THE LAND AND THE HEROES OF LOKRIS IN THE ILIAD

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Abstract: The presentation of Lokris and the Lokrians in the Iliad is problematic. The entry for Lokris in the Catalogue lists an unusually large number of towns for such a small area, but many of those towns are obscure. Despite the small size of the region of Lokris, it has given the epic not one but two major heroes of very different characters: the Lokrian commander Oilean Aias and Patroklos, Achilles’ friend and warrior companion. Although Aias is praised in the Catalogue entry as the greatest of Homeric warriors, elsewhere in the Iliad he is only a second-rank hero and his men, the Lokrians, are relatively insignificant archers. Seeking a resolution of these difficulties, this paper integrates information derived from the text of the Iliad with what is known of the topography and archaeology of Lokris between the Late Mycenaean and Archaic periods. It is concluded that Aias, the more traditional hero, is firmly embedded in Lokris, whereas Patroklos, who appears to be ‘reinvented’ by the poet of the Iliad, has no traditional connection to the land. The contrast between these heroes may reflect the division between the mountainous Epiknemidian and the urban Opountian parts of Lokris. Oilean Aias encapsulates the ancient virtues of the mountain warrior and is linked with Epiknemidian Lokris; Patroklos, with his gentle disposition, is representative of the citizen of the polis and as such is linked to Opous, the capital of Lokris.

Keywords: Iliad, Catalogue of Ships, East Lokris, Aias the Lesser, Patroklos

The Lokrians are introduced in the Iliad in nine lines in the Catalogue of Ships. The Lokrian leader Oilean Aias (henceforth: Aias) is described in the first four lines, followed by three lines listing the Lokrian towns and a line giving the number of ships that Aias brings. The last line specifies the location of the Lokrian land, opposite Euboia:

The Lokrians were led by Oileos’ son, swift Aias,  
the Lesser, not as great as Telamonian Aias  
but much smaller: he was small, with a linen breastplate,  
but with the spear he surpassed all the Hellenes and Achaeans.  
They lived in Kynos, Opoeis, Kalliaros,  
Bessa, Skarphe, lovely Augeiai,  
Tarpe, and Thronion at the river Boagrios.  
Him followed forty dark ships  
of the Lokrians, who dwell opposite sacred Euboia (Il. 2.527–35).

The Homeric phrase ‘Lokrians’ thus refers to the inhabitants of the land that is known as East Lokris: a small area in central Greece adjacent to the north Euboian Gulf (Fig. 1). The exact borders of historical Lokris varied somewhat over time, but the basic territory was always confined to the narrow strip of land along the coast of the north Euboian Gulf, from Halai in the southeast to Thermopylae in the northwest, bounded on its southwest by the mountain ranges of Kallidromos and Khlomon. East Lokris was historically divided into two geographically distinct

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1 Homer does not seem to know the historical West Lokrians, located in Phokis and Aitolokarnania: Katsonopoulou (1990) 3 (though according to Strabo the specification in line 535 suggests that Homer was aware of another group of Lokrians living elsewhere: Strabo 9.4.7).  
2 Parts of modern Phokis and Boiotia were Lokrian at some point in time: Nielsen (2000) 91; Kramer-Hajos (2008) 12.
parts: Opountian Lokris in the southeast and Epiknemidian Lokris in the northwest. Opountian Lokris was the historically dominant part of Lokris; it was named after its capital Opous (Strabo 9.4.1), which was located at the modern town of Atalanti. Its centre is formed by the large coastal plain of Atalanti, which is surrounded by low hills. The less important northwestern part of Lokris was known as Epiknemidian Lokris, after Mount Knemis in the Kallidromos range (Strabo 9.4.1), the area’s most prominent mountain peak. It consists of high hills, steep cliffs and deep valleys; the plain of Skarpheia-Thermopylai was significantly less extensive in antiquity than it is nowadays. The entire Lokrian area is no more than ca. 70km long and ca. 15km wide, and is one of the smallest political units of the Catalogue.

I. The Lokrian towns of the Catalogue

For such a small area, a surprisingly large number of towns is listed in the Catalogue of Ships: no fewer than eight Lokrian towns are named (II. 2.531–33). This makes Lokris one of the most prominent players in the Catalogue: of the 29 units in the Catalogue, only six feature more than eight towns. These six regions are Boiotia (29 towns; II. 2.496–508), the part of the Argolid ruled by Agamemnon (11 towns; II. 569–75), Arcadia and the part of the Argolid ruled by Diomedes (10 towns each: II. 2.603–08, 2.559–62), and Lakedaimon (II. 2.581–85) and Pylos (II. 2.591–94) with nine towns each. Four of these units (Mycenae, the Argolid, Lakedaimon and Pylos) are mentioned by name. For a seventh region, Crete, only seven towns are listed by name, but it is said that there were in total 100 towns (II. 2.649).

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3 The distinction is first made by Strabo (9.4.1); it does not appear in the works of Herodotus, Thucydides or Polybius. Whether ‘officially’ recognized or not, geographically the two parts always were quite different and their different characters – one more urbanized, the other more mountainous – are aptly reflected in their names. See Nielsen (2000) for the various terms used to describe the Lokrians and their implications.

4 For a seventh region, Crete, only seven towns are listed by name, but it is said that there were in total 100 towns (II. 2.649).
Pylos) are core-regions of Mycenaean civilization and are ruled by heroes important in the rest of the *Iliad*: Agamemnon, Diomedes, Menelaos and Nestor.\(^5\) The case of Boiotia is discussed in the next section of this paper; only Arcadia is inexplicably prominent. Lokris thus features, with Phokis, for which eight towns are also listed, just below the real ‘heavyweights’ in the Catalogue. When considering the size of the territories in the Catalogue, it becomes clear that Lokris’ position needs explaining: Lokris is not only tiny compared to the regions for which more towns, or the same number, are listed, but also compared to many regions with fewer listed towns or localities.\(^6\)

The eight Lokrian towns listed in the Catalogue of Ships are Kynos, Opoeis, Kalliaros, Bessa, Skarphe, Augeiai, Tarphe and Thronion. Only the first two of these are fairly well known. Kynos is the least problematic: it has long been identified with the coastal mound site on the northern edge of the plain of Atalanti, which has yielded impressive Mycenaean remains and survived into the Early Iron Age.\(^7\) Kynos was especially prominent in the LH IIIC period, when pictorial kraters, decorative vases used for mixing wine with water during élite male symposia, provide evidence for a maritime warrior culture (Fig. 2).\(^8\) The activities depicted on these kraters suggest the presence of a sailor-warrior class, fighting with spears and possibly bows-and-arrows (the figure at the stem of the ship in Fig. 2) and specializing in coastal or overseas raids and seabattles, the sort of activities that are epically magnified and glorified in the *Iliad*.\(^9\) Possibly due to this active and prominent role of the local élites in the chaotic years at the end of the Bronze Age, Kynos survives the transition to the Early Iron Age relatively unscathed. Whereas this transition was often, for example in nearby Boiotia and in most of the Peloponnese, accompanied by widespread destructions and abandonment, at Kynos and elsewhere along the Lokrian coast there are strong signs of continued prosperity and continuous development.\(^10\) Kynos’ position at the head of the Lokrian Catalogue entry may well reflect its prominence in this period.

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\(^5\) Crete is ruled by Idomeneus, another first-rank hero.

\(^6\) Although it is admittedly a risky business to try to draw up a map of Greece according to the Catalogue of Ships, it is nevertheless clear that Lokris is considerably smaller than Euboia (seven towns; *II*. 2.537–45), Attika (only Athens is mentioned; *II*. 2.546–56), Elis (five towns; *II*. 2.615–24), the Kephallenians (six localities; *II*. 2.631–37), Rhodes (three towns; *II*. 2.653–70) and Phthia (six localities; *II*. 2.681–94).

