

Camilla Tosi

Classical world and game learning. The case of Athena in *God of War*

Abstract: Atena è un personaggio chiave della saga di *God of War*. In tutti gli episodi la dea interviene secondo le proprie esigenze, influenza i protagonisti e le loro scelte secondo i propri scopi e gioca quindi un ruolo fondamentale nello sviluppo della trama. La tradizione letteraria riporta azioni e qualità specifiche di Atena, mentre la storia dell'arte ne indaga gli aspetti estetici e posturali: attraverso le sue parole, i suoi gesti e i suoi superpoteri è possibile comprendere la grande complessità di questo personaggio divino greco. La stessa complessità traspare durante il gioco, nei diversi episodi della saga. Gli scopi principali del mio articolo sono: dimostrare quali elementi hanno in comune la dea della mitologia e l'Atena del videogioco; illustrare il potenziale didattico nell'uso di questo gioco per imparare la mitologia classica, attraverso l'immedesimazione nelle vicende della protagonista e le sceneggiature ispirate al mondo classico.

Abstract: Athena is a key character in *God of War* saga. In all the episodes the goddess intervenes according to her own needs, influences the protagonists and their choices according to their own purposes and thus plays a fundamental role in the development of the plot. The literary tradition reports specific actions and qualities of Athena, while the history of art investigates her aesthetic and postural aspects: through her words, her gestures, and her superpowers it is possible to understand the great complexity of this divine Greek character. The same complexity shines through during the game. The main purposes of my article are: to demonstrate what elements the goddess of mythology and Athena of the video game have in common; and illustrate the didactic potential in the use of this game to learn classical mythology through identification with the events of the protagonist and the scripts inspired by the classical world.

Parole-chiave: Athena; *God of War*; video games; apprendimento; classici
Keywords: Athena; *God of War*; videogames; learning; classics

Dopo una formazione in antichistica e un Dottorato di ricerca in Scienze umane, Camilla Tosi oggi è docente alle scuole superiori e tutor didattico all'Università di Bologna. I suoi interessi di ricerca sono rivolti in particolare alle fonti di cognizione della letteratura latina, attraverso lo studio del lessico tecnico e l'esame delle fonti storiografiche e artistiche. È autrice di alcune pubblicazioni riguardanti la tradizione del mondo classico. Email: camilla.tosi21@gmail.com

Preliminary Remarks

The world of video games is at the centre of our daily lives. In recent years, in fact, gaming opportunities have multiplied, both on home platforms and online.

This virtual reality offers many ways of entertainment, fun, but also learning. The player's experience, which often takes place in the first person, also allows him/her to come into contact with ancient world, which allow him/her to discover Greco-Roman history. This is the case of *God of War*, in which the protagonist, Kratos, encounters various characters taken directly from the Greek literary and iconographic tradition.

I chose to delve into this video game because to this day it remains one of the most popular internationally, also thanks to its graphics and script, which remain in line with the expectations of the most demanding gamers, such as teenagers. In particular, the figure of Athena is central in the different episodes of the saga.

In the first part of my contribution, I broadly reconstruct the commonalities between videogames and the literary and iconographic tradition. The studies and bibliography cited are inherent to art history and philology.

In the second part, I propose reflections on how this game can influence the player, especially in the adolescent phase, and bring him closer to the classical world. This learning opportunity, which has both positive and potentially negative implications, is based on a pedagogical and psychological bibliography.

God of War

It was March 2005 when the brutal Spartan warrior Kratos made his US debut as a *PlayStation 2* exclusive, while Europe had to wait until July of the same year. Development began in 2002 under the provisional name *Dark Odyssey*. David Jaffe was leading the project in development at Santa Monica Studio.

Centred on Greek mythology, the idea behind *God of War* was

to create an action game that also had a focus on puzzle-solving and a more cinematic slant than titles in the same genre. Another feature of the work would have been a brutal approach to combat, complete with bloodshed, to more credibly portray the inner rage of the protagonist.

Kratos has in fact sacrificed his family by selling his soul to Ares, the God of War, in order to obtain the necessary strength to destroy any enemy who stood in his way first towards glory, and then towards liberation from the life of slavery to which he had submitted himself. The saga continued with numerous sequels and prequels centred on the same protagonist, each time grappling with different characters and scripts, but always linked to the Greek mythological world.

God of War turned out to be a huge success in terms of critics and audiences alike, exceeding even the most optimistic expectations and giving birth to a series destined to write pages of gaming history, particularly in the world of *PlayStation*.

ATHENA.

Literary sources

Athena is undoubtedly one of the main Gods of the Greek *Pantheon*¹.

According to Plato², her archaic name, *Theonoe*, would express the prodigious character of her birth, that is by *parthenogenesis*, from the head of Zeus who, after having impregnated Metis, Goddess of prudence, would then swallow her to possess her characteristic attribute forever³.

The singular origin of Athena is reiterated in the *Homeric Hymn* 28 and, some centuries later, by the poet Pindar⁴.

The cult of Athena has very ancient roots in the Greek world⁵. Evidence of this is provided by precious epigraphic documents such as the *linear B* tablets, which can be dated to the Bronze Age. In the archives of the palace of Knossos⁶, in addition to the appellative of

‘divine’, it has been found that of Πότνια, or ‘lady of Athens’: her cult found great popularity especially in Attica.

***God of War*⁷**

In *God of War* Athena is the Goddess of wisdom and one of the main characters of the series, mostly an ally of Kratos.

***God of War: Chains of Olympus*⁸**

The fearless Spartan general Kratos is now a warrior tormented by his nightmares and reduced to a servant of the Gods. He is sent by the Gods to the coast of Attica to stop the advance of the Persians.

After the bloody Battle of Attica against Persian invaders and the Basilisk, a horrible and gigantic monster, the Spartans see the sun, the god Helios, fall. In the absence of sunlight, *i.e.* Helios, the Gods begin to weaken, and Morpheus, the god of dreams, can take over. Kratos makes his way through the various creatures that invade the city and manages to reach the chariot. After climbing it, Athena appears as a statue and tells Kratos that Morpheus has thrown his mantle and is succumbing to the Gods in a deep sleep.

After the final battle between Kratos and Persephone, Kratos has to choose between the love of his daughter or the salvation of humanity. By making a great sacrifice he abandons his daughter and regains his weapons, his skills and his cruelty. Little satisfied with the victory achieved and disappointed with the permanence of his nightmares, he throws himself to commit suicide from Helios’ chariot on earth, but before crashing to the ground, Athena and Helios save his life.

***God of War I*⁹**

During the first sequences there is a weak Kratos with suicidal instincts, but Gaia intervenes telling us what happened in the weeks before.

The player discovers that Kratos was the general of a Spartan army that, one day, clashed with a huge group of Barbarians. The fight unleashed a massacre: Kratos himself was falling victim at the hands of the head of the Barbarians. In that moment, the protagonist invoked the help of Ares, God of War and his protector: in exchange for his soul he had to defeat the enemy. Ares accepted and in a few minutes the Spartan army overturned the situation by defeating the enemy. Kratos is now in the duties of Ares and the *Swords of Chaos* were indissolubly bound to his wrists.

