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ON THE HISTORY OF THE TERM *μῆνις*¹

μῆνις in Homer denotes the wrath of the gods or the wrath of Achilles, the hero of semi-divine origin. In the 4th century, St. Basil the Great uses the word to refer to camel's avenging grudge (Bas., *In hex.*, 8, 1). May we assert desacralization of the term in general?

There is no scholarly agreement on the etymology of *mênis*². According to the definitions available from ancient times, *mênis* is considered to be one of the affects, a type of anger or its development: "...ὄργῃ καὶ τὰ εἶδη αὐτῆς (θυμὸς καὶ χόλος καὶ μῆνις καὶ κότος καὶ πικρία καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα... Ὀργὴ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμία τιμωρήσασθαι τὸν δοκοῦντα ἡδίκηκέναι παρὰ τὸ προσήκον... μῆνις δὲ ὄργῃ εἰς παλαιῶσιν ἀποτεθειμένη ἢ ἐναποκειμένη..." (Stobaeus, *Anth.*; 2, 7, 10b 13-10c 10)³; "ὄργῃ δ' ἐστὶν ὄρεξις, ὑπερβαίνουσα δὲ μῆνις" (*Ps.-Phocylidea*, 64)⁴. Sometimes *mênis* is identified with some other terms denoting anger (ὄργῃ, κότος, χόλος, μένος)⁵. Homeric scholia say nothing about the sacral meaning of *mênis* either⁶.

¹ I wish to thank Prof. Rismag Gordeziani for his consultations in Homeric studies.

² See Beekes R., with the assistance of L. van Beek, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series, v. 10/1-2, Leiden-Boston 2010.

³ Stobaeus (5th c.) speaks here about the Stoics, Didymus (1st c. B.C.E.-1st c. C.E.) is indicated as a source. Cf. *Scholia in ranas* 844 (ed. W. Dindorf).

⁴ 1st c. B.C.E.-1st c. C.E.

⁵ See Porphyrius, *Ad Il.*, I 77, 19; 79, 3; 102, 5-10; Palladius, *Dialogus de vita Johannis Chrysostomi*, 133, 19, etc. However, some authors seem to become aware of the specific terminological import of *mênis* as compared to other words denoting anger. See, e. g.: "...παράφρασις... ἢ τῶν λέξεων ἄλλοια διήγησις, ὡς τὸ ... μῆνιν εἰπεῖν ὄργην καὶ τὸ αἶδε ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγει" (*Scholia et glossae in halieutica*, 1, 130); "...τὸ γὰρ τί ἦν εἶναι σημαίνει παρὰ Ἀριστοτέλει τὸν ὀρισμὸν (ὡσπερ παρὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς ἡ μῆνις τὴν ὄργην), ἐπειδὴ ὁ ὀρισμὸς τὸ τί ἐστὶν ἐκάστου καὶ τὸ εἶναι σημαίνει." (*In Porphyrii isagogen sive quinque voces*, 108, 19-12). However, this can be associated with the

Despite that, the Homeric works provide grounds for assigning the term originally to religious vocabulary⁷. Different aspects and nuances of the term are highlighted in different studies: solemn epic significance⁸, sanction against taboo behavior, thus implying activity along with emotion, etc.⁹

In myths the anger of gods, which is manifested for men through personal and global calamities, suggests an idea of inadmissibility of breaking the order established from above. At the same time, human beings are affected by conflicts of interest between the gods whose areas of activity and functions are distributed. These conflicts in their turn reflect challenges and obstacles of life, which are ultimately regulated according to the supreme universal order. All these are represented in Homer's works with outstanding artistic skill. Due to the fact that *mēnis* denotes not only the immortals' anger towards mortals but also the anger of Zeus towards other gods (*Il.* 5, 34; 15, 121-122), it can be stated that it is considered to be exactly a sacral wrath ensuring the supreme cosmic order¹⁰. Thus *mēnis* is represented as a specific, punitive, avenging anger of a more honorable divine figure in response to *hybris* against him¹¹.

changes in the meaning of *mēnis* in the course of time. “ἡ μῆνις τῆν ὀργὴν [σημαίνει]” is translated as “ძვრმდგომთობდა რისხვისა [დაჰნებნავს]” in Georgian in the 12th century (Works of Ammonius Hermiae in Georgian Literature, texts prepared for publication by Natela Kechakmadze and Maya Rapava, the research, glossary and indices by Maya Rapava, Tbilisi 1983: 82, 37).

⁶ See also Latacz J. (ed.), Homers Ilias. Gesamtkommentar. Auf der Grundlage der Ausgabe von Ameis-Hentze-Cauer (1868-1913). Band: Erster Gesang (A). Faszikel 2, Munich/Leipzig 2000, 13.

