

THE RECOVERY OF PARMENIDES' PHILOSOPHY BY J. BRUCKER

Did philosophical knowledge develop because natural philosophers perfected their description of their sense perceptions about the outside world or was it necessary for thought to move beyond inductive reasoning for philosophy to develop? By asking such questions, many historians of philosophy have judged earlier philosophers, and by so doing, placed them into the world of their own historical time, further, many framed their research so their view of how knowledge developed in the past lead them to project the same progress of thought into the future. This lead historians to question texts so that they would give answers that might validate their own philosophical points of view. This essay will examine how the great German historian of philosophy, Jacob Brucker wrote his *Historia critica philosophiae*¹ during 1742-1744 to validate his view that the perfection of the knowledge of the senses drove natural philosophy to develop. Diderot not only found the work pleasing but pillaged it for his philosophy entries for the *Encyclopédie* as Wilhelm Hegel did after him². From then on almost all historians of philosophy read Brucker, although many have disagreed with some of his methods or interpretations; yet as a source of scholarly data it was and still remains invaluable.

This essay is limited to examining how Brucker gathered together information from a multiplicity of secondary sources in an attempt to reconstruct the philosophy of the pre-Socratic Parmenides. To appreciate Brucker's task, we must remember that Parmenides' poem was originally about eight hundred verses long; of those, we have about one hundred and sixty in fragments and another sixty-two in fragment 8, which comes from the commentary the Alexandrian Simplicius wrote on Aristotle's *Physics*. He notes in his text: «I would gladly transcribe in this commentary the verses of Parmenides on the one being [...] because of the scarcity of Parmenides' treatise».

1. J. BRUCKER, *Historia critica philosophiae*, Leipzig, 1742-1744, 5 vols., pp. 730. *Institutiones historiae philosophicae usui academicae juventutis adornatae*, 1749, 1756³.

2. See French edition for the best identifications of Brucker quotes or references. G. W. F. HEGEL, *Leçons sur l'histoire de la philosophie*, Tomes I - VII, Paris, Gallimard, 2004.



Brucker's had several sources, but two are particularly important, and both texts were originally written in English: one, Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy* (1666, 2nd 1683), which he read in a Latin version translated by Gottfried Olearius (1711), and the other, Ralph Cudworth's *The True intellectual System* (1678). It is from the latter he found several lines from Simplicius commentary on the *Physics*. The work was translated into Latin, by the leading Protestant German church historian Lorenz Mosheim who added very extensive and learned notes³. It is well to remember that the first collection of Parmenides' fragments was only published in the last years of the century in Georg Gustav Fuelleborn's *Beytrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie* that appeared between 1796 and 1799 – Simplicius' fragments are in volume 6⁴. How Brucker brought together a plausible discussion of Parmenides' philosophy and why two of his main sources originated in seventeenth century England is the story I am going to try to put together here. Certainly eighteenth century Augsburg is far from seventeenth century Cambridge and Oxford. For Brucker, Parmenides, the pre-Socratic, like Thales, was a natural philosopher, who, unlike Thales, also wrote metaphysics. There is no hint of the extatic trip to the Goddess in Brucker's description of Parmenides' philosophy. What Brucker aimed to do, and I think does quite successfully, is to free Parmenides from an identification with the Parmenides of Plato's dialogues and to give a much clearer definition of his physics and metaphysics.

Brucker, a scholarship student from Augsburg, was sent to the university of Jena where he quickly became close to one of the most learned men of the older generation, the historian of philosophy and church historian, Franz Budde 1667-1729, from whom he was instructed in the method of eclectic philosophy and church history. He was soon permitted to read in the great man's library. At this time, the English Kings were the Hanoverians, and English philosophical, scientific and literary culture was sought by the Germans. The scientific discoveries of the British Royal Society were read about first through the summaries in French and published journals of the Huguenot Jean Le Clerc, who was also a close friend of John Locke⁵. Indeed

3. R. CUDWORTH, *Systema intellectuale huius Universi seu de Veris Naturae rerum originibus, Commentarii quibus omnis eorum Philosophia, qui Deum esse negant, funditus evertitur. Accedunt Reliqua eius Opuscula*, J. L. MOSHEMIUS, Jena, Meyer, 1733.

4. G. G. FUELLEBORN, *Beytrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, Freystadt-Jena, 1796-1799. This was only available to Wilhelm Tenneman only two or three years before the publication of vol. 1: *Geschichte der Philosophie*.