One day, during an uprising in a village, Ares took the protagonist's wife and daughter in the middle of the racket, where by mistake Kratos killed them. After realizing that he had been deceived by Ares, who wanted to turn him into a real war machine, Kratos finds himself with a mockery: the ashes of his daughter and his wife will be forever imprinted on his skin, thanks to a spell from The Oracle. At this point the warrior asked the Gods of Olympus to erase his memory and they accepted, but in return Kratos will have to serve them for ten years.

Meanwhile Ares began to destroy Athens, the city of his sister.

At such a point both Zeus and Athena transferred their powers to Kratos: if he had defeated the God of War, he would have atoned for all his sins. Kratos, taken with ferocious vengeance, threw himself headlong into a near suicide mission, but there was practically nothing left to lose. His entire adventure will be simply articulated according to his revenge, overcoming trials and acquiring new powers, until you get to retrieve Pandora's Box under the advice of The Oracle of Athena.

Once he reached Ares, Kratos opened the box and managed to become as giant as he was, then managing to defeat him as he had been practically ordered by the sense of vengeance and the other Gods¹⁰. At the end of the epic battle, Kratos wanted his sins atoned but, once again, he was mocked by the Gods, who gave him the throne of God of War in return.

In this first chapter of the saga, therefore, Athena presents herself

as a guiding spirit, suggesting moves to Kratos according to her own purposes.

The Goddess follows her strategy just like in the Homeric *Iliad*: she presents herself physically only when strictly necessary, communicates in a prophetic and not always clear way, influences the choices of the heroes and participates in the human destiny only because she is concerned about her own.

*Ghost of Sparta*¹¹

Kratos, the new *God of war*, is plagued by constant visions of his mother and brother, who he believes are both deceased. He feels the possibility of changing them, as he tells Athena shortly before arriving at Atlantis, the cradle of all human knowledge where he hopes to find an answer. The Goddess tries to dissuade him, telling him that there are things it is better not to know: Kratos, tired of the lies of the Olympians, does not listen to her. The game develops through numerous clashes against mythological creatures (Titan Thera, Scylla¹²) and dialogues with family members, such as Callisto, the mother of Kratos.

The God of war then decides to return to his hometown, Sparta, and more precisely to the Temple of Ares, to look for clues about his brother's whereabouts. His path pushes him on a mountain range where young Spartans are sent to become men and on which he meets Erinni, the daughter of the God of death Thanatos, kidnapper of Deimos. At the end of a daring clash Kratos manages to kill the demon while arriving at the gates of the city: here he has a flashback that shows how an oracle¹³ predicted that a branded warrior would be the cause of the fall of the Olympians, and how Ares and Athena themselves kidnapped Deimos, since he was the only one of the two brothers to have his skin painted, also causing the famous scar on Kratos' eye.

Once he enters the Kingdom of Death, Kratos finally reunites with his brother, freeing him from the chains that held him prisoner. Deimos, however, in an outburst of anger affirms that he will never

forgive Kratos for having allowed him to be kidnapped. He begins a clash that will see Deimos as the winner: when he is about to give the Phantom of Sparta the final blow, Thanatos intervenes: the oldest of all the Gods explains that Ares and Athena fell into error because it was not Deimos who was predestined to destroy Olympus, but Kratos. Thanatos is therefore transformed and attacks the two.

In the clash that follows Deimos finds death while trying to save Kratos, who, at the sight of his dying brother, unleashes all the power of Thera, becoming so inflamed that he succeeds in damaging the armored body of Thanatos. After a fierce clash, he kills him.

Having recovered his brother's corpse, Kratos takes him to the top of the hill where the gravedigger of Athens has already prepared a pit and reveals to him that he has become Death, the destroyer of worlds.

Athena appears and, apparently pleased with the death of the last two family members of the Spartans, offers to finally erase their memories. Kratos, unexpectedly, opposes and sets off towards Olympus. When he cannot hear her, Athena says to him «Forgive me, brother». Then the gravedigger reappears, with Callisto in his arms, who says «Now only one remains».

At the same time Kratos, wearing the armor of the God of war and sitting on his throne on Olympus, is preparing to go and give strength to his army, ready to lay siege to Rhodes.

Just like with Kratos, Athena is Ulysses' special patron. However, she does not help Odysseus in every situation narrated in the poem: The hero is alone until he reaches Scheria, the island of Alcinoos. Only then does the goddess, having obtained from Zeus that he returns to his homeland, begins to assist him and stays close to him guiding him towards the final victory.

The bond between them arises from the similarities of their natures. On the beach of Ithaca¹⁴, she manifests herself to him as a young shepherd and hears an invented story from him:

But come on, let's not say any more because we both know / the tricks. You are the best of all mortals / for advice and word, I, of all the Gods. / I'm famous

for hindsight and cunning: even you didn't recognize the / Pallad Athena, daughter of Zeus, who always, / in all dangers, I assist and defend.

The similarities of this scene to the video game are clear: the Goddess does not always help Kratos in a clear way, but her presence is a constant element, just like in the Homeric poem, where she is mentioned 162 times only in the *Odyssey*¹⁵.

God Of War II¹⁶

After defeating Ares, Kratos has become the new *God of war* and thanks to his patronage the Spartans hold Greece in their grasp. The new God, however, still holds a grudge against the other Olympians because even though he has been forgiven for his past faults, Athena has not removed his painful memories. The Goddess also reveals to him that the other immortals look at him with increasing suspicion, but the Spartans ignore his words.

The game develops through the clash with numerous characters (such as Gaia¹⁷, Fates, Titans¹⁸, Atreus, Pegasus, Dark Knight, Typhon, Prometheus¹⁹, Steeds of Time, Sisters of Fate²⁰, Cronos, Theseus, Cerberus, Golden Fleece²¹, Argonaut, Jason, Euryale, Icarus, Kraken, Lahkesis, Clotho, Phoenix) and through the discovery of several geographical locations (such as Rhodes, Hades, Island of Creation, Underworld, the Ruins of the Forgotten, the Great Chasm, Palace of the Fates, the Spire).

Kratos then goes back in time to the battle of Rhodes, where he clashes with Zeus immediately after his death: after a furious duel on the altar of Olympus, Kratos pierces Zeus with the *Sword of Olympus* but Athena, who is beaten to death to save her fleeing father, comes between them. Before succumbing²², the Goddess confirms to Kratos that Zeus is really her father and that she wanted to eliminate him so as not to be killed by her son, as Zeus himself did with Chronos and these, in turn, with Uranus.

Kratos, who now has the power to manipulate time, returns to the past until the moment when the Titans are about to be defeated

by the Gods, saving them from their exile in the Underworld and transporting them to the present, where they prepare to attack Zeus and the Gods.

The goddess Athena very often plays a leading role in the events of the Trojan War, narrated in Homer's Greek poem, *Iliad*. In the 22nd book the most valiant heroes of the two fighting armies, the Trojan and the Achaean, face each other. They are Hector, son of the king of Troy, and his opponent Achilles. Hector is chased around the walls of the city of Troy by Achilles. The outcome of the fight is directly influenced by the intervention of the goddess Athena²³.

Zeus too had expressed his regret for the fate of the Trojan hero, and even Apollo, Hector's protector, must abandon him when the scales holding the hero's fate descend to Hades. While Apollo leaves Hector, now devoted to his destiny, Athena intervenes to help Achilles: The Goddess takes the form of Deiphobus and convinces Hector to stop to face his adversary.

