

## THE THREE VIRGIN GODDESSES IN THE HOMERIC HYMN TO APHRODITE

A significant portion of the scholarship on the larger Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* addresses the relevance of Aphrodite's stories of Ganymede and Tithonus to the rest of the poem.<sup>1</sup> Though these two 'digressions' have been proven by Charles Segal<sup>2</sup> and Peter Smith<sup>3</sup> to be integral to the themes of the poem, the hymns to the virgin goddesses at the beginning of the poem, which have also often been considered superfluous 'digressions,' have been less thoroughly examined. Usually they are considered to be mere «exceptions that prove the rule» of Aphrodite's nearly universal influence<sup>4</sup> or to present through the virginal goddesses those cultured aspects of Greek civilization that counter the natural passions over which Aphrodite has jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup> Thus, rather than define Aphrodite and her *champ d'action*<sup>6</sup> through her affinities with other gods, as she is defined in Hesiod's *Theogony* 194-202 for example, the poem instead defines Aphrodite by demarcating the boundaries of her specific *mode d'action* through differentiating her from these goddesses. But the observation that the miniature hymns delimit Aphrodite's power does not exhaust the scope of these miniature hymns' influence on the remainder of the larger hymn or on its depiction of Aphrodite. For in serving as the bastions culture has constructed to defend against nature's sexual urges, the three miniature hymns establish images of virginity<sup>7</sup> and patterns of virginal action that the remainder of the poem recalls<sup>8</sup> throughout the *narratio*. Let us now turn to each of these three miniature hymns in turn to examine their relationship to Aphrodite's myth.

<sup>1</sup> For a brief discussion of the scholarship, see E. Pinto, *Il Maggiore Inno Omerico ad Afrodite*, Napoli 1968, 14ff.; and H. Podbielski, *La Structure de l'Hymne Homérique à Aphrodite à la Lumière de la Tradition Littéraire*, Wrocław 1971, 1-17.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. Segal, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite: A Structuralist Approach*, CW 67, 1974, 205-12.

<sup>3</sup> P. Smith, *Nursling of Immortality: a Study of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, Frankfurt 1981, 70ff.

<sup>4</sup> Podbielski, 22; H.N. Porter, *Repetition in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, AJP 70, 1949, 252.

<sup>5</sup> Podbielski, 23; F. Solmsen, *Zur Theologie des grossen Aphroditehymnus*, Hermes 88, 1960, 64.; A.S. Brown, *Aphrodite and the Pandora Complex*, CQ 47, 1997, 35.

<sup>6</sup> G. Dumézil, *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, essai sur la conception indo-européenne de la société et sur les origines de Rome*, Paris 1949, 1 first differentiated between a god's broad-ranging *champ d'action*, which encompasses his full range of honors, festivals and places and overlaps frequently with other gods' as they share festivals or honors, and a god's *mode d'action*, which denotes those aspects unique to a particular god. Marcel Detienne in *Expérimenter dans la Champ des Polythéismes*, Kernos 10, 1997, 52-72 calls for the examination of gods through the range of their influence and the relationship and overlap of that range with those of other gods.

<sup>7</sup> Podbielski, 23.

<sup>8</sup> This function of the miniature hymns corresponds to the trend noticed by Porter and Podbielski that the *invocatio* establishes the two major themes of the poem, the «ἔργα Ἀφροδίτης» and the tension between mortality and immortality (Porter, 257-59; Podbielski, 21).

## HYMN TO ATHENA

Athena is the first of the three goddesses over whom Aphrodite wields no power mentioned in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*. Her miniature hymn begins with a couplet that describes her rejection of Aphrodite (8-9), followed by four lines describing her role as patroness of warfare and armory (10-13), and finally another couplet that balances the first in length and attributes to her jurisdiction over the maidenly arts (14-15). The poet herein attributes two distinct τιμαί to Athena: the arts of warfare and of maidens (the precedents for which are too numerous to relate here). The repeated denotation of these τιμαί as ἔργα lexically ties together the first 15 lines of the larger hymn (through the end of the hymn to Athena) and smoothes the transition from the *invocatio* of the «ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης» (1 and 9) and «ἔργα... ἐϋστεφάνου Κυθερείης» (6) to Athena, who rejects Aphrodite's ἔργα (9), and instead posits two of her own as preferable: the ἔργον of Ares (10), to which «ἀγλαὰ ἔργ'» in line 11 corresponds, and the «ἀγλαὰ ἔργ'» she teaches maidens (14-15).<sup>9</sup> By replacing Aphrodite's ἔργα with Athena's, the poet establishes Athena as thematically antithetical to Aphrodite.<sup>10</sup> Athena's ἔργα become the markers that denote the boundaries of Aphrodite's *champ d'action* and, hence, the limits of her power.

But as Aphrodite's ἔργα inform a reading of the role of Athena's ἔργα within the poem, Athena's ἔργα also inform a reading of Aphrodite's. The verbs that describe Aphrodite's ἔργα in the *invocatio* usually denote violent actions, particularly involving military battles, when found elsewhere in the Homeric and Hesiodic corpora. The verb ὄρνυμι in the active voice with ἐπί and the dative, which describes Aphrodite arousing «γλυκὺν ἴμερον» against the gods in line 2, outside this poem almost always indicates that a god sends some hostile force against a mortal or inferior divinity,<sup>11</sup> and when found in the middle voice it always indicates that the subject

<sup>9</sup> The broad range of the term seems to be implied when it appears in *HH* 20.2 due to the generality of the context and the phrase's application to both Athena and Hephaistos. But the four other times it appears in archaic epic it describes exclusively the domestic arts appropriate to women, and explicitly weaving in one case (κ 223).

<sup>10</sup> This has been thoroughly examined by Porter, 253ff. and Podbielski, 18ff.. For Aphrodite, «deeds» must not only indicate the actual manipulations of others in order to induce them to have sex, but also sex itself. This, after all, is what does not please specifically Athena, who is elsewhere depicted as a beguiler of minds herself (Pandarus, Hektor, the suitors, etc.). Athena's rejection of Aphrodite's ἔργα leads her therefore to extend the semantic range of the word beyond its original boundaries in the poem (sex) to include war and the manufacturing of both military equipment and fabrics.

