

catalogue act as “the captioning of an implied image” – an image formed in the minds of bard and audience.⁴

Sammons’ study has shown that, even if we as modern readers find Homeric catalogues ugly, we cannot dismiss their importance to Homeric aesthetics. Further studies of their performativity will, I hope, demonstrate that their ugliness and awkwardness are modern misperceptions.

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The Culture of Kitharôidia. By Timothy POWER. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies. Hellenic Studies Series. Harvard University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv + 638. Paper \$18.95. ISBN 978-0-674-02138-9.

This important book casts a flood of light on a neglected field of Greek lyric poetry. Neither the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed.) nor *Brill’s New Pauly* has an entry on kitharody, and Terpander, whose importance in kitharody is like Homer’s in epic, merits only a single paragraph in the *OCD*, and that a lightly refurbished note by C. M. Bowra from earlier editions. And yet the art of “singing to the kithara” was for centuries one of the most prominent and popular forms of Greek musical entertainment. Indeed, Power’s substantial and wide-ranging study makes kitharody key to understanding a vast body of Greek lyric, all that was sung to strings rather than to pipes (*auloi*).

There are, of course, formidable problems of evidence: primary texts are scrappy until the end of the fifth century BCE, and while ancient discussions of the art are abundant (Power notes that we have as much information about kitharody as we do for dramatic or epic performance), they are late and replete with confusion and contradiction. Power copes by adopting an eclectic methodology that includes not only the documentary evidence but also pictures of kitharodes in action on monuments, pots and wall paintings (thirteen very legible plates are appended). To reconstruct the genre’s proto-history he uses the methods of structural linguistics (the work stems from a dissertation advised by G. Nagy). Terpander emerges as an “idealized” author (224), retrospectively gener-

⁴David Elmer, “Helen *Epigrammatopios*,” *Classical Antiquity* 24 (2005) 1–39.

ated from the poetry to make it intelligible to classical audiences; the obscure kitharodic “nomes” are compared with Indian *rāga*’s as formats for melodic improvisation (227).

This linguistic-anthropological approach to the “Archaic kitharodic performance tradition” (243) is supplemented with techniques of cultural studies, and so this book promises to do for kitharody what Peter Wilson and Eric Csapo have done for aulody. Opening with a “thick description” of a kitharodic performance by Nero signals that Power wants to integrate larger literary processes with specific historical instantiations. Nero serves as a leitmotiv for Part I which brings out the lastingness and popularity of the form while addressing such cultural-studies issues as whether kitharody had a distinctive erotics or gender (arguing on pp. 57–71 that women “probably” could serve as kitharodes in some contexts). A main claim of this part is that kitharody proper, the professional spectacle, only came to Rome late, and indeed that Nero’s fascination with the flamboyant form had a lot to do with encouraging its spread.

Readers of Greek lyric will especially focus on Parts II–IV, which trace the art from its foundations through the developed classical forms. Power hypothesizes that both kitharody and rhapsody derived from Dark-Age phorminx-players who could provide both musical accompaniment for melic choruses or monadic presentations of heroic themes. Power’s prototypical performance began with an instrumental introduction (*anabolê*), followed by a brief prelude (*prooimion*) sung by the kithara-player and then the main choral song which the performer would accompany as *kitharistês*. The kernel was the middle piece, which was expanded into long, elaborate competition pieces – kitharody for lyre-singers and “Homeric” hymns for rhapsodes.

This hypothetical scenario comes to life when Power reads passages in archaic poetry as alluding to their tradition. For example, the Chian *aoidos* who addresses the Delian Maidens’ chorus in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* is interpreted as an Alcman-type kitharist who sings solo *prooimia* to the maiden chorus he accompanies (202). Within the hymn, the interlude functions as a rhapsodic *prooimion* acknowledging its “kitharodic” lineage. (An example of the fruitfulness of Power’s perspective is that it illuminates Sappho’s address to her girls in the poem published in 2005: 202 n. 43).

As Power proceeds, kitharody begins to crop up everywhere. For him, the *humnos* with which Hesiod won the prize at Amphidamas’ funeral games was a proto-kitharodic performance, and such figures as the *Odyssey*’s Phemius or Demodocus are proto-kitharodes not proto-rhapsodes, though both rhapsodes

and kitharodes later claimed them as prototypes for their own art. Again, such identifications pay off when Power can show texts engaging in inter-generic competition. For example, when Demodocus sings about Ares and Aphrodite to a lyre in the presence of dancers, Power sees Homer “embody[ing] the transformation of choral *kitharistês* into the kitharode” (210); the story of Thamyris’ being stripped of his *kithara* playing is a “reflex of kitharodic-rhapsodic antagonism” (254). When Achilles sings heroic songs to the *phorminx* in *Iliad* 9, Powers detects the kitharodic art of the famed “Lesbian Singers,” adducing M. L. West on the old Aeolic phase of Homeric diction. Their songs were also heard by Sappho, and her reference to a high-pitched (*orthion*) song to Apollo in Fr. 44.32–34 is taken as a deliberately anachronistic reference to Terpander’s *orthios nomos*.

The synthetic sweep is impressive even if not all its details will convince. Power has to allow for wiggle room in the evidence because some figures he regards as proto-kitharodic (e.g. Demodocus or Philammon) also function as (non-singing) *kitharistai*. Whether to write off such evidence as “diachronic skewing” is sometimes in the eye of the beholder: in Pindar, for example, representations of choruses led by the kithara are sometimes taken as stylized but accurate (e.g. *Pyth.* 1.1 ff.) and sometimes as “skewed” in an archaizing way (e.g. *Nem.* 5.21–6). Sometimes I thought Powers multiplied entities unnecessarily to keep his schemes neat, as in positing “secondary choral *prooimia*” (203) for fragments like Alcman 14 *PMG*, which may more simply be taken as regular, but manneristic *prooimion*, as in Pindar. On the huge question of whether Stesichorus, Pindar or Ibycus performed as kitharists accompanying a chorus (as Power thinks: 235) or as soloists, he seemed to disregard the evidence of papyri in favor of the testimonia of the *Suda* (235–6).

But Power’s discussion of the evidence (accessible through an Index Locorum) is always intelligent and well informed, and the comprehensive picture he gives opens up exciting vistas and certainly gives one much to ponder. This invaluable study of fundamental texts on early Greek lyric will be an indispensable source for further studies in the genre.

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