HESIOD'S DESCRIPTIONS OF TARTARUS (*THEOGONY* 721–819)

DAVID M. JOHNSON

SUSPECTED INTERPOLATIONS ARE, whatever their other uses, a good indication of scholarly unease, and by this measure Hesiod's account of the underworld (*Theogony* 721–819) has left scholars more puzzled than most passages in what is, all told, a rather puzzling poem. This unease has continued to affect the great modern editors of the text: West (1966: 50) believed that the passage provided the best evidence for archaic interpolations in the *Theogony*; Solmsen (1982: 14–18) came to doubt that Hesiod should be credited with any of it. But while we have no firm basis for trusting the accuracy of our text, we have even less reason to believe that we can accurately detect interpolations in the one extensive description of the underworld given in early epic.[1] Nor is the compromise position that Hesiod himself composed different sections of the description of Tartarus at different times a satisfying answer: we would still need to consider why Hesiod left contradictory passages in the final version. And so our first step ought to be an attempt to understand the passage as it stands, daunting though this may be. Despite its obscurities, Hesiod's Tartarus deserves another attempt at interpretation because of its intrinsic role in the *Theogony* and its influence on subsequent Greek thinking about the structure of the universe. Tartarus serves at once as a safe place to detain the Titans and as the home of some of the brood of Night who still do their evil business above ground; it thus plays an important role both in the narrative of the rise of Zeus and in Hesiod's description of the negative powers we mortals still have to face. And it is only by understanding Hesiod's description of the founts and limits and the great chasm in Tartarus that we will be in any position to evaluate his cosmology.

The structure of the description of Tartarus has generally been recognized as an important argument for the authenticity of all or most of it.[2] While some have pushed the structural argument too far, the passage is unified by ring-composition and the sort of juxtaposition which typifies Hesiod's method of composition. There is not to be found in it, despite Schwabl (1966: 97–106), a series of line to line correspondences; the easiest way to foil any attempt at line-counting is to note that there is no clear place where the Titanomachy ends and the description of Tartarus begins. Yet this lack of a clear transition shows the integration of the description of Tartarus with the rest of the poem. Tartarus is described, first and last, as the place where the Titans are consigned by the Hundredhanders. It is this repeated connection to the Titanomachy and the duplicate lines on the founts

[1] Compare the more tolerant early Solmsen 1949: 60, n. 197: "To be sure, the whole description is unique in Hesiod; this realization should make us ready to tolerate unique 'stylistic' features."

[2] So Stokes 1962: 22–24; West 1966: 357–358; Schwabl 1966: 97–106; Northrup 1979: 34–35; and Ballabriga 1986: 257–258; Solmsen (1968: 324, n. 1) dissents.

PHOENIX, VOL. 53 (1999) 1–2.

and limits (736–739 = 807–810) which give the passage its basic ring structure. From 721 through 744 we are told of the Titans deep in Tartarus and the walls to keep them in, together with the cosmic chasm, threshold, roots, founts, and limits which are located, as we shall see, at the horizon the Titans would have to cross to escape. From 807–819 we are again told, more briefly and not precisely in the same order, of the same things. The very structure of the world ensures the continued captivity of the Titans, and with the basic ring-composition of the passage Hesiod neatly emphasizes this point, surrounding his description of the underworld with descriptions of the cosmic structures which mark the boundaries of the underworld and ensure that the Titans will remain below.

The rest of the passage falls within this ring but does not itself fall into any obvious large-scale structure. Individual items within the ring, however, are linked to one another clearly enough by genealogy or function and by stylistic features which unify individual paragraphs or connect them with their neighbors. Night, as one of the first born daughters of Chaos and the mother of the offspring who are such an important part of Hesiod's world, is the first divinity Hesiod describes in Tartarus after the Titans and their guards (744–757). Mention of Night leads Hesiod to describe Atlas holding heaven in front of the house of Night (746–748); his role as stabilizer of the cosmos justifies his presence in our passage. Night shares her house with her daughter Day, and their roles above earth readily bring to mind Night's children Sleep and Death, who are then described in lines (755–757) that nicely round off the description of Night while preparing us for the house these two sons of Night share. As Hesiod had described how Night and Day never are in their house at the same time, he now adds that Helios never looks upon Sleep and Death (759–761). He then describes their roles on earth, which leads us naturally enough to Hades, Death's partner or double (767–773). Hades' house is guarded by Cerberus, who keeps its inhabitants from leaving rather as Death was said to keep hold of his victims, rounding off this paragraph with an allusion to the end of the previous one (773, cf. 765).[3]

We come then to Styx (775–806), who is described at far greater length than any other single inhabitant of Tartarus. But this ought not be surprising, as it is Styx, among the inhabitants of Hesiod's underworld, who has the most important impact on the gods of the upper world, and it is these gods who are Hesiod's prime concern. Like Death, Styx is hated by the immortals (775, cf. 766), because (aside from etymology) the κῶμα of Styx which threatens the perjured god is the closest thing to death the immortals know. She thus belongs in the underworld, and the description of her follows naturally upon the treatment of mortal death. Even the order of the details of Hesiod's description matches that in his earlier treatment of strife among mortals.[4] The oath of Styx replaces battle between the

[3] I omit 774 (= 768) which is absent from most manuscripts.

[4] ἔρις – νεῖκος – ψεύδηται – ὅρκον – πῆμα – ἐπίορκον . . . ἐπομόσσῃ in 782–793 correspond with Ἔρις – Νείκεα – Ψεύδεα – Ὅρκον – πημαίνει – ἐπίορκον ὀμόσσῃ in 226–232. Schwenn

gods, and the temporary coma and exile her water enforces on the perjured god replace permanent imprisonment of the sort inflicted on the Titans in Tartarus.[5]

While these general observations about the structure of the passage and its relevance to the general themes of the *Theogony* present a fair *prima facie* case for its authenticity, they can hardly suffice as an interpretation. The task that remains is to make some sort of coherent sense out of the details of the passage. The sort of sense to be made, as most have agreed, is not spatial sense in any straightforward way.[6] There is little or nothing in the passage which gives us any indication of how we could locate the items described relative to one another. ἔνθα appears again and again in our passage (729, 734, 736, 758, 767, 775, 807, 811), but can hardly mean anything more than "there," i.e., "in Tartarus." It would only tell us that separate structures in Tartarus were near each other if it were contrasted with other spatial terms, but there are, as we shall see, precious few of these. To add to the trouble, many of the structures in Tartarus look alike, so much so that it is often difficult to say just how many of them there are. There is one reference to a barrier (ἕρκος 726), one to a wall (τεῖχος 733); three times gates are described (πύλαι 741, 773, 811), and at least once doors appear (θύραι 732; cf. θύραζε 750); twice a threshold is mentioned (οὐδός 749, 811). We also hear of the homes or houses of Night and Day, Sleep and Death, Hades, Styx, and the Hundredhanders (οἰκία 744, 758; δόμος 751, 753, 767; δώματα 777, 816). Night appears in a number of guises (726, 744, 748, 757, 758, 788). There is no clear way to tell which of these items are to be identified with one or more of the others. While, as we have seen, the beginning and end of the passage form a rough ring, this structure does not provide the sort of line to line correspondence that would help us map Tartarus. If we insist on looking for some sort of topographical sense in the description of Tartarus, then, we must conclude either that Hesiod has done a very poor job of it or that his text is irremediably corrupt.

Fränkel (1975: 105) pointed the way to a more palatable solution when he made use of Hesiod's descriptions of Death, Hades, and Cerberus to make a more general observation about Hesiodic method:

Here too the same things appear in several distinct pictures: death as Death, as the realm of Hades, and as a dog. The archaic mode of thought does not deal with an object once

---

(1934: 28) noticed the pattern, but oddly took it as evidence against the former passage; West (1966: 357) more reasonably argues that the parallels are unconscious and thus evidence for the authenticity of Tartarean Styx.

[5] For Styx and her children as the best illustration of Zeus' justice in the *Theogony*, see Blickman 1987; for the power of Styx as a reflection of primordial waters see Rudhardt 1971: 93–97. Zeus' violent battle with Typhoeus will follow the description of Tartarus, of course, but the sort of foreshadowing in which Zeus' final order is previewed is common in the poem. On the phenomenon of "teleology without purpose" as a principle of Hesiod's cosmology, see Clay 1992: 138–139.

