also uses it just once, and possibly in application to the entire branched stem of a cluster of grapes: τὴν δὲ τοῦ στεμφύλου προσηγορίαν ἐπιφέρουσιν αὐτοὶ τῷ τῶν κλημάτων ἐκπεφυκότι ῥιζώματι τῶν ῥαγῶν (*De al.* 576-7). Since στέμφυλον generally refers to a “mass” of pressed grapes or olives, it may be that Galen took it to refer to a ramified stem supporting an entire cluster of grapes rather than to the simple stem at the base; the latter was chosen by the translation of Powell (2003) 79: “The same people give the name *stemphylon* to the stalk of berries that sprouts from the branches.” Still, perhaps it only referred to the simple primary stem or rachis (see *OED* s.v. 3.a.) of the grape cluster.

ρίζωματα of ever-flowing nature”).¹³⁴ The uncertain provenance of the Oath prevents it from helping us much, and, as the use of φύσις for a collective “Nature” gives further cause for doubt, Burkert concluded that the verse “can scarcely be older than Empedocles.”¹³⁵ It is possible then that Empedocles inspired the Pythagorean usage. But the word remained uncommon until shortly before the first extant quotations of B6 and the Oath, both of which crop up in many of the same texts and, somewhat suspiciously perhaps, right when the word ρίζωμα had already begun to find new purchase first in the Septuagint and then among neo-Pythagoreans.¹³⁶ At some point, then, Empedocles’ ρίζωματα were absorbed into (presumably not being a product of) discourse

¹³⁴ Note again the combination of root and spring. In part, it would seem, to make the two terms parallel in this text, some have edited it to read instead παγάν ἀενάου φύσεως ρίζωμά τ’ ἔχουσαν (“holding the fount and root of ever-flowing nature”); see e.g. DK 58B15, Burkert (1972) 186, Thesleff (1965) 170. I follow Laks-Most (cf. their Pythagoras D10), persuaded by the fourfold (cf. tetractys) plurality of ρίζωματα in Empedocles and in Athamas the Pythagorean (see below). The Pythagorean Oath is cited in Sextus, *adv. Math.* 4.2.10, 4.3.6, 4.9.6; Aetius (Ps.-Plut.) *De placitis* 282.5; Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 20.19; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.2.9.2, 4.51.7.3, 6.23.4.4, 6.34.1.2; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pythag.* 28.150.17, 29.162.18 and *Theologoumena arithmeticae* 22.22, etc. Cf. the note above for the sources of Empedocles B6, which overlap extensively with this list. Another interesting comparandum in this vein is that the earth is called an ἀεροφυῆς ρίζωμα or “air-grown root” by Secundus “the Silent Philosopher” (and neo-Pythagorean) *Vita et Sententia Secundi*, Sententia 7.

¹³⁵ Burkert (1972) 186.

¹³⁶ In both cases therefore it was among Alexandrian Jews. The plural appears already in the Septuagint’s translation of Job 36.30.2, καὶ ρίζωματα τῆς θαλάσσης ἐκάλυψεν (but the image is lost in the Vulgate’s “cardines quoque maris operiet,” and the KJV “and covereth the bottom of the sea”); the singular appears in Psalm 52:5, where God will remove τὸ ρίζωμά σου ἐκ γῆς ζώντων, a phrase which attracted attention from commentators. (For the later Christian use, see e.g. John Chrysostom, *In sanctum pascha (sermo 6)*, 34.1.3.) The most intriguing neo-Pythagorean evidence is a quote attributed by Clement of Alexandria to one Athamas the Pythagorean, who is otherwise known only from a list in Iamblichus’ *vit. Pythag.* (cf. *RE* s.v. Athamas 6): ὦδε ἀγέννατος παντὸς ἀρχὰ καὶ ρίζωματα τέσσαρα τυγχάνοντι, πῦρ, ὕδωρ, ἀήρ, γῆ· ἐκ τούτων γὰρ αἱ γενέσεις τῶν γινομένων. Although Clement asserts that Empedocles was copying from Athamas, this is most likely another case of chronological inversion to suit Clement’s prioritization of the Orphics, on which see Herrero de Jáuregui (2010) 203-4. Likewise, in the Orphic *Hymn to Pluto*, Acheron holds the ρίζωματα γαίης. See also Nicomachus *Math. Theologoumena arithmeticae* 21.3, 23.4.

communities in which the word took on a particular currency—albeit one which may have owed something to Empedocles’ influence.¹³⁷

The most pertinent evidence for Empedocles’ use is much sparser, and shows only some less arcane metaphorical “roots.” From the fifth century there is only one other instance, in Aeschylus, who plants a metaphorical ῥίζωμα firmly in the ground. In the *Seven against Thebes* it is said that

σπαρτῶν δ’ ἀπ’ ἀνδρῶν, ὧν Ἄρης ἐφείσατο,
ῥίζωμ’ ἀνεῖται, κάρτα δ’ ἔστ’ ἐγγώριος,
Μελάνιππος...¹³⁸

from the sown men, whom Ares spared,
a ῥίζωμα has been sent up, and he is in truth a man of the soil,
Melanippus...

Numerous features of the passage keep the metaphor in ῥίζωμα alive, even if the image is not precisely clear.¹³⁹ Although this Aeschylean use would support the conclusion that the metaphor should be felt in Empedocles’ text as well, it stands in contrast with the only remaining classical instance, which is a fragment of Theodectes, put in the mouth of Helen:

¹³⁷ How the word took on such strong connotations of vegetal growth in modern scholarship is a question for another occasion.

¹³⁸ Aesch. *Sept.* 413.

¹³⁹ Confusion reigns among the commentators. Sidgwick glosses ῥίζωμ’ ἀνεῖται with “his stock is sprung.” Verrall ad loc. (l. 400 in his edn.) somewhat less confusingly on this point but more confusingly otherwise: “ῥίζωμα, nominative; *he is a plant from the root of* etc. The construction is ἀνεῖται ῥίζωμα ἐκείνων, ὧν Ἄρης ἐφείσατο ἀπὸ (from among) Σπαρτῶν ἀνδρῶν.” Glossing ῥίζωμ’ alone Tucker ad loc. (again l. 400) writes only, “cf. ἔρνος, ὄζος, θάλος.” Hutchinson says nothing. From men sown into the ground, a ῥίζωμα has been sent up: on ἀνεῖται < ἀνήμι, see LSJ s.v. A.: “of the earth, καρπὸν ἄ. *make* corn or fruit *spring up*, h.Cer. 333; κνώδαλα A. Supp. 266; also of the gods, ἄ. ἄροτον γῆς S. OT 270, etc.” Why it is a root and not a shoot is hard to tell, but perhaps it is to emphasize his rootedness in the soil. (For a similar image, cf. Pindar O 2.46 σπέρματος ... ῥίζαν, and Gildersleeve ad loc.: “Seed root, origin.”) The metaphor is further marked in the final clause about his being ἐγγώριος, and all the more so since κάρτα is used by Aeschylus “in playing upon words, i.e. where a novel interpretation is emphasised,” acc. to Tucker ad loc. (again l. 400); cf. also Hutchinson ad loc.

