

Tongue-tied Aphrodite: the *paradeigmata* in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*¹

ANASTASIA MARAVELA

The presence of mythological examples in Aphrodite's speech to Anchises is one of the traits which impart to the (fifth Homeric) *Hymn to Aphrodite* its distinctive character as the 'most Homeric' of the early hexametric hymns. Without assuming or claiming a direct link between the *Hymn to Aphrodite* and Homer, this paper simply sets out to explore the interpretative perspectives that may be gained if Aphrodite's mythological examples are considered in the light of the scholarly discussion on Homeric *paradeigmata*.²

The poetics of the Homeric paradeigma

A mythological example (*paradeigma* or *exemplum mythicum*) in Homer is 'a myth introduced for exhortation or consolation'.³ Malcolm Willcock's classic definition has been refined by Øivind Andersen as follows: 'the paradigmatic use of myth entails the application of mythical precedent to illustrate, understand or affect a situation; in the last case the paradigm may be used for exhortation or dissuasion.' According to Andersen, 'essential to the paradigmatic function is a certain similarity or analogy ... even if difference and contrast may also play an important part ... In each case, the actual situation is seen in the light of a mythical situation.'⁴

The salient traits of the Iliadic *exempla*, identified by Willcock, may be extended to the Homeric *paradeigmata* in general:

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2 Podbielski (1971, 71) suggested that this approach might be fruitful. However, he did not follow it through but rather treated the examples as 'parables' on a par with the stories of the goddesses who do not submit to Aphrodite (7–33) and Aeneas' upbringing by the mountain nymphs (256–2). Smith (1981, 69) and Lenz (1975, 111–12) have drawn attention to the paradigmatic character of the stories but have reached partly different conclusions.

3 Willcock 1964, 142.

4 Andersen 1987, 3.

(a) The mythical example is commonly used in speeches ... when one character wishes to influence the actions of another; (b) The form in which the *paradeigma* appears is often what is called ring-composition. ‘You should behave in this way. A famous mythological figure was once in the following situation (surprisingly parallel to yours); he behaved in this way. Therefore you also should behave in this way’; (c) The parallelism between the mythological story and the immediate situation often appears to be the creation of the poet; (d) Homeric invention is sometimes marked by some phrase which is irrational in the context, but whose provenance can be explained; (e) When Homer is inventing, he tends to use stock motifs.⁵

The story of Niobe, cited by Achilles to Priam in Il. 24.601b–19a, has served as a token of Homeric exemplarity.⁶ Having promised to release Hector’s body, Achilles urges Priam: ‘now you and I must remember our supper’ (601b ... νῦν δὲ μνησώμεθα δόρπου) pointing out that ‘even Niobe, of the lovely tresses, remembered to eat, whose twelve children were destroyed in her palace’ (602–03 καὶ γάρ τ’ ἠύκομος Νιόβη ἐμνήσατο σίτου | τῆ περ δώδεκα παῖδες ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὄλοντο). Achilles then relates how and why Apollo and Artemis slew Niobe’s children, concluding the narrative with Niobe ‘who remembered to eat when she was worn out with weeping’ (613 ἦ δ’ ἄρα σίτου μνήσατ’ ἐπεὶ κάμε δάκρυ χέουσα). Having wrapped up the example, Achilles renews the invitation to Priam: ‘Come then, we also, aged magnificent sir, must remember | to eat’ (618–19 ἀλλ’ ἄγε δὴ καὶ νῶϊ μεδώμεθα διε γεραῖε | σίτου).

Aphrodite’s examples

The *Hymn to Aphrodite* includes not one but two consecutive mythological examples. The first example (202–17) relates how Zeus carried off Ganymede and made him the wine-pourer of the immortals and how the sorrow of Ganymede’s father at the mysterious disappearance of his son turned to joy when he received news of his son’s fate and immortal horses from Zeus. The second example (218–38) relates how Eos carried off Tithonus and asked Zeus that he be granted immortality, how Eos enjoyed her love with him until he started growing old, and how at the end, when Tithonus had become utterly enfeebled, she shut him away in a chamber (although she still took care of him).

The examples are quoted by the divine protagonist, Aphrodite, to the Trojan prince Anchises at the end of their single day of love-making. In what

⁵ Willcock 1964, 147.

