Karl Kerényi, *Mytologie Řeků I: Příběhy bohů a lidí*, př. J. Binder, Praha: Oikúmené, 1996, s. 97–99 (zkráceno a mírně upraveno)

Métis

O jedné z velikých Diových manželek bychom patrně vůbec nic nevěděli, kdyby nepatřila do příběhu o veliké Diově dceři, Palladě Athéně. Métis, „Důmyslnost“, by mohla být také přízviskem bohyně Athény, o níž se praví, že se odvahou a důmyslností vyrovná Diovi. Vypráví se však, že Zeus si zvolil za první manželku Métidu, která ze všech bohů a lidí nejvíce znala. Byla dcerou Ókeanovou a Téthyinou a pomáhala Diovi již tehdy, když Kronos všechny jeho sourozence spolkl. Podala bohu prostředek, který strašlivého otce uspal, a tím ho donutila spolknuté bohy opět ze sebe vydat. Métis dovedla také to, co se jinak vypráví o bohyni Nemesis: když se jí chtěl Zeus zmocnit, proměňovala se v nejrozmanitější postavy. Víc si o tom nepovíme – jen to, že se jí Zeus přece jen zmocnil. Co se odehrálo potom, patří do příběhu o zrození Pallady Athény.

Zrození Athény

Jedním z vyprávění o zrození Athény navazuje Hésiodos na zprávu, že si Zeus zvolil za svou první ženu Métidu. Když se však Métis chystala porodit Athénu, vypravuje dále, úskočně ošálil Zeus bohyni lichotivými slovy a pozřel ji do vlastních útrob. To mu poradila Gaia s Úranem, aby z nesmrtelných bohů nedostal královskou hodnost nikdo jiný než Zeus. Bylo totiž souzeno, že Métis porodí nesmírně moudré děti: nejdříve dívku se sovíma očima, Trítogeneiu (Athénino přízvisko, jež pochopíme z druhé verze), která se odvahou a rozvážností vyrovná Diovi; poté měla porodit chlapce zpupného srdce, jenž bude králem bohů i lidí. Dřív než k tomu mohlo dojít, pohltil Zeus Métidu, aby za něho rozvažovala o dobrém a zlém.

Druhou verzi zaznamenal rovněž Hésiodos, když se zmínil, že Zeus zrodil ze své hlavy sovookou Trítogeneiu – hrůznou strůjkyni bojové vřavy a vůdkyni vojsk, která si libuje v ryku a válkách a bitvách –, Héra zase sama ze sebe mistrného umělce Héfaista. Vyprávění pak dále rozpřádá, jak se manželé navzájem řevnivě předstihovali: Héra porodila bez Diova přičinění Héfaista, Zeus zase učinil tajně svou milenkou Ókeanovnu Métidu. Přestože byla tak chytrá, obelstil ji: popadl ji oběma rukama a pohltil ji do vlastních útrob. Bál se totiž, že Métis porodí něco, co bude silnější než blesk. Proto ji Kronův syn zčistajasna spolkl. Ona však v témž okamžiku otěhotněla Palladou Athénou. Otec bohů a lidí porodil dceru pod jedním vrcholkem na břehu řeky Trítónu (odtud příjmení Trítogeneia, „Z Trítónu zrozená“), zatímco Métis, Athénina matka, strůjkyně všech spravedlivých věcí, která ze všech bohů a lidí nejvíce věděla, seděla skryta v Diových útrobách.

V tomto vyprávění se přímo neříká, že se zrození udalo z Diovy hlavy. O „vrcholku“, kterýžto výraz znamená v řečtině totéž co „hlava“, se hovoří spíše proto, aby se neobyčejný způsob porodu zahalil tajemstvím. Vyskytla se však také vyprávění o tom, že Héfaistos nebo Prométheus pomáhal při porodu a udeřil Dia dvousečnou sekyrou nebo kladivem do lebky. Vyskočila Pallas Athéné s tak hlučným bojovým pokřikem, že se nad tím zděsilo Nebe i matka Země. Narodila se z otcovy posvátné hlavy ve válečné zbroji zářící zlatem. Všichni nesmrtelní bohové se ulekli a divili jejímu zjevu, když Pallas, máchající špičatým oštěpem, vyskočila z otcovy nesmrtelné hlavy a stanula před Diem třímajícím aigidu, kožený ochranný štít. Mocně se zachvěl mohutný Olymp pod tíhou sovooké bohyně. V hlubinách duněla kolem dokola země a moře vřící nachovými vlnami se bouřlivě vzdulo. Pod slaným přívalem zmizely břehy a skvoucí Hyperíonův syn Hélios nadlouho zastavil rychlé sluneční oře, až konečně panenská Pallas Athéné sňala z nesmrtelných plecí božskou zbroj. I zaradoval se Zeus, bůh rozvážnosti.

Otcové a vychovatelé Athény

V řecké mytologii byla Pallas Athéné dcerou svého otce: bojechtivá panna, při jejímž zrození hrál otec větší úlohu než matka. V řeckém náboženství zaujímala – alespoň podle Homéra – vedle otce Dia hned druhé místo. Avšak nikoli ve všech vyprávěních je jejím otcem Zeus. Již dříve, při líčení boje s Giganty, jsme se zmínili o Gigantovi jménem Pallás. Pod týmž jménem vystupoval syn Títána Kria a Eurybie a týmž jménem byl také označován otec Pallady Athény. Slovo *pallas* mohlo být v řeckém jazyce, kde se vyskytuje s dvojím přízvukem a dvojím skloňováním, chápáno tu jako rodu mužského (*pallás*, gen. *pallantos*), tu jako ženského (*pallas*, gen. *pallados*). V prvním případě znamenalo statného mladého muže, ve druhém statnou pannu, *virago*, jak by se nazývala latinsky. Mužský Pallás byl, nehledě na různé genealogie, jedna a táž postava, nespoutanější, ještě bojovnější mužský obraz bohyně Pallady. Pallás, otec Pallady Athény, prý chtěl svou vlastní dceru znásilnit. Bohyně ho přemohla, ukořistila jeho kůži – totéž se vypráví o kůži Giganta jménem Pallás – a sama si ji oblékla. Otec Pallás byl okřídlený, jako bývá na starých vyobrazeních zpodobována i dcera Pallas.

Kromě Dia a Pallanta bývá uváděn ještě třetí otec bohyně. Métis prý byla už těhotná, když ji Zeus spolkl. Athénu s ní zplodil Kyklóp Brontés – „Hromobijce“. Na toto otcovství se zřejmě odvolává ona věta v dříve vyprávěném příběhu o zrození Athény, v němž bylo řečeno, že se Zeus obává, aby Métis neporodila cosi silnějšího než blesk. Kyklópové mají jakožto kováři nejblíže k ídským Daktylům, o nichž už víme, že to byly falické prabytosti. O druhých prabytostech, prvních lidech a pravládcích různých končin, se říkalo, že se po Athénině narození ujali jejího vychování. Jednoho z nich jménem Itónos považovali ostatně také za Athénina otce.

Když Athéna u řeky Trítónu, jak se vypráví, vyskočila z otcovy hlavy, ujal se jejího vychování říční bůh. Trítón sám měl dceru jménem Pallas. Athéna a Pallas se spolu cvičily v boji. Pallas měla v úmyslu probodnout Athénu oštěpem. Zeus se

vyděsil. Podržel před dcerou svou hrozivou kozí kůži, aigidu. Pallas odvrátila zrak a Athéna ji smrtelně zasáhla. Bohyně pro ni truchlila a vytvořila její sošku, palladion. Přes tuto sochu přehodila aigidu a postavila palladion vedle sochy Diovy. Zmíněný již Itónos byl otcem dvou dcer: Athény a Íodamy. Při cvičení ve zbrani Athéna sestru zabila. Za Athénina vychovatele pokládali také pradávného arkadského krále jménem Pallás. Měl dvě dcery: Níké a Chrýsé. Víme, že Níké, okřídlená bohyně vítězství, byla podle jiného vyprávění dcerou Pallanta, syna Títána Kria, a že přilnula k Athéně, která sama měla příjmení Níké. Mimochodem se Athéna nazývala i Chrýsé, „Zlatá“ – avšak určitě v jiném smyslu než Afrodíté. Je to stále týž příběh, ve kterém se objevuje pod různými jmény dvojí tvář jedné a téže bohyně.

Athéna a Héfaistos

Ve všech příbězích, které se vyprávěly o Athéně, byla považována za Parthenos, „Pannu“. Byla však zároveň vzývaná jakožto Metér, „Matka“. Známe zvláštní příběh o její svatbě, v níž neztratila své panenství, ale přesto vzápětí svěřila dcerám Kekropa, krále svého milovaného města Athén, jakési dítě. Byla to posvátná událost, která byla často předváděna. Vidíme ji na jednom oltáři v Římě, který stál v posvátném okrsku jedné zbožné císařovny, prohlášené po smrti za bohyni.

Vyprávělo se, že Héfaistos žádal, aby mu odměnou za to, že byl při porodu nápomocen svým kladivem, dali Athénu za ženu. Bylo mu také vyhověno a už si ji vedl na svatební lože. Když však vedle ní ulehl, bohyně zmizela. Tak padlo jeho semeno na zem. Bohyně Gaia – zvaná také Chthón – zrodila z něho Erichthonia, božské dítě athénské Akropole, a odevzdala novorozeně Palladě Athéně. Podle jiné verze vznikl mezi Héfaistem a Athénou spor, *eris,* a proto se dítě jmenuje Erichthonios. Podle třetí podoby vyprávění Héfaistos Athénu pronásledoval, a nakonec ji dohonil (to je zobrazeno na římském oltáři), ale nemohl ji připravit o panenství. Athéna se mu ubránila, stran této okolnosti existuje několik verzí, v nichž hrála roli vlna *(erion),* jejímž chomáčem bohyně semeno utřela, anebo prach, s kterým se smísilo. Básnickým jazykem se také hovořilo o „svatební rose“. Pro „rosu“ máme v řečtině dva výrazy: *hersé* nebo *drosos.* Obě slova mohla stejně dobře označovat novorozené dítě. Dokonce i bůh, Apollón nebo Zeus, se nazýval ve své podobě božského dítěte Hersos nebo Erros.