⁷ See for instance Frisk H., Μῆνις. Zur Geschichte eines Begriffes, Eranos, 1946, 28-40; Irsmscher J., Götterzorn bei Homer, Leipzig, 1950; Chantraine, P., Dictionnaire étimologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots. T. III, Paris 1974, 696; etc.

⁸ Considine P., Some Homeric Terms for Anger. Acta Classica (S. A.) 9, 1966, 15-25. On terms denoting wrath in the Homeric works, see: Irsmscher, op. cit., 3-25; Harris W. V., Restraining Rage: the Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity, Harvard University Press, 2001, 51-52. As P. Considine notes that the words denoting wrath (χόλος, κότος, χόμαι, etc.) are used over 350 times; There are 27 instances of using *mēnis* and its cognates in the *Iliad* and 7 in the *Odyssey* (Considine P., op. cit., 15).

⁹ Muellner L., The Anger of Achilles: Mēnis in Greek Epic, Cornell University Press 1996.

¹⁰ Cf. Muellner, op. cit., 26-27.

¹¹ Every immortal and mortal has their respective *timē* – honor (Cf. Шгаль И. В., Художественный мир гомеровского эпоса, Москва 1983, гл. 4: Эпический идеал человека и категории, этот идеал составляющие) that has a *price* (τιμᾶω I *value* at a certain price, I *pay due respect to*, I *honour*), according to which reimbursement is measured out if *timē* is infringed upon.

Mênis, understood exactly in this way, is given a mythopoetic sense in the *Iliad*: the anger of Achilles, a semi-divine person, towards Agamemnon and the Achaeans, succeeding the anger of Apollo¹² and protected by Zeus (in fact, the wrath of Achilles came upon the Achaeans as the wrath of Zeus¹³), results from ignoring his honor (τιμή), which is considered as a fatal mistake (ἄτη) of the insulter's blinded mind and is subject to relevant punishment (τίσις).

Let us recall the peripeteias of Achilles' anger in the *Iliad*: Agamemnon causes the anger of Apollo by humiliating, *dishonouring* (ἠτίμασεν) his priest (Il. 1, 11) as he refused to return his daughter. The priest, in return for his service, calls on Apollo to revenge the offence: he wants the Danaans to *pay the price* (τίσειαν) for that (Il. 1, 42), and the god fulfills his wishes. Agamemnon gives honour to Apollo and returns Chryseis to her father though, in turn, he *dishonours* (ἠτίμασεν) Achilles by taking away his captive concubine (1, 356). Achilles asks his mother, the goddess, to prevail on Zeus, to give due honor to her son and to side with the Trojans, in order for powerful Agamemnon to realize his *fatal mistake* (ἄτη) – that is, having underappreciated the best of the Achaeans and failed to treat him appropriately (οὐδὲν ἔτισεν) (1, 411-412). Thetis urges Achilles to continue his wrath (μῆνις) against the Achaeans and refrain from battle (1, 421-422). She then goes to Zeus and asks him, in return for her service, to do honor to her son (τίμησον) who was dishonored (ἠτίμησεν) by Agamemnon, to give him his due (τίσον) and let the Achaeans pay for her son and glorify him (τίσωσιν ὀφέλλωσιν τε ἔ τιμή) (1, 504-510). While addressing Zeus, Achilles' mother repeats the words of Chryses addressed to Apollo, which indicate the substitution of Apollo's avenging anger with that of Achilles. Hence, the *mênis* of Achilles, the son of the immortal, is supported by a goddess and is approved and carried out by Zeus himself. After a while, Achaean leaders, anxious about the power of the Trojans, rebuke Agamemnon for dishonoring (ἠτίμησας) the bravest man whom the immortals themselves honoured (ἔτισαν); Agamemnon admits to his *fatal mistake* (ἄτας) (Il. 9, 105-118) in front of them, and while admitting his mistake (ἁσάμην), commits himself to returning the captive woman and

¹² Based on the content of the *Iliad*, R. Tsanova stated that “the anger of Achilles is in fact Apollo’s anger” (Tsanava R., *Mythoritual Models, Symbols in Classical Literature and the Parallels in Georgian Literature and Ethnology*, Tbilisi 2005, 202). It must be noted that the substantive *mênis* is mentioned only twice in Book I to refer to the wrath of Achilles and Apollo, thus highlighting the connection between these two instances of anger.

