

Creation Stories from Around the World

Creation 2: Ancient Greece, c. 725 BCE

Hesiod's Theogony

Translated by A. Athanassakis, *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1983.
 Line numbers and breaks in the text have been inserted to facilitate textual references, but do not correspond to the original.
 See the family tree at this section's end, taken from "Parthenon Graphics Timelines," <http://chaos1.hypermart.net/fullsize/mythfs.gif>
 Notes taken from common dictionaries, and from Theoi Project, a guide to Greek gods, spirits, and monsters: www.theoi.com

I begin my song with the Helikonian¹ Muses²;
 they have made Helikon, the great god-haunted mountain,
 their domain;
 their soft feet move in the dance that rings
 10 the violet-dark spring and the altar of mighty Zeus³.
 They bathe their lithe bodies in the water of Permessos
 or of Hippokrene or of god-haunted Olmeios.
 On Helikon's peak they join hands in lovely dances
 and their pounding feet awaken desire.
 From there they set out and, veiled in mist,
 glide through the night and raise enchanting voices
 to exalt aegis⁴-bearing Zeus and queenly Hera⁵,
 the Lady of Argo⁶ who walks in golden sandals;
 20 gray-eyed Athena⁷, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus,
 and Phoebus Apollo⁸ and arrow-shooting Artemis⁹.
 They exalt Poseidon¹⁰, holder and shaker of the earth,
 stately Themis¹¹ and Aphrodite¹² of the fluttering eyelids,
 and gold-wreathed Hebe¹³ and fair Dione.
 And then they turn their song to Eos, Helios, and bright
 Selene,
 to Leto, Iapetos, and sinuous-minded Kronos,
 to Gaia, great Okeanos, and black Night,
 and to the holy race of the other deathless gods.
 It was they who taught Hesiod beautiful song
 30 as he tended his sheep at the foothills of god-haunted
 Helikon.
 Here are the words the daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus,

the Muses of Olympos¹⁴, first spoke to me.
 "Listen, you country bumpkins, you swag-bellied yahoos,
 we know how to tell many lies that pass for truth,
 and we know, when we wish, to tell the truth itself."
 So spoke Zeus's daughters, masters of word-craft,
 and from a laurel in full bloom they plucked a branch,
 and gave it to me as a staff, and then breathed into me
 40 divine song, that I might spread the fame of past and future,
 and commanded me to hymn the race of the deathless gods,
 but always begin and end my song with them.
 Yet, trees and rocks are not my theme.¹⁵ Let me sing on!
 Ah, my heart, begin with the Muses who hymn father Zeus
 and in the realm of Olympos gladden his great heart;
 with sweet voices they speak of things that are
 and things that were and will be, and with effortless
 smoothness
 the song flows from their mouths. The halls of father Zeus
 50 the thunderer shine with glee and ring, filled with voices
 lily-soft and heavenly, and the peaks of snowy Olympos
 and the dwellings of the gods resound. With their divine
 voices
 they first sing the glory of the sublime race of the gods
 from the beginning, the children born to Gaia¹⁶ and vast
 Ouranos¹⁷
 and of their offspring, the gods who give blessings.
 Then they sing of Zeus, father of gods and men -
 they begin and end their song with him
 60 and tell of how he surpasses the other gods in rank and might.
 And then again the Olympian Muses and daughters of aegis-
 bearing Zeus
 hymn the races of men and of the brawny Giants,
 and thrill the heart of Zeus in the realm of Olympos.
 Mnemosyne¹⁸, mistress of the Eleutherian hills,
 lay with father Zeus and in Pieria gave birth to the Muses
 who soothe men's troubles and make them forget their
 sorrows.
 Zeus the counselor, far from the other immortals, leaped
 70 into her sacred bed and lay with her for nine nights.
 And when, as the seasons turned, the months waned,

¹ **Helicon**: A mountain, 5,735 ft. high, of central Greece. It was the legendary abode of the Muses and was sacred to Apollo.

² **Muses**: the nine daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, each of whom presided over a different art or science, as sources of inspiration

³ **Zeus**: The principal god of the Greek pantheon, ruler of the heavens, and father of other gods and mortal heroes

⁴ **Aegis**: The goatskin shield or breastplate of Zeus or Athena.

⁵ **Hera**: The sister and consort of Zeus

⁶ **Argo**: a large constellation in the southern hemisphere lying principally between Canis Major and the Southern Cross

⁷ **Athena**: The goddess of wisdom.

⁸ **Phoebus Apollo**: The god of light; god of prophesy and poetry and music and healing; son of Zeus and Leto; twin brother of Artemis

⁹ **Artemis**: The virgin goddess of the hunt and the moon and twin sister of Apollo

¹⁰ **Poseidon**: The god of the waters, earthquakes, and horses, and brother of Zeus

¹¹ **Themis**: goddess of justice

¹² **Aphrodite**: goddess of love and beauty

¹³ **Hebe**: The goddess of youth and spring, cupbearer to the Olympian gods

¹⁴ **Olympos**: the highest point in Greece and home of the mythical Greek gods

¹⁵ A proverbial saying meaning, 'why enlarge on irrelevant topics?' (Note by Hugh G. Evelyn-White)

¹⁶ **Gaia**: The goddess of the earth, who bore and married Uranus and became the mother of the Titans and the Cyclopes

¹⁷ **Ouranos**, or Uranus: the earliest supreme god, a personification of the sky, who was the son and consort of Gaea and the father of the Cyclopes and Titans

¹⁸ **Mnemosyne**: The goddess of memory, mother of the Muses

many many days passed and a year was completed,
she gave birth to nine daughters of harmonious mind,
carefree maidens whose hearts yearn for song;
this was close beneath the highest peak of snowy Olympos,
the very place of their splendid dances and gracious homes.
The Graces¹ and Desire dwell near them and take part
in their feasts. Lovely are their voices when they sing
and extol for the whole world the laws
80 and wise customs of all the immortals.
Then they went to Olympos, delighting in their beautiful
voices
and their heavenly song; the black earth all about resounded
with hymns, and a harmonious tempo arose as they pounded
their feet
and advanced toward their father, the king of the sky
who holds the thunderbolt that roars and flames.
He subdued his father, Kronos², by might and for the gods
made a fair settlement and gave each his domain.
90 All this was sung by the Olympian Muses,
great Zeus's nine daughters whose names are
Kleio³, Euterpe⁴, Thaleia⁵, Melpomene⁶,
Terpsichore⁷, Erato⁸, Polymnia⁹, Ourania¹⁰
and Kalliope¹¹, preeminent by far,
the singers' pride in the company of august kings.
And if the daughters of great Zeus honor a king
cherished by Zeus and look upon him when he is born,
they pour on his tongue sweet dew
and make the words that flow from his mouth honey-sweet,
100 and all the people look up to him as with straight justice
he gives his verdict and with unerring firmness
and wisdom brings some great strife to a swift end.
This is why kings are prudent, and when in the assembly
injustice is done, wrongs are righted
by the kings with ease and gentle persuasion.
When such a king comes to the assembly he stands out;
yes, he is revered like a god and treated with cheerful respect.
Such is the holy gift the Muses give men.
The singers and lyre players of this earth
110 are descended from the Muses and far-shooting Apollo,
but kings are from the line of Zeus. Blessed is the man
whom the Muses love; sweet song flows from his mouth.
A man may have some fresh grief over which to mourn,
and sorrow may have left him no more tears, but if a singer,
a servant of the Muses, sings the glories of ancient men
and hymns the blessed gods who dwell on Olympos,
the heavy-hearted man soon shakes off his dark mood, and
forgetfulness
120 soothes his grief, for this gift of the gods diverts his mind.
Hail, daughters of Zeus! Grant me the gift of lovely song!

