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SHORTER NOTES

MIXING WITH MEN AND NAUSICAA'S NEMESIS*

At *Odyssey* 6.273–88 Nausicaa explains to Odysseus that, out of concern for her reputation, she is unwilling to have him accompany herself and her maidservants all the way to town:

> τῶν [*sc.* the Phaeacians] ἀλεείνω φῆμιν ἀδευκέα, μή τις ὀπίσσω
> μωμεύῃ· μάλα δ' εἰσὶν ὑπερφίαλοι κατὰ δῆμον·
> καί νύ τις ὧδ' εἴπῃσι κακώτερος ἀντιβολήσας·
> "τίς δ' ὅδε Ναυσικάᾳ ἕπεται καλός τε μέγας τε
> ξεῖνος; ποῦ δέ μιν εὗρε; πόσις νύ οἱ ἔσσεται αὐτῇ·
> ἤ τινά που πλαγχθέντα κομίσσατο ἧς ἀπὸ νηὸς
> ἀνδρῶν τηλεδαπῶν, ἐπεὶ οὔ τινες ἐγγύθεν εἰσίν·
> ἤ τίς οἱ εὐξαμένῃ πολυάρητος θεὸς ἦλθεν
> οὐρανόθεν καταβάς, ἕξει δέ μιν ἤματα πάντα.
> βέλτερον, εἰ καὐτή περ ἐποιχομένη πόσιν εὗρεν
> ἄλλοθεν· ἦ γὰρ τούσδε γ' ἀτιμάζει κατὰ δῆμον
> Φαίηκας, τοί μιν μνῶνται πολέες τε καὶ ἐσθλοί."
> ὣς ἐρέουσιν, ἐμοὶ δέ κ' ὀνείδεα ταῦτα γένοιτο.
> καὶ δ' ἄλλῃ νεμεσῶ, ἥ τις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι,
> ἥ τ' ἀέκητι φίλων πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς ἐόντων
> ἀνδράσι μίσγηται πρίν γ' ἀμφάδιον γάμον ἐλθεῖν.

This discussion concentrates on the meaning of Nausicaa's words in lines 286–8, in particular on the force of the phrase καὶ δ' ἄλλῃ κτλ. and the sense of the verb μίσγηται. On the latter Hainsworth[1] comments, 'In later usage the simple verb in such a context is used as a euphemism for the sexual act. The line must have sounded most odd to the classical age.' Thus he translates 'associate with', citing *Odyssey* 7.247 as an exact parallel; since, in that place, the verb refers to nothing more than ordinary human intercourse (neither gods nor men 'have anything to do with' Calypso), with no further connotations, one must conclude that Hainsworth sees no innuendo whatever in 6.288.

It is clear that a neutral sense of μίσγεσθαι is quite possible in the poem,[2] but the verb is also, and more frequently, found in the context of sexual relationships. In most of these passages the sexual reference is conveyed not by the use of μίσγεσθαι alone, but by the addition of specific terms such as φιλότης and εὐνή;[3] even this, however, is enough to raise the possibility of a sexual connotation in 6.288. This possibility is strengthened when we note that there does exist a number of passages in which the verb is used without qualification as a simple euphemism for sexual intimacy. Admittedly, in a great many of these cases some other reference to sex or childbirth in the immediate context makes the application of μίσγεσθαι clear,[4] but these nonetheless remain instances of the simple verb, unqualified, in a specifically sexual sense; and in one passage of Book 20 it is the verb μίσγεσθαι itself, alone and

* I should like to thank Mr A. F. Garvie for his comments on an earlier draft of this note.

[1] *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1988), *ad loc.*

[2] See 1.209, 4.178, 24.314, as well as 7.247. The verb can also mean as little as 'come into contact with', 'be in/enter the company of'; 5.378, 386, 6.136 etc.

[3] 1.433, 5.125–6, 10.334, 15.420–1, 19.266, 23.219; cf. *Il.* 2.232, 3.445, 6.25, 161, 165, 9.133, 275, 14.295, 19.176, 24.131.

[4] 1.73, 7.61, 8.268 (the story described as one of φιλότης in 267), 11.268, 306–7, 15.430, 18.325, 22.445; cf. *Il.* 21.142–3.

unaided, which conveys the sexual connotation.[5] So it is not only the classical age which might, in the light of its familiarity with the euphemistic sense of μίσγεσθαι, have found the passage odd; the possibility of a sexual connotation is raised by the usage of the *Odyssey* itself.

