

Heidegger, Parmenides, and Being and Time

Opening Lecture for the Reading Group

Heidegger and Classical Thought The Beginning of Western Philosophy Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides ¹

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Martin Heidegger's first words in print were not his own,² but Plato's, or rather, the words of the Ξένος, the Stranger. Words that were addressed to Theaetetus, from the dialogue the *Sophist*. They appeared in his hastily prepared and unfinished *Sein und Zeit, Being and Time*, in 1927. The Macquarrie-Robinson translates Plato's Greek as closely as it does Heidegger's German, when it says: "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression use the expression '*being*'. We however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed".³ In the German, Heidegger designates the Greek word ὄν with, not the noun, *das Seiende*, "present being",⁴ but the uncapitalised verbal participle,

¹ See *Bibliography* below, Martin Heidegger, GA35.

² If we may discount the juvenilia and the fact that his doctorate and *Habilitation* are only technically publications in the strict sense. If we must count the latter, then far more weight should be attached to the last two words of the *Habilitation* thesis, appearing at the end of a paragraph only added after the thesis was accepted. Heidegger envisages that everything that is to come in his work will be in *Auseinandersetzung . . . mit Hegel* (confrontation . . . with Hegel). "With" has all the connotations that the word πάρα has in Greek: with, alongside, up-against (i.e. next-to), over-against (i.e. opposed), contrary to, even *beyond*. See 'Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus (1915)' (GA1), p. 411.

³ John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans.), *Being and Time*, p. 19. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (GA2), p. 1. ". . . δῆλον γὰρ ὡς ὑμεῖς μὲν ταῦτα (τί ποτε βούλεσθε σημαίνειν ὅποταν ὄν φθέγγεσθε) πάλαι γινώσκετε, ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ὄνομα, νῦν δ' ἠπορήκαμεν . . .", "Denn offenbar seid ihr doch schon lange mit dem vertraut, was ihr eigentlich meint, wenn ihr den Ausdruck 'seiend' gebraucht, wir jedoch glaubten es einst zwar zu verstehen, jetzt aber sind wir in Verlegenheit gekommen."

⁴ The more common translation for this term, "beings" is wholly inadequate, since with the use of a plural it fails completely to denote the *abstract* understanding of what is intended. Miles Groth, among others, notes that *das*

seiend, which, to be able to hear adequately in English, we almost have to hyphenate: be-ing. The translation qualifies the word with a long and detailed footnote. Over the coming weeks we will consider in great detail the meaning of the word “being” (*das Seiende, ein Seiendes*), the verb “be” (*sein*), “to be, being” (*das Sein*), “be-ing” (*seiend*). Parmenides is (arguably) the first thinker in whom we find a written record of the attempt to address being *as being as such*. Heidegger is not alone in drawing attention to the verb *being*: the philosopher, commentator on early-Greek texts, and philologist, Charles Kahn published in 1973 a difficult and dense monograph of nearly 500 pages entitled *The Verb ‘Be’ in Ancient Greek*, with a revised edition in 2001, and a further set of *Essays on Being* eight years later.

The text we are looking at takes the word “beginning” in its sub-title: “the beginning of Western philosophy”: hardly an unambitious claim. Today we make our own beginning. The beginning we take into consideration is not just our own, but on this occasion, a return to one that was made ninety or so years ago, in very different circumstances, delivered as a set of lectures by Martin Heidegger at the University of Freiburg, and entitled “The beginning of Western Philosophy: Anaximander and Parmenides”. I will refer to this from now on as “the 1932 lectures”. The text we will work from is volume thirty-five of Heidegger’s collected works, or *Gesamtausgabe*, in a version edited by Peter Trawny in 2012.⁵ Trawny is a renowned editor of quite a number of the volumes of the Heidegger *Collected Works*. The publication of this text marked, not a beginning, but a fulfilment of a kind: it was the last to be published of a total of forty-seven volumes of Heidegger’s lecture courses delivered from 1919, first at Freiburg, then Marburg up until 1929, then as Professor of Philosophy back at Freiburg, until the collapse of teaching in the wartime situation of 1944. Chronologically, the final courses Heidegger delivered were on Heraclitus, and their titles are significant: “The beginning of Western thinking” and “Logic: Heraclitus’ Doctrine of the Logos”.⁶ The translation we will use is by Richard Rojcewicz, an accomplished translator of eleven volumes of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*. As we proceed we will have to hand the German text, and the Greek of Anaximander’s and Parmenides’ fragments. We have not made it a requirement to have German or Greek, and, for those of you who do, I am going to ask you in your contributions

Seiende “denotes the active ongoing manifesting of an effective actuality. [. . .] It does not mean a static, finished entity or totality of such entities. [. . .] [It] is the pivotal term in Heidegger’s way of thinking beginning with *Sein und Zeit*.” Miles Groth, *Translating Heidegger*, p. 8.

⁵ The overall plan of the *Gesamtausgabe* is for one hundred and two volumes of Heidegger’s writings, of which only three (and one half of a double-volume of seminars) are yet to appear.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit*. 1. *Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens*; 2. *Logik. Heraklits Lehre vom Logos*, edited by Manfred S. Frings (1994 [1979]) (GA55). Translated by Julia Goesser Assaiante and Shane Montgomery Ewegen as *Heraclitus: 1. The Inception of Occidental Thinking and 2. Logic: Heraclitus’s Teaching of the Logos*.

not to avoid the original languages, but to have careful regard, when referring to the original languages, to those who may not have them, or have them as readily as you do. To those of you who do not have one or both of the original languages, I am going to ask you at least to be prepared to familiarise yourself with the Greek alphabet and how it works, and to be prepared to work with the original languages. If you find yourself struggling, please contact either Dr. Turner or me, and we will do what we can do to help you.

In this opening session I want to provide an introduction to the thinking behind this seminar, or “reading group”. This group arose out of a small, but happy attempt (until the pandemic intervened) in 2019 to bring together some classicists with an interest in Heidegger, and some philosophically minded people with an interest in Heidegger’s relationship to the texts of classical antiquity, to consider Heidegger’s lectures entitled *Plato’s Sophist* from a Freiburg course of the Winter Semester of 1924/25.⁷ As soon as it became possible, we decided to repeat the exercise, but this time with Heidegger’s far less well-known, but perhaps more decisive, engagement with Anaximander and Parmenides. This opening session is intended to provide some background to this claim that between them (and in ways that we will not be able to consider, Heraclitus) they constitute the *Anfang*, the opening, the beginning, the inception, of Western thought.

We must understand the claim. For in no sense does Heidegger argue that there was no thinking before Anaximander, before Parmenides (before Heraclitus). Quite the reverse: Heidegger’s claim is that we can only gain access to what preceded this beginning by understanding how *this* beginning unfolded. The beginning, as Heidegger describes it, is not arbitrary, nor is it accidental. Often Heidegger uses the word “fateful”, both of the beginning, and of what he calls the “history of being”. As we shall come to see, he means these two are one and the same. Standing alongside it, in fact as part of this history, is a history of the forgetting of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), sometimes discussed as the *oblivion* of being, and as being’s *forgottenness*. This question of the relation of the unconcealed to the concealed, of being’s being-forgotten, is not heavily emphasised in the lectures of 1932 (it is formally discussed only at §13), and indeed with regard to Parmenides, it is discussed very little at all, and yet it is decisive.⁸ This decisive interpretation of Heidegger’s makes an early appearance here, going far beyond what he had earlier believed had occurred only in Plato (and in this he

⁷ *Platon: Sophistes*, edited by Ingeborg Schüßler (1992) (GA19). Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, as *Plato’s Sophist*.

⁸ Indeed the meagre reference to *being’s* being-forgotten are relegated to the Appendix, p. 239. Where Heidegger discusses forgetfulness in relation to Parmenides, he does so as a habit of philosophers themselves, not something connected with being as such (cf. p. 160).

was not alone). Heidegger unfolds an interpretation of Parmenides in which he shows how the withdrawal and forgottenness of being only occurs on the basis of the presence of being, on being-present (*das Seiende*), and not the other way round. Heidegger tells us: “all unpresence [lies] within the sphere of presence”.⁹ Whatever is in presence is not in some sense (metaphysics speaks of it “causally”) dependent on something absent: here we might think of Kant’s “Übersinnliche”, the “supersensible”, or Plato’s ἐπεκείνα, the “over-there”, “beyond (being)”. What we think to be “beyond” (in any sense) can only make its presence felt or understood primarily and only on the ground of the present-presence of the *here* (the *Da*, this is the *Da* of *Da-sein*).¹⁰

The beginning of Western *philosophy* begins here: begins with Parmenides, begins with Anaximander (begins with Heraclitus). Does it begin *in* them, or *after* them or *because of* them, or in what way way? Is it *their* beginning, or are they (and what they say) in some way what appears when something presses-in to arrive? There are many signs in the lectures of 1932 that Heidegger is to a certain extent unsure, still finding his way, in to the answer to these questions. Something, we might say, is also struggling to make an appearance through what he says. How would that be? What is it that seeks, that at times urgently presses forward, to find a voice? Let me repeat a point I learned from Heidegger’s own words, and that must be made as often as possible. As thinkers we are best placed when we are uninterested in merely in what other thinkers have to say – the “stuff” of their – our – conversations. We should, however, pay closest attention to what it is they speak *of*. None of us should aspire to be “Heideggerians” – to join an esoteric club of “the initiated”, none of us, in the strict sense should be interested in Heidegger, *so much as* be interested in *what he was interested in*. If that is the composure with which we are to begin, we have perhaps a chance to be ready for where it is we must strive to go.

