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Ares and Other “Mothers’ Sons” in Greek Mythology: A Structural Analysis

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Abstract: This paper, based on characters such as Hephaestus or Typhon, defines the Greek mythical category of the “mother’s son.” It analyses the link between Ares and this type of character through the god’s relationships with the female universe, and specifically with Hera, his mother, which help to determine the personality and attributes of the god of war, and his situation within the Olympian family. The similarities between Ares and the “mother’s sons” makes it possible to study his mythological figure, explore the consequences of exclusively being “born of woman” or “born of man,” and finally, to consider the situation of the feminine and the masculine in Greek mythology.

Keywords: Ares, Hera, birth, Ancient Greece, myth.

Presentation.

The myths related to Ares present a series of evident similarities with a type of mythical character, the "mother's sons": the affinities they all have with the feminine realm. These similarities between myths are, in the opinion of Lévi–Straus, "the true constituent units of a myth (...), not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to reproduce a meaning"¹. This is equivalent to saying that "the basic meaning of the myth is not conveyed by the sequence of events but (...) by bundles of events even although these events appear at different moments in the story"². For this reason, in the present work we will carry out a structural analysis of the mythical whole mentioned above. This analysis is based on two fundamental ideas: 1) that "a myth is made up of all its variants" and 2) that there is no reason to proceed to "the quest for the true version, or the earlier one"³ because, in reality, the myth lacks original text⁴. Thus, only a knowledge of the different versions will make it possible to discover these "bundles of relations" that link the different myths and characters. Bearing in mind these theoretical principles, it is possible to understand the interest that certain, very secondary mythical versions within the Greek mythical tradition may have for the present work, or notices transmitted by minor or very recent authors within the history of Greek literature.

What is a “mother’s son”? Hephaestus as an example.

Firstly, we will characterise the mythical figure we refer to as the “mother’s son.” This character forms a part of Greek mythical considerations of masculine superiority, the rejection of female children, and exalting the role of the male, as a part of the concept that essentially manifests the masculine desire to sire heirs and descendants on their own⁵.

Amongst the main embodiments of this ideology of male superiority are the

mythical tales of the turbulent conjugal relations between Zeus and Hera, with Zeus' frequent infidelities and the offspring they both had outside of their relationship. These factors explain the close link between this type of character with the theogonic mythology, and especially with the poetry of Hesiod.

Zeus and Hera's marriage was problematic and unfruitful, basically serving at mythical and religious level to define the nature of the ritual contract of Greek marriage⁶. Their myths as a couple mainly focus on their quarrels, especially those caused by Hera's jealousy⁷. But their most famous clashes were not a result of Zeus' adultery, but instead because of him giving birth on his own. This was especially true in the case of the birth of Athena⁸, a "male birth" that deeply irritated Hera⁹. This anger was due to the intimate relationship between the virgin goddess and her sole parent¹⁰. Athena was the perfect daughter, closely connected to her father. Her birth and her main characteristics (virginity and being unmarried) are directly linked to the predominance of Zeus over the gods. Her birth was a direct result of the union of Zeus and Metis, which resulted in Zeus consolidating his divine sovereignty by making his wife's *μητις* (wisdom, skill) available to him, an essential quality for a good king¹¹.

The pain that Hera felt as a result of this birth soon turned to a desire for revenge¹². The myth, which demonstrates Greek patriarchal ideology, converted this revenge into a condemnation, and in contrast to Zeus' perfect birth, offered the image of Hera's failure when, in attempting to imitate her husband, she gave birth to Hephaestus, lame and deformed, the result of a poor birth that would herald Hera's subsequent failed pregnancies, and the goddess' solo birth¹³.

Hephaestus' most basic features, his *μητις* and the fact that he was marginalised from the society of the gods, are closely linked to his disability¹⁴. The literary sources indicate that his lameness was associated with his marginal nature, as well as their artisanal activity. These two characteristics make him the only Olympian with a physical defect and a manual activity¹⁵, features that, to a certain extent, make him an "anti-god," a caricature of the divine¹⁶. According to Homer, his lameness was a physical defect that was caused by Zeus, when in the middle of an argument with Hera, he grabbed him by the foot in order to cast him out of Olympus¹⁷. Another version states that it was caused during an argument between the couple caused by Heracles, Zeus' illegitimate son, when Hephaestus intervened in defence of his mother, offending Zeus, who punished him by expelling him from Olympus, resulting in his disability¹⁸. In this latter version, Hephaestus defended the legality of the relationship between Zeus and Hera and the legitimacy of their progeny, behaving as a good mother's son, who opposed the all-embracing power of Zeus over his marriage and his family¹⁹.

According to another version by Homer, Hera was ashamed of Hephaestus' lameness, and was responsible for casting him out of Olympus²⁰. This reaction could only be explained if it is once again associated with the birth of Athena. Despite her nurturing, life-giving character²¹, Hera, in comparison to the perfect daughter born from Zeus, was only capable of giving birth to a handicapped child. This distancing between mother and son turned her into a bad mother, equating her behaviour with that which was reserved for the male offspring of other mythical bad mothers, the Amazons. These warrior women dislocated the joints of the knees and hips of their male children, while babies, making them lame²². According to this same source, these children, become adults, dedicated themselves to artisanal activities, such as working with leather or bronze, the latter of which, like their limp, resembles Hephaestus²³. This behaviour was also an indication of the failure of Hera's original objective: to give birth to a son who was as closely bound to her as Athena was to Zeus.

Through Athena and Hephaestus, the comparison between both myths reveals an

opposition between good and bad parthenogenesis, a polarity that was also present in their relationship with their parents: harmony and collaboration between Zeus and Athena, and the impossibility of any close contact between Hera and Hephaestus due to the reaction of the "father" to a son with a very close bond to his mother, or the behavior of the mother who, faced with the imperfections of her son, rejected him, pushing him away, and behaved as a bad mother²⁴.

Hephaestus helps us to characterise the "mother's son;" in order to examine this definition in greater detail, we need to analyse the most outstanding physical feature of this god: his lameness. In the case of Oedipus, Lévi–Strauss associated the repeated locomotion problems of the royal house of Thebes with a topic that is frequently found in mythology: the characteristic clumsiness or inability to walk that characterises the children of Earth at the moment of their birth. This mytheme would express the difficulty posed to a society that believed in autochthony in recognising that they were actually born from a man and a woman²⁵. It would seem that Greek mythological thought associates faulty locomotion with an excessive closeness between the son and the mother (incest in the case of Oedipus, parthenogenesis in the case of Hephaestus), and with the topic of the correct or incorrect use of sexuality in the reproduction process. Negative elements which the myth associates with lameness and mobility problems and which, ultimately, form part of the negative consideration by the Greeks of locomotory disabilities, as a limitation of the perfect image of the Hellenic human ideal, represented by the man solidly planted on his two legs who, thanks to them, was able to move with absolute freedom²⁶.