¹³ Cf. Whitman C. H., *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, 1958, 225.

to making many gifts to the satisfaction of Achilles (ἀρέσαι) (9, 119-157). He finally says: "let him submit himself unto me, seeing I am more kingly, and avow me his elder in years" (9, 160-161)¹⁴. However, such reconciliation and gifts are not sufficient for Achilles: it is not an adequate compensation for the offences he suffered. He finds unacceptable the position of the ambassadors who urge him to accept a worthy gift, as they call it, and to have pity on the Achaeans, promising him an appropriate reward. Achilles responds: "in no wise have I need of this honour: honoured have I been, I deem, by the apportionment of Zeus" (9, 223-610)¹⁵. Despite that, the death of the closest friend (which could be considered as resulting from Achilles' *Ate*, because he did not listen to the Achaeans' pleas) makes him decide to rejoin the battle. Besides, he is inspired by Hera (Il.18, 166 sqq), and is supported by his mother this time too (18, 128), who also appeals to him to renounce his wrath (19, 35). Achilles publicly makes his peace with Agamemnon. He regrets that many courageous men have fallen by reason of his wrath (19, 56-68). As for Agamemnon, he publicly blames everything on *Ate* (19, 91) and gives the hero generous recompense. Following the end of *mênis*, Achilles takes an ordinary human vengeance on his friend's murderer and the Trojans. The status quo that existed prior to the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles is restored.

What kind of attitude do the characters have towards Achilles and his *mênis*? **Achilles** himself demands to be treated with respect due to both his origin and his valor: he deems that Zeus had to give him honor, as a son of Thetis (τιμήν πέρ μοι ὄφελλεν, cf. *Il.* 9, 607-608) and had to make Agamemnon pay back (ἔτισεν) for dishonor (ἠτίμησεν) done to him (1, 352-356), which he regards as impudence, *hybris* (1, 203; 9, 363). Achilles is proud of himself due to the fact that he, as a descendent of Aeacus, is a descendant of Zeus too (21, 187-189) and therefore is even mightier than the god of river (21, 190-191). He thinks of himself as being equal with Agamemnon, who only surpasses him in power (16, 52-59). Moreover, he claims that it is he and not Agamemnon (1, 90-91), who is the best of the Achaeans (1, 244; 412), at least at war (18, 105-106). Thus, he wants Agamemnon to acknowledge the fatal mistake against him - *Ate* (1, 411-412). However, he finally regrets his *mênis*, which Zeus fulfilled, as it rather harms him: he loses his beloved friend whom he honoured as

¹⁴ Murray A. T. (tr.), *Homer. The Iliad with an English Translation*, in two volumes, Harvard University Press, 1924.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

himself (ἀλλὰ τί μοι τῶν ἦδος ἐπεὶ φίλος ὄλεθ' ἑταῖρος / Πάτροκλος, τὸν ἐγὼ περὶ πάντων τῶν ἑταίρων / ἴσον ἐμῇ κεφαλῇ; 18, 79-82). That is why he lost his *joie de vivre* (90-91). Achilles, filled by an ordinary human vengeance against murderer, abandons his *mênis*.

Agamemnon, though calling Achilles godlike (θεοείκελε 1, 131) and admitting to Achilles being much stronger than his own brother Menelaus (7, 114), nevertheless mentions him as a man whom Zeus befriends (9, 116) and whom gods give strength (1, 177; 290). Therefore, he admits that dishonoring Achilles, who is protected by Zeus, is a fatal mistake, though believes that Achilles must be obedient to him (9, 115; 19, 88; 136).

The Achaeans also value Achilles for bravery (*Il.* 1, 275-284), as a hero who gods befriend (9, 110; 1, 74;) and admit to his kingly honour (9, 164). At the same time, they are well aware of his claims regarding his divine origin: it is not accidental that the Achaeans promise him to honor him as a god: Odysseus accentuates it twice (σε ... θεὸν ὡς τιμήσουσι, 9, 297-8; σε θεὸν ὡς τίσουσ', 9, 302-303); Phoenix, who helped to raise Achilles as a child, tells him the same as well (9, 603)¹⁶. On the other hand, he is reminded that even the gods, who have more honor (τιμῇ) and might, are condescending towards suppliants (9, 496-500). He is also reminded that the gods will hear the prayers of those who respect Litae (9, 509). Both Agamemnon and the Achaeans speak about Achilles' proud heart (μεγαλήτωρ 9, 255; 629; 675) and about his mercilessness (νηλεές, 16, 33). These features of Achilles are understood as the cause for his refusing Agamemnon's generous gifts, though after his reconciliation with Agamemnon he is mentioned as greathearted, as he has renounced his wrath (μῆνιν ἀπειπόντος μεγαθύμου Πηλεΐωνος, 19, 75). The attitude of the Achaeans is well formulated in Nestor's speech: Achilles is stronger (καρτερός), a goddess mother bore him but Agamemnon is mightier (φέρτερος) since he is king over more (1, 275-284)¹⁷.

