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## The Scales as the Symbol of Justice in the Iliad

**Abstract.** The idiom of the *scales of justice* is commonly known and widely used. Iustitia can frequently be seen in different representations holding scales in her hand. The scales as a means or a symbol of justice (justness) or the administration of justice can be encountered in various places in Greek literature, one of its earliest instances being the *Homeric Hermes' Hymn (Dikés talanta)*. According to these loci Zeus holds the scales of Diké, that is to say, the scales of justice in his hand. In the Iliad (23, 109–213) one may come across a scene presented in context, thus suitable for being more amply analysed, in which Zeus is pronouncing justice over the heroes using a pair of scales. In search of the meaning of *Dikés talanta*, this study tries to clarify the concept of law and justice (justness) in Homeric epic (I.), then by a structural (II.) and comparative analysis (III.) of certain lines of the weighing scene, decisive in the combat of Achilles and Hector, it formulates a few remarks on the origin and meaning of the concept of the scales of justice.

One cannot claim that this idea of Egyptian religion had been transferred in its entirety into Greek thinking, but it is not surprising, as one can barely encounter an unaltered Egyptian borrowing in Greek mythological thinking. Nonetheless, some Egyptian influence, possibly with Cretan transmission, can be detected in the development of the Greek versions of psychostasia and kerostasia. Pictorial as well as textual manifestations of such influence can be found on the one hand in vase-paintings, and on the other hand—undergoing a specific alteration of aspect in the form of kerostasia—in Homer, who paved the way for the scales of justice of Zeus and Iuppiter to become the symbol of Diké and Iustitia, and subsequently of the administration of justice itself.

**Keywords:** scales of justice, dike, Homeric law, kerostasia

The idiom of the *scales of justice* is well-known, its use is widely spread, Iustitia can frequently be seen with scales in her hand in different representations.<sup>1</sup> The scales as the symbol of justice and administration of justice can be encountered in various places in Greek literature, one of its earliest instances can be found in the *Homeric Hermes's Hymn (Dikés talanta)*.<sup>2</sup> Then, to mention only a few examples, this picture can be detected in Bakkhylides,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lange, H.: Die Wörter Aequitas und Iustitia auf römischen Münzen. *Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichts, Romanistische Abteilung*, 60 (1940) 296. sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Rademacher, L.: *Der Homerische Hermeshymnus*. Wien, 1931. 213.

<sup>3</sup> Bacchyl. 4, 12; 16 (17), 25.

while in Theognis<sup>4</sup> Zeus is measuring out richness and poverty with the help of a pair of scales. According to these loci Zeus is holding in his hand the scales of Diké.<sup>5</sup> In the *Iliad* one can encounter a scene presented in context, thus suitable for being more amply analysed, in which Zeus is pronouncing justice over the heroes using a pair of scales. Searching for the meaning of *Dikés talanta* this paper will first try to clarify the concept of law and justice as it appears in the Homeric epic (I.), then, by the structural (II.) and comparative (III.) analysis of some lines of the weighing scene, decisive in the combat of Achilles and Hector, some remarks will be made on the origin and meaning of the concept of the scales of justice

I. The word *diké* is traditionally derived from the root *\*deik* of the verb *deiknymi* (to show, to point at, to explain, to testify); its basic meaning of *direction, way, custom* is completed with the meanings *customary procedure, decision, resolution, trial, and law*.<sup>6</sup> (These two meanings, traditionally derived from each other are approached from a new aspect by Palmer, according to whom the meaning of *signalling, custom, characteristic, particularity* and the meaning *decision, resolution*, of the word *diké*, originally the *borderline* drawn between two litigant parties derived from the root *\*deik*, developed parallelly, independently from each other so neither of these can be considered secondary, derived from the other.<sup>7</sup>) The primary meaning of the word *diké*—or in any case the one mentioned first—(generally in genitival and adverbial constructions) frequently occurs in the *Odyssey* as *a quality, a particularity, a way of behaviour* characteristic of a given group of people.<sup>8</sup> It is also worth scrutinizing the other meaning of the word *diké*, which can be performed together with the examination of the verb *dikadzein* and the adjective *dikaspolos*.<sup>9</sup> In this sense *diké* originally signifies *a border* or a *dividing line*, most often dividing two plots of land, which constitute the object of two persons' claims of ownership.

