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Becoming Classical Artemis: A Glimpse at the Evolution of the Goddess as Traced in Ancient Arcadia

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the evolution of the goddess Artemis in Ancient Greek religion from prehistoric till late historic times. In the related studies, still there is no certainty as to the beginning of worship of Artemis in Ancient Greece and her original concept. Moreover, Artemis' appearance in the early historic period with the features of the prehistoric Mountain-Mother-Goddess, the Mistress of Animals, the goddess of lakes, the goddess of trees, the goddess of birth and child-care, on the one hand, and as a virgin-huntress who presented rudimentary traits of bear-goddess and deer-goddess, on the other, raises questions whether Artemis originally had all these hypostases or acquired them gradually through assimilation with different goddesses. This paper argues that the concept of Artemis as attested during the historic period was the result of its long development, which consisted of two major phases. Originally, Artemis was a goddess of wild animals and herself was imagined as a bear and a doe. Perhaps, from the beginning, she was regarded as a guardian of sacred rules and a punisher for inappropriate religious behavior. Gradually, Artemis was identified with the old universal goddess of nature and received from her connection with mountain-tops and lakes, responsibility for plant growth and fertility in general, obligation to protect childbirth, etc.. In this paper, the evolution of the concept of Artemis is traced on the basis of her cults practiced in Arcadia, one of a few areas of Ancient Greece where ethno-cultural continuity remained unbroken from prehistoric to late historic times.

Keywords: Ancient Arcadia, Ancient Greek religion, Artemis, Arcadian Artemis.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The subject of the study and the aim of the research

In Greek religion of the historic period, Artemis was probably the most complex goddess who embodied a variety of different and even contradictory concepts. She was imagined as a young and pure virgin-huntress, who never had intimate relationship with any male and gave birth to no child, but

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she was also considered responsible for childbirth, while certain licentious elements attested in many of her cults gave grounds to the poet Timotheus (5th century BC) to call her “mantic, frantic, Bacchic, fanatic” (Timotheus, *Artemis*: “Θυιάδα, φοιβάδα, μαινάδα, λυσσαάδα”). She was closely associated with wild nature, but was also regarded as a guardian of the sacred rules, on which the religious behavior of people was based. She could appear with horrible features of monstrous Gorgon (Frothingham, 1911) and was praised as the “fairest of maidens” (Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 66: “καλλίστα πολὺ παρθένων”). She was linked to mountain-tops and to lakes, to groves and to sea-shores, and her functions varied in accordance with the location of her cult-places (see the most recent study examining various aspects of Artemis by Budin, 2016). This complexity of the religious concept of Artemis was the result of the evolution passed by the goddess from the time she began to be worshiped in Greece until the Classical period, when her cults obtained their final forms.

However, the course of her evolution and its content are still not clarified, mainly because of insufficient evidence for worship of Artemis in Greece during prehistoric time (Nosh, 2009; Budin, 2016, P.9-34). In the related studies, no certainty has been arrived at concerning the origins of Artemis in Greek religion, her initial concept, the chronology and the causes of the emergence in her concept of all those aspects, which characterized the goddess in Classical time (current opinions concerning Artemis are presented in the collective volume edited by Fischer-Hansen & Poulsen, 2009). For the understanding of the nature of various Classical cults of Artemis to be correct, it is essential to establish, which of those cults were based on Artemis’ original concept(s) and which ones expressed the aspects adopted by her from other goddesses. Such a task requires a complex study, which would summarize and compare all the available evidence (information of written sources, archaeological finds from Artemis’ sanctuaries, iconography, etc.) coming from all the areas of Greece.

It is the suggestion of this paper to initiate this complex study and to begin it with the consideration of the evidence relating to worship of Artemis in Arcadia, a Peloponnesian region, where very peculiar ethno-cultural traditions remained more or less continuous from prehistoric to late historic times and where the cults of Artemis attested during the historic period presented, perhaps, the widest spectrum of concepts and practices.

1.2 The methodology of the research and its contribution to the study

The particular research analyzes the information about Arcadian Artemis contained in mythic tradition and ancient literature; that information is correlated with the archaeological material discovered in the Arcadian cult-places of Artemis (Jost, 1985; Solima, 2011; Mitsopoulos-Leon, 2012; Schaus, 2014, and oth.) and with Artemis’ iconography (Kahil, 1984). Some supplementary evidence relating to Artemis from other areas of Greece is adduced as well. Also, the comparative evidence from Indo-European religions and languages is used for tracing Indo-European backgrounds of Artemis.

As starting point of the research, the primal form of Artemis’ concept is discerned based on the common rule that in early religions the animal associated with a deity normally indicates the deity’s original animal shape (Cook, 1894, p.160). The aspects and functions of historic Artemis, which are securely traced in prehistoric goddesses (except, perhaps, hunting), are considered adopted by the former from the latter.

The present research puts forward a possible line of the evolution of Artemis in Greek religion, which, on the one hand, may explain the presence of very different, even polar aspects in the classical concept of Artemis and, on the other, prevents from searching for the goddess with all the aspects of classical Artemis in prehistoric religion.

The main part of the paper consists of two large sections, in which the original concept of Artemis and its transformations over time as traced in ancient Arcadia are considered, respectively; the results of the research are summarized in the conclusion part.

