

HESIOD'S THEOGONY

Translated by Christopher Kelk

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From the Heliconian Muses let me sing:

They dance on soft feet round the deep-blue spring

And shrine of Cronus' mighty son upon

The great and holy mount of Helicon.

They wash their tender frames in Permessos

Or Horses' Spring or holy Olmeios

And then display their fair terpsichory

On that high mountain, moving vigorously;

They wander through the night, all veiled about

With heavy mist and lovely songs sing out 10

To Zeus, the aegis-bearer, lavishing hymns,

And her whose golden sandals grace her limbs,

Hera, the queen of Argos, and grey-eyed

Athena, Phoebus and her who casts side-

Long glances, Aphrodite, Artemis, too,

The archeress, and Lord Poseidon who

Both holds and shakes the earth, Themis the blest

And Hebe, too, who wears a golden crest,

And fair Dione, Leto, Iapetos

And crafty Cronos, Eos, Helios 20

The mighty, bright Selene, Oceanos, Ge,

Black Night and each sacred divinity

That lives forever. Hesiod was taught

By them to sing adeptly as he brought

His sheep to pasture underneath the gaze

Of Helicon, and in those early days

Those daughters of Lord Zeus proclaimed to me:

“You who tend sheep, full of iniquity,

Mere wretched bellies, we know how to tell

False things that yet seem true, but we know well 30

How to speak truth at will.” Thus fluidly

Spoke Zeus’s daughters. Then they gave to me

A sturdy laurel shoot, plucked from the ground,

A wondrous thing, and breathed a sacred sound

Into my throat that I may eulogize

The past and future, and to lionize

The blessed gods they bade me, but to praise

Themselves both first and last. Why do I raise,

However, such a topic? Let me start

With the Muses, who enliven the great heart 40

Of Zeus on Mt. Olympus as they sing

Of present, past and future, warbling

With one accord. Unwearied, all around

The house their lips emit the sweetest sound,

And thundering Zeus laughs loud in ecstasy

To listen to the dainty quality

Of sound that spreads abroad. Their voices ring

Round Olympus’ snowy peaks while echoing

Through the immortals’ homes. They glorify,

With their undying voice, the gods on high - 50

Those whom both Earth and Heaven have created

And those who followed them and have donated

Good things to all, and then of Zeus they sing,

The father of all gods and men, telling

How excellent he is, reigning supreme

Among the gods, then taking up the theme

Of man and mighty giants, gladdening

Again the heart of Lord Zeus as they sing.

Then in Pieria Mnemosyne,

Who in Eleuthera maintains sovereignty 60

Among the hills, coupled with Zeus and bore

Forgetfulness of ills forevermore

And rest from sorrow. For nine nights she lay

With wise Zeus in his holy bed, away

From all the gods. After a year went past,

The seasons rolling by, she bore at last

Nine daughters, all of one accord, and they

Were set on singing, free from all dismay,

Near snowy Olympus' peak, where stand, right there,

Bright dancing-places and fine dwellings where 70

The Graces and Desire dwelt quite free

Of care while singing songs delightfully

Of the gods' laws and all the goodly ways

Of the immortals. Offering up their praise

They then went to Olympus, revelling

In their mellifluous tones and uttering

Their heavenly song. The black earth echoed round

And underneath their feet a lovely sound

Rose up. They to their father made their way,

With lightning and with thunder holding sway 80

In heaven, once Cronus he'd subjugated

As to the immortals he disseminated

Their rights. Lord Zeus begat this company

Of Muses, Thalia, Melpomene,

Clio, Euterpe and Terpsichory,

And Polyhymnia, Calliope,

Urania, Erato: but the best

Of all of them, deferred to by the rest

Of all the Muses is Calliope

Because the kings blest by divinity 90

She serves. Each god-nursed king whom they adore,

Beholding him at birth, for him they pour

Sweet dew upon his tongue that there may flow

Kind words from him; thus all the people go

To see him arbitrate successfully

Their undertakings and unswervingly

End weighty arguments: thus are there found

Wise kings who in crisis turn around

The problem in assembly easily,

Employing gentle words persuasively, 100

And he stood out among them. Thus were they

A holy gift to me, for to this day

Through them and archer Phoebus here on earth

Men sing and play the lyre, but the birth

Of kings comes from Lord Zeus. Happy are those

Loved by the Muses, for sweet speaking flows

Out of their mouths. One in a sudden plight

May live in sorrow, trembling with fright

And sick at heart, but singers, ministering

To the Muses, of their ancestors will sing 110

And all the deeds that they've performed so well,

And all the gods who in Olympus dwell:

At once they then forget their heaviness –

Such is the precious gift of each goddess.

Hail, Zeus's progeny, and give to me

A pleasing song and laud the company

Of the immortal gods, and those created

In earthly regions and those generated

In Heaven and Night and in the briny sea.

Tell how the gods and Earth first came to be, 120

The streams, the swelling sea and up on high

The gleaming stars, broad Heaven in the sky,

The gods they spawned, providing generously

Good things, dividing their prosperity

And sharing all their honours, and how they

To many-valed Olympus found their way.

Therefore, Olympian Muses, tell to me,

From the beginning, how each came to be.