\(^7\) Dakoronia (1993) 124–26; (2004); Dakoronia and Kounouklas (2009).

\(^8\) Dakoronia (1996b; 1999); for photographs of the pictorial kraters: Dakoronia (2002) 98–100.


Opoeis also features prominently in the Catalogue, falling after the caesura of the first line of the Lokrian entry. Elsewhere in the Iliad, too, Opoeis, as the home of Patroklos’ father Menoitios (II. 18.324–27, 23.85), appears to be the most important of the Lokrian towns mentioned in the Catalogue, and, according to ancient Greek authors, in the historical periods Opous (identified at Atalanti on the basis of Archaic inscriptions found there) was the only important town in East Lokris. Opoeis is thus probably to be equated with Atalanti. Whereas Kynos is rich in Late Mycenaean remains, at Atalanti there is ample evidence from the Early Iron Age in the form of élite burials, including a warrior grave, attesting to the importance of the site in the Protogeometric period. If the equation of Homeric Opoeis with Atalanti is correct, its inclusion in the Catalogue may reflect an Early Iron Age reality.

The other six Lokrian towns of the Catalogue are much more elusive. Kalliaros and Bessa were both unknown already to Strabo, who places Kalliaros in a plain (probably based on no more than the name of the town, taking Kalliaros as from καλός, beautiful, and ἀρόω, to till) and describes Bessa, again based on its name (‘wooded glen’), as a ‘wooded place’ (Strabo 9.4.5). It is likely that Kalliaros is to be sought in or near the plain of Atalanti: this would provide a logical itinerary after Kynos and Opous, and the D-Scholia (on Hom. II. 2.531) make Kalliaros the son of Opous, which suggests that Kalliaros was located in the same general area as Opous. All evidence is however circumstantial.

With Skarphe we may be on firmer ground, given the similarity of this name to Skarpheia in western Epiknemidian Lokris. The next town, Augeiai, is however completely unknown, although Strabo associates it with the Skarpheians (Strabo 9.4.5). Tarpe was located on a height, possibly above the village of Mendenitsa; this, too, lies in western Epiknemidian Lokris.

Homeric Thronion, finally, is to be found ‘at the streams of the Boagrios’ (II. 2.533). A Hellenistic inscription locates this capital of the Epiknemidian Lokrians at Palaiokastro eis ta Marmara, near Kainourgio, the location of a rich late Geometric cemetery. If this cemetery is to be associated with the Thronion of the Catalogue, this line of the Catalogue dates to the eighth century at the earliest.

11 Fossey (1990) 68–74; Dakoronia (1993) 117–20; (2006) 484. In the Lokrian genealogy, Opoeus features as son of Lokros and father of Kynos. This, together with the fact that half (or all: see Nielsen 2000) of Lokris was later called Opountian Lokris, indicates Opous’ importance in the historical periods.

12 The form Opoeis is attested for an inscription which was set up near Thermopylai and called Opoeis ‘metropolis of the Lokrians’ (Strabo 9.4.2). Alternative candidates for Homeric Opoeis are Kyparissi (Dakoronia (1993) 117) and Mitrou (Coleman (1994)); however, neither is convincing. The hill-site of Kyparissi is too late (second half of the sixth century BC to Roman) to be a candidate and the deposit of Mycenaean to Archaic sherds found on one of the lower slopes (Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 47–48) has not, so far, been linked to any architectural remains. As for Coleman’s suggestion, there is no positive evidence to equate Mitrou with Homeric Opoeis, and this assumes that Opoeis/Opous (or at least its name) shifted in location from coastal Mitrou to inland Atalanti at some point in time.

13 Dakoronia (1993) 119–20; (2002) 48–65; (2006); Lemos (2002) 171–72. See also Kramer-Hajos (2008) 42. This appears, with the exception of a few cist tombs at Mitrou, to be the only cemetery dated to the Protogeometric period in Opountian Lokris; Geometric graves have been excavated at Traganos (Onassoglou (1981)).

14 Although the absence of evidence does not constitute evidence for absence, the total lack of Mycenaean remains at Atalanti to date, despite continuing investigations at various locations in and around the town, suggests that it was not an important site in the Late Bronze Age.

15 So, too, Eusthatius on II. 2.531: ‘others say that [Kalliaros] was named Kalliara, in the neuter gender, because the land there was beautifully tilled’.

16 Fossey (1990) 75 suggests Skala Atalantis as the location; Dakoronia (1993) 120–24 proposes Kyparissi as the location for Kalliaros on the basis of an inscribed fragment.

17 The text at this point has a major lacuna, but the general meaning seems clear. Augeiai can be safely supplied since Strabo here talks about those towns mentioned in Homer, and Skarpheia is uncorrupted.

18 Hope-Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 49 with further references.

19 Hope-Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 49. No prehistoric material was found here.

This brief overview suffices to show that despite the relatively large number of towns listed for Lokris, a remarkably high proportion of these sites are unidentifiable, and was practically unknown already to Strabo.  Intensive archaeological investigation in the last few decades shows that Opountian Lokris was densely inhabited in the Late Mycenaean period and Early Iron Age: apart from the major settlement at Kynos, excavations have uncovered an important settlement at Mitrou as well as several important Mycenaean cemeteries in the interior of Opountian Lokris for which the associated settlements have not yet been found.  The archaeological evidence for Epiknemidian Lokris is scarcer, with Late Mycenaean only at Agnanti; there are however rich Geometric remains at Anavra as well as at Kainourgio.  Unique for Opountian Lokris is that, even in the Protogeometric period (the Dark Age), the number of sites is relatively high, in accordance with the prominence of the area in the Catalogue, and that several sites (notably Kynos and Mitrou) survived the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age transition without major destruction or temporary abandonment.  This can be linked to the evidence for a sailor-warrior culture from LH IIIC Kynos: evidently regarding attack as the best form of defence, these settlements may well have caused, rather than suffered, much of the destruction associated with the end of the Bronze Age.  This historical reality of the 12th to tenth century may have informed the prominent treatment of Lokris in the catalogue.  Yet, the inclusion of Thronion, with its Geometric remains, suggests that the entry for Lokris consists of an amalgam of towns belonging to various different time periods.  Had the poet limited himself strictly to one single period, the entry would have been considerably briefer.  Although a real prominence of the region may thus have informed the poet’s treatment of the catalogue entry for Lokris, the amalgamated nature of the entry appears to betray a deliberate attempt to magnify the small Lokris in the Catalogue, to make it seem more prominent than was strictly warranted.  The question of why the poet felt the need to do so will be revisited in the next section of this paper.

Given the ‘overkill’ of barely known places, it is striking that one of the best-known Lokrian towns is omitted: Naryx, the birthplace of Ajax, located in Epiknemidian Lokris.  The reason is simple: Naryx, located in the Epiknemidian hinterland about 6km south of Kainourgio, probably