θείων δ' ἀπ' ἀμφοῖν ἔκγονον ῥιζωμάτων
τίς ἂν προσειπεῖν ἀξιώσειν λάτρην;¹⁴⁰

As the offspring from twofold divine roots,
who would think it fit to call me slave?

Helen, apparently derived here from Zeus and winged Nemesis (as in the *Cypria*; the more familiar variant mother, Leda, being mortal), fittingly neglects to claim any strong connection to the earth.¹⁴¹ The word ῥιζωμάτων seems to do little work other than asserting her parentage in lofty terms.

In their context in B6, the Empedoclean ῥιζώματα are indisputably closer to the Theodectean use than to the Aeschylean. Unlike in Aeschylus, no other vegetal metaphors reinforce the image of the roots.¹⁴² Instead, any vegetal connotations of the term are counteracted by the immediate identification of the four ῥιζώματα with (mostly) familiar anthropomorphic deities. And, while the προυνωμα (“spring”) of line 3 may resuscitate those connotations somewhat, it does not sustain any consistent vegetal image: roots seek water, of course, but here a “root,” namely Nestis, whose original identity is very obscure, provides water to a spring, and thus plainly stands for the aqueous element itself. This inversion (of a “root” providing water to a “spring” rather than receiving it from it) certainly reveals no inclination toward the systematic development of any root-connotations of ῥιζώματα.¹⁴³

The use of ῥίζα/ρίζη (“root”), from which ῥιζωμα derives, shows a comparable range: ῥίζα, as LSJ have it, may be either a root of a plant, a metaphorical “root” anchoring e.g. an

¹⁴⁰ Theodectes fr. 3 Snell, cited Arist. *Pol.* 1255a37 as being a line of Helen’s in Theodectes, and therefore likely from his attested tragedy *Helen*.

¹⁴¹ That is, she would not assert something like a chthonic status for her parentage; but, on the putative origins of both Nemesis and Helen as chthonic deities, see Hornum (1993) 6-7.

¹⁴² Compare the contrastive discussion of Pindar and Aeschylus in Ch. 2.

¹⁴³ But see Picot (2000) 63-66.

eyeball or the earth, or “*that from which anything springs as from a root,*” as e.g. a parent.¹⁴⁴ The semantic alignment of the two words brings us to further proof against the structural contrast between ῥίζωμα and ῥίζη that Primavesi (probably following the LSJ) posited. Nouns in -μα are found with increasing frequency in a variety of fifth-century texts, but especially tragedies, which employ them as variant forms that offer metrical convenience and sophistication of tone.¹⁴⁵ Aeschylus, for one, has been shown to have a penchant for the suffix generally, but especially for -ωμα, using for instance κάρπωμα for “fruit” where καρπός would be commoner.¹⁴⁶ Grandeur, length and weight are stressed in all the analyses of this development, and if those features can furnish an explanation of the generic preference for the nouns, they can certainly explain Empedocles’ ῥιζώματα at such an important moment in his didactic poem. Indeed, in B6 Empedocles matches Aeschylus’ fondness: the last of the ῥιζώματα listed is, as was seen above, “Nēstis, who with tears wets the mortal κρούνωμα” — which is to say the spring or well head of mortals.¹⁴⁷ This κρούνωμα, one of many Empedoclean *hapax legomena*, does

¹⁴⁴ The latter meaning is particularly notable in Pindar: see I.2 above.

¹⁴⁵ On the use and register of nouns in -μα, see Pepler (1916), Long (1968) 18-21 and 35-46, and most recently Willi (2003) 137-8: “In tragic poetry, nouns in -μα were frequently used to create unusual (‘de-automatizing’) variant forms [...] . [...] In tragedy the abstract nouns in -μα acquired stylistic grandeur, especially when they were used in the plural.” On nouns in -ωμα, it is worth quoting Pepler (1916) 461-2: “Aeschylus had a great fondness for derivatives in -μα from verbs in -όω [e.g. κάρπωμα (= καρπός) *Suppl.* 1001, which Pepler cites loc. cit. n. 7], perhaps because besides having greater length they produced a grandiose effect.”

¹⁴⁶ Aesch. *Suppl.* 1001, where “fruits” is very much demanded by the brutally extended metaphor. Acknowledging Tucker’s skeptical commentary ad loc. (where against the MSS κάρπωματα Tucker wrote καὶ σώματα), I would argue that since Aeschylus could also use e.g. τέκνωμα for a (metaphorical) child (LSJ s.v.), and others could use στεφάνωμα as a fancy term for a crown (LSJ s.v.), and Empedocles could use κρούνωμα for κρουνός (B6.3) which has no associated verb in -όω, Tucker’s doubts about the synonymy of κάρπωμα with καρπός are unfounded.

¹⁴⁷ The long list of nouns in -μα in Empedocles includes πίστωμα (B5.2), which Aeschylus also uses (*Ch.* 977, *Eu.* 214, *Pers.* 171); for Empedocles’ πίστωμα, Fraenkel (1916) 231 compares Aeschylus, Aristotle, and Clearchus the poet of Middle or New Comedy, whose usage he takes to

not require a meaning other than that of *κρουνός* (“spring”), and the metaphor would be apt enough. The solemn tone of B6 is thus sustained from the first to the last line, in part by means of these two nouns. Yet the second, it should be noted again, does nothing to extend any root image. On the basis of this and the other evidence considered so far, one can only conclude that Empedocles’ *ρίζώματα* is a stylistic variant of *ρίζαι*, used in B6 in the sense of a fundamental source, and without marked attention to the metaphor.

To assess its possible role in a broader phytomorphic paradigm, one must turn to the Empedoclean *ρίζη*. There are only two instances of the word, one metaphorical, cited above, and one literal. The literal use is in a pair of lines said to come from the *Katharmoi*, and has been plausibly situated in a catalogue of “forms of excellence” (L-M) of the different organisms:

τῶν γὰρ ὅσα ρίζαις μὲν ἐπασσύτερ’, [α]ὐτὰ[ρ ὕ]περθε
μανοτέροις ὄρπηξι καταστή(ι) τηλεθάο[ντα]¹⁴⁸

as many of them as are denser in their roots, but above with rarer shoots stand blossoming
One might be tempted to analyse this as a metaphor for other, particularly intellectual forms of excellence, and in fact there is another fragment which would secure an analogy with animal anatomy at least—but not with any obvious application to Empedoclean psychology.¹⁴⁹ The metaphorical use of *ρίζη*, quoted already above, is notably paradoxical:

αἰθήρ <δ’ αὖ> μακρῆσι κατὰ χθόνα δύετο ρίζαις¹⁵⁰

show, probably, an *Einfluß der Gemeinsprache*; but perhaps there is some Empedoclean influence to be discerned in Clearchus’ *Citharode* (according to Athenaeus) in the phrase *συγγενέσι πίστωμα φιλίας* (“pledge of love for relatives”).

