

# THE HOMERIC HYMNS

Translated by Christopher Kelk

© Copyright 2020 Christopher Kelk, All Rights Reserved.  
Please direct enquiries for commercial re-use to [chriskelk@sympatico.ca](mailto:chriskelk@sympatico.ca).

## CONTENTS

I - TO DIONYSUS .....	2
II - TO DEMETER.....	2
III - TO DELIAN APOLLO .....	15
[TO PYTHIAN APOLLO] .....	19
IV - TO HERMES .....	28
V - TO APHRODITE .....	41
VI - TO APHRODITE.....	47
VII - TO DIONYSUS .....	48
VIII - TO ARES .....	49
IX - TO ARTEMIS.....	50
X - TO APHRODITE .....	50
XI - TO ATHENE .....	50
XII - TO HERA.....	50
XIII - TO DEMETER.....	51
XIV - TO THE MOTHER OF THE GODS .....	51
XV - TO HERACLES THE LION-HEARTED .....	51
XVI - TO ASCLEPIUS .....	51
XVII - TO THE DIOSCURI.....	52
XVIII - TO HERMES.....	52
XIX - TO PAN .....	52
XX - TO HEPHAESTUS .....	53
XXI - TO APOLLO.....	54
XXII - TO POSEIDON .....	54
XXIII - TO THE MOST HIGH SON OF CRONUS .....	54
XXIV - TO HESTIA .....	55
XXV - TO THE MUSES AND APOLLO.....	55
XXVI - TO DIONYSUS .....	55
XXVII - TO ARTEMIS.....	55
XXVIII - TO ATHENA.....	56
XXIX - TO HESTIA .....	57
XXX - TO EARTH THE MOTHER OF ALL .....	57
XXXI - TO HELIOS .....	57
XXXII - TO SELENE .....	58
XXXIII - TO THE DIOSCURI.....	59

## I - TO DIONYSUS

Some say that you were born to Semele  
In Dracenum, some say in blustery  
Icarus, god-born and sewn in Zeus's thigh;  
Some say in Naxos; some that it was by  
Deep-eddying Alpheus, begot by Zeus  
The thunder-lover; other men produce  
The tale that it was Thebes. All fabrication!  
The father of the gods and every nation  
Arranged your birth far from each human eye  
And white-armed Hera. There's a mountain, high 10  
And thronged by woods, called Nysa, far away  
In Phoenice, where Egypt's waters play.  
"And many offerings to Semele  
Men will put up inside her shrine. Since three  
Is sacred, when each three-year span is done,  
They'll ever yield you hecatombs." The son  
Of Cronus bent his dark brows as he said  
These words, while the divine locks on his head  
Flowed down and great Olympus reeled. And thus  
Wise Zeus confirmed this with a nod. To us 20  
Be favourable, o Insewn One, who  
Inspire your frenzied women. For of you  
We sing from start to finish; one may find  
Those who forget you cannot call to mind  
One holy song. Farewell to you, Insewn,  
O Dionysus, and not you alone –  
Farewell, too, to your mother Semele,  
Who's known to all mankind as Thyone.

## II - TO DEMETER

Fair-haired Demeter, holy deity,  
I'll praise – her trim-legged daughter, also, she  
Who was by Aïdoneus seduced, for her  
He had of Zeus, far-seeing, Thunderer.  
Far from Demeter of the golden sword  
And glorious fruits, upon the soft greensward  
With Ocean's well-endowed young girls she played,  
And flowers, which the will of Zeus had made

The earth to grow to satisfy Hades  
 And snare the bloomlike girl, she plucked, and these 10  
 Were roses, croci, lovely violets and  
 The iris, hyacinth, narcissus (grand  
 And radiant flower), such a sight to see  
 For gods and men. Its deep extremity  
 Produced a hundred blooms. Its fragrant smell  
 Caused all the heavens to laugh – the earth as well  
 And the salt-sea's swell. The maiden's breathless joy  
 Made her reach out to grasp the lovely toy  
 When Earth with her broad pathways split asunder  
 Upon that Nysian plain and then from under 20  
 The ground, the lord who goes by many a name,  
 The Host of Legions, son of Cronos, came  
 With his immortal horses, leaping far.  
 Against her will he caught her in his car  
 Of gold as she yelled out. With a shrill cry  
 She called upon her father, the most high  
 And glorious son of Cronos. Not one tree  
 That bears rich olives, not one deity  
 Nor man could catch her voice; just two were there  
 To hear her – tender Hecate, whose hair 30  
 Shone bright, Persaeus' daughter, as she lay  
 Within her cave, and Helios, Lord of Day,  
 Hyperion's bright son, as loud she cried  
 To Zeus, her father. But he sat aside  
 From all the gods within his temple where  
 So many pray, receiving his sweet share  
 Of mortal offerings. And so that son  
 Of Cronos, host and lord of many a one,  
 Who goes by many a name, was carrying 40  
 Away the girl by leave of Zeus the king  
 On his immortal chariot, though she  
 Was most reluctant. While she still could see  
 The earth, the starry heavens and the shine  
 Of sunlight and the strongly-flowing brine  
 Where fishes shoal, the goddess hoped to view  
 Her darling mother and the great gods who  
 Live endlessly – this calmed her mighty soul.  
 The heights of all the mountains and the whole  
 Sea-depths with her immortal voice rang out,  
 And then her queenly mother heard her shout: 50  
 Acute pain seized her heart; her dear hands tore  
 Her headdress; and the dusky cloak she wore  
 She cast off, speeding bird-like over sea  
 And land to find her child. But nobody,

No god nor man, would tell her what was done,  
 And of all of the birds of omen none  
 Would say the truth. She wandered through the land,  
 The queenly Deo, torches in her hand,  
 For nine days, forsaking in her misery  
 Sweet nectar and ambrosia, while she 60  
 Denied to bathe. But when the tenth dawn broke,  
 Then Hecate, with a torch, met her and spoke  
 These words: "Queenly Demeter, who bring us  
 The seasons, you who are so generous  
 With rich gifts, say what man or deity  
 Has carried off your child Persephone  
 And caused you pain? I heard her cry but who  
 He was I did not see. I'll tell to you  
 In short all that I know." Thus Hecate  
 Addressed her. Rich-haired Rhea's progeny 70  
 Made no reply but, with her torches, flew  
 With her until they came to Helios, who  
 Watched over gods and men and there she stood  
 Before his horses, telling him: "You should,  
 Helios, respect me as a deity  
 If ever I have given gaiety  
 To you in word or deed. My fair, sweet child  
 I heard as one in someone's thrall – a wild  
 And thrilling sound! But nothing did I see.  
 But by your beams through the extremity 80  
 Of both the land and sea and radiant air  
 You look down. Have you seen her anywhere?  
 My dear child! Who has seized her violently -  
 What god or man? – and made escape?" Thus she  
 Spoke. Then Hyperion's son gave his reply:  
 "Demeter, child of rich-haired Rhea, I  
 Will tell the truth to you. Exceedingly  
 I honour you and grieve your misery  
 Over your slim-legged daughter. None but Zeus  
 Cloud-Gatherer's to blame. He dared to loose 90  
 The maid to Hades so that she might be  
 His buxom wife – yes, his own brother. He  
 Snatched her away down to the misty gloom  
 As in his chariot she wailed her doom.  
 But, goddess, cease your loud lament. For it  
 Is wrong to show vain anger. Not unfit  
 To be a son-in-law to you, her mother,  
 Being of the same stock and your own brother,  
 Is Aïdoneus , Lord of Many Men  
 Among the deathless deities; again, 100

When honours were first measured out, he gained  
A third part of renown and has remained  
Lord of his fellow-dwellers there.” That said,  
She called her steeds. They heard her voice and sped  
Along like long-winged birds. More suffering  
Assailed her. Angered at the Dark-Cloud King  
Of Gods she shunned their gatherings on high  
Olympus and to towns and fields that lie  
On earth she went, inflicting injury  
A long time on herself. On scrutiny 110  
No man, no, nor yet one deep-bosomed dame  
Knew her for who she was until she came  
To wise Celeus, who then was sovereign  
Of sweet Eleusis. She sat, troubled in  
Her heart, on the roadside by the Maids’ Spring  
Whence folk drew water. Overshadowing  
This dark lace was an olive shrubbery.  
Just like an ancient crone she seemed to be,  
Cut off from childbirth and the offerings  
That garland-loving Aphrodite brings, 120  
Like those who tend the kingly progeny –  
Those kings who weal out justice lawfully –  
Or like the stewards in the halls that sound  
In echoes. There Celeus’s daughters found  
Her as she carried water which they drew  
So easily so they might take it to  
Their father’s house in bronze urns. Like divine  
Goddesses, there were four of them, in fine  
And blooming youth – they were Callidice  
And lovely Demo and Cleisidice 130  
And then Callithoë, the eldest one.  
They, too – for it is not so easily done  
For any man to know a deity –  
Failed to detect her and spoke wingedly:  
“Who are you, ancient one? What is your race?  
Why have you left your city and won’t face  
These houses? Dames like you, and younger, too,  
Live here in dark halls and would welcome you  
In word and deed.” They spoke and in reply  
The queen of all the goddesses said, “I 140  
Greet you, dear children, whosoever you be  
Of womankind. I’ll tell my history  
To you, because the answer is no shame.  
My queenly mother gave to me the name  
Of Doso, and I came across the sea,  
The broad, broad sea, from Crete unwillingly,

Snatched off by pirates. After that they came  
Swiftly to Thoricus, where many a dame,  
And many a man, amassed upon the strand  
And by the ropes began upon the sand 150  
A meal. Wanting no food, I slipped away  
Sadly across that dark land – I'd not stay  
With my imperious masters that they might  
Not carry me, unpaid for, in their flight  
And sell me off. Thus in my wandering  
I landed here – I do not know a thing  
About this place or who you folk may be.  
I pray, though, each Olympian deity  
Will grant you mates, and children, too, the prayer  
Of every parent. Maidens, do not spare 160  
Your pity for me. Please, then, make it clear,  
Dear children, who the folk are who live here,  
The men and women, that I cheerfully  
May work for them with chores befitting me,  
A crone – tending a babe or tidying  
Or in his fine room's recess readying  
The master's bed or giving my advice  
To the women." Thus she spoke and in a trice  
The fairest maid, unwed Callidice,  
Replied, "Mother, in our adversity 170  
We bear the gifts that gods deal out to men –  
They're stronger than we are. I'll tell you, then,  
The names of all the men in power here,  
Who've earned our honour. I *will* make it clear  
Who by their wisdom and their true decrees  
Rule us and guard our city walls. Now these  
Are wise Triptolemus and Dioclus,  
Polyxeinus and splendid Eumolpus  
And our brave father. All have wives who run  
Each house, and on first sight there's not a one 180  
Who would dishonour you and turn you out.  
They'd welcome you because there is no doubt  
That you are like a goddess. Stay here, though,  
If you prefer, and all of us will go  
Back to our house and tell our mother, who  
Is buxom Metaneira, all that you  
Have said. Thus she will bid you to repair  
To us and not seek sanctuary elsewhere.  
In our fine house, she has a late-born son,  
Much prayed for and embraced – her only one. 190  
Nurse him till he's a youth and you will find  
That you're the envy of all womankind.