First Chaos came, then wide Earth, ever-sound

Foundations of the gods who on snow-bound 130

Olympus dwell, then, swathed in murkiness

Beneath the wide-pathed Earth, came Tartarus,

Then Eros, fairest of the deathless ones,

Who weakens all the gods and men and stuns

Their prudent judgment. Chaos then created

Erebus; black Night was born, and then she mated

With Erebus and spawned Aether and Day;

Then Earth, so that on every side she may

Be covered, first bore Heaven, who was replete

With stars, providing thus a permanent seat 140

For all the gods, as large as Earth; then she

Engendered lengthy mountains which would be

Delightful haunts for all the Nymphs, who dwell

Among their glens; then, with its raging swell,

She bore the barren sea, no union

Of love involved, although she later on

Mingled with Heaven, and Oceanus,

Deep-swirling, was created, and Coeus

And Crius and Hyperion she bore,

And Iapetus and Theia, furthermore, 150
And Rheia, Themis and Mnemosyne,
And her who wore a golden crown, Phoebe,
And lovely Tethys, and the youngest one,
The wily Cronus, such a dreadful son
To lusty Heaven, the vilest of all these
Divinities. She bore the Cyclopes –
Brontes, who gave the thunderbolt to Zeus,
And Steropes, who also for his use
Gave lightning, and Arges, so strong of heart.
The only thing that made them stand apart 160
From all the other gods was one sole eye
That stood upon their foreheads: that is why
We call them Cyclopes. Both skilfulness
And mighty strength did all of them possess.
There were three other children, odious
Though spirited – Cottus, Briareus
And Gyges, all full of effrontery:
Even to be in their vicinity
Was dangerous – of arms they had five score,
Sprung from their shoulders ; fifty heads, what's more, 170
They had on brawny limbs; none could suppress
Their perseverance or their mightiness.
They were the foulest of the progeny
Of Earth and Heaven and earned the enmity
Of their own father, for, as soon as they
Were given birth, he hid them all away
Deep in the earth's recesses, far from the light,
And in his evil deeds took great delight.
But vast Earth groaned aloud in her distress

And so devised a piece of cleverness, 180

An evil ruse: a mass of flint she made

And of it shaped a sickle, then relayed

Her scheme to all her brood in consolation,

Although her heart was sore with indignation.

“Children, your father’s sinful, so hear me,”

She said, “that he might pay the penalty.”

They stood in silent fear at what she’d said,

But wily Cronus put aside his dread

And answered, “I will do what must be done,

Mother. I don’t respect The Evil One.” 190

At what he said vast Earth was glad at heart

And in an ambush set her child apart

And told him everything she had in mind.

Great Heaven brought the night and, since he pined

To couple, lay with Earth. Cronus revealed

Himself from where he had been well concealed,

Stretched out one hand and with the other gripped

The great, big, jagged sickle and then ripped

His father’s genitals off immediately

And cast them down, nor did they fruitlessly 200

Descend behind him, because Earth conceived

The Furies and the Giants, who all wore

Bright-gleaming armour, and long spears they bore,

And the Nymphs, called Meliae by everyone;

And when the flinty sickle’s work was done,

Then Cronus cast into the surging sea

His father’s genitals which were to be

Borne long upon the waves, and there was spread

White foam from the timeless flesh: from it was bred 210

A maid: holy Cythera first she neared,
Then came to sea-girt Cyprus. A revered
And lovely goddess she became. Grass grew
Beneath her feet, and men and gods all knew
Her then as Aphrodite, Nursed Around
The Foam Upon The Sea, and richly-crowned
Cytherea, which she'd reached. She's known as well,
Because she first saw light amid the swell
Of Cyprian shores, The Cyprian. One more name
She's known by, since from genitals she came, 220
Is Philommedes, Genial-Loving One.
Love and Desire formed a union
With her the moment she was born: all three
Of them then went to join the company
Of all the gods. This honour she attained
From the beginning and this share she gained
Among both men and gods – the whispering
Of maids who are in love, their giggling,
Sweet loving, gentleness and trickery
In love affairs. Great Heaven's progeny 230
He labelled Titans for they used huge strain
To do a dreadful deed, and so the pain
Of punishment would follow. Night gave breath
To hateful Doom, black Destiny and Death
And Sleep and Dreams, and after that, although
She lay with none, Disgrace and painful Woe,
And, even later, the Hesperides,
Who guard the rich, gold apples and the trees
Beyond the glorious Ocean; subsequently
The Fates who doom all mortals' destiny, 240

Clotho and Atropos and Lachesis,
Who fix from birth where a man may go amiss
And where be virtuous; the sinfulness
Of men and gods they dog and won't suppress
Their dreadful rage until they all impose
An agonizing penalty on those
Who go astray; and then did deadly Night
Give birth to Nemesis, who is a blight
To mortals, then Deceit and Amity
And hateful Age and harsh Disharmony. 250
Foul Strife bore toilsome Pain, Forgetfulness
And Famine and tear-stained Unhappiness,
Fights, Battles, Murders, Slaughter, Bickering,
The Telling of Untruths and Arguing,
Crime, Ruin, intimates all, and Oath, a pain
To those who falsely swear. The watery Main
Begot Nereus, who never tells a lie,
The oldest of his progeny, known by
The name of Old Man, since he's virtuous
And kind and keeps the laws of righteousness 260
And thinks good thoughts. Once more he lay with Earth
And she to mighty Thaumas then gave birth
And haughty Phorcys and the fair-cheeked maid
Ceto and her whose heart had been inlaid
With flint, Eurybia – all wondrously fair,
Ploto, Sao, Amphitrite, Entrante,
Galene, Thetis, Eudora, Glauce, 270
Fair Halie, Cymothoe. Speo,
Pasishea, Theo and Erato,
Eulimene and gracious Melite

