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THE "ELEATIC ONE" IN MELISSUS

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Parmenides' goddess allows only one road of truth: *ώς ἔστι* (B8.1f.), and the one and only reality proclaimed in his poem is that of the *ἔόν*. However on this road there are many *σήματα*, indications or even “proofs”—which meaning we prefer depends on our interpretation of the next lines—for attributes which are of necessity connected with the *ἔόν*. One of these attributes is the *ἕν* (B8.6), yet it is in no way given a privileged position but finds itself on a par with many others, like *οὐλον*, *ἀτρεμές συνεχές*, *πᾶν δμοῖον*, *ἀκίνητον* etc., and on one of the possible interpretations *ἕν* would even have a subordinate or subsidiary function in the proof of the two basic attributes, *ἀγένητον* and *ἀνάλεθρον* (B8.3).¹⁾ Cornford's suggestion to consider “that which is, is one” as a tacitly assumed premiss of Parmenides' argument has received little attention and carries no more conviction than G. E. L. Owen's attempt to find the proof for the *ἕν* in B8.22–25.²⁾ Taran, who argues against both of these theories, is himself of the opinion that the *ἕν*—or more precisely *μονογενές* in 8.4, which if it is the correct reading, would mean almost the same—is demonstrated in B8.34–41.³⁾ But the actual subject of these lines is quite clearly stated in v. 34: *ταῦτόν δ' ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκέν ἔστι νόημα*. The uniqueness of Being may be found implied in vv. 36f. where everything *ἄλλο* is rejected; but here again it would have a secondary

¹⁾ As the apparatus in Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, or in Taran (see Note 3) shows, different texts of B8.4 were current in antiquity. If the majority of witnesses favor *οὐλον μονογενές τε*, the reading adopted by Diels, Taran et al., this is not necessarily decisive. It would be defensible to prefer with Burnet, Kranz, et al. the minority reading *ἔστι γάρ οὐλομελές*, especially if we understand *σῆμα* (v.2) as a poetic equivalent of *σημεῖον* (= “proof”, see LSJ s.v. II; cf. Guido Calogero, *Studi sull'Eleatismo*, Rome, 1932, 78 n. 1) in Melissus B8.1, a passage to be examined later. On this view 8.4–21 (note the last verse) would indeed be a full and coherent presentation of the proofs (or *σήματα*) for *ἀγένητον* and *ἀνάλεθρον*. It may not even be fanciful to consider the partiality of later schools for the *ἕν* (soon to be discussed) as a reason why the reading *μονογενές* gained ground. After stating the reasons in favor of the minority reading so strongly—for I think they deserve serious pondering—I admit that I find it rather attractive to think of Parmenides as applying to his Being *μονογενές*, the Hesiodic (or epic?; see esp. *Theog.* 426) word for an only child. In balance I should favor v.4 in the form which includes this word and should understand *μονογενές* as emphasizing the uniqueness of Being, whereas *ἕν* (v.6) would convey its intrinsic unity and thus for a good reason be placed before *συνεχές*.

²⁾ F. M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (London, 1939) 35; G. E. L. Owen, *Cl. Q.* n.s. 10 (1960) 92.

³⁾ Leonardo Taran, *Parmenides. A Text with Translation etc.* (Princeton, 1965) 107, 189ff., 191. On *μονογενές* see Note 1.

or subsidiary function. We shall refrain from further consideration of this problem, because it would take us too far from the subject we wish to explore.

On the cardinal question Taran's position seems to me perfectly correct: For Parmenides himself Being is the central concept and thesis, yet in the philosophical tradition beginning with Plato⁴⁾ he is represented as teaching that "all things are one," or (in an alternative formulation of the same theory) that "the One is," scil. as the only reality. Taran has carefully examined the more important passages in which Plato, as after him and under his influence Aristotle, puts forward this view of Parmenides' central doctrine, and has by analyzing some arguments of the Platonic *Sophistes* tried to explain the origin of this misrepresentation.⁵⁾ We again need not follow him into the details of his discussion but may instead for a moment let our thoughts wander off to later developments, recalling that the *εν* of the Platonic *Parmenides*, i.e. the *εν* which Plato here associates with the historical Parmenides, was in turn to have a very large progeny; for through a pedigree which includes Speusippus and many other intermediary stages it was to become the ancestor of the One in Plotinus' and in other Neoplatonic systems.⁶⁾

Although there is a tendency among contemporary scholars to speak of the "Eleatic One" as something whose historical reality may be taken for granted,⁷⁾ the credentials of this concept seem

⁴⁾ See esp. Plato, *Parm.* 128d1 (cf. d6, 137b4): *εν εστι*; a8 *εν ελαῖ τὸ πᾶν*.