<sup>4</sup> Theogn. 157.

<sup>5</sup> Aisch. *Ag.* 250; *Pers.* 345. sk; *Hik.* 822. Cf. E. Wüst: Die Seelenwägung in Ägypten und Griechenland. *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 36 (1939) 166.

<sup>6</sup> Gonda, J.: *ΔΕΙΚΝΥΜΙ: Semantische Studie over den Indo-Germanische Wortel DEIK*. Amsterdam, 1929. 224. sqq.; Gagarin, M.: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *Classical Philology*, 68 (1973) 82.

<sup>7</sup> Palmer, L. R.: *The Indo-European Origins of Greek Justice*. *TPhS Oxford*, 1950. 157. sqq.

<sup>8</sup> *Od.* 4, 690–692; 11, 216–218; 14, 58–60; 18, 274–275; 19, 43; 19, 67–70; 24, 254–255.

<sup>9</sup> Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 83.

Naturally, this borderline can be either straight or curved,<sup>10</sup> the meaning of the word *diké*, determining, dividing the parts of the litigants in a legal process, and thus deciding the matter of dispute, possibly developed from this fact.<sup>11</sup> If they did not want to decide the dispute between two persons over a certain issue (over property, or over the blood money to be paid for the murder of a relative etc.) by violence (*bié*) but by way of peaceful decision (*diké*), but they could not reach a solution, which would satisfy both parties they could make appeal to an objective third person, who was not interested in the case, to make a proposal (*dikadzein*) for deciding the dispute. They could agree to solve their contradiction (*dikaspolos*) according to the opinion of a single person, or they could ask different persons for proposals for decision, and then to end the dispute by yielding to the solution most acceptable for both of them. So *diké* was the proposal for decision, at the same time *diké* was the whole contradictory process itself, although the society of the Homeric epoch probably did not know the compulsive force to constrain the individual to subject himself to *diké*.<sup>12</sup> Two descriptions of such a procedure, in which, as the sources also demonstrate it, the oath naturally played an important role as well, can be found in Homer: one connected to the argument between Antilochus and Menelaus following the chariot race, risen over the primacy and the reward in the contest,<sup>13</sup> the second description of the legal procedure occurs in the description of Achilles's shield in the *Iliad*.<sup>14</sup> As it becomes evident especially from the second locus the straightest *diké* does not necessarily have to coincide with the claims of either party—which might seem surprising at first sight because in the legal cultures based on Roman law a legal process had to end either with acquittal or condemnation<sup>15</sup>—because the essence of the Homeric trial most probably consisted of finding and implementing the most acceptable compromise with the help of the *dikai*.<sup>16</sup> Whenever the verb *dikadzein* occurs in the active in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,<sup>17</sup> it always means deciding a certain case, its medial form *dikadzesthai* means the dispute, or representing a concrete case in

<sup>10</sup> Palmer: *op. cit.* 159.

<sup>11</sup> Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 83; Gagarin, M.: Diké in the Archaic Greek Thought. *Classical Philology*, 69 (1974) 187.

<sup>12</sup> Bonner, R. J.–Smith, G.: *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle I*. Chicago 1930. 46. sqq.; Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Il.* 23, 540–554; 566–586.

<sup>14</sup> *Il.* 18, 497–508.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Földi A.–Hamza G.: *A római jog története és intézményei* (History and Institutes of Roman Law). Budapest, 2005. 153.

<sup>16</sup> Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 85.

<sup>17</sup> *Il.* 1, 540–543; 8, 427–431; *Od.* 11, 547.

the course of the dispute,<sup>18</sup> the expression *dikaspolos* can be encountered in the sense of sentence passing judge.<sup>19</sup> The basic interpretation of *diké*, meaning *decision* is corroborated by the Homeric loci, which designate *diké* as the portion to which somebody is lawfully entitled,<sup>20</sup> at the same time, elsewhere it designates the legal process itself, the solving of particular contradictions peacefully,<sup>21</sup> by way of legal disputes, in other places it signifies a whole chain of decisions, possibly the legal procedure *en général*.<sup>22</sup> Two further loci<sup>23</sup> testify that *diké* in the singular could mean a lawful procedure, a peaceful judgement.<sup>24</sup> (As two basic meanings of the word *diké* are differentiated, this can also be done in the case of the adjective *dikaïos* and the adverb *dikaiós*, in most cases meaning proper conduct, in accordance with custom, or, in the negative meaning deviation from accepted behaviour,<sup>25</sup> in some cases however, they designate lawful,<sup>26</sup> rule following procedure.<sup>27</sup>)

