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The Homeric Source of the Category of δόξα Δοκέω from a Cognitive-Presumptive Perspective: A Presumption on the Present

Abstract: The objective of this article is to determine the sources of the philosophical notion of δόξα, understood as *presumption*. The analyses presented here focus upon the gnoseological content of the concept of presumption as it occurs in poetry traditionally attributed to Homer (the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*,¹ the so-called *Homeric Hymns*). Two fundamental aspects of such content give the concept of δόξα its philosophical significance: its objective aspect and its subjective aspect. The complexity of the problematic mutual relationship between them manifests itself with particular clarity in lexis belonging to the semantic group of the verb δοκέω, which, for the purposes of the present study, is hereby described as a group expressing *presupposition limited to the present*. The reflections and analyses presented in this article allow one to determine the critical foundations of the Greek epistemological thought, whose actual point of departure is the problem of the status of the presupposition and its relationship to the concepts of truth and knowledge.

Keywords: δόξα, δοκέω, presupposition, presumption, Homer, cognitive characteristics of presumption, Greek epistemological thought

Introduction

Pre-Platonic epistemological reflection found its source in the distinction between and strong opposition of two cognitive fields: knowledge, whose proper object is truth (σαφές/τετελεσμένον, ἀλήθεια), and opinion (δόκος, δόξα), which, since the time when poems by Xenophanes of Colo-

¹ Henceforth, in-text references to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* will be marked parenthetically as *Il.* and *Od.* (respectively), followed by the numbers of the book and the verse. Also, unless stated otherwise, dictionary references are made to the so-called *Liddell Lexicon*: Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). All references to this edition shall henceforth be marked as LSJR.

phon and Parmenides of Elea were created, has generally been associated with the phenomenal sphere—a sphere both overt and seemingly self-evident to man, who functions as the subject postulating its cognition and, in consequence, expressing judgments or opinions about it.

In this context, we can risk the statement that the Greek idea of δόξα involves two aspects that determine the term's philosophical meaning, both of which were widely exploited by later thinkers. The first aspect may be described as *subjective*, as it is connected with the activity of the cognizing subject, the effect of which is *opinion*. The second aspect refers to the “apparent,” “present” object, which constitutes the basis of the subject's judgments about it. Δόξα, understood thusly, is a concept expressing a combination of the subjective and the objective spheres, and—what is essential—a concept leaving one at a loss in the face of the lack of any possibility to unambivalently determine the principles of their relation to each other.² The latter, broadly understood, would be an assumption or an opinion formed by man on the basis of his/her perception of the world, which, however, cannot guarantee any irrefutable knowledge or certainty about this world.

An essentially critical distinction between these two spheres (in accordance with the root meaning of the verb κρίνω³) already appears in Homeric poetry, namely in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the so-called *Homeric Hymns*.

² It must be noted that Eric Havelock, in his interpretation of the status of oral poetry in Platonic philosophy, indicated this “mix-up” of the subjective and objective spheres as a characteristic feature of the concept of δόξα. It is worth citing his accurate remarks here *in extenso*: “But to return to *doxa* or opinion: it is this word that, precisely because of its very ambiguities, was chosen not only by Plato but by some of his predecessors to crystallise those properties of the poetised experience from which the intellectuals were trying to escape. Both the noun, and the verb *doko*, are truly baffling to modern logic in their coverage of both the subjective and objective relationship. The verb denotes both the ‘seeming’ that goes on in myself, the ‘subject,’ namely my ‘personal impressions,’ and the ‘seeming’ that links me as an ‘object’ to other people looking at me—the ‘impression’ I make on them. The noun correspondingly is both the ‘impression’ that may be in my mind and the ‘impression’ held by others of me. It would appear therefore to be the ideal term to describe that fusion or confusion of the subject with the object that occurred in the poetised performance and in the state of mind created by this performance. It is the ‘seeming show of things,’ whether this panorama is thought of as within me or outside of me.” Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 250–251.

³ Above all, this verb means: “separate,” “put asunder,” “distinguish,” e.g.: [...] ὄτε τε ξανθὴ Δημήτηρ/κρίνη ἐπειγομένων ἀνέμων καρπὸν τε καὶ ἄχνας (*Il.* V, 500–501). Aside from the above mentioned meanings of this verb, also worthy of attention are those meanings in which the evaluative aspect enabling choice is visible: “pick out,” “choose,” e.g.: ἐν δ’ ἐρέτας ἔκρινεν εἰκόσιν [...] (*Il.* I, 309); [...] ἀρίστους/κρίνάμενος κατὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιϊκόν (*Il.* IX, 520–521), as well as a decision and solution: “give judgment,” “decide a contest” (e.g. for a prize), “determine to do something” (LSJR).

This article will demonstrate that already in the earliest literary monuments of Greece it is manifest that the activity consisting in the *formation of opinions*—or the activity of *presuming*—would, cognitively, be related to the verb *δοκέω* (i.e. the verb from which the nouns *δόξα* and *δόκος*, known from the gnoseological reflection of the first philosophers, derive).⁴ Furthermore, instances of the usage of this verb in Homer's poetry, allow one to single out characteristic traits of the semantics of this notion and to map out the dynamics of its relations with other concepts, which, taken together, served to determine the frames of the philosophical understanding of *δόξα* as a *presupposition* understood in opposition to *knowledge* and *truth*.

Etymological Outline

The concepts of perceptivity and receptivity, which make the philosophical concept of *opinion* problematic, are connotatively inscribed in the Greek words *δόξα* and *δόκος*. Both terms have a similar semantic scope⁵ and are noun derivatives of the verb *δοκέω*, which signifies above all: “expect,” “think,” “suppose,” “imagine,” “have or form an opinion,” “seem.” The same root appears in the verb *δέχομαι* (*δέχομαι*⁶), from which *δοκέω* derives, and the audible difference lies in the degree of apophony: the exchange of the vowel “ε” for the vowel “ο.”⁷ The general meaning of the char-

⁴ Following the principle adopted by the editor of this issue, also in my article all references to the works of the presocratic philosophers are made to the texts included in the following edition: Hermann Diels, Walther Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, (Vols. 1–3), transl. by Hermann Diels (Dublin, Zürich: Weidmann, 1964/1966). The format of the reference will henceforth include the following elements: an abbreviated name of the author (e.g. “Xenoph.” for Xenophanes of Colophon), the capitalized letter denoting the section of the Diels–Kranz collection (“A” or “B”), the sequential number of the fragment and the number denoting the verse, e.g. (Xenoph. B. 34, 4).

