# All Manners of Actual Teaching

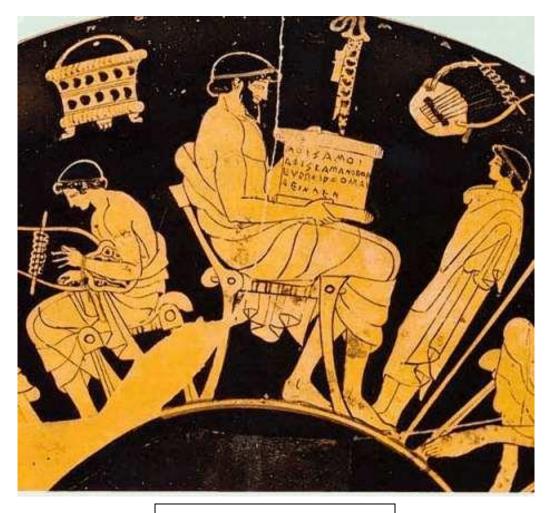## The Didaxis of Didactic Poetry and its Variform Applications

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Double sided *aulos* showing a teacher and his student, K6WFYC.

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## 1. The Didactic Nature of Didactic Poetry

What is didactic poetry? Although this question seems to have remained largely untouched in antiquity, contemporary scholarship has gone to some length to offer a suitable answer to this question. However, none of the definitions proposed has reached general consent and critics are regularly able to point towards weaknesses in these definitions, although one definition may find more assent than the other.[1] That is why this project will consider didactic poetry from a different standpoint. Whereas modern studies up till now have mostly limited themselves to the rendering of generalizing descriptions of basic characteristics, or to the exhibition of poetic intentionality by the poets,[2] this project will embark on a different course, namely that of the arrangement of the didactic content.

It is my contention that the quintessential basis for the composition of any didactic poem is the availability of a system of didactic markers, the so-called didaxis. This term, which is of principal importance throughout this project, loosely signifies all processes that guide the audience – whether it be internal or external – towards the eventual conclusion the teacher-poet is aiming for.[3] The eventual conclusion of this guidance, it must be said, does not always need to be didactic in its outlook, even though the didaxis will guide us there. This means that the direct instructions will be of interest, but also e.g. excursive narrations, that create for instance a more lively overall narration. These didactic markers, moreover, must be constituted in such a way that the didaxis clearly leads (or seems to lead) the student to knowledge of the subject matter proclaimed, or alternatively guides the student to an inherently different conclusion.

The main improvement of such an innovative approach would be the opportunity it offers us to shift our attention towards the real exposition of the didactic content, even if we

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[1] E.g. Effe (1977), Toohey (1996) and Volk (2002), the last of which is at this moment most generally accepted. See for general critiques of the definitions proposed by these guiding studies for instance the reviews by Kenney (2003), who notes the lack of attention for subject matter in the definition, in this case by Volk, and Denardis (2007, 173), who contends that the poems considered didactic are just too diverse to constitute one overall framework. Also, Atherton (1997, VII-VIII) elaborates on the dichotomy between form and content in didactic poetry, which inevitably leaves us with the question if a singular form can even be attained for all those diverse works.

[2] For the definition of didactic poems based on formal characterisations, e.g. Effe (1977, 22-26) and Toohey (1996, 2-5), for the identification of didactic poems on the basis of the didactic poetic intent by the poets themselves, e.g. Volk (2002, 6-24).

[3] Cf. Reynoso e.a. (2009, 30-36), who align this didactic approach to what they term the 'plano retorico', which is the structuring of the text to guide the reader in a certain direction.

cannot define a clear-cut genre of didactic poetry.[4] Since the definition of didaxis offered above is quite unrestrictive, this shift necessarily presupposes quite a broad set of poems involved in my definition of didactic poetry, although this project will remain limited to the treatment of some specific cases. The main criterium for inclusion in my set of exemplars of didactic poetry will therefore be the presence of concrete didactic elements, as they form the conventional framework into which the didaxis is cast.[5] Under these I understand, generically, the presence of a teacher-student constellation and the application of instructional and exhortatory tactics and, traditionally, the direct and programmatic treatment of an educationally transferable subject, rendered in the dactylic hexameter.[6] This very plain characterisation of didactic poetry clearly obstructs poems regularly regarded as didactic for their indirect conveying of moral values or learning (e.g. Homer's epics) from being perceived as didactic poems,[7] but allows the entry of works in other meters, such as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, and an epyllion like the Pythagoras episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[8]

This project will consider some of the most renowned didactic poems from antiquity up to and including the third century CE in both Greek and Latin. This is, summarily stated, the time frame in which didactic poetry was on the whole a usual genre, while after the third century we do not find any completely surviving didactic poems. From the chosen sources, the didactic patterns will be extracted and compared to each other to determine the typical form of didactic poetry in terms of didaxis and to see to what extent poems were able to diverge from this form. The texts that will perform as case studies (Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Aratus' *Phaenomena*, Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, Vergil's *Georgics*, and Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica*) will be treated diachronically, after which a synthesising discussion of their

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[4] As Toohey (1996, 4-5) admits, it is impossible to make a working generalisation that will embrace all possible instances. Such definitions necessarily amount to characterisation of "an ideal form".

[5] Cf. Gábor (2016, 95): "Since the acts of teaching are instantiated in linguistic structures, the figurative/poetic conventions of the genre can be considered the linguistic context of poeticising the didactic process. Consequently, I assume that the genre-specific conventions of didactic poetry are related to the intersubjective acts of teaching, and they are explainable as the figuration of didaxis."

[6] Dalzell (1996, 24-30) discusses the inclusion of these elements in light of the authorial intention didactic poetry foresees. I make the formal distinction between generic and traditional features, so that we may distinguish between more and less strict rules. For example, whereas all didactic poems must possess real and direct didactic output, they do not necessarily have to deal with one specific sort of subject. The *Ars Amatoria*, as always, makes for a useful example, as this poem contains all generic features, but clearly subverts our traditional expectations of didactic poetry.

[7] Sider (2014, 20-22).

[8] Ov. *Met*. 15, 75-478. Cf. Lühr (1969, 21-22) and Volk (2002, 64-68) on their addition of this poem to the category of didactic poetry.

similarities and respective divergences will be inserted. Although there are obviously more didactic poems available, these seem, for their centrality within the genre and the traditionality of their content,[9] to me to be representative of the genre of didactic poetry and collectively form a usefully varied picture of different sorts of didactic poems in periodisation as well as possible intentionality.[10] The diverging use of various didactic instruments in these poems will in the conclusion be compared to the results of modern studies on this subject, concerning the categorisations they apply to the different forms of didactic poems.[11] An overview of this past research will first be provided to the reader by way of a *status quaestionis*, so that this project may be better positioned in its scholarly context. This frame will also pave the way for my own scope for looking at didactic poetry, which will be less restrictive than scholarship is used to up to now and which will serve as the background to my investigation. The final part of this introductory chapter will deal with the theoretical as well as the methodological framework applied to the texts under scrutiny.

The goal of this project, then, is to answer the question 'In what similar ways do the diverse didactic poets constitute their didaxis, with the goal of claiming their position in the generic tradition, and what different ways, with the goal of emulating their predecessors?' The answer to this question will be given on the basis of the results of the case studies to be treated, where the guiding question will always be how the poems, at large as well as in their specifics, manifest themselves as texts containing didactic features. How these features will be extracted, we will discuss later in this introduction.

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[9] These poems earn their centrality in the debates to their position as the greatest and best surviving didactic poems of their times, while the traditionality of their subject matters may be regarded in for instance the popularity of their themes: farming, astronomy, philosophy and hunting (the themes dealt with in these poems) are all recurring themes in didactic poetry.

[10] I am aware of the fact that any selection of texts used will necessarily be flawed, but I believe that this selection will enable us to create a representative picture of the didactic methodologies applied in didactic poetry. The addition of the time-frame of the Presocratics would have given us the chance to create an even more varied picture of poetic didaxis through the ages, but since we possess only fragments of their work, I believe that it would be too hard to extract from these fragments a useful picture in the space this project offers me. Also, I have chosen not to follow the complete periodisation as given by Toohey (1996), who specifies a whole stage devoted to the didactic epics by Ovid, on amatory subjects, and by Horace, on poetry (Toohey [1996, 146-173]). Apart from the lack of space in this project, their absence is also justified by the uniqueness of their didactic poems in the fact that both authors frame their poems as something not entirely a didactic poem, which is significant. Ovid's amatory poems are at the same time elegies and Horace's *Ars Poetica* is framed as a letter. This complicates the identification of these works as straightforward didactic poems and for that reason the poems will be left out of consideration here.

[11] Especially Effe (1977, 40-79) and Toohey (1996) may be considered guiding studies here, although they are both necessarily not generally accepted. For instance, Scodel (2007) names some general shortcomings of the approaches applied by Effe and Toohey. Both run the risk, according to her, of leaving matters too black-and-white, as there is always more than one side in a poem.

## 1.1 Didactic Poetry according to the Ancients[12]

Already in antiquity, the position of didactic poetry was obscure and even the existence of a didactic genre was questionable, as learning and poetry were generally considered to be inseparable. This led to a misunderstanding of the genre by the first literary critic to discuss it, Aristotle, who considered it impossible for a natural philosopher like Empedocles to be considered a poet like Homer, with whom he shares the meter.[13] His reason for this exclusion was the fact that didactic poetry lacked his primary precondition of imitating reality.[14] While this exclusion may in principle be plausible for the earliest authors, for whom writing in prose was either not yet possible or an unlikely option,[15] the authors from the Hellenistic era onwards could choose to write in prose but remarkably favoured the poetic variant, so they consequently regarded themselves as poets. This development heralded the creation of the unambiguous genre of didactic poetry, although the preliminary role played by the earlier poets in developing a didactic genre should not be discarded as readily as for instance Sider would argue.[16] Many of the elements argued to be part of didactic poetry have their origin in these predecessors.[17]

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[12] It should be stated that in dealing with ancient scholarship on didactic poetry, I limit myself to these *testimonia* that directly discuss didactic poetry qua didactic poetry (cf. also Pöhlmann [1973, 816-835]). This means that statements about poetry in general as a teaching facility will not be considered, unless they can explicitly tell us something about didactic poetry as a genre. For a broader overview of *testimonia* about the didactic nature of poetry, the reader will find a useful segment in Hunter (2014a, 89-100). On the other hand, there are also ancient contributions to the role that was fulfilled by poetry in relation to prose, on which Tueller & Macfarlane (2009, 230-232) have specifically contributed. Clay (1998, 18-40) treats the *persona* in poetry more in general terms on the basis of ancient theorising.

[13] Arist. *Poet*, 1447b, 17-20. Cf. Sider (2014, 21-22).

[14] Arist. *Poet.* 1447a, 18-23. Pöhlmann (1973, 816-818) sets forth Aristotle's reasoning in more detail.

[15] Effe (1977, 24-25).

[16] Sider (2014, 22-24) is probably right in pointing out that the inclusion of the pre-Hellenistic poets now considered didactic poets is based on an anachronic retrojection of principles originating from the Hellenistic period. Yet, to reduce the status of these works to that of proto-didactic in the Hellenistic sense would take things too far; their influence on the genre of didactic epic, and especially Hesiod's influence, is eminent, and the poems clearly conform to the most important generic rules. It is not for nothing that Callim. *Epigram* 27 Pf. names Aratus' poem a poem in the style of Hesiod, as Sider (2014, 22) himself also points out but takes to mean something else. He only regards this Callimachean statement to "[establish] the important link between "scientific" subject matter and hexameter verse", while it clearly also establishes a generic link between Hesiod and Aratus as didactic poets, as Aratus' poem itself is called a "song of Hesiod" (Ἡσιόδου τό τ᾽ ἄεισμα). Cf. Schrijvers (1982, 401).

[17] Cf. Hunter (2014a, 51): "Hesiod and the later period, and however much the ancient and modern sense of Hesiod as a 'didactic poet' is a retrojection from a poetic form that really only took shape in the late classical and Hellenistic periods, there is no doubt that later systematisation is, *inter alia*, a systematisation and generalisation of Hesiodic practice itself."

For some time, the allusive referencing to the generic predecessors, materialized by for instance the use of intertextuality or antonomasia (the mentioning of a predecessor's name or other generally known feature), was the only practical marker that allowed for identification of a poem as a didactic poem, as this constituted a personal statement by the author to recall a certain tradition.[18] This mode remained important for the self-identification of poets as didactic poets, but from at its earliest the first century BCE the gap in our theoretical knowledge of didactic poetry qua genre was partially filled by the information delivered in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, sometimes identified as the lost part of Aristotle's *Poetics* for its treatment of comedy and its acceptation of the pre-eminence of the mimetic.[19] This treatise discusses the different sorts of poetry and, emulating the Aristotelean mimetic criterium, divides poetry into representational (μιμητική) and non-representational (ἀμίμητος) poetry, thus disposing of the problem created by Aristotle's preliminary that poetry must under all circumstances imitate (i.e. form a representation of) some part of reality. Hence, didactic poetry, which is in this definition part of the category non-representational poetry, gets its due in this definition, and is even further divided into the categories of instructional (ὑφηγητική) and theoretical (θεωρητική) poetry.[20]

This classification constituted the first attestation of didactic poetry as a genre of its own, but it was definitely not yet commonly accepted until much later, as hexameter poetry was also sometimes still considered one singular category without distinction, as Quintilian's perfunctory treatment of all epic poets in one big category exemplarily showcases.[21] In some cases, this may even lead to a double classification of a poem in modern scholarship, for instance when Lucretius is considered both an epic and a didactic poet in essence.[22] The

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[18] E.g. Farrell (1991, 33-60) gives us such an example in which Vergil, using antonomasia, calls to mind Hesiod's didactic poem the *Works and Days* by calling his song an 'Ascraeum carmen' (Verg. *G.* 2, 176). Cf. Dalzell (1996, 23-25), Fakas (2001, 39-40) and Damschen (2004, 110). Tellingly, Gale (2013, 27-28), on the basis of arguments concerning allusion, recalls her position on the generic position of Lucretius, because it is now indeed clear that there are strong Hesiodic and thus didactic allusions in the *De Rerum Natura*. Formerly, she claimed that the poem was clearly epic (Gale [1994, 107]). Contra Rider (2016, 1), who argues that the poets themselves were probably not aware of their tradition, which is too boldly put in my opinion, considering the evidence just given.

[19] For a further discussion of the content and context of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, one can consult Janko (1987, 159-160), Volk (2002, 32-33) and Sider (2014, 15-16).

[20] *T.C.* 1.

[21] Quint. *Inst. Or.* 10.1.46-58; 85-92. Cf. Man. *Astr.* 2, 1-49; 3, 1-45; Pöhlmann (1973, 820-825); Dalzell (1996, 21); Paschalis (2000, 204).

[22] This case to include the *De Rerum Natura* in the category of epic *pur sang* has been made by Murley (1947, 341-345) and his arguments may still hold true today. Nonetheless, he completely passes over the didactic elements in this poem, of which the teacher-student constellation is the most significant. This renders his

categorisation of didactic poetry in antiquity as a self-contained genre remains problematic to trace and only sporadically are remarks made upon its nature. The most telling of these, the mention in the *Ars Grammatica* by Diomedes, is mostly important for the explicit establishment of a solitary category of didactic poetry, next to the already more defined genres. His theory, that probably found its origins in Platonic ideas,[23] distinguishes poems according to the role and presence of the narrator in the story, and thus has to separate didactic poetry, that is almost totally narrated by the first person teacher, from narrative epic, which contains a large amount of character speech.[24]

As can be observed so far, the only question that was even slightly addressed about didactic poetry in antiquity – as far as our source material reaches – was what kind of poetry it was, if it can be considered poetry at all. Ancient scholars were not able to move beyond a superficial definition of the genre until at least Servius, who names the most basic characteristic of didactic poetry, namely the requirement to have a teacher directly address a student.[25] Modern scholarship, however, has taken up this enterprise more eagerly than the ancients did.

## 1.2 Modern Approaches to Didactic Poetry

Modern scholarly attention has primarily been drawn towards the exposition of generally valid restrictions by which to categorise didactic poetry, either as a genre or, at the very least, a subgenre.[26] Yet, such expositions have shown their defects in their incapability to cope with the changing conditions that genre is necessarily subjected to.[27] This instability of genre in general necessitates the existence of a pluriform network of generic instances that cannot easily be compiled under one all-embracing definition.[28] This would mean, namely, that it

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standpoint a bit one-sided, for which reason his investigation should be consulted with some vigilance. Cf. De Lacy (1964, 50-51), who states in connection to the war imagery that it is especially meant as a point of comparison for Lucretius to transfer a point.

[23] Volk (2002, 31-33), who is for this reason also willing to posit the treatise at a relatively early stage in time, around the Hellenistic period, as this was a period of bloom for didactic poetry.

[24] Diom. *Ars Gram.* 1, 482, 14-17. Diomedes leaves no space in his definition of didactic poetry for spoken parts by the characters (*sine ullius personae interlocutione*, "without speech of any character", 21), but that would be too strict a definition, as for instance Aratus, *Phaen.* 123-126 shows (cf. Faulkner [2015, 75-76]), but its general absence is indeed significant.

[25] Serv. *Prooem.* In V. *Georg.* (p. 129.9-12 Thilo). Cf. Volk (2002, 37): "His remark (…) is easily the most insightful statement about didactic poetry to have survived from antiquity."

[26] E.g. Fowler (1982, 56); contra Volk (2002, 35).

[27] Fowler (1982, 45-48).

[28] Fowler (1982, 38-40), who explains that this clings to the fact that for no genre all exponents display sufficient similarity in their key features as to be able to speak of a genre along these lines.

should be possible to account for all specificities as generic markers, but we can see that this is impossible for the genre of didactic poetry. Therefore, it is necessary to set up a looser framework, that furthermore allows for deviation from the assigned norm.[29]

Such a framework anticipates the refutation or at least restriction of narrow definitions as those rendered by Effe, Toohey and Volk, whose investigations presently form the main landmarks in the identification of didactic poetry as a genre.[30] It is notable that these scholars did not account for this option themselves, moreover, since they were, with the exception of Volk, willing to discern a complex system of generic subdivisions. It is necessary to create a framework that embraces all poems we would logically consider didactic poems.[31] Also, the new definition should grant such subdivisions, albeit arrived at subjectively, their place, if they are found to work.[32] Nevertheless, the fact that the defining principles proposed in these studies are marked by an inaptness to encompass all didactic poems righteously without becoming too broad does not leave these definitions themselves useless. They may constitute an advanced starting point for further investigation – as long as we keep track of the poems themselves – for which reason they are systematically discussed in the form of a synthesis.[33]

Aside from some poetic common-places like meter, the main specialists, since Servius, agree on the presence of one common aspect: the teacher-student constellation.[34] If we wish to identify a didactic poem, therefore, we should expect to discover this practice in any sort

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[29] Toohey (1996, 4-5) already admitted the necessity of such a position.

[30] A system of restriction will not be the focus of this project, but may be found in Cairns (1972, 23-25) and Fowler (2000, 205-206), where a very limited set of primary elements, like the one expounded here, is complemented by secondary elements that are not essential for a poem to be a didactic poem.

[31] E.g. Volk (2002, 41-42) excludes the *Ars Poetica* by Horace from her selection of didactic poems for the reason that in the poem "he never implies that the teaching speech he addresses to the Pisones is itself a poem." Toohey (1996, 146-157), however, views this poem as a marker of just another stage in the development of didactic poetry, together with Ovid's amatory didactic poems, which Volk (2002, 157-195) takes as one of her case studies even. Cf. von Albrecht (1980, 67) on Effe's unmotivated exclusion of poems normally considered didactic.

[32] Dalzell (1996, 31).

[33] Lightfoot (2014, 85) treats the twofold options of discussing the genre of didactic poetry as a whole, namely bottom-up (starting with the specific poem and through this *exemplum* making observations about the greater whole) and top-down (starting with the genre as a whole and through its characterisation discussing the role of the specific text). This project aims to combine the approaches by immediately testing the values found in earlier work about the genre against the background of the didactic poems.

[34] Pöhlmann (1973, 835-836); Effe (1977, 23); Dalzell (1996, 25-26); Toohey (1996, 2); Volk (2002, 37-39), although she remarks on the fact that this criterium is also not so straightforward, as a differentiation can be made between the teacher-student and author-reader relationship. I assent with this point and the additional argument that this teacher-student relationship is the one clearly intended in the poems and that all proof for real authorial intent is lost and irretrievable for us, which would make even grasping for it hopeless.

of instantiation, more or less explicit,[35] although the poet is not necessarily the teacher, as Parmenides' case demonstrates.[36] Related to this, according to some studies, there is the existence of an overarching narrative, unfolding to show the process made by (one of) the didactic protagonists, for instance in becoming a better student.[37] Although this feature is not necessarily of primary importance, its recurrence has remarkably been demonstrated in multiple didactic poems, which makes it quite persistent.[38]

The narrativity in didactic poetry does not limit itself to the presence of such an all-traversing plot, but moreover distinguishes itself through the multiplicity of its digressions, stories that are inserted into the narration to function as interruptions of the serious instructions.[39] These serious instructions, either meant seriously or composed for another reason,[40] would normally treat an educational subject (practical or philosophical), although exceptions are made, and would be ordered systematically, so that they may either instruct or persuade the student.[41] Also, as championed by Volk, the poet should show awareness of his role as a teacher and he should be aware of his use of the poem as a medium.[42]

We may observe here the reliance from scholars on narrative elements to delimit the generic framework. These elements would typically constitute the structure of a didactic poem and the development of a didaxis through the use of direct lessons in the form of addresses with instructions or exhortations. The ultimate aim proposed by the poet qua teacher would be the subject-specific amelioration of the student, although this goal may remain superficial, with another authorial goal hiding beneath the surface. This enumeration of proposed characteristics renders us quite a general picture of what a didactic poem may contain, but it might also be argued that elements are missing. For instance, little is said about

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[35] A good example of a poem that has a very explicit characterisation of both the teacher and the student is Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Aratus, *Phaen.* and the *Epigrams* by Posidippus show more of a skeleton version of this, with only references to an unspecified 'you'.

[36] E.g. Parm. Fr. 1, 23-32; cf. Pöhlmann (1973, 839-841), Coxon (1986, 12) and Sider (2014, 16-17).

[37] Fowler (2000, 207-208); Canevaro (2014a, 31-33). The idea of poetic simultaneity that Volk (2002, 39-40) proposes as a key element also falls into this classification.

[38] Landolfi (2003, 11-28), although primarily focused on Manilius, gives some insightful examples of this development. In this case, the narrative development is performed through the recalling of an image in which the poet figuratively travels on some sort of vehicle past all the information to be treated. Cf. Lühr (1969, 44), although his ascription of this theme specifically to philosophical didactic poems is too narrow.

[39] Dalzell (1996, 22-23); Toohey (1996, 3). Pöhlmann (1973, 879), moreover, coins the digressions as ἡδύσματα.

[40] Effe (1977, 30-33).

[41] Effe (1977, 22-23); Dalzell (1996, 33); Toohey (1996, 2-3).

[42] Volk (2002, 36-37; 39).

the specific use of the teaching instruments, and these are not necessarily always direct, as the above would make us believe on first sight.[43]

On another note, there was also the poets' awareness of themselves as didactic poets, as the focus on allusive methods has also proven. As I stated earlier, allusions enable the poet to create a framework into which the poem can be read, placing the composition in a tradition or even emulating the 'old' poet through his use of allusion.[44] This kind of allusion could include any sort of similar motive between works (for example, the allusion to an earlier work treating a certain story)[45], but could also fix a more varied tradition, such as a generic one, like the extended system of references to Hesiod in Aratus, of a thematic as well as narratorial nature, would for instance suggest.[46]

Next to the question of definition, scholarship has also wondered about the relationship didactic poems show to each other in their concrete instantiations. Again, the ancients stay silent (except for the statement in the *Tractatus Coislinianus* that didactic may be divided into instructional and theoretical poetry, mentioned earlier)[47], but modern scholarship has explored it more eagerly. Globally three sorts of categorisations can be distinguished, all of which have further subdivisions. The obvious risk remains, however, that such divisions too lead to unnecessary limitations in our observations.[48]

I have already mentioned the periodisation as it was rendered by Toohey.[49] In his scheme, didactic poetry follows more general trends in poetry and is placed in a broader contextual picture.[50] On the other side, scholars have proposed a division based on structure and subject. In this group, the divisions are determined by whether the poem is practical

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[43] E.g. the *ainos* in Hes. *Op.* 202-212, which is still found difficult to interpret (Hubbard [1995, 1-3] hands us an overview of the most highly reckoned interpretations in modern scholarship), but which was clearly meant to make the reader think, we may surmise.

[44] Conte (1986, 37-38) and Whitlach (2013, 2). Hinds (1998, 10) discusses this same kind of referentiality in allusions but applies to it the term self-annotation, thus pointing to the fact that any allusion fetched by the reader tells that reader something about itself.

[45] E.g. Conte (1986, 32-33).

[46] Fakas (2001, 100-148) highlights and explains these references to Hesiod in Aratus' *Phaenomena*.

[47] *T.C.* 1, also rendered clearly by Sider (2014, 16) in a scheme.

[48] Hence, we may lose track of other possible interpretations as a consequence of our categorisations. Kenney (1979, 71) gives the example of how we may categorise a poem in one group in for instance Effe's scheme, but the poet may have had a totally different aim with it.

[49] Toohey (1996). Cf. Pöhlmann (1973, 835-896), although his focus is more on the development of the genre than on the aim of the specific poets to change the didactic tradition in light of contemporary developments.

[50] E.g. Toohey (1996, 49) on the Hellenistic period as a period of development of didactic poetry: "This was an era that enthused over the list."

(instructional) or philosophical (theoretical).[51] In the most well-known categorisation, that by Effe, the poems are divided according to their authorial intention, whereby a poem could be *sachbezogen* (straightforwardly teaching what it claims to teach), *formal* (using the genre only to display one's poetic skills), or *transparent* (claiming to speak about one thing but actually discussing something else, under the surface).[52] Although these *Grundtypen* are still largely contested,[53] there are definitely arguments in favour of the identification of these categories, as the poems are not uniform in their expositions. As long as we keep in mind that poets can shift their stresses throughout their text or have different intentions in one and the same passage, this framework can well function to help define the poems.[54] We will return to this later.

## 1.3 A New Scope

What we have perceived so far is an abundance of elements related to didactic poetry and sometimes mistakenly attributed to the genre as if it were a prerequisite. I have argued that the unequivocal ascription of a set of necessary preliminaries to didactic poetry as a definite form runs the risk of becoming unrepresentative for the severe principality it exercises on the inclusion or exclusion of poems naturally considered didactic. That is why this project proposes a new framework from which to investigate ancient didactic poetry. Instead of being so narrow as to leave no room for divergent forms of didactic poems, this project will consider the genre as a more fluid form that leaves room to include the deflecting cases, and thus

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[51] E.g. *T.C.* 1 and Dalzell (1996, 11); Gibson (1998, 68) posits broadly the same system, but marks off regularly theoretical from philosophically theoretical texts, which this project merges into one overarching group of theoretical didactic poems so as not to complicate matters unnecessarily.

[52] Effe (1977, 40-79). He repeats this position in Effe (2005, 28-29).

[53] Although Effe (2005, 29-30) believes that his scheme has found common acceptance, there is still indeed a lot to debate about in his typology, as the examples of later scholars show. Schrijvers (1982, 400) suggestively emphasises the subjectivity of this division in claiming the traditionality of the tripartite division in German scholarly divisions: "La tripartition (dans cette sort de discussions les triades restent populaires!) a été derivée de l'attitude caractéristique de l'auteur ancient vis-à-vis de sa matière." Cf. Lightfoot (2014, 87), who opts for a system in which the poems are not so strictly divided among groups.

