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Plato's two Hesiods

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INTRODUCTION

Friedrich Solmsen's path-breaking study of Hesiod's influence on Plato focused on 'motifs' common to the two authors. Concerned to bring out the 'threads of continuity' in their ethical thought, Solmsen explicitly set aside the evidence of quotation, explaining that '[b]y and large, Plato is moving on a level of thought on which direct contact with the Hesiodic legacy could serve little purpose' (Solmsen 1962: 179). There is no doubt that Plato found Hesiod 'good to think with' in a general way, but the evidence of his quotations of the poet is surely worth looking at as well. The present study is one of several in this volume to take up this material, which heretofore has been studied principally for text-critical reasons (Howes 1895). My concern will be to understand a simple pattern in the evidence: of the fifteen occasions on which Plato quotes specific Hesiodic lines or phrases (as against 146 quotations from Homer), fourteen come from the *Works and Days*; the *Theogony* is quoted once, though specific genealogies are referred to on a few other occasions.¹ Whether a disproportion of this sort in such a small

¹ Brandwood (1976), 996–1001; Howes (1895), 161–74; cf. Most's list of passages, pp. 000–000 above. I am not counting three doubtfully Platonic texts: *Minos* 320d (*Catalogue of Women*: 144 MW), *Demodocus* 383c (338 MW; cf. 293 Most), and *Epistle* 11, 395a (324 MW; cf. 223 Rzach). All are accepted by Schwartz (1960), 580–82.

sample is significant may be doubted, but it is no idiosyncrasy of Plato's: Aristotle takes fourteen of his seventeen Hesiodic quotations from the *Works and Days*; in addition, his three quotations from the *Theogony* all come from the same passage (*Theogony* 116–20), which is the very one quoted in Plato.² Explanations of the phenomenon are readily imaginable: the *Works and Days* is inherently a more 'quotable' work, replete as it is with aphorisms and precepts; Plato and Aristotle are more likely to quote it because they write more often about ethical and social issues than mythology or theology. But a closer look at these passages will suggest that the disparity is not fortuitous but reflects the fact that the two principal Hesiodic works occupied different niches and played different roles in the cultural life of late classical Athens. What follows is an attempt to delineate these two Hesiods and to explain their presence in Plato.

It must be conceded at once that, in themselves, verbatim quotations can tell at best only a part of the story of *Hésiode et son influence* (to quote the title of the volume in which Solmsen's essay appeared). Yet quotations provide literary history with precious evidence for how the poet's actual words were recalled and interpreted. The detail they add will require us to nuance claims for Hesiod's authority in the 4th century, and should make us pause before attributing to classical Greece certain hermeneutical approaches to Hesiod we take for granted. Modern literary and philosophical studies of Hesiod, whether they regard him as an historical person or as the name of a tradition, usually define his *oeuvre* as consisting of the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony* (to which some would add the *Catalogue of Women* either as a continuation or sequel);³ moreover, these core works are treated as mutually explicative, as in Jenny Strauss Clay's recent *Hesiod's Cosmos* (J. S. Clay 2003), which describes them as 'parts of an organic whole, a diptych, as it were in which each component illuminates the other'.⁴ It might seem legitimate to

² Bonitz (1870), s.v. *Ἡσίοδος*; cf. Howes (1895), 168–72. Hesiodic quotations by Xenophon, Isocrates, and the orators (see Graziosi, this volume, Ch. 6) also come from the *Works and Days*, but are too infrequent to be statistically significant.

³ On the relation of *Catalogue* to *Theogony* see West (1985), 124–7; Hamilton (1989), 96–9; R. L. Hunter (2005).

⁴ J. S. Clay (2003), 6. In J. S. Clay (2005) she acknowledges the *Catalogue* as a 'supplement' to the diptych.

attribute the same hermeneutic stance to Plato, since the evidence of quotation shows that he 'apparently is the earliest author who cites from Hesiod exclusively in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*'.⁵ Yet a closer look at these passages indicates that the texts had little to do with each other in practice, and comparing the evidence of Plato's contemporaries suggests we should recognize two distinct Hesiods in the 4th century BC, each with his own place in the culture and his own kind of authority. Putting the two beside each other will give us a fuller and more realistic picture of Plato's encounter with Hesiod, not as a timeless conversation between Olympians but as part of the processes by which the meaning of an old corpus of poetry was shaped and circumscribed by the social institutions that preserved it. My study will analyze the quotations of *Theogony* 116–20 and then give an overview of uses of the *Works and Days*; but I begin by reviewing two well-known 5th-century testimonia to show that it was possible to cite Hesiod as the author of one poem without the other being in view.

THE POET OF THE *THEOGONY* AND THE POET OF THE *WORKS AND DAYS*

Herodotus pairs Hesiod with Homer as proof that the Greeks acquired their picture of the gods relatively recently: 'Hesiod and Homer are in my estimation no more than 400 years earlier than I. And they are the ones who made a genealogy of gods for the Greeks, attributing names to the gods, distributing their honours and spheres of activity and indicating their forms. The poets alleged to be earlier than these were, in my view, born later' (2.53).

⁵ Most (2006), 243. The hexameter quoted at *Republic* 390e, which is ascribed to Hesiod by the Suda (fr. dub. 361 MW = 272 Rzach), complicates the question, as does the reference to Hesiod as the author of astronomical poetry in *Epinomis* 990a (p. 148 MW = T 72 Most). I note that I do not include cross-references to the valuable editions of Rzach and Most except when they provide differences of emphasis or interpretation worth considering.

