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*The Classical Quarterly* (2022) 72.1 53–68
doi:10.1017/S0009838822000374



# FINDING ITHACA, AND SENSE IN PARMENIDES B1.3: THE HOMERIC MEANING OF ΕΙΔΩΣ

**ABSTRACT**

*A close reading of the contexts of several Homeric passages reveals that Homer often uses* εἰδώς *with ironic force. This realization sheds light on several passages discussed herein, including: 1) Homer's description of the location of Ithaca, which is shown to be Odysseus' strategic lie that directs the Phaeacians to the local stronghold (nearby Dulichium), and 2) the manuscript reading of Parmenides B1.3, which is shown to harbour no internal conflict even if its* εἰδότα φῶτα *('one who knows') is in a state of confusion (*ἄτῃ*), because* εἰδότα *can signal incomplete or confused knowledge, or even a lack of it. Other literary clues in Parmenides B1 are shown to support this reading.*

**Keywords:** Parmenides; Homer; Ithaca; *Odyssey*; Greek language; Greek literature; textual criticism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Parmenides B1.3 has attracted well over two dozen emendations.[1] The suggestions invariably concern a stretch of text which all manuscripts of Sext. Emp. *Math.* 111 (where the opening lines of Parmenides' poem are quoted) agree contains this sequence of letters: καταπαντατη(ι).[2]

Why have Parmenidean scholars emended the text? From 1912 until Coxon's 1968 report,[3] the correct reading of MS N, πάντ' ἄτῃ, was erroneously understood to be πάντ' ἄστη. Coxon himself, however, emended the text (returning to Heyne's[4] suggestion of κατὰ πάντ' ἄντην).[5] Subsequently, a number of scholars have proposed more emendations.[6] Yet, aside from arguing against prior emendations (including ἄστη) or stating that the text is corrupt or incomprehensible (for example Scaliger: 'locus corruptus';[7] Karsten: 'obliteratam lectionem … versus mutilus et sine sensu'[8]), not

[1] Most recently E. Hülsz and B. Berruecos, 'Parménides B1.3: una nueva enmienda', in M. Pulpito and P. Spangenberg (edd.), ὁδοὶ νοῆσαι. *Ways to Think. Essays in Honour of Néstor-Luis Cordero* (Bologna, 2018), 31–59. They provide a discussion of the suggested emendations (at 38–47) and a helpful table (at 53). Other works frequently cited in this paper include: F. Ahl and H. Roisman, *The* Odyssey *Re-formed* (Ithaca, 1996); M.R. Cosgrove, 'The unknown "knowing man": Parmenides, B1.3', *CQ* 61 (2011), 28–47; J.F. Newell, 'Parmenidean irony' (Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2002). Portions of this dissertation have served as the basis of this paper.

[2] Manuscripts frequently omit iota subscripts, so writing -HI where a manuscript has -H should not be regarded an emendation: G. Cerri, 'Il v. 1,3 di Parmenide: la ricognizione dell'esperienza', in D. Pegorari (ed.), *Mousa: Scritti in onore de Giuseppe Morelli* (Bologna, 1997), 57–63, at 60; H. Pelliccia, 'The text of Parmenides B1.3 (D–K)', *AJPh* 109 (1988), 507–12, at 511 n. 20; L. Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton, 1965), 74; and H. Usener, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig, 1913), 2.116–20.

[3] A.H. Coxon, 'The text of Parmenides fr. I. 3', *CQ* 18 (1968), 69.

[4] C.G. Heyne, *Göttingische gelehrte anzeigen* 2 (Gottingen, 1796), 21–4, at 23.

[5] A.H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Las Vegas, 2009$^2$ [Assen and Maastricht, 1986$^1$]), 49, 271–2.

[6] Hulsz and Berruecos (n. 1), 38–47, 53.

[7] In H. Stephanus, *Poesis philosophica* (Geneva, 1573), 271.

[8] S. Karsten, *Parmenidis Eleaticae carminis reliquiae* (Amsterdam, 1835), 54.

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everyone has given reasons for emending the text. Among the few who go into details, Fülleborn is the first to address the meaning of the manuscript:[9]

Ne cui forte in mentem veniat, legere ἄτη, quasi illud, quod idem Sextus appellat τὰς ἀλόγους τῆς ψυχῆς ὁρμάς τε καὶ ὀρέξεις.

Let not the reading ἄτη occur to anyone, as if [meaning] the very thing that Sextus calls 'the irrational urges and impulses of the soul'.

Fülleborn's injunction has proven persuasive, yet ἄτη does not point to an irrational urge or impulse of the soul (like the desire to indulge in a tempting vice) but to a matter of faulty judgement—often arising from (misleading) external sources of information—that usually leads to ruin.[10] If, then, ἄτη does not mean τὰς ἀλόγους τῆς ψυχῆς ὁρμάς τε καὶ ὀρέξεις, Fülleborn's injunction does not apply.

In 1976 Tarrant reconsidered the manuscript reading and concluded:

adequate sense can be made of the line reading δαίμονος, ἣ κατὰ πάντ' ἄτη (Ἄτη or Ἀτῃ, ἄτῃ) φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα· The alternatives which I have bracketed make no great difference to the significance of the line, and it would be the task of editors to make the tricky choice between them.[11]

Unfortunately, Tarrant did not explore the range of possibilities more fully, and instead proceeded to argue for associating personified Ἄτη with the δαίμων. This left his view vulnerable to uncharitable readings. For example, in 1982, Cordero responded to Tarrant's case for the manuscript reading, saying:

Les datifs tombent l'un apres l'autre, car si la Déesse, reprise par ἣ guide κατὰ πάντα, on ne peut admettre sa répparaition, dans le même vers, en tant que Ἄτῃ et à un cas different. En ce qui concerne le nominatif, s'il est certain qu'il reprend δαίμων (nonobstant la position insolite de l'apposition, qui serait ainsi apposition d'une apposition). Le contenu du passage serait contradictoire en l'égard du poème entire: ce n'est pas, en effet, un μοῖρα κακὴ (qui serait synonyme de Ἄτη), mais Thémis et Diké qui conduit le char.[12]

Despite Cordero's efforts to include all the options, his argument only works in a limited way against the personifications. For even if we accept the personified nominative, the 'unusual' word order would simply suggest that the phrase κατὰ πάντ' applies to Ἄτη and does not serve as a part of the predicate; that is: 'the divinity who, as Delusion in regard to all things, conducts a man who knows' instead of 'the divinity who, as Delusion, conducts a man who knows through all things' (reading κατὰ πάντ' with φέρει) or 'a man with knowledge about all things' (reading πάντ' or κατὰ πάντ' with εἰδότα).[13]

[9] G.G. Fülleborn, *Fragmente des Parmenides* (Zullichau, 1795), 36.

[10] See A. Sommerstein, '*Atē* in Aeschylus', in D.L. Cairns (ed.), *Tragedy and Archaic Greek Thought* (Swansea, 2013), 1–15, at 1–4.

[11] H.A.S. Tarrant, 'Parmenides B1.3: text, context, and interpretation', *Antichthon* 10 (1976), 1–7, at 1.

[12] N.L. Cordero, 'La vers 1.3 de Parmenide', *RPhilos* 107 (1982), 159–79, at 161: 'The datives fall one after another because, if the goddess, referred to by ἣ, guides κατὰ πάντα, one cannot allow her reappearance as Ἄτῃ in the same [clause] and in a different case. In regard to the nominative, if it is certain that it refers to the δαίμων (despite the unusual position of the apposition—which would be an apposition of an apposition), the content of the passage would be contradictory with regard to the entire poem: it is not, in effect, a μοῖρα κακὴ (which would be synonymous with Ἄτη), but Themis and Dikê who lead the chariot.'