2. Artemis in Arcadia: Primal shape and concept

Arcadian myths and certain Arcadian cults associated with Artemis provide indications of that in Arcadia Artemis originally appeared as a goddess of wild beasts, especially of those who live in remote places, in wooded mountains. The following passage of Hesiod is quite revealing in this regard: "... [Kallisto] was the daughter of Lykaon and lived in Arcadia. She chose to occupy herself with wild-beasts in the mountains together with Artemis" (Hesiod, *Astronomy*, 3; according to Homer, *Iliad*, 21.485-486, Artemis' main occupation is to chase after wild beasts on the mountains). Artemis' connection with the wild world must have been the earliest and strongest feature in her concept overall; it was reflected in her epithet *Agrotera-Άγροτέρα* (a poetic form of the adjective *Άγριος* "wild") used for her in epic diction (Homer, *Iliad*, 21.471), possibly from prehistoric time. In Arcadia, a special sanctuary of Artemis *Agrotera* - "Artemis of the wilderness" was located on a hill in the area of ancient Megalopolis (Pausanias, 8.32.4), but other Arcadian cults of Artemis reveal her links with wild animals as well; thus, the poet Bacchylides (5th century BC), referring to the cult of Artemis at Lousoi (northern Arcadia), which is archaeologically attested from the 8th century BC (Mitsopoulos-Leon, 2012), describes the goddess worshiped there as *Άγροτέρα* "of the wilds" and *Θηροσκόπος* "looking out for wild beasts" (Bacchylides, *Ode 11.37*, 107). Being the goddess of wild animals, Artemis was imagined, perhaps by all the Greeks, as a nurse of their young; the Athenian poet Aeschylus expressed this in the following verses: "... O Lovely One, you are so gracious to the tender whelps of fierce lions, and take delight in the suckling young of every wild creature that roams the field..." (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 140-143).

As a goddess of beasts, Artemis herself was initially imagined in the shape of wild female animals, which is especially evident in the Arcadian mythic and religious traditions. Thus, mythic Kallisto, the Arcadian bear-nymph of Artemis, undoubtedly symbolized the nature and the primal shape of the goddess she accompanied as those of the bear. Essentially, Kallisto, a beautiful Arcadian maiden and Artemis' follower turned into bear (Hesiod, *Astronomy*, 3), may be compared with the Athenian teenage girls who attended Artemis Brauronia in Attica and were called "little bears" (Kahil, 1977; Hamilton, 1989); clearly, that Attic custom, too, indicates the original bear-nature of Artemis. In Arcadia, Artemis as a bear-goddess was probably connected with special links with the territory around Mantinea (eastern Arcadia): a bear was represented as a religious emblem on the city coins during the historic period (Gardner, 1887, pl.34, nus.18, 19, 22 – Mantineian coins of the early 5th century BC), while to the southwest of Mantinea, there was a sanctuary of Artemis located on the top of the supposed grave of Kallisto, her bear-maid (Pausanias, 8.35.8). Artemis' connection with the bear was not confined to Arcadia and Attica and is traced in some other cults practiced for her in historic time (Bevan, 1987), as in that of Artemis Orthia in Sparta (Dawkins, 1929, fig.113 – bear-figurine) and especially in that of Artemis at Kyrena, where the Sacred Law obliged pregnant women to offer sacrifice to Artemis the Bear or her bear-priestess before giving birth (Rhodes & Osborne, 2003, nu.97, lines 97-99). Therefore, it may be inferred that as a bear-goddess Artemis was considered the protectress of little girls and maidens as long as those grew up (perhaps, until their first sexual experience) and was also seen responsible for the safe delivery of babies. This concept must have been of a very early origin (Johnson, 1981, figs.328, 331) and may be traced back to the oldest common European pattern of a bear-goddess who cares about infants and (pregnant) women. Thus, Greek Artemis as a bear-goddess may be compared with the Celtic goddess Artio who was imagined as a huge bear protecting women and children (Gimbutas, 2001, 183-187). The same pattern in association with Artemis is recognized in the myth about Atalanta, an Arcadian princess exposed by her father and saved from death by a she-bear who suckled her; grown to womanhood, Atalanta devoted herself to Artemis (Apollodorus, *Library*, 3.9.2).

Another animal shape of early Artemis was symbolized by the deer – her beloved animal, sacred exclusively to her in religion of historic time: various pan-Hellenic and local myths linked the deer to Artemis in one way or another; in all the areas of Greece, including Arcadia, there were cults of Artemis, which bore traces of her connection, in some form or other, with the deer (especially the cult of Artemis Elaphia - "Deer-Goddess" in Olympia, Strabo, *Geography*, 8.3.12); the goddess was widely and variously portrayed holding deer or fawn (Kahil, 1984). In regard to this, it should be pointed out that the earliest cult of Artemis in association with the deer attested to date is that of Artemis Elaphebolos -

“Deer-Hunter” at Kalapodi (Phocis), which is archaeologically traced from the Mycenaean period - LH IIIc (Felsch, 2007, 158-159, 382-384 - Mycenaean / Sub-Mycenaean rings as votive offerings and Mycenaean tools among the finds), while secure representations of Artemis with the deer are known from the first half of the 7th century BC (e.g., Kahil, 1984, nu.1231 - Melian amphora, c.650 BC). A very special connection of Arcadian Artemis with the deer may be inferred from the myth, which explained Artemis’ appearance in a deer-drawn chariot in Classical art (e.g., on an Attic red figure krater of c.460-440 BC, Theoi Project, 2000-2017, and on a Boeotian krater of c.450-425 BC, Kahil, 1984, nu.1196): it was believed that in Arcadia, at the base of the Parrhasian Mountain (probably Mt. Lykaion), Artemis found the herd of magnificent female deer with golden antlers and captured four of them to draw her chariot; one of the animals escaped and became known as the Keryneian Hind caught by Herakles (Callimachus, *Hymn to Artemis*, 98-108). In the Arcadian cult-places of Artemis, her links with the deer are traced on the basis of the available archaeological material from the 5th century BC: fragmentary terracotta figurines of the same Classical type, representing Artemis with a fawn and a bow in her hands, were found in the above-mentioned sanctuary at Lousoi and at Gortsouli Hill near Mantinea (Reichel & Wilhelm, 1901, 37, fig.25; Καραγιώργα-Σταθακοπούλου, 2008, pl.25, nu.4). However, archaeological finds do not always reflect the actual situation in the sphere of religion.

