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Some Say the World Will End in Fire

Philosophizing the Memnonides in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

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The story of Memnon in *Metamorphoses* 13 has primarily attracted attention as one modulation of the Homero-Vergilian Trojan cycle in the last four books of the epic. This is not surprising: Memnon is an obvious analogue for both Hector and Achilles, parallels that—at least according to Homeric neoanalysts—may stretch as far back as the Cyclical antecedents of Homer.[1] Furthermore, in addition to Memnon himself, Ovid's account of the creation of warring birds from his ashes has likewise been read as parallel with the events of surrounding episodes, not least with the generation of a heron from the burnt ruins of Ardea, a city whose destruction serves in turn as an analogue for Troy's own.[2] The episode has also been read in light of the memorializing function of poetry and *kleos*, thanks especially to the similarity between Memnon and words of remembering (μνημοσύνη, *memini*).[3]

Sara Myers, however, has pointed out in passing that at several points in the concluding lines of the episode, consisting of Memnon's cremation and the subsequent generation of the Memnonides (*Met*. 13.600–22), Ovid appears to be engaging with scientific terminology, especially with the language and imagery of Lucretius' cosmogony in *De rerum natura* 5.[4] Taking this observation as my starting point, I here press the ramifications further, beyond the confines of the immediate scene and its obvious Lucretian antecedent, and beyond the now familiar technique of "remythologizing" Lucretius.[5]

[1] See, recently, several papers in Fantuzzi and Tsagalis, eds. 2015.
[2] For example, Papaioannou 2003, 2005: 194–7, 2007: 260 nn. 553–4; cf. Ellsworth 1980: 29.
[3] Johnson and Malamud 1988: 35.
[4] Myers 1994: 48–9. This is one part of what Myers demonstrates is a broader thematization of cosmogony—and especially Lucretian cosmogony—throughout the epic.
[5] The classic study is P. Hardie 1986; see also especially Gale 1994b, 2000, and Myers 1994: 27–60 and 133–66.

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Cosmic Combustions

Iuppiter adnuerat, cum Memnonis arduus alto
corruit igne rogus, nigrique uolumina fumi
infecere diem, ueluti cum flumina lentas
exhalant nebulas, nec sol admittitur infra;
atra fauilla uolat glomerataque corpus in unum
densetur faciemque capit sumitque calorem
atque animam ex igni; leuitas sua praebuit alas.
et primo similis uolucri, mox uera uolucris
insonuit pennis; pariter sonuere sorores
innumerae, quibus est eadem natalis origo.
terque rogum lustrant, et consonus exit in auras
ter plangor; quarto seducunt castra uolatu.
tum duo diuersa populi de parte feroces
bella gerunt rostrisque et aduncis unguibus iras
exercent alasque aduersaque pectora lassant,
inferiaeque cadunt cineri cognata sepulto
corpora seque uiro forti meminere creatas.
praepetibus subitis nomen facit auctor: ab illo
Memnonides dictae, cum sol duodena peregit
signa, parentali morituraе more rebellant.

(Ov. *Met*. 13.600–19)

602 om. MN^{ac}
602 lentas *Postgate (Hardie)*] natas Ω *(suspectum Tarrant)* nigras χ *alia alii*
605 calorem $fpW^{c?}$] colorem Ω
611 plangor Ω] clangor $l_4p\chi$ *(Heinsius)*
611 seducunt castra Ω] succedunt astra $(N^{ac}?)UP$ succedunt castra $N^{2c}\varphi$
619 more $M^{2s}BF^{v}GT^{v}$] voce $\Delta F^{1}PT^{1}$ morte $l_6{}^{2}\chi$ caede *Slater*

Jupiter had nodded assent, when Memnon's towering pyre collapsed under the soaring fire, and black coils of smoke stained the day, as when rivers exhale lazy mists, and the sun isn't admitted below. Black ash flies up and, clumped together into a single body, grows dense and takes on a shape and gets heat and breath from the fire; its own lightness bestows wings. And at first like a bird, soon a true bird, it made noise with its feathers; at the same moment, countless sisters made noise, who had the same natal origin. Three times they traverse the pyre, and three times their unison cry travels into the breezes; on their fourth flight, they split into camps. Then, from

> opposed sides, two fierce peoples wage war, and they vent their wrath with beaks and hooked claws, and they beat their wings and their opponents' breasts, and they fall as death-offerings to the buried ash, kindred bodies, and they memorialize that they were created from a brave man. Their originator provides a name for the sudden birds: from him, they are called Memnonides. When the sun has trekked around the twelve signs, they fight again in parental fashion,[6] about to die.[7]

As Myers notes, the process of the Memnonides' generation is a primary locus for cosmogonic language here. Memnon's ash, as it flies upward, provokes a simile of mists rising off a river, which Lucretius had used in his cosmogony as an analogy for the upward movement of *aether*'s tiny atoms (5.463); and the verb that Ovid uses to describe the clustering of the ash prior to its transformation, *glomerata* (*Met*. 13.604), is distinctly cosmogonic in the epic, appearing both in the *Metamorphoses*' initial account of cosmogony and in its later recapitulation by Arachne in the weaving contest.[8] Other words that Myers identifies as bestowing a cosmogonic feeling upon these lines are *densetur* (605), *igni* (606), and the *calorem* of some manuscripts in 605.

Another important but unremarked phrase, *Memnonis arduus alto/corruit igne rogus* (13.600–1), which describes the sagging collapse of Memnon's fire-eaten pyre, anchors these parallels more concretely within the framework of Ovid's own cosmos. The pairing of *corruere* and *ignis* that we see here occurs at just one other place in surviving Latin literature: eleven books earlier in the *Metamorphoses*, when, after Phaethon's near-incineration of the cosmos, Jupiter makes his rounds to check whether any part of the fire-ravaged cosmic enclosure has been compromised:

> at pater omnipotens ingentia moenia caeli
> circuit et ne quid labefactum uiribus ignis
> corruat explorat.
>
> (Ov. *Met*. 2.401–3)

[6] For possible allusions to the Parentalia here, see McKeown 1989: 342–3; Hopkinson 2000: 190–2; P. Hardie 2015b: 311.

[7] All translations are my own. I use the following editions: for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Tarrant 2004 with the modifications of the Fondazione Valla edition; for the *Fasti*, Alton, Wormell, and Courtney 1978/1997; for Empedocles, Laks and Most 2016; for Vergil's *Georgics*, Thomas 1988; for Lucretius, Bailey 1947. For discussions (subsequent to Tarrant's edition) of the possible readings at *Met*. 13.602–3, see Liberman 2004: 85 and Ramírez de Verger 2006: 36–7.

