

VII. Linear B and Hesiod's Breadwinners

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To Margarete Bieber on the Occasion of her Eightieth Birthday.

Since antiquity Hesiod's *Theogony* has enjoyed a greater cultural prestige than his *Works and Days*.^{*} By the former work, as we all know from Herodotus, Hesiod helped create for the Greeks "the history of their gods."¹ In contrast Heraclitus condemned Hesiod as the "teacher of most men," possibly, as Solmsen points out, because "most men" implied the inarticulate "masses."² It was these masses, certainly, whom the poet instructed by his *Erga*, a poem also scorned by the Spartans as an epic for serfs.³

Today, even when we regard the *Erga* with greater charity, we search the poem in vain for that saving grace of the true literary georgic, that "sense of the symbolic solemnity of agricultural processes" which we associate with the pastoral masters.⁴ But this desire of ours is misdirected. Hesiod could not have regarded Nature with feelings of spiritual or metaphysical rapport, since these are attitudes of a later and contemplative stage of both

* I should like to thank Professor Paul Alexander of the University of Michigan for reading the manuscript as well as for his invaluable suggestions and encouragement. I am also grateful for the information received from Mrs. Eva Brann of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J., and from Mr. Nicholas Christodoulou, Professor of Comparative Agriculture at the University of Athens.

¹ Herodotus 2.53.

² Heraclitus, frs. B57 and B40, in H. Diels-W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*⁶ (Berlin 1951); F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 103.

³ Epic for serfs: This scorn would be especially true after the 8th century when Sparta was evolving an economy based on serfdom. Within Hesiod's own time master and mistress still worked along with their slaves, just as they had in Homeric times. It was only after the rise of the exploiting aristocracies during the 7th and through the 5th centuries in some of the Greek states that all labor performed by slaves was brought under a stigma. But even this contempt, though covering handicraft and trade, was not normally extended to agriculture. See R. Schlaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery," *HSCP* 47 (1936) 171. Schlaifer reminds us, for example, that even Solon, himself a merchant, also referred to artisans as the "sons of Athena and Hephaistos."

⁴ Harold Nicolson, "Nature in Greek Poetry," *Proc. of the Cl. Assn.* (Great Britain) 48 (1951) 12. Given as the president's address to the Classical Association, this study by the eminent British writer is one of the most perceptive on the subject. Cf. L. Stella, "Esiado poeta georgico?" *La parola del passato* 5 (Naples 1949) 201-16.

civilization and literature. And even as we misguidedly search in his poem for values that cannot be there, we tend, for that very reason, to underestimate the literary worth of the *Erga* and its vast importance to the cultural development of the Greeks; the two are interlocked. This undervaluation arises when the poem is esteemed as merely a "worthy expression of old peasant culture" or "a compendium of time-honored agricultural instruction."⁵ Now it is true that through his verses Hesiod is passing on old information that is hard and dry with practical detail; but for "most men" it was news, since, as I hope to show, the practice of intensive and relatively large-scale agriculture in Greece was a new experience for a large proportion of the population at the time.⁶ While it is also true that Hesiod's information is sometimes deficient, we must remember that he did not compose the *Erga* as a Dean of Agriculture any more than he wrote the *Theogony* as a Theologian.⁷ Yet the two poems are of equal cultural importance, one as the introduction and definition of the new stage of Olympian religion, and the other of a new stage of agrarian economy.

It is his hectoring tone, hectoring beyond even the usual tone of that didactic age, which first alerts one to the fact that in the *Erga* Hesiod is a poet with a mission. Were he merely trying to convince his public of old and widely practised truths, he would not feel impelled to such strenuous instruction; what he is doing is asserting old truths in a new range of application. His tone, which so often seems that of a dour old crab, is really that of a profoundly harried man who feels himself in command of an important new vision, who is forced to an intense awareness

⁵ R. Cantarella, "Elementi primitivi nella poesia esiodea," *Rivista indo-greca-italica di filologia* 15 (1931) fasc. 3-4, 1-45.

⁶ The time referred to is the latter half of the 8th century, with Hesiod's floruit ca. 700 B.C.: H. T. Wade-Gery, "Hesiod," *Phoenix* 3 (1949) 87. F. Jacoby *CQ* 35 (1941) 109. I refer to the poem as the *Erga* rather than by its more usual title of *Works and Days*, to indicate that the arguments in this paper can stand on the evidence of the *Works* section alone and need not depend on the *Days*, a section whose authorship has been more often questioned (cf. vv. 765-828). For arguments against the Hesiodic authorship of this section see M. Nilsson, *Archiv. f. Religionswiss.* 14 (1911) 438 ff. and F. Solmsen (above, note 2) 76, note 1.

⁷ But as Wade-Gery points out (above, note 6) 86, Hesiod did not conceive of himself as a scientist rather than an entertainer. In the *Theogony* he was offering not a dogma but a hypothesis as to the nature of the gods and the universe. The *Erga* goes further and represents a *working hypothesis* which needs only practical, immediate application to demonstrate its pertinence.

by the economic changes that had occurred since the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization and the arrival and settlement of the Dorians. By this change is meant a slow but major shift in the kind of food consumed from the Mycenaean through the Early Geometric period. This change is reflected in Hesiod's own text and brought into even sharper focus by contrast with Homeric texts and, particularly, by monumental evidence and also by the new data deduced so far from documents of Linear B.

First, then, let us turn back to the Homeric poems for evidence of the food habits of the earlier Greeks. From these literary works we know that the epic heroes did not merely eat; they feasted on meat and wine frequently taken without reference to any other food.⁸ When other fare is included, in the *Iliad* at least, it is never *artos*, "bread," but either *alphita leuka*, "white barley" or "groats" as we commonly call them, or else it is something less readily identifiable, called *sitos*. Both these terms require closer examination because their use has frequently been misunderstood.⁹

In the case of the *alphita*, the translators are led to violate the reading of it when it appears in connection with roast meat. Regularly they would sprinkle the flesh with those groats without stopping to realize that, on flesh already roasted, uncooked flakes or grains of threshed barley would merely slide off, particularly if these were as coarse and granular as groats normally are.¹⁰ If, on the other hand, the grains were precooked and moist and then smeared on the roasted meat, this would hardly make for a palatable dish. Also, on uncooked flesh raw grains would merely scorch when exposed to the heat, as would eventually even cooked cereal. In either usage, then, the sprinkling or smearing of groats on meat, raw or cooked, is an incorrect interpretation grammatically, practically, and gastronomically. The only time that such a combination of ingredients does take place, however, is during the performance of a sacrifice in the *Odyssey* when there is strewn upon the flesh a *spear* of barley, *alphitou aktēi*, unthreshed grain, for a symbolic, not an actual meal.¹¹ But for practical

⁸ *Il.* 1.470 ff., 2.421 ff., 7.465 ff.

⁹ A. Jardé, *Les céréales dans l'antiquité grecque* (Paris 1925) 4.