21 This is also noted by Oldfather (1916) 43; Hope-Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 50; Schachermeyr (1983) 202.
22 For overviews of the archaeology of East Lokris, see Dakoronia (1993; 1996a; 2002); Van de Moortel (2007); Kramer-Hajos (2008).  For Mitrou, see also Van de Moortel and Zahou (2003–2004); Kramer-Hajos and O’Neill (2008).  Given the prominence of Mitrou, one would expect this settlement to feature in the Catalogue.  However, the name ‘Mitrou’ is modern: it is unclear which, if any, of the town names in the Catalogue might be equated with the site of Mitrou.
26 The date of the Catalogue, as of the *Iliad* in general, continues to be disputed, with two extreme positions represented by Shear, who advocates an almost purely Mycenaean origin (Shear (2000) 97–98, 129–30), and Crielaard (1995), who argues for a seventh-century date.  Known towns from the Catalogue span this entire time period; the inclusion of towns prominent exclusively in the Late Bronze Age next to towns not inhabited before the late Early Iron Age suggests that various time periods are represented in the Catalogue and that therefore the Catalogue as a whole cannot have been completed in its present form before late in the Early Iron Age (which is not to say that individual entries may not be datable to an earlier period, as has been convincingly argued in the case of Ithaca and the Kephallenians by Petrakis (2006)).
27 Cf. Schachermeyr (1983) 202, who notes that the impossibility of identifying most Lokrian places with certainty indicates that many of the Catalogue’s Lokrian towns seem to have been utterly insignificant: it seems as if the poet tries to offset the insignificance of the listed places by their high number.
28 Other well-known poleis from the Classical period that do not feature in the Catalogue are Alphonos and Nikaia in Epiknemidian Lokris and Alope, Halai and Larymna in Opountian Lokris (see Nielsen (2004) 664–73 for the list of known Classical Lokrian poleis).
dates to the Archaic period and thus did not yet exist when the *Iliad* essentially reached its current form. It is possible that the association between Aias and Naryx is even later: Diodorus and Strabo are the first authors to mention it, though it must have been a well-established connection by the third century BC judging from *IG* IX 2 1 706, a decree referring to Aias’ successors, the family of the Aianteioi in Naryx (see below, n.57). Nevertheless, in the Catalogue – and in the *Iliad* as a whole – Aias is a hero without a hometown. Aias is however associated with Epiknemidian Lokris, and this may be the reason for another oddity in the Catalogue entry: the apparent emphasis on Epiknemidian Lokris at the expense of Opountian Lokris. Although the order of the places mentioned in the Catalogue does not necessarily reflect an actual logical itinerary – the order may at least in part be determined bymetrical restrictions – yet it seems likely that the last four towns are to be located in western Epiknemidian Lokris, which was historically less important. Depending on the locations of Kalliaros (most likely in Opountian Lokris) and Bessa, Epiknemidian Lokris is thus, in terms of number of towns, either equal to Opountian Lokris or more prominent. This is hard to explain on archaeological grounds: from the Late Bronze Age through to the Archaic period, settlement remains and (for the Archaic period) known *poleis* are more numerous and substantial in Opountian Lokris, with its fertile coastal plains and low foothills, than in mountainous Epiknemidian Lokris. The reason for this oddity is connected with the observation that Aias is not associated with any town in the *Iliad*; section III will come back to this.

Whereas Aias is a hero without a town, Opous, capital of the Opountian Lokrians and most important of all Lokrian towns, lacks a hero. Although Patroklos is associated with Opoeis in the *Iliad*, this association is tenuous at best; in the fifth century, Opous assimilated Aias, not Patroklos, as its own hero. Section IV of this article deals with Patroklos and his ties to Opoeis.

II. Oilean Aias: the Lokrian hero of the Catalogue

The Catalogue entry for Lokris is interesting for another reason: the treatment of the Lokrian leader. The four lines dedicated to Aias the Lesser, son of Oileus, culminate with the hyperbolic praise that ‘with the spear he surpassed all the Hellenes and Achaeans’ (*Il. 2.530*). Since the spear was the Homeric weapon *par excellence*, to be the best with the spear amounts to being the best warrior of all the Greeks: Aias is presented here, uniquely, as a first-rank hero. This is problematic, since elsewhere the *Iliad* makes it abundantly clear that Achilles and Telamonian Aias are the best warriors fighting in the Trojan War on the Greek side (for example *Il. 2.768–69, 17.279–80*).

Why does Aias get praised to such extent in the Catalogue? I suggest below that the problem of Aias’ treatment in the Lokrian entry is directly related to the question posed earlier in this paper: why does the poet list so many unknown places in the Lokrian entry? Examining the Lokrian entry in its context in the Catalogue suggests an answer to both questions.

29 Polygonal walls at the site of Rengini/Naryx date probably to the later sixth or earlier fifth century BC: Dominguez (2009) 1198.
30 Diodorus 14.82.8, Strabo 9.4.2.
31 Euripides has Aias leave ‘famed Thronion’s citadel’ in *IA* 264. Thronion, as the capital of Epiknemidian Lokris, was a logical choice for this rational fifth-century author looking for a place with which to link the traditionally homeless Aias.
33 This conclusion is based on the identification of Skarphe with Skarpheia and on Strabo, who places Skarpheia, Tarphe and Thronion in Epiknemidian Lokris, and Augeiai presumably near Skarpheia (Strabo 9.4.4–6).
34 Although its name might suggest a location in hilly Epiknemidian Lokris, grouping it with the Opountian group would create a neat balance between Opountian and Epiknemidian Lokris.

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The Lokrian entry is the fourth entry of the Catalogue, which starts with Boiotia and continues with adjacent territories in central Greece before moving to Athens and Salamis, and from there to the Peloponnese. The entries in the Catalogue are thus grouped by geographical areas; the constituents of these larger groups are occasionally linked together by cross references. For central Greece, five constituent areas and their leaders are mentioned. Boiotia gets the lion’s share of the attention, with five leaders and 29 places in 17 lines (Il. 2.494–510). Despite the large number of 29 Boiotian towns, many are well known and abundant geographical detail serves to give at least the impression of historical accuracy. The five Boiotian leaders, leading 50 ships of 120 men each, are, on the other hand, all rather insignificant or even unknown and no detail is wasted on them. Three are probably invented by Homer and thus unknown to his audience. The Boiotian entry stands in this respect in stark contrast to the Lokrian entry: one features a detailed geography, the other a well-known long established hero; obscure abundance, in the Lokrian entry reserved for the geography, is in the Boiotian entry linked with the commanders.

The following brief entry for Aspledon and Minyan Orkhomenos (Il. 2.511–16) seems surprising: Aspledon and Orkhomenos are usually conceived as parts of Boiotia. Thus, although there is no explicit cross reference to Boiotia, this entry serves nevertheless as an extension of the Boiotian entry. Whereas the Boiotian entry focuses on geography, the Minyan entry, with just two towns, necessarily focuses on details of the leaders. This entry is followed by the entry for Phokis (Il. 2.517–26), which is explicitly linked to Boiotia since the Phokians take their place in the battle line next to them (Il. 2.526). The Phokian entry distributes detail equally over the genealogy of the leaders and the geography, naming eight distinct towns and the river Kephissos.

The Lokrian entry (Il. 2.527–35) is next: it also lists a river (Boagrios) and the same number of towns as the entry for Phokis, but the Lokrian towns are almost completely devoid of detail (‘lovely Augeiai’ (Αὐγειὰς ἐρατεινὰς) in line 532 makes in the Greek a nice assonance but can hardly be taken as a detailed geographical characteristic) and even obscure; attention is on Aias who is excessively praised. In line 535, by mentioning that the Lokrians live opposite Euboia, the Lokrian entry refers to the following entry (Il. 2.536–45). Although three of the seven Euboian towns (all three located in the northern part of the island, opposite Lokris) receive some level of description, the emphasis in this entry is on the warriors, the Abantes, rather than on either geography or leaders.

Thus the first five Catalogue entries fall into two balanced groups: Boiotia (including Minyan Orkhomenos) and Phokis on the one hand, with accurate and detailed geographical descriptions; Lokris and Euboia on the other hand, with emphasis on a leader and the masses of warriors, respectively.

Lokris is the only one of these five entries with a well-known hero as its leader;
it is also the only entry with so many unknown towns. Since the Lokrian entry is the first entry in the entire Catalogue of Ships in which we encounter a hero of some substance, it seems that the poet of the Catalogue for this reason feels compelled to lavish abundant praise on him.

The pattern of praise in the Catalogue is generally odd: typically praise is bestowed on very different characters from those in the rest of the Iliad. Within the Catalogue, excessive praise is bestowed upon Oilean Aias, Menestheus and Agamemnon. Aias is, as we have seen, said to have ‘surpassed all Hellenes and Achaeans with the spear’ (II. 2.530); of Menestheus it is said that ‘no man on earth was his equal’ (II. 2.553); and Agamemnon is called ‘the best’ without much further ado (II. 2.580). In the case of Agamemnon, the poet informs the audience that he was distinguished ‘because he was the best and brought by far the most troops’ (II. 2.580). Being ‘the best’ is thus directly linked to bringing the largest contingent of men (Agamemnon brings 100 ships (II. 2.576)).