The Trojans also discuss his strength and the way gods protect him as a mortal (20, 434-437; 21, 566-570): even Aeneas, who is a son of one of the main goddesses, admits that it is impossible to face swift-footed Achilles in fight because one of the gods is always with him as his guardian (20, 94-98).

In the speech of the **gods**, an emphasis is made on "doing honor" to Achilles (1, 558-559; 2, 3-4). Athena also mentions *hybris* of Agamemnon (1, 214). Hera declares that Hektor and Achilles will not be given equal honor

¹⁶ Cf. A statement regarding Hektor: ὃ Τρώες κατὰ ἄστυ θεῶ ὡς εὐχετόωντο, XXII, 394.

¹⁷ Murray A. T. (tr.), *op. cit.*

(ὄμην... τιμήν, 24, 57) because Hektor's mother is mortal whereas Achilles is the child of a goddess (θεᾶς γόνος, 24, 59) who Hera herself brought up and married to Peleus (24, 60-61). Zeus agrees with her (οὐ μὲν γὰρ τιμή γε μί' ἔσσεται, 24, 66). At the same time, the gods emphasize his mortal nature. His goddess **mother** laments over her son's mortality (1, 414-418; 24, 84); she supports Achilles' avenging anger and even encourages him (μήνι' Ἀχαιοῖσιν, 1, 422), so that the Achaeans should give due honour to her son (1, 510).

What does the **narrator** himself say about it? The very first lines of the *Iliad* mention that due to the anger [*mênis*] of Achilles, Peleus' son, countless woes came upon the Achaeans by the will of Zeus, from the time when Atreus' son, "the king of men" (*ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*) and "divine" (*δῖος*) Achilles had parted in strife (1, 1-7). Though "divine", "god-like" (*θεοείκελος*, *διοτρεφής*, *διογενής*) are common poetic epithets applied to famous heroes (they themselves address each other with these epithets), and *δῖος* too can sometimes be found with the name of Agamemnon¹⁸, in the first lines of the poem (1, 7) the epithet is clearly contrasted with the phrase "leader of men", applied to Agamemnon: the social status of Achilles is determined by his being the son of a mortal man and an immortal goddess.¹⁹ In Book I, soon after the opponents are characterized as Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς (1, 7), during their debate Homer refers to Agamemnon as ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν (1, 172), εὐρὺ κρείων (1, 102), κρείων (1, 130; 285) and to Achilles as δῖος (1, 292), ποδάρκης δῖος (1, 121). There is only one instance when Achilles is mentioned without this epithet (*πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς*, 1, 148). Following the reconciliation, in their dialogue, the epithets applied to Agamemnon and Achilles are ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν (19, 76; 184) and πόδας ὠκὺς (19, 55; 145; 198) respectively.

According to the epos, mortals, even children of gods (Homer defines them as demigods, ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν, 12, 23; many of them fell in the Trojan War) cannot be equal with the immortals (even Achilles may come to fear when one of the gods meets him in battle²⁰, 20, 130; his greatest gift – swift feet, is useless in front of Apollo 22, 8-10). Mortals gain strength only with the help of gods: despite Apollo's encouragement of Aeneas that Achilles' mother is inferior to his mother in rank (20, 104-109), Poseidon

¹⁸ Even when the Trojans speak about the anger of Achilles towards Agamemnon (Ἀγαμέμνονι μήνιε δῖφ, 18, 257).

¹⁹ Interestingly, Achilles is referred by the same epithet when confronting Aeneas (20, 159-60).

²⁰ Though, it also happens that mortals do not stand in awe of gods (See *Il.* 5, 335-351).

warns Aeneas that fighting Achilles is folly as he is both a stronger man and more beloved of the immortals than Aeneas (20, 334). However, the mortal nature of god's offspring is one thing, but their honor is quite another. Chryses, as Apollo's priest, has honor and dishonoring the priest means doing dishonor to Apollo, just like Achilles, being the son of the goddess, has honor, which is protected by Zeus. The substantive μήνις which is believed to have specifically religious significance (the verb forms of the same stem may not have a sacral meaning)²¹, occurs only four times in the text to denote Achilles' wrath – it is thus mentioned by the narrator (I, 1), the goddess mother (19, 35); and the Achaeans (9, 517; 19, 75).