Many times when we pick up a text of Heidegger’s, it can be filled with words which clearly have an important, even decisive meaning for him, and yet which are not explained, or at least not explained in the text picked up. I want simply to alert you to what you are likely to find, right from the beginning, with this text. A beginning implies a trajectory, and a history. “History”, German *die Geschichte*, is a word which Heidegger uses frequently, and throughout *Being and Time*, and yet, it seems, almost never does he explain what he means by it, except

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Der Anfang der Abendländischen Philosophie* (GA35), p. 176. “Alles Abwesende im Umkreis von Anwesenheit.”

¹⁰ This argument is made with much greater sophistication in a small lecture prepared at the end of the war. See Martin Heidegger, ‘Von der Vergessenheit 1944/45’ (GA80.2), pp. 921–943.

to say what it is *not* (– especially in *Being and Time*: it is not, he says, *Historie*, the mere succession and assemblage of facts and details, of persons and recollected events). If Heidegger goes as far as saying that the human being is the historical being, he explains history *not* as “human history” in the way that Hegel, or Marx, or even Fukuyama have explained it, but as the history *of* being (*Seinsgeschichte*). The full burden of the meaning of the word “of” is intended here (the subjective and objective genitives): the history that being *has*, and the history that being *is*, and the history that being *lets happen and occur*.

Even after a thorough examination of *Being and Time*, we can be left struggling to understand what is meant by “being” or by “history”. A few years before the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins to speak of what he calls the “ontological difference”. In German this is easy to explain: the ontological difference is between being, *das Sein*, and being, *das Seiende*. You will note that these two different German words translate with the same English word “being”. I was fortunate enough to have attended lectures by John Macquarrie, one of the translators of *Being and Time*, in the early 1980s, and to know him personally a few years later. Macquarrie sometimes in discussion distinguished these two German words by speaking of “being with a big ‘B’ and being with a little ‘b’”: it should be said this is largely not the solution Macquarrie and his co-translator use in their translation. A more modern, but arguably quite misleading, solution has been to speak of being, *das Sein* and beings (plural), *das Seiende*. The solution is misleading because it tends to erase exactly one of the participial meanings that Heidegger names, and favours the substantive (“noun”) meaning of the participle over the verbal, and even adverbial, meaning. We hear in “beings” “heaps of things” (we hear this term within the subject-object relation, when precisely Heidegger sought to step away from and undercut the philosophy of subjectivity on which this relation depends), and not any “thing-ing”. There is a danger in working with Heidegger’s writing that, especially in English, we end up sounding like Dr. Seuss – asking questions like “what is the ‘-ing’ in ‘thing’?”. For that reason we are going to try, as best we can, working across at least two languages in addition to English, so speak plainly. Neither of the conventional distinctions (big/little ‘b’, or “beings”) will help us when we begin to converse in earnest with Parmenides. The distinction which at this juncture Heidegger called the “ontological difference” can be found, quite without discussion, throughout German philosophy. It is particularly obvious in the work of someone who had a huge influence not only on the youthful Heidegger, but also Husserl: Franz Brentano, who wrote a short but immensely important work *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*.

At the end of my remarks today I will examine briefly how Heidegger himself carries out this distinction, not from the 1932 lectures, but from one of Heidegger’s last lecture course

(on Heraclitus), where the meaning and the difference between *das Sein* and *das Seiende* is laid out very clearly, and, most importantly, in relation to the fragments of Parmenides. Before that point of clarity, let me suggest an area that will at this stage seem like one of greater difficulty and confusion, and yet it is essential to understand, especially for those of you who are classicists. Heidegger believed the ontological difference to have unfolded in consequence of the very “beginning of Western philosophy” that we are seeking to address in the 1932 lectures. Its origin can be found in what was later said (above all by Aristotle and Plato) of Parmenides’ two pairings, ἐόν ἔμμεναι, and ἐόν ἴσται. However, Heidegger came to hold that Parmenides does not foresee bringing into being anything like an “ontological difference”, a view that Riezler also held: indeed Heidegger understood that what he had come to call the ontological difference had its inception in an interpretation of being that, even if it had already emerged, was carried out formally only through Plato and Aristotle, and at a certain point he ceased to speak of the ontological difference as a formal distinction in being.¹¹ At bottom lay not only an interpretation of being, but also the interpretation of truth, ἀλήθεια. Indeed, the lectures of 1932 mark a point, not only of beginning, but of departure, *away* from talk of “ontological difference”, in ways we will come to see only when we turn to the beginning of the book, in fact to the opening paragraph of §1.

The interpretation of Plato necessary to prepare for this view was undertaken by Heidegger in the lectures that immediately preceded the 1932 lectures, in the Winter Semester of 1931/32, and entitled *On the Essence of Truth* (GA34). A more advanced version of this interpretation was prepared as an annexe to a second set of lectures with the same title delivered two years later, in the Winter Semester of 1933/34 (GA35/36). In between the two stand our lectures of 1932. The Plato-interpretation was made fully public with the publication in 1942 of the essay *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth* (GA9). In later publications this had added to its title the important dates of composition, given as 1931/32, 1940. Peter Trawny’s short but highly suggestive *Editor’s Afterword* to the 1932 lectures point to Heidegger’s own remarks on the importance of the 1932 lectures for the working out of what Heidegger was to develop as *das Ereignis*, “the Event”. Coincident with this idea is the abandonment, at least in Heidegger’s private writings, of the continued pursuit of “ontological difference” in favour of an understanding of being that Heidegger eventually was to call *das Geviert*, “the fourfold”.¹² I

¹¹ While retaining the view that it is constitutive for what he came to call “metaphysics”.

¹² This “Bezug zum Seyn” (a relation “to”, but also “within” or even “belonging to” *beyng*) was first publicly discussed in lectures delivered to a non-academic audience in Bremen in 1949 (see *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge* GA79), but versions of it appear as early as the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (GA65), dating from 1936.

said earlier that the “fateful” location of the beginning of Western philosophy to the fragmentary remains of Anaximander and Parmenides was neither arbitrary nor accidental, and that this fateful event holds within it the power to grant us access, not only to what flowed from the event itself, but also what preceded it.

Let us not lose sight of Heidegger’s provocativeness in the very opening of the lectures. He says on the one hand that we will set off from the beginning of western Philosophy, and in the opening lines of the lectures, he announces an *end* to philosophising. In the excursus into the careful and close reading of the texts of the beginning, the very thing which these two thinkers set in motion comes to an end. From now, we will take a different path. Are we the first ones to do so? Perhaps not.

In the introduction to a discussion of Hölderlin, Heidegger asks a question which has relevance for everyone present here today. He asks “whether Hölderlin belongs with the philologists or the philosophers”?¹³ This question is not an idle one: it asks: what has priority: poetry (Epic, Elegy, Lyric), or philosophy? What is invoked here is the “ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy”, the subject of discussions in Plato’s *Republic* and *Ion*.¹⁴ Philosophy *begins* in the ontological difference, in the way being is understood within itself. Its inception is in consequence of something indicated (and that came to be pursued), but not (formally) part of the thought of, Parmenides. Hölderlin, often thought to be the author of *The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* (even if the text we have of this decisive document appears to be written in Hegel’s hand),¹⁵ was for Heidegger that one who had allowed the beginning to speak yet again, but a beginning not *of western Philosophy*, but of thinking, the *thoughtful beginning*. Heidegger argued that Hölderlin’s poetry had spoken from out of that “where” from which what he (Heidegger) had come to call the fourfold also speaks: the “relation” of the “four”, the paired-pairs: of earth and heavens; and mortals (being toward death) and divinities (the deathless ones). If we ask whether the fact that Hölderlin writes primarily in poetic form decides this question of where Hölderlin belongs (to philology? or to philosophy?), we must also ask this same question of Parmenides, whose fragments are part of a metrically constructed poem, a poem whose commentators point out has Homer and the Epic form firmly in view.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, ‘Hölderlins Erde und Himmel’ (GA4), p. 152. “Inzwischen ist die Frage laut geworden, ob Hölderlin den Philologen oder den Philosophen gehöre.”

