

ATHENA'S EPITHETS IN THE *ILLIAD* AND THE *ODYSSEY*: AN ANALYSIS

by

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(Under the Direction of Jared Klein)

ABSTRACT

This thesis initially seeks to identify the criteria by which we may identify adjectives and other descriptors such as relative clauses and substantives which may qualify as epithets. The primary determining factor is whether they are part of the traditional epic poetic inventory. The methods for this will also be established. Once these criteria have been identified, the words and phrases used to describe Athena exclusively which meet those criteria will be examined for their etymologies, frequency of use, metrical structure, and cultural significance. The final chapter will take the etymologies and cultural significance of the epithets examined in detail in Chapter 2, as well as the conclusions drawn from the analyses, and conduct a character study of Athena. It will also investigate new and previously poorly understood elements of the early history of the goddess and her worship during the period before the written records of alphabetic Greek.

INDEX WORDS: Athena, Character study, Epithet, Etymology, Formula Greek, Homer, Iliad, Odyssey

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For CS Ramsey

Pax tecum

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INTRODUCTION

The present thesis will examine Homeric epithets from the perspective of their metrical shape and how they fit into their respective lines, including their interchangeability. Additionally, I will lay out the methodology by which the epithets are employed in order to evoke certain emotions and, related to this second point, what each individual epithet demonstrates about the character to which it refers. Since an analysis of all of the epithets contained in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is of much too large a scale to take up here, the present study will concentrate exclusively on the character of Athena as she is described in Homer's epic works. Not only will this narrowed focus allow for a more manageable discussion but keeping the analysis strictly to a single individual will make way for a more detailed character study of the individual through the lens of the epithets which Homer chooses in different instances. Furthermore, the analysis of the use of the epithets will not be clouded by having to wade through the additional layer of the personalities of the multiple individuals who are described, which could encompass a whole body of work by itself.

The first chapter below contains an analysis of Homeric epithets as an element of composition within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the foreword to his book *The Traditional Epithet in Homer*, which has served as an invaluable aid to the present study, Milman Parry (1971: 1) clarifies that the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and "the oldest of the *Homeric Hymns*" all share a similar style. However, he subsequently states that he is only "working within the texts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*." Regarding Homer's style and the scope of my analysis, I have done the same. In selecting Homer's "epic works" as the focus of this study, I have deliberately chosen to

omit the *Homeric Hymns* for two reasons. First, the *Hymns* themselves are not of sufficient length and scope to demonstrate the same characteristics and traditions as the two epic poems. Additionally, they do not offer much information about their subjects' characters, the analysis of which will be conducted in Chapter 3. Similarly, we do not see any interactions between the subjects of the *Hymns* and any other deities, which reduces the number of opportunities for the poet to incorporate epithets and traditional phrases in circumstances and events similar to those found in the epics. Secondly, in order to include the analysis of the *Hymns* in such a study, one would first have to distinguish which of them follow a style which parallels the epics and which ones do not. While this is an interesting question, it would require a much broader discussion of Homeric composition than is appropriate here. As a result, the discussion and analysis of Homeric epithets and formulae below will be confined to their uses in the epic works.

Chapter 1 will lay out, primarily based on Parry's (1971) analysis, the criteria for what qualifies as an 'epithet' for the purpose of the analysis in Chapter 2. There are two different pairs of categories assigned to epithets within the epic tradition, and these are based on how and with what frequency they occur, though one category is less definitive than the other, as we shall see. To use Parry's terminology, *generic* epithets are those which are used to describe a multitude of different characters, primarily gods and heroes, with little regard for their specific personalities, actions, or the situation at hand. Epithets of this sort are used only to identify their referents as heroes. The most common generic epithet in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, δῖος, which is used to describe thirty-two different deities and heroes, is also the example which Parry (1971: 146-47) cites as the quintessential example of a generic epithet. The counterpart to the generic epithet is the *distinctive* epithet, which will be the primary focus of Chapter 2. These are the epithets which, throughout the epics, are used to refer only to one individual, and thus may be able to

provide more definitive insight into that individual's character. Thus, the distinctive epithets of Athena identified using the criteria established in Chapter 1, as well as a few whose status is not entirely clear and deserves a more thorough investigation, are the focus of Chapter 2.

The other distinction of categories of epithets is between *ornamental* and *particularized* epithets. These have less to do with their accompanying nouns and more to do with *why* they were chosen. *Ornamental* epithets, as Parry demonstrates so completely, and as I have endeavored to summarize below, were chosen not for their meaning but for their metrical value. The importance of this discovery is that Parry identified criteria by which one can identify an inventory of words which were part of a traditional epic language. That is, Greek poets had an inventory of default words which they were trained to insert depending on metrical need and the category of entity being described—person, place, nation, etc.—so that they had an option for every metrical possibility. This is the foundation of Chapter 1, which attempts to determine which adjectives used for Athena qualify as part of that traditional inventory.

Particularized epithets, on the other hand, are those which *are* chosen for their meaning. These are identifiable by the fact that, unlike the case with ornamental epithets, we see the use of two or more adjectives having the same metrical value in different places. That the poet did not resort to the same descriptor every time indicates that at least one of these words was *not* the default option and was thus chosen for its meaning rather than for its metrical value. These are more difficult to identify, however, because, as we shall see, the fact that an adjective only appears a handful of times, or even just once, does not disqualify it from being part of the inventory of traditional epic language and thus from being included in the present study. These ideas will be expanded upon in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 will outline the descriptions of Athena within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which fall into the category of “epithet” based on the criteria established in Chapter 1. Each epithet will receive full treatment including etymology (where possible), metrical analysis, and its association with the “traditional language of epic,” which will also be laid out in this chapter.¹ The second half of Chapter 2 will look at the groups of epithets which share the same metrical shape, and thus could have been substituted for one another. This will open the discussion, continued in Chapter 3, about why the poet(s) chose the particular epithets in question in certain instances. Special care has been taken to ensure that the discussion of each of the above aspects, and especially the last, takes into account that there is a certain amount of uncertainty about the cultural framework in which these phrases arose and came to be part of the tradition.

Chapter 3 will then continue and expand the discussion of the choice of Athena’s epithets in specific locations where they provide information about Athena’s character. This will be followed by an examination of what light these choices shed on the way she was viewed by the Greeks, Mycenaeans, and even the Minoans, as well as of related goddesses from other cultures and regions whose characteristics may have influenced and/or become incorporated into the character and portrayal of Athena. An attempt will also be made, based on the conclusions drawn about Homeric tradition, to establish a relative chronology of the cult of Athena as evidenced by the choice of epithets presented in Homer’s epics.

¹ We do not have full etymological backgrounds for every word in Homer, including some of the epithets highlighted in this study. I have endeavored to take discussions of these words as far as I can, and references to sources with fuller discussions of those with tenuous origins will be provided in the notes in that section.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS AN EPITHET?

As mentioned above, Milman Parry's work on Homeric formulae and the epithets contained within them has been monumentally helpful. However, it is important to note that a distinction should be made between the formulae which Parry analyzes from a stylistic perspective and the nouns, epithets, and other elements of which they are comprised. The purpose of the present study is to analyze the origins of those epithets and to try to understand how they became part of the formulaic tradition which Parry establishes. However, in order to conduct a proper analysis of Athena's epithets in Homer's epics, as well as to use them to conduct a study of her character, it is first necessary to define specifically what we mean here by the term "epithet."

The easiest place to start is the definition which Parry himself provides:

Epithet can be defined as a qualifying word added to a substantive without the intermediary of the copula. Thus it is not necessarily an adjective: it can also be a substantive (ἄναξ, βασιλεύς) or even a composite expression (εὐρὺν κρείων, βοὴν ἄγαθός)." (M. Parry, 1971: 20fn1.)

That is, the formulae established by Parry cannot be taken to be equivalent to the epithets contained within them, even though we see that certain individual epithets such as ὀβριμοπάτρη are of the same metrical value as full Homeric formulae, in this case Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.² Despite the fact that ὀβριμοπάτρη is itself an epithet, that an epithet in and of itself takes up space equivalent to that of many other noun-epithet formulae is an uncommon occurrence. Although this may at first glance seem to contradict Parry's definition quoted above, since he defines an epithet as "a

² A fuller account of the metrical values of epithets will be taken up in Chapter 2.

qualifying word *added* to a substantive,” rather than the substantive itself, I suggest here that this particular adjective has become substantivized, a category which he includes in his definition.³ Parry also includes ὀβριμοπάτρη in his own list of divine epithets for Athena.⁴ We can alter the definition of an epithet slightly to account for the inclusion of nouns which are used as *replacements* for the proper names of the gods and goddesses and also refer exclusively to one particular deity.

In my analysis of the *category* of epithets below, I have followed Parry’s lead in focusing my analysis specifically on epithets of gods and heroes, as opposed to those referring to locations (Πύλου ἡμαθόεντος, *Il.* 9.153), groups of people (ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπῆας, *Il.* 1.423), or things (θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας, *Il.* 2.8). There are several reasons for this, the most important being that the names of individuals and their associated epithets appear much more frequently than those of the categories above. This provides both a larger sample size of epithets to analyze as well as more frequent occurrences of the same epithets, which in turn allows for more certain conclusions about any patterns or other information which may be found. Additionally, the names of gods and heroes, as the focus of a particular line/sentence, most often appear in the nominative case, whereas the peripheral categories above are generally found in oblique cases. Peoples and nations certainly *can* be found in the nominative (μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοί, *Il.* 1.123), but this is less common. As a result of this imbalance, the names of groups and peoples will also be disregarded in the present study. This will eliminate any differences in usage which can solely to metrical variation based on case. Thus, in the following discussion of both generic and distinctive epithets, the scope of the project will be best served by examining epithets for gods and heroes which are found primarily in the nominative case.

³ The status of ὀβριμοπάτρη as a substantive will be discussed in its entry in Chapter 2.

⁴ Parry (1971: 39)

It is important to distinguish epithets from generic adjectives. To that end, as I will show, an epithet can be defined as a constituent part of a Homeric formula, which itself is characterized by location within a line, repeated use with the same name(s) or type of entity, and frequency of use. Parry (1971: 39) demonstrates that depending on the space in a particular line which the poet was required to fill—most often from the masculine or feminine caesura, but also from the bucolic diaresis to the end of the line, different epithets were used. However, because of the metrical length of these traditional formulae, Parry demonstrates that they can also be used to open a line where the poet has the remainder of the sentence subsequently organized or arranged.⁵

Ornamental epithets are specifically characterized by their presence within Homeric formulae because their use is determined by metrical need. That is to say, the poet often, if not always, chooses a formula specifically because of its ability to complete the line metrically or else uses it to fill the beginning of the line before continuing with his thought. This can be seen where Homer uses the same adjectives to describe multiple heroes repeatedly: δῖος is the primary word that Parry cites as his example of a “generic” and “ornamental” epithet, but many others are used interchangeably for the multitude of heroes who appear in the Homeric epics.⁶ One could even say that the use of these epithets classifies the named individual as a “hero” in the general sense, rather than that the adjective is chosen because the individual *is* a hero.⁷ He further demonstrates that the use of such common epithets in conjunction with so many different names removes all doubt that δῖος and related adjectives were used for any reason other than their metrical convenience, pointing out that δῖος is employed once every 68 lines within Homer.⁸ The

⁵ For the locations of formulae for gods and heroes, see Parry (1971: 18-19)

⁶ For a comprehensive list, see M. Parry (1971: 89-91)

⁷ On the categorical use of ornamental epithets as markers of “hero” status, see Parry (1971: 146)

⁸ Parry (1971: 137 and note)

audience would struggle to process independent meanings and reasons for use of words which appears so frequently and in such a wide variety of contexts. Therefore, the use of this and similar adjectives serves the sole purpose of maintaining the rhythm of the poetry.

One might suggest that the adjectives initially carried some specific description of the individual(s) to whom they refer and in fact, this is the main focus of Chapters 2 and 3. However, in the intervening years between when those adjectives first became associated with their respective individuals and when we encounter them in Homer, the adjectives which developed into epithets became disconnected from their particularized original meanings, instead standing in for the general heroic qualities of the name(s) featured within each formula.⁹ This in fact is the key difference between generic/ornamental and particularized epithets. While both are chosen to suit the meter, the ornamental epithets serve only that purpose, and the meaning is disregarded except to stand in as an unspecific marker of “heroism” or “divinity,” that is, to identify the described individual as a hero or a deity, depending on the category. In the case of δῖος, Parry notes that this adjective is used with the names of thirty-two individual heroes across the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.¹⁰ One important element of the classification of epithets discussed above which deserves attention here is that the two pairs of categories are not mutually exclusive. Epithets can be identified as either ornamental or particularized *and* as either generic or distinctive. The most frequent epithet used for Athena, γλαυκῶπις, for example, can be identified as ornamental, as it is used ninety-three times in Homer’s epics, more than enough for the audience to divorce the word from any particular meaning. Additionally, however, this adjective refers only to Ἀθήνη within Homer’s epics and so can also be identified as *distinctive*. It is this precise combination of qualities which will be used to identify appropriate epithets in Chapter 2.

⁹ On the categories of generic heroic epithets, see Parry (1971: 139)

¹⁰ Parry (1971: 146)

Ornamental epithets, both generic and distinctive, have been detached from their original meaning. However, their presence within formulae, and thus indirectly their separation from their original meaning, is part of what identifies them as epithets as opposed to merely general adjectives. The fact that any adjective of the proper metrical shape could have fit into the formulae as they evolved suggests that these particular adjectives for each metrical value were *initially* adopted into the Homeric tradition for a reason other than their suitability to the meter.¹¹ The examination of the background of these specific epithets, taken up in Chapter 2, will not be to determine *why* they were chosen, but to look at their linguistic origins and to see what they tell us about the character of Athena at the time when the version of the epics which we currently have was first written down, and perhaps even at the time when the traditional inventory of epithets was initially created.

In order to be able to quantify which words and names related to Athena deserve to be analyzed, we must further establish individual criteria for what qualifies as an epithet. We have already mentioned that the epithets which we are going to discuss are found in Homeric formulae, and that the status of a particular phrase as a formula is determined by its place in the line: it generally either begins or ends a line, extending to or from one of the caesuras or the diaeresis.¹² We also see formulae which take up an entire phrase, such as those found at *Il.* 4.8 and 5.747, on which more below. Frequency of occurrence is another indicator that a particular epithet belongs to the traditional poetic language and thus deserves inclusion in the present study. In the case of the two most common epithets of Athena, Παλλάς and γλαυκῶπις, their fifty-four and ninety-three occurrences, respectively, certainly identify them as belonging to the traditional inventory of epithets. But what about nouns, adjectives, and other descriptors such as

¹¹ Parry (1971: 144)

¹² On the importance and productivity of this structure, see Hainsworth (1968: 6)

relative clauses, which may only appear a handful of times, or even just once? Does that discount them from being considered? It does not appear so. We can take frequency of use, especially in the same positions in multiple lines and with the same entities or types thereof, as *confirmation* of a traditional epithet or full formula, and subsequently state that any embedded adjectives qualify as epithets.¹³ However, the *infrequency* of occurrence of a particular epithet or formula does not automatically remove that word or phrase from consideration in the present study.¹⁴

Let us look, for instance, at the only two lines which contain a particular epithet of Athena, seen at *Il.* 4.8 and *Il.* 5.908:

Ἥρη τ' Ἀργεΐη καὶ Ἀλαλκομενηΐς Ἀθήνη

Given that these are the only two occurrences of Ἀλαλκομενηΐς in Homer's epics, one may not initially expect this item to be included in an analysis of formulaic epithets of Athena. However, if one compares the two lines, one finds that they are exactly the same, which Parry shows to be another hallmark of a traditional formula which was subsequently adopted by Homer.¹⁵ The routine, mechanical structure achieved by including the exact same line at two different places in the text supersedes the paucity of occurrences which might otherwise indicate that it does *not* deserve to be included in an analysis of formulaic epithets. In Parry's own words, "The frequency or the rarity of a formula thus depends solely on the poet's need to express some one idea more or less often."¹⁶ And if we look at the wider context, these are the only two instances where Hera and Athena are depicted as sitting together, unified in a particular endeavor. At *Il.* 4.20-21, they are planning the downfall of the Trojans together:

ὦς ἔφαθ', αἱ δ' ἐπέμυξαν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη
πλησίαι αἱ γ' ἦσθην, κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μεδέσθην.

¹³ Russo (1963: 236-7)

¹⁴ Parry (1971: 44); Hainsworth (1968: 12-13) disagrees, on which see p. 26-27 below.