At the same time, Diké as a divine being is Zeus's daughter as well, thus being a so-called *Person-Bereich Einheit*, partaking of a certain kind of abstraction as well. The *Person-Bereich* thinking was for the ancient man a specific way of experiencing things in the course of which he experienced some physical reality (an object, a process or a state), and, at the same time, he experienced it also as a divine being.<sup>28</sup> The thing and the divinity was designated by the same concept. Sometimes—because antique writing did not differentiate between the maiuscula and the minuscula—it causes great difficulty in textual tradition to decide whether to write *fortuna* or *Fortuna* in a given instance. Naturally, either form is preferred, the other is tacitly part of the concept and should be taken into account as well. Designating a concept with identical words would outwardly suggest juxtaposition, but in fact it shows the unity of the person and the field represented or function fulfilled by him or her,

<sup>18</sup> *Od.* 11, 543–546; 12, 437–441.

<sup>19</sup> *Il.* 1, 232–239; *Od.* 11, 184–187.

<sup>20</sup> *Il.* 19, 179–180.

<sup>21</sup> *Il.* 16, 541–543; *Od.* 11, 568–571.

<sup>22</sup> *Od.* 3, 244. 242–245.

<sup>23</sup> *Il.* 16, 384–388; *Od.* 14, 83–84.

<sup>24</sup> Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 85–86.

<sup>25</sup> *Od.* 3, 52. 133; 14, 90; 18, 275; 18, 414 = 20, 322; 6, 120 = 8, 575 = 9, 175 = 13, 201; 20, 294 = 21, 312.

<sup>26</sup> *Il.* 11, 832; 13, 6; 19, 181.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gagarin: „Diké” in the „Works and Days”. *op. cit.* 86; Gagarin: Diké in the Archaic... *op. cit.* 188.

<sup>28</sup> Pötscher, W.: Person-Bereichdenken und Personifikation. *Literatur-Wissenschaftliches Jahrbuch*, 19 (1978) 229.

in which one or the other aspect comes to the fore.<sup>29</sup> (It is problematic though, to what extent can the cult be considered a crucial proof of the fact that the given divinity was also experienced as a person, or, more precisely the lack of a cult does not prove that the personal component was missing from the given divinity. It is a widespread opinion that if a god did not have a cult, it is only an impersonal power, *mana*, thus belonging not so much to the religious sphere but rather to the magical one.<sup>30</sup> Undoubtedly, the widespread cult with prayers, sacrifices, clergy and temples is a definite proof of a personal god-image. However, the cult is not the only possible form of expressing religious veneration and it is a question whether there was any need to consecrate separate temples for the gods who were experienced spectacularly and with intensive emotions. At the same time, in the case of certain gods, who were experienced by the Greeks and Romans as *Person-Bereich Einheit*, the cult was considerably widespread, e.g. Zeus, who had been originally the Indo-European God of Sky and Rain, or the river Tiber—with the cultic name Tiberinus—or Ares.<sup>31</sup>)

**II.** In the following I would like to expound briefly on the development of Greek soul-weighing in order to highlight the importance of scales in the course of the legal process. The dramatic climax of the twenty-second song of the *Iliad* is the description of Hector's death. The heroes Achilles and Hector, preparing for the final combat have already gone round the Greek camp three times, then, when they reach the well for the fourth time, the following happens before the final combat ending in Hector's death takes place:

*Καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατήρ ἐτίθεινε τάλασπα,  
ἔπ' δὲ τίθει δύο κῆρε ταναφλεγέσῳ θανάτοιο,  
τὴν μὲν Ἀχιλλῆσῳ, τὴν δ' Ἑκτορῳ ἵπποδάμοιο,  
ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν· ῥέπε δ' Ἑκτορῳ αἴσιμον ἦμαρ,  
ᾧχετο δ' εἶπ' Αἴδαο λίπεν δέ ε' Φοῖβῳ Ἀπόλλων.<sup>32</sup>*

The scene is completely picture-like and unambiguous, it is only the *dyo kére*, measured by Zeus, i.e. the expression *two kére* that needs further explana-

<sup>29</sup> Pötscher, W.: Das Person-Bereichdenken in der frühgriechischen Periode. *Wiener Studien*, 72 (1959) 24.

