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PhD dissertation: Logic, Metaphysics and Theology. The Reception of the *Parmenides* in the Middleplatonism.

The present study has the purpose of establishing the role that Plato's *Parmenides* has had in the middleplatonian philosophy. This research is therefore intended to answer to a key question: was the *Parmenides* integrated in the readings and in the exegesis of the middleplatonists? And, if so, what role did it play in them? This question will be addressed by taking into account some of the most important middleplatonian authors and by examining, for each one, those aspects of their thinking that likely show a dependence on the Platonic *Parmenides*. It should be emphasized, first of all, that this theme presents peculiar difficulties to the extent that in all the middleplatonian texts that have come to us, often in an indirect and fragmentary form, the presence of *Parmenides* seems rather marginal and hardly demonstrable. However, as I will try to demonstrate, in the writings we have, we can still trace the elements that justify the hypothesis of a specific reception of the dialogue in the Middleplatonism.

Each author will be firstly presented in a general way, framing from time to time the philosophical context and the central doctrines. Subsequently, the most promising steps for this research will be examined in order to show particular concepts and theories that can be traced back to, or derived from, what Plato has established in the *Parmenides*. In most cases, the connections between the *Parmenides* and the author dealt with are terminological similarities, content affinities, and repetitions of themes that are in the *Parmenides*. In any case, the closure of each section (each corresponding to the examination of an author, or one or more specific doctrinal aspects) will present brief general conclusions, in which will be expressed my opinions regarding the possible presence and role of the *Parmenides*.

The division into chapters of this research, structured in 'logic', 'metaphysical' and 'theological' ¹ interpretations, is traced from the Proclus' Commentary to the *Parmenides*. In this work (631.11-641.14)², Proclus clearly distinguishes these three interpretative lines from the previous tradition, and thus provides a proof of the actual existence of a relatively broad exegetical tradition of the *Parmenides*³. However, Proclus gives no name to the interpretative lines he has identified, so it is not easy to understand who he is referring to. Proclus' division, in

¹ Even though these categories constitute 'thematic chapters', they are not to be taken rigidly, since they are mostly an organizational criterion to arrange the subject in a more orderly manner.

² See C. Luna / A.-P. Segonds (éd.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, t. I-V (8 voll.), Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2007-2013.

³ It is good to note from now that Proclus does not explicitly speak of *Parmenides*' metaphysical interpretations. He rather expresses that there were some interpreters who saw in the *Parmenides* an inquiry into the Being (περὶ τοῦ ὄντος; Procl. *In Parm.* 635.33) and related to 'πράγματα'. The way of understanding such interpretations as 'metaphysical' or 'ontological' corresponds to a modern way of summing up the exegetical attitude of Proclus. See G.-R. Morrow / J.-M. Dillon (eds.), *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1987, p. 32.

any case, leaves room to admit that he was not merely referring to his closest neo-platonic predecessors but also authorizes the hypothesis of the existence of pre-plotinian interpretations of the *Parmenides*. What is established by Proclus is a good - but not the only - motivation to examine in depth the possibility of a middleplatonian reception of the *Parmenides*.

On this basis, the purpose of this investigation is not only to prove that the *Parmenides* was read during the Middleplatonism, rigorously examining the bases for this hypothesis, but also and above all to grasp the repercussions that its validation has in consideration to what we know about middleplatonists. This implies that sometimes the analysis, starting with the hypothetical presence of the *Parmenides* in some authors, will come to deny its true veracity. The reader of my dissertation will find even critical judgments about some of the studies that have accredited the hypothesis that the *Parmenides* was relevant for the medioplatonism. For example, in the section dedicated to the Anonymous Commentary at the *Parmenides*, I will come to reject G. Bechtle's thesis, which proposed a middleplatonian dating of the script. On the other hand, will emerge numerous and interesting testimonies, confirming that the *Parmenides* was read and used in a weighty way by middleplatonian authors. Such confirmations will prove to be decisive in determining that the *Parmenides* has had some undeniable repercussions on middleplatonian thinking.

My research aims to establish that:

- 1) The *Parmenides* - in particular the second part of the dialogue (*Parm.* 137b1-166c5) - for many middleplatonists has been a kind of argumentative model for dealing with the relationships between unity and multiplicity and, similarly, for those between the first principle and the principled (what comes from the first principle). In this sense, the *Parmenides* provided a logical-argumentative framework of reference, used as a support to the *Timaeus* and, partly, to the *Republic*, which remain in fact the texts mainly interpreted and used by middleplatonian authors (with a clear priority for the first work).
- 2) Some middleplatonian philosophers resorted to the dialectical exercise contained in the *Parmenides*, particularly to the first series of logical deductions (*Parm.* 137c4-142a8), tracing a reference model for the 'negative theology'.
- 3) More generally, the present study will contribute to understanding the dynamics associated with the spread of the platonic *corpus*, shedding light on some decisive aspects of the development of the Middleplatonism such as the systematization of platonic thinking, the general tendency to 'theologization' of the eidetic paradigm and the formulation of ontological-metaphysical hierarchies.