¹⁵ Parry (1971: 55)

¹⁶ Parry (1971: 44)

Thus he spoke, and both Athena and Hera muttered nearby
As they planned evil events for the Trojans.

The poet was unable to use the full-line formula found in *Il.* 4.8 again because an individual (Zeus) had just finished speaking. The speech took precedence over the presentation of the gods and resulted in the poet's choosing the oft-used formula ὦς ἔφαθ'.¹⁷ This maintained the flow of the narrative but resulted in the names of Hera and Athena standing by themselves rather than with the epithets Ἀργεΐη and Ἀλαλκομενηΐς.

The only other point in Homer's works where Athena and Hera are unified in their actions and are depicted specifically together is at the end of *Iliad* 5 after they have driven Ares from the field of battle to protect the Argives:

Αἱ δ' αὖτις πρὸς δῶμα Διὸς μέγαλοιο νέοντο
Ἥρη τ' Ἀργεΐη καὶ Ἀλαλκομενηΐς Ἀθήνη,
παύσασαι βροτολογιγὸν Ἄρη' ἀνδροκτασιάων. *Il.* 5.907-9

And in turn they went back to the house of all-powerful Zeus,
Argive Hera and Alalcomenaeian Athena,
Having stopped Ares, the bane of men, from his man-slaying.

Upon further examination of the *Iliad*, we can see now that the only reason this formula appears so infrequently is because these are the only two places where the poet had occasion to use it, if we posit that this particular formula is used when Hera and Athena are depicted engaging in the same activity. We do not see this formula used when they are merely in the same location or at the same gathering of the gods, as in *Iliad* 8 and *Odyssey* 1. The epithets themselves were chosen for their metrical length (as demonstrated above). However, based on the specificity of the use of this formula, and the epithets contained therein, as well as the other epithets which will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 2, it seems that certain of the lesser-used formulae may have been

¹⁷ For this phrase and its variants as a common epic formula, see Parry (1971: 11-12).

selected for use in particular situations rather than simply whenever the poet needed an epithet or formula to fill a particular metrical space.

Let us turn now to the composition of individual sentences/lines within Homer's work and the placement of the formulae. That some of the formulae appear more frequently in certain sections of Homer's work—e.g. γλαυκῶπις appears five times in the first 221 lines of the *Odyssey*—demonstrates further that the epithets and formulae were of secondary importance, chosen to finish each line once the rest of it had been composed. That is, for lines which contained formulae that did not take up their entirety, the poet composed the other parts of the line (sometimes the beginning, sometimes the end, as discussed above), and then added in whichever formula completed the meter of the line. If the formulae were chosen first, we would see a much wider array of noun-epithet formulae in Homer's works, which would additionally provide more insight into the personalities of the individuals depicted. Instead, it is quite clear from the metrical analysis conducted by Parry that the poet settled on one formula for each combination of character and required metrical value, and that "We learn the characters of men and women in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not from epithets but from what they do and from what they say."¹⁸ Thus, in the composition of the poems, the poet built the sentence with the verb as the focal point and then finished the composition of the line by including the noun-epithet formula which was metrically suitable for the remainder of the line. This also lends further support to Parry's suggestion that selections of formulae, even those containing particularized epithets, were exclusively determined by meter rather than meaning.

The importance of this element of the composition of Homer's work is that by using the same epithets in a variety of narrative and situational contexts, the original importance of the

¹⁸ Parry (1971: 152)

meaning of each of those epithets was eventually, and perhaps rather rapidly, removed. There is less focus on what the epithets say about the individuals and other elements they describe, and more on the meter and maintaining the flow and prosody of the poem. Homer's works were, after all, intended as entertainment for a listening audience that was more keyed into the rhythm of the words than their meaning. This was especially true of those epithets which the audience would have heard repeatedly and often (though not always) attached to a wide variety of individuals:

If we today, using a dictionary and grammar to go slowly through the text of only two poems, can acquire a complete indifference to the particular meaning of an epithet in certain combinations, the original audience of those poems, who had become familiar with their style by no conscious effort but by having heard a quantity of epic verse countless times greater, must have already acquired this indifference even for expressions which appear but twice or thrice in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, too rarely for us to regard in this way.¹⁹

The dissociation of these epithets from their meanings—that is, that the meanings of the epithets do not have any impact on the events depicted in the passages in which they appear—serves to cement their status as traditional epithets as opposed to adjectives chosen for the purpose of providing additional information to the audience.

Certainly the epithets which can be identified as traditional based purely on frequency and which refer exclusively to Athena, including Παλλάς and γλαυκῶπις (mentioned above), will be included in the analysis found in the following chapters. However, other epithets which appear only two or three times will also be examined. We have already seen how Ἀλαλκομενής appears only twice, but the parallels of both occurrences identify it as part of the traditional language. We can further expand the range of epithets which fall into the category of 'traditional' if we take into consideration that Homer's contemporary audience, "long before they ever heard the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, were too familiar with the expression to think of finding in it any

¹⁹ Parry (1971: 130)

particularized meaning.” Although Homer’s are the oldest extant works that utilize the traditional epithets and patterns of Greek poetic composition, they are certainly not the only ones to have existed, nor can they definitively be said to be the oldest.²⁰

If we presume then that the Homeric audience was intimately familiar with this traditional language as *being* traditional, such that they already understood the epithets presented in the formulae as being independent of their original meanings, it may be that even certain adjectives which are *hapax legomena* can be identified as part of the epic tradition through other analytical means. Specifically, it may be possible to show that a certain epithet is traditional despite being a *hapax legomenon* within Homer if its usage in that particular line does not seem to make sense in the narrative context of the line. This will show that it is only present due to its metrical status. Although slightly counterintuitive, the use of an epithet *despite* its meaning warrants its identification as a traditional epithet, since there is no justification for its use in that particular spot other than that it was the default option owing to decades or centuries of tradition. We have already established that lack of frequency does not automatically discount a word from being identified as part of the epic tradition. However, individual assessments of such forms will be made on a case-by-case basis in their proper places in the following chapter.

Despite the fact that Homeric epithets belonging to the traditional language had been thoroughly divorced from their meaning on account of their repetition, Parry (1971: 139) states that the epithets which specifically refer to heroes “all refer to five qualities: courage, strength, fame, royalty, and that heroic but vague concept, ‘divinity’.” It seems then that these fixed epithets were used merely to indicate what one might call the “heroic status” of an individual rather than to illustrate a specific virtue of a particular character. Indeed, Parry (1971: 146-7)

²⁰ For the shift away from traditional language and poetic structure in favor of a style which focused more on meaning than meter, see Parry (1971:131-134, esp. 131).

goes on to list the thirty-two individuals described by the adjective δῖος in order to demonstrate the insignificance of the adjective's meaning "for 32 heroes who have in common only the fact that they *are* heroes!" (Italics mine). This is the distinction between generic epithets—those which identify some category of person, divinity, or people, and distinct epithets—those which are always found paired with the same entity, and thus seem to have some intrinsic connection to it.

Having looked broadly at epithets as they pertain to gods and heroes categorically, we can now narrow our focus further to concentrate on the epithets of the gods. The primary difference between heroes and gods in Homer's works is that gods and goddesses are usually described with their own *distinctive* epithets which are attributed to that individual and no one else.²¹ Although this occasionally happens with heroes—πολύμητις for Odysseus and ποδάρκης for Achilles—it is much more common for gods and goddesses, and with a much wider range of adjectives. While the gods and heroes each have formulae which fill every possible metrical need, those of the latter often contain generic epithets such as δῖος. Conversely, the formulae of the former consist primarily, though not exclusively, of distinctive epithets.²² That Homer, and thus the epic tradition as a whole, describes the gods primarily with distinctive epithets rather than generic ones supports the idea that the characters of the Greek gods carried additional weight when the stories told in these poems were first being crafted, since they were left distinct from the category of heroes with their generic epithets. Instead, the epic tradition maintains the distinction of the gods not just in their words and deeds but in their epithets as well. Thus, we

²¹ Parry (1971: 84); Hainsworth (1968: 10)

²² For the full inventory of epithets of differing metrical values, see Table 1 in Parry (1971: 39); In the category of epithets which are not distinctive, see the discussion on λαοσσόος below (pp. 48-49)

can also say that these distinctive adjectives can be used as sources for information about the gods and goddesses within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

While many of Athena's epithets—*γλαυκῶπις*, *Παλλὰς*, *ὀβριμοπάτρη*, etc.—refer exclusively to her and are thus clearly distinctive in nature, they are also shown to be ornamental, being used exclusively for metrical convenience rather than because of their meaning. It is important also to be able to identify whether any of the epithets which Homer uses to describe Athena can be said to be *particularized*, that is, chosen because of their meaning rather than their metrical value. However, it can be tricky to identify these since we have already seen that infrequency of use does not discount an epithet from being identified as traditional and thus ornamental. Nevertheless, there are other ways of identifying particularized epithets. There are unlimited possible combinations of names and adjectives for each character and metrical value.²³ Given this fact, it makes sense that the epic tradition, and thus Homer, pared down the possibilities and selected certain favorites as defaults. As a result, if we find that Homer uses two different epithets of the same metrical value in two different places, it is likely (though not guaranteed) that one of them was chosen specifically because the poet wanted to convey a particular idea about that character, which thus identifies it as a particularized epithet.²⁴ Additionally, the appearance of a noun-epithet formula in the middle rather than at the beginning or end of a line may indicate that the information it conveys is more important than metrical convenience, thus identifying it as a particularized epithet.

Particularized epithets are categorically noteworthy because unlike ornamental adjectives, they provide immediate information about their accompanying nouns especially in instances where a more frequently used, formulaic epithet or full formula can be shown to be

²³ Parry (1971: 144); this idea will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

²⁴ Cf. Parry (1971: 155).

regularly used in the same environment. These epithets must be set apart from the traditional, distinctive epithets due to their use as describing multiple different individuals. However, they may still be included in the present study because their particularized uses provide information about a character which the poet felt was necessary in a particular instance. These particularized uses of these epithets must also be considered if we are to establish as full a picture as possible of Athena's history.

Two criteria are useful in identifying epithets as particularized. The first, similar to ornamental epithets but in reverse, is their *infrequency* of use. It is more likely that epithets which are used only a few times, and only once or twice with a particular character, have a particularized usage. The second is epithets which can be identified as traditional through repeated, regular use for one character but are only used once or twice for another. In the former category, we see λαοσσόος 'people-rousing' which is used to describe Athena twice (*Il.* 13.128, *Od.* 22.210), as well as Ares (*Il.* 17.398), Strife (Ἔρις, *Il.* 20.048), Apollo (*Il.* 20.079), and Amphiaraos (*Od.* 15.244) once each. The use of this epithet to describe the mortal Amphiaraos is curious, especially since he does not appear anywhere else in Homer other than in the bard's song in *Odyssey* 15. Another epithet belonging to this category is μεγάλθυμος. We see it used of Athena only twice (*Od.* 8.520, 13.121) but also of a slew of mortal heroes including Tydeus (*Il.* 5.235, 10.509) and Nestor (*Il.* 5.565, 13.400). Parry (1971: 66, 179) suggests that both λαοσσόος and μεγάλθυμος are used as epithets of Athena by analogy with the other uses of those epithets. The status of these two adjectives as ornamental or particularized epithets will be taken up in Chapter 2, with the goal of establishing whether they warrant inclusion in Athena's character analysis in Chapter 3. For the latter criterion, we see πότνι 'Lady, Mistress, Queen,' which is used of Hera twenty-three times across the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and always in the same

location, but only once of Athena, at *Il.* 6.305. Additionally, this unique use with Athena's name falls in a different location than it does when it is used as an epithet of Hera. Thus we have reasonable evidence that this use of *πότνι* at *Il.* 6.305 with the name of Athena deserves consideration as a particularized epithet.

The last category of epithet, which will not factor into the analysis in Chapter 2 is that which Parry (1971: 20n) describes as “composite expressions.” Epithets are not always single adjectives or substantives but can also take the form of relative clauses and appositional phrases, either with or without an accompanying noun. Two similar examples of this kind of epithet which are used of Athena are the phrases *αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος* (*Il.* 2.157, 5.115, etc.) and *κούρη Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο* (*Il.* 5.733, *Il.* 8.384, etc.). The important element is not the variation in the phrases, which is to be expected to accommodate different metrical placements in a line, but rather the repeated use of the same phrase with no internal variation along with the same placement in the line. Both of these expressions can thus be labelled as traditional formulae. Even more specifically, because they are paired with either *Ἀθηναίην* (*Il.* 5.733, etc.) or an equivalent (*Ἀτρυτώνη*, *Il.* 2.157), both of these phrases can also be identified specifically as epithets. However, for reasons that will be made clear in the analysis of *Ἀτρυτώνη* in Chapter 2 as well the discussion of Athena's relationship with Zeus in Chapter 3, these formulae and others which fall into the same category will not be examined in depth in the present study.

We have now established the criteria for the epithets which will be examined in the following chapter, and these criteria will be addressed for each individual epithet which is examined. We have also explained that the term ‘epithet’ can refer to more than simply an identifying adjective: it can be an adjective, noun, or even a whole phrase. As this particular study will look specifically at the epithets of Athena, it will primarily focus on *distinctive*

epithets, that is, those which refer only to one particular individual. However, within the distinctive category, most of the epithets which we will look at will in fact be *ornamental* rather than *particularized*. The vast majority of epithets in Homer, as we have seen, are in fact ornamental; that is, they are used only to fit the meter and have been divorced from any but the most generic meaning for narrative purposes. However, it is this combination of distinctive and ornamental which is precisely the focus of this study. *Generic* epithets—those which are ornamental and are used to describe some category of individual indiscriminately—still associate a particular quality with the individual or group they are describing (see above). *Distinctive* adjectives, however, due to their association with one particular individual, may be used independently or in place of that individual's name or title and still be understood as referring to that individual. Based on these criteria, it is precisely this relationship which I will seek to illuminate in the remainder of this paper. The analysis below will lay out in detail why these particular epithets and titles came to be associated only with Athena, and what that may reveal about her character and her worship in the days before and during the compositional period of the epics, as well as about deities in other cultures and religions with whom she may at one time have been associated.

Before I begin that analysis, however, it is important to establish the grounds on which Athena was selected as the focus of this study. Several other individuals—e.g. Achilles and Odysseus-- feature prominently in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and might also be subjects of a similar study. However, as discussed above, in addition to their distinctive epithets, the number of which for each hero appears to be fewer than those of the gods and goddesses, the heroes also have a number of generic epithets which are used to describe each one of them as well as many

others. In selecting a deity, I have endeavored to select a character for whom the largest percentage of occurrences will be meaningful and appropriate for this study.

While there are many viable options among the deities for both epithet analysis and subsequent character studies, Athena is particularly appealing for several reasons. Primarily, she appears in the widest range of contexts *and* features more prominently across *both* the *Iliad* *and* the *Odyssey* than any other deity. Owing to the slight to her honor in the Judgment of Paris, Athena had more cause than some of the others—e.g. Zeus and Apollo (on whom see more below)—to favor one side over the other in the Trojan War. Thus, we see her heavily invested and directly involved in the Greeks’ struggles from the very beginning: her name is first mentioned at *Il.* 1.200, preceded only by the poet’s introduction and the expositional argument between Agamemnon and Achilles. The audience not only hears her *name* early but also sees her take direct action to prevent Achilles from taking violent action against Agamemnon.

In addition, as a goddess of war, Athena is willing *and* able to intervene and to assist when necessary, a combination we do not see from many other gods, even among those who took specific sides. I have already discussed *Il.* 4.8, where she is mentioned with the epithet Ἀλαλκομενήϊς in a context where Hera and Athena are depicted together. However, just a few lines later, at *Il.* 4.20, we see the poet mention not only that Hera and Athena are still together, but also that they ‘muttered’ (ἐπέμυξαν, *Il.* 4.19) and ‘plotted evils for the Trojans’ (κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μεδέσθην, *Il.* 4.20). The poet deliberately mentions to the audience that Athena and Hera are taking an active role in opposition to the Trojans. Furthermore, Athena follows through on her plans in several ways. Her most frequent method is to rouse the Achaean heroes to action, especially Diomedes in *Iliad* 5. Her most important influence is to convince individual Trojans to take actions that wind up benefitting the Greeks: she persuades Pandarus to break the truce in

Iliad 4 and tricks Hector into turning to face Achilles in *Iliad* 22. Most directly, she even dons her own arms and armor (*Il.* 8.384-96) and eventually joins the battle in person (*Il.* 20.47-51).

