

JENNY STRAUSS CLAY

Studies in
Early Greek Theology

Edited by
ATHANASSIOS VERGADOS



Mohr Siebeck

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Edited with an Introduction by

Athanasios Vergados

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Preface

I was flattered and honored when I was approached by the editors of Mohr Siebeck with the project of publishing my articles scattered over 50 years on the subject of early Greek theology as embodied in the poets, teasing out what I believe are common threads. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Athanassios Vergados for the laborious task of editing these essays and for his patience, good humor, and his generous introduction. Incalculable too is my debt to students, friends, and colleagues – too many to be named – who have encouraged, commented, and offered suggestions, corrections, and criticisms of my work.

Reading over these contributions, I sometimes feel like a dog chasing her tail, always barking up the same tree (what an atrocious metaphor!). I regret that I have not updated them, as much has been written that I would have had to take into account that surely would have refined and modified my views. Nevertheless, although the volume is not arranged chronologically, I like to think that there is a developing vision or at least a sustained exploration of the early Greek conceptions of the relations of gods and human beings. And I also like to think that there is still much more to be said.

Charlottesville, September 2025

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List of Abbreviations

Greek authors and works are abbreviated according to LSJ⁹ (= Liddell, H. G. and Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ninth edition with revised supplement; revised and augmented throughout by Sir H. S. Jones, with the assistance of R. McKenzie, Oxford 1996), with the following exceptions:

Aesch.	Aeschylus
Bacch.	Bacchylides
Eur.	Euripides
<i>h.Aphr.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite</i>
<i>h.Apol.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Apollo</i>
<i>h.Dem.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Demeter</i>
<i>h.Herm.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Hermes</i>
Soph.	Sophocles
<i>Adv. M.</i>	(Sextus Empiricus) <i>Adversus Mathematicos</i>

Journals are abbreviated according to *L'Année Philologique*. The following abbreviations are also used:

<i>ABV</i>	Beazley, J. D. 1956. <i>Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters</i> . Oxford.
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
<i>ARV²</i>	Beazley, J. D. ² 1963. <i>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</i> . Oxford.
<i>CEA</i>	Cahiers des Études Anciennes
<i>CFS</i>	<i>Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure</i>
Chantraine <i>DELG</i>	Chantraine, P. 2009. <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots</i> . Paris.
<i>CHD</i>	Güterbock, H. G., Hoffner, H. A., van den Hout, Th. (eds.) 1980–. <i>The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago
<i>CMG V, 9, 1</i>	Mewaldt, J. (ed.) 1914. <i>In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentaria III</i> . Berlin.
<i>CollAn</i>	<i>Colloquium Anatolicum</i>
<i>D.-K.</i>	Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (eds.) ⁶ 1951–1952. <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . Berlin.
<i>HW²</i>	Friedrich, J., Kammenhuber, A., Hoffmann, I. 1975–. <i>Hethitisches Wörterbuch. Zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage auf der Grundlage der edierten hethitischen Texte</i> . Heidelberg.
<i>IEG²</i>	West, M. L. ² 1992. <i>Iambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantati</i> , 2 vols. Oxford.
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>K.-A.</i>	Kassel, R. and Austin, C. (eds.) 1983–. <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> . Berlin/Boston.
<i>KRS</i>	Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E. and Schofield, M. ² 1983. <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i> . Cambridge.

- KUB Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1921–1990. *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköy*. Berlin.
- LIMC *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Zurich (1981–2009).
- L.-M. Laks, A. and Most, G. W. 2016. *Early Greek Philosophy*, 9 vols. Cambridge, Mass.
- LfgRE Snell, B. et al. (eds.) 1955–2010. *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*. Göttingen.
- MJSS *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*
- M.-W. Merkelbach, R. and West, M. L. 1967. *Fragmenta Hesiodica*. Oxford.
- NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology*
- PMG Page, D. L. 1962. *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford.
- RVAp Trendall, A. D. and Cambitoglou, A. 1978. *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia*, 2 vols. Oxford.
- S.-M. Snell, B. and Maehler, H. 1987–1989. *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*. Munich/Leipzig.
- SP *Studia Phoenicia*
- SVF II von Arnim, H. 1903. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, vol. II: Chrysippi fragmenta logica et physica*. Stuttgart.
- TrGF Snell, B., Kannicht, R., and Radt, S. L. (eds.) 1971–2004. *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 5 vols. Göttingen.

Introduction

ATHANASSIOS VERGADOS

The majority of the essays collected in this volume appeared first as journal articles or book chapters over a period of more than fifty years. The earliest (chapter 18) was published in 1972, the most recent in 2025 (chapters 23, 24). Chapters 7 and 20 are published here for the first time. Together, they explore a broad range of interrelated questions surrounding the views of archaic Greeks on the cosmos, the gods, and the role of men within that order both in themselves and in relation to the divine. But these essays do not by any means represent the totality of Jenny Strauss Clay's publications on the subject. Articles or book chapters that subsequently appeared as parts of monographs have not been included here. The arguments made in those monographs (especially in *The Wrath of Athena: Gods and Men in the Odyssey*; *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns*; and *Hesiod's Cosmos*) will resonate with several of the chapters, and together, the essays in the present volume and these monographs have shaped, over the past decades, our understanding of early Greek theology as it is expressed particularly in archaic hexameter poetry.

With a few exceptions, the essays are published as they originally appeared, or only lightly revised. Any new material is clearly marked as an afterword. Where necessary, translations were introduced and the quoted text was updated to the most recent edition. The arrangement of the chapters is thematic rather than chronological, which allows better tracing of the common threads in the arguments presented. The first section is concerned with cosmogony, theogony, and cosmography. The chapters therein ask whence the mortal bard derives his authority to narrate the early stages of the cosmos so that he can describe parts of the cosmos (such as Tartaros) which lie beyond ordinary human experience. Seen together, these chapters trace a set of reflections that interrogate the traditional source of poetic authority, the Muses. Moreover, related to authority is another epistemological question, *viz.* the communicability of the knowledge about the early stages of the cosmos, however this is achieved: is our language adequate to capture and express this knowledge so that it can be transmitted to, and convince, others? The second section (The World of the Gods) contains two overview essays (chapters 5 and 6 on religion in Homer and the *Homeric Hymns*, respectively), as well as essays that trace the establishment of Zeus's world order

and the mechanisms through which he ensures its permanence, *viz.* through the use of power but also through negotiation with other important divine players. The divine world emerges here as an arena of political calculations and actions, where divine honors and spheres of influence are distributed equitably and strategically by Zeus so that the pantheon becomes a system of interconnected relations and interests. Finally, the chapters that comprise part three (Gods, Heroes, Men) explore the place of mortals in the world as organized by Zeus and the gulf that separates them from the gods and the heroes. A recurring theme is the reflection on language: the language used by poets when narrating the early stages of the cosmos (a link to the chapters in part 1), as well as the language of hexameter poetry, the Homeric *Kunstsprache*, and the ways it encodes this gulf between gods and men. A further theme is the progressive separation of gods from men, so that from a time in cosmic history in which gods and humans conversed freely with each other we reach the end of the age of heroes: from now on the distance between men and gods can no longer be bridged, as Zeus decreed.

Chapter 1 (“Commencing Cosmogony and the Rhetoric of Poetic Authority”) explores two interrelated questions: where does a cosmogonic poem begin and from where do poets derive their knowledge and authority on the past of the cosmos. In other words, what is at issue here is the origin of any narrative of origins, a question with philosophical and rhetorical parameters. In Homer the source of authority is the Muse. He, too, is concerned with beginnings, both in the sense of where the song should begin (as in the narrator’s question at *Il.* 1.8) and in terms of cosmological beginnings (e.g., Okeanos and Tethys as the primordial couple in *Il.* 14 or the division of the cosmos between Zeus and his brothers in *Il.* 15). There is, furthermore, a clear distinction between divine and human knowledge, as is seen in the case of the $\mu\omega\lambda\nu$ (on which, see chapters 18 and 19), a distinction that is also reflected in language. Hesiod complicates matters: while poetic inspiration comes from the Muses, these goddesses are now enigmatic (cf. *Th.* 27–8). Our reconstruction of the cosmos and knowledge about the gods presented in the *Theogony* can at times be incomplete or imperfectly organized, a feature that draws attention to the fact that the reconstruction of the past is a process of selection and ordering of the material. The repetition of terms like “first” or “beginning” (and even $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\iota\sigma\tau\alpha$, “very first”) underscores precisely the importance of order. In the *Works and Days* authority does not derive from the divine (though cf. the section on seafaring) but from the speaker’s $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ (cf. 293).

Hesiod’s fundamental ontological and epistemological questions (whether knowledge about the divine is verifiable; the question of beginnings; whether the language we use to speak of the divine is adequate: can gods be considered $\alpha\iota\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ although they are born, i.e. even though there was a point in time when they did not exist?) will be taken up by the Pre-Socratics. With Parmenides and Empedocles Hesiod’s genealogical model of representing the divine yields to one that involves $\mu\acute{\iota}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and separation. Parmenides’ authority rests on the anonymous

goddess who transmits in her speech to the κοῦρος (and hence to us) both the divine truth and human knowledge (δόξα), though it is not always clear that her role is necessary. Empedocles' knowledge derives from personal experience, having been a long-lived δαίμων and experienced the coming to be and passing away of the ἐφρήμεροι. Besides the ephemeral, fragile world of human existence his teaching includes also the four elements and the divine principles of love and strife that account for the state of the cosmos.

