

1 **The Concept of ἵστορ (hístor) in Homer's Iliad**

2
3 *The objective of this investigation is to characterize the concept of*
4 *ἵστορ (hístor) in Homer's Iliad and to give account of the epistemic*
5 *fundament in Western history, particularly in Ancient Greece; our*
6 *intention is to take History closer to Science and away from ideology.*
7 *The methodology that we're going to use is semiotics. Our hypothesis*
8 *is that Homer was crucial for the transition from the mythical to the*
9 *logical thought, among other things, because he made a semiotic*
10 *progression from the oral to graphic sign by the very fact of write the*
11 *Iliad; he also delivered, thru his epic poem, a new epistemic*
12 *fundament of reality that gave the possibility to the appearance of*
13 *new kinds of thought that fit in the logical thought, such as historical,*
14 *philosophical or political thought. To show that, we analyze two*
15 *Chant from the Iliad, the XVIII and the XXIII, where the word ἵστορ is*
16 *used. And we propose that the new epistemic fundament of reality*
17 *involves the fact as action or event, space, time, and the participant of*
18 *the discourse; everyone has access to it, and no longer only few*
19 *people who were inspired by deities.*

20
21 **Keywords:** ἵστορ (hístor); epistemic; Semiotics; History; Homer.

22 23 24 **A Semiotic/Historic Perspective**

25
26 We will begin by showing brief data about the Homer's poem given by
27 Emilio Crespo Güemes. The *Iliad* is the oldest epic poem in European
28 literature. It was composed shortly before 700 BC, probably on the western
29 coast of Anatolia or on one of the adjacent islands. The poets, called *aoidos*,
30 composed orally, improvised and without the help of writing. Their poems
31 were meant to be sung with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. It is
32 unknown when the *Iliad* was put into writing; but, in any case, before 520 BC
33 existed in Athens a standardized text.¹

34 Based on this information, we can think that the *Iliad* is an important step
35 in the development of human thinking, which leads from mythical thinking to
36 logical thinking for several reasons, among others, because of the consolidation
37 of a language, the Greek: as is well known, and according to various authors,
38 both ancient and contemporary, including Güemes,² Homer was the educator of
39 Greece, the Greeks learned to read and write with the *Iliad*, for which reason it
40 could be considered a basis or foundation for the consolidation of ancient
41 Greek as a language. To the extent that the epic poem spread over time, we
42 could consider the *Iliad* as a formative and structural instrument, both
43 intellectual and social even cultural, among other things, for teaching the Greek

¹Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 7.

²Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 87.

1 language, reading, writing, values, behavior models, representation of the
 2 world, etc., in general, signs and values, significance and the significant,
 3 respectively, within the meaning, as Morris would say,³ that we can find in the
 4 *Iliad*. Over this ground we can explain a semiotic progression, in this case,
 5 from the oral sign to the graphic sign that, following Vico, leads from mythical
 6 thought to logical thought.⁴ And the change from verse to prose, where we
 7 consider the writing of Homer's epic poem as the first necessary step to allow
 8 the arrival to prose, as the starting point that allows a transition, from verse to
 9 prose, and with it, from mythical to logical thinking, respectively. The semiosis
 10 of the sign is a process that can be explained by both biological and intellectual
 11 aspects,⁵ where the physiological conditions that allowed speech gave the
 12 conditions to develop the sign, and the sign in turn allowed the development of
 13 the intellect, in a relationship of mutual development where one allows the
 14 other to develop and vice versa.⁶

15 In Peirce's terms, the sign evolves (semiosis); the unity of the sign made
 16 up of the representamen, the object and the interpreter make up an unlimited
 17 semiotic progression.⁷ In Vico's terms, the language of the Heroes, characterized
 18 by being symbolic or by similarity, allowed the progression to the language of
 19 Men, where that symbolism and similarity acquire articulation and meaning.⁸ In
 20 Morris' terms,⁹ we could explain this in such a way that the graphic system
 21 (language of Men, according to Vico) is dominant and receptive, so it adapted and
 22 adopted the oral system (language of Heroes, according to Vico), which it
 23 surpassed and integrated it into its own system, including everything that the
 24 oral system, in turn, had surpassed and integrated into its own system of
 25 previous systems (like the language of the Gods, which is hieroglyphic or
 26 sacred)¹⁰. The transition from the mythical to the logical is explained, among
 27 other things, from the intellectual development fostered by the graphic sign
 28 that, by generating new demands in the explanation of the reality, mythical
 29 thought is overcome, which opens the possibility of a new kind of thinking, the
 30 logical.

31 Vico proclaims song and verse as prior to speech and prose,¹¹ so if we take
 32 into account that, as Detienne says, from the 12th to the 9th century, Greek
 33 civilization was not going to merge in the written tradition, but in the oral

³Morris C (1974) *La significación y lo significativo*. Madrid: Comunicación Serie B. Back cover.

⁴Vico G (1971) *Opere Filosofiche*. Florence: Sansioni. p. 439. Also, in Viana A (2011-2012) *Historia, evolución, semiótica*. El Orden Ternario De Vico Y Peirce. *Cuadernos Sobre Vico* (25-26). p.76.

⁵Viana A (2011-2012) *Historia, evolución, semiótica*. El Orden Ternario De Vico Y Peirce. *Cuadernos Sobre Vico* (25-26). p.79.

⁶Vico G (1971) *Opere Filosofiche*. Florence: Sansioni. p. 439; and Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 105.

⁷Peirce CS (1973) *La ciencia de la semiótica*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión. p. 45.

⁸Viana A (2011-2012) *Historia, evolución, semiótica*. El Orden Ternario De Vico Y Peirce. *Cuadernos Sobre Vico* (25-26). p.76.