5. J. LE CLERC, *Bibliothèque Universelle et Choise*, Amsterdam, 1686-1694. See B. FABIAN and M.-L. SPEICKERMANN, *The English book on the Continent. The Cambridge History of the Book*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

these journals were used for reference years after their publication, as one can see from Brucker's own use of them in his early work *Historia philosophia doctrinae de ideis* (1723). In his *Prefatio* to his translation into Latin of Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*, Mosheim praises Le Clerc, Locke and Bayle⁶. Baring this in mind, perhaps, it is not as surprising as all that to find that English 17th century scholarship is very much part of the intellectual background to Brucker's work. He had been very influenced by the success of the scientific investigations at the Royal Society in London. His view that natural philosophy could only progress through inductive reasoning was one held by Christian Thomas and Franz Budde was far from unique, this approach to logic had been developed in Halle where Christian Thomas taught and where his teacher Franz Budde was a student. One way of reading the *Historia critica* is as a long historical proof of how inductive reasoning developed natural philosophy and how reasoning through myth and metaphor lead other philosophies and religions into error. This view was articulated by Pierre Gassendi in his introduction to the *Syntagma* (1658) and at his own university, by his friend Georg Walch in his *Historia logica* (1721)⁷.

Eclectic philosophy and Brucker's method

Brucker was later criticized by many nineteenth century historians of philosophy. One of the most articulate challenges came from the author of the next comprehensive history of philosophy, Wilhelm Tennemann. He writes interesting critical comments about Brucker's unphilosophical method. Tennemann wrote, he:

«[Brucker] is almost always more expansive in the description of the lives of philosophers than in the portrayal of their systems. Where he presents the latter, they are fragments which are in need of many corrections and additions taken from sources; he also intermixes many lines of enquiry that do not belong there. With all the acuity that he displays, he does not own sufficient philosophical spirit. His notion of philosophy is too shifting and in-

6. CUDWORTH, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

7. In Brucker's first work, *Historia philosophia doctrinae de ideis*, Augsburg, 1723, in which states that Robert Boyle's experiments proved that substantial form did not exist. P. GASSENDI, *De origine et veritate logicae, Opera omnia*, eds. H. L. Habert de Montmor and F. Henri, Lyons, Vol. 1; J.-G. WALCH, *Historia logicae, Parerga Academica ex historiarum atque antiquitatum monumentis collecta*, Leipzig, 1721. Brucker's interest in logic was far from unique; see G. SCHENK and R. MEYER, *Psychologisch-juristische Richtung der Logik im 18. Jahrhundert in Halle: Thomasius, Buddeus, Sperlette, Schneider, Gundling, Heineccius*, Halle, Schenk, 2008.



determinate to be able to form a firm point of view and plan for the history of philosophy. In spite of all these shortcomings it is nonetheless the first complete work about this history»⁸.

Hegel was even more critical: «Thus in Brucker's great *History of Philosophy* (Pt. I. pp. 465-478 seq.) a list of thirty, forty, or a hundred theorems is quoted from Thales and others, no idea of which can be traced in history as having been present to these philosophers. There are also propositions in support of them and citations taken from discussions of a similar kind with which we may occupy ourselves long enough. Brucker's method is to endow the single theorem of an ancient philosopher with all the consequences and premises which must, according to the idea of the Wolffian metaphysics, be the premises and conclusions of that theorem, and thus easily to produce a simple, naked fiction as if it were an actual historical fact ... Thus, according to Brucker, Thales said, *ex nihilo fit nihil*, since he said that water was eternal. Thus, too, he was to be counted amongst the philosophers who deny creation out of nothing; and of this, historically at least, Thales was ignorant»⁹.

Tennemann's criticism is correct while Hegel credits him with an interest in metaphysics Brucker did not have, but significantly both mention fragments or 'single theorems'. Brucker had identified those philosophers that had systems, that is who wrote philosophy in all its parts; logic, physics, metaphysics and ethics. He then broke each part down into individual doctrines, which are examined. Sometimes in these short definitions, Brucker will make comments about the doctrine, and relate it to a contemporary argument, at others provide devastating criticism. This does not look very philosophical at first glance, but it is.

