

Etymological Aspects of Apollo's Mythology

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Abstract. The present study focuses on how etymology could play an important role in the mythology of Apollo. Obviously, when it comes to the issue of the meaning of names, one often enters the realm of speculation. However, in many instances of Apollo's mythology, etymology seems to reflect important aspects of the myth. These aspects start with Apollo's family and birth, and continue with his role in Greek mythology. The accord between etymology and mythology appears to be more than a simple coincidence.

Keywords: Apollo, mythology, etymology, Callimachus, Hekate, Ortygia, Artemis.

[es] Aspectos etimológicos de la mitología de Apolo

Resumen. El presente artículo estudia cómo la etimología desempeña un papel importante en la mitología de Apolo. Obviamente, cuando se trata de la etimología de los nombres, se entra a menudo en el ámbito de la especulación. Sin embargo, en muchos aspectos de la historia mítica de Apolo, la etimología parece reflejar aspectos importantes del mito, empezando con la familia y el nacimiento del dios y continuando con su papel en la mitología griega. La concordancia entre etimología y mitología no parece ser una simple coincidencia.

Palabras clave: Apolo, mitología, etimología, Calímaco, Hécate, Ortigia, Ártemis.

Sumario. 1. Delos becomes 'fixed' in the sea. 2. The wandering island. 3. Hekatos – Hekate. 4. Ortygia. 5. Delphi. 6. Artemis the midwife. 7. The palm-tree. 8. Artemis and the bear. 9. Apollo Lykeios. 10. Conclusions.

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1. Delos becomes 'fixed' in the sea

Apollo was famously born on the island of Delos. According to the version told by Callimachus in the *Hymn to Delos*, however, Apollo's birth by Leto takes place on the floating island of Asteria. It is only after the birth of Apollo that the name of the island changes to Delos. In other words, for Callimachus, Apollo's birth on Delos is connected to the character of Asteria. Is this a Hellenistic invention, possibly Callimachus', or is this version older than it appears to be? Obviously, one cannot answer

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this question without comparing the different versions of the story. It is also equally important to understand the rationale behind Apollo's association with the apparently obscure character of Asteria².

In the *Hymn to Delos*, Asteria is initially a young goddess with whom Zeus, in his customary way, wants to make love. Callimachus does not give any other information about Asteria's background and genealogy³. Details about her, however, are known from Hesiod. She is the daughter of the Titans Koios and Phoebe and, therefore, Leto's sister; she is also Hekate's mother, a detail of extreme importance for the arguments in the present paper⁴.

In the story told by Callimachus, Asteria rejects Zeus and tries to escape his embraces by running away from him. Eventually, she can avoid Zeus' advances only by throwing herself into the sea, where she becomes a floating island; the island of Asteria must constantly move to remain hidden from Zeus. During her wanderings, Asteria comes across Leto, who happens to be in a similar situation. Leto is pregnant by Zeus with Apollo, but she cannot give birth to him, because jealous Hera forbids all the places on earth, including the islands, to give her shelter. Asteria is the only island that receives Leto, and, thus, Leto can eventually give birth to Apollo. The birth immediately causes the island to become fixed in the sea. As a result of this, Asteria's name is changed to Delos. The new name reflects the fact that Asteria is not a floating island anymore, hidden from Zeus' sight, but becomes 'visible' (Delos = 'conspicuous', 'visible')⁵. In other words, the name of Delos corresponds to the new state of the island. In spite of the lack of etymological uncertainty, even Leto's name has been put in connection with the root meaning 'hidden' (Λητώ), thus alluding to her tribulations⁶.

The story of Apollo's birth on Delos is told in a different way in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. In this hymn, there is no mention of Asteria and her wanderings. Nor is there any mention of a floating island, which eventually becomes fixed in the sea. The composer of the hymn merely describes how Delos is the only island that receives Leto for the delivery of Apollo, without any indication of what the reasons for such an acceptance might be:

But I am apprehensive about one thing I have heard Leto, I won't conceal it from you: they say Apollo will be an all too wild sort, and lord it greatly over immortals and mortals across the grain-giving land. So my heart is terribly afraid that as soon as he sees the light of the sun he may spurn this island (ποσσὶ καταστρέψας), as I am indeed rocky of soil, and kick (ῥσσι) it over into the sea's expanses. Then I shall have the mighty waves surging over my head in a mass for evermore, and he will go to another land... (*Hymn to Apollo* 66-75 West)

² For the myth of Asteria, cf. Wernicke (1895); Schirmer (1886); Papastavrou (1984); Bing (1988: 96-110); Stephens (2015: 158-232).

³ Mineur (1984: 83-84).

⁴ *Th.* 409-412.

⁵ Call. *Hymn to Delos* 53; cf. e.g., Pi. fr. 52h 47; Arist. fr. 488 Rose; Hardie (2016: 91); Mineur (1984: 94); Bing (1988: 101-103, 113); Stephens (2015: 189).

⁶ Gk. λανθάνω = λα-ν-θ-άν-ω (Lat. *la-t-ēre*); cf. Chantraine (1968: s.v. λανθάνω), who considers it a popular etymology; Ernout & Meillet (2001: s.v. *lateō*); Mineur (1984: 86); Beekes (2009) ignores this etymology. For the end vowel in Λητώ, cf. Πειθώ, Κλωθώ, Καλλιτώ, Καλυψώ, Σαπφώ etc.

The absence of the fixation of Delos in the sea in the *Homeric Hymn* gave rise to the conclusion that the Callimachean version of the myth is a later invention⁷. According to this view, the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, more precisely its Delian part, in which Apollo's birth is described, provides the *terminus post quem* for the creation of that episode⁸. Thus, the episode would have been invented not before the end of the sixth century. This conclusion is seemingly supported by the fact that the first extant mention of the story of Delos becoming fixed in the sea belongs to Pindar in his *First Hymn*⁹:

Hail, god-built offshoot most desirable to the children of Leto of the anointed locks, daughter of the sea, unshakable (ἀκίνητον) wonder of the broad earth, whom mortals call Delos, but the blessed ones in Olympus call the far-shining star of dark earth (fr. 33c S-M).

For before it was borne upon the waves by blasts of winds from every direction; but when the daughter of Coeus, frantic with her pangs of approaching birth, stepped out on to her, then at that point four straight pillars with adamantine bases rose up from the roots of the earth and support the rock with their capitals. There after giving birth she looked upon her blessed offspring (fr. 33d S-M)¹⁰.

