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An Artistic and Optimistic Passage in Hesiod: *Works and Days* 564–614*

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SUMMARY: This article analyzes the third section of the agricultural portion of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. It argues that this section has little to do with a succession of seasonal tasks or with drudgery previously justified on the grounds of morality and profit, as in some common views of the overall work. Rather, the passage is an accomplished example of art that maintains a positive attitude toward the part of life it treats.

THE PORTION OF HESIOD'S *WORKS AND DAYS* that cites agriculture, 383–617, constitutes a large fraction of the poem's 828 lines (minus a few interpolations), and is clearly important to interpret. But in doing so it is traditional simply to follow its apparent listing of tasks and to consider it a "farmer's almanac." To be sure, this conception of it has also been criticized.[1] Among the most recent commentators, Nelson argues as well as anyone that "Hesiod is not teaching us how to farm;" rather, his point is "to experience farming." In her particular interpretation of this point, the passage is "one dramatic unity, [including] the stars and winds, the heat and cold, drought and rain, the birds and beasts of the forest, the crops and the fields and the oxen who work them, the farmer and his workmen," and several other entities.[2] And while even

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[1] The criticism has mostly been on the grounds that the material is too incomplete for a manual; for references see Nelson 1996: 45 n. 2; Beall 2004a: 6 n. 16. Recent general Hesiod bibliographies include Arrighetti xxxviii–lxvi, Nelson 1998: 231–45, and Clay 2003: 183–98.

[2] Nelson 1998: 48–58, 107–10 (quotations: 57).

within the framework of the almanac notion some have granted that the poet's description of nature in the slack seasons is impressive, Nelson is surely right that the nominal prescriptions can be stirring too: "we are asked not to see, but to feel" the details of the plowing process, for example.[3]

Still, the idea that listing tasks is the actual thrust of Hesiod's agricultural portion remains influential. Thus in her thoughtful new study of the possibility that the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* bring out complementary aspects of a common universe, Clay agrees with the critique in saying that the material "provides no manual for farming," but not otherwise. That is, she speaks of an "orderly catalogue of seasonal chores," if with digressions, a catalogue that indeed covers "all the chores" required for one particular occasion.[4] For their part, ancient historians seeking evidence of the times from the poem continue to assume that the role of the agricultural material is to provide an almanac, and then sometimes make questionable inferences.[5] And at least one point of Nelson's presentation gives pause. She says that in devoting space to viticulture near the end of the portion, Hesiod "distract[s] our attention" from more important matters, after he himself had earlier "scold[ed] us for wasting too much time on [vines]."[6] From this emphasis one might believe that he mentioned viticulture in spite of his better judgment because it was part of farming, i.e., that he proceeded after all from a desire to teach the occupation. In any case, her position here does not recognize the possibility of positive aesthetic reasons for including the activity.

[3] Nelson 1998: 54 (speaking of 465–71).

[4] Clay 2003: 44–45, esp. 44, speaking of 414–47 on wood-cutting and plowing. The critique holds the treatment to be generally incomplete (see n. 1 above); and on the wagon of 424–27 in particular see Erbse 22–23 (cf. now Beall 2004a: 13). West already suggests in his 1978 commentary (*ad* 423) that the wood-cutting cited there simply reflects what one can do with a tree trunk of given size.

[5] Most recently, during the course of a work mostly on Hesiod's social milieu, A. Edwards 132 says peripherally that if some features are lacking in the "agricultural system" cited in the poem, "that does not mean that they were not present or even widespread elsewhere in Greece, but only that *they were not characteristic of agriculture in Hesiod's Ascra*" (emphasis added). (He indeed [132–50] accords negative evidentiary value in discussing detailed matters such as irrigation and crop diversification in the sequel, despite an introductory discussion [19–25] where he allows that the work is not a "documentary text.") But if the agricultural portion is not an almanac, then no conclusion from the absence of crops or other features can be drawn even for Ascra. There may be poetic reasons for omitting them, as I will argue below in one case.

[6] Nelson 1998: 57 (speaking of 609–14) and 56 (of 570–72), respectively.

One reason for lack of complete agreement with the critique might be that in practice it has focused on the first two sections of a more or less standard tri-partite division, those dealing nominally with fall tasks and describing winter, respectively.[7] I believe that it is particularly the third section, the one including viticulture, that exposes the inadequacy of taking the agricultural material to revolve around seasonal tasks. This article will endeavor to clarify the role of the viticulture in particular, but more generally will claim that the artistry of the section's treatment is sufficient to submerge consciousness of a temporal succession of tasks. In the bargain, whereas there remains a hint in views such as Nelson's that farming is after all drudgery,[8] it will turn out that at least in this section the poet maintains a mood that is optimistic to the point of joyfulness.

