HEKATE IN EARLY GREEK RELIGION

by

Ilmo Robert Von Rudloff
B.Sc., University of Victoria, 1982
M.Sc., University of Victoria, 1985
B.A., University of Victoria, 1988

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Classics

ACCEPTED
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
[redacted]
DEAN
DATE 4 FEB 93

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr. S. E. Scully, Supervisor (Department of Classics)

[redacted]

Dr. J. G. Fitch, Departmental Member (Department of Classics)

[redacted]

Dr. J. J. Tucker, Outside Member (Department of English)

[redacted]

Dr. J. M. Michelsen, External Examiner (Department of Philosophy)

University of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr. Sam E. Scully

ABSTRACT

Classical and later literature commonly presents Hekate as a goddess of malevolent magical practices and ghosts. However, earlier and contemporary evidence seems to contradict this picture by revealing beneficial functions and public acceptance of her worship. This study focuses upon all the evidence concerning the worship of Hekate in the Greek world until c400 B.C.E., to determine what her early primary functions were and how the later shift in emphasis in portrayal arose.

The limited record indicates that in early times Hekate was a secondary figure who could serve one or more of several specific functions that can be categorised under the titles *Propylaia, Propolos, Phosphoros, Kourotrophos,* and *Chthonia.* The first three of these were her most distinctive functions, and often involved attending upon more prominent deities such as Demeter and Persephone, Artemis, and Kybele. Two anomalous instances in which Hekate served a primary role, in the *Theogony* and in Roman Karia, are best explained as being isolated exceptions rather than indicating her early status. Hekate's chthonic function is poorly attested in the Archaic evidence, but came to be strongly emphasised and associated with extreme and fantastic magical practices in literature by the end of the fifth century. Aspects of this role suggest that it may have reflected an exaggerated literary tradition rather than prevalent religious and magical practices.

The early archaeological evidence is concentrated about the Aegean Sea and in western Anatolia. Together with the nature of many of her associations with other deities, this suggests that Hekate originated, at least in part, as a close but minor associate to the "Great Goddess" figure common to Anatolia. However, there is insufficient evidence to confine her homeland to Karia, the region favoured by modern scholars such as Nilsson, Kraus and Burkert.

Examiners:

[redacted]

Dr. S. E. Scully, Supervisor (Department of Classics)

[redacted]

Dr. J. G. Fitch, Departmental Member (Department of Classics)

[redacted]

Dr. J. J. Tucker, Outside Member (Department of English)

[redacted]

Dr. J. M. Michelsen, External Examiner (Department of Philosophy)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank most of all Dr. Sam Scully for his enthusiasm, gentle proddings, and constructive criticism and Bryony Lake for her incredible patience, computer expertise and boundless support throughout the preparation of this thesis. I am also grateful to Drs. John Fitch and John Tucker for their insightful comments and valuable questions in the final stages of preparation. Finally, thanks go to the patient inhabitants of D. and H., whose lives were put on hold for so long.

Dedication

Εἰνοδίαν Ἑκάτην κλήζω τριοδῖτιν ἐραννήν,
οὐρανίαν χθονίαν τε καὶ εἰναλίαν κροκόπεπλον,
τυμβιδίαν, ψυχαῖς νεκύων μέτα βακχεύουσαν,
Περσείαν, φιλέρημον, ἀγαλλομένην ἐλάφοισιν,
νυκτερίαν, σκυλακῖτιν, ἀμαιμάκετον βασίλειαν,
θηρόβρομον, ... παντὸς κόσμου κλειδοῦχον ἄνασσαν.

— Orphic Hymn to Hekate (post-Classical)

("I praise lovely three-formed Hekate Enodia,
of the sky, earth, and sea, saffron-veiled,
who celebrates Bacchanelia at the tomb, with the souls of the dead;
daughter of Perseis, lover of solitude, who is honoured with cakes,
nocturnal protector of dogs, the invincible sovereign,
heralded by the roar of wild beasts, ... keybearing Queen of the whole Cosmos.")

Introduction

The limited record of the goddess Hekate in antiquity appears to show many contradictions. The common presentation in many of the well-known plays and poems of Classical Greece and Augustan Rome is that of a benefactress of malevolent sorceresses and queen of restless ghosts and other nasty creatures of the night.[1] For example, one of antiquity's most imfamous characters, Medeia, was commonly portrayed as a devotee of Hekate. This negative image of the goddess seems to contrast significantly with the earliest literary references, as well as much of the meaningful inscriptional evidence, which portray a significant, beneficent, often specialised goddess of gateways, divine attendantship, birth, death, and personal interaction between humans and deities. An example of the extreme range of views is the difference between the Hekates of Hesiod and Horace[2]: the former honours Hekate for her powers over the Sky, Earth, and Sea (but not the Underworld), which are seemingly second only to those of Zeus, while the latter presents her as the object of debased worship of grotesque, supernatural, fairytale women who work evil necromancy in graveyards.

Evidence consistent with a benign picture of Hekate can be found in nearly every century of antiquity, including the following examples: her portrayal in two major literary works of the Archaic period, Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*; the popularity of personal names based on the stem Hekat-, especially in Ionia and Karia[3]; the occurrence of

---

1: For example, Euripides, *Medeia* 395f. and *Helen* 569f.; Ap. Rhod., *Argon*.3.1030ff., 3.1211ff., etc.; Horace, *Satires* 1.8; and Ovid, *Met*.7.194f., 14.44, etc.

2: Hesiod, *Theogony* 411-52; Horace, *Satires* 1.8.33ff.

3: The recent *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* by Fraser and Matthews (1987) is an excellent source, but to date only the first volume (from Cyprus, Cyrenaica, and the Aegean islands) has been published. 158 names are listed with the stem Hekat- (pp. 147f.): one from the sixth century, one from the fifth, ten from the fourth, 116 from the Hellenistic period, twenty-eight from the Roman period, and two undatable. The much older collection of Sittig (pp. 62ff.) has 267 Hekat- names from the entire Greek world, but only seventy-five are dated; of these, two are from the fifth century, one is from the fifth or

inscriptions from the first century B.C.E.[4] at Lagina showing her to be a powerful and dominant figure in Karia, and one from nearby Miletos in which a local person proudly highlighted his own career with the dedication of an altar to Hekate;[5] her role in the philosophical tradition surrounding the Chaldaean Oracles of the second and later centuries C.E., which has her as a personal saviour; and the devotion to her recorded in an epitaph from late fourth-century C.E. Rome of a prominent senator and his wife.[6]

Literary references to Hekate are moderately frequent, but most are very brief and nearly all are from the fifth century B.C.E. or later. Archaeological evidence is even more limited, with nearly all early material in the form of inscriptions, especially altar dedications. It does, however, come from regions as widespread as Sicily and Asia Minor, as well as mainland Greece itself. Very few temples to Hekate are known to have existed, and most sanctuaries to her were small and have yielded very little meaningful material. Statuary exists, but many pieces are Roman copies of earlier, unidentifiable Greek works;[7] it is very hard to determine how accurate these reproductions are.

Studies of Greek religion, starting in the last century, have tended to emphasise the negative aspects of Hekate. The earliest had a negligible archaeological record with which to work, and concentrated heavily upon the more artistic literary sources.[8] This literature was

---

fourth, twenty-five are from the fourth, twenty-four are Hellenistic and twenty-three are Roman. It should be noted, however, that the significance of these names to the study of the worship of Hekate has lately been called in question: this problem will be discussed in section III.3.

4: All dates hereafter are B.C.E. (before common era), unless otherwise noted.

5: For example, Kraus (1960) 11.

6: ILS 1259-61.

7: It is unfortunate that the excellent *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* does not yet include an entry for Hekate. Kraus (1960) has a good set of plates of three-form statues; otherwise, no substantial collection of plates of artwork involving Hekate has yet been compiled.

8: For example, Farnell (1909) II.201ff., Heckenbach (1912), Rohde (1925) II.80ff. and Wilamowitz (1931) I.169ff.

generally believed to offer accurate portrayals of contemporary beliefs and practices, with little regard given to the intentions of the ancient authors. The general consensus was that Hekate was a dangerous, nocturnal goddess of ghosts and evil magic, whose worship came to Greece in the Archaic period from some eastern or northern barbarian land such as Karia or Thrace. Little weight was given to evidence that did not fit this picture or suggested variations over time or between Greek and Roman culture. Thus the very favourable picture of Hekate in the *Theogony*, for example, was generally condemned as being an inferior addition inserted by devout but atypical devotees of the goddess of a subsequent century, or a product of Hesiod's peculiar personal views.[9] In effect, the fascination with Medeia in ancient (and modern) times made it easy to construct a quite specific picture of Hekate, but not necessarily one that was balanced or was based upon anything but a literary tradition.

More recently, with the increase in archaeological material, together with a more sophisticated understanding of early religions and a greater variety in analytical strategies, a far more varied picture has emerged. Nevertheless, the current view of Hekate still privileges the Hekate of, for example, Horace over that of Hesiod, treating the latter as little more than an inconsequential anomaly, and thus presents a quite lopsided and partial view.[10] Several recent papers have offered significant re-evaluations of the *Theogony* passage in particular,[11] but still have not adequately explained the conflicting diversity of ancient portrayals of her. Is this diversity illusory, that is to say an accident of the extremely limited nature of our evidence? If it is real, was it always present? Does it reflect the existence of relatively distinct "versions" of Hekate, the complex nature of a single one, or the existence of a literary tradition that did not reflect real religious practices? If different "versions" existed, was this diversity due to the functions and

---

9: Wilamowitz (1931) I.172, Nilsson (1967) I.722, West (1966) 276f. and Burkert (1985) 171.

10: For example, Nilsson (1967) I.722ff. and Burkert (1985) 171. Even Kraus (1960) 77ff., who grants Hekate a more benign beginning, sees her as having evolved into the unpleasant form through interaction with the Thessalian Goddess of Pherai, sometimes called *Enodia*.

11: Marquardt (1981), Boedecker (1983) and Clay (1984).

perception of her changing significantly over time? If so, did the "versions" co-exist? It is quite noteworthy that other deities with similar foci, such as Hermes (associated with journeys and the dead) and Artemis/Diana (with whom Hekate was often equated), have not suffered from the same negative reputation, then or now.[12]

This study will attempt to answer these questions by trying to determine the early "form" of Hekate: her origins, her early roles and her interactions with other deities, and the early attitudes expressed towards her. I shall concentrate upon the earliest material concerning her to minimise problems involved with extrapolations made backwards over centuries of cultural evolution. Previous studies of Hekate have either tried to deal with the entire span of antiquity, but concentrated heavily upon the more plentiful later material, or focused upon specific early pieces of evidence, notably the *Theogony*. A more comprehensive treatment of the pre-Classical period has thus been largely neglected, though it clearly needs to be better understood before arguments can be made concerning later changes to, and diversity in, the nature of Hekate. Furthermore, the study of a single, albeit minor, figure such as Hekate in pre-Classical times can contribute to our comprehension of Greek religion as a whole in that period. With our growing knowledge of the Bronze Age, especially through the interpretation of Linear B tablets, there has arisen a greater desire to understand the subsequent centuries leading up to the relatively well-known Classical period.

The procedure taken in this study is first to assemble the evidence. Analysis is made of major pieces on their own; then major themes that arise from the entire body of material are studied. Suggestions are made as to how her early functions could have been the basis for the later, negative portrayals. Aspects of the analysis which are weak are identified, as is evidence most open to reinterpretation or in need of supplementation.

12: Hermes was sometimes associated with liars, thieves and dishonest merchants, but this association arose from functions that he did not share with Hekate.

A cutoff date of about 400 B.C.E. has been chosen for most evidence, roughly the midpoint of the Greek Classical period and the one-third point of the entire record of Hekate in antiquity. It would have been preferable to stop one century earlier, at the end of the Archaic period (the eighth to sixth centuries), so as to minimise the range of possible evolutionary changes in religious practices and attitudes in the material analysed. However, the pre-Classical record of Hekate is simply too scanty to stand on its own. Fifth-century material is much more abundant, and it is not unreasonable to assume a degree of continuity with the previous century, though we must bear in mind that the fifth century was a period of rapid change in many areas including religion. Evidence pertaining to the fourth century or later, however, would in most cases be too late to reveal accurately aspects of pre-Classical worship. It would also involve taking into account a significant change in the predominant type of literary sources preserved, that from poetic drama to prose. Finally, it has been suggested that a significant change in the character of Hekate occurred in the second half of the fifth century, due to "contamination" with the Thessalian goddess *Enodia*[13]: if this occurred, then the inclusion of later materials introduces yet another complication.

In certain instances, however, material from later centuries is considered. For example, regions such as Thrace and Karia have often been suggested as homelands for Hekate, yet they are completely lacking in early evidence. It is therefore necessary to study what later material exists in order to consider seriously the possibility of early Hekate worship. This procedure is of course risky, and is pursued with due caution. More reliable than such retrospective extrapolations are the works of late writers which make mention of names, artifacts or legends that can be attributed to previous centuries. The possibility for error or misrepresentation still exists, but the reliability of some material can be determined through comparison with other sources: Pausanias and Strabo, for example, have proven often enough to have been reliable observers of what existed or was known in their day that in most cases one can safely accept what they write.

13: For example, Kraus (1960) 77ff.

The goal of this study is to illuminate the early Hekate and to explain the apparent conflicting diversity in her portrayal in the Classical and later periods. This will enhance our understanding of both her and Greek religion in general in the Archaic period.

Chapter I: Archaic literary evidence

Literary evidence for the worship of Hekate from the Archaic period is not very substantial. Two major works, the *Theogony* of Hesiod and the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, are by far the most significant. They are valuable sources in that, besides providing specific mention of Hekate, they are complete and thus offer insights into the overall context of the passages. The fragmentary *Catalogue of Women*, attributed to Hesiod but likely a sixth-century work,[1] may also have mentioned Hekate. In a reference to this work Pausanias (1.43.1) relates the story of Iphigeneia being transformed into Hekate by Artemis, though the only surviving fragment (23a M-W) from this section of the work does not explicitly mention Hekate.

The only other literary work that may be pre-Classical is fragment 42 (Jacoby) of Akousilaos, who wrote in the sixth or fifth century. This text simply states that Hekate was the mother by Phorkys of Skylla. Two legendary figures by the name of "Skylla" are known, neither of which is particularly noteworthy: the sea monster in book 12 of the *Odyssey*, and a daughter of King Nisos of Megara.[2] Fifth-century references, while numerous, are mostly very short; the more important ones will be discussed individually in chapters III and IV.

I.1 Hekate in the Theogony of Hesiod

Hesiod's *Theogony*, probably the earliest major extant Greek literary work, can be dated to the late eighth or early seventh century.[3] Lines 411-452 are devoted to describing the birth, history, powers, and spheres of influence of Hekate. At forty-two lines, this passage is the longest

---

1: Many of the genealogies may have originated one or two centuries before; see West (1985b) 136, 164.

2: Skylla of Megara is mentioned in Ovid, *Met.*8.11ff., who has her transformed into the monstrous Skylla by Circe.

3: West (1966) 40 and Walcot (1966) 109.

section in the entire poem pertaining to an individual deity other than Zeus.[4] It also involves humans more than any other section. In brief, Hekate is described as follows:

411: she is the child of Asteria and Perses (and thus a cousin of Artemis and Apollo);

411-15: she is honoured by Zeus above all others, and is granted shares by him in the Sky, Earth, and Sea;

416-18: she is invoked by humans in every sacrifice;

418-20: she grants (or withholds) much favour and success to humans who call upon her;

421-28: she keeps the rights that she held among the Titans, as an only child and direct descendant of Gaia, Ouranos and Okeanos ("Earth", "Sky" and "Sea");

429-47: she blesses six specific groups of mortals: leaders, warriors, athletes, cavalrymen, fishermen (with Poseidon) and herdsmen (with Hermes);

448-49: she is honoured by all the deities although she is an only child;

450-52: she is a *kourotrophos* ("nurse") to all living beings.

This portrayal of Hekate in the *Theogony* has long posed the biggest stumbling block for understanding the goddess, for four main reasons. Firstly, the overall portrayal of Hekate bears little relationship to that found in nearly all later literary works. In particular, there are no chthonic, lunar or overtly magical traits, nor any mention of torches or her favourite haunting place, the crossroads. Secondly, her *timai* ("honours" or, more loosely, "functions") are unusual in the context of the poem itself. They are more universal than those of all other deities except Zeus, yet they are quite specifically shared (422): "hers is a special kind of *time*, superimposed upon the formal scheme, but harmonizing with it."[5] Thirdly, Hekate's parentage is surprisingly obscure, for one who has had such grand honours from the beginning, and emphasises her anomalous position.

4: The passage is often referred to as a "hymn" (for example, Burkert [1985] 177) but this is misleading: the label has arisen largely because of the common interpretation that the passage was an interpolation. Its praising nature is common to the entire poem.

5: West (1966) 277.

Lastly, despite the importance granted to her in the passage, she is entirely absent from the rest of the poem, as well as the Archaic record of Boiotia, Hesiod's homeland.

These apparent problems cast much doubt upon the authenticity of the passage. This has led to much analysis over the last century and a half, although, interestingly enough, the passage is not known ever to have been disputed in antiquity. Is it evidence for Hekate's widespread popularity, a proselytising insert reflecting the personal views of Hesiod or of some later poet, or a structural feature of the poem that has little religious significance? Even if the entire passage was added to the poem at a later date, it would still be the fullest and one of the oldest references to Hekate, and thus be too valuable a source to ignore.

The dominant interpretation until the second half of this century was that the passage was not written by Hesiod. The extant version of the poem was seen as a hodgepodge relic of a now-lost masterpiece, that had been significantly modified by some later, inferior author.[6] Thus Kirk argued that it had "obviously suffered major expansions and omissions as well as many minor interpolations,"[7] and Warr called it "an incoherent medley".[8] In particular, either Hekate was a clumsy substitute for some original child of Asteria and Perses, or the passage was expanded greatly. The impetus for such a change probably would have been religious propaganda, to bolster her image. The lack of chthonic, lunar, and magical traits was seen as an intentional "whitewash" of the true, generally unsavory nature of Hekate, as described in later literary works. Such a specific alteration, then, would only have reflected the views of a small minority, thus explaining why the passage is the only evidence for Hekate in pre-Classical Boiotia.

There is evidence that can indirectly corroborate such an intentional modification of the

---

6: For example, Goettling (1831), Warr (1895) 390f., Jacoby (1930) 162f., Wilamowitz (1931) I.172 and Kirk (1962). Certainly an early motivating factor for this theory was an idealisation of classical culture: anything that might spoil the image of a perfect work of poetry (by modern standards) was suspect.

7: Kirk (1962) 63.

8: Warr (1895) 390.

Theogony to highlight Hekate. Much of the archaeological record of Hekate worship begins relatively suddenly in the sixth century in regions as diverse as Sicily, Eleusis and Samothrace (see chapter II). The references to Hekate in the *Hymn to Demeter* may also date to then (see following section). Thus Solmsen[9] suggests that the passage is a relic of a short lived "invasion" of devotees into Boiotia and many other parts of the Greek world in the sixth century. In a few places, such as Eleusis and Samothrace, Hekate became a significant addition to the local religion, while in most other regions, including Boiotia, she quickly faded into the minor role indicated by later literature. However, there is no supporting evidence for such an invasion, nor any explanation for its rapid success and equally rapid decline, and thus the notion is at best only an hypothesis.

The view that Hesiod was not the author of the passage is no longer popular, in part because of current rejection of the excessively analytical approach taken by scholarship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in part by a reappraisal of the integrity of the poem as a whole. The overall structure of the poem is now felt by many scholars to have remained intact, and any changes made were either not extensive or well executed.[10] The most commonly cited grammatical and linguistic discrepancies of the Hekate passage have been dismissed by West,[11] who concludes that the passage is, if anything, one of the more authentic passages of the *Theogony*.

Apparent contradictions within the passage, such as when Hesiod has Zeus grant Hekate functions that she has had from the beginning, have often been cited as proof of tampering by later writers. However, Rowe[12] argues that such contradictions are the product of the Archaic, "irrational" way of thought that is common in Hesiod's works, in which matters are examined from

---

9: Solmsen (1982) 8.

10: For example, Walcot (1958) 7ff., West (1966) 48ff. and Hamilton (1989) 40ff.

11: West (1966) 277ff.

12: Rowe (1983) 125ff.

several differing and independent viewpoints. The resulting collection of explanations and perspectives can appear to be contradictory, because the point is not to come to one precise description or conclusion but to offer all possible ones. Religious accounts are particularly well suited to such an approach, because they are frequently deemed beyond human comprehension. Thus Rowe feels that in *Works and Days* (60ff.), for example, the creation of Pandora is described twice so as to display different ways of looking at it. The account of Pandora in any case is incompatible with the subsequent story of the Five Races, but they seem to be presented side-by-side so as to offer differing views on the nature of important moral concerns. Rowe concludes that Hesiod was not trying to be a philosopher, so he should not be treated as one when we analyse his poems.

If the passage was written by Hesiod, but does not portray the Hekate of his world, then perhaps she was the goddess of his own private beliefs or of a small minority to which he belonged. In creating the *Theogony*, Hesiod was both a compiler of traditional material and a composer of original verse; he had a large, basic, often inconsistent body of material to select from, but had some unknown degree of latitude in how to present it.[13] We unfortunately have no earlier or contemporary versions of the material, and thus few clues as to what parts were original to Hesiod. Thus it is quite possible that a section like the Hekate passage was largely his own contribution.[14]

13: Theogonic epic poetry is a common genre, especially in illiterate societies. Walcot and others have shown that similarities exist between *Theogony* and other foreign works such as the Bronze Age Hittite *Epic of Kumarbi*, and that it is likely that in Hesiod's time many differing "theogonies" may have existed. A good indication of Hesiod's latitude in presenting religious matters as a composer is the presence of discrepancies between the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*: for example, the portrayals of Eris and the accounts of Pandora (lines 225ff. and 570ff. in the *Theogony*; 11ff. and 60ff. in *Works and Days*).

14: The approach of Walcot (1966) 127ff. is to compare material with what Homer wrote, taking what is common to be traditional to much of the Greek world, and what is not to be either original or material recently imported from outside Greek lands (typically from the East). This would suggest that the entire Hekate passage was either Hesiod's own creation or of Eastern origin. However, it is not clear

West, whose detailed commentary on the *Theogony* is recognised as the standard, is the most prominent supporter of this theory. He sees the passage as "not so much a hymn as a gospel", and Hesiod as an "evangelist" for Hekate.[15] He cites two details in Hesiod's *Works and Days* that suggest the poet's connection with her: Hesiod's brother is named Perses, which in *Theogony* is the name of Hekate's father; and Hesiod's father is described as a trader from Aeolian Kyme, and could therefore have travelled to Karia, which has long been felt to be the homeland of Hekate. West therefore suggests that Hesiod's father was devoted to Hekate, named one of his sons after her father, and brought her worship to Boiotia when he emigrated.

If West's hypothesis is correct, it would nicely explain to a large extent the anomalous nature of the passage, and would also make this one of the few instances where we know something of the religious bias of a major author. However, it makes Hekate's absence in the rest of the poem even more anomalous: if Hesiod was so devoted to her, why did he not name her in the prooemium, where several other deities are given special mention (lines 11-21)? Griffith argues that her absence in the prooemium, in particular, shows that the poet did not have a personal attachment to her.[16] Furthermore, the hypothesis relies on two minor details of *Works and Days*, the accuracy and interpretation of which are quite debatable.

Concerning West's first point, theophoric names do not necessarily reflect personal devotion. Perses could have been merely a popular name in pre-classical Boiotia or Kyme, or one whose religious significance had become obsolete.[17] Given the obscure nature of this divine

---

why Homer's material should be considered any more "Greek" than Hesiod's, especially when Homer probably lived in Ionia and thus was closer to the east.

15: West (1966) 276f.

16: Griffith (1983) 52f.

17: After all, the geographer Hekataios is not considered a devotee of Hekate because of his name. On the other hand, it is interesting that three theophoric names found in the Archaic period were Kr(e)ios, Koios, and Astraios: West (1966) 278. By Hesiod's genealogy, these relate to three direct ancestors of Hekate, all of whom were as inconsequential as Perses in later times.

Perses, and the fact that other traditions present different fathers for Hekate, for example, Helios or Zeus, one could alternatively suggest that Hesiod invented a new father for Hekate in honour of his brother (much like some Renaissance artists who painted the faces of personal acquaintances in the background of their grandiose works). As for his second point, how likely would it have been that Hesiod's father actually became a devoted follower of Hekate simply because he may have traded in a region where she was popular? Hesiod credits her with favouring many professions, but not traders.

An alternative approach to analysing the significance of the passage, especially popular in the last decade, has been to study its structural role in the poem as a whole.[18] The underlying premise is that the poem is not merely a linear recitation of divine genealogies, but a masterful creation with a carefully designed structure. For example, there are five main "stories" interspersed with the genealogies: Kronos overthrowing Ouranos; Zeus overthrowing Kronos; Prometheus and Pandora; the battle between the Olympians and the Titans (the Titanomachy); and the battle between Zeus and Typhoeus. The first two and the last two are pairs that have similar themes, and the middle episode is the central climax.[19]

There are four significant non-genealogical passages of increasing length that are delayed, presumably for emphasis, to the end of the account of the Titans. They deal in turn with matters concerning Styx, Hekate, the birth of Zeus, and Prometheus. The Hekate passage occurs at a pivotal point in the poem, marking the rise to power of Zeus, the transition between the Titans and Olympians, and the point after which mortals ceased to be able to interact directly with the immortals. In it, Hekate is honoured by both the old and the new orders, she has privileges spanning all realms but that of the dead, and she oversees the sacrificial link between humans and the deities. Thus she serves to bridge many transitions. If the passage was originally only a few

---

18: For example, Walcot (1956) and (1958) 5ff., Boedecker (1983), Clay (1984) and Hamilton (1989).

19: Walcot (1966) xiif.

lines long, or if it appeared elsewhere in the poem, it would significantly weaken this structural feature.

Clay argues from these points that Hesiod saw Hekate primarily as an intermediary figure: "The lengthy treatment of Hecate at a pivotal moment in the *Theogony* attests not to a personal whim of Hesiod's, but to the poet's understanding of her critical mediating function."[20] This is probably too strong an assertion of our understanding of the goddess. It would be more appropriate to suggest that Hesiod simply found in the various functions of Hekate a useful intermediary role, and in her non-Olympian ancestry a suitable representative for the old order.[21] Many other functions and attributes could have been left unmentioned by him, leaving us with an indication of simply one of her aspects in Hesiod's time.

Interpreting passages such as this one as being largely a function of their roles in the poem grants to Hesiod a high degree of compositional skill. It also significantly undermines the usefulness of the entire poem as a historical document from which we can deduce the popularity or primary functions of deities in the Archaic period. It is known from archaeological remains, for example, that Athena, Apollo and Artemis were far more popular in most of the Greek world than their roles in the *Theogony* would suggest.[22] Clay argues that Eros and the Muses receive noteworthy praises because of their structural roles "which are vital to the argument of the *Theogony*", not because they were popular deities.[23] Thus the length and even the content of the Hekate passage need not have reflected her popularity or worship in Hesiod's time: Hekate could well have been a quite minor goddess, and have been merely useful to Hesiod on account of one of her functions. Her obscurity would actually have made it easier to mold her into such an unusual,

---

20: Clay (1984) 36f.

21: This is similar to what Griffith (1983) 55 concludes: "Hesiod has specifically tailored and developed his Hecate to fit the requirements of his poem".

22: See, for example, Coldstream (1977) 327f.

23: Clay (1984) 28f.

functional figure. Furthermore, this would also explain why Hesiod does not praise her elsewhere in the poem, such as in the prooemium: he had no special attachment to her.

It is also possible that the seemingly all-encompassing nature of Hekate's powers may be largely misinterpreted. She is granted a share in three realms, but is not necessarily very powerful in them. Her ready ability to grant or take away blessings for all mortals could be said of most if not all Greek deities: what is unusual is simply that it is emphasised to such a degree. Lines 416-18 suggest her involvement in every sacrifice made by humans, but West suggests a paratactic structure is intended that merely says: if one invokes her, she hears.[24] West, believing Hesiod to have been a devotee of Hekate, further attributes the overall sense of universality to her being drawn from Hesiod's own life. Clay, on the other hand, argues that the emphasis in the passage on Hekate's "easy exercise of arbitrary power over success and failure in every human venture" results in the distorted picture.[25]

Another contributing factor to the way Hekate is handled may be the supposed etymology of her name. Numerous beings are described in terms of such etymologies: for example, Aphrodite is "foam-born" (from *aphros*), Pegasus is born "near springs" (from *pegai*), and Chrysaor is a product of Perseus' "golden sword" (from *chrysaor*). In Aphrodite's case, several other titles are presented and explained, showing an attempt to amalgamate many different traditions into one somewhat coherent version. Sometimes Hesiod seems to be punning, as in the use of *rhe(i)a* to mean "easily" several times in the Hekate section (lines 419, 438, 443) immediately before Rheia the goddess is presented.[26] Perhaps Hesiod invented, or used a pre-existing, etymological derivation of the name Hekate from ἔκητι (Attic ἕκατι), meaning "by whose will", which appears in formulaic expressions such as ἔκητι Διός ("by the will of Zeus") and οὐκ ἀέκητι θεῶν ("not against the will of the deities").[27] This derivation is suggested by

24: West (1966) 283.

25: Clay (1984) 36f.

26: *Rhe(i)a* is also used three times to describe Zeus in lines 5, 6 and 7 of *Works and Days*.

27: For example, Homer, *Il.*12.8, 15.720 and *Od.*1.79, 3.28, etc., and Bacchylides, *Ode* 1.6, 5.33, etc. See

repeated emphasis on her will (lines 429, 430, 432, 439, 443, 446), and her being invoked in all sacrifices as some sort of intermediary.[28] A similar derivation might explain the name of Metis, whom Hesiod calls the wisest of all deities (886f.), from the formulaic expression *metieta Zeus* ("all-wise Zeus").[29]

The unusual ancestry of Hekate has also offered an approach to the analysis of Hesiod's Hekate. As with most other deities of the Greek world, she did not have a universally accepted family tree: Hesiod names her father Perses and traces her maternal line back through Asteria and Phoibe to Gaia. Musaios (date unknown) has Asteria and Zeus as Hekate's parents, with Perses as Asteria's cuckolded husband.[30] Asteria and Perses are poorly attested figures in later times, perhaps dismissible at first glance. However, they may have been more significant figures in some Greek traditions.[31] Asteria, for example, was an old name for Delos.[32] *Phoibe* was an old Delphic title, perhaps referring to Gaia, Apollo's predecessor at the Oracle at Delphi. Warr proposes that Perses was an old Sun-God, and that the ancestry therefore reflects Hekate's heritage as a Moon-Goddess; this theory is quite speculative, as clear evidence for Hekate as a Moon-Goddess is late.[33]

Even if Asteria and Perses were better known in the archaic period, however, it is unlikely that they could have provided an ancestry for Hekate that was as prominent as she warranted,

---

Clay (1984) 34f.

28: For the latter point, Hesiod may have also drawn upon Hekate's title *Antaia*, of which one meaning is "to whom one makes supplication". See also section IV.5.

29: Clay (1984) 36.

30: Musaios fr.16 (Diels-Kranz).

31: West (1985a) 175 believes all of the Titanic genealogies are of Asiatic Greek origin. However, he bases this view primarily on the discrepancies with Homer, who would seem to be more likely to have drawn upon such (see n. 14).

32: Pindar, fr.523.42, Kallimachos, *Hymn to Delos* 36ff., 4.197ff., Pliny, *NH*.4.66, etc.

33: See section IV.4 below.

given the honours attributed to her. Why did one of the most noteworthy deities of the *Theogony* have such obscure parents? A foreign homeland would help to explain this anomaly: if record of significant worship of Asteria and Perses were to be found in Karia, for example, we could suppose that the worship of their daughter alone was brought to Greece.

Another possibility is that Hesiod meant to draw upon not the reputations of her parents but rather those of her well-known aunt and cousins, Leto, Artemis, and Apollo. Certainly in later literature, Hekate and Artemis were closely associated. As well, Apollo had the title *Hekatos* as early as Homer, and Artemis took *Hekate* as a title, at least by the end of the fifth century (see sections III.2 and III.3). Linking Artemis and Apollo to Hekate through a cousin relationship could have been intended to reflect this association. Furthermore, as Artemis and Apollo had strong followings in Anatolia, West sees this relationship being indicative of Asiatic kinship and thus supportive of a Karian origin for Hekate.[34]

A third possible explanation stems from Hekate's relationship with Zeus. It is quite surprising that Hesiod did not make them direct relatives, as nearly all other major deities are presented as siblings or children of Zeus, emphasising his dominance. Why did Hesiod not do so for the most noteworthy deity next to him? In this detail, Hekate has the company of Aphrodite, who is known to have been a popular deity in early pre-Classical times, if not back through the Bronze Age into the Neolithic period. Hesiod may have intentionally given Aphrodite Titan ancestry to reflect a strong, independent tradition pre-dating the creation of the Olympian family. If so, perhaps the same was the case for Hekate: her parents may have been chosen precisely because of their obscurity, as a means of bringing Hekate into the divine genealogy with a minimum of disruption.