¹ **Graces:** Three sister goddesses, known in Greek mythology as Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, who dispense charm and beauty

² **Kronos,** or Chronus: a Titan whose name means "Time," dethroned by his son Zeus

³ **Kleio**³, or Clio: Muse of history

⁴ **Euterpe:** Muse of lyric poetry and music

⁵ **Thaleia,** or Thalia: Muse of comedy and pastoral poetry

⁶ **Melpomene:** Muse of tragedy

⁷ **Terpsichore:** Muse of dancing and choral singing

⁸ **Erato:** Muse of lyric poetry and mime

⁹ **Polymnia:** Muse of sacred song and oratory

¹⁰ **Ourania,** or Urania: Muse of astronomy

¹¹ **Kalliope,** or Calliope: Muse of epic poetry

Sing the glories of the holy gods to whom death never comes,
the gods born of Gaia and starry Ouranos,
and of those whom dark Night bore, or briny Pontos fostered.
Speak first of how the gods and the earth came into being
and of how the rivers, the boundless sea with its raging swell,
the glittering stars, and the wide sky above were created.
Tell of the gods born of them, the givers of blessings,
how they divided wealth, and each was given his realm,
130 and how they first gained possession of many-folded
Olympos.
Tell me, O Muses who dwell on Olympos, and observe
proper order
for each thing as it first came into being.

Chaos was born first and after her came Gaia
the broad-breasted, the firm seat of all
the immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympos,
and the misty Tartaros¹² in the depths of broad-pathed earth
140 and Eros¹³, the fairest of the deathless gods;
he unstrings the limbs and subdues both mind
and sensible thought in the breasts of all gods and all men.

Chaos gave birth to Erebos¹⁴ and black Night;
then Erebos mated with Night and made her pregnant
and she in turn gave birth to Ether and Day.
Gaia now first gave birth to starry Ouranos,
her match in size, to encompass all of her,
and be the firm seat of all the blessed gods.
150 She gave birth to the tall mountains, enchanting haunts
of the divine nymphs¹⁵ who dwell in the woodlands;
and then she bore Pontos¹⁶, the barren sea with its raging
swell.
All these she bore without mating in sweet love. But then
she did couple with Ouranos to bear deep-eddying Okeanos¹⁷,
Koios¹⁸ and Kreios¹⁹, Hyperion²⁰ and Iapetos²¹,
Theia and Rheia²², Themis and Mnemosyne,
as well as gold-wreathed Phoibe²³ and lovely Tethys²⁴.

¹² **Tartaros,** or Tartarus: The abysmal regions below Hades where the Titans were confined. An infernal region; hell.

¹³ **Eros:** The god of love, son of Aphrodite

¹⁴ **Erebos,** or Erebus: The dark region of the underworld through which the dead must pass before they reach Hades.

¹⁵ **Nymphs:** Any of numerous minor deities represented as beautiful maidens inhabiting and sometimes personifying features of nature such as trees, waters, and mountains

¹⁶ **Pontos:** ancient personification of the sea

¹⁷ **Okeanos,** or Oceanus: A Titan god of the outer sea encircling the earth and the father of the Oceanides and the river gods

¹⁸ **Koios:** Titan of the inquisitive mind, his name meaning "query" or "questioning"

¹⁹ **Kreios:** Titan of leadership, domesticated animals and the constellations of heaven

²⁰ **Hyperion:** Titan, the son of Gaea and Uranus and the father of Helios, the sun.

²¹ **Iapetos:** Titan who was the father of Prometheus and Atlas and an ancestor of the human race

²² **Rheia,** or Rhea: The sister and wife of Cronus and the mother of Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, Poseidon, and Zeus

²³ **Phoibe,** or Phoebe – the virgin goddess Artemis, of the hunt and the moon and twin sister of Apollo

²⁴ **Tethys:** Titaness and sea goddess who was both sister and wife of Oceanus

160 Kronos, the sinuous-minded, was her last-born,
a most fearful child who hated his mighty father.
Then she bore the Kyklopes¹, haughty in their might,
Brontes, Steropes, and Arges of the strong spirit,
who made and gave to Zeus the crushing thunder.
In all other respects they were like gods,
but they had one eye in the middle of their foreheads;
their name was Kyklopes because of this single
round eye that leered from their foreheads,
and inventive skill and strength and power were in their
170 deeds.
Gaia and Ouranos had three other sons, so great
and mighty that their names are best left unspoken,
Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges², brazen sons all three.
From each one's shoulders a hundred invincible arms
sprang forth, and from each one's shoulders atop the sturdy
trunk
there grew no fewer than fifty heads;
and there was matchless strength in their hulking frames.
All these awesome children born of Ouranos and Gaia
180 hated their own father from the day they were born,
for as soon as each one came from the womb,
Ouranos, with joy in his wicked work, hid it
in Gaia's womb and did not let it return to the light.
Huge Gaia groaned within herself
and in her distress she devised a crafty and evil scheme.
With great haste she produced gray iron
and made a huge sickle and showed it to her children;
then, her heart filled with grief, she rallied them with these
words:
190 "Yours is a reckless father; obey me, if you will,
that we may all punish your father's outrageous deed,
for he was first to plot shameful actions."
So she spoke, and fear gripped them all; not one of them
uttered a sound. Then great, sinuous-minded Kronos
without delay spoke to his prudent mother:
"Mother, this deed I promise you will be done,
since I loathe my dread-named father.
it was he who first plotted shameful actions."
So he spoke, and the heart of giant Earth was cheered.
200 She made him sit in ambush and placed in his hands
a sharp-toothed sickle and confided in him her entire scheme.
Ouranos came dragging with him the night, longing for
Gaia's love,
and he embraced her and lay stretched out upon her.
Then his son reached out from his hiding place and seized
him
with his left hand, while with his right he grasped
the huge, long, and sharp-toothed sickle and swiftly hacked
off
210 his father's genitals and tossed them behind him -
and they were not flung from his hand in vain.

Gaia took in all the bloody drops that spattered off,
and as the seasons of the year turned round
she bore the potent Furies³ and the Giants, immense,

¹ **Kyklopes**, or Cyclopes: the three one-eyed Titans who forged thunderbolts for Zeus

² Three giants or gods of violent storms and hurricanes summoned forth from the stormy pit of Tartaros. Each had a hundred hands and fifty heads, for the wielding of the destructive power of storm.

dazzling in their armor, holding long spears in their hands,
and then she bore the Ash Tree Nymphs of the boundless
earth.
As soon as Kronos had lopped off the genitals with the sickle
220 he tossed them from the land into the stormy sea.
And as they were carried by the sea a long time, all around
them
white foam rose from the god's flesh, and in this foam a
maiden
was nurtured. First she came close to god-haunted Kythera
and from there she went on to reach sea-girt Cyprus.
There this majestic and fair goddess came out, and soft grass
grew all around her soft feet. Both gods and men
call her Aphrodite⁴, foam-born goddess, and fair-wreathed
230 Kythereia;
Aphrodite because she grew out of aphros, foam that is,
and Kythereia because she touched land at Kythera.
She is called Kyprogenes, because she was born
in sea-girt Cyprus, and Philommedes, fond of a man's
genitals,
because to them she owed her birth. Fair Himeros and Eros
became her companions when she was born and when she
joined the gods.
And here is the power she has had from the start
240 and her share in the lives of men and deathless gods:
from her come young girls' whispers and smiles and
deception
and honey-sweet love and its joyful pleasures.
But the great father Ouranos railed at his own children
and gave them the nickname Titans, Overreachers,
because he said they had, with reckless power, overreached
him
to do a monstrous thing that would be avenged some day.
250 Night gave birth to hideous Moros⁵ and black Ker⁶
and then to Death and Sleep and to the brood of Dreams.
After them dark Night, having lain with no one,
gave birth to Momos⁷ and painful Oizys⁸
and to the Hesperides⁹, who live beyond renowned Okeanos
and keep the golden apples and the fruit-bearing trees.
She also bore the ruthless Keres and the Moirai¹⁰,
Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who when men are born
give them their share of things good and bad.
They watch for the transgressions of men and gods,

³ **Furies**: The three terrible winged goddesses with serpentine hair, Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone, who pursue and punish doers of unavenged crimes

⁴ **Aphrodite**: goddess of love and beauty

⁵ **Moros**: male spirits of doom, the forces which drove a man to his fated death

⁶ **Ker**: female spirits of violent death, personifying death in battle, by accident, murder or ravaging disease

⁷ **Momos**: male spirits of mockery, blame, ridicule, scorn, complaint and stinging criticism.