[6] So, for example, West 1966: 358. Pellikan-Engel (1974) and Northrup (1979) do attempt to plot the structures in Tartarus relative to one another: we will see some of the problems they ran into below.

and for all, thereafter simply discarding it; rather, its habit is to circle around its object, in order to inspect it ever afresh from changing viewpoints. This applies to Hesiod's *Theogony* in details and as a whole.

Whether or not we follow Fränkel in generalizing about "the archaic mode of thought," we do find Hesiod himself telling us that he is giving distinct accounts at *Works and Days* 106–108:

> εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω,
> εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι,
> ὡς ὁμόθεν γεγάασι θεοὶ θνητοί τ' ἄνθρωποι.

The myths of the five races and of Prometheus are both intended to explain why mortals, who once had it easy like the gods, now have it so hard; but the two accounts cannot be reconciled in detail, nor does Hesiod choose between them.[7] Something similar can be said of Hesiod's account of the rise of Zeus, in which Zeus seems to triumph because of the weapons given him by the Cyclopes (which have become his own strength by 687), because of the children of Styx, and because of the actions of the Hundredhanders.[8] This approach immediately begins to make sense of the morass of similar sounding detail in the description of Tartarus, encouraging one to treat as many of the different descriptions as possible as multiple representations of the same underlying reality. In this reading the description can make coherent sense not as a map to the various structures within the underworld but as a series of complementary images for what lies beneath the earth. The description of Tartarus offers a striking case—probably the most extreme case—of Hesiod's propensity to give a number of distinct descriptions of a single thing, and it is this which has made it seem so difficult.[9]

Multiple representations then, but multiple representations of what? Fränkel made the ultimate object out to be metaphysical truths: the talk of thresholds and roots, as the imagery of the *Theogony* in general, is "cover for something the poet could not formulate directly" (1975: 98). Hence, for example, the placement of

[7] So Fontenrose 1974: 1–2; Rowe 1983: 132–133.

[8] So Fränkel 1975: 98–101; Rowe 1983: 131–132. Mondi (1984) attributes the different accounts to different sources, casting Hesiod as an editor, but this leaves us with the same questions about Hesiod the editor as we had about Hesiod the author.

[9] Rowe (1983) provides an excellent introduction to the multiple approach reading of Hesiod; in addition to Fränkel, Rowe's sources include Lloyd's treatment (1966: 202) of sleep in Homer and Wilson's characterization (1967: 53–54) of the multiple views of the sky taken by the Egyptians. This last may be the closest parallel to the Hesiodic underworld. For the Egyptians, the sky may rest on walls or posts or be held up by a god; it may appear as a cow or as a goddess who supports herself and is supported by a god at once. Most who have discussed Hesiod's description of Tartarus recognize some variant descriptions: Rowe (1983: 131, n. 60) suggested that the passage could be read as an impressionistic series of variants; the fullest description of the passage along these lines is that of Thornton and Thornton (1962: 16–21), who made it a prime example of "appositional expression" in Greek. Some, as we will see below, have suggested that one or another of the houses may be representations of the whole underworld. But most such remarks have been left as *obiter dicta*, and no one has been so rash, as far as I know, to match my claim that *all* of the structures in Tartarus are descriptions of the *whole* of the underworld.

the founts and limits of all things near the chasm (i.e., Chaos) of 740 is really an ontological claim:

> Formulated in our language, this means that everything in being exists by the fact that it is opposed (spatially, temporally, and logically) by an empty non-being; what it is, is determined by its boundary with what it is not, to wit, the void (Fränkel 1975: 105–106).

The danger with this sort of developmental approach is that much will be lost in the translation into "our language." Hesiod's imagery is not only an awkward attempt to express the abstract truths of later science: it must be treated, as far as can be, in its own terms. Rowe is closer to the right track when he argues that Hesiod is not best characterized as proto- or pre- anything but as non-scientific or non-rational, where "rational" and "scientific" refer, among other things, to the inclination to make critical choices between alternative representations. Whether or not Hesiod's thought is primitive in some meaningful sense is a question we must leave unresolved until we determine how his thought works. The important point is to avoid begging the question either by assuming a developmental hypothesis which makes Hesiod out to be primitive or by assuming that he intends us to make connections he leaves unspoken, whether they be narrative connections to make the rise of Zeus into a single coherent plot, or spatial connections to allow us to map Tartarus.

Hesiod's representation of Tartarus are multiple because the underworld has multiple tasks to perform. For the most part the images of underworld are complementary, and describe the whole of the underworld as an immense, dark, enclosed place; in this most general way the description makes topographical sense, and Hesiod is describing one imagined entity, the whole underworld. This fundamental unity is stressed by the roughly parallel descriptions which begin and end the passage (721–744; cf. 807–819). But we can also distinguish three basic types of images with three different functions. For the Titans Tartarus is essentially a walled enclosure from which there is no escape. For Night, Day, Sleep, and Death it is a house that can be entered and exited. It can also be viewed as a great gorge, as it is when Hesiod describes the founts and limits of all things, the chasm, and the cave-like dwelling of Styx. These three types of image can overlap: the great depth of the gorge can also serve to distance the Titans from earth; the house of Hades, who can presumably leave if he wishes, is a prison for the dead, and the massive cave of Styx is also a house. The walls, gates, and doors of the houses and prison do not describe different structures but all provide or block access to the underworld as a whole. But the three sorts of images serve three basically distinct goals. With the chasm Hesiod illustrates his cosmology by providing an image of the beginning of the physical world. With the prisons he provides a final resting place for defeated gods and dead men. In the houses he provides an image for the cyclical phenomena of night, day, sleep, and death. Among other things, then, Tartarus mediates between linear and cyclical phenomena, imaging both the beginning of things and their present state,

both the finality of the exile of the Titans and of the dead and the cyclical motion of day and night and of mortal and Stygian sleep. Tartarus is the place for the past and for the repeating present. In this sense it is as much about time as it is about space.

But let us return from such generalities to see what light the multiple approach thesis can shed on the troublesome details of the passage. The Titanomachy ends and the descriptions of Tartarus begin with Hesiod telling how far the Titans fell to reach Tartarus: ten anvil days down, just as far as it is from sky to earth. It has long been suspected that something beyond a simple anvil lurks behind the falling bronze ἄκμων (722) Hesiod uses to measure this fall. Indo-European cognates mean "stone" but also "sky," "meteorite," and "thunderbolt"; the idea that the sky was made of stone or metal perhaps originates from observation of meteorites, which were also thought to be the burnt-out residue of thunderbolts.[10] Akmon also appears as "a shadowy cosmic power" in fragments ranging from the *Titanomachy* to Callimachus.[11] It is likely that these connections are in some sense responsible for why it is an anvil that falls here, and why Hera's feet were weighed down with anvils in *Iliad* 15.19. But, as Whitman (1970: 41) admits, "Homer and Hesiod knew nothing of the god Akmon." Whatever its mythological background, the anvil is appropriate both here and in the *Iliad* passage as "the first example that comes to mind of a movable object of great weight" (West 1966: 360). Aristotle (*de Caelo* 1.6 273b30–274a3) and no doubt most people before and after Galileo have assumed that heavier objects fall faster. The falling anvil has reappeared in Warner Brothers cartoons for similar reasons: sometimes an anvil is just an anvil—whatever its original mythical significance. Hesiod's major point here is the great distance between Tartarus and the earth, a distance he can best express by comparing it to the distance between earth and sky and the great distance he imagines an anvil would fall in ten days: this distance helps to ensure that the Titans will not return.[12]

[10] My treatment of this theme is based on Janko's discussion (1992: 229–231) of the anvils tied to Hera's feet at *Iliad* 15.18–31; see also Whitman 1970. For a rather different account of Ouranos, see Worthen 1988.

[11] Janko 1992: 230, citing *Titanomachy* fr. 2B, Callimachus fr. 498, Alcman fr. 6, and Antimachus fr. 44.

