

# STYX AND THE JUSTICE OF ZEUS IN HESIOD'S *THEOGONY*

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- Στύξ δ' ἔτεκ' Ὀκεανού θυγάτηρ Πάλλαντι μιγείσα  
Ζῆλον καὶ Νίκην καλλίσφυρον ἐν μεγάροισι  
385 καὶ Κράτος ἡδὲ Βίην ἀριδείκετα γείνατο τέκνα.  
τῶν οὐκ ἔστ' ἀπάνευθε Διὸς δόμος, οὐδὲ τις ἔδρη,  
οὐδ' ὁδός, ὅππῃ μὴ κείνοις θεὸς ἡγεμονεύει,  
ἀλλ' αἰεὶ παρ Ζηνὶ βαρυκτύφῳ ἐδριόωνται.  
ὥς γὰρ ἐβούλευσε Στύξ ἄφθιτος Ὀκεανίνῃ  
390 ἡματι τῷ, ὅτε πάντας Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητῆς  
ἀθανάτους ἐκάλεσσε θεοὺς ἐς μακρόν "Ὀλυμπον,  
εἶπε δ', ὅς ἂν μετὰ εἰο θεῶν Τιτῆσι μάχοιτο,  
μὴ τιν' ἀπορραΐσειν γεράων, τιμὴν δὲ ἕκαστον  
ἐξέμεν ἦν τὸ πάρος γε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.  
395 τὸν δ' ἔφατ', ὅστις ἄτιμος ὑπὸ Κρόνου ἡδ' ἀγέραςτος,  
τιμῆς καὶ γεράων ἐπιβησέμεν, ἡ θέμις ἐστίν.  
ἦλθε δ' ἄρα πρώτη Στύξ ἄφθιτος Οὐλυμπόνδε  
σὺν σφοῖσιν παιδεσσι φίλου διὰ μῆδεα πατρός·  
τὴν δὲ Ζεὺς τίμησε, περισσὰ δὲ δῶρα ἔδωκεν.  
400 αὐτὴν μὲν γὰρ ἔθηκε θεῶν μέγαν ἔμμεναι ὄρκον,  
παιδας δ' ἡματα πάντα ἐοῦ μεταναίετας εἶναι.  
ὥς δ' αὐτως πάντεσσι διαμπερές, ὥς περ ὑπέστη,  
ἔξετέλεσσ'· αὐτὸς δὲ μέγα κρατεῖ ἡδὲ ἀνάσσει. (*Th.* 383–403)<sup>1</sup>

ONE OF THE GREATEST uncertainties in the interpretation of the *Theogony* is whether the poem is concerned with the justice of Zeus. The foundation for contemporary consideration of this question is F. Solmsen's *Hesiod and Aeschylus*. Most scholars are probably convinced by him that "Hesiod has a firm conviction that Zeus stands for a better order because he knows what kind of world Zeus' government has superseded."<sup>2</sup> It is the world of Ouranos and Kronos, the fathers who suppress their children, and Zeus is not as evil as they are.

<sup>1</sup>I cite the text of M. L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford 1966), unless otherwise indicated. H. Fränkel, "Drei Interpretationen aus Hesiod," in *Festschrift Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig and Berlin 1931) 10–17 is cited hereafter as Fränkel, *FestReitz*; it appeared slightly rewritten in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* (Munich 1960) 324–329 (hereafter *Wege*); trs. M. Hadas and J. Willis, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (New York and London 1973) 99–101 (hereafter *EGPP*).

<sup>2</sup>F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, N. Y. 1949, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 30) 9.

But is Zeus merely the best of a bad lot, the last of the strong men to rule in heaven, who, though he keeps the peace reasonably well, is still culpable for swallowing Metis (886–900) and clearly a far cry from the Zeus of the *Works and Days* who defends δίκη with such vigor? Or is there a positive concept of the justice of Zeus in the *Theogony*? At this point the consensus breaks down. In *The Justice of Zeus* H. Lloyd-Jones cites the important fact that Zeus marries Themis and becomes the father of Dike (901–906).<sup>3</sup> But if this act is all that can be said on his behalf, it is understandable that some readers seem to find it too little too late. C. J. Rowe, for instance, in a good recent article on archaic thought in Hesiod which is meant to vindicate the poet from accusations of irrationality, nonetheless says that the idea that Zeus is an ethical figure in the poem is “in my view mistaken . . . . If Hesiod regards Zeus’ defeat of Kronos . . . as especially just, he does not say so; and the Titanomachy is a simple struggle of power.”<sup>4</sup> Now if one accepts that both the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* are by Hesiod, it is fair to ask why there should be such a dramatic change in the poet’s view of Zeus. One traditional response is that the cause was his dispute with his brother Perses, which supposedly forced him to search the heavens for justice. Today it would be more fashionable to invoke genre.<sup>5</sup>

A proper discussion of the relationship between the two poems demands a full-scale study of Hesiod’s ethical thought. This paper, with its more limited focus, will argue that in this central passage on Styx Hesiod defines and establishes the justice of Zeus in the *Theogony*.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this text, which presents a most extraordinary combination of philosophical abstractions and living myth, in some ways reflects a more profound criticism of morals and politics than the *Works and Days* and should be considered the beginning of Greek political theory. In discussing this text, I propose to criticize in some detail previous interpretations, not for the sake of polemic (I have obviously learned from all these scholars), but in the hope of making my own view

<sup>3</sup>H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley 1973, 1983<sup>2</sup>) 35–36.

<sup>4</sup>C. J. Rowe, “‘Archaic thought’ in Hesiod,” *JHS* 103 (1983) 124–135, at 132. A. W. H. Adkins, “Cosmogony and Ethical Order in Ancient Greece,” in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order*, eds. R. W. Lovin and F. E. Reynolds (Chicago 1985) 60: “Hesiod, or his sources in the *Theogony*, does not portray a Zeus who became ruler of the gods because he was just and Kronos was not, or because he was more just than Kronos.”