Such gifts shall you receive!" That's what she said,  
And at her words the goddess bowed her head.  
They filled their shining buckets and withdrew,  
Rejoicing. In a short time they came to  
Their father's house and told their mother all  
That they had seen and heard. She bade them call  
The stranger swiftly so that they might pay  
Her boundless wages. Then they went away, 200  
Like deer or calves with a sufficiency  
Of pasture, who then bound across the lea.  
Those maidens down the hollow pathway sped,  
Holding their lovely garments' folds ahead  
Of them. Just like a crocus flower, their hair  
Streamed round their shoulders as they went to where  
They'd left the good goddess by the wayside,  
And there they found her. Then with her they hied  
To their dear father's house. She walked behind,  
A veil upon her head, grieved in her mind. 210  
Around her slender feet her dark-blue dress  
Fluttered about. Quite soon, with the goddess,  
They came to heaven-bred Celeus' residence.  
They went along the portico and thence  
They found their queenly mother sitting near  
A pillar of the close-fit roof, her dear  
Young son within her arms. To her they sped.  
The goddess on the threshold stood, her head  
Reaching the roof. Her heavenly radiance  
Filled up the doorway. Awe and reverence 220  
And pale fear took their mother at this sight.  
She got up then so that Demeter might  
Sit on her couch, and yet she, who supplies  
The seasons and gives perfect gifts, her eyes,  
Her lovely eyes, cast down, would not sit there  
Upon that golden couch. With tender care  
Iambe brought a jointed stool and cast  
A silver fleece upon it. Then, at last,  
The goddess sat and held a veil before  
Her face. A long time there she sat, heart-sore, 230  
Unsmiling, never speaking, not by sign  
Or word addressing anyone. No wine,  
No food she took but, pining wistfully  
For her deep-bosomed daughter, there sat she.  
Then careful Iambe moved the holy queen  
With many a jest, smiling and laughing, keen  
To lift her heart – as she would cheer her up  
Thereafter. Metaneira filled a cup

Of sweet wine for her, but she put it off. 240  
 It was not right, she said, for her to quaff  
 Red wine. Water and meal was her request,  
 Mixed with soft mint. She fulfilled her behest.  
 The great queen drank, for she observed that rite.  
 Then spoke up, out of those within her sight,  
 Well-girdled Metaneira: "Hail to you,  
 Lady, for I believe it to be true  
 Your stock is not ignoble – dignity  
 And grace shine in your eyes, which you may see  
 In justice-dealing kings. What the gods send  
 We bear perforce – beneath the yoke we bend 250  
 Our necks. Bring up my child, a god-sent boy,  
 Late-born, past hope, but a much-prayed-for joy.  
 Nurse him till he's a youth and you will find  
 You'll be the envy of all womankind.  
 Such gifts shall you receive!" Came the reply  
 From wreathed Demeter: "Greetings, too, say I,  
 God bless you. I will take him willingly  
 Just as you bid me and you'll never see  
 The Cutter or witchcraft bring him distress  
 By reason of his nurse's heedlessness - 260  
 The Woodcutter's not stronger than a spell  
 I have and there's a safeguard I know well  
 Against foul witchcraft." Then she took the boy  
 Unto her perfect bosom and with joy  
 His mother's heart was filled. Thus the fine son  
 Of wise Celeus was nursed – Demophoón,  
 Whom the well-girdled Metaneira bore –  
 Right there. He grew like an immortal, for  
 He neither ate nor suckled at the teat.  
 Each day rich-wreathed Demeter breathed so sweet 270  
 Upon him at her breast and smeared his skin  
 With ambrosia as though he were the kin  
 Of gods. She hid him in the fire, though,  
 Each night (his loving parents did not know)  
 Just like a brand. They were amazed that he  
 Grew past his age – godlike he seemed to be.  
 Deathless and ageless she'd have made the lad  
 If the well-girdled Metaneira had  
 Not in her fragrant chamber watched by night  
 In heedlessness. Lamenting in her fright, 280  
 She smote her hips, afraid for him, and these  
 Swift words she spoke, bewailing her unease:  
 "Demophoón, the stranger buries you  
 Deep in the fire, affording me much rue."

Bright-crowned goddess Demeter heard. In spleen  
She took the darling child, the boy who'd been  
Born in the palace to Metaneira who  
Had lost all hope of one more child, and threw  
Him from the fire to the ground. Then she  
To well-girt Metaneira instantly 290  
Said, "You dull mortals cannot see the lot  
Awaiting you, both good and bad. For what  
Is done's past cure. Be witness the gods' plight,  
The endless river Styx, your dear son might  
Through me have been immortal all his days  
And ageless and been given endless praise.  
But now death and a mortal's destiny  
He can't avoid, yet he will always be  
Much honoured for he lay upon my knees  
And slept within my arms. And yet, when he's 300  
Full-grown, year after year the progeny  
Of the Eleusinians continually  
Will fight each other in dread strife. Know, then,  
That I'm Demeter, prized by mortal men,  
A cause of help and joy to them. And so,  
Let there be built a temple and, below,  
A shrine beneath the city and sheer wall  
Above Callirrhous and on a tall  
Hillside. I'll teach my rites that I may be  
Won over by your honest purity." 310  
The goddess changed her looks as this she said,  
No longer old – around her, beauty spread  
And from her robe wafted a fine bouquet.  
Demeter's body shone from far away  
In a divine light, and now golden hair  
Spread from her shoulders, and, like lightning, there  
Was brightness in that well-built house. Then she  
Went from the palace and immediately  
Metaneira's knees went weak; she made no sound  
For a long time; her child upon the ground, 320  
Her late-born child, she overlooked. Nearby  
Her sisters heard the infant's pitiful cry  
And from their well-spread beds without delay  
They sprang. While one took up the child and lay  
Him at her breast, another set about  
To light a fire and a third set out  
On soft feet for their mother so she may  
Come from her fragrant chamber. And now they  
Gathered around the struggling little boy  
And bathed him, hugging him with loving joy. 330

He was not solaced, though – the skilfulness  
Of those handmaids and nurses was far less.  
They prayed to the glorious goddess through the night,  
Shaking with fear, and, at the dawn's first light  
They told the mighty Celeus all, as she,  
Well-wreathed Demeter, told them to. Then he  
Summoned his people to the meeting-place,  
That countless throng, and bade them then to grace  
Rich-tressed Demeter, with a temple there,  
A splendid one, an altar, also, where 340  
The hillock rose. They heard and started to  
Do as he ordered, and the infant grew  
Just like a god. When done and at their rest  
They all went home. Demeter, golden-tressed,  
Apart from all the gods sat as she pined  
For her deep-bosomed child. Mortals would find  
Upon the fecund earth a cruel year  
For the well-wreathed Demeter kept each ear  
From sprouting. Many a curving plough in vain 350  
Was drawn by oxen. White barley would rain  
To no avail upon the ground. So she  
Would have destroyed with cruel scarcity  
All of mankind and would have robbed as well  
Of gifts and sacrifices those who dwell  
High on Olympus did Lord Zeus not see  
What she had done. He sent immediately  
Gold-winged Iris to the richly-tressed  
Lovely Demeter. That was his behest,  
And she obeyed dark-clouded Zeus, the son 360  
Of Cronus – swiftly to her did she run.  
She came then to Eleusis, rich in scent.  
She found dark-cloaked Demeter and she went  
Into the temple where she'd come to rest  
And said with winged words:" It's the behest  
Of Father Zeus, who's ever wise, that you  
Should join the holy tribe of deities who  
Are everlasting. Don't let this decree  
Go unbeyed. Still she refused to be  
Persuaded. Zeus then gave one more command –  
The blest, eternal gods should see her and, 370  
Each one after the other, on they came  
And offered fair gifts, calling out her name.  
They promised any rights she might prefer  
Among them, not prevailing, though, with her,  
So angry was she. She spurned stubbornly  
All that they'd said. She'd never go, said she,

To well-scented Olympus nor let rise  
 Fruit from the ground till she with her own eyes  
 Saw her fair child. Zeus the Loud-Thunderer,  
 Who sees all, sent the executioner 380  
 Of Argus with his wand of gold to Hell  
 That he with coaxing words might put a spell  
 On Hades to send back into the light  
 Holy Persephone from murky night  
 And let her mother see her and let go  
 Her anger. Hermes was persuaded so  
 To do and left Olympus speedily  
 Down to the places on the earth, then he  
 Found Hades on a couch at home beside  
 His apprehensive and reluctant bride, 390  
 Much yearning for her mother, who yet mused  
 On her dread project far away, abused  
 By the blest gods. Staunch Hermes, standing near,  
 Said: "Dark-haired Hades, sovereign down here  
 Among the dead, I'm given a command  
 By Father Zeus to take out of this land  
 The fair Persephone up to the place  
 Where the gods live so that she, face-to-face,  
 May meet her mother that she may let go  
 Her rage at the gods; a dread scenario 400  
 Demeter had in mind – she planned to bring  
 An end to weakly men by burying  
 Seed underground, the honours that they brought  
 To the immortals thus reduced to nought.  
 She kept her dreadful anger nor would she  
 Mix with the gods but solitarily  
 Kept to her fragrant temple, dwelling in  
 Rocky Eleusis." With a joyless grin  
 The ruler of the dead then acquiesced  
 To Father Zeus' command and thus addressed 410  
 The wise Persephone immediately:  
 "To your dark-robed mother, Persephone,  
 Go now. Think kindly of me. Do not brood  
 Or be in an exceedingly sad mood.  
 Among the gods I'll be a fitting spouse,  
 For I am Zeus's brother. In this house  
 Over all living things you'll have command  
 And with the highest honours will you stand  
 Among the gods; always those who do ill  
 Shall be chastised, those who refuse to still 420  
 Your power with sacrifices, reverently  
 Performing rites and giving gifts." Thus he

Addressed her. Filled with joy then was the shrewd  
 Persephone, and in that happy mood  
 Leapt up. But Hades gave her secretly  
 A pomegranate seed that she'd beside  
 Her dark-robed mother not always abide.  
 Aïdoneus, Ruler of Many Men,  
 Attached his steeds that never perish then 430  
 To his gold chariot. She got on, and strong  
 Hermes took reins and whip and drove headlong  
 Those horses, for they flew on readily.  
 They managed their long journey speedily.  
 No sea, no river, not one mountaintop,  
 No grassy glen was seen to put a stop  
 To their advance as they cleft the wide air  
 Above them. Thus he brought those steeds to where  
 Well-wreathed Demeter stayed, halting before  
 Her fragrant temple. Seeing them she tore 440  
 Outside, as on a wooded mountainside  
 A Maenad tears; Persephone then spied  
 Demeter's sweet eyes, then leapt down and sped  
 To fall upon her neck. Yet in her head,  
 While holding her, Demeter suddenly  
 Fancied some trick and trembled violently,  
 Ceasing her kisses. "Child," she cried, "did you  
 Not eat when down below? Come, tell me true.  
 Hide nothing that we both may truly know.  
 If not, then from that loathsome place below 450  
 With Cronus' son, dark-clouded Zeus, and me  
 You'll come and dwell and will respected be  
 By all the gods. But if you ate, back there  
 Below the earth you'll hold a one-third's share  
 Of every year, the other two with me  
 And all the other gods. But when we see  
 Earth blooming with the fragrant flowers of spring,  
 Up from that gloom you'll rise, a wondrous thing  
 To gods and men. What trick did Hades play  
 Upon you when he spirited you away?" 460  
 Then fair Persephone replied to her:  
 "Mother, I'll tell you all. The messenger,  
 Aid-giving, swift Hermes was sent to me  
 By Zeus, my sire, and each divinity  
 To bring me back to earth from Erebus  
 That you might feast your eyes on me and thus  
 Cease your dread wrath against the gods. Why, I  
 At once leapt up in joy. But by and by  
 He placed inside my mouth clandestinely