[54] Cf. the system set up by Heath (1985, 53-55), where he differentiated between formal and final didactic, actually the two main categories in Effe, leaving out the *transparent*. Although he himself admits that there may be something of both in any didactic poem, he would still opt for a quite strict system of division in this connection. This idea, however, also remains essentially arbitrary, as we can simply never be sure of the author's intention. As Kennedy (2000, 175) states, "But can it be the case that "no one supposes that Ovid really wrote his poem in order to instruct the youth of Rome in that art"?" Cf. Canevaro (2014a, 26-33) on why Heath's exclusion of Hesiod would in this sense be faulty.

applies a more unconstrained definition.[55] This will be done on the basis of the following principles.

As Lyotard describes in an enlightening report on the nature of knowledge, for knowledge to be transported in a narrative – and it can only be transported in the form of narrative – there must be a sender, a receiver, and a referent (the subject to be taught), so that the knowledge may be actualised.[56] If there is no narrative, the knowledge is essentially good for nothing and also non-existent, as it will only remain with the initial student who is familiar with it, but will not find its way out there, to benefice anyone, other than its bearer.[57] If the knowledge is actualised and proven true, it will find its legitimation in its capability to ameliorate societal value in general.[58] Although this last point may not hold necessarily true for the situation created in didactic poetry (but must be kept in mind, holding Effe's category of the *transparent* in consideration)[59], the idea that knowledge must be subject to a repetitive process of instantiation in a uniform fashion makes this epistemological framework stand out. Didactic poetry is exactly such an actualisation of knowledge in which a student and a teacher observe their object of study as if it were the truth. Consider for instance Hesiod's programmatic statement in his introduction:[60]

ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην.

"I will tell truths to Perses."

In this statement, we should note that the truth for Hesiod is what Lyotard would have considered knowledge, a set of provable values.[61] Such claims to tell truths as Hesiod uses above became an essential part of didactic poetry, and could be realized in different ways, for instance through the knowledgeability didactic poets assigned to themselves as experts in the

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[55] Scodel (2007) proposes the tool of family resemblance to get to grips with didactic poetry's nature; cf. Fowler (1982, 40-42).

[56] Lyotard (1979, 42). Cf. Kennedy (2000, 163-165).

[57] Lyotard (1979, 38).

[58] Lyotard (1979, 53). This interrelatedness between the subject-specific knowledge that single projects convey and its role in the ever-changing foundation of our moral institutions can also be extended to educational theory in general. As Moore (1974, 12-13) already explained, there may be such a theoretical basis behind a work that its content may be set up in a way respective of its underlying goal, hence either to teach something specific or more societally apt.

[59] Effe (1977, 40-56).

[60] Hes. *Op*. 10.

[61] Lyotard (1979, 44). The translation in Bennington (1984, 24) of the term to designate 'truth', "a horizon of consensus", denotes the underlying idea that truth is only relative very well.

fields treated by them.[62] In this way they were also able to appropriate to themselves the competence demanded of them as senders, because their expertise allowed them to claim to be able to prove and defend their knowledge.[63]

Hence, it seems useful to apply the principles that Lyotard delineated for narrative knowledge to the study of didactic poetry. If this analogy may be stretched out to the generic standards of didactic poetry as well, this would also mean that, in line with Lyotard's thought, there will be an underlying system constituting the pedagogical conveyance, the narrative pragmatics. It is Lyotard's belief that we always adhere to some general system to set forth our thought, and this system is what Lyotard understands as the pragmatics of knowledge.[64] Such pragmatics are installed in didactic poetry as the characteristic pedagogical elements possibly involved in it, the elements of didaxis, and therefore form a frame from which the pedagogy may be actualised always again in the reader.[65] Considered as such, the idea didactic poetry is the prototypical form that inspires diverse strata of instantiations, whether they be seriously didactic or not. Didactic poetry, then, in the definition presented on the first page, is the general idea, the master narrative,[66] of which the extant poems are the actualisations. With Lyotard, I believe that it is important to leave space for these instantiations themselves as so-called "différends", individual markers of the overarching idea.[67] We will therefore keep in mind the pragmatics underlying all the poems to see if they applied the same framework, and if a different use of didaxis also prefigures a change in intent.

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[62] E.g. Man. *Astr*. 1.1-6, where he explicitly claims to be the first to recount the stars in a new fashion, and 5.1, where he states that he will go even further (cf. Landolfi [2003, 97-109]). Instances of authority creation would not need to be so straightforward as the ones discussed here, as an author could also display his claim more playfully, as for instance Aratus does. He is actually already highly knowledgeable in his conception of the signs that he claims to seek from the gods (Aratus, *Phaen*. 10-12). This is playfully shown in his employment of these very same signs in his poem, as his acrostic λεπτή in Aratus, *Phaen*. 783-787 shows. Volk (2010, 205-208) for example discusses this use. Hunter (2008, 166-175) also makes some useful observations on the legitimacy of the truth claims made by the earliest didactic poets until Aratus.

[63] Lyotard (1979, 39-40).

[64] Lyotard (1979, 38-39): "Their narration usually obeys rules that define the pragmatics of their transmission" (Bennington [1984, 20]).

[65] Kennedy (2000, 163): "And yet, we have seen (…), that pedagogical communication is not reducible to such formally defined relations of communication and, indeed, that the pedagogical effect is plotted teleologically not from the point of its production, but rather from wherever, whenever, and whatever happens to be its point of reception."

[66] Although Lyotard himself seems to oppose this term in its principal modern definition (consider e.g. the discussion in Boeve [2014, 24-25]), the master narrative remains quite a functional term to apply with some caution.

[67] Lyotard (1986, 63-64). Cf. Boeve (2014, 26).

The option will therefore remain open that poems are constructed differently in their specifics as "différends" while merging into the overarching genre of didactic poetry. I have stated that the poets may build up their poems differently to claim their own position in the genre and create their unique focuses. It may then be assumed that there is a reciprocated relation between the overall pragmatics underlying the genre and the individual intent triggering the poetic instantiation. It may be interesting to observe how this explicit teaching altered as the form of didactic poetry changed, whether this be through progression in time or through variation of the intention. Discovering how this didaxis came to the fore in the diverse didactic poems may therefore render us a prolific framework of the legitimacy of the diverse categorisations proposed in paragraph 1.2. It is time to enunciate what framework will be used as the ruling principle in the continuation of this project.

## 1.4 Investigating Didaxis: The Tools

It is, thus, the aim of this study to observe the operations of didaxis in didactic poetry. Hence, we need to find a way to approach its specific instantiations, the poems, so as to deliver us general as well as particular insights into the application of didactic methods in the didactic poems. A combination of narratology (for the passage-specific) and mixed methods (for the overall picture) should enable us to examine the specific poems most fruitfully.

First, we will discuss the narratological perspective. It is a generally accepted position that our interpretation of a text depends on the greater context in which we read it, hence also the generic label we attach to it.[68] Yet, to trace this generic context in didactic poetry is a complex undertaking, as I have shown above.[69] A narratological approach will help us define the genre more explicitly by chunking the texts into their diverse narratorial elements: narrators, narratees, and narrations.[70] All these constituents should display narratorial functions throughout the diverse poems in a semi-uniform way that enables the real, actual reader to presume how the narrative might proceed qua didaxis.[71] It might be superfluous to mention that this entails a division between the intra- and extratextual audience, and thus "il

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[68] Fowler (1982, 24); Fludernik (2000, 286-288).

[69] Pp. 6-13 of this project.

[70] Esp. De Jong (2014, 17-131) gives a useful overview of the application of narratology in Classics and will therefore fulfil the role of a guiding study here. Cf. the more concise list of necessary elements listed by Altman (2008, 21-27).

[71] Cf. Günthner (2014, 311-313), who points out that for the communication genre, thus real-life communication, the same rules apply concerning the making of presumptions on the basis of the generic elements recognized. The idea remains the same, however, for both literary and communicatory methods.

destinatario nel testo e il destinatario del testo".[72] This way, we can extract the general principles of what we would consider didactic poetry, as well as the specific divergent character of the diverse poems.

Admittedly, in this regard too didactic poetry is a peculiar case. It does not contain a narrative in the sense that it narrates events strictly speaking.[73] Nevertheless, even if we do not grant didactic poetry the label 'narrative', we cannot say that there was not clearly some narratorial drive urging the authors to present their elementary material in an unnecessarily variable manner that alternates between different kinds of direct and indirect instructions and regular story-telling in the digressions.[74] Also, all key elements to apply a narratological approach, such as the presence of a narrator and a narratee and different layers of embeddedness, are manifestly present in didactic poetry. They delimit didactic poetry as a clear-cut narrative genre of its own. The only task awaiting therefore is to indicate these factors and investigate if there appear some significant divergences from the norm to be extracted from the case studies in their totality, possibly dependent on an alternation in didactic intent.[75] An element that one may especially think of in the case of intergeneric distinction is the insertion of digressions in the poems to set them apart from each other.[76]

The second tool will be that of mixed methods. Although the field of mixed methods is not singularly definable due to the plurality of interpretations as to how it should be applied,[77] we can be sure about its universal aim: the integration of quantitative and qualitative

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[72] Schiesaro (1993, 130). Cf. Clay (1998, 17-18): "The hard won distinction that has now emerged is that there is a difference between the poet of a poem and a poet in a poem; that there is a difference between the readers of a poem and the reader in a poem." When referring to the audience that is inside the text, I use the terms, intratextual, internal, and implied audience interchangeably, as they all allude to the readers who are to a greater or lesser extent to the audience that is given character within the text. The opposite applies to the extratextual audience, that I will also refer to as external or actual audience, i.e. the audience that will in reality read the poem, from outside the text. The terminology and exact definition of such terms is a difficult phenomenon, as one quick glance at Schmid (2014, 301-309) manifests.

[73] De Jong (2014, 17) names this as one of the two primary restrictions in her definition, the other being the presence of a narrator.

[74] This narratorial drive is one of the key features proclaimed by Altman (2008, 18-21) as a prerequisite for narrative in general. Also, an overall narrative may not be absent after all, as Fowler (2000, 205-219) would argue, who envisions the motive of the teaching as a plot on its own in these narratives. Cf. Cowan (2018, 269-271), who also propagates the admission of narratology within studies of didactic poetry.

[75] Further elucidation on the specific application of narratology per poem will be given on the spot if this turns out to be necessary or beneficial. This will involve both the more general picture of didactic poetry at large and its specific instances.

[76] De Jong (2004, 10) lists five sorts of embeddedness for secondary narratives which may function as useful categorisations of digressions in didactic poetry. Another useful element to be considered is the differentiation created between the internal and the external student by way of addressing, in order to create two different readings of the poem. This process is coined "radical narrative apostrophe" by Kacandes (2001, 141-196).

[77] Plano Clark & Ivankova (2017, 56-59).

approaches.[78] Mixed method research believes that these two can be combined to constitute a beneficial framework with the best of both sides. This leaves scholars a lot of room to decide on their specific employment of the method.[79] It is important to note here that this project will restrict itself to the utilisation of the quantitative analyses in order to gather interpretable data. These data, moreover, will lie more at the foundation of this research project as markers of clear statistical significance of for instance the use of certain forms of instructions.

What does this mean? As it is in my opinion still necessary to begin and end a philological project (which this project essentially is) on an interpretative note, there is only space for quantifiable data in the middle of my project, and data must be interpreted too.[80] Also, the extent to which the tool is used is restricted, as this project is on the whole more concerned with the displaying of didactic tendencies than with the gathering of concrete percentages; the latter approach would leave the project too narrowly minded and would take away the possibility to delve deeper into the consequences the didactic tendencies lead to. There would, namely, be insufficient time to consider all statistical elements within all poems, and we would already get a viable image by exploiting the didactic tendencies on a more relative scale. The mixed methods will therefore be specifically used in so far as it supports me in obtaining analyses on significant didactic tendencies that can then be analysed within the greater whole. Altogether, this means that data will be extrapolated from the poems to be interpreted qualitatively with the aim of shedding a light on the goals the poets foresaw with their didaxis.

The benefit of this additional tool is that it allows me to make more distanced observations, as opposed to the close reading of the text. These will be based on the relative preponderance of certain didactic instructive modes that may be found in the poems and will be categorised as such concerning their instructional behaviour,[81] to find out if certain poets had other concerns with their instruction than we would generally expect, in line with the

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[78] Plano Clark & Ivankova (2017, 35); Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004, 17).

[79] An overview of these specific applications can be found in Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004, 21-22).

[80] At the same time, the employment of mixed methods in this way helps me to partially avoid a general problem attributed to the combining of qualitative and quantitative research, coined the 'incompatibility thesis' (e.g. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie [2004, 14-15]). Proponents of this thesis claim that the nature of qualitative and quantitative research are different to such an extent that a combination of both is impossible (*contra* Bergman [2008a, 10-21], who proposes a whole set of arguments against such positions). It is to the advantage of this project that the two paradigms will not be intertwined, as the problem just described will not occur in this manner.

[81] An example of such a project is especially Gibson (1998, 71-92), who compares the use of direct and indirect imperatives in Latin didactic poems and prose texts to find out how they differ from each other.

divisions made in modern studies, as these were discussed in section 1.2. The gradual abundance of didactic instruments will form an argument for the interpretation of specific didactic poems and their intentions.

In the following chapters, the poems will be treated diachronically, in the process of which passages, representative of the greater whole, will be selected and assessed on the way they try to educate. These will function as guiding passages to showcase the observations made on the more general level of the poems in their totality. Some informative remarks, to broadly contextualise the poem chosen within the genre, will always be the starting position, supported by the theoretical and methodological considerations, after which (a) specific passage(s) will be analysed to lay bare their didactic specificities. The chapters will be closed with conclusions on the position the poem holds in the genre qua didaxis.

## 2. Hesiod: The *Works and Days*[82]

As I stated earlier, the *Works and Days* holds a difficult position within the genre of didactic poetry, as there was not yet a real idea of a didactic genre.[83] It has been argued convincingly that Hesiod himself was influenced by wisdom texts from the Near East in his textual design,[84] but the fact remains that we cannot definitely determine Hesiod's awareness of his generic position. Our view is even further troubled by the fact that archaic poetry in general originates in an oral form.[85] This may have caused some changes in the text that Hesiod may not have foreseen. Still, these problems should not constitute too great a difficulty, as the overall text is likely to have remained the same and Hesiod himself is the one who was imitated: it is thus likely that his successors adopted his scheme and claimed the *Works and Days* for their didactic tradition.[86] The question remains, however, what Hesiod had planned as his programme with the poem; simply to convey truths or is there more?

Leaving these questions further aside for now, we should look at the development of the didaxis, beginning with a bird's-eye view over the whole poem to steadily specify our scope on the basis of the distant remarks following now. The theoretical and methodological observations will lead the way towards an exposition of notable characteristics of the Hesiodic didaxis.

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[82] For the *Works and Days*, I use in principle the text as rendered by Most (2006, 86-153) as the edition I refer to. The translations are my own throughout the whole project, unless it is stated otherwise.

[83] At least, if there were rules at all, they were not documented for us, but they made that the ancients were probably able to recognize a genre. Cf. Depew & Obbink (2000, 3-4) and Canevaro (2014a, 27-28). Osborne (1997, 25-28) makes the useful observation that metrical writing was the default form for those earliest didactic poets, which also problematises the label of didactic poetry, because the authors did not have another choice.

[84] West (1978, 3-25); Schmidt (1986, 13-15). Aloni (2010, 124), however, states that there is little use in considering didactic poetry in light of this tradition, as it is so widespread all over the world in different eras. It would be better to consider the *Works and Days* as a text on its own in his opinion.

[85] Walcot (1962, 13-36); Toohey (1996, 23-32); Pavese (1972, 1-2)

[86] Cf. Zhang (2009, 2-3), who assigns to Hesiod this invention of the poet qua educator that becomes such a guiding principle in didactic poetry. The number of papyri from antiquity as well as the manuscripts from the Byzantine period makes it seem the more likely that the text of the *Works and Days* as we have it goes to at least some extent back to the Hesiodic original, although we can obviously never be sure of this. For a broad overview of the transmission, showing that the poem was transmitted fairly uniform, cf. West (1978, 75-86). I should note here too that I believe the whole of the *Works and Days* to belong together, as is now a much better accepted position than it used to be. My main reason for this position is the centrality of the themes of justice and working throughout the poem and their recurring importance. For further arguments, cf. Walcot (1961, 13-15), who argues that the same system of treatment persists throughout all parts of the poem so that they are logically combined as a whole, and Lardinois (1998, 319-336), who shows the closeness of the themes in the diverse parts of the poem.

## 2.1 The Role of the Narration in *Works and Days* Didaxis

In narratological terms, the first thing that stands out is the general openness with which the persona of the author appears as a clearly overt narrator. And not only he, but also Perses, the narratee-student, gains character,[87] although we lose him out of sight eventually, when he is largely replaced by a unspecified 'you'.[88] Hesiod clearly remains the teacher but proceeds towards a generally anonymous exposition of advice on what is expected of a labourer to live well throughout the year (381-828). This is in stark contrast to the first part of the poem, where Hesiod sets out to convince Perses that it is more advantageous to be righteous (1-380).[89]

But the contrast between the two parts manifests itself in more ways: whereas the first part, treating justice (δίκη), is more personal and contains more embedded digressions,[90] the second part is much drier as regards its content and contains more instructions and descriptions.[91] This contrast, again, is probably a consequence of the nature of the two differentiating parts: while the first part mostly concentrates on the theory of becoming a better person, the second delves deeper into the practical side, how to gain a livelihood as a morally sound person.[92]

Nevertheless, there is a close link between the two passages, and that is the fact that working and ethics are closely intertwined. Hesiod has first described that immoral acts (like

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[87] E.g. Hes. *Op.* 37-41, where the precondition for the present situation is described, that gives some insight in the relationship and moral behaviour of both characters. Kerschensteiner (1944, 152-154) states how this personal element is introduced in the *prooimion* to the *Works and Days* as a surprising feature of this new kind of epic. Interestingly, as Aloni (2010, 125) notes, some expectable biographical facts, like indeed Hesiod's name are omitted. They have already been treated in the *Theogony* (v. 25) and it is unnecessary for the following narrative to restate them.

[88] Griffith (1983, 58-59). We may point to v. 414 as the moment we lose track of Perses in the *Works and Days* for a long while, although he does recur by name (e.g. *Op.* 611). Cf. Clay (1993, 30-32) on this phenomenon. Zanker (1986, 26-27) believes that these unspecified addressees are meant to be the *deiloi*, people of low social status, as Perses is himself identified as such (v. 214). This is an interesting reading from an historical point of view and addressing these lowlier people might indeed be Hesiod's goal with the general advice, but in the text itself, I believe that such a historical reading should be evaded. It is more likely, if we were to ever search for the intended anonymous addressee, that it would be the good person (ἐσθλός, v. 295) who Hesiod names as the person who is able to take heed of good advice and to act according to it too. Cf. Schmidt (1986, 69-70), for whom this addressee coincides with '*die Arbeitswilligen*'.

[89] This is also the delimitation for the first part on justice (δίκη) proposed by Beall (2006, 168-170). Nevertheless, I would grant to the last portion of the first part, vv. 286-380, the label of transition passage, as there already appear some more practical instructions as they abound in the rest of the poem (e.g. vv. 354-359).

[90] The personal plot I have already mentioned above. The whole part of vv. 42-212, furthermore, could be considered digressions, all piled up in one part of the poem.

[91] E.g. vv. 504-558, where Hesiod first describes winter and its effects to then give exact instructions on how to get through the season.

[92] Cf. Zanker (1986, 27-28) and Naddaf (2002, 350).

Perses') are always punished abundantly (238-247), since Zeus keeps an eye on man (252-262). And the only way to avoid punishment is to live righteously, and hence to work, as Zeus ordained to man.[93] If one does not work, he is dependent on others and that makes him despised by the gods, and thus an opponent to δίκη.[94]

The *Works and Days* consists of two parts, then, but this is not attended by a change in narratorial design, except for the fact that the narration remains on the primary level in the second part and only sporadically diverts from it to treat embedded stories. Also, it is significant that as the poem proceeds, the style becomes ever more impersonal. The narratorial roles, that were first inherent to the background story, lose their status and become simple message-conveying bodies. Hence, the narrator shifts from a subsequent-cum-simultaneous narration to a purely simultaneous one,[95] namely the speech he is presently uttering. Hesiod makes a clear distinction between the personal past and the more impersonal present.[96]

A pattern may be seen in the way these personal elements are used, if we consider for instance the so-called *Nautilia*-passage (618-693). In this passage, we regain sight of Perses, who seems to think about taking up sailing for a living. Although Hesiod would normally dismiss this branch of work, because it makes for a poor and hard-wrought life, he still gives advice to Perses.[97] After a general introduction on the preconditions for sailing and some

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[93] This may be inferred from vv. 42-47, where the plan to make people start to work is first attributed to the gods in general but next to Zeus specifically. Cf. Perysinakis (1986, 102-103) and Nelson (2018, 364-365).

[94] Hes. *Op.* 309-311. A further argument for this unrighteousness of not working is given, although more implicitly, at Hes. *Op*. 399-401. It is stated there that men who do not work have to beg with their families for resources at other people's houses, an undertaking at which they will eventually fail. These people, who are explicitly stated to be idle, are to be identified with the people who take "by means of [their] tongue" (Hes. *Op.* 233, translation Most [2006, 113]), and are bad due to this. Cf. Hes. *Op*. 356.

[95] These terms are borrowed from De Jong (2014, 73-74). Contra Nünlist (2004, 31-32), who perceives the *Works and Days* only in light of simultaneous narration. Cf. Aloni (2010, 141), who speaks of a '*sistema deittico*' in the *Works and Days*, which is a further argument for the suggestion that the text should be read as if the events were happening at the exact moment of the narration.

[96] It is interesting to think here also of the future that is predicted in Hes. *Op*. 179-201 and is also rendered more personal by the exclamation that Hesiod cries out to precede it (vv. 174-178). This part forms a clear warning of what the future will be like if humans will not act better. The fact that this passage forms part of an embedded story on the ages, in this case about the iron age, and thus belongs to a digression, leaves the interesting narratological question how the digressions relate to the whole in didactic poetry or at least Hesiod's story. A possible answer has been proposed by Currie (2012, 52-58), who would read into this digression some kind of history on which the readers may decide themselves. Cf. Beall (2006, 165-168) on the introduction of this race in the narration.

[97] This passage also gives us some useful insights into the authority of Hesiod as a teacher, because he knows little to nothing about seafaring, he tells us. Yet, through his connection with the Muses, that the poet emphasises again in this passage (662), he claims his ability to sing too of subjects he is not so knowledgeable of. Cf. Martin (2004, 49-50); Hunter (2014a, 53-54).

biographical facts about the brothers' father (618-640), Hesiod proceeds to give specific instructions (641-693). The instructions are clearly aimed at his brother, too, who was just revoked in the preceding (641), and are again strengthened by strong personal notes.[98] As soon as Hesiod is done with these specific notions, he returns to the overarching narrative without so much as a hint, except for the recurring theme of keeping in mind the right time (καιρός) and the plan to instruct in line with the general conceptions (μέτρα) of the specific subject.[99]

Hesiod, who is no expert in sailing and has no reason to treat it in his overarching account, needs to establish this reason and finds it in Perses' keenness to become a sailor, fictional or not.[100] Just like at the start of his poem, where the treatise on justice is justified by the conflict between Hesiod and his brother, specifically the fact that Hesiod is impaired by Perses' immoral behaviour,[101] Perses' formerly unknown wish to become a sailor introduces the chance for Hesiod to speak about something that he is not so well acquainted with. It also allows him to elaborate on his victory in a song-competition and his subsequent devoting the awarded prize to the Muses, as they are his source of inspiration. This, at first glance unnecessary, implementation of instructions leads to a programmatic statement by the poet to establish his authority as a muse-inspired poet who could sing about anything.[102]

In conclusion, when we come across strongly deliberative narratorial elements, they are signified normally by a strong personal urge. This personal element, again, seems to play a role only insofar as it hands the narrator an opportunity to set forth his instructions.[103]

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[98] E.g. Hes. *Op*. 682-683, where he personally discourages Perses from sailing.

[99] These μέτρα are mentioned in 648, in the middle of the *Nautilia*-passage, and in 694, at the start of the new passage as the very first word. Significant here is the fact that the sentence containing μέτρα - μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι ("take heed of the measures") – lacks any measure to denote its marking function. Most (2006, 143) is very clear in making this sentence the start of a new section, but keeping in mind these measures is also clearly the conclusion that one can draw from the *Nautilia*-passage as the most important lesson. Cf. West (1978, 318, 326) and Rosen (1990, 102-102), who explain this role played by the μέτρα.

[100] For the question of the creation of Perses as a fictional character, I refer to Schmidt (1986, 18-21) and Stamatopoulou (2016, 1-17). Cf. Kerschensteiner (1944, 187-188).

[101] This is also the situation Stamatopoulou (2016, 2) sketches as the reason for the composition.

[102] Cf. n. 97 on p. 22. Cf. Rosen (1990, 99-113), who regards the passage as programmatic in other ways too, namely, to create a poetic distinction between his own programme and the heroic tradition.

[103] Cf. Clay (1993, 23-33), who reads into the addresses to Perses a whole system of motivational expressions that likewise show the progress Hesiod's brother is making. This searching for a reason by Hesiod for displaying his thought seems to me to be a remnant of the Near Eastern tradition, where there was still a clear situation created in which the speech act became a secondary narration (e.g. *The Instructions of Shuruppak*, especially 1-13 and 73-82; cf. Griffith [1983, 57] and Nünlist [2004, 32-33]). Hesiod would then have chosen to leave out this primary narration that would construct the background, and would have inserted it in his own narration to create less detached instructions.

Moreover, we may surmise on the basis of the *Works and Days* that the narratological default form of didactic poetry is a simultaneous narration by a primary narrator narrated to an equally primary narratee. Also, as far as we may go with the evidence so far and if Hesiod turns out to be representative, we can tell that there is at least some degree of overtness inherent to didactic poetry, inviting the reader to take on the position of student in the narration, and that this needs further specification in the diverse poems to follow. This applies to the degree of involvement of the narratological personae as well.

## 2.2 The Conspicuous Elements of Hesiod's Didaxis

Now that we have investigated the manner in which Hesiod frames his didactic narration, it is time to consider the specific methods he applies to teach. Some clear patterns may already be seen in his general technique. For example, Hesiod did not limit himself solely to the versifying of his instructions but left an extensive part for additional material developing an amplificatory reasoning around his protreptics. Thus, it has been argued, instruction normally follows a basic scheme that may be varied, but still possesses some elements that are common to all instantiations.[104] The developer of this scheme, Horne, took up the idea that all instructions in Archaic Greek wisdom poetry – *hypothèkai* is the term coined by the ancients – conform to this pattern, that sees an address, a command, and an explanation developed as to constitute instruction.[105] It may further be supplemented by the description of a situation, but nothing else is permitted in Horne's scheme.[106] Although this scheme is very useful in catching most of the instructions, some elements are still lacking to make it entirely feasible.

