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# Hecate and her dogs

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## 1. Introduction

Even though the Greek goddess *Ἑκάτη* is well-attested at many places and with many functions and inter-divine relations in the ancient Greek tradition, the scholarly community has so far not succeeded in agreeing on the etymology of her name. At present, three etymological proposals exist, but I will demonstrate in this article that neither of these conform sufficiently well to what we know about her places of worship and origin, her relations to other deities and her function. Based on her frequent appearance with dogs, I propose a new etymology of her name, viz., that it reflects the exocentric compound PIE *\*sue-kunt-eh<sub>2</sub>* ‘possessing her own dogs, possessing separate dogs’.

Addressing this aim of my article, I will therefore, in section 2, outline the existing etymological proposals, after which I will investigate and outline in section 3 what is known about *Ἑκάτη*’s places of worship and origin, her relations to other deities and her function with the purpose of evaluating the existing etymologies on the basis thereof. With reference to the same walkthrough of *Ἑκάτη*’s features, I will propose and argue for the formal feasibility of my new etymology in section 4. Finally, section 5 concludes the article.

## 2. Existing etymologies

The first existing etymology of *Ἑκάτη* to be considered here is that her name is of pre- or non-Greek origin. Non-Greek may refer to two different sources in this context. First, it may refer to an association of her with the Egyptian frog-shaped goddess *Heqet*, the goddess of fertility and childbirth (McKechnie & Guillaume 2008: 133). However, a more widely accepted etymological proposal is the second one, viz., that of Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1931: 325) who claims that she is of Anatolian – more specifically maybe Carian – origin and that her name was subsequently adopted by the Greeks to either of the known Apollonian epithets *ἑκατηβόλος*, *ἑκηβόλος* or even *ἑκατηβελέτης*. An example of *ἑκατηβόλος* used as an Apollonian epithet is seen in, e.g., *ἑκατηβόλου Απόλλωνος* ‘of Apollo who strikes from afar’ (Hom.II. 1.370). Several scholars support this idea, among which Frisk (1960: 473–4), Kraus (1960: 41–54), Nilsson (1961: 78) and Beekes (2010: 396–8).

One of these two epithets, *έκατηβόλος*, actually forms the basis of the second existing etymology, according to which *Έκάτη* constitutes an abbreviated form of the epithet *έκατηβόλος* ‘striking with hundreds’ or ‘shooting from afar’ as per the etymological analysis made by the ancient Greeks themselves (Wackernagel 1927: 316–21, Chantraine 2009: 313), cf. also *έκατᾶβόλων δὲ, τῶν εἰς ἅπαντα τόπον διικνεῖσθαι ποιούντων τὰ ποιήματα* ‘causing the words to penetrate into all places’ (Masseti 2019: 216, referring to Schol. in Pi. O. 9.8). The starting point in this ancient etymology would be either ‘shooting from afar’, i.e., a compound with a derivation of some kind to *έκάς* ‘afar, far off’ as its first member, or maybe ‘striking with hundreds’ with the first compositional member formed to *έκατόν* ‘one hundred’. This form would then be abbreviated to *έκηβόλος* and ultimately to *έκατος*, which are both well-known Apollonian epithets just as *έκατηβόλος* itself. The latter of the abbreviated forms has, then, *έκάτη* as its feminine counterpart.

Proposing a third etymology of *Έκάτη*, Prellwitz (1905: 133) suggests a meaning along the lines of ‘she who works her will’, analysing *έκ-* as harking back to PIE *\*mek-* ‘wish’. Prellwitz’s etymology was taken up again by Liddell & Scott (1940: 500) and also mentioned briefly by Beekes (2010: 398) and Boisacq (1950: 236–7). If we follow this line of thought, *έκατηβόλος* and *έκηβόλος* would mean ‘hitting the mark at will’ and ‘striking at will’, respectively. As Massetti (2019: 216–8) has demonstrated, a comparison of the semantic essence of *έκατηβόλος* (when describing the properties of a bow as in *έκαταβόλων Μοισᾶν ἀπὸ τόξων* (Pi.O. 9.5), which is traditionally translated as “vom Bogen der ferntreffenden Musen”) with Ved. *váṣṭi prá tád aśnoti dhánvanā* “mit seinem Bogen trifft (Bṛhmanaspati) dahin, wohin er will” (RV 2.24.8) reveals that an etymology that includes an element of wish and “free will” – or more specifically of shooting or hitting whomever, wherever or whatever you want – might not be that far-fetched. Nevertheless, we must not forget that this comparison involves *έκατηβόλος*, not necessarily *Έκάτη* herself.

