



**Perses, Work "In Season," and the Purpose of Hesiod's "Works and Days"**

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PERSES, WORK "IN SEASON," AND THE PURPOSE OF HESIOD'S  
WORKS AND DAYS

I

Hesiod's *Works and Days* confronts the reader with a notorious diversity of subject matter. While concerned in large part with agriculture, the poem also contains a number of passages the relation of which to this central theme has not proved, to judge from an extensive and complex secondary literature, in the least obvious.<sup>1</sup> Particularly vexed is the question of the significance within the whole of the account of a quarrel between the poet and his brother Perses and of the several apostrophes of, and allusions to, Perses, not all expressly connected with the quarrel, elsewhere in the poem. The reading which I shall now propose will, if correct, not only demonstrate in detail the relation of this subject to agriculture but will also go far towards eliciting the ultimate purpose of the entire poem. Let us begin with the perpetually troublesome account of the quarrel in lines 27–41:<sup>2</sup>

ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα τεῶν ἐνικάτθεο θυμῶ,  
μηδὲ σ' Ἔρις κακόχαρτος ἀπ' ἔργου θυμὸν ἐρύκοι  
νείκε' ὀπιπεύοντ' ἀγορῆς ἑπακουὸν ἔοντα.  
30 ὦρῃ γάρ τ' ὀλίγη πέλεται νεικέων τ' ἀγορέων τε,  
ὅτινι μὴ βίος ἔνδον ἐπηετανὸς κατάκειται  
ὠραῖος, τὸν γαῖα φέρει, Δημήτερος ἀκτῆν.

<sup>1</sup>Because my interpretation springs from an entirely new understanding of the import of Hesiod's attitude towards Perses I have seen no point in systematically collating agreements with or divergences from other readings that are based on quite different premises. For the benefit of those who wish to consider contrasting views, however, I append a list of some more recent discussions of the overall structure, unity, or purpose of the poem: J. Kerschensteiner, "Zu Aufbau und Gedankenführung von Hesiods Erga," *Hermes* 79 (1944) 149–91; F. J. Teggart, "The Argument of Hesiod's Works and Days," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 8 (1947) 45–77; B. A. van Groningen, *La Composition littéraire archaïque grecque* (Amsterdam 1958) 283–303; P. Walcot, "The Composition of the Works and Days," *REG* 74 (1961) 1–19; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, 2nd ed. (Munich 1962) 156–81; W. J. Verdenius, "Aufbau und Absicht der Erga," in *Hésiode et son influence (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique VII, Geneva 1962)* 111–59; W. Nicolai, *Hesiods Erga: Beobachtungen zum Aufbau* (Heidelberg 1964); S. Benardete, "Hesiod's Works and Days: a First Reading," *Agon* 1 (1967) 150–74; C. R. Beye, "The Rhythm of Hesiod's Works and Days," *HSCP* 76 (1972) 23–44.

In my analysis of the quarrel with Perses (part II) I make repeated reference to B. A. van Groningen, "Hésiode et Persès," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterkunde 20 (6) (Amsterdam 1957), and to M. Gagarin, "Hesiod's Dispute with Perses," *TAPA* 104 (1974) 103–11.

The text cited and reproduced throughout is that of M. L. West, *Hesiod, Works & Days* (Oxford 1978).

<sup>2</sup>Lines 40–41, included here for the sake of completeness, are not, however, discussed since the difficult questions of their meaning and reference do not bear directly upon my line of argument.

- τοῦ κε κορρῆσσάμενος νείκεα καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλοις  
 κτήμασ' ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίοις. σοὶ δ' οὐκέτι δεῦτερον ἔσται  
 35 ὧδ' ἔρδειν, ἀλλ' αὐθι διακρινώμεθα νεῖκος  
 ἰθείησι δίκης, αἶ τ' ἐκ Διός εἰσιν ἄρισται.  
 ἤδη μὲν γὰρ κλῆρον ἔδασσάμεθ', ἄλλα τε πολλά  
 ἀρπάζων ἐφόρεις, μέγα κυδαίνων βασιλῆας  
 δωροφάγους, οἱ τήνδε δικὴν ἐθέλουσι δικάσσαι,  
 40 νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἤμισυ παντός,  
 οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ μέγ' ὄνειρα.

Throughout these lines details of Perses' quarrelsome activity are juxtaposed with pronouncements by the author on the value of work. Although the connections are loose, it is obvious that both subjects are thematically related to the foregoing 26 lines of text. Perses' litigiousness at once recalls the invocations of the Muses to tell of Zeus and of Zeus himself to "straighten judgments with Justice" (1–10); it is also reminiscent of the portrayal of Bad Strife, "who fosters evil war and battle" (14), for Perses has, as we shall see, been cultivating νείκεα (29, 33, 35). At the same time, the theme of work harks back to the characterization of Good Strife, who "excites even the lazy to toil," because when "a man, without work on hand, sees the rich hurrying to plow and to plant and to set the house in order, neighbor vies with neighbor as he hurries after wealth;" and "potter is angry with potter, carpenter with carpenter; and beggar is jealous of beggar, and singer of singer" (20–26). Against this background, the function performed by our passage is, generally speaking, twofold: first, to exemplify Good and Bad Strife by reference to the career of a specific individual, the poet's brother; and, secondly, at least at the outset, to relate quarreling to work as mutually exclusive alternatives. Thus Hesiod admonishes Perses because he has allowed the Bad Strife, exemplified in his quarreling, to defeat the Good, which should be exemplified, but is not, in his attention to his farm. "O Perses," he begins, "take these things to heart and do not let the Eris that delights in evil keep your heart from work, gazing at quarrels (while) a listener in the agora" (27– 29).