Chapter 2 ("The Hittite 'Song of Emergence'") contributes a linguistic parallel that links Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Emergence*: the Hittite term *para=uwa* ("going out," "emerge") and the verb ἀνιέναι ("allow to emerge," *Th.* 157). Besides substantiating the parallel, the chapter also asks about its transmission: is it part of an Eastern Mediterranean *koine*? If so, how and when did it enter Hesiod's horizon? The transmission may have occurred through Euboeans travelling to Cyprus, Cilicia, and the northern Levantine Syrian plane, especially Mt Ḫazzi (or Zaphon), the site of many dragon-slaying stories. The chapter, finally, makes the important point that parallels between Greek and Near Eastern texts or traditions are convincing when they are not only thematic but also exhibit correspondence in their verbal expression.

Chapter 3 ("A Stroll through Hesiod's Tartaros") tackles a well-known critical question in the *Theogony*, the placement and purpose of the description of Tartaros. Here Hesiod shifts from the temporal (genealogical) to a static (cosmographic) description: Tartaros is described in the present tense, reflecting the permanence of Zeus's regime. This description is an ekphrasis that invites us to ask through whose eyes we are "seeing" Tartaros. Hesiod constructs the Underworld as a mirror of the upper world. There is an upper layer (Hades) and a lower one (Tartaros). Tartaros corresponds to Ouranos (as the "floor" and "ceiling" of the world, respectively). Atlas is in the far west, towards the upper limit of the upper storey; close to him is the house of Night. Styx, on the other hand, is located in the extreme east of the underworld, a symmetrical pendant to Atlas with her silver columns. Chaos, that in the beginning of the poem was undefined, now reappears as the χάσμα μέγα that divides Tartaros from Hades. Two perspectives coexist, one that observes Tartaros from above and one that focuses on it from below; the latter is the perspective of the prisoners, the Titans. Ring composition is used to emphasize both the imprisonment of Zeus's enemies in real and verbal bonds and our return to where we started our tour of the underworld.

Chapter 4 ("Typhoeus, or Cosmic Regression") looks at a different aspect of Hesiod's *Theogony*, the monstrous and disruptive, anti-cosmic, elements. While characters such as the Cyclopes and Hundred-Handers or the monsters of lines 270–336 are either accommodated into the cosmos as important allies of Zeus or are annihilated by him and his sons, Typhoeus threatens to undo what Zeus has achieved. Here the Typhonomachy, whose authenticity is a question that has exercised generations of scholars, emerges as an essential episode of the

Theogony. Tartara, introduced in the *Theogony* as a neuter plural noun, now appears as Tartaros, a masculine entity, who mates with Gaia to produce the ultimate monster, a union in keeping with Gaia's role as the promoter of change that supplants the king of the gods. Typhoeus is an anti-Zeus, whose mixed and confused voices combine the super-human with the sub-human and animalistic and contrast with the harmonious and orderly song of the Muses. What the Typhonomachy achieves is to turn the destruction of the cosmos, expressed indirectly through the simile of lines 700–5 in the heat of the Titanomachy, into a distinct possibility: what might have happened, had Zeus not been watchful. It is furthermore a battle between two characters who use fire as their weapon: Zeus's thunderbolt, i. e. celestial fire, vs. Typhoeus' subterranean fire that aligns him with Gaia. In contrast, the Titanomachy was waged with more primitive weaponry. The Typhonomachy, therefore, is also a battle for the control of fire, and, significantly, Zeus puts an end to Gaia's generative abilities by causing her interior to melt, something that Hesiod expresses through the metallurgy simile of v. 861–7. It thus emerges that the Typhonomachy is not merely a doublet of the Titanomachy but an episode that represents a heightened state of danger for Zeus's cosmos and Zeus's successful battle to avert this danger permanently.

The chapters in the second part focus on the world of the gods, as it is explored primarily in hexameter poetry. Chapter 5 (“Homeric Religion”) offers an overview of the religious worlds (note the plural!) in Homer's poetry. Two difficulties characterize this project: first, what exactly do we mean by Homeric? Does this term refer to a single historical period or to a mixture of cultural elements, just like the *Kunstsprache*? Second, what do we mean by religion? This question is particularly apposite given that the ancient Greeks did not have a word for it. To avoid this stumbling block the analysis proceeds by examining two interrelated issues: cult and ritual, i. e. what Homeric characters do (e. g., communication with the divine through prayer and sacrifice; reading omens) and what they or the narrator say, explicitly or implicitly, about the gods, from which we can extrapolate a set of beliefs that we can call theology. All of this is complicated by the literary, fictional nature of the Homeric poems whose aim is not to reproduce what happens “in real life,” but to produce stories involving the heroes in their interactions with the gods.

While the communication between men and gods relies on reciprocity, the Homeric poems' theological speculation is rather complex. First, these were literary rather than scriptural texts, which makes Herodotus' famous statement in *Histories* 2.53 particularly remarkable. The Olympian gods as presented in the Homeric poems both resemble and differ from the gods of cult, not to mention the many local variations in cult and representations of the divine. In addition, “epic distance” is a crucial factor when considering the theology (or theologies) of the Homeric poems: the epics depict a world in which relations between humans and the divine were different from those of the poems' audience: direct

interaction between men and gods was still possible (if rare), but, while gods appear as actors within the poems and exhibit anthropomorphic traits, nevertheless a gulf separates them from the heroes.

Chapter 6 (“Theology and Religion in the *Homeric Hymns*”) asks, first, how we are to classify Greek hymns. Whatever system we adopt (e.g., distinguishing between rhapsodic and epigraphic, or according to the sponsor of the hymn; using deictic markers that point to the circumstances of the hymn’s performance, such as references to local myths and festivals), the *Homeric Hymns* would form their own category, as poetry with a clear Pan-Hellenic vision: they acknowledge local variations in the conceptualization of the gods praised, yet these hymns are not tied to a particular community but offer theological speculation. While Furley and Bremer emphasized the literary rather than cultic aspect of the *Homeric Hymns*, functionalist approaches have nevertheless attempted to tie them to specific places and cultic events. But it is necessary not to lose sight of important distinctions about ritual and religious festival: for instance, while the Great Dionysia was a religious festival, not all actions that took place (e.g., theatrical performances) were equally tied to religious activity. Important, too, is the activity of itinerant bards and Pan-Hellenic shrines which contributed to the harmonization of local traditions so that songs appealed to a broader community and were expressed in a language that, while it was comprehensible to everyone, was tied to no specific locale (the Homeric *Kunstsprache*). Following Wolf, many scholars still regard the *Homeric Hymns* as preludes to epic recitation – but then why is there no major Hymn to Athena, the patron goddess of one of the chief festivals in which Homeric recitation took place? Another important performance context might have been the symposium, whether private or public. Xenophanes’ famous sympotic fragment mentions theogonic subjects as possible topics, while in *Odyssey* 8 Demodocus performs a song that resembles a *Homeric Hymn* as possibly mimetic entertainment. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, on the other hand, rejects local traditions and rather focusses on the god’s two major (Pan-Hellenic) cult centers, Delos and Delphi, while incorporating the lyric mode of the Apollo’s cultic song, the paean.

Starting by examining the way in which Zeus maintains his power once he has acquired it in the *Theogony* (i.e. by accommodating and honoring powerful goddesses), chapter 7 (“Zeus’s Politics in the *Iliad*, or Zeus the Godfather”) aims to understand his leadership style in the *Iliad*, which is compared to that of the head of a mafia organisation. Zeus navigates between the conflicting goals of the other members of the pantheon, who sometimes even oppose him. This is the case with the famous βουλή Διός (on which, see chapter 14) introduced at the beginning of the *Iliad*: to fulfil his promise to Thetis, to put an end to the race of heroes, and to destroy Troy. We follow then Zeus as he uses soft power and even sometimes threatens to use hard power in order to achieve his goals. To soft power belongs the manipulation of other gods so that they do what he desires

while thinking that they are doing it of their own accord, as when he provokes Hera (*Il.* 4.5–13) or when he misleads Agamemnon through the false dream in Book 2 that inspires him with the idea that he can conquer Troy in one day – but his mustering of the army fails, and it takes Odysseus’ intervention to restore order. What Homer shows here is that if a (mortal) ruler is bad, he better have good advisors who will allow him, wherever possible, to save face, as Odysseus does in *Iliad* 2. But Zeus, besides manipulating other gods and heroes so that they advance his plans through their actions, can at times also display his power to deter them from opposing his βουλή, as he does with Hera in *Il.* 14 and with Poseidon (through Iris) in Book 15. While human leaders are imperfect, lacking in political acumen, status, savviness, or power, Zeus emerges as the perfect leader able to achieve his goals using a variety of methods.

