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Mélanges de littérature et linguistique offerts à Françoise Létoublon

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Demeter "Nods" to Aphrodite? 
Narrative Interactions between 
the "Homeric" Hymn to Aphrodite and 
the Hymn to Demeter

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The relationship between the Hymn to Aphrodite (Aphr) and the Hymn to Demeter (Dem) has attracted scholarly attention at least since the late 19th century.¹ An extensive list of verbal parallels has provided the basis for assessing the connection.² Discussions have concentrated overwhelmingly on the question of whether and how the shared linguistic items shed light on relative chronology, somewhat overshadowing the issue of the literary relation. Currently the view that the poet of Dem "knew" Aphr is accepted widely, albeit with varying degrees of certainty.³

This paper attempts to broach the topic from a narrative and thematic vantage point. As both poems are products of a tradition, the poetological building blocks of which include formulaic language and narrative, it seems

3. West (2012, p. 239) and Faulkner (2008, pp. 47–8) deem the connection certain, Richardson (1974, pp. 42–3 and 2010, p. 29) and Olson (2012, p. 24) probable. The only dissenting voice is that of Van Eck (1978, p. 24 ad l. 31) who holds that Dem is older because its language was bound to be more conservative.

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appropriate to pay attention also to narrative when the density of linguistic parallels signals a relation of some sort. The two hymns indeed share a fair amount of narrative elements: Zeus as instigator and secret controller of the action; female divinity appearing in disguise; abduction stories; epiphanies; misdirection as to the possibility of overcoming mortality; compensation for non-obtained immortality, and prohibition against disclosing a secret.

Admittedly the main motif-provider for Dem is not Aphr but the Eleusinian tradition, in the form of either oral narratives or poetry on the rape and recovery of Persephone. A compelling case has been made recently that Dem interacts intensively with the hexametric poem partly paraphrased and partly cited in papyrus BKT 44. The interaction encompasses narrative structures and motifs, as well as specific wording.

Against the background of this important development it may be worthwhile to revisit the thematic, narrative relation of Dem with Aphr, a poem that linguistic parallels point out as a possible influence. If nothing else, comparison of motifs may yield insights into the narrative poetics of Dem and explanations as to the background of some linguistic parallels.

Zeus' role

In Aphr Zeus hatches the plan that leads to Aphrodite's humiliation but undertakes no action beyond igniting her passion for Anchises at the outset of the plot (45, 53). He does not appear in the narrative in propriis verbis, but his presence in Aphrodite's mind is strongly implied when she recalls his role in the immortalisation of Ganymede and Tithonus and tacitly bypasses the option of seeking immortality for Anchises (202-46). Zeus holds the role of secret instigator also in Dem where his consent to the Rape of Persephone is foregrounded repeatedly (3, 9 and 30). He himself remains passive, turning a deaf ear to the abducted girl's cry for help (27-9). Later in the plot Zeus' role is somewhat more active since he must resolve the crisis sparked by Demeter's withdrawal (313ff.). Even then his words and actions are reported indirectly.

The similarities as regards Zeus' role in Aphr and Dem come into sharper relief when we consider that in the other major "Homeric" hymns Zeus either takes no part in the action (Hymn to Apollo) or that his role is to resolve, not to provoke crises (Hymn to Dionysus fr. D, Hymn to Hermes 322ff.). Zeus’

7. On Zeus' ugly role in Dem see Lenz (1975, pp. 61-9) and Parker (1991, pp. 6-7) who identify the closest parallels within the hymnic genre.
part in Persephone’s abduction may have been an element of epic versions of the Rape early, as it is mentioned in the *Theogony* (αὐτὰρ ὁ Δήμητρος πολυφόρβης ἐς λέχος ἠλθεν, ἢ τεκε Περσεφόνην λευκώλευν ἢν Αιδώνεις ἢρπας ἐς παρὰ μητρός. Ἐδωκε δὲ μητίητα Ζεὺς, 912–4). His instigating role in the divine dramas played out in Αφρ and Δημ may have originated in the theogonic fibre of the hymns, their interest in how the divine order came about. However, expressions Διὸς βουλησει, Διὸς ἐννεύσῃ, ἔδωκε δὲ [...] Ζεὺς vel sim. are compatible with either an active or a passive role for Zeus. In the poem paraphrased in BKT 44 Zeus comes to the aid of Hades actively (τὸν δὲ Δία βρονταίς καὶ στραταίς ἔπαξον ἐνελαίαι[5], 38–9). Thus, even if the narrative element of Zeus as instigator of the action has generic-theogonic origins, the remote-controller role of the supreme god may still represent a unique link between Αφρ and Δημ.

