APHRODITE *PHILOMMÊDÊS* IN THE *THEOGONY*

ELSA BOUCHARD

*Université de Montréal**

Abstract: Discussion of Aphrodite's epithet *philommeidês/philommêdês* in Hesiod *Theogony* 200. Hesiod's aetiological account of this name suggests the meaning 'wiles-loving' as well as 'genitals-loving'. This interpretation is supported by a number of episodes from Archaic poetry in which literary or mythical figures make use of a ruse to permit the fulfilment of their erotic longing, or conversely exploit someone else's desire as a means to achieve supremacy in a power struggle.

Keywords: Hesiod, Aphrodite, *philommêdês*, etymology

In his account of the birth of Aphrodite Hesiod gives the goddess no less than four names, each of which is provided with an ad hoc etymology consistent with the mythical context:

> τὴν δ᾽ Ἀφροδίτην
> ἀφρογενέα τε θεὰν καὶ ἐυστέφανον Κυθέρειαν
> κικλήσκουσι θεοί τε καὶ ἀνέρες, οὕνεκ᾽ ἐν ἀφρῶι
> θρέφθη· ἀτὰρ Κυθέρειαν, ὅτι προσέκυρσε Κυθήροις·
> Κυπρογενέα δ᾽, ὅτι γέντο περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρωι·
> ἠδὲ φιλομμειδέα, ὅτι μηδέων ἐξεφαάνθη.[1]
>
> Aphrodite,
> foam-born goddess, and fair-garlanded Cytherea,
> thus gods and men call her, because it is in foam
> that she was produced; Cytherea, because she arrived at Cythera,
> and Cyprus-born because she was born in sea-surrounded Cyprus.
> Also *philommeidês*, because she came to existence from *mêdea* (*Theogony* 195–200).[2]

I call these *etymologies* and not simply wordplays because the passage contains an explicit metalinguistic vocabulary; there is mention of the act of denomination (κικλήσκουσι) and of cause-to-effect relationships between words (οὕνεκ᾽, ὅτι).[3] Although ancient etymologies are generally held to be 'scientifically' (that is, linguistically) worthless, they provide us with precious clues as to the ideas that their authors entertained of their own divinities – whatever other 'correct' accounts of the origins of Greek gods may be proposed by historians of religion.[4] While possessing genuine literary appeal and giving poets occasions to show off their wit and inventiveness,[5] they also reveal an authentic concern with issues such as the heuristic value of language and the effectuality of divine names. In fact, Hesiodic poetry is packed with names and epithets, many of which are

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* elsa.bouchard@umontreal.ca.

[1] Edited by West (1966), who brackets v. 196. The repetitiveness of these lines has created suspicion of interpolation; see Arnould (2009) 4–6 for a review of the critical tradition.

[2] All translations are my own. I leave the words φιλομμειδέα and μηδέων untranslated, as their complex meaning is the very topic of this paper.

[3] Gambarara (1984) 106 identifies these elements as criteria distinguishing etymology from wordplay.

[4] *Cf.* Pironti (2005) 129–30. The debates on

Aphrodite's place in the Greek pantheon have long been monopolized by the question of her origins: *cf.* Pirenne-Delforge (1994) 1–6. She is now generally believed to be related to Oriental Astarte: Dugand (1974); Burkert (1985) 152; West (2000); *contra* Boedeker (1974). According to Heubeck (1965), followed by Burkert (1985) 154–55, the word φιλομμηδής means 'possessing male genitals' and is to be explained by a Semitic androgynous ancestor of the Greek goddess.

[5] Hesiod himself may be thought to be more playful than the label 'didactic poet' suggests: see Heath (1985).

accompanied by (more or less) explicit epexegetical comments.[6] This is obviously true of the *Theogony*, but *Works and Days* also contains its share of etymologies, especially in the first (mythical) quarter of the poem: for instance Zeus, who the Muses are asked to sing, is 'he *by whom* mortal men are renowned or unknown' (δεῦτε Δί᾽ ἐννέπετε […] / ὅν τε <u>διὰ</u> βροτοὶ ἄνδρες ὁμῶς ἄφατοί τε φατοί τε, 2–3); Pandôra (who is left unnamed in the *Theogony*) is so called ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχοντες / δῶρον ἐδώρησαν (81–82) – an ambiguous statement (did the Olympians give presents *to her* or did they give *her* as a present – to humankind?). Both explanations are compatible with the story told by Hesiod, so perhaps the lines are purposely equivocal. I shall argue that the poet exploits such an ambiguity in the passage describing Aphrodite's birth.