So far so good. The initial problem concerns the interpretation of the ensuing account of the quarrel(s). On the basis of what we have seen thus far, the νεῖκος should, as a symptom of Perses' possession by the Bad Strife, serve to illustrate his neglect of his work—hence function as a foil for the protracted presentation of how the Good Strife should be embodied in the management of the addressee's farm. Yet critics, including some very recent ones, have traditionally studied the quarrel with Perses as a subject in its own right, often without regard to its relation to the surrounding text. To be sure, there are real problems regarding the specific details—the number of "trials" which have taken, or are contemplated as taking, place: whether it is Perses or Hesiod who is to be understood as having emerged, or as being likely to emerge, victorious therefrom; and, whatever the legal situation, regarding the past, present, or probable future financial condition of the two parties. But to fail to consider the function of the quarrel within its context is to run the risk of missing Hesiod's real point in introducing the subject and in describing it in the terms he does. Indeed, a few critics, in apparent neglect not only of the

opening passages but even of the great bulk of the poem, have gone so far as to suggest more or less substantial connections between the νεῖκος and the very composition of the *Works and Days*. For one scholar, the poem was "immediately inspired" by the quarrel; for another, it embodies a plea delivered by Hesiod to his brother to settle the dispute; for another, and most extreme of all, it was composed as an actual "weapon for litigation."<sup>3</sup>

My belief is that the importance of the quarrel has, expressly or by implication, been both misconstrued and exaggerated. What I propose to show is that throughout the account Hesiod continues, in harmony with the opening lines just paraphrased, to develop the point that the νεῖκος is objectionable *only* because it may interfere with Perses' proper attention to his farm. There will be other objections, too, as we shall acknowledge, but these are reserved for later, after the connection with the farmer's work has been firmly established. Thus to the subject of work the poet subordinates, for the time being, all consideration of Justice, either in the particular or the abstract. Work itself, the primary theme, will, moreover, in these very same lines be given a more precise formulation appropriate to the farmer's (and sea-trader's) pursuits as work done "in season" or, in more technical terms, in conformity with Hesiod's own agricultural (and maritime) calendar. Although hardly noticed by commentators, the principle of work in accordance with the "calendar" is overwhelmingly supported by Hesiod's emphasis not on the way in which work is to be done, but rather on its proper timing.<sup>4</sup> Besides astronomical and calendric indications, the point is repeatedly signaled by the use of the term ὥρη and its adjective ὥραϊος (ὥριος),<sup>5</sup> which, as we shall see, encapsulate as well as any single words the author's fundamental purpose.

## II

Following the injunction to Perses not to let the Bad Strife keep him from his work by gazing at quarrels in the agora, Hesiod provides justification for his admonition with three lines which serve as well to introduce the author's

<sup>3</sup>For discussion of some of these conventional views of the quarrel see, for example, J. F. Latimer, "Perses versus Hesiod," *TAPA* 61 (1930) 70–79; van Groningen 1957 (above, note 1) 153, note 1; and Gagarin (above, note 1) *passim*. For the dispute as the "unmittelbaren Anstoss" see A. Rzach, "Hesiodos," *RE* VIII (1913) 117. The view that the poem was intended to be recited in order to bring about a settlement is that of van Groningen 1957 (above, note 1) 155–56. The phrase "eine Waffe im Rechtsstreit" was used by B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, 3rd ed., Hamburg 1955, p. 97, with reference to Hesiod's work generally; but of course only the *Works and Days* can be intended.

<sup>4</sup>The same point is made by West (p. 52) about the poem in general; yet the observation plays no discernible role in his interpretations of either the quarrel or the portrayal of Perses. The same may be said of Beye's reading despite his statement that "this idea of the right moment, the concept of ripeness, is a continual refrain in Hesiod's poem" (above, note 1) 37.

<sup>5</sup>Most but not all instances of the noun and its adjectives appear in the following discussion. The exceptions, all of self-evident import, are the uses of the noun with terms denoting literal seasons, viz. winter (450), summer (584, 664), and "of ploughing" (460); and similar uses of the adjective concerning rain (492), cold (543), and ἔργον (422). For the allied terms μέτρον (with μέτριος, μετρείσθαι) and καιρός see part IV ad fin.

ethic of work. To translate West's text: "For there is little concern with quarrels and agoras for a man for whom abundant livelihood is not laid up within, ripe livelihood, which earth brings forth, the grain of Demeter" (30–32). Although commentators appear to be in agreement that this is the general sense of the lines, no fewer than three individual words, each potentially relevant to my interpretation, are in fact subject to controversy or doubt. Of these the least problematic is the adjective ὠραῖος in line 32. The word is glossed in West's commentary (*ad loc.*) by the English "ripe,"<sup>6</sup> but ripeness, in the context of a farmer's βίος, is only secondary to, or derivative of, the purely temporal aspect of being "in season." A crop that is ὠραῖος is one which, as will be explicitly or implicitly indicated throughout the poem, is sown, tended, and harvested in accordance with Hesiod's calendar. Only thus will the fruit be of the quantity and quality that are desired.<sup>7</sup> That the βίος, furthermore, is agricultural and not from some other source is specified in the remainder of the line, which West (*ad loc.*) dismisses without further comment as "padding," but which really underscores a distinction vital to the content of the poem. Hesiod's father, "in need of good βίος," had turned from seafaring out of coastal Aeolian Kyme to farming in mainland Boeotian Askra (633–40). Elsewhere in the poem, too, marine commerce is represented as a possible, though less desirable, supplement to the life of the farmer.<sup>8</sup> Hesiod adds these words in line 32 because he is anxious to typify the work which his brother, in the grip of Bad Strife, has neglected.

With this fairly secure point in mind, we may ask, with respect to the second of the three terms, whether ἐπητανός in line 31 might not mean, rather than merely "abundant" or "sufficient" as it is often rendered, more specifically "lasting for a year" (*sc.* from ἐπί and ἔτος), as some have suggested.<sup>9</sup> Such a meaning would be particularly appropriate to an agricultural schedule according to which a given crop might be harvested only once a year, thereby necessitating that each commodity be grown and stored in quantities sufficient for twelve months—a requirement that would apply to both that part of the crop which is to be consumed and that part to be reserved for use as seed for the following year. While the linguistic evidence is unfortunately inconclusive, nothing stands in the way of this rendering, which is entirely appropriate to the present context.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, and most problematically, attention should be drawn to the first word of line 30, which in West's and other modern editions is given as ὄρη (with smooth breathing) but which there is some manuscript authority for printing as ὄρη (with rough breathing), meaning of course not "concern" but

<sup>6</sup>With the comment: "Hesiod seems to have felt it an important addition here. . . ."

<sup>7</sup>The connection is made explicit at lines 479–82 (discussed below, part IV).

<sup>8</sup>Lines 45–46, 236–37, 618–94. For the point that, for Hesiod, going to sea is not an alternative but an "optional supplement" to farming see West on 618–94, p. 313.

<sup>9</sup>E.g. H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch I* (Heidelberg 1960) s.v. (p. 534) and P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque II* (Paris 1970) s.v. (p. 357). The word is also found at lines 517 and 607, in both of which passages the suggested sense, though possible, is not required.

<sup>10</sup>Compare, too, for the sense, lines 43–44, where a world is imagined in which a single day's work would produce enough even for a year.