Therefore, given these considerations, the story of Delos' fixation in the sea apparently must have been composed during the time elapsed between the date of the *Homeric Hymn* and Pindar's time (~500 BC)¹¹. Pindar himself could have invented the story, and Callimachus could have been indebted to it¹².

There are, however, certain fundamental aspects of the myth of Apollo's birth on Delos, which seriously put into question the above conclusion. The most important one is the issue of the name of the island, Delos. It is hard to dissociate this name, which means 'visible', from the story of the fixation of the island in the sea. The name of the island perfectly fits the version of the story told by both Pindar and Callimachus. Given this, it is very possible that the name of Delos, which is obviously older than any of the texts discussed here, belonged initially to myth. At some point, in the prehistorical period, this mythical name was given to one of the islands in the Cyclades. The story of Delos becoming fixed in the sea could be older than both the *Homeric Hymn* and Pindar.

Is then the name of Delos a mythological creation? The case has been made that the connection between myth and name is late and artificial; it would be based on a coincidence, which is the similarity between the name Delos and the word meaning 'visible'. The similarity itself would be at the origin of the myth of Apollo's birth

⁷ Bruneau (1986: 368); Athanassakis (1976: 82); West (1996: 281); Sistakou (2009: 236).

⁸ The Homeric Cynaethus may have recited this hymn on the occasion of the celebrations instituted by Polycrates of Samos in Delos in 523 BC to honor Apollo; cf. West (2003: 9-12).

⁹ Only few fragments of this hymn survived; Hardie (2006: 26).

¹⁰ Stephens (2015: 161); Hardie (2000: 26-30).

¹¹ Hardie (2000: 26-30); Herodotus (2.156) mentions that the Egyptians of his time already knew of the association between Apollo and a floating island.

¹² Sistakou (2009: 236); Hardie (2000: 30); however, Pindar's allusion to Asteria in her relation to Delos (*Pa.* 5.40-42) suggests that the myth was known to the poet and, therefore, not invented by him: «...they held glorious/Delos, for Apollo/ of the golden hair gave them/ the outward form of Asteria to inhabit»; cf. Bing (1988: 98-99). In *Pa.* VIIb. 42-44, of which only fragments survive, Pindar also alludes to Asteria and Delos; cf. Rutherford (1988: 68).

on a fixed island¹³. Is this the case? To answer this question I explore below other notorious aspects of Apollo's mythology.

The story of Delos receiving foundations and thus becoming 'fixed' in the sea is not randomly conceived; it is organically and essentially related to Apollo's role and place within the Greek religion. For example, it is clearly reflected in one of Apollo's well-known roles, which is that of being the founder of cities, the god of the colonists. Apollo builds the foundations of cities and foundations in general. He weaves his altar in Delos with the horns of the Cynthian goats that Artemis brings him (Call. *Ap.* 55-60)¹⁴. The horns perfectly reflect the idea of 'fixation'; the altar is, like horns, soundly 'fixed' and cannot be removed elsewhere¹⁵. The well-known connection of Apollo to Gaia and Themis can be explained from the same perspective. Both Gaia and Themis are symbols of stability and order¹⁶. Even Apollo's mysterious epithet of Smintheus 'the god of the mice', which is already Homeric (*Il.* 1.39), is related to this aspect of Apollo. It is well-known that the mice's places of wanderings and refuge are the foundations of buildings in general. Thus, Apollo could become the god of the mice¹⁷.

Apollo's role of founding cities is totally opposite to Poseidon's well-known destructive role of ruining foundations¹⁸. Poseidon is 'the earth-shaker', the god of earthquakes. From this perspective, the well-known association of these two gods in the Trojan myth is not randomly conceived. Their building of the walls of Troy during the reign of Laomedon, who eventually refuses to pay them for their work, suggests both a solid foundation and the future destruction of the city. The Trojan horse itself is probably an allusion to Poseidon, who is also the god of horses. Apollo's role as founder of cities may be as old as the Trojan myth¹⁹.

The idea of 'fixation' is spectacularly present in another essential aspect of Apollo. As the god of destiny and prophecy, Apollo reveals the absolute and immutable purpose of Zeus to mankind²⁰. Delos is the reflection of this fact; it gets eventually fixed in the sea; its name hints to the idea of revelation. Thus, the idea of 'fixation' is fundamental to Apollo's mythology. The same, however, can be said about the idea of 'wandering'.

2. The wandering island

The connection between Apollo and Delos does not concern only the idea of immutability and fixation. It is also about the initial state of Delos, which is that of a

¹³ Bing (1988: 141); Hardie (2016: 57 n.69, 91).

¹⁴ Williams (1978: 55-59). Artemis' altar on Delos was also made of horns; Burkert (1985: 92).

¹⁵ Both the altar and the island reflect the same symbolism; Hardie (2016: 117).

¹⁶ Cf. *Th.* 117: Gaia is ἔδος ἀσφαλῆς αἰεὶ «the eternally unmovable seat» (of the gods). The word for 'foundation' in Greek, θεμελίαι, comes from the same PIE root, *dheh₁- 'to found, to establish' (cf. τίθημι), which is also at the origin of the word θέμις. Cf. Benveniste (1935) 200-202; Detienne (1998: 151); Williams (1978: 57-59); Ruipérez (1960) makes the case that θέμις originally represented the stones 'set' as boundaries. For the connection between Apollo and Gaia and Themis, see Detienne (1998: 160-67).

¹⁷ The mouse can also be seen as a prophetic animal, his behavior during earthquakes being well-known; Ael. *Nat. Anim.* 11.19; Monbrun (2007: 245).

¹⁸ Hardie (2000: 29).

¹⁹ Cf. *Il.* 7. 452-453; 21. 441-449.

²⁰ Cf. *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 132: διὸς νημερτέα βουλὴν.

wandering island. Apollo, therefore, could become the leader of colonists. Similarly to Delos, the colonists are ‘wanderers’. They worship Apollo.

The idea of ‘wandering’ is spectacularly reflected by Apollo’s well-known epithet of Hekatos, which is derived from the Greek adverb ἐκάς ‘far, far away’²¹. The epithet, with which Artemis is characterized as well (Hekate), reflects the wanderings of the twins while in their mother’s womb. Apollo is the god who comes to a fixed point after long and far-away journeys. His arrows shot from afar never miss their target, on which they become fixed, thus fulfilling people’s fate according to Zeus’ will.²² Apollo is Ἐκάεργος, Ἐκατηβόλος ‘the god who shoots from afar’²³.

