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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 1.4. *ELEATIC ONTOLOGY IN PLATO*

1. The Eleatic Ontology

The School of Elea (6th–5th century BC) includes its founder, Parmenides, his disciple Zeno, and Melissus of Samos. They are the first Western thinkers who undertook a systematic logical analysis of the philosophical questions concerning fundamental metaphysical notions, as the Being (τὸ ὄν) and the Not-Being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) in parallel with their various epistemological approaches, leading to the truth or to false opinions.

In spite of the limited extent of texts containing the original ideas of the Eleatic Ontology, the variety of their interpretations and their profound influence on the philosophers during the following centuries, starting from the Antiquity and arriving to our times, are extraordinary. Therefore, they constitute a subject of high importance to be explored at the same time in greater depth and from the larger perspective of the global history of ideas.

2. The EON Project

The EON Project (*Eleatic Ontology: Origin and Reception*) was created in 2018 to complete this gap in the international research. It consists of a multi-volume work, containing original articles of experts, younger and more experienced, from all over the world, on different aspects of the development and the influence of Eleatic Ontology on the philosophical thought of humanity through the ages. It is produced with the support of the Universidade de São Paulo. The work is directed and coordinated by two general editors, Dr Nicola S. Galgano (Universidade de São Paulo) and Prof. Rose Cherubin (George Mason University).

The publication is fundamentally electronic, but some volumes may also come out in print. As the EON project aims at the diffusion of scientific knowledge to the public worldwide, the articles are open-access, and free of charge to all who wish to read them. The site is hosted at the address: <https://eleaticontology.wordpress.com/>.

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Each volume of the project covers a period of the history of philosophy. Volume 1 contains the *Eleatic Ontology in Ancient Philosophy*. Following chronological as well as thematic criteria, the volume is divided into six tomes:

- 1.1. Eleatic Ontology in Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus.
- 1.2. Eleatic Ontology in the Sophists and Pluralists.
- 1.3. Eleatic Ontology in Socrates and Socratic Schools.
- 1.4. Eleatic Ontology in Plato.
- 1.5. Eleatic Ontology in Aristotle.
- 1.6. Eleatic Ontology in Hellenistic period to Late Antiquity.

As Massimo Pulpito points out in the *Introduction of Volume 1: each of these sections studies, in chronological order, a crucial moment in the history of Eleatic ontology, its transformations and survivals, demonstrating that philosophy has had to deal for a very long time with the shadow of "Parmenides the Great" (Sph. 237a) and his epigones.*¹

For each tome, two experts on the specific philosophical schools were recruited as volunteers, in order to invite specialized authors to contribute with articles of high quality and to assume the editorial tasks.

Two tomes of the Volume 1 have already been published: tome 1.1., on the sources of Eleatic Ontology, and tome 1.5., on the reception of Eleatic Ontology in Aristotle (in two parts).²

3. The Volume 1.4. *Eleatic Ontology in Plato*

The Volume 1.4. *Eleatic Ontology in Plato*, had started with two editors who, for different reasons, had to abandon this task. Dr Nicola Galgano proposed to the author to undertake the continuation of the editorial work together with Dr Claudia Luchetti (Tübingen Universität). We both gladly accepted and, after surmounting all kinds of challenges in a spirit of excellent cooperation, are actually happy to bring to light the present volume, containing seven articles of eminent scholars from different countries. Each one constitutes a precious contribution to the better understanding of the relations between the Eleatic Ontology and Plato's theories.

We were extremely afflicted to learn the recent departure of our first author, Prof. Maurizio Migliori (Università di Macerata), an excellent scholar and an extraordinary personality, highly appreciated by the international scientific community. Therefore, we decided to dedicate this collective work to his memory. Dr Claudia Luchetti undertook to compose a special presentation of Prof. M. Migliori. As co-editors of the volume, we shared thus the two introductory texts. Prof. M. Migliori's article had already been finalised and is published here with the gracious permission of his family.

Plato integrates in many dialogues discussions on the ontological and epistemological positions of the Eleatic school, putting them in a multi-faceted

¹ M. Pulpito, *Introduction to Volume 1*, p. 7.

² See also N. Galgano, *General Introduction*.

relation with his own philosophical methods and theories. Some of the most important texts treating, for example, the questions of the Being and Not-being, of the One and the Multiple, of the proper use of the dialectic method to explore the truth, of the theory of the Ideas, are of course the *Parmenides*—where the homonymous philosopher is depicted as a honourable old man, accompanied by his brilliant student Zeno, in conversation with the still young Socrates—the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Euthydemus*, the *Gorgias* et al.