For instance, what can be said about the larger framework, which goes beyond the individual occurrences of *hypothèkai*? It is generally agreed that Hesiod divided his work into different secluded sets, which separately treated one overarching subject.[107] Take for example the passage 694-760: the passage is clearly demarcated by an overarching comment that functions as an introduction to the following instructions and a concluding remark to

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[104] Horne (2018, 41-51).
[105] Horne (2018, 35) also creates a scheme and an example so that it may be immediately clear:
"Apostrophe — Command — Explanation
"My friend, do it this way, it's better like this.""
[106] Horne (2018, 41-42).
[107] Walcot (1961, 15-16); Heath (1985, 247-249). Canevaro (2014b, 100) notices that Hesiodic passages in general could be and were taken out of context and still understood clearly for their appropriate message, in contrast to the Homeric epics, where some part of the interpretation would be lost. This decontextualization would be a logical consequence of the delimitation developed by the author.

underscore these.[108] The main body, consisting of instructions, discusses all kinds of specifics that are associated with the idea of 'doing all at the right measure', thus being mindful of the different aspects of timing and circumstances.[109]

What Hesiod does, here, is creating a framework in which one all-embracing remark introduces a set of instructions enfolded in it, concluded by a summarising point, similar to the point opening the section. These instructions are neatly ordered inside this framework as related ideas, and thus ensure that the instructions compiled in such sections are exhibited through logical patterns.[110] On top of this, the scheme of *hypothèkè* proposed by Horne is not inclusive in the way it characterises the instructional phases. A typical Hesiodic formula may well be directed to an anonymous addressee – thus lacking an apostrophe – with or without an elaboration, which may moreover not form a causal relation, but can also be of final or even gnomic value.[111] As a last point of critique, I feel that Horne's dealing with the beginnings of the *Works and Days* is insufficient;[112] indeed, the first approximately 300 lines of the poem constitute the theoretical background that lies at the basis for the following practical advice, as Horne proposes, but it aims also to advise on its own, namely pointing out how to live.[113] The digressions that appear pre-eminently in this first section are also part of this advice in

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[108] The opening comment can be found in Hes. *Op*. 694: μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι· καιρὸς δ᾽ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἄριστος. ("Keep in mind the measures: the right timing is the best with all things"). The conclusion, Hes. *Op*. 760 (ὧδ᾽ ἔρδειν·, "work like this"), forms the logical ending point and transition to the next passage. Cf. approximately Hes. *Op*. 388-378, where some general instructions that should lead to self-sufficiency are framed in light of the ultimate goal: to avoid neediness (Hes. *Op*. 388-404, 477-478).

[109] These aspects of timing contain for instance marrying at the right time (vv. 695-697) as well as marrying someone of the right age (v. 698). For the circumstances, one may think of marrying a maiden in your own society (vv. 699-701).

[110] Contra Fakas (2001, 72-73), who discusses the Hesiodic structuring principle as purely associative. I believe that this way of looking at the structure is logical, yet runs the risk of limiting the Hesiodic program to a mere extempore narration without a clear didactic agenda. The text that we possess is too structured for this possibility, as the construction as described above displays. Indeed, when the specific instructions are embarked on, the structure is more associative, but the poem always follows a clear pattern that introduces the separate thoughts.

[111] The lack of apostrophe is especially visible in the second part of the *Works and Days*, as we have already observed above and Horne (2018, 39-40) also notes. Schmidt (1986, 53) has calculated that only 61 of the 331 verses at the start of what Schmidt considers the second part (vv. 286-617) can be confidently described as advice for Perses. This means that the greatest part is not aimed to a concrete addressee at all. Also, a clear distinction can thus be made between causal elaborations (e.g. 759), often accompanied by γάρ, and final elaborations (e.g. 539-540), diversely opened with subordinate conjunctions like ἵνα (539) or ὄφρα (544), and for the negation μὴ (546). The gnomic expressions are to be placed somewhere in between, because its values are more omnivalent in their appliance. Also, they tend to stand looser from the instruction they follow in their syntactical construction, so we should not expect such telling and explicit conjunctions as was the case with the earlier elaborations (e.g. 719-721, 723).

[112] Horne (2018, 59).

[113] E.g Hes. *Op*. 213: ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δ᾽ ἄκουε Δίκης, μηδ᾽ Ὕβριν ὄφελλε· ("O Perses, but do you listen to Justice, and do no not strengthen Outrageousness").

their capability to explicate certain conditions, for instance as indicated in the introduction to the myth of Pandora (42):

κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν·
"For the gods have hidden livelihood for men."

The idea is elaborated on here that there is need for man to work, because we are not so fortunate anymore as was the case in the prior human condition (43-48). Life in general has worsened, and so we need to adapt to our circumstances.

Thus, a special explicatory role may be laid bare for these digressions too,[114] if the context allows it, and we cannot disregard their instructional role. This does not mean, however, that all digressions are explanatory panels in the *Works and Days*. We have already considered the personal notes that Hesiod applied in the *Nautilia*-account, that laid claim to authoritative knowledge,[115] but also Hesiod's descriptions of circumstances function otherwise.[116] Still, Hesiod limits himself to embedded stories that remain inherent to the overarching narrative. Their value, if not explanatory, shows thematic and cogent relations to the narrative background in which they are found.[117]

What we have considered here enables us to form an image of what Hesiod's didactic methodology looks like. In general, Hesiodic instruction follows a fixed instructional pattern, that does however throughout the poem appear in various forms, in order to create a diversified educational process. Although the poem follows an overarching line of thinking, Hesiod is willing to depart from it to broaden the usability of his poem, wherever his personal

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[114] In fact, Horne (2018, 47) admits such a role for digressions in the second part of the *Works and Days* while skipping over these earlier digressions.

[115] Esp. pp. 22-23 in this project. Cf. Haubold (2009, 22-23) on Hesiod's establishment of a didactic persona in his own work.

[116] E.g. Hes. *Op.* 582-588. Kerschensteiner (1944, 186-187) notes the ornamental refinement of this description and others in contrast to the general narrative.

[117] Cogent (or persuasive) is for instance Hes. *Op.* 35-41, where Hesiod explicitly states that he has been treated unjustly by Perses and refers to an earlier dispute. Hesiod's confidence that they will resolve the dispute along the lines of Zeus' justice and his use of language to express the evilness of the kings (δωροφάγους, "gift-eating", v. 39, νήπιοι, "fools", v. 40) and Perses (ἁρπάζων ἐφόρεις, "You took it grabbingly", v. 38) clearly convey an image of Hesiod claiming his own right in opposition to his contender and planning to prove his right (v. 35). Cf. also the grammatical incongruity of vv. 40-41 to express Hesiod's anger (Canevaro [2014b, 104] interprets these Hesiodic oxymoric expressions as a way to highlight the narrator's superior knowledge). Thematic are all descriptive specifications, like Hes. *Op.* 582-588, where a simple indication of the hottest of summer is transformed into a description of events associated with this time of year.

background story may lead him. This might, in fact, partially explain the seemingly disorderly mishmash of instructions that has intrigued scholars so often.[118] The personal time and again intrudes into the narrative and diverts the instructions.[119] Furthermore, Hesiod allows himself to abandon the overarching teaching line too, although this is often not for long and most of the time also profits the main narrative.[120] For Hesiod, the didactic programme, conveyed in structured instructions without a regulated order-principle, is most important, and the whole composition builds up as a logically following body of instructions.

## 2.3 An Elaboration on Hesiodic Didactic Principles

So far, I hope to have laid bare the concrete structure of the Hesiodic instructions and the different overall methods to amplify his didactic message. These are not solely confined to dryly exposed enumerations of *hypothèkai*, but also involved strategies to draw attention and elaborate on further aspects that the author considered useful. Now it is time to discuss how this variegated system of instructions that we have analysed above manifests itself in a particular instance. The passage 286-380 will function as my example, as this part can be considered the medium conjoining both greater wholes of the theory and the practice in the *Works and Days*.[121] It will not be claimed that this passage is totally representative of the whole work, but I believe that it shows a close relationship with all aspects of the poem as a whole.

The programmatic way in which Hesiod opens this passage already implies a change of method in instructing Perses (286), from the more oblique use of storytelling to the concrete use of direct instructions:[122]

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[118] Kerschensteiner (1944, 150); West (1978, 45-46); Lardinois (2003, 1-2).

[119] Cf. Lardinois (2003, 1-20), who argues that the poem can be read as an angry speech like the ones we also come across in the Homeric poems. In this way, Hesiod would make a difference between the internal and external narratee, where the external narratee is implicitly encouraged to take the side of the poet, who lays waste to the ethic persona of the internal narratee and thus makes the side of this internal narratee uninviting.

[120] The most interesting exception to this qualification is formed by Hes. *Op*. 509-535: this is an extended description of winter and its happenings. Hesiod seems to even lose himself in his descriptions and only at the end to retrieve his programme, when he states καὶ τότε ἔσσασθαι ἔρυμα χροός, ὥς σε κελεύω ("and then you should clothe yourself in the fence of your body, as I bid you", v. 536).

[121] Kerschensteiner (1944, 149); Beall (2006, 165).

[122] Cf. Lardinois (2003, 5-6), where he states that indeed this passage as a whole is characterised by a much more forceful address to Perses specifically. In opposition to my scheme, however, he believes that this part of the *Works and Days* begins at v. 274, possibly because his focuses are on the structure of angry speeches rather than on the division of content, taken as the guiding principle here.

σοὶ δ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐσθλὰ νοέων ἐρέω, μέγα νήπιε Πέρση.

"To you, Perses, great fool, I will say good things, thinking well."


This statement strongly involves Perses in the poem again and at the same time points out the programme Hesiod will now follow. It clearly leaves the preceding thoughts on justice to reintroduce the topic of living justly.[123] Hesiod, to begin on a theoretical note, first sets forth the different paths one can follow (287-292) and enumerates the different kinds of man (293-297). The attention then shifts to Perses again, who is reminded to get to work (298) and is offered a detailed argumentation on why to work (299-306), strengthened with a simile, one of the rare occasions where such a visualisation is applied.[124] Vv. 307-319 form an extensive re-elaboration of these arguments with loosely connected thoughts and exhortatory comments. Next, the first real instructions appear with great refinement (320-334). These are still oblique but are soon followed by direct protreptics (335-362).[125] The final part, vv. 363-380, consists of a combination of direct and indirect instructions, where the addressee is nevertheless still present.

What we perceive in the present passage is a clear focus on teaching, embarked on with some theoretical remarks that leave it to the actual audience, aside from Perses, to

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[123] West (1978, 229) discusses this as the start of a passage to fulfil another ring, namely that in which there were first two myths, one on labour and one on δίκη, then instructions to live according to δίκη, and now, to finish it, instructions to make people work.

[124] Hes. *Op*. 304-306. Kerschensteiner (1944, 174) marks another image conveyed as a way to emphasise the Hesiodic message, namely Hes. *Op*. 219-221, where some abstract concepts are visualised to show their tangible effects.

[125] I do not agree with the proposal of Most (2006, 117), who would make an amendment in the text – against all manuscripts – by replacing vv. 361-363 by vv. 364-366 in linear order. His argument, that vv. 361-363 are posited much less awkwardly after a passage about keeping livelihood in store, is in my opinion not sufficient for a transposition. The message of vv. 361-362, namely, fits perfectly well after the preceding. These lines run: εἰ γάρ κεν καὶ σμικρὸν ἐπὶ σμικρῷ καταθεῖο, // καὶ θαμὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἔρδοις, τάχα κεν μέγα καὶ τὸ γένοιτο. ("For if you would put little upon little, // and you would do so often, it would also quickly become a lot."). In the preceding, Hesiod had claimed that even taking a little (καί τε σμικρὸν ἐόν, "even though it is a little") is corrupting, and the following lines form a perfect argument to this, pointing out that a little may quickly become a lot. I understand Most's concern with the following line, reading ὃς δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐόντι φέρει, ὁ δ᾽ ἀλέξεται αἴθοπα λιμόν· ("and who brings to what is there, he will ward off keen hunger"), and his subsequent willingness to move it, but for this line too it is unnecessary. The particle δέ points out that a new point is to be made, that does not necessarily fall in line with the directly preceding. I believe that this is the case here: the line must be read in opposition to the combination of vv. 359-360, where Hesiod proclaimed the idea, in the same syntactical manner, that it is bad only to trust on other's resources. Line 363 shows a more active attitude in gaining your own livelihood, and in this way makes for a very logical transition point to the following. On top of this, this line order keeps the distinction between direct and indirect instructions intact, as delignated above. This order is also preserved in Solmsen (1970, 65) and West (1978, 113).

decide what kind of person they will be (287-297). The implied narratee, Perses, has already been decided for (298-299):

ἀλλὰ σύ γ᾿ ἡμετέρης μεμνημένος αἰὲν ἐφετμῆς
ἐργάζεο Πέρση, δῖον γένος,
"But you, Perses, of eminent origin, always remembering
our behest, work,"

This explicit addressee justifies Hesiod's continuation of his plea on the internal level of the poem and initiates the subsequent instructions.[126] The apparent need for Perses to work exemplifies this justification. The first real educational directives, leaving the preceding theoretical basis, appear in line 320, when Hesiod discusses the moral laws man is bound to, again with a lengthy explication (321-326). The instructions on how to live continue until 334, after which the addressee is again spoken to and told to act piously (335-341), after which the final part (342-380) uses various ways of expression to convey various teachings.

These previous instructions clearly constitute the main part of this instructional episode but are not easily identified. For instance, we come across explicit imperatives/infinitives that are directly applicable to the student, but the third person cupitative optatives no less so. A last instance of instructional mode form the indirect advices, that do not show the pretension to be so forceful, but do teach for those who can apply them correctly.[127] This diversification creates a framework where there are different levels of understanding for different kinds of persons (that is, people with different capabilities to understand), where a more careful listener would grasp the meaning of certain protreptics

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[126] Heath (1985, 250); Clay (1993, 29-30) believes that the address indicates temporary moral amelioration, because of the epithet δῖον applied to Perses. Although I would be somewhat cautious in interpreting this epithet as a well-deserved "good conduct medal" (why would Hesiod otherwise let his motivational instruction be followed by a lengthy reasoning on why it is better to work [vv. 299-306]?), and would be more inclined to see the epithet as a motivational marker for Perses to earn his place as an eminent person, the general point in Clay – that this address enables Hesiod to proceed – is common in both our interpretations. Cf. Kerschensteiner (1944, 185) and Aloni (2010, 126).

[127] For this deeper level of instruction that needs to be extracted by the reader, one can consider for instance v. 364: although the reader will probably be able to see the truth in such a statement, only the more considerate ones will know how to deal with this (Hunter [2014, 49-50]). Cf. Daly (1961, 45-51), Schmidt (1986, 102-104), Lonsdale (1989, 403-412) and Aloni (2010, 132-133) on how this double-levelness of the *Works and Days* may be seen in the so-called *ainos* (Hes. *Op*. 202-212) on the hawk and the nightingale, presently the most investigated passage in this respect.

much better.[128] The instructions are abundantly defended with further explications confirming their truthfulness, that are often framed as gnomic truths, as in 375, explaining that women are untrustworthy:

ὃς δὲ γυναικὶ πέποιθε, πέποιθ᾽ ὅ γε φιλήτῃσιν.
"He who trusts a woman, trusts thieves."

Hesiod is fond of such conditionally used phrases and applies many of them, almost as if to vindicate these utterings. Especially in the section scrutinised here, he seems to state whatever pops up in his mind and this creates the feeling that instructions are sometimes a little banal, as in vv. 354-358, where different phrases essentially express the same idea with minor variations: give to others if you can. Hesiod thus make his instructions as clear as possible.

Hesiod's overall programme qua didaxis, then, displays the tendency to be as complete as possible on the points put forward. In the sample of the *Works and Days* discussed here, too, the personal background story persists to create a dramatic situation motivating towards work, and the instructions are built up around the personal character of the poem, mostly with great amplification of the thoughts. Hesiod's work is clearly centred on these instructions, although the form he chooses for them is not definite; it can be either a concrete *hypothèkè* or a more concealed message depending on the actual audience addressed. Finally, there is a pattern of overarching and embedded instruction that alternates between global statements and the specific exemplars to create clear-cut frames.[129] This makes Hesiod's narrative more organised and creates a text that is very serious in its specifics as well as in its overall organisation. It would probably be clear from this investigation that it would not need to be doubted that the *Works and Days* is a seriously intended didactic poem.

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[128] Hesiod himself differentiates between the morally good (295), who will be able to follow only advice given to them by superiors, and the morally supreme (293-294), who can think for themselves.
[129] Consider also the fact that, at least in the section discussed above, a difference is made between the way the direct imperatives are used. In the case of the overarching narrative, they are real imperatives, albeit also of the third person (299, 306), but on the more specific level they become imperatival infinitives (e.g. 336-338).

## 3. Aratus: The *Phaenomena*[130]

With Aratus, it has been claimed that we reach the first real didactic poet, as he could explicitly choose the prose variant but chose instead to pursue poetry of his own account and deliberately versified a prose source as a marker of this.[131] Yet, at the same time, a problem arises with this versification: whereas the earlier authors are generally relied on to have been the developers of their own ideologies, based on the knowledge they themselves processed, Aratus is believed to have had no personal knowledge of his subject prior to composing his *Phaenomena*, and is thus probably not an expert.[132] Next to this, modern scholarship has discovered ever more aesthetic features, which clearly fulfil no other function than to show the poet's capability to refurbish his plain source.[133] This naturally prompts the following question: what was Aratus' intent in creating a relatively accurate – as it was definitely considered as such –[134] poetic version of an already extant treatise?[135]

Although I cannot hope to offer a suitable answer to the question what goal Aratus aimed to achieve in composing the *Phaenomena*, we might at least be able to decide on his intratextual positioning in the didactic genre, to put forward suitable claims on his implicit intentions.

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[130] The primary text of the *Phaenomena* has been taken generally from the edition of Mair & Mair (1921).

[131] Sider (2014, 22-24). Cf. n. 16 of the first chapter and Volk (2012, 225-226).

[132] Effe (2005, 33): "Ob die *Phaenomena* nun den 'formalen' oder den 'transparenten' Typ repräsentieren: In jedem Fall Markieren sie ein eklatante Distanz zu normal-'sachbezogener' Didaktik, und ihre typologische Spezifität ist Resultat und Ausdruck eines ganz bestimmten literarhistorischen Kontexts." In fact, he is said to have essentially copied the material as it was written down by an astronomer named Eudoxus (on whom, see Kidd [1997, 14-18]). Nevertheless, as Tueller & Macfarlane (2009, 238-245) demonstrate, the information given in the *Phaenomena* was still often considered useful and even prominent.

[133] Ludwig (1963, 447-448). Esp. Jacques (1960, 48-61) on the famous acrostic in vv. 783-787 and Bing (1990, 281-2850 on the *sphragis* in v. 2 of the *Phaenomena* are renowned examples of the Aratean stylistic quality. Volk (2012, 225-229) delves even deeper in such pictures to suggest that Aratus even hints at such intratextual hidden signs, to be discovered by the attentive reader. Toohey (1996, 49-51) asserts, I believe correctly, that the insertion of such playful secrets are a consequence of the newly found literacy and hence an exploitation of this. Apparently, Aratus was seen as an example to follow in this by later authors, as has been exploited in various studies (e.g. Springer [1984, 131-134], Casteletti [2012, 83-95], Campbell & Ryan [2017, 301-303] and Kronenberg [2018, 1- 32]).

[134] Its renown as such was widespread, as later authors saw themselves necessitated to ameliorate the content of the *Phaenomena* where this turned out to be inaccurate. A famous example of this is the commentary by Hipparchus, who was a great name in the study of the astronomy in the second century BC. From all the works he was supposed to have written, only his commentary to the *Phaenomena* survives (Nadal & Brunet [1989, 305-354]; Tueller & Macfarlane [2009, 232-235]), a fact that is quite telling for the importance attached to this poem.

[135] Erren (1967, 4).

## 3.1 The Anonymity of the Aratean *Personae*

The first element that needs specification is the narratorial design established in the *Phaenomena*, to find out how the poet generally creates a didactic situation. While the composition clearly follows the Hesiodic tradition,[136] it is striking how differently both narrate their instructions. In the first place, Aratus gives no information about himself or his student, so they are left nearly anonymous.[137] Where we may be able to extract information on both *personae*, it remains intrinsic and we need to be careful in interpreting it. The image that we may extract on the basis of the internal hints is still limited to the narrator, as the internal audience could be nearly anyone, probably intentionally, as we will consider later.

What do we know about the narrator? He manifests himself as the knowledgeable teacher who possesses considerable knowledge on the signs in heaven and could purvey information on any of these;[138] but he also knows his limitations, for instance when discussing the rotations of the planets (460-461):

οὐδ᾽ ἔτι θαρσαλέος κείνων ἐγώ· ἄρκιος εἴην

ἀπλανέων τά τε κύκλα τά τ᾽ αἰθέρι σήματ᾽ ἐνισπεῖν

"And no longer do I dare these; may I suffice

in naming the circuits of the unerring [planets] and the signs in heaven."

Yet, this statement does not simply signify the teacher's unfamiliarity with his subject. It primarily forms a programmatic statement that such cases are not his focus; erring matters are not correctly interpretable.[139]

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[136] Ludwig (1963, 438-445); Kidd (1997, 8-10); Fakas (2001). Porter (1946, 158-170), furthermore, points to the fact that Aratus was even following Hesiod quite accurately in the metrical particularities, such as the application of words of the same syllabic length.

[137] Bing (1993, 99; 101); Ševčíková (2018, 152-153) notes that Aratus does not even display himself in any sense as a teacher, but uses only verbs like σκέπτομαι, meaning 'to look at', when actively exhibiting his teaching role, and thus places quite some autonomy with the readers themselves when they are looking at the signs. After all, the actual inferences to be made on the basis of the recognition of the signs is in most parts of the *Phaenomena* of only limited importance to Aratus. Fakas (2001, 93) points out that the verb διδάσκειν is however used to describe how the moon instructs (734; 793).

[138] E.g. Aratus, *Phaen*. 1036-1043, where Aratus, by way of a *praeteritio*, names some, probably unexpected, phenomena from which signs may be inferred for future events. These phenomena, furthermore, are all examples of small substances that can predict the weather at large, and thus form a strong contrast to the great constellations in the sky, that are some of the biggest markers. The contrast, then, shows the general applicability of this semiotic approach to all kinds of creations.

[139] Aratus, *Phaen*. 454-459 discusses the fact that you cannot decide on their future position on the basis of the other signs, as was the case with the regular constellations. This makes it impossible to interpret their value.

We get the image of a teacher who is strictly aware of his goal, manifesting and explaining the signs, but distances himself, through his absence, from the material in a way that Hesiod did not. Indeed, this leads to a seemingly more objective narration,[140] but it also destroys a lot of the immediate background possibly underlying the didactic situation instantiated here. This leaves the didactic programme qua intentionality, that we expect to familiarise ourselves with early in the poem, quite awkward.[141] The internal overtness of the Hesiodic characters enabled the teacher to establish a didactic composition in the present, but Aratus leaves himself no such possibility; his opening prayer to Zeus is the passage coming closest to a programmatic *raison d'être* for the poem, being the fact that there are signs out there to be interpreted. However, there is also a possible reason to believe that specifically Aratus was the right demonstrator of the signs, if we interpret the following passage as Volk does:[142]

τά τις ἀνδρῶν οὐκέτ᾽ ἐόντων
ἐφράσατ᾽ ἠδ᾽ ἐνόησεν ἅπαντ᾽ ὀνομαστὶ καλέσσαι
ἤλιθα μορφώσας.

"These all had someone of the men who are no more
made up and intended to be called by a name
after giving them a form altogether."

The conceptualiser of the constellations, albeit denoted as someone already passed away, is someone who was able to create constellations with his mental institutions, and this is exactly the conceptualisation that Aratus reiterates with his poem on the constellations as signs. This link, furthermore, is underscored by the alleged *sphragis* (ἄρρητον, "unnamed") in v. 2, that

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Contra Semanoff (2006, 313-314), who regards this passage as an Aratean apology to his student, to strengthen Aratus' own position as a teacher of the other subjects he does treat. I believe that this interpretation is only partial and draws the attention away from all statements on the interpretable and uninterpretable courses of the stars in the present and the preceding passage (452-453; 455-459), that are most logically the focus of Aratus' programme. His further argument, that Aratus only possesses his own, mortal, knowledge (in direct opposition to Hesiod) also makes little sense, as Aratus explicitly evokes the muses to show him the way (v. 18). Cf. Ševčíková (2018, 151).

[140] Fakas (2001, 89-94) thinks that this has to do with some alleged form of objectivity claimed by Aratus. By distancing himself, he would take away his own role and thus his own interests and create a more objective picture.

[141] Erren (1967, 9-10). Fakas (2001, 90-91) notices the fact that the first addressee only appears in v. 75.

[142] Aratus, *Phaen.* 373-375. Volk (2012, 219-221).

is found in the line immediately after Zeus' mentioning, who is the first creator, before Aratus, who then takes second place. Further than this, we are left guessing why Aratus explicitly decided to compose this poem.

For the narratee, it is generally agreed on that his anonymity is deliberate, because Aratus did not want to limit himself to a single person or class.[143] Hence, we find references specific to various professions, and Aratus is very clear in telling that no sign applies to anyone in particular.[144] On the contrary, everybody should investigate the signs according to their own institutions, and this necessarily leads to a dichotomy in what students gain from the interpretation of a phenomenon, as vv. 1005-1009 imply:

πλειότεροι δ᾽ ἀγεληδόν, ἐπὴν κοίτοιο μέδωνται,

φωνῆς ἔμπλειοι· χαίρειν κέ τις οἰίσσαιτο,

οἷα τὰ μὲν βοόωσι λιγαινομένοισιν ὁμοῖα,

πολλὰ δὲ δενδρείοιο περὶ φλόον, ἄλλοτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ,

ἧχί τε κείουσιν καὶ ὑπότροποι ἀπτερύονται.

"There are more in herds, when they are mindful of the pairing,

filled with a voice; one could believe that they rejoice,

how they call alike to the happily crying,

now a lot around the bark of a tree, now on top of it,

Where they lie and flap their wings, returning."

In this passage, the signs of storm are discussed, but not all readers are clever enough to penetrate their value, so various signs are taken at face-value, as mere phenomena by these readers who are incapable of understanding them correctly.

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[143] Semanoff (2006,304): "Aratus' techniques encourage the readers of the poem to insert themselves into the role of the student." Faulkner (2015, 79-85) shows that, at times, even women should feel addressed in this Aratean universe. Cf. Van Noorden (2009, 256) and Ševčíková (2018, 153-154).

[144] Sale (1966, 161-163); Bing (1993, 100-101). Ludwig (1963, 448) is somewhat more narrow-minded in claiming that it was not the sailors and farmers that were foreseen as primary audience, but sooner the Hellenistic *litterati*. Although this may in principle be true for the extratextual environment in which the poem could have circulated, I believe that there is no evidence to suppose that on the intratextual level we are dealing solely with a more intellectual readership, although this readership will obviously exercise its own specific reading of the poem that may be more profound than the other internal readership's.

A point clinging to this interpretational versatility is the value of the written composition as well, in which scholarship has detected some highly artistic features.[145] Aratus is constantly notifying us that there is more underneath everything, and his poem functions as an example for this, with its stylistic features that only arise for the more attentive reader.[146] In this way too, Aratus is second after Zeus, creating a semiotic system of his own, but in this case a micro-cosmos to Zeus' macro-cosmos.[147]

This creates a diversely interpretable text where the reading depends on the extratextual audience instantiating the poem. There is no internal situation limiting its appropriation, so every time the poem is instantiated, it becomes a simultaneous narration again: Whatever the readership will be, they will be just as involved as any other reader or even the internal reader who is enacted within the poem. Paradoxically, the overall covertness of this poem in narratological terms leads to a more open narration.

## 3.2 Transferring Signs in Structured Instructions

It is now time to consider the definite form Aratus created to convey his message and what that overall message was. In Aratus, the connection between these has long been considered problematic, as the text's structure cannot easily be identified as aiming at a certain pattern and scholarship has explored the different parts as individual segments that are not necessarily related.[148] This position, however, overlooks the fact that there is clearly a recurring theme guiding the poem: the semiotics.[149] Most instructions cling to the concepts of observing and, acting in accordance with, the phenomena,[150] and the Stoic reading of the poem can be seen as a consequence of the importance attached to the signs, as they are

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[145] Cf. p. 31, n. 133.