And Doto, Proto, pink-armed Eunice,
Nisaea, Pherusa, Dynamene,
Actaea, Doris, fair Hippothoe,
Panopea, pink-armed Hipponoe,
Fair Galatea and Cymodoce
(With Amphitrite and Cymatolege
She calmed with ease the storms and misty sea), 280
Protomedea, Cymo, Eione,
Rich-crowned Alimede and Glauconome,
Laugh-loving, Pontoporea, Leagore,
Laomedea and Polynoe,
Autonoe and perfect Euarne,
Divine Menippe and fair Psamathe,
Neso, Themisto, Eupompe, Pronoe
And Nemertes, who had the qualities
Of her deathless father. All fifty of these 290
Sprang from fine Nereus, who was talented
In splendid specialties. And Thaumias wed
Electra, fathomless Ocean's progeny
Who bore Iris who moves so rapidly
And the well-tressed Harpies, Aello,
Ocypetes, who on swift pinions go
With raging winds and flocks of birds on high.
Ceto bore Phorcys the fair-cheeked Graiae,
Called thus by everyone who walks on earth
And all the deathless gods, grey from their birth, 300
Well-clad Pemphredo, Enyo, who is dressed
In saffron and the Gorgons in the west
Beyond famed Ocean in the far frontier
Towards Night, where the Hesperides sing out clear

And liquid songs, Sthenno and Euryale
And her who bore a woeful destiny,
Medusa (she was mortal, but Sthenno
And Euryale were not and did not grow
In age) and then the dark-haired god of the sea,
Amid spring flowers and in a pleasant lea, 310
Lay with her. When Perseus cut off her head,
Great Chrysaor and Pegasus were bred
From her dead body, Pegasus called thus
Since he was born near the springs of Oceanus,
Chrysaor since at the moment of his birth
He held a gold sword. Pegasus left the earth,
The mother of all flocks, and flew away
Up to the deathless gods, where he would stay:
He brought to prudent Zeus his weaponry,
Thunder and lightning. To Callirrhoe, 320
Begot by glorious Ocean, Chrysaor
Was joined in love, and Calirrhoe bore
The creature with three heads, Geryones,
But in sea-girt Erythea, Heracles
Slew him among his oxen on that day
He drove *his* wide-browed oxen on the way
To holy Tiryns, after he had gone
Across the sea and slain Eurytion
The herdsman in an inky-black homestead
And Orthus. She then bore a monster, dread 330
And powerful, in a hollow cave: and it
Looked like no god or man, no, not a whit,
And fierce Echidna, who, with flashing eyes
And prepossessing cheeks, displays the guise

Of a nymph – well, that was half of her at least,
The other half a snake, a massive beast,
Whose skin was speckled: it was frightening.
Beneath the holy earth this dreadful thing
Consumed raw flesh within a cave below
A hollow rock where none would ever go, 340
Mortals or gods, though the gods had decreed
A glorious house for her, and she indeed
Dwells there as guard among the Arimi
And never ages through eternity.
The dread, outrageous, lawless Typhaon,
People have said, was joined in union
With her of the flashing eyes, and she grew round
And bore fierce offspring – first Orthos, the hound
Of Geryon, then a beast one can't defeat,
The loud-voiced Cerberus who eats raw meat, 350
The Hound of Hell, the fifty-headed one,
Strong and relentless. Still she was not done,
For then she bore the Hydra, foul and cursed,
Of Lerna, which the white-armed Hera nursed,
In anger at great Heracles, the son
Of Zeus and from the house of Amphitryon,
Who slew Echidna with the warlike aid
Of Iolaus and the forager maid
Athene, with his ruthless sword. And she
Had borne Chimaera who relentlessly 360
Breathed fire, mighty, swiftly-moving, dread
And powerful, possessing not one head
But three, in front a lion's with flashing eyes,
And then a fiery goat's, the third in the guise

Of a great snake. Noble Bellerophon
And Pegasus slew her. Orthus lay upon
Echidna, and from out her womb there grew
To adulthood the deadly Sphinx who slew
The men of Cadmus whom the goodly wife
Of Zeus brought up and caused to live his life 370
In the Nemean hills, a plague to all
Its people, proving, too, a pestilent gall
To her own tribes, and he had mastery
Over Tretus and Apesas, yet he
Was slain by Heracles. From coitus
With Phorcys Ceto bore the venomous
Serpent, the last child that she brought to birth,
Who in the gloomy cells beneath the earth
Protects the golden apples. Oceanus
Begot on Tethys Nile and Alpheus, 380
Both eddying rivers, and Eridanus,
The Strymon, the Meander, beauteous
Istrian stream, the Phasis, the Rhesus,
The silver eddies of Achelous,
The Haliacmon, the Heptaporus,
The Nessus, Rhodius, the Granicus,
The holy Simois, the Aesepus,
The Peneus, Hermus, the fair Caicus,
The great Sangarius, Parthenius,
The Ladon, Evenus, the Ardescus, 390
Divine Scamander, and a sacred race
Of daughters who received the godly grace
Of Zeus to nurture young men, with the aid
Of Phoebus and the rivers I've displayed,

Across the earth – Electra and Peitho,
Admete, Ianthe, Doris and Pymno,
Divine Urania, Hippo, Clymene,
Rhodea, Clytie, Callirrhoe,
Idyia, Pasithoe and Galaxaura,
Thoe and fair Dione and Plexaura, 400
Melobosis, fair Polydora and Thoe,
Fair Circeis, Zeuxo, Xanthe, Acaste,
Ianeira, Perseis, soft-eyed Pluto,
The fair Petraea, Metis, Menestho,
Eurynome, Europa, Telesto
The saffron-clad, the charming Calypso,
And Asia and Eudora and Tyche,
Ocyrrhoe, Amphiro – finally
The chiefest, Styx. And yet Oceanus
Had other daughters, multitudinous, 410
In fact three thousand of them, every one
Neat-ankled, spread through his dominion,
Serving alike the earth and mighty seas,
And all of them renowned divinities.
They have as many brothers, thundering
As on they flow, begotten by the king
Of seas on Tethys. Though it's hard to tell
Their names, yet they are known from where they dwell.
Hyperion lay with Theia, and she thus
Bore clear Selene and great Helius 420
And Eos shining on all things on earth
And on the gods who dwell in the wide berth
Of heaven. Eurybia bore great Astraeus
And Pallas, having mingled with Crius;