Can we associate the myths of the birth of Hephaestus and the cause of his lameness with a conflict of sovereignty? As previously mentioned, according to Homer's version, Zeus cast Hephaestus out of Olympus for challenging him during an argument with Hera, a type of behaviour that implied opposing his sovereign power. We should not forget that these myths have their essential origin against the backdrop of a struggle for royal power: Zeus swallowed the pregnant Metis, and then "gave birth" to Athena, so that he would not be defeated by the son that would be born by both of them. Hera, through the birth of Hephaestus, behaves in a way that was only permitted to Zeus, attributing herself with powers and duties that did not correspond to her, as demonstrated by her "failure" in the gestation and birth of Hephaestus. Therefore, in Greek mythological thought, there was a close link between the struggle for sovereignty and problems with movement or certain types of physical deformity associated with them, indicative of irregular sexual behaviour, or an anomalous closeness between mother and son.

Like the problems of movement that affected other mythical characters, Hephaestus' lameness also explains his improper sexuality²⁷ and markedly phallic nature²⁸. The clearest indication of his unfitting sexual behaviour can be seen in the tale, which forms a part of the Athenian myths of autochthony, of his attempted rape of Athena, an unsuccessful sexual relationship that resulted in the birth of the snake-like Erichthonius, due to the earth becoming impregnated by Hephaestus' semen that had stained the woollen fleece Athena used to clean her tunic²⁹. According to some versions³⁰, Erichthonius was the son of Hephaestus and Gaia, a goddess who produced numerous "mother's sons," such as the Giants and Typhon, important characters in the *Theogony* of Hesiod to whom the next section of this article is dedicated.

Gaia and her offspring: mother's sons in the *Theogony* of Hesiod.

The Giants, sons of Gaia who were spawned from the blood that gushed forth from Uranus after he was castrated³¹, are a mythical group characterised by similar aspects to those found in Hephaestus: they were only born from their mother, had difficulties in walking, and were opposed to male sovereignty. The fact that they were engendered from a male

does not detract from their nature as sons who were only born by a mother: Uranus' blood, due to its similarity to menstrual blood, could be closely related to the feminine³². Castration meant that Uranus could be considered as sharing a characteristic with women: the blood that flowed from his testicles was an impure fertilising element, a 'poor' semen, comparable to menstrual blood, whose characteristics it seems to have adopted. For this reason, it could only lead to a flawed, abnormal conception: children who were conceived, in an aberrant way, only from a female.

The Giants also had movement problems, as they were snake-legged³³. Ancient literature refers to the obvious link between snakes and the earth, their chthonic nature, and their relationship with poor locomotion, either because of their way of moving, or because the bites of certain species cause lameness and paralysis³⁴. Some snakes, such as the viper, are bad "wives," because after mating they kill the male³⁵, in the same way as the bad mythical wives such as Clytemnestra or the Amazons. Their stench during copulation³⁶ relates them to mythical-ritual situations of distancing between husbands and wives, such as the Thesmophoria in Athens, or the mythical Lemnians³⁷. While Greek mythical thought considered this smell as a cause of sexual disconnection, the foetid copulations of the snakes did not augur a good "marriage."

In summary, the snake is configured as an "anti-wife," at the opposite pole to the ideal of the worshippers of Demeter Thesmophoria. In some cases, such as the viper, they are not only a bad wife who murders her partner, but also an unfortunate mother, who is killed by her children as soon as they are born³⁸. Snakes such as Hera with Hephaestus, cannot have a normal relationship with their children, whose birth always implies the victory of the father. All of these tales recognise the assertion of the patrilineal principle in the offspring, at the same time as reaffirming the power of the father in the family³⁹.

Having clarified the significance of the snakelike appearance, we now return to the Giants: beings who were purely mother-born⁴⁰, such as Hephaestus, created and born against a backdrop of conflict between Gaia and Zeus⁴¹. Uranus had ordered Hecatoncheires and Cyclops—the goddess' first born—to be expelled to Tartary. Gaia convinced the Titans, who were also her sons, to oppose their father's power. Once Uranus had been defeated, Kronos—the Titan responsible for his castration—released his brothers, ensuring their divine sovereignty and sending them back into exile⁴². Gaia once again sought her revenge, becoming involved in the defeat of Kronos by helping Zeus; in gratitude, he once again released them, so that they would support him in his fight against the Titans for sovereignty over the kingdom of the gods⁴³. The help that Zeus gave to the exiles did not prevent Gaia, once the Titans had been defeated, from challenging the king of Olympus and attempting to overthrow his kingdom, producing the Giants for this purpose with the blood from the castration of Uranus⁴⁴.

According to an omen, victory over the Giants could only be achieved by collaboration between a god and a mortal. As a result, Zeus asked for help from two of his favourite children: Athena and Heracles⁴⁵. In this context, the virgin goddess defended her father's sovereignty over Olympus against threats from the female sphere, represented by Gaia and her sons, to depose him. Thanks to Zeus's cunning, Gaia failed in her attempt to make her children immortal. The Giants were defeated with the help of Heracles, Zeus's illegitimate son and the only hero who became a god, thereby achieving immortality; this was also a further victory by Zeus over Hera, who from then on accepted him as a son, who thanks to his marriage to Hebe, the daughter of Zeus and Hera, became part of the family⁴⁶. The Greek myth, through the support provided by Athena and Heracles to Zeus, once again reveals the father's superiority over the mother in the realms of procreation and descendancy, returning to the theme of the inherent relationship between the male sex and sovereignty.

Typhon is the son of Gaia and Tartarus⁴⁷. Apollodorus associates his birth with the defeat of the Giants, when he states that Gaia gave birth to him in revenge for the defeat of her children, and because of their failure⁴⁸. Thus, Typhon is presented as a “mother’s son,” begotten by the Earth. However, according to this version, he has a father: Tartarus, a primordial power in the *Theogony* of Hesiod, who, unlike his mother, does not seem to play any role in the tale of Typhon and his quarrel with Zeus; his role as Typhon’s father is genealogically null and void⁴⁹. Once again, we are faced with another myth about the attempt to impose the role of the mother and of the female sex in reproduction.

The version of Typhon’s birth in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* reinforces this notion⁵⁰. Hera, having been cast out following Zeus’s success as the progenitor of Athena and her failure with Hephaestus, invokes Gaia, the heavens, and the Titans, so that they allow her to give life to a son similar in strength to Zeus, but without the involvement of her husband⁵¹; one year later, Typhon is born, an unequalled creature⁵². Hera’s gesture to “sire” Typhon, similar to that of Leto in order to make the River Xanthus rise in Lycia⁵³, evokes the relationship between the earth and reproduction.

These two genealogies and versions of the birth of Typhon coincide in presenting him as a “mother’s son,” born to challenge Zeus, revenge their mother, and conquer the sovereignty of Olympus.

Unlike the most recent authors, in Hesiod the snakelike nature of Typhon is represented by a hundred serpents’ heads that sprout from his shoulders⁵⁴; Apollodorus describes him as half human, half monster, with thighs from which enormous vipers hung⁵⁵. This snakelike appearance of Typhon does not seem to be a feature incorporated in recent times, as it is indicated by artistic representations dated in the 7th century BC⁵⁶. The link between Typhon and snakes is not only limited to his physical appearance: the sources indicate that Hera, faced with the character and nature of her son, decided to rid herself of him, giving him to a female dragon so that she could raise him⁵⁷. This snakelike nature is further emphasised through his love affair with Echidna⁵⁸ and his offspring, such as the Lernaean Hydra⁵⁹, the Dragon that protected the garden of the Hesperides, or the Colchian Dragon⁶⁰.

