

Hesiod's *Ate* Again

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In the most recent commentary on Hesiod's *Works and Days*, vv. 1–382 (Brill 1985), ad 216, W.J. Verdenius raises two objections to my interpretation of Hesiod's *ate*, in which I maintain that *ate* in the meaning “ruin” is not only post-Homeric, as E.R. Dodds maintains, but post-Hesiodic as well.¹

His first objection is that my interpretation overlooks a reference to *ate* meaning “ruin” in *Odyssey* 12.372. This is incorrect. In my paper I acknowledged and accepted E.R. Dodds' view of the Homeric *ate*. Dodds observes that in *Odyssey* 12.372 “Odysseus was neither guilty nor rash when he took a nap at an unfortunate moment, thus giving his companions a chance to slaughter the tabooed oxen... Odysseus knows that his nap was sent by gods εἰς ἄτην, ‘to fool him’.”² If the term in line 372 means “ruin” then it must refer to Odysseus' “ruin;” and this interpretation is not justified by the plot the text presents. Both Teiresias (11.110–37) and Circe (12.138–41) have made it clear to Odysseus that if Helios' kine are harmed on the island of Thrinakia, only his ship and his comrades will be destroyed for sure. They indicate that he himself may still be able to return home, as indeed he does. The usual terms for “ruin” that Odysseus uses in retelling his story to Alkinoos are: ὄλεθρος (10.115, 12.244, 287), πόντος (10.245), κακόν (12.107, 275), πῆμα (12.231), not ἄτη. The attribution of the meaning “ruin” to *ate* in this case is simply anachronistic.

Verdenius also objects to my interpretation of the aorist participle ἐγκύρσας in *Works and Days* 215f. as prior in time to βαρύθει, and opposes

1 “Hesiod's *ate*,” *Hermes* 101 (1983) 491–496. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 18, 38.

2 *Ibid.* p. 6.

my interpretation of *atai* in this passage as signifying temporary mental imbalance which brings about the hybristic act.

The sentence reads:

ὑβρις γάρ τε κακῆ δειλῶ βροτῶ, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρῦθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
 ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν.³

Hesiod admonishes Perses not to yield to *hybris*, since even the prosperous person finds her harmful: "once he falls into *atai*, he is weighed down by *hybris*." Verdenius' interpretation of *atai* as "ruin" incorrectly implies that *atai* is the punishment for hybristic behavior. Verdenius observes that "the action denoted by the aorist participle is often contemporaneous with that of the main verb," and refers the reader to Kühner-Gerth, I, 199, Schwyzer, II, 301, and Barrett on Euripides' *Hipp.* 289.⁴ It should be noted, however, that "often" is not the same as always.

Furthermore, the authorities Verdenius cites do not support his claim since they either demonstrate by their examples or state explicitly that the aorist participle is generally used coincidentally when the leading verb is of the same lexical aspect as the participle. Verdenius fails to address the issue of the aspect of βαρῦθει in relation to that of ἐγκύρσας. Moreover, the three authorities stipulate several qualifications as necessary for understanding an aorist participle as coincidental. Verdenius does not show that those qualifications apply to *Works and Days* 215f., or even address the issue. The fact, as I will show below, is that they do not apply.

First, Kühner-Gerth (*ibidem*), following Brugmann, emphasize that the acts referred to by the coincidental/modal aorist participle and the leading verb are usually cohesive semantically (e.g., εἶπεν ἐπευξάμενος *Il.* 6.475).⁵ Schwyzer also observes that the verbal contents of most aorist coincidental participles are the same as those of the leading verb. Since the majority of coincidental participles are semantically cohesive, and βαρῦθει and ἐγκύρσας are not cohesive semantically, it seems that the burden of proof lies with the one who claims coincidence.

Second, all but one of Schwyzer's examples are coincidental aorist participles in which the leading verb and the verb of the participle are *lexically*

3 The text followed in this discussion is *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum*, edidit F. Solmsen, *Fragmenta Selecta*, ediderunt R. Merkelbach et M.L. West (Oxford 1970).

