NOTES ON THE LINES 93–94 OF THE *HOMERIC HYMN TO APHRODITE*

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Abstract

In the lines 93–94 of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* five goddesses (Artemis, Leto, Aphrodite, Themis and Athene) are enumerated. The reason why the poet of the hymn arranged them in that order has not been made clear yet. The purpose of this paper is to find a solution to this question.

To reaffirm his sovereignty over Aphrodite, Zeus makes her fall in love with a mortal man, the Trojan prince Anchises. Aphrodite visits him in the hut on the mountain Ida, disguised as a pure maiden. He is surprised at her beauty and seized by love. Anchises casts his speech of welcome and, to ascertain her identity, he offers her seven choices, Artemis, Leto, Aphrodite, Themis, Athene, Charis and Nymph.[1]

Χαῖρε ἄνασσ', ἥ τις μακάρων τάδε δώμαθ' ἱκάνεις,	92
Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητὼ ἠὲ χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη	93
ἢ Θέμις ἠϋγενὴς ἠὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη	94
ἤ πού τις Χαρίτων δεῦρ' ἤλυθες, αἵ τε θεοῖσι	95
πᾶσιν ἑταιρίζουσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται,	96
ἤ τις νυμφάων αἵ τ' ἄλσεα καλὰ νέμονται,	97
ἢ νυμφῶν αἳ καλὸν ὄρος τόδε ναιετάουσι	98
καὶ πηγὰς ποταμῶν καὶ πίσεα ποιήεντα.	99

There is a gap between 93–94 and 95–99 in this list. In the lines 93–94 only the names and epithets of the five goddesses are enumerated. On the other hand, in the lines 95–99 Charis and Nymph are described in detail by using relative clauses. It is appropriate that the descriptions of Charis and Nymph, who are often subordinate to a goddess, are given after the five goddesses in the list. However, it is not clear why the poet of the hymn arranged the five goddesses in this order. Walcot has written: "The list artfully conceals the true answer, Aphrodite, between two pairs of alternative identifications, each of which includes a goddess, Artemis in the one case and Athene in the other, previously singled out as a virgin goddess sharply contrasting with the sex-ridden Aphrodite (vv. 8–20)."[2] However, whether the poet intentionally arranged the goddesses in this order to aim at the effect is not very certain. The purpose of this paper is making the grounds for choosing this order of the five goddesses clear.

If we just arrange any five goddesses, we can choose one among 120 orders. However, if we arrange Ἄρτεμις, Λητώ, χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη, Θέμις ἠϋγενής and γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη in two hexameter lines (93–94), connecting each one with ἤ or ἠέ,

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[1] The text used: Allen, Halliday & Sikes 1936. Following them, I adopt the form χρυσέη in this paper.

[2] Walcot 1991: 145.

we have only a few choices.[3] Firstly, χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη and γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη are always in the second half of the line in Epic.[4] In 93–94 too, each of them must be in the second half of the line. Secondly, Θέμις ἠϋγενής has enough metrical quantity to fill the first half of the line independently. In another line, Ἄρτεμις and Λητώ are in the first half of the line together. Thirdly, if Λητώ were before Ἄρτεμις, the phrase ἢ Λητὼ ἢ Ἄρτεμις would be the only possibility. However, in this phrase, hiatus would occur between -ὼ and ἢ, and ἢ and Ἄ-. Moreover, there would be no caesura in the third foot. Therefore it is necessary to put Ἄρτεμις before Λητώ. Fourthly, Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητώ cannot be in the first half of the line 94. The reason is that neither ἢ nor ἠέ can be put before Ἄρτεμις metrically, although one of them is necessary at the head of 94. Therefore Θέμις ἠϋγενής must be put in 94. Thus, only the following two possibilities remain:

> Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητὼ ἠὲ χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη
> ἢ Θέμις ἠϋγενὴς ἠὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
> or
> Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητὼ ἠὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
> ἢ Θέμις ἠϋγενὴς ἠὲ χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη

A definitive reason to choose the former can not be immediately understood. However, when the poet of the hymn composed the line 93, he must have found a model in the formula Ἀρτέμιδι ἰκέλη ἠὲ χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη at *Od.* 17.37 and 19.54. The reason why we should think this formula is a model of 93 is the coincidence of the words.[5] Moreover, this formula is used in the scenes that look like the one described here: in expressing the beauty of Penelope. In both *Od.* 17.37 and 19.54 she is about to appear in front of others. Here too, a beautiful girl appears in front of Anchises. Following this Homeric model, the poet of the hymn must have arranged Ἄρτεμις and Ἀφροδίτη to the same line.

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References

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[3] Certainly, nothing prevents the poet from choosing other epithets and different frame. This question will be discussed elsewhere.

[4] χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη: all forms of this formula are always in the second half of the line (in *Il.*×5, in *Od.*×5, in Hes. [*Th., Op.*] ×6). But at *Il.* 9.389 χρυσείη Ἀφροδίτη is in the middle of the line. γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη: this nominative is always in the second half of the line (in *Il.*×28, in *Od.*×50, in Hes. [*Th., Op., Sc.*] ×6).

[5] *Od.* 17.37 and 19.54 are the only examples in Homer, in which Artemis and Aphrodite are in the same line.