

## ROADS: WORDS AND THINGS

What is a *hodos*? The urgency of the question will be obvious to any reader of Parmenides' Greek. We have already noted the degree to which the word and image are woven into the very heart of the poem's fabric, however much that fact may have been deplored by the purists who guard the gates to Logos' wing of the academy. Similarly, we have already observed the ways in which the traditional impulse to read the 'Route to Truth' portion of Parmenides' poem (frs. 2–8) as a deductive argument – no more and no less – have at best ignored this question, and at worst precluded its being investigated further, rendering it *panapeuthēs*; if Parmenides is *already* making a deductive argument, and if he is *only* making a deductive argument, who would think to ask what a *hodos* is – and why, anyway, would it matter? How could the chance, contingent facts of archaic Greek means of travel by land and technical questions of road construction have any bearing on a timeless argument concerning the timeless questions of the nature of what is?

We may recall once more Lloyd's observation that 'the terminology in which [Parmenides] describes what he is doing is a very limited one'.<sup>1</sup> Viewed from the perspective of the mature, well-developed technical vocabulary with which Aristotle or the Stoics, for example, can undertake not only various kinds of proofs and demonstrations, but also second-order reflections on these topics, this is undoubtedly true. All Parmenides has at his disposal are the resources of 'ordinary', 'everyday' objects and the power and resonance of epic poetry and myth. And yet, for precisely the same reason, Parmenides has at his disposal *all* the resources of 'ordinary', 'everyday' objects and the power and resonance of

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd (2000) 245.

epic poetry and myth.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, then, I shall take a closer look at just what this material was that Parmenides had to work with; in the first part (Section 1.1), I shall examine the physical nature and social function of archaic and classical Greek roads as realia, while in the second (Section 1.2), I shall examine the semantics of the Homeric vocabulary of roads and journeying, especially the word *hodos*, relevant to Parmenides' poem.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Archaic and Classical Greek Roads

So what, then, is a *hodos*? Fortunately, we are better able to answer the question now than we were during most of the twentieth century. Although some of the key facts about archaic and classical Greek roads have long been known, the current view has only recently come into focus thanks to light shed by the last few decades of scholarship on the physical nature of the Greek *polis*. That roads are on the scholarly agenda at all is in itself a minor revolution; for the better part of the twentieth century the topic was largely neglected, attracting the odd monograph, an article here or there in the archaeological bulletins, and the occasional insinuation into chapters devoted to other topics.<sup>4</sup> Until recently, the conventional wisdom regarding roads in archaic and classical Greece could be summarized as follows. To begin with, there weren't many. Those that did exist were generally rudimentary and rather crudely constructed. The emergence of a well-developed system of roads was thought to depend on the existence of an empire or other central authority rich enough to be able to build a highway network, centralized enough to plan it, and oppressive enough to need one in order to administer (and, if necessary, subdue) far-flung, subordinate provinces. Seen this

<sup>2</sup> Putting the matter in these terms calls to mind Easterling's discussion of what she calls 'plain words' in Sophocles; see Easterling (1999). That there are fundamental questions of genre that complicate, and limit, the comparison cannot be denied – but that the comparison can be hazarded at all is telling.

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller study of Homeric road words, see Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> This includes Despotopoulos (1940), Forbes (1955), Forbes (1964), Young (1956), MacDonald and Rapp (1972) 25–29, Casson (1974), White (1984), and the important Pritchett (1980).

way, road networks seemed incompatible with the fierce independence that defined that patchwork mosaic of Greek *poleis* before Alexander. The Persians, who impressed Herodotus with top-notch roads (in the time of Xerxes, a messenger could cover the 2,600 km from Sardis to Susa in nine days, a rate unmatched until the Napoleonic era)<sup>5</sup> were ruled, of course, by a tyrant king who could afford to build them – and who needed to. Further road building was left for the Romans. Hence Greek road building's relative neglect, historically speaking, as a meritorious subject of inquiry.<sup>6</sup>

The combination of new archaeological evidence and the emergence of a new way of conceptualizing both the evolution of the *polis* and what a *polis* is have, however, slowly chipped away at the foundations of that traditional construction and helped produce a new one.<sup>7</sup>

First, the *polis*. François de Polignac's *La naissance de la cité grecque* (1984) has been variously critiqued, developed, and nuanced,<sup>8</sup> but its enduring legacy is a conceptualization of the evolution of the *polis* (and, indeed, of theorizing what it means to be a *polis*) that links that evolution to the relationship between urban nucleus or nuclei and places of religious, economic, or

<sup>5</sup> Hdt. 5.52–53; cf. also Hdt. 8.98, Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.17–18, Xen. *An.* 1.5.7. See Forbes (1955) 132–33.

<sup>6</sup> And still: the 1,500-page *Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World* dispenses with non-Roman road-building in less than a page, citing only Forbes's outdated study, Theseus' mythical journey from Troezen to Athens, and Pausanias (Quilici (2008) 552–53). See also comments in Lohmann (2002) 73–76.

<sup>7</sup> Giannis Pikoulas in particular has revolutionized our understanding of ancient Greek roads; see Pikoulas (1995) esp. 25–26, 273–323, 332–46 on Corinth, the Argolid, and eastern Arcadia; Pikoulas (2002) on Arcadia; Pikoulas (2012) esp. 515–42 for dating, and 587–96 for concluding remarks on Laconia; see also Pikoulas (1999), Pikoulas (1999), Pikoulas (2007). Building on Pikoulas are Marchand (2009a) and Marchand (2009b); Lolos (2011) esp. ch. 3 and remarks at 93–97; Korres (2012). Ober (1985) is comprehensive but addresses a later period; for more recent bibliography, see Fachard and Pirisino (2015). Each of these authors makes the case for networks of carriageable roads that connected *poleis* from the archaic era onwards. Dillon (1997) esp. 34–38 and Elsner and Rutherford (2005) also touch on aspects of interest to this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> See de Polignac, esp. de Polignac (1994), the English edition, with substantive revisions, of *La naissance de la cité grecque* (de Polignac (1995)), de Polignac (1999), de Polignac (2005), de Polignac (2006); some theoretical questions addressed in Snodgrass (2006), Osborne (2005b); important critiques of de Polignac in Hall (1995), Malkin (2002). For studies of specific territories see e.g. Jost (1994) for Arcadia; Morgan (1994) for Corinth; Osborne (1994) for Attica.

strategic significance in the surrounding environment.<sup>9</sup> In de Polignac's own words, 'it is impossible to separate the evolution of urban centres from the overall process of organization of territory'.<sup>10</sup> And it is impossible in turn to consider the relationship between urban centre and territory (and, *a fortiori*, the organization of a territory) without according a primordially important role to the road. This has sometimes been acknowledged (though too rarely explored at length), as when de Polignac discusses the importance of the sacred ways linking an urban nucleus or nuclei to extra-urban sanctuaries.<sup>11</sup> At the most mundane, and certainly the most obvious, level, without some means of physical communication facilitating movement from town to extra-urban sanctuary, the great processions that have been recognized as vital for the formation and consolidation of a single social unit would not have been possible – for how else could the necessary carts, elaborate processions, and cult paraphernalia make it the many kilometres from town to sanctuary or sanctuary to town?<sup>12</sup> No less significant were the social, political, and economic consequences of road building that linked urban centres (or sanctuaries) to marble quarries or mines, for example, or to a port, or to sites of cultic importance, or, indeed, to other *poleis* and trading partners.<sup>13</sup>

It is also true that the increasing significance of roads in this emergence of the *polis* might be extended along many other axes. Following scholars who have compared the construction of roads from pre-existing paths or tracks to the relationship between writing and speech,<sup>14</sup> or have discussed the evolution of the

<sup>9</sup> See esp. de Polignac's analysis of Megara Hyblaea (de Polignac (1999), de Polignac (2005)) and that of the excavators themselves, Gras and Tréziny (2001).

<sup>10</sup> de Polignac (2005) 63.

<sup>11</sup> See esp. de Polignac (1995) 39–40.

<sup>12</sup> For general treatments, see Graf (1996), Kavoulaki (2011); for processions and the ritualization of space, see e.g. Calame (1990), Kavoulaki (1999), and Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) for Athenian processions, Herda (2011) for the procession of the Molpoi (with extensive further bibliography). For processional roads, see e.g. Coulton (1976), Hölscher (1999) 74–83 and Hölscher (2007) 166–67, Giannisi (2006), Herda (2011) 74.

<sup>13</sup> On Megara Hyblaea, see Martin (1983), Villard (1999), Gras, Tréziny, and Broise (2004) 527–31, Tréziny (2006), Gras and Tréziny (2012). More macroscopically, for an interstate perspective, see Adshead (1986), Marchand (2009a), and Marchand (2009b) for the Corinth–Tegea road as an 'axis of history'.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Tilley (1994) 29–30.

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‘visual semiotics’ of the *polis*, it is important to stress the conceptual effect of the fixed, manifest, and highly visible form of expressing and articulating the linkages between an urban nucleus and sites of importance in its territory.<sup>15</sup> One example of special importance concerns the decisive role played by roads in defining the domains developed in new colonies and demarcating the framework – here understood in a peculiarly literal sense – according to which land could be differentiated into public and private or partitioned into *klēroi* for allocation to new citizen-settlers.<sup>16</sup> Or again, how, once fixed, these roads became public sites around which cemeteries and monumental grave markers sprang up to advertise the wealth and status of the local aristocracy and prominent families.<sup>17</sup> What would emerge in all of these cases is the manner in which roads play a decisive role in the organization, systematization, regularization, and ritualization of space – topics linked to Parmenides’ ‘Route to Truth’ by the central role played by roads in the ordering of space, be it physical, mental, or discursive.