¹⁰ As for instance: *Il.* 18.559-60, *Od.* 14.77 in the translation of A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Lib.

¹¹ *Od.* 14.429. The Loeb translation is incorrect in ignoring the *aktēi* and rendering the barley simply as "meal." *Aktē* here has the meaning that it does in the Hesiodic *Sc.* 290, of *unthreshed* grain, and in his *Erga* 505, 897.

eating purposes these foods are not actually combined, as we see in the following two instances where they are clearly served separately as dinner fare:

ὀπτήσας δ' ἄρα πάντα φέρων παρέθηκε' Ὀδυσῆϊ
θέρμ' αὐτοῖς ὀβελοῖσιν· ὁ δ' ἄλφιτα λευκὰ πάλυνεν.¹²

"Thus when he had roasted everything, he brought and set it before Odysseus, hot upon the spits. He, then, spread out [doled out] the white barley groats, ἄλφιτα λευκὰ πάλυνεν." The reading clearly does not say that Odysseus sprinkled the groats *upon* the meat, as it is rendered in translation. Once again, in the *Iliad*, there is the same juxtaposition, not admixture, of ingredients: "... and heralds apart beneath an oak were making ready a feast and were dressing a great ox they had slain for sacrifice." The passage continues:

αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες
δείπνον ἐρίθοισιν λεύκ' ἄλφιτα πολλὰ πάλυνον.

"and the women, in turn, doled [or spread] out the dinner for the workmen, much white barley."¹³ Here the barley is simply synonymous with "dinner."

Yet though the reading and common sense force us to keep separate the barley and the meat this way, other problems arise thereby, for man cannot digest plain, dry groats. We have to suppose that they had been precooked and made palatable somehow.¹⁴ A knowledge of plain cookery or of the food habits of those who today consume groats would seem to supply the answer: there was either poured over the precooked grain, or else simply cooked with it, milk, or water if they had nothing else, or, more likely, since they were Greeks, they combined the stuff with wine as they still do today. We seem also to have contemporary literary confirmation for this when in the *Odyssey* Circe bids Odysseus appease the ghosts of the dead in the underworld with a libation which is in the nature of a meal: "first with mild honey, thereafter with sweet wine, and in the third place with water and strew on it white barley groats." In the next book Odysseus

¹² *Od.* 14.76-7.

¹³ *Il.* 18.558-60.

¹⁴ On the necessity for precooking groats and all grain for human consumption, whether as cereal, bread, pasta, or pastry, see L. Moritz's excellent new study, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford 1958) 145 ff.

carries out her instructions exactly.¹⁵ Similarly, when Hecamede mixes for Nestor and his guests that potion of Pramnian wine, a sweet raisin wine, which so revives them, she sees fit to thicken and fortify the thin liquid with grated goat's cheese and white barley.¹⁶

That Homeric men ate *alphita* and that it was an essential part of their diet begins to be clear from the passage in the *Odyssey* in which the duties of a servant woman of the household are described: "And a woman grinding at the mill uttered a word of omen from within the house hard by, where the mills of the shepherd of the people [Odysseus] were set. At these mills twelve women in all were wont to ply their tasks, making meal of barley wheat, the marrow of men."¹⁷ Now these mills were not the great ones of a professional miller, powered by beasts and producing for mass consumption, since, as Moritz has effectively shown, such large-scale methods were not introduced until Roman times.¹⁸ Instead, Odysseus' maids used small, individual saddle- (i.e. hand-) querns, indicative of a primitive and limited stage of grain preparation.¹⁹ But notwithstanding the limitations of preparation, grain was regarded as the "staff of life," as is indicated by the eloquent epithet, "the marrow of men"—which is not to assume, however, that the "marrow of men" was in the shape of hard bread; for the image suggests something soft and moist like marrow or porridge.

¹⁵ *Od.* 10.518 ff, 11.26 ff. In regard to providing this kind of fare for the dead, we are reminded of the rites held on the "Feast of the Pots," the "Chytroi," which was the last day of the three-day festival of the Anthesteria, and which was given up to the tendance of the dead and to the eating of cereal porridge, "the most ancient kind of food, more archaic than bread." Cf. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 112, 113, note 1; A. R. Burn, *The World of Hesiod* (London 1936) 62.

¹⁶ *Il.* 11.638 ff. This passage would suggest that they also practiced adding cheese to their wine-porridge. By way of experiment I have cooked groats with wine and at the end added grated Parmesan cheese to it. Served with wild duck, this dish supplemented as successfully as wild rice normally does.

¹⁷ *Od.* 20.105-8.

¹⁸ L. Moritz (above, note 14) *passim*, but esp. chapter 6, "The Saddle-Quern in Classical Greece." Mr. Moritz and I came to this conclusion independently. Both of us were guided by the absence of any absolutely conclusive archaeological evidence for the use of large mill-stones in the early period. Mr. Moritz, who has pursued the problem with great penetration, has found no certain evidence or literary reference to such a large rotary-mill before 160 B.C., and then not in Greece but in the Roman world (67 and note 5; 140).

¹⁹ In Linear B documents so far, Palmer has proposed to interpret *o-no* as *onos*, "mill-stone," but that term is regarded by J. Chadwick as meaning "price," in E. Bennett, "Mycenaean Tablets II," *TAPhS* 48.1 (1958) 110 (Group Oe108).

Then this same slave woman continues (20.116–19): “May the suitors this day for the last and latest time hold their glad feast in the halls of Odysseus. They that have loosened my limbs with bitter labor, as I made them barley meal. May they now sup their last.” We can assume from this passage, in any case, that the suitors were no exception to the rest of the population in their consumption of barley which, it seems reasonable to suppose, they ate in the form of porridge.

Similarly the word *sitos*, after analysis of its various usages, seems to come to somewhat the same thing. In general the term seems to be a generic one, meaning “grain” or “cereal” as applied to both wheat and barley; it is also synonymous with *food made from grain* as opposed to meat or drink.²⁰ Several times the term is used by Homer in this way, a typical example occurring in the first book of the *Odyssey*, when the “grave housewife brought and set out *sitos* [food], dainties in abundance, giving freely of her store, while a carver lifted up and placed before them platters of all kinds of meats, and set by them gold goblets.”²¹

But what is more specific and striking is the apportionment of *sitos* in “handsome,” i.e. “expensive,” i.e. “metal” baskets, *καλοῖς ἐν κανέοισιν*. This occurs three times in the poems, and the *sitos* is rendered by the translators as “bread,” which would imply that each guest had his own bread basket like an individual bread and butter plate.²² Now there is no reason for scepticism at so formal a table setting, since a wealthy and courtly host need spare no expense or trouble. But we do become sceptical of the need for the individual bread baskets when the swineherd also goes to the trouble to serve the beggared Odysseus and his son in individual ones.²³ But if the *sitos* were in a loose form, like cereal, and the swineherd heaped it up, literally, *parenéneen*, then there might be a real need for such individual dishes.²⁴ Moreover, to

²⁰ *LSJ* s.v. *sitos*. See also *Od.* 17.334–5; *Il.* 8.547, 9.706.