¹⁴⁸ D37 = 152 W ≠ DK. The fragment is found in Herodian, *Prosod. cath.*, as preserved in a “Wiener Palimpsest-Codex (*Vindob. Hist. gr.* 10)” studied by Primavesi and Alpers (2006), q.v. for the details of the constituted text printed above and for bibliography; see also Wright ad loc.

¹⁴⁹ B75 = D200 = 70 W: τῶν δ’ ὅσ’ ἔσω μὲν πυκνά, τὰ δ’ ἔκτοθι μανὰ πέπηγεν, / Κύπριδος ἐν παλάμῃσι πλάδης τοιήσδε τυχόντα.

¹⁵⁰ B54 = D108 = 30 W.

Aether <in turn> with long roots sank down through the earth.

The strangeness of the image develops the more puzzling second half of Hesiod's description:

αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν / γῆς ῥίζαι πεφύασι καὶ ἀτρυγέτιοι θαλάσσης (“but below / the earth's roots have grown and the unharvested sea's”).¹⁵¹ Just as the Hesiodic sea has roots that have grown (πεφύασι), so the Empedoclean aether “with long roots sank down through the earth.”

This is the most unmistakably vegetal image applied to any of the ῥιζώματα in the extant fragments: the only time that a root image is explicitly evoked in that connection, it is an image of the paradoxical “roots” of aether. Again one perceives immediately the limits of the paradigm on the surface of this corpus.

Nevertheless, with the Hesiodic ῥίζαι πεφύασι posited as the fundamental scheme, Macé has compellingly argued that Empedocles' use of ῥίζαι and ῥιζώματα, together with that of φύεσθαι and its compounds in application to the elements' activity, reveal a distinct universalization of the Hesiodic roots in a vision of a quasi-vegetal cosmos.¹⁵² As we have seen, the “roots” in their cyclic expansion and contraction are said to “grow apart” (διαφύειν) and “grow together” (συμφύειν); Macé, supported by the use of those verbs and their nominalizations in medical and botanical texts, shows this to be a scheme of diffuse quasi-vegetal growth, of cyclic “ramification” and “concrecence.” Macé's conclusions are compelling, but one should note again that the forms of φύεσθαι are often substituted by less evocative terms, such as συνέρχεσθαι (“come together”),¹⁵³ which reveal that the explicit evidence for such a vegetal scheme is regularly counteracted by neutral language that is more

¹⁵¹ *Theog.* 727-8.

¹⁵² Macé (2013) 235-45.

¹⁵³ For συνέρχεσθαι, see B17.7, B20.2, B26.5, B35.3, B36.1.

suggestive of simple, almost mechanistic activity. The phytomorphic imagery is again remarkably restrained, even if it is demonstrably significant.

Building on Macé's account, I would focus again on the cosmological use of *μανθάνειν* and how that establishes another momentous analogy between micro- and macrocosm. One of the essential texts for this argument was already examined above: B17. As we saw, one line of it was inserted on the basis of the following, B26, in which the vegetal scheme is visible again:

ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο κύκλιοι,
καὶ φθίνει εἰς ἄλληλα καὶ αὖξεται ἐν μέρει αἴσης.
αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι' ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
γίνοντ' ἄνθρωποι τε καὶ ἄλλων ἔθνεα θηρῶν
ἄλλοτε μὲν Φιλότητι συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓνα κόσμον, 5
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ δίχ' ἕκαστα φορούμενα Νείκεος ἔχθει,
εἰσόκεν ἐν συμφύντα τὸ πᾶν ὑπένερθε γένηται.
οὕτως ἦ μὲν ἐν ἐκ πλεόνων μεμάθηκε φύεσθαι
ἠδὲ πάλιν διαφύντος ἐνὸς πλέον' ἐκτελέθουσι,
τῇ μὲν γίγνονταί τε καὶ οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰών· 10
ἦ δὲ τὰδ' ἀλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,
ταύτη δ' αἰὲν ἔασιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον.¹⁵⁴

In turns they rule as the circle goes around, and decay into one another and increase in turns of destiny. For these things are themselves, but running through each other they become both human beings and the tribes of other beasts, sometimes coming together by Love into one cosmos, sometimes again apart, being severally carried off by the hatred of Strife, until, grown together as one, the whole is submerged. Thus to the extent that they have learned to grow as one from many and again, the one having grown apart, they end up as many, to that extent they come-to-be, and for them there is no constant life; but to the extent that they do not cease changing continuously, to that extent they always are, immovable in a circle.

Apart from this *μεμάθηκε* (l. 8) and its probable repetition at B17.9, the only other form of *μανθάνω* in the fragments is also used of the elements at the cosmological level, and is also collocated with a form of *φύεσθαι*: αἶψα δὲ θνήτ' ἐφύοντο, τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ' εἶναι

¹⁵⁴ B26 = D77b = 16 W.

(“quickly they grew mortal, which previously learned to be immortal”).¹⁵⁵ In that passage we encounter the inverse, i.e. a description of the elements having learned, under the increasing influence of Strife, to separate into homogeneous masses; which presumably amounts to the unlearning of the patterns taken as a result of Love’s impulse toward the union of dissimilars. Yet it confirms the interpretation that the elements *learn* to grow together and apart, to become one in the Σφαῖρος and also to take on the differentiated forms that constitute the world of mortals.

As such, their learning must also produce the growth of the individual human, and thus provides the reductive analysis of even the human subject’s own learning. This is borne out by several familiar passages that identify human learning with growth and increase. But one should note that the reductive analysis of human cognition as elemental interaction is not in question in the interpretation of Empedocles.¹⁵⁶ This treatment will consequently be brief, aiming only to bring out the salient details that establish the analogy between human and elemental learning.

We have already seen the only Empedoclean instance of a derivative of *μανθάνω*, paired with the notion of simple physical growth, in the assurance, *μάθη γὰρ τοι φρένας αὔξει* (B17.14: “for learning shall cause your mind to grow”). Another relevant passage is cited by Aristotle as evidence for Empedocles’ identification of the changing material substrate as the subject of cognition:

ὅσον <δ’> ἀλλοιοὶ μετέφυν, τόσον ἄρ σφισιν αἰεὶ
καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν ἀλλοῖα παρίσταται.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ B35.14 = D75.14 = 47.14 W.

¹⁵⁶ See e.g. Sassi (2015) and Long (1966). The relationship between that explanation of cognition and Empedocles’ soteriological psychology is another matter, addressed by e.g. Long (1966).

¹⁵⁷ B108 = D244a = 80 W. See also D244b.

To the extent that they grow different, to that extent are they always also thinking different things.

In this first extant use of μεταφύεσθαι, one can arguably discern another implicit assertion that φύσις, however persistent, is not exactly constant, and is constituted by the mixing and exchange of the elements.¹⁵⁸ The rearrangement of the elements within the subject effects an altered mind.