However this statement needs explaining. Brucker wrote the history of philosophy as scholar trained in the eclectic method. Eclecticism arose when the Aristotelian encyclopaedia was no longer dominant, and new philosophies had arisen. To know which doctrines to accept and which to reject, an eclectic philosopher was to examine the individual doctrines of each philosopher, as well as criticisms of them, and then select which to reject or accept and which to find probable. These were, if appropriate, compared with new philosophical doctrines and the philosopher or student was then to choose which, if either, was the better doctrine. Changes in philosophical thinking

8. W. TENNEMANN, *Geschichte der Philosophie*. Leipzig, Barth, 1798, p. lxxv.

9. G. W. F. HEGEL, *Lectures in the History of Philosophy*, tr. E. S. Haldane, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, p. 43. The extent that Hegel used Brucker has not been fully investigated. One example of total translation can be found in his description of Cardano, vol. III, p. 117.

did not happen always as Thomas Kuhn, with his marvelous paradigm shift, would have us think, many in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries found the eclectic method very useful – a cautious way to deal with major conflicts of information and explanations of the nature of things.

Not surprisingly many eclectic philosophers began their university courses with a summary history of philosophy; for example, an early eclectic was the legal and moral philosopher, Christian Thomas whose school text, *Introductio ad philosophiam aulicam*¹⁰, was one of the first to set out the method how to examine each detail of each doctrine and how to evaluate each. After this exercise the student or philosopher should be able to choose whether to accept or reject the doctrine. Thomas gave examples of how this technique should be employed in the initial 45 pages of his text¹¹. The method was adopted by Protestant scholars and philosophers, including, Brucker's two teachers at Jena: Franz Budde and Johann Syrbe¹². This was a long and tedious process, but one that opened up all the past philosophical dogmas for examination. Brucker uses that method for his discussion of Parmenides.

The recovery of Parmenides' text, Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy* and Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*

Now a word about Brucker's three fundamental sources for information on Parmenides: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy*, and Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*, all of which he read in recent Latin editions or translations. Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers* went through many editions, the one that Brucker used is the most useful for the reader.¹³ It is a new version, of the one ed-

10. C. THOMAS, *Introductio ad philosophiam aulicam*, Leipzig, 1688. Thomas was interested in examining how people reasoned: «The terms of thinking and reasoning deserves clearer thought because many people, clearly do not know what they are doing when they are thinking», *ibid.*, p. 71; F. BUDDE, *Elementa philosophiae eclecticae*, Halle, 1703; J. J. SYRBE, *Institutione Philosophiae primae novae et eclecticae*, Jena, 1719, 1726². An invaluable book on Thomasius: I. HUNTER, *The secularisation of the confessional state, the political thought of Christian Thomasius*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

11. THOMAS, *Introductio ad philosophiam*, 1-45.

12. F. BUDDEUS, *Elementa philosophiae instrumentalis (philosophiae theoreticae), seu institutionum philosophiae eclecticae*, 1702. This school text was very popular and reprinted through the 1720s: J. J. SYRBIUS, *Institutiones Philosophiae primae novae et eclecticae*, Jena, 1719 1726². Syrbius was unusual as he was very interested in the history of science. Brucker may have got his interest in part from him.

13. DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *De Vitis, Decretis et Responsis Celebrium Philosophorum libri Decem*, eds. G. MENAGES and J. KUHN, Amsterdam, Westen, 1692 (2 vols). This edition not only has a complete index but also numbered paragraphs. Hegel says of this magnificent edition:

ited by Gilles Menage and printed in London in 1664. In 1692 an improved version by Joahim Kuhn in Amsterdam was edited, who numbered the paragraphs of the text so it could be used easily for reference. Hegel writes of this magnificent edition:

«It is an important compilation, and yet it brings forward copious evidence without much discrimination. A philosophic spirit cannot be ascribed to it; it rambles about amongst bad anecdotes extraneous to the matter in hand». The other work, Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy*, was based on the Diogenes Laertius text, but Stanley greatly embellished the texts by looking up the references in the margin of the Isaac Casaubon edition (1583) and entering quotations from Aristotle and Plutarch in his text. In this version Parmenides is described, as a philosopher who believed his sense perception enough to describe the natural world. Thus after he paraphrases Aristotle that the principle of all things is one, and it is immoveable, he writes that Parmenides said that there is hot and cold, fire and earth, and then he includes a series of quotations from Plutarch about the moon and the earth: "Moon is of equal brightness to the sun and borrows light from her, that the earth has limited habitable parts, and is equidistant and does not decline one way or the other." Brucker quotes these phrases in his section on Parmenides' physics¹⁴. In the Stanley-Olearius Latin text that Brucker read, each individual statement is separate from the other and the whole section on Parmenides does not describe a coherent philosophy.

Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* is the Brucker most important source. Not only can he find quotations by Parmenides taken from Simplicius, but also suggestive debates over the meaning Parmenides' statements by Cudworth and Mosheim which transform Brucker's discussion. Cudworth owned copies of the Aldine Greek texts of Aristotle's *Physica* and *De Caelo*. The route from 16th century Venice, where the text was printed to 18th century Augsburg was not direct, but interesting, and reveals important information about the unusual ways texts reached new audiences. Simplicius' commentaries were first published in Greek in Venice in the 1520s and then in Latin translations in the 1540s, the *Physics* alone was printed eight times¹⁵. Cudworth, in his great work, he sets out his version of the concordist

«The book of Diogenes Laertius (*De vitis, &c., Philoss. lib. x.*, ed. Meibom. c. notis Menagii, Amstel, 1692) is an important compilation, and yet it brings forward copious evidence without much discrimination. A philosophic spirit cannot be ascribed to it; it rambles about amongst bad anecdotes extraneous to the matter in hand».

14. T. STANLEY, *The History of Philosophy, containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions and Discourses of the Philosophers of every sect*, London, Bassett - Newman & Cockrill, 1687 (2nd ed.) p. 747. HEGEL, *op. cit.*, vol. 1.

15. Major Parmenides fragments are found in Simplicius: ARISTOTLE, *De physica auscultatione*, October 1526, *De Caelo*, January 1527. See A. CATALDI PALAU, Gian Francesco d'Aso-

view that the pagan philosopher and Christian thinkers all agreed there was one God, including substantial Greek quotations with English translations quoting what he needed from Simplicius to bolster his argument¹⁶. Brucker had himself neither a Latin or Greek edition of Simplicius, instead he relied on Mosheim's translation of Cudworth complete with the extensive footnotes provided by Mosheim for information on Parmenides. Brucker read Cudworth with great care, although he himself objected the concordist attempts to argue that many different philosophies in the end agreed. He would say, «it is like fitting a square peg into a round hole».

Brucker the Eclectic liberates Parmenides' philosophy from Platonism and the charge of Atheism

Until Brucker's *Historia critica philosophiae*, Parmenides had not been placed into a general history of philosophy or indeed had his philosophy been accurately defined. There were two different traditions that had attached themselves to the discussion of Parmenides' philosophy that Brucker sought to disentangle: first, he worked hard to prove that Parmenides, the philosopher, was not identical with the character of the same name in Plato's dialogue. As a result, he established who Parmenides was and what he thought. He knew it was necessary to collect from as many sources as possible precisely what the reports were about the philosopher and gather fragments of quotes from the ancient sources to the best of his ability. Brucker owned a large personal library. Only at that point would it be possible to reconstruct his philosophy. Second, it was a general policy in the *Historia* to eliminate accusations of atheism from the philosophy of those he was describing. One reason was that, as a pietist, Brucker distinguished religious methods of thinking from those employed in philosophical thought, mixing philosophy and religion as the neo-Platonists did, was condemned as sycretistic. When liberated from unphilosophical arguments based on questions of religious orthodoxy it was possible to judge philosophical arguments. While it is true that Cudworth was a Cambridge Platonist, it is also true that Brucker read his work with great interest, for an eclectic he felt free to take what was true from a text and leave what was untrue. Perhaps he was more

la e la tipografia aldina: la vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell' asolano, Genoa, 1998. The Latin translations were popular: *Physics*: 1544, 1546 1551, 1558 (imperfect edition), 1565, 1566, 1587; C. Schmitt noted in 1986 that Galileo quoted Simplicius often in his studies as a study of his *Juvenilia* reveals. C. B. SCHMITT, *Philoponus in the Sixteenth Century*, in R. SORABJI (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, London, Institute of Classical Studies, 2010², p. 266.

16. Texts 3, 5, 6 and 7 in complete form, books 4, 1-5 and 10-14; 8, 6-10. Duckworth, London.

influenced by the tone of Cudworth's work that he admitted, for although Brucker used no concordist argument to prove all the philosophers agreed with each other, he limited his accusations of Atheism to those who did not believe in a God, the God did not have to be Christian.

We have indicated that Brucker had to draw from many different sources – from the first words in his entry Brucker, himself, indicates how difficult it was to put together a discussion of a philosopher. He writes: «The discussion concerning Parmenides' philosophy is doubtful and uncertain, as is almost everything in the Eleatic school, neither do the Poems themselves survive: but the fragments are encountered everywhere and consist of tiny scraps taken from the whole corpus of Parmenides' system with the result that their connection and sense of his speech cannot be judged»¹⁷.

