

**NOTES ON THE WORKS AND
DAYS OF HESIOD WITH
INTRODUCTION AND
APPENDIX: A DISSERTATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649659173

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Cover @ 2017

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The University of Chicago

NOTES ON THE WORKS
AND DAYS OF HESIOD

WITH INTRODUCTION AND APPENDIX

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF GREEK

BY

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Private Edition, Distributed By
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
1918

The Goshute Press
GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING COMPANY
MENASHA, WISCONSIN

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PREFACE

In the following dissertation no dogmatism has been attempted where certainty is impossible, but it has generally been assumed that the Works and Days is the only genuine work of Hesiod, and that a very considerable part of it is due to his genius, whatever his sources. It has also been taken for granted that Hesiod was influenced by the Ionic Epic, and was somewhat later than Homer.

Acknowledgement is due to Professor Paul Shorey of the University of Chicago, at whose suggestion the work was undertaken, to Professors W. G. Hale, C. D. Buck, and H. W. Prescott, also of the University of Chicago, to Professor M. W. Humphreys of the University of Virginia, under whom the author first read the Works and Days, and to Professor W. G. Manly of the University of Missouri for the use of his private library.

H. M. HAYS.

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INTRODUCTION

I. Life and Time of Hesiod: The reliable facts of the life of Hesiod that have come down to us are few and are derived chiefly from his works. We learn from Works and Days 633-40 that his father left Cyme in Aeolis hard pressed by poverty and sailed the seas as a trader, and finally settled at Ascra, a village in Boeotia on the slope of Helicon, near the town of Thespieae, which according to Diodorus Siculus¹ was ruled by seven princes. Here it seems the poet was born, though according to some he was born at Cyme and came to Ascra with his father.² At all events the son became a farmer and shows an intimate personal acquaintance with agriculture, while his knowledge of sea-faring seems to be second-hand. Besides being a farmer and the son of a trader Hesiod is represented in Theogony 22-3 as having been a shepherd-boy at the foot of Helicon, where the Muses inspired him with the gift of song, while in Works 654-62 he appears as a professional bard.³ But the main fact in the life of Hesiod and the one which is prominent in the Works and Days is the difficulty which arose between him and his brother Perses with reference to the division of their father's estate. This was the occasion of the poet's administering to the Thespian princes the lessons of justice and to Perses the lessons of industry found in the Works.

For the later events of his life we have little that is reliable, a few references in ancient authors and the Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi,⁴ the work of an anonymous writer of the reign of Hadrian,

¹ IV 29, 4. Strabo (IX 2, 25) says: In the country of the Thespians is Ascra, the father-land of Hesiod.

² So Suidas, v. *Holoŏos* and *Hermesianax* (III 21) in Athenaeus 597d.

³ Th. 22-3 seems to be a reference to Hesiod as the great poet of Helicon by the later author of the Theogony. See Croiset, *Lit. Gr.* I 450 and 512. Evelyn-White renders: And one day they taught Hesiod glorious song while he was shepherding his lambs under holy Helicon, and this word first the goddesses said to me: Nowhere in the Works and Days does the author show any particular interest in a shepherd's life or acquaintance with it. The second passage has been so severely criticized in ancient and modern times (see note 4 *infra*) that it seems rash to base a conclusion on it.

⁴ The certamen is printed in the editions of Goettling-Flach, Sittl, Rzsch, and Evelyn-White, and may be said to represent fairly correctly the ancient tradition on the subject. It is evidently based on Works 654-62. These verses were rejected by Plutarch, and are suspected by most modern editors. Rohde,

who however drew his information for the close of the poet's life from Alcidas and Eratosthenes. After some idle speculation on the parentage of Hesiod⁵ the contest is given in full. All the people were for awarding the prize to Homer, but the king Panedes crowned Hesiod as having sung of peace and industry, whereas Homer had sung of war and bloodshed. After the contest Hesiod went to Delphi to dedicate to the God the first fruits of the victory, and was told by the oracle to beware of the grove of the Nemean Zeus; for there he was fated to meet death. Consequently he avoided the Peloponnesus, thinking the Nemea there was meant, and took refuge at the court of the brothers Amphiphanes and Ganymetor at Oeneum in the country of the Ozolian Locrians near Naupactus, not understanding the oracle; for this place also was sacred to the Nemean Zeus. The two princes, suspecting that Hesiod had violated their sister, slew him and cast his body into the sea. On the third day it was brought to land by dolphins, when the people were keeping holiday on the shore; and they recognized and buried him. The murderers in alarm took ship for Crete, but were struck by a thunder-bolt in mid-sea. Later the inhabitants of Orchomenos in accordance with an oracle removed the body to their own city and buried it there. Such is the account of Alcidas, but Eratosthenes says that Hesiod was not the guilty person, the maid having been ruined by a fellow-traveller of his.⁶