Kekropovy dcery

Athéňané vyprávěli, že jejich prvním králem byl Kekrops, ze země zrozený pratvor, půl člověk, půl had. Jméno je v tomto tvaru patrně slovní hříčkou: *Kerkóps* znamená „Ocasatý“. Když se Pallas Athéna s Poseidonem svářeli o vládu nad Atikou, pozdější zemí Athéňanů, rozhodl spor Kekrops. Poseidon udeřil trojzubcem do skály, na které měla později stát Akropolis, a vytvořil tak dokonce nahoře jakési „moře“, slaný pramen. Vyprávělo se také, že dal při této příležitosti vzejít z půdy prvnímu hřebci. Athéna vypěstovala první olivovník, a nato jí Kekrops přiřkl vítězství. Dále se vyprávělo, že Kekrops první nazval Dia jménem, zřídil Athéně první kultovní sochu a první pochopil, že kromě matky existuje i otec a první zavedl monogamii.

Athéna peskuje jednu z Kekropových dcer za to, že nahlédla do košíku s Erichthoniem (430 př. n. l.)

Kekropova manželka se jmenovala Aglauros nebo Agraulos, „Žijící na poli“. Manželská dvojice měla tři děti: Aglauros, Hersé a Pandrosos. Obě poslední jména znamenají „Kapku rosy“ a „Úplně orosenou“ anebo „Všechno orosující“. Slavný příběh o Kekropových dcerách zní takto: Athén přijala od bohyně Země malého Erichthonia, jehož otcem byl Héfaistos, a chtěla ho vychovat potají, aby se druzí bohové o tom nedověděli. Položila dítě do zavřeného kulatého koše, podobného těm, jakých se používá při mystériích a z nichž se – jak znám z četných vyobrazení – plazí had. Později se říkalo, že prý Athéna porodila hada. Příběh byl vyprávěn také tak, že Athéna položil Erichthonia do truhly. Zavřenou schránu odevzdala bohyně do opatrování třem Kekropovým dcerám a přísně jim zakázala ji otevřít. Když se vzdálila, dívek, zejména Aglaury, se zmocnila zvědavost. Všichni se shodují na tom, že koš neb truhlu otevřela ona. Kromě ní nesla na tom vinu i jedna nebo druh z obou sester: ale která, na to jsou názory různé. Aglauros a její spoluvinice spatřily tajemství, které bývá opět líčeno různě. Byl to had, nebo dítě střežené hadem či dokonce dvěma hady; aneb dítě s hadíma nohama. Ta, která tajemství spatřila, nepochybně Aglauros, ale také její spoluvinice, zešílela a vrhla se z vysoké skály, na níž později stála Akropolis. Nebo pronásledovali provinilé dívky strážní hadi? Na jedné vázové malbě to tak vypadá. O hadovi, kterého bylo vidět za štítem slavné sochy Athény Parthenos, díla sochaře Feidia, se říkalo, že je to onen had, který se z koše uchýlil pod ochranu bohyně.

Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985 (něm. orig. 1977). Následující text je provizorní ukázkou z českého překladu připravovaného pro vydání nakladatelstvím Vyšehrad

ATHÉNA

Bohyně Athéna, přesněji *Athénaiá*, iónsky *Athénaié*, aticky *Athéná*, epicky *Athéné*, je svým jménem i sférou působení v nejtěsnějším spojení s městem Athénami, nad nimiž ještě dnes ční její „panenské obydlí“, Parthenón, který se stal souhrnným pojmem pro celé řecké umění. Zda je město pojmenováno podle bohyně či bohyně podle města, to je starý spor. Jelikož *-éné* je typická místní přípona – Mykéné, Palléné, Troizén(é), Messéné, Kýréné – pravděpodobně má bohyně své jméno podle města, je Pallas z Athén, *Pallas Athénaié*, tak jako Héra z Argu se jmenuje *Héré Agreié*. Také jediný doklad na tabulkách s lineárním písmem B, *atana potinija* v Knóssu, je nutno syntakticky chápat jako „paní z At(h)ana“. Pro Athéňany byla prostě „bohyně“, *hé theos*. Slovo Pallas zůstává temné; někdy se vykládá jako „dívka“, jindy jako „mávající zbraněmi“, ale jeho původ může být i mimo Řecko.

Nilsson se pokoušel Athénu dát do souvislosti s Bohyní s hady, údajnou domácí a palácovou bohyní mínójského krále. Ještě sugestivnější je spojení s mykénským božstvem štítu, zvláště poté, co byla v téže svatyni objevena fresková malba bohyně v přilbě. Později stál v Mykénách na místě paláce Athénin chrám. V klasické době je Athéna bezesporu všude bohyní hradu a města. Často je to vyjádřeno i jejími přídomky *Polias, Poliúchos*. Tak je její chrám velmi často hlavním chrámem města na opevněném kopci – nejen v Athénách, ale i v Argu, ve Spartě, v Gortýně, v Lindu, Larise v Thessalii, a v Íliu (tedy dokonce i v homérské Tróji, i když je v eposech je Athéna nepřítelkyní Tróje). Jako bohyně hradu a města se objevuje na působivých obrazech ozbrojené panny, chrabré a nedotknutelné. O dobytí města hovoří Homér jako o „rozvázání její čelenky“.

Ozbrojené bohyně jsou i v Orientu: Ištar v mnoha místních variantách, Anat v Ugaritu. Syrským válečnickým sochám s přilbou, štítem a pozdviženou zbraní ikonograficky odpovídá obraz „malé Pallady“, Palladion. Mýtus vypráví, že osud Tróje závisel na jeho Palladiu; teprve když Odysseus a Diomédés v noci vnikli do Tróje a Palladion ukradli, mohlo město padnout. Později mnohá města – především Athény a Argos – prohlašovala, že Palladion vlastní. V Argu se obraz spolu s Diomédovým štítem veze na voze k lázni, a podobné procesí se koná v Athénách, kdy je Pallas dopravena k moři a pak zpět do svého okrsku v Athénách.

Athéna své zbraně nenosí nadarmo. „Strašlivá štváčka bojové vřavy, nezdolná vůdkyně vojska, paní, jíž líbí se bojový ryk a války a bitvy“, tak ji líčí Hésiodos. Když Achajové vyrazí do boje, Athéna s jiskřícími zbraněmi probíhá jejich řadami a probouzí v každém neutuchající sílu k boji a válce. Když Achilleus znovu zasáhne do boje, začne sama Athéna vydávat daleko znějící bojový pokřik, nejprve z příkopu, poté z pobřeží. Takto v divoké vřavě boje a v mimořádném vzrušení válečník věří, že vidí samotnou bohyni. Také Archilochos líčí, jak Athéna milostivě stála po boku vítězných bojovníků a podněcovala odvahu v jejich srdcích.

Poznávacím znamením a štítem Athény je aigida (*aigis*). Když zvedne aigidu, zmocní se nepřátel panika a brzy jsou ztraceni. *Aigis*, jak říká to jméno, je kozí kůže; zvláštní kozí oběť je součástí Athénina kultu v Athénách. Mýtus líčí, jak tato koza byla příšerou, *gorgó*, kterou Athéna sama zabila a stáhla; výtvarné umění udělalo ze zvířecí hlavy hlavu Gorgony a aigidu olemovalo hady, zatímco básník *Íliady* mluví decentněji o zlatých střapcích. Ještě zlověstnější jsou mýty, které vyprávějí, jak Athéna na ostrově Kós zabila lidskou bytost, obra zvaného Pallás, stáhla ho a oblékla si jeho kůži, proto prý se jmenuje Pallas. Dokonce se tvrdilo, že tento Pallás byl její vlastní otec.

Vedle této primitivní krutosti je tu péče o mírumilovné ruční práce, zvláště o práci žen s vřetenem a tkalcovským stavem. Athéna *Ergané* je vynálezkyně a patronka práce s vlnou, oněch nádherných prací, které jsou tak důležitou součástí domácího majetku a prestiže. Také sama bohyně pracuje s vřetenem. Pro ni ženy společně tkají *peplos* předávaný o Panathénajích; pravidelně se na něm objevují scény z boje s Giganty. Athéna je také bohyně tesařů, vynalezla vůz jakož i postroj pro koně, postavila první loď a pomáhala sestrojovat dřevěného trójského koně.

V neposlední řadě je jí zasvěcen jemný olivovník – zvláště ten, který roste na athénské Akropoli, protože takřka ztělesňoval kontinuitu města a stal se symbolem naděje, když po spálení Peršany opět vyrašil. Spolu s Diem Athéna dohlíží i nad dalšími olivovníky, jejichž olej slouží jako cena vítězům o její slavnosti, Panathénajích. Když se v dávných dobách bohové přeli o atickou zemi, dala Athéna vzrůst tomuto stromu, a tím Athény získala, zatímco Poseidón se slaným pramenem, který vyrazil ze skály, musel ustoupit.

Tyto divergentní sféry kompetence nespojuje nějaká elementární síla, nýbrž síla civilizace: správné rozdělení rolí žen, řemeslníků a válečníků a organizační dovednost, která to umožňuje. Ne divoký olivovník z Olympie, ale ušlechtilý strom je darem Athény. Poseidón násilnicky zplodí koně, Athéna na něj vloží uzdu a zbuduje vůz; Poseidón bouří vlny, Athéna postaví loď; Hermés může zmnohonásobit stáda, ale Athéna učí používat vlnu. Dokonce ani válka není pro Athénu neomalenou útočností – tu zosobňuje Arés –, ale vlastně kultivací, jako tanec, jako taktika, jako odříkání: když Odysseus, se svou chytrostí a sebekázní dosáhne toho, že vojsko Achajů, přes omrzelost válkou a touhu po domově, táhne do boje, je to práce Athény.