### 1.1.1 *Physical Nature and Construction*

This is not, however, the place to undertake these sprawling examinations concerning the manner in which roads order space and organize territories; what is most relevant here is the physical nature of these roads, something never previously considered in relation to the use of the figure of the road in the poetry of Homer,

<sup>15</sup> See Hölscher (1991), Hölscher (1998), and de Polignac (2009) 437–38; see also Hölkeskamp (2002).

<sup>16</sup> Discussed in Martin (1973); Martin (1983); Schmitt Pantel (1992); Lévêque (1996). See Vita (1996), Greco (1998), Mertens (2006) 63–72, and Hölscher (2007) 166–68 on public and private space and the formation of the agora. On the partitioning of land, Megara Hyblaea is fundamental; see Vallet (1973), Gras, Tréziny, and Broise (2004) 528–44, Gras and Tréziny (2001), Tréziny (1999), and esp. Tréziny (2002); Svenbro (1982) is problematic.

<sup>17</sup> Houby-Nielsen (1995), Houby-Nielsen (1996), Houby-Nielsen (2009) 199–200, 207–08 for Attica; for Corinth, see Morgan (2003) 55–61; for Pherai in Thessaly, see Morgan (2003) 93–95 and 138–40; for Pherai, with questions of dating and relationship to the goddess Enodia, de Polignac (2006). Papadopoulos (1996) esp. 112 makes important observations concerning changing traffic patterns in Attica, as does Morgan (2003) 64–66.

for example, or Pindar, or, most pertinently, Parmenides.<sup>18</sup> For what is meant by ‘road’ in all the settings adduced above are not the myriad mule paths and beaten tracks that criss-crossed the countryside.<sup>19</sup> Nor are we discussing, as often seems to be assumed, the roads, constructed from mortar, concrete, stone slabs, and cement, that would later serve as one of Rome’s most celebrated exports and cultural signifiers. Rather, the stony Greek terrain (and, perhaps, the slightly more modest finances of the individual *polis*) demanded another method of road construction. This is what has often been called the ‘rut road’, ‘track road’, or, in Mure’s enduring phrase, the ‘stone railway’:<sup>20</sup> a pair of grooves engraved into the rocky Greek terrain. Ultimately, we shall see that giving proper consideration to the physical nature of archaic Greek roads will open up a new horizon onto Parmenides’ ‘Route to Truth’ and its skilful exploitation of language and imagery in the service of fashioning a new notion of discursive arrangement, one that involves a prescribed movement along a path (or, as we would call it, logical necessity; see Chapter 6 below).

If Mure was right to insist that these ruts were not merely the product of repeated use but were intentionally constructed, how were these rut roads constructed?<sup>21</sup> Particularly jagged sections of terrain might call for the levelling of the road’s surface;<sup>22</sup> more often, however, the surface of the road was left alone, and the set of

<sup>18</sup> In the case of Homer, the only relevant body of scholarship one can find addresses the important figure of the *oimē* (see Ch. 3). The *oimē* is unlike a *hodos* insofar as contemporary scholarship imagines the bard to travel it by foot, not wheeled vehicle; but it is like Parmenides’ *hodos* of inquiry insofar as it is already blazed into the terrain of myth and therefore articulates a *prescribed* movement (one undertaken, furthermore, under the custody of a female divinity with privileged access to knowledge).

<sup>19</sup> See Section 1.2 below and Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022) for the semantics of various road words.

<sup>20</sup> See Mure, travelling in Greece in the early to mid-nineteenth century: ‘The term rut must not be understood in the sense of hole or inequality worn by long use and neglect on a level road, but of a groove or channel purposely scooped out at distances adapted to the ordinary span of a carriage, for the purpose of steadying and directing the course of the wheels . . . in the same way as the sockets of our railroads. Some of these tracts of stone railways, for such they may in fact be called . . .’: Mure (1842) 251. A number of nineteenth-century visitors to Greece record observing ruts: see Pritchett (1980) 167–80 and esp. 180 nn. 95, 97, 98.

<sup>21</sup> See n. 20 above.

<sup>22</sup> Young (1956) 95; see also n. 26 below.

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grooves is the only sign of the road builders' presence.<sup>23</sup> Ruts could be cut to a depth of anywhere from 1 to 30 cm.<sup>24</sup> We know less than we might about the technical detail of this construction; perhaps our best evidence comes from an inexplicably neglected passage in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* where Persian 'superintendents of the road builders' (οἱ τῶν ὁδοποιῶν ἄρχοντες) are told that soldiers deemed unfit for service with the spear, bow, or slingshot must carry the wood-cutting axe (πέλεκυς ξυλοκόπος), the mattock or pickaxe (σμινύτη), and the shovel (ἄμη), respectively, 'in case there should be need of any road building' (ὄπως ἦν τι δέη ὁδοποιίας, Xen. Cyr. 6.2.36). Whichever specific instruments may have been employed, the road ruts were carefully squared and polished.<sup>25</sup> As the enduring presence today of some ancient ruts attests, this method of road construction produced a result that was unusually resistant to daily wear and tear and weather damage in comparison to other road-building techniques. Evidence suggests that roadbeds could also be constructed across portions of the route that did not traverse rocky terrain, and that these, too, were rutted; the road track, that is to say, was probably entirely continuous from origin to destination. These roadbeds were confected of gravel or pot sherds mixed with earth.<sup>26</sup>

Casson and others have claimed that cart roads had a 'more or less standard gauge' across the board, but there was evidently at least a certain degree of variation. At the Athenian Dipylon Gate and along the Sacred Way the median average gauge is 1.45 m, for example, while a rutted road 23 km north of Sparta has a gauge of 1.35 m, and even narrower tracks with gauges of 1.23 m and 1.25 m have been recorded near Mycenae and Cardamyle,

<sup>23</sup> Casson (1974) 69; see also Forbes (1955) and Forbes (1964) 101–02.

<sup>24</sup> Pikoulas (1999) 251; for road ruts 50 cm deep at a quarry near Agrigento, see Pike (1967) 601.

<sup>25</sup> See Forbes (1964) 103, Forbes (1955) 138. In Roman times, ruts were engraved with pick and hammer (see Chevallier (1976) 88–89; see also Casson (1974) 69, Pritchett (1980) 168–69). Pike (1967) 601 notes that ruts leading from the quarry near Agrigento bear 'clearly visible . . . chisel marks' in their 'vertical sides'. See also Despotopoulos (1940) 329–38.

<sup>26</sup> Or rubble from old buildings: Morgan (2003) 146; see also Broneer (1973) 18–19. For roadbeds and ruts, see Pikoulas (1999) 251, Pikoulas (2007) 82 for most up-to-date bibliography. On engineering, see also Lohmann (2002) and also Vanderpool (1978), Sanders and Whitbread (1990).

respectively; on the other end of the spectrum, Despotopoulos reported gauges of 1.55–1.60 m on roads in the Argolid and between Orchomenus and Larymna.<sup>27</sup> Even among the roads in Laurium one finds gauge differentials of up to 6 cm. Likewise, the width of the ruts themselves varied from 6 cm to 14.5 cm. Nevertheless, it seems likely in most cases that any given cart would have been able to negotiate nearly all the roads just mentioned.<sup>28</sup>

Greek roads were certainly more at the mercy of topography than their Roman successors, and, as a result, often meandered through relatively level valley terrain regardless of the extra distance such a course might entail (footpaths and beaten tracks offered more direct but less level routes that were generally not suitable for wheeled vehicles).<sup>29</sup> This is not to say, however, that Greek engineers lacked the know-how to undertake more ambitious engineering projects when they saw fit: in the area around Laurium alone, Young catalogues many instances of what he terms the ‘terraced road’, the ‘cut-and-terraced road’, the ‘dam road’, and the ‘dyke road’.<sup>30</sup> One may also note the use of so-called ‘groove roads’ over portions of especially smooth rock; here, bands of shallow grooves (like those on the ascent to the Athenian Acropolis) were chiselled out at an angle transverse to the cart’s path in order to afford purchase on the slick surface.<sup>31</sup> Recent studies have also observed more daring instances of engineering, including the construction of roads on slopes exceeding a 10–15 per cent gradient, or at very high altitude (e.g. over the north crest of Taygetus, at 1,600 m).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Pritchett (1980) 169–81, Young (1956). Pritchett insists on a ‘standard gauge of about 1.40m’ (p. 177), likewise Pikoulas (1999), Pikoulas (2007); Forbes refers to a ‘normal gauge’ 1.44 m – see Forbes (1955), Forbes (1964) *passim*. For the Diolkos at the Isthmus of Corinth, see Raepsaet (1993). The gauge in Italian Magna Graecia seems to have been nearer 1.50–1.60 m; see e.g. Pike (1967) esp. 604.

<sup>28</sup> For this question *vis-à-vis* the dynamics of wheeled vehicles, see Crouwel (1992), also Lorimer (1903), Burford (1960), and Richardson and Piggott (1982). On the ability of the same vehicle to travel between *poleis*, see Casson (1974), Pikoulas (1995).

<sup>29</sup> Forbes (1964) 103, Young (1956) 97, Pikoulas (2007) 83, Rackham (1990) 105–06. See also Korres and Tomlinson (2002) 47.

<sup>30</sup> Technical questions discussed at Young (1956) 95–96; for Mycenaean predecessors, see e.g. Kase (1973).

<sup>31</sup> Young (1956) 95; see also Tréheux (1955).

<sup>32</sup> Pikoulas (2007) 83.



