

the authorship of some passages included in the Theognidean collection – he suggests that *Theognidea* 1123–8 are by Archilochus (Chapter 12), and that *Theognidea* 667–82 were probably composed by Euenus of Paros and one Simonides of Eretria might have composed *Theognidea* 903–30 (Chapter 20) –; and although his suggestions are speculative, as he recognises, it is rewarding to observe and follow the thought process by which B. reaches these conclusions.

In its totality, the volume grapples with fundamental aspects of research on Greek lyric poetry, which is perceived in its oral and performative contexts, in sociocultural and political circumstances, within the mythological continuum, in generic dialogue with epigram and prose genres, featuring metrical entities and items of intertextuality, and lastly as a material text that can be collected and transmitted. Some of the chapters included would otherwise not have been readily accessible in many libraries, and their inclusion makes them available to a broader readership. The contents of this volume bear witness to B.'s remarkable scholarly range, erudition, command of the evidence, skill at close reading, lucid and elegant argumentation, and wit. It is a treat for readers to be able to track, within a single volume, the generation and elaboration of B.'s ideas over the last four decades.

University of Birmingham

THEODORA A. HADJIMICHAEL
t.hadjimichael@bham.ac.uk

EARLY VIEWS ON COSMOS AND CREATION

ALMQVIST (O.) *Chaos, Cosmos and Creation in Early Greek Theogonies. An Ontological Exploration*. Pp. x+238. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Cased, £85, US\$115. ISBN: 978-1-350-22184-0.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002116

A.'s monograph offers a refreshing insight on Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Orphic Derveni theogony and Protagoras' philosophical creation myth in Plato's eponymous dialogue, and it proposes a whole range of valuable observations on the subtle orchestration between theo-cosmogony and anthropogony, and therefore between cosmology, ontology and anthropology in Greek cosmological myths. As the foundational ontological distinction/relation between gods and humans (and, to a lesser extent, animals) is central to A.'s approach, a close engagement with the ontological turn in anthropology, in particular with the work of P. Descola (*Beyond Nature and Culture* [2005]), is integral to his overall strategy: he explores through anthropological lenses the complex relations, ritually established, between ontologically distinct beings, as resulting from the contrasting and competing ontological assumptions – analogism, pantheism, naturalism – found in the early poetic tradition and metaphysical speculation of the Presocratic philosophers.

In Chapter 1, following suggestive remarks by Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 14.1091a–b) and recent anthropological perspectives on analogist cosmologies, A. reverses the orthodox view of Hesiod's *Theogony* as a monistic cosmology (anticipating the rational orderliness of the first Presocratics) whose central idea is that of an inherent cosmic order carefully unfolded from beginning to end and whose endpoint is a stable ordered totality. He demonstrates that, on the contrary, inherent aspects of Hesiod's vision of creation – from the confusing primordial triad (especially the shapeless, etymologically and ontologically

puzzling Chaos) through the countless theomachies to the two rival and non-intersecting extensive lineages (Chaos' and Gaia's) – fall under the image of a chaotic world composed of conflicting disorderly forces, fractured by antagonism, defined by contradictions and in need of an imposed order. If the cosmic order can be breached, that is, according to A., a reflection of the world's fragile harmony and underlying ontological assumption of difference. If cosmic order can be teleologically achieved only if imposed by an external agent, in Hesiod's poem this task falls in a dramatic fashion to Zeus, 'the archetype cosmic negotiator' (p. 45), allotting *τιμοί/μείρομα/γέρῶ* and thus establishing his power through imposing order upon the chaotic elements of the cosmos. His battles against monstrous or ambivalent beings (e.g. the hybrids refusing categorisation or Ouranos' and Kronos' disorderly conduct and anti-cosmic rule), his strategic marriages and the consolidation of his power by the encompassment of his contrary (Metis, *μητις*) gradually lead to the reunion of the dissolute parts of the originally chaotic cosmos into a hierarchical whole, yet not an ordered cosmic system. Zeus's own (hi)story begins as an underdog who overthrows Kronos and takes his place; he does not annihilate his enemies, but simply relocates and puts them to another use; like Ouranos and Kronos, he does not abolish the disruptive forces, but just takes precautions against the multiple acts of disobedience or threats of succession that perpetually impend over both his authority and the cosmic stability. Thus, A. shows that for Hesiod order is always temporary and volatile, while disorder is a continuing pervasive threat, and chaos 'a force that can never be eradicated but only suppressed' (p. 45).

