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## Empedocles

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher **Empedocles** (c. 490–430 B.C.E.) was known in the Muslim world as Anbaduqlīs (his name appears in other variants, including Ambīduqlīs, Ibn Duqlīs, Anfāriqlūs, and even Benīdīdīs). Authentic fragments of Empedocles’ poems were transmitted in Arabic through citations in the works of Aristotle and his commentators. The translations were often very defective, as Arab translators generally felt uneasy with Greek verse. The Arabs had some knowledge of Empedoclean doctrines also through Greek doxographies, such as the *Placita philosophorum* of Aetius (Hans Dairber, *Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden 1980), but the Arabic Empedocles was mainly a “Pseudo-Empedocles.” Arabic works belonging to various genres—doxography, history of philosophy, Shī‘ī-Isma‘īlī theology, Sūfism, heresiography, and magic—ascribe to Anbaduqlīs Neoplatonic doctrines mixed with Islamic elements. They are said to be taken from a book written by Empedocles, for which various titles are given, none of which is known from Greek tradition

(Albino Nagy, Di alcuni scritti attribuiti ad Empedocle, *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*, ser. 5, 1901, 10:307–20, 325–44).

One of our main sources for this ps.-Empedocles, probably the oldest one, is the “Book by Ammonius on the opinions of the philosophers” (*Kitāb Amūniyūs fī āwā’ al-falāsifa*, ed. Ulrich Rudolph, *Die Doxographie des Pseudo-Ammonius. Ein Beitrag zur neuplatonischen Überlieferung im Islam*, Stuttgart 1989). Presenting Empedocles as one of the seven “pillars of wisdom” (*asāṭīn al-ḥikma*)—distinct from the famous Seven Sages of Greece—along with other pre-Socratics, such as Pythagoras, Thales, and Heraclitus, this work appears to be an Islamicised paraphrase of a lost doxography of Late Antiquity, in which elements borrowed from the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* of Hippolytus (d. c. 235 C.E.) are combined with a Neoplatonic interpretation of pre-Socratic philosophy. The doxography of ps.-Ammonius (d. c. 520 C.E.) was used extensively by al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), who copied almost the entire text in his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*. His chapter on Empedocles, however, also contains additional ps.-Empedoclean

material, probably taken from a longer version of ps.-Ammonius or directly from the latter's source (al-Shahraṣṭānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, trans. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot, 2 vols., Leuven and Paris 1986–93, 2:193–200). Closely related to ps.-Ammonius is the section on the history of philosophy in the *Kitāb al-amad 'alā l-abad* by Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992). According to al-ʿĀmirī, Anbaduqlīs was a disciple of the Qurʾānic sage Luqmān and a contemporary of the prophet Dāwūd (David). In Syria he learned philosophy from “the niche of prophecy” (*mishkāṭ al-nubuwwa*), and he introduced this philosophical teaching subsequently in Greece (Everett K. Rowson, *A Muslim philosopher on the soul and its fate. Al-ʿĀmirī's Kitāb al-amad 'alā l-abad*, New Haven 1988, 70).

Because no text attributed to Anbaduqlīs has survived in Arabic, we have only indirect reports about his doctrine, but David Kaufmann (*Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, Budapest 1899) discovered in three Jewish works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries large fragments from a “Book on the five substances” ascribed to Empedocles. These Hebrew fragments, translated from Arabic, propound the same doctrine as do the Muslim reports on ps.-Empedocles. Professing the absolute unity of God (*taḥḥūd*) and His remoteness from created being, Anbaduqlīs thought that God created (*abdaʿa*) by His will (*irāda*) Prime Matter (*unṣur*), out of which emanate, in a descending hierarchy, four cosmic principles—Intellect, Soul, Nature, and Secondary Matter—and the four elements of the sublunary world. Every principle is moved upwards by the desire to return to the cause of its existence and ultimately to the First Cause. This cosmic process is animated by two opposing forces, love (*maḥabba*) and victory (*ghalaba*)—the lat-

ter arising from an itacist rendering of νεῖκος (strife), in the Empedoclean dyad φιλία–νεῖκος, as νῖκος (victory)—which determine all events in the sublunary world. The human soul is part of the universal soul fallen into matter. Through the teaching of divine messengers, the soul may remember its celestial origin, be purified of the corruption of the material world, and survive after the death of the body. This doctrine of Anbaduqlīs reflects a late Neoplatonic interpretation of Empedocles' philosophy, close parallels to which are found in the works of Proclus (d. 485 C.E.), Simplicius (fl. c. 530 C.E.) and John Philoponus (d. c. 570 C.E.).

Ps.-Empedocles also influenced Muslim philosophers belonging to the Ishrāq (Illuminationism) tradition—in particular, al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and al-Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288)—and to the Shīʿī “School of Isfahan” (of which Mullā Ṣadrā, d. c. 1050/1640, was the leading philosopher; cf. Daniel De Smet, *Le souffle du Miséricordieux (Nafas ar-Rahmān). Un élément pseudo-empédocléen dans la métaphysique de Mullā Ṣadrā aṣ-Ṣirāzī*, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 10, 1999, 467–86), as well as mediaeval Jewish philosophers (the *Fons vitae* of Ibn Gabirol [Avicebron], d. c. 1058 C.E.; ed. and trans. Marienza Benedetto, *Fonte della vita*, Milan 2007). A direct influence of ps.-Empedocles on the Andalusian mystic Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931), claimed by Miguel Asín Palacios (*Abenmasarra y su escuela*, Madrid 1914, trans. Elmer H. Douglas and Howard W. Yoder, *The mystical philosophy of Ibn Masarra and his followers*, Leiden 1978), is difficult to establish, in the absence of strong textual evidence (Samuel Miklós Stern, *Ibn Masarra*, follower of Pseudo-Empedocles. An illusion, *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e*

*Islámicos* (Leiden 1971), 325–37; De Smet, *Empedocles Arabus*, 17–9; J. Vahid Brown, Andalusī mysticism. A recontextualization, *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2, 2006, 69–101). Nevertheless, both share a version of Islamic Neoplatonism that may derive from common sources (Sarah Stroumsa, Ibn Masarra and the beginnings of mystical thought in al-Andalus, in Peter Schäfer, ed., *Wege mystischer Gotteserfahrung. Judentum, Christentum und Islam*, Munich 2006, 97–112; Sarah Stroumsa and Sara Sviri, The beginnings of mysti-

cal philosophy in al-Andalus. Ibn Masarra and his *Epistle on contemplation*, *JSAI* 36, 2009, 201–53, esp. 207–11).

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