[13] The claim of J.H. Lesher, 'The significance of κατὰ πάντ ἄ<σ>τη in Parmenides fr. 1.3', *AncPhil* 14 (1994), 1–20, at 1, that translating the line is 'impossible' because the neuter accusative

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If we read the dative as personified and pointing to another god, then we could have a dative of advantage (Smyth §1481; 'the man is conducted to Delusion, or for her') or a dative of association (Smyth §1523) either with the goddess ('the divinity who, along with Delusion, leads a man') or with the man ('a man accompanied by Delusion'). The non-personified dative could easily be a dative of accompanying circumstance (Smyth §1527, that is, 'in a state of confusion').

As to the 'contradiction' Cordero mentions:

1) If retaining or restoring the reading of a manuscript in a single location contradicts one's entire understanding of an emended text, then one's understanding is predicated on that emendation, and accommodating or salvaging that interpretation is not the responsibility of those who remain true to the manuscript reading—it is incumbent upon those who emend to make a case against the manuscript, not on those who read the manuscript to accommodate the meanings of alternate readings.
2) Despite what the goddess says in her greeting, it is not at all clear that Themis and Dike are in support of the narrator's journey—Themis was not mentioned in the proem, and Dike appears to have been tricked into opening the gate.[14]
3) μοῖρα κακή is more frequently understood a fate leading to death,[15] while ἄτη is more closely associated with deception or delusion (especially in Homer),[16] so the goddess's 'assurance' at Parmenides B1.26 amounts to saying 'You are not dead or about to die'. This, then, contains no assurance that the κοῦρος is not deluded or otherwise in very bad or difficult situation (as mortals often are when they have dealings with the gods, and as her need to reassure him suggests). Too often scholars have confused Parmenides' goddess with a benevolent Judaeo-Christian angel bearing divine revelations; the Greek gods are not reliably benevolent.[17]

We may, then, set Cordero's objections aside, conclude that the manuscript reading, as Hulsz and Berruecos concede,[18] has meaning, and take up Tarrant's invitation to make

plural πάντα 'combines with' the nominative singular feminine noun ἄτη, is subject to similar criticism: their juxtaposition does not imply some kind of grammatical or syntactical 'combining'. Lesher also overlooks the possibility that ἄτῃ is dative (see n. 2 above).

[14] The daughters of the Sun deceive or beguile her with soft words (τὴν δὴ **παρφάμεναι** κοῦραι μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν, B1.15). Homer generally uses παρφάμεναι in contexts of persuasive lying (*Od.* 16.287, 19.6) or beguilement (*Il.* 12.249, 14.217, *Od.* 2.189). At *Il.* 1.577, Hephaestus does not, *pace* LSJ, merely 'advise' Hera to have goodwill towards Zeus, but endeavours to persuade her to use beguiling words herself (ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέσσι καθάπτε μαλακοῖσιν, 1.582), so that she can appease Zeus by skirting or sidestepping (παρα-φάμεναι) the truth. Here, Parmenides signals something that is paradoxical or in need of further consideration, namely that justice relies too heavily on what people say, and so can be led to do the wrong thing.

[15] *Il.* 13.602 τὸν δ' ἄγε μοῖρα κακὴ θανάτοιο τέλοσδε ('But an evil fate led him towards a doom of death'). Probably synonymous with μοῖρα δυσώνυμος (*Il.* 12.116) and μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ … [θανάτοιο] (*Il.* 16.849, 21.83, 22.5; *Od.* 2.100, 3.238, 19.145).

[16] R. Doyle, ἌΤΗ, *its Use and Meaning: A Study in the Greek Poetic Tradition from Homer to Euripides* (New York, 1984). Given Parmenides' reliance on Homeric vocabulary, the likelihood is that, for him, ἄτη means 'delusion', not 'death'. See also Sommerstein (n. 10), 1–4.

[17] The reference to the Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, understood, *pace* LSJ, as more closely related to Ἡλιάδης (i.e. 'descendant of the Sun') than to ἡλιακός ('solar'), need not be restricted to Phaethon's sisters (who never drove the chariot of the Sun and were not immortal). The only female descendant of Helios whom myth reports as driving his chariot is Medea. Divine daughters of the Sun include Phaethusa and Lampetie, who guard the tempting cattle of the Sun, and Circe and Pasiphae, both known for passion and witchcraft. None of these should be regarded as being above either lying to Justice or participating in illicit activities, or as having a close relationship to the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

[18] Hulsz and Berruecos (n. 1), 41 n. 41.

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the 'tricky choice' between ἄτη, Ἄτη, Ἄτῃ and ἄτῃ. Yet ἄτη does not stand alone in signalling deception and confusion at the outset of Parmenides' poem. For example, the first line (ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι) points to what Hera tells Zeus about her horses at *Il.* 14.307–9:

> **ἵπποι** δ' ἐν πρυμνωρείῃ πολυπίδακος Ἴδης
> ἑστᾶσ', **οἵ μ' οἴσουσιν** ἐπὶ τραφερήν τε καὶ ὑγρήν.
> νῦν δὲ σεῦ εἵνεκα δεῦρο κατ' Οὐλύμπου τόδ' **ἱκάνω**

And **the horses which will carry me** over fertile land and water, stand on the far side[19] of the heights of Ida with its many springs, but now, due to you, **I have come** down from Olympus, here to this spot.

The audience knows that these lines are a lie because they know that Hera got to Ida on her own power (*Il.* 14.225–30, 14.280–93), and that she has no intention of visiting Oceanus and Tethys. Her goal is to seduce Zeus,[20] and this, in turn, is intended to serve as a distraction until Sleep overpowers him while Poseidon breaks the rules, bringing death and defeat to the Trojans. All of this succeeds, and temporarily thwarts the will of Zeus. This is not a minor incident, nor is it one which, with its elements of sex, intrigue, suspense and crime would have been unpopular (and so unfamiliar) to Parmenides' contemporaries.

Additionally, the context has resonances with the word ἄτη since Hera's deception of Zeus here recalls the way in which she deceived him on the day Herakles was to be born.[21] The generalized context, then, is one of a female divinity who deceives in an erotic context[22] in an attempt to challenge the established world order.

Yet this allusion to Hera does not tell readers everything they need to know. As the reader discovers a few lines later, the με in line B1.1 is not Hera or Parmenides' goddess but the κοῦρος, so the allusion is muted by displacement, and its net effect was probably to set readers on their guard, and raise the possibility—not the certainty—of divine mischief.

We can see, then, that the text is already operating on several levels. The allusions to Homer point toward divine disobedience and deception, while the surface narrative involves the mundane details of a chariot ride. When words begin to signify more or something other than their 'normal' dictionary meaning, we find ourselves in a setting that is ripe for irony. Mourelatos[23] laid significant groundwork for understanding Parmenides as making deliberate use of ambiguity and irony, and Cosgrove ([n. 1], 29–30), speculating that Parmenides may be using irony here (though not reading a form of ἄτῃ), develops a sound and interesting interpretation of the proem.[24]

[19] LSJ gives 'lower-slope, foot of a mountain', citing this passage; however πρυμν- tends to have the meaning of 'back, rear, far side' more than 'bottom', and the point is that the alleged horses are out of sight—where Zeus cannot see if they are there or not—on the 'far side of the mountain' (= πρύμνα + ὄρος).

[20] παρφάμεναι μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν used of the Ἡλιάδες at Parmenides B1.15 would nicely describe how Hera deals with Zeus here.

