

From Thinking to Raging: Reflexes of Indo-European *Men- Polysemy in Homer

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the semantic value of the verb $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ “to rage, to be furious” in Homeric Greek, in order to clarify the striking semantic relationship between the common ‘irrational’ meaning of the verb and the original ‘rational’ meaning of the Indo-European root *men- “to think”, to which the verb traces back. The corresponding words for $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ in other Indo-European languages (e.g. OInd. *mányatē*; Av. *mainyeite*; OIr. *(do)moiniur*; OCS *мѣнѣ*; Lit. *miniu*) can be translated as “to think”, thus showing an opposite meaning. From a textual analysis of all the occurrences of $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ in the Iliad and the Odyssey, the study aims at finding semantic traces of the original meaning “to think” belonging to the Indo-European root *men-, in order to account for the apparently impossible semantic relationship between the verb and the original root. Textual data show a significant polysemy of $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, which refers to particular psychosomatic dynamics and which can be explained by taking into account the Homeric ‘body-mind’ association and the role of the heart as the crucial organ which supervises all the vital functions, including the psychic and the cognitive ones.

Keywords: Indo-European, Homeric Greek, Semantics

1. Introduction: State of the Art and Purpose of the Study

It is well known that the Ancient Greek verb $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ prototypically conveys the idea of “raging”, “being furious, mad, insane” and is etymologically connected to terms such as $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ “force, might, rage” and $\mu\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ “madness” (LSJ 2011; Snell 1955-2010). Semantically stative and non-telic, the verb $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ basically suggests a state of agitation experienced by the subject, which seems to be highly involved, according to the *medium tantum* status of the

verb. Although the common meaning of *μαίνομαι* concerns what we would call the irrational dimension, fully conveying the “anger”, the fact of “being insane”, something striking actually emerges from the linguistic comparison. The corresponding words for *μαίνομαι* in other Indo-European languages convey the idea of “thinking”, e.g. OInd. *mányatē*, Av. *mainyeite* “to think”; OIr. (*do*)*moiniur* “to believe, to assume”; OCS *мънѣти* “to think”; Lit. *miniu* “to think about, to remember of”, therefore showing an opposite meaning, which rather refers to the rational dimension. A similar semantic opposition is also found in other corresponding forms, e.g. μένος “force, might, rage” vs. OInd. *mānas-*, Av. *manah-* “mind”. As well as all the terms taken into account so far, the verb *μαίνομαι* traces back to the IE root **men-* (Note 1), to which some scholars assign the rational meaning “to think” (cf. Rix 2001: 435, who translates *einen gedanken fassen*). Other scholars add the irrational meaning “to be spiritually aroused” as well (cf. Pokorny 1959: 726, who translates *denken; geistig erregt sein*; see also Boisacq 1916: 600-601; Walde 1927: 264), in order to account for the irrational component which seems to prevail in Ancient Greek forms, as also shown by other forms, e.g. μενεαίνω, μνάομαι, μενοινάω “to desire”, μαντεύομαι “to divine, prophesy”, μάντις “diviner, seer, prophet” (Note 2). Starting from Meillet (1897), many scholars have tried to explain the divergence between the irrational frame of the Ancient Greek and the rational frame proper to the original Indo-European root as shown by the other languages. Most of these scholars have hypothesized a semantic split Greek has undergone as opposed to a Proto-Indo-European state (see Monier-Williams 1899; Pokorny 1959; Frisk; 1960-70; Mayrhofer 1963; Chantraine 1968-80). More recently, through a comparative analysis of Homeric Greek and Vedic Sanskrit, Bartolotta (2003; 2012) has shown that the opposition that has just been sketched has to be seen rather as in terms of a semantic continuum, based on the polysemy of the IE root **men-*, in which both the rational and the irrational dimensions are blurred and mutually connected. She has shown that Homeric and Sanskrit forms actually refer to the same kind of cognitive process by taking into account both μενεαίνω, μνάομαι, μενοινάω “to desire”, μαντεύομαι “to divine, to prophesy”, μάντις “diviner, seer, prophet”, and Sanskrit terms connected with the stem *man-*, like *mányatē* “to desire”, *mānas-* “mind”, which concern “knowledge”. In the light of the semantic nucleus the IE root **men-*, which can refer to the idea of “having in mind”, and its intimate relationship with the IE root **weid-* “to see”, this cognitive process concerns the physical dimension, so as to involve body, movement, impulse to act, sensorial perception, desire, memory (Note 3). In this perspective, both the rational/irrational and the body/mind dichotomies were likely to be originally blurred and strongly connected to each other in Homer as well as in the Indo-European culture.

