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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Claude Calame. *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Functions.* Maryland and London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997. xii + 282 pp. $46.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8226-3063-0; $82.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8226-3062-3.

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Published on H-Women (January, 1998)

This book is a recent translation of the original French edition published in 1977: *Les Choeurs de Jeunes Filles en Grece Archaique*. The book has also been updated in terms of bibliography. The English title of the current edition is somewhat misleading in that the book is, as the original French title clearly indicates, concerned with choruses of girls and young women in *archaic* Greece, that is, the seventh and sixth centuries BC. The main points of the book are as follows: archaic Greek society was in many respects a musical society. The ubiquitous girl and boy choirs that existed during that and (to a lesser extent) in the following periods were the primary means by which adolescents were educated and socialized. According to Calame, "The chorus members learn(ed) and internalize(d) a series of myths and rules of behavior represented by the material taught all the more since archaic choral poetry has to be understood as a performative act, as a set of poems representing cult acts in precise ritual contexts" (p. 231).

There is, of course, a very limited quantity of relevant text surviving from the archaic period. Calame employs a philological and linguistic analysis of the extant scraps of lyric poetry and the ancient commentaries on the same subject, and refers frequently to surviving representations of choruses on vases and in terra cotta, of which a substantial quantity exists. In addition, Calmae analyzes the idealistic descriptions of Spartan and other societies provided by writers like Xenophon and Plutarch, all of whom mention choruses as instruments of education, and indeed frequently use the Greek words for chorus and chorus leader as synonyms for students and teacher. Plato's utopian Laws also stress the choruses as the most appropriate forum for creating perfect citizens. Calame lists and categorizes the various contexts of choral performances in archaic Greek culture. Despite the fact that they often appear to fulfill different purposes, they all tend to inscribe and reinforce societal norms. Calame refers to similar functionalist models in anthropological studies of other oral and musical societies as analogies.

Choruses of girls in archaic Greek culture, like those of boys, consisted of homogenous age groups, and members of age groups usually progressed together through a cycle of choruses as they matured. Calame shows how the divine auspices governing the choral groups varied according to the age of the performers. Artemis, the virgin hunter goddess, is frequently associated with adolescents. Hera, associated with marriage and maturity, is usually associated with older unmarried girls and women. Calame posits a connection between the location of rites and shrines to Artemis (usually outside city boundaries) and the untamed outsider qualities recognized in adolescence. By acknowledging a ritual outsider status for adolescents, these rituals reinforce their eventual integration into the community of adults. The frequent allusions to abduction, rape, and suicide in Artemisian rituals signify a ritual death of the adolescent as a prefatory step to adulthood. The frequent inclusion of agnus castus trees in the rituals reflects their ancient employment as an herb conducive to both chastity and fertility. Finally, some Artemisian festivals celebrate the survival of the community through a traumatic event and, ultimately, the rebirth of the community. Together these elements signify the transitional position adolescents occupied in Greek culture and an imminent initiation into the adult community. The progression of the girl choruses from the divine auspices of Artemis to those of Hera reflects the culmination of this initiatory process. These conclusions are general, and are distilled from ritual elements across archaic Greece.

In particular, Calame examines the choruses of girls associated with Sappho on the island of Lesbos. The individuals in these choruses came from all over Ionia (the eastern Aegean), and were members of the aristocratic

class. It was Sappho's job to initiate her charges into their expected roles as wives and mothers in aristocratic families. Her instruction was ritualized under the religious auspices of the goddess Aphrodite. In this context the students sang Sappho's poetry. Calame takes up the obvious homoerotic elements evident in Sappho's poetry, and places them alongside certain well known initiatory Greek rituals for boys. In all of these cases concerning boys, an ambiguous and sexually charged but nevertheless temporary relationship with an older mentor figure is a primary element in the ritual transition to adulthood.

Calame points out that the individuals for whom Sappho was ostensibly pining in her poetry were usually former students who had graduated. The beauty that Sappho celebrated in those young women can be interpreted as a recognition of their perfection, a perfection which had resulted both from graduation to adulthood and the acceptance of normative sexuality. Calame reminds the reader of the Greeks's definition of beauty as a virtue. Sappho's real or imagined sexual relationships with her former charges is therefore secondary to the fact that her current charges ritually sang the praises of those who had left. The explicitly temporary nature of these homoerotic liaisons reinforced the permanent alternative into which the students inevitably graduated. The argument was novel when first propounded twenty years ago, and is still fresh. But Calame's conclusions here are inherently controversial because they outrun the evidence by a significant margin.

Calame also gives the Spartan choruses special attention. Unlike the choruses associated with Sappho, Spartan choruses included all citizen children. The choruses were therefore a feature of the political structure and their content reflected official needs. We know that the boys of Sparta were ultimately trained to be subservient to authority and to be good warriors; Calame asks, for what role were the girls trained? According to Calame, domestication and submission are the most frequent themes celebrated by Spartan girl choruses. All are geared toward marriage, the proper end of which is the production of more Spartan warriors. This also explains the unusual sexual license accorded Spartan women. Calame's conclusions on this topic are logical if not controversial, and reinforce what we already know about Sparta, but as with those concerning Sappho's girls, they reach further than the evidence.

The apparatus of the book is fairly good. The table of contents is a detailed outline of the book. The footnotes are extensive, and very useful, and add many references not present in the eight pages allotted to the appended bibliography. The index is a bit uneven: the forty-odd page references listed under "marriage" have no further annotations, yet "dance," with only thirteen page references, is sub-divided into six separate categories. The translation of the text into English is a good one. The book is well worth reading. It is certainly a must-read for classicists interested in lyric poetry. It also has important applications for those interested in the history of education and the inscription of gender. But I wonder for whom is this re-publication intended. The philological and linguistic arguments are virtually inaccessible except to specialists. The first half of the book is filled with untranslated ancient Greek and jargon derived from various modern languages. As a particularly egregious example, on page 45, the author uses untranslated words or phrases from three different languages in the same sentence. Furthermore, since the book has no photographs or drawings, it is impossible to assess the evidence derived from vases and terra cotta figures. The French edition (which is readily available in the libraries) has no illustrations either. The non-specialist is therefore forced to accept many of the conclusions on faith. Those scholars for whom the topic is important and who have the linguistic tools to critique the evidence have most likely already read the book in the French. If the re-publication of this book in English is an attempt to make the book available to a wider audience some effort ought to have been made to make the evidence and argument similarly available.

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Citation: Randall S. Howarth. Review of Calame, Claude, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Functions.* H-Women, H-Net Reviews. January, 1998.

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