**From Ionian Speculation to Eleatic Deduction:**

**Parmenides’ Xenophanean-Based Theism**

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This book series aims to examine the ancient intellectual and cultural heritage of Southern Italy and Sicily. Warranting further examination is how the nascent philosophical tradition initially spread to this region from its Ionian provenance. Despite numerous ancient attestations that Parmenides of Elea was influenced, or even directly instructed, by the Ionian-born Xenophanes, many modern scholars remain skeptical of this historical association.[[2]](#endnote-2) The extent of this skepticism ranges from cautious uncertainty to outright denial of any historical plausibility. The skeptical grounds similarly vary, from distrusting the historical veracity of late and/or perhaps biased commentators, to understanding these thinkers as involved in radically different projects. This essay aims to challenge the skeptical position, and establish a direct link disseminating Ionian philosophy to Magna Graecia via Xenophanes and Parmenides.

The argument is straightforward. First, the ancient geographical and temporal evidence is noted, establishing that it was possible for Parmenides to have been influenced and/or taught by Xenophanes. Next, the metaphysical and epistemological parallels between these thinkers are considered. Despite notable differences, on balance, these close parallels suggest against the skeptical view, making it quite plausible to impute a direct intellectual link between these thinkers. Third, I consider ancient claims that both thinkers were engaging with religious topics, offering a sort of “rational theology.” This evidence for a close intellectual relationship between these thinkers has been entirely ignored by modern scholars, and orthodox interpretative models cannot readily provide a charitable explanation for them. However, by reconsidering the theistic content in Parmenides’s poem, a new interpretative approach is revealed which can. Once this evidence is considered in its totality, the case for imputing a close and direct intellectual heritage from Xenophanes to Parmenides proves quite substantial.

**Geographical and Historical Considerations**

Xenophanes certainly lived to be 92, and likely slightly over 100.[[3]](#endnote-3) Accepting that he was banished from Colophon after the Persian conquest (546/5 BCE) by Harpargus, and later counseled the Sicilian tyrant Hieron (r. 478-467 BCE), his birth should be dated c. 570-65 BCE.[[4]](#endnote-4) Whatever birthdate is accepted for Parmenides—530 or 515 BCE—Xenophanes would have lived long enough to serve as Parmenides’s master.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Xenophanes seems to have spent much of his later life in Magna Graecia. In addition to his association with Hieron’s Sicilian court, he is reported to have lived in two Sicilian cities—Zancle (Messina) and Catana (Catania).[[6]](#endnote-6) A fragment likely referring to Pythagoras confirms his familiarity with southern Italy.[[7]](#endnote-7) Furthermore, Xenophanes can be linked directly to Parmenides’s hometown of Elea. Xenophanes wrote celebratory odes on the founding of two cities: his native Colophon, and Elea.[[8]](#endnote-8) This suggests a deep familiarity with, and affinity for, a city.[[9]](#endnote-9) Thus, both were likely important to Xenophanes in a similar way—places he identified with as “home.” Aristotle even reports that the citizens of Elea once consulted Xenophanes on whether to perform a sacrifice or not.[[10]](#endnote-10) With no evidence to the contrary, there is every reason to accept that Xenophanes lived in southern Italy, nearby or even in Elea itself, in the late-sixth and early-fifth century.

From this, it seems entirely possible for Parmenides to have been directly influenced by Xenophanes. That several ancient sources explicitly aver that there was a master-pupil relationship make such even more likely.[[11]](#endnote-11) Skeptics may argue that these accounts may not be independent, universally relying upon a purportedly flippant remark by Plato—that Xenophanes, *and even others before him*, belonged to the same “Eleatic tribe” which claimed “all is one.”[[12]](#endnote-12) However, it is rather dubious to think that Aristotle had no further insight into his master’s views on the historical relationship between these thinkers besides an offhand remark in a late popular dialogue. Thus, this common skeptical reasoning is quite spurious. One source does claim that, despite being a pupil of Xenophanes, Parmenides did not follow his teachings.[[13]](#endnote-13) While this singular evidence cuts against my thesis that there are Xenophanean elements in Parmenides, it is undeniably an independent source, which again imputes an historical relationship between these thinkers. On balance, this evidence establishes a good *prima facie* case for a substantial influence on Parmenides by Xenophanes.