In contrast to this, many of the other major deities in the Greek pantheon simply do not appear in the poems often enough to allow for an in-depth study of their epithets. In looking at the number of appearances of names in the nominative case across the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Hephaistos (24), Aphrodite (27), Dionysos (1), Artemis (19), Demeter (2), and Hermes (17) can immediately be eliminated from contention because they do not provide a statistically significant number of data points.²⁵ Even considering that some of them have big roles in certain *parts* of the story—Aphrodite saves Aeneas from being killed by Diomedes (*Il.* 5.311-17); Hephaistos makes new armor and a shield for Achilles, the primary focus of *Iliad* 19—the deities mentioned above appear with not even close to the same frequency nor in as wide a range of contexts and situations as does Athena.

Those who *do* appear frequently can also be shown to be less appropriate for a study of this breadth. Although Zeus' name appears in the nominative more than any other deity across the two poems—254 times compared with Athena's 250—he is not nearly as directly involved in the events of the stories as Athena. When he *does* take action, it is usually at the request of one of the other gods—Thetis in *Iliad* 1, Hera in *Iliad* 4—and even then, he sends one of the other gods, often Athena, his favorite child, to address the request, rather than getting directly involved. This staunch neutrality, which limits the breadth of character to be studied, combined with the lack of direct action of any sort makes it difficult to offer any kind of deeper character analysis, which is the focus of the last portion of this study. Poseidon is significantly less involved than his brother,

²⁵ It is assumed that epithets which replace names, such as ὀβριμοπάτρη for Athena, are used with proportional frequency to the nominative names, so that they are not worth considering as additional data points unless the names themselves show up a statistically significant number of times.

despite being mentioned several times as one of the most steadfast opponents of the Trojans and also holding a prominent role in the *Odyssey* by causing problems for Odysseus throughout the story.

Although Apollo (112 occurrences), Hera (ninety-nine occurrences), and Ares (fifty occurrences) all appear frequently enough in the nominative and in an active enough role in Homer's epics to be considered as subjects of an analysis of their epithets and character, their names suffer from a distribution problem. Of the ninety-nine times Hera's name appears in the nominative, all but three are found in the *Iliad*. Likewise, of Apollo's 112 appearances, all but fifteen are found in the *Iliad*. Lastly, only five of Ares' fifty occurrences in the nominative are found in the *Odyssey*. This dramatic shift of frequency can be interpreted in two different ways. It could be that Hera and Apollo simply did not play as large a role in the *Odyssey* as they did in the *Iliad*, which in itself makes them less appealing for a study which relies on both frequency and variety. The alternative is that the versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which we have were composed by two different poets, an idea which is altogether opposed to the fundamentals of what we have established so far, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* share a common foundation in the language and formulae of the Greek poetic tradition which arose at some point during the Greek Dark Ages (see above). This proposition will thus be wholly ignored. Therefore, if we take the absence of Hera and Apollo in the *Odyssey* as indicative that the poet did not have as much cause to use them in that poem, the larger question, to be answered in a different study, is why that was the case. For the present, it is enough to say that they do not show up in both poems in equal numbers, and thus cannot be said to be as prominent in either story as is Athena.

The last point to take up in relation to the choice of Athena as the focus of the present study is the fact that she appears to be the only god or goddess whose name is given two

different *nominative* forms. Ἀθήνη is far more common (197 occurrences), but Ἀθηναίη appears often enough (53 occurrences) that one may conclude that within the poetic tradition, she developed two names of different metrical values and lengths so that her name could fit into a wider range of contexts as a chief figure not just in Greek religion but in epic poetry specifically. This is yet another appealing reason to make her the focus of a study of a deity's epithets. We will see how these two forms of her name interact with different epithets and in different formulae in regard to both metrical value and structure and their positions in their respective lines.

In addition to establishing the criteria for what qualifies as an epithet, we have now clearly shown the purpose for pursuing this epithet and character study of Athena, as well as why Athena has been chosen in the first place. The goal is not just to examine her epithets and their backgrounds (Chapter 2) but also to see what they say about her (Chapter 3). She appears more than any deity other than Zeus across the two epics and also plays a pivotal role in both. Furthermore, hers is the only name which is found with two different nominative forms, which may hold some significance on its own. Whether that was a mechanism to allow her name to be used more frequently and widely or whether it was to facilitate a wider array of epithets is a question which will be examined in the analysis in Chapter 3. But first we will look at the collection of epithets of Athena used throughout Homer's epics, including their etymologies (where possible), the traits and other concepts they embody, and their metrical structures.

CHAPTER 2

ATHENA'S QUALIFYING EPITHETS

The personages distinguished by their own special epithets are either divine or, with some few exceptions, are major characters in the story. We do not know the origins of these epithets, which are doubtless diverse, but within the context of the poet's technique it is a simple matter to assume that a hero of the stature of Achilles or Odysseus is *sui generis*, and so merits his own honorific. -Hainsworth (1968: 10)

Rather than examining all of the epithets found throughout the Homeric corpus, which would be a monumental task, this study will focus specifically on the epithets of Athena and her role in Homer's works. The statement from Hainsworth (1968) perfectly encapsulates the qualification of any hero, god, or goddess for a character study based on that character's distinctive epithets. I have already provided evidence in support of my selection of Athena as the focus of this particular study. In this chapter, I will now examine the descriptors, both individual words and phrases, which qualify as epithets based on the criteria established in the previous chapter. Additionally, I will also take up a few of those whose status may at first seem uncertain and make the case that they deserve to be included. For each entry, I will present its etymology, or offer competing ones if its origin is as yet unclear, and make connections to elements of Athena's personality and worship, some of which will be brought in from other, secondary sources. Athena appears often enough and in a wide enough range of roles and contexts that there are sufficient data for a full analysis of her *distinctive* epithets. I will also take the opportunity to examine certain epithets which are used of multiple individuals to see if there is any way they can be said to be particularized specifically in their description of Athena, which would provide more information for her character analysis, found in Chapter 3.

As part of the etymological analysis of these epithets, I will look at their roots in Proto-Indo-European (henceforth PIE) to see if there is any connection to other, similar descriptors in other Indo-European languages. In addition to possibly shedding light on the development of Athena's cult and worship, the relationships between these words may be taken as proof of direct connections to deities in other religions and from other cultures and regions. To this end, I have taken Beekes and van Beek (2010) as a starting point for the PIE roots, from which a more expansive look at the avatars of those roots in other languages may be identified.

In addition to their forms, the concepts which the epithets as linguistic signs identify are also associated with Athena and her personality given their status as *distinctive* epithets. Though a few generic epithets will be looked at (e.g. λαοσσόος), as well as some whose status as either distinctive or generic is uncertain, the vast majority of them are distinctive, indicating that the concepts and attributes marked by those linguistic signs are also specific to Athena. The meaning and concept marked by each epithet will also be examined, including how that particular trait came to be associated with Athena. This chapter takes a narrower view, looking at each epithet individually. The holistic analysis of both the presence or absence of certain epithets and their frequency of use in different sections of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is found in Chapter 3.

The analysis found in this chapter begins with the most frequent epithets—*γλαυκῶπις* and *Παλλὰς*—and moves through the other demonstrably traditional epithets. It then proceeds to the less frequent descriptors and those which I demonstrate to have particularized meaning and/or usage. As we have already seen, lack of frequency does not discount a word or phrase from inclusion in this list, but more careful analysis will be required to establish the justification for words and phrases which do not meet the high-frequency criterion. Parry's definition of an epithet (see above), which has so far formed one of the foundations of this analysis, also allows

for the inclusion of longer phrases such as relative clauses. In some instances, an entire formula will be presented, especially if there are multiple instances of a particular epithet in the exact same formula with no variation, as with Ἀλαλκομενήϊς.²⁶ However, the presentation of these full formulae within the present analysis is only a by-product of the environment(s) in which these epithets occur and is not itself the focus of the analysis.

Hainsworth (1968: 12-13 and n.5) refutes what he views as Parry's belief that Homer's epics consist entirely of traditional formulae and proposes that these infrequent formulae are instead the poet's own innovation using the frequent epithets as the building blocks to construct them. This view is supported by Martin (1989: 151):

In the years following publication of *The Singer of Tales* (1960) a number of studies located Homeric innovation and creativity precisely within his tradition, in the variation, juxtaposition, and expansion of preexisting motifs and diction.²⁷

Martin (1989: 151-2) continues a short while later:

Although it is to this day unclear to what extent “oral,” “traditional,” and “formulaic” overlap as descriptions of Homeric poetry, at least it is recognized that these labels do not limit the expressive power of the poet; “expressiveness” is simply posited at a different level.

The conclusion to draw from these statements is certainly not that the poet was limited in the way that he could express the events of a particular story or even the words spoken by a particular character. We have already seen that the poet had a massively large selection of adjectives which he could use to describe a particular character, group, or item. However, it appears that he chose to use the same descriptors, passed down via the poetic tradition, in a given location repeatedly, and strongly demonstrate and utilize creativity in the way in which those traditional words are organized.

²⁶ For the initial discussion of this epithet as being found exclusively in a full-line formula, see pp. 10-11 above. The full analysis and discussion is presented below.

²⁷ See also Martin (1989: 151n16) on this same statement.

This view of the composition of Homer's epics demonstrates the purpose of the analysis of Athena's epithets featured in this chapter. We have shown that the epithets themselves are a part of the larger Greek poetic tradition, and that is all we are focused on here. Whether the Homeric epics are entirely, or only partially, composed of stock formulae does not factor into the present study. We are only concerned with the fact that certain epithets can be independently shown to be part of the older tradition. Hainsworth himself (1968: 10) states that "we do not know the origins of these epithets, which are doubtless diverse," referring to what Parry (see above) calls "distinctive epithets" and what Hainsworth (1968: 10) calls "special epithets." The study of these demonstrably traditional epithets will shed some light on their origins, both etymologically and how they came to be selected as the epithets which the epic poets as a group may be said to have placed in regular locations in given lines and phrases, using those fuller phrases to evoke such a wide range of emotions and styles of narratives for their various audiences through their uses of larger scale themes and motifs.

Let us begin our study of one of the most foundational elements of Greek poetry pertaining to one of the most prominent characters across both stories with the most common epithet: γλαυκῶπις. Of the ninety-three occurrences of the various inflected forms of this adjective in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, eighty are in the nominative case. And of these, all but one (*Il.* 8.406) are found immediately following the hepthemimeral caesura and preceding Ἀθήνη to complete the line. The frequency and regularity with which this epithet is found in the same position in the line mark it clearly as belonging to the traditional language.

Although it is one of the most pervasive epithets in Homer's epics, the history and etymology of γλαυκῶπις are somewhat murky. This word is most often translated 'bright-eyed,' 'with gleaming eyes,' or simply 'grey-eyed.' The common element in all of these translations is

that they have something to do with the eyes. This is clearly represented by the second part of the compound, -ῶπις. This can be traced back to the Proto-Indo-Europaen root **H₃ek^w*- ‘see,’ and is naturally related to other words having to do with seeing, such as ὄπωπα, the 1.SG.PF. of ὁράω ‘I see.’ However, the precise form of the root as it shows up in Greek deserves explanation. Most of the forms from **H₃ek^w*- show a short o- rather than the long ω-, e.g. ὄψις ‘vision,’ ὄψομαι 1.SG.FUT. of ὁράω. The presence of an omega as a long vowel in γλαυκῶπις is exceedingly important for the purposes of meter, as the (non-existent) phrase [˘]γλαυκόπις Ἀθήνη would not fit anywhere in dactylic hexameter with its -uuu-- structure. So given the actual form γλαυκῶπις, the ω needs to be explained structurally.

Sihler (1995: 120) posits that the ω in the related ὄψ NOM.SG. ‘eye, face’ and ὄπα ACC.SG. (the latter of which is only found in Homer), which must have the same origin as that of γλαυκῶπις, is “probably from lengthened grade **H₃ēk^ws* or **Hōk^ws* nom.sg. with the long vowel generalized.” More recently, Beekes and van Beek (2010: 1685) agree that ὄψ is an “old formation with lengthened grade beside ὄψ ‘eye, face’.” He additionally (1684) cites ὄψ as the origin of the “feminine formations e.g. ἐλικ-ῶπις, βο-ῶπις (perhaps originally -ὠπίς < **-iH-s*),” the class to which γλαυκῶπις certainly belongs. That the long ω is an “old formation” lends support to its status as belonging to the poetic tradition and its inventory.²⁸ Given the connection already made between the Greek ὄψ and the feminine formation found in γλαυκ-ῶπις, we can say too that this formation is also old even by Ancient Greek standards.

The first member of the compound γλαυκῶπις is perhaps even more perplexing than the second. There are several *simplex* (i.e. non-compound) Greek lexemes which show a clear

²⁸Whether the underlying form of the root began with **H₃ē-* or **H₃ō-* is of little consequence since we already see the long ω in pre-Greek (Beekes and van Beek, 2010: 1684), showing that the alternating suggestions between **ē* and **ō* had no effect on the Greek form for the purposes of the present analysis. It is more important to be able to trace the origin of the *length* of the vowel all the way back to PIE.

relationship to the γλαυκ- seen in this epithet. We have the adjective γλαύκος, which is generally defined as ‘gleaming, silvery.’ However, it can also specifically refer to hues of eye color, in which case it can mean ‘grey, light blue.’ Hence we have the two common translations ‘bright-eyed’ and ‘grey-eyed’ depending on whether the translator takes it as referring to the color or quality of Athena’s eyes. This epithet is shown to be ornamental with no meaning relevant to each use other than to identify more clearly which goddess the poet is mentioning and to give the audience a regular formula to which they are accustomed at the end of the line. As a result, the distinction between color and quality is not relevant for the passage, nor for our discussion here. More relevant is the fact that there are several other characters who are mentioned as having flashing eyes, but none of them are described with the epithet γλαυκῶπις. If we look only at those whose ‘shining eyes’ are described specifically with an adjective—to minimize any discrepancies that could be attributed to syntactic differences between the uses of verbs and adjectives—we see that Aphrodite (ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα, *Il.* 3.397), Zeus (ὅσσε φαεινῶ, *Il.* 13.3 and 13.7), and Menelaus (ὅσσε φαεινῶ, *Il.* 17.679) are all shown to have the same general trait of ‘gleaming’ or ‘flashing’ eyes which is so characteristic of Athena through the repeated use of her most frequent epithet γλαυκῶπις. Yet despite the trait of ‘bright/flashing eyes’ being attributed to so many individuals throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Athena’s description is the only one which acquires the status of a unique epithet.

A clue to the uniqueness of this epithet can be found in another Greek word which shares the same origin as its first member. The Greek noun γλαύξ from which both the adjective γλαυκός and the first element of γλαυκῶπις appear to have been derived is not a color word, but the word for ‘owl.’ Thus it is not unreasonable to suggest that the meaning of γλαυκῶπις at an early stage of the Greek language was actually ‘owl-eyed.’ Given Athena’s association with the

owl, the meaning metonymically shifted from ‘owl-eyed’ to simply ‘flashing-eyed,’ which is the most conspicuous feature of the owl, especially at night when it is difficult to see much else of it.²⁹ The suggested translation ‘owl-eyed’ is given further support by the parallel to one of Hera’s common epithets, βοῶπις, which is most frequently translated as ‘ox-eyed,’ but can also be defined through a similar metonymy as ‘large-’ or ‘full-eyed.’³⁰ Even though βοῶπις is also used to describe mortals like Clymene (*Il.* 3.144) and Phylomedusa (*Il.* 7.10), it can certainly be said to be traditional—it appears in the same location in each line and in the same formula (βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη, *Il.* 1.551, etc.) each of the fourteen times it is used to describe Hera in Homer’s works.³¹ The similar -ῶπις feminine formations also demonstrate that βοῶπις and γλαυκῶπις are of the same stock regarding both age and etymology. It makes sense then that the poetic tradition would have generalized adjectives for each goddess according to a physical trait which was shared by their respective sacred animals.

The larger discussion centered around the epithet γλαυκῶπις is how Athena came to be associated with owls in the first place. Two options seem most likely, the first being that both Athena and owls were associated independently and eventually interchangeably as symbols of wisdom. From this point it is simple to show that her ‘owl-eyes’ came eventually to mean ‘flashing-eyes.’ As a note on these translations, it is difficult to assess how Homer’s original audience, and even the later Greeks who read his works would have interpreted the meaning of the word in contexts outside of epic poetry.³² It is virtually impossible to know how closely an

²⁹ The full relationship between Athena, her eyes, and the owl will be discussed fully in Chapter 3.

³⁰ On the connection between these goddesses and their associated animals, see Pötscher (1994: 7)

³¹ That these fourteen occurrences all appear in the *Iliad* lends support to one of the reasons given above as to why Hera is not a good subject for a study of this type. The extension of this epithet to other individuals does not negate the absolute proof that this was originally an epithet of Hera. It may be that βοῶπις underwent this sort of extension earlier than γλαυκῶπις. However, as this study is focused on Athena’s epithets and treatment, I shall refrain from speculating further.