⁹Morris C (1974) *La significación y lo significativo*. Madrid: Comunicación Serie B. p. 42.

¹⁰Vico G (1971) *Opere Filosofiche*. Florence: Sansioni. 1971, p. 439

¹¹Vico G (1971) *Opere Filosofiche*. Florence: Sansioni. p. 443

1 traditions;¹² and that the *Iliad* is written in verse and divided in chants, and that
 2 according to the ancient Greek tradition, as Güemes says, the poems of the
 3 *aidos* were intended to be sung with the accompaniment of a stringed
 4 instrument,¹³ we can weave Vico's idea with the Homeric poem that serves as a
 5 vestige, to recognize that moment of mythical thought characterized, among
 6 other things, by the song and verse to communicate a representation of the
 7 reality. Also, Hartog argues that with the first history, the realm of the spoken
 8 word is over. Prose replaces verse; writing dominates; the Muse disappears.¹⁴
 9 So, we could considerate that with history the transition from mythical to
 10 logical thought finishes and properly starts the logical thought. It seems
 11 possible that before reaching speech and prose, the new logical thinking began
 12 as logical-poetic, surpassing the mythical-poetic. An example that we can
 13 consider logical-poetic is the *Poem* of Parmenides, which invokes the muses
 14 and refers to Θέμις (*Themis*) and Δικέ (Diké), the goddesses of order and
 15 justice, respectively, in order to give account of *being* (εἶναι (*einai*), το εον (*to*
 16 *eon*), ἐστίν (*estin*); and of ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*): truth, and δόξα (*doxa*): opinion,
 17 or experience as Llansó proposes,¹⁵ as ways to find the *being*. In order, finally,
 18 to overcome song and verse, typical of mythical thought, and reach speech and
 19 prose, typical of logical thought, where the philosophical and political, among
 20 others, fit, and where most of the thinkers or intellectuals, from ancient Greece
 21 to the present day, belong.

22 As we can see, it is a process, a semiosis of thought and language. Where
 23 the development of both is complementary to each other, and where the
 24 emergence of the new does not eliminate the old, but integrates it and, although
 25 to a lesser extent, the old remains.

28 Concepts

30 Before properly start, we're going to clear up what we understand for
 31 specific terms or concepts. For myth we're going to follow Mircea Eliade, who
 32 says that the myth is regarded as a sacred story, and hence a "true history,"
 33 because it always deals with *realities*.¹⁶ Myth tells only of that which *really*
 34 happened, which manifested itself completely. The actors in myths are
 35 Supernatural Beings. They are known primarily by what they did in the
 36 transcendent times of the "beginnings".¹⁷ The function of the myth is to supply
 37 models of human behavior and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to
 38 life.¹⁸ As in "primitive" societies where myths are still living, still establish and

¹²Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 25.

¹³Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 7.

¹⁴Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 393.

¹⁵Parmenides (2007) *Poema*. Spain: Akal. pp. 26, 28.

¹⁶Eliade M (1963) *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row. p. 6. This characterization of the myth is related with Detienne's ideas which we're going to see later.

¹⁷Eliade M (1963) *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row. p. 6.

¹⁸Eliade M (1963) *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row. p. 2.

1 justify all human conduct and activity.¹⁹ That is how we see the *Iliad* in this
 2 investigation, as a model that teaches ways of behavior, values, in general, a
 3 way to represent the world.

4 Regarding logic, we're going to go along Charles Peirce, we understand it
 5 as a method of thought with reference to its power of investigating truth.²⁰ In
 6 this case a rational thought, limited to the human, in order to explain reality. As
 7 opposed to the myth, which is a lower kind of thought that explains reality thru
 8 deities.

9 Concerning epistemic and epistemology we're going to consider the sense
 10 given by Dr. René Ceceña, and a specialized dictionary. By epistemic, Dr. René
 11 Ceceña understands the conceptual ground that accommodates various
 12 configurations of knowledge at a given time; while by epistemological he
 13 considers everything related to the particular form of each discipline within a
 14 given epistemic foundation.²¹ This definition or characterization of epistemic
 15 seems to be similar to that of M. Foucault, who, in *The Archeology of*
 16 *Knowledge*, says that by episteme is meant the set of relationships that can
 17 unite, in a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to some
 18 epistemological figures, to some sciences, eventually to some formalized
 19 systems. The epistemic is the set of relationships that can be described, for a
 20 given era, between the sciences when they are analyzed at the level of
 21 discursive regularities.²²

22 In the *Diccionario de las ciencias de la educación* epistemic refers, in
 23 general, to a type of knowledge that, in turn, presupposes a certain idea of
 24 reality. In pre-Socratic philosophy there was a relevant development of the
 25 epistemological consciousness. The root of what will be constituted as
 26 epistemic is detected: a human attitude that brought forth scientific knowledge,
 27 together with a concern for humanization.²³ This definition distinguished
 28 between the mythical thought as spontaneous knowledge and logical thought
 29 which is rational. The epistemic is demonstrative, universal, necessary,
 30 fundamental, cause-based and teachable knowledge. It knows the why, the
 31 causes, the foundation. It shows the reasons, the proofs; what configures the
 32 epistemic model is its claim to offer knowledge that reaches the foundation
 33 level.²⁴

¹⁹Eliade M (1963) *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper & Row. 1963, p. 3.

²⁰Peirce CS (1994) *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. vol. I, book 1, CP 1.28.

²¹Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. p. 223.

²²Foucault M (1970) *La arqueología del saber*. Mexico: Siglo XXI. p. 323.