**Metaphysical & Epistemological Parallels.**

That there appear to be substantial metaphysical and epistemological parallels between these thinkers is not terribly controversial, their presence widely noted by ancients and moderns alike. Skeptics simply tend to emphasize the notable differences over the apparent similarities. Thus, it is important to consider how closely these parallels hold, as well as how greatly they differ. The greater the similarity, the less likely the parallel is a coincidence explained by a general cultural/intellectual milieu, and the more likely it is to be a direct influence.

The first metaphysical parallel to consider is the claim that both held “all things,” or the “entire cosmos,” to be just one unchanging thing (monism)—at least in *some* sense.[[14]](#endnote-14) This supposed defining characteristic of Eleaticism is first mentioned by Plato.[[15]](#endnote-15) Aristotle appears to agree with this, noting that Xenophanes held the entire cosmos to be one thing—God.[[16]](#endnote-16) However, the extant fragments do not explicitly support these claims, nor is it easy to make interpretative sense of this view in relation to the texts overall. It is more likely that Plato and Aristotle are erroneously imputing the views of Melissus and Zeno back onto Parmenides and Xenophanes

There is another metaphysical parallel upon which a shared “Eleatic” tradition could be grounded, and it is textually undeniable. Xenophanes’s God is: supreme (μέγιστος), transcendent (οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὔτε νόημα),[[17]](#endnote-17) unified (οὖλος) in being and senses,[[18]](#endnote-18) entirely still and unmoving (αἰεὶ δ’ἐν ταὺτῷ κινοὐμενος οὐδἐν...),[[19]](#endnote-19) morally perfect,[[20]](#endnote-20) and eternal.[[21]](#endnote-21) Similarly, Parmenides’s arguments explicate some (kind of?) entity (i.e. “What Is”), which is concluded to be: eternal [both ungenerated (ἀγένητον) and imperishable (ἀνώλεθρόν)], unified (οὖλον), unique (μουνογενές), motionless (ἀτρεμὲς), and perfect (τέλεστον).[[22]](#endnote-22) Parmenides’s “What Is” might also be inferred to be transcendent, since knowledge of its nature is beyond the sense perception of mortals. In short, both hold the most fundamental metaphysical entities in their respective systems to be: motionless, changeless, unified and complete, transcendent and (in some sense) perfect.[[23]](#endnote-23)

There are least two notable dissimilarities here. First, Parmenides never explicitly describes What-Is as “divine” in the extant fragments, whereas Xenophanes makes this explicit. Second, Xenophanes’ God possesses a causal, cosmic efficacy through thought alone, and this feature is also absent from Parmenides’ description of “What Is”.[[24]](#endnote-24) Given the completeness of the fragment describing the nature of “What-Is” (DK B8), it seems unlikely that the textual evidence for these characteristics is simply missing.

Epistemically, both thinkers seem particularly concerned with the gap between divine and mortal knowledge, and whether it could be overcome by mortals.[[25]](#endnote-25) Xenophanes not only criticizes mortals for their erroneous claims about the gods,[[26]](#endnote-26) and says that the gods have not revealed all things to mortals,[[27]](#endnote-27) but he also claims that mortals can never have certain knowledge about either the gods or anything else.[[28]](#endnote-28) Parmenides similarly denigrates mortal views repeatedly throughout his poem, indicating not only that mortals are mistaken about some important topics,[[29]](#endnote-29) but describing them as entirely lacking in understanding and judgment.[[30]](#endnote-30) Both clearly think mortals face significant epistemic limitations.

Yet, once again there are substantive differences. Whereas Xenophanes seems to outright deny that mortals can ever truly possess genuine knowledge, Parmenides must implicitly hold that mortal ignorance can be overcome.[[31]](#endnote-31) Otherwise, the very mortal philosopher-youth in his poem could not hope to gain reliable knowledge from the poem’s spokes-goddess (nor could the readers/listeners of the poem).

These philosophical parallels alone are probably insufficient to make any strong determinations: the dissimilarities can be emphasized to serve as evidence against a close intellectual heritage just as easily as the close similarities can support one. However, similarities are generally more suggestive than differences. Close similarities make coincidence unlikely, as is the case here. And, substantive differences in conjunction with close similarities is not clear evidence *against* a significant intellectual influence—after all, it is quite common for pupils to hold very different views than their masters. Thus, the scales should be charitably tilted at least slightly against the skeptical view at this point.