"season."<sup>11</sup> Editors, confronted with the conflicting paleographic testimony, assert or appear to assume that the less common ὥρη might more easily have been replaced by the more common ὄρη than vice versa.<sup>12</sup> But it is not clear that the former yields the more difficult *sense*. "Brief is the season for quarrels and agoras" would be, in the context of an agricultural writing, metaphorical and might easily have given way to the prosaic ". . . concern for quarrels and agoras."<sup>13</sup> Stylistically unobjectionable,<sup>14</sup> the suggested reading would comport perfectly with the certain implications of ὥραϊος in line 32 and the possible specific sense of ἐπηετανός in line 31. The (metaphorical) season for litigation is brief because the time and effort expended thereon can only detract from one's proper attention to the (literal) seasons of the agricultural calendar, those which the farmer must observe to produce the livelihood necessary to sustain himself and his family.<sup>15</sup> These lines would accordingly acquire a significance that will be, as we shall see, programmatic for the greater part of the poem.

"Once you have satisfied yourself of this (sc. βίου)," Hesiod continues, "you might increase your quarrels and battling for the property of others" (33–34). With these words Hesiod renews the theme of Perses' contentiousness introduced in line 29, with the addition, however, that whereas in the earlier passage Perses was envisioned as a mere spectator, he is now described as bringing suits on his own behalf. It is difficult, in view of the wording "increase your quarrels," which can only allude to the *νέκεια* in line 29, to escape the conclusion that a development of some kind is intended. But what

<sup>11</sup>See the app. crit. of A. Rzach, *Hesiodi carmina*, Leipzig 1902 (and cf. the *editio minor* of 1908 and 1913), according to which (p. 133) the reading with rough breathing was defended by Karl Lehrs, *Quaestiones epicae* (1837), p. 223 note 5 (*non vidi*). Among modern commentators I find the reading supported by M. S. Jensen, "Tradition and Individuality in Hesiod's Works and Days," *C & M* 27 (1966) 1–27: 7–8.

<sup>12</sup>The argument from the *lectio difficilior* is used by T. A. Sinclair, *Hesiod, Works and Days*, London 1932, ad loc., in favor of the "less common" word.

<sup>13</sup>Since the autograph and early copies (?) of the text will presumably have been written in the epichoric Boeotian script and since this script used a separate character, the *eta*-sign, for the aspirate (see L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, p. 89), it is easiest to assume that the change occurred early in the minuscule tradition, when symbols for breathings were not in general use (see R. Barbour, *Greek Literary Hands A.D. 400–1600*, Oxford 1981, xxvii–xxviii).

<sup>14</sup>West ad loc. observes that the usage of ὥρη is "distinct from that of ὄρα," but cites no evidence that might eliminate or even render less probable the reading of the latter. Πέλεσθαι is used of the dawn at line 547 and thrice of the time for sailing (πλόος) at lines 665, 678, and 682; in Homer, it is used of days at, e.g., *Odyssey* 18.367 and 22.301. The adjective δλιγος modifies the noun χρόνος at, e.g., *Iliad* 19.157 and 23.418 and Pindar *N.* 7.38. For the (resulting) proximity of ὥρη and ὥραϊος compare the juxtaposition of ὥρης and ὥραϊος at lines 664–65.

<sup>15</sup>In answer to the possible objection that, as a matter of historical fact, the winter months would have provided ample opportunity for a lengthy "season" for litigation in town it is sufficient to cite lines 493–501, where the reader is advised to "pass by the blacksmith's shop and its warm lounge in the wintry season when cold keeps a man from his tasks (ἔργα), when an unhesitant man might greatly increase his οἶκος;" and, similarly, 554, wherein one is urged, "anticipating the North Wind, to complete one's ἔργον and return home (οἰκόνδε)." Specific jobs prescribed for the winter, however, seem to be limited to the feeding of oxen and of one's "man" (559–60) and the pruning of vines (570).

significance is to be attributed to the distinction is unclear. Gagarin, reading line 29 in the light of what we are not told until lines 33–34, assumes that Perses, while a spectator, was also at that time actually engaged in disputes himself.<sup>16</sup> But this reconstruction requires the acceptance of a non-linear reading of the text whereby entirely new content, for which no preparation has been made, is retrojected to the earlier passage. To the assumption, on the other hand, that Hesiod really does intend a significant contrast between the (mere) observation of quarrels and actually engaging in them oneself an alternative is suggested by the fact that both are explicitly opposed to the demands of agriculture. Perhaps the explanation is simply that Hesiod does not intend the distinction, although clearly stated, to be significant for his point about the need for work. Perhaps, as the preceding analysis would suggest, Hesiod's primary concern is with the consequences for the farmer's life. To the viewing of quarrels in the agora he protests only that such activity may interfere with work; and in lines 33–34, as Gagarin has already observed,<sup>17</sup> Hesiod is willing to permit even the bringing of suits on one's own behalf provided that one first satisfy the need for livelihood. Both are alike, in other words, in terms of their possible negative ramifications. What difference does it make what you are doing in the agora if the farm at home is suffering from neglect?<sup>18</sup>

Now that the conditions necessary for the resumption of litigious activity have been established, Hesiod ordains that such a course of action will not after all be open to Perses. "But for you it will not be possible to act in this way a second time; rather let us, right here, settle the quarrel ourselves with straight δίκαι, which, (since they come) from Zeus, are best" (34–36). To restrict our discussion initially to the first clause, we must deal with the difficult question of the referent of the adverb ὧδε, translated "in this way." Some earlier scholars imagined that Hesiod has "trials" in mind and that he is warning Perses that another such "trial" will not occur.<sup>19</sup> But this reading is open to the decisive objection that no "first" or other "trial" has been mentioned to this point; nor do the immediately following lines, 37–39, in which such a first "trial" has usually been found, support, as we shall shortly see, the view that such a proceeding was actually begun, much less completed. Gagarin offered the at first sight more attractive alternative interpretation that the reference is to "engaging in disputes with sufficient livelihood," which he supplies from the immediately foregoing text. Yet the difficulty arises here that there is at hand no good explanation why Perses should be denied a second such opportunity. Gagarin suggests that there will be no second chance because Perses has impoverished himself in his earlier attempt, described in lines 37–39, to acquire property of his brother and will not have the means to try again.<sup>20</sup> But the account of the abortive attempt

<sup>16</sup>Gagarin (above, note 1) 105, note 6.

<sup>17</sup>Gagarin (above, note 1) 106.

<sup>18</sup>In this connection it is apt to note that Hesiod, for the same reason, urges avoidance of the blacksmith's shop (493–501; and see above, note 15). Town life in general threatens the routine of the agriculturist.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, Latimer (above, note 3) 72–73, with references to the earlier literature.