³² I specify here external uses due to the fact that in context, it would have carried little meaning except as a marker of the importance of Athena as a character in the story.

ancient audience would have associated γλαυκῶπις with its root noun γλαύξ. These two words may have originally been extremely close, but hearing γλαυκῶις outside of the context of γλαύξ may have distanced the two in peoples' minds, and the -ῶπις formation caused the audience to think specifically about how Athena's eyes looked, i.e. with a color and brightness akin to that of an owl, but independently of the animal. Conversely, it may be the case that since Athena was so closely connected to the owl that that was the main element which the audience processed, and that they did in fact hear and read it as 'owl-eyed' rather than 'bright-' or 'flashing-eyed.' It is likely that this question will never be answered with certainty, but this is not the end of this discussion. The original root of the first member of the γλαυκῶπις compound appears to be directly related to its use as an epithet of Athena. The information it provides about her history and background will be fully addressed in Chapter 3.

Although the epithet Παλλάς is not as common in Homer's works as γλαυκῶπις, its fifty occurrences in the nominative certainly mark it as belonging to the traditional lexicon of epithets. Additionally, despite its less frequent use, Παλλάς appears to be more versatile. We saw that γλαυκῶπις in the nominative is almost exclusively used at the beginning of a formula which stretches from the hepthemimeral caesura to the end of the line, and only with the name Ἀθήνη. Παλλάς, on the other hand, although also only found with Athena's name, occurs in the nominative with both forms of her name: Ἀθήνη (forty-one occurrences) and Ἀθηναίη (nine occurrences). Beekes and van Beek (2010: 29) state that the name is pre-Greek and further suggests that the form Ἀθηναίη was adopted as a formal name of Athena by association with the Greek term for a citizen of Athens, Ἀθηναῖος. Athens is one of the oldest cities in Greece, and "the beginnings of proto-Greek language elements appear to date back to...around and after

2000 BC.”³³ The importance of the different forms of Athena’s name is that they allowed the poets greater flexibility in where they could insert her name in a particular line.

The flexibility we see with Παλλάς, i.e. that it appears with both forms of Athena’s name and in two different locations—at the very beginning (*Il.* 10.275, etc.) and following the bucolic diaeresis (*Il.* 1.400, etc.)—can be attributed to the fact that it has a much simpler structure (-u) than γλαυκῶπις (--u). Not only does γλαυκῶπις have two syllables in a row which are long by nature, but it begins with two consonants, thereby making any preceding syllable long by position even if it were not already long by nature. This structure generally makes it much less flexible than Παλλάς, which only spans two syllables. Additionally, that Παλλάς ends with a consonant means that it could take a position before either a vowel *or* a consonant, the latter of which would render its scansion as --, if that were required by the rest of the line.³⁴

The etymology of Παλλάς has not yet been firmly established, which makes it difficult to use it as the basis for ancient opinions and views on Athena. Nevertheless, there is one derivational connection which appears most appealing. Beekes and van Beek (2010: 1147) do not give Παλλάς its own entry in his work, but he does mention in the entry for παλλακή ‘concubine’ that Παλλάς may be derivationally related to it. He additionally states in the same entry that both Παλλάς and παλλακή may be related to πάλλας, -αντος ‘youth (m.).’ These parallels may be where the oft-used translation ‘maiden, virgin’ originates. Parker (2007: 397) is similarly hesitant to offer a definitive etymology, stating that “its origin and meaning are unknown.” However, he does list several possibilities:

Etymological explanations are mostly based on the different meanings of the verb *pállō/pállomai*, ‘to swing’, or are applied to a giant...or a girl—of the same name killed by the goddess. These explanations were used from early on...In the modern period,

³³ Welwei (2003: 271)

³⁴ This supports the previous assessment that the epithets/formulae were the last elements incorporated into a particular line as it was being composed, and that the poet chose whichever form suited the metrical requirements.

P[allas] has been connected with *pállax* ‘youth’ (of either sex), with Semitic *ba’alat*, ‘female ruler’.³⁵

In addition to the meaning given above, the verb *πάλλω* can also mean ‘I brandish.’ It may be that the original purpose of this epithet was to describe Athena as a protectress, a role similar to that depicted in Theano’s prayer to Athena at *Il.* 6.305-311, the last formula of which is, in fact, *Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη* (*Il.* 6.311).³⁶ The connection between *Παλλάς* and the verb *πάλλω* with the meaning ‘to brandish’ is also suggested by Graziosi and Haubold (2010: 166). Thus, it seems plausible that the epithet *Παλλάς* does in fact refer to some characteristic of Athena relating to protection and therefore, by extension, warfare.

The last point to be made about *Παλλάς* is the fact that it is one of several epithets of Athena found in Homer’s works which is always capitalized. We will look at others such as *Ἀλαλκομενήϊς*, *Ἀτρυτώνη*, and *Τριτογένεια* below. Initially one may suppose that the capitalized epithets are understood to be proper names of Athena where the others are just adjectives and substantives. Upon initial inspection, this analysis appears to be supported by the presence of other epithets, such as *ὄβριμοπάτρη* (*Od.* 3.135) and *γλαυκῶπι* (*Il.* 8.420), which are *not* capitalized, despite appearing independently of Athena’s name, though no doubt still referring exclusively to that goddess. Conversely, that neither *Παλλάς* nor *Ἀλαλκομενήϊς* appear *without* one of the forms of Athena’s name invalidates that analysis. With that in mind, the most plausible alternative is that Athena became so closely associated with protection and her battle gear that *Παλλάς* became not just a title for her, but even a second name by which she was addressed, and *Παλλάς Ἀθήνη* stayed together as a formula simply for the ease of composition of

³⁵ These last two connections are more related to individuals than adjectives and epithets, and so will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 3.

³⁶ This prayer is exceedingly interesting from the standpoint of its structure and the titles which Homer has the character use. These are discussed in greater detail below.

later lines and in keeping with the tradition which is so closely associated to the genre of epic poetry.

Following a thorough examination of the primary epithets of Athena, we will now move to those which are not as frequent and/or those for which the case that they represent traditional epithets is not as strong. As discussed above, only a handful of occurrences, or even just a single one, does not discount an adjective, noun, or phrase from being included in this study. Furthermore, there may be evidence that a particularly old form which can be traced all the way back to Mycenaean may be an example of a particularized epithet. However, we will first look at Ἀλαλκομενηῖς due to its disputed etymology and possible (though unlikely) connection to Παλλάς. We have already shown that Ἀλαλκομενηῖς belongs to a full-line formula (see above, pp. 10-11). Despite only being used twice throughout all of Homer's works (*Il.* 4.8 and *Il.* 5.908), the two lines in which it is found are entirely identical. When combined with the fact that there are no other scenes in which Hera and Athena appear unified in a particular endeavor, it becomes clear that the epithet Ἀλαλκομενηῖς as well as the formula in which it is found belong to the traditional language. Parry (1971: 44) offers a justification for the inclusion of an infrequently-used formula in his overview of the traditional inventory: "The frequency or the rarity of a formula thus depends solely on the poet's need to express some one idea more or less often." Thus, the appearance of the line in the exact same form in two different locations can be said to override the lack of frequency of its use in identifying it as a traditional formula. This status is also in keeping with Martin's (1989: 151) statement that "rather than by recondite vocabulary or allusiveness, [the poets] ornamented and expanded their performances of traditional material by adding lines, motifs, and themes." The inclusion of this particular formula in multiple places marks it as traditional. Additionally, its lack of overall frequency can be taken as proof that the

poet was crafting his own narrative on a larger scale while relying on the smaller building blocks of traditional epithets and formulae to fill in the details, using specific epithets where needed. From this perspective, it appears that the particular epithet Ἀλαλκομενήϊς belongs not just to the traditional language, but also to the specific, full-line formula found at *Il.* 4.8 and 5.908.

That Ἀλαλκομενήϊς is limited to the formula Ἦρη τ' Ἀργεῖη καὶ Ἀλαλκομενήϊς Ἀθήνη within Homer's epics is not all that surprising, given its metrical structure u-uu-u. It is longer than a single foot, and even too long to complete a line following the bucolic diaeresis. With its six-syllable structure, Ἀλαλκομενήϊς must begin in the second half of a particular foot following another short syllable. This requirement leaves limited versatility for versification. The most suitable location for it in a particular line is naturally after the feminine caesura, which is indeed where it is used in *Il.* 4.8 and 5.908. Given the status of formulae as providing the foundation of individual lines, where the poet's creativity in composition shows through on a more macroscopic scale, it can be stated that the individual epithets were not detached from their formulae and inserted elsewhere. Rather than selecting an epithet to fill a position in a line, the poet was content to keep the traditional epithets within their previously established formulae. However, in addition to the lack of need for this particular formula, there is another supporting explanation for the absence of independent occurrences of Ἀλαλκομενήϊς despite the large inventory of formulae which appear directly following the feminine caesura.

The most frequent location of a verb in Homer's works, and dactylic hexameter as a whole, is directly *preceding* the feminine caesura.³⁷ Additionally, most verbs in epic are third person singular preterites, “and thus will almost always have -ε (or more rarely -εῖτο, -ᾶτο, [and] -ῶτο)...or if it is not a verb-form, the word preceding this type of formula is most likely to be

³⁷ Parry (1971: 54)

ἔπειτα or δέ.”³⁸ The commonality shared between the third-person singular forms, ἔπειτα, and δέ is that they all end with a short syllable consisting of a vowel. This allows the first word of a formula starting at the feminine caesura to begin with a single consonant. And in fact, outside the full-line formula found at *Il.* 4.8 and 5.908, the poet chooses to add a disyllabic word whose first syllable is naturally short to an already well-represented formula, producing the extended formula θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη. This extended version of the formula discussed in the first paragraphs of this chapter appears fifty-one times, no doubt utilized to fill the space from the feminine caesura to the end of the line. And since it had already been established in the tradition, there was no reason for the poet to attempt to get creative and choose a different disyllabic word or utilize another word that would have fit in place of θεὰ γλαυκῶπις (u---u).

The archaic nature of Ἀλαλκομενηῖς may offer a glimpse into Athena’s background, depending on which etymology one chooses to accept. Ἀλαλκομενηῖς only appears twice across the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. However, it also appears in multiple later Greek authors in connection with Athena. One in particular deserves consideration here. Strabo (*Geography* 9.2.36) quotes part of the formula found at *Il.* 4.8 and 5.908 as part of his discussion of its importance and the relation between Athena and her title Ἀλαλκομενηῖς as it appears in Homer. He states that it is an honorific pertaining to a place in which she was held in high regard, owing to a myth that she was born there:

The poet recalls [the name of] the Alalcomenaeans, but not in the *Catalogue* [of contingents in *Il.* book 2], “Argive Hera and Alalcomenaeon Athena.” It has an ancient temple of Athena which is exceedingly honored, and they even say that the goddess was born there, just like Hera was born in Argos, and that it was on account of this that the poet named them as such.

³⁸ Parry (1971: 54)

It appears that the connection to Alalcomenae, a town in Boeotia in Northern Greece, was strong enough that it was still apparent when Strabo was writing in the second half of the first century BCE.³⁹ This combined with the fact that it found its way into a dedicated Homeric formula indicates that it was established as a center of worship at an early period *and* that it was an important religious center, given that the temple and cult endured for so many centuries relatively uninterrupted. The location of the city itself also indicates a rather widespread cult of Athena before and during the period during which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed. This is further supported by possible connections with other (non-Greek) goddesses, which will be taken up in Chapter 3.

A possible alternative, or perhaps related, point of origin of Ἀλαλκομενήϊς is found in the verb ἀλαλκεῖν ‘to ward off.’ Various forms of this verb appear a total of thirteen times throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, indicating its status as a similarly archaic lexical item in the history of Greek. It is easy to see how this verb and the character of Athena herself could have become closely intertwined in the early history of the development of the traditional poetic language, especially considering what we have already seen with Παλλάς. This linguistic relationship between the verb and the goddess could theoretically have developed in either order, however, based on linguistic theory, it appears that that the verb ἀλαλκεῖν developed its meaning of ‘to ward off’ first and was subsequently associated with Athena so closely that it became a title reserved solely for her. This is parallel to one of the possible sources of the epithet Παλλάς (see above, p. 33) from the verb πάλλειν ‘to brandish.’ However, it is also possible that the

³⁹ For the location of Alalcomenae, see Funke (2002: 419). Funke (2002: 420) goes on to say that “after the robbery of the old cult image...the sanctuary fell into disrepair, but the town itself remained in existence.” However, Strabo (*Geography* 9.2.36) discusses the temple and the town in the present tense as still functioning and as a place held in high honor. The precise date of its decline is immaterial to the present discussion and cannot be identified precisely. The important thing is that we have a historical source in Strabo who can corroborate that such a place not only existed but was held in high regard and could trace its existence back to a point at which it may have influenced Homer’s writing and the traditional poetic language.

epithet originated solely from the name of the town in Boeotia and that this verb is unrelated.

The final option is that the name of the town Alalcomenae is somehow related to the verb itself, and perhaps became so through the shared connection with Athena. However, I will refrain from speculating further on this development, and for the purpose of this study will take the town of Alalcomenae as the mostly likely source of this epithet.

There is one substantive which has already been mentioned as deserving of its own discussion. ὀβριμοπατρῆ is most often translated as ‘daughter of a mighty sire.’ It is well-known that Zeus had many divine offspring, to say nothing of his mortal children. However, this particular epithet became specifically reserved for Athena at an early point in the history of epic tradition. Also, despite only occurring five times in total, with three of those in the nominative, ὀβριμοπάτρῆ is another epithet which can be shown to be part of the traditional language by virtue of its presence in a repeated full-line formula, similar to Ἀλαλκομενηΐς. All three occurrences of ὀβριμοπάτρῆ in the nominative (*Il.* 5.747, 8.391, and *Od.* 1.101) appear in the following full-line formula:

ἡρώων (τ)οῖσιν τε κοτέσσεται ὀβριμοπάτρῆ⁴⁰

That ὀβριμοπάτρῆ appears multiple times in the same formula is reminiscent of other epithets we have looked at and clearly marks it as belonging to the traditional language from a very early stage. Lastly, it deserves to be noted that, just as the other epithets we have seen, and unlike the epithets for many of the other members of the Greek Pantheon, this epithet appears in its full-line formula in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The presence of both this epithet and its comprehensive formula across both epics serves as additional evidence that it was firmly

⁴⁰ At *Il.* 5.747, the second word is οἷσιν, while at *Il.* 8.391 and *Od.* 1.101, it is τοῖσιν. These particular forms are immaterial to the discussion at hand, since the third syllable is already long by nature.

entrenched as a traditional epic formula to be used whenever the poet felt the need to insert it as part of his narrative.

Like Ἀλαλκομενηῖς, ὀβριμοπάτρη is preceded by a vowel in a short syllable and thus *could* be replaced by the more frequently used phrase Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη, both of which have the metrical structure -uu--. However, we see instead that the poet chooses to retain the older full phrase even though a more modern and common formula would also fit. Because of the structure of the rest of the line at e.g. *Il.* 8.391, the poet could have written ἥρώων τοῖσιν τε κοτέσσεται Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη, which features an epithet-name formula which would have been demonstrably much more familiar to the audience. However, the fact that the poet chose *not* to do this indicates that these older epithets were fully embedded in their formulae and were neither used outside of them nor replaced within. This suggests a strong, more archaic connection between the poetic tradition and these full-line formulae, such that they are still included in the Homeric epics and also that they are not altered at all with the replacement of the traditional epithets with more common ones.

Beyond the question of whether an epithet belongs to the traditional language, there appear to be two categories of epithets: those which appear more archaic and are only found as part of full-line formulae such as Ἀλαλκομενηῖς and ὀβριμοπάτρη, and those which appear “younger” and are part of partial-line formulae which generally fall in the same position in their lines but can be paired with any other narrative element which fits the empty portion of the line. The latter category includes many phrases we have already seen, including Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη and γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη. As I have already shown, these can be distinguished by the fact that the shorter, more recent formulae could take the place of those epithets found in the older, full-line formulae, based on the metrical structure of the surrounding syllables. However, the older

epithets are *not* replaced by those which elsewhere are extremely prevalent and were no doubt the poet's default choice when composing a new line. From this it appears that the traditional inventory of epithets and even entire formulae took place in at least two different stages. There are a number of different possibilities for how these came about, and it is unlikely we will ever determine the exact process by which such a complex and expansive inventory was developed.