Yet, the verb *μαίνομαι* still needs further clarification as it represents the polar opposite in reference to the rational meaning, which is inherent to the Indo-European root, within the semantic continuum sketched above. The present study aims at investigating the semantic value of the verb *μαίνομαι* in Homeric Greek, which is the oldest state of the Greek language, through a textual analysis of its occurrences in the Homeric poems, in order to account for the apparently impossible semantic relationship between the common ‘irrational’ meaning of the verb and the original ‘rational’ meaning of the IE root **men-*. The ultimate purpose of the study is to find semantic traces of the original meaning “to think” in the Homeric contexts of use of the verb *μαίνομαι*.

2. Distribution of *μαίνομαι* in the Iliad and the Odyssey

There are 162 occurrences of *μαίνομαι* in Homer, in particular 135 are found in the Iliad and 27 in the Odyssey. In 109 of the total occurrences the verb occurs as a nominal form (i.e. infinitive or participial), while in the other 53 it occurs as a finite form. There is a higher frequency of occurrences as absolute forms (85×) and as governing an infinitive (73×); only rarely the verb governs a genitive of things (4×). Distributional data are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Homeric distribution of *μαίνομαι*

Total forms	Finite forms	Nominal forms	Absolute forms	Governing forms
162 (135 Iliad; 27 Odyssey)	53	109	85	77

In particular, the Homeric verbal forms of *μαίνομαι* are:

- present indicative, *μαίνομαι* (11×);
- unaugmented imperfect indicative, *μαίνετο* (3×);
- augmented sigmatic aorist indicative, *ἔπ-εμήνατο* (1×) (Note 4);
- perfect indicative, *μέμονα* (27×);
- unaugmented pluperfect indicative, *μέμασαν* (8×);
- present participle, *μαινόμενος* (7×);
- perfect participle, *μεμαώς* (101×);
- perfect imperative, *μεμάτω* (2×);
- present infinitive, *μαίνεσθαι* (1×);
- present subjunctive, *μαίνηται* (1×).

Talking about verbal forms in terms of coherent paradigms may be inappropriate in reference to Homeric Greek, since different forms which are traced back to the same root can often exhibit a certain level of independence, which is both formal and semantic. As far as *μαίνομαι* is concerned, the distribution of the verbal forms shows a dichotomy between those built on the present stem (*μαινο-*) and those built on the perfect stem (*μεμον-/μεμα-*). This dichotomy proves to be also semantic, as it will be shown.

3. Textual Analysis: Contexts of Use of the Verb *μαίνομαι* in the Homeric Poems

Made by means of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG 2000) digital database, the purpose of the textual analysis of all the Homeric contexts of use of the verb *μαίνομαι* is to shed light on the complex semantics of the verb besides its common meaning “to rage, be furious” and to find semantic traces that can account for the original rational meaning “to think” included in the Indo-European root to which the chosen verb traces back.

In this section the results of the textual analysis on the Homeric poems are presented and discussed. For reasons of space, only a significant selection of examples is taken into account. In each one, noteworthy lexemes are written in bold.

3.1 *μαίνομαι and the Martial Rage*

The common meaning of the verb *μαίνομαι* is connected to rage, fury, and madness. This can account for the first non-random distributional data: the broad majority of occurrences in the *Iliad* (135×) rather than in the *Odyssey* (27×) may be due to the topic of the first poem, i.e. the war between Achaeans and Trojans. War represents a circumstance that forces anybody to be in an incessant state of tension which is both physical and psychic. Most of the Homeric occurrences of *μαίνομαι* refer in fact to the impetus shown by “furious” heroes during the battle, as illustrated in (1):

(1) οἳ κεν δὴ κακὸν οἴτον ἀναπλήσαντες ὄλωνται

ἀνδρὸς ἐνὸς ῥίπτῃ; ὃ δὲ **μαίνεται** οὐκέτ’ ἀνεκτῶς

Ἐκτῶρ Πριαμίδης, καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργεν. (*Il.* 8.354-356)

“Now they (*scil.* Achaeans) will certainly perish moving towards an evil fate

because of the rush of a single man: Hector, Priam’s son, now **rages** unbearably

and he does great harm to them”

In (1), expressed by *μαίνεται*, Hector’s rage is unbearable. The contextual connection with the idea of movement, as shown by the dative *ῥίπτῃ* that conveys Hector’s hostile “rush” (cf. *ρίπτω* “throw, cast”) is noteworthy: the condition expressed by *μαίνομαι* seems to be a state of agitation causing an impulse to act.