Some indication of an independent religious tradition for Hekate can be found in the passage. Marquardt notes the repetitive sequence of six prominent *ethelo*-phrases in lines 429-46.[35] The first serves as an opening statement while the other five are tied to each of the specified

34: West (1966) 281.

35: Marquardt (1981) 247ff.

categories of humans, except athletes. She suggests an origin of those lines in liturgical refrains. Hekate's blessings of fishermen and herders specifically in conjunction with Poseidon and Hermes (441, 444) may indicate specific relationships between her and the two gods. Later evidence exists for such links: Hekate and Poseidon may have shared a temple at Eleusis in the early fifth century or before, while Hekate had much in common with Hermes by the Classical period in their roles as chthonic deities.[36]

Apparent discrepancies within the passage may indicate the accommodation of existing traditions within Hesiod's grand scheme. For example, Zeus grants Hekate shares in the three realms in 412-14, while in 423-27 it is a previous Titanic allotment. Likewise, in line 452 Hekate is *kourotrophos ex arches* ("from the beginning"), while two lines earlier Zeus bestows this function upon her. The wording in each case makes it ambiguous as to whether a contradiction really exists, perhaps an indication of the care Hesiod gave to honouring multiple traditions. On the other hand, he may have intentionally chosen this repetitious awarding of honours to highlight the primacy of Zeus: it is only by his grace that she is allowed to retain her former honours.

The role of *kourotrophos* is quite noteworthy. It is the subject of only three lines at the very end of the passage, almost as if it were an afterthought of the poet.[37] However, the placement can also convey emphasis, as if to say: "and above all, she was *kourotrophos*". No mention is made of her sharing this role with other deities, nor is the word used anywhere else in the poem. It is perhaps not unreasonable for her, as nurse of all living beings, to be personally involved with humans (more so than any other deity in the poem). As well, a few later sources suggest a common tradition of offering to *kourotrophos* the first part of every sacrifice:[38] this could explain

---

36: See sections II.2 and III.5.

37: The authenticity of lines 450-52 has been challenged because of this placement and their absence in the oldest extant copy of the *Theogony*: see Solmsen, Merkelbach and West (1983) 24 and West (1962) 179.

38: See section IV.2.

Hekate's apparent involvement in all sacrifices in lines 416-18. *Kourotrophos* could therefore be the role that Hesiod drew most upon to create his diverse picture of her. Furthermore, this is the one role of Hekate in the poem that is readily apparent in later evidence. Thus perhaps *kourotrophos* was the most important and enduring function of Hekate.

If a non-Olympian tradition did indeed exist for Hekate, Hesiod may have found it suited his purposes. He stresses that she is an only child and a direct descendant of Gaia, Ouranos, and Okeanos, making her a good candidate for receiving special privileges in the realms of Earth, Sky, and Ocean. Zeus' association with such an isolated and unique descendant of the older generation of deities thus serves to help legitimise his rule: ... Κρονίδης ... οὐδέ τ' ἀπηύρα, ὅσσ' ἔλαχεν Τιτῆσι μετὰ προτέροισι Θεοῖσιν (lines 423-25, "The son of Kronos ... did not take anything away of all that was her portion among the former Titan deities").[39]

This brings us to the question of Hesiod's motives in composing the *Theogony*. Certainly most of the poem highlights Zeus. Cornford argues that it is a hymn to Zeus and of Creation, while Solmsen says that Hesiod wanted primarily to explain what Zeus represents, the nature of his rule, and his relationship with the other deities.[40] Arthur goes further,[41] arguing that Hekate's role, as well as those of the Muses, Aphrodite, Styx, Pandora and Athena (in essence, every female figure after Gaia), was carefully designed to support the theme of the rise of Zeus and patriarchal society. The passage "shows how Hesiod's theology actually works for mankind",[42] and as Hekate quite specifically remains powerful by the will of Zeus, it is he that Hesiod is crediting as being the real benefactor. This interpretation further supports the contention that Hesiod drew upon the expression ἕκητι Διός. Furthermore, Hekate is the first deity whose mother is labelled *akoites*

39: Solmsen (1982) 8.

40: Cornford (1950) 97 and Solmsen (1949) 9.

41: Arthur (1982) 65ff.

42: Griffith (1983) 53.

("wife", line 410), which helps to herald the coming of the lawful, patriarchal nature of Zeus' reign.

The inclusion of six specific groups of people whom Hekate blesses has led to the speculation that Hesiod composed the poem with such an audience in mind at a specific event. Wade-Gery[43] first proposed that the *Theogony* was the poem mentioned in *Works and Days*, lines 654-59, which Hesiod presented at funerary games in Amphidamas on Euboia, and that these groups would have been significant elements in the audience. Interestingly enough, the prooemium of Bacchylides' *Ode 7* may have been addressed to Hekate as the benefactor of footracers at the Olympiad of 452.[44] If Hesiod did compose the *Theogony* for a specific event, perhaps Hekate was a popular but very localised goddess on Euboia and Hesiod composed the extensive passage for her honour. Similarly, the specific mention of Poseidon and Hermes together with Hekate could have reflected very localised traditions.

Boedecker, on the other hand, points out that these groups reflect the categories of ruler, warrior and provider, and therefore correspond well with the tripartite Indo-European social order as proposed by Dumézil.[45] This association does not mean that Hekate should be seen as a descendant of some original Indo-European deity; rather, Boedecker argues that it would tie in with the overall devotion of the poet to Zeus, who is one of the few Greek deities whose name is recognisably Indo-European.

After more than a century of analysis, the Hekate passage still yields conflicting discussions. While Hesiod's authorship is generally accepted, its significance has probably been overrated. Unless we accept West's questionable evidence for Hekate worship in Karia influencing Hesiod's family, the motives and background of the author(s) are speculative at best. The main outcome of having a different author is the postponement of the date of composition of the

---

43: Wade-Gery (1949) 85ff.

44: See section IV.4.

45: Boedecker (1983) 83ff.

passage by up to a century.

It is doubtful that Hekate was as prominent in Hesiod's world as her portrayal implies if taken at face value. But it is clearly too simplistic to dismiss the passage as the propaganda of some obscure and irrelevant minority, if for no other reason than that it survived through antiquity without provoking noticeable dispute. If we grant Hesiod a reasonable degree of poetic license, the relevance of the passage to the entire poem becomes more clear, but the nature of Hekate becomes less so. The portrayal, unusual both in relation to later works and to other deities in the poem, can indicate that she was significant to the poet for reasons that were either personal or compositional. Great personal devotion by Hesiod is possible, but does not preclude his ability to have created an image that served a poetic rather than merely descriptive role. It is likely that there was something about Hekate that made her suitable for Hesiod's compositional needs; however, it seems too extreme to restrict Hekate entirely to a technical intermediary role as Clay does. Similarly, we should be careful not to assume that every anomaly has a deeply significant source, nor that any strict orthodoxy existed at the time or was intended by Hesiod. Rowe's argument for an "irrational" thought process seems quite plausible, and allows for considerable variety in description.

Thus it is most likely that Hekate was a relatively minor figure overall, but one that nonetheless had longstanding traditions associated with her, glimpses of which have been suggested above. Probably one of her primary functions was as a *kourotrophos*. This may have been the inspiration for Hesiod that lent itself to the personal interaction with humans. Other functions may have been left out of the passage completely. The dissimilarity between the portrayal of Hekate in the *Theogony* and in later literature can probably be attributed both to the differing needs of Hesiod and the later writers, and to changes in the perception of her over time; but without any other contemporary record of her, particularly in Boiotia, it is impossible to determine which factor is the more significant. Likewise, questions of the parentage and homeland of Hekate, the early

spread of her worship in the Greek world, and the significance of the few roles familiar from later sources (notably that of *kourotrophos*) are simply unanswerable in the context of the *Theogony* alone. However, if a better understanding of her can be achieved for the sixth and fifth centuries, then it may be possible to extrapolate backwards into Hesiod's time and re-evaluate the passage in light of her later functions.

I.2 Hekate in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter

The second oldest major literary work that makes reference to Hekate is the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the earliest significant account of the rape and return of Persephone. The hymn dates to the late seventh or early sixth century,[46] making it about a century later than the *Theogony*, but over a century before nearly all other literary references to her. The composition may have been contemporary with, and perhaps even related to, the opening of the sanctuary at Eleusis to non-Eleusinians and its new pan-Hellenic role. Other versions of the same legend have survived, and offer differing accounts of several details. These discrepancies, in turn, have highlighted apparent problems within the Homeric hymn itself. Two points are most commonly noted: the central passage concerning Demophon seems unrelated to the rest of the hymn, and there is no mention of Triptolemos, who was such a popular figure in vase art in later centuries.[47] It is as if two or more differing traditions were combined.

Although the roles of Hekate in the hymn are quite minor, the work presents a quite noteworthy relationship between Hekate, Demeter, and Persephone. In brief, Hekate hears the cries of Persephone (24-25), informs Demeter of what she heard and asks what happened (53-58), accompanies Demeter to Helios to hear of the events that he saw (59-62), and upon the return of

---

46: Richardson (1974) 5.

47: Hekate does appear in a vase painting of the send-off of Triptolemos, so the presence of one does not seem to preclude the other: Beazley ARV^2 1191.1.

Persephone becomes her constant guide and companion (438-40).

Hekate's appearances are very brief and sudden, which suggest tampering with the original work, much like her passage in the *Theogony*. The most commonly suggested reason for her involvement is to explain her role in the Eleusinian religion.[48] However, evidence for her at Eleusis at any time is not substantial, nor is it certain that the hymn was directly linked to the religious practices there. Thus Nilsson believes that Hekate was "forcibly introduced" into the hymn, as "brisk propaganda" for her.[49] Clinton is even more skeptical, doubting her presence in the Eleusinian religion altogether, as well as doubting that the poem was composed at Eleusis.[50]

Other scholars feel that the peculiar nature of Hekate's part is indicative of its being intentionally muted: the lines read as if something is missing. Johnston suggests that Hekate's role in the hymn was reduced from a more active one, in which she was Persephone's companion from the outset.[51] Motivation for the change might be a decline in her significance in the Mysteries at Eleusis, or a desire to purge the hymn of a figure that had acquired an undesirable reputation. Brown offers the unusual suggestion that her "name and function in the Mysteries were considered part of the *arreton* ('secret things')."[52] His argument is understandably speculative, in that it deals with what initiates were not permitted to reveal; nevertheless, it would explain the "missing" feeling, and the scarcity of the archaeological record of Hekate's name which Clinton highlights.

Whatever their origins, Hekate's appearances are worth analysing in detail. Readily identifiable roles are those of observer, care-giver and attendant. Although she brings to Demeter very little new information, Hekate is clearly made a part of the process of gradual revelation.

48: For example, Richardson (1974) 155f.

49: Nilsson (1961) 78.

50: Clinton (1986) 45. Clinton is quite right to minimise the connection between the hymn and the Eleusinian Mysteries, but he seems too critical of the authenticity of the hymn and of the evidence of Hekate's worship at Eleusis (see section II.2).

51: Johnston (1990) 23.

52: Brown (1991) 47, n. 26.

When Hekate first hears the cries of Persephone, she is in a cave (25): this could be an indication of a chthonic nature, or a more subtle clue as to her nature as a guide between the surface of Earth and the Underworld.[53] Hekate is described as carrying torches (52), a common attribute for her in later art, although so is Demeter (48). Some descriptive words are quite complimentary and more in line with the Hesiodic portrayal than that of later literature: *atala phroneousa* ("gay spirited", line 24), *liparokredemnos* ("with bright headband", line 25), and *anassa* ("Queen" or "Lady", line 440, a common title for many goddesses).

These roles and descriptions overlap considerably with those of Demeter and Persephone. If Hekate was introduced quite late into the hymn, an imitative nature could have been intentionally chosen to make her fit in. On the other hand, it could also be indicative of a true similarity and authentic relationship between the three deities.[54]

Line 440 is perhaps the most interesting of all: ἐκ τοῦ οἱ πρόπολος καὶ ὀπάων ἔπλετ' ἄνασσα ("from that time the Lady [Hekate] was servant and companion to her [Persephone]"). The phrase *ek tou* ("from that time") suggests an aetiological explanation for a ritual institution: what it was precisely we unfortunately do not know.[55] The context suggests that Hekate may have been a personal guide and attendant for initiates, who probably underwent a spiritual equivalent of Persephone's descent and return. As a guide across the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead, Hekate could certainly acquire a favourable reputation for giving personal attention.

Most of the other words in the line are adjectives describing Hekate. *Propolos* usually

---

53: Johnston (1990) 27f.

54: Edwards (1986) 314 notes how well, in some portrayals, the goddesses Hekate, Persephone, and Demeter represent three stages of a woman's life: maiden, bride, and mother. This triple-goddess theme is discussed further in section IV.5.

55: See Richardson (1974) 294, Johnston (1990) 23 and Clay (1989) 257.

refers to a servant who walks in front, while *opaon* generally means a follower: a contradictory pair of terms if taken literally. Johnston suggests that this contradiction helps convey a meaning of thoroughly attending, guarding, and guiding Persephone "on one of the most difficult and significant journeys imaginable".[56] This interpretation is perhaps reading too much significance into a pair of words, but it would be appropriate if Hekate had a guiding role in ritual. A *propolos* can also be a servant of a deity, which would also make sense here: the term might be similarly used for Hekate as a minor associate of Artemis in the *Catalogue of Women*, and Sophokles may have called her *propolousa*.[57] However, these are all unusual roles for someone who is called lady or queen: the word order if anything stresses the word *anassa*. Does this reflect two differing traditions, one of Hekate the *anassa*, the other of Hekate as devout attendant to Persephone? Or were the words chosen to highlight some special, intimate relationship between the lowly initiate and the regal goddess who is their guide in the mysteries?

A noteworthy yet undeveloped connection in the hymn is between Hekate and Helios. The two are certainly linked in later literature through Medeia, her priestess and his descendant (for example, in Apollonios Rhodios' *Argonautika* and Euripides' *Medeia*). The view, common in Hellenistic and Roman times, that Hekate was a Moon-Goddess (and thus logically paired with Helios, the Sun-God) is not easy to substantiate in early times: this matter will be dealt with in more detail in section IV.4. Nevertheless, the pairing seems intentional, and their actions offer some interesting contrasts. She is shown as very supportive of the Two Goddesses: Hekate brings news to Demeter, accompanies her when she seeks more information from Helios, and repeatedly embraces Persephone upon her return. Helios, on the other hand, shows little compassion: he only reveals his information upon request (74-81), adds at much greater length his opinion that Demeter should simply accept the rape of her daughter because the perpetrator is Demeter's

---

56: Johnston (1990) 23.

57: Line 26 of fr.23(a) (M-W) has Artemis *Einodia* as *propolos* of Artemis; Sophokles, *Rhizotomoi* fr.535 (Radt). See section IV.3.

brother and would be a fitting husband (82-87), and then quickly departs (88-89). This response is hardly what a grieving mother would want to hear.

The return of Persephone is the most common subject in vase paintings that include Hekate, and they help convey some of the subtleties of the relationship between her and Persephone. The name vase of the Persephone Painter, from about 440, probably is the most informative.[58] Persephone is shown rising from the ground on the left, with Hermes beside her. Hekate walks in front of her, looking back and down at her and holding two torches. On the right, Demeter regally awaits her daughter. Persephone is looking ahead, likely past Hekate towards her mother. Hermes' presence suggests that Hekate does not lead Persephone all the way back from Hades, but rather takes over the task from him at the transition from the Underworld to the Earth's surface. Hekate's backward gaze suggests that she is a more attentive and caring guide than Hermes, who is somewhat removed from the scene and stares out from the vase at the viewer. Her posture is very similar to an early fifth-century sculpture found at Eleusis (discussed in section II.2 below). The lost lekanis lid, formerly in Berlin,[59] similarly shows Persephone rising from the Earth with Hekate leading her with two torches to the awaiting Demeter.

This scene does not agree with that described in the hymn, in which Hekate becomes a companion only after Persephone meets and embraces her mother. Because of this, Edwards suggests that the vase images did not have a literary origin, but rather were a product of the visual arts. Perhaps they evolved as a encapsulated rendition of both the first return of Persephone and the subsequent yearly journeys to Hades with Hekate as her escort, as implied by the *ek tou* in line 440. On the other hand, the artistic versions could be more faithfully recording an older role of Hekate which was purged from the hymn.

Other, later versions of the story are known to exist, usually in quite fragmentary form only. Many show variance in the geographical details, such as the site of the kidnapping,

---

58: Beazley ARV^2 1012.1; see, for example, Edwards (1986) pl. 21, fig. 9.

59: See, for example, Edwards (1986) pl. 21, fig. 10.

Demeter's wanderings, or the return of Persephone.[60] Others involve characters not present in the Homeric version, sometimes replacing Hekate and Helios in their observer roles.[61] However, a vase found at Eleusis dating to the second half of the fifth century shows Hekate more directly involved at the scene of the rape, running along beside the chariot of Hades.[62] If the geographical variations represent attempts to glorify the history of the local worship of Demeter in various sites, then perhaps Hekate's role was merely a local Eleusinian feature.

Equally variable is the account of the actual return of Persephone. One version (Orph. fr. 41) has Demeter herself going down to recover her daughter, rather than Hermes. Another (Orph. fr. 42) has Hekate, as a daughter of Demeter and Zeus, sent by Zeus to retrieve Persephone. Most pottery images of Hekate show her as a companion for Persephone back from the Underworld;[63] these, as already suggested, may reflect more the subsequent, yearly voyages of Persephone to and from Hades.

60: The Homeric version, for example, features Eleusis as the point where Demeter begins her mourning and where Persephone rejoins her.

61: The Argive tradition recorded by Apollodoros I.5.1 has Argives reporting the kidnapping to Demeter, for example. In Orphic fragments Triptolemos and Eubouleus, children of Baubo, inform Demeter of the tragedy. All three of these figures are noteworthy: Baubo (literally "body cavity") was an obscure, semi-divine figure whose actions in Demeter's presence probably had ritual significance (see Burkert [1985] 285); Triptolemos was a legendary figure long associated with Eleusis, whom Demeter sent to bring her gifts of cultivation to humans; and Eubouleus ("good advisor") was a guide for Demeter in the Underworld (Orph. fr. 41), was the son of Demeter or Persephone (Orph. fr. 29), and was the legendary founder of the Eleusinian Mysteries (IG I^2.76.39.). Baubo is later sometimes identified with Hekate, but it is not clear whether this link is due to their common role in this matter or some other reason: Brown (1991) 48 suggests that the two were simply different names for the same mysterious figure in the rituals.

62: Beazley ARV^2 647.21. Another vase (ARV^2 1112.3) may have her in the vicinity of the event. Both of these vases are discussed in Edwards (1986) 316.

63: Beazley ARV^2 1012.1, 1121.11, 532.44; and the lost lekanis lid from Berlin (see, for example, Edwards [1986] pl. 21, fig. 10).

This variety suggests that there was no dogmatic uniformity in much of the story, despite its considerable religious significance. Conflicting versions coexisted, some likely as local variants. One cannot even assume that the Homeric hymn is the "main" version, for it completely lacks at least one important event: the mission of Triptolemos. The hymn undoubtedly reflects both local and common traditions; inconsistencies within it, and discrepancies between it and other versions, may reflect awkward compromises. This aspect makes it difficult to evaluate the "authenticity" of the work and thus the significance of Hekate's role here: her involvement in the hymn may only reflect a local tradition, rather than one that was widely accepted.

The brevity of Hekate's part in the *Hymn to Demeter* makes it very difficult to determine her complete character. Without drawing upon the limited archaeological evidence at Eleusis, we are left with little more than a sense of her as a caring companion for the Two Goddesses. Artistic renditions tend to show a greater involvement in the initial journey of Persephone to Hades, and thus suggest that the relationship was older than line 440 of the hymn indicates, but this could have been just as easily the result of artistic license.

Hekate's companionship with Persephone, the Queen of the Dead, is clear, and is in agreement with the later portrayals connecting Hekate to the dead.[64] However, to say more specifically that Hekate had a protective role, as Johnston does,[65] requires drawing more heavily upon external sources: it seems to be a reasonable conclusion, but not one that comes directly from the passages in the hymn.

The connection between Hekate and Helios is puzzling. Their actions most clearly present contrasting reactions as bystanders, and serve gradually to enlighten Demeter. If a significant link existed between the two at the time, based on their being Moon-Goddess and Sun-God, it plays no obvious role in the hymn; yet their well-known association with Medeia makes it

---

64: See section IV.5.

65: Johnston (1991) 23 connects Hekate's role here with that seen in later literature as an escort of the dead to and from Hades.

unlikely that their pairing is coincidental.

I.3 Discussion

Although mention of Hekate is quite brief in the *Hymn to Demeter*, she seems to differ substantially from the Hekate in the *Theogony*. She serves a specific but very limited role in the former, with no mention of the sweeping rights granted by Zeus or the intermediary role between humans and the deities seen in the latter. Hesiod does not involve Hekate in the Underworld, however, while in the hymn she at least deals with Persephone's journey to and from it. Only two similarities seem apparent: Hekate's intimate *kourotrophos* function, which in the hymn is focused upon Persephone, and her involvement with transitions. While the limited overlap in representation could be coincidental, it can serve as the basis for a model of what the primary functions of the Archaic Hekate were: *kourotrophos*, guide, and personal attendant.

The simplest explanation for this discrepancy is that Hekate was not the same goddess for the two poets, and that she was conceived of differently in Boiotia and Eleusis, or between the eighth and seventh centuries. However, the two works were probably not composed in complete isolation from each other, as several phrases and descriptive passages are remarkably similar in the two works. Richardson finds eight possible echoes in the hymn of the Hekate passage of the *Theogony*.[66] None of these are used to describe the same deity, however, so the borrowings may have been largely for artistic reasons.

Nevertheless, if familiarity with Hesiod's work can be assumed, one must wonder why the composer of the hymn chose to portray Hekate in a different manner. Perhaps there were only a few roles for which she was needed in the Eleusinian Mysteries, as Demeter took on most of the roles that Hekate otherwise would have had. Or perhaps the difference in purposes of the two

---

66: Richardson (1974) 39.

works allowed for such latitude in portrayal that the diversity displayed was inevitable for any highlighted deity. If we accept the premise that Hesiod specifically created a distorted image of Hekate to suit his compositional needs, by emphasising an intermediary role, then we should allow for some flexibility on the part of the hymn's poet. There may have been some limitations imposed by the need to reflect certain aspects of the Mysteries, but nevertheless many key traits of Hekate could have been ignored if they did not suit the storyline: with only three brief appearances in the hymn, there is not much opportunity to display many functions.

This variety in portrayal also underlines an attitude towards religious writings that it is necessary to keep in mind: no matter how important an influence *Theogony* may have had on later writings and thought, it was not considered sacrilege (in the modern sense) to cannibalise parts to generate another work that differed from, if it did not contradict, the original. Conversely, unless such an attitude only arose after the work was created, the *Theogony* could itself easily have been a liberal reworking of contemporary religious thought.

It is not only in the character of Hekate that one sees differences. Both works mention a three-way division of the universe, but they do not agree on the details. In line 86, the hymn refers to the Homeric division of Sky, Sea, and Underworld on a relatively equal basis between the brothers Zeus, Poseidon and Hades; Earth and Olympos were common to all three.[67] Hesiod, on the other hand, says Hekate has a share in the Sky, Sea, and Earth. While mention is made of sharing with Poseidon and Hermes in the latter two realms, Zeus does not seem to be restricted merely to one realm, and instead completely dominates his brothers. The Theogonic universe is thus far more centred about Zeus.

It is hard to say whether the difference in realms of the universe has any significant bearing upon Hekate. Perhaps it underlies the different focus of Hekate's attention in the two works: Hesiod has her focused upon humans and uninvolved in the Underworld, while in the hymn she

---

67: For example, Homer, *Il.*15.189-91.

deals mostly with deities, and journeys to and from the Underworld.

Overall, the *Hymn to Demeter* seems more compatible with later images of Hekate. We see Hekate as a secondary figure, traveling with torches and being protective. While there is no mention of ghosts, necromancy, or other scary matters, her involvement with the transition between Earth and the Underworld could foreshadow her association with these. It is tempting, then, to say that the hymn gives a more accurate portrayal of her than does the *Theogony*. However, there are two reasons to question such a conclusion. Firstly, Kraus argues that the most significant changes to Hekate's character arose in the fifth century, well after the hymn, with her merging with the reputedly unsavoury Thessalian Goddess of Pherai.[68] Secondly, if the "problem" with the *Theogony* is that it was influenced by an evangelical poet or by its catering to a specific audience, then the hymn should even be more suspect: it need not at all have reflected views common to non-initiates.

For both works the possibility exists of considerable poetic license having produced a very narrow view of the goddess. Hekate as the caring *kourotrophos* is the role most obviously common to both works, and is a good starting point for understanding her in the Archaic period. To proceed from there, comparison with other material is necessary.

68: Kraus (1960) 77ff.; see also section IV.5.

Chapter II - Major sites of Hekate worship

Ten sites or regions are discussed here, which are noteworthy either for the age of material pertaining to Hekate or for their significance in Classical or later times. The order of presentation is arbitrary: I begin with central Greece and proceed out to lands at the edge of the Greek world.

II.1 Athens

The greatest amount of literary material on Hekate has come from Athens, as is the case with so many other aspects of Greek history. Much of it is from the second half of the fifth century, and thus late in our period of study, but the quantity of information makes it invaluable. Concerning Hekate, most of what we have from Aischylos and Sophokles is unfortunately fragmentary; however a dozen plays, as well as some fragments, of Euripides and Aristophanes mention her. The next two chapters will deal with some of these in detail.

Hekate's presence in sixth-century Athens is attested in the form of her oldest-known image: a 20 cm. high terracotta statuette.[1] It has her crowned and enthroned, but otherwise quite undistinguished; only the inscription identifies her: ΑΙΓΟΝ ΑΝΑΘΕΚΕΝ ΘΕΚΑΤΕΙ ("Aigon dedicates [this] to Hekate"). The regal, seated pose resembles the common portrayal of Kybele, the primary goddess of Phrygia.

Athens also was the site of the most famous image of Hekate, the *Epipyrgidia* of Alkamenes. The title simply means "on the tower", a formation from *epi* + *pyrgos*. Despite the fame of the statue, its precise location, date of erection, and even exact form are not known.[2] Our information comes from Pausanias (2.30.2), who describes the statue in passing, and from later

---

1: Berlin Antiquarium TC 7729; see, for example, Farnell (1909) II.549, pl. 38a, and Kraus (1960) 26f.

2: Recently discussed in Fullerton (1986) 669ff.

copies. It was probably situated on the Athena Nike bastion of the Acropolis, where the gate to the Bronze Age Mykenaian fortress had been and a remnant of the old Cyclopian wall was left exposed in historical times. If so, it must date to the period in which Alkamenes was active and after the bastion was reworked for the building of the temple of Athena Nike, and thus about 425.[3] It is likely that the statue was intended to be quite prominent, but later modifications to the bastion for reason of safety blocked its view from the approach below.[4]

An alternative site for the statue is right beside the propylaia, where a statue base has been found in association with the older gate.[5] The main argument in favour of this site is the closer proximity to the propylaia, in keeping with her association with doorways;[6] however, the Nike bastion better suits the name *Epipyrgidia* and the words of Pausanias. A compromise between the two sites is also possible: perhaps an older statue of Hekate was situated close to the old propylon. This could have been the subject of a comment from Aischylos, who was active in the first half of the fifth century: "Lady Hekate, the one before the royal halls" (fr.388 [Radt]). With the building enterprise on the Acropolis of the second half of the century, it then could have been moved to the nearby bastion.

Alkamenes chose, for reasons not recorded, to portray her in triple form, i.e. as three complete bodies joined at the back in a circle about a central pillar, with each body facing outwards in a different direction. This three-fold portrayal, commonly called a Hekataion, became the standard for Hekate thereafter. Although dating to the second half of the fifth century, the reputed archaic features of the statue suggest a link to the Archaic period for her, either at Athens or in Ionia in general. Unfortunately the original was lost, and the accuracy of the copies is questionable, with the result that analysis of the archaic elements is quite speculative.[7]

3: Fullerton (1986) 669ff. and Kraus (1960) 94.

4: Fullerton (1986) 670.

5: See Fullerton (1986) 669f., especially nn. 7 and 8.

6: See section IV.1.

7: See Kraus (1960) 95ff. and Harrison (1965) 86ff. Harrison dates most of the copies to the Roman

Hekate may have also appeared on the Acropolis in the middle of the fifth century on the east pediment of the Parthenon. The fragmentary figure G is commonly identified as Artemis, but its placement beside Demeter and Persephone and the resemblance in pose and dress to the "Running Maiden" figure found at Eleusis (see below) suggests that it may have been Hekate.[8]

II.2 Eleusis

At Eleusis, site of the most famous sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, there is physical evidence for the presence of Hekate in archaic times. Pausanias (1.38.6) describes the Roman temple at the entrance to the great sanctuary as being dedicated to Artemis *Propylaia* and Poseidon *Pater*. Beneath it have been found the remains of structures going back to the geometric period, with the earliest one identifiable as a temple dating to the Archaic or early Classical period.[9] The location and the title *Propylaia* have led many to identify this Artemis with Hekate, both because of Hekate's connection with doorways in Athenian literature and because of her role in the *Hymn to Demeter*.[10] Thus this may have been an Archaic temple to Hekate. A gatekeeper role is also suggested on a vase from Eleusis of the fifth century, which shows a youthful, but quite static figure with two torches who is likely Hekate: Edwards argues that she signifies the entrance of the sanctuary.[11] The sharing of a temple with Poseidon is unusual, but reminiscent of the *Theogony*

---

period, and identifies some distinctive elements as being of Roman style.

8: See E. B. Harrison, "Athena and Athens in the East Pediment of the Parthenon," *AJA* 71 (1967): 42f.

9: The sanctuary itself was likely in use continually from the mid-second millenium onwards.

10: See, for example, Wilamowitz (1931) I.167f., Kraus (1960) 63, 96, Richardson (1974) 295 and Edwards (1986) 316, as well as section IV.1. On the other hand, if the goddess referred to was simply Artemis, this would be comparable with the Demeter mysteries at Lykosaura in Arkadia. There, Artemis and Poseidon were worshipped as sister and brother, and Poseidon was considered the father of Persephone: see Kerenyi (1967) 70.

11: Beazley ARV^2 1112.3, discussed in Edwards (1986) 316.

(lines 411-13), which has them jointly involved in providing fish. As well, offerings of fish were made to Hekate at Eleusis and elsewhere.[12]

The "Running Maiden" figure of a pedimental group from about 480 found just outside the sanctuary was probably Hekate.[13] She is represented as an active and young woman, in keeping with all other early Classical images of her.[14] The pose of the figure, now armless, suggests that she was carrying two torches and calmly looking backwards and downwards while running. The most likely context for such a pose is when Hekate is guiding Persephone from the Underworld, as shown on vases such as the one by the Persephone Painter (see section I.2). Her presence in such a sculpture supports the contention that she was a prominent figure in the Eleusinian religion, most notably in the role of guide and companion for Persephone.

It is important to note, however, that none of the evidence conclusively points to Hekate's worship at Eleusis. The "Running Maiden" could have been some other companion of Persephone, and the few vases portraying Hekate that have been found at Eleusis could be coincidental. Clinton points out that Hekate's name has not been found at Eleusis in any time period, and argues that the *Hymn to Demeter* is not an Eleusinian poem; he thus concludes that she did not have any role there.[15] While the absence of her name is surprising, in the context of a mystery religion it seems very misleading to argue from silence. As mentioned in section I.2, Brown suggests that her name was unmentionable;[16] Clinton himself notes that at Eleusis the name Persephone never appears, probably because it was taboo to name her.[17] With so little understood about the actual mysteries at Eleusis, it would seem best to take the absence of Hekate's name as a noteworthy, but not decisive, piece of evidence.

12: For example, Athenaeus, *Deipn.*325a-d, quoting Melanthios. See also section III.7.

13: Edwards (1986) discusses this figure in detail.