[12] The symmetry in the distance between earth and sky and earth and Tartarus is, at the outset, a subordinate point, though Hesiod does dwell on the symmetry longer than is required to make his point about the great distance (especially if all the transmitted lines are retained, and I see no compelling reason to remove any of them). Similarly in 126–128 sky is equal to earth not merely for the sake of symmetry but in order that sky cover all of earth and thus be an unshaking seat for the gods. Homer's Zeus, at any rate, seems to distort the symmetry by threatening to toss any disobedient gods as far beneath Hades as earth is from sky (*Il.* 8.13–16)—though perhaps Zeus is exaggerating for effect, or Homer places Hades close to the surface of earth (for more on the two passages see Stokes 1962: 5–6; Karl 1967: 75–77). For the classic account which makes rather more of early symmetry, see Vlastos 1947: esp. 169.

We have, then, the Titans in Tartarus far beneath the earth, or rather the surface of the earth, for Tartarus is sometimes considered part of the earth, as at 731 where Titans are placed at earth's lowest extremity. The distance separating the Titans from the upperworld helps to ensure Zeus' reign; so does the fence (ἕρκος) which goes around the whole of Tartarus in 726. Thus far all of Tartarus is the prison of the Titans. And for Hesiod, at any rate, there is no reason to think that Tartarus is only a part of the underworld; together with earth, sky, and sea it makes up the whole of the Hesiodic universe.

Most have taken the δειρή of 727 to be the neck or throat of Tartarus, to which one may compare the *fauces Orci* of Vergil (*Aen.* 6.273).[13] Hesiod would then be describing the entrance to Tartarus as a place distinct from the rest of it, and this distinction could conceivably help us to map relative locations within the underworld. The image of the underworld or its entrance as a gaping maw does come readily enough to mind: consider the gaping chasm at 740 and the eating done by Cerberus in 773. West (1966: 360) alternatively compares the entrance to a jar, and one could cite *pithos* burials in support of this notion. But supporters of the neck/throat view cite no Greek parallels, and in the Latin case the image is made easier inasmuch as *fauces* is the technical term for a narrow passage in a Roman house (Vitr. 6.4.6). This reading would also have us jump from the bottom of Tartarus in 725 to the top here, without a warning such as that given by ὕπερθε in the next clause. So it seems safer to take the word in its secondary, topographical sense of "col" or "glen," as does Ballabriga (1986: 258, note 3).[14] In this case the gorge would be an image for the whole of Tartarus, as we would have expected following on the second half of 726, where Tartarus is still the antecedent of μιν. The image of the gorge suggests further that the δειρή is equivalent to the χάσμα of 740. Night is spread through this gorge, i.e., through all of the underworld.[15]

With the roots of earth and sea (727–728) we clearly do have local differentiation of sorts, as they are said to be above Tartarus, or at least above the δειρή. But whether one makes the δειρή the whole of Tartarus or the entrance to Tartarus,

[13] This interpretation goes back to the scholia, and supporters cite the possible etymological connection with βιβρώσκω and βέρεθρον, which, however, "can no longer have been felt in Hesiod's time" (West 1966: 360). See also Stokes 1962: 9, and, for the Roman concept, Fauth 1974.

[14] Pindar twice uses the plural of δειρή in a topographical sense (*Ol.* 3.27, 5.29). While translators of Pindar (at least in English) tend to render it with something like "ridges," this is unlikely, given the clearer link between the root meaning of "neck" and "pass," as in the Latinate "col" (so the LSJ supplement). While Pindar both times refers to mountainous terrain which no doubt contains both ridges and valleys, the latter meaning (and this sense with the singular) seems to be confirmed by a passage in Nicander (*Th.* 502), where a plant which grows on a δειρή is also said to frequent a νάπος; in a final probable topographical use in Hermesianax (7.54; the text is uncertain), the δειρή seems to be something that Teos slopes down to (δειρῇ κεκλιμένην; see LSJ κλίνω II.5). δειρή is thus to be distinguished from δειράς, which does mean ridge, but has an etymology distinct from that of δειρή.

[15] Ballabriga (1986: 258, n. 3) notes that both ἀμφί in 726 and περί in 727 can refer simply to the region in which night is spread: night need not circumscribe anything.

the roots are, or at least "have grown" (πεφύασι), from above Tartarus, and thus do not help us map its interior. They are almost certainly related to the founts and limits of earth, sea, Tartarus, and sky in 736–739, but it is less clear just what that relationship is.[16] The two sets are located roughly in the same location, at least vertically speaking, since the founts and limits, I will argue, should be placed at the horizon and the roots are—or at least start—above the bottom of Tartarus. Roots no doubt are imagined first in connection with earth, and then are connected with the sea in a zeugma, just as in 738 the founts (πηγαί) are applied to earth, Tartarus, and sky in addition to the sea. The founts and limits have been seen as having cosmogonical importance, and with this I will agree below. But the case with the roots is not as clear. "Root" is a frequent cosmogonical metaphor, most famously in the case of Empedocles' four ῥιζώματα (DK B6).[17] But the roots of the earth at *Works and Days* 19 have nothing obviously cosmogonical about them. The roots as guarantors of the stability of the great constituents of the world help to show the security of the Titans' prison, which is Hesiod's main concern in the immediate context, and any cosmogonical function of the image is in the background.[18] This is clearer still for the roots of 812, which fall in a similar place in the structure of the passage.

I see no good reason to distinguish Poseidon's doors (θύρας, 732) and the associated wall (τεῖχος, 733), which prevent the escape of the Titans, from the fence (ἕρκος) of 726. The word ἕρκος should if anything refer to a lesser barrier than does τεῖχος, but the ἕρκος goes around the whole of Tartarus, and the τεῖχος could hardly surround anything greater. And while this is less explicit in 726 than in 733, it seems likely enough that both walls are designed to keep the Titans in; we ought, therefore, to identify them.[19] Nor, I think, ought we to distinguish the θύραι of 732 from the πύλαι of 741.[20] Here the semantics of the words would work for those who wish to locate the doors of the prison of the Titans within the gates of the whole underworld, but one group of manuscripts has πύλας in 732, making this argument unreliable. We have no other indication that the structure of 732 is of a smaller scale than that of 741, and thus no good ground to choose between the variants.

The Titans have fallen ten anvil-days down, presumably to the very bottom of Tartarus, which has led some to limit their prison to the lower region of Tartarus.

[16] Solmsen 1950: 242; West (1966: 363–364), Pellikan-Engel (1974: 24), Fränkel (1975: 105), Northrup (1979: 25–26), and Kirk (1956–57: 11 and at Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983: 40) all agree that the two sets are related; Stokes (1962: 10, 27) dissents. I will link these roots to those attached to the threshold of 811–813 below.

[17] For the metaphor see Heidel 1912: 222–223; West (1966: 361, tentatively) and Miller (1977: 447) see cosmogony here.

[18] So Stokes 1962: 15.

[19] As do Stokes (1962: 15), West (1966: 362), and Karl (1967: 81). Northrup (1979: 24 with n. 13) and Ballabriga (1986: 259) would distinguish the fence from the wall.

[20] As do West (1966: 363) and Ballabriga (1986: 259); here I agree with Northrup (1979: 27, n. 24).

But if the walls surround all of Tartarus we would expect them to be placed at the entrance to the underworld, i.e., at its upper border with the upperworld at the horizon. And this is where we seem to be when we reach the Hundredhanders at 734, at least if we are to place them where they appear to be placed in 816, on the foundations of Ocean. Certainly we are at the entrance to the underworld by the description of the gates of 741. The underworld *is*, among other things, the walled enclosure holding the Titans; it is also, if the interpretation of δειρή given above is correct, a gorge. One cannot place the gorge or the prison somewhere within it.