[21] The story is told by Agamemnon (*Il.* 19.86–139); his larger comments on Ἄτη and deception should also be borne in mind when reading Parmenides.

[22] See D.L. Blank, 'Faith and persuasion in Parmenides', *ClAnt* 1 (1982), 167–77 for more on erotic overtones in Parmenides' proem.

[23] A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (Las Vegas, 2006), 222–63.

[24] See also Newell (n. 1), 201–693 who *does* read ἄτῃ and makes a substantial case that Parmenides uses irony.

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Reading Parmenides as employing irony and other forms of ambiguity does not reduce one's interpretative options. Indeed, owing to the nature of irony, it also allows one to continue reading the text's non-ironic significations. That is, one may continue to explore the surface text or choose to dive beneath the surface to explore what may be revealed through irony. Those who fear, like Cordero, that the inclusion of ἄτῃ will disrupt their understanding of the text may understand it in one of the following innocuous ways:

1. As applying to the road, which, at B1.27, is said to be far from the paths of men (τήνδ' ὁδόν ἦ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν), and so one would expect it to be in a state of ruin (ἄτῃ) or overgrown. It could, then, be the less trodden path of the select and enlightened philosophers.
2. As applying to the εἰδότα φῶτα, but in a fairly benign way: the κοῦρος is a wise man (εἰδότα φῶτα or even εἰδότα φῶτα κατὰ πάντ') who, nevertheless, is bewildered by his current situation, a temporary condition[25] which becomes clarified once the goddess explains the reasons for his journey (χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι, B1.28–30) and which, as her need to explain indicates, he did not know at the time described in B1.3.[26]

Other readings are possible. The inclination, so prevalent among scholars, to read the text as meaning one thing, and one thing only, must be combatted. The text is far more interesting than that.[27] The aim of the remainder of this paper, however, is to address the more difficult case of a non-trivial understanding of how an εἰδότα φῶτα can be in a state of confusion (ἄτῃ).[28] And, in particular, to demonstrate that the conditions expressed by εἰδότα and ἄτῃ are not the polar opposites they have been taken to be. In order to do this, we will look to how Homer uses the participle εἰδώς.

## II. HOW DOES INVESTIGATING HOMER SHED LIGHT ON PARMENIDES?

As Mourelatos and Coxon note,[29] almost ninety-nine per cent of Parmenides' vocabulary is either strictly Homeric or based upon a Homeric model. Although it may be fashionable to regard Parmenides as using Homeric diction and the poetic form merely as a decorative touch, or, as Mourelatos ([n. 23], 39) put it, '[to use] old words, old motifs, old themes, and old images precisely in order to think new thoughts in and through them', one is not in the position to draw such a conclusion until one has exhausted the search for meaning along traditional lines. As Kerferd observed, one of the primary guiding principles for

[25] One might find a parallel to Odysseus' confusion when he first returns to Ithaca, *Od.* 13.187–355, or in tales of Thales falling into a well: a man who is wise about X (the stars) but not about Y (mundane matters).

[26] This is in line with Heinrich's 'sciendi cupid[us]' (C.F. Heinrich, 'Spicilegium observationum in Parmenidis fragmenta', in G.G. Fülleborn (ed.), *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie* (Jena, 1797), 2.8.191–200, at 193) and Karsten (n. 8), 54: 'qui supra vulgus sapit, sapientiae studiosum, quamquam nondum doctrina perfectum'.

[27] ἄτη (ἄτῃ) could also, for example, refer to the goddess. For a fine example of the richness of the text, see M. Miller, 'Ambiguity and transport: some reflections on the proem to Parmenides' poem', *OSAPh* 30 (2006), 1–47.

[28] Newell (n. 1), 292–3 and J. Palmer, *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford, 2009), 376–7 appear to be the first to explicitly say that the line raises the question of how 'one who knows' (εἰδότα φῶτα) might also be 'deceived' (ἄτῃ).

[29] Mourelatos (n. 23), 4–6; Coxon (n. 5), 7–12.

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interpreting Parmenides should be 'to put oneself in the position of the destined reader or hearer'.[30]

Parmenides' intended audience—that is, his contemporaries—were members of a culture steeped in Homeric poetry.[31] Consequently, they could not have helped but understand the text (at least on first reading) as being laden with Homeric meanings and allusions.[32] If we want to know what Parmenides meant, we should begin by attempting to become similarly familiar with Homer, Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns* and related works.[33] A start can be made by investigating particular words not only by looking at the lexicons but also by investigating the contexts in which a given word or phrase occurs.[34] Sometimes one finds meanings which the lexicographers have overlooked.

In the case of εἰδώς (the masculine perfect active participle of *εἴδω), we have a fair sense of what *εἴδω means (something in the spectrum that ranges between seeing and knowing, whether physically, mentally, or spiritually), and many interesting things have been said about it,[35] but the suggestion that the word may sometimes carry an ironic sense of 'not seeing or knowing adequately',[36] or 'mistakenly thinking that one sees

[30] G.B. Kerferd, 'Review of A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides, a Study of Word, Image and Argument in the Fragments*', *AGPh* 54 (1972), 89–92, at 89. While Kerferd lays down this principle, he takes it in quite a different direction than that followed here. See also Cosgrove (n. 1), 37: 'First-time readers/hearers should … be expected to be capable of grasping the motifs, images and allusions of the proem based on their cultural background and the information provided in the proem itself.'

[31] See E. Havelock, 'Parmenides and Odysseus', *HSPh* 63 (1958), 133–43, at 136: 'The philosopher's audience knew their *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by heart. The associations conveyed by these lines would be instinctive and automatic.' See also N.L. Cordero, *By Being It Is* (Las Vegas, 2004), 14. A larger conclusion was drawn by C.M. Bowra, 'The proem of Parmenides', *CPh* 32 (1937), 97–112, at 97: 'The origins of [Parmenides'] method have been studied, but a knowledge of them does not explain either what he meant to say or what his contemporaries would see in his words. If we can understand what the Proem meant in the thought of his time, we may perhaps understand better how Parmenides viewed his calling as a philosopher.'

[32] See also P. Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Point Reyes, CA, 1999), 52. Newell (n. 1), 261–719 provides a line-by-line commentary on just these connections.

[33] In contrast, W. Burkert, 'Das proömium des Parmenides und die "katabasis" des Pythagoras', *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 1–30 takes a different route, finding two contexts in which εἰδώς tends to be used without an object: 1) when the object can readily be supplied from the context, and 2) when εἰδώς essentially means 'initiate' (Burkert [this note], 5). Consequently, the κοῦρος addressed by the goddess is taken to be an initiate to an unspecified cult, or a wise man of some sort. Yet the examples Burkert finds ([Eur.] *Rhes.* 973; Andoc. 1.30; Ar. *Nub.* 1241) were written after Parmenides' day, and their resonance does not appear to be consistent with Homeric precedents (*Nub.* 1241 may be an exception), so, given the predominantly Homeric tone of Parmenides' poem, it is not likely that his contemporaries would have understood his use of εἰδότα as Burkert does. Homer does, however, supply instances of εἰδώς without an object which Burkert overlooks: *Il.* 9.345 and *Od.* 13.113, both of which are discussed below. A third possibility is *Il.* 10.250 εἰδόσι γάρ τοι ταῦτα μετ' Ἀργείοις ἀγορεύεις, if ταῦτα is taken exclusively with ἀγορεύεις (see LSJ *εἴδω II.B.1, fourth example from the end, i.e. 'you say these things to the knowing Argives') and not as the object of εἰδόσι (as the word order suggests [ταῦτα planted in the midst of a dative phrase], i.e. 'you are talking to Argives who know these things'). This passage is discussed below (n. 42).