It needs to be noted that in the Arcadian beliefs, Artemis’ sacred animal - the doe was linked to the nursing function, as was the bear. This is reflected in the Arcadian myth about Telephos, Herakles’ son born by Auge, an Arcadian princess: new-born Telephos was exposed on Mt. Parthenion, but escaped death because of a doe that suckled him (Apollodorus, *Library*, 2.7.4, 3.9.1; Cacciotti, 2010, 96, fig.7 - statue of Herakles holding baby-Telephos in his arms and accompanied by a doe, Roman copy of the 1st – 2nd centuries AD from the Late Classical Greek original; Boardman, Palagia, & Woodford, 1988, nus.373, 439, 1695 – Roman representations of Herakles with baby-Telephos, sometimes accompanied by a doe). It seems possible to presume that the doe of the Telephos’ myth symbolized Artemis as a deer-goddess who nurses the newborns; significantly, a shrine of Artemis, which functioned during the Archaic and Classical periods, was discovered in the vicinity of Mt. Parthenion - in the district of Korythi, at the base of Mt. Ktenias, in eastern Arcadia (Ρωμάιος, 1911).

On the level of cult, the concept of Artemis as a deer-linked goddess could originally have orgiastic aspect and even sexual connotations. This assumption is based on the representational material coming from different parts of the Greek world, as, e.g., the 6th century BC Tarentine figurine of Artemis dancing or running with a fallow deer in her arms (Fischer-Hansen, 2009, fig.13), the representation of Artemis riding on the back of a doe and accompanied by a maenad and a naked satyr, on an Apulian vase of c.4th century BC (Kahil, 1984, nu.685), and the representations of a satyr copulating with a doe in vase-painting (e.g., Pipili, 1993, 35, pl.23, nu.3 (22833) – Attic black-figure skyphos). The exact meaning of the orgiastic and sexual elements in the concept of early Artemis as a deer-goddess and their survival in Artemis’ later cults need to be examined in a special study. However, it is remarkable that satyrs were in some way involved in the Arcadian cults of Artemis at Lousoi and on Mt. Kotilon (western Arcadia): at the former, a terracotta satyr-mask and a terracotta figurine of a satyr, both dated to the Classical period, were found (Reichel & Wilhelm, 1901, figs.47-48), while the finds from the latter comprise a ritual vessel covered with a satyr-mask, dated to the 5th-4th centuries BC (Κουρουνηώτης, 1903, 171, fig.7). At Lykosoura (south-western Arcadia), the frantic side of Artemis in association with the deer was reflected in her statue seen by Pausanias: the goddess was represented wrapped in the deer skin (as were usually maenads) and carrying a quiver on her shoulders; in her hands, she held a torch and two serpents (Pausanias, 8.37.4).

Artemis’ essential connection with the wild animals generated two other very important aspects in her original concept, which are traced in her cults throughout Ancient Greece, including Arcadia.

Naturally, as a goddess of wild animals and originally a wild animal herself, Artemis was regarded as the deity who controls the relations between the humans and the wild world, that is, as a goddess of the hunt – a vitally important, but also dangerous occupation of the early people. As a huntress-goddess, Artemis was abundantly described in myths (e.g., Homer, *Iliad*, 5.51-53, 21.485-486) and was widely

honored on the level of religion. Based on the archaeological material available to date, a huntress-goddess, who may be more or less securely identified with Artemis, is traced in Greece as early as from the Mycenaean period – in above-mentioned Kalapodi in Phocis (Felsch, 2007, 158-159, 382-384) and possibly in Tiryns, Mycenae, and Thebes (Musket, 2007, 55-62), which gives certain grounds to hypothesize that the Arcadians, like their neighbors at Mycenae and Tiryns, honored Artemis as a goddess of the hunt from the prehistoric period. On the early phase, worship of Artemis as a huntress-goddess, perhaps, involved peculiar rituals, which survived until the late historic period, but their meaning became misunderstood in the course of time: thus, at Tegea (eastern Arcadia), at the feast of Apollo of the Streets, a priestess of Artemis, pretending to be the goddess, performed a symbolic chase after a man (Pausanias, 8.53.3). In historic Arcadia, Artemis the Huntress may originally have been the most important goddess of Orchomenos (eastern Arcadia): inside the city, Artemis had a sanctuary known as that of Artemis Mesopolitis, where local hunters dedicated as votives bronze spears and arrow-heads and where fragments of a terracotta figurine, which represented Artemis as a huntress, were found; the sanctuary was provided with a magnificent temple, built in the 4th century BC, and an altar; most of the finds are dated from the 4th century BC, but a few bronze dedications may be of the late 8th century BC (Καραπαναγιώτου, 2014, 70-74; Voyatzis, 1999, 147). Artemis was represented as a huntress-archer on the coins of Orchomenos (Καραπαναγιώτου, 2014, 84-86, nu.102). The hunting function of Artemis symbolized by her traditional attributes – a bow, a quiver with arrows, and a spear, is traced in many other Arcadian cult-places connected with her in historic time, as those at Lousoi and Gortsouli, where the above-mentioned similar 5th century BC terracotta representations of Artemis with a bow and a deer were found. Artemis imagined as a very young huntress was worshiped on Mt. Kotilon (western Arcadia) and in the area of Mt. Parthenion (eastern Arcadia): a bronze relief plaque with the image of Artemis holding a spear and a marvelous bronze figurine representing Artemis shooting an arrow, both dated to the 4th century BC, were found in the sanctuaries located there, respectively (Κουρουνηώτης, 1903, 175, fig.9.6; Ρωμαίος, 1911).