14: Edwards (1986) 317f.

15: Clinton (1986) 45.

16: Brown (1991) 47, n. 26.

17: Clinton (1986) 44.

II.3 Aigina

Pausanias (2.30.2) tells us that the Aiginetans especially revered Hekate, and every year celebrated her mysteries, which they claimed were brought from Thrace by Orpheus. She had a sanctuary, in which stood a wooden, single-form statue by the famous sculptor Myron. The oldest families on the island also reputedly came from northlands.[18] The Myron statue would have dated to c460; however no pre-Roman archaeological evidence exists for her worship on the island. The primary goddess of Aigina was Aphaia, whom Athena and Artemis essentially absorbed by the end of the fifth century; she does, however, bear a resemblance to Hekate via the Iphigeneia legend (see section IV.1).

II.4 Argos

The only temple to Hekate known to exist with reasonable certainty in the Classical period was in Argos, beside the prominent and likely Archaic sanctuary to Eileithyia.[19] Unfortunately archaeology does not reveal when the temple was built or when the site first came into use. Pausanias (2.22.7-8) mentions that it contained statues by Skopas, Naukydes and Polykleitos the younger, which would suggest that the temple was in existence at least by the first half of the fourth century. Pausanias (1.43.1) also relates the legend that Eileithyia's sanctuary was dedicated by Helen of Sparta upon the birth of her daughter Iphigeneia (whom Klytaimnestra subsequently adopted). Given the link between Iphigeneia and Hekate in the better-known tale of Iphigeneia's death (discussed in section III.2) and the antiquity of the neighbouring sanctuary, this legend might indicate that Hekate also was worshipped in Argos at a very early date. Furthermore, the fact that

---

18: Farnell (1909) II.504. A Thessalian settlement has been found on Aigina dating to the thirteenth century: Stillwell (1976) 20.

19: Tomlinson (1972) 213f.

Hekate warranted statues by several well-known sculptors suggests she had a reputation in the fourth century that was far more favourable than contemporary literature might suggest. Unfortunately we have no other information on either the temple or Hekate in Classical Argos, so the full significance of this site is unclear.

II.5 Boiotia

Despite the splendid passage about Hekate in Hesiod's *Theogony*, there is no definite archaic evidence for her presence in his homeland of Boiotia. The earliest record of her worship consists of small Hekataia from the Hellenistic period.[20] However, there is ample reason to believe that a major goddess was worshipped in Boiotia in Archaic times, whose name we do not know. Pindar, the Theban writer of the mid-fifth century, makes passing reference several times to her, generically named the Great Mother or the Mother of the Deities.[21] He also seems to have set up a sanctuary to her by his home.[22] Scully suggests that several Boiotian valleys, such as that of the Muses on Mt. Helikon and a similar valley on Mt. Ptoon, were sacred to such a Great Goddess in the early Archaic period.[23]

Marquardt suggests that the *Potnia Theron* ("Queen of Beasts") figures on Boiotian vases of the eighth century resemble Hesiod's Hekate.[24] These have a central female figure flanked symmetrically by animals, often in a pose that is both dominating and protective. Marquardt admits that the anthropocentric nature of Hesiod's Hekate hardly suits a figure so

---

20: Kraus (1960) 58.

21: Pindar, *Pyth.*3.78ff., fr.95.2 and fr.79b.2.

22: Pausanias 9.25.3.

23: Scully (1962) 107f. These valleys were associated with Apollo in the Classical period; a similar change occurred at Delphi, where the sanctuary went from being for Gaia to Apollo: see, for example, Coldstream (1977) 330.

24: Marquardt (1981) 253ff.

oriented towards wild animals, but points out details on two vases that perhaps indicate an interesting connection. On one vase,[25] she suggests that the depiction of lions, birds, and a fish with the female figure represent the realms of Earth, Air, and Sea, in which Hesiod's Hekate specifically had a share. This explanation is probably too contrived, and would only complicate the overall picture of Hekate by providing yet another anomalous portrayal of her. Marquardt's second example depicts a figure that she interprets definitively as a *kourotrophos*;[26] while this is a role specifically mentioned by Hesiod, it is also applicable for dozens of other goddesses.[27] A far more likely equation is between these images and Artemis or Pindar's Great Mother.

Schachter discusses several local groups of figures worshipped in Boiotia, most notably sets of two and three females and pairs of males.[28] The evidence is primarily literary records of minor folk customs: the implication is that they may reflect old, widespread traditions. The groups of three females are all associated with springs and possessed powers of fertility and inspiration: the Charites of Orchomenos, the Muses of Helikon,[29] the three Parthenoi of Eleon, and perhaps three other sets. There is no obvious distinction of function among the members of each group. The pairs of females gained fame upon their deaths, which was often self-inflicted, as averters of evil.

What is interesting about these figures is that they offer some similarities with Hekate. First of all, Hesiod's Hekate had honours in three realms, and Alkamenes portrayed her in triplicate: perhaps they drew upon a tradition in which Hekate was a threesome. Secondly, Hekate had some association with young women who became guardians upon their sacrificial

---

25: National Museum at Athens, vase 5839.

26: National Museum at Athens, vase 5898.

27: See section IV.2.

28: Schachter (1974).

29: It is interesting that Schachter (1974) 18 finds that the Muses apparently were originally three in number, not nine as Hesiod has them. As well, they were clearly associated with a spring, and had titles implying powers of fertility.

death.[30] This is very meagre evidence for Hekate worship, of course, and further highlights how anomalous the account of Hekate in the *Theogony* is even in pre-Classical Boiotia.

II.6 Sicily

A similar situation to that at Eleusis may be attested for the famous sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros at Selinus in Sicily. The earliest finds at the sanctuary date to the second half of the seventh century, and thus may be concurrent with the founding of the colony in 627.[31] A separate precinct, probably dedicated to Hekate, existed by the sixth century right beside the old propylaia of the main sanctuary.[32] Some finds there go back to the middle of the previous century, but are of indeterminate significance.[33] Furthermore, an Archaic metope on the acropolis of Selinus may have had Demeter, Persephone, and Hekate as a group.[34]

Unfortunately we have no literary records concerning the sanctuary, and do not know what role Hekate played. The placement of a site sacred to Hekate beside the entrance to the main sanctuary is reminiscent of her presumed temple at Eleusis, and suggests a similar role of entrance guardian. However, it is not known what influence the local Sikel religion may have had on the colonists, beyond the possible contribution of titles for two deities worshipped in the main sanctuary: Demeter *Malophoros* and Persephone *Pasikrateia*.[35]

30: As is discussed in section IV.1.

31: See Yavis (1949) 110ff., 134, and Dunbabin (1948) 304.

32: Zuntz (1971) 98 and Yavis (1949) 77, 112.

33: Stillwell (1976) 25.

34: Tusa (1969).

35: There is some uncertainty as to the origin of the title *Malophoros*. It is commonly assumed that it is a Greek rendition of a Sicilian name for an indigenous deity, but Dunbabin (1948) 304 believes that Malophoros came with the Greek colonists. He cites the observations by Pausanias 1.44.4 of a sanctuary of Demeter *Malophoros* in Megara (the mother city of Selinus), but the record is eight centuries after the founding of the colony and thus of quite limited use.

Neighbouring Akragas, 75 km to the west, had two sanctuaries in the sixth century that may have been quite similar to the one at Selinus. They show signs of possible pre-Greek usage, but the remains are too scant to be sure.[36] As at Selinus, Demeter and Persephone were the primary deities in strongly chthonic roles. Although no record of Hekate's worship exists, by analogy with Selinus she could have been brought here from Greece, or identified with some indigenous goddess, because of her connection with Demeter and Persephone.

II.7 Thessaly

Thessaly has often been associated with Hekate, but there is no evidence from the Archaic period for her worship. Thessalian women became stock characters in literature for their magical prowess, usually of an fantastic and evil nature.[37] They bore some resemblance to contemporary portrayals of Medeia, but this may reflect folklore traditions or misogynistic fears more than any specific indigenous traits that might link them to Hekate.

In the city of Pherai in southern Thessaly there was a dominant goddess, sometimes called *Enodia* ("in the road"), who was often identified with Artemis or Hekate in the fourth and later centuries. Pausanias (2.10.6, 2.23.5) records statues of Artemis-Pheraia at Athens, Sikyon, and Argos. Hellenistic period coins from Pherai mention both Artemis-*Pheraia* and Hekate-*Ennodias*.[38]

36: Dunbabin (1948) 176, 304 and Malkin (1987) 162. Akragas was founded in 582, later than Selinus. The evidence in favour of pre-Greek religious activities at any Greek sanctuary in Sicily is slight at best, but as our knowledge of archaic Sikel religious practices is similarly lacking, one cannot argue against it from silence.

37: For example, Aristophanes, *Nub.*749, Plutarch, *Mor.*400b and 416f, Plato, *Gorgias* 513a, Menander, *Thessalian Women*, Horace, *Epodes* 5.46, Lucan, *Bellum Civile* 6.438ff., Propertius 1.19 and Polyainos 8.43. It should be noted that none of these works are by Thessalians.

38: Farnell (1909) II.480.

Sometimes Hekate was called her daughter.[39] *Enodia*'s main symbols were a horse, which she was often portrayed as riding, a dog, and a torch: the latter two were common for Hekate as well.[40] A sixth-century temple to an unidentified deity has been found at Pherai, on or very near a shrine with offerings dating to the eighth century; *Enodia* is the likely candidate.[41] A fourth- or early third-century altar found at Pherai was erected to honour six goddesses in a manner that suggests they were the local version of the female half of the Olympian Twelve:[42] *Enodia* was included, probably in place of Artemis.

The apparent similarity between the Goddess of Pherai and Hekate could mean that one evolved from, or was heavily influenced by, the other.[43] However, without evidence of their association prior to the second half of the fifth century, this is hard to verify.

II.8 Thrace

Thrace was a northern hinterland, whose non-Greek indigenous inhabitants are poorly documented. In both ancient and modern literature,[44] it has been proposed as a homeland for Hekate. The Aiginetans, for example, considered the worship of Hekate to have come to their island from Thrace in archaic times.[45] However, there is no evidence for her worship in Thrace prior to the Classical period, and none at any time outside of the Greek colony cities on the coast. Still, the entire archaeological record of Thrace is sparse, so very little can be concluded concerning Thracian religion.

39: Schol.Lycoph.1180.

40: A beautiful example showing all of these symbols is a marble relief from the fifth century, now in the British Museum (from Krannon): see, for example, Kraus (1960) pl. 2, no. 3.

41: Stillwell (1976) 72f.

42: Miller (1974) 251.

43: For example, Kraus (1960) 77ff.

44: For example, Farnell (1909) II.508.

45: See section II.3.

The earliest record of Hekate in Thrace is from Abdera, a colony of Teos in Ionia. A fragmentary hymn for the city by Pindar[46], dating to the mid-fifth century, states that φοινικόπεζα ... παρθένος / εὐμενῆς Ἑκάτα ("the maiden of the ruddy feet, gracious Hekate") sent an omen of victory on the new Moon, her holy day. Two old theophoric names are recorded at the city as well, from the fifth and fourth centuries.[47] However, given the greater antiquity of the evidence for Hekate's worship in Ionia, this evidence is probably more indicative of her popularity in the colonists' homeland than among the local Thracians.

The Thracian religion was commented upon by Herodotos (5.7), writing in the fifth century, and by Strabo (*Geographia* 10.3.12-16), in the time of Augustus. Neither records Hekate's name nor any indigenous goddess who bore an obvious resemblance to her. Instead, the observations of the two ancient writers, together with the limited archaeological record, have led some scholars to conclude that the main deities consisted of a primary Mother-Goddess, perhaps called Kotys, Semele, Bendis or Brimo and identified with Leto; a Maiden-Goddess identified with Artemis; and a god (or twin gods), identified with Apollo, Ares and Dionysos.[48] However, Strabo records Kotys and Bendis as two distinct deities.

Kotys was apparently known to Athenians by the first half of the fifth century, as Aischylos makes passing reference to her in his fragmentary play *Edonoi* (fr.57.1 [Nauck]). Better documented, but of uncertain significance, is the introduction of Bendis to Athens in the fifth century.[49] This event was a political move intended to help secure an alliance with a Thracian

---

46: Pindar, *Paian* 2.78. See also Kraus (1960) 64f.

47: Sittig (1912) 67.

48: For example, Farnell (1909) V.101 and Gergova (1989). However, Hoddinot (1981) 169 suggests that Herodotos' record of Artemis, Ares, Hermes and Dionysos merely reflects the Greek view of aspects of Thracian religion and culture that they considered exaggerated or foreign, such as ecstasy, fertility, rebirth, and war.

49: Bendis is mentioned in an inscription from c429, and possibly in a lost comedy by Kratinos, *The Thracian Women*, dating to c443. Nilsson (1951) 45ff. discusses the politics involved with the importation of her worship.

king, or at least his goodwill. Plato (*Republic* 327a-328a) records Sokrates offering prayers to Bendis and discussing a horseback relay race with torches in her name in c411. She was primarily noted for her torch and her title *Dilongchos* ("two-fold"),[50] and the limited Hellenistic evidence from Thrace has her as a Saviour and Healing Goddess.[51] In the fourth and later centuries Bendis was gradually absorbed in Thrace by Hekate, but by Artemis in Athens. Farnell considers Bendis to have been the primary goddess of the Thracians and identifiable with Hekate, but our information is too limited to be sure.[52] Furthermore there is very little trace of Bendis in Thrace itself, which casts some doubt upon her significance there.

II.9 Samothrace

Hekate gained considerable fame through her role at the sanctuary to "the Great Gods" on the northern Aegean island of Samothrace.[53] By the Classical period, this sanctuary was the most significant in the northern Greek world, and its popularity continued to grow in the Hellenistic period. The deities and rites of the island may have been known widely as early as Homer.[54] Initiates apparently included Herodotos, King Lysander of Sparta, and Philip II and

---

50: Farnell (1909) II.507. Perhaps the title *Dilongchos* refers to her being a double goddess, analogous to Demeter and Persephone.

51: Hoddinot (1981) 170.

52: Farnell (1909) II.474f.

53: For a general overview of the entire sanctuary and religion, see Stillwell (1976) 804ff. and Lehmann (1975).

54: In Homer, *Od.*5.334-75, the Sea-Goddess Ino gives Odysseus a veil to tie around his waist during a nasty storm at sea. Later records indicate that seagoing initiates at Samothrace tied a purple scarf around their waist to invoke protection: see Lehmann (1975) 29, 32, and Burkert (1983) 132. This is also suggested, although less specifically, by Apollonios Rhodios, *Argon.* 1.916-21, in which the Argonauts go to Samothrace for seagoing protection.

Olympia of Macedonia (the parents of Alexander I), as well as legendary figures such as Iason, Herakles and Orpheus. Aiolian Greek settlers arrived in c700, mixing perhaps relatively peacefully with the indigenous Thracian populace,[55] who already had a significant sanctuary there (with remains dating to the eighth to tenth centuries). A stone altar, one of the three earliest of many in the sanctuary, was dedicated to Hekate in the sixth century; it lay just outside the oldest section of the sanctuary, which was enclosed in the middle of the previous century.

The Thracian nature of the religion of "the Great Gods" on Samothrace was noted in antiquity, with the Thracian language still in use for names and in rituals in the first century.[56] The primary figure in the religion was called Axieros, The Great Mother; the early Greeks called her Elektra, after the daughter of Atlas, and Strategis ("leader"), but later equated her with Demeter. She was generally pictured seated. Hekate Zerynthia (meaning unknown) and Aphrodite Zerynthia seem to have been two secondary aspects of her; in Greek literature, however, Hekate is often the dominant, if not only figure recorded.[57] A cave to Hekate was commonly referred to, but has not yet been identified.[58] There was a consort of Axieros named Kadmilos, an ithyphallic Fertility-God, whom the Greeks equated with Hermes. There were also two minor ithyphallic attendants of some sort, the Kabeiroi, whom the Greeks called the Dioskouroi.

Two other deities were included with this group of six figures, but they may have been early Greek additions: Axiokersa and Axiokersos, commonly equated with Persephone and

---

55: Differing views exist concerning the encounter between Greeks and Thracians on Samothrace: compare Hoddinot (1981) 81 and Lehmann (1975) 15, for example. Diodoros 5.48f. records a tradition that suggests that the mysteries were forcibly opened up to foreigners.

56: For example, Apollonios Rhodios, *Argon.*1.916-21, Diodoros 5.48, and Strabo, *Geog.*10.3.16-21. Although Stabo was writing in the early Imperial period, he cites several fifth century sources.

57: For example, Aristotle, *Mir.*847a.5-7 and Strabo, *Geog.*10.3.20.

58: Lehmann (1975) 61 suggests that the original site of the altar, buried by roadworks in c340, was in its underground state the "cave".

Hades.[59] With them came the theme of the rape of Persephone, which by the fourth century was identified with the legendary marriage of Harmonia and Kadmos, the founders of Thebes (perhaps due to confusion of the latter with Kadmilos).

II.10 Anatolian Coast and the Aegean Isles

Hekate worship is well attested in this region in the Classical period. Usually she is associated with Artemis, Apollo, and Leto; this association will be more closely examined in sections III.2 and III.3. The oldest verifiable archaeological record of Hekate worship anywhere is at Miletos. In the oldest part of the sanctuary of Apollo Delphinios, a brief sixth-century boustrophedon inscription, on what is probably a seventh-century altar, is a dedication to Hekate by three prytaneis: ... ΕΟΘΡΑΣ ... / ... ΛΕΩΔΑΜΑΣ / ΟΝΑΞΟ ΠΡΥΤ[Α] / ΝΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ Α- / ΝΕΘΕΣΑΝ ΤΗ- / ΚΑΤΕΙ ("the prytaneis Eothras, Leodamas, and Onaxo, as promised, dedicate [this] to Hekate").[60] The altar is not in its original site, having been moved, for reasons unknown, into the sanctuary in antiquity along with several other altars.[61] Miletos was also the birthplace in the sixth century of the geographer Hekateios, bearer of one of the earliest known Hekat- names. The city itself had a long history, with Minoan and Mykenaian elements from the Bronze Age. Continuity of Greek culture through to the time of the Ionian migration is uncertain,[62] but by the Archaic period it was the foremost Ionian city.

Eighteen km. south of Miletos is Didyma, which was a significant religious centre. Apollo

---

59: Lehmann (1975) 26. Their names were recorded by the seventh century and clearly relate to Axieros, so it is also possible that they were indigenous deities whose identities were very rapidly Hellenised.

60: Yavis (1949) 137.

61: Stillwell (1976) 580.

62: Pausanias 7.2.3 records the Milesian tradition that indigenous people first mixed with Kretan exiles, but that they were slaughtered and enslaved by the subsequent Ionians.

had a major sanctuary there, with a very early temple dating to the seventh or perhaps even the eighth century, while nearby there were smaller sanctuaries to Artemis, Zeus, and Aphrodite as well. Hekate worship is attested at the Apollo sanctuary, in a religious calendar that can be traced back to the fifth century, as some sort of gatekeeper: two γυλλοί, perhaps stone cubes,[63] were carried in a procession to Didyma, and placed παρ' Ἑκάτην τὴν πρόσθεν πυλέων ("for Hekate before the gates"), and ἐπὶ θύρας ("at the gate") of the sanctuary.[64] The names of Apollo and Hekate were part of an inscription on a seated statue found there, but the context is uncertain.[65] Evidence suggests that the region was of religious significance from a very early time: Pausanias (7.2.4) records the tradition that the oracle of Apollo originally was Karian, predating the Ionian migration.

In Roman times, a statue of Hekate is known to have stood in the great Artemis sanctuary at Ephesos behind the main temple.[66] No earlier evidence exists for her presence there, however. Religious calendars found at Erythai, dating to the fourth or third century, record Hekate receiving sacrifices on specified days, especially the first, second and seventh days of the month.[67] Offerings to Apollo, Artemis, and Leto, however, were much more common.

Beside Delos is a tiny island that was named *Hekates nesos* ("Hekate's island").[68] Delos itself had a long history of worship of Apollo and especially Artemis: a temple to her existed by the seventh century, and it overlay the richest collection of Mykenaian finds on the island.[69]

63: Hesychios defines *gyllos* as a cube or square stone, but otherwise the word is quite obscure. See also Kraus (1960) 12f.

64: Kraus (1960) 12f.

65: Kraus (1960) 11, n. 4.

66: Strabo, *Geog.*14.1.23, and Pliny, *NH.*36.32.

67: Graf (1985) 163f., 185.

68: Suidas: *Hekates nesos*, Athenaeus, *Deipn.*645b, and Harpocr.: *Hekates nesos* (quoting Lykourgos of the fourth century).

69: Coldstream (1977) 330ff. and Stillwell (1976) 262. The finds include a large number of arrowheads, surprisingly appropriate for the Archer-Goddess.

Conceivably the small island was seen as a lesser companion to Delos, reflecting some relationship of Hekate to Artemis and Apollo.

Another indication of the popularity of Hekate in Ionian lands may be the prevalence of theophoric names. Sittig lists 81 Hekat- names:[70] while none are indicated as being from before the fourth century, approximately two-thirds are undated and potentially older. The two oldest theophoric names in Fraser and Matthews' Lexicon are from the island of Chios, a Hekataios and a Hekataie from the sixth and fifth centuries respectively; four more come from the fourth century.[71] Theophoric names were also exported to distant colonies: Apollonia, a colony of Miletos, had two Hekat- names, from the fifth and the fifth or fourth centuries, while Abdera, a colony of Teos, had one from the fifth and one from the fourth century. It is generally assumed that the names are derived from Hekate, but Berg[72] suggests that they are derived from Apollo *Hekatos* instead, who was very popular in Ionia. This would render this evidence irrelevant, a possibility that will be discussed in section III.3.

II.11 Karia and Phrygia

Karia and Phrygia were two hinterlands to the east of the Greek-dominated coastlands of Asia Minor. Their indigenous inhabitants are poorly documented, particularly in pre-Classical times. Both lands played a role in the development of the coastal Greek cities, credited and otherwise.[73] Contact with Greeks probably began in the Bronze Age, but they preserved their

---

70: Sittig (1912) 62ff. Of the 81 listed, 15 date to the fourth century and 13 from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

71: Fraser and Matthews (1987) 147f.

72: Berg (1974) 134f. See also section III.3.

73: Homer, *Il.*2.867-68 mentions the Karians as holding Miletos, and not speaking Greek; Pausanias 7.2.3f. records Karians at Miletos and Didyma; Strabo, *Geog.*14.1.21 records that Karians originally inhabited the region of Ephesos, but were driven out by the Ionian Greeks.

own language and presumably many other aspects of their culture well into historical times.[74]

Karia has become the most commonly cited homeland of Hekate in modern literature. The most significant factor supporting this theory is that in Hellenistic and Roman times two major sanctuaries served all of Karia: those of Hekate at Lagina and of Zeus Chrysaoreus nearby. Strabo (*Geographia* 14.2.25) mentions the sanctuaries, and records that hers drew great festal assemblies every year. Of the archaeological remains at Lagina, however, only a second-century altar definitely predates Roman times. Roman patronage seems to have led to a significant building enterprise in the first century B.C.E.,[75] and whatever pre-Roman structures existed may have been destroyed or modified beyond recognition. While it is unlikely that the Karians did not worship some goddess in pre-Classical times, the name and attributes are quite unknown now.

The second most important evidence for Hekate's worship in Karia is the large concentration of Hekat- names that have been found.[76] However, only five of the 57 have been dated. The earliest is only from the early fourth century, but is quite noteworthy: Hekatomnos of Mylasa. Very little is known of his background, but he was "dynast" of Karia and a Persian satrap from c390 to 377. The prominence of someone who had a Hekat- name could be a coincidence, or it might suggest that Hekate was already quite important at the time. Burkert notes that the ending of the name is not a Greek formation,[77] but it is not clear whether this reflects a Karian origin of her name, or the combination of Greek and Karian elements.

In Hellenistic times Lagina fell under the jurisdiction of Stratonikeia, which was probably founded in the early third century by Macedonians on the site of an older Karian town, either Chrysaoris or Idrias (which significantly was previously named Hekatesia).[78] Stratonikeia became

---

74: Cook (1962) 29. Even into Roman times, the indigenous peoples living around Greek cities such as Ephesos were distinctive enough to warrant mention (Strabo, *Geog*.14.1.21).

75: Sulla rewarded the city in the early first century for its loyalty to Rome in the war against Mithridates.

76: See Sittig (1912) 62ff.

77: Burkert (1985) 171.

78: Pausanias 5.21.10; Stillwell (1976) 861 and Farnell (1909) II.506.

the centre of the Chrysaorian League of Karian cities, despite its non-Karian re-founding, suggesting that the site was quite significant to the Karians: perhaps the Hekate sanctuary at Lagina was then already a focal point in Karia.

We know something of the worship of Hekate in Roman times.[79] She was given many complimentary titles, such as *Soteira*, *Megiste*, and *Epiphanestate* ("saviour", "the greatest", and "most manifest"). The main statue was single-form, which may be indicative of a strong indigenous tradition that survived despite the three-form standard set by Alkamenes in Athens. The primary attributes of Hekate were a torch, snake, whip, and key. The *kleidos pompe* ("procession of the key") was a major element in the Hekatesia festival, with the high priestess (or a near relative of hers) being the key bearer. Elsewhere the key was a common symbol for Hekate in Hellenistic times.[80] The key could refer to the guardianship of the land of the dead: for example, Pausanias (5.20.3) refers to Ploutos as having locked up Hades. In Hellenistic Egypt, on the other hand, keys signified the opening up of a sanctuary to reveal the deity to the worshippers.[81] It is interesting to note that Linear B tablets refer to a *klawiphora* ("keybearer") as a significant female religious figure; however, this title may refer more to economic concerns, as temples were food storage centres. Eunuchs were also an integral part of the clerical body at Lagina.[82] This is in keeping with religious practices in many other sites in Asia Minor, such as for Artemis at Ephesos, but not at all so on the Aegean islands or the Greek mainland.

The prominence of Hekate is striking, particularly as it is in association with Zeus. Is this the source of Hesiod's portrayal of Hekate? Her only other definite link with Zeus is that most genealogies other than that of Hesiod had Hekate as the daughter of Zeus (which is hardly a unique status). Zeus' titles *Panamaros* ("of the whole day", or "of all time") and *Chrysaoreus* ("of the

---

79: See, for example, Hatzfeld (1920), Stillwell (1976) 477 and Kraus (1960) 41ff.

80: Farnell (1909) II.556 and Johnston (1990) 41.

81: Hatzfeld (1920) 83.

82: Hatzfeld (1920) 79ff., 84, and Farnell (1909) II.506.

golden sword", or perhaps "golden brilliance"[83]) suggest a Sky-God emphasis: if so, Hekate could have been seen as a complementary Earth- or Moon-Goddess. The two sanctuaries were certainly closely associated in Roman times, as the priesthood of Zeus was a prerequisite for that of Hekate.[84] The east frieze of her temple at Lagina, which dates to the late second or first centuries, shows her as a *kourotrophos*, caring for the infant Zeus; perhaps this reflects an older mother-son relationship, in the pattern of Leto and Apollo that was so prevalent elsewhere in Asia Minor.[85] The west frieze is of the Titanomachy, and shows Hekate fighting a Titan with her torch. As the result of this battle was the supremacy of Zeus, it may be that a conscious attempt was made to glorify Hekate through her relationship with the chief deity of the Greeks.

Clearly the worship of Hekate in Roman Karia was quite unusual, both in its nature and prominence. With no evidence pre-dating the fourth century, however, we can only speculate as to its origins. Some theories will be discussed in sections III.2 and III.3.

In late Classical and Hellenistic times, Hekate was sometimes associated with the Great Goddess of Phrygia, Kybele. A tenuous link between the two goddesses is apparent through some legends concerning Samothrace (where Hekate worship is attested by the sixth century) that had Kybele and the Phrygian people as having originated from that island, or Thrace in general.[86] The

---

83: The *Hymn to Demeter* (4) gives the title *Chrysaoros* to Demeter, which, if translated as "of the golden sword", would be quite out of character for her. Perhaps the original meaning of this name was more like "golden brilliance", in keeping with another name she goes by in the Hymn, Deo. This would make the epithet more suitable for both her and Zeus.

84: See A. Laumonier, *Les Cultes indigénes en Carie* (Paris: 1958) 367.

85: Price (1978) 157.

86: Strabo, *Geog.*10.3.16 says that the Phrygians were Thracian colonists, thus explaining why the rites of the Phrygians were like those performed on Samothrace and those of Kotys and Bendis of Thrace. Diodoros 5.48f. records that Elektra, the Goddess of Samothrace, was mother to Dardanos, Harmonia, and Iasion. Dardanos went to Asia and founded Dardanian line of rulers of Troy. Harmonia married Kadmos after his initiation into the island's mysteries, and they then went on to found the Boiotian city

Hekate of Lagina does bear some resemblance to Kybele, in that they both were served by eunuch priests. As well, Kybele's consort, Attis, castrated himself, while Hekate's associate in Karia, Zeus, castrated his father.

Kybele was most commonly portrayed seated, and the many small statuettes of her resemble the sixth-century terracotta of Hekate found at Athens. This similarity could be interpreted as showing a link between the two goddesses, but more probably reflects an indifferent attitude to the appearance of Hekate, or the manufacture of small, generic religious icons. Another common representation of Kybele, the *naiskos*-group, shows her seated in a temple, with two young figures represented on the columns, one female (with one or two torches) and one male. The latter two figures have been variously interpreted, but are commonly equated with Hekate and Hermes.[87] The concept of a regal mother figure with a young female and a young male associate is quite reminiscent of Leto, Artemis, and Apollo, as well as the suspected main deities of Thrace.

Less formulaic reliefs also exist that show the two goddesses together. A fourth-century relief from the Piraeus shows Hekate and a fragmentary male, perhaps Hermes, standing in front of Kybele seated.[88] Hekate cradles one torch in her arms, and the two goddesses look at each other. A Hellenistic relief from Lebadeia, Boiotia, shows a seated Kybele on the left with eleven other standing figures.[89] Persephone with a key and Demeter veiled are closest to Kybele. Hekate with two large torches occupies a central position. The other figures are Dionysos, Pan, Asklepios, three nondescript warriors, and two males who might be Kastor and Pollux. A similar relief from Tanagra featuring Kybele also has Hekate with her torches.[90] A second century C.E. relief from

---

of Thebes and eventually become the grandparents of the god Dionysos. Iasion married Kybele, and they produced Korybas, who carried the worship of the Samothracian Great Goddess to Phrygia. The Korybantes, noted for their ecstatic worship of Kybele in Phrygia, were named after Korybas.

87: See Vermaseren (1977) 79f. and pl. 71.

88: In Staatliche Museen, Berlin; see Vermaseren (1977) 80 and pl. 23.

89: In Athens National Museum; see Vermaseren (1977) 80f. and pl. 27.

90: In Athens National Museum; see Vermaseren (1977) 81.

Thasos,[91] erected by a Kybele priestess, shows a seated Kybele flanked by her two lions and then Hermes and Hekate (again with torches). Demeter and Persephone are on the other side of Hekate; the other figures are Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis or Leto, and three warriors.

Attempts have been made since the late Roman period to determine the meaning of Kybele's name.[92] In particular, there may be a connection between Kybele and stone cubes:[93] her name bears a resemblance to κύβος ("dice cube"), and the site of her main sanctuary was Pessinos, which resembles πεσσός, a small gaming stone. As well, the sacred image of her that the Romans brought to Rome in 204 was apparently a meteorite. Perhaps the *gulloi* associated with Apollo and Hekate at Didyma (section II.9 above) originated with Kybele.

Hekate also has a vague connection with Phrygia through the mythological figure of Hekabe, daughter of King Dymas of Phrygia and a wife of Priam of Troy. Besides the similarity in names, fragments of plays by Euripides and Aristophanes have her daughter Kassandra prophesy that Hekabe would be transformed into a dog at a statue of Hekate.[94]

II.12 Discussion

When the sites discussed above are considered together, several interesting points become obvious. First of all, with the exception of Sicily, they all congregate about the Aegean Sea; southern and western Greece are totally unrepresented. Furthermore, all of the Dorian sites, or at least their mother-cities, were open to influence from non-Dorian regions because they lie in close proximity to Athens or are in the Aegean Sea: Aigina is an island in the Aegean, less than 30 km. from Athens; Argos lies close to the Aegean shore of the Peloponnese, and is also not far from

---

91: Vermaseren (1977) 80 and pl. 28.

92: See Vermaseren (1977) 21ff. for a summary.

93: See, for example, Lydus, *Mens.*III.34 and R. Eisler, "Kyba-Kybele," *Philologus* (1909): 122.