**Goddess in disguise**

In both hymns the protagonist deity enters the human sphere in disguise and meets the human(s) that she will develop an intimate relationship with. Aphrodite stands before Anchises as a maiden (στῇ δ' αὐτοῦ προπάροιβῃ Διὸς βουλήτης Ἀφροδίτης/ παρθένῳ ἀδμήτῃ μέγεθος καὶ σίδος ὁμοῖος, 81–2). In Δημ the daughters of king Celeus encounter Demeter in the likeness of an old woman by the Maidens’ Well (ἐκ τῆς ἔρημος νεκροῦ Κελευς/ Παρθένῳ οὕτοι τιμήθηκε/ καὶ τιμία τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ τῆς Παρθένου, 81–2). In both cases the disguise is organic to the plot: By concealing her immortal nature Aphrodite avoids scaring off her intended lover, while the youthful attraction of the virgin throws Anchises into irresistible temptation. In Δημ the newcomer’s age singles her out as a suitable nursemaid for the royal infant (103–4).

At first sight Δημ, 98–104, does not appear specifically interactive with Αφρ. As divine manifestations in human form are common in epic, the natural step is to view the scenes as independent instantiations of a typical theme. Demeter’s arrival in Eleusis in disguise is attested in versions of the Rape which may have been independent of, perhaps also prior to, Δημ. In the poem paraphrased in BKT 44 the Eleusinian queen and her daughters encounter Demeter (by a well?) in the form of a woman (age unspecified)

9. Zeus’ mediated presence in mediis rebus cannot be illuminated further out of lack of comparative material.
11. This is the approach of Sowa (1984, pp. 236–50).
mourning for her daughter. In a poem by Pamphus Demeter sat by the Anthion well in the guise of an old woman. The disguise motif may have originated in these versions (or their sources). Demeter's disguise is equally functional in plots in which the goddess ignored Persephone's fate and the abductor's identity so that much hinged on the relations of trust that she could build with potential informants, as well as in versions (like Dem) where the goddess headed to Eleusis in possession of this information.

However, two elements may indicate that more is at play in the passage than recycling of stock motifs: a) Demeter sits by a well, the Partheneion, that appears only here and never again in the Eleusinian traditions, poetic or other, and b) the introduction of the goddess-old woman is elaborated upon with an apposition (“who is barred from motherhood and from the gifts of Aphrodite who loves garlands”) that describes her in terms of differentiation from Aphrodite. May these elements be viewed as traces of poetic interaction? A well that peters out of history certainly raises questions that historians and archaeologists are struggling with. One cannot but wonder why it is introduced as “[the Maidens’ Well] where the inhabitants of the place fetched water” ([...] δειν υδρευοντο πολιται, 99), if it were an Eleusinian landmark familiar to the audience.

Borrowing and adaptation in early epic are usually unveiled by the fact that transferred elements sit less comfortably in the secondary context. Since the content of the apposition is integral to the plot, as it implies that the nursemaid is not likely to be distracted from duty by her own offspring or erotic escapades, the test is negative. This, however, should not preclude the possibility of interaction in contexts where the elements transferred have been adapted seamlessly. Some seamless adaptations involving “interaction by character import” have been pointed out in the Greek epic corpus.

Patroclus’ and Antilochus’ joint presence in Achilles’ entourage in the Underworld (Odyssey, XXIV, 15f.) may signal the modelling of the Iliadic Patroclus on Antilochus of *Memnon* and *Aethiopis.* The introduction of Aphrodite and Athena among the deities who adorn Pandora in *Works and
Days, 63–6 may acknowledge the model passage, *Aphr*, 14–5. Eurycleia’s glance at Penelope and her aborted attempt to reveal that the beggar whose feet she is washing is Odysseus (*Odyssey*, XIX, 476–9) may acknowledge that in another version of the homecoming it was Penelope who washed Odysseus’ feet and that in that version the recognition of husband and wife took place at this point and paved the way for the extermination of the suitors to which Penelope was an informed accomplice. Helios may be invoked by Hermes in *Hymn to Hermes*, 381, because of his role in the Odyssean model scene, the consumption of Helios’ cattle on Thrinacia. In the above examples the element(s) transferred are invariably well-adapted in the new context.