<sup>5</sup>This term should be scrutinized whenever applied to the *Theogony* as an argument about a central point of interpretation, since the poem, despite its many conventional features and similarities to the Homeric hymns, is in the final analysis *sui generis*. See R. Mondi, “The Ascension of Zeus and the Composition of Hesiod’s *Theogony*,” *GRBS* 25 (1984) 326–334.

<sup>6</sup>The term “justice of Zeus” in this paper refers to his upholding of θεμῆς as the normative order *among the gods* and, in this discussion, should not be taken as including the relations of Zeus to mortals. The latter topic is the main concern of the *Works and Days*, and there the key figure is Dike, the daughter of Zeus and Themis who operates in the human world (see *Th.* 901–903).

more precise and convincing. In general the difficulty of Hesiod has produced not merely a healthy caution, but perhaps an excessive reluctance among Hesiodic scholars to undertake exegesis of each other's work.

The first three verses tell us that Styx bore Zelos, Nike, Kratos, and Bia (383–385). The next three verses say in three different ways that these beings are inseparable from Zeus (386–388). The picture is one of Zeus in command (ἡγεμονεύει) with these absolutely faithful subordinates. What follows at 389 ff. is an explanation (γάρ, 389) of why this is so.<sup>7</sup> Styx was the first to ally herself with Zeus when he promised to guarantee the honors of all who joined him against the Titans. The narrative leads back to its starting point, that is, the fact that her children are always with Zeus (401), but does not end with it. The last two verses state that Zeus faithfully carried out all his other promises in the same way and that he rules (402–403).

H. Fränkel's sensitive discussion of this passage has been the most influential and remains important.<sup>8</sup> Fränkel thinks that Hesiod is trying to establish the legitimacy of "die Macht und Gewalt" (= children of Styx). This is accomplished by the delivery of these dumb powers into the service of Zeus, who obviously represents justice. Insofar as Fränkel offers evidence for this assumption that Zeus is just in the *Theogony*, he cites the *Works and Days*.<sup>9</sup> Thus, it is awkward to use Fränkel's interpretation (that might and power are being given legitimacy) to combat the notion that Zeus is just in the *Theogony*, since his view in fact presupposes this idea.

He finds support for his theory that power and might are being legitimized in the corollary notion that Styx and her children are among those gods who were not honored under Kronos (395–396): "das Zeitalter des Kronos, die sanfte, goldene Zeit, war ein Zeit milden, glücklichen Friedens ohne Kampf und Gewalt. Jetzt in unsere Zeuswelt ist Gewalt zu den höchsten Ehren gekommen: Zeus selbst verleiht sie."<sup>10</sup> There may be a trace of a golden age in the common banquet of gods and mortals at Mecone (535–537).<sup>11</sup> But this is man's perspective. For the gods in the *Theogony*

<sup>7</sup>The same technique is repeated with Hekate and Prometheus. In all three cases, Hesiod sets out first the position of the particular god (or gods: the children of Styx) in relation to Zeus (386–388, 411–415, 521–534). A narrative is then introduced in order to explain the history or significance of this fact (389 ὡς γάρ; 416 καὶ γὰρ νῦν; 535 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε), and a recapitulation comes at the end (401 f. ὡς; 448 f. οὕτω; 613 f. ὡς).

<sup>8</sup>Fränkel, *FestReitz* etc. (above, n. 1).

<sup>9</sup>Fränkel, *EGPP* 100: "the *Works and Days* shows that for Hesiod Zeus is the divine bearer of right."

<sup>10</sup>Fränkel, *FestReitz* 16 = *Wege* 328. Presumably Fränkel has in mind the description of the golden generation under Kronos in the *Works and Days* (108–126; Kronos at 111).

<sup>11</sup>J.-P. Vernant, "À la table des hommes," in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, eds. M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (Paris 1979) 53, states very well how the Prometheus episode is on the margin of the poem's main theme of the struggle for sovereignty among the gods. "En effet on ne trouve pas dans le poème la moindre allusion à une existence humaine sous le règne de Cronos."

Kronos does not represent peace! Therefore, an important part of Fränkel's interpretation rests on an impossible and artificial isolation of the passage from its context in the *Theogony*.<sup>12</sup> It seems fair to add that Fränkel's basic idea of "legitimizing power and might" (and Zelos and Nike?) is obscure.

Fränkel was right, of course, to invoke the Hekatoncheires, "das Urbild roher Gewalt," as a parallel to the children of Styx. The two myths tell the same story: "einmal in der massiven altmythischen Weise (Hekatoncheiren), das andre Mal in der modernen, fast schon metaphorischen Art (Styxkinder)."<sup>13</sup> In a revised discussion, he added the Cyclopes as another version.<sup>14</sup> The verbal and compositional links among the three groups are such as not to be accidental. The names of the children of Styx, or similar terms for strength and power, are associated with the Cyclopes and Hekatoncheires. The Cyclopes have ἰσχύς, βίη, and μηχαναί (146), the Hekatoncheires have ἰσχύς τ' ἀπλητος κρατερή (153). What Zeus does with the children of Styx, κρατεῖ and ἀνάσσει (403), he does with the Cyclopes' gift of lightning (ἀνάσσει, 506). All these verses form the significant conclusions of their "paragraphs." Moreover, Zeus speaks to the Hekatoncheires about νίκη and κάρτος (647, cf. νίκην, 628; βίην, 649; κρατεροί, βίην, 670). When Zeus unleashes his own βίη, it is with the thunderbolt (689 ff.). All this talk of might and power has indeed been promised in the prooemium as part of what the Muses celebrate (49, 71–73, which verses have βροντήν, κεραυνόν, κάρτει νικήσας).