²¹ *Od.* 1.139 ff., tr. by A. T. Murray, Loeb ed. Too often the translator assumes, as here, that this is merely “bread.”

²² *Il.* 9.216, 24.625; *Od.* 20.254.

²³ *Od.* 16.51.

²⁴ It has long occurred to me that there seems to be preserved an embarrassingly high proportion of drinking vessels in all materials in comparison with the number of plates. Perhaps a number of the small deep vessels, with or without handles, were not wine-cups at all but food-bowls or “baskets.” As for the absence of spoons, we may more safely argue *e silentio*, since they would normally be made of materials more perishable than terracotta, such as wood, bone or metal. We do find stray

press the argument further, let us contrast this usage of *sitos* with the two occasions when actual bread, *artos*, is given the disguised hero.²⁵ Then, both times, it is taken *out of a basket* and put unceremoniously into Odysseus' hands.

Furthermore, it is also possible to detect here, with the use of *artos*, that Homer is making simple social distinctions. Perhaps it may be a false impression, but it does seem significant that on the two occasions when his social betters offer the beggared Odysseus food, they choose to give him *artos*. It is true that Telemachus, of gentle disposition, supplements the bread with roast, but the suitors only with sausage, as though bread along with sausage was suitable fare for one in his lowly condition. One cannot help but link this impression with Archilochus' bitter qualification, *doulion arton edôn*, "lowly bread, fit for slaves."²⁶

If we trust to Homeric epic, with its literary and aristocratic bias, we can discern only a partial story of the food habits of these early Greeks. Moreover there is a real question whether Homer is revealing information about contemporary prejudices or about Mycenaean food habits several centuries before his own time. Actually, Mycenaean rubbish and debris indicate a more

references to spoons, of course: Vickery reports the presence of ivory and terracotta ones at Troy. Cf. K. Vickery, *Food in Early Greece* (Urbana 1936) 40. For the preparation of these cereal foods, the great cauldrons, so prized among the ancients, must have made admirable cooking pots. It seems clear now that the *sitos* and *alphita* were probably virtually synonymous and also equivalent to the *far* and *puls* of the Romans, and from which the latter people developed *polenta* after further developments in wheat cultivation. Cf. L. Moritz (above, note 14) 149 and note 10.

Between the time that this article was finished and set up, Mrs. Eva Brann of the Institute for Advanced Study kindly supplied further evidence. She has been working together with Evelyn Smithson on the pottery from the Agora excavations at Athens, and they verify the fact that "Plates are almost entirely absent from the protogeometric [period]. The geometric well deposits (which we always take to consist of household as distinct from ceremonial pottery) contain a far higher proportion of deep skyphoi and bowls as opposed to plates. E.L.S. [Miss Evelyn Smithson] points out that the deep skyphos was a main shape in the protogeometric period. These deep vessels (e.g. Desborough, *Protogeometric Pottery* pl. 10-11; the low-based geometric successor is even more popular, examples in *Hesperia* Suppl. 2, 150 ff.) are commonly taken to be wine-drinking cups—if they were, the early Athenians were a hard-drinking crowd, and one rather hopes that something milder and more nourishing was served in them [sic!] . . . by the way would the Pheidonian calling in of spits have any connection with all this?" Letter from Mrs. Eva Brann, Princeton N.J., Jan. 6, 1959.

²⁵ *Od.* 17.344, 18.120. By the term "bread" we should not assume that this was as yet the familiar raised loaf of either later antiquity or later ages.

²⁶ Cf. Archilochus 2.6, E. Diehl, *Suppl. Lyricum* (Bonn 1917). See also the *doulia maza* of Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1041. *Maza* is a kind of kneaded, unleavened cake.

varied diet. For example, Odysseus' sailors touch fish only twice, "when their bellies are pinched with hunger."²⁷ Yet quantities of seashells are found in Mycenaean trash,²⁸ and fish, squid, and octopus are used repeatedly as decorative motives, even as the decoration on the megaron floor of the palace at Tiryns.²⁹ Similarly, vegetables are rarely mentioned in epic, yet everywhere in the ruins traces are found of peas, chick peas, beans, lentils, vetches, pumpkin seed, parsnip, etc., and fruits like figs, pears, apples, plums, pomegranates.³⁰ In addition, one group of Linear B tablets, possibly a merchant's wholesale account, includes a list of herbs and spices: fennel, cumin, sesame, mint, coriander, safflower both red and white, cress, pennyroyal.³¹ Such condiments are normally not used on roast flesh but are generously applied in the preparation of fish, fowl, salads, cooked vegetables, and wild edible greens. In addition, olive oil was used abundantly with these foods, a fact also corroborated by the recent finds in the House of the Oil Merchant at Mycenae.³²

Hence we have sufficient evidence that olive-growing and horticulture were a considerable, if unheroic, part of the economy; and in fact both Glotz and Vickery declared vegetables more important than grain in the Mycenaean diet.³³ Yet we do find physical traces of various kinds of grain,³⁴ as well as documentation

²⁷ *Od.* 4.368, 12.331.

²⁸ K. Vickery (above, note 24) 75-9. A. Wace, *Mycenae* (Princeton 1949) 106. See also his interesting comments in note 4 on that page.

²⁹ G. Rodenwaldt, *Tiryns* II. *Die Fresken des Palastes* p. xix.

³⁰ K. Vickery (above, note 24) 50-1, 59-60. Cf. A. Wace (above, note 28).

³¹ E. Bennett (above, note 19) 107-10, Class Ge. These were found in the House of the Sphinxes; and Bennett, with reservations, speculates on whether they may not have comprised a merchant's list. Possibly, also, these aromatic herbs may have been used for perfumed unguents as well, as L. Palmer suggests, *Achaeans and Indo-Europeans* (Oxford 1955) 4.

³² K. Vickery (above, note 24) 51 ff. Although there is certainly archaeological and literary evidence for the extensive use of olive oil, especially for bathing purposes, thus far the Mycenaean records dealing with it are surprisingly not very common. Cf. M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge 1956) 217 ff., A. Wace, "The House of the Oil Merchant," *ABSA* 48 (1953) 9-15, G. Mylonas, *Ancient Mycenae* (Princeton 1957) 71-4, and pl. 21, E. Bennett (above, note 19) 6-9 in the introduction by A. Wace.

³³ G. Glotz, *Aegean Civilization* (New York 1925) 162, K. Vickery (above, note 24) 48.