The fundamental problem is the false testimony of both Plato and recent Platonists: «We have warned more than once that Plato, who would like to seem to have set out Parmenides' philosophy, was suspect [...] So if we reject Plato [...] and if we do not accept the more recent Platonists who are insane corrupters of ancient philosophy, then we must compare the accounts of the ancient writers and pay attention how the method of the thoughts of Parmenides could cohere with the other, so that some degree of probability can be established concerning his metaphysic and physical principles...»¹⁸.

The attempt to identify Parmenides' doctrines with that of Plato began with Ficino's introduction to his translation of the Platonic dialogue. Stanley included his own list of Platonic ideas at the end of his chapter on Parmenides' philosophy that link Parmenides with the Platonic dialogue. Stanley's discussion of Parmenides was divided into three sections, the last as entitled: *Ideas*. Olearius included them in the Latin text.

Stanley begins chapter three writing: «But the assertion, for which he (Parmenides) became most eminent, was that of *Ideas*, delivered by Plato in a Dialogue, which he entitled *Parmenides*, or *Ideas*; the form where of is this: All is One and Many; One the *Archetype*, *Idea*».

Stanley includes many very Platonic arguments: «These Ideas subsist in two ways; in our minds, as Notions; in Nature as Causes. In our Minds they exist as they are variously comprehended by us, according to diverse manifold respects. In Nature they exist, as they are Ideal forms, and have the power both of existence and determination»¹⁹.

17. BRUCKER, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 1158.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 1158.

19. T. STANLEY, *The History of Philosophy* 1687, (an expanded version of the 1655, London), pp. 748-749. See also T. STANLEY, *Historia philosophiae, Vitas opiniones, reque gestas et dicta, philosophorum sectae cuiusvis complexa autore Thoma Stanleio Anglico sermone in Latinum translata, emendata & variis disserttionibus atque observationibus*, tr. Gottfried Olearius, Leipzig, Fritch, 1711.

As we have said, Brucker and Cudworth came from two different traditions. Brucker knows that his attempt to find the original meaning of Parmenides' philosophy is complicated by the fact he is reading about it through Cudworth and that Cudworth understood «the metaphysical part of philosophy as philosophising according to the truth, if taken in the Platonic sense, that is the contemplation of divine and supernatural topics»²⁰. Cudworth's aim was similar if not identical to that of Simplicius who had written his heartfelt concordist defence of pagan philosophy against Christians who in the 6th century AD claimed that ancient philosophers only argued with each other, but did not know the truth²⁰. Cudworth was reconciling pagan philosophy with Christianity, a tradition he found in the concordist writings of the Florentine NeoPlatonist, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Augusto Steuco, a papal librarian, author of the *Cosmopoeia* and *Philosophia perennis*²¹ and drew inspiration and quotations from these Italian concordists and Simplicius²². Because he personally owned the original Adine Greek printed text he could and did quote Parmenides' poem making it possible for Brucker to develop his own description of the philosophy, as he had neither the Latin or the Greek text available²³.

Brucker ends his section on Parmenides' philosophy with Olearius' translation of Stanley's Platonic list. He explains Plato's aim in the dialogue in this way: «In it he wished to appear to explain the truth of Parmenides' hypotheses about the *summa uno* and the unities built into it. He did nothing other than, as Ficino elegantly summed up, to show that just as the one it-

20. See the works of the Jesuit, B. PERERIUS, *De communibus omnium rerum*, Rome, 1577; *Commentariorum ... et Disputationum in Genesim*, Rome, 1589. Both books were printed in Germany, the commentary on *Genesis* last in 1685. See the Paduans, M. A. ZIMARA, *Tabula dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averroes*, Venice, 1538; P. ZABARELLA, *Opera Omnia logicae*, Venice, 1578.

21. R. CUDWORTH, *Systema intellectuale huius universi*, Jena, Meyer, 1733, 1773², Leiden, 1765; English: 1678, 2nd 1706; Italian transl. L. Benedetti, Pavia, 1823. See Cudworth's library list: *Bibliotheca Cudworthiana, sive Catalogus variorum librorum*, Rev. Doct Dr, Cudworth, S. T. P. Coll. Christi apud Catab. in Cemeterio Divi Pauli, secundo die Februarii, 1690/1. See p. 27, no. 38: *Simplicius in Aristotelis Physica & de Anima* 3 col. (Aldi 1627: error 1527), p. 9, no. 167. I thank Sarah Hutton for that information.