<sup>20</sup>Gagarin (above, note 1) 106–7.

follows our clause at an interval of two full lines<sup>21</sup> and, in any event, we shall see that the case for Perses’ supposed impoverishment is exceedingly weak. However, Gagarin’s initial premise, that the word ὤδε must refer to preceding content, remains valid. Since, then, no other specific referent appears available, I am inclined to see the clause, with ὤδε, as referring generally to the entire foregoing discussion from line 27 on.<sup>22</sup> Hesiod has opposed litigiousness to timely work, warning that the two, at least for Perses, are incompatible. Hesiod’s injunctions strongly suggest (though they do not imply) that Perses has already been guilty, as a result of the pursuit of *νείκεα*, of inattention to his work. Such neglect will not occur a second time, he says. The declaration is vague, but perhaps with a purpose: lack of specificity, in combination with the future tense might create, for the time being, an ominous uncertainty—an uncertainty which is redoubled by the lack of any indication of what might happen should Perses, despite his brother’s threat, again neglect his farm.

The suggestion that Hesiod’s words in our phrase are deliberately vague is bold and, since such a claim is by its very nature difficult to validate, would have little to recommend it were there no other evidence from the text that could be marshalled in its favor. But such evidence is available, evidence which, moreover, besides confirming my reading of our clause, also offers specific support for my representation of Hesiod’s point about the importance of timely work. I refer to lines 391–98:

. . . γυμνὸν στείρειν, γυμνὸν δὲ βωωτεῖν,  
 γυμνὸν δ’ ἀμάειν, εἴ χ’ ὦρια πάντ’ ἐθέλησθα  
 ἔργα κομίζεσθαι Δημήτερος, ὥς τοι ἕκαστα  
 ὦρι’ ἀέξηται, μὴ πως τὰ μέταξε χατίζων  
 395 πώσσης ἀλλοτρίους οἴκους καὶ μηδὲν ἀνύσσεις—  
 ὡς καὶ νῦν ἐπ’ ἐμ’ ἦλθες· ἐγὼ δέ τοι οὐκ ἐπιδώσω  
 οὐδ’ ἐπιμετρήσω· ἐργάζεο νήπιε Πέερση,  
 ἔργα, τὰ τ’ ἀνθρώποισι θεοὶ διετεκμήραντο. . . .

Here, just after the opening of the *Works* proper, the consequences of the neglect of the calendar are related to Hesiod’s earlier and prospective dealings with Perses. “Strip to sow, strip to plow, strip to reap, if you wish to bring in all the ἔργα of Demeter *in season* (ὦρια), in order that each crop of yours grow *in season* (ὦρι’), lest perchance afterwards, in need, you cower before other men’s houses and obtain nothing—even as, in fact, you came to me.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>West ad loc. tries to minimize the difficulty by supposing that Hesiod assumes that lines 33–34 are sufficient to signal Perses’ first attempt to acquire his brother’s property. But the fact remains that the verbal construction of the sentence is potential optative and that no allusion to actual judicial proceedings is made until line 37.

<sup>22</sup>Elsewhere in the poem the adverb is either prospective (203, 382 [West]) or retrospective (473, 760 [West]).

<sup>23</sup>The reading of the clause in line 396 attached by a dash to the preceding words is crucial for my interpretation. If the clause were to refer to *all* that has gone before in the μὴ-clause beginning in line 394, it would follow that when Perses came to Hesiod, he—as might happen in the hypothetical future case—“obtained nothing.” Hence the statement in lines 396–97 could *not* mean “I shall not give to you again . . .”; and new meanings (readily available) would have to



But I shall not give to you again nor measure out to you again.<sup>24</sup> Do the work, foolish Perses, that the gods marked out for humans. . . .” The implications of the passage are clear. Perses—as a result, we may conjecture, of his wasting time in the agora—had fallen behind schedule on his farm and, failing to produce crops “in season,” that is, in sufficient quantity and/or quality to provide adequate food and seed for the coming year, had appealed to his brother, on this first occasion successfully. So far as we are informed by the poet, Perses’ failure had been caused by no factor other than his inattention to the farm. There is no hint, to look ahead to our following discussion, of general “destitution” as a result of a trial, whether through payment of an award to his brother or through the bestowal of “bribes” or “fees” on judges.<sup>25</sup> Besides, the notion that Perses, following such a trial, would then apply to Hesiod for help is wildly improbable in itself if Hesiod is to be assumed, as he must, as having knowledge of his brother’s thwarted intentions. What Perses *had* failed to do was to manage his farm in a timely, which is to say (for Hesiod) productive, fashion during the preceding year. Hesiod now spells out in fuller, explicit form the threat only vaguely issued in lines 34–35. There will not be a second such act of generosity on his part. There will be no more “gifts” (ἐπιδώσω); nor will he again “measure out” (ἐπιμετρέησω) the foodstuffs and seed that Perses had, in the previous year, failed to produce for himself. Instead of a forgiving brother, Perses will, in the event of a second failure, confront his neighbors (κατὰ γείτονας), who might help out two or three times but in the end may turn their backs on him (399–403).

Returning to the text in line 35 we find that Hesiod now opposes to the (unwelcome) possibility of further such negligence the proposal that the brothers adjudicate the quarrel themselves “on the spot . . . with straight δίκαι” (35–36).<sup>26</sup> But in what sense, it might be objected, could the settlement of the quarrel in the manner so described be represented as an alternative to the untimely agricultural practices which Hesiod is prohibiting? The answer, a simple one, is provided by the foregoing text. Since presence in the agora might keep one from his work (28), settlement at home (αὔθι) would offer a clear advantage in terms of compatibility with the agricultural

be found for the verbs ἐπιδώσω and ἐπιμετρέησω. But, in fact, the range of the adverb ὡς, with which the clause is introduced, is limited by the verb ἦλθε, which is accordingly best taken as glossing πώσσης. For the rendering of καὶ νῦν as “in fact” see below, part III.

<sup>24</sup>The rendering of the prefix ἐπι- in both verbs as “again” or “more” was suggested by van Groningen 1957 (above, note 1) 164, note 34, followed by Gagarin (above, note 1) 111. Neither verb occurs elsewhere in the Hesiodic corpus, but an uncontested Homeric parallel for the intended sense of ἐπιδιδόναι occurs at *Iliad* 23.559.

<sup>25</sup>Gagarin (above, note 1) 111: “The poet’s advice here clearly confirms the picture of Perses as destitute. . . .” In fact, all (if anything) that is implied is that Perses had previously failed to produce crops that were ὄζια, which need suggest nothing more than a temporary shortage. Other difficulties with Gagarin’s notion of Perses’ “destitution” are brought out below, note 32.