⁸ **Oizys**: spirits of misery and woe, distress and suffering

⁹ **Hesperides**: three goddesses of the evening and sunsets

¹⁰ **Moirai**: personifications of the inescapable destiny of man.

They assigned to every person his or her fate or share in the scheme of things. Their name meant 'Parts', 'Shares' or 'Allotted Portions'. Klotho, whose name meant 'Spinner', spun the thread of life. Lachesis, whose name meant 'Apportioner of Lots' - being derived from a word meaning to receive by lot -, measured the thread of life. Atropos (or Aisa), whose name meant 'She who cannot be turned', cut the thread of life.

260 and the dreadful anger of these goddesses never abates
 until wrongdoers are punished with harshness.
 Baneful Night bore Nemesis¹, too, a woe for mortals,
 and after her Deception and the Passion of lovers
 and destructive Old Age and capricious Strife.
 Then loathsome Strife bore Ponos², the bringer of pains,
 Oblivion and Famine and the tearful Sorrows,
 the Clashes and the Battles and the Manslaughters,
 the Quarrels and the Lies and Argument and Counter-
 Argument,
 270 Lawlessness and Ruin whose ways are all alike,
 and Oath, who, more than any other, brings pains on mortals
 who of their own accord swear false oaths.
 Pontos³ sired truthful Nereus⁴, his oldest son,
 who tells no lies; they call him the old man
 because he is honest and gentle and never forgetful
 of right, but ever mindful of just and genial thought.
 Then Pontos lay with Gaia and sired great Thaumás⁵,
 Phorkys⁶ the overbearing, and fair-cheeked Keto,
 and Eurybie, who in her breast has a heart of iron.
 280 To Nereus and Doris of the lovely hair,
 the daughter of Okeanos, the stream surrounding the earth,
 a host of godly daughters was born in the barren sea.⁷
 (Removed: partial listing of the “host of godly daughters”)
 Thaumás took as his wife Elektra, daughter of Okeanos,
 whose stream is deep, and she bore swift Iris
 and the lovely-haired Harpies⁸, Aello and Okypete,
 who, with fast wings, trail flying birds and windy breezes
 as they soar and swoop from high up in the air.
 To Phorkys Keto bore the fair-cheeked Graiai⁹,
 290 gray from birth, who are given this name
 both by the immortal gods and by men who tread the earth,
 well-robed Pempfredo and saffron-cloaked Enyo;
 then the Gorgons¹⁰, who dwell beyond glorious Okeanos
 at earth’s end, toward night, by the clear-voiced Hesperides,

¹ **Nemesis**: female spirit of indignation and retribution for evil deeds or undeserved good fortune

² **Ponos**: the spirit of painful labour, hard work and toil (backbreaking physical labour is implied rather than simply hard work)

³ **Pontos**: personification of the sea

⁴ **Nereus**: ancient marine-god representing the bounty of the sea (fish, shellfish, salt)

⁵ **Thaumás**: personification of the wonders of the sea, whose daughters were the Whirlwinds (Harpyiai) and Rainbows (Iris), and his wife amber tinged clouds (Elektra)

⁶ **Phorkys**: personification of the dangers of the sea. By his sister Keto (the Whale) he fathered Ekhidna (the Eel), Skylla (the Crab), Ladon (the Tidal Rips), the Graia (the Grey Foam), and the Gorgones (the Terrifying - dangerous rocks and reefs)

⁷ Hesiod names 50 sea nymphs from lines 256 to 275, who personify various aspects of the sea, from caves to fish catches to sailing.

⁸ **Harpies**: personified whirlwinds, waterspouts and powerful storm-winds

⁹ **Graiai** were sea-demons who personified the white foam of the sea. They were born old but became older and older as time went on, so that they have remaining to them only one eye and one tooth, which they took turns in using

¹⁰ **Gorgons**: three powerful winged sea-demons, the mortal Medousa, and her two immortal sisters Sthenno and Euryale. The three probably represented the danger posed to ships by submerged rock reefs.

Sthenno, Euryale, and ill-fated Medousa¹¹,
 who was mortal; the other two were ageless and immortal.
 Dark-maned Poseidon lay with one of these, Medousa,
 on a soft meadow strewn with spring flowers.
 When Perseus cut off Medousa’s head, immense Chrysaor
 300 and the horse Pegasos sprang forth.
 His name came from the springs of Ocean by which he was
 born,
 but Chrysaor’s from the golden sword he carried in his hand.
 Pegasos left the earth, mother of flocks, and flew away
 and reached the immortals; he lives in the palace
 of Zeus the counselor, to whom he brings thunder and
 lightning.
 Chrysaor then lay with Kallirhoe, daughter of glorious
 Okeanos,
 310 and sired the three-headed Geryones¹²
 whom the might of Herakles slew
 beside his shambling oxen at sea-girt Erytheia
 on the very day he crossed Ocean’s stream
 and drove the broad-browed cattle to holy Tiryns.
 Then he also slew Orthos¹³ and the oxherd Eurytion¹⁴
 out at that misty place, beyond glorious Ocean.
 Then Keto bore another invincible monster,
 in no way like mortal men or the deathless gods;
 yes, in a hollow cave she bore Echidna, divine
 320 and iron-hearted, half fair-cheeked and bright-eyed nymph
 and half huge and monstrous snake inside the holy earth,
 a snake that strikes swiftly and feeds on living flesh.
 Her lair is a cave under a hollow rock,
 far from immortal gods and mortal men;
 the gods decreed for her a glorious dwelling there.
 Arima, beneath the earth, is the stronghold of the grisly
 Echidna,
 the nymph who is immortal and ageless for ever.
 They say that this bright-eyed maiden lay in love
 330 with Typhaon, that lawless and dreadful ravisher,
 and impregnated by him she bore a harsh-tempered brood.
 First she gave birth to Orthos, the dog of Geryones,
 and then she bore a stubborn and unspeakable creature,
 Kerberos, the fifty-headed dog of Hades, that mighty
 and shameless eater of raw flesh, whose bark resounds like
 bronze.
 Her third child was the loathsome Hydra of Lerna,
 and she was nurtured by white-armed Hera
 whose wrath at mighty Herakles was implacable.
 340 But Herakles, born to Amphitryon as son of Zeus,
 together with Iolaos slew her with the merciless bronze blade,
 for Athena, leader of the war host, willed it so.

¹¹ **Medousa**: a snaky-haired monster native to the island of Kisthene (in the Red Sea) who was loved by the god POSEIDON. He seduced her in the shape of a bird, and lay with her in the holy temple of Athena, a sacrilege which the goddess never forgave. From their union were born the winged horse Pegasos and the giant Chrysaor, a winged-boar.

¹² **Geryones**: GERYON was a triple-bodied, four-winged GIANT who dwelt on the island of Erytheia in the western reach of the earth-encircling River Okeanos. He was slain by Herakles during that hero’s quest to fetch his fabulous herd of sunset-tinged cattle.