<sup>11</sup> It can be found sixteen other times in archaic epic with or without tmesis, with only three exceptions to the indicated usage. Two exceptions occur in the repeated formula «ὄς μοι ἐπῶρσε μένος λαιψηρά τε γούνα» (Υ 93, X 204), which takes as its antecedent a god who saves a hero from being slaughtered by Achilles (in Υ 93 the beneficiary is Aeneas). The desperation of both heroes' predicaments demands a verb that adequately, even if only

himself physically attacks the object. Aphrodite next «ἐδαμάσσατο» (3), literally overpowers, conquers, or subdues humans and animals<sup>12</sup>; this verb also describes Aphrodite's influence over the other gods when the poet introduces Artemis in lines 16-7: «οὐδέ ποτ' Ἀρτέμιδα ... δάμναται ἐν φιλότῃ<sup>13</sup> φιλομμειδῆς<sup>14</sup> Ἀφροδίτῃ.» By specifying that Artemis cannot be conquered, the text implies that all of the other gods (except Athena and Hestia) are literally «subdued» by Aphrodite's power, and both the narrator (33-37) and Aphrodite herself (251) later verify this implication by repeating the same formulation. Though the verb δαμάσσω traditionally describes Aphrodite's power, it demonstrably retains its violent metaphorical tone when used in an erotic context only in some few antecedent passages.<sup>15</sup> In the majority of instances, and particularly in Hesiod, it seems to have lost all trace of any association with violence.<sup>16</sup> In the *Hymn Aphrodite*, however, the consistency of the metaphor of violence and the reactions of the other gods to Aphrodite's power enables it to retain its full potency.

The transition from the hymns of the three goddess back to the main text continues Aphrodite's metaphorical violence by relating how nothing but the three virginal goddesses have managed to «flee,» «πεφυγμένον» (34), her, and Aphrodite's power is later wielded, both by herself and by Zeus, through the verbs ἐμβάλλειν (45, 53, 73, 143), (κατά-)αἰρέω (57, 91, 144), and the phrase «ἔκπαγλος ἕμερος» (57), all of which express the violence of her ἔργα.

The close and inherent relationship between violence and war forms a segue from the *invocatio* to Athena's miniature hymn by positing a resemblance between

metaphorically, denotes the urgency of the situation. In the third exception, Eurykleia tells Odysseus that she will go wake Penelope «τῇ τις θεός ὕπνον ἐπῶρσε» (χ 429). Sleep, though normally not a hostile force, assumes that character for Eurykleia in this passage, as she feels that Penelope's nap is extremely inopportune. The verb thus becomes focalized through her emotions. Additionally, the verb here creates a humorous oxymoronic word play, as ὄρνυμι can also denote the action of waking up from sleep.

<sup>12</sup> In Homer, the word most commonly refers to conquering an enemy in battle (See Γ 352, 429, 436; Δ 479; Ε 106, 138, 278, 559, 564, 653, 746; Ζ 74, 368; Η 72, etc.; α 100, 237, γ 90, 269, 410, δ 244, etc.).

<sup>13</sup> Instrumental Dative. See Smyth §§ 1503-1511.

<sup>14</sup> The words φιλότῃ and φιλομμειδῆς repeat the element φιλο- for phonetic, and possibly thematic, effect.

<sup>15</sup> It might retain its violent tone generally, but usually it is impossible to determine whether it does or not. Nonetheless, there are certain passages in which the violence of the language remains clear. While preparing to seduce Zeus in *Iliad* Ξ, Hera asks Aphrodite to give her «φιλότῃ καὶ ἕμερον, ᾧ τε σὺ πάντας / δαμνᾷ ἀθανάτους ἠδὲ θνητούς ἀνθρώπους» (Ξ 198-99). Zeus later testifies to its influence over him through the word «ἐδάμασσαν» (Ξ 316) and lies on the mountain top «ὑπνω καὶ φιλότῃ δαμείς» (Ξ 353). Also, at the end of *Iliad* 3 Aphrodite threatens Helen and frightens her into having sex with Paris (Γ 413-20), using violence to promote sex.

<sup>16</sup> The term ἀδμήτη/ἀδμής seems to have lost all sense of violence or oppression in Homer and Hesiod, coming to mean simply «virginal». In Hesiod δαμάζειν in the passive denotes the female role in sex, also almost without necessarily conveying any violent innuendoes. See *Th.* 327, 374, 453, 962, 1000, 1006; *Sc.* 48, 53; *Fr.* 23a.28, 23a.35, 25.18, 64.16, 141.2.

Aphrodite and Athena through the juxtaposition of Aphrodite's violence in the *invocatio* and Athena's military τιμαί at the beginning of her hymn. But the three lines dividing the two goddesses, culminating in the assertion that «οὐ γάρ οἱ εὐάδεν ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης» (9), indicate that the resemblance is metaphorical rather than actual. Despite the violence with which she wields her power, Aphrodite does not engage in truly military matters like Athena; rather than fight with Athena's «σατίνας τε καὶ ἄρματα ποικίλα χαλκῶ» (13), Aphrodite fights with «φιλότητι» (17) deceptions (lines 7, 33, 38), and «γλυκὺν ἕμερον» (2 and 142).<sup>17</sup> Because Aphrodite conquers her victims' minds with desire and deceptions, and so robs them of their sanity (254) and compels them to have sex rather than physically overpowers and kills them, her violence remains metaphorical and therefore distinct from Athena's.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, Aphrodite's and Athena's similarly violent deployment of their τιμαί indicates a parallelism in their modes of action even though their purposes differ, and this parallel illuminates a contiguity in their fields of action that a complete separation of the two goddesses would not allow us to perceive. This contiguity extends beyond the hymn and will be elaborated by later poets through the topos that «*militat omnis amans.*»<sup>19</sup>

Aphrodite also incorporates Athena's domestic τιμαί into her mortal disguise in her seduction of Anchises, but since she disguises herself as a mortal, she uses Athena's τιμαί on a mortal level, assimilating herself to Athena's mortal disciples rather than to Athena herself. Before Aphrodite leaves her temple, she «ἔσσαμένη δ' εὖ πάντα περὶ χροῖ εἴματα καλὰ χρυσῶ κοσμηθεῖσα» (64-65). The fine clothes recall the garments Athena teaches her disciples to weave, and the term χροός solidifies the echo by evoking the description of Athena's maidens as being «ἀπαλόχροα» (14).<sup>20</sup> The poet describes these clothes in more detail when Aphrodite presents herself to Anchises (81-88). Their brightness, suggested by the adjectives «σιγαλόεντα» (85), «φαεινότερον πυρὸς ἀύγη» (86), «φαεινὰς» (87), and by the fact that her peplos «ὥς σελήνη<sup>21</sup> ... ἐλάμπετο» (89-90) recalls

17 In Soph. *Ant.* 781-805 Eros and Aphrodite are unconquerable because they do not fight with physical weapons.

18 Homer constructs the same comparison between Athena and Aphrodite in *Iliad* E both graphically and in the words of Athena, Zeus, and Dione.