⁵ The noun *δόκος* appears above all in the famous epistemological passage from Xenophanes of Colophon (Xenoph. B 34, 4). Its meaning is shared with most of the meanings of the noun *δόξα* (an exception is the meaning: “expectation,” which is the oldest known meaning of *δόξα*—it is the only meaning of *δόξα* to appear in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*), as well as, following the LSJR dictionary, with all of the meanings of the noun *δόκησις*. The semantic scope of all three words is delimited by the following meanings: “opinion,” “judgment,” “conjecture,” “imagine,” “fancy,” “apparition,” “phantom,” “appearance” (as opposed to reality), “repute” (the opinion which others have of one), “credit.” As we can see, the subjective (what someone supposes, thinks) and objective (what it is that appears to someone) moments are intertwined with the listed senses.

⁶ In further parts of the article, only the Attic form of this word will be given.

⁷ Edward Ross Wharton, *Etyma Graeca. An Etymological Lexicon of Classical Greek* (London: Percival, 1890), pp. 44, 141.

acteristic root *δεκ’-/δοκ’- can be reduced to some form of “receptivity,”⁸ which is especially visible in the case of the verb δέχομαι itself: “take,” “accept,” “receive” (initially in regards to objects, later also in a metaphorical sense: “to accept something calmly,” “approve,” “welcome” [= receive someone], as well as in the case of its noun derivatives, e.g.: “ιο-δόκος (epic: “receiving arrows/shots,” “containing arrows”—from here also ἰοδόκη “quiver”), δωρο-δόκος (Att.: “receiving gifts, bribes”), δοκός (“support beam,” lit. “that which receives, takes the roof onto itself”⁹). It is a more difficult task to indicate the original sense of “receptivity,” which would derive from the root *δεκ’-/δοκ’- in the verb derivatives to which the verb δοκέω also belongs. The matter is further complicated by the lack of agreement among scholars as to the details of the formation of such words as δοκάζω, δοκεύω and δοκέω, and especially the lack of familiarity with the semantic dependence between them.¹⁰ According to Walther Prellwitz, the general meaning of “receptivity,” already clearly visible in the word δέχομαι, is enriched in these verbs with the valor of “spirituality.”¹¹ While we may doubt whether this thesis is fully correct in regards to δοκεύω (“beobachte,” “stelle nach”¹²), and δοκάζω (“beobachte”—the meaning given by Prellwitz, but most of all: “wait for”¹³), it seems fully justified in regards to the third verb, δοκέω, in which the original and most general “receptivity,” or “acceptance,” can be applied to the broadly-understood sphere of human intellectual activity, which Prellwitz wonderfully demonstrates in explaining the common meaning of this verb: “meine,” “scheine” as: “nehme an’ eine Ansicht, ein Aussehen.”¹⁴

⁸ Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*. In two volumes. With the assistance of Lucien van Beek. *Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series*, Volume 10. (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), p. 345; Walther Prellwitz, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905), p. 109.

⁹ R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek...*, p.345.

¹⁰ R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek...*, p. 345; Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bd 1. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1960), p. 405.

¹¹ W. Prellwitz, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 109.

¹² W. Prellwitz, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 109.

¹³ LSRJ

¹⁴ W. Prellwitz, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 109.

What is essential for the meaning of the verb δοκέω, and later, for its noun derivatives δόξα and δόκος is that the concept of “accepting something”/“receiving” that the verb contains is not connected to the notions of the *inerrancy* or *certainty* of such a reception. In all known meanings of the verb δοκέω, what comes to the forefront is lack of conviction as to the truth of the declared judgment or opinion. For this reason, it is worth noting, after Pierre Chantraine, that this verb sometimes appears in Greek in opposition to φαίνεσθαι, as long as the latter was understood as “to be evident.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, it must be added that both of these verbs often had the same meaning, i.e. a meaning indicating something that appears to man externally and is not certain for him.¹⁶ Thus, both verbs could signify a “subjective impression” that the subject has of something or someone—an impression, which can but does not have to be true, and whose truth often remains unascertainable to the subject. Δοκέω (as well as φαίνω) already appear in this sense in the oldest relics of Greek literature—the poetry associated with the name of Homer.

Homeric δοκέω

The verb δοκέω appears ten times in the *Iliad* and seventeen times in the *Odyssey*. Its two uses in the Homeric hymns must also be taken into account: one appearance each in the *Hymn to Hermes* and *Hymn to Aphrodite*.¹⁷ This gives us a total of twenty-nine appearances of this verb; some of these are present within fixed reoccurring phrases, which limits the variety of this word’s applications, in truth, though the seman-

¹⁵ Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. T. 2, (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1968), p. 290.

¹⁶ See e.g.: *Od.*, IX 318; XV 25; Il. II 9; IV 277–278; X 17. A meaning similar to “to seem” can also be seen in Homer in such phrases as: εἶδω μοι (or without the dative), εἶναι μοι, γίγνομαι μοι, where in the place of the possible first person ablative, any given person or thing can appear in the same case.

¹⁷ Both hymns belong to the group of the so-called “old Homeric hymns”: accepting that none of them appeared later than 7th century B.C., it is possible to determine the *terminus ante quem* for the source material analyzed here.

tic differences, sometimes very subtle, that result from the various contexts in which form of *δοκέω* are used, remain vital.

The most common—and most general—meaning of this verb in Homeric poetry is “to seem.” In such cases, it is connected with the ablative of a person or thing. The universality of this usage is attested to by the fact that it occurs nine times in the *Iliad* and fifteen times in the *Odyssey*, which makes up the majority of the uses of this verb in the works of Homer. Nonetheless, we can attempt to systemize all uses of *δοκέω* in Homer, dividing them into general semantic groups depending on the context in which this word appears.

The first group will include all occurrences of this verb in which the broadly-understood practical sphere plays the main role: *δοκέω* in this sense is connected with decision-making and individual preferences and choices, which is why this group will be called *the decisional-preferential group* (twelve occurrences in Homeric poetry).¹⁸ In the second major group, *δοκέω* appears in a cognitive context, which is interesting from the point of view of later philosophical reflection. Owing to the wide variety of forms connected with this sense of *δοκέω*, this group will be referred to as *the cognitive-presumptive group*. Within it, three basic subgroups can be distinguished: a group connected with the communication of a sudden feeling, in which the characteristic feature is the lack of the element of assertion in the declared statement and a significant role of the emotional component in creating opinions (this meaning is manifest only in the *Odyssey*, where it occurs three times);¹⁹ a group that refers to the recognition and evaluation of character and social status (also appears only in the *Odyssey*—eight appearances);²⁰ and a group in which the verb discussed appears strictly in the presumptive sense. The last subgroup can be further divided into types. The first is *δοκέω* referring to the future

¹⁸ *Il.* VI 338; 90; *Od.* I 227; 376. All applications of the verb *δοκέω* in the fixed Homeric formula: “[...] ὅς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα.” (e.g.: *Il.* IX 103; 314; XII 215; XIII 735; *Od.* XXIII 130; XIII 154; V 360) also belong to this semantic group.

¹⁹ *Od.* X 415; XVIII 354; XX 93.

