

Evermore Shall Be So



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With the publication of Arthur Farndell's "Gardens of Philosophy" (Shepherd-Walwyn 2006), there remained only four of Ficino's commentaries on Plato's dialogues which had not yet been translated into English. Farndell's translation of the commentaries on "The Republic and the Laws" will comprise the third volume under the title "When Philosophers Rule" and the fourth, "All Things Natural", will contain the "Timaeus". As Carol Kaske of Cornell University wrote when reviewing "Gardens of Philosophy" in "Renaissance Quarterly", these translations fill 'A need. Even those Anglophone scholars who know Latin still need a translation in order to read quickly through a large body of material'. The central message of 'Parmenides', that everything depends on the One, resonates with the growing awareness around the world of the inter-relatedness of all things, be it in the biosphere, the intellectual or spiritual realms. Philosophers in ancient Greece appreciated this unity and employed reason and dialectic to draw the mind away from its preoccupation with the material world and attract it towards contemplation of the soul, and ultimately of that Oneness which embraces, but is distinct from, the multifarious forms of creation. Thus Parmenides carefully instructed the young Socrates, and Plato recorded their dialogue in this work which he named after the elderly philosopher. Nearly 2000 years later, Marsilio Ficino made 'Parmenides' available to the West by translating it into Latin, the language of scholars in his time. Ficino added a lengthy commentary to this translation, a commentary which "Evermore Shall Be So" puts into English for the first time, more than 500 years after its original composition. Ficino's crucial influence upon the unfolding of the Renaissance and his presentation of Plato's understanding of the One and the so-called Platonic Ideas or Forms make "Evermore Shall Be So" an important work in the history of thought. Though it will be an essential buy for renaissance scholars and historians, its freshness of thought and wisdom are as relevant today as they ever were to inspire a new generation seeking spiritual and philosophical direction in their lives.

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