<sup>30</sup> Pötscher: Das Person-Bereichdenken... *op. cit.* 26.

<sup>31</sup> Pötscher: Person-Bereichdenken und Personifikation. *op. cit.* 219.

<sup>32</sup> *Il.* 22, 209–213.

tion.<sup>33</sup> The view according to which *kér* would only mean dead soul, was categorically refuted by Malten. Malten, deriving *kér* from *kéraion*, calls it a harmful spirit, a malefic demon (*Schadengeist*).<sup>34</sup> He does not connect it directly with the human soul, but he regards it as a general destructive force that can manifest itself in the form of a god, a human or an animal,<sup>35</sup> according to the given situation.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the opinion according to which the *kér* would be only the synonym for human soul, *psykhé* is untenable, because comparing the description with pictorial representations to be discussed later, one can see that when in the vase-pictures Zeus is measuring the little figures representing the souls (*psykhai*) with the scales, the result of the measuring is contrary to the one known from the *Iliad*, namely the scale pan with the winner's soul descends and the one with the loser's soul ascends.<sup>37</sup> The idea that Zeus would measure malefic gods or harmful demons with the scales is likewise to be discarded, because although this meaning of *Kére* can be found elsewhere,<sup>38</sup> the deities are always powerful beings,<sup>39</sup> so it would seem absurd to measure their ability to destroy a man or a heros.<sup>40</sup> I think that we can find a plausible explanation for the conceptual pair *Kér/kér* in the idea of *Person-Bereich Einheit*. How is the *Person-Bereich Einheit* represented in this case? The *Kér/kér* means at the same time a destructive, harmful god (goddess) as its personal component and it also includes its material aspects, i. e. a mortal force or energy. The human soul attacked by the deity *Kér*, also became *kér*, a substance permeated by destructive power, infected by corruption. So Zeus, in the course of the *kerostasia*, is placing onto the scales the souls who became possessed by *Kér*, and thus were transformed into *kér* themselves.<sup>41</sup>

The *kerostasia* found in Homer—ultimately the weighing of souls transformed into *kér*—is based on a much earlier belief about soul-measuring, which becomes evident from the following. We have knowledge of a tragedy by Aeschylus entitled *Psykhostasia* and we have numerous vase-pictures on which we can see Zeus and Hermes placing souls onto scales. The Homeric epic gives a vivid

<sup>33</sup> Roscher, W. H.: *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* II. Leipzig, 1884–1937. 1136. sqq.

<sup>34</sup> Malten, L.: *Ker*. RE Suppl. 4. 883. sqq.

<sup>35</sup> *Il.* 18, 115=22, 365; *Il.* 2, 352; 5, 652.=11, 443; *Il.* 3, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Dietrich, B. C.: The Judgement of Zeus. *Rheinisches Museum*, 1964. 103. sqq.

<sup>37</sup> Pötscher, W.: Schicksalswägungen. *Kairos*, 15 (1973) 61.

<sup>38</sup> *Il.* 12, 326.

<sup>39</sup> *Il.* 18, 534.

<sup>40</sup> Pötscher: Schicksalswägungen. *op. cit.* 61.

<sup>41</sup> Pötscher, W.: Moira, Themis und timé im homerischen Denken. *Wiener Studien*, 73 (1960) 15. sqq.