The bright goddess to Perses, too, gave birth,
Who was the wisest man on all the earth;
Eos bore the strong winds to Astraeus,
And Boreas, too, and brightening Zephyrus
And Notus, born of two divinities.
The star Eosphorus came after these, 430
Birthed by Eugeneia, 'Early-Born',
Who came to be the harbinger of Dawn,
And heaven's gleaming stars far up above.
And Ocean's daughter Styx was joined in love
To Pelias – thus trim-ankled Victory
And Zeal first saw the light of day; and she
Bore Strength and Force, both glorious children: they
Dwell in the house of Zeus; they've no pathway
Or dwelling that's without a god as guide,
And ever they continue to reside 440
With Zeus the Thunderer; thus Styx had planned
That day when Lightning Zeus sent a command
That all the gods to broad Olympus go
And said that, if they helped him overthrow
The Titans, then he vowed not to bereave
Them of their rights but they would still receive
The rights they'd had before, and, he explained,
To those who under Cronus had maintained
No rights or office he would then entrust
Those very privileges, as is just. 450
So deathless Styx, with all her progeny,
Was first to go, through the sagacity
Of her fear father, and Zeus gave her fame
With splendid gifts, and through him she became

The great oath of the gods, her progeny
Allowed to live with him eternally.
He kept his vow, continuing to reign
Over them all. Then Phoebe once again
With Coeus lay and brought forth the goddess,
Dark-gowned Leto, so full of gentleness 460
To gods always – she was indeed
The gentlest of the gods. From Coeus' seed
Phoebe brought forth Asterie, aptly named,
Whom Perseus took to his great house and claimed
As his dear wife, and she bore Hecate,
Whom Father Zeus esteemed exceedingly.
He gave her splendid gifts that she might keep
A portion of the earth and barren deep.
Even now, when a man, according to convention,
Offers great sacrifices, his intention 470
To beg good will he calls on Hecate.
He whom the goddess looks on favourably
Easily gains great honour. She bestows
Prosperity upon him. Among those
Born of both Earth and Ocean who possessed
Illustriousness she was likewise blest.
Lord Zeus, the son of Cronus, did not treat
Her grievously and neither did he cheat
Her of what those erstwhile divinities,
The Titans, gave her: all the liberties 480
They had from the beginning in the sea
And on the earth and in the heavens, she
Still holds. And since Hecate does not possess
Siblings, of honour she receives no less,

Since Zeus esteems her, nay, she gains yet more.
To those she chooses she provides great store
Of benefits. As intermediary,
She sits beside respected royalty.
In the assembly those who are preferred
By her she elevates, and when men gird 490
Themselves for deadly battle, there she'll be
To grant to those she chooses victory
And glory. She is helpful, too, when men
Contend in games, for she is present then
To see the strongest gain the victory
And win with ease the rich prize joyfully,
Ennobling his parents. She aids, too,
The horsemen she espouses and those who
Are forced to ply the grey and stormy sea
And prey to Poseidon and Queen Hecate, 500
Who grants them many fish with ease, although
She'll take them back if she should will it so.
With Hermes, too, she helps increase men's stocks –
Their droves of cows and goats and fleecy flocks.
Of few she'll cause increase; of many, though
She'll cause a dearth if she should will it so.
She is adored by the whole company
Of gods. And Zeus determined that she nursed
Young children from the moment that they first 510
Looked on the light of day. But Rhea bore
To Cronus awe-inspiring children, for
They were Demeter, Hestia and gold-shod
Hera and strong Hades, a pitiless god
Beneath the earth, and he who rules the sea

And loudly shakes the very earth and he
Who is the ruler of all gods and men,
Whose thunder stirs the spacious earth. But when
Each left the womb and reached its mother's knees,
Great Cronus gulped it down that none of these 520
Proud sons should rule on high, for he had found,
Of Earth and starry Heaven, that he was bound
To be subdued by one of them, strong though
He was, through mighty Zeus's plan, and so
He kept keen watch and ate his progeny.
Rhea was filled with endless grief, and she,
About to birth great Zeus, who would hold sway
As father of all gods and men one day,
She begged her loving parents that they might
Concoct a plan to keep her out of sight 530
While birthing her dear child, that they might see
Revenge for crafty Cronus' progeny.
They heard their darling one and acquiesced,
And what was bound to happen they impressed
Upon her. So they sent her to rich Crete,
To Lyctus, when her hour was near complete
To bear great Zeus, her youngest progeny.
Vast earth received him from her then, that she
Might rear him in broad Crete. For there indeed
She took him through the murky night with speed. 540
She placed him in her arms and then concealed
Him where earth's recesses can't be revealed,
Within a yawning cave where, all around
The mountain called Aegeum, trees abound.
But then she gave the mighty heavenly king

A massive boulder wrapped in swaddling.
The scoundrel took the thing and swallowed it,
Because he clearly did not have the wit
To know his son had been replaced and lay
Behind him, safe and sound, and soon one day 550
Would strongly crush him, making him bereft
Of all his honours, he himself then left
To rule Olympus. After that his power
And glorious limbs expanded by the hour;
The wily Cronus, as the years rolled on,
Deceived by Earth's wise words, let loose his son,
Whose arts and strength had conquered him. Then he
Disgorged the boulder he had formerly
Gulped down. In holy Pytho, far below
Parnassus' glens, Zeus set it down to show 560
The marvel to all men, and he set free
His father's brothers whose captivity
Cronus had caused in his great foolishness,
And they were grateful for his kindness,
So lightning and loud thunder they revealed
To him in recompense, which were concealed
Before by vast Earth, and he trusts in these
And rules all men and all divinities.
Iapetus wed neat-ankled Clymene,
The child of Ocean, and their progeny 570
Were mighty Atlas, fine Menoetius
And clever, treacherous Prometheus,
And mad Epimetheus, to mortality
A torment from the very first, for he
Married the maid whom Zeus had formed. But Zeus