**Theistic (and Poetic) Parallels**

While many ancient commentators also associated both thinkers on more theistic grounds, consideration of this by modern scholarship is essentially non-existent. It is not hard to infer why, as such claims simply stand in direct opposition to traditional contrasting narratives. It cannot be denied that both wrote in epic meter—a format traditionally associated with more religious, mythopoetic works. However, Xenophanes also composed original elegiac and iambic compositions on non-philosophical topics (such as proper behavior at symposia).[[32]](#endnote-32) In light of his varied poetical modes and subjects, Xenophaneshas often been portrayed primarily as a poet—one who only occasionally dallied in properly philosophical topics. In contrast, Parmenides wrote a singular work in epic meter, which on orthodox interpretations includes a deductively-reasoned examination on the nature of being itself. Parmenides is thus deemed the first “proper” metaphysician and logician, a genuine philosopher who just happened to make use of epic poetry as his communicative medium. Imputing any Xenophanean religious concerns into Parmenides’s thought threatens this contrasting narrative, and Parmenides’s status as a genuine philosopher. Nevertheless, these attestations deserve serious consideration here, if for no other reason than their prevalence.

The 2nd-1st c. BCE Greek doxographer Aetius is among those who report that Parmenides was an actual pupil of Xenophanes. He also claimed that both agreed there was a “complete, unique, still, ungenerated being,”[[33]](#endnote-33) and that both held the entire cosmos to be “ungenerated, eternal, and imperishable.”[[34]](#endnote-34) What is new is that Aetius also explicitly claims that the unmoved, limited, and spherical entity described by Parmenides *is* God.[[35]](#endnote-35) Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish philosopher of the 1st c. CE, offers another notable comment. He wonders how Xenophanes and Parmenides—such “divine men,” *theologians* engaged in theological matters—should be so lacking in divine inspiration as to produce such poor poetical compositions.[[36]](#endnote-36) While not terribly surprising in Xenophanes’s case, it is for Parmenides. Yet, surprising as they may initially be, these are hardly aberrations. At least half a dozen additional, independent sources—from a variety of perspectives and times (1st-6th c. CE)—also view Parmenides in this light.[[37]](#endnote-37) Most describe Parmenides as offering an exposition on the nature of divine being. However, there are also attestations that Parmenides offered criticisms of mortal views about the divine, upon anthropomorphic and moralistic grounds. The parallels to Xenophanes should be obvious.

The reliability of the sources is admittedly far from ideal. These perspectives are centuries removed from Parmenides’s context, with likely anachronistic biases. It is also not at all surprising to for Abrahamic thinkers to anachronistically see Parmenides’s “What Is” as a close analogue to their conception of God. On the other hand, when they state that Parmenides was “talking about God,” they might just merely mean that his description of “What Is”—from their worldview—would have to be the Abrahamic God, without intending to impute any anachronistic claims upon Parmenides himself. However, while a healthy skepticism of ancient sources and their biases is appropriate, this evidence should not be summarily dismissed. First, such authors generally would have had far superior access to the texts in question, knowledge of lost historical sources, as well as linguistic and cultural insights which moderns may very well be blind to. Thus, the default presumption should be to lend credence to such reports, unless good reason for skepticism can be provided for each. At the very least, Aetius’s testimony on this matter seems reliable, being relatively early and Greek (i.e. not biased by Abrahamic traditions).

The skeptic might claim these parallels are merely the result of a confused conflation, based solely upon the similar descriptions of Xenophanes’s God and Parmenides’s What Is. However, while this objection seems reasonable at first, it should ultimately be rejected as viciously uncharitable. Adopting this objection begs the question for orthodox, secular readings of Parmenides, and requires that either: 1) none of these commentators read Parmenides (untenable for either Boethius or Ammonius), or 2) they did read Parmenides, and yet somehow completely failed to recognize that the orthodox, secular reading is in fact correct.

As neither of these options is acceptable, a more charitable solution should be sought. Perhaps there are indeed theistic considerations within Parmenides’s poem that went overlooked and/or unmentioned by earlier commentators (e.g. Plato and Aristotle), which in following their lead has led modern scholars astray. Perhaps the worrisome biases of Abrahamic thinkers were exactly what was needed to break free of these early influences, and recognize what had always been present in Parmenides’s poem. In any case, as the apparent absence of theistic considerations in Parmenides is a major component of the skeptical narrative, an interpretative account that demonstrated the presence of such content would go far in challenging it. This is what I aim to develop below.