[146] Fakas (2001, 53-54) points out that these hidden values also change our interpretation of the poem as a whole.

[147] Volk (2012, 210-212). Cf. De Cattalaÿ (1996, 7), who points out that the specific *Phaenomena* section in the poem (vv. 1-732, with v. 138 being spurious), next to the following section that is also known as the *Diosemeiai*, is as long as "a double solar year in the Egyptian calendar". This points to a micro-cosmic structure of at least the first part of the *Phaenomena* as a whole as we know it nowadays.

[148] Sale (1966, 163-166); Erren (1967, 132); Bing (1993, 103).

[149] Cf. Volk (2012, 209-240). Marauch (1970, 127-128) in a sense already fetched the idea that the gods, in this case Nyx, made signs for human beings to scan and use them in their advantage, thus not the other way around, namely that there are signs to attest of the gods' Stoic, omnipresent benevolence.

[150] This can be learned from a quick scan of the scheme produced in Bing (1993, 109).

produced by the beneficent god Zeus to guide humanity.[151] As such, all aspects of the poem quintessentially aim to expose the semiotic character of the cosmos.

If we take this theme to be the guiding line in the *Phaenomena*, we find out that there is indeed a more thorough structure that underlies the narration.[152] And this structure is also clearly explicable if considered in light of the signs. At the start of his poem, Aratus follows Hesiod's hymn, but now with a more sympathetic Zeus, to point out the aim of his poem, to tell of the signs.[153] Followed by this, there appear a variety of heavenly signs – signs that are more easily distinguishable than the later earthly phenomena, to raise the reader's awareness of his semiotic surroundings (19-461). As if it is by now clear what the practical use of reading the signs is, Aratus next explains extensively how you could even decide on the constellations' position by looking at the position of the other signs in the sky, a skill that is useful when foggy weather for instance does not allow you to see clearly (462-757). When all essential background information has been set forth, Aratus for the first time delves deeper into the use to be extracted from interpreting their position (758-908). This leads the poet to a broader exposition of signs to foretell the weather in general (909-1141). At the end of the poem we find some advisory remarks that the student should take account of if he would like to continue studying the signs (1142-1154).[154]

What these last lines, that form the ultimate conclusion and would thus logically recall the most important theme,[155] suggest, is that the reader will not even be an expert when he has carefully investigated the *Phaenomena*.[156] Although he will now have a profound basis to

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[151] On this Stoic interpretation, Effe (1970, 167-182), Effe (1977, 40-56) (contra Kenney [1979, 72]), Fakas (2001, 18-19). I believe, however, that the stress they put upon their primarily Stoic interpretation of the whole poem is somewhat overstated, as the proem is the only place where this element occurs very strongly. It therefore seems more logical to think of this element as the background to the concrete theory of the semiotics (cf. Kidd [1997, 10-12]). Also, the same benevolent attributes are ascribed to the goddess Nyx in the poem (408-430), which would place her on the same Stoic level as the supreme god Zeus. This would in my opinion rather weaken the power attributed to Zeus in the proem and would thus leave the Stoic interpretation feebler.

[152] Contra Fakas (2001, 72-76). Cf. Erren (1967, 2-5).

[153] Vv. 1-18. Ludwig (1963, 430); Kidd (1981, 356-357).

[154] Cf. Ludwig (1963, 429-434), Sale (1966, 160-164), Kidd (1997, 5-7) and Fakas (2001, 205-206). Garbačiauskas (2009, 24-27), furthermore, explains that throughout the poem symmetrical patterns may be discerned.

[155] Fakas (2001, 216-218), where he also interestingly notes the complete absence of the religious theme in the conclusion, that typically concluded the Hesiodic "Days". I would suggest that this atypical keeping silent about the god, whose presence was such an important feature for the Stoic reading, is another argument in opposition to this same reading.

[156] Esp. Vv. 1143-1152, cf. pp. 32-33, n. 139 and the passages discussed there as well.

proceed from, there is still a lot of insecurity if one is not experienced enough, as vv. 1143-1144 manifest:

μᾶλλον δὲ δυοῖν εἰς ταὐτὸν ἰόντων
ἐλπωρὴ τελέθοι, τριτάτῳ δέ κε θαρσήσειας.
"The hope of two [signs] pointing to the same may
Be better, and you would be confident with a third."

The reader is not done when he has gained the theoretical knowledge on semiotics, then, but should also familiarise himself with the practical side.[157]

Hence, with this statement Aratus unambiguously manifests his explicit intention, to create the background to the actual practice, and he structures his narrative in sequences that would as such lead to one another.[158] The *Phaenomena pur sang* (1-732), that only sporadically include concrete instructions (e.g. 40-44, 287-294) but are furthermore specified with as much side-information as is considered necessary to identify them, conclude with the general applicability of the heavenly signs in relation to each other (752-732).[159] Nevertheless, there is not yet a real feeling of directly useful application.[160] Ultimately, when the nature and workings of the heavenly signs have been clarified, more instructions follow (733ff.) with specific examples of application, now that the reader is aware of how they work through the instances of the heavenly instances that preceded. The student now knows enough about the

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[157] Cf. vv. 758-760; Erren (1967, 299-300); Van Noorden (2009, 268). Contra Hard (2015, 167), whose translation of vv. 1153-1154 is quite misleading. He translates "Keep a close eye on these signs, all taken together, throughout the year, and you would never draw an ill-founded conclusion from what you see in the sky" for the Greek original (Τῶν ἄμυδις πάντων ἐσκεμμένος εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν // οὐδέποτε σχεδίως κεν ἐπ᾽ αἰθέρι τεκμήραιο, 1153-1154), but this reading would suggest that these instructions would need to be taken up every year again. I, contrarily, read the lines as stating that the reader, after having looked at the signs *for* a year (εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν, 1153, cursives are my own), will be capable of interpreting the signs without any hardship (again, σχεδίως does imply that there may be a few mistaken interpretations even for the experienced student, but that in general this student has few problems with interpreting them).

[158] Contra Sale (1966, 160- 164), who believes that the diverse parts all fulfil a separate function without forming a necessary pattern as a whole.

[159] Cf. vv. 892-908, where this system comes to the fore once more, but now as a micro-system that exemplifies the bigger picture. Vv. 892-898 describe the position and specific characteristics of this constellation, the so-called Manger, and the rest is formed by specific instructions that set forth the events to be foretold by the Manger's standings.

[160] The only thing we get to know about the benefice of interpreting the signs at this moment is that we can, through knowing their position, approximately retrace the time of year (462-465) or examine how far the sun is on its way back up (559-562). Except for these introductory remarks, however, we are left uncertain as to how we must apply these considerations in light of the constellations we would practically observe in the sky.

ruling systems and applications, but the task remains to learn more about the signs that remain unknown in the world.[161]

We have now considered how the narrative is ordered to lead to the theme of semiotics in the grand worldly system, but there is also more to be said about the specific instructions used by Aratus. Whereas Hesiod applied well-ordered directive instructions that were normally not dependent on the theoretical background traced at the beginning of that poem (*Op*. 1-382), the describing background and the instructions in the *Phaenomena* are so interdependent that to solely treat the instructions would make for an awkward composition. This interdependence can also be observed in the way the real instructions are set up, mostly transferred in conditional sentences that realise the relationship between circumstances and consequences.[162] It is unique for Aratus' didactic programme to be as complete as possible in exposing the whole semiotic system, including the actual inferences to be made on the basis of the signs' specificities, and the consequent instructions. The audience, through this thoroughness, will not be wronged in embarking on his semiotic studies but gets a functional framework to proceed from.

The image to be extracted from the Aratean didaxis is that of a highly inclusive and serious, yet clearly objectified, exposition. Nevertheless, there is also room for repose in the narration, for instance in the δίκη-digression (100-136). This story is inserted with a thematic relation to the main narrative, but fulfils no further explicit constitutive role in the narrative, except to explain the position the Maid, another heavenly sign, holds.[163] Hence, the thematic link established is only an aetiological one.[164] This notwithstanding, the Aratean programme would not be so typical of our teacher if there were not also some possible intrinsic values to be read under the surface, that scholarship has thoroughly investigated.[165] There is thus

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[161] Unknown still, that is, through the will of Zeus (768-772). Cf. Volk (2012, 227) on the invisibility of certain signs that can only be resolved by the attentive reader.

[162] E.g. vv. 783-798 on the conclusions that may be inferred from the position and appearance of the moon and vv. 988-993 on signs that may tell one if the weather will be clear or not.

[163] Faulkner (2015, 75-86) does claim some further relation for this digression with the main narrative, but only concerning the view Aratus would have held towards the constitution of the world in opposition to Hesiod's pessimistic view. This still leaves the digression as a part that only shows a tight thematic link with the main narrative.

[164] Cf. vv. 637-646, where it is explained why the constellation Orion departs from the sky as soon as the Scorpion arises.

[165] Van Noorden (2009, 262-265) points out that, here too, there are different interpretations possible of the figure of the Maiden alone, so that it is easily possible to come up with divergent ways of looking at her.

always a tight link between digressions and the main narration, but the digressions may still treat something entirely different qua intrinsic value.

What we generally perceive in the *Phaenomena*, then, is an internally straightforward argument set forth by a teacher who works structurally towards his eventual goal. This teacher, although he displays some narratological similarities to the Hesiodic persona, is far less personal, but clearly uses this to his advantage by rendering the narration accessible to anyone. Also, on the level of instruction, Aratus applies a likewise structured method of teaching, but on a much larger scale. If considered like this, it becomes clear, on the basis of this structural repetition of what are essentially instances of semiotically interpretable phenomena, that Aratus is not so much trying to convey information as much as he attempts to teach a skill – how to interpret the signs rightly. His didaxis, then, is more impersonal than we have seen in the *Works and Days* and in this way is equally applicable to both the internal and external audience. They are, moreover, uniformly guided to the actual teaching, that is different from what we would at first sight expect to be the Aratean programme.

### 3.3 An *Exemplum* of Aratean Instructions

The final part of this chapter will consider a particular passage in the *Phaenomena*, 778-818,[166] to showcase the didactic tendencies we have observed above on a smaller scale. The introductory remarks of this passage inform us on the rules to apply the moon as a sign-conveyer and especially which parts to focus on (778-782). After the reader has been made sufficiently aware of the peculiarities of the moon and the inferences to be made on their basis, the teacher sums up the most common signs that we may observe (783-804), interrupted by another informative note (799-801). Finally, after some caveats (805-810), there follow a few last signs (811-817), that are followed by a general conclusion on the lunar signs (818).

What we perceive here is a system characteristic of the Aratean whole; a few overall remarks on the phenomenon under discussion are first offered, so that the reader may not be mistaken about its characterising traits. This exposition instantiates an enumeration of the signs that may be extracted from the specific position and form the phenomenon assumes at

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[166] This passage has been chosen for the simple reason that it forms the first instance of applied instructions after the overall theoretical framework. These instructions all apply to the phenomena relating to the moon.

different times, where necessary with more elaboration.[167] Aratus thus creates a clear scheme from which the reader should learn what inferences can be made on the basis of all available particularities of the signs. Furthermore, specific to this passage is the fact that the instructions also comprise the exceptions to the rule described. In the Hesiodic fashion,[168] Aratus describes that certain days adhere to different rules, but apparently, he does not think it worthwhile to tell in what way:[169]

σήματα δ᾽ οὐ μάλα πᾶσιν ἐπ᾽ ἤμασι πάντα τέτυκται·

"But surely not for all days are all signs established."

Aratus tells us here that some signs must be interpreted otherwise, but he omits the details about what we will have to look for in that case. This is a task left for the student who is willing to proceed on his own account.[170]

Also, when we regard the enumerations of actual instructions in this passage, we find out that most of them are indeed conditional, but also oblique; what one will have to do is left uncertain.[171] In fact, the only real instructions here too are those that tell the student to watch well around him. In line with the Aratean programme, no room is left for anything else than teaching semiotics. If the student would want to learn how to go on from these instructions, he should consult Aratus' predecessor Hesiod, who elaborates on this extensively.[172]

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[167] Cf. vv. 822-890, where the concrete instructions are also alternated with more general remarks (832-833; 880—884) to lead the instructional narration and make the instructions logical in the context.

[168] Hes. *Op*. 765-821. Cf. Fakas (2001, 67-69).

[169] Aratus, *Phaen*. 805. The following lines, 806-811, function as simple *exempla* to the phenomenon described, thus attesting to the fact that there are certain specificities to familiarise oneself with.

[170] Nisbet (2001, 635): "Apart from a few wondrous introductory lines it is a detailed observational record, testable and useful." It is interesting to note that this statement was made in a modern nature-scientific magazine, and there is thus at least some basis to seriously regard the *Phaenomena*.

[171] The main exception in the concrete instructions form vv. 794-795, but this example is no more instructive in what needs to be done:
εἰ δέ κέ οἱ κεράων τὸ μετήορον εὖ ἐπινεύῃ,
δειδέχθαι βορέω· ὅτε δ᾽ ὑπτιάῃσι, νότοιο.
"But if the upper horn rightly inclines forward,
Fear the Northern wind, when it falls back, the Southern wind."

[172] Hunter (2014a, 21-23). Cf. Fakas (2001, 135): "Diesen äußeren Eindruck erweckt aber v.a. eine Reihe von thematischen Berührungspunkten zwischen beiden Texten, die die fragliche Partie als meteorologisches Pendant zum "Bauernkalender" Hesiods und so als Fortsetzung des dort dramatisierten Bauernunterrichts erscheinen lassen."

With Aratus, then, we perceive an author who is almost single-mindedly composing his handbook on semiotics, nearly without diverting from his main narrative.[173] At least, so much can be said about the intratextual position preferred by the teacher. As I have mentioned, Aratus seemed well aware of the fact that his poem was contrarily also aimed at an extratextual readership, to which he intentionally accommodated his composition. With this external audience in mind, it may become more logical what Aratus aimed to do. Indeed, on the one side he was explicitly teaching his audience how to interpret, but on the other, he was showing the more literate that there was indeed much beauty in being able to perceive the signs.[174] Our teacher in the *Phaenomena* had a clear idea how to apply his didaxis so that it was applicable to whichever audience would actualise the poem. Kaibel's observation that Aratus must be seen as the teacher standing in nature with his student may not hold true,[175] but the idea is not completely wrong; if Aratus is not standing directly in nature and pointing out the signs, he is at the very least doing so on different levels within the text.

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[173] The observation made by Erren (1967, 67), albeit aimed at a small passage only, that the *Phaenomena* "in sachlich mitteilender Ton gehalten sind", is therefore also quite to the point.
[174] Cf. Marauch (1970, 124; 131-132), who notes the fact that there are various smooth artistic remarks throughout the *Phaenomena* that are hard to observe at first sight.
[175] Kaibel (1894, 91).

## 4. Lucretius: The *De Rerum Natura*[176]

As the first Roman didactic poet to have sufficiently survived for our study,[177] Lucretius is an intriguing case in many respects. This is not least so because he is not solely a didactic poet in his composition, but is also clearly influenced by the rhetoric of his time.[178] The *De Rerum Natura* is overloaded with rhetorical arguments and these regularly seem to surpass Lucretius' didactic aims, prompting one to say that the poem is more about persuading one than about teaching.[179] Of course, in the earlier tradition of didactic poetry the element of persuasion also had some role to play, in order to trigger the student to follow the didactic programme, but this original constitution is completely reversed in the *De Rerum Natura*: here, the didactic content of the poem serves as the background to the actual aim of the poet, i.e. to convince the student that he should start to adhere to Epicureanism, as we will also perceive later in this chapter. Is there any way in which this rhetorical stance can be observed in the didactic strategies employed by the teacher-poet in instructing his student?

This is the question that the present chapter will investigate. As in the preceding chapters, we will first consider the narratorial structure of the poem, after which we will consider the general form applied by the poet to convey his argument. There will be special consideration of the Lucretian structuring methods in the specific arguments, as this focus might tell us more about the pre-eminence Lucretius might have given either to the didactic or the rhetorical aspect in his poem. Nonetheless, there are two preliminaries that we should beforehand take into account.

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[176] When citing from the *De Rerum Natura*, I hold on to the critical text as it was produced by Bailey (1900).

[177] We know of at least a small amount of previous didactic poems or poems written in the didactic mode. As Pöhlmann (1973, 848-850) demonstrates, there are some clear examples of didactic poems, written by for instance Ennius and Accius. Brown (1982, 77-78) uses this argument to show that Lucretius should not be sang loose from his contemporary context, because he was clearly influenced by concepts that had already found some popularity in his own time. Cf. Kenney (1970, 366-369) and Görler (1997, 193-207), who also point out that Lucretius can be pointedly placed in his context qua stylistics and Keen (1985, 5-7), who claims that there are clear markers for reading the historical context in the *De Rerum Natura*.

[178] Especially Classen (1968, 84-95) and Marković (2008, 34-46) show how this rhetoric is employed in the *De Rerum Natura* in practice. Furthermore, Schrijvers (1970, 7-8) enumerates more examples of scholarly work on Lucretian rhetoric and sketches the process scholarship in this specific element has undergone. Cf. Owen (1968, 123-125), who argues that the content of the diverse books follows the structures that contemporary rhetorical training prescribed, and Schiesaro (2007, 63-90), who argues that Lucretius was interacting with the laws in his poetic composition.

[179] Classen (1968, 81-82) pointed out this Lucretian concern for persuasion rather than education rather well in stating that our poet was not writing for an Epicurean audience but rather for an ignorant audience that would need to understand and validate the points put forward by Lucretius. His whole programme was meant to lead the reader to the Epicurean truth. Cf. Bruns (1884, 11-12) and Glidden (1979, 171): "Lucretius seems far more concerned with his poem as an instrument of conversion than with didactic requirements for a complete presentation of Epicurean theory."

First, there is the fact that Lucretius, in composing his poem, was undisputedly following the great master of Epicureanism, Epicurus himself.[180] Although I do believe that there are certain aspects in which our poet was clearly embarking on his own project, such as his choice to compose verses,[181] there are too many resemblances of Epicurean works to say that Lucretius was on an individual mission qua ideology, that he certainly adopted from Epicurus. This point is related to the second warning observation, that we cannot be sure that the structure of the poem at large would be the one envisaged by the poet in its final stage. As Lucretius died before he had finished the poem, there might be, at the very least, some passages that he would still have adjusted. There are even critics who would dare to state that the overall structure as we have it now was not the final stage that Lucretius had planned.[182] However this may be, such considerations should remind us to be careful in interpreting the overall structure of the *De Rerum Natura*, even if this encompasses the micro-level of the poem. It is now time to take into consideration the poem itself.

## 4.1 Memmius: A Serious Student?

The first thing that appears striking for those who read the *De Rerum Natura* is the fact that, while Lucretius clearly aims his poem towards a direct addressee, this audience soon loses its

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[180] Gale (2001, 8). With Sedley (1997, 1-5), I believe that Lucretius was in general following Epicurus' *On Nature* as his direct source. As Sedley convincingly shows, the structure of the *De Rerum Natura* mostly follows the pattern as we may retrieve it from this Epicurean work, with a lot of one-on-one parallels in subject between them at the same stage in the works. Of course, this should not lead to the exclusion of the other Epicurean works from our list of sources if we were to investigate the direct Epicurean parallels in the *De Rerum Natura*, such as the transmitted *Letter to Herodotus* (cf. Bruns [1884, 11] and Townend [1978, 267]), as we can be sure that they also had some role to play in the development of Lucretius' programme.

[181] This seems to be a very strange choice for an Epicurean, as the philosophical school of Epicureanism was occupied by the idea that poetry was an inadequate medium to convey truths (Cox [1971, 9]; Marković [2008, 15-16]). Lucretius himself was probably also aware of this problem, as he felt obliged to explain why it was for him necessary to explain his choice for poetry. The reason for this choice, he tells us, is that poetry may function as a pleasurable material to teach something highly serious in a way that is more acceptable for the larger public (Lucr. *DRN*, 1.936-950; 4.11-25; cf. Classen [1968, 104-105] and Gale [2001, 17-19]).

[182] Dalzell (1973, 425-427) concisely discusses the history of this debate from the early twentieth century onwards. Still, no consensus has been reached as to what the actual final form of the poem should have been. The two most likely options are that the poem would have at least been left ordered in the structural form that Lucretius had envisaged, thus in the main lines being as it is now (championed e.g. by Owen [1968, 122-123] and Sedley [1997, 6-7]), or that the last few books should be somewhat inversed (proposed e.g. by Townend [1979, 101-111], who would replace books 3 and 4 with books 5 and 6). I take the position of the first group, that the present composition of the poem as we have it must be the one Lucretius had planned for the simple reason that, otherwise, it would have been a logical first step for the poet to change the order of the books at an early stage already, and not leave them in their present order, while on the other side already ameliorating the design of the first few books, as Owen (1968, 123-125) and Sedley (1997, 7-14) manifest. Also, although I am not very familiar with the manuscript tradition of the *De Rerum Natura*, I cannot help but wonder why Lucretius would in this case not simply have omitted all the mentions of Memmius or replaced them.

face; while there are some mentions of a name, Memmius, he is in total named merely eleven times throughout the approximately 7000 lines the poem counts and in certain books he does not appear at all.[183] Various reasons for his limited presence in the poem are given, such as that Lucretius only inserted the named addressee for convention's sake,[184] or soon thought his undertaking to persuade this man a lost hope,[185] but such attempts to defend the limited presence of the direct addressee seem to me not to do justice to the complexity and general thoughtfulness of the Lucretian composition. Therefore, we will first consider Memmius' specific role when he certainly occurs to proceed from there to a broader examination of the relationship the teacher-poet creates for himself with the foreseen readership.

At the start of the poem, it does not take us long to find out that Memmius is indeed the addressee who should be convinced, and not without reason (1.26-27):

Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni

omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.

"[…] for our Memmius, whom you, goddess, wanted to excel

at all times, equipped with all things."

After calling on Venus as his ally (1.21-25), Lucretius states that it is apparently Venus' will that Memmius should excel in all things.[186] This goddess, as she is the one to cause the nature of

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[183] Townend (1978, 268) and Keen (1985, 8, n. 2), who also enumerates the occurrences and defends the general use of including the first two mentions of Memmius, that are actually not directly addressed to our addressee.

[184] Beye (1963, 164-165); this position is also supported by Roller (1970, 248), who states that it might be the case that the insertion of the name of Memmius at the places where he is mentioned only follows when Lucretius is in need of a supplement in that specific metrical position.

[185] Cf. n. 182 on the previous page. This interpretation is quite logical if we were to picture the historical Memmius as being the real internal addressee. This figure, as far as our sources can tell, performed a relatively small role in the Roman political world, but it soon became clear that he had great ambitions to become a powerful politician (Gale [2001, 22-23]; Volk [2002, 74]). This kind of a person, in my opinion, would not be too motivated to become an Epicurean, as this obviously meant that he would have to forsake his political ambitions, an Epicurean principle.

[186] The insertion of and prominence given to Venus are a fact that is also object of lots of scholarly dispute. Epicureanism believed that the gods played no role whatsoever in human life and thus a description of all that Venus contributes to the universe feels quite awkward, especially at the start of the poem. There is now, however, general consensus on the use of this Venus-theme: she is not the real goddess, but rather a personified concept that functions as the embellishment of the poem (Classen [1968, 104-105]; Cox [1971, 16]; Thury [1987, 287-292]; Gale [2001, 33-35]). This is also already briefly marked in passing in Lucr. *DRN* 1.28: quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem. "give so much more eternal sweetness to my writings, goddess." Later, for the reader who keeps this passage in mind, it becomes clear that this is really the only function that the goddess has to actually fulfil. Cf. Catto (1988, 99-103), who argues that Lucretius steadily makes sure to point out that it is indeed not the goddess of this introduction, but the atoms that create everything.

the universe as it is (1.3-20), is the only logical goddess to invoke as a helper. Her use, then, is twofold, as she is on the one side the creator of the cosmos as we perceive it, and on the other, apparently, assigns the poet to create the description of this universe, the poem.[187] The premise for the poem, however, is that there is a student who must benefit, Memmius himself, and consequently must learn how the universe functions.[188]

Lucretius' hymn to Venus does not stop here, however, as immediately afterwards (1.29-49), he encourages Venus to ensure that peace will rule, so that both the author and student will have time and opportunity to entertain themselves with the poem, as peace is the only workable circumstance for such enterprises.[189] Only after this, Lucretius states what he has planned (1.54-55):

nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque

disserere incipiam, et rerum primordia pandam,

"for I will begin to discourse for you on the highest account

of heaven and the gods, and I will disclose the beginnings of the things,"

So far, the proem,[190] that keeps Memmius in the role of addressee, has created a didactic situation to follow in which Venus has established the possibility to compose the poem, while Memmius functions as the direct reason for composition, being expected to learn how the things work.

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[187] This prompts me to argue that the poem, in this sense, functions as a micro-cosmos to the macro-cosmos that is the universe. This idea is more often pursued in the case of the *De Rerum Natura*, for instance by Thury (1987, 270-287) and Volk (2002, 78-79). It is the belief of this hypothesis that the practice as Lucretius prescribes it of slowly coming to the truth of the things in real life is exemplified by the analogy of the word-images in Lucretius' poem, where we come across concepts that will slowly but surely gain meaning through our interpreting them. Cf. Clay (1997, 190-192), who discusses this methodology of looking at the surroundings in more detail. Contra Marković (2008, 121-122).

[188] Lucr. *DRN* 1.25.

[189] Lucr. *DRN* 1.41-43: nam neque nos agere hoc patriai tempore iniquo // possumus aequo animo nec Memmi clara propago // talibus in rebus communi desse saluti. "for neither can I lead this (sc. the poem) in an unfair time for my fatherland // with equal mind nor the famous offspring of Memmius // keep away from the common salvation in such things." Asmis (1982, 466-467), furthermore, argues that Venus, in being able to create peace for mankind here, is becoming some kind of Epicurean supreme goddess, as she is capable of working along the lines of Epicureanism in creating peace. This would be the case, because she can instantiate peace in everything out of its own free will.

[190] I follow here the division recommended by Cox (1971, 2), who demarcates vv. 1.1-61 from the rest of the poem as a general proem to the whole poem.

After this, Memmius appears only sparsely, and when he does, his naming normally introduces a new section within the poem.[191] His function as an addressee, seen in this light, turns out to be that of a an indicator of transition, letting the actual reader know where in the narrative we are. An especially clear example of this is 2.182:

Quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta.
"and these things we will later make overt for you, Memmius."

But not even in this application is the vocative unique; throughout the poem, the teacher is very clear on what he is going to teach and he is not afraid to actively involve the reader in this process.[192] On the contrary, the reader is led slowly but steadily to a higher Epicurean level, until finally he will be able to live as was obliged by the master himself. And to know how to live well is a consequence of knowing how the universe works.[193] With this form of proceeding, at least on the most superficial level, the poet has reached his intratextual goal, to show the student the *rerum natura* (1.25), and consequently, how to live.

Obviously, he aims to achieve the same with the actual audience, but this may somewhat change the logic; whereas we have seen that the implied student, Memmius, must be taught according to a quasi-divine plan, there are no such hints for the actual reader, who remains detached from the narration's intratextual story as it is embedded for the sake of Memmius, to explicate why the poem was explicitly composed.[194] Therefore, it is also likely

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[191] 1.1052, 2.143, 5.8, 5.93, 5.1282. There are a few occurrences that are a bit harder to indicate as such, namely 1.411, 2.182, 5.164 and 5.867, at least according to the division made in Bailey (1900) and Rouse (1924). These places can however be easily explained in the same way that the other passages can, as I will soon make clear.