The particular agitation indicated by *μαίνομαι* is often linked to *μένος* “might”, i.e. a vital energy, which is physical and psychic at the same time. Sometimes, the furious rage of a hero can be particularly remarkable. This happens especially when a god increases *μένος* inside the chest of a hero. Originating from an external agent (i.e. a god), this particular event thus involves heroes internally, making them feel as they were taken by a certain temporary madness (*μανία*) (Note 5) that allows them to accomplish extraordinary acts, as illustrated in (2), in which Diomedes receives a triple increase of his *μένος* from Athene (cf. also v. 125):

(2) καὶ πρὶν περ **θυμῷ μεμαῶς** Τρῶεσσι μάχεσθαι·

δὴ τότε μιν τρὶς τόσσον ἔλεν **μένος, ὧς τε λέοντα,**

ὄν ῥά τε ποιμὴν ἀγρῶι ἐπ’ εἰροπόκοις οἴεσσιν

χραύσει μὲν τ’ αὐλῆς ὑπεράλμενον, οὐδὲ δαμάσσει·

[...] αὐτὰρ ὁ **ἐμμεμαῶς** βαθέης ἐξάλλεται αὐλῆς·

ὧς μεμαῶς Τρῶεσσι μίγη κρατερὸς Διομήδης. (*Il.* 5.135-143)

“and before **his heart had been eager** to fight against the Trojans,

and then a **force** laid hold upon him three times as much, **as upon a lion**,
that a shepherd in the field, guarding his fleecy sheep,
has wounded as he leapt over the fence, but has not killed;
[...] but the **eager** lion leaps over the high fence:
as eager, mighty Diomedes did and mingled with the Trojans.”

In (2) Diomedes is under the effect of an upsetting force that makes him furious like a voracious lion. With reference to the increasing μένος, the phrase μιν [...] ἔλεν “(it) grasped him” refers to the idea of something experienced by the subject because of an external intervention (cf. Dodds 1951). According to the stative value of the Homeric perfect, the perfect participle μεμαῶς refers to the status of somebody who “is eager” to do something. Thus, in the simile with the animal (which is a common Homeric topos to indicate who is eager) μεμαῶς seems here to involve a slightly different semantic nuance that goes beyond the idea of rage and fury, connecting the verb to the idea of a type of agitation that is an irresistible desire to act (Note 6). It is worthy of note that such an agitation, desire, and impulse is based in the heart, in which the increase of μένος takes place, as confirmed by its frequent co-occurrence with some anatomical terms, i.e. θυμός (cf. vv. 135-136), ἦτορ, κραδίη/καρδίη, φρένες, relating to that crucial organ which supervises all the vital functions in Homer (see below 3.2-3.3).

3.2 μαίνομαι *Between Yearning and Intention*

The particular psychosomatic disposition connected to the polysemy of the verb μαίνομαι, as emerged from the examples discussed so far, is further clarified in this section. Such a disposition seems to refer to both burning desire, yearning, and a solid resolution as somehow originated from a rational elaboration. As it will be shown in the following examples, the semantic nuances of μαίνομαι are often merged and difficult to distinguish, due to the ‘body-mind’ and ‘irrational-rational’ associations, which are rather blurred and inextricably connected in Homer (Note 7). For this reason, the broader discourse context is crucial to fully understand the semantic complexity of μαίνομαι.

