CHAPTER 1

APPROACHING HESIOD

Hesiod's *Works and Days* is a veritable gold mine for those who would not inhibit their hermeneutical aspirations. The undertaking is a risky one, however, for often a reexamination of the author or of the passage in question completely upsets one's carefully formulated opinions.[1]

1.1 The argument of this book: an 'alternative account'

Just over a hundred verses into Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the speaker follows up an account of Prometheus and Pandora by introducing another version of human history: four human races preceded our own. The first race, of ever-prosperous Golden men, was succeeded by one of Silver, men who stayed children for a century and on reaching adulthood were destroyed by Zeus for impiety. Zeus next created Bronze men who perished by mutual violence, but then made a more just race of Heroes. Some died in war, some flourish still on the Blessed Isles. At this point in the narrative, Hesiod's narrator laments his own place in the present, among corrupt and violent Iron men whose destruction lies in the future.

This intriguing narrative, widely known as the 'myth of the races',[2] inspired Greek and Roman writers and was reworked throughout the next millennium. Yet although the story of the five races is a candidate for the most influential passage from the Hesiodic corpus, its importance for Classical antiquity requires reassessment. Thus far, discussion of the races has occurred mainly

[1] Lateiner (1930) 70, cited by Nisbet (2004) to herald his provocatively satirical reading of the poem.

[2] It is introduced as a λόγος (*WD* 106), often translated 'account' (or 'récit' – cf. Calame (2004) 67). In this book I use 'narrative', 'presentation' or 'account' when analysing details, but 'myth of the races' when referring to it as material inspiring a tradition or a response.

within surveys of ancient ideas of paradise[3] or time,[4] 'Oriental' myths of mankind[5] or 'Greek' ideas about cultural progress and civilization.[6] When it comes to Latin texts, the intellectual legacy of the races has been conflated with, or assimilated into, studies of the cultural significance of the Golden Age,[7] that central myth of Western culture which in fact developed independently out of Hesiod's idyllic image of a Golden race ruled by Cronus.[8] Ancient responses to Hesiod's races, however, range far beyond nostalgia for a lost paradise or hope of its return. This book contends that a scholarly preoccupation with human decline, whose ancient disseminations arguably took inspiration as much from Homer as from Hesiod,[9] has diverted attention from more subtle ways in which this narrative was interpreted and exploited in antiquity as a specifically Hesiodic tale.

'Hesiodic' here means a narrative considered in the first instance as part of a poem (and corpus) attributed to Hesiod, and consequently employed to evoke an idea of this wider work. My focus will be on evidence of interest in the relationship between the five-stage sequence and its first extant context, the ethical argument of the *Works and Days*, in which a speaker, 'Hesiod',[10] urges his errant brother Perses and the local magistrates (βασιλεῖς) towards work and justice. Hesiod presents his case through two stories, allegorical images of justice and injustice, threats, assorted proverbial wisdom and practical instruction. I shall demonstrate, through a series of close readings, that those rewriting Hesiod's metallic sequence, from

[3] E.g. Gatz (1967), and Sourvinou-Inwood (1997) 11 on the 'blessed isles' v. Homer's Elysium.
[4] E.g. Campion (1994), Feeney (2007) ch. 4 (the latter much more nuanced).
[5] E.g. Dumont (1965), West (1997).
[6] Lovejoy and Boas (1935), Havelock (1957) ch. 2, Dodds (1973) ch. 1, Blundell (1986), Gera (2003).
[7] E.g. Wallace-Hadrill (1982) (on Augustan ideology), Kubusch (1986) and Brisson (1992) (on Latin literature), Barker (1993) (on the 'goldenness' of the Golden Age), Evans (2008) (on utopian narratives).
[8] See Baldry (1953) on the 'life under Cronus' in Greek comedy, and for a further Cronus-centred set of twists, Lucian *Saturnalia*.
[9] See e.g. Gera (2003) chs. 1–3 on Homer's Cyclopes, recalled by ideas of 'Golden Age' communication with animals e.g. in the prologue to Babrius' Aesopic fables.
[10] The identification is justified by the speaker's recollection of 'his' meeting with the Muses on Mount Helicon (*WD* 659 'where first they set me in the way of clear song'), corresponding to their meeting with 'Hesiod' in *Theogony* 22–34.

Plato to Juvenal, offer interpretations of the story in some relation to this context. By experimenting with the structure, voice, audience, pace and argumentative function of Hesiod's story, they reconstruct Hesiod's project of instruction in new forms and test the conditions for the success or failure of an utterance with didactic pretensions.