⁶ Willcock 1964, 141–2; Andersen 1975, 179–230. The translation of the Iliadic passage is Lattimore’s (1969).

precedes, Aphrodite develops a great passion for the Trojan prince who, in this poem, spends time as a shepherd on Mount Ida. Having adorned herself, the goddess heads to Ida and seduces the gullible man by telling a false tale – she is a Phrygian princess who has been transported there miraculously by Hermes as Anchises’ intended wife. The audience, however, are in the know, having been informed by the hymn’s narrator that Aphrodite’s infatuation has been instigated by Zeus, whose ulterior aim is to restrict her ability to mock the other gods and boast of her hold over them.⁷

45–52⁸

τῆ δὲ καὶ αὐτῇ Ζεὺς γλυκὺν ἴμερον ἔμβαλε θυμῷ
 ἀνδρὶ καταθνητῷ μιχθήμεναι ὄφρα τάχιστα
 μηδ’ αὐτὴ βροτέης εὐνής ἀποεργμένη εἶη
 καὶ ποτ’ ἐπευξαμένη εἶπη μετὰ πᾶσι θεοῖσιν
 ἦδὺ γελουήσασα φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη
 ὥς ῥα θεοὺς συνέμιξε καταθνητῆσι γυναιξί
 καὶ τε καταθνητοὺς υἱεῖς τέκον ἀθάνατοισιν
 ὥς τε θεὰς ἀνέμιξε καταθνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις

But upon Aphrodite herself Zeus cast sweet desire to be joined in love with a mortal man, to the end that, very soon, not even she should be innocent of a mortal’s love; lest laughter-loving Aphrodite should one day softly smile and say mockingly among all the gods that she had joined the gods in love with mortal women who bore mortal sons to the deathless gods, and had mated the goddesses with mortal men.

Like Homeric *paradeigmata*, Aphrodite’s examples have a rhetorical frame – they form part of the lengthy speech (192–290) which the goddess gives to her mortal lover when she resumes her divine form after their love-making. This turns out to be her farewell speech to Anchises. The rhetorical frame directs attention to the speaker’s reasons for using the examples and the poet’s reasons for putting examples in Aphrodite’s mouth, i.e. to the primary or ‘argument’ function and the secondary or ‘key’ function of the mythological examples respectively.⁹

Beginning her speech, Aphrodite is at pains to reassure a terrified Anchises

7 The different interpretations of Zeus’ aim are summed up in Clay 20062, 165–6 (and n. 43–5). Van der Ben’s (1986, 6–7) and Clay’s (20062, 170) proposal that Zeus’ aim was to put a permanent stop to affairs between gods and mortals, not to Aphrodite’s boasting only, has received critical scrutiny in Faulkner 2008, 10–18.

8 Text citations are from Càssola’s edition (1975) with some deviations. Translations are from Evelyn-White’s translation (1914), or are slight adaptations of this translation.

9 The terms have been coined in Andersen 1987, 3–7.

that no harm will befall him as a consequence of his consorting with a goddess (192–5). She then announces that a son will result from their union, Aeneas, and explains his name as a reminder of her terrible distress (αἰνὸν ... ἄχος) at having ‘fallen in the bed of a mortal man’ (196–9). There follows the pivotal couplet which bridges the actual situation with the mythical past conjured up through the examples:

200–01

ἀγχίθιοι δὲ μάλιστα καταθητῶν ἀνθρώπων
αἰεὶ ἀφ’ ὑμετέρης γενεῆς εἶδός τε φηὴν τε

Of all mortal men those of your race
are always the closest to gods in beauty and in appearance.

Anchises – Ganymede – Tithonus

The verses set the scene for the first level of analogy operating in the examples, that between Anchises and his ancestors, Ganymede and Tithonus. Anchises, whose name partly resonates in the first component of the programmatic ἀγχίθιοι (200),¹⁰ remains steadily in focus throughout Aphrodite’s examples. The multivalent syntax and semantics of the adjective¹¹ convey multiple aspects of Anchises’ connection with the human protagonists of the examples. Like Ganymede and Tithonus, Anchises possesses godlike beauty: he is ἀγχίθεος ... εἶδός τε φηὴν τε. His exceptional beauty captivates Aphrodite instantly and spurs her into action (55–6), as Ganymede’s and Tithonus’ good looks once prompted Zeus and Eos to take action (203 ἤρπασε ὄν διὰ κάλλος and 218–19 ἤρπασεν ... | ... ἐπιείκελον ἀθανάτοισι). What is more, Anchises is a member of a family that time and again yields men to whom gods are attracted and with whom the gods develop intimate relations (ἀγχίθιοι ... αἰεὶ ἀφ’ ὑμετέρης γενεῆς).¹²