**Religious Imagery in Parmenides**

The most obvious theistic content in Parmenides’s poem is found in the opening section (*Proem*).[[38]](#endnote-38) This contains a first-person account of an anonymous young male (κοῦρος), traveling along a cosmic and divine path, in a chariot driven by the Heliades (Maidens of the Sun). The Heliades’s journey began at the House of Night, casting off their veils as they left the darkness of Tartarus behind, and entered the light. To reach their destination, the party must pass through the “aetherial” Gates of Night and Day. Justice guards the gates, and the Heliades persuade her to open them, revealing a yawning chasm beyond.[[39]](#endnote-39) An unnamed goddess then welcomes the youth, assuring him that no evil fate, but Right and Justice, has delivered him to her dwelling, “far from the path of men.” She then sets out a programmatic outline for the youth to learn, leading to the central epistemological and metaphysical section of the poem (*Aletheia*).

There is no clear philosophical relevance in the *Proem*, nor any obvious guidance for understanding what follows. It is thus understandable why both ancients and moderns alike have largely ignored, minimized, and/or dismissed its interpretative relevance.[[40]](#endnote-40) However, the presence of this content and its swift dismissal reveals the underlying questionable assumption—that Parmenides’s philosophical message is not religious in nature. It is certain that the epic hexameters in this section are largely borrowed from Homer.[[41]](#endnote-41) The religious imagery of Light/Night, the House of Night, and the Gates of Night and Day closely track Hesiod’s *Theogony*.[[42]](#endnote-42) This section is intentionally invoking the mythopoetic tradition, particularly its religious trappings (i.e. anthropomorphized deities). The question is, to what end?

There is also a pervasive thematic focus upon contrasting imagery of Day/Light and Night/Darkness. The Heliades begin veiled and in darkness, unveiling as they enter the light. The divine cosmic path the Heliades travel is most likely the diurnal path of Sun/Day (shared by Night). The chariot’s “fire-blazing wheels” complement this association. The Gates of Night and Day are described as “aetherial,” suggesting a heavenly location; however, the mythopoetic tradition always locates these in dark Tartarus. This ambiguity of location itself draws a contrast between light/heavens and darkness/Hades.[[43]](#endnote-43) The House of Night is where Night and Day alternately dwell. As the Heliades are driving in the light, it should be daytime, with Night in-residence—suggesting an identification for the unnamed spokes-goddess. This thematic contrast makes little sense in relation to the more philosophical section (*Aletheia*); however, it doesparallel the content in the poem’s final section (*Doxa*)— which scholars have generally considered to be a naturalistic, physical account along Milesian lines.

The extant content of *Doxa* is quite fragmentary and varied.[[44]](#endnote-44) *Doxa* includes: metaphysical critiques of how mortals err in “naming” things, particularly in terms of a Light/Night duality—the explication of this error seems to be the overarching thesis of *Doxa* (DK B8.51-61, B9, B19); programmatic passages promising a detailed account of the origin of celestial bodies (DK B10-11); a theogonical account of a goddess who rules the cosmos and creates other deities, beginning with Eros (DK B12-13); astronomical descriptions (DK 14-15a); some consideration of the relationship between the mind and body (DK B16); and a discussion of animal/human procreation (DK B17-18). The entire section is tied together with a conclusion relating back to the Light/Night naming error (DK 19).

The presence of the Light/Night duality should stand out. These opposing forms are described in contrastive detail, as the constitutive elements of all things via their mixture (DK B8.51-61, B9). Though commonly capitalized, both ancient and modern commentators treat them as a fundamental metaphysical and/or physical dualism—not as divine entities. However, given that the *Proem* explicates a paralleled dualism in religious terms, it would seem appropriate to infer that a similar identification is intended here.

Next comes a programmatic outline, promising a full accounting of the origins and nature of numerous physical, astronomical objects (sun, moon, stars, aether, heavens, etc.) (DK B10-11). This initially seems to be confirmation of the orthodox view of *Doxa* as a Milesian-style physics. Yet, it is almost universally overlooked that the fulfillment of this promised account clearly begins with a *theogonical* account.