³⁴ K. Vickery (above, note 24) 33, 48-9, 55-6. Also A. Wace (above, note 28) 56, in the so-called Granary building at Mycenae.

for these.³⁵ Linear B records from Pylos, for example, mention quantities of wheat contributed annually to Poseidon, and mention is also made of "meleuron," "flour." Another tablet mentions *me-re-ti-ja*, and *si-to-ko-wo*, who presumably grind and measure grain.³⁶ Then there is the uncertain reading for seventeen *a-to-po-go*, seventeen "bakers," in records in one house at Mycenae.³⁷ However, one must concur with the scepticism of Chadwick and Bennett at the presence of seventeen bakers in one private residence, though less so, perhaps, with the suggestion that this structure may rather have been a palace appendage.³⁸ But this scepticism mounts again when it is pointed out that there is not one clearly designated granary as such in Mycenae,³⁹ and, in fact, from all the Mycenaean sites together we do not have as yet the remains of a single bake-oven. At this point perhaps, mention should also be made of the fact that J. D. S. Pendlebury, in describing the private houses at Knossos, complains of the absence of bread-ovens,⁴⁰ and Evans, in his index to the *Palace of*

³⁵ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 128, 215 ff. (Group Fn). E. Bennett, "The Landholders of Pylos," *AJA* 60 (1956) 104-13, lists numerous entries for what is interpreted as "wheat." Cf. W. E. Brown, "Land Tenure in Mycenaean Pylos," *Historia* 5 (1956) 391.

³⁶ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 123.

³⁷ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 123, 389: "Nom. plur. *artopoguoī* 'bakers.' [*ἀρτοκόπος* Herodotus+, — *πόπος* Poll.+; *—*poguos*, Schwyzler, Gram. 1, 298]." This is one of those words which can be directly equated with Homeric or classical forms, and have corresponding meanings which fit the context of the tablets with virtual certainty, as the authors state on 385.

³⁸ E. Bennett (above, note 19) 96, 106.

³⁹ The so-called "Granary" building just within the Lion-Gate at Mycenae, with its two basement rooms containing storage jars of chaff, grain, and vetches, is now regarded as too imposing to have served as such, and ill-suited for the purpose. But the misnomer has stuck, as a convenient designation. Professor George Mylonas has been kind enough to confirm this for me in conversation.

⁴⁰ *The Archaeology of Crete* (London 1939) 194. Cf. O. Benndorf, *Eranos* (Vienna 1893) 372 ff. As early as 1893 Benndorf remarked on this strange lack of bake-ovens at Troy, Mycenae, and Tiryns. Since then apparently only one large, and presumably, bake-oven has been found, though not in Greece or Crete, but at Troy, and dating from the early second millennium B.C. Cf. C. Blegen, *AJA* 38 (1934) 228 ff. and fig 6. But Wace still remarks on the absence of ovens in the Greek world. See also K. Vickery (above, note 24) 49-50. The so-called "ovens" from Neolithic Thermi, which Vickery discusses, have been discounted by G. Mylonas, *Olynthus*, Pt. I: *The Neolithic Settlement* (Baltimore 1929) 17; also A. Wace and M. S. Thompson, *Prehistoric Thessaly* (Cambridge 1912) 37, note 1. Note also Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 130: "The absence of recognizable bread-ovens from Mycenaean sites has led to some doubt whether some bread was baked (as it certainly was by the Hittites and Semites), but this is resolved by the mention of the trade *arto-poguoī* 'bakers' . . ." As we have seen, there is still considerable doubt as to whether this point has been "resolved."

Minos, does not indicate finds of either bread or ovens. Moreover, as Vickery notes, from early Greece and through the Bronze Age, only a single specimen of bread has been found, and that from a primitive Thessalian site.⁴¹

Furthermore, while Linear B documents inform us of well-defined divisions of labor for Mycenaean workers, "there is one very obvious omission . . . the absence of any word implying that the raising of crops was a specific occupation. . . . This suggests that everyone in addition to his special occupation also farmed a portion of land."⁴² But what does this actually mean in agricultural terms? He who is a shepherd or fuller or a baker has no time to farm. At most, he and his wife can cultivate a little vegetable garden on the side. Moreover, one would think that there would still have to be some sort of categorical designation for those who farmed the land full-time for the palace occupants. If they employed fullers surely they must have employed someone to grow their grain.

There is another curious lack in those Linear B tablets so far, also in terms of man-power necessary for heavy agricultural work: while feminine names and categories are found aplenty for slaves, male names are strikingly fewer, and their manner of listing indicates that the male slaves were not originally free-born captives but the sons of female slaves. In other words, as Ventris and Chadwick conclude, Linear B would seem to corroborate what has long been suspected as historical fact: that all captured women were retained as slaves but few of the men.⁴³ Why so? Simply because large numbers of recalcitrant male captives would be a menace, particularly if there was not enough heavy work to occupy them, the kind of large-scale agricultural operations, for example, which Spartan serfs were to practice at a later date.

Finally Ventris and Chadwick express perplexity over the figures they deduce from the Pylos tablets for densities of sowing. For, if these figures are so interpreted, "absurdly low acreages

⁴¹ K. Vickery (above, note 24) 49–50 notes that only one specimen of bread has ever been found, at Marmariani, and dating from the third or fourth period of the Thessalian series.

⁴² Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 123.

⁴³ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 124, 156. Here too it is suggested that the private raid was the source of supply for female captives and that indeed the Trojan War may have begun as such an operation. For further discussion of the tablets concerning slaves see T. B. Webster, "Homer and the Mycenaean Tablets," *Antiquity* 29 (1955) 12–13, and L. Palmer (above, note 31) 5.

result for the lands if the same rate of sowing is applied as among other ancient peoples.”⁴⁴ In the light of the other deficiencies just considered, such as the lack of equipment like granaries and bake-ovens, the absence of a large male slave labor force, and even of vocabulary denoting agricultural workers proper, it should not be too surprising that the rate of seeding also is inadequate, for clearly the Mycenaeans seem to have been only incidental growers of grain, incidental, that is, when compared to the porridge-eaters of Homer’s own time.

The real staple of the Mycenaeans was meat, supplemented with garden produce prepared with olive oil. Fish also was generously consumed as was a certain amount of grain in the form of porridge. As for bread, it was most likely made, but only in small quantities and either in a pan like a small Dutch oven,⁴⁵ or directly on the hearth, most probably as a flat unleavened cake. It is when bread is consumed in large, staple quantities that large-scale agricultural operations begin and hearths and pans eventually become greatly enlarged and converted into the familiar dome-shaped earth oven of permanent form in every household. But so far, we are reminded, none of these has been found on Mycenaean sites.

In contrast to their modest grain consumption, evidence for meat consumption is abundant. Bones of all kinds of domestic and some game animals have been found in generous quantities on all Mycenaean sites, and naturally so, since bones are not so perishable as peas or porridge.⁴⁶ But Pylos tablets supply more impressive evidence, however, since an inventory of these so far

⁴⁴ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 237. These figures are absurdly low, that is, as compared with figures “quoted for ancient times by Neo-Babylonian texts, by Cicero and Columella, and by the Talmud which are in agreement with those in use today.” This can only indicate that these other ancient peoples were eaters of bread or some form of grain as their main staple.

