

RECEPTION OF THE *WORKS AND DAYS*

HUNTER (R.) *Hesiodic Voices. Studies in the Ancient Reception of Hesiod's Works and Days*. Pp. viii + 338. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Cased, £65, US\$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-04690-0. doi:10.1017/S0009840X15000050

H.'s volume is a rich addition to a mighty rush of recent works on the reception of Hesiod's poetry (Montanari et al., *Brill's Companion* [2009]; Koning, *Hesiod: the Other Poet* [2010]; Boys-Stones and Haubold [edd.], *Plato and Hesiod* [2010]; Ziogas, *Ovid and Hesiod* [2013]; Ormand, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* [2014], the last two, after H.; and forthcoming: van Noordén, *Playing Hesiod*; Scully, *Hesiod's Theogony*; Loney and Scully [edd.], *Oxford's Handbook*). It both profits from and is hampered by its heavy focus on the *Works and Days* and its reception story of 1,000 years from 'not many decades after the composition of the poem' to the fifth-century C.E. Neoplatonist, Proclus. H. does an excellent job with the project as stated but the scope of the book could have been helpfully widened. Some chapters are organised primarily by theme: the reading of Hesiod and the Hesiodic, the idea of didactic literature and Hesiodic style; others are period or tradition studies: the *W&D* and archaic poetry, and fourth-century prose writers, and the Aesopic tradition and, most pointedly, Plutarch's lost commentary, at least four books in length, on the *W&D*, carefully considered through Proclan and non-Proclan scholia. True to the book's subtitle, H. takes his lead primarily from ancient texts which either name Hesiod directly or reference a passage from the *W&D*, or 'imitate' some of its verses. Less frequently, he ranges further afield and considers 'voices' or creative imitation of Hesiodic themes. The longevity of Greek and Roman interest in the poem stems, broadly speaking, from the ancient coupling of Homer and Hesiod and from the tendency of writers to preface their own wise utterances with ancient poetic wisdom, either to signify continuity of thought or an advancement upon the past. The *W&D* was particularly distinctive, H. argues, for its 'ancient wisdom', 'quotability' and treasure trove of 'pious, moral themes', the ancients being 'more interested [than moderns] in the interpretation and application of the individual verse or passage than of overall structure and "meaning"'.

H. is particularly good at showing how the urgent and distinctive first-person voice of the *W&D* easily finds its way into 'the moralizing protreptic of sympotic poetry', first in archaic poetry and later in imperial-age prose. He describes well how Alcaeus (fr. 347 Voight), which H. calls a 'remarkably close' 'imitation' and 're-appropriation' of *W&D* 582–96, treats the 'model' poem with ironic distance, turning Hesiod's recommendation for moderate drinking into an exhortation to 'stain your lungs with wine'. When we see Theognis 1197–202 'experimenting' with a Hesiodic voice at *W&D* 448–51 and 616–17, H. argues that the elegiac singer is even further removed than was Alcaeus from the harsh burdens of agricultural work and that we are witnessing the beginning of an aesthetic 'when the "natural" world will indeed for poets be a literary construct built on allusion and reminiscence'. Alexandrian sensibilities do not seem far away. At other times, however, H. shows how Theognis (as at 1135–50) assumes the voice of Hesiod, even as if he were Hesiod.

From a study of Archaic poets (Alcaeus, Solon, Theognis and Semonides), H. turns to fourth-century prose writers and texts: Xenophon, Prodicus, Isocrates, Plato and the *Certamen*. Other featured authors in this story include Callimachus and Aratus at Alexandria, Dio Chrysostom, a spectrum of Second Sophistic authors, including Plutarch and Lucian, and Aesop and Proclus in the imperial era. There is surprisingly little

about the Presocratics (Xenophanes and Heraclitus being the first to mention Hesiod and Homer by name, and both critically) or about fifth-century authors.

H. is relatively quiet about Hesiod as an early political scientist, interested in the making of social harmony and in kingly rule, in both positive (*Th.* 80–93) and negative forms, and there is less about δίκη in this reception story than one might expect. H. certainly recognises δίκη as a central Hesiodic theme but, except when discussing it in the context of Plutarch's effort to interpret the archaic poet in Platonising terms, it is not a major theme in this volume. He does make reference to Hesiod's 'just city' (*W&D* 225–31) but only twice and those in passing (in the context of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*); similarly, the provocative statement at *W&D* 276–80 that Zeus drew up a law (νόμος) that he gave δίκη to humans only, and not to fish, beasts and birds who eat each other. This δίκη is by far the best. H. discusses the passage well in the context of Aesop: the Hesiodic sentiment both erased by the very nature of the animal fable and confirmed as those stories 'are actually "about us"'. But the story of 'the Hesiodic' Δίκη and its reception has a broader reach. It touches upon questions of genealogy and personification, on other fable writers like Archilochus and on the 'Milesian' challenge to Hesiod, most succinctly expressed by Heraclitus in the phrase δίκην ἔριν (DK 22 B80; cf. Anaximander DK 12 B1). Far from a uniquely human and distinctly political vision of Δίκη (δίκη?), here it is descriptive of nature and the perpetual oscillation from one extreme to another (day/night, summer/winter, war/peace, satiety/hunger). In the Hesiodic vision, by contrast, Δίκη is a precondition for civic harmony, leading in its idealisation (as in Plato's *Republic*) to a stable and permanent community. To varying degrees of intensity, most subsequent Greeks of the Archaic and Classical periods interested in visions of an idealised polity looked to Hesiod.

