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Chiara Robbiano. *Becoming Being: On Parmenides' Transformative Philosophy*. International Pre-Platonic Studies, 5. Sankt Augustin: Academia, 2006. Pp. 240. €59.00. ISBN 978-3-89665-383-3.

Robbiano explores what she terms the “transformative” aspects of Parmenides’ hexameter poem about what-is. Her claim is twofold. First, she argues that Parmenides uses epic language and literary strategies to transform the reader into the thinker who ultimately knows all things. Second, she maintains that the “becoming being” of her title is literal: the thinker who knows Being finally becomes Being (her upper case). The two parts of her project do not always ride easily with one another (and Robbiano hints in her preface that the second aspect was a later addition to a project that began as a dissertation), and the first is, I think, more successful than the second.

A virtue of the book is Robbiano’s attention to the Proem (DK 28B1). She returns to it several times, adding layers to her interpretation as she works through its thirty-two lines (using the text of Diels-Kranz). In this, her own strategy mirrors the one that she attributes to Parmenides and his goddess-narrator: the point of the poem “unfolds” as a reader works through the poem, catching the references and similarities to other ancient works, as well as the internal points of contact among the fragments and their arguments. Her analysis of the narrative “I” of B1.1–23 and the “you” to whom the goddess speaks (from B1.24 to the end of the poem) is persuasive: the reader is brought into the presence of the goddess, and the commands to listen, carry away the story, judge by reasoning, and so on are addressed to the reader as well as to the *kouros*. Not only must he cease to be a passive hearer and become an active thinker, so must we, who stand with him.

Robbiano stresses the importance of the *routes* of inquiry, which ties in with her view that we are to give up a mortal perspective and take on the goddess’ view of Being. This, too, seems correct, and part of Parmenides’ revolutionary thought. In doing this we will adopt a certain kind of monism:

The goddess advises the ‘you’ to look at what is the same in everything. Therefore monism is not incompatible with dialogical situation, nor with the existence of people, . . . nor finally with the usefulness of another perspective that recognizes differences. Parmenides is a monist: *noein* is the same as *einai*—if and when one manages to focus with one’s *nous* on Being, to understand it and to become one with it. (129)

The problem is to understand what this means. Robbiano has lovely arguments linking the signs at the beginning of B8 with Parmenides’ rejection of earlier Presocratic cosmologies, and I think her view that Parmenides finds genuine change in fundamental entities impossible (and thus rejects earlier cosmologies) is correct. But when she tries to explain what Being is, and how we become one with it through changing our lives and following a way of inquiry, things become unclear. (It is here that the two parts of the project seem to clash with one another.) She links an understanding of Being with the “fullness of what-is” at B8.24 (130–33) and refers to B16. Yet B16 is a physical description of the limbs of a mortal and the changes in mortal thought caused by changes in physical composition, and part of the *Doxai*. How does that connect with Parmenides’ claim that what-is is full of what-is? What is it to become one with Being?

Robbiano accepts A. A. Long’s view of the identity of thought and Being, and is attracted to Peter Kingsley’s mystical Parmenides, but she has trouble

linking these with her analyses of rhetorical strategy and Parmenides' arguments. She seems eager to accommodate many views on Parmenides (and is refreshingly undogmatic), but not all of these can ride easily with one another. She avoids taking a stand on the "two routes or three?" question, but then has to argue that the *Doxai* (her preferred term for the discussion of the beliefs of mortals) are not the result of a way of inquiry, for that would make them no different from the views of mortals discussed in B6 and B7. This is not convincing, given the links between B1.28–32 and B8.50—end of the poem. Her positive account of the *Doxai* is appealing (it is similar to the view argued for in Alexander Nehamas' "Parmenidean Being/Heraclitean Fire," in V. Caston and D. W. Graham, eds., *Presocratic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of A. P. D. Mourelatos* [Aldershot 2002] 45–65).

The volume suffers from bad proofreading and editing. Names of secondary authors suffer ("Minar" becomes "Minair," "Cherubin" is renamed "Cherubine," Chalmers loses the "s" at the end of his name). There are sentences that are ungrammatical or have words missing, and tighter editing would have pruned repetition. There is an *index locorum* and a general index. Modern authors (other than, oddly, Hegel and Heidegger) are not indexed, an unfortunate omission because of Robbiano's many detailed (and generous) discussions of other scholars' views.

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PATRICIA CURD

Jonas Grethlein. *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias: Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive*. Hypomnemata, 163. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht. Pp. 381. €64.90. ISBN 978-3-525-25262-8.

This book's forbidding subtitle might give the impression that it is too preoccupied with theory to be of interest even to most classicists. In fact, *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias* is at its heart a fresh and insightful approach to the most basic questions of interpretation that the *Iliad* poses as a literary work. This is not to say that Grethlein's book does not contain plenty of theory, but its two chapters of "theoretical considerations" (chs. 2 and 4) are for the most part ancillary and can easily be skipped or skimmed by less theoretically oriented readers. The one exception is the third section of chapter 3 (32–41), in which Grethlein elaborates a typology of four "historical perspectives." It is one of these perspectives, *Schicksalskontingenz*—a worldview in which human hopes and intentions are continually liable to be thwarted by chance contingencies—which Grethlein believes is the key to understanding the *Iliad*.

To begin with, Grethlein sees *Schicksalskontingenz* as defining the outlook of the *Iliad*'s heroes. Although they continually seek to deny contingency through appeals to the stability of historical and mythic exempla, genealogies, and traditions, they are nevertheless forced to acknowledge the ultimate fragility of human life, and it is upon the recognition of this fragility that the heroic *ethos* is based. While this may not come as a revelation to students of Homer, Grethlein's readings of particular passages are often new and valuable. Particularly noteworthy is his elucidation (78–115) of the encounter between Glaukos and Diomedes in terms of the dynamic between *Schicksalskontingenz* and the heroes' attempts to achieve psychological security through alternative, but ultimately less sustainable, perspectives.

Grethlein goes on to argue that the poet himself shares his characters' worldview and that this is reflected in the Homeric narrative in a variety of