19 *Ov., am.* 1.9.1 and 2.

20 The clothes Hera wears in the *Dios Apate*, a scene which influenced much of this poem, were made by Athena (Ξ 178-79), who commonly assists in such beautification scenes. For the relationship between the *Dios Apate* and the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, see K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, Göttingen 1961, 514ff.; Podbielski, 57ff.; Porter, 268; and Brown, 33.

21 According to Farnell (*Cults of the Greek City States*, II, New Rochelle 1977, 456-60), Welcker and Preller believed that Artemis was originally a lunar goddess. Farnell disagrees, however, and dates her lunar associations only back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. At any rate, this poem makes no mention of any of Artemis' lunar aspects in her miniature hymns, and so therefore any possible allusion here to Artemis or, similarly, Athena in the «ἐλάϊω» with which Aphrodite anoints herself (61) is extremely uncertain and, at any rate, tangential to this paper.

Athena's «ἀγλαὰ ἔργα» (15) both through their radiance (recalling specifically ἀγλαά) and because they are examples of Athena's ἔργα. Wearing these, Aphrodite disguises herself as a «παρθένω» (82) with «στήθεσιν...ἀπαλοῖσιν» (90) and a «ἀπαλῆ δειρῆ» (88), causing herself to resemble Athena's «παρθενικὰς ἀπαλόχροας» (14). The introduction of Aphrodite in this passage as «Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη» (81) perhaps recalls the only other goddess so described in this poem, «κούρη τ' αἰγιόχοιο Διός, γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην» (8), and prepares the audience to recognize their association. Anchises completes the frame of this passage with another, more explicit comparison between the two goddesses in the beginning of the next passage when he guesses that the as yet unidentified figure could be Athena (94) in the center of his list of possible identities.<sup>22</sup> Even though his greeting may be patterned by conventions of cordiality, it nonetheless points to the resemblance between Aphrodite and Athena generated by Aphrodite's use of Athena's τιμαί in fashioning her disguise.

The poem alludes to Athena's domestic τιμαί one last time when Aphrodite tries to convince Anchises to accept her as his bride. Among the other presents she promises that her parents will send him as part of the «ἀγλαὰ...ἄποινα» (140) are «ἔσθητά θ' ὑφαντήν» (139). The inclusion of expensive fabrics and clothing in gifts and ransoms is not remarkable in archaic poetry,<sup>23</sup> but the particular phrase found in 139 occurs elsewhere in archaic epic only in ν 136 and π 231, both times in the same formula as the one in which it appears in the hymn,<sup>24</sup> and both times referring to the fabrics the Phaiakians include in the treasure they give to Odysseus. Outside of this phrase, the adjective ὑφαντής only appears in ν 218, again referring to these same fabrics. Approximately 150 lines after the first occurrence of the phrase in the *Odyssey*, Athena claims that the Phaiakians only gave Odysseus these gifts by her will and plan (ν 303-07), and the second time the line is used, her name appears two lines later as the goddess who helped Odysseus return home. If the repetition of the long formula (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> foot caesura to the end of the line) denotes either an allusion or association<sup>25</sup> between the passages, and note that the formula represented by these three lines exists nowhere else in extant archaic epic, then the presence of Athena would be felt quite strongly at this point in the hymn. Even without this connection, the extreme rarity of the diction, particularly of the adjective ὑφαντής, draws attention to its specific semantic value which, in conjunction with the inclusion of these items

<sup>22</sup> Athena is the fourth of the seven possibilities listed.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, the gifts Priam gives Achilles (Ω 228-31).

<sup>24</sup> «χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τε ἄλις ἔσθητά θ' ὑφαντήν» (ν 136 and π 231) vs. «οἱ δέ κέ τοι χρυσόν τε ἄλις ἔσθητά θ' ὑφαντήν» (HH 5.139).

<sup>25</sup> Many formulae acquire semantic values that are distinct from their literal meaning through the register of the Homeric *Kunstsprache*. We can get a feel for this by seeing not only in what immediate circumstances, but also in what extended circumstances a formula is used. On this issue see Martin, *Telemachos and the Last Hero Song*, *Colby Quarterly* 29, 1993, 222-40 and Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art*, University Park 1999.

amongst «ἀγλαὰ... ἄποινα»,<sup>26</sup> recalls Athena's domestic ἀγλαὰ ἔργα with its more specific reference to weaving and so reinforces the contiguity between the two goddesses that I have already shown.

These contiguities defy the strict delineation of one goddess' sphere of influence from the other's, and so the text undermines its own declared efforts to remove Athena's τιμαί from Aphrodite's field of action by having Aphrodite exert her seductive powers through using what the poem at the beginning demarcates as Athena's. The particular overlap in Aphrodite's and Athena's fields of action in weaving and clothing, like their overlap in violence, also has literary parallels. Agamemnon desires to keep Chryseis as his concubine in part because she excels in qualities and skills associated with Athena (though the goddess is not mentioned), being inferior to Clytaemnestra «οὔτ' ἄρ φρένας οὔτε τι ἔργα» (A15). Hesiod makes the connection clearer by having Athena prepare the virgin<sup>27</sup> Pandora so that Epimetheus will find her irresistible<sup>28</sup> in the *Works and Days* by teaching her «ἔργα...πολυδαίδαλον ἰσθὸν ὑφαίνειν» (Er.64) and in both the *Works and Days* and *Theogony* by dressing her in gleaming garments and jewelry (Er.72 and 76, Th. 573-78). In the *Theogony*, Athena alone is responsible for her adornment once