²³VV. AA. (1983) *Diccionario de las ciencias de la educación*. Madrid: Santillana. p. 547.

²⁴VV. AA. (1983) *Diccionario de las ciencias de la educación*. Madrid: Santillana. pp. 548-549.

1 **ἵστωρ and ἵστω**

2

3 From the reading of the *Iliad*, it could be understood that *ἵστωρ* seems to be
4 characteristic of men, particularly, elders and kings, as Chants XVIII and XXIII
5 show. While *ἵστω* seems to be typical of the deities, especially Zeus, as shown
6 in the Chants VII, X, XV and XIX. What is not very clear is whether the *ἵστωρ*
7 is, can, or should be a witness to the events that occurred in order to be an
8 arbitrator or judge in a conflict between two or more people. Nor is it clear
9 whether the *ἵστωρ* has a special formation to be able to assume that role or
10 position, unless the only ones who can have that position or privilege are kings
11 and elders, as we mentioned before. But we will address these questions later.

12 The word *ἵστω* is mentioned five times in the entire epic poem. It is
13 generally used to make an oath, where it refers to a deity as a witness of what is
14 sworn. Every time it is mentioned it refers to Zeus. The word *ἵστω* is used by
15 Agamemnon, Hektor, Hera and Poseidon; the first three do it to take an oath,
16 while the last one does not swear, he uses it more as a kind of threat, where he
17 refers to Zeus so that he knows, or perhaps witnesses, that there will be a
18 dispute if he does not allow them to sack Ilion and grant the Argives total
19 victory.²⁵ In addition to referring to Zeus as a witness in the oaths, on one
20 occasion Agamemnon also includes the Earth, the Sun and the Erinyes;²⁶ in the
21 case of Hera, she swears an oath in front of Zeus, where she refers as witnesses
22 to the Earth, the wide Heaven above, the water of the Styx that flows into the
23 depths, the most solemn and terrible oath to the happy gods, and also the sacred
24 head of Zeus and the legitimate nuptial bed of Zeus and Hera.²⁷ This can make
25 us think that the word *ἵστω* is typical of the sacred, of the deities; while the
26 word *ἵστωρ* seems to be typical of the profane, of men. The secularization of
27 *ἵστω* turned into *ἵστωρ* where the validity of the witness lies in the Master of
28 truth, who has the privilege of contacting the other world. His memory allows
29 him to "decipher the invisible".²⁸

30 According to the Liddell-Scott-Jones dictionary, *ἵστωρ*, in the contexts of
31 Chants XVIII and XXIII,²⁹ is translated as one who knows law and right; and
32 as judge.³⁰ The Perseus webpage shows that, in the Middle Liddell dictionary,
33 *ἵστωρ* is translated as a wise man, one who knows right, a judge.³¹ In Frisk's
34 Greek etymological dictionary, *ἵστωρ* appears as what can be translated as the

²⁵Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. pp. 398-399, vv. 212-217.

²⁶Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 495, vv. 258-265.

²⁷Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 393, vv. 36-40.

²⁸Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 27.

²⁹Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 482, v. 501: and both demanded the use of an arbitrator for the verdict. (*ἐπὶ ἵστορι πείραρ ἐλέσθαι* Il.18.501); Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 570, v. 486: and let us both take Atreus' son Agamemnon as arbitrator (*ἵστορα δ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα θείομεν ἄμφω* 23.486).

³⁰Liddell HG, Scott R (1996) *A Greek-English Lexicon*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 842.

³¹<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=i%29%2Fstori&la=greek&can=i%29%2Fstori0&prior=eπi&d=Perseus:text:1999.01.0133:book=18:card=490&i=1#note-link1>, Consulted on May 5, 2023.

1 knower ('*der Wissener*', '*wissend*', '*kundig*') or witness ('*Zeuge*'); in an unclear
 2 meaning: witness or arbitrator? ('*Zeuge*' oder '*Schiedsrichter*'?) referring to
 3 Chant XVIII, v. 501 and Chant XXIII, v. 486.³² Émile Benveniste explains that
 4 *histôr* comes from the root **wid* which means "to see", and from which also
 5 comes the verb οἶδα (*oïda*) "I know". Therefore, the *histôr* is "the one who
 6 knows by having sight".³³ Catherine Darbo-Peschanski says that a long
 7 tradition of comments regarding the *histôr* in the *Iliad* have been made of it
 8 either a witness, or an arbitrator, or a judge.³⁴ Finally, François Hartog
 9 mentions that the word *historiê* is the Ionic form of *historia*. It is an abstract
 10 word, formed from the verb *historein*, to inquire. To inquire means to go and
 11 see for oneself. It expresses more a state of mind and an approach than a
 12 specific field. *Historia* is derived from *histôr*, which is related to *idein*, to see,
 13 and *oïda*, I know.³⁵ Hartog also indicates that the *histôr* is present in the epic
 14 where he appears several times, but not as an eyewitness, only as an arbiter, or
 15 better yet a guarantor in a context of *neikos* (quarrel): he has never seen for
 16 himself what is at stake.³⁶

17

18

19 **The Concept of ἵστωρ**

20

21 From the reading of the *Iliad*, in particular Chants XVIII and XXIII,
 22 Homer seems to show us about the *ἵστωρ* that, among other things, he is an
 23 arbitrator or judge, that both elders and kings can assume the role of *ἵστωρ*, that
 24 there may be more than one *ἵστωρ* intervening in a conflict or disagreement,
 25 that the *ἵστωρ* can intervene both in bets and in what today is considered a
 26 crime (such as murder), that the trial or intervention of the *ἵστωρ* is public, and
 27 that the intervention of the *ἵστωρ* is at the request of the parties in conflict,
 28 because there does not seem to be an imposition of his intervention. On the
 29 other hand, after consulting different dictionaries, the word *ἵστωρ* comes from
 30 *ἵστωρ*, which translates as *witness*, among others, but we will talk about it later.