In all fairness, I should also mention an additional etymology, which is, however, rather a modification of either the second or the third etymological proposal and is concerned only with the internal relationship between *έκατος*, *έκάτη*, *έκηβόλος* and *έκατηβόλος*. Frisk (1960: 474), who mentions it in his etymological dictionary, suggests that we should regard both *έκατος* and *έκάτη* as abbreviations of *έκηβόλος*. Only afterwards would *έκατηβόλος* arise as a secondary hybrid of these.

### 3. Hecate: Origin, relations and attributes

Since I have now reviewed the existing etymological proposals of the theonym *Ἐκάτη* and potentially related epithets such as *ἔκατος*, *ἐκάτη*, *ἐκηβόλος* and *ἐκατηβόλος*, we may benefit from relating them to the nature and the properties of the goddess herself to see if any of these three etymologies actually fit with what we know about her. Consequently, we shall now turn to looking at, above all, her places of worship and origin, her relations to other deities and her functions.

### 3.1. Places of worship and origin

Concentrating on the places of worship and origin first, we may note that, even though von Rudloff (1992: 32–55) lists multiple places of worship (among which Athens, Aigina, Sicily, parts of Thrace, etc.), the evidence for a connection to Asia Minor is compelling (von Rudloff 1992: 45–55). This is, in turn, fully compatible with the claim of the first etymological proposal that *Ἐκάτη* was of Anatolian or Carian origin.

In fact, Kraus (1960: 41–54) and Nilsson (1961: 78), summed up by Berg (1974: 128–9), advocate specifically for an Anatolian origin. They find support for their arguments in, e.g., 1) the existence of theophoric personal names formed on *ἐκατ-* (e.g., the geographer *Ἐκαταῖος* and the Carian satrap *Ἐκατόμνος*) primarily in Caria during the 5th and 4th centuries BC, 2) the existence of a temple of *Ἐκάτη* at Lagina in Caria where she was worshipped as *σώτειρα* ‘protectress, saviouress’, *μεγίστη* ‘greatest’ and *ἐπιφανεστάτη* ‘most manifest’, her exalted rank and function being unmatched in cults of *Ἐκάτη* elsewhere, which indicates that she was a fully independent deity, and 3) the original single-bodied instead of trimorphic appearance of her cult statue in that area as depicted on coins of Stratoniceia and on the northern frieze of her temple. To this, I may add Hesiod’s description of her cult in his *Theogony* (Hes.Th. 411–52) as well as the lack of mentioning of her in the Homeric epics.

If we follow this line of thoughts, we might surmise, as again summarised by Berg (1974: 129), that her cult was introduced to the Greek mainland from Asia Minor in the archaic period, after which we would have had contamination with witches and demons that eroded and infernalised her Olympian stature, transforming her finally into the *Ἐκάτη* known from later traditions, i.e., the goddess of witchcraft, etc. So far, it therefore seems that an assumption of Caria or, in general, Asia Minor as the place of origin of *Ἐκάτη* is not that far-fetched.

However, there are also indications that clearly disfavour a Carian or general Anatolian origin. First, as Berg (1974: 132–4) and von Rudloff (1992: 48, 54–5) mention, there are indeed numerous monuments to *Ἐκάτη* in Caria and the surrounding area, but they are all of a quite late date. Most of them stem from around the 1st century BC and thus belong to the Roman