DK B12 introduces an unnamed, cosmic-goddess—much like the *Proem* introduces the unnamed spokes-goddess. This cosmic-goddess controls all things by mixing together male and female. This seems to include not only sexual unions by mortals, but also the mixing together of gendered opposites, like Light/Sun (male) and Night (female). The first (and only extant) action explicitly attributed to this cosmic goddess is the creation of Eros as the first god. This is fitting, as Eros is a primordial force related to combination/mixture and sexual generation, as readily seen in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. The first generation (Chaos, Earth, Tartarus, Eros) of primordial entities are spontaneously generated, without parentage or identifiable cause. Cause and parentage are introduced next, when Chaos creates Erebus and Night. However, there is still no sexual union, but a creative act of will, as is the case with the cosmic goddess’s creation of Eros in DK 13. Only then, between deities of the second generation in *Theogony*, does sexual union and generation occur, in conjunction with the presence of Eros. Notably, it is Night herself in *Theogony* who is the first deity to engage in sexual union and birth, coupling with her brother Erebus (darkness) to generate Aether and Day.[[45]](#endnote-45) If the spokes-goddess is Night, so it seems the cosmic goddess of DK B12 might also be so identified. Thus, the spokes-goddess would be providing an account of how mortals err in understanding her nature.

The three fragments that immediately follow (DK B14-15a) certainly describe aspects of the sun, moon, and earth. In isolation, it is again quite understandable to read them as purely physical descriptions. However, it makes better contextual sense to understand these as a continuation of the theogonical account, which itself continues to explicate erroneous mortal views based upon the Light/Night dualism (DK 19). Thus, these fragments are partial descriptions of how Helios (Sun), Selene (Moon), and Gaia (Earth)—all divine entities—came to be and interact. This can be further supported by noting that the behavior of these entities is described in rather anthropomorphic ways—i.e. Selene always “gazes” towards the sun, and “wanders” around Gaia. A similar treatment can be consistently applied to the remaining fragments (DK B16-18), taking them to be an account of how the cosmic goddess generated and established the nature of mortal intellect and sexual reproduction.

By recognizing how the *Proem* and *Doxa* are carefully contrived in their theistic parallels, it becomes clear that the *Proem* must be interpretatively significant. Furthermore, mapping these parallels reveals that the purportedly “Parmenidean physics” should not be considered a physics at all, but rather a theogony closely related to Hesiod’s own. This alone might help make some sense of the claims that Parmenides was engaged in theistic considerations, as any theogonical account clearly counts as religious. However, this view would still require a rather obvious misreading of Parmenides—taking *Doxa* to be positively endorsed. To get at Parmenides’ actual theistic message, the religious content of the *Proem* and *Doxa* must now be considered in relation to *Aletheia*.

**Parmenides’s Xenophanean-Based Theism**

It is made clear from the beginning of the poem that *Aletheia* is a trustworthy account endorsed by the spokes-goddess (i.e. Parmenides), while *Doxa* is a mortal view, unreliable in comparison.[[46]](#endnote-46) *Doxa* is also referred to as “deceptive,”[[47]](#endnote-47) whilemortals themselves are portrayed as hopelessly confused, and lacking judgment.[[48]](#endnote-48) DK 8.37b-42 makes clear that the subject of *Aletheia* is what mortals are wrong about—thinking that it comes-to-be, perishes, both is and is not, changes/moves, etc., and this is related to the Light/Night naming error. In short, the text makes it abundantly clear that *Aletheia* is a corrective account to mortal views, and *Doxa* an explication of that misunderstanding. Taking *Aletheia* as a corrective on *Doxa*, and given the close parallels in religious content and thematic imagery between *Proem* and *Doxa*, *Aletheia* should also be understood as a corrective on that account as well. But, what exactly is *Aletheia* itself about?

The *Proem* invokes the mythopoetic traditions of Homer and Hesiod, introducing a divine agent to provide a philosophical education. *Aletheia* ensues, concluding there is some (kind of?) perfect, unchanging entity. The text moves on to consider how mortals have misunderstood this (kind of?) entity. This involves positing a primordial dualism as the constitutive grounds for all things in the cosmos, the generative origin and natures of which are ultimately explicated in a theogony like Hesiod’s.