The story of the floating and wandering island, which becomes fixed in the sea, seems to be neither a random invention nor a later addition to the mythology of Apollo. It is an organic part of a coherent mythology. In fact, it is likely that even the composer of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* knew the same story. Indeed, in this *Hymn*, when Delos is asked by Leto for refuge, Delos’ response is that she is afraid that Apollo will push her with his feet into the wide-open sea (cf. 66-75, see above). In other words, Delos is afraid that she will become a floating island. It is unlikely that the poet who composed this passage did not know the whole story of the floating island as we explicitly know it from as early as Pindar²⁴. In the *Homeric Hymn*, Delos is afraid of becoming again what she used to be before Apollo’s birth, that is, a floating island looking for refuge.

3. Hekatos - Hekate

As is well-known, the names of Hekatos/Hekate do not apply only to the children of Leto, but also to the goddess Hekate²⁵. Hesiod describes Hekate in the *Theogony* as a universal goddess, who is highly honored by Zeus «over land, sea, and sky» (cf. 427-428). The whole story about Hekate in the *Theogony* was considered by many to be an interpolation, principally because of the unusual importance given to her by Hesiod²⁶. One can add to this argument the fact that Hekate’s portrait in the *Theogony* is different from what she represents in later antiquity, namely the goddess of magic and liminal spaces that lead outside²⁷. Whatever the connection between the Hesiodic and the later Hekate may be, one of the insurmountable difficulties of Hekate’s mythology has been her name itself, which is identical to the epithet of Apollo. The difficulty lies in the fact that, while Apollo’s epithet can be associated with one of his roles, which is ‘to strike from afar’, there has been no plausible explanation

²¹ Hekatos is probably formed analogically to ὕπατος ‘best’, which, in turn, is derived from ὕπερ.

²² I suggest that even Apollo’s connection with the North (the Hyperboreans) also might have to do the idea of ‘fixity’, the celestial North Pole being the only fixed point in the sky. The tripod on which the Pythia sits reflects the same idea, the tripod being the most stable chair.

²³ Chantraine (1968) s.v. Ἐκατηβόλος; Monbrun (2007: 186).

²⁴ Cook (1914-1940 III, 2: 984); Mineur (1984: 82).

²⁵ For Apollo Hekatos, cf. Kraus (1960: 13-14); for Artemis Hekate, cf. Graf (1985: 229); Kahill (1984: 686-687).

²⁶ Cf. Th. 404-452; West (1966: 276-290); Wilamowitz (1931: 172); Griffith (1983: 51); Clay (1984: 27); Mazon (1964: 21-24) against interpolation; for a synopsis of the issue, cf. Tsagalis (2009: 136).

²⁷ Johnston (1990: 21-28); Clay (1984: 27); West (1966: 277); Graf (1985: 257-259): ‘Göttin des Draussen’; for a review of the later sources on the ‘liminal’ Hekate, cf. Serafini (2015).

for why Hekate bears the same name²⁸. There is, however, another thing that Apollo and Hekate have in common. This is the fact that they belong to the same family²⁹.

In Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, the stories of Asteria and Leto mirror each other. Both Asteria and Leto arouse Zeus' amorous interest. Zeus manages to possess Leto, who becomes pregnant with Apollo, thus raising Hera's wrath. Asteria, however, manages to escape Zeus' advances. She hides from Zeus by throwing herself into the sea where she becomes a floating island, the future island of Delos. Thus, the two sisters find themselves in similar situations. Both of them are wanderers; Asteria to avoid being raped by Zeus; Leto to avoid Hera's wrath. Leto, therefore, does not find refuge on a random island. Delos is, in fact, her sister Asteria, who undergoes a similar fate and, therefore, can understand her suffering³⁰.

The parallelism between the fates of the two sisters does not stop here. Both sisters give birth to children. The names of all these children reflect the wanderings of their mothers. Leto's twins are called Hekatos and Hekate. Asteria's child is Hekate. The identity of all these names, which are as old as Homer and Hesiod, shows that the stories of Leto and Asteria must have been conceived to correspond to each other. Given this, the story of the wandering island of Delos cannot be a later invention. It is related to the mythologies of both Apollo Hekatos and Hekate. It must be at least as old as Homer and Hesiod. It is pan-Hellenic³¹.

An interesting detail in the Hesiodic story of Hekate is Zeus' apparently strange affection for Hekate, whom he honors above all and to whom he gives dominion over the land, sea, and starry heaven³². Zeus' attitude towards Hekate is so much stranger as she is not his child but Perses', a Titan and Zeus' uncle. Zeus' attitude towards Hekate, however, can be explained through his love for her mother Asteria. It reflects his weakness for Asteria. Such 'transitive' loves for different members of the same family are a common place in both mythology and real life³³. The role given by Zeus to Hekate also reflects, like her name itself, her mother's wanderings. Asteria is, as her name shows, initially a nymph in the sky before she becomes an island. Consequently, Hekate will receive honor on «the land, sea, and starry heaven». It follows that the story of Asteria as told by Callimachus could already be familiar to Hesiod.

The parallelism between the myths of Hekate and Apollo shows that it is unlikely for these stories to have been conceived independently of each other. Hekate, on one hand, and Apollo and Artemis, on the other, are part of the same myth and, therefore, are likely to have the same origin. And, given that the name of Hekate, which is purely Greek, perfectly fits the stories told in these myths, it is also likely that the origin of this goddess is Greek and not Anatolian as it has been argued³⁴. The myth

²⁸ Hekate's name is usually assumed to derive from Gk. ἐκών or ἑκητι 'willing', thus reflecting her 'willingness' to help (*Th.* 429, 439); Pucci (2009: 53); Frazer (1983: 56). Kerényi (1951: 40) raises the possibility that the name could mean 'far away' («in die Ferne»). Hekatos was even considered a foreign name, which the Greeks adapted for their purpose; cf. Kraus (1960: 15).

²⁹ «En famille»; cf. Bing (1988: 107).

³⁰ Bing (1988: 113).

³¹ Tsagalis (2009: 175).

³² *Th.* 410-415; Zeus' gifts to Hekate are unexplained; Pucci (2009: 54).