A sweet pomegranate seed, thus forcing me 470  
 To taste it. I will tell you, blow by blow,  
 How Hades took me to the depths below  
 Through Zeus's clever plan. In a fair lea  
 We were cavorting – there was Leucippe,  
 Phaino, Electra, Ianthe, Melite,  
 Rhodeia, Iache, Calirrhoë,  
 Melobosis, Tyche and Acaste,  
 Chryseis, Ianeira, Admete.  
 Also there were gathering blooms with me 480  
 Rhodope, Plouto, Calypso the Fair,  
 Styx, also, and Urania were there,  
 The beauty Galaxaura, Pallas, too,  
 Who rouses battles, and Admetus, who  
 Delights in arrows. We were gathering  
 Sweet blooms - soft crocuses, all mingling  
 With iris, hyacinth, rose, lily – o  
 Such sights! – narcissus, too (these flowers grow  
 On the wide earth like crocuses). With glee  
 I picked them all. The earth, though, suddenly 490  
 Parted beneath me. Up leapt the strong lord,  
 The Host of Many, bundled me aboard  
 His golden car and then against my will  
 Took me beneath the earth. My cry was shrill.  
 All this is true, although it hurts to say  
 These words.” Then with one heart all through the day  
 They cheered each other's souls with many a kiss,  
 Which brought relief as back and forth some bliss  
 They gave and took. Then bright-eyed Hecate  
 Approached them both, embracing frequently 500  
 Demeter's holy child and from then on  
 Queen Hecate was her companion  
 And minister. Then Zeus, Loud-Thunderer,  
 All-Seeing, sent to them a messenger,  
 The well-tressed Rhea, so that she might bring  
 Dark-robed Demeter to the gathering  
 Of gods, and honours of her choice he swore  
 That they would give , agreeing furthermore  
 That one-third of the circling year she'd live  
 In gloom and darkness while the rest he'd give 510  
 To her that with her mother she might stay  
 And the other gods. She did not disobey  
 The bidding of Lord Zeus but speedily  
 Flew down from high Olympus' promontory  
 On to the plain of Rharus, whose terrain  
 Was once corn-rich but now produced no grain,

Quite leafless, for the white fruit was concealed  
 By trim-ankled Demeter. Time revealed,  
 However, long and waving ears of grain  
 When spring burst out and on the ground they'd gain 520  
 Rich furrows full of corn. With others bound  
 In sheaves already, there, upon this ground  
 She landed first out of the desert air,  
 And they rejoiced to see each other there.  
 The rich-tressed Rhea said: "Zeus calls to you -  
 Loud -Thunderer, All-Seeing. Come, child, do,  
 And join the other gods. Zeus also swore  
 Whatever rites you wish and, furthermore,  
 That one-third of the circling year you'll live  
 In gloom and darkness while the rest he'll give 530  
 To you that with your mother you may stay  
 And *all* the gods. That's what she heard her say  
 To her and after Zeus's words were said,  
 In token of his oath he bowed his head.  
 Obey, child, don't be wrathful endlessly  
 With Zeus of the Dark Clouds, but instantly  
 Increase the grain that offers life to men."  
 That's what she said. Well-wreathed Demeter then  
 Obeyed and on the rich lands caused their fruits  
 To spring and with all kinds of blooms and shoots 540  
 The wide earth groaned. She showed Triptolemus  
 And Diocles, horse-driver, Eumolpus  
 The mighty and Celeus, who rules his nation,  
 Those justice-dealing kings, the operation  
 Of all her rites and taught her mysteries  
 (None may transgress or learn or utter these,  
 For great awe for the gods restrains one's voice).  
 Those who have seen these mysteries rejoice.  
 No such bliss comes to those who take no part  
 In them, however, once they must depart 550  
 Into the gloom below. When all was taught  
 To them by the divine goddess, they sought  
 Olympus and the other gods. There they,  
 Those holy and revered goddesses, stay  
 With Zeus the Thunderer. Happy is he  
 Whom they both freely love. Immediately  
 To Zeus' great house they sent the god Plutus,  
 Who gives to mortals opulence. To us,  
 O queen of sweet Eleusis and the isle  
 Of Paros and the rock-strewn Antron, smile, 560  
 Gift-giver, season-bringer, Deo, fair  
 Persephone as well, and for my air

Grant me delightful substance. You I'll tell  
Of in my song – another song as well.

### III - TO DELIAN APOLLO

Apollo, the Far-Shooter, I'll recall,  
Whom all gods tremble at as through the hall  
Of Zeus he goes, and from their seats they spring  
As he draws near, his bright bow lengthening.  
Leto alone by Thunderer Zeus will stay,  
Unstring his bow and put his darts away.  
From his broad frame she takes the archery  
In hand and on a golden hanger she  
Drapes it against a pillar in the halls  
Where Zeus, her father, lives, and then she falls 10  
To guiding him to sit. Then Father Zeus  
Greets his dear son and gives him nectar-juice  
In a gold cup. The other gods then place  
Him on a seat there. Full of queenly grace,  
Leto rejoices in her son's great might  
And skill in archery. Blest one, delight  
In both your glorious children – Artemis  
The huntress and the Lord Apollo, this  
In rocky Delos, in Ortygia that.  
You bore Apollo as you rested at 20  
The lengthy Cynthian hill, hard by a tree  
Of palm at Inopus' streams. How shall I be  
Your bard when you're so fit in every way  
To be extolled? For every form of lay  
Is yours, on isles and on the rocky mainland where  
Calves graze. All mountain-peaks high in the air  
And lofty headlands, streams that to the sea  
Flow out, shores, ports, all give you jollity.  
Shall I sing of how Leto gave you birth,  
A source of joy to every man on earth, 30  
As she took rest upon that rocky isle  
Of Delos on Mt. Cynthus. All this while  
Dark waves on either side drive to the strand,  
Pressed by shrill winds, whence you assumed command  
Over all men. To Crete and Athens town,  
Aegina and Euboea whose renown  
Is in her ships, Aegae, Peiresiae  
And Peparethos, with the sea nearby,  
Athos and Pelion's towering heights, Samos,

Ida's dark hills, Phocaea and Scyros, 40  
 Autocane's high slope, Imbros, so fair,  
 Scorched Lemnos, wealthy Lesbos (who lives there  
 But Macar, son of Aeolus?), and Chios,  
 The wealthiest of the islands, and Claros,  
 Which gleams, and craggy Mimas, Corycos  
 With her high hills and water-fed Samos,  
 Aesagea's steep slope and Mycale  
 With her sheer heights, Miletos, Cos, where be  
 The Meropoi, steep Cnidos, Carpathos  
 That's racked by winds, and Paros and Naxos 50  
 And rocky Rhenaea – thus to and fro,  
 Heavy with the Far-Shooter, did Leto  
 Wander to see if one would house her son.  
 They trembled, though, in fear and not a one –  
 No, not the richest - would take him. At last  
 Queen Leto to the isle of Delos passed  
 And asked in winged words: "If you will take  
 My son, Phoebus Apollo, and will make  
 A rich shrine for him, Delos, you'll find out  
 None else will touch you; though I have no doubt 60  
 You won't be rich in oxen or in sheep  
 Or harvest wine, nor will your earth be deep  
 In plants, yet if a temple should stand here  
 For the Far-Shooter, men from far and near  
 Shall bring you hecatombs and you shall smell  
 Their constant savour and those folk who dwell  
 On you shall be fed by an alien hand,  
 For truly you are not a fecund land."  
 That's what she said, and Delos in delight  
 Answered: "Famed daughter of that man of might, 70  
 Coeus, I'll take your son, for it is true  
 Men don't speak highly of me. But through you  
 I'll be renowned. What's said, though, I confess  
 I fear – that he'll be full of haughtiness  
 And lord it over all the gods and men  
 Upon the fruitful earth. I'm fearful, then,  
 That he, as soon as you have given birth,  
 Because I have a hard and rocky earth,  
 Will scorn and stamp me down into the sea  
 And the great ocean everlastingly 80  
 Will surge above me, and then he will go  
 To somewhere else that pleases him, and so  
 Will make his shrine and thickets. As for me,  
 For many-footed creatures of the sea  
 And black seals I shall be their domicile,

Quite undisturbed, because I am an isle  
 That lacks folk. But, goddess, if you dare swear  
 A solemn oath, he'll build on me a fair  
 Temple, an oracle for men, he then  
 May build his shrines and groves for other men 90  
 Elsewhere, for he'll be much renowned." That's how  
 She answered. Then a solemn, godly vow  
 Made Leto: "Hear this, Earth and broad, broad Sky  
 And Styx's dropping streams below (for I  
 Now swear the mightiest oath that there can be  
 Among the gods) – a fragrant sanctuary  
 Shall Phoebus have here, and you will have fame  
 Above all folk." To the oath's end she came.  
 At the Far-Shooter's birth great ecstasy  
 Struck Delos. In unwonted misery 100  
 Did Leto groan nine days and nights to bear  
 Apollo. All the goddesses were there  
 Who were the chiefest – Rhea, Dione,  
 Ichnaea, Themis and Amphitrite,  
 Who groans aloud – yes, every goddess, all  
 Save white-armed Hera, who sat in the hall  
 Of Zeus, Cloud-Gatherer. Only one goddess,  
 She of sore childbirth, knew not the distress  
 Of Leto, for on high Olympus she  
 Sat under gold clouds, by the subtlety 110  
 Of white-armed Hera tricked. She kept her there  
 Through envy – well-tressed Leto was to bear  
 A great and faultless son. The goddess, though,  
 Sent Iris from this well-set island so  
 She might bring Eilithyia, promising  
 A massive necklace bound with many a string  
 Of golden threads, nine cubits long, and they  
 Bade Iris move Eilithyia away  
 From white-armed Hera lest she should persuade  
 Her back. Then Iris, swift as winds, who'd paid 120  
 Attention to her, ran and soon the space  
 Between was covered and she reached the place  
 On high Olympus where the gods reside.  
 Immediately she bade to come outside  
 The goddess of travail and, wingedly,  
 Her words told her what each divinity,  
 Each goddess, bade her, and in her great heart  
 She was persuaded and saw them depart  
 Like shy doves. She of Sore Delivery  
 Reached Delos, when Leto in agony 130  
 Began to give birth, hankering to bear

Her son. She leant against a palm-tree there  
And knelt upon the soft grass, and the ground  
Rejoiced beneath her. Phoebus, with a bound,  
Now saw the light. The goddesses all cried  
Aloud. Great Phoebus, you were purified  
With pleasing water, and then you were wrapped  
In a fine, new-made garment and then strapped  
In a gold band. Gold-bladed Phoebus, though,  
Was never to be suckled by Leto; 140  
Ambrosia and nectar for the boy  
Thetis poured out; Leto was filled with joy  
That she had borne a mighty archer-lad.  
But, Phoebus, once that heavenly food you'd had,  
No golden bands or cords kept you in thrall –  
No longer struggling, you loosed them all.  
Then to the goddesses immediately  
He spoke: 'The lyre and the bow by me  
Shall be esteemed. To men I shall declare  
Zeus's unfailing will.'" Then here and there 150  
The long-haired Phoebus, the Far-Shooter, went  
Upon the wide earth, and astonishment  
Struck all the goddesses. All Delos shone  
With gold from that time, as we see upon  
A mountain-top wild blooms. Far-Shooter, Lord,  
You walked on craggy Cynthus or abroad  
You wandered in the islands. Wooded brush  
And shrines you have a-plenty. Streams that gush  
To sea, high crags and lofty mountains, too –  
All these are dear to you. But, Phoebus, you 160  
Most joy in Delos, for across the seas  
Long-robed Ionians come with obsequies  
To you with their shy wives and children. They  
With boxing, dancing, singing make you gay  
Each time they gather. You might well believe  
Them ageless and godlike should you perceive  
Them then. You'd see their graces and you'd stare  
At them and their well-girded wives and their  
Swift ships and massive wealth. There is, beside,  
A wondrous thing that never will subside - 170  
The girls of Delos, maidens who attend  
To the Far-Shooter; praise to him they send,  
And then to Leto and to Artemis,  
She who delights in arrows; after this  
They sing of their forebears and fascinate  
The tribes of men, and they can imitate  
The tongues of all men and their clattering speech.