H. writes extremely well about the correspondence between the words ancient critics use to characterise Hesiod's style and those which Hesiod himself uses to describe the gentle and honeyed manners by which just kings talk to their people when issuing 'straight judgments'. But he does not consider a significant aspect of Hesiod's style, his penchant for personified abstractions in the *Theogony's* genealogical lists and the striking way that he enfolds those names in the narratives of both poems. For example, as 'destructive Night' and Eris brought into the universe Κῆρες, Γῆρας, Πόνος, Ψεύδεα, Λόγοι (*Th.* 218, 225–30), so the 'destructive race of women' (*Th.* 591) (often bracketed) 'gave men the κῆρες, πόνος, καταγηράσκουσιν (made them *grow old*) (*W&D* 90–3). Furthermore, Hermes set ψεύδεα and wily λόγοι in her (*W&D* 78). Hesiod's genealogies inform not only our reading of Pandora but also of the just city which τέθηλε (blooms) and in it εἰρήνη abounds and men share in festivities (θαλίαι) while war (here πόλεμος), λιμός and ἄτη are absent (*W&D* 225–31). In such a city, we hear in the form of common nouns and verbs the names of Zeus' children with Themis, Δίκη and Εἰρήνη (and Εὐνομίη is implied), of Θαλίη, his child with Eurynome (*Th.* 901–9), and those of Eris' children, Λιμός, Μάχαι, Ἄτη, now kept at bay.

The ancients regarded Hesiod's style as pleasing (τὸ ἡδύ) and sweet (τὸ γλυκύ). Dionysius of Halicarnassus said Hesiod attended to the pleasure (ἡδονή) from the smoothness of names (ὀνομάτων λειότης) (H., as others, prefers 'from smoothness of words') and harmonious composition (σύνθεσις ἐμμελής). He also praises Hesiod for effectively fitting and interweaving words together. Another critic especially praised the *Theogony* (in contrast to the Orphic hymns) for its purity or cleanness (καθαρότης) and moderation (συμμετρία) in periphrases. It is not easy to know exactly what is meant by these various terms, but possibly they relate to Hesiod's graceful interplay between proper names and narrative and perhaps even to his distinctive interweaving of verbs, nouns and adjectives in his narrative with the proper names of his genealogical lists.

This book is a major and innovative study about the making of a 'didactic literature' and it breaks new ground in our understanding of Plutarch's commentary on the *W&D*,

but it engages with the *Theogony* less than it might, foreshortening thereby our understanding of *W&D*'s vibrant place in the story of Hesiodic voices and reception.

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## SOURCES FOR DRAGONS

OGDEN (D.) *Dragons, Serpents, and Slayers in the Classical and Early Christian Worlds. A Sourcebook*. Pp. xxvi + 319, ills. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Paper, £18.99, US\$29.95 (Cased, £60, US\$99). ISBN: 978-0-19-992511-7 (978-0-19-992509-4 hbk).

doi:10.1017/S0009840X15000402

An expansive collection of primary sources in English translation, O.'s work offers an indispensable resource for researchers and advanced students of mythology interested in gaining access to major as well as less canonical texts that delve into or, shall we say, creep into the realm of snakes, serpentine monsters and dragon-slaying feats in antiquity.

The book opens with a useful and thorough synopsis that presents a quick overview of the common motifs O. was able to extrapolate from the literature on the topic as well as a window onto the tremendous diversity of variations within any given scheme. In isolating significant patterns that characterise the various stories, O.'s methodology is much indebted to the formalist analysis pioneered by the Soviet folklorist Vladimir Propp.

The introduction clarifies the scope and organisation of the work. The book is split into two distinct sections, the first and more extensive treating the portrayal of dragons in the classical world, the second and more compact focusing on the hagiographical renditions of the snake figure from early Christian traditions to the thirteenth century C.E. The widespread range of literature under O.'s scrutiny enables readers to discern which classical motifs were productively redeployed in the hagiographical traditions and which traits the Christian narratives introduced anew in their depiction of the battles between dragons and saints.

In the section dedicated to the classical dragon, O.'s selection includes not just serpents/dragons *per se*, but also any creature featuring herpetographic elements or sharing characteristics attributable to snakes. Alongside the more renowned stories featuring the serpent Python slain by Apollo or Heracles' encounter with Hera's snakes, readers will enjoy the less obvious choice of mythical monsters displaying a composite nature, such as Medusa with her anguiform mane, Chimaera, whose fire-breathing ability qualifies it as possessing *drakôn* qualities, and the far less explicitly serpentine Cerberus, often represented on Greek vases with a serpent tail and/or snakes budding out of its body. The treatment of more obscure tales, for example the child-devouring Lamia or the slaying of an African dragon at the hands of the Roman army, testifies to the comprehensiveness of O.'s research and enriches the body of the surveyed material.

While the book's focus rests on what the Greeks termed *drakôntes* (and the Romans *dracones*), O. does not shy away from including in his selection *kêtê*, sea monsters. These are related to the family of *drakôntes* according to the genealogical tree delineated by Hesiod (Hes. *Theog.* 270, 295 wherein *Kêto* ultimately sires the whole breed of dragons) and count amidst their number the famous marine creature that Perseus defeated while rescuing Andromeda. Even in the absence of a terminological correspondence between maritime monsters and dragons proper, the sea-monster story type provides a neat model for illustrating the continuity between the classical and Christian dragons, especially if one considers the close