[34] R. Renehan, Review of Coxon (n. 5), *AncPhil* 12 (1992), 395–409, at 403 makes a similar point: 'one must always be on the alert for the possibility that when Parmenides takes over something from the old epics (or elsewhere), it is not only the *language* that he adapts, but also sometimes (*mutatis mutandis*) the *content* and *context* of the original passage(s). One could hardly find a better illustration of the close affinities between poetry and philosophy in early Greek thought than in the proem of Parmenides' poem.'

[35] Cosgrove (n. 1), 29–33 provides an extensive discussion.

[36] The ironic use would rarely be equivalent to 'being blind' or 'being completely ignorant'; instead, it would point to missing the crucial point. Used non-ironically, εἰδώς is not restricted to

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or knows' does not appear to have been adequately explored.[37] Yet there are a number of passages where this ironic meaning is readily apparent.

## III. HOMER'S IRONIC AND NON-IRONIC USES OF ΕΙΔΩΣ

With Homer we have many cases of the participle εἰδώς that show no signs of irony (*Il.* 2.718, 3.202, 4.196, 206, 218, 310, 5.245, 6.438, 7.278, 12.350, 363, 13.665, 15.525, 679, 17.325, 23.665, 709, 24.88; *Od.* 1.37, 2.38, 170, 188, 4.460, 696, 711, 5.182,[38] 250, 6.12, 7.157, 8.584, 9.428,[39] 12.188, 14.288,[40] 15.557, 20.288, 22.361, 24.51, 442). It is peculiar that all of these instances are in the nominative singular.[41] Other forms of the word (for example εἰδότα, as Parmenides uses it), however, tend to show ironic force. Homer uses such forms sixteen times (*Il.* 2.720, 823, 5.11, 5.549, 5.608, 9.345, 10.250,[42] 360, 12.100, 15.527; *Od.* 3.277, 9.281, 12.156, 13.113, 296, 17.248).

Another group involves negation (which is closer to an ironic use than to a positive use). These occur with any of the forms of the participle εἰδώς. If we bear in mind that Parmenides uses οὐδὲν as the direct object for εἰδότες at B6.4, these passages are not insignificant. They are *Il.* 11.710 (οὔ … εἰδότε), 15.632 (οὔ … εἰδώς), 17.5 (οὐ πρὶν

the philosophical ideal of perfect or absolute knowledge, but signifies knowledge that is sufficient to pass telling tests.

[37] It has, however, been noticed. The LSJ Supplement for *εἴδω reads, in part: 'A.II. add 4. *think* that something is so, c. acc. and inf., A.R.1.718, 1024.'

[38] The sole double negative: 'you do not know empty thoughts' (οὐκ ἀποφώλια εἰδώς). The line is delivered by Calypso after Odysseus asks her to promise not to cause him any harm (which may be the best way to respond to goddesses offering 'help'). The preceding line, μείδησεν δὲ Καλυψὼ δῖα θεάων, | **χειρί τέ μιν κατέρεξεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ'** ('and Calypso, the divine goddess, smiled, and, caressing his hand, spoke a word', *Od.* 5.180–1), may be echoed by the greeting of Parmenides' goddess (καί με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρί | δεξιτερὴν ἕλεν, ὧδε δ' ἔπος φάτο καί με προσηύδα, B1.22–3).

[39] A case of positive knowledge of a negative quality ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς (knowing lawlessness), said, understandably, of Polyphemus and (*Od.* 20.288) of the suitor Ctesippus.

[40] A (telling?) case of positive knowledge about deception, δὴ τότε Φοῖνιξ ἦλθεν ἀνὴρ ἀπατήλια εἰδώς ('Then indeed Phoenix, a man knowing deceit, came'). LSJ does not indicate an etymological connection between ἀπατήλιος and ἄτη, but ἀπάτη-λια suggests itself with the -λια ending serving as an adjectival indicator as in γαμήλιος, νυκτέλιος, γενέθλιος, etc., especially if the π in ἀπάτη and ἀπατήλιος is a remnant of the ϝ that was once in ἄτη (that is, ἀϝάτη, and ἀϝάτηλιος), for then ἄτη (ἀάτη/αὐάτα) and ἀπάτη would not be mere synonyms but the same word. Support for the change from ϝ to π can be found, for example in Greek interrogatives starting in π which have cognates in *qu-* words in Latin and *wh-* words in English (O. Szemerenyi, 'The labiovelars in Mycenaean and historical Greek', *SMEA* 1 [1966], 29–52). There need not be a 'true' etymological connection for Parmenides to have used this as the inspiration for his pairing of ἄτη and εἰδώς.

[41] Melanthius attempts to use the nominative singular with ironic or sarcastic force at *Od.* 17.248 when he scoffs at Eumaeus for his prayer that Odysseus return and deal with the suitors (Melanthius mockingly calls Eumaeus a dog who knows baneful things— ὢ πόποι, οἷον ἔειπε κύων ὀλοφώϊα εἰδώς), yet Odysseus (in disguise) is standing right next to him, so Melanthius speaks the truth despite his intentions.

[42] Having been selected by Diomedes to accompany him on the spy mission, and having been complimented by him as well for his perceptive intellect (ἐπεὶ περίοιδε νοῆσαι, *Il.* 10.248), Odysseus deflects the praise (Τυδεΐδη μήτ' ἄρ με μάλ' αἴνεε μήτέ τι νείκει, 10.249) and says that the Greeks already know this (εἰδόσι γάρ τοι ταῦτα μετ' Ἀργείοις ἀγορεύεις, 10.250), thus suggesting that everyone agrees with Diomedes. While some—especially those whom Diomedes has just passed over—might vehemently deny that they *know* Odysseus is superior to them, Odysseus puts the words in their mouths anyway.

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εἰδυῖα), *Od.* 1.202 (οὔτ᾽ … εἰδώς), 2.231 (μηδὲ … εἰδώς), 4.534 (οὐκ εἰδότ᾽), 4.818 (οὔτε … εἰδώς), 5.9 (μηδὲ … εἰδώς) and 9.215 (οὔτε … εἰδότα).

We will focus on the sixteen non-negated passages. While it is not necessary to demonstrate that *all* of them show irony in order to establish that the word was frequently used ironically, nevertheless, by investigating each in turn, we may discover to what extent Parmenides' readers would have been inclined to understand εἰδότα φῶτα ironically (that is, as 'one who mistakenly thinks he knows X' or 'one who does not know X adequately'). Such a reading will make it easy to understand how an εἰδότα φῶτα could be confused or deluded (ἄτῃ).

*a. 'Knowing' how to fight*

There are seven cases which refer to knowing how to fight; four (*Il.* 2.823, 5.11, 5.549, 12.100) involve a formulaic line applied to a pair of fighters (μάχης εὖ εἰδότε πάσης 'both knowing well all modes of fighting'), while a fifth uses a variant (δύο **φῶτε** … **εἰδότε** χάρμης 'two men who knew the thrill of victory'[43]). Two of these instances (2.823, 12.100) apply to the same pair (Archilochus and Acamas); 5.11 refers to Phegas and Idaeus; 5.549 refers to Orsilochus and Crethon, while the variant line, 5.608, refers to Anchialus and Menesthes. For all their knowledge about warcraft, none of these fighters ranks with the principal fighters on either side. How, then, do they fare in battle?