⁴⁵ L. Moritz (above, note 14) 209 discusses such pans in connection with the *artopta* of Pliny, and the “bread baked on top of the hearth” mentioned by Galen (6.489κ). Perhaps it is such little cakes that Blegen’s little terracotta “Mycenaean Breadwinner” is kneading. *Annuario della scuola archeologica di Atene*, Ser. 8 (1946) 13–16.

⁴⁶ Cf. K. Vickery (above, note 24) *passim*, but esp. 61 ff., and A. Wace (above, note 28) 106. Wace also mentions hunting among the Mycenaeans, both as a sport and as a “means of helping the larder.” Since Neolithic times the Greeks kept cattle, goats, sheep, and swine, with the latter two kinds predominating among the remains. Of fowl, ducks, geese, and pigeons were found. Chickens were introduced at a later date.

records a total of over 12,500 livestock, and, as Ventris and Chadwick comment, "there is good reason to think that the figures recorded only a small percentage of the total flocks."⁴⁷

The linguistic evidence is even more arresting. From the same root come "nómos," in its latest usage meaning "law," and "nomós," a much older derivative signifying "pasture."⁴⁸ Similarly the venerable word "agora," which inevitably invokes images of the intellectual assembly place of Athens, in Linear B denotes "a collecting place for sheep"; and its Mycenaean adjective "agoraïos" means simply "of mixed livestock."⁴⁹

Livestock, indeed, was the principal food of the Mycenaeans, their chief source of wealth and of exchange; it was a way of life and one that colored deeply their vocabulary.⁵⁰ At the time of the collapse of their civilization, the Mycenaeans continued to use meat as their main food—a fact which coincided catastrophically with the food habits of the instreaming Dorians, flock-breeding nomads. By this fusion of two dominantly flesh-eating peoples the economy suffered enormously, particularly during the population increases and developments in the redistribution of land that took place between the ninth and eighth centuries;⁵¹ there was simply not enough land in Greece for pasturing the number of flocks necessary for such a population. This condition became even more acute, of course, because the land had fallen gradually into the possession of relatively few persons, a situation which made even less grazing land available for the rest. But while many aspects of this historical and political situation have long been understood and documented, it is this one point, the changes in food habits brought on by inadequate *pasture* land, which needs clarification and stressing now.

It is a fact that in that early period a single sheep required at

⁴⁷ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 198 ff.

⁴⁸ Cf. *LSJ* s.v. νομός.

⁴⁹ Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 200, 386–7. Note also the form *a-ke-re* = "he collects sheep."

⁵⁰ This is not the place to take up a discussion of the question of land ownership under the Mycenaeans even though it does impinge upon our subject. For discussion of this vexing but extremely important subject, see at least Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) ch. viii; also M. I. Finley, "Homer and Mycenae: Property and Tenure," *Historia* 6 (1957) 133–59.

⁵¹ Cf. A. Burn (above, note 15) 232–3, and J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece* (New York 1937) 99 ff. for the connection between colonization and the changes in the family system of property rights. See also ch. ii *passim*.

least one acre and sometimes more to graze upon.⁵² Until the Greeks learned to make more use of cereal, particularly bread, meat-hunger forced many to depart and colonize elsewhere.⁵³ Today agricultural Greece manages to keep alive some 8,000,000 inhabitants, with improved methods of agriculture and considerable food importation. But the far fewer inhabitants of the eighth century B.C. went hungry for lack of land, grazing land. Moreover, by Homer's and Hesiod's times, the old, relatively stable social conditions were gone. Lords and princes existed, though the spade reveals that for two or three centuries at least they too lived poorly and maintained but meagerly their former, well-provisioned holdings.⁵⁴ In addition Greece was full of infiltrating groups, misplaced persons, turning for the first time to independent farming to survive, to intensive agriculture in which grain really supplants meat as the main staple.⁵⁵ What do we mean by such a diet?

In modern Greece, for instance, the population normally eats at least 1 pound of bread apiece per day and a little less than

⁵² I am much indebted to Mr. Nicholas Christodoulou for corroborating this information. As permanent Under-Secretary of Agriculture, Governor of the Agricultural Bank of Greece, and Professor of Comparative Agriculture at the University of Athens, his knowledge on these matters, of which he has given me unstintingly in conversation and correspondence, has been invaluable. I quote from a letter, dated Nov. 2, 1958, regarding the grazing potential of Greece: "Today there are 4.5 million sheep units (where a cow counts for 7 sheep, a horse for 9, etc.) in the country, and the available land comes to just about one acre apiece. Qualifying points: there is a certain quantity of animal feeds which substitute for grazing. On the other hand I don't believe that in the period under examination [for this paper] the existing livestock were as numerous and the land as exhausted. So I should say that about an acre and a half should be about right."

⁵³ As for the agricultural rather than the commercial motivation for early Greek colonization, see A. R. Burn (above, note 15) 233 and note 1, 250. Also on the non-commercial role of early colonies see J. Hasebroek, *Trade and Politics in Ancient Greece* (London 1933) 66 ff., 103 ff., 106 ff.

⁵⁴ Cf. W. B. Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Ancient Greece*³ (London 1950) 38, 65; M. Nilsson, *Homer and Mycenae* (London 1933) 109, 239, 246 ff.; A. R. Burn (above, note 15) 1 ff.; A. O. Lovejoy, G. Boas and others, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore 1935) 199-221. Something of the helplessness and poverty suffered by the Greeks for two or three centuries after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization seems to be reflected in the Homeric hymns *Hymn to Apollo* 3.190, *Hymn to Hephaestus*, and in Aeschylus *Prometheus* 442-58, and his *Palamedes* fr. 182. For further documentation on the antiprimitivism that appeared in literature as a reaction to the misery of that early time, see Lovejoy, Boas and others, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Cf. H. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece*² (Cambridge 1957) 59. For notes on grain production in Greece by the 4th century B.C. see 50 ff. On the infiltration of Greeks in the early period, see M. I. Finley (above, note 50) 136.

1 pound of meat or fish a week.⁵⁶ A field-hand at harvest-time consumes meat only twice a week, but at least 2 pounds of bread a day, plus filling foods like potatoes and pasta, supplements which since antiquity have taken the place of porridge. Peasant bread, too, is not our urban prefabricated pap, but black, thick-crusted and so dense that a loaf some 15 inches across weighs about 4 to 5 pounds; it is, in other words, as substantial as an equivalent portion of solid beef.⁵⁷ It has to be, if troops like Caesar's were content to march on bread alone and laborers plow their stony furrows.⁵⁸ Yet it was, apparently, several centuries before even bread so substantial as this was to supersede porridge as the dominant dietary staple. Gradually, but only completely by the time of Alexander the Great, did this change come about in the Greek world, and some two centuries later, in the Roman. The Greeks until the Classical Period were, like Plautus's fellow-citizens, "Porridge-munchers." It took several centuries until the ancients learned by painful experience to grow the right wheat and to mill and prepare it for universal bread consumption, as has been very ably and very fully demonstrated by Moritz in his recent, valuable book, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity*.⁵⁹

In the meantime it was hard labor, indeed, to raise sufficient grain in that uncharitable Greek soil for the increased porridge and bread rations. For the first time most free Greek men had to work exhaustingly, consistently, and in enslavement to the

⁵⁶ Mr. Christodoulou comments on this point: "Two lb. [of protein from meat or fish] every three weeks is a closer approximation to the average consumption."