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The now-ubiquitous comparison of the ‘rut road’ to a kind of stone railway (or, as a more recent scholar puts it, a ‘negative railway’),<sup>33</sup> a comparison that Mure had made as far back as 1842, is especially worth commenting on here. Once a vehicle’s wheels were ‘in the groove’, as it were, its route and its destination were locked in no less than its wheels (see frontispiece). This proved especially problematic when two carts confronted each other on the open road, for the vast majority of roads seem to have been single-tracked for the better part of their course (though a handful of the busiest roads, notably between Athens and Delphi and Sparta and Olympia, were in some places given double tracks).<sup>34</sup> The extent of the challenge this presented to ancient travellers is difficult for the modern user of roads to fathom fully. One strategy for coping with such challenges was to construct a series of (often infrequent) lay-bys or turn-offs, which allowed two vehicles to pass each other;<sup>35</sup> if a pair of carts travelling in opposite directions encountered each other, the two options were thus for one to retreat to the nearest lay-by or, if there were none in the area, to physically remove the vehicle and its wheels from the track, which must have been a heavy task indeed. The situation in mountainous areas has seemed so hazardous as to prompt one scholar to speculate on the necessity of watchmen to oversee traffic at key points of important routes; at the very least, a set of protocols governing right of way would seem to have been needed in such situations, even if it is lost to us now.<sup>36</sup> (At this point in the discussion it is considered *de rigueur* to craft a joke about Oedipus, Laius, and the first recorded case of road rage in antiquity.) Of course, this position of being locked into a fixed course could also be beneficial if, say, one needed to execute a turn while descending a steep slope surrounded by cliffs (a scenario with which any driver or bus passenger on the modern Greek road is terrifyingly familiar); here the ruts act as a kind of ‘guard rail’. This situation is worth bearing

<sup>33</sup> Pikoulas (1999) 251; see also n. 20 above.

<sup>34</sup> Casson (1974) 70 thinks the most heavily trafficked quarry roads were given double tracks; see also Lolos (2003) 143 and n. 20. Euripides seems to refer to precisely such a double-tracked road at *Electra* 775, where we find a δίκροτος ἀμοξίτος; see esp. Denniston (1939) ad loc.

<sup>35</sup> Known as an *ektropē*; see Pikoulas (1999) 251, Pikoulas (1999) 261 for photographs.

<sup>36</sup> Pikoulas (1999) 251–52.

in mind when considering the labour (and wide arc) required to turn a cart whose wheels are higher than its frame.<sup>37</sup> Again, this fundamental aspect of travelling via rut road will be important in our discussion of Parmenides below, particularly in relation to his invention of the notion of logical necessity (see Chapter 6).

### 1.1.2 Social Context

What little we do know about the administration and supervision of ancient Greek roads comes from the classical period and does not shed much light on how such affairs were managed in the archaic period.<sup>38</sup> Some scholars imagine construction and repair to have been a liturgy, others that it was a quasi-imperial endeavour of ‘a powerful central authority’, and others still that hoplite armies served as road crews.<sup>39</sup> Hard evidence is in short supply.<sup>40</sup> *Intra muros*, it seems that in the classical period the *astynomoi* (and later the *agoranomoi*) were tasked with keeping streets clean, while the *hodopoiioi*, of which there were five at Athens, according to [Aristotle] (*Ath. Pol.* 54.1), were to look after their repair with the assistance of public slaves;<sup>41</sup> the regular appointment of these officials may well have been a fourth-century development, however.<sup>42</sup> Plato’s *Laws* contains

<sup>37</sup> Chevallier (1976) 88–89. White (1984) 136 writes that ‘good brakes are important, but the little evidence we have does not suggest that braking was satisfactory’ for wheeled vehicles. See Crouwel (1992) 52–53, 73–74, 91–93 on controlling various chariots.

<sup>38</sup> Pritchett (1980) 145–51 remains the most comprehensive; I draw liberally from it here. Pikoulas (1999) 254 insists that ‘the creation of the [rut road] network [in the Peloponnese] is to be dated to the seventh century (at the latest), with the middle of the sixth century . . . as a landmark for its later development’; see also Pikoulas (1999) 306–09, Pikoulas (1995) 349–55. In addition to the studies cited in n. 7 above, there is evidence of rut roads at the Isthmian Sanctuary predating the fire there c. 475 BCE; see Broneer (1973) 18–19. For a *terminus ante quem* of the sixth century for the rut road near Larymna, see Oldfather (1916) 42.

<sup>39</sup> See Casson (1974), Pikoulas (2007) 84 (for the quotation), and Ober (1991) 174–79, respectively.

<sup>40</sup> Pace Lolos (2003) 143.

<sup>41</sup> On the *hodopoiioi*, see BNP, Rhodes (1972) 237. Again, one might have expected that Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.36 (see p. 37 above), which addresses the ‘superintendents of the road builders’ (οἱ τῶν ὁδοποιῶν ἀρχοντες) should there be need of ‘any road building’ (τι ὁδοποιίας), would be helpful for any discussion of this topic.

<sup>42</sup> See Pritchett (1980) 147 and n. 10 and Rhodes (1981) *ad* 54.i for further discussion and bibliography. Aeschines’ *In Ctes.* 3.25 states that the controllers of the theoric fund ἡσαν δὲ καὶ ὁδοποιοί; Rhodes (1981) *ad* 54.i interprets this to mean that the former ‘provided

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a lengthy passage on the responsibilities of the so-called *agronomoi*, one of which was to oversee sixty young men from each tribe tasked with beautifying the countryside, conserving its waters, and attending to the roads (760a–761a); it is doubted whether this position ever actually existed in Athens.<sup>43</sup> Nor do inscriptions always provide unequivocal answers. A pair of inscriptions regarding bridges on the road to Eleusis, for example, tell different stories: the older, from 421/20 BCE, provides for the construction of a stone bridge at public expense by decree of the Athenian *ekklēsia* (IG I<sup>2</sup> 81), while a decree by the deme of Eleusis (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1191) exactly 100 years later honours one Xenocles for constructing a stone bridge at his own expense.<sup>44</sup> An Athenian copy of an Amphictyonic Law of 380/79 BCE arrogates to the Amphictyones responsibility for repair of roads and bridges, presumably those leading to Delphi and Pyloi (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1126.40–43).<sup>45</sup> Herodotus tells us that in Sparta, judgement concerning the public roads was the prerogative of the kings alone (6.57.4).<sup>46</sup>

In Herodotus' description of the events leading up to the denouement of the Persian campaign against the Scythians, we find a sentence that begins as follows (4.136):

ἄτε δὲ τοῦ Περσικοῦ μὲν τοῦ πολλοῦ ἔόντος πεζοῦ στρατοῦ καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς οὐκ ἐπισταμένους, ὥστε οὐ τετμημένων τῶν ὁδῶν.

But seeing that the Persian army was for the most part footmen and did not know the *hodoi*, since they had not been *tetmēmenai*.

Many translations here render ὥστε οὐ τετμημένων τῶν ὁδῶν 'since the roads had not been marked'.<sup>47</sup> Other scholars, however, take the word τέμνειν much more literally: 'just as in the English language roads are "constructed," in Greek they were "cut"

funds for road-building, and probably worked with the *hodopoi*, not that they supplanted them'.

<sup>43</sup> Pritchett (1980) 149–50.

<sup>44</sup> Pritchett (1980) 150.

<sup>45</sup> Pritchett (1980) 150 and Sordi (1957) 65–67.

<sup>46</sup> Michell (1964) 110–11, esp. 110 n. 7; see also Lolos (2011) 95, who looks at the evidence from Thucydides and Xenophon, and also Lolos (2003) 43, Pikoulas (1999) 307.

<sup>47</sup> As in Godley's Loeb translation; Rawlinson is more apt: '... had no knowledge of the routes, which are not cut in Scythia' (357).

(*temnein*)'.<sup>48</sup> Construing τέμνειν as 'to cut' rather than simply 'to mark' draws support from a passage in Thucydides (2.100), who notes, for example, that it was King Archelaus who was responsible for most of the fortresses and roads to be found in Macedonia in Thucydides' day, for it was he who 'cut the highways/major roads' (ὁδοὺς εὐθείας ἔτεμε) in the region.<sup>49</sup>

The passage from Herodotus raises the question of the nature and extent of road signs, signposts, or road markers of other kinds in archaic and classical Greece. Historically, the consensus was that such things had come only with the Romans and their road-building expertise.<sup>50</sup> Archaeological finds from Attica suggest otherwise, however. An inscription on the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the heart of the Athenian agora reads (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 2640*):

[ἡ πόλις] ἔστ[η]σ[έν με β]ροτ[οῖς] μνημεῖον ἀληθές  
 [πᾶσιν] σημαίνει[ιν μέ]τ[ρον] ὁδοιπορίας·  
 [ἔστιν γὰρ τ]ὸ μεταχθὺ θεῶν πρὸς δώδεκα βωμῶν  
 [πέντ' ἐπι?] τεσσαράκοντ' ἐγ λιμένος στάδιοι.

(The city) set (me), a true record (for all) men  
 To indicate (the length) of the journey:  
 The distance to the Altar of the Twelve Gods  
 From the harbour is (five and?) forty stades.<sup>51</sup>

The inscription itself is dated to the end of the fifth century, but the original altar is thought to have been built in 522/21 by Peisistratus (grandson of the tyrant) and perhaps renovated around 425 BCE.<sup>52</sup> Whether or not this altar was conceived of as the epicentre of the Athenian *polis*, the basis or focal point anchoring a larger system

<sup>48</sup> Detienne (2009) 68.

<sup>49</sup> On the semantics of *eutheia hodos*, see Lolos (2003) 140. Pikoulas (1995) 22 n. 38 and Lolos (2011) 93 n. 3 connect this terminology with the engraving of road ruts. Incidentally, at Ar. *Thesm.* 1101, one also finds the verb with *keleuthos* in reference to the 'cutting' of a path through the air (that *keleuthos* appears when the route in question cleaves the air, not land, is fully consistent with the way that the word is used in Homer; see Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022)). Eur. *Phoen.* 1, where Jocasta appeals to Helios, *tēn en astrois ouranou temnōn hodon* (1), is a more complex case, not least on account of its questionable authenticity; see Mastronarde (1994) 142 and n. 1.