And so, Typhon is not like the gods, or mortals, as he does not originate from them, although Apollodorus draws attention to the fact that he is a combination of both⁶¹. This lack of similarity between the son and progenitor points towards the irregular nature of his birth and heritage, both of which are exclusively due to the involvement of females. This characteristic links his birth with other abnormal mythical situations, marked by an excess of ὄβρις and an absence of δίκη, like Hesiod’s “iron race,” a fierce time when “the father will not agree with his children, nor the children with their father”⁶².

The example of Typhon confirms the snakelike appearance and the close relationship with snakes as methods used in Greek myth to associate descendants who born exclusively from the earth, who were therefore “mother’s sons,” with the snakelike and the feminine⁶³. The myth uses animal references, snakes again, to introduce another characteristic theme of the “mother’s sons”: their opposition to their father, in this case Zeus. The snakelike appearance of these characters, in itself, is a zoological indicator of their opposition to the ruler of Olympus, as snakes are natural enemies of eagles, the bird that is closely associated with Zeus due to being one of their characteristic attributes, and a way of manifesting his omens⁶⁴.

By challenging the order established by Zeus, the monstrous Typhon would not only harm humans, but also the gods of Olympus, bringing about the terrible battle that culminated with Zeus’s victory⁶⁵. Thus, the mythical tale of Typhon is the story of another failed attempt to defeat power, within the series of Greek myths about conflicts

of divine sovereignty. Hera had engendered a son, against the political wishes of her husband, becoming “the intimate enemy of Zeus, the goddess closest to him”⁶⁶; she cooperates with her husband in the control of power, and at the same time, gives birth to Typhon in order to challenge him; an effort that was doomed to failure, as “Hera begets a solitary disturbing, not a new sovereign”⁶⁷.

The leitmotif of the mythical tale of Typhon is therefore identical to that of the mythical tales we have already examined: the struggle between male and female descendants, which always ends with the victory of the paternal lineage. Through these myths, the Greeks embodied the supremacy of the paternal lineage over the maternal in determining kinship, the greater importance of the male role in conception, and its predominance over the female sex.

The births of Ares.

We will now analyse the particular case of Ares. Together with his sisters, Hebe and Eileithyia, he was the offspring of Zeus and Hera, gods who, considering their power within the pantheon of Olympus and their reproductive capacity, would have been expected to have had a larger number of children⁶⁸. Zeus was at the summit of the divine hierarchy, while Hera reigned as his wife and sister. As both siblings and husband and wife, they formed a couple that was characterised by having equal status, which simultaneously led to complicity and conflict⁶⁹. However, their offspring, in terms of their relevance within the pantheon, did not stand out either in terms of their quantity, or quality⁷⁰.

Considering the close relations that, as we shall see below, unite Ares and Hera, it is not surprising, therefore, that Hebe, much more akin to her father, barely had mythical associations with her brother, unlike the situation between Ares and Eileithyia whose respective fields of action, war and childbirth, as we shall see, do have certain similarities⁷¹. Neither did Eileithyia, despite this closer relationship with her brother, play a predominant role amongst the gods, and is even overlapped in childbirth, her main sphere of activity, by Artemis, the protector of childbirths as a Λογία⁷². A priori, only Ares has a mythological corpus befitting a worthy son of such powerful progenitors.

Ovid provides a different version of the birth of Ares, which allows us to associate him with the “mother’s sons.” According to him, Ares would have been the offspring of a solo birth by Juno/Hera who, angered by the birth of Minerva/Athena, asked Flora/Chloris to be a mother without a husband. Flora agreed, and made her wish come true thanks to a “drug,” an unusual flower with which she touches Juno, who becomes pregnant with Mars/Ares⁷³.

This was the last of Hera’s “solo” pregnancies. But what did the goddess’s three children have in common? Can we define a code of equivalences between them, in the same way as the features shared by Typhon and Hephaestus? In principle, Ares did not have any of the peculiarities of his maternal brothers: he did not have snakelike feet, did not have any problems in walking, did not take part in attacks against the sovereignty of his father, and there is no evidence of his closeness to Hera. Nevertheless, can he be included within this system of values and relationships?

A final version of the birth of Ares, included in a scholia to *The Suppliant Women* of Aeschylus and diametrically opposed to Ovid’s version, presents him as having been born solely by Zeus, after drinking the waters of the Nile, a nourishing river, described in the text as ἀλφεισίβοιος, with life-giving waters, and especially prone to give rise to male children (ἀρρενογόνοος), as occurred in this case⁷⁴. This version of the birth of Ares not only reveals the supremacy of the male sex in reproduction, but

also the problem for ancient Greek men of women's role in reproduction. At least, this is what the two adjectives describing the waters of the Nile would seem to indicate. Since Homer, the epithet ἀλφεσίβοιος is associated with young women who, after being married, obtain large numbers of oxen for their parents⁷⁵; in our text, this term seems to be used to compare the waters of the Nile with a young woman of marrying age, with the river and its flow adopting the role of the wife in the gestation and birth of Ares. Another term, ἀρρενογόνοϛ, belongs to the vocabulary used by Greek scientific writers to refer to that which engenders or produces males⁷⁶; in this case, its use would reinforce the "maternal" aspect of the water in this version, the masculine nature of the offspring of this union, and in general, the importance of the male sex.

Ares, the mother, and opposition to paternal aspects.

Ares is usually associated with the bloodiest, most destructive facets of war, revealed by his epithets⁷⁷, his love of warfare⁷⁸, and his reckless or enraged character⁷⁹, behaviour which, in the same way as Typhon, defined him as a "disaster"⁸⁰. His situation amongst the Olympians cannot be considered as advantageous: he was a laughing stock amongst the gods, thanks to the trap that revealed Aphrodite's adultery to Hephaestus⁸¹; he was indicted for the murder of Halirrhothius, in the first trial held amongst the Olympians⁸²; he had an indecisive nature, revealed by the fact that he constantly changed sides during the Trojan war⁸³; and he was condemned by Zeus⁸⁴.