⁵⁾ See Taran, *op. cit.*, 269ff.; in dealing with Aristotle (pp. 279ff.) Taran acknowledges a large debt to the investigations of Harold Cherniss (*Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, Baltimore, 1935, 61ff.). The most relevant chapters in Aristotle are *Physics* I 2f.; *Metaphys.* I 3ff. (see e.g. 3.984b1 ff., 5.986b18 ff.).

⁶⁾ See E. R. Dodds' classical paper in *Cl. Q.* 22 (1928), 129 ff., esp. 135 ff. For further work along similar lines I content myself with citing Philip Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague, 1953, 86 ff., 193 and pass.) and refer for other studies to the survey in H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistesmetaphysik* (Amsterdam, 1965) 12 f. Many historical connections are pointed out by Krämer himself in this book. His earlier *Arete bei Plato und Aristoteles* (Heidelberg, 1959) helps greatly toward a better understanding of the relation between Plato himself and Parmenides. The question when and how Plato in his pursuit of the Socratic *ἀγαθόν* turned to Eleatic ontology is greatly in need of clarification, and whatever hesitations we may have on points of detail, Krämer has contributed much to it.

⁷⁾ One illustration taken from a book of deservedly high reputation may here suffice. G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought* (London, 1935) speaks of the Milesian philosophers as seeking to reduce the "variety of the physical world to one underlying substance" and after reporting some of their solutions continues: "By following up this conception to its logical conclusion Parmenides came to assert the existence of the One, eternal and immovable..." I believe myself—or at least think it probable—that Parmenides followed up a conception of the earlier thinkers "to its logical conclusion" but (putting it very roughly) it would rather be that of something truly real and proving

dubious, if Parmenides, the chief representative of the Eleatic "School", gives it such poor support. Should it be possible that some of our contemporaries are still under the spell of the Platonic and Neoplatonic conception, which though fruitful in its results, is decidedly in the category — so familiar to any historian of thought — of creative misunderstandings? If Taran's explanation is the whole story, the "Eleatic One", being unknown to Parmenides, has no historical validity and originated with Plato. However, besides Parmenides there are two other Eleatic philosophers, Zeno and Melissus. The evidence for Zeno requires extensive investigation, which I hope to present on another occasion; here it may suffice briefly to say that the account in *Parmenides* 127e6–128e4 is not as reliable a historical testimony for Zeno as it is generally supposed to be; for to mention but one of the arguments against it, Zeno's treatise is in that passage said to have been written in support of the Parmenidean *έν*, and we have seen how problematic this concept is; moreover if fragments of Zeno seem to bear out the statements of the *Parmenides*, such confirmation is deceptive, because Simplicius to whom we owe the fragments accepted Plato's testimony as gospel truth⁸⁾ and would, when quoting Zeno, not easily offer anything at variance with that testimony. Zeno then, in short, provides no more, and perhaps even less support for the "Eleatic One" than Parmenides, and the only Eleatic philosopher to whom we may still look with some hope is Melissus.

A study of his fragments shows that the *έν* has indeed improved its status. Whether it has become an entity in its own right may still be a question, but it has advanced sufficiently to receive proofs of its own and in turn to figure in the proofs for other essential attributes of Being. For Being retains the position which it had in Parmenides; it still is the central philosophical conception, and every other topic or question taken up in Melissus' treatise is discussed with reference to Being. Still, as we have said, the *έν* has become sufficiently important to be deduced by special arguments. According to Simplicius the "infinite" both in its temporal and its spatial meaning is the first predicate that Melissus secured for Being;⁹⁾ next ἀπό τοῦ ἀπείρου τὸ ἐν συνελογίσατο ἐκ τοῦ 'ει

its reality by persisting, even though it changes—and Anaximander's *ἀπείρον* would not even change.

⁸⁾ See esp. in *Phys.* 134.4–9 Diels (in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca IX*). A comparison with Plato, *Parm.* 128e6 ff. shows how closely Simplicius here follows Plato's authority. He himself admits this in the last sentence (134.8f.), which Diels-Kranz have not included in their testimonium 29A23 for Zeno. See also Simplicius *ibid.* 138.18–22. I expect to discuss the subject in a paper dealing with the tradition about Zeno of Elea.

⁹⁾ Simplic. 109.19–110.4; cf. Melissus B2–4.

μὴ ἐν εἴη, περανεῖ πρὸς ἄλλο¹⁰). Another fragment suggests (if perhaps not quite so unambiguously) the same association of *ἐν* and *ἀπειρον*, using again, it would seem, the former concept as a safeguard of the latter.¹¹) In B9 the *ἐν* is essential for a proof that itself (and therefore Being) has no body.