era. Only one altar in the Carian precinct of Apollo Delphinus is older (2nd century BC), but the goddess is not in a sanctuary of her own (Berg 1974: 134). In contrast to this, archaeological evidence for her worship in Athens, Selinus and Samothrace appears already in the 6th century BC. Only one brief 6th-century boustrophedon inscription dedicated to her on a 7th-century altar in Miletos predates this. Second, Berg (1974: 134–5) and von Rudloff (1992: 48, 54–5) argue, all the Carian or general Anatolian or Ionic theophoric personal names built on *έκατ-* may actually belong to the Apollonian or maybe Artemisian epithet (*έκατος* or *έκάτη*) rather than to the goddess *Έκάτη*, because these two deities were also demonstrably strong in the area. For instance, Strabo mentions explicitly in his *Geography* (Str.Ge. 13.2.5) that the small group of islands between Lesbos and the Anatolian mainland called *Έκατόνησοι* was named so after *Άπόλλων έκατος*. Moreover, the absence of theophoric names in *έκατ-* on the Greek mainland does not necessarily indicate that *Έκάτη* was less important there than in Caria, seeing that, in the 5th century, theophoric names were rare in Attica in general (Dow 1937: 216–24, esp. 218). Third, we know that *Έκάτη* was worshipped as a fully independent deity also at Aigina and in Athens. For instance, *Φιλοκλέων* mentions in Aristophanes' *The Wasps* (Ar.W. 804) that a *έκάταιον* 'statue of Hecate' stood before every house in Athens, and in general, numerous references to her appear in Attic drama (Kraus 1960: 84–94).

Berg (1974: 138–40) even goes so far as to suggest that Mycenaean  *i-pe-me-de-ja* on the Linear B tablet Tn 316 might represent the Mycenaean variant of the Greek name *Ίφιμέδεια*, in itself an earlier variant of *Ίφιγένεια*, i.e., Agamemnon's daughter who, according to Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (Hes.Cat. fr. 23a 14–26), was saved from the sacrificial altar by Artemis and worshipped under her name with the epithet *είνοδία* 'in the road'. Seeing that *είνοδία* is also a standard Hecatian epithet, we may have some type of association of *Έκάτη* with Mycenaean *i-pe-me-de-ja*, indicating that this goddess might be of Mycenaean and thus Greek rather than Carian or generally Anatolian origin; see also Scarpi (1975) on the placing of *Ίφιμέδεια* in the chthonic realm as a double of *Έκάτη*.

### 3.2. Relations to other deities

When we turn to looking at *Έκάτη*'s relations to other deities as outlined by von Rudloff (1992: 56–85), we soon discover that she is a goddess whom we really cannot place in a fixed box. She is a little of everything. Taking her relation to *Δημήτηρ* and *Περσεφόνη* first, we observe an early mentioning of her as an attendant of *Περσεφόνη*, and altars and sanctuaries dedicated to her are found just outside the entrance to sanctuaries of *Δημήτηρ* and *Περσεφόνη*.

However, as evinced by both classical and later literature, the most intriguing and most profound association of her – or, as it were, confusion or total identification – is not with these goddesses, but with *Ἄρτεμις*. For instance, we have already seen that *ἑκάτη* is also used as an Artemisian epithet, just as its masculine variant *ἕκατος* serves as an epithet of *Ἀπόλλων*, who is, in turn, closely connected to *Ἄρτεμις*. Aischylos informs us in his *Suppliant Women* (Aisch.Suppl. 676) that *Ἄρτεμις ἑκάτη* was a protector of women in labour, and Farnell (1909: II.501) mentions *ἑκάτη* as a guardian aspect of *Ἄρτεμις*. Nilsson (1961: 79) claims that *Ἐκάτη* represents the dark or chthonic side of *Ἄρτεμις*, as the addition of *ἑκατηβόλος* to her name with the purpose of indicating her belligerent and destructive role would suggest, and when we proceed to Hellenistic times, we see a great level of confusion between the two goddesses. So far, the evidence seems to suggest not only association of *Ἐκάτη* with *Ἄρτεμις*, but even a total single identity of these two deities.

Two problems exist with this theory of a total single identity of *Ἄρτεμις* and *Ἐκάτη* though. First, although one of *Ἐκάτη*'s main roles is serving as a *πρόπολος* ‘attendant, guide, companion’ or a guardian figure at entrances to sanctuaries and temples (see section 3.3), we rarely see her in that role with *Ἄρτεμις* (von Rudloff 1992: 67). Second, at least according to von Rudloff (1992: 64, 69), *Ἐκάτη* is never portrayed as an archer in art or myth and is thus never depicted with a bow, one of the very hallmarks of both *Ἀπόλλων* and *Ἄρτεμις*. It is tempting to assume on the basis hereof that the association of *Ἐκάτη*'s name to the epithets *ἑκατηβόλος* and *ἑκηβόλος*, which both involve shooting (*-βόλος*), is not as straightforward as assumed by most of the existing etymologies and that we should rather keep these names apart.