By the same token Aphrodite may be introduced in *Dem*, 101–2, both as a foil for the old woman and to underscore interaction with similar epic scenes, to wit passages featuring Aphrodite in disguise. Two such scenes from the extant epic corpus leap into mind: *Aphr*, 81–167, with Aphrodite disguised as a maiden (πάρθενος), and *Iliad*, III, 383–425, in which Aphrodite in the guise of an aged spinning-woman (γυνη [... ] ἐκεῖα παλαιογενεί [...] / ἐφοκόμω [...], III, 386), in Helen’s entourage leads her unwilling mistress back to Paris. If *Dem*, 98–102, acknowledges a scene featuring Aphrodite in disguise, it would be reasonable to assume this to be the Iliadic scene in which Aphrodite holds the part of an elderly domestic servant. Indeed, this episode may be echoed in the phrase δεώρων [...] Ἀφροδίτης, a variant of which is employed in *Iliad*, III, 54 and 64. However, with the exception of these elements, no significant thematic links are discernible between the Iliadic scene and *Dem* that would make the interaction hermeneutically meaningful.

There is, on the contrary, a thematic hard core which is common for *Aphr* and *Dem*. Literary readings of *Aphr* have called attention to an important thematic thread in it, the unbridgeable divide between immortals and mortals exemplified in the pair Aphrodite-Anchises and its paradigmatic counterparts, Zeus-Ganymede and Eos-Tithonus. Aphrodite’s affair with Anchises, fraught with the tension between divine permanence and human transience, will not lead to permanent union between the two and abolition of the divide. This outcome is somewhat mitigated through the conception
of Aeneas who will secure continuation for Anchises’ lineage (196–9 and 256–85), the surrogate form of immortality open to mortals. The special significance of progeny becomes evident early in the narrative. Anchises’ address to the unknown female creature of divine beauty concludes with a request for a lasting lineage ([...]) ποίεi δ’ ἔξοπτιοι θαλαρον γόνιον, 104); the maiden-Aphrodite stresses that Hermes has brought her to bear Anchises children ([...]) σοι δ’ ἀγάλακ τέκνα τεκείσθαι, 127). The topic runs through Aphrodite’s farewell speech that concludes with a description of how Aeneas will be raised by the mountain nymphs before he is returned to his father and to the realm of mortality where he will belong. Preoccupation with offspring as a means of overcoming death constitutes, I suggest, the crucial thematic link between Aphr and Dem in general, and Dem, 98–102 in particular. The passage marks the turning point when Demeter, having lost her daughter to the realm of death, stands poised to adopt and immortalise a mortal child. 22 In tune with the religious background of its myth and its dissemination Dem ultimately offers a different solution to the transience of human existence, initiation to the Eleusinian mysteries, which hold up hope for the afterlife. The eschatological dimensions of the Eleusinian cult and their prominence in Dem make Aphr, which has partly similar thematic concerns, a likely dialogue partner. The evocation of Aphrodite and the name of the well by which Demeter is met by the Eleusinians may acknowledge this dialogue and “nod” to the maiden-Aphrodite in Aphr.

In narrative terms the scenes show notable divergences within a frame of similarity: the goddesses move to their destinations indirectly: Aphrodite via Paphos (58–63), Demeter via a number of cities (92–4). They enter the human sphere at opposite ends of the life spectrum and in opposite postures: following an active display of power on the animal world Aphrodite stands before her intended lover (στὴ δ’ αὐτοῦ προπτάροιε [...], 81); Demeter has assumed a seated, passive posture (ἐξέπτο δ’ ἐγγύς ὁδὸν φίλων τετιμένη ἦτορ, 98). Perception also proceeds in opposite directions: Aphrodite spots a single mortal (τὸν δ’ ἑδρε [...], 76–7); Demeter is spotted by a group of mortals (τὴν δὲ ἵδον [...], 105).