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As Riedinger observes in his work on the formal composition of the agricultural portion, lines 564–614a are organized as one of the ring structures common to Homer and Hesiod.[9] At first sight they seem to comprise five vignettes that are unrelated except for an (inconsistent) chronological order.[10] But they really form an "exterior circle" consisting of the first and fifth episode, both on vines; an "interior circle" for the second and fourth, on grain; and a "mo-

[7] Most scholars have followed Nicolai's (88–96) division of 383–617 into an introduction, 383–413, and three sections on concrete material between 414 and 617, if some (e.g., Hamilton 70) absorb the introduction into the first section. (But 614b–617 is a coda to the entire set; see Rodríguez Adrados 220.) For discussion of the first section see Arrighetti 435 on 414–22, Nelson (n. 3 above), Marsilio 15–22 on 422–36, and Beall 2004a on the section generally. For the second, a seminal work is Ballabriga's literary analysis; see also Hamilton 71–72 and Nelson 1998: 55–56. There is, moreover, a certain literature on the sexual symbolism of the "boneless" creature of 524; for review see Bader 1989: 119–24.

[8] It is traditional to say that "Hesiod was a pessimist," and that the agricultural portion follows earlier parts of the poem in seeing labor as an unwelcome necessity imposed by Zeus, if it can be excused on grounds of morality and profit. The last representative of this position in its pure form among philologists appears to be the 1967 contribution of Welles, but among ancient historians see, e.g., Fisher 193–96.

[9] On ring composition in Homer see M. Edwards 44–48. In our poem the agricultural portion as a whole is widely noted (so originally Walcot 8–9; since him, e.g., Riedinger 122), but another ring is its three sections, 414–614, and inside that, plowing framed by general advice to work, 448–503 (see Beall 2004a: 25–26). Earlier in the poem the *dikê* discussion is framed by the hawk-nightingale "fable" and comparing humans and animals, 202–85 (see, e.g., Hamilton 61–62, Rodríguez Adrados 217–18, and now Clay 2003: 42).

[10] The episodic structure was pointed out at least as early as Kumaniecki 88–89.

ment of rest," the third.[11] And this structure is actually more intricate than Riedinger notices.

Consider the outer vignettes. As elsewhere in the agricultural portion, each appears superficially to preface tasks with a signal from events in nature. Thus the first (564–70):

εὖτ' ἂν δ' ἑξήκοντα μετὰ τροπὰς ἠελίοιο
χειμέρι' ἐκτελέσῃ Ζεὺς ἤματα, δή ῥα τότ' ἀστὴρ
Ἀρκτοῦρος προλιπὼν ἱερὸν ῥόον Ὠκεανοῖο
πρῶτον παμφαίνων ἐπιτέλλεται ἀκροκνέφαιος·
τὸν δὲ μέτ' ὀρθ[ρ?]ογόη Πανδιονὶς ὤρτο χελιδὼν
ἐς φάος ἀνθρώποις ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο.
τὴν φθάμενος οἴνας περιταμνέμεν· ὣς γὰρ ἄμεινον.

At sixty (days) after the sun's turnings [i.e., the solstice], when
Zeus finishes up winter days, well right then the star
Arcturus, abandoning the lively stream of Oceanus,[12]
rises at twilight and first shines;
and after him the rightly-wailing [or: wailing-before-dawn]
daughter of Pandion, the swallow, rises
to light for humans, just at the onset of spring.
Prune your vines ahead of her, for this is better.

And the fifth (609–14a):

εὖτ' ἂν δ' Ὠρίων καὶ Σείριος ἐς μέσον ἔλθῃ
οὐρανόν, Ἀρκτοῦρον δ' ἐσίδῃ ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς,
ὦ Πέρση, τότε πάντας ἀπόδρεπε οἴκαδε βότρυς·
δεῖξαι δ' ἠελίῳ δέκα τ' ἤματα καὶ δέκα νύκτας,
πέντε δὲ συσκιάσαι, ἕκτῳ δ' εἰς ἄγγε' ἀφύσσαι
δῶρα Διωνύσου πολυγηθέος.[13]

[11] I translate (as for other languages from works cited herein) from Riedinger 137–38. Less elaborately, Petropoulos 74–76 sees a ring for the inner three vignettes. Riedinger himself misses the opportunity to stress the importance the structure implies for viticulture; rather, he is concerned to say (135) that "it is on grain, and on grain alone, that the *bios* depends," and that the wine viticulture makes possible is "strictly limited" to the occasion cited in the third vignette.

[12] Russo argues against construing *hieros* as "holy" in all cases; see Russo et al. 50–51.

[13] An emendation of δὲ ἴδῃ, "knows," for δ' ἐσίδῃ (now adopted by Arrighetti) would create hiatus at the caesura, an irregularity found on occasion in the *Theogony* but not in our poem; see West 1966: 96. Against a variant with infinitive ἀποδρέπεν rather than true imperative ἀπόδρεπε (also Arrighetti), West (*ad* 611) still seems right.

> When Orion and Sirius come to mid
> sky, and rosy-fingered Dawn beholds Arcturus,
> hey Perses, then pick all your grapes (to bring) home;
> show them the sun for ten days and ten nights,
> shade them over for five, and on the sixth draw into jars
> the gift of Dionysus the much-cheering.