As already mentioned, *Ἐκάτη* is associated with not only *Ἄρτεμις*, but also her brother *Ἀπόλλων*. Both of these major deities are seen as archers and bringers of sudden disease and death, and death in particular is a recurrent property of *Ἐκάτη* as per the description of her chthonic side in section 3.3. This side of her, however, we most often see when she is associated not with *Ἀπόλλων*, but with *Ἐρμῆς* (von Rudloff 1992: 76) with whom she shares the epithets *ἐνόδιος/ἐνοδία* m./f. ‘in or on the way’ as well as the role of being both a chthonic deity that receives sacrificial meals at her statue and a household guardian. One additional indicator of an association between *Ἀπόλλων* and *Ἐκάτη* is the comparatively early date (7th-8th c. BC) of the archaeological material for *Ἐκάτη* found at Apollo's sanctuary at Miletos (von Rudloff 1992: 45–6, 68). However, as von Rudloff (1992: 68) also states, “[t]he most striking connection between Apollo and Hekate [...] is through two of his titles that resemble her name: Hekatos and Hekatebolos.” This implies that her association with *Ἀπόλλων* is largely dependent

on an etymological connection between her name and the Apollonian epithets, not on actual archaeological or philological evidence.

So far, I have mentioned known associations of *Ἑκάτη* with numerous deities, but I could easily expand the list by adding even more deities such as *Ἥλιος*, *Κυβέλη* and, although to a lesser extent, *Ἀθηνᾶ*, *Εἰλείθυια*, *Ποσειδῶν* and *Ζεύς* (von Rudloff 1992: 72–6, 78–82). The most important associations seem to remain those with *Ἄρτεμις* and *Ἀπόλλων*, however, at least as concerns the etymology. Von Rudloff (1992: 82–3) attempts to sum up the evidence and concludes that the reason why we record so many associations and confusions of *Ἑκάτη* with other deities might be her general role of serving as a *πρόπολος* ‘attendant, guide, companion’ and thus of being subservient to other, more prominent deities – more or less irrespective of who those deities are – as also evinced by her association with entranceway figures.

### 3.3. Functions

We complete our investigation of *Ἑκάτη*’s nature and properties by looking at her functions, of which Von Rudloff (1992: 86–128) lists and discusses the five most important ones: *προπύλαια* ‘entranceway guardian’, *κουροτρόφος* ‘child nurturer’, *πρόπολος* ‘attendant, guide, companion’, *φωσφόρος* ‘light bringer, light bearer’ and, finally, *χθόνια* ‘of the earth/netherworld’.

That she functioned as a *προπύλαια* ‘entranceway guardian’ is apparent from the archaeological record of the Archaic period as well as from literary references (von Rudloff 1992: 87–8; see also Ar.W. 804’s mentioning of *ἐκάταια* ‘statues of Hecate’ before every Athenian house in section 3.1 above). We may summarise this function of her as affording protection from what is beyond a boundary. A more detailed description will reveal that the boundary need not be a physical one only (doorways, pathways, crossroads, entrances, gates, etc.), but may also, by extension, be spiritual. As such, she also holds the apotropaic function of protecting her worshippers against the realms outside or beyond the world of the living. With further reference to her chthonic role (see below), Nilsson (1967: 724) even states that “[w]er den Spuk sendet, kann ihn auch abwehren”.

Her second role, which she shares with several other deities such as *Γαῖα*, *Δημήτηρ*, *Εἰλείθυια*, *Ἰφιγένεια* and *Ἄρτεμις*, is that of *κουροτρόφος* ‘child nurturer’ (or, as it were, a ‘birth goddess’). One feature frequently associated with birth goddesses in general, and thus also with *Ἑκάτη* in particular, are torches and dogs (von Rudloff 1992: 99). The appearance of torches is usually explained by the common association of fire with childbirth, most likely for reasons of hygiene and purification. When it comes to the dogs, our speculations are a little less solid. The

connection may have been through purification rituals in which the animals constituted the agent by which the uncleanness associated with birth was removed (von Rudloff 1992: 99, 118–9). However, before lending too much weight to this function at all, we should bear in mind that pre-Roman references to *Ἐκάτη* as a birth goddess are rare, the only Classical reference being an invocation of *Ἄρτεμις ἑκάτη* in a fragment of Aischylos (von Rudloff 1992: 97).