[8] *Met*. 1.35 (*magni speciem glomerauit in orbis*) and 6.19 (*glomerabat in orbes*). See Feeney 1991: 191 and S. M. Wheeler 1995a: 105–6 for Arachne's cosmogonic recapitulation.

> But the omnipotent father takes a tour around the vast walls of the sky and investigates whether anything is collapsing, made unstable by the fire's force.

Given Myers's demonstration of the cosmogonic language in what follows the recurrence of the *iunctura*, the implication is clear: through the parallel, Memnon's pyre becomes a cosmos in miniature, consumed in world-ending flame just prior to the cosmogonic process beginning anew in the next line. *Ekpyrōsis* precedes *palingenesis*.

However, the parallel between the two episodes goes beyond the simple repetition of a phrase. Phaethon's story is closely parallel to Memnon's story overall in Ovid: hailing from Ethiopia,[9] they are cousins, both the sons of celestial bodies and dead before their time; both are the cause of eternal grief for their divine parent, who grows dim at their death;[10] the death of each is accompanied by a bird metamorphosis; both are lamented by a group of sisters; and both their stories end in conflagration. Both episodes even subsequently close with an aetiological transformation of the tears shed for them, tears that become amber and dew, respectively. But the text reveals further points of contact. In particular, the story of Phaethon is itself a critical touchstone for understanding and contextualizing the eruption of smoke and ash from Memnon's collapsing pyre that Ovid details in the following lines.

Memnon's enormous pyre (*arduus*, 13.600), which sends up globs of black ash and blots out the sun with smoke, is strongly reminiscent of the literary topos of the erupting volcano, as established by Lucretius and Vergil.[11] This is not, however, Ovid's first engagement with the language of this topos; rather, his earlier description of Phaethon's midair incineration (*Met*. 2.227–34) draws substantially on Vergil's two descriptions of Etna's eruption, in *Georgics* 1 and *Aeneid* 1, as well as a volcano-like firestorm in *Georgics* 2.[12] But Damien Nelis has shown that a key model for Etna's volcanic activity in the *Aeneid* is none other than the smoldering body of Phaethon in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes.[13] Accordingly, the volcanic language surrounding Ovid's Phaethon seems to reinstantiate and confirm Phaethon as the archetype of Vergil's eruption-based motifs. It is doubtless significant, therefore, that the pyre of Phaethon's intratextual and mythological analogue,

[9] Phaethon's Ethiopian origins: *Met*. 1.778.
[10] *Met*. 2.329–32 (Sun; cf. 2.381–5); 13.581–4 (Aurora).
[11] Lucr. 6.639–702 and Verg. *Aen*. 3.571–82; their imagery, in turn, goes back at least to Pindar.
[12] See, especially, *G*. 1.471–2, 2.308–9, and *Aen*. 3.573.
[13] Nelis 2001: 50–1.

Memnon, also seems to erupt, quite literally, with a cloud of ash, further replicating Phaethon's ekpyrotic fireball even as its process of renewal begins.

Additionally, the cosmogonic language embedded in the subsequent generation of the Memnonides further develops the associative volcanics of the Ovidian passage. Notably, the first word of the generative process, *glomerata* (13.604), is as deeply indebted to the Vergilian language of the volcano topos as to the language of Ovidian cosmogony. *Glomerare* or its cognate *globus* occurs in both of Vergil's descriptions of Etna (*G.* 1.473; *Aen.* 3.574, 577) and in the firestorm in *Georgics* 2 (311);[14] while these two words appear not infrequently in the *Aeneid*, in a variety of contexts, Vergil uses them far more sparingly in the *Georgics*. In fact, in the *Georgics*, *globus* occurs only in the eruption of Etna, and *glomerare* appears exactly once per book, in a sequence of intimately connected passages (*G.* 1.323 [storm], 2.311 [firestorm], 3.117 [chariot racing], 4.79 [bee swarm]). The associations that accrue to the term through this carefully curated recurrence imbue it with undertones of civil war, the myth of Phaethon, and the elemental chaos that is brought on or symbolized by storms, volcanic eruption, and cosmic dissolution.

The Birds and the Bees

It is the *Georgics*' final use of *glomerare*, during the extended bee sequence of *Georgics* 4, that will prove to be a direct and crucial antecedent for the Ovidian *fauilla glomerata* that becomes the Memnonides. Here, the theme of civil war is especially prominent:

> sin autem ad pugnam exierint—nam saepe duobus
> regibus incessit magno discordia motu,
> continuoque animos uulgi et trepidantia bello
> corda licet longe praesciscere; namque morantis
> Martius ille aeris rauci canor increpat, et uox
> auditur fractos sonitus imitata tubarum.
> tum trepidae inter se coeunt pennisque coruscant
> spiculaque exacuunt rostris aptantque lacertos

[14] The volcanic implications of *glomerare* and *globus* are underscored by later engagements with the topos: for example, *glomerata* (Ov. *Met.* 14.212, of the Etna-like vomiting of Polyphemus); *glomeratim* (*Aetna* 199, of Etna's eruptions); *globos* (V. Fl. 3.135, of the flames of a torch held by the volcano analogue Phlegyas: Krasne 2019: 52–3).

et circa regem atque ipsa ad praetoria densae
miscentur magnisque uocant clamoribus hostem.
ergo ubi uer nactae sudum camposque patentis,
erumpunt portis, concurritur, aethere in alto
fit sonitus, magnum mixtae glomerantur in orbem
praecipitesque cadunt; non densior aëre grando,
nec de concussa tantum pluit ilice glandis.

(Verg. *G.* 4.67–81)

But if they go out to battle—for often discord has seized two kings, with great disturbance, and you can always tell far in advance the inclination of the populace, and that their hearts are agitating for war; for that martial bugle of the hoarse bronze spurs on the laggards, and a voice resembling the stuttering blare of military trumpets is heard. Then they swarm together, agitated, and their wings vibrate, and they sharpen their stings on their beaks and adjust their arms, and around the king and at the very hive-headquarters they densely mingle together and call on their enemy with great buzzing. Therefore, when they have gotten a clear spring day and wide-open plains, they burst from their portals; there's a clash; the sound resounds in the high upper air; mixed together, they cluster into a great ball and fall headlong; hail falls no thicker from the region of mist, nor does such a quantity of acorns rain down from a shaken holm oak.