Archilochus is killed by Ajax (14.463) and Acamas by Meriones (16.342). Nine lines after we learn that he 'knows how to fight well', Phegas is killed by Diomedes (5.18–20). Idaeus was headed for the same fate a few lines later, but Hephaestus saves him from death (5.23–5). Hector kills Anchialus and Menesthes, even as we are told that they can fight well (*Il.* 5.608).[44] And Orsilochus and Krethon have already been slain by Aeneas (5.541–2) by the time we are informed that they can fight well (5.549).

Clearly, in these contexts, 'knowing' (εἰδότε) how to fight does not do any of these men any good. Their limited knowledge is not sufficient to lead them to success, or even to save their lives. And the phrase is never used of anyone while they are being successful in battle. They are much like the 'experts' whom Socrates encounters: they think they know something, but, when put to the test, their failings become apparent.[45]

Whether we are talking about Socrates' or Hector's adversaries, overcoming opponents whose knowledge is sufficient to make them a true challenge is worth far more than defeating unskilled pretenders. It is not clear where each of these men's 'knowledge' lies on the spectrum ranging from utter ignorance to slightly inadequate knowledge, but it is likely that Homer is trying to acknowledge the fact that they

[43] The primary sense of χάρμη is 'joy of battle', the thrill that comes with victory or the emotional 'momentum' (so often mentioned in sporting contests) that assists victory. A secondary sense is merely that of 'battle'.

[44] This line features a variant on the phrase εἰδότα φῶτα, i.e. Ἕκτωρ δύο φῶτε κατέκτανεν εἰδότε χάρμης. The structure of the line underscores the irony inherent in the phrase εἰδότε χάρμης: we first encounter Hector, then the two men, then we learn that he killed them; only after that do we hear that they know something, and, when we finally hear that it is χάρμης ('thrill of victory'), the phrase can hardly be heard as anything but hollow and sad, a thing already thoroughly refuted.

[45] Perhaps tellingly, Plato uses forms with the stem εἰδότ- when he has Socrates describe such persons at *Ap.* 23c6–7 (κἄπειτα οἶμαι εὑρίσκουσι πολλὴν ἀφθονίαν οἰομένων μὲν εἰδέναι τι ἀνθρώπων, **εἰδότων** δὲ ὀλίγα ἢ οὐδέν) and d7–9 (τὰ γὰρ ἀληθῆ οἴομαι οὐκ ἂν ἐθέλοιεν λέγειν, ὅτι κατάδηλοι γίγνονται προσποιούμενοι μὲν εἰδέναι, **εἰδότες** δὲ οὐδέν).

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would have been successful if they had not faced heroes of the highest rank. It turned out, however, that they did face such heroes and, when they did not run away, their shortcomings became fatally apparent.

*b.* εἰδώς *vs* εἰδότ- *in the same context*

There are two instances where both the nominative εἰδώς and a form of εἰδότ- appear in close proximity and are applied to closely related subjects. In both cases, the text is more informative when one reads the nominative singular as non-ironic (signalling true or adequate knowledge), and the form with the stem εἰδότ- as ironic (signalling inadequate knowledge).

The first instance occurs when Dolops is said to know how to use a spear (αἰχμῆς ἐῢ εἰδώς, *Il.* 15.525), but two lines later he is said to εὖ εἰδότα θούριδος ἀλκῆς.[46] In the fight that follows (15.528–38), Dolops thrusts his spear into Meges' chest, which is protected by his breastplate, and ducks so that Meges' spear only cuts off his helmet's plume. Then, as they square off for a second round, Menelaus unexpectedly comes from behind and strikes down Dolops (15.539–45). The rapid change from εἰδώς to εἰδότα (15.525–7) foreshadows the course of the fight: Dolops did, in fact, know how to use his spear well (αἰχμῆς ἐῢ εἰδώς), but he still did not know how to defensively navigate the confusing rush of battle (εὖ εἰδότα θούριδος ἀλκῆς).

In another case, Philoctetes is described as τόξων ἐῢ εἰδώς (2.718), while his men are described as τόξων ἐῢ εἰδότες (2.720). This may be an unavoidable shift from singular to plural, but non-ironic εἰδώς would single out Philoctetes, who bears the fateful bow of Herakles, while ironic εἰδότες would suggest a contrast in his men's archery skills.

*c. Insufficient knowledge*

When Odysseus and Diomedes go on their spy mission in *Iliad* Book 10, they discover Dolon and give chase, trying to keep him penned in and running toward the Greek ships. This is not a very effective way of giving pursuit, and Homer breaks off into a simile before Diomedes, concerned that a Greek from the camp will get credit for capturing or killing Dolon, changes tactics and, rushing at him, captures him. The simile reads (*Il.* 10.360–2):

> ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε καρχαρόδοντε δύο κύνε, εἰδότε θήρης,
> ἢ κεμάδ᾽ ἠὲ λαγωὸν ἐπείγετον ἐμμενὲς αἰεὶ
> χῶρον ἀν᾽ ὑλήενθ᾽. ὁ δέ τε προθέῃσι μεμηκώς

And as when two dogs with jagged teeth, who εἰδότε hunting, press after a young deer or hare, always and constantly, through a wooded area, and it flees ahead shrieking

The key lies in the phrase ἐμμενὲς αἰεί which recurs a few lines later (10.364) when Homer applies the simile to Odysseus and Diomedes as they pursue Dolon.[47] The

[46] The line echoes 11.7.10, a case involving negation: Eurytus and Kteatus, two sons of Poseidon also known as the Moliones, are introduced as not yet really knowing the rush of battle (οὔ πω μάλα εἰδότε θούριδος ἀλκῆς). At 11.749–51, Poseidon rescues them from death.

[47] It also occurs 1) at *Il.* 13.517, where Deïphoebus is said to ἐμμενὲς αἰεί bear a grudge against Idomeneus; 2) at *Od.* 9.386, where Odysseus and his men twist the beam in Polyphemus' eye just like a strap wound around a drill enables men to spin it ἐμμενὲς αἰεί; and 3) at *Od.* 21.69, when Penelope,

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point is pursuit—constant pursuit—not capture. For Odysseus and Diomedes, this is their plan *until* they get close to the ships. The dogs, however, lack any such plan, and perpetual pursuit is not the mark of good hunting. By using the ironic form εἰδότε when describing the dogs, Homer tells the reader that these are young, inexperienced dogs who have lots of energy but do not yet know how to use it effectively—they have exuberance, not skill. They think they know how to hunt (εἰδότε θήρης), but they only know how to chase.[48]

At *Od.* 12.154–7, Odysseus addresses his men, saying that it is important that they know (χρὴ … ἴδμεναι) Circe's prophecies about their journey home, so that, knowing (εἰδότες) them, they can either die or escape death. He then gives them an edited version, leaving out any mention of the Clashing Rocks, Scylla, Charybdis and Thrinacia (compare Circe's prophecy, 12.39–141, to Odysseus' report, 12.158–64; see also 12.222–5). Evidently, εἰδότες does not mean knowing the full story, even though that is what Odysseus' men are led to think they know.

### *d. In the know*

Several examples show evidence that Homer's aristocratic elites are aware of the ironic force of εἰδώς and use it to say a bit more than they would like to openly admit. For example, at *Od.* 9.281, Odysseus, reporting on his extended battle of wits with Polyphemus, says: 'He did not get by me, I who εἰδότα many things.' This is Odysseus' comment, after the fact, on an exchange he had with Polyphemus, who had asked where Odysseus had left his ship. Odysseus, attempting to hide the truth and stir up some compassion, replied that Poseidon sank their ship. Without another word, Polyphemus eats a couple of Odysseus' men (9.279–98). What kind of sense does this make? Why did Odysseus' words provoke that response? And how does this reveal that Odysseus was εἰδότα when he told this lie?