²⁰ *Od.* II 33; V 342; VI 258; VIII 388; XVII 415; XVIII 18; XVIII 125; XVIII 382.

(δοκέω in the sense of “expect”—as was mentioned, the oldest meaning of the noun δόξα, appearing already in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is precisely “expectation”). In this sense, the verb appears in Homer three times.²¹ The second semantic type, which my further analyses will concentrate on, is δοκέω in the sense of presumptions on the present (four appearances in Homeric poetry: two in the *Iliad*, one in the *Odyssey*, and one in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*).²²

The presumptive semantic group of δοκέω, in which the action of opining is limited to the present, and even to the current perceptive “grasp,” provides important information about the gnoseological content connected with the discussed verb in works in which the problem of cognition is not the central problem. First of all, this allows us to grasp the natural, pre-philosophical function of this word. Second, having contexts in which this verb was used at our disposal, it is possible to indicate the key aspects in Homer’s understanding of opinion as to the effect of the action signified by δοκέω.

The characteristic feature of δοκέω in the presumptive use limited to the present is the clear opposition of the strength and value of cognition (or knowledge) and their presumptive substitute. Such a meaning of the verb discussed here is very common in Homeric poetry, appearing in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. In all of the variants of its application without exception, the presumption signified by δοκέω is contrasted with a cognitive act described by what James Lesher has called “knowledge words.”²³ The scholar, analyzing the problem of perception and cognition in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (though omitting opinion resulting from an act of δοκέω), lists the following verbs in this context: γιγνώσκειν, νοεῖν, εἰδέναι. It is extremely significant

²¹ *Il.* VII 192; IX 625; *Hymnus Homericus ad Venerem*, 125. Henceforth abbreviated to “*h. Ven.*”

²² *Il.* XXIII 459; 470; *Hymnus Homericus ad Mercurium*, 208 (henceforth abbreviated to “*h. Merc.*”); *Od.* V 360. It must be noted that the last indicated appearance of δοκέω (*Od.* V 360) can be included both in the decisional-preferential group (decision-making) and in the cognitive-presumptive group (a presumption regarding the present situation, set in opposition to an exact cognitive “grasp,” which will be discussed later).

²³ James H. Lesher, “Perceiving and Knowing in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,” *Phronesis*, Vol. 26 (1981), No. 1., p. 8.

that all of these, without exception, appear in relation to the semantic group of *δοκέω*, chosen here for analysis, that appears in Homer. Aside from this, the adverb *σαφές*, appearing as a counterweight to *δοκέω* in the *Hymn to Hermes*, must be added to the list of “knowledge words” created by Leshner, as it is extremely important from the perspective of analyses of the presumptive meaning of this verb, as well as from the point of view of the beginnings of epistemological reflection.

Δοκέω versus εἶδω (διαγιγνώσκω)

The four appearances of presumption in opposition to cognition and resulting from the activity signified by *δοκέω*, can be reduced to three cases situated in various contexts and various scenes. In Book XXIII of the *Iliad*, the verb *δοκέω* with the function of presumption concerning the present is used twice, both times in the same statement.

Achilles, wanting to honor his dead friend, organizes sporting games. The first contest is a chariot race, whose participants include: the exceptional rider²⁴ Eumelos—son of Admetos; brave Diomedes, who uses the excellent, captured steeds of Aeneas;²⁵ Menelaos, with nimble steeds²⁶—among which is the very valuable mare of his brother,²⁷ Antilochus—son of Nestor, whom Zeus himself and Poseidon were to have taught the equestrian art;²⁸ and Meriones—the charioteer of Idomeneus. There is not room for incidental names on this list—each of the mentioned heroes is a master at charioteering or can at least boast of perfect steeds. An emphasis on the equal chances of the participants must be considered singularly essential here. They signify that none of the event’s observers can with full conviction, justified by more than private sympathies, know who will win the race. An observer can, though, express a presumption (*resp.* expect), but the essential fact remains that such a judgment

²⁴ *Il.* XXIII, 289.

²⁵ *Il.* XXIII, 291–292.

²⁶ *Il.* XXIII, 294.

²⁷ *Il.* XXIII, 296–299.

²⁸ *Il.* XXIII, 306–308.

will remain an average “it seems to me” (μοι δοκεῖ), until it is verified at the race’s finish line.

Someone who would like to object to the rather rigorous evaluation of the cognitive possibilities of the race’s observers and audience could indicate that the public is always present at the races and observes what goes on on the track; and thus, seeing the development of the situation, could submit cognitively valuable predictions, which would be justified in the present (visible to observers) state of the race. Such a reservation would be valid if we were to simplify the cognitive situation and omit the conditions that accompany the race in Book XXIII of the *Iliad*. These turn out to be of fundamental significance for the value of opinions and predictions about victory.

In the first place, it must be emphasized that the race takes place a long distance away from where the observers stand.²⁹ A view of the situation on the track is further inhibited by the clouds of dust that rise above it.³⁰ Taking into account the above natural obstacles, we can risk the statement that the Achaeans did really not know much about what went on during the race. That is why their ignorance (or incomplete knowledge) about this was to be compensated for by the function bestowed on old Phoinix, who is located much closer to the plain³¹ that the horses will run on. Thanks to this, he can: 1. perceive the details, which are either vague or simply not visible to the other observers, 2. retain what he has already seen in his mind (μεμνηῖτο δρόμου³²), and finally 3. Later relay this information honestly to his companions, not concealing any of what he saw and remembered³³ (ἀληθείην ἀποείποι).³⁴ He is to be an eye-witness of what will happen on the Trojan plain,

²⁹ *Il.* XXIII, 358–359.

³⁰ *Il.* XXIII, 365–366

³¹ *Il.* XXIII, 369–360.

³² *Il.* XXIII, 361.

³³ *Il.* XXIII, 361.

³⁴ It is worth noting that even Arthur William Hope Adkins, who tried to prove that ἀλήθεια has a broader meaning in Homer than just “unforgotten,” was forced to recognize that, in the passage from the *Iliad* analyzed here, this term really should be connected with the problem of the relation of knowledge to memories of past events (Adkins, “Truth, ΚΟΣΜΟΣ, and ΑΡΕΤΗ in the Homeric Poems,” *The Classical Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 22 (1972), No. 1, p. 5). Snell

and his knowledge gained in this direct way and imprinted in his mind is to be the criterion of solving all possible conflicts concerning the race. Phoinix's knowledge constitutes an unattainable cognitive ideal here for the other observers, which is based on the directness of the perceptive "grasp," possible to reliably pass on with the help of the memories of the remaining observers, which have the task of opining and anticipating.