Víc než které jiné božstvo je Athéna blízko svým chráněncům – „bohyně blízkosti“, tak ji nazval Walter F. Otto. Kdekoli mizí těžkosti a nemožné se stává možným, je u toho Athéna – ale tak, že její přítomnost neubírá výkonu ostatních: „Spolu s Athénou přilož i vlastní ruku“, říká přísloví. Na metopě z Olympie vidíme, jak bohyně lehkou rukou podpírá nebe, které tak těžce doléhá na ramena Héraklea. Jde

o jeden z nejkrásnějších obrazů jejího působení: milost a pomoc, která stále zůstává lehká a skoro hravá. Proto je i při jiných příležitostech po boku Héraklea a často je zobrazována, jak pomáhá Perseovi přelstít a zabít Gorgonu. V *Íliadě* nejzřejměji pomáhá Diomédovi tím, že se sama stane jeho vozatajem a podněcuje ho k zranění Area. Její zásah samozřejmě může být i nebezpečný; vítězství jednoho je záhubou druhého. Vláká Hektora do smrtelné léčky, když se mu zjeví jako jeho bratr, aby pak v rozhodujícím okamžiku vrátila Achilleovi jeho kopí a zmizela. Aby chránila Řeky, bez zaváhání zničí Aianta.

Naprosto charakteristickým způsobem se zjevuje Achilleovi: když ve sporu s Agamemnonem sáhne po meči, stojí Athéna za ním a uchopí ho za vlasy; ostatním zůstává neviditelná, ale Achilleus s úžasem poznává bohyni, jejíž oči strašlivě září. Radí mu, aby ovládl svůj hněv; „dáš-li si říci“, dodá zlehka, a Achilleus samozřejmě poslechne. Řada badatelů poukázala na to, že je zde rozebrán psychologický proces sebeovládání a představen jako božský zásah. Athéniny zářící oči označují okamžik jasné moudrosti ve sporu, který se stává stále chmurnějším.

Také Odysseovi se Athéna zjevuje zvlášť příznačným způsobem: když Odysseus po návratu na Ithaku nepoznává svou otčinu a propukne v nářek, přistoupí k němu Athéna v podobě pastýře a sděluje mu dobrou zprávu. Odysseus, při vší radosti nedůvěřivý, odpovídá vylhaným příběhem. Ale Athéna se usměje a promění se v krásnou vysokou ženu, která se dobře vyzná v krásném tkaní. Odysseus ji poznává a poznává Ithaku. Toto, říká Athéna, ji spojuje s Odysseem, že on je první mezi muži v plánování a myšlenkách, ona však je mezi bohy proslulá chytrostí a lstí; to proto nemůže Odyssea opustit, proto řídí zápletku *Odysseie* od začátku až do rozvážného konce.

Podle Hésioda je matkou Athény Métis, Důmyslnost. Jedná se, pravda, o chytrost zvláštního druhu, jíž nejsou cizí kličky, úklady ani podvody. Až pozdější etika vykládala Athénu jako mravně odpovědnou rozumnost, *fronésis*. Sám Zeus provedl rafinovaný trik svým spojením s Métidou, kterou neprodleně spolknul. Tak se musela Athéna narodit z Diova čela. Podle jiné verze zplodil Zeus Athénu úplně sám, bez matky. Obraz ozbrojené Athény vyskakující z Diovy hlavy se počínaje 7. stoletím často objevuje na vázách. Mnohdy je na obrazech se svou sekerou i Héfaistos, který jako pomocník při porodu musel Diovi rozštípnout lebku. *Ílias* naráží na zvláštní vztah Dia a Athény velmi jasně: jedině Zeus zrodil tuto dívku.

Tento mýtus o zrození je oblíbený, ale zároveň záhadný. Sotva může být odvozen z přírodní metaforiky – zrození z vrcholu hory – a už vůbec ne z alegorie, podle níž chytrost vychází z hlavy; pokud dávní Řekové někam umisťovali správné myšlení, pak do dechu a bránice. Jednotlivé motivy mají orientální paralely, například spolknutí a narození z neobvyklé části těla v mýtu o Kumarbim; egyptský Thoth, bůh chytrosti, se pro změnu narodil z hlavy Setha. Řekové už od doby Homéra zdůrazňují jedinečnou vazbu na otce: „jsem zcela na straně otce“. A přesto je v tomto násilném spojení naznačen velmi dvojznačný vztah: rozštípnutí lebky je vždycky smrtelné. Ne nadarmo Héfaistos na mnoha obrazech po zasazení úderu se svou sekerou prchá. Rána sekerou a útěk byly kultickou realitou v oběti vola pro Dia, jež se konala právě na Akropoli, naproti východnímu štítu Parthenónu. Tento – nikdy nevyslovený – prvek otcovraždy v mýtu o zrození vede zpět k apokryfnímu mýtu o Pallantovi. Neexistence matky zároveň znamená, že panna se úplně zříká svého ženství: vůbec nikdy neměla kontakt s ženským lůnem. Civilizační moudrost je odseknuta od samého základu života.

O poznání pružnější je athénský lokální mýtus o původu prvního krále. Héfaistos, násilnický porodní pomocník, byl žádostivý panny, kterou přivedl na svět, pronásledoval ji a vystříkl své sémě na její stehno. Ona je setřela a hodila je na zem: nato Země zrodila chlapce Erichthonia či Erechthea, kterého Athéna vychovávala ve svém chrámu. V mýtu se dále líčí, jak je tajné dítě objeveno Kekropovými dcerami a způsobí jejich smrt, což úzce souvisí s rituálem *Arrhéforoi* na Akropoli. Panenská Athéna se tak jen o vlásek nestane matkou prvního krále, jemuž se v Erechtheiu dostává trvalé úcty. Paradoxní identitu panny a matky se mýtus vyslovit neodvažuje.

Pozdně antická kopie Feidiovy Athény.

V protikladu k těmto všem dávným dvojznačnostem byl v 5. století nově zřízen mimořádně velkolepý chrám pro vznešenou, nedotknutelnou Pannu. Feidiás pro něj ze zlata a slonoviny vytvořil sochu vítězné bohyně s nádhernou přilbicí a štítem, kterak stojí a na pravé ruce nese okřídlenou bohyni vítězství, Níké. Je pozoruhodné, že v souvislosti s touto sochou nepadne nikdy ani zmínka o náboženském nadšení, jež v návštěvnících probouzel Feidiův Zeus v Olympii. Namísto toho je věrně zaznamenána váha zlata. *Peplos* byl stejně jako předtím předáván staré primitivní soše (*xoanon*). Parthenón stojí na umělých základech.

1

THE BIRTH OF ATHENA

> Nobody is the mother that gave birth to me, and I approve of the male in every respect, with all my heart, with the exception of undergoing marriage, and I am exceedingly of the father.
>
> (Aeschylus, *Eumenides*: 736–8)

INTRODUCTION: HARDLY A HEADACHE

The birth of Athena is typically recounted today as a story with humorous potential: Zeus has a 'splitting' headache, Hephaistos takes out his axe to relieve the pain, and out comes Athena. That such an interpretation was possible in antiquity is evident from one of Lucian's second-century AD *Dialogues of the Gods*. 'What's this? A girl in armour?' is what Hephaistos exclaims as he sees the result of his actions, 'she's got *glaukos* ('fierce') eyes, but they go very well with her helmet'. But the majority of the sources present Athena's birth in less frivolous terms, as a story with strong aetiological ('explanatory') components. As this chapter will consider, it explained key things about Athena including how she came to be born, what her relationship was to her father, and how she acquired certain of her characteristics and attributes. It also dealt with larger events concerning the development of the Olympian pantheon and Zeus's emergence as the sovereign power in the universe.

The interpretation of any Greek deity is aided by an awareness of their perceived origins, but to come in any way close to an

understanding of Athena, it is necessary to examine the story of her birth. But what exactly was the myth? In a culture that lacked any single, canonical version of stories, it was continually open to adaptation and transformation. Such was its popularity that in some circumstances it only needed to be alluded to rather than narrated at length as is the case even in the earliest references to the story, those in the Homeric epics, where Athena is described as *Dios ekgegauia* ('Zeus-born': e.g. *Odyssey*: 6.229) and where her birth was already the cause of a special intimacy between father and daughter. At one point in the *Iliad*, Ares complains to Zeus about the favouritism shown to Athena at his own expense, the reason given being *autos egeinao* ('you fathered her' or, more likely, 'you gave birth to her': 5.880). In the brief sketch that follows, I am making no attempt to provide some all-encompassing, archetypal form of the myth, but rather am aiming to indicate recurrent trends in order to introduce some of the aspects that we will be discussing.

- Zeus received a prophecy that the second child born to his wife, the Titaness Metis, would overthrow him as he had overthrown his father Kronos, and Kronos had before that overthrown his own father Ouranos.
- Metis was a type of Greek deity who was able to shape shift; when she was pregnant with her first child, Athena, Zeus tricked her into turning herself into something tiny, and then swallowed her.
- Athena was released from Zeus's body by the craft god, Hephaistos – or in some accounts Prometheus – by cracking open his head with an axe.
- Athena sprang forth, sometimes fully grown, but in any case in full armour, brandishing her weapons and crying: not the cry of a newborn baby but that of a warrior.
- The gods looked on startled, and the whole of the universe was thrown into disarray by the noise and the spectacle. As for Hephaistos, he is typically depicted fleeing from the scene with his axe.
- Having emerged, Athena removed her weapons and the universe returned to normal.

- The site of her birth was usually a river called Triton, variously situated in Libya and certain Greek locations including sites in Arcadia, Boiotia and Krete.