At villainous Menoetius let loose
His lurid bolt because his vanity
And strength had gone beyond the boundary
Of moderation: down to Erebus
He went headlong. Atlas was tireless 580
In holding up wide Heaven, forced to stand
Upon the borders of this earthly land
Before the clear-voiced daughters of the West,
A task assigned at wise Zeus's behest.
Zeus bound clever Prometheus cruelly
With bonds he could not break apart, then he
Drove them into a pillar, setting there
A long-winged eagle which began to tear
His liver, which would regrow every day
So that the bird could once more take away 590
What had been there before. Heracles, the son
Of trim-ankled Clymene, was the one
Who slew that bird and from his sore distress
Released Prometheus – thus his wretchedness
Was over, and it was with Zeus's will,
Who planned that hero would be greater still
Upon the rich earth than he was before.
Lord Zeus then took these things to heart therefore;
He ceased the anger he had felt when he
Had once been matched in ingenuity 600
By Prometheus, for when several gods and men
Had wrangled at Mecone, even then
Prometheus calved a giant ox and set
A share before each one, trying to get
The better of Lord Zeus – before the rest

He set the juicy parts, fattened and dressed
With the ox's paunch, then very cunningly
For Zeus he took the white bones up, then he
Marked them with shining fat. "O how unfair,"
Spoke out the lord of gods and men, "to share 610
That way, most glorious lord and progeny
Of Iapetus." Zeus, whose sagacity
Is endless, thus rebuked him. With a smile
Prometheus, not forgetting his shrewd wile,
Said cleverly, "Take any part that you
Would have, great lord of all." But Zeus well knew
The trick and planned against humanity
Mischief: he took the white fat angrily,
Seeing the bones beneath it, and therefore
On fragrant shrines men burn bones evermore 620
For all the gods. "O son of Iapetus,"
Said Zeus, who drives the clouds, still furious,
"The cleverest of all humanity,
You've not forgotten your chicanery."
Thenceforth he brooded on that trick, and so
He would not give to mortal men below
Voracious fire. Prometheus, though, secreted
It in a fennel-stalk and thereby cheated
Lord Zeus, who burned in furious rage when he
Saw radiant fire amongst humanity. 630
At once with evil he made mortals pay
For this: a modest maid was formed of clay
By the famous Limping God at his behest.
Bright-eyed Athene made sure she was dressed
In silver garments, and down from her head

A cleverly embroidered veil she spread,
Remarkable to see; she also laid
Upon her head a golden circlet made
By the Limping God himself, a courtesy
To Zeus, and all about these trappings she 640
Placed lovely wreaths of flowers freshly grown.
On it such curious craftsmanship was shown;
For it had many creatures that were raised
On land and in the sea – they brightly blazed
As if they lived. This piece of devilry,
The price to be paid by all humanity
For blessing, he brought out and set her where
The gods and men were standing. At the glare
Of all that finery that Zeus's child,
Grey-eyed Athene, gave to her she smiled. 650
Awe took them all at the sheer trickery,
To every man a liability.
She is the source of all the female nation,
To men a trouble and a great vexation,
Who never aids them in extremities,
Only in wealth. Just as a swarm of bees
Will feed their drones who always go astray –
They lay the honeycombs day after day
Until the sun has gone down in the West,
While in their hives the drones all take their rest 660
And reap the work of others as they lay
It all inside their bellies – in this way
High-thundering Zeus gave to all mortal men
This evil thing, but he gave, yet again,
A second evil for the good they'd had:

He who won't wed since women make him sad,
When he grows old with nobody who could
Minister to him, though a livelihood
Is lacking while he lives, yet when he's gone
His kin go to his house from hither and yon 670
To carve out his belongings. And yet he
Who opts for marriage, choosing carefully
A fitting wife, will find right from the first
Good wrangling with bad, for he who's cursed
With wicked children lives with constant pain
Within his heart nor ever will regain
Relief. The will of Zeus one can't mislead
Or overstep, for even the kindly deed
Of Prometheus meant that he could not break free
Of his deep wrath, but of necessity 680
Strong fetters held him tightly, even though
He knew so many wiles. But long ago
Uranus was profoundly furious
With Gyes, Cottus and Briareus,
His sons, and shackled them most cruelly,
Jealous of their strong masculinity
And comeliness and great enormousness;
And then he made them dwell in dire distress
Beneath the earth at its periphery.
But they were brought back by the progeny 690
Of Cronus and the richly-tressed goddess
Rhea, because Earth, in a full address
To them, advised it, for she said that thus
They'd win great praise and be victorious.
There had been stubborn, painful war among

The blessed gods: indeed the strife was long
Between Othrys' noble divinities
And those who grant mortals advantages,
The Olympians; ten years would it abide
With no conclusion clinched by either side: 700

The balance of the war dubiously swayed.
But when Lord Zeus before the gods arrayed
Ambrosia and nectar, they consumed
That godly food and all at once resumed
Their manly pride. Zeus said, "Bright progeny
Of Earth and Heaven, hear what my heart bids me
To say. The Titans have been wrangling
With us so long in hope this war will bring
Them victory. Show to unyielding might
And face the Titans in this bitter fight. 710