I do not wish to suggest, however, that there is any *specifically* sexual sense in Nausicaa's use of μίσγηται in 288 – it would be superfluous for a well-brought-up young woman like Nausicaa to express her disapproval of a girl who has sex with men (pl.) before marriage; but I do wish to show that an entirely neutral sense of the verb could lead to a significant misunderstanding. Clearly μίσγεσθαι can be used over a wide range of senses; let us assume a polarity of two extremes, one of entirely innocent social intercourse and one of sexual intercourse; my contention is that Nausicaa's use of the verb lies somewhere between these extremes, and draws something of its connotation, but *not* its denotation, from the latter, sexual context.

Properly to determine the connotation of μίσγηται in 288 is not a matter of merely philological importance; rather it will contribute significantly to our view of the passage as a whole, and will even have implications for the study of Homeric values in general. The crux of the problem is this; if Nausicaa's νέμεσις is directed at any girl who merely associates with men before marriage, then she herself has been guilty of breaking the standard whose breach she is ready to criticize in others, for she is not married and she has been in Odysseus' company for some time. Quite natural, some may say; Homeric society is a shame culture and it is not the offence which matters, but its discovery; Nausicaa can readily countenance association with Odysseus, but cannot bear that her indiscretion should be discovered. Her response is purely calculative, based on fear of detection.[6]

Such a view, however, ignores the significance of the phrase καὶ δ' ἄλλῃ νεμεσῶ, ἥ τις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι in 286. Similar locutions elsewhere provide important evidence of the falsity of the thesis that appropriate behaviour in Homer is motivated by fear of external sanctions alone. Thus at *Odyssey* 15.69–71 Menelaus assures Telemachus that he need have no fear of incurring his resentment by wishing to leave:

> νεμεσσῶμαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλῳ
> ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδόκῳ, ὅς κ' ἔξοχα μὲν φιλέῃσιν,
> ἔξοχα δ' ἐχθαίρῃσιν· ἀμείνω δ' αἴσιμα πάντα.

Menelaus, then, is saying that he would not dream of acting in a manner which he would criticize in another. To say that one would feel νέμεσις against another is thus to express one's agreement with standards by which one is liable to be criticized.[7] Similarly, when Achilles, intervening in the quarrel between the lesser Ajax and Idomeneus in *Iliad* 23, points out that they themselves would feel νέμεσις against anyone who behaved as they do (23.494), he is making it clear (*a*) that he is not applying standards any more censorious than those to which the two antagonists normally subscribe and (*b*) that Ajax and Idomeneus should not persist in conduct

[5] 20.7 and 12, of the maidservants' intimacy with the suitors.

[6] A shame culture is defined by its earliest proponents as one in which concern for external sanctions, for punishment and disgrace, is the force which promotes socially approved behaviour; its members are thus supposed not to possess standards of their own; see M. Mead (ed.), *Co-operation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (New York, 1937), pp. 493–5, and R. Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (London, 1947), p. 223; that the shame culture–guilt culture antithesis is, at least in its original formulation, untenable is shown by G. Piers and M. B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study* (Springfield, IL, 1953, ²New York, 1971), yet it is still found, without explicit modification, in classical contexts.

[7] cf. M. Dickie, '*DIKE* as a Moral Term in Homer and Hesiod', *CP* 73 (1978), 91–101, at 94.

which they would recognize as reprehensible in others.[8] These locutions, then, appeal to the ideas that individuals possess standards of their own and that one does not do oneself that which one would criticize in another.

So Nausicaa is saying that she possesses standards of her own; but if μίσγηται means simply 'associate with' with no further connotations, she is already in breach of these standards. We can accept that Nausicaa might act against her own principles, but that she should enunciate those principles in explanation not of their observance, but merely of her concern that their breach should not be discovered would be strange, and would mean that the καὶ δ' ἄλλῳ... phrase behaves anomalously in this passage; whereas the other passages appeal to the idea that one should not do what one criticizes in others, Nausicaa, while using the same language, apparently abandons conduct which she regards as inappropriate in others only when it is in danger of becoming public. The significance of the other passages as indications of Homeric man's commitment to personal standards might be undercut by one in which the personal standard is enunciated, but ignored. But we should look further before accepting such an anomaly.

We can allow the phrase καὶ δ' ἄλλῃ νεμεσῶ κτλ. to bear the same force as analogous locutions only if we regard the conduct described as worthy of νέμεσις as different from Nausicaa's own. There are, in fact, clear signs that this is the case. In 286 τοιαῦτα refers not to Nausicaa's own future behaviour (entering the city in the company of a man) but to the criticisms made by τις κακώτερος in 274–84. Nausicaa would feel νέμεσις, then, at someone who acted in the manner attacked by the churlish elements in these lines; and these churlish elements do not simply criticize the fact of her presence in Odysseus' company. Rather they infer that the stranger will be her husband, implying that the relationship has already advanced beyond simple association; they picture, maliciously, Odysseus as a god who has arrived in answer to the maiden's prayers and who will 'have her forever', an allusion to the type of erotic encounter which is frequent between gods and virgins; and they conclude that it is good that Nausicaa *has found* a husband from elsewhere, since she has such obvious contempt for her local suitors – a typical male remark, by which a woman who has no interest in the group of males with which the speakers identify themselves is credited with amorous adventures elsewhere. In short, the reproaches which Nausicaa fears are full of innuendo, and imply much more than simple association. Accordingly, her application of μίσγηται to the behaviour of one who deserves these reproaches has the same overtones as the language of τις κακώτερος. Nausicaa does not use the word specifically to *mean* 'have sex with', but she is using it in full knowledge of its euphemistic sense; the rest of the line in which the verb occurs – 'before open marriage takes place' – itself suggests by contrast some covert form of intimacy.