(The poem thereby speaks overtly to its addressee, Hesiod's supposed brother.) But it is noteworthy that both vignettes cite Arcturus, representing the signals, as well as the tasks (viticulture in each case), thus assisting closure of the ring composition.

Moreover, Hesiod assists this structure with evocative verse in both passages. Of course, in the almanac view one can only think of the mythical allusions to the behavior of stars and to Philomela becoming a swallow in the first vignette,[14] and the image of divine sky beings in the fifth, as inessential adornment; yet a more sensitive interpretation must account for the poet's attention to lyrical expression.[15] And although the effect of a creative use of epic language is diluted for modern readers, it will have enhanced the lyricism for at least some members of early audiences.[16] In fact, in the first of the cited segments our poet uses epic phrases to assist the personifications even to the point of exaggeration. These include not only "substantial" expressions such as *tropai êelioio* (also at *Od*. 15.404) and *hieros rhoos Ôkeanoio* (cf. *Il*. 11.726, 16.151, 18.402, *Od*. 12.1)[17] but also the chains of particles that often

[14] To Hesiod Philomela is the swallow (see West *ad* 568) even though to Roman and modern poets she is the nightingale.

[15] West, who in general mediates between the almanac construal and a more nuanced approach, does note *ad* 610 the "charming phrase that hints at the interaction of celestial personalities" in the fifth vignette; however, that hardly suffices to bring out the segment's excellence. Nelson's (1998: 56–57) focus on changes of pace in the overall section is good, but does not address all of its poetic aspects. In using the word "lyrical" in its standard modern sense I of course do not imply connection to Greek lyric poetry (although in general Hesiod arguably draws on that also; see Rodríguez Adrados 203).

[16] As I have summarized with references elsewhere (2004a: 2–5), although the poem's epic usage is commonly treated as mere passive repetition of so-called formulae, many Homer scholars now think of such standard expressions as resources available to the poet, and much the same is true for Hesiod.

[17] Also, for *ôrto … / es phaos anthrôpois*, cf. a similar expression in *Od.* 23.348. To be sure, as I have previously noted (2004a: 4), some imply that one cannot know if a given phrase in Hesiod alludes to something in Homer, believing that our transmitted epic texts only date from when they were written down in the classical period. But however that may be, it is usually a question of alluding not to Homer as we now have him but to epic phrases developed over a long period of time. The highly individualized *Works and Days*

set off the actions of epic personalities. *Ton*/*tên de meta* is famously used (cf. Pl. *Prot*. 315c) when "after him/her" Odysseus saw another shade (*Od.* 11.260, 266, 305, 572, 601).[18] And the more aware members of the audience must have chuckled at Eos looking over Arcturus in the later passage, for it seems to allude wittily to Calypso saying that she should be allowed to keep Odysseus as a lover, since *Ôriôn' heleto rhododactulos Êôs*, "rosy-fingered Dawn took Orion" (*Od*. 5.121).[19] That is, the idea of Arcturus rising at dawn is expressed as Eos considering a different paramour, while *Ôriôn* is moved to another line as Orion is now a bystander.[20]

The action portions of the two episodes will also have resonated. Especially, *deka … deka …* in the latter is a convention whose most notable use is Homer saying he could not give the Catalogue of Ships without the aid of the Muses, even if he had "ten" tongues and "ten" mouths (*Il*. 2.489; cf. 23.851). West stresses that using a "formula" for (six) days and nights results in a period of time of which only half is functional[21]; yet at least the form is strengthened by adding alliteration with *deixai*.[22]

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came late in this tradition. In particular, the work's farm tools have not acquired fixed epithets, in contrast to weapons in Homer, suggesting that the agricultural portion was of recent provenance at the time the poem as a whole coalesced; see de Hoz 145. Thus we must assume that, at least in that portion, Hesiod views any given standard phrase in its epic context.

[18] As for *dê rha tote* at 565, cf., e.g., *Il.* 12.162, *Od.* 6.217. The expert on standard epic expressions, Hainsworth, gives an example of a particle chain (*ei men dê*) as such (3).

[19] One might well ask how much early audiences appreciated such subtleties. Lacking data on the point, we can only assume that some persons hearing a recital (which continued to be the primary mode of reception into the classical period, be the recitation from memory or from a written text) got more out of it than did others, just as in the case of modern readers of a poem or novel. As to cross-references, my guess is that in the oral culture some listeners will have instantly noticed many that moderns only find through research.

[20] The possibility cannot be ruled out that this Homeric saying was not in the epic tradition but resulted from Homer alluding to the Hesiodic line (assuming a final redaction of Homer's poem after this one). But if so, Homer spoils a metrically regular verse with *-to rhodo-*. It seems more likely that Hesiod repairs an irregularity he finds in the tradition.

[21] West *ad* 385. Actually, the thrust of *nuktas te kai êmata* at 385 is that the Pleiades are hidden "nights as well as days" for forty of them, similar to the expression's normal epic use: a person spends even the normal sleep period crying (*Il.* 18.340, 24.745, *Od.* 11.183 = 13.338 = 16.39).