Hence, *mênis* befits Achilles as the son of the immortal. However, as a human being he demonstrates *Ate* (rash action) as he refuses to reconcile with Agamemnon, endowed with a supreme kingly honor by gods, and is deaf to the entreaties of the Achaeans. Achilles, as well as others, uses various words to refer to his wrath, such as χόλος (9, 675 and elsewhere), μένος (1, 207), etc. The vocabulary also includes derivatives from *mênis*: μνηιθμός (16, 62), μηνίω (18, 257), ἀπομηνίω (7, 230). It should be noted that in the *Illiad*, the verb form is also used to describe the state of Agamemnon (as he is opposing Achilles, ἐμήνιε, 1, 247), while in the "*Odyssey*" it is used to express Telemachus' rage against Penelope's suitors (ἀπομηνίσει, 16, 378-379), which emphasizes the exceptional significance of their wrath. The word is used somewhat ironically in one of the passages of the "*Odyssey*" when Telemachus speaks to the swineherd about Odysseus, disguised as a beggar: I cannot take care of this stranger, let him beg his food in the city, but if he is wrathful at this (εἴ περ μάλα μηνίει), it will be worse for him (*Od.* 17,14).

Mênis in literature, and especially in epic poetry and historiography, will always be used to denote, first of all, the wrath of gods. However, later in tragedies the substantive *mênis* is also used with mortals fulfilling the revenge of the dead (Aesch. *Cho.*: 278; 294), a mother revenging for a child (Aesch. *Ag.*: 155); parents who are angry with their children (Soph. *OC.*: 1328), a son who commits suicide in order to take vengeance on his own father (Soph. *Ant.*: 1177), cities that nurse hatred against other cities (Eur. *Heracl.*: 762). The desacralization of *mênis* is also contributed by philosophers' critical attitude towards Homeric mythopoiesis (where gods are depicted with human passions).

In Lucian's work, Prometheus condemns the revenge of Zeus against him and states that remembering the bad and maintaining *mênis* does not

²¹ See e. g. Chantraine, op. cit., 696.

benefit gods and is not, generally speaking, a royal behaviour (Lucianus, *Prom.* 8.6). In accordance with his philosophical standpoint, Iamblichus offers the following interpretation of *mēnis* as related to gods: “in order to avoid *mēnis* of gods we must understand what it is. This, therefore, is not, as it appears to be to some, an ancient and lasting anger (οὐχ... παλαιά τις ἐστὶ καὶ ἔμμονος ὀργή), but the turning away from the gods’ beneficent care, from which we turn ourselves away, exactly as at midday having covered the light, we bring darkness to ourselves, and deprive ourselves of the beneficent gift of the gods...” (Iamb. *Mist.* 1.13.1 sqq). Though Iamblichus opposes the notion of *mēnis* widely accepted in those times, we cannot claim that he assigns a specific religious meaning to the term.

The wrath of Achilles is considered as an ordinary human vice by Plutarchus (Plut. *De cohibenda ira* 455 A). Neither does Diogenes Laertius (the 3rd century) speak of the sacrality of *mēnis* in the *Iliad* when reporting the Stoic point of view: *mēnis* is mentioned among other vices as subordinate to irrational appetite (ἄλογος ὄρεξις) and its definition – μῆνις δὲ ἐστὶν ὀργή τις πεπαλαιωμένη καὶ ἐπίκοτος, ἐπιτηρητική δέ... (Vit. 7, 114) – is illustrated by Calchas’ words from the *Iliad* concerning a king who “even if he swallows down his wrath..., yet afterwards he cherishes resentment in his heart till he brings it to fulfillment” (Il. 1, 81-82)²². These words allude to Agamemnon. Later, Themistius (4th c.) criticized an educational method that consists in inspiring the youth not with examples of friendship but with the stories of wars and conflicts, starting with the wrath of Achilles (*Περὶ φιλίας*, 264 c-d, t. 1). Neither does Aristotle identify any specific difference between the wrath of Achilles and that of any mortals when highlighting the twofold²³ understanding of the word μεγαλοψυχία: If we were inquiring what the greatness of soul (μεγαλοψυχία) is, we should examine the instances of high-souled men (μεγαλόψυχος) we know of to see what, as such, they have in common. For example, if Alcibiades was high-souled, and such were Achilles and Ajax, we should find on inquiring what they all had in common, that it was intolerance of insult (τὸ μὴ ἀνέχεσθαι ὑβριζόμενοι): Alcibiades waged war, Achilles was wrathful (ὁ δ’ ἐμήρισε) and Ajax committed suicide. We should next examine other cases – Lysander, for example, or Socrates, and then if these have in common indifference alike to good and ill fortune, I take these two results and inquire what common element

²² Murray A. T. (tr.), op. cit.