Chapter 8 (“The Justice of Zeus in the *Theogony*?”) begins with an account of the mechanisms that promote justice in the *Works and Days* and explores the different, yet complementary, vision of justice offered in the *Theogony*. Justice is absent from the divine narratives of the *Theogony*. This is seen, on a basic level, in the relative absence of the word δίκη from the *Theogony*, which instead is a dominant feature of the *Works and Days*. Whenever δίκη occurs in the *Theogony* it refers to humans rather than to the gods. When she appears as a deity, daughter of Themis and Zeus, late in the *Theogony*, her presentation and that of her sisters (Εὐνομίη, Εἰρήνη τεθαλυῖα) prefigures the description of the Just City in the *Works and Days* (225–31). This difference between the two poems reflects the fact that justice is necessary among men because of the scarcity of resources caused by Zeus’s concealing βίος after Prometheus’ attempt to deceive him. To preserve the political community, it is necessary for men to work to acquire resources, rather than stealing from each other. Disputes are to be resolved through ἰθεῖαι δίκαι in the world of the *Works and Days*, but Zeus has introduced a different method for preventing strife among gods. First, he has granted or preserved the τιμαί of important deities of the previous generation (e. g., Hecate), while he has made Styx, who together with her children sided with Zeus during his struggle for power, the great oath of the gods which prevents perjury among them. With this mechanism he also puts an end to the *lex talionis* that prevailed in the divine struggle for succession before he came to power. All in all, relations between gods are regulated by a network of τιμαί dispensed by Zeus.

Some of the issues raised in chapters 7 and 8 are elaborated in chapter 9 (“How to Deal with Difficult Goddesses: Nyx, Styx, and Hecate”) that focuses on three powerful female deities that can potentially destabilize Zeus’s regime and need to be accommodated into, rather than excluded from, his newly established order. In the case of Nyx, Hesiod implicitly acknowledges her role as primordial deity in other theogonies and her potential for disruption on account of her long list of offspring, all of whom are negative concepts that seem to arise after the conclusion of the first stage of the Succession myth. Zeus relegates them to

the world of humans, but assigning Night and her daughter Day to their diurnal alternations. Styx, on the other hand, the most outstanding of the Okeanids, is the first to answer Zeus's call for allies together with her children (Ambition, Victory, Strength, and Might), who become permanent members of his entourage. Previously without τιμαί, Styx is now given an important role in Zeus's dispensation: she becomes "the great oath of the gods," thereby guaranteeing the stability of Zeus's regime and the prevention of strife and perjury among the gods (see previous chapter). As the river that supplies the water of the gods' great oath, she dwells in the Underworld apart from her children. Hecate, finally, is unlike the other goddesses by not having a long line of offspring or any divine siblings. But she represents the confluence of the Ouranid and Pontid bloodlines and had already been awarded τιμαί under Kronos' dispensation. Zeus adds to them her kourotrophic function as well as powers over all human activities and throughout all sections of the cosmos (land, sea, heaven). Her assistance is conditioned upon her willingness, a point that Hesiod repeats emphatically. By incorporating these goddesses into his cosmic order, Zeus reveals his profound political μῆτις.

Chapter 10 ("The Silence of the Pythia") seeks to explain the absence of any mention of the Pythia in the second half of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. Rather than being the poet's error or depending on the realities of the oracle's operation at the time of the *Hymn's* composition, it is an essential part of the *Hymn's* ideology. Treating the poem as a unified composition, a point argued in *The Politics of Olympus*, and rejecting the late date of the presumed second half of the *Hymn*, Jenny Strauss Clay presents arguments suggesting that by the 6th c. BCE the Pythia was present at Delphi, uttering oracular responses on a tripod. But if this is so, then why does the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* ignore her? This is explained by the poem's ideological outlook that is male, patriarchal, and Olympian, as opposed to female, Titanic, and chthonic. The *Hymn* alludes to (and suppresses) the Previous Owners Myth, according to which the oracle originally belonged to Gaia, who was succeeded by Themis and then Phoebe, who gave it to Apollo. This myth may have been created at an early point when Delphi had to assert its pre-eminence by claiming antiquity. The *Homeric Hymn*, on the other hand, was composed at a time when the Delphic oracle had surpassed its competitors and thus did not need to assert its antiquity. No rival owners are mentioned, and the focus is on Apollo as the only god who has the τιμή "to convey to mankind the unerring will of Zeus."

Chapter 11 ("Hide and Go Seek: Hermes in Homer") shifts our attention to Apollo's mischievous younger brother. Hermes resembles in many ways the *Odyssey's* central hero, who in some accounts was his descendant. But the *Iliad*, too, offers important evidence for the god, even though his role there is limited mainly to Book 24 when he appears to Priam and guides him to Achilles' camp. Significantly, when he reveals his divine identity to the old king, the revelation is not achieved through a common divine epiphany. Rather, he appears to Priam

in a form close to his “real” one, similar to that in which he reveals himself to Odysseus on Circe’s island. Indeed, the *Odyssey* with its polytropic hero contains several overt and implicit references to the god. Odysseus is sent at a young age to recover stolen cattle from the Messenians – cattle rustling is of course one of Hermes’ specialties. He must have frequently mentioned to Circe Odysseus’ arrival to her island, as we find out when her magic does not work on him thanks to Hermes’ supplying the hero with the μῶλυ. But this makes us wonder about the purpose Hermes’ frequent visits to Circe. Relatedly, in Book 8, his response to Apollo’s question brings to the fore his humorous and erotic aspect, which may have something to do with his visits to Circe as well. Moreover, the meeting between Odysseus and Athena in the form of a young shepherd in Book 13 is particularly intriguing: is she disguised as Hermes to deceive the cunning hero? Finally, when Odysseus appears to the Phaeacians as they pour libations to Hermes, it seems as if they experience one of Hermes’ epiphanies which according to a proverb quoted by Plutarch causes silence. Odysseus will soon convince the Phaeacians through his rhetoric (a domain of Hermes) to convey him to Ithaca. Hermes’ presence in Homer is covert, then, and in keeping with the god’s tricky nature.

Chapter 12 (“Sappho’s Hesperus and Hesiod’s Dawn”) proposes that the meaning of Sappho’s fr. 104V, a fragment that has exercised scholars in the past, hinges on a paronymological wordplay on Hesperus’ name, here understood as deriving from ἔς + φέρειν, hence “he who brings in.” Detected in Sappho’s poem already by ancient scholars, this etymological play renders Sappho’s Hesperus the counterpart of Hesiod’s Eos (Dawn): she sends men and animals to work and advances (προ-φέρει) their journey (*Op.* 578–81), while Sappho inverts Hesiod’s description of the Dawn. To Hesiod’s triple anaphora of Ἠώς corresponds the triple wordplay Ἔσπερε ... φέρεις ... φέρεις, and Hesperus’ gathering together contrasts with Dawn’s scattering.

The starting point of chapter 13 (“Fusing the Boundaries: Apollo and Dionysus at Delphi”) is the profound opposition between Apollo, on the one hand, and Dionysus and Hermes, on the other, as late-born gods whose divinity is challenged and who must assert their τιμαί. If Apollo imposes boundaries, Hermes crosses and penetrates them, while Dionysus dissolves them, leading to excess and fusing of opposites. Dionysus and Apollo, moreover, appear complementary to each other in both myth and cult. While scholars have debated the priority of the two gods, with their opposition lying at the heart of Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, Philodamus’ *Paeon*, a poem influenced by the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, employs an important strategy for fusing the two gods, thus making Dionysus more Apolline. This hymn surprises us already in its first stanza, when the Apolline *epithymnion* ἰὲ Παῖάν follows the Bacchic cry εὐοῖ ᾧ ἰὸ Βάκχ[(5), thus drawing attention early on to the mixing of Apolline and Dionysiac elements. While the poem’s opening implies that it will be a dithyramb, as it

unfolds audience expectations are frustrated: Apolline elements proliferate. The catalogue of places visited by Dionysus focuses on Greece and avoids far-away areas in the East which we would conventionally expect in a poem about Dionysus. His epiphany in the folds of Parnassus has an Apolline flavor, while his incorporation into the Olympian pantheon elides the struggles for recognition known from myth. Dionysus is celebrated as Παιάν and ἄναξ ὑγείας, hinting at a domain that is normally the preserve of Apollo; dithyrambic contests feature in the Apolline festival, and Apollo leads the dance. It emerges, furthermore, that Apollo guarantees Dionysus' place and honors on Olympus, while Dionysus is asked to be gracious towards Delphi. Likewise, on the pedimental sculpture of the temple of Apollo Dionysus *kitharodos* is the pendant of Apollo on the east pediment.

The fusion of the two gods by the end of the poem is informed by the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. Like the archaic Hymn, the *Paeon* is structured in two discrete parts: the first narrates the god's birth and reception on Olympus amid the song and dance of the Muses; the second contains his arrival to Delphi and the establishment of his cult and temple. Both poems, furthermore, contain geographic catalogues, while in both poems the gods have an astral epiphany and acquire panhellenic status and new cult titles. In this way Philodamus invests Dionysus with the authority of Apollo. His *Paeon* is also important because it supplies allusions to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* from the mid-4th c. BCE. The motivation for this fusion might have been the increased popularity and diffusion of theatrical performances during that period. By assimilating Dionysus to Apollo, Delphi presents itself as patron and protector of the theater.