This brings us to one of the most important fragments, B110, where learning and φύσις are discussed together within a scheme of transparent agricultural metaphor:

εἰ γὰρ καὶ σφ' ἀδινῆσιν ὑπὸ πρᾶπίδεσσιν ἐρείσας
εὐμενέως καθαρῆσιν ἐποπτεύσης μελέτησιν,
ταῦτά τε σοι μάλα πάντα δι' αἰῶνος παρέσονται,
ἄλλα τε πόλλ' ἀπὸ τῶνδε κτήσεαι· αὐτὰ γὰρ αὖξει
ταῦτ' εἰς ἦθος ἕκαστον, ὅπη φύσις ἐστὶν ἕκαστω. 5
εἰ δὲ σύ γ' ἄλλοίων ἐπορέξεαι οἷα κατ' ἄνδρας
μυρία δειλὰ πέλονται ἅ τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας
ἦ σ' ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνιοι
σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἰκέσθαι·
πάντα γὰρ ἴσθι φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νόματος αἴσαν.¹⁵⁹ 10

For if, having fixed them under a close-packed mind, with pure attention you look upon them kindly, all these things will be present to you throughout your life, and you will acquire many other good things from them; for these themselves grow into each character, according to the nature of each. But if you reach out for other things, such as among men are countless miseries which dull the cares, indeed they will abandon you thereupon, as time goes around, longing to come to their own dear kind: for know that all have mind and a share of thought.

Much has been made of the apparent image of planting here, and with it the probable mystery-cult connotations of ἐποπτεύω.¹⁶⁰ On the conceptual level, the absorption of Empedocles'

¹⁵⁸ Theophrastus, had he taken adequate note of these passages, would perhaps not have thought (as he seems to) that he was uttering an unforeseen objection to Empedocles' theory when he wrote, πάντα τε αἰσθήσεται καὶ ταῦτὸν ἔσται μίξις καὶ αἴσθησις καὶ αὖξισις ("All things will think and mixing, perception, and growth will be the same thing"), *De sensu* 12 (A86).

¹⁵⁹ B110 = D257 = 100 W.

¹⁶⁰ See Wright ad loc. for discussion and bibliography, as well as Bollack (1957) 50-53, Kingsley (2002) 399-400 and above all Kingsley (2003), discussed below.

teaching is claimed to lead to the spontaneous development of ἦθος.¹⁶¹ The individual's φύσις¹⁶² is notably invoked as a determining factor for that development, and “pure attention” or perhaps “pure meditations” (καθαρήσιν ... μελέτησιν, l. 2) are demanded. Yet the passage forcefully emphasizes the autonomy of whatever precisely is being received—which must consist of the elements, if it is not just the elements themselves in some sense.¹⁶³ No manipulation, no constructive analysis is commanded. Simply by “kindly” attention (εὐμενέως, l. 2), one will encourage the spontaneous ἄρθμα ἔργα of the teachings. The disciple, in the process of learning, thus performs in miniature the “growing-together” of the elements in the tutelary presence of Aphrodite. (One will recall Aristotle’s remark about the necessity of συμφυῆναι, “growing together,” for an understanding of Empedocles.) This is not an attempt to control “nature” so much as a submission to it.

At the same time, the passage shows a remarkable degree of constraint or disinterest in the development of the latent agricultural image. The translation of ἐρείσας as “planting” or “having planted” is common but infelicitous: ἐρείδω is, it seems, never used of planting a seed or plant, but only of “planting” spears, etc.¹⁶⁴ The possibility of direct verbal clues is mostly limited to two rather unevocative words, found together in the second line: ἐποπτεύσεις μελέτησιν (“you will oversee them with attentions”). It has been argued by Kingsley on the basis of these two words that “the activity of pressing down Empedocles’ words underneath the diaphragm corresponds to the action of a planter pressing down seeds underneath the surface of

¹⁶¹ Cf. e.g. the Pindaric immutable ἐμφυῆς ἦθος, *O.* 11.20.

¹⁶² On the identification of this φύσις as that of the individual disciple, as opposed to the elements or whatever else might be in question here, see the discussion in the previous chapter.

¹⁶³ Cf. Wright *ad loc.* and the discussion of Long (1966).

¹⁶⁴ Note that L-M avoid this translation now.

the earth. To do what he says is to become farmers of his teaching inside ourselves.”¹⁶⁵ To prove this, Kingsley claims that ἐποπτεύω is “a term only ever used by the great early poets such as Homer, or Hesiod, for describing one very specific process: the activity of overseeing the planting of seeds and the tending of crops. And again,” Kingsley adds, “the single word he uses, *meletê* ... was a term traditionally associated with the constant attention devoted by farmers to their work.” These claims are not entirely baseless, and an initial study of the LSJ could indeed confirm them. A closer look reveals Kingsley’s treatment to be misleading.

First, ἐποπτεύω is used once in Homer, and once in Hesiod. At *Od.* 16.140-1, we learn that Laertes “used to oversee the works and drink and eat in the house with the servants” (ἔργα τ’ ἐποπτεύεσκε μετὰ δμῶων τ’ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ / πίνε καὶ ἦσθ’). One easily takes this to refer to “overseeing the planting of seeds and the tending of crops,” and the use of ἔργα encourages this somewhat, but not with such specificity.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, at *Op.* 767-8, we are instructed that “the thirtieth of the month is best for overseeing the works and distributing the rations” (τριηκὰδα μηνὸς ἀρίστην / ἔργα τ’ ἐποπτεύειν ἢ δ’ ἀρμαλιὴν δατέασθαι). The activity of “a general inspection once a month”¹⁶⁷ is presumably not what Empedocles’ reader is to imagine. In any event, if the Homeric and Hesiodic usage is to be a precise guide to Empedocles’ meaning, then is it not rather to become *overseers* of the “farmers of his teaching inside ourselves”? More promising, I think, is that ἐποπτεύω is frequently used of the activity of tutelary deities, such as Pindar’s Χάρις ζωθάλμος (“life-blossoming Grace”) who oversees the fortunate in turns, often

¹⁶⁵ Kingsley (2003) 525.

¹⁶⁶ See LSJ s.v. ἔργον A3a.

¹⁶⁷ West ad loc.

making music,¹⁶⁸ and, in later texts, of initiation in the mysteries. The semantics of ἐποπτεύω thus underline the relative passivity enjoined upon Empedocles' addressee, who is promised, as it were, a happy internal harvest.