31 The author of the epic poem does not tell us much about how the *ἵστωρ*
 32 proceeds in his role, we do not know if the *ἵστωρ* knows the facts or not, which
 33 leads us to the question: does the *ἵστωρ* tell the truth or does he give account for
 34 what is real? We know that the *ἵστωρ* listens to the different parties in conflict;
 35 what is not clear is whether the *ἵστωρ* is a witness to the facts, that is, if he has
 36 seen or listened, has witnessed what has caused the conflict between the
 37 different parties. It is also not clear what is the method used by the *ἵστωρ* to
 38 reach a conclusion and give his verdict.

³²Frisk H (1960) *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, p. 740.

³³Benveniste É (1948) *Noms d'action et noms d'agents*. Paris: Maisonneuve. pp. 29, 32, 35, 51.

³⁴Darbo-Peschanski C (2007) *L'histoire. Commencements grecs*. Paris: Gallimard. p. 41.

³⁵Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 394.

³⁶Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 394.

1 In the Chant XVIII, Homer describes the shield that Hephaistos made for
 2 Achilles at the request of Thetis. The shield contains a representation of the
 3 world that seems to have a mythical foundation, among other things, due to the
 4 figuration of the *ἵστοροι*, elders who issued their judgment within a sacred circle
 5 in order to judge with justice. These elders, performing the function of *ἵστορ*,
 6 were seated on polished stones in a sacred circle holding in their hands the
 7 staves of the heralds, with which they rose to give their judgment in turn, and
 8 in the middle of them there are two golden talents to be given to the one who
 9 pronounces the most correct sentence.³⁷ We can assume that each gold talent is
 10 given by the respective party to the conflict, in this case, on the one hand, the
 11 man who claims to have paid everything, and on the other hand, the man who
 12 denies having received anything.³⁸ But who and how is it determined which of
 13 the elders pronounces the most righteous sentence?

14 In the Chant XXIII, where the funeral games in honor of Patroclus are
 15 narrated, Achilles puts Phoinix at the finish line as a witness to tell the truth in
 16 the charioteer race competition. However, in the discussion between
 17 Idomeneus and Aias Oíleus about which of the competitors is in first position,
 18 Phoinix is not proposed as *ἵστορα* but Agamemnon (for being the closer to
 19 Zeus?), and Achilles intervenes,³⁹ this intervention that we do not know
 20 whether to interpret as if he himself assumes the role of *ἵστορ* or if his
 21 intervention is to avoid the verdict of a *ἵστορ*. Additionally, if we consult the
 22 original *opus*, Phoinix is referred to with other words to describe his role as
 23 witness and not that of *ἵστορ*.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Achilles in his intervention says
 24 "sitting in the enclosure, contemplate the horses, which soon in their eagerness
 25 for victory will arrive here. Then each of you will find out which Argive horses
 26 are second and which are ahead."⁴¹

27 If we use Morris's semiosis,⁴² we can analyze this situation from the signs,
 28 the interpreters, the interpretants, the meanings and the contexts. Where the
 29 sign is the horse that arrives first; the observers of the competition, affected by
 30 the race itself, are the interpreters; the disposition of these observers to react in

³⁷Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 482, vv. 503-508.

³⁸Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 482, vv. 499-500.

³⁹Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 570, vv. 485-491.

⁴⁰Ομηρου (1920) *Ιλιας*. Oxford: D. B. Monro and T. W. Allen. p. 374, vv. 359-361: *παρὰ δὲ σκοπὸν εἶσεν ἀντίθεον Φοίνικα ὀπάονα πατρὸς ἑοῖο, ὡς μεμνέωτο δρόμους καὶ ἀληθείην ἀποεῖποι*. Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 566, vv. 359-361: Al lado de ésta apostó como vigía a Fénix, comparable a los dioses, escudero de su padre, para que fuera testigo de la carrera y declarara la verdad. Here, the key words are *σκοπὸν* (*skopón*), *μεμνέωτο* (*memnéoto*); *ἀληθείην* (*aletheín*); *ἀποεῖποι* (*apoeípoi*). Which correponds respectively with the spanish version with *vigía*; *testigo*; *verdad*; *declarar*, and neither of those is *ἵστορ* or *ἵστω*. In the English version, necessary for this article, we used Homer (1951) *Iliad*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. pp. 459-460, vv. 359-361: far away on the level plain, and beside it he stationed a judge, Phoinix the godlike, the follower of his father, to mark and remember the running and bring back a true story. Here the corresponding words are "judge", "to mark and remember", "bring back", "a true story". The differences between one translation and another represents a problem that we must attend, but that will be on another occasion.

⁴¹Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 570, vv. 495-498.

⁴²Morris C (1974) *La significación y lo significativo*. Madrid: Comunicación Serie B. p. 14.