Furthermore, Artemis' old role as that of a nurse of the wild animals' whelps and her responsibilities for their survival and growth were projected onto the human sphere and made her a goddess who cares about the new-born children and supervises their proper growth and maturation until the age of marriage. This aspect must have emerged in the concept of Artemis in the conditions, when her worshippers – the early Greeks, still had close ties with the wild world; in historic time, it was reflected in various religious ceremonies of transitional character performed in Artemis' sanctuaries, mostly by young females. In Arcadia, such ceremonies in one form or another were part of many cults of Artemis, but the cult practiced in the sanctuary of Artemis Hemera – “Taming Goddess” at Lousoi is most notable in this regard. There, grown-up girls participated in quite a frenzy ritual, which comprised nudity, lewd dances with young males, and some kind of ecstatic behavior – possibly, running around the sacred territory in a state of wild-like madness during the night. These elements of the Lousoi ritual are suggested by the finds from the sanctuary combined with the representational material and the related mythic tradition. Precisely, a considerable number of (fragmentary) terracotta figurines representing young naked females, dated to the 5th-4th centuries BC, were found in the sanctuary (Mitsopoulos-Leon, 2012, nus.399, 524-528). A bronze figurine possibly representing Artemis of Lousoi, found at Kalavryta and dated to the 5th century BC, shows the goddess with a torch and a big rattle – ‘poppy-seed’ in her hands (Neugebauer, 1951, pl.14); these objects indicate nocturnal and noisy ceremonies held in the precinct of the goddess, supposedly under her leadership. The depiction of the Lousoi sanctuary on a Lukanian vase of the early 4th century BC shows that the Classical temple of Artemis was adorned with the metopes bearing representations of sexually provocative dances (Kahil, 1994, nu.4). The myth of the Proitides, which was shaped by the Early Archaic period, told how the daughters of the mythic Argive king Proitos were stricken with insanity because of their disrespect for Dionysos (or Hera) and ran around Arcadia as wild beasts, naked and in the condition of madness, hiding in the mountains; the seer Melampous, taking with him the most stalwart of the young men, chased the girls in a bevy from the mountains with shouts and a sort of frenzied dance and returned them to sanity through certain healing and purifying ceremonies in the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi (Apollodorus, *Library*, 2.2.2; Kahil, 1994, nus.1 & 3 - representations of the Proitides of the 7th century BC). It seems that Arcadian maidens living around Lousoi, when they reached the age of marriage,

participated in the ceremony, which would have been supposed to awaken their sexuality and, thus, was intended to mark the final phase of their growing up process, that is, to validate symbolically their readiness for sexual life. If the proposed interpretation of the main ceremony held in the Lousoi sanctuary is correct, it could be regarded as certain that Arcadian Artemis Hemera, “the Goddess who tames”, fully controlled the girls’ frantic outburst and ensured their return to normal condition and purity: probably, at the end of the ceremony, before the dawn, the girls were ritually cleansed in the ‘Fountain House’, a large building for ritual activities with water, discovered in the territory of the sanctuary (Reichel & Wilhelm, 1901, 16-17, figs.6-7).

It is noteworthy that the sanctuaries of Artemis discovered at Lykohia (Mantineia region) and at Arachamites (near Ancient Lykoa in eastern Arcadia, Pausanias, 8.36.7), dated from the 5th and the 7th centuries BC, respectively, comprised buildings for bathing activities, too (Steinhauer, 1975; Forsen, Forsen, Smekalova, & Tikkala, 2008, 227-228). Remarkably, in the sanctuary at Lykohia, according to the excavators, those activities most probably involved purification and were carried out in the night time, which is inferred from the fact that the temple of Artemis comprised a chamber for cleansing rituals, provided with four large basins, while a lamp was found on the lid of one of them and another large basin was adjacent to the northern wall of this chamber from the outside (Steinhauer, 1975). Therefore, it seems possible to presume that transitional ceremonies for grown-up girls analogous to that held at Lousoi took place in those two Arcadian sanctuaries of Artemis as well. To note, ritual running of naked grown-up girls was practiced in the Attic sanctuary of Artemis at Braurona, in the context of the *rites de passage* supervised by Artemis the bear-goddess (Kahil, 1977, pl.19, nus.1 & 3), while indecent dancing as part of ritual behavior is attested in a number of cults of Artemis, especially in that of Artemis Kordaka in Elis (Pausanias, 6.22.1; Schnabel, 1910).

Apart from being especially concerned about secure transition of the young from one stage of their life to another, Artemis from the beginning appeared as a goddess of proper religious behavior in general, which in early societies, surrounded by dangerous wilderness, was considered a necessary condition for their survival. This function of Artemis seems to have been reflected in her very name, which might be derived from the Indo-European conceptual term *(a)r(i)ta(m)- meaning “the proper order”, “the truth”, “the righteousness” (Zolotnikova, 2013, 29-30, notes 188, 196). In many myths, Artemis demonstrates her wrath because of someone’s disregard for the established sacral rules and punishes those who violate them. In Arcadia, the old role of Artemis as that of a guardian of religious customs was reflected in her cults as Hymnia “Goddess of the Religious Hymns” at Orchomenos (Pausanias, 8.5.11, 8.13.1) and Hiereia “Priestess” at Oresthasion (southern Arcadia, Pausanias, 8.44.2). Attention should be given to Pausanias’ remark that “Artemis Hymnia has been worshipped by all the Arcadians from the most remote period” (Pausanias, 8.5.11). Combined with the archaeological evidence for significant Late Bronze Age activities in the area of Orchomenos, especially at Analipsis Hill and Mytikas Paleopyrgou Hill (Howell, 1970, 84, 115; Καραπαναγιώτου, 2014, 125-126). This information may be taken as a serious indication of that the cult of Artemis Hymnia had its roots in the earliest prehistoric religious traditions of Arcadia. The case of the cult of Artemis Pyronia - “Fire-Goddess” practiced on Mt. Krathis (on the territory of Ancient Pheneos, northern Arcadia) testifies to that in Arcadia Artemis’ old role as that of a goddess responsible for proper observance of the religious rules was especially prominent: Arcadians’ neighbors, the Argives, when they needed to apply to the powers of Artemis over the ritual sphere and to perform with her help purification ceremonies, took sacred fire in that Arcadian sanctuary (Pausanias, 8.15.9).