94: Euripides, fr.968 (Nauck) and Aristophanes, fr.594 (Kock).

Athens; Selinus on Sicily was a colony of Megara, which lies to the immediate west of Athens; and the mother-city of Akragas on Sicily was a colony of the islands of Rhodes and Crete. Admittedly the archaeological record of Greece is far from uniform, but when combined with the literary accounts of religious sites (such as those of Herodotos, Strabo and Pausanias), the evidence strongly points to a concentration of Hekate worship in non-Dorian lands about the Aegean.

Secondly, only at two sites does Hekate appear to have been a fully independent deity: at Lagina, where all of the evidence is quite late, and on Aigina. In all other cases, the evidence suggests a secondary status for her, typically at major, ancient sanctuaries of other deities. At more than half of the sites, Hekate has a statue, small precinct or temple very close to the entranceway of the sanctuary: the Athenian Acropolis, the Eleusis sanctuary, Eileithyia's sanctuary at Argos, the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Selinus, the sanctuary on Samothrace, and Apollo's temple at Didyma. The naming after Hekate of a tiny island beside Delos, where Artemis and Apollo were dominant from an early date, is suggestive of a similar arrangement. At Miletos, she had an altar inside the sanctuary of Apollo, but it had been moved from a previous, unknown location.

The primary deity to whom Hekate seems attached varies, but is generally female; in three cases it is Demeter. The main exception is her association with Apollo at Miletos and nearby Didyma. At none of the sites is she clearly associated with Helios or Hermes, despite their appearance with her in literature.

A third noteworthy point is that Hekate is involved in three major mysteries: those of Aigina, Eleusis and Samothrace. Demeter again figures prominently, as she was the dominant goddess at the latter two. Furthermore, these two mysteries of Demeter may have been the source of her worship in several other regions: for example, those of Eleusis for neighbouring Athens and Megara, and those of Samothrace for Phrygia, Thessaly and Aigina.

The second and third points suggest that the major functions of Hekate were somehow

associated with entranceways, attendance to other deities, and mysteries: gatekeeping and guardianship are obvious possibilities. The portrayal of Hekate in the *Hymn to Demeter*, as a nurturing and protective guide for Persephone on her journeys to and from Hades, perhaps offers an encapsulation of these primary functions.

We should also note that at Aigina, Argos and Athens, statues of Hekate were made by famous sculptors of the fifth and fourth centuries. As well, Roman period writers such as Pausanias and Strabo record the popularity of her sanctuaries and festivals at Aigina, Argos and Lagina. Thus plentiful evidence exists of Hekate enjoying a very favourable reputation in a public context. This popularity contrasts with contemporary and later negative portrayals which typically involve solitary figures at night.

Another interesting point is the relatively sudden appearance of archaeological evidence for Hekate's worship in the sixth century. At Athens, Selinus and Samothrace, as well as possibly Eleusis, the first material appears then; only Miletos (and the *Theogony*) offers evidence of her worship from before that century. As the *Hymn to Demeter* was composed at about the beginning of the sixth century, and as all of these sixth-century finds either involve a sanctuary of Demeter or are close to Eleusis, the evidence may indicate a sudden wave of popularity for Hekate through her relationship with Demeter. However, it is also possible that this is simply a coincidental aspect of the meagre historical record. In section III.1, this matter will be examined in greater detail.

The most anomalous pieces of evidence concerning Hekate are her appearances in the *Theogony* and at Lagina. That these exceptions bear much similarity to each other is perhaps the most convincing reason to suspect that Hesiod's Hekate originated in Karia. Unfortunately, the span of over half a millennium between the poet and the archaeological remains makes this a very speculative supposition. From the evidence that we currently possess, a far more likely point of origin of the worship of Hekate for Hesiod or his father would have been Samothrace, where her presence is attestable within two centuries of the poem's date and her widespread popularity within four centuries. As for Lagina, we should seriously entertain the possibility of the flow of

transmission being reversed, such that an anonymous goddess of Lagina was molded at a relatively late date into the Hekate described by Hesiod. Nevertheless, the prominence and nature of her worship there in the Roman period are quite remarkable: in sections III.2 and III.3, the possibility of her presence in Archaic Karia will be considered in light of her early associations with Artemis and Apollo in the rest of Anatolia.

Chapter III: Relationships Between Hekate and Other Deities

From the review of the literary and archaeological evidence in the previous two chapters, it is clear that a significant aspect of Hekate's nature in the Archaic and early Classical period was her association with other deities. In many cases, she is found at the entrance of the sanctuaries of prominent, if not primary, goddesses of communities. Even in the *Theogony*, which has the most extensive and favourable account of Hekate, she is a secondary associate of Zeus, the foremost deity of the poem. Of course, every Greek deity can be found to interact with other deities in certain circumstances, but few seem to do so to the same degree as Hekate. Furthermore, most close relationships between deities arise through, or are explained by, familial or marital links: for example, Demeter and Persephone (maternal), Artemis and Apollo (sibling), Hera and Zeus (marital). At most of these sites, there is no indication that Hekate was considered to be related in this manner. Thus it is reasonable to assume that in some, if not most, cases the relationship is of a different nature, and that it might have to do with the function or functions that she served in these locations. These functions will be discussed in the next chapter; for now we will look at the relationships between Hekate and these other deities.

The issue of relationships is complex, as among the various major and minor deities a wide spectrum of forms of relationships is possible. Four main types can be readily identified, provided that we keep in mind that they can and do easily overlap: association, resemblance, confusion, and identification. For example, Artemis and Apollo are commonly associated together, as twin sister and brother, yet are completely distinct deities. Athena and Hera resemble each other in their roles as protectors of cities such as Athens and Argos, but are still easily distinguishable. Confusion arises between the many goddesses for whom the title *Potnia Theron* was appropriate, such as Artemis, Britomartis, Kallisto and Orthia. Complete identification can occur in two forms: one figure with two names, such as Ares and Enyalios, and two separate but essentially indistinguishable figures, such as the Dioskouroi.

In Hekate's case, examples of each of these forms of relationships seem to have existed. Simple association occurs with Helios, through their relationships with Medeia, their revelatory roles in the *Hymn to Demeter*, and, at least by the Hellenistic period, their complementary roles as deities of the Moon and Sun. Hekate resembles Apollo and Hermes, in that she has in common with them certain titles and roles. Hekate is confused with several goddesses involved with childbirth and nursing, such as Artemis, Eileithyia and Gaia; with Artemis, confusion is so prevalent as to suggest identification.

When we consider the closest type of relationship, that of identification, we must ask ourselves whether Hekate actually had an independent identity: are we examining a unique goddess or simply a title of a more diverse one such as Artemis? There are several factors that are necessary if a deity is to achieve and maintain a distinctive identity. Burkert identifies at least four of them:[1] a divine name, the existence of established local forms of worship, iconography (especially temple statuary), and myths about the deity. The evidence for Hekate is weak with respect to all four of these factors: the Greeks used her name for Artemis and used *Hekatos*, the cognate form, for Apollo; there are very few references to public rituals for Hekate, at any date; early images of her are generally not distinctive;[2] and myths concerning Hekate are notably scarce.[3] If Hekate's claim to a distinctive identity is therefore questionable, then it is even more

---

1: Burkert (1985) 119ff.

2: Images of Hekate are rare before the fourth century, and are easily confused with Kybele, in the case of the sixth-century statuette from Athens, or torch-bearing goddesses such as Artemis and the Goddess of Pherai. It is only with the three-formed statue of Alkamenes that images of her become truly distinctive. Edwards (1986) 318 argues that the early classical image of Hekate as a young and active female is unique to her. This is by no means certain, and even by his reckoning, it may have only lasted for a few decades.

3: Her role in the return of Persephone was well known, but is clearly secondary to the main story. Otherwise, we have the legend of Hekabe transforming into a dog at a statue of Hekate (Euripides, fr.968 [Nauck] and Aristophanes, fr.594 [Kock]) and a few legends of young women being transformed

important that we determine the nature of her relationships with other deities.

III.1 Hekate, Demeter and Persephone

In the early evidence Hekate's most common associates are Demeter and Persephone. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, as well as in most vase paintings, Hekate's actions are entirely focussed upon them. At Eleusis and Selinus, and perhaps also at Akragas, she seems to have been allotted sacred space beside the entrances to major sanctuaries of Demeter and Persephone. The archaeological record of Hekate on Samothrace is scant, but literary records make her an associate of The Great Mother, who was known to the Greeks as Demeter, among other names. At Athens, she may have appeared on the Parthenon together with the Two Goddesses.

Hekate was commonly portrayed as an attendant of Persephone, particularly in the matter of her yearly journeys to and from the Underworld. In later literature, the two are often closely linked in chthonic matters. When we consider the favourable accounts that Hekate received in the context of the mysteries in which she was involved,[4] it is reasonable to suggest that she had a very positive role in the eyes of initiates. Perhaps Hekate was for the initiates in ritual what she was for Persephone in myth: a caring, personal guide. This role may also explain why the most common attribute of Hekate in art was her torches, and why she often had the title *Phosphoros* ("light bringer"). Hekate's roles in chthonic matters and in the mysteries with which she was involved will be discussed in the next chapter.

A complicating factor in understanding Hekate's relationship with Persephone is that the latter is not a simple figure. It has often been suggested that she originated as two distinct figures:

---

by Artemis into Hekate (see section IV.1). The east frieze of her temple at Lagina shows her caring for the infant Zeus: this could represent a local myth, but it could also be indicative of an attempt to bolster her reputation.

4: At Aigina, Paus.2.30.2; at Samothrace, Arist., *Mir.*847a.5-7, and Strabo, *Geog.*10.3.20; and at Lagina, Strabo, *Geog.*14.2.25.

Persephone, a pre-Greek Queen of the Dead, and Kore, the Greek daughter of Demeter.[5] Distinctions between the two are apparent at Eleusis, where it was apparently taboo to mention the name Persephone.[6] When Hekate appears as a companion, it is with the innocent daughter of Demeter; and Hekate, Kore and Demeter sometimes form a distinctive triad of young girl, bride, and mother. When the chthonic Hekate is invoked, she is often named with, or even identified with, the Queen of the Dead. It is interesting to note that part of Persephone's name resembles Perseis, a name sometimes used for Hekate.[7] If Persephone and Kore were originally two separate deities, then perhaps their merging transformed whatever original relationship one or both had with Hekate.

Hekate's early association with Demeter and Persephone on Sicily and Samothrace is noteworthy. These colonial sites are widely separated and otherwise unrelated. How are we to account for Hekate's presence at them? Was Hekate worship in the sixth century widespread, or was it restricted to specific sites as a result of a quite limited dissemination?

If we accept the view proposed by Nilsson[8] that Hekate was artificially introduced into the *Hymn to Demeter* and the Eleusinian religion, then perhaps she was exported from Eleusis after the colonies were established and given a small precinct by the pre-existing Demeter sanctuaries to reflect this change. However, this sequence of events would have had to have occurred fairly quickly: the hymn was probably composed no earlier than the late seventh century, and Hekate's name was recorded at Samothrace and Selinus no later than the late sixth century. A more serious problem with this hypothesis is that it cannot explain Hekate's absence at many other Demeter sanctuaries, as well as her numerous relationships with other deities.

5: For example, Bräuninger (1893) 944ff., Wilamowitz (1931) I.108ff., Zuntz (1971) 75ff., Burkert (1985) 196.

6: Clinton (1986) 44; see section II.2.

7: Ap.Rhod., *Argon*.3.467, Diodoros iv.45, and Lyk.1175.

8: Nilsson (1961) 78.

An alternative explanation is the suggestion of Solmsen,[9] that her worship was more generally spread throughout the Greek world in the sixth century by devotees to Hekate, and was successfully incorporated into a variety of already established, unrelated sanctuaries. This would again have had to have occurred within one century, but the relationship need not have exclusively depended upon who the primary deity was. The great diversity in associates for Hekate would therefore be more understandable, and it could be simple coincidence that her most common partner was Demeter.

However, both hypotheses require us to accept the proposition that Hekate was a surprisingly popular sixth-century interloper in the established Greek religion, whose propagation left no other discernible record and provoked no other known reaction or comment. This silence seems too great to ignore, and thus renders these proposals quite speculative at present.

Another possible explanation is that interaction with the more numerous local communities influenced the religion of the Greek colonies in their early stages. On Samothrace, the Greeks clearly renamed the primary indigenous goddess Demeter, and probably preserved many of her original traits. As for Sicily, Pindar records a tradition that Zeus gave the island to Persephone, which may reflect recognition of her absorption of a dominant pre-Greek goddess.[10] Perhaps in both cases the local communities also worshipped an associated figure who, in the eyes of the Greeks, resembled Hekate as she appeared at sanctuaries in their homeland. The occurrence of such a specific identification on such unrelated islands would suggest that the worship of a specific set of goddesses that corresponded to Demeter, Persephone and Hekate existed in numerous, culturally unrelated Mediterranean lands in Archaic or earlier times. Such uniformity is not demonstrated in the evidence, so this hypothesis does not seem very probable.

9: Solmsen (1982) 8. See also section I.1.

10: Pindar, *Nem.*1.13ff. Zuntz (1971) 70ff. argues for a relatively smooth evolution of a Great Goddess figure in the southern Italian region from the Neolithic to the historical period, by which time she was equated with Persephone by the Greeks.

A simpler explanation is that Hekate was brought with the other two goddesses by the Greek settlers in the seventh century. If Hekate was already associated with Demeter in the mother-cities at the time of colonisation, then their joint presence in the colonies would be understandable. Unfortunately, there is no early evidence in any of the homelands involved (Megara, Aeolia, Crete and Rhodes) for Hekate worship or any other factor that might explain her presence in their colonies. On the contrary, the diverse background of the colonies, if anything, suggests that the relationship was quite widespread in the Greek world. This, however, would again make it more difficult to explain Hekate's other relationships and her absence at other sanctuaries of Demeter.

There is a somewhat different hypothesis that is not vulnerable to these objections: Hekate was present at these sanctuaries from their outset, but her presence did not depend to a large degree on who the primary deity was. If one of Hekate's original and primary functions was to do with entranceways, her worship may have been instituted whenever sanctuaries were founded. While such an explanation has the appeal of simplicity, it does not explain why she is not found outside every sanctuary in the Archaic period. It is highly improbable that record of her presence has been lost at every other Archaic sanctuary in the Greek world; therefore, there must have been some determining factors as to which sites warranted Hekate's presence. Perhaps it was a short-lived 'fad', not unlike that proposed in Solmsen's theory above, that only caught on in certain regions and for a short space of time.

Whatever the origins of the relationship between these three deities, by the Classical period there appears to be considerable consistency in the functions that Hekate serves: her altars and sanctuaries are just outside the entrances to sanctuaries of Demeter and Persephone, suggesting a protective role, and in art and myth, Hekate is the young, caring companion of Persephone.

III.2 Hekate and Artemis

In Classical and later literature Hekate is most closely connected with Artemis. They share several titles, attributes and functions, and appear to be considered identical in many instances. However, it is surprising how rarely Artemis is found in the archaeological record of Hekate at any date: this absence could be indicative of just how scarce the material is, or of some significant difference in the nature of this relationship compared to that discussed in the previous section.

In contrast with Hekate's involvement with Demeter and Persephone, that with Artemis does not often involve entranceways or attendantship. *Hekates nesos* perhaps was seen as an attendant island to Delos (see section II.10), which was sacred to Artemis, but as Asteria was an old name for Delos as well as the name given by Hesiod to Hekate's mother, the two islands may have been named to reflect this mother-daughter relationship. In the *Catalogue of Women*, Artemis transforms Iphimede into Artemis *Enodia*, her attendant: τὴν δὴ νῦν καλέουσιν ... / Ἄρτεμιν Ἐνοδίην, πρόπολον κλυτοῦ ἰοχεαίρης ("even now they call her Artemis *Enodia*, servant of the renowned arrow-shooter").[11] When compared with the version of the story related by Pausanias (1.43.1) in which Iphigeneia becomes Hekate, it is reasonable to conclude that Hekate is a *propolos* of Artemis.[12] Diodorus Siculus (4.45f.) seems to draw loosely upon this tradition, when he makes Hekate a mortal devotee of Artemis in Tauris.

In Ionia, where the archaeological record of these two deities together is most plentiful, their relationship is not clear. For example, at Ephesos all we know is that Hekate had a statue behind the main Artemis temple, and in the religious calendars found at Erythai, in which Artemis, Apollo, and Leto are the primary deities receiving offerings, Hekate is simply one of several secondary ones.[13] Quite surprisingly, there is little sense of confusion or identification in Ionia.

11: *Catalogue of Women* fr.23(a) M-W, line 25f.

12: Note that the same term is used for Hekate in the *Hymn to Demeter* (440).

13: See section II.10.

There are several links between the families of Hekate and Artemis in the *Theogony*. Hesiod makes their mothers, Asteria and Leto, daughters of Phoibe and Koios, and thus Hekate a cousin of Artemis and Apollo. As discussed in section I.1, Hesiod may have invented Hekate's ancestry in a way that recognised an existing relationship with Leto's family: making Hekate a sister of Artemis may have been too drastic an alteration to existing genealogies, and thus he settled upon presenting her as a cousin.

In the fifth and later centuries, we see much confusion between, and apparent identification of, the two goddesses. The double names Artemis-Hekate and Artemis-Hekaerge appear often, and it is often unclear which goddess is indicated. For example, Aischylos has Artemis-Hekate invoked as a protector of women in labour: this text is commonly interpreted as being the earliest evidence for their identification, as based solely on earlier evidence neither Artemis or Hekate alone suit the role.[14] A minor sanctuary to Hekate in Attica had an offering spot for Artemis-Hekate, as if this was simply an alternate name for Hekate.[15] The only occurrence of Hekate's name in fifth-century Athenian treasury listings is as Artemis-Hekate, in what seems to be a reference to the statue of Alkamenes.[16] Euripides goes as far as calling Hekate a daughter of Leto,[17] a relationship otherwise reserved for Artemis. On Delos, on the other hand, numerous votive offerings were made to Artemis-Hekate in the Classical period: here it could be just

---

14: Aischylos, *Supp.*676. Friis Johansen and Whittle (1980) 41f. argue from contextual grounds against "-Hekate" being simply a title for Artemis meaning "the far-shooter", and against her being Hekate, as there is no earlier evidence for her specifically as a goddess of childbirth, rather than childrearing; thus the least unlikely explanation is an intentional identification of the two. See also Kraus (1960) 86 and Burkert (1985) 171. However, West (1990) 162 seems to accept Hekate as a simple title for Artemis in this line.

15: Price (1978) 123.

16: The listing of 429/8 (IG.I^{2}310.192-4) mentions her as Artemis-Hekate and together with Hermes. As Hermes also had a statue near the entrance to the acropolis, Kraus (1960) 85 feels that Alkamenes' statue is being referred to.

17: Euripides, *Phoen.*109f.

Artemis that is meant, as she was so prominent on the island.[18]

The two goddesses are both commonly identified with the Goddess of Pherai and the Thracian goddess Bendis; they also share *Enodia* and *Phosphoros* as titles. As *Phosphoros*, Artemis was often portrayed as carrying a torch and looking very much like Hekate. Artemis received sacrifices as Goddess of Good Counsel before every meeting of the Athenian assembly,[19] reminiscent of Hekate in *Theogony* (line 434). Artemis also seems to have absorbed Hekate's role in front of the Eleusinian sanctuary, as Pausanias records the temple there as being dedicated to her (see section II.2).

The common interpretation of this apparent identification is that the two goddesses were one, either in origin or through syncretism. Farnell sees Hekate as a guardian aspect of Artemis, and likens their relationship to that between Athena and Athena-Nike.[20] Nilsson suggests that Hekate represented the "dark" chthonic side of Artemis:[21] perhaps an analogy could be made with Persephone, as the dread Queen of the Dead, and her less frightening mother Demeter. The title *Hekatebolos* was often added to Artemis' name to indicate her belligerent and destructive roles,[22] suggesting a meaning of "striking from afar"; perhaps Hekate grew out of this function and title. While such an identification with Artemis is an appealing explanation, it fails to explain why we so rarely see Hekate as a guardian figure at entrances to sanctuaries and temples of Artemis, as she is for other deities, and never see her with a bow.

It should be kept in mind that the confusion between Hekate and Artemis is not very evident in Ionia, where their association is well documented. This discrepancy may serve as a

---

18: Fullerton (1986) 674. Hekaerge is also the name of a legendary Hyperborean woman who came to Delos with offerings for Artemis or Eileithyia, and whose tomb on the island was the site of rites for Artemis in historic times (Pausanias 5.7.8).

19: American School of Classical Studies at Athens (1980) 9.

20: Farnell (1909) II.501.

21: Nilsson (1961) 79.

22: Friis Johansen and Whittle (1980) 42.

useful reminder of how biased our perceptions of Greek history can become through the abundance of Athenian evidence, and how lacking in uniformity Greek communities were in many religious matters. Most of the evidence that indicates confusion or identification between Hekate and Artemis comes from Athens, neighbouring Eleusis, or Delos when it was under Athenian domination. Perhaps the Hekate of Athens in the fifth and later centuries should be seen as a distinct "version", at least when it comes to her interactions with Artemis.

An intriguing, albeit rather speculative, explanation for this is that Hekate's functions changed somewhat as the result of political manipulation. The statue of Alkamenes discussed in section II.1, which was probably situated prominently on the Nike bastion on the Athenian Acropolis, dates to the time of the Peloponnesian War, in which Athens and Sparta claimed to represent the Ionians and Dorians respectively. Thus a statue of a deity best known in Ionian lands who was associated with gateways, possibly as a guardian, could have been intended to remind the Ionian allies of Athens' legendary resistance to the Dorian invasion and its subsequent founding of the Ionian cities: "as a deity especially popular among the Ionians, Hekate is an appropriate guardian not only of Athens herself but of the entire Delian league as well."[23] However, when the war treasury of the Athenian alliance was moved to the Acropolis in about 454 from Delos, where Artemis was prominent and possibly a divine guardian of the treasury, a heightened overlap in the functions of the two goddesses may have arisen. For the most part, Hekate would seem to have been the loser in such a merger: she did not acquire any functions normally reserved for Artemis, such as archery or governing wilderness, while Artemis' name joined hers at the entrance to Athena's sanctuary in Athens and replaced hers at Eleusis. Perhaps this dominance of Artemis is why Hekate's chthonic role became so pronounced in the literature of Athens in the fifth and later centuries: she may have lost most of her other functions to Artemis. Aischylos' use of the joint

---

23: Fullerton (1986) 674. It is also interesting to note that Harrison (1965) 62 likens Alkamenes' portrayal of Hekate to that of contemporary images of Amazons, who in art commonly symbolised Ionians or Anatolians.

name Artemis-Hekate probably predates the move by one decade,[24] which could indicate a predisposition to equating the two goddesses; alternatively, it could undermine this entire hypothesis.

Irrespective of how the close association between Hekate and Artemis arose, by Hellenistic times their names could be quite interchangeable. This confusion offers a possible explanation for the anomalous primacy of Hekate in Karia. The early Greek migrants in Anatolia usually chose to name as Artemis any indigenous Nature-Goddess that they adopted, from the most localised and specialised to the all-encompassing *Potnia Theron* figures.[25] From this habit probably arose the "Asiatic" flavour of Artemis in cities such as Ephesos, where such a renaming is suspected to have occurred at a very early date.[26] This transformational process is also documented as late as the Hellenistic period: the Goddess of Perge in Pamphylia went from being called simply Anassa to Artemis in the second century.[27] Berg suggests that a prominent goddess at Lagina underwent a similar change of name in the Hellenistic period but assumed the name of Hekate, rather than Artemis, because of certain factors: Hekate and Artemis had by then become fairly interchangeable names; the attributes of torch and dog recorded in Roman times may have belonged to the indigenous goddess, and may have been more associated with Hekate than Artemis; and the possible pre-existence of Zeus' name for the local god would have made Hekate a reasonable

---

24: Aischylos, *Supp.*676. This play is now dated to 463: see, for example, Garvie (1969) 1f.

25: See, for example, W. Helck, *Betrachtungen zur grossen Göttin und den ihr Verbundenen Gottheiten* (Munich: 1971), 203, 247, Berg (1974) 135f., and Burkert (1985) 149. Archaic Apollo was similarly suitable for adopting deities of the wilderness, as altars and sanctuaries to him in the ninth and eighth centuries were typically quite removed from urban areas: see Coldstream (1977) 328.

26: Dietrich (1973) 218. "Asiatic" is an adjective commonly used to describe deities and religious practices of the Greeks in Asia Minor that seem to have significant non-Greek elements more commonly associated with oriental cultures, such as ecstasy, music, and eunuchs. The distinction was, and is, sometimes exaggerated and misleading, and in part may just as well reflect what was prevalent in pre-Classical Greece.

27: Berg (1974) 136.

choice based on their relationship in the *Theogony*.[28] By this line of reasoning, the Hekate of Lagina is merely a variation of Artemis as seen at Ephesos, for example, and thus her status in Roman times does not indicate that the region was her homeland.

Hekate's relationship with Artemis clearly differs in a number of ways from that with Demeter and Persephone. Only in a few instances do we find Hekate serving as a *propolos* or entranceway figure for Artemis; the occasions on which we find them together at all in early times are surprisingly few, considering how often they shared titles and functions in literature of the fifth and later centuries. While the tendency was for identification between them to increase after the fifth century, with Artemis generally absorbing Hekate, the latter preserved at least a moderate level of independence to the end of antiquity (perhaps because of the popularity of her role in the mysteries on Aigina and Samothrace).

In Ionia, where Hekat- names were most prevalent, the two are found together more often, but there is less confusion between them than in the Athenian evidence. They appear in simple association, with little evidence of a functional relationship, although Hekate is generally secondary in status to Artemis. This arrangement is more in keeping with what we might expect from their traditional cousin relationship, such as is seen in the *Theogony*. The anomaly of Hekate's dominance in Karia can be reasonably explained as a variation on the "Artemisation" of indigenous Anatolian deities (this hypothesis will be explored further in the next section). The relationship between the two goddesses in Athens may have been heightened in the fifth century, perhaps through political considerations, resulting in an exaggerated emphasis on their similarities.

III.3 Hekate and Apollo

Hekate's connection with Apollo is the most intriguing of those she has with gods. First

---

28: Berg (1974) 136f.

of all, they are both closely associated with Artemis: already in the *Theogony*, all three are related. Secondly, the earliest archaeological material for Hekate is found at Apollo's sanctuary at Miletos. While we do not know the details of their relationship there, at nearby Didyma offerings were made to Hekate at the entranceway to another sanctuary of his, the only known case where Hekate is found at the gates of a sanctuary to a male deity.

The most striking connection between Apollo and Hekate, though, is through two of his titles that resemble her name: *Hekatos* and *Hekatebolos*.[29] These epithets pose a largely neglected problem in that they complicate the issue of the Hekat- theophoric names: do they derive from Hekate, Hekatos, or both? This would be very significant in the debate over Hekate's origin, as the prevalence of Hekat- names is the older of the two main pieces of evidence cited for her homeland being Karia.

What makes this form of evidence difficult to interpret is that there is no direct way to discern which divine name forms the root of personal names such as Hekataia, Hekataios, or Hekatadoros; there is no evidence to suggest, for example, that men's names were derived from Hekatos and women's names from Hekate. Berg[30] suggests that they all relate to Hekatos, citing the greater overall popularity that Apollo enjoyed. Indeed, it is certainly misleading to label such names in regions where the worship of Apollo is well attested as definite evidence for the popularity of Hekate. On the other hand, in a region such as Karia in the Roman period, when Hekate's temple at Lagina was clearly prominent, one can probably safely conclude that she is the deity referred to. Perhaps the very ambiguity of the names made them popular, as they could refer to either deity. At most, probably all that one can conclude for most regions where the names occur is that Hekate's name was not so fearful as to render them undesirable, as "children are not [named] after spooks".[31]

29: Homer, *Il.*1.370, 7.83, etc., Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* 275f., Homeric *Hymn to Artemis* 1, etc.

30: Berg (1974) 134f.

31: Berg (1974) 129.

The meaning and etymology of the names Hekate and Hekatos have been debated for some time.[32] Derivation from the preposition ἕκητι ("by whose will") has been proposed by Clay as the basis for Hekate's role in the *Theogony* (see section I.1). However, this has no obvious connection to her later roles in literature or to those of Apollo. A more common derivation, suggested already in late antiquity,[33] is from ἑκαέργος or ἑκατηβόλος, which may mean "working at a distance" or "the far-shooter". Taken literally, the latter lends itself nicely to the image of Apollo and Artemis as archers and bringers of sudden disease and death, a function commonly attributed to them by both Hesiod and Homer. However, Hekate is never portrayed as an archer in art or myth.

The derivation "working at a distance" could suggest a deity who, though distant in a hierarchical sense, interacts with mortals on a personal level. Burkert interprets Apollo's actions in this way, as a god who can both strike and enlighten from afar: "man [*sic*] knows himself in his distance from the god".[34] Hekate's role in the Chaldaean Oracles of the Roman period also displays such a philosophical sense. As well, interaction with mortals is quite pronounced in the Hekate passage of the *Theogony*. Finally, Hekate's possible involvement as a deity that guides initiates in mysteries such as at Eleusis could have also conveyed such a personal aspect. However, these details are certainly not sufficient to prove that such a sophisticated background was the source of her name, so this hypothesis cannot be treated as much more than speculation.

It is more likely that the origin of these names was less elegant and more coincidental, and thus more difficult to trace. Perhaps Hekate and Hekatos began as titles of Artemis and Apollo,

---

32: For example, G. Hermann, "De mythologia Graecorum antiquissima dissertatio," *Opuscula II* (Leipzig: 1827): 185; A. Fick, *Die griechischen Personennamen* (2nd ed. Göttingen: 1894), 452; Steuding, *ML*.I 2 (1899) s.v. "Hekate"; W. Prellwitz, "Participia praesentia activi in der Zusammensetzung," *Glotta 17* (1929): 145ff.; Wilamowitz (1931) I.177; and Kraus (1960) 14f.

33: Hesychios *Hekatoio: makrobolou* (fifth century C.E.). It should be noted, however, that there is no record of speculation upon the meaning or origins of her name from before the Roman period.

34: Burkert (1985) 148.

and simply meant "far-shooter", in reference to their archery. Such symmetry of titles between the children of Leto is not improbable, given the close association found between the two by the seventh century. If some Anatolian goddess was encountered with a name that resembled Hekate, perhaps she was identified with Artemis under that specific title. Over time, enduring traits of the indigenous deity may have led to a distinction between Artemis and (Artemis-)Hekate. Alternatively, Hekate could have been a Hellenised version of a local name, around which later formed false etymologies such as "far-shooter". In both cases, the name Hekate would have been a late addition to the actual deity.

A very similar name that could have been confused with Hekate is Hekabe, which is recorded as a Phrygian personal name in the *Iliad*: Euripides and Aristophanes both seem to record a link between her and Hekate,[35] while as a Phrygian she could conceivably have had some connection with Kybele. A more interesting candidate is Hepat, a major goddess of the Bronze Age Hurrians.[36] They were a people of eastern Anatolia, with whom the Karians could have had contact. In the previous section, it was proposed that the Laginan Hekate is simply a variant of the Asiatic Artemis, and thus a local goddess renamed by colonial Greeks: perhaps this local goddess was Hepat. As Hepat was sometimes paired with the Hurrian Weather-God, this could also explain Hekate's partnership with Zeus at Lagina. Such eastern links are suspected for Apollo as well, for example, through the Hittite Guardian God Rešep.[37]

Another way of interpreting this set of names is to postulate that Hekate and Apollo Hekatos were originally paired, and that Artemis came to replace Hekate. Despite the tradition since Hesiod and Homer that Artemis and Apollo were close siblings, there are many sites where they were worshipped by themselves: Apollo took on an equal status with Artemis on Delos only

---

35: Euripides, fr.968 (Nauck) and Aristophanes, fr.594 (Kock).

36: Kraus (1960) 55, n. 264 and G. Wilhelm, *The Hurrians* (Warminster, England: 1989), 50, 55f.

37: The main attribute of Rešep was his bow and arrow, and he was associated to some degree with Apollo on Cyprus. See Burkert (1985) 144f.

in the sixth century, while she never joined him at Delphi.[38] As Burkert has noted, the history of their worship has been "eclipsed by the form of thought [and] by the image of the youthful brother and sister".[39] In light of this, Hekate's early presence with Apollo at Miletos (and later at Didyma), could be interpreted as the last signs of a partnership that originated among Bronze Age Anatolians. By this line of reasoning, Artemis presumably replaced Hekate as companion of Apollo Hekatos when she began to absorb other Anatolian goddesses early in the millennium. Unfortunately, the exceptional situation of Karia is not adequately explained by this hypothesis: the partner of Hekate there should be Apollo, but instead is Zeus.