The allusive significance of inversion attending the transfer and adaptation of narrative sequences in new epic contexts has been underscored in a series of studies: Bruno Currie has pointed out the inversions obtaining in Odysseus’ entry into Scheria (Odyssey, VI, 255–7, 154) compared with Priam’s journey to Achilles’ tent (Iliad, XXIV, 281–508) which he holds to be the model for the Odyssean scene. 23 The same scholar has identified the mechanism at work when the fashioning of Achilles’ armour

22. Clay (2006, p. 239) has observed crucially that Demophon’s adoption is represented symbolically by Demeter’s maternal gesture of holding the baby to her bosom.
Demeter "Nods" to Aphrodite?

by Hephaestus\textsuperscript{24} is transferred from *Memnonis/Aethiopis to the Iliad, as well as in the scenes involving Demeter, Hecate and Helios (Dem, 51–90) that invert details of the model scenes featuring Demeter, Baubo and Triptolemus in the poem paraphrased in BKT 44, 89–119.\textsuperscript{25} Inversion is detected also by Jonathan Burgess in his discussion of the relation between the fragment from the Little Iliad describing the death of Astyanax (Ilias Parva fr. 21, 3–5 Bernabé) and the family scene in Iliad, VI, 467–70.\textsuperscript{26} "Multiple correspondence", especially multiplication of the characters present in or affected by the action, has also been associated with recasting of narrative sequences in early epic.\textsuperscript{27} The narrative elements in Demeter's arrival to Eleusis may by dint of this technique reflect, deflect and multiply the details of Aphrodite's arrival to Ida. This does not amount to claiming that the scene in Dem had no models other than Aphr. Indeed the central element, Demeter’s disguise, may have been imported from poetry on or from the traditional version of the Rape. It simply amounts to proposing that the scene in Aphr was one of the passages that contributed to the narrative shaping of the scene in Dem.

Tales of abduction

The disguised goddesses each relate a tale of abduction in order to convince of their credentials. Aphrodite claims that she was abducted by Hermes in Phrygia while dancing in the company of young girls and was flown to Ida (117–30). Demeter relates that she was enslaved by pirates and brought from Crete to Thoricus where she managed to escape (123–34). There is again no compelling reason to assume that Demeter's abduction story draws specifically on Aphrodite's. It is likely that in some versions of the search for Persephone Demeter gave an account of the circumstances of her arrival to Eleusis, although this may not necessarily have involved abduction. Odysseus' lying tales (in particular Odyssey, XIV, 334–59) and Eumaeus' abduction by Phoenician pirates (Odyssey, XV, 403–84)\textsuperscript{28} would be much more suitable candidates as models. However, beyond the abduction element (and Crete) no obvious points of contact are discernible between Odysseus', Eumaeus' and Demeter's abduction, neither at the narrative nor at the verbal level. On the contrary, the speeches that contain Aphrodite's and Demeter's tales of abduction display remarkable similarities of content

\textsuperscript{24} Currie (2006, p. 29).
\textsuperscript{25} Currie (2012, pp. 193–4).
\textsuperscript{26} Burgess (2012, p. 173) views these as concomitant changes in motif transference.
\textsuperscript{27} Currie (2006, pp. 14–5).
\textsuperscript{28} On the motif “abduction by pirates” in early epic see Sowa (1984, pp. 133–4).

**Abducted offspring**

Apart from fictitious abductions the narratives relate real abductions of offspring: Ganymede (*Aphr*, 202–17) and Persephone (*Dem*). The approximation of these figures is signalled at the level of expression: Ganymede as the gods’ wine-pourer on Olympus is “a wonder to see, esteemed by all the immortals” (καὶ τε Δίως κατὰ δῶμα θεοῖς ἐπιοικοσεύου/ θαύμα ιδεῖν πάντεσσι τετιμένος ἀθανάτοις, 204–5). Demeter employs the same formulaic phrase when she reveals that, if Persephone has not tasted food in the Underworld, she may rejoin the Olympian family (καὶ παρ’ ἐμοί καὶ πατρί κελ[καί] Ῥούνισσα/ ναεσταίοις πάντεσσι τετιμ[ένη ἀθανάτοις], 396–7). This is no doubt formulaic language employed also elsewhere in epic. However, only in the two hymns does the phrase refer to victims of abduction who live (or return to live) on Olympus. Narrative similarities and differences are also notable: Ganymede’s abduction leads to ascent (to Olympus), Persephone’s to descent (to the Underworld). In her case a divine mother loses her immortal daughter; in his case a human father loses his mortal son. Both parent figures have a strong emotional reaction to the disappearance of their offspring (Τρώα δὲ πένθος ἀλαστον ἢξε φρένας, *Aphr*, 207–9 ~ ἰξὺ δὲ μν κραδὴν ἄχως ἔλαβεν, *Dem*, 40). They remain unaware of the child’s fate for a period (*Aphr*, 209–14 ~ *Dem*, 44–50), are informed of it by other divinities (Hermes, *Aphr*, 212–4 ~ Helios, *Dem*, 52ff.) but have the exact opposite reaction to the news (*Aphr*, 215–7 ~ *Dem*, 90ff.).