⁵⁷ I am indebted for all this practical information to Miss Margaret Koumbis of the village of Stimanga, Corinth.

⁵⁸ Grain, regardless of how it is prepared, has fats, carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins in large proportions, which are vital to the human body. Moritz notes (above, note 14) xix and note 1, that in modern Great Britain about one-third of the daily caloric intake comes from cereals and that the proportion was probably higher in antiquity when there were no potatoes. Caesar's troops "stave off famine" by subsisting entirely on beef and without bread, "yet never a word was heard from their lips unworthy of the dignity of Rome." *De bello Gallico* 7.17.

⁵⁹ This paper had been written when Moritz's book came into my hands and served as welcome confirmation on several points which I had arrived at independently. His book is concerned mainly with the Roman evidence and in part with the Greek, particularly from the Classical period and later. As he points out (161 and note 7), sifted flour, for example, probably did not appear in Greece before the 5th century B.C. On the "Porridge-munchers" see also 70-1. (Note that 70 is mistakenly printed as 72 in his text.) See also xxii in his introduction. The term comes from the *Poen.* 54 and *Most.* 828.

calendar⁶⁰ as they had never worked before in such numbers.⁶¹ The herding of flocks on a large scale by a few men, horticulture by a few more slaves, female particularly, was no longer enough. It is no wonder that Hesiod evaluates the former Races of Man in due proportion to the ease with which they obtained their food.⁶² Behind the metallic glitter with which he identifies those Races, how crucial food is to his thesis: the Golden Race is remembered as ideal, the time of substantial economy and integrated culture when the "fruitful earth, unforced, bore them grain (*karpon*) abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and with many good things, *rich in flocks* and loved by the blessed gods."⁶³ This would suggest the golden affluence of the Cretans at their peak.⁶⁴ But in their decline, as the Silver Race, because "they would not give honor to the blessed gods who live on the

⁶⁰ In the main part of the *Erga*, of Hesiodic authorship, time is reckoned broadly, by seasons mainly, for which the annual return of certain birds and the positions of the stars are the farmer's main guides: 383-93, 415 ff., 448-64, 479-92. It is worth noting certainly that the last section of the poem, the *Days* proper (765-828), is not always accepted as genuinely Hesiodic. Cf. T. A. Sinclair, *Hesiod, Works and Days* (London 1932) lvii ff. See also above, note 6. What is important to note is the fact that these latter, and perhaps later, inclusions reflect a period in which calendar instructions were given much more specifically, in smaller divisions of time, within actual days of the month such as the 1st, 4th, 7th, and so on until the 30th. This development would suggest that, in the interim between Hesiod and the later author of the *Days*, the agricultural economy had sufficiently expanded to create a surplus which, in turn, gave rise to regular market-days for the sale of this surplus. The break-down of time into such narrow divisions and reckonings such as fortnights, weeks, and even smaller units arises regularly at this stage in the development of any agrarian economy, out of the need to keep track of market-days. Cf. A. S. Diamond, *The Evolution of Law and Order* (London 1950) 256.

⁶¹ As to the problems of the small landowner in Greece in the Hesiodic period, see W. Halliday, *The Growth of the City-State* (London 1923) ch. viii; A. R. Burn (above note 15) *passim*; A. Lattes, "La figura di Esiodo e l'ambiente ispiratore della sua poesia," *Rivista di studi classici* 2.2 (1954) 87-99, who shows clearly how deeply peasant life of Boeotia affected Hesiod's personality.

⁶² The myth of the Races of Man which Hesiod uses is a very old one to the eastern Mediterranean world although, of course, he adapts it in terms of his own civilization and his understanding of it: A. Nock, *JHS* 49 (1929) 114-15; Sinclair (above, note 60) 15-17. But what concerns us is Hesiod's particular contemporary emphasis on food, especially the distinction made between meat- and cereal-eaters. Cf. H. Baldry, *CQ* 46 (1952) 84 ff. and note 1.

⁶³ *Erga* 117-20.

⁶⁴ Hesiod's debt to *Od.* 6.203 and 7.81, regarding the good life among the Phaeacians, has been noted before this: F. Teggart, "The Argument of Hesiod's *Works and Days*" *Journ. Hist. Ideas* 8 (1947) 54. And, in turn, the connection between the Phaeacians and the Cretans has long since been noted.

Olympus," they were put away by the angry son of Cronos.⁶⁵ These were succeeded by the "Brazen Race," presumably Mycenaeans, godlike and heroic, who lived in bronze houses, wore bronze and carried implements made of it.⁶⁶ And, as the poet specifically notes: "They ate no *sitos* [cereal] and were hard of heart."⁶⁷ For Hesiod, the Mycenaeans ate no cereal because they had more than enough meat to eat. Their successors of the Fourth Race, the demigods, fought for the flocks of Oedipus and for rich-haired Helen's sake⁶⁸; or to put it bluntly, for herds and female captives.⁶⁹ When these happy heroes died and occupied the Islands of the Blessed, for them "the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet grain (*karpon*) flourishing thrice a year."⁷⁰ How poignant and unmistakable that in Hesiod's Golden Paradise on earth and in the after-life, the *food produces itself* without backbreaking toil. Finally, with those of the Fifth Race (who must be of Iron if they are to survive their harsh new ways of life), Hesiod brings us down to contemporary reality, where "men never rest from labor." Zeus will destroy this Race also "when they come to have grey hair on their temples at birth."⁷¹ This is driving the idea of premature aging from overwork to utmost pessimism.

The condition of the overworked male is integral to Hesiod's poem and plainly not one he accepts as traditional and of time-immemorial, but as a new, though now tragically permanent, state that all must adapt to. It is for this new way of life for "most men" that he instructs. First of all, says the poet in the introduction to the *Erga*, give up former ways of gaining wealth by Strife, by plundering either through organized raiding as of old, or by the new, legalized way (he says), "of plundering by the tongue, by law-suits in corrupt courts."⁷² This is the way of the

⁶⁵ *Erga* 135-9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 142-3, 150-1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 146-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 157-65.

⁶⁹ See above, p. 53 and note 43.

⁷⁰ *Erga* 171-3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 176-81. This concept of the destruction of mankind by deity, like the whole myth of the Races of Man, is again a very old theme, common to the eastern Mediterranean area. See Teggart (above, note 64) 58 ff.