Remember our kind counselling when we
Returned you from your dreadful misery
And cruel bondage back into the light."
Good Cottus said, "Divine one, you are right.
We know well what you say, we know as well
That you returned us from a living hell
Where we were bound in grim obscurity;
Thus we enjoyed what we'd not hoped to see.
Now fixedly we'll strive to aid you, Lord,
And be your allies in this dread discord 720

Against the Titans. Hearing what he said,
The gods applauded, for his words had fed
The spirit they had always felt for war
But now was even greater than before.
Then each god and goddess stirred up that day

Repellent war, the Titan gods and they
Of Cronus born, and those who, strong and dread,
From Erebus's gloom by Zeus were led
Up to the light, and each of those possessed
A hundred hands and fifty heads, all blessed 730
With robust limbs. The Titans then they faced
And in their mighty hands huge rocks they'd placed,
While, opposite, the Titans eagerly
Strengthened their ranks, and simultaneously
Both sides revealed their strength, and all around
The boundless sea roared with a fearful sound
And all the earth crashed loudly; in the sky
Wide Heaven, shaking, groaned and groaned; on high
Olympus rolled and tottered from its base
At their attack; the quaking reached the face 740
Of gloomy Tartarus; the awesome sound
Of feet as on they charged echoed around
As their hard missiles clanged, and then they hurled
Their deadly shafts, and up to heaven whirled
The shouts of both the armies as the fight
They now engaged. Now Zeus held back his might
No longer, but at once he was aflame
With fury; from Olympus then he came,
Showing his strength and hurling lightning
Continually; his bolts went rocketing 750
Nonstop from his strong hand and, whirling, flashed
An awesome flame. The nurturing earth then crashed
And burned, the mighty forest crackling
Fortissimo, the whole earth smouldering,
As did the Ocean and the barren sea,

And round the Titan band, Earth's progeny,
Hot vapour lapped, and up to the bright air
An untold flame arose; the flashing glare
Of Zeus's bolt and lightning, although they
Were strong and mighty, took their sight away. 760

Astounding heat seized Chaos, and to hear
And see it, Earth and Heaven were surely near
To clashing, for that would have been the sound
Of Heaven hurling down into the ground
As they demolished Earth. Thus the gods clashed,
Raging in dreadful battle. The winds lashed
A rumbling, dust-filled earthquake, bringing, too,
Thunder and lightning-bolts, the hullabaloo
Great Zeus commanded, and the battle-shout
And clangour to their ranks. Then all about 770

Raged harsh discord, and many a violent deed
Was done. The battle ended, but indeed
Until that time they fought continually
In cruel war, and Cronus' progeny
Appeared in the forefront, Briareus,
Cottus and Gyes, ever ravenous
For war; three hundred rocks they frequently
Launched at the Titans, with this weaponry
Eclipsing them and hurling them below
The wide earth, and in bitter chains their foe 780

They bound, despite their eager zealousness,
The distance from the earth being no less
Than Heaven is above the earth; and thus
A brazen anvil would reach Tartarus
In nine full days and nights. A barricade

Of bronze runs all around it, and the shade
Of night about it spreads in a triple row
Just like a necklace; and above it grow
The roots of earth and of the barren sea.
The Titans there in dim obscurity 790

Are hidden by cloud-driving Zeus' decree
In a dank setting at the boundary
Of the wide earth. They may not leave this snare
Because bronze portals had been fitted there
By Lord Poseidon, and upon each side
A wall runs round it. There those three reside,
Great-souled Obriareus, Cottus and Gyes,
The faithful guardians and orderlies
Of aegis-bearing Zeus, and there exist

The springs and boundaries, filled full of mist 800
And gloom, of Earth and Hell and the barren sea
And starry heaven, arranged sequentially,
Loathsome and dank, by each divinity
Detested: it's a massive cavity,
For once inside its gates, one must descend
Until a full year has achieved its end
Before reaching its floor, but even so
Squall after squall may toss him to and fro.
Even the deathless gods are full of awe

At this great wonder; and within this maw 810
Lives murky, cloud-wrapped Night, while in front stands
Atlas who on his head, with tireless hands,
Holds up wide Heaven, motionless; and here,
Passing the bronze gate, Night and Day draw near
Each other in greeting, one of them about

To enter the house, the other going out;
One roams the earth, the other stays within
And waits until her journey should begin.
One holds, for all to see, a radiant light,
The other one, the cloud-wrapped evil Night, 820
Holds Sleep, Death's brother and her progeny,
And there they dwell in dim obscurity,
Dread gods, never looked at by the beaming Sun,
Whether descending when the day is done
Or climbing back to Heaven. Day peacefully
Roams through the earth and the broad backs of the sea,
Benevolent to mortals; Night, however,
Displays a heart of iron, as ruthless ever
As bronze; the mortals whom he seizes he
Holds fast: indeed he's earned the enmity 830
Of all the deathless gods. In front, there stand
The echoing halls of the god of the lower land,
Strong Hades, and Persephone. A guard
In canine form, stands, terrible and hard,
Before the house; and he employs deceit:
On those who enter he fawns at their feet,
Tail tucked, ears back, but blocks them if they try
To leave: indeed he keeps a watchful eye
And eats them if they do. The dread goddess,
Who's earned from all the gods much bitterness, 840
The river Styx, lives there, the progeny
Of Ocean, his first daughter. Separately
She dwells, great rocks above her; all around
Her glorious dwelling white columns abound,
Leading to Heaven. It is very rare

Swift-footed Iris brings a message there
Across the sea. When strife and feuds arise
Among the gods, or when one of them lies
Zeus sends for her to bring from far away,
In a golden jug, the great oaths gods must say, 850

Represented by the water, famed and cold,
That ever from a beetling rock has rolled.
From under earth a branch of Ocean flows:
Through Night out of the holy stream it goes.
A tenth part Iris owns. With nine streams he
Winds all around the earth and spacious sea
Into the main; but the share of the goddess
Drops from the rock, a source of bitterness
To gods: if one with this pours a libation

And is forsworn, he suffers tribulation: 860
He must lie breathless till an entire year

Has run its course, at no time coming near
Ambrosia or nectar, uttering
No words, upon a bed, and suffering
A heavy trance. When the long year is past,
Another trial, more arduous than the last,
Is thrust upon him. He is separated
From all the other gods for nine years, fated
To miss the feasts and councils that they hold.