22. On Mosheim's collection of non-German books, cf. A. NAEFNER, M. MULSOW, Mosheim's Bibliothek, *Johann Lorenz Mosheim (1693-1755): Theologie im Spannungsfeld von Philosophie, Philologie und Geschichte*, edited M. Muslow, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen; Bd. 77, Wiesbaden, 1997, pp. 273-399. English trans. with Mosheim's footnotes: R. CUDWORTH, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, footnotes by Dr. J. L. Mosheim, tr. J. Harrison, London, Thomas Tegg, 1845; reprint, Thoemmes Press, 1995.

23. J. BRUCKER, *op. cit.*, p. 1159.



self was the principle of all things, over all things, and that all things came from it through it and towards it, in the same way everything is outside all things and in all things. In order to assent by degrees to a metaphysical awareness Parmenides ascended from the things of the senses to the things of the intellect or unities and from them to the highest monad on which as though on route all other things are here»²⁴.

Parmenides' metaphysics and physics

The reader is urged to bear in mind when reading this forthcoming description of Parmenides' philosophy, that Brucker was an eclectic who believed that not only should you investigate past philosophy for individual dogmas that are true and eliminate those that are false, but that the individual philosophers themselves developed eclectically. While Brucker used the word *system* when he wrote a philosopher's work, he did mean that each philosopher developed a whole original and self-verifying philosophy, a notion that developed later and influence by an interpretation of Kant. Rather than he described different parts of a philosophy in this order: logic first, then physics, metaphysics and ethics, and on occasion politics. While some nineteenth century historians of philosophy tried to find a perfect system in Plato, Brucker did not. He read Plato's philosophy historically, finding certain Pythagorean influences in some doctrines: for example he believed that Plato's idea was a transformed concept of Pythagorean number. In this case, despite the scant information available, Brucker does as best as he can to set out Parmenides metaphysics and physics, but freely add additional perspective because of his own knowledge of the philosophers or ancient poets Parmenides must have known. There is no mention of Parmenides' journey to the Goddess, rather what we set out below is the result of Brucker's attempt to piece together of what was available to him so he could construct a pre-Socratic philosopher who did not deny knowledge of the imperfect senses, and whose metaphysics was based on reason rather than a concept of «ideas».

Brucker begins by setting out the basic principle of Parmenides' philosophy: it is two-fold, the first part is based on opinion and sense and is uncertain because of the flux of matter and the weakness of the senses which are «slippery and deceiving». The second reason is reliable and stands on an immovable foundation, this first part should be named physics and second metaphysics²⁵. Despite such a description of the deceiving senses he insists that Parmenides is sceptical in an Eleatic way, not sceptical way, and he

24. *Ibid.*, p. 1159.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 1158.

takes his lead here from Cudworth who rejected Aristotle in *Physics* 1, 2, that the world was all one and motionless. Cudworth comments «this would make Parmenides not a philosopher but a madman»²⁶. Brucker happily accepts Cudworth's rejection of Aristotle.

Cudworth and Brucker were not the only ones puzzled by Aristotle's description. The learned Mosheim in his footnotes to this page comments «what did the one unmoveable all mean?». He notices that according to Eusebius, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus all stated these doctrines and also that Aristotle said they took away motion from the nature of things. Mosheim has read the text carefully, questions Aristotle's statement, and notes that only Xenophon was attributed with that view. Such mistakes, Mosheim suggests, were caused because «ancient authors» did not examine the dogmas of the earlier sects with attention, and tended to assume that when they used the same word as another philosopher, they meant the same thing. The problem of how to interpret what words meant was a subject of major debate at the time. Mosheim writes an almost emotional comment about the difficulty of understanding other philosopher's statements: «For, everyone who has devoted any attention to the matter must be aware of the utter poverty of almost all languages in expressing the notions and speculations of the mind. Hence it comes to pass that we are frequently compelled to designate different ideas by the same words; by which many, who understand things only superficially, are led into the gravest errors»²⁷.

Now we shall try to establish how Brucker describes Parmenides metaphysics and physics. Immediately, he makes a definition *Ens* to remove it from Platonic connotations: it is what is immoveable and brings about substance and «is recognized by reason alone – which also constitutes all things»; this is the metaphysical part – thus reason exercises its ability to make a mental abstraction, not a Platonic one. Parmenides' physics arises out of matter that is in flux, and while description can only be opinion, Brucker remarks that Parmenides was not «so stupid and lacking reason to contend that what we see as physical things through the senses are mere imaginings, and concoctions»²⁸.

Brucker²⁹ then lists six principles of Parmenides metaphysics as he gleaned from his sources: Aristotle, pseudo-Origen, Plutarch, and Eusebius; (1) noth-

26. CUDWORTH, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

27. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 35 n. 6.