Two points in this famous passage are worth underscoring. First, it is as the poet of the *Theogony* that Hesiod is in view. We will see that this is usually the case when Hesiod and Homer make a pair.⁶ Some would go on and infer from the fact that Herodotus names Hesiod before Homer (twice in 2.53) that he thought him chronologically earlier. The ancient debate over their relative dates had possibly already begun (cf. Xenophanes 21 B13 DK), but Herodotus' main point here is to make other religious poetry, notably that of Orpheus and Musaeus, whose earliness had been accepted by Hellanicus, postdate Homer and Hesiod.⁷ A more likely reason why Herodotus puts Hesiod before Homer is that he is thinking of their works in terms of what Walter Ong called a 'topical poetic', a Greek way of organizing long hexameter poems from the archaic age according to how the stories they told lined up along a continuous 'path' (οἴμη) of narrative (Ford 1992: 40–48). In this perspective—which was widespread, traditional, and useful in the absence of indisputable evidence about authors and dates—Hesiod's narrative poetry tended to get detached from the gnomic *Works and Days* and to be located next to the epic cycle on the path of songs about early history. The poet of the *Theogony* naturally claimed precedence over Homer since he recounted the ultimate antecedents and (in the *Catalogue*) the ancestors of the heroes who fought at Troy. The need to bracket Hesiod's best known other work offered no difficulty to this view, since in Greek terms the non-narrative, hortatory *Works and Days* was a fundamentally different kind of song (Ford 1997: 409–11).

The second point worth underscoring in this passage is that Hesiod's authority is far from absolute. Herodotus takes the poets as early and influential sources of Greek ideas about the gods, but keeps his distance from endorsing their theogony.⁸ His only other explicit reference to Hesiod is a remark in the Scythian ethnography

⁶ So, I believe, already in Xenophanes 21 B11 DK rephrasing 'Homer and Hesiod' for attributing 'thieving, adultery and deceiving each other' to the gods; cf. 21 B12.2 DK with Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 1.289.

⁷ Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F5a, 5b (= 5a, 5b Fowler).

⁸ Burkert (1990), 26. Herodotus' attitude toward Hesiod (and Homer) is well epitomized by Veyne (1988), 33: 'as the investigator cross-checks information he imposes the need for coherence on reality. Mythical time can no longer remain secretly different from our own temporality. It is nothing more than the past.'

that 'the Hyperboreans are mentioned by Hesiod, and by Homer too in the *Epigonoï*—if Homer in fact is the author of that poem' (4.32; cf. Schwartz 1960: 575). On the common but risky assumption that Herodotus' reference is to be tied to a specific passage in the Hesiod we possess, the only candidate is a brief mention of the Hyperboreans in the *Catalogue of Women* (150.21 MW; cf. 209 Rzach); if so, the sentence implies that Herodotus regarded the *Catalogue* as Hesiodic poetry (whether he saw it as separate from the *Theogony* we cannot tell). The 'Hesiod' in which Herodotus is interested, then, is an early poet whose poems may be consulted for information about early beliefs and peoples. He gives no sign of being interested in the *Works and Days*.⁹

The poet of the *Works and Days* appears in a different kind of list from Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1030–36). 'Aeschylus' there defends the social utility of poetry by showing 'how the most excellent among poets have been of service' (1031: *ὡς ἀφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγένηται*): civilization is indebted to Orpheus for mysteries and taboos on killing; Musaeus revealed healing rites and prophetic arts; Hesiod follows as the one who taught 'working the earth and the seasons for harvesting and ploughing' (1033–4: *Ἡσίοδος δὲ | γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους*); last comes 'god-like' Homer, whose honour and fame derive from his teaching 'marshalling troops, courageous acts, and the arming of men' (1036). Hesiod is represented by the *Works and Days* and Homer by the *Iliad* for contrast, and to mark steps in Aeschylus' evolutionary scheme. These interpretative reductions fit the logic of the speech, which is a parody of sophistic disquisitions on progress in the arts. Many in Aristophanes' audience may have thought this list reflected actual chronology—the view Herodotus argued against—but the main function of its implicit topical poetic is to organize notable early hexameter corpora into an intelligible hierarchy: the *Works and Days* is located after poetry dealing with the most basic requisites for

⁹ The fact that the last line of the oracle quoted at 6.86γ52 ('an oath-abiding man's race is better in aftertimes') happens to be the same as *Works and Days* 285 is no proof of Herodotus' knowledge of the latter. Herodotus' quotations of non-Homeric poetry tend to lyric: Alcaeus (5.95.2), Sappho (2.135.6), Simonides (5.102.5, etc.), and a little disquisition on the wisdom of a Pindaric tag (3.38).

human society but before the *Iliad*, because war depends on the wealth and social grouping that agriculture makes possible. The same basic outlook can be seen in the sophist Hippias who wrote a discourse which collected excerpts from, as he lists them, Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer, along with other poets prose writers (86 B6 DK, see below).

THE POET OF THE *THEOGONY*

One might have expected that Plato would be closely engaged with the poet he paired with Homer as the leading purveyors of harmful stories to the Greeks (*Republic* 377d), yet references to Hesiod in the *Republic*'s notorious censoring of poetry are brief and vague. Socrates begins with 'the greatest lie' about the greatest matters, 'what Ouranos wrought, and how Kronos punished him and the deeds and sufferings of Kronos at the hands of his son' (377e). Thereafter Hesiod drops from sight, for Plato is proceeding topically: when Socrates turns from the succession myth to stories of gods struggling against each other (378b–d), he turns to Homer and other sources for examples.¹⁰ The vagueness with which the *Theogony* is paraphrased is probably a sign of Socrates' piety, reflecting his conviction that such stories are harmful for the young even to hear; other speakers in and out of Plato do not scruple, in referring to these tales, to use the contemporary medical language of 'castration' where Hesiod speaks metaphorically of 'reaping' (ἡμῆσε: 181) or generally of 'cutting off' (ἀποτμήξαις: *Theogony* 188).¹¹

When Socrates says that such stories are not redeemed by finding 'under-meanings' in them (ἐν ὑπονοίαις: 378d), we may infer that allegorical defences of divine violence in the *Theogony* were circulating at the time, as they were for Homer's theomachy and the Orphic cosmogony in the Derveni papyrus. Support comes from *Euthyphro*:

¹⁰ Commenting on the same theme in Isocrates' *Busiris* 35–7, Livingstone (2001), 171–6 also provides valuable notes on Plato's ostensible references.