Their sweet songs are so close to truth that each  
Would say that he was singing. Phoebus, you  
With Artemis protect us, and adieu 180  
You maidens, and remember me when some  
Outsider who has suffered much should come  
And ask, “O maidens, of those who come here,  
Who sings most sweetly and gives the most cheer  
To you?” With one voice, answer, “He is blind  
And dwells in rocky Chios. You will find  
His songs will ever be supreme, and I  
Shall carry his renown wherever lie  
Well-settled towns I visit, and they, too,  
Will credit what I say, for it is true. 190  
And all my praises never will be done  
For the Far-Shooter, rich-tressed Leto’s son.

[TO PYTHIAN APOLLO]

Lycia and lovely Maeonia, o lord,  
And the delightful town on the seaboard,  
Miletus – these are yours. But you hold sway  
Yourself on sea-girt Delos. But his way  
To rocky Pytho famous Phoebus made,  
Queen Leto’s son, and on his lyre played,  
In holy, scented garments clothed, and when  
His lyre felt the golden plectrum, then 200  
The sound was sweet indeed. Them, swift as thought,  
He went up to Olympus, where he sought  
Zeus and the other gods. Immediately  
The deathless gods bore only melody  
And song in mind. Their voices answering  
Each other, all the Muses sweetly sing  
Of the unending gifts divinities  
Enjoy and of all mortals’ miseries  
At the gods’ hands – they’re witless, hapless, they  
Cannot cheat death nor can they find a way 210  
To dodge old age. The Graces, with their hair  
So richly-coiffed, the cheerful Seasons there  
Danced with Harmonia and with Hebe  
And Aphrodite, Zeus’s progeny,  
Holding each other’s wrists. Among them, one  
Not mean nor small but tall to look upon  
And lovely, sang – Apollo’s sister, she  
Who joys in arrows. In this company

Were also sporting Hermes, keen of eye,  
 And Ares, while Apollo, stepping high 220  
 And fine, played on his lyre. All around  
 His radiance shone, his gleaming feet would bound,  
 His close-weave vest aglow. Felicity  
 Filled gold-tressed Leto and wise Zeus to see  
 Among the gods their dear son as he played  
 The lyre. How, then, shall I, for one who's made  
 So apt in theme for song, sing of you? Well,  
 Shall I sing of the lover? Shall I tell  
 Of when you wooed the daughter of Azan  
 When you had by your side that godlike man, 230  
 Ioschys, whose father was Elatius,  
 The horseman, or the wife of Leucippus,  
 Or Leucippus himself, or Phorbas who  
 Was Triops' son – he on his chariot, you  
 On foot (although he did not lack the art  
 Of Triops). Shall I sing how at the start  
 Throughout the earth you wandered all around  
 That you might set some consecrated ground,  
 An oracle for men? First from on high  
 You sought Pieria, and you passed by 240  
 Sandy Lectus, Enienae, then went through  
 The land of the Perrhaebi, and then you  
 Came to Iolcus and then placed your feet  
 Upon Cenaeum, famous for its fleet  
 Of ships, set in Euboea. Then you stood  
 On the Lelantine plain – it was not good,  
 You thought, though, for a shrine and groves. Phoebus,  
 Far-Shooter, then you crossed the Euripus,  
 Climbed the green, holy hills to Mycalessus  
 And then on to the grasses of Teumessus 250  
 And wood-clad Thebe, for that holy spot  
 Had yet no mortals nor yet had it got  
 Pathways across its grain-filled plain. Then you  
 Came to Orchestus where a bright grove grew  
 In honour of Poseidon. It was there  
 That a new-broken colt, compelled to bear  
 The trim car at its back, can convalesce.  
 The charioteer is skilful – nonetheless  
 He leaps down to the ground; the empty car  
 The horses rattle, guideless as they are. 260  
 If in the woody grove the horses split  
 The car, the men tend to them but tilt it  
 And leave it there. The rite was ever so.  
 They pray to the shrine's lord; the chariot, though,

Falls to the god's lot. You went further still,  
Far-Shooter, coming to the meadow's rill  
Of Cephissus, whose water, sweetly flowing,  
Pours forth from Lilaea. You crossed it, going  
Past many-towered Ocalea, you who  
Works from a long way off, and then came to 270  
The grassy Haliartus. Then your aim  
Was going to Telphusa, and this same  
Seemed sweetly fit for shrine and grove. He went  
Close to her, saying: "It is my intent  
To build a glorious temple here to be  
An oracle for all mortality,  
Telphusa. Perfect hecatombs they'll bear  
And bring to me, all those who have a care  
To seek an oracle, those who reside  
In rich Peloponnesus, those who bide 280  
In Europe and upon the isles, and I  
Will give to all honest advice in my  
Rich temple." Speaking thus, Apollo laid  
All the foundations out and these he made  
Both wide and very long. But when she'd seen  
All this, Telphusa's heart was full of spleen.  
She said: "A word, Far-Worker, in your ear,  
Since a fair temple you plan to build here,  
An oracle for men who'll bring to you  
Their perfect hecatombs. Now listen, do, 290  
And lay it to you heart – the trampling  
Of rapid horses and mules watering  
Here at my sacred spring will irk you. Men  
Will rather wish to see fine chariots than  
And stamping rapid horses than to see  
Your massive shrine and the great quantity  
Of treasures in it. Hear, then, what I say –  
You are much mightier than I – I pray,  
At Crisa build your temple, just below  
The glades that lie in Parnassus; there no 300  
Bright chariots will clash nor any steed  
Near your fine altar at a rapid speed.  
No, glorious tribes of mortal men will leave  
Gifts to you as 'Hail-Healer'; you'll receive  
Rich sacrifices which will please you well  
From those who round about these regions dwell.  
Thus she got the Far-Shooter to agree  
That she should have renown there, and not he.  
Further you went, Apollo, coming then  
To where the Phlegyae dwell, presumptuous men, 310

By the Cephisian lake in a fair glade,  
Taking no note of Zeus. You quickly made  
Your way to Crisa then, which lies below  
The mountain of Parnassus, white with snow,  
A foothill facing west – above, a bluff  
Hangs over it, beneath, a valley, rough  
And hollow. Lord Phoebus Apollo planned  
To build his lovely temple on this land.  
He said: “I’ll build my lovely temple here,  
An oracle for men, who will come near 320  
With perfect hecatombs, those who reside  
In rich Peloponnesus or abide  
In Europe and upon the isles, and I  
Will give to all honest advice in my  
Rich temple.” Speaking thus, Apollo laid  
All the foundations out and these he made  
Both wide and very long. Trephonius  
And Agamedes, sons of Erginus,  
Dear to the gods, laid down a pediment  
Of stone on them, and countless different 330  
Tribes built the shrine with polished stones to be  
Sung evermore. In this vicinity  
Was a sweet spring, where with his mighty bow  
The lord Apollo, son of Zeus, laid low  
The bloated, great she-dragon who wrought deep  
Distress upon the men and their lean sheep –  
A bloody torment. She of the gold throne,  
Hera, once gave her fierce, fell Typhaon,  
Whom she brought up to be a plague to men.  
Hera had borne him, being angry then 340  
With Father Zeus when he bore in his head  
Glorious Athena. Queenly Hera said  
In anger to the gods who had amassed:  
“Hear me! Cloud-Gathering Father Zeus has cast  
Dishonour on me whom he made his wife,  
His faithful wife. For he has given life  
To the grey-eyed Athena, far from me  
(She is the paramount divinity).  
My son Hephaestus, though, is frail and lame  
Among the gods, which causes me great shame. 350  
I picked him up and into the wide sea  
I cast the lad. But Nereus’ progeny,  
Silver-shod Thetis, took him in her care  
With all her sisters. Oh, if only there  
Had been some other service she had done  
For the blest gods. Oh, wretched, crafty one,

What will you think up now? How could you bear  
Grey-eyed Athena all alone? How dare  
You do it? Could not I? For after all  
The gods who live on Mount Olympus call 360  
Me Zeus's wife. Watch out in case I hatch  
Some trick against you that will be a match  
To yours. In fact I will! Yes, I'll devise  
To bear a child who in Olympian eyes  
Will top them all. Nor will I shame our bond  
Of holy wedlock. I'll consort, beyond  
Our house, with all the gods. I will not lie  
With you." She spoke and from the gods on high  
She went in anger. Then she smote the land,  
Did cow-eyed Hera, with the flat of her hand 370  
And prayed: "Earth, Heaven, Titan gods as well,  
Who in great Tartarus beneath us dwell  
Which spawns both men and gods, listen to me.  
Grant me a child, apart from Zeus, and see  
He's no less great than Zeus. In fact, consent  
That he'll be greater still to the extent  
All-seeing Zeus tops Cronus." At that word  
She smote the earth with her strong hand and stirred  
Life-giving Earth, and this filled her with joy  
For she believed that she would bear that boy. 380  
For one year wise Zeus' nightly company  
She did not seek nor sit, as formerly,  
On her carved chair where for her mate she made  
Fine plans. No, cow-eyed queenly Hera stayed  
Within her temples where so many pray,  
Enjoying sacrifices. When each day  
And month was over, as the year rolled round,  
The seasons now approaching, then she found  
She'd borne no mortal nor a god, oh no,  
But dreadful, cruel Typhaon, a woe 390  
To mortals. Then she gave immediately  
This evil to another evil. She  
Received it, and he plagued so many men.  
Whoever met the dragoness, why, then  
He met his doom until the mighty bow  
Of the far-shooting Phoebus laid her low.  
Gasping for breath, she lay in agony  
Upon the earth and writhed about. And she  
Let out an awful noise. It filled the air  
As in that wood she twisted here and there. 400  
Then, breathing out the blood of life, she died.  
Phoebus Apollo swaggeringly cried:

“Rot there upon the fecund earth. No more  
Will you harm man, who feeds upon the store  
The earth provides for them, and hither they’ll  
Bring perfect hecatombs. To no avail  
Against fell death now will Typhoeus be  
Nor the ill-famed Chimaera. We shall see  
Black Earth and shimmering Hyperion  
Cause you to rot.” Thus he boasted. She was gone 410  
Into the dark. Then Helios’ burning eye  
Caused her to rot right there, and that is why  
They call the place Pytho, whose lord they name  
Pythian Apollo, since the piercing flame  
Of Helios caused the beast to rot right there.  
And then it was that Phoebus was aware  
That the sweet spring had duped him. Seeing red,  
He then went to Telphusa and he said:  
“You did not plan, Telphusa, through deceit 420  
To keep this lovely place and pour forth sweet  
Waters. To me, not you alone, will cling  
Renown.” He spoke and pushed a showering  
Of rocks on her and hid her streams, and then  
He built an altar in a wooded glen  
Hard by the clear stream. All the people there  
Offer to ‘the Telphusian’ a prayer  
(For thus they call their lord) since he abased  
Holy Telphusa’s streams. And now he faced  
The problem of electing priests to aid 430  
His rites in rocky Pytho. While he made  
These plans, he saw upon the wine-dark sea  
A swift ship with a goodly company  
Of Cretans out of Minyan Knossos (these  
Perform rites to their master whose decrees  
They promulgate – whatever Phoebus, Lord  
Apollo, he who bears a golden sword,  
Below Parnassus’ dells gives out when he  
Replies to them out of the laurel-tree).  
To sandy Pylos they were sailing then 440  
In their black ship to trade with Pylian men.  
Phoebus Apollo met them then, pouncing  
On their swift ship and lay, a loathsome thing  
Just like a dolphin. No-one knew this fish  
Was Lord Apollo. No, it was their wish  
To throw it back. He made the black ship shiver  
On every side – the timbers were aquiver.  
They sat there in the vessel silently  
In fear, nor did they set the topsail free