[192] E.g. Lucr. *DRN* 3.177-178, 3.417-424. Cf. Volk (2002, 79-81), although she is, I believe, nevertheless a bit exaggerating in stating that Memmius can almost be seen to actively respond and take part in the philosophical debate. Gale (2005, 175-176) argues on the basis of this very personal style in general that Lucretius might be seen to revert to the pre-Hellenistic version of didactic poetry again. Mitsis (1993, 123-125) states that Lucretius can do this by putting forward Memmius as a negative example not to follow.

[193] Cf. Lucr. *DRN* 5.1281-1282, where it is stated that Memmius can now work out an argument concerning the accidentality of the work himself, after he has listened to a similar argument in the directly preceding passage (Lucr. *DRN* 5.1241-1280). Cf. Erler (1997, 79-80), who discusses the fact that Lucretius' didactic poem aims to cause direct deliberation in the reader.

[194] Cf. n. 192. Contra Townend (1978, 271-272), who would argue that instead the scarcity of references to Memmius makes it easier for the reader to identify with the general addressee. This might be the case, but then still there is a difference between the actual and the implied reader, as it is improbable that any reader other than Memmius would for instance feel addressed in a personalised situation as e.g. 1.410-417, where Lucretius states he would go to great lengths if Memmius will not immediately listen (cf. Rouse [1924,34-35] and Mitsis [1993, 117-118]). Beye (1963, 161) suggests that the poem is not composed for the benefit of anyone else than Lucretius, as a sort of private dialogue. This, however, seems highly unlikely to me, as

that there is another intrinsic method of study planned for this external readership. We may best find this other method by looking at how the teacher actually planned to convey his messages, i.e. through his instructions.

## 4.2 Instructions to Persuade or to Teach?[195]

It is striking how very orderly Lucretius applies his didaxis to instruct his student.[196] Not only does he very explicitly proclaim what he is about to tell, but also does he, within his argument, structurally mark the point we have reached.[197] There are various words marking the progress we have made so far in the didactic process, so that we can be in no doubt at which point of the exposition we find ourselves. The only question is, then, how are these expositions constructed?

As I have just mentioned, there is a clear word pattern that guides the reader, and this closely assigns to the poem a working structure. It becomes manifest that there is always first an introductory section, in which Lucretius sets forth his goal, for instance 4.673-674:

Nunc age quo pacto naris adiectus odoris

tangat agam.

"Now come, I will set forth in what manner contact with smell

touches the nostrils."

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Lucretius is far too conscious about his role as a teacher of others, as for instance 3.258-261 manifest; such remarks, where Lucretius points out some obvious drawbacks for his exposition of points, in this case the absence of an adequate vocabulary, would be superfluous when meditating for yourself.

[195] Because of the vastness of instructions in the *De Rerum Natura*, I have chosen to limit myself in this paragraph specifically to the content of book 4, only discussing other parts when they seem to me highly significant. There is no significant reason for choosing this book, but I feel that all books are equally representative in this respect. Book 4 deals more specifically with the Epicurean thoughts on perception (cf. Martin [1972,19]).

[196] Minadeo (1965, 452-460); Classen (1968, 89-92); Schrijvers (1970, 167-171).

[197] E.g. Lucr. *DRN* 4.110-175, where Lucretius embarks on his argument with 'nunc age' ("come on", 4.110) with an imperative, after which he makes his point. This is followed by 'primum' ("first", 4.116) to state his first argument in favour of this proposition, followed by further points ('praeterea', "on top of this", 4.123; 'sed ne forte putes', "but do you not incidentally think that", 4.129). 'Nunc' ("now/next", 143) introduces the next point to be made, defended by 'enim' ("after all", 145) and 'quapropter' ("next to this", 154), and concluded by 'ergo' ("so", 159). The point just made forms the basis for the following allusive argument ('quasi…sic', "as...thus", 161;163), after which one more argument ('praeterea', 168) precedes the final conclusion, that strangely does not cling to such an indicational connector. In the next paragraph of this chapter, a study will follow of the Lucretian elaboration on this element that also takes account of the content. Cf. Marković (2008, 70-79), who discusses these different indicators in longer measure.

Similar places inform us that there are few restrictions to the content discussed by the poet in this part.[198] Nevertheless, we do already get an image of the specific subject to be treated, as Lucretius on a meta-narratorial level already puts forward the specific question he will answer.[199] After the issue at hand has been put forward, the answer immediately follows, a process that is repeated until eventually Lucretius' complete didactic programme with the one book momentarily treated has passed.[200] It only becomes striking, however, with the occurrence of the rest of the usual Lucretian system of exposition.

What we have not observed to such a large extent in the previous didactic poems, but is in the *De Rerum Natura* common use, is the investing of space in the argumentation to the validation of Lucretius' worldview. On the one hand, this is of course a logical consequence of the poet's choice to describe his, essentially subjective, worldview.[201] On the other hand, however, he could have also chosen to leave all dispute aside and present his matter as if it were the only true world order, as his introductory remarks to Memmius also suggest. Instead – as his extensive use of rhetorical questions to put forward his teaching alone attests to already –[202] he felt the need to convince, and this is where his rhetorical side also enters the picture.

By far the largest part of the total sum of instructions is concerned with the defending and proving of the Lucretian worldview. As certain sections show, Lucretius is not afraid of presenting an accumulation of variform arguments to express his vision.[203] These arguments,

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[198] Cf. 4.110-111 and 4.269-270, where Lucretius uses the introduction to address the student to contribute by looking at the phenomena Lucretius is describing, and 4.176-180 and 4.907-915, where Lucretius tells us some more about the manner in which he will work out this section.

[199] Cf. 4.921-931 and especially 4.931: expediam: tu fac ne ventis verba profundam ("I will set forth: do you make sure that I do not waste my words to the winds"). Striking is the fact that these questions are normally put forward in an indirect dependent question.

[200] That these diverse books treat their own specific subject is commonly agreed on. It is a commonly accepted position that Lucretius had a clear idea to what goal his diverse books were composed. In short, this meant a division between books where we begin with the smallest scale, the atoms, to proceed towards humans themselves, and in the last position the complete world (Ernout & Robin [1925-1928, v-xiii], cf. p. 43, n. 180). Nevertheless, the concrete subject assigned to the books is still regularly object of scholarly scrutiny (Porter [2003, 12-13], and esp. n. 37 there).

[201] Schrijvers (1970, 192-193). I paraphrase here his argument in favour of this proposition; as the things themselves are essentially invisible, Lucretius needs to find a way to make them presentable. To drive this visible presentation home, he has to find different arguments to make this image seem likely and thus logical for the reader. Cf. Marković (2008, 95-100), who points to the use of analogy in this sense.

[202] E.g. Lucr. *DRN* 2.196; 207; 5.646. Reinhardt (2010, 226) points out the emotive strength such rhetorical questions convey, which ensures that their employment holds rhetorical strength too.

[203] E.g. Lucr. *DRN* 3.417-831, where Lucretius presents us with no less than thirty arguments (illuminatingly put forward in the translation by Rouse [1924, 220-253]) of why the nature of the soul is attached to the body and thus mortal.

furthermore, are also clearly presented as being rhetorical in nature. For example, at various moments, Lucretius moulds his teaching into a clearly rhetorical question, where the answer is already presupposed in the formulation of the question.[204] In other ways too, Lucretius tries to make his programme as personally involving as possible, thus creating a tension that feels almost dialogical, although only Lucretius is speaking directly; the student is expected to actively assent to the points put forward by our teacher. This direct and active involvement of the reader reveals that the didactic situation sketched in the poem is presented as taking place simultaneously to the actual narration of these events within the poem.[205] But Lucretius is not merely deliberating with his student; at times, the student must simply obey.

Very frequently, our teacher asks his student to use his senses and see if Lucretius' exposition makes sense. As the nature of the universe is mostly invisible to us, however, he cannot ask his student to perceive this directly. That is why he chooses in such cases arguments by analogy.[206] In such a way, the teacher hopes to empower his world vision even further, and makes his observations feel even more natural, as if they just display the world as it is. This conforms to the Lucretian programme, that at least aims to frame the Epicurean message as if it were the truth.

Hence, although Lucretius develops his argumentation in such a way that it may seem only logical, there is a real task ahead of the author to actually persuade the student in a gradual process, because his messages were definitely not in accordance with the views held in his own time.[207] For this reason, he aimed to make his worldview comprehensible through

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[204] E.g. Lucr *DRN* 4.118-122, 4.199-215; 4.234-236. This device may sometimes be preceded by the phrase 'nonne vides' ("do you not see", e.g. 4.122; 4.206), which Lucretius appropriated to poetry as a formerly prosaic marker. As Murphy (1991, 230) notes, the fact that Lucretius adopted this phrase probably led to its becoming a precedent for later poets.

[205] Lucr. *DRN* 4.239-268; 4.353-378. The focus in both passages is mostly on general observations having to do with our perception of the things. It is however clear – even though these present verbs can signify general circumstances – that the situation to be perceived is a simultaneous one. This can be seen for instance in 'dico' ("I say") in v. 4.239, that clearly points to the fact that the poet is orating now (Volk [2002, 73]). Also, such instances as 'fateare necessest' ("it is necessary that you admit") that occur throughout the poem enlighten us on this simultaneity of the narration and the situation sketched in the background (Volk [2002, 75-76]).

[206] An especially well-chosen example is Lucr. *DRN* 3.434-439, where water and the mind are likened. The concluding thought is that the mind consists of particles that must be even smaller than water, and we can see water disperse when it is in a vase and the vase is broken. Thus, when the body is broken, it is only all too logical that the mind, that is after all held in the body, disintegrates at a much faster pace than water as well. Cf. Lucr. *DRN* 155-158, where the student is also imagined as performing a perceptual experiment to test Lucretius' truths, and Kenney (1970, 385).

[207] For instance, Epicureanism's beliefs about the gods were quite controversial, claiming that the gods did not care for humanity and are not even in any way present in our daily lives (e.g. Lucr. *DRN* 6.379-422, cf. Gale [2001, 47-51]).

first presenting things in the way they were generally known to be, to then slowly change their meaning.[208] Consequently, the reader's conception of the things also gradually changes. Not didaxis, but rhetoric plays the central role in the actual programme prescribed by Lucretius in the *De Rerum Natura*.

We have looked, so far, at the personal devices Lucretius applies to make his message agreeable for the audience.[209] What caught the eye was the fact that the matter treated is embedded as straightforward explanation, thus obscuring the fact that we are actually dealing with subjective material. I would suggest that this peculiarity can easily be resolved if we consider the dichotomy elaborated on in the previous paragraph; for the implied reader, Memmius, the exposition was clearly meant to instruct him in the structure of the world, with the final goal to teach Memmius how to behave properly in this world. For the actual reader, contrarily, it is not to be taken for granted that he will be so willing. This person must not only be instructed, he must be convinced. Hence, not only is Memmius a foil for the actual reader, as an implied reader that is not troubled by the inherently subjective nature of Epicureanism, he also allows Lucretius to expose his philosophy undisturbedly.

### 4.3 Helping the students on their way

The previous two paragraphs have pointed out that there is indeed a dichotomy between the implied and the actual audience and that the perspective from which the poem is read alters the reading of the poem. Knowing this, we may attempt to say something about the final aim Lucretius aimed to fulfil with the composition of the *De Rerum Natura* for the external, actual, audience. We can take here as our starting point the trend of Epicureanism in general.

Our knowledge of Epicureanism allows us to state that it was not only important to know about the nature of the universe, but more essentially to act upon it. As Gale concisely expressed it, "[t]he study of physics is only a means to an end."[210] The real goal of

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[208] Cf. p. 44, n. 186 and Porter (2003, 5-12).

[209] Of course, these are not the only rhetorical argumentative devices employed by Lucretius, only the most significant and telling ones for this project. For a broader overview of all main devices used by our poet, I refer to Marković (2008, 83-144), although I feel obliged to mention that his discussion of the argument by etymology (esp. Marković [2008, 111-112]) is a bit flawed in my opinion. Marković would have it, namely, that Lucretius employs unobtrusive etymological references in his work as a consequence of rhetorical training, where such arguments were apparently also employed. Yet, when we consider the tradition of didactic poetry at large up to this point, we find varying instances of etymological play to drive a point home, as for instance the link between διά and Διὸς in Hes. *Op*. 3-4 (cf. Verdenius [1985, *ad loc.*]).

[210] Gale (2001, 43). Cf. Keen (1985, 7).

Epicureanism was to "attain freedom of mind by freeing [your]self from futile anxiety and excessive desire."[211] If we read the *De Rerum Natura*, however, we do not get this image as strongly as such statements would make us surmise. How is this compatible with the image we retrieve from the poem – that the student will be taught how to live?

There is, it turns out, a fairly simple answer to this question: just like it was the case with Aratus' *Phaenomena*, in the *De Rerum Natura* the reader is also expected to extract an underlying tone, in this case to draw the conclusions on how to live without the explicit help of the poet. Although the poet will at all times explain how the world itself functions, it is the student's task to find out what way of living this demands of him. And this, of course, can only be discovered by one who can perceive the real nature of the universe.[212]

At various moments throughout the poem, Lucretius emphasises the fact that he aims to illuminate the world for his student, who is apparently at the moment groping around in the darkness. The only way for the reader to get out of this, is through obtaining the reason of nature:[213]

Hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest

non radii solis neque lucida tela diei

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

"It is therefore necessary that not the rays of the sun

nor the shiny weapons of day disperse this fear of the mind

and the shadows, but the aspect and reason of nature."

As this section in particular illuminates, there is a connection between the darkness, that Lucretius pictures for everyone not aware of reality, and the futilities of everyday anguish that

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[211] Ibid. Cf. Martin (1972, 16). This is also the ultimate conclusion that Epicurus, in his *Letter to Herodotus*, draws from his metaphysical exposition (Diog. Laert. *Lives*, 10.80-83).

[212] This may also explain the Lucretian importance attached to the notion of perception (as is also emphasised in Erler [1997, 82-92]). As Keen (1985, 3) remarks, this is also the most essential part of the didactic programme in the *De Rerum Natura*. Cf. pp. 48-49 of this chapter. This conforms to the general pre-eminence attached to the institution of perception in the Epicurean doctrine, as we can perceive in the *Letter to Herodotus* (Diog. Laert. *Lives*, 10.38).

[213] Lucr. *DRN* 1.146-148. Cf. Lucr. *DRN* 3.316-318 and 4.337-343.

Epicureanism is fighting.[214] This picture is made especially clear in a recurring section of the poem:[215]

nam veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis

in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus

interdum nilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam

quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.

"Because like boys shudder and fear all things in the blinding

darkness, likewise meanwhile we fear in the light

which things are no more fearful than

which things boys in the darkness tremble before and imagine to happen."

Hence, if we want to emerge from this darkness and start living as we are supposed to without superstition, we should make sure to listen carefully to the teacher.

Thus, it becomes clear that Lucretius aims to guide the reader away from the darkness and that this is only done obliquely through indirect instructions. Clear examples of this are especially the digressions, that deal with certain aspects of our life and fear in an allusive way that the reader should penetrate,[216] such as vv. 3.978-1023: in an allusive manner, Lucretius demonstrates that all the things we typically fear in death are actually worries we experience in life, so that we are actually living life as we imagine hell.[217]

Likewise, at later moments in the narration, we are expected to draw the practical conclusion from the theoretical basis ourselves, especially in these digressions, so that we will learn to distance ourselves from what is unimportant and most of all learn to live our life with

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[214] Cf. Volk (2002, 92-93) and Marković (2008, 87-89).

[215] Lucr. *DRN* 2.55-58; 3.87-90; 6.35-38. Mitsis (1993, 116-118) points out how this imagery makes the figure cast in the role of inattentive reader indeed very unflattered.

[216] This process where the reader tries to get to the bottom of these digressions is what Gigandet (1997, 209) terms the "réduction rationelle" of the content. Later in his chapter, he shows how this really works specifically in the case of myths, that is by "traiter les mythes comme autant de symptoms" (Gigandet [1997, 213]). Cf. Cox (1971, 1): "Thus, what are in structural terms 'digressions', lie closest of all to the heart of the work."

[217] Thus, there are fear of the gods (vv. 3.980-983), the tearing apart of the heart by love (vv. 3.984-994), idle ambition (vv. 3.995-1002), vain beautification (vv. 3.1003-1010) and all other pointless fears that haunt us (vv. 3.1011-1023). Cf. Jocelyn (1986, 43-46), who explains how the idea for this passage probably stems from the Epicurean tradition at large, but Lucretius also innovates the tradition by, for instance, adding a passage on Tartarus (vv. 3.1012-1013). Catto (1986, 311) marks some points in the earlier parts of the poem, such as the proem to Book 2, that this allegory possibly relates to through intratextual references.

peace of mind (ἀταραξία).[218] Such an interpretation also affirms the authenticity of the epilogue to the *De Rerum Natura*: as has been variously argued,[219] this conclusion only works if the reader, in the process of the poem, has succeeded in becoming an Epicurean *pur sang*. The final image contains a description of the effects of an epidemic in Athens and the misery it effectuates.[220] As we should now be immune to such sorrowful images, however, we should no longer flinch when confronted with such misfortunes. There is nothing to be afraid of, so no reason to disturb our inner rest and become involved.

## 4.4 The Logic of Thunder

We have so far considered the overall teaching logic and didactic aims that Lucretius had foreseen with his poem. It is now time to, in light of this, consider a specific passage on the grounds of its real, rhetoric-cum-didactic, nature, to see if he diverges from the teaching as we know it in a significant way. The guiding passage used will be vv. 6.239-421.[221]

In this passage, it is Lucretius' final aim to show that thunderbolts are not sent by a divine agency. To point this out, he uses the structure already analysed above. First, he draws up the question to be answered: how can thunder become so powerful that it may destroy things (6.239-234)? To answer this question, he appeals to our perceptual abilities, to actually guide us towards his answer (6.235-268).[222] The next step, logically, is to indicate the cause of this phenomenon (6.269-322), where Lucretius uses our observations, supported by our background knowledge,[223] as his starting point. This exposition instantiates the consequent account of the characteristics that make thunder so devastating (6.323-378). Significant for this section, thereafter, is the attention paid to alternative, superstitiously designed,

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[218] Toohey (1996, 89-90); Schiesaro (2007, 65-68). Cf. the imagery of the vv. 2.1-24 on events that take place somewhere in the distance for one perceiving them from afar. De Lacy (1964, 49-55) discusses how this image fits within the Epicurean doctrine of distancing yourself from casualties in life, in this case unnecessary labour (Catto [1986, 307-308]).

[219] E.g. Erler (1997, 83-85), Gale (2001, 40-42) and Porter (2003, 26-27).

[220] Lucr. *DRN* 6.1138-1286.

[221] I have chosen this section, as it is symptomatic of the broader teaching programme in general. Also, this passage elaborates on the diverse parts of the argument that I have enumerated above in a very extensive fashion.

[222] Especially significant are vv. 6.262-265: sic igitur supera nostrum caput esse putandumst // tempestatem altam; neque enim caligine tanta // obruerent terras, nisi inaedificata superne // multa forent multis exempto nubila sole; ("so it must be thought that there is a storm high above our head; for they could not bury the lands in such a great haze, if there would not be many clouds cultivated above many after the sun has been abated;").

[223] Lucr. *DRN* 6.271-273. Rouse (1924, 513) points out that this information was given in vv. 6.206-210.

explanations that he consequently refutes.[224] Lucretius smoothly introduces this refutation in his concluding remarks on the preceding (6.379-386). What follows are arguments in support of Lucretius' position (6.387-421).

It should be clear, then, that this particular section, in a very emphatic way, confirms the image sketched above; although the poem seems to be, and in fact frequently is, educational, its final goal is to persuade the reader for whom Epicurean doctrine is not yet accepted. The argumentative form also points to this same conclusion; even when Lucretius is framing his poetry as solely didactic, the manner of its exposition creates the feeling of an urge to persuade. Lucretius does not simply describe the *rerum natura* as a truth, but rather creates an image that maintains to be truthful, while in fact it is held up by allegorical and affective pictures.[225] So too, when Lucretius is not quite sure, his presentation of the argument makes him seem confident still:[226]

"Denique quod longo venit impete, sumere debet

mobilitatem etiam atque etiam, quae crescit eundo

et validas auget viris et roborat ictum;

Next, because it comes in a long rush, it is necessary that it takes on

speed further and further, which makes it grow by proceeding and

increases strong powers and empowers the impact;"

Here, attaching importance to a general observation, the length of the lightning bolt, Lucretius goes on to imply that the weight of the atoms (6.335) apparently premeditates the incredible speed of the atoms. No further argument is given, and the reader is expected to take the point in its present form at face-value.

Of course, not all points are constituted as such and the poem also exhibits arguments that are better amplified.[227] Yet, we should not forget that this poem is after all only

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[224] Other passages, namely, skip over such refutations and simply repeat the argument and advocate its truthfulness (e.g. Lucr. *DRN* 6.527-534).

[225] For the allegorical imagery, e.g. 6.306-308, 6.314-316 and 6.329, for the affective imagery, 6.281-294, where a detailed description of the process of thundering eruption is given. Porter (2003, 14-20) points out that the choice of phenomena like thunder, and later volcanoes, earthquakes and other natural disasters, resembles the Longinian sublime, and I believe that this choice therefore also reflects the rhetorical use of strengthening images to emphasise one's point.

[226] Lucr. *DRN* 6.340-342.

[227] E.g. Lucr. *DRN* 269-270 and 6.357-363.

presenting a theory and not an objective account, as was the case with the preceding poems. We should therefore not be surprised that the Lucretian presentation of didaxis is also different from what we found in the earlier poet-teachers. They did not have to deal with problems concerning the objectification of their subject matter to such a large degree and for that reason were not obliged to constitute their message in such an oblique fashion. Considered in this sense, it would not have been ill-suited to label the *De Rerum Natura*, in Effe's terminology, the 'transparente Typus'.[228] Nevertheless, it cannot be negated that the content and tone of the poem are indeed highly serious and that Lucretius had a clear aim with his composition: to convince the reader to live in the right manner. The only task put aside for the reader is to find out what this exactly meant.

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[228] That is, in direct contrast, or as a supplemental proposition, to the identification of the poem as 'sachbezogen' (Effe [1977, 60-79]).

## 5.  Vergil: The *Georgics*[229]

The past chapters have all dealt primarily with the method, intention and actual message within the poems that were chosen as case studies. So far, they have shown a tendency to be serious in expounding their content, while the definite intention would still constitute some teaching that was in some sense alike to the base material portrayed. Furthermore, the utmost parts of these conclusions could be drawn from the internal evidence considered qua didaxis and internal and external teaching constellations. The frameworks chosen thus support us adequately in reframing the actual didaxis of didactic poetry in the cases up to now. Now is the time to consider if these measures still suffice in a case that has generally been otherwise labelled qua intention: Vergil's *Georgics*.

When we take the secondary literature to the *Georgics* as the advancing point in our investigation, there recurs one striking commonly accepted observation that immediately stands out: the *Georgics*, although it pertains to teach, is actually about something completely different than instructing about agricultural life.[230] Although modern scholarship has up to now not succeeded in formulating a *communis opinio* on the secreted message the poem is conveying, a few suggestions have been made, mostly concerning the political situation that was contemporarily coming into being,[231] on the worldview that Vergil was advocating in succession of Lucretius.[232] In line with both these interpretations of the poem, it has also been taken as a possibility that the poem, through the veil of agronomics, aims rather to promote Augustan propaganda concerning the way of life to be taken up by the Roman citizens, a practical agenda on the basis of the Vergilian way of life.[233] Which of these interpretations is correct it is of course impossible to say, but it might pay off to consider if the internal didaxis of the poem may lead us to an answer.

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[229] For the *Georgics*, I have chosen to make use of the critical edition as it is proposed by Thomas (1988a&b).

[230] Thomas (1987, 243); Volk (2002, 120); Holzberg (2006, 92); Thibodeau (2011, 39-41); Cowan (2018, 274). Contra Spurr (1986, 175-180).

[231] Wiik (2002, 124-125); Weeda (2015, 88-102). Cf. Buchheit (1972, 19-29), where the situation is depicted thus that Vergil would have perceived himself as a priest praying for the welfare of the emperor, who resettles Roman society in a beneficial way.

[232] Klepl (1967, 6-7): "Es ist die Naturanschauung, die sich unwillkührlich in die Lehrdarstellungen mischt und sich reiner als dort in den freigestalteten 'dichterischen' Abschnitten ausprägt." Spurr (1986, 164) discusses various previously given interpretations searching in the *Georgics* for symbolic value concerning life. Cf. Stehle (1974, 358-361); Schechter (1975, 357); Thomas (1987, 256-260).

[233] E.g. Bradley (1969, 348-353) and Holzberg (2006, 93-109), who see in the poem as the main theme the ongoing fight with nature and disorder to be overcome by the farmer as well as the emperor to bring order.

For this reason, this chapter will take the Vergilian didaxis as its starting point, to proceed from here to a verification or rejection of the more internal 'vector of intention'.[234] The didaxis will be investigated, logically, along the same lines as in the above case studies, but in this chapter we will look more closely specifically at the implied and the actual aim within the poem that the teaching faculties are leading us to. After these matters have been decided on, the subsequent section will indicate the general direction of authorial intention that the standpoint of didaxis presupposes. In this way, I hope to propound a theory of intention that most strictly conforms to the implied and actual reading of the poem as a whole. My reading will, contrary to many earlier readings, not be built up around the concluding story of the *Georgics*, concerning Aristaeus and Orpheus (4.313-558), that has in many readings been found to be unproportionally relevant in comparison to the rest of the poem.[235] I believe that this story has too often erringly attained central stage in recent interpretations, but it would in my opinion be more fitting to see it as another evenly essential part of the Vergilian programme at large, that furthermore possesses a deflected aim too, namely performing as the preamble to the heroic epic following the *Georgics*.[236]

## 5.1 All About Teaching?

Although it is generally taken that the *Georgics* is in its versification of the base material quite accurate,[237] scholarship has in general not allowed for the option that this might signify a serious internal concern for agricultural practice. Rather, scholars tend to focus on the serious lacks exposed in Vergil's teachings,[238] that since Seneca have been considered final proof of Vergil's inability to discuss agriculture.[239] This position has been rejected now, but still little

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[234] The term is coined in Thibodeau (2011, 175-178), in his usage referring specifically to the emotional or alleged intention of Vergilian sections, but it is equally apt for the more general usage I am opting for here.

[235] As e.g. is the case with Bradley (1969, 353-358), Stehle (1974, 364-369). Conte (1986, 130-132) concisely discusses the diverse treatments given to the epyllion as an inherent part of the Vergilian programme.

[236] Harrison (2007, 160-167), although he is in my opinion a little too rash in claiming that Aristaeus, in *G*. 4.326-332, is definitely abandoning his old georgic life. As the conclusion of the epyllion displays sufficiently, this is not the case as Aristaeus simply picks up his life with a swarm of bees again after his adventure (*G*. 4.554-558).

[237] As Spurr (1986, 181-182) and Thibodeau (2011, 144-149) note, Vergil's use of his material is in accord with what we know of agronomic science, as it is for instance rendered in Varro's *De Re Rustica*, one of Vergil's main sources. On the informational sources used by Vergil, one can consult Farrell (1929, 42), Thomas (1987, 230) and Horsfall (1995, 77), the latter of whom gives a brief account of what scholarship has discovered.

[238] Normally, students address this shortcoming in treating certain aspects of agriculture as a choice of selectivity by the poet, leaving him useless as a didactic poet. E.g. Thomas (1987, 239) on Vergil's instructions on building a threshing floor: "Now both Cato and Varro had described the preparation of the threshing floor, and a glance at their versions shows just how inferior Virgil's precepts are from any instructional point of view."

[239] Sen. *Ep*. 86.15; cf. Spurr (1986, 164-165).

attention is paid to the internal exposition of serious instruction, so this will naturally form the starting point of this investigation.