In this way, I argue, the intellectual tradition of the metallic races provides a focused illustration of broader currents in the ancient response to Hesiod.[11] Working out the legacy of Hesiod's poetic voice from a point other than the much-imitated scene of his initiation by the Muses, I want to show how rewritings of the 'myth of the races', as a story intriguingly embedded in a didactic poem, engage a wider idea of Hesiodic teaching which spans the *Works and Days*, the *Theogony* and (in Rome if not already in Greece) the *Catalogue of Women*, a poem structured as a five-pronged genealogy encompassing the whole age of heroes.

The reception of Hesiodic poetry as a whole has not often been discussed in relation to that of the races. Analyses of these traditions have converged mainly in studies of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Georgics*. By contrast, the bulk of this book seeks to demonstrate that the receptions of the races and of Hesiod intertwine in texts and traditions *other* than didactic poetry. Focusing in particular on the post-Hesiodic manifestations of the races in works by Plato, Ovid, ps.Seneca and Juvenal, it argues that they have much to gain from analysis as part of Hesiod's legacy. There is a chapter on Aratus' enormously popular didactic poem on astronomy and meteorology, but its primary function is to explain how the *Phaenomena*'s intense response to Hesiod does not entirely screen later readings, but allows for and encourages different directions to be taken with the races in its wake.

Each transformation of the account studied here may be viewed as commenting in some respect on the relations between the story and the material that surrounds it in the Hesiodic text. This emphasis is unexpected if one simply adopts the often-repeated scholarly position that both oral and written use of the *Works and Days* in antiquity operated at the level of recalling its distinct ὑποθῆκαι ('precepts'). Detailed reworking of stories from Hesiod, however,

[11] On those currents, see first Koning (2010) and Hunter (2014).

already implies a greater commitment to reading than taking up a short, separable 'tag' such as *WD* 41: 'the half is more than the whole'. Conversely, the argument that rewriting a Hesiodic story in detail raises wider questions about the didactic mode might be thought unremarkable, insofar as one might expect the interrogation of didactic to emerge as a tendency in the ancient reception of *any* famous story from Hesiod, 'teacher of the most men'.[12] There have been no such findings, however, in studies of responses to Hesiod's accounts of Prometheus-Pandora;[13] a little more has been done with the tale of the hawk and nightingale, which follows that of the races in the *Works and Days*.[14] I suggest that the provocative framing of the races narrative in Hesiod as an 'alternative' account of humanity (on which see ch. 2), as well as its memorable use of the first person (*WD* 174) for the first time in the *Works and Days* since the proem, serve to call attention to questions about the place of *this* story in particular in the corpus attributed to 'Hesiod'.

The 'readings' I uncover in any later author are not necessarily that author's 'genuine view' of Hesiod's myth; each one is constructed for the rhetorical purposes of the later text. Indeed, the personal and provisional element of every act of appropriation[15] is itself an important principle as a response to the voice(s) of the *Works and Days*. The central emphasis of this book is that there was in Classical antiquity no passive 'reception' of the 'myth of the races', but a continual rereading of the story, in detail and as a whole, within 'constructions and reconstructions'[16] of Hesiod's most famous poem. In seeking thus to characterize the appeal of Hesiod's metallic races in Classical antiquity, my underlying position is, broadly, not unlike that for which Martindale has argued with regard to the hermeneutics of reception of Latin poetry.[17]

[12] As Heraclitus complains (διδάσκαλος . . . πλείστων in Diels-Kranz 22 B57).
[13] For the (surprisingly scanty) explicit references to Pandora, see Musäus (2004). For a meta-reception of Pandora in antiquity, see Kenaan (2008).
[14] See e.g. Hunter (2014) 241–3.
[15] This principle is memorably affirmed by Hinds (1998) 143–4, concluding his seminal study of the 'dynamics of appropriation' in Roman poetry.
[16] Cf. Hunter (2005) on ancient responses to the Hesiodic *Catalogue*.
[17] Cf. Martindale (1993), especially 11–28 on canonicity, first citing MacIntyre (1988) 383: 'every tradition becomes to some degree a tradition of critical reinterpretation in which one and the same body of texts, with of course some addition and subtraction, is put to the question, and to successive different sets of questions, as a tradition unfolds'.

In this introductory chapter I first sketch different approaches that have been taken to identify a 'Hesiodic' project and indicate their relevance for this book. Beginning with the broadest ideas of Hesiod alongside Homer in Greece (section 1.2a), I consider Virgil as a reader of Hesiod (1.2b), the Hesiodic corpus (1.2c) and Hesiod as didactic poet (1.2d). I next identify issues of terminology and narrative shape attached to the races (1.3), then outline the chapters through which this book offers a sample of ancient responses to Hesiod's famous narrative.

