

CLAY, Jenny Strauss, *Hesiod's Cosmos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xii + 202. Hb. ISBN 0-521-82392-7. £45.00.

(Jenny Strauss) C(lay) is respected for her work on Greek epic, but begins this example about the Hesiodic poems with a preface containing an admission of concern over its reception. Specifically, she suspects reviewers would object that the supposed “farmer from Boeotia” could not have composed pieces of the sophistication she maintains underlies *Th(eogony)* and *W(orks)* and *D(ays)* (p. ix).

C's fear has not been borne out, but is nonetheless suggestive. Most classicists who lack esteem for Hesiod nowadays are not reviewers of books about him, but rather others who have not had the time to assimilate recent scholarship on the poems. Writers on the subject over the past few decades have tended to have better opinions of the poet than did earlier scholars, and naturally form the majority of those assigned to review books about him. Thus the published appraisals of C's volume to date have been generally positive notwithstanding her specific fear. Still, the people who suspect Hesiod's ability may not heed them. In my opinion the work suffers from a basic flaw, and a greater concern might be that this flaw would distract readers, especially those who tend toward the dismissive view, and impede their attention to numerous persuasive aspects of the volume. That would be unfortunate, particularly since these aspects do suggest ability on the part of the author(s) of the poems.

For the very thrust of C's exposition can be questioned, although in a manner that has nothing to do with the intellectual qualities of the poems. Her basic thesis is that the same metaphysics, “a” cosmos, is common to both works, or as she says with the aid of a visual arts metaphor, “the two Hesiodic compositions can be understood synchronically as two halves of an organic whole, a diptych, as it were, in which each component illuminates the other” (p. 6). One need not believe that Hesiod was ignorant to be suspicious of this idea. *A priori*, two distinct orientations can be expected, in the first place because any late work will have ideas that are different from those of an early one, whether authored by the same person (or group, as some say about the poems) or another, and given that most authorities hold *Th* to have coalesced before *W&D* apart from a few late ideas and interpolations. In the second place, and perhaps more fundamentally, *Th* seems purely descriptive in its orientation: it tells what the gods are or do, while *W&D* has a strong – perhaps dominant – normative component: it speaks of what humans *should* be or do. How can it be possible to marry two such universes?

C has certainly endeavored to confront the differences, which she acknowledges to be “massive” (p. 5). Following the book's introduction and its first two chapters, which respectively give synopses of the two poems, she offers five chapters, each of which treats the similarity and the difference between

them in dealing with a particular subject that she believes is common to them. In this way she compares: the proemia of the poems; how they view “the origins and nature of mankind”; the narratives of Prometheus; the “perspectives on gods and men”; and certain “hybrids”, meaning creatures that are not quite gods (for *Th*) or humans (for *W&D*).

Unfortunately, though, none of the five discussions is convincing *qua* argument for a common orientation. For example,¹ *W&D* indeed has a view of human history, deriving from the so-called myth of five races or ages. C believes that *Th* also has a view of the subject, claiming in Chapter 4 that certain allusions to humans in the poem constitute evidence for an implicit anthropology. She asks just when and how the human origin occurred according to this poem, and then, as a result of an argument whose key point appears to be that *Th* 50 mentions humans and giants in the same phrase, accepts the answer of the ancient scholia: the poem thinks of humans as having been engendered by the giants who had been created as a byproduct of the castration of Uranus by his son Cronus (pp. 95-98). In all this C and the scholia alike think after the fashion of a modern person who speaks of a single world or time, “in” which all things exist or all events occur. But did the archaic Greeks themselves think this way? Some excellent students of the period say to the contrary that the earliest Greeks thought their myths had taken place in a “time of gods”, which in some sense had happened before the properly historical “time of men” (really “humans”: *anthrōpoi*), or at any rate was not contiguous with it. Our modern conception of a single, continuous phenomenon of duration, correct or not, does not appear to be the most anthropologically natural.² And whether it is a temporal issue or not, my impression is that the archaic Greeks did not yet put all their myths into a common structure as would the scholars of late antiquity such as the Euhemerists. Thus it is easy to believe that the author of *Th* simply took the humans that his poem mentions casually here and there to be given, contra C, and did not yet think of the point that if they existed they must have been generated, as would the author of *W&D* later. The juxtaposition of humans and giants in *Th* 50 could simply be accidental and have nothing to do with anthropology.

¹ As another example, against treating both Prometheus narratives as variants of the same story, see my article in *JHI* 52 (1991) 355-71. (C does not confront the argument of this paper.)

² I mean that original hunting-gathering cultures had two temporal conceptions. As is fairly well known, they did not think of a single kind of time, but of one type that concerned linear processes like the course of life, and another for cyclical processes like the movement of the sun. The adverb *ēmos* in Greek epic might be a residue of this consciousness, since it is only used with cyclical processes (the day for Homer; the year for Hesiod): it is not quite “when”, but “at the point of the day/year that”.