Returning to Kingsley's second claim, one notes that μελέτη likewise lacks such specificity: in Hesiod of course one can infer that the care and work is largely agricultural, but the other usage, especially Pindar's, shows that the sense cannot be so restricted.¹⁶⁹ In sum, the diction of the passage is far from being specific to the agricultural scheme which it nonetheless so transparently suggests. There is no explicit comparison of his words to seeds, no use of familiar words for planting, none of harvest. Perhaps more evocative than anything is the appearance of φύσις, which we of course know to have been connected—especially in later literature—with far more prominent vegetal metaphors. Yet, contrary to what one might expect, the emphasis is not upon the fruits of one's φύσις, but on the capacity of the teachings to effect change of their own accord. One's pre-existent φύσις is noted as a determining factor, but it is the teachings that will grow of themselves into each ἦθος. No work, it seems, is required to secure this boon, but only loving observation.¹⁷⁰

On the topic of the work required by Empedocles' disciple, there is another far more evocative word: λιπόξυλος, or "lacking in wood." It is used twice by Empedocles, and never by

¹⁶⁸ *O.* 7.11. Among other authors, Aeschylus uses it a number of times of gods watching over, often of war or conflict, but in some cases suggesting agriculture: e.g. *Ag.* 1270, 1579, *Cho.* 1, 489, 985, 1063. Compare also the use of ἐπόπτης, LSJ s.v.

¹⁶⁹ See LSJ s.v. μελέτη and Slater s.v. μελέτα.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. the comments of Wright ad B37 (31 W): "The increase of the bulk of earth is due to the natural tendency of the roots, i.e., the way they act of their own accord, when not kept together by Aphrodite riveting, gluing, or nailing them. An ordered arrangement of parts is the result, in nature, of constraint applied to the material by Aphrodite, and in the case of man a disciplined mental effort is needed, cf. 100(110).1-9." There is nothing in B110 that suggests, to my mind, mental effort akin to a craftsman's "constraint applied to the material."

another author. One reads it first in the opening lines of B21 (the remainder of which was quoted above for its significant substitution of ἐβλάστησε for the κτίζοντε of B23):

ἀλλ' ἄγε, τῶνδ' ὀάρων προτέρων ἐπιμάρτυρα δέρεκευ,
εἴ τι καὶ ἐν προτέροισι λιπόξυλον ἔπλετο μορφῇ,
ἠέλιον μὲν λευκὸν ὄραν καὶ θερμὸν ἀπάντη,
ἄμβροτα δ' ὅσσ' ἴδει τε καὶ ἀργέτι δέυεται ἀύγῃ,
ὄμβρον δ' ἐν πάσι δνοφόνετ' ἀριγαλέον τε·
ἐκ δ' αἴης προρέουσι θέλυμνά τε καὶ στερεωπά.¹⁷¹

But come, consider witnesses of these preceding discourses, if anything in the preceding was lacking-in-wood in its form, the sun, bright to see and warm everywhere, immortal things that are moistened with both warmth and bright ray of light, and rain in all things both dark and chilling; and from the ground flow forth fundamentals and solid-faced things.

Recall that what follows comes to focus on trees, etc., sprouting forth (ἐβλάστησε). The second seems to introduce a similar enjoiner to observe how the four elements can compose all things:

εἰ δέ τί σοι περὶ τῶνδε λιπόξυλος ἔπλετο πίστις,
πῶς ὕδατος γαίης τε καὶ αἰθέρος ἠελίου τε
κιρνομένων εἶδη τε γενοῖατο χροῖά τε θνητῶν
τόσσ' ὅσα νῦν γεγάασι συναρμοσθέντ' Ἀφροδίτῃ...¹⁷²

If for you the proof is at all lacking-in-wood regarding these things, how from water and earth and aether and sun mixed together both the forms and colors of mortal things come-to-be, just as many as have now come to be, joined together by Aphrodite...

What would it mean, in such contexts, for some portion of the teaching or the πίστις or “proof” to be “lacking-in-wood”?¹⁷³ Unfortunately, the word has received little attention: the majority

¹⁷¹ B21.1-6 = D77a = 14 W.

¹⁷² B71 = D61 = 60 W.

¹⁷³ The translation of πίστις is a problem: it is often translated in Empedocles as “belief” *vel sim.*, but, as noted by Vlastos (1995) 339 n. 60 and more recently by Iribarren (2006), the notion in this author (as in others) seems to combine subjective and objective reference (i.e. a feeling of trust as opposed to a proof or pledge which establishes that feeling); see also LSJ s.v. Empedocles' use of πίστις (B3.5,8, B71.1, B114.3) and πιστώματα (B4.2) suggest to my mind a greater emphasis on the objectivity of the trust, so I translate it here as “proof.” This would also bring the two uses of λιπόξυλος somewhat closer.

only concur with LSJ that it means, in this instance and the other, “defective.”¹⁷⁴ Kingsley has rightly demanded a closer examination of the metaphor it contains: insisting on the translation “lacking in wood,”¹⁷⁵ Kingsley writes, “Only too plainly he is evoking the image of a tree lacking substance or growth, of trunks missing branches or branches without a trunk.”¹⁷⁶ Following Kingsley, one would then have the ostensible seeds of the teaching (B110) grow into the wood of sound πίστις. But again there are no seeds, and the meaning of λιπόξυλος is not so plain.

Among the uses of ξύλον, the closest parallel I have found is in Athenaeus’ employment of the Pindaric fragment, ποτίκολλον ἄτε ξύλον παρὰ ξύλῳ (“like wood attached to wood”).¹⁷⁷ The use of κολλάω by Pindar and other authors all but guarantees that the image belongs to carpentry, and not to grafting or the like.¹⁷⁸ Yet the semantics of ξύλον straddle the line between the techno- and phytomorphic: although ξύλον is most commonly “wood cut and ready for use,” or “hence anything made of wood,”¹⁷⁹ it is also used sometimes to designate live wood. So the problem extends to the single instance of ξύλον in Empedocles, in the assertion that “wine is water from the bark that has rotted in wood” (οἶνος ἀπὸ φλοιοῦ πέλεται σαπὲν ἐν ξύλῳ

¹⁷⁴ Some translations of the word in B21.2 and B71.1, respectively, are: DK, “ein Mangel an ihrer (*der Elemente*) Gestalt geblieben war” and “die Überzeugung noch irgendwie mangelhaft blieb”; L-M, “defective” and “lacking in firmness”; M-P, “mangelhaft an Gestalt” (so also Primavesi (2008)) and “der Beweis noch irgendwie unvollständig”; Wright, “incomplete” and “belief ... lacked assurance”; Bignone, “mancamento” and “manchevole”; Inwood, “left wanting in form” and “your conviction is in any way wanting”; Bollack, “La beauté manquera-t-elle de corps en ces chants primordiaux” and “n’avait matière où se fonder”; Panzerbieter (1844) 17, “schwankend.”

¹⁷⁵ Kingsley (2003) 539, 542. Cf. G-M: “etwas ... bezüglich ihrer [der Elemente] Form »an Holz« mangelte” and “der Beweis dafür noch irgendwie »an Holz« mangelte.”

¹⁷⁶ Kingsley (2003) 540.

¹⁷⁷ Pindar fr. 241, quoted by Athenaeus twice, at 1.24b and 6.248c.

