

## Praise in Perspective: Hesiodic Life Lessons in Bacchylides' *Odes* 3 & 5

This paper examines the Hesiodic intertext in Bacchylides's *Odes* 3 and 5, where Bacchylides draws upon the words and worldview of the revered archaic tradition to craft meaningful poetry of praise. Both the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* establish a framework of reference between the audience and the order of the cosmos. *Works and Days* emphasizes how one's misery or happiness in this world depends upon fulfilling one's role within Zeus's cosmos, drawing out appropriate relationships between mortals and deities, between those who rule and their subjects, especially the poets. For his praise of Hieron, Bacchylides draws chiefly on the Hesiod's description of kings. In the *Theogony* the ideal kings (*Theog.* 80-82: βασιλεῦσιν ... αἰδοίοισιν "reverent kings", διοτρεφέων βασιλῆων "kings dear to Zeus"), receive from the Muses the ability to rule through sweet speech and soft words rather than force (79-93). In the *Works and Days*, good kings rule through ἰθείησι δίκῃς "straight justice" (*WD* 36), the justice of Zeus, and Hesiod's criticism of wicked kings provides further qualities that shine when kings act as they should.

Among the various readings of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Nelson 1998 has proven most influential in understanding both the structure of the poem and the nature of the justice. With respect to Bacchylides, Cairns 2010 provides substantial notes which identify the moments of intertext within the two epinicians, and Stamatapoulou 2017 discusses at length the chief intertexts in *Odes* 3 and 5; while she discusses the use of Hesiod to provide authority and a schema for the relationship between *laudator* and *laudandus*, she does not consider that the intertext also functions to frame the poems within Hesiod's larger worldview. (Márquez Guerrero

1992 and Stenger 2004 discuss how gnomic statements create thematic consistency within the various elements of a Bacchylidean epinician.)

This paper will work within the context of these studies to show how Bacchylides evokes the archaic framework structuring the relationships among gods-kings-poet-people in Hesiod in *Odes* 3 and 5 to Hieron of Syracuse. By describing Hieron in both poems with the epithets belonging to the kings of Hesiod, Bacchylides places the king within a set relationship to the gods, poet, and people: one who judges straight judgments, who like the poet can understand the words of the Muse, and whose rule over the people comes from Zeus. The poet, in turn, can assume the position of servant of the Muses who sings both praise and instruction to the kings and people. Incorporating this structure also allows Bacchylides to speak to a wider audience, who, recognizing the relationships evoked, can identify the roles appropriate to their individual station in life. His Hesiodic framework comes with a Hesiodic amalgamation of material; each ode follows the general pattern of praise, myth, and concluding praise punctuated throughout with gnomic statements which provide thematic unity. In Ode 3, Bacchylides evokes the Hawk and Nightingale fable to frame his praise of Hieron, choosing the story of Croesus and meditations on death to add elements of a *consolatio* in view of Hieron's ill health. In Ode 5, Bacchylides initially positions himself and Hieron in the relationship laid out in the proem of the *Theogony* and by the end, has joined this relationship of praise to Zeus's prerogative to glorify whomever he wishes. In both, Bacchylides emphasizes that it is only a life led according to the rules of the Zeus's cosmos that can provide mortals with any happiness, here by a fortunate life, and after death the enduring glory of their deeds.

## Bibliography

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