After a brief survey of possible Near Eastern antecedents, we will introduce some of the salient aspects of the myth via a look at two visual representations and then a literary account, the longer of the two Homeric Hymns to Athena. After that, we will explore its place within the Olympian succession myth. Finally we will consider the gendered aspects to the story and their implications for understanding Athena's character and functions.

ANTECEDENTS

Among the numerous approaches that have been developed for the study of Greek myth, two in particular have had a bearing upon how to tackle the story of Athena's birth. Fuelled by the 'Paris School' of Vernant, Detienne and others (Chapter 3), there has been a strong focus since the mid-twentieth century on the implications of particular stories for shaping our understanding of the beliefs and values of the people that possessed and transmitted them irrespective of the origins and early development of the stories in question. On the other hand, recent years have seen a renewed interest in the early development of the myths, particularly via a consideration of their eastern heritage. This section will survey some of the attempts that have been made to determine the oriental motifs and traditions behind the story of Athena's birth while assessing whether the quest has any bearing on our interpretation of the Greek versions of the myth.

The early archaic period saw what has been described as an 'orientalising revolution' with the Near East exerting a profound influence upon Greek culture, the development of the alphabet being one facet of this as well as developments in art and mythology. Parallels have been discerned between Greek myths and the much older Near Eastern material including the Hittite myth known as the *Kingdom in Heaven*, which has been hailed as the inspiration for

the Hesiodic account of the divine succession (see below). In order to overthrow the heaven god, Anu, Kumarbi bit off and swallowed his genitals. Discovering that this act had impregnated him, he spat out the semen but the weather god Teššub remained inside and needed to be cut out of him, as it seems did other deities including one called ^{d}KA.ZAL, who possibly emerged out of his skull (West 1999: 278–9; 280). The text is too fragmentary to enable us to do anything more than speculate as to whether ^{d}KA.ZAL's birth lies behind the story of Athena's head birth but it at least raises the possibility of a Hittite background to the story.

Moving to Mesopotamian myth, a more promising antecedent may be discerned: the story of the ascent from the netherworld of Inanna, the principal goddess of the Mesopotamian pantheon, a deity similar to Athena in certain regards as a warrior (though also the love goddess) whose attributes included the owl. Trapped in the netherworld, Inanna had lost the seven garments that represented her holy power or *me* but on her return, she emerged fully clothed once more, reborn resplendent in her power, the spectacle of the emerging goddess causing her fellow god Dumezi to flee the scene. In the story of Inanna's return, we may have the origins of Athena's emergence, decked out in the attributes that represent her power. To add to the possibility, both stories involve an intermediary, the craft gods Enki and Hephaistos, who enable the goddess in question to be released. Enki, the god of wisdom and craft, the keeper of the *me*, created two figures, kur-gar-ra and gala-tur-ra who, on his instructions, sprinkled her body with the food and water of life.

The possibility that this story was an inspiration for Athena's birth looks more appealing still when we take account of its possible mountain symbolism. In his investigation of parallels with Mesopotamian myth, Charles Penglase (1994: 232–3) draws attention to some of the words used for Zeus's head, among them *to karēnon* which can also denote a mountain peak and *koryphē*, the crown of the head or the peak of a mountain. Depictions of Inanna's return in Mesopotamian art, meanwhile, show her standing on a mountain representing the netherworld.

It should be stressed, however, that finding antecedents can only go part of the way to explaining the reasons for a myth. If the motif

does have its origins in the Near East, it has been transformed in a distinctively Greek context to depict the particular features of Athena, the warrior with an exceptionally close relationship with her father. In what follows the emphasis will shift from the question of where the story came from to the uses made of it by the Greeks.

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

Visual representations serve as a convenient starting point for our analysis because of the nature of the medium. Artists needed to make their subjects immediately recognisable by conveying, as succinctly as possible, key features of the story. In the two vases that we will examine in this section, each artist has selected the moment that is the common feature of visual representations of the birth: Athena's emergence out of the head of Zeus. There are a number of differences between the two depictions, a consideration of which will enable us to demonstrate the versatility of the myth and introduce some of the aspects of the myth we will explore later in this chapter.

In figure 1, an Attic black-figure lip cup from *c.* 560 BC, Athena is emerging out of Zeus's head while the 'midwife', Hephaistos, is fleeing the scene. The reason for the choice of only three participants is in part consistency with the other side of the vase on which Athena and Zeus are again present, again with a third figure, this time Herakles (see figure 4). In addition, it would presumably have been in the artist's interests to make the scene as simple as possible because the image on the cup is only a tiny one, of about 3cm × 2cm. In his little painting, the artist has managed to pack in a great many details, expressing the relationship between the three figures and their reaction to the events. In among the most striking depictions of father–daughter closeness, Athena is holding her spear aloft in a gesture that parallels that of Zeus as he wields the thunderbolt so that, even as she is being born, Athena is seen to act in partnership with her father. At the same time, she has not yet fully emerged, a detail which effectively makes her an attribute of Zeus, as yet not fully separated from her father.

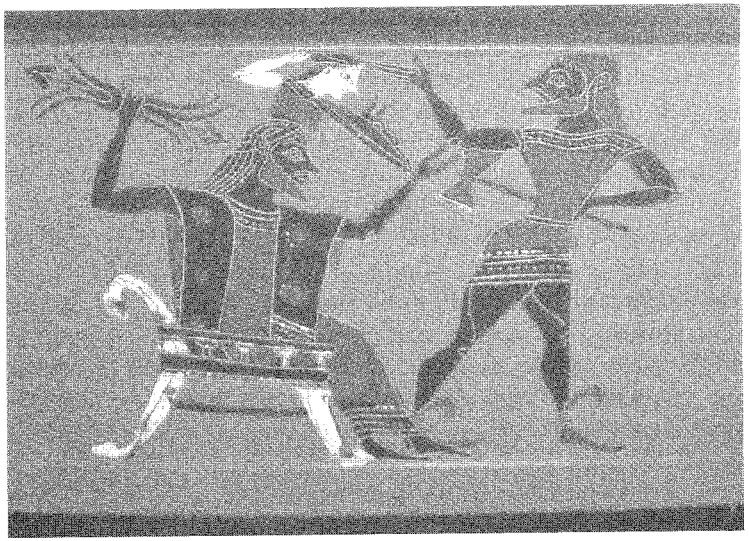

Figure 1 Athena emerging from the head of Zeus while Hephaistos flees the scene, Attic black-figure cup, London, British Museum B 424.

As for the third figure, Hephaistos, he is fleeing from the scene carrying the axe that broke open Zeus's head, a detail that brings out something lacking in literary accounts, namely the apparent hostility towards him on the part of Zeus and Athena, both of whom are brandishing a weapon in his direction. This makes him, effectively, the first joint enemy that they need to face. Rather than seeking to relieve Zeus of his headache, we seem to be being presented with a less well-intentioned attempt to wound Zeus. Hephaistos is here more like Prometheus, who in some sources is said to have delivered the violent blow and whose inimical relationship to Zeus is a recurrent feature of Greek myth (see Dougherty 2005: esp. 31–4, 71–2). As this chapter unfolds I will consider some possible reasons for Hephaistos' actions, and in Chapter 3, further possibilities will be proposed when we come to explore Athena's relationship with the craft god. In the meantime, suffice it to say that this vase presents us with a range of features, notably the closeness

of Athena and Zeus who act in concert against Hephaistos even as the goddess is being born.

More elaborate is figure 2, an Attic black-figure amphora from around 540, which, being so much larger, is able to include many more details. Hephaistos is not present this time. Eileithyia, the birth attendant goddess, has the more customary role of midwife while another female and two males are observing Athena's emergence. Athena is clothed once again in a dress but also a helmet, which is merging into the decorative pattern at the top of the vase, a shield and a spear. Over her dress, she wears another of her attributes, the aegis, which contains a little rectangular gorgoneion. Athena is not 'supposed' to be wearing the aegis at this stage, because according to literary accounts, it is something that she acquires subsequently – either as something given to her by Hephaistos, or as an object that she herself fashions out of the flayed skin of a defeated enemy (e.g. Apollodoros 1.6.2: the giant Pallas; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.23.59; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2.28: a father called Pallas). Similarly, the head of the Gorgon is given to her in myth by Perseus after he beheads the monster with her assistance (Chapter 4). Vase paintings, however, are not meant to be chronologically accurate: the artist is showing the consummate goddess, small-scale though fully formed, decked out in her warrior paraphernalia.