¹³ **Orthos**: guard-dog of the cattle of the giant Geryones

¹⁴ **Eurytion**: a Centaur who forced King Dexamenos of Olenos to agree to let him marry his daughter Mnesimakhe. However, when Eurytion came to take her away, he was slain by the hero Herakles.

She [Echidna] bore Chimaira, mighty, dreadful, huge
and fleet-footed, who breathed forth a ceaseless stream of
fire.
She had three heads, one of a glowering lion,
another of a goat, and yet another of a savage dragon;
her front was a lion, her back a dragon, and her middle a
goat,
350 and she breathed forth an awesome stream of gleaming fire.
Pegasos and noble Bellerophon slew her.
Orthos covered her, and she bore the destructive Sphinx,
a scourge for the Kadmeans, and then the Lion of Nemea,
who was reared by Hera, the glorious wife of Zeus,
and settled on the hills of Nemea as a scourge to mankind.
There was his abode and from there he preyed on the tribes of
men
and lorded it over Apesas and Nemean Tretos,
but the strength of mighty Herakles subdued him.
360 Keto then lay in love with Phorkys and bore her youngest,
a ghastly snake that guards the all-golden apples,
lurking in his lair in the gloom of earth's vast limits.
This is the brood born of Phorkys and Keto.

Tethys bore to Okeanos the whirling rivers,
Neilos and Alpheios and deep-eddying Eridanos,
Strymon and Maiandros and fair-flowing Istros,
Phasis and Rhesos and Acheloios of the silver swirls,
370 Nessos, Rhodios, Heptaporos, and Haliakmon,
Grenikos, Aisepos, and divine Simoeis,
Peneios, Hermos, and fair-flowing Kaikos,
great Sangarios, Ladon, and Parthenios,
Euenos, Ardeskos, and divine Skamandros.
She gave birth to a throng of holy daughters, who with the
Rivers
and lord Apollo nurture men throughout the earth,
for this is the task that Zeus has given them.
They are (Removed: partial list of names)
and Styx¹, who holds the highest rank.
380 These are the eldest daughters born to Tethys
and Okeanos. But there are many others.
Okeanos has three thousand slender-ankled daughters -
splendid children of goddesses - who roam in bevvies
and haunt the earth and the depths of the waters alike.
And there are as many tumbling and rushing rivers,
all sons of Okeanos and queenly Tethys.
It is hard for a mortal to recite the names of all,
but those who live by them know each of their names.

390 Theia yielded to Hyperion's love and gave birth
to great Helios² and bright Selene³ and Eos⁴,
who brings light to all the mortals of this earth
and to the immortal gods who rule the wide sky.
Eurybia⁵, the radiant goddess, lay in love with Kreios

¹ **Styx**: the goddess of the underworld river Styx, one of the Titan generation of Okeanides. Styx was also the personified spirit of hatred. Styx was a firm ally of Zeus in the Titan Wars, who brought her children Nike (Victory), Zelos (Rivalry), Bia (Force) and Kratos (Strength) to stand alongside the god. Zeus rewarded her by making her streams the agent of the binding oath of the gods.

² **Helios**: the sun

³ **Selene**: goddess of the moon

⁴ **Eos**: goddess of the dawn

⁵ **Eurybia**: the sea-goddess who presided over the influence of the seasonal rising of the constellations on the sea

and gave birth to great Astraiois⁶ and to Pallas⁷
and then to Perses⁸, who surpassed all in wisdom.
Eos shared love's bed with Astraiois
and bore him the mighty-spirited winds,
bright Zephyros and gusty Boreas and Notos.
400 After them Eos the early-born brought forth the dawn-star,
Eosphoros, and the glittering stars that crown the heavens.
Styx, the daughter of Okeanos, lay in love with Pallas
and in his mansion gave birth to Zelos⁹ and fair-ankled
Nike¹⁰,
and then she bore two illustrious children, Kratos¹¹ and Bia¹².
These two have no home apart from Zeus, nor seat
nor path, except the one to which he leads them,
but their place is with Zeus of the roaring thunder.

410 For this was the will of Styx, the deathless daughter of
Ocean,
on the day the Olympian hurler of lightning
called all the immortals to lofty Olympos
and said that he would not wrest away the rights
of those who would fight with him against the Titans
and that each god would retain his previous honors.
He said that those deprived of rights and honors
by Kronos could now lay just claim to them.
On her own father's advice the immortal Styx
420 and her children were first to come to Olympos.
And Zeus granted her honor and countless gifts
and decreed that the gods should swear great oaths by her
and that her children should dwell with him for ever.
He fulfilled with exactness the promises made to all;
and yet, he is sovereign lord and his power is unchallenged.

Phoibe went to the much longed-for bed of Koios,
and she, a goddess loved by a god, conceived
and gave birth to dark-robed Leto¹³, ever sweet,
430 gentle to men and to gods who never die,
sweet from the beginning, gentlest of all the Olympians.
She also bore Asteria¹⁴, whose name brings good luck;
Perses brought her to his great house, to be his dear wife.
There she conceived and bore Hekate¹⁵, whom Zeus
honored above all others;

⁶ **Astraiois**: the titan of the stars and planets, as well as the practice of astrology

⁷ **Pallas**: the titan of war-craft and the Greek military campaign season of late spring and early summer

⁸ **Perses**: the titan of destruction, the sack of cities, and burning of the grain fields in war, as well as the withering of crops caused by summer droughts

⁹ **Zelos**: the female spirit of eager rivalry, emulation, envy, jealousy and zeal

¹⁰ **Nike**: the female spirit of victory

¹¹ **Kratos**: the spirit of strength, might, power and sovereign rule

¹² **Bia**: the female spirit of force, power, might, bodily strength and compulsion

¹³ **Leto**: the goddess mother of the major Olympian gods Apollo and Artemis. She was usually worshipped in conjunction with her children.

¹⁴ **Asteria**: titaness of falling stars and the art of communicating with the spirits of the dead in order to predict the future

¹⁵ **Hekate**: the underworld goddess of witchcraft was the only child of the titaness Perses and Asteria. From her parents she inherited powers over the earth, sea and heavens

(Removed: Partial information pertaining to Hekate]

Rhea succumbed to Kronos's love and bore him illustrious children,
440 Hestia and Demeter and Hera, who walks in golden sandals, imperious Hades, whose heart knows no mercy in his subterranean dwelling, and the rumbling Earthshaker, and Zeus the counselor and father of gods and men, Zeus under whose thunder the wide earth quivers. But majestic Kronos kept on swallowing each child as it moved from the holy womb toward the knees; his purpose was to prevent any other child of the Sky Dwellers
from holding the kingly office among immortals.
450 He had learned from Gaia and starry Ouranos that he, despite his power, was fated to be subdued by his own son, a victim of his own schemes. Therefore, he kept no blind watch, but ever wary he gulped down his own children to Rhea's endless grief. But as she was about to bear Zeus, father of gods and men, she begged her own parents, Gaia, that is, and starry Ouranos, to contrive such a plan that the birth of her dear child would go unnoticed and her father's Erinys would take
460 revenge
for the children swallowed by majestic, sinuous-minded Kronos.
And they listened to their dear daughter and granted her wish and let her know what fate had in store for King Kronos and his bold-spirited son.
And so they sent her to Lyktos, in the rich land of Crete, just as she was about to bear the last of her children, great Zeus, whom huge Gaia would take into her care on broad Crete, to nourish and foster with tender love.
470 She carried him swiftly in the darkness of night, and Lyktos was
the first place she reached; she took him in her arms and hid him inside the god-haunted earth in a cave lodged deep within a sheer cliff of densely wooded Mount Aigaion.
But to the great Lord Kronos, king of the older gods, she handed a huge stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. He took it in his hands and stuffed it into his belly -
480 the great fool! It never crossed his mind that the stone was given in place of his son thus saved to become carefree and invincible, destined to crush him by might of hand,
drive him out of his rule, and become king of the immortals. The lord's strength and splendid limbs grew swiftly and, as the year followed its revolving course, sinuous-minded Kronos was deceived by Gaia's cunning suggestions to disgorge his own offspring - overpowered also by the craft and brawn of his own son. The stone last swallowed was first to come out,
490 and Zeus set it up on the broad-pathed earth, at sacred Pytho, under the rocky folds of Parnassos, forever to be a marvel and a portent for mortal men. He freed from their wretched bonds his father's brothers, [Brontes and Steropes and Argos of the bold spirit,] whom Ouranos, their father, had thrown into chains; they did not forget the favors he had done them, and they gave him the thunder and the smoky thunderbolt and lightning, all of which had lain hidden in the earth. Trusting in these, he ruled over mortals and immortals.