³³ E.g., in myth, Dido, Aeneas, Ascanius; Theseus, Ariadne, Phaedra; Tereus, Procne, Philomela; in history, Xerxes falls in love with both mother and daughter (*Hdt.* 9.109). Hatred can be transitive as well: e.g. Medea, Jason and their children; Procne, Tereus, son Itys.

³⁴ Wilamowitz (1931: 324-328); Henrichs (1996: 671-672); Johnston (1990: 21); Graf (1985: 257-259); Kraus (1960: 24, 55-56); Burkert (1985: 171); West (1966: 277); for Leto, cf. Graf (1985: 61).

of Hekate is at the core of Greek polytheism because of its essential connection to Apollo's mythology through the myth of the 'wanderer'³⁵. It is also because of the same myth that Hekate could eventually be associated with roads, 'liminal places', and 'crossroads'³⁶.

4. Ortygia

The island of Ortygia 'the island of the quail' (Gk. ὄρνιξ = 'quail') is famously related to Artemis' birth. According to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (cf. 16), Artemis was born on Ortygia, and Apollo on Delos. This means that, for the author of the *Homeric Hymn*, the two places are different. The 'true' location of Ortygia is a vexed issue. There is the famous island of Ortygia in the Syracusan harbor, in Sicily. This location is already known by Pindar (*Nem.* 1). In later authors, Ortygia was identified with Delos itself (Hyg. 140; Apollod. 1.4.1; Call. *Hymn to Apollo* 59). Ortygia was also thought to be a grove near Ephesus where Artemis had her famous temple and where rites for her are attested since the fourth century BC³⁷. Other locations competed for this honor as well³⁸.

The Syracuse location deserves a special note because of the well-known myth of the nymph Arethusa, which is part of Artemis' mythology. The myth is about how the river-god Alpheus from the Peloponnesus tries to rape the nymph Arethusa. To escape Alpheus, Arethusa flees to Sicily, where she becomes the famous fountain in Syracuse, on the island of Ortygia. Alpheus in turn follows her to Sicily. He 'flows' under the sea to Syracuse, where it mingles its waters with those of the fountain.

It is obvious that the location of Arethusa on the island of Ortygia is related to the birthplace of Artemis. This, however, does not mean that the Sicilian Ortygia is the 'real' birthplace for Artemis. The reasons for this are the following.

The myth of Arethusa most likely reflects the colonization of Syracuse by Greeks from Peloponnesus in 734-733 BC. Obviously, these colonists did not decide to colonize Syracuse because Artemis was really born there. It is, then, possible, even probable, that there was no Ortygia in Sicily before the colonization. What is, then, the 'real' Ortygia? There is, perhaps, no need to look for it. Ortygia might originally be, like Delos, just a mythical name. Not unlike their predecessors, who gave the name of Delos to an island in the Aegean Sea, the Syracusan colonists, who were bringing with them the cult of Artemis, could give their new settlement the mythical name of Ortygia. Why, then, 'the island of the quail'? What does the quail have to do with all this?

The answer to this question concerns the nature of the quail. The quail is a well-known migratory bird. Artemis is born on 'the island of the quail' because, like the quail, her mother Leto migrates from place to place³⁹. Not unlike Delos, Ortygia hints as well to the story of Leto's wanderings. It is a mythical name.

³⁵ Henrichs (1996: 671).

³⁶ Graf (1985: 258); Kraus (1960: 11-13; 77-79); Johnston (1990: 21-28).

³⁷ For the evidence, cf. Stephens (2015: 102).

³⁸ Williams (1978: 57-58); Stephens (2015: 102).

³⁹ The fact that Hera let Leto give birth to Artemis has probably to do with the fact that Artemis is a girl, not a boy.

5. Delphi

The names of Ortygia and Delos are likely to belong to myth. They were invented to reflect certain aspects of Leto's wanderings and her giving birth to Artemis and Apollo. In this sense, one could say that these names are symbolic.

An identical situation characterizes the other most important place in Apollo's mythology, Delphi. As is well-known, this word is related to the Greek word for 'womb'⁴⁰. The relation is not coincidental. In myth, Delphi is indeed the ὀμφαλός, the 'navel' of the earth or of the world⁴¹. The well-known stones scattered throughout the archaeological site at Delphi show that the Greeks thought of this navel in a very realistic way. Indeed, these stones resemble a human navel, the end of the umbilical cord. At Delphi one can literally see the navel of Gaia or of the world⁴². All this shows that, like the names of Delos and Ortygia, the name of Delphi belongs to the world of myth.

One of the most important events that take place at Delphi is the cosmic fight between Apollo and Python. Obviously, it is not accidental that this fight takes place precisely in this place. Delphi is the center of the earth, Gaia, who, in turn, is Python's mother. Why Python is located precisely in this place, however, is still unknown. Obviously, the answer to this question cannot be separated from the other fundamental issue which is the significance of the cosmic battle between Apollo and Python. This issue, in turn, leads to another important one, which is the significance of Python herself.

Python is often described as a snake with coils. In Callimachus (*Hymn to Delos* 93), Python has nine coils, κύκλοι, with which she encircles Delphi. Statius (*Theb.* 1.563-65) mentions a snake with seven coils. Other authors mention just the coils without any reference to their number⁴³. These numbers are not randomly conceived. They are related to Apollo. Seven is Apollo's sacred number. Nine is the number of the Muses, whose leader is Apollo.

At first, the mention of the coils seems to be just a redundant description of the snake. They appear, however, in a new light if one takes into consideration that Delphi is the 'real' womb, the *umbilicus* of Gaia. Given this, Python can be also interpreted in a realistic way. I make the hypothesis that the serpent with coils, Python, anatomically represents Gaia's umbilical cord. Indeed, the umbilical cord is coiled. Its number of coils varies; they can go up to nine or ten. Thus, there is a perfect concordance between this anatomical part and Python, the snake with coils located where the navel of the earth is⁴⁴.

The above interpretation can also explain the significance of Apollo's slaying of Python. Through the killing of Python, Apollo destroys Gaia's umbilical cord, which will 'rot' (πύθω). As a result of this, Gaia will not be able to carry offspring anymore, which could revolt against Zeus and his family. After the slaying of Python, Zeus

⁴⁰ Cf. Chantraine (1968) s.v. δελφοί, δελφός.