Similarly, Menestheus is praised in hyperbole because ‘no man on earth was his equal / in marshalling horses and shield-bearing men’ (II. 2.553–54). Although line 554 limits the hyperbolic praise bestowed upon Menestheus in the previous line – Menestheus is not unsurpassed on earth in everything, only in ‘marshalling horses and shield-bearing men’ – at the same time it specifies why Menestheus has no equal on earth. As Agamemnon is praised because he brought the most men, Menestheus deserves to be praised because of his ability to command his many men (he brings 50 Athenian-manned ships). In contrast, Telamonian Aias, elsewhere in the Iliad a major hero (he is called the best of the Greeks after Achilles as soon as the Catalogue is over; II. 2.768–69) brings only 12 ships and thus deserves only a terse two lines in the Catalogue, and of Nireus, who brings only three ships, it is said explicitly that he was physically beautiful, but weak ‘and a small host followed him’ (II. 2.675). As being ‘the best’ is connected with bringing and commanding the most followers, being ‘weak’ is connected with a small number of followers. In the Catalogue, it is the extent of a hero’s realm and the number of men following him to Troy which define his status as a hero.

Although the reason for Aias’ hyperbolic praise seems to be that he appears as the first well-known hero in the Catalogue, the poet’s excuse for this praise should thus, according to the internal rules of the Catalogue, be the large realm or number of men Aias brought. However, there is no denying that Lokris is the smallest of the central Greek territories listed. To distract attention from this obvious fact, we are not only told that Aias brings 40 ships (a significant investment for an area as small as Lokris and suggestive of a large population, in conformity with Lokris’ importance during the Dark Age) but are also treated to an unusually large number of

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41 Sammons (2010) 171, 175.
42 I deem praise ‘excessive’ if a phrase such as ‘the best of all’ or ‘surpassing all’ is used.
43 A ‘nonentity and something of a ninny’ (Page (1959) 146) in the rest of the Iliad.
44 See also II. 2.577, where the poet adds that Agamemnon not only brought by far the most, but also the best men.
45 Sammons (2010) 174–76. Given the content of the Catalogue – a muster list, rather than a song about great duels on the battlefield – it is not surprising that the hero bringing the most men is the most prominent. Yet, a large number of men may be a sine qua non for receiving excessive praise; it is not an automatic guarantee. For example, Nestor, despite the 90 ships he supplies (II. 2.602), does not receive any praise in his own entry (although in the Athenian entry he is said to be the only one to surpass Menestheus since he was older (II. 2.555)), and while Diomedes and Idomeneus each bring 80 ships, they, too, receive barely any praise: Diomedes is called ‘noble’ (II. 2.563, 567), Idomeneus ‘famed with the spear’ (II. 2.645, 650). Similarly, Menelaus (60 ships) is merely called ‘good at the war-cry’ (II. 2.586) and the Arcadian Agapenor (60 ships) receives no praise at all. A possible reason in this case is that Agapenor gets his ships from Agamemnon, since Arcadians have no business with seafaring (II. 2.614), rather than providing them himself. Petakis calls attention to the fact that the highest numbers of ships are not necessarily contributed by the most prominent heroes, but by the most renowned archaeological sites and regions: Mycenae, Pylos, the Argolid and Crete (Petakis (2006) 383).
46 The number itself is not unusual; nine other regions supply 40 ships as well (see n.48). According to Hygin. Fab. 97, the Lokrians brought only 20 ships. This may well represent a rationalization of this Augustan author reflecting the relative insignificance of Lokris.
towns associated with Lokris. Although for Phokis and Euboia the same number of ships and a similar number of towns (eight and seven respectively) are listed, the geographical areas of both territories are far larger than that of Lokris; moreover, the towns for these two areas are, with one exception each, well known.47 For the other localities with 40 ships, at most five towns are listed.48 Thus, although Aias may occupy a small territory, he rules over the relatively large number of eight towns.

III. Oilean Aias and his Lokrians outside the Catalogue

Aias is however not an undisputed hero. Even in the Catalogue entry itself, the excessive praise bestowed upon him in line 530 is controversial: in the preceding two lines, Aias has been described as not just much smaller than Telamonian Aias (II. 2.528–29), but indeed as just ‘small’ (II. 2.529) and wearing a linen, not a bronze, cuirass. Aias is thus described simultaneously as second rank, being small and barely outfitted as a warrior, and as the best fighter of the Greeks.

The ultimate cause of this contradiction may lie in a linguistic misunderstanding. As in the Catalogue entry, elsewhere, too, Oilean Aias is often linked to Telamonian Aias, many times by use of the dual form Αἴαντε to cover both Aiases. This represents a misunderstanding of the dual, which originally referred to Telamonian Aias and his brother Teukros in an old Indo-European construct, but was reinterpreted in the epic tradition to mean ‘two men called Aias’.49 This explains Aias’ odd inclusion in the select company (Telamonian Aias, Nestor, Idomeneus, Diomedes, Odysseus and Menelaus) that is invited to a sacrifice and meal by Agamemnon (II. 2.406: the first time Aias appears in the Iliad, as one of the ‘two Aiases’), as well as his closeness to and dependence on the greater Aias in many battle scenes (for example II. 13.701–08, 719–20) where the greater warrior serves as his shield and cuirass. In II. 17.732–33 the two Aiases even turn as one.50 Aias appears in these scenes more as Telamonian Aias’ sidekick than as his own man. This introduction of Aias into battle scenes where he originally played no part has led in turn to an expansion of his role in these battle scenes, and consequently a promotion to a well-known hero.

His artificially inflated role is typically strikingly negative: in II. 13.201–05, for example, he decapitates an already slain Trojan and hurls the head towards Hektor as a taunt.51 Even his greatest gift, that of speed, referred to in the Catalogue entry and by Aias’ standard epithet ταχύς (‘swift’), is no reason for praise. In fact, Aias’ speed is as controversial as is the hero himself. He uses the gift of speed in ways not consistent with a major hero’s arete: in II. 14.522 it is suggested that Aias’ speciality is the killing of fleeing men, since he is the only Greek warrior fast enough to follow the retreating enemy. Similarly, in II. 16.330–33 Aias kills the Trojan Kleoboulos after the latter trips in the chaos of battle. Aias’ speed rarely brings him the recognition and praise a Homeric hero desires. When the Trojans fight for the dead body of Patroklos, and Telamonian Aias requests help in holding them off, Aias is the first to arrive at the scene (II. 17.256–57), but does nothing worthy of mention in the ensuing battle. His speed even leads to utter humiliation in II. 23.773–77, in a situation which mirrors Kleoboulos’ tripping up. Competing in the footrace as part of the funeral games for Patroklos and about to finish first, he...

47 For Phokis, only Kyparissos cannot be located with any certainty (Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 40); for Euboia, only Dion is disputed (Sackett et al. (1966) 37 suggest it may be sought at the very northwestern tip of Euboia; see also Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1970) 53).
48 For Elis, Aitolia, the domain of Proteisilaos, and that of Polygoites and Leonteus, the Catalogue lists five towns each; for Meges’ domain two; for Eurypylus’ domain two towns, a spring and a mountain are listed; for Magnesia only a mountain and a river.
50 Fighting with the spear with only the protection of a linen corselet seems a dangerous business; presumably it is due to Aias’ unrivalled (except for Achilles) speed (not hampered by the weight and inflexibility of a bronze cuirass), his dependence on Telamonian Aias and his ‘speciality’ of killing the enemy when his back is turned (see below) that he manages to survive on the battlefield at all.
stumbles, due to interference by Athena on behalf of Odysseus, and slides face-first into cow dung. Thus the hero who typically uses his speed to catch up with men who are fleeing or hampered in their movements, is here, in an inversion of this situation, overtaken by his rival Odysseus after his movement has been hampered. In the last of the few occasions on which we hear Aias speak, he does so while spitting out dung from his mouth (II. 23.781), causing laughter all around. There is thus a somewhat comical side to Aias as well, and he is treated with less dignity than the Greek heroes of the first rank.