[22] Other parallels: for a cardinal followed by the next highest ordinal such as our five and sixth, see, e.g., eight and ninth (*Il.* 2.313 = 327), four and fifth (*Od.* 9.335, our 698),

But *tên phthamenos* in 570 actually recalls the phrase earlier in our poem itself, and recognition of the fact helps solve the perceived problem that Hesiod only refers to one task among those that might be cited for the time,[23] as well as the long noticed difficulty that the swallow's *-goê*, "wailing," in 568 bears no resemblance to the real bird's call (a twitter). The most recent critic, Arrighetti, finds it "very surprising" that Hesiod, who seems to have been a keen nature observer, would credit so incongruous an idea,[24] but that is simply a clue that he did not intend the specific myth seriously. Meanwhile, a bit earlier (554), one needed to finish the rare winter *ergon* and get back inside *ton phthamenos*, "ahead of him," i.e., the north wind Boreas who was about to blow cold rain on the addressee. Thus, and taking into account the point suggested above, that the personification is too inflated for mere denotation, the mythical swallow Philomena must be a figure, standing for something one would avoid just as one would avoid Boreas.[25]

Specifically, I have previously posited that "Pandionis the swallow" is a synecdoche for the swallows of Greek mythology, and that that generic swallow is an entity that *augurs deception*.[26] Thus the point of finishing whatever task you have "ahead of her" is to do the work before becoming beguiled in some way as opposed to getting rained on. "Before that daughter of myth comes in spring, get it done or she'll fool you." Here, as with Boreas, only one task is needed for the point, and to cite more would be superfluous.[27]

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and esp. three and fourth (see n. 52 below). For *dôra Diônusou polugêtheos*, cf. *dôra … Murmidones megalêtores* ("the great-hearted Myrmidons [gathered] gifts," *Il.* 19.278), and *dôra para Aïolou megalêtoros* ("gifts from great-hearted Aeolus," *Od.* 10.36).

[23] See West *ad* 570. Nelson 1998: 56 is troubled, rather, by the signal arriving after the task.

[24] See Arrighetti 438. Criticism begins already with Pl. *Phd.* 85a.

[25] A precedent for the figurative use of birds is 202–12. The nightingale and hawk are figures for Hesiod and the kings, respectively, according to West *ad* 203 and many others. Even those who dissent (e.g., Nelson 1998: 77–79) think of the hawk as standing for Zeus, the nightingale for the kings or Perses. Another point is that Homer also uses the phrase *earos neos histamenoio* (569), but for Philomela's sister, the nightingale Procne (*Od.* 19.519). If this is the earlier of the two uses, and if Hesiod alludes to it rather than using a traditional phrase, this difference might suggest that he is unconcerned with the myth's details.

[26] Beall 2004b: 117–19, where I also infer that this symbolic value is archetypal in that it is consistent with the swallow in much of other world literature. To the citation noted there of Athena watching the battle as a swallow (*Od.* 22.240), add Odysseus's ominous bow-string singing like a swallow (21.411).

[27] Thus no historical inference can be drawn from the absence of other tasks (cf. n. 5 above).

Thus the outer episodes are both well integrated and rich. When the "heliacal rising" of Arcturus occurs at dawn,[28] you can make the wine you had envisaged when he rose at dusk, and the expression of these facts is pleasant and imaginative.

As to the interior, in the second vignette the poet goes from the lyrical (Arcturus and Philomela) to the droll when he says the snail "carries its house" vertically upward as a signal to get ready for the labor-intensive harvest (571 *phereoikos*). Leclerc 285 observes (with Hesiodic alliteration) that it is a time "quand la moisson exige que l'on quitte sa maison"; we should get out of our house to bring in the harvest. And just as the snail "flees" (the heat thought to be associated with) the Pleiades (572 *pheugôn*), we are to "flee" the activity of sitting in the shade or staying in bed at dawn (574). In modern Greece, Petropoulos finds, the harvest is "the most gruelling of the year's tasks," but is accompanied by singing and telling jokes (19–25). I take it good humor abounds because, although the work is strenuous, its benefit is clearly in sight (unlike the case for plowing such as that covered earlier in the poem). Thus it is apposite of Hesiod to employ rustic wit here, with the snail image and the two fleeings.

To be sure, seriousness of purpose is amply conveyed in 574–77, which state explicitly that the harvest is to be undertaken in order that "the means of livelihood be sufficient" (*bios arkios eiêi*). And Maria Marsilio points out to me that this prescription repeats that phrase from 501, where the poet says that the person for whom it is not the case has no business relying on expectation. Thus bringing in the harvest also implies that no such reliance is needed.[29] But then the poet takes the occasion of getting up before dawn (577) to add an atemporal appendix to the nominally temporal statement of the task (578–81):

Ἠὼς γάρ τ' ἔργοιο τρίτην ἀπομείρεται αἶσαν,
Ἠώς τοι προφέρει μὲν ὁδοῦ, προφέρει δὲ καὶ ἔργου,
Ἠώς, ἥ τε φανεῖσα πολέας ἐπέβησε κελεύθου
ἀνθρώπους πολλοῖσί τ' ἐπὶ ζυγὰ βουσὶ τίθησιν.