Before we turn to still another and rather elaborate proof for the *ēr* in B8, it will be well to examine its problematic and to all appearance rather anomalous role in B7. This fragment is like all others of Melissus preserved by Simplicius (*in Phys.* 111.18.) The words he uses to introduce it have done the understanding of the fragment more harm than good, and we shall later in this paper have to consider their implications. Melissus' own text begins: οὐτως οὖν ἀδιόν ἔστι καὶ ἀπειρον καὶ ἐν καὶ δμοιον πᾶν. The grammatical and logical subject of this sentence can be none other than τὸ ἔόν (if this were open to doubt, the ἔόν would be confirmed by the tenor and text of the entire fragment). In view of the widespread confusion about the “Eleatic One”, we should not miss the opportunity for pointing out that in this sentence *ēr* finds itself side by side with three other predicates of Being and is presumably of equal status. Melissus continues: καὶ οὗτ' ἀν ἀπόλοιτο οὔτε μεῖζον γίνοντο οὔτε μετακοσμέοντο οὔτε ἀλγεῖ οὔτε ἀνιᾶται.¹²⁾ Each of these possibilities must be disproved by special arguments, and to do so is Melissus' objective in B7.2 (*ei γάρ ἐτεροιοῦτο*)-6.¹³⁾ However the first argument professes to apply to *all* changes mentioned in the sentence just quoted, and it is this argument which more than anything else brings the problem of Melissus' *ēr* into focus. In the MSS. of Simplicius (111.19f.) it reads: *ei γάρ*

¹⁰⁾ Simplic. 110.5f.; cf. Mel. B5.

¹¹⁾ B6 (in Simplic. *in de caelo* 557.14ff.).

¹²⁾ For a good discussion of the last two predicates see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 2 (Cambridge, 1965), 113f. The shift from the potential to the indicative should not go unnoticed, although it is easily explained. For after rejecting possibilities Melissus by the last two verbs suggests a permanent and presumably essential condition of *τὸ εὖρ*, its well-being. The words as such are "anthropomorphic" but I do not think they allow any far-reaching inference regarding the nature of Melissus' Being.

13) If there is no exact one-to-one correspondence between these special arguments and the possibilities mentioned in the first sentence of B7.2, we may explain this in part by understanding that *έτεροιούσθαι* covers *inter alia* also the possibility of increase. Another discrepancy is discussed in the text of the paper. Melissus is clearly anxious to fight off *μεταβολής*. This may well be understood as a protest against the pluralists who tried to preserve the eternity of the basic realities while yet allowing for mixture and rearrangement. I am grateful to Julius R. Weinberg for pointing this out to me. See his *Abstraction, Relation and Induction, Three Essays in the History of Thought* (Madison, Wis., 1965) 64f. I therefore incline to think that G. Calogero in his new book *Storia della Logica antica* 1 (Bari, 1967), 206f. underestimates the difference between *έτεροιούσθαι* and *μεταβολείσθαι*.

τι τούτων πάσχοι, οὐκ ἀν ἔτι ἐν εἴη. If we accept these words as they stand, *ἀπόλλυσθαι, μεῖζον γίνεσθαι κτλ.* must be rejected because each of them would pose a threat to the *ἐν*. Thus the *ἐν* would after all have a particularly important place in Melissus' scheme. Is this impression borne out by the more specific arguments which follow? The *γάρ* of the next sentence would suggest this, but the sentence as a whole tells against it: *εἰ γάρ ἐτεροιοῦται, ἀνάγκη τὸ ἐὸν μὴ δμοῖον εἶναι, ὅλλ’ ἀπόλλυσθαι τὸ πρόσθεν ἐόν, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐὸν γίγνεσθαι.* Quite clearly what is at stake is *τὸ ἐόν* itself, the pivotal concept of the whole system; if anything else is threatened and thereby endangers *τὸ ἐόν* too, it is not the *ἐν* but the *δμοῖον*, one of the three other attributes specified in the first sentence where we found them on a par with the *ἐν*.

What is true of the argument against *ἐτεροιοῦσθαι* is equally true of the following arguments (7.3–6). There are two more references to *δμοῖον*,¹⁴⁾ yet none at all to *ἐν*. But as in the argument presented as sample, so in the others too the *ἐόν* itself, not any of its qualities and attributes would pass out of existence if one of the changes were to materialize (in the case of *ἀπόλλυσθαι* this is so obvious that Melissus has not even seen the need of combatting the idea by special arguments). We may quote two more illustrations in support of our assertions: The possibility of an internal rearrangement (scil. by a new mixture) is refuted by the strong and simple affirmation *οὐδὲ μετακοσμηθῆναι ἀννοτόν ὁ γάρ κόσμος ὁ πρόσθεν ἐών οὐκ ἀπόλλυται οὔτε ὁ μὴ ἐών γίνεται* (7.4), and the argument against the possibility of *ἀλγεῖν* runs: *οὐδ’ ἀν τὸ ὑγιές ἀλγεῖν δύνατο· ἀπὸ γὰρ ἀν δῆλοιτο τὸ ὑγιές καὶ τὸ ἐόν, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐὸν γένοιτο.* Now if there is nothing in the entire fragment to bear out the contention: *εἰ γάρ τι τούτων πάσχοι, οὐκ ἀν ἔτι ἐν εἴη*, what are we to think of its main clause? Since it is difficult to accept so glaring a discrepancy between promise and performance in a philosophical treatise – of a school which on the whole marks a considerable advance in the history of logical thinking – I had in my copy of the *Vorsokratiker* years ago put square brackets around the *ἐν*. Without the word,