Another essential obstacle in estimating the worth of predictions of victory is the fact that the gods have influence over the way the race proceeds. The charioteers may be exceptional at what they do, may have excellent steeds, which is emphasized in the narration, but in the end, victory still depends on supernatural divine intervention, which can rid even the best contestant of his chance at victory. This happens to Eumelos, who was in the lead until his chariot was smashed by Athena, who favored Diomedes. Thanks to her intervention, the son of Tydeus unexpectedly and paradoxically, i.e. contrary to expectations (*παρὰ δόξαν*), took the lead during the last lap and was able to uphold it to the finish line.

The Achaeans observing the sporting struggle from the stands had no idea about the events that ended Eumelos' participation in the race and which resulted in the victory of his main rival. The last time they were able to see the situation on the track, Eumelos was in the lead right in front of Diomedes, who was fast at his heels. That is why when they now see the carts nearing the finish line, or rather their vague out-

emphasized the necessary connection of the concept of ἀλήθεια with memory in his famous interpretation, which constitutes an alternative to Martin Heidegger's reflections. See: Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of Mind. The Greek Origins of European Thought* (New York: Harper, 1960); here quoted after the Polish edition: *Odkrycie ducha*. Translated by A. Onysymow (Warszawa: Alétheia, 2009), p. 296. Thomas Cole writes about the advantages of Snell's interpretation *vis-à-vis* Heidegger's. See: Thomas Cole, "Archaic Truth," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica, New Series*, Vol. 13, No. 1. (1983), pp. 8–10. Anna Maria Komornicka understands the term ἀλήθεια similarly to Snell; her valuable remarks are worth citing here: "Knowledge about reality flows from the object in the direction of the subject, and its limits are set down by human memory. Existing reality is identical to the reality perceived by the subject (i.e. man) and remains imprinted in his mind [...]. Alétheia is the oldest form of the direct transfer (communication) of perceived reality, cognized by thought and expressed in words. It is an 'unveiling' not only of that, which exists objectively, but also of what is subjectively inherent in human consciousness." See: A. M. Komornicka, "Pojęcie prawdy w starożytnej literaturze greckiej," *Znak* 1992, nr 1. p. 36.

lines, as they are unable to recognize the drivers, they are convinced that Eumelos is still winning. They are not aware that the perception upon which they base their opinions is no longer valid. In this sense, we can risk the statement that everyone who expects the victory of Eumelos on the basis of a false opinion represents the exact opposite of cognitive values, which Phoinix, judging the race, represents. On the one hand, there is error and a lack of knowledge resulting from the erroneous conviction that nothing changed in the last turn of the race; on the other—the exceptionally valuable knowledge of the eyewitness, who is certain of what he knows because he can see it.

The two options mentioned do not exhaust all of the cognitive variants in the description of the chariot race in the *Iliad*. There is also a third possibility—the most essential, which is situated between direct knowledge and mistaken opinion and expectation. It is the correct (*resp.* true) presumption of the Cretan commander Idomeneus, who sees a bit more than the other observers, though it also seems that he does not see everything, which distinguishes his situation from that of Phoinix. From the narrator's description it is clear that Idomeneus was, in truth, located further than the other Achaeans, but he was also sitting in an elevated position, which can be explained by the fact that he wanted to spot his charioteer, Meriones.³⁵ His place allowed him a good enough view of the situation on the track that he succeeded, after cries from the charioteer, and by the characteristic appearance of one of the horses,³⁶ in recognizing (ἀὐγάζειν) the contestant who was approaching the finish line.

I will allow myself to cite the rather extensive full statement of the excited Idomeneus, which is filled with important words from the perspective of the analyses conducted here:

My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, is it I alone that *discern* the horses, or do ye as well? Other are they, *meseemeth*, that be now in front, and other is the charioteer

³⁵ Geoffrey Stephen Kirk, *The Iliad: Commentary*. Vol. 6. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [1985] 2001), p. 220.

³⁶ *Il.* XXIII, 450–455.

that *appeareth*; and the mares will have come to harm out yonder on the plain, they that were in front on the outward course. For in truth *I marked* them sweeping first about the turning-post, but now can I nowhere *spy* them, though mine eyes *glance* everywhither over the Trojan plain, as *I gaze*. Did the reins haply slip from the charioteer, and was he unable to guide the course aright about the post, and did he fail in the turn? Even there, *methinks*, must he have been hurled to earth, and have wrecked his car, and the mares must have swerved from the course in wild terror of heart. Howbeit stand ye up also, and *look*; for myself I *discern* not *clearly*, but the man *seemeth* to me to be an Aetolian by race, and is king among the Argives, even the son of horse-taming Tydeus, mighty Diomedes.³⁷

The Cretan commander only guesses (ὄϊω) that on the part of track invisible to observers an accident could have taken place that completely changed the results of the race, since it seems that (μοι δοκέουσι) horses other than the expected ones—those of Diomedes, not Eumelos—are approaching the finish line. As Geoffrey Kirk rightly notes, the matter mentioned by Idomeneus demonstrates the qualities of a ring-structure:³⁸ both in the beginning (verses 457–460), and in the end (verses 469–472) the uncertainty of the commander’s judgment, who states that someone else is in the lead than was during the last lap, is emphasized. That is why in verse 470 the verb δοκέω is again used with the first-person singular ablative. The only difference between the appearance

³⁷ “ὦ φίλοι Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες
οἷος ἐγὼν ἵππους ἀγάζομαι ἦε καὶ ὕμεις;
ἄλλοι μοι δοκέουσι παροίτεροι ἔμμεναι ἵπποι,
ἄλλος δ’ ἠνίοχος ἰνδάλλεται· αἶδέ που αὐτοῦ
ἔβλαβεν ἐν πεδίῳ, αἶ κεῖσέ γε φέρτεροι ἦσαν·
ἦτοι γὰρ τὰς πρώτα ἴδον περὶ τέρμα βαλούσας,
νῦν δ’ οὐ πη δύναιμι ἰδέειν, πάντη δέ μοι ὄσσε
Τρωϊκὸν ἄμ πεδίον παπταίνετον εἰσορόωντι·
ἦε τὸν ἠνίοχον φύγον ἠνία, οὐδὲ δυνάσθη
εὐ σχεθέειν περὶ τέρμα καὶ οὐκ ἐτύχησεν ἐλίξας·
ἔνθα μιν ἐκπεσέειν ὄϊω σὺν θ’ ἄρματα ἄξαι,
αἶ δ’ ἐξηρώησαν, ἐπεὶ μένος ἔλλαβε θυμόν.
ἀλλὰ ἴδεσθε καὶ ὕμμες ἀνασταδόν· οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε
εὐ διαγιγνώσκω, δοκέει δέ μοι ἔμμεναι ἀνήρ
Αἰτωλὸς γενεήν, μετὰ δ’ Ἀργείοισιν ἀνάσσει
Τυδέος ἵπποδάμου υἱὸς κρατερὸς Διομήδης.”

(*Il.* XXIII, 457–472, trans. A. T. Murray). All emphases in the cited passage—both in English and in Greek—S.Ś.