Part three of the volume explores the relationship between gods and men in archaic poetry. Chapter 14 ("The Whip and Will of Zeus") returns to the Διὸς βουλή, a topic briefly discussed in chapter 7. Three interpretations (to fulfill his promise to Thetis by honoring Achilles; to bring about the destruction of Troy; to bring an end to the Age of Heroes) find support both within and outside of the *Iliad*, yet each of them entails contradictions. For Zeus to destroy Troy, the Greeks must win; but to honor Achilles, the Greeks must experience sufferings. Besides, Zeus's plan meets with the opposition of other gods. Book 12 is a particularly apt illustration of the conflicts surrounding Zeus's βουλή. By its very existence the Achaean wall shows that the Greeks are on the defensive. By allowing Hector to breach the wall, Zeus completes the first part of his plan (honoring Achilles by causing suffering to the Greeks). The opening of Book 12, on the other hand, with its account of the wall's destruction, foreshadows the time when Troy and the race of heroes will disappear. In the course of this Book, Zeus sends mixed messages to the Trojans, which further reflect the complexity of his plan: thus, Polydamas interprets the omen of the snake and the eagle correctly (Troy will fall), but Hector's reading of it, however misguided, has elements of truth, as the Trojans resemble the snake that will temporarily harm the eagle. The Book's

similes likewise support this conflicting image: at 12.445–55 Hector lifts a rock that men of today would not be able to lift, yet at the same time the poet says that Zeus made it light for him. Rather than undermining Hector, this simile underscores the complexity of Zeus’s plan, in which Hector is trapped. Finally, the simile in 12.278–89 with its winter scene, the snow and silence, draws attention to the fact that what is now a battlefield full of din, will soon be silent when the heroes are gone, and Zeus’s will will have been completed.

Chapter 15 (“*Δέμας καὶ αὐδή*: The Nature of Divine Transformation in Homer”) focusses on the specifics of the vocabulary signifying human and divine appearance in Homer. These two words are part of a formula (... *εἰδομένην ἤμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδήν*) used five times in the *Odyssey* when gods take on human shape. The examination of the passages where *δέμας* and *αὐδή* occur as well as ancient scholarship on these terms show that they refer to *human* body and *human* voice, when used without further qualification. By contrast, *ὄσσα* and *ὀμφή* signify the divine voice, often emanating from Zeus himself.

Chapter 16 (“Immortal and Ageless Forever”) examines another formula commonly used of the gods. Immortality and eternal youth distinguish them from humans, though immortality does not necessarily imply agelessness, as the story of Tithonus shows. Besides expressing this profound difference, this formula points to the fact that humans are linked to the vegetative cycle, both metaphorically since they are born, grow, and die (*Il.* 21.462–6), and literally since they consume grain. Men are called *βροτοί*, a term related to the root **mer-* “die,” but the poem seems to relate it to *βρότος*, “bloody gore”: humans are those in whose veins flows blood. Gods, on the other hand, are *ἀνάιμονες* (“bloodless”) and possess *ἰχώρ* (= *ἄμβροτον αἶμα*), eat *ἀμβροσία* (“immortality”), and drink *νέκταρ*. Their nourishment and drink, at least in Homer, does not render them immortal but only ageless; later authors confuse this distinction, although reflexes of the old, Homeric understanding are still found. When used on the bodies of mortals, ambrosia halts decay, can cover putrid smells, or enhance a person’s allure. While the formula epitomizes what distinguishes gods from mortals, it appears once more to describe the imperishable dogs of gold at Alcinous’ palace (*Od.* 7.94), the kind of imperishable works of art elsewhere termed *ἄφθιτα*.

Chapter 17 (“Aeolia, or Under the Sign of the Circle”) explores Odysseus’ adventure on the island of Aeolus. While scholars have highlighted parallels with the episode at Phaeacia (a high level of civilization; offering to convey Odysseus to Ithaca; magical elements), the differences between the two episodes are no less significant. There is no movement in and out of Aeolia, a floating island from which seafaring and commerce, the signs of civilization for the Greeks, are absent. Instead, in this endogamous society Aeolus’ six sons are married to their sisters: social structure does not culminate in a *polis*; rather, the *oikos* is the *polis*. This episode is also distinguished through its circularity: Odysseus spends a month (a full lunar cycle) in Aeolia; when his companions open the bag of winds,

they return to Aeolia completing a circle, as it were, but things have changed after their departure – now he is no longer welcome or aided. His return to Ithaca will be through his own efforts rather than through divine assistance.

Chapter 18 (“The Πλαγκταί and the Μῶλυ: Divine Naming and Knowing in Homer”) explores the difference in knowledge between gods and mortals as this is expressed in language. While in the *Iliad* Homer mentions a few cases of a different divine and human names (e.g., Briareos, the divine name, vs. Aigai-on, the name used by men at *Il.* 1.403–4), the *Odyssey* contains two cases of “mononymy,” i.e. objects for which there is a name only in the language of the gods but not in that of humans. The reason for the missing “human” names is that certain things are known only to gods. Thus, the Πλαγκταί do not belong to the experience of mortals: no mortal can cross them without perishing, hence they remain nameless among men. As for the μῶλυ, its white flower is visible to all, but its dark root is known only to gods. This is why Hermes, in addition to revealing its name, also explains its φύσις to Odysseus. The language of the gods thus does not only contain alternative terms to those used by mortals but is richer and encompasses terms not known, hence not expressed, by mortals. If, finally, as Jean Bollack suggested, the Πλαγκταί are to be identified with Scylla and Charybdis, then the μῶλυ is the only trace in Homer of an object known exclusively to gods.

Language, both divine and mortal, is also at the heart of chapter 19 (“Double-talk: Divine and Human Language from Homer to Parmenides”) that examines the ability of language to represent the nature of reality. Homer offers the first traces of the φύσις-νόμος antithesis, so important in the 5th c. BCE, in his account of the μῶλυ, discussed in the preceding chapter. The *Odyssey* further reflects on the conventional nature of names set by parents and the extent to which they reflect the true nature of the person named. In particular, the name of Odysseus is fraught with ambiguity, both when it is first uttered by Autolycus (how are we to understand ὀδύσσασθαί?) and in the poet’s allusions to the various meanings it could have – not to mention the fictitious name *Outis* the hero assumes. Thus, already in Homer the slippery nature of naming emerges clearly. Hesiod, as well, is aware of the epistemological divide between human and divine knowledge. This difference is already seen in the initial catalogues of the *Theogony* proem, but it emerges most clearly from the poet’s handling of names. While the etymologies in the *Theogony* appear to suggest that there is truth in language, the *Works and Days*, with their human perspective on the cosmos, complicates this picture. At the beginning of the poem we encounter two goddesses named Eris on earth, a single name that can point to a good or an evil goddess; likewise, αἰδώς can be ambivalent, while δίκη can have four meanings, as the ancient scholia already realised.

Pherecydes’ prose *Theologia* continues in this vein. His gods have names that, while corresponding to those by which they are known to mortals, are

somewhat different (Zas ~ Zeus, Chronos ~ Kronos, Ogenos ~ Okeanos). Crucially, Pherecydes does not rely on a Muse for the knowledge of these names but may intend to generate an authoritative eye-witness effect through his use of the historical present. His divine names may be more correct than those used by men, as suggested perhaps by their etymology, and he may thus implicitly engage in criticism against the conceptualization of these gods in epic poetry. All in all, this duality of language implies that human names for gods may be corrupt forms of their “original” names. For Heraclitus, on the other hand, language is ambiguous, as seen already in the opening of fr. 1 (D.-K.). Men are unaware of the *logos*, i. e. both Heraclitus’ teaching that follows and the eternal, cosmic *logos* to which Heraclitus’ *logos* corresponds. Furthermore, even though they hear it, men are like the deaf and do not comprehend it. What complicates matters further is that language can be deceptive, as the famous bow fragment shows: the word is misleading and may cause us to misrecognize the object named, a problem deriving from the fact that language creates oppositions that conceal the underlying unity of things. Language is elusive, but mortals have no access to a different language that can adequately describe the phenomena.

For Parmenides, as well, there is a dichotomy in the divine and human perspective on reality and truth that is reflected in the imperfect language of mortals. He shares with Heraclitus the epistemological and ontological duality between human and divine, and, despite the difference of prose vs. poetry, they both use artful language. While scholarship often treats Parmenides’ teaching separately from the proem to his didactic poem, the proem should be considered integral to this teaching, especially on the problematic nature of the language used to convey this teaching. The language of the proem is characterized by repetition and doublets, which foreshadow the “two-headed mortals” and the multivalence of human language that renders it unable to capture Being. His proem thus anticipates the great divide between appearance/senses/*δόξα* and Being/truth and raises questions about naming that will be important later in the poem. The goddess describes Being in the *δόξα* in ways that bring to the fore the fact that she can only use human (imperfect) language when expressing Being to mortals. The ineffectiveness of human language is seen, for instance, in the image of Being as bound by the bonds of Moira, Ananke, and Dike, the same Being that is also said to be immovable (then what’s the need for bonds?) and boundless. What humans can do at best is to try to approach Being through circumlocutions and *σήματα*. Naming is a purely human activity (names are *imposed* – *κατατίθεσθαι* – by humans), and in their multiplicity the names applied to Being are mistaken, and the language of humans imprecise.