¹⁴⁾ Both of them occur in 7.4 where the possibility of *ἀλγεῖν* is scrutinized. Guido Calogero, *op. cit.*, Note 1, 70 makes an interesting attempt to relate the specific arguments of B7.2–6 to the *ἐν*: “l'*Ἐτεροιότης* non è possibile perché implica una negazione dell’unità” etc. Such thoughts may of course be supplied, but if they really determined Melissus' own approach to the problem, I can think of no reason why he would not come into the open with them. In his more recent book (see N. 13), which through the author's kindness reached me while I was working on this paper, Calogero (pp. 189f.) seems to me less positive on this question. In the cardinal problem, the relation between Being and One, I am glad to find our views in close agreement with one another (...“anche per Melisso lo *ἐν* rimanga in sostanza quell'attributo che è per Parmenide” 188).

the text *οὐκ ἀν ἔτι εἰη*: "it (scil. τὸ ἐόν) would no longer be" seems to be in complete accord with the argument as it develops in B7. However, finding no reference to anyone who had ever suspected this *εν* of being interpolated, I wondered whether the mistake was on my side and whether I in some way or other misunderstood the point of Melissus' reasoning in this fragment. For that the excessive prestige of the "Eleatic One" should have protected the word *εν* where it was out of place seemed difficult to believe. All the more pleasant was my surprise when in the second volume of Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy*¹⁵⁾ I found the sentence rendered as follows: "If it were to undergo any of these things it would no longer be." This seemed to confirm my deletion.

Since no variant readings are recorded and Guthrie himself says nothing to justify his translation of the clause, the omission seems to have been prompted by the intrinsic *ἀνάγκη* of the argument as a whole. If we do not expunge the *εν*, we have to consider Melissus guilty of a serious inconsistency.

Still, attractive as this solution is, there are two weighty reasons against accepting it. The first is connected with the summary of Melissus' treatise which we read somewhat earlier in Simplicius (*in Phys.* 103.13–104.15). This summary presents our clause in words identical with those of B7, including the problematic *εν*. Shall we remove this word in the summary too? To perform the same critical operation in two different places appears to be a violation of elementary philological principles. Actually the violation looks worse than it is. For what I have called the summary is now generally and rightly considered Simplicius' own paraphrase—in fact, as we shall presently see, a not unbiased paraphrase—of Melissus' treatise.¹⁶⁾ Thus the *εν*, if intrusive, would be not a Byzantine but an ancient addition to the text; in other words the

¹⁵⁾ P. 103 (see above Note 12). For the text including *εν* a parallel would be found at the end of B9, for the text without it in the first sentence of Zeno (*Vorsokratiker* 29) B1 and in Melissus' own final clause of B10: *κυνούμενον δὲ* (scil. τὸ ἐόν) *οὐκ ἀν εἰη*, provided that this is the correct reading. Earlier (1882) in his edition of Simplicius Diels had printed *οὐκ ἀν εἰη ἄμα*, and in the *Vorsokratiker* (or for that matter in any edition of Melissus) *ἄμα* still ought to have a place, at least in the apparatus; for while we may be uncertain how to understand it, we cannot simply dismiss it as unintelligible. As for the manuscripts, the support they give to *ἄμα* roughly equals that for *ἄλλα*. Since *ἄλλα* is needed for the next sentence (of Simplicius), Diels' final decision in preference of it was probably correct, but some uneasiness about the text of B10 remains.

¹⁶⁾ Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (4th ed., 1930, 321 n. 4) says that he in § 138 of his first edition and simultaneously with him A. Papst in *De Melissi Samii fragmentis* (Bonn, 1889) came to this conclusion. Much to my regret I have not been able to see a copy of Papst's dissertation (?), in-

interpolation did not materialize in the archetype of Simplicius' manuscripts, but antedates Simplicius. The text of Melissus which Simplicius used was most probably the copy in the Library of the Academy.¹⁷ We have no way of telling through how many Neoplatonic hands this had passed; still given the persistent preoccupation of this school with the *ἐν*, conditions and environment would be almost ideal for a (conscious or subconscious) interpolation of this word in B7.2.