4 W.S. Barrett, *Euripides, Hippolytos* (Oxford 1964).

5 Cf. K. Brugmann, *Griechische Grammatik* (München 1900) 492.

punctual and the leading verb is in *aorist indicative*, conditions not met in *Works and Days* 215f.⁶

Barrett, the third authority Verdenius calls to his support, states that a coincidental aorist participle can occur when the leading verb is an aorist of any mood or a future, so long as the participle and the leading verb are *of the same aspect*, which again disqualifies the case of ἐγκύρσας... βαρύθει.

In short, each of these qualifications excludes the case in *Works and Days* 215f. where the leading verb, βαρύθει, is in *present indicative* and of stative/-durative aspect, whereas the aorist participle, ἐγκύρσας, is *punctual*.

An examination of the aorist participles in *Works and Days* shows no instance of a coincidental/modal aorist participle which corresponds to the case of 215f., namely an aorist participle of a *punctual* aspect coincidental with a leading verb of stative/durative aspect in the *present indicative*. About half of the coincidental aorist participles follow the rules indicated by Kühner-Gerth, Schwyzer, and Barrett; that is to say, the leading verb and the verb of the participle are lexically *punctual*, their acts coalesce, and the leading verb is in aorist or in future: 282f., ὄμóσσας... ψεύσεται — “forswearing himself he lies”; 283, βλάψας... ἄασθῆ — “commits *ate* by hurting”; 371, γελάσας... θέσθαι — “even with your brother, smile and have a witness”; 430f., πῆξας... πελάσας προσαρήρεται — “when he arranges it fitting... and fastening”;⁷ 468, λαβών... ἴκηαι — “holding in your hand...bring down”; 580, φανεῖσα... ἐπέβησε — “dawn appearing sets many men on their road”; 729f., μήτ’ ... οὐρήσης... ἀπογυμνωθεῖς — “do not urinate... exposing your body”.

The other half of the coincidental aorist participles indicate a characteristic not yet explained or referred to explicitly in any of the grammar books:⁸ 218, παθών... ἔγνω — “learns through suffering”; 267f., ἰδών... νοήσας... ἐπιδέρεται — “The eye of Zeus when it sees and applies its νοῦς, beholds these things”;⁹ 295, εὐ εἰπόντι πίθηται — “who listens to a good advisor”; 359,

6 The exception is ὁ δὲ δακρύσας ἔπος ἠῦδα (*Il.* 10.377), which does not follow either of the requirements. On this category of the coincidental aorist see further note 8 and p. 14 below.

7 For the difficulty in viewing προσαρήρεται as a short-vowel subjunctive of the perfect, and preferring it as a subjunctive of a reduplicated aorist, see M.L. West, *Hesiod, Works & Days* (Oxford 1978) ad 431.

8 See note 6 above. Kühner-Gerth also have one example belonging to this category: ὡς εἰπών προΐει (*Il.* 1.326), but do not enlarge on the fact that the aorist participle in this case is coincidental with a present stem leading verb.

9 For the possibility of durative aspect in ἰδεῖν see, R. Freundlich-Amit, “On the double lexical aspect of the verb ἰδεῖν,” in *Studies in Honor of Haim B. Rosén on*

ἐλθται... πιθήσας — “whoever takes himself trusting shamelessness”; 432, θέσθαι... πονησάμενος — “get two ploughs working on them at home”; 439f., ἐρίσαντες... ἄξειαν — “break... quarreling”; 441f., ἔποιτο... δειπνήσας — “let follow... dining on”; 671f., πιθήσας/ἐλκόμεν — “haul... trusting”; 709f., ἄρχη... εἰπών... ἔρξας... — “being first... in a say... or deed”; 738, εὔξη ἰδών... νισάμενος — “till you pray looking... washing”. From the above instances, one may learn that when the verb in an aorist participle is lexically durative, that is to say, depicts a continuous or linear act, the participle can serve in a modal capacity regardless of the mode, tense or lexical aspect of the leading verb. The aorist of the durative verb of the participle is complexive in such cases; that is, it does not imply a beginning or an end, and its function is thus to indicate an action without specifying when it occurs.¹⁰ In *Works and Days* 216, however, ἐγκύρσας is punctual, not durative, and thus does not belong to this category either.