It is tempting to focus on the Light/Night dualism, inferring that *Aletheia* rejects this in favor of monism. However, recognizing *Doxa*’s theogonical context makes this dualism a minor detail of a larger account. The broader objection to *Doxa* seems to be thinking that divine nature possesses causally efficacious mental capacities, and serves as an explanation for the generation and nature of the cosmos. And, as both *Proem* and *Doxa* ascribe anthropomorphic descriptions to divine beings, *Aletheia* can be understood as a corrective to the mythopoetic tradition, offering an entirely non-anthropomorphized account of divine nature instead.

This reading explains why “What Is” so closely matches Xenophanes’ God, as well as the notable differences (lack of mental capacity or cosmic efficacy) between these descriptions. Xenophanes drew his conclusions rather speculatively from suppressed moralistic premises—what is moral is fitting for the divine, and nothing immoral is. On the other hand, Parmenides begins from explicit premises—grounded in widely held assumptions like the impossibility of *creatio ex nihilo*,and a principle of sufficient reason—and reasons deductively from them. It seems reasonable to conclude that the shared predicates are those Parmenides thought he could offer good arguments for, and the differences are those he could not, for some reason. The differences might also be explained due to a perceived lack of internal consistency—can a perfectly complete, motionless entity that can change in no manner think? Doesn’t that require some sort of internal change, and imply some lack of eternal perfection?

Whatever the ultimate explanation, this reading is consistent with a substantial and direct Xenophanean influence. Parmenides aimed to provide a far more carefully argued rational account of divine nature, as a corrective against the mythopoetic tradition. This rational theism ended up being even more radical than Xenophanes’ own, featuring a complete elimination of all anthropomorphic characterizations (including mind) and religious import (no involvement in the world).[[49]](#endnote-49) This reading also provides a substantive and charitable explanation that can account for all the philosophical parallels between these thinkers inthe ancient *testimonia*.

Further recommending this interpretative view is that it offers a far more holistic account than traditional models have offered so far. First, it makes the *Proem* interpretatively relevant. Second, it allows for *Aletheia* and *Doxa* to be easily reconciled, a task which has long plagued Parmenidean studies. No longer is there any worry that Parmenides was arguing that the entirety of the cosmos is one unified, unchanging entity—and thus madly denying the existence of everything in our experience, including himself. One need only accept that Parmenides was in fact closely following Xenophanes—offering metaphysical arguments for a rational theism rather than a metaphysical analysis of being in-itself—and thereby establishing the Eleatic tradition in Magna Graecia.