If the paraphrase in this regard proves not too troublesome, it may in others even help us toward a better understanding of B7. For it shows us the *ἐν* extending its sway farther than the actual text of B7 would even on the most generous interpretation warrant. The section corresponding to B7 begins by announcing *ἄλλα μήν εἰ ἐν* (scil. *τὸ έόν ἐστι*), *καὶ ἀκίνητον* and proves this by declaring *μετακοσμεῖσθαι* and the other changes specified in the same sentence of B7.2 (see above) as incompatible with the *δύοῖς* and by this token with the *ἐν*.¹⁸ For in the paraphrase all these changes (i.e. *ἀπόλληνσθαι*, *ἀλγεῖν*, *ἀνιᾶσθαι*) are regarded as *κινήσεις*, a good Platonic and Aristotelian conception¹⁹), but foreign to Eleatic thought. Melissus in conformity with the usage of his time confines the term *κίνησις* to local movement, whose possibility he disproves in the final section of B7(7–10). For this the paraphrase follows him more closely but Simplicius gives the impression of reproducing a different argument (*κατ' ἄλλον τρόπον* 104.4), not of moving on to another topic.

The misrepresentation just discussed would be of minor interest if it were confined to the paraphrase, but Simplicius has transferred

spired by Hermann Usener?), on which e.g. Diels–Kranz rely in keeping the paraphrase apart from the genuine fragments. We shall presently find additional confirmation for the prevailing opinion.

¹⁷⁾ Cf. Wilamowitz, *Die griechische Literatur des Altertums* (in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. P. Hinneberg, I.8, 3. ed., 1911 and 1924) 283.

¹⁸⁾ How Melissus proved Being to be *δύοῖς* we do not know. He may in fact have availed himself of the *ἐν* for this purpose (as the treatise *De Meliso*, Xenophane, *Gorgia* suggests, esp. 1.4, 974a12f., but we had better not trust it; see next note). We have found occurrences of the *δύοῖς* motif in B7.2–6, see p. 7; yet even if we make every allowance for their importance, Simplicius' paraphrase still claims too much for the *ἐν*.

¹⁹⁾ Cf. e.g., J. B. Skemp, *The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues* (Cambridge, 1942) and my books *Plato's Theology* (Ithaca, New York, 1942) 75ff. and *Aristotle's System of the Physical World* (*ibid.*, 1960) 20ff., 30ff., 175ff., and pass. In the treatise *De Meliso* etc. too the *ἐν* is allotted a larger role than the original text warrants (e.g. in I.5f., 974a 14–23, which would be the passage "comparable" to B7). I doubt whether anyone today would share K. Reinhardt's confidence in the trustworthiness of this witness for Melissus (*Parmenides und die Geschichte der griech. Philosophie*, Bonn, 1916, 90f.).

it to B7 itself by prefacing the entire argument as follows: *λέγει δοῦν δὲ Μέλισσος οὐτως τὰ πρότερον εἰρημένα συμπεριουσόμενος καὶ [οὗτως] τὰ περὶ τῆς κινήσεως ἐπάγων* (111.18ff).²⁰⁾ Clearly Simplicius here too thinks of *κίνησις* as comprehending also the "changes" discussed in B7.2–6.²¹⁾

Some scholars and editors,²²⁾ including Diels and Kranz, have not escaped the spell of the words by which Simplicius introduces B7; their presentation of B7 recognizes *κίνησις* as the general denominator for all changes repudiated in the fragment. Had they realized how misleading Simplicius' sentence is, they would not have treated the argument of B7 as a unit but would have admitted the beginning of a new thought in 7.7. For in 7.7–10 *τὸ κενεόν, ἄραιον* and *πυκνόν* are investigated, *κίνησις* is with their help ruled out of existence,²³⁾ and in the end a decision between *πλέων* and *κενεόν* is made in favor of the former. There is neither an external link nor an intrinsic connection between these subjects and the "changes" whose possibility or impossibility is examined in 7.2–6. We may even wonder whether in the original text 7.7–10 was the immediate sequel of 7.1–6; and if editors, perhaps rightly, hesitate to treat them as two separate fragments,²⁴⁾ at the very least a new para-

²⁰⁾ I have deleted the second *οὗτως* because the first, placed where it is, announces all that is to come in B7.