<sup>26</sup> The word ἄποινα is strange here, since it elsewhere refers to ransoms given to kidnapers or as presents in general rather than treasure given as a dowry. The normal Homeric words for dowry are ἔδνον, its variant ἔεδνον, and μείλια. In the formulae in which ἔδνον or its lengthened form appear, it is modified by ἀπερείσια (Π 178; ο 529; Hes.Fr.198.10), μυρία (Π 190, X 472; λ 282; Hes.Fr.26.37, 43a.21), πολλὰ μάλ' (α 277, β 196), μάλα πάντα (θ 318), simply πόλλα (Hes.Fr.199.9, 200.4) or by no adjective at all (λ 117, ν 378, ο 18; Hes.Fr.204.45). Conversely, the formula found here, «ἀγλαὰ δέχθαι ἄποινα» is found twice in the *Iliad* (A 23 and 377) and once without the infinitive separating the adjective from its noun (A 111). It is possible, therefore, that the word appears here with such an unusual meaning not necessarily for comic effect (as is usually thought) or because it is the appropriate word (E. Heitsch, *Aphroditehymnos, Aeneas, und Homer: sprachliche Untersuchungen zum Homerproblem*, Göttingen 1965, 29-30), but in order to use a preexisting formula that contains the word ἀγλαὰ in relation to woven goods to draw the audience's attention back to Athena's ἀγλαὰ ἔργα specifically. This would not explain its unusual use later in the hymn to describe the horses given in exchange for Ganymede (210), however, unless the repetition indicates a connection between the two passages. See also Podbielski, 89; and N. van der Ben, *Hymn to Aphrodite* 36-291: *Notes on the Pars Epica of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, Mnemosyne 39, 1986, 1-41.

<sup>27</sup> Her virginity is not only evident from her recent creation, but also because Hephaistos crafts her «παρθενικῆς καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον» (Op. 63) and «παρθένω αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον» (Th.572).

<sup>28</sup> Neither the *Theogony* nor the *Works and Days* passage explicitly state that Epimetheus receives her as his wife or lover. But considering that the passage purports to describe how Zeus punishes mankind for their possession of fire, and not the love-life of Epimetheus, this omission should not surprise us. The context, in which Hermes at Zeus' behest leads, «ἄγοντα» (Op. 85), a girl who has just been made exceedingly beautiful, resembles Aphrodite's story in her *Homeric Hymn*, and the special care taken to describe how the gods make Pandora beautiful so that Zeus can use her as a «δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν» (Th.589) suggests that Pandora is brought to be Epimetheus' wife. Later versions of the story support this impression. See also Apollodorus 1.7.2. and Hyginus 142.

Hephaistos has fashioned her.

That the associations of Athena with clothing and violence on the one hand, and of clothing and violence with seduction on the other are traditional in no way invalidates my argument. I myself suspect from the similarities in and even duplication of the diction (and often of unusual diction) between the *invocatio* and the *narratio* that the poet deliberately constructed these echoes in order to lead his audience to recognize the overlap in these goddesses' traditional spheres of influence. He then writes ironically when he distinguishes them as he does in the *invocatio*, providing the traditional distance between the goddesses only to collapse it later. But even though we can do no more than guess at the poet's intention, because the two goddesses' traditional spheres overlap, when the poet represents Aphrodite's power in action he cannot help but echo Athena's traditional *champ d'action* as presented in the *invocatio*. Regardless of whether or not the poet intended to display this overlap, the traditional nature of these *champs d'action* is absolutely necessary for this process because it provides a cultural reference for the goddesses according to which the overlap can be observed. The absence of cultural reference would render the entirety of the poem fatuous and the attempt to distinguish the goddesses, and hence their overlap, either impossible or meaningless.

## HYMN TO ARTEMIS

The expansion of Aphrodite's sphere of influence through the incorporation of those areas originally designated to limit her power continues with the miniature hymn to Artemis. Artemis' τιμαί in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* are more diverse than Athena's ἔργα, as are their manifestations later in the hymn. Priority both in position and length of description (one whole line (18) and the first epithet, χρυσηλάκατον (16)) is given to hunting. Like Artemis for whom «ἄδε τόξα καὶ οὖρεσι θῆρας ἐναίρειν» (18), Aphrodite «ἐδαμάσασατο...οἰωνούς τε διιπετέας καὶ θηρία πάντα» (3-4). The two lines' approximate synonymy evinces Aphrodite's use of the language suitable for Artemis' hunting.

The hunting metaphor becomes graphically realized as Aphrodite walks through the woods of Mt. Ida. She travels «δι' οὐρεος» (69), the same «οὖρεσι» (18) in which Artemis hunts, but rather than shooting animals with a bow, she «τοῖς ἐν στήθεσσι βάλ' ἕμερον»<sup>29</sup> (73), literally «shot desire into their chests.» Until the last word is sounded, the meaning of this line remains ambiguous, since the same words elsewhere can indicate either the shooting of an arrow<sup>30</sup> or the inspiration of a particular emotion.<sup>31</sup> As a result of this «shooting», Aphrodite causes the animals to mate «κατὰ σκιόεντας ἐναύλους» (74), reminiscent of the «ἄλσεά τε

29 A very similar phrase, in which the verb ἐμβάλλω is used with ἕμερος as the direct object and θυμός as the thing struck, is also found in lines 45, 53 and 143.

30 E 317, 346, etc.; v 62., etc.

31 E 513, P 451, etc.

σκίοεντα» (20) that delight Artemis.<sup>32</sup> The environment of the hunting scene is later recalled both in the description Aphrodite provides of the wilderness through which she claims Hermes carried her to marry Anchises (*Aphr.* 123-24) and in the skins of bears and lions, the two central animals in the list of those Aphrodite causes to mate (70-71), that Anchises obtained from his own hunting and with which he covers the bed on which they two make love (158-60). But as with her imitation of Athena, Aphrodite's hunting remains only metaphorical; the fiercest animals<sup>33</sup> fawn over her instead of attacking or fleeing because she brings them new life through sex rather than the death that both Artemis and Anchises bring through real hunting.

At least four of Artemis' other five τιμαί – lyres, dances, piercing cries, shadowy groves – are similarly drawn into the mythical narrative.<sup>34</sup> When Aphrodite reaches Anchises' house, she finds him «διαπρύσιον κιθαρίζων» (80), recalling simultaneously Artemis' «φόρμιγγες» (19)<sup>35</sup> and «διαπρύσιοί τ' ὀλολυγαί» (19).<sup>36</sup> The «χοροί» (19) of Artemis' miniature hymn find an explicit counterpart in Aphrodite's forged biography, in which she claims that Hermes snatched her «ἐκ χοροῦ Ἀρτέμιδος χρυσηλακάτου κελαδεινῆς» (118), repeating the same epithets that introduced Artemis' miniature hymn (16). The shadowy groves, as has already been said, serve as the setting for Aphrodite's «hunting» and in the journey of her false biography, but they also feature more specifically in the description of the nymphs who inhabit «ἄλσεα καλά» (97) and to whom Aeneas likens Aphrodite. Though a skeptical critic might discount one or even two of these echoes if there were no more, the regularity with which both of Athena's τιμαί and all but one (and perhaps even this last one<sup>37</sup>) of Artemis' τιμαί appear again in the *narratio*, often with precisely the same unformulaic diction as is used in the *invocatio*, suggests an almost undeniable pattern. At the very least, it would be difficult to reject a link

<sup>32</sup> The connection between these two passages has also been noticed by Smith, 37.