3. Arcadian Artemis as a universal goddess of nature

Original Artemis was distinct from the much more powerful and much more complex goddess whose features she eventually acquired – Great Mountain-Mother-Goddess, mistress of nature, provider of fertility, and guarantor of the continuity of life. That goddess came in Greece in the Bronze Age from Crete, where she as a universal divinity controlling all the aspects of nature was venerated in a number of forms, in which various sides of her complex concept were manifested. She was linked to mountains, especially to mountain-tops, where from she exercised her power over the world and controlled the

weather (note the so-called “Mountain Mother Seal” from Knossos with the image of a goddess standing on a mountain-top flanked by two lions, Evans, 1900-1901, 29); she was connected with lakes, springs, and rivers, which contain water essential for life; forests and groves were her domains; wild animals and birds were her fosterlings, attendants, and servants (note Homer, *Iliad*, 8.47 - the verse expressing quite clearly the concept of the prehistoric Great Mountain-Mother-Goddess: “[Mountain] Ida,.. Many fountained mother of wild beasts”).

That old universal goddess was responsible for the rebirth of nature and reproduction of people and, therefore, was believed to perform the sacred marriage with some male deity in order to transmit the energy of reproduction to the world. She often appeared as an overpowering female who controls animals and birds, that is, as the goddess conventionally called “Mistress of Animals” – Homeric “Potnia Theron” (Πότνια Θηρῶν); as such, she had a male counterpart – “Master of Animals”, but the character of their relationship to each other is not clear. She also had another divine partner – a goat linked to her in a mysterious way, perhaps as a carrier of male fertilizing power (note Kahil, 1984, nu.6 - representation of a cultic scene comprising a Goddess, her female attendant, and a Divine Goat, on a Late Helladic II gem from Vapheio in Laconia; also Kahil, 1984, nu.8 - representation of the Mistress of Animals holding a goat, on a Late Minoan II sardonyx gem from Elis). Her responsibilities for human reproduction took the shape of the goddess supervising childbirth, later called Eileithyia - “She who ensures the coming into this world”, and that of the goddess nursing the infants, designated by the epithetic name Kourotrophos – “Child nurturer” (traces of the goddesses who may have been connected with childbirth and baby-care in prehistoric religion of Greece are discussed in Muskett, 2007, 62-63). However, she also had a terrifying aspect, which was later personified in the monstrous goddess Gorgon (Frothingham, 1911; Zolotnikova, 2016, 359-362).

The presence of this goddess in prehistoric Peloponnese is traced from the beginning of the Late Helladic period on the basis of the material coming from Laconia, Elis, and Mycenae, precisely: the above-mentioned representations of the Mistress of Animals from Vapheio and Elis, the representation of the Mistress of Animals bearing snakes and a double axe on her head and flanked by two lions, on a carnelian seal from Mycenae, dated to the 15th century BC (Kahil, 1984, nu.2), and the representation of the Mistress of Animals (or the Mistress of Birds) with the bird-like face, holding two water-birds, on a Late Bronze Age seal from Vapheio (Sakellariou, 1964, nu.233-b). Arguably, she appeared in Arcadia in the prehistoric period as well: in her hypostasis as the Mistress of Birds she, probably, was from a very early date connected to the Stymphalian Lake, which was definitely involved in Bronze Age activities (Schaus, 2014, 6-7) and, according to the mythic tradition, was the abode of the dangerous Stymphalian Birds driven away by Herakles in his Sixth Labor (Apollodorus, *Library*, 2.5.6). The old concept of the Mistress of Birds was partly preserved at Stymphalos in later cult: Pausanias, describing the sanctuary of Stymphalian Artemis, mentioned sculptures of birds on the roof of the temple and marble statues of maidens (apparently symbolizing the attendants of the local goddess) with the legs of birds, which stood behind the temple (Pausanias, 8.22.7). The Mistress of Animals worshiped in early historic Mantinea, on Gortsouli Hill, during the Geometric - Early Archaic periods (note the representation of winged Mistress of Animals staying between two she-goats or deer, on a Laconian fibula dated to the third quarter of the 7th century BC, found at Gortsouli, Καραγιώργα-Σταθακοπούλου, 2008, 131, pl.21.15) may have been connected with the site from prehistoric time: human activities took place at the hill during the whole Bronze Age, were interrupted towards the end of the prehistoric period, and resumed approximately in the 8th century BC; it is noteworthy, that the finds from Gortsouli indicate that the goddess worshiped there during the early historic period was connected not only with the animal world, but also with a young winged god, perhaps, her male version and/or counterpart (Καραγιώργα-Σταθακοπούλου, 2008, 133, pl.24.2 – Late Daedalic Laconian figurine representing a winged male deity, found at Gortsouli).

One of the prehistoric hypostases of the Great Mountain-Mother-Goddess was personified in the goddess Orthia (forms of the name Ὀρθία, Ὀρθεία, (F)Ὀρθασία, and (F)Ὀρθωσία) who was originally linked to the mountain-tops (her name seems to have been formed on the basis of the Indo-European root *uer- expressing the notion of height, Pokorny, 1959, 1, 1151-1152) and was worshiped in various

areas of Greece until the late historic period (Dawkins, 1929, 111, fig.86, nu.1; Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 3.29-30; Herodotus, 4.87.2; Pausanias, 2.24.5; Rhodes & Osborne, 2003, 246, 247, nu.50, line 14; Connelly, 2007, 14). Significantly, a cult of Orthia-(F)Ὀρθασία was practiced in western Arcadia – in the area of Mt. Kotilon, near Bassae, as late as the third quarter of the 5th century BC (*Inscriptiones Graecae*, V.2, nu.429; Κουρουνιώτης, 1903, 179, fig.10).