In each of these comparative chapters C acknowledges a great difference between the two treatments of a supposedly common subject, such as the alleged origin from giants in *Th* just mentioned versus the five-fold human creation in *W&D*. Thus she goes to extremes in alleging the commonality. It is difficult not to believe that this central idea of hers, in the final analysis, simply reflects the tradition that both poems are by “Hesiod”, whether or not they were actually composed by the same person(s).

Still, I hold that the volume contains better arguments on smaller but still significant issues, which do attest some sophistication of the poems if without detailing it. People with an interest in this poetry would certainly profit by reading these expositions, and moreover, for the foreseeable future they will constitute indispensable study for scholars who write about it.

In particular, Chapters 1 and 2 present learned and often original paraphrases of the poetry that are fairly close to the level at which it touches us immediately. For example, the discussion of the initial entities of the theogony proper of *Th* is illuminating insofar as C argues for the mutual incompatibility of the beings it says descended respectively from Chaos and from Gaea (pp. 15-20). She also gives a nice presentation on the oft remarked alteration in the personality of the nominal addressee of *W&D* as the poem develops, arguing that this variation “represents the dynamic linear evolution of the education of Perses”, whether or not he actually existed (34-47; citation, 34).

Besides this, the comparative chapters themselves are attractive if we disregard the “cosmos” notion, in that C offers many novel ideas on details of the poems that may or may not be right but certainly demand our attention. To cite a few, first, at the very beginning *Th* 1 says *archōmetha*, “let us start (by singing about the Muses)”. It is generally thought that the plural indicates some sort of expansion of the singular narrative voice, but according to C it includes the goddesses themselves, who are to participate in the song (pp. 50-52). Or in a more complex example, the pattern of Zeus’s punishment of the sons of Iapetus at *Th* 514-34, says C, betrays an artifice that amounts to a substitution for the episode known as the *Gigantomachia*, which other ancient sources feature prominently but which is not found as such in this poem although one would expect it (113-15). Then to be fair, C has at least one idea on *W&D* reflecting *Th* that is new, i.e., beyond the generally recognized correction of a single kind of strife and re-treatment of Prometheus in the early part of the poem. The point that Zeus is not prominent in the agricultural discussion of *W&D* 383-617, she says, is because the sisters Eunomia, Dike, and Eirene, whom *Th* 901-2 say were engendered by Zeus (with Themis) and are also Horai, implicitly regulate the seasons cited in the later poem in an autonomous fashion, without the need of intervention by their father (145). These and other interesting ideas must be considered by anyone who would understand these texts.

Such achievement is in no small part the result of C's excellent command of Hesiod scholarship – to the point of supporting the surely correct emendation of διασκήσαι for διδασκήσαι in *W&D* 64: Zeus did not direct Athena to educate Pandora, as current editions have it, but to beautify her (p. 123 n. 6). Thus the bibliography (183-98) is adequate, as are the subject index (199-200) and the *index locorum* (200-2). My principal reservation derives from C's exclusive focus on the intellectual aspects of the poems – as if they could be expressed equally well in prose. It seems to me that this gives rise to some tendency to minimize the literature on their poetic aspects.

The volume is well printed, and is practically error-free insofar as I have checked – I will only note here that the scholia to *Th* were not edited by Pertusi (p. 97 n. 51), but by Flach and by di Grigorio.

Lastly, as to the audience for this work. Classicists themselves should find its prose congenial, but C indicates in her preface that she also wants to bring Hesiod to “students and those interested readers who may be less familiar with the Hesiodic poems” (p. ix). Thus she duly translates the Greek citations into English. However, she is not immune to pedantry, for example, in putting the philological controversy over whether or not Prometheus's division of the sacrifice at *Th* 538-40 actually fooled Zeus in the middle of the page instead of the notes (109-11). To be sure, she has some talent for expression – one enjoys the phrasing “randy women rendered lubricious during the dog days that enervate men” (45), for example – and this might alleviate the situation. It surely will not hurt interested amateurs to make an effort to understand the book.

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NERI, Camillo, *La lirica greca. Temi e testi*. (Studi Superiori, Lettere Classiche, 450). Roma: Carocci, 2004. Pp. 309. Pb. ISBN 88-430-2842-1. € 21.40.

No es fácil hacer una exposición breve de un tema tan amplio y variado como la lírica griega arcaica. Los diversos géneros comprendidos por ella, y, dentro de ellos, los muy diversos temas tratados, representan un desafío a la hora de hacer una exposición clara, comprensible para todo el público, pero no por ello superficial. En *La lirica greca. Temi e testi*, Camillo Neri (CN a partir de ahora) ha hecho un aporte significativo en ese sentido. Con esta anto-