³⁸ G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: Commentary*, p. 221.

of δοκέω in verse 459 and in verse 470 is that in the first case, the presumption still refers to horses (ἄλλοι μοι δοκέουσι παροίτεροι ἔμμεναι ἵπποι), while in the second case—to the charioteer (δοκέει δέ μοι ἔμμεναι ἀνήρ). Thus, it would not be unjustified to claim that the verb δοκέω has exactly the same meaning in both cases, though it concerns two different objects of presumption. It must be emphasized that within the framework of the ring-structure, both applications of this verb seem to impart the processuality of Idomeneus' recognition (or "grasp"), as he initially develops an opinion solely about the horses, which he sees first, and only later, partially on the basis of the first presumption, draws a conclusion as to their charioteer, whom he also has standing before him (ἰνδάλλεται) and sees him with increasing clarity, but still not clearly enough to be certain of the latter's identity.

Concerning the charioteer, the judgment expressed by Idomeneus in both places (verses 460 and 470) gives the impression of being very cautious and balanced, but we cannot deny that towards the end of his speech he gains increasing certainty that he is correct—not only regarding his first opinion that someone else will win the race, but also about who this new leader is. This is attested to by the fact that initially, the Cretan only notes that he thinks he sees a different charioteer, or rather that it "seems to him" that he sees a different charioteer, which further weakens the assertion of the expressed judgment. However, the verb δοκέω is not used here to mark the state of uncertainty, but rather a word that has a similar, though more narrow meaning: the verb ἰνδάλλομαι. It means: "appear," "seem," "flash on one's mind"³⁹ and as such may in some cases be treated as synonymous with δοκέω when it appears with the ablative, also in Homer.⁴⁰ This is the case in the present passage of the *Iliad*, where in one sentence μοι δοκέουσι and ἰνδάλλεται appear one after the other—in truth, with different subjects (in the former—horses, in the latter—the charioteer), but a few verses later we can find δοκέει μοι, for which

³⁹ LSJR

⁴⁰ As an example one may quote be the following verse from the *Odyssey*: αὐτὰρ τοι ἐρέω ὥς μοι ἰνδάλλεται ἦτορ. (*Od.* XIX 224).

the subject is identical with the earlier ἰνδάλλεται (ἄλλος δ' ἠνίοχος = κρατερὸς Διομήδης).

At the same time, it must be emphasized that the final act of presumption, marked by the verb δοκέω, is not as indefinite and general as the initial opinion signaled in verses 459 and 460 by the words: μοι δοκέουσι and ἰνδάλλεται. Everything indicates that Idomeneus has succeeded in “ascribing a face” to the profile which he initially saw unclearly, and for this reason he now gives the name of the racing charioteer, along with details as to his house. Thus, we can conclude that the second δοκέω signifies a presumption with a greater degree of certainty than the one used earlier in verse 459. In the context of what has been said, it seems that this is a very probable hypothesis, but it is worth emphasizing once more that it in no way follows from this hypothesis that two different meanings of the verb appear. An essential consequence that must be emphasized in connection with the subtle difference between the two uses of δοκέω is that this verb may have been used to signify opinion characterized by various degrees of certainty. The latter, as the homogeneous cognitive extreme, is reserved (at least in this scene) for direct and perceptive knowledge (the function of old Phoinix). Thus, it also seems that the opinions that result from actions marked by δοκέω should not be identified with probability (at least understood objectively), but rather only with the subject's degree of conviction as to the certainty of what he declares. This conviction is of a subjective character and may turn out to be false regardless of its strength, unless it is verified either objectively, i.e. through reference to a direct “grasp” of the object, or through the confrontation of subjective opinion with the presumptions of other witnesses and observers. The Cretan commander is aware of both of these possibilities, and even mentions the second *explicit* in his statements.

Aside from accenting the uncertainty of Idomeneus, his call to the remaining Achaeans is also repeated within the bounds of the ring-structure (verses 457–458 and 469). He begins his speech

with a question directed at his companions, whether they have already recognized the approaching chariot, as he has. In the last verses of the speech, he calls on them to verify (positively or negatively) his judgment with the help of their perceptions (ἴδεσθε καὶ ὕμμες). Of course, we cannot consider the reference to what the remaining observers see, at least in this case, as an irrefutable criterion of the correctness of the commander's presumptions. It is clear that their places are in worse positions than his, thus, their opinion will not be more valuable than Idomeneus' presumptions. This is shown on the example of Ajax, who answers the Cretan's speech with anger and invective—for he is convinced that Idomeneus is mistaken and, being an old man, cannot see clearly what is happening on the track.⁴¹ Trust can be garnered only by those presumptions that are attested to by clear and uninterrupted perception. This perception guarantees the recognition (γίγνωσκείν) of a given object, though the quality of perception influences the quality of cognition.⁴²

One who sees everything close up and exactly, as Phoinix did, possesses certainty as to the fact that his cognitive actions are not disrupted, and, thus, that he grasps the course of the race correctly. It is such exact, precise recognition (εὖ διαγιγνώσκω) that Idomeneus

⁴¹ *Il.* XXIII, 474–481

⁴² The distinction of the category of “good discernment” (εὖ διαγιγνώσκω), which suggests the existence of “un-good” discernment or discernment simpliciter should be considered symptomatic in this passage. Such a distinction of the effectiveness of individual acts signified by the verb γίγνωσκείν may turn out to be essential for attempts at systemizing the epistemological context of Homeric poetry. This would confirm J. Leshner's doubts as to the truth of Snell–Fritz's hypothesis, according to which a hierarchy of individual cognitive acts could be made on the basis of the criterion of the perceptive exactness of knowledge acquired on their basis (James H. Leshner, “Perceiving and Knowing in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,” p. 10). Accordingly, “knowledge words,” i.e. the verbs: ἰδεῖν, γίγνωσκείν, νοεῖν would not have identical semantic fields, and each next one would signify a more reliable form of cognition. Γίγνωσκείν would be the discernment of an object as something determined, for example, what appeared as a green blur turns out to be a bush. Idomeneus asserts in his speech that he “grasps” (ἀυγάζειν) the approaching chariot, but this is not εὖ διαγιγνώσκείν, which could signify that he either treats εὖ διαγιγνώσκείν as equivalent to διαγιγνώσκείν, or identifies the inexact act of ἀυγάζειν with διαγιγνώσκείν. The last possibility would take away the verb γίγνωσκείν's distinguished place in the hierarchy of levels of cognition proposed by Bruno Snell and Kurt von Fritz. See: Kurt von Fritz, “Noos and Noein in the Homeric Poems,” *Classical Philology* 38 (1943), pp. 88–90; Kurt von Fritz, “Nous, Noein, and their Derivatives in Pre-Socratic Philosophy (excluding Anaxagoras),” in: *The Pre-Socratics*, Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, ed. (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1974), pp. 23–24.