This tells us of a god who was only valued—or rather, feared—in warfare, who was irrelevant in other spheres. However, in his case, this activity also has a negative side. Ares engaged in bloody, destructive warfare, far removed from the combat of the hoplite citizen-soldiers⁸⁵, instead befitting the "savage warrior [...] the worst personification of Ares"⁸⁶, with rules and strategies that flew in the face of the technical warfare that Athena dominated to perfection. This type of warfare is tinged by the contamination implicit in the spilling of blood⁸⁷, closer to murder and pollution, as indicated by some of his epithets⁸⁸. The murderous warfare of Ares, which in opposition to Athena, brought him more closely into line with the figure of the "imperfect son." This pronounced opposition between Ares and Athena has recently been explained by Deacy⁸⁹ who, quite rightly, has indicated both the existence of similarities between the two characters, and the much more complex character of Ares' mythical personality. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between the two divinities which, pointing to an already indicated trait, allows us to continue defending the existence of a polarity between both mythical characters: Athena can distance herself from war and violence⁹⁰ while Ares, on the other hand, needs war in order to exist because this is his work⁹¹. This fact, in our opinion, makes him, like Athena, a specific patron of warfare, a field of action in which, as Kostuch has pointed out⁹², many other divinities also participated, albeit in a much more tangential way and perhaps as a consequence of the influence that the war context of the Iliad exerted throughout the history of Greek culture and religion⁹³.

One of the many deviations of Ares is his attachment to Hera⁹⁴, a similarity with his mother that clearly set him apart from Zeus, his father according to most versions. Ares "is a brute without a vestige of mētis"⁹⁵, in no way similar to his father, the μητίετα. This similarity was also referred to in Ovid's version: "This god who loves conflict, who is so similar to his mother"⁹⁶, the son of a single progenitor "begotten without male semen, marked, therefore, with a female dishonour not mitigated by male elements"⁹⁷. An Ares who was begotten with the help of a flower, without any sexual relations, and furthermore, without Hera stepping down from her role as a wife⁹⁸.

The birth of Athena led to Hera's solo birth of Ares. This god, through his birth, the main sphere of action and characteristics, is the perfect antithesis of the παρθένος

and at the same time, opposed to the values associated with paternity. The sources present Athena as a positive image of Ares, as she also: “Loves deeds of war, the sack of cities and the shouting and the battle”⁹⁹.

This antagonism is supported by myths that feature both of them, and in which Ares is always defeated. The *Iliad* provides a number of examples, such as the passage in which Athena supports Diomedes, proclaiming her superiority over her brother, so that he does not respect the god of war¹⁰⁰; the direct confrontations between both of them, describing the goddess disarming the god, directly demonstrating her superiority¹⁰¹ or even threatening him¹⁰². Neither is Ares particularly affectionate towards Athena, and in a fit of fury, declares this to Zeus, together with the reasons that explain Zeus’s favouritism¹⁰³.

Their differences even include the type of warfare they represented. As we have seen, Ares personified bloody, savage, uncivilised warfare, closer in nature to the “pollution” of murder¹⁰⁴; a savage nature maybe related to the closer relationship of Ares with an ancient Indo–European god of war¹⁰⁵. Athena presides over another type of warfare, strategic and tactical in nature, and based on the polis¹⁰⁶. The virgin goddess is also marked by her μητις, a feature that makes her similar to her father; while Ares lacks it¹⁰⁷, as well as living apart from the Olympians¹⁰⁸ and failing to feel any penchant for civilisation.

Their relationships with their respective solo parents reveal another facet of their mutual opposition. There was a close, solid paternal bond between Athena and Zeus, characterised by their similar nature¹⁰⁹. Ares refers to his attachment to his mother on several occasions, such as when he harasses Leto for his mother’s jealousy, and urges pregnant women to invoke her. However, Hera does not seem to reciprocate her son’s love, as revealed in the *Iliad* when she condemns her son’s actions, and demands that he be punished¹¹⁰; a request that ill befits a mother, whose husband, declaring his absolute lack of empathy towards Ares, suggests that his daughter Athena should be the one who deals out the punishment. The implicit values in this passage are clear: Athena, the perfect father’s daughter, is superior to Ares, the catastrophic “mother’s son.” An analysis of Hera’s maternal aspects will provide us with a clearer understanding of this complex fabric of interwoven relationships, a goddess who, as we have seen, usually distanced herself from the children she had engendered on her own, raising doubts about her qualities as a mother¹¹¹.

Ares, the mother, and the female

The birth of Ares without any male involvement allows us to envisage a close relationship between mother and son, revealed by his harassment of Leto, who was pregnant with Zeus’s twins, Apollo and Artemis. The sources tell of Hera’s fury when faced with the immediate birth of the twins, mainly due to the fact that: “Leto with the lovely tresses was soon to bear a son faultless and strong”¹¹². Zeus’s wife, driven by hate and jealousy, subjected her rival to a cruel, merciless persecution, which included her children¹¹³, appointing her son Ares and Iris as guardians of the pregnant woman, threatening the cities she attempted to visit, and forbidding them to receive her¹¹⁴. Eileithyia, the goddess¹¹⁵ of childbirth, also played a “passive” role in Hera’s revenge, who, sat on the summit of Olympus and driven away from Leto by Hera’s trickery, was unaware of Leto’s tempestuous situation. She only intervened when Iris, on the request of the gods, brought her behind Hera’s back, in order to commence the birth¹¹⁶.

Ares’ involvement in hindering the birth reveals his curious association with childbirth, thereby connecting two apparently distant, almost opposite spheres: warfare, which corresponds to a wholly masculine universe, and childbirth, uniquely feminine in nature, but with which Ares nevertheless connected, harassing the pregnant woman and

accompanying his sister, Eileithyia¹¹⁷. Through his mother and his sister, the god therefore maintains a close relationship with clearly feminine qualities. This encroachment by Ares into the female sphere is not limited to his closeness to his mother, his harassment of Leto, or his complicity with Eileithyia, but also to providing advice to married and pregnant women who had sought help from his mother¹¹⁸.

How can Ares' association with childbirth be explained? Are there any links between his sphere of action, and the process of giving birth? Does the close relationship between Hera and Ares wholly explain the god's involvement in the female sphere, or was this possible because of other attributes? In order to answer these questions, we must examine the connection between childbirth and warfare, and in particular the bloody warfare of Ares.

The link between childhood and war in Ancient Greece is obvious thanks to the well-known verse of *Medea*¹¹⁹, a close relationship that has also been identified by modern-day scholars¹²⁰. In both cases, an equivalence has been identified—albeit with certain differences—between women in childbirth and the warrior: while the tragic poet focuses on the hazardous situation they both have to face, modern scholars do so with regard to the social facets of birth and warfare. Other ancient authors also refer to this relationship, such as Plutarch, when he states that tombs only bear the names of men who have fallen in battle, or women who have died in childbirth¹²¹, an honour that equates mothers with hoplites¹²², as both have attained ἀρετή through their death¹²³.

But in what way can childbirth be compared to warfare? Loraux equated both in stating that “labor is a battle”¹²⁴, a female war that differs from male hoplite combat. In it, Artemis plays a leading role; the goddess, supreme protector of women, rejected marriage and instead turned to the sphere of warfare, sometimes together with Ares¹²⁵, through a personal type of warfare¹²⁶. Women giving birth, with the assistance of the goddess of childbirth, Artemis Λοχία¹²⁷ take part in a bloody, feverish battle, befitting of Ares¹²⁸. Loraux¹²⁹ also refers to the relationship between the pain of childbirth and madness¹³⁰, living together, as if they were a marriage. In turn, the sources characterise Ares through epithets that evoke madness, referring to his impetuous, enraged, furious or delirious nature¹³¹.