Hesiod's glosses of her first three appellations are fairly straightforward: Aphrodite from *aphros*, Cytherea from Cythera, Cyprogenês from Cyprus.[7] By contrast, line 200 provides an unexpected justification of a common name and contains a striking pun with multiple layers of significance. As it happens, previous attempts to elucidate *philommeidês*[8] have imperfectly uncovered the allusions conveyed by the epithet in this specific context, as I hope to show in this paper.

The word as it is transmitted in the manuscripts is φιλομ(μ)ηδής. It appears to be a variation on φιλομ(μ)ειδής,[9] a traditional epithet for Aphrodite in epic poetry that is usually translated as 'smile-loving' in reference to the goddess' obvious association with the realms of seduction and eroticism.[10] Hesiod himself, a few lines further on, names smiles in the list of her prerogatives:

> ταύτην δ᾽ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τιμὴν ἔχει ἠδὲ λέλογχε
> μοῖραν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
> παρθενίους τ᾽ ὀάρους <u>μειδήματά</u> τ᾽ ἐξαπάτας τε
> τέρψίν τε γλυκερὴν φιλότητά τε μειλιχίην τε.
> Since the beginning such is her privilege,
> the lot she obtained among humans and immortal gods:
> maidenly chats, smiles, tricks,
> sweet pleasure, lovemaking,[11] and tenderness (*Theogony* 203–06).

Considering the frequency of φιλομμειδής as applied to Aphrodite in epic diction (including Hesiodic poetry), there is no doubt that at line 200 Hesiod is self-consciously substituting φιλομμηδής, 'genitals-loving', for the usual φιλομμειδής, and grounding this substitution in the mythical context of the goddess' birth from Ouranos' severed genitals: ὅτι μηδέων ἐξεφαάνθη.[12]

What I want to suggest is that this is not the end of the story. An overwhelming majority of commentators on this passage[13] have failed to notice that this reinterpretation of φιλομμειδής as

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[6] *Cf.* Deichgräber (1951); Ferrante (1965) 455–61; Duhoux (1967); Duban (1978b); Arnould (2009). Hesiod's etymologies work the other way round from his equally numerous personifications, in which common names and concepts are 'elevated' to a divine, or semi-divine, status.

[7] As Clay notes, 'Cytherea' and 'Cyprogenes' are only apparent exceptions to Hesiod's avoidance of local cult epithets, to which he prefers names with a Panhellenic or cosmic tenor: 'Hesiod goes out of his way to derive her epithets, "Cyprian" and "Cytherean," from the circumstances of her birth rather than from any specific and local cultic association' (Clay (1988) 326). On Hesiod's Aphrodite and some of her epithets, see, for example, Sale (1961); Leclerc (1978); Morgan (1978); Washbourne (1999); Hansen (2000).

[8] See West (1966) 88, 224; Boedeker (1974) 24; Washbourne (1999); Arnould (2009) 4–6.

[9] See West (1966) 88 for a discussion of the alternatives ει/η. The exact word used by Hesiod does not matter much to my argument since ancient etymologies are indifferent to such minor phonological variations. On the 'rules' of ancient etymologizing, see Woodhead (1928); Allen (1948); Gambarara (1989); Lallot (1991); Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1997); Peraki-Kyriakidou (2002); Sluiter (2015).

[10] On the erotic overtones of Aphrodite's smiles, see Boedeker (1974) 23–35; *cf.* Rosenzweig (2004) 7.

[11] For this translation of φιλότης, see Pironti (2007) 38–41.

[12] *Cf.* Risch (1947) 76; Washbourne (1999) 136. The sequence of events – Cronos' trick, then Aphrodite's birth – is analysed as a whole by Heubeck (1966).

[13] See the references listed at n.8. Admittedly, many have noticed that the whole episode 's'articule autour du mot *mèdéa*, qui concerne à la fois les pensées et les parties sexuelles' (Pironti (2005) 130). Duban (1978a) considers Hesiod's choice of μήσατο (instead of μήδετο)

φιλομμηδής with its attending aetiological account ('because she was born from μήδεα') also admits the meaning *ploy-loving*, since Aphrodite is indirectly born from Gaia's and Cronos' ploys (μήδεα, an exact homonym to the word meaning 'genitals'). Indeed Ouranos' castration is described as an artful trick or stratagem (*Theogony* 160: δολίην … τέχνην; 175: δόλον) contrived by Gaia and and her crooked-minded, ἀγκυλομήτης, son. It is thus perfectly legitimate to take the second part of line 200 to mean 'because she was born from ploys'. The ambiguousness of the word μήδεα in Hesiod (and in epic diction in general)[14] is clearly illustrated by juxtaposing the following metrically equivalent *côla*:

Theogony 180: φίλου δ' ἀπὸ μήδεα πατρός (Cronos cuts off Ouranos' μήδεα)

Theogony 398: φίλου διὰ μήδεα πατρός (Styx reaches Olympus following her father's counsels, μήδεα)

It certainly comes as no surprise that Hesiod should simultaneously ascribe to Aphrodite a fondness for genitals and for trickery. At *Theogony* 205 he lists ἐξαπάται along with smiles and maidenly chats as parts of her τιμαί. Moreover, the goddess' closest counterpart in the human realm is Pandôra, a 'beautiful evil' whose very name evokes the deception (δόλος) concealed in this divine gift (δῶρον).[15] The gods responsible for her creation endow her with both erotic qualities and moral vices such as lies, deceitful language and a thief's character (*Op.* 78: ψεύδεά θ' αἱμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος). Once all these implications are understood, one can detect a programmatic value in *Theogony* 200 in addition to its aetiological claim: while Aphrodite's birth is part of the succession myth from Ouranos to Cronos to Zeus, it also introduces a theme that proves to be ubiquitous in Hesiod's poems, namely cunning. The same narrative strategy is used in the nearby passage on the name of the Titans:

Their father called them by the name of Titans (Τιτῆνας ἐπίκλησιν καλέεσκε),
the great Ouranos, in his quarrel with the children that he had begotten.
He said that by stretching (τιταίνοντας) toward recklessness they accomplished a
dreadful deed for which they would later pay the price (τίσιν) (*Theogony* 207–10).

Most commentators perceive a double etymology in this passage, the name Titans being glossed with both τιταίνοντας and τίσιν.[16] τιταίνοντας alludes to the preceding story of the Titans' 'excesses' that led to their father's mutilation, while τίσιν anticipates events that will be told later in the poem – the chastisement they incur from the Olympian gods who eventually overthrow them.[17] Likewise, the double significance of φιλομμηδής points both backwards to the theogonical account and forwards to the future state of things, when gods and men are submitted to the suspicious power of Aphrodite.[18]

at *Theog.* 166 and 172 as a way to avoid the repetition of the morpheme *med-* at v. 200 (φιλομμειδέα … μηδέων). Arnould (2009) 5–6 signals the existence of a parallelism between Aphrodite's birth from her father's genitals and that of Athena from Zeus' head after he has swallowed Mètis, and she mentions *en passant* that linguistically there is no good reason not to link μήδεα to the root of μήδομαι (though for the purposes of this paper, linguistic likelihood is only secondarily relevant, as I have stressed earlier). On the parallelism between Aphrodite and Athena in Hesiod, see also Leclerc (1978), who to my knowledge is the only scholar to elaborate to any extent on the double meaning of μήδεα: (1978) 16–17. Despite the previously cited works, the specific reference to Aphrodite's cunning in φιλομμηδής remains unexplored.

[14] According to Nagy (1974) 265–75, this word possesses a thematic unity in Homer and Hesiod, where it denotes a kind of power that is both mental and

sexual/reproductive.

[15] See Mazur (2004) on the recurrent paronomasia δῶρον/δόλον around Pandôra. The interpretation of the exact relationship between Aphrodite and Pandôra is a delicate task to handle. It is probably excessive to speak of the latter as the 'incarnation' of the former – as does Marquardt (1982) – and consequently to project onto the goddess all the evils that Hesiod imputes to the first woman and to women in general. On Greek goddesses' strained connection with 'feminity', *cf.* Burkert (1985) 183–84.

[16] Risch (1947) 77; Deichgräber (1951) 23; Duban (1978b); Mazur (2004) 243; *contra* Duhoux (1967), 43 n.31 and *passim*.

[17] See Lauriola (1999), who speaks of 'prolessi narrativa.'

[18] On Aphrodite's influence on the mode of procreation from the primordial states of the cosmos to the generation of the Olympians, see Rudhardt (1986).