As the bees swarm into battle, the metaphorical storm of civil war that brought the first book of the *Georgics* to a close now becomes realized in a massed cloud of self-destructive insects that behave very much like earlier clusters of wind and fire in the *Georgics* (e.g., *G.* 1.318, 2.306).[15] But it is not just Vergil's own storms that are in evidence here; so too are the winds of Pacuvius' famous storm that seemingly provides key language for all subsequent storms of Roman literature:

tenebrae conduplicantur, noctisque et nimbum obcaecat nigror,
flamma inter nubes coruscat, caelum tonitru contremit,
grando mixta imbri largifico subita praecipitans cadit,

[15] On the parallels between storm and civil war in the *Georgics*, Ross 1987: 135–6; Thomas 1988: 1.120–1; Gale 2000: 69–70.

undique omnes uenti erumpunt, saeui existunt turbines,
feruit aestu pelagus.

(Pacuvius, *Teucer* 356–60 Wa. = fr. 239.4–8 Schierl/*Incert*. 45.4–8 [412–16] R^3)

The shadows redouble, and the blackness of night and storm clouds blinds us; flame flashes amidst the clouds; the sky shivers with thunder; hail mixed with sheets of rain falls of a sudden headlong; everywhere all the winds burst forth; raving whirlwinds spring into existence; the sea seethes and heaves.

In addition to the clear recollection of Pacuvius' language and imagery, Vergil's structural imitation in *G.* 4.78–80 of Pacuvius' pervasive asyndetic parataxis strongly reinforces the echo. Later, Vergil will further concretize the bees' place within the epic's nexus of storm, volcanism, and civil war through a comparison with the Cyclopes at their forges under Etna (*G.* 4.170–5), thereby returning us to the portentous image of Etna erupting in *Georgics* 1.[16]

Against this background, Ovid's Memnonides should ring multiple bells of stormy and volcanic familiarity for a reader of the *Georgics*. As though replicating the action of Vergil's bees, they mass into a dense cluster in midair (*Met*. 13.604–5 ~ *G.* 4.79–80), split into two groups (*Met*. 13.612–13 ~ *G.* 4.67–8), make use of their *rostra* and limbs to wage civil war (*Met*. 13.613 ~ *G.* 4.74), and fall from the sky (*Met*. 13.615 ~ *G.* 4.80). Thus, like Memnon's collapsing pyre that generates them, the Memnonides suggestively replicate Vergil's narratives of storm and fire and even Etna itself, especially through their compact denseness and their aggression. Moreover, it is not just the "Roman" bees from the opening of *Georgics* 4 that the Memnonides imitate;[17] their gradual transformation from shapeless black smoke to feathered birds and the transmutation of heat into life recall the miraculous creation of bees in Egypt through the process of *bugonia*:

interea teneris tepefactus in ossibus umor
aestuat, et uisenda modis animalia miris,
trunca pedum primo, mox et stridentia pennis,
miscentur, tenuemque magis magis aera carpunt,

[16] See also Farrell 1991: 248–51 on the stormy and volcanic language that accrues to the bees.

[17] On the first bees of *G.* 4 as specifically representing Romans, see, for example, Perkell 1978; W. R. Johnson 1984; and Morley 2007; however, cf. the counter-remarks of Geue 2018: 126, with bibliography.

donec ut aestiuis effusus nubibus imber
erupere.

(Verg. *G.* 4.308–13)

Meanwhile, the warmed moisture seethes within their soft bones, and animals of marvelous fashion, a sight to see, at first bereft of feet, but soon whirring on wings, swarm together, and more and more of them take to the thin air, until they have burst forth like rain poured from summer clouds.

atra fauilla uolat glomerataque corpus in unum
densetur faciemque capit sumitque calorem
atque animam ex igni; leuitas sua praebuit alas.
et primo similis uolucri, mox uera uolucris
insonuit pennis; pariter sonuere sorores
innumerae, quibus est eadem natalis origo.

(Ov. *Met.* 13.604–9, translated earlier)

Accordingly, both the Memnonides' generation and subsequent destruction become distinctly bee-like. But why give such an apian shape to this avian metamorphosis?

Recent critical work on Ovid's own versions of the *bugonia*, I propose, should help to give us an insight. As Myrto Garani and Charles Ham have both argued, Ovid's two-line condensation of the *bugonia* in the *Fasti* encodes the Empedoclean idea that unity fragments into plurality under the cosmic influence of Strife: *feruent examina putri/de boue: mille animas una necata dedit* ("swarms boil from the rotted cow: one slain produced a thousand souls," *Fast.* 1.379–80).[18] Both scholars extend this reading into an understanding of the *bugonia* as allegorizing the transmigration of souls, and thence to the question of societal regeneration, in both the Vergilian and Ovidian accounts of the phenomenon.[19] Not only are the same implications available here, but such a reading also gives further meaning to *glomerata*, further meaning to the traces of cosmogonic process that Myers identified in the Memnonides' generation, and further meaning to the Memnonides' yearly battle.

[18] Garani 2013: 244–53; Ham 2013: 271–95. On Empedoclean thought in Ovid's work, see also Ham (Chapter 8), Hardie (Chapter 16), Myers (Chapter 12), and Williams (Chapter 15) in this volume.

[19] Outside of the Empedoclean context, Farrell 1991: 262–72 and L. Morgan 1999: 105–44 likewise explore the philosophical background of the *bugonia*'s connections with metensomatosis and the rebirth of society.

To say that *glomerare* is a cosmogonic word, in Ovid, is indisputable; to suggest that its hints of rotundity can have an Empedoclean resonance should be equally acceptable. In particular, the *Fasti*'s distinctly Empedoclean Janus explains how, in the guise of Chaos, he began as a pan-elemental *globus* (*Fast.* 1.111), the shape produced by the action of *glomeratio*[20] and, as an optimal translation of σφαῖρα, undoubtedly significant in the deeply Empedoclean context of the passage.[21] In the Memnon episode, the adherence to an Empedoclean process, kick-started by *glomerare*, is remarkably detailed. A single body is produced by the compacting ash (*glomerataque corpus in unum/densetur*, *Met.* 13.604–5), and like Janus, it takes on features (*faciemque capit*, 13.605; cf. *in faciem redii*, *Fast.* 1.112). This single body, with its emphatically single genesis (*eadem natalis origo*, 13.609), then fragments into multiplicity (*uolucris* [sg.], 13.607 → *sorores/innumerae*, 13.608–9), much like Janus' single heap of elements under the action of strife (*aer et quae tria corpora restant/ . . . unus aceruus erat./ut semel haec rerum secessit lite suarum . . . / . . . massa*, *Fast.* 1.105–8), and subsequently separates into groups (*seducunt castra . . . /tum duo diuersa populi de parte*, *Met.* 13.611–12).[22] Strife ensues, as they wage war (*bella gerunt . . . iras/exercent . . . aduersaque pectora lassant*, 13.613–14). And, importantly, the sequence ends with repetition: every year the whole process will occur again (*rebellant*, 13.619). The generation of the Memnonides is not simply cosmogonic; it is a fundamentally encapsulated Empedoclean cosmogonic process.

