Theogony

HESIOD

c. 700 BC

Theogony

Θεογονία

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Theogony · Hesiod (c. 700 BC)

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INTRODUCTION

"Let us begin our singing with the Muses of Helicon." So opens the *Theogony*, the "birth of the gods," the oldest surviving Greek account of how the world and its gods came to be. Its poet names himself: Hesiod, a shepherd on Mount Helicon in Boeotia, who says the Muses gave him a laurel staff and the voice of a singer.

The poem starts with Chaos, Earth and Eros and moves through three generations of rulers. Sky smothers his children until his son Cronus maims him; Cronus swallows his own children until Zeus, saved by a trick, forces him to give them back. Zeus then wins a ten-year war against the Titans and a last fight with the monster Typhoeus, and divides the honors among the gods. Along the way come Aphrodite's birth from the sea foam, the monsters of the deep, the trickster Prometheus who steals fire for mortals, and the first woman, made as a punishment for them.

Hesiod composed around 700 BC, in the same verse and much the same traditional language as Homer. Much of the poem is genealogy, lists of names that mapped the Greek world of gods, rivers, nymphs and monsters, and it has stories with close parallels in Near Eastern myths of divine succession. The translation here is in prose, passage by passage beside the Greek.

Theogony

How the gods came to be: from Chaos and Earth through the overthrow of Sky and of Cronus to the reign of Zeus.

HYMN TO THE MUSES

The Muses of Helicon teach Hesiod to sing and tell him what to sing of.

1 Let us begin our singing with the Muses of Helicon, who hold Helicon, the great and holy mountain. On their soft feet they dance around the violet-dark spring and the altar of the mighty son of Cronus. When they have bathed their tender skin in the Permessus, or the Horse's Spring, or holy Olmeius, they form their dances on the topmost heights of Helicon, beautiful and lovely dances, and their feet move nimbly.[1] 9 Setting out from there, veiled in thick mist, they walked by night and sent out their beautiful voice. They sang of Zeus who holds the aegis, and of lady Hera of Argos, who walks in golden sandals, and of the daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis, gray-eyed Athena, and of Phoebus Apollo and Artemis the archer, and of Poseidon, Earth-holder and Earth-shaker. They sang of revered Themis and Aphrodite of the glancing eyes, of Hebe with her golden crown and lovely Dione, of Leto and Iapetus and Cronus of the crooked counsel, of Dawn and the great Sun and the bright Moon, of Earth and great Ocean and black Night, and of the holy race of the other immortals who live forever. It was they who once taught Hesiod beautiful song, while he was shepherding lambs below holy Helicon. 24 And these were the very first words the

1 Helicon is a mountain in Boeotia, near Hesiod's home village of Ascra. The Permessus, the Horse's Spring (Hippocrene) and the Olmeius are waters on it.

goddesses spoke to me, the Muses of Olympus, daughters of Zeus who holds the aegis: "Shepherds of the fields, poor wretches, nothing but bellies: we know how to tell many lies that are like the truth, and we know, when we wish, how to proclaim the truth." So spoke the daughters of great Zeus, whose words are apt. They plucked a branch of flourishing laurel and gave it to me as a staff, a marvel to see. And they breathed into me a divine voice, so that I might celebrate what will be and what was before. They told me to hymn the race of the blessed gods who live forever, but always to sing of themselves first and last. But why all this about oak or rock?[2]

36 Come then, let us begin with the Muses, who with their hymns delight the great mind of father Zeus within Olympus, telling of what is and what will be and what was before, their voices in harmony. From their mouths the song flows sweet and tireless. The house of father Zeus, the loud-thundering, laughs as the goddesses' lily-soft voice spreads abroad; the peaks of snowy Olympus echo, and the houses of the immortals. Sending out their immortal voice, they first celebrate in song the revered race of the gods from the beginning, those whom Earth and wide Sky bore, and the gods who were born of them, givers of good things. Next they hymn Zeus, father of gods and of men, as they begin and as they end their song: how he is the mightiest of the gods and the greatest in power.[3] 50 Then again they sing of the race of men and of the mighty Giants, and so delight the mind of Zeus within Olympus, the Muses of Olympus, daughters of Zeus who holds the aegis. Mnemosyne bore them in Pieria after joining with their father, the son of Cronus—Mnemosyne, who rules the hills of Eleuther—to be a forgetting of evils and a rest from cares. For nine nights Zeus the wise counselor lay with her, going up into her holy bed apart from the immortals. And when a year had come round, and the seasons had turned as the months waned, and many days had been completed, she bore

2 "Oak or rock" is a proverbial phrase, already found in Homer, for talk that strays from the point; Hesiod uses it to break off and start again.
3 Sky is Ouranos, the Uranus of Latin writers.

nine daughters, all of one mind, whose hearts are set on song and whose spirits are free from care, a little way from the highest peak of snowy Olympus.[4]

63 There are their shining dancing-floors and their beautiful houses, and beside them the Graces and Desire have their homes, amid festivity. Sending a lovely voice from their mouths, they sing and celebrate the laws of all things and the good ways of the immortals, sending out their lovely voice. Then they went to Olympus, glorying in their beautiful voice, in immortal song; the black earth rang around them as they sang, and a lovely beat rose from under their feet as they went to their father. He is king in the sky, and he himself holds the thunder and the blazing thunderbolt, since he conquered his father Cronus by strength; and he has arranged everything well for the immortals alike and assigned them their honors.

75 These things, then, the Muses sang, who have their homes on Olympus, nine daughters born of great Zeus: Clio and Euterpe, Thalia and Melpomene, Terpsichore and Erato, Polyhymnia and Urania, and Calliope, who is the foremost of them all, for she also attends on revered kings. Whenever the daughters of great Zeus honor one of the kings nurtured by Zeus, and look on him at his birth, they pour sweet dew on his tongue, and gentle words flow from his mouth. All the people look to him as he settles disputes with straight judgments; speaking surely, he skillfully puts a quick end even to a great quarrel. For this is why kings are wise: when the people are being wronged in the assembly, they easily turn matters around, winning men over with gentle words.[5] 91 As he goes through the gathering, they court his favor like a god's, with gentle respect, and he stands out among those assembled. Such is the holy gift of the Muses to men. For it is from the Muses and far-shooting Apollo that there are singers and lyre-players on earth, and from Zeus that there

4 Mnemosyne means "Memory." Pieria is the region at the foot of Mount Olympus; Eleuther a town near Helicon.

5 The Muses' names are "speaking" names: Clio, for example, suggests "glory," Calliope "beautiful voice."

are kings. Happy is the one whom the Muses love: sweet is the voice that flows from his mouth. For if someone has grief in a newly troubled heart and is parched with sorrow, yet a singer, servant of the Muses, sings the glorious deeds of men of old and the blessed gods who hold Olympus, at once he forgets his heavy thoughts and remembers none of his cares: the gifts of the goddesses have quickly turned them aside.

THE INVOCATION

Hesiod asks the Muses how the gods, the earth and everything else came to be.