description of the ideas that the ancient Greeks had of the human soul. The *Odyssey* calls the dead *amenéna karéna*<sup>42</sup> because they lack *menos*, the vitality characteristic of the living. The souls of the dead are flying about like bats,<sup>43</sup> they cannot be touched, just like shadows or dreams,<sup>44</sup> and the *psykhé* is flying away like a bird.<sup>45</sup> Archeological findings also corroborate this. The more ancient vase-paintings using black figures represent the human soul almost exclusively as a little winged figure, or, in some cases, without a wing.<sup>46</sup> The transformation of *kerostasia* into *psykhostasia* only indicates the changing of the aspect of measuring. While in the course of *psykhostasia* it is the scale pan of the soul possessing more *menos*, thus being more powerful, more vital that descends and the scale pan of the loser, the weaker part ascends, in *kerostasia* this happens the other way round, because the soul penetrated with *kér* to a greater extent possesses less *menos*, it is precisely the lack of vital power that signifies the power and greatness of the destructive force (or, to use psychological terms, it shows how the death instinct overpowers the life instinct). The fact that the scale pan containing the soul condemned to die descends is also explained by the localization of Hades, the underworld.<sup>47</sup>

In order to render the idea complete—and hopefully to clear up some misbeliefs—here I would like to make some remarks on the role of Fate in Homeric thinking. *Moirá* means *part, share*<sup>48</sup>—Nielsson observes that the essence of the concept is given by the translation *portion (Portion)*, because in time the concepts *part (Teil)* and *share (Anteil)* became somewhat abstract, though in the beginning they did not possess such abstract meaning. This is also shown by the loci of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,<sup>49</sup> where *moira* appears with the following meanings among others: a part of a god's rule over the world,<sup>50</sup> a given period of time,<sup>51</sup> the share received from the prey,<sup>52</sup> a portion

<sup>42</sup> *Od.* 10, 521.

<sup>43</sup> *Od.* 24, 5. sqq.

<sup>44</sup> *Od.* 11, 205.

<sup>45</sup> *Il.* 16, 856; 22, 362.

<sup>46</sup> Nielsson, M. P.: *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I*. München, 1968. 196; Waser, O.: Über die äussere Erscheinung der Seele in den Vorstellungen der Völker zumal der alten Griechen. *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 16 (1913)

<sup>47</sup> Pötscher: *Schicksalswägungen. op. cit.* 62.

<sup>48</sup> Nielsson: *op. cit.* 362.

<sup>49</sup> Eberling, H.: *Lexicon Homericum I–II*. Hildesheim, 1963. I. 1113. sqq.

<sup>50</sup> *Il.* 15, 195.

<sup>51</sup> *Il.* 10, 253.

<sup>52</sup> *Il.* 9, 318.

at a meal,<sup>53</sup> or in the plural it can signify pieces of meat.<sup>54</sup> The idea of Fate originates in the concrete share of luck (*Lebensglück*), one person's *moira* is in close connection with that of another person, therefore the *moira* did not become an abstract concept of destiny. Fate, designated with *moira* is often represented as a person or persons, these are the goddesses of Fate, the *Moirai*. Instead of personification it seems more adequate to regard this phenomenon as a *Person-Bereich Einheit*. The *Moirai/moira* is also one of the concepts in which the personal and the physical spheres constitute an indivisible unity.<sup>55</sup> Although—as we could see—the presence or absence of the cult does not prove the lack of the personal component of the deity, in the case of *Moirai/moira* the existence of the cult is proved.<sup>56</sup> The number of *Moirai* is three, which originally only meant that several *Moirai* existed in Greek religious thinking, as in a more ancient stage of the Greek language the smallest number that could stand in plural, (*pluralis*) was three due to the fact that in the respective period the language was aware of the dual (*dualis*).<sup>57</sup> Later, following the pattern of other divine trinities, their number was fixed in three, and the role of each person (*Klóthó*, *Lakheis*, *Atrópos*) came to be precisely determined. However, the relationship of the *moira* and Zeus as well as the *moira* and other gods is more essential and also causing more debate. The views appearing in the literature of the subject can be classified in three main groups: While one group is placing the *moira* below Zeus and the other above him, the representatives of the third group maintain that posing the question of subordination and superiority is not in accordance with Greek religious thinking. In their view the *moira* is a heterogeneous concept, perfectly separable from the gods, and the fact that the *Moirai* are goddesses themselves did not cause disturbance in the Greek mythological world, which was completely lacking a logically constructed theological or dogmatic system.<sup>58</sup> The gods guarantee order, so their role is more active than that of the *moira*, yet the *moira* is also a part of the order sustained by the gods. Thus in one sense Zeus and the gods stand above the *moira*, because they implement it, but in another respect the *Moirai/moira* stands above the gods because it expresses the order that must be implemented by the gods.