The poem's emphasis on the strength of Zeus leads some critics to discount the notion of his being a moral figure. The remarks of Rowe quoted above are typical in this respect. But a different response is possible. There is not the slightest contradiction in having Zeus both strong and just. The same applies to a human ruler, as Solon, who knew his Hesiod well,<sup>15</sup> realized in a passage (36.15–20) which uses similar language to *Th.* 383–403:

ταῦτα μὲν κράτει  
ὁμοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην ξυναρμόσας  
ἔρεξα, καὶ διήλθον ὡς ὑπεσχόμεν.  
θεσμούς δ' ὁμοίως τῷ κακῷ τε καὶ ἀγαθῷ  
εὐθείαν εἰς ἕκαστον ἀρμόσας δίκην  
ἔγραψα.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Although there is no clear indication, Fränkel's neglect of the unity of the poem may be due in part to the time in which he was writing, since it was the high tide of the analysts' view of the *Theogony*, as found in the edition of F. Jacoby (Berlin 1930) and F. Schwenn, *Die Theogonie des Hesiodos* (Heidelberg 1934).

<sup>13</sup>Fränkel, *FestReitz* 16; cf. *Wege* 329.

<sup>14</sup>*Wege* 328–329; *EGPP* 98–101.

<sup>15</sup>Solmsen (above, n. 2) 107–123.

<sup>16</sup>As will be seen more clearly below, Hesiod's text also describes a ruler making and keeping promises to give each party its due.

Thus, so far from proving that Zeus is not just, his violence, though glorified as would be that of any Homeric hero, could at the same time prompt the idea that Zeus must be justified in wielding such force against his father and the Titans. N. Brown has brought the latter conviction to bear on the poem in a searching discussion, though his answers can be challenged.<sup>17</sup> To Brown's credit, he realized there is a problem: "We cannot say that the law of retribution does not apply to Zeus because his hands were clean, although this interpretation is maintained by certain sentimental interpreters who apparently want to find in Zeus a god who satisfies the demands of their own moral consciousness" (22). It is, in fact, not simply the violence of Zeus which makes readers uneasy, but more specifically the ominous *similarity* of his actions to those of Ouranos and Kronos. He too overthrows his father and swallows his first wife Metis (886–900). A fuller study would have to show how the law of retribution, to which Kronos is subject (207–210, 472–473), seems to be manipulated in order to support Zeus, not to threaten him. As for Metis, the issue is whether the action of Zeus condemns him in the eyes of *Hesiod*, not ours. Judgement about any one text in Hesiod is affected by our view of the whole corpus. Thus, *if* the swallowing of Metis were the only ethically significant act of Zeus in Hesiod—if Zeus did not, for instance, marry Themis as well—a negative evaluation would be more reasonable. But the notion that Zeus is truly to be condemned for swallowing Metis in *Hesiod's* view is to my mind absurd mainly because both the *Theogony* (see below) and the *Works and Days* praise his defense of θέμις and δίκη in ways that cannot be outweighed by this one episode. Secondly, as J.-P. Vernant has shown, this text about Metis (886–900) is the climax of the theme of μήτις which is developed systematically in the course of the poem, so that the poet is keenly aware of the highly allegorical nature of Metis.<sup>18</sup> Because the symbolism of Metis is precisely wherein her significance lies, swallowing her is not the same as devouring children.<sup>19</sup> Athena, the offspring of Zeus and Metis, *is born* without being harmed (924–926), and no other child is conceived.

<sup>17</sup>N. Brown, *Theogony. Hesiod* (Indianapolis 1953). I know of no analysis of Brown's essay, though it has been deservedly influential, at least in the United States. His translation is now replaced by R. M. Frazer, *The Poems of Hesiod* (Norman, Oklahoma 1983).

<sup>18</sup>See the chapters on Hesiod, "The Combats of Zeus," and "The Union with Metis and the Sovereignty of the Sky," in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, tr. J. Lloyd (Hassocks, Sussex and Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1978). H. Erbse, "Orientalisches und Griechisches in Hesiods *Theogonie*," *Philologus* 108 (1964) 1–28, at 8 ff., gives a detailed defense of the authenticity of 886–900.

<sup>19</sup>Thus Brown's polemical remarks about sentimental interpreters, which are directed at Solmsen, recoil upon himself, for his notion (22) that Zeus' swallowing of Metis is worse than Kronos' consumption of his children is truly sentimental. Indeed Brown, with scarce consistency, takes much the same view as Solmsen when (on the next page) he advances the argument that Zeus is distinguished from his predecessors because he does not violate natural

Brown's contribution is to see how "political" the regime of Zeus is, which he contrasts with the essentially patriarchal rule of Kronos. Zeus forms political alliances with the Cyclopes ("an armament industry"), the Hekatoncheires ("a mercenary army"), and the children of Styx. The latter are only the first of Zeus' supporters who later actually elect him king and receive their due honors (881–885).

At this point, however, Brown singles out Zeus' intelligent qualities as the most important and proceeds to confuse the issue of *θέμις* with that of *μητις*; he analyzes the concept of the "political" essentially in terms of intelligence. "Since Zeus' power is based on politics, his distinctive attribute is not strength but statesmanship—the quality which Hesiod called *metis*, cunning, or wisdom, though the word cannot be satisfactorily translated" (20). Zeus' wisdom does seem to be much of the point in his alliance with the Hekatoncheires. It has certainly been noticed that Kottos' reply (deft for a monster) to Zeus begins with an acknowledgement of Zeus' superior wisdom (which is thus the first reason for obedience to him, 655 ff.; cf. 626 f., for the wisdom involved in freeing them).<sup>20</sup> The superior wisdom of Zeus is the moral drawn from the Prometheus story too (613–616). But the ability of Zeus to outflank Prometheus and Kronos, who are both ἀγκυλομήτης (18, 137, 168, 473, 495, 546, cf. *WD* 48), is not the same as a justification of his rule in terms of *θέμις*.