⁴¹ Pi. *Pyth.* 4.74 («the navel of mother earth»); cf. Acosta-Hughes & Stephens (2012: 151).

⁴² Burkert (1985: 85); Burkert (1983: 126-27); on the omphalos and its association with the well-known «stone of Zeus», which was spewed out by Kronos (*Th.* 497-99), cf. Bassi (2009: 117).

⁴³ Stephens (2015:196); Mineur (1984: 125-126).

⁴⁴ Gupta *et al.* (2006).

will remain the undisputed master of the universe⁴⁵. As for Apollo, he will be able to reveal and put in practice Zeus' will unhindered by anybody⁴⁶.

To sum up: in the myth of Apollo's birth the creator(s) of the myth made use of sophisticated strategies, which are a combination of symbols and popular etymologies. As I show below, the same type of strategies were used for Artemis, a character who is closely associated with Apollo as his twin sister.

6. Artemis the midwife

The episode of Leto's delivery of Apollo is not told in the same way in the *Homeric Hymn* and in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*. In the *Homeric Hymn*, at the moment of delivery, Leto clasps her hands around a palm tree (φοῖνιξ) while Eileithyia is assisting her (115-118). In Callimachus, on the other hand, the palm-tree is present as well (270), but there is no explicit mention of Eileithyia's presence. Callimachus just tells how the Delian maidens sing a hymn to Eileithyia at the moment of the god's birth (257). Apollo comes out to light by himself in an independent, powerful way⁴⁷. Eileithyia's absence in Callimachus reflects Hera's hostility towards Leto. In fact, in the *Homeric Hymn*, Eileithyia is present at Apollo's birth explicitly in spite of her mother's adversity⁴⁸.

As is well-known, there is another version of Apollo's birth, in which Artemis is the midwife, not Eileithyia (Eur. *IT* 1097). Callimachus knew this version of the story. In his *Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus clearly describes Artemis as such⁴⁹.

The fact that other gods can play the role of a 'nurse' at another god's birth is not peculiar to this case. It is well-known that Hephaistos plays an important role in Athena's birth from Zeus' head⁵⁰. More precisely, Hephaistos is the one who splits up Zeus' head with his axe so that Athena could come out of her father's head. The

⁴⁵ In spite of his power, Zeus' domain is the upper world. The mountain, on which he is born, Ida (Ἰδῆ < *Fid- 'to see'), reflects etymologically the 'visible' world (Ida in Phrygia might reflect the 'gazing' place of Zeus). By contrast, the underworld is the world of the 'unseen', Hades Ἅιδης (< *aFidēs).

⁴⁶ The story of Apollo and Python is strikingly similar to that of Zeus and Typhoeus, underscoring the idea of 'like father, like son'. Even the names of the two monsters are similar, Typhon (*thuph- 'to fume') and Python deriving from each other through metathesis and Grassmann's law or, to avoid the Indo-European perspective, through a double metathesis (consonants + aspiration). It is also transparent that the ending of the name Typhoeus was invented to correspond to that of Zeus whereas the variant Typhon corresponds to Python. The ending of Python's, on the other hand, corresponds to Apollo's (ὄν). The two stories mirror each other and may have been created simultaneously; Miller (1986: 82-88). Thus, there is no need to assume a Near Eastern or even an Indo-European origin for these stories; West (1997: 300-304); Rutherford (2009: 11-14).

⁴⁷ Mineur (1984: 147, 206).

⁴⁸ It is Iris who summons Eileithyia to assist Leto with the birth; cf. *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 55-57; Bing (1988: 114); cf. also Mineur (1984: 147).

⁴⁹ Cf. Call. *Hymn to Artemis* 20-25; Hardie (2016: 135-139). Artemis and Eileithyia retained separate cult identities and precincts in Delos; Calame (1997: 106-108); Hardie (2016: 45). The syncretism between Eileithyia and Artemis is attested beginning with the fifth century BC; cf. Pingiatoglou (1981: 98-99); Kahill (1984: 676).

⁵⁰ Hephaistos could not have been present at Athena's birth if he had been born asexually from Hera (the 'Hesiodic' version of Hephaistos' birth, *Th.* 924). This could happen only if he was the son of both Hera and Zeus and, therefore, the brother of Hebe, Eileithyia, and Ares (the 'Homeric' version, e.g. *Il.* 14.338). I note that the brothers Hephaistos and Ares complement each other: Ares is beautiful and dumb, Hephaistos is ugly and clever. This observation may indicate that the Homeric version predates Hesiod's (in fact, Zeus' head had to be split up in order for Athena to come out); cf. Boardman (2004: 104).

episode is well represented in ancient art.⁵¹ Usually, Eileithyia is also present in such scenes⁵².

The presence of Artemis as a nurse (μαῖα) at her brother's birth is logical given that she was born first⁵³. With Leto facing the adversity of Hera, who is Eileithyia's mother, Artemis becomes the only candidate capable of assisting her mother with Apollo's birth.

The story about Artemis assisting Leto with Apollo's birth must be old. The famous sculpture of Artemis of Ephesus hints to it. As is well-known, this statue shows the goddess with clusters of swollen objects around her body. These mysterious objects have been deemed to be breasts (*polymastia*), a fact which, according to some, would symbolize fertility⁵⁴. There is no evidence for such a hypothesis. The explanation for these objects is much more pedestrian. They represent the fruits of the palm-tree, the tree on which Leto leaned when she gave birth to Apollo. In fact, the bottom half of the statue looks exactly like the trunk of a palm-tree⁵⁵. The statue transparently alludes to the palm-tree, and, therefore, undeniably points to Artemis' role as a midwife⁵⁶.

An interesting symbolism is represented by the presence of sculpted bees on the statues of the Ephesian Artemis. The bees are a splendid metaphor for Artemis and her companions. The nymphs surround Artemis in the same way the bees gather around their queen⁵⁷.

As for the age of Artemis of Ephesus, there is no certainty about it⁵⁸. Interestingly, the oldest representations of the 'polymastia' or 'multimammia' are from the fourth century BC and belong to the statues of Zeus Labraundos in South Western Anatolia (Caria). The bottom halves of these statues are similar to those of Artemis and clearly represent the trunk of the palm-tree. Therefore, Zeus' breasts must represent the palm-tree's fruits as well⁵⁹. The connection between Zeus and the palm-tree is not explicit, but on coins depicting Zeus' Labraundos on the obverse, one can see on the reverse the image of Apollo. Zeus Labraundos, Zeus of the palm-tree, is probably represented as Apollo's father in such cases⁶⁰.