A huge number of works already exists, treating one or the other aspect of the interpretation of these passages and concepts that continue to nourish the ongoing dialogue among scholars worldwide. For example, two of the most important, in my opinion, recent collective contributions to the research are the papers presented and discussed in the IV Symposium Platonicum Pragense (Prague, October 9–12, 2003) and the XII Symposium Platonicum on Plato's *Parmenides* (Paris, July 15–19, 2019); they are largely published in the respective *Proceedings*.¹ These works include also rich bibliographical supplementary information on the subject.

The present collection of essays could be considered as a continuation of the discussions on some of the most important questions raised on the vast theme of the relations between Eleatic and Platonic philosophy. The dialogue remains of course always open, which attests to the actuality and the eminence of the subject through time.

Prof. M. Migliori, *The Different Aspects of the Relationship Between Plato's Philosophy and The Eleatic School*, elaborates a sagacious reading of Plato's works, in view of demonstrating that the philosopher refers to elements of the Eleatic philosophy already in the *Phaedrus* (261c–d), the *Euthydemus*, the *Theatetus*, before presenting as great teachers Parmenides himself and Zeno in the *Parmenides*, the Eleatic Stranger in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Thus the author highlights the major importance of the Eleatic ideas and methods that Plato adopts, revises or criticizes. In parallel, M. Migliori reveals the dexterous use of these data in each dialogue by the dramaturgic genius of Plato.

Dr Francesca Eustacchi (Università di Macerata), *The Eleatic Elements in the Metaphysical Reflection and in the Physical Mentions of the Parmenides*, by a refined analysis of the Platonic text, reveals interesting data derived by various positions of Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus, diffused in the whole dialogue, that are not easily perceptible *prima vista*.

Dr Luc Brisson (CNRS), has already presented in previous works² an original interpretation of the character of Parmenides in Plato's homonymous dialogue, supporting that he incarnates the historical person, who by the term τὸ ὅν in his *Poem* meant *the world*, seized by the senses or by the intellect. L. Brisson contradicts Proclus' position, i.e. that the subject of Parmenides' hypothesis is the One and the verb *to be* should be taken in an existential sense. In *The Ontology of Parmenides According to Plato's Parmenides*, he offers sup-

¹ See *Plato's Parmenides. Proceedings ... & Plato's Parmenides, Selected papers ...*

² See Platon, *Parménide*, tr. L. Brisson, L. Brisson, *Is the World One?* & L. Brisson, *Réponse à D. O'Brien*.

plementary arguments in order to support his attributing a predicative meaning to the verb *to be*, with *the world* as its subject and *one* as the predicate.

Dr Saloni De Souza (Heinrich Heine Universität), in *Everything in Its Right Place: Zeno's Paradox of Place in Part 2 of the Parmenides*, attracts the attention on a theme that hasn't been taken sufficiently under consideration in the definition of the relations between Plato and the historical Zeno. It concerns Plato's multiple and original use of Zeno's paradox of place in the first deduction of the second part of his dialogue *Parmenides*.

Prof. Annie Larivée (Carleton University), has contributed with two articles, each containing a part of a larger study, dedicated to the way in which Plato presents Parmenides as a polyvalent educator of Socrates, not only in the practice of the *elenchos*, but also in the realization of intellectual virtues: *What Socrates Learnt from Parmenides. Part 1. Parmenides' Gymnasia and Socrates' Intellectual Virtues* and *Part 2. Hypothesis, Antilogy, and Philosophical Self-Defense in the Phaedo*.

Why did Plato present Zeno as a master of antilogic in the *Phaedrus*? Prof. Chloe Balla (University of Crete), *Zeno and Antilogic*, offers an explanation based on data mainly from the *Phaedrus* and the *Parmenides*. She supports that Plato wished to defend his teacher Socrates from the unjust common confusion with the Sophists, by underlining his attachment to the Eleatic school.

Acknowledgements

As co-editors of the volume 1.4. of the EON Project, Dr Claudia Luchetti and myself would like to thank each one of our distinguished authors, who honoured us with their confidence.

Our gratitude goes also to the editor of the review *Organon*, Prof. Robert Zaborowski, for his kind acceptance to host the collection of our articles in a special volume. The editorial work was successfully completed thanks to his conscientious and rigorous contribution.

Finally, we address here our appreciation to the general responsables of the Project, Dr Nicola S. Galgano and Prof. Rose Cherubin, who offered us the occasion to participate in such an enriching philosophical experience of international cooperation.

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