29. See also Faulkner (2008, pp. 185–6).
31. As observed by Faulkner (2008, p. 185), no speeches in extant epic show such close correspondence of formal structure. Odysseus’ speech to Nausica (*Odyssey*, VI, 149–85) has partly similar formal structure.
32. E.g. *Iliad*, XXIV, 533; *Theogony*, 415 and 449; *Hymn to Apollo*, 479 and 522.
33. On the spatial dynamics of the embedded narrative see Segal (1974, p. 208).
Misdirection concerning the status of immortals and mortals

In *Aphr* Anchises is described as godlike (55, 77) while the goddess insists that she is a mortal (109–10). Similarly, in *Dem* the goddess introduces herself as a mortal (122ff.) while Celeus’ daughters are launched onto the scene with the expression ἐῳς τε θεαὶ κουρηίων ἄνθος ἔχουσαι (108). Demophon, the goddess’ nursling, is later described as resembling the gods ([…] θεοῖς δὲ ἄντα ἐφέκει, 241). 34 Again, traditional epic idiom is drawn upon. However, only in these hymns do godlike-expressions occur in a context where references to godlike mortals and the putative mortal status of immortals precede the contact between the goddess and her mortal partner or protegé, and implicitly raise expectations that the divide between mortal and immortal existence may be transcended. Jasper Griffin has shown that godlike-phraseology in the Homeric epics prefigures complications for the character who it is applied to. Male heroes introduced as godlike are typically bound to death. 35 In these two hymns godlike-phraseology applied to mortals (and gods masking as mortals) prefigures an aborted attempt to transcend the boundary between mortality and immortality. This may represent a generic hymnic variant of the tragic dimension that godlike-phraseology imports into heroic epic.

While in *Aphr* only Anchises is endowed with godlike appearance, in *Dem* the corresponding phraseology qualifies not only, as expected, the goddess’ nursling whose immortalisation plan fails but also his sisters for who no such option is ever open. “Multiple correspondence” may be at work, unless the allusions to the godlike status of the first humans who meet the goddess at Eleusis prefigure the afterlife blessedness held out to all initiates to the Mysteries.

Divine epiphanies

The epiphany scenes occupy a prominent place in discussions of the relation between *Aphr* and *Dem*. The premature timing of Demeter’s epiphany 36

36. Heitsch (1965, p. 39): “Will man nicht sagen, daß die Worte der Situation geradezu widersprechen, so sind sie jedenfalls situationsfremd, ohne Funktion für den Fortschritt der Handlung.” Most critics echo Heitsch, see e.g. Lenz (1975, p. 56). Exceptions are Sowa (1984, p. 7) who accounts for the motif “in terms of the theme of divine Epiphany, where a ‘first set of divine tokens’ is exhibited by the god but not correctly interpreted by the mortals” and Clay (2006, pp. 232–3) who thinks that Demeter’s entrance is designed to inspire awe in Metaneira.

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(Aphr, 173–4 ~ Dem, 188–9) and the syntactic and pragmatic peculiarities raised by the expression μελάθρου/κύρε κάρη in Dem are taken to indicate its secondary status. The narrative may yield further perspectives. As pointed out by Lutz Lenz, in each hymn the protagonist divinity manifests herself twice, once upon her entrance into the main theatre of the action (pre-epiphany), and second when she reveals her divine identity (epiphany proper). In Aphr the goddess is presented in epiphanic terms as she appears before (and through) Anchises’ eyes (84–90) and again after their union (172–5). Demeter has a pre-epiphany as she enters Celeus’ palace (181–9) and a proper one the night when the queen surprises her in the act of immolating the royal infant (275–80). Regarding the placement of the epiphany scenes both poems conform to epic tradition: the revelation of a god’s identity takes place either upon arrival or during departure. But the combination of a pre-epiphany on arrival with a full-fledged epiphany upon departure is unique to these two among the major hymns.

