



HESIOD

HESIOD (Gk. Hēsíodos), Greek epic poet, who lived about 700 B.C.E. and is the author of several didactic poems such as the *Theogony* “Genealogy of the gods” or its continuation, in a sense, the *Catalogue of [mortal] Women*. At least by mentioning for the first time the Scythians, Hesiod belongs to the Greek authorities for Iranian matters. This mentioning of the Scythians (*idè Skýthas hippēmólgoús* “and the mare-milking Scythians”) is found in frag. 150 M.-W., which belongs to the *Catalogue*, in a verse (v. 15), the context of which (both a list of faraway peoples and an account of their divine ancestors) is known only fragmentarily from a scrap of papyrus. It was quoted by Strabo (7.3.7) solely as evidence of the fact that already the ancient epic poets described the Scythians by this epithet. At the beginning of the following line (v. 16) also the name of their eponymous ancestor, *Skýthēs*, has been added by conjecture (“[Skýthēs] was born as son of over-mighty Zeus”), and with good reason, since only such a wording is convincing in this context (if compared with Diodorus Siculus 2.43.3). In verse 8 of the same fragment (frag. 150, 8 M.-W.) the name of the Massagetae was conjectured for the gap at the beginning of the line, but this remains uncertain. One should take into account, in any case, that the Greeks became familiar with the Scythians only after having established the first colonies at the northern coast of the Black Sea.

In the *Theogony* (v. 1001), *Médeios*, the son of Jason and Medea, is mentioned in a catalogue of children originating from the unions of goddesses with mortal men. It is absolutely impossible, however, to decide whether *Médeios* already in this passage may be understood as the eponymous first king of the



Medes, as is admittedly the case with later authors (who mostly call him *Médos*). If interpreted in this way, the passage in question must be a secondary insertion of much later times (6th cent. B.C.E.), because this problem is connected with both the chronology of the Greeks' familiarity with the Medes and the date of the change of *ā* to Ionic *ē* seen in the name of the Medes (*Médoi* from OIran. *Māda*). In consequence of this, for M. L. West, who does not see any *raison d'être* for *Médeios* other than to be the Medes' ancestor (*Hesiod: Theogony*, Oxford, 1966, pp. 429 f.), both the final part of the *Theogony* mentioning *Médeios* and the entire *Catalogue* with its reference to the Scythians reflect "a sixth-century ethnographical perspective" (*The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, Oxford, 1985, p. 154) and are not the work of Hesiod.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text; see also R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, eds., *Fragmenta Hesiodica*, Oxford, 1967.