The context in (3) describes the preliminary moment before the battle. In such an introspective situation, heroes are thus forced to get ready for war: on the one hand, they are yearning for gaining the glory by fighting in battle, on the other hand, they are reflecting on the wretched possibility that they are going to die:

- (3) Τρῶες δ’ αὖθ’ ἐτέρωθεν ἀνὰ πτόλιν ὀπλίζοντο,
παυρότεροι, **μέμασαν** δὲ καὶ ὧς ὑσμῖνι μάχεσθαι,
χρειοὶ ἀναγκαίηι, πρό τε παίδων καὶ πρὸ γυναικῶν. (*Il.* 8.55-57)
“The Trojans, on their side, armed themselves throughout the city,
they were fewer, yet they **were eager** to fight in battle

through utter need, for their children's sake and their wives”

Although the Trojans are worried probably because they are few against the siege of the Achaeans, they are encouraged to fight by utter need (cf. *χρειοῖ ἀναγκαίη*): the necessity of defending their sons and wives makes them ready to fight and, indeed, eager to do it (cf. also *Il.* 12.169 f.). In the phrase *μέμασαν [...] μάχεσθαι*, (“(they) were eager to fight”), the pluperfect *μέμασαν* conveys the idea of a desire which is both instinctive and conscious, a wish which originates from both an inner impulse and a rational evaluation of the situation. In other terms, in the meaning of *μέμασαν* both desire and will, instinct and reason seem to coexist. Similar observations are valid also in reference to (4), in which the pluperfect *μέμασαν* occurs within the formulaic locution *μέμασαν δὲ μάλιστα* “(they) were utterly eager”:

- (4) οἱ μὲν ἄμ’ Ἑκτορ’ ἴσαν καὶ ἀμύμονι Πουλυδάμαντι,
οἱ πλεῖστοι καὶ ἄριστοι ἔσαν, **μέμασαν δὲ μάλιστα**
τεῖχος ῥηξάμενοι κοίλησι ἐπὶ νηυσὶ μάχεσθαι· (*Il.* 12.88-90 = 12.195)
“Some went with Hector and peerless Polydamas,
and they were the most numerous, the best, and **were utterly eager**
to fight by the hollow ships, once the wall was destroyed.”

As shown by the superlative *μάλιστα* (“exceedingly”), the formulaic locution *μέμασαν δὲ μάλιστα* in (4) refers to the heroes’ yearning to undertake something. Yet, the desire expressed by *μέμασαν* can also be seen as a tenacious resolution, therefore as something rationally determined: the Trojans’s will to attack the Achaeans over the wall remains firm, although their horses stopped for fear, forcing the heroes to continue on foot (cf. vv. 49-79) (Note 8).

The idea of a will as involved by the meaning of the analyzed verb is particularly evident in (5), in which the narrative-syntactical context clearly connects the perfect *μεμάασι* to the verb (*ἐ*) *θέλω* “to want”:

- (5) ὧς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ **ἔθελον** Διομήδει πολλοὶ ἔπεσθαι.
ἠθελήτην Αἴαντε δύω, θεράποντες Ἴαρος,
ἠθελε Μηριόνης, μάλα δ’ **ἠθελε** Νέστορος υἱός,
ἠθελε δ’ Ἀτρείδης δουρικλειτὸς Μενέλαος,
ἠθελε δ’ ὁ τλήμων Ὀδυσσεὺς καταδῦναι ὄμιλον
Τρώων· αἰεὶ γάρ οἱ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἐτόλμα.
τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων·
“Τυδεΐδη Διόμηδες, ἐμῶι κεχαρισμένε θυμῶι,
τὸν μὲν δὴ ἔταρόν γ’ αἰρήσειαι, ὃν κ’ ἐθέλησθα,

φαινομένων τὸν ἄριστον, ἐπεὶ **μεμάασί** γε πολλοί. (*Il.* 10.227-236)

“So he spoke, and many **were fain** to follow Diomedes.

Fain were the two Aiantes, squires of Ares,

fain was Meriones, and right **fain** the son of Nestor,

fain was the son of Atreus, Menelaus, famed for his spear,

and **fain too was** the brave Odysseus to plunge into the throng

of the Trojans: for the heart in his chest was always daring.

Then among them spoke the king of men, Agamemnon:

“Diomedes, son of Tydeus, dear to my heart,

choose as your comrade, whoever you like,

the best of those who offered themselves, for many **intended** (to follow you)”

Diomedes has volunteered to spy on the enemies at night. The mission is highly risky and he asks whether there is any comrade willing to go with him. Diomedes’s words (cf. vv. 220-226) make several Achaeans yearn to participate with him. In (5) there is a list of all those comrades who are ready to take part on the mission. The connection with the verb (ἐ)θέλω, which is repeated in anaphora, clearly confirms the semantic value of the perfect μεμάασι: in reference to the volunteers, in this passage it means “(they) wanted, intended (to do)”, therefore conveying their firm will as an attitude or a disposition to act, which is both physical and psychic. In all likelihood, the volunteers are encouraged, on the one hand, by Diomedes’s words, and, on the other hand, by considering the glory (as well as the risks) connected to the mission (cf. vv. 211-216).