In her terrifying (= protecting) form as Gorgon, the old Great Goddess of nature could especially be linked to Tegea (eastern Arcadia) in prehistoric time: that link seems to have been reflected in the local mythic tradition about a lock of Gorgon's hair, which Athena supposedly gave to Kepheus, a legendary king of Tegea, and which magically protected the city (Pausanias, 8.47.4). In Arcadia, worship of Gorgon who bore features of primitive Mistress of Animals was part of cultic activities in an Archaic sanctuary discovered on Nea Ekklioula Hill, 3 km north-east of modern Megalopolis (south-western Arcadia): the finds from the site comprise a terracotta vessel dated to the early 6th century BC, shaped as Gorgon holding a snake and sitting on the head of a lioness (Καραγιώργα, 1970, 134-149). A primitive, horrible Gorgon-like deity might be recognized in Eurynome – a minor goddess imagined as half-woman – half-fish, worshiped “from old times” in Phigalia (western Arcadia), at the confluence of the rivers Lymax and Neda; remarkably, the cult-image of that goddess was bound by gold chains (Pausanias, 8.41.4-6), probably, because of the fear of her dangerous powers, which she could exercise over people (like, e.g., the eyes of Gorgon, which turned the beholder into stone). It is tempting to compare the cult-image of Eurynome as a fish-tailed female evoking the feeling of awe with the representation of Gorgon as a winged female with lion paws and long fish tale, on an Archaic bronze shield from Olympia (Γιαλούρη & Γιαλούρης, 1999, 68, β).

Perhaps, it was Arcadia where the mysterious Divine Goat of the Great Goddess obtained human form and became the god Pan – a goat-like deity-shepherd especially connected with Arcadia: the name of Pan – Πάν is attested in an Arcadian inscription of the 6th century BC from Melpea (Lykosoura area, south-western Arcadia) in the form of dative Πάνονι (*Inscriptiones Graecae*, V.2. nu.556), which indicates the Arcadian nominative form of the god's name as Πάων; this form gives grounds for deriving the name of the god Pan from the Indo-European term *pauh-on meaning “herdsman”, Greek ποιμήν; the same term produced the name of the Vedic god-protector of herds Pūśán (Pokorny, 1959, 1, 790; Beekes, 2010, 2, 1149). According to Classical mythology, Pan served the Mountain-Mother-Goddess inspecting the tops of her mountains and dancing for her there (*Homeric Hymn* (19), *To Pan*, 2-14, 19-26; note also Early Archaic lead figurines of dancing goats, possibly representing Pan, from the sanctuary of the goddess Orthia in Sparta, Dawkins, 1929, pl.184, nu.19, pl.189, nus.23-25).

In the course of time, the Mountain-Mother-Goddess and Artemis began to be linked to each other, probably on the basis of their connection with the mountains and wild animals, as well as with nurture. This merging process, probably, started in the Mycenaean period and may be traced, for example, in Messenia, the south-western neighbor of Arcadia: a seal-impression from Pylos bears a representation of a goddess with snakes (?) and a double-axe on her head (resembling the Minoan Mistress of Animals represented on the above-mentioned carnelian seal from Mycenae, Kahil, 1984, nu.2), but flanked by two gazelles and seemingly two wolves (one is preserved fragmentary) instead of the traditional companions of the Great Mountain-Mother-Goddess - lions, griffins, and goats (Sakellariou, 1964, nu.379). Also, the name of Artemis is possibly read in two Linear B texts from Pylos (in PY Es 650.5 and PY Un 219.5, Jorro & Adrados, 1985-1993, 1, 115), which suggests worship of her in Messenia during the Mycenaean period. By the time of the composition of the *Iliad*, Artemis was already widely known as a goddess who could perform the role of the old Mistress of Animals (Homer, *Iliad*, 21.470-471: “...Artemis, patroness of wild beasts / πότνια θηρῶν...”). Remarkably, from the early 7th century BC, Artemis began to be represented holding her symbolic animal – the deer in the way the prehistoric Mistress of Animals held her traditional animals – lions and goats (e.g., on a Melian amphora of c.650 BC, Kahil, 1984, nu.1231, and on a wine-jar from Megara Hyblaea in Magna Graecia, dated to the 7th century BC, Fischer-Hansen, 2009, fig.5). However, throughout Greece, the process of Artemis' merging with the Mountain-Mother-Goddess and numerous local goddesses who represented various aspects of the latter was durable and subject to the religious conditions at each particular territory: for example, in

Sparta, local Laconian Orthia-Ὄρθία, a form of the prehistoric Mountain-Mother-Goddess - Mistress of Animals, was definitely transformed into Artemis or substituted by her only by the late 6th century BC (Dawkins, 1929, 282-283).

In Arcadia, Artemis' appearance with the features of the Mountain-Mother-Goddess is attested as early as from the 8th century BC, in her sanctuary at Mount Parnonas – modern Mt. Agios Panteleimonas in the Tegea region: the sanctuary, which Pausanias mentions as that of Artemis Knakeatis (Pausanias, 8.53.11), was located close to the top of the mountain, at an altitude of 1300 meters, and was founded, according to the finds, in the Late Geometric period (Ρωμάλος, 1952, 26, fig.20).

Apart from Mount Parnonas, during the historic period Artemis was connected with a number of other Arcadian mountains, as Mt. Krathis (possibly modern Mt. Zarouhla, north-eastern Arcadia), which was the place of the sanctuary of Artemis Pyronia (Pausanias, 8.15.9), Mt. Knakalos (modern Mt. Kastania, in the land of Kaphyae, central Arcadia), which was the sacred place of Artemis Knakalesia (Pausanias, 8.23.3-4), Mt. Artemision (on the borders with Argolis) topped with a sanctuary of Artemis (Pausanias, 2.25.3, 8.6.6), Mt. Ktenias / Mt. Parthenion (in the Tegea region), where a small sanctuary of Artemis dated from the Archaic period was found (Ρωμάλος, 1911), Mt. Kotilon (in the Phigalia region), which was used for the sanctuary of Artemis Kotilea and was also a cult-place of Orthia-(F)Ὄρθασία (*Inscriptiones Graecae*, V.2, nu.429). However, it is not known with certainty from what time were these mountains involved in religious activities and when did they become associated with Artemis. It is noteworthy that Arcadian Mount Artemision bore the goddess' name, as if the whole mountain was viewed as her sanctuary; this clearly indicates that the Arcadians at some point began to worship Artemis as a mountain-goddess.