A scholium to the poem shows that the semantic connection might have been made by ancient readers, although the scholiast is mostly intent on giving a moralizing explanation for the homonymy:

μήδεα: the genitals (αἰδοῖα). The poet does not want us to indulge in sexuality in an irrational fashion (ἀλογίστως), but with reason (μετὰ λόγου). Thus he is right to call 'thought-loving' (φιλομηδέα) she who presides over sexuality (schol. R2WLZX *Theogony* 188).[19]

Other testimonies suggest a more subtle understanding of the equivocal allusion in Hesiod's φιλομμηδής. One is a poem from the *Theognidea*:

Cyprus-born (Κυπρογενές), Cytherea (Κυθέρεια), wiles-weaving (δολοπλόκε), this huge privilege Zeus gave you as a present, for your honor (τιμήσας). You tame the shrewd minds of humans (ἀνθρώπων πυκινὰς φρένας), and no one is strong or wise enough to escape you (Thgn. 2.1386–89).

Following a convention of hymnic literature, the poem begins with a series of epithets, the first two of which also feature in the Hesiodic passage under review. But the triad in Theognis is completed with δολόπλοκε instead of φιλομμηδές. Indeed φιλομμηδές (or any equivalent reading, such as φιλομειδές) would have been unmetrical, but the substitution still appears significant. I shall come back later to the specific resonances of δολόπλοκος and the relevance to our problem of the Διὸς ἀπάτη, to which the Theognidean poem seems related.

The *Orphic Hymn to Aphrodite*, of which I give the first three lines, is constituted by a lengthy accumulation of epithets for the goddess:

Οὐρανία, πολύυμνε, φιλομμειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη,
ποντογενής, γενέτειρα θεά, φιλοπάννυχε, σεμνή,
νυκτερία ζεύκτειρα, δολοπλόκε μῆτερ Ἀνάγκης.
Heavenly, much-celebrated, *philommeidês* Aphrodite,
sea-born, goddess of generation, lover of nocturnal feasts, venerable,
nightly yoker, wiles-weaving mother of necessity (*Orphic Hymns* 55.1–3).

Although this text is of late composition, it demonstrates obvious intertextual links with Hesiod: there is a reference to Ouranos and to a birth in the sea, in contrast with the Homeric version that makes Aphrodite a daughter of Zeus and Dionê. Moreover, these lines confirm the goddess' special alliance with night (φιλοπάννυχε, νυκτερία),[20] which is hinted at in Hesiod. In the *Theogony* the story of Ouranos' castration and Aphrodite's creation is immediately followed by the four lines on the name of the Titans and then by the extensive enumeration of the progeny of Night (211–32). Among Night's children are Ἀπάτη and Φιλότης (224), who are also part of Aphrodite's lot, as noted earlier.

This intimate link between Aphrodite and Night might be reflected in some of her cult titles.[21] She was worshipped as μελαινίς in Thespiai (next to Hesiod's Ascra), Corinth and Melangeia (Arcadia), according to Athenaeus and Pausanias.[22] Closely related in meaning is the name σκοτία, which was used in Cretan Phaistos[23] and possibly Egypt.[24] Remarkably, the two entries in the

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[19] Edited by Di Gregorio (1975).
[20] *Cf. Orph. Hymn* 3.2, where Night is called *Cypris*. According to Ramnoux (1986) 228–29, this hymn contains a 'dialectical' theology whose origins lie in the Archaic period.
[21] *Cf.* Pironti (2007) 81. Gantar (1957) relates μελαινίς and σκοτία to an Oriental myth in which Ishtar (Aphrodite's Babylonian counterpart) receives a black

cloak representing the nocturnal sky – hence also the name Οὐρανία.
[22] Ath. 13.588c; Paus. 2.2.4, 8.6.5, 9.27.5. Pausanias explains the epithet by the fact that sexual intercourse is more frequent at night (*cf.* 8.6.5–6).
[23] Cf. *Et. Gud.* κ 352; *Et. Mag.* 543.48–50.
[24] Hesychius *Lexicon* σ 1124.

Byzantine etymologies adduce this appellation in order to confirm an etymology of Κυθέρεια as 'she who conceals love' (ἡ κεύθουσα τοὺς ἔρωτας […], ὡς κρυψίποθον) – hence acknowledging what was likely a common view of Aphrodite's connection to secretive sexuality.