⁷² *Erga* 319 ff. For the role of piracy in the early Greek period, see G. Biraghi, "La pirateria greca in Tuciddide" *Acme* 5 (1952) 471-9; W. Halliday (above, note 61) 38 ff., 47 and note 22; H. Ormerod, "Ancient Piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology* 8 (1921) 105-24, and his book, *Piracy in the Ancient World* (London 1924); Ventris and Chadwick (above, note 32) 156.

Evil Eris, the old Spirit of Contention, that leads astray laggards like his brother Perses and the bellicose princes, perverters of Justice.⁷³ Men must turn instead to Zeus, in his new capacity as Protector of Justice,⁷⁴ and follow the Good Eris, whose powers of contention are now enlisted against the soil itself.⁷⁵ Obtain your wealth not through plunder but through work in the fields, the poet proclaims.⁷⁶ It is not Nature, but Agriculture, Work itself, that the poet is urging men to love and regard as pleasure.⁷⁷ This is a new kind of exhortation, one which for stolid generations of independent farmers would not only have been unnecessary, but indeed a bore. But by the very way that the literary genius

⁷³ *Erga* 11 ff., esp. 14–16. See also 30–3 on Hesiod's advice that no one should be concerned with quarrels and courts "who has not a year's victuals laid up betimes, even that which the earth bears, Demeter's grain" (Loeb transl.). See also P. Forbes, "Hesiod versus Perses" *CR* 64 (1950) 82–7 on the *Erga* as a masterpiece of forensic rhetoric and psychology. The familiar pessimism of Hesiod's prophecy on the evil conditions that lay in store for mankind if this course of litigation continues (namely, the dissolution of family ties, the disappearance of conscience and of the amenities of community life, 182–201), has reminded some scholars of the prophets of the Old Testament of the 8th century: Micah, Isaiah, Amos. Cf. Teggart (above, note 64) 61 ff. and note 10. However, this can hardly signify any cultural or literary influence of the Hebrew prophets on Hesiod, but rather parallel and analogous economic situations which produced similar conditions, pressures, and morality.

⁷⁴ *Erga* 1–10, especially 35–6. The literature on the role of Zeus as the protector of Justice is extensive. See for example F. Solmsen (above, note 2) *passim*. Hesiod states clearly what the rewards are for those who follow the path of Justice. Their rewards are not in Heaven but of the Earth itself: "Neither famine nor disaster ever haunt men who do true justice; but lightheartedly they tend the fields which are all their care. The earth bears them victual in plenty—they flourish continually with good things, and do not travel on ships for the grain-giving earth bears them fruit" *Erga* 230 ff. With his agricultural creed, maritime commerce could not hold much interest or temptation for Hesiod, and he gives it short shrift in his economic manual.

⁷⁵ *Erga* 17 ff. "But the other [Eris] is the elder daughter of dark night, and the son of Cronos who sits above and dwells in the aether, set her in the roots of the earth: and she is far kinder to men. She stirs up even the shiftless to toil" (Loeb transl.). As Wade-Gery says in his *Hesiod* (above, note 6) 92: "Hesiod's is a world whose evils are Poverty and Greed, leading to Perjury and Outrage. The cures for these Evils are Justice and Thrift: these are the two themes of the poem of his manhood."

⁷⁶ This, it would seem to me, is the meaning of that "enigmatic" line 42: *κρύβαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν*. "The gods keep hidden from men the means of life"—they keep it hidden in the ground where men must obtain it by tillage, for if not, then "you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working." Cf. E. Vandvik, "Notes on Hesiod," *Symb. Osl.* (1945) 156 ff.; also his *The Prometheus of Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Oslo 1943) 17.

⁷⁷ Labor in the fields is the work which has been ordained by the gods for men (*Erga* 398). It is a source of virtue and happiness: "A man grows eager to work when he considers his neighbor, a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and put his house in good order" (*Ibid.* 25).

of Hesiod drives the obvious and the particular, we must realize that these injunctions were not so obvious to most men at that time:

First of all get a house, and a woman and an ox for the plough—a slave woman and not a wife, to follow the oxen as well—and make everything ready at home, so that you may not have to ask of another, and he refuse you, and so, because you are in lack, the season pass by and your work come to nothing.⁷⁸

or

Mark, when you hear the voice of the crane who cries year by year from the clouds above, for she gives the signal for ploughing and shows the season of rainy winter; but she vexes the heart of the man who has no oxen. Then is the time to feed up your horned oxen in the byre; for it is easy to say: "Give me a yoke of oxen and a waggon," and it is easy to refuse: "I have work for my oxen." The man who is rich in fancy thinks his waggon as good as already built—the fool! he does not know that there are a hundred timbers to a waggon. Take care to lay these up beforehand at home.⁷⁹

Most of this advice, Teggart points out in his analysis of the *Erga*, occupies fifteen separate sections, each averaging about thirteen verses.⁸⁰ Their length and the lack of transition between them is explained by the fact that these short sections are intended as oral instruction and that the pause between each substituted for the literary transition. In his instructions for crop-raising, for instance,⁸¹ Hesiod directs operations like the captain of a foundered ship whose crew, intact but witless with fright, has landed on a desert island. If only they recover their senses and work while the weather holds, they can, like Crusoes, provide everything, even hide garments and shoes from goats and oxen which they have butchered with their own might.⁸² Like Defoe describing all the steps in discovering how to make a pot or basket, or like

⁷⁸ *Erga* 405–9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 448–57.

⁸⁰ F. Teggart (above, note 64) 57. Some of these injunctions are so extraordinarily obvious that they must be intended either for total idiots or, what is more to the point, for the totally inexperienced, as when Hesiod explains what will happen if they plow at the wrong time: "But if you plow the good ground at the solstice, you will reap sitting, grasping a thin crop in your hand, binding the sheaves awry, dust-covered, not glad at all" (479 ff.).

⁸¹ *Erga* 458–78, for example.

⁸² *Ibid.* 536–46.

Homer minutely explaining how Odysseus must use the craft of a shipwright to put out the eye of the Cyclops,⁸³ so Hesiod instructs with precise elementary detail how to construct one's own tools in the fall of the year, for

then the wood you cut with your axe is least liable to worm. Then remember to hew your timber: it is the season for that work. Cut a mortar three feet wide and a pestle three cubits long, and an axle of seven feet, for it will do very well so; but if you make it eight feet long, you can cut a beetle from it as well. Cut a felloe three spans across for a waggon of ten palm's width. Hew also many bent timbers, and bring home a plough-tree when you have found it, and look out on the mountain or in the field for one of holm-oak; for this is the strongest for oxen to plough with when one of Athena's hand-men has fixed in the share-beam and fastened it to the pole with dowels. Get two ploughs ready and work on them at home, one all of a piece, and the other jointed. It is far better to do this, for if you should break one of them, you can put the oxen to the other. Poles of laurel or elm are most free from worms, and a share-beam of oak and a plough-tree of holm-oak . . .⁸⁴

There are numerous such thoughtful, specific injunctions and instructions contained in this didactic epic. For these writers, Defoe, Hesiod, and Homer, such carefully noted and homely, practical details by accumulation become the masterstrokes, the texture, by which their great works are realized. All three writers have the same theme: the conditions of human survival, and human survival *is* made up of precisely combined details accomplished at the right moment. "Don't hire too young a man," says Hesiod, for such a one "gapes like one distraught after his fellows."⁸⁵ And, in fact, such a Man-Friday would also have spelled doom for Odysseus in the cave or for Crusoe against the cannibals. The margin between life and death was too close for Odysseus, Hesiod, and Crusoe to allow room for such fellows—except that in Hesiod's case he was not telling stories.