God Of War III²⁴

God of War III picks up exactly where *God of War II* left, with Kratos intent on riding Gaia who, along with the other Titans, climbed Mount Olympus to attack the Gods. As soon as Gaia tries to climb back up, Kratos, unable to find a foothold, begins to slip on her back asking for help. Gaia says she cannot help him and reveals to him that he is only a pawn in the Titans' plans. Kratos loses his grip and falls to Hades.

During the fall, Kratos and the *Blade of Olympus* are separated, with Kratos landing in the river Styx. As he comes out suffering from the river, Kratos meets the ghost of Athena who, intent on helping him, tells of the Flame of Olympus, a powerful weapon capable of giving Kratos revenge. It also gives him the *Blades of Exile*. Later Kratos, having recovered the *Blade of Olympus* with Athena, once again at her guide, proposes to find Zeus.

Kratos travels to various places to find the key to open Pandora's Box, discovering afterwards that Pandora herself is the key and that

only she can appease the Flame of Olympus. After the clash Zeus is exhausted, but Pandora decides to sacrifice herself in order to temper the Flame. Kratos thus opens Pandora's Box only to discover that it is empty.

After several fights, Kratos frees himself from Zeus' grip and eliminates him once and for all. Then the spirit of Athena appears, asking Kratos to return to her what she took from the Box. He answers that the vase was empty, which Athena cannot believe. Athena explains that when Zeus sealed the evils of the world inside the Vase, she was afraid of what could happen if it was opened and put her own power, *Hope*, inside the Vase.

At this point Athena realizes that when Kratos opened the Vase for the first time to defeat Ares, evil escaped and infected the other Gods, while Kratos was endowed with hope, lost over time because of his nightmares and misdeeds. Athena asks Kratos to give her back her power, believing that she knows how to use it best to rebuild the world. Kratos rejects and pierces himself with the *Blade of Olympus*, sacrificing himself to give hope to humanity. Athena leaves telling Kratos that he has failed her.

At the end of the credits, Kratos is no longer at the point of her suicide, but gives way to the Sword of Olympus, which is followed by the trail of blood extended to the cliff.

***God of War (2018)*²⁵**

When Kratos peregrinates back to his domicile, Athena appears before him on the boat; the Spartan authoritatively mandate her to get out of his head, and she vanishes.

As Kratos once again arms himself with the *Blade of Chaos*, Athena appears again in front of his habitation, taunting him for his futile endeavors to elude the truth about himself; that he is and always will be a monster. Kratos admits that she is veridical, but declares that he is not her monster anymore, ambulating through her and causing her to vanish again. At this point, Kratos has accepted that he is his own monster, and that he must be preponderant, veracious, and trusting towards his son.

The Homeric poems often emphasize the contrast between life, light and vision, on the one hand, and death and loss of sight, on the other hand. The imagery of light is also associated with divine manifestations, for example Achilles' recognition of Athena by her flashing eyes (*Il.* I 199-200)²⁶. Light imagery employed in divine manifestations underlines the superiority of divine power.

A model to build the character: the epithets of Athena

The character of Athena presents a balanced meeting point between male and female characteristics: in an Orphic hymn she is called ἄρσιν καὶ θήλυσ (*arsen kai thelys*)²⁷, which means “you are male as well as female”.

From the epithets with which Athena is cited in the sources, the image of a multi-functional divinity certainly shines through. These recurrences are clues to understand what there is in common between the character created for the video game and the characteristic image of the Greek deity in ancient literary sources

A. Γλαυκῶπις - *Glaukopis*

By virtue of the qualities of astuteness, wisdom and prudence that bind it exclusively to Zeus²⁸, it is possible to explain the recurrent appellation of *glaukopis*²⁹, that is “by the glittering gaze or eyes”. The root of this adjective is actually also common to that of the noun *glaux*, which means “owl”: this animal is the one with which the Goddess is often depicted or indirectly recalled in artistic production, as well as on the coins of Athens³⁰ and other poleis.

This word is a combination of ὤψ *ops* “eye” and γλαύκος *glaukos* meaning “with the bright, lighting eyes of a owl” and, in later times³¹, “greenish-blue”.

In the gameplay, Athena is depicted just like that: her representation follows both the archaic iconography and the classical iconography. This choice of play, in addition to depicting the bright blue gaze³², has a physiognomy typical of ancient statuary³³. Sometimes the

Goddess has a nose with a high bridge, which seems to be the natural continuation of the forehead, deep eyes, full lips, a narrow mouth and just wider than the nose, the elongated neck outline a serene but somewhat detached beauty.

As such bird is able to see with its big eyes at night, so also Athena is able with her intelligence to lighten the darkness of human ignorance. This quality becomes a powerful weapon in the first episode of the saga, in which the owl represents a weapon as powerful as the intelligence and sagacity of the Goddess: *Athena's Owl*, the most powerful weapon in *God of War 1*.

B. Ἀγελεία – Ageleia

There are numerous episodes in literature in which Athena warns some characters, in order to help them, give them suggestions, provide them with means or ideas with which to overcome difficulties. Athena acts as a guide for characters during the siege of Troy. She often gives courage to the Achaeans³⁴, suggesting at the same time precious advice and stratagems, such as the one given to Epeius to erect the famous horse for the conquest of the city³⁵.

This attitude of help and advice is matched by another epithet, *alkis* “she who gives aid”, which appears, more than in literature³⁶, in the numismatic tradition³⁷.

Her loving protection turns to specific protagonists³⁸.

Diomedes, for example, is helped during a night raid in the Trojan camp that aims to kill the Thracian king Rhesus³⁹. Achilles, instead, who has a portrait of her on his shield, is promptly stopped when he is caught in a murderous rage against Agamemnon, who has unjustly taken his servant Briseid⁴⁰. Odysseus, animated on several occasions by his *metis*⁴¹, rejects the provocative proposal of the king of Mycenae, as well as head of the Achaean expedition, to return to his homeland and immediately afterwards incites his companions to take up arms with a speech heard by the Goddess herself as a herald⁴².

After Kratos defeats Ares, in the second chapter of the game, he receives two swords from Athena.

These swords are given to him to reward him for his service to the Gods, in addition to the place of the God of war after the death of Ares, replacing the *Swords of Chaos*, lost during the fight against Ares.

C. Ἀλαλκομενηΐς – *Alalkomenes*

Also towards other heroes of the myth Athena often shows an almost maternal protection⁴³. The name Alalkomenes may also come from the verb ἀλάλκειν (*alalkein*)⁴⁴, so that it would signify the “powerful defender”.

Theseus, son of Aegean and Etra, is flanked by the Goddess during the victorious fight against the Minotaur⁴⁵. Heracles receives from her the precious advice to use as a headgear the flayed skin of the Nemean lion just killed, as well as special castanets to kill the birds of the swamp of Stymphalus⁴⁶, reaching also through her intercession, at the end of her labors, on Olympus the common father Zeus⁴⁷. Similarly benign the Goddess shows herself to Jason, helping him to build the ship Argos and influencing Medea in the choice to support him in the hard conquest of the Golden Fleece⁴⁸; or Bellerophon, who defeats the Chimera not before having tamed Pegasus with a golden bridle given to him by the Goddess herself.