However, the analogy between Anchises and Ganymede/Tithonus is asymmetric in one major respect, i.e. Ganymede and Tithonus were transported to the divine sphere and became immortal (ἀγχίθιοι in an absolute sense), but neither of these things will happen to Anchises. Given that Aphrodite’s programmatic statement announces a comparison between men in terms of beauty (perhaps an ironic reversal of the famous beauty contest on Ida that

¹⁰ Van der Ben 1986, 24 (comm. on 200–01) and Faulkner 2008, 261 (comm. on 200). The adjective, an emendation proposed by Barnes (1711), is clearly superior to the manuscripts’ ἀγχι θεοί.

¹¹ Van der Ben 1986, 24 (comm. on 200–01).

¹² Podbielski (1971, 66–75, esp. 71, and 102) views this thematic line as ‘principe compositionnel’.

caused the Trojan War?) and also that the main topic of the *exempla* is the immortality of beautiful men from Anchises' lineage who have caught the eye of immortal gods, the paradigmatic expectations are seriously thwarted when Aphrodite concludes at the end of her short analeptic narratives:

239–46

οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε σὲ τοῖον ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἐλοίμην
 ἀθάνατόν τ' εἶναι καὶ ζῶειν ἤματα πάντα
 ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν τοιοῦτος ἐὼν εἶδός τε δέμας τε
 ζῳοῖς ἡμέτερός τε πόσις κεκλημένος εἴης
 οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτά μ' ἄχος πυκινὰς φρένας ἀμφικαλύπτου
 νῦν δέ σε μὲν τάχα γῆρας ὁμοῖον ἀμφικαλύψει
 νηλεῖές τ' ἔπειτα παρίσταται ἀνθρώποισιν
 οὐλόμενον καματηρόν ὃ τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ.

I would not have you be deathless among the deathless gods and live continually after such sort. Yet if you could live on such as now you are in looks and in build, and be called my husband, sorrow would not then enfold my careful heart. But as things are, hostile, merciless old age will soon enshroud you, which attends men in the time to come, accursed, wearisome, most certainly abhorred by the gods.

τοιοῦτος ἐὼν εἶδός τε δέμας τε in 241 picks up ἀγχιθεοὶ ... εἶδός τε φηγήν τε (200–01) and signals that Aphrodite's paradigmatic thinking and reasoning have come full circle. The correspondences and responses between 200–01 and 241–2 indicate that the two examples in Aphrodite's speech form a paradigmatic unity. Consequently, they should be viewed not as two contrasting examples¹³ but as interlocking parts in a unified train of thought and argument explaining why Aphrodite cannot and will not transport her lover to the realm of the gods.

In terms of 'argument function' then Aphrodite's examples are artfully ambiguous. Ostensibly directed at Anchises, they ultimately (by virtue of the pivotal adjective ἀγχιθεοὶ) pertain primarily to Aphrodite herself. Their purpose is to explain and justify her departure from the scene without her lover. Contrary to most Homeric examples, here the *prima facie* addressee, Anchises, is the silent and passive recipient of the goddess' decision. There is no question of the examples serving to persuade or dissuade him.¹⁴ As the decision-maker,

13 Richardson 2010, 28. Lenz (1975, 111–12 and 128) has stressed the 'einheitliche Rammung' of the examples.

14 Contra Smith 1981, 69 'We should be alive to the possible persuasive intentions of Aphrodite's speech; when we have heard from her about Ganymede and Tithonos, we should be ready to perceive how, from Anchises' point of view, they might apply to his own case.'

Aphrodite merely explains to him what the situation is. Her point of view, inscribed in the second component of the programmatic ἀγχιθῆοι, imbues her *paradeigmata* and shapes the conclusion, to which I now turn.