The interaction is also noticeable in narrative details. The pre-epiphanies share a reference to the visual impression imparted by the goddess’ peplos (Aphr, 86 ~ Dem, 182–3), that is chromatically opposite: Aphrodite’s peplos is brighter than fire (φαεινότερον πυρός αὐγής); Demeter’s is dark (αμφι δὲ πέπλος/κυάνεος). Both scenes include a reference to divine radiance ([... ] ὡς δὲ σελήνη/στήθειν ἀμφὶ ἀπαλοίθην ἐλάμπετο [...], Aphr, 89–90 ~ [...] πλήσεν δὲ θύρας σέλας θείοι, Dem, 189), conveyed by etymologically related nouns (σελήνη, σέλας). The epiphanies proper incorporate a reference to the goddesses’ beauty (κάλλος δὲ παρειάσων ἀπέλαιμπεν/αμβροτον, Aphr, 174–5 ~ περὶ τ’ ἀμφὶ τε κάλλος ἅπτο, Dem, 276 and [...] τῆλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτου/λάμπε θείς, 278–80). The simple formulation in Aphr may have been developed through the mechanism of “multiple correspondence” into something more complex in Dem. On the other hand, the motif of the head touching the rafter (in Dem the lintel) appears in reverse order, in Aphrodite’s epiphany and in Demeter’s pre-epiphany. The length of the descriptions is inversely proportional: Demeter’s pre-epiphany is approximately as long as Aphrodite’s epiphany (two ~ three ll.), while her epiphany proper is rich in details on a par with Aphrodite’s pre-epiphany (seven ~ six ll.).

38. Lenz (1975, pp. 56–8).
41. It also occurs in Hymn to Dionysus (7) that may postdate Dem. See West (2003, pp. 16–7).
Unrealised immortality and compensation

Following her paradigmatic excursus Aphrodite rejects the option of translating Anchises to the realm of the immortals. He will instead acquire a son who will perpetuate the family-line (196–7, 255ff.). Demeter informs Metaneira that her intervention has thwarted Demophon’s chance of immortality. However, his having been nursed by a goddess will gain him a form of cultic commemoration that will be re-enacted annually (265–7). To describe Anchises’ impossible immortality Aphrodite employs a conditional that expresses potential which is bound not to be realised (άλλ' εί μέν [...]/ ζώοις [...] τε [...] κεκλημένοι εἰς/ οὐκ ἄν [...] ἀμφικαλύπτοι, 241–4). She then describes future realities for Anchises and herself in a string of clauses introduced by νῦν δὲ (244ff.). Also Demeter describes Demophon’s failed chance of immortality by means of a curtailed conditional (ἀθάνατον κεν τοι [...] [...] ποίσα [...]], 260–2) that conveys unrealised potential. The topic of Demophon’s future honour is then introduced, also by νῦν δ’ (262ff.). The grammatical structures are comparable but point to opposite temporal directions, future and past respectively. Constructions with conditionals followed by a νῦν δ(ε)-clause are not infrequent in epic (Aphr, 241–4 ~ Iliad, 71–3; Odyssey, XVIII, 254–6; Dem, 260–2 ~ Odyssey, XVIII, 401–4; XXIV, 30–4) as are announcements of future compensation, be it offspring or office (Odyssey, XI, 248ff.; pseudo-Hesiod, Eboiae, fr. 31 M-W; Hymn to Apollo, 482ff.). The crucial, and perhaps unique, link between the Aphr and Dem passages is thematic, to wit unrealised immortality.