From the beginning, Athena has protected the life of Kratos. At first she prevents him from being killed by Ares because of the prophecy. Then, she leads him in the fight against Ares. In *God of War 2* Athena is warning Kratos about the incoming wrath of the Gods: «Enough, Kratos! With every city you destroy, the wrath of Olympus grows, soon I will no longer be able to protect you».

The dialogue demonstrates the Goddess' sense of concern for the future of the protagonist, increasingly felt in the development of events.

C. Πρόμαχος – *Promachos*

In the light of these myths, there are connections to specific historical events, such as the Second Persian War and in particular the battle of Salamis: the flight of an owl, according to Aristophanes⁴⁹, foretold the final victory of the Greek troops over the Persians⁵⁰. The recurring attribute of *promachos*⁵¹, i.e. “first in battle”, “commander of the armies”, is also justified.

In classical statuary she is mostly depicted as she advances toward the fight, with her arm raised, brandishing her shaft and shield against her enemies⁵².

In *God of War 2* Athena steps in like a warrior, and screams: “I wish not to fight you, Kratos, but I will defend Olympus!”.

D. Ἀρεία - *Areia*

According to epic sources⁵³, what differentiates her from Ares is that she provokes a confrontation only when necessary⁵⁴. Sometimes Athena appears in a threatening way, but only because the context requires it: it is in this unique case, in fact, that she also appears with the epithet of *areia*⁵⁵ “belligerent like Ares”. This is a point in common with the plot of *God of War 1*, where the divine protagonists show a different aspect of their warlike attitude.

Both in literature and gameplay Ares strongly desires war and tries in every way to make the characters clash with each other, with the purpose of creating turmoil and unrest⁵⁶. On the contrary, Athena is the Goddess of wisdom, of calm and before showing her violence she tries to take alternative and peaceful paths. Within this competition and divergence of character Athena clashes with Ares, on the one hand in a direct way, as the literature shows, on the other in an indirect way, as the plot of *God of War 1* suggests.

In the fifth book of the *Iliad* the Goddess urged Diomedes to attack Ares, so the hero threw a spear at him and his battle cry frightened both the Trojans and the Achaeans. Athena made the

spear hit Ares, who, screaming in pain, fled to Olympus forcing the Trojans to retreat.

In the first chapter of the saga, Ares, angry and jealous of Athena, summoned an army from the Underworld with the aim of attacking the city of Athens to prove his superiority. Since Zeus had forbidden all the Gods to compete with each other directly, the Gods decided to stop Ares and helped Kratos defeat him. Athena led him on his journey to find the Pandora's Box and showed him the way. When he opened the Pandora's Box he managed to kill Ares.

Both in Homer and in the video game Athena uses a *medium* to defeat her brother. The Homeric description of the episode (*Il.* V 1-6) also seems to well represent *God of War* 1, in particular with regard to the strength and the help instilled by the Goddess in her helper:

And then to Diomedes, son of Tyldus, Pallas Athena infused strength and fury, so that among all the Achaeans he would stand out and conquer great glory; an unquenchable flame burned his helmet and shield, it seemed the autumn star that shines brightly when it rises from the waters of the Ocean.

E. Νικηφόρος – *Nikephoros*

This adjective, or more simply Νίκη, *Nike*, “the one who brings victory”, always refers to the military sphere⁵⁷. It derives from a character of Greek mythology, personification of victory and daughter of the titan Pallas and the nymph Styx⁵⁸. This label defines the strong character of the Goddess, who fights and wins. Her very solid physical and inner strength has a secondary reference to another rare but significant epithet: *atritonia*⁵⁹, which would qualify her as “she who does not wear herself out, does not destroy herself”; *sthenias* “strong”, which would reinforce the concept of a brave Goddess⁶⁰.

In *God of War* 3 all these features are highlighted.

Despite the strong bond with her father, Athena decides to eliminate him, and to do so convinces Kratos to help her in her

murderous intent. This clash, rather unpredictable in the first two chapters, resumes a feeling of resentment and revenge of the Goddess against Zeus⁶¹: both in the video game and in the *Iliad*, in fact, Athena obeys her father, but only until she understands his mistakes. Here then she shows herself, once again, determined and winning: Kratos, in fact, manages to defeat the father of the Gods.

Athena also gets very irritated because Kratos does not give her *Hope* back from Pandora's Box⁶².

As the Goddess is defeated, she is disappointed by the protagonist's attitude: She did not expect to be overshadowed at all. The defeat, after a series of brilliant victories against Ares and Zeus, upsets her and that is why she gets so angry that she leaves Kratos dying.

Therefore, Athena does not compromise, remains firm in her principles and only wants the victory: she abandons the protagonist and stays behind the scenes for a long time.

F. Ἀγοραία - *Agoraia*

In addition to these episodes of punishment there are, however, others in which the Goddess poses herself almost as a defense attorney⁶³. The titles of *boulaia*⁶⁴ and *agoraia*⁶⁵ undoubtedly refer to his patronage in the political sphere.

The most important, perhaps, is that inherent to the trial of Orestes: Athena, a member of the Areopagus court, understands the reasons of the hero, stained by the murder of his mother Clytemnestra, and contributes with her vote to his acquittal⁶⁶.

In this juridical context, it is also interesting to note how the Goddess, although she takes this sympathetic attitude towards the offender, is not unaware of his misdeeds: she is well aware of the inner demons that persecute the boy, who is constantly plagued by nightmares, remorse and regret.

At the end of *God of War 3* the Goddess understands the motivations and impulses that drove Kratos to commit these crimes.

A similar situation arises in *God of War 4*, when Athena and Kratos discuss the past that haunts the protagonist. The Goddess returns

as a spirit in a dialogue full of *pathos* and suffering, in which man avoids in every possible way the return of memories and images that are painful for him. To Kratos' verbal violence, the woman responds with a severe warning:

There's nowhere you can hide, Spartan. Put as much distance between you and the truth as you want, it changes nothing. Pretend to be everything you are not: teacher, husband, father. But there is one unavoidable truth you will never escape: You cannot change. You will always be a monster.

G. Παρθένος - *Parthenos*

Parthenos, i.e. "virgin", is the adjective with which Phidias represents the Goddess in the chrysoelephantine statue placed in the temple in her honour on the Acropolis of Athens⁶⁷. It seems to derive not only from a free and conscious choice, but also from a particular episode: the failed attempt to rape her by Hephaestus⁶⁸.

In *God of War 1* Kratos arrives at the temple of Athens and sees the statue of the Goddess. He begins to invert them against them, angry and disappointed by the dishonest behavior of the Goddesses. It is possible to see the close resemblance of the statuary pose represented in the urban reality of the game with the classical statuary.

H. Ἀμβουλία - *Amboulia*

It was the surname under which the Spartans worshiped Athena⁶⁹. The meaning could derive from *anaballo* (ἀναβάλλω) "to defer", in order to designate a divinity as the delayer of death⁷⁰.

This Spartan nickname is significant in the context of the video game, since it is precisely the place of origin of the protagonist: Athena and Ares arrive just as carriers of death and misfortune.