²³ Similar to μεγαλήτωρ, it also has both positive (“generosity”) and negative (“pride”, “arrogance”) meanings according to the context.

have apathy amid the vicissitudes of life (ἀπάθεια ἢ περὶ τὰς τύχας) and impatience of dishonour (ἢ μὴ ὑπομονὴ ἀτιμαζομένῳ). If they have none, there will be two genera of the greatness of soul (Arst. *APo* 97b, 7- 97b, 36)²⁴.

Forgiveness is considered to be a good deed probably in all religions (in the Homeric epic too, rejecting Prayers – Litae – is *Ate*, a fatal mistake. gods will hear those who listen to others' pleas (*Il.* 9, 502-514); the idea of "not resisting evil" (*Mt.* 5, 39), in some sense, is not unknown to the antiquity (Socrates asserted that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it). The Bible too calls us to avoid "an avenging grudge against the sons of our own people" (οὐ μνηεῖς) and love our neighbor as ourselves (*Lev.* 19, 18). Moreover, it is stated in the "Wisdom of Sirach": "He who avenges will discover vengeance from the Lord", "forgive your neighbor a wrong, and then, when you ask, your sins will be pardoned" (*Sir.* 28, 1-5; 10, 6-7). Despite that, "eye for eye" still remains a principle of the ancient world (*Ex.* 21, 24, etc.). The concept of the *New Testament* – "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you..." (*Mt.* 5, 39-44)²⁵ expresses a completely "new" worldview.

Hence, in Christianity, which teaches forgiveness and regards anger (ὀργή) as one of the mortal sins²⁶, lasting anger, supported by a wish for vengeance, will never be tolerated. The substantive *mênis* has a negative meaning in Septuagint as well (*Gen.* 49, 7; *Sir.* 10, 6; 27, 30; 28, 5), though the verb form is applied to God too (*Ps.* 102, 9). It is translated into old Georgian as "remembering, recalling bad things".²⁷ It should be noted that "remembering" is considered to be an important point for perceiving the concept of *mênis*.²⁸

The word *mênis* and the forms derived from it do not occur in the *New Testament* at all. In other texts they are associated exactly with

²⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Translated by G. R. G. Mure, eBooks@Adelaide, 2007.

²⁵ As it is known, these words are said as opposed to the Biblical principle *eye for eye...* *Exod.* 21, 24 (see also: *Lev.* 24, 20; *Deut.* 19, 21; *Num* 35.21).

²⁶ However, "enemy" is, at the same time, the devil's name. And anger towards the devil is justifiable. That is, wrath (ὀργή) is aimed against the enemy of truth in general and consequently of the mankind, rather than against a person who acts being captured by this enemy.

²⁷ "οὐκ εἰς τέλος ὀργισθήσεται / οὐδὲ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα μνηεῖ" (*Ps.* 102, 9) "არა სრულად განობსნებს, არცა უკუნისამდე ძვრი იქნება".

²⁸ Lynn-George M., Review on Leonard Muellner's cited work, Bryn Mawr Classical Review, <http://bmc.brynmawr.edu/1997/97.02.10.html>.

“remembering, recalling bad things”: according to the “Shepherd” of Hermas, lasting hostility and anger due to the remembering of wrongs (μνησικάκοι γίνονται μνηιῶντες ἀλλήλους... (Hermas, *Pastor, Parab.* 9, 23)²⁹ are regarded as especially great sins. The use of *mēnis* to describe camel’s character reflects its close connection with nursing grudge, remembering the bad (μνησικακία) (Bas., *In hex.*, 8, 1; 53, etc.)³⁰. The heavy wrath associated with camel is among the reasons by which John Chrysostom accounts for the parallel between camel and the Slanderer (the Devil) in the New Testament: „Καμήλω πολλάκις παρεικάζει ἡ Γραφή τὸν διάβολον, διὰ τὸ πολυόγκον καὶ πολυστρεβλον καὶ βαρυμήνιον...” (Joannes Chrysostomus, *In praecursorem domini*, PG 59, 490 D).

In the texts of Christian authors *mēnis* is often mentioned together with *orge*, as well as with other vicious affects and sins: “Τότε οἱ Σεβουαῖοι διὰ μῆνιν καὶ ὀργὴν μετέθηκαν τοὺς καιροὺς τῶν ἑορτῶν τῶν προειρημένων...” (Epiphanius, *Haer* 1, 204, 15);³¹ “Οὕτως ἡ πρὸς τὸν θυμὸν διανάστασις συγγενῆς μὲν ἐστὶ τῇ τῶν ἀλόγων ὀρμῇ, αὐξεται δὲ τῇ τῶν λογισμῶν συμμαχία. Ἐκέιθεν γὰρ ἡ μῆνις, ὁ φθόνος, τὸ ψεῦδος, ἡ ἐπιβουλή, ἡ ὑπόκρισις. Ταῦτα πάντα τῆς πονηρᾶς τοῦ νοῦ γεωργίας ἐστίν” (Gr. Nyss., *Hom. opif.* PG 44, 193 A) etc.