104 Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song. Celebrate the holy race of the immortals who live forever, who were born of Earth and starry Sky, and of dark Night, and those whom salty Sea nourished. Tell how at first the gods and earth came to be, and the rivers and the boundless sea, surging with its swell, and the shining stars and the wide sky above, [and the gods who were born of them, givers of good things,] and how they divided their wealth and shared out their honors, and how they first took possession of many-ridged Olympus. Tell me these things, Muses who have your homes on Olympus, from the beginning, and tell which of them came to be first.

THE FIRST BEINGS

Chaos, Earth, Tartarus and Eros; Earth bears Sky, and with him the Titans, Cyclopes and Hundred-Handers.

116 First of all, Chaos came to be; and then broad-breasted Earth, the ever-secure seat of all [the immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus,] and misty Tartarus in a recess of the wide-wayed earth, and Eros, who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the limb-loosener, who overpowers the mind and the shrewd counsel in the breasts of all gods and all men. From Chaos, Erebus and black Night were born; and from Night, in turn, Aether and Day were born, whom she conceived and bore after joining in love with Erebus. Earth first bore, equal to

herself, starry Sky, to cover her all around, so that he would be an ever-secure seat for the blessed gods.[6] 129 She bore the tall Mountains, the pleasant haunts of goddesses, the Nymphs who live in the wooded mountains. She also bore the barren deep, surging with its swell, Sea, without delightful love. But then, lying with Sky, she bore deep-swirling Ocean, Coeus and Crius and Hyperion and Iapetus, Theia and Rhea and Themis and Mnemosyne, gold-crowned Phoebe and lovely Tethys. After them the youngest was born, Cronus of the crooked counsel, the most terrible of her children; and he hated his lusty father. She bore, too, the Cyclopes, with overbearing hearts, Brontes and Steropes and Arges of the violent spirit, who gave Zeus the thunder and made the thunderbolt.[7]

142 In all else they were like gods, but a single eye was set in the middle of the forehead. They were given the name Cyclopes because a single round eye was set in their foreheads. Strength and force and craft were in their works. Then there were others born of Earth and Sky, three sons, huge and mighty, not to be named: Cottus and Briareus and Gyes, overweening children. A hundred arms sprang from their shoulders, unapproachable, and on each of them fifty heads grew from the shoulders, above their sturdy limbs; and boundless, mighty strength was in their huge forms.[8]

THE CASTRATION OF SKY

Cronus maims his father Sky with Earth's sickle; the Furies, Giants and Aphrodite spring from the blood and foam.

154 For all those who were born of Earth and Sky were the most terrible of children, and from the beginning they were hated by their own father. As soon as each of them was born, he would hide them all away in a hidden place of Earth and would not let

6 Chaos means "Chasm" or "Gap," not disorder; Erebus is the darkness beneath the earth.
7 Brontes, Steropes and Arges mean roughly "Thunder," "Lightning" and "Flash."
8 The name Cyclopes suggests kyklos, "circle," and ōps, "eye": "round-eyed."

them up into the light; and Sky took delight in his evil work. But huge Earth groaned within, cramped and pressed, and she devised a crafty and evil scheme. At once she created the substance of gray adamant, fashioned a great sickle, and showed it to her dear children; and she spoke to encourage them, though grieved in her own heart:

164 "Children of mine and of a reckless father, if you are willing to obey me, we can avenge your father's evil outrage; for he was the first to devise shameful deeds." So she spoke; and fear seized them all, and not one of them uttered a word. But great Cronus of the crooked counsel took courage and answered his good mother: "Mother, I would undertake this deed and carry it out, since I care nothing for our father, hateful even in name; for he was the first to devise shameful deeds." So he spoke; and huge Earth rejoiced greatly in her heart. She set him in hiding in an ambush, put the jagged-toothed sickle in his hands, and explained the whole plan to him.

176 Great Sky came, bringing night with him, and, longing for love, he spread himself over Earth and stretched out everywhere. Then from his ambush the son reached out with his left hand, and with his right he took the huge sickle, long and jagged-toothed, and swiftly cut off his own father's genitals and threw them behind him to be carried away. Not in vain did they fly from his hand: all the drops of blood that spurted out, Earth received; and as the years went round she bore the mighty Furies and the great Giants, gleaming in armor, holding long spears in their hands, and the Nymphs whom men call Melian all over the boundless earth.[9] 188 As for the genitals, once he had cut them off with the adamant and thrown them from the land into the surging sea, they were carried over the deep for a long time; and around them white foam rose from the immortal flesh, and in it a maiden grew. First she drew near to holy Cythera, and from there she came to sea-girt Cyprus. Out stepped a revered and beautiful goddess, and grass grew up around her under her

9 The Melian nymphs are nymphs of the ash tree (melia), the wood from which spears were made.

slender feet. Gods and men call her Aphrodite [the foam-born goddess and Cytherea of the fine garland] because she grew in foam; and Cytherea, because she reached Cythera; and the Cyprus-born, because she was born in sea-washed Cyprus; and Philommedes, because she came forth from the genitals.[10] 201 Eros went with her, and fair Desire followed, when she was first born and went to join the tribe of the gods. And this is the honor she has held from the beginning, the portion she has been allotted among men and immortal gods: the whispers of maidens, and smiles, and deceptions, and sweet delight, and love, and tenderness. But their father, great Sky, called those children of his own begetting by the name of Titans, in reproach; for he said that, straining in their recklessness, they had done a monstrous deed, and that vengeance for it would come later.[11]

THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT

Doom, Death, Sleep, the Fates, Nemesis, and Strife with her brood of troubles.

211 Night bore hateful Doom and the black Death-Spirit and Death; she bore Sleep, she bore the tribe of Dreams. Next, dark Night, the goddess, bore Momus and painful Oizys, though she lay with no one, and the Hesperides, who tend the beautiful golden apples beyond glorious Ocean and the trees that bear the fruit. She bore the Fates and the pitilessly avenging Death-Spirits, Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give mortals at their birth both good and evil to have, and who pursue the transgressions of men and gods; and the goddesses never cease from their terrible anger until they have paid back grim retribution to whoever offends.[12] 223 Deadly Night bore Nemesis too, a bane for mortal men; and after her she bore Deceit and Love and destructive Old Age, and she bore strong-hearted Strife. And

10 Aphrodite is linked here to aphros, "foam"; Philommedes, usually "laughter-loving," is punned on mēdea, "genitals."
11 Hesiod derives "Titans" from titainō, "strain," and links it to tisis, "vengeance."
12 Momus means "Blame," Oizys "Misery"; the Hesperides are the "Daughters of Evening," living in the far west.

hateful Strife bore painful Toil, and Forgetfulness and Famine and tearful Pains, Combats and Battles and Murders and Manslaughters, Quarrels and lying Stories and Disputes, Lawlessness and Ruin, who keep close company with each other, and Oath, who brings the most harm to men on earth whenever anyone willingly swears a false oath.[13]

THE CHILDREN OF SEA

Nereus and the fifty Nereids; Iris and the Harpies; the Graeae, the Gorgons, Medusa and Pegasus.