In *God of War: Ghost of Sparta* Zeus, driven by dread in the wake of hearing the prophet's prediction that Olympian standard would end because of a 'Marked Warrior', sent Ares and Athena to catch the one bound to topple Zeus. Seeing the bizarre skin colorations

on Deimos, they attacked Sparta and caught the kid. His more established sibling, Kratos, attempted to stop them, however was effectively smacked aside by the God of War.

I. Ἀξιόποινος - *Axiopoínos*

Pausanias⁷¹ testifies to this nickname of Athena, which means “avenger”⁷². Under this epithet Heracles constructed a temple to the Goddess at Sparta, after he had chastised Hippocoon and his sons for the homicide of Oeonus.

In *God of War* 1 Ares is terribly jealous of his sister: that is why he decides to summon beasts from the Underworld and utilize them to assault the city of Athens. Since Zeus had forbidden the Gods to combat each other straightforwardly, Ares thought that nothing seemed stop him. For this reason, Athena looked for to engage Kratos to spare Athens and put an conclusion to Ares’ frenzy once and for all. The Goddess’ initiative is part of her traditional vindictive and punitive character.

L. Σώτειρα – *Soteira*

It occurs as a surname of several female divinities in Greece, *i.e.* the “saving Goddess”. Some sources testify to a use of the word for Athena herself⁷³.

In *God of War: Ghost of Sparta*, before Ares could execute Kratos, Athena mediated and disclosed to him they previously had what they sought. Is the same Goddess who saved him and convinced Ares to spare the life of young Kratos, still a child. Her epithet of “savior” has been used since the beginning of the video game plot.

God of War as a learning opportunity

God of War is now Sony’s highest-rated and most-played game on Steam: the game has an all-time concurrent players peak of 73,529⁷⁴. The wide and transversal diffusion of this video game allows it to

be identified not only as an opportunity for entertainment, but also as a potential instrument of historical divulgation⁷⁵, particularly in schools.

History needs to involve the past, to allow even the youngest to feel part of the heritage they feel is far away. Those tales of classical mythology, the moment they are studied in school books, seem demanding, full of data, names, circumstances, dates.

The uniqueness and value that historical video games can claim in comparison to other media are based on this: in fact, while books offer a static representation of the past, in video games it is possible to outline, through the player's interaction, a true counterfactual history, which makes it possible to identify oneself with a man of that time, experiencing its problems.

The widespread idea that events can only be told historically in one way, so much so as to see the player's interaction and the changes to which it gives rise as the negation of a univocal past, of a monolithic and unchangeable history, seems to me rather to be the true strength of the media in its relationship with history. The interaction of video games gives access to multiple paths to reach the end of them and, therefore, of the story told within them⁷⁶. Video game simulations are not only determined by sequences of events prefixed by the developers, but also by the behaviours that the players enact in the face of them, so that, unlike in narrative pure and simple, the sequence of events is never fixed and things will always turn out differently each time they are played⁷⁷.

Yet there are obvious limitations, mainly related to the scenes of violence in the plot itself. There are many pedagogical studies on the subject⁷⁸

Beyond this, however, reading this list of negative effects carefully, and comparing it with the list of positive effects that can be reconstructed from the many articles that have come out on the subject, the impression is that a fairly clear separation is being established between medium and message, that is, between the structural and mediological characteristics of the video game and the use that is made of it, both with regard to the contents that are

conveyed through it in the form of narratives and game objectives, and with regard to the social and psychic consequences that can be generated by excessive use.

The greatest negative effects attributable to video games would reside, also by virtue of their content, in making people interactively and continuously participate in violent actions, actions that the game system rewards in order to advance the status of the game⁷⁹.

In particular, in the *God of War* saga, violence underlies many scenes and plot developments. In particular, in the figure of Athena, the element of violence is well present in the various episodes of *GoW*. This feature, however, is legitimised by centuries of literary and iconographic tradition. Indeed, as I have shown above, in the panorama of behavioural, instrumental and physical characteristics associated with the goddess, various epithets and aspects emerge that make Athena just the Athena we all know.

GoW is particularly precise in this: in fact, the scriptwriters have included numerous scenes of violence in the video game that also strongly characterise the goddess in literary and artistic episodes.

It is clear that one must perhaps ask oneself what image of Athena is created in the mind of the player, especially the teenager. Compared to the idea, however, that was intended in classical times of the goddess as a strong-willed woman capable of resorting to violence, it can be said that the developers have been able to faithfully respect the ancient heritage.

Conclusion

Myth has accompanied man since the dawn of time. In many ways, the history of mankind is a myth and, for many reasons, every historical period has its own mythological period of reference. Endlessly fascinating, mythology has been able to impose itself thanks to its irresistible lightness. In particular, the Greco-Roman one.

This is because myth is accompanied, first and foremost, by an extensive literature: cartoons, television series, films and even

documentaries are dedicated to it. Because myth, we might say, is the very essence of a people or a culture. And because its ontologically ‘open’ nature makes it available for any transposition.

Why does the world of deities stimulate the imagination so much? Because there is nothing more human than the divine. Immortal gods who share with men vices and virtues, sanctity and curse.

Mythology is also the lifeblood of gamification and advances in new technologies. The best known and most obvious example of this is *God of War*, an award-winning and much-loved series of *PlayStation* video games that, over a decade or so, have reinterpreted the struggle between the Gods of Olympus.

Athena, in this virtual world, remains in my opinion the perfect example of how the classics can still be revived today. The *GoW* episodes do not start out as educational projects, but they probably derive their strength from this: the graphics are excellent, as are the soundtrack and script. The characters inherit their main characteristics from ancient literature and art and are embedded in highly engaging dynamics. In particular, the case of Athena confirms how much the actualisation of these stories, however readapted and personalised by the scriptwriters, is still capable of engaging a wide audience.

In an analysis of narratives that are effective in conveying history, choosing this video game offers a greater historical depth, which explicitly favours a faithful historical transmission of content. At this point, it is an excellent choice on Sony’s part to include the classicists in their realisation, in order to find plots in the scripts that in the game do not excessively alter the player’s perception (especially if they are teenagers) of the image they had of Athena in antiquity. As Christesen and Machado have suggested

one significant possibility for the future is regular and active involvement of classicists in the production of video games, something which would likely result in games with much enhanced pedagogical potential⁸⁰.

Why are Greco-Roman mythological heroes the protagonists of

the most modern and sophisticated video games? What relationship could the world of games and the world of mythology possibly have? Apparently none, basically many, close and in strong relationship.

The game of *God of War* therefore presents itself not only as an engaging and multifaceted game experience, but also as an educational opportunity to learn about Greek mythology and, more generally, the classical world in an interactive way. As Plato said, one should live by playing. And man, in his history, has taken this literally. And he plays, he has always played.

Notes

1 For a precise but concise reconstruction of the figure of Athena, ideal even for less experienced readers, see PARKER 2016. Valuable for its survey of a range of topics including etymology, myth, function, roles, ritual, and iconography is GRAF, LEY 1997, 160–167. DEACY 2008 weighs up various meanings of Athena through a focus on birth myths, possible attempts at determining origins, associations with other mythological and religious figures, Athenian myths and institutions, representations across the wider Greek world, and postclassical receptions.

2 *Cra.* 407b.

3 *HES. th.* 866 ff.

4 *O.* VII 34 ff.

5 MILANI 1982 traces the cultural filiation that links the great Mycenaean Goddess to the Athena of the classical period and to the Italic Minerva.