¹⁷⁸ See the instances listed by Slater and LSJ s.v.

¹⁷⁹ See e.g. *Il.* 8.507, 547, and *Op.* 808.

ὑδωρ).¹⁸⁰ The standard interpretation is that of Wright, who plausibly asserts that the process in question can only be fermentation in a wooden cask, and that φλοιός, usually “bark” but sometimes “husk” of a fruit, refers to the skin (and fruit) of the grapes.¹⁸¹ This would certainly suit our modern conception of wine-making. But it seems the use of wooden fermentation vessels was almost unheard of in the ancient Mediterranean: even Pliny only mentions it as a strange practice found in the Alps.¹⁸² Moreover, in the passage in which Plutarch quotes the fragment,¹⁸³ he is clearly concerned with processes that occur within the living plant, although his cursory commentary on the fragment itself may leave some room for uncertainty. The most likely interpretation, then, is that Empedocles was explaining wine by a process within the plant (water being taken in through the bark and then “rotted” within the wood before being released into the fruit), and thus ξύλον would have to refer to the living vine.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ B81 = D256 = 67 W.

¹⁸¹ See Wright ad loc. Wright’s interpretation of φλοιός is meant to be supported by her account of B80 = 66 W, which includes the phrase ὑπερφλοια μήλα. Plutarch (*quaest. conv.* 683d.) says that he had puzzled over the phrase while eating apples with his grandfather, who interpreted the adjective as meaning that the flesh is outside of what one might call the φλοιός or “husk,” namely the protective layering of the apple core: Wright follows Plutarch’s grandfather, using the phrase “outside the husk”; then, referring back to that discussion, shows some unfortunate confusion by saying that φλοιός “seemed to refer to the (edible) part of the apple surrounding the seeds,” and yet translates φλοιόν simply as “skin.” Another interpretation is possible. Since μήλον can also designate the apple tree (cf. e.g. Theoph. HP 4.4.2; the meaning is not noted by LSJ), just as the σίδαι (“pomegranates” or “pomegranate trees,” q.v. LSJ) mentioned before the μήλα in B80, ὑπερφλοια may describe instead the apple trees. (Likewise ὀψίγονοι σίδαι could just as well be late-bearing pomegranate trees rather than late-born fruit.) Compounds in -φλοιος always designate bark or husk. Apples do not have a considerable husk. But apple trees can have noteworthy bark, especially when old. Empedocles may therefore have thought that apple trees are “very barky,” in order to contain the moisture which develops into apples later than other comparable fruits.

¹⁸² Pliny *NH* 14.132; for further discussion of the technology of ancient wine making and references, see Frankel (2016) esp. 555 on the (extremely unusual) use of wood.

¹⁸³ *Quaest. nat.* 912c.

¹⁸⁴ This is perhaps also supported by Euripides *Cyc.* 572: παπαί, σοφόν γε τὸ ξύλον τῆς ἀμπέλου (“Hoo-wee, the wood of the vine is wise indeed”).

If ξύλον refers to the living vine in that fragment, giving proof that Empedocles did not restrict ξύλον to dead wood ready for use, then it becomes more plausible that λιπόξύλος is meant to evoke an image not of inadequately supported wooden framework or the like, but rather of a live plant, not yet grown enough to be woody.¹⁸⁵ This would certainly make the word a more fitting epithet for πίστις, considering “son inscription dans le poème d’Empédocle en tant que phénomène organique,” as Iribarren put it.¹⁸⁶ Unfortunately, Iribarren did not analyse λιπόξύλος; but, as he himself argued (in an article prior to his book on the technomorphic), the persuasion and the persuasiveness of Empedocles’ verses, as we saw in B110, are depicted consistently “as an organic phenomenon.” Indeed, this feeds into a broader commonplace in Empedoclean scholarship: “Empedocles’ *logos* seems to grow.”¹⁸⁷ Even so, it is hoped that the same conclusion has been adequately supported here.

There is one last set of evidence to corroborate that conclusion, which has somehow remained even more neglected by the scholarship. Tucked away in the botanical teachings are two words that play upon Empedocles’ own name—and are the only such words in the corpus.¹⁸⁸

Theophrastus writes,

And if the air should continuously favor these [regions], perhaps what has been said by the poets would not seem to be illogical, nor as Empedocles says, “[trees] evergreen and constant-fruiting (αείφυλλα καὶ ἔμπεδόκαρπα) bloom with liberalities of fruits all year as a result of the air (θάλλειν καρπῶν ἀφθονίησι κατ’ ἡέρα πάντ’ ἐνιαυτόν),” supposing [as he would have to] some mixture of the air, [namely] the vernal [mixture], to be common.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ One might also imagine roots lacking “wood,” either through seasonal decay or loss from pruning or the like; cf. e.g. the inverse image in Nicolaus Hydruntinus, *Disputatio contra Judaeos* 234.8: Τὸ δ’ αὖ ξύλον, ὅπερ τοῖς ὄρεσι λέλοιπε τὴν ἰδίαν τεμνόμενον ῥίζα ...

¹⁸⁶ Iribarren (2006) 64.

¹⁸⁷ Trépanier (2003) 176.

¹⁸⁸ But note the phrase ἔμπεδος αἰών seen above in B17.11 and B26.10.

¹⁸⁹ *CP* 1.13.2: καὶ εἴ γε συνεχῶς ὁ αἶρ ἀκολουθοίη τούτοις ἴσως οὐδὲ τὰ παρὰ τῶν ποιητῶν λεγόμενα δόξειεν ἂν ἀλόγως ἔχειν, οὐδ’ ὡς Ἐμπεδοκλῆς αείφυλλα καὶ ἔμπεδόκαρπά φησιν θάλλειν καρπῶν ἀφθονίησι κατ’ ἡέρα πάντ’ ἐνιαυτόν ὑποτιθέμενός

The exact content of the quotation is uncertain, and at the very least it probably did not contain the infinitive θάλλειν; but the authenticity of ἐμπεδόκαρπα is not doubted.¹⁹⁰ Next, in a discussion of ivy (κιττός), Plutarch notes that it is “ever-blossoming (ἀειθαλές) and, as Empedocles says, ‘constant-leafed’ (ὡς φησιν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐμπεδόφυλλον).”¹⁹¹ Plutarch then provides a brief discussion of Empedocles’ theory, that evergreen plants such as ivy have “a certain symmetry of pores (πόρων τινὰ συμμετρίαν)” such that they take in a sufficient and not excessive amount of water and are thereby sustained throughout the year. The two passages were unnecessarily combined by prior editors into a couplet:

<δένδρεα δ’ > ἐμπεδόφυλλα καὶ ἐμπεδόκαρπα τέθηλεν
καρπῶν ἀφθονίησι κατ’ ἥερα πάντ’ ἐνιαυτόν.¹⁹²

Trees constant-leafed and constant-fruiting bloom with liberality of fruits all year as a result of the air.