Before exploring how this philosophical imposition on the innate cyclicality of the event impacts our interpretation of the episode, let us consider some Empedoclean fragments that seem to resonate particularly closely with Ovid's language and may, therefore, contribute further to our understanding. To begin with, the progressive transformation from particulate ash to singular body to plurality of birds is clearly suggestive of the constant exchange between one and many that pervades various fragments of Empedocles, including our longest surviving passage, which begins:

[20] *Globus*, not its cognate *glomus*, is the generic term; *glomus* is used almost exclusively of balls of wool (*TLL* s.vv. *globus*, *glomero*, and *glomus*).

[21] Pfligersdorffer 1973: 187, citing Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.47, followed by Harrauer 2007: 133–4 and Ham 2013: 227; cf. Pascal 1905: 135 on Ovid's Empedoclean sphericity (including *glomerauit*) in the *Met.* creation episode. On Janus' Empedoclean features, see also P. Hardie 1991, 1992, Ham 2013: 221–36, and Williams (Chapter 15) in this volume.

[22] We should also note the shift from *consonus* (13.610) to *seducunt* (13.611) and *diuersa* (13.612); cf. P. Hardie 2015b: 309.

δίπλ᾽ ἐρέω τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἓν ηὐξήθη μόνον εἶναι
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ᾽ αὖ διέφυ πλέον᾽ ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι.
δοιὴ δὲ θνητῶν γένεσις, δοιὴ δ᾽ ἀπόλειψις· 235
τὴν μὲν γὰρ πάντων ξύνοδος τίκτει τ᾽ ὀλέκει τε,
ἡ δὲ πάλιν διαφυομένων θρεφθεῖσα διέπτη.
(Empedocles D73.233–7 L-M/B17.1–5 D-K)[23]

I shall speak in duplicate: for at one time they expanded to be one thing alone, from multiple things, and at another time again they grew apart to be multiple things, from one; and double is the genesis of mortals, and double their end. For the coalescence of all things both begets their genesis and destroys it, but conversely, as things grow apart, their end, once it has been brought to maturity, flies away.

While this concept of alternating union and separation is repeated in a multiplicity of variants and reprises throughout the fragment, describing the interchanges of the four elements under the controlling actions of Love and Strife, a few formulations stand out. In particular, ταῦτα γὰρ ἴσά τε πάντα καὶ ἥλικα γένναν ἔασι ("for these are all equal and of the same age in respect to birth," D73.258/B17.27), which re-emphasizes the shared eternity and equality of the elements, is strikingly close to *eadem natalis origo* (*Met*. 13.609), a phrase that underscores the sameness of the Memnonides and their existence. Furthermore, Empedocles' line leads directly into his assertion that the cycle of the elements' fluctuating dominance and subordination continues for eternity (D73.260–6/B17.29–35)—much like the ever-recurring yearly battle of the birds.[24] Even the very creation of the birds out of the destruction of something else is suggestive of Empedocles' assertion that nothing is truly destroyed, but only becomes something new (D73.263–6/B17.32–5).[25]

The exchange between one and many is an obvious context in which to find straightforward Empedoclean parallels with Ovid's passage; there are, however, additional fragments of Empedocles that resonate. When Empedocles

[23] I provide the numeration of both Laks-Most (L-M) and Diels-Kranz (D-K), in that order, throughout.

[24] Cf. especially περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο (D73.260/B17.29) with *cum sol duodena peregit/signa* (*Met*. 13.618–19).

[25] Obviously this is a principle of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, later emphasized in the Empedoclean Speech of Pythagoras, and it draws on Epicurean ideas of eternally recombining atoms as well as on Empedocles.

describes the creation of the first humans, at an indeterminate point in his poem(s), their genesis is likewise similar:

> νῦν δ' ἄγ', ὅπως ἀνδρῶν τε πολυκλαύτων τε γυναικῶν
> ἐννυχίους ὅρπηκας ἀνήγαγε κρινόμενον πῦρ,
> τῶνδε κλύ'· οὐ γὰρ μῦθος ἀπόσκοπος οὐδ' ἀδαήμων.
> οὐλοφυεῖς μὲν πρῶτα τύποι χθονὸς ἐξανέτελλον,
> ἀμφοτέρων ὕδατός τε καὶ ἴδεος αἶσαν ἔχοντες·
> τοὺς μὲν πῦρ ἀνέπεμπε θέλον πρὸς ὁμοῖον ἱκέσθαι,
> οὔτε τί πω μελέων ἐρατὸν δέμας ἐμφαίνοντας
> οὔτ' ἐνοπὴν οἷόν τ' ἐπιχώριον ἀνδράσι γυῖον.
>
> (Empedocles D157/B62)

> But come now, how separating fire led up the saplings, at night, of men and much-wailing women, hearken to these things: for my story does not stray from the mark, nor is it ignorant. First, whole-natured images sprang up from the earth, having a share of both water and warmth; fire kept sending them up, wanting to reach its likeness [i.e., the sun or *aether*], though they as yet displayed neither a lovely body of limbs nor vocalization and such a member as is inherent to men.

Fire, here, is the driving force of the as yet undifferentiated mortals rising from the earth, much as fire causes Ovid's proto-bird cloud to rise (*Met*. 13.605–6),[26] while Empedocles' emphasis on the lamentation of women prefigures the lamentation of the Memnonides (*Met*. 13.610–11). Likewise, his comment that the early whole-natured forms did *not* yet possess figuration or voice anticipates Ovid's description of the process of the ash cloud's metamorphosis, wherein it gains both figuration and voice. The genesis of the Memnonides clearly recapitulates ontogeny as well as cosmogony.

[26] Aëtius' summary of Empedocles' zoogony, where he describes the genesis of birds, likewise resonates: τὰ δ' εἰς ἀέρα ἀναπτῆναι, ἕως ἂν πυρῶδες ἔχῃ τὸ πλέον ("and some flew up into the air, so long as they contained more fiery substance," D151/A72). Kingsley 1995: 50–3 and 78 sees D157/B62 and D102/B51 as suggesting that volcanic action is implicated in the generation of the first living beings and the celestial bodies (cf. D111/A69 on the volcanic origin of cliffs, promontories, and boulders); if this is so, the volcanic imagery of Memnon's pyre takes on a significant additional dimension.

Misty Moisty Mornings

A further set of parallels can be drawn not with Empedocles himself, but with his undeniable heir, Lucretius, in a passage that is likely to be deeply indebted to the Sicilian poet-philosopher, the cosmogony of *De rerum natura* 5.[27] We have already seen some important interplay between the genesis of the Memnonides and Lucretius' cosmogony, and in this section I shall revisit those allusions more closely and adduce some additional intertexts.