With the founts and limits and chasm of 736–740 we enter into the most contentious part of the description of the underworld. It is best to begin by considering what Hesiod meant by πείρατα before turning to what cosmogonical ideas may be lurking behind the πηγαί. Luckily most of what should be said about the topography here has been said by Stokes (1962: 16, 25–32). As Solmsen argued (1950: 243), the limits of earth, Tartarus, sea, and sky can only be at one place, the horizon, where sky meets the earth and sea. The entrance to the underworld is often placed in the west, where the setting sun leaves the sky, and so there is good reason to assume that the underworld meets earth at the horizon much as the sky does.[21] Kirk (1956–57: 11) claimed that it was senseless to place the limits of sky in Tartarus. But this is to overinterpret ἔνθα, which merely places us vaguely in the other world; we are not in Tartarus but at the entrance to Tartarus at the horizon, in a strange place of limbo not quite to be identified with any of the great constituent masses of the world.

The chasm of 740 appears to be equivalent to the founts and limits.[22] The syntax is abrupt, but as Stokes (1962: 11) notes, "the apposition of χάσμα to the πηγαὶ καὶ πείρατα need cause no difficulty, since any πηγή known to Hesiod in Greece was likely to take the form of a gaping hole or crack, and the sequence of thought is clear enough." Once we get over the syntax, however, we run into another difficulty: here a man falling cannot reach the bottom in a year, whereas in 725 the bottom could be reached in ten days.[23] This has caused some to reject

[21] Stokes (1962: 26–27) raises and offers solutions to a problem about the placement of the founts and limits of both earth and sea at the horizon, where sky only meets one or the other of these, or rather Ocean; it seems to me that it is not asking too much to make "earth and sea" a sort of hendiadys for the level of the universe we live on.

[22] Karl (1967: 83) and Northrup (1979: 27) argue that it is best to avoid this by making ἔνθα in 736 subordinating: there, in the area of the founts and limits, is a great chasm. But this is to treat the ἔνθα of 736 differently than in its many other uses in the passage.

[23] Nor is this the only problem. Ballabriga (1986: 259–261), following Mondolfo, makes πάντα the subject of ἵκοιτο in place of the indefinite τις supplied by the scholia and most editors since. Ballabriga makes two arguments for this. First, πάντα is redundant if taken to modify τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτόν; this is logical enough, but irrelevant to Hesiod, who elsewhere makes use of similarly fulsome expressions of time (compare the far more egregious 58–59). Second, the supplied third person singular subject is far less common than standard grammars would lead one to believe. Here Ballabriga makes a worthy point; once one throws out the relatively common cases where a participle

these lines as inconsistent with 725 and others to credit Hesiod with an infinitely deep chasm—or at least one as indefinitely deep as Hesiod could imagine.[24] But neither of these moves is necessary. In 725 it was an anvil that was dropped, largely because an anvil, being heavy and compact, would fall fast and straight, thus providing a vivid imagine of the great depth of Tartarus. Here a man falls and does not reach the bottom even after falling for a year, but is blown about by the winds: Hesiod stresses the power of the winds in the chasm rather than its great depth.[25] There is no need, then, to separate this chasm from Tartarus proper: the underworld, among other things, *is* a great windy chasm. Just how a chasm can be the fount and limit of earth, sea, sky, and Tartarus we will consider later when we take a brief look at Hesiod's cosmology.

In 744 the house of Night is introduced rather abruptly, so much so that some would cut 744–745 even if they retain the surrounding lines.[26] A common argument against the lines is that they anticipate the next paragraph, but this is to assume too much about the autonomy of Hesiodic "paragraphs." Another difficulty seems to lie in the lack of any word clarifying just where this house lies.[27] But Hesiod is not thinking about topography but in images, and he thus introduces the house as wrapped in dark clouds, an image which follows readily

---

or infinitive helps supply a subject, none of the few remaining examples cited by Wackernagel (1926: 111–113), Chantraine (1953: 8), or Kühner and Gerth (1955: 1.35–36) provides a sure example of a supplied indefinite subject (save for the specialized legal language of the Gortyn law code). Cases like Hes. *WD* 291, Hom. *Il.* 13.287, and *Od.* 20.88 are often interpreted as having an indefinite subject, but in each case a subject can be provided from the context. But the Mondolfo/Ballabriga reading creates problems of its own. Presumably both want to interpret the passage as "nor could *anything* reach the bottom," but this I cannot get out of the Greek. While πάντα can be used absolutely in epic (so *WD* 563, *Il.* 14.246), if negated it should mean "not everything," i.e., "only some things"; οὐ πᾶς for "nothing" is a late idiom, at least judging by LSJ, who first find this usage in the Septuagint (πᾶς D. VI). The only alternative would be to negate the verb rather than πάντα: "nor would everything reach the bottom." But to imagine all things falling through the chasm at once is absurd even by Tartarean standards.

[24]The rejecters include West (1966: 364). He goes on to note "curious echoes" of this passage in *Od.* 3.319–321; to my ear they are not all that striking, but if West is hearing something real then the echo is curious indeed if 740 is interpolated: even if one follows West in placing Hesiod prior to Homer, 740 would have to be an early interpolation indeed. For the view that the chasm is (nearly) infinite, see Solmsen 1950: 245–246 and Ballabriga 1986: 259–261.

[25]So Northrup 1979: 29, n. 28. An anonymous reader for *Phoenix* notes the importance of ἀλλά in 742: the contrast is not between reaching the bottom and not reaching the bottom but between falling straight down and being blown about. It takes Hephaestus but a day to fall from Olympus to Lemnos (*Il.* 592–594) since it is less windy up there. Is it possible that the falling anvil has something to do with the fall of the god who would have used one?

[26]West (1966: 365) suspects 744–745 are "an interpolation within an interpolation"; Stokes (1962: 11–12) rejects 743–745 alone.

[27]Not that there are not other problems: West (1966: 365) finds a number of them. "It is quite unlike epic style, in making a second proposition about anything, to refer to it again by such a phrase as τοῦτο τέρας. The word τέρας itself is oddly used." But the use of τέρας is not particularly strained in light of its use for the fixed stars at *Il.* 18.484; here the sign sent by the chasm is one of fearful awe, the same sort of message sent by the monsters so often referred to with τέρας. That δεινὸν δὲ καὶ

enough on that of the fierce winds of 742–743.[28] Attempts to locate the house within the underworld fail: Northrup suggests that the mention of the οὖδος in 741 has brought us down to the bottom of the chasm, but the unfortunate falling fellow has, for all we know, still not reached the bottom of Tartarus, so this is unpersuasive.[29] Stokes (1962: 11, note 7) suggests that the only alternative to removing 744–745 is to "take the Νυκτὸς οἰκία as equivalent to Tartarus as a whole." This remedy, which seemed desperate to him, will both make the best sense of the location of Atlas in 746 and of the threshold of this house in 748–749.

The appearance of Atlas in what is called a description of Tartarus has long caused problems, as Hesiod earlier (517–519) located Atlas with the Hesperides in the far west. As this apparent discrepancy has been an important ground for attacking all or part of the description of Tartarus as an interpolation, it will be worthwhile to spend some time locating Atlas. Most have either assumed that Hesiod could not have confused east and west and argued that the passage is corrupt, or have chosen to defend the text and argue that Hesiod was confused or indifferent, or changed his mind and gave different descriptions of Atlas at different times.[30] Neither of these approaches is satisfactory, as the first one solves the problem by editing away its existence and the latter leaves it unresolved.

More ambitious approaches deny the text is confused or corrupt. Karl (1967: 77–86) places the Atlas of 746 in the far west, and believes that Hesiod, like Homer, does not confuse the west with the underworld but places Tartarus below the earth and in the west at once, at the bottom of the chasm located in the far west. Karl (1967: 80) argues that Hesiod's description of Kronos' banishment of the Hundredhanders makes this clear:

> κατένασσε δ' ὑπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης.
> ἔνθα οἵ γ' ἄλγε' ἔχοντες ὑπὸ χθονὶ ναιετάοντες
> εἵατ' ἐπ' ἐσχατιῇ μεγάλης ἐν πείρασι γαίης (620–622)

The Hundredhanders are definitely settled beneath the earth, but the meanings of ἐπ' ἐσχατιῇ and ἐν πείρασι γαίης are less clear. Similar phrases are found in other passages which do unambiguously refer to the western horizon. ἐσχατιῇ πρὸς νυκτός (275) locates the Gorgons near the Hesperides; the πείρατα at line 518 are again in the west with the Hesperides; and most place the πείρατα of 736–739 and 807–810 at the horizon. But there is no reason why these words must refer only to the western limits and extremity of the earth, as the earth has lower

---

ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι "sounds as if it intended as the end of a paragraph" is true enough, but the sort of progressive enjambment which results when one does not place a full stop at 743 is common as well.