Brown's analysis of the "political," or "statesmanship," in terms of intelligence seems to be what leads him to his Machiavellian justification of Zeus (22):

The reason why Zeus escapes the fate of Sky and Cronos is not because he commits no "evil deeds," but because he puts himself beyond good and evil and beyond the reach of the law of retribution. The state, which, like Zeus, inaugurates a new regime of Law, Order, Justice and Peace for its subjects, is not itself subject to Law. Zeus is the founder of what Machiavelli calls "civil society" in the cosmos . . . .

He then quotes Machiavelli's defense of Romulus' killing of his brother on the grounds that the resulting well-constituted state justifies the means. Brown cites no evidence that Hesiod thought in this way. If the idea were suggested to the poet, perhaps he would concede some truth to it. But as it is, Hesiod's very lack of such an idea seems to be what prompted his own solution.

The heart of Hesiod's answer lies in the narrative of 383–403, the first substantial one about Zeus. The prooemium has indicated that a better order

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order by suppressing his children. For defense of the crudity of the Metis episode see L. S. Sussman, "The Birth of the Gods: Sexuality, Conflict, and Cosmic Structure in Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Ramus* 7 (1978) 61–77, at 71.

<sup>20</sup>"Zeus and his companions are indeed cleverer than the older powers (655 ff.), but less strong and violent:" Fränkel, *EGPP* 99.

is destined to emerge under his rule.<sup>21</sup> Now we learn the constitution and justification of that order. The attendance of the children of Styx upon Zeus symbolizes his supreme power.<sup>22</sup> But it is the *possession* of these powers by Zeus which needs justification, not (*pace* Fränkel) the existence of these beings themselves. Hesiod knows of truly evil beings, such as many of the progeny of Night (211–232), but does not feel compelled to give a defense of their existence. Hence, Fränkel's formulation, though perhaps on the right track in that he sensed the passage was concerned to establish the legitimacy of something or someone, reverses the truth. Zeus, not these dumb creatures, is being justified, and quite explicitly. Zeus *earns* the alliance of Zelos, Nike, Kratos, and Bie by promising to guarantee proper honors (392–396) and by keeping this promise (399–403). The traditional phrase, ἡ θέμις ἐστίν (396 with West *ad loc.*), is not, I submit, being used casually. On the contrary, the upholding of θέμις by Zeus is being given a clear definition. His justice consists in his guaranteeing to the gods the enjoyment of their due τιμαί, including correction of abuses by Kronos (392–396).<sup>23</sup> In maintaining such a fair and stable order, Zeus upholds θέμις. This passage expresses the *Theogony's* definition of the justice of Zeus, and this justice is what establishes the legitimacy of his monopoly of force (= the attendance of the children of Styx), his right to be king. After coming to this conclusion, I was glad to find that F. M. Cornford had thought it almost too obvious to argue for:

The allegory of the Oath of the gods, bringing Victory, Mastery, and Force to the newly enthroned King is transparent enough. Zeus takes an oath, at his coronation, to confirm the rights and privileges of his courtiers, and his own rule will last so long as he keeps his pledge.<sup>24</sup>

It is time to return to his view.

<sup>21</sup>See the neglected article of E. M. Bradley, "The Relevance of the Prooemium to the Design and Meaning of Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Symbolae Osloenses* 41 (1966) 29–47. R. P. Martin, "Hesiod, Odysseus, and the Instruction of Princes," *TAPA* 114 (1984) 29–48.

<sup>22</sup>The four abstractions represent political dominance, with their order quite possibly reinforcing the analysis. First comes Zelos (Rivalry, Ambition, "the spirit of Zeal in the Vindication of one's rights"—Frazer [above, n. 17] 52), then Nike is achieved. This triumph confirms Kratos, interpreted as Power or Sovereignty (Fränkel, *FestReitz* 12 = *Wege* 325; Schwenn [above, n. 12] 98–99; κρατεῖ in 403 reveals the allegory). Given that these beings are invented for the sake of justifying Zeus' control of them, does the final position of Bie imply that this force, though clearly relevant to the Titanomachy (689), is especially that wielded by the ruler once installed?

<sup>23</sup>On ἐπιβαύω in 396, see L. Gernet, *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece* (Baltimore 1981) 177–179 (= *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* [Paris 1968] 223–227).

<sup>24</sup>F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge 1952) 222. Cf. his *From Religion to Philosophy* (London 1912; repr. New York 1957) 21–31. A similar idea is glimpsed in R. Hirzel, *Der Eid* (Leipzig 1902) 171. The researches of W. Luther, "Wahrheit" und "Lüge" im ältesten Griechentum (Leipzig 1935) 121–152, H. Diller, "Hesiod und die Anfänge der griech-

A major reason for misunderstanding has been that the fascination with the nature of the children of Styx has obscured the reference to *all* the gods (402–403). But the keeping of his promises by Zeus to all the gods is the central final point of the passage. Note the emphasis: αὐτως πάντεσσι διαμπερές (402; cf. 391–396). 402–403 is the poem's single most important sentence justifying Zeus.<sup>25</sup> The explanation is exactly that given throughout the poem. Zeus pledges to respect everyone's due rights (μὴ τιν' ἀπορραΐσειν γέραων, 393), to guarantee θέμις (396). *This explicit link between τιμαί and receiving one's proper τιμαί and γέρας in 391–396 helps to make clear that the other mentions in the poem of distribution of honors by Zeus, such as 73–74,<sup>26</sup> are indeed equivalent to a statement of his justice.* The protection of τιμαί is what differentiates his regime from that of Kronos. As the theme of μήτις is capped in 886–900, so that of θέμις is brought to a climax in the second marriage of Zeus, to Themis herself (901–906).