<sup>33</sup> The list of animals includes only frightening predators: lions, bears, leopards, and wolves. Callimachus in his *Hymn to Artemis* depicts her as hunting only deer, rabbits, and other harmless animals to the ridicule and chastisement of Herakles (153-57), who then presents himself for ridicule by including the oxen he enjoys eating among harmful animals.

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 34 for an hypothesis about the fifth, the city of just men.

<sup>35</sup> Within the archaic corpus the two instruments seem to be semantically equivalent, since the verb that describes Anchises' playing, «κιθαρίζων» can often be found elsewhere to denote playing the φόρμιγξ. The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, for example, uses the verb «ἐγκιθαρίζειν» (17, 423, 425, 433, 455, 475, 476, 510), to describe the playing of a single instrument called φόρμιγξ (64, 506), λύρα (423), and κίθαρις (499, 509, 515). In *The Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Apollo plays a φόρμιγξ (184) which is only four lines later called a κίθαρις (188).

<sup>36</sup> The word διαπρύσιον occurs only ten times in archaic epic (Θ 227, Λ 275, 586, Μ 439, Ν 149, Ρ 247, 748, and ΗΗ 4.336), but the first eight are in repetitions of a single formulaic line. Only in the two instances in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* does it describe an inarticulate noise. The uniformity of this very unusual use of this uncommon word in the same text could serve to connect the two passages in the audience's mind. For new uses of traditional epic words in this hymn, see Heitsch 21 ff.

<sup>37</sup> See footnote 35.



between the dances mentioned in Artemis' miniature hymn in 19 and the «χοροῦ Ἀρτημίδος» in which Aphrodite claims to have participated in 118, and the unquestionable security of this connection should lead us to accept the other echoes, which may be slightly more tenuous.

Just as Aphrodite comes to resemble Athena through her traditional use of violence and woven materials, as she parallels Artemis' hunting in the virginal goddess' wooded mountains she comes to resemble her as well. By the time she reaches Anchises' shelter at the end of this journey, her appropriation of the virginal guise is complete and her physical appearance now manifests this assimilation. She stands before Anchises «παρθένω ἄδμητη μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη» (82), resembling not only Athena, but also Artemis so closely that when Anchises tries to guess her identity, he first conjectures that she actually is Artemis<sup>38</sup> (93) and last suspects that she might be one of the nymphs who inhabit the mountain, springs, glades, or Artemis' «ἄλσεα καλά» (101). Though the nymphs of the mountain are not virgins (262-63), the nymphs of the «ἄλσεα καλά» inhabit Artemis' virginal «ἄλσεα... σκιόεντα» (20).

Yet in proving her humanity, Aphrodite again mutes her resemblance to the goddess she emulates by presenting herself not in imitation of Artemis, but as a mortal practitioner of her τιμαί, specifically of her dances.<sup>39</sup> just as she likened herself to Athena's mortal disciples rather than to Athena herself. Through describing this dance she implicitly explains her purpose in impersonating the virginal goddesses: rather than merely resemble the virginal Artemis or Athena for the sake of the resemblance *per se*, she wants to ensure that Anchises believes she is a virgin. In accordance with this desire, she not only explicitly links the dance with the virginal goddess and thereby recalls the dances mentioned in Artemis' miniature hymn, but, since the dance is performed by «νύμφαι καὶ παρθένοι» (119), uses her participation in it, her practice of Artemis' τιμαί as evidence of her own virginity.<sup>40</sup>

38 Vergil plays with the same relationship when he dresses Venus as a virgin huntress in *Aeneid* 1.314ff. There too, the mortal guesses that Venus might be Diana or one of the nymphs: «*an Phoebi soror? an Nympharum sanguinis una?*» (*Aen.* 1.329). Considering the similar guises the goddess assumes in the two passages, the similar reactions of the mortals, and the fact that the *Hymn to Aphrodite* describes Aeneas' conception, it does not seem absurd to hypothesize that Vergil might have had the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* in mind when he composed his scene.

39 Boedeker's (*Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic*, Leiden 1974) entire second chapter discusses the connection between Aphrodite and dances. See also footnote 49 below.

40 The only τιμή of Artemis not directly linked with either Aphrodite or Anchises is the «δικαίων τε πτόλις ἀνδρῶν» (20). The standard interpretation, for instance Evelyn-White's «the cities of upright men» (in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homeric*, Cambridge Mass. 1967, 407) is impossible. The word πτόλις only exists as a plural form in the accusative case and with a long final syllable, features that are precluded by the both by the syntax and meter of the line (See Hdt. 2.41.23, 2.102.16, 108.15, etc., though of course the prose conceals the quantity of the syllable). This word must be the nominative singular, and therefore, contrasted with the grammatically parallel but plural forms «τόξα... φόρμιγγες... χοροὶ... ὀλοσυγαῖ... ἄλσεα» (18-20), the emphatically differentiated singular πτόλις must refer to a singular city,

Both the Artemisian and Athenian traits that Aphrodite assumes conceal her own sexual nature and superimpose a virginal façade, and thereby either prepare or constitute the dissimulation, the ἀπατή, through which she seduces Anchises. Because Aphrodite's exhibition of virginity is seductive and opens the way to sexual intercourse, these same images cannot be excluded from her realm when they are used for seductive purposes, even when not used by her personally. Thus, Anchises' Artemisian features, his hunting and piercing music, similarly promote rather than counter his sexuality. His music plays with or serves as a prototype for the literary *topos* of the bucolic musician-lover evident in Paris, who is chided by Hektor for reveling in music and Aphrodite's gifts rather than fighting Menelaos (Γ 54-55), and in the Silenoi and Hermes, who traditionally are linked with music and later in the