It is noteworthy that the impulse to do is something that comes from the inside, namely from the heart, and this indeed constitutes the crucial issue to account for the inherent polysemy of μαίνομαι. In this respect, taking again into account the previous context in (5), the verse 232 is rather significant:

(6) [...] αἰεὶ γὰρ οἱ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἐτόλμα (*Il.* 10.232)

“[...] for **the heart in his chest was** always **daring**”

In reference to Odysseus’s will to go with Diomedes as a volunteer, Homer says that Odysseus’s heart (θυμὸς) in his chest or, more precisely, in his pericardium (ἐνὶ φρεσὶ), is always ready to dare to do something. Similarly, Diomedes says that he is urged by his own heart as well, when he for first volunteers for the risky mission of spying on the enemies, as illustrated in (7):

(7) [...] ἔμ’ ὀτρύνει κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ

ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων δῦναι στρατὸν ἐγγυὸς ἐόντων

Τρώων ·[...] (*Il.* 10.220-222)

“[...] **my heroic heart urges me**

to enter the camp of the enemies, that are near,

the Trojans; [...]”

Diomedes’s will to volunteer comes out as an encouraging impulse (cf. *ὀτρύνω* “to stir up, egg on”) coming from his heart, i.e. *κραδίη* καὶ *θυμὸς* (for their synonymousness, see below) (Note 9).

Furthermore, the particular psychosomatic status expressed by the pluperfect *μέμασαν*, in reference to heroes’ yearning to fight - cf. (2)-(4) - is based in their hearts as well, as illustrated in (8)-(9):

(8) [...] **μέμασαν δ’ ἐνὶ θυμῶι**

ἀλλήλους καθ’ ὄμιλον ἐναίρεμεν ὄξεϊ χαλκῶι. [...] (Il. 13.337-338)

“[...] and they **were eager in their hearts**

to slay one another in the throng with the sharp bronze.”

(9) [...] **ἐν δ’ ἄρα θυμῶι**

ἀμφοτέροι μέμασαν πολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι. (Il. 7.1-3)

“[...] and **in their hearts**

they **were** both **eager** to struggle and fight.”

The co-occurrence of physical terms proves that the heart plays a central role on the psychosomatic dynamics involved by the meaning of the verb *μαίνομαι*. According to the Homeric biological concept, the heart is the complex human organ whose parts supervise all the vital functions, including the psychic and the cognitive ones, jointly and without any functional distinction, as confirmed by the frequent terminological interchangeability between Homeric terms such as *θυμός*, *κραδίη/καρδίη*, *φρένες*, *ἦτορ*, in spite of their reference to different elements. In the Homeric human being, the motion of the sanguineous life/motion principle (i.e. *θυμός*) inside the heart (i.e. *κραδίη/καρδίη* or *ἦτορ*) is basically propagated to the pericardium (i.e. *φρένες*), in which the heart is contained, so giving rise to emotions, desires, wills, reasoning, thoughts, and, if this motion also spreads to other body parts, to movements, actions, and speech (Laspia 1996: 107 ff.) (Note 10). All the human functions depend on the heart. Therefore, there is not a real distinction between body and mind in Homer, the only dimension which he recognizes for the self is the physical one. In other words, what will be later seen as psychic, mental, spiritual, cognitive processes is actually a physical motion of the heart in Homer, and this accounts for that in Homer the psychic lexicon is basically the physical one (cf. Onians 1951; Vivante 1956; Laspia 1996; Spatafora 1999; Bartolotta 2012; Levko 2016). Hence, the semantic complexity of the verb *μαίνομαι* refers to that state of agitation resulting from the motion of the heart in the chest,

namely of the θυμός inside the κραδίη/καρδίη/ἤτορ and, in turn, the φρένες.

3.3 *μαίνομαι and the Thought Process*

In the light of the Homeric concept of the cardiac system, the following examples present particular uses of the verb *μαίνομαι* which show traces of the rational original meaning “to think”, proper of the Indo-European root **men-*.