500

Iapetos took as his wife the fair-ankled Klymene¹, daughter of Okeanos, and shared her bed, and she bore him Atlas², a son of invincible spirit, and Menoitios³ of the towering pride, and Prometheus⁴, whose mind was labyrinthine and swift, and foolish Epimetheus⁵,
who from the start brought harm to men who toil for bread; he was first to accept the virgin woman fashioned by far-seeing Zeus,
510 who with flaming thunderbolt struck Menoitios and cast him into murky Erebos
for his folly and reckless flaunting of manliness. By harsh necessity, Atlas supports the broad sky on his head and unwearying arms, at the earth's limits, near the clear-voiced Hesperides, for this is the doom decreed for him by Zeus the counselor. With shackles and inescapable fetters Zeus riveted Prometheus
on a pillar - Prometheus of the labyrinthine mind;
520 and he sent a long-winged eagle to swoop on him and devour the god's liver; but what the long-winged bird ate in the course of each day grew back and was restored to its full size.
But Herakles, the mighty son of fair-ankled Alkmene, slew the eagle, drove the evil scourge away from the son of Iapetos and freed him from his sorry plight, and did all this obeying the will of Olympian Zeus, who rules on high, to make the glory of Herakles, child of Thebes,
530 greater than before over the earth that nurtures many. Zeus so respected these things and honored his illustrious son that he quelled the wrath he had nursed against Prometheus, who had opposed the counsels of Kronos's mighty son. When the gods and mortal men were settling their accounts

¹ **Klymene**: the titaness of renown, of both fame and infamy.

² **Atlas**: the younger titan of astronomy, endurance and daring spirit. He presided over the fixed stars (or constellations), holding the heavens upon his shoulders and revolving the constellations on their axis

³ **Menoitios**: the titan of violent anger, rash action, and human mortality. Zeus struck him down with a thunderbolt and sent him to Erebos (the Underworld) as punishment for his hybriatic behaviour

⁴ **Prometheus**: the titan of forethought and crafty counsel. He was given the task of creating mankind out of clay. But in the quest to better the lives of his creation, he stole fire from the gods of heaven and cheated them out of the best share of the sacrificial portion. Zeus was wroth and chained him to Mount Caucasus where a gigantic Eagle fed daily on his ever regenerating liver. Generations later Herakles slew the eagle and freed the Titan from his torture.

⁵ **Epimetheus**: the titan of afterthought, the father of excuses. He was given the task of creating the creatures of the earth. At the same time his brother, Prometheus, was creating mankind and, seeing the formidable abilities Epimetheus had given his creations, stole fire from heaven to assist his. Zeus in anger at this crime ordered the gods to mold Pandora, the first woman, and sent her to Epimetheus as his bride armed with a great jar. Pandora, succumbing to curiosity, opened it releasing all of the harmful daimones the gods had trapped within (the children of Nyx and of Eris) to forever plague mankind. Only Hope (Elpis) remained behind to comfort them.

at Mekone, Prometheus cheerfully took a great ox,
 carved it up, and set it before Zeus to trick his mind.
 He placed meat, entrails, and fat within a hide
 and covered them with the ox's tripe,
 but with guile he arranged the white bones of the ox,
 540 covered them with glistening fat, and laid them down as an
 offering.
 Then indeed the father of gods and men said to him:
 "Son of Iapetos, you outshine all other kings,
 but, friend, you have divided with self-serving zeal."
 These were the sarcastic words of Zeus, whose counsels
 never perish,
 but Prometheus was a skillful crook and he smiled faintly,
 all the while mindful of his cunning scheme,
 and said: "Sublime Zeus, highest among the everlasting gods,
 550 choose of the two portions whichever your heart desires."
 He spoke with guileful intent, and Zeus, whose counsels
 never perish,
 knew the guile and took note of it; so he pondered evils in his
 mind
 for mortal men, evils he meant to bring on them.
 With both hands he took up the white fat,
 and spiteful anger rushed through his mind and heart
 when he saw the white bones of the ox laid out in deceit.
 From that time on the tribes of mortal men on earth
 560 have burned the white bones for the gods on smoky altars.
 Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer angrily said:
 "Son of Iapetos, no one matches your resourceful wits,
 but, friend, your mind is clinging stubbornly to guile."
 So Zeus, whose counsels never perish, spoke in anger
 and thereafter never forgot that he had been beguiled
 and never gave to ash trees the power of unwearying fire
 for the good of men who live on this earth,
 but the noble son of Iapetos deceived him again
 and within a hollowed fennel stalk stole the far-flashing
 570 unwearying fire. This stung the depths of Zeus's mind,
 Zeus who roars on high, and filled his heart with anger,
 when he saw among mortal men the far-seen flash of fire;
 so straightway because of the stolen fire he contrived an evil
 for men.
 The famous lame smith took clay and, through Zeus's
 counsels,
 gave it the shape of a modest maiden.
 Athena, the gray-eyed goddess, clothed her and decked her
 out
 580 with a fetching garment and then with her hands
 she hung over her head a fine draping veil, a marvel to
 behold;
 Pallas Athena crowned her head with lovely wreaths
 of fresh flowers that had just bloomed in the green meadows.
 The famous lame smith placed on her head a crown of gold
 fashioned by the skill of his own hands
 to please the heart of Zeus the father.
 It was a wondrous thing with many intricate designs
 of all the dreaded beasts nurtured by land and sea.
 590 Such grace he breathed into the many marvels therein
 that they seemed endowed with life and voice.
 Once he had finished - not something good but a mixture of
 good
 and bad - he took the maiden before gods and men,
 and she delighted in the finery given her by gray-eyed
 Athena,
 daughter of a mighty father. Immortal gods and mortal men
 were amazed when they saw this tempting snare
 from which men cannot escape. From her comes the fair sex;
 600 yes, wicked womenfolk are her descendants.

They live among mortal men as a nagging burden
 and are no good sharers of abject want, but only of wealth.
 Men are like swarms of bees clinging to cave roofs
 to feed drones that contribute only to malicious deeds;
 the bees themselves all day long until sundown
 are busy carrying and storing the white wax,
 but the drones stay inside in their roofed hives
 and cram their bellies full of what others harvest.
 So too Zeus who roars on high made women
 610 to be an evil for mortal men, helpmates in deeds of harshness.
 And he bestowed another gift, evil in place of good:
 whoever does not wish to marry, fleeing the malice of
 women,
 reaches harsh old age with no one to care for him;
 then even if he is well-provided,
 he dies at the end only to have his livelihood shared
 by distant kin. And even the man who does marry
 and has a wife of sound and prudent mind
 spends his life ever trying to balance
 620 the bad and the good in her. But he who marries into a foul
 brood
 lives plagued by unabating trouble in his heart
 and in his mind, and there is no cure for his plight.
 So there is no way to deceive or hide from the mind of Zeus,
 for not even noble Prometheus, son of Iapetos,
 escaped the heavy wrath of Zeus, but, despite his many skills,
 succumbed to force and was bound in mighty chains.