In another passage, toward the end of the poem (881–885), it is surprising to find the gods acting collectively to elect Zeus as king and divider of honors after the battle with the Titans.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥα πόνον μάκαρες θεοὶ ἐξετέλεσαν,  
 Τιτῆνεσσι δὲ τιμῶν κρίναντο βίηφι,  
 δὴ ῥα τότε ὤτρυνον βασιλευμένῃ δὲ ἀνάσσειν  
 Γαίης φραδμοσύνησιν Ὀλύμπιον εὐρύσπα Ζῆν  
 ἀθανάτων· ὁ δὲ τοῖσιν εὖ διεδάσσατο τιμάς.

But this text is truly difficult only if Zeus is viewed as a clever strong man. To define the “political” aspect of Zeus’ regime, as it appears here, in Brown’s Machiavellian terms of intelligent alliances misses Hesiod’s dis-

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ischen Philosophie,” *Antike und Abendland* 2 (1946) 140–151 = *Hesiod*, ed. E. Heitsch (Darmstadt 1966, Wege der Forschung 44) 688–707, M. Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris 1967) and *Crise agraire et attitude religieuse chez Hésiode* (Brussels 1963, Collection *Latomus* 68) 32–51, and P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore 1977), which investigate the concept of truth and its connections to justice in Hesiod and elsewhere in early Greek thought, complement this interpretation of Styx.

<sup>25</sup>Schwenn, (above, n. 12) 100, interprets ὥς . . . ἐξετέλεσσε (402–403) as a timeless aorist: “Daran schliesst Hesiodos noch eine Prädikation des Höchsten: ‘Wie diesmal, so hält Zeus immer seine Versprechungen’.” Cf. P. Walcot, “Hesiod’s Hymns to the Muses, Aphrodite, Styx, and Hecate,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 34 (1958) 5–14, at 9: “An epilogue, which stresses the present continuity of Zeus’ reign, rounds off the story (402–403).” These remarks are helpful insofar as they serve to bring out that this bit of history is integral to the present good order which Zeus still ensures. Indeed, the ambiguity of the skilfully placed aorist would seem to have just this purpose. But Schwenn and Walcot miss the importance of all the gods (392 f.) and so think 402 merely an epilogue. Again, it is a key sentence in the whole poem. Hesiod’s consciousness of it as his true conclusion is shown by the displacement of ὥς from 401, where it ought to be if the children of Styx were the climax (see the parallels with Hekate and Prometheus, above, n. 7), to 402.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. 346–348, 412 ff., 520, 881–885, 904.



tinctly Greek reflections on what constitutes the “political.”<sup>27</sup> Far from putting himself “beyond good and evil,” Zeus submits to a normative order (θέμις) from the beginning of his story and founds a κοινωνία.<sup>28</sup> Only after showing that Zeus is acting in the cause of θέμις (383–403) does Hesiod release him to the series of his struggles with Kronos (453–506), Prometheus (507–616), the Titans (617–735), and Typhoeus (820–880).

This interpretation also provides an answer to the puzzle of how Styx rather than some other god comes to have these children. The accepted view has been that Styx as oath exerts force on him who swears. “Die nahe Verwandtschaft zwischen den vier und der Eideskraft können wir dahin verstehen, dass im Streit, nach altem Recht, der Eid den Prozess zugunsten des Schwörenden entscheidet.”<sup>29</sup> None of these four abstractions, however, appears in 775–806 where the dread oath goes into action. Nor is this surprising, since only Bie among them really has any chance to fit this punitive role.

Such an approach disregards the historical act of Styx becoming the oath. It implies that a natural causal relationship exists between Styx and her children, as in the case of Eris and Horkos (226–232). Just as Eris produces Horkos, so does Styx produce Bie. But it was by taking this unique narrative seriously as history that we could see its main point of establishing the

<sup>27</sup>In fact, according to I. Berlin, “The Originality of Machiavelli,” in *Against the Current* (Harmondsworth 1982) 25–79, Brown’s reading of Machiavelli is mistaken (Brown’s view is that of B. Croce—see Berlin 53 for Croce’s comment that Machiavelli was the discoverer of “politics which is beyond moral good and evil”). Berlin argues that Machiavelli’s concept of political morality was classical, that is, he did not deny moral legitimacy to the wielding of power in order to establish and maintain a state. Whatever the right assessment of Machiavelli, the problem of classical scholars reading τὰ πολιτικά more or less cynically as “politics” is a perennial one (see following note).

<sup>28</sup>Adkins, (above, n. 4) 49 (cf. 60), follows Brown in thinking the political deals of Zeus are mutually exclusive of his justice: “Zeus’s administration of the universe is a political one, based on *moirai* of time . . . not on justice.” C. J. Herington, in a review of D. J. Conacher’s *Aeschylus’ Prometheus Bound. A Literary Commentary* (Toronto 1980), says that Conacher views the trilogy’s final settlement between Zeus and Prometheus as “a political deal, just that” (Herington’s italics, *Phoenix* 36 [1982] 82). Herington goes on to remark that this cynical interpretation is characteristic of our time. I am not at all sure that Herington reads Conacher accurately, but the point is that for Aeschylus and his audience a fair and stable arrangement of either the divine government or a human πόλις is a fine achievement which, so far from excluding justice (θέμις, δίκη), is synonomous with it. The evidence of the *Birds* and Plato’s *Protagoras*, which may well reflect the Aeschylean trilogy, suggests the Greek attitude: in the comedy Prometheus helps the birds get from Zeus εὐβουλία, εὐνομία, and σωφροσύνη (1539–40; Eunomia, helpful “to mortals,” is born of Zeus and Themis at *Th.* 901–903) and in Plato Zeus gives mortals ἡ πολιτικὴ τέχνη, but this is not μῆτις, nor a capacity for “making deals,” but the same as ἡ πολιτικὴ ἀρετή, namely, δίκη and αἰδώς (322–323a).