¹¹ Agathon at *Symposium* 195c (ἐκτομαί); Isocrates, *Busiris* 38 (πατέρων ἐκτομάς), noted by Livingstone (2001), 175. So too Euthyphro (ἐκτεμεῖν) in *Euthyphro* 6b.

its title character, an expert in matters divine, has contempt for 'people' (οἱ ἄνθρωποι) who criticize him for indicting his father and yet believe that great Zeus bound his father, who in turn 'gulped down' his children (*Euthyphro* 6b). Euthyphro objects not only to the inconsistency of people's views but to their literal understanding of the *Theogony*.¹² Often taken as a sort of Orphic, Euthyphro boasts an esoteric knowledge of 'divine matters' (3e; cf. *Cratylus* 396d) and offers to tell Socrates 'things yet more marvellous, which the many do not know' (6b: θαυμασιώτερα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἃ οἱ πολλοὶ οὐκ ἴσασιν).

The passage from the *Theogony* that seems to have drawn the most attention in Plato's time was the beginning of its story, the account of the rise of Chaos and the primordial elements (see the *apparatus criticus* at Rzach 1902: 21–5). Hesiod's version was drawn upon, along with theogonies like the Derveni's (Betegh 2004: 153–69), to concoct the 'correct' theogony preached in the parabasis of Aristophanes' *Birds* (esp. 691–4). Hesiod's opening lines in particular were often quoted, but always selectively, so it may be helpful to set out the text:

ἦτοι μὲν πρόπιστα Χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα	116
Γαί' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ	117
ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου,	118
Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης	119
ἣδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.	120

Now it was Chaos that arose at the very first, and thereupon broad-chested Earth, steadfast eternal seat of all the immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus, and misty Tartarus in a recess of the wide-wayed land and Eros, who is the fairest among the immortal gods.

Plato's *Phaedrus* quotes from this passage in the *Symposium* as part of his praise of Eros.¹³ Editors have rearranged the text, but we have a better chance of following *Phaedrus*' logic by staying with the paradosis:

¹² Euthyphro's 'gulped down' (κατέπιπεν) suggests he is thinking of Hesiod's version in particular (*Theogony* 459, 467, 473, 497).

¹³ See also the discussion of Kenaan, this volume, Ch. 8.

γονῆς γὰρ Ἔρωτος οὐτ' εἰσὶν οὐτε λέγονται ὑπ' οὐδενὸς οὐτε ἰδιώτου οὐτε ποιητοῦ, ἀλλ' Ἡσίοδος πρῶτον μὲν Χάος φησὶ γενέσθαι —

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα [116]

Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, [117]

ἣδ' Ἔρος [120]

φησὶ <δη> μετὰ τὸ Χάος δύο τούτω γενέσθαι, Γῆν τε καὶ Ἔρωτα. Παρμενίδης δὲ τὴν γένεσιν λέγει —

πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων.

Ἡσιόδῳ δὲ καὶ Ἀκουσίλειως ὁμολογεῖ. οὕτω πολλαχόθεν ὁμολογεῖται ὁ Ἔρος ἐν τοῖς πρεσβύτατος εἶναι.¹⁴

For Eros has no begetters, nor are any recorded by laymen or poets; Hesiod rather says that Chaos was the first to arise—

‘and straight upon

broad-breasted Earth, seat of all, unmoving always,

and Eros.’

And so he says that after Chaos these two arose, Earth and Eros. But Parmenides recounts his origin:

‘[she] contrived Eros as first of all the gods.’

But Acusilaus agrees with Hesiod. And so it is agreed on all sides that Eros is among the oldest of gods.

Phaedrus quotes selectively, but his omissions are not designed to fudge the evidence. He perhaps leaves out verse 118 because its proleptic description of Earth as ‘the seat of the immortals’ might obscure the earliness of Eros. Similarly, Tartarus at 119 might seem to interpose another divinity between Chaos and Eros (as the verse did for Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander* 343C and Pausanias 9.27.2); it could be fairly passed over if Tartarus were regarded as only a part of Earth (*pace Theogony* 729–819: see West 1966: 192). Phaedrus quotes enough Hesiod to show that no parents are mentioned when Eros ‘arises’ in verse 120, and that, no matter what source you follow, Eros comes early in the cosmos.

¹⁴ *Symposium* 178b–c. *Pace* Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1920), ii, 341, and Dover (1980), 90–91, I agree with R. L. Fowler (2000), 5 that it is unnecessary to transpose φησὶ μετὰ . . . Ἔρωτα to follow Ἡσιόδῳ . . . ὁμολογεῖ. (The change seems ruled out by Fowler’s reconstruction of Acusilaus’ genesis: Chaos–Erebus–Night–Aether–Eros–Metis.)

Phaedrus can be called an over-reader, as interested in what can be inferred from what Hesiod says as in what Hesiod says. A lack in the text, Hesiod's non-mention of anthropomorphized antecedents to Eros, counts as much for proof as his explicit testimony. Such authority as Hesiod may have is not sufficient to override Parmenides (28 B13 DK), for Phaedrus leaves open the question of whether Eros is the first or is among the first gods. He brings in Acusilaus (*FGrHist* 2 F6a = 6a Fowler), not to settle the matter but as a prose source. One may further suggest that Acusilaus is cited in part to make a trio of witnesses, a rhetorical gesture in which a number of 4th-century references to Hesiod appear. Triads are of course inherently shapely in Greek, but they also carry a certain logical force: one witness proves only that a poet held the view in question; two may be a case of common error; a debater cultivated enough to muster three witnesses—and so much the better if one can find poets in agreement with prose writers—can then conclude with Phaedrus, 'on all sides it is agreed...' Adeimantus' challenge to Socrates in the *Republic* to recommend justice for its own sake is a similar rhetorical performance, arguing that fathers teach their children the opposite view when they recommend justice by citing 'noble Hesiod and Homer' (*γενναῖος Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ Ὅμηρος*: *Republic* 363a) for the idea that prosperity is the gods' gift to just kings (*Works and Days* 233–4; *Odyssey* 19.109, 111–13), and capping them with Musaeus' promise that virtuous people will enjoy an everlasting symposium in the afterlife (363bc). The texts suggest both that Hesiod was still a name to conjure with in the 4th century BC, and that claims for his wisdom by Plato and his contemporaries may be rhetorical or hyperbolic.