1.2 Identifying a 'Hesiodic' project

1.2a Not-Homer

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Hesiod's poetry, whose importance for the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome has undergone reassessment on several fronts.[18] Texts such as Aristophanes' *Frogs* and the extant *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* have been employed to emphasize broad 'ideas' of Hesiod governing his popular critical reception. On this level, Hesiod as a teacher is often compared and contrasted with Homer. So in the *Frogs*, when 'Aeschylus' is pushed to identify the subjects learned from the great poetic authorities, he names war as the province of Homer, and 'agriculture, seasons and ploughing' as that of Hesiod (*Frogs* 1033). This is obviously connected with the view of Homer in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* (§13 West), in which Hesiod was declared the winner, against the popular vote, 'because it was right for the one calling men to farming and peace to win, not the one recounting war and slaughter'.

In such broadly evaluative contexts, Hesiod is presented first and foremost as the author of the *Works and Days* rather than that of the battle-filled *Theogony*. Another strand of his reception, however, aligned him with Homer as a religious expert; in this context, the perception of Hesiod's *oeuvre* expands to include the

[18] See Clay (2003) and Bezantakos and Tsagalis (2006) on the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, Ledbetter (2003) and Stoddard (2004) on the *Theogony*, Hunter (2014) on the *Works and Days*, Hunter (2005) on the *Catalogue* and Montanari *et al*. (2009) and Koning (2010) surveying the corpus.

Theogony,[19] if not also the *Catalogue of Women*. In this sense, Hesiod is a 'double poet'.[20] Of all the works attributed to Hesiod in antiquity, the *Works and Days* was the most widely cited poem, although numerous papyri of the *Catalogue* attest to its popularity in Greek Egypt. Hesiod's reputation for wisdom arises primarily from those who mined the *Works and Days* for moral maxims, although the *Theogony* and the *Catalogue* were also used as sources of genealogical information.[21]

Detailed modern studies of Hesiod's poetry, by contrast, have emphasized both the complexity of the genealogies[22] and the unity and variety of perspectives within the poems taken together as 'Hesiod's cosmos',[23] even as they find here a poetics distinct from those of Homeric epic.[24] The range of possible implications of the 'Hesiodic' label has been explicitly emphasized in the context of its importance (as an alternative to Homer) for Hellenistic and Augustan poets.[25] Hellenistic stylistic judgements of Hesiod too present him primarily as 'not-Homer', pointing both to the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony*.[26] Still, the comparative elusiveness of Hesiod's poetic texture perhaps comes across from later ancient citations of Hesiod as exemplifying the *medi[um] gen[us]* ('middle style') and the γλαφυρὰ σύνθεσις ('smooth style'), terms which do not translate self-evidently to modern readers. These considerations, especially when read together with surveys of the

[19] Graziosi (2002) 176–7, 180–4; ideas of the Homeric corpus too expanded in these contexts.
[20] Rosati (2009) 349.
[21] On the ancient use of maxims from the *Works and Days*, see Petrakēs (2003). For an overview of the ancient uses of Hesiodic content down to the fourth century BCE, see Buzio (1938).
[22] On the social and political rhetoric informing the construction of genealogies such as those of the *Catalogue*, for instance, cf. first Fowler (1998); various potential implications of the *Catalogue*'s organization are brought out by Irwin (2005a) and R. Osborne (2005).
[23] This is the main thrust of Clay (2003).
[24] Especially Von Fritz (1962), Tsagalis (2009) and Rengakos (2009).
[25] Schroeder (2006) 288–90. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) offer stimulating samples of the diverse receptions of Hesiod in Hellenistic poetry. For Callimachus, see Sistakou (2009). Different senses of 'Hesiodic' emerge one by one in the studies of La Penna (1962) and Rosati (2009).
[26] See Schwartz (1960) 43–4 on the 'Hesiodic character' ascribed by Aristophanes of Byzantium to a catalogue in the *Iliad* (18.39–49 on the Nereids, resembling *Th*. 243–62), Achilles' story of Niobe (24.614–17) and a gnomic passage of the *Odyssey* (15.74, Menelaus on guests, recalling *WD* 342–3).

different lines of Hesiod's reception, warn against simple definitions of the 'Hesiodic voice'.[27]