despite its lack of a definite article. Artemis' role as a civic goddess primarily in Asia Minor (Farnell II:464-70) combined with her support of Troy in the *Iliad* encourages the hypothesis that the city alluded to in the hymn to Artemis might be Troy, the city in whose environs the narrative occurs and the only city mentioned elsewhere in the hymn. Only the qualification that this city is populated by «δικαίων...ἀνδρῶν» could preclude this hypothesis. Callimachus describes Artemis' desire for justice as an important attribute of the goddess, since she «εἰς ἀδικῶν ἔβαλες πόλιν» (*In Dianam* 122). But the Trojans in archaic epic are only accused of injustice by the biased Achaians; the narrator and the Trojans defuse these accusations. For example, Agamemnon specifically demands that Priam swear the oaths before the duel between Paris and Menelaos rather than any of his sons in *Iliad* 3 because they are «ὑπερφύαλοι καὶ ἄπιστοι» (106). But the same book proves the exclusive guilt of Paris, exculpating the other Trojans: when Paris tries to rescind his challenge Hektor chastises him «κατ' αἴσαν» (59) for having brought the war upon the innocent Trojans, the old men on the wall want to return Helen to the Greeks (159-160), and after the duel the poet describes the Trojans' hatred of Paris and their desire to hand him over to the Greeks (453-454). Hektor expresses the lawful disposition of the populace quite succinctly when he tells Paris that he would have been executed had the Trojans not feared killing their own prince («ἀλλὰ μάλα Τρῶες δευδῆμονες· ἦ τέ κεν ἤδη λάϊνον ἔσσο χιτῶνα κακῶν ἔνεχ' ὄσσα ἔοργας»). (Γ 56-57). The *Hymn to Aphrodite* provides no ethical assessment of Troy, but considering its subject matter we should not impose on the text a negative view of Troy merely because the prejudiced Achaians in the *Iliad* revile the Trojans. If the hypothesis is correct that the entire poem is an encomium of the Aeneadae (a very questionable hypothesis – see Wilamowitz, *Die Ilias und Homer*, Berlin 1920, 83ff.; Heitsch, 13ff.; Reinhardt, 507-23; Lutz Lenz, *Der homerische Aphroditehymnus und die Aristie des Aineias in der Ilias*, Bonn 1975; Kamerbeek, *Remarques sur l'Hymn à Aphrodite*, *Mnemosyne* 20, 1967, 394; Podbielski, 66 and 93ff.; Peter Smith, *Aineidai as Patrons of Iliad 20 and of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, HSCP 85, 1981, 17-58), then the intended audience most certainly would have held the morality of the Trojans, whom they claim as ancestors, in the highest regard. Much of the later tradition (for example Gorgias, Herodotus (who still believes that they offended the gods, however -- 2.120), and Euripides) exculpates the Trojans as well, or at least mitigates their fault in the matter. The «δικαίων τε πόλις ἀνδρῶν» might, therefore, be reflected, if not recalled specifically, in the presence of Troy at the end of the hymn (280). Even if «πόλις» represents the generic idea of a «city of just men» rather than a specific city, Troy at the end of the poem seems to serve as an example of such a city. If this hypothesis is correct, then Artemis' city, the last of her τιμαί, is also borrowed and used by Aphrodite for purposes related to her sexual endeavors, since she uses it as the location in which she commands Anchises to raise Aeneas, the symbol of the sexual encounter in that he is both the index of it (253-255) and through his name expresses the «αἰνὸν...ἄχος» his mother acquires from that union (198-199).

hymn enjoy sexual escapades with the Nymphs of the mountain (262). His hunting, particularly when juxtaposed with Aphrodite's hunting, points to the sexual tension inherent in his character<sup>41</sup> and thereby evokes in him the ambiguous nature of the hunter who combines both the threatened chastity of Hippolytus and the lasciviousness of Orion. Since the skins of the animals he has killed that cover the bed on which the two make love are specifically those whom Aphrodite «hunted» before, those who had been overcome by her power, they combine sexual intercourse, virginal hunting, and Aphrodite's seductive power into a single moment. The two lovers, like the animals who precede them on the bed, become the spoils of a hunt as well.<sup>42</sup> As with the τιμαί shared by Aphrodite and Athena, these images must be traditional to function.

## HYMN TO HESTIA

The poem presents Hestia as the last of the three virgin goddesses, and justifies her inclusion by differentiating her chastity from Aphrodite's lasciviousness through a mythical narrative in which she rejects two illustrious marriage proposals (from Apollo and Poseidon), in contrast to Aphrodite's avid pursuit and consummation of an ignoble sexual relationship. Her story thus provides an inverted model for Aphrodite's. In exchange for forsaking marriage, Zeus gives her the honor of sitting in «μέσῳ οἴκῳ» (30), revered in every temple and home. As the hearth, Hestia forms the stable and constant center of these edifices, remaining inside and thus secluded from interaction with the outside.<sup>43</sup> As such, her τιμαί are, in a sense, extremely limited and separated from the exogamy that Aphrodite necessarily entails – she is a goddess of fertility, one that ensures the continuation of a family bloodline, but one dissociated from the sexuality normally involved.<sup>44</sup>

As the spatial center, Hestia forms a natural couplet with Hermes, the spatial periphery, and the Greeks traditionally and frequently associated the two deities. The

<sup>41</sup> See Gregson Davis, *Death of Procris: Amor and the Hunt in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Roma 1983, 11ff. and *passim* for the hunter as a sexual figure.

<sup>42</sup> The underlining of the merely metaphorical nature of Aphrodite's hunting through the death of the animals foreshadows the downfall of both characters through their sexual intercourse. Aphrodite will suffer the disgrace of having slept with a mortal and bear a son whose name, Aeneas, refers specifically to her «αἰὼν...ἄχος» (198-99). Anchises will become «ἄμεινον» (288). Though the precise meaning of this word is unclear, it most likely relates to sexual impotence. For discussions of this see H. J. Rose, *Anchises and Aphrodite*, CQ 18, 1924, 11-16; and Boedeker, 78-80. For a contrary opinion see van der Ben, 19-21. The repetition of line 221, which describes the debilitating immortality Tithonus receives that prevents Eos from copulating with him, in the description of Anchises' potential immortality in line 240 perhaps compares the fates of the two and, in so doing, foreshadows sexual impotence for Anchises.

<sup>43</sup> In Plato's *Phaedrus* 247a while the other gods depart to spread their presence and influence, she remains behind inside the home.

<sup>44</sup> For this reading of Hestia, see J. P. Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks*, Boston 1983, 127-75, particularly pages 133-38.