<sup>50</sup> See e.g. the passages excerpted in Salviat and Servais (1964) 272 n. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Translation after Long (1987) 65.

<sup>52</sup> For which see Gadbery (1992), esp. 447–51. Extensive discussion can be found at Long (1987) 159–62. For Peisistratus, cf. Thuc. 6.54. Ar. *Av.* 1005 is not without interest here; see also Travlos (1971) 458–59.

## 1.1 Archaic and Classical Greek Roads

of measurement, from the moment of its installation is not certain; what seems clear, however, is that by Herodotus' day at the latest, it occupied precisely this role.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, no critic of Parmenides' poem could fail to be struck by two features of this extraordinary object: first, that the marker declares itself to record and convey some kind of truth – it has been erected as a *mnēmeion alēthes*; and second, that this record is truthful insofar as it accurately 'signs out' aspects of a 'journey'. Truth, journeying, and the details of the route-to-be-journeyed are thus all linked within one discursive and conceptual network on the face of the altar at the heart of the agora.

There is more, however. It has sometimes been speculated that this altar should be seen as part of a larger project of spatial organization, monumentalization, and political consolidation that would also have included the installation of the celebrated herms which dotted the roads of Attica, reportedly erected by Peisistratus' uncle, Hipparchus.<sup>54</sup> These road markers, set up at the halfway points between the town centre (presumably measured from the Altar of the Twelve Gods) and the deme to which the road led, bore on one face information about the journey being undertaken (notifying travellers that they were halfway between the town and their destination) and on the other a moralizing or philosophical maxim devised (or at any rate selected) by Hipparchus.<sup>55</sup> Fortunately, the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus* records two of the maxims inscribed by the Athenian tyrant: 'walk thinking just thoughts' (στειίχε δίκαια φρονῶν) and 'do not deceive a friend' (μὴ φίλον ἐξαπάτα).<sup>56</sup> These peculiar objects take on a particular charge and interpretive frisson in light of

<sup>53</sup> See Herodotus 2.7.1 for the Altar of the Twelve Gods as the ground zero of Athens: ἔστι δὲ ὁδὸς ἐς Ἥλιου πόλιν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἀνωϊόντι παραπλησίη τὸ μῆκος τῆ ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν ὁδῶ τῆ ἀπὸ τῶν δωδέκα θεῶν τοῦ βωμοῦ φερούση ἐς τε Πίσαν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν νηὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου.

<sup>54</sup> On the relationship between herms and the altar of the Twelve Gods, see Lohmann (2002) 76–79, Long (1987) 159–60 (bibliography at 160 n. 83). Regarding dating the herms, the confluence of literary evidence (Pl. [*Hipparch.*] cf. 228b–229d) and archaeological evidence (a herm found *in situ* near modern-day Koropi in Attica) is enticing; see the classic Osborne (1985) esp. 48–51 and, more recently, Tomlinson (1998) 33–35 and Lohmann (2002) 76–79 for further discussion.

<sup>55</sup> So the *Hipparchus* reports (see n. 54 above). Although only one side of the Koropi herm survives, it seems to corroborate the dialogue's claims exactly, reading: [ἐ]ν μῆσοι Κεφαλῆς τε καὶ ἄστυος ἀγλαῶς ἡερμῆς (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 1023). See also Parker (1996) 80–83, Wrede (1986) esp. 5–8.

<sup>56</sup> Pl. [*Hipparch.*] 229a4 and 229b1, respectively. For hermeneutic complications and considerations surrounding these maxims, particularly in light of the distinctive medium

Parmenides' poem insofar as they, too, form an explicit link between roads, travelling, and what we would now call philosophical (or at least ethical or moralizing) thinking. Indeed, the unique form of the herm embodies in and of itself this (very Parmenidean) linkage between the itinerary of a voyage and philosophical or moralizing thought, expressing it in the form of a single, unified object: two faces, very literally, of the same stele.

Proper consideration of the possible links between the herms and Parmenides' poem is undertaken in Chapter 6, when Parmenides' poem itself will be examined, but Mourelatos's interpretation of Parmenides' notion of a *sēma* which stands 'on the *hodos*' of inquiry (Fr. 8.2–3) is evocative enough in this setting to deserve being mentioned, even briefly, at this juncture:

In Parmenides' own language: To reach the goal of the 'quest,' we must go by the route 'is.' To stay on that route, we must keep an eye on the 'signposts' along the way. To be faithful to the imagery, we might think of the signposts as imperatives like: 'always look for that which is simple, immobile, complete.' Parmenides puts this less expressively by saying: 'along the route there are many signposts that [or "as to how"] . . .' (B8.2–3).<sup>57</sup>

Seen against Mourelatos's characterization of Parmenides' *sēmata*, we may say (without wishing to press the claim too hard) that Hipparchus' herms, likely built not so long before Parmenides' poem was composed, offer an extremely arresting set of possible parallels.<sup>58</sup>

The herms and the road network connecting the demes to Attica are, of course, deeply tied up with several dynamics specific to that region, especially those related to the consolidation of Athenian political power and the relationship between the central city and the demes.<sup>59</sup> The use of road markers and road signs in archaic

of the herm, see esp. Osborne (1985b) esp. 51–57. For the herms in light of the Peisistratid project of monumentalization, see Camp (2001) 37–38.

<sup>57</sup> Mourelatos (2008b) 94.

<sup>58</sup> For Parmenides' dates, see Ch. 2, n. 1 below; note that, for example, West (1971) 220 n. 3 puts Parmenides' birth later but hypothesizes that his poem was composed in the 490s.

<sup>59</sup> On Cleisthenes, see e.g. Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet (1996), revisited in de Polignac (2012) (see esp. 309 nn. 8–11 for bibliography). On the relationship between Athens and the demes, see Osborne (1985a), Osborne (1994). For political and economic relationships between town and countryside from the late archaic period *vis-à-vis* road building, see Tomlinson (2002), Korres and Tomlinson (2002), Langdon (2002), Lohmann (2002), and now Fachard and Pirisino (2015).

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Greece was, however, by no means limited to Attica. A road sign or signpost (the French excavators refer to it as a ‘*stèle indicatrice*’) from the island of Thasos has been securely dated to the decade between 450 and 440 BCE.<sup>60</sup> This ‘*stèle indicatrice*’, located in a sanctuary at the south-eastern tip of the island, lists the distances from the marker to two other points on the island, the *polis* (on the northern coast), by way of Ainyra, and a location known as the ‘Diasion’ in the (village or town of) Demetrium (presumably in the south-west quadrant of the island); below this, we then get a third distance, from the ‘Diasion’ to the *polis* by way of a seaside route (*peri thalassan*) that presumably traces out the circumference of the island’s western and northern coasts.<sup>61</sup> The Altar of the 12 Gods and Hipparchus’ network of herms were hardly unique.

Emerging from both literary and archaeological evidence, then, is a picture that becomes highly suggestive when viewed alongside Parmenides’ use of the language and imagery of roads, travelling, and journeying. In concluding this discussion of the physical nature and social function of archaic and classical Greek roads as realia, I would like to highlight two points most of all. First, that we should find the distinctive nexus comprising the practice or concept of journeying, information about an itinerary, philosophical or moralizing maxims, and claims about truth – all apparently Parmenidean – linked in various ways on several road signs or spatial markers in the later archaic and classical period offers us a valuable invitation to reassess aspects of Parmenides’ poem that critics have found confusing or simply ignored. The second point, which is perhaps even more consequential, concerns the implications we may draw from considering the techniques of archaic Greek road construction and the mechanics of travel these dictated for journeying by wheeled vehicle. More specifically, the archaic and classical Greek *hodos* for wheeled vehicles, a rut road that locked the vehicles that travelled on it into a prescribed track,

<sup>60</sup> Salviat and Servais (1964).

<sup>61</sup> Salviat and Servais (1964) 284–86. They note two examples of ‘road signs’ of a sort from the fourth century BCE: an inscription denoting the length of the *peripatos* around the Athenian Acropolis (*JG* II<sup>2</sup> 2639; see Salviat and Servais (1964) 273 and n. 1 for further information) and a stele in the Temple of Zeus at Olympia stating the distance from Olympia to Sparta and indicating that other such markers would be encountered on the road to Sparta (*Sylloge*<sup>2</sup>, 1069; see Salviat and Servais (1964) 273 and nn. 2, 3).

offered Parmenides a tremendously powerful conceptual resource. In Chapter 6 I shall examine the claim that one of Parmenides' major undertakings is to articulate some means of 'reach[ing] toward a new notion of metaphysical or logical necessity'.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, I shall argue that invoking the image of the archaic Greek rut road (and the prescribed motion along a track that it entails) – now in the form of a *hodos dizēsios* that leads necessarily from point to point in sequence across the terrain of an argument – is one of Parmenides' most important strategies for accomplishing this goal.

The erection of different kinds of road markers or road signs and the creation of a network of road signs and systems of organizing and systematizing travel by road seem to have occurred more or less during Parmenides' lifetime. These developments should be viewed in relation to processes of territorial consolidation and the monumentalization of architecture occurring in the same years, but that is not an argument against keeping them in mind as we read Parmenides' poem. Just the opposite. If his was a time when space, by virtue of being incorporated into the framework of the *polis* and its ritual, political, and economic linkages, became increasingly measured, marked, signed, controlled, ordered, regularized, and systematized, what better model could he have found to impose order on discursive space than a *hodos dizēsios*: the route, journey, or road of inquiry?

## 1.2 The Semantics of the word *hodos*

We have seen, then, what a *hodos* was in archaic Greece. But what did the Greeks mean by the word *hodos*? The main aim of this section is to map out the relevant portions of this word's semantic field in Homer.