1.2b The Virgilian lens

Apart from statements in prose *about* Hesiod, answers to the question of what 'Hesiod' meant to self-consciously literary communities have focused on the programmatic potential of allusions to Hesiod in Latin poetry of the first century BCE. Most famous is Virgil's *Georgics*, four books of hexameters ostensibly about agriculture, viticulture, cattle and bee-keeping, but incorporating longer and wider perspectives on the contemporary world (29 BCE). This text is our best evidence of sensitive and informed 'reading' of the whole *Works and Days* in this period, integrated with other literary traditions. The fourth-century CE grammarian Servius saw that the *Georgics*' opening indirect questions, *quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram / uertere* ('what makes the crops glad, beneath what star to turn the soil', *Geo*. 1.1–2) recall 'works' and 'days' respectively, and introduce topics covered in *Geo*. 1.43–203 (farming) and *Geo*. 1.204–350 (calendar). Hesiod for Virgil is, as Ovid terms him in *Fasti* 6.14, *praeceptor arandi* ('teacher of ploughing'), and more broadly, the inspiration for emphasizing 'the necessity of expending toil on everything' (*Geo*. 2.61: *omnibus est labor impendendus*).[28]

What modern analyses have emphasized is the extent to which Virgil's 'Hesiodic' spirit, felt throughout the poem, indicates his distance from the original Hesiod. The most overt declaration of the poem's 'Hesiodism' is the first-person claim (*Geo*. 2.176) to be singing through Roman towns an *Ascraeum carmen*, a song in imitation of Hesiod as 'poet of Ascra'. Joseph Farrell has argued that by the time of this assertion in the second book, the primary literary inspiration is the *Phaenomena* of the Hellenistic poet

[27] Hunter (2009), updated in Hunter (2014), emphasizes the connections between the judgements of ancient rhetorical scholars and the wider tracks of Hesiod's ancient reception.

[28] Gale (2000) 156: 'Virgil's insistence on the importance and necessity of unremitting effort is perhaps the one aspect of his poem which enables it fully to qualify for the title *Ascraeum carmen*.'

Aratus,[29] whose 'Hesiodic' qualities were noted by a fellow-modernizer of Hesiod, Callimachus (*Ep*. 27 Pfeiffer, discussed in ch. 4 below).[30] More recently, it has been stressed that Virgil combines Hesiod with Aratus from the outset,[31] not to mention Lucretius, his nearest predecessor in didactic poetry. The ostensible topics of *Georgics* 3 and 4 are farm animals and bee-keeping respectively; their treatment, notably the extended description of the plague which strikes the cattle, responds to that of Lucretius concluding the *De rerum natura*, while the Lucretian conception of *labor* has been noted as a reference point in every book of the *Georgics*.[32] On this reading, the dominance of Hesiod in Book 1 indicates his role as the ultimate source of long tradition.[33]

Virgil's own *Eclogues* already presented Hesiod as the head of a self-consciously literary tradition. Embedded in the sixth *Eclogue* is Silenus' cosmological/mythological song, whose climax features Hesiod as a kind of Orpheus figure able to move mountains, a channel for the poetic gift. In the song, the poet Linus invites Virgil's contemporary Gallus to accept the staff that the Muses gave to 'the old man of Ascra before' (*Ecl*. 6.70: *Ascraeo quos ante seni*);[34] the reference is evidently to the scene of poetic initiation in Hesiod's *Theogony*, famously recalled by Callimachus at the start of his *Aetia* and (as Lucretius and Propertius report) by Ennius in the *Annales*:

> αἵ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδήν,
> ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ' Ἑλικῶνος ὕπο ζαθέοιο.
> τόνδε δέ με πρώτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον,
> Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο·
> 'ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
> ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,

[29] Farrell (1991) ch. 2.
[30] Some argue that *Ascraeum* connotes primarily 'Hesiod' as reconceived by Callimachus; they are working back from the use of *Ascrae[us]* in Propertius (2.10.25, 2.13.4 (see below n. 35), 2.34.77), whose debts to Callimachus are explicit. See Thomas (1988) 6ff.; on Callimachus in Rome, see Hunter (2006).
[31] Hunter (2014) 20–5, with further bibliography.
[32] Mynors (1990), Gale (2000) 155–84.
[33] See La Penna (1962) and the extended discussion following his contribution.
[34] On the odd placement of *ante* here, see Scodel (1980) on the biographical traditions of Hesiod's rejuvenation. Hunter (2001) 248, 253 comments on Hesiod's old age as a mark of poetic distinction.

ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.'
ὣς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι,
καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον
δρέψασαι, θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν
θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα.