[28] The clouds/winds connection I owe to an anonymous reader for *Phoenix*.

[29] Northrup 1979: 30; Pellikan-Engel's (1974: 26) view is similar, though she only places the house deep within the chasm, not necessarily at its bottom.

[30] Stokes (1962: 18–21) gives a list of scholars who found interpolations in the description of Tartarus, but argues by means of parallels from other cultures that he was more likely confused; West (1966: 339, 366) plumps for indifference; Northrup (1979: 30, n. 31) believes Hesiod changed his mind.

as well as western limits (as in Hom. *Il.* 8.478).[31] Without any explicit statement that the underworld is both in the west and down far beneath the surface of the earth Karl's position is rather weak, as the most natural interpretation of passages like 717–725 is that Tartarus is straight down just as the sky is straight up.[32] The symmetry between sky and underworld leads us to the idea that the underworld stretches far beneath the surface of the earth but also touches it at the horizon.

Ballabriga, like Karl, wants the underworld to be both in the west and below the earth; unlike Karl, he places our Atlas beneath the earth (Ballabriga 1986: 77). While Karl attempts to reduce Hesiodic space to Cartesian coordinates, Ballabriga wishes to model it on a sort of relativistic celestial sphere. Not only do west and underworld coincide, especially around Atlas: so too do east and west, periphery and center. The only way to make this work, in Ballabriga's view, is to posit a cosmic nadir located, inasmuch as one can locate it anywhere, deep in Tartarus.[33] What for most other interpreters are embarrassing cases of archaic confusion are for Ballabriga prize examples of the complex and ambiguous mythical conception of space. This is not the place to evaluate the whole of Ballabriga's complex argument about the coincidence of opposites in the archaic world view, but we should consider his argument in the case of Atlas.

Much of Ballabriga's (1986: 81–89) argument for the ambiguity about the placement of Atlas rests on the *Theogony*. The first two passages he cites, 215–216 and 274–275, show only that the Garden of the Hesperides, near which Atlas stands, is near the realm of Night; this is entirely compatible with a location in the far west. Lines 334–335 seem to offer better support for his case, for there Keto gives birth to the serpent ὃς ἐρεμνῆς κεύθεσι γαίης / πείρασιν ἐν μεγάλοις παγχρύσεα μῆλα φυλάσσει. Ballabriga (1986: 82–83) takes ἐρεμνῆς κεύθεσι γαίης to be a reference to the underworld, and makes these lines an example of the coincidence of vertical and horizontal extremes of the universe.[34] But this, as West (1966: 250) notes, is to make too much of the phrase κεύθεα γαίης, which

[31] So West 1966: 258–259, 339. On πείρατα see also Onians 1951: 310–342. In 731 πελώρης ἔσχατα γαίης could conceivably refer to the horizon but would more naturally be placed deep in Tartarus as well.

[32] So Stokes 1962: 15; Pellikan-Engel 1974: 22. Karl (1967: 78) argues that Hesiod is there stressing the vertical distance between Ouranos and Tartarus to better demonstrate Zeus' victory; true enough, but why not say the Titans are displaced to the horizontal margin as well—if they really are so displaced—to make the same point?

[33] Nadir and cosmic sphere analogy: Ballabriga 1986: 290–291; relativity: Ballabriga 1986: 138. Pellikan-Engel (1974: 15–17) argues explicitly for a spherical sky based on the mistaken notion that ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι in 127 must have Ouranos covering the bottom of Gaia as well as the top. It is not even clear whether the Homeric and Hesiodic sky was *hemi*-spherical: West (1966: 198) disputes the common view that it was.

[34] The phrase πείρασιν ἐν μεγάλοις itself has also drawn comment, but, as West (1966: 258) suggests, the epithet has simply been transferred in an adaptation of μεγάλης ἐν πείρασι γαίης (622). There is thus no need to follow Dührsen (1994–95: 89) and Onians (1951: 316—apparently) in having πείρατα refer to the coils of the snake, as the phrase πείρατα γαίης is relatively common, and they cite no parallels for the use of πείρατα for a snake.

is used of more or less normal caves within the earth in 300 and 483. We are dealing with a cave in the west, not with the underworld, and this reference is consistent enough with the placement of the Hesperides in the far west.

There is, in fact, little evidence in literature or art that places Atlas in the underworld. Ballabriga (1986: 83–84) cites Euripides *Heracles* 393–407, where the chorus, in the context of telling of Heracles' plucking of the apples and supporting the starry homes of the gods, has him make the nooks of the sea (ἁλὸς μυχούς) safe for navigation.[35] Atlas is elsewhere associated with the depths of the sea, as at *Odyssey* 1.52–54, where he is said to know them (just as Proteus does at 4.385–386).[36] But the depths of the sea are not in the underworld; this is to confuse the realm of Hades with that of Poseidon. Most of the twenty-nine appearances of Atlas in Greek and Etruscan art catalogued in *LIMC* show him in the context of Heracles' labor in the Garden of the Hesperides, which is itself normally placed in the far west. Most of the time the artists did not explicitly identify what Atlas was supporting, but six representations of Atlas show him holding something identified as the sky by stars or some other clear means (*LIMC* 1, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 17). Four examples, however, have been taken to have him support the earth or earth and sky, which would place him in the underworld. A Greek mirror cover from the fourth century depicts Atlas handing off something in the shape of a beam to Heracles; while the ground they are standing on has been taken to be infernal, and the beam to represent the earth, I see no justification for either interpretation.[37] An Etruscan mirror from the middle of the fifth century has Atlas holding a rounded mass with what appears to be vegetation on it; unless these are very poorly drawn stars, this should be the earth, and this Atlas would have to stand in the underworld if he is actually imagined standing anywhere.[38] The other two depictions are known only from Pausanias, and in one of these cases Pausanias was probably wrong to say that Atlas held both sky and earth;

[35] The *Heracles* passage is rather odd, as it makes no connection between Heracles' theft of the apples, which he does with his own hand, and his supporting the sky in place of Atlas. Mention of his pacification of the sea comes in between these two vignettes, but probably describes something Heracles did on his way west through the Mediterranean; it would hardly make sense to clear the waters near the Hesperides for navigation. Bond (1988: 165) reaches this conclusion from analysis of the tenses in the passage. So there is, despite Ballabriga, no conflation between vertical extremes (sea depths) and horizontal ones (the land of the Hesperides).

[36] Just what Atlas is doing in the *Odyssey* passage is uncertain, but given his duties elsewhere it is likely that he is holding columns which keep sky and earth apart (ἀμφίς), not columns which support both earth and sky all around.

[37] *LIMC* Atlas 11 = New York, MMA 06.1228. De Griño and Olmos (1986: 6) claim "the irregularity of the ground line suggests a rocky chasm, perhaps in the infernal regions"; but the ground bends up regularly enough at the right of the field to give Heracles' club and bow something to lean against. Atlas is elsewhere shown supporting a beam that represents the heavens rather than the earth (as in *LIMC* Atlas 7, Athens Nat. Mus. 1132—complete with stars and moon), so the notion that this beam represents the earth-disc seems groundless.

[38] *LIMC* Atlas 15 = Vatican 12.242. Beazley saw plants and, therefore, the earth; others have managed to make the squiggly triangles out to be stars.

the most that can safely be concluded from the two is that by Pausanias' time it was possible to imagine that the sphere Atlas held represented the earth and sky rather than the sky alone.[39] One Etruscan mirror and a pair of probable Pausanian mistakes do not amount to much of a haul, and Hesiod's Atlas is, therefore, better left in the west.