This task is pertinent to our understanding of Parmenides on three counts. The first concerns the polysemous nature of the word *hodos*. As is increasingly recognized, Parmenides had a subtle but devastating talent for wordplay more generally, and for capitalizing on linguistic ambiguities of precisely this sort more

<sup>62</sup> Mourelatos (2008b) 40.



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specifically.<sup>63</sup> The study undertaken in this section will help us appreciate how central this technique was to Parmenides' rhetorical and poetic – that is, meaning-making – strategies. Recognizing that Parmenides' central, programmatic word *hodos* has two distinct meanings is thus a matter of no small hermeneutic urgency. As we shall explore below, the word *hodos* can signify either a kind of physical object or a kind of activity. That the same word encompasses both senses offers Parmenides a resource he exploits with virtuosic skill; the effect, of enormous importance to his project, is to yoke together both senses, each of which offers him something crucial and distinctive, and to harness their combined power in the service of mediating a new concept of the nature of thinking and knowing. It is strategies like this that help Parmenides wring the most power out of the linguistic tools available to him, the better to think new thoughts in and through old words.<sup>64</sup>

This urgency deepens when we take into account what the two specific meanings of the word *hodos* are. The second point concerns the value of the first meaning of *hodos* to Parmenides' purposes. As we shall explore in Section 1.2.1, when the word *hodos* signifies an object, this is often an object of the sort discussed in Section 1.1, namely, a road suitable for wheeled traffic. As we saw, once one sets out on such a road, one is committed to follow it until it ends; wheels locked in the ruts, one cannot swerve, deviate, or circle back from the prescribed path. As we shall examine in Chapter 6, this provides Parmenides with a crucial – and, to date, entirely unobserved and unexamined – resource for groping towards a primordial articulation of what would come to be called logical necessity.

Similarly, the third point concerns the value of the second meaning of *hodos* to Parmenides' larger endeavour. As we shall discuss in Section 1.2.2, when the word *hodos* signifies an activity, it is something intrinsically teleological, something, that is, inherently directed towards a terminal destination and a conclusive goal. This basic fact of the meaning of *hodos* imparts

<sup>63</sup> See Introduction, n. 28 above.

<sup>64</sup> See again Introduction, 14 and nn. 60 and 61 for discussion of Mourelatos's arguments and their importance.

a distinctive conceptual footprint to Parmenides' *hodos dizēsios*. The significance of this conceptual footprint must be evaluated in light of the third feature common to Parmenides' argument and the paradigm of demonstration that evolves from it identified by Lloyd: that both proceed to an inescapable conclusion.<sup>65</sup> In short, the inescapability comes from the sense of a *hodos* as an object, the conclusiveness from the sense of *hodos* as an activity. These are topics we shall take up more fully in Chapter 6; in this chapter, I merely lay the groundwork for the analysis to be undertaken there.

I have elsewhere conducted a more comprehensive study of the semantics of road-related words in Homer.<sup>66</sup> There, I discuss at greater length the framework I shall assume below; this centres on the distinction between a sense of *hodos* that denotes an object, and another that denotes an activity. We shall examine each in turn.

### 1.2.1 *The hodos as an Object*

In contrast to *keleuthoi*, which (in the plural) are paths of some kind, usually through the sea or the heavens, and thus generally part of the natural constitution of the world, the *hodos* as an object is almost invariably part of the *built* landscape;<sup>67</sup> generally speaking, a *hodos* is constructed.<sup>68</sup> When Nestor first proposes that the Achaeans build the wall guarding their ships, he ends by singling out the importance of building gates into this wall (*Il.* 7.340):

ὄφρα δι' αὐτάων ἵππηλασίη ὁδὸς εἴη.

*So that through them there might be a road suitable for horse-drawn vehicles.*<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See Introduction, 2 and n. 12.

<sup>66</sup> See Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022).

<sup>67</sup> See Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022) for the difference between a *hodos* and *keleuthoi*.

<sup>68</sup> Though need not necessarily be. Becker's observation that '*hodos* is the street's "super-ordinate concept" [*übergeordneter*]' (Becker (1937) 20) is shrewd; he is here referring to *aguia*, but the point seems to hold for the whole lexicon of overland routes, paths, tracks, streets, etc., not all of which will have been built. See also *Lfgre* s.v. *hodos*.

<sup>69</sup> See Wilcox (1976) ad loc. for the optative. For this rendition of ἵππηλασίη see e.g. *DELG* s.v. *elaunō*, Cunliffe.

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This is not a throw-away phrase; the line is repeated when the Achaeans do, in fact, complete these gates a hundred lines later (*Il.* 7.439). The product of deliberate foreplanning and laborious construction (as we are reminded when Apollo undoes all this fine work in an instant; cf. *Il.* 15.355–58, *Il.* 15.260–61), this ἵππηλασίη ὁδός provides an illuminating point of contrast to a functionally similar entity, one that also takes horse-drawn vehicles from one side of the Achaean fortifications to the other – the passage ‘bridged’ by Apollo in *Iliad* 15. The former is the product of planned, organized construction, the latter an ad hoc creation produced in an instant and by a foot, stemming from the exigencies of the moment. The first is a *hodos*, the second a *keleuthos*.

Connected to this notion of constructedness is a sense of purposiveness: a *hodos* is constructed to serve a purpose, and one more enduring than the momentary demand of siege logistics. As the phrase ἵππηλασίη ὁδός suggests, adjectives or adjectival phrases modifying the *hodos* as an object often refer to the kind of traffic the *hodos* is intended to support.<sup>70</sup> The association with wheeled traffic is particularly notable. Revealing here is the fateful road Odysseus’ men take *en route* to the palace of the Laestrygonians, along which they encounter the daughter of the local king and queen. In the event, we are told (*Od.* 10.103–04):

οἱ δ’ ἴσαν ἐκβάντες λείην ὁδόν, ἧ περ ἄμαρξαι  
ἄστυδ’ ἀφ’ ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων καταγίνεον ὕλην.

They disembarked and travelled along a smooth *hodos*, on which wagons  
Often bore timber down to the city from the high mountains.

Compare this with the *keleuthos* that Apollo promises Hector he will ‘smooth’ (λεαίνω, *Il.* 15.261) before the Trojan advance. Where that *keleuthos* was provisional, the Laestrygonians’ ‘smooth road’ has been constructed for a specific purpose within the framework of what appears to be a larger pattern of usage (note the imperfect καταγίνεον), one that is presumably related to a regular need for timber.<sup>71</sup> Also related to the *hamaxa* is, of

<sup>70</sup> See e.g. the concluding remarks of Bouchet (2006).

<sup>71</sup> In Attica several of the oldest rut roads are those serving the marble quarries in Mount Pentelicon and the silver mines in Laurium; for these, see Young (1956) and Goette (2002). On the importance of vehicles servicing sites of this sort, and thus the need for

course, the ἀμάξιτος. While the precise role it plays in the course of Hector's flight from Achilles in *Iliad* 22 is not entirely clear,<sup>72</sup> that the word itself, originally (and usually) an adjective modifying *hodos*, means 'carriageable', 'able to be traversed by a *hamaxa*', is clear.<sup>73</sup>

The benefit and level of sophistication of the *hodos* as a 'carriageway' becomes obvious in the neat contrast between the Laestrygonian road and an image we find in a simile depicting Menelaus and Meriones as they labour to drag the body of Patroclus from the field (*Il.* 17.742–44):

ὦς θ' ἡμίονοι κρατερόν μένος ἀμφιβαλόντες  
 ἔλκωσ' ἐξ ὄρεος κατὰ παιπαλόεσσαν ἀταρπὸν  
 ἦ δοκὸν ἠὲ δόρου μέγα νήϊον. . .

And as when mules, straining with all their might,  
 Drag out of the mountain heights along a rocky beaten track  
 A beam or great ship-timber . . .

Making do with a mere *atarpos* – a 'beaten track' of the rugged sort that Odysseus will have to take through wooded country and steep terrain to get from the sea-level harbour to Eumaeus' hut inland (τρηχεῖαν ἀταρπὸν | χῶρον ἀν' ὑλήεντα δι' ἄκριας (*Od.* 14.1–2))<sup>74</sup> – the mules struggle mightily just to bring one beam down from the mountain; on the Laestrygonian road, one may bring it down by the wagonload.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, we may contrast the level of construction and sophistication associated with both the Laestrygonian wagon *hodos* and the ἱππηλασίη ὁδός through the gates in the Achaean wall with one

especially constructed roadways affording passage to these wheeled vehicles, see Burford (1960), Crowel (1992).

<sup>72</sup> See Bouchet (2006) for extended discussion.

<sup>73</sup> For analysis and sources of the etymology, see Bouchet (2006) 276 n. 18; Lolos (2003) 142–43 for (mostly much) later sources.

<sup>74</sup> The country road from Eumaeus' hut to the fountain where Melanthius is encountered is referred to as both a παιπαλόεσσα ὁδός (*Od.* 17.204) and an ἀτραπός (*Od.* 17.234); see Lolos (2003) 150–51. Herodotus uses the word for Ephialtes' path over Mount Callidromon (7.212, 213, 215), as does Thucydides (4.363). *Contra* Becker (1937) 35, it seems more useful to see the contrast as one of functionality as much as level of construction: an *atarp(it)os* would then be a road that is not accessible by wheeled vehicle, though it may well be passable by means other than foot (e.g. mule).

<sup>75</sup> Regarding the width of the *atarpos*, Edwards (1991) ad 742–43 notes: 'the beam is clearly dragged behind the mules, not slung between them'.

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of the very few Homeric examples of overland *keleuthoi*. After the embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9 proves fruitless, Agamemnon and Menelaus confer in the dead of night and decide to summon the Greek chieftains to a midnight council. Having settled who will go to rouse whom, Menelaus asks whether he should return to Agamemnon or stay with Ajax and Idomeneus, whom he is to visit; Agamemnon replies that the latter makes more sense, lest they miss each other in the course of their errands (*Il.* 10.66):

πολλαὶ γὰρ ἀνὰ στρατόν εἰσι κέλευθοι.