Aphrodite – Zeus – Eos

Aphrodite's conclusion is permeated by negative forms of expression (οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε ... ἐλοίμην, οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτά μ' ἄχος ... ἀμφικαλύπτοι), obscurities and logical cracks. The negative formulations tally with the negative conclusion: Aphrodite will not seek to immortalize Anchises. However, this is nowhere stated in unambiguous terms. The goddess touches upon it in 239–40 only as a possibility which is contingent upon a fate similar to that of Tithonus (subsumed under τοῖον in 239). One may reasonably object here, as many scholars have done already, that it would not be necessary for an immortal Anchises to age like Tithonus, if the former's divine lover knows what to watch out for when seeking to make him immortal.¹⁵ The goddess' final words on the matter (244–6) dwell on the unavoidability of aging for Anchises but stop conspicuously short of mentioning the reason, i.e. that Aphrodite will not seek to challenge the limits of mortality and appeal to Zeus for immortality for her lover.

Aphrodite's fragmented discourse and her reticence to spell out her decision may become more comprehensible if we consider how the mythological examples pertain to her and how the past is presented with her, and her situation, as a point of reference. This vantage point brings Zeus' presence and role in the two mythological examples into sharp focus and renders them hermeneutically meaningful at story level. The pair Zeus – Ganymede in the first example replicates the pair Aphrodite – Anchises in the actual situation. Shown in a situation similar to that of Aphrodite, Zeus transports his favoured member of Anchises' family to the divine realm and accords him a position of honour among the immortals. He also has the power to amend any negative repercussions of the immortalization, turning the sorrow of Ganymede's father into joy when he sends him news of his son and gifts (207–17).

The constellations in the first mythological example, however, miss out something of the actual situation in which Zeus is Aphrodite's secret

¹⁵ Most succinctly formulated by Clay 20062, 190: 'Her contention, however, is flawed by the simple fact that there is no reason why Aphrodite should repeat the foolish mistake of Eos' and Olson 2012, 253: '... why could she not have repeated Dawn's experiment, with the flaw in the plan corrected?' From a slightly different angle Bergren 1989, 35 asks 'And why does she not at least mention to Anchises the possibility of appealing to Zeus, if only to insist upon its futility?' For an overview of options and proposed solutions see Olson 2012, 253–4.

opponent, as the narratees are aware by dint of 46–52. The triangle Aphrodite – Anchises – Zeus is replicated accurately only in the second mythological example. This stages a lovelorn Eos transporting Tithonus to the realm of the immortals with Zeus’ consent, only to discover that she forgot an essential dimension of his human nature, aging. Eos does not have the power to remedy the consequences of her lover’s ultimately unsuccessful immortalization. She watches helplessly as he is gradually enfeebled and reduced to a mere voice until, in the end, she cannot even bear the sight of him. Interpretations of the poem have raised the question of whether Aphrodite is aware of Zeus’ part in her adventure.¹⁶ Indeed, Zeus’ position of power in matters of immortalization is acknowledged in Aphrodite’s examples. It may, moreover, be projected onto the actual situation by dint of the example’s ‘key function’ as ‘a *sign* of the main story and a *comment* on its own context’.¹⁷ Should Aphrodite wish to transfer Anchises to the realm of immortality, Zeus would have to appear in the story to sanction it. His record suggests that he would consent, but this is not what matters most for Aphrodite.

Aphrodite’s relation to Eos in the hymn also rests on the ‘key function’ of exemplarity. In addition to Eos’ miscalculation being a deterrent for Aphrodite, both goddesses are on the losing end of affairs with mortals and also in their dealings with Zeus. I suggest that the paradigmatic relationship between Aphrodite and Eos may include a further dimension which is rooted in the goddesses’ partly overlapping identities in terms of religious–mythological tradition and origins. The Greek goddess Eos is the fully fledged counterpart of the PIE goddess of Dawn, *H₂éusōs. Aphrodite’s divine identity is complex. Although her main realm of action is different than that of Eos and *H₂éusōs, and many of her divine traits derive from the Semitic/Phoenician goddess Ištar/Astarte,¹⁸ part of her identity overlaps with that of the PIE Dawn goddess.¹⁹ Should the connection be accepted,²⁰ Eos may be upgraded from a mere external parallel, a scatter-brained predecessor of Aphrodite in the business of seducing male members of the Trojan royal family, to an *alter ego* of, and a stand-in for, Aphrodite. Of course, more than speculation is hardly possible concerning issues involving divinities and story patterns that migrate across time and cultures. There is, furthermore, no denying that aspects of

16 Clay 20062, 190–1.

17 Andersen 1987, 5.

18 Càssola 1975, 234–9; Breitenberger 2007, 7–20.

19 Boedeker 1974, 1–42 and 64–84; Friedrich 1978, 9–54, esp. 47–9; Kölligan 2007; Janda 2010, 247–8. Friedrich’s balanced weighing of the possibilities as well as Kölligan’s comparative study of the Greek epithets of Aphrodite and their counterparts in the Vedic tradition are particularly convincing.