Perhaps nowhere else, it occurs to me, does Hesiod convey more acutely the psychic duress of the changing economic situation than in his ambivalent attitude toward women both in the *Erga* and the *Theogony*, as for example toward Pandora of fair

⁸³ *Od.* 9.382–94. And his careful preparation of the stake, 318–30.

⁸⁴ *Erga* 420–36.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 439–47.

appearance who is "a plague to men who eat barley."⁸⁶ Women are sluggards, detestable drones, at whose creation all the labors of man began,⁸⁷ a judgment that would seem to have a real point since women can no longer maintain alone the increasing field-work. Now at best, a wife is good only to tend cattle, he states, and look after the needs of the house, and even for this a slave woman without child is preferable.⁸⁸ Marry, of course, a neighbor whose character you know and not a wastrel.⁸⁹ By the latter Hesiod means a *pygostolos*, a distracting wife who swishes when she walks.⁹⁰ Beware of such a "banquet-seeker," he says, "who is always at table, for though a man be strong she consumes him without a torch and consigns him to unripe old age."⁹¹ Note how he thinks even of connubial relations in the vocabulary of food. But he is bitterly correct, for who could have the means or energy to live with such a vain creature after slaving all day? Hesiod was not writing for palace-occupants or Lotus-eaters; he profoundly and accurately gauged every act of contemporary man's life and knew that there must be no fatal choices in all its hazardous course.

Yet his genius forces him to create one glimmering image of such distractions. On the sombre barrenness of his canvas he produces momentarily one radiantly poetic scene, with the chiaroscuro of a Rembrandt. In this scene Boreas is described blowing across the countryside⁹²:

He goes even through the ox's hide; it does not stop him. And too, he blows through the goat's fine hair. But the fleece of sheep, because of their thick wool, the unkind Boreas does not pierce at all, but it makes the old man curved as a wheel.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 82. Pandora plays a more evil role in the *Theogony*, as the prototype of her sex, by which Zeus has wrecked the life of man, *Th.* 591 ff. Jacoby rejects lines 603-12. See F. Solmsen (above, note 2) 47 and note 153. But though one may reject whole lines like this, it is not possible to erase the strong anti-feminine attitude of the period, an attitude to which Hesiod certainly contributed his share, as did others like him, such as Semonides of Amorgos. It was attitudes such as theirs that fostered and reared the myths of murderous, vengeful women which were to fill Greek drama with Clytemnestras, Danaids, and Medeas.

⁸⁷ *Theogony* 592-602, *Erga* 60-82.

⁸⁸ *Erga* 404-5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 695-701.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 373.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 703-5.

⁹² *Ibid.* 513-25.

Then, from this dark and austere reference to the old outside, the poet focuses his image on the young within:

and it does not pierce the soft-skinned maiden who bides with her dear mother, unlearned as yet in the ways of Golden Aphrodite; when having bathed her tender body and anointed herself with oil, she rests during the night within the house on the wintry day . . .

The poet prolongs this vision like the fascinated Elders gazing upon Susanna. But in the very next words he wrenches the vision away with an ugly, almost pathological image, as he finishes the sentence:

. . . on the wintry day when the Boneless One gnaws his foot in his fireless and wretched home.

By contrasting, first, the harsh and familiar scene of the Greek countryside, second, the idyllic but sheltered and distant vision of tender ease, and finally, the revolting and enigmatic figure of self-preoccupation, Hesiod gives us a singular example of the three-fold framework of contemporary life: the external, immediate and practical reality, then the longed-for world of the dream, and finally the renunciation and grim solitude of private, inner life. He is as acutely aware as any poet of all the loveliness feminine charm can bring to life, but he feels he must not succumb too far to it, if he is to survive. Therefore we say he is "ambivalent" in his attitude toward women.

But of the *Works and Days* itself, we say more: it is a creative work of the cultural magnitude of the *Theogony*, a manual for the newly created economy of the tillers of the soil who were beginning to practice independent agriculture full-time and in great numbers. It is perhaps worth evaluating briefly, and in conclusion, the cultural scope of these poems, both immense forces in the stabilization and integration of early Greek classical civilization. Ultimately the seeds of the *Erga* flourished more deeply, more widely and were of greater duration than those of the more celebrated *Theogony*. While this latter work was of great importance to the Greeks, it was of real importance only to the ancients: in this compendium of Greek Olympian belief, the *Theogony*, Hesiod is clarifying and perpetuating the limited Homeric notion that man's life, fate, experiences, feeling and show of action, the totality of his existence, are directly motivated

by the Olympian Gods and the Fates. This kind of religious attitude of total dependence is, of course, the natural concomitant of a warrior-society, one which, though structurally and economically stable enough for the population as a whole, still represents constant and harrowing instability for the individual: he never knows but that the next battle, the next raid or border-incident, the next day's work in other words, may be his last. No matter how courageous or skilled a warrior, his name may be already fatally inscribed on a weapon of the enemy—only the Gods and the Fates know and plan it so.

But no one's name was ever fatally inscribed in quite this way on a spade or plow. One's back may be broken by such implements; but if one keeps one's health and works according to a practical program of the kind Hesiod formulates, then it is possible, with the help of the gods, to prosper and live to a ripe old age.⁹³ Hesiod may have had contemporary reasons for pessimism but it was never so acute, nor even the same kind of pessimism as the old-time, the brooding fatalism of the Homeric warrior and warrior's wife. By virtue of the fact that he taught those "most men" survival, Hesiod's "dusty-footed, skin-clad yeomen" gradually were to become less immediately fatalistic, gradually more able to exercise control over their survival and their well-being. By his *Erga* Hesiod taught them the first steps that were eventually to lead to intellectual independence, but physical independence of body and livelihood had to come first. Thus, it was the Boeotian peasant of Ascra, perhaps, rather than as Bruno Snell would brilliantly persuade us,⁹⁴ Archilochus of Paros, who unwittingly planted the first seeds that eventually produced the independent Greek Mind.

⁹³ For what purpose should someone like Hesiod honor the gods? The poet-farmer himself gives us this logical answer: "that so to thee they [the Olympians] may entertain a propitious heart and spirit that thou mayest buy the land of others, not others thine" (*Erga* 337 ff.).

⁹⁴ B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Oxford 1953) ch. 3, "The Rise of the Individual and the Early Greek Lyric."