28. BRUCKER, *op. cit.*, p. 1159.

29. Brucker went to great length to prove that Pyrrho believed his senses in every day life: C. BLACKWELL, Diogenes Laertius's «Life of Pyrrho» and the interpretation of ancient scepticism in the history of philosophy: Stanley through Brucker to Tennemann, *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. R. Porkin, Leiden, 1993.



ing comes from nothing, (2) the whole principle of things is single, immobile and immutable, (3) there is a single universe, (4) that the single universe is eternal without origin and clad in the shape of a sphere, (5) there is only things alone and it is truly *ens* and everything else is not *ens* and therefore nothing, (6) an individual thing is generated or corrupted but only the species of that thing places itself before us³⁰. Brucker, very aware that information was not complete, notes there was more than one view of what Parmenides meant, in particular some imputed Atheism, as did Pierre Bayle and Brucker's teacher Buddeus, as we shall see and others freed him from it. Parmenides' definition is then placed in an historical context, Brucker lists others who defined *ens* in the same way: Plato, the Alexandrian Platonists, Simplicius, and recently Lipsius, Gassendi, Michael Mourgues and Cudworth among others said that the one thing or *ens* was the one source of all things, and the supreme cause from which all things took their essence and origin, on which they depended, and through which they had their true essence. Other things were not *ens* that is they were things that were always mutable and subject to change at every moment. The debate is not resolved, Brucker admits, because the metaphysics of Parmenides permits both views.

Brucker describes Parmenides physics by selecting his comments about creation and the heavens. Parmenides held that the principle of all things was heat and cold, these are fire and earth: the first is efficient cause and earth is material cause, Brucker selects facts from Laertius, and Plutarch: the elements in all things are hot and cold – in the sun as well as the earth. Brucker emphasizes that these principles of things are physical not metaphysical, noting that Parmenides followed Pythagoreans when he made the distinction between the first of nature and the elemental fire. Brucker then finds other borrowings in Parmenides' cosmology, when he notes that a passage from Cicero, that there was a fire which formed a circle in the universe, was probably a concept which came from the very ancient philosophers.

For actual creation of man and the universe involves in addition to fire and earth, love and strife, Brucker refers to verses he finds in Sextus Empiricus and Aristotle. From Plato and Hesiod he adds that love and strife was also involved in the arrangement of chaos. All these things together are involved with the birth of natural things, with fire and heat playing a generative role. Particles mingle with a fire hiding within them – and stir up the earth – or mud with an inborn heat – this in turn causes fermentation. Then this heat separates out different elements from the mud, which in turn

30. BRUCKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 1163-1164.

are mixed with each other. From this all things were created, including the first human beings. They arose from this mud through the meditation of heat and cold. The heat or fire of the sun, which is both the effective and material cause of human beings, endows human beings with an *anima*.

Parmenides had an astronomy as well, the earth he describes as round and placed in the middle, according to Laertius. It is suspended and stands apart so there is no reason for it to incline in one direction or another. However, at this point he becomes annoyed at one piece of fragmentary evidence – he quotes the pseudo-Origen that the earth will die one day but he grumbles this is very unsatisfactory and too fragmentary, thus it was impossible to know how Parmenides thought the world would end. Perhaps, Brucker muses, if one thinks he might have followed the thought of Pythagoras or even that of Xenophanes, it would mean he asserted that there would be periodic conflagrations, and countless changes of worlds.

The Atheism debate is a long and substantial one, that we will not go into in depth, it is enough to say that the two authors who attributed atheism to Parmenides were Pierre Bayle and Brucker's teacher Franz Budde. Bayle first wrote a long discourse in his entry on Xenophanes in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* and Budde later attacked Atheistic philosophers by his teacher. To set up his debate on whether Parmenides was an Atheist or Spinozist, Brucker drew one of the best studies of the topic by Jacob Friederick Reimann (1668-1743), *Historia universalis, Atheismi et Atheorum falso et merito suspectorum*³¹.

Was Parmenides a Spinozist before Spinoza, did he say that the substance of all things was matter as Bayle and Budde maintained? Brucker notes that others thought Parmenides followed Pythagoras who wrote «the one» should be understood in the metaphysical and theological sense, meaning the source of all things, and the supreme cause from which all things took their essence. The other things should be understood as «not *ens*» and were always mutable. This is the argument Cudworth uses to explain Parmenides, and in doing so purifies his philosophy, Brucker notes. Brucker decides not to decide.