The answer lies, as Odysseus later found out, in the fact that the Cyclopes are the children of Poseidon (9.412). Polyphemus' reaction, then, was pragmatic: my father was trying to kill these men, so I am free to finish what he started. If Odysseus had known this, he would have concocted a different story. In hindsight, then, Odysseus must regard either his 'cleverness' or his ignorance as the source of the problem, and so ἐμὲ … εἰδότα πολλά should not so much be read as a proud boast but as tinged with undertones of regret, and so have the force of 'me and my big mouth'.

A second case of this sort occurs at *Od.* 3.277. Nestor uses εἰδότες when he reports that he and Menelaus regarded one another as dear (φίλα εἰδότες ἀλλήοισιν). This looks like a non-ironic usage, but why does Nestor feel the need to say this? We do not get a similar comment on his relationship to Odysseus or Diomedes and, after ten years of comradeship, why should he feel a need to point out that they are on good terms with one another?

A closer look at the context suggests that the relation between Nestor and Menelaus was actually rather strained. Nestor reports that, as the Greeks were leaving Troy, the

hailing the suitors to announce the contest of the bow, refers to their habit of ἐμμενὲς αἰεί eating and drinking in the house. The phrase, then, marks a process as continuous or unending.

[48] A similar case of inexperience or insufficient knowledge (also involving herding) occurs at *Il.* 15.632. The passage describes a herdsman who always walks along (αἰὲν ὁμοστιχάει) with the foremost or hindmost cows. A lion bests him by pouncing in the middle. The herdsman (οὔ πω σάφα εἰδὼς) is still in the process of learning from his mistakes.

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sons of Atreus[49] called a meeting which nearly led to armed conflict between the Greeks (*Od.* 3.141–52). Nestor then says that, after a night of resentful brooding (νύκτα μὲν ἀέσαμεν χαλεπὰ φρεσὶν ὁρμαίνοντες | ἀλλήλοις, 3.152–3), half the Greeks, including Odysseus, Diomedes and himself, left the following morning (3.153–60). Although Menelaus was advocating for an early departure, Nestor does not mention him in this group. A reader might, however, be excused for reasonably concluding that Menelaus went with them, since Nestor reports that half the host remained with Agamemnon (3.155–6), and one would presume that Menelaus would not want to associate with them. Upon reaching Tenedos, Odysseus and some unnamed others turn back, while Nestor and Diomedes press on to Lesbos (3.160–7). At this point, Menelaus reappears in Nestor's narrative as arriving afterwards (ὀψέ, 3.168) and catching up (ἔκιχεν, 3.169) as Nestor and Diomedes consider their options regarding the long journey ahead. It does not appear that they were waiting for him, and it now looks as if they left Troy without him—leaving him behind to carry on his foolish and potentially deadly quarrel with Agamemnon. When they reach Sunium, Menelaus' pilot, Phrontis, dies; although Menelaus is eager to sail on (ἐπειγόμενός περ ὁδοῖο, 3.284), he has to take some time to bury Phrontis (3.278–85). Apparently, the 'goodwill' (stated right here, 3.277) that Nestor felt for Menelaus did not extend to waiting for him or assisting him with the hasty burial of his pilot. The whole sequence, then, suggests that Nestor is veiling the fact that he and Diomedes were doing their best to rid themselves of Menelaus (whom, owing to the divisive quarrel with Agamemnon, they regarded as a troublemaker). If so, φίλα εἰδότες ἀλλήοισιν points to these underlying tensions and means something more like 'politely tolerating one another (while harbouring deep resentment)' or 'pretending to be friends' rather than genuinely 'regarding each other as dear'.

A third such case may occur at *Il.* 9.345, when Achilles, having just said that Agamemnon deceived him (νῦν δ᾽ ἐπεὶ ἐκ χειρῶν γέρας εἵλετο καί μ᾽ ἀπάτησε), says: 'Let him not tempt me, I who know well' (μή μευ πειράτω ἐῢ εἰδότος). As with Parmenides B1.3, the lack of an object leaves what is 'known' unclear. The context allows at least these options:

- I know that he can trick me
- I know him well = I know he is up to something = I am onto his tricks = he cannot trick me
- I know how to get the better of him
- I know some inside information (namely Thetis' deal with Zeus)
- I know what I am doing

Homer and the reader, however, know that this is Achilles' last chance for a trouble-free outcome, since his rejection of Agamemnon's offer sets the stage for the death of Patroclus. Since Achilles does not know this, whatever he does know (or thinks he knows) is of little consequence. The use of εἰδότος here, then, signals a significant area of ignorance.

[49] Nestor twice uses the dual (3.137, 3.148) to refer to Agamemnon and Menelaus, making them inseparable despite the fact that they are quarrelling with each other. This suggests that he assigns the blame for the quarrel to both equally, and does not favour Menelaus simply because he was advocating a quick departure—they created the quarrel, catching others up in something that should not have gotten started in the first place.

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If Achilles is aware of the ironic implications of εἰδότος, the lack of an object and his abrupt change of topic (ἀλλ᾽ Ὀδυσεῦ, 9.346) may be accounted for: in his anger, he accidentally utters the fateful word, but then, realizing this, he checks himself from stating the object of εἰδότος in an attempt to avoid making a false or hubristic claim. And, apparently, he believes this is sufficient. He cannot, however, unsay it, and so may remain marked, by his own words, as both deceived and doomed.

### *e. Knowing 'better'*

At *Od.* 13.296–7, Athena, revealing herself to Odysseus after he tries to lie to her, says that they both know cunning tricks (εἰδότες ἄμφω κέρδε᾽). This would seem to be true enough, and her suggestion to change the subject (μηκέτι ταῦτα λεγώμεθα, 13.296) would then amount to something like calling a truce, lest they get into a pointless competition of piling one lie on top of another. She goes on, however, to brag that she has always been at his side (13.300–1), and, when Odysseus catches her in this lie (13.316–23), she confesses that she had to refrain from helping him out of respect for Poseidon (13.341–2), which is probably about half true.[50] Odysseus is wise enough not to press her into recalling further details.

It is true that we are dealing with two inveterate liars, but the root sense of κέρδος is 'profit' or 'gain', so the sense we are dealing with here is not mere cunning or lying (that is, lying for its own sake) but lying for the sake of gaining an advantage. In the sequence that starts with Athena's appearance at 13.221, Odysseus and Athena demonstrate not only a virtuosity of deceit but also a keen eye for spotting deception, but where does all this get them? What do they gain?[51]

If we apply these questions to the larger picture, what advantage has Odysseus, the 'best' of all men in cunning, gained? Here he is, disoriented on the beach of his own land, ten years after the war at Troy has ended. He has lost his ships, his men and his trophies of war. He would be destitute, and still far from home were it not for the generosity of the Phaeacians. At his home, suitors consume his property while plotting to kill his son, marry his wife and take over his kingdom. Lesser men than he have been living peacefully at home for years, while his 'cleverness' has managed to lengthen the duration of a relatively simple trip from Troy to Ithaca into a ten-year ordeal. And what advantage has all her cunning won for Athena, who boasts herself to be famous among all the gods for wisdom and cunning (13.298–9)? Why, if she is so clever on the divine level, could she not find a way around Poseidon's anger? Why is she repeatedly unable to deceive Odysseus? Why does Mentor[52] peculiarly serve to inspire her renewed interest in Odysseus? And why, looking forward, is neither of them able to come up with a plan to get rid of the suitors? It is Penelope who proposes the contest with the bow and so gets a weapon into Odysseus' hands.[53]

Odysseus and Athena, however, are not unintelligent. They know that they are clever—and they are—so they must also recognize the frustrating inefficacy of their cleverness. Odysseus said as much earlier to the Phaeacians when telling them about his disastrous

[50] She makes no mention of the period between the sack of Troy and Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus.