1 a certain way because of the race is the interpretant; the kind of object by
 2 which observers are prepared to act in a certain way is the signification of the
 3 sign; and the position occupied by the competitors during the race is part of the
 4 context. The fact that a horse arrives first in a race has a meaning, that when it
 5 arrives first, it is the winner of the competition. In this case there are two
 6 interpreters, on the one hand, the interpreter Idomeneus, who said that
 7 Diomedes was leading the race, and on the other hand, the interpreter Aias
 8 Oïleus, who assured that Eumelos continued to hold the lead in the race; Since
 9 each one had as its object a different horse that was in front, the meaning that
 10 each one gave to the sign diverged, that is, which horse would arrive first.
 11 Therefore, Achilles intervenes to avoid a discussion based on speculation and
 12 on the weakness or inaccuracy that may exist in sensation. And he prefers the
 13 clarity of the events that take place in front of him. Here it does not matter if
 14 for a moment in the race some horse had the lead, it matters which horse is the
 15 one that arrives first to name it the winner. By being named that act of arriving
 16 first, in addition to giving it meaning, it is given order and justice in the
 17 universe of things, it is named the winner for having arrived first, it is a fact or
 18 event that acquires a fair meaning. Achilles prefers the judgment of the fact or
 19 event, he accounts for what is real, he waits for the fact or event considered as
 20 a sign of action to give a verdict, to communicate the fact or event, that is, he
 21 translates the sign of action into a sign of communication, looking for a precise
 22 correspondence between the fact or event with the word or discourse, instead
 23 of simply telling the truth through an ambiguous speech for the privilege of
 24 being king.⁴³

25 Returning with Achilles' intervention, as we already mentioned, he said
 26 "sitting in the enclosure, contemplate the horses, which soon in their eagerness
 27 for victory will arrive here. Then each of you will find out which Argive horses
 28 are second and which are ahead."⁴⁴ This short phrase change everything in the
 29 history of the thought, and we're going to explain why. To do so, we must
 30 consider what Detienne says about the word. In the introduction of his book,
 31 Vidal-Naquet affirms that the truth is, in first place, word.⁴⁵ Then, Detienne
 32 explains that the word is truly conceived as a natural reality, as a part of the
 33 φύσις (*physis*) [...] The word of the prophet and of the oracular powers, as well
 34 as the poetic verb, delimits a plane of reality: when Apollo prophesies, he

⁴³Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 57. "The 'truth' is instituted through the correct application, ritually carried out, of the procedure. When he presides, in the name of the gods, at the ordeal trial, the king 'tells the truth' or, rather, transmits the truth. As the poet and the prophet, the king is 'Master of truth'."

⁴⁴ Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 570, vv. 495-498. In the English version, Homer (1951) *Iliad*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. p. 463, vv. 495-498: Rather sit down again among those assembled and watch for the horses, and they in their strain for victory will before long be here. Then you each can see for himself, and learn which of the Argives horses have run first and which have run second. In the original version, Ομηρου (1920) *Ιλιασ*. Oxford: D. B. Monro and T. W. Allen. p. 378, vv. 495-498: ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς ἐν ἀγῶνι καθήμενοι εἰσοράασθε ἵππους· οἱ δὲ τάχ' αὐτοὶ ἐπειγόμενοι περὶ νίκης ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσονται· τότε δὲ γνώσεσθε ἕκαστος ἵππους Ἀργείων, οἱ δεῦτεροι οἱ τε πάροιθεν.

⁴⁵Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 9.

1 "realizes".⁴⁶ By definition, the word is an aspect of reality; it is an effective
 2 power. But the power of the word is not only oriented towards the real; it is
 3 inevitably oriented towards the other.⁴⁷ In the system of religious thought
 4 where the effective word triumphs there is no distance between 'truth' and
 5 justice; This type of word is always in accordance with the cosmic order, since
 6 it creates the cosmic order, it constitutes the necessary instrument for it.⁴⁸ The
 7 author also talks about a system of thought in which the word is attached to a
 8 network of symbolic values, in which the word is, naturally, a power, a
 9 dynamic reality where, as a power, it acts on the other.⁴⁹ Particularly important
 10 for us is when he explains that the magical-religious word is, first of all,
 11 effective, although its quality of religious power summons other aspects: first,
 12 this type of word is indistinguishable from an action in which, there is no, to
 13 that level, distance between the word and the act. [...] The word provided with
 14 efficiency is not separated from its realization; it is reality, realization, action.⁵⁰
 15 All of this is necessary in order to explain first, that Achilles gives preference
 16 to the fact or event, instead of the word of some authority that may or may not
 17 know or witnessed the fact or event. Second, that Achilles distinguish the word
 18 from the action, therefore, from reality; before, the word didn't need
 19 verification, because as being action, the word itself was its own proof, but as
 20 soon as Achilles separated word from action, made them independent of each
 21 other, made that distinction between word and action, where the word was no
 22 longer an action, in the way that Detienne explains. So, with that phrase,
 23 Achilles took everyone to a ground of a kind of thought different of the
 24 religious or mythical. Third, Achilles not only considers the fact or event, he
 25 goes beyond, because, on the one hand, he also considers where the fact or
 26 event takes place, the referents where we can locate, find, determine, delimit,
 27 define that fact or event, that is the space and the time; and, on the other hand,
 28 Achilles takes account of the observers or participants in the discourse.

29 In sum up, Achilles gives Phoinix the charge of witness, but he doesn't
 30 call him ἵστωρ, he uses other words; his intervention that stopped the
 31 designation of a ἵστωρ may suggest Achilles' rejection of the ἵστωρ, which
 32 shows a preference of the son of Peleus for judge the fact or event, with
 33 everything it entails, as we already observed, rather than a judgment thru the
 34 truth of the word; in his intervention he looks for a consensus of the fact or
 35 event, a conclusion that can be established by all the observers, instead of the
 36 truth of a Master of truth, Achilles deliver the access of reality to the majority,
 37 subtracting it from the elites, who were the Masters of truth. All of this can be
 38 interpreted as a radical change, a paradigm, a rupture in the kind of thought.
 39 This radical change can also be suggested by the change of generation, where
 40 the youngers prefer to give account of reality thru the fact or event, unlike the

⁴⁶Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 63.

