Jonathan Barnes, *et al.*: *Eleatica 2008: Zenone e l'infinito*. A cura di Livio Rossetti e Massimo Pulpito. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag 2011. 213 S. (Eleatica. 2.).

Zeno's arguments have exercised the human mind for more than two millenia and they continue to do so. This is documented again by the present volume. It is the second volume of a newly founded series 'Eleatica', whose editor is Livio Rossetti, Perugia, and contains the proceedings of a conference held in January 2009 at the 'Fondazione Alario per Elea-Velia' in Ascea, whose main lecturer was Jonathan Barnes (JB). Velia is the Latin name of the Greek city Elea. Its remnants are now to be found in Ascea, Province of Salerno. The gentleman JB pays a compliment to the city, namely that the small city of Elea-Velia has contributed more to philosophy than the great city of Rome. The arguments of Zeno are in fact paralleled with the ontological argument of Anselm and Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. The lecture is mainly dedicated to *one* of the paradoxes, namely fragment B1 (Diels-Kranz), which JB calls, in distinction to other terminologies (it is subsumed, e.g. by Kirk/Raven under the name of 'paradoxes of plurality'), the paradox of 'dichotomy'. This paradox is to be distinguished from the runner paradox (Aristotle. *Phys.* 233a21–23) which belongs to the paradoxes of motion and which – according to JB – Aristotle calls the dichotomy (cf. p. 62, n. 25). JB limits himself to: «Thus if several things exist, it is necessary that they be both small and large – so small as to have no size so large as to be infinite.» The gist of his lecture is summarized in an overview (p. 8–9) in English, as well as by Livio Rossetti and Massimo Pulpito in Italian (p. 19–24). Thus, there is no point in presenting another summary. We underline only some original or striking points in JB's lecture. The infinite in its ordinary sense is not a technical notion (although an out-of-the-ordinary notion could be made into a technical one); the introduction of atoms, which seems to be a good reply to Zeno, is based on an error, or more exactly an *ignoratio elenchi* (p. 72–74), since even the

atom which is not actually divisible into parts has some bits because it has size. Zeno's argument does not prove its conclusion since it involves two additional premises, namely one that links the size of a body to the «sum of the sizes of its parts», the other being that «the sum of an infinite number of magnitudes is equal to an infinite magnitude». For the first premise, JB introduces two technical terms: «partition» and «quasi-partitions». The Zenonian sequence is a series of quasi-partitions. The most interesting contribution seems to be the 'Porphyrian partitions', which he bases on a testimonium in the commentary of Porphyrius to the Aristotelian *Physics*, preserved by Simplicius (*in Phys.* 139.24–32) (p. 103).

In addition to JB's lecture, the volume contains seven commentaries by colleagues and replies to these comments by JB. The contributors address many different points, but not all are closely connected to the philosophical content of JB's lecture. They deal with such heterogeneous topics as the difference between the paradoxes of the impossibility of motion in Zeno and Parmenides (Constantin Antonopoulos: 'An Infinity of Priorities'), the role of the analytical method in writing about ancient philosophy (Maddalena Bonelli: 'La dicotomia di Zenone ovvero l'anacronismo anglosassone'), the alleged nihilism of Zeno's arguments (Nestor Cordero: 'Commentaire à propos du Zénon de Jonathan Barnes'), the argument that Parmenides was not a monist (Francesca Gambetti: 'Zenone filosofo e Parmenide scienziato'), a reading of Zeno's paradoxes in the light of infinity and quantum mechanics (Marcella Giulia Lorenzi and Mauro Francaviglia: 'I Paradossi di Zenone e la meccanica quantistica'), a reformulation of the Dichotomy paradox that probably works (Massimo Pulpito: 'Partizioni infinite. Zenone, Barnes e la grandezza dei corpi'), and finally the role of paradoxes as provocation and not as part of a philosophical theory (Livio Rossetti: 'Un filosofo senza filosofia'). JB answers all comments in detail. His methodological thoughts and so-to-speak second-order comments on the interrelation of philological, historical and philosophical aspects, on the question of whether there is some-

thing in between history of philosophy and philosophy, and on the principle of charity in ancient philosophy have value on their own and are most interesting to everyone who studies not only ancient philosophy, but mediaeval and modern philosophy as well.