This sole passage from the *Theogony* quoted by Plato is also found, as noted, three times in Aristotle, and in a pseudo-Aristotelian work as well. Closest to the *Symposium* is *Metaphysics* 1.4 where Aristotle is considering whether Anaxagoras was the first to look beyond material causes and seek a cause of motion and order. Among possible predecessors is Hesiod (984b.23–31; cf. T 117(c)ii Most):

ὑποπτέουσαι δ' ἂν τις Ἡσίωδον πρῶτον ζητῆσαι τὸ τοιοῦτος, κἄν εἴ τις ἄλλος
ἔρωτα ἢ ἐπιθυμίαν ἐν τοῖς οὐσίω ἐθηκεν ὡς ἀρχήν, οἶον καὶ Παρμενίδης· καὶ
γὰρ οὐτος κατασκευάζων τὴν τοῦ παντὸς γένεσιν

‘πρώτιστον μὲν’ φησιν ‘ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων’,

Ἡσίωδος δὲ

‘πάντων μὲν πρώτιστα χάος γέενετ’, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα [116]

γαί’ εὐρύστερνος . . . [117]

ἢδ’ ἔρος, ὃς πάντεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν, [120]

ὡς δέον ἐν τοῖς οὐσίω ὑπάρχειν τιν’ αἰτίαν ἣτις κινήσει καὶ συνάξει τὰ
πράγματα.

One might suppose that Hesiod was the first to inquire into such a cause, along with anyone who like Parmenides made love [*eros*] or desire a first principle in things: for Parmenides too in his rendition of the origin of the universe says,

‘first of all the gods (s)he contrived Eros,’

and Hesiod says,

‘Of all things now first of all Chaos arose, and thereupon

broad-breasted Earth, seat of all, unmoving always,

and Eros’

as though there must be some cause in things which moves them and brings them together.

The fact that Aristotle combines the same passage from the *Theogony* with the same verse from Parmenides may suggest that he is quoting the *Symposium*. But slight differences indicate that if Aristotle was reading Plato he was also reading (or remembering) Hesiod. Whereas Phaedrus paraphrased the first two thirds of 116, Aristotle quotes the verse entire. In his version of the line (which is also quoted at *Physics* 208^b27–32), the asseverative particle ἦτοι is omitted, converting didactic precept into self-contained proposition; replacing it with πάντων makes it clearer that Hesiod is talking about the same thing as the philosopher, the ultimate origin of cosmic motion (984b22: ὅθεν ἢ κίνησις ὑπάρχει τοῖς οὐσίω). (It is to show that the line from Parmenides is on the same point that Aristotle glosses it as an account of ‘the origin of the universe’.) As to verse 117, quoted in whole by Phaedrus, Aristotle stops after the name and epithet of Earth have been given: this omits any distracting mention of ‘all’ in 117b, which also would have been otiose after his ‘all’ beginning 116. Like Phaedrus, Aristotle takes no account of 118–19, jumping to 120;

but he quotes this line entire, in a variant form stressing the pre-eminence of Eros rather than his beauty (Howes 1895, 173). It may be that this boiled-down understanding of *Theogony* 116–20 was standard in the Academy and the Lyceum: a similar citation of *Theogony* 116, 117, and Aristotle's version of 120 is found in the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* applied to the question of whether something can come from nothing (see 975^a9–14; cf. Melissus 30 A5 DK); *Physics* 4.1, 208^b29–35, quotes 116–17a to ask if Chaos ('chasm') precedes Earth as an intimation of the doctrine that space is the precondition for 'bodies'.

Complicating the triangular relation between Aristotle, Hesiod, and Plato is the likelihood of a further source to which both philosophers respond. The evidence is at *Cratylus* 402b where Socrates is trying out the idea that the original maker of the gods' names held a Heraclitean view of the universe. Etymologies of Rhea as 'flow' (ῥέω) and Kronos as 'spring' (κροονός) suggest as much, as do a trio of cosmogonic passages in old poetry:

Just as Homer speaks of

'Okeanos, the origin of gods, and mother Tethys,'

I think Hesiod does so as well (οἶμαι δὲ καὶ Ἡσιόδος); and Orpheus somewhere says:

'fair-streamed Okeanos was the first to marry

and espoused Tethys, his sister by the same mother.'

The Homeric proof-text is from the *Iliad* (14.201 = 302: Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσίν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν), with Tethys etymologized to mean pure water (402cd). The curiously non-committal mention of Hesiod makes it hard to specify the reference, but *Theogony* 337 is usually adduced: 'and Tethys bore to Okeanos the whirling rivers' (Τηθὺς δ' Ὠκεανῷ ποταμοὺς τέκε δινήεντας).¹⁵ Though that line's fluidity is suitably Heraclitean, nothing in it suggests that the watery union is primordial (Okeanos is child of Earth and Sky). This may be why Aristotle appealed to a different Hesiodic context when he treated the same topic in a slightly earlier part of the *Metaphysics*. Considering possible antecedents to Thales' 'watery' first principle, Aristotle cites

¹⁵ E.g. Orpheus 1 B2 DK with note; Howes (1895), 167–8.