Prohibition against disclosure

Both narratives end with a prohibition against divulging a secret—in Aphr the true identity of Aeneas’ mother (εἰρήνη τοι πάντα τ' οὗ δὲ [...] ι'χεσο, μηδ' ὄνομανε, θεον δ' ἐποπίτευμο μὴν, 290–1), in Dem the content of the mysteries [...] καὶ ἔπεφραζεν ὅργια καλὰ [...]/ σεμνὰ τά τ’ οὖ περὶ ἄστι παρέξ[μ]εν οὖ[τε πυθόνθαι]/ οὔτ’ ἀχέειν ἡ̄ ὅμερος τί θεον σέβαισα ἱεράνει αὐ̄̄ν, 479–81). Prohibitions issued in the wake of contacts, sexual or other, between gods and mortals are not uncommon in epic. An example that is verbally and thematically close to Aphr, 290–1 is Poseidon’s prohibition to Tyro in Odyssey, XI, 251 (νῦν δ' ἔρχεσεν πρὸς δῴμα καὶ ἵχεο μηδ' ὄνομυς) following their union and his announcement that she will bear his child. In Hymn to Apollo, 540–4 the god issues a warning to his priests that concludes: εἰρηταὶ σοι πάντα, οὗ δὲ φρεσί σήσι φύλαξαι. However,

42. Maravela (2014).
43. On the differences of this scene with Aphr, see Schein (2012, pp. 301–2).
the narrative context in *Aphr* and *Dem* may indicate that the prohibitions in question are not mere instantiations of a stock motif: in both poems they follow the reunion of a parent with a temporarily lost child (Anchises-Aeneas, *Aphr*, 277–90 ~ Demeter-Persephone, *Dem*, 377–469) and precede ascent to Olympus (*Aphr*, 291 ~ *Dem*, 474), while they are sanctioned by evoking the wrath of and deference to the gods respectively (θεόν μηνι ~ θεόν σέβομαι).

**Liminal spaces, liminal creatures**

Aeneas and Persephone inhabit transitional spaces populated by betwixt-and-between creatures, the mountain-nymphs and the Oceanids respectively (*Aphr*, 256–73 ~ *Dem*, 4–16 and 414–30). The Oceanids witness Persephone’s rape also in BKT 44. 44 If that poem is, as it appears, independent of *Dem*, the presence of the Oceanids may have been a traditional, or at any rate known, element of the Rape. The motif of the victim of abduction playing or dancing with young women occurs elsewhere in epic 45, most famously in *Aphr*, 117–21. As regards this narrative element then, *Dem* may be interacting with the poetic tradition of the Rape and with epic patterns for narrating abduction. As the chronology and relation of the versions of the Rape is uncertain and given that the linguistic affinities, consisting in shared epithets, appear significant, the crucial question is whether the narrative context may impart a deeper meaning to the linguistic connections and may thus take us more securely beyond the possibility of instantiations of traditional epic language. Turning attention to the shared adjectives, (a) βαβύκολποι is apt for the mountain-nymphs given their role as nursemaids (νυμφαί μιν θρέψωσιν ὀρεσκώσι βαβύκολποι, 257). Applied to the daughters of Oceanus (παίζουσαι κούρησι σὺν ὑκεανοῦ βαβύκολποις, 5), it conveys a literal physicality. The Oceanids partake of the recesses and bays of the landscape to which they are associated; they are “deep-bayed”, and embody the landscape in which the abduction will take place; (b) In *Aphr* ἔροις qualifies the recesses that host the erotic encounters of the mountain-nymphs (μίσοντ’ ἐν φιλότητι μυχῶ σπείρων ἔροιτων, 263); in *Dem* it describes the flowers that Persephone and her companions pick (παίζουμεν ἦδ’ ἀνθεὰ δρέπομεν χείρεσσα’ ἔροιτα, 425). The innocent desires of the young maidens are in stark contrast to the licentiousness of the mountain-nymphs. It is noteworthy that the hymnic passages represent unique early instances of the adjective being attached to places or objects,

44. BKT 44, 19–27. Currie (2012, pp. 200–3) has argued that *Dem* upstages its model by incorporating the catalogue of Persephone’s playmates in character-speech.
45. Iliad, XVI, 16, 179ff. (Hermes and Polymele).
while in Hesiodic poetry it accompanies exclusively names of nymphs;\(^{46}\) (c) \(κάλυκώτης\), counts among the most significant linguistic links between the two hymns, as it does not occur elsewhere in early epic. Its use provides a fairly stable ground for testing narrative interaction. While in \(Aphr\) the adjective qualifies the anonymous nymph whose offspring Aeneas will be introduced as (φάσθαι τοι νύμφης καλυκώτης ἐγὼν εἶναι, 284), in \(Dem\) it qualifies Persephone at the moment when the earth sprouts the fatal narcissus that will translate her from maidendom to womanhood (τοις καλυκωτίδι κοῦρη/ Γαῖα, 8–9). The adjective is later put in the mouth of Persephone to describe one of her playmates before the Rape (Μηλόβοσις τε Τύχη τε και ἰκυρόθ καλυκώτης, 420). Also these passages are interactive in opposing adult sexuality (\(Aphr\)) and maidenly innocence (\(Dem\)). Thus, while the sources of the Rape episode remain unclear, the linguistic and narrative picture appears coherent.