Pausanias provides us with a story that associates the god with women and warfare¹³². According to him, in the agora of Tegea there was an image of Ares Γυναικοθοίνας. This epithet originated during the war against the Lacedaemonians, when the women took up arms, ambushed their enemies and forced them to flee, and then celebrated their victory with sacrifices in honour of Ares. Amongst the women who led the battle, Pausanias makes special reference to the bravery of Marpessa¹³³. García Quintela associates this woman with the term used in the text to make her stand out from amongst her companions: τόλμα, audacity¹³⁴. In his opinion, the heroine, by homonymy, evokes a woman with a strongly marked sexuality, and a clear proximity to the god of war as the mythical Marpessa, Ares' granddaughter and the mother-in-law of Meleager, Ares' son¹³⁵. Τόλμα is an ambiguous term, used in particular to refer to audacity in a somewhat negative way, such as that shown by women¹³⁶, thieves, or murderers. Marpessa's τόλμα, befitting of her gender, led the women to victory, and they must give thanks for it to Ares Γυναικοθοίνας “because he put a τόλμα in his actions”¹³⁷.

In the tale of Pausanias, it is surprising that the women ambush (ἐλόχων) their enemies. Firstly, because the ambush, as a military strategy, is not a typical aspect of hoplite warfare and secondly because λόχος (“ambush”) is both symbolically and etymologically associated with birth¹³⁸. Therefore, Ares' immersion in the feminine world does not only correspond with his maternal proximity, but also with his

association as the god of war.

We will now analyse the god's relationship with Gaia. If we consider the characteristics of Gaia's offspring (with snakelike legs, difficulties in walking, and opposed to their father's sovereignty), Ares, a priori, would seem not fit within this mythical scheme. However, many mythical aspects point towards the existence of a nexus.

Ares does not have any difficulties in walking; he does not have any snakelike characteristics, and he does not have any links with the earth by birth. However, these mythemes appear in myths associated with his descendants, such as the tale of Cadmus and the founding of Thebes. Cadmus killed the dragon—the son of Ares—who guarded a spring¹³⁹; on the advice of Athena, he sowed its teeth¹⁴⁰, and a group of armed men, the Spartoi (Σπαρτοί) sprang from the ground¹⁴¹, the origin of the Thebans. This group is easily recognisable as “sons of the earth.” According to Vian, these warriors were born from the dragon who was under the patronage of Gaia and Ares¹⁴², a god associated with the land and the Earth, as would seem to be indicated by his epithet of παλαίχθων¹⁴³, a possible memory of an ancient link with the earth (πάλαι “at another time” and χθών “earth”)¹⁴⁴. The Spartoi are especially associated with Gaia, whose name they bear, γηγενέων¹⁴⁵, and also have “the same chthonic affinities as the dragon from which they were born”¹⁴⁶.

Once again, we see an indirect relationship between Ares and the characteristics of the “mother's sons” or of the Earth; despite not being one of them, his offspring, the dragon, gives rise, together with the Earth, to the Thebans, who as Ares' warriors, are born already armoured and fighting.

The end of the tale once again refers to the same aspects: Ares seeks revenge for the death of the dragon, and Cadmus, as a punishment, is changed into a snake¹⁴⁷. The relationship between these characters and the snakelike beings becomes even closer through the transformation of Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite and Cadmus's wife, into a snake¹⁴⁸.

Some of Ares' other descendants have shared features with the children of Gaia, such as unsuitable sexual behaviour associated with locomotor problems. These characters include the Amazons, who were not only associated with Ares by being his descendants¹⁴⁹ but also through their devotion to him¹⁵⁰. These women, who were hunters, warriors, archers, and hostile towards marriage, equivalent to the Greek man¹⁵¹, offer a reversed, mirror image of the Hellenic female role. Their abnormal sexual behaviour was therefore a deviation from Greek social norms.

Meleager is, in some accounts, Ares' son; he is also the protagonist of the Calydonian boar hunt¹⁵² and a heroic figure characterized by his abnormal sexuality¹⁵³. Faced with a hunt that may be interpreted as initiatory¹⁵⁴ and which would have marked his entry into the adult world, this was instead transformed, due to his inopportune love of Atalanta, into a slaughter that destroyed the Oeniads, including himself¹⁵⁵. During his initiation, the love-struck hunter confuses the realms of hunting and sexuality¹⁵⁶: in wooing the young girl during the hunt, he falls victim to ὕβρις and displays an inappropriate sexuality, by anticipating this love with the separation and joining that form a part of the initiation rites.

Oenomaus, another of Ares' sons, is also characterised by his improper sexuality¹⁵⁷. He protected the virginity of his daughter Hippodamia, in fear of a prophecy that claimed he would die if she were ever to marry. To prevent her marriage, he competed in a chariot race with her suitors, who he defeated, and then killed¹⁵⁸. This “pre-nuptial race” represented a reversal of the social norms of Greek marriage, in which the father “grants” the chosen suitor to his daughter, but never competes against

him. This sexual deviation of Oenomaus is completed by the information provided by Apollodorus who considers the possibility that he was in love with his daughter¹⁵⁹ and Hyginus who includes both amongst “those who are guilty in incest”¹⁶⁰.

In some sources Ixion¹⁶¹, another descendant of Ares, has a biography that is full of attacks against the social order: the murder of his father-in-law¹⁶², and his attempted rape of Hera, which also offended Zeus’ principles of commensality¹⁶³. His actions present him as a “destroyer of the social order”¹⁶⁴: a murderer, inspirer of adultery, excessive seducer, and violator of hospitality.

The last of these “deviant sons” of Ares was Tereus, king of Thrace¹⁶⁵. During his wedding with Procne, a relationship marked by bad omens¹⁶⁶, he forced himself upon Philomena, his wife’s sister, then cutting out her tongue so she could not denounce the crime. Once these acts of violence were discovered, they were avenged by the two sisters, who sacrificed his son, Itys, serving his flesh to his father in a meal¹⁶⁷.

Judging by these stories, amongst other features, the progeny of Ares was characterised by a deviant sexuality that caused alterations to the social order. Also, in the same myths associated with the god of war, we once again find snake-legged and “terrestrial” forms, as well as a proximity with the female world through his relationship with his sister Eileithyia¹⁶⁸, his closeness to his mother, or even the bloody, disorganised war over which he presided, and which was similar in many ways to a birth¹⁶⁹.

Conclusion

In this study, we have explored concepts that are all oriented in the same direction: human reproduction, and the importance of each gender in this process. The myths of those who were “born from a single parent” have made it possible to focus more closely on this topic, taking into account aspects ranging from the “general problem of reproduction” through to the “problem of reproduction by women on their own.”

The myths we have analysed that express the Greek ideology of male superiority, even in the sphere of reproduction, also reveal the popular belief transmitted by the tragic poets¹⁷⁰ and include by the ancient naturalists¹⁷¹. The poets even fantasised about the possibility of reproduction without any female involvement¹⁷², describing this happy time when women no longer existed, and men reproduced spontaneously, like the races of Selenites described by Lucian of Samosata in his critique of the paradoxographic genre¹⁷³.