⁴⁷Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 84.

⁴⁸Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 68.

⁴⁹Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 85.

⁵⁰Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 65.

1 elders who were habituated or accustomed to say truth, in the way that
2 Detienne explains.

3 As we already saw, the *ἴστωρ* can be an elder or a king, so, following
4 Marcel Detienne's ideas, we can interpret that the *ἴστωρ* could be a prophet or a
5 king of justice.⁵¹ In the Chant XVIII, the sacred circle and the staves suggest
6 that the elders were prophets. As Detienne says, the scepter or stick was a
7 prove or instrument of authority; and the word is indivisible from a gesture and
8 a behavior, the verbal language was always intertwined with gestural language
9 [...] it's the attitude of the body which confers its power to the word [...] all
10 these social behaviors are symbols of a religious potency.⁵² In terms of Peirce
11 we could think that these behaviors established a kind of logic in the mythical
12 thought. And, as we already saw, following Vico and Morris' ideas, the
13 combination between the use of the word, with the gesture or behavior in the
14 act of communication shows us that the older languages or systems remain in
15 the new ones. And in the Chant XXIII the proposal to place Agamemnon as a
16 *ἴστωρ* could suggest that he is the natural election, among other things, for
17 being the king of Mycenae, who occupies a hierarchical position superior to
18 that of the other kings,⁵³ so, he's closer to the Olympic gods and, as might be
19 expected, closer to Zeus, therefore he's proximate to the truth; Agamemnon as
20 the predilected king of justice, who seems to fit as a Master of "truth", as
21 Detienne illustrate, the king of justice is endowed with the same privilege of
22 efficacy: his judgments of justice, his *themistes* are, in fact, species of oracles.⁵⁴
23 These reasons make us think why the king of Mycenae is the first and only one
24 proposed as *ἴστωρ* by Idomeneus.

25 In summarize, the judgment of both elders and kings, exercising the role
26 of *ἴστωρ*, are based on "saying the truth", as "Masters of truth",⁵⁵ and not on
27 giving account of reality. We don't know if Homer, as a poet and therefore as a
28 master of truth, was conscious or not at starting with the end of the ones of his
29 kind, and with that, starting with the transition from the mythical to the logical
30 thought. Maybe in Achilles, a demigod, the son of the king Peleus and the
31 goddess Thetis, the author of the *Iliad* presents an intermediary between the
32 sacred and the profane, the myth and the reality, or as we've been saying, the
33 transition from the mythical to the logical thought. Looking at all these details
34 might make us suspect that he, indeed, was conscious of what he was doing, in
35 that case, we could consider Homer the greatest thinker of all time, because we
36 could trace and find his influence in every thinker before him, who find
37 inspiration in a particular verse. Another paradox, a poet, who belongs to the
38 mythical thought inspiring the thinkers, intellectuals, Scientifics who belong to
39 the logical thought. That shows us that the logical thought wouldn't be possible
40 without the mythical thought, and that is how we started this article, saying that
41 the *Iliad* was the first necessary step to allow the arrival to prose, as the starting

⁵¹Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 59.

⁵²Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. pp. 51, 60.

⁵³Homero (1996) *Iliada*. Madrid: Gredos. p. 32.

⁵⁴Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 64.

⁵⁵Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 57.

1 point that allows a transition, from verse to prose, and with it, from mythical to
2 logical thinking, respectively.

3

4

5 **Those who have dealt with *ἵστορ* or *ἵστω***

6

7 We're going to mention Hannah Arendt, François Hartog and one of my
8 professors at the University, the Dr. René Ceceña.

9 Hannah Arendt analyses the concept of history, and its subjects of matter
10 along time, but she does not properly attend the concept of *ἵστορ* or *ἵστω*. For
11 example, she explains what is history for Herodotus, but that's far away from
12 what we're focused here. What she does mention is Homer, Arendt says that
13 history as a category is older than the written word, older even than Homer;
14 then one of her most cited lines start, when she describes the scene of the
15 *Odyssey* where Ulysses listens to the story of his own life, and Hannah
16 considers it paradigmatic for both history and poetry.⁵⁶ We can say that maybe
17 history as a notion could exist, but history can't properly exist if the word and
18 its meaning don't exist. Also, older than the written word is the oral word, and
19 Homer was part of it, we could even consider him fundamental in the
20 progression from the oral to the written word.

21 A great observation is when the German philosopher says that impartiality,
22 and with it all true historiographic, came into the world when Homer decided
23 to sing the deeds of the Trojans no less than those of the Achaeans, and to
24 praise the glory of Hector no less than the greatness of Achilles; and she
25 considers this Homeric impartiality as still the highest type of objectivity we
26 know.⁵⁷ We could also think that what she describes as impartiality is a way of
27 Homer to show that despite how strong the Trojans were, the Achaeans still
28 defeated them; generally as a political reason, like a way to accentuate that the
29 Achaeans will win no matter what. But, whatever the reason, it gave rise to
30 impartiality as Arendt keenly pointed out. Finally, Arendt's interpretation of the
31 history seems a bit contradictory when she says that history wants to reach
32 pretty much the same ends of poetry, that is, immortality; and that what Homer
33 has done was to immortalize human deeds.⁵⁸ As we already seen, poetry is
34 deeply attached with the myth, therefore, it can't refer to human deeds, because
35 it is a discourse that doesn't even give account of the human.

36 For François Hartog the historiography for the Greeks presupposed the
37 epic, and later became for the moderns in the West "history".⁵⁹ But the
38 Homeric epic is no way history.⁶⁰ Then he cites the famous Arendt's extract

⁵⁶Arendt H (1961) *Between Past and Future*. New York: The Viking Press. p. 45.