<sup>29</sup>Fränkel, *FestReitz* 12, who is echoed by Schwenn (above, n. 12) 99 and Walcot (above, n. 25) 9–10. Solmsen (above, n. 2) 33, n. 102, denies this idea: “I can find no trace of this thought in Hesiod,” and Fränkel lost confidence in this view (*Wege* 326).

justice of Zeus. Solmsen's discussion is better on these points, since he firmly denies a natural fit between mother and children. "The poet's primary idea was not that the mother of Nike and the three others must be Styx but that what Zeus needs to secure his rule is these four powers."<sup>30</sup> Styx is important in 383–403 because of what she does (help Zeus), and this act explains who she becomes. Her children do not belong to her apart from this narrative.

The significance of Styx can only be fully understood in the context of oaths in the Hesiodic poems generally. Their obvious importance in the *Works and Days* is matched by that of Styx in the *Theogony*.<sup>31</sup> Hesiod thought deeply about the importance of keeping one's word and came to the conclusion that it was the foundation for a civilized society.<sup>32</sup> Zeus establishes his justice and legitimacy by making promises to respect the rights of others and by doing so. Presented as *aition* for the closeness of Styx's children to Zeus (386–388), the narrative (389–403) later only mentions this fact (401) submerged in the story of Zeus' promises. We see them offered (392–396), accepted (397–398), and fulfilled (399–403). Promising is the subject of the story. The first great instance of Zeus' good faith came with Styx, and a whole verse is devoted to the announcement (397). It is fitting, then, that Zeus reward her by making her the oath for the gods (399–400). As such, she commemorates and symbolizes the inauguration of the regime of Zeus.

The later role of Styx (775–806) complements the earlier passage.<sup>33</sup> Having been told how and why Styx became the oath for the gods, we now see her functioning as such. Oaths upon Styx serve to settle any future *ἐρις* and *νείκος* (782) that arise under the otherwise peaceful reign of Zeus. Logic

<sup>30</sup>Solmsen (above, n. 2) 32–34; the quotation is from 33.

<sup>31</sup>On Horkos in *Th.* 231–232, see the excellent commentary of Fränkel, *FestReitz* 9–10 = *Wege* 323.

<sup>32</sup>See Hirzel (above, n. 24) 132, n. 4, for the later equivalent idea that the oath holds together democracy (cf. 3, n. 1); W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 250–254.

<sup>33</sup>Solmsen, "The Earliest Stages in the History of Hesiod's Text," *HSCP* 86 (1982) 1–31, at 16, has reversed his defense (in *Hesiod and Aeschylus* and his OCT edition of 1970) of 720–819: "Least Hesiodic of all is to my mind the account of Styx in vv. 775–806." He finds that this passage, which he rightly observes served as a model for "Empedocles' message about the sin and expiation of fallen daimons" (B115, on which see below), is "a good example of what under the influence of Dodds' great book we regard as manifestations of a guilt culture." For the possible echo of pollution for homicide in 775–806, see J. G. Frazer's note, *Apollodorus* 1 (London and Cambridge, Mass. 1939 Loeb Classical Library) 218–219. But this aspect of the passage does not justify a post-Hesiodic date. See R. Parker's *Miasma* (Oxford 1983), esp. 104–143, and my remarks in "The Myth of Ixion and Pollution for Homicide in Archaic Greece," *CJ* 81 (1986) 193–208. Fundamental on *Th.* 775–806 is J. Rudhardt, *La thème de l'eau primordiale dans la mythologie grecque* (Bern 1971) 93–97 and *passim*. If the passage is not by Hesiod, we are interpreting a poet who may be considered to have developed Hesiod's text sympathetically.

breaks down in the realm of divine origins, but the strength of the Stygian oath appears both to support and be supported by the regime of Zeus. It may be suggested that one train of thought which contributed to Hesiod's conception of Styx was as follows: How could an oath upon Styx have the irrefragable force which tradition attests it does? Answer: just as among mortals preservation of oaths is necessary for a civilized society, so among the gods the strength of the Stygian oath must be linked to the guardianship of the order of Zeus. This link is what makes it nearly the strongest force known in the cosmos. It is interesting to note the promissory and assertive aspects of the original "Stygian" oath of Zeus in 383–403 and the normal oaths upon Styx in 775–806.<sup>34</sup> By maintaining his promise to honor her as the oath of the gods (383–403; a promissory act), Zeus supports the oath, and his rule is supported by the oath's settling of disputes (775–806; assertive oaths). Thus Hesiod, in one of his typical but unappreciated syntheses, was able to combine his explanation of the origins of the Stygian oath with his narrative of the establishment of θέμις by Zeus. The poem contains an implication that Zeus could not preserve his power, that is, his alliance with the children of Styx, if he broke his original Stygian oath which was the act of foundation and justification for his regime.