31. P. BAYLE, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Amsterdam, 1740, 5th ed., vol. 5, pp. 575-564. Brucker's teacher finds atheism everywhere: J. F. BUDDE, *Theses theologicae de atheismo et superstitione*, Jena, Bielcke, 1717; French translation: *Traite de l'athéisme et de la superstition traduit en français par Louis Philon*, Amsterdam, Mortier, 1740. J. F. BUDDE *Theses Theologicae de Atheismo et superstitione, quibus suas annotationes adjecit*, J. Lulufs, Louvain, Le Mair, 1757. Brucker's source in which atheism is debated: F. REIMMANN, *Historia universalis atheismi et atheorum falso et merito suspectorum*, Hildesheim, Schröder, 1725.



Conclusion

What we have just described in perhaps too much detail has been looked down upon by some philosophers and regarded by others as mere *historia literaria*. To my mind the best way of assessing Brucker's effort is to appreciate the condition the philosophical texts were in at the very beginning of the eighteenth century. Although a great deal of important philological work had been accomplished, there was an immense amount still to do – and classicists in nineteenth century set to work. Brucker was absolutely of his period, he tried to define philosophical concepts precisely as possible as he was interested in defining difference, not similarity. It is that very diligence that freed Parmenides from the Platonic interpretations. There certainly was a great interest in how philosophers thought, as we have noted in passing that the philosophers at Halle, including Christian Thomas, were very interested in the details of logical thinking. Lorenz Mosheim's comment in his footnote to Cudworth is also indicative of both the interest and frustration of a learned man aware how difficult it is to understand meaning, and who finds «the utter poverty of almost all languages in expressing the notions and speculations of the mind». Of course, no one would write another *Historia critica philosophiae*, but also they would not have to.

I will end this essay with a quotation from Karl Reinhold's Seventh Letter in his *Briefe über die kantische Philosophie*, in which he complains that the psychological concept of reason had been undeveloped and hails the coming of Kant, saying «Only six years ago we came upon a work that has exhausted the concept of thinking through the analysis of the faculty of cognition and fully determined its meaning and use of the concepts of substance and the simple rule of reason included among the many other unrecognized laws of our faculty of cognition»³².

It is by this standard that the next great history of philosophy was written by Wilhelm Tennemann.

C. BLACKWELL
(London)

32. K. L. REINHOLD, *Letters on Kantian philosophy*, edited by K. Ameriks, tr. H. Hebbeler, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 89.

**JACOB BRUCKER:
Η ΑΝΑΚΤΗΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΡΜΕΝΙΔΟΥ**

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Τὸ ἄρθρο αὐτὸ συνιστᾷ μιὰ μετριοπαθῆ ἀπόπειρα μελέτης τῆς παράδοσης τῶν ἀποσπασμάτων τοῦ Παρμενίδου, ὅπως αὐτὰ ἐντοπίζονται στὸ σχόλιο τοῦ Σιμπλικίου γιὰ τὰ Φυσικὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους. Ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ πλαίσιο ποὺ ἔθεσε ὁ Jakob Brucker στὸ ἔργο του *Historia Critica Philosophiae*. Ὁ τελευταῖος προσέγγισε τὸν Παρμενίδη διὰ μιᾶς λατινικῆς μεταφράσεως τοῦ 17ου αἰῶνα, ποὺ πραγματοποιήθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν νεοπλατωνιστὴ Ralph Cudworth. Ἐνα ἀπὸ τὰ θέματα ποὺ θίγει ὁ Brucker εἶναι ἡ ἐπαγωγικὴ λογικὴ, ἡ ὁποία κατὰ τὸν ἴδιο ἔχει ὡς πεδίο ἀναφορᾶς καὶ τὴν φυσικὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν μεταφυσικὴ. Ὁ Karl Reinhold ἀργότερα ἄσκησε κριτικὴ στὴν προσέγγιση τοῦ Brucker, καταλογίζοντάς της ὡς μειονέκτημα τὴν ἔλλειψη μελέτης τῆς ψυχολογικῆς διαστάσεως ὡς παράγοντα ποὺ συμμετέχει στὴν ἐπαγωγικὴ λογικὴ, ἐνῶ ὁ W. Tennemann παρουσίασε μιὰ προσέγγιση στὰ φαινόμενα τῆς ἱστορίας, ποὺ συγχρόνως υἱοθετεῖ, καὶ ἀντιπαρατίθεται σέ, ἐκείνην τοῦ Brucker.

Constance BLACKWELL
(μτφρ. Ἀπόστολος ΣΤΑΒΕΛΑΣ)