Furthermore, association with the universal goddess of nature generated Artemis' linking to the lakes and springs, which is widely attested throughout historic Greece and particularly in Arcadia. Thus, a sanctuary of Artemis was founded near the sacred lake of an old goddess of water-birds at Stymphalos (Pausanias, 8.22.7) approximately in the Late Archaic period; this date is indicated by the archaeological evidence from the Acropolis of Stymphalos available to date (Schaus, 2014, 7), but the cult may have begun even earlier. The fact that the concept of Artemis, the huntress-goddess, was harmonically conjoined with the concept of the original mistress of the Stymphalian Lake is reflected in that a special myth about the drowning of a hunter and a deer in the waters of the lake was linked to the festival, which was traditionally held at Stymphalos (Pausanias, 8.22.8-9) – the place of habitation of mythic water-birds.

A sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, “Lady of the Lakes”, was located in the region of Tegea, about 1.6 km (9 stades) to the south from the city, on the left of the road leading to Laconia, and about 1.8 km (10 stades) away from the above-mentioned sanctuary of Artemis Knakeatis on Mt. Parnonas (Pausanias, 8.53.11); its remains were found at the place called Aspela (Ρωμάλος, 1918, 103). According to Pausanias, the sanctuary was provided with an image of the goddess made of ebony wood, which could be of Archaic date. Parts of a small stele topped with the head of Artemis and bearing dedicatory inscription with the name of the goddess were found dispersed in the area around the sanctuary-place; the stele may be dated to the 4th – 3rd centuries BC (Ρωμάλος, 1912, 379-380, nu.10). To note, it was observed that Artemis worshiped as the “Lady of the Lakes” in Messenia, at Volimnos on Mt. Taygetos, from the 8th century BC, clearly exhibited features of the Mistress of Animals (Koursoumis, 2014).

A number of other Arcadian sanctuaries of Artemis placed near springs and rivers indicated her linking to the fertile waters of the earth in historic Arcadia. Among such, the above-mentioned sanctuary of Artemis on Mt. Artemision, which was located close to the springs of the river Inakhos (Pausanias, 8.6.6, 2.25.3), may especially be noted. In Phigalia, Artemis was eventually conjoined with the goddess Eurynome whose cult was carried out not far from hot springs, at the place where the river Lymax fell into the river Neda (Pausanias, 8.41.4).

Toward the Late Archaic period, Artemis seems to have been associated with the older Mistress of Animals worshiped at Gortsouli Hill: from the 6th century BC, votive terracotta figurines representing young females, both dressed and nude, appear among the dedications to the sanctuary (Καραγιώργα-Σταθακοπούλου, 2008, pl.25.1), which, possibly, indicates re-profiling of the cult in favor of Artemis around that time.

Gorgon representing the terrifying aspect of the powers of nature began to symbolize Artemis in her new role as that of the goddess controlling the natural world (note, e.g., the representation of the Mistress of Animals with Gorgon's head, on an Archaic plate from Rhodes, Krauskopf, 1988, nu.280). In Arcadia, an acroterion in the shape of Gorgon's face (*Gorgoneion*) adorned the Archaic temple of Artemis on Mt. Parionas (Ρωμαίος, 1952, 18-19, fig.16). A small Late Archaic terracotta *Gorgoneion* was found in the sanctuary at Gortsouli Hill (Καραγιώργα-Σταθακοπούλου, 2008, pl.25.5). The sanctuary of Artemis Skiatis - "Goddess of the Dark Place" founded in the area of Megalopolis in the 3rd century BC thirteen stades (c.2400 m) north of the ancient city (Pausanias, 8.35.5) was located not very far from the place of the old, abandoned sanctuary, which functioned during the Archaic-Classical periods on a hill (now called Nea Ekklissoula), 3 km north-east of modern Megalopolis, and where, as it was mentioned above, Gorgon-Mistress of Animals was venerated in some form (Καραγιώργα, 1970, 134-149).

From the old goddess of nature Artemis received responsibility for plant growth and, therefore, was linked to the trees. In the area of Orchomenos, she was worshiped as the Cedar Tree Goddess – Kedreatis; her wooden image, possibly of Archaic date, was set in a large cedar tree near the city (Pausanias, 8.13.2). In the land of Kaphyae, at Kondylea, Artemis' image was used in a primitive magic ceremony, which was probably performed there from enough old time and was intended to stimulate the growth of trees: every year, the image of the goddess was hung on one of the trees at the goddess' sacred grove (Pausanias, 8.23.6-7), as, e.g., during rustic celebrations in honor of Bacchus-Dionysus masks of deities of his circle were hung on the trees (Virgil, *Georgics*, 2.380-396).

The responsibility for the childbirth, which could originally be implied in the primal concept of Artemis the Bear-goddess, became one of her official functions, and she began to occur widely in association with Eileithyia, the goddess of birth and one of the prehistoric personifications of the Great Mother-Goddess. Perhaps, a special sanctuary was dedicated to Artemis-Eileithyia at the Acropolis of Stymphalos in the Late Archaic period; the nature of the cult is suggested by the fragments of a statue of a young female (*kore*) with a hare and those of a male child, found in the site (Schaus, 2014, 48-49, 405-413, 414-416). Fragments of a statue of a child were also found in the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi (Schaus, 2014, 46).