<sup>53</sup> *Od.* 3, 66; 8, 470; 14, 448.

<sup>54</sup> *Od.* 20, 260.

<sup>55</sup> Pötscher: *Moirai, Themis und timé im... op. cit.* 103.

<sup>56</sup> Roscher: *op. cit.* 3089. sqq.

<sup>57</sup> Kühner, R.–Blass, F.–Gerth, B.: *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache I–II*. Hannover, 1890–1904. 1. 362.

<sup>58</sup> Nielsson: *op. cit.* I. 364.



**III.** The vase-pictures representing soul-weighing deserve more attention, in these it is Hermes who regularly places the souls of the two heroes Achilles and Memnón onto the scales.<sup>59</sup> (In some representations Zeus is also present but it is not him who performs the weighing. The two heroes can unquestionably be identified as Achilles and Memnón because their mothers Thetis and Eos are present in order to influence with their prayers the outcome of the weighing meant to decide the result of the combat.) The Aeschylean *Psykhostasia* mentioned before also deals with the combat between Achilles and Memnón, ending with the former's victory,<sup>60</sup> but here the scales are not in Hermes's but in Zeus's hands.<sup>61</sup> If we take a quick glance at the Egyptian sources we can easily find similarities and analogies between Greek and Egyptian *psykhostasia*.

The most mature and most precise description of Egyptian soul-measuring can be found in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead written in the time of the XVIII. dynasty (16th–15th century BC.).<sup>62</sup> According to this the other wordly judging—and the soul-measuring, constituting the object of the present analysis as part of this—was performed in the following way. Osiris sat on a throne in a huge hall, the hall of the two Maat-s,<sup>63</sup> which was roofed by flames and the signs of Justice, in front of him were standing Anubis and the Horus-sons, and a beast combining the features of a crocodile, a lion, and a hippopotamus in his appearance, which had the task of devouring the defendant eventually found guilty in the verdict. The forty-two judges appointed by Osiris were sitting in the back of the hall (their number symbolising the number of the districts of Egypt), the scales on which the dead person's heart was to be placed stood in the front part of the hall. The Goddess of Justice (Maat) received the deceased person coming into the hall, whose heart was placed by Horus and Anubis in one of the scale-pans—while a feather or an eye was placed in the other (both being the symbols of maat)—, then they weighed it to see whether it was lighter than justice. If the pointer did not move, the weighing was considered successful, whereas if the pan containing the dead person's heart ascended, the beast devoured the culprit. The result of the weighing was noted down by Thot, the divine scribe, who later told it to Osiris. The dead person stepping into the hall made a negative confession, i.e. he denied committing the sins connected to the forty-two judges, offending the ethical codex of the Egyptians, and then

<sup>59</sup> Roscher: *op. cit.* II. 1142. sq.; Wüst: *op. cit.* 164. sqq.

<sup>60</sup> Wüst: *op. cit.* 165.

<sup>61</sup> Plut. *aud. poet.* 17a

<sup>62</sup> Erman, A.: *Die ägyptische Religion*. Berlin, 1909. 101. sqq.; Spiegel, J.: *Die Idee vom Totengericht in der ägyptischen Religion*. Glückstadt, 1935.

<sup>63</sup> Morenz, S.: *Ägyptische Religion*. Stuttgart, 1960. 117. sqq.

enumerated the names of the judges.<sup>64</sup> (During the confession the deceased person wishing to clear himself had to name and to greet the judge connected to the respective deed. So, for example he had to state that he did not commit injustice, robbery, he did not use force against anyone, did not steal, did not kill, and did not instigate anyone to do so. He did not cause damage to the temple or the gods, did not take away anything unlawfully from the sacrifices destined for them, did not commit adultery, did not fornicate, did not falsify the measuring device of grain, did not violate the borders of someone else's land, did not commit false measuring, etc. Naming these circumstances reveals a great deal about the ideas of the Egyptians about the maat—which can be paralleled from a structural point of view with the Greek themis or diké.)