When the actual reader embarks on his reading of the *Georgics*, it takes him quite a while to discover in which role he is cast when actualising the song. Although in the second verse there already occurs a vocative, Maecenas, his role does not conform itself to the role commonly found in didactic poetry, that of instructed student. More fittingly, Vergil designates this patron as an inspirator for the proceeding of his work, as his later explicit occurrences specify.[240] This is not the role manifested in the introduction to the work, however:[241]


Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram

vertere, Maecenas, […]

hinc canere incipiam.

"What makes the crops glad, with which star to turn

the earth, Maecenas, […]

from here I will begin to prophesy."


What Maecenas' occurrence here indicates is a concise summary of the following work at large, but nothing more. Strikingly, the inspirational foundation is also redirected to the juxtaposed figures, the gods concerned with agriculture and especially the emperor, Octavian.[242] What Maecenas' presence signifies, then, remains to be considered.

After the invocation prayer, we are finally addressed for the first time (1.64).[243] From this moment onwards, there needs to be little guessing about the actual internal addressee of the *Georgics*, as the rest of the poem's main diegesis is marked by agronomic instruction to

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[240] Verg. *G.* 2.41; 3.41; 4.2. Cf. Volk (2002, 130-131). It is noteworthy that Maecenas assumes this divine role of inspirator, which was formerly put aside for the Muses, who play no role for the composition of the *Georgics* (Buchheit [1972, 27-29] and Rutherford [2008, 87]).

[241] Verg. *G.* 1.1-2; 5.

[242] Verg. *G.* 1.5-42. Wiik (2011, 197-200) explains how a phenomenon he names the 'poetic I' creates the illusion that this invocation not only holds panegyric power but also more essentially programmatic power.

[243] I would argue here that this position should be denied to the previous imperative, 'nonne vides' (*G.* 1.56), as this one is, I believe, intentionally left ambiguous in the context as an instruction equally attachable to Maecenas as to the actual student. As was already shown by Beutler (1940, 413), this imperative introduces a sense of magnitude for the things described that does not limit itself to farming but involves the products the world at large offers us (Verg. *G.* 1.56-59). There is also a clear link with the Lucretian method of presenting the world in such verbs that mark perception (cf. Horsfall [1995, 71]).

the real implied addressee, the 'agricolae' (1.101). As Thibodeau has convincingly argued, this naming is broad enough to involve both the autarkic peasant and the rich estate-holder and Vergil also regularly switches between them indiscriminately.[244] The instructions to their advantage make it clear that Vergil was upholding a didactic situation of instruction, as for instance 1.176-177 manifest:

Possum multa tibi veterum praecepta referre,

ni refugis tenuisque piget cognoscere curas.

"I can report to you many precepts of old,

if you do not take shelter and are not ashamed to learn of tender cares."

Throughout the poem, this didactic posture is kept up and the teacher gives direct instructions, but also more theoretical explanations underlying agricultural practice.[245] Yet, what the reason for these instructions is, never becomes clear. In the other cases investigated so far, we have perceived a tendency to actively involve the reader in a fictional background story to establish a *raison d'être* for the poem. This forms a stark contrast to the *Georgics*, where the actual student qua farmer is addressed only thrice,[246] and with no more significance than to motivate them to participate simultaneously. In fact, the only reason for the composition of didactic instructions to be found in the poem is 3.41-42:

Interea Dryadum silvas saltusque sequamur

intactos, tua, Maecenas, haud mollia iussa.

"Let us meanwhile follow the woods of the Dryads and the untouched

glades, your difficult commands, Maecenas."

Hence, no specified backstory precedes and supports the didactic narration, except Maecenas' command.[247] Also, the constitution of the instructions themselves is in no way motivated, and

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[244] Thibodeau (2011, 35-37).

[245] E.g. 2.9-34 and 2.47-60 on the different ways of the sprouting of plants provoke the instructions that follow on the way of planting them the farmer should apply (2.61-83).

[246] Verg. *G*, 1.101; 2.36; 3.288. Cf. Thomas (1988a, 83). There occur also more general vocatives, e.g. 1.210, 'viri'.

[247] But cf. Verg. *G*. 2.173-178, where Vergil states that he writes in praise of the earth that bore great Romans.

Vergil creates the feeling that the structure is only stimulated by the author's temper, that drives the teacher to treat certain themes more abundantly while omitting other themes.[248] On the explicit scale, therefore, of the implied reader, there seems to be no basis for instruction, and also the high percentage of digressions suggests that teaching was not his ultimate goal.[249]

Thus, whereas we were formerly used to perceive a complete didactic scene created within the poem, where there was attention for the progress of the implied student to guide the actual student, the *Georgics* leaves no clue for the reader to follow the thread of didaxis except in the most superficial ways, when he tells us what topic he is about to bring on stage.[250] No further relevance is given to this story, that consequently lacks an intratextual *raison d'être*. We have seen in the earlier cases that this internal orderly exposition of didaxis was the quintessential method of creating and motivating the actual teaching for the external audience. If the above observations are correct, this dichotomy is undermined within the *Georgics*, and it would be logical to assume that Vergil did indeed not so much care for the actual teaching of a subject. What his eventual aim was, then, will be considered now.

## 5.2 Teaching What is Really Important

It is my opinion, in line with most modern scholarship on the matter, that Vergil intended his poem to signify something else than the explicit teaching would suggest.[251] Although I can see the logic of the point put forward that Vergil was attempting to incite the students to learn more at their own behest,[252] this does not suffice as undeniable proof that the *Georgics* solely attempted agronomic instruction.[253] Vergil was indeed fairly factual, but his instructions function more like wrappings; but for what message?

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[248] E.g. Verg. *G*. 3.284-286 and 4.116-124.

[249] Horsfall (1995, 75-76) points out that digressions comprise around 30% of the whole *Georgics*, which is a significantly high percentage. Although he does make the remark that this percentage stems from a very totalitarian reading of the poem where everything that does not directly add to the main narrative is considered digressive, it would still be a strikingly high percentage if we were to be less strict, as all books essentially end with an extended digressive narrative.

[250] E.g. Verg. *G*. 2.2-3; 177-178; 226.

[251] Cf. p. 56, n. 230.

[252] Thibodeau (2011, 123-127).

[253] In the same way does the argument that Vergil was later considered a serious agronomical source not rule out the standpoint preferred here (Doody [2007, 180-181]): it must have been expected of the poet to frame his poetics as truthful if he were to be taken seriously as a didactic poet, even when he was actually addressing another implicit subject.

When we consider the overall organisation of the instructions within the *Georgics*, there are some recurring facets of the poem that should be accounted for when searching for the overall message of the *Georgics*. First of all, the standard opening scene for all books concerns a general introduction of the subject setting forth the elements to be treated.[254] Around this programmatic statement, some loosely attached points may occur by way of a digression,[255] after which Vergil embarks on his theme. The instructions put forward here comprise the utmost part of the poem in all books, and from this point the digressions also appertain to the theme discussed.[256] As a finale, Vergil always discusses something not directly relevant to the precedingly taught subject, but more concerned with a broader subject, adjacent to the subject at hand in the book.[257]

It is now time to consider how the real instructions are put forward, and it would be most useful to do so keeping only one book in mind. For this reason, this paragraph will deal mostly with book 2, to be able to find some specified outcomes. In this book, Vergil concerns himself with the care to be taken for growing trees. Firstly, Vergil describes the basic principles and the kinds of trees available (2.9-60), whereby he emphasises the distinction between trees that arise of their own accord ('sponte sua', 2.11, 47) and trees that man cultivates (2.22). This distinction, applied already at the start of the poem, will recur at various point in his discussion.[258] This theory that was just exhibited is followed next by the more practical side, where Vergil explains how a farmer must actively attempt to gain control of the trees ('multa mercede domandae', "must be tamed with much trouble", 2.62), and how various

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[254] Verg. *G*. 1.50-53; 2.1-9; 3.42-45; 4.1-7.

[255] Verg. *G*. 1.54-63; 3.1-42; 3.46-48. Thomas (1988b, 146) schematises the opening scenes as such too, pointing out that books 2 and 4 are differentiated by their much shorter introduction, that furthermore show resemblance to one another.

[256] The instructions take up the space between Verg. *G*. 1.63-464; 2.9-457; 3.49-530; 4.8-314. There are various digressions inserted here, and these will be treated in the following parts of this project.

[257] Verg. *G*. 1.465-514; 2,458-542; 3.531-566; 4.315-558.

[258] Esp. the oxymoric juxtaposition of the vine, that needs heavy caring, and the olive, that needs nearly no help in growing, attests to this fact (2.397-425). This point is particularly well emphasised by the poet when he opens his demonstration of the nature of the olive's growth and states contra, 'non ulla est oleis cultura' ("contrarily, there is no nursing in the olives", 2.420), after which he enumerates the tasks that are spared for the olive-tender in opposition to the vine-tender just discussed (2.420-422). In a similar way, the opening of the treatise on the care for animals may be explicated (3.49-94), where Vergil explains how cows and horses may be bred in the most advantageous way. The role put aside for the shepherd appointed to this task is described as a very preliminary one (cf. esp. 3.70-71):
semper enim refice ac, ne post amissa requiras,
anteveni et subolem armento sortire quotannis.
"for always recruit [new ones] and, lest later you find them lost,
be first also to gain new stock from the cattle on a yearly basis."

combinations of trees could be "grafted" and "budded" ('inserere [...] oculos imponere', 2.73).[259] After this, a lengthy passage is filled with a catalogue (2.83-135) and a subsequent digression praising Rome (2.136-176). Some preliminary remarks (2.177-258), furthermore, finally lay the basis for the actual instructions, divided into various sections concerning the care to be taken, beginning with precautionary remarks concerning the planting (2.259-294), after which we make a great lapse in time (2.294-297) and suddenly discuss the way to keep the trees strong (2.298-419). The final part, in stark contrast, mentions the olive and the fruit trees, that require far less tending (2.420-542).

When we consider these observations, the most significant phenomenon to be remarked is the nearly complete absence of descriptions of such tasks as the watering and, most importantly, the actual planting of the trees! The closest thing to such a specific remark form vv. 2.76-80, that discuss the strange combining of diversified plants. Contrarily, extensive attention is paid to keeping the plant fit within all possible scenarios.

These observations, that I believe apply to the other books too, create the picture that, in farming at least, all circumstances must be direly accounted for if one wants to establish the best situation thinkable. Through the near-complete omission of directives concerned with the most straightforward, yet essential, parts of farming, Vergil puts emphasis on this point, probably deliberately. The overall focus of the poem at large, therefore, would be the element of care ('cura' is the appropriate term employed in the *Georgics*),[260] as is also supposed by other scholars in the field.[261] This term, namely, covers the content of what we have just described as the preliminary activity that the farmer for one must exercise. Moreover, other features of the poem too show the focus laid on this element, as we will now observe.

For instance, when Vergil describes the garden of an elderly self-provisioning man in a digression (4.125-146), he creates the picture that this man is with all efforts the first ('primus',

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[259] Verg. *G*. 2.61-82. For convenience's sake, I have adopted here the translation by Goold (1916, 141), which in my opinion best translates these sections and terms.

[260] For the use of the term 'cura' in the sense propagated here, e.g. Verg. *G*. 1.3, 1.17, 2.405, 3.124, as opposed to the 'curas' in 4.531, that signifies a concept that comes closer to what we would call 'mental distress'. Nelis (2016, 47-48) points out that this concept constitutes one of the key words within the poem, although he fails to note the overall significance of this term in the *Georgics* as a whole, when he places it in the context of the first book with only limited application to the rest of the books. The same counts for Thomas (1988a, 69), who approaches it as a term only appropriate to the care taken of animals, which I hope to have shown is incomplete (cf. Henderson [2001, 15]).

[261] Schiesaro (1993, 141-142); Thibodeau (2011, 35-41).

4.134; 140, also 'novo', 4.142) and as such achieves the greatest welfare (4.130-133).[262] Of course, Thibodeau is right in claiming that this man's labour gains him his welfare,[263] but the explicit stress which underlines the timeliness of this man's undertakings evidently casts a shadow over the element of labour, that plays second fiddle in the overall composition. In the same way, the introduction to the *aition* explaining why humanity is in the poet's present obliged to work concisely stresses the circumstances that may ruin an agricultural enterprise (1.118-121). The underlying message, therewith, is of course that the student must learn to deal with these phenomena and must be able to prevent them from ruining his provisions. This leads us to the final part of the hidden message put forward by Vergil.

## 5.3 Establishing a Vergilian World-order

Another aspect that scholars have frequently noted is the regular play with themes found in Vergil's direct source of influence within the didactic genre, Lucretius. Both, for instance, apply the theme of the creation of the present constellation as a consequence of past actions, but the foreseen results will be seen to differ. Obviously, the explicit theme of the *Georgics*, farming, is in no way consistent with the worldview portrayed in the *De Rerum Natura* as a theme. Nevertheless, on the more internal level scholarship has often found links in the way both poets consider the world around them.[264] This is not solely on the intertextual level, but also comprises the elaborate reworking of themes, as we will discuss in this section. We will now discern the role this plays in connection to the overall message propounded in the previous paragraph.

As I have argued above, the theme that Vergil chose to pursue as his guiding principle, 'cura', is repeatedly addressed through direct mention of the term or its equivalents, or in a more oblique fashion, by stressing for instance the importance of measures that should be premeditated when producing. However, we have up to now not considered the concrete reason why this element is positioned so pre-eminently within the poem, although there are clearly arguments for this central position given in the poem.

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[262] Cf. Verg. *G*. 2.405-409, that parallels this passage through its focus on the primacy of the farmers' enterprise.

[263] Thibodeau (2001, 176). Cf. Perkell (1981, 167-168), who discusses some other interpretations of the theme.

[264] Freudenburg (1987, 159): "Both works [scil. the *De Rerum Natura* and the *Georgics*] entertain an approach to nature that is an approach to life itself. They ask the deepest questions of mankind." In n. 2 he sums up scholarly work that has been done on the interrelations between the two works in this sense.

Especially elucidating in this respect is the digression at vv. 1.129-158, where Vergil, in a highly marked passage – at the start of the poem – sets forth the origin of the present status quo. In a clear re-elaboration of the Hesiodic Myth of Ages,[265] Vergil defends his theme through the use of an historically meant digression that explains the present situation. More importantly, however, and in line with the didactic tradition in general,[266] this story supports, and lends importance to, the actual didaxis put forward in the poem. Whereas in the *Works and Days* this actually applied to the themes of working and justice, the *Georgics* emphasises its hidden theme 'cura', which is programmatically brought to the front.

It is interesting to note how Vergil establishes this worldview. As is commonly noted, a golden past is established where humanity did not have to act to keep a living,[267] a situation that the supreme god Jupiter was not content with. For that reason, by his agency a complex earthly system was instantiated to urge man to work (129-132):

ille malum virus serpentibus addidit atris,

praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moveri,

mellaque decussit foliis, ignemque removit,

et passim rivis currentia vina repressit,

"He [scil. Jupiter] added to the black snakes the evil of venom,

and ordered the wolfs plunder and the sea to move itself,

and threw honey of the leaves, and removed fire,

and everywhere repelled the flowing wines from the currents,"

By taking away all ease, Jupiter has obliged man to become self-provisioning, which turns out to be his goal:[268]

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[265] Hes. *Op*. 106-201; cf. Aratus, *Phaen*. 100-136; Lucr. *DRN*. 5.925-1457, which passage Beye (1963, 160) also notes to belong to this category.

[266] As Gale (2004, 61-67) points out, an underlying historico-mythical story also at the very least lays the foundation for the broader exposition championed in the didactic poems of Hesiod and Lucretius.

[267] This combination of golden past and lives of ease was already established in the *Works and Days*. Although this era is not so explicitly named in the *Georgics*, this combination manifests the fact that this is so (cf. Goold [1916, 107]). Nelis (2004, 4-5) points out that there are also clear intertextual links between the rendering of the races in the *Georgics* and the *Phaenomena* by Aratus, where they also appear.

[268] Verg. *G*. 1.133-135. Contra Schechter (1975, 355-356), who believes that these lines signify a growing deterioration of human life, and therefore probably takes 'ut' (1.133; 135) to convey consecutive value here. In the context, however, its usage is more logically final, as it was Jupiter's aim to make man find new ways of surviving, and we are essentially reading this passage from his perspective.

ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes

paulatim, et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam,

ut silicis venis abstrusum excuderet ignem.

"so that habit laboured on various arts through cogitation

steadily, and sought accretion of grain in ploughing,

so that it forged the hidden fire from the veins of granite."


The teacher subsequently enumerates various instruments that have been constructed by man to be able to obtain their means of living (1.136-146). Only after this common principle has been conveyed, Vergil proceeds to adapt this situation to agriculture in a so-called *Prôtos Heuretès* passage, mentioning Ceres as the origin of human productivity (1.147-149).[269]

Considered in this way, it becomes clear that Vergil presupposed a divine constellation that developed living as it is now. This situation is furthermore affirmed by a following passage of instruction, where Vergil, again following a didactic predecessor – Aratus – sets forth an exposition of practical instructions focusing on the time of working. Although the link to the Aratean *Phaenomena* is not unknown,[270] scholarship seems to me to have been blindfolded to the consequences the insertion of this passage presupposes. As we saw in the constitution of the *Phaenomena*,[271] Aratus makes Zeus, his supreme deity, a benevolent god who helps mankind through the disposition of signs as guides, and Vergil seems to me to be keen to reassert this behaviour. It becomes especially clear when the teacher reaches festive days (1.268-272):


quippe etiam festis quaedam exercere diebus

fas et iura sinunt: rivos deducere nulla

religio vetuit, segeti praetendere saepem,

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[269] Other examples of the *prôtos heuretès* theme may be found for instance in Aratus, *Phaen*. 373-375, Opp. *Hal*. 3.28, and Ps.-Opp. 2.5-30. Bartley (2003, 178-180) discusses some other significant examples of this and argues that this became a trait only in the later examples of the genre. This argument might be a bit enforced considering the passage in the *Phaenomena*, but it is certainly true that we perceive examples of the theme mostly in later instances of didactic poetry.

[270] The link between both passages has been duly noted by Jermyn (1951, 49-59), although he did not go as far as to make the inferences made here.

[271] Esp. Aratus, *Phaen*. 5-14.

insidias avibus moliri, incendere vepres,

balantumque gregem fluvio mersare salubri.

"for on festive days too lawfulness and rights allow

to execute some things: no religious objection has forbidden to tract

down the streams, to span the enclosure for vegetation,

to create traps for birds, to burn the thorns,

and to immerse the flocks of sheep in the healthy river."

Although these days are of course not explicitly marked as days that benefice a certain strand of undertakings, the enumeration of exemplary instructions does portray the significance ascribed to preliminary preparation very pointedly.[272] On top of this, the authority to assign the diverse tasks to be fulfilled is also posited with the divine, that essentially forces certain tasks upon the farmer, if he can correctly understand what needs to be done.[273] After all, the gods are regularly given the agency within the text to create various circumstances.[274]

As such, the *Georgics* puts quite a lot of stress on the expounding of his essentially optimistic worldview, in opposition to Lucretius in his poem, who also discusses the world at large. In the latter's case, this worldview centred around the nihilism that underlies all our anxieties, including our urge to work. Vergil, albeit also propagating a worldview that is permeated by a proposition in favour of ease,[275] refutes the counter-effective pessimism surrounding Lucretian nihilism and instead assigns to the world more meaning through the internalisation of the divine that promotes human action. Of course, this highly contradicts the Lucretian assertion of life that argued otherwise.

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[272] As Thomas (1988a, 113-114) points out, the tasks described here all concern preliminary tasks to prevent malicious happenings from occurring.

[273] The translation of Goold (1916, 117) functions quite aptly for discussing the lines quoted on this page, when he names 'fas' (1.269) "the laws of God", and thus assigns to the gods the authority argued for here. Also, Verg. *G*. 1.275-276; 1.335-338; 1.351-355.

[274] E.g. Verg. *G*. 2.454-457; 2.473-474; 4.453-456. Nelson (2018, 368)) shows how this employment of the divine in the *Georgics* alludes to the Hesiodic organisation, that was built up around the justice of Zeus, and argues that this picture essentially inverts the Hesiodic order by creating a hostile disruption between humanity and nature.

[275] Esp. The poet's praise of country life (2.358-512), that is mostly implicitly contrasted to urbanity and its cautions. Kronenberg (2000, 347-350) points out the explicit links this passage shares with the *De Rerum Natura*. Cf. Buchheit (1972, 58-60).

## 5.4 How to Take Care of Animals

The Vergilian worldview, therefore, may be summarised as follows: the gods have willed mankind to attain more in life and have for that reason effused hardship over humanity. This resulted in a worldly order where humanity is essentially forced to work and more specifically to plan the work in advance. Throughout the *Georgics*, this element recurs and is supplemented by further instructions that point in this direction. It is now time to once more return to these instructions in a particular instance to see how they are specifically constituted to point out the above prescribed focus. The instructions to be dealt with here are those in book 3, but the general structure will be seen to account for the others too.

The first observation to be made is that, at the outset of the actual instructions, Vergil is mostly concerned with the procreation of animals, his theme in book 3 (3.49-156). Immediately at the start, the teacher gives a characterisation of what the perfect animal should look like to procreate the best offspring (3.49-94). After this, we encounter a proleptic image that tells us how hard it may be to take good care, when we are told to lock away an old beast (3.95-96):[276]

Hunc quoque, ubi aut morbo gravis aut iam segnior annis

deficit, abde domo.

"Him too, when either he, heavy with disease or worn out in years,

Reaches his end, do you hide in the house."

This sudden advice sets the tone for what will follow qua instructions. After advising on the upbringing of certain animals (3.157-208), the first more restrictedly preliminary instructions occur, concerning love in animals (3.209-241). The teacher gives indirect advice by describing common practice (to let male animals graze alone, 3.212-214) and extendedly explains the disastrous effects uncontrolled love creates. For that reason, the premature advice is given.

However, Vergil is not simply content with the given reasoning why this is so but amplifies the picture with a digression on the nature of love in general (3.242-283), explaining how this state of mind ruins many creatures, man and animal alike ('hominumque ferarumque', 3.242). The foreseen consequence here is that the student will reconsider and

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[276] The passage at large on this beast concerns vv. 3.95-100. Verg. *G*. 3.100-122 continue the line of description of the perfect animal that was cut off by the proleptic passage discussed here.

apply the preceding advice on separation of the male animals to see how this would account for the bigger picture, not least man himself.[277] In this way, the digression forms an integral part of the bigger didactic picture.

A programmatic passage (3.284-294) eventually leads us back to the main narrative, where we first come across goats and sheep (3.295-383), treated in a way similar to the earlier animals, to finally reach a list of extended instructions, from which point the element of 'cura' abounds (3.384-439). It is significant, moreover, that these instructions awake the impression that they run a course from fairly productive in their results (and thus useful for the short term) to seemingly less important in the end. Nevertheless, when considered in its totality, the picture actually shows growing interest in the welfare of the farm as a whole.[278]

The last stage, functioning as a grand finale and *exemplum* of 'cura' on top of that, concerns diseases (3.440-566). At the outset, the circumstances that facilitate the outbreak of an epidemic are brought to the fore as being concerned with weather, and here they recall the passage on the weather signs (1.257-310),[279] with the goal to stress the exteriority of the causes.[280] This exteriority, on its turn, reiterates the divine constellation that underlies all life.[281] Following this, the teacher directly enumerates the diverse tasks to be fulfilled to repel diseases in animals (3.445-473), only to introduce next in the sequence a description of all the results disease can and has brought about (3.475-566).  The aspects expounded in this digression, moreover, do not necessarily comply to the implied, agricultural, subject, but do also display elements that may seem insignificant, such as 3.537-539:

non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum

nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat; acrior illum

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[277] Klepl (1976, 118-122). Thomas (1987, 247-251) and Wiik (2002, 117-118) both point out that this use of digressions functions to broaden the frame of our interpretation, and thus trigger us to broaden our scope to our own position in the bigger picture too.

[278] Thus, the instructions are opened with tasks that should keep the fleeces of sheep perfectly white (3.384-394), to continue through the obtaining of lots of milk (3.395-403), to a partially lucrative, partially preservative task, keeping the dogs healthy (3.404-413), to a task completely devoted to preservation, the shunning away of harmful animals (3,415-439).

[279] Esp. the intratextual play with the phrase 'frigidus imber', occurring only in vv. 1.259 and vv. 3.441 emphasises this point on a deeper level, next to the more superficial treatment of similar themes in both passages.

[280] Verg. *G*. 3.441-444. Thomas (1988b, 124) points out that the two causes pointed out, cold weather ('frigidus imber', 3.441) and unwashed sweat ('inlotus sudor', 3.443-444), in this section are to be identified as extreme weather conditions.

[281] Pp. 62-65 of this project.

cura domat.

"the wolf does not scout the ambushes around cages,

nor does he sneak up to the flocks at night-time; a stronger care

tames him."

Although this note may at first sight seem like an unnoteworthy detail, read in the larger context of the *Georgics* it attains meaning as a model of provision within an animal. The use of the noun 'cura' creates the feeling that the wolf apparently does understand the world-order and knows how to deal with it; the reader of the *Georgics* should follow.

Again, therefore, an excursus is used as an inherent part of the actual teaching programme, although it may not seem so on the superficial level. Only the students who are capable of reading between the lines will find the significance of such passages. In this way, Vergil has painstakingly reached an underlying message in a poem that propounds to teach something completely else.

This chapter has been quite a strange case in the list of didactic poems treated so far. This was also clearly visible on the internal level of didaxis. Indeed, the poem meets all criteria a didactic poem should superficially adhere to, but the way in which these were used appears to be more complex than was the case with the earlier poems. This was best visible with the role-division applied by the poet in posing his audience. In this connection, it seemed very much like the poet wanted to minimalize his internal audience's participation in the teaching process and wanted more to establish his actual message through the near-complete absence of the internal audience. This is indeed where the early addresses to Maecenas may again enter the scene. Albeit completely unmotivated within the poem qua didaxis – because of the function of devotee that Vergil idiomatically created for him – his role cannot be eliminated on such grounds and I agree with Volk that his naming should function as a marker for an underlying message within the poem, as there is no reason to view Maecenas in any way as a farmer.[282] Hence, meaning is most definitely given to the poem and it is up to the reader to find out what this meaning is. The didaxis, I hope to have shown, points into the direction of the element of care, but that does not mean that this is necessarily the fixed interpretation; the poem cannot in its totality be grasped with only one interpretation, as Addison in the 17th

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[282] Volk (2002, 130-139). Cf. Schiesaro (1993, 138) and Holzberg (2006, 91-92).

century was already aware of.[283] It is now time to make a lapse in time to see if this diverse

strata of didactic poems also had influence on the way later didactic poets decided to work.

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[283] His statement is processed in Dryden (1987,147-148). Cf. Rutherford (2008, 91) and Thibodeau (2011, 150).

## 6. Pseudo-Oppian: The *Cynegetica*[284]

The development of the didactic genre has up to now displayed a growing interest in the rendering of more all-embracing accounts of the world at large, at the expense of the implied content. As Schindler has shown, this development is much indebted to the poetics manufactured by such poets as Lucretius, Vergil, and Manilius, who were all in one way or another occupied with the establishment of their own worldview.[285] For Schindler, moreover, this earlier time-frame was only a precursory period leading to the gradual disappearance of the genre in approximately the third century CE – an event that she describes as nearly inevitable.[286] However, such an underappreciation of the later didactic tradition seems to me highly fallible, as it is simply not true that the genre lost its favour, but contrarily attained huge popularity in the late second and early third century.[287] If this is the case, it would be illogical if only a few decades later this genre alone would have disappeared out of the blue.[288] It seems more probable, then, that this was a general consequence of the growing unrest within the empire at this time that troubled well-established poetic activities generally, and thus not solely haunted didactic poetry.[289] Nevertheless, Schindler's overall argument on the deterioration of the didactic genre is interesting and deserves more attention here as a

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[284] The edition used for referring to the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian is that of Mair (1928).