The goat-like god-shepherd Pan, who may have evolved from the Divine Goat of the Great Goddess, became a companion of Artemis in cults and myths. The case of Arcadia is characteristic in this regard: it was believed that Arcadian Pan living at Mount Maenalos (eastern Arcadia) provided Artemis with hunting dogs, when she visited him there (Callimachus, *Hymn to Artemis*, 87-91); remarkably, there was a sanctuary of Artemis Lykoatis at the foot of Mount Maenalos: its remains dated from the 7th century BC were found at Arachamites, as it was already mentioned above (Forsen, Forsen, Smekalova, & Tikkala, 2008). Dancing Pan was involved the cult of Artemis at Lousoi (Neugebauer, 1951, pl.16 - bronze figurine of dancing Pan from Lousoi), and Pan playing flutes, who was possibly called Pan Sinoeis (Σινόεις), was present in the sanctuary of Artemis on Mt. Kotilon (Κουρουνιώτης, 1903, 170, fig.6 – terracotta figurine of Pan playing two flutes, p.179, fig.10, lines 10-11 – inscription containing the divine name Παν Σινόεις in dative, both found in the sanctuary on Mt. Kotilon).

Finally, having absorbed the major part of the concept of the universal goddess of nature, Artemis may have been obliged to participate in the sacred marriage with some fertility god. Echoes of this function of Artemis may be traced in several later myths, in which male deities attempted to violate Artemis' virginity; the best known example is the Elean myth about the wooing of the river-god Alpheios who fell in love with Artemis and tried to win the goddess as his bride (Pausanias, 6.22.8-10). An analogous

story was told in Arcadia regarding the river Bouphagos: “The river got its name, they say, from a hero called Bouphagos... They also say that Artemis shot Bouphagos on Mount Pholoe [on the border between Arcadia and Elis] because he attempted an unholy sin against her godhead” (Pausanias, 8.27.17). At Mount Knakalos in the land of the Kaphyatans, Artemis could secretly be joined with Poseidon during the historic time: the city as described by Pausanias had two sanctuaries – one of Artemis Knakalesia and one of Poseidon, while on the mountain Knakalos, outside the city, mysteries in honor of Artemis were celebrated every year; all these details seem to point at a mysterious periodical ritual of sacred marriage between the Mountain-Mother-Goddess and the god of waters Poseidon as the basis for the later cult of Artemis Knakalesia. It also deserves to be mentioned that the finds from the sanctuary of Artemis-Eileithyia on the Acropolis of Stymphalos comprise a fragment of a terracotta vase for drinking–libation rituals in the shape of penis, dated to c.500 BC, and a bronze ring with representation of a draped female seated on a lap of a bare-chested man, dated to the 4th century BC (Schaus, 2014, 480, nu.32; 430, 439, nu.101). Therefore, there are grounds to presume that the cult-practice associated with the particular Arcadian sanctuary of Artemis included fertility ritual(s) and the sacred marriage element during the Archaic and even the Classical periods.

However, because of Artemis’ traditional connection with adolescent girls, she herself was prevalently imagined as a young and pure virgin, and the elements of the sacred marriage were eventually eliminated from her cults.

4. Conclusion and practical results of the research

The evidence examined above indicates that the goddess Artemis was initially imagined as a wild female animal – a she-bear and a doe and appeared in the religious beliefs of the population of Arcadia on that stage when people still had very close links with the world of wild nature. Artemis’ original functions were to care for the new-born animals and young children, to help them to grow up, and to prepare them for adulthood; also, she mediated between the world of wild animals and the humans’ sphere by controlling people’s hunting activity. Like wild beasts, she was imagined to live in forests and woody mountains. An important part of her original responsibilities was to ensure the observance of the sacred rules, especially those which regulated the process of biological maturation (the so-called *rites de passage*). It seems probable that Artemis with all these features was worshiped in Arcadia during the Bronze Age, but the forms of her prehistoric worship and her prehistoric cult-places in the particular region are not exactly known.

Around the Late Bronze Age – beginning of the Early Iron Age, Artemis began to be identified with the old universal goddess of nature, conventionally called the Great Mountain-Mother-Goddess. The merging with that goddess enriched the religious concept of Artemis with many significant features, most of which characterized her during the historic period: Artemis began to be linked to the mountain-tops, lakes, and springs, began to be seen responsible for childbirth and plant growth, began to be imagined as the mistress of animals and birds, and could even appear with the traits of Gorgon. In Arcadia, the association of Artemis with the Mountain-Mother-Goddess is traced from the Geometric period, but it may have started earlier. From the Mountain-Mother-Goddess Artemis received a new divine companion – the Great Goddess’ Divine Goat-Shepherd, later god Pan, who was especially linked to Artemis in Arcadia during the historic period. Also, at the beginning of merging with the Great Goddess of nature, the sacred marriage could have become part of the ritual in some cults of Artemis, including the Arcadian ones. However, the order of the Olympian pantheon, which was being gradually imposed on Greek religion during the Archaic period, did not suppose for Artemis the role of the Mother-goddess; it was reserved for other Olympian goddesses and first of all for Demeter. In new religious conditions, Artemis had to personify youth, virginity, and purity. Hence, the notion of sacred marriage was almost completely annihilated in the concept of Artemis in Classical religion and mythology, with some possible exceptions, among which the Arcadian cult of Artemis Knakalesia should be noted.

The research presented in this paper is by no means complete and is confined to only one particular region of Ancient Greece – Arcadia. However, it proposes a general line for establishing the course of transformation of Artemis in Greek religion, which may be implemented in analogous research on the evolution of Artemis in other areas of Ancient Greece (Attica, Boeotia, Messenia, Laconia, Elis, islands, and other). Undoubtedly, more specific details and local particularities are expected to be traced through such research in the original forms of Artemis and the goddess' development over time. Nevertheless, the timeline of Artemis' evolution as argued in this paper may help to systematize countless aspects, characteristics, and mythological images of this goddess attributing them either to the primal form(s) of her concept or to the later, so-called Classical, form, in which she appeared with the features of the universal goddess of nature; also, a transitional form, in which Artemis was still worshiped as a bear- or a doe-goddess, but already began to be provided with the functions of the Mountain-Mother-Goddess, should not be excluded.

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