In (10), the perfect μέμονε clearly refers to a cognitive process which involves the movement of the φρένες:

(10) **διχθὰ δέ μοι κραδίη μέμονε φρεσὶν ὀρμαίνοντι,**

ἧ μιν ζῶν ἐόντα μάχης ἄπο δακρυόεσσης

θείω ἀναπάξας Λυκίης ἐν πίονι δήμῳ,

ἧ ἤδη ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενoitιάδαο δαμάσσω. (*Il.* 16.435-438)

“My heart thinks in two different ways as it ponders with its revolving pericardium,

whether I shall snatch him up while he is still alive

and set him afar from the tearful battle and take him to the rich land of Lycia

or whether I shall slay him now by the hand of the son of Menoetius”

In (10) Zeus tells Hera that he is torn: he would like to help Sarpedon, a hero which is dear to him, but he has forbidden everyone from helping any hero in the battle. Zeus is actually pondering and he is literally *divided*: the adverb *διχθὰ* “in two (ways)” actually refers to the way Zeus’s heart (κραδίη) is agitated (μέμονε) moving inside/with the pericardium (φρεσὶν), so giving rise to two divergent hypotheses, two different thoughts. The cognitive process expressed by μέμονε lies in Zeus’s heart movement, as also shown by the significant connection with the motion verb ὀρμαίνω “to turn over; revolve anxiously in the mind; think, ponder” (which is etymologically connected to ὀρμάω “to set in motion”, ὀρμή “rapid motion forwards; impulse”, ὀρνομι “to urge on; awaken”): Zeus’s heart, namely his φρένες, is actually turning over two hypotheses. Conveyed by the adverb *διχθὰ*, the twofold thinking of Zeus is also linguistically reflected when he verbalizes his divergent thoughts, as shown by the particles ἧ [...] ἧ “whether... whether or”.

Similarly, in (11) the perfect μέμονας expresses the idea of pondering, as also proved by the co-occurrence with the denominative verb φρονέω (< φρένες), which means “to think; be minded”:

(11) ὧδ’ ἔστω, Ἐκάεργε· τὰ γὰρ φρονέουσα καὶ αὐτή

ἧλθον ἀπ’ Οὐλύμποιο μετὰ Τρῶας καὶ Ἀχαιοῦς.

ἀλλ’ ἄγε, πῶς μέμονας πόλεμον καταπαυσέμεν ἀνδρῶν;

τὴν δ’ αὖτε προσέειπεν ἄναξ Διὸς υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων·

[...] ὧς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἀπίθησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη. (*Il.* 7.34-43)

“So be it, you god that work afar; so **thinking** myself,

I came from Olympus to the midst of Trojans and Achaeans.

But come, **how do you intend to** put an end to the battle of the warriors?

Then in answer to her spoke king Apollo, son of Zeus:

[...] So he spoke, and the goddess, flashing-eyed Athene, was convinced”

In (11) Apollo intends to stop the battle and Athene agrees with him, as expressed by the participle of φρονέω (cf. τὰ γὰρ φρονέουσα), she was pondering the same thing. Yet, the goddess asks Apollo *how* (πῶς) he intends to do it. In other terms, Athene wants to know what is the way Apollo has thought of. As proved by the larger discourse context, the semantic value of the perfect μέμονας in (11) is “(you) have pondered, thought, planned”: in fact Apollo tells (προσέειπεν) Athene a real detailed plan (cf. vv. 38-42). According to the stative value of the Homeric perfect, the cognitive activity expressed by μέμονας can be explained as a state resulting from a concluded action, with reference to the heart agitation: “(you) are aroused (in your heart)” > “(you) have thought” > “(you) intend (to do)”. As in (10), also in (11) what is thought is also verbalized: by explaining his plan, Apollo convinces the goddess.

In the light of (10)-(11), in (12) the verb μαίνομαι co-occurs with φρένες in reference to a state of agitation which seems to reflect thought process, rather than rage or madness:

(12) ἀλλὰ πατήρ οὐμὸς φρεσὶ μαίνεται οὐκ ἀγαθήσιν,

σχέτλιος, αἰὲν ἀλιτρός, ἐμῶν μενέων ἀπερωεύς (*Il.* 8.360-361)

“but my father **thinks with evil heart,**

merciless that he is, always wicked, a thwarter of my intents”

Athene would like to see Hector dead, but her father Zeus does not agree with her. In (12), Athene says that Zeus has a bad disposition to her purposes: the goddess literally says that Zeus is in a state of agitation (μαίνεται) with bad φρένες (φρεσὶ [...] οὐκ ἀγαθήσιν). In this perspective, Zeus’s disposition, which is certainly mental, can be understood as resulting from bad movements of his heart (namely, his φρένες). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Athene’s intents are actually her own μένος (cf. gen. pl. ἐμῶν μενέων).