calls for. The opinions he expresses are, in truth, preceded by some form of cognition (ἀυγάζομαι), but supported by an unclear picture of the situation—a picture which, despite his keen looking around the plain (πάντη δέ μοι ὄσσε Τρωϊκὸν ἄμ πεδίον παπταίνετον εἰσορόωντι), the commander is not able to correct. “Good discernment,” i.e. a full verification of his presumptions, will only occur when the race ends. That is why the conflict between Idomeneus, reserved and cautious in his judgments, and Ajax, unrestrained in anger and driven by excessive self-confidence, is interrupted by Achilles, who organized the race:

No longer now, O Aias and Idomeneus, answer ye one another with angry words, with evil words, for that were unseemly. Ye have indignation with another, whoso should act thus. Nay, sit ye down in the place of gathering, and watch (εἰσοράσθε) ye the horses; full soon in their eager haste for victory will they come hither, and then shall ye know (γνώσεσθε), each man of you, the horses of the Argives, which be behind, and which in the lead.⁴³

The form of cognition (γίγνωσκειν) mentioned by Achilles, which will occur at the finish line is the full (*resp.* holistic) discernment (εἶδ διαγιγνώσκειν) of the victorious chariot already postulated by Idomeneus. Without it, the opinion of the Cretan commander is just another presumption that results from a partial, inexact presentation of an object moving in the distance among clouds of dust. The action signified here by the verb δοκέω is, both times it appears, a substitute for holistic perception (ιδέειν/εἰσοράω), thus, an equally certain, direct grasp, that constitutes the basis of a “good,” i.e. dependable, discernment of the object (εἶδ διαγιγνώσκειν/γίγνωσκειν). Such a form of cognition is proper Phoenix by virtue of the function he fulfills, but it will also be proper to anyone who will be present at the finish line for Diomedes’ victory.

In Homeric poetry, the opposition of the act of presuming or supposing and knowledge, which draws from sensory perception, boils down to the difference between a lack of certainty and such cognition, thanks

⁴³ *Il.* XXIII, 492–498. (Trans. A. T. Murray).

to which one acquires clear and obvious knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of an eyewitness of an event. Perception may not always guarantee such certainty, however, which is attested to by the case of Idomeneus, who sees, and even tried to correct his vision (παπταίνω εἰσοράω, verse 464), but is still unable to gain certainty as to whether what he perceives is true. Referring back to the etymology of δοκέω, we can briefly say that what is “received” is not always as it is in reality. On the basis of the described cognitive situation connected with the games in honor of Patroclus from Book XXIII of the *Iliad*, we must state that the recognition of a perceptive “grasp” as the criterion of certain knowledge must take into account the numerous obstacles that stand in the way of achieving such cognition. Insofar as sensory perception, especially sight, seems to be the necessary condition for the Homeric concept of knowledge, it is certainly not a sufficient condition.

Δοκέω **versus** σαφές οἶδα

The situation presented in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* is an elaboration of the problems connected with the perceptive character of a cognitive “grasp” and the certainty that is to result from it. In accordance with the characteristics of the analyzed semantic group of the verb δοκέω indicated earlier, an opinion that is a result of the action signified by this word is set in opposition to knowledge understood as true and certain. However, in the *Hymn to Hermes*, such knowledge does not coincide with average perception, even when it is not hindered by external conditions, as it was in the case of the observers of the race in Book XXIII of the *Iliad*.

An old winegrower witnesses a strange situation: he sees a boy leading a herd of cattle backwards through the grasses of the Onchestus. It is the cunning and recently born Hermes, who seized the holy cows of his older brother Apollo. The boy tries to cover his tracks so that his brother will not be able to track him down. That is why he leaves

misleading tracks behind, suggesting that the herd moved in the opposite direction. However, all his efforts will be for naught if the old man betrays him. So, Hermes suggests that the old man keep silent if asked about what he has saw.⁴⁴ However, the old man clearly disregarded the boy's words, since somewhat later, asked by Apollo if he saw anyone leading a herd of cattle recently, describes the strange situation he witnessed. Its peculiarity, however, causes him to lack certainty as to what he really saw. Therefore, he says, with hesitation, that it seems to him (ἔδοξα) that he perceived (νοῆσαι) a boy, though he does not clearly know (σαφὲς δ' οὐκ οἶδα) if this was really the case. It is all the less possible for him to say who the child could have been (ὅς τις ὁ παῖς⁴⁵). Next, in his words he concentrates on exactly relaying the event he witnessed,⁴⁶ without—what is essential—drawing specific and decisive conclusions that he could not permit himself to draw, lacking certainty as to his “knowledge.”

As was already visible in the case of the chariot race scene in the *Iliad*, an opposition between cognition and presumption is also drawn in the *Hymn to Hermes*. The difference is that knowledge, which is contrasted here with the action signified by the verb δοκέω, is not exhausted in sensory perception. Such a form of “grasping” is not enough for the old man to say: σαφὲς οἶδα. The information at his disposal (the relation of the occurrence) is, in truth, a form of knowledge, but it is not knowledge that he can trust, i.e. it is not clear and obvious, as the adverb σαφέως⁴⁷ suggests. Despite the fact that he saw exactly what happened, it is not fully conceivable to him—he does not understand the paradoxical-

⁴⁴ *h. Merc.* 92–93.

⁴⁵ “παῖδα δ' ἔδοξα φέριστε, σαφὲς δ' οὐκ οἶδα, νοῆσαι, / ὅς τις ὁ παῖς ἅμα βουσὶν εὐκράϊρησιν ὀπήδει.” (*h. Merc.* 208–209).

⁴⁶ *h. Merc.* 209–211.

⁴⁷ The concept of that, which is clear and obvious, signified by the adjective σαφής, noun σαφήνεια, or adverb σαφέως, played a very important role in the epistemological reflection being born. It already appears in the texts of the first philosopher who explicitly dealt with the problem of knowledge—Xenophanes of Colophon, for whom it constitutes one of two conditions of the truth of a statement. (Xenoph. B 34). The famous doctor—Pythagorean Alcmaeon of Croton also put forth theses on the subject of the clarity of cognition (σαφήνεια) in the context of the division into divine and human knowledge (Alcmaeon B 1). The role of this concept in the philosophy of the first epistemologists shows the great degree to which their reflection remained under

cal situation that played out before his eyes and which he is now relaying to Apollo. Thus, such a form of incomplete—due to its non-obviousness—knowledge coincides in this case with presumptions (ἔδοξα) that lack certainty. However, it is worth putting forth the hypothesis that if not for the peculiarity of the phenomenon that occurred before the farmer’s eyes, the exact same relation of the event would surely have the qualities of certain knowledge, because it would lack all that stood in opposition to the obviousness of the most ready interpretation (σαφές). Such a relation would exactly correspond to the information relayed by Phoinix, the judge of the race in the *Iliad*. At the same time, this would mean that the ideal knowledge supposed in the *Hymn to Hermes* is not very far off from the one that can be reconstructed on the basis of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. It seems, however, that in the discussed hymn it is enriched by a certain aspect of intellectual action, thanks to which the gathered material of perception can, and in exceptionally complex situations should, be interpreted, and above all—understandable for its addressee. Knowledge about what was seen, “received,” that lacks this “intellectual processing” can only serve as the basis for presumption, as the example of the old man in the *Hymn to Hermes* attests to.