233 Sea fathered Nereus, who does not lie and speaks the truth, the eldest of his children. They call him the Old Man because he is unerring and kind, and does not forget what is right, but knows just and kindly counsels. And again, joining with Earth, he fathered great Thaumas and proud Phorcys, and fair-cheeked Ceto, and Eurybia, who has a heart of adamant in her breast. 240 From Nereus and lovely-haired Doris, daughter of Ocean, the perfect river, there were born in the barren sea children much beloved among goddesses: Ploto, Eucrante, Sao and Amphitrite, Eudora, Thetis, Galene and Glauce, Cymothoe, Speio, Thoe and lovely Halie, Pasithea, Erato and rosy-armed Eunice, graceful Melite, Eulimene and Agave, Doto, Proto, Pherusa and Dynamene, Nesaea, Actaea and Protomedea, Doris, Panopea and fair Galatea, lovely Hippothoe and rosy-armed Hipponoe, and Cymodoce, who with Cymatolege and fair-ankled Amphitrite easily calms the waves on the misty sea and the blasts of raging winds,[14] 255 Cymo, Eione and Halimede of the fine garland, smile-loving Glauconome and Pontoporea, Leagore, Euagore and Laomedea, Polynoe, Autonoe and Lysianassa, Euarne, lovely in figure and flawless in looks, Psamathe, graceful of body, and divine Menippe, Neso, Eupompe, Themisto and Pronoe, and Nemertes, who has the mind of her immortal father.

13 Nemesis means "Retribution," the gods' indignation at excess.
14 The Nereids' names mostly evoke the sea and its gifts: Galene, for example, means "Calm," Cymodoce "Wave-receiver."

These were the fifty daughters born of blameless Nereus, skilled in blameless works. Thaumas married Electra, daughter of deep-flowing Ocean; and she bore swift Iris and the lovely-haired Harpies, Aello and Ocypete, who on their swift wings keep pace with the blasts of the winds and with the birds, for they dart high through the air.[15] 270 To Phorcys, in turn, Ceto bore the fair-cheeked Graeae, gray from their birth, whom immortal gods and men who walk on the ground call the Graeae: Pemphredo of the fine robe and Enyo of the saffron robe; and the Gorgons, who live beyond glorious Ocean, at the edge of the world toward Night, where the clear-voiced Hesperides are: Stheno and Euryale and Medusa, who suffered a grim fate. She was mortal, but the other two were immortal and ageless; and with her alone the dark-haired god lay, in a soft meadow among spring flowers. When Perseus cut her head from her neck, out sprang great Chrysaor and the horse Pegasus.[16] 282 The one got his name because he was born by the springs of Ocean; the other, because he held a golden sword in his hands. Pegasus flew away, leaving the earth, mother of flocks, and came to the immortals; he lives in the house of Zeus, carrying the thunder and the lightning for wise Zeus. Chrysaor, joined with Callirhoe, daughter of glorious Ocean, fathered three-headed Geryon. Him the might of Heracles slew beside his shambling cattle on sea-girt Erytheia, on the day when he drove the broad-browed cattle to holy Tiryns, crossing the stream of Ocean, after he had killed Orthus and the herdsman Eurytion in the misty farmstead beyond glorious Ocean.[17]

ECHIDNA AND HER MONSTERS

Half nymph, half snake, she bears Orthus, Cerberus, the Hydra and the Chimaera; the Sphinx and the Nemean lion.

295 And she bore another monster, irresistible, not at all like mortal men or immortal gods, in a hollow cave: divine Echidna,

15 Harpies means "Snatchers"; Aello is "Storm-wind," Ocypete "Swift-flier."
16 Graeae means "Old Women." The dark-haired god is Poseidon.

strong of heart, half a nymph with glancing eyes and fair cheeks, half a monstrous serpent, terrible and huge, speckled, eating raw flesh, in the depths of the holy earth. There she has her cave, down under a hollow rock, far from immortal gods and mortal men; there the gods allotted her a glorious house to live in. Grim Echidna keeps watch among the Arimi, under the earth, an immortal nymph, ageless all her days. With her, they say, Typhon joined in love, terrible, violent and lawless, with the glancing-eyed maiden; and she conceived and bore strong-hearted children.[18]

309 First she bore Orthus, the dog of Geryon. Second she bore an irresistible creature, not to be spoken of, Cerberus who eats raw flesh, the bronze-voiced dog of Hades, fifty-headed, shameless and strong. Third she bore the Hydra of Lerna, whose mind was set on grim things, whom the white-armed goddess Hera reared in her boundless anger against mighty Heracles. But the son of Zeus slew her with the pitiless bronze, Heracles, son of Amphitryon, with Iolaus dear to Ares, by the plans of Athena who drives the spoil. And she bore the Chimaera, who breathed raging fire, terrible and huge, swift-footed and strong. She had three heads: one of a fierce-eyed lion, one of a goat, one of a snake, a mighty serpent. [A lion in front, a serpent behind, a goat in the middle,] [she breathed out the terrible fury of blazing fire.][19] 325 Her Pegasus and noble Bellerophon killed. And she, overpowered by Orthus, bore the deadly Sphinx, destruction for the Cadmeans, and the Nemean lion, which Hera, the glorious wife of Zeus, reared and settled in the hills of Nemea, a bane to men. There he preyed on the tribes of men who lived there, lording it over Tretus in Nemea and Apesas; but the strength of mighty Heracles overcame him. And Ceto, joined in love with Phorcys, bore her youngest, a terrible snake, which in the hidden depths of the dark earth, at its great bounds, guards the

17 Pegasus' name is linked to pēgai, "springs"; Chrysaor means "Golden Sword."
18 It is unclear whether "she" is Ceto or Callirhoe; the Arimi are a people or place of uncertain location.
19 Chimaera is the Greek word for a she-goat.

apples that are all of gold. This is the brood of Ceto and Phorcys.[20]

RIVERS, TITANS AND STARS

The rivers and Oceanids; the other Titans' offspring: Sun, Moon and Dawn, the winds and the stars.

337 Tethys bore to Ocean the eddying Rivers: Nile, Alpheus, and deep-eddying Eridanus, Strymon, Maeander, and fair-flowing Ister, Phasis, Rhesus, and silver-eddying Achelous, Nessus, Rhodius, Haliacmon, and Heptaporus, Granicus, Aesepus, and divine Simois, Peneus, Hermus, and fair-flowing Caicus, great Sangarius, Ladon, and Parthenius, Evenus, Ardescus, and divine Scamander. She also bore a holy race of daughters, who throughout the earth bring young men to manhood, together with lord Apollo and the Rivers; this is the portion they have from Zeus.