⁵⁷Arendt H (1961) *Between Past and Future*. New York: The Viking Press. p. 51.

⁵⁸Arendt H (1961) *Between Past and Future*. New York: The Viking Press. p. 48, 72 and p. 232, note 29.

⁵⁹Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 388. And Arendt H (1961) *Between Past and Future*. New York: The Viking Press. p. 45.

⁶⁰Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 389.

1 where she saw the beginning, poetically speaking, of the category of history.⁶¹
 2 But we already talked about this. Later, Hartog explains that the epic separates
 3 past and present through simple juxtaposition. As soon as the bard begins to
 4 sing the caesura divides, the great deeds of heroes, are transformed into acts
 5 performed by men of yore and the dead become men of the past.⁶² Detienne
 6 wouldn't agree with that, because he says that the magic-religious word isn't
 7 subjected to temporality [...] at this level there is no trace of an action or a
 8 word committed to time. The magical-religious word is pronounced in the
 9 present: in an absolute present, without a before or after, a present that, like
 10 memory, encompasses "what has been, what is, what will be".⁶³

11 Hartog made a couple of, what could be consider, sever critics against
 12 Greeks. First, he claims that if the Greeks were inventors of anything, they
 13 invented the historian rather than the history.⁶⁴ Then, he points out that the
 14 Greeks discovered or rediscovered writing relatively recently (during the eight
 15 century B.C.E) by adopting the Syro-Phoenician alphabet.⁶⁵ Even so, it is
 16 thanks to Homer that it is present until our days and with grater dominance
 17 than any other linguistic root; and, as we already mentioned in the case of
 18 Hannah Arendt, history can't properly exist if the word and its meaning don't
 19 exist, and is thanks to Homer's *ἵστορ* that this sign could evolve to what now is
 20 history and the meaning it has today. Hartog also says that epistemologically,
 21 the Greeks always privileged seeing (over hearing) as the mode of knowledge.
 22 To see, to see for oneself, and to know were one and the same thing.⁶⁶

23 The Dr. René Ceceña says that "history" is the speech of the *hístôr* (*ἵστορ*),
 24 of the one who can testify based on the presence in the place of the events
 25 about which they testify.⁶⁷ Here we can see a semiosis of the sign, this meaning
 26 is in the time of Hecateus, not of Homer, that is, there are approximately three
 27 centuries of distance between Homer's epic poem and the historical narration of
 28 Hecateus. In the epic poem this corresponds, as we already mentioned, with the
 29 deities, especially Zeus as a witness (*ἵστω*) who sees everything. But in the
 30 case of the *ἵστορ*, which seems to correspond to men, there is no clarity in the
 31 work that they will have a presence at the place of events, on the contrary, the
 32 elders being in a sacred circle, seems to suggest an inspired knowledge or
 33 transmitted by deities.

⁶¹Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 389.

⁶²Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 392.

⁶³Detienne M (1981) *Los maestros de verdad en la Grecia arcaica*. Madrid: Taurus. p. 65-66.

⁶⁴Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 393.

⁶⁵Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 386.

⁶⁶Hartog F (2000) The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus. *History and Theory* 39(3) p. 386.

⁶⁷Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. p. 226.

1 He also says that the history of the *hístôr* is a response to the type of
 2 reality that is built with the myth, fundamentally in the form of poetry. History
 3 proposes a discursive definition that makes myth, as a word that it is, a way of
 4 truthful description of human reality that matches said and done through
 5 testimony, and where reality is reconstructed and not fantasized.⁶⁸ Here we can
 6 see the first post Homeric attempts to pass from a poetic discourse to one in
 7 prose, and, with it, from a mythical-poetic thought to logical thought. Where
 8 the action or event, as sign of action, could be translated into a discourse as a
 9 sign of communication with precise correspondence. We can look upon this as
 10 the first vestiges of rational thought, that seeks an adequate discourse to
 11 represent reality, to represent what is presented to the thought thru the
 12 sensation, where the thought can be considered as an intermediary between
 13 reality and the discourse; the action is presented to thought, and the thought
 14 represents that action projecting it in language. This can only be according to
 15 the first Greek historians (5th century BC). Because if we consider Achilles
 16 *ἵστωρ*, in Chant XXIII, this characterization of *ἵστωρ* would correspond, and it
 17 could be determined that, Homer proposed it first. In case of not considering
 18 Achilles *ἵστωρ*, the historians of the 5th century BC would have misunderstood
 19 Homer and would have appropriated the *ἵστωρ* to provide him with that
 20 definition or characterization, when perhaps the *ἵστωρ* was the one who judged
 21 by a knowledge inspired by deities, and Homer proposed through Achilles the
 22 counterpart of the *ἵστωρ* (just as logic is the counterpart of the myth). That is,
 23 someone who judges by testimonial knowledge, limited to their human
 24 capacities and not inspired by deities. Then we could have two possibilities, in
 25 the one hand, the mythical-poetic discourse that contains the *ἵστωρ* who seeks a
 26 judgment of justice based on knowledge inspired by deities; and on the other
 27 hand, the logical discourse that paradoxically takes the *ἵστωρ* and make it, not
 28 another way of Master of truth, but a higher kind by characterize him as being
 29 aware of making judgments of justice based on human knowledge, a
 30 knowledge limited to human capacities, knowledge based on sensation,
 31 experience, verification, testimony; one who considers not only the fact in the
 32 action or event, but a whole context, such as time, space, and the participants of
 33 the discourse.