The relation between Artemis and the palm-tree is spectacularly illustrated in book 6 of the *Odyssey*. During his famous encounter with Nausicaa, Odysseus compares her to the palm-tree of Delos, a fact which may indicate that Homer already knew of Artemis as a midwife⁶¹.

⁵¹ Cassimatis (1984: 985-988, 1022-1023).

⁵² The presence of Eileithyia does not necessarily reflect the Hesiodic version. She could have been added in such scenes simply because of her generic role.

⁵³ One should note that nurses are old women in Ancient Greece; Calame (1997: 376-377). Artemis' role, therefore, is totally unusual.

⁵⁴ For some, they represent the testicles of the animals killed by Artemis; Burkert (1983: 80); Nielsen (2009); Budin (2015: 20-22).

⁵⁵ Morris (2008: 60).

⁵⁶ The association between the palm-tree and Artemis is clearly attested on cult vessels from Brauron as early as the beginning of the fifth century BC; cf. Simon (1982: 83-85); Torelli (2002).

⁵⁷ Morris (2008: 57-59); Fleischer (1973: 99-100); for Artemis the 'queen', see below.

⁵⁸ Muss (2008); Morris (2008) sees the breasts as reflecting a fertility role and, therefore, possibly going back to the pre-Greek religions of Anatolia; cf. also Fleischer (1973: 74-87) for an excellent treatment of the history of the issue.

⁵⁹ Monbrun (2007: 14, 75, 78).

⁶⁰ Vollkommer (1997); Fleischer (1984).

⁶¹ *Od.* 6.160-165; Burkert (1985: 85-86).

7. The palm-tree

The significance of the presence of the palm-tree at Apollo's birth is a vexed issue⁶². The attempts to explain it as an import from the Middle East during the Minoan-Mycenaean age cannot account for why, among all the gods, only Apollo and Artemis are associated with it⁶³. In addition, the symbolism -if there is indeed one- of the palm-tree in the Middle-East iconography is not known. Given this, I suggest another interpretation for the presence of the palm-tree in the cult of Apollo. The connection between Apollo and the palm-tree may be the result of the coincidental similarity between Apollo's other name, Φοῖβος, and the Greek name of the palm-tree, which is φοῖνιξ⁶⁴. The first syllables in these words, including the accentuation, are identical with each other. Such etymological association is not singular in Apollo's mythology. The cultic epithet of Delphinios, with which Apollo is famously characterized, is the result of the association between Δελφοί 'Delphi' and δελφίς, the Greek word for 'dolphin'⁶⁵. The name itself of Apollo, the archer killer, can be derived from the Greek word 'to kill' (ἀπόλλυμι)⁶⁶. This etymology might be reflected by Apollo's other name, Phoebus 'the pure'⁶⁷. Unlike humans, the god who kills remains 'pure'⁶⁸.

8. Artemis and the bear

Artemis' name is as well at the origin of popular linguistic associations, which led to spectacular consequences for the cult of the goddess. The first part of the name of the goddess is similar to the Greek name of the bear, ἄρκτος⁶⁹. This similarity is probably at the origin of the introduction of the bear in the cult of Artemis⁷⁰. The well-known ritual of the ἄρκτεία, performed by young girls masked as bears, derives from this popular etymological connection and has little to do with sexuality as it was sometimes thought⁷¹. The fact that the ritual is performed by young girls before

⁶² Sourvinou-Inwood (1985); Torelli (2002) (fertility symbol); Mineur (1984: 188-189).

⁶³ Marinatos (1984).

⁶⁴ Cf. Monbrun (2007: 79-80): the palm tree is, like the string of Apollo's bow, elastic; it does not break, being the symbol of victory (the palm of victory!).

⁶⁵ Chantraine (1968) s.v. δελφίς; Graf (1979).

⁶⁶ The well-known Doric form Ἀπέλλων was explained as the 'original' name of the god. Apollo would be the god of the ἀπέλλαι, the Doric assembly of citizens, whose duties included the introduction of young males to citizenship. In this view, the Ionic form Ἀπόλλων would be the result of a phonetic assimilation; Burkert (1975); Burkert (1985: 143-144); Beekes (2003), however, argues against this etymology and proposes an Anatolian origin for Apollo. Burkert's theory does not affect my argument. Ἀπέλλων could become Ἀπόλλων because of the influence of ἀτόλλωμι. One should note, however, that the reverse situation is possible as well (i.e. Ἀπόλλων > Ἀπέλλων because of ἀπέλλαι).

⁶⁷ Hesych. s.v. φοῖβος: καθαρός, λαμπρός, ἄγνός, ἁμίαντος; Kraus (1960: 17).

⁶⁸ The epithet is often used in reference to 'pure' water and air. Phoebus Apollo, therefore, is the god of transparency as well and as such he can reveal the future.

⁶⁹ I would speculate further that the derivation from *artos to Artemis was made to correspond to Themis, a goddess associated as well with Apollo in cult; Chantraine (1968) s.v. Ἄρτεμις.

⁷⁰ The bear in the cult of Artemis was explained as either being a relic from the Neolithic or a borrowing from the Illyrians whose word for 'bear' *artos would be at the origin of the name of Artemis; cf. Simon (1983: 85).

⁷¹ Budin (2015: 77-80); Parker (2005: 228-242); Calame (1997: 99-100); Simon (1982: 83-88); Perusino (2002); Donato (2002); Marinatos (2002: 36): «being a bear equals the transformation of the Parthenos into a woman through sexuality»; Brûlé (1987: 240-245); Perlman (1989); Calame (1997: 98-99); Lonsdale (1993: 171-193); see, however, Brelich (1969: 240-279, esp. 263); Faraone (2003: 43-68), for whom the ritual represents a substitute sacrifice. The main ancient evidence for the ἄρκτεία comes from Ar. *Lys.* 645.

the age of marriage must have to do with Artemis' nature. Artemis is the goddess of the virgins⁷².