Unlike the etymologies of several other epithets we have already seen, that of ὀβριμοπάτρη is relatively straightforward. The second half of the compound, -πάτρη comes directly from the Greek πατήρ, showing zero-grade of the stem suffix as part of a compound. The first member, ὀβριμο-, is slightly more difficult to analyze. It too has a clear point of origin within Greek in the adjective ὀβριμος 'strong, mighty.' Beekes and van Beek (2010: 1043) identify the adjective as being "traditionally compared with words that have no initial ὀ- and a long stem vowel: βριμός, μέγας, χαλεπός."⁴¹ Furthermore, of the two variants presented by Beekes and van Beek (ibid.)—βριμός 'harsh, fierce' and ὀβριμος—only the latter is present as a standalone adjective in Homer's writings. Lastly of the twenty-seven occurrences of the forms of ὀβριμος which are metrically equivalent—ὀβριμος (nominative sg.) and ὀβριμον (accusative sg.) both begin with a vowel, end with a single consonant, and have the metrical structure -uu—only two are found outside the fifth foot. And of these occurrences, which fall after the bucolic diaeresis, thirteen are paired with the noun ἔγχος. All this is to say that the alternation between ὀβριμος and βριμός is *not* merely one of poetic convenience. Rather, as Beekes and van Beek (2010: 1043) suggest, the alternation "probably points to pre-Greek origin."

⁴¹ Beekes and van Beek (ibid.) additionally note that ὀβριμος is seen in the first member of the compound ὀβριμοπάτρη, which he identifies as an "epithet of Athena and others." However, as this epithet only refers to Athena in Homer's works, it is being treated as a distinctive epithet within that scope.

A third title of Athena, Ἀτρυτώνη ‘unwearied,’ also replaces her name rather than accompanying it. Additionally, it is likewise used exclusively in a particular formula, though not one that takes up an entire line, and always falls in the same place in the line, in this case the very end, similar to ὀβριμοπάτρη. This presents an interesting scenario for a number of reasons. First, its presence in the formula Διὸς τέκος Ἀτρυτώνη ‘Atrytone, child of Zeus,’ which occurs seven times and always in the same location in the line, marks it quite clearly as a traditional formula. Of those seven occurrences, six are additionally preceded by αἰγιόχοιο ‘aegis-bearing.’⁴² Its standing as a traditional epithet and as another which appears to be related to Athena’s status as war-goddess suggests that this was her status in the earliest stages of Greek culture.⁴³ Second, similar to Παλλάς, Ἀλακομενηΐς, and Τριτογένεια (below), this title is capitalized. This epithet is simply explained as a lengthened form of ἄτρυτη, the regular adjective which has the same meaning.⁴⁴ This seems to indicate that the capitalization of this class of epithets does not definitively indicate that they have their origin in another proper noun, but rather that they became so closely associated with Athena that they were capitalized due to being interchangeable with her name.

The last feature of Ἀτρυτώνη which I will discuss is the fact that it and ὀβριμοπάτρη both fall in the same place in the line in their respective formulae. More importantly, they are metrically equivalent. This interchangeability demonstrates that the poet’s composition was more driven by application of formulae than by specific epithets, and consequently that they are ornamental rather than particularized. The poet did not exchange ὀβριμοπάτρη for Ἀτρυτώνη in

⁴² *Il.* 10.284 is the only one which is not. This may support the claim by some scholars that book 10 was not composed at the same time as the rest of the *Iliad*.

⁴³ i.e. after she developed from a Minoan goddess, on which see Chapter 3 below.

⁴⁴ *LSJ*; neither ἄτρυτη nor the name Ἀτρυτώνη is addressed by Beekes and van Beek (2010), so I will not expand further here on the relatively straightforward source of this meaning.

the formulae even though he could have—they both start with vowels, take up exactly two feet (-uu-- vs. ----), *and* fall at the end of the line. The most reasonable explanation for the absence of alternation between the two is that the poet was more engaged with the full formulae than the individual pieces. This shows that both of these adjectives not only belong to the traditional inventory but also are unique for the purposes of this study and worthy of examination in Chapter 3.

The last epithet which falls into this category of proper noun due to its capitalization also has the least clear point of origin. Τριτογένεια appears four times and in two different places in the line.⁴⁵ However, there is enough regularity about its placement and the surrounding elements to suggest that this name also belongs to the traditional inventory and deserves inclusion here. The primary proof is that its two occurrences which begin in the second foot of the line are both part of an identical line, which is one of the criteria we used as evidence for the inclusion of Ἀλαλκομενήϊς. The fact that Τριτογένεια also shows up in a different location in its other two lines may appear problematic at first, but there are enough similarities that we will still consider it. Although the lines at *Il.* 4.515 and *Od.* 3.378 are not *exactly* the same, they do show enough similarities to accept them as formulaic. Both lines show Διὸς θυγάτηρ in the first half of the line as well as Τριτογένεια at the very end. That leaves only the first two syllables of the first foot and the portion of the line between the masculine caesura and the bucolic diaeresis empty. These empty spaces are easily filled with the verb, a conjunction or particles, or an adjective or noun, the last of which is seen least often when surrounded by formulaic phrases; but this is actually what we see in both instances. Thus, even with the four occurrences in different positions in the line, there is still enough evidence to state that Τριτογένεια belongs to the traditional inventory.

⁴⁵ At the very end of the line at *Il.* 4.515 and *Od.* 3.378; following the first foot at *Il.* 8.39 and 22.183.

Its origin and etymology are indeterminate enough that in translation it is often rendered simply in its transliterated form ‘Tritogeneia.’ The second member of the compound is quite clearly related to γένος ‘birth.’ There are several suggested etymologies for the first member, some of which come to us from ancient authors. Herodotus (4.180.5) describes a festival in Libya during which the participants worship the goddess “whom we call Athena,” stating that she was born from Poseidon by the nearby Lake Triton. This story is also suggested by Apollonius of Rhodes (*Arg.* 4.1308-11), and the *LSJ*. If true, this would be a remarkable range of worship from Boeotia all the way down to Africa. An alternative suggestion is Pausanias’ claim (9.33.7) that Athena was born from a stream of the same name in Boeotia, though he is familiar with the explanation of Herodotus (1.14.6). This pairs nicely with the source of Ἀλαλκομενήτις above and suggests that Athena may have been heavily favored in Boeotia in addition to Athens and Crete. Alternatively, it is possible that this epithet originates from the manner of her birth rather than the location, since τριτώ is an uncommon word for ‘head.’ However, this seems unlikely given the ancient commentaries.

Having provided a comprehensive overview of those epithets which are most common and/or clearly identifiable as belonging to the traditional inventory of Homeric formulae, I will now turn to those epithets which I mentioned briefly in the introduction as unclear with regard to their status as either distinctive or generic epithets. The two prominent adjectives which feature in this category are λαοσσόος, ‘people-rousing,’ and πολύβουλος, ‘many-counselled, rich in counsel.’ The analysis of these adjectives will take a different path than that of the epithets which we have already examined. The previous examples all had defining characteristics such as location in the line and/or presence in a particular formula to identify them as entrenched forms and thus belonging to the traditional inventory. However, these and other characteristics must

first be examined for these adjectives whose status is not yet clearly defined. Once that has been done, if they qualify, we will see what information they provide about Athena's character.

Let us begin with πολύβουλος, 'many-counselled,' for the simple reason that it is identifiable as distinctive to Athena within Homer's works. It appears only twice (*Il.* 5.260, *Od.* 16.282); however, several features of these two occurrences support the inclusion of πολύβουλος in the traditional inventory of epithets. First, in both instances it is found directly preceding the feminine caesura. We have already demonstrated that placement in the same location in multiple lines can be a marker of traditional epic language. Additionally, it is found with the actual name of Athena in both instances, though it is only directly followed by her name at *Il.* 5.260. This marks it as an adjective rather than a substantive. The latter would be more difficult to demonstrate as belonging to the traditional inventory, given the lack of an obvious formula, unlike the environment in which we find ὀβριμοπάτρη.

Conversely, one may say that we must discount πολύβουλος from being included in the present study due to the absence of a formula anywhere in the line. Even beyond the adjective itself, there is no discernible formula found either at *Il.* 5.260 or *Od.* 16.282, though it is noteworthy that both of these lines are preceded in the previous line by the same full-line formula (*Il.* 5.259 and *Od.* 16.281). However, this does not appear to affect the composition of the lines in which πολύβουλος is found. In addition to the absence of a formula, or even similar vocabulary, in the two lines in which this adjective is found, it is curious that Ἀθήνη is found directly following the adjective at *Il.* 5.260 but is placed at the very end of the line at *Od.* 16.282.

In response to this observation, I will point out that this adjective is found in direct quotations in both instances, whereas most of the traditional epithets of deities are instead found in pure narration, where the poet can use whichever epithet fits the meter, allowing him to pay

more attention to the overall sequence of events rather than the specific meaning of each word.⁴⁶ However, within direct quotations, there appears to be an added layer of expression, as if the poet is trying to have each speaker use particularized epithets which pertain to the kind of statement he or she is making. At the very least, the poet employs different epithets within direct speech than he does in the main narrative. This is true both of *πολύβουλος* as well as of *ποτνια*, discussed below, which despite being used twenty-five times as one of Hera's primary epithets is used exactly once of Athena, in the first line of Theano's prayer at *Il.* 6.305-10. Based on the sample size, the fact that both adjectives refer to Athena, and the fact that they are used in direct speech, I will claim that *πολύβουλος* is indeed a particularized epithet employed in each instance with a relationship to the statement made by the speaker: in both instances, the speaker states what he will do "when many-counselled Athena should put it in my mind" (*Od.* 16.282) or "if many-counselled Athena gives me the glory to kill them both" (*Il.* 5.260-1). Both of these lines defer to the goddess herself, as the goddess of wisdom, which can naturally be connected to the idea expressed *πολύβουλος*, namely that she has many different options for how events will play out. This conclusion is supported by the remark about the stem of the second element of *πολύβουλος*, *βουλή* 'will, desire', by M.L. West (1997: 222) that "the word *βουλή* does not just mean 'will' in the sense of what the god wanted; it implies a considered plan." The last piece of evidence for the status of *πολύβουλος* as a particularized epithet is the combination of the fact that it is not found in any formula, nor does it appear often enough that the audience would have dissociated the word from its original meaning, as was undoubtedly the case for *γλαυκῶπις* and *Παλλάς*.

⁴⁶ For the methods of the poet's creative expression, see above (pp. 26-27) and Martin (1989: 151-53)

The prayer at *Il.* 6.305-10, which I have already mentioned, is interesting from a structural standpoint for several reasons, not the least of which is the title given to Athena at the beginning of the first line, πότνι ‘lady, mistress, Queen.’⁴⁷ As already stated, this epithet—for we can call it that based on frequency of use—is primarily used for Hera, a status which makes its use for Athena at *Il.* 6.305 curious. We once again see a divergence from the normal epithets within a direct quotation from one of the characters, in this case a prayer rather than a conversational statement. This is made even more poignant by the fact that unlike πολύβουλος, the form seen in the prayer has a metrically identical alternative which could have been used. Both πότνι and Παλλάς have the same metrical structure of -u, and they are also both followed by Ἀθηναίη. Given that we have already shown Παλλάς Ἀθηναίη to be a formula utilized at the beginning of a line, it is difficult to view this unique occurrence with Athena’s name as anything other than a particularized epithet in place of an otherwise generic one, the goal of which is to convey a specific detail about the goddess, either something more about her divine nature which the adjective ποτνι encompasses, or else perhaps to change the epithet simply *because* it is in direct speech, specifically a prayer, and the poet wanted to employ different language to indicate the shift in tone.

This latter possibility seems all the more likely when we consider its etymology and the evidence for this term in the earlier stages of the Greek language. That the word has to do with some form of power is clear from the root *pot-*, the same as that found in Latin *possum* ‘I am able’ and *potestas* ‘power.’ Beekes and van Beek (2010: 1226) glosses the PIE form **pot-n-iH₂* as ‘lady,’ but Sihler (1995: 47) glosses it as ‘mistress,’ connecting it further to the masculine form **potis* ‘master.’ This term then did not originally refer just to a woman, but to a woman

⁴⁷ See below for observations on ἐρυσίπολι at *Il.* 6.305.

who had power or command over others, an appropriate title for a goddess. This also explains how it became one of the more common epithets for Hera, the queen of the gods. We even see a form of this word in Linear B which suggests extremely close ties to Athena as early as the Mycenaean period. The Linear B form *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* is noted by Palmer (1963: 239) as most likely meaning something like ‘The Lady of Athana.’ He mentions also that it “has no word-divider...The scribes seem to have been reluctant to divide a divine name.” We can take from this that the Mycenaean form *po-ti-ni-ja*, whence πότνια, originally had much closer ties to Athena than those which we see in Homer’s works. Additionally, we see a goddess mentioned in Mycenaean texts who was closely associated with Athens even at that early stage of the Greek language, and as far away as the island of Crete. Whether Athens was named after Athena or vice versa will be considered in Chapter 3. Given the evidence presented here regarding the specificity of the use of the epithet combined with its meaning and origin, as well as associated evidence that it was part of the traditional inventory of epithets, I will suggest that just as was the case with πολύβουλος, this use of ποτνι’ is a *particularized* one, and thus should be included in Athena’s character study.

Three other epithets deserve attention as part of this study, but they seem less likely to qualify at first glance. I mentioned the first two, λαοσσόος and μέγαθυμος in the introduction. The third is another title, ερυσίπολις which also appears at *Il.* 6.305 at the start of Theano’s prayer. The generic epithet μέγαθυμος is the easiest to discount as outside the parameters of the present study for two reasons. I have already referred to the first, that μέγαθυμος is a generic epithet. Among the nouns associated with it in its seventy-six uses in Homer’s works are Ἀχαιοί (*Il.* 1.135), Ἰφίτου (*Il.* 2.518), and Τρῶες (*Il.* 5.27, 5.102). Not only do we see it used of a variety of heroes including Iphitos, but it is also used of groups such as the Achaeans and the Trojans.

Even aside from the sheer number of different names which are associated with this adjective, the fact that it is used with these groups of people removes it from the parameters discussed in the Introduction (p. 5 above). Beyond this, of those seventy-six uses, *μεγάθυμος* appears in the nominative only fourteen times—five in the singular, nine in the plural. This too makes it more difficult to analyze within the parameters of the current analysis, since there is a much wider range of possibilities for constructions and locations within lines if we look at all possible cases of particular adjectives. As a result, *μεγάθυμος* will *not* be taken into account in Chapter 3's character study.

The status of *λαοσσόος* 'people-rousing,' on the other hand, is more difficult to assess. It only occurs six times in total, four of those in the nominative. On the one hand, *λαοσσόος* is found in the same location in the line in each nominative occurrence, in the fourth foot, immediately before the bucolic diaeresis. However, the variety of names which it describes poses a slight problem. We find it in the nominative once each with Athena (*Il.* 13.128), Ares (*Il.* 17.398), Strife (*Il.* 20.48), and Apollo (*Il.* 20.79). Given its status as a generic epithet as opposed to a distinctive one, we must determine whether these uses are particularized and have something to do with the narrative at hand in each instance, or whether they are ornamental and should thus be discounted from the present study.

The case can be made that each instance is a particularized use of the epithet bringing to the audience's attention the fact that the god in question is engaging his or her talent for war. In support of this analysis, we see that each use of *λαοσσόος* is found either in the middle of combat or else at a point when that 'people-rousing' would be expected and even necessary: it is used of Strife (*Il.* 20.48) and Apollo (*Il.* 20.79) at the beginning of *Iliad* 20 when the gods are arming to finally join the battle after being given permission to do so by Zeus. Ares is an

aggressive god of war, so any use with his name would be appropriate, but even with him we only see it used at *Il.* 17.398 in the description of how fiercely the Trojans and the Greeks are fighting over Patroclus' corpse: "not even people-rousing Ares or Athena would make light of that [struggle] seeing it, even though their anger was especially fitting." (*Il.* 17.398-9) Lastly, Athena is described as λαοσσόος at *Il.* 13.128 as Homer describes the Aiantes quite literally rousing the rest of the Greek soldiers shortly before engaging the Trojan troops on the battlefield. All four of these uses are not just connected to events around the periphery of fighting but are used to describe the gods when they are mentioned in connection with fighting and/or 'people-rousing' that is actually taking place in the moment.