Thus, Greek society considered male superiority in reproduction, and expressed it in myths about the “father births” and “mother births.” In principle, the case of Ares is not so evident, although, as we have mentioned, his character fits the idea of these “imperfect mothers’ sons.” Despite not having problems with walking, Homer refers to him as “the swiftest of the gods”¹⁷⁴, many of their children did have the features of those born from the earth: having snakes instead of legs, or sexual deviations. Neither did Ares impinge on the sovereignty of Zeus, but he did declare the displeasure he felt towards him¹⁷⁵.

Ares was also a marginalised god in Olympus, hated by Zeus, and close enough to his mother to meddle in feminine affairs. However, this proximity is ambiguous, as Hera is seen as disparaging and rejects it, in the same way as with some of her other “only sons” (Typhon and Hephaestus). This maternal behaviour, typical of the goddess, is radically opposed to the attitude shown by Zeus, as a single father, with Athena, his only daughter, who shared attributes with Ares. This shared functional sphere, and the comparative grievance between the perfect Athena and the imperfect Ares, further deepens Ares’ links with the mythical “mother-born” beings.

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¹ Lévi–Strauss 1963: 211.

² Lévi–Strauss 1978: 20.

³ Lévi–Strauss 1963: 216–217.

⁴ Lévi–Strauss 1971: 576.

⁵ E. *Hipp.* 616–624; A. *Eu.* 658–661; Arist. *GA.* 728a.

⁶ Detienne 1994: 89.

⁷ On the descendants of Zeus outside of his marriage: Apollod. 2.4.1–8; Hes. *Th.* 900–929. On Hera’s anger over her husband’s adultery: Apollod. 2.1.3; 3.4.3 and 3.8. 2; Paus. 8.3.6; Ov. *Fast.* 2.177–178; A. *Pr* 704–736.

⁸ Pi. *O.* 7.35–39 ; Hom. *Il.* 5.875; Orph. *H.* 32, 1; *h.* 28.5–7; Call. *Lav.Pall.* 5.135; Hes. *Th.* 924; Apollod. 1.3.6; *h. Ap.* 3. 314–316.

⁹ *h.Ap.* 3.323–325.

¹⁰ Hes. *Th.* 886–893 and 926; Apollod. 1.3.6.

¹¹ Jeanmaire 1956; Detienne and Vernant 1978: 107–130.; Bonnard 2004: 25–35.

¹² *h.Ap.* 3.326–330.

¹³ Hes. *Th.* 927–929 ; Apollod. 1.3.5; Hyg. *Fab. Proleg.* 22; *h.Ap.* 3.317; Hom. *Il.* 1.577–579 seems to be unaware of this tradition as, according to the most generalized version, he tells us that he is the son of Zeus and Hera; schol. *Il.* 14.296 introduces, in this last version, a local variant of Naxos that turns Hephaestus into the son of the couple born out of wedlock.

¹⁴ Detienne and Vernant 1978: 259–275.

¹⁵ Ratinaud–Lachkar 2010: 156; Barbanera 2013: 55 and 62.

¹⁶ Yche–Fontanel 2001: 71–72.

¹⁷ Hom. *Il.* 1.590–594.

¹⁸ Apollod. 1.3.5.

¹⁹ Unreachable legitimacy of Hephaestus, son of Hera without Zeus, also revealed by his lameness, as Ogden (1997: 32) pointed out: “We have seen that the concepts of bastardy and deformity, in particular lameness, were brought together in the figure of the *teras* [...] Concomitantly with this, the notions of straightness and crookedness were applied metaphorically to legitimate and illegitimate birth respectively.”

²⁰ Hom. *Il.* 18.395–400; *h.Ap.* 3.31; Paus. 1.20.3.

²¹ Orph. *H.* 15.5.

²² Hp. *Art.* 53; D. S. 2.45.2, mentions that they mutilated their legs and arms.

²³ On the cultural practices attributed to the society of the Amazons see Devereux 1982: 198 – 199; Tyrrell 1984: 54–55; Blok 1995; Mayor 2014: 153–160.

²⁴ Our interest in the lameless of Hephaestus does not arise from the question of whether a categorization of disability existed in classical antiquity (Penrose 2015), opening up a debate, in recent decades, between scholars for (Garland 1995: xiii and 2) and against (Rose 2003: 2 and 31) this hypothesis. The lameless is, for us, a means to approach, in these myths, the functioning of polarity and analogy, two ancient types of argumentation in early Greek thought (Lloyd 1966).

²⁵ Lévi–Strauss 1963: 216.

²⁶ Yche–Fontanel 2001: 89–90.

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- ²⁷ Devereux 1982: 189–195.
- ²⁸ Delcourt 1957: 28.
- ²⁹ Apollod. 3.14.6; Paus. 3.18.3; Hyg. *Fab.* 166.3; see Loraux: 1990b; Leduc 2015:1–16.
- ³⁰ Paus. 1.2.6.
- ³¹ Hes. *Th.* 183–186.
- ³² Arist. *GA.* 520b–521b; on reproductive capacity of menstrual blood as impure semen: Arist. *GA.* 737a and 765b; see also Detienne 1979: 213–214; Detienne 1989: 29–40; Arthur 1982: 65–67; Sissa 1990: 87–89.
- ³³ Apollod. 1.6.1; doubts about the veracity and antiquity of this feature: Paus. 7.29.3–4; Vian 1952: 3.
- ³⁴ Ael. *NA.* 17.4.
- ³⁵ Ael. *NA.* 1.24; Plin. *HN.* 10.169; Hdt. 3.109.
- ³⁶ Ael. *NA.* 9.44.
- ³⁷ In the Athenian Thesmophoria women used chasteberry or chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) to make their bedding. This practice allows us to further explore the relationship between wives who were separated from their husbands, and the nature of the snakes (Ael. *NA.* 9.26). The unpleasant smell of this plant, amongst other features, allowed for the women to be chaste, at the same time as repelling the snakes: Detienne 1994: 79–82; Dumas 1968: 61–68; Ducourthial 2003: 182, 213, 220, 228–289 and 511n3. The chaste tree helped them to comply with their sacred obligations by physically and symbolically removing animals that were naturally fetid, whose bite caused a stench, and whose females are poor “wives”: Ael. *NA.* 4.57; with regard to the stench caused by a snakebite, see the case of Philoctetes: Hom. *Il.* 2.721–724; Apollod. *Epit.* 3.27; Procl. *Chr.* = West 2003: 75–77). On Lemnian women: Apollod. 1.9.17; A.R. 1.609; Dumézil 1998.
- ³⁸ Hdt. 3.109; Ael. *NA.* 1.24 and 15.16; Arist. *HA.* 558a; Aeschylus provides confirmation of the close relationship between the snake and the bad wife: *Ch.* 527–550.
- ³⁹ On Greek–Latin mythology relating to snake–like monsters and characters, see Ogden 2013 and Fontenrose 1959.
- ⁴⁰ Hes. *Th.* 183–186.
- ⁴¹ Apollod. 1.6.1.
- ⁴² Apollod. 1.1–4; Hes. *Th.* 155–160.
- ⁴³ Apollod. 1.2.1; Hes. *Th.* 470–505 and 617–625 .
- ⁴⁴ Apollod. 1.6.1.
- ⁴⁵ Apollod. 1.6.1–2.
- ⁴⁶ Apollod. 2.7.7; Hes. *Th.* 950–956; Hyg. *Fab.* 224.1.
- ⁴⁷ Hes. *Th.* 820–823; Ant.Lib. 28; Hyginus (*Fab.* 152.1) mentions that his parents are Tartarus and Tartara.
- ⁴⁸ Apollod. 1.6.3.
- ⁴⁹ Ballabriga 1990: 18; Blaise 1992: 356–7.
- ⁵⁰ *h.Ap.* 3.310–356.
- ⁵¹ *h.Ap.* 3.340–341.
- ⁵² *h.Ap.* 3.350–353.
- ⁵³ Q. S. 11.21–27.
- ⁵⁴ Hes. *Th.* 823–826.
- ⁵⁵ Apollod. 1.6.3.
- ⁵⁶ Touchefeu–Meynier 1987: 148 and 150–151.
- ⁵⁷ *h.Ap.* 3.354–355.
- ⁵⁸ Hes. *Th.* 298–299 and 305–314.
- ⁵⁹ Hyg. *Fab. Praef.* 39.