Let us consider now the parallels between the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and the Greek vase-paintings (disregarding for the moment the fact that scales are used in both cases)!<sup>65</sup> Both Thot and Hermes fulfill in mythology the role of *psykhopompos*, the guide of souls in the underworld, both of them are so-called literate gods, at the soul-weighing they are either performing the act or playing the role of the scribe. At the process both Osiris and Zeus are present as principal gods. It is hardly by accident that both in the vase-pictures and in Aeschylus Achilles is confronting Memnón, king of Aithiopia whose homeland was believed by Homer to be South-East from the Greeks. Presumably, the Greeks originally appropriated the idea of soul-weighing for Achilles's combat with a hero whose homeland was thought to be close to the place where this belief had originated, and later—after integrating these elements into their own religious world-picture—they used it more freely and with a wider scope.<sup>66</sup> The fact that the symbolism of the scales of justice reached the islands of the Aegean Sea very early, in the years 1500–1200 BC., is proved by archaeological discoveries as well. In a Mycenaean grave—excavated by Schliemann—in which two women lay buried along with their babies, they found two golden scales in good condition. A butterfly can be seen on the upper part of each of their pans. Although many experts<sup>67</sup> wished to consider these findings only articles of personal use, it is probably not over-hasty to draw some further conclusions from the symbolism of the scales.<sup>68</sup> As it was mentioned *per tangentem* before, the human soul was often represented by the ancient Greeks

<sup>64</sup> Budge, E. A. W.: *Egyptian Religion—Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life*. London, 1979. 130. sqq.

<sup>65</sup> Wüst: *op. cit.* 167. sqq.

<sup>66</sup> Wüst: *op. cit.* 168.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. Fimmen, D.: *Die kretisch-mykenische Kultur*. 1924. 124; Wüst: *op. cit.* 167.

<sup>68</sup> Diertich: *op. cit.* 121.

as a winged figure. It is not only at the Greeks, but also at the Germans and the Albanians that the so-called soul butterfly picture can be encountered.<sup>69</sup> On a vase found in the Cyprian Encomy, dating from around 1300 BC. according to Nielsson, two men are represented, who are standing on a chariot, facing another man holding a pair of scales, presumably Zeus.<sup>70</sup>

With all these I naturally do not wish to mingle the Egyptian *psykhostasia* with the Greek one, as the differences between them are obvious. In Egypt the soul of every deceased person is placed on the scales of justice, the Greeks do so only with the souls of a few exceptional heroes, preparing to fight one another, and this happens while they are still alive. The Egyptian idea carries a moral content, whereas the Greek one decides and approves the—possibly morally justifiable—outcome of the fight.<sup>71</sup> It seems worth taking a quick glance at the transformations and changes of aspect through which the *kerostasia* of the *Iliad* reached Roman literature. The most typical example for this can be found in the twelfth song of Virgil's *Aeneid* where the final combat between Aeneas and Turnus is described: "*Iuppiter ipse duas aequato examine lances / sustinet et fata imponit diversa duorum, / quem damnet labor et quo vergat pondere letum.*"<sup>72</sup> The *fata* of the two persons are placed onto the scale-pans and whereas in Homer the reader is informed about the result of the weighing, in Virgil we can infer that the outcome was favourable for Aeneas only from the events on earth.

So we cannot claim that this idea of Egyptian religion would have completely been transported into Greek thinking but this is not strange, as we cannot encounter any unaltered Egyptian borrowing in Greek mythological thinking.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, some Egyptian influence—possibly with Cretan transmission—can be detected in the development of the Greek version of *psykhostasia*. The pictorial, as well as the textual proof/manifestation of this influence can be found on the one hand in vase-paintings, on the other hand—undergoing a specific alteration of aspect, in the form of *kerostasia*—it can be found in Homer, from whom directly leading to Zeus's and Iuppiter's scales of justice becoming the symbol of Diké and Iustitia, and then the symbol of the administration of justice itself.

<sup>69</sup> Waser: *op. cit.* 337. sqq.

<sup>70</sup> Nielsson, M. P.: *Homer and Mycenae*. London, 1933. 267. sqq.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Malten, L.: Elysiion und Radamanthys. *Archäologisches Jahrbuch*, 38 (1913) 35. sqq.

<sup>72</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 12, 725–727.

<sup>73</sup> Dietrich: *op. cit.* 114. sqq.