Christian authors pay special attention to the psychoanalysis of sins and present the evidence of their interrelationship and gradation, highlighting various types of anger³²: “ἐκ τῆς ἀφροσύνης γίνεται πικρία, ἐκ δὲ τῆς πικρίας θυμὸς, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ θυμοῦ ὀργή, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ὀργῆς μῆνις· εἶτα ἡ μῆνις αὕτη ἐκ τοσοῦτων κακῶν συνισταμένη γίνεται ἀμαρτία μεγάλη καὶ ἀνίατος” (Hermas, *Pastor* 34, 4, 4). It is quite natural that Evagrius Ponticus, who regarded anger as a basis for all other sins, takes particular interest in its types: “Ἡ ὀργὴ πάθος ἐστὶν ὀξύτατον· θυμοῦ γὰρ λέγεται ζέσις καὶ κίνησις κατὰ τοῦ ἡδίκηκότος ἢ δοκοῦντος ἡδίκηκεναι· ἥτις πανημέριον μὲν ἐξαγριοῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, μάλιστα δὲ ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς συναρπάζει τὸν νοῦν, τὸ τοῦ λελυπηκότος πρόσωπον ἔσοπτρίζουσα. Ἔστι δὲ ὅτε χρονίζουσα καὶ μεταβαλλομένη εἰς μῆνιν, παραχὰς νύκτωρ παρέχει, τῆξιν τε τοῦ σώματος καὶ ὠχρότητα, καὶ θηρίων ἰοβόλων ἐπιδρομάς. Ταῦτα

²⁹ See also: *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 2, 53, 41; Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in Eph.*, PG 62,108.

³⁰ See also, for instance: “Λέγεται γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰδόντων μὴδὲν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς κτήνεσιν οὕτω βαρῦμητι καὶ δύσθυμόν καὶ μνησικάκον, ὡς ἡ κάμηλος” (Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in 2 Thess.*, PG 62, 483); “τὸ δὲ τῶν καμήλων μνησικάκον καὶ βαρῦμητι διαρκὲς πρὸς ὀργὴν πῶς ἂν τις εἴπη; πάλαι ποτὲ πληγεῖσα κάμηλος, μακρῷ χρόνῳ ταμειουσαμένη τὴν μῆνιν, ἐπειδὴν εὐκαιρίας λάβηται, τὸ κακὸν ἀντιδίδωσι (Michael Glycas, *Annales* 93.17).

³¹ See also Gr. Nyss., *De vita Mosis* 2, 123, 12, etc.

³² Types of anger are pointed out by Homer’s commentators as well.

δὲ τὰ τέσσαρα μετὰ τὴν μῆνιν συμβαίνοντα, εὖροι ἂν τις παρακολουθοῦντα πλείοσι λογισμοῖς” (Evagr. Pont., *Practicus* 11, 1- 9. Cf. *Scholia in ranas* 844, 1 sqq.). The text by Evagrius is attached as a scholium to the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by John Climacus (PG 88, 836 C).

When identifying types of anger and defining *mênis*, John of Damascus follows Nemesios of Emesa: “Εἶδη δὲ τοῦ θυμοῦ τρία· ὀργή, ἣτις καλεῖται χολή καὶ χόλος, καὶ μῆνις καὶ κότος. Θυμὸς μὲν γὰρ ἀρχὴν καὶ κίνησιν ἔχων ὀργή καὶ χολή καὶ χόλος λέγεται. Μῆνις δὲ χολή ἐπιμένουσα ἡγουν μνησικακία· εἶρηται δὲ παρὰ τὸ μένειν καὶ τῇ μνήμῃ παραδίδοσθαι. Κότος δὲ ὀργῇ ἐπιτηρούσα καιρὸν εἰς τιμωρίαν· εἶρηται δὲ καὶ οὗτος παρὰ τὸ κεῖσθαι”. (Jo. D. *Expositio fidei*, 30, 7-11 ed. Cotter) (Cf. Nemes., *De natura hominis* 19, 9-15).