349 Peitho, Admete, Ianthe, and Electra, Doris, Prymno, and godlike Urania, Hippo, Clymene, Rhodea, and Callirhoe, Zeuxo, Clytia, Idyia, and Pasithoe, Plexaura, Galaxaura, and lovely Dione, Melobosis, Thoe, and fair Polydora, Cerceis, lovely in form, and ox-eyed Pluto, Perseis, Ianeira, Acaste, and Xanthe, lovely Petraea, Menestho, and Europa, Metis, Eurynome, and saffron-robed Telesto, Chryseis, Asia, and desirable Calypso, Eudora, Tyche, Amphirho, and Ocyrhoe, and Styx, who is the greatest of them all.[21] 362 These are the eldest daughters born to Ocean and Tethys, but there are many others too. There are three thousand slim-ankled Oceanids. Scattered far and wide, they haunt the earth and the depths of the waters everywhere alike, glorious children of goddesses. And there are as many rivers again, flowing with a roar, sons of Ocean, whom lady Tethys bore. It is hard for a mortal man to tell all their names, but those who live near each of them know it.

371 Theia, yielding to Hyperion in love, bore great Sun and bright Moon, and Dawn, who shines for all who live on earth

20 The Cadmeans are the Thebans, named after Cadmus, founder of Thebes.
21 Metis, whose name means "Cunning," will later become Zeus's first wife.

and for the immortal gods who hold the wide sky. Eurybia, shining among goddesses, joined in love with Crius and bore great Astraeus, and Pallas, and Perses, who stood out among all for his knowledge. To Astraeus Dawn bore the strong-hearted winds, a goddess bedded in love with a god: clearing Zephyrus, Boreas swift on his way, and Notus. After them the Early-born bore the star Eosphorus, and the shining stars that crown the sky.[22]

STYX AND HECATE

Styx sides with Zeus and her waters become the gods' great oath; a hymn to Hecate's many powers.

383 Styx, daughter of Ocean, joined with Pallas and bore Rivalry and fair-ankled Victory in her halls. She also bore Power and Force, glorious children. Zeus has no house apart from them, no seat, no road on which the god does not lead them; they always sit beside deep-thundering Zeus. This was the plan of Styx, the immortal daughter of Ocean, on the day when the Olympian lightning-god called all the immortal gods to high Olympus. He said that whichever of the gods would fight beside him against the Titans, he would strip none of them of his privileges: each would keep the honor he had held before among the immortal gods. And whoever had been left without honor or privilege under Cronus, he said, he would raise to honor and privileges, as is right. 397 So Styx the immortal came first to Olympus with her children, following the counsel of her dear father. Zeus honored her and gave her surpassing gifts. He made her the great oath of the gods, and her children he made to live with him for all time. And just as he had promised, he kept his word to all, every bit of it; while he himself holds great power and rules. Phoebe, in turn, came to the much-loved bed of Coeus. The goddess conceived in love, goddess with god, and bore dark-

22 Zephyrus, Boreas and Notus are the west, north and south winds; Eosphorus, "Dawn-bringer," is the morning star.

robed Leto, always gentle, kind to men and to the immortal gods, gentle from the beginning, the mildest in all Olympus.[23]

409 She also bore Asteria of the happy name, whom Perses once led to his great house to be called his dear wife. And she conceived and bore Hecate, whom Zeus, son of Cronus, honored above all. He gave her glorious gifts: a share of the earth and of the barren sea. From the starry sky, too, she has her share of honor, and she is honored above all by the immortal gods. For even now, whenever any man on earth offers fine sacrifices according to custom and prays for favor, he calls on Hecate. Great honor comes easily to the man whose prayers the goddess graciously receives, and she grants him prosperity, for the power is hers.[24] 421 For of all those who were born of Earth and Sky and received honor, she holds a share. The son of Cronus did her no violence and took nothing away from what she had been allotted among the Titans, the former gods. She keeps it as the division was first made, from the beginning: her privilege on earth, in the sky, and in the sea. And though she is an only child, the goddess has no smaller share of honor, but much more still, since Zeus honors her. 429 Whomever she wishes, she stands by in great power and helps. In judgment she sits beside revered kings. In the assembly, whomever she wishes stands out among the people. And when men arm themselves for man-destroying war, the goddess stands by those she wishes, freely granting them victory and handing them glory. She is good, too, when men compete in the games: there also the goddess stands by them and helps them, and the man who wins by strength and might easily carries off the fine prize, rejoicing, and brings glory to his parents. She is good at standing by horsemen, whomever she wishes. 440 To those who work the gray, stormy sea and pray to Hecate and the loud-roaring Earth-shaker, the glorious goddess easily gives a large catch, and easily takes it away just as it

23 The gods swore their most binding oaths by the water of Styx, a river of the underworld.

24 This Perses is a Titan, son of Crius, not the brother Hesiod addresses in *Works and Days*.

comes into view, if her heart so wishes. She is good in the farmsteads, with Hermes, at increasing the stock. Herds of cattle, droves, broad flocks of goats, and flocks of woolly sheep, if her heart so wishes, she makes many out of few, or fewer out of many. So, though she is her mother's only child, she is honored with privileges among all the immortals. The son of Cronus made her nurse of the young, of all who after her have seen with their eyes the light of all-seeing Dawn. So from the beginning she has been a nurse of the young, and these are her honors.

THE BIRTH OF ZEUS

Cronus swallows his children; Rhea gives him a stone instead of Zeus, who later makes him disgorge them.

453 Rhea, overcome by Cronus, bore glorious children: Hestia, Demeter, and gold-sandaled Hera, mighty Hades, who lives in his halls beneath the earth with a pitiless heart, and the loud-roaring Earth-shaker, and wise Zeus, father of gods and men, whose thunder shakes the wide earth. Great Cronus swallowed them, each as it came from its mother's holy womb to her knees. His purpose was that no other of the proud sons of Sky should hold the royal honor among the immortals. For he had learned from Earth and starry Sky that it was fated for him to be overcome by his own son, strong as he was, through the plans of great Zeus. So he kept no blind watch: he watched closely and swallowed his children. And grief beyond bearing held Rhea. 468 But when she was about to bear Zeus, father of gods and men, she begged her own dear parents, Earth and starry Sky, to devise a plan with her, so that she might bear her dear son in secret, and the Furies of her father, and of the children whom great Cronus of the crooked counsel had swallowed, might have their vengeance. They listened closely to their dear daughter and did as she asked, and told her all that was fated to happen to King Cronus and his strong-hearted son. They sent her to Lyctus, in the rich land of Crete, when she was about to bear the youngest of her children, great Zeus. Huge Earth received him from her in

wide Crete, to nurse and rear.[25] 481 There she came, carrying him through the swift black night, first to Lyctus. She took him in her arms and hid him in a steep cave, deep in the hidden places of the holy earth, on the Aegean mountain, thick with woods. Then she wrapped a great stone in swaddling clothes and put it into the hands of the son of Sky, the great lord, the former king of the gods. He took it in his hands and put it down into his belly, the wretch. He did not realize in his mind that in the stone's place his son was left behind, unconquered and untroubled, who would soon overcome him by force and with his hands, drive him from his honor, and himself rule among the immortals.[26]

492 Swiftly then the strength and glorious limbs of the young lord grew. As the years went round, great Cronus of the crooked counsel, tricked by the shrewd promptings of Earth, brought his offspring up again, [beaten by the skill and the force of his own son.] First he vomited up the stone he had swallowed last. Zeus set it firm in the wide-wayed earth at holy Pytho, in the hollows below Parnassus, to be a sign for times to come, a wonder to mortal men. And he freed from their cruel bonds his father's brothers, the sons of Sky, whom their father had bound in his folly. They remembered to repay him with thanks for his kindness: they gave him the thunder, the blazing thunderbolt, and the lightning, which huge Earth had kept hidden until then. Trusting in these, he rules over mortals and immortals.[27]

PROMETHEUS

The sons of Iapetus; Prometheus tricks Zeus over the sacrifice at Mecone and steals fire.