As I mentioned previously, the initial collapse of Memnon's pyre looks back to the potential collapse of the walls of the world (*moenia caeli*, *Met*. 2.401) after Phaethon's ride, following which the coils of smoke rising from the collapsed pyre are likened to mists rising off a river. This simile, as I noted earlier, is directly indebted to Lucretius' simile-analogy of morning mists, which he uses to illustrate the process of lightweight atoms being squeezed out from the initial cosmic storm to form the sea, the celestial bodies (stars, sun, moon), and the walls of the world (*magni moenia mundi*, Lucr. 5.454). Again, we can see just how thoroughly Ovid begins to recreate his metaphorical cosmos, through allusion both to his own text and to Lucretius', in the very instant following its destruction. However, a key phrase that Ovid borrows from Lucretius at this point, *exhalant nebulas* (*Met*. 13.603; cf. Lucr. 5.463), appears elsewhere in both Lucretius and Ovid, as well as in Vergil.[28] These several uses will help to shape our understanding of the phrase's reception here.

Lucretius' other use of the phrase occurs earlier in the same book, describing the sunbaked earth emitting clouds of dust in "a kind of 'earth-cycle'":[29]

> principio pars terrai nonnulla, perusta
> solibus assiduis, multa pulsata pedum ui,
> pulueris exhalat nebulam nubisque uolantis
> quas ualidi toto dispergunt aere uenti.
>
> (Lucr. 5.251–4)

[27] See especially Garani 2007: 146–50 and Campbell 2003 for Lucretius' debt to Empedocles in this and the following section of *De rerum natura* 5.

[28] These are the phrase's only surviving uses in Augustan and pre-Augustan literature; in later poetry, Lucan uses it once and Silius three times, all in clear combinatorial allusion to Lucretius and Ovid.

[29] Gale 2009: 129.

> First of all, no small part of the earth, burned to a crisp by constant suns, pounded by a great force of feet, exhales a mist of dust and billowing clouds which the strong winds disperse throughout the whole air.

Here, the atomized soil is constantly replaced by new soil, the earth being both genesis and grave for everything (5.259); the next section of the text (5.261–72) describes the analogous water cycle of groundwater → surface water → clouds → rain. Lucretius' reuse of the phrase 200 lines later (5.463), describing mists that rise from bodies of water, therefore helps to analogize further the two processes (as does his mention of the earth "smoking," presumably with mist and evaporating dew, in the following line, *ipsaque ut interdum tellus fumare uidetur*, 5.464). Vergil's one echo seems to pick up on this inverted parallelism: his *exhalat nebulam* (*G.* 2.217) describes the haze of condensation that shimmers above the rich volcanic loam of Campania (*G.* 2.217–25). But Campania is better known for another type of terrestrial emanation, the sulfurous, poisonous, and bird-killing vapors of its volcanic terrain, and this context is where Ovid squarely locates his own four repetitions of the phrase, suggesting that he sees the availability of such an interpretation in his readings of Vergil and Lucretius.

Ovid's three uses of *exhalare nebulam* outside of the Memnon episode describe the misty Styx (*Styx nebulas exhalat iners*, "sluggish Styx exhales mists," *Met*. 4.434), the mists of Sleep's kingdom (*nebulae caligine mixtae/ exhalantur humo*, "mists mixed with gloom are exhaled from the ground," *Met*. 11.595–6), and a mist called up by Circe's magic (*densetur carmine caelum/et nebulas exhalat humus*, "the sky is thickened by her spell, and the ground exhales mists," *Met*. 14.369–70). They form a progression: the first is in the context of the actual path to Hades (*Met*. 4.432–45), the next is a neighboring region (*Met*. 11.592–615), and the last is an evocation of the infernal region upon the earth's surface (*Met*. 14.365–71, continued at 14.403–15).[30] However, the description of Sleep's realm alludes particularly strongly to Vergil's Campanian Avernus in *Aeneid* 6, and indeed locates it nearby (*prope Cimmerios*, *Met*. 11.592),[31] while the description of Circe's magic draws on the cosmogonic, stormy, and quasi-volcanic language of "underweaving" the sky or sun with clouds (*patrio capiti bibulas subtexere nubes*, *Met*. 14.368; cf. *subtexunt nubila caelum*, Lucr. 5.466, *subtexit caerula nimbis*, Lucr. 6.482,

[30] Cf. Myers 2009 *ad* Ov. *Met.* 14.370.

[31] The Cimmerians as dwelling alongside Lake Avernus: Lycoph. *Alex*. 695–6, Strabo 5.4.5, §244, Sil. *Pun*. 12.120–37.

caelum subtexere fumo, Verg. *Aen*. 3.582). We can, accordingly, see the cosmogonic and volcanic elements of Memnon's pyre as helping not just to incorporate our target use of *exhalare nebulam* (Ovid's only direct adaptation of the Lucretian simile) within the broader Ovidian sequence of repetitions, but also to reify and expand the significance and scope of that sequence.

We must grant that, on one level, the coalescing mists create an eschatological frame for this conclusion to the Memnon episode—an appropriate touch, given Aurora's plea to Jupiter to honor her son in death (*Met*. 13.587–99).[32] In addition, however, the same Lucretian atomic processes that, by suggestive extension, elsewhere create the sulfurous, bird-killing fumes of Campanian Avernus[33] here turn out instead, paradoxically, to create birds which temporarily take on life before succumbing to death, with the same ongoing interchange of life and death promised *ad infinitum*. Perhaps we should see in this an echo of Lucretius' simultaneously constructive and destructive atomics, or else take the implicit eschatological frame as grounding a reading of the Memnonides as a metaphor for the reincarnated soul, as is suggested by their Empedoclean overtones and their analogy to the ox-born bees of the *bugonia*. But the overall implications are unchanged: birth, death, and even chaos are part of an ongoing process, the same ongoing process that makes and unmakes the cosmos.

To return to Ovid's more immediate Lucretian intertexts in the Memnonides passage, the next section to consider is the process of the ash's agglomeration and densification. Here, *glomerataque corpus in unum/densetur* (13.604–5), describing the confluence of ash particles to form the proto-Memnonides, is strongly suggestive of Lucretius' line from somewhat later in his cosmography, *inde coire globum quasi in unum et conficere orbem* (5.665), describing the confluence of heat particles to form the rising sun. As Garani has noted, Lucretius frames this process in terms identical to his cosmogonic processes two hundred lines earlier, where the ethereal *moenia mundi* are formed out of lightweight atoms;[34] the two are thus analogized, and Ovid's juxtaposition of allusions to both passages suggests that he noticed the same parallel. It may also be, of course, that both Lucretius

[32] According to Proclus' summary of the *Aethiopis*, Zeus granted Memnon immortality in response to Eos' request.

