

BOOK REVIEW

The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women and Archaic Greece. By KIRK ORMAND. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 265. Hardcover, \$90.00. ISBN 978-1-107-03519-5.

The past decade has witnessed an explosion of publications on the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*: Martina Hirschberger's philological commentary (2004); Glenn Most's Loeb edition (2007); a volume of essays edited by Richard Hunter (2005); and Ioannis Ziogas' study of Ovid's reception of the poem (2013). Kirk Ormand's monograph serves as further evidence of contemporary interest in the poem, but takes an altogether different approach from previous studies: he explores interactions of the *Catalogue's* descriptions of marriage with the social context in which the poem arose.

Accepting the sixth-century date proposed by a number of scholars for the poem's composition (e.g. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, 1985), Ormand draws on the work of Leslie Kurke (*Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold*, 1999) and Ian Morris (articles from 1986, 1996, and 1998), who have discovered two competing "discourses" (Ormand's term, in preference to "ideologies") in late archaic Greek society: an "elitist" persuasion associated with aristocratic concerns, and a more "middling" perspective that focused on obligations towards the *polis*. At the same time an earlier aristocratic emphasis on the exchange of goods to cement social ties was being challenged by the rise of mercantile wealth, and the accompanying idea that transactions could have a purely monetary value. Ormand believes that an elitist view dominates the *Catalogue* and its representations of marriage, but that "middling" concerns of civic responsibility and mercantile wealth intrude periodically into the poem.

After a first chapter that explores the sorts of social themes outlined above, Ormand considers references to *hedna* in the *Catalogue's* accounts of wooing, alongside the absence of the lexeme in classical literature. He understands *hedna* as gifts from well-born suitors, who through their generosity competed for status within an aristocratic hierarchy, but who also, through the very fact of taking part in such competitions, confirmed their place in an elite social class. The aristocratic custom of giving *hedna* fell out of favor with the rise of classical *poleis*. In the

light of this social development, and his dating of the *Catalogue* to the sixth century, Ormand concludes that the poem's mentions of *hedna* represent a late assertion of aristocratic *mores* before the decisive changes of the classical age.

Ormand goes on to explore the social dynamics of the poem, offering case-studies from its stories of suitors and brides. Firstly, in what is to my mind the strongest chapter in the book, Ormand considers an episode with a more "mid-dling" political orientation: the tale of the shape-changer Mestra, whose father Erysichthon sells her off to a succession of husbands, in the hope of satisfying his preternatural hunger. Ormand argues that Mestra's shape-shifting reflects the instability of an archaic Greek woman's identity, which was defined relative to her father and her husband, with the result that it was unclear to which man's *oikos* she ultimately belonged. Mestra abandons each of her husbands to return to her father, even when she finally becomes a mother, by Poseidon; her identity is thus decided in favor of her father's *oikos*. Similar priorities are reflected in the *epiklēros* legislation of the political moderate Solon: if a father died without male heirs, his daughter had to be married off to a male kinsman, even if she was already married.

The next three chapters focus on episodes that more closely reflect aristocratic perspectives on marriage. The fact that Atalanta's suitors come from various states to compete for her hand echoes aristocratic cultural practices, even if the competitive giving of *hedna* is replaced in that episode with a footrace against the potential bride (chapter 4). Alkmene, unlike Mestra, remains faithful to her husband Amphitryon even after he kills her father; thus, in keeping with sixth-century aristocratic priorities, she places loyalty to her husband above the claims of her *polis* and paternal *oikos* (chapter 5). Helen's suitors, like those of Atalanta, assemble from a number of Greek states. But the poem's admission that Achilles would have bested Menelaus, the richest man, if he had been old enough to attend suggests that the contest is decided by wealth rather than (aristocratic) merit. In this way, the *Catalogue* reflects the sorts of anxieties we see in Theognis, who describes challenges to traditional value systems from new wealth (chapter 6). Developing this thought, Ormand proposes that with its account of the wooing of Helen, which anticipates the Trojan War and the end of the Age of Heroes, the *Catalogue* offers an allegory for the end of an aristocratic age in archaic Greece (chapter 7).

Ormand has argued persuasively for the dominance of an aristocratic "discourse" in the poem; but some might not accept his association of that discourse with a sixth-century context. In particular, oralists might suspect that the poem's

competing discourses reflect societal influences felt throughout the tradition of composition-in-performance from which, presumably, the *Catalogue* developed. Indeed, as Ormand himself notes (page 15), studies by Erich Kistler (in Robert Rollinger and Christoph Ulf eds., *Griechische Archaik*, 2004) and Alain Duplouy (*La Prestige des élites*, 2006) reveal tensions between the two discourses from early archaic times. But this would be to question only the time-frame to which Ormand applies his findings, not the importance of his analysis of the poem's social dynamics.

The text has for the most part been well edited, but there were problems with the Greek quotations: in particular, characters with subdots caused problems on pp. 77 (ύέ[τεῶο for Πέ[τεῶο); 80, 91 and 106 (spaces after characters with subdots in ὁ ρκία, ἀρά σθαι, ἄλλον, πάγτας, ἔ [χοντα); 170, 189, 192, 198, 202, and 206 (double subdots and/or subdots missing from Διὸς, ἀπ[ο]θξίτο, γυ]γαικός, Χείρων,]οισι, ἐ]πὶ μαστῶι).

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