¹⁴ See, for instance, Pl.R. 607 b. ὅτι παλαιὰ μὲν τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφία τε καὶ ποιητικῆ

¹⁵ See Freidrich Hölderlin, ‘Entwurf (Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus)’, in *Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, vol. 4.1, pp. 297–299. Translated by H. S. Harris as ‘The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism’ in Jon Stewart (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings of G. W. F. Hegel*, pp. 110–112.

Does this mean that the “four” of the fourfold in how Hölderlin writes, and in what we find in epic, or in Sappho, or Pindar, “predates” Plato and Aristotle? Here is what Heidegger actually says: “this number is never especially thought or said by Hölderlin. Nevertheless, throughout all his saying, the four are first glimpsed from the intimacy of their togetherness”.¹⁶

The positive Anglophone reading of Heidegger has, with notable exceptions, often neglected Heidegger’s engagement with Greek texts. There are three principal reasons for this. First, German metaphysics as a whole came to be neglected (perhaps with the exception of Kant) or even actively marginalised in many British, Australian, and North American departments of philosophy at precisely the time when Heidegger’s work began most widely to be received. This situation has changed a little in recent years, but the reading of Heidegger that has emerged is often based on a narrow, sometimes quite violent, reading of a limited range of texts, and has at times cajoled his work into a shape he himself might have struggled to recognise. The small but powerful strand of Heidegger scholarship that has attended to Heidegger’s relations with the Greeks – David Krell, Charles Bambach, David Jacobs, Dennis Schmidt, among others – has almost always stemmed from North America (although Schmidt is now in Australia), and is often a somewhat marginal voice.

Second, where Heidegger has been read, he has often been read with the aid of French, and more latterly Italian, theorists, in humanities departments parallel to, but outside philosophy: English, Modern Languages, Geography, and latterly Politics and International Relations (here, more often through the spectacles of Foucault). Few in these departments have worried much about Greek, or had much interest in Greek texts: few enough had the requisite close interest in how and in what ways Heidegger related to Hegel, Kant, Husserl, Dilthey, Schelling, Leibniz, even Descartes, let alone Aquinas, Augustine, even Avicenna: not, I stress out of laziness or neglect, but often because this was simply not their focus or their training. An attempt at Heidegger’s “history of being” has therefore often been made without close regard to the history of the philosophy with which it was in discussion.¹⁷ Finally, Heidegger’s work is rendered into English only with very great difficulty. To say the least, not every attempt has met with unqualified success. Heidegger is a master of the German language, on a level with Eckhart or Nietzsche. If he is not a literary stylist (his poetry is often worth reading, in

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, ‘Hölderlins Erde und Himmel’ (GA4), p. 170. “Diese Zahl wird von Hölderlin nicht eigens gedacht und nirgends gesagt. Gleichwohl sind die Vier überall für all sein Sagen zuvor aus der Innigkeit ihres Zueinander erblickt.”

¹⁷ Where has Hegel appeared in these discussions, he did so introduced by Kojève, and therefore through a very one-sided reading of some sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, reading Hegel as a form of the philosophy of subjectivity outside absolute subjectivity and focused on the a selective reading of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* rather than the *Logik*.

German at least), the elegance and allusiveness of his language, and his rhetorical poise lend astonishing power to what he has to say. For those with a background in classical philology, let me add that German and Greek, especially syntactically, do have notable affinities. Heidegger is often mocked (or accused) for his slightly tongue-in-cheek remarks at Cerisy-la-Salle in 1955 and elsewhere about his French colleagues who, when they wish to think, must do so in German: but it is necessary to understand what Heidegger meant by this. He meant that German, especially the German of Hölderlin, was privileged only because, uniquely among Western *philosophical* languages it was on occasion capable of thinking as Greek can think. This questionable claim, is – *fragwürdig* – precisely *dubious*, because it is worthy of being questioned and looked into. It is not an apodeictic, arrogant statement, nor is it (as the Spiegel interviewers tried to claim in a journalistic “gotcha!” moment), a mark of Heidegger’s nationalism. It is a provocation. As students of thinking (which we all are) we are here to be provoked. Few enough of us do very well when we are not. Only the better students will make sense of what they are being goaded *to*.

On the other hand, Anglophone philologists have, with a few exceptions, often been suspicious, even derisive, of Heidegger’s reading of Greek texts. How that derision arose is understandable for reasons I shall touch on, but, I am going to suggest, it does not stand much scrutiny. Heidegger was a competent classical philologist. It is, however, still possible to find classically trained scholars continuing to make the claim (for instance) that Heidegger’s etymology of ἀλήθεια as “unhiddenness”, “dis-closedness”, as an alpha-privative of the verb λανθάνω, “has since been conclusively rebutted” by Paul Friedländer.¹⁸ It is true that Friedländer devoted a whole (brief) chapter to this “rebuttal” of Heidegger’s interpretation in the (second) 1954 edition of Friedländer’s *Hauptwerk* on Plato.¹⁹ In his 1968 *Preface* to the English translation of the third edition however, Friedländer had to concede (even though he continued to stress his disagreement with Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato) with regard to ἀλήθεια, “it has become clear that the aspect of unhiddenness most stressed by Heidegger was present very early”.²⁰ Friedländer’s “rebuttal” of Heidegger was simply wrong, and there is

¹⁸ James Orr, ‘Heidegger’s Critique of Aquinas on Truth: A Critical Assessment’, in *New Blackfriars*, pp. 43–56, 49. There is no intention here to single Orr out: he makes a point that has been a commonplace in many classics departments.

¹⁹ Paul Friedländer, *Platon: Seinswahrheit und Lebenswirklichkeit* (vol. 1) (1954), pp. 233–242.

²⁰ Paul Friedländer, *Plato* (vol. 1, third edition), translated by Hans Meyerhoff (1969), p. viii. This concession had necessitated an almost complete rewriting of the relevant chapter of the third, 1964, edition of Friedländer’s work. Cf. Paul Friedländer, *Platon*, vol. 1 (1964), p. 233–242. The German (1964) ‘Preface’ is rather more concise, (p. viii): “Wesentliche Änderungen hat nur die Auseinandersetzung mit Heidegger in Kapitel XI erfahren” (The only essential changes are in the confrontation with Heidegger in Chapter XI”).

now an extensive literature to this effect.²¹ In fact Heidegger’s etymology is attested as early as the *Etymologicum Magnum* (around AD 1150), and as recently as the publication this year of *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*. It is well known to linguistics (it is central to Pokorny’s masterwork of Indo-European linguistics),²² and is wholly uncontroversial. Much more important and fruitful for our own studies is the continued attention to the history and strangeness of the term ἀλήθεια, so central to Parmenides (Ἀλήθεια is the goddess in the fragments we will read).

Setting aside the whole discussion around the use of ἀλήθεια in Homer in *verba dicendi* (which became current in the post-war period, and which Bruno Snell was pressing as late as 1975),²³ and which has always seemed to me something of a blind alley, Charles Kahn, who is well aware of Heidegger, but does not focus on his work, has devoted a whole section of his *The Verb ‘Be’ in Ancient Greek* to what he calls “the veridical use”,²⁴ by which he means that in Homer and other early Greek texts to say something “is” and “is true” are one and the same. As we shall see, what Heidegger comes to call *das Seyn* is in fact shorthand for *die Wahrheit des Seyns*, “the truth of beyng”, with a firm emphasis on the subjective genitive and the verbal sense of the infinitive. Heidegger only ever tangentially considers other words for truth, most important of which is ἐτυμός,²⁵ but Pokorny carefully describes the relationship of ἐτυμός with (*digamma*) φερόμαι, with Latin *veritas, verum*, and as a form derived from εἶναι, “being”.²⁶

There are frequent references in Heidegger not only to Greek philosophy, but throughout his work to Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Thucydides, Hesiod and others. Terms central to his work, especially to *Being and Time*, are not neologisms at all, as has often been claimed, but direct renderings into contemporary idiom of Greek words. *Sein zum Tode*, “being toward death”, directly renders both the English and German dictionary translations of θνητός, of which “mortal” is only the secondary, more truncated definition. Similarly the term *Vorhandene, das Vorhandensein*, “what is at hand”, “being-at-hand”, is a good rendering of

²¹ See especially: Wilhelm Luther, ‘Wahrheit, Licht Und Erkenntnis In der griechischen Philosophie bis Demokrit’ (1966); Heribert Boeder, ‘Der frühgriechische Wortgebrauch von Logos und Aletheia’ (1959), and ‘Heidegger’s Legacy: On the Distinction of Ἀλήθεια’ (1998).

²² Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, p. 651.

²³ For Heidegger’s own comments on this, see ‘Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens (1964)’ (GA14), p. 87.