An especially striking feature of the scene is the frontal depiction of the two central figures. Figures in Greek art are usually depicted in profile with frontality reserved for those who are monstrous, or in some other respect out of the ordinary, dangerous and ambiguous. Dionysos, the god of excess, drunkenness and abandon is at times depicted thus, as are people who have died or who are on the verge of death. Frontally depicted figures are those who upset norms, which is why frontality is a trait of the Gorgon, whose peculiar blend of animal and human traits, as well as male and female ones, marks her out as the most ugly and dangerous of all monsters. This frontal depiction of Zeus and Athena is a means, perhaps, of emphasising that something strange and extraordinary is taking place, something that confounds the usual state of things. As on the cup, Zeus is holding his distinctive attribute, the thunderbolt, but it serves a very

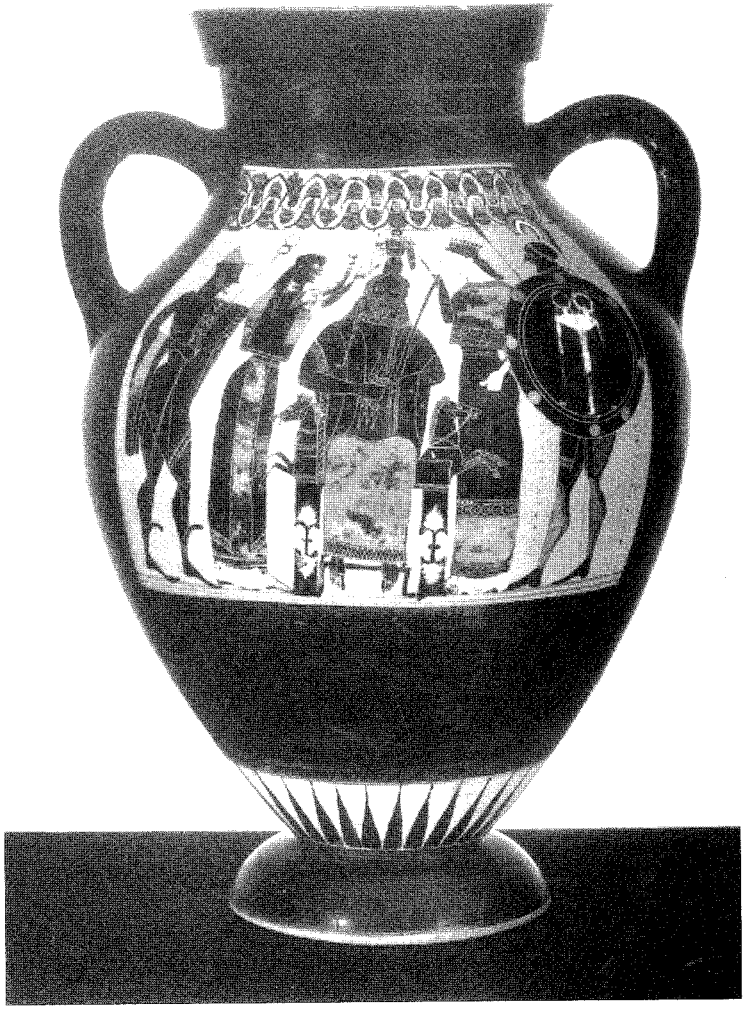

Figure 2 The birth of Athena in the presence of several deities, Attic black-figure amphora, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond 60.23. The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund. Photo: Katherine Wetzel. © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

different purpose. Far from wielding it as a defensive weapon, he is grasping it between his hands, as a means, perhaps, of dealing with the pain of childbirth. What the artist seems to be indicating is that, in appropriating the female ability to give birth, he suffers the pain associated with it too. There is a nice gender inversion here: the king of the gods has taken on the role that is quintessentially female, while Athena emerges in full armour.

The attributes of the two male witnesses, a kerykion (herald's staff) and armour, show them to be, respectively, the messenger god Hermes and Ares, the male power of war, who offsets Athena the female warrior. Eileithyia is shown to our left. We would expect the female on the other side to be a second Eileithyia, except that she is wearing a crown, a detail that makes it likely that she is Hera, Zeus's wife. Her body language, with one fist clenched, may well be expressing her displeasure at what has taken place; after all, she typically reacts adversely to her husband's production of children outside their marriage, notably Herakles (Chapter 4), also Apollo and in some accounts Athena. In the *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo*, for example, Hera accuses Zeus of giving birth to 'Glaukopis Athena who is foremost among all the blessed gods' (314–15) as a deliberate attempt to surpass her parthenogenic ('without fertilisation by a male') production of Hephaistos who was 'shrivelled of foot, a shame to me and weakly' (316–17). This points us towards why Hephaistos may be absent from the scene, namely because Hera is there instead as the one with the ambivalent reaction, rather than her son. Although the details are different, a thematic consistency is apparent in that, in each case, Athena's emergence impacts upon the society of the gods, here causing Hera's displeasure, and elsewhere leading Athena and Zeus to wield their weapons towards Hephaistos. We will turn now to a poetic account of the myth and its effects upon those who witnessed it.

COSMIC TERROR: THE HOMERIC HYMN TO ATHENA

In *Homeric Hymn* 28 *To Athena*, the radiant spectacle of the emerging goddess throws the whole universe into disarray:

> Metieta Zeus himself gave birth to her out of his terrible head, arrayed in warlike arms, golden, gleaming. Astonishment seized the gods as they watched. She sprang forth at once from the immortal head and stood before Zeus who holds the aegis, shaking a sharp spear. Great Olympos began to quake dreadfully at the might of Glaukopis, and earth all about screamed horribly, and the sea moved and frothed with dark waves, while foam suddenly burst forth. The brilliant son of Hyperion stopped his swift-footed horses for a long time, until the girl, Pallas Athena, stripped the godlike armour from her immortal shoulders, and Metieta Zeus rejoiced.
>
> (*Homeric Hymn* 28.5–16)

As she breaks forth out of Zeus's head, her 'golden, gleaming' weapons present a dazzling spectacle, while her eyes too blaze forth light. Athena is Glaukopis, a title that is often translated as 'grey-eyed', with other possibilities being 'blue-eyed' or 'green-eyed', but it is lightness or brightness that is the key rather than any particular hue. A more apt translation is 'gleaming-eyed' or 'darting-eyed', or even 'owl-eyed', from the glaux, the little owl, which with its big eyes, night vision and tendency to make sudden appearances was a fitting attribute of the goddess (see figure 3 below). This is the same dazzling brightness that is a feature of other epiphanies including Athena's sudden appearance before Achilleus in the *Iliad* when he was on the verge of killing Agamemnon and 'terribly did her eyes flash' (1.200). This tendency is present even in the Lucian dialogue discussed at the start of this chapter where I opted for the translation 'fierce' to capture the contrast between the attractiveness, for Hephaistos, of the emerging goddess and the spectacle of her *glaukos* stare.

The gods look on in amazement as Athena leaps forth, while heaven 'quaked dreadfully', earth 'screamed horribly', the sea 'moved and frothed with dark waves', and the sun ('the brilliant son of Hyperion') stopped his passage across the sky. Athena – gleaming, dazzling, golden as she is – has temporarily taken over the sun's role. Her birth is similar to a degree with the birth of another golden child of Zeus, Apollo:

> So she [Leto] cast her arms about a palm tree and kneeled on the soft meadow while the earth laughed for joy beneath. Then the child leaped forth to the light, and all the goddesses raised a cry. Straightaway, great Phoibos, the goddesses washed you purely and cleanly with sweet water, and swathed you in a white garment of fine texture, new-woven, and fastened a golden band about you.
>
> (*Hymn to Delian Apollo* 117–22, Loeb translation, slightly adapted)

With a bright name – Phoibos or 'Shining One' – and bright attributes, this is a fitting epiphany of the god associated with the sun. His agile birth, springing forth 'to the light' recalls Athena's emergence from Zeus's head except that while Earth 'laughed for joy' at the prospect of Apollo's birth, the birth of Athena caused an earthquake. The radiant brilliance of Phoibos is to be contrasted to the flashing, terror-inducing epiphany of Glaukopis, that can replace the sun as giver of light. A closer parallel for Athena's dangerous, dazzling brightness is what happens when Zeus uses his power against the Titans:

> From Heaven and from Olympos he came immediately, hurling his lightning: the bolts flew thick and fast from his strong hand together with thunder and lightning, whirling an awesome flame. The life-giving earth crashed around in burning, and the vast wood crackled loud with fire all about. All the land seethed, and Ocean's streams and the unfruitful sea. The hot vapour lapped round the earthborn Titans: flame unspeakable rose to the bright upper air: the flashing glare of the thunderstone and lightning blinded their eyes for all that they were strong.
>
> (689–700, Loeb translation, slightly adapted)

As on the occasion of Athena's birth, the whole kosmos is affected with normal order suspended. Perhaps this is what the artist of figure 1 had in mind in showing Zeus wielding the thunderbolt while the emerging Athena is shaking her spear, with the warrior spectacle of her birth comparable to the effects produced by the weapon of Zeus. In the moment she is being born, she is like her father, with power that can dazzle the universe. There is something impetuous about her birth, breaking out as she does from the head of Zeus displaying power that is reminiscent of his own.

The terror exists only, however, until Athena breaks the spell by removing her golden armour. Her war magic is capable of

generating cosmic chaos, but she can also turn off her power and restore order and peace. This movement from warmonger to peace-bringer seems to be signalled by the change of names. While emerging in her armour, she is Glaukopis; when she removes the amour she is 'the girl Pallas Athena', the ally of Zeus who ends the cosmic terror. Then, the epiphany over, 'Metieta Zeus rejoiced'. Ultimately, her birth brings pleasure, like Apollo's birth did and the hymn ends by depicting the closeness between Athena and the father who delights in her. As we shall see throughout this book, Athena is a goddess who embodies various contradictions including masculinity/femininity and war/peace. In the hymn, her duality is evident from the moment of her birth. She is the dangerous warrior but also a peace-bringer. She displays an otherness so extreme that it can stop the universe from functioning properly but she is capable of detaching herself from that power and aligning herself with Zeus.

A different perspective can be offered on this duality if we take one step back, to explore the events that led up to her birth. This will necessitate an examination of the myth of the divine succession, the story of how Zeus came first of all to be ruler of the universe and then secured this rule for all time through the birth of Athena. Our discussion will enable us to move to an understanding of one further aspect of the hymn, Zeus's epithet Metieta, sometimes translated as 'wise' but more specifically denoting something like 'Metis-ized'. When Zeus gives birth to Athena, he does so as one who possesses Metis ('cunning'), the goddess who was pregnant with Athena when, to protect his future, Zeus swallowed her.