The story of Arcas supports this hypothesis about the origin of the bear in the cult of Artemis. Arcas is the eponym king of Arcadia⁷³. He is the son of Callisto, one of Artemis' nymphs, and Zeus. Because of Hera's jealousy, both Callisto and Arcas are turned into bears. The nature of the transformation has to do with Arcas' name. Arcas becomes a bear because his name is similar to ἄρκτος. Therefore, the strategy that associates Arcas with the bear is identical to that in Artemis' case. The etymological connections in these two cases, however, are not identical. If the name of Artemis lacks a *k* to be similar to ἄρκτος, Arcas' name misses the other part of the cluster, which is *t*.

All this leads to another important issue. According to the hypothesis above, Artemis was associated with the bear because of the coincidental similarity between her name, whose origins I assumed to be unknown, and the Greek name of the bear, ἄρκτος. But is the association between Artemis and ἄρκτος really coincidental? Before I try to answer this question I need to address an issue which cannot be separated from the presence of the bear in the cult of Artemis. This is the presence of the wolf in the cult of Apollo.

9. Apollo Lykeios

The presence of the bear in the cult of Artemis strikingly corresponds to the presence of the wolf in the cult of Apollo Lykeios 'the wolfish'⁷⁴. The powerful twins Apollo and Artemis are, thus, associated with the two major predatory mammals that populate both Greece and the temperate regions; the bear and the wolf. Is this parallelism a mere coincidence?

The cult of Apollo Lykeios was practiced mainly but not exclusively in the Peloponnesus⁷⁵. As is well-known, the epithet of λύκειος has been interpreted in various ways⁷⁶. The ancients, however, understood it as a reference to the wolf. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the connection between Apollo and the wolf is undeniable⁷⁷. The examples are numerous. The Delphians worshipped the wolf; they were said to have originated in Lykoreia, a place obviously related to the word for wolf; the first inhabitant of Mount Parnassus was Autolykos, Odysseus' grandfather. The Delphians even set up a bronze wolf statue near the great altar of Apollo's temple⁷⁸. Apollo is called by Sophocles λυκοκτόνος, the 'wolf-killer', an allusion to Apollo's well-known role of protecting cattle and sheep⁷⁹.

⁷² Cf. Dowden (1989: 34-36). The 'wild' nature of Artemis and her presence in the forest are probably related to her being a virgin; as is well-known, marriage means the opposite, i.e., 'domestication, taming and yoking'; cf. *Od.* 6.109 (παρθένος ἀδμή); Calame (1997: 239-240).

⁷³ Lévêque (1961: 94) derives Arcadia from ἄρκτος; but see Chantraine (1968) s.v. ἄρκτος.

⁷⁴ Lonsdale (1993: 172-173).

⁷⁵ Graf (2009: 120); for Athens, see Parke (1977: 177, 185).

⁷⁶ For short summaries, cf. Jameson (1980: 229); Graf (2009: 120-124).

⁷⁷ Aesch. *Theb.* 145: Λύκει' ἄναξ λύκειος γενοῦ στρατῷ δαίω.

⁷⁸ Burkert (1983: 120-121).

⁷⁹ Other well-known animals associated with Apollo symbolize different things. The raven, for example, being an ominous bird perfectly fits Apollo's prophetic role. The falcon is Apollo's bird in *Od.* 15. 325-334, probably symbolizing the 'little eagle'; Apollo sends the falcon to Telemachus in the same way Zeus sends his eagle to Odysseus; the swan anticipates her death through singing (the swan's song); Plat. *Phaed.* 84e; Monbrun (2007: 247).

As noted, there are also other well-known interpretations of λύκειος such as the connections to the ancient Greek word for ‘light’, **lykē*, or to the region of Lycia in Asia Minor, where Leto had a famous shrine. Neither of these two interpretations can clearly explain the role of the wolf in Apollo’s mythology.

Another interpretation is sociological. Apollo would be the leader of the ‘pack of wolves’, which symbolizes the band of youth. Apollo’s role as the protector of herds would derive from it⁸⁰. This totemistic aspect of the cult of Apollo was deemed to be very old, preceding the emergence of agricultural societies. It takes us to remote pre-historic times. There, is obviously, no way to prove it.

It is worth noting that, from a linguistic perspective, the epithet of λύκειος can be derived from λύκος ‘wolf’ in the same way in which the adjective ἄρκτειος is derived from ἄρκτος. The derivation from the putative word for ‘light’ **lykē* is impossible, since the derived adjective should be λυκαῖος, and not λύκειος⁸¹. Λυκαῖος in fact represents the well-known cultic epithet of Zeus on Mount Lykaion in Arcadia. Whether this word is derived from ‘light’ or not –such connection with Zeus would make sense–, it is hard to say. The myth of Lycaon, which is associated with this mountain, seems to point to the solution ‘wolf’, not ‘light’. Zeus is called Lykaios because the place of his cult is Mt. Lykaion, the ‘Wolf Mountain’⁸². In such a case, Mt. Lykaion would be an analogical formation after other mountain names in Greece such as Mts. Pangaion, Aigaion (the ‘Goat-Mountain’) etc.⁸³ However, it is still possible to see this name as initially derived from ‘light’ and the association with the word ‘wolf’ as secondary.

In conclusion, the linguistic evidence for λύκειος points in favor of the meaning of ‘wolfish’ for this epithet. The parallelism between the cults of Apollo and Artemis points to the same conclusion.

As noted above, the wolf in the cult of Apollo corresponds to the bear in the cult of Artemis. This observation can explain why Apollo was associated with the wolf. Once Artemis was associated with the bear for the reasons I mentioned, her twin brother had to be associated with a similar predator as well⁸⁴. In Greece, this was the wolf. Interestingly, in the story about Arcas and Callisto, Callisto is the daughter of Lycaon, ‘the wolf’. The bear and the wolf complement each other in both myth and cult.

It appears then that the association of Apollo with the wolf has no agricultural or sociological origin. It is also unlikely to be the result of the linguistic similarity between the words for ‘wolf’ and ‘light’. It only reflects the parallelism between the cults of Artemis and Apollo⁸⁵.

⁸⁰ Ael. *Nat. an.* 12.40; Paus. 10.14.7; Burkert (1985: 145).

⁸¹ Cf., e.g., ἀρχή, ἀρχαῖος.

⁸² For Lykaon, Lykaia etc., cf. Burkert (1985: 266); Burkert (1983: 84-93).