20 The possibility has been raised *en passant* in Friedrich 1978, 67 but has not been explored further.

Aphrodite's representation in the hymn relate to Near Eastern motifs²¹ or that elsewhere in the Greek epic tradition she holds roles that point back to Ištar.²² More importantly, even scholarly consensus on Aphrodite's origins would not automatically resolve the most crucial issue of all when such connections are ventured – the issue of whether the relationship is consciously exploited in the hymn, or whether the two figures cross paths in this story as a result of traditional mythological undercurrents and narrative concatenations circulating freely. Be this as it may, the hermeneutic legitimacy of the connection rests instead on the observation that the second mythological example, and especially Eos' part in it, fills in the blanks in Aphrodite's subsequent reasoning. That Aphrodite's conclusion and decision may be articulated as though what happened to the couple Eos – Tithonus would necessarily also happen to her and Anchises shows, at the very least, how intensely the goddess identifies with Eos and her fate. That Aphrodite is able to avoid mentioning her going up to Zeus to ask for immortality for Anchises, as well as her encapsulation of her unwillingness in the opaque and pregnant-with-possibilities *vūv δέ* (244), is feasible because the scene of approaching Zeus to ask for immortality for one's mortal lover has already been enacted in the mythological past by her stand-in, Eos. The traditional identification with Eos allows the goddess to hide thoughts and also avoid mentioning what gives her discomfort.

A reticence to name and reveal (or conversely, an intense preoccupation with hiding) marks every step of Aphrodite's thought and discourse in the aftermath of her adventure with Anchises. Following the markedly evasive conclusion of her *paradeigmata*, the goddess stresses her resulting inability to mention that she enmeshes gods and goddesses in affairs with mortals (252–3).²³ The living proof of her union with Anchises, Aeneas, will remain 'hidden away' for the first years of his life with the forest nymphs (256–80) and will be later presented as the offspring of one of them (281–5). Anchises is most insistently enjoined not to reveal the affair (281–90).

Accordingly, Aphrodite's language foregrounds not-naming, voicelessness and negative forms of voice/sound: Tros 'groaned' (*γόασκε*, 209); Eos is *νηπίη* (literally 'voiceless', 223); the aged Tithonus' 'voice flows indescribable' (*φωνή ῥέει ἄσπετος*, 237); the goddess describes her own situation as *ᾄδειδος* (247 '[words bringing] shame')²⁴ and *ἄχος* ('distress'). The latter word, *ἄχος*, is etymologically akin to the participle *ἄχέων/ἄχεύων* meaning 'crying

21 Càssola 1975, 547 (comm. on 68–74); Faulkner 2008, 19–22.

22 As argued in e.g. Andersen 1997.

23 Faulkner 2008 14–18.

24 *LfrE* Vol. 3, 710 s.v. 'Schimpfwörter', 'Schmäungen', 'Vorwürfe die man äußert od. (als Tadel der Öffentlichk.) über sich ergehen lassen muß'.