But on the tenth he's welcomed to the fold 870

Once more. The oath for all eternity
Was by the gods thus authorized to be
In Styx's primal water, where it streams
In a rugged place. There are the dark extremes
Of Earth, the barren sea, dim Tartarus

And starry Heaven, dank and hideous,
Which even the gods abhor; and gates that glow
And a firm, bronze sill, with boundless roots below,
Its metal native; far away from all
The gods the Titans dwell, beyond the pall 880
Of Chaos. But the glorious allies
Of thunderous Zeus dwell where the Ocean lies,
Even Cottus and Gyes. But Briareus,
Because he is upright, the clamorous
Earth-Shaker made his son-in-law, for he
Gave him in marriage to his progeny
Cymopolea. When Zeus, in the war,
Drove the Titans out of Heaven, huge Earth bore
Her youngest child Typhoeus with the aid
Of golden Aphrodite, who had bade 890
Her lie with Tartarus. In everything
He did the lad was strong, untiring
When running, and upon his shoulders spread
A hundred-headed dragon, full of dread,
Its dark tongues flickering, and from below
His eyes a flashing flame was seen to glow;
And from each head shot fire as he glared
And from each head unspeakable voices blared:
Sometimes a god could understand the sound
They made, but sometimes, echoing around, 900
A bull, unruly, proud and furious,
Would sound, sometimes a lion, merciless
At heart, sometimes – most wonderful to hear –
The sound of whelps was heard, sometimes the ear
Would catch a hissing sound, which then would change

To echoing along the mountain range.
Something beyond all help would have that day
Occurred and over men and gods hold sway
Had Zeus not quickly seen it: mightily
And hard he thundered so that terribly 910
The earth resounded, as did Tartarus,
Wide Heaven and the streams of Oceanus,
And at his feet the mighty Heaven reeled
As he arose. The earth groaned, thunder pealed
And lightning flashed, and to the dark-blue sea,
From them and from the fiery prodigy,
The scorching winds and blazing thunderbolt,
Came heat, the whole earth seething in revolt
With both the sky and sea, while round the strand
Long waves rage at the onslaught of the band 920
Of gods. An endless shaking, too, arose,
And Hades, who has sovereignty over those
Who are deceased, shook, and the Titan horde
Beneath that Hell, residing with the lord
Cronus, shook too at the disharmony
And dreadful clamour. When his weaponry,
Thunder and lightning, Zeus had seized, his might
Well-shored, from high Olympus he took flight,
Lashed out at him and burned that prodigy,
Igniting all those wondrous heads. When he 930
Had conquered him, belabouring him so
That he became a maimed wreck, down below
He hurled him. From the earth a loud groan came,
And from the thunder-stricken lord a flame
Shot forth in the dim, mountain-hollows when

He was attacked. Much of the earth was then
Scorched by a terrible vapour, liquefied
As tin by youths is brought to heat inside
Well-channelled crucibles, or iron, too,
The hardest of all things, which men subdue 940
With fire in mountain-glens and with the glow
Causes the sacred earth to melt: just so
The earth now fused, and to wide Tartarus
In bitter anger Zeus cast Typhoeus,
From whom unruly, wet winds issued forth,
Except the Zephyr, and the South and North,
For they are sent by the gods and are to all
A boon; the others, though, fitfully fall
Upon the sea, and there some overthrow
Sailors and ships as fearfully they blow 950
In every season, making powerless
The sailors. Others haunt the limitless
And blooming earth, where recklessly they spoil
The splendid crops that mortals sweat and toil
To cultivate, and cruel agitation
Are everywhere. At the cessation
Of the gods' Titan wars, when they emerged
Successful with their dignity, they urged
All-seeing Zeus to wield his sovereignty
Over them, at Earth's suggestion, and so he 960
Divided among the gods their dignities.
Now Zeus, the king of all divinities,
First wed Metis, the wisest among men
And all the immortal gods, but later, when
Her time arrived to bring forth the goddess

Grey-eyed Athene, he with artfulness
And cunning words in his own belly hid
The child, as he by Earth and Heaven was bid
So that no other god should ever hold sway,
For destiny revealed that she someday 970
Would bear wise brood – first, her of the bright eyes,
Tritogeneia, just as strong and wise
As Father Zeus, but later she would bring
Into the world an overbearing king
Of gods and men. Before his birth, though, he
Put her into his belly so that she
Might counsel him. And then he wed the bright
Themis, who bore The Hours, Order, Right
And blooming Peace, who mind men's works. Then she
Bore all the Fates, whom Zeus especially 980
Honoured – Atropos, Lachesis and Clotho –
Who judge which way a mortal man may go,
To good or bad. Then fair Eurynome,
The child of Ocean, bore to Lord Zeus three
Graces, fair-cheeked, Aglaea, Euphrosyne
And fair Thaleia, whose glance lovingly
Melted the limbs of all. Indeed the eyes
Of all of them were fit to hypnotize
Those whom they looked upon; and furthermore
He wed nourishing Demeter, who then bore 990
A daughter, the fair-armed Persephone
Whom Hades snatched away, though prudently
Zeus brought her back; fair-tressed Mnemosyne
He lay with next, producing progeny –
The nine gold-armed Muses glorying

