BECOMING BEING
ON PARMENIDES’ TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

PROEFSCHRIFT

TER VERKRIJGING VAN
DE GRAAD VAN DOCTOR AAN DE UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN,
op gezag van de RECTOR MAGNIFICUS DR. D.D. BREIMER,
hoogleraar in de faculteit der Wiskunde en
Natuurwetenschappen en die der Geneeskunde,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 29 JUNI 2005
KLOKKE 15.15 UUR

DOOR

CHIARA ROBBIANO

GEBOREN TE GENUA (ITALIË) IN 1972
Promotiecommissie:

Promotoren: Prof. dr. I. Sluiter
    Prof. dr. F.A.J. de Haas
Referent: Prof. dr. K.A. Algra (Universiteit Utrecht)
Leden: Dr. R.M. van den Berg
    Prof. dr. I.J.F. de Jong (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
    Prof. dr. J. Mansfeld (Universiteit Utrecht)
    Dr. P.A. Meijer
    Dr. M. van Raalte
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Aim of the book 1
1.2 Parmenides’ traditions 3
   a. Parmenides and the tradition of the Parmenides Forschung 5
   b. Parmenides as the father of western philosophy 6
   c. Parmenides in context. The transformational side of knowledge 8
   d. Parmenides as a Philosophical Poet. The coherence and effectiveness of a philosophical text 15
1.3 Parmenides’ method in guiding the audience towards understanding 24

CHAPTER TWO. EPIC EXPECTATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIVE TRUTH 35
2.1 Introduction 35
2.2 The genre of Homer, Hesiod, Xenophanes and Parmenides 38
2.3 Parmenides’ epic Poem and its new transformative truth 54
2.4 Conclusion 65

CHAPTER THREE. BECOMING THE PROTAGONIST 69
3.1 Introduction 69
3.2 Identification and enrichment of identity: ‘I’ and ‘you’ strategies 71
3.3 What is the truth-seeker required to do? 85
3.4 Two perspectives 92
3.5 Conclusion 100

CHAPTER FOUR. RESISTING TEMPTATION 105
4.1 Introduction 105
4.2 Choice 106
4.3 The wrong way(s) and the anti-models 114
4.4 Elenchos of the traditional methods of investigation 126
4.5 Conclusion 142

CHAPTER FIVE. MOVEMENT TOWARDS BEING AND IMMOBILITY 145
5.1 Introduction 145
5.2 Effort, guidance especially in the form of sêmata, and the second sêma (B8, 22-25) 146
5.3 From movement to immobility and the third sêma (B8, 26-31) 161
5.4 Conclusion 175

CHAPTER SIX. CROSSING ALL BOUNDARIES 179
6.1 Introduction 179
6.2 Thresholds 180
6.3 The gate of Night and Day and Dikê 183
6.4 Boundaries around Being (knowing subject included): the first (B8, 6-21) and fourth sêma (B8, 32-49) 197
6.5 Conclusion 212

CHAPTER SEVEN. OPPOSITES AND SEPARATION 217
7.1 Introduction 217
7.2 Appropriate foundation of the Doxai on opposites 220
7.3 The Doxai and the Alêtheia must be kept separated 231
7.4 Conclusion 243

CHAPTER EIGHT. CONCLUSION 247
TEXT AND TRANSLATION 262
TRANSLATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY 273
SAMENVATTING 281
CURRICULUM VITAE 290
Preface

The idea of looking at the rhetorical strategies of Parmenides’ Poem has been the fruit of my encounter with the scholar who has been the reason for me to write a PhD in the Netherlands: the late Professor Sicking. I have worked with Sicking for more than a year, and in that period I had the feeling I had found a sensei, i.e. “someone who shows the way”, according to Tom Verhoeven, my aikido sensei. I like to remember both Sicking’s fatherly care, youthful enthusiasm, great wisdom and knowledge of which I could profit in the first stage of my research, and the wonderful atmosphere of his Academic Staff which welcomed me so warmly in the Spring of 1997.

My deepest gratitude goes to the man who more than anyone else has shown me the way: Professor Anthony Long. I have been so lucky to meet this wise and extraordinary brilliant man and to see him once a week in Utrecht in the Autumn of 2003, when my dissertation was in need of inspiration in order to reach its definitive shape. I hope that in my attempt to shed light on the transformation of the ‘apprentice philosopher’ he will recognise the development of some of the suggestions he made both in writing and during our most fruitful conversations. I hope he will not be too disappointed with the results.

I would like to thank:

Professor Mario Battegazzore for awakening my interest in Ancient Philosophy by giving enthusiastic courses on Aristotle at the University of Genua and for sending me to Leiden when I won a scholarship after graduating; Professor Enrica Salvaneschi for showing me how to love and analyse poetry written in almost any language in a rigorous and daring way;

an extraordinary woman I cannot name (see Promotie Reglement) for helping with my first dissertation steps and for behaving as a guardian angel in every sphere of my life since the time when she was the only person I knew in the Netherlands;

Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer for coaching, rescuing, advising, supporting, admiring and protecting me from the times when my book was only a clumsy research proposal;

two more persons whom I absolutely may not thank, whose help in structuring my ideas has been invaluable;

Adriaan Rademaker for scrutinising my chapters when they were still in a confusing stage and assisting me in many other ways;
many scholars at Leiden University and other Dutch, English, Italian, American, Hungarian, Swiss, German Universities many of whom I am (again) not allowed to name, for their most helpful suggestions;

Jackie Murray for efficiently and quickly correcting my English (of course the mistakes that remain are my own);

Kim Fok for designing the beautiful cover of this book;

Gabriella Grosso Robbiano, Isabel Schröder, Katerina Scott, Maddalena Semino, Magali Veldhuis, Myrthe Bartels and Tazuko van Berkel for our most inspiring conversations about the Big Theory of Everything;

all my friends and family in Italy and in the Netherlands for making me feel at home wherever I am;

my parents for showing me how great it can be to do research, for understanding and supporting my decision to live in the Netherlands, and always believing in me;

Magali Veldhuis for turning my life into an extraordinary journey.