In their black, hollow ship; their sails they let  
Alone in that dark-prowed ship. Once they'd set 450  
It firm with oxhide ropes, they sailed away,  
Borne by a swift South Wind behind. First they  
Passed Malea, then skimmed the Spartan strand  
To Taenarum, sea-wreathed, in the land  
Of Helios, a friend to men, where graze  
Lord Helios's thick-fleeced sheep always  
In a sweet land. They wished to dock and check  
And see if that great marvel stayed on deck  
Or leapt into the fish-filled swelling wave.  
The well-constructed ship would not behave, 460  
However, under its helm but skimmed straight past  
Rich Peloponnese, and, aided by the blast  
Of winds, Apollo steered her easily.  
She held her course and came to Arene  
And lovely Argyrhea and Thryon,  
The ford of River Alpheus, then on  
To well-built Aepy, sandy Pylos, too,  
Past Crumi, Chalcis, Dyme, and straight through  
To lovely Elis, where the Epei reign.  
She made for Pheras, helped across the main 470  
By Zeus's blasts. They spied Mt. Ithaca's height  
Beneath the clouds, and then came into sight  
Dulichium, Same, wooded Zacynthus.  
When they had passed all Peloponnesus,  
Crise's great gulf, that cuts off all that land,  
Appeared. Then Zeus ordained a mighty and  
Clear West Wind, which from heaven boisterously  
Gusted that with all speed across the sea  
The ship might run. So they set sail once more  
Back to the rising dawn, and at the fore 480  
Was Lord Apollo. Crisa, then, they reached,  
Seen from afar, the land of vines. They beached  
Their ship upon the sands. And then their lord,  
Phoebus Apollo, the Far-Worker, soared  
From off the ship, just like a star that's seen  
At noon and many flames with glittering sheen  
Flew from him up to heaven. To the shrine  
He went through priceless tripods, and the shine  
He caused among the flames was great, as he  
Showed off his arrows, and a radiancy 490  
Filled Crisa. This deed raised a hullabaloo  
From all the wives – and well-bound daughters, too –  
Of Crisa, for they all were much afraid.  
Then, swift as thought, back to the ship he made

His winged way. A youth, robust and strong,  
 He seemed to be, his hair cascading long  
 On his broad shoulders. He said wingedly:  
 “Strangers, who are you? Whence across the sea  
 Have you sailed? Are you traders? Do you roam,  
 Perhaps, at random, pirates on the foam, 500  
 Risking your lives and bringing injury  
 To foreign folk? Why in timidity  
 Do you rest here, not venturing to go  
 Ashore nor on your black vessel to stow  
 Your gear? That is industrious people’s way  
 When after their black ship is anchored, they,  
 Fatigued with labour, yearn for food.” This said,  
 He gave them courage, and the man who led  
 The Cretans answered: “Since you seem to be,  
 In shape and kind, not of mortality, 510  
 But an immortal god, to you all hail!  
 May you be blest and may the gods not fail  
 To give you cheer. That I may understand  
 Completely, tell me truthfully: What land,  
 What country is this? Who lives here? For we,  
 With other things in mind, crossed the great sea  
 From Crete to Pylos (we’re a Cretan race).  
 In all unwillingness we reached this place  
 On quite another journey, and for home  
 We long. Some god brought us across the foam. 520  
 Apollo, the Far-Worker, then replied:  
 “Stranger, though in past time did you reside  
 In wooded Cnossos, you shall not go back  
 To your dear city; you will ever lack  
 Your fair house, wife and children. Instead, here  
 You’ll keep my rich shrine which is held most dear  
 By many men. I am the progeny  
 Of Zeus – Apollo. Over the wide sea  
 I’ve brought you, wishing you no harm. You’ll know  
 The plans of all the gods, who’ll make it so 530  
 That you’ll be honoured always every day.  
 Come now and with all speed do as I say.  
 First loose the sheets and lower the sail, then tow  
 Your speedy ship up onto land; unstow  
 Your goods and all your fair ship’s gear, then raise  
 An altar on the beach and offer praise  
 Around a fire and offer white meal to me  
 All round the altar. From the hazy sea  
 I leapt upon your swift ship, and therefore  
 Pray to me as Delphinus; furthermore 540

The altar shall be called 'Delphinus', too,  
Forever and 'Offering a splendid view'.  
By your swift, dark ship cook a meal, and then  
Make offering to the Olympian gods, and when  
You no more crave sweet food, then come with me  
And sing the hymn 'Hail, Healer' till we see  
Where my rich temple stands to be your care."  
They harkened and obeyed him. Then and there  
They loosed the sheets and lowered the sail; that done,  
They let the mast down by the ropes upon 550  
The mast-head. Then they landed on the strand  
And drew their swift ship high upon the sand  
And fixed stays under her. And then they made  
An altar on the beach and, after, prayed  
Around a fire and offered white meal, as he  
Had ordered them, in all solemnity,  
By their swift, dark ship cooked a meal, and then  
Made offering to the Olympian gods, and when  
They no more craved sweet food, they left the strand,  
Led by the lord Apollo, in his hand 560  
A lyre. Stepping high and proud, he played  
A sweet air, while the Cretans also made  
Their way to Pytho, dancing to the beat  
Of their own paeon as the men of Crete  
Perform it, filled with a sweet melody  
Sent by the Muse. The ridge unwearily  
They reached, then saw Parnassus and the place,  
That sweet place, where they'd dwell, receiving grace  
From many men. The holy sanctum then  
He showed them, and the rich shrine. In those men 570  
Their hearts were stirred, and then their master said:  
"Since from our friends and country we've been led  
By you, lord - so it pleased you - how shall we  
Now live? That would we know. Here do we see  
No vineyards, pastures, nothing else that can  
Help us to thrive and serve our fellow-man."  
Apollo smiled and said: "You'd like to be  
Oppressed by cares, hard toil and poverty,  
You foolish wretches! Listen, I will say  
One little thing - although you all will slay 580  
These sheep with knives continually, yet still  
You will have endless plenteousness that will  
Be brought to me by glorious tribes. So mind  
My shrine and entertain all of mankind  
That gathers here and show my will to all.  
Be righteous, and if anyone should fall

From compliance or shun me or, maybe,  
Utter a word or act unthinkingly  
Or show conceit, as men will, other men  
Shall be your masters and forever then 590  
Shall you be in their power. Now you know  
It all – remember it.” So farewell, o  
You son of Zeus and Leto. You I’ll tell  
Of in my song – another song as well.

#### IV - TO HERMES

The son of Zeus and Maia, Hermes, sing,  
O Muse, lord of Arcadia, burgeoning  
With flocks, and of Cyllene, who brings glee,  
The herald of the gods and progeny  
Of Zeus and rich-tressed Maia, a shy  
Goddess who passed her fellow-deities by  
And dwelt in a dark cave, and it was there  
One night she lay with Zeus – and unaware  
Of what they did were all the gods and men –  
While white-armed Hera sweetly slept, and when 10  
Great Zeus’s deed was done and up on high  
The tenth moon was established in the sky,  
She was delivered and a deed was done  
Of great import: she bore a cunning son,  
Gifted, a thief, a cattle-driver too,  
A watcher at the gates by night, one who  
Brings dreams and will among the gods display  
Great deeds. Though born at dawn, yet at midday  
He played the lyre and when nightfall had come,  
He stole Apollo’s cattle (the month’s sum 20  
Of days was four); once from the womb he’d leapt,  
Within his holy cradle nothing kept  
Him long. He left his high cave in one bound  
And in his search an endless joy he found  
In a tortoise, which he first made fit for song.  
He came upon it waddling along  
Before the courtyard portals as it fed  
On the rich grass. He laughed out loud and said:  
“A wondrous sign of luck so soon for me!  
I will not slight it. Hail, in ecstasy 30  
I greet you, lovely beater of the ground,  
Companion at the feast. Where have you found  
This spangled shell, this plaything – you who dwell

Up in the mountains? Since you'll serve me well,  
I'll take you home and bring you no disgrace.  
First you must help me, though. A better place  
Is home – outdoors is harmful. You shall be  
A spell against malicious sorcery.  
You'll sing most sweetly, though, when you are dead.”  
He gathered up the tortoise as he said 40  
These words and took his fine toy home with him.  
With a grey iron ladle every limb  
Of this peak-living beast he lopped away.  
As swift thought comes to those around whom play  
Uneasy, thronging cares, as from the gaze  
Of someone's eyes resplendent glances blaze,  
Famed Hermes made his plans for word and deed  
Immediately. He measured stalks of reed  
Which he had cut and then he fixed each one  
Across its back and through its shell. This done. 50  
He stretched an ox-hide very skilfully  
Across it, put the horns on, too, then he  
Fit bridges on the horns in, too, and then  
Stretched seven strings made out of sheep-gut. When  
He had done that, he tested every string  
With the plectrum as he held the lovely thing.  
It sounded wondrously beneath his hand  
While he sang sweetly, as a youthful band  
Swaps taunts at festivals. He sang an air  
Of Zeus and well-shod Maia, how that pair 60  
Chatted while they made love, and he related  
The tale of his famed birth and celebrated  
The nymph's handmaids and her bright home and all  
The tripods and the cauldrons at her hall.  
Meanwhile, with other matters he was faced.  
He took the hollow lyre which he placed  
Inside his holy cradle. Now he yearned  
For meat and with sheer trickery he burned  
As he sprang from the fragrant hall and went  
To a lookout – on such deeds are rascals bent 70  
In dead of night. The sun beneath the land  
Was setting in the west with horses and  
Their chariot. Hermes now came at a run  
To the Pierian peaks that lack the sun,  
Where the gods' deathless cattle have their stead  
And on unmown and pleasant grass are fed.  
And then the son of Maia, he who slew  
Argos, took fifty beasts that loudly moo  
From the herd and drove them all a-straggling

Across a sandy spot while swivelling 80  
 Their hoof-prints round. It was a clever scheme  
 To turn them in that way that they might seem  
 Not what they were, while he walked normally.  
 With wickerwork he fastened by the sea  
 Wonderful sandals, quite remarkable,  
 Before unheard-of, unimaginable,  
 With myrrh-twigs and with tamarisks mixed. Fresh wood  
 He fastened and attached them – well and good- ,  
 The leaves and all, beneath his feet. Behold,  
 A pair of lightweight sandals. As I told  
 You, this was in Pieria when he  
 Prepared to leave upon his odyssey 90  
 In his unique way. An old greybeard, though,  
 Tilling his flowering vineyard, saw him go  
 Speeding towards the plain as he went through  
 Grassy Onchestus. “Well, old fellow, who  
 Are digging with bowed shoulders, “ famed Hermes  
 Said, “you’ll have plenteous wine when all of these  
 Vines bear fruit. So remember not to see  
 What you in fact have seen, and similarly  
 Be deaf to what you’ve heard and do not say  
 A word – you’ll not be harmed in any way. 100  
 At this, he sped his sturdy cattle on.  
 Through many shadowy mountains had they gone,  
 Echoing gorges, flowering plains, with night,  
 His holy friend, near over, and daylight,  
 That urges folk to labour, almost nigh,  
 When Pallas’ child Selene up on high  
 Climbed to the look-out, shining radiantly,  
 Then to the Alpheius Zeus’ strong progeny  
 Drove Phoebus’ wide-faced cattle and, still spry,  
 They reached the byres where the roofs loomed very high 110  
 And troughs before the splendid field, and when  
 He’d fed the loudly-lowing cattle, then  
 He drove them close-packed to the byre while they  
 On moist sedge and on lotus chewed away.  
 He heaped a pile of wood and started out  
 To seek the art of fire. He took a stout  
 Bay-branch and trimmed it with a knife which he  
 Clutched tightly in his hand, and torridly  
 The smoke rose up. For fire he formulated  
 And fire-sticks. Next he accumulated 120  
 Many dried sticks and laid them thick and tight  
 In a sunken trench and with a fiery light  
 A flame began to glow and when the force

