1. Hesiod’s language has always been discussed in relation to that of the Homeric poems (and the “Homeric” Hymns) not only because of obvious affinities in metre, dialect and vocabulary, but also because at a chronological level of the late 8th–early 7th century BC there is almost no other type of Greek language (literary or non-literary) with which it can be compared; inscriptions in any dialect are very few and short, and ironically enough the language of the Boeotian Mantiklos epigram (CEG 326), certainly earlier than 675 BC, is phonologically very different from that of Hesiod (see below, §3).

The old problem of the chronological priority of Homer over Hesiod or vice versa is meaningless if posed in these terms. To all appearances Hesiod was a real person, which may well not be the case for “Homer”: it is highly probable that the Iliad and the Odyssey, although they basically use the same type of metre and language, reflect different values and interests and belong to different milieus (see §2), which means that their final version may be the work of two different poets (at least). What is really important is that Hesiod adopted a competitive stance towards heroic epic, as Graziosi ([2002] 168–170) and Steiner (2005) have rightly emphasized in recent times. In other words, Hesiod as an individual may have been older than the “monumental” poet of the Iliad, but he was certainly younger than the poetic traditions of heroic epic to which the poet of the Iliad gave its final shape, and knew very well the language mixture in which that heroic poetry was expressed. In this sense one is justified in saying that Hesiod is more or less “Homeric” in a given passage of a poem: the main point is not the imitation of an author, but the allegiance to a poetic tradition.

Unfortunately, we often do not know to what extent we are before a text originally recited (or sung) by Hesiod himself, or later interpolations, or even whole poems of totally different authorship—a problem already discussed in Hellenistic times. In the wake of a number of modern scholars I regard the Aspis as spurious; in antiquity the Catalogue of Women (henceforth CW) was considered the continuation of the Theogony, and it may
well contain Hesiodic material, but its bulk is likely to have been the work of post-Hesiodic poets, composed between the last decades of the seventh c. BC and the first two or three of the sixth (Hirschberger [2004] 42–51). *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (WD) are mostly genuine; yet they are surrounded by much controversy over the authenticity of specific passages; two alternative versions of the same story are frequent but either is often regarded as spurious. In general terms, the Hesiodic corpus seems to have circulated in a shape that was much more fluid than its Homeric counterpart (Rossi [1997], Ercolani [2001]). Some of the fakes, like e.g. the Χείρωνος ὑποθήκαι, were very influential in antiquity (Schwartz [1960] 228–244, D’Alessio [2005b] 232).

2. It is interesting that a number of Hesiodic lines occur in almost identical form in the *Odyssey* and nowhere else in the archaic epic we possess (Edwards [1971] 166–189); e.g. Th. 27 ἵδιμεν ψεύδεα πολλά λέγειν ἐτύμῳοιν ὄμοια, Od. 19.203 ἵππε ὁψύδει πολλά λέγειν ἐτύμῳοιν ὄμοια; Th. 228 Ὑομίνας τε Μάχας τε Φόνους τ’ Ἀνδροκοταίας τε, Od. 11.612 ύμίναι τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ’ Ἀνδροκοταίαι τε; Op. 317 οἰδώς δ’ οὐχ ἄγαθή νεκρημένον ἄνδρα κομίζει, Od. 17.347 οἰδώς δ’ οὐχ ἄγαθή νεκρημένον ἄνδρι παρείναι; some “formulaic” expressions, like e.g. ἀεσίφρων ἰαίμοι/ἀεσίφρων ἰαίμοι, are found only in the *Odyssey* and the *Works and Days* (Od. 21.302, Op. 315, 335, 646).¹

The similarity between these lines and formulae is probably due to the fact that both Hesiod and the poet(s) of the *Odyssey* were rooted in very similar “continental” traditions of Ionic poetry. I do not want to revive the old theory that “the *Odyssey* … received its first substantive form in the ancient epic schools of Boeotia” (Thomson [1914] 87) but the importance of mainland sagas and interests in the poem is undeniable and there are also various linguistic indicators of a “continental” origin of the poem. Over the last thirty years it has been realized—also in the wake of the spectacular discoveries in Lefkandi—that Euboea must have played a remarkable role in the development of Ionian epic (Peters [1986], West [1988], Cassio [1998]); Peters [1986] and [1987] regards Homer as a “Westionier” and according to M.L. West ([1988] 172) “the *Odyssey* might well be a Euboean poem”. If the *Odyssey* was the work of

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¹ In the *Nekuia* many lines are identical with lines of the *Ehoiae* (e.g. in the story of Tyro: Od. 11.249 f. = fr. 31.2 f. M.–W. etc.), but they are often regarded as late interpolations from the *Ehoiai*. However, Hirschberger (2004) 62 regards them as “traditionelles episches Sprachgut.”