6 See GUARDUCCI 1937.

7 *God of War* is a series of action-adventure games developed by *SIE Santa Monica Studio* and released by *Sony Interactive Entertainment* since 2005 for *PlayStation 2*, *PlayStation 3*, *PlayStation 4*, *PlayStation Portable* and *PlayStation Vita*.

8 *God of War: Chains of Olympus* is an action video game developed by *Ready at Dawn Studios* exclusively for *Sony PlayStation Portable*. The previous chapter is *God of War: Ascension*. It is a video game for *PlayStation 3*, developed by *SCE Santa Monica Studio* and published by *Sony Computer Entertainment*. I decided not to go deeper into its contents as Athena does not play a central role in the development of the plot.

9 *God of War* is a video game produced by *SCE Studios Santa Monica* and released by *Sony Computer Entertainment* for the *PlayStation 2*, *PlayStation 3* and *PlayStation Vita* platforms.

10 The feeling of revenge that is generated in Kratos is also present in the Homeric epich: For the revenge ethic in classical Greece and patterns of vengeance in classical Greek see LENDON 2000, 1-30.

11 *God of War: Ghost of Sparta* is an action game developed by *Ready at Dawn Studios* exclusively for *Sony PlayStation Portable*.

12 There are numerous character and metaphorical parallels between the mythological character of Scylla and the enemy monster of Kratos: to learn more about the iconological and mythographic aspects see HOPMAN 2012.

13 The Greek texts allow a comparison between the theophany narratives and the oracular narratives, since both concern manifestations of the divine in the human sphere. Real religious experiences make it possible to understand the origin and formation of these narratives and show that contact with the divine, in both cases, is always mediated, because, as the mythical narratives reveal, direct encounter with a God was considered dangerous. These two religious experiences fall within the sensory domain and mediation is based on the conception of anthropomorphism (for the epiphany) and antropoglottism (for the oracle). But the sensory can deceive and the relationship with the divine must be analysed as a cognitive problem. Accounts of oracles and epiphanies show the same structure formed by a crisis, authorization, resolution and finally commemoration. These narratives can be seen as narratives about human apprehension of the divine world: see KINDT 2018.

14 HOM. *Od.* 13, 295-301.

15 See STRAUSS CLAY 1997.

16 *God of War II* is a video game for *Sony PlayStation 2*, produced by *SCE Studios Santa Monica*. The previous chapter is *God of War: Betrayal*. It is a mobile phone video game produced by *Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment*. I decided not to include it because it is a non-canonical chapter and therefore not part of the official saga.

17 Gaia is often the narrator in *God of War*. In literature Gaia is a schemer, a prototype for her granddaughter Metis. She includes discussion of Zeus' role as a star of the story that culminates in his election as king of the Gods. Hesiod's *Theogony* presents a Gaia whose commitment to sustainability endures through time. On Gaia's motivations in the course of Hesiod's *Theogony* see FELSON 2018, 57-80.

18 In Greek mythology, as well as in *God of War*, both Titans and Chronos face Zeus, with the aim of getting rid of them, in a delicate game of power and balance. To know the conflicts of successors according to Greek mythology see FLORES JÚNIOR 1992, 25-32.

19 The myth of Prometheus, an icon of human progress, with the suggestion

of the theft of fire from Zeus for the benefit of mortals, has had a flourishing fortune in the history of Western culture, in the sign of multiplicity of interpretations. For further information see PATTONI 2012-2013.

20 The tria *Fata* are the Latin denominations of Μοῖραι, but they are distinguished by the richness of their attributes and by their particular function, which is to write divine orders. As for *Parca*, she is originally a goddess of birth, life and death; seen first of all as a trinity, she is divided into her three functions under Greek influence. From then on, the three Fates became goddesses of destiny and merged with the Μοῖραι. See VAN DER HORST 1943.

21 The question of the essence and real meaning of the golden fleece is widely discussed in the classical world and modern specialist literature as well. The fleece was a symbol of a protector of royal power. The country where the fleece was preserved, Aea/Colchis, is to be identified with modern Western Georgia. The richness of Colchis in metal, mainly gold, became a basis for the euhemerizing, rationalist explanation of the golden fleece. For a detailed study see LORDKIPANIDZE 2001.

22 In Greek mythology most symbols of Athena, for example, the snake, moon, pomegranate, spindle and phiale, are symbols of both life and death. Just as life and death are indissolubly joined, so the goddess who dispenses them is one and single. See LUYSTER 1965.

23 See PUCCI 2017.

24 *God of War III* is the third installment in the *God of War* video game series, produced by SCE Santa Monica Studio and published by Sony Computer Entertainment exclusively for PlayStation 3.

25 *God of War* (also known as *God of War 4*) is the eighth chapter in the *God of War* series, developed by SIE Santa Monica Studio and published by Sony Interactive Entertainment for PlayStation 4.

26 See CONSTANTINIDOU 2010, 91-109.

27 HOM. *Od.* XVI 172.

28 AESCH. *Eum.* 736 ff.

29 HES. *Theog.* 924 ff.

30 The changing obverse types of Wappenmünzen are moneyer's symbols, begun in Pisistratus' final tyranny. The gorgoneion tetradrachms are the earliest civic emblems of Athens, minted ca. 520-518. The earliest owls (Seltman Group H) should be dated ca. 517-515 B.C. See KROLL 1981.

31 The disappearance of the epithet γλαυκῶπις soon after the pre-Socratics used the word in the meaning "light blueeyed" clearly show that the reinterpretation must be put into a much later time than Homer. See PÖTSCHER 1997.

32 From Plato onwards, it sometimes takes on the meaning of "light blue", fully symmetrical to the blue gaze of the protagonist in the video game. For the philological reconstruction mentioned here see PEROTTI 1989.

33 A. Furtwängler's reconstruction (*Meisterwerke der griechischen Plastik*, Leipzig & Berlin 1893) of Pheidias' statue, combining a body in Dresden with a head in Bologna and adding a helmet to her left hand, is a true copy of a mid-5th cent. B.C. statue. It is reflected, albeit indirectly, in two original sculptures of the classical period, a late 5th cent. statuette from the Athenian Acropolis and a 4th-cent. relief of Athena holding her helmet, from Epidauros. See PALAGIA 1987.

34 HOM. *Il.* IV 313; XVII 547 ff.

35 HOM. *Od.* VIII 493; VERG. *Aen.* II 264. See BREMMER 1972.

36 LIV. XLII 51.

37 See KOBLITZ 1931.

38 See RAIMOND 2017.

39 HOM. *Il.* X 274 ff.

40 HOM. *Il.* I 193 ff. See HOOKER 1990.

41 See CAMASSA 1980.

42 HOM. *Il.* II 279.

43 From literary and iconographic testimonies that show how Athena defended Perseus, Heracles, Theseus, Achilles and Orestes in their confrontations with Medusa, the Amazons and Clytemnestra, the role of the Goddess as defender of the patriarchal reason is exposed. The female characters referred to are configured against Athena according to the "savage/civilized" opposition. See GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ 2003.

44 HOM. *Il.* IV 8.

45 PLUT. *Thes.* 15-19.

46 PSEUD. APOLLOD. II 5, 1-12.

47 PAUS. III 8, 11.

48 AP. RHOD. *Argon.* III 10-157.

49 *Vesp.* 1086. See ANDERSON 1995.