<sup>26</sup>For the sense of the middle διακρινώμεθα see Gagarin (above, note 1) 107 note 11. For αὔθι, a shortened form of αὐτόθι, meaning “on the spot” see *LSJ*<sup>9</sup> s.v. I: West ad loc. cites D. Pinte’s study, *Recherches de philologie et de linguistique* (Louvain) 2 (1968) 141–46, showing that epic uses of the word always have a local sense, which I am inclined to follow against West’s own suggestion of a temporal meaning.

schedule. That it is likewise clear from the following text that Hesiod contrasts the "straight" δίκαι of such a private settlement with the presumably "crooked" ones which might be issued by the "gift-eating" judges does not in any way invalidate the point; Hesiod represents himself as having a combination of motives for his proposal. So the sense, admittedly somewhat cryptically expressed, would be (in paraphrase): "if you neglect your farm again by spending time in the agora, Perses, I won't help you out as I did last time; instead let us settle our quarrel at home privately so that you will not have to worry about interference of the court schedule with your work."<sup>27</sup>

Mention of the brother's νεῖκος in line 35 occasions fuller comment on its specific nature in lines 37–39. "For already we divided the κλήρος, and you kept grasping and trying to snatch and carry off much else, conferring great honor on gift-eating basileis, who wish to judge this case." Evidently, to make the less controversial point first, a distinction is being made between the land proper, the κλήρος, and the "movables" (ἄλλα τε πολλά), which alone were subject to the opposing claims.<sup>28</sup> More importantly for the present purpose, we owe to van Groningen the crucial observation that the verb ἐφόρεις, which is in the imperfect tense, must stand in some meaningful temporal contrast with the aorist ἔδασσάμεθ'; and that, of the possible interpretations for the former, incomplete effort, rather than either a past state or iteration, yields the most satisfactory sense.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, there is no real reason to think that these proceedings before the basileis were brought to completion—or, I would add, even initiated. This last point is plainly suggested by the present tense of ἐθέλουσι in line 39 and not contradicted by any other part of the sentence.<sup>30</sup> Oddly, Gagarin, after correctly commenting on the tense of ἐφόρεις and after correctly interpreting its dependent participle ἀρπάζων as similarly "imperfect," assumes without argument that the "honoring" denoted by the present participle κυδαίνων was nonetheless completed.<sup>31</sup> This assumption facilitates the inference, vital to his position, that Perses had squandered his patrimony on the payment of "fees" to the basileis, as a result of which he is now "destitute." But while it is true that Hesiod goes on to say that the basileis were receptive of "gifts" (δωροφάγους; 39), we are not thereby compelled to understand that Perses' attempts to bestow such gifts (or "fees") were necessarily successful. Perhaps the gifts were not large enough. Perhaps Hesiod himself was trying to bestow still larger gifts. In any case it would be strange to say that Perses had actually conferred the gifts, then in the

<sup>27</sup>I omit reference to the "judgments" and "basileis." An explanation for their prominence here is offered in part IV.

<sup>28</sup>For the distinction between the land proper and the "movables" see Walcot (above, note 1) 8–9 and C. B. Welles, "Hesiod's Attitude toward Labor," *GRBS* 8 (1967) 5–23: 6. See also note 32 below.

<sup>29</sup>van Groningen 1957 (above, note 1) 156, note 8, amplified by Gagarin (above, note 1) 108–9.

<sup>30</sup>For arguments, in my estimation decisive, against the alternative rendering "who are willing to dispense this sort of (i.e. crooked) justice," which would describe a generic quality of the judges and hence not necessarily imply that commencement of the trial was still pending, see Gagarin (above, note 1) 108, note 13.

<sup>31</sup>As apparent from his translation, Gagarin (above, note 1) 107–8, and assumed without discussion thereafter.

very next line state only that the *basileis* “are willing” or “wish” to judge the case. Was the purpose—or effect—of the putative gifts merely to ensure the *basileis*’ willingness to sit in judgment?<sup>32</sup> Hesiod does not clearly inform us on such details of the litigation, the reason being, I believe, that the dispute is really tangential to his main concern. What he does clearly establish here is his knowledge of the venality of the judges, which serves to support his proposal for settlement through “straight *δίκαί*.” And that, in turn, is congruent with his primary goal to keep the quarrel at home in order that *Perses* not, by taking the case to the *agora*, ignore the calendar.

Looking back, now, over the passage as a whole, what we have found is, generally speaking, a plea by Hesiod to his brother to resume the timely working of his land. The point is easily lost because by far the greater share of the text is devoted to the characterization of *Perses*’ quarrels and because these, above all since the poet himself is expressly involved in the final instance, naturally make a strong claim on our attention. Understandably at this early stage of the poem, immediately following the discussion of the Bad and Good Strifes, Hesiod is at pains to exemplify the former in terms of the life of his nominal addressee: only after *Perses* has been made a convincing exemplar of Bad Strife can he serve as a convincing audience for Hesiod’s teachings about the Good Strife. But, even so, in each of the three references to *Perses*’ *νείκεα*, Hesiod is careful to state or imply that such quarreling is objectionable only (or, in the third instance, in part) because the demands it imposes upon the litigant can cause him to lose sight of the form of Good Strife appropriate to the agricultural life.

### III

If this reading of lines 27 through 39 is to have any claim to validity, it is reasonable to demand that it at least be consistent with other statements made to or about *Perses* elsewhere in the poem. The demonstration of such consistency, besides providing support for the reading, would have the added benefit of rescuing Hesiod from the charge that his treatment of *Perses* is internally incoherent. Traceable in modern scholarship as far back as 1864 and later modified by Wilamowitz, the position has recently been developed in an extreme form by M. L. West. “If we examine carefully the passages where

<sup>32</sup>The case for *Perses*’ “destitution” might also be attacked on the grounds that *χυδαίωνων* may not refer to the bestowal of gifts (van Groningen 1957 [above, note 1] 157, in fact, suggests “applauding” in connection with line 29); and that, even if it does, the notion that *Perses* would impoverish himself by doing so, particularly if a judgment has not been delivered, is improbable in itself. Besides, in this pre-coinage economy, what would “destitution” signify in the case of a man who, like *Perses*, appears to have retained possession of his land, i.e. his share of the *κλήρος*? Not only is so much implied by line 37, but why would Hesiod say in line 341 “. . . in order that you buy others’ *κλήρος*, not another yours,” if *Perses* had already lost his land? Could the “movables,” the ownership of which is now on Gagarin’s own reconstruction in dispute, have in whole or part been bestowed upon the judges? Certainly “money,” a term anachronistically introduced by Gagarin (above, note 1) 109, could not have been involved. In any case, if gifts were given, it is far less likely that they were “fees” than “bribes” (the traditional interpretation) in view of the express association of the “gift-eating *basileis*” with “crooked judgments” in lines 220–21 and 263–64—an objection not satisfactorily dealt with by Gagarin at 109, note 19.