At this moment of greatest humiliation, even modern readers are hard pressed to feel sorry for Aias: not because they automatically side with Odysseus or because they find it genuinely amusing that Aias has swallowed a mouthful of filth, but because earlier during the games he managed to alienate even the most sympathetic audience by verbally abusing Idomeneus when the latter correctly thought that Diomedes had taken the lead in the chariot race (II. 23.473–41). Aias could have been forgiven, had he been right; but he was not. Calling Idomeneus a braggart three times, it is clear that in fact it is Aias who is bragging, since Idomeneus saw correctly. In the Odyssey this undesirable character trait of Aias’ is further emphasized, and he is shown in an even less favourable light, as a foolish braggart and a contemptor deorum. Aias’ death is due to his hubris: after Poseidon saves his life in a shipwreck, Aias boasts that he saved himself despite the gods, provoking Poseidon to strike the rock on which he had found refuge so that Aias is swallowed up by the sea (Od. 4.499–511). Aias here lacks modesty as well as good judgment, turning the gods against him in an instant – rather as he turns the audience against him in II. 23.473–81 – and thereby sealing his own fate.

Later traditions are even harsher about Aias, recounting how during the sack of Troy he seized Cassandra, who had sought refuge at the statue of Athena, with so much force that he tore the statue itself from the ground (Proklos Chrest. 93), dragging her away violently and taking her captive. According to some traditions, he even violated Cassandra in the temple; Odysseus at least accused him of this crime, and Aias was to be stoned to death, but saved himself by establishing his innocence by an oath (Paus. 10.26.1, 31.1).57

Although in the Iliad Aias himself, despite his linen cuirass, fights with the spear, as befits a leader and hero, his men, the body of Lokrian warriors, fight in only tunics, without shields and helmets, with bow and arrow or sling shots. Thus the Lokrians are subtly marginalized, in line with their general obscurity. And just as Aias only comes into his own when the Trojans turn their backs (II. 14.522), so his men, who ‘do not like close combat’ (II. 13.713), shoot their arrows at the Trojans ‘from behind’ (II. 13.721). Though seemingly cowardly, these tactics of the Lokrian skirmishers are effective in breaking up the enemy ranks (II. 13.718). These ‘guerrilla tactics’ of killing the enemy from behind thus appear to be a Lokrian speciality: effective, but hardly the stuff of great heroes.59

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53 In addition to stating that Idomeneus is not the youngest, his eyes not the best and in general there are better men than him, Aias calls Idomeneus a braggart in lines 474, 478 and 479.
54 The same version of the story appears in Proklos Chrest. 107.
55 Eur. Troad. 70; Virg. Aen. 2.403; Hygin. Fab. 116.
56 Tryphiod. 635; Q. Smyrn. 13.422; Lycothhr. 360, with the Scholia.
57 These later traditions accordingly state that Athena, offended by Aias’ crimes in her temple, killed Aias in the storm at sea: Hygin. Fab. 116; compare Virg. Aen. 1.40–42, 11.260. For a different account of his death, see Philostr. Her. 8.3; Scholia ad Lycothhr. i.e. See also Dowden (1996) 55. In penance for Aias’ crimes, the Lokrians sent two maidens annually to Troy to serve in the Temple of Athena for a year; initially the Lokrian ‘Hundred Houses’ – the Lokrian aristocratic families – took care of this, but in the third century BC it was decreed that the family of the Aianteioi in Naryx was to take on responsibility for sending the two maidens (IG IX2 1 706).
58 See Schwartz (2011). Note that both promachoi and possibly an archer are depicted on the krater from Kynos in Fig. 2: a very real tradition forms the basis for the depiction of the Lokrians in the Iliad.
59 That Aias’ speciality pays off is reported in II. 14.511–22, where of all the heroes killing Trojans, Aias kills the most (II. 14.520). The phrase ‘guerrilla tactics’ is taken from Janko (1992) 136.
Thus Aias, though made into a Homeric warrior for the \textit{Iliad}, shares important characteristics with his people, and is as such an encapsulation of the land and people of Lokris of which he is the traditional hero. He is to a great extent a construction of his geography, retaining many of the features one expects from an anti-heroic, guerrilla warrior from the mountains: like his light-clad Lokrian warriors, he ambushes rather than duels in a straight fight, with his slight build he is a fast runner, he is belligerent, and he lacks good judgment and social skills.\footnote{Many of these traits make Aias remarkably similar to Tydeus, Diomedes’ father. Tydeus is the only other hero in Homer said to ‘excel all Achaeans with the spear’ (\textit{Il.} 14.124–25) and even, without qualification, to be ‘above all’ (\textit{Il.} 4.375), and he is likewise from a peripheral mountainous region (Aitolia) as well as a \textit{promachos}, small of stature, belligerent, not worth much in council, and a \textit{contemptor deorum} who often operates by ambush (\textit{Il.} 4.372–400, 5.801–08; Aesch. \textit{Seven Against Thebes} 377–94; Ps. Apoll. 3.6.3, 3.6.5, 3.6.8). Tydeus is even a great recruiter of men: were it not for Zeus’ intervention, many men of Mycenae would have joined him against Thebes (\textit{Il.} 4.376–81). In short, Aias represents the same old-fashioned mountain-man values as Tydeus from the previous generation.}

As such, the \textit{Iliad} does not connect him to a specific town: his later hometown, Naryx, does not feature in the \textit{Iliad} and there is no mention of another town to which Aias belongs.\footnote{The prominence of the Lokrian ‘Hundred Houses’, representing the Lokrian aristocracy, at the expense of the importance of individual \textit{poleis}, is already clearly visible at the end of the eighth century, when the Hundred Houses, not an individual \textit{poleis}, established the Lokrian colony in Italy. The Lokrian colonizing venture thus shows that the \textit{ethnos} of the Lokrians, symbolized by and encapsulated in the Hundred Houses, was more important than any single \textit{polis} (Dominguez (2009) 1197). In line with this, Aias does not, at least traditionally, represent a certain \textit{polis}, but all the Lokrians.} It is likely that only later was Aias linked with the town of Naryx; even then, the town that gets the honour of being designated as the hero’s hometown is located not just in Epiknemidian Lokris, but in the Epiknemidian hinterland, away from the coast. Aias cannot shed his mountain roots. His strong connection to the mountains may be reflected in the emphasis on Epiknemidian Lokris in the Catalogue entry: that is where Aias, and the warriors he brings with him in 40 dark ships, are at home, and any mention of Aias conjures up the picture of the high hills of the Lokrian leader’s homeland.