The action that δοκέω signifies would, then, be a presumption, but not one that results from the inexactness of the sensory presentation of the object of cognition, which distinguishes the use of this verb in the hymn from its meaning in the speech of Idomeneus in the *Iliad*, but rather the presumption of the untrustworthiness of perception, even when undisrupted by external factors. Due to the character of knowledge, which is opposed to presumption here, we can risk the statement that the act of doubting itself, resulting from the use of the verb δοκέω, also acquires the meaning of an intellectually-understood act of cognition (δοκέω as “think”), thanks to which what is uncertain (i.e.: a pure, uninterpreted, received perception), cannot be considered true. The cau-

the influence of the Homeric context of the problem of cognition, in which the requirement of clarity and certainty played a central role.

tious old man demonstrates a large dose of criticism, because he is not inclined to accept everything that appears before his eyes—his uncertainty results in this case from reflection and caution, which cause him to consciously formulate his answer in such a way that does not aspire to being irrefutable, despite the apparent obviousness of the situation he witnessed.

Δοκέω **versus** προνοέω

The verb δοκέω in the sense of a presumption connected with the present also appears in Book V of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus' fight for his life at sea is described. For precision's sake, it is worth repeating that this example of using the verb δοκέω eludes the simplified division used in these analyses. It can be both included in the decisional-preferential group, and cognitive-presumptive group. The fact that it could belong to the first group is determined by the fact that δοκέω appears here within a characteristic Homeric formula: “[...] ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα,” which is closely related to the practical and decisional spheres in the face of sudden and significant events. However, it seems essential for the meaning of the verb δοκέω that is used to also be counted in the cognitive-presumptive group. A justification for this is the opposition of presumption and more valuable forms of knowledge that was recognized as the distinguishing feature of the presumptive meaning limited to currently-occurring cognition.

Ino comes to help Odysseus, though initially he fails to listen to her counsel, fearing deception by the gods. He resolves to rely on his own evaluation of the situation first. At the same time, he notes that the decision he is making to save himself from death in the depths of the sea seems (δοκέει δέ μοι⁴⁸) best in the existing situation, though he is aware that other, better methods of rescuing himself surely exist. For now, though,

⁴⁸ *Od.* V, 360.

he does not know what those methods are—for he is unable to come up with (προνοῆσαι) anything better (ἄμεινον⁴⁹).

It is clear that in the described scene no form of knowledge that would have its source in sensory perception comes into play. A grasp of the opposing factors of presumption is not of a perceptive character, though it is also to have the quality of directness that originally characterizes precisely the sensory “grasp.” Here, the object of a cognitive act is not meant to be an objective reality or internal “world” of the subject—the agent of this action. Odysseus, “planning” what he should do, tries to “get” an idea.

The directness and suddenness of the desired, though in Odysseus’ situation—unattainable, cognitive “grasp” is suggested by the verb (προ-)νοέω, which, like the noun νόος, expresses the same sphere of unprocessual intellectual activity, thanks to which instant decisions can be made in states of exceptional danger.⁵⁰ It is noteworthy that the action of νόος cannot be reduced in Homer to abstract discursive thought or to logic, which would only secondarily designate the directives of action. On the contrary, it remains closely-tied with the act of sensory perception, especially with sight (ibidem). Therefore, this is such reason that “sees,” “perceives” its object in its directness and permits a certain “awareness of the existing situation,” “a sudden realization of the significance of the existing situation,”⁵¹ thanks to which the more effective planning and choice of such an option of further action as will be most adequate for the present danger becomes possible.

The hurried decision made by Odysseus is not an optimal solution and the hero is fully aware of this. It is only relatively best: the best of those options that come to mind in the face of danger. This does not change the fact that “[...] ὡς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα” clearly does not fulfill, in Odysseus’ opinion, the requirements of a holistic, quasi-perceptive view of the situation, by virtue of which he could have the certainty that he will get out of the oppression alive. Thus, he has to make do with opinion, which,

⁴⁹ *Od.* V, 364.

⁵⁰ Kurt von Fritz, “Noos and Noein in the Homeric Poems,” *Classical Philology* 38 (1943), p. 88.

⁵¹ K. von Fritz, “Noos and Noein in the Homeric Poems,” pp. 88–89.

of course, has room for error and is open to correction, by way of which it can always become something relatively better (ἄμεινον).

Recapitulation

In the poetry traditionally associated with the name of Homer, it was not strange to perceive truth or knowledge in opposition to opinion; on the contrary, this opposition played a significant role in the epistemological reflection of the first philosophers. The research of modern scholars who indicate the concurrence of the division into truth and opinion with division into human and divine knowledge, not only characteristic of Homeric poetry, but for the entire epic, is of inestimable value to the state of knowledge on the sources of Greek epistemology.⁵² However, it seems that recognizing the Homeric context of the philosophical problem of cognition does not have to, even should not, be limited to an analysis of what a deity could know and what mortal man could (or could not) know. An awareness of the problems connected with cognition is present in Homer already at the level of knowledge of the average human being, without the necessity of references to the sphere of the divine cognitive ideal. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the action of imperfect opining was already connected then with the verb δοκέω, from which the nouns δόξα and δόκος are derived, delimiting, along with concepts that refer to truth, the most general framework of understanding cognition in Greek philosophy. Only one semantic subgroup of the verb δοκέω was subject to analysis here, which should be justified above all by the fact that the main feature which makes it stand out is the strong opposition between presumption and the certainty of the holistic cognitive understanding—thus, precisely

⁵² Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of Mind. The Greek Origins of European Thought*, quoted after the Polish edition: *Odkrycie ducha*, pp. 171–174. The fact that the division into divine and human knowledge, in a slightly changed form, is still upheld in philosophical reflection should be considered a sufficient reason for the necessity of analyzing this distinction. Here, we can risk the thesis that philosophical epistemological reflection at its source was based on the fundamental difference between ideal divine knowledge and the imperfect human way of “grasping.” As Heraclitus of Ephesus states: “ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνῶμας, θεῖον δὲ ἔχει.” (Heraclit. B 78)

that feature which distinguished the later philosophical concept of opinion as δόκος and δόξα.