mournfully²⁵ and resonates with ἀχέω, which means ‘to proclaim loudly’, ‘to sing’, ‘to make (an instrument) sound’.²⁶ This connection is most interesting and may even be echoed in Aphrodite’s description of her future inability to name her triumphs over the other gods, if Buttmann’s emendation of the manuscripts’ unsatisfactory *στοναχίσεται* is adopted in 252²⁷ (252–3 νῦν δὲ δὴ οὐκέτι μοι στόμ’ ἀχίσεται ἐξονομῆναι | τοῦτο μετ’ ἀθανάτοισιν ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὸν ἀάσθη | σχέτλιον οὐκ ὀνομαστὸν²⁸ ‘my mouth will no longer sound to name this among the immortals since I was greatly blighted, a terrible blight, not to be named ...’). Quite apart from the other factors that recommend the emendation,²⁹ the poet’s predilection for punning on Anchises and Aeneas (192 Ἀγχίσις – 200 ἀγχίθιοι, 198–9 Αἰνεΐας – αἰνόν ἄχος) increases the plausibility of yet another pun, associating Aphrodite’s ἄχος with her for-ever-tied tongue (198–9 οὐνεκα μ’ αἰνόν | ἔσχεν ἄχος and 243 οὐκ ἄν ἔπειτα μ’ ἄχος | πυκινὰς φρένας ἀμφικαλύπτει – 252 οὐκέτι μοι στόμ’ ἀχίσεται ἐξονομῆναι). Further examples of silences and prohibitions in the last part of Aphrodite’s speech include the nymphs’ silent presentation of Aeneas to Anchises (275 δειξουσὶ τε παῖδα)³⁰ and the warning not to boast of or mention the affair for fear of Zeus’ anger (286–8, esp. 286 εἰ δέ κεν ἐξείπῃς καὶ ἐπεύξῃς and 290 μῆδ’ ὀνόμῃς). Ironically, the latter mode of expression picks up Zeus’ thoughts on Aphrodite (48, καὶ ποτ’ ἐπευξαμένη εἶπῃ). Zeus’ plan, to tie Aphrodite’s tongue forever, has been fulfilled, and in a final ironic turn the poem reveals it all by means of Aphrodite’s own voice (Aphrodite’s initial address to Anchises is aptly introduced (176) with the formula ἔπος τ’ ἔφατ’ ἐκ τ’ ὀνομάζεν).

Paradigmatic adaptations

In Homer the comparison between the actual situation, the past conjured up in an *exemplum*, and other known versions of the same mythological story suggests that the paradigmatic past is malleable and is often adapted to the actual situation.³¹ This may also be true as regards Aphrodite’s *paradeigmata*. In the first mythological example Ganymede is carried off by Zeus, not by the

25 *LfrE* Vol. 1, 1751–2 s.v. ‘voll Trauer und Klage’, ‘traurig klagend’.

26 *LfrE* Vol. 1, 1750–1 s.v. ‘verkünden’, ‘besingen’, ‘ertönen lassen’.

27 Editors are divided between Matthiae’s στόμα τλήσεται ‘my mouth will dare’ (Cassola, Faulkner, Richardson) and Martin’s στόμα χεῖσεται ‘my mouth will open wide’ (Allen, Halliday and Sikes, Humbert, West, Olson).

28 Another emendation, by Martin, of the manuscripts’ ὀνομαστὸν (Clarke ὀνομαστὸν ‘to be blamed’).

29 Kamerbeek 1967, 392–3.

30 On 276–7, a rhapsodic alternative couplet which is at odds with Aphrodite’s preoccupation with hiding the affair, see Faulkner 2008, 291–2 (comm. on 274–7).

31 Willcock 1964, 152–3. The malleability of the past has been discussed more generally in Andersen 1990.

gods as in the version of the story told by Aeneas in the *Iliad* (20.232–5 και ἀντίθεος Γανυμήδης | ὃς δὴ κάλλιστος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων· | τὸν και ἀνιρέψαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἰνοχοεῦειν | κάλλεος εἵνεκα οἷο ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι μετεΐη). Since there is no reason why Aeneas would alter his family history in this way, a plausible scenario is that Zeus' active role in this version of the hymn derives from his looming position at story level as a more powerful parallel to Aphrodite.³²