As was the case with πολύβουλος, we do not see λαοσσόος present in any sort of formula, which lends further support to the idea that these lines were perhaps the poet's own creation, and that he chose individual adjectives which *both* fit the line and contributed to the narrative. Unlike the other epithets which we have qualified as particularized in their use, these take place in the basic narration rather than in the direct speech of a character. However, that may be due to the fact that this is a generic epithet which refers to multiple individuals, and so the use in direct speech would not have been as powerful a shift as the distinctive epithets we saw above which referred exclusively to Athena. It appears to be appropriate to say then that λαοσσόος is also a particularized epithet owing to its usage in multiple different situations in which we would expect to find some adjective with a meaning generally related to the idea of fighting or aggression such as 'people-rousing.'

The last epithet I will mention specifically in this chapter is the other which is found only in *Il.* 6.305: ἐρυσίπολι 'protectress.' Like μέγαθυμος, this item is relatively easy to discount for several reasons, but it is important to mention because the discerning reader will note that we

already discussed ποτνι' above, whose only appearance is also in this line. The simplest criterion to use to discount this form from this study is the fact that it is not in its nominative form ἐρυσίπτολις. Not only does this violate the previously established parameters of the study, but the nominative form would change the locations where it could fit in the meter and, indeed, would prevent it from being used where it is found. The vocative singular ἐρυσίπτολι has the metrical structure uu-uu both on its own and at *Il.* 6.305 because it ends with a short vowel and is followed by δῖα which begins with a single consonant. The form ἐρυσίπτολις on its own has the same uu-uu structure, but the last syllable is made long by position in its line when followed by the same δῖα. This would give it in the text a metrical structure of uu-u-, which is not allowed by the rules of dactylic hexameter. One may object that ποτνι' Ἀθηναίη is also in the vocative rather than the nominative. However, ποτνια in Greek shows no difference between the nominative and vocative inflectional endings, and even if it did, unless that vocative ending ended in a consonant, the last vowel would be dropped just like it is at *Il.* 6.305 to avoid hiatus.⁴⁸ This combined with the fact that the form πότνι' has a possible alternative in Παλλὰς which has been shown to also pair with Ἀθηναίη at the beginnings of lines and whose vocative form is *also* the same as its nominative, allows for its inclusion in the study. However, none of these characteristics apply to ἐρυσίπτολι, and as such, it will not be taken into account in the character study in Chapter 3.

Based on the criteria established in Chapter 1, we have seen how different epithets of Athena found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* qualify as part of the traditional inventory. Even if they don't meet all of the criteria, there is a strong enough case to designate them as belonging to the oldest layer of poetic language which is discernible within Homer's epics. The two biggest

⁴⁸ Two syllables' worth of vowels cannot be dropped to avoid hiatus, hence the combination πότνι' Ἀθηναίη.

determining factors are frequency of use—i.e. to the point where the audience would not have been able to or even interested in figuring out the specific meaning of the epithet in each particular usage. The epithets which meet this criterion are the two most frequently used of Athena's epithets, γλαυκῶπις and Παλλάς. These epithets also meet the second major criterion, an obvious presence in a stock formula, which we have established as falling in the same location in a line as well as being surrounded by the same words. Those epithets which meet this latter criterion but not the former have been shown to belong to a full-line formula from which the poet refused to deviate, even when an alternative was available. We saw this with Ἀλαλκομενήϊς and ὀβριμοπάτρη, both of which have potential alternatives in other epithets used of Athena in Homer's epics. Thus it has been established that these belong to full-line formulae which appear to be old even relative to the partial-line formulae.

The other category of epithets which have been included in the study are those which appear to be *particularized* epithets—i.e. those which have been selected specifically for their meaning rather than because of their presence in an already-established formula which was included for the sake of the meter. These are naturally included in a character study based on epithets due to the fact that they were chosen on account of their general meaning rather than their preexisting association with the particular character being examined, in this case Athena. These epithets appear only once or twice in reference to Athena specifically, but have either been shown to be used in specific situations (πολύβουλος) or of multiple characters (λαοσσόος), and finally when there is a more frequent, default epithet which is discarded in a particular instance (e.g. ποτνί' at *Il.* 6.305 rather than the more common Παλλάς). Possible reasons for these particularized uses will be examined in the following chapter, which will also explore what the presence of these epithets in the traditional language tells us about the early history of Athena,

including her traits, places of worship, and possible connections with deities from other cultures and religions.

CHAPTER 3

ATHENA'S CHARACTER STUDY

In Chapter 1, we established the criteria for determining which of Athena's epithets in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* belong to the traditional language of the epic poets. The first determining factor was frequency of use, which would have led to these words becoming divorced from their original meaning in the minds of the audience. The second determining factor, both for those epithets which were demonstrated to be frequent as well as for those which did *not* have frequency in their favor, was their presence in a particular Homeric formula. In the latter case, we have seen that these were often full-line formulae which the poet used even in instances where other epithets would also have fit metrically. In Chapter 2, we examined the etymologies and metrical structures of those traditional epithets. This provides the foundation for the focus of this chapter, namely the determination of how those words are connected to the character of Athena herself and what they may tell us about the locations of her places of worship, her physical and character traits, and even her connections with deities from other cultures and regions.

Beyond those which were confirmed as belonging to the traditional epic inventory, I have also included a few adjectives which I have argued to be particularized epithets chosen specifically for their meaning, with a view toward examining why the poet employed them in the places he did. I did not devote much time to the etymologies of place epithets because for the purposes of this study I am interested in the etymologies of the traditional epithets, whose use was established at an earlier period of the Greek language. Conversely, I am only interested in

the meanings of the particularized epithets at the time when they were introduced into the text, since that meaning is what informed their original use by the poet. Thus for those epithets, I examined the environments in which they are found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, including the events of the narrative at large, rather than their etymological background.

This chapter consists of several sections, each relating to a particular aspect of the chosen epithets. I will begin by focusing on Athena's specific character traits and expand outward to the related topic of the locations of her worship and other religious and cultural elements. These will overlap somewhat, as it seems most appropriate to discuss the cultural areas associated with each of the traditional epithets rather than to keep them entirely separate. The last portion of this chapter will focus specifically on the more tenuous connections to other gods and goddesses. It will also explore how those other deities may have both been the source of certain epithets, especially Παλλάς, as well as whether they were viewed as possessing similar traits in their own right.⁴⁹

To begin with the most specific of the epithets mentioned in Chapter 2, it seems most appropriate to first take up those which we identified as particularized. These were chosen specifically because of their relationship to Athena herself. Also, their use and meaning are less clouded by the different developments which affected the forms and meanings of the traditional epithets. Of those epithets which were examined in Chapter 2 above, πολύβουλος, λαοσσόος, and ποτνι were identified as particularized due to the fact that they are not associated with any formula, their infrequency of use, and their presence in similar situations in the overall narrative. πολύβουλος is employed in the direct speech of a character who is discussing what he will do if 'many-counselled Athena' (*Il.* 5.260, *Od.* 16.282) allows a particular event to come to pass.

⁴⁹ On the possible connection of Παλλάς to deities from other cultures and regions, see Parker (2007: 397) and p. 36 above.

λαοσσόος is utilized in moments when the gods are mentioned in connection with fierce fighting. However, this does not happen too often in either epic: In the *Iliad*, the gods are forbidden from entering the battle directly until *Iliad* 20 (though we do see them in combat before that, e.g. *Iliad* 5), and the poet apparently did not feel the need to insert λαοσσόος in the few instances of direct combat found in the *Odyssey*. More importantly, there are few instances where λαοσσόος is both appropriate for the events of the narrative *and* fits into the meter. I will take up πορνι' last, as this word's connection to Mycenaean will allow a nice transition to the epithets which speak to locations of Athena's worship.

The use of πολύβουλος 'many-counselled' as a particularized epithet is in one sense quite straightforward. "[Athena] is famed among gods for wisdom and wiles."⁵⁰ West (1997: 267, 273) additionally notes that it is common in Homeric prayers for the suppliant to comment that their request is within the benefactive god's ability.⁵¹ Thus it would come as no surprise to the Greek audience that Athena would have a slew of different plans and alternatives available to her in a given situation, nor that the suppliant would make this explicitly known in his request. Furthermore, the status of πολύβουλος as a particularized epithet means that we can also look at the grammar of the sentence in which it is found. In each case, we see a hypothetical statement indicating that the outcome which the speaker is requesting is one of several possibilities. At *Il.* 5.260, the clause begins with αἶ 'if,' and the verb ὀρέξῃ, the basic meaning of which is 'reach out/stretch out,' is in the subjunctive mood. These are clear indicators of a future more vivid condition, indicating the speaker's admission that his request is certainly possible, but not guaranteed. At *Od.* 16.282 we have a similar construction, though this one is a bit more definitive. The poet has Odysseus open this section of his speech not with a form of 'if,' but

⁵⁰ Burkert (1985: 142)

⁵¹ For prayers with similar phrasing to other gods, see e.g. *Il.* 24.344, *Od.* 6.188

ὅπποτε ‘whenever’. Additionally, the main verb of the protasis is in the present subjunctive, indicating a general condition. This is a more definitive statement than the future more vivid found at *Il.* 5.260, as it expresses some degree of expectation that the discussed event will come to pass. However, both statements rely on Athena’s direct action and utilize her epithet *πολύβουλος*, the particularized *and* distinctive use of which in these instances solidifies her status as the goddess of wisdom.

With that status established, we now have the opportunity to bring attention to connections to deities from other cultures, as well as similarities in presentation of those deities and those of the Greeks. Burkert (1985: 142) mentions ties to Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom, whose story shows similar narrative elements. Like Athena, Thoth was also born from the head of another god, Seth. That Thoth was not born from the head of Amon-Ra, the king of the Egyptian pantheon and Zeus’ equivalent, is immaterial to the present discussion. It is curious that the Greek and Egyptian birth stories show their respective deities as being born from another’s forehead, given Burkert’s (*ibid.*) comment that “This birth myth...is scarcely to be derived from nature metaphor...and even less from allegory, whereby wisdom comes from the head.” The Egyptians believed that the seat of the rational and emotional mind was the heart, which was weighed upon death against the feather of truth, Ma’at, to determine one’s fate in the afterlife. The Greeks similarly believed that “it is, if anything, the breath, the diaphragm which is the seat of right thinking.” (Burkert, *ibid*)

Athena is additionally connected to Thoth through her status as matron of crafts, which can be compared to Thoth’s role as the patron of writing. This connection is more concrete than that of the similar birth stories. Writing and handiwork are tangible elements which permeated all ancient cultures, so it is only appropriate that they assign deities as matrons or patrons of

each. On this premise, it seems most appropriate to designate the deity of wisdom, who is already understood to be mindful and calculating, as the patron of the arts. The Greeks thus honored Athena, goddess of wisdom, as their matron of those crafts, and the Egyptians likewise worshipped Thoth as the god of writing.⁵² There does appear to be a slight disconnection between Athena as the gentle goddess of wisdom and handicrafts and that of the fierce, ‘people-rousing’ goddess we see on the battlefield. I will make the case that these roles are the result of influences from different cultures which were syncretized and eventually became different aspects of the same deity.

Somewhat in opposition to this, Gantz (2003: 85) expresses surprise that “Of Athena’s patronage of crafts or domestic arts we hear less than we might have expected in the two epics. But she certainly weaves clothing on occasion.” The limited references to her skill in women’s handicrafts—Gantz (*ibid.*) mentions three short passages in particular—are in stark contrast to the myriad descriptions of her aid for the Achaeans on the battlefield directly (*Il.* 5.1-7, 22.214-223) or indirectly (*Il.* 4.86-103, 22.226-247, etc.), as well as arming for battle herself (*Il.* 8.384-96) and eventually joining the conflict (*Il.* 20.47-51).⁵³ The lack of references to her craftsmanship supports by the idea that she was initially exclusively a war goddess (on which more below), and that the other roles for which she was famous during the Classical period and beyond were later additions to her character.

This role as a war goddess is evoked on one occasion by the poet’s use of λαοσσόος ‘people-rousing’. This epithet is also used of Ares, Strife, and Apollo and seems diametrically

⁵² Whether Thoth was named the patron of writing because of his role as god of wisdom or vice versa, the fact that both roles are assigned to the same god is sufficient to demonstrate the connection between him and Athena.

⁵³ The πέπλον ‘robe, upper garment’ which Hector mentions at *Il.* 6.271 can certainly not be meant as an offering to a goddess of handicrafts given the nature of his request. It seems rather to be a garment which befits a goddess of Athena’s status to clothe her, hence the adjectives χαριέστατος ‘most graceful, elegant’, μέγιστος ‘greatest’, and φίλτατος ‘most beloved, dearest’.

opposed to her role as goddess of both crafts and wisdom, and this is further evidence that her role as a war goddess was established much earlier than those of wisdom and handicrafts, a stance which is supported by Hall (1997: 219). She is not portrayed as thirsty for battle in the same way Ares is. Instead, she is often shown as engaging with and protecting her favored heroes, such as Achilles (*Il.* 1.196-214), Diomedes (*Il.* 5.1-8), and especially Odysseus (e.g. *Od.* 13.221-310). One may suggest that this is the reason the poet uses the adjective only once for Athena in the nominative (*Il.* 13.128). However, that does not explain why it is also used only once for Ares, for whose character the epithet's descriptive quality is more appropriate. Instead, it seems more likely that the factor determining the limited use of λαοσσόος is a combination of its metrical structure (--uu must be preceded by a long syllable) and the absence of a suitable context for its employment. There are a number of scenes where Athena intervenes on the battlefield in the *Iliad*, but most of them take place after the armies are already engaged and involve her support for individuals rather than groups.

Nevertheless, λαοσσόος *is* used to describe Athena at *Il.* 13.128, and we can make a few connections based on its usage. We know from the very beginning of the *Iliad* that Athena is supportive of the Greeks in their war against the Trojans because of Paris' selection of Aphrodite over Athena. When this is combined with the understanding that Athena embraces the chaos of battle in direct support of heroes such as Diomedes (*Il.* 5.1-8) and Achilles (*Il.* 22.214-298), it is not difficult to see how that supporting and encouraging role might have been expanded to a whole group of people (λαός), in this case the Greek army. This element of her personality in the *Iliad* is brought to the fore when the Greeks gather to face the Trojans. It appears too that each employment of the epithet λαοσσόος possesses a general, characteristic sense rather than indicating a concrete action. At *Il.* 13.126-8, Homer describes the Greek armies as already

enthusiastic for battle: “and around both Aiantes stood their staunch battalions, which neither Ares nor people-rousing Athena, coming upon the scene, might make light of.” The epithet λαοσσόος is thus used as a defining marker of one of Athena’s regular behaviors which the audience may use as a point of reference for the behavior of the Greek army. It is used in a similarly generalizing manner of Strife, Apollo, and even Ares. Furthermore, each use of λαοσσόος depicts concretely the passion within each deity. In Athena’s case, it represents her desire to urge on the Greek army so that she may both protect her cherished heroes and avenge the slight to her honor.

The most informative of the three particularized epithets is πότνι’, whose background and connections to certain locations will provide a transition to the other epithets which show connections to specific locations both within and outside of the Greek sphere of influence. ποτνι’ is found at *Il.* 6.305, where it begins a prayer by Theano dedicated to Athena. This is not the only prayer of request directed to a specific god or goddess within the Homeric epics. Odysseus offers such a prayer to the local river god beginning at *Od.* 5.445. In this case we find the title ἄναξ ‘lord, king’, which nicely parallels the meaning of πότνι’ ‘mistress, queen’. We additionally see Nestor offer a prayer to Athena beginning at *Od.* 3.380, in which he includes the term ἄνασσ’ ‘mistress, queen’, the feminine form of ἄναξ. All of these show a pattern of referring to the addressee of a prayer with some honorific title that identifies him or her as having some degree of power.

This appears to be the reason that the prayer at *Il.* 6.305-10 begins with the epithet ποτνι’, despite the fact that Παλλάς is both metrically equivalent in this position—i.e. before a vowel—and the more frequent epithet, especially in connection with the form Ἀθηναίη. From what we saw in Chapter 2, although a prominent epithet, Παλλάς does not appear to convey any direct

notion of authority or power. As such, it seems a less appropriate choice to introduce a prayer, given the typical convention within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of introducing such entreaties with an honorific title. The poet appears to have selected *πότνι*’ then for its metrical structure *as well as* its categorical meaning, broadly speaking, as referring to someone with authority. Although we saw in Chapter 1 that one of the signs of generic epithets is their categorical reference to something broadly related to “courage, strength, fame, royalty, and that heroic but vague concept, ‘divinity’,” the circumstances in which we find *πότνι*’ are specific enough and closely enough related to its meaning that these characteristics support its status as a particularized epithet. There is, however, a case to be made that *πότνι*’/*πότνια* is instead a traditional, ornamental, and generic epithet.