In singing songs as well as banqueting.
Then Zeus was joined in love to the goddess
Leto, and from their love the archeress
Artemis and Apollo sprang, who'd be
The loveliest tots in the whole company 1000
Of gods. Last, Zeus the youthful Hera wed:
The king of gods and men took her to bed,
Who Eileithyia, Hebe and Ares bore.
But Zeus himself yet brought forth, furthermore,
Bright-eyed Tritogeneia from his head,
The queen who stirred up conflict and who led
Her troops in dreadful strife, unwearying,
In tumults and in battles revelling.
But Hera with her spouse became irate,
And therefore, spurning union with her mate, 1010
She brought into the world a glorious son,
Hephaestus, who transcended everyone
In Heaven in handiwork. But Zeus then lay
With Ocean's and Tethys' fair child, away
From Hera [...] He duped Metis, although she
Was splendidly intelligent. Then he
Seized her and swallowed her right then and there,
For he was fearful that she just might bear
A stronger thing than his own bolt. And then
She bore Athene. The father of gods and men 1020
Gave birth to her from his own head beside
The river Triton; Metis would abide,
Still hidden in his entrails: this goddess,
Athene's mother, filled with righteousness,
Was wisest of all gods and men. She'd made

Athene's dreaded weapon: thus, arrayed
In arms of war, Zeus gave her birth. Then he
Begot Triton, the owner of the sea,
With Amphitrite. Triton would reside
With his dear mother and Lord Zeus inside 1030
Their golden house, a fearful god and mighty.
And then Lord Zeus begat with Aphrodite
Panic, the god who pierces shields, and Fear,
Who drives close ranks of warriors to career
In numbing war in chaos with the aid
Of Ares, who sacks cities; and the maid
Harmonia, spirited Cadmus' wife. What's more,
Atlas's daughter Maia to Zeus bore
Famed Hermes, herald of the gods, for she
Entered the holy bed. Now Semele, 1040
Cadmus's daughter, lay with Zeus the king
And Dionysus bore, that revelling
And splendid god, a mortal woman's son.
Now both are gods. Then Zeus in union
Lay with Alcmena, who then brought to birth
Great Heracles, whose feats were known on earth.
Famed, lame Hephaestus then Aglaia wed,
The youngest Grace. Dionysus to his bed
In marriage took Ariadne. For his sake
The son of Cronus then resolved to make 1050
Her ageless. Heracles, the valiant son
Of trim-ankled Alcmena, once he'd done
His grievous toils, took Hebe to his bed
As his attractive wife, who had been bred
By Zeus and gold-shod Hera on the height

Of snowy Olympus. How full of delight
He was now that his toil was done and he
Now dwelt untroubled in the company
Of all the gods to live for evermore.
Perseis, the progeny of Ocean, bore 1060
To the unwearying Helios Circe
And King Aëetes, who consequently
Wed fair Idyia, child of the perfect stream,
Ocean, for all the gods who rule supreme
Willed it. Trim-legged Medea their union
Produced. And now farewell, you dwellers on
Olympus, islands, continents, the sea
Between them all. Now sing the company
Of sweet-voiced Muses who by mortal men
Were loved and bore them godlike children. Then 1070
Shining Demeter lay with Iasion
In a thrice-ploughed field in the rich land upon
The isle of Crete and bore kindly Ploutos,
A god who travels everywhere across
Both land and sea and brings prosperity
To all those who enjoy his company.
Harmonia bore Io and Semele,
Fair-cheeked Agave and Autonoe,
Who later wed long-haired Aristaeus,
And in rich-crownèd Thebes Polydorus: 1080
All these Cadmus begat. Callirrhoe
Was daughter of Oceanus, and she
Was joined in love to stalwart Chrysaor
And then the strongest of all men she bore,
Geryon, whom mighty Heracles had to slay

On Erythea when he took away
His oxen. Emathion and Memnon,
The Ethiopian king, who wore upon
His head a brazen crest, to Tithonus,
Queen Eos brought to birth. To Cephalus 1090

She brought to birth the vigorous Phaethon,
A godlike lad, indeed a splendid son:
When he was in the flower of youth, while yet
Retaining childish notions, he was met
By Aphrodite, who loved laughs of joy:
She caught him in her arms and made the boy
The keeper of her shrine by night to be
A holy spirit. Jason, progeny
Of Aeson, when his many toils had ceased,
Which Pelias, that overbearing beast, 1100

Had put upon him, took from Aeëtes,
The ruler nurtured by divinities,
His daughter. To Iolkos he had gone
And placed that girl with flashing eyes upon
His speedy ship and to her he was wed.
Once yoked to Jason, who his people led,
She bore Medeus, whom Cheiron, Philyra's son,
Brought up upon the mountains. Thus was done
Great Zeus's will. Fair goddess Psamathe,
One daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, 1110

Nereus, was yoked in love to Aeacus
And thereby brought into the world Phocus.
Another, the goddess Thetis, she who wore
Silver shoes, was loved by Peleus and bore
The mighty Heracles, killer of men.

A third, the fair-crowned Cytherea, then
Bore to Anchises Aeneas amid
The summits of Mt. Ida where are hid
So many wooded glens. The progeny
Of Helios, Hyperion's son, Circe, 1120
Her sister, loved steadfast Odysseus
And thus were born the infant Agrius
And strong Latinus, so exemplary,
Also Telegonus. This company
Ruled over the famed Tyrseni in the bay
Within the holy islands far away.
The bright Calypso bore Nausithous
To Odysseus, whom she loved, and Nausinus.
These goddesses loved mortal men and they
Bore to them godlike children. Now a lay,
Sweet-singing Muses, chant melodiously
And rhapsodize this female company.