Perses appears," West states, "we find not only that his failings are different in different contexts, but that they are determined by the requirements of the context in each place, and in some cases apparently invented only after part of the context had been composed." Again: "It is apparent that Perses is a changeable figure that Hesiod stations in his poem as he chooses."<sup>33</sup> My interest in examining the evidence for these claims, let me emphasize, is not to ascertain whether or not, or to what degree, Hesiod's Perses is a real person—a question which is in any event, on present evidence, incapable of definite resolution. What we need to know is whether the suggested reconstruction, when brought to bear upon the remainder of the poem, yields a coherent, internally consistent portrait of Hesiod's brother, real or not, and of the author's attitude towards him.

West's argument of course includes the passage just reviewed, about which he asks "What is the connection between the watching and listening to disputes, which distracts Perses from his work so that he needs exhortation, and the alleged misappropriation of Hesiod's land or chattels?"<sup>34</sup> To West's answer that the connection is only verbal, not logical, we can now iterate as an alternative the view that, although the three allusions to Perses' quarreling differ in content, Hesiod's primary interest is, again, in their negative consequences; they are connected, in other words, by the fact that such quarreling competes for the farmer's attention. At the same time, of course, these lines may have a particular significance appropriate to the development of the subsidiary theme of Perses' litigiousness. My suggestion is that, far from revealing incoherence or, as West argues, "ambivalence,"<sup>35</sup> they really represent complementary aspects of a single reality which is disclosed in progressively more serious terms; that is, from the mere observation of others' *νείκεα* (29) to the "increasing of *νείκεα* (and *δήρις*)" upon his own behalf "against others' property" (33–34) to the climactic revelation that one of these latter is none other than Hesiod himself (35–39). We would have, then, not different failings, but sequential stages of the same failing.

Such a reading of these lines would, in addition, help prepare the way for the still further expansion of the theme later on in the form of renewed attacks upon the "gift-eating" *basileis*, the parable of the hawk and the nightingale, and much other comment on the subject of Justice. Herein Hesiod's apostrophes of Perses are for the most part of a moralizing nature: they are connected, explicitly in one instance (315–16) and by implication in the others, with his attempts, dishonest in Hesiod's estimation, to carry off his brother's property. Thus at line 213: "But you, Perses, listen to *δίκη* and do not foster *ὑβρις* . . . ." West comments that "Perses is still associated with dishonest litigation and corrupt judges," and to be sure the following lines go on to harp upon the dire consequences of broken oaths and crooked judgments. But there is no longer justification for suggesting the existence of

<sup>33</sup>West, pp. 36, 40.

<sup>34</sup>West, p. 37.

<sup>35</sup>West, p. 37: "Ambivalence" is found in lines 33–34 (*νείκεα* . . . *ἀλλοτριόις*), which West states "have to be taken in one sense to cohere with what precedes and in a different sense to cohere with what follows."

an inconsistency here on the grounds that “before, he had accomplished his fraud and was to have no chance of repeating it. . . .”<sup>36</sup> The point of Hesiod’s threatening warning in lines 34–35 was, as we have seen, that Perses would not have a second chance to ignore his farm and expect relief from his brother; and, besides, Hesiod’s proposal (35–36) that the *νεῖκος* be resolved privately, not in a formal trial, remains only a proposal and obviously carries no guarantee that Perses will not renew his activities in the agora.

Following further admonitions to Perses “to heed *δίκη* and forget *βίη* entirely” (274–75) and to follow the path of *ἀρετή*, not that of *κακότης* (286–92), Hesiod embarks upon an extended exhortation of Perses to work (298–319). The passage is potentially troublesome for the reading in that the activity recommended is not everywhere qualified as seasonal, a difficulty more than amply illustrated by the use of *ἀεργός* (or *ἀεργίη*) six times in eleven lines (302–12, including the spurious 310)—of a total of eight occurrences of the words in the poem—to describe the contrary of the desired quality. Unmistakable, too, in its implications is the comparison of the *ἀεργός* to “stingless drones” who consume the labor of the honey bees, “eating but not working (*ἀεργοί*)” (304–6). To this extent, accordingly, there is justification for West’s characterization of Perses in this passage as an “idler.”<sup>37</sup> Support might be found here also for the hypothesis, propounded most notably by Wilamowitz, of two stages of composition, one prior to the settlement of the quarrel when Perses was not working (represented by the present passage), the other afterwards when he had come to accept the necessity for work and needed only practical advice on how to go about it (hence the greater part of the poem).<sup>38</sup> Yet closer scrutiny reveals that the admittedly valid distinction in sense corresponds not to different attitudes towards one individual but, on the one hand, to statements of a comprehensive nature, in all but one instance in the third person, concerning people in general and, on the other, to direct addresses to Perses himself in the second person. The former are aimed at the merely idle; the latter at the quite different proper recipient of Hesiod’s calendar. Thus: “But you, Perses, divine descendant, ever remembering my behest [i.e. the calendar], work, in order that Hunger hate you and well-garlanded Demeter, the venerable one, love you and fill your barn with livelihood. Hunger [now switching to the third person] is altogether the companion of the lazy man (*ἀεργῷ*); and him gods, and men, despise—the man who lives without work (*ἀεργός*), like in temperament to stingless drones who consume the labor of the honey bees, eating without working (*ἀεργοί*). But to you [turning to Perses] let *ἔργα* be dear, to order them in measure [*μέτρια κοσμεῖν*, i.e. in accordance with the calendar], in order that your barns be full of seasonal livelihood (*ὥρατου βιότου*). Men [in general] become rich in flocks and wealthy from work; and a man who works is much dearer to the immortals;<sup>39</sup> and work is no disgrace,

<sup>36</sup>West, p. 38.

<sup>37</sup>West, p. 39.

<sup>38</sup>U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Hesiodos’ Erga*, Berlin 1928, pp. 131–62.