50 Analysis of archaeological and literary sources suggests that the *Athena Promachos* of Phidias also carried an owl in her right hand. See GROOTHAND 1968.

51 HOM. *Il.* V 733-747; Hdt. I 60; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 14,4. See DEMARGNE 1984, 1020.

52 HOLTZMANN 2014.

53 Rather than being straightforwardly different from one another, Athena and Ares are changeable and often elusive figures. Set against Athena's promotion of rationality and intelligence in warfare is an association with terror, fury, and derring-do. Despite lacking the multivalence of Athena, Ares too is more complex than generally allowed. See DEACY 2000, 285-298.

54 HES. *Theog.* 924 ff.

55 PAUS. I 8,4. See JEPPESEN 1971.

56 HOM. *Il.* V 761; V 890. See PRIETO 1996.

57 PAUS. I 22,4.

58 For an examination, based on archaeological, literary and Greek epigraphic evidence, of the building phases of the temple of Athena *Nike* on the Athenian Acropolis, and the evolution of her cult from the 7th cent. B.C. to the 3rd cent. A.D., see LEMBIDAKI 2013, 367-393.

59 HOM. *Il.* X 284.

60 PAUS. II 32, 5.

61 In the *Iliad* Zeus imposes her will on Athena by all means; the result for Athena, obliged to submit, is a resentment which explains any hostile act on her part towards her father. See SYNODINOU 1986.

62 WARMAN 2004 argues for the definition of *elpis* (ἐλπίς) as an emotion-tinged uncertainty about the future in Hesiod's story of Pandora, discussing ancient evaluations of the word and possible translations for it.

63 PAUS. III 11,8.

64 An inventory set up in the *bouleutèrion* of items dedicated to Zeus *Boulaios*, Athena *Boulaia*, and Hestia in GEAGAN 1971.

65 On the votive archaeological finds of Athena Agoraia see GALLIS 1974 and ARAPOJANNI 1999.

66 Greater complexity in the analysis of ambivalence in tragedy is needed, not only through greater differentiation of types of ambivalence and ambiguity, but above all through a historically informed understanding of the functioning of ambivalence. On the issue of acquittal and doubts about guilt and innocence see SEAFORD 1995, 202-221.

67 In his praise of the originality and variety of Phidias' art, Himerius, *Gold.* 21 speaks of the fine redness that the artist spread on Athena's cheeks. This passage undoubtedly refers to the Lemnian and should not be interpreted in the literal sense, but in the figurative and eminently moral sense of "virginal modesty". One can think of an expression similar to that of the dreamy Athena on the stele of the Acropolis; indeed, this small masterpiece is due to Phidias just as much as the Lemnian and the monumental Athena chryselephantine. See MAGI 1976.

68 See DEACY 1997, 43-63.

69 GAGLIANO 2015 analyzes the cult of Athena in Sparta and the meaning of her epiclesis on the basis of literary (first of all Pausania), epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological evidence, with the characteristic *ex-voto* of bronze bells.

70 PAUS. III 13,4.

71 III 15,4.

72 The interpretation of the laconic epithet of Athena Ἀξιόποινος proposed by Pausania, which links it to the concepts of reparation and punishment

appropriate to a wrong done, finds no explicit parallels in Greek. The specificity of Athena as a punishing deity is instead attested in the Anatolian context, where some inscriptions of the 1st millennium B.C. represent as such the Lycian Goddess corresponding to her (Maliya). See SERANGELI 2014.

73 *Scholiast on Plato* p. 90 (ed. Ruhnken); *Aris. Rh.* III 18. For the archaeological evidence of the cult of Athena *Soteira* see PAPAGIANNOPOULOS-PALAIOS 1958-1959.

74 See: <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2022/01/god-of-war-steam-most-played> [last check: 27/10/2022]

75 See LOWE 2009.

76 See Ruocco 2009.

77 See CHAPMAN 2021.

78 See ANDERSON, DILL 2000; ANDERSON, BUSHMAN 2001; ANDERSON *et al.* 2007.

79 CLARE 2021, 44.

80 CHRISTESEN, MACHADO (2010) 109.

References

ANDERSON = C. A. Anderson, *Athena's epithets: their structural significance in plays of Aristophanes*, Stuttgart, Teubner, 1995.

ANDERSON *et al.* 2007 = C. Anderson *et al.*, *Violent video game effects on children and adolescents: Theory, research, and public policy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007

ANDERSON, BUSHMAN 2001 = A. Anderson, B. J. Bushman, *Effects of violent video games on aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and prosocial behavior: A metaanalytic review of the scientific literature*, in *Psychological Science*, 12, 2001, 353–359.

ANDERSON, DILL 2000 = C. A. Anderson, K. E. Dill, *Video games and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the laboratory and in life*, in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 2000, 772-790.

ARAPOJANNI 1999 = X. Arapojanni, Αναθηματική επιγραφή από το Πρασιδάκι Ηλείας, in *Όρος*, 13, 1999, 167-172.

BORTHWICK 1969 = E. K. Borthwick, *Two notes on Athena as protectress*, in *Hermes* 48, 1969, 385-391.

BREMMER 1976 = J. N. Bremmer, *Athena and the Trojan horse*, in *Museum Africum*, 1, 1972, 4-7.

CAMASSA 1980 = G. Camassa, *Dall'alke alla metis*, in *Civiltà classica e cristiana*, 1, 1980, 173-193.

CHAPMAN 2021 = A. Chapman, *Form Over Content: Analysing Historical Videogames*, in *Journal of Digital Humanities*, 2012, <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-2/privileging-form-over-content-by-adam-chapman> [last check: 27/10/2022].

CHRISTESEN, MACHADO 2010 = P. Christesen, D. Machado, *Video Games and Classical Antiquity*, in *CW*, 104, 2010, 107-110.

CLARE 2021 = R. Clare, *Ancient Greece and Rome in Videogames. Representation, Play, Transmedia*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2021.

CONSTANTINIDOU 2010 = S. Constantinidou, *The light imagery of divine manifestation in Homer*, in C. Menelaos et al., *Light and darkness in ancient Greek myth and religion*, Lanham (Md.), Rowman and Littlefield, 2010, 91-109.

DEACY 1997 = S. Deacy, *The vulnerability of Athena: parthenoi and rape in Greek myth*, in S. Deacy, K. F. Peirce, *Rape in antiquity: sexual violence in the Greek and Roman worlds*, Swansea, Classical Pr. of Wales, 1997, 43-63.

Ead. 2000 = *Athena and Ares: war, violence and warlike deities*, in H. Van Wees, *War and violence in ancient Greece*, Swansea, Classical Pr. of Wales, 2000, 347-360.

Ead. 2008 = *Athena. Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008.

FELSON 2018 = N. Felson, *The partnership of Zeus and Gaia in Hesiod's Theogony*, in L. Athanassaki e al., *Gods and mortals in Greek and Latin poetry: studies in honor of Jenny Strauss Clay*, Rethymno, University of Crete, 2018, 57-80.

FLORES JÚNIOR 1992 = O. Flores Júnior, *Mitos de geração e sucessão em Hesíodo: Urano, Cronos e Zeus*, in *Anais da VI reunião anual da SBEC 1991, 1992*, 25-32.