'some people' who held that a similar view of nature is found among those who 'made the first accounts of the gods' (πρώτους θεολογήσαντας) in ancient times: 'they made Okeanos and Tethys the parents of creation (τῆς γενέσεως πατέρας), and they described the oath of the gods as being by water, to which they give the name of Styx' (*Metaphysics* 983^b28–32 = T 117(c)i Most). Aristotle drops the evidence of Orpheus, but refers to the same passage from Homer;¹⁶ the passage from Hesiod to which Socrates evasively referred is identified as the gods' swearing by Styx (*Theogony* 775–806), a text Aristotle makes cosmically significant by the specious argument that 'what is oldest is most venerable, and what is most venerable is oath' (τιμιώτατον μὲν γὰρ τὸ πρεσβύτατον, ὄρκος δὲ τὸ τιμιώτατόν ἐστιν). Whether this citation is due to 'some people' or is Aristotle's improvement on a reference to Okeanos and Tethys at *Theogony* 337 we cannot tell, for he closes the question as admitting no answer.

In an important analysis of the doxography on Thales, Bruno Snell (1944, 178–80) argued that both the Platonic and Aristotelian passages made use of Hippias' anthology, which had connected tags from Homer, Hesiod, and Orpheus with Thales' naming of water as the primordial element. Snell's powerful argument certainly chimes well with Hippias' description of that work (86 B6 DK):

Of these things, some perhaps have been said by Orpheus and others by Musaeus, briefly, by this poet here and that poet there, some by Hesiod and some by Homer and by many other poets, and by prose writers, Greek as well as foreign. From all these, my novel and genre-crossing discourse will put together the parts that are most important and suited to each other.¹⁷

Aristotle would thus have taken the Homer–Thales connection from Hippias, along with his reference to Hesiod (or perhaps substituted his own as better); Plato in *Cratylus* downplayed the Hesiod (perhaps

¹⁶ Pace Most (2006), 247, who suggests that Aristotle is thinking less about the *Iliad* than about the offspring of Okeanos and Tethys catalogued at *Theogony* 337–70; but the progeny of Hesiod's Okeanos and Tethys are confined to rivers and springs, whereas θεῶν γένεσιν at *Iliad* 14. 401 is closer to Aristotle's gloss, 'parents of generation' (τῆς γενέσεως πατέρας).

¹⁷ I take as genuine the final sentence of 86 B6 DK: ἐγὼ δὲ ἐκ πάντων τούτων τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα συνθεῖς τούτων καινὸν καὶ πολυειδῆ τὸν λόγον ποιήσομαι. For the significance of Hippias for Plato's relationship with Hesiod see also Koning, in this volume, Ch. 5.

euphemistically avoiding mention of Styx), but preserved Orpheus (15 Kern = 1 B2 DK = 22 Bernabé), all the while transferring the context from Thaletan hydrogony to the flux of his *bête noire* Heraclitus.

Few though they are, these quotations suggest two preliminary observations about the use of the *Theogony* in the 4th century BC. In considering Hesiod's influence on Plato we should not imagine them as two talking heads raising their voices above history and addressing each other directly. Readers like Plato doubtless read and re-read all of Hesiod (possibly more than all), but Hippias' was one of many works—others lie behind the parodic theogony in *Birds*—that mediated the *Theogony* for contemporaries, focusing on particular passages and suggesting contexts within which to interpret them. Aristotle's engagement with the poet was shaped by these and by Plato as well.

A second point to note is that, for all their nods to poets as wise men, thinkers of the Academy seem to have been interested in Hesiod's antiquity as much as his authority. Phaedrus, of course, is less a philosopher than an after-dinner speaker manipulating putative authorities to exalt his object of praise. His use of Hesiod is confuted later in the *Symposium* by Agathon, on the not altogether serious grounds that if Eros arose before the other gods, 'there would have been no castrations and bindings and other such violence among them' (195c). Aristotle shows the poem being used in a lecture hall: he is willing to consider possible philosophical implications of its cosmogony, but always in the optative mood: one 'might suppose' Hesiod discovered motive causes (*Metaphysics* 1.4, 984^b23–4); he 'might seem to have spoken correctly' in putting Chaos (i.e. space) first (*Physics* 208^b27–8); the idea that ancient poets preserve ancient truth is attributed to 'some people' (*Metaphysics* 1.3, 983^b27–30).¹⁸

To be sure, the idea that the ancients were wise—even uncannily so—was widely proclaimed in the culture, and Plato elsewhere shows Socrates extracting from the *Theogony* theses he thinks worth defend-

¹⁸ [Aristotle] in *On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias* is less reserved, citing Hesiod as 'not just anyone but one of those esteemed for wisdom' (975^a6–7: οὐχ ὅτι οἱ τυγχάνοντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν δοξάντων εἶναι σοφῶν).

ing in philosophical discussion. But Plato never presents Hesiod's word as adequate warrant for adopting a belief. So Socrates praises the unnamed genealogist—i.e. Hesiod in *Theogony* 266, 780—who made Iris the daughter of Thaumas, but this wisdom stems less from the poet's insight than from Plato's own ingenuity in discovering 'speech' (ἔρω) in Iris and 'wonder' (θαυμάζω: *Theaetetus* 155d) in Thaumas. When in *Cratylus* 406c Socrates agrees to accept Hesiod's derivation of Aphrodite's name from her being born from foam (*Theogony* 197–8) this is a 'playful' (παιδικῶς) etymology (and one for which Aristotle preferred a naturalistic explanation, based on the fact that semen is foamy: *On the Generation of Animals* 736^a18–21). Though the etymologies of *Cratylus* have in recent years been acknowledged as philosophically suggestive, Plato insists and never retreats from the position that we know nothing about divine names and can at best play with the names men have given (*Cratylus* 400d–401a). David Sedley observes that in the end etymology for Plato was 'not a dependable route to the truth',¹⁹ and the same can be said for reading the *Theogony*. Plato's playfulness toward that text is established early in the discussion when Socrates etymologizes Zeus, Kronos, and Ouranos but declines to go further back into 'Hesiod's genealogy', claiming he cannot remember the earlier part (ἐμνησθήμην: 396c). The suggestion is that we have to rely on our own memory and powers, not *Μνημοσύνη's* daughters the Muses, however well hymned they are in *Theogony* 1–116.