however, points out (Kleine Schriften I 43, note 1) that the ground of Plutarch's objection must have been their reference to the contest between Homer and Hesiod, which he considered a fable. Here, however, the fact that Homer is not mentioned is clear proof that the author did not know of that tradition, else he would have mentioned the greatest of all epic poets. Hence this passage is older than the oldest form of the Certamen, and was the basis of that tradition.

⁵ Perses is called *δῖον γένος* in Works 299, where some of the ancients seem to have read *Δῖον γένος*. Hence the tradition that Hesiod was the son of Dios. It seems that nothing more is meant than in the case of the honest swine-herd of the Odyssey, who is called *δῖος Εβμαῖος*. In II. IX 538 *δῖον γένος* (of Artemis) it taken by Leaf to be equivalent to *Διὸς κούρη*.

⁶ The tradition of the Certamen is supported by Plutarch (Conv. Sep. Sap. 19), whose statement, however, seems to imply that the Orchomenians were unsuccessful in their attempt to remove the remains, and by Pausanias (IX 31, 6 and 38, 3-4). The double interment of the poet is referred to by Pindar (Frag. 328 Christ). There seems to be an element of truth in the tradition that Hesiod spent the latter part of his life in the neighborhood of Naupactus, and possibly at Orchomenos. That he should have become dissatisfied with the uninviting region of Ascrea (see Works 640), especially after his experience with the authori-

The time at which Hesiod lived is a question on which the ancients were divided. Herodotus made him and Homer contemporaries, and fixed their date at 400 years before his time.⁷ This opinion is perhaps based on the legend of the Certamen. The Certamen itself and Ephorus of Cyme, according to the life of Homer ascribed to Plutarch, make Homer a generation younger than Hesiod; while the Parian Marble makes Hesiod 30 years the elder. On the other hand the Alexandrians, Eratosthenes and Aristarchus, were of the opinion that Hesiod must have lived after Homer on the ground of his wider geographical knowledge and the later character of his myths.⁸ According to Gellius (III 11, 2) even before the Alexandrians Xenophanes had declared Homer to be the elder, while Cicero in Cato Major 54 refers to Homer as having been *multis, ut mihi videtur, ante Hesiodum saeculis*.

Hesiod was by origin an Aeolian from Cyme, but he passed the most important part of his life at Ascra in Boeotia.⁹ His poem, however, is in the Ionic dialect with a somewhat larger Aeolic element than the Homeric poems and a few Doricisms. It is reasonable to suppose that the Works was composed virtually as it now stands, so far as language is concerned. From this it may fairly be concluded that the Ionic epic was already well developed and generally known in Greece at the time of Hesiod, and it follows that Hesiod was probably somewhat later than Homer, who (whatever opinion may be held of him) must have stood at the culmination of the

ties there, is not surprising. Compare Velleius I 7: *Patriamque et parentes testatus est (Hesiodus); sed patriam, quia multatus ab ea erat, contumeliosissime contestatus est*. It is evident from Thuc. III 96 that the tradition of his death at Oeneum goes back at least to the time of Pericles.

⁷ II 53. So Varro (Gellius III 11, 3).

⁸ See Strabo I 2, 14 and 22; and Aristarchus on Il. IX 246; XI 750. It is to be noted that this opinion is based not on the Works and Days, but on the Theogony and later Hesiodic works. Thus the Theogony refers to the Nile (338), the Tyrrhenians (1016), Latinus (1013), the Eridanus and Ister (338-9), the island Erytheia (290), and the Hesperides (518), all which are not mentioned in Homer. In Th. 913-14 Hades snatched Persephone from her mother and Zeus allowed him to keep her (cf. Hom. Hymn to Demeter). This myth is not mentioned in Homer, where Persephone is associated with Hades as a dread goddess. The incident of Od. III 464 is developed into a marriage between Telemachus and Polyaste in the Catalogus (Frag. 17).

⁹ The language of Boeotia was an Aeolic-Doric mixture. See Buck's Greek Dialects, pp. 1-14.