\textbf{IV. Patroklos: the other Lokrian hero}

Possibly because of his unfortunate end and his controversial character, Pindar evidently did not think it fit to pay too much attention to Aias when celebrating an Opountian Lokrian in \textit{Ol.} 9. Instead, he decided to focus on another famous Lokrian: Patroklos.\footnote{62 Miller (1993) 117, with further references. Miller remarks that it is unusual that neither the victor’s father nor his clan are named in this ode (Miller (1993) 113). This, however, may make it more acceptable to produce Patroklos as paradigmatic for the Lokrian victor, since Patroklos’ father, Menoitios, was an immigrant to Opous and Patroklos’ clan was probably linked not with a Lokrian, but with a Myrmidon family (see below). Patroklos also appears as a heroic exemplar in \textit{Ol.} 10.16, composed for an Epizephyrian Lokrian.} But already in the \textit{Iliad}, Patroklos overshadows Aias on almost every count: he plays a far more prominent role in the plot of the \textit{Iliad}, is mentioned by name more often, is a rounder character\footnote{Although far from completely round: in fact it is the one-dimensionality of Patroklos’ character, coupled with his dependence on Achilles, which has suggested to neo-analysts (most notably Schelika (1943)) that he may be an Iliadic invention modelled on either Antilokhos or Achilles himself (see, for example, Combellack (1976); Burgess (1997); (2001) 71-3; Allan (2005) 11-15 for criticism of this theory).} and is linked to the greatest of all Greek heroes, Achilles, rather than to the second-best, Telamonian Aias. The only aspect in which Aias surpasses Patroklos, is that he is a commander, which Patroklos is not.\footnote{63 Although far from completely round: in fact it is the one-dimensionality of Patroklos’ character, coupled with his dependence on Achilles, which has suggested to neo-analysts (most notably Schelika (1943)) that he may be an Iliadic invention modelled on either Antilokhos or Achilles himself (see, for example, Combellack (1976); Burgess (1997); (2001) 71-3; Allan (2005) 11-15 for criticism of this theory).}

The modest Patroklos is a very different character from the bragging Aias: he is a more humane and more tragic hero, who, appalled by Achilles’ indifference to the suffering of the Greeks, in tears recounts the losses of the Achaeans in an attempt to be allowed to lead the other Myrmidons to battle (\textit{Il.} 16.1–45). The poet calls him νήπιος, ‘foolish’ or ‘infantile’ in this episode, since he is begging for his own death (\textit{Il.} 16.46), and Achilles had earlier compared...
him to a little girl (κούρη νηπίη) clinging to her mother (I. 16.7–8); despite his actual age, Patroklos is portrayed as a foolish child.65 For the story of the Iliad, his ‘foolishness’ is of course of paramount importance: with it, Patroklos sets in motion a chain of events that will lead to his own, Hektor’s and eventually Achilles’ deaths, as well as to the ultimate demise of the city of Troy. Through it all, Patroklos, as Achilles’ beloved friend, behaves like a human being with feelings and emotions, and thereby inspires feelings of empathy which Aias never manages to do.66

Part of the reason why a modern audience likes and identifies with Patroklos so easily is his civility.67 In this respect he is the exact opposite of Aias, who, as a mountain dweller, represents the uncivilized element in ancient Greek thought: it is unsurprising that the Cyclopes, uncivilized brutes par excellence who know not of law and order, live in caves on mountain peaks (Od. 9.113). Patroklos is in this respect similar to Hektor: both are propelled not by a desire for personal glory, honour, revenge or even just booty but by a feeling of responsibility, by a concern for family and comrades. Indeed, if Hektor, with his dedication to the wellbeing of his family and city, can be seen as ‘an example of the real-time infiltration of the new ethics of the polis’,68 the same holds true for Patroklos, whose concern for the plight of his comrades leads him in Book 16 of the Iliad, first, to plead with Achilles (who, as a representative of the typical Homeric warrior with values steeped deep in the honour-shame culture, mocks him mercilessly) and then to take action himself.69 Whereas Aias appears to represent a previous generation as well as the uncivilized wild hinterland, Patroklos represents the modern, civilized polis dweller: a man not without honour (witness his final words to Hektor), but who realizes that he is part of a larger community with all the social responsibilities that brings with it. Patroklos is not the egocentric warrior who fights for his prize and honour: he fights to save his fellow Greek warriors. Like Hektor, he dedicates his life to the service of others. Moreover, he has respect for the established social order and settled procedures.70 In other words, his moral code is that of a citizen, not of a typical Homeric warrior, let alone of a ‘guerrilla fighter’.

A comparison of the epithets used for Patroklos and Aias confirms the idea that Patroklos is not only a very different character, but also rounder and more sympathetic. The number of epithets used for Patroklos is large: no fewer than 14 different epithets are used in 21 different phrases, distributed over all grammatical cases. We find ‘hero’, ‘wretched’, ‘son of Menoitios’, ‘servant of Achilles’, ‘friend’, ‘knight’, ‘charioteer’, ‘godlike’, ‘god-born’, ‘loved by Zeus’, organized by poleis (Osborne (2004) 207, n.1: in the funeral games as well as in the Panathenaia there were prizes for all), and been seen as a ‘manifestation of the transcendent polis’ (Wickesham and Pozzi (1991) 5–6). But not only the funeral games, but also the character of Patroklos suits itself to a polis context. Due in part to the character similarities between Patroklos and Hektor, both have been suspected of being inventions of the poet of the Iliad (Hektor: Scott (1913), with criticism by Combellack (1944); Patroklos: see n.63).

The Patroklos of the Iliad would never, as portrayed in the 2004 blockbuster Troy, take on Achilles’ armour and lead the Myrmidons in battle without Achilles’ approval or even knowledge: he asks Achilles’ permission for doing so (I. 16.38–40), well aware, as always, that his status is that of Achilles’ subordinate (I. 18.152, 23.90). ‘Respect for social order and settled procedures is to live as a member of a polis’ according to Luce (1978) 15. Aias lacks this respect for social order when he verbally assaults the greater and universally respected hero Idomeneus (I. 23.473–81).

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65 Finlay (1980) 271 interprets this as an attempted reversal of ages and roles by Achilles. Recalling an episode from his childhood, Patroklos calls himself a ‘foolish child’ (νηπίος) in II. 23.88 because he killed another boy.

66 Within the Iliad: Briseis laments Patroklos when she sees him dead, calling him ‘dearest to my wretched breath’ (II. 19.282–90). Modern readers: see, for example, Parry (1973) 43; Janko (1992) 312: ‘as well as sympathizing with a man stripped defenseless by a god, we admire Patroklos for defying Hektor with his dying breath’; and especially Brann (2002) 88: ‘[Patroklos] is simply the most lovable man in the Iliad... For he is gentle and softhearted ... He is universally courteous’.

67 See Brann (2002) 88, quoted in the previous note.

68 Jaeger (1966) 121. Hektor’s ‘code of ethics’ becomes apparent in Iliad Book 6, especially in the encounters with his mother, Helen, Andromakhe and Astyanax.

69 Shame culture: Dodds (1951). The funeral games for Patroklos have been compared to later games organized by poleis (Osborne (2004) 207, n.1: in the funeral games as well as in the Panathenaia there were prizes for all), and been seen as a ‘manifestation of the transcendent polis’ (Wickesham and Pozzi (1991) 5–6). But not only the funeral games, but also the character of Patroklos suits itself to a polis context. Due in part to the character similarities between Patroklos and Hektor, both have been suspected of being inventions of the poet of the Iliad (Hektor: Scott (1913), with criticism by Combellack (1944); Patroklos: see n.63).

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‘equal to the gods in council’, ‘great-hearted’, ‘high-minded’ and ‘excellent’.\footnote{71} Some epithets directly appeal to our feelings for Patroklos, others are highly flattering. No fewer than eight of the 12 vocatives occur in a direct address by the poet, a rare use which is mostly reserved for Patroklos and Menelaos (on seven occasions). Its effect is to build up sympathetic characters.\footnote{72}

Despite the great variety of epithets and epithet phrases, the number of instances in which they are actually used is small: Patroklos is mentioned by name altogether 168 times in the \textit{Iliad}, but in only 40 of these instances is an epithet used.\footnote{73} In stark contrast to this stands Aias, who is mentioned by name only 20 times in the \textit{Iliad}, but has epithets in 14 of those cases: ‘swift’, either on its own or, mostly, in combination with ‘son of Oileus’, which can also occur self-standing,\footnote{74} ‘best in strife, bad in council’\footnote{75} and ‘radiant’\footnote{76}. Thus only four different epithets are used in no more than six different phrases, overwhelmingly in the nominative. In all except for two cases they refer to Aias’ speed or ancestry. One exception, the generic epithet ‘radiant’, appears ironically at the moment of Aias’ greatest public humiliation, suggesting that it is to be taken sarcastically here;\footnote{77} the other exception, in an abusive vocative phrase, contrasts with Patroklos’ characterization as ‘equal to the gods in council’ in \textit{Il}. 17.477. Whereas Patroklos’ epithets work hard to portray the hero as a humane and compassionate character, Aias’ epithets are markedly less positive and varied.

