

FOLIT-WEINBERG (B.) **Homer, Parmenides, and the Road to Demonstration**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 367, illus. £90. 9781316517819. doi:[10.1017/S0075426923000836](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426923000836)

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus receives instructions from Circe after he returns from Hades. When she starts to describe the Planctae and then Scylla and Charybdis (12.55–126), she first invites Odysseus to think over how to navigate past them, but then explains that it would be disastrous to sail close to Charybdis and futile to fight Scylla. In the 1950s Eric Havelock argued that this episode influenced Parmenides' presentation of a choice, given to him by a goddess, between ways only one of which is rational ('Parmenides and Odysseus', *HSCP* 63 (1958), 133–43). Alexander Mourelatos then argued briefly, in his wide-ranging study of epic form in Parmenides, that the structural parallel between Parmenides' poem and Circe's speech, with a choice between routes, explanations and instructions, is 'even more exact' than Havelock realized (*The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven 1970; Las Vegas 2008), 24 n.38). Now a new book on Homer and Parmenides, claiming to draw inspiration from Mourelatos, says to him what he had said to Havelock: the parallel 'may be even more precise than Mourelatos spells out' (217 n.1).

Benjamin Folit-Weinberg's treatment is, however, distinctive. First, there is a much narrower focus on Circe's instructions in *Odyssey* 12. The author insists that this passage, rather than other parts of Homeric epic, Hesiod or later poetry, is the primary intertext for Parmenides. Folit-Weinberg protests that he is not defending a 'single-mindedly Homeric reading of Parmenides' (185), but this rings hollow. He denies comparable significance to Hesiod, Xenophanes and other poets, and argues that, in respects in which Parmenides resembles Homer, Homer is 'entirely unlike' Hesiod and others (216 n.69). Secondly, Folit-Weinberg develops an elaborate and sophisticated account of *hodos* (path) as a way of organizing discourse into description, narrative, instructions and explanation, or, in his words, a 'rhetorical schema'. The application of this to Parmenides is the most successful aspect of the book. Early epic and didactic poems offer several ways of presenting information or instructions in a comprehensive and systematic manner (theogony, catalogues, *hodos*), and Parmenides found the last of them most suitable for his own poem (or, we should say, for some parts of it, but not the *Doxa*). Folit-Weinberg provides a chapter that is ostensibly about the *Doxa*, but in fact about further connections between the *Odyssey* and the Way of Persuasion. I was disappointed to see that it does not ask why Parmenides uses an alternative to the *hodos* schema in the *Doxa*: theogony.

Thirdly, Folit-Weinberg presents the connection between Parmenides and *Odyssey* 12 as the solution to a question of origins: how did Parmenides invent 'extended deductive argumentation' (a phrase repeated very often)? Answer: by treating Circe's instructions to Odysseus as a 'blueprint' that shows how to structure a combination of argument, guidance and description. Logical deduction thus becomes a descendant of Homeric narrative sequence. Here I was puzzled by Folit-Weinberg's disinclination to look beyond *Odyssey* 12 to other examples of early argumentation, Homeric and otherwise, and to grant that *less* 'extended' arguments, in earlier literature and philosophy, made some contribution to the design of Parmenides B8. Homeric poetry is full of characters reasoning with and trying to persuade one another, and Circe's attempt to guide Odysseus is just one example. Why not explore other Homeric scenes of debate and speech-giving when looking for antecedents to the Way of Persuasion? Xenophanes is mentioned but given short shrift, even though Aristotle attributes to him arguments that sound like pre-echoes of Parmenides: for example, it is as impious to say that gods were generated as to say that they die, as either way there is a time when they do not exist (*Rhetoric* 2.23 1399b6–9, cf. the choice in 1400b5–8). It would have been better to combine the suggestion that the large-scale architecture

of Parmenides' poem was modelled on parts of *Odyssey* 12 with more inclusive consideration of early arguments.

Finally, in the first part of the book Folit-Weinberg considers archaeological evidence for the ancient rut roads whose grooves 'locked' a wagon or chariot into a route. He argues that these roads provided Parmenides with a powerful resource for expressing directedness and logical coercion. This part of the book is especially likely to intrigue specialists on early Greek philosophy, most of whom are already familiar with comparisons between Parmenides and Homer but unsure where to find good archaeological work on physical roads. As readers pass from the material on rut roads to the comparison with *Odyssey* 12, many, I expect, will ask themselves how one and the same intellectual enterprise can resemble both the 'locking in' of a rut road and an Odyssean voyage, where a detour is always possible, and what the relative importance of the two motifs is. Folit-Weinberg eventually answers that question, but tucks away the answer in a detour of his own (section 6.3.1, 258): the motifs are not combined, but rather the journey is transferred from sea to land, or from ship to chariot. There is a mismatch between this view of their relation and the book's design: across the book as a whole, discussion of *Odyssey* 12 predominates, but, according to this section, it is the rut road that more accurately represents Parmenides' journey.

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FOWLER (R.) **Pindar and the Sublime: Greek Myth, Reception, and Lyric Experience** (New Directions in Classics). London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. 261. \$24.25. 9781788311144.  
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Robert Fowler's contribution to Bloomsbury's 'New Directions in Classics' series is a relatively slim volume, but its length belies the richness and complexity of its arguments. The monograph undertakes an exploration of Pindar as poet and of the aesthetics of his poetry through the lens of the sublime. This scope is as capacious as it sounds, and has something of the Pindaric about it, in the sense that any attempt to summarize its contents risks missing the point. The monograph consists of three substantial chapters bookended by a brief preface and an even briefer epilogue; within each chapter, subheadings provide orientation, though one is sometimes carried along as though on Horace's Pindaric torrent, best served by taking in the sweeping vistas as they come.

The first chapter, 'Sublime Receptions', pursues two related narratives: the early modern reception of Pindar and conceptions of the sublime, both explored with an eye to the way that they can inform a reading of Pindar. Anticipating the complexity of the ensuing discussion, Fowler foregrounds some key themes: 'the "sublime" style ("enthusiasm"); the nature of poetic genius; emotional and cognitive aspects of the sublime (analysis of the observer's mental state); political aspects of the sublime; art and myth as gateways to ultimate truth and transcendent reality; language and the sublime; and lyric's technique of parataxis (juxtaposition)' (6–7). The chapter develops as a historical tour through approaches to Pindar and/or the sublime, with stops at Boileau, Perrault, Herder, Burke, Kant and Schiller, and culminating with Hölderlin, a section in which theories of the sublime and Pindaric engagement come together in a rousing discussion of poetic genre, translation theory and the relationship of both to the idea of the transcendent.