507 Iapetus took as his wife Clymene, the fair-ankled daughter of Ocean, and went up into the same bed with her. She bore him a son, strong-hearted Atlas. She also bore glorious Menoetius, and Prometheus, subtle and quick-witted, and Epimetheus, whose

25 Lyctus is a town in central Crete.
26 The Aegean mountain is otherwise unknown; it was presumably in Crete.
27 Pytho is Delphi, where a stone said to be this one was shown to visitors.

mind went astray, who from the beginning was a bane to men who eat bread: he was the first to accept the woman Zeus had formed, a maiden. Violent Menoetius wide-seeing Zeus struck with a smoking thunderbolt and sent down to Erebus, for his recklessness and his overbearing strength. Atlas, under hard necessity, holds up the wide sky at the ends of the earth, in front of the clear-voiced Hesperides, standing, with his head and his tireless arms. This is the portion Zeus the wise counselor allotted him.[28] 521 And he bound Prometheus of the subtle plans in unbreakable fetters, painful bonds, driven through the middle of a pillar. He set on him a long-winged eagle, which ate his immortal liver; but by night the liver grew back, every bit as much as the long-winged bird had eaten through the whole day. That bird the valiant son of fair-ankled Alcmene, Heracles, killed. He warded off the cruel plague from the son of Iapetus and freed him from his torment, not against the will of Olympian Zeus who rules on high, so that the fame of Theban-born Heracles might be greater still than before across the bountiful earth. Out of regard for this, Zeus honored his glorious son. Angry as he was, he gave up the wrath he had held before, because Prometheus had matched his wits against the mighty son of Cronus. 535 For when gods and mortal men were reaching a settlement at Mecone, Prometheus, with a ready heart, divided up a great ox and set it before them, trying to deceive the mind of Zeus. For the men he laid out the flesh and the innards rich with fat inside the hide, covering them with the ox's stomach. For Zeus he arranged the ox's white bones with crafty skill and laid them out, covering them with gleaming fat. Then the father of men and gods said to him: "Son of Iapetus, most glorious of all lords, my good friend, how unfairly you have divided the portions!" So spoke Zeus, mocking him, Zeus whose counsels never fail. And Prometheus of the crooked counsel answered him with a quiet smile, not forgetting his crafty skill:[29]

28 Prometheus and Epimetheus mean roughly "Forethought" and "Afterthought."
29 Mecone was later identified with Sicyon, near Corinth. The story explains why men burn the bones wrapped in fat for the gods and keep the meat for themselves.

548 "Zeus, most glorious, greatest of the gods who live forever, take whichever of these the heart in your breast bids you." So he spoke, plotting deceit. But Zeus, whose counsels never fail, recognized the trick and was not fooled, and in his heart he foresaw evils for mortal men, evils that were to come true. With both hands he lifted the white fat, and he grew angry in his mind, and wrath came over his heart, when he saw the ox's white bones arranged with crafty skill. Ever since then, the tribes of men on earth burn white bones for the immortals on fragrant altars. Deeply vexed, Zeus the cloud-gatherer said to him:

559 "Son of Iapetus, you who know counsels beyond all others, my good friend, so you have not forgotten your crafty skill yet!" So spoke Zeus in anger, Zeus whose counsels never fail. From then on, always remembering the trick, he would not give the strength of tireless fire to the ash-tree race, the mortal men who live on the earth. But the good son of Iapetus outwitted him: he stole the far-seen gleam of tireless fire in a hollow fennel stalk. It stung Zeus who thunders on high deep in his heart, and angered his dear heart, when he saw among men the far-seen gleam of fire.[30]

THE FIRST WOMAN

Zeus has the first woman made as a beautiful evil for men; from her comes the race of women.

570 At once, in exchange for fire, he made an evil thing for men. The famous lame god molded out of earth the likeness of a modest maiden, by the plans of the son of Cronus. Gray-eyed Athena girded her and adorned her with silvery clothing, and with her hands draped an embroidered veil down from her head, a wonder to see. [Around her head Pallas Athena set lovely garlands, flowers of the fresh-blooming meadow.] Around her head she set a golden crown, which the famous lame god had made himself,

30 "The ash-tree race" probably reflects a tradition that humankind sprang from ash trees.

working it with his hands to please father Zeus.[31] 581 On it were worked many intricate designs, a wonder to see: beasts, of all the many kinds the land and the sea nourish. He put many of them on it—and great charm shone from it—marvelous things, like living creatures with voices. When he had made the beautiful evil in exchange for a good, he led her out to where the other gods and men were, delighting in the finery the gray-eyed daughter of a mighty father had given her. Wonder seized the immortal gods and mortal men when they saw the sheer trick, against which men are helpless.

590 For from her comes the race of women, the female sex; [for from her comes the deadly race, the tribes of women,] a great woe to mortals. They live with men as partners not in cursed poverty but in plenty. As when, in roofed hives, the bees feed the drones, partners in evil works—the bees hurry about all day long until the sun goes down, every day, and build the white combs, while the drones stay inside the roofed hives and reap the toil of others into their own bellies—in just the same way Zeus who thunders on high made women an evil for mortal men, partners in troublesome works. And he gave a second evil in exchange for a good: 603 whoever flees marriage and the troublesome works of women and refuses to marry comes to cursed old age with no one to care for him. He does not lack a livelihood while he lives, but when he dies, distant kin divide up his property. As for the man whose lot is marriage, if he has a good wife, sound of mind, then all his life evil vies steadily with good. But whoever gets the ruinous kind lives with ceaseless pain in his breast, in his spirit and his heart, and the evil is past cure. So it is not possible to deceive the mind of Zeus or get around it. Not even the son of Iapetus, kindly Prometheus, escaped his heavy wrath; clever as he is, a great bond holds him down by force.

31 Hesiod does not name her here; in *Works and Days* the first woman is called Pandora.

THE WAR WITH THE TITANS

The Hundred-Handers are freed to fight for Zeus; his thunderbolts set the world ablaze; the Titans are hurled below.