[285] Schindler (2005, 196-200).

[286] At least, this is the feeling I get when considering her arguments (Schindler [2005, 195-206]). These arguments that claim the logic for the disappearance of the didactic genre are concisely 1. that the poetic examples have already exhausted all resources available within the genre, 2. that the amount of topics was too limited to go on in this tradition any longer, 3. that prose began to take poetry's place as an information-conveyer, 4. that poetry started to merge again into one overall genre (cf. Schubert [2007, 347]). This last argument finds some reverberation in scholarship on late didactic poetry. As such, Hollis (1994 58-66) has pointed out the use of *ktiseis* in the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian and Kolde (2006, 215-242) argues for the implementation of tragic elements in Oppian's *Halieutica*, 5.416-588.

[287] Kneebone (2017, 204-205). This is at least the picture we may retrieve from the amount of manuscripts that have survived of Oppian's *Halieutica* (58) and Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica* (17), which were quite many (Bartley [2003, 2]).

[288] Moreover, strong objections may be made against the arguments put forward by Schindler. On the most superficial level, this concerns the fact that she nearly completely skips over the pre-imperial context of the genre, and consequently discerns the genre as a mostly Roman construction. When we consider for example the choice of subject within this bigger picture (e.g. with the catalogue in Sider [2014, 28-29]), it becomes clear that Schindler's picture is indeed flawed (cf. also the *Periegesis* by Dionysius Periegetes, that concerns geography but is omitted from the list in Schindler [2005, 198]). This also concerns the temporal relation didactic poetry upheld with narrative epic and didactic prose, both of which run a long history along with didactic poetry that in my opinion does not change significantly. In fact, when Schindler (2005, 204-205) discusses the various elements that both genres have had in comparison to each other diachronically, she seems to me to contradict her own argument that this was a process.

[289] So also, Von Albrecht (1994, 1018-1020). As König & Whitmarsh (2007a, 6-7) have shown, in fact, the correlation between knowledge and power is so inherent that they mutually affect each other. I believe that this must find a near analogy in the relation between poetry and power, as this is another form of intellectual enterprise, and thus also dependent on this possibilities societies can offer for intellectual thought.

general scholarly background to our present discussion on Pseudo-Oppian, to at the very least consider whether indeed the genre loses its characteristic didactic hallmark and instead partakes in a less didactic stage of the genre.

The present case study, the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian,[290] will prove an interesting one. This work stands in a larger tradition of later didactic poems that all concern some pastime activity, which immediately lightens the seriousness of the content and also tells us once and for all that they were probably written for a more elite audience, that had time for such activities.[291] With this external readership already decided on, it will be interesting to investigate if this explicit evocation of a probably intellectual readership is also confirmed in the *Cynegetica*, which, I have to state, I will not argue to be necessarily representative for the late didactic tradition at large.[292] This case study will mainly function as an extension of our bigger project, to see if the results attained so far can be seen to account for a significantly later poem too. It goes without saying, moreover, that this confirmatory study applies mainly again to the setup of the didaxis within the poem.

## 6.1 Teaching Whom?
In the first place, it is once again important that we start with the constitution of the didactic situation within the poem. The reader does not have to wait long to find out for what reason the poem was professedly written, as Pseudo-Oppian in *Cyn.* 1.16-19 already explains this:

Τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἔραμαι θήρης κλυτὰ δήνεʼ ἀεῖσαι.

τοῦτό με Καλλιόπη κέλεται, τοῦτʼ Ἄρτεμις αὐτή.

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[290] That is, Pseudo-Oppian as distinct from his predecessor Oppian, the poet of the *Halieutica*, who I believe was a different person, but who has too often been taken together with our poet here as being the same person (e.g. in Toohey [1996, 199-204]). Cf. Mair (1928, xiii-xvi) and Fajen (1999, 78-80), who discuss this differentiation.

[291] Schindler (2003, 198-199); Toohey (1996, 246-247) sees in this overall trend to treat leisurely activities in these poems a tendency to put the stress completely on this element, away from the playfulness that was inherent to earlier poems, such as the *Georgics* and the *Ars Amatoria* (cf. his refurbishment of the argument in Toohey [2004, 41-51]). This is also the image of the hunt that is suggested by Ps.-Opp. *Cyn.* 2.31-42, where he describes the peaceful nature of hunting. Cf. Paschalis (2000, 225-226). This does not mean, however, that all poems in the late didactic tradition concerned leisurely activities (e.g. Dionysius' *Periegesis* on geography and Pseudo-Manetho's *Apotelesmatica* on the stars). The fact remains, still, that the poems are no longer concerned with serious practical lucrative advice, as we saw for instance in the theme of farming (Hesiod and Vergil) or philosophical concerns (Parmenides and Lucretius).

[292] For a consideration of the diverse didactic intents in the other didactic poems on hunting roughly contemporary to Pseudo-Oppian, one can for instance consider Effe (1977, 154-183), who discusses them apart from each other. Fajen (1999, 92-94) discusses various synthesising and distinguishing approaches to the diverse didactic poems from the imperial period, that all try to create a picture of imperial didactic poetry.

ἔκλυον, ᾗ θέμις ἐστί, θεείης ἔκλυον ἠχῆς,

καὶ θεὸν ἠμείφθην·

"I long then to sing of the famous devices of the chase.

Calliope orders me thus, thus Artemis herself.

I listened, whither it is meet, I listened to the godly voice,

and answered the goddess;"

These lines, immediately following the dedication of the poem to the emperor Caracalla, function as a programmatic statement on the internal level of the poem to establish the reason for composition.[293] The teacher will, according to a divine plan, sing of the chase. But to whom will he sing?

What we have perceived in the previous didactic poems from the time of Rome's supremacy was the trend to explicitly dedicate the poem to an elite person in high Roman society, whether he be the actual addressee or not.[294] This is no different in the *Cynegetica*, where Caracalla is named as the dedicatee of the poem, and also seems to fulfil the role of addressee.[295] And yet, a problem occurs here. Whereas the earlier poems were characterised at least by an addressee who was clearly cast in the role of benefited student, this element seems to be lacking in our present poem, except for the following statement (4.21-24):

σὺ δέ, πότνα θεά, παγκοίρανε θήρης,

εὐμενέουσα θοῇ βασιληΐδι λέξον ἀκουῇ,

ὄφρα τεῶν ἔργων προμαθὼν ὀαρίσματα πάντα

θηροφονῇ, μακαριστὸς ὁμοῦ παλάμῃ καὶ ἀοιδῇ.

"and you, lady goddess, supreme ruler of the hunt,

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[293] As if these lines had not been clear enough proof of the divine will underlying the poem's composition, Pseudo-Oppian hastens himself to add, so to say, an account of his meeting with the goddess Artemis, to emphasise the divine foundation for his undertakings. As Bartley (2003, 171-172) rightly notices, this passage, through the innovative use of an epic dialogue, combines the usually applied hymn opening typical of didactic poetry (Dalzell [1996, 113-114]) with a programmatic statement on his further project and its subject matter.

[294] This project has made mention of Memmius in the *De Rerum Natura* and Maecenas in the *Georgics*, but consider also for instance the dedication to Caesar (whether this refers to Augustus or Tiberius is uncertain) in Manilius' *Astronomica* and the *Cynegetica* by Nemesianus, that is dedicated to the Roman emperors Numerian and Carinus, who ruled as brothers.

[295] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.1-15; 4.16-21. This idea of the explicit dedication is supported by the hypothesis of Costanza (1991, 486–489), who makes the suggestion that in fact Pseudo-Oppian inserted certain passages at Caracalla's behest, as a way of propaganda.

do speak graciously to the quick-witted, kingly hearing [sc. of Caracalla],

so that he, having learned beforehand all familiar converse of your tasks,

may slay beasts, blessed in hand as well as song."

Even here, however, the implication is not that this specific poem should instruct Caracalla, but rather that Artemis herself, who is invoked, would do so.[296] Further than this, we cannot make any well-grounded statements about the teacher's goal with composing the poem,[297] and also inside the poem, the teacher does not go much further than simply to state what he is (not) going to treat:[298]

Μοῦσα φίλη, βαιῶν οὔ μοι θέμις ἀμφὶς ἀείδειν·
"Dear Muse, it is not meet for me to sing about little animals;"

The passage immediately following this statement, a *praeteritio,* ironically, sums up little creatures that will not be the focus in the *Cynegetica* (2.571-628), but the point is clear: Pseudo-Oppian does at times insert such programmatic statements to mark the proceeding of the narration. Hence, we are dealing here with a poem that on the most superficial, programmatic, level does not give us many clues as to what its reason for composition from a didactic standpoint was, but the narration does show markers attesting to the subjects that will be treated next. This situation also obscures the didactic intent of the poem, that was in previous examples so strongly embedded, because this poem does not tell us why the hunt specifically must be discussed.

The more internal level of instruction will be found to be no less troublesome, as we will perceive later in this chapter. An observation that can at least be made already as a marker of the less serious didactic plan is the paucity of second person verbal forms or cases of the

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[296] Cf. Whitby (2007, 133-134), who points out that this message may actually be interpreted as holding encomiastic value, praying for the ruler to attain strength in general to preserve peace. During this time, around the second to third century, epideictic rhetoric also began to abound in didactic poetry, so we do not need to be surprised of its role at the start of our poem (Bürner [1912, 44-48] and Amato [2003, 153-155]). Contra Bartley (2016, 253), who would take this passage to signify simply that our poet is the one who should teach Caracalla how to hunt.

[297] Lightfoot (101-102) points out that this would strictly taken exclude our poet from Volk's definition.

[298] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 2.570; cf. also the use of the word θέμις in this sentence, which echoes its use in 1.18, and thus suggests that Artemis, who ordained Pseudo-Oppian to treat the chase in that section, remains to oversee the poem in the progress. The word is also used in Aratus, *Phaen*. 18, where it signifies the same idea. An example where Pseudo-Oppian tells us what he is about to treat is 3.183.

pronoun σύ within the poem that point to possible activity on the student's side.[299] These would obviously have been indicators of involvement of the reader qua student, and it would not have been illogical to expect to find a high degree of involvement inside a didactic poem on such a manual subject as the hunt.[300]

How does this affect the narratorial situation that we have thus far seen created in the diverse case studies? In principle, not much is effectuated by this change in didactic situation. If we look at the presentation of the material, we still find that, although there is no elaborated backstory,[301] the material presented all adheres to the principle of poetic simultaneity.[302] In fact, the teacher goes to such lengths as to at times use a system of intratextual deictic references to maintain the feeling that he is in control of the ongoing composition:[303]

τί χρέος ἐκ μερόπων δὲ κλυτὰς ἤμειψε γυναῖκας

ἐς τόδε πορδαλίων γένος ἄγριον, αὖθις ἀείσω.

"What need changed renowned women from humans

to this dangerous sort of leopards, I will sing later."

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[299] The total number of such second person references amounts to 34 times throughout the whole *Cynegetica*, which counts over 2.000 lines in total. These occur in Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.306; 316; 376-377; 393; 395; 397-398; 425; 436; 442; 445; 511; 514; 2.87; 251; 356-358; 362; 364; 374; 516; 3.77; 84; 279-280; 282; 345; 359-360; 4.77; 156; 439. Mentions of a 'you' found in invocation prayers (e.g. 3.461 to the Muse) or belonging to an apostrophe (e.g. 2.442 addressing a creature called the *subus*) have not been included in this scheme. N.B. this scheme, and other cumulations of similar points, only count the actual verses in which reference is made of some kind of 'you'. This means that in the context the references may actually still hold some syntactical value in later or earlier verses. Nevertheless, I believe that the schemes do remain representational, as they still give us an indication of the poet's infrequent use of this device of second person references in our poem.

[300] In fact, we do possess another didactic poem on hunting that gives us exactly this image of a practical hunting manual, namely the *Cynegetica* by Grattius. In this poem, the amount of second person references, again excluding apostrophes and invocations, amounts to a total of 53 occurrences in the 500-odd lines we have left (Grattius, *Cyn*. 29; 49; 51; 55-56; 62; 73; 114; 125; 127; 140-141; 144; 148; 153; 168-169; 175; 178; 181; 190; 199; 203; 261; 263-264; 176; 186; 300; 302; 307; 327; 337; 344; 346; 354; 356; 360; 377-378; 382; 395; 397; 419; 421; 468-469; 473; 475; 493; 496; 501; 513). This makes for more than 10% of the total extent Grattian version, in opposition to the mere 1.5% in Pseudo-Oppian's version. It should logically follow that the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian is quite distinct from poetry on the same subject, as scholarship has already pointed out (Błaśkiewicz [2015, 354-355]). I believe this is also visible in the actual focus that Grattius emphasizes in his poem, namely the importance put on the concept of 'usus' ("experience") in this poem, that is of course something that depends on human agents (contra Enk [1918, 3-5], who on the basis of the same evidence opts for the importance off 'sapientia' ["wisdom"], which I believe can be seen as just another term pointing in the same direction in the case of Grattius' *Cynegetica*).

[301] Except for maybe the dialogue with Artemis (Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.20-40), that is probably placed in the past within the poem, although it is impossible to tell for certain.

[302] E.g. 1.376; 1.436; 2.1-4; 2.43; 4.39-42.

[303] Ps.-opp. *Cyn*. 3.82-83; an example of referring to a previous section is found in vv. 4.117-119.

Hence, it is clear that we are dealing again with a narration taking place simultaneously to the actions described as happening, and this is also reflected in the role of the narrator and the narratee, who perform – as usual – as internal, intradiegetic, characters. Nevertheless, the facts that the real internal addressee, Caracalla, is addressed by name only twice (1.1; 1,43), and that this naming occurs in two encomiastic passages, that can easily be interpreted by the reader as detached formulaic sections,[304] encourage me to state that this specific poem, contrarily to our previous poems, does not hold on so tightly to the distinction made between the internal and external addressee. This does not mean, however, that there cannot be a deeper layer within the text for the attentive reader. The next paragraph will look into the dichotomy between the external and internal interpretation of the text more closely.

## 6.2 Involving the Reader…. But in What?

As I have already stated, the *Cynegetica* does apparently not function as a treasury of direct instructions, but fortunately we may also consider more oblique forms of instruction to see the message this poem conveys. These oblique forms, interestingly, are formed not as directives in any sense, but seem to describe the hunting activities from afar, and, more notably even, occur regularly in book 4, the book that discusses the actual hunting:[305]

Θηροφόνος δέ τις ὧδε πάγην ἑτάροισι σὺν ἄλλοις

θηρσὶ φιλακρήτοισιν ἐμήσατο πορδαλίεσσι.

"Some animal-killer had in the following manner with other friends

devised a trap for wild leopards, fond of sheer wine."

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[304] The translation of Mair (1928, 5) does not render it essentially clear ('Fain then am I'), but I believe that the particle τοιγάρ (1.16) in this sentence should be taken only with the following, without any sense of referring back to the last sentence. This seems highly probable if we consider the definition given in the LSJ s.v. τοιγάρ: 'an inferential particle'. This means that it indicates a new action based on a previous one, and these are in this sentence both enfolded in the present sentence and the next. In the use of the particle, Pseudo-Oppian has decided to first proclaim his inferred action (ἀεῖσαι, 1.16) before evidencing the actual reason for this activity (κέλεται, 1.17). In this way, we can easily take the preceding section as forming a self-contained passage with its own elaborated thought, and v. 1.16 to start a new section. The same accounts for vv. 1.43-46, that stand secluded between the conclusion of the dialogue with Artemis and the subsequent treatise on hunting. Cf. Błaśkiewicz (2014, 29-32), who believes that Pseudo-Oppian was a court-poet and for that reason needed to insert an invocation hymn to the emperor like this, that could consequently stand loose from the following.

[305] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 4.320-321. This way of describing the activities by putting the focus on a generalised hunter-figure continues until v. 438, after which the last two animals, gazelles and foxes, are described mostly through their characteristics after which in short a method of catching them is mentioned, where there is no place made for human agency in the actual catching process (vv. 4.439-453).

The hunt is described here as an activity that the internal reader at least is not necessarily involved in; except for a few statements urging the reader to actively participate in the process,[306] his role seems on the whole to be diminished to that of a distant observer, this actually being the same role the poet-teacher assumes for himself.

The teacher, namely, does not describe himself as someone who has practical knowledge of his subject (although he definitely knew what he was talking about),[307] but rather is dependent on what he has heard and seen:[308]

Ἔκλυον ὡς βόθροισιν ὁμοίοισίν τε δόλοισι

θήρασσαν καὶ θῶας ἀναιδέας, ἡδὲ γένεθλα

πορδαλίων ἀπάτησαν, ἀτὰρ πολὺ μείοσι βόθροις·

I have heard that they hunted also with trenches and like crafts

the reckless jackals, and deceived the races

of leopard, albeit with much smaller trenches;"

He thus leaves for himself a minimal claim to expertise on the subject, and this is quite unseen in the genre as we have experienced it so far. The didactic tradition up to now has been built up around elements that constitute the teacher's authority in one way or another, yet Pseudo-Oppian unobtrusively, willingly even, repulses any such claims to knowledge. Obviously, the reader will also have noted this tendency, and will have found out that there must be more under the surface, if indeed it is not the hunt that our teacher is experienced in.

Our teacher, as we have seen, rarely concerns himself with direct instructions and is clear in stating that his focus is not so much on directly teaching how to hunt. This can, I believe, also be seen retrospectively in the circumstances in which the concrete instructions occur. A quick glance at the quantities discussed earlier in this chapter (in the form of an

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[306] E.g. 3.278-286, where the reader is imagined using animal hides as the material for the manufacturing of objects, in order to point out the hides' usefulness.

[307] Błaśkiewicz (2014, 33-34). Contra Anderson (1985, 129).

[308] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 4.212-214; cf. 1.198 and 3.46. Kneebone (2017, 226-227) points out that Pseudo-Oppian factually stands quite apart through his focus on autopsy as a way of engaging with his subject, also in his own time. Nevertheless, Kneebone does point out that other didactic poets of this time, especially Oppian and Dionysius, also start to depend less on expertise than on the aspect of personal experience in composing their didactic material.

enumeration of lines where forms of the second person or mentions of 'you' are found)[309] delivers us the image of a decreasingly directive poem, where at the end of the poem teacher and student have almost completely distanced themselves from practical hunting. The first book, still maintaining quite a serious stance towards hunting as an activity to be taught to the student, deals with the preparations for hunting, and so the instructions given are also quite serious, in line with the subject matter: they tell us what must be done when preparing for the hunt:[310]

ἐς μέν νυν θήρην ὁπλίζεο τοῖα γένεθλα
αἰχμητῶν σκυλάκων, τοὶ κνώδαλα πάντα δίενται.
"For hunting now arm such kinds of
warlike dogs, that make all beasts speed away."

Also, in line with what we have perceived in previous didactic poems, this book – and the reference in 4.439 for that matter – still makes regular use of statements that are ostensibly provoked by the student's presence, thus creating the feeling that the addressee would be asking the teacher to teach more about a specific subject (1.436-438):

Εἰ δέ νύ τοι πινυτὴ σκυλακοτροφίη μεμέληται,
μήποτ᾽ ἀμέλγεσθαι σκύλακος νεοθηλέϊ μαζῷ
αἰγῶν ἢ προβάτων, μηδ᾽ οἰκιδίῃσι κύνεσσιν·
"If now wisdom of dog-caring is your concern,
never milk a dog at the fresh-budding breast
of goats or cattle, nor at domestic dogs;"

The student, then, albeit mostly written out of the story, can in his anonymity still play this role within the story. The first book, considered as such, seems in its totality still to pretend to be didactic as we know it.

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[309] These can be found on p. 75, n. 299. These quantities, moreover, count up to 13 mentions of a non-specified 'you' in book 1, 9 in book 2, 8 in book 3, and 3 in book 4.

[310] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.425-426; cf. 1.306-310 and 1.514-518, where the same verb is employed.

This pretension is lost in the rest of the books. Nearly all direct addressees from this point onwards are no longer concerned with actually hunting but with perceiving in one way or another,[311] thus pointing out that not only the teacher is expected to use his perception, but the reader as well:[312]

πάντα μιν ἀθρήσειας ὀρέσβιον οἷα λέαιναν,
νόσφι μόνου ῥινοῖο, τὸν αἰόλον ἐστεφάνωται,
δαίδαλα πορφύροντα καὶ ἄνθεσι μαρμαίροντα.
"You would remark it in every way like a lioness living in the mountains,
Except for the skin alone, with which he has surrounded himself, speckled,
Dying it with a spotted red and gleaming brilliantly."

This focus on perceiving is quite logical for the second and third book, that discuss the animals to be captured, enveloped between the actual hunting practices of book 1 and book 4,[313] but the last book, as I have observed in this paragraph, is also not as we would expect a manual on hunting to be.[314] As there is almost no involvement of the student implied in this book and the teacher is also absent himself from the practical narrations on the actual hunting, this book is quite atypical for the genre-specific tradition of didaxis as we have deducted it from our previous case studies.[315]

With all of the didactic constitutional elements lacking to such a large degree, it would not be illogical to claim that Pseudo-Oppian's poem uses the didactic mode more as a wrapping to enfold his actual message in. To an even lesser extent than Vergil, who was already applying didaxis more as a convenient cover-up for his actual programme,[316] our teacher seems to attach importance to the actual teaching of the matter he puts forward. Rather, he describes what he perceives and lets the reader draw his conclusions for himself.

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[311] E.g. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn.* 2.87-89; 2.516-518; 3.77; 3.83-84.
[312] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn.* 3.345-347. Cf. Kneebone (2017, 228): "This is a poem oriented towards human endeavour and the relationship between personal experience and theoretical knowledge rather than the gap between divine and human mortal understanding."
[313] Whitby (2007, 127).
[314] In fact, one of the three passages that directly involve the reader, vv. 4.156-157, also pertains to the category of perception that we discussed for books 2 and 3.
[315] This same strategy within the poem has been argued for in the case of the *Halieutica* by Oppian by Rebuffat (2001, 29-33), although this does not necessarily mean that both poets foresaw the same focuses.
[316] Cf. pp. 63-71 of this project.

It will be interesting to investigate what exactly the reader will find as the actual programme of the poem.

## 6.3 Showing your Student the World

As we have just observed, Pseudo-Oppian does still write himself as a teacher and the reader as a student into his poem, but he does so clearly not with the goal of teaching hunting, as the instructions manifest. What he does try to achieve, I believe, can be easily extrapolated from the evidence we have considered above. The extensive focus on the element of perceiving and the near-complete neglect of didaxis when it comes to hunting per se suggest to me that we are dealing with a poem that aims rather to highlight a perceptual element of the world. In a fashion comparable to that of the *Halieutica* by his namesake Oppian (that is, if we align ourselves with the interpretation of Kneebone)[317], Pseudo-Oppian contrived his poem to display the various personalities that may be found in existence for those who are willing to look around for them. The way in which this may be seen in the poem will be the focus of this paragraph.

The *Cynegetica* spends its middle two books solely on descriptions of animals and their behaviour. Sometimes, these descriptions still serve as a background to a specific hunting technique – probably to keep up the implied didactic situation –[318] but on the whole they seem to take a more separate position from the wider hunting background. In such a way we may for instance consider the passage 2.43-82, where the hierarchical constitution of bulls is drawn from the leader's point of view. This is, moreover, clearly meant as a piece on the primary level of instruction within the poem, as is exemplified by its opening lines:

Ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε δὴ ταύρων ζηλήμονα πάγχυ γενέθλην
πρῶτον ἀείδωμεν καὶ μυρίον ἔξοχα νεῖκος
οἷον ὑπὲρ θαλάμοιο πανάγρια δηρίσαντο.

"But come, let us first sing of the very jealous race of
bulls and especially the extensive strife,
how they most of all beasts compete for their bedding."

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[317] Kneebone (2008, 34-48).
[318] E.g. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn.* 2.308-313; 2.356-357; 3.362-363.

The involvement of the reader in such statements to mark the progression of the poem is a device Pseudo-Oppian employs more often in this poem to indicate that we are continuing our story on the main level.[319] Also, our poet applies these descriptive passages to intersperse them with digressions on thematically linked or aetiological themes, another marker that points out to me that these passages themselves are clearly meant as panels on the primary level of instruction.[320]

Hence, we are dealing here with a central part of the Pseudo-Oppianic didactic programme to which we have so far not attached significant meaning in the overall didactic context of the poem. This can however be easily resolved when considering the content of such passages. The passage on the bulls, as I have already mentioned above, centrally focuses on the leader of a tribe. His role, moreover, is to personify what Pseudo-Oppian had manifested as his teaching programme in the introduction, the striving nature of bulls. The leader is described as supreme master of all, to whom the whole herd answers (2.46-50), until an outsider with superior power replaces him (2.50-71). It turns out, then, that the loser removes himself from the herd to train his powers "like an athlete" (οἶά τις ἀθλεύων, 2.76), until he is sure to have superior strength (2.72-78), after which he dares to take on an opponent for the possession of a herd (2.79-81). The conclusion takes us back to the beginning of this section (2.81-82):

φορβαῖς γὰρ ἑὸν δέμας ἐξήσκησε
τηλόθ᾽ ἐνὶ δρυμοῖσι σθενοβλαβέος Κυθερείης.

"For he practised his skin with pasture,
far from weakening love in the woods."

The implication is that the leader is eventually weakened by love and thus loses his herd to a stronger competitor, who is actually fighting for the leader's position and the appurtenant

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[319] E.g. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 2.316; 3.7; 4.4, which are all marked by a first-person plural. This is in stark opposition to the use of digressions that are more often set apart by the use of first-person singular statements to indicate the end of an excursive piece (e.g. 1.80 and 2.158). Schmitt (1996, 72) and Bartley (2003, 104) note that such statements are drawn from the tradition of didactic poetry at large.
[320] To my knowledge, ancient didactic poetry does not show any examples of more embedded layers of digressions, an observation that also prompts me to state that such passages are meant to be read on the primary level of instruction. A digression occurring in such a passage is e.g. 2.109-157, which forms a thematic link to the context in which it is found.

benefits, including the power over the females as well. The teacher makes it abundantly clear that such is the nature of bulls.[321]

Read as such, this passage does not give much away on the diversified framework of personalities that I opt for. This element only gains power, however, if we consider the narratorial elements that strengthen the image presented above. At various points, animals are presented as being alike to humans concerning certain traits or embody emotions ascribed to humans. This is especially done, moreover, like in the above, by likening animals to humans through the use of similes, but also more obliquely by personifying the animals and their activities. At various places throughout the poem, there occur stages where an explicit link is made between animal behaviour and its human equivalent, as for instance in 2.220-221:[322]

πρόσθε μὲν εἷς ἐλάφοισιν ἐπὶ στίχας ἡγεμονεύει,

οἷα κυβερνητὴρ μεθέπων οἰήϊα νηός·

"Soon one guides the deer in lines,

like a steersman driving the rudder of a ship."

The image conveyed is one of an orderly working team under the guidance of one captain navigating the ship. This image is furthermore strengthened by the use of personifying language in the rest of the passage.[323] In the same way, emotions are strengthened in the poem, again with the goal of emphasising specific traits. An interesting device that functions as such is the rhetorical figure of *prosopoieia*. At its two appearances (2.360-372; 3.220-332), an animal is voicing distress using human speech to create a human tension in itself.[324] Such *prosopoieia*, moreover, also stresses the horror of the larger context, in which the speaking animal is lamenting another's maleficent action, and thus reinforces our personal detachment from the actions and subsequent character of the acting creature.