I have already touched upon the most important features of her third function as a *πρόπολος* ‘attendant, guide, companion’ in section 3.2, so I shall now continue to her fourth – the *φωσφόρος* ‘light bringer, light bearer’ function, which is the most common distinguishing feature of her in art, since she is often seen carrying a torch. Here we may record a partial overlap with her *κουροτρόφος* ‘child nurturer’ function, seeing that, as mentioned above, birth goddesses were often associated with torches, but her torch bearing may also relate to the moon or the morning and evening “stars” (i.e., Venus) or to her role as a guide in mysteries (von Rudloff 1992: 104). The last-mentioned relation is evident in early Classical art where she appears as the torch-bearing guide for *Περσεφόνη* on her travels to and from *Ἄδης*.

Lastly, the fifth main function of her is that of *χθόνια* ‘of the earth/netherworld’. Although this may very well be her most salient or most well-known attribute, it is actually recorded quite late. Only from the second half of the 5th century BC onwards do we possess evidence that she was associated with restless spirits, phantasms and, in general, magic and sorcery. The Archaic period offers no direct evidence for this side of her (von Rudloff 1992: 109). In this role, regardless of its age, we come across purification ceremonies involving the killing of dogs and offerings of food left at the crossroads, especially three-way intersections, at every new moon. Another typical trait of her, and of other chthonic deities, is multiplicity. In late art, i.e., again from the middle of the 5th century, she is often depicted as three-formed or triple-bodied, appearing with one dog head, one serpent head and one horse head, but other representations exist, as well. In earlier art, she is always single-bodied. Wedeck (1994: 203) has suggested that her late, triple-bodied form represents a triple role as a goddess of the moon: as *Σελήνη* (the moon in heaven), *Ἄρτεμις* (the huntress on earth) and *Περσεφόνη* (the destroyer in the underworld and queen of hell).

At this point, I have made several references to her appearance with dogs (von Rudloff 1992: 117–120). Above all, dogs are closely associated with the underworld – which references to *Κέρβερος*, the hound of Hades, and *Ὀρθ(ρ)ος* should suffice to illustrate – and in the specific case of *Ἐκάτη*’s association with dogs, late Hellenistic and Roman works (e.g. Lucian’s *Philopseudes* 39.22) describe the sound of barking dogs as the first ominous sign of *Ἐκάτη*

*χθόνια*'s approach. There is persistent evidence, however, that *Ἐκάτη*'s dogs may not be hellhounds or netherworld dogs *ab origine*. Besides being ghostly apparitions, her dogs also come with less ominous roles. First, as we have already seen, dogs constituted sacrificial offerings, e.g., in connection with childbirth-purification rituals. Second, they had a good reputation as guardians and hunters. In this role, they were associated with deities such as *Ἄρτεμις*, *Ἀπόλλων* and *Ἀσκληπιός*. Indeed, there is some evidence that the early connection with dogs (guardian and hunter) was with *Ἄρτεμις* rather than with *Ἐκάτη* herself, while the later connection (impure animal suitable for purification ceremonies) was with *Ἐκάτη* more specifically, but we must bear in mind, here, the close association between these two goddesses (see section 3.2). As von Rudloff (1992: 120) puts it, “[i]t may be that dogs served two distinct roles, one as companion and the other as an impure animal suitable for purification ceremonies. Artemis would identify mostly with the former role, while Hekate with the latter, at least by the fifth century. The close identification arising in the Classical period between the two deities would similarly confuse these roles for dogs.”