[51] The sequence certainly serves as a bonding exercise, so *gain* is not the only motive at work.

[52] Cf. *Od.* 2.224–45, 5.1–25.

[53] This is characteristic of Odysseus: for all his supposed 'cleverness', he is continually being saved by women (Athena, Circe, Calypso, Ino, Nausikaa, Arete, Penelope, even Helen [*Od.* 4.240–59]).

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exchange with Polyphemus. Now Athena, weary from playing pointless games that she still cannot quit playing, says essentially the same thing to Odysseus with the sarcastically[54] tinged εἰδότες ἄμφω κέρδε᾽: 'Both of us surely know some tricks, don't we?'[55]

### *f. 'Knowing' where Ithaca lies*

At *Od.* 13.96–112, Homer describes the harbour of Phorcys at Ithaca. It features a natural breakwater and a point of anchorage where ships can drift unmoored in the calm water.[56] The Phaeacian sailors, however, row right past the point of anchorage and hit the coast with enough speed to run half the boat onto the shore (13.113–15). Why would they do that when arriving at *rocky* Ithaca? By way of explanation, Homer says they had prior knowledge (πρὶν εἰδότες, 13.113). This, however, does not fit well with other information we have been given about the Phaeacians and their ships.

At *Od.* 8.555–63, for example, Alcinous reports that the Phaeacian ships do not require pilots or even have steering oars; instead, they pilot themselves by knowing the thoughts of men (αὐταὶ ἴσασι νοήματα καὶ φρένας ἀνδρῶν, 8.559). That is, the *ships* know where they are going, not the sailors—each ship has, in our parlance, an automatic pilot with built-in GPS navigation, plus mind-reading capabilities. They probably also power themselves.[57]

Apparently, an important step in the process of conveying passengers on these ships is for the passenger to be cast into a deep sleep (7.318–21, 13.73–89). Once Odysseus falls asleep (13.79–80), he remains asleep until well after the Phaeacians depart Ithaca, so Odysseus is not available to tell the Phaeacians where they are when they arrive there. It is also not likely that the Phaeacians know much about Ithaca from their own

[54] For sarcasm in Homer, see W.I. Hunt, 'Homeric wit and humor', *TAPhA* 21 (1890), 48–58.

[55] The structure of this and the following lines (13.296–9), which use enjambment to repeatedly separate both Odysseus and Athena from what she claims they know, underscores the point: ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε, μηκέτι ταῦτα λεγώμεθα, εἰδότες ἄμφω | κέρδε᾽, ἐπεὶ σὺ μέν ἐσσι βροτῶν ὄχ᾽ ἄριστος ἁπάντων | βουλῇ καὶ μύθοισιν, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐν πᾶσι θεοῖσι | **μήτι** τε κλέομαι καὶ **κέρδεσιν** ('But come, let us no longer speak like this, both of us knowing how | to gain by tricks, since you, for your part, are by far the best of all men | at council and telling tales, and, on my side, I, among all the gods | am known for wisdom and gaining by tricks').

[56] Compare *Od.* 10.87–96 and 9.136–48. In the first case, we get a nice description of how to moor a ship in a bay surrounded by (presumably rocky) cliffs. In the second case, the ships run aground *by accident* owing to the darkness of the night, but the land slopes gently enough that it poses no risk (9.132–9). For a short stay, mooring is probably best (cf. *Il.* 1.432–7, *Od.* 10.87–97, 12.305–19), while beaching is an option on sloping sand (see *Od.* 10.509–12, 11.20, 12.5). The Phaeacians probably want to beach the ship because of the cargo they have to unload.

[57] Ahl and Roisman (n. 1), 63 comment: 'Their most distant voyage took them no more than half a day's rowing from Scheria, which means either that their notions of distance are foreshortened, or that their ships, powered by Phaeacian hands, could travel at speeds somewhere between those of a hydrofoil and a jet.' We do hear of the Phaeacians rowing their boats when pulling away from shore or pulling in, but on the open sea their ships move at speeds faster than a hawk (13.78–9). Hawks can reach speeds nearing 150 mph, so a hydrofoil would have difficulty keeping up. It is not likely that the Phaeacian rowers serve as the power source, and the phrase Homer uses, ἀνερρίπτουν ἅλα πηδῷ ('splashing up the sea with an oar', 13.78), does not inspire confidence about their ability to row a ship. LSJ generously interprets the phrase as meaning 'row with might and main', citing *Od.* 7.328 (where Alcinous boasts about these same sailing abilities—but see Ahl and Roisman [n. 1], 58–70 for reasons to question such a boast) and 10.130 (where Odysseus' men, in a panic [δείσαντες ὄλεθρον], flee the attack of the Laestrygones), but, since panicked action is often inefficient, the passage suggests that ἀνερρίπτουν ἅλα is better read literally as meaning '(inefficiently) splashing up the sea'. For instances of more productive rowing, see *Od.* 9.104, 180, 472, 490, 564.

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experience, which seems to be restricted to the bounds of the southern Mediterranean Sea (to the exclusion of the Ionian and Aegean Seas in particular). Indeed, at 7.321–6, Alcinous tells Odysseus that the most distant land any of the Phaeacians have seen (ἴδοντο)[58] is Euboea. Lastly, even though Odysseus gives a detailed description to the Phaeacians of the location of Ithaca (*Od.* 9.21–7), it is not likely to be of much help because, as numerous scholars[59] have discovered, the directions he gives do not lead to Ithaca. This has universally been taken as a Homeric flaw despite the fact that the directions do not come from Homer's mouth but from Odysseus', and that Odysseus announces, just before giving these directions, that he causes trouble for everyone through his deceptive cunning (ὅς πᾶσι δόλοισιν ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, 9.19–20). In other words, 'I am that guy who deceives *everyone*; now here is how *you* can get to my house.' Why should we think that 'you' is not included in 'everyone'? And surely it is reasonable to conclude that, just as he lied to the Cyclops to protect his men, his ships and the goods thereon, he now lies to the Phaeacians, directing them to Dulichium, the local stronghold, from whence came at least half of his ships (*Il.* 2.631–7) and 52 of the 108 suitors (*Od.* 16.247–51), instead of Ithaca, which supplied only 12 ships and 12 suitors, and which is where his wife, son, father, dog and home are. Odysseus knows that, if he can reach Dulichium, he can travel to Ithaca very easily, and it is always best to play it safe.[60]

He describes this 'Ithaca' to the Phaeacians as being χθαμαλή (either 'low-lying' or 'close to the mainland'[61]—either of which can apply to present-day Leucas which we may identify with Dulichium[62]). If the Phaeacians understood χθαμαλή as meaning low-lying, they may have been anticipating that they were in a gently sloping bay (such as that at the modern resort town Vassiliki—a place where running a ship aground would be a safe practice) when their ship brought them instead to the harbour of Phorcys.[63] The ship, knowing better,[64] would have stopped at the spot which was

[58] Ahl and Roisman (n. 1), 63–4 treat this as meaning that they went there when transporting Tityus from Crete, and posit that the Phaeacian's main direction of travel was *westward* across the Aegean. Their approach, however, must have been from Crete in the south. If, then, the Phaeacians travelled northwards from Crete to the coast of the Peloponnese, then across the Saronic Gulf, around the tip of Attica and into the Euripus Strait (on their way, presumably, towards Tityus' hometown, Panopeus [Strabo 9.3.423] in Phocis), Euboea would be the one landmass that was always the northernmost one that they saw.