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- ⁶⁰ Hyg. *Fab. Praef.* 39 and 151.
- ⁶¹ Apollod. 1.3.6.
- ⁶² Hes. *Op.* 182; see Vernant 1971: 32–34; english version: Evelyn–White 1914.
- ⁶³ González García 1996: 184.
- ⁶⁴ Arist. *HA.* 609a5; Plin. *HN.* 10.4.17; Cook 1914: 56n4 and 91; Wissowa ed. 1894: 373; Roscher ed. 1965: 687; Darenberg and Saglio, eds. 1900: 693; Hemingway 2015: 89–114.
- ⁶⁵ Apollod. 1.6.3; Hes. *Th.* 836–860; Hyg. *Fab.* 152.1–2.
- ⁶⁶ “L’ennemie intime de Zeus, parce qu’elle est la divinité la plus proche de lui”: Pirenne–Delforge and Pironti 2009: 105–106.
- ⁶⁷ “Héra [...] n’engendre pas un nouveau souverain, mais un perturbateur solitaire”: Pirenne–Delforge and Pironti 2009: 107.
- ⁶⁸ Hes. *Th.* 922–923; Apollod. 1.3.1; Hyg. *Fab. Praef.* 20.
- ⁶⁹ Pirenne–Delforge and Pironti 2009: 102.
- ⁷⁰ Dowden 2006: 40.
- ⁷¹ Hebe has not a extensive mythology; she is frequently interpreted, because of her name, as a personification of youth (Roscher ed. 1884–1890: 1869). Normally this goddess appears performing auxiliary roles as the cupbearer of the gods (Hom. *Il.* 4.2; Paus. 2.13.3; Cic. *ND.* 1.40, 112; Nonn. *D.* 8.93–96; 14.430–431; 25.447–450; 27.248), her mother’s helper (Hom. *Il.* 5.721–723; Pi. *N.* 10.17; Paus. 8.9.3) or wife of Herakles (Hom. *Od.* 11.605; *h.Hom.* 15.8; Hes. *Th.* 950; Pi. *N.* 1.71; 10.17; Pi. *I.* 4.59–60; E. *Or.* 1686–1687; E. *Heracl.* 855). This lack of mythical personality is also manifested in the iconography that show her to us as the adolescent daughter, the young married woman, lacking characteristic features that differentiate her from other mythical characters in similar situation (Laurens 1987: 70–71). Hebe, in fact, only presents a certain iconographic characterization in the scenes of his marriage to Herakles. Everything seems to indicate, therefore, that the mission of this goddess, from a mythical point of view, consists of acting as an introductory element of Herakles in the Olympic family (Laurens 1996: 237–247). In fact, the performance of this function makes her an anomalous wife, because, unlike mortal brides, she does not change dwelling, but instead her husband, a son begotten by Zeus outside of his marriage with Hera, who, in this way, occupies a position within his father's family, as further proof of the superiority of paternal filiation over maternal filiation within the Greek world.
- ⁷² E. *IT* 1099; Valderrábano González 2016: 257–272.
- ⁷³ Ov. *Fast.* 5.22–259.
- ⁷⁴ A. *Supp.* 855–856.
- ⁷⁵ Hom. *Il.* 18.593; see also *h.Ven.* 5.119.
- ⁷⁶ Arist. *HA.* 582a and 585b; Thphr. *HP* 9.18.5.
- ⁷⁷ Βροτολοιγός; Hom. *Il.* 5.31 and 910; μαιφόνος; Hom. *Il.* 5.31, 455 and 844 or other similar: *Orph. H.* 65.2; S. *OT.* 28; Hes. *Th.* 937; S. *El.* 95; *Orph. H.* 65.1; Hom. *Il.* 8.516; Hom. *Il.* 18.209; Hom. *Il.* 5.717.
- ⁷⁸ *Orph. H.* 65.1–6.
- ⁷⁹ Hom. *Il.* 5.831 and 892; 15.128 and 605; A. *Th.* 344.
- ⁸⁰ Τυκτόν κακόν; Hom. *Il.* 5.831.
- ⁸¹ Hom. *Od.* 8.325–332; Hyg. *Fab.* 148.1–2; Ov. *Met.* 4.185–189.
- ⁸² Paus. 1.21.4 and 28.5; Apollod. 3.14.2.
- ⁸³ Hom. *Il.* 5.830–834.
- ⁸⁴ Hom. *Il.* 5.890–983 .
- ⁸⁵ Vian 1968: 53–69; Eck 2012: 122.