Chapter 20 (The Triads of *Olympian 2*: God, Hero, Man, Past, Present, and Geography) elucidates Pindar’s *Olympian 2*, an ode that has raised a host of questions regarding its coherence, structure, and conception of the afterlife. The opening tripartite question (god, hero, man) intersects with a spatio-temporal

tripartition (earth, underworld, Isles of the Blest; present, past, future), in a way that allows Pindar to celebrate Theron's victory by incorporating the *laudandus'* views on the afterlife and the history of Akragas. Through a detailed close reading of the ode, it is shown how the references to these three coordinates create a tightly-knit argument. For example, the mention of Semele's and Ino's apotheosis in the second set supports Theron's claims to Theban origins, links the present of the poem's enunciation to the mythical past, and connects back to the opening question by evoking "god." The poem's account of the afterlife is particularly complex, and scholars have often sought answers by evoking Orphism and Pythagoreanism or other cults. Rather than importing extraneous material into the interpretation of the ode, we should again consider the opening coordinates: having already discussed the man's (i.e. Theron's) past and present, Pindar now links him to the future. The afterlife, too, is articulated as a triad: the sinners, the *ἔσλοί* who enjoy a pleasant afterlife reminiscent both of Hesiod's Golden Race and Race of Heroes, and the heroes on the Isles of the Blest. What separates the last two categories is their experience of time: while the *ἔσλοί* are still subject to time, the heroes have transcended time and experience eternal bliss. But whereas the heroes of old could obtain their place on the Isle of the Blest by virtue of their proximity to the divine, current mortals must endure three lives, and it is through their virtue that they can later join the heroes. In this way, Pindar succeeds in accommodating Theron's views of the afterlife to those espoused in Homer and Hesiod's poetry, while suggesting, implicitly and only for those who understand, that Theron belongs to those who have "thrice kept themselves from injustice" and are on their way to the Isles of the Blest.

Emphasizing that questions of the authenticity of the *Catalogue of Women* are often based on an unstated assumption drawn from interpretations of *Th.* 26–8, i.e. that Hesiod pits his own poetry against heroic epos, chapter 21 ("The Beginning and End of the *Catalogue of Women* and its Relation to Hesiod") treats the *Catalogue* as the counterpart of traditional heroic poetry: while the latter focuses on the male element, the *Catalogue* uses the genealogical structure with emphasis on the female. From this perspective, the *Catalogue* emerges as a poem complementary to the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. It does not present heroes in the same light as the other major Hesiodic works: the heroes have close relations with the gods, while the stated aim of the *Catalogue* (to present the heroes born from the unions of male gods and mortal women) implies a different conception of the female from that in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, especially when considering Pandora or the first Wife. Like these other poems, the *Catalogue* contained its own version of the Prometheus story, this time focusing on Prometheus' son Deucalion and Pyrrha, daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora. Pyrrha unites both with Deucalion and Zeus, which accounts for mankind's complex origins, at once human, Titanic, and Olympian. The *Catalogue* may have indicated the progressive distancing of gods and men as it led

towards the event that marked the end of the heroic age, the Trojan War. In doing this, it seems to have drawn on the same tradition as the *Cypria* that also narrated the end of the heroic race and the beginning of the Trojan War, presented there as Zeus's strategy to alleviate Gaia's overpopulation, a strategy that may be alluded to in [Hes.] fr. 204.99–100. The *Catalogue*, thus, covers the entire history of the heroic race and may present its end in terms similar to the *Erga*: the description of the (female) snake (fr. 204.129 ff.) that is struck in the winter by the κῆλα Διός but, her soul surviving, gives birth in the spring may hint at the continuity between the heroic and the Iron races as suggested in the *Erga*.

Chapter 22 (“How to Be a Hero: The Case of Sarpedon”) explores the “Heroic Code” as expressed by Sarpedon in *Iliad* 12.310–28. This code has two aspects, a social and an individual. Heroes like Sarpedon and Glaucus enjoy privileges in their community, in the forms of choice cuts at the feast (*geras*) and land (*temenea*) awarded by the Lycians. Some of these honors (e.g., the *temenos*) may be inherited, but the hero must confirm his worth by fighting in the front line. Sarpedon proves his worth not by fighting to defend the Lycians but at Troy, far from home. The individual part of the “Heroic Code” refers to the hero's mortal nature, which can be overcome only through *kleos* obtained when he faces his enemy and dies a heroic death. Were he immortal, he would not fight in the front line or encourage others to do so. Sarpedon is unique among heroes, in that he embodies both sides of the “Heroic Code” (social and individual, or through both his mortal *physis* and the *nomos* of the honors bestowed by the Lycians) and is the only son of Zeus fighting at Troy. A special dispensation awaits him: while Zeus cannot save his son, who is destined to die at the hands of Patroclus, Sleep and Death accompanied by Apollo will take his body back to Lycia where he will enjoy hero cult. He thus obtains both the *kleos apthiton* granted by epic song and the *timē apthitos* awarded by hero cult.

Hero cult in the *Iliad* is the topic of chapter 23 (“Achilles Inaugurates his Cult”) which argues that the actions in *Iliad* 23 offer the blueprint for a joint cult of Patroclus and Achilles, the *aition* that inaugurates a hero cult. The funerals of the two heroes are already superimposed in Book 18 with Thetis' proleptic mourning of Achilles and the hero's description as a dead warrior, a feature that Neoanalysis has traditionally interpreted as deriving from the *Aethiopsis*. This merging continues in Book 23 when Achilles distributes his own belongings along with those of the deceased, thus setting in motion his own cult.

Hero cult is no longer thought of as post-Homeric. Rather, the consensus is that Homer downplays hero cult, either by suppressing it or by incorporating it only implicitly. But this chapter offers a more nuanced view: Starting from the account of the destruction of the Achaean Wall in *Il.* 12.9–33 (for which, cf. chapter 14), it is argued that, while all visible signs of the wall as well as the heroes' helmets and shields will be scattered by Poseidon, Apollo, and Zeus, the *kleos* surrounding them will persist, a *kleos* that is the prerogative of epic

poetry to bestow rather than hero cult or other material remains. That hero cult is not an adequate means to disseminate *kleos* is seen in the funeral games (23.326–33), where Nestor mentions a *σῆμα* that will function as the turning post for the horse race, which, while easily discernible, does not reveal whether it was someone's tomb or a turning post in the past. A number of features point to hero cult in Achilles' actions in *Iliad* 23: e.g., the displaced feast that occurs before rather than after the burial and thus resembles a sacrifice for a hero, or Achilles' refusal to bathe when he is summoned to a feast at Agamemnon's hut. The remainder of the chapter follows this ritual in its details: the *thysia* and the holocausts, the offering of hair, the fasting, the refusal to bathe, sleep, or engage in commensality; the processions and the ritual mourning; the funerary pyre and libations, the alternation between activities performed by all the Greeks and others only by the Myrmidons. But this ritual is also anomalous: no ritual mourning of women introduces it; instead, Achilles is said to lead the mourning, through a formula elsewhere used to introduce women's lament, a lament that will not be sung until the second *Nekyia* in the *Odyssey* and to which *Iliad* 23 looks forward.

Chapter 24 ("Last Tango in Ogygia: Divine and Human in *Odyssey* 5") focuses on a time when apotheosis is no longer possible and the commerce between gods and humans is soon to be a thing of the past. The progressive distancing of gods from men is already seen at the opening of Book 5, which coincides with the new dawn, expressed through a formula that draws attention to the unfortunate lot of Tithonus, once a mortal youth who was made immortal but not ageless. Despite its beauty, Calypso's island is an ambiguous place, at once paradisaical with Golden-Age overtones and reminiscent of the underworld. Likewise, Calypso is a beautiful goddess but also similar to the initially threatening Circe, while her name, deriving from *καλύπτειν* ("cover," "conceal"), draws attention to her potential association with death. Indeed, the immortality she promises Odysseus, a gift she is actually unable to offer as it is solely Zeus's prerogative, would amount to death, since Odysseus' tale would not have been told, had he stayed forever on Ogygia. Besides, the rituals that are central in the life of mortals, such as *xenia*, are not observed in Ogygia, as Hermes's visit reveals; in this respect Ogygia is not unlike the land of the brutish Polyphemus. Just like Odysseus, moreover, Hermes does not enjoy Ogygia, as there are no human worshippers who would offer sacrifices to gods. Despite her protestations, Calypso lets Odysseus go, and this time we get a different glimpse of her island, now no longer resembling a paradise but, at least where Odysseus builds his boat, it contains old, dry trees. Shipbuilding as well reminds us of the differences between humans and gods or non-human entities like the Cyclopes. The distance between gods and men comes further to the fore when the shipwrecked Odysseus encounters Ino/Leucothea, once a mortal woman who was deified, a fate no longer available to men. Finally, *Odyssey* 5 reaffirms the hero's identity by reactivating the

meaning of his name. Initially we find him weeping (ὀδύρεσθαι) on Ogygia's shore. But later, as he approaches Phaeacia he has an "epiphanic moment" as he realizes the cause of his suffering, Poseidon's hatred (5.423 ὀδῶδυσται); Leucothea confirms this realization (5.539–40: ὠδύσατ[ο]). We are reminded of Autolycus' bestowing Odysseus his name (19.406–9), but Homer draws attention also to another σῆμα that points Odysseus' identity, when he has the hero create a shelter that resembles the lair of the boar that wounded his thigh, causing the scar that will lead to his recognition on Ithaca (5.478–83 ~ 19.439–43). The poet compares Odysseus in his lair to the "seed of fire" hidden by a farmer in the ashes, in a remote part of his field. He thus draws attention to farming and the use of fire, activities that again underscore the distance between gods, who do not engage in them, and men, whose lives depend on them. By the end of *Odyssey* 5, thus, we are far removed from the carefree world of the gods.