Of famed Hephaestus took its blazing course  
He dragged two horned and lowing cows along  
Close to the fire – for he too was strong –  
And threw them panting on their backs and, when  
He'd rolled them to their sides, their life force then  
He pierced. Then, slice by slice, the meat he slit,  
The rich and fattened meat, then on a spit 130  
Of wood the flesh he roasted and the dark  
Blood of the innards and the chine, the mark  
Of honour; on a rugged rock each hide  
He spread and even now through time and tide  
They still are there and evermore shall be.  
Then Hermes took the rich meat joyfully  
And placed it on a stone both smooth and flat  
And split it into twelve by lot. At that,  
Each slice would bring much honour to each one  
Who tasted it. Now Zeus's famous son 140  
Longed for the holy meat. Its sweet smell made  
Him dreary, though a god, but he was stayed  
By his proud heart, but he put it all by,  
The fat and flesh, in the byre, whose roof was high  
And quietly placed it high so all might see  
His youthful theft. Dry sticks accordingly  
He gathered and then threw into the flame  
The heads and hooves. When to the end he came  
Of all these deeds, his sandals then he cast  
In the deep river Alpheius and passed 150  
The night in quenching embers and with sand  
He spread the black ash, while upon the land  
Selene brightly shone. At break of day  
To Cyllene's bright crests he went straightaway.  
And there was neither god nor man – not one –  
Met him as on he trekked, and no dogs – none –  
Let out a bark. Then luck-bringing Hermes,  
The son of Zeus, just like a misty breeze  
In fall, passed through the keyhole of the hall  
Straight to the rich shrine and no noise at all 160  
He made then went to his cradle hurriedly  
And donned his baby-clothes so he might be  
Just like a babe himself and then he played  
With the sheet about his knees; yet he had laid  
At his left hand his sweet lyre. And yet he  
Was noticed by his goddess mother. She  
Said: "Oh you rogue, whence have you come at night,  
Wrapped in your shamelessness? With cords drawn tight  
Round you shall Phoebus – such is my belief –

Eject you or you'll live life as a thief 170  
 Out in the glens. Go! You were spawned to be  
 A bane to men and gods." Then craftily  
 He answered: "Why attempt to make me start,  
 Mother? I'm not a helpless babe whose heart  
 Knows little wrong and fears his mother may  
 Rebuke him. I'll continue to essay  
 What plan is best and feed continually  
 The two of us. I'm not prepared to be  
 A resident here, as you advise, and bear  
 The shame of not receiving gifts or prayer. 180  
 Better to live among the gods always,  
 Wealthy in everything, than spend my days  
 In gloomy caves, and as for honour, why,  
 If Zeus will not allow me them, I'll be  
 The prince of thieves – I've the ability.  
 If I'm sought out by Leto's glorious son,  
 I think that he'll regret what he has done.  
 Into Pytho's great house I plan to break  
 And from it I will splendid tripods take 190  
 And gold and cauldrons, in great number, too,  
 And much bright iron and apparel. All this you  
 May see." That's what they said, each to the other,  
 Hermes the son of Zeus and his royal mother,  
 Maia. When early Dawn brought light to men  
 From the deep-flowing Oceanus, then  
 Phoebus Apollo came to Onchestus,  
 The holy, sweet grove of Gaieochus,  
 The roaring Lord of Earth and there he found  
 An old man who along the trodden ground 200  
 From the courtyard fence his beast was pasturing.  
 The glorious Hermes said the following:  
 "Old man, who weed the grassy land, I came  
 Out of Pieria with just one aim -  
 Cattle, all cows, with curving horns – I own  
 Them all. The pitch-black bull grazed all alone.  
 Four fierce-eyed hounds, though, shadowed them like men,  
 All of one mind. The dogs and bull were then  
 All left behind – surprisingly. And yet  
 The cows left the sweet pasture at sunset. 210  
 Tell me, have you seen someone passing by  
 Behind these cows? The old man answered: "Why,  
 My friend, it's hard to tell all one can see.  
 So many pass through this locality,  
 Some bent on bad, some good. It's hard to know  
 Each one. While digging in my vineyard, though,

Till sunset, I believe, sir, that I spied  
Some child or other walking side to side  
Behind some long-haired beasts and carrying  
A stick – though I’m not sure – and piloting 220  
Them backwards, facing them.” That’s what he said,  
And at his words Apollo faster sped  
Upon his way. He noticed presently  
A long-winged bird and knew the progeny  
Of Zeus had stolen them. So then with speed  
He went to splendid Pylos in his need  
To find the shambling beasts, while all around  
His massive shoulders a dark cloud was bound.  
Apollo marked his footsteps, saying: “Oh,  
This is a wondrous marvel; for, although 230  
The straight-horned oxen made these tracks, they lead –  
Or seem to do – back to the flowery mead.  
No man nor woman, no grey wolf nor bear  
Nor lion made the tracks that I see there,  
Nor shaggy Centaur either, I suppose,  
Whoever made such monstrous tracks as those  
So swiftly. For on this side of the way  
They are amazing – even more are they  
Upon the other. When this he had said,  
He to well-forested Cyllene sped 240  
And the deep, rocky cave, beset with shade,  
Where Zeus was born unto the holy maid.  
The lovely hill smelled sweetly and a flock  
Of sleek sheep grazed and he that dusky rock  
Instantly entered. Hermes, when he knew  
Apollo’s anger, snuggled down into  
His fragrant swaddling-clothes. As ash will screen  
Tree-stumps’ deep embers, Hermes, once he’d seen  
Apollo, huddled, heads, hands, feet squeezed tight  
(Just as a new-born seeking sweet sleep might), 250  
Though wide awake. His lyre he kept below  
His armpit. Phoebus recognized him, though,  
And Maia, too, the lovely mountain-maid,  
Although he was so craftily arrayed  
And but a babe. Through that great cavity  
He peered in every nook; with a bright key  
He opened up three closets well-supplied  
With nectar and ambrosia beside  
Much gold and silver, Maia’s garments, too,  
Some purple and some silver, such as you 260  
Might see among the blessed gods. then he  
Said: ‘Infant, lying in your cot, lest we

Fall out, tell me about my beasts. I'll fling  
You into dusky Hell, that harrowing  
And hopeless dark. Your parents shall not flee  
You as you roam and hold supremacy  
But over little folk." Then said Hermes  
With cunning: "Phoebus, what harsh words are these?  
You want your cows? I've not seen them or heard  
A single mention of them, not a word. 270  
I cannot help you, cannot claim a prize.  
Am I a cattle-lifter in your eyes?  
A strong man? No, this isn't my concern.  
I care for other things; for sleep I yearn  
And mother's milk and blankets and to be  
Bathed in warm baths. Let our controversy  
Not be reported, for this would astound  
The gods - that such an infant would be found  
Bringing home beasts. Unseemly! I was born  
But yesterday, my soft feet would be torn 280  
By rugged ground. Upon my father's head  
I'll swear a great oath, if you wish it said,  
That I am innocent nor did I see  
Who took those cows - whatever cows they be,  
For I have only *heard* of them, "he said.  
He quickly glanced about and turned his head  
This way and that and raised his brows as well  
And whistled long as he heard Phoebus tell  
His tale as though he lied. Then quietly  
Apollo laughed and said: "So virtuously 290  
You speak, you cunning rogue, full of deceit.  
This night, I think, you've plundered many a seat,  
Filching in silence. In the glades up high  
You'll badger many a herdsman, coming by  
His herds and thick-fleeced sheep in your great thirst  
For flesh. Come in now, leave your cot, your cursed  
Companion, if you'd not sleep your last sleep.  
Among the gods this title shall you keep  
Forever - prince of thieves." He grabbed the lad,  
But Hermes had a plan: while Phoebus had 300  
Him in his hands, he sent up to the sky  
A bird, a hard-worked serf that flew on high,  
A wretched envoy, and immediately  
He sneezed. Apollo threw him down when he  
Heard this and, eager though he was to go,  
Sat down and mockingly addressed him: "Oh,  
Fear not, you swaddled one, I'll find my herd,  
My brawny cows, by reason of this bird.

And you shall lead the way.” Immediately  
 Hermes sprang up and off. The sheet that he 310  
 Had placed around his shoulders he now drew  
 Up to his ears and said: “Hey, where are you  
 Carrying me? The angriest of all  
 The gods are you. Is it these cows that gall  
 You so that you harass me thus? Death to  
 All cattle! Look, I did not filch from you  
 Your cows – whatever they may be – or see  
 The culprit. I but heard their history.  
 Be just and swear to Zeus.” They argued thus  
 In detail, nor was Phoebus tyrannous – 320  
 He’d lost his cattle! But duplicity  
 Was Hermes’ aim, but when he found that he  
 Was matched in this, across the sand he sped  
 With Phoebus in his wake, himself ahead.  
 They came to sweet Olympus quickly, where  
 The scales of justice waited for this pair.  
 After the hour of Dawn on her gold seat  
 The gods on snowy Olympus came to meet  
 In counsel. Then they stood at Zeus’s knees:  
 To Phoebus the High-Thunderer’s words were these: 330  
 “Whence have you brought this mighty spoil, this tot  
 So like a messenger? This is a lot  
 For us to think about?” In his reply  
 Apollo said: ”Father, the time is nigh  
 For you to hear this weighty tale, although  
 You chide me for my love of spoil. But lo!  
 Here is a child whom, after journeying long,  
 I found, a downright plunderer, among  
 Cyllene’s hills. Such pert audacity  
 Among both gods and men I’ve failed to see – 340  
 Though many men deceive. He pirated  
 My cattle from their meadow, then he led  
 Them west to the shore of the loud-roaring sea  
 And straight to Pylos. Like a prodigy  
 Of some smart sprite, these traces were twofold.  
 The cattle’s tracks, the black dust clearly told,  
 Led to the flowery lea. But that strange thing  
 That led them seemed to have been travelling,  
 Outside the path upon the sandy ground,  
 On neither hands nor feet. He must have found 350  
 Some other means – in slender oaks maybe.  
 The dust showed all these tracks perceptibly.  
 After the sandy trek, though, not a trace  
 Could be detected on the ground’s hard face.

But as he drove the wide-browed cattle straight  
To Pylos, someone saw him. When the gate  
He'd quietly closed behind them, craftily  
By twists and turns he went back home, then he  
Lay in his cradle, still as the dark night,  
In his dim cave – no keen-eyed eagle might 360  
Have spotted him. Then much he rubbed his eyes  
And bluntly spoke out as he planned his lies:  
“I have not seen or heard of them; no man  
Has told me of them, so of them I can  
Say nothing nor claim a reward.” At that,  
Phoebus sat down. Then Hermes pointed at  
Lord Zeus and answered: “Here’s the truth for I  
Am truthful, Zeus, and cannot tell a lie.  
Seeking his shambling cows, he came today  
Up to our house just at the break of day. 370  
He brought no god as witness. Violently  
He ordered me to make confession. He  
Vowed he’d send me to the broad land of Hell,  
Because he’s at the height of youth and, well,  
I was born yesterday – he knows it, too.  
I don’t steal cows, I’m weak. All this is true –  
Believe, for you claim to have fathered me.  
I did not take them – as I hope to be  
Wealthy – nor cross the threshold. I revere  
Helios and all the gods. You I hold dear 380  
While dreading him. You know I’m blameless. I  
Will swear a great oath that I am. Yes, by  
The finely-decked Olympian drapery!  
One day I’ll punish him, strong though he be,  
For this harsh grilling. Now, though, give your aid  
To younger ones. The Cyllenian spoke and made  
Side glances, while his swaddling-clothes he had  
Upon his arm. Zeus laughed at this young lad  
Who plotted ill, denying cunningly  
His guilt. He ordered both of them to be 390  
Of one mind and search out the beasts. Hermes  
He told to lead and deal no falsities  
And show where he had left the sturdy herd.  
Zeus nodded. Good Hermes obeyed his word,  
For Zeus’s will prevailed. And then his two  
Fine sons for sandy Pylos made and through  
The ford of Alpheius and the fields they came  
Up to the high-roofed byre where those same  
Beasts were brought up. Then to the rocky cove  
Went Hermes and the hardy herd he drove 400