²¹⁾ If there could be any doubt about this, it would be dispelled by his polemic against Alexander of Aphrodisias shortly before this passage (110.20–111.2). In dealing with Aristotle's question about Melissus: "Why should the One be immovable?" (*διὰ τί ἀκίνητον, εἰ ἔν;* *Phys.* I3, 186b16), Alexander had understood *ἀκίνητον* as relating solely to local movement. Protesting against this interpretation, Simplicius declares that Melissus secures the *ὄν* against all other changes as well. He here (25f.) calls these changes *κινήσεις· τὰς παρὰ τὴν γένεσιν* and in support of his opinion introduces us to the argument of B7 (which he soon will quote). In his view, Melissus, while establishing that Being is unborn, eternal, infinite, One, and homogeneous, shows *ὅτι οὐτε ὡς ἀπολλύμενον οὐτε ὡς αὐξόμενον η μειούμενον οὔτε ὡς ἀλλοιούμενον κινεῖται τὸ ὄν η δὲλως ἐτεροιούμενον*. The sentence makes perfectly clear how many changes *κίνησις* comprehends for Simplicius but it does nothing to improve his case, since in Melissus' own text the verb *κινεῖσθαι* appears only B7.7, where locomotion is the issue.

²²⁾ See also R. Mondolfo, *Il pensiero antico* (21950) 88. Burnet, *op. cit.*, 322f., although differing from Diels and Kranz, does not present B7 in the right form either.

²³⁾ Melissus (B7.7) declares the *κενεόν* to be *οὐδέν*. As the sequel shows, he can hardly have meant to make a distinction between *οὐδέν* and *οὐκ ἔστι*. However to make quite sure that there can be no question of a *κενεόν*—and not even of a *κενεώτερον* (=some degree of void)—he also has to rule out *ἄραιόν καὶ πυκνόν*. Here he, as Guthrie says (*op. cit.*, 104; see also 115), develops a hint of Parmenides (B8.23f.; cf. also 44–49).

²⁴⁾ At least as long as no instance has come to light in which Simplicius runs together passages originally not continuous. His normal practice is to separate such passages by *εἴτε* or *μετ' ὅλη*. In *Phys.* 156.4 he at least adds a *φησί* when skipping some sentences of Anaxagoras B4; *ibid.* 34.25 he leaves out one sentence of the same fragment. See on the problematic

graph ought to indicate the beginning of a different subject in 7.7. And we may as well say once more that the *εν* figures in 7.7–10 no more than it does in the preceding arguments (7.2–6).

To return to the *εν* of B7.2, the hurdle of the paraphrase has proved less formidable than it looked. More serious is the difficulty arising from B8. We have already cited this fragment as containing actual proofs for the *εν*. In this respect it is far more elaborate than B5, 6 or 9. Its specific thesis is stated at the beginning and at the conclusion of the argument in almost identical words: “if there were many, they would have to be of the same kind as I maintain the One is.”²⁵⁾ This may have no bearing on B7.2, but the first sentence of the fragment (which precedes the argumentation) has, and besides it we must once again take account of the words by which Simplicius introduces the fragment. They are: εἰπών γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ὅτι ἐν εστὶ καὶ ἀγένητον καὶ ἀκίνητον καὶ μηδενὶ κενῷ διειλημμένον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐλον ἔαντον πλῆρες, ἐπάγει.²⁶⁾ Now Melissus himself begins: μέγιστον μὲν οὖν σημεῖον οὗτος ὁ λόγος ὅτι ἐν μόνον ἔστιν, ἀτὰρ καὶ τάδε σημεῖα (these further σημεῖα are the arguments operating with the “many”, whose gist we know). What Simplicius says about absence of movement and of void and about the fullness of Being can hardly be understood otherwise than as referring to the second part of B7, where these subjects are discussed and where movement and void are shown to be non-existent. Accepted at face value and in combination with one another, Simplicius’ sentence and Melissus’ own first describe the proof of ἀκίνητον and the decision for fullness and against the void in B7.7–10 as “the strongest proof” ὅτι ἐν μόνον ἔστιν. And yet we must repeat that in the corresponding actual text the *εν* is not at all at issue; as we have seen, the word itself appears only in the problematic sentence of 7.2 and we should have to stretch our imagination more than is humanly possible if we insisted on finding the fate of the *εν* involved anywhere else. Also on a strict interpretation of B7.2 as transmitted the *εν* is not to be proved but to be played off against several other concepts. However, it may be questioned whether we should apply so high standards of accuracy to Melissus’ arguments.

Still if Melissus himself in B8.1 designates as proof of the *εν* arguments that in no way refer to it, second thoughts about this word in B7.2 seem in order. We must not lose sight of this problem,

reconstruction of B4 Hermann Fränkel, *Wege und Formen frühgriech. Denkens* (Munich, 1955) 287 n. 1.

²⁵⁾ B8.2 and 8.6.