GAGLIANO 2015 = E. Gagliano, *Μία χαλκείη κώδων νέα: il suono di Athena: realia e culto di Athena Chalkioikos a Sparta*, in *ASAA*, 15, 2015, 81-112.

GALLIS 1974 = K. J. Gallis, *Ἀναθηματικά ἐπιγραφαι ἐξ Ἄτραγος καὶ Φαρσάλων*, in *Archaiologika Analekta ex Athenon*, 7, 1974, 273-286.

GEAGAN 1971 = G. J. Geagan, *Greek inscriptions*, in *Hesperia*, 40, 1971, 96-108.

GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ 2003 = M. M. González González, *Atenea y la razón patriarcal: arte y mito en torno a la hija de Zeus*, in *Helmantica*, 54, 2003, 247-267.

GRAF, LEY 1997 = F. Graf, A. Ley, *Athene*, in H. Cancik, *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 2, Stuttgart and Weimar, Germany, Metzler, 1997.

GROOTHAND 1968 = M. H. Groothand, *The owl on Athena's hand*, in *Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevoordere der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving*, 43, 1968, 35-51.

GUARDUCCI 1937 = M. Guarducci, *Due aspetti di Athena nella religione cretese*, in *RIA*, 7, 1937, 7-19.

HOLTZMANN 2014 = B. Holtzmann, *Statues de culte et figures associées d'Athéna sur l'Acropole d'Athènes*, in S. Estienne et al., *Figures de dieux*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2014, 13-25.

HOOKE 1990 = J. T. Hooker, *The visit of Athena to Achilles in Iliad I*, in *Emerita*, 58, 1990, 21-32.

HOPMAN 2012 = M. G. Hopman, *Scylla: myth, metaphor, paradox*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Pr., 2012.

JEPPSEN 1971 = K. Jeppesen, *Ἀργοῦσά που κατὰ το θεῖον. Zu Pausanias ix, 42, über die Gemälde im Tempel der Athena Areia zu Platäa*, in *AArch*, 42, 1971, 110-112.

KINDT 2018 = J. Kindt, *Revelation, narrative, and cognition: oracle stories as epiphanic tales in ancient Greece*, in *Kernos*, 31, 2018, 39-58.

KOBLITZ 1931 = H. von Koblitz, *Keltische Münzen vom Athena-Alkis-Typus*, in *Wiener Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, 18, 1931, 1-9.

KROLL 1981 = J. H. Kroll, *From Wappenmünzen to gorgoneia to owls*, in *The American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*, 26, 1981, 1-32.

LEMBIDAKI 2013 = E. Lembidaki, *Η λατρεία της Αθηνάς Νίκης στην Ακρόπολη των Αθηνών: από την Αθηνά την Νίκη στη Νίκη Άπτερο*, in E. Sioumpara, *Θεμέλιον: 24 μελέτες για τον δάσκαλο Πέτρο Θέμελη από τους μαθητές και τους συνεργάτες του*, Athina, Etaireia Messiniakon Archaialogikon Spoudon, 2013, 367-393.

LONDON 2000 = J.E. Lendon, *Homeric vengeance and the outbreak of Greek wars*, in H. Van Wees, *War and violence in ancient Greece*, Swansea, Classical Pr. of Wales, 2000, 1-30.

LORDKIPANIDZE 2001 = O. Lordkipanidze, *The golden fleece: myth, euhemeristic explanation and archaeology*, in *OJA*, 20, 2001, 1-38.

LOWE 2009 = D. Lowe, *Playing with Antiquity: Videogame Receptions of the Classical World*, in D. Lowe, K. Shahabudin, *Classics For All: Reworking Antiquity in Mass Cultural Media*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 62-88.

LUYSTER 1965 = R. Luyster, *Symbolic elements in the cult of Athena*, in *HR*, 5, 1965, 133-163.

MAGI 1976 = F. Magi, *Un passo di Imerio, la Lemnia e l'Atena pensierosa*, in *PP*, 31, 1976, 324-335.

MILANI 1982 = C. Milani, *Atena e la Potnia micenea*, in *Contributi dell'Istituto di Storia antica dell'Università del Sacro Cuore*, 8, 1982, 29-42.

PALAGIA 1987 = O. Palagia, *Ἐρύθημα... ἀντικράνους. In defense of Furtwängler's Athena Lemnia*, in *AJA*, 91, 1987, 81-84.

PAPAGIANNOPOULOS-PALAIOS 1958-1959 = A. A. Papagiannopoulos-Palaios, *Πειραική αρχαιολογία. Το τεμενος Διος Σωτήρος και Ἀθηνᾶς και τα ἐν αὐτῷ λατρευτικά ἀγάλματα και ἀνδριάντες*, in *Polemon*, 7, 1958-1959, 26-48.

PARKER 2016 = R. C. T. Parker, *Athena*, in S. Goldberg, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, New York, Oxford Univ. Press., 2016.

PATTONI 2012-2013 = M. P. Pattoni, *Introduzione: il mito di Prometeo tra letteratura e arti: dai testi antichi alle rivisitazioni contemporanee*, in *Aevum(ant)*, 12-13, 2012-2013, 5-44.

PEROTTI 1989 = P. A. Perotti, *Sur les adjectifs γλαυκός, γλαυκῶπις*, in *LEC*, 57, 1989, 97-109.

PÖTSCHER 1997 = W. Pötscher, *Die Bedeutung des Wortes γλαυκῶπις*, in *Philologus*, 141, 1997, 3-20.

PRIETO 1996 = M. L. Prieto, *Ares en Homero: función del dios de la guerra en la Ilíada y la Odisea*, Amsterdam, Hakkert, 1996.

PUCCI 2017 = P. Pucci, *Divine protagonists in the Iliad: Hector's death in book 22*, in *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic*, 1, 2017, 175-205.

RAIMOND 2017 = É. Raimond, *L'initiation de Diomède dans l'Iliade (Chants 5-6)*, in *Res Antiquae*, 14, 2017, 221-230.

RUOCCO 2020 = C. C. Ruocco, *La narrazione della guerra nei videogiochi*, in *Didattica della storia*, 2, 2020, 396-412.

SEAFORD 1995 = R. A. S. Seaford, *Historicizing tragic ambivalence: the vote of Athena*, in B. Goff, *History, tragedy, theory: dialogues on Athenian drama*, Austin (Tex.), University of Texas Pr., 1995, 1-37.

SERANGELI 2014 = M. Serangeli, *Atena Ἀξιοποινος (Paus. III 15,6)*, in *Aevum(ant)*, 14, 2014, 131-141.

STRAUSS CLAY 1997 = J. Strauss Clay, *The wrath of Athena: Gods and men in the Odyssey*, Lanham (Md.), Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.

SYNODINOU 1986 = K. Synodinou, *The relationship between Zeus and Athena in the Iliad*, in *Dodone(hist)*, 15, 1986, 155-164.

VAN DER HORST 1943 = P. W. Van der Horst, *Fatum, tria Fata; Parca, tres Parcae*, in *Mnemosyne*, 11, 1943, 217-227.

WARMAN 2004 = E. A. Warman, *Hope in a jar*, in *Mouseion*, 4, 2004, 107-119.