As its title indicates, this nicely put together book is a *Festschrift* in celebration of Alexander Mourelatos’ contribution to the study of ancient philosophy, originating in the papers presented in his honour at the twenty-first Annual Ancient Philosophy Workshop held at the University of Texas at Austin in 1998. Contributors include a host of Mourelatos’ colleagues and former pupils, some of whom are the most well respected scholars in the field. Indeed, among the book’s twenty-two chapters one finds the work of such luminaries as Alexander Nehamas, Daniel W. Graham, Julia Annas, Jaap Mansfeld, Jacques Brunschwig, and Sarah Broadie, to name but a few, side by side with the work of lesser known researchers. This diversity is also reflected in the size of the chapters, which range anywhere from not quite five pages to a substantial twenty-five pages in length.

Despite its title, this book is not limited to the discussion of Presocratic philosophy. Its five sections move from the Milesians to Heraclitus and Parmenides and then the Pluralists before branching out into articles on the Sophists and a final section on the reception of Presocratic themes broadly construed. This wide scope is fitting, as it follows the contours of Professor Mourelatos’ own research interests with articles on ancient astronomy and Gorgias coalescing around a mass of material on Parmenides.

The book boasts many items of interest. Among the host of offerings on Parmenides Alexander Nehamas’ outstanding article ‘Parmenidean Being/Heraclitean Fire’ is likely to cause the greatest stir. Calling into question the claim advanced in the previous chapter by Daniel W. Graham’s meticulous ‘Heraclitus and Parmenides’, in which Graham argues that Parmenides wrote with Heraclitus in his sights, Nehamas scuttles the neat contrast traditionally drawn between Heraclitus the dynamic aphorist and Parmenides the sombre poet of reason. He argues that the two thinkers in fact have a good deal in common, and draws attention to their shared mistrust of appearances and faith in reason, suggesting that they also shared a commitment to an uncreated and unchanging ontology as well as a common target in the
Milesian empirical monists Anaximander and Anaximenes. Whether one agrees with him or not, Nehamas' claims have been put forward in the most compelling fashion possible and certainly deserve the careful attention of anyone working on either Parmenides or Heraclitus. The whole second part of this book (27-116), in fact, will prove essential reading for anyone with an interest in Parmenides for some time to come.

Another central contribution on ancient metaphysics is Patricia Curd's excellent article on mixture and separation in Empedocles and Anaxagoras. Curd explains in careful detail how both philosophers employ the process of mixture in order to reconcile their allegiance to the Eleatic doctrine of the unchanging nature of basic metaphysical entities with the apparently contradictory evidence of the senses. Her results are of both historical and philosophical interest, showing the crucial influence of Parmenides on Pluralist thought and raising some new difficulties for Empedocles and Anaxagoras in their inability to account for natural structures and the regularity of biological processes.

Mourelatos' interest in ancient astronomy is reflected in two articles, one at either end of the book. In 'Three Philosophers Look at the Stars' Sarah Broadie draws attention to Theophrastus' criticisms of the tensions implicit in Aristotle's uncomfortable concessions to Platonic cosmology in the Metaphysics. Stephen White's daring 'Thales and the Stars' argues in support of the ancient appraisal of Thales as 'the father of Greek astronomy' (14) and questions the modern characterisation of Thales as a bold speculative cosmologist by drawing attention to the evidence for Thales' systematic quantitative treatment of empirical astronomical data. White is forced to ride the few available sources rather hard in support of his thesis, particularly when drawing upon the unreliable anecdotal tradition, but he rewards his readers with powerful interpretations of Callimachus' and Pliny's reports concerning Thales in the process.

One welcome feature of the book, unusual in volumes on early Greek philosophy, is the number of articles on subjects other than metaphysics, in this instance epistemology and normative philosophy in particular. Victor Caston's weighty 'Gorgias on Thought and its Objects' falls into the former category, offering a fresh look at Gorgias
by means of a thorough reappraisal of the key sources that undercuts the
value of Sextus Empiricus’ testimony in a number of important respects.
A further epistemological highlight that can expect to be particularly
well received by Anglophone readers is the inclusion of an English
translation of Jacques Brunschwig’s fascinating reconstruction of the
doxography of Xeniaades of Corinth. Brunschwig depicts Xeniaades as a
radical opponent of Parmenidean ontology and connects this rejection of
Eleaticism to Xeniaades’ famously pessimistic epistemology. The
speculations he offers as to the possible influence of Xeniaades on
Democritus promise to shed some valuable light on Democritean
philosophy also.

In the normative arena, contributions to ancient political
philosophy are made by Paul Woodruff’s examination of whether there
was a theory of natural justice in Greek philosophy before Plato (which
he concludes with a negative answer) and William J. Prior’s
interpretation of Protagoras’ Great Speech in the Protagoras as Plato’s
attempt to run the best possible defence of Athenian democracy. Carl
Huffman reviews the sources for Archytas of Tarentum and finds him
advocating the rationality of a more egalitarian political order, and Julia
Annas makes a significant contribution to our understanding of early
Greek ethical theory in her interpretation of the ethical fragments of
Democritus. Annas argues against the received view that regards
Democritus’ ethics as a mere peddling of quotidian platitudes, gathering
the evidence for his individual form of rationalistic eudaimonism and
following up the connection made by Arius Didymus between the
Democritean conception of happiness and that espoused in Plato’s Laws.
The keen-sightedness of Annas’ analysis makes it regrettable that she
has chosen to exclude the social and political fragments of Democritus
from consideration.

As a whole, the book offers a handful of very good articles on
assorted subjects, as well as an ample taste of the current state of
scholarly debate surrounding the Presocratics. Bearing in mind the want
of consensus among scholars in this area, my one reservation about the
book is that, as is so often the case with edited collections of articles, the
chapters seldom refer to one another even when their arguments either
approach one another very closely or seek to deny exactly what another
has claimed. When such cross-references are made they can be
somewhat perfunctory, although Nehamas’ genuine engagement with Graham’s article already mentioned (47-8) provides a notable exception to this tendency. It should be noted that this lack of detailed cross-referencing is only a problem because of the general high standard of the articles. For those inclined to make a detailed comparison between what the various articles have to say on a given topic, the text is equipped with a general index and index locorum that should prove most helpful.

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