#### 4. Towards a new etymology

From what we have learnt in section 3, it has become evident that the etymological proposal based on an Anatolian or Carian origin of *Ἐκάτη* suffers from, i.a., the comparatively late date of the Hecatan monuments in Caria and the surrounding area, her connection to and the worshipping of her in mainland Greece being of a considerably earlier date. Equally unsatisfactory may the two proposals be that connect *Ἐκάτη* etymologically to the Apollonian and Artemisian epithets *ἑκατος*, *ἐκάτη*, *ἐκατηβόλος*, *ἐκηβόλος* and *ἐκατηβελέτης*, since, reportedly (von Rudloff 1992: 64, 69), *Ἐκάτη* is never portrayed as an archer in art or myth and is thus never depicted with a bow, one of the very hallmarks of both *Ἀπόλλων* and *Ἄρτεμις* as well as a prerequisite for the second compositional member *-βόλος* in the sense of ‘shooting’. Finally we have learnt that she is intimately connected with dogs and that these dogs are not hellhounds *ab origine*, but actually may serve two distinct and separate roles: 1) as companion and 2) as an impure animal suitable for purification ceremonies.

On this basis, I would like to propose an inner-Greek etymology based directly on her appearance with dogs. More specifically, I propose that *Ἐκάτη* harks back to PIE *\*sue-kunt-eh<sub>2</sub>* ‘possessing her own dogs, possessing separate dogs’. In this exocentric compound, PIE *\*sue-* ‘self, own, separate’ is what ultimately yields *έ-*, and PIE *\*-kunt-*, the zero-grade form of PIE *\*k(u)uōn* ‘dog’ (Mallory & Adams 1997: 168, Wodtko & al. 2008: 436), is continued by

the second compositional member *-κατ-*, after which follows the feminine variant of the thematic suffix, i.e., PIE *\*-eh<sub>2</sub>* > *-η*.

That *Ἐκάτη* possesses dogs is evident, so there is no further reason to argue for the inclusion of dogs in her name, but the motivation for identifying these dogs as ‘her own, separate’ may be somewhat less transparent. One option is that the ancient Greeks simply wanted to point out that, even though she was associated with the netherworld in her role as *χθόνια*, she had her own dogs not identical to the hellhounds *Κέρβερος* and *Ὅρθ(ρ)ος*. A second option, which, in my opinion, seems more likely in light of the late appearance of her association with magic, spooks and ghostly apparitions, is that her name is meant to illustrate not that her dogs were different from other dogs, but that they were different from each other, serving two distinct and separate roles as mentioned above.

Two potential formal problems prevail with this etymological proposal. First, we would not have expected the sequence PIE *\*-k̑u-* to yield *-κ-*, but rather *-ππ-* as in *ἵππος* ‘horse’ < PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>ék̑uo-*. A modified version of the *βουκόλος* rule may solve this problem, however. This rule states that a labiovelar stop (PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>*, *\*g<sup>w</sup>*, *\*g<sup>w</sup>h*) dissimilates to an ordinary velar stop (*\*k*, *\*g*, *\*g<sup>h</sup>*) next to the vowel *\*u* or its corresponding glide *\*u* (Beekes 1995: 62, Fortson 2004: 64, Sihler 1995: 156, etc.), as seen in *βουκόλος* ‘tending kine’ (Myc. *qo-u-ko-ro*) and Welsh *bugail* ‘shepherd, pastor’ < PIE *\*g<sup>w</sup>ou-kolh<sub>1</sub>o-* < *\*g<sup>w</sup>ou-k<sup>w</sup>olh<sub>1</sub>o-*. Without this dissimilation, we would have had *\*βουπόλος* (Myc. *\*qo-u-qo-ro*) instead. The development of PIE *\*súé-k̑unt-eh<sub>2</sub>* to *Ἐκάτη* does not constitute an exact parallel, since we are dealing with 1) the sequence *\*-k̑u-* and not a true labiovelar *\*k<sup>w</sup>* and 2) distant dissimilation rather than immediate dissimilation due to the dissimilated sound not being positioned directly next to the dissimilating *\*u*. Nevertheless, the two processes are sufficiently similar for us to be able to understand why this distant dissimilation of PIE *\*súé-k̑unt-eh<sub>2</sub>* to *\*súé-k̑nt-eh<sub>2</sub>* could happen.

Our second seeming problem is the presence of PIE *\*t* in the reconstructed form for ‘dog’. Normally, the paradigm for ‘dog’ is reconstructed as PIE *\*k̑(u)uón-* in the strong and *\*k̑un- ~ k̑unt-* in the weak cases (Mallory & Adams 1997: 168, Wodtko & al. 2008: 436), but as Olsen has shown at several occasions (e.g., 2001: 74–6, 2004: 222–7), PIE *\*nt* and *\*n* originally constituted phonologically conditioned variants of the same derivational suffix. It might not be too far-fetched to assume, therefore, that PIE *\*t* would be expected in *\*k̑unt(t)-* ‘dog’ and actually represents the underlying form. This *\*t* also surfaces in derivations in other Indo-European branches, allowing us to meet forms such as PGmc. *\*hunda-* ‘dog’ and Latv. *sùntene*, *sùntana* ‘large dog’, both < PIE *\*k̑unt-* (Olsen 2004: 222).