It is noteworthy that the remaining aorist participles in *Works and Days* are in fact subordinated to a *present stem leading verb*, as is the case at 215f., and the acts described by them are *prior* to those of the leading verb. In these instances the leading verb has a durative/ stative lexical aspect and the verb of the participle is punctual, as is the case in *Works and Days* 215f.: 42, κρύψαντες... ἔχουσι — “they have hidden it and [try to] keep it”, (see Verdenius, ad loc.); 55, χαίρεις ... κλέσας... ἠπεροπέυσας — “you are glad that you have stolen fire and outwitted me”; 198f., καλυψαμένω... ἴτον προλιπόντ’ — “wrapped in white robes they will go having forsaken”;¹¹ 217f., ἴσχει ... ἐξελθοῦσα; cf. Verdenius on ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα — “when it comes to fulfillment”, i.e., justice prevails over hybris after coming to fulfillment; 222f., ἔπεται... ἔσσαμένη — “clothed in mist follows”; 254f., φυλάσσουσίν... ἔσσάμενοι — “clothed in mist... keep watch”; 266, [τεύχει]... βουλεύσαντι — “and evil planned [is (cf. the tense of τεύχει, 265)] worse to the plotter”; 316, τρέψας μελετᾶς — “if you turn your misguided mind away from other men’s property to your work and attend to your livelihood”; 420 πέλεται

the occasion of his Sixty fifth birthday [Tel Aviv 1987, 4–6] (in Hebrew). Cf. *II*. 1. 587, 11.243. See also B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA, 1953), 13, who by ascribing the meaning of “thinking” to νόος strongly implies that νοεῖν can have a durative capacity.

10 Cf. Brugmann, (see note 5 above) 492. The idea was suggested to me by my teacher, friend and colleague, Professor Raphael Freundlich-Amit, who is studying the coincidental aorist participle.

11 Εἶμι can also have a future meaning (cf. Goodwin 1257).

τμηθεῖσα — “then, when it showers its leaves to the ground and stops sprouting, the wood which was cut with the iron is least liable to worm”; 522f., λοεσσαμένη ... χρισαμένη... καταλέξεται — “... who washes her body and anoints herself with oil and lies down”;¹² 550–2, ἀρυσσάμενος... ἀρθείς... ὕει — “and [after] it (the mist) is drawn from the ever flowing rivers and is raised high above the earth by wind-storm and sometimes it rains towards evening...”; 566f., προλιπών... ἐπιτέλλεται — “then the star Arcturus leaves the holy stream of Ocean and first is rising all bright at dusk”; 570, φθάμενος... περιταμνέμεν — “prune the vines [after] having anticipated the swallow’s coming”; 594–6, τρέψαντα... προχέειν — “turn my face... and pour”; 646f., τρέψας... βούληται — “turning... have chosen”; 695–7, ἄγεσθαι... ἐπιθείς — “bring home a bride when you are ripe, while you are not far short of thirty years, now having added many;” 735f., μηδ’ ... ἀπονοστήσαντα/σπερμαίνειν — “do not beget children... after returning from”; 755f., μηδ’ ... κυρήσας/ μωμεύειν — “if you should come upon... do not mock”; 800f., ἄγεσθ’ ... κρίνας — “bring home a bride after having chosen...”.

Verdenius concludes his two objections to my interpretation of *atai* in *Works and Days* 216 with the words: “the obvious meaning is ‘he is weighed down by her when he meets with disaster’.” This is a reading that he nowhere supports. Moreover, even this translation of the aorist participle as “when” implies some kind of sequence. It is certainly clear that meeting with *ate* is a necessary and prior condition to being “weighed down,” even if the two events overlap in time.

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12 For καταλέξεται see West (note 7 above) ad loc.