²⁴ Charles Kahn, *The Verb ‘Be’ in Ancient Greek*, pp. 331–370.

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Winke I und II* (GA101), p. 106–107. Apart from a glancing reference elsewhere, there is also a brief reference in an appended note to the preparatory material for a seminar on Plato’s *Phaedrus* of 1932. See ‘Platons Phaidros’ (GA83), p. 144.

²⁶ Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, p. 342. One should not miss the connections Pokorny and others make between *verum* and Germanic **wer*, *wahren*, *wehren*, *Wahrheit*, but that, perhaps is a topic for another day.

Aristotle's τὰ ὑπάρχοντα. Heidegger's initially startling claim from his 1942/43 lectures on *Parmenides* that “the word πόλις belongs to the same root of the old Greek word for ‘being’ = πέλειν, ‘coming forth into the unconcealed, rising’”,²⁷ is shufflingly confirmed by Beekes,²⁸ but is assuredly explained and developed by the more authoritative Pokorny, who demonstrates the connections between πέλω, πέλομαι, τελέζω, τέλομαι, τέλος, and even κύκλος, from an Indo-European root *k^uel-, to revolve or be-rotating.²⁹ I have so far been unable to show this formally, but I am convinced that Heidegger's later use of the term *Inständigkeit* – steadfastness, in-standing-ness, holding-fast-in-being, is an attempt to think through the meaning of the infinitive ἔμμεναι. The connections between forms of the verb “to be” and -sto, -sta, “to stand”, “to hold”, παρέστω, are well-known, but *men, -μεν also means to stand out, to bring forth: thus Latin ē-mineō (our “emanate”), and more originarily, Greek ἐν-μέν-α, and so ἔμμεναι. In an important commentary on *Being and Time* written for private use in 1936, Heidegger takes up further elaboration of the word *Da-sein*, which he expressly hyphenates, to show that it does not in any sense denote a “thing” or form or *instance* of personhood (a “subject”), but means *here-being*, privileging the “here” (*Da*) that being “is, and goes on, making present (for itself)”, Heidegger notes the following: “*Da-sein* – das Dasein als Inständigkeit ‘im’ Da als Jemeinigkeit *Selbtheit*”.³⁰ We can translate this dense and truncated note as “*Here-being* – actuality (*Dasein*) as in-standing-ness (ἔμμεναι) “within” the *here* – as my-very-own-ness, *selfhood*.” When we come to elucidate Parmenides' fragment 3 (DK), which we will do in a preliminary way at the end of today, the startling connection with Parmenides is difficult to ignore.

There is not much ground for the suggestion that Heidegger's etymologies are fanciful: they are legitimate, if at times audacious, interpretations. What is far more important is that Heidegger himself constantly sought, and found (to his own satisfaction at least) repeated confirmations of the claims he made in literature and scholarship apart from his own. Heidegger's relations with classical philology up until 1933, and in fact 1945, were on the whole excellent. In a series of carefully researched surveys between 1977 and 1997 the little-known American scholar Frank Edler has pieced together the web of connections between Heidegger and, among other things, the German philologists.³¹ He explains with meticulous

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* (GA54), p. 133. “Dasselbe Wort wie πόλις ist dem Stamm nach das altgriechische Wort für ‘sein’ = πέλειν, ‘aufgehend ins Unverborgene ragen’.”

²⁸ Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1, p. 1168 f.

²⁹ Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, p. 639.

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, ‘Laufende Anmerkungen zu “Sein und Zeit” (1936)’, p. 25. (Heidegger's emphases)

³¹ See especially Frank Edler, ‘Heidegger and Werner Jaeger on the Eve of 1933: A Possible Rapprochement?’, in *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 27 (1997), pp. 122–149.

care the relationships that emerged between Heidegger and Werner Jaeger, Kurt Riezler, Karl Reinhardt, Wolfgang Schadewalt, Julius Stenzel and Walter Otto.³² Riezler's 1934 edition of the Parmenides' Fragments, speaks of his gratitude for insights gained from both "the work of Karl Reinhardt on Greek philosophy and Martin Heidegger's foray into the problematic of the question of being".³³ These connections have since been underplayed, or just not noticed.

The suspicion of classical philologists is driven, almost certainly not by Heidegger's competence, or lack of it, in Greek, but rather more in consequence of his political engagement. Some of the most capable classical philologists were driven out of Germany – many to the United States – because they were designated as Jewish under laws passed by a racist regime to which Heidegger for a time lent unqualified public support. We should note here that even if there is a good case for arguing (indeed, I have argued this myself) that Heidegger came to be critical of the Nazi regime,³⁴ certainly from 1935 onwards, both privately and in his lectures, there was never, before or after the war, any public recantation by Heidegger of the Nazi regime. Heidegger's anti-Semitism was, on his own admission (if you know where to look for it) "reprehensible", and there can be no doubt of the truth of his claim that, for those who could see it, he was even by 1934 in a confrontation with the regime, but that does not make this question less vexed. I do not propose to dwell on Heidegger's political engagement, nor should it be part of our deliberations, but this does not mean it can, or should, be ignored, or brushed aside.³⁵

The *Schedule* we proposed for reading this text may at first sight seem odd. We begin, not at the beginning, but in the middle, at §18, with the discussion of Parmenides, putting it first, before the sections on Anaximander. If you have already looked at, or know, the 1932 lectures you will be aware that the two halves are quite discreet. The text itself works "chronologically", discussing first Anaximander and then Parmenides. It is only at §§16 and 17 that the text asks how these two thinkers are tied together. It might seem more obvious,

³² Otto in particular shared with Heidegger a love of Hölderlin, and was highly respected among Hölderlin scholars. They both published essays in what became the inaugural publication of the *Yearbook* of the Hölderlin Society. See *verso* and contents pages of the second (1944) edition of Paul Kluckhohn (ed.), *Hölderlin: Gedenkschrift zu seinem 100 Todestag, 7 Juni 1943*.

³³ Kurt Riezler, *Parmenides*, p. 7 "Ich hätte den Versuch nicht unternehmen können, wenn nicht in der Muße dieses Sommers Einsichten früherer Jahre hätten reifen können, für die ich Karl Reinhardts Arbeiten zur griechischen Philosophie und Martin Heideggers Einbruch in die Problematik der Seinsfrage dankbar verbunden bleibe." This Preface was removed from later editions: the 2001 edition speaks only of an interpretation of Parmenides carried out under an the "impulse" of Reinhardt and Heidegger, and the latest (2017) edition mentions them both only in the Bibliography, with some additional and rather woolly remarks on Heidegger from Hans-Georg Gadamer in an appended essay.

³⁴ Heidegger's remarks on the criminality of the regime in his private notebooks, had they been discovered at the time they were written (especially around 1938), would have been more than sufficient to get him shot.

³⁵ Nor should there be any attempt to downplay or ignore Heidegger's anti-Semitism.

perhaps, for Heidegger to have examined this question not in the middle, but at the beginning, but there are reasons for this that I hope to make clear. Our deliberations will formally conclude, therefore, at the point that might have made a better beginning for Heidegger himself, that is, with the question of how these two thinkers belong together. Why, then, propose this scheme for our reading?

The meaning of what we know in English as “being” must necessarily dominate our deliberations of this text. This English word can translate a multitude of Greek and German ones: in German *das Sein*, but also *das Seiende*, in Greek τὸ ὄν, τὸ εἶναι, and, archaically (as we find in Parmenides) τὸ ἐόν, τὸ ἔμμεναι. Heidegger also used the Schwabian dialect and archaic *das Seyn*, *das Seyende*, forms of “beyng with a ‘y’”, and, unless it is a later insertion, Heidegger’s first written use of *das Seyn* (that I can trace) appears in the lectures of 1932, right at the beginning, in §1.³⁶ One of the first (and there were very few, during his lifetime) public, published, uses of the term appears in the 1949 (second) edition of the published version of Heidegger’s short lecture, *On The Essence of Truth*, in an expanded version (now numbered, §9) of the *Note* added to the original (1943) edition.³⁷ Many Heidegger scholars have complained that Heidegger nowhere explains what he means to say when he begins to write *das Seyn*, despite the term being ubiquitous across the vast body of material that Heidegger scheduled for publication after his death (and central to any attempt to understand “the later Heidegger”). In fact the explanation given in the 1949 note is perfectly clear. It says: “The question concerning the truth of essence understands essence verbally and, still remaining within the thinking of metaphysics, thinks in this word, beyng (*das Seyn*) as the difference holding sway between being and present being”.³⁸

We must exercise care with these phrases of Heidegger that speak of what is “still remaining within the thinking of metaphysics” – since in the hands of cruder interpreters, these

³⁶ Heidegger often revised the transcripts of his work, adding, deleting and re-writing passages, almost always without providing any indication of the date that changes were made.