[28] "Heliacal rising" means that the star rises sufficiently earlier than the sun to be visible before sunrise; see West *ad* 383–84.

[29] All this gravity is set off by prefacing 574–77 with one of the verses without caesura but with three increasing cola discussed by Kirk (1985: 20–21). It is time to desist from vines (572), *all' harpas te charassemenai kai dmôas egeiren*, "no, sickles// do you sharpen// and your servants arouse" (573). That is, the rhythmic change engages the ear ahead of the harvest segment. This effect is deliberate, since the poet has eschewed the alternative ordering *alla charassemenai t' harpas kai dmôas egeiren*, which would have preserved the caesura.

For yes Dawn claims a third portion of the work [i.e., a third of a day];
see, Dawn furthers the way and also furthers the work;
Dawn: she whose appearing sets on the path many a
human, and puts the yoke on many an ox.

With its priamel-like structure this quatrain is one of the more effective epanaphorae in Homer and Hesiod.[30] Editors generally decline to personify ἠώς here, but surely if Dawn is a personality in inspecting Arcturus at 610, within the structured passage 564–614, then she is one here too. Indeed, the segment resembles a ritual paean to a deity, or at least a celebration of a hero.[31] In effect, one gets up before dawn to appreciate the goddess as much as to take action. That is to say, while the quatrain continues the labor-intensive mood, the work it cites is assimilated to the divine (almost a vicarious harvest god celebration), thereby putting any vision of the work as drudgery out of sight.

For the fourth vignette I propose accepting the plausible transposition suggested by Wilamowitz, so that 602–5 follow 608.[32] Then the beginning of the episode tells us to thresh grain at the appropriate time (597–600), and (601, 606–8)

πάντα βίον κατάθηαι ἐπάρμενον ἔνδοθι οἴκου,
χόρτον τ' [or: δ'] ἐσκομίσαι καὶ συρφετόν, ὄφρα τοι εἴῃ
βουσὶ καὶ ἡμιόνοισιν ἐπηετανόν. αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
δμῶας ἀναψῦξαι φίλα γούνατα καὶ βόε λῦσαι.[33]

(after) you store all your livelihood tightly inside your house
carry in fodder and chaff, (enough) so that it is for your
oxen and mules abundant. Thereupon afterwards
(let) your servants rest their own knees, and unyoke the oxen-pair.

[30] In this case the last thought of the priamel is emphasized by means of its longer length than the first or second, as in the classic case of Pindar *O.* 1.1. To be sure, three different subjects are compared there; for an example comparable to ours (also an epanaphora) see *Il.* 23.315–18; cf. Richardson 209–10.

[31] A comparable example is the case of Nireus, *Il.* 2.671–74; cf. Kirk 1985: 227.

[32] See Wilamowitz 109–10. He believes the transmission became incorrect after resting the oxen was thought a better conclusion to the overall vignette than feeding the dog. Differently, I suggest that it was thought that *aoikon poieisthai* in 602 meant one should discharge the worker (as in a construal noted shortly), and that it was then denied that the poet would have advised such an action just after resting him.

[33] Wilamowitz replaces τ' in 602 with δ', as the transposition requires; he also reads τ' at 606, as in the MS consensus prior to a standard emendation to δ'. Yet one might keep the editors' δ', as in one dissident MS and the *Etymologica*, but meaning "on the other hand" (as at, e.g., *Il.* 16.199).

Although one can cite Greek syntax as a reason for the transposition,[34] the main point is that it rectifies the order of the thoughts. It is natural to think that feed for the livestock has lower priority than that for the household, and the problem of why one would speak of hiring workers (602–3) after labor-intensive activity is finished is at least deferred.[35]

If that is right,[36] then in spite of the fact that threshing entails exertion, the poetry on food and rest in this first part of the vignette again minimizes any negative anti-labor feeling. Rather, a quasi-philosophical point suggested at the end of the winter section is again implied: there is both similarity and difference between humans, on the one hand, and *boes kai hêmionoi* (an epic phrase that may connote domestic animals generally: e.g., *Il.* 7.333, *Od.* 17.298), on the other. Both must be fed (601 with 606–7) as well as rested (608), but animals' feed is secured after humans' (600 *autar epên dê*)—a similar priority to saying that animals get less food in winter (558–59). Otherwise, Riedinger's inner "circle" of human activity around a point that lacks it is implemented by a contrast of the passage's labor with the idleness of the preceding summer, in turn contrasting with the harvest labor before that.[37]

But then, just as with the Eos paean of the second vignette, in the reconstructed verse order there is an addendum in an atemporal mode, and in four lines (602–5):

[34] As Wilamowitz 109 suggests, the present system infinitive *poieisthai* ("get" an estateless laborer, 602) seems out of place here, and it is generally more natural for an aorist such as *katathêai* in 601 to be complemented with another, like *eskomisai* (606). To be sure, one finds violations of such rules in epic.