Besides this link in nomenclature, Hekate shared with Apollo a role commonly described as that of guardian. This he performed under various titles, such as *Apotropaios* ("averter of evil"), *Agyieus* ("of the road"), *Thyraios* ("at the door"), *Propylaios* ("before the gate"), *Karinos* and *Prostaterios*. One scholiast linked the two as protecting travellers: "[Hekate and Apollo *Agyieus*] fill the roads with light; he in the day, she in the night."[40] Statues or crude herms of Apollo *Agyieus*, Hermes *Propylaios* and Hekate may have served as common protective figures at roadsides and in front of houses.[41] At Didyma, stone cubes may have been associated with both Hekate and Apollo at entranceways.[42] It has been suggested that Apollo's name is derived from various words meaning stone, but these derivations are quite speculative;[43] nevertheless, he is the

---

38: Burkert (1985) 219.

39: Burkert (1985) 220.

40: Schol.Pl.*Leg*.11.914b. This seems to draw upon a presumably late view of Hekate and Apollo as paired deities of the Moon and Sun.

41: Apollo *Agyieus* in Athens in Aristophanes, *Vesp*.875 and *Thesm*.488; Apollo *Karinos* and *Prostaterios* in Megara, as recorded by Pausanias 1.44.2-3. For discussions of Apollo in these roles, see Nilsson (1948) 4f. and (1952) 125, Dietrich (1986) 111, 169ff., and Harrison (1965) 113.

42: See section II.10.

43: For example, S. Solders, "Der ursprüngliche Apollo," *AfR 32* (1935): 142-55 and Nilsson (1967) I.556, 558f.

Greek deity most commonly associated with stones, next to Hermes.

If it were not for Apollo's title of *Hekatos*, his relationship with Hekate could probably be treated as being of limited significance. However, their sharing of names can hardly be a trivial coincidence: Hekate's origins and identity are somehow tied to those of Artemis and Apollo. Did Hekate begin as merely a title of Artemis? Did Artemis replace Hekate as companion of Apollo? There are several speculative but quite tantalising pieces of evidence that point to Hekate and Apollo having common roots in Bronze Age Anatolia, perhaps as paired guardian deities. Whatever their origins, however, even by the sixth century any close relationship between Apollo and Hekate was restricted to a few Ionian sites such as Miletos and Didyma, and gods such as Helios and Hermes were more commonly her male companions.

III.4 Hekate and Helios

There are several references in literature that show an association between Hekate and Helios, the Sun-God. The earliest record may be in the *Theogony* (956f.), where Helios is the mate of Perseis and grandfather of Medeia, Hekate's most famous devotee:[44] Perseis can refer to Hekate, as daughter of Perses. In the *Hymn to Demeter* they definitely appear together, and serve a common role: Hekate and Helios are the only witnesses to Persephone's kidnapping (22-26), and they inform Demeter of what has happened (53-58, 74-81). Sophokles has Medeia invoke them together: "Ηλιε δέσποτα καὶ πῦρ ἱερόν, τῆς Εἰνοδίας Ἑκάτης ἔγχος ("Lord Helios and the sacred flame, weapon of Hekate *Enodia*").[45] They are also less directly connected in

---

44: The authenticity of line 956f. has been questioned, however. West (1966) 397ff. believes that all lines after about 900, including the transition to the *Catalogue of Women*, are post-Hesiodic; on the other hand, Hamilton (1989) 40 and Walcot (1966) xiiiff. accept up to line 965.

45: Sophokles, *Rhizotomoi* fr.535 Radt.

Euripides' play *Medeia*. Diodoros (4.45) has Hekate the daughter-in-law of Helios.

It has often been assumed that this relationship reflects their complementary nature as Moon-Goddess and Sun-God. However, the evidence for a lunar Hekate this is mostly quite late, as will be detailed in section IV.4. Nevertheless, an association between Hekate and Helios is clearly displayed. It does not resemble those seen so far, as Helios generally is not found at entranceways nor is he involved in matters of guardianship, nursing, birth, or death. In every surviving version of the legend of the kidnapping of Persephone, Hekate and Helios either are paired as observers or are both absent. This suggests that this pairing is not coincidental, though not necessarily vital to the story. It is perhaps relevant to note here that there is a common pattern found in folklore in many parts of the world of the Sun and Moon being questioned concerning events occurring on Earth, as they are assumed to be able to observe everything:[46] Helios is quite explicitly called *skopos* (62), meaning "watcher" or "guardian", and Hekate is able to hear clearly the abduction from her cave. Even if Hekate was not yet associated with the Moon, the folklore motif may have been the source of this pairing.

Another possible explanation is that the two deities were brought together in the Hymn through their relationships with Medeia, one of the most popular dramatic figures in antiquity. The earliest records of Helios as an ancestor of Medeia are found in a work by the eighth-century Corinthian poet Eumelos[47] and in the *Theogony* (956f.). Hekate's link with her, however, may not be nearly so ancient: while Hekate may be her grandmother in the *Theogony* under the name of Perseis (as mentioned above), in Eumelos' account Medeia is most closely associated with Hera.

The first definite connection between Hekate and Helios date to more than a century after the *Hymn to Demeter,* in the plays of Sophokles and Euripides that deal with Medeia; thereafter,

---

46: Richardson (1974) 156.

47: Pausanias 2.3.8 summarises part of Eumelos' *Korinthiaka*.

nearly all accounts of Medeia mention Hekate. It is interesting to note that both fifth-century playwrights draw upon the tradition that Medeia was from Kolchis, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. It was to Tauris (the Crimean peninsula on the north shore of that sea) that Iphigeneia was transported by Artemis and transformed into Hekate; as the earlier name for Iphigeneia was Iphi*medeia*, could one of these two playwrights have created the link between Medeia and Hekate, two figures previously associated with lands of the distant Black Sea? Furthermore, perhaps Medeia's evil magical skills were transferred from the Taurians, who were stereotypically granted other savage practices; and then through association with her, Hekate's reputation as a goddess of chthonic magic arose. It is thus possible that the association between Hekate and both Helios and Medeia only began in the fifth century.

A more speculative link between Hekate and Helios involves another set of names. Hesiod presents a sister of Perseis named Elektre; this name was also given by early Greeks to the Great Goddess of Samothrace, with whom Hekate had a significant connection. Elektor, on the other hand, is an early name for Helios. Ἤλεκτρον or ἠλεκτρος probably referred to amber in Archaic times, but later came to be used to describe the silver-gold alloy used in coinage that we now know as electrum. If the root of these words refers to brilliance,[48] then it could suit a Moon-Goddess and Sun-God pair. However, another possibility is that Elektre came from ἀ-λέκτρα, meaning un-wedded. As a title, this would be quite similar to *Parthenos* ("maiden"), which may have been a widespread title for the Great Goddess in the Ionian region (see section III.6).

Hekate and Helios are associates as early as the *Hymn to Demeter*, but for reasons that are not clear. They do not seem to share roles that we have seen in the previous sections, and the evidence is weak for their being paired deities of the Moon and Sun any earlier than the Hellenistic period. However, by the fifth century, they are firmly related through their relationships with

---

48: As suggested by Burkert (1985) 284.

Medeia. Even if Hekate's association with her does not predate Sophokles and Euripides, it is notable that the most prominent factor relating Hekate and Helios is their link to such a legendary woman. Hekate's involvement with her will be discussed in greater detail in section IV.5.

III.5 Hekate and Hermes

Hekate's relationship with Hermes is the least documented in early times of those considered so far. Hermes is briefly mentioned in the Hekate passage of the *Theogony* (444): ἐσθλὴ δ' ἐν σταθμοῖσι σὺν Ἑρμῇ ληίδ' ἀέξειν ("and she is good in the stables, with Hermes, to increase the stock"). This could indicate some joint worship of the two, as Hermes commonly serves as a deity of sheep and cattle. It is also possible that Hesiod included him simply to represent the Earth: the only other deities mentioned in the passage (besides her ancestors) are Poseidon (441) and Zeus, who are ideal representatives of the Sea and Sky, the two other realms in which Hekate has honours.

The earliest evidence supporting a true connection with Hekate is at the entrance to Athenian Acropolis in the fifth century: Hekate had a prominent statue there at least by c425, as already noted in section II.1, and Hermes *Propylaios* had one by c475.[49] A treasury listing of 429/8 seems to refer to these two statues together,[50] suggesting that at least bureaucratically they were seen as a pair. In later records, the two seemed to function commonly as guardians, with statues being placed in front of houses and city gates.[51]

Hekate and Hermes are commonly equated with the two young figures associated in art with Kybele.[52] The formulaic representation is reminiscent of the familial relationship of Artemis,

---

49: Pausanias 1.22.8.

50: IG.I^{2}310.192-94.

51: Farnell V.17f., Nilsson (1952) 125, and Harrison (1965) 113. See also section IV.1.

52: See Vermaseren (1977) 79f. and section II.11.

Apollo and Leto seen in Ionian sculpture. While no image is known to be pre-Hellenistic, some non-Greek traits may indicate that their relationship is indigenous and perhaps of greater antiquity. A few, much more hellenised sculptures of the fourth and third centuries also show Hekate and Hermes grouped with Kybele; however, the relationship between the three is less obvious in these. Hekate and Hermes are also identified as early as the sixth century with members of the "Great Gods" of Samothrace (from where Kybele's worship reputedly originated),[53] perhaps again in a relationship that recalls Artemis, Apollo and Leto.

The significance of these relationships in Phrygia and Samothrace is hard to evaluate: in both cases we have negligible information on the roles that Hekate and Hermes served. In particular, we do not know whether the identification of the two Greek deities with local figures indicates a pre-existing relationship between them. If it does not, then all we can conclude is that their closest cognates in two other cultures had some unknown relationship. On the other hand, it may indicate a similarity between Hekate and a member of a popular and widespread set of deities in the east.

Hekate and Hermes also shared several functions that were generally common to many chthonic deities (and will be dealt with in greater detail in section IV.5). They both received sacrificial meals left at their statues, but these were also left for all chthonic deities. They were called *Enodia* and *Enodios*, meaning "in/of the road": this could refer to their statues erected in the roads, but at least for Hermes it was also applicable for his role as protector of travellers. Both were invoked in the so-called "curse tablets" (*katadesmoi* or defixiones), which have been found by the hundreds: the earliest date to the mid-sixth century, but the vast majority come from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Hermes was the primary recipient in about half of the inscriptions; when Hekate was invoked, it was nearly always together with Hermes.

Their roles as chthonic deities and possible household guardians have led some scholars to

---

53: See section II.9.

conclude that Hekate and Hermes originated as a humble pair of deities of the common people.[54] This theory could explain, particularly for Hekate, the reputed[55] abundance of small statues before houses and the relative absence of impressive temples and works of art depicting them: they were popular, but rarely granted official status. However, a significant difference in religious practices between the commons and the elite is not easy to justify. Furthermore, such an unobtrusive beginning makes Hekate's appearances in the *Theogony* and the *Hymn to Demeter* somewhat more difficult to explain.

Hermes is the only deity with whom Hekate significantly shared chthonic functions. However, there is little early evidence for an association between Hekate and Hermes or a strong chthonic function for Hekate, suggesting that the role may have only become significant in the fifth century. Their shared propylaic role also dates only to the fifth century, but earlier evidence exists for both independently: perhaps their association arose because they shared this function. The identification of the two with the young companions of Kybele, if correct, could be older than the current evidence indicates; however, the evidence is too meagre to be sure.

III.6 Hekate and Kybele

Kybele is the most significant Anatolian deity whose name and indigenous traits were preserved after contact with the Greeks. Hekate had connections with her in late Classical and Hellenistic times. The most important evidence is their portrayal together in two types of artistic works, *naiskos*-group figurines and group reliefs (see section II.11).

Admittedly, Hekate's presence in the *naiskos*-group is somewhat conjectural, the identifi-

---

54: For example, Nilsson (1961), 79 and Wilamowitz (1931), I.169.

55: Aristophanes, *Vesp.*804 refers to the widespread prevalence of Hekataia before houses, but he is probably exaggerating: see section IV.1.

cation being based primarily on the presence of torches. No names are inscribed, so one cannot be sure who was intended by the Phrygians who made them. However, the relatively close association to Kybele of the readily identifiable figures of Hekate and Hermes in the more Hellenised reliefs makes it likely that the Greeks, at least, thought that the torch-wielding attendant was Hekate. In both groups, Hekate is shown to be secondary to Kybele; in the figurines, Hekate and Hermes are child-like attendants.

The images of these three also resemble the triad of Leto, Artemis, and Apollo, numerous images of which have been found in Asia Minor. Perhaps this similarity is the result of Greek settlers adopting and renaming in different ways a mother-daughter-son set of deities common to many indigenous peoples of Anatolia. The ancient roots of Kybele are far more verifiable than those of Artemis or Apollo, and her name at least can be traced to the Bronze Age goddess of the city Karchemish on the Euphrates in south-central Anatolia, where a pair of attendants are not recorded.[56] By the seventh century, her worship had been brought into contact with Greeks on the Anatolian coastland.

The worship of a Great Goddess seems to have been common in Anatolia and the islands of the eastern Aegean, often under the title *Parthenos*: for example, Kybele of Phrygia, the Goddess of Samothrace, Aphrodite of Aphrodisias (and as she is portrayed in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*), Artemis of Ephesos, Hera of Samos, and Hekate of Karia.[57] Hekate is documented in association with many of these goddesses. In section III.1, it was suggested that Hekate might have been a entranceway figure capable of serving at sanctuaries for various deities; in Anatolia, she may have had a similar generic nature, serving as an attendant to many Great Goddess figures.

Samothrace has so far been considered as providing evidence for a relationship with Demeter, but this is not necessarily a very accurate appraisal. What is recorded of the religion there

---

56: See Vermaseren (1977) 16f. and Burkert (1985) 420, n. 16.

57: Farnell (1909) II.447, 473, Bennett (1967) 25ff., Kraus (1960) 54, Lloyd-Jones (1983) 90, Burkert (1985) 120.

does not indicate a close equivalency with that of Demeter and Persephone elsewhere: for example, the mother-daughter relationship is not pronounced, the presence of Aphrodite and Hermes is unique, and the mysteries came to be known as belonging to Hekate. The Greeks were themselves not necessarily convinced that she should be equated with Demeter: Apollonios Rhodios (*Argonautika* 1.915f.), writing in the third century, retains the earlier Greek name of Elektre, with no mention of Demeter. Both Strabo and Diodoros[58] record the tradition that Kybele and the Phrygians were originally from Thrace, if not Samothrace in particular. The few coin representations found of her resemble typical portraiture of Kybele.[59] The similarity of the names of three deities on Samothrace, Axieros, Axiokersa and Axiokersos (commonly equated to Demeter, Persephone and Hades), suggests a triad comparable to Kybele, Hekate and Hermes. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to view Axieros, the primary goddess of Samothrace, as being more like Kybele than Demeter.

Much of this discussion is speculative, because we have very little evidence from Phrygia and other interior lands of Anatolia. The sculpted works of art and Hekate's presence on Samothrace are undeniable, however, and in general indicate some sort of attendant status for Hekate to Kybele and other Great Goddess figures of Anatolia and the eastern islands. In the previous sections it was suggested that Hekate may have had roots of considerable antiquity in Anatolia, in association with Apollo and Artemis: if so, her relationship with Kybele would probably be a part of this background.

III.7 Other Relationships

Hekate was connected with four other deities to a much lesser degree than in the cases

---

58: Strabo, *Geog.*10.3.16 and Diodoros 5.48f; see section II.11, n. 86.

59: Burkert (1985) 283.

discussed above. These relationships deserve brief mention here.

i) Athena

The most famous image of Hekate, the three-form statue by Alkamenes, stood by the entrance of the most famous sanctuary of Athena, the Athenian Acropolis. This placement suggests a connection between the two goddesses. However, nowhere else is this relationship found, including cities where statues modeled on this one have been found. Moreover, there is no indication that Hekate had a close relationship with Athena on the Athenian Acropolis, in myth, or in Athenian literature. This unusual situation is in agreement with the supposition put forth at the end of section III.1 that, when Hekate is found at sanctuary entranceways, the relationship arose through some guardian-like function, rather than specific traits of the primary goddess. Furthermore, if figure G on the east pediment of the Parthenon is Hekate,[60] then her relationship with Demeter and Persephone at nearby Eleusis may have overshadowed any that she had with Athena in Athens, without diminishing her specific function on the Acropolis.

ii) Eileithyia

Hekate and Eileithyia seem to have been linked together in some relationship at Argos as early as the Classical period. As temples to Hekate are so rare, it is unfortunate that we know so little about her worship there: is the presence of a temple, with statues by famous sculptors (as recorded by Pausanias 2.22.7-8), indicative of a strong following of Hekate in Argos, an important and official status for her, the prestige of the Eileithyia sanctuary, or simply the overall wealth of the city? A puzzling feature of this relationship is that while Hekate is commonly found at

---

60: See section II.1.

sanctuary entrances, Eileithyia was not the dominant goddess of Argos: that status always belonged to Hera, with whom Hekate had no significant connection.

It should also be noted that the legend of the sanctuary's foundation links Eileithyia to Hekate through the birth of Iphigeneia. Perhaps the close proximity of Hekate's temple to Eileithyia's sanctuary did not indicate a hierarchical relationship between the two, but rather their shared role as deities of childbirth (see section IV.2).

iii) Poseidon

There are two instances in which Hekate and Poseidon appear together. In the *Theogony* (441), they jointly grant good catches of fish to those who honour them. Mention of Poseidon could simply serve to emphasise her share of the three realms, in the same way as Hermes is mentioned to represent the Earth. However, it may also refer to some relationship between the two: there are a few references to Hekate receiving offerings of fish and even being called a Sea-Goddess, making a proper association with Poseidon seem plausible.[61] The fish apparently most associated with Hekate was the trigle (red mullet); this connection was attributed to its name (tri- relating to her three-fold statues), according to Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistai* 325a). She may have also acquired an aquatic connection through her presence at Samothrace, where sea travel and fishing were particularly important and catered to.

The second specific connection between the two is at Eleusis, if the assumption is correct that they shared the temple at the entranceway to the great sanctuary.[62] Perhaps her limited functions relating to the sea came through her association there with him: a fragment of a work on the Eleusinian mysteries by the otherwise unknown late fourth-century historian Melanthius makes reference to the trigle and mainis fish being sacred to Hekate.[63]

61: Most notably Athenaeus, *Deipn.*325a-d.

62: See section II.2.

63: Melanthius, *FGrHist.*326f (*On the Eleusinian Mysteries*).

iv) Zeus

Hekate is closely associated with Zeus in the *Theogony*, as was discussed at length in section I.1. Hesiod makes her a benevolent bestower of gifts to humans, effectively acting on behalf of Zeus; one could argue that she serves as Zeus' intermediary with mortals. However, it seems more probable that Hesiod was rather selective in his presentation of the functions of deities such as Hekate, and thus we should treat the passage as only a very incomplete discussion of her. With the exception of Karia, nowhere in the Greek world do we find evidence for a relationship between the two as presented by Hesiod, and the hypothesis that he was familiar with, and devoted to, the Karian Hekate does not seem very plausible. Thus it doubtful that Hekate and Zeus had a significant relationship anywhere else in actual religious practices.

III.8 Discussion

The examination of Hekate's relationships with other deities yields a number of interesting points concerning her. As was noted in the previous chapter, there is a strong focus upon the eastern half of the Greek world. Most of the major relationships seem to centre upon Anatolia. In particular, through Artemis, Apollo, Hermes and Kybele she was commonly associated with Great Goddess-daughter-son triads that seem to have been prevalent in much of Anatolia. She is equatable with a daughter-like figure of Kybele, with Hermes as the brother; she may have been the original partner of Apollo, being replaced before the sixth century by Artemis. Perhaps the set of Kybele, Hekate and Hermes is simply a northern version of Leto, Artemis and Apollo. In this context, the Hekate of Karia is best explained as an variant of the more prevalent Asiatic Artemis.

In the introduction, it was suggested that Hekate's identity may lack distinctiveness. On several occasions, I have proposed the hypothesis that Hekate serves roles that are subservient to other, more prominent deities, irrespective of who those deities are: in particular, she can be an

entranceway figure and an attendant. Perhaps it is this flexibility or generic quality that is at the root of the weakness of her identity. If Hekate actually originated as the divine daughter of the Anatolian Great Goddess, then perhaps from this she came to be able to serve these secondary roles for any other goddess that was prominent in a region: for example, Athena at Athens, Eileithyia at Argos, and Demeter at various sites.

The main exception to this eastern focus is her association with Demeter and Persephone. If Samothrace can be reclassified as a site involving Kybele (or some other Thracian-Phrygian goddess) rather than Demeter, then the remaining early sites involving Demeter become far more restricted: in particular, Eleusis, Athens and Megara (the mother-city of Selinus) are very close neighbours. In this case, a reasonable hypothesis could be that one of these cities, particularly Eleusis,[64] might have been the source for Hekate's association with Demeter and Persephone.

This hypothesis would also leave us with an interesting geographical distribution of the main associations with other goddesses: that with Demeter and Persephone emanating from central Greece, that with Artemis from Ionia, and that with Kybele from Phrygia and Samothrace. Such a distribution reinforces the suggestion that Hekate became associated with these deities because of their regional prominence, rather than because of who they were. The distribution also further highlights Hekate's absence in southern and western Greece. However, this tidy grouping depends on our being able to "rename" the Goddess of Samothrace Kybele.

Another possible geographical factor is that Hekate's roles may have been significantly altered in Athens in the fifth century, through the politically motivated importation of Artemis as a guardian figure. As Athens had a considerable influence over much of fifth- and fourth-century Greece, and has had an even stronger one over the historical record of that period, any aspects of Hekate that were peculiar to that city could have noticeably affected our perception of her. While this specific scenario is of course highly speculative, it can serve to remind us of how changes could

---

64: As suggested by Nilsson (1961) 78.

have been introduced into the religion of ancient Greece through seemingly trivial and mundane actions.

One of the major uncertainties concerning Hekate is why her chthonic side became so prevalent in the fifth century. In particular, no evidence for the overtly magical roles which characterised her in later literature predates that century. In the next chapter, her chthonic functions will be examined in detail; for now, it is useful to note that her relationships with Hermes, Artemis and Helios yield three possible explanations for the increasing importance of these functions.

It is with Hermes that we most often see Hekate in her chthonic roles. They had negligible connections before the fifth century, but did perform independently as propylaic deities. Perhaps her role at entranceways was more complex than simple guardianship, and facilitated her growth as a deity associated with extreme magical practices (real and imaginary). It has also been suggested that these two began as humble deities of the common people, who may have been more apt to indulge in these practices; what may have happened in the fifth century was that the record of their ways became more permanent, in terms of both physical and artistic artifacts.

If Artemis was intentionally imported into Athens as a guardian figure in the fifth century, and was soon commonly identified with Hekate, then this may have resulted in an exaggeration of the functions that Hekate was left with; most notably her chthonic ones. Perhaps Hekate even became viewed as the chthonic side of Artemis.

Hekate's early relationship with Helios seems to have been based primarily on their involvement with Medeia, rather than their being deities of the Moon and Sun. As Medeia became a favourite figure in plays and poetry, mostly in roles that involved chthonic magical practices, she may have passed this tradition onto her reputed mentor, Hekate. Why Medeia acquired her reputation is another matter: perhaps the casual habit of the Greeks to attribute barbaric practices to exotic foreigners allowed for a mixing of her background with the reputed customs of the Taurians.

Clearly these three hypotheses are very speculative. The likelihood of each will become clearer in the next chapter, where Hekate's functions will be examined in greater detail.

Chapter IV: Functions of the early Hekate

Ἥλιε δέσποτα καὶ πῦρ ἱερόν,
τῆς Εἰνοδίας Ἑκάτης ἔγχος,
τὸ δι' Οὐλύμπου προπολοῦσα[1] φέρει
καὶ γῆς ἀνιοῦσ' ἱερὰς τριόδους,
στεφανωσαμένη δρυὶ καὶ πλεκταῖς
ὠμῶν σπείραισι δρακόντων.

— Sophokles, *Rhizotomoi* fr.535.1ff. (Radt).

("Lord Helios and the sacred flame,
weapon of Hekate *Enodia*,
which she bears when leading in Olympos
and in her haunts by the sacred three-ways on Earth,
crowning herself with oak leaves
and twisting coils of wild serpents").

Having looked at the significant literary and archaeological records of Hekate's worship in the Archaic and early Classical periods, and her relationships with other deities, we are now ready to examine the functions that she serves. Five primary ones are discussed, and identified as *Propylaia*, *Kourotrophos*, *Propolos*, *Phosphoros* and *Chthonia*. The titles chosen are somewhat arbitrary, in the sense that no source in antiquity simply lists her functions (or those of any other deity, for that matter); other labels may be equally suitable for some of the functions described. As well, it could be equally appropriate to group together some of these categories into one,

1: The MS reads πολοῦσα, which does not scan properly; thus Pearson proposes προπολοῦσα (which Radt accepts) because it has additional meaning for Hekate, as noted in sections I.2 and IV.3. Two alternate emendations are πωλοῦσα ("going") and παλλοῦσα ("brandishing"), both of which fit the meter and context: see A.C. Pearson, ed., *The Fragments of Sophocles* (Cambridge: 1917), Vol. 2, 176 and S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Gottingen: 1977), Vol. 4, 411.

particularly *Propolos* and *Phosphoros*. Nevertheless, these five seem to describe her primary functions adequately as indicated by the evidence.

There are two major sources of uncertainty that we must recognise from the outset. The first is that many attributes and titles of Hekate are ambiguous. For example, consider the details in the passage of Sophokles at the beginning of this chapter: what is the significance of her torches, crossroads, or serpentine hair? Why is she often associated with entranceways? There are many possible functions that could justify attributes such as these.

The second problem faced is the notable lack of uniformity in religious views in the ancient Greek world. It is very difficult to be sure that an attribute or function of any deity was more widespread than what is explicitly indicated by the evidence. Furthermore, duplication or redundancy was never seen as a drawback when it came to divine assistance: thus many deities are found in numerous roles that can sometimes seem unrelated or even contradictory to us. It is therefore very difficult to describe with any certainty what a minor deity such as Hekate, for whom we have a very limited record, was to the Greeks as a whole: it may even be meaningless to attempt to do so.

IV.1 Hekate Propylaia: apotropaic guardian?

The evidence presented in chapter II makes it clear that Hekate was strongly associated with entranceways. Sometimes her presence is signified just with a statue, at other times with an enclosed sanctuary or even a temple. She is found at the entrances to several sanctuaries of other deities: at Selinus, Samothrace and perhaps Eleusis by the sixth century, and at least by the fifth century at Athens, Didyma, Argos and perhaps Delos.

In at least two cases, she was joined by another deity. At Athens, a statue of Hermes also apparently stood before the main entranceway to the Acropolis, was called *Propylaios* and was mentioned together with Hekate in the tribute lists: it is reasonable to suppose that they were

serving similar functions. At the temple at Eleusis, if we are correct to assume that Hekate can be identified with Artemis *Propylaia*, she was paired with Poseidon *Pater*. In this case, however, there is no indication what role or roles she may have shared with Poseidon.

Two fifth-century literary passages specifically refer to Hekate before doors. Fragment 388 (Radt) of Aischylos reads δέσποιν' Ἑκάτη, τῶν βασιλείων πρόδομος[2] μελάθρων ("Lady Hekate, the one before the royal halls"), while Aristophanes (Vespae 804) says ὥσπερ Ἑκαταῖον πανταχοῦ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ("just as a Hekataion is everywhere before doors"). Aristophanes is almost certainly exaggerating, but his passage suggests a widespread presence of Hekate outside the doorways of Athenian houses, as was also the case for Hermes.[3]

In none of these instances is Hekate's role obvious; it is not even certain that her role at these places was always the same. The words recorded to describe Hekate, such as πρόδομος ("the one in front"), πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ("before the doors"), προπύλαια ("before the gate"),[4] and προθύραια ("before the door"),[5] merely refer to her placement. However, with other deities and in other cultures, rituals performed at entranceways (and crossroads) generally serve one or more of three basic functions:[6] to establish a boundary and to protect what is inside from the outer world, to help travellers setting out from, or returning to the entranceway, and to watch over the actual transition that the entrance entails. Each of these is possible for Hekate and must be considered.

Protection from what is beyond a boundary is a role that is commonly assigned to Hermes and, to a lesser extent, Apollo.[7] As was discussed in sections III.3 and III.5 above, stone herms

---

2: One version of this fragment (Aristides *Or.*37[2], 29) has πρόδρομος ("running in advance") rather than πρόδομος; the former seems quite inappropriate in this context.

3: Nilsson (1952) 125, Harrison (1965) 113.

4: Hesychios s.v. *propula*.

5: Proclus, *Hymn to Hekate and Janus*.2,.14. Prothuraia may have also been a distinct goddess: see section IV.2.

6: Johnston (1990) 24.

7: See Burkert (1979) 40.

were erected to represent both of them along roadsides and in front of houses. Both Hekate and Hermes had statues by the entrance of the Athenian Acropolis by the fifth century, and the most obvious explanation is that she served the same role there as he did.

Although late in our period of study, the relative abundance of archaeological and literary evidence from Athens makes this a useful city to consider in detail. Hekate is not as closely associated with Athena, the dominant goddess of the city, as she is with Demeter or Artemis elsewhere. It is possible that the paucity of literary material at the other sites has led to a simplified and overrated connection between Hekate and the other goddesses. However, intimacy with other goddesses was usually the result of her *propolos* or *kourotrophos* function. As well, Athena may have had less "need" for a distinct guardian associate than other goddesses did: she inherited much from the Bronze Age goddess that watched over the Mykenaian palaces, and became the most common defender of cities in later times; in Homeric epics and even in the *Theogony* (925f.) she was very much an anthropomorphised warrior deity; and Athens itself made much of its invulnerability on account of her.

If Athena had a guardian aspect, it was as Athena-Nike. The latter was allotted a small but prominent temple on the bastion of the Athenian Acropolis, beside the propylaia, where the gate to the old Mykenaian fortress had been and a remnant of the old cyclopean wall was intentionally left exposed. This was also the likely site of the *epipyrgidia* of Alkamenes (see section II.1). Besides being at the entranceway, the site also overlooked a major three-way intersection; in other contexts in contemporary literature, these are often associated with Hekate (see section IV.5). The sharing of such a site again suggests a prominent guardian role for Hekate.

It is perhaps strange that Athena-Nike would be thought to need the help of Hekate in guarding the Acropolis. However, it is not uncommon to find deities sharing functions. Furthermore, if the Eleusinian mysteries popularised Hekate's role as attendant, the Athenians may have felt it appropriate to include her as a supplement of their own guardian deity.

It is also possible that the two figures guarded against different types of evils: Athena-

Nike was perhaps more associated with the physical defence of the city, as indicated by the frieze on her temple of the victory of the Greeks over the Persians in 480 and by analogy with the common depiction of Athena armed, while Hekate was more involved with unseen, spiritual foes. In this case, we may appropriately use the term *apotropos* ("turn away, banish"). Fullerton argues that the immobility of the three-form nature of Hekate's statue was suitable for such an apotropaic protection, while the archaic elements of her dress stressed the timelessness of the bastion as key to the city's defences.[8]

Nilsson has suggested that such an apotropaic role arose through her being a deity governing dead spirits: "she who sends the ghost can also ward against it".[9] If her protective nature was focused upon such supernatural threats, because she was intimately involved with them, this could explain the vague descriptive terms used to identify her: there may have been some fear in being more explicit. This would further link this role to that which she had at crossroads, where she received monthly offerings in Athens, at least, in the fifth and later centuries (see section IV.5). However, the earliest evidence for her association with ghosts and the like is only from the fifth century. It is therefore far from certain that this explanation is applicable before then. Perhaps Nilsson's suggestion can be modified somewhat: if Hekate was in early times a guardian against unseen dangers, perhaps in the fifth century she came to be seen as associating with them and even sending them. The connection between the roles of guardianship and of leading ghosts will be further explored in section IV.5.

There is an attribute of Hekate seen in later evidence that may indicate a gatekeeper role: the holding of a key. In the Orphic *Hymn to Hekate* (1.7) she is called *kleidouchos* ("key holder"), at her sanctuary at Lagina a *kleidos pompe* ("procession of the key") was a major element in the Hekatesia festival (see section II.11), and in late-Roman literature concerning the Chaldaean

---

8: Fullerton (1986) 671-74.

9: Nilsson (1967) 724: "Wer den Spuk sendet, kann ihn auch abwehren."