Combined with the violent circumstances of her birth in the Hesiodic account, Aphrodite's complicity with Night highlights the more worrisome side of the goddess; indeed, recent scholarship has convincingly contested her once monolithic image as the 'goddess of love'.[25] In Archaic poetry, night is a privileged moment for cunning minds to deploy a variety of schemes. A famous example is the nocturnal escapade that costs the life of the suggestively named Dolon in the *Iliad*, but one need not go beyond Hesiod to confirm this: the very trick concocted against Ouranos was fulfilled during the night.[26]

It is also at nighttime that Hermes accomplishes his glorious theft of Apollo's cows, as is recounted in the Homeric hymn to the former:

> Suddenly craving (ἐρατίζων) for meat,
> he jumped out of the fragrant hall to keep watch,
> pondering a deep trick in his mind (δόλον αἰπὺν ἐνὶ φρεσὶν), such as those
> that thieves (φιλῆται) perform at the hour of black night.
> The Sun was sinking below the earth into the Ocean
> along with his horses and chariot, when Hermes
> arrived at a run at the shady mountains of Pieria,
> where the immortal cattle of the blessed gods had their dwelling (64–71).

Instead of Homeric ληϊστήρ, the word used for 'thief' here is φιλήτης (l.67), and it is again associated with Hermes later in the poem.[27] In a fragment of Hellanicus this appellation is given a mythological etymology based on its obvious similarity with φιλεῖν:

> [Μαίαι δὲ Ζεὺς μίσγεται λανθά]νων ἐν σπῆι· τ[ῶν] δὲ γίγνεται Ἑρμ[ῆς] Φιλήτης, ὅτι αὐτῆι φιλησίμ[ως] συνεκοιμ[ᾶτο].
> Zeus had sex with Maia secretly, in a cave. From them was born Hermes [named] φιλήτης, because Zeus amorously (φιλησίμως)[28] lay with Maia (*FGrH* 4 F 19 (b)).[29]

Hermes is in fact a figure closely related to Aphrodite, with whom he shares the quality of cunningness and the status of go-between.[30] It is telling that in Plato's *Cratylus*, the name Hermes is etymologized as ὃς τὸ εἴρειν ἐμήσατο, 'he who devised speech', while speech itself is glossed as a power properly belonging to 'the character of an interpreter, a messenger, a thief, a deceiver in words and a merchant'.[31] The epithet φιλήτης is first attested in Hesiod, albeit not in relation to Hermes:

> Do not let a woman who flaunts her buttocks deceive (ἐξαπατάτω) your mind
> by cajoling you with guileful words (αἰμύλα κωτίλλουσα), while she probes your
> granary. He who trusts a woman is trusting thieves (φιλήτηισιν) (*Op.* 373–75).

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[25] See Pironti (2010), who emphasizes her close connection to the realm of war. In this regard, Aphrodite appears to transcend her traditional opposition to Athena.

[26] *Theogony* 176.

[27] *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 159, 175, 214, 292, 446.

[28] As Thomas (2007) argues, it is preferable to read φῐλησίμως rather than φῑλησίμως. Thomas believes that this text of Hellanicus is based on Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*.

[29] Ancient etymologies of proper names often refer to the parents of the character whose name is being etymologized: Sulzberger (1926); Perdicoyianni-Paleologou (2001).

[30] Friedrich (1978) 90.

[31] Pl. *Crat.* 407e6–408b1. *Cf.* Clay (1989) 106: 'Speech … belongs to Hermes' domain. But the rhetoric of Hermes is of a peculiar sort; persuasive, seductive, and deceptive, it is characteristically ambiguous and riddling'.

A scholium to v. 375[32] glosses φιλήτηισιν with κλέπταις, λησταῖς and interprets the lemma as 'euphemistic' (κατὰ εὐφημισμόν) – without any further precision, but likely with an eye on the positive connotations of the φιλ- root. For my part, I would not exclude the possibility that Hesiod is playing on the ambiguity of φιλήτηισιν ('loveable thieves'?), since treachery is once again expressed in terms of threatening seduction. Here as in the *Works and Days* generally, Hesiod describes realities that are specific to human life and for which there are no real counterparts in the divine world of the *Theogony*. His disparagement of human sexuality is tightly linked to his well-known mistrust of women, to whom this and similar passages impute the vices of laziness, gluttony and duplicity. By contrast, in the *Theogony* and in other Archaic accounts, Aphrodite and erôs are conceptualized as cosmic forces of constraint that go largely ungendered.[33]