The greater flexibility of epithet phrases for Patroklos is linked to the perception of Patroklos as a fuller and more positive character: the wide range of epithets reflects the personality the poet wished to portray.\footnote{78} Aias is more a stock character, and his limited epithets reinforce this. Thus Aias seems to be more fixed in character and more consolidated than Patroklos, who is developed as a more substantive, rounder and sympathetic figure appropriate to the crucial role he plays in driving Achilles to redirect his \textit{menis} towards revenge. Given Patroklos’ importance for the development of the plot of the \textit{Iliad}, it is likely that his fleshed-out character is largely a creation of the poet of the \textit{Iliad}: although a traditional hero, identifiable by the audience by his patronymic alone (his first appearance in the \textit{Iliad} is as ‘son of Menoitios’ (\textit{Il}. 1.307)),\footnote{79} Patroklos is a


\footnote{74} Much as ἄριστος Αἰγίσθοιο is certainly sarcastic in \textit{Od}. 1.29.

\footnote{75} This number would be higher if we were to include ‘dead’ among Patroklos’ epithets (\textit{Il}. 17.184, 17.229, 17.341, 18.195, 21.28, 23.192, 24.575). Since this adjective cannot, however, be used in all cases where Patroklos is mentioned, it cannot be considered a real epithet and is therefore not included in this analysis.


\footnote{77} Much as ἄμύμονος Αἰγίσθοιο is certainly sarcastic in \textit{Od}. 1.29.

\footnote{78} The same reason is given for the many different epithets Odysseus receives in the \textit{Odyssey}: Shear (2000) 125. In this respect, νήπιος (\textit{Il}. 23.88), though not an \textit{epitheton ornans}, serves the same role: to flesh out Patroklos’ character.

\footnote{79} The old epithets ‘knight’ and ‘charioteer’ also suggest that Patroklos was a traditional hero. Parry (1973) 44, n.1 adds Patroklos’ conventional epithets such as ‘god-born’ and ‘great-hearted’. See also Burgess (1997) 10–16; (2001) 71–75. Burgess (2001) 73 draws specific attention to Patroklos’ appearance in the \textit{Cypria}; in Pindar \textit{Ol}. 9.70–79, where Patroklos accompanies Achilles on the Teuthronian expedition; and on the Sosian cup, where he bandages a wounded Achilles (a non-Iliadic scene).
predominantly literary figure with no historical importance outside of epic poetry. He was never, it seems, a major mythological character. Although he was thus not entirely invented by the poet of the *Iliad*, his character was greatly remodelled and his role amplified.

Both Lokrian heroes are strongly connected to the two greatest warriors of the Greeks: Aias is almost physically bound to the greater Telamonian Aias and dependent on him in battle, whereas Patroklos is subordinate to Achilles as well as connected to him emotionally. This gives rise to another question: what exactly are Patroklos’ ties with Lokris? He is reported to be a native of the major Lokrian town of Opopoi in *Il.* 18.324–27 and 23.85. After he killed a boy in anger (*Il.* 23.86–88), he sought refuge with Peleus, king of Phthia, and lived there until he was called to Troy: hence his close connection to Achilles. However, in *Il.* 11.765–90 we are told that Patroklos’ father Menoitios was in Phthia when his son left for Troy, not in Opopoi, and in *Il.* 18.10, Achilles calls Patroklos a Myrmidon. The *Iliad* itself is thus somewhat inconsistent in its portrayal of Patroklos’ origins, which may point to a deeper mythological inconsistency. Since it is likely that Homer substantially enhanced the character and role of Patroklos in the *Iliad*, it is possible that some of the details regarding Patroklos are *ad hoc* inventions by the poet.

Traditionally, Patroklos was linked with Achille’s family: Hesiod states that Menoitios was Peleus’ brother (*Cat.* 212a). This is, however, suppressed in the *Iliad*, and instead the audience is treated to the story of exile-following-a-murder: a topos often used and invented by the poet to transport heroes conveniently to untraditional places. Thus the poet may have invented the murder-and-exile story and with it the details in *Il.* 23.85–88. However, why did the poet need to go down this route, if Patroklos was traditionally already strongly linked to Achilles? Since in this case the place to which Patroklos is transported due to the invented murder is traditional, then the place *from which* he is transported may not have been: it is possible that Homer invented not only the details of the exile, but also the birthplace of Patroklos: Opopoi.

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80 See n.63.
82 In *Il.* 9.201–21 Patroklos silently and obediently fulfils Achilles’ every request; in *Il.* 16.1–47 Patroklos, despite the rather harsh words he speaks to Achilles, begs Achilles for permission to join the battle and is compared to a little girl begging her mother to be picked up; and in *Il.* 18.151–52 and 23.90 Patroklos is explicitly called Achilles’ servant.
84 The third brother is Telamon, and all three are sons of Aiakos. Peleus and Telamon were, according to Apollodorus (3.12.6; see also the reference in Pindar *Nemean* 5.14–16) exiled from Aigina after murdering their half-brother Phokos; Peleus ended up as king of Phthia, Telamon as king of Salamis. For the complex genealogies of both Peleus and Menoitios, see Nagy (2011) 52–53. For Patroklos as a Myrmidon, see also Janko’s analysis of the catalogue of Achilles’ subordinate commanders in *Il.* 16.169–97 as a remodelling of a standard Myrmidon muster-list headed by Achilles himself and Patroklos (Janko (1992) 339–40). Allan, on the other hand, suggests that Hesiod’s *Catalogue* may make Menoitios a brother of Peleus in order to explain his presence at Peleus’ court in *Il.* 11.765–89 (Allan (2005) 11).
85 Janko (1992) 134. Peleus was a popular host for such exiles: Schlunk (1976).
86 Another possibility is that we are dealing here with an alternative, now lost, tradition which placed Patroklos at Opopoi. Later authors give us more details: Pindar (*Ol.* 9.66–70) explains that Menoitios was a settler, though of high standing, in Opopoi. Apollonius Rhodius suggests that Menoitios’ father Aktor already resided at Opopoi (Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica* 1.69–70: Aktor sent his son Menoitios from Opopoi to accompany the chiefs). A high standing for Menoitios at Opopoi is likewise suggested by Diodorus: otherwise Menoitios could not have commanded that Herakles should receive the honours of a hero in Opopoi (Diod. Sic. 4.39.1). These later authors thus confirm the association between Patroklos and Opopoi; since they all, however, postdate the *Iliad*, it is impossible to determine whether they represent pre-Homeric traditions or are themselves based on the *Iliad*. It seems to me important that the oldest tradition preserved outside the *Iliad*, Hesiod’s *Catalogue*, links Menoitios to Peleus (even if Peleus is himself in that tradition an immigrant to Phthia).
Opous is mentioned as Patroklos’ birthplace twice in the Iliad, and both times in a speech, the typical context for mythological innovation.87 A mythological innovation in these contexts is often marked by five characteristics: a character tries to influence another character’s actions via a paradeigma; the desired action forms a ring-composition around the mythological invention; the mythological story is embellished, changed or reinvented in order to create a parallel between the mythological story and the immediate situation; the invention is sometimes accompanied by a phrase which is irrational in the context; and standard motifs are used in the innovation.88 The second time that Opous features as Patroklos’ birthplace (II. 23.82–92) is in a passage which contains several of these characteristics. The ghost of Patroklos appears in a dream to Achilles and speaks as follows:

And I will speak and tell you another thing, if you will listen: let my bones not be placed apart from yours, Achilles, but together, as we were reared in your house, when Menoitios brought me, a little child, from Opous to your house, because of sad murder, on the day when I, foolish child, killed the son of Amphidamas, not intentionally, in anger over the dice. Then knight Peleus received me into his house and reared me kindly and named me your servant: even so let our bones be enfolded in a common urn, golden with two handles, which your revered mother gave you (II. 23.82–92).