For many are the *keleuthoi* up and down the camp.

In contrast to the very limited number of specially constructed, carriageable *hodoi* communicating the Greek camp with the Trojan plain or serving as a landmark in *Iliad* 22, these seem to be merely ways of getting through the camp between the tents and the ships, ways of passage that take on a kind of object residue by being used repeatedly and habitually.<sup>76</sup>

The contrast between the ‘many *keleuthoi*’ through the camp and the single ‘smooth *hodos*’ in the land of the Laestrygonians or three ‘*hodoi* suitable for wheeled traffic’ penetrating the Achaean wall (if we imagine one per gate, and three gates) is neatly exemplified in the simile used to describe Ajax as he leaps from ship to ship to fend off the Trojan advance (*Il.* 15.679–84):<sup>77</sup>

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ἵπποισι κελητίζειν εὖ εἰδώς,  
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ πολέων πίσυρας συναίρεται ἵππους,  
σεύας ἐκ πεδίοιο μέγα προτὶ ἄστου δίηται  
λαοφόρον καθ' ὁδόν· πολέες τέ ε' θηήσαντο  
ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δ' ἔμπεδον ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ  
θρόσκων ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλον ἀμείβεται, οἱ δὲ πέτονται. . .

And as when a man who knows well the art of leaping from horse to horse,  
Having yoked together four choice horses,  
Speeding from the plain to the great city, drives  
Along the main thoroughfare: and crowds marvel at him,

<sup>76</sup> Kahn adduces this sentence in support of his claims regarding *keleuthoi* of night and day; see Kahn (2009a) 113. The contested status of *Iliad* 10 is perhaps not without consequence here.

<sup>77</sup> See Bouchet (2006) for the relationship between a *hamaxitos* and a *laophoros hodos*, particularly in the Iliadic context.

## Roads: Words and Things

Men and women alike, as he keeps leaping, safe and steady,  
Now to this horse, now to that one, while the stallions fly on. . .

The juxtaposition of the ‘many *keleuthoi*’ through the camp with the single λαοφόρος ὁδός is telling. In the first case, in the absence of any of the limitations imposed by the need to construct a more sophisticated *hodos*, the number of *keleuthoi* available for use proliferate to such an extent that even two individuals who are expressly seeking each other may nevertheless fail to happen upon one another. By contrast, there being but a single route along which to transport one’s team of yoked horses (or Laestrygonian timber, or Trojan wagons), the attention of the many men and women who live along the λαοφόρος ὁδός is concentrated on the single location of the road. In short, the *hodos* as an object signifies something that is generally constructed, built for a purpose, and, as a result, able to accommodate heavier traffic – especially, in contrast with the *atarp(it)os*, wheeled vehicles.

### 1.2.2 *The hodos as an Activity*

The word *hodos* also signifies a kind of activity. In Homer, no verb – and no cluster of words – is more closely associated with the word *hodos* used in this sense than those derived from τέλος, ‘end’. Such verbs take *hodos* as a direct object three times and are used passively with *hodos* as the patient subject twice more.

Closely related to this is the fact that, unlike the word *keleuthos*, which often appears in the middle of an episode of travel, the word *hodos* (especially when paired with a verb derived from τέλος) often appears either before the journey in question has occurred or after its completion. The first pairing in the *Odyssey* between *hodos* and a verb derived from τέλος takes place early, in the debate in the Ithacan agora, and provides an excellent example. Telemachus’ proposal to raise a news-gathering expedition is met with scorn by Leocritus, who suggests that Telemachus will never get around to leaving Ithaca and so ‘will never accomplish the *hodos*’ he wishes to undertake (τελέει δ’ ὁδὸν οὔ ποτε ταύτην, *Od.* 2.256). After

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Telemachus does, in fact, embark on just the journey in question, Antinous remarks (*Od.* 4.663–64):

ὦ πρόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ὑπερφιάλως ἐτελέσθη  
Τηλεμάχῳ ὁδὸς ἦδε· φάμεν δέ οἱ οὐ τελέεσθαι.

For shame! A great deed, this *hodos*, was accomplished  
For Telemachus, and outrageously so: and we said that it  
would not be accomplished for him.

The completion of the return leg of this journey – despite the suitors’ attempted ambush – occasions a virtually identical outburst from Eurymachus (*Od.* 16.146–47).

The same pattern of usage – namely, a verb derived from *τέλος* taking *hodos* as its object at the precise moment the journey emerges as a totality, either just before it has begun or upon its completion – characterizes Odysseus’ journeys as well as Telemachus’. When Odysseus appeals to Circe to launch him on his voyage home from Aeaea (*Od.* 10.483–84):

ὦ Κίρκη, τέλεσόν μοι ὑπόσχεσιν ἦν περ ὑπέστης,  
οἴκαδε πεμψέμεναι. . .

Circe, fulfil for me the promise that you made  
To guide me home. . .

she responds, using the verb *teleō* as a pivot (*Od.* 10.491):

ἀλλ’ ἄλλην χρῆ πρόωτον ὁδὸν τελέεσαι.

But first you must complete another journey.

At the moment when Odysseus and his men are so close to completing their *nostos* that they descry Ithaca’s hearth fires, we find this pairing again. That their journey is to all intents and purposes finished is precisely the concern, for what his crewmates lament is that, because the journey is essentially over, they will have no further opportunity to gain the spoils of war or collect gifts from abroad – as Aeolus’ bag of winds makes it seem Odysseus has (*Od.* 10.41–42):

ἡμεῖς δ’ αὐτε ὁμῆν ὁδὸν ἐκτελέσαντες  
οἴκαδε νισσόμεθα κενεὰς σὺν χεῖρας ἔχοντες.

## Roads: Words and Things

But we, who have completed to the end the very same journey,  
Return home empty-handed.

In sum, we may observe two things. First, the *hodos* as an activity-like concept is something that one can ‘complete’, ‘accomplish’, ‘fulfil’. Second, that it is just at the moments when one views a journey as a single, unified project to be undertaken (viewed prospectively) or already essentially completed (viewed retrospectively) that one discusses a *hodos* and does so in terms expressed by verbs derived from τέλος.<sup>78</sup>

The association between the word *hodos* and words derived from τέλος is not limited to the relationship between verb and patient. When Athena encourages Telemachus in the aftermath of the agora debate, she claims that, just as his father, Odysseus (*Od.* 2.272–73),

οἷος κείνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε  
οὐ τοι ἔπειθ' ἀλήη ὁδὸς ἔσσεται οὐδ' ἀτέλεστος.

Was such a man who accomplished his word and deed,  
So then your *hodos* will not be vain or unfulfilled.

Athena’s assimilation of ‘accomplishing’ something – an *ergon*, an *epos* – to a *hodos* that is not ‘vain’ or ‘unfulfilled’ reveals another aspect of this meaning of *hodos*. The adjectives ἀλήη and ἀτέλεστος represent a key cluster of modifiers associated with the *hodos* as an activity-like concept in the *Odyssey*.<sup>79</sup> These feature most prominently in the discussions surrounding Telemachus’ journey. In a reprise of the debate in the agora, the suitors respond to his proposed *hodos* with the same contempt displayed by Leocritus; this time, Telemachus stands his ground, declaring (*Od.* 2.318):

εἶμι μὲν, οὐδ' ἀλήη ὁδὸς ἔσσεται ἦν ἀγορεύω.

But indeed I shall go, nor will the *hodos* of which I speak be vain.

Not long after he completes the first leg of the journey in question, another authority figure, this time Nestor, urges Telemachus onwards

<sup>78</sup> See e.g. Holwerda (1963), Waanders (1983).

<sup>79</sup> The other alludes to the length (*Od.* 17.426) or difficulty (*Od.* 3.288, 14.235) – or both (*Od.* 4.393, 4.484) – of a *hodos*.



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by invoking the same notion, in this case the spectre of a τηῦσιη ὁδός, a ‘fruitless *hodos*’, that must be avoided (*Od.* 3.316 = *Od.* 15.13; Athena delivers the second admonition). Closely related, then, to the notion of accomplishing, completing, fulfilling a *hodos* is a concern with the *hodos* that is potentially ἀτέλεστος, ἀλίη, or τηῦσιη, ‘unfulfilled, fruitless’, ‘vain’, ‘useless’.

The sense mobilized here extends beyond a journey that is simply unfinished or incomplete – one that somehow terminated before its scheduled point of conclusion – to suggest that a notion of purposiveness is inherent in the words these adjectives modify; an ‘unfulfilled’ *hodos* would not be one that is merely unfinished, but one that fails to fulfil or accomplish its purpose. The point can be expressed in two possible ways. The more modest claim is that, just as ‘a stone can be sightless but not blind’ (for ‘to be blind requires that one be in the sight game’),<sup>80</sup> so in order for a *hodos* to be ἀ-τέλεστος, ἀλίη, τηῦσιη, ‘unaccomplished, fruitless’, ‘vain’, ‘useless’, it would have to be in the ‘accomplishment’, ‘fruitfulness’, or ‘usefulness’ game to begin with. A *hodos*, then, would be a notion with just such a nature that it is susceptible to predications involving the notion of purposiveness. Second, given the frequency with which the predications in question are made, we could push the point further and say that not only is purposiveness an inherent aspect of the notion of a *hodos* as an activity-like concept, but it is one of the aspects of this notion emphasized most prominently in Homeric usage.

Moreover, specific purposes are frequently attributed to this or that *hodos* used as an activity-like concept. This is most commonly expressed via a verb of motion used in conjunction with a future participle. In fact, a number of the passages we have reviewed do precisely this. Exemplary again is the rest of Circe’s reply to Odysseus when the latter asks her to ‘fulfil her promise’ (*Od.* 10.491–94):

ἀλλ’ ἄλλην χρὴ πρῶτον ὁδὸν τελέσαι καὶ ἰκέσθαι  
εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης,  
ψυχῇ χρησόμενους Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο,  
μάντηος ἀλαοῦ, τοῦ τε φρένες ἔμπεδοί εἰσι.