<sup>39</sup>Or, adding the excised line 310: “. . . and, if you work, you will be much dearer to the immortals and to mortals; for they much despise the lazy (*ἀεργούς*).” The deletion of the line, of

while failure to work (ἀεργίη) is a disgrace; but if you work [exceptionally, second person], soon the ἀεργός will envy you in your wealth; and wealth is attended by ἀρετή and κῦδος. But however you be with respect to fortune [reverting again to Perses], working is better if, turning your demented mind from others' property [the dispute with Hesiod] to work, you attend to livelihood as I advise you [i.e. in conformity with the calendar]" (298–316).<sup>40</sup> The term ἀεργός (or ἀεργίη) has been used five (or, counting line 310, six) times, but not once of Perses. Not a shiftless "idler," Perses is instead recognizable as the addressee of the programmatic passage (27–41) and of virtually the entire content of the *Works and Days*—a man whose litigious activity has caused him to lose sight of the agricultural schedule, only the observance of which makes an ὠραῖος βίσιτος possible. Phases of composition might conceivably still be invoked to explain the vacillation in subject, although I find it difficult to imagine under what circumstances Hesiod might have changed his appraisal of his brother so radically. With greater likelihood, to suggest an entirely different approach, the inconsistencies arise from an imperfect wedding of traditional material about laziness (the third person statements) and original, specific allusions to the (real or imagined) individual Perses (in the second person).<sup>41</sup>

For West one of the most troublesome passages is that, already studied, wherein Hesiod renews his threat to Perses, lines 391–98. Here, as I translated, Hesiod urges Perses to work, "lest afterwards, in need, you cower before others' houses and obtain nothing—even as, in fact, you came to me." West comments: "Hesiod is recommending work, giving one of his standard reasons for working, namely to avoid penury and the need to beg . . . ; and next thing, lo and behold, we have a Perses who is begging already."<sup>42</sup> But this alleged inconcinnity depends, in the first place, upon a debatable translation of the clause in line 396, in which the aorist ἦλθεῖς is rendered by West as perfect: ". . . as even now you have come to me."<sup>43</sup> Now, it is true that the clause contains the word νῦν, but the adverb need not designate the literal present moment at which Hesiod represents himself as speaking; instead it can, and I believe does here, contrast the specific factual instance with the preceding hypothetical, future case.<sup>44</sup> Thus there is no justification for invoking an exceptional use of the aorist to denote present perfect time. If read at face value, the text implies that the "begging" belonged to the earlier occasion, while the admonition to work (and so to avoid "penury") is given

course, removes what would otherwise be a second exception (for the first, in line 312, see below) to the suggestion that the second person statements refer not to mere work, but to *seasonal* work.

<sup>40</sup>For similar uses of the phrase "as I advise you" see lines 536, 623, and 688 (ἀγορεύω).

<sup>41</sup>For symptoms of oral composition in the *Works and Days* see the extended studies by G. P. Edwards, *The Language of Hesiod in its Traditional Context* (Oxford 1971), and B. Peabody, *The Winged Word* (Albany 1975).

<sup>42</sup>West, p. 39.

<sup>43</sup>West, p. 39. So also Gagarin (above, note 1) 111.

<sup>44</sup>For the use of καὶ νῦν (alongside the commoner, in this sense, νῦν δέ) to mark a contrast with an unreal case see *LSJ*<sup>9</sup> s.v. νῦν, I.4. Even if the adverb is taken as temporal, it may still refer to the immediate past (op. cit. I.2) and so allow the assumption that in the meantime Hesiod had responded to the plea by rendering assistance.

here, as throughout the *Works*, with reference to future developments.

Following a long stretch of more than 200 lines in which Perses is not mentioned by name, Hesiod again addresses his brother at lines 609–17: “When Orion and Sirius arrive at mid-heaven, and rosy-fingered Dawn is looking at Arcturus, Perses, harvest your grape clusters, dry them in the sun for ten days and ten nights, cover them over for five, and on the sixth day draw off into vessels the gifts of much-rejoicing Dionysos. But when the Pleiades and Hyades and the might of Orion begin to set, at that time next be mindful of ploughing in season (ἀρότου μεμνημένος εἶναι / ὥραίου).” West finds here only “a colourless vocative,” and suggests that Perses has been “resurrected” at this point “precisely because it is the final paragraph [of the agricultural section].”<sup>45</sup> In fact, the passage is typical of the *Works* in its emphasis on the need for strict adherence to the farmer’s calendar; and if the vocative, as West suggests, affords a final reminder of the addressee’s identity, then it also serves to remind us of that addressee’s need for just the sort of detailed instruction, rigorously set out on a day-by-day basis, that that calendar, which is nothing other than the *Works* itself, provides. Turning, next, from agriculture to sea-trade, Hesiod advises (630–34): “You yourself wait for the sailing season (ὥραϊον μίμνειν πλόον; cf. 665); and then haul your swift ship to the sea and stow a tight cargo in it, in order that you bring home a profit, just as my father and yours, Perses you big fool, used to sail in a ship, in need of good livelihood.” West comments that “the premise is now a more advanced one,” by which he means more advanced than the assumption of a begging Perses or even a Perses who has satisfactorily managed his farm since there is no occasion to sail unless one has accumulated a surplus of grain.<sup>46</sup> But there is no reason why there should not be such a “premise” inasmuch as Perses’ earlier discomfiture had been relieved by Hesiod and, if he only adhere to his brother’s advice, prosperity, we are led to believe, is attainable.

In none of these apostrophes, then, have we found it necessary to acknowledge the chameleon-like Perses that West has urged upon us. Perses does indeed serve as a target for both moralizing sermons on Justice and exhortations to work, but both are, on the reconstruction which I have offered, entirely appropriate. Perses had attempted to bring suit against Hesiod for part of the patrimony and, although Hesiod proposes a settlement at home, he may resume his litigious activity, including his efforts to bribe the judges.<sup>47</sup> Perses had also, precisely because he had been viewing or engaging in suits in the agora, neglected his farm with calamitous results; and Hesiod, although threatening that he will not again come to his brother’s relief, nonetheless assumes responsibility for instructing him in agricultural technique in order that he avert another such occurrence. Both lines of instruction, moralizing and technical, converge, furthermore, in the injunction to avoid litigation lest one’s work suffer neglect (28–36, 314–16). Since, accordingly, litigation and the farmer’s life are viewed as incompatible, it is sufficient that Hesiod, on

<sup>45</sup>West, p. 40.

<sup>46</sup>West, p. 40.

<sup>47</sup>On the “bribery” of the judges see above, note 32.

occasion, merely enjoin adherence to the calendar. And it is precisely with this precept that Hesiod, surely significantly, opens his *final* address to Perses in lines 641–42: "And you, O Perses, be mindful of all tasks in their season . . . ( . . . ἔργων μεμνημένος εἶναι / ὥραίων πάντων . . . )."