[59] For a summary, see C. Souyoudzoglou-Haywood, 'Archaeology and the search for Homeric Ithaca the case of Mycenaean Kephalonia', *Acta Archaeologica* 89 (2018), 145–58 with bibliography; also F.H. Stubbings, 'The principal Homeric sites: Ithaca', in A.B.J. Wace and F.H. Stubbings (edd.), *A Companion to Homer* (London, 1969), 398–421.

[60] Ahl and Roisman (n. 1) (for example 58–81) provide an excellent discussion of the tensions between Odysseus and the Phaeacians which would motivate such a lie. Additionally, if, when Odysseus wakes up on Ithaca, he expects to see the landscape of Dulichium, one would expect him to be disoriented, and he is (*Od.* 13.187–355); but Athena intensifies the experience for him.

[61] This meaning can be found in Strabo's discussion (10.2.12) of this passage, but it is fairly clear that readers were confused by Odysseus' lie even in Strabo's day, and so were searching for ways to make the words fit the landscape that they wanted the text to describe.

[62] It is probably best to identify Dulichium with Leucas (also known as Lefkada), even though Leucas is not an island but a peninsula, because it is all but disconnected from the mainland (the exception being a narrow strip of land [barely as wide as a road in some places] in the northeast). It may be that, for all practical purposes, the locals regarded Dulichium as an island'; (words for peninsula [*paene insula* = 'almost an island'; χερσόνησος = 'dry island'] tend to associate the land formation with islands), or that Odysseus was concealing the existence of the land bridge for strategic purposes. There also may be an etymological relationship between Du**lich**ium and **Leuc**as/**Lefk**ada.

[63] Leucas also has a mountain, Stavrota, located in the centre of its land mass, so the landscape matches what Odysseus had said about 'Ithaca' (9.21–7).

[64] The ships would be getting their information by reading Odysseus' thoughts, a process that

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appropriate for dropping anchor; the Phaeacians, thinking that they knew (εἰδότες) the place from the lie Odysseus had told them earlier (πρίν), hastily grabbed their oars and foolishly scraped half the length of the ship (ὅσον τ᾽ ἐπὶ ἥμισυ πάσης 13.114) up onto the rocky shores of Ithaca. Reading εἰδότες with ironic force helps explain their behaviour, and serves as a significant clue that Odysseus' directions were a lie.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This investigation into Homeric precedents of εἰδότ- reveals that a reader well versed in Homeric turns of phrase would sense potential irony when encountering this stem. This understanding helps make sense of the puzzle surrounding the location of 'Homer's' Ithaca, as well as that of the manuscript reading of Parmenides B1.3. In the case of the location of Ithaca, the directions given are Odysseus' strategic lie which lead to nearby Dulichium. With respect to Parmenides' poem, even if[65] the word ἄτῃ in B1.3 also describes the εἰδότα φῶτα, it would simply highlight the ironic potentialities of εἰδότα, since an εἰδότα φῶτα would readily be understood as a man who mistakenly thinks he knows what he needs to know, that is, he is deluded (ἄτῃ). This would lead the ancient reader not to reject the line (as modern scholars have done) but to develop a curiosity as to the limits and nature of this (potentially misguided) knowledge and, perhaps, a determination not to fall into the same difficulty.

We have also discussed Parmenides' use of the word ἄτῃ at B1.3 as adding a reference to Hera's deception of Zeus in *Iliad* Book 19, and as supplementing and reinforcing the allusion in B1.1 to her deception of him in *Iliad* Book 14.

While some scholars may balk at the idea that the recipient of the goddess's revelations is not a heroic man of wisdom but, perhaps, a deluded pretender, we must recall that the goddess calls him a young man (ὦ κοῦρ᾽, B1.24) and that line B1.3 may only describe his condition *before* he learns what the goddess has to teach. His condition at that time should be one of potential wisdom, not enlightenment. Such a change in perspective need not, then, radically undermine most interpretations of what follows. The κοῦρος of the proem is either 1) Parmenides himself when he *first* followed a train of thought that led him to the revelation that follows, or 2) each reader as they are conveyed or initiated along the same path, or 3) a fictional character who undergoes such a transformative experience, or 4) some combination of these. On these readings, for example, Cosgrove's suggestion that the line indicates that the young man was following the typical course of the Presocratic *physilogoi* (with inadequate perspicacity) before being blindsided by the goddess's revelations would fit well with this understanding of the line.

And unforeseen transformation seems to be an important aspect of the process. Indeed, who would imagine that the goddess's peculiar, two-part speech (with all of its intricate content) came next if all that survived of Parmenides' poem was the proem's description of the chariot ride (B1.1–21)? On its surface, at least, the proem is designed to capture the interest not of initiates and philosophers but of those who love fast-paced

would, no doubt, easily detect any deliberate falsehoods (as would happen if Odysseus was trying to resist their probing—Odysseus, however, seems to be entirely unaware of the ship's interaction with his mind).

[65] This is the most challenging way to read the line. As noted above, there are other ways to read Parmenides B1.3.

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action stories, surprise-twists of plot, exotic or fantastic locations, seductive and bewitching goddesses and, in short, narrative (rather than didactic) poetry. To use Lucretius' image, it is the honey on the lip of the cup of medicine, a lure to draw in unsuspecting minds. Such persons who picked up Parmenides' text or heard the proem, and thought they knew (εἰδότες) what was coming next were surely in a state of confusion (ἄτῃ), just as are those who (like modern scholars) expect the poem to be didactic and find themselves first taken on a wild chariot ride—both end up (for opposite reasons) with their expectations challenged, wondering what is going on. The reading ἄτῃ … εἰδότα φῶτα, therefore, suits both the context and the reader's experience.

We have, therefore, found meanings for the manuscript reading that accord with 1) the various ways in which the line can be construed, 2) the Homeric tone of the poem's vocabulary, 3) the nature of divine revelation in Greek myth, 4) the allusion in Parmenides B1.1 (and so in B1.25) to Hera's deception of Zeus and 5) several prominent interpretations of the proem. On these counts, then, it is very likely that Parmenides wrote B1.3 exactly as the manuscripts have it:

δαίμονος, ἣ κατὰ πάντ᾽ ἄτῃ φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα

which we might translate in a variety of ways, some of which are:

A. The way of the divinity that[66] carries a man who thinks he knows[67] through all things in a state of confusion;[68]
B. The way of the divinity that carries a man who thinks he knows completely[69] down to ruin;
C. The way of the divinity that, with/to/for Delusion about everything, leads a man who thinks he knows.

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[66] Ambiguity as to whether 'that' refers to the divinity or the road is intended here and in the following options.

[67] The phrase 'thinks he knows' (here and in the other options) is meant to suggest delusional confidence in a false opinion.

[68] Given the central position of ἄτῃ in the line, ambiguity as to whether 'in confusion' applies to the way, the goddess, or the man is intended. If it applies to the way, then 'confusion' would be better rendered as 'ruin'.

[69] Ambiguity as to whether the man knows completely or whether he is carried completely into ruin is intended. In this reading, ἄτῃ has poetically disrupted even the structure of the sentence, casting κατὰ in tmesis with φέρει and throwing the object πάντ᾽ far from its governing participle εἰδότα. Also, the tone of the English version (rising hopefully to 'completely' and then collapsing) is opposite to the Greek which directly descends into ruin.

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