617 When their father first grew angry in his heart with Briareus, Cottus, and Gyes, he bound them in a mighty bond, resenting their overbearing strength, their looks, and their size, and he settled them beneath the wide-wayed earth. There they lived beneath the earth in pain, sitting at the edge, at the ends of the great earth, grieving long, with great sorrow in their hearts. But the son of Cronus and the other immortal gods, whom lovely-haired Rhea bore in love with Cronus, brought them up again into the light on the advice of Earth. For she had told them everything from beginning to end: that with these three they would win victory and splendid glory.[32] 629 For a long time they had been fighting, in heart-wearying toil, the Titan gods and all who were born of Cronus, facing each other in mighty combats: the proud Titans from high Othrys, and from Olympus the gods, givers of good things, whom lovely-haired Rhea bore, bedded with Cronus. With heart-wearying anger against each other they had been fighting without pause for ten full years. There was no release from the bitter strife, no end for either side, and the outcome of the war hung evenly. But when these three were provided with all they needed, nectar and ambrosia, which the gods themselves eat, the proud spirit swelled in all their breasts. When they had tasted nectar and lovely ambrosia, the father of men and gods spoke among them:[33]

644 "Hear me, glorious children of Earth and Sky, so that I may say what the heart in my breast bids me. For a very long time now, day after day, we have been fighting each other for victory and power, the Titan gods and all of us born of Cronus. Now you must show your great strength and your invincible hands

32 Their father is Sky, who had imprisoned his children inside the earth; these three are the Hundred-Handers.

33 Othrys is a mountain in Thessaly, facing Olympus across the plain.

against the Titans in grim battle. Remember our kind friendship, and all you suffered before you came back into the light, out of your cruel bondage beneath the misty gloom, through our counsels." So he spoke, and noble Cottus answered him in turn: "Divine one, you tell us nothing we do not know. We know ourselves that your mind and your understanding surpass all others, and that you have been the immortals' defender against chill destruction.

658 Through your shrewdness we have come back again from the misty gloom, out of our relentless bonds, lord son of Cronus —a thing we never hoped for. So now, with steadfast mind and prudent purpose, we will defend your power in the dreadful fray, fighting the Titans in mighty combats." So he spoke, and the gods, givers of good things, approved when they heard his words. Their hearts longed for war still more than before, and they all stirred up battle, a battle no one could envy, on that day, female and male alike: the Titan gods and all who were born of Cronus, and those whom Zeus had brought up into the light from Erebus beneath the earth, terrible and mighty, with overbearing strength.

671 A hundred arms shot out from the shoulders of all of them alike, and each had fifty heads growing from his shoulders above his sturdy limbs. These now took their stand against the Titans in grim battle, holding huge rocks in their sturdy hands. On the other side the Titans eagerly strengthened their ranks, and both sides together showed what their hands and their strength could do. The boundless sea roared terribly all around, the earth crashed loudly, the wide sky groaned as it shook, and high Olympus was shaken from its foundations by the onrush of the immortals. The heavy quaking reached misty Tartarus, and so did the shrill din of feet in the unspeakable charge, and of the mighty missiles. So they hurled their grievous shafts at one another. 685 The voices of both sides reached the starry sky as they shouted to each other, and they came together with a great war cry. Then Zeus no longer held back his might. At once his heart was filled with fury, and he showed all his strength. From

the sky and from Olympus he came striding, hurling lightning without pause. The thunderbolts flew thick and fast from his sturdy hand, with thunder and lightning together, whirling holy flame. All around, the life-giving earth roared as it burned, and the vast forest crackled loudly in the fire on every side.

695 The whole earth was boiling, and the streams of Ocean, and the barren sea. Hot blasts engulfed the earthborn Titans, flame beyond telling reached the bright upper air, and the flashing glare of thunderbolt and lightning blinded their eyes, mighty as they were. Unearthly heat took hold of Chaos. To see it with the eyes and hear the sound with the ears, it seemed exactly as if Earth and wide Sky above were coming together. Such a crash would rise if she were being crushed and he were crashing down on her from on high: so great a crash arose as the gods clashed in strife. 706 With it the winds roared, stirring up quaking and dust, thunder and lightning and the blazing thunderbolt, the shafts of great Zeus, and they carried the shouting and the war cries into the midst of both sides. An unbearable din arose from the dreadful strife, and mighty deeds were displayed. Then the battle turned; but until then they had pressed on each other and fought steadily in mighty combats. Among the foremost, Cottus, Briareus, and Gyes, insatiable for war, stirred up bitter battle. They hurled three hundred rocks from their sturdy hands, one after another, overshadowing the Titans with their missiles. They sent them down beneath the wide-wayed earth and bound them in painful bonds, having conquered them with their hands, overweening as they were,

TARTARUS

The Titans' prison; the houses of Night, Sleep and Death; the hound of Hades; the waters of Styx.

720 as far beneath the earth as the sky is above the earth, for that is how far it is from the earth to murky Tartarus. A bronze anvil falling from the sky for nine nights and days would reach the earth on the tenth; and a bronze anvil falling from the earth for

nine nights and days would reach Tartarus on the tenth. Around it runs a fence of bronze, and night is poured around its neck in three layers, while above it grow the roots of the earth and of the barren sea. There the Titan gods are hidden under murky gloom, by the counsels of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, in a dank place at the farthest ends of the huge earth. 732 There is no way out for them. Poseidon set doors of bronze on it, and a wall runs around it on every side. There Gyes and Cottus and great-hearted Obriareus live, the trusty guards of Zeus who holds the aegis. And there, one after another, are the sources and the ends of all things: of the dark earth and murky Tartarus, of the barren sea and the starry sky. They are grim and dank, and even the gods abhor them. It is a great chasm: once inside the gates, no one would reach its floor in the whole course of a year, but grim gust after gust would carry him this way and that. This is a fearful wonder even to the immortal gods. And there stands the fearful house of gloomy Night, wrapped in dark clouds.

746 In front of it the son of Iapetus stands holding up the wide sky on his head and tireless arms, unmoving, where Night and Day come close and greet each other as they cross the great bronze threshold. One is about to go down inside as the other goes out through the door, and the house never holds them both within. Always one of them is outside the house, traveling over the earth, while the other stays inside and waits until the hour of her own journey comes. One brings far-seeing light to those on earth; the other, deadly Night, wrapped in misty cloud, carries in her arms Sleep, the brother of Death.[34]

758 There the children of dark Night have their homes, Sleep and Death, fearful gods. The shining Sun never looks on them with his rays, either as he climbs into the sky or as he comes down from the sky. One of them roams the earth and the broad back of the sea, quiet and gentle to men. But the other has a heart of iron, and the spirit in his breast is bronze and pitiless: whatever man he catches first, he keeps. He is hateful even to the immortal gods.