This way of explaining the presence of the *\*t* creates a new problem, though. In this kind of phonological surroundings, i.e., PIE *\*CRntV-*, the expected development of the *\*nt-*suffix would be loss of the *\*n*, i.e., PIE *\*CRtV-*, as evinced by, e.g., PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>r-nt-ó-* > *\*k<sup>w</sup>rtó-* (Olsen 2004: 224). This implies that we would expect a reconstructed form along the lines of *\*\*k<sup>u</sup>-t-eh<sub>2</sub>* rather than *\*k<sup>u</sup>-nt-eh<sub>2</sub>*. I would suggest that we could solve this problem by revocalising an original form *\*k<sup>u</sup>nteh<sub>2</sub>* – which represents the actual expected development *\*VntV-* > *\*VntV-* (Olsen 2004: 224) – as *\*k<sup>u</sup>nteh<sub>2</sub>* in accordance with standard Proto-Indo-European syllabification rules. Alternatively, *\*k<sup>u</sup>nt-* could represent the original and expected vocalisation, which was altered to *\*k<sup>u</sup>nt-* (in PGmc. *\*hunda-* ‘dog’, Latv. *sùntene*, *sùntana* ‘large dog’ etc.) in analogy with the most prevalent zero-grade form (*\*k<sup>u</sup>n-*) of the weak forms of the regular ‘dog’ paradigm, e.g., gen.sg. PIE *\*k<sup>u</sup>n-ós* > Skt. *śúnah*, Gr. *κυνός*, etc. (Wodtko & al. 2008: 439 fn. 19).

## 5. Conclusion

In this article, I have demonstrated that, based on the places of worship and origin, the relations to other deities and the functions of the Greek goddess *Ἑκάτη*, neither of the existing etymologies of her name conforms well to these data. Neither is she necessarily of non-Greek or Carian origin, nor is she depicted with a bow or generally as closely associated with *Ἀπόλλων* and *Ἄρτεμις* as often assumed; e.g., she is rarely seen as a guardian figure at entrances to sanctuaries and temples of *Ἄρτεμις*. This implies, in turn, that neither Wilamowitz-Moellendorf’s (1931: 325) suggestion that her name is of Anatolian or more specifically Carian origin and was only subsequently adopted by the Greeks to either of the known Apollonian epithets *ἑκατηβόλος*, *ἑκηβόλος* or *ἑκατηβελέτης*, nor the classical approach according to which *Ἑκάτη* is ultimately an abbreviated form of *ἑκατηβόλος* ‘striking with hundreds’ or ‘shooting from afar’ finds unequivocal support in any Hecatian feature.

Her frequent appearance with dogs rather lends weight to the alternative etymological proposal of this article, according to which her name harks back to PIE *\*s<sup>u</sup>é-k<sup>u</sup>nt-eh<sub>2</sub>* ‘possessing separate dogs’ with the notion of ‘separate’ most probably referring to her dogs serving two distinct and separate roles: 1) as companion and 2) as an impure animal suitable for purification ceremonies. The two formal difficulties with this suggestion are moderate and surmountable. First, even though the loss of the second *\*u* (PIE *\*s<sup>u</sup>é-k<sup>u</sup>nt-eh<sub>2</sub>* to *\*s<sup>u</sup>é-k<sup>u</sup>nt-eh<sub>2</sub>*) has probably not happened as a result of any general sound law known at this point, the distant dissimilation witnessed here resembles, in many regards, the process of the *βουκόλος* rule. Second, we may ascribe the unexpected presence of a PIE *\*t* in the word for dog (usually

reconstructed as PIE \**k̑(u)uón-* ~ \**kun-* ~ \**kun̑-*) to the suffixal \**nt/n-* complex unveiled by Olsen (e.g., 2001: 74–6, 2004: 222–7).

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