First father Ouranos nursed anger in his heart
 against Briareos, Kottos, and Gyges, and bound them in
 chains
 630 and then settled them under the earth of the wide paths,
 awed at their size, their shape, and their towering vigor.
 There they stayed and suffered great pains,
 sitting at the utmost limits of the boundless earth,
 their hearts stung by endless grief and mourning.
 But the son of Kronos and the other immortal gods
 born of the love of Kronos and lovely-haired Rhea
 brought them into the light again, following Gaia's
 640 instructions,
 for she kept on reminding them that in alliance
 with those three they would win victory and dazzling glory.
 The divine Titan and the gods Kronos sired
 struggled for a long time against one another
 and did fierce battle, heartsore with strife,
 the noble Titans from the peak of lofty Othrys,
 and the gods born of Kronos and lovely-haired Rhea
 - the very gods who give blessings - from Olympos.
 With heavy hearts they did battle against one another
 650 and fought incessantly for ten full years;
 their strife was harsh and there was no end and no resolution
 for either side, and the outcome was indecisive.
 But when Zeus gave the three gods what strengthens the
 body,
 the very nectar and ambrosia of the gods,
 and they drank nectar and ate exquisite ambrosia,
 then the spirit rose bold in the hearts of all,
 and Zeus, the father of gods and men, spoke and said:
 "Listen to me, noble sons of Ouranos and Gaia,
 660 for I wish to speak out what spirit and heart command.
 So far the divine Titans and the gods Kronos sired
 have fought against one another every day
 and far too long for victory and power.
 Now in this bitter battle give the Titans proof
 of the unyielding strength in your invincible arms.
 Remember our noble friendship and the pains you suffered

until, through plans we conceived, you came up to the light
again
out of cruel chains and murky darkness.”

670 So he spoke, and blameless Kottos gave this answer:
“Lord Zeus, you speak of things that are not unknown,
for we know full well that your mind is sharp
and that you have provisioned the gods against dread disaster.
O Lord and son of Kronos, it is through plans
conceived by you that we, sore from unexpected pains,
came back up again out of cruel chains and murky darkness.
For this, with unbending mind and shrewd resolve,
we shall battle the Titans with might and main,
to defend your power in the savage clash.”

680 So he spoke, and the gods, givers of blessings,
heard and acclaimed his words. Then more than ever before
they yearned for war and they fought a fierce battle
on that day, all of them, both male and female:
the divine Titans and the gods Kronos sired,
and those whom Zeus brought up into the light from Erebos,
the dread and mighty ones, whose strength was matchless.
From each one’s shoulders a hundred arms sprang forth
and from each one’s shoulders and sturdy trunk
there grew no fewer than fifty heads.

690 They pitted themselves against the Titans in relentless battle
with huge boulders in their stout hands.
The Titans, for their part, strengthened their ranks
and both sides eagerly gave proof of mettle and might of
hand.
The deep and boundless sea resounded all around,
the earth boomed and the wide sky above shook
and groaned while lofty Olympos heaved from its foundation
in the whirl of missiles flung by the immortals. A heavy din
and the ear-splitting sound of feet in merciless pursuit
and of hefty missiles reached gloomy Tartaros.

700 They hurled whining missiles at one another
and the rousing shouts when both sides clashed
with deafening clamor reached the starry heavens.
Zeus could no longer hold back his fighting spirit,
which straightway surged to fill his heart
and showed all his strength, as from the sky and from
Olympos
he advanced with steady pace amid flashes of lightning
and from his stout hand let fly thunderbolts

710 that crashed and spewed forth a stream of sacred flames.
The life-giving earth burned and resounded all over
and the vast forest groaned, consumed by fire.
The whole earth and Ocean’s streams seethed,
and so did the barren sea; then the heated vapor engulfed
the earth-born Titans and towering flames licked the bright
sky.
For all the Titans’ might, the blazing flash
of thunderbolt and lightning blinded their eyes.
Wondrous conflagration spread through Chaos, and to eyes

720 and ears
it seemed as though what they saw and heard
was the collision of the Earth and the wide Sky above.
For so vast a crash could only arise
if earth collapsed under collapsing sky;
such was the uproar of the battling gods.
The winds churned quaking land, dust, and thunder,
lightning, too, and glowing thunderbolts, great Zeus’s weapons,
and they swept the noise and clamor into the midst
of the warring hosts. Unbearable din hovered above

730 the horrid fray. Both sides gave proof of strength,
and then the scales of the conflict tipped; before, each side
charged

against the other and fought a grisly and stubborn battle.
But now Kottos and Briareos and war-hungry Gyges
in the front lines stirred up bitter battle
and from their stout hands hurled three hundred boulders
in thick-falling volleys that threw a mantle of darkness
over the Titans. And though the Titans’ spirit was bold,
they were vanquished and then hurled beneath the earth
of the wide paths and bound with racking chains
740 as deep down below the earth as the sky is high above it;
so they were cast deep down into gloomy Tartaros.

A bronze anvil falling from the sky would travel
nine days and nights to reach the earth on the tenth day,
and a bronze anvil falling from the earth would need
nine days and nights to reach Tartaros on the tenth day.
Tartaros is fenced with bronze and round its gullet
drifts night in triple array, while above it grow
750 the roots of the earth and of the barren sea.
There, by the decree of Zeus the cloud-gatherer,
the divine Titans have been hidden in the misty gloom
in a rank realm at the utmost limits of giant earth.
There is no escape for them; Poseidon built gates of bronze,
and a wall runs all around on every side.
There dwell Gyges, Briareos, and high-mettled Kottos,
ever the trusted guards of aegis-bearing Zeus.
There, in proper order, lie the sources and the limits
of the black earth and of mist-wrapt Tartaros,
760 of the barren sea, too, and of the starry sky -
grim and dank and loathed even by the gods -
this chasm is so great that, once past the gates,
one does not reach the bottom in a full year’s course,
but is tossed about by stormy gales;
even the gods shudder at this eerie place.
There also stands the gloomy house of Night;
ghastly clouds shroud it in darkness.
Before it Atlas stands erect and on his head
and unwearying arms firmly supports the broad sky,
770 where Night and Day cross a bronze threshold
and then come close and greet each other.
When the one descends the other shrinks away,
and the house is never host to both of them,
but always one of the two is out and away from it
and roams over the earth, while the other inside it
awaits the appointed time for its own journey.
The one brings to mortals the light that sees all,
while the other, the harmful Night, veiled in dusky fog,
carries in her arms Sleep, Death’s own brother.

780 There, too, dwell the children of black Night,
Sleep and Death, the awesome gods who are never seen
by the rays of the blazing sun when it rises
on the sky, or moves on its downward path.
Of these, the one wanders over land and broad-backed sea,
ever at peace and ever gentle to mortals,
but the other, a ghoul even the gods detest,
has a heart of iron and feelings hard as bronze,
and no man gripped by him can free himself again.
There too stand the echoing halls of Hades,
790 whose sway is great, and of awesome Persephone.
A hideous and ruthless hound guards the place
skilled in an evil trick: wagging his tail
and wriggling his ears, he fawns on those who enter,
but he does not let them out again;
instead, he lies in wait and devours those he catches
outside the gates of sovereign Hades and of awesome
Persephone.