We have found, then, neither good parallels for, nor good explanations of, the confusion between the west and the underworld most have seen in the description of Tartarus. But if we make the house of Night an image for the whole of the underworld, and recall that Atlas stands *in front* of the house of Night, then Atlas is not in the underworld at all. Tartarus can be both down and in the west because it is as large as its upperworld counterpart, Ouranos: it thus stretches deep below the surface of the earth and to the horizon. And as the west is where gods and men enter the underworld, it is natural to focus on the west as the most relevant part of it. Now the position of Atlas is still a bit strange. One would normally expect that someone standing in front of a house would be able to enter it horizontally, which would place the house of Night off to the west, beyond even Atlas and the sky he supports. But this would put Night too far west. When one enters the house of Night one goes down, not simply in: this is what happens when one enters the gates of 741, after all, and what Day and Night do when they enter their house by going down—at least if καταβήσεται (750) retains its sense of downward motion.

We are told that Atlas stands where Night and Day greet one another as they cross a great bronze threshold. The location of this threshold presents us with still another mystery.[40] Paley (1883: 251) suggested that here Night and Day meet in the west, going opposite directions, with Day setting in the west and Night rising there. This makes excellent topographical sense but no sense at all in terms of the daily appearance of things, according to which, of course, both night and day move from east to west. Another alternative, clearly argued for by Stokes, is to place the house of Night beneath the center of the earth.

[39] Pausanias (5.18.4), describing the chest of Cypselus (ca 550 B.C.) at Olympia, says that Atlas "as the story goes" (κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα) supports heaven and earth. But "as the story goes" could imply that Pausanias is judging more by tradition than by what he was seeing, and the inscription Pausanias quotes mentions only the sky: Ἄτλας οὐρανὸν οὗτος ἔχει, τὰ δὲ μᾶλα μεθήσει (cf. *Th.* 517). At 5.11.5–6 Pausanias describes Atlas holding earth and sky in a painting at Olympia; here Pausanias does not add the qualification "as the story goes," nor do we have an inscription to check him against, but it is plausible that the description again tells us more about Pausanias than about the image he was looking at.

[40] This passage is often compared to Homer's description of the land of the Laistrygonians, but as that passage is hardly clear in itself I will gladly limit myself to citing Ballabriga (1986: 124–126), who places them in the far north, following Crates; and Karl (1967: 104–106), who places them in the far east. Worthen (1988: 8–9, 14) compares still another passage, that describing the cloudy doors of Olympus (*Il.* 5.747–751 = 8.393–395), which he claims serve to let Night and Day enter and exit; but νέφος in these passages is simply cloud, not "thick gloom," which would be ζόφος and would imply night.

Employing "what may loosely be called common sense," Stokes (1962: 17) argues first that only one door is meant, since Day and Night address each other, and Greek houses normally have only one door. Day rises in the east and night sets in the west. As the house must be equidistant from east and west, Stokes concludes it can only be beneath the center of the earth. But while mortals may have difficulty greeting each other across distances, this may not be a problem for goddesses, especially if they are as large as day and night, and so there is no need to reduce the house to human dimensions or to locate it in any particular part of the underworld. Stokes' explanation also would correspond to no visible phenomenon, while the rest of Hesiod's description of the house of Night does: Day and Night share the house alternatively since it is alternatively day and night on earth.

The best remaining option is to treat the whole surface of the earth as the threshold of the house, and have Day and Night greet one another at sunrise and sunset, or rather before sunrise and after sunset, when it is neither entirely night nor entirely day.[41] This interpretation is supported by the textual variant ἀμφὶς ἐοῦσαι (748), which is found in two of West's manuscript groups and is implied by the scholia. West prints ἆσσον ἰοῦσαι, the *lectio facilior*: persons greeting one another generally approach one another. But the variant ἀμφὶς ἐοῦσαι seems to have been read by Parmenides (judging from DK B1.11–14), and it is more likely that someone not imagining things on a cosmic scale would have altered the strange ἀμφὶς ἐοῦσαι than have tampered with the run of the mill ἆσσον ἰοῦσαι. I would like to believe that Hesiod recognized the difficulty of the image and wrote ἀμφὶς ἐοῦσαι to note that Night and Day were on both sides of their great threshold when greeting each other.[42]

We come next to the house of Sleep and Death (758–766). This too seems strange, as Sleep was a babe in the arms of Night in 756 (as, apparently, was his brother Death, who is mentioned in the same line). One could attempt to reconcile the two pictures by arguing that Sleep and Death are early-bloomers, like so many gods; but Night's action in 756 appears to be part of the permanent nature of things, not just some early stage in the lives of Sleep and Death.[43] It is

[41] West (1966: 366–367) notes this alternative but rejects it, tentatively, on the ground that ὅθι should refer to a more limited area. Pellikan-Engel (1974: 32–33) identifies the threshold with the horizon, but goes on to introduce an unhelpful distinction between the concrete house of night, which she places far below the earth, and the domain of the house of Night, which extends to the horizon. Fränkel (1975: 104) recognizes that the threshold would have to be in both west and east to make spatial sense, but abandons any physical sense to propose a metaphysical interpretation.

[42] West (1966: 366) suggests that one may also read ἀμφὶς ἐοῦσαι concessively as "being apart" or "having been apart" (imperfect); the latter would appear to be the interpretation of the scholiast: χωριζόμεναι ἀπ' ἀλλήλων προσαγορεύουσιν ἀπαντῶσαι ἀλλήλας. The future καταβήσεται in 750 is also a bit odd. Perhaps the future does for the goddess outside what the form θύραζε does for the one inside: one is about to go down in, while the other is presently moving toward the door.

[43] Stokes (1962: 12–13) compares the early-blooming Muses and Kronos earlier in the *Theogony*, but Night's repeated carrying of Sleep presents a more difficult problem. Vermeule (1979: 148)

thus more likely that we have here two separate and incompatible descriptions of Sleep and Death. It comes as no surprise, then, that Hesiod makes no attempt to locate the house of Sleep and Death relative to that of Night. Helios shines on Sleep and Death neither when rising toward heaven nor when descending from it. This would seem to be inconsistent with the idea that Night and Day greet one another, but what Hesiod means is that Helios never enters the underworld to find Sleep and Death at home and is never above the earth when they are out and about. Day is distinct from Helios, and she lingers in the upperworld after Helios has set and peeks up into the upperworld before he rises, thus allowing Day and Night to overlap while Helios and Night do not.[44] As Helios shines on no part of the underworld, we are free to make the house of Sleep and Death encompass all of the underworld, as had the house of Night.

The next house presents us with still more problems, as with πρόσθεν in line 767 we appear to have a rare bit of topographical information, but there is no agreement on how to render it:[45]

ἔνθα θεοῦ χθονίου πρόσθεν δόμοι ἠχήεντες
[ἰφθίμου τ' Ἀίδεω καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης]
ἑστᾶσιν . . . (767–769)

The most likely interpretation places the house of Hades in front of Death, who we have just seen making his trip above earth. He now delivers the dead to Hades' house, in front of which Cerberus is standing (προπάροιθε, 769).[46] Death

---

suggests that "the infant Sleep in this context is like the sun, new every day, but quickly growing adult with his own house independent of Night." But Hesiod gives no hint that he believes that Helios or any other divinity was reborn each day.

[44] Our passage has much in common with Homer's description of the Cimmerians (*Od.* 11.13–19), who are probably located in the far west (so Karl 1967: 95–106; for the opposing view see Ballabriga 1986: 132–137). But, once again, to use the Homeric puzzles to solve Hesiodic ones is to explain *obscurum per obscurius*. A better parallel is *Od.* 12.377–386, where Helios threatens to shine on the dead and is told by Zeus to continue shining on the world above: the threat makes sense only if Helios never shines below.

[45] In addition to the reading I will give in the text, there are at least four other interpretations, two which take πρόσθεν as an adverb, and two which take it as a preposition with θεοῦ χθονίου. In one adverbial interpretation the house of Hades is located in front of the house of Sleep and Death; but we have been discussing the journey of Sleep and Death above earth, not their house, and it would be curious to backtrack and note a house in front of one already described. Others take πρόσθεν to mean "beyond" (West 1966: 370, followed by Northrup 1979: 32); but this is an *ad hoc* interpretation for πρόσθεν here and in 813 (Ballabriga 1986: 266). Taking πρόσθεν as a preposition, one may make the chthonian god Hades (as was suggested to me by Edwin Brown); but this either leaves the house undefined (if one drops 768) or awkwardly makes Hades the object of the preposition in θεοῦ χθονίου πρόσθεν and then a possessive genitive in 768. Finally, one may make the chthonian god Kronos (Karl 1967: 87–89), but Kronos has been offstage too long for such a reference to be intelligible.