³⁷ In fact the first published occurrence of *das Seyn* seems to be from 1943, in the first appearance of the Hölderlin essay ‘Andenken’, published in 1943 by Paul Kluckhohn (ed.), *Hölderlin. Gedenkschrift zu seinem 100. Todestag* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, pp. 267–324, 310 = GA4.134): Heidegger says “die Schönheit ist die Anwesenheit des Seyns. Das Seyn ist das Wahre des Seienden.” In what was published in Heidegger’s lifetime, most mentions of *das Seyn* are quotations, mainly from either Hölderlin or Schelling. Otherwise Heidegger speaks publicly of *das Seyn* only very rarely: a few times in the essay ‘Überwindung der Metaphysik (1936–1946)’ (*Vorträge und Aufsätze*); in the verses and commentary on them published in *Denkerfahrten*, together with a mention at the end of the essay ‘Von Geheimnis des Glockenturms (1954)’. One other occurrence is in 1962, in the *Letter to Fr. William Richardson*: Here Heidegger speaks of “das Sein als solches (das Seyn)”. See Richardson ‘Vorwort’, p. xvii; ‘Ein Vorwort, Brief an Pater William J. Richardson’ (=GA11, p. 148 f.).

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (1949), p. 26. “Die Frage nach der Wahrheit des Wesens versteht Wesen verbal und denkt in diesem Wort, noch innerhalb des Vorstellens der Metaphysik, das Seyn als den waltenden Unterschied von Sein und Seiendem.

have sometimes been ossified into “laws” for the interpretation of Heidegger’s texts. The text which said something like this in the *Letter on Humanism* instantly became the claim that *Being and Time* was a “metaphysical” text, when Heidegger meant nothing of the sort.³⁹ These phrases say nothing of this kind, or rather they are the reverse: they place *you* the reader in relation to the *Kehre*, or the “turn”, this supposed transformation in Heidegger’s mind that everyone gets so excited about. There was no “change of mind” like a “change of heart”. They say: *you*, “unturned” reader who still, and unthinkingly, thinks within the province of metaphysics, you will only hear what is said here in the most provisional way: *you*, who remain thoughtlessly in metaphysics, must understand that you can only approach this term from out of the familiar, metaphysical distinctions.

The metaphysical distinction *par excellence* is the “ontological” difference. The metaphysical distinction *par excellence* is therefore at first and primarily the *metaphysical* distinction – it installs a metaphysics. Which is to say, it forces a distinction in how we hear the pairs: “ἔόν, ἔμμεναι”, “ἔόν ἴσται”, ὄντως ὄν being *of* what is presently being, the pair ὄν / εἶναι *in their difference*. *Das Seyn*, therefore, stands in relation to metaphysics as the ἔόν / ἔμμεναι of Parmenides stands in relation to his interpreters, Aristotle and Plato, who spoke of the difference between τὸ ὄν and τὸ ὄντως ὄν *as* what Heidegger had come to call the “ontological difference”. In short, *das Seyn* speaks of the “truth of being” and speaks of Parmenides’ speaking of (the truth of) being, a point which Heidegger clarifies further in the same paragraph at the revised end of the lecture *On the Essence of Truth*.

Heidegger is well known as a “thinker of being”: so too is Parmenides. Inasmuch as Heidegger is a “thinker of being”, we must confront something difficult and strange. There is at no point in Heidegger’s entire output a single, systematic treatise or work dealing solely with the explication of being, *das Sein* or *das Seyn* as such: this is in stark contrast to Hegel, whose final (and posthumously published) 1832 revision of the first part of his *Logik* has the explicit title *The Doctrine of Being*.⁴⁰ Being is also here spelled by Hegel with a ‘y’, *das Seyn*. Hegel, like Heidegger (and Hölderlin), was Schwabian.

³⁹ Martin Heidegger, ‘Brief Über dem Humanismus (1946)’ (GA9), p. 328. It is here that Heidegger explains that the second half of *Being and Time* was held back and “did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics.” Heidegger’s habit of continuing to write “in the language of metaphysics” in public texts is hinted at in a note added to his personal (1949) edition of the *Humanismusbrief*, recorded in the *Gesamtausgabe* edition at p. 316. What is said on that page (of *das Ereignis*) is “only a hint within the language of metaphysics. Because ‘Ereignis’ has been since 1936 the guiding word of my thinking.”

⁴⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik (1832). Erster Theil, die Objektive Logik, erster Band. Die Lehre vom Seyn*.

Not even *Being and Time*, insofar as it is a “book” in the conventional sense, functions as such a treatise. Those of you who know the history of the book will know that only a (smaller) part of what it was originally envisioned to be was ever published. The *schema* explained at §8 is for the work as a whole: it says that the first part would discuss “*Dasein* in relation to temporality”, and yet the book as it was actually written breaks off precisely before this schema is to be reversed in the discussion of “time and being”. This shift from *Dasein* to temporality to “time and being” is in fact the much vaunted and discussed “*Kehre*” or change in Heidegger’s thinking, promised, but not carried out.⁴¹ *Being and Time* leaves many things unsaid: if there is only a partially systematic discussion of “being”, even as “the question of being”, “time” as such is also never fully examined systematically. Various, at times almost Byzantine, attempts have been made to reconstruct the work as projected, or even to “finish” it on Heidegger’s behalf. Heidegger’s own attention turned in the entirely opposite direction, to what he called a more originary thinking, namely to what had laid the basis for the thinking of “being and time”, either as treatise, or, more importantly as a region of enquiry at all. Here, then, is my central contention, especially for why these lectures of 1932 are so important. As Trawny hints in the *Afterword*, these lectures to some extent represent a decisive break with the formal project of *Being and Time* in order to ask about the history of being itself, as the very question concerning being (*Frage nach dem Sein*). There is no systematic treatment because the question can only ever be dealt with historically. “Historically” means here: in and through the manners and texts in which the question *actually appeared*, not in some “systematic” abstraction that claims to represent the “inner meaning” of those texts.

The history of philosophy is littered with primers, schemas, “Introductions” and the like to the work of almost every thinker of note. These secondary texts are almost without exception useless: what they say must be *unlearned* when we undertake the real work of learning what a thinker actually thought in his or her own words. It is entirely possible (because I have done it myself) to teach, for instance, the actual text of Kant’s *First Critique* to people who have neither a word of German nor indeed have ever heard the name of Kant before, by patiently translating and expounding his actual words before their very eyes, with the “Cliff notes” sitting in the waste-bin. One must simply go more slowly, and more carefully, and make sure never to shame those present for what they do not yet, but can entirely, know.

In a now almost unremembered colloquium in Muggenbrunn in 1952 with Max Müller, Eugen Fink, Walter and Marly Biemel, only shortly after Heidegger had been allowed to teach

⁴¹ See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (GA2), pp. 52–53.

again after having been forbidden to teach in 1946, Heidegger remarked “I held my first course on Parmenides’ fifth fragment, and the problem has not let go of me since then”.⁴² The reference to the fifth fragment is significant, because if you know only the current *Diels-Kranz* numbering you will know it as the third. Heidegger remembers it from the original 1903 numbering of Hermann Diels’ first edition, before Walther Kranz’s minor alterations to the order. The text or preparatory material for this course, if it exists, is not in the public domain. It was given in Freiburg when Heidegger was a *Privatdozent* in the Winter Semester of 1915–1916. It was advertised as *Über Vorsokratiker: Parmenides*.⁴³ Heidegger began, certainly in his own words, with Parmenides. There are, throughout Heidegger’s work, multiple discussions of Parmenides. If there is any reason for us to begin with Parmenides, it is this. The year 1916 saw the publication of Karl Reinhardt’s *Parmenides and the History of Greek Philosophy*. It is likely this work came too late for Heidegger’s first course, but Reinhardt was known to Heidegger, and it is possible he could have had advanced sight of the book, or (far) more likely, that he was well aware of its central arguments through discussion. It was the first work to foreground and examine in detail the “three ways” of Parmenides (even today, there are authors who assert that only two ways are discussed in Parmenides’ fragments). Reinhardt, a scholar of considerable power, appears on the reading lists or in the footnotes of many of Heidegger’s lectures and other texts, including these lectures of 1932.

In his lectures on the *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger devotes some detailed discussion to Parmenides. He notes that Aristotle and Plato in their taking up and opposition to Parmenides, thereby raised Greek thinking to a “higher level”.⁴⁴ This corresponds to the generally accepted view of Heidegger and the origins of *Being and Time* in the literature. This view can be summarised as follows: Heidegger was hugely influenced by his reading of Aristotle, but by the time of the publication of *Being and Time* he had also carried out a fundamental *Auseinandersetzung* – conversation, confrontation – with Plato and his dialogue *The Sophist*. Theodore Kisiel, who has made himself almost the historian of the genesis of

⁴² Martin Heidegger, ‘Colloquium über Dialektik’ (GA86), p. 20. “Ich hielt mein erstes Kolleg über sein V. Fragment [Parm. Fr. 3 DK] und das Problem hat mich seither nicht mehr losgelassen.”