34 The son of Iapetus is Atlas.

767 There, in front, stand the echoing halls of the god below, mighty Hades, and of dread Persephone. A fearful dog keeps guard before them, pitiless, and he has an evil trick: those who go in he fawns on with his tail and both his ears alike, but he does not let them go out again; he lies in wait and devours whoever he catches going out through the gates. [of mighty Hades and dread Persephone.] There lives a goddess hateful to the immortals, fearful Styx, eldest daughter of Ocean, who flows back into himself. She lives apart from the gods in a famous house roofed with great rocks, propped on every side to the sky by silver pillars.

780 Seldom does the daughter of Thaumas, swift-footed Iris, go with a message over the broad back of the sea. But whenever strife and quarrel arise among the immortals, and one of those who have homes on Olympus tells a lie, Zeus sends Iris to bring from far off, in a golden jug, the great oath of the gods: the famous water, cold, that trickles down from a high, sheer rock. Far beneath the wide-pathed earth it flows out of the holy river through the black night, a branch of Ocean, and a tenth part is allotted to it. Nine parts coil around the earth and the broad back of the sea in silver eddies and fall into the brine; this one part flows out from the rock, a great bane to the gods. 793 Whoever of the immortals who hold the peak of snowy Olympus pours a libation of it and swears falsely lies breathless for a full year. He never comes near ambrosia and nectar to eat, but lies without breath and without voice on a spread bed, and an evil stupor covers him. And when he has come to the end of his sickness after a long year, another ordeal, harder still, follows on the first. For nine years he is cut off from the gods who live forever, and he never joins their councils or their feasts for nine full years; in the tenth he joins again the gatherings of the immortals who have homes on Olympus. Such is the oath the gods made of the imperishable, primeval water of Styx, which it sends out through a rugged land.

807 And there, one after another, are the sources and the ends of all things: of the dark earth and murky Tartarus, of the barren

sea and the starry sky. They are grim and dank, and even the gods abhor them. There are gates of marble and a bronze threshold, unshakable, fixed on unending roots, grown of itself. And in front of it, outside all the gods, beyond gloomy Chaos, live the Titans. But the famous allies of loud-crashing Zeus, Cottus and Gyes, live in houses on the foundations of Ocean. Briareus, though, because he was brave, the deep-thundering Earth-shaker made his son-in-law, and gave him his own daughter Cymopolea to marry.

TYPHOEUS

Earth's last and most terrible son challenges Zeus and is blasted by his thunder.

820 But when Zeus had driven the Titans out of the sky, huge Earth bore her youngest child, Typhoeus, after joining in love with Tartarus, through golden Aphrodite. His hands have strength for deeds, and the mighty god's feet are tireless. From his shoulders grew a hundred heads of a snake, a fearful serpent, flickering with dark tongues. From the eyes in his monstrous heads fire flashed under the brows, and from all his heads fire burned as he glared. 829 And in all his fearful heads were voices that sent out every kind of sound, beyond telling. At times they spoke so that the gods understood; at times they had the voice of a loud-bellowing bull, proud and unstoppable in its fury; at times of a lion with a ruthless heart; at times they sounded like whelps, a wonder to hear; and at times he hissed, and the high mountains echoed beneath. And a thing past help would have happened on that day, and he would have become lord of mortals and immortals, if the father of men and gods had not been quick to see it. He thundered hard and mightily, and all around him the earth rang terribly, and the wide sky above, and the sea and the streams of Ocean and the depths of Tartarus in the earth. 842 Great Olympus quaked under the immortal feet of the lord as he rose, and the earth groaned in answer. Heat from both of them gripped the violet sea, from the thunder and the

lightning, from the fire of the monster, from the scorching storm winds and the blazing thunderbolt. The whole earth was boiling, and the sky and the sea. Long waves raged around the headlands, all about, under the onrush of the immortals, and an endless quaking arose. Hades trembled, who rules over the dead below, and the Titans under Tartarus who are with Cronus, at the endless din and the dreadful fighting. When Zeus had raised his fury to its height and taken up his weapons, the thunder and the lightning and the blazing thunderbolt, he leaped from Olympus and struck, and he scorched all the uncanny heads of the fearful monster, all around. 857 And when he had beaten him down, lashing him with blows, the monster fell, crippled, and huge Earth groaned. Flame shot out from that thunderstruck lord in the dark, rugged glens of the mountain where he was struck. Much of the huge earth was burning with an unspeakable blast of heat, and it was melting, as tin melts when it is heated by the skill of young men in well-bored crucibles, or as iron, which is the strongest of things, melts in the holy earth under the hands of Hephaestus when it is subdued by blazing fire in mountain glens. Just so the earth was melting in the glare of the blazing fire. And he flung him, angry at heart, into wide Tartarus.

869 From Typhoeus comes the wet force of the blowing winds, except Notus and Boreas and Zephyrus who clears the sky; these are of the gods' race, a great blessing to mortals. The others blow at random over the sea. They fall on the misty sea, a great bane to mortals, and rage in evil squalls. They blow now one way, now another, scattering ships and destroying sailors; and there is no defense against that harm for men who meet them on the sea. Over the boundless, flowering earth too they destroy the lovely works of men born on the ground, filling them with dust and grim uproar.[35]

35 Notus, Boreas and Zephyrus are the south, north and west winds.

THE REIGN OF ZEUS

Zeus becomes king; he swallows Metis and marries Themis, Hera and others; Athena is born from his head.

881 But when the blessed gods had finished their toil and settled by force the dispute over honors with the Titans, then on Earth's advice they urged wide-seeing Olympian Zeus to be king and lord of the immortals, and he divided their honors among them. Zeus, king of the gods, made Metis his first wife, she who knew most among gods and mortal men. But when she was about to give birth to the goddess gray-eyed Athena, he tricked her mind with guile and wheedling words and put her away in his belly, on the advice of Earth and starry Sky. This is what they advised him, so that no other of the gods who live forever should hold the kingly honor in place of Zeus.

894 For it was fated that children of great wisdom would be born from her: first a girl, gray-eyed Tritogeneia, equal to her father in strength and wise counsel; and after her she was to bear a son, king of gods and men, with an overbearing heart. But Zeus put her away in his belly before that, so that the goddess might advise him of good and evil. Second, he married shining Themis, who bore the Seasons, Good Order and Justice and flourishing Peace, who watch over the works of mortal men; and the Fates, to whom Zeus the wise counselor gave the greatest honor, Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give mortal men good and evil to have.[36]

907 And Eurynome, a daughter of Ocean, lovely in form, bore him three fair-cheeked Graces, Aglaea and Euphrosyne and lovely Thalia. From their eyelids, as they look, flows desire that loosens the limbs, and beautiful is their glance beneath their brows. Then he went to the bed of Demeter, who feeds many, and she bore white-armed Persephone, whom Aidoneus snatched away from her mother; and Zeus the wise counselor gave her to him. Next he fell in love with Mnemosyne of the

36 Tritogeneia, "Trito-born," is a title of Athena of uncertain meaning.

lovely hair, and from her were born to him the nine Muses with golden headbands, who delight in feasts and the pleasure of song.[37]

[918] And Leto, joined in love with Zeus who holds the aegis, bore Apollo and Artemis the archer, children lovelier than all the heavenly gods. Last of all he made Hera his blooming wife, and she bore Hebe and Ares and Eileithyia, joined in love with the king of gods and men. He himself, from his head, bore gray-eyed Tritogeneia, the fearful rouser of battle din, leader of armies, the Unwearied One, the lady who delights in din and wars and battles. And Hera, without joining in love, bore famous Hephaestus, who excels all the heavenly gods in craft; for she was furious and quarreling with her husband.[38]

ANOTHER VERSION

An alternative account of the births of Hephaestus and Athena, quoted by the physician Galen.