THE SUCCESSION MYTH AND THE DEFEAT OF THE MOTHER

Athena's birth is often depicted as something that appears *ex nihilo*, a phenomenon without apparent precedents. In Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* (1976: 258), for example, it is used in relation to the novel's heroine, to denote her sudden appearance on the literary

scene as the author of a critically-acclaimed work of poetry. But it also forms part of, and resolves, the story concerning how Zeus came to power: a story that begins in the earliest days of the cosmos. According to the best-known (and earliest) account, in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Gaia (Earth) gave birth through parthenogenesis to Ouranos (Heaven), who became her husband; however, he prevented their children from being born by keeping them imprisoned within their mother. In time, Gaia equipped her youngest son, Kronos, with a sickle, and he used this in order to castrate his father. Kronos married Rhea, and received a prophecy from Gaia and Ouranos that one of his sons would overthrow him. In an attempt to avert the same fate that befell his father, he swallowed his children as soon as they emerged. But when the youngest, Zeus, was born, Rhea gave him a stone to swallow instead, and tricked by his wife, he disgorged each of the children, and Zeus arose as ruler in his father's place.

Zeus should have fallen prey to the same fate as his father and grandfather before him. While his first wife, Metis, was pregnant with Athena, he received a prophecy – again from Gaia and Ouranos – that their second child, a son, would overthrow him. However, he came up with a response that outdid the actions of either of his ancestors. Ouranos stuffed his children back inside their mother, and Kronos ate his children, but what Zeus did was to swallow his wife, 'craftily deceiving her with cunning words' as Hesiod puts it, to 'put her in his own belly, so that the goddess might devise for him both good and evil' (*Theogony* 899–900). Not only does this prevent the successor being born, it also ensures that his wife will not be able to take action against him, in the way that Gaia did against Ouranos, or his own mother Rhea did against Kronos.

It also ensures that Zeus will be able to avert fate. Prophesies usually come true in myth, however much individuals seek to escape them, as Kronos discovered and as did Oedipus. But with 'cunning' literally contained within Zeus so that the god has become, as it were, Metis-ized, this one remains permanently unfulfilled. His rule now secure, he embarks upon a series of unions before marrying Hera. It is once he has entered into this final, lasting union that Athena is born:

> Zeus himself gave birth out of his own head to Gleaming-eyed Tritogeneia, Awful, Rouser of Battle, Raiser of the Noise of War, Unwearying, Mistress, who delights in tumults and wars and battles.
>
> (*Theogony* 924–6)

With Athena's birth, the problem of the succession is resolved once and for all:

Ouranos
↓
Kronos
↓
Zeus
↓
Athena

The scheme ends not with the threatened son, but with the daughter who, warrior and warmonger though she is, will not seek to overthrow her father. Broken too is the chain of female power:

Gaia
↓
Rhea
↓
Metis
↓
Athena

Gaia set in motion the succession myth by giving birth to a fatherless son; Zeus now produces a daughter who is denied a relationship with her mother. One of her epithets is polymetis ('cunning in many ways') and the quality of metis is one of her defining features, which, as we will see in subsequent chapters (esp. 3 and 4), underlies many of her spheres of influence. But there is a difference between the cunning of Metis and that of her daughter. Metis was too dangerous to be permitted an independent existence but polymetis Athena is, as it were, a safe version of her mother, who aligns herself with her

father and with the patriarchy over which he reigns. The myth is not just about Athena: it is also about who she is not. She is differentiated from Metis, the embodiment of cunning, and from her nameless brother, the child who would have been 'something else, stronger than the thunderbolt' in the words of a variant of Hesiod's account (Hesiod fr. 343.8).

Athena's birth is the product of a temporary mixing up of gender roles. Zeus becomes feminised, giving birth to a child in lieu of his wife, while, in some versions, Hephaistos takes on the role of midwife. The product is a deity who confounds gendered norms, but who, with the close bond established with her father by her birth, safeguards the patriarchal system that comes into place at the time when she was born. As she is made to say in the *Eumenides*, in the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, she is a motherless goddess whose affiliations are at once with her father Zeus and with 'the male' in general. This makes her, in gendered terms, an anomaly: 'the child of Olympian Zeus' as Apollo states earlier in the *Eumenides*, 'who was not even nursed in the darkness of a womb' who is consequently 'such an offspring to which no goddess could give birth' (663–6). The Greeks were fond of exploring Athena's similarities with other pugnacious females, notably the Amazons, the enemies of patriarchy *par excellence*, whose society was represented as a matriarchy and who, on various occasions in myth, launched invasions of Greece. While the Amazons as a race, and individual women like Klytaimnestra, threaten male domination, however, Athena is consistently the upholder of patriarchy, trusted by her father more than any other deity and even given access to his thunderbolt (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 827–8; Euripides, *Women of Troy* 78–93). This made her an appealing figure to use as a means of exploring gender norms, as one odd and ambiguous but ultimately aligned with order and patriarchy. This duality of Athena will be a recurrent feature of this book. One of the elements that make Athena so appealing for the Greeks, it has also been seized on by modern commentators as a means of explaining her nature.

OVERVIEW

This multi-layered myth has provided a convenient starting point for this book because it was regarded as integral to Athena's character and many of her divine roles. It enables us to confront from the outset particular aspects of the goddess, including her place in the pantheon, her distinctive mixture of masculinity and femininity, her role as a warrior and the cunning that she inherits from her mother via Metieta Zeus. The myth establishes Athena's close relationship with her father, and with 'the male' in general. A warrior female who ought to be subversive and transgressive, she uses her power in concert with her father from the moment of her birth. More broadly, her birth brings to an end the problem of the succession and underlines Zeus's status as the sovereign power over the universe. A diverse figure, she is at once magical, powerful and dangerous and also the upholder of order.

2

TRACING ATHENA'S ORIGINS

> We do not know where the Greek gods came from, but the conventional view is that most of them came from somewhere else.
>
> (Hurwit 1999: 12)

INTRODUCTION: DO ORIGINS MATTER?

One of the current methodological issues in the study of Greek religion is the question of the origins and early development of the gods. Until the second half of the twentieth century, it was commonplace to understand their nature and roles by determining their supposed origins and prehistoric development. With these issues decided upon, it was thought that an understanding of all subsequent manifestations could be reached. Origins, in short, were thought to supply a key to uncovering the nature of individual gods. In contrast, in the wake of the structuralist-influenced work of Vernant, Detienne and others, the emphasis has shifted from origins to what may be termed 'contexts'. It has become customary to look not to the question of prehistoric formation, but to the contexts in which the gods appear in archaic, classical and subsequent representations. To understand Athena, for example, scholars have regularly looked not at where her cult and persona may have originated but at her place in the complex religious system that is the pantheon (Chapter 3).

However, an interest in origins has not gone away. The work by

THE 'NEW WAY': THE FUNCTIONALIST PARADIGM

A significant concern in the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries was to produce studies of the major gods that traced the salient characteristics of each: their epithets for example, the sanctuaries at which they were worshipped and their festivals. The most distinguished example of this, L.R. Farnell's five-volume *Cults of the Greek States* (1896–1909), presents a detailed account of the major deities, cataloguing their cult, cult-monuments and ideal types. It remains a valuable reference work, especially in Athena's case, for its geographical register of her cults (Farnell 1896: 419–23), but now looks out of date, because it is of limited value for providing a sense of how the gods were thought to interact with one another. It presents, effectively, a 'Zeus religion', an 'Athena religion', an 'Apollo religion' etc. (cf. Burkert 1985: 216) rather than an account of how the Greeks experienced their gods as beings within a polytheistic system, each with particular roles and characteristics, but none operating in isolation.

The study of the Greek gods has been transformed through the work of a group of francophone scholars, often identified as the 'Paris School', who have sought to understand deities via their place in the pantheon. As set out in the work of one of the most influential, Jean-Pierre Vernant:

> We must analyse the structure of the pantheon and show how the various powers are grouped, associated together and opposed to and distinguished from each other. Only in this way can the pertinent features of each god or each group of gods emerge.
>
> (1979: 99).

This approach, influenced by the structuralist methodology developed by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss is highly appealing as a means of interpreting Athena. It frees us from the need to study her in terms of her prehistorical formation, and enables us to look, instead, at the particular contexts in which she was thought to manifest herself. In works by Vernant, Marcel

Detienne and others, a series of oppositions have been established with a series of other gods, where she consistently brings to bear skill, technical aptitude, and, above all, metis. These qualities have been seen to underlie her interventions in myth and cult, and are regarded as pivotal to an interpretation of her areas of competence. The influence of the functionalist paradigm is exemplified in Walter Burkert's summary of Athena's functions:

> Poseidon violently sires the horse, Athena bridles it and builds the chariot; Hermes may multiply the flocks, Athena teaches the use of wool. Even in war, Athena is no exponent of derring-do – this is captured in the figure of Ares – but cultivates the war-dance, tactics and discipline.
>
> (1985: 141)

We will explore this methodology by presenting several case studies, each of which looks at her relationship with one of her fellow gods. Our starting point will be Poseidon, as it is this relationship that has generated particular interest from a structuralist perspective. Sometimes, as we shall see, the standard way of interpreting Athena through the lens of structuralism is limited as a means of shedding light upon her modes of operation. Although applicable up to a point, the metis/elemental force opposition is overly limiting in certain contexts because Athena is herself depicted as a being with powers that might be termed 'elemental'. Through restructuring the model, however, we will see that the methodology provides a useful vehicle for exploring Athena's nature and divine relationships.

ATHENA AND POSEIDON: THE HORSE AND THE SEA

It is in the case of Athena's common areas of concern with Poseidon that the structuralist opposition on the face of it works particularly effectively. In his various areas of competence, Poseidon is a volatile god, given to displays of anger and ferocity, who seems very different from the skilful and intelligent Athena. He is the earth-shaker, for example, and the bringer of floods, whose ability to cause destruction may be exemplified by his response to the Athenians'

rejection of him in favour of Athena, when in his anger he floods the Attic plain (see Chapter 5).