The final chapter ("The new Simonides and Homer's 'Ἡμίθεοι'") discusses the term ἡμίθεοι used by Semonides in fr. 11.18, a rare word that appears only once in Homer and rarely elsewhere, and which connects this fragment with a Simonidean *Threnos* (fr. 523 PMG) where it likewise appears. Archaic poetry uses this term to create a retrospective view of the past, the age of heroes, from the vantage point of the present. In this, Simonides resembles Homer, who in *Iliad* 12.10–23 distances himself from the heroes and views them from the perspective of his own times, when the ἡμίθεοι are long gone. Simonides, however, while distancing himself from Homer's heroes, turns his attention to his contemporary heroes, those who fought at Plataea, to whom he will bestow *kleos*, as Homer had done for the ἡμίθεοι who fought at Troy.

Overarching themes link several of the chapters across the three parts of the volume. One of these is the high degree of self-reflexivity present in archaic poetry. Thus, for instance, the search for cosmic beginnings explored in part 1 is simultaneously expressed through the question (i) where a poetic text about beginnings should begin and (ii) where the authority of the mortal bard rests: is it transcendental, relying on the inspiration from the Muses, does it depend on the bard's own mind (νοῦς) and philosophical conceptions, or is it a combination of both? Related to this is another question that links part 1 with a number of chapters in part 3 (especially 15, 16, 18, 19, 24): is human language capable of capturing and communicating events that lie beyond human ken or reality in general (including proper names)? What are the differences that separate divine from human language?

Archaic poetry's self-reflexivity emerges both in thematic terms and on the textual level. The topographic description of Tartaros exhibits a geographic symmetry with regards to the localization of the various parts of the cosmos, but also a deft use of ring composition that, here as elsewhere in the poem, mirrors, through the verbal boundaries it creates, what the text expresses, in this case: the bonds that restrain the defeated gods in Tartaros (e.g., chapter 3). Form is thus

integral to the meaning of the texts. Or: the question of beginnings in a poem of beginnings and *aitia* such as the *Theogony* is self-consciously emphasized through the repetition of expressions denoting “first” and “beginning” throughout its proem (chapter 1); words repeated and used in two different senses in the proem to Parmenides’ poem point to the “two-headed men” (chapter 19). Chapter 20 as well seeks to unlock the meaning of *Olympian 2* by tracing the tripartite division that sets up correspondences and symmetries between different realms of existence: time (past, present, future), space (earth, Underworld, Isles of the Blest), and categories of beings (god, hero, man).

The opposition between divine and human knowledge is a further theme that resonates with several of the chapters. This opposition, too, concerns formal matters as well, which emerges clearly when formulaic expressions are duly examined. The difference between divine and human language, divine mononymy (e.g., chapters 11, 18, 19), and the limitations of names imposed by men (e.g., chapters 18, 19, 24) are some of the relevant aspects. This epistemological question takes us back to section 1, with its chapters on cosmogony and cosmography, where a different aspect of this problem (*viz.* the source of poetic authority) is discussed. The formulaic language of hexameter poetry, too, is important in this context: it is shown (e.g., chapters 15, 18, 19) that the *Kunst-sprache* encodes the gulf that separates gods and men, which is not only cognitive and epistemological (as we see, e.g., in chapters 1 and 19) but extends to terms for such features as bodily shape and voice.

Furthermore, a number of essays show that, although the problems identified by earlier analytical criticism may not admit the solutions proposed by those critics (e.g., bracketing the description of Tartaros and the Typhonomachy in the *Theogony*, or finding fault with the divine assembly of *Odyssey 5*), they nevertheless draw our attention to important features of the texts that require interpretation. Relatedly, text-immanent interpretations, as opposed to attempting to elucidate texts by importing extraneous material related to, e.g., the poet’s biography (to explain the presence of Hecate in the *Theogony*; see chapter 9), putative historical circumstances (the assumption that the Pythia did not exist at the time of the composition of *h.Apol.*; see chapter 10), or Orphism and Pythagoreanism (to account for the view of the afterlife expressed in *Olympian 2*; chapter 21) offer great advantages: they avoid circularity and explain the function of a problematic section *within* the text as the poet composed it.

Despite the differences between men and gods, human institutions and conceptions are by necessity applied to describe and explain the divine world. This can be expressed as a relation of opposition (e.g., gods are immortal and ageless forever, whereas men are mortal; gods have access to knowledge of the remote past, humans have to rely on the Muses, on hearsay, on their limited language), but there are also important aspects of similarity. The genealogical scheme through which Hesiod expresses the affinities between the various deities

and deified abstractions who make up the cosmos in the *Theogony* offers an important example (e.g., chapter 9), as does the conception of Zeus's world as a political arena, with Zeus as the supreme ruler (or Mafia boss: see chapter 8), where power is acquired, consolidated, and maintained through the supreme god's political acumen and negotiation tactics (e.g., with powerful goddesses: chapter 9; by creating relations of complementarity between gods, e.g., Apollo and Dionysus: chapter 13).

All in all, the theology that emerges from these essays is a philosophical one, exploring as it does crucial moments of archaic reflection on the cosmos, the divine, man's place in the world, the authority of knowledge, and correctness of language. Homer, Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns* poets, and early lyric pose philosophical questions (on the ἀρχή, on language, the creation and evolution of the world, epistemological matters etc.) that are later taken up by the Pre-Socratics as important points of reflection that set in motion a philosophical quest, thus confirming Aristotle's view that the φιλόμυθος is in some sense also a φιλόσοφος (*Metaph.* 1.982^b18).

Part I

Cosmogony, Theogony, Cosmography

Chapter 1

Commencing Cosmogony and the Rhetoric of Poetic Authority

Prolegomena

I would like to examine two themes here: first, since cosmogony means recounting how the cosmos came into being, I would like to explore the problem of beginning: where to start and how to start to give such an account. Second, I would like to consider where the knowledge or authority to speak about such matters comes from. Now, these two questions are linked: an account of the beginnings of the cosmos has also to give an account of its own beginnings, of the origins and sources of its knowledge of beginnings. These issues are clearly philosophical, but they are equally literary or rhetorical. And even practical: I must start my account somewhere and demonstrate that my account is persuasive. To do that, I must explain the source of my knowledge and even how I acquired it. The more distant that knowledge may be from ordinary human ken, the more imperative the need to explain its source.

I do not claim to break new ground, but merely focus on the issue of poetic and epistemological authority and how it is negotiated in Homer, Hesiod, Parmenides, and Empedocles, and how the form and structure of their compositions are shaped by the sources and character of the knowledge they intend to convey.

Homer

Ἐξ Ὀμήρου ἀρχώμεθα. But should we include Homer in this discussion at all? Although one might argue that the Homeric poems do present a comprehensive vision of the cosmos and contain some hints as to how it came to be, Homer does not, to be sure, present a systematic cosmogony. Such knowledge is divine in that it transcends ordinary human experience. But since each of the poets I will consider subsequently, Hesiod, Parmenides, and Empedocles, stake their claim to authority and define their credentials and subject matter in relation to their predecessors, we too must begin from the beginning.

Much of the material that follows is familiar, but I want to emphasize certain aspects that will run through all the works we examine. What knowledge does

the Homeric poet lay claim to and what is its source? The answer to the second question is pretty straightforward: the Muses. In several passages, we learn that the Muses or Apollo instruct (διδάσκειν) the poet; and the poet then becomes someone with expert knowledge (ἐπισταμένως). Phemius acknowledges that a god has “implanted” (ἐνέφυσεν) all kinds of songs in him, but he also claims to be αὐτοδίδακτος (*Od.* 22.347–8). For Homer, the knowledge the Muses grant him is twofold as emerges on those occasions when the poet asks the goddesses a question or requests their aid. In the appeal to the Muses that precedes the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.484–93), the requested knowledge concerns not gods, but human beings, human beings from the past about whom we may have heard but imprecisely (κλέος οἶον); but as eyewitnesses, the goddesses can furnish that precision to the poet. But the very first question the poet addresses to the Muses is τίς θεῶν? “Who of the gods?” (*Il.* 1.8). Such information concerning the divine apparently lies outside the range of ordinary human knowledge. The Homeric poet likewise struggles with the question of beginnings. In the *Iliad*, the poet declares his subject, the wrath of Achilles, and he asks the Muses to recount its beginnings ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα (*Il.* 1.6); on other occasions too the poet of the *Iliad* interrupts his narrative with follow-up questions (“who was the first?”), which renew our realization of his dependence on the Muses not only for information, but also for the proper ordering of that information, i. e. its κόσμος. Thus, the epic poet, much like a cosmologist, must wrestle with the problem of proper arrangement, of κόσμος, of beginnings.