⁴³ Or so William Richardson claimed, in his *Through Phenomenology to Thought*, p. 670. Richardson notes that he compiled the list personally from the catalogues of the relevant universities, and asked Heidegger personally to correct it. Kisiel disputes the precise details: see Kisiel’s extended note in Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, pp. 552 ff. See also Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger Jahrbuch*, vol. 1, ‘Chronologisches Verzeichnis der Werke Heideggers’, p. 467, which suggests that Heidegger’s first course was actually entitled *Die Geschichte der antiken und scholastischen Philosophie*. Express (negative) mention is made here of Richardson’s reference (n. 17). None of this indicates that Parmenides Fragment 3 (DK) was not discussed in 1915–16.

⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (GA20), p. 201 ff. The word in the text is *niveau*.

Being and Time, although he references Parmenides' place in relation to Aristotle, indicates no particular importance for Parmenides (let alone Anaximander) in the preparation for *Being and Time*.

Heidegger's own commentary on *Being and Time* took a fundamentally different view. Repeatedly he notes how the connections between *Sein und Zeit* and Aristotle have been identified by what he calls the "zealous historical calculators" – those types who say so-and-so got it all from Plato, or Nietzsche, or Hegel, and so forth – the typical language of secondary academic discussion. Heidegger asks, why do they not ask how, and in what ways, Heidegger is dependent on Parmenides and Heraclitus?⁴⁵ Clearly *this* prior question is simply not asked.

In what ways? Let me advance, then a suggestion. The discussion of "authenticity" and "inauthenticity" (*Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit*), and the separation out of the question concerning being, of *das Man*, the "they-self", and the importance of the "nothing", "*das Nichts*" cannot have arisen on the basis of Heidegger's confrontation with Aristotle and Plato alone, and are clearly an essential confrontation with the "three ways" of Parmenides. Of even greater significance, however, is the discussion in the same context of what Heidegger identifies as the interpretation of the singular question, τί τὸ ὄν; (what is being itself?), "which question is *therefore* repeated (i.e. either by Anaximander and Parmenides, or by Aristotle and by implication Plato), that it itself becomes questionable – nominally or verbally – which means herein lies the "difference".⁴⁶ We will see precisely this distinction, in the "nominal" or "verbal" senses of being, very shortly. Heidegger does not parrot Parmenides, indeed, in important ways he transforms the "three ways" so that they must be understood as occurring together and intertwined with each other, but there is a compelling case to be made that Heidegger found in Parmenides a way of proceeding with regard to the question of being that had lain neglected and overlooked for centuries: that "way" also, as it had for Parmenides, necessitated a driving "questioning", seeking out and pursuing (δίζησις) being, and truth.⁴⁷

These lectures of 1932 were the first time that Heidegger had discussed Anaximander, fully and extensively. There is one earlier recorded mention, from a lecture course of 1925, but this focused, in barely more than a single page of text, on the term ἄπειρον, "das Unbegrenzte", "the unlimited": although the words of the Anaximander fragment is reported,

⁴⁵ Martin Heidegger, 'Zeitlichkeit des Daseins – Weg' (GA82), p. 234 ff. "Heidegger ist von Aristoteles abhängig und [nicht] von Parmenides und Heraklit?" The "nicht" is clearly implied in the text.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, 'Zeitlichkeit des Daseins – Weg' (GA82), p. 234. "Abhängig nämlich von der einen Frage: τί τὸ ὄν; welche Frage selbst allerdings so wiederholt wird, daß sie selber erst fragwürdig wird, ὄν —nominal und verbal: d. h. darin die 'Differenz'."

⁴⁷ Parm. Fr. 2, 6, 7, (8, δίζημαι) (DK). The noun (unlike the verb) is unique to Parmenides, although used by a variety of authors when citing him.

nothing is said of it. “Das Unbegrenzte” Heidegger calls “not sensible, determinate present being (*Seiendes*), but insensible, indeterminate, however still *ein Seiendes, a being*”.⁴⁸ How we should hear this word, *ein Seiendes*, “a being”, is something to which we will have to return. Nevertheless, Heidegger leaves himself with a question: how is the fragment of Anaximander to be connected to any thought about *Seiende*, being? This question is left unanswered in any written text until these lectures in 1932. Compared to what we have here, the text of 1925 is vague, nebulous, even naïve. By contrast, the 1932 lectures on Anaximander, delivered five years after the publication of *Being and Time*, represents one of the clearest, most accessible places in the whole of the Heidegger-corpus where anything like a “Lehre vom Seyn”, not a “Doctrine of being” but a close and careful explication of where *historically* the question of the meaning of being can be found. This text takes us to a precipice, to a point of departure.

To understand what is at issue we need to look more closely at the opening remarks, at §1 of the 1932 lectures. You may wish to look at page 1 of the English or the German text. I will translate slightly differently from Rojcewicz. We see “first part”, then a reference to Anaximander, and then the title, *Introduction*. Here we are again, at a beginning: §1, *The Task and the Fragment*. Then “a) Abbruch und Anfang”: termination (cessation, breaking-off, even demolition); and beginning. We break off and break away, in order to begin. We break off from a continuity, from something that has been otherwise unceasing, that holds itself together with itself. Parmenides would say, as we shall see in due course, συνεχής. There is not time to dwell on that now. Heidegger continues:

Unser Auftrag: der Abbruch des Philosophierens? *D. h. das Ende der Metaphysik* aus ursprünglichem Fragen nach dem “Sinn” (Wahrheit) des Seyns.⁴⁹

Our task: the cessation of philosophising? *That means, the end of metaphysics* from originary questioning in pursuit of the “meaning” (truth) of being.

At this stage I want only to ask about the determinations of ending (cessation), beginning, and continuity that are raised here. Heidegger had begun to speak of the “end of metaphysics”, and its *Vollendung*, completion, fulfilment, and the Greek reference here is clearly to Aristotle’s concept of ἐντελέχεια – being that which has come into the character of its end, “purpose”, “perfection”: ἐν-τέλος – from about 1930, and with great specificity, in a lecture on Hegel

⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (GA22), pp. 53. “Das Unbegrenzte [. . .] (Zu ἄπειρον). Nicht sinnliches bestimmtes Seiendes, sondern unsinnliches Unbestimmtes, aber auch *ein Seiendes*” (Heidegger’s emphasis).

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Der Anfang der Abendländischen Philosophie* (GA35), p. 1. Heidegger’s emphasis

whose text has only recently been published.⁵⁰ Heidegger identifies Hegel's metaphysics with the development and explication of his *Logik*, which he describes in the following terms:

[For Hegel] The absolute identity as making-possible is the absolute reality of the real. In so far as logic allows this making-possible to become and come to be represented, it is absolute self-knowledge of the reality of the real: metaphysics. Hegel's metaphysics is logic.⁵¹

Heidegger adds that "the contents of this logic [is] the "realm of making-possible (*possibilitas* = *essentia* of entities) (*Wesenheiten*). This is brought to the sharpest expression in the following statement of Hegel's: 'this realm [of pure thinking] is truth'." ⁵²

It is impossible not to hear in this presentation of Hegel, an interpretative presentation, namely how Heidegger understands *Hegel's* interpretation of Parmenides, as the bringing to an end a whole history of interpretation. Metaphysics reaches its end and fulfilment *as* an interpretation of Parmenides, and so *as* a completion of a specific beginning. One might, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, advance the thought that much of the recent Anglophone interpretation of Parmenides, as essentially a kind of analytic philosophy of logic (or at least that the "problems" in the text are resolved in this direction) is an envious glance in the direction of such an interpretation as is here attributed to Hegel. As I have already noted, the title of the 1832 edition of the *Logik* speaks of the "Lehre vom Seyn", with the archaic Schwabian spelling, "Seyn". It is very clear from much of the vast corpus of Heidegger's *Nachlaß* material, which has only really become available in the last two decades, and is still only in an infancy of exploration, Heidegger's use of the term *das Seyn*, as we have seen already (from the text of 1949), means *Wahrheit des Seyns*, "truth of beyng". Even this formula is a shorthand, for *an* originary questioning which pursues the truth of beyng in a more originary way than can be represented (thought) by metaphysics. *This* questioning requires understanding how *one* possibility of interpreting Parmenides is brought to a cessation, an end and fulfilment, in (Hegel's) metaphysics, but sets out in renewed form as nevertheless *also* a more genuine and more originary interpretation of Parmenides.

⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, 'Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik' (GA80.1), pp. 281–325. Later Heidegger was to extend the *Vollendung*, the completion, of metaphysics to the work of not only Hegel, but also Nietzsche and even Karl Marx.

⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, 'Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik' (GA80.1), p. 293. "Die absolute Identität als Ermöglichung ist die absolute Wirklichkeit des Wirklichen. Sofern die Logik diese Ermöglichung in ihrem Werden werden läßt und darstellt, ist sie absolute Selbsterkenntnis der Wirklichkeit des Wirklichen: Metaphysik. Hegels Metaphysik ist Logik."

⁵² Martin Heidegger, 'Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik' (GA80.1), p. 293. "Der Inhalt dieser Logik – das Reich der Ermöglichung (*possibilitas* = *essentia* der *Wesenheiten*). Das kommt am schärfsten zum Ausdruck in folgenden Sätzen Hegels: 'Dieses Reich [des reinen Gedankens] ist die Wahrheit'." Citing Hegel GW21, p. 34.

The reason for beginning with Parmenides, therefore, is to begin by asking how Heidegger's interpretation of Parmenides was achieved, and then to examine the interpretation of Anaximander. The suggestion is that we should proceed as Heidegger himself proceeded: to gain an interpretation of the Anaximander-fragment only because we have become capable for it on the basis of our interpretation of the fragments of Parmenides. Here we think with Heidegger, but we will not parrot Heidegger: we aim to think *of* what he led the way in thinking *of*. In Heidegger's vast output, the Anaximander interpretation only finds its first written form in 1932, with these lectures. The Parmenides interpretation has a quite different origin, as we have seen. The Heraclitus interpretation began later than that concerned with Parmenides, but, and in a similar way, was spread across numerous places in Heidegger's oeuvre.

It is only at that point that we can ask how these two belong together, and indeed, why the fragments of Heraclitus are also significant. Heidegger's attempt to enter again the greatness of that beginning in Western thinking took place through a confrontation with three originary figures: Parmenides, Anaximander and Heraclitus. The extent of this confrontation has only very recently been made clear, although it has long been known in outline by a limited number of Heidegger commentators. The limited access to the shape of that confrontation, in the form of smaller excerpts and developments of much larger bodies of material – I am thinking of how David Krell's and Frank Capuzzi's 1975 collection *Early Greek Thinking* – was enormously prescient for the importance of that confrontation,⁵³ and yet its significance could almost be overlooked. The very late appearance of the lectures from 1932,⁵⁴ together with the text of the undelivered lecture course from 1942 on Anaximander in 2010,⁵⁵ formed the basis of the 1946 essay *The Anaximander Fragment*,⁵⁶ but the 2010 text is even now yet to be translated into English. Indeed, that there *was* a lecture course on Anaximander intended for 1942 was barely known. I know of no mention of it in other material or biographical studies, and in the years before the appearance of the actual text the *Gesamtausgabe* prospectus from the publisher Klostermann referenced the volume with the simple remark: "The Fragment of Anaximander (1946)".⁵⁷ This corresponded with Krell's remark that the essay he had

⁵³ Translated by David Krell and Frank Capuzzi, *Early Greek Thinking* contained translations of four essays: *Der Spruch des Anaximander*; *Logos*; *Moirai*; and *Aletheia*. It is clear from the 'Translator's Preface' (p. 1) how little was known of the history of these essays and their relation to the entire Heidegger-corpus when they appeared in 1975.

⁵⁴ As the last of all of Heidegger's lecture courses to be prepared for publication.

⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Der Spruch des Anaximander* (GA78).

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, 'Der Spruch des Anaximander (1946)' (GA5). The first translation of this essay was published in *Early Greek Thinking*.

⁵⁷ The earliest plan of the *Gesamtausgabe* was included as an appendix to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition of *Sein und Zeit* in 1977, having been published a year earlier. This listed only 57 volumes, identical with the final plan, if

translated, published in *Holzwege* (GA5) in 1950 had been “taken from a treatise composed in 1946”.⁵⁸

Although the final lecture courses of 1942 and 1943, both concerned with the fragments of Heraclitus (GA55), appeared in German as early as 1979, no English translation appeared until 2018.⁵⁹ Kenneth Maly and Parvis Emad published an attempt to gather together the central strands of Heidegger’s Heraclitus-interpretation in *Heidegger on Heraclitus: A New Reading*, published in 1986, but the volume was aimed at specialists and has received little general attention.

The final lecture course on *Parmenides* was delivered in the Winter Semester of 1942/43, and was first published in German in 1982, with an English translation appearing ten years later. The *Parmenides* volume containing the lectures of the Winter Semester of 1942/43 is different in many fundamental respects to the 1932 lectures, and there are even more marked differences between the Anaximander-interpretation of 1932 when compared to the undelivered manuscript *Der Spruch der Anaximander* (GA78). These differences, together with the late appearance of the *Heraclitus* volume in English has arguably limited the ability, especially by English-speakers, to understand the extent of Heidegger’s confrontation with these three originary figures.

What becomes clear from all of this is that in the years 1942–43 Heidegger had intended to carry out a thoroughgoing and full-scale interpretation of the three originary figures of the “first beginning” of occidental, “Hesperian”, thinking in three related lecture courses. In this sense the shorter essays that actually did appear in the 1950s and 1960s (and in English in 1972) can be understood to contain the kernel of this vast edifice of material. Only in English was a much-truncated version of this edifice gathered together in a single place, almost no more than a hint of the the whole, as the collection just mentioned, *Early Greek Thinking*.

How does the long-invisible plan of 1942-43 relate to the lectures of 1932? Peter Trawny says in the *Afterword* that there is a note appended by Heidegger to the *Parmenides* section of the 1932 lectures, which says “the interpretation is insufficient, even while much is essentially grasped”.⁶⁰ In the *Parmenides* lectures of the 1940s there is far less close textual

not with the final titles, up to volume 55. Later plans have been published by Klostermann in a successively updated small prospectus, and as an appendix to the 2009 publication of *Das Ereignis (1941/42)* (GA71). The plan I am quoting from is *Das Ereignis (1941/42)* (GA71), which appeared only a year before the appearance of *Der Spruch der Anaximander* (GA78). To this was added the note “in preparation for 2010”.

⁵⁸ David Krell and Frank Capuzzi, ‘Translator’s Preface’, in *Early Greek Thinking*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ It seems to have passed through the hands of several translators: Catriona Hanley was at one point listed by the publisher, but she is not mentioned in the translation that has appeared.

⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Der Anfang der Abendländischen Philosophie* (GA35), p. 271. “Die Auslegung ist unzureichend, wengleich manches wesentlich gefaßt.” Trawny also draws attention to a further qualifying note

analysis of the Greek of the fragments. However, we should not forget the very general practice in German universities of the circulating among students of courses hand-prepared or typewritten and cyclostyled transcripts of earlier relevant lecture-courses from the same professor. It is perfectly possible Heidegger might have expected a transcript of the 1932 lectures to have been consulted by students attending the lectures of the 1940s. The deeper interpretations of the early 1940s, and indeed the more polished and accomplished texts published after 1950, shed light on the 1932 lectures. However, they are not only amplifications of the 1932 text (and other related interpretations), but also are themselves illuminated by the earlier material. Even if no such transcripts did circulate, it would be entirely wrong artificially to refuse to allow these texts to speak to, and inform each other.

I would like to conclude by turning to how Heidegger clarifies an understanding of the ontological difference, and indeed presents an interpretation of Parmenides fragment 3 (DK) which was decisive for his entire question concerning being, perhaps from as early as 1915. In a lecture course given about the time that *Being and Time* was prepared, Heidegger draws out and explains many of the distinctions and interpretations that remain basic to *Being and Time* itself and in later work. The central interpretations of οὐσία, ὑπάρχοντα, ἀλήθεια, the pair ἐνέργεια–δύναμις, a preliminary exploration of being as “beyond” in the sense of *transcendens*, from which, he argues, Kant takes off, but also distorts, his own notion of transcendence, all these are worked out and explained in here, as well as the “ontological difference” as we have touched on it, and a fundamental interpretation of the relation of Parmenides to the question of time. The emphasis is on a “methodical middle path: Aristotle as pathfinder”.⁶¹

In proceeding, it is necessary to remind ourselves of what Heidegger himself reminded his student audiences more than once. The different words for being: *das Seiende, das Sein, Dasein, Da-sein, seiend, das Seyn, das Seyende*, all speak of singular *being*. If we recall here Aristotle’s dictum, that “being is said in many ways” (τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς),⁶² it is *singular* being that is manifoldly spoken of. This is above all why the translation of *das Seiende* cannot adequately be rendered into English as *beings*. Even when the Greeks speak (plurally) of τὰ ὄντα, they mean the singular τὸ πᾶν, τὸ ὄν. The distinctions between beings do not lie in that

attached in *Der Spruch der Anaximander* (GA78), p. 158, to the effect that there was a misinterpretation contained in the 1932 lectures in the Anaximander section. It is clear from the text of *Der Spruch der Anaximander* (GA78), however, that what is at issue is merely a question of emphasis (in relation to the meaning of δική in the life of the πόλις). In no sense does Heidegger question or invalidate the Anaximander-interpretation of the 1932 lectures as a whole.

⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (GA22), p. 22. “Methodischer Mittelweg: Aristoteles als Wegweiser.” See also §§4, 8, 53–64, and §§28 and 28a of the ‘Mörchen Nachschrift’ (pp. 234–236).

⁶² Arist. *Metaph.* 1028 a 10 (cf. 1017 a ff.).

they are, be-ing. In *The Mörchen Nachschrift* of the lectures of 1926 Heidegger is reported as saying:

Being (*das Sein*) is unbreakable, without gradation, unmoved. [. . .] Each apprehension is apprehension of present being (*das Seiende*), therefore apprehension as such is a being (*ein Sein*). Because being (*das Sein*) is entirely one and singular, apprehension and being is identical.⁶³

We could stumble on one phrase here: “Daher ist das Erfassen selbst ein Sein”. This does not say “therefore [each] apprehension itself is an entity (*ein Sein*)”. The German speaks of apprehension *itself as such*, “all apprehending”, not a “multitude” of apprehensions, the “mental states” beloved of some styles of philosophical discourse. Rojcewicz’s translation renders “ein Sein” as (p. 185) “a mode of being”, which is not entirely wrong (if a little misleading). Inasmuch as there is *an* apprehension, there is *for every apprehension a being* (of, and for, that apprehension). Not a thing-being, but a be-ing that the apprehension also *has* and *is*. But all being is one-and-the-same: *a* being and *all* being is the same. Inasmuch as it is an apprehension, it is a be-ing: to apprehend is to be. Heidegger is interpreting Parmenides: he expressly has in mind Parmenides fragments 3 and 8 (DK). Fragment 3 says τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν, τε καὶ εἶναι: “for indeed thinking is the same as being [is]”.⁶⁴

A further place where Heidegger explicitly explores the distinction between being, *das Seiende* and being, *das Sein*, explicitly in relation to Parmenides, comes in the lecture course on Heraclitus in 1942/43. Here Heidegger examines the meaning of what he says the Greek grammarians characterised as a word that operates ἡ μετοχή, “through participation”, namely as both a substantive, denoting a noun or, a *Zeitwort*, its verbal meaning. He proceeds, by appeal to Heraclitus, to how the thinker thinks most principally of words of this form verbally, not substantively. He begins with the participle τὸ δῶνον, but moves rapidly to speak of τὸ ὄν, being. Heidegger notes that we are most often moved to think of τὸ ὄν, *das Seiende*, as “the being”, under the question “what is the being?”⁶⁵ However, the question does not refer to *this thing here*, but asks verbally, *how is it with be-ing?* Thus *how is it with be-ing?* Is already a question about some kind of knowing. Heidegger again appeals to Aristotle, as one who formulates the question of being insofar as it is being (τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν) as an essential thinking

⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (GA22), p. 235. “Das Sein ist unzerbrechbar, ohne Grade, unbewegt [. . .] Jedes Erfassen ist Erfassen von Seiendem. Daher ist das Erfassen selbst ein Sein. Weil das Sein nur eines und ein einziges ist, ist das Erfassen und das Sein identisch.”

⁶⁴ We could, in reasonably translate the “ein” as “in”: thus every apprehension is, *in* being.

⁶⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit* (GA55), p. 54. “τί τὸ ὄν; – ‘Was ist das Seiende?’”

(θεωρεῖν) that is at the same time a specific knowing (ἐπιστήμη). Heidegger notes that understood in this way, what is in question is not what is closest – something to be “gaped at” like a house or a tree or a donkey, but something that is in a certain sense more distant, that whatever is under consideration, is under consideration inasmuch as it “is”, its present being (*das Seiende*) “determined as a being” (*als ein Seiendes bestimmt ist*). The *ein* in question functions in the same way as we saw before, and means “determined as in be-ing”. Thus what is at issue is not merely that it is *das Seiende*, “in being”, but that it is [a] *Seiend*, be-ing. Heidegger asks “Was kennzeichnet überhaupt das ‘Seiend’ als ein solches?” – “what characterises the ‘be-ing’ as such?”⁶⁶ The answer is *being*, (*das Sein*). Heidegger concludes:

If, therefore, the thinker thinks τὸ ὄν, he thinks τὸ εἶναι – the being (*das Sein*) specifically of present be-ing (*das Seiende*). He thinks being (*das Sein*) as that from where all present be-ing (*das Seiende*) stems.⁶⁷

There is a further consequence of this thinking, at least from Aristotle onwards. The “stems” that is spoken of here is thought causally by Aristotle and by Plato, as an origination. Thus being (*das Sein*) “is”, with respect to present be-ing (*das Seiende*) “always already the ‘earlier’ [. . .] ‘what was’.”⁶⁸ It is here that we see the ‘birth’, the origination of metaphysics, of “ontological difference”, itself. Significantly, Parmenides *does not* make this step, and indeed understands the relation in an entirely different way – not least, because being (τὸ εἶναι, ἔμμεναι) and present be-ing (τὸ ὄν, ἐόν) are not distinguished, even temporally.

There remains one last point to draw to our attention. Even many who believe themselves to be holding faithfully to what Heidegger himself thought, fail to see the radicality of Heidegger’s explication, including in these passages from the *Heraclitus* lectures, of Parmenides fragment 3 (DK). It would seem that in posing the figure of “the thinker”, Heidegger suggests *that* one who is in some sense “most capable” for thinking. A Plato, or an Aristotle, or even a Nietzsche, Hegel, or a Heidegger himself, perhaps even one such as Parmenides or Heraclitus. Agent thinkers think: this is the claim of Kant, when he says that there is an “Ich denke” that accompanies every thought *to be* thought.⁶⁹ In one sense

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit* (GA55), p. 55.

⁶⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit* (GA55), p. 56. “Wenn also der Denker τὸ ὄν denkt, denkt er τὸ εἶναι —das Sein, nämlich des Seienden. Er denkt das Sein als das, woher alles Seiende stammt.” “He” should be taken here inclusively.

⁶⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit* (GA55), p. 56. “Stets schon das ‘ältere’ [. . .] ‘was war’.”

⁶⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 131. “Das: Ich Denke, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können.” Heidegger repeats his citation of this phrase across a multitude of texts, normally simply by referring to Kant and “das: Ich denke”. See especially Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (GA2), pp. 319–322. The full citation from the first *Critique* is given, with its reference and Heidegger’s analysis of it, in Martin Heidegger, *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA21), p. 227.

Parmenides says no other than this, but he means it in a sense quite other than Kant, indeed, so far from Kant that what Parmenides means is more even than the mere “reverse” of Kant. Nevertheless, in this Aristotle, while still speaking from that province from which Parmenides speaks, is closer to Kant than to Parmenides, since without the whole history of metaphysics, without the ontological difference itself, Kant could never have come to speak as he did.

Not even the English translators of the *Heraclitus* lectures can bring themselves to say what Heidegger says Parmenides says. For Heidegger concludes:

Seiendes ist aber ein Seiendes dadurch und allein dadurch, daß es ‘ist’, d. h. durch ‘das Sein’, τὸ ὄν, das Seiende, ist τὸ ζητούμενον, das Gesuchte, aber gesucht wird im Denken, das das Seiende denkt, das Sein des Seienden und dasjenige, was diesem, dem Sein zukommt.⁷⁰

The translation by Julia Assaiante and Shane Ewegen has

But the being is only a being because it ‘is’: i.e., it is only a being by virtue of ‘being.’ τὸ ὄν, the being, is τὸ ζητούμενον, the sought-after; but what is sought-after in the thinking of the being is the being of beings, and whatever belongs to it.

The German does not say this. It says

Present be-ing is, however in be-ing only, and absolutely only, because it ‘is’, that is, through ‘being’: τὸ ὄν, present be-ing, is τὸ ζητούμενον, the searched-out-after, but is sought in thinking itself, which present be-ing thinks, the being of present be-ing, and whatever therefore, arrives in this, [arrives] in being.

The thinker is always, and already, *included* in being, because the thinker is already and always within present be-ing, the be-ing of whatever-is (the thinker is also present, be-ing, in being). In this sense present be-ing *thinks* (*das Seiende denkt*: thus it is *not* the thinking of the thinker *that ‘does’ the thinking*, but: present be-ing thinks). Be-ing (verbal), thinks: the arriving of being. Being arrives to be thought. When we are ready to think what this says, we are ready to think through what in Parmenides’ fragments is thought. We are ready to begin: the thinking of the question that goes out after – questions – (ζητεῖ) being, *das Sein*, but *das Sein selbst* as the “truth of being” (*das Seyn*).

⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Heraklit* (GA55), p. 55.

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