In lieu of a fuller discussion of the final passage on Styx, the unity of the *Theogony*, and, in both poems, the significance of oaths, these brief remarks are necessarily incomplete. But the thesis advanced here only extends that of Solmsen in *Hesiod and Aeschylus* another step, and in a direction that brings the *Theogony* closer to the *Works and Days*. In terms of the techniques of the *Theogony*, this interpretation suggests that there is a coherent theme about the θέμις of Zeus in the poem which is parallel to that of μῆτις.<sup>35</sup>

The issue of whether later Greeks understood the *Theogony* in this way should, however, be mentioned, especially since confusion is easy on this point. Certainly the violence of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus was the *pièce de résistance* in later attacks on the morality of the gods of epic. Plato in the *Republic* (377d–378d) refers to the story as the first traditional tale to be censored (τὸ μέγιστον καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων ψεύδος ὁ εἰπὼν οὐ καλῶς ἐψεύσατο). But we must separate the question whether Plato believed Hesiod's stories, which no one would claim, from the question whether he could have been aware of a moral justification of Zeus in the text of the *Theogony* and chosen to ignore it. There would, I think, be cause for concern if we blithely discovered a "hidden" meaning in a Greek text which

<sup>34</sup>Hirzel (above, n. 24) 2–7 on the basic distinction between the two types; 176–82 for his theory that the assertive Stygian oaths of *Tb.* 775–806 are "older" than the promissory Stygian oaths in Homer.

<sup>35</sup>S. Saïd, "Les combats de Zeus et le problème des interpolations dans la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode," *REG* 90 (1977) 183–210, at 191, remarks appropriately that Zeus is characterized by βίη, μῆτις, and θέμις.

Plato did not recognize. But given his interest in religious reform and the particular contexts of his dialogues, the argument from the silence in his work about such an interpretation is worth little. Moreover, Plato would have read an earlier Greek philosophical poet who seems to have understood Hesiod's link between Styx and the order of Zeus, since his work contains similar ideas. Empedocles, in a fragment inspired by *Th.* 775–806,<sup>36</sup> says that a daimon who has shed blood will wander for 30,000 years apart from the immortals (B115). This exile is decreed by an “oracle of Necessity” (Ἀνάγκης χρήμα), which is sealed with mighty oaths (πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκους). In fragment 30 we hear of the mighty oath (πλατέος παρ' ἐλήλαται ὄρκου) which grants to Neikos its period of honor (ἐς τιμὰς τ' ἀνόρουσε). The banishment of the daimon in fr. 115 and the language about the τιμή of Neikos in fr. 30 echo, respectively, *Theogony* 775–806 and Hesiod's general concept of order as the τιμαί guaranteed by Zeus. The debt to Hesiod must also include the role of this extraordinary oath, which, as in Hesiod, is a key in producing the exile. G. Vlastos, without any reference to Hesiod, has explicated its connection to justice. “We may thus infer that ‘mighty oath’ in Empedocles, like ‘strong *Ananke*’ in Parmenides, alludes to the orderliness of existence [the proper apportionment of τιμαί] conceived under the aspect of justice.”<sup>37</sup> These words about the connection in Empedocles of this oath to justice fit well Styx in the *Theogony*, and Empedocles must be considered not just to have taken certain terms and imagery from Hesiod, but to have understood Styx in the *Theogony* as an intimate guarantor of the divine order.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the fragments of Empedocles tend to confirm the interpretation advanced here.

The passages on Styx in the *Theogony*, therefore, probe the moral basis of political power more fundamentally than anything else in Homer or Hesiod. The *Theogony* represents the beginnings of Greek political theory. (Strictly speaking, it does so obliquely in that it deals with the gods, not a human πόλις.) A chieftain in Homer inherits the sceptre from his father, and the standing of the house can be raised or lowered by its military prowess. Yet despite the implication in both Homeric epics that rulers ought to be just, the traditional and inherited basis for kingship remains unchallenged.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Cf. above, n. 33. I follow the text of G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 193 f., 245, who also discusses its debt to *Th.* 775–806.

<sup>37</sup>See his discussion in “Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies,” in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* 1, eds. D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen (London and New York 1970) 63–65 = *CP* 42 (1947) 160–161. For the high status of Styx, cf Arist. *Met.* 983b30–34.

<sup>38</sup>There may be a glance at Styx in Empedocles' στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες (B115, line 12), since Hesiod seems to link the name of Styx to the corresponding adjective (στυγερή, 775–776).

<sup>39</sup>In the *Iliad*, Achilles' withdrawal from Agamemnon's authority because he feels the king has violated his proper standing (τιμή), though reflecting similar ideas to those in the *Theogony*, does not lead to the deeper analysis of the Hesiodic poem. Diomedes agrees Zeus' gift of the sceptre to Agamemnon means he is to be honored above all others, even if he is personally unworthy (9.37–39).

Hesiod, on the other hand, has thought through for himself the very foundations of a ruler's legitimacy. Even Zeus must swear and is bound to uphold *θέμις*. Monopoly of the means of force, Hesiod found, needs a moral basis. From this simple and obvious thought springs an unending search in theory, for its proper definition, and in action, for its realization.

The relation between these ideas and political practice in Hesiod's time is uncertain. The late eighth century—if that is about the right date for the poems—begins a long period of tremendous political creativity throughout the Greek world.<sup>40</sup> Is Hesiod's narrative a reflection of current political innovations aimed at curbing the power of individual aristocrats (or kings at Sparta) or co-ordinating the sharing of power among them? That is, the oath of Zeus may well reflect that of a magistrate agreed upon by the community.<sup>41</sup> These innovations must have been accompanied by much debate, and all four of the surviving early epic poems do, in fact, contain an intense interest in the proper wielding of political power.<sup>42</sup> We can make an educated guess where Hesiod fits into such debate. The dominating political thought in a society tends to reflect the outlook of those who hold the power and may be termed "radical" to the extent that an idea is pushed beyond what the current social circumstances or people's minds seem able to accommodate.<sup>43</sup> The *Theogony* must be considered at least progressive, and the very formulation of more explicit political ideas can have radical implications. But there are reasons to limit this approach to Hesiod. The concern with the same issues in the Homeric poems shows that the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are not peculiar, and we should remember Solmsen's elo-