⁸³ Mount Aigaion is another token of spectacular associations between names and myths. This is the place where Zeus was born and fed by the goat (αἴξ) Amaltheia. The same goat is at the origin of ἀργίς, Amaltheia’s skin that eventually becomes Athena’s breast-shield, the aegis, which has, like Amaltheia, a protective role; of Aigaion (the Aegean Sea, where Zeus was born); of Poseidon’s place in the depths of the sea, Aigai (*Il.* 13.21; *Od.* 5.381), which mirrors Zeus’ place on Mount Aigaion; of the name of Aegina, Zeus’ beloved nymph, whose descendants through her son Aeacus are Peleus and Telamon, that is, the fathers of Achilles and Ajax, respectively!; cf. Chantraine (1968) s.v. αἰγιαλός.

⁸⁴ The Arcadian cult of Zeus Lykaion probably reflects the importance of the wolf in this region; Lévêque (1961: 93-98); Burkert (1983: 84-93); warriors in Arcadia wore skins of wolves and bears; Paus. 4.11.3; Buxton (1988: 71).

⁸⁵ It is unlikely therefore that the term has anything to do with the military youth; see Jameson (1980: 234-235). Apollo’s youthful aspect comes from him being the son of Zeus. He corresponds to Artemis, the goddess of young, unmarried girls. Apollo and Artemis are the gods of adolescence; Calame (1997: 262).

I can finally tackle now the issue of the origin of Artemis' name. According to my initial hypothesis, Artemis was associated with the bear through the similarity between her name and that of the bear. This would mean that this similarity is purely coincidental. This is certainly not impossible, but one needs to assume an obscure origin for Artemis and her name. To avoid this conclusion, I put forth a new hypothesis, which takes into account the above parallelism between the wolf and the bear. This perfect parallelism raises the possibility that the wolf and the bear could be ascribed to Apollo and Artemis, respectively, right from the beginning, when they were conceived in myth as the children of Zeus. Since Zeus had already been assigned the eagle as the symbol of his royalty and power, Apollo and Artemis could not be left without similar symbols. The bear and the wolf are big, predatory animals; most importantly, they are, like the twins, powerful killers. Artemis' name, then, could emerge once the bear and the wolf were assigned to the children of Leto (possibly simultaneously!). The epithet *λύκειος* was probably invented at the same time.

The above theory can explain the origin of the name Artemis, which is likely to derive from *ἄρκτος*. The loss of *t* is certainly problematic. However, as some of the examples above show, there is no need for a perfect congruence between names when it comes to such word plays (*cf.* *Ἀπόλλων* from *ἀπόλλυμι*). In addition, Greek does know a form *ἄρτος* for *ἄρκτος*. Chantraine considers it secondary, but this does not tell anything about how old such a form could be⁸⁶.

The bear and the wolf, therefore, were associated with Artemis and Apollo, respectively, for the reasons I mentioned above. They are real animals. Apollo and Artemis, however, are associated with mythological animals as well such as the sphinx or the griffin⁸⁷. Both these creatures are a combination of lion (body) and eagle (wings or wings and head, respectively). The famous sphinx offered by the Naxians to Delphi is a good illustration of the association between this creature and Apollo⁸⁸. The same goes for the sphinx in the story of Oedipus, which plays such an important part in Oedipus' destiny⁸⁹. Given the parts they are made of, all these creatures symbolize supreme power and royalty⁹⁰. The eagle obviously represents Zeus. The lion does not belong to Zeus, but it is a well-known symbol of power, which, for Greece, goes back at least to Mycenaean times. A pair of them can be still seen topping the famous Lions Gate at the entrance of the royal palace in Mycenae⁹¹. The association between Apollo and the lion is clearly shown by the story of Croesus offering a golden lion to the Delphians⁹². The famous terrace of lions in Delos also points to

⁸⁶ Chantraine (1968) s.v. Artemis.

⁸⁷ Wilamowitz (1931: 269-270).

⁸⁸ The sphinx is, like Apollo's priestess, a female.

⁸⁹ The sphinx brings, like Apollo, whose instrument she is, death; Wilamowitz (1931: 269-270).

⁹⁰ As Zeus' daughter, Athena is also famously represented with such creatures on her helmet; for the case of Artemis, see Fleischer (1973: 98) (Artemis Ephesia).

⁹¹ The famous Egyptian sphinx, which represents a lion, is also likely to symbolize supreme power. The fact that its head probably represents the pharaoh supports this interpretation. In addition, coincidentally or not, the typical Egyptian ornament on the head of the pharaoh strikingly resembles the mane of the lion.

⁹² Hdt. 1.50; *cf.* also Hdt. 1.84; 5.56 (Hipparchos, one of the Pisistratids, is called 'lion'); 5.92 (Cypselos, the tyrant of Corinth, is called 'lion'); 6.131 (Pericles is a 'lion'); 7.225 (the stone lion dedicated to Leonidas at Thermopylae).

the same connection⁹³. Very tellingly, these Delian lions do not have a mane, which points to their youth and, therefore, to Apollo⁹⁴. The lion as symbol of royal power can be met with in the *Odyssey* as well, both Odysseus and Penelope -the King and the Queen- being compared with lions in splendid similes⁹⁵.

10. Conclusions

The main aspects of the myth of Apollo's birth are not randomly conceived. All the elements of the story are integrated into an organic unity, which reflects the nature and function of the god Apollo. In this respect, etymology plays also an extremely important role in both Apollo's and Artemis' myths. Names such as Hekatos, Delos, Delphi, Delphinios, Phoebus, Apollo, Artemis, were most likely invented to correspond to the myths and cults of these two gods.

The most important conclusion of this paper, however, concerns the origins of Apollo and Artemis. The story of their births, the origin and meaning of their names, the reason behind their association with the wolf and the bear, respectively, all these facts taken together show that the origins of Apollo and Artemis are essentially Greek. In other words, Apollo and Artemis appear to be Greek gods conceived by the Greeks⁹⁶. The same goes for Hekate, whose birth and origin cannot be separated from those of Leto's children.

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⁹³ The lion, therefore, has nothing to do with Apollo being an Oriental sun god associated with the lion as some scholars believed; Kraus (1960: 18-19); Simon (1969: 132-135).

⁹⁴ This reminds of the well-known fact that Zeus is artistically represented with a beard whereas Apollo is not.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Od.* 4.332-340; 22.401-06 (Odysseus); 4.791-94 (Penelope).

⁹⁶ In this sense, Apollo is, indeed, the «most Greek of the Greek gods» as Otto famously stated; cf. Burkert (1985: 145).

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