

*verba* of Parmenides' poem, the preservation and order of the fragments, and a discussion of much of the most important secondary literature. The monograph's main focus is the singularity of Parmenides' view of reality: that he is the first thinker to see the need to establish that there are things at all and that he does so by a demonstration. The demonstration's crucial inference is contained in the book's title: By being, it is. According to Cordero, the poem's introduction already indicates Parmenides' concern with methodical procedure, which he takes to be symbolized in the philosopher's journey – his ascent to truth. This is to alert the reader to the importance of the missing subject of *esti* in fr. 2. After a review of the various possibilities favoured by other scholars Cordero argues that *esti* does contain its own subject: 'Parmenides starts from "is" and shows that "is" hides a broader, richer notion within itself, which will be reached only after having grasped the present and undeniable force of "is."' The secret subject is therefore nothing but the 'fact of being'.

It is not possible to sum up the book's further arguments and observations that are based on this hypothesis. An appendix contains the Greek text of Parmenides with the author's translation and a comprehensive bibliography. Whatever Parmenides- scholars' reactions to the book's main contentions may be, it is well researched and full of useful suggestions and references. Even so, the book is no light reading; besides a firm grasp of Greek it presupposes scholarly knowledge of ancient philosophy in general. In short, despite its very readable style (thanks to the translator's admirable job), the book is not an introduction for beginners but a challenge for the *cognoscenti*.<sup>9</sup>

Chiara Robbiano, *Becoming Being. On Parmenides' Transformative Philosophy*.<sup>10</sup> This monograph, which began its life as a University of Leiden dissertation directed by the late C.M.J. Sicking, is a very stimulating contribution. Robbiano modestly calls her book 'an integrated study' of the poem's literary and philosophical features, but what she actually offers is a full-scale paradigm shift in the interpretation of this perennially challenging and frustrating thinker. Rather than taking Parmenides' project to be an analysis of reality that detaches the knower from the knowable, what primarily interests Robbiano is 'the place of the knowing subject in a

<sup>9</sup> This note was written by Dorothea Frede.

<sup>10</sup> Chiara Robbiano, *Becoming Being. On Parmenides' Transformative Philosophy*. International Pre-Platonic Studies vol. 5, Sankt Augustin (Akademia Verlag), 2006, pp. 240, ISBN 3-89665-383-0 €54.00.

monistic reality'. She proposes that Parmenides offers his audience a 'mental journey' whereby 'one who understands Being becomes Being'. If we initially balk at this proposal, on the ground that it is at odds with Parmenides' metaphysical monism and denial of all becoming, Robbiano makes the fascinating suggestion that Parmenides' monism should be interpreted perspectivally, as a way of *learning* to 'see everything as unity' and in that process becoming one with it. In this way, she is able to dissolve many of the standard paradoxes arising from metaphysical monism without losing her grip on Parmenides' challenge to acceptance of the reality of empirical phenomena, substantive change, difference, and so forth. Among many fresh suggestions of detail, I single out Robbiano's treatment of Ananke and Dike which, together with Moira, she is probably right to capitalize and treat as literarily, though not ontologically, divine. The book is up to date bibliographically and very generous in its acknowledgements. She draws effectively on the recent work of Kingsley and Cerri as well as that of such classic authorities on Parmenides as Mourelatos, Mansfeld, Kahn, and Coxon. Only the most rigidly analytical readers will leave this book without having their understanding of Parmenides enhanced.<sup>11</sup>

Giuseppe Scuto, *Parmenides' Weg. Vom Wahr-Scheinenden zum Wahr-Seienden*.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Robbiano's research monograph, Scuto's book, though shorter than hers, presents itself as a comprehensive study of Parmenides consisting of three main parts: first, a text of the fragments with translation, commentary, and word index; secondly, four essays on 'Der Weg', respectively entitled 'Durch das Tor' (the Proem), 'Die Natur des Wahr-Scheinenden', situated intriguingly before the third essay called 'Die Krisis' (Scuto's study of B2-7, and parts of B8), and fourth 'Das Herz des Wahr-Seienden' (on the *semata* of B8); and thirdly, 'Die Rezeption', which treats Presocratic and Platonic responses to Parmenides, but says nothing about Aristotle and later. In the book's end matter Scuto includes a twenty page

<sup>11</sup> In recommending this book, I should note that I am not a completely detached reviewer. I discussed Parmenides with the author before she finalised her work, and, in reference to my article, 'Parmenides on thinking being' (*BACAP* 12 (1996), 125-51), she thanks me for having influenced her approach, especially over the idea that Parmenides identifies being and thinking. However, Robbiano takes the idea much further than I did, and gives it a deeply suggestive meaning for Parmenides' project in its entirety.

<sup>12</sup> Giuseppe Scuto, *Parmenides' Weg. Vom Wahr-Scheinenden zum Wahr-Seienden. Mit einer Untersuchung zur Beziehung des parmenideischen zum indischen Denken*, Sankt Augustin (Akademia Verlag), 2005, pp. 213, ISBN 3-89665-365-2 €27.00.