The contrast between the two deities is discernible in one of their shared areas of activity, horsemanship. As Poseidon Hippios and Athena Hippia they are each deities 'of the horse', but Athena has been identified as a power of metis in contrast to the elemental power that her fellow god brings to bear. Poseidon is the horse god *par excellence*, who fathered the first ever creature by ejaculating on a rock, while among his other offspring were the fabulous horses Pegasos (one of his children with Medusa) and Areion, whom he fathered on Demeter Erinys ('Fury'), when he raped her in the guise of a stallion. Athena's interventions, in contrast, involve skill and technology. As set out in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* quoted at the head of this chapter, she was 'the first to teach mortal craftsmen to make war-chariots and other chariots wrought in bronze'. She also enabled Bellerophon to tame Pegasos, Poseidon's son, by presenting him with the bit (Pindar, *Olympian* 13.75–8). The structuralist opposition between the two gods provides a means of understanding the different abilities that each possesses. Poseidon is the horse's creator, while Athena tames it and makes it useful to mankind. When she herself plays a part in the creation of a horse, indeed, it is not a living creature but the Trojan Horse, the ultimate instance of artifice, technology and trickery (see further Chapter 4).

When we turn to the sea, however, the structuralist opposition works less well as a means of contrasting Poseidon as an elemental force with Athena as a power of civilisation and metis. Poseidon was the major sea god of the Greeks. Athena, too, was venerated as a maritime power, worshipped as Promachorma ('guardian of the anchorage') for example, on a promontory called Bouporthmos ('ox crossing') in the Argolid and as Koryphasia on the Koryphasion promontory near Pylos. Her best-known maritime cult, meanwhile, at Cape Sounion on the southern tip of Attica, was situated on a low hill below the sanctuary of Poseidon Soter ('safety').

The metis/elemental force opposition applies in relation to the sea, but only to a point. Of vital importance to a seafaring people like the Greeks, the sea was regarded as violent, dangerous and

'desolate' (*atrugetos*). These qualities were reflected in the nature of the god who was assigned the sea as his domain at the time when the world was being divided up between him and Zeus, who acquired the sky, and Hades, who became lord of the underworld. Like his brothers, he was at once the power who controlled his designated domain and intimately associated with that domain. When he rode across it in the *Iliad*, 'it parted before him, rejoicing' (13.29), but when he was angry, the sea was destructive and potentially deadly, as Odysseus discovered after he incurred the god's wrath in *Odyssey* for blinding another of his sons, the cyclops Polyphemos. When Athena intervenes in connection with the sea, in contrast, it is often to promote skilled activities including shipbuilding, navigation and helmsmanship. She built the first ever ship, variously identified as that of Jason or of Danaos (Apollodoros 2.1.4), and was responsible for the ship that brought Helen to Troy (Homer, *Iliad* 5.59). In the most famous epic voyage, Jason and the Argonauts' journey to Colchis to capture the Golden Fleece, she selected the trees for the Argo, chose the pilot and supervised the shipbuilding (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.18–19; 109ff.). She intervened during the voyage too, nowhere more strikingly than during the clashing rocks incident, when she helped the ship through at just the right moment (2.598ff.). She also assisted Odysseus' son Telemachos on his quest for news of his father (Homer, *Odyssey* 1.113ff) by advising him on the sort of ship to equip, guiding him during his journey and generating a favourable wind to Pylos.

Athena is represented as capable of operating in a manner that differs from her fellow sea god, intervening to help skilled practitioners and seafarers to create a path through Poseidon's domain. Yet to characterise her solely as a goddess of metis would be to oversimplify her role as a maritime power. She is herself able to control conditions at sea and capable of generating storms no less powerful and destructive than any of Poseidon's. When she sprang from Zeus's head, 'the sea moved and frothed with dark waves, while foam suddenly burst forth' (*Homeric Hymn* 28.11–13). Likewise, in her fury at the Greeks' sacrilege during the sack of Troy, she produced the storm that devastated the returning fleet (Chapter 4).

With Athena capable of operating in a way that affects conditions at sea, the standard structuralist opposition between Athena (metis) and Poseidon (elemental force) emerges as overly limited as a means of accounting for Athena's distinctive mode of activity. But far from making us desirous of writing off structuralist methodology, our survey has demonstrated its potential to elucidate Athena's particular traits. Comparing the two deities in their maritime guises uncovers an intriguing contrast between them. Poseidon's operations are guided by his role as an elemental force. Athena, in contrast brings to bear a duality between the 'civiliser' of the sea who promotes skilled activities and the power able to create violent storms.

The value of the structuralist methodology is that it confirms what we have already identified as a distinctive quality of Athena, namely that there is a particular duality about her. On the one hand, she is a civiliser, who brings orders and who resolves various situations. But she is also capable of generating disorder and chaos. We will now test the implications of the approach further though an investigation of another of Athena's divine relationships, that with Hephaistos.

ATHENA AND HEPHAISTOS: SKILLED CRAFT

The god of fire, blacksmiths and artisans, Hephaistos was so closely linked with fire that his very name could denote the element. This is similar in part to how Poseidon is intimately linked with the sea, except that Hephaistos is a god endowed with metis, in his case a cunning that elevated him beyond a solely elemental power. He is fire, but he is also a craftsman able to exploit and tame fire. As klutometis ('renowned for cunning'), he was responsible for works of exceptional skill including the shield of Achilleus, certain golden-wheeled tripods that were capable of moving by themselves and automata fashioned from gold to assist him in his forge. It was thanks to Hephaistos that the birth of Athena was able to take place, when he freed her from the body of Zeus with his 'child-delivering axe' (Kallimachos fragment 37). He also created a throne for his mother Hera that was gleaming and enticing, but from which she could not escape until he released her from the invisible constraints that were imprisoning her. This takes us to another dimension of his cunning. He was an outsider among the gods – the lame god, detested by his mother as soon as he was born (Chapter 1) – but he was able to use his skills to extract revenge. This ability is seen most notably when he takes revenge on Aphrodite by trapping her with her lover Ares in a net so fine that it was invisible (Homer, *Odyssey* 8.266ff.). So effective is his trickery and artifice that it could trap even the goddess of the wiles of love.

Athena, too, was able to fashion intricate objects, in her case as a woolworker. One of her epithets was Ergane ('worker') and she is sometimes depicted holding woolworking implements. According to one ancient description of the palladion, for example, 'in the right hand it held a spear lifted up, while in the other, a distaff and spindle' (Apollodoros 3.12.3). In her contest with the mortal weaver Arachne, she produced a tapestry with 'subtle delicate tints that change insensibly from shade to shade' (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.63–4, tr. Melville). In the *Iliad*, she is clothed in the dress that she herself wove (5.734–5) and in one version of the creation of the aegis, the flayed skin of the giant Pallas provides the raw material for her techne (Apollodoros 1.6.2). As well as weaving her own clothes, she was the patron of mortal woolworkers, whether women who performed the task as domestic labour, such as the 'soft-skinned young women' of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* quoted at the head of this chapter – who carried out their skill inside their houses – or those who did it as their trade. Several of the epigrams in the *Palatine Anthology* concern professional spinsters who dedicate their tools to Athena as their patron. In 6.288, for example, four sisters dedicate their implements to her as a proportion of their profit, and to pray for enhanced prosperity, while in 6.289, three sisters dedicate their implements on the occasion of their retirement.

Athena is associated with other skilled activities too. As well as helping to create the Trojan Horse, she fashioned the palladion in the likeness of a childhood friend called Pallas (Apollodoros 3.12.3). She was the patron of potters and shared Hephaistos' function as deity of metalwork, the difference being that she did not herself work with metal. When she required weapons, she turned to

Hephaistos, just as all the gods did. This differentiation provides a way of understanding the differing status of Athena and Hephaistos among the gods. As we have seen, Hephaistos was the divine servant, a figure of fun, whose status was peripheral in contrast to that of Athena, the goddess who was, in the words of Hera, 'distinguished among all the blessed gods' (*Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo* 315), a contrast that reflects the status of metalworkers in Greek society as essential to society, but marginalised and even feared. Athena had the technical ability to teach skills and promote male craft, but she did not, herself, work with these materials.

The main differences we have identified so far, then, are that while both deities are gods of craft, the works of Hephaistos are fashioned in the noise of the furnace while Athena does not get her hands dirty, as it were. Her particular skill, woolworking, was, in contrast, the consummate female activity for a society where the proper role for women was working at the loom. This division of labour is reflected in their respective roles in the creation of Pandora, where Hephaistos used base material (clay) and Athena taught her woolworking:

> He [Zeus] urged renowned Hephaistos to make haste and mix earth with water and to put in it the voice and strength of humankind, and fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, like to the immortal goddesses in face; and Athena to teach her needlework and the weaving of the varied web.
>
> (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 60–64, Loeb translation, slightly adapted)

So far we have been highlighting the distinctive manner of operation of the two deities. As the male and female deities of craft, however, they are frequently paired and accorded similar manners of operating. In a simile in *Odyssey* 6, they are each envisaged as teaching 'all kinds of skill' to 'some skilful man', enabling him to produce 'graceful' (*charieis*) work (6.232–4). Their close associations in Athens reflect the importance of craft in the city, particularly their connection at the Hephaisteion above the Agora, where Athena was even known as Hephaisteia ('of Hephaistos'). The Chalkeia, in honour of both gods, was the festival of smiths. It was also the occasion when the loom was set up for the Panathenaic peplos. In other words, male craft and women's work were jointly honoured in the cult of Athena and Hephaistos.