To take Nausicaa's νέμεσις as directed at transgressions she does not see herself as having committed, then, preserves the coherence of the passage; it also fits better with the attitude of her father at 7.299–301, where he reproaches her for not bringing Odysseus back to the city along with her attendants; Alcinous has not given specific permission for Nausicaa to associate with this stranger, yet he clearly does not feel that there is anything wrong in her doing so, provided the situation is innocent[9] and

[8] cf. *Il.* 6.329–30, where Hector argues that Paris himself would fight or fall out with anyone whom he caught slacking – σὺ δ' ἂν μαχέσαιο καὶ ἄλλῳ... On these two second-person formulations see I. M. Hohendahl-Zoetelief, *Manners in the Homeric Epic* (*Mnem.* Suppl. 63, Leiden, 1980), pp. 11–13.

[9] The situation in this case is innocent in that Nausicaa has a duty to Odysseus as a guest, a duty to which she herself refers (6.206–8).

provided she is attended. It is extremely unlikely, then, that Nausicaa could, in 6.286–8, be referring to an absolute prohibition on the presence of unmarried girls among men without their parents' permission.[10] Where parental permission is required is in the forming of attachments leading to marriage; this is what the gossip of the citizens suggests Nausicaa has done, and it is to this that her use of the verb μίσγηται refers. Outwardly, at least,[11] it is not her own behaviour which Nausicaa recognizes as improper or which she describes as 'mixing with men', but that which is conjured up as a pejorative construction placed on her own conduct by the churlish elements in the polis.

To show that Nausicaa's νέμεσις is not directed at behaviour which could be compared with her own it is sufficient that her own behaviour should be innocent, and that this is so is suggested by the context of guest-friendship and by Alcinous' remarks; accordingly, it may be argued, I do not need a pejorative sense of μίσγηται to prove my case. By the same token, however, if the behaviour which Nausicaa criticizes is not her own, there is no need for a neutral sense of μίσγηται, and if 'mixing with men' is to paraphrase the taunts of the citizens and contrast with 'open marriage', a neutral sense, I submit, is impossible.[12]

Nausicaa's expression of her principles thus makes perfect sense; rather than enunciating principles which she is actively engaged in flouting, she is explaining to Odysseus exactly why the criticisms of the churlish elements, unjustified as they are, matter to her. The use of the καὶ δ' ἄλλῳ... formula in this passage therefore does not detract from, but reinforces the importance of the locution as an indication of Homeric man's awareness that he possesses standards of his own.

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[10] On the sense of line 287 and the difficulty in construing the genitives see Hainsworth, *ad loc.*

[11] The meeting between Nausicaa and Odysseus is very subtly handled, and, in particular, our knowledge of N.'s readiness for marriage is consistently exploited to colour our interpretation; it is possible that N. is so sensitive to criticism of her having found a husband from elsewhere precisely because she hopes to do just that; thus she may feel rather more vulnerable to criticism than might a girl with no thought of marriage in her mind. This does not entail, however, that N. should regard herself as guilty of 'mixing with men' in the manner which she would criticize in others, and any hidden anxieties she may feel do not affect the logic of her explicit remarks.

[12] Rieu's (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946 etc.) 'consorts with' is on the right lines.

PARMENIDES' REFERENCE

First in the aether Parmenides places the morning star, which he believes to be the same as the evening star...[1]

[the moon] always looking towards the sunshine[2]

I shall not be concerned with the truth or falsity of these ascriptions, only with the fact that they are just the sort of thing that Parmenides could have said. Nor is an

[1] Diels–Kranz A40a (Aëtius 2.15.4 [*Dox. Gr.* 345]) tr. Gallop. See Diogenes Laertius 8.14 (Diels–Kranz A40a also), where the same discovery is said to have been attributed by Parmenides to Pythagoras (but for two opinions, see Diels–Kranz A1, Diogenes Laertius 9.21–3).

[2] Diels–Kranz B15. See also Diels–Kranz A42 for direct statements that, according to Parmenides, the moon gets its light from the sun.