29<sup>th</sup> Homeric Hymn celebrates Hestia and Hermes jointly, presenting her as the goddess without whom there is no banquet, since she is the first and the last libation and hence as the goddess who frames the banquet temporally (*HH* 29.4-5) as well as provides a framework for the banquet spatially. Hermes, on the other hand, the messenger and traveller, must be invited into the house from outside (*HH* 29.9). Together the two, the inside and the outside, encompass the total range of human experience, forming a harmonious whole, «φίλα φρεσὶν ἀλλήλοισιν εἰδότες» (*HH* 29.9-11), that both helps mortals (*HH* 29.10 and 12) and in its ubiquity, for this partnership is the very essence of ubiquity for earthbound mortals, knows their noble deeds (*HH* 29.11-12).<sup>45</sup>

Because the poem elsewhere relies upon the other goddesses' traditional associations, the reader will, I hope, indulge me by allowing me to adduce this particular traditional association, which is one of Hestia's only ones, even though it is not explicit in the poem. Because ancient hexameter poetry, and hymn in particular, was necessarily grounded in a religious context both in its performative and poetic environments, this adduction could hardly be seen as introducing anything foreign to the poem, i.e. from outside of its context. Though his partner Hestia does not appear after her miniature hymn, Hermes twice enters into the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, and, unlike the other gods who have cameos, in both instances his presence is dictated by his sexual nature. He first appears in the false account Aphrodite provides to explain her sudden appearance at Anchises' stead as the god who snatched her from the dance and brought her to Anchises in order that she be his bride. In selecting Aphrodite from this group of virgins, Hermes confuses or even conflates virginity and sex by selecting sex incarnate to be a virgin bride. His abduction of this virgin-who-is-not-a-virgin is accomplished through the verbs ἀρπάζω (121) and its compound ἀναρπάζω (117), which have an unambiguously sexual innuendo when they occur later in the poem to describe Zeus' rape of Ganymede (203 and 208) and Eos' rape of Tithonus (218). The verbs thus suggest that Hermes' abduction is figuratively a rape, and the close thematic and linguistic connections<sup>46</sup> between this passage and Π 181-86, in which Hermes sees Polymele participating in a dance to Artemis and later sneaks into her bedchamber to ravish her, intimate this context. In Hermes' second appearance in the hymn, Aphrodite names him alongside the Silenoi as the lover of the nymphs who will raise Aeneas (262), charging that entire wild, peripheral, and therefore «Hermetic» setting with sexuality.

<sup>45</sup> This pairing could also be seen in the frieze by Phidias on the base of the statue of Zeus at Olympia according to Pausanias 5.11.8, and on the Sosibios vase (cf. P. Raingeard, *Hermès psychagogue: essai sur les origines du culte d'Hermès*, Paris 1934, 500). There survive certain columns with two heads, one belonging to Hermes and the other to Hestia. On this relationship, also see A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, 3, New York 1965, 2 and 1057 ff.), and Vernant, 127-75.

<sup>46</sup> Except for the preposition at the beginning of the line and the case of χορός, line 121 of the hymn, which denotes that the dance is in honor of Artemis, is the same as Π 183.

Because of the traditional and intimate association between Hermes and Hestia and the contiguity of their fields of action through the contrast between the inside and the outside, the emphasis on Hermes' sexual exploits within the hymn casts an ironic suspicion on both the precise nature of Hermes' and Hestia's association and on the association that the hymn initially posits between Hestia's field of action and virginity. As with the other virginal goddesses' fields of action, Hestia's too becomes contiguous with sexuality. Though the poem provides no clear example of her areas of provenance in the plot of the hymn, the bifurcation of her *τιμαί* into specifically the temples of the gods (31) and the homes of mortals (30 and 32) is reflected in the only two fixed and static settings the poem provides:<sup>47</sup> Aphrodite's temple in Paphos and Anchises' *κλισίη*.<sup>48</sup> As these edifices become the settings in which Aphrodite most explicitly prepares and then executes her seduction of Anchises by beautifying herself in her temple and then entering the shack to make love with Anchises inside on the bed rather than outside (as gods usually do), the temple and the domicile become subsumed, much like hunting and clothing have been, into Aphrodite's sexual field of action.

#### SYNOPSIS

The poet has created these miniature hymns as a storehouse of images, of *τιμαί* that initially characterize these goddesses and their virginity through their divine fields of action, but which Aphrodite echoes in the manner in which she wields her power in general and in her seduction of Anchises in particular. Thus, for instance, the language through which the poet describes how Aphrodite inspires lust in the animals evokes Artemis' hunting, while the clothes she «borrows» from Athena make her more beautiful and thereby aid her seduction of Anchises. She uses these *τιμαί* both in her own person to provoke lust and embodied in Anchises to satisfy her own sexual desires on a bed covered with its own connection to these *τιμαί*, the animal skins that are the fruits of his hunting. Because the virgin goddesses appear in the poem solely because of their virginity, the *τιμαί* that express and therefore evoke their nature come to symbolize virginity as well. Therefore, as Aphrodite in the implementation of her own power and to further her sexual goals uses those *τιμαί* that originally

47 The wilderness of Mt. Ida through which she travels serves as a transition between these two fixed edifices, and therefore is not a center but a periphery, an outside rather than an inside, that must be traversed to move from one center to another.

48 There is a tenuous lexical connection between Hestia's and Aphrodite's temples through the word *νηός*, which only occurs in this poem in reference to these two groups of edifices (31 and 58). The absence of a word for «house» in the line referring to Hestia's position among mortals precludes any such lexical connection with Anchises' shack, but at the same time it does not preclude a thematic connection. The word *οἶκος* (30) seems to refer to her position in both temples and mortal homes, and therefore does not serve to denote mortal homes exclusively, but does delimit her involvement among mortals to their homes. The word *οἶκος* never appears in reference to Anchises' shack.

belonged exclusively to goddesses who reject her and sex, she in a sense appropriates them and modifies their original purpose by making them promote what the poem previously declared that they oppose.<sup>49</sup> Aphrodite's violence, clothing, hunting, dancing, Anchises in his hunting and piercing music, the bed strewn with the spoils of the hunt on which the two copulate, even (perhaps) the stable center of Aphrodite's temple and Anchises' shack, all have original associations with these three goddesses and, hence, with virginity, but by the end of the poem Aphrodite has subsumed them all into her sexual τιμᾶί.

