
This study of Parmenides, which falls into two parts, (1) a text with translation and commentary, and (2) four "critical essays" (I. Parmenides' Concept of Being; II. Ateheia and Doxa; III. The World of Appearance Described in the Doxa; IV. Parmenides in the Ancient Philosophical Tradition), is not as exhaustive as its title and the headings of the critical essays suggest. The text is that of the B-Fragments only (!); of these, Fr. B8, 50-61, B10, B11, B13-15 and B17-19 receive no commentary at all (Fr. B9-B19 occupy no more than 11 of 165 pages of text, translation and commentary, but are commented upon in critical essays II and III). This is perhaps symptomatic of T.'s evaluation of the doxa-part of the poem. The last essay is almost entirely devoted to an incomplete assessment of Plato's and Aristotle's interpretations of Parmenides; his influence on Pre-Socratic thought is omitted; the doxography proper is dealt with in 3 pages; the Neoplatonic interpretation has been left out. Some of this omitted matter has of course been touched upon at different points of the commentary; a systematic study, however, would have been more welcome. In the commentary T. tries hard to concentrate upon problems of textual criticism and detailed textual interpretation, while he reserves for the essays the problems of systematical importance. This divorce is not very practicable. Many points of wider relevance inevitably intrude into the commentary; just as often, however, we are arbitrarily referred to the essays for further

1) Die Zwischenbemerkung „Achille placa la sua ira cantando sulla φόβο
μεγάλα ι κλαί αύθρῳν“ findet im Text (I 186-9) keine Bestätigung, denn von seinem Zorn ist keine Rede.

2) Auch in den Zitaten spürt man eine gewisse Vorliebe für tiefsernstige
Erklärungen, wie auf S. 2: „La poesia è il canto della Musa: è una rivelazione
dell'essere delle cose, che possono svelarsi solo nel canto, che anzi vivono
per la prima volta proprio soltanto nel canto (Otto)“, und S. 6: „la coartante
misura del tempo è abolita e, per un vedere poetico, tutto si raffigura in una
presenzialità che ha la specie dell'eternità (Stefanini)“. 
elucidation (mostly without the pagination being given, which is a handicap).

All in all, the commentary, although instructive, is rather thin (its best part being probably the 78 pages devoted to Fr. B8). The text is reliable and has a very welcome critical apparatus, referring to more conjectures than does that of the VS; it differs from that of the VS on several points, e.g. in the arbitrary assumption of a lacuna of some lines between Fr. B6, 3 and 4, in preferring in B8, 4 the reading ὠδὸν μονογενέας, and in adopting in B8, 12, with Reinhardt and others, the conjectured οὐτε ποτ’ ἐκ τοῦ ἐνότος (οὐδὲ ποτ’ ἐκ μὴ ἐνότος ms.). For this constitution of the text of B8, T. makes out an interesting case; to the improbable lacuna postulated in B6 I shall return below.

The translation is literal, sometimes to the point of being both arbitrary and unintelligible (e.g. what does “exist for being”—transl. of B3, p. 44—signify? Is it really equivalent to “can exist”, p. 41? What is the meaning of the opaque “dispersing it” (sc. Being) “everywhere in order”—transl. of B4, 3, p. 45—?). Sometimes it is strangely wrong, as e.g. when taking B9, 4 ἐστιν as an adverb (p. 163). The discussion, in this commentary, of the possible ways of construing and translating the text is generally far from complete. Yet a commentary which would be the basis for general interpretation should be exhaustive in this respect, regardless of the consequences: there will always be time to select.

For the reasons outlined above, I prefer to treat the two parts of this book as a unity. The advantage of this is that I can restrict myself to a criticism of T.’s systematical interpretation; for reasons of space, moreover, it is impossible to enter upon a detailed discussion of text and commentary. I may be allowed to remark that, although one often feels bound to disagree with points of detail as well, T.’s assessment of them contains valuable suggestions and on the whole makes profitable reading (this holds also for essay III, which replaces the commentary to Frs. B9-B19). The real weakness of the book lies elsewhere.

One of the most hotly-debated problems in the interpretation of Parmenides has always been the relation between the two parts of the Poem. The Way of Truth contains the doctrine of Being: Nothing is besides Being. The Way of Seeming nevertheless contains a Π. φῶς, stating this to be a summa of the erroneous opinions of men. T. deals with this seeming inconsistency by rejecting any attempt to confer any ontological status upon the world of appearance. For Parmenides, there is nothing next to Being; ergo the sensible world is non-existent. The only aim of the Doxa is to catalogue the opinions of men who mistakenly believe this world