Hesiod's *Erga,* Genre Theory, and Greek Lyric Poetry
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The relationship between a literary product and its prior tradition is complicated, and in turn complicates our definitions both of genres and of genre. Particularly interesting is the relationship between questions of literary participation and evidence of the specific performance contexts of archaic poetic production. Much work has been devoted to the symposium as the critical locus for poetic production, but the recursive nature of literary history demands that we focus on a multiplicity of audiences implied *within* the immediate context of production. I take a rather wide view of a literary work's context, combining the initial performance audience of a lyric poem with its author's conception of the wider audience addressed—including the contemporary Panhellenic sphere and the poem's future "readership." This putative audience problematizes any question of genre.

Hesiod's *Erga* addresses such a plurality of audiences and, in doing so, confounds our definitions of didactic literature. The poem's content relates more to peace of mind and a theory of justice than to practical instruction for farmers, thereby demonstrating its own inconsistency of address to its internal addressee. In this, it is analogous to a Near Eastern tradition of instructional poetry with well-defined generic characteristics. The relationship of the *Erga* to subsequent instructional literature in the Greek tradition can be understood and described with the linguistic and mathematical tools of Prototype Theory (see, for instance, E. Rosch 1973, "Natural Categories"). If we understand the *Erga* as the prototype for advisory poetry, then we can profitably examine the *Familienähnlichkeit* between other examples of what might be called instructional literature (especially Archilochean animal fable, Theognidean paedagogy, Solonian or Alcaic political paraenesis, Tyrtaean military exhortation, Phocylidean *gnomai*, and Alcaic or Xenophanic symposiastic directives). This prototype may have influenced these later archaic poets—particularly Alcaeus, whose advisory mode comprises a set of the formulaic elements found in the *Erga*—but dependence need not be assumed. Treating that text as a prototype we can measure the conceptual distance separating participants in the generic resemblance. This paper describes the specific salient features of instructional discourse in the *Erga* and analyzes the occurrence of these features in the archaic iambic, elegiac, and lyric poets. The phenomenon of the Seven Sages is discussed in relation to the strategic use of such generic topoi.