In Chapter 2, the close reading of Hesiod's aetiological myth of the sacrifice at Mekone within its wider theogonic context, broadens the thematic spectrum of A.'s ontological reading of the *Theogony* via his interpretation of humanity's status within Hesiod's analogist cosmos. He argues that in the *Theogony* (as opposed to *WD* 109–18 and *CW* fr. 1.1–7 M.-W.) no clear reference suggests the existence, prior to Mekone, of a Golden Age nor of any utopic original (comm)unity between gods and men. Never equals (similar, *ὁμόθεν* or ontologically identical) nor kin or strangers, early humans and gods were separated and ontologically differentiated only after Prometheus' sacrificial division of meat. The same episode also establishes an affinal relation of hierarchical connection between the two opposing categories of beings: within the mediating ritual of sacrifice and through the ritual commensality based on shared meals, they are united, despite the difference that separates them, as *ξένοι*, 'guest-friends', and *ὁμοτρόπεζοι*, 'table companions' (cf. Pausanias 8.2.4). Therefore the humans' and gods' status and relationship are to be thought of as built on difference and negotiated through the ritualised eating, without encroaching on the ontological distinction of the categories themselves. As the Promethean divide is akin to Zeus's cosmic allotments, A. advocates for understanding Mekone as a myth of creation by sacrifice and the sacrificial division as a creative cosmological act both of separation of humanity from the gods and of integration in its proper place into a new world order.

By turning to the theogonic poems associated with Orpheus, particularly the *Derveni Theogony*, a deep dive into the early allegorical tradition and philosophical speculation allows an intensive engagement with the topic of cosmological processes in this alternative tradition to Hesiod's analogist cosmology. A. emphasises the Orphic innovative additions to Hesiod's traditional theo-cosmogony and thus the Orphic reinvention of the cosmos: a shift in the understanding of the word *κόσμος* as 'world order'; a new monistic orientation (replacing the ontological plurality and close to Anaximenes' or Heraclitus' monism) providing a demiurge (Protogonos), a pantheistic god (Zeus ingesting Protogonos and the whole world previously created and thus becoming one and identifying with it before recreating and ordering the cosmos afresh) and a single lineage, focused on connections/identity/unity (rather than on separation/distinction/differentiation); a pantheist ontology

(replacing Hesiod's analogism and whose key is Zeus as simultaneously being 'first, middle and last') where the many-named nominally distinct gods (a single form with manifold aspects alternating with the changes of time, reminiscent of Heraclitus B33 and B67) are refractions of a single pantheistic ever-present deity (Zeus) and extensions of a divinely ordered cosmos.

In an orderly symmetrical fashion, Chapter 4 mirrors Chapter 2 (as the third chapter mirrors the first). After exploring the ways in which Orpheus reversed and rewrote Hesiod's ontological assumptions, A. deepens this topic by exploring Orpheus' variation of the Promethean sacrificial division: the myth of Dionysus' dismemberment and resurrection, attesting to the emergence of a new cosmological and sacrificial narrative in the sixth or fifth centuries BCE describing creation as an interchange between the one/the many and of a new understanding of selfhood, in tune with the Presocratic monistic and pantheistic views on an essential continuity between body/soul/cosmos, between life/death and immortality/mortality as cyclic and organic becomings. The well-drawn comparison (entailing a rich discussion of the controversial evidence for the Dionysus' murder myth and of several elements shared by alternate mythic traditions, for example Empedocles' tale of the primordial murder/sacrifice and the fallen δαίμων) between the Orphic and Hesiodic contrasting anthropogonies and aetiologies on sacrifice is productive, consolidating and expanding, without leading to repetitions, the remarks given in the previous chapter regarding the innovative penchant of the Orphic pantheist ontology for connections/continuity between all beings. While for Hesiod sacrifice was 'a key means of connecting ontologically distinct tribes of gods and humans', for the Orphics 'sacrifice separates ontologically similar beings' (p. 120).

To close the volume A. chooses a paradigmatic example of the swarming mid-fifth century, when all three competing ontologies (naturalism, analogism and pantheism) coexisted and coalesced: he examines the ontological assumptions of Protagoras' creation myth, which interweaves traditional ideas on the Promethean myth of the early poets-'sophists' (Homer, Hesiod and Orpheus), elements of Protagoras' cosmology and contemporary politics in a complex whole. The resulting ontology and nature/culture dichotomy, intimately related to the particular cosmological vision specific to naturalism, defines humanity in terms of a struggle between a 'nature' (φύσις) shared with animals and a divine νόμος of Zeus's ordaining that raises the human condition above its bestial nature and beyond φύσις. A quick survey of Protagoras' sophistic legacy and of the nature/culture divide's influence on Western thought allows A. to emphasise the profusion and the complexity of ontological speculation throughout antiquity and beyond, from Neoplatonism's pantheism through the Renaissance's analogism to the ever-growing dominance of naturalism, without over-homogenising the ontological assumptions of the West.

A.'s book is a fascinating read warmly to be welcomed. Constantly enlightening and thought-provoking, it is interspersed with intertextual parallels, analytic commentaries treated with intellectual vividness, close attention to detail and due caution to the pitfalls of the intra-/intertextual contextualisation and textual criticism.

University of Montréal

GABRIELA CURSARU
gabriela.cursaru@gmail.com