[35] West *ad* 602 notes that those who solve the problem by reading firing rather than hiring mistake the language (*pace*, subsequently, Nelson 1998: 184 n. 62), but implausibly says this is the natural time of year to hire. We will see shortly that, when properly understood, 602–5 do not refer to a specific time.

[36] An anonymous *TAPA* reader offers the possible objection to the transposition that its rationale could fail because "epic narrative is purposefully digressive." So it is with Homer, but not, I think, in this poem. I have argued (2004a) that at least in 414–503 it offers an epic vision comparable to that of the *Iliad* or of the *Odyssey*, but also (2004a: 20–25) that this vision is well organized, in particular in the plowing essay of 458–92. Most of Hesiod's digressions are general homilies on the order of "but you remember to work;" an "exception" like 462, where spring and summer in addition to fall plowing are enjoined, is only digressive if one insists that the subject is a succession of tasks rather than plowing as such.

[37] This contrast is the reason often given for placing the episode here even though real threshing occurs at a date before the nominal time of the third vignette; see, e.g., West 1978: 54, Nelson 1998: 56–57. Only Petropoulos 74–75 notes the poetic structure.

θῆτὰ δ᾽ ἄοικον ποιεῖσθαι καὶ ἄτεκνον ἔριθον
δίζησθαι κέλομαι· χαλεπὴ δ᾽ ὑπόπορτις ἔριθος·
καὶ κύνα καρχαρόδοντα κομεῖν, μὴ φείδεο σίτου,
μή ποτέ σ᾽ ἡμερόκοιτος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ χρήμαθ᾽ ἕληται.

An estateless hired man get, and a childless (female) laborer
seek, I bid you: a laborer nursing a child is difficult.
Care for your jagged-toothed dog too—don't spare its food—
lest at some point the day-sleeping man take away your property.

The *hêmerokoitos anêr* is of course a burglar. That the phrase is a kenning is noted,[38] but it is also a clever play on epic phrases consisting of a compound epithet with nominative case *anêr* such as the more positive figure of the *harmatopêgos anêr*, "chariot-building man" (*Il.* 4.485).[39] As such, it perhaps matches the wit of the snail-image of the second vignette. In any case, the matter of resting servants in 608 has put the poet in mind of a thought about servants generally: hire those who are most useful.[40] For good measure he adds another thought about servicing one's security needs. As with the Eos quatrain this is atemporal: get useful workers whenever you hire (so that hiring specifically after the harvest is not meant in the first place), and always feed your dog.[41] To be sure, this segment might suffer in comparison with the exalted air of the earlier, as it is prescriptive rather than descriptive.[42] Still, its rhythmic structure is also progressive: less than a verse on the itinerant worker, one and a half on the female, and two on the dog.

In sum, while there is nothing like the gift of Dionysus to end the "inner circle," at least Eos is celebrated in its earlier episode, and a generally positive tone is maintained.

[38] So, e.g., West *ad* 605.

[39] Cf. Beall 2001: 157 on *etôsiergos anêr* (411) and *amboliergos anêr* (413).

[40] That is, an estate or a child would distract the worker; see West *ad* 602.

[41] Indeed, a dog is kept indefinitely, so that the quatrain must be meant atemporally, unless we posit that the second couplet is basically separate from the first about the laborers who are not so kept, and is inserted in a haphazard way.

[42] *Kelomai* in 603 is the one example in 564–614 that Lardinois (5 n. 10, 10 n. 18) gives for his thesis that what he calls a didactic poem (including a "Farmer's Almanac" [2]) is patterned after the Homeric "angry speech." Otherwise, he (5) cites Hesiod's use of *hôs se keleuô*, "as I urge you" (316, 536, 623), as part of the evidence that the instruction in (what Lardinois assigns as) the poem's second half is "much more forceful" than in the first. However, whether or not that is true in general, the one Homeric use of *hôs se keleuô* (*Od.* 10.516) is not especially forceful. *Kelomai* in our case only reminds us that the consequences of not following the advice could be serious.

It is the center of all this, the third vignette, that is most quoted.[43] Yet, while 582–96 are invariably cited as an integrated piece, and one that portrays an idyllic situation, they actually fall into two parts: the usual sequence of nature and action segments, which, however, in this case have a negative and positive thrust, respectively. Another point is that, as with the winter section, it is only a task-oriented construal of the agricultural portion that causes one to think of stillness as do the commentators. Rather, as in winter, in the first part of this vignette it is only humans who are still; the (anthropomorphic) nature forces are active, if for the most part negatively so (582–84):

ἦμος δὲ σκόλυμός τ᾽ ἀνθεῖ καὶ ἠχέτα τέττιξ
δενδρέῳ ἐφεζόμενος λιγυρὴν καταχεύετ᾽ ἀοιδήν
πυκνὸν ὑπὸ πτερύγων, θέρεος καματώδεος ὥρῃ,