## IV

If at this point doubts still persist, they should be dispelled by the general observation that throughout those extensive tracts of text in which Perses is not directly addressed by name, Hesiod's objective continues to be not to promote mere industry, but to urge adherence to his schedule.<sup>48</sup> Exceptions are very few and nearly all mitigated by special circumstances. Thus although he advises that one "pass by the blacksmith's shop and its warm lounge in the wintry season when cold keeps a man from his tasks (ἔργα), when an unhesitant man might greatly increase his οἶκος" (493–95), it is at least clear that the ἀεργός who fails to heed this advice (498–501) is of a different order from the merely shiftless. Nor is it the lazy man who is cautioned to avoid in the harvest season "shady seats and sleeping until dawn" (574–75), for the following observation that "dawn amounts to a third part of (one's) ἔργον" (578) implies only a late start, hardly outright inactivity. That the avoidance of "shady seats," too, is simply a question of timing is borne out by the famous evocation of "rocky shade and Bibline wine . . ." (588–96), a respite from work on which the poet confers his full approbation; for it is, after all, to be deplored that in this Age of Iron "men never cease all day long from labor and sorrow" (176–77). Perhaps the one genuinely inactive person (in Hesiod's view of things) is a female, the soft-skinned παρθενική who, on a winter's day, stays indoors with her mother, bathing, anointing herself with oil, and taking to bed in an inner room (519–26). But Hesiod's dramatic audience is male and the owner of a small farm; and this person is generally assumed to be industrious. It is not a question of willingness to work at all, but of willingness to work on schedule. "But if you plough the divine earth *at the solstice* [i.e. when it is too late], you will reap sitting, grasping a meager crop in your hand, binding the sheaves athwart, covered with dust, not happy at all; and you will carry the crop home in a basket; and few will admire you" (479–82). Not the idler but the procrastinator is Hesiod's target. ". . . Make all things ready in the house, lest you ask another and he refuse and you go without and the season pass by and our ἔργον be diminished. Do not put your work off to tomorrow or to the next day, for the dawdler does not fill his barn; nor the procrastinating man. Application enhances ἔργον; but the procrastinator is always at grips with disaster" (407–13).

Such a man, I have argued, was Perses; accordingly, it is not laziness but a tendency towards dilatoriness which I believe Hesiod is determined to correct.

<sup>48</sup>The troublesome lines 298–319, in which the word ἀεργός (or ἀεργή) occurs no fewer than five times, were discussed above, part III. Except for line 498 (shortly to be discussed), the adjective makes only one other appearance, at line 44, where it is used in the context of an unreal world in which a man need work only one day per year. Irrelevant here, too, are the single word ἀπάλαμος (20) and the phrase "without toil(s)" (91, 113), which likewise occur in general or mythical contexts.



The litigation, to be sure, because it occasions the fault, plays a role, but its significance for Hesiod's narrative should not be exaggerated. While there is talk of a trial, proceedings have yet to be initiated; and even if "bribes" (or "fees") have changed hands, there is no reason to suppose that either Hesiod or, as argued here, Perses has sustained a significant loss of property therefrom. Perses' earlier appeal to his brother had been, instead, as Hesiod implies, a consequence of his litigious activity only to the extent that it of necessity caused his absence from the farm; similarly, loitering around the blacksmith's in winter or "shady seats" or "sleeping until dawn" might have had comparable effects. With Perses in the agora, the schedule was neglected and, as the text suggests, the result was a failure to produce crops that were ὄρτια (391–94). Whereas a mere neighbor might under these circumstances have rejected such an appeal (400), Perses' brother did not refuse to come to his aid, although, he warns (34–35, 396–97), there will not be a second such occurrence. Even so, with true—if embittered—generosity Hesiod takes measures to prevent another shortfall by providing Perses with an agricultural (and maritime) calendar by observing which he cannot again fail to produce an ὄρταιος βίσιτος.

At the same time I do not wish to deny, what is obvious from the text, that Hesiod, once the νεῖκος has been introduced, enlarges upon its importance. It is not only for Perses' agricultural schedule that the litigation may have ramifications. As the text unfolds, beginning with the reference to "straight δίκαι" in line 36, it becomes increasingly clear that the poet's own stake in the outcome of the prospective trial (or private settlement) is a matter of no small moment. Dropping the guise of disinterested concern for his brother's welfare, Hesiod fulminates against the "gift-eating" basileis with their "crooked" δίκαι, urges Perses to follow the path of ἀρετή, and expatiates upon the nature of Justice—all with the obvious purpose (explicit in 315–16) of supporting his own side of the dispute. Plainly this motive possesses a life of its own and is not to be subsumed under any desire merely to return Perses to his farm. Nonetheless, it was not in such a spirit that the νεῖκος had originally been introduced. If the quarrel was to play any part at all in a poem largely concerned with the agricultural calendar, it had, at least at the outset, to be couched in terms that permitted the two themes to be interconnected—and here, if the present interpretation be accepted, the poet has succeeded brilliantly. Once, however, the prospective litigation has been represented as potentially impinging upon Perses' schedule, Hesiod is at liberty to explore its wider implications, not the least those for himself. The result is the unleashing of righteous indignation at (he fears) the impending injustice of a decision in his brother's favor. But however impressed we may be by the passionate eloquence of these exhortations, they remain developments of, and additions to, the carefully laid groundwork of the initial programmatic passage. We must resist the temptation, in other words, to read back into these early lines what we are not, for very good reasons, told until after Hesiod's stage is entirely set.

To view Hesiod's message to Perses and to his wider audience as well in these terms, finally, accords perfectly with the author's general concern with

the notion of propriety outside the spheres of agriculture and sea-trading. The range of application of our leading term itself may be extended, for Hesiod speaks of the ὥραϊος man who, not far short of or much beyond thirty years, takes a wife—this marriage is ὄριος (695–97). Similarly the allied term μέτρον might be used with reference to Hesiod's immediate subject of the measurement of grain into vessels (600), of the "measure" of the age of bulls (438; also, at 132, of men), and of the "measures" (or "rules") of the sea (648; see West ad loc.), while elsewhere, in a different context, it is used of the "measured" movement of the tongue (719–20). At the practical level, if you expect to fill your barns, you must order your ἔργα "in measure" (306–7); so, in the domain of moral precept, if you expect to find security in your neighbor, "have fair measure given to you by him, and pay back fair, with the same measure, or better, if you can" (349–51). In the *Days* propriety is expressly brought into relation with the same calendar with which the *Works* had dealt in agricultural terms. At line 694 of the *Works* the universal applicability of the principle is spelled out in so many words: μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι· καιρὸς δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος. No more fitting formulation could be found to express Hesiod's admonition to a brother who, though willing to work, had erred, and may err again, by failing to do so "in season."\*

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