800 There dwells a goddess loathed by the gods,
dreadful Styx, eldest daughter of Ocean, whose stream
flows back on itself; she dwells apart from the gods
in a stately palace roofed by lofty rocks and ringed
by silver pillars that tower into the sky.
Seldom does fleet-footed Iris, the daughter of Thaumás,
roam on the broad-backed sea to bring her a message
when strife and quarrel arise among the immortals
and when one of the Olympian dwellers lies.
Then Zeus sends Iris far away to fetch in a golden jar
the legendary cold water by which the gods swear great
810 oaths,
water that tumbles down from a steep and soaring rock.
This water flows through the black night
from a sacred river, far below the earth of the wide paths.
It is a branch of Ocean allotted one tenth of the water;
the other nine parts wind round the earth and the broad-
backed sea
and, silver-swirled, cascade into the briny deep,
but this one branch - this bane for the gods - runs off a cliff.
If any one of the gods who hold the peaks of snowy Olympos
820 pours a libation of this water and then swears a false oath,
he lies breathless for no less than a full year's course;
and he cannot come close to ambrosia and nectar
for nourishment, but no longer able to speak or breathe
lies in bed, wrapped in the shroud of evil coma.
And when the illness is over at the long year's end,
another, even harsher, trial is in store for him.
For nine years he is an outcast to the eternal gods
and does not mingle with them at council or feast
for nine full years, but on the tenth he joins again
830 the meetings of the gods whose homes are on Olympos.
Such is the oath the gods made of the primeval and immortal
water of Styx that gushes through a rugged place.
There, in proper order, lie the sources and the limits
of black earth and of mist-wrapped Tartaros,
of the barren sea, too, and of the starry sky,
and they are grim and dank and loathed even by the gods.

There stand the gates of marble and the threshold of bronze,
unshakable and self-grown from the roots that reach
840 deep into the ground. In front of these gates, away from all
the gods
dwell the Titans, on the other side of murky Chaos.
But the renowned allies of Zeus, whose thunder echoes
through the sky, have their houses at Ocean's foundations.
These are Kottos and Gyges, and noble Briareos;
to him the deep-rumbling Shaker of the Earth gave
Kymopoleia,
his own daughter, and thus made Briareos his son-in-law.
When Zeus drove the Titans out of the sky
850 giant Gaia bore her youngest child, Typhoeus¹;
goaded by Aphrodite, she lay in love with Tartaros.
The arms of Typhoeus were made for deeds of might,
his legs never wearied, and on his shoulders were
a hundred snake heads such as fierce dragons have,
and from them licking black tongues darted forth.
And the eyes on all the monstrous heads flashed
from under the brows and cast glances of burning fire;
from all the ghastly heads voices were heard,

weird voices of all kinds. Sometimes they uttered words
860 that the gods understood, and then again
they bellowed like bulls, proud and fierce
beyond restraint, or they roared like brazen-hearted lions
or - wondrous to hear - their voices sounded like a whelp's
bark,
or a strident hiss that echoed through the lofty mountains.
An irreversible deed would have been done that day
and Typhoeus would have become lord over gods and men,
had not the father of gods and men kept sharp-eyed watch.
He hurled a mighty bolt and its ear-splitting crash
870 reverberated grimly through the earth and the wide sky
above,
through the sea, the streams of Ocean, and through the
underworld.
And when the lord moved, massive Olympos shook
and the earth groaned under his indestructible feet,
and the heat of the duel engulfed the violet-dark sea,
heat from Zeus's lightning and thunder, from hurricanes
and from the fire that raged as thunderbolts struck the
monster.

880 The whole earth, the sea, and the sky seethed;
a dread quake arose in the wake of the immortals' charge
and heaving waves rolled up against the shores;
then Hades, lord of the wasted shades below,
and the Titans under Tartaros and around Kronos
shuddered at the unending din and grisly clash.
But now Zeus' strength surged and he grasped his weapons,
thunder and lightning and glowing thunderbolt,
and, lunging from Olympos, he set fire
to all of the hellish monster's gruesome heads.

890 Then, when Zeus's blows had whipped him to submission,
Typhoeus collapsed, crippled, on the groaning giant earth;
and the flame from the thunder-smitten lord
leaped along the dark and rocky woodlands
of the mountain, and the infernal blast of the flames
set much of the giant earth on fire until it melted
like tin that has been heated by craftsmen
over a well-pierced crucible, or like that strongest metal,
iron, which in mountain woodlands the scorching fire tames
and the craft of Hephaistos melts inside the divine earth.

900 So melted the earth from the flash of the burning fire,
and Zeus in terrible anger cast Typhoeus into broad Tartaros.
From Typhoeus come the violent and damp winds,
but not Notos, Boreas, and bright Zephyros,
who are descended from the gods, a great boon to mortals.
But other fitful blasts blow over the sea to bring harm.
They swoop down on the face of the misty sea,
a raging and wicked gale, a great scourge to mortals;
they blow in all directions, and they scatter ships
and wipe out the sailors, and men who run into such winds
810 in the open sea have no way to fend off havoc.
They fill the flowering and boundless earth
with harmful and whirling clouds of dust
and sweep away the lovely works of earth-born men.

But when the gods achieved their toilsome feat
and by brute force stripped the Titans of their claim to honor,
then, through Gaia's advice, they unflaggingly urged
Olympian Zeus, whose thunder is heard far and wide, to rule
over the gods, and he divided titles and power justly.

¹ **Typhoeus**: a monstrous immortal storm giant who was defeated and imprisoned by Zeus in the pit of Tartaros. He was the source of all devastating storm winds which issued forth from this nefarious realm

920 Zeus, king of the gods, took as his first wife Metis¹,
 a mate wiser than all gods and mortal men.
 But when she was about to bear gray-eyed Athena,
 then through the schemes of Gaia and starry Ouranos
 he deceived the mind of Metis with guile
 and coaxing words, and lodged her in his belly.
 Such was their advice, so that of the immortals
 none other than Zeus would hold kingly sway.
 It was fated that Metis would bear keen-minded children,
 first a gray-eyed daughter, Tritogeneia²,
 930 who in strength and wisdom would be her father's match,
 and then a male child, high-mettled
 and destined to rule over gods and men.
 But Zeus lodged her in his belly before she did all this,
 that she might advise him in matters good and bad.

His second wife was radiant Themis; she bore the Seasons,
 Lawfulness and Justice and blooming Peace,
 who watch over the works of mortal men,
 and also the Fates, to whom wise Zeus allotted high honors.

940 These are Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos,
 and they give mortals their share of good and evil.
 Then Eurynome³, Ocean's fair daughter,
 bore to Zeus the three Graces, all fair-cheeked,
 Aglaia⁴, Euphrosyne⁵, and shapely Thalia⁶,
 their alluring eyes glance from under their brows,
 and from their eyelids drips desire that unstrings the limbs.
 After Zeus slept with Demeter⁷ who nurtures many,
 she bore white-armed Persephone⁸, whom Aidoneus⁹
 950 snatched away from her mother with the consent of wise
 Zeus.

Then he fell in love with Mnemosyne the lovely-haired,
 who gave birth to the gold-filleted Muses,
 lovers, all nine, of feasts and of enchanting song.
 Leto lay in love with aegis-bearing Zeus
 and gave birth to Apollo and arrow-shooting Artemis,
 children comelier than all the other sky-dwellers.
 Last of all, Zeus made Hera his buxom bride,
 and she lay in love with the king of gods and men
 and bore Hebe and Ares¹⁰ and Eileithyia¹¹.

¹ **Metis**: the titaness goddess of good counsel, advise, planning, cunning, craftiness and wisdom. She was also one of the Okeanides.

² **Tritogeneia**: an epithet meaning "born from the head"

³ **Eurynome**: the titaness of flowery water-meadows and pasturelands. She was also one of the eldest of the Okeanides.