At the point of the year that the thistle blooms and the shrill cicada,
"sitting on his tree," showers down his "clear song"
in fast beats from under his wings, in the season of exhausting summer,

then certain conditions pertain (585 through the first four feet of 588). Despite the standard view that fails to distinguish the later, positive part of the vignette from this part, and takes the cicada to govern the later as well and to be positive, the creature is an ominous presence.[44] It is true that Hesiod will later assign *ligurê aoidê* to himself (659),[45] but surely its most striking instance in the Homeric-Hesiodic corpus is that the Sirens utter it in luring men to their doom (*Od.* 12.44, 183). Moreover, while *dendreôi ephezomenos* is related to the comparison of a Trojan council to "lily-voiced" cicadas, instead of the lily image we get the idea of a coarse thistle.[46] Then, while the scene the insect introduces seems innocent at first, with "the best" wine and the fattest of epic's "fat goats" (585; *piones aiges* is attested six times), the cited lusty women (586a) are as negative as are others in the poem. Men are weakened by Sirius (586b–88a), and thus are too tired to be bothered with them, just as in Hesiod's view men have worked too hard for the grain to allow women to steal it (373–75),

[43] This is particularly so in general works that mention the agricultural portion, e.g., Barron/Easterling 102; cf. Beye 56, Hass 25. For a non-classicist's view see Sarton 150.

[44] As an example of the positive view, Rosen 107–8 sees the cicada as a figure for a good poet: the poet of the time when "men relax and turn to esthetic pleasures."

[45] As Rosen loc. cit. points out.

[46] See *Il.* 3.152; cf. Bader 1993: 51. Whatever the direction of the allusion, the allusion itself is clear from the extremely unusual shortening of *-eôi* to a single light syllable in both passages. But if Hesiod were the earlier and were unconstrained by the tradition, he would probably say *enezomenos*, "sitting in" the tree rather than "on."

not to mention that men's life in paradise was ruined by the creation of woman according to him (47–105). That is, the thrust here is basically ironic.[47] One might think something pleasant will result from whatever the creature is enticing people to do with its so-called song, and most commentators project the later Greeks' love of it back onto Hesiod, but he himself demurs.[48]

Thus the sequel is not part of the cicada's regime, but an escape therefrom. Of recent Hesiod authorities I have only found Lamberton grasping the point, when he says that as we proceed to the latter part of the vignette, "from a vision of a natural landscape that drains, sears, and emasculates, we pass into a sheltered and humanized world."[49] And form follows content, as the change takes place through "violent" enjambment (588b–89):[50]

ἀλλὰ τότ' ἤδη
εἴη πετραίη τε σκιὴ καὶ Βίβλινος οἶνος

But then at once
let there be shade in the rocks and wine of Biblos.

To this are added a number of foods carefully prepared to have gourmet appeal (590–92). The segment concludes by saying that upon finishing the meal you should turn your face to the breeze of the west wind Zephyr (593–94), and (595–96)

κρήνης δ' αἰενάου καὶ ἀπορρύτου, ἥ τ' ἀθόλωτος,
τρὶς ὕδατος προχέειν, τὸ δὲ τέτρατον ἰέμεν οἴνου.

from an ever-flowing and running spring, and one untroubled,
pour out three (parts) of water, and throw (in) a fourth of wine.

Here festivity reigns, in contrast to the first part of this third vignette, but in agreement with the reference to Dionysus at the end of the fifth and of the composition itself. Indeed, as to wine there is a parallel with epic celebrants.[51]

[47] This irony is metrically enhanced by a faux-lyrical singsong presentation: three of the six lines 582–87 (583, 584, and 586) have dactyls for the first five feet (cf. 14% of verses for our poem as a whole, 19% for Homer).

[48] On the cicada in later Greece and further matters see Beall 2004b: 112.

[49] Lamberton 127–28. Among earlier work, Bona Quaglia 174–75 makes much the same point. It seems ironic that others misconstrue as positive the *only* negative segment in the piece studied here.

[50] I follow Higbie's (1990: 51–55) definition of enjambment as violent if, among other possibilities, the first line of the pair contains only the clause's particles.

[51] For *epi d' aithopa pinemen oinon*, "after (eating) drink shining wine" (592), cf. *epi d' aithopa woinon*, "he (poured) shining wine over" meat (*Il.* 1.462 = *Od.* 3.459).

The poet's stress on the water as ever-flowing, etc., is consistent with the deep sense of the basic elements air, water, and earth he displays in the winter section (see Ballabriga 592–93), as well as a certain awe of water implicit elsewhere in the poem (in particular see 737–39 on crossing rivers); yet the exclamation point provided by the strong verb for adding the wine again brings out the transcendance of nature by culture in this vignette.[52] That is to say, at the pivotal point of the piece, the end of its central vignette, a celebration (perhaps of something connoted by the end of winter) is in full swing.

To be sure, this festivity is not some passive contemplation of a painter's idyllic rendering of nature, as one would gather from some readings of the vignette.[53] Even the enjoyment of the shade in Zephyr's breeze, with items such as cake made with milk (589–90), is "made possible by human effort," as Lamberton says.[54] The reflection is on enjoyment of the fruits of labor, not the scenery.