To come back to the names of Aphrodite: in Archaic and Classical literature many of her epithets have explicit connotations with the idea of cunning: ποικιλόφρων,[34] δολοφρονέουσα,[35] δολιόφρων,[36] δόλιος,[37] δολομήδης,[38] δολόπλοκος;[39] the last-mentioned is especially relevant to the notion of erotic guile, since it evokes the paradigmatic figure of Penelope weaving at her loom to deceive her suitors.[40] The goddess has a place among M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant's 'figures de la ruse',[41] and indeed she regularly plays a role in stories of deception involving an element of eroticism. The most famous is the Iliadic Διὸς ἀπάτη, where Hera uses a blend of physical charm, romantic rhetoric and enchanted devices to seduce her husband – for the sole purpose of distracting him from the battlefield while the Greeks take the upper hand. On this occasion, Hera, who borrows Aphrodite's magic girdle, is also endowed with strongly aphroditic traits; in the course of the episode she is thrice called δολοφρονέουσα,[42] and when Aphrodite – herself falling victim to Hera's lies – agrees to help her, Hera flashes an emphatic smile: 'Thus spoke Aphrodite, and large-eyed, royal Hera smiled (μείδησεν); smiling (μειδήσασα), she dropped the girdle in her bosom' (*Il.* 14.222–23). Despite the frequent erotic connotations of smiles, it is obvious that this one is not motivated by Hera's desire to seduce as much as by her triumph at having pulled off a successful trick.[43] Aphrodite's girdle itself is described as containing 'sex (φιλότης), desire (ἵμερος), flirtatious chat (ὀαριστὺς), and persuasion (πάρφασις), which steals the sense even of the astute thinkers (ἥ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων)' (*Il.* 14.216–17).[44] The πάρφασις in particular emphasizes the discursive nature of erotic guile, which is also evinced in Aphrodite's nickname *Peithô*.[45] Speech's power to deceive, especially in an erotic context, is also implied in Hesiod's derogatory 'maidenly chats' (*Theogony* 205) and 'wily coaxing' (*Op.* 374).

[32] Schol. *Op*. 375b (ed. Pertusi (1955)).

[33] I owe this important precision to an anonymous reader for *JHS*, who pointed out to me the inadequacy of the association between 'cunning' and 'female' as regards the Greek cultural representation of the workings of desire. On the different perspectives of the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* on erôs, see Most (2013) especially 173–74.

[34] Sappho *fr*. 1.1. There is an alternate reading, ποικιλόθρων, a *lectio difficilior* which has been recently defended by Jouanna (1999); but for cogent arguments in favour of ποικιλόφρων, see Neuberger-Donath (1969).

[35] *Il*. 3.405.

[36] Eur. *IA* 1300.

[37] Bacch. *Dith*. 3.116

[38] Simon. *fr*. 70: παῖ δολομήδεος Ἀφροδίτας. Some editors read δολόμηδες, in which case the epithet modifies Erôs, Aphrodite's son.

[39] Sappho *fr*. 1; Theognis 2.1386; Simon. *fr*. 36; *Lyr. Adesp. fr*. 31 Page.

[40] *Cf*. Thomas (1999) 4, n.7. On Penelope's cunning, see Marquardt (1985); Winkler (1990) 145–61, who shows that one of the lessons given by the poet of the *Odyssey* is that '*mêtis* is not sex-specific' (160). On the connections between weaving, deception and drugs, see again Winkler (1990) 172–73.

[41] Detienne and Vernant (1974) 269–70; *cf*. Detienne (2006) 130–33.

[42] *Il*. 14.197, 300, 329; once more in the story of Heracles' birth, where Hera deceives her husband by making him swear a treacherous oath (*Il*. 19.106).

[43] *Cf*. Levine (1982) 101.

[44] On the resemblances between this passage of the Διὸς ἀπάτη and Hesiod's description of Aphrodite in the *Theogony*, see Sale (1961) 510–11; Boedeker (1974) 34.

[45] Buxton (1982).