The selection of *πότνι*’ as the epithet to pair with *Ἀθηναίη* at the beginning of this prayer is noteworthy on a larger scale. The Linear B form *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* has been found on a tablet from Knossos (KN V 52), though its connection to Athens is questionable. We find the second portion of the compound, *po-ti-ni-ja* in other Linear B phrases with the literal meaning ‘Female goddess who has power’, but it is more usually translated simply as ‘lady’ or ‘mistress’.⁵⁴ In addition to *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* (KN V 52) meaning ‘lady of At(h)ana’, we also have *da-pu₂-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja* (KN Gg 702), which Trzaskoma et al. (2016: 402) gloss as ‘lady of the Labyrinth’, and *e-re-wi-jo po-ti-ni-ja* (PY Vn 48.2; note the word break). This last phrase may be fully translated as ‘at the festival of lady Hera’, the first lexical element of which comes down into alphabetic Greek as *Ἡρηφίων* ‘at the festival of Hera’.⁵⁵ This may also be the predecessor of the alphabetic Greek *Λαβυρινθοιο πότνια* ‘lady/mistress of Labyrinthos.’⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Trzaskoma et al. (2016: 399)

⁵⁵ For the connection to the alphabetic Greek form, see Palmer (1963: 419). I have added the ‘lady’ to the gloss of the Linear B phrase to account for the inclusion of *po-ti-ni-ja*.

⁵⁶ Palmer (1963: 238)

These data offer several clues both about the use of forms of *πότνια* in Homer's epics and about the relationship between Athena and centers of her worship. Forms of *πότνια* are used only once for Athena, but are employed multiple times for other figures, including Hera and the mortal woman Hebe. In fact, of the 69 uses of *πότνια/πότνι'* in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, it is curious that exactly one of them references Athena, and in a scenario vastly different from its other uses. Additionally, scholars are not in agreement as to what is meant by the form *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja*. While there is little doubt that this form is translated 'Mistress of At(h)ana', whether that 'At(h)ana', a place name, and the Athens of mainland Greece are one and the same is still up for debate. Burkert (1985: 43) offers the exact translation "'for the Mistress of At(h)ana'" in a list in which he also provides the known names of other deities, which seems to indicate his skepticism that this At(h)ana. Deacy (2008: 95) also expresses doubts about the connection between this *a-ta-na-* and the city of Athens, although she does (ibid.) refer to two passages in Homer (*Il.* 2.546-551, 7.77-80) where Athena is connected directly to the city of Athens.

In favor of the connection between the form *a-ta-na-* and Athens are Puhvel (1987: 129) and Trzaskoma et al. (2016: 407), each of whom provide the translations 'to Lady Athena' and 'to the Lady of Athens' respectively. The latter also cites Burkert's (1985: 139) discussion of the topic and concludes that Athens "must have been significant in the late Bronze age", i.e. during the Mycenaean period.

The form *πότνι'*, however, is quite clearly a versatile honorific, applying to many different 'mistresses' of different locations who were worshipped at their respective temples and shrines. As such, it makes sense contextually that Thenao's prayer opens with this honorific which appeals to her power. As such, one may ask whether this is, in fact, a traditional formula meant to be used regularly as the opening line of prayers to many different goddesses and that

the prayer beginning at *Il.* 6.305 is the only place where the poet felt the need or desire to use it in reference to Athena. We have already pointed out that there are not many direct prayers to Athena in Homer's epics, and one of these, spoken by Nestor beginning at *Od.* 3.380, differs from that of Theano at *Il.* 6.305 in being a personal prayer rather than one on behalf of a group of people. In this instance, the poet has Nestor refer to Athena as ἄνασσ'. Furthermore, Nestor's prayer is inserted in the middle of his speech, whereas Theano's begins her entreaty. We can see then why the poet chose to utilize different formulae for each. There is also some evidence that ἀλλὰ ἄνασσ' is a formula: we see it used again at *Od.* 6.175, this time to introduce a request of Odysseus to Nausicaa after he comes to the kingdom of the Phaeacians. All this is to say that the poet's creativity lies not so much in the epithets he chooses as in the larger formulae and structures in which these epithets are contained.

If this is true, one may imagine that the full-line formulae were originally crafted with the goal of including in each the epithets which are most suitable for the situations where they occur. More concretely, the fact that the *po-ti-ni-ja* element in the compound *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* is shown to connect multiple different locations and their matron deities suggests why πότνι' at *Il.* 6.305 may be a particularized use of an otherwise generic and ornamental epithet, while providing a connection between Athena and Athens (see above) during the period of composition of these epics. It seems possible that the presence of πότνι' in reference to Athena is a remnant of its previous use before this transition, especially if *a-ta-na* refers to Athena and if πότνι' Ἀθηναίη can be proven to be a formula either on its own or as part of a full-line formula.

The interpretation of *a-ta-na* is complicated by the fact that it is attested only once in the extant Linear B inscriptions. However, if we take the whole phrase *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* to mean 'Lady of Athana' and accept that the 'At(h)ana' refers to Athena in one of her older forms, we

can continue our analysis by positing that Athena was originally named after the city, a conclusion also presented by Trzaskoma et al. (2016: 407). It subsequently follows that the place name elements of these compounds were very quickly generalized as the names of those deities. In the last stage of the development of this epithet, *po-ti-ni-ja* was omitted but the idea of ‘lady, mistress, queen’ was retained in the roles of those goddesses, including Athena. Thus, by the time of Homer and alphabetic Greek, I suggest that forms of *πότνια* were originally so closely linked to Athena and other goddesses that the word somewhat retained its status as part of the Homeric formula which we see at the end of lines such as *πότνια Ἥρη* (*Il.* 1.551), *πότνια Ἥβη* (*Il.* 4.2), and even the more generalized *πότνια μήτηρ*. Finally, the information surrounding the naming customs of various goddesses seems to indicate that they took their names from the places in which they were worshipped and were otherwise held in high esteem. By this reasoning, Athens should have existed for some time before any sort of cult developed there around Athena or indeed any other deity. This is plausible given that there was an Indo-European presence there as early as 2000 BCE and, as Welwei (2003: 272) states, “since the Neolithic period there has, without a doubt, been continuous settlement [there].” Welwei (*ibid.*) also mentions that there is evidence that “Athena was already a Minoan palace and city goddess”, a claim backed up by which lends support to the above suggestion that However, without knowing precisely when these different developments took place, we may suggest that the goddess took her name from the city where her worship in her Greek form first sprang up.⁵⁷

The insight provided by *ὀβριμοπάτηρ* is more straightforward than the multiple layers of cultural and linguistic information contained in *πότνι*. Its meaning ‘daughter of a mighty father’ doesn’t say anything about Athena’s personality, but I will discuss briefly its connection to her

⁵⁷ I mention “Greek form” here because we have already seen that elements of her story are related to those of other gods.

father, Zeus. Athena is portrayed as the favorite child of Zeus throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and ὄβριμοπάτρη is one piece of evidence for that.⁵⁸ In addition, she is the only deity portrayed as wielding the αἰγίς, a goat-skin shield, other than Zeus, its rightful owner.⁵⁹ In connection with this relationship, Athena is referred to alternatively as αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος ‘child of aegis-bearing Zeus’ (*Il.* 2.157, etc.) and κόρη Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο ‘daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus’ (*Il.* 5.733). There are two points to consider here. First, one may have expected this epithetic phrase to have been examined in greater detail in Chapter 2. However, we see the latter version of this phrase also used both of other divinities including the Muses (*Il.* 2.598) and Helen (*Il.* 3.426). As such, the variants of this formula pertain more to Zeus than to Athena, though the first is used exclusively of Athena in the full-line formula with Ἀτρυτώνη, on which more below. Second, Zeus is the one depicted as αἰγιόχοιο ‘aegis-bearing’ in the phrases mentioned above, marking the aegis as belonging specifically to him. With that in mind, the reader gains a greater understanding of and appreciation for the preferential treatment which Athena receives in being allowed to wield it. ὄβριμοπάτρη can perhaps be considered a parallel to these phrases, since the aegis was a symbol of Zeus’ power and authority, and represented, in a way, his status as ὄβριμος.

The meaning of Ἀτρυτώνη ‘unwearied’ is equally straightforward. I have included it at this point due to its relationship to ὄβριμοπάτρη by way of its presence in a full-line formula which carries a similar indication of the close relationship between Athena and Zeus. Beyond that connection, of the epithets in this study, the broader sense of Ἀτρυτώνη is most closely related to the suggested etymology of Παλλὰς as ‘bearer/brandisher.’ Both of these are related to her role as a war goddess, and also show up in older Homeric formulae. Ἀτρυτώνη is part of a

⁵⁸ On Zeus’ favoritism of Athena, see Burkert (1985: 142)

⁵⁹ *Od.* 22.295-8

full-line formula, and Παλλὰς appears to have been associated with Athena for such a long time that we have lost any sense of its original meaning. The presence of multiple epithets in older Homeric formulae combined with their meanings related to Athena's role as a war goddess suggests that of her various roles—primarily as goddess of war, wisdom, and crafts—goddess of war is her most archaic and important. This is further supported by the fact that her most active role in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is that of a war goddess who aids heroes on the battlefield and also engages in the fighting herself.

We have already seen that πότνι' constitutes one epithet from which we were able to deduce information about one location of Athena's worship. A more straightforward example is the epithet Ἀλαλκομενή. We saw in Chapter 2 that this indicates a place of worship in Boeotia in Northern Greece. Additionally, the association of πότνι' with Athena in the Mycenaean documents demonstrates her presence on the island of Crete. The combination of these two epithets, the former of which is shown to be part of one of the oldest traditional formulae and the latter of which is associated with forms of Athena's name which extend back to the Mycenaean period, indicates that Athena's status as one of the chief Greek goddesses was cemented extremely early on in the history of Greek culture, and that her worship was widespread at an equally early point. If one takes the expansion of Athena's worship as beginning at least from the Mycenaean period, any potential borrowing or influence from other cultures and deities must have occurred earlier, perhaps even in the prehistoric period.

Another possible etymology of Ἀλαλκομενή is that it originally represented a location “where presumptive old goddesses have been remembered only as surnames of a major goddess or as local nymphs.”⁶⁰ West (ibid.) additionally lists a number of place names which “are simply

⁶⁰ West (1997: 38)

the plural of a goddess's name", from which we may gather that there was an original goddess *Alalkomena* who was originally worshipped somewhere on mainland Greece. Subsequently, as the goddess Athena grew in influence and popularity, she merged with this and other local goddesses, and their origin myths were syncretized with her own. This seems especially likely given the disputed location to which the epithet Τριτογένεια refers (see below). We start to see a picture of a goddess whose cult began at Knossos and extended outward, syncretizing elements of other deities either as a method of pacification of conquered peoples or, more likely, as a result of natural cultural integration as a byproduct of interaction between the Greek and Semitic peoples.

As just mentioned, the relationship of Τριτογένεια to the character of Athena shows a close relationship to that of Ἀλαλκομενηΐς. Although one suggested translation is 'born of the head' from τριτώ as a dialectal Greek word for 'head', ancient and modern writers more widely agree that the place of her birth is the most likely source of this epithet. The difficulty comes in establishing which of two bodies of water are the more likely point of origin, if indeed one can be said to be more prevalent than the other. There is a stream Triton near Alalcomenae in Boeotia, the same Alalcomenae from whence Ἀλαλκομενηΐς above, and there is also a lake Tritonis in Libya. It may seem at first as though birth from the Tritonian Lake in Boeotia is more likely due to its closer proximity to Athens itself. Nilsson (1972: 116) also discusses a connection between Boeotia and Athena in Homer, as the father of Diomedes, one of her favored heroes, is from there.

It is possible that the two names are one and the same. In his explanation of the development of another Greek name, Καδμεῖοι, West (1997: 449) discusses that:

...we shall have to presuppose the residence in Boeotia at some period of a group of Semitic-speakers, presumably Phoenicians. This is after all something that the Greeks accepted as a fact, even if only on the basis of a myth.

It is thus plausible that a particular African deity whose origin is found in ancient Libya found his or her way around the Mediterranean to the Semitic peoples who then took her into Greece with their migration. Indeed, Menelaus (*Il.* 4.83-5) discusses that after the end of the Trojan war, his return journey took him around Φοινίκην ‘Phoenicia’, Αἰγυπτίους ‘Egypt’, and Λιβύην ‘Libya’, showing the same length of travel but in reverse.

Though the Homeric epics certainly distinguish gods and mortals, the former are associated with Africa as well, albeit somewhat loosely. In a well-known passage in *Iliad* 1, as Thetis is comforting her son Achilles, she mentions that ‘Zeus went yesterday for a feast with the excellent Ethiopians’ (*Il.* 1.423-4). That we hear so little mention of Africa in the Homeric epics is understandable due to the primary conflict taking place in Asia Minor. However, it should also be noted that the Ethiopians appear five times across the two epics and Egypt eleven (ten in the *Odyssey*), both with unquestioningly favorable portrayals. That both groups appear in both epics to me indicates more than a passing knowledge of their existence, but rather a more complex and established relationship.

Athena’s specific connections to African peoples are supported by both ancient and modern sources. Herodotus mentions connections to the Libyans, including mentioning the ‘Tritonian Lake’ as the place of her birth (4.180.5) and describing that certain ‘images of Athena were copied by the Greeks from the Libyan women’ (4.189.1). Plato (*Ti.* 21e) draws a connection between the cult of Athena and that of the Egyptian goddess Neith, stating that they are one and the same. In the modern literature, Bernal (2006: 540-582) draws a similar parallel based on the linguistic similarities between the forms Ἀθήναι/Ἀθηναία and the Egyptian Ḥt-nṯr.

However, this basis has been strongly disputed by Deacy and Villing (2008: 12-13 and n.) among others. Nevertheless, Deacy and Villing (ibid.) do agree that there may be some degree of syncretization between the two, but that “even if it were true that Athena derived from Neith, she would have evolved beyond her origins, and become integrated into Greek culture.” West draws connections between naming conventions of cities in Greece and Canaan.⁶¹ This in and of itself is not necessarily noteworthy, except as perhaps a very broad connection which does not have much of an impact on the present study. West (1997: 361) presents a more specific and concrete connection between to Egypt specifically when he discusses the parallel portrayals of Diomedes in *Iliad* 5 and “the Egyptian poem of the Battle of Qadesh.” West (ibid.) specifically draws parallels between the Egyptian passage and *Il.* 5.177 and 183. Lichtheim (1976: 67) and *Il.* 5.177 both show opposing soldiers wondering whether their powerful adversary is in fact some deity incarnate. Additionally, Lichtheim (1976: 70) also closely resembles *Il.* 5.185, both of which instead show the adversaries assuming that that deity is perhaps assisting the rampaging hero rather than taking his form. We have seen already that at the beginning of *Iliad* 5 Diomedes is assisted by Athena who grants him μένος ‘strength’ and θάρσος ‘courage. Similarly, the translation provided by Lichtheim (ibid.) states that:

My [Ramesses II’s] majesty paused in valor and victory,
Having felled hundred thousands by my strong arm.

They called out to one another:
“Beware, take care, don’t approach him,
Sakhmet the Great is she who is with him.

The parallel structure and content of these passages present a convincing enough connection to warrant further discussion. We know that the poem discussed above as presented by Lichtheim (1976) was composed by an Egyptian author (definitively not Ramesses II

⁶¹ See above, p. 65-6

himself). The account of the Battle of Kadesh shows several similarities to the Homeric epics, including the most fundamental that both are epic poems.⁶² Additionally, just as Diomedes' *aristeia* is certainly of mythological proportions, so too does the Egyptian account of Kadesh

leave the realm of the possible and become entirely fanciful, for they claim that Pharaoh, charging the enemy from his chariot and killing vast number, fought his way out of the encirclement by himself alone.⁶³

Most importantly for the purposes of this study, the passage above (Lichtheim, 1976: 70) shows a description of Sakhmet (sic.), an Egyptian war goddess, which is extremely similar to that of τὶς θεός 'some god' (whom the audience knows to be Athena) at *Il.* 5.177. To some, all of these similarities may be coincidence or simply evidence of overlapping narrative structure. To my mind, however, the similar structure of the narratives and their depictions of goddesses—Athena and Sakhmet—lending strength and power to their favored warriors—Diomedes and Ramesses respectively—makes for a convincing argument that Athena and Sakhmet eventually became syncretized, especially given our earlier comparison between Athena and Thoth.