[33] Poison atoms rising from the earth: Lucr. 6.816–20 (cf. 6.476–82). The birds' death above Avernus analogized to the formation of storm clouds: Lucr. 6.492/839. On the parallel atomic processes of *De rerum natura* 6, see esp. Jope 1989. Vergil's bees, anticipating the Memnonides, fall just like the birds killed by Avernus: *praecipitesque cadunt* (Lucr. 6.744/Verg. *G*. 4.80).

[34] Garani 2007: 148.

and Ovid are indebted to a shared source wherein the two are already analogized, most likely Empedocles;[35] after all, it is strikingly apparent from surviving fragments and paraphrases of Empedocles that these several passages of Lucretius' description of the cosmos and its formation (5.449–508) are distinctly Empedoclean in flavor.[36] Either way, however, the Memnonides seem to replicate not just cosmogenesis, but also heliogenesis.[37]

Here Comes the Sun

The solar inflections of Memnon's narrative—appropriate for a tale that, of necessity, occurs at dawn—also connect with Memnon's final analogue in the epic. As previously noted, Papaioannou has argued for an analogical triangulation between the cremation of Memnon, the destruction of Troy, and the destruction of Ardea; and she and other critics have read both Troy and Ardea as parallels for Rome herself, the reborn Troy.[38] Adding to these narratives of destruction and rebirth is the story of the self-perpetuating phoenix in Pythagoras' speech. This bird, as Hardie observes, can be associated with five potentially interconnected ideas at this point in Ovid's epic:[39] the reincarnation of the soul; the poet's survival beyond his own death;[40] the rebirth of Troy as Rome;[41] the death and apotheosis of the emperor; and the theme of (preferably self-replicating) succession.[42] Through the phoenix's analogical parallel with Memnon (and the Memnonides), however, and thence to Phaethon,[43]

[35] We can compare the Speech of Pythagoras in *Met*. 15, which, as P. Hardie 2009: 143 notes, often simultaneously alludes to Lucretius and Empedocles.

[36] So, for example, D99/A49 ~ esp. Lucr. 5.458–9, 5.465–70, 5.483–6, 5.490–505; D122/B38 ~ esp. Lucr. 5.483–6; D147a/B55 ~ esp. Lucr. 5.486–8; D147d/A66a ~ esp. Lucr. 5.486–8. However, we cannot fail to notice that Lucretius' cosmogony in these lines also corresponds closely to the anonymous atomist cosmogony at Aët. 1.4 (= [Plut.] 878c4–879a1), for which, see the discussion in Bakker 2016: 224–35.

[37] As the more precise context for Lucretius' description of sun formation is an Epicurean theory that posits a daily process of the sun's destruction at its setting and recreation at its rising (cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Pyth*. 92; see also Bakker 2016: 52), the cyclicality of the Memnonides' destruction and creation is further amplified by this intertext.

[38] See Papaioannou 2003, 2005: 194–7, 2007: 260 nn. 553–4; also, for example, P. Hardie 2015b: 324. J. Henderson 2000: 1–12 argues that Ovid writes Ardea into the narrative as an intrusion on behalf of all the Italian cities that Vergil had written out of his narrative, victims of Rome's imperial monopoly.

[39] P. Hardie 2015b: 533–4.

[40] See P. Hardie 1997: 194; Vial 2008; Nelson Hawkins forthcoming.

[41] On Rome as the reborn Troy in Augustan literature more generally, see, for example, C. S. Kraus 1994; P. Hardie 2013; and Stok 2017, with bibliography.

[42] On the phoenix as the type of hoped-for Julian succession, see P. Hardie 1997: 194; on succession, Pasco-Pranger 2006: 50–64 and Krasne 2016.

[43] The link between the phoenix and Phaethon can easily be drawn in any case; Nelson Hawkins forthcoming calls Phaethon "a failed phoenix."

we can add to this list several more of the phoenix's traditional associations: with the sun,[44] with the Great Year[45] and the inception of a new era,[46] and, possibly, with actual cosmogony.[47] But Ovid's recourse to natural philosophy in the passage leading up to Pythagoras' account of the phoenix allows us to draw a handful of more detailed connections with the philosophical shaping and intertexts of the Memnon episode.

To begin with, Ovid places the phoenix in close proximity to his (or, rather, Pythagoras') actual account of *bugonia* (*Met*. 15.364–7), which begins thirty lines before Pythagoras describes the phoenix. However, the *bugonia* is not strictly limited to these lines: Pythagoras implicitly returns to it after his initial foray through the catalogue of animals that become other animals or take on a shape over time,[48] repeating the Lucretio-Vergilian *nonne uides* with which he had begun the catalogue and introduced the *bugonia*:

> nonne uides, quaecumque mora fluidoque calore
> corpora tabuerint, in parua animalia uerti?
> †i quoque delectos† mactatos obrue tauros
> (cognita res usu); de putri uiscere passim
> florilegae nascuntur apes, quae more parentum
> rura colunt operique fauent in spemque laborant.
>
> (Ov. *Met*. 15.362–7)

> Don't you see how whatever bodies decay from the passage of time and dissolving heat are turned into little animals? †Go on, also† bury the †chosen† slain bulls (a thing familiar from experience); from the putrefied flesh, flower-culling bees are born indiscriminately, who tend the fields in the manner of their parents and are inclined to work and labor hopefully.

> nonne uides, quos cera tegit sexangula, fetus

[44] R. Evans 2003b: 91, with bibliography.

[45] An association available by at least the early first century BCE: R. Evans 2003a: 298 points out the temporal coincidence between the lifespan of the phoenix and the duration of the Great Year (540 years) in Pliny's paraphrase of Manilius (see n. 53).

[46] Van den Broek 1972: 415.

[47] Notably, the Egyptians connected their similar (and assimilated) *bnw*-bird with cosmogony (van den Broek 1972: 15–26), but whether this particular tradition would have been available to Ovid is unclear.

[48] This first catalogue of metamorphic generation (*Met*. 15.362–81) is carefully structured, progressing from animals literally produced from other animals (bees from bulls; hornets from horses; scorpions from crabs) to animals that change shape over time (moths from caterpillars via intermediary cocoons; frogs from, successively, sludge and tadpoles; cubs from shapeless to formed).