Oracles, Hekate was called *kleidophoros* ("key bearer").[10] By Hellenistic times, the bearing of a key often symbolised the ability to open and close the gates of Hades: Persephone and Ploutos, deities closely associated with Hades, are often shown with keys.[11] In Hekate's case, this could reflect her association by that time with spirits, especially those summoned by magicians: as the gatekeeper of Hades, she could let spirits in and out. However, there is no evidence for her association with keys earlier than perhaps the fourth century, so here we cannot attach much significance to such speculative roles.

There are other protective female figures that bear some interesting similarities with Hekate. The Horai ("Seasons"), for example, are the Homeric gatekeepers of Olympos.[12] They are *kourotrophoi* for Hera in Olen's *Hymn to Hera*.[13] They also commonly serve as attendants of deities, especially Aphrodite and Hera. One Orphic hymn (43.7) has Persephone led back from Hades by the Horai and two other triplets, the Moirai and the Charites. The Charites were similarly common attendants of Aphrodite, and Pausanias (1.22.8) records a fifth-century statue of them at the Athenian Acropolis entranceway as well. While the Horai and Charites are sometimes given individual names, both are generally treated as indistinguishable sets.

The Gorgones are a triplet of semi-divine females of which one member is quite identifiable: Medusa (*Medeousa*, meaning "guardian"). Their father is Phorkos, who is the only god that mates with Hekate in any early literature.[14] Medusa's head, with boar tusks and serpents for hair, was used as a fearsome protective device that could turn people to stone.[15] The pediment

---

10: See Johnston (1990) 39ff.

11: Johnston (1990) 40f.

12: Homer, *Il.*5.749ff., 8.390ff.

13: Pausanias 2.13.3. Pausanias mentions the Horai in several other instances in conjunction with Hera: 2.17.1ff., 2.20.4, 5.15.3, 5.17.1.

14: Akousilaos, fr. 42 (Jacoby).

15: For example, Athena is often portrayed wielding a shield with Medusa's head on it.

of the sixth-century temple of Artemis at Korkyra had Medusa as its central figure;[16] several later temples of Artemis also featured her face. The emphasis on Medusa's face suggests that she may have been an apotropaic figure. Such a function would be very interesting, as several late statues of Hekate seem to resemble three masks hung from a central pillar: this arrangement has been suggested as the model upon which Alkamenes drew when he made the famous *epipyrgidia* statue at Athens.[17] Combined with Medusa's early association with Artemis and her serpentine hair, which is an occasional attribute of Hekate in literature (see section IV.5), this function suggests an interesting analogy between Medusa and Hekate.

Another, quite specific form of supernatural guardianship possibly related to Hekate that was common in ancient Greece was that of legendary young women who were sacrificed or took their own lives to ensure the safety of their people.[18] Often the victims were quite mundane in life and relatively localised guardians after death, such as the daughters of Leos who guarded one city gate of Athens (Thucydides 6.57.1-3). In other cases, the resulting guardians were *bona fide* goddesses, such as Aphaia of Aigina (Pausanias 2.30.3).

The earliest recorded case concerns Iphigeneia (or Iphimede) in the *Catalogue of Women*, whom Agamemnon sacrificed to Artemis to ensure the safety of the Greek fleet when it sailed for Troy. Artemis chose to transform her into Artemis *Enodia* or Hekate.[19] This story, as well as the connection between Hekate and Iphigeneia, is also alluded to by Pausanias (2.22.7) when he

---

16: Stillwell (1976) 449f.

17: Kraus (1960), 107ff.; see also Nilsson (1967), 724, n. 10.

18: See Burkert (1979) 72ff. and (1983) 64f., 77f., 82, Lloyd-Jones (1983) and Edwards (1986) 315, n. 66. Some Boiotian examples are discussed above in section II.5. There is at least one instance of a legendary young man sacrificing himself for the defence of his city: Menoikeus in Euripides *Phoen.*905. However, his death differs in some details, such as involving matters of blood-guilt, so it is reasonable to discuss only the vast majority of female cases here.

19: *Catalogue of Women* fr.23a (M-W), line 25f.; see section III.2.

records that the sanctuary of Eileithyia at Argos, situated beside the temple of Hekate, was dedicated upon the birth of Iphigeneia (see section II.4). An Ephesian version concerns the "wife of Ephesos" (perhaps a euphemism for Artemis herself). Artemis was first offended by her and turned her into a dog, then pitied and restored her. The "wife" then hung herself, and Artemis dressed her in her own apparel and called her Hekate.[20] Medusa is perhaps another example of this motif, for one legend has her head buried in Argos, possibly for protective purposes.[21]

Exactly how the death of a young woman served a protective role is unclear, but it is likely that the soul of the deceased protected against unseen evils, or placated hostile daimonic forces. Hekate is known to be directly linked to the victim in only a few cases; however, Artemis is often the deity involved in the sacrifices. Hekate's portrayal as a very young woman is apparently unique among the goddesses in the early Classical period; only by the second half of the fifth century did goddesses such as Artemis and Eileithyia take on similar imagery.[22] Thus perhaps Hekate had a common role in early times representing or governing the souls of these sacrificed women.

Similarities such as these with figures who otherwise are unrelated to Hekate suggest that her role at entranceways may not have been unique to her. Perhaps there were many Hekate-like figures throughout the Greek world in very early times; towards the end of the Archaic period, some receded in importance and became merely legendary women, while others fused with Hekate who thus gradually became the primary Guardian-Goddess.

The second possible function that Hekate could serve at entranceways is to protect travellers leaving (or returning). This is a role commonly assigned to Hermes and sometimes Apollo; however, there is little evidence specifically for Hekate. The most explicit is a scholion's comment that "(Hekate and Apollo Agyieus) fill the roads with light; he in the day, she in the

---

20: Fontenrose (1978) 76f.

21: Pausanias 2.21.6 and perhaps Pindar, *Pyth.*12.15.

22: Edwards (1986) 315.

night."[23] Her association with crossroads is never presented in a context of protecting travellers. In fact, the reverse is sometimes the case in later literature, supporting the contention that her title *Antaia* referred to her attacking travellers.[24] Aristophanes (*Ranae* 366) speaks of Ἑκατείων ... ὑπᾴδων ("wayside shrines of Hekate"), but this is not very informative. Nevertheless, several scholars have attributed to Hekate a role of "Goddess of Roads";[25] given our present evidence, this title can only be postulated by analogy with Hermes, who shares several titles and apparent roles with Hekate.

The third possible role for Hekate is to govern the actual transition point that an entranceway implies. Several scholars have argued that her association with entranceways can be generalised to include many transitions.[26] In these terms, Hekate helps people cross difficult boundaries, where the danger, or at least significance, lies in the act of crossing. For example, in the *Theogony* (416-18), Hekate is involved in every sacrifice: Clay cites this as evidence that she provides the intermediary link between the mortal and immortal world during sacrifices. She appears in a vase painting of the legendary marriage of Thetis and Peleus (the parents of Akhilleus), which brought together an immortal and a mortal.[27] In the return of Persephone, Hekate's attendance may be specifically required because of the transition from the Underworld to the world of the living. Hekate is also associated with birth and death, at least by the Hellenistic period, which are clearly significant transitions in life (see section IV.5).

This is an appealing unification of many possible aspects of Hekate, but it presumes a very conceptual view that is hard to reconcile with the everyday life of ordinary worshippers of pre-Hellenistic Greece. Thus it is probably best to view such a role for her as being restricted to later philosophical traditions, such as that surrounding the Chaldaean Oracles of the Roman period.

23: Schol.Pl.*Leg*.11.914b.

24: See section IV.5.v.

25: For example, Nilsson (1961) 71 and D.M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes: Wasps* (Oxford: 1971), 240.

26: Edwards (1986) 317, Clay (1984) 35 and (1989) 257, and Johnston (1990) 25ff., 29ff.

27: The name vase of the Peleus Painter, Beazley ARV^2 1038.1; see Edwards (1986) 317 and pl. 21, fig. 12.

Of the three most likely roles for Hekate when she is found at entranceways, the evidence best supports that of guardian against outside dangers. At times she may have served more specifically as an apotropaic device against supernatural forces, a function which may be directly tied to, or have been the source of, her frightening association with restless spirits; this connection will be discussed further in section IV.5. The greatest weakness in postulating a protective role for Hekate is that she is almost never specifically called a guardian:[28] titles and descriptions merely state her presence at entranceways, almost as if it were deemed unlucky to mention her real function there. The suggestion that Hekate's placement at entranceways is indicative of her being a Goddess of Transitions seems possible only in much later times for a minority of worshippers.

IV.2 Hekate Kourotrophos: Goddess of Women?

> θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης κουροτρόφον, οἳ μετὰ κείνην
> ὀφθαλμοῖσιν' ἴδοντο φάος πολυδερκέος 'Ηοῦς.
> Οὕτως ἐξ ἀρχῆς κουροτρόφος ...
>
> — Hesiod *Theogony* 450-52.

> ("and the Son of Kronos made her *kourotrophos* for those
> who after that day saw with their eyes the light of all-seeing Dawn.
> So from the beginning she is *kourotrophos* ...").

As early as the *Theogony*, Hekate has the role of *kourotrophos* ("nurse of the young").

28: One late reference calls Hekate *Phylax* ("guardian"), together with the more common titles *Dadouchos*, *Phosphoros* and *Chthonia*: schol.Theocr.*Id.*2.12 (=fr.556 Schneider).

Birth, childrearing and death are matters of great importance to all human societies. Hekate is associated with all three, to varying degrees. As well, many of the goddesses with whom she is most closely linked are similarly involved with them. Involvement with these perhaps can be considered a simple extension of her role as a guardian: if she stands guard at entranceways of people's homes, perhaps those who are confined indoors the most would readily call upon her assistance when in need. However, these three aspects of life were traditionally considered the concern of women, if not their exclusive domain, so Hekate's involvement in them may imply a particular focus upon women.

Childbirth and childrearing were clearly very important concerns of nearly all women in antiquity. Nevertheless, they are not prominent topics in literature. In part, this absence is probably the result of the overall literary bias towards men and the nearly total lack of female writers. However, certain aspects of life associated with women, such as childbirth, may have been specifically shunned by men and thus even less likely to be documented by them.[29] Thus we are left with a record that is not very satisfactory.

The goddesses found to be most commonly presiding over childbirth are Artemis and Eileithyia; less common are references to the Genetyllides, Kallisto, Prothuraia and Hekate.[30] References to Artemis in this role go back well into the Archaic period, and continue throughout the historical period. Eileithyia is primarily a Birth-Goddess, although some sort of guardian role is sometimes indicated.[31] Her name is attested in Linear B tablets as *Ereutija*, and is linked to childbirth from archaic to imperial times.[32] The Genetyllides are little known except for their name

---

29: See, for example, Aristophanes, *Nub.*52; also Farnell (1909) II.219, 655 and Price (1978) 127.

30: Aubert (1989) and Kraus (1960), 25f., 85f.

31: Pingiatoglou (1981) 48f. Eileithyia's sanctuary at Argos lay beside the city walls, and had a gate named after it: perhaps she served as a guardian there as well.

32: Tablet KN Gg 705, for example. Pausanias 1.18.5 relates a Delian tradition that Eileithyia came from the Hyperboreans in the north to Delos to help Leto give birth to Artemis. The Delians claimed that they were subsequently responsible for the spread of her worship. This seems unlikely, unless they

and men's apparent aversion to them, but Hesychios (s.v. *Genetyllis*) links them to Hekate. Kallisto ("most beautiful") and Prothuria ("before the door") are obscure goddesses: the former was generally equated with Artemis, while the name of the latter strongly suggests an overlap with Hekate, if it is not simply a title for her.

Pre-Roman references to Hekate as a Birth-Goddess are rare. The only Classical reference is an invocation of Artemis-Hekate in a fragment of Aischylos (*Supplices* 676).[33] However, as this is also commonly felt to be the earliest example of her identification with Artemis, it is not certain whether the role belonged to Hekate prior to the first half of the fifth century. On the one hand, for Aischylos to make the connection between the two goddesses suggests that they were both already suitable for the role; on the other hand, if they shared any other roles, Aischylos may have been simply elaborating upon their similarities. Early evidence is otherwise nonexistent for Hekate in this role, but as accounts of childbirth are uncommon in Greek literature, the silence may not be conclusive.

Kourotrophos was the name most strongly connected with matters of childrearing, a role related to, and often associated with, childbirth, but nevertheless distinct from it. While the name translates as "child's nurse", in a more general sense of "caring parent" it is a role nearly all Greek goddesses played either for immortals or mortals. Typically the primary goddess of a city was *kourotrophos* for the city or a legendary hero: for example, Athena at Athens, Artemis at Sparta, and Hera at Samos.[34] It is debatable whether there was ever a goddess called *Kourotrophos* in her

---

could recall Bronze Age events, but there is no doubt that she had a strong following on their island and a long association with Artemis. There are indications that her status may have been much higher in archaic times. For example, a hymn by Olen (the legendary Lykian composer of very old Greek hymns) had her as Primeval Creatress, and a legend at Olympia had her as a dominant goddess: see Pausanias 6.20.2ff. and Farnell (1909) II.610f.

33: Discussed in section III.2, especially n. 14.

34: A very fragmentary excerpt from Archilochos, of the eighth or seventh century, reads "*kourotrophos* over the city".

own right; rather the title probably identified an aspect of many goddesses.[35] In many inscriptions the name appears by itself, but the goddess referred to may have been left unidentified because it would have been so obvious to the locals. As an epithet, it refers to a significant, perhaps the most significant, aspect of most goddesses.[36]

While over 50 goddesses were called *kourotrophos* at least once,[37] the name was most commonly associated with Gaia, Demeter, Eileithyia, Iphigeneia, Artemis and Hekate. Of this list, all but Gaia we have already seen connected with Hekate. Hekate is the oldest known *kourotrophos*, as in the *Theogony* (450-52) she is called *kourotrophos* to all living beings.[38] If one departs from the strict interpretation of caring for infants, then the high degree of interaction with mortals in the rest of Hesiod's passage, Hekate's caring of Persephone in the *Hymn to Demeter*, and her possible role as personal guide for initiates in mysteries are also quite suitable for such a role. Hekate's role as *kourotrophos* in the *Theogony* may also be alluded to in the puzzling statement that she was invoked in every sacrifice (lines 416ff.): the Suda (s.v. *Kourotrophos Ge*) records that the first sacrifice always went to *Kourotrophos*.[39] Later evidence for this role is

---

35: The most extensive survey is Price (1978), who sees the name as a title that many goddesses had in common (p. 1f.). Others such as Farnell (1909) III.17f., on the other hand, see *Kourotrophos* as a distinct goddess, at least in Attika.

36: See Price (1978) 199. She argues that *Kourotrophos* was a very significant aspect of most goddesses, being involved in matters besides childcare such as childbirth, pregnancy, death and the dead. She was important enough for many of her traits to have been adopted by the Christian Mary (p. 215). On the other hand, her worship was quite humble and of low status, with little grandeur: there are no known temples of any significant size or artistic merit. Instead, most worship occurred at small, nondescript altars. This peculiarity may have arisen because there was no need for much attention to be paid specifically to her, as the goddess of whom she was an aspect was probably well represented on her own. However, it is also likely that as the role was so specifically associated with women, misogynistic societal forces denied her fitting status.

37: Price (1978) 189ff.

38: However, the authenticity of these three lines is still being questioned: see section I.1, n. 37.

39: The *prothyma* sacrifice: see also Price (1978) 10, 105ff., 123 and Clay 35f.

provided by specific locations for offerings to *Kourotrophos* in a sanctuary for Hekate in Attica[40] and the frieze on her Roman temple at Lagina which shows her caring for the infant Zeus.

On Samos, an otherwise unnamed *kourotrophos* received chthonic offerings at crossroads, in ceremonies from which men were banned.[41] Some scholars[42] have concluded that because of the reference to crossroads, she must be Hekate, but as Hekate hardly has a monopoly on chthonic offerings, crossroads or the name *Kourotrophos*, it is just as likely to have been Hera, who was the dominant deity of the island.

Torches and dogs were common attributes for Birth-Goddesses and *kourotrophoi*. Torches have been explained by the common association of fire with childbirth, likely for reasons of hygiene and purification; it has even been suggested that torches symbolised a sacred immortalising bath.[43] With dogs, the connection may have been through purification rituals in which the animals were the agent by which the uncleanliness associated with birth was removed (see section IV.5).

It has been suggested[44] that Hekate also had a role in marriage, another transitional stage of life of particular importance to women. There are two Classical pieces of evidence linking her with marriage. The name vase of the Peleus Painter shows the marriage of Thetis to Peleus with Hekate in the background.[45] However, as suggested in the preceding section, her presence could be indicative of the significance that the marriage was bridging the division of immortality and mortality. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* (322f.), Kassandra calls upon Hymenaia and Hekate to bless a marriage. Given the unusual role of Kassandra in this and other plays, the mention of Hekate may be an intentional inversion of norms and foreshadowing of misfortune, and thus not at

---

40: Price (1978) 123.

41: [Hdt].*vit.Hom.*30. See also Price (1978) 152.

42: For example, Rohde (1925) 322, n. 91.

43: Price (1978) 201.

44: Rohde (1925) 322, n. 91 and Edwards (1986) 317.

45: See section IV.1, n. 27.

all indicative of a normal role for her. As both of these references are open to alternate explanations, and no later evidence is known, we cannot conclude that Hekate has a role in marriages.

Ceremonies of death were largely the concern of women in ancient Greece.[46] Women predominate in artistic and literary representations of mourning and the laying out of bodies; laws were passed governing their actions and power at funerals. Indirect evidence for Hekate's involvement with these specific ceremonies includes apotropaic offerings to her (and other chthonic divinities) of house sweepings left at crossroads at new moon after a thirty-day mourning period.[47] Classical and later evidence has numerous references to Hekate and restless spirits (see section IV.5); however, this association does not necessarily indicate a connection to death rituals particular to women.

Besides these specific aspects of life that were primarily of concern to women, there are a few references to Hekate's association with women in general. In *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes mentions games played by young women in Hekate's honour (700ff.) and has a woman consult Hekate when she leaves home (63), presumably at an entranceway statue; doorways of houses may have had greater significance for women, at least of the upper class, as they reputedly spent more of their lives inside houses than men did.[48] Her name is also used as a casual oath several times in plays of Aristophanes; the usage suggests that this was more appropriate for women than for men.[49] Female literary figures such as Medeia and Simaetha also rely heavily upon Hekate in

---

46: See Garland (1985) 29, 42, Alexiou (1974) 15ff., 212, n. 107, and Padel (1983) 5; Athenian laws attributed to Solon in c600 specifically limited the activities of women at funeral ceremonies.

47: Garland (1985) 40.

48: Nilsson (1967), 725. The seclusion of Greek women is a controversial subject: see Gould (1980) 46ff. and Just (1989) 106ff. A secluded lifestyle was probably not common for women of the lower classes.

49: "By Hekate": Aristophanes, *Thesm.*858, *Eccl.*70, 1097, *Plu.*764, 1070. "By *Phosphoros*", in reference to Hekate or Artemis: *Lys.*443, 738. Only in *Plu.*1070 is it made by a man, and he may be intentionally misusing it.

their magic practices, but this could be more indicative of her function in magic use and of misogynistic stereotypes than a specific association with women.

It is reasonable to assume that a deity who is significantly involved in rituals of birth, childrearing and death could be similarly involved with women's lives in general. There is some indication of a significant difference in the attitudes of men and women towards some deities involved in these rituals. However, it is not clear that the evidence is sufficient to justify the claim that Hekate was such a "Women's Goddess". The *kourotrophos* function is reasonably documented for Hekate, but her involvement in other concerns specific to women is poorly documented and her association with women in general mostly comes from a single Athenian writer, Aristophanes. Nevertheless, given a general neglect of these functions by predominantly male writers, a bias against these functions is not unexpected, so it may not be reasonable to expect a better record. Scholars such as Wilamowitz and Nilsson feel justified in claiming that she had this role;[50] however, they may be unduly influenced by the false premise that women were more prone than men to being superstitious and to practicing magic in association with her.

IV.3 Hekate Propolos: guide and companion

The role of attendant and guide is fairly evident for Hekate in connection with several other goddesses. While this can be interpreted as an extension of a guardian role, there is enough specific evidence for it to warrant separate examination. As well, a minor, but potentially significant, difference between a *propolos* and a *propylaia* is that the former implies much greater mobility: human analogies would be a personal servant that accompanies a specific noble wherever he or she goes and a gatekeeper that serves an entire household but only in a limited area.

50: Wilamowitz (1931) I.130 and Nilsson (1967) 725.

This aspect of Hekate *Propylaia* may explain why Alkamenes made his famous statue of her a static, immobile three-bodied arrangement: "to function (properly), an apotropaic image should be immobile".[51]

The best example of this function is in conjunction with Persephone, as was discussed in sections I.2 and III.1. In the *Hymn to Demeter* (440) Hekate becomes *propolos* and *opaon* to her, and in several vase paintings she is shown accompanying her from, and sometimes to, Hades. She is similarly helpful to Demeter early in the Hymn (53-62), although she is not a regular companion for her. At Eleusis itself the evidence suggests that Hekate served this role, as shown by the "Running Maiden" figure, in addition to standing guard at the sanctuary entrance as *Propylaia*. If Hekate can be identified with Iphigeneia/Iphimede in the *Catalogue of Women*, then Hekate is also specifically called *propolos* for Artemis (see section III.2).

It is possible that Hekate was also *propolos* for Kybele. The *naiskos*-group statues suggest either a servile or child-like status for her and Hermes (see sections II.11 and III.6), but we have no literary documentation to support either contention. If we could verify a *propolos* function for Hekate in these pieces, then by analogy we might be able to conclude a similar relationship for her with the Goddess of Samothrace; however, this must remain speculation at present.

Sophokles may have used the related participle *propolousa* to describe Hekate in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter. However, even if he did, it is not clear whether this text should be seen as evidence for her *propolos* function, as the passage does not link her to any deity other than Helios, for whom such a relationship is not documented elsewhere.

Hekate was involved in three major mysteries, those at Eleusis, Samothrace, and Aigina. By their very nature the details of these events are poorly understood, and so we can merely speculate about Hekate's role(s) in them. Nevertheless, it is tempting to see in the personal

---

51: Fullerton (1986) 673.

attention she gives to Persephone on her yearly journeys to and from Hades a divine analogy for an element of the initiatory process in the Eleusinian mysteries. Her presence at the two other mysteries might similarly be explained by her *propolos* function: her popularity at both certainly suggests a favourable role. In times when fantastic and evil magical practices were strongly associated with her worship, Hekate's popularity among initiates, at least, could have been preserved by such a positive role.[52] Her early popularity in cities such as Athens, Megara (from which the colony of Selinus on Sicily came) and Argos might also be explained by their close proximity to Eleusis. While Hesiod makes no mention of her involvement in any mysteries, the very interactive role he grants her in the *Theogony* is also suggestive of a closeness with humans.

Hekate *Propolos* is typically portrayed as a very personal, caring attendant. She most commonly accompanies Persephone, but evidence suggests she also served Artemis, Kybele and perhaps the Goddess of Samothrace. Because of the nature of this function, it is a reasonable candidate for her role in one or more of the three major mysteries that she was involved in. Overlap with her *propylaia* function is probable at some sites, such as sanctuaries of Demeter and Persephone.

IV.4 Hekate Phosphoros

The most common distinguishing feature of Hekate in art is her torches. While Hesiod does not mention this attribute, the *Hymn to Demeter* (52) does. Several of her titles relate to this, most notably *Phosphoros* ("light bringer") and *Dadophoros* ("torch bearer"). However, Hekate is not the only torch-wielding or light-bringing deity. The Goddesses of Pherai and Perge are always

---

52: Her mysteries at Aigina were still well known in late Roman times: see, for example, J.H. Smith, *The Death of Roman Paganism* (London: 1976), 56.

portrayed with torches, Artemis, Persephone and Eileithyia are often so, and Artemis and Apollo are often called *Phosphoros*. It is possible that the role of torchbearer is therefore shared with several other deities. If the popularity of torches for Hekate reflects the importance of the function(s) that they symbolise, then they could have been the trait that led to assimilation with deities such as those of Pherai and Lagina: just as we tend to call unidentified Greek goddesses Hekate because of the presence of torches, perhaps Greek settlers did the same with indigenous goddesses that they encountered.

As with the *propylaia* function, it is not immediately obvious what function Hekate actually serves while wielding a torch and casting light. Four possibilities will be discussed below: as a deity of child-birth, of the Moon, of the morning and evening "stars", and as a guide in mysteries.

As was discussed in section IV.2, torches were often associated with childbirth. For a goddess such as Eileithyia, this would be a sufficient explanation for bearing torches. However, in Hekate's case, the evidence does not reveal a childbirth function to have been very significant before the fifth century. Thus it is unlikely that she became so associated with torches for this reason alone.

In his analysis of the genealogy of Hekate in the *Theogony*, Warr proposed that there was an old Sun-God and Moon-Goddess pair named Perse(u)s and Perseis.[53] These were later supplanted by Helios and Selene, while a title for Perseis, Hekate, evolved into a distinct deity. While the evidence that Warr offers for such a speculative sequence of events is quite unconvincing, it is consistent with a common assumption that Hekate always was a Moon-Goddess. The

---

53: Warr (1895) 391f. However, compare Kerényi (1979) 4 who considers Perseis to have been a Sun-Goddess.

evidence for this is mostly from Hellenistic and Roman times,[54] and usually arises in conjunction with her links with Artemis and Diana, for whom pre-Hellenistic lunar evidence is also negligible. Significantly, there are no artistic renditions linking her to the Moon until the Roman period. The simple possession of light-bringing torches is not enough to verify lunar attributes to Hekate, as Selene, the primary Moon-Goddess of the Greeks, was not regularly attributed with torches. Nevertheless, given her traditional association with the Moon, it is worth examining in detail what early evidence there is.

Several passages suggest a connection between Hekate's torches and moonlight. Sophokles evokes a very distinctive picture of Hekate in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter; of relevance here is that her torches seem to specifically link her with Helios, the Sun-God. Aristophanes (*Ranae* 1362f.) speaks of Hekate's torches showing the way at night: σὺ δ', ὦ Διός, διπύρους ἀνέχουσα λαμπάδας ... παράφηνον ... ὅπως ἂν εἰσελθοῦσα φωρᾶσω ("and you, oh daughter of Zeus, holding up two flaming torches; ... show the way ... so that I may search for the thief"). This could indicate a link between her torches and moonlight, but could just as easily be a metaphor of no great significance.

Somewhat more substantial evidence is found by considering together two unrelated passages of Bacchylides. Fragment 1B (Snell) reads

> Ἑκάτα[˪δαιδοφόρε
> ταν ἰε[ρ
> Νυκ˪τὸς μεγαλοκόλπου θύγατερ ...[55]

("Hekate, torchbearing daughter of great-bosomed Night ..."). The prooemium of *Ode 7* is

---

54: For example, Plutarch, *De def.or.*416e and *Mor.*416e, 944c.

55: The symbol [indicates where the papyrus text breaks off; the material following the symbol ˪ is preserved in a later manuscript source, schol.Ap.Rhod. *Argon.*3.467.

to an unnamed daughter of Nux ("Night"), as benefactor of footracers at the Olympiad of 452: this role recalls Hekate helping athletes in the *Theogony* (435ff.). The four-year Olympic cycle was measured as 50 months (i.e. 50 cycles of the Moon), and the final ceremonies were held at the full Moon. If Hekate is the goddess referred to, this timing might therefore reflect a lunar aspect of her.[56] However, this text would be the only reference to her at any games outside of the *Theogony* and Roman Karia, so such an interpretation is quite speculative.

Another heavenly body that Hekate's torches may represent is the planet Venus. Because its orbit lies close to that of the Earth, but within it, Venus alternates between being the brightest object visible in the morning and evening skies. These morning and evening "stars" were called Phosphoros and Hesperos (literally, "of the evening").[57] As the brightest object in the morning sky, Phosphoros could be said to herald the coming day, or to lead one from night to day, while Hesperos could serve the reverse role in the evening. A possible example of this interpretation is in the *Hymn to Demeter* (52), where torchbearing Hekate came to Demeter "... when the tenth light-bringing dawn came ..." (ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ δεκάτη οἱ ἐπήλυθε φαινολὶς ἠώς, ἤντετό οἱ Ἑκάτη). Although we have no record of Hekate being called Hesperos, one of the few identifying traits of

---

56: Piper (1969) first suggested that Hekate is the unnamed goddess in *Ode 7*, by a line of reasoning similar to what I have presented here. She, however, added the unwarranted assumption that Hekate was a Moon-Goddess in the mid-fifth century; I have thus twisted her argument somewhat, and used the other evidence to derive what she took for granted. The most popular alternative is Hemera ("Day"); see, for example, Jebb (1905) 297. Marcovich (1970) argues, on the other hand, that the passage is simply too vague for identification. It is perhaps also worth noting that the number 50 bears a coincidental connection to Hekate's name, as the word for double that amount is *hekaton*.

57: Already by the late sixth century, it apparently had been deduced that the two "stars" were in fact one body: Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.*9.23.7f. states that Pythagoras was the first to declare that the two "stars" were one. However, it is not known how widely spread this knowledge became. It is also recorded that later followers of Pythagoras reputedly called planets "the hounds of Persephone": Porphyry, *Vita Pythag.*41 (= Aristotle, fr.196).

her in artistic works is the presence of *two* torches, rather than one:[58] perhaps her two torches represent Phosphoros and Hesperos. This would have suited very well the roles of *propolos* and daughter of Nux, her mother according to the genealogy recorded by Bacchylides, as well as her complementary partnership with Helios. Furthermore, as a trait in mysteries was the interplay of dark and light,[59] suggestive of death and rebirth, perhaps this transition between night and day also represented for her a role as guide both into and out of the Underworld.

This theory quite elegantly ties together several seemingly unrelated details of Hekate. Unfortunately, other than being called a daughter of Nux, we have no pre-Roman record to Hekate being linked to any star or planet. Furthermore, the insignificance of Nux in actual worship would argue against the role of *propolos* to her being very relevant for Hekate. Nevertheless, it is likely that some people might have made a connection at least between *Phosphoros*, the torch-wielding goddess, and Phosphoros, the bright "morning star".

A fourth and final possible explanation is that Hekate's torches symbolised a guiding function in mysteries. This would tie in very closely with her *propolos* function, if it is not simply equatable with it. Torches in her hands tend to feature prominently in artistic renditions of the return of Persephone back from Hades, as if the light that they cast is crucial. If this is symbolic of the initiatory process, then her torches would be a logical symbol of her function. The Niinnion painting of about 400 found at Eleusis shows initiates being led towards Demeter by two figures, each with two torches; the female leader could be Hekate.[60]

Phosphoros, the torchbearer, is the most important image of Hekate in art. While this

---

58: This distinction is not perfect, however. The carrying of two torches is not unique to Hekate, merely common for her and rare for other goddesses.

59: Burkert (1985) 287f.

60: Kerényi (1967) 63.

may in part be the result of her torches being a convenient identifier, it seems likely that the function that they symbolise is important. It is tempting to equate her torchlight to the light of the Moon, but the evidence does not support an early lunar trait for Hekate. Equally unsatisfactory is to see her torches as indicating a role as Goddess of Childbirth, as the evidence does not support that role being very significant for Hekate.

The most promising explanation relates to her *propolos* role discussed in the previous section, as a guide and attendant. In the context of the mysteries in which she was apparently involved, such a function could best explain the popularity of her torches and the related titles for her.

IV.5 Hekate Chthonia

ἐξαπατῶσιν ἑαυτοῦς καὶ δαπανῶσι καὶ ταράττουσιν,
εἰσ' ἀγύρτας καὶ γόητας ἐμπεσόντες λέγοντας
ἀλλ' εἴτ' ἔνυπνον φάντασμα φοβῇ,
χθονίας θ' Ἑκάτης κῶμον ἐδέξω
τὴν περιμάκτριαν κάλει γραῦν καὶ βάπτισον σεαυτὸν εἰς
θάλατταν καὶ καθίσας ἐν τῇ Γῇ διημέρευσον.

— Plutarch, *Moralia* 166a.[61]

("[the superstitious] delude and waste and agitate themselves,
and go to the beggar priests and sorcerers who say:
if you fear phantasms in your sleep,
or hear the procession of Hekate Chthonia,

61: This critical comment by Plutarch quotes a fragment (375 Radt [Adespota]) of an unknown tragedy, suspected to be by Aischylos.

then call on the old woman who performs purifications, dip yourself
in the ocean, and sit down on the ground for the whole day")

In the second half of the fifth century, we begin to see in Greek literature a side of Hekate that is both frightening and seemingly new. Most notably, and dramatically, she is associated with restless spirits and phantasms that attack by their own volition or under the command of spiteful foes, with purification ceremonies involving the killing of dogs, and with offerings of food (both scraps and specially prepared loaves) left at crossroads at every new Moon.