⁴ **Aglaia**: the Goddess of beauty, splendour, glory, magnificence and adornment

⁵ **Euphrosyne**: the goddess of good cheer, joy, mirth and merriment

⁶ **Thalia**: goddess of festive celebrations and rich and luxurious banquets

⁷ **Demeter**: the great Olympian goddess of agriculture, grain and bread (the staple food of the ancient Greeks)

⁸ **Persephone**: the beautiful Queen of the Underworld and the Great Goddess of the Eleusinian Mysteries

⁹ **Aidoneus**: another name for Hades, king of the underworld and the god of the mineral wealth of the earth. In the division of the world amongst the three sons of Kronos he inherited the dark realms of Erebus, while his brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, won the sky and the sea respectively. The Greeks had many names for Hades for they feared to invoke this terrible god by calling out his true name.

¹⁰ **Ares**: the great Olympian god of war and battle

960 Then from his head he himself bore gray-eyed Athena,
 weariless leader of armies, dreaded and mighty goddess,
 who stirs men to battle and is thrilled by the clash of arms.
 Hera wrangled with her husband and because of anger,
 untouched by him, she bore glorious Hephaistos¹²
 who surpasses all the other gods in craftsmanship.
 From the union of rumbling Poseidon and Amphitrite
 came the great Triton¹³, whose might is far-flung,
 an awesome god dwelling in a golden house that lies
 at the sea's bottom, near his cherished mother and lordly
 970 father.

Now to shield-shattering Ares Kythereia bore the dreaded
 twins

Fear and Panic who with Ares, sacker of cities,
 force men to flee in disorder from the thick array of battle.
 Harmonia, too, the wife of bold Kadmos, was her daughter.
 Maia¹⁴, daughter of Atlas, shared the sacred bed of Zeus
 and gave birth to Hermes¹⁵, renowned herald of the gods.
 Semele, daughter of Kadmos, yielded to Zeus's lust,
 and she, a mere mortal, is now the divine mother
 980 of the dazzling and deathless god in whom many exult¹⁶.

Alkmene gave birth to invincible Herakles
 after she had lain in love with Zeus the cloud gatherer.
 And Hephaistos, the lame smith of wide renown,
 took as his buxom bride Aglaia, the youngest of the Graces.
 Golden-haired Dionysos took blond Ariadne,
 daughter of Minos, to be his buxom bride,
 and then Zeus made her ageless and immortal.

990 Herakles, mighty son of fair-ankled Alkmene,
 accomplished his grim labors and took Hebe,
 daughter of great Zeus and gold-sandaled Hera,
 to be his noble spouse on snowy Olympos.
 Blessed is he! His exploits all finished,
 he is now among the gods, griefless and ageless forever.
 Perseis, Ocean's famous daughter, bore to Helios,
 who never wearies, both Kirke and King Aietes.
 Then Aietes, son of Helios who shines his light on mortals
 through divine decree, married Idyia of the blooming cheeks,
 daughter of Okeanos, the river whose stream rings the earth;
 under the spell of golden Aphrodite she yielded
 1000 to her husband's desire and bore fair-ankled Medeia.

Hail, O gods dwelling on Olympos,
 and hail islands and continents parted by the briny sea!
 Now Olympian Muses, sweet-voiced daughters of Zeus
 the aegis-bearer, make the theme of your song
 the immortal goddesses who shared the beds of mortals

¹¹ **Eileithyia**: the goddess of childbirth and women's labour

¹² **Hephaistos**: the great Olympian god of fire, metalworking and crafts

¹³ **Triton**: a sea-god son of Poseidon who, with his conch-shell trumpet, stilled the ocean's waves

¹⁴ **Maia**: the eldest of the seven star-nymphs of the constellation Pleiades. She was a shy goddess who dwelt alone in a cave on Mount Kyllene. There she had many a secret encounter with Zeus and bore him the god Hermes. Later she was placed amongst the stars with her sisters as the constellation Pleiades.

¹⁵ **Hermes**: the great Olympian god of markets, travel and trade, herds and flocks, heralds, gymnasiums and athletes. He served as messenger, scribe, and herald for the other gods

¹⁶ The mortal Semele gave birth to **Dionysus**, the great Olympian wine, festivals, revelry and parties, the theatre, madness, drunkenness and insanity

and bore them children with divine looks.
 Radiant Demeter, a goddess, and Iasion¹, a hero,
 coupled with passion on a field plowed three times,
 1010 in the rich soil of Crete; their child, noble Ploutos²,
 wanders everywhere on land and broad-backed sea
 and grants the bliss that comes from great wealth
 when he comes into the hands of those he meets.
 Harmonia³, daughter of golden Aphrodite,
 bore to Kadmos⁴ Ino and Semele and fair-cheeked Agaue;
 Autonoe, too, who became the bride of lush-haired Aristaos,
 and then, Polydoros - all in turret-crowned Thebes.
 Kallirhoe, Ocean's daughter, spell-bound by golden
 Aphrodite,
 1020 coupled in love with stout-hearted Chrysaor
 and bore a son surpassing all men in strength,
 Geryones, whom brawny Herakles slew
 in sea-stroked Erytheia, to win the ambling oxen.
 To Tithonos Eos bore bronze-gearred Memnon,
 king of the Ethiopians, and also lord Emathion.
 The blossom of her love for Kephalos was a splendid son,
 high-honored Phaethon, a man of godlike beauty;
 when he was still in the tender blossom of luxuriant youth,
 a child lost in innocent thought, smile-loving Aphrodite
 1030 swooped down on him and carried him away to her temple
 to be keeper of its holiest part, a luminous demigod.
 Then Jason, through the decrees of the undying gods,
 took as his bride the daughter of Aietes, the Zeus-cherished
 king,
 after he had accomplished many grim labors on orders from
 Pelias,
 the great and brazen king, whose deeds were shameless folly.
 These done, Jason suffered no few hardships
 and then on a swift ship sailed to Iolkos, whence he brought
 1040 a bright-eyed maiden who became his buxom wife.
 And Jason, shepherd of the people, made her submit
 to his passion, and she bore Medeios, a son fostered on the
 mountains
 by Philyra's son, Cheiron, and great Zeus's design was
 fulfilled.
 Then come the daughters of Nereus, old man of the sea:
 the exalted goddess Psamathe, incited by golden Aphrodite,
 lay with Aiakos in love and gave birth to Phokos;
 and then Thetis, the silver-sandaled goddess, became the wife
 1050 of Peleus and bore lion-hearted Achilleus, breaker of men.
 Fair-wreathed Kythereia gave birth to Aineias,
 after she and the hero Anchises tenderly coupled
 on the wind-swept peaks of many-folded Ida.
 And Kirke, daughter of Helios Hyperionides,

took as her lover Odysseus, whose resolve never flagged,
 and bore him Agrios and the blameless and stout Latinos,
 and also Telegonos, under the spell of golden Aphrodite.
 The first two ruled over all the glorious Tyrsenians,
 very far away in the inner enclave of the sacred islands.
 1060 Kalypso, the radiant goddess, came to know the charm
 of Odysseus's love, and bore him Nausithoos and Nausinoos.
 These are the immortal goddesses who shared the beds
 of mortal men and gave them godlike children.
 But now, sweet-singing Olympian Muses,
 daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, sing of mortal women.

¹ **Iasion**: a minor agricultural demi-god or hero. He was probably the springtime consort of the goddess Demeter in the Kabeirian Mysteries of Samothrake. Iasion was originally a mortal-lover of Demeter, but when Zeus discovered the pair copulating in a thrice-plowed field, he struck Iasion dead with a thunderbolt. Some say Iasion was then placed amongst the stars alongside Triptolemos as the constellation Gemini

² **Ploutos**: the rustic god or spirit of agricultural wealth and the bounty of the harvest (the main source of material wealth in the ancient world). He was a son of Demeter who was said to have been blinded by Zeus so that he would distribute his wealth indiscriminately and without favour

³ **Harmonia**: the goddess of marital harmony and union. She sometimes also represented harmony in a more general and abstract sense

⁴ **Kadmos**: the legendary founder of Thebes