Aphrodite also often acts as procuress between mortal lovers. Thus Hippomenes, seeking the hand of Atalanta, owes his success to the goddess who provides him with the apples with which he tricks the maiden into losing the race.[46] But she especially rejoices in the production of unnatural, heterogeneous couples: in the longest *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, she admits to having provoked numerous unions between gods and mortals with her speeches and her ruses (249: ἐμοὺς ὀάρους καὶ μήτιας). The hymn tells how Zeus, in retaliation for her schemes, made her fall in love with the mortal Anchises, for whom she indeed admits to 'having lost [her] mind' (253–54: ἀάσθην … ἀπεπλάγχθην δὲ νόοιο).[47] Dressed as a mortal woman and adducing a mendacious story, she manages to bring him to bed with her. Just as in the Διὸς ἀπάτη, this is an example of eroticism being used as a means rather than an end:[48] Zeus wants to punish the goddess for her previous exploits by giving her a taste of her own medicine. Thus he secures his authority over the other gods and, by putting an end to the production of semi-divine offspring, he establishes the permanent state of things in the realm of generation.[49] Aphrodite's lesson is also a show of force on the part of the recently crowned king of heaven. The humiliation she suffers in this episode is quite exceptional in contemporary literature. It finds its closest match in the story of the Phaeacian bard Demodocus reporting her love-affair with Ares,[50] the outcome of which is the exhibition before other male Olympian gods of the bound adulterous lovers caught *in flagrante*. But in this case it is a cuckolded husband who takes on the role of the trickster: deprived as he is of any ambition to achieve supremacy in the field of erotics, the lame Hephaestus is reduced to gaining partial compensation for his sexual mortification in the contrivance of a *dolos* (*cf. Od.* 8.276) which simultaneously foregrounds his prowess in his own specific sphere (metallurgy) and confronts his adversaries with some shameful consequences of their erotic feat.

Hephaestus' revenge exemplifies a folkloric motif – that of the success of a lesser rival over a greater – which more frequently casts the masterful seducer in the position of the unexpected winner. That is the case in the story of the judgment of Paris, which was told in the cyclic *Cypria*.[51] Aphrodite starts off at a disadvantage in the beauty contest: her rivals appear *prima facie* stronger – one in virtue of her warlike qualities, the other because of her royal status. Yet it is Aphrodite – whom Euripides calls δολιόφρων in his account of the episode[52] – who wins, thanks to the lust for Helen that she has breathed into Paris; Aphrodite seduces Paris with the promise of a further seduction.[53] In this critical moment of the epic saga, erotic passion is created from a thoroughly designed scheme, providing the goddess with τιμή in an agonistic situation. Mythical illustrations of this pattern could be multiplied.[54]

A quick comparison of these examples reveals that the conceptual association between eroticism and cunning in Archaic literature can be understood as two-fold. On the one hand, ruse appears in numerous narratives as a favoured means for various types of wooers keen to satisfy their erotic longings. The frequent mythical use of *doloi* in erotic contexts is probably what Pausanias has in mind when he comments on the accuracy of a cult-title for Aphrodite used by the citizens of Megalopolis:

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[46] The story is found in fragmentary form in Hesiod, where Hippomenes himself is called δολοφρονέων (*fr.* 76 M-W).

[47] Some ancient etymologies of the name 'Aphrodite' refer to the folly (ἀφροσύνη) that affects the goddess' victims. These etymologies are either explicit (for example Eur. *Trojan Women* 990) or implicit (see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (2003) on Homer and the hymns).

[48] *Cf.* Brown (1997) 33 (about the Διὸς ἀπάτη): 'this episode is not just about sex: it shows us how sexuality can be exploited to attain other ends'. Brown's article focuses on the linkage of sexual and economic concerns in early poetry – an important aspect of the 'political' tenor of erôs.

[49] *Cf.* Clay (1989) 166; Pirenne-Delforge (1989).

[50] *Od.* 8.266–366.

[51] Clay (1989) 156–57 makes the interesting suggestion that the poem's title derives from Aphrodite's central role in the events that launch the story.

[52] *Iph. Aul.* 1299–308.

[53] *Cf.* Clay's definition of seduction as the 'conquest of the stronger by the weaker' (Clay (1989) 159), which can be easily extended to include the conquest of a third party by the weaker *to the detriment* of the stronger, as in the judgment of Paris.

[54] *Cf.* Apollod. 3.14.4, where Aphrodite punishes Smyrna's negligence of her cult by making her infatuated with her own father.

I believe that the appellation 'Contriver' (Μαχανῖτιν) they gave to the goddess is most appropriate; indeed, because of Aphrodite and her works, numerous are the contrivances of men, and diverse their inventions in speech (πλεῖσται μὲν ἐπιτεχνήσεις, παντοῖα δὲ ἀνθρώποις ἀνευρημένα ἐς λόγους) (Paus. 8.31.6–7).