> melliferarum apium sine membris corpora nasci
> et serosque pedes serasque adsumere pennas?
>
> (Ov. *Met*. 15.382–4)

> Do you not see how those which the hexagonal wax conceals, the offspring of honey-bearing bees, are born as bodies without limbs and take on their feet late and their wings late?

That this return to the generation of bees is, at least suggestively,[49] a return to *bugonia* in particular is apparent thanks both to the ring-composed reiteration of *nonne uides* and to the clear echo of language and meaning from the Vergilian *bugonia* (*Met*. 15.384 ~ *trunca pedum primo, mox et stridentia pennis*, *G*. 4.310). But in an echo of the bee-like Memnonides, the larval bees here seem almost to metamorphose still further—into birds—as we read, gaining their feet and wings just in time for the next line to begin with *Iunonis uolucrem* (15.385) and setting off a brief catalogue of birds and their development within eggs:

> Iunonis uolucrem, quae cauda sidera portat,
> armigerumque Iouis Cythereiadasque columbas
> et genus omne auium mediis e partibus oui,
> ni sciret fieri, quis nasci posse putaret?
>
> (Ov. *Met*. 15.385–8)

> As for Juno's bird that bears stars on its tail, and Jove's weapon-bearer, and Cytherean doves, and every kind of bird—if one were not aware that it is the case, who would imagine that they could be born from the middle portions of an egg?

It has been observed that all three of the birds mentioned here reprise divinely induced transformations from earlier in the work.[50] But there may be another reason for some of these specific birds to be chosen, in light of the phoenix that follows shortly thereafter: Greek sources describe the phoenix as most similar in appearance to a peacock or eagle.[51]

[49] The mention of the wax honeycomb (15.382) prevents this from fully being a *bugonia*, but the bees' regular ontogenetic process replicates the bugonic ontogeny.

[50] Myers 1994: 156.

[51] Van den Broek 1972: 251–4; the connection is also noted by P. Hardie 2015b: 532–3.

Furthermore, while the peacock and eagle on their own might simply be imagined to evoke a general association with the phoenix's physical appearance, and the doves and catch-all *genus omne auium* (15.387) to evoke its traditional multi-avian entourage,[52] the catalogue of birds is immediately preceded, as we have just seen, by a description of bees growing from larvae that seem in turn almost to evolve into the birds that follow. This sequence, therefore, matches—and thus seemingly embodies—a belief preserved elsewhere that the reborn phoenix begins as a larval form before growing into a bird: *ex ossibus deinde et medullis eius nasci primo ceu uermiculum, inde fieri pullum* ("then, from its bones and marrow, is born a thing that is maggot-like at first, then becomes a chick," Plin. *HN* 10.4).[53] Such a reading seems to be underscored by the final transformation that intervenes between the catalogue of birds and the phoenix, the hypothetical generation of serpents from human spinal marrow: *sunt qui, cum clauso putrefacta est spina sepulcro,/mutari credant humanas angue medullas* ("there are those who believe that when the spine has become rotten, in a sealed-up tomb, human marrow is transformed into a serpent," *Met*. 15.389–90).[54] Like the phoenix larva, which develops from bones and marrow and thus embodies both the soul and material substance of its predecessor, the marrow-born serpent—the chthonic creature par excellence—again suggests the transmigration of the soul as well as the zoogonic transformation of decomposing matter that we find in the accounts of phoenix and *bugonia* alike. Furthermore, as the generation of living creatures from a process of putrefaction and concoction is endemic to natural philosophy, possibly including that of Empedocles,[55] we may see further traces of Empedocles' zoogony underlying this internally repetitive and recollective sequence that stretches from *bugonia* to phoenix.

In considering the regenerative phoenix and its analogues, we must also look to the death of Caeneus under a mound of tree trunks, from which an unnamed and unique bird flies away (*Met*. 12.510–31)—a narrative that is, in its overall shape, clearly parallel to the subsequent stories of Memnon and Ardea[56] and may, in its interpretation, help to develop further those parallels. If

[52] Van den Broek 1972: 193.

[53] As Pliny is paraphrasing an early first-century BCE source (explicitly dated to 97 BCE), the erudite, autodidact senator Manilius, the parallels between Pliny's phoenix and Ovid and Vergil's *bugoniae* seem more likely to originate with the account of the phoenix than with the account of *bugonia*. For a survey of accounts involving the phoenix "worm," see van den Broek 1972: 146–56, 186–9, with the corrective refinement of R. Evans 2003a: 291 n. 22.

[54] A similar point is made by P. Hardie 2015b: 532.

[55] Pl. *Phd*. 96a-b (= Socr. D7 L-M/31A76 D-K) mentions the idea that putrefaction produces living creatures only in association with other theories that we know to belong to Empedocles (e.g., that blood is the source of thought). However, σῆψις certainly had pertinence to Empedocles' theorizings more generally (e.g., D205/A77b, Plut. *Quaest. Nat*. 912b-c).

[56] For example, Papaioannou 2007: 97.

the bird generated from Caeneus' destruction is the phoenix, as Papaioannou and others have proposed,[57] then we have an even closer connection between the phoenix's life cycle and the life cycle of the Memnonides, as their first ever origins become parallel too. And the heron that flies from Ardea's ashes can, perhaps unsurprisingly, also be connected with the phoenix: the Egyptian *bnw*-bird, to which the phoenix was closely assimilated, was usually depicted as a heron in Egyptian art.[58] Accordingly, it is possible to view each of the last four books of the *Metamorphoses* as providing us with another instantiation of the phoenix's own life cycle, beginning and ending with the phoenix itself and, like Pythagoras' narrative in *Metamorphoses* 15, even passing through what we might view as a "grub" stage (the Memnonides/bees) and a "similar birds" stage (the heron/peacock-and-eagle):

	Destruction of . . .	**Produces . . .**	**Analogous to . . .**
Book 12	Caeneus	first phoenix	phoenix
Book 13	Memnon	Memnonides	phoenix larva
Book 14	Ardea	heron	phoenix-like bird
Book 15	phoenix	phoenix	phoenix

The construction of a key narrative through analogic parallels and substitutions in the surrounding text is an increasingly familiar process within Ovid's *Metamorphoses*;[59] here, we have yet another example. But the target narrative is usually largely suppressed in the main text; and so, we must ask, is the phoenix itself truly the focus of the narrative?

Roma renascens

I would argue that it is not: rather, it is Troy's destruction and her rebirth as Rome that suffer occlusion throughout,[60] even while at every stage, and

[57] Papaioannou 2007: 120–1; previously, M. Delcourt 1953 followed by van den Broek 1972: 411 n. 1.

[58] While there is no clear evidence that this visual identification between heron and phoenix was familiar at Rome in Ovid's day, it certainly was a century later (Lecocq 2009).