Into the light. Now Phoebus glanced aside  
And in the precipitous rock cowhides he spied  
And said to glorious Hermes: “Crafty one,  
How could you flay two cows? How was it done  
By one new-born? I dread your future strength;  
Your growing’s almost at its utmost length.”  
With hardy osier cords he tried to bind  
His hands. About each other, though, they twined  
And grew beneath their feet immediately  
And hid the wild beasts through the trickery 410  
Of Hermes. Phoebus gaped in great surprise.  
Then furtively the Argos-Slayer’s eyes  
Bent to the ground and flashed like fire as he  
Desired to hide himself. Yet easily  
He soothed the son of glorious Leto, stern  
Though he yet was. He tried each string in turn  
When he took up the lyre and he produced  
A sound wondrous to hear and it induced  
Phoebus to laugh with joy, and that sweet sound  
Of glorious music touched his heart; around 420  
His soul a tender longing grew as he  
Sat listening. Now, playing beautifully,  
Hermes plucked up his nerve and stood nearby  
Phoebus’ left side and, as he warbled high,  
Began to sing, and lovely was the sound.  
Of the deathless gods he sang and of the ground,  
Their birth and how the portions came to be  
Doled out to each one. First Mnemosyne,  
The Muses’ mother, he acclaimed – her due  
Was Maia’s son himself. According to 430  
Their ages, all the rest he hymned – how they  
Were born – as on his arm his lyre lay.  
A boundless longing seized Phoebus, and so  
With winged words he said to Hermes: “O  
Beast-slayer, busy rogue, friend of the feast,  
The song you sing’s worth fifty cows at least.  
This problem can be settled, I believe,  
Amicably. Therefore, please give me leave,  
O clever one, to know if this great thing  
Was yours from birth or did you learn to sing 440  
With some god’s teaching? For it’s marvellous,  
This new-sung sound, which I think none of us-  
No god nor man – but you has ever known,  
You thief. What is this talent that you own?  
To take away one’s desperate cares? For here  
Are three things one may choose from – love and cheer

And restful sleep. I am a satellite  
 Of the Olympian Muses who delight  
 In song and dance and in the thrilling cry  
 And full-toned chant of flutes. However, I 450  
 Have never liked those clever feats before  
 One hears at young men's sprees. Now I adore  
 Your sound. I marvel at how well you play.  
 But sit down, since, though born but yesterday,  
 You have such skills. Lend a respectful ear  
 To counsel which from your elders you'll hear.  
 Among the gods, you, and your mother too,  
 Shall have renown. This shall I tell to you  
 Directly. By this cornel-shaft, you'll be,  
 Among the gods, a leader – dignity 460  
 And glorious gifts I'll give you. Nor will I  
 Deceive you ever." Hermes, in reply,  
 Said craftily: Your questions to me are  
 Most careful, o you who work from afar.  
 I am not jealous that you want a part  
 In my great skill: today I shall impart  
 This fact to you. I wish to be a friend  
 To you in thought and deed. Now there's an end:  
 You know it all. Foremost you sit among  
 The deathless gods, and you are good and strong. 470  
 Zeus rightly loves you. Splendid presents he's  
 Given to you. They say that dignities  
 And his decrees and oracles you know  
 Of him. I've heard you're rich. Whatever so  
 You wish to know, you may. But since to play  
 The lyre is your wish, then chant away  
 And pluck its strings. Give way to gaiety.  
 This is my gift to you. Yet give to me  
 Renown, my friend. With this ally who's so  
 Clear-voiced within your hands, sing well. You know 480  
 The art of balanced utterance. Now bring  
 It boldly to rich feasts, to revelling.  
 To lovely dances – such festivity  
 Both night and day. If someone knowingly  
 Should ask about it, by its very sound  
 It teaches wondrous things that play around  
 The mind. With its humanity and ease  
 And feeling, toilsome drudgery it flees.  
 But if some fool should query violently,  
 It chatters nothing but mere vanity. 490  
 You can discover what you please, though. So  
 Here is my lyre. For my part, I'll go

And on both plain and hill my beasts I'll feed.  
Then, coupling with my bulls, the cows will breed  
Heifers and bulls galore. Though you've a bent  
For greed, you've no need to be violent  
And angry. He held out the instrument.  
Apollo took it and, unhesitant,  
Proffered to him his whip that shone so bright  
And made him keeper of the herds. Delight 500  
Caught Hermes as he took it while Apollo  
Took up the lyre and placed it in the hollow  
Of his left arm and tested every string  
With the plectrum one by one. And did it sing  
As he so sweetly trilled! Subsequently  
They took the herd back to the sacred lea,  
Then sped to snowy Olympus once again,  
Delighting in the lyre. Wise Zeus then  
Was glad and joined those two in amity.  
And since that time Hermes continually 510  
Loved Phoebus, having given the instrument  
To him as token. More than competent  
Was he in playing it. But he now found  
Another cunning art – the pipes, whose sound  
Is heard afar. Phoebus said to him: "Guide  
So full of cunning, I am terrified  
That you will steal the lyre and the curved bow,  
For Zeus has authorized that you shall go  
And travel through the fruitful earth to trade  
With men. But if a mighty oath you made 520  
Among the gods by nodding of your head  
Or by the potent waters which the dead  
Traverse, you'll please me well and comfort me.  
Then Hermes bowed his head in surety  
That he'd not steal whatever he possessed  
Or near his mighty house. Phoebus professed  
His friendship with the lad and vowed he'd love  
Not one of those immortals high above  
The earth nor any Zeus-born mortals more.  
Zeus sent an eagle then, and Phoebus swore: 530  
"To all the gods above I shall impart  
You as a token that within my heart  
You're prized and trusted. I'll give you to hold  
A splendid staff of riches made of gold,  
Three-branched, which will preserve you and fulfil  
All words and actions, so they be not ill.  
This do I know from Zeus. The prophecy,  
However, noble, heaven-born progeny,

Of which you query, never must be known  
 By any other god but Zeus alone. 540  
 As pledge a great and solemn oath I swore  
 That to no god who lives for evermore  
 But me shall Zeus his clever plans unfold.  
 So, brother, you who bear the staff of gold,  
 Don't bid me tell them. As for mortals, I'll  
 Harm one and aid another, all the while  
 Sorely perplexing all humanity.  
 That man who hears the bird of prophecy  
 And sees its flight and comes to me shall get  
 My vocal aid and not be misled. Yet 550  
 Who trusts in birds that idly chatter and  
 Wishes, against my will, to understand  
 More than the gods, his journey's been in vain.  
 And yet the gifts he brings I shall retain.  
 I'll tell you something more, lad: there are three  
 Pure, holy winged sisters whom you'll see  
 Sprayed with white meal about their heads. They dwell  
 In their home beneath Parnassus in a dell,  
 All teachers of the art of prophecy,  
 Apart from me, an art which occupied me 560  
 When, as a boy, I followed herds, although  
 My father paid no heed. They to and fro  
 Fly, feeding on honeycomb as they induce  
 The future. When inspired by the juice  
 Of honey, they'll speak truth. But if denied  
 The gods' sweet food, they'll tell lies as they glide  
 About. I give you them. If you enquire  
 Strictly of them, you'll gain your heart's desire.  
 If you teach this to someone else, he'll hear  
 Your answer often, if he wins good cheer. 570  
 Take these and tend your roving, horned herd,  
 All steeds and patient mules." That was his word.  
 And over all the wild beasts that are fed  
 By the broad earth, he made famed Hermes head –  
 The grim-eyed lion, the gleaming-tusked boar,  
 All flocks, all dogs, all sheep and, furthermore,  
 Made him sole messenger to Hades: though  
 Hades receives no bounty, even so  
 He'll give him no mean prize. The progeny  
 Of Maia thus received great amity 580  
 From Lord Apollo who augmented then  
 His gifts with grace – with all the gods and men  
 He traffics. Though he makes some gains, yet he  
 Cheats men throughout the night continually.

So farewell, son of Maia. You I'll tell  
Of in my song – another song as well.

## V - TO APHRODITE

Of golden Aphrodite, Muse, tell me –  
That Cyprian goddess who stirs ecstasy  
Among the gods, subduing men, as well,  
And birds and animals, all those that dwell  
On earth and in the sea. They all hold dear  
The well-wreathed one's exploits. There are a mere  
Three hearts she cannot bend nor yet beguile:  
Grey-eyed Athene's one – she'll never smile  
At Aphrodite's deeds. Her care is war,  
The work of Ares, conflict, blood and gore. 10  
She was the first to teach mortals to build  
Bronze chariots of battle, and she filled  
Soft maids with knowledge of the arts. Also,  
The laughter-loving love goddess had no  
Ability to tame the dark huntress,  
Gold-shafted Artemis, in amorousness,  
For she loves slaying beasts and archery,  
The lyre, thrilling cries, terpsichory,  
Dark groves and just men's cities. Now the chaste  
Istia is the third to have no taste 20  
For Aphrodite's works (first progeny  
Of wily Cronus, and the last, was she  
By aegis-bearing Zeus's will) - a queen  
Of whom Poseidon and Phoebus had been  
Wooers, whom she rejected stubbornly.  
She swore a great oath, which would come to be  
Fulfilled, by touching Father Zeus's head.  
She'd be a virgin evermore, she said.  
For this she was given a great reward  
And lodged inside the house of Zeus, the lord 30  
Of all and got the greatest share, and she  
Is praised in all the shrines, the primary  
Goddess among all mortals. These are they  
That she can't influence in any way.  
But Aphrodite cannot be ignored  
By other gods or men. Even the lord,  
Thunderer Zeus, she leads astray, though he  
Is mightiest of all. Easily she  
Seduces his wise heart and, at a whim,

With mortal womenfolk enforces him 40  
To couple, although Hera does not know  
Of this (she is his sister and, also,  
His wife) and Hera's the most beautiful  
Of all the goddesses – most glorious  
Child whom with Rhea sly Cronus created.  
With the chaste, modest goddess Zeus then mated,  
The ever-wise one. Zeus, though, this goddess  
For a mortal man imbued with amorousness.  
And she lay with him so that even she  
Might soon know mortal love nor laughingly 50  
Say gods to mortal women she had paired,  
Creating mortal men, while men had shared,  
Through her, goddesses' beds. So she straightway  
Then made Anchises love her who, that day,  
In godlike shape, was tending herds around  
Many-springed Ida's steep hills. When she found  
The man, she loved him passionately. She went  
To Paphos where her altar, sweet with scent,  
And precinct were. She entered there, and tight  
She shut the doors, those doors that shone so bright. 60  
The Graces bathed her with the oil that's seen  
Upon the deathless gods with heavenly sheen,  
Fragrant and sweet. Her rich clothes they arrayed  
Her in, then, swathed in gold, for Troy she made  
With speed high in the air. And thus she came  
To Ida (of the beasts she cannot tame  
She is the mother). To the high retreat  
She came, where, fawning, grey wolves came to meet  
Her – grim-eyed lions and speedy leopards, too, 70  
Hungry for deer and bears. All, two by two,  
Mated among the shadowy haunts. But she  
Came to the well-built leas. And there was he -  
The hero Anchises, some way away  
From others, in the homesteads. One could say  
That he was godlike in his beauty. Though  
The others urged their cattle all to go  
With them to grassy pasturelands, yet he  
Was playing on his lyre thrillingly  
While strolling to and fro. And there she stood  
Before him like a girl in maidenhood, 80  
In height and mien, that she might quell his fright.  
He saw her and he wondered at the sight –  
Her height and mien, her shining clothes. For she  
Had on a robe whose shining brilliancy  
Capped fire, gorgeous, golden and enhanced