Indeed, Aphrodite's seduction of Anchises rests as much on her deceptive tale as on her physical attractiveness, but sometimes her 'contrivances' take the form of bluntly concrete objects: Atalanta is tricked by apples and Persephone by an enchanted flower. At the beginning of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the latter's daughter inadvertently causes the earth to open for Hades to spring out by plucking 'a narcissus that Earth had produced as a snare (δόλον) for the roseate girl, in accordance with Zeus' plans' (8–9). Although Aphrodite takes no part in the scheme in this version of the myth,[55] the story in itself is one of a divine union accomplished through (not one, but) two carefully planned stratagems: first the narcissus, then the pomegranate seed by which Hades secures the return of Persephone. The description of the meadow where the girl is gathering flowers abounds with erotic connotations,[56] and the visual effect of the narcissus, whose supernatural glow (θαυμαστὸν γανόωντα) 'was an awe-inspiring sight for all immortal gods and mortal men (σέβας τότε πᾶσιν ἰδέσθαι ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἠδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις)' (10–11), evokes Hesiod's account of Zeus' introduction of Pandôra to the world soon after her fabrication:

> He led her to the place where the other gods and men were, shining as she was with the adornment of the bright-eyed daughter of a mighty father; and wonder struck immortal gods and mortal men alike (θαῦμα δ' ἔχ' ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητούς τ' ἀνθρώπους), as they watched this deep snare, inescapable to men (δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν) (*Theogony* 586–89).

On the other hand, erotic desire is anthropologically conceived of as a strong power susceptible to being instrumentalized with a view to other purposes, such as gaining honour in the context of a power struggle. Such a notion extends beyond the purely mythical and literary realms, since the association between erotic charm, hierarchical relationships and economic success has been noted as a constant feature of the agonistic ideology that lies behind some age-old Greek magical practices.[57] At times, the two kinds of association can be seen at work simultaneously in a single story, as for instance in that of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*: first the goddess is a victim of Zeus' plan to limit her power, but then she herself uses a stratagem to convince the young man to sleep with her.[58] All these instances suggest that, contrary to what might be the modern assumption, our authors do not perceive an opposition between blind passion and cunning reflection, but rather see them as complementary.[59] The exact configuration of this counterintuitive psychological notion deserves further investigation.

[55] She is involved in later versions of the story: see Richardson (1974) 138.

[56] *Cf.* Calame (1996) 213.

[57] See Winkler (1990) 77–79; Faraone (1990) 223–27 argues that many early mythical elements (such as Aphrodite's girdle in the *Iliad*, Pandora's necklaces in the *Works and Days* and Hippomenes' apples) are reminiscences of the Greeks' actual use of love-charms.

[58] *Cf.* Clay (1989) 175.

[59] Aristotle seems to endorse a similar conception in a passage contrasting spirit (*thumos*) with desire (*epithumia*) (*EN* 1149b13–18): 'A spirited person does not make plots (οὐκ ἐπίβουλος), nor does the thumos; they operate in daylight (φανερός). But desire is like Aphrodite, whom they call "wiles-weaving Cyprogeneia" (δολοπλόκου γὰρ κυπρογενοῦς). And Homer says of her embroidered girdle that it contains "Persuasion, which steals the sense even of the astute thinkers" (*Il.* 14.217)'. This occasional 'enlisting' of ruse in the service of desire should lead one to qualify Calame's characterization of Greek erôs as such a powerful force as to suspend its victim's capacity for understanding and making decisions (*cf.* Calame (1996) 32).

Conclusion

In Archaic thinking, erôs is not so much an emotion as a mode of constraint, and is thus comparable to both force and ruse. As regards Hesiod, who expresses the belief that women and marriage are unavoidable components of life in the Iron Age, we might add 'necessity' as a further point of comparison.[60] The large intertextual network of coupled references to love and cunning in myth and literature supports the reading of φιλομμηδής proposed at the beginning of this paper: the epithet acts as a focal point where notions of guile, eroticism and seduction are simultaneously evoked through the homonymy of μήδεα and the paronomasia with μειδήματα. Thus I contend that *Theogony* 200 provides much more than a *Volksetymologie*, awkwardly interpolated in Hesiod's poem. The Greeks' relationship to language is not confined to technical analysis (although it includes it), but also reveals a reflective engagement with existential stakes: wordplays can have the function of 'controlling unknown forces and unifying diverging impulses'.[61] One could not better describe Hesiod's syncretic *tour de force* when he makes the *philommeidês* goddess the encapsulating figure of love and guile.[62]

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[60] *Cf.* Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*, where ἔρως is put on a par with τύχη (along with ἀνάγκη and the gods' will), βία and λόγος as possible causes of Helen's journey to Troy.

[61] Somville (1989) 199 (my translation). On the multiplicity of perspectives allowed by ancient etymologies, *cf.* Wolanin (1995) 515–17.

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