But nothing compels us to combine them, and it is hard to believe that, had Empedocles used the two words in such proximity, the pairing would not have been preserved by either author, and that those two authors would have selectively applied some of the words to two different plants. So it is better to keep them separate, and follow Theophrastus in applying ἐμπεδόκαρπα to trees, and Plutarch in applying ἐμπεδόφυλλον to ivy. On two separate occasions, then, Empedocles played upon his own name, first when describing evergreen trees, some of which

τινα τοῦ ἀέρος κρᾶσιν, τὴν ἡρινὴν, κοινήν. Pace Wright, Theophrastus’ remark that Empedocles was “supposing (ὑποτιθέμενος)” the vernal mixture to be universal may suggest a hypothesis about “a condition that no longer exists” (Wright ad loc.); so I incline to the view of Stein and Karsten, that this description belongs to the account of the age of Kypris described in B128 = 118 W.

¹⁹⁰ So e.g. L-M keep only ἐμπεδόκαρπα (D252) and then καρπῶν . . . ἐνιαυτόν (D253).

¹⁹¹ *Mor.* 649c.

¹⁹² So printed by DK but labelled as two separate fragments, B77 and B78; the first line (= B77) was composed and printed by Karsten.

(such as his beloved δάφνη) were of course sacred, and then when describing ivy, sacred to Dionysus. Neither can be said to be poetological metaphors—at least not directly—, but the unique play upon his own name strongly suggests an intentional *sphragis*, a seal of this poet’s authority. Together with the other evidence, these two words offer further proof that for the interpretation of Empedoclean metaphor, the most reliable key, as it were, or ἔμπεδος κλείς, is the plant.¹⁹³

When the fragments discussed above are seen in light of the wealth of imagery of plants, limbs, neckless heads, human beings and all manner of things sprouting up from the earth or upon other bodies, it is hard not to conclude that vegetal growth especially captured Empedocles’ imagination. The exuberance of plant growth, literal and metaphorical, at the level of the formation of organisms is undeniable. It becomes more attenuated and abstract in his accounts of human psychology, and particularly the portrayal of learning in B110. In his cosmology, in turn, a few precious traces establish the power of the phytomorphic, through sparing talk of “roots,” their growing (φύεσθαι), and the learning (μανθάνειν) that conspicuously connects the cosmos to the microcosm. And there is the also perhaps the furtive promise that by seeking the union of one’s self with τὸ πᾶν, one will enjoy an ἔμπεδος αἰών, being both ἔμπεδόφυλλος and ἔμπεδόκαρπος.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter has endeavored to prove that vegetal metaphor is fundamental to the thought of Empedocles and its articulation of the genesis of mortal organisms, the human mind, and the cosmos as a whole. In Empedocles we can observe the extremely ancient comparisons of the

¹⁹³ I owe this pun to the ἔμπεδόμυθος Branden Kosch.

human with the plant, and the human with the cosmos, entering into a new dynamic within extant Greek thought: the growing plant, having been projected already through manifold metaphors upon the physical and psychological constitution of the human being, is deepened in that capacity while it is also projected more clearly upon τὸ πᾶν, the behavior of which is thereby modelled on a conception of a subtly anthropomorphic plant—and to a greater extent, perhaps, than it can be said to be modelled on that of a phytomorphic human. The broader phytomorphic paradigm evinced in the Empedoclean corpus can be centered around a reductive, anti-substantialist view of the individual φύσις as comprised of the sentient growing-together of the elements, the ramifications of which effect the individual’s development in the form of differentiated limbs and in intellectual faculties. This conception is also mapped onto the formation of the successive stages of the cosmos, where verbal echoes establish parallels that anticipate the extension of φύσις from the individual to the All.

At the same time, even the rhetoric of vegetal growth is in crucial regards subdued. When carefully analysed and compared, Empedocles’ images display a combination of poetic license and critical restraint or disinterest, such that although vegetal metaphors are decisively privileged over those from craftwork, even vegetal metaphors have their limits. The elements are called ῥιζώματα, but only once, and these “roots” show no sign of being coordinated with anything resembling a cosmic tree. As in Pindar, so in Empedocles the word φύσις does not seem to have attracted any prominent vegetal metaphors. The elements learn to grow together, and by learning the mind grows according to the φύσις of each person, but this talk of growth does not bear out any concrete vegetal paradigm, and is not connected to any more distinct poetological metaphors like Pindar’s “fruit of the mind.” Empedocles apparently left it to his audience to grasp any

connection between his own wisdom and the trees that could be more literally termed “constant-fruiting.”

Craft imagery, as I have argued, is still more limited in its significance. Within Empedocles’ universal conception relating the history of human beings to that of the cosmos, human art, as a product of human learning, becomes a development of the same processes that constitute human nature; the metaphorical arts practiced by Aphrodite may likewise be conceived as a special development of the same, where the autonomous activity of the roots, under Aphrodite’s influence, combine to form the intricately wrought forms of mortal organisms. But we have seen that Aphrodite’s activity is only technomorphic within narrow limits, never being applied to the cosmos as a whole; Empedocles’ cosmos is not crafted.

Between a demiurgic Love and random growth, Empedocles’ roots learn to grow together into a living unity that ultimately outstrips all familiar figuration. But in the lingering tension and divergent potentials of the techno- and phytomorphic paradigms, one can observe the uncertainty and ambition of Empedocles’ project. In a Blumenbergian vein, Iribarren has helpfully distinguished “the *demonstrative function* of paradigms and metaphors within a closed system of ontological presuppositions from their *creative and heuristic efficacy* at the open horizon of critical philosophies.”¹⁹⁴ In Empedocles, the phytomorphic, like the technomorphic, undeniably possesses some of that “demonstrative function,” especially at the level of zoogonical speculation. Yet I hope also to have shown how the cautiously employed vegetal imagery in this corpus reveals precisely the “creative and heuristic efficacy” of metaphors at the bounds of one particular critical philosophy—and the relative dominance of the vegetal paradigm.

¹⁹⁴ Iribarren (2018) 18: “la *fonction démonstrative* des paradigmes et métaphores à l’intérieur d’un système clos de présupposés ontologiques d’avec leur *efficacité créative et heuristique* dans l’horizon ouvert des philosophies critiques.” Emphasis in original.

Concluding Remarks

Contemplating the All (τὸ πᾶν) in its relation to its many parts, Plotinus remarks that

ἡ δὲ φύσις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπροσδεῆς βουλευσεως. καὶ δεῖ τοῦ παντὸς τὴν διοίκησιν καὶ τὸν διοικοῦντα ἐν τῷ ἡγεῖσθαι οὐ κατ' ἰατροῦ ἕξιν εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὡς ἡ φύσις. [. . .] πάσας γὰρ τὰς φύσεις κρατεῖ μία, αἱ δὲ ἔπονται ἀνηρημένοι καὶ ἐξηρητημένοι καὶ οἷον ἐκφυῖσαι, ὡς αἱ ἐν κλάδοις τῇ τοῦ ὅλου φυτοῦ. (*Enn.* 4.4.11)

Nature from the beginning is without need of deliberation. And it is necessary that the administration of the All and the one administering be, in leading, not after the habit of a doctor, but as Nature. [. . .] For one Nature rules all natures, and they follow upon it, being attached to and dependent upon it and as it were having grown out of it, as the natures in branches follow upon the nature of the whole plant.