<sup>80</sup> Wrathall (2005) 342.

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But you must first complete another *hodos* and come  
To the house of Hades and dread Persephone  
In order to receive a prophecy from the spirit of Theban Tiresias,  
The blind seer, whose wits abide steadfast.

We shall see in other passages below how frequently the ‘verb of motion + future participle’ construction appears alongside the word *hodos*. While the nexus of adjectives identified above demonstrates the intrinsic relationship between the *hodos* as an activity-like concept and a sense of purposiveness more generally, this sense is often rendered explicit by the use of grammatical constructions that specify a particular purpose associated with a particular *hodos*.

Similarly, the word *hodos* is often accompanied by a pair of lexical items: the spatial affix *-δε* and the preposition *εις*, both of which identify a clear spatial goal or destination.<sup>81</sup> When Odysseus calls on Circe to ‘fulfil her promise to him’ (τέλεσόν μοι ὑπόσχεσιν ἣν περ ὑπέεσσης, *Od.* 10.483) this promise consists in ‘guiding (me) homewards’ (οἴκαδε πεμφέμεναι, *Od.* 10.484). Her response, we saw, redirects this *hodos* towards another destination: to the underworld (*Od.* 10.491). For his part, Odysseus casts this sense of destinationality into sharp relief by echoing Circe’s line initial *εις Ἄϊδοο*, again emphasizing the destination (*Od.* 10.501–02):

ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γάρ ταύτην ὁδὸν ἠγεμονεύσει;  
εις Ἄϊδος δ’ οὐ πῶ τις ἀφίκετο νηὶ μελαίνῃ.

O Circe, who will guide us on this *hodos*?  
To *Hades* no man has ever yet travelled in a black ship.

This exchange mirrors the opening scene of the Telemachy proper. There, too, a female divinity proleptically narrates to another member of the House of Laertes a *hodos* that he ought to accomplish;<sup>82</sup> in this case, of course, it is Athena, disguised as Mentor, who sets the poem’s plot in motion by addressing Telemachus as follows (*Od.* 1.279–90):

<sup>81</sup> See e.g. Smyth 1588, 1589, Smyth 1686a, for *-δε* and *εις* + accusative, respectively.

<sup>82</sup> As the narrator will refer to the itinerary delineated by Athena (*Od.* 1.444): βούλευε φρεσίν ἧσιν ὁδὸν τὴν πέφραδ’ Ἀθήνη. (‘So Telemachus was pondering in his mind the *hodos* Athena had made manifest to him.’)

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σοὶ δ' αὐτῶ πυκινῶς ὑποθήσομαι, αἶ κε πίθηαι·  
νῆ ἄρσας ἐρέτησιν ἐείκοσιν, ἧ τις ἀρίστη,  
ἔρχο πευσόμενος πατρός δὴν οἰχομένοιο . . .  
πρῶτα μὲν ἐς Πύλον ἔλθε καὶ εἴρεο Νέστορα δῖον,  
κεῖθεν δὲ Σπάρτηνδε παρὰ ξανθὸν Μενέλαον·  
ὄς γὰρ δεύτατος ἦλθεν Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων . . .  
εἰ δέ κε τεθνηῶτος ἀκούσης μηδ' ἔτ' ἔοντος,  
νοστήσας δὴ ἔπειτα φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

But for yourself, I shall counsel you shrewdly, and hope you will listen.  
Fit out a ship with twenty oars, the best you can come by,  
And depart for the purpose of asking about your father, who is so long absent . . .  
First go to Pylos, and there question the great Nestor,  
And from there go to Sparta to see fair-haired Menelaus,  
Since he came home last of all the bronze-armoured Achaeans . . .  
But if you should hear that he has perished and no longer lives,  
Then return home to your beloved native land.

Just as Circe's *hodos* was to the house of Hades and dread Persephone in order to consult the spirit of Tiresias, so Athena spells out a clear itinerary: first to Pylos to talk to Nestor, then to Sparta to Menelaus, and finally back to Ithaca (and, again, in the service a clearly defined goal – gathering news about Odysseus – designated through the same purpose construction). Characteristic of the discourse of the *hodos* is the appearance of place-names-cum-destinations tagged with the local, direction-indicating lexemes -δε and εἰς. Whether one is completing a *hodos*, narrating a *hodos*, or guiding someone else's *hodos*, in the *Odyssey* the *hodos* in question is a *hodos* to somewhere.<sup>83</sup>

It may prove useful at this juncture to introduce a pair of distinctions from the linguistic analysis of verbal aspect and philosophical analysis of action: that between the perfective and imperfective, and between events and processes, respectively.<sup>84</sup> Introducing these terms is an act of bricolage, not engineering; these two dichotomies provide models from which we may usefully draw inspiration, and I wish to stress that they are to be understood here as serving a purely provisional, heuristic role.

<sup>83</sup> See also Mourelatos (2008b) 19.

<sup>84</sup> Comrie (1976) remains the definitive work on verbal aspect. For analysis of 'situations', see Mourelatos (1978), Mourelatos (1993), Gill (1993), Graham (1980), Thompson (2008) 123–28. This analysis is based on the schemata propounded by Vendler (1967) and Kenny (1963); see Mourelatos (1978) for bibliography.

Verbal aspects are ‘different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation’.<sup>85</sup> The fundamental distinction in the domain of aspect is between the so-called perfective and imperfective.<sup>86</sup> The perfective ‘presents the totality of the situation referred to’, which is to say that ‘the situation is presented as a single . . . whole’; the perfective aspect can therefore be said to depict the situation ‘from the outside’.<sup>87</sup> The imperfective ‘make[s] explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of the situation’; it may therefore be said to look at the situation ‘from the inside’.<sup>88</sup>

The aptness with which this description of the perfective can be applied to the relationship between the word *hodos* and verbs derived from *τέλος* is evident. In the situations discussed – Telemachus’ proposal in the agora; the suitors’ dismay at his departure for, and then successful return from, the mainland; the resentment of Odysseus’ crewmates as Ithaca hoves into view – there is no interest in the internal dynamics, phenomenological experience, or series of individual actions that make up the *hodos* discussed. Instead, the emphasis falls on the journey understood as a ‘single whole’ presented ‘in totality’ and viewed, whether after the fact or before it, ‘from the outside’.<sup>89</sup>

Second, we observed that in the cases where verbs derived from *τέλος* are involved, the *hodos* in question is yet to be embarked upon or has already been completed (or virtually so). This is a phenomenon that holds more generally across nearly all uses of the word *hodos* as activity-like concept; if aspect matters, so, too, does tense. Notably common is the relationship between the *hodos* and the future tense. The exchange between Odysseus and Circe is again exemplary. Odysseus responds to Circe’s injunction to ‘accomplish another *hodos*’ by asking (*Od.* 10.503):

<sup>85</sup> Comrie (1976) 3; see Comrie (1976) 3 n. 1 for further discussion.

<sup>86</sup> The place of what is usually referred to as the ‘perfect’ (to be distinguished from the ‘perfective’, one half of the dichotomy ‘perfective/imperfective’) in this schema is a fraught topic; see Comrie (1976) 5–6.

<sup>87</sup> Comrie (1976) 3.

<sup>88</sup> Comrie (1976) 4.

<sup>89</sup> This is in stark contrast to passages where the word *keleuthos* features; there, the focus is emphatically on the ‘inside’ of the action, the attendant range of experiences, details, and sensations that comprise the process of travelling a *keleuthos*. See Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022).

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ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γὰρ ταύτην ὁδὸν ἡγεμονεύσει;

But who, Circe, will guide us on this *hodos*?

The pairing of this particular verb with *hodos* as its object is also characteristic; on two other occasions we find characters who volunteer to provide just this service.<sup>90</sup> Another common pairing sees *hodos* stand with a future form of εἶμι or one of its compounds.<sup>91</sup> Fresh from the Ithacan agora, Athena reassures Telemachus (*Od.* 2.272):

οὐ τοι ἔπειθ' ἀλίη ὁδὸς ἔσσεται οὐδ' ἀτέλεστος. . .

Nor will this *hodos* be vain or unfulfilled for you. . .

and repeats this encouragement, retracing the arc of ring-composed exhortation (*Od.* 2.285):

σοὶ δ' ὁδὸς οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἀπέσσεται. . .

Not for long will this journey remain absent for you. . .

Laodamas, the impertinent Phaeacian nobleman who challenges Odysseus to try his hand at the discus, repeats the claim verbatim (*Od.* 8.150): the future journey to be taken from Ithaca to the mainland, or from Scheria to Ithaca, lies ahead of each pair of interlocutors, both of whom view it ‘from the outside’, as a ‘totality’ and a ‘single whole’.<sup>92</sup>

It is not enough, however, to observe that a *hodos* presents a journey in its totality as a single whole as if ‘from the outside’. As the persistent linkage with words derived from τέλος suggests and the affiliation with the complex of adjectives, the purpose construction, and the directional indicators -δε and εἰς confirm, the single whole the *hodos* represents is teleological. That is to say, *it is constituted in relation to an end* – an end-as-destination and an end-as-purpose. As we have seen, a *hodos* is a *hodos to* somewhere in particular, a *hodos* one travels *for* a purpose.

<sup>90</sup> At *Od.* 6.261, Nausicaa concludes her interview with Odysseus with ἐγὼ δ' ὁδὸν ἡγεμονεύσω, while at *Od.* 7.30 Athena appears in disguise to proffer the very same assistance. See also Mourelatos (2008) 18–21.