There is no direct evidence for this side of Hekate in the Archaic period. Unqualified statements of her being "the most ancient goddess of the underworld"[62] are simply not supported by our record. What is the significance of this seemingly new side of Hekate? Does it point to a function of hers that was always present, but simply undocumented prior to the great dramatists? If it was a new role for her, how and why did it arise? Can it be dismissed as "magic", unrelated to her worship by pious Greeks? How was "legitimate" religious worship of Hekate able to coexist with it for nearly a millennium after it became prominent? We must attempt to answer these questions in order to understand Hekate in the fifth and later centuries.

We should note at the outset that the chthonic title is not a very precise one in that it is often used to describe many attributes not specifically "of the Earth". What distinguishes chthonic deities from Olympian ones is the use of low altars on which offerings are made into the Earth (rather than into the air), the concept of their dwelling beneath the Earth's surface, and their greater concern with matters of basic living, such as fertility, childbirth, crops, fate and death.[63]

Further confusion arises because many Greek deities could be conceived of as either chthonic or Olympian, according to the particular needs of their followers at a particular time.[64]

62: Luck (1985) 26.

63: Burkert (1985) 199f.

64: See, for example, Yavis (1949) 91, 94.

An extreme example of this is in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (465), where Zeus (the supreme "Sky-God") is invoked as Chthonios with Demeter to promote crops.[65] As West has so aptly noted, deities expand to fit the roles required by their people.[66] Thus to perceive a deity like Hekate as being purely chthonic is probably too simplistic: fifth-century and later evidence shows that she had a chthonic aspect, for which she was often entitled *Chthonia*, but there is no reason to believe that this is the only function that she was thought to serve at any period.

Essentially all attributes and events associated with Hekate in later, better-documented times are common to other chthonic deities. These include crossroads, monthly sacrificial meals, multiplicity, dogs, snakes, torches, keys, dangerous magic and dealings with the dead. There is a tendency to associate some of these primarily with Hekate, but none were exclusively hers. Furthermore, some of these are not specifically chthonic: torches and keys in particular are well-suited for her roles of *phosphoros* and *propylaia* (as was discussed in sections IV.4 and IV.1, respectively). Nevertheless, the other traits warrant discussion, to see what they can tell us about her.

i) Crossroads

It is an old concept in many parts of the world that crossroads are supernatural places.[67] They are good places to work magic and to encounter spirits, for better or worse. While they generally have a negative reputation, there are numerous examples from other cultures of beneficial magical events occurring there.[68] In Greek literature, crossroads were commonly the site for various kathartic (purification) or apotropaic rituals. Sweepings from the house of a

---

65: Zeus also is called chthonic in Orphic fr.70.2.

66: West (1966) 277.

67: See Puhvel (1976).

68: See, for example, Puhvel (1976) 170f.

deceased were ceremoniously deposited at crossroads after the thirty-day mourning period.[69] Plato (*Leges* 11.873a-b) states that bodies of kin-killers were stoned at crossroads and left unburied. Tombs were often built at crossroads.[70] The Oidipous story, at least as presented by Sophokles, features fateful choices being made and fateful events occurring at crossroads: he may have chosen the site for its ominous atmosphere.[71]

In later literature Hekate is often associated with crossroads, specifically three-way intersections. However, there are only one or two references to Hekate and crossroads that are pre-Hellenistic. Besides the Sophokles passage at the beginning of this chapter, which has her residing at "sacred three-ways", fragment 1 (Kock) of Charikleides,[72] perhaps of the late Classical period, calls her *trioditi* ("in the three-way"). It is possible that Hekate's three-form statues may have become associated with crossroads.[73] If they were, it may have been because of her association with the rituals that occurred there, or because the statues could better ward off dangerous spirits with faces looking all ways. Other deities are associated with crossroads as well; a notable example is from Samos, where a goddess identified simply as *Kourotrophos* receives offerings by women at crossroads.[74] The earliest known case of a statue being erected at a crossroad is to Artemis by the daughter of a Spartan king in about 500, as recorded in the *Anthologia Graeca* (6.266).[75]

69: Garland (1985) 40.

70: Luck (1985) 101.

71: See, for example, Bremmer (1987) 45 and Halliwell (1986).

72: Charikleides fr. 1 (Kock) is quoted by Athenaeus, *Deipn.*325.d.

73: Literary references do not specifically link these statues and crossroads. Plutarch, *Mor.*193f. says that images of Hekate used to be set up at three-way intersections, but he is writing in Roman Imperial times and does not specify what form of statue.

74: *Vita Herod., Hom. Vitae* 410ff. Price (1978) 152f. suggests that Hera is the most likely candidate, as she was always the primary goddess of the island and had a chthonic aspect there. See section IV.2.

75: The *Anthologia Graeca* was compiled almost 1500 years after the event, however, so its accuracy is far from certain.

It should be noted that the form of purification specifically associated with crossroads differs from other recorded types. Polluted things or people were typically brought there with no intention of being recovered; the deities involved received the pollution, but did not specifically purify what contained it. This contrasts with Apollo's traditional role at Delphi, for example, where people went to be cleansed of certain forms of pollution such as blood guilt.[76]

This distinction may be why the deities associated with purification at crossroads were sometimes felt to be impure.[77] In Hekate's case, the best example of this attitude is Theophrastos' Superstitious Man (*Characters* 16.7, 16.14), of the early Hellenistic period, who thinks that she continually pollutes his home and that her statues are unclean to look at.[78] Clearly the latter statement must involve some degree of exaggeration, because divine statues were abundant and very visible in all Greek cities: how could the Superstitious Man walk down streets, if we accept Aristophanes' reference to Hekataia being in front of most houses?

Sacrificial meals were commonly left out for chthonic deities during the three days about new Moon, often at crossroads. These are sometimes called *Hekates deipna* ("Hekate's banquets") in Classical and later literature, but were generally offerings to all the chthonic powers.[79] The significance of these offerings is unclear; perhaps the food was intended to placate the unfriendly spirits that lurked there, or to "pin" them to the crossroads.[80] Despite the sacred nature of this food, there are literary references to poor people helping themselves, making the

---

76: For example, Orestes in Aischylos, *Ag*.1034ff.

77: Burkert (1985) 76f.

78: See also Parker (1983) 223.

79: Sophokles, *Chrys*. fr.734 (Radt), Sophron, fr. 158 (Kaibel), Plato, *Symp*.709a, Lucian, *Catapl*.7.2 and *Dial. Mort*.2.3.6, and Athenaeus, *Deipn*.325a. Hermes was also often singled out: see Kraus (1960) 71, 85.

80: Nilsson (1967) 724 and Parker (1983) 224. As well, Johnson (1990) 26 notes that, just as with the new year, the new Moon was a time of some uncertainty and increased fear of the unknown; thus offerings of appeasement to spirits might be more appropriate then.

offerings a food bank of sorts: in Aristophanes (*Ploutos* 594-97), for example, we read that τοὺς μὲν ἔχοντας καὶ πλουτοῦντας δεῖπνον κατὰ μῆν' ἀποπέμπειν, τοὺς δὲ πένητας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἁρπάζειν πρὶν καταθεῖναι ("the wealthy and the rich provide a meal monthly, but the poor people snatch it up before it is put down").[81]

Hekate's association with crossroads may be the reason for her acquiring the epithet *Enodia* ("in the road"). In this name we are again faced with an ambiguous reference to function: does it refer to the rituals that occurred at crossroads, the spirits that haunted them, or to something less specific involving travellers on roads? The Goddess of Pherai in Thessaly, with whom Hekate became equated in the fifth century, is also commonly called *Enodia*.[82] Wilamowitz and Kraus argue that *Enodia* is an ancient Greek goddess, who fused with Hekate, who they argue is Karian, by the fifth century.[83] Unfortunately, the record of this Thessalian goddess is very meagre. The literary references are all found in non-Thessalian sources and are strongly biased towards her reputed involvement with "Thessalian women", who were stereotypical experts in the use of magic and drugs.[84] Their resemblance to the more fantastic portrayals of Medeia make it seem likely that they were, at least in part, the product of similar folklore traditions and misogynistic fears. This further undermines our knowledge of the Goddess of Pherai.

It would seem more likely that *Enodia* is not a distinct deity but rather a specific aspect of many others, much like *Kourotrophos*. Most references to her are as titles of other goddesses, such as Hekate, Persephone, Artemis, Selene, Brimo, Bendis, and the otherwise unnamed Goddess of Pherai. The earliest occurrence is in the *Catalogue of Women*, in which the sacrificed

---

81: Demosthenes, *Orat.*54.39.6 and perhaps Plutarch, *Mor.*708f.5 also record such happenings.

82: See section II.7. The city was situated at an important crossroad, one road of which led to a major port. Miller (1974) 252 suggests that the Goddess became prominent as a result of the commercial significance of the city and roadway, and was a guardian for the merchants there.

83: Wilamowitz (1931) I.173ff. and Kraus (1960) 77ff.

84: See section II.7, n. 37 and (vii) below.

Iphimede is transformed into Artemis *Enodia*, a *propolos* of Artemis, who is later equated to Hekate. The title is found applied directly to Hekate by Sophokles and Euripides; however, they both also seem to use the title for Persephone.[85] Hermes similarly has the title *Enodios*; however, as he is often seen as a protector of travellers, for him it may be in reference to roadways in general, not just intersections. By analogy with this function of Hermes, Hekate has been described by some scholars as a Goddess of Roads and Travelling,[86] but there is no evidence directly supporting such a role.

If *Enodia* is a specific aspect of Hekate, then it is tempting to see it as being related to the apotropaic guardian role discussed in section IV.1. If Hekate could offer protection from hostile spirits at entranceways, then perhaps she could do the same at crossroads, where unsuspecting travellers could face such dangers. However, there is simply no evidence for this function for Hekate or any other goddess before the fifth century.

ii) Multiplicity

There are numerous examples of multiple supernatural and divine beings in Greek religion such as the Potniai, Charites, Moirai, Horai, Erinyes, Gorgones, Dioskouroi and Eileithyiai. Most groups are female; none are of mixed sex. They could be of an unstated number, but often were pairs or triplets; this is the case in many other cultures as well.[87] The reason for this multiplicity is not obvious: Boedecker feels that it is derived from the Indo-European triple canonical order system as determined by Dumézil,[88] but it could just as easily reflect the traditional, magical

---

85: Hekate *Enodia*: Sophokles, *Rhizotomoi* fr.535 (Radt) and Euripides, *Helen* 570. Persephone *Enodia*: Euripides, *Ion* 1048 and perhaps Sophokles, *Ant.*1199.

86: See section IV.1, n. 25.

87: For example, the three Matrons of the Gauls and the Three Norns of the Norse.

88: Boedecker (1983) 84ff.

significance of the number three, with the specific intention of conveying a three-fold increase of power.[89] It is not certain whether multiplicity is properly a chthonic trait, but most instances are of chthonic deities. As well, most references to three-formed Hekate are in a chthonic context.

In Hekate's case there is no evidence for multiplicity prior to the middle of the fifth century, other than her being granted privileges in *three* realms in the *Theogony*. Even Aischylos, who speaks of Triformed Moirai,[90] has no Triformed Hekate. There is some artistic evidence from the fifth century suggesting that Demeter, Persephone and Hekate were seen as a Triple Goddess at Eleusis.[91] Pausanias (2.30.2) thinks that Alkamenes was the first to portray Hekate in triple form; even if he was not, his statue on the Athenian Acropolis seems to have popularised the three-form image of her. We unfortunately have no contemporary record of the statue, nor of his motivation to create what seems to have been a new style.

It may be that Alkamenes was drawing upon an existing tradition of portrayal, and his statue merely became the first durable or noteworthy one. One hypothesis is that these trimorphic Hekataia were originally three apotropaic masks, perhaps Gorgon-like, hung from pillars at three-way intersections.[92] As discussed in section IV.1, her role at entranceways may have been specifically as an apotropaic guardian. The fact that Hermes was also called three- and four-formed supports this proposition, as he was the God of Herms and also an entranceway figure.

Factors other than this basic apotropaic function may have influenced the form of the statue as well. As a famous sculptor, Alkamenes was commissioned to create a work suitable for

---

89: C. Christou, *Potnia Theron* (Thessalonika: 1968), 36-41.

90: Aischylos, *PV*.516.

91: Edwards (1986) 314. As well, the number three appears to be significant in the *Hymn to Demeter*: see Clay (1989) 207, n. 21.

92: See, for example, Nilsson (1967) 724, n. 10, Kraus (1960) 107ff., and Burkert (1985) 171. There are no surviving examples, but Kraus discusses several statues from later times that can be interpreted as resembling masks on poles.

the grandiose construction project on the Acropolis. In this case we might expect a greater degree of artistic latitude than normal. Images of Hekate before the time of Alkamenes, both in sculpture and on vases, show Hekate as a torch-wielding young woman with a normal face in the role of *propolos*. However, if Edwards is correct in his contention that the portrayal of Hekate as a young woman was uniquely hers among the deities in the early Classical period,[93] then by the second half of the fifth century, when Artemis and others took the form as well, there may have arisen a need to create something new and distinctive for Hekate. Her association with three-way intersections[94] or with Demeter and Persephone as a three-some, or perhaps even her Hesiodic honours in three realms, could have been sufficient reason to put three normal female figures in a circle. However, if a tradition already existed for frightening masks to be mounted on poles in crossroads and other places prone to supernatural terrors, not specifically of Hekate but of *Enodia* (as an aspect of several deities) or even of chthonic powers in general, then Alkamenes may have decided to combine this theme with the contemporary image of Hekate. Even if the final product was quite non-traditional, it clearly was felt to be a significant artistic achievement, as so many copies were made of it.

Whatever the reason was for three-form statues, it did not preclude singular images of Hekate, even near Athens.[95] The lack of a central, official doctrine for nearly all aspects of Greek religion makes the significance of this discrepancy hard to determine. If the three-form nature was a localised Athenian invention, then perhaps not all Greeks accepted it. Another possibility is that the three-bodied form was specific to her chthonic function, while the single-bodied form was more universal.

93: Edwards (1986) 318.

94: Kraus (1960) 84ff.

95: Her statues at Ephesos and Lagina, of the fourth and first centuries respectively, were both single-formed, and a relief from early fourth-century Piraeus shows her with just one body (Staatliche Museen, Berlin; see Vermaseren [1977] pl. 23).

Another anomaly in her multiplicity is that there are almost no instances in which she is referred to in the plural.[96] Other deities such as Eileithyia show inconsistency in their numbers, but none have such a lopsided record. Instead, references to her multiplicity typically refer to being three-formed or three-headed: for example, δέσποιν' Ἑκάτη τριοδῖτι, τρίμορφε, τριπρόσωπε ("Lady Hekate of the three-ways, three-formed, three-faced").[97] Unless this is a coincidental bias of the evidence, it suggests a fundamental difference in the nature of her triple state. If it arose as an artistic convention that was adopted only in the fifth century, conservative tendencies may have preserved her singular state as the normal mode of address.

iii) Dogs

The animal most commonly associated with Hekate is the dog. Later references in particular tend to have her dogs either as sacrificial offerings or as ghostly apparitions. The sound of barking dogs is the first ominous sign of Hekate Chthonia's approach in Hellenistic and Roman works.[98] Rohde[99] goes as far as arguing that she was originally perceived as having a dog's head or even a dog's body, presumably like the Egyptian God Anubis; however, the evidence he cites is late, and the concept is quite uncharacteristic for the ancient Greeks.[100]

The only explicit Classical references to dogs and Hekate are fragments of Euripides and Aristophanes, which seem to record a legend of Kassandra prophesying that Hekuba would be turned into a dog at the foot of a statue of Hekate *Phosphoros*.[101] A slightly earlier connection

---

96: The only instance that I am aware of is Lucian, *Philops* 39.22.

97: Charikleides fr. 1 (Kock).

98: Apollonios Rhodios, *Argon*.3.1214 and Lucian, *Philops* 39.22.

99: Rohde (1925) 324, n. 99.

100: Burkert (1985) 64f.

101: Euripides, fr.968 (Nauck) and Aristophanes, fr.594 (Kock).

may be evident in fragment 42 (Jacoby) of Akousilaos of the sixth or fifth century, which states that Hekate is the mother of Skylla: in the *Odyssey* (12.86) Skylla is a sea-monster that howls like a puppy, while in later accounts she is portrayed as having dog-like features.[102] However, Homer has Kratais as her mother, not Hekate, so the connection is uncertain.

Dogs generally have a negative reputation in Greek literature.[103] They were often "symbols of shameless behaviour" and barred from many sanctuaries because they were deemed impure.[104] Then, as now, dogs were used in a derogatory sense to describe women.[105] The dangerous Erinyes were commonly associated with dogs, and there may have been an old belief that souls of unburied dead could appear in the shape of dogs.[106] However, dogs did have a good reputation in guarding and hunting and in association with a few deities such as Artemis, Asklepios and Apollo.[107]

Dogs were sacrificed in purification rituals to chthonic deities such as Hekate.[108] The disease or uncleanliness was ritually transferred to the dog, which was then killed and removed. The body was subsequently offered to the deities involved, who thus received the impurities that it bore. The association between dogs and deities who watched over childbirth may be because of

---

102: For example, Virgil, *Ecl.*6.75.

103: For a good survey of dogs in ancient Greek literature, see Lilja (1976).

104: Parker (1983) 357.

105: Oliensis (1991) 111.

106: Lilja (1976) 127.

107: Lilja (1976) 103 and Parker (1983) 358.

108: Plutarch, *Mor.*280c, 290d. See also Rohde (1925) 589f. and Pingiatoglou 78, n. 202. A widespread military sacrifice involved the marching of troops before battle between the halves of a dissected dog, for purification against the murder that they were about to commit. This is recorded in Greece and many other lands in the Eastern Mediterranean: see Burkert (1985) 82. The deliberate cruelty involved may have also been used as a means of instilling courage and desensitising the soldiers to the cruelties that they were expected to inflict and receive.

their use in post-birth purification rituals.[109] The earliest reference to Hekate's involvement may be in fragment 204 (Kock) of Aristophanes, in which a white puppy is carried τῇ Θεῷ εἰς τὰς τριόδους ("for the Goddess in the crossroad"). Surprisingly, this is the only possible pre-Hellenistic evidence we have for Hekate receiving sacrificed dogs, and it is far from being definitive. If her role in childbirth only arose in the fifth or later centuries (see section IV.2), then perhaps she was a recipient of dogs only through that function.

The deathly aspect of the sacrificed dogs may explain the later picture of ghostly dogs accompanying Hekate. In effect, she received both the impurities and the spirits of the dogs. This topic will be further explored in section (v) below.

Besides the ominous approach of Hekate Chthonia, the sound of barking dogs had another, quite specific and mundane connotation in ancient Greece: that of a loyal guard dog that stands watch at the front door.[110] Plutarch (*Moralia* 200b) states that those who stand before a house should be its guardians, terrifying to strangers and able to track down evil-doers, but gentle and mild to the residents. Aischylos (*Agamemnon* 607f.) more briefly refers to the same theme for dogs. Plutarch (*Moralia* 368e) also records that dogs as well as Hekate were credited with excellent night vision. This motif is quite suitable for Hekate when she stands at entranceways. However, the lack of any pre-Roman references to Hekate in this context makes this analogy quite speculative.

Dogs are also strongly associated with Artemis, specifically in the role of hunting companions. However, a sacrificial element is suggested in the legend of Artemis and the "wife of Ephesos": the latter is turned into a dog by Artemis before she takes her own life (see section IV.1). The similarities between the Ephesian legend and that of Iphigeneia, in which Artemis turns

---

109: Aristophanes, *Nub.*62, Hesychios *s.v. Genetyllis* and Pliny, *NH.*30.123. An alternate explanation is offered by Plutarch, *Mor.*277b, who quotes Sokrates as saying that female dogs were sacrificed because of the ease with which they bring forth their young.

110: Lilja (1976) 83.

the woman into a deer just as she is sacrificed by Agamemnon, are striking: in both cases, the woman is renamed Hekate. Both are also reminiscent of the tendency for Greek deities to be identified with the animals that were commonly offered to them: for example, Poseidon with horses, Hermes with goats, and Artemis with deer.[111] Thus we have Artemis, Hekate and two animals sacred to Artemis closely linked in two legends. The role of both Hekate and the animals is that of *propolos* to Artemis. However, this status seems to conflict with the images of Hekate leading her own retinue of ghosts and dogs.

The lack of early evidence for Hekate and dogs points to Artemis having the older association with dogs, but the apparent identification of the two in fifth and later centuries makes it very difficult to be sure. It may be that dogs served two distinct roles, one as companion and the other as an impure animal suitable for purification ceremonies. Artemis would identify mostly with the former role, while Hekate with the latter, at least by the fifth century. The close identification arising in the Classical period between the two deities would similarly confuse these roles for dogs.

iv) Snakes

Snakes were the animals most commonly associated with the dead. A common belief was that the dead could appear in the form of snakes.[112] Chthonic deities, in their role of governing the dead, were likewise associated with snakes. Some deities, such as Poseidon, Zeus and Athena, also seem to have preserved specific links with snakes that are traceable back to the Bronze or even Neolithic Age, when the animals are thought to have had a greater role in ritual.[113]

Snakes appear with Hekate almost entirely in the context of her hair. The passage of

---

111: Burkert (1985) 65.

112: Nilsson (1967) 198f. and Burkert (1985) 195.

113: For example, Poseidon: Burkert (1985) 136, 138f.; Zeus: Burkert (1985) 130, 201; and Athena: Burkert (1985) 140 and Nilsson (1967) 145ff.

Sophokles at the beginning of this chapter describes her as wreathed with snakes and oak leaves; Apollonios Rhodios (*Argonautika* 3.1214f.) probably borrowed from this passage when he had her "garlanded with fearsome snakes entwined among oak boughs". The only other pre-Hellenistic reference is a fragment of Aristophanes, in which Hekate Chthonia is σπείρας ὄφεων ἐλελιζομένη ("entwining herself in coils of serpents"), and equated with Empousa.[114]

This portrayal is reminiscent of the Erinyes, as Aischylos reputedly first described them,[115] and of Medusa. As discussed in section IV.1, the hair may have contributed to the apotropaic nature of Medusa's face. Thus Hekate's serpentine traits may simply be an attribute of her guardian function, rather than indicating a specific connection with the dead.

v) Ghosts and the Dead

As the quotation from Plutarch at the beginning of this section illustrates, Hekate was sometimes portrayed as causing nightmares and having a ghostly retinue.[116] Hippokrates (27.1.92f.) in the second half of the fifth century also records the belief that nightmares are caused by Hekate, and similarly denounces it as superstition. Hekate's title *Antaia*, which usually means "hostile", may refer to this function.[117] The earliest reliable record of Hekate sending ghosts is in

---

114: Aristophanes, *Tagenistai* fr.500 (Kock) (= 515 PCG). A recently documented version of this fragment has εἰλιξαμένη ("coiling herself") rather than ἐλελιζομένη, which conveys the same meaning: see R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin: 1991), Vol. 3.2, 271. For a brief discussion of the fragment, see Brown (1991) 48.

115: Aischylos, *Cho.*1048f.; Pausanias 1.28.6 says that he was the first to describe the Erinyes in this fashion.

116: See also Rohde (1925) 593ff.

117: See Nilsson (1967) 723. A very fragmentary reference by Aischylos (fr.223 [Radt]) suggests this meaning. However, *Antaia* can also mean "to whom one makes supplication", as was noted in section I.1, n. 28.

Euripides' play *Helen* (569f.): when unexpectedly confronted by Helen, Menelaos exclaims ὦ Φωσφόρ' Ἑκάτη, πέμπε φάσματ' εὐμενῆ ("Oh *Phosphoros* Hekate, send me kindly phantasms"), to which Helen replies οὐ νυκτίφαντον πρόπολον Ἐνοδίας μ' ὁρᾷς ("you do not see in me a night-appearing attendant of *Enodia*"). It is interesting to note that a ghost is specifically called a *propolos* of Hekate: while this may have simply been a convenient term for Euripides, it is in keeping with the later accounts. It is also noteworthy that phantasms could be pleasant rather than just terrifying.

There are several named monstrous and ghostly creatures that Hekate is sometimes linked to, most notably Empousa. Aristophanes (*Ranae* 285ff. and *Ecclesiazusai* 1056) has Empousa appear as a frightening, shape-shifting monster. Significantly, the shape that identifies her is that of a dog. Another passage of Aristophanes[118] directly equates her with Hekate Chthonia; however, it is fragmentary and the context is unclear. Brown[119] suggests that Aristophanes in *Ranae* was discreetly describing an aspect of the Eleusinian Mysteries, in which initiates were scared by a ghost, and that her role was somehow related to that of Hekate. Perhaps Empousa was felt to resemble Hekate in her apotropaic form.[120]

In later literature, Hekate is typically accompanied by a horde of "restless dead". These are spirits of people who are unable to complete their journey to Hades, and are forced to wander between the worlds of the dead and the living. The most prominent and fearful of these are the *aoroi* ("untimely dead"), who await their proper time of death.[121] With these human dead are

---

118: See n. 114 above.

119: Brown (1991) 42ff.

120: Rohde (1925) 590ff. goes so far as to equate Hekate with all scary chthonic female figures, which is too simplistic.

121: Garland (1985) 77f. and Johnston (1990) 135f. The fear of the souls of those who died before their time, especially those murdered or who took their own life, is common to many parts of the world. In England as late as 1823, for example, the bodies of suicide victims were staked and buried at crossroads to prevent their doing harm to the living (Garland [1985] 96)!

apparently also the spirits of dogs sacrificed to Hekate: thus the sound of barking dogs precedes her appearances.[122]

There are several possible explanations for Hekate having this retinue. The simplest is that she acquired it through an original association with Hades, perhaps as his gatekeeper. However, this runs counter to her absence from the description of the Underworld in both the *Theogony* and the *Odyssey*. The image of human and canine ghosts accompanying a terrifying deity that flies at night is common to several other European cultures, most notably the Wild Hunt of the Celts. As the primary deity of hunting, Artemis also could lead a noisy retinue of dogs: perhaps Hekate acquired this attribute from her.[123] Hekate's function as guide, particularly in and out of Hades for Persephone, and her association with entranceways and by extension all transition points, at least in later times,[124] may have made her a suitable leader of spirits that lingered in limbo between the two worlds. In this, she displayed some overlap with Hermes' role of psychopomp.[125]

vi) Curse tablets

The use of curse tablets for "magical bindings" (*katadesmoi* or defixiones) is a specific magical practice in which Hekate's role has sometimes been overstated.[126] This was the practice of writing curses on lead tablets, which were conveyed via the souls of the dead to chthonic deities for enactment.[127] While the vast majority of the datable tablets belong to the Hellenistic and

---

122: See n. 98 above.

123: Nilsson (1961) 79.

124: Johnston (1990) 35.

125: An interesting connection between psychopomps and crossroads is given by Plato, *Phd.*108a: the road to and from the Underworld has many intersections, reflecting the choices made by the soul in life, and thus requires a guide.

126: For example, Rohde (1925) 327, n. 107, 594 overly emphasises her association with curse tablets.

127: See, for example, Garland (1985) 6f., 86.

Roman periods, the earliest evidence of the practice appears in the mid-sixth century; it is not known whether a different, less durable medium was used before, or the practice truly began then.[128] So far, none of the tablets that involve Hekate have been dated to before the fourth century. The most suitable carriers were felt to be the *aoroi*, as their souls were thought to remain in the vicinity of their graves awaiting their proper time of death.[129] The *aoroi* were also felt to be unhappy with their state, and thus potentially dangerous; this aspect probably added to the negative reputation of the activity. The tablets were usually left in tombs of the *aoroi*, in chthonic sanctuaries, and in underground bodies of water such as wells.

Hundreds of tablets have been found, but no systematised compilation of them all has been done since Wuensch.[130] His listing of thirty-one from various dates shows a fair mix of male and female victims (roughly 2:1), with the perpetrators anonymous. Sixty percent were primarily directed to Hermes alone. About ten percent were to each of Hekate, Gaia, and Persephone, usually in conjunction with Hermes. In particular, of the five tablets mentioning Hekate, on four she was invoked together with Hermes in the format "Hermes Chthonios and Hekate Chthonia", and on the fifth she was joined with the Erinyes. Jordan has since compiled hundreds found in the Athenian agora from the Roman period.[131] Many if not all were written by just a few people, perhaps hired professionals. Hermes dominated these later ones as well, and Hekate was still always invoked with other deities (usually Hermes).

Clearly it is Hermes who was the primary deity associated with this magical practice, not Hekate. His role as psychopomp must have dictated this: he was not always expected to enact the curses, but could instead convey the wishes to other, unnamed deities.[132] Hekate, through her

---

128: earliest examples found at Selinus: *SEG 16* (1959), no. 573; *SEG 26* (1976-77), nos. 1112-16. The use of tablets may have replaced a verbal tradition, as suggested by Burkert (1985) 75.

129: Garland (1985) 86, 93.

130: Wuensch (1897).

131: Jordan (1985a and 1985b).

132: For example, in Aischylos, *Cho.*123ff. Iphigeneia asks Hermes to tell the other chthonic deities to

association with the "unquiet dead", likewise had an obvious connection with the *aoroi*; but the evidence shows that she was simply one of several less commonly chosen deities involved. As she was always specified as *Chthonia*, her "un-titled" state, if anything, must have been even less associated with the practice. As well, none of the tablets that involve Hekate have been dated to before the fourth century.

vii) Magic and Medeia

Hekate has a significant role in the nearly obsessive portrayal of Medeia in antiquity. Roughly a dozen Greek and Latin plays that we know of deal with her; of these only those of Seneca and Euripides have survived in more than fragmentary form. Medeia also features prominently in several other works, such as Apollonios Rhodios' *Argonautika*. Her primary role is usually that of an evil magician and herbalist. She is also a priestess of Hekate and a descendant of Helios; Hekate and to a lesser extent Helios were her benefactors or teachers. This is probably Hekate's most noted role in later literature, and as such contributed much to her negative image. Helios, on the other hand, has not suffered in the same way.

It is noteworthy that Medeia's invocations of Hekate usually do not involve the summoning of spirits or other magical techniques for which we have actual documentation. Instead, she seems to use a different system of magic that was particularly associated in literature with women, most notably the "Thessalian women".[133] This may tie in with the fact that, for the most part, these women were misogynistic fantasies, extreme literary creations of the rigid patriarchal society of Classical Greece. Some scholars have cited Hekate's role as the benefactor of this magic as evidence for her being a "Woman's Goddess".[134] While such a role is certainly possible, as was

---

hear her prayers.

133: See section II.7, n. 37.

134: Wilamowitz (1931) I.130 and Nilsson (1967) 725.

discussed in section IV.2, these literary accounts are very questionable evidence for it: we have no record of a living woman invoking Hekate and performing acts in the manner described. What they are a better indicator of is the prevalence in antiquity of certain misogynistic stereotypes.

It is important to note that very few of these chthonic attributes can be associated with Hekate prior to the fifth century. Neither Hesiod nor Homer knows her as a chthonic deity. The only attribute that clearly appears in the Archaic period is the torches: the *Hymn to Demeter* clearly notes them, for both Hekate and Demeter. However, these probably indicate Hekate's guiding function. Her link with Medeia could be as old as the *Theogony*, if she is the same as Perseis (956f.), but it is only in the fifth century that the relationship is shown clearly. As a guardian figure at entranceways, perhaps we can see *Enodia*, the Crossroads Goddess, or the frightening apotropaic figures of Empousa and Medusa: however, this is no more than speculation.

While it is fair to say that evidence for chthonic traits of many other deities is sparse prior to Classical literature, for Hekate the absence is extreme. It therefore seems hard to justify including Hekate Chthonia, in the form that she appears in later times, as a prominent part of the early goddess.

IV.6 Discussion

Five functions of Hekate have been identified and discussed. Those of *propolos* and *phosphoros* show sufficient overlap perhaps to warrant their being classified simply as one; those of *propylaia* and *kourotrophos* may also overlap, but probably to a much lesser degree. Similarly, part of her chthonic function perhaps could be classified on its own as *Enodia*. *Chthonia* is also the most unusual of the five in that it is the least documented in early times but comes to dominate the other functions in later literature.