This dense passage encapsulates much of the later development of the vegetal paradigm as an expression of φύσις: a vast, interconnected vegetal growth serves as a ready image for the nature of the All in its non-deliberative self-sufficiency.¹ Even one disinclined to historical teleology is compelled to recognize in this the actualization, so to speak, of certain potentials inherent in the relationship between φύσις or φυά and vegetal metaphors as we saw in Pindar and Empedocles: the role of the phytomorphic within Pindar's poetics of divinely gifted spontaneity and φυά or Empedocles' pedagogical assurances, as well as the role of the phytomorphic in asserting organic connections even between an island and the sea or between the four ριζώματα in their cosmic formations, etc.² “Vegetality,” as Payne has observed, “becomes a way of thinking *physis*—the coming into being and passing away of what is—as fully vegetal in nature: the mode of being of a living cosmos.”³ Indeed, vegetality *becomes* precisely that, but only after the universalization

¹ Dillon & Blumenthal (2015) 356 ad loc. do not explore the image of the plant, but refer the reader to the discussion of the “great plant” at *Enn.* 3.7.26-33. For relevant discussion of Plotinus on plants, see Payne (2018) esp. 263-5 and 268.

² For the island sprouted from the sea, see: *O.* 7.69-70: βλάσπε μὲν ἐξ ἀλὸς ὑγρᾶς νᾶσος.

³ Payne (2018) 260. For another delightful expression of the cosmos as *fully* vegetal, see Philo, *On Noah's Work as a Planter (De Plantatione Noe)*, in which the cosmos is “a plant embracing

of φύσις, and on the foundations of a long tradition of vegetal tropes cultivated by Pindar and Empedocles, among countless others. From the expansion and subsequent clarification of the concept of a universal φύσις, there ultimately emerged “the ancient recognition of the clarity with which *physis* is visible in the lives of plants.”⁴

Conversely, then, one must also note how that later complex of concept and image has made it far too easy for us to assume that φύσις or φυά is conceived in Pindar and Empedocles as finding its paradigmatic expression in φύλλα or φυτά, in leaves or plants. As I have argued above, in order to better understand the texts of these two authors (and many others), it is necessary to be wary of projecting such a conceptual schema upon them. We cannot say that plants were so distinctly associated with φύσις yet, above all because φύσις was not yet so universalized. The concept which we have seen Pindar and Empedocles clarifying, each in his own way, is a much more restricted one.

Their poetical activity fell within a period of heavy contestation and new clarifications of what φύσις or φυά amounted to. Between the two of them, Pindar and Empedocles represent a good portion of the range of positions available—a range which they likely expanded. The stratified corpus of Pindar itself ranges from some of the most outlandish claims about the self-sufficiency of φυά in opposition to learning, to gentler appraisals of innate gifts honed through teaching, and even the possibility of becoming the sort of person one is by learning (*P.* 2.72). Those gentler appraisals thus verge into a more progressive, sophistic stance, which, on the

in itself all the myriad plants together” (φυτὸν δὲ αὖ περιέχον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ ἐν μέρει φυτὰ ἅμα παμμυρία, 1.2), with all separate natures in fact presented as plants, some of which are said to be *particularly* (ιδίως) called plants (3.13); other plant metaphors are rampant in this text. On the history of the concept of τὸ περιέχον (which participle is applied by Philo to the plant-cosmos “embracing” the other plants) within the history of the concept of the milieu or environment, see Spitzer (1948) 179-316.

⁴ Payne (2018) 269.

interpretation proposed above, assumes both human and cosmic dimensions in the guise of Empedocles' elements that learn to grow. And Pindar, on the one hand, who sometimes parades his self-awareness in the manipulation of word and image and myth, nevertheless appears to take many things, such as the reality of φύά, for granted—however impossible it is to settle on one Pindaric doctrine of φύά. Empedocles, on the other hand, openly proclaims that φύσις is a name bestowed by human beings, that we must correct our corresponding conception, and that in some regards at least, familiar images will not lead us to the truth.

One remarkable feature the two authors share is a rather unusual resistance to (or perhaps lack of interest in) the direct coordination of φύσις or φύά with plant metaphors or comparisons that is so easy to document in other authors. To establish the mostly latent connections between image and concept, we have had to scour the texts more closely for patterns of association. The semantic field from which their vegetal metaphors are drawn is of course profoundly traditional, especially when applied to human birth and development as well as discourse, whether oracular, poetical, or simply authoritative utterance. Yet both authors evidently innovated in their use of all manner of metaphors, not least the vegetal. We have seen how traditional vegetal imagery in both of these authors is “subjected to self-conscious redeployment in the interest of semantic effects specific to a particular text or passage,”⁵ and even with effects that shape an entire corpus of poems. Opposing such literary idiosyncrasy and particularity with the power of metaphors to give form even to the most abstract universals, Gadamer wrote that

It is obvious that the particularity of an experience finds expression in metaphorical transference, and is not at all the fruit of a concept formed by means of abstraction. [. . .] But classificatory logic also starts from the logical advance work that language has done for it.⁶

⁵ Maslov (2015) 120.

⁶ Gadamer (2004 [1960]) 428.

The metaphors we have seen, both traditional and innovative, work beyond the limits of the texts' conceptual systems, and in advance of others. To pick two examples, Pindar's καρπὸς φρενῶν ("fruit of the mind") and Empedocles' λιπόξυλος ("lacking-in-wood") are, I submit, not "the fruit of a concept formed by means of abstraction"—they are not, that is, metaphors that can be straightforwardly translated into conceptual statements, that were formed as simple imagistic correlates to the authors' concepts of φύσις or φύά. And yet, as stated above, it is all too easy to see how the patterns of concept and metaphors in these corpora, when read in the light of the later concept of φύσις, would naturally take on a new, self-evident meaning. To conclude with a line once attributed to Empedocles:

αὐτίκα καὶ φυτὰ δῆλα, τὰ μέλλει κάρπιμ' ἔσεσθαι.⁷

Also immediately apparent are plants that are about to be fruitful.

⁷ B154c, printed among the "Zweifelhaftes" ("dubious"), and not included in any collections of the fragments of Empedocles since. The hexameter line is preserved by Suidas, s.v. αὐτίκα, who introduces it as a παροιμία or proverb, and explains it as being ἐπὶ τῶν εὐθὺς ἀπὸ πρώτης ἀρχῆς πρὸς ἀγαθὸν τέλος ἀποβλεπόντων ("concerning those that straightaway from the first beginning gaze steadfastly toward a good end")—perhaps a fitting description of Pindar and Empedocles.

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