According again to Aeneas' genealogical account in *Il.* 20.230–41, Tithonus belonged to the same generation as Anchises. Aphrodite's example implies a different chronology: should sufficient time be allowed for Tithonus to age at Eos' side, he must have belonged to (at least) the generation preceding that of Anchises. Again, since Aeneas would not have had any reason to alter his family history, it is likely that Tithonus is transposed back in time in order to serve as a *comparandum* to Anchises. Podbielski has argued that Eos' request to Zeus was modelled on her request on behalf of her son, Memnon in the *Aethiopsis*.³³ Be this as it may, it is worth noting that early poems on Tithonus focus either on his relationship with Eos (Hom. *Il.* 11.1–2 = *Od.* 5.1–2, Hes. *Theog.* 984–5) or on his aging. Mimnermus presents Tithonus as endowed with 'an imperishable evil, old age, something to shudder more than the trouble that death is' (fr. 4 West, *IE*² Τιθωνῶι μὲν ἔδωκεν ἔχειν κακὸν ἄφθιτον < – x > | γῆρας ὃ και θανάτου ρίγιον ἀργαλέου). Describing old age as an evil worse than death is typical of Mimnermus (fr. 1 and 2 West, *IE*²), while the subject of the verb cannot be ascertained.³⁴ In Sappho's fr. 58, Tithonus is transported by Eos to the ends of earth: '... being young and beautiful; yet, even him who had an immortal bedfellow grey old age conquered in time' (Sappho fr. 58.9–12³⁵ και γάρ π[ο]τα Τιθωνον ἔφαντο βροδόπαχυν Αὔων | ἔρωι φ..αθειςαν βάμεν' εἰς ἔσχατα γᾶς φέροισα[ν] | ἔοντα [κ]άλον και νέον ἀλλ' αὐτον ὕμως ἔμαρψε | χρόνῳ πρόλιον γῆρας ἔχ[ο]ντ' ἀθανάταν ἄκοιτιν). Eos' immortal youth makes the aging of her once-beautiful partner seem even uglier.³⁶ In both Sappho's and Mimnermus' poems then the emphasis seems to be firmly on Tithonus' aging. Tithonus' immortality is not hermeneutically required, although it may be implied in Mimnermus' κακὸν ἄφθιτον and in Sappho's ἐς πέρατα γαίης³⁷

32 Richardson 2010, 246 (comm. on 202–17) considers the versions as 'essentially the same', while Van Eck 1978, 74 maintains that the Iliadic version is secondary.

33 Podbielski 1971, 69.

34 The last foot has been supplied with ὁ Ζεὺς by Gesner (Ζεὺς by Trincavelli) or αἰεὶ by Schneidewin.

35 Text as in West 2005, 5.

36 West 2005, 6 'He [sc. Tithonus] lived on, growing ever more grey, frail, and decrepit, while ever beholding, and measuring himself against, the unfading beauty of his consort – even as Sappho grows old in the face of a cohort of protégées who, like undergraduates, are always young.'

37 Brown 2011, 22.

and ἀθανάτων ἄκοιτιν. Tithonus' youth and beauty, Eos' love for him, his transportation to her realm and then his inevitable aging, which is even more conspicuously sad at the side of an immortal and eternally youthful partner: these elements would have been in the common source of the poems, if indeed a common source ever existed.³⁸ The episode of Eos approaching Zeus to ask for immortality for Tithonus is suited to and derives from the paradigmatic logic because it introduces the supreme god in the role which Aphrodite is unwilling not just to accord him but even to speak of in the story.

Conclusion

The *Hymn to Aphrodite* offers a masterful representation of psychological and rhetorical evasion. When examined in the light of the poetics and 'rhetorics' of the Homeric *paradeigmata*, Aphrodite's mythological examples offer glimpses into the cognition of the humiliated and tongue-tied goddess in the wake of her affair with the mortal Anchises. Ostensibly concerned with Anchises, these analeptic tales are primarily shaped by Aphrodite's point of view as they jointly argue her decisions to leave her lover behind and to suppress the embarrassing affair. This strategy of suppression – a veritable triumph for Zeus' plan to curb Aphrodite's tongue – is effected in the examples which bring the supreme god into centre stage, only in the past instead of the present, and on one occasion set him up face to face with a goddess who has a traditional kinship with Aphrodite, thus enabling Aphrodite to express her dilemma as though it concerned somebody else. The hymn's handling of exemplarity matches the complexity of Aphrodite's situation and thought-processes at the moment when she suffers a case of 'the biter bit'. Thus, although it is illuminated by Homeric exemplarity, exemplarity in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* ultimately surpasses the Homeric paradigm in terms of its shifts in perspective and cognitive subtlety.

38 The relationship between the hymn, Mimnermus fr. 4 and Sappho fr. 58 is the subject of a complex scholarly debate that cannot be summarized here. Some scholars consider the hymn as Sappho's intertext (Rawles 2006) while others are inclined to postulate a common source, perhaps a narrative in which Tithonus featured as immortal and ageless (Bettarini 2007). Review of the discussion in Faulkner 2008, 270 (comm. on 218–38).

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