The four appearances of δοκέω in the sense of presumptions regarding the present and resulting from an insufficient state of knowledge are confronted in Homer with various verbs referring to cognition and delimiting the boundaries of its correctness: 1 and 2) δοκέω contrasted with accurate perception and the resulting ability to recognize an object (ιδέειν and εἰσοράω, as well as εἶ διαγιγνώσκειν and γιγνώσκειν); 3) δοκέω contrasted with the obviousness and understanding of a solely apparently clear impression (σαφές οἶδα); 4) δοκέω as a practical substitute of the non-perceptive act of recognizing the best possible means of rescue (προνοέω). It should be recognized as significant that the postulated cognitive ideal is different in each of the analyzed cognitive situations. In only one case (though δοκέω appears twice here) is it pure sensory perception as the basis of a direct observer's knowledge (the function of the arbitrating Phoinix). In the *Hymn to Hermes*, it is a self-evident perception, and as such requires interpretation, critical reflection. In the third scene (*Odyssey*), on the other hand, there can be no talk of any sensory grasp, and opinion is contrasted with a holistic, "intellectual" grasp of the threatening situation. This transcendence of the perceptive character of "grasping" (formulation) as a measure of cognition substantiates the hypothesis that the meaning of the verb δοκέω retains an undercurrent of "receptivity" that stems from its etymology. Something that is "received," that imposes itself on the subject externally (like an impression), does not automatically have to be considered true. An exemplification of this thesis is the uncertain judgment of Idomeneus, who perceives something, in truth, but his perception is disturbed by external factors. However, in the fullest form, the conviction about receptivity's relation to δοκέω appears in the case of the old farmer's trial in the *Hymn to Hermes*—here, even undisturbed perception does not guarantee knowledge understood as obvious and clear (σαφές).⁵³

⁵³ The conviction about the insufficiency of receptivity that permeates the meaning of δοκέω will later become one of the main distinctions of the philosophical concept of opinion common to all of pre-Platonic gnoseology (see e.g.: Heraclit. B 107).

The next essential quality of the Homeric understanding of opinion as *δοκέω* results from the breaking off of the relationship between receptivity and the truth: it is only subjectively valid. In accordance with what Havelock has already indicated, the Greek concept of *δόξα* and its corresponding verb are characterized by a mix-up of the subjective and objective spheres. Such a presumption is *de facto* the result of what appears to man and how he interprets it. In accordance with the above statement, we cannot say Homeric opinion is simply “appearance,” or, more emphatically, “phantom,” just as we cannot reduce it to “judgment.” This is clearly visible in the formula “[...] ὧς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα,” which was cited here in connection with the presumption expressed by Odysseus. His judgment is important to him himself (which is emphasized by the frequent connection of the verb *δοκέω* with the ablative of a person) and in regards to the existent situation. Thus, we can risk the statement that such a judgment is doubly relativized: to the object (circumstances) and to the subject. In this sense, Idomeneus’ presumptions, though correct, are only significant to him and, until they are verified at the finish line of the race, are of the same value as those formed by other people watching the race—which is visible in Ajax’s stormy reaction.

Another essential quality accompanying *δοκέω* is epistemological openness. It was mentioned that the accepted cognitive ideal, set in opposition to presumption, differs in each of the analyzed scenes. This does not mean, however, that a common feature distinguishing them cannot be indicated: this feature is directness, the unprocessuality of formulation, which, in truth, originally belongs to the senses, especially the sense of sight, but also appears in the Greek concept of *νόος* and in the function expressed by *νοέω*. The effect of such a monumental formulation of the object is the clarity and obviousness of cognition, and therefore that, which is explicitly called *σαφές* in the *Hymn to Hermes*. This certainty is the desired cognitive goal, though it is not always possible to achieve.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Also in the case of Xenophanes of Colophon, *σαφές*, as a necessary condition of cognition is set in opposition to the opinion *δόκος* (Xenoph. B 34). Thanks to further study, the latter remain open to what is better, or, translating *ἀμεινον* adverbially, to: “finding the better” (Xenoph. B 18).

The opinion it is contrasted with is, in the meantime, open to further correction, amendments—in a word, to that which is better (ἄμεινον).

The epistemological breadth of opinion reveals its next quality that already appears in Homer. The fact that clarity is associated with fully-achieved cognition means that we can distinguish more and less certain presumptions.⁵⁵ This is most clearly visible in the *Iliad*, where in one of the Cretan commander's statements δοκέω appears signifying two opinions with a different degree of certainty. The conviction as to an opinion's correctness increases in this case to the degree that obstacles disabling the recognition of the approaching victorious cart disappear.

However, the most important understanding of opinion for Homer seems to be the critical distinction of knowledge and full cognition from that, which is only a simplification that, in the words of Parmenides of Elea, "lacks true certainty."⁵⁶ Awareness of this fundamental difference is the cornerstone not only of Greek epistemological reflection, but also of the critical attitude that has accompanied European culture from its beginning.

⁵⁵ In this aspect, Homeric opinions come close to their later Parmenidean counterpart. Neither fulfills the rigorous condition of the uniformity of truth, which Parmenides mentions, among others, when describing the σήματα of being (Parm. B 8, 22–24).

⁵⁶ Parm. B 1, 30.

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Sebastian Śpiewak

Homerowe źródła kategorii δόξα
Δοκέω w znaczeniu kognitywno-presumpcyjnym:
presumpcja na temat terażniejszości
Uwagi o źródłach greckiego krytycyzmu

Streszczenie: Głównym celem prezentowanego artykułu jest określenie źródeł filozoficznego pojęcia δόξα rozumianego jako mniemanie. Analizie poddana zostaje gnoseologiczna treść pojęcia mniemania występującego w poezji łączonej tradycyjnie z imieniem Homera (*Iliada*, *Odyseja*, tzw. *Hymny homeryckie*). Treść ta zawiera w sobie dwa podstawowe aspekty – podmiotowy i przedmiotowy – które decydują o filozoficznej doniosłości pojęcia δόξα. Problematyczność zachodzącej między nimi relacji widoczna jest szczególnie w grupie semantycznej czasownika δοκέω, która, na potrzeby niniejszego artykułu, zostaje określona grupą *presupozycji ograniczonej do terażniejszości*. Analizy skupione wokół wyżej wymienionej grupy znaczeniowej dostarczają istotnych informacji o poznawczej charakterystyce czynności mniemania i jej efektów, które wykorzystane zostały najpierw w epice homerowej a później również w rodzącej się filozofii. Prezentowane rozważania i analizy pozwalają na rozpoznanie źródłowo krytycznych podstaw greckiej refleksji epistemologicznej, której właściwym początkiem jest problem statusu mniemania i jego relacji do pojęcia prawdy oraz wiedzy.

Słowa kluczowe: δόξα, δοκέω, przypuszczenie, mniemanie, Homer, kognitywne cechy przypuszczenia, grecka refleksja epistemologiczna