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2. Some representative skeptical examples: A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Richard McKirahan (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009), 18-20; Daniel W. Graham, *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy: Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4, 95; Richard McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010), 151-52; 18-20; Néstor-Luis Cordero, *By Being, It Is: The Thesis of Parmenides* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004), 9-11; Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 16n33. Michael Patzia, “Xenophanes,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 10/16/2016. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/xenoph/>. Leonardo Tarán, *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965) 3, 201. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Diogenes, *Lives*, ix.18-20; DK *Xen.* B8. Censorinus 15.3; DK *Xen*.A7. In addition to original sources, I include the standard numbering of Presocratic fragments from Diels-Kranz (‘DK’) when appropriate, abbreviating the respective Presocratic (e.g. *Xen.* or *Parm*.) the fragment is grouped under if necessary. Hermann Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker griechisch und deutsch*, 6th Ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1952). I also often include Coxon’s numerical listing of *testimonia* (i.e. *Test*. #), for *testimonia* relating to Parmenides. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve, *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle* 4th Ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2011); J.H. Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1992). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Two different traditions suggest very different dates for Parmenides’ birth. Cf. Diogenes, *Lives*, ix. 23; Plato, *Parmenides*, 127a10-c9. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. *Lives,* ix.18-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *Lives*,viii. 36; DK B7. Pythagoras’ school was founded c. 530 BCE. The Sicilian Empedocles (490-430 BCE) is also said to have lived with learned directly from Xenophanes. *Lives*,viii. 56; *Xen*. A5. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. *Lives,* ix. 18-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Far more likely than Cordero’s hypothesis that Xenophanes wrote his ode to Elea while still in Colophon. Cordero, *By Being It Is*, 10-11. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.23 1400b6 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 986b20-23. Theophrastus, *Opinions of the Natural Philosophers* fr. 6. Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Math.* vii, 111—114. Aetius, *On Principles*,i, 3. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromata* 5. Coxon *Test*. 40, 55, 87, 136. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Plato, *Sophist*, 242d4-d5; Coxon Test. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. *Lives* ix, 21; Coxon *Test.* 96. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Those claiming Eleaticism holds “all is one” include: Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and some early Neo-Platonists (Calcidius and Simplicius). Cf. fn. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Plato, *Parmenides*,248a8-b1; Coxon *Test*. 11. *Sophist* 242d4-d5. Cf. fn. 16. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 986b21-25. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Clement, *Misc.*,5.109; DK B23. Sextus, *Adv. Math.*, 7.49.110; DK B34. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Sextus, *Adv. Math*., 9.144;DK B24. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Simplicius, *Comm. Physics,* 23.19, 23.10. DK B25-26. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Inferred from Xenophanes’ rejection of portrays which make the gods as anthropomorphic beings, engaging in inappropriate behaviors like: thieving, adultery, war, deception, etc. Cf. DK B1, B11-15. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Clement, *Misc.*,5.109; DK B14. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1399b6-9; A12. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. DK B8.3-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Aetius best describes this parallel, claiming both held the cosmos to be: ungenerated, eternal, imperishable, unmoved, unique and complete. Aetius, *On Principles* i, 3; Coxon *Test*. 55. *Whether the Cosmos is Indestructable* 11; Coxon, *Test.* 60. Cf. Pseudo-Plutarch *Stromata* 5; Coxon, *Test.* 87. More moralistically, Cicero claims both held the sole good to be that which is one, alike, and always the same. Cicero, *Lucullus* 129; Coxon *Test.* 102. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Simplicius, *Comm. Physics,* 23.19; DK B25. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Sextus, *Adv. Math*, 7.49.110; DK B34.Cf. DK *Xen*. A24. Cicero, *Lucullus* 74; Coxon, *Test.* 101. Sextus, *Adv. Math*., 111-114; Coxon, *Test.* 136. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. DK B11-12, B14-16. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Stobaeus, *Selections*, 1.8.2; DK B18. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. DK B34. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. DK B1.1.29-30; DK 8.38b-41, 8.50-54, 8.60-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. DK 6.4-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. DK B34. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. And, foundational odes to cities. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Aetius, *On Principles* i, 3; Coxon *Test.* 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Aetius, *Whether the Cosmos is Indestructable* 11; Coxon, *Test.* 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Aetius, *On God*,26; Coxon, *Test.* 56. A nearly contemporaneous (though less reputable) text similarly states that Parmenides was describing God, in largely Xenophanean terms, with one notable point of departure—Parmenides holds that God is limited (and “like a sphere”), rather than unlimited. Pseudo-Aristotle, *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, 978b7-15; Coxon, *Test*. 120 Ibid., Test. 120. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Philo of Alexandria, *On Providence*, ii, 39, 42; Coxon, *Test.* 104-105. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, 978b7-15; Coxon, *Test*. 120 Ibid., Test. 120.

    Menander Rhetor, *The Division of Epideictic Speeches*, I, 2 and 5; Coxon, *Test*. 151-2.Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, v, 14; Coxon, *Test.* 129-30. Ammonius, *Comm. De Interpreatione*, 133, 16-24; 136, 17-25; Coxon, *Test.* 187-88. Macrobius, *Comm. On Scipio’s Dream*, I, 2, 20-21; Coxon, *Test.* 161. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, iii, 12, 96; Coxon, *Test.* 218. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. DK B1.1-32. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Scholars are divided over whether the youth’s journey indicates: a) *anabasis*—metaphorical ascent from darkness (ignorance) to light (knowledge), or b) *katabasis—*a descent back to the House of Night. Though I favor the *katabasis* interpretation, this interpretative preference will make little to no difference here. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. The sole source for DK 1.1-27 is Sextus Empiricus. Not only did no other ancient source quote from these lines, no source *ever* mentions their content. Sextus himself offered a clearly anachronistic, allegorical treatment of the *Proem*. Allegorical approaches are the second most common treatment. However, these are quite problematic in the details, and ultimately offer little to no interpretative impact. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. For this, see especially: Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, 2nd Ed. (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. *Theogony*, 713-819. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Cf. Mitchell Miller, “Ambiguity and Transport: Reflections on the Proem to Parmenides’ Poem” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2006): 1-47. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. DK 8.50-DK 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116-125. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. DK B1.28b-30. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. DK B8.50-52. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. DK B6. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Cf. Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy*, 329-330. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)