THE POET OF THE *WORKS AND DAYS*

The poet of the *Works and Days* is not only quoted far more frequently in 4th-century prose, he is also, unlike the poet of the *Theogony*, attested as taught in schools. In a rare description of the classical elementary curriculum, Plato's Protagoras observes that letter-teachers 'set before their students on their benches works of good poets and compel them to learn them by heart, in which

¹⁹ Sedley (2003), 34; cf. 30–34 on the 'anthropological basis' in Plato's day for taking poetic testimony seriously.

there are many admonitions and detailed narratives, panegyrics and eulogies of the good men of the past' (*Protagoras* 325e–326a: *παραιθέασιν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν βάρθρων ἀναγιγνώσκειν ποιητῶν ἀγαθῶν ποιήματα καὶ ἐκμανθάνειν ἀναγκάζουσιν, ἐν οἷς πολλὰ μὲν νοουθηθεῖσαι ἔναισιν πολλὰ δὲ διέξοδοι καὶ ἐπαινοὶ καὶ ἐγκώμια παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν*). Assuming that Hesiod was already standard school reading (as he was later: Cribiore 2001: 197–8), the only term here that can apply to Hesiodic rather than epic poetry is 'admonitions', suggesting that it was his gnomic verse that featured in school texts. Support can be found on a *kyathos* from the beginning of the 5th century, one of our earliest representations of Greek book rolls: there a youth sits holding an open papyrus roll while two youths with walking sticks stand on either side of him listening; on top of a box in front of the reading youth is another volume inscribed 'Chironia'.²⁰ The boy is clearly equipped to read didactic poetry like the Hesiodic *Precepts of Chiron* (fr. 283–5 MW), very possibly that work itself: the pedagogic suitability of Hesiod's *Precepts* was reinforced by its 'plot', which consisted of a series of precepts from the noble centaur to young Achilles.

Further support comes from a protreptic passage in Isocrates' *To Nicocles* (42–4) which additionally gives an insight into popular attitudes toward Hesiod's gnomic poetry:

Everyone believes that texts that offer advice, whether in poetry or prose, are very useful, but by no means do people listen to them with pleasure; their attitude toward them is rather the one they take toward people who rebuke them. For they also praise these people, but prefer to associate with fellow sinners and not those who would correct them. An example would be the poetry of Hesiod, Theognis, and Phocylides. For people say that they are excellent advisors about human life, but while they say these things they prefer to pass their time with the inanities of others and not their precepts. Moreover, if one should pick out from the top-ranked poets the so-called maxims, on which they have lavished such effort, people would be similarly disposed toward these—for they would listen with more pleasure to the cheapest comedy than to things so artistically composed.

²⁰ ARV² 329.134, on which see Beazley (1948), 337; on Chiron-literature, Kurke (1990), 192.

Hesiod is here ranked with other authors of maxims and 'advice about life'. People apparently are willing to pay lip-service to the worthiness of such texts, but few care to spend more time with them than they are obliged to. Homer's narratives do not fall into this class, even if, as Isocrates suggests, Homer was among the 'top-ranked poets' from which 'so-called maxims' could also be culled (εἴ τις ἐκλέξειε τῶν προεχόντων ποιητῶν τὰς καλουμένας γνώμας).²¹ But the occasional nugget of anthologizable wisdom was hardly typical of epic, and Isocrates goes on to group Homer with the tragedians as a dramatic poet who pleases audiences by the vivid presentation of myth, undiluted by admonition and advice (*To Nicocles* 48–9).

The typical schoolbook, then, was more likely to contain extracts from Hesiod's gnomic poetry than his *Theogony*. Such 'treasuries that wise men of old wrote and left behind in books' were likely to be what Xenophon's Socrates used to 'unroll with friends and go through, picking out whatever strikes us as good' (ἀνελίττων κοινῇ σὺν τοῖς φίλοις διέρχομαι, καὶ ἂν τι ὀρώμεν ἀγαθὸν ἐκλεγόμεθα: *Memorabilia* 1.6.14). We find Socrates interpreting an extract from the *Works and Days* for his students in Polycrates' *Accusation of Socrates*, which charged that he corrupted them by 'extracting from the most esteemed poets their most corrupt passages' (τῶν ἐνδοξοτάτων ποιητῶν ἐκλεγόμενον τὰ πονηρότατα) and using them to teach his associates to be tyrannical (*Memorabilia* 1.2.56–7). The example is *Works and Days* 311, 'work is no disgrace but not working is a disgrace', which Socrates was held to interpret as 'no deed is disgraceful'; a deliberately perverse construal of ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος. This same Hesiodic half verse is also subjected to hair-splitting analysis in Plato's *Charmides* to distinguish banauistic from liberal activity (*Charmides* 163b).²² The fact that the interpreter is none other than Critias, Socrates' tyrannical associate, suggests that Plato and Xenophon are not in direct dialogue with Hesiod but are triangulating his name with a 4th-century rhetorical text and other sources—very possibly including Prodicus (*Charmides* 163d; cf. *Birds* 692). Like the *Theogony*, the *Works and Days* depended for its

²¹ Cf. Aristotle's discussion of maxims in *Rhetoric* 2.21 where examples are taken from Homer (but not Hesiod).

²² Cf. Koning and Graziosi, this volume, Ch. 5 and 6 respectively.

continuing relevance on a para-literature that excerpted it and gave it point.