<sup>91</sup> See here Porzig (1942) 306–07.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. also: *Il.* 9.43, *Od.* 2.318 (discussed above), *Od.* 12.57. By contrast, the word *keleuthos* arrives at just the moment when the activity of travelling it denotes is placed before our eyes as an act in progress; see again Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022).

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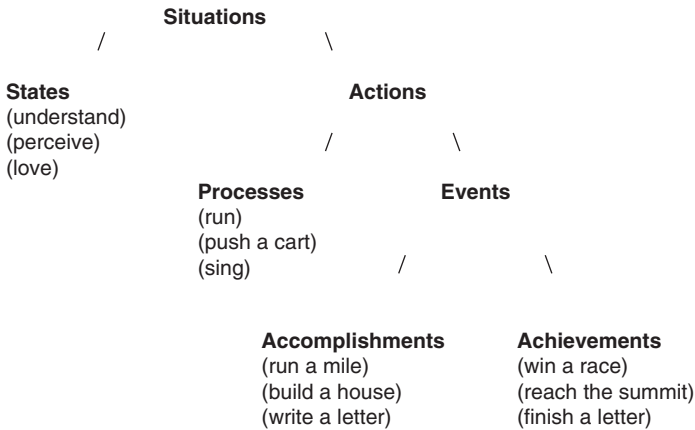


Figure 1.1 Modified Kenny–Vendler typology

One element of the definition of ‘perfective’ given above can be examined further in relation to the ‘activity-like concept’ sense of *hodos*: this is the claim that the perfective presents a situation in totality as a single whole ‘without reference to its internal temporal constituency’. In fact, as we shall explore at much greater length in chapters 3 and 4, the *hodos* as an activity-like concept is intimately concerned with the internal structure of the single whole it presents; it is simply interested in this internal structure in a way that differs markedly from the depiction of the ‘internal temporal constituency’ effected by *keleuthos*. Introducing the second distinction, between ‘events’ and ‘processes’, can explain this difference more precisely.

The distinction emerges at the intersection of linguistics and philosophy. At its modern base is the Kenny–Vendler classification of what may be referred to as ‘situations’ (Figure 1.1).<sup>93</sup> Here it may be useful to present the schema with examples.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Mourelatos’s modifications are designed to take into account the full bundle of factors involved in a predication, rather than the Kenny–Vendler analysis of ‘verb-type’: Mourelatos (1981) 421. The Kenny–Vendler typology is usually portrayed as consisting of ‘states’, ‘activities’, ‘accomplishments’, and ‘achievements’.

<sup>94</sup> Examples culled from Mourelatos (1978) 415 and Graham (1980) 119. Because I am interested in ‘actions’ (undertaken by human or divine agents) rather than the ontologically broader ‘occurrences’ (including events or processes occurring in the natural world), I retain the Kenny–Vendler framework and designations, with the exception of ‘process’ for ‘activity’ (despite Mourelatos (1993)). Thompson (2008), a landmark in

What is crucial here is the distinction between ‘processes’ and ‘events’ (and ultimately between ‘processes’ and ‘accomplishments’). Unlike processes, events are ‘telic’; that is, they ‘have the fuller integration implied by the posit of reaching a goal or giving closure to a process’.<sup>95</sup>

‘Events’ can be further split into ‘accomplishments’ and ‘achievements’, distinguished by whether or not the action ‘is conceived of as lasting a certain period of time’.<sup>96</sup> While achievements ‘capture either the inception or the climax of an act’ but ‘cannot in themselves occur *over* or *throughout* a temporal stretch’, accomplishments ‘have duration intrinsically’.<sup>97</sup> This combination of the durative and the telic, then – the fusion of ‘a process leading up to the terminal point as well as the terminal point’ – provides the essential qualities of the accomplishment.<sup>98</sup> It also gives us an important insight into the power and capaciousness of the *hodos* as an activity-like concept to encompass a wide range of phenomena and experiences, processes *and* products within its basic conceptual framework.

There is one final distinction between ‘processes’ and ‘accomplishments’ that is relevant. Processes are ‘homogeneous’: ‘if “Jones is . . . running for half an hour,” then it must be true that “he is . . . running for every time stretch within that period”’.<sup>99</sup> By contrast, accomplishments are ‘heterogeneous’: “in case I wrote a letter in an hour, I did not write it, say, in the first quarter of

the contemporary field of ‘action theory’, endorses Mourelatos (1978) and Mourelatos (1993) as fundamentally important.

<sup>95</sup> Mourelatos (1993) 386. Put another way, events ‘involve a product, upshot, or outcome’ (Mourelatos (1978) 417). By contrast, processes are ‘essentially atelic’: ‘pushing-a-cart qualifies as an activity regardless of whether the cart is pushed to some destination’ (Mourelatos (1993) 386). It follows from this that we may say that ‘the time stretch of [processes] is inherently indefinite, for they involve no culmination or anticipated result’ (Mourelatos (1978) 416). Accordingly, per Comrie (1976) 44, processes ‘can be protracted indefinitely or broken off at any point’ in a way that events cannot; the classic illustration of this distinction points to the difference between, say, interrupted singing and interrupted house building: if I have been singing but am interrupted, I can still say, ‘I have sung’; but if I have been building a house and am interrupted, I cannot claim, ‘I have built a house’.

<sup>96</sup> Comrie (1976) 41.

<sup>97</sup> Mourelatos (1978) 416.

<sup>98</sup> Comrie (1976) 47.

<sup>99</sup> Mourelatos (1978) 416, quoting Kenny (1963) and Vendler (1967), respectively.

that hour””.<sup>100</sup> The homogeneity of processes can be assimilated to that of ‘mass terms’ (as opposed to ‘count terms’); ‘bottle’ and ‘necklace’ can be identified as discrete, countable items whereas ‘wine’ and ‘gold’ are mass terms, not discrete, countable items. Mass terms ‘generally do not have plural forms, or if they do there is a meaning shift: wines are *types* of wine’.<sup>101</sup> Closely related to this is a difference in the nature of the structure or internal constitution of that which is denoted by the term in question: a bottle is not made up of other bottles nor a necklace of necklaces, in the way that gold is made up of more gold or wine of more wine.

We may take the second point first. Recalling that the *hodos* Athena ‘made manifest’ to Telemachus was defined by the sequence of destinations it encompassed (to Pylos, then Sparta, then back home) and the purpose for which it was undertaken, we may speak of the *hodos* as being concerned with the inner constitution of the journey to be taken understood as a whole, the series of distinct and identifiable items that together constitute the skeleton of the route. Likewise, Leocritus uses the word *hodos* when he casts doubt on Telemachus’ fundamental ability to undertake the journey (i.e. as a whole) at all. What is at issue for Telemachus at this stage is not where he ought to go or mustering the will to do so (he has already received Athena’s instructions and pep talk), but rather mustering the specific means to get from point A to point B (*Od.* 2.212–13):

ἀλλ’ ἄγε μοι δότε νῆα θοὴν καὶ εἴκοσ’ ἑταίρους,  
οἳ κέ μοι ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διαπρήσσωσι κέλευθον.

But come, grant me a swift ship and twenty companions  
Who can effect my passage from here to there.

The ensuing discussion in the agora concerning the itinerary and the journey-as-a-whole sees the word *hodos* used repeatedly (five times in 200-odd lines, one of the highest concentrations of the word *hodos* in the course of Homer), but the actual setting sail and the sailing itself is twice referred to as a *keleuthos*. In short, when the actual process of travelling is in question, the word *keleuthos* is

<sup>100</sup> Mourelatos (1978) 416, quoting Vendler (1967) 101.

<sup>101</sup> See Mourelatos (1978) 424; Vendler (1967) 101.



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used; when the structure of the route or the entirety of the journey is in question, we find the word *hodos*.

### 1.2.3 *Towards a telos*

There is a fundamental distinction between two senses of the word *hodos* in Homer: one denotes (a) an object, and the other (b) an activity. Understood as an object (a), a *hodos* is usually a built road, one that passes over land and often supports wheeled traffic (i.e. a 'rut road'). One of its primary referents is the object discussed in Section 1.1 above – the rut-road *hodos* that leads those who travel upon it, wheels locked into the track, unyieldingly, inexorably, necessarily, from a point of origin to a prescribed destination. Understood as an activity (b), a *hodos*, like the perfective (the form often taken by verbs that govern *hodos* used in this sense), looks at the notion of the journey 'from the outside', that is 'as a single, unified whole'. Moreover, the Homeric *hodos* activity is an 'accomplishment' – an activity with intrinsic duration but one linked with a clear end, an end which we have seen is an end not only in time (in the sense of closure or finality), but in space (in relation to a terminal destination) and also in relation to a goal or purpose (in the sense of accomplishment or fulfilment). We find *hodos* used in this sense where the emphasis is on the structural framework of the journey *qua* unified whole. Fundamental to the Homeric use of the word *hodos* in its sense as an activity is its very close ties to a range of lexical items indicating destinationality and purposiveness. The *hodos* as an activity, that is to say, is marked by a strong sense of teleology: a *hodos* is always a *hodos* to somewhere, undertaken for a purpose.

Looking forward to Parmenides, these distinctions bear heavily on his use of language and the resonance of the imagery he evokes. Scholars have largely failed to appreciate the complex semantics of the Homeric language in which Parmenides composes his verse, as if he were already writing a treatise in the notation of today's formal logic and not composing a poem in dactylic hexameter. When Parmenides fashions his sequence of deductive arguments as a *hodos* of inquiry, we should understand this to mean travelling

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a *hodos* (b) along a *hodos* (a): a journey *to* a conclusion undertaken *for* the purpose of gaining knowledge along a kind of inexorable rut road inscribed into the terrain it crosses. We shall explore what exactly this means for Parmenides, his notion of what we would call logical necessity, and the shape of his *hodos* of inquiry in Chapter 6.