Hekate's *propylaia* function is the one most readily apparent from the archaeological

record of the Archaic period. This prominence is not surprising, given that it can be indicated by the simple presence of an altar to her at the sanctuary of another, more significant deity. In this sense, the other functions require more specific evidence, and thus are less frequently represented in the archaeological record. On the other hand, definite evidence for the *propylaia* function is absent in the early literature. Furthermore, in early Classical art we most commonly see Hekate as the torch-bearing guide for Persephone travelling to and from Hades: she had come to play a minor part in a very popular subject. Her *kourotrophos* function is the least documented of all, particularly outside of the *Theogony*, but it is also the one for which we should least expect the evidence to survive. Realising these biases, we can see that the prevalence of the evidence for these four functions is probably a poor indicator of their relative importance: we can merely propose that they were significant. Furthermore, as few sites offer evidence of more than one function, we also do not know to what degree these functions were exclusive of each other: did she regularly perform several functions in each community, or was she often limited to only one?

None of these five functions is unique to Hekate. The titles of *kourotrophos* and *chthonia* in particular are shared with numerous other deities. However, the other three are uncommon for most other deities, and thus are her most distinguishing traits. The suggestion that Hekate was a Goddess of Transitions in the Archaic period is appealing because of its capacity to unify many of these roles. However, this proposition is based heavily upon recent interpretations of the passage in the *Theogony*. While these analyses strengthen the case for the authenticity of the passage, they assume that it strongly serves a compositional role, which undermines its reliability as a historical document. In the broader context of all early evidence for Hekate's worship, this hypothesis is at best intriguing speculation: only in much later centuries does one find evidence readily identifying Hekate so strongly with the concept of transitions.[135]

The prominence of Hekate Chthonia in later literature is probably the most difficult

---

135: Most notably in the context of the Chaldaean Oracles: see Johnston (1990) 29ff., 71ff.

anomaly to explain. Nilsson argues that her chthonic side must have been present from her beginnings in Karia, and was brought to the forefront in the fifth century when superstitious fears and magic practices became widespread among the commonfolk.[136] It was also suggested in section IV.1 that *chthonia* was emphasised at the expense of her other functions in order the better to differentiate her from Artemis in Athens. It is apparent that at least some of her chthonic traits could have been derived from the four functions previously discussed. A Medusa-like apotropaic guardian with serpents for hair and a guide for Persephone to and from Hades, and perhaps mortals through an initiatory rebirth, are not unreasonable sources for the grim picture of Hekate that began to emerge in the fifth century.

Hekate's chthonic side could also have been enhanced through her relationships with other chthonic deities. Her guardian function is shared most commonly with Hermes, with whom she later shared many chthonic activities. The deity that she was most commonly portrayed as guiding, Persephone, is always known as the Queen of the Dead.

136: Nilsson (1967) 725.

Part V: Conclusion

In the previous four chapters, I have examined the early evidence for the worship of Hekate. Each chapter has utilised a different part of the body of evidence in order to obtain several different views of the subject. The result is not a single, unified concept of her; nor can it be, for no Greek deity was conceived of in the same way by every Greek at any single time or place in antiquity. The roles that deities serve mirror the needs of their followers, which vary from community to community and change with time. In this way, we are necessarily restricted to a mode of analysis that accepts many differing viewpoints, and must grant that there was no single monolithic form of Hekate in the Archaic period. To this basic limitation must be added the fact that Hekate is not a major deity and thus is poorly represented in the overall historical record. As well, the different types of evidence emphasise different roles.

The lengthy portrayal of Hekate in the *Theogony* still remains the most significant anomaly in the body of early evidence for her worship, despite the new approaches taken to its analysis. The stronger the case is made for the passage serving a compositional role in the poem, the less we can accept the details as illustrating Hekate's functions or revealing popular attitudes towards her. The most recognisable functions presented in the passage are those of intermediary between mortals and deities and of *kourotrophos*. However, evidence for the latter function is otherwise lacking until the fifth century, and even then it does not become plentiful. Her intermediary function is similarly undocumented until quite late; it is perhaps best explained as relating to her role in mysteries, and thus could belong to her *propolos* function. If evidence could be found for Hekate's presence in a mystery contemporary with Hesiod, the *Theogony* passage might become more understandable.

It can be argued that the confusion with Artemis apparent after the sixth century is sufficient to deny Hekate a truly independent status. However, it is too simplistic to conclude that she is merely an aspect of Artemis, or another name for her. Her functions best documented in the early period, *propolos* and *propylaia*, are specifically subservient functions. In these she attends

upon many deities besides Artemis and generally retains her name and identity. This secondary nature of Hekate limits her to a minor position in the Greek pantheon, but nonetheless it is distinctive enough overall to preserve her identity.

The secondary nature of Hekate's functions also explains why public festivals in her honour were so rare. As a *propylaia* before homes, she served individuals, not the entire community. At the entranceways to sanctuaries and as a *propolos*, Hekate's status was overshadowed by that of other deities. Thus Hekate was usually honoured in a minor way in public celebrations of other deities, such as Demeter and Artemis, and in private ceremonies on her own (or perhaps together with Hermes *Propylaios*)[1], but never on her own. Even as Chthonia, she did not become significant enough to stand out from the other chthonic deities and receive her own celebrations.

Hekate's relationship with Artemis is problematic in other ways. Despite the close association and occasional identification between them that is documented in the fifth and later centuries, in many ways they remain quite dissimilar. Two legends link them through the sacrificial death of both an animal and a mortal woman: those of Iphigeneia and of the "wife" of Ephesos. These cases would seem to fit a specific relationship outlined by Burkert: "[through] destruction by a god ... the victim become the double of the god[;] ... the figure killed in this way is preserved ... as a dark reflection of the god."[2] What is particularly interesting is that in the Ephesian legend Hekate is a canine *propolos* of Artemis, while later accounts have ghostly dogs among Hekate's *propoloi*: animal, servant and deity are all intertwined.

The question of Hekate's homeland has often been debated because it has commonly been assumed that Hekate was in origin not a Greek deity. Probably the strongest evidence for this view

---

1: Simon (1983) 3.

2: Burkert (1985) 188.

is her complete absence from the Homeric epics, and her unusual portrayal in the *Theogony*, which predates or is at least contemporary with Homer's works. The relatively sudden and widespread archaeological evidence for her worship in the sixth century thus may indicate her arrival from some outside location.

This theory is certainly in part the result of the tendency, particularly common in the nineteenth century, to idealise ancient Greek culture. Other deities such as Apollo, Dionysos and Ares have also been considered foreign in origin, despite their presence in the Homeric works (and even Linear B tablets). Apollo is particularly noteworthy here, given his associations with Hekate: Burkert,[3] for example, argues that at least three components of Apollo worship can be readily discerned, one of which came from Asia. While we certainly cannot rule out foreign concepts being incorporated into the worship of any deity, it is likewise possible that certain elements of the rituals associated with them convey a false exotic impression, despite their being entirely Greek in origin.[4] Dionysos and Ares also had negative reputations in antiquity: for the former, the problem lay with the reputed actions of his followers, while with the latter it was his own deeds in legend. Thus it is likely that the question of Hekate's place of origin in the past has been asked in part on account of her negative reputation and a desire to keep the Greek religion "clean". If nothing else, the attribution of deities to foreign lands denies the ancient Greek religion some of its diversity; and even if such foreign origins are proven, too much emphasis on their exotic origins can overshadow the roles that these deities had once they were fully adopted into Greek culture.

While a foreign origin for Hekate is certainly plausible, it is far from certain. The supposed flaws of the *Theogony* have been subject to considerable debate, making the work far less suspect

---

3: Burkert (1985) 144ff.

4: See, for example, Graf, "A Poet among Men" (in Bremmer [1987]), 100. Alternatively, Guthrie (1950) 172 suggests for Dionysos that the foreign nature of his worship was "inherent in the ritual and comes into the myths primarily from that source and only secondarily, if at all, from the fact of historical opposition to his cult in Greece".

than it was considered decades ago. Hekate's absence from the Homeric epics is puzzling, but not inexplicable: Demeter, for example, plays a very small role despite her significant popularity in much of the Greek world in Homer's time. The relatively sparse archaeological record of Hekate in archaic times is hardly unique to her, and not surprising given that her functions tend to define her as a secondary figure. The apparent onset of her worship in the sixth century could quite easily be an accidental quirk of the meagre archaeological record, or indicative of a new desire to honour secondary figures in a manner that produced more lasting evidence. Furthermore, the distribution of archaeological sites in the Archaic and early Classical periods strongly favours regions about the Aegean Sea, which could indicate an Ionian origin. If so, the Linear B tablet that lists offerings for Iphimede becomes a more interesting find: was Hekate worshipped under this name, which was a variant for Iphigeneia, among the Mykenaians in the Bronze Age?

It is also possible that the analysis of the evidence supposedly indicative of Hekate's homeland is too focussed upon her name, as discussed in section III.3. The actual functions of Hekate in the Archaic period do not suggest a specific point of origin, and could have been quite widespread. Similarities between Hekate and the Horai and the Gorgones could indicate that in early times there were many names for the functions that later came to be associated primarily with Hekate.

Nevertheless, earlier in sections II.11, III.2, and III.3 we noted the common conclusion that the worship of Hekate originated in Anatolia, especially Karia. The actual evidence of Hekate worship among non-Greek peoples such as the Karians is relatively late and insufficient to provide adequate support for this supposition. However, an attractive hypothesis is that Hekate's name may have been a corruption of Hepat or Hekabe. If so, it could have been preserved because of its similarity with the various Hekat- titles of Artemis and Apollo. As Artemis was the name most commonly given by Greeks for indigenous goddesses in Anatolia, the worship in late times of Hekate as the dominant deity of Karia may simply indicate where this evolution of her name occurred.

Furthermore, Hekate shares her *propylaia* function with both Apollo and Hermes. These two deities also appear in two divine triads that are prominent in Western Anatolia: Kybele-Hekate-Hermes and Leto-Artemis-Apollo. As Hekate has much in common with Artemis, it is possible that these triads were in essence the same and indicate an Asiatic preference for such groupings. Thus in Anatolia, at least, Hekate could have been a name for the divine Daughter of the Great Goddess. As Artemis often took on attributes and status more suited to her Mother, the unusually dominant nature of the Karian Hekate may indicate a similar overlap between Mother and Daughter.

While this status is perhaps documented on nearby islands such as Samothrace, on the Greek mainland there is little sign of such a familial arrangement for her. As well, her functions seem to be far more independent; in particular, her *propylaia* and chthonic duties were applicable in a wide range of situations. Thus it does not seem appropriate to postulate a simple migration of her worship, intact, from Anatolia into Greece: at the least, she adopted a significant indigenous Greek element.

By the fifth century, when literary records become relatively abundant, Hekate is firmly in place in all of the Greek world as a Greek deity. That century also marks the point when the literary record begins to stress Hekate Chthonia at the expense of her other functions. As documentation of this aspect is meagre beforehand, it is appropriate to ask whether some significant shift occurred in what was seen as her primary functions.

It is important to note that every Greek deity has beneficial and destructive functions: for example, Euripides, in the *Bacchae* (860f.), has Dionysos say of himself: Θεὸς / δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος ("the God [is] most fearful, yet most gentle to humankind"). Thus Hekate is in no way unusual for having a function that is as fearful as it is sometimes portrayed. For some deities these functions are paired opposites: for example, Apollo was both a healer and a sender of plagues and Artemis could both aid and kill women in childbirth. Thus Hekate's

chthonic function may directly relate to her *propolos* function, in the context of guiding to and from the Underworld, or to her *propylaia* function, through interaction with hostile spirits.

Thus the more relevant question to ask is why the function became so strongly emphasised in literature. Documentation of real magical practices, such as the curse tablets, do not stress Hekate's role overly much: she is merely one of many chthonic deities invoked, the most prominent of whom is clearly Hermes. As well, she is specifically named Chthonia, to distinguish this function from her other ones. However, both the earliest and the most elaborate references to Hekate Chthonia seem to have little direct bearing to actual religious practices, but instead are in the context of supporting the legendary magical practices of Medeia and other fantastic female figures. The negative portrayal of powerful women such as Medeia and the Amazons who live outside of the bounds of society, both literally and figuratively, is common in Greek literature.[5] When these women are associated with deities, it is typically with goddesses that honour their independent nature, such as Artemis, or grant them unusual powers, such as Hekate. Unfortunately, the earliest detailed references to Medeia only date to the fifth century, so it is not possible to determine whether her reputation prompted the rise in popularity of Hekate Chthonia, or vice versa. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that through simple association with Medeia in these popular misogynistic myths, the ghostly and dangerous side of Hekate may have been popularised.

We must also keep in mind that Hekate's other functions did continue at the same time as her chthonic side was emphasised. Throughout antiquity leaders proudly dedicated altars in her name,[6] parents gave their children names that began with Hekat-, famous sculptors were commissioned to construct statues of her for public display, and people were initiated into her mysteries. The worship of several deities was restricted by official decrees in the Roman period, but Hekate was never one of them. We cannot tell whether lurid accounts of the macabre worship

---

5: For Medeia, see section IV.5.

6: For an example, Kraus (1960) 11.

of Hekate have any basis in fact, though they certainly contain exaggeration and stereotyping, but real people continued to worship her in ways that did not provoke serious negative reactions.

Further evidence that the literary tradition of fearful chthonic spooks did not reflect the views of all people is demonstrated by the passages of Hippokrates (27.1.92f) and Plutarch (*Moralia* 166.A.5) cited above in section IV.5. These provide us with one of the few instances in which we see conflicting views on the functions of Hekate. Their attitude is that of sceptical rationalists, ridiculing the superstitions of their less-educated compatriots. These contrary views were made at the same time that other fantastic events were attributed to Hekate or her followers: were the academics of antiquity prompted to comment on attitudes which they thought foolish in the same way that modern academics are moved to counter "irrational" but popular ideas of our time?

Bibliography

Alexiou, M. 1974. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition.* Cambridge.

Alfondi, A. 1960. "Diana Nemorensis". *AJA* 64: 137-44.

American School of Classical Studies at Athens. 1980. *Gods and Heroes in the Athenian Agora.* Athens.

Arthur, M.B. 1982. "Cultural Strategies in Hesiod's Theogony: Law, Family, Society". *Arethusa* 15: 63-82.

———. 1983. "The Dream of a World without Women: Poetics and the Circle of Order in the Theogony Prooemium". *Arethusa* 16: 97-116.

Aubert, J.J. 1989. "Threatened Wombs: Aspects of Ancient Uterine Magic". *GRBS* 30: 421-50.

Bennett, F.M. 1967. *Religious Cults Associated with the Amazon.* New York.

Berg, W. 1974. "Hekate: Greek or Anatolian?". *Numen* 21: 128-40.

Boedeker, D. 1983. "Hecate: a Transfunctional Goddess in the Theogony?". *TAPh* 113: 79-93.

Bowman, L. 1990. "Tradition and Misogyny in Euripides". Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Classical Assoc. of Canada, May 20-22, at the University of Victoria. B.C.

Bräuninger, F. 1893. "Persephone", *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 19: 944ff.

Bremmer, J. 1983. *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul.* Princeton.

———, ed. 1987. *Interpretations of Greek Mythology.* London.

Brown, C.G. 1991. "Empousa, Dionysus and the Mysteries: Aristophanes' *Frogs*: 285ff". *CQ* 85: 41-50.

Buck, R.J. 1987. *A History of Boeotia.* Edmonton.

Burkert, W. 1979. *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual.* Berkeley.

———. 1983. *Homo Necans*. English trans. Berkeley.

———. 1985. *Greek Religion.* English trans. Cambridge, MA.

Burn, A.R. 1960. *The Lyric Age of Greece*. New York.

Clay, J.S. 1984. "The Hekate of the Theogony". *GRBS* 25: 27-38.

———. 1989. *The Politics of Olympus*. Princeton.

Clement, P.A. 1939. "A Note on the Thessalian Cult of Enodia". *Hesperia* 8: 200.

Clinton, K. 1986. "The Author of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter". *Opuscula Atheniensia* 16: 43-49.

Coldstream, J.N. 1977. *Geometric Greece*. London.

Cook, J.M. 1962. *The Greeks in the East.* London.

Cornford, F.M. 1950. *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays*. Cambridge.

Coulson, W.D.E. 1980. "Menestratos". *CJ* 75: 200-03.

Detienne, M., and Vernant, M.L. 1978. *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society.* English trans. Hassocks, England.

Dietrich, B.C. 1973. *The Origins of Greek Religion*. Berlin.

———. 1986. *Tradition in Greek Religion*. Berlin.

Dodds, E.R. 1973. *Ancient Concept of Progress*. Oxford.

Dover, K.J. 1974. *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford.

Dunbabin, T.J. 1948. *The Western Greeks*. Oxford.

Edwards, C.M. 1986. "The Running Maiden from Eleusis and the early Classical Image of Hekate". *AJA* 90: 307-18.

Farnell, L.R. 1909. *The Cults of the Greek States*. 5 vols. Oxford.

Foley, H.P. 1982. "Marriage and Sacrifice in Euripides' Iphigeneia in Aulis". *Arethusa* 15: 159-80.

Fontenrose, J. 1978. *The Delphic Oracle*. Berkeley.

Fraser, P.M., and Matthews, E., eds. 1987. *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. Vol. I. Oxford.

Friis Johansen, H., and Whittle, E.W., eds. 1980. *Aeschylus: The Suppliants*. Vol. 3. Copenhagen.

Fullerton, M.D. 1986. "Hekate Epipyrgidia". *Archaologischer Anzeiger*. 669-75.

Garland, R. 1985. *The Greek Way of Death*. London.

Garvie, A.F. 1969. *Aeschylus' Supplices*. Cambridge.

Gergova, D. 1989. "The find from Rogozen and one Religious Feast in Thracian Lands". *Klio* 71: 36-50.

Goettling, K., ed. 1831. *Hesiodi Carmina*. Leipzig.

Gould, J.P. 1980. "Law, Custom & Myth: Social Position of Women in Classical Athens". *JHS* 100: 38-59.

Graf, F. 1985. *Nordionische Kulte*. Rome.

Griffith, M. 1983. "Personality in Hesiod". *Classical Antiquity* 2: 37-65.

Griffiths, F.T. 1981. "The Emancipated Woman in Theocritus". In *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, edited by H.P. Foley, 247-65. New York.

Guthrie, W.K.C. 1950. *The Greeks and their Gods*. Boston.

———. 1952. *Orpheus and Greek Religion*. London.

Halliwell, S. 1986. "Where 3 Roads Meet: a neglected detail in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*". *JHS* 106: 187-90.

Hamilton, R. 1989. *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry*. Baltimore.

Harrison, E.B. 1965. *The Athenian Agora, vol. XI: Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture*. Princeton.

Hatzfelt, J. 1920. "Inscriptions de Lagina en Carie". *BCH* 44: 70-100.

Heckenbach, J. 1912. "Hekate", *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 7: 2770-80.

Hoddinot, R.F. 1981. *The Thracians*. London.

Jacoby, F. 1930. *Hesiodi Theogonia*. Berlin.

Jebb, R.C., ed. 1905. *Bacchylides: the Poems & Fragments*. Hildesheim.

Johnston, S.I. 1990. *Hekate Soteira*. Atlanta.

Jordan, D. 1985a. "Defixiones from a Well Near the South West Corner of the Athenian Agora". *Hesperia* 54: 205-55.

———. 1985b. "A Survey of Greek Defixiones not Included in the Special Corpora". *GRBS* 26: 151-97.

Just, R. 1989. *Women in Athenian Law and Life*. London.

Karouzou, S. 1972. "An Underworld Scene on a Black-figured Lekythos". *JHS* 92: 64-73.

Kerényi, K. 1951. *The Gods of the Greeks*. London.

———. 1967. *Eleusis*. New York.

———. 1979. *Goddesses of the Sun and Moon*. Dallas.

Kraus, T. 1960. *Hekate*. Heidelberg.

Kirk, G.S. 1962. "The Structure and aim of the *Theogony*". *Entretiens Hardt sur l'antiquité classique* 7: 61-95.

Lattimore, R. 1959. *Hesiod*. Ann Arbor.

Lefkowitz, M.R. 1986. *Women in Greek Myth*. London.

Lehmann, K. 1975. *Samothrace*. New York.

Lewy, H. 1956. *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*. Paris.

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. 1984. Zürich.

Lilja, S. 1976. *Dogs in Ancient Greek Poetry*. Helsinki.

Linford, I.M. 1941. *The Arts of Orpheus*. Berkeley.

Lloyd-Jones, H. 1983. "Artemis & Iphigeneia". *JHS* 103: 87-102.

Luck, G. 1985. *Arcana Mundi*. Baltimore.

Malkin, I. 1987. *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece*. Leiden.

Marcovich, M. 1970. "Bacchylides Ode 7 Again". *GRBS* 11: 181-84.

Marquardt, P.A. 1981. "A Portrait of Hecate". *AJPh* 102: 243-60.

Merkelbach, R., and West, M.L., eds. 1967. *Fragmenta Hesiodea*. Oxford.

Mikalson, J. 1983. *Athenian Popular Religion*. Chapel Hill.

Miller, S.G. 1974. "The Altar of the Six Goddesses in Thessalian Pherai". *CSCA* 7: 231-56.

Millet, P. 1984. "Hesiod and His World". *PCPhS* n.s. 30: 84-115.

Mylonas, G.E. 1942. *The Hymn to Demeter and Her Sanctuary at Eleusis*. St. Louis.

Nilsson, M. 1948. *Greek Piety*. Oxford.

———. 1951. *Cults, Myths, Oracles, and Politics in Ancient Greece*. New York.

———. 1952. *A History of Greek Religion*. Oxford.

———. 1961. "Review of *Hekate*, by Theodor Kraus". *AJA* 65: 78-79.

———. 1967. *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2nd ed. 2 vols. Munich.

Oliensis, E. 1991. "Canidia, Canicula, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes*". *Arethusa* 24: 107-38.

Padel, R. 1983. "Women: a Model for Possession by Greek Daemons". In *Images of Women in Antiquity*, edited by A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt, 3-19. London.

Parke, N.W. 1977. *Festivals of the Athenians*. London.

Parker, R. 1983. *Miasma*. Oxford.

——— 1991. "The Hymn to Demeter and the Homeric Hymns". *G&R* 38: 1-17.

Pingiatoglou, S. 1981. *Eileithyia*. Würzburg.

Piper, G.N. 1969. "The Prooemium of Bacchylides' Ode 7". *GRBS* 10: 229-34.

Price, T.H. 1978. *Kourotrophos*. Leiden.

Puhvel, M. 1976. "The Mystery of the Cross-roads". *Folklore* 87: 167-77.

Richardson, N.J., ed. 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Oxford.

Robertson, M. 1975. *A History of Greek Art*. Cambridge.

Rohde, E. 1925. *Psyche*. London.

Rollin, S. 1983. "Women and Witchcraft in Ancient Assyria". In *Images of Women in Antiquity*, edited by A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt, 34-45. London.

Roscher, W.H. 1893. *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Romischen Mythologie*. Suppl. 1: 96-99.

Rowe, C.J. 1978. *Essential Hesiod*. Bristol.

———. 1983. "Archaic Thought in Hesiod". *JHS* 103: 124-35.

Schachter, A. 1974. "Some Underlying Cult Patterns in Boeotia". In *First International Conference on Boiotian Antiquities*, 17-26. Montreal.

———. 1981. *Cults of Boeotia*. London.

Scully, V. 1962. *The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods*. New Haven.

Simon, E. 1983. *Festivals of Attica*. Madison, Wisconsin.

Sittig, E. 1912. *De Graecorum Nominibus Theophoris*. Halle.

Solmsen, F. 1949. *Hesiod and Aischylos*. Ithaka.

———. 1982. "The Earliest Stages in the History of Hesiod's Text". *HSCP* 86: 8-31.

Solmsen, F., Merkelback, R., and West, M.L., eds. 1983. *Hesiodi Opera*. Oxford.

Stillwell, R., ed. 1976. *The Princeton Encyclopedeia of Classical Sites*. Princeton.

Thompson, M.L. 1964. "A Pompeian Painting of a Samothracian Myth?". In *Essays in Memory of Karl Lehmann*, edited by L.F. Sandler, 329-43. New York.

Tomlinson, R.A. 1972. *Argos and the Argolid.* London.

Tusa, V. 1969. "Due nuove metope arcaiche da Selinunte". *Arch. Clas.* 21: 153-71.

Vermaseren, M.J. 1977. *Cybele and Attis*. London.

Vernant, J.P. 1980. *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*. Sussex.

———. 1983. *Myth & Thought Among the Greeks*. London.

Wade-Gery, H.T. 1949. "Hesiod". *Phoenix* 3: 81-93.

Walcot, P. 1956. "The Text of Hesiod's Theogony and the Hittite *Epic of Kumarbi*". *CQ* 50: 198-206.

———. 1958. "Hesiod's Hymns to the Muses, Aphrodite, Styx, and Hecate". *Symbolae Osloenses* 34: 5-14.

———. 1966. *Hesiod and the Near East.* Cardiff.

Warr, G.C.W. 1895. "The Hesiodic Hecate". *CR* 9: 390-92.

West, M.L. 1962. "More Notes on the Text of Hesiod". *CQ* 56: 177-81.

———, ed. 1966. *Hesiod: Theogony*. Oxford.

———. 1985a. "Hesiod's Titans". *JHS* 105: 174-75.

———. 1985b. *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*. Oxford.

———. 1990. *Aeschyli Tragoediae cum incerti poetae Prometheo*. Stuttgart.

Westlake, H.D. 1935. *Thessaly in the Fourth Century B.C.*. London.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von. 1931. *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols. Berlin.

Wuensch, R., ed. 1897. "Invocantur Numina", in *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. 3, pt. 3.4, 18-29. Berlin.

Yavis, C.G. 1949. *Greek Altars*. St. Louis.

Zeitlin, F.I. 1978. "The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth and Mythmaking in the Oresteia". *Arethusa* 11: 149-84.

———. 1982. "Cultic Models of the Female: Rites of Dionysos and Demeter". *Arethusa* 15: 129-57.

Zuntz, G. 1971. *Persephone*. Oxford.

Appendix I: Relevant literary references before c400 B.C.E.

1. Hesiod: *Theogony*

lines 411-52: the Hekate passage.

- See section I.1 (7ff.), IV.2 (95, 98).

line 956f.: Perseis (=Hekate?) is mate of Helios, mother of Kirke, and grandmother of Medeia.

- See section III.4 (72f.).

2. *Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*

fragment 23(a).25f. (Merkelbach-West): Iphimede sacrificed to Artemis and turned by Artemis into her Propolos, Artemis Enodia.

Also in Pausanias (1.43.1), but Iphigeneia turned into Hekate by Artemis.

- See sections III.2 (62), III.4 (74), IV.1 (92f.), IV.3 (102) and IV.5 (113f., 119f.).

3. *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*

lines 24f.: Hekate hears cries of Persephone from her cave.

lines 52ff.: Hekate informs Demeter

lines 438-40: Hekate becomes *propolos* and *opaon* to Persephone.

- See sections I.2 (22ff.), III.1 (58f.), III.4 (72f.), IV.2 (98), IV.3 (102) and IV.4 (103, 106).

4. Musaios

fragment 16 (Diels-Kranz): Hekate's father is Zeus (not Perses).

- See section I.1 (16).

5. Akousilaos

fragment 42 (Jacoby): Skylla daughter of Phorkus and Hekate.

- See sections I (7), IV.1 (91) and IV.5 (118).

6. Aischylos

Supplices 676: Artemis-Hekata watches over the child-bed of women.

- See sections III.2 (63) and IV.2 (97).

fragment 223 (Radt): Hekate Antaia.

- See section IV.5 (121, n. 117).

fragment 388 (Radt): Hekate before the doors of the royal halls.

- See section IV.1 (88).

7. Pindar

Paian 2.78: Hekate sends omen of victory to people of Abdera.

- See section II.8 (42).

8. Bacchylides

fragment 1B (Snell): Hekate is Torchbearer and holy Daughter of Nux.

- See section IV.4 (105f.).

9. Sophokles

*Ant.*1199: Enodia placated with respect to an unburied body.

(N.B.: this is probably Persephone rather than Hekate)

- See section IV.5 (114).

Chrys fragment 734 (Radt): Food offering to Hekate.

- See section IV.5 (112).

Rhizotomoi fragment 535 (Radt): Medeia invokes Helios and Hekate Enodia, who bears torches, resides at three-ways and is entwined with serpents.

- See sections III.4 (72), IV (86), IV.3 (102), IV.4 (105), IV.5 (111, 114, 120f.).

10. Euripides

Helen 569f.: Hekate is Phosphoros, Enodia, and sends dreams.

- See section IV.5 (114, 121f.).

Ion 1048: Einodia is daughter of Demeter.

(N.B.: this is probably Persephone rather than Hekate)

- See section IV.5 (114).

Medeia 395f.: Medeia invokes Hekate as a fellow worker of magic.

- See sections III.4 (72f.) and IV.5 (125f.).

*Phoen.*109f.: Hekate is Child of Leto.

(N.B.: this may be Artemis rather than Hekate)

- See section III.2 (63).

*Tro.*322f.: Kassandra invokes Hekate for a wedding.

- See section IV.2 (99f.).

fragment 968 (Nauck): Hekabe becomes a dog by statue of Hekate Phosphoros.

- See sections III (57, n. 3), III.3 (70) and IV.5 (117).

11. Sophron,

fragment 158 (Kaibel): Bread offerings to Hekate.

- See section IV.5 (112).

12. Aristophanes

*Eccl.*70 and 1097: "By Hekate!" as an oath.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Eccl.*1056: Empousa as a monster.

(N.B.: Empousa is sometimes identified with Hekate)

- See section IV.5 (122).

*Lys.*63: woman consults (statue of?) Hekate before a meeting.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Lys.*443, 738: "By Phosphoros!" as an oath, in reference to Hekate or Artemis.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Lys.*700ff.: woman plays a game for Hekate.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Plut.*594-97: Food offerings to Hekate devoured by people.

- See section IV.5 (113).

*Plut.*764, 1070: "By Hekate!" as an oath.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Ran.*285ff.: Empousa as a monster.

(N.B.: Empousa is sometimes identified with Hekate)

- See section IV.5 (122).

*Ran.*366: a wayside Hekataion is befouled by dancing around it.

- See section IV.1 (94).

*Ran.*1362f.: Hekate, daughter of Zeus, wields two torches.

- See section IV.4 (105).

*Thesm.*858: "By Hekate Phosphoros!" as an oath.

- See section IV.2 (100).

*Vesp.*804: Hekataia at entranceways of houses.

- See section IV.1 (88).

fragment 204 (Kock): a white puppy is carried for "the Goddess in the crossroad".

- See section IV.5 (119).

fragment 500 (Kock): Hekate Chthonia entwined with serpents, called Empousa.

- See section IV.5 (121, 122).

fragment 594 (Kock): Hekabe becomes a dog by statue of Hekate Phosphoros.

- See sections III (57, n. 3), III.3 (70) and IV.5 (117).

13. Hippokrates

27.1.92f.: Hekate attributed with sending nightmares and delirium.

- See section IV.5 (121).

14. Charikleides

fragment 1 (Kock): Three-formed Hekate at crossroads and associated with fish.

- See section IV.5 (111, 117).

15. Authorship uncertain, attributed to Aischylos

fragment 375 (Radt [Adespota]), quoted in Plutarch Moralia (166.A.5):

Hekate Chthonia sends phantasms in sleep and leads a *komos* ("procession").

- See section IV.5 (108f., 121).

VITA

Surname: Von Rudloff — Given Names: Ilmo Robert
Place of Birth: Saskatoon, Sask. — Date of Birth: March 6, 1960

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon	1977 to 1978
University of Victoria, Victoria	1978 to 1993

Degrees Awarded:

B.Sc. (Honours)	University of Victoria	1982
M.Sc.	University of Victoria	1985
B.A.	University of Victoria	1988

Honours and Awards:

N.S.E.R.C. Postgraduate Scholarship	1982/83 and 1983/84

Publications:

Hutchings, J.B. and I.R. Von Rudloff. 1980. "Ultraviolet Spectroscopy with IUE of OB Stars with Stellar Winds". *ApJ* 238: 909ff.

Hesser, J.E., R.D. McClure, T.G. Hawarden, R.D. Cannon, I.R. Von Rudloff, B. Krueger, and D. Egles. 1984. "A New Colour-Magnitude Diagram for the Peculiar Star Cluster E3 = C0921-770". *PASP* 96: 406ff.

Von Rudloff, I.R., D.A. VandenBerg, and F.D.A. Hartwick. 1988. "Thermal Instabilities in Low-Mass Subgiants". *ApJ* 324: 840ff.

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the Library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis: Hekate in Early Greek Religion

Author: 

Ilmo Robert Von Rudloff

January 8, 1993