The practice of extracting tags from the *Works and Days* and adapting their meanings can be seen already in Pindar, who quotes the first half of *Works and Days* 412 ('devotion, you know, furthers the work', *μελέτη δέ τοι ἔργον ὀφέλλει*) in an epinician honouring a son of Lampon of Aegina: 'In his "devotion to work" Lampon truly honours that saying of Hesiod, which he quotes when exhorting his sons' (*Isthmian* 6.66–7 SM: *Λάμπων δὲ μελέταν | ἔργοις ὀπάζων Ἡσιόδου μάλα τιμᾷ τοῦτ' ἔπος*). Nothing could seem more respectable than a prominent aristocrat quoting Hesiod to his sons, but Pindar's Hesiod is subtly updated: in the language of the *Works and Days*, *μελέτη* means the sort of assiduous care required in agricultural labour (*ἔργον*); Pindar's Lampon uses it, however, in the sense of 'practice', a meaning the word acquired when it was adopted by the highly esteemed professional trainers to refer to their athletic exercises. The word appears in the name of the famous Athenian trainer Melesias, and Bacchylides describes the trainer of Lampon's sons as 'Menander, whose exercises bring benefit to mortals' (*μελέτα*[*ν τε*] *βροτωφ*[*ε*] *λέα Μενάνδρου* 13.191–2). Indeed the compound epithet *βροτωφελέα*, unique to Bacchylides, suggests that his own phrase is also an adaptation of the Hesiodic motto: its second element brings Hesiod's verb *ὀφέλλω*—'to increase' or 'enlarge' in a sense appropriate to agricultural prospering—into the orbit of *ὠφέλεω*—'to be of use to', a word for a person providing a service for another (cf. *ὠφέλιμοι* in *Frogs* 1031 quoted above). Even in traditionalist circles, Hesiodic vocabulary needed constant adaptation.

Xenophon's Socrates stands in this tradition when he explicates another half line from the *Works and Days*. Defending Socrates from charges of nonconformity with civic religion, Xenophon explains that he held small sacrifices to be in no way inferior to exorbitant ones (*Memorabilia* 1.3.3–4):

He was an admirer of this verse, 'in accordance with your power make sacrifices to the immortal gods' [*Works and Days* 336: *καὶ δὲ δύναμιν δ' ἔρδειν ἱέρ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι*], maintaining that 'acting according to one's powers' was also good advice for dealing with friends, guest-friends and the rest of life.

The story shows that Socrates was pious and also that he was willing to reinterpret Hesiod's memorable old phrase by extending the meaning of ἔρδειν from 'sacrifice' to 'acting' in general. A sophistic discourse summarized in Plato's *Lysis* uses the poet similarly: defending the thesis that the like is the greatest enemy of the like, the 'eloquent' speaker first called on Hesiod as a witness—'potter strives against potter, singer against singer | beggar against beggar' (215c, compressing *Works and Days* 25–6)—and then went on to extend this widely quoted maxim (four times by Aristotle alone: Howes 1895, 162) and to apply it to everything, not excluding the physical elements (215e). As Aristotle would say, Socrates differs from Poly-crates or from the unnamed sophist as a reader of the *Works and Days* only in moral intent, not in method.

Plato's *Protagoras* suggests how a sophist like Prodicus handled one of the most popular passages from the *Works and Days*, Hesiod's allegory of *aretē*. In much-quoted verses (already paraphrased by Simonides: 579 *PMG*), Hesiod explained that Baseness or Misery (*κακότητα*) is always nearby and easy to be found, whereas Excellence or Prosperity (*ἀρετή*) dwells at the end of a long, steep road and is not reached without sweat (287–92). According to Socrates, 'Prodicus and many other people agree with Hesiod that *becoming* good is hard, for "in front of excellence" the gods have put "sweat", but when one "reaches the top, then it is easy, difficult though it is" to acquire' (340d: 'εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται, ῥηϊδίην δὴ πειτα πέλειν, χαλεπὴν περ εὐοσάν, ἐκτῆσθαι). We may infer that Prodicus used this text to display the value of his skill in distinguishing the meanings of words; the reading attributed to him also resolves the meaning of Hesiod's final line, which is ambiguous enough to be rendered quite differently by Most: when one 'reaches the top, then it is easy, difficult though it still is'.²³

If a sophist read this familiar text as proving that attaining *aretē* requires expenditure, Plato's 'beggar-priests' seem to have used it differently. Adeimantus says these priests explained that even the virtuous (and rich) may require expiatory rituals because, as Hesiod shows, the gods send misfortunes to good people (*Republic* 364b–d). Not wanting to alienate potential clients, they quoted only Hesiod's

²³ For further discussion of the passage see Yamagata, this volume, Ch. 4.

lines about the prevalence of Misery (*Works and Days* 287–9), leaving out the bit about achieving excellence by sweat (290–92). Able speakers, the priests also had Homer to cite for the idea that gods are swayed by gifts (quoting *Iliad* 9.497–500), and they made a trio of witnesses by adding a ‘bushel of books’ from Orpheus and Musaeus on expiatory rites (cf. Koning, this volume, pp. 000–000). Contrary to what a philologist might suppose, the currency of the passage made its meaning less determinate: Hesiod’s allegory appears in humbler company making a simpler claim when Xenophon’s Socrates combines the lines with the consensus of athletic trainers and the verse of Epicharmus to argue that it takes steadfast commitment to achieve fine works (*Memorabilia* 2.1.20). I suspect we come close to Plato’s own reading when *Works and Days* 289–92 are given a mischievous twist by the Athenian stranger: ‘the many prove that Hesiod was wise’ when he said that there is no great abundance of people who are zealous for virtue, the proof consisting in the scarcity of excellence among them (*Laws* 718e).