[59] See S. Mack 1988: 136–41; Newlands 1997a; Gildenhard and Zissos 2000, 2004; Boyd 2006; Krasne 2011: 26–38, 2016.

[60] For instance, Troy's actual destruction is barely narrated (*Met*. 13.403–4, if even that, since editors athetize 404), but as Papaioannou 2007: 209–51 shows, the city is repeatedly destroyed *in*

in every analogue, we can readily implicate Rome and her society. Beyond the more direct parallel with Ardea, we have seen various ways in which the bees of the *bugonia* suggest the regeneration of Roman society, both intertextually and philosophically; likewise, the phoenix's pious journey bearing his father's tomb has been compared to Aeneas' journey carrying Anchises (and Troy's *penates*).[61] To return to the Memnonides themselves, they simultaneously reflect and reverse elements of both analogies: ever reborn as a collective society, rather than an *auis unica*, they piously offer up their own lives in honor of their progenitor, ash to ash, blood for tears, through the bellicose medium of self-directed aggression (Hardie's "pietà dubbia"[62]), even while their origin, from a funeral pyre that (like Ardea's ashes) suggests Troy's own immolation, analogizes them to Rome's own rebirth from Troy.

The looming presence of Rome behind this string of regenerative avian, solar, and cosmogonic narratives in the last several books of the epic poses an interesting potential resolution to a curious fact observed by Denis Feeney: that after Book 2, any "forward references" to contemporary Rome disappear from the epic, until we reach contemporary Rome herself in Book 15, and that "after book 1 these forward references cluster around Phaethon."[63] As we have seen, the heliocentric story of Phaethon is the epic's archetypal—if problematized—inceptive antecedent to its cyclical closural narratives, wherein the distortions of time produced by Phaethon's chaotic ride bring the entire *story* of the universe—and the *Metamorphoses*—to a premature close.[64] Accordingly, we can reinforce recent arguments for the epic's teleological drive toward Rome—but not as an eternal and unchanging *telos*. Rather, Rome can be seen as the end of every cosmic cycle, and Phaethon's ekpyrotic self-combustion does not so much cut short as short-circuit a cycle that had itself just begun. The following cycle will persist until the end of the epic and the rise of Rome.

While there is, notoriously, no indication in Pythagoras' speech that Rome's glory as *immensi caput orbis* (*Met*. 15.435) will be *sine fine*, and

effigie throughout Book 13. This occlusion inverts that of all non-Trojan, non-Roman cities in the *Aeneid* (see J. Henderson 2000: 1–12 and my n. 38 above).

[61] Lecocq 2013: 455–7; P. Hardie 2015b: 535 *ad* 15.403–5. J. Henderson 2000: 12 intimates that the textual representative of Aeneas, too, Vergil's *Aeneid*, with its eleventh hour reprieve from the funeral pyre, might also fit into this analogy of resurrection.

[62] P. Hardie 2015b: 312 *ad* 13.620–2.

[63] Feeney 1999: 27; see additionally Schiesaro 2014: 90–1.

[64] For the distortion of time, see Zissos and Gildenhard 1999.

indeed his many exempla seem strongly to suggest otherwise, the multiple avian parallels further suggest that this is not the resolution we ought to be seeking. If Rome collapses, as the vicissitudes of time and nature tell us must inevitably be the case, even if it is by her citizens' own hands, she will nevertheless be reborn anew and grow once more into her glory. And while it would be easy to imagine that this cyclicality, or the motivation for it, might be an expression of Rome's famously inescapable propensity for civil war, this seems not, in fact, to be the case, as may be understandable several decades into the Augustan Principate. Instead, out of all of Rome's multiple analogues in the closing books, it is only the Memnonides who truly display such undying inclinations toward self-destruction, and Ovid's primary focus seems to be on the process of continual rebirth from the figurative (or literal) ashes.

It is, moreover, unmistakable that the eclectic philosophical framework that anchors this putative regeneration is likewise inescapably cyclical, and I propose that leveraging this endemic cyclicality is a primary function of Ovid's intertextually philosophical program that I have laid out in this chapter. Regenerative cycles are endemic to ancient philosophical and sociopolitical thought;[65] Rome's apparent capacity for eternal resurgence, already a trope by Ennius' day,[66] lies along the same conceptual axis. In all cases, destruction must precede rebirth: the Stoic *palingenesis* is preconditioned on *ekpyrōsis*; the Empedoclean periods of *kosmos* (from our perspective) are intermediary between the two poles of total Love and total Strife; the creative power of Epicurean Nature is identical to its destructive power; and the paradigmatic *Troia capta*, replicated in various *urbes captae*, is a precondition for Rome.[67] Even the quasi-Aristotelian earth and water cycles that Lucretius analogized to his cosmogonic processes, those that Ovid subsequently drew on through his eschatological repetitions of *exhalare nebulas*, are a part of this pervasive cyclicality of destruction and rebirth. And although Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15 merely adumbrates the inevitability of continual change, the true Pythagorean doctrine of metensomatosis—as implicit in the narratives of the Memnonides and the cosmogony itself as in

[65] For a useful overview, Groisard 2018.

[66] Enn. *Ann*. 344–5: *quae neque Dardaniis campis potuere perire/nec quom capta capi nec quom combusta cremari* ("[Pergama,] which could neither perish on the Dardanian plains nor, when captured, stay captured, nor, when burned down, become ash").

[67] On the historiographical topos of the replication of the (destroyed) *urbs capta* as a precondition for the *urbs condita*, see C. S. Kraus 1994; for the notions of temporality that come into play, Feeney 2007: 100–7.

the accounts of the phoenix and *bugonia*—assumes corporeal death as a necessary precondition for life, while the soul itself remains *un*changed.

Famously, an equation of *urbs* and *orbis* exists—in Ovid's own words, *Romanae spatium est Vrbis et orbis idem* ("the span of the Roman city and the world is the same," *Fast.* 2.684).[68] While Ovid's observation applies to spatial rather than temporal congruity, his philosophical intimations that link Rome's cyclicality with that of the cosmos suggest otherwise. Indeed, it becomes clear that cyclicality is as endemic to the *Metamorphoses* as to the *Fasti*, encoded in cycles of cosmic rather than calendrical repetition, and it is a cycle that no one, not the *princeps*, not exile, not even Ovid, can bring to an end. Ovid himself may live forever, in a poetic immortality, but Rome has no need to do so—not when she so clearly possesses the ability (and imperative) to regrow, like a perfect clone of herself, from even the cosmos's total annihilation.[69]

[68] For the Lucretian background, see P. Hardie 1986: 190.
[69] Compare Schiesaro (Chapter 14) in this volume.