²⁶⁾ Simpl. *in de caelo* 558.19ff. Simplicius is here maintaining against Aristotle *de caelo* Γ 1, 298b14–24 that Melissus knew and kept up the distinction between ἀκίνητα and κυνητά or νοητά and αἰσθητά.

although it has by now become a part of a larger and more vexing question. If we retain in B7.2 the text of the manuscripts and accept without reservation the beginning of B8 with Simplicius' introduction to it, we should have to draw rather startling conclusions. Melissus would claim more for the One than he actually establishes; $\tauὸ\ \varepsilon\nu$ and $\tauὸ\ \varepsilonօν$ would be fused (not to say, confused) in his mind and he would no longer know or care which of them is his subject. Altogether he would be very imprecise about the content of his arguments. Reluctant as we may be to go to such extremes, we might yet understand the unsubstantiated claims about the $\varepsilon\nu$ as reflecting the need to defend Parmenides' message against doubts and attacks based on – what could be more natural? – the obvious plurality of objects within everybody's daily experience.²⁷⁾

It seemed appropriate to face this extreme position, yet I believe that we may with a good conscience prefer a different view of the situation. Of a certain discrepancy between what B7.2 suggests and what B8.1 asserts about the $\varepsilon\nu$ we have already spoken. Shall we add that – again by strict standards – the final sentences of B7 prove only $\piλέων\ εἶναι$, whereas Simplicius' resumé describes Being as $\xi\alphaντοῦ\ πλῆρες$? More important is another consideration. In spite of Simplicius' $\xi\piάγει$, B8 need not be the immediate sequel of B7. There may well have been in the original text a few sentences which after B7.9f turned $\tauὸ\ \piλέων$ into a proof for the One. The longer we consider Simplicius' resumé, the more we realize how incomplete it is. It includes no reference to the Infinite, none to $\dot{\alpha}\nuώλεθον$, and none to any of the other changes and experiences which Melissus ruled out in B7 before he turned to the subject of movement.²⁸⁾ In view of this "selective" procedure on the part of Simplicius, we should, I think, no longer regard Melissus as guilty of the confusion and the rather extreme inaccuracy that we envisaged as a possibility in our last paragraph.

Whatever may be right or wrong with Simplicius' reports, on one cardinal point he is borne out. Even where Melissus becomes engrossed in the opposition between the One and the many, his true and principal subject remains Being. The final sentences of B8

²⁷⁾ We may make allowance for such developments without retracting anything of what at the beginning of this paper was said about the essence of Parmenides' own philosophy. Zeno's criticism of $\tauὰ\ πολλά$ is proved by 29B1 and B3 as well as by P1. *Parm.* 127e1 ff. Plato, *ibid.* 128b takes it for granted (or makes Zeno take it for granted) that those who ridicule Parmenides' philosophy believe in "the many". On Melissus' attitude to plurality cf. Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 105ff.

²⁸⁾ Parmenides' and Melissus' positions on $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\eta\tauον$ and $\dot{\alpha}\chi\epsilon\eta\tauον$ form Aristotle's subject in the passage of *de caelo* (Γ1,298b15ff.) on which Simplicius has been commenting for some time; hence his special interest in these concepts.

are so revealing for his position that they must be quoted. Having previously argued that if the many were real and "true" they ought not to change (*μεταπίπτειν*), he concludes: *ἢν δὲ μεταπέσῃ, τὸ μὲν ἔὸν ἀπώλετο, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἔὸν γέγονεν. οὕτως οὖν, εἰ πολλὰ εἴη, τουαῦτα χρὴ εἶναι οἶόν περ τὸ ἔν* (8.6). Nowhere in the preserved material is Melissus' attitude as ambivalent as here. He no longer speaks of *ἔν* (as Parmenides had done and as would be fitting for an attribute of Being) but of *τὸ ἔν*. In fact *τὸ ἔν* occurs also in the first sentence of the argument (B8.2) and, although there the Greek language made it almost necessary for him thus to continue the discussion of what in the previous sentence still was simply *ἔν*,²⁹⁾ his use of the definite article creates the impression of greater independence. Actually the *ἔν* still remains a satellite of *τὸ ἔόν*. Melissus himself in the former half of the last passage quoted keeps close to the Parmenidean position, excluding every doubt about his primary concern with *τὸ ἔόν*. Nevertheless later generations of philosophers for whom the *ἔν* was the ultimate reality might, thanks to this passage,—and there may have been others of the kind in Melissus—have found a semblance of support in the Eleatics. As far as we can tell, they did not even need anything so authentic. Plato did not hesitate to read the thesis *ὅτι ἔν ἔστιν* into Parmenides' own thought,³⁰⁾ and once he had done so, other interpreters of the Eleatics, whether orthodox Platonists or not (Aristotle is after all one of them), would take Parmenides' commitment to the *ἔν* or the identity of *ἔν* and *ὅν* in his philosophy for granted.³¹⁾

An editor of Melissus' fragments would still be justified in placing the *ἔν* of B7.2 between square brackets; if in view of the larger complex of problems he is unwilling to go so far, he ought at least to indicate in the apparatus that the word is under suspicion. For us too the textual question has become merged in the larger as to the historical reality of the Eleatic *ἔν*. *ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν*; this indeed is the *κρίσις*. We have seen to what severely limited

²⁹⁾ Calogero, *op. cit.*, N. 1, 78 n. 1 is probably correct in regarding *ἔν* as the grammatical subject of the clause *ὅτι ἔν μόνον ἔστιν* (B8.1). This too would have the effect of enhancing the dignity of the *ἔν*, even though Diels-Kranz rightly (here and in similar contexts later) by putting an accent on the first syllable of *ἔστιν* indicate that it is not a copula but an existential predication.