Such a notion of anger is inapplicable to God from the Christian point of view. In order to denote the anger of God both in the *Old* and *New Testaments* again ὀργή is used, which in Christianity, when associated with God, acquires a connotation of an educational sanction. However, *mênis* too can be found in the works of Christian authors, especially in historiographic works, to denote God’s anger incurred by sinners: ἡ θεία μῆνις, μῆνις Θεοῦ (Eusebius of Caesarea and others).³³ The term *θεομηνία* is particularly often used by Sozomen³⁴.

Mênis can be found in the works of Gregory of Nazianzus, mostly in poetry. For instance, in the verse Κατὰ τοῦ πονηροῦ (Gr. Naz., *Carmina de se ipso* 1399, 5)□he addresses the evil spirit: “fear the wrath of God” Ἀζόμενος μῆνιν τε Θεοῦ (see also: Gr. Naz., *Carmina dogmatica* 458, 7 and 458, 11, etc. also, *De pauperum amore*, PG 35, 889). We might think that Gregory of Nazianzus, a theologian well educated in ancient Greek language and literature, is influenced by the classical language as he uses *mênis* to refer to the wrath of God; yet, we may come across the same word in the works of other theologians too, for instance, Cyril of Alexandria (ὑπὸ θεῖαν ἔσονται μῆνισιν, □Cyrillus, *Commentarius in duodecim prophetas*, 1, 105, 23, etc.). The latter, however, opposes the idea of considering God as cruel (σκληρός) or heavy in wrath (βαρύμηνις), as for him God is the righteous judge (Cyrillus, *Commentarius in duodecim prophetas*, 1, 625, 9, see also *Commentarii in Joannem* 2, 141.11: πρέπον δ’ ἂν εἶη λοιπὸν τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ πεπλαθῆσθαι τοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἰπεῖν, καὶ μνησικακόν τινα καὶ βαρύμηνιν ὑπάρχειν τὸν ἀγαθὸν ἡμῶν οἶεσθαι Θεόν). For the purposes

³³ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4,11, 2; Theodoretus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 78.15; Socrates Scholasticus, *H.e.* 4,11, 6; *H.e.* 4,16, 2; *H.e.* 6, 19, 20, Theodorus Scutariota, *Additamenta ad Georgii Acropolitae historiam* 56.56, Sozomenus, *H.e.* 2, 15, 4, 4; 5, 20, 6, 5. etc.

³⁴ Sozomenus, *H.e.* 2, 4, 4, 4; 2, 27, 3, 8; 3, 4, 1, 5; 5, 8, 4, 1; 5, 21, 1, 3 et al. loc.

of comparison, it is interesting to note that Nonnus of Panopolis, a 5th century author, often applies this epithet, βαρύμηνις, to gods (mainly, to Hera, also to Ares, Eros, Artemis and Athena) in his epic poem *Dionysiaca*, which is based on antique mythology.

Origen is careful even in using the verb form of *mênis*, specifically, when speaking about God's anger against the Hebrews after the arrival of Christ³⁵. Dionysius the Areopagite finds the mentioning of Divine appearances, body parts, mood, grief, wrath, etc. metonymical, which means that the Divine essence is described through the notions of the sensible world (τίνες οἱ θυμοί, τίνες αἱ λῦπαι καὶ αἱ μήνιδες, Dion Ar., *De mystica theologia*, III, 146, 14)³⁶. It is further stated that when speaking apophatically about the Divine, we start excluding names that denote things which are most remote from God, for example, "to be intoxicated" (κραιπαλᾶ) or "to be wrathful" (μηνιᾶ) (*De mystica theologia*, III, 147.20).

Thus, as time passed, *mênis*, denoting sacral wrath in Homer's works, tended to express particularly strong and motivated avenging anger, and finally came to refer to an action that is the most remote from God. Despite that, it continues to be employed in both Ancient and Byzantine literature to denote God's fulfilled anger, because of the well established expression in the language.

³⁵ Παραφράζει δέ τινας λέξεις ὁ Κέλσος, ἐμφαινούσας πληρωθῆσεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν διὰ τοῦ ἐβραϊκοῦ σπέρματος· ὅπερ ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν μνημόντος, ἕν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω, τοῦ θεοῦ γεγένηται μετὰ τὴν Ἰησοῦ ἐπιδημίαν ἥπερ εὐλογίας ἀποδιδόντος (Orig., *Contra Celsum* 7, 19, 7).

³⁶ Ephrem Mtsire translated μήνιδες as "to remember, recall something bad", μηνια as "remembering, recalling something bad" (Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, Works, translated by Ephrem Mtsire, prepared for publication and the research and glossary attached by Samson Erukashvili, Tbilisi 1961 227, 4 and 29-30).