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[321] Cf. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 2.72: αὐτὰρ ὅ γ᾽ οὔτι φέρει δοῦλον ζυγόν ("but he [sc. the loser] does not stand the bonds of slavery"), implying that the weaker bull cannot deal with his inferior position, implicitly because of his jealous nature.

[322] Cf. 4.200-206, of the lion who admits defeat like a defeated former champion. Bartley (2003, 254-264) treats some examples of what he calls 'anthropomorphic similes' more extensively. It must be said that he only treats the similes that he considers completely developed, but there are also smaller similes like the one given as an example here and the one mentioned on page 81.

[323] E.g. περόωσιν ("pass through", 2.218), ναυτιλίην πλώοντες ("sailing on a voyage", 2.219), ποντοπορεύων ("traversing the sea", 2.223), τέρμα φάλαγγος ("the end of the line", 2.226) are all clear examples of language that is normally used to describe human activities.

[324] Rebuffat (2001, 119-121).

Hence, we perceive in the *Cynegetica* an abundance of markers pointing to the diverse natures that characterise creatures – animals as well as humans, as the digressions manifest: more than once, these treat the close relationship between both forms of creatures by aetiologically pointing out their common origin (2.614-628; 3.8-19; 4.233-319).[325] Thus, the description of the worldview presented accounts for both humans and animals, who apparently both possess diversified natures and characters.[326]

But it does not stop there. Book 4, namely, the book that should actually function as a manual, also shows this semi-ethnographic habit, when discussing hunting techniques. In 4.77-199, when treating the hunt on lions, Pseudo-Oppian enumerates three forms of hunting which he strikingly also attaches to three nationalities, marking their differences very emphatically through the deliberate juxtaposition.[327] Here, too, this differentiation seems to point to differing personal traits, this time in nations, to create a wholesome image of the world at large.

This programme also seems to be what Pseudo-Oppian had in mind if we consider the following passage in the light just shed on the poem (3.464-465):

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ὅσσα νόησας, ὅσ᾽ εἴδεα νῶϊ φύτευσας,
ὅσσα βροτοῖσιν ὅπασσας, ὅσ᾽ εἰναλίοις νεπόδεσσιν.
"Father Zeus, how many forms have you devised, how many have you grown in your mind, how many have you given to mortals, how many to the swim-footed sea-creatures?"

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[325] Cf. Bartley (2016, 245-246). Contra Hopkinson (1994, 197-198) and Błaśkiewicz (2014, 34-35) who see the digressions as mere embellishments.

[326] There is actually an ongoing tradition in antiquity of animals presented as possessing human traits, so this is not such a strange idea. The most famous example of this tradition is probably Semonides of Amorgos' seventh poem on women, where women are explicitly compared to their equivalent animals with regard to habits. Verdenius (1969, 157-158) gives more examples of this broad tradition in line with Semonides' poem.

[327] These ethnographic groups are the Libyans (Λιβύων πολυδίψιον αἶαν, " the often thirsty land of the Libyans", 4.111) (4.79-111), who lure the lion into a trap using bait, the people in the Middle East (παρ᾽ ὄχθαις Εὐφρήταο, "at the banks of the Euphates", 4.122) (4.112-146), who scare the lion with fire and pursue it until it chances into their nets, and the "Ethiopians" (Αἰθιοπήων, 4.147) (4.147-199), who alternately inflict damage upon the lion until it ceases to fight back. It is interesting to note that the passage on hunting lions is introduced neutrally as if the first method proposed is going to be the only one (4.77-78). Only at the end of that passage do we find out that this implicates a technique only used by the Libians (4.111).

Just before discussing the hybrid animals (3.464-503), Pseudo-Oppian inserts this programmatic statement attesting to the diversity of the creatures of the world.[328] In this way, the teacher concisely summarises the aspect of the world's diversified inhabitation. The Pseudo-Oppianic didaxis on the whole therefore leads more to the description of the world with regard to the diverse natures present in it than to the transference of hunting as a teachable tool.[329] The picture, moreover, relates to animals as well as humans, as especially the digressions manifest.

Of course, I have not been able to clarify all passages within the text in this way because of a lack of space, but I believe that this can fruitfully be done in later research. For instance, the question may be asked if the extensive physical portraits in the poem (e.g. 2.83-108) function also to tell us more about the traits of the animals, that is, as a form of physiognomy.[330] If this is the case, these descriptions also exemplify the diversity of nature. Also, there has been no deliberation here as to what aim Pseudo-Oppian had planned to reach with his description of the world. These are, namely, points that do not occur strongly within the poem from the standpoint of the didaxis, and for which this project can therefore not easily offer an answer.[331] Nevertheless, on the basis of the internal evidence we can conclude what the result of the poetic enterprise was from a didactic point of view: rendering a picture of the diversity of nature on the basis of the nature of animals, but possibly transferable to the world in its totality.

## 6.4 Breeding Dogs or Sketching the World?

It is now time to briefly reconsider the didaxis and subsequent message put forward in the poem on the basis of a guiding passage again. The specific passage chosen for this is 1.375-435, as book 1 has up to now been left underexposed in this chapter. In this way, I hope to

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[328] Cf. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.166-167 and 4.25-30, where the differences between creatures are again set forth in general terms.

[329] Cf. Barringer (2001, 86-87), moreover, who argues that the hunt itself may be used metaphorically in diverse works from antiquity to represent a pursuit of a loved one. An interpretation on this level for the practice of hunting may also possibly be opted for in the *Cynegetica*.

[330] As also suggested by Sánchez (1994, 121-122). The practice of physiognomy was widespread in antiquity and could even then be applied to animals as is shown in Evans (1969, 5-6), so it would be interesting to see if such an interpretation can also account for the physical descriptions in the *Cynegetica*.

[331] But cf. Hollis (1994, 156-157), who discusses the encomiastic character of the poem in favour of the ruler and especially points out the ruler's supremacy over the whole earthly constellation. By drawing down all kinds of people and animals in his poem, it might not be unthinkable that Pseudo-Oppian was throughout his poem attempting to praise the supreme reign of the Roman emperor in an elaboration of what he had stated in Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.10-15.

show that my findings may contribute to the interpretation of all books combined too, and not just to particular books within the poem.

Using a programmatic statement, Pseudo-Oppian opens the following account concerned with the mixed breeding of dogs (1.376-377):

Εἰ δέ νύ τοι κεράσαι φίλον ἔπλετο δοιὰ γένεθλα,
εἴαρι μὲν πρώτιστα λέχος πόρσυνε κύνεσσιν·
"If now it would please you to mix two kinds,
first prepare a bed in spring for dogs."

This statement immediately manifests the subject that lies before us and moreover points out what the first step to take in mixed breeding will be. Therewith, our teacher also posits the coming instructions in the broader context of the internally established didaxis. Here (1.369-538), namely, our teacher is discussing the upbringing and training of dogs for hunting, and a first step would logically be the procreation of the dog most suitable for hunting animals.

What is thereafter discussed also seemingly follows this programme, but there is more to it, as we will see after our exposition of the passage. Following a lengthy digression on the pre-eminence of spring as the mating season (1.378-392), to which man too is prone (1.391), the teacher sets forth his instructions on mixed breeding by giving examples of which dog-breeds may be combined (1.393-398), only to conclude that it is better to keep pure breeds (1.398-400):[332]

ἀτὰρ πολὺ φέρτατα πάντων
φῦλα μένειν μονόφυλα, τὰ δ᾽ ἔξοχα τεκμήραντο
ἄνδρες ἐπακτῆρες
"But far best of all it is
to keep the kinds of one kind, and to this especially do the
hunting men attest."

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[332] Cf. Grattius, *Cyn*. 193-197, that does propagate the active intermingling of breeds, as also Secord (2015, 222) notes, in opposition to the standpoint in Pseudo-Oppian's *Cynegetica*.

The teacher next (1.400-401) explains why these are superior, to then treat two idealised forms of dogs, the swift ones (1.402-413) and the strong (1.414-426). The last section concerns the inferences one can make on the basis of the colour of a dog (1.427-435).

One glance at this passage should at least make clear that for a piece allegedly dealing with preparing for the hunt, significantly little is said on the actual preparations to be undertaken. On the whole, Pseudo-Oppian is here too concerned with describing traits, as the focus on the colours and their subsequent characters manifest (1.427-435). Even the descriptions of the idealised dogs, if read more closely, lose their irreal sense, as 1.412-413 manifest:[333]

τοῖοι μὲν ταναοῖσιν ἐφοπλίζοιντο δρόμοισι
δόρκοις ἠδ᾽ ἐλάφοισιν ἀελλοπόδῃ τε λαγωῷ.
"Such are the dogs which should be arrayed for the swift chase
of gazelle and deer and swift-footed hare."

Pseudo-Oppian creates the feeling that the kind of dog described above already exists and is best equipped for the task of hunting quick animals, and thus does not need to be bred anymore, just like the strong sort can be described as it is already, not as it should be.[334] The eventual goal here, then, is to manifest the relation between certain specific forms of animals and their subsequent traits, in this case the relation between appearances of certain dogs and the appertaining speed or strength. To reach this goal, Pseudo-Oppian does not find it problematic to sacrifice his implied didaxis for this more oblique message.

As I have already mentioned, Pseudo-Oppian interrupts this passage with a digression, that I believe once more marks the overall programme, of which the breeding section now turns out also to form a part. It is stated that all creatures, man included, prefer mating – described with the personifying term λέχος –[335] in spring. This is not out of free will, but "because" (1.392)

εἴαρι γὰρ πάνδημος ἐπιβρίθει Κυθέρεια.

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[333] I am indebted here to the translation of Mair (1928, 42), that I believe renders the optative perfectly. I have therefore copied his translation in my project.
[334] Esp. Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.423-424.
[335] Ps.-Opp. *Cyn*. 1.377; 382. Bartley (2003, 123) calls this use 'anthropomorphic'.

"in spring common Love presses on us."[336]

Thus, all creatures are subservient to the same kind of love. Again, a superficially unimportant digression is used to strengthen the inherent argument of the poem, this time in confirming the equality of all creatures as regards certain characteristics. In the rest of the poem, as we have seen,[337] this background forms the basis for the following picture of the diversified world qua its inhabitants. Whether this picture functions as the basis for an encomium to the emperor or constitutes a deeper didactic message for its own sake, we cannot tell from the constitution of the didaxis in the poem.

Hence, even in book 1, where the focus should more implicitly be on preparation for the hunt, do we find references to the bigger picture of the diversified world we live in. In contradistinction to the poems we have perceived before, however, the *Cynegetica* is not subject to such a strong didaxis to underlie the message that is put forward on the external level of the actual reader. On the most basic level, our teacher still applies the measures of didaxis, but it seems that these are more formal than serious. Even to find the actual message the poem is conveying, we have to divert from the didaxis at times to consider measures that are more rhetorical (e.g. the *prosopoieia*) or poetic (e.g. personification or similes) to find out what the poem is really trying to tell us.

For this reason, taken from the standpoint of the didaxis, the observations made by Schindler are understandable,[338] at least if we take the *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian as being representative of late didactic poetry. Strictly speaking, this poem is losing its didactic hallmark to turn into something more general. Nevertheless, what it is turning into is a problem on its own, as scholarship has also been keen to point out that it is nearly impossible to put one's finger on the genuinely most important aspect of the poem.[339] With this chapter, I hope to at least have contributed to finding out about this central aspect of the poem, by taking the scope of the didaxis as my guiding theme.

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[336] Contra Bartley (2003, 125), who refuted the translation 'common' in favour of 'divine'. This suggestion seems to me to be completely unnecessary, as 'common love' functions as a strong summary to the preceding and is the most common translation for πάνδημος anyway.
[337] Pp. 81-84 of this chapter.
[338] Schindler (2005, 193-209). Also, pp. 71-72 above.
[339] Anderson (1985, 129-135); Błaśkiewicz (2014, 27-28).

## 7. Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, it has been my aim to display the didactic tendencies in the diverse poems taken as my case studies, in order to find out, respectively, if a recurring didactic strategy could be retrieved within didactic poetry, if a difference in didaxis within the diverse case studies could be perceived, and if, on the basis of these findings, a profound analysis could be made of the actual programme the poets foresaw with their compositions in relation to each other. The answer to all these questions, in short, is yes. This conclusion will more thoroughly present the actual similarities within and differences between the poems and their programmes, but first we will briefly recapitulate the results attained in the various case studies. The final part will bring all results together in an overarching synopsis of didaxis in didactic poetry.

### 7.1 Recapitulating Didaxis

This project took on a diachronic scope throughout antiquity taking into account both Greek and Latin literature. As such, we began our project with a poem that stood at the edge of the development of the genre of didactic poetry, the *Works and Days* by Hesiod. As is only logical in such a primordial case, this poem has been found to be highly serious in its conveyance of the actual message. The didaxis consequently was also clearly built up around the leading themes in the poem, working and justice, and Hesiod seemed not to be planning anything else with his poem than the actual education of the student, whether he be internal or external. There was a distinction, however, between the internal and external students in the way they are evoked throughout the poem. I have argued, namely, that Hesiod created an internal didactic situation in the past that allowed him to logically put forward his teaching in the present. This situation binds Perses to the teacher as a pupil, who is enacted as being actively involved in the process, and through whose presence Hesiod is able to proceed undisturbedly to his eventual goal. Thus, the poet uses all possible measures as regards didaxis to lead his student to what he believes to be an ameliorated situation. These measures include the poet's extensive instructing as much as the elaboration of an internal didactic situation.

The Aratean programme already shows some divergences from this basic model. In the *Phaenomena*, we have found a didactic programme that is still seriously working towards the exposition of the implied message, but thereby also taking into account its role as written literature: Aratus was keen to exploit the possibilities of written composition, and for this he

found the subject of the signs to function perfectly. His didaxis, open to the intratextual as much as to the extratextual reader, was built up in such a way as to allow for different strands of meaning to be assigned to the overall composition. It is important to note here, too, that the didaxis played its role as a pointer to meaning on the superficial level, the signs in the world, as much as on the hidden level of the text as sign. It depends on the readership how much meaning they can retrieve from the composition in its totality. The poem in its totality thus in one way or another adheres to its assumed aim, teaching how to interpret signs.

As we have seen, in general lines this is also the case with the *De Rerum Natura*. In this poem, the teacher does discuss the content he explicitly claims to put forward as his primary programme, namely the world according to an Epicurean outlook, but the goal he is trying to attain changes if we take on the scope of the external reader instead of the implied reader. I have argued that Lucretius deliberately minimalizes the role ascribed to Memmius, the implied addressee, with the goal of creating this diversification. In this way, while allegedly teaching the *rerum natura* to the implied reader, Lucretius can actually use his exposition as an argumentation to convince his external audience of the Epicurean truth. The poem, then, although still straightforwardly concerned with factual teaching, actually shows a deeper layer of rhetoric that should lead the student, whether he be internal or external, to the Epicurean ideal.

With Vergil, we have seen that the actual message gets more separated from the explicitly treated programme than was the case in his predecessors' poems. It soon becomes clear for one reading this poem that we are not concerned with farming per se, as the internal situation would have it. A close reading of the instructions points out that the focus is actually on the concept of 'cura', making sure that all work is prepared and sufficiently done in due time. This real focus, however, can only be found by one who is capable of detaching oneself from the internal didaxis. To signify this point, Vergil has added Maecenas to the poem in the role of intellectual dedicatee, to form a counterpart to the lower-class farmers, who would only be able to grasp the most superficial message. By bringing the figure of Maecenas into his composition at a position completely separable from the actual didaxis but still clearly adducing his importance as a receiver of the poem, our poet points out that this dedicatee's presence should be felt throughout the poem. What this again signifies, must the reader decide, but the didaxis, as I have shown, points to the centrality of 'cura'.

The *Cynegetica*, the most recent poem in the list, shows itself a poem in the most nigh to the *Georgics*, as the didactic evidence adduced in this project shows. The didactic element, that was so central in most of our previous poems, is relieved of most of its importance in this poem and functions more as a generic marker in the actual programme. Although there is still a deeper layer retrievable in the *Cynegetica*, the diversity of the world and its characters, this element is only slightly supported by the exposition of the didaxis. Rather, Pseudo-Oppian has shown himself dependent on poetic and rhetorical measures in the exposition of this element. When signifying the actual programme of his poem, namely, the teacher tended to neglect the typical didactic measures we have seen in the other poems but rather chose to stylise his exposition with stylistic features that pointed out the actual programme. This led, moreover, to a text that is almost uniform in its treatment of the intratextual and extratextual audience and that to only a small degree applies actual instruction and involvement of the reader. The didactic situation that performed so strongly in our previous poems has become a generic foil in the *Cynegetica*.

## 7.2 Comparing Didaxis

Keeping this brief summary of the various didactic programmes in mind, we can now go on to compare the poems on the basis of their distinct specificities and common generic tendencies qua didaxis. We will make use here also of the intrageneric differentiations applicable according to modern scholarship.[340] Some conclusions will then follow, based on the programmes and content put forward in the poems and how these factors are compatible with the actual didaxis of the poem.

As we have observed in this project, the genre of didactic poetry is indeed subject to constant change, first being highly serious in its expositions and applying its didaxis with this straightforward programme always maintaining the most importance, to eventually reach a stage where didaxis is more of a formal measure to attain something completely else than is implicitly proffered. Indeed, a didactic situation is always kept up, but its significance in the overall programme is gradually changing.

This process can be sketched as follows: in the earliest time period (that of Hesiod), the genre originated in an oral form without a prose equivalent; if one wanted to convey a

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[340] See for these again pp. 9-13 of this project.

message, therefore, poetry was only the most likely medium to do so, and for that reason, it is only logical that we chance upon poems that hold a highly serious stance towards their subject matter and therefore also stage their didaxis with this goal in mind. This is not the case for the later poets, who all have access to the prose equivalent of didactic poetry. Their choice to use didactic poetry is a deliberate one, and their aim is most likely not simply the conveying of information in a straightforward fashion, as prose was now the logical default form to choose. For that reason, scholarship searches for other reasons of composition in these poems, and it has often been found in a deeper meaning conveyed in the poem. This deeper meaning has also been opted for in this project, but not to such an extent as others would have it. Aratus, for instance, was found to indeed hide something beneath the surface, namely the text as a sign in itself, but this level does not rule out the explicit content of the poem, the signs at large. This is in opposition to the position that the *Phaenomena* would only pivot on the underlying Stoic worldview.[341]

This 'transparente' interpretation of didactic poetry, moreover, also displays gradually changing tendencies: there always remained the dichotomy between the superficial level of instruction and the underlying message within the poem, but the extent to which they interacted steadily changed. In the *Phaenomena* and the *De Rerum Natura,* the dependence of the deeper level of instruction on the straightforwardly exposed instructions is still clearly visible, but their successors Vergil and, to an even greater extent, Pseudo-Oppian were found to be far less concerned with the creation of a cohesive system of explicit versus implicit instructions. This can be clearly perceived, in the first place, in the distinctness of the topics put forward on both levels, but also, no less importantly, in the way the didaxis leads us towards these different levels.

This last point was best remarkable in the degree of didaxis put forward. We could see that Hesiod was, expectably, highly concerned with the construction of a well-wrought didaxis, where the actual student was guided to wisdom quite obliquely, through the production of an internal situation in the poem, staged as being produced for the implied reader, Perses. Aratus and Lucretius too used a relatively high amount of didactic markers, although they were attempting to attain different goals with their compositions; for instance, both applied the teacher-student constellation in their own ways, Aratus making his didactic situation very

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[341] This Stoic interpretation of the poem has been shortly discussed on pp. 35-36, and especially in n. 151 there.

plain so that anyone could feel involved, Lucretius creating the Hesiodic feeling by making a clear distinction between Memmius (who had to be taught) and the actual student (who needed to be persuaded). This resulted in an actual message to be conveyed that was, read in its totality, somewhat broader in the case of the *Phaenomena* and slightly altered with regard to its textual goal, no longer being concerned with teaching but more with persuading, in the *De rerum Natura*.

The fact that these didactic markers play a far smaller role in the last two poems, the *Georgics* and the *Cynegetica*, does not imply that these two poems do not possess a telling didaxis, as I have shown. Their didactic methodologies were only more restricted in their span of influence. Nevertheless, these two poems also differ between themselves in their use of didaxis and their build-up in bringing about the actual underlying message. Vergil, namely, does still use the instruments of the implied and the actual student, in combination with the heavy implementation of instructions, in order to denote an underlying didactic programme that shows some affiliation with the internal programme addressed to the farmers. The instructions, still directed at the reader if he wishes to perceive them as such, do convey a meaning conforming to the internal programme put forward, but to an outside reader may just as well be illustrative of the more implicit programme of 'cura' proposed here. In the *Cynegetica*, this cohering dichotomic situation is not worked out so strongly on the level of the didaxis: in this poem, the didaxis is minimalised and this results also in the creation of a weaker implied didactic situation. Consequently, the composition is also subject to a detachment, of the actual message put forward in the poem from the superficial message, that is even stronger than was the case in the previous poems: choosing to minimalize the implementation of didactic instruments, Pseudo-Oppian had to find other ways of advancing his actual message, and he found these ways in poetic and rhetorical features. The slightly developed didaxis supporting the implied exposition on hunting only plays a role on the superficial level of instruction as a generic marker but has lost its foremost importance.

Hence, we perceive in the genre in the first place a close connection between the application of the didaxis, on the internal as well as the external level of the poetic situation created, and the eventual aim propagated for the poem. A second observation, no less noteworthy, is that a growing inclination to discard the didaxis in the poem as a pointer to meaning can be discerned. Of course, this project presents some case studies and is thus necessarily flawed as regards putting forward definite outcomes. It is still a conceivable option

that other poems deal with their didaxis in a very different way. For that reason, it may still be helpful to take a close look at poems that have not played a role in this project. This may on the one hand prove that the general didactic tendencies portrayed here are all-embracing and on the other hand may supplement the image of the periodical development globally sketched here already. Nonetheless, the results attained here may speak for themselves and also allow us to delve deeper into the exposition of didaxis in didactic poetry, the activity that will cover the last paragraph of this project.

## 7.3 Defining Didaxis

In the various case studies performed in this project and in the preceding introduction, various didactic tools have been focused on, that at large constitute the didaxis. It is now time to briefly revise these measures to create an all-embracing picture of what I have argued to be the central element of didactic poetry and thus see what didactic poetry essentially is.

Of course, in the first place an element that is central to any didactic poem is the creation of a (partly or wholly) developed didactic situation underlying the overall narration. In the panel discussing this background situation, there always perform two didactic characters, a teacher and a student, who together form the reason for composition and establish inherently how the poem will proceed. This poetic situation, however, can only be maintained on the internal level of the poem, and the poets seemed to be aware of this. For the external reader, the poem is at all times kept comprehensible, and a distinction is even made between the two readerships in the way they are involved in the poem. Within this distinction, moreover, it is always the external readership that is dependent for its interpretation of the text on the way the internal situation evolves, as the teacher presents us with a deeper level of meaning in the text that is at least based on the internal level. Lastly, we have seen that it is in later stages of the development of didactic poetry a complex undertaking to really grasp what the actual goal was that a poet foresaw with his composition, but that the teacher-student constellation is a fruitful starting point in finding out about the different meanings attached to the poem.

Secondly, an important part is played by the actual instructions within the poem, that have been seen also not to be as straightforward as may be expected. This project has been mostly restricted to the presentation of the instructions in their broadest sense, but it may also for later research be useful to consider the different actual forms that are given to the

instructions, such as the use of active imperatives versus cupitative phrases in the diverse poems.[342] Nevertheless, the instructions in themselves have been telling of their own account too. These, namely, fulfil the role of markers where the narration will lead us. On the one hand, they must explicitly be in accordance with the actual narration, but on the other we have seen that they also signify the more inward message of the poem. Hence, most of the time they too play a dual role.

These two 'tools' of didaxis are obviously the most pre-eminent in any didactic poem, but there are also other factors that play a role in the actual teaching progress, as the above case studies have pointed out. Mostly, these perform as traits of the tools mentioned above, but a further characteristic must at least be mentioned. This concerns the side-information given in the digressions, that more often than not contributes to the programme championed in the poems, and often, through the use of *exempla*, hints at the overarching programme. These digressions are, furthermore, implemented in the poem at places where they show a link to the main narration, whether this be a causal, thematic, or aetiological one. Hence, these too may be argued to be able to work on the superficial and deeper level of the poem and need also to be accounted for if one wants to deliver an all-embracing definition.

Hence, returning to our starting point in this investigation of didaxis in didactic poetry,[343] we may indeed speak of a so-called master narrative in the case of didactic poetry as a narratorial design on which all individual poems depend in the way they convey their teaching. These individual instantiations, moreover, all perform as "différends", that adapt this narratorial design to their individual needs and subject, but nonetheless use the basic scheme to a certain degree. I would like to contend, on the basis of these overall findings, that this differentiation within didactic poetry (based on considerations of the superficial as well as the actual programme of didaxis put forward) also provides our genre with the troubling pluriformity that has made it so difficult to describe what a didactic poem would in its essence actually have looked like: if all poets had to keep different overall goals in mind, it is only logical that the skeleton of didactic poetry is the only characteristic that they would keep in mind, as it is the most essential element. It therefore seems wiser to me to apply only the most basic scheme of characteristics when talking about didactic poetry, the one proposed here.

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[342] A division that is made e.g. by Gibson (1997, 67-98).
[343] Esp. pp. 13-16 of this project.

All these observations considered, it would not be illogical to conclude that didactic poetry can indeed be considered a separate genre on its own. Even though a larger framework than the one offered here cannot be retrieved, this skeleton of the master narrative does in my opinion suffice to speak of a separate genre that had clearly demarcated the general principles that one needs to adhere to. These principles, tested in the various case studies, play a central role in any one of the poems discussed here, even if they show themselves to be less significant in the actual programme. It remains a matter of dispute whether my findings on the internal programmes put forward in the diverse poems are plausible or not, but I am strongly inclined to argue that a central role must be granted to the didactic organisation underlying the composition.

Of course, I have not been able to adduce answers to all questions remaining about the role of didaxis in didactic poetry. A lot of ground is still to be covered by examining other examples of didactic poetry, even those poems that have not survived in their entirety. It can even be hoped for that our examinations of the complete texts may enable us to make predictions on how these incomplete poems would have continued to use their didaxis in the parts that did not survive the test of time. Also, other perspectives may be assumed to check if the role ascribed to the didaxis in this project is in fact legitimate in uncovering the programmes put forward in individual didactic poems; if diverse perspectives may point into a different direction with regard to the actual programme of the poems, it would be advantageous to see how this conforms to or diverges from the actual programme the internal didaxis suggests. In such a way, we may find out even more about what characterised didactic poetry as a separate genre with such a rich tradition.

Finally, didactic poetry is obviously not the only genre that applies didaxis, so a broadening of one's perspective would not be ill suited. Therefore, I would in the last place like to suggest investigating the interrelations of didactic poetry and other genres that apply didaxis. In this way, we may discover more about education in the bigger context of literature in its totality, but this will most probably also deliver insights into the specified use of didaxis in didactic poetry in opposition to the other places of occurrence for didaxis. Especially the relation to didactic prose will prove interesting: some research has already been done on the formal affiliations between both genres (thus, for instance, how do authors in both genres

stylise their compositions?),[344] but  it would not be out of place to see how both apply their actual didaxis.

As these suggestions for further research make clear, there remains a lot to be investigated on both didactic poetry as a genre and the didaxis inserted as a methodology within literature. hopefully, the answers to these questions will result in the creation of a uniform interpretation of the relation between didaxis and literature, or at the very least show the significance of didaxis in interpreting didactic poetry. If such questions will turn out to be too far-fetched for present scholarship, however, my project will at least have paved the way for future considerations of didactic methodologies in ancient literature in general or for innovative interpretations of specific didactic poems.

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[344] Fowler (2008, 228-250); Hutchinson (2009, 196-211).

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