JB reminds us that his lecture only tackles philosophical questions and not historical or philological ones. Of course, JB knows that there are problems in ancient philosophy which raise all three sorts of questions and that these questions can depend on each other and may be interrelated in one way or another. But, as he presupposes, sometimes a philosophical question can be answered without answering one of the other questions first, at least he thinks that this position is true when it comes to Zeno's Dichotomy. This is a very interesting point as (Gadamerian) hermeneutics of ancient texts usually assume that it is not possible to answer a certain question without knowing the whole philosophical, historical and philological context of it. It also seems that the distinction between philosophy and the history of philosophy, wherein the former tackles only philosophical, the latter only historical and philological questions, does not exclude something in between: e.g. in studies on Zeno's paradoxes, one needs a method which is philosophical, although its subject is from the history of philosophy.

Usually interpreters support the idea that the Principle of Charity is highly useful in the study of ancient text. According to this principle in its Davidsonian version, the reader of a text should presuppose that it is free from logical errors, that it is consistent and coherent, and that its propositions are true. Surprisingly, in his comment to Bonelli's paper, JB puts forward what is nothing but a counter argument to the fruitfulness and usefulness of Davidson's Principle of Charity. JB comes to the conclusion that the Principle of Charity is not sound and that it is of no help when one tries to understand texts from ancient philosophy. Nevertheless, JB accepts some version of a «principle of charity» which to avoid confusion could also be called a principle of bona fide interpretation after which a philosophical au-thor has something meaningful to say: «In part, then, charity is simply a matter of recognizing that sense is commoner than nonsense» (p. 193).

Some concluding remarks: There are few monographs on Zeno, and this monograph has surely to be consulted on D/K.B1. However, the volume leaves us with an ambiguous impression. It is a merit of the city of Ascea to excavate its own philosophical past and of the 'Fondazione Alario per Elea-Velia' to support such a congress. Livio Rossetti (LR) is to be thanked warmly for his initiative and JB for agreeing to give the talks. On the other hand, one may ask some questions: JB writes a rich and varied English prose. Why translate this prose into Italian? Because the discussions have been in Italian? But perhaps not all non-Italian *lovers* of Zeno and the *lingua di Dante* are willing to invest the necessary free time – which is for many scholars their vacation time – to read excellent English prose translated into Italian. LR gives a useful short history of the research done before *Ascea* (p. 13–35), but in the contribution of JB, large parts of the existing literature are absent. The book lacks a bibliography and an index. It is true: JB writes not for specialists nor for people with a distaste for the obvious. Of course, what is obvious has first to be seen. But the oral style also contains many repetitions of the obvious, and who should read such a book if not specialists? The limitation on *one*, or more exactly, *one-half* of a paradox perhaps shows the importance of that half but does not leave every reader satisfied. The book could have been made more interesting if it had also treated the paradoxes of motion and what has been called «Zeno's metrical paradox of extension» (A. Grünbaum) or the «fundamental paradox» (R. Ferber), which seems also to underlie the four or at least three of the paradoxes of motion. The 'paradox' consists in the fact that an extended linear continuum can be conceived as an aggregate of unextended elements and has found at least four different answers in the history of human thought: (a) Aristotle's theory of the continuum, (b) Leibniz/Newton's infinitesimal calculus, and (c) Cantor's theory of the continuum and (d) the theory of 'indivisible lines' assigned

to Plato by Aristotle (*cf. Metaph.* A9. 992 a 20–22). Thus, the book remains somewhat in the air. With the exception of Livio Rossetti's short history of research the book it is not really connected to the scholarship done before nor is it connected to the present philosophical *status quaestionis* in the sciences or at least some parts of the *status quaestionis.* It is rather left to the reader to find out what is really new in comparison to other publications in this *mare magnum* of publications on Zeno, including those of JB. Nevertheless, the volume shows the vitality of Zeno in the venerable city of Elea/Velia. A bibliography on Zeno we find now in the new Überweg, Frühgriechische Philosophie, Basel 2013, 562-572.

Luzern   *Rafael Ferber/Gregor Damschen*