[46] I take this reading, gratefully, from an anonymous reader for *Phoenix*. On this reading one could either athetize 768, which appears in all but one of our manuscripts but is missing from the only papyrus to include this section of the *Theogony*, or take it to be a definition and expansion of the anonymous θεοῦ χθονίου.

and Hades' hound are described in similar terms; as Death holds on to whomever he takes hold of in the first place, so also Cerberus devours whomever he seizes (ὃν πρῶτα λάβῃσιν, 765; cf. ὅν κε λάβῃσι, 773). But while Death leaves his house each night to bring back the dead, Hades and Cerberus have the job of ensuring that none of the dead escape from the underworld. The phenomenon of death is cyclical when considered in itself, linear when looked at from an individual's point of view; Hesiod pictures both aspects of death by giving two largely separate descriptions of it. Death leaves his home, the underworld, and returns to the house of Hades, the underworld, with each night's catch. It is fitting that Hades, Zeus' brother, is assigned the task of making death irreversible, just as Zeus is to establish a lasting regime which will put an end to the successive overthrow of each divine generation by its own offspring.

We come at last to Styx. Hesiod's description of her may owe something, ultimately, to an actual waterfall, most likely the Styx at Nonacris in Arcadia, but "it is the mythical one that Hesiod is describing, and he probably knew no other" (West 1966: 372). The κλυτὰ δώματα of Styx (777), like those of Echidna (303), are pictured as a huge cave. The silver pillars are parts of Styx herself, as Hesiod's mention of the silver eddies of Ocean a few lines later (791) makes clear. It is by means of them that the home is raised up toward sky (πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται, 779); the vertical streaming columns raise its roof toward the sky at the horizon, where Ocean, the source of Styx, flows.[47] The emphatic ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντῃ (778) suggests that Styx approaches or touches the sky all around the horizon. Once Styx parts from Ocean, she flows far beneath the earth (787),[48] through the night (788) which is presumably that wrapped about the δειρή of 727. This much suggests that Styx flows through much of the underworld both horizontally and vertically. Mention of an apparently specific and singular rock in 786 and 792 gives the Styx a single source, where, presumably, Iris gets the water for divine oath. It is not clear how this source is connected to Ocean, or with the multiple columns flowing around the world; if we wish to impose a single image, we can say that Styx begins as a single stream at the horizon—perhaps in the west—and then flows off downwards in many streams. At the very end of his description of Styx, Hesiod says that the river sends her water through a rugged land (806); if my placement of Styx's source at the horizon is correct, this line would serve as a preparation for the repeated lines on the founts and sources, and the chaos which corresponds to the chasm of 740—a most rugged land indeed. Styx starts where everything else does, at the horizon.

[47] So West (1966: 372) reasons, "if Hesiod's ideas are at all definite." The precise meaning of ἐστήρικται here is not clear. West suggests it may simply mean "reach," but columns generally support something; as it is highly unlikely that we are to imagine the entire dwelling being supported by columns, I suggest that it is the roof of the dwelling of Styx that is so raised.

[48] Word order makes this the more likely meaning of πολλὸν ὑπὸ χθονός, though the caesura intervenes and "in great quantity" is also possible. West (1966: 373) cites *Od.* 6.40 πολλὸν γὰρ ἀπὸ πλυνοί εἰσι πόληος in support of the former interpretation.

After the repeated lines 807–810 we meet up once again with gates, a threshold, roots, and chaos. These gates are "shining" (μαρμάρεαι), which places them at the horizon, the only place in the underworld where this makes any sense.[49] This threshold is "self-born" (αὐτοφυής), which distinguishes it from the doors added by Poseidon (ἐπέθηκε, 732); the threshold existed before those doors were added to keep the Titans in. If the threshold of the underworld is the horizon, as argued above, it could hardly be other than natural.[50] I see no reason to deny that the roots of this threshold are the same as those of earth and sea at 728; in both cases the roots are described just before the Titans are, and ought to begin high in the underworld at the horizon. Here the Titans are in front of (πρόσθεν, 813) the gates and their roots, i.e., *outside* the gates. We might have expected to hear that they were *inside*, but here the gates serve to keep the Titans out of the upperworld and apart from the rest of the gods, so outside is reasonable enough. πέρην χάεος ζοφεροῖο is also troubling; assuming that this chaos is equivalent to the chasm of 740, one wonders how the Titans can be both across it and in front of the gates at the horizon.[51] But the gates have been described along with their roots, which extend far into the underworld, so one can reconcile things by placing the Titans in front of the whole complex. The situation here seems parallel to that near the beginning of the description of Tartarus (729), where the Titans are described just after the roots of earth and sea which are above the bottom of Tartarus the Titans fall into. The underworld is huge, but when described in images incorporating man-made or even natural features it is necessarily pictured on a smaller scale.

Many of the problems in the description of Tartarus, then, can be solved once we see that Hesiod is not attempting to provide a map of the various structures within the underworld but is giving separate descriptions of the underworld as a whole. Before returning to the upperworld, though, we should briefly consider the cosmogonical features of Tartarus. Here again I begin in fundamental agreement with Stokes (1962: 25–33): the founts and limits are cosmogonical, as is the chasm with which they are glossed, and this chasm is to be connected with the chaos of 814 and hence the Chaos of 116. Where I would differ is mainly in pausing for a moment with Hesiod rather than going on to Anaximander and Anaximenes. How is it that a chasm can be the source of earth, Tartarus, sea, and sky? It seems

[49] This is what μαρμάρεος means the three times it occurs in Homer; as Ballabriga (1986: 273, n. 41) points out, we would expect a metal rather than stone if the material of the gates were given.

[50] Ballabriga (1986: 271) seems to me to make entirely too much out of this threshold, which he takes to be so self-generated that it precedes even Chaos. αὐτοφυής need only mean that this threshold, unlike most, was not made by men or gods but grew naturally.

[51] This discrepancy lead West (1966: 370) to come up with his "beyond" for πρόσθεν here and at 767; Ballabriga (1986: 265–266), while rightly critical of West on πρόσθεν, is almost as cavalier with πέρην, which he renders as "opposite," the better to place Chaos beneath Tartarus. But none of the few early citations of πέρην in this sense cannot be rendered as "beyond." In the one case Ballabriga cites, *Iliad* 2.235, the Locrians live *beyond* Euboea from the regular Ionic perspective of the Homeric narrator (on which see Ballabriga 1986: 18); *Il.* 2.626 and 24.752 should be similarly glossed. LSJ list no other examples of this usage before Pausanias.

to me that rather than comparing Chaos to some primordial stuff from which all subsequent things are created, we ought to get all we can from the image of the chasm located at the horizon. The oft-repeated etymology tying χάος to χάσκω and hence χάσμα has been questioned.[52] But for the interpretation of Hesiod scientific etymology is a fairly unimportant matter: Hesiod is always ready to provide his own etymology, and by glossing χάος by χάσμα in line 740 he does so. In making a gap the first thing to come to be, Hesiod is providing an image for a guiding theme in the development of his *Theogony*, the progressive differentiation of a small number of basic elements into the complex world we experience. Separation models differentiation.