Some cosmological details are mentioned in Homer: Okeanos and Tethys as the γένεσις πάντεσσι (*Il.* 14.246; cf. θεῶν γένεσιν, *Il.* 14.201, 302); and the poet alludes to other early moments in divine history: the Titans have been confined to the underworld (*Il.* 8.479–81); the sons of Kronos, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, drew lots to divide the cosmos between them (*Il.* 15.187–93); when they were young, Hera and Zeus snuck off to make love without the knowledge of their parents (*Il.* 14.295–6). Some less harmonious incidents in their marriage involved Zeus tying up his wife and hanging anvils from her feet (*Il.* 15.18–22). The interesting thing about these passages is that they are all put in the mouths of gods – with one telling exception, which really proves the rule: in what is clearly a tale of cosmological import, Achilles relates how his mother often used to tell him how she rescued Zeus from the rebellious triad of Hera, Athena, and Poseidon, by summoning the giant monster Briareos (*Il.* 1.396–406). In other words, the epic poet, even though inspired by the Muses, still places accounts concerning the cosmogonic or theogonic past directly in the mouths of the gods. Apparently, an extra layer of authority is required to recount the pre-history of the gods. It can only emanate from the *ipsissima uerba* of the gods themselves.

Another important passage in Homer further develops the distinction between divine and human knowledge. As Odysseus makes his way to Circe’s house, he

meets Hermes, who gives him a special plant (which somehow will protect the hero from porcinification), μῶλυ,¹ of which we are told (*Od.* 10.302–6):

... Ἀργεῖφόντης
 ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.
 ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος·
 μῶλυ δὲ μιν καλέουσι θεοί, χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν 305
 ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.

[Hermes] dug it up from the earth, and showed me its *physis*:
 it had a black root, but the flower resembled milk.
 The gods call it *moly*; but it is difficult indeed for mortal men
 to dig it up, but the gods can do everything.

This passage is the first attestation of the word φύσις, a word fundamental to subsequent Greek thought and in Homer emblematic of the distinction between divine and human knowledge. The whole consists of the white flower and the black root, the visible and the hidden; to know the whole is to know its nature, its φύσις; and knowing φύσις allows the gods to give a full account and thus to name it accurately. Human beings, however, have no name for it. On the basis of this passage we might call Homer the first φυσιολόγος and the one who characterized knowledge of the whole as belonging to divinity. Similarly, the *imago mundi* that constitutes the shield of Achilles is the product of divine craftsmanship; it is a god, Hephaestus, who can depict the whole of the cosmos, including the heavens and the gods (*Il.* 18.483–608). In general, human knowledge is partial, fragmentary, but the gods alone have knowledge of the whole, of φύσις.

The notion of the duality of knowledge thus already begins in Homer and runs through Greek thought like a leitmotif. These two kinds of knowledge, divine and human, can in turn be further refined to differentiate knowledge available to the gods and knowledge *about* the gods, as opposed to knowledge available to humans and knowledge of the human things.

Hesiod

I have elsewhere argued at some length that Hesiod's *Theogony* represents the universe from the perspective of the gods while the *Works and Days* represents it from the human viewpoint and that the two works are in some sense complementary.² The two works of Hesiod, then, follow the paradigm of μῶλυ; the two parts, divine and human, only when taken together represent the φύσις of the whole. But Hesiod complicates things somewhat. Like Homer, his knowledge of the gods comes from the Muses, but his Muses are far more enigmatic than

¹ On μῶλυ, see chapter 18 in this volume.

² Strauss Clay 2003.

Homer's. He encounters the Muses in the space between the peak of Helikon and the habitations of men, a halfway point emblematic of their mediating power between the divine and the human (*Th.* 1–34). The scene plays out in the dark, giving it a mysterious quality. The scornful address of the Muses in the plural, which breaks down any sense of human individuality (ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγγεα, γαστέρες οἶον, “Beastly shepherds, wretched tribe, mere bellies!,” *Th.* 26), includes us, their audience, among their addressees. We too belong to those wretches, not so much like shepherds but rather like the herd of sheep they pasture, not even living in houses (a hallmark of the human),³ and consigned to stuffing our bellies. The distance between these goddesses and us humans appears unbridgeable.

Whereas Homer gave us no reason to question his Muses' veracity, Hesiod has his goddesses vaunt their own ambiguity; their tales resemble those of Odysseus: some may be true, but others may not be; and as human beings we cannot discern the difference. Given the unbridgeable gulf that separates gods from mortals, knowledge of the divine things is ultimately unverifiable. And even the Muses might have difficulty narrating their own birth, not to speak of all the events that occurred prior to it. Nevertheless, Hesiod declares that he will transmit to us what the goddesses tell him. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod traces his authority to speak about the gods to his personal encounter with the Muses, to what has been called his *Dichterweihe*. Before that moment of inspiration/initiation, he has attributed to the Muses another song that offers a catalogue of the gods but one quite different from the one he will ultimately sing with the Muses' aid. First, it begins from Zeus and Hera and Zeus's offspring, the present generation of the gods (13–14); then it seems to work itself backward to Gaia and Okeanos and finally to Night and then the catch-all ἄλλων τ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων (21). While resembling a cosmogony in reverse, its exact arrangement (κόσμος) is obscure, and it is admittedly incomplete. I suggest that both the beginning from the present and the opaque, disjointed, and partial ordering of this catalogue represent the piecemeal and haphazard knowledge of the gods that ordinary mortals possess. It is not entirely wrong, but remains unsystematic and incomplete, rather like the partial human knowledge of μῶλυ. Later thinkers would label it the δόξα βροτῶν.

Armed with the laurel scepter and the divine voice the Muses have granted him, Hesiod will perform their song, but like Homer who can dictate to his Muse where to begin, Hesiod is no mere passive instrument. While the Muses instruct him to sing about the gods, Hesiod himself insists that they begin at the beginning.⁴ Doubtless there were other theogonies in circulation – Hesiod himself has

³ In Homer, both goddesses (Calypso) and monsters (Polyphemos) live in caves. Cf. *h.Hom.* 20 to Hephaestus.

⁴ On the problem of beginning in the *Theogony*, see Strauss Clay 2003, 49–72; also, more generally, Brague 1990. Hesiod draws attention to it by using the word πρῶτιστᾶ in line 24 and 116.

already alluded to one in which Night is the primordial mother of all; and Homer, as mentioned, has Okeanos and Tethys (the sweet and salt water reminiscent of Near Eastern theogonies) as the *γένεσις θεῶν*. But Hesiod's repeatedly insists on first beginnings (words for "beginning" or "first" recur repeatedly in the *Theogony's* proem) and implicitly rejects other theogonies, even those that begin with Gaia and Ouranos (which is how the Muses begin their song when they entertain Zeus on Olympus [*Th.* 45]). But while that version *ἔξ ἀρχῆς* is good enough for Zeus, it does not suffice for Hesiod; he demands of the goddesses, even dictates to them, that in his theogony the Muses also include the natural phenomena (the rivers, sea, stars and heaven above [*Th.* 109–11]), and thus what we would call both the divine and the physical cosmos.

Or, if that distinction is anachronistic, a complete account of all the things that are *αἰὲν ἔόντα*. Hesiod further insists that they begin with the "firstest" things (*πρώτιστα*). And thus, we find the startling assertion with which the *Theogony* proper begins: that Chaos was the very first (*πρώτιστα*) that came into being (*Th.* 116). This neuter Chaos brings forth Darkness and Night, who unite to produce the polarities of Brightness and Day. These entities somehow belong to a category different from both the natural phenomena (e. g., earth, sun, rivers, and stars) and the anthropomorphic gods of mythology. This poetic way of speaking points to a radically new way of thinking: in figurative language, I believe Hesiod is saying: nothing can come into being before there is space (Chaos) and time (marked by the alternation of day and night, who are the offspring of Chaos).⁵ The line of Chaos produces abstractions and personifications of forces and ideas that you cannot see or touch (Strife, Hatred, Fate, Battles, the so-called Children of Night [*Th.* 211–32]) but can have a mental conception of: they are nonetheless real and eternal components of the cosmos – at least as real as the gods.