One time, [the Muses] taught Hesiod beautiful song while he was pasturing lambs under holy Helicon. And this speech the goddesses spoke first of all to me, the Olympian Muses, the daughters of aegis-holding Zeus: 'Field-dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies: we know how to say many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things.' So spoke great Zeus's ready-speaking daughters, and they plucked a staff, a branch of luxuriant laurel, a marvel, and gave it to me; and they breathed a divine voice into me, so that I might glorify what will be and what was before. (*Theogony* 22–32, trans. Most)

With the *Eclogues* in view, this passage from the *Theogony* is striking for its degree of self-reference. With the switch from third person to first person in v. 24, the poetic speaker constructs an autobiography, one to be exploited also in the *Works and Days* (vv. 658–62). Self-consciousness or self-reference in a literary context certainly became a marker of the didactic tradition stemming from Hesiod, as opposed to that of heroic epic in the Homeric tradition.[35] Perhaps, then, the use of *Ascraeo* in *Eclogue* 6 works to reinforce the poet's self-placement in a poetic tradition, a move then 'confirmed' by the *Georgics*' re-use of this adjective in Book 2.[36]

The *Georgics*' development of the image of Hesiod also stems from the fact that its 'programme of allusion' extends to Homer (and for interpreters of the *Georgics*, this passage of the *Theogony* is most often brought into play in the argumentative context of Hesiod versus Homer, as rival claimants for poetic lies and truth).[37]

[35] On Virgilian and Aratean 'signatures' in their poems, see Katz (2008). The poetic *ego* strikingly surfaces in relation to claims of being *Ascraeus*, not only in Virgil *Georgics* (*Ascraeum . . . cano*) but also in Propertius (*nondum etiam Ascraeos norunt mea carmina fontes* 2.10.25, and see also 2.13.4: *hic me tam gracilis uetuit contemnere Musas, / iussit et Ascraeum sic habitare nemus*).

[36] Such back-reference is supported by the *Georgics*' concluding recollection of Virgil as *Eclogue*-poet (*Vergilium me* (*Geo*. 4.563) combining proper name and first person, like Hesiod at *Theogony* 22–4) and a quotation of that collection's first line (*Geo*. 4.566: *Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi*).

[37] In favour of Hesiod, La Penna (1962) and Boyle (1979) 69; Koning (2010) 310–18 argues that Pindar already reflects such a construction of Hesiod as poet of truth. For Hesiod as the embodiment of poetic lies, such as the *Theogony*'s Muses warn they can produce, see Ross (1987) 117–28, Rosati (2009) 350.

In *Georgics* 4, Cyrene, consulted by her son Aristaeus on how to regenerate his hive of bees, instructs him to capture Proteus for advice; Proteus tells Aristaeus the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Hesiodic didaxis, incorporating mythological tales, is the framework here for echoes of Homer's *Odyssey* 4, *Iliad* 1 and 18, the Hesiodic theogony and even a catalogue of women (in a song of Cyrene's companion Clymene). By incorporating Homer into the traditions of Hesiodic poetry, Virgil effectively unites different strands of the epic tradition.[38] Although the way in which 'Hesiod travels together with Homer'[39] is not the focus of this book, I shall find a precedent in Plato for Virgil's framing of Hesiod-within-Homer (see ch. 3).

I focus on Virgil's *oeuvre* at this point, not because I think that 'no . . . Roman poets before Vergil were at all interested in Hesiod *per se*',[40] but to demonstrate two principles important for this book. The first is the formation of different 'Hesiods' from selected elements of his poetry. This point has been made explicitly in studies of Solon[41] and Aratus;[42] more recently, Gianpiero Rosati's overview of Hesiod's Latin reception is structured by the different ideas of Hesiod (such as 'the poet of wisdom', 'the poet of the gods and their loves', 'the poet of peace and regret' and 'encomiastic poetry / poetry for kings') created out of selections from the Hesiodic corpus.[43] A related point, amply illustrated in studies of Virgil but only recently noted as a principle of Hesiodic reception, is how later authors' constructions of Hesiod vary from work to work within their corpus.[44] Through the study of Plato's corpus in ch. 3, this book emphasizes his role as predecessor for the complex and detailed response to Hesiod already observed in Virgil by others.[45]

The second principle for which Virgil's *Eclogue* 6 and *Georgics* are worth noting here, before I turn to other ancient responses to the 'Hesiodic project', is the centrality of the 'myth of the races' to

[38] See L. Morgan (1999) ch. 1. [39] For this topic, see first Koning (2010).
[40] Farrell (1991) 315. [41] Irwin (2005b) 163–96 on Solon fr. 4. [42] Fakas (2001).
[43] Rosati (2009); see also Koning (2010) *passim*.
[44] See Hardie (2005) 287 and Hunter (2014) *passim* for examples.
[45] See now Gee (2013) 39–48 for a detailed reading of how *Eclogue* 4 builds on Platonic and Aratean reconstructions of Hesiod.