[929a] And Hera was furious and quarreled with her husband. Out of this quarrel she bore a glorious son, Hephaestus, without love with Zeus who holds the aegis, who excels all the heavenly gods in skill of hand. But he lay, apart from Hera, with the fair-cheeked daughter of Ocean and Tethys of the lovely hair, … deceiving Metis, for all her many wiles. He seized her in his hands and put her away in his belly, afraid that she might bear something else stronger than the thunderbolt.[39] [929j] That is why the high-throned son of Cronus, who dwells in the aether, swallowed her suddenly. But she had at once conceived Pallas Athena, and the father of men and gods bore her from the crown of his head, by the banks of the river Trito. And Metis, Athena's mother, contriver of just things, who knew most among gods and mortal men, stayed hidden beneath the inward parts of

37 Aidoneus is a form of the name Hades.
38 Eileithyia is the goddess of childbirth.
39 Lines 929a–t, an alternative account of these births, survive in a quotation by the physician Galen; the text has a gap.

Zeus. There the goddess received that by which she excelled all the immortals who have homes on Olympus in skill of hand, [having made the aegis, Athena's army-scattering armor;] with it he bore her, dressed in the armor of war.

OTHER UNIONS OF GODS

Other divine births and marriages, from Triton to Heracles' marriage with Hebe and the birth of Medea.

930 From Amphitrite and the loud-thundering Earth-shaker was born great Triton, wide in strength, who holds the floor of the sea and lives in a golden house beside his dear mother and his lord father, a fearful god. And to Ares, piercer of shields, Cytherea bore Phobos and Deimos, fearful ones, who throw the close ranks of men into confusion in chilling war, together with Ares sacker of cities; and Harmonia, whom high-spirited Cadmus made his wife. And to Zeus, Maia, daughter of Atlas, bore glorious Hermes, herald of the immortals, going up into his holy bed. And Cadmus' daughter Semele, joined in love with him, bore him a glorious son, Dionysus of many joys, an immortal born of a mortal; and now both of them are gods. And Alcmene bore mighty Heracles, joined in love with Zeus the cloud-gatherer.[40]

945 And Hephaestus, the famous lame god, made Aglaea, the youngest of the Graces, his blooming wife. And golden-haired Dionysus made fair-haired Ariadne, daughter of Minos, his blooming wife, and the son of Cronus made her deathless and ageless for him. And the valiant son of fair-ankled Alcmene, mighty Heracles, when he had finished his groaning labors, made Hebe, child of great Zeus and golden-sandaled Hera, his respected wife on snowy Olympus. Happy man, who has accomplished a great work among the immortals and lives unharmed and ageless all his days! And to the tireless Sun the famous daughter of Ocean, Perseis, bore Circe and King Aeetes. And Aeetes, son of the Sun who brings light to mortals, by the will of

40 Phobos and Deimos mean "Rout" and "Terror."

the gods married fair-cheeked Idyia, daughter of Ocean, the perfect river. And she, subdued in love through golden Aphrodite, bore him fair-ankled Medea.

GODDESSES AND MORTAL MEN

Goddesses who bore children to mortal men, among them Demeter, Dawn, Thetis, Aphrodite, Circe and Calypso.

963 Farewell now, you who have homes on Olympus, and you islands and continents and the salt sea within. And now, sweet-voiced Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus who holds the aegis, sing of the tribe of goddesses: all the immortal goddesses who lay with mortal men and bore children like the gods. Demeter, bright among goddesses, joined in sweet love with the hero Iasion in a thrice-plowed fallow field in the rich land of Crete, bore Plutus, a kindly god, who goes everywhere over the earth and the broad back of the sea. Whoever meets him, whoever he comes into the hands of, that man he makes rich, and grants him great prosperity.[41]

975 And to Cadmus, Harmonia, daughter of golden Aphrodite, bore Ino and Semele and fair-cheeked Agave, and Autonoe, whom long-haired Aristaeus married, and Polydorus, in well-crowned Thebes. And a daughter of Ocean, Callirhoe, joined in the love of golden Aphrodite with strong-hearted Chrysaor, bore a son, the strongest of all mortals, Geryon, whom mighty Heracles killed for the sake of his shambling cattle on sea-girt Erytheia. And to Tithonus, Dawn bore bronze-helmeted Memnon, king of the Ethiopians, and lord Emathion. And to Cephalus she bore a glorious son, mighty Phaethon, a man like the gods. While he was young and had the tender flower of glorious youth, a child with a child's thoughts, laughter-loving Aphrodite snatched him up and carried him off, and made him the keeper of her holy temples by night, a divine spirit.

992 And the daughter of Aeetes, the king nurtured by Zeus, was led away from Aeetes by the son of Aeson, by the will of the gods

41 Plutus (Ploutos) means "Wealth."

who live forever, when he had finished the many groaning labors that the great king laid on him: overweening Pelias, insolent and reckless, a doer of violence. When he had finished them, after much toil, the son of Aeson came to Iolcus, bringing the bright-eyed girl on his swift ship, and made her his blooming wife. And she, subdued by Jason, shepherd of the people, bore a son, Medeus, whom Chiron, son of Philyra, reared in the mountains; and the purpose of great Zeus was fulfilled. And of the daughters of Nereus, the old man of the sea, Psamathe, bright among goddesses, bore Phocus in love with Aeacus, through golden Aphrodite; and the goddess Thetis of the silver feet, subdued by Peleus, bore Achilles, breaker of men, with the heart of a lion.[42]

1008 And Cytherea of the lovely crown bore Aeneas, joined in sweet love with the hero Anchises on the peaks of Ida, with its many folds and woods. And Circe, daughter of the Sun, son of Hyperion, joined in love with Odysseus of the enduring heart, bore Agrius and Latinus, blameless and strong; [and she bore Telegonus through golden Aphrodite.] Far away, in the inmost recess of the holy islands, they ruled over all the famous Tyrrhenians. And Calypso, bright among goddesses, joined in sweet love with Odysseus, bore him Nausithous and Nausinous. These are the immortal goddesses who lay with mortal men and bore children like the gods. And now, sweet-voiced Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus who holds the aegis, sing of the tribe of women.[43]

42 The daughter of Aeetes is Medea, whom Jason, son of Aeson, brought back with the Golden Fleece.

43 The Tyrrhenians are the Etruscans of Italy.