These primal events repay closer examination: the progression from space (Chaos) to time (Day and Night) requires some kind of movement, some kind of intervention to get things going. This seems to involve, first, separation or scission when Chaos, or some part of it, splits off into two similar parts that closely resemble their "parent": Night and Erebus, both characterizing the dark empty space from which they emerge. This process of fission can only multiply itself or proliferate its own qualities and therefore has limited cosmogonic potential. But in a rather surprising move, the union of these two forces of darkness produces radically different, or perhaps we should say, complementary, entities: Day and Aither. Hesiod identifies the cause of this production as "mingling in *φιλότης*" or the power of Eros (*Th.* 120–2):

⁵ Note that time and the alternation of day and night in Hesiod, just as in the Hebrew Bible, is prior to and does not depend on the sun.

ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, 120
 λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

[Eros] most beautiful among all the immortal gods,
 looser of limbs, of all gods and of all men
 he overcomes the mind in their breast and thoughtful counsel.

As “most beautiful of the gods,” Eros therefore has the power to bring together or attract by his beauty, but as λυσιμελής he also separates and dissolves body and soul, not unlike the dissolution caused by death and sleep. But if the beauty of Eros invites and entices, his violence overcomes and destroys (δάμναται) mind and will. Paradoxically, he embodies both tearing apart and joining together without which there can be no cosmos.⁶

Given the primacy of Eros in the *Theogony*, it is perhaps surprising how little we hear of him in the poem.⁷ In fact the only time the verb ἐράω occurs in the poem is at line 915, where we learn that Zeus ἐράσσατο Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses; this is the only love match, so to speak, in the entire composition. Nevertheless, the paradoxical character of Eros is central to the initial stages of cosmogony. As it unfolds, Chaos' absence of features stands in opposition to the solidity and visible contours of “broad-breasted” Gaia, which include height (mountains) and depth (glens). Gaia's parthenogenic generation of Ouranos, the enveloping sky, and Pontos, who delimits her landmasses – ἄτερ φιλότητος ἐφιμέρου (“without desirable love,” *Th.* 132) – further serves to define her, demarcating her most salient features. Here as with Chaos, fission serves to further define the parent. But only the sexual union of Heaven and Earth initiates the genuine process of cosmogony and determines its functioning. In the case of Gaia and Ouranos, the erotic drive for unity is, to put it mildly, excessive and its procreative function blocked. Eros in his undiluted form turns out to be brutal and, as Ouranos' unending coitus with Gaia demonstrates, inverts its basic purpose by impeding generation, imprisoning her children in her womb. Paradoxically, this erotic union is accompanied by the simultaneous appearance of hatred as Ouranos' children both hate and are in turn hated by their father.⁸ The only solution to this impasse is a violent separation through Ouranos' castration, which allows their offspring to emerge into the light. Union

⁶ Cf. Bonnafé 1985 and Most 2013.

⁷ The adjective does occur: ἐρατήν ... ὄσσαν, 65; ἐρατός ... δοῦπος, 70; Τηθύν τ' ἐρατεινήν, 136; of nymphs, 259, 353, 355; ἔργ' ἐρατά, 879. The Graces also have a close connection with Eros: τῶν καὶ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ἔρος εἴβετο δερκομενάων | λυσιμελής, 910–11; their mother Eurynome is said to πολυήρατον εἶδος ἔχουσα, 908; and one of her daughters is referred to as Θαλίην τ' ἐρατεινήν, 909; see, finally, ἐρατῆ φιλότητι, 1009, 1018.

⁸ *Th.* 138, 155. Pl. *Smp.* 195c1–5 comments on the contradiction: the παλαιὰ πράγματα about Eros recounted by Hesiod and Parmenides cannot be true; for he could not be responsible for the gods castrating and binding each other.

and separation are inextricably bound together, and cosmogony requires them both. A resemblance to Empedocles' Love and Strife seems inescapable.

With the birth of Aphrodite, Eros becomes subordinate to the goddess, and his primal cosmic power domesticated. Also joining Aphrodite's entourage is Himeros ("Desire") whose origin has always been a mystery (201).⁹ Although his birth is never narrated in the *Theogony*, the proem mentions that his abode is near the Charites and the Muses (64). Previously, too, we have learned that Gaia generated Pontos ἄτερ φιλότῆτος ἐφιμέρου (132), and Ouranos embraces Gaia ἱμείρων φιλότῆτος (177). As with the Muses and the children of Night, so also in the case of Himeros, forms of his name are deployed before his personified emergence: function precedes naming, or perhaps better: the emergence of the name crystallizes his preceding dynamic manifestation.

The arrival of Himeros on the cosmic stage is emblematic of the domestication of Eros and his new partnership with Aphrodite. In what I believe to be an etymological play,¹⁰ the raw cosmic power of Eros has become split (ἡμι-ερος)¹¹ and tamed (ἡμερεύω)¹² to become not merely the external force that compels μίξις, but now with Himeros in attendance, the drive from within that promotes the desire for sexual union.¹³ The two of them henceforth operate together under the aegis of Aphrodite and inaugurate a new world order. To be sure, remnants of the primal erotic violence abide and are not immediately neutralized; tellingly, it emerges once again in the union of Rhea and Kronos, which introduces the second act of the Succession Myth where Rhea is said to be δμηθεῖσα by Kronos (453).¹⁴ In the final act of succession, with Zeus's swallowing of his bride Metis, this violence is masked, so to speak, by the Olympian's "having deceived her mind with seductive words" (δὸλω φρένας ἐξαπατήσας | αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισιν, 889–90), precisely the weapons of Aphrodite (205) once Eros and Himeros have become her attendants and joined her entourage.

In the *Theogony* Hesiod lays claim to an authority that is guaranteed by the Muses, but at the same time, that authority is rendered problematic by the

⁹ Himeros along with Philotes, Oaristus, and Parphasis are embroidered on Aphrodite's κεστός (*Il.* 14.216–17), which Hera borrows to seduce Zeus.

¹⁰ It will be objected that the wordplay is not explicit, but there are plenty of other implicit etymological wordplays in Hesiod. Cf. Vergados 2020.

¹¹ It is hard not to think of the splitting of the round men in Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*.

¹² I believe that Pindar imitates Hesiod's wordplay in the opening of *N.* 8.1–5, emphasizing the double character of Eros, gentle or otherwise.

¹³ The distinction Kloss 1994, 60 detects in Homer ("dass ἔρος offenbar den Funktionen des Körpers nahestellt, während ἡμερος dem geistig-sinnlichen Bereich angehören") is operative in Hesiod, although Kloss later (p. 104) concludes of Eros' two appearances in Hesiod that "so ganz unterschiedlichen Vorstellungen finden sich bei Hesiod nebeneinander, ohne dass der Dichter den Versuch einer sinnvollen Verbindung machte."

¹⁴ Note also Theia and Hyperion: ὑποδηθεῖσ' Ὑπερίονος ἐν φιλότῆτι (374). Here, the violence of the verb is softened by ἐν φιλότῆτι; but cf. 962, 1000, and 1006.

goddesses' declaration of their own ambiguity. In the *Works and Days*, however, Hesiod openly vouches for his own truthfulness in announcing ἐτήτυμα to his brother Perses (10). Apparently, to speak of human things requires no super-human authorization.¹⁵ In the *Works and Days*, Hesiod's authority does not depend on the Muses. Not knowledge derived from the Muses gives him the authority to speak even to fools (νήπιοι), whether his brother or the kings, but it is νοῦς that distinguishes his discourse in the *Works and Days*: οὔτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει (293). His expertise is also conveyed by the use of the second person, singular or plural, which as both the kings and Perses recede from his discourse, directly addresses us, his audience, in his own authoritative voice. Through his differentiation of divine and human knowledge, Hesiod makes us emphatically aware of the limitations of any human account of cosmogony. Perhaps one can only come up with a likely story.

The big questions that Hesiod raised and which were taken up by his successors were the fundamental ones that can fairly be said to have preoccupied subsequent Greek thought and determined its direction. They are both ontological and epistemological: first, how can we have access to knowledge of the eternal and the divine? And can that knowledge be verifiable? In this Hesiod would, I think, agree with Xenophanes (fr. B 34 and B 35 D.-K. = D49 and D50 L.-M.):

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔ τις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
εἰδῶς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπῶν,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν εὐκρίτα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι.¹⁶

Now then, clarity no man has seen nor will there be one
with knowledge concerning the gods and whatever I say about all things;
for even if in speaking perfectly, he would be for the most part accurate,
nevertheless, he himself would not know; seeming covers all.

Let these things be considered similar to genuine things.

The second is raised by the very foundation of Hesiod's account of cosmogony and theogony: if the gods and the cosmos have come into being, how can they be αἰὲν ἑόντες? In turning to Parmenides and Empedocles, we observe a

¹⁵ There is an exception when Hesiod speaks of seafaring of which he only has limited experience (*Op.* 646–94). On these matters he must invoke the Muses to instruct him concerning the “mind of Zeus who wields the aegis” (661–2).

¹⁶ On this notoriously difficult line and especially the interpretation of εὐκρίτα, see Bryan 2012. However the word is understood, it indicates a gap between the things that are and what can be known. But Xenophanes also seems slightly to mitigate the harsh speech of Hesiod's Muses, by substituting εὐκρίτα for their ὁμοῖα, and using δόκος and δεδοξάσθω in place of ψεύδεα; he thereby appears to allow for some possibility of human knowledge, even if not certainty.

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