For Hesiod, though, Chaos is not merely an image reflecting metaphysical truth, but a real part of the physical world. It can be seen most comprehensively at the horizon, where the sky, earth, and underworld not only meet but also begin to come apart. It is there that the greatest cosmic differentiation begins, still. It is for this reason that Chaos can both be the beginning of things and be part of the existing world. Hesiod also ties Chaos to Tartarus. This is clear enough from 814 and the chasm of 740 which, if it begins at the horizon, certainly extends far beneath the earth. It would also seem to be the case at 116, at least if we take Τάρταρα there as a nominative, and make the gap between earth and Tartarus the first gap.[53] For this Hesiod has his reasons. In the first place, Chaos as the first thing to come to be does in some sense belong to the past, and the underworld is the place for the past. And Chaos' brood, the daughters of Night and Strife, are a nasty bunch who belong in the underworld. Of course there are arguments for placing Chaos as the gap between earth and sky, the most impressive of which is the fact it appears there in the earliest occurrences outside of Hesiod.[54] This too makes sense inasmuch as it is a gap which causes earth and sky to take on separate existence, and we would expect Chaos to have some connection with the sky if the founts of sky are to be found at the horizon just as the founts of earth and Tartarus are. The chasm and chaos in the description of Tartarus, then, show

[52] Karl 1967: 11; Mondi 1989: 7. Mondi's own effort (1989: 23–25) to gloss χάος as "insubstantial formlessness" through its sure cognate χαῦνος is unpersuasive; things that are χαῦνος may well be insubstantial, but, as many of Mondi's own examples show (take the collar-bone or softwoods), this is more due to hollowness or porousness than to lack of form.

[53] The interpretation and authenticity of 118–119 are controversial, of course. The strongest argument for both retaining 119 and reading Τάρταρα as a nominative is that Tartarus plays too important a role in the *Theogony* both in our passage and in 822 (itself suspect, alas) for its birth to go without being mentioned. West (1966: 194) gives further arguments that 118–119 are authentic and Τάρταρα is nominative; Stokes (1963: 1–3) argues the other side. While Stokes makes too much of the secondary tradition (which is only as reliable as Plato chose to be), he does rightly point out that in any reading Tartarus is spatially subordinated to earth via μυχῷ χθονός; but this is not incompatible with a separate existence. For a defense of the authenticity of 822, see Blaise 1992: 357–359.

[54] This theory, made popular by Cornford (1952: 194), has been made almost canonical through its presentation by Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983: 34–46). Regarding the problematic location of Chaos in 700 it seems to me that Kirk (it must be above earth, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983: 37–38) and Mondi (it must be below, 1989: 12–15) cancel each other out.

how the world came to be and came to be differentiated, while the roots and Atlas provide some assurance that the resulting differentiated world is stable. If earth provides a stable seat for gods and men, it is only thanks to the windy gap that there is space for them at all.

The very obscurity of the underworld and the powerful emotions it inspires make it a flexible and powerful tool for Hesiod for much the same reasons they make it puzzling for those looking for topographical coherence. Once we abandon the opposite and equally misguided approaches of looking for interpolations to subtract or of adding topographical connections Hesiod does not provide, we can appreciate the multiple descriptions Hesiod gives of Tartarus and the multiple purposes Hesiod's underworld can serve. Tartarus provides a secure and permanent prison for the defeated gods and for the dead—the latter a function not only melancholy but also soothing to the living, who so often fear the power of the dead. It houses the cyclical phenomena of night, day, sleep, and death, thus perhaps helping us to face our all too linear deaths by pairing Death with his more pleasant brother and aunt and his more familiar mother. Finally, at its margins the underworld contains an image of the beginning of things, separation, much as it houses the gods and mortals of the past. It has much to teach us, then, about the origins and stability of the universe and of Zeus' reign, and about the ongoing cycles of day, night, sleep, and death. Only the dead need a map of the underworld: Hesiod provides us with images we can use now.[55]

Department of Foreign Languages
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901–4521
U.S.A.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballabriga, A. 1986. *Le Soleil et le Tartare: L'Image mythique du monde en Grèce archaique.* Paris.

Blaise, F. 1992. "L'Épisode de Typhée dans la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode (v. 820–885): La Stabilisation du monde," *REG* 105: 349–370.

Blickman, D. R. 1987. "Styx and the Justice of Zeus in Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Phoenix* 41: 341–355.

Bond, G. W. ed. 1988. *Euripides:* Heracles. Oxford.

Chantraine, P. 1953. *Grammaire homérique. Tome II: Syntaxe.* Paris.

Clay, D. 1992. "The World of Hesiod," *Ramus* 21: 131–155.

Cornford, F. M. 1952. *Principium sapientiae.* Cambridge.

De Griño, B. and R. Olmos. 1986. "Atlas," *LIMC* 3: 2–16.

Dührsen, N. C. 1994–95. "πείρασιν ἐν μεγάλοις (Hes. *Th.* 335)," *WürzJbb* 20: 87–90.

[55]This study began as part of a 1990 Chapel Hill M.A. thesis, which greatly benefited from help from Edwin Brown and Peter M. Smith. An anonymous reader for *Phoenix* also provided many helpful comments.

Fauth, W. 1974. "Der Schlund des Orcus," *Numen* 21: 105–127.
Fontenrose, J. 1974. "Work, Justice, and Hesiod's Five Ages," *CP* 69: 1–16.
Fränkel, H. 1975. *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy: A History of Greek Epic, Lyric, and Prose to the Middle of the Fifth Century.* Oxford.
Heidel, W. A. 1912. "On Anaximander," *CP* 7: 212–234.
Janko, R. ed. 1992. The Iliad: *A Commentary. Volume IV: Books 13–16.* Cambridge.
Karl, W. 1967. *Chaos und Tartaros in Hesiods* Theogonie. Erlangen.
Kühner, R. and B. Gerth. 1955 [1904]. *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechishen Sprache. Zweiter Teil: Satzlehre*[3]. Hanover.
Kirk, G. S. 1956–57. "The Interpretation of Hesiod, *Theogony* 736ff," *PCPS* 184: 10–12.
Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield. 1983. *The Presocratic Philosophers*[2]. Cambridge.
Lloyd, G. E. R. 1966. *Polarity and Analogy.* Cambridge.
Miller, M. H. 1977. "La Logique implicite de la cosmogonie d'Hésiode," *Revue de mètaphysique et de morale* 4: 433–456.
Mondi, R. 1984. "The Ascension of Zeus and the Composition of Hesiod's *Theogony*," *GRBS* 25: 325–344.
—— 1989. "Χάος and the Hesiodic Cosmogony," *HSCP* 93: 1–41.
Northrup, M. 1979. "Tartarus Revisited: A Reconsideration of *Theogony* 711–819," *WS* 13: 22–36.
Onians, R. B. 1951. *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate.* Cambridge.
Paley, F. A. ed. 1883. *The Epics of Hesiod.* London.
Pellikan-Engel, M. E. 1974. *Hesiod and Parmenides: A New View on Their Cosmologies and on Parmenides' Proem.* Amsterdam.
Rowe, C. J. 1983. "Archaic Thought in Hesiod," *JHS* 103: 124–135.
Rudhardt, J. 1971. *Le Thème de l'eau primordiale dans la mythologie grecque.* Bern.
Schwabl, H. 1966. *Hesiods* Theogonie: *Eine unitarische Analyse.* Vienna.
Schwenn, F. 1934. *Die* Theogonie *des Hesiodos.* Heidelberg.
Solmsen, F. 1949. *Hesiod and Aeschylus.* Ithaca, N.Y.
—— 1950. "Chaos and Apeiron," *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 24: 235–248.
—— 1968. Review of West 1966. *Gnomon* 40: 321–329.
—— 1982. "The Earliest Stages in the History of Hesiod's Text," *HSCP* 86: 1–31.
Stokes, M. C. 1962. "Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies – I," *Phronesis* 7: 1–37.
—— 1963. "Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies – II," *Phronesis* 8: 1–34.
Thornton, H. and A. 1962. *Time and Style: A Psycho-Linguistic Essay in Classical Literature.* London.
Vermeule, E. 1979. *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry.* Berkeley.
Vlastos, G. 1947. "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies," *CP* 42: 156–178.
Wackernagel, J. 1926. *Vorlesungen über Syntax, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Griechisch, Lateinisch und Deutsch*[2] 1. Basel.
West, M. L. 1966. *Hesiod:* Theogony. Oxford.
Whitman, C. H. 1970. "Hera's Anvils," *HSCP* 74: 37–42.
Wilson, J. A. 1967 [1946]. "Egypt: The Nature of the Universe," in H. and H. A. Frankfort, J. A. Wilson, and T. Jacobsen, *Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man.* Baltimore. 37–133.
Worthen, T. 1988. "The Idea of 'Sky' in Archaic Greek Poetry: ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τά τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται," *Glotta* 66: 1–19.