To summarize the structure of 564–614a: Riedinger's ring symmetry is more precise than his treatment of it notices, particularly if the reconstructed order for the fourth vignette is correct. The first and fifth vignettes are each in a single part; the second and fourth in two, with a seven-line segment in a narrative mode followed by an atemporal four-line segment in a progressive rhythm. The symmetry also has the effect of mutual reinforcement of the five vignettes, to imply an overall festive mood not confined to the central one.

In any case, particularly given the lack of chronological order and the fact that none of the five vignettes is particularly long, the material implies a single, if extended moment in time. Thus, while there are also chronological deviations elsewhere in the agricultural portion,[55] here the assumption of chronicity breaks down entirely. Indeed, I do not infer that the autumn of 609–14 is necessarily the "next" autumn after that of 414–22: it can be seen as simply an alternative vision of a setting, given to satisfy the structure.

Of course, a work of art that accomplished only symmetry could be an empty formal exercise. We have seen more than that here, at least in that Hesiod supplies excellence in verse. But part of the appeal of, say, the *Iliad* is

[52] The transcendence is also assisted by the ambiance entailed in following a standard pattern: one tries something three times with modest results, and succeeds decisively on the fourth attempt; for discussion with examples see Kirk 1990: 106.

[53] Such as Kumaniecki's (89), Rosen's (n. 44 above), or Beye's or Sarton's (n. 43 above).

[54] Lamberton 128. Aside from baked goods, I have argued that the beef one eats (591) is from a wild specimen, for a gamier taste (see Beall 2001: 163; *contra*, now, A. Edwards 144). If so, it would have to be hunted.

[55] See 462, 503. Moreover, the winter description at 504–63 essentially cites events in the month of Lenaeon as if it were a single moment in time.

that, while it has a highly developed overall ring structure and excellent verse, it also has a steadily developing plot.[56]

In our case, although some hint of progress may accrue to the emphatic "gift of Dionysus" at the end of our passage, the forward movement seems mostly to accrue to the larger ring of 414–614a.[57] This motion is signaled in particular by the citation of Perses near the end (611) for the first time since the introduction to the agricultural portion (397). That point is variously interpreted,[58] but I believe the effect is to acknowledge him as a true person at last, after his full story comprising the agricultural portion has been told. The addressee who has carried out the goal-oriented activities of the first section, which I have previously argued (2004a) are favorably compared with the activities of epic heroes; the battle with winter of the second; and the festively accented matters of the third, is now one truly worthy of comparison with Achilles or Odysseus.

* * *

To conclude, it is true that there are passages in the first half of the *Works and Days* that are readily interpreted as stressing drudgery, but in others work is more or less pleasant, especially in the section considered here.[59] And the mismatch creates problems for any facile conception of the poem's unity.[60]

[56] On the ring see Richardson 4–13; on the plot Schein 348–51. To further illustrate the point, ring structure under such names as "sonata form" is of course an important feature of Western classical music; still, the point does not preclude forward development. Among pieces in specifically five movements like ours, a good example is Bartók's fifth string quartet. It is cast in ABCBA or "arch" form, where the two A's share the same mood (or what Bartók called *affektenlehre*), and similarly the B's. Yet in this piece the second B treats the mood of the first ironically, while the second A is a more vigorous *allegro* than the first.

[57] See n. 9 above.

[58] West 1978: 40 thinks of "a final reminder of the addressee's identity." Clay 1994: 30 (= 584–85) holds the citation to stress need to get back to work after the picnic of the third vignette, given that the intervening fourth had transpired at an earlier time.

[59] As to drudgery, especially, form follows content in 299–316, themselves tedious (so West *ad* 309). So also the *kamatos* cited at 177 in the quasi-prophetic "fifth race," although I am among those who are unconvinced that that is included in what Pandora let out of the jar in 90–104. As to pleasant tasks apart from here, one thinks first of woodworking and plow-making, 422–36; see Nelson 1998: 51–52, Marsilio 16–19, Beall 2004a: 13–14. Within the "Days," 814–18 unite key themes without negativism.

[60] For such reasons, Nelson 1998: xi, 47–48 holds that the unity of the poem is not structural but is found in themes common to its given parts. To be sure, this view begs the question, since it does not explain why specifically these are the parts the poet includes.

Especially, its "works and days" proper cannot simply illustrate principles formulated earlier to the effect that drudgery is required for morality or prosperity.[61]

That is to say, both grapes and grain are demanded. If we do not read nose to page, Hesiod has spirits either drunk or grown in three of the five vignettes, because the protagonist signified by Perses needs both bread and wine to be a complete human being. To be sure, at this point he has accomplished far too much for mere passive aesthetic contemplation. That gift of Dionysus may well make him dance.

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[61] It may be that 1–382 introduce the rest of the poem (so, e.g., Heath), but the mode of the prefacing cannot be generalities with their specifications to follow. Perhaps the role of the first half is to show that one must be ethical, which necessarily entails that life will be hard at times, but then, having assimilated that point, the farmer/listener is free to experience the "drama" that Nelson brings out in 383–617, as well as the ensuing scenes that, as Clay (2003: 44; cf. 46–48) rightly says, are also important.

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