As deities of craft, Athena and Hephaistos had in common a concern with the promotion of civilisation. One of the Orphic hymns, for example, envisages 'Athena presiding over various arts, in particular that of weaving, and Hephaistos especially to watch over other skills' (Kern, *Orphica Fragmenta* 178). This joint benefaction is taken a stage further in the *Homeric Hymn to Hephaistos* where they are envisaged as enabling mankind to become civilised because they 'taught men glorious crafts throughout the world: men who previously dwelt in caves in the mountains like wild beasts' (20). Such notions may lie behind the Athenian foundation myth concerning the birth of one of the early kings, Erichthonios:

> Athena came to Hephaistos wanting him to fashion arms. But he, having been rejected by Aphrodite, began to desire Athena and started to pursue her, but she fled. When he came near her with a great deal of distress – for he was lame – he attempted to have sex with her; but she, being chaste and a parthenos would not suffer him to act thus, and he ejaculated onto the leg of the goddess. In disgust, she wiped off the semen with wool, and threw it on the ground; and as she fled and the semen fell on the ground, Erichthonios was born.
>
> (Apollodoros 3.14.6)

One aspect of this multifaceted story (to be explored further in Chapter 5) concerns the ability of Hephaistos and Athena to produce a child in circumstances that should have precluded it. Hephaistos' near-magical ability to create extraordinary things is evident in his mixing of semen and earth to produce Erichthonios. What distinguishes Erichthonios' origins, however, is the mediation of Athena. Elsewhere Hephaistos' creative partner, here she becomes in a sense his sexual partner too when she wipes the semen off her leg and casts it on the ground. Erichthonios was even, in one ancient derivation of his name, 'Woolly-Earthy' (*erion-chthonios*: Etymologicum Magnum sv. *Erechtheus*; Scholia on Homer, *Iliad* 4.8). He is, here, the product of the earth that Hephaistos is capable of utilising to fashion living beings and also the wool used by Athena in her own skilled work.

Applying structuralist methodology to investigate the relationship between Athena and Hephaistos in their shared field of operation provides a way of understanding Athena's mode of operation as a deity of skilled craft. She is the cult partner – and even in a sense the sexual partner – of Hephaistos, sharing his role as a patron of techne and being, like him, imbued with metis in a practical sense. Through her patronage of skilled craft, Athena emerges once again as a benefactor of civilisation, possessed of technical skill and passing this ability to mankind. This demonstrates further that the structuralist methodology does not have to rely solely upon opposition, but can also shed light on the modes of operations of pairs of deities with comparable areas of expertise.

ATHENA AND ARES: WAR

It has become a near-cliché to differentiate between Ares as the embodiment of war's violent and chaotic aspects, and Athena as the goddess who orders and systemises it through inventions like the chariot and the armed dance. In the nineteenth century, John Ruskin stated that Ares is 'brutal muscular strength' while Athena represents 'the strength of young lives passed in pure air and swift exercise' (1890: 49). The contrast has resurfaced in structuralist-influenced research with the differences between taken to reflect the ideals of Greek warfare (e.g. Daraki 1980). Ares has been said to stand for the kind of violent behaviour that warriors ought to avoid, while Athena represents war as warriors are supposed to fight it. Ares signals the hubris of the warrior who attempts to pit himself against the gods; Athena is the one who inspires *menos* ('strength', 'courage' or 'prowess').

It is possible to identify similarities between the two deities, however, that undermine these rather neat patterns, for in order to inspire *menos*, Athena operates in ways that are resonant of Ares. She is a warmonger from the moment she is born shaking her armour and making her war cry (Chapter 1). She displays ferocity in the battle between the gods and giants, even flaying Pallas, and as we have seen, fashioning the aegis from his skin. This section will

explore some of her warlike traits and interventions in order to determine how far the structualist view of Athena as the power of civilisation and metis applies in this instance.

In the *Iliad*, Athena gets into the thick of battle to assist her favourites. The extraordinary *menos* of Diomedes that dominates Book 5 is inspired by the goddess (e.g. 5.1–8). At one point he displays such unbridled rage under Athena's influence that no one, neither Greek nor Trojan, is able to discern who he is or even which side he is on as he 'storm[s] up the plain like a winter torrent' (87–8). This could not be more different from the usual pattern of battle in the epic, where warriors are aware of the identity and pedigree of their opponents. Indeed, Diomedes himself otherwise exhibits such self-control that he refrains from combat with the Trojan Glaukos because their ancestors were guest-friends (6.212–31).

With Athena's help, another of her favourites, Achilleus, also takes on an appearance that differs from the usual pattern of heroic conduct when she clothes him in the aegis, places a golden cloud around his head and makes fire blaze from him (18.203–18). He then utters a war cry and she adds her own to it and the results are extraordinary: 'unutterable confusion' ensues (218) and the panic produces deaths through 'friendly fire': the only instance of this in the *Iliad*. With Athena's ability to inspire such extreme warrior behaviour, it is her similarities with Ares that are brought to the fore. Indeed, the *Iliad* frequently describes the gods in comparable terms, even though their relationship is presented as less than amiable, witness for instance Ares' complaint to Zeus about the favouritism shown to Athena (chapter 1). The shield of Achilles, for example, includes a representation of defenders of a town under siege sallying out led by Athena and Ares: 'each golden, dressed in golden garments, beautiful and great in their armour' (18.516–17). The shorter of the two *Homeric Hymns to Athena* (11.2–3) sums up the relationship. Athena is 'terrible' it says, 'and with Ares she makes her business the works of war, the sack of cities and the shouting and the battle'.

But there is always a degree of difference. Homeric heroes become the 'equal of Ares' in the thick of battle. When Athena

intervenes it is intimacy rather than identification that is produced. She is the deity who leads the warrior by the hand (4.541–2) in a way that one could not imagine Ares doing. Moreover, unlike Ares, Athena is able to distance herself from war and violence. In the *Iliad* (5.733ff.), she arms herself for battle by removing the self-made dress that she had been wearing, and replacing it with weapons, most strikingly, the 'terrible tasselled aegis' which contains the personified abstractions Phobos (Fear), Eris (Strife), Alke (Strength), blood-chilling Ioke (Pursuit), and then, most of all 'the head of the terrible monster the Gorgon, both fearful and awful to look on'. These abstractions become part of the spectacle she produces; but they are also detachable.

Ares, meanwhile, has a more permanent kind of attachment with some of these figures: Phobos and Eris are even his relatives, since he is identified as the father of the former (e.g. *Iliad* 13.299), and the brother of the latter (*Iliad* 4.441). Perhaps what we have here is a contrast between armour and natural forces. The opposition between the deities is not so much between war as a cosmic, destructive force and 'civilised warfare' as between natural power and weaponry. It is Athena's weapons coupled with her frenzied cry and blazing eyes that make her a deity of war and she possesses power that she could either use or turn off. Ares, meanwhile, is more closely identified with his warlike power, as may be exemplified by the description of the two gods in the Hesiodic *Shield of Herakles* (191–200). 'There', the poem recounts, 'was baneful Ares the spoil-wearer himself. In his hands he held a spear and he was urging on his foot-soldier, and he was red with blood'. 'There, too', the poem continues, 'was the daughter of Zeus, bringer of spoil [*ageleiē*], Tritogeneia. She seemed as though she intended to arm herself for battle, since she held a spear in her hand, and a golden helmet, and the aegis about her shoulders.' In certain respects, they are described in comparable terms. Ares is the 'spoil-wearer' and Athena the 'bringer of spoil', but while Ares is covered in blood, Athena is clothed in armour.

Ares is little more than the god of war. Athena is warlike when she needs to be, but she is much more besides. This may be exemplified by figure 4, the other side of figure 2, the image we discussed in

Figure 4 Herakles and the Nemean Lion, Attic black-figure amphora, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond 60.23. The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund. Photo: Katherine Wetzel. © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Chapter 1, where we see a very different-looking Athena from the resplendent goddess emerging in her warrior panoply out of the head of Zeus. Armed only with her spear, she makes an intriguing contrast to Herakles' mortal helper Iolaos who is kitted out in full panoply.

The standard way of evaluating Athena's interventions in war is too limiting. However, this far from invalidates the structuralist methodology of comparing and contrasting pairs of deities. The comparison brings out Athena's particular manner of operation as a warrior, intervening to assist her favourites and able to inspire their displays of warrior power, while deriving her power from her weapons rather than some natural affinity with war of the kind exemplified by Ares.

OVERVIEW: A KEY TO ATHENA?

The result of this survey is a picture of Athena as a multifaceted goddess with numerous functions including seamanship, horsemanship, craft and war. Our discussion has shed further light too on the nature of Athena's metis, which is capable of transforming things that are raw, dangerous and elemental into useful objects, including such unlikely raw materials as the dead body of Pallas and the wool she was carrying when Hephaistos attempted to have sex with her. Through our investigation of her role within the pantheon, she has emerged as a power of technology and creativity who promotes creativity and order, but with another side to her power, that of the storm bringer and warmonger.

Exploring the structuralist approach in relation to Athena has furthered our understanding of some of her distinctive traits. It has also shown how she functioned within the amalgamation of gods that was the pantheon. There was no separate 'Athena religion'. She functioned as part of a network of beings so that in various fields of competence, she was variously compared and contrasted to her fellow divine beings.

4

HEROES, HEROINES AND THE TROJAN WAR

> The gods we have as allies are not worse than those of the Argives, my lord. For Hera is their champion, Zeus's wife, but Athena is ours. This too is a source of good fortune for us, that we have better gods. For Pallas Athena will not put up with defeat.
>
> (Sophocles, *Children of Herakles* 347–52, tr. Kovacs)

INTRODUCTION: HELPING FRIENDS, HARMING ENEMIES

Athena appears in an extraordinary range of myths, due in part to her role as the patron of heroes. She participates in stories associated with numerous heroes, from the Greek warriors at Troy to the great adventurers including Jason, Perseus and above all Herakles. So pervasive is her role that it might even be said that one of the 'qualifications' for heroism in Greek myth was to have Athena on one's side. W. F. Otto memorably identified Athena as the 'goddess of nearness' (1954). It is in her interventions in the lives of heroes that this characterisation has particular resonance.

There was a flip side to this protection and assistance, however. As well as the greatest friend that a hero might acquire, she was, as we shall see, a fierce and persistent victimiser of any mortal she regarded as her enemy. This is something easy to overlook. It is the kind of role we tend to associate with certain of her fellow deities: Hera, for example, or Poseidon, whose victimisation of Odysseus is one of the driving forces of the hero's myth. But, in fact, those who