In the invocation of the poem, the text establishes these goddesses and their τιμᾶί as boundaries to Aphrodite's power, and these boundaries are respected to the extent that Athena, Artemis, and Hestia are and remain virgins; but it happens that the very realms in which these goddesses' virginity delights become also the means by which Aphrodite's erotic seduction successfully operates. The demarcation of the τιμᾶί made in the invocation is to some extent put in question or transgressed by what I have shown to be a perhaps unexpected but nonetheless completely traditional contiguity between these goddesses' fields of action. Whether it is the nature of this Aphrodite, of sex in fact, to transgress her boundaries – this procedure seems characteristic of the poet of this hymn, as he similarly exalts Aphrodite's power by depicting her transgressing the bounds of the divine hierarchy when she induces even Zeus to commit adultery – or whether it is in the nature of the structure of polytheism to fail to maintain strict boundaries between divine fields of action is difficult to determine. Perhaps the two possibilities should not be distinguished too strictly.

Even though Aphrodite includes these supposedly excluded areas in her field of action, she does not actually alter them, their associations with the three virgin goddesses, or, through these goddesses, with virginity. She encroaches on these goddess' spheres of influence, but overlaps rather than appropriates their territory. These areas become shared by Aphrodite and their original proprietresses and thereby garner a duality of implication in which each τιμῆ implies both virginity and sexuality simultaneously. Aphrodite uses the titillating tension that ensues in each image from their ostensibly contradictory associations with virginity and sex, wherein the very presence of virginity suggests its destruction through sex, to charge these virginal images with sexual force and thereby makes virginity itself a part of her sexual domain via its seductive potential. In the clearest example, she makes herself resemble Athena and Artemis through borrowing their τιμᾶί, and in so doing disguises herself as a virgin in order to augment her seduction of Anchises by offering him the opportunity to deflower her. Accordingly, she does not conceal all aspects of her own sexual

<sup>49</sup> Penelope in the *Odyssey* associates herself with Athena through weaving and uses the same weaving to postpone her marriage. See I. Papadopoulou-Belmechi, *Le chant de Penelope: Poétique du tissage féminin dans l'Odyssée*, Paris 1994. Livy too uses this relationship when he characterizes Lucretia as a bastion of chastity and womanly virtue through her weaving (1.57-60).

identity when she changes her appearance; Anchises' second guess is that the mysterious girl before him is Aphrodite (93). The virginal goddesses' τιμαί do not conceal or displace Aphrodite's own sexual character when she borrows them, but mix with it to create a sexual-virginal figure whose seductive appeal is augmented by the tension created by combining these two supposedly antagonistic forces.<sup>50</sup>

The dance in which she claims to have partaken graphically depicts this relationship by simultaneously expressing and threatening virginity. It presents girls ripe for marriage, and hence «ἀλφεισίβοιαι» (119), to a crowd perhaps of potential suitors,<sup>51</sup> including Hermes who seizes the opportunity to abduct Aphrodite's alter-ego in order that she lose her virginity to Anchises. Through the very act of displaying the girls' virginity, the dance presents them as desirable mates, and thereby threatens the very virginity it both evinces and signifies. Anchises' virginal aspects function similarly. Through their association with the virginal Artemis, his hunting and piercing music lean towards reifying the comparison of his beauty to the gods' in the simile «δέμας ἀθανάτοισιν ἑοικώς» (55). It is his extraordinary appearance, augmented by his virginal aspects, that arouses Aphrodite's lust (53-56) and specifies Zeus' desire that she sleep with an undesignated «ἀνδρὶ καταθνητῷ» (46) to Anchises.

Aphrodite always exerts her power, and hence comes to be characterized, through the images and actions that exist in these overlapping areas of her *champ d'action* that she shares with Athena, Artemis, or Hestia. Thus the very attempt by the poet to delimit Aphrodite's power through setting these three goddesses and their τιμαί as the parameters of Aphrodite's field of action crumbles, whether intentionally or unintentionally, under the force of a polytheistic system that precludes the complete exclusion of a god from any aspect of human experience. Even such conventional oppositions as sex and virginity conjoin under a single goddesses' jurisdiction in an oxymoronic amalgam that becomes the device through which the goddess' seductions function, and thus is the core, rather than the perimeter, of her power.

The poetic distinction between the virginal goddesses' application of virginity and Aphrodite's should not be overlooked, however. For though there remains a single concept «virginity», we have seen that it has an inherent tension that derives from its positive and negative capacities, i.e. in its capacity to exist and in its tempting capacity

<sup>50</sup> Homer was certainly aware of this relationship between virginity and sex. The poet charges the relationship between Odysseus and Nausikaa with sexual tension through describing her virginity specifically in terms of its removal as she goes to the shore to wash clothes for her own imminent wedding (ζ 25-35) and finds Odysseus, who likens her, just as Anchises does Aphrodite, to Artemis (ζ 151). Earlier, when Helen enters the hall in which Menelaos and Telemachos are dining, this most sensual of mortals and the mortal corollary to Aphrodite has her sexuality augmented by being likened to «Ἀρτέμιδι χρυσηλακίτη» (δ 122). The Roman elegiac poets, particularly Ovid, used the same patterns of imagery, namely hunting and military matters, to discuss the relationship between virginity and sex in their poems.

<sup>51</sup> Boedeker, 43ff. posits this theory.

to exist no longer, to be removed or destroyed through the sexual act.<sup>52</sup> The difference between the virginal goddesses' and Aphrodite's virginity resides not in virginity itself, but rather in the willing evocation of virginity's inherent tension. At various times in the mythological tradition both Athena and Artemis have their virginity threatened, and Hestia has hers threatened within the confines of the hymn we are examining. But they consistently reject the negative capacity represented by these threats, ignoring the temptations to end their virginity's existence. Thus in this hymn they operate not as virginal and therefore opposed to sex, but instead as goddesses who have chosen to cultivate the chaste capacity of virginity. Aphrodite, conversely, is presented as the goddess who uses virginity's lascivious and seductive capacity to be removed. Seen in this light, as figures on a continuum of virginity's capacities and therefore potentially susceptible both to virginity's positive capacity and to the temptations of virginity's negative capacity, Aphrodite seems far more lascivious and the virginal goddesses seem far more chaste and distanced from the shame Aphrodite accrues than they would if the potential of virginity they do not exercise had never existed for them.

Ithaca

Daniel Turkeltaub

<sup>52</sup> I do not use these terms with a moral slant, though the author of the poem seems to think in this way, but rather in an absolute sense of existence as opposed to non-existence.