Patroklos’ request of Achilles frames a mythological tale89 which, first of all, contains the standard motif of murder followed by exile and, second, does not appear elsewhere before the fifth century (when it could well be based on the Iliad). It is clear that the text would stand on its own equally well without lines 85–90, which are an expansion on the simple statement that Achilles and Patroklos grew up together and may function as the invented mythological background to the story. In this case the parallelism between mythological tale and contemporary reality is the shared childhood of Achilles and Patroklos in Phthia, not the Opountian background of Patroklos. Nevertheless, the shared time together in Phthia acquires a greater significance when we realize that Patroklos was an ‘immigrant’ to Phthia, rather than living there all his life. Likewise, the detail that Peleus named Patroklos Achilles’ servant, which at first may seem out of place here, in fact makes Patroklos’ speech stronger: Patroklos was not born into servitude to king Peleus, but only acquired that status after making a foolish mistake in his childhood. With this, the speech also conforms to the do ut des principle: Patroklos here tries to convince Achilles to do something for him, as Patroklos had since childhood done things for Achilles. This ‘demand for compensation’ is another characteristic which features prominently in invented mythological tales.90 In addition, we learn here that Patroklos joined Peleus in Phthia after (inadvertently) killing a playmate, and Patroklos speaks here to an Achilles who feels that he has (inadvertently) killed his best friend and who now expresses the wish that they may be joined together in death as they were in life. It appears a distinct possibility that the Opountian background of Patroklos is an ad hoc invention.91

87 Willcock (1964) 147; (1977) 43.
88 Willcock (1964) 147.
89 The ring-composition goes several levels deep: lines 82–83 are taken up again in lines 91–92 (the request); line 84 corresponds to line 90 (we grew up together); 85 corresponds to 89 (Patreklos is handed over by Mepohtios to Peleus); and lines 86–88 give the details of the murder story.
90 Braswell (1971).
91 The question arises of course as to why the poet chooses, of all possible places, Opous. Although this question cannot be answered with any certainty, it is likely that location (Lokris is adjacent to Phthia), Opous’ prominence from the Early Iron Age onwards and the fact that Opous lacked an associated hero all play a role.
Additional support for this hypothesis can perhaps be found in the traditional genealogy of the Lokrians, which lists Iapetos, Prometheus, Deukalion, Amphyktion, Physkos, Lokros, Opous, Kynos, Hodoidokos, Oileus and Aias. According to Pindar, Menoitios had originally come to Opous as a settler; according to our account in the *Iliad*, Patroklos left Opous for good when he was a mere boy – Patroklos’ ties with Opous are very fragile indeed! Although in the fifth century Patroklos was embraced by Pindar as exemplary for the Lokrians, fourth-century BC coinage struck by Opous featuring Aias in fighting attitude suggests that Aias was far more firmly embedded in Lokrian genealogy and mythology than the otherwise more famous and ‘positive’ hero Patroklos: the Lokrians themselves, even the Opountians, chose Aias to represent them on their coins.

In conclusion, Patroklos as we know him from the *Iliad* seems an Iliadic invention, his traditional role greatly remodelled. Part of this process of remodelling may have been an invention of his birthplace, Opous. The civic and civilized Patroklos embodies the values of the citizen of the *polis*, and is appropriately linked to Opous, which was emerging as a prominent town in the Early Iron Age; the time when the *Iliad* essentially may have reached its current form. This new, Homeric tradition which associated Patroklos with Opous never became very strong, however: once Opous had risen in prominence to be the capital and leading city of all East Lokrians, it took it upon itself to represent all Lokrians and as such appropriated the emblematic representative of the Lokrian *ethnos*, Oilean Aias, who, despite his Epiknemidian roots, now featured on Opountian coins.

V. Conclusions
The Lokrian entry of the Catalogue represents the first time that Oilean Aias appears on his own in the *Iliad*, and his problematic character is summed up in a few lines: he is fast, but that is no reason for praise; he is inevitably linked with Telamonian Aias, and compared unfavourably (he is small and wears a linen cuirass) as well as favourably with him (he surpasses all the Greeks with the spear and receives many more lines in the Catalogue than the greater Aias); he rules over a very small and insignificant area, but over many towns. Since this is the first time in the Catalogue of Ships that a well-known hero is mentioned, the poet praises Aias excessively; since this sort of praise is in the Catalogue reserved for leaders of many men, the poet has given Aias a relatively large number of towns over which to rule. Given Lokris’ small size, however, many of these towns are necessarily insignificant and even unknown. Nevertheless, it is likely that a real historic prominence of Lokris, possibly during the transition from Bronze to Iron Age, informs the Catalogue’s picture of a region larger than it actually was.

92 Oldfather (1908) 425. There is a problem with this genealogy, as Oldfather notes: Pindar emphasizes in *Ol*. 9.69–75 that Patroklos is Menoitios’ son; Menoitios himself had been honoured by Opous. This would place Patroklos three generations before Aias. Oldfather supposes that Pindar uses an abbreviated genealogy in which Oileus is son of Opous, leaving out Kynos and Hodoidokos (Oldfather (1908) 441). D-Scholia on Hom. *II*. 2.531 makes Opous and Kynos both sons of Lokros, and Oileus and Kalliaraos sons of Opous. Note that 11 generations are represented in this genealogy, close to the maximum in any genealogy of 14 generations (Fowler (1998) 3). In any genealogy, the ‘revered founders’ (Fowler (1998) 3) tend to be remembered, and the most recent generations are present to living memory (in our case, Aias is prominent in mythology and his patronymic fixed). Since more than 14 generations are generally not remembered, the generations in the middle continuously drop out – in the Lokrian case, they are represented by place names and minor mythological characters – and these are the generations which are garbled in the accounts.

93 See Nielsen (2000) 100–01 for these coins, struck by Opous now in its own name, now in the name of the (Opountian or Hypoknemidian) Lokrians. These coins are also evidence for the prominence of Opous among the Lokrian towns, as well as for the propaganda employed by the *polis* of Opous, taking it upon itself to represent all Lokrians, and assimilating Epiknemidian Aias.
References to Aias’ home town are avoided in the *Iliad*: Aias encapsulates the rough Lokrian landscape, not the civic niceties of the *polis*. Later traditions associate Aias specifically with Naryx and thus with Epiknemidian Lokris, but already in the *Iliad* the ‘guerrilla tactics’ followed by Aias and his Lokrians seem well suited to the mountainous terrain of Epiknemidian Lokris. Since this is the area associated with the Lokrian leader, at least half of the towns which supply troops in the Catalogue of Ships are associated with Epiknemidian Lokris.

However, historically the other part of Lokris, Opountian Lokris, was always more important, and so is the other Lokrian hero, Patroklos. Both heroes’ roles have been expanded by the poet of the *Iliad*, but whereas Aias represents the ancient and uncivilized mountainous hinterland, Patroklos is representative for the contemporary citizen of the *polis*. As such, he is linked by the poet of the *Iliad* to Opous, a detail which may have been invented by the poet at a time when Opous was becoming the most prominent town of Lokris.

Thus the dual nature of the land of the Lokrians, consisting, on the one hand, of the coastal plains and foothills of the more urban Opountian Lokris and, on the other, of the higher hills and mountains of Epiknemidian Lokris, is paralleled in the *Iliad* by featuring two Lokrian heroes: the ‘guerrilla fighter’ Aias from Epiknemidian Lokris and the more developed, civilized Patroklos from Opous. The oddities noted in the presentation of Lokris and its heroes can only be understood by considering the heroes and the land together.

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