The authority of a poet treated in this way can only be notional or negotiable. Socrates adduces the poets to help define friendship because ‘they are to us like fathers and guides to wisdom’ (*Lysis* 214a), but in the event they offer no clear guidance: they first suggest the thesis that friendship is an affinity bestowed by the gods, ‘which they express, as I think, thus: “god always draws like to like” and makes them familiars’ (214a, citing a hexameter found at *Odyssey* 17.218 and treated by Aristotle as a proverb: *Rhetoric* 1371b). But the opposite case can also be supported from the poets, as Socrates notes in recalling that Hesiod’s lines on strife were used to argue that the like is the enemy of the like (215c). Accordingly, Plato’s Socrates, like Xenophon’s, usually approaches the *Works and Days* by extracting a phrase or verse and examining it in isolation to see if the poet’s reputation for wisdom is deserved. Experience will show ‘if Hesiod was in fact wise’ (*Republic* 466c) or ‘was correct after all’ (*Laws* 690e) when he said ‘half is more than a whole’ (*Works and Days* 40). On matters of which we lack certain knowledge, we may rely on the poets. So, for example, Socrates will adopt the Homeric custom of feasting heroic men with choice cuts of meat and wine (*Republic* 468d–e, quoting *Iliad* 7. 321 and 8.162, and adding that warriors need good nutrition); when such men die on campaign, he will

'believe Hesiod' and quote *Works and Days* 109 in affirming that they belong to the 'golden race' (468e; note 'gold' is interpreted in *Cratylus* 398a as 'noble'); he will add *Works and Days* 121–2 to show they have become protective spirits (469a).²⁴ Sometimes, of course, we don't believe him (cf. *Republic* 468e quoting and rejecting *Works and Days* 122–3).

Quotations suggest that for readers of Plato's time Hesiod's *Works and Days* was usually encountered in pre-selected, often pre-interpreted excerpts. To be sure, rhapsodes could perform 'something from Hesiodic poetry' (*Laws* 658d: *τι τῶν Ἡσιοδῶν*), though we do not know which of his works were included (along with Homer and Archilochus) in their repertoire.²⁵ Isocrates speaks of 'sophists' haunting the Lyceum during the Great Panathenaia and 'discussing the poets, especially the poetry of Hesiod and Homer, saying nothing original about them, but merely chanting their verses and repeating from memory the cleverest things which certain others had said about them in the past' (*Panathenaicus* 18).²⁶ There is no evidence in Plato and Xenophon to support the assumption that they presented Hesiod's poems in full or read the one against the other; their methods are far more likely to have been those that Isocrates complains they applied to his own works: 'misreading them in the worst possible way, dividing them incorrectly and ruining them by picking them to pieces' (*ibid.* 17).

CONCLUSIONS

Hesiod's two most popular works were in two different genres, and in the classical age genre continued to be tied to occasion of performance. Extracts from his wisdom poetry were commonly taught at

²⁴ Noting how often Hesiod's verses on the races and the *daimones* were rewritten, Solmsen (1962), 184–5, 195 claimed only 'a certain authority' for them.

²⁵ Cf. *Ion* 531a. Hesiod himself was thought of as a rhapsode: *Republic* 600d. See also Graziosi in this volume, Ch. 6.

²⁶ Although the Aristotelian school produced a book of 'Hesiodic questions' (*ἀπορήματα*, in the Hesychian *Vita*, no. 143 Rose), I do not think Isocrates' 'Lyceum' points to Peripatetics particularly: it is festival time and many intellectuals—teachers—writers are working the crowd.

school, where many learned to repeat the claims of pedagogues that Hesiod was a valuable adviser even as they found the poetry tedious. Sayings from the *Works and Days* could be presented as venerable wisdom, though in practice the old maxims usually needed a bit of interpretative legerdemain to be made relevant to contemporary situations. Works like the *Accusation of Socrates* or the sophistic piece of natural philosophy described in *Lysis* highlighted certain passages of the poem as especially interesting or problematic. As a result, the *Works and Days* was encountered most often in the form of isolated titbits that were quoted, by sophist and layperson alike, to see if Hesiod's reputation as a wise counsellor was deserved.

The *Theogony* was probably more often encountered through presentations by rhapsodes than at school. The poem was acknowledged as one very early and influential account of the gods (for some, influential merely because early), and like most poetry treating such matters, was allegorized, etymologized, and 'philosophized' in certain circles. The *Theogony* was seen as a complement to Homeric epic in providing an account of the gods that was coherent and recognizable throughout Greece. In this perspective, the poetic pair could be set against Orpheus and his like, whose mystical theogonies were less Panhellenic in aspiration and less amenable to exploitation by civic religion. Nevertheless, Orphic poetry, like its eschatology and soteriology, claimed enough popular adherents that the *Theogony* did not attain the dominant position in *theologia* that Homeric epic did in heroic song (or that the *Works and Days* did in gnomic verse). Hence it was also possible to combine Hesiod and Homer with Orpheus and Musaeus as forming a sort of summa of ancient wisdom.

As for Plato, he must be allowed to have been one of the subtlest readers of his time, but his encounter with Hesiod was shaped by the ways in which Athenian culture preserved and institutionalized this old poetry. Although the question of which of the many works ascribed to Hesiod were really by him was never unanimously answered in antiquity (cf. Most 2006: 188–215), Plato seems to have focused, as we do, principally on the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Yet our documented 4th-century readings do not treat Hesiod as the author of a coherent and self-explanatory *oeuvre*, and never appeal from one work to another to explicate Hesiod's ideas. We can only guess, of course, at what went on in esoteric interpretative commu-

nities, but it is notable that the two Hesiods do not meet even in the well-read Plato. I submit that this is because he wrote not only as a creative thinker engaged with the poetry of the past, but also as a social critic, observing and critiquing the musical culture of the society for which he wrote. Plato thus provides an important challenge to those assertions of Hesiod's timeless value he quotes. His texts are precious because they frequently adopt, sometimes parody, and always represent the many curious ways in which the poet's actual words were put to work.