<sup>40</sup>The Athenian archonship is dated from at least 682 and possibly earlier (T. J. Cadoux, "The Athenian Archons from Kreon to Hypsichides," *JHS* 68 [1948] 70–123; R. S. Stroud, "State Documents in Archaic Athens," in *Athens Comes of Age. From Solon to Socrates* [Princeton, N.J. 1978] 20–42). The ephors in Sparta are associated with the Eurypontid king Theopompus (ca 720–675) and seem to belong within the eighth century (even if the chronographers' date of 754 for the first eponymous ephor is considered unreliable; see W. den Boer, *Laconian Studies* [Amsterdam 1954] 197–212 for the link to Theopompus; P. Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia* [London 1979] 102 ff. on Spartan history at the time). Most significantly, the *prytaneia* among the Bacchiads at Corinth, initiated in 747 or, given the development of Corinth, surely soon thereafter, was known quite likely to Hesiod (J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* [Oxford 1984] 55 ff.). Moreover, the founding of colonies forced discussion and creation of political institutions.

<sup>41</sup>On oaths of Athenian archons see *Ath. Pol.* 3.3, 7.1, 55.5, of ephors see Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 15.7.

<sup>42</sup>Cartledge (above, n. 40) 123 describes the outlook of the Partheniai of Sparta, the malcontents who founded Taras probably in the last decade or so of the eighth century: "why should a family-tree—and pre-eminently descent from Herakles—give a man the right to cheat, oppress, dominate and impoverish his fellows? It is no accident that the Partheniai were contemporaries of Hesiod."

<sup>43</sup>In the 20 years before the American Declaration of Independence initially progressive or even radical ideas moved swiftly into the center, not least because they fit the actual situation of the colonies. See B. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967).

quent account of how the poem's conservatism toward many of the older gods is ultimately Hesiod's own.<sup>44</sup> The poet may, in fact, only be expressing a fairly widespread contemporary notion. The unexpectedly democratic "election" of Zeus by the other gods was remarked upon earlier (*Th.* 881–885). But the idea of "democracy" in the sense that a majority of the community members has taken control from the aristocrats is not to be attributed to Hesiod. One looks in vain in Hesiod for any notion that nobles should not rule.<sup>45</sup> Hence, we must not think too much in class terms. In areas where one person was not dominant, aristocrats, artisans, and modest farmers like Hesiod (or the sort of person to whom the *Works and Days* is addressed) could all have supported the appointment of magistrates. One hoped that they would be accountable.

The institution of magistrates was probably in its barest infancy in Hesiod's day, and, of course, other practices might have prompted the oath of Zeus. The use of oaths in judicial settlements (δίκαι) would suffice to account for their role in the *Theogony*; and βασιλείς whose positions we cannot define simply as either "magistrate" or "ruler" might have sworn to uphold θέμιστες, perhaps when sitting as judges. Aristotle, in his account of βασιλείς in heroic times (κατὰ τοὺς ἡρωικοὺς χρόνους), says that in judging δίκαι, some raised the sceptre and swore, others did not (τοῦτο δ' ἐποιοῦν οἱ μὲν οὐκ ὀμνύοντες οἱ δ' ὀμνύοντες· ὁ δ' ὄρκος ἦν τοῦ σκήπτρου ἐπανάστασις, *Pol.* 1285b2–12).<sup>46</sup> Whether this describes a promise to judge fairly or a form of pronouncing the decision, in which the oath asserted it to be a fair one, there would seem to be an attempt at a moral-religious sanction on the actions of the βασιλείς.

Hesiod's insistence that broken oaths bring retribution is clearly prompted by too much experience to the contrary. Autolycus, the grandfather of Odysseus, not any fifth-century Athenian, was famous for deceitful swear-

<sup>44</sup>Solmsen (above, n. 2) 66–75.

<sup>45</sup>The eighth- and seventh-century settlement at Emporio in Chios has revealed a large house on the hilltop surrounded by a low defensive wall enclosing several acres. The house and its lord dominated a village of about 500 below. J. Boardman, *Excavations in Chios 1952–1955. Greek Emporion* (London 1967, BSA Supp. 6). This arrangement may not have existed everywhere, but it does illustrate that although Hesiod could demand justice of such men, a replacement of them as rulers was not yet conceivable. W. G. Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy 800–400* (New York and Toronto 1966) 60; *CAH* 3, 3.228. P. W. Rose, "Class Ambivalence in the *Odyssey*," *Historia* 24 (1975) 129–149, suggests that the *Odyssey* and *Theogony* conceive an idealized monarchy, perhaps with some nostalgia, that presents a sharp contrast to the contemporary gift-gobbling aristocrats denounced in the *Works and Days*, but his distinction between monarchy and aristocracy (as political types, leaving aside evaluation of them) is a dubious one for the period (J. V. Andreiev, "Könige und Königsherrschaft in den Epen Homers," *Klio* 61 [1979] 361–384).

<sup>46</sup>For the sceptre raised in an oath see *Il.* 7.411–412, 10.321, 328; cf. 1.233–239; 2.205–206; 9.156, 298; *Od.* 11.568–571.

ing (*Od.* 19.395 f.).<sup>47</sup> The underdeveloped political and legal institutions of Hesiod's day were soon to give way to tyranny and other reformatations in the face of the social pressures glimpsed in his poetry. Such changes are usually based on some acts or threat of force. But when, for instance, the Kleisthenic Council was at last inaugurated in Athens, a new oath was devised for the councillors (*Ath. Pol.* 22.2). Moral ideas are also essential to the maintenance of a government, as recognized first by Hesiod.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Hirzel (above, n. 24) 41–52.

<sup>48</sup>I would like to thank Brigham Young University for a grant to complete this research.