4. Conclusion

From the textual analysis of the Homeric contexts of use of the verb μαίνομαι, its complex polysemy has been clarified. According to the rational meaning included in the Indo-European root *men- to which the verb traces back, the semantic field of μαίνομαι - including also those forms built on the perfect stem (μεμον-/μεμα-) - involves a range of nuances, i.e. “to rage, be furious”, “to be eager”, “to desire”, “to be fain”, “to intend”, “to think”, which are often merged. All these meanings refer to a state of agitation (basically

associated with something to do) which is strongly connected to that complex organ which is the heart, and namely to that motion of the θυμός/μένος inside the κραδίη/καρδίη and φρένες, which supervises all human functions in Homer, including cognitive processes.

Similarly to the semantic value of other Archaic Greek forms tracing back to the Indo-European root *men-, it does not actually seem to be appropriated to distinguish between concepts such as body and mind, or irrational and rational, which are rather inextricably merged in the original meaning of the root and, thus, in the early Indo-European culture.

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Notes

Note 1. The present stem of $\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ is constructed adding the *-yo suffix to the zero grade *m η - of the IE root *men-.

Note 2. Both meanings "to think of; remember" are given in Beekes (2009). Ebeling (1885:

1008) adds the meaning “to stand” (cf. “et cogitandi et furendi et manendi”), thus linking the root to Gr. μένω and Lat. maneo, even though other scholars doubt it (Walde 1927; Pokorny 1959; Rix 2001).

Note 3. Focusing on the activity of the seer (i.e. μαντεύομαι; μάντις), which is common in the Indo-European world and traditionally related to the idea of a god-given prophetic rage (see, among others, Dodds 1951; Schwyzer 1953: 694; Frisk 1960-70: 172; Chantraine 1968-80: 665; Bonfante 1979: 327; Roth 1988: 238; Porzio Gernia 1989: 82; Snell 1955-2010; more recently, see also Ustinova 2018), she shows that seer’s activity actually concerns a particular, albeit human, cognitive activity connected to a specific organ, a sort of mind eye (cf. OInd. mánas-), as also shown by the overlap between the terms for the poet and the seer in many Indo-European languages, e.g. Lat. vates; OIr. fili (see Bartolotta 2003; 2012 for further details; see also Rohde 1970).

Note 4. Besides ἐπεμήνατο, prefixed form with the preposition ἐπ(ί)- “to, towards”, there are occurrences (13×) in which μάνομαι occurs in prefixed form with ἐν- “in”.

Note 5. On the concept of madness in Ancient Greek culture, see, among others, Chandler (2009); Perdicoyianni-Palólogou (2009); more recently, see also Laios et al. (2018); Ahonen (2019).

Note 6. Some verse before, Diomedes is assimilated to a river in flood (cf. vv. 87-88). Besides the case of Diomedes, another excellent example of heroic fury/madness is that of Hector, which is assimilated to Ares and to a destructive fire (cf. Il. 15.605-606).

Note 7. Also according to philosophical speculation, at least from Aristotle onwards, both an irrational and a rational impulses are involved in the psychic processes which generate choices and will.

Note 8. Similar semantic nuances are also found in contexts which are outside of that of war/battle (cf. the use of the perfect μέμαμεν in Il. 9.640-642). The formula μέμασαν δὲ μάλιστα also occurs at v. 90 in a rather similar context, in which the co-occurrence of the verb μερμηρίζω, which means both “to think” and “to think about; to be anxious or thoughtful”, is significant (cf. Il. 12.195-200).

Note 9. The same formula ἔμ’ ὀτρύνει κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ is used in Il. 10.319 by Dolon, the Trojan spy that voluntarily goes to spy on the Achaeans.

Note 10. In Homer, μένος basically represents an increase of θυμός; for further details on the Homeric biological concept, see Laspia (1996).

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