- ⁸⁶ “Guerrier sauvage [...] l’incarnation d’Arès dans son pire état”: Eck 2012: 139.
- ⁸⁷ Parker 1983: 104–143.
- ⁸⁸ Μιαίνων εὐσέβειαν Ἄρης: A. *Th.* 344; φοίνιος: S. *El.* 95; λοιμός: S. *OT* 28; μαιφόνος: Hom. *Il.* 5.31, 455 and 844; Eck 2012: 116–166.
- ⁸⁹ Deacy 2000: 285; Deacy 2008: 54–56.
- ⁹⁰ Deacy 2000: 289; Deacy 2008: 56.
- ⁹¹ Kostuch 2011: 46.
- ⁹² Kostuch 2011.
- ⁹³ On the importance of this aspect of the *Iliad* see Payen 2017; Bouvier 2017.
- ⁹⁴ Hom. *Il.* 5.892–893.
- ⁹⁵ Detienne and Vernant 1978: 285.
- ⁹⁶ “Ce dieu tout-conflict que ressemble tant à sa mère”: Loraux 1990a: 42.
- ⁹⁷ “Engendré sans semence masculine, marqué de la souillure féminine qu’aucun élément mâle n’est venu tempérer”: Roux 1988: 41.
- ⁹⁸ Detienne 1989: 31.
- ⁹⁹ *h.Minh.Hom.* 11.1–3; english version: Evelyn–White 1914.
- ¹⁰⁰ Hom. *Il.* 5.826–828 y 830–832.
- ¹⁰¹ Hom. *Il.* 15.125–127 and 21.410–411.
- ¹⁰² Hes. *Sc.* 449.
- ¹⁰³ Hom. *Il.* 5.875–880.
- ¹⁰⁴ Vian 1968: 55.
- ¹⁰⁵ Strutynski 1980: 217–231.
- ¹⁰⁶ Eck 2012: 121.
- ¹⁰⁷ Θούρος: Hom. *Il.* 5.830; 15.127 and 605.
- ¹⁰⁸ Eck 2012: 171.
- ¹⁰⁹ Hes. *Th.* 896.
- ¹¹⁰ Hom. *Il.* 5.755–766 and 762–766.
- ¹¹¹ Hard 2004: 135; Pirenne–Delforge and Pironti 2009: 107.
- ¹¹² *h.Ap.* 3.98–101; english version: Evelyn–White 1914.
- ¹¹³ Nonn. *D.* 8.78.
- ¹¹⁴ Call. *Del.* 4. 59–150. Nonn. *D.* 4.168–171 and 27.265–278.
- ¹¹⁵ Goddesses in Homer: *Il.* 9.270.
- ¹¹⁶ *h.Ap.* 3.96–106.
- ¹¹⁷ Ov. *Met.* 9.283.
- ¹¹⁸ Ov. *Fast.* 3.251–258.
- ¹¹⁹ E. *Med.* 250.
- ¹²⁰ Vernant 1974: 38.
- ¹²¹ Plu. *Lyc.* 27.3.
- ¹²² Iriarte 2002: 136.
- ¹²³ Loraux 1995: 24.
- ¹²⁴ Loraux 1995: 23.
- ¹²⁵ Loraux 1995: 30 – 31.
- ¹²⁶ Ellinger 1993: 39 and 230; Ellinger 2009: 113; Frontisi–Ducroux 1981: 48.
- ¹²⁷ A characteristic epithet of this goddess associated with childbirth: Chantraine 1968: 634.
- ¹²⁸ E. *IT.* 1099.
- ¹²⁹ Loraux 1995: 33.
- ¹³⁰ E. *Hipp.* 163–169.
- ¹³¹ Such as μαινόμενον: Hom. *Il.* 5.831; μαινόμενε: Hom. *Il.* 15.128.

- ¹³² Paus. 8.48.4–5.
- ¹³³ Paus. 8.48.5: ὑπερβαλέσθαι τῇ τόλμῃ τὰς ἄλλας γυναῖκας.
- ¹³⁴ García Quintela 1989: 280–291.
- ¹³⁵ Apollod. 1.7.7–10 and 1.8.2.
- ¹³⁶ E. *Ba.* 1222 and *Med.* 1051.
- ¹³⁷ “Porque puso una *tólma* en sus actos”: García Quintela 1989: 288.
- ¹³⁸ Chantraine 1968: 634; Loraux 1995: 25.
- ¹³⁹ Apollod. 3.4.1; Nonn. *D.* 4.356–420; Ov. *Met.* 3. 31; Hyg. *Fab.* 178.5; E. *Ph.* 65.
- ¹⁴⁰ Nonn. *D.* 4.399–405.
- ¹⁴¹ E. *Ph.* 939–940.
- ¹⁴² Vian 1963: 106–109.
- ¹⁴³ A. *Th.* 104.
- ¹⁴⁴ Or even the nature of born from the earth: παλαίχθων δῆμος Ἀθηναίωνας (Aesch. 3.190–191).
- ¹⁴⁵ Nonn. *D.* 4.404.
- ¹⁴⁶ “Les mêmes affinités chtoniennes que le dragon auquel ils doivent leur naissance”: Vian 1963: 162. From the god’s perspective, this offspring of Ares’ warriors does not serve, however, as compensation for Cadmo killing the dragon that caused Ares’ misfortune and resentment towards Thebes: Detienne 2003: 40–43.
- ¹⁴⁷ E. *Ba.* 1357–1359; Nonn. *D.* 4.417–420; Ov. *Met.* 4.570–600; Apollod. 3.5.4; Hyg. *Fab.* 6.
- ¹⁴⁸ E. *Ba.* 1357; Ov. *Met.* 4.600.
- ¹⁴⁹ A. *R.* 2.988–992; Isoc. 12.193; Hyg. *Fab.* 30.10; Apollod. *Epit.* 5.1.2; Q.S. 1.55–56.
- ¹⁵⁰ A. *Eu.* 685.
- ¹⁵¹ Homeric ἀντιάνειραι: Blok 1995: 160–170.
- ¹⁵² Apollod. 1.8.2; Hyg. *Fab.* 14; 16; 171.1.
- ¹⁵³ Meleager, in most of the ancient accounts, is the son of Oeneus: Roscher ed. 1894–1897: 2591.
- ¹⁵⁴ Felson Rubin and Merritt Sale 1983; Barringer 2001: 154–155.
- ¹⁵⁵ Hyg. *Fab.* 172 and 174; D.S. 4.34, 2–4; Ov. *Met.* 8.260–533; *Ep.* 4.99–101; Apollod. 1.8.2; B. 5.3.103–110; *Myth. Vat.* 1.171 and 2.167.2–6.
- ¹⁵⁶ Felson Rubin, Merritt Sale 1983: 138.
- ¹⁵⁷ D. S. 4.73.1; Hyg. *Fab.* 84.1; 159; 245.1; 250.1; Paus. 5.1.6.
- ¹⁵⁸ D. S. 4.73.2–6.
- ¹⁵⁹ Apollod. *Epit.* 2.4.
- ¹⁶⁰ Hyg. *Fab.* 253.1. English version: Grant 1960.
- ¹⁶¹ Sch. *Pi. P.* 2.40b, p. 39 Drachmann.
- ¹⁶² D. S. 4.69.4.
- ¹⁶³ *Pi. P.* 2.20–49.
- ¹⁶⁴ Detienne 1994: 86.
- ¹⁶⁵ Apollod. 3.14.8; Hyg. *Fab.* 45.1.
- ¹⁶⁶ Ov. *Met.* 6.428–435.
- ¹⁶⁷ Apollod. 3.14.8; Ov. *Met.* 6.428–680.
- ¹⁶⁸ González García 1996: 187.
- ¹⁶⁹ Loraux 1995: 30.
- ¹⁷⁰ A. *Eu.* 658–660 and 663–664.
- ¹⁷¹ Arist. *GA.* 728a.19–22 and 730a.28–34; Bonnard 2012: 119–94.
- ¹⁷² E. *Med.* 573–576 and *Hipp.* 618–625.
- ¹⁷³ Luc. *VH.* 1.22.

¹⁷⁴ Hom. *Od.* 8.331.

¹⁷⁵ Hom. *Il.* 5.875.