The epithets that construe the nymphs in \(Aphr\) as motherly and given to adult sexuality in \(Dem\) construe Persephone and her attendants as natural, innocent and maidenly—another notable thematic reversal.

**Conclusion**

The question of the relationship of \(Dem\) to \(Aphr\) is intriguing not only because of the unusually large number of linguistic points of contact—some unique—but also in view of their significant differences in content, general character and intent. \(Aphr\) is non-religious to the point of having been labelled “secular”\(^{47}\) and tragicomic as it makes a laughing stock of Aphrodite by divulging her supposedly secret lapse with Anchises while it meditates on human transience with divine permanence as a foil. \(Dem\), on the contrary, though not a cultic hymn, is religious in so far as it sets out a version of the Rape and provides the aition for the institution of the Mysteries and for specific Eleusinian rites. With the exception of some “lighter” moments, the intent of its plot is thoroughly serious, at times even sombre. It is, I submit, the “tragic” dimension in \(Aphr\), its preoccupation with mortality and the narrative motifs developing this dimension that may have left traces in the narrative of \(Dem\). The most intriguing of these may be the disguised Demeter’s “nod” to the disguised Aphrodite upon entrance onto the human scene.

Comparative examination of shared motifs has foregrounded patterns of similarity and contrast that may, though \(they need not\) (especially if one operates with an oralist hermeneutic frame), be interpreted as motif transference

\(^{46}\) At line-beginning: \(Theogony\), 251, 357 and \(Ehoiae\), fr. 169.1 M-W; at line-end: \(Theogony\), 245.

\(^{47}\) Reinhardt (1956, p. 1) “[…] nicht sakral, sondern profan ist”.

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with accompanying inversions of narrative details and/or multiple correspondence. Thematic resonance forms the subsoil for the connection, while linguistic affinities signal it at surface level. Case-in-point: The adjectives that qualify Persephone, her companions and the landscape of the Rape construe them in stark contrast to the nymphs in Aphr. None of the motifs and details discussed suffices in itself to determine the case for narrative interaction between Dem and Aphr. As with linguistic parallels, individual examples have their merits and limitations, and some may be more convincing than others. The case for narrative interaction can only be cumulative.

On the other hand, attention to the narrative context may refine the view of linguistic borrowing. The epithet in Δημήτηρ τιμάρχος (268), an Aeolism unique to the two poems, is viewed as a decisive token for the dependence of Dem on Aphr. Whereas in Aphr the epithet is predicative in a context where Hestia receives honours from Zeus, in Dem it is merely decorative and violates formular economy. The implication of the argument is that adaptation entails deterioration. Currie has shown that at this point Dem abandons the traditional formula (occurring in slightly modified form in Dem, 54) εἰ μὲν Δημήτηρ ὡρηφόρος ἀγαθόρωρος, used in an earlier poem. A complementary perspective emerges from narrative contextualisation. Aphr, 31 connects the epithet with temple worship presenting Hestia as “recipient of honour in the temples of all gods” (πᾶσι δ' εὖ νησίσι θεῶν τιμάρχος ἔστι). In Dem, 268 the goddess introduces herself as τιμάρχος and then goes on to ask for a temple (270ff.). Violation of formular economy thus has a thematic reason (which is perhaps also an interactive trigger). What is more, whereas linguistic comparison juxtaposes Aphr, 82 ~ Dem, 145–6 and Aphr, 279b ~ Dem, 159b ending up in hermeneutically sterile connections, attention to narrative motifs highlights the common thematic threads which run through both narratives and have formed the ground for interaction.

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50. In other versions the story did not continue with the erection of a temple, as the scanty remains in BKT 44, 102–20 suggest.

51. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer and to Nicholas Elwyn Allott for checking the English.
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