34 Hecateus, Herodotus, Thucydides and company could make proper
 35 history, among other things, thanks to the epistemic foundation that Homer
 36 gifted to the world, which should not be taken for granted. Make or consider
 37 history as a higher way of poetry seems a very limited reading, because they
 38 don't see that they can make history thanks to the new epistemic foundation
 39 that Homer inherited thru the voice of Achilles, when he refuses the
 40 intervention of the *ἵστωρ* and proposes a, let's say "logic", method to determine
 41 the fact. That was a crucial factor to transit from myth to logic, within it,
 42 because of the separation between word and reality, as Detienne explained.
 43 Even the scene of Ulysses, that Arendt very well analyze, can be a ratification

⁶⁸Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. pp. 227-228.

1 moment, because suggests that he realizes that he don't need a Master of truth
 2 to know what is real, he lived what the poet is singing, the validation isn't in
 3 the words of an *oidos*, is in the facts that took place which he and the rest of
 4 the Achaeans attested. But that's outside of our actual project, so we're going
 5 to leave it for another occasion.

8 **The Epistemic Foundation in History**

10 In his text, Dr. Ceceña tries to define which are the basic considerations
 11 that lead to the emergence of historical discourse; he tries to establish the
 12 meaning of the epistemological relationship between history and geography, to
 13 clarify how the geographical procedure is the effect of the mode of historical
 14 questioning; finally, he sees why the epistemic foundation that organizes
 15 history and geography is constituted by the *χώρα* (*jora*).⁶⁹

16 For the first, it seeks to specify the origin of historical discourse, using
 17 classical Greek authors whose texts, according to Dr. Ceceña, are the first to
 18 attempt a true determination of human events through a formulation that is
 19 explicitly assumed to be historical.⁷⁰ He refers to Hecataeus, Herodotus and
 20 Thucydides, and shows fragments of the writings of each one to account for
 21 their respective attempt to establish a discourse that determines and specifies
 22 the indefinite discourse that constitutes the mythical-poetic discourse.⁷¹

23 We can propose that these ancient historians put into practice what Homer
 24 gave to the world thru Achilles, that is, the procedure or method to give
 25 account of reality only by human means.

26 Dr. Ceceña observes that the historical proposal is a radical offer to
 27 reorganize the epistemological landscape that is contemporary to it, an
 28 alternative to myth, poetry and logography as forms of expression of reality
 29 through a discourse that has not elaborated forms of verification of related
 30 facts.⁷² What we are proposing here is that this is not spontaneous, casual, or
 31 came out of nowhere, but rather has its origins in Homer's *Iliad*, and that
 32 without it, this change in the type of thought would not be possible. The myth
 33 is a necessary previous moment so that the logical can be manifested. And over
 34 the *Iliad* thought developed in Greece, extending through time and space,

⁶⁹Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. pp. 224-225.

⁷⁰Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. p. 225.

⁷¹Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. pp. 225-230.

⁷²Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. p.227.

1 where its influence reaches our days, and covers, inherently, the Western world,
2 and we can even consider that it exceeds it.

3 For Dr. Ceceña, the epistemic foundation that organizes history and
4 geography is constituted by the referential framework that defines human
5 reality: *χώρα*, that is, the first place of determination of a given historical fact.⁷³
6 Here we think that the epistemic foundation is not limited to the certification of
7 the fact and space (or *χώρα*), but that it also includes time, and the members of
8 the discourse. We base this thought on the verses of the epic poem of the 8th
9 century BC (approx.), specifically in Chant XXIII, in which Homer seems to
10 donate or give to the world, through Achilles, an indication of a new epistemic
11 foundation to determine what is human, what is real, and which constitutes a
12 paradigmatic moment in the history of thought, the transition from mythical to
13 logical thought. This new epistemic fundament includes the fact as action or
14 event, space, time, and the members of the discourse. As we already explained,
15 in Chant XXIII Eumelos started leading the race, but it doesn't matter if he was
16 the leader, the winner is who finish first, and Diomedes finish first. There is
17 involved space, with the reference point of the finish line; time, with who
18 arrived first; the action that we locate in space and time and that allows us to
19 give it meaning; and the members of the discourse, with the witnesses who
20 arrived at an objective consensus thru those elements that conform a, let's say,
21 method.

22
23

24 **Occident: Semiosis of the Homeric Sign**

25

26 Homer was fundamental in the progression from the oral to the written
27 word. He gave the conditions for the transition from the mythical to the logical
28 thought, among other things, besides the written word itself, by laying as the
29 epistemic foundation of reality the fact in the action or event that takes place in
30 space and time, and that everyone can access through the sensation; ending, in
31 this way, with the "truth" of the word to which only the "Masters of truth" had
32 access. And finally, we could say that Homer's oeuvres have configured most
33 of what we call the Western World, not only because of the words that we still
34 use, but the influence in the ideas raised by his reading, as well as the
35 expansion of the West around the planet, and even starting to spread outside of
36 it.

37
38

39 **Conclusion**

40

41 This paper could contain more concepts to enrich its content, and give
42 more precision to our exposition, but it would require a longer extension.

⁷³Ceceña R (2005) Historia y geografía. El fundamento epistémico de su complementariedad epistemológica. In B Berenzon, G Calderón (coord). *Coordenadas sociales. Más allá del tiempo y el espacio*. Mexico: UACM. p. 225.

1 In our research we started with the idea of look for prestige to the History
 2 in the origin of the word, that is, in the *Iliad*, and we ended finding out that, in
 3 that particular moment, the *ἵστορ* might not be what Herodotus and so on
 4 thought it was. But it shows the process of semiosis, the unlimited semiotic
 5 progression, where *ἵστορ* acquired a new meaning that has been maintained
 6 until our days.

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