With many hues and, like a moon, it glanced  
 Over her delicate breasts, a wondrous sight,  
 And twisted brooches, earrings shining bright,  
 And lovely necklaces were set around  
 Her tender throat. Now Eros quickly found 90  
 Anchises, who said: "Lady queen, may bliss  
 Be on you whether you are Artemis  
 Or golden Aphrodite or, maybe,  
 Noble Themis or bright-eyed Athene  
 Or Leto? Does a Grace, p'raps, come to me?  
 (They're called immortal, seen in company  
 With gods). Or else a Nymph, who's seen around  
 The pleasant woods, or one, perhaps, who's found  
 Upon this lovely mountain way up high  
 Or in streams' springs or grassy meadows? I 100  
 Will build a shrine to you, seen far away  
 Upon a peak, and on it I will lay  
 In every season some rich offering.  
 Be gracious, granting that all men may sing  
 Of my prestige in Troy, my progeny  
 All strong forever after. As for me,  
 May I live long in wealth." Then in reply  
 The child of Zeus addressed him and said: "I  
 Am no goddess, Anchises, most sublime  
 Of earth-born ones. Why do you think that I'm 110  
 Immortal? No, a mortal gave me birth.  
 My father's Otreus, very well known on earth,  
 If you have heard of him. He holds command  
 In well-walled Phrygia. I understand  
 Your language well. At home have I been bred  
 By a Trojan nurse who, in my mother's stead,  
 Nurtured me from a child, and that is why  
 I know *your* tongue as well. However, I  
 Was seized by Hermes, who took me away  
 From Artemis's dance. A great array 120  
 Of marriageable maids were we as we  
 Frolicked together. A great company  
 Surrounded us. Thence Hermes snatched me, then  
 Guided me over many fields of men,  
 Much land that was not harrowed nor possessed,  
 Where beasts of prey roamed the dark vales. I guessed  
 I'd never touch the earth again. He said  
 I'd be the wedded partner of your bed  
 And birth great brood. Back to the gods he flew,  
 And here I am! I have great need of you. 130  
 So by your noble parents (for no-one

Of wretched stock could create such a son)  
And Zeus, I beg, take me to wife, who know  
Nothing of love, a maiden pure, and show  
Me to your parents and your brothers, who  
Shall like me well. Then send a herald to  
The swift-horsed Phrygians that immediately  
My sorrowing folks shall know of this. You'll see  
From them much gold and woven stuff and more.  
Take these as bride-price, then make ready for 140  
A lovely wedding that for gods and men  
Shall be immortalized. The goddess then  
Put love into his heart. Then Anchises,  
Thus stricken, said: "If I can credit these  
Words that you say, if you're of mortals bred,  
That Otreus fathered you – that's what you said –  
And Hermes brought you here that you might be  
My wife forever, no-one shall stop me –  
No god nor man – from having intercourse  
With you right now, not even if perforce 150  
Phoebus shot arrows from his silver bow  
At me. I'd go into the land below  
The earth most gladly once I'd broached your bed,  
O godlike lady." That is what he said.  
He took her hand. She threw her glance aside,  
Her lovely eyes cast down, and slowly hied  
To the well-spread bed, which was already made  
With delicate coverings. On it were laid  
Bearskins and skins of roaring lions he  
Had killed in that mountainous territory. 160  
In bed, each twisted brooch and each earring  
And necklace he removed – each shining thing –  
And doffed her girdle and bright clothes and laid  
Her on a golden-studded seat, then made  
Love to her, man and goddess – destiny  
And the gods' will condoned it – although he  
Did not know what he did. But at the hour  
When oxen and tough sheep back from the flower-  
Filled pasture were led home, the goddess blessed  
Anchises with sweet sleep but then she dressed 170  
Herself in her rich garments. With her head  
Reaching the well-hewn roof-tree, by the bed  
She stood, and from her cheeks there radiated  
Unearthly beauty one associated  
With well-wreathed Cytherea. And then she  
Roused him and said: "Why sleep so heavily?  
Get up, Anchises! Tell me, is my guise

The same to you as when you first laid eyes  
 Upon me?" He awoke immediately.

Seeing her neck and lovely eyes, was he 180  
 Afraid; he turned his eyes, his cloak concealing  
 His comely face. His winged words appealing,  
 He said: "When first I looked on you, I knew  
 You were a goddess – you did not speak true.  
 By aegis-bearing Zeus, I beg, let me  
 Not live my life among humanity,  
 A palsied thing. Have pity. For a man  
 Who lies with goddesses no longer can  
 Be sound." She answered him: "O leading light

Of mortals, courage! You've no need of fright. 190  
 Nor I nor any god will cause you fear –  
 The gods love you. A son who shall be dear  
 To you shall over Troy hold sovereignty,  
 As shall his offspring in posterity.  
 His name shall be Aeneas, for the pain  
 Of grief I felt inside because I'd lain  
 With a mortal. Yet the people of your race  
 Are the most godlike, being fair of face  
 And tall. Zeus seized golden-haired Ganymede

Thanks to his beauty, that he might indeed 200  
 Pour wine for all the gods and always be  
 Among them all – remarkable to see.  
 Honoured by all, he from the golden bowl  
 Drew the red nectar. Grief, though, filled the soul  
 Of Tros, not knowing if a heaven-sent blow  
 Had snatched away his darling son, and so  
 He mourned day after day unceasingly.  
 In pity, Zeus gave him indemnity-  
 High-stepping horses such as carry men.

Hermes, the Argos-slaying leader, then, 210  
 At Zeus's bidding, told him all – his son  
 Would live forever agelessly, atone  
 With all the gods. So, when he heard of this  
 No longer did he mourn but, filled with bliss,  
 On his storm-footed horses joyfully  
 He rode away. Tithonus similarly  
 Was seized by golden-throned Eos – he, too,  
 Was of your race and godlike, just like you.  
 She begged dark-clouded Zeus to give consent

That he'd be deathless, too. Zeus granted this. 220  
 But thoughtless queenly Eos was amiss,  
 Not craving youth so that senility  
 Would never burden him and so, though he

Lived happily with Eos far away  
On Ocean's streams, at the first signs of grey  
Upon his lovely head and noble chin,  
She spurned his bed but cherished him within  
Her house and gave him lovely clothes to wear,  
Food and ambrosia. But when everywhere  
Old age oppressed him and his every limb  
He could not move, her best resolve for him 230  
Was this – to place him in a room and close  
The shining doors. An endless babbling rose  
Out of his mouth; he had no strength at all  
As once he had. I'd not have this befall  
Yourself. But if you looked as now you do  
Forevermore and everyone called you  
My husband, I'd not grieve. But pitiless  
Old age will soon enshroud you – such distress  
Will burden every mortal – wearying  
And deadly, even by the gods a thing 240  
Of fear. You've caused great endless infamy  
For me among the gods who formerly  
Feared all my jibes and wiles with which I mated  
The gods with mortal maids and subjugated  
Them all. However, no more shall my word  
Have force among the gods, since I've incurred  
Much madness on myself, dire, full of dread.  
My mind has gone astray! I've shared a bed  
With a mortal! Underneath my girdle lies  
A child! As soon as he has cast his eyes 250  
Upon the sun, the mountain Nymphs whose breasts  
Are deep, who dwell on those great sacred crests,  
Shall rear him. They're not of mortality  
Nor immortality; extendedly  
They live, eat heavenly food and lightly tread  
The dance among the deathless ones and bed  
With Hermes and Sileni, hid away  
In pleasant caves, and on the very day  
That they are born, up from the fruitful earth  
Pines and high oaks also display *their* birth, 260  
Trees so luxuriant, so very fair,  
Called the gods' *sancta*, high up in the air.  
No mortal chops them down. When the Fates mark  
Them out for death, they wither there, their bark  
Shrivelling too, their twigs fall down. As one,  
Both Nymph and tree leave the light of the sun.  
They'll rear my son. And at his puberty  
The goddesses will show you him. Let me

Tell you what I propose – when he is near  
His fifth year on this earth, I'll bring him here 270  
That you may gaze upon him and enjoy  
The sight, for he will be a godlike boy.  
Bring him to windy Ilium. If you  
Are queried by some mortal as to who  
Gave birth to him, then say, as I propose,  
It was a flower-like Nymph, one Nymph of those  
Who dwell upon that forest-covered crag.  
Should you tell all, though, and foolishly brag  
That you have lain with rich-crowned Aphrodite,  
Then with a smoky bolt will Zeus Almighty 280  
Strike you. That's all. Take heed. Do not name me.  
Respect the anger of the gods." Then she  
Soared up to windy heaven. Queen, farewell.  
Your tale is told. I have one more to tell.

#### VI - TO APHRODITE

Of stately Aphrodite, crowned with gold  
And beautiful I'll sing, her whose stronghold  
Is well-walled, sea-girt Cyprus, whither she  
Was wafted on soft foam across the sea  
By the moist West Wind, received with happiness  
By the gold-circleted Hours, her heavenly dress  
Provided by them, and a diadem  
They placed upon her heavenly head – a gem  
Of gold, fair and well-wrought. Her ears, which she  
Had pierced, they hung with fine-gold jewelry 10  
And copper-mountain gems. Her snowy-white  
Breasts and her tender neck were decked with bright-  
Gold necklaces, which they themselves would wear  
When they went to their father's house, for there  
They joined the gods in fair terpsichory.  
Decked out they took her to the company  
Of the gods who warmly greeted her and prayed,  
As each one welcomed with his hands the maid,  
That she might be his wedded wife, their eyes  
Gazing upon the goddess in surprise. 20  
O sweetly-winning, coy-eyed goddess, hail!  
O grant that in this contest I'll not fail.  
Give orders for my song. For you I'll tell  
Of in my song – another song as well.

## VII - TO DIONYSUS

I'll sing of Dionysus, who's the son  
Of glorious Semele, just like someone  
In the first flush of youth close by the strand  
Of the fruitless sea on a jutting headland,  
While all about him waved his rich dark hair,  
A purple robe on his strong back. Soon there  
Appeared, in a well-decked ship, a company  
Of Tyrrhenian pirates on the wine-dark sea.  
They saw him, nodded each to each and sprang  
Out quickly and their hearts joyfully sang 10  
As he was seized, for they believed that he  
Was son of heavenly kings and wished to see  
Him tightly bound but could not do it. No,  
The bonds fell from his hands and feet and lo!  
He sat there with his dark eyes smiling. Then  
The helmsman, now enlightened, to his men  
Said: "Madmen! Who's this god you've taken here  
And bound? Even this well-built ship, I fear,  
Can't hold him. He is strong! He's Zeus, maybe,  
Or else Apollo or Poseidon. He 20  
Does not appear to be like mortal men.  
No, he's a god, I'm sure. Let's set him, then,  
On the dark shore at once, and do not lay  
Your hands on him lest, in a rage, he may  
Send dangerous winds and heavy squalls." Thus he  
Addressed them. But the master tauntingly  
Said in reply: "Madman yourself! Go check  
The wind. Help hoist the sail. All hands on deck  
To catch the sheets! We'll deal with him. I claim 30  
That Egypt or else Cyprus is his aim  
Or else the Northern Folk or farther yet.  
But he will speak out in the end, I bet,  
About his friends, wealth, brothers. Destiny  
Has thrown him in our way." And, with this, he  
Got them to hoist the mast and sail. The blast  
Of winds then filled the sail and on the mast  
They tautly hauled the sheets on either side.  
But strange things happened soon. Both far and wide  
Throughout the black ship wine, fragrant and sweet,  
Flowed free. A heavenly scent arose. The fleet 40  
Of men was all amazed. A vine now spread  
On the topsail, while clusters pivoted

Down from it. From the mast dark ivy wound  
With flowers blossoming and all around  
Rich berries grew. The tholes were garlanded.  
They told the helmsman, hearing this, to head  
For land. The god, however, now transformed  
Into a lion in the bows and stormed  
With roaring, then amidships wondrously  