The multiplicity of compelling connections between Athena and various African deities and peoples shows a remarkable range of worship and influence which not only spans the entire Greek world but expands into Africa as well, essentially covering the entire eastern half of the Mediterranean. Just as in our analysis of Παλλάς below, it appears most likely that several different goddesses were worshipped in Boeotia, Knossos, and Egypt, and as these cultures spread and interacted, the goddesses syncretized, eventually becoming the goddess "whom we call Athena," with the original goddesses' names preserved in her epithets.⁶⁴ This explains why they don't have precise translations, since they were originally proper names themselves. It also

⁶² Lichtheim (1976: 59) discusses that this may be the first epic poem in the history of Egypt.

⁶³ Lichtheim (1976: 58)

⁶⁴ Hdt. 4.180.5

provides another data point on the timeline that by the time of the establishment of the Homeric formulae in the late second or early first millennium BCE these goddesses had already syncretized, but that the memory of their differences still lingered.

The last two epithets to be discussed in this character study offer the widest array of information, but their origins are also the most unclear, and the conclusions which may be drawn from them are thus the least definitive. γλαυκῶπις ‘bright-/flashing-eyed’ shows connections going all the way back to the Minoan period, where we see that one of Athena’s early representations was an owl.⁶⁵ The status of γλαυκῶπις will be discussed only insofar as the establishment of Athena’s roots in Minoan culture are concerned. To keep the scale and scope of this portion of the study manageable, I will examine in detail only those elements related directly to the connection of owls to Athena and Athena’s relationship to Mycenaean and Minoan goddesses with whom owls and birds in general are associated.

Pötscher (1994) states that the connection between Athena and owls has its roots as far back as the Minoan period. At that point, many deities were associated more closely with nature than with abstract qualities such as wisdom with which we associate the Classical Greek deities. It is from a particular unnamed Minoan goddess that Athena and several other Greek goddesses inherited these associations⁶⁶ and in fact appear to have originally been component parts of her.⁶⁷ The close connection to nature eventually became narrowed to the point that the original Minoan goddess was ultimately associated only with birds due to their ease of flying (*Leichtigkeit des Fliegens*), their sudden appearance and disappearance (*rasche Auftauschen und wieder*

⁶⁵ Pötscher (1997: 4)

⁶⁶ On each deity taking different forms, see Pötscher (1994: 4); on the development of Athena from a Minoan goddess, see Pötscher (1994: 6)

⁶⁷ Rehak (1984: 544 and n56)

Verschwinden), and their strong vitality (*starke Vitalität*).⁶⁸ The Mycenaean period first shows the development of the familiar Greek goddesses, including Demeter, Artemis, and Athena, all of whom appear to have inherited different aspects of the original Minoan goddess, including certain representations of her in the natural world. Athena eventually came to be represented specifically (though not exclusively) by the owl.⁶⁹ In an intermediate stage, however, these goddesses as a group were represented categorically by birds as a remnant of the symbol of the Minoan goddess whose natural representation eventually became limited to birds from what appears to have been originally the entirety of the animal kingdom.⁷⁰ Nilsson (1971: 338-9) suggests that the bird connection to all of these goddesses are in connection with a “cult of the dead” with the birds as “representations of the spirits of the deceased.”

From this point, the associations between this class of goddesses and birds narrowed such that each new goddess became associated with a specific bird. In Athena’s case, this was the owl, the most noteworthy trait of which may have been its extremely conspicuous (*überaus auffälligen*), luminous (*leuchtenden*) and frightening (*erschreckenden*) yellow eyes.⁷¹ Pötscher (1994: 7) concludes:

It is unremarkable, then, that they attributed the owl to Athena, who through her Minoan prehistory converged most closely with a bird, and then in Athens was most closely associated with the owl γλαῦξ, and thus they named her γλαυκῶπις.

The epithet γλαυκῶπις, then, comes to be associated with Athena by a complicated path originating from a general association with nature, which was then narrowed to birds, and narrowed further to the owl.⁷² As its most conspicuous trait, the eyes of the owl lent themselves

⁶⁸ Pötscher (1994: 5)

⁶⁹ For the transformation of the Minoan goddess into the various Greek goddesses, see Pötscher (1994: 6). On the representation of Athena as different birds, see Pötscher (ibid.) and Nilsson (1971: 491-2)

⁷⁰ On the Minoan goddess with this representation, see Nilsson (1971: 392n3)

⁷¹ Pötscher (1994: 7)

⁷² Nilsson (1971: 493)

to descriptions of Athena even once her relationship to the owl itself lessened. Finally, it is difficult to establish *where* the specific connection between Athena and owls (as opposed to other birds) began. It is easy to suggest that Athens may have been one of the main centers of her worship in the Classical Greek world, but as Pötscher (1997: 6) reminds us, “there are owls elsewhere [in Greece] as well” and, in the end, “Where Athena was first connected to owls, it is naturally impossible to say.”

Thus, we see that Athena’s epithet γλαυκῶπις does indeed trace back to her association with owls specifically and birds more generally at point when she was not ‘Athena’ as we know her today, but rather one aspect of her Minoan predecessor. As the direct connection between animals and various goddesses was lost, several of the deities nevertheless retained certain traits of those animals which became their own. This occurred most prominently with Athena and γλαυκῶπις, which can be shown to originally mean ‘owl-eyed’ and was broadened more generally to ‘bright-eyed.’ We also see a parallel to this with Hera and βοῶπις ‘ox-/cow-eyed.’ That multiple goddesses retain these formations in -ῶπις strengthens the case that many of the Greek goddesses draw at least some of their inspiration from an original unnamed Minoan goddess who was believed to have the power to actually change into different birds, snakes, and other animals.⁷³ In the early versions of Athena as a goddess, she was believed to have this ability as well—she departs from Nestor, Telemachus, and their comrades in the form of a φήνη ‘vulture, eagle’ at *Od.* 3.371-2—but this became less common, as the Classical Greek goddesses appear to have developed a more ethereal role, presiding over elements of the natural world, but not often changing into physical representations of them.

⁷³ On this behavior of the original goddess, see Pötscher (1997: 4)

Finally, we come to perhaps the most prominent epithet in all of Homer's epics: Παλλάς. There are several possible points of origin for this, each of which provides a different type of information. We have already seen the most straightforward explanation, which derives Παλλάς from πάλλειν 'to shake/brandish.' If we take into account as well the epithet Ἀτρυτώνη, usually translated as 'unwearied', which has also been shown to be a part of one of the oldest Homeric formulae, we see a picture of Athena even before the time of Homer as an original war goddess who then developed other associations, including wisdom and crafts, as her cult expanded and was influenced perhaps by other local deities and customs. I am in favor of this analysis, but there are others to consider as well. Burkert (1985: 140) and Parker (2007: 397) both discuss a giant of the same name slain by Athena, from whom she took the name as an honorific. Burkert (1985: 140) specifically mentions that this giant lived and was killed on the island of Kos. This story is referenced in ancient sources,⁷⁴ and Guía (2020) takes it as the foundation for several vase paintings found at Athens which she discusses as depicting a ritual to memorialize this event.

The most intriguing suggestion also comes from Burkert (1985: 139) and Parker (2007: 397), who both mention a connection to the Semitic *ba'alat* 'female ruler.' This is the most concrete connection to figures from other cultures. We have already seen that Athena can trace her lineage back through Mycenaean (through πότνια) all the way to Minoan (through γλαυκῶπις), though the latter connection originates from a point before she was known as Athena as such. Chadwick and Baumbach (1963: 232) cite Παλλάς as the source of the Greek πάλλας 'youth'. Parker (2007: 397) suggests the form πάλλαξ as an alternative source of the epithet Παλλάς. However, although Παλλάς is sometimes translated as 'Maiden,' neither

⁷⁴ Burkert (1985: 140n21)

Parker's nor Chadwick and Baumbach's claims account for the shift in accent between their Greek forms and the epithet in question

Because the connection to *Ba'alat* is murky and also extends beyond the Greek world to that of the ancient Near East, I will provide background here which is less directly related to Athena and her role in Greek culture than that which I have provided for any of the previously discussed epithets. The goddess *Ba'alat-Gubal* (*b'lt gbl* in the original Phoenician), appears to have been one of the most prominent Sumerian and Babylonian goddesses, whose name is rendered simply as "Lady of Byblos."⁷⁵ The form *Ba'alat* by itself simply means 'mistress, lady, female ruler', with almost an exactly parallel translation to that of *πότνια* above. Also similarly to *πότνια*, we see *Ba'alat* associated with many different deities across Anatolia, the Near East and into the Eastern Mediterranean including Innana, Astarte/Attart, Anat, Isis, Hathor, and even Aphrodite.⁷⁶ Although the connections to Athena are tenuous, not least because Aphrodite shows more direct connections to goddesses of the ancient Near East, there are certain parallels which I will present for consideration. The most striking is that of the names of the two goddesses themselves. If the meaning of *Ba'alat-Gubal* given above is accurate, then both her name and that of Athena show a remarkable relationship to the cities over which they presided. We have seen with Athena that this goes all the way back to the Mycenaean period, and records of *Ba'alat-Gubal* in this form stem at least from the early second millennium BCE.⁷⁷ There are additional parallels to this naming structure in Hittite records of the Sun-Goddess Arinna, whom Teffeteller (2001: 352) also seeks to associate with Athena partially through the structural similarities of their names and more generally in their roles as protectresses, which we have

⁷⁵ Zernecke (2013: 226)

⁷⁶ Zernecke (2013: 226), West (1997: 38 and n151)

⁷⁷ Marcovich (1996: 45)

already demonstrated to be Athena's primary role. Teffeteller (2001: 356-8) goes on to demonstrate how this connection to Near Eastern war goddesses may be made if we take Παλλάς to have its origin in the first assessment above as something like "brandisher."

From this connection, it is convincing to me, if not entirely definitive, that we may connect Athena to *Ba'alat-Gubal* through other Near Eastern war goddesses from whom her role as protectress may have developed. West (1997: 350) connects Athena to the Near Eastern goddesses Anat and Attart/Astarte, Deacy (2008: 41) mentions her in connection with these two as well as Innana, and Marcovich (1996: 45) discusses all four—Athena, Innana, Anat, and Attart/Astarte—in connection with *Ba'alat-Gubal*. Furthermore, Ishtar, the primary Near Eastern focus of Marcovich's paper, is also mentioned by Teffeteller (2001: 353) in connection with Arinna and the Hittite goddesses.⁷⁸ Though the evidence is circumstantial, it is possible now to draw a connection between Athena, *Ba'alat-Gubal*, and to a lesser extent the other Near Eastern goddesses mentioned above through their roles as protectors of their respective cities, their titles which may be translated 'Lady/Mistress of (city)', and their roles as warriors on the battlefield.

It is also possible that the epithet Παλλάς developed from the name *Ba'alat* itself, and that Athena's role as a war goddess, despite being the earliest which she adopted in her Greek form, was itself a carryover from Near Eastern tradition. We have seen how *Ba'alat* was exactly parallel to the Greek πότνια, where the latter was applied to many goddesses as an honorific. From this, it seems reasonable that *Ba'alat* could have become the epithet Παλλάς, retained as a remnant of the original Near Eastern goddess, just as we saw with Τριτογένεια from an African goddess, and Ἀλαλκομενήτς from a Boeotian goddess above. An image discovered at Knossos—the same location as the single attestation of the form *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* discussed above—to be

⁷⁸ I am referencing the Hittite text here through the way in which Teffeteller (2001: 353) presents it.

an early, Minoan version of a representation of Athena.⁷⁹ That Athena was originally a ‘palace goddess’ is supported by Puhvel (1987: 133). However, Rehak himself (ibid.) suggests that this was at a time before this goddess was Athena as such, rather one element of the earlier Minoan goddess whose characteristics were passed on to the several Classical Greek goddesses.

Robertson (1996: 384 and n2) is similarly skeptical that this figure represents the Classical Athena, and Kinsley (1989: 141) suggests that the Minoan-Mycenaean palace goddess was “‘a forerunner of Athena,’” rather than Athena herself. We thus have a picture of Athena not so much as an original deity *ipso facto* who took on new roles as she was syncretized with goddesses from other cultures, but rather as a syncretization herself of elements from Greek, Near Eastern and African origins, all of which are preserved in the epithets which are found in the oldest Homeric formulae.

⁷⁹ Rehak (1985: 544n59)

CONCLUSION

Athena was one of the most prominent deities throughout the history of ancient Greek culture, and this is reflected in part by the establishment at an early point in the history of Greek epic poetry of a versatile traditional inventory of epithets which could accommodate any metrical need. We have demonstrated that certain epithets may be proven to be traditional and ornamental due to their repeated use (Παλλάς, γλαυκῶπις), their presence in the same line multiple times (Ἀλαλκομενήϊς), and/or their lack of interchangeability with other epithets (ὀβριμοπάτρη, Ἀτρυτώνη). These epithets thus have been shown to be chosen only for their metrical values or presence in a larger (usually full-line) formula, which explains why they were not substituted for one another even where they could have been. We have also looked at several epithets which take on a *particularized* meaning, that is, which were chosen specifically for that particular situation. This additional purpose is what differentiates ornamental and particularized epithets. The latter were shown to be related more to the specific situation in the narrative rather than the status of the referent overall. However, both were demonstrated to be informative for the character of Athena in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Additionally, we demonstrated that Athena not only was a prominent figure in Greek religion, but also appeared regularly *and* played an active role throughout both epics. No other Greek deity fulfills both of those requirements so completely.

Once those criteria were established, we looked at a wide array of epithets, both ornamental and particularized, with the aim of establishing *why* they were chosen as the traditional epithets to fill a particular metrical space. Those which weren't were selected, in a

way, *because* they weren't, and were demonstrated to be particularized epithets which were otherwise normally used to describe other individuals. We showed that few traditional epithets shared the same metrical value as any other, and those which did (e.g. ὀβριμοπάτρη and Ἀτρυτώνη) were entrenched in the oldest Homeric formulae and had survived from an earlier era of the development of the established traditional inventory. The end goal was to examine what the oldest epithets of Athena tell us about the earliest stages of her character, worship, and development, which we accomplished by analyzing their metrical values and their etymologies to understand how the words themselves developed, as well as any other traits or characteristics which may have been associated with them.

Finally in Chapter 3, we looked these points of origin on a larger scale and what they tell us about Athena's history. There was quite a wide array of information about her character, roles, location of worship, and relationship to deities from other cultures. We saw through Ἀλαλκομενήϊς, Τριτογένεια, and πότνι' that Athena was worshipped from an early period all the way from Boeotia in Northern Greece to the island of Crete (which appears to have been one of her points of origin), and even down to Africa, if the myth about Athena's birth taking place by the Tritonian Lake in Libya in Herodotus and Apollonius of Rhodes is to be believed. Given what we have already seen about the way in which deities change and inherit qualities from one another, it seems more likely that the goddess whose birth in Libya was the source of Τριτογένεια, if that is the source, was some other goddess who was eventually folded into Athena's story and character. Several of the main elements of Athena appears to have originated in a Minoan nature goddess, as is the case with the earliest forms of deities in many cultures. She later developed into the Minoan *a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja* 'Lady/Mistress of At(h)ana,' whose earliest status was a protectress, and from which the Greek Ἀθήνη/Ἀθηναίη originates. This also

appears to be the form from which πότνι' Ἀθηναίη (*Il.* 6.305) originates, a noteworthy particularized use, since πότνια 'lady, mistress' is otherwise shown as an *ornamental* epithet with names including Hera (*Il.* 1.551, etc.) and Hebe (*Il.* 4.2, etc.) as well as with the general μήτηρ (*Il.* 6.264, etc.).

Even by the time of Homer, Athena holds a role as a goddess of wisdom, evident through the use of πολύβουλος as a particularized epithet used by speakers when they are requesting something of her in a particular situation (*Il.* 5.260, *Od.* 16.282). However, her most prominent and seemingly most archaic role is that of a city protectress and more generally as a war goddess. This is demonstrated in the particularized epithet λαοσσόος, and more importantly two separated ornamental epithets, Ἀτρυτώνη and Παλλάς. The fact that two separate ornamental, traditional epithets reference her status as a war goddess is compelling evidence that this was her most prominent and thus most ancient role. This evidence becomes even stronger when we consider the origins of the epithet Παλλάς, which, although not definitive, point exclusively in one direction. Whether this epithet originates from the Near Eastern goddess Ba'alat—which to me seems most likely—from the verb πάλλειν 'to brandish/wield' (which from the investigation above appears to have come from the epithet Παλλάς itself), or from her slaying of a giant of the same name (which seems least likely), this epithet speaks broadly to her role as a war goddess and protectress. From here, we may also connect her circumstantially to other ancient Near Eastern goddesses, which may shed additional light on the relationship between the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations and those of the ancient Near East.

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