³⁰⁾ See the references given in Note 4, to which should be added *Theaet.* 180e2ff. as testifying that for *Μέλισσοι τε καὶ Παρμενίδαι* as opponents of the theory of flux *ἔν τε πάντα ἔστι καὶ ἔστηκε κτλ.* This (besides its repetition 183e3) is the only mention of Melissus in Plato, and it would be desirable to find the passage included in the *testimonia* for his doctrine. In the *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* it is to be found in the material collected as evidence for, and preceding, Parm. B8 (*ad* v.39). The testimonium A26 for Parmenides ought to begin at *Theaet.* 180d7.

³¹⁾ See references above in Notes 5 and 6.

extent it has claims on reality. Even in Melissus it remains in principle an adjunct of Being, although it tends to develop its own sphere of interest. There is no evidence that it ever attained independence.

It would be well if in the treatment of Presocratic philosophy the "Eleatic One" did either not appear at all or—since this is perhaps too much to hope for—if at least great caution succeeded to the reckless use which in the last decades has more than once been made of this concept. For obvious reasons, this field of study encourages hypotheses, and it does not take long for an hypothesis to harden into a dogma. Lest I be accused of giving too gloomy an account, I shall conclude this paper with two samples taken from widely used books (quoting them not without hesitation, but it seems after all necessary). H. D. P. Lee is dissatisfied with Simplicius' defense of Zeno against the charge of having attacked the *εν*. Simplicius "fails to perceive that there are two senses of *τὸ εν* in question and not only one. There is *τὸ εν* in the sense of the 'one being' of Parmenides which Zeno is certainly not attacking, and there is *τὸ εν* in the sense of the ultimate element from which plurality is made up, which is precisely what Zeno is attacking."³²⁾ Poor Simplicius! The tone of confidence in which Lee speaks should perhaps be itself a cause for suspicion; some of the reasons which inspired this confidence have in the meantime worn thin, and while others still call for serious consideration, dogmatic declarations about two quite different concepts of the *εν* would better be avoided as long as there is no firmer basis for this theory. In the chapter on Melissus contributed by J. E. Raven to *The Presocratic Philosophers*³³⁾ the One has usurped much of the territory that the text itself attributes to Being. "The One . . . is unequivocally (!) declared . . . to be infinite in extent as well as in time." Where Melissus from the infinity of Being deduces its *εν*, he according to Raven "argues for the unity of the One".³⁴⁾ After some more information of this kind we learn that "whereas there is no mention in any of Zeno's fragments of the Eleatic but only

³²⁾ *Zeno of Elea* (Cambridge, 1936; repr. Amsterdam 1967) 26. According to *Parm.* 128a-c Zeno's intention to defend Parmenides' position eluded the readers. Since this position is there (a8) defined as *εν* *τὸ πᾶν*, a definition which for the historical Parmenides is not correct (see above p. 4), the readers would have had some excuse if they did not catch on to Zeno's alleged intention (c5f.). For details I must refer to my paper on Zeno (see Note 8).

³³⁾ Cambridge 1957, 298ff.

³⁴⁾ See *ibid.* 300, where a similar interpretation is applied to Parmenides. The views of Raven here quoted become meaningful—but not acceptable—in the context of the elaborate theories set forth in his *Pythagoreans and Eleatics* (Cambridge, 1948).

of the Pythagorean (or at any rate the pluralists') One, the exact reverse is true of Melissus."³⁵⁾ Actually the word *εν* does not occur in Zeno's fragments at all, but apart from this inaccuracy, the statement is relatively cautious. Still since the Pythagorean One is for Raven the "unit-point-atom",³⁶⁾ a ghost by now laid to rest, the opposition between the "Eleatic One" (or "Parmenidean One") and the Pythagorean, of which we read so much in Raven's chapters on Zeno and Melissus, is what the Greeks would call a *σκιαγραφία*, a battle between phantoms.

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³⁵⁾ *Presocr. Philos.* 303; cf. *Pythagoreans* etc. 88.

³⁶⁾ Lee's confident statement is inspired by a similar theory. We need not here review the history of this theory, whose errors were exposed most effectively by Gregory Vlastos; see his article "Zeno" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8 (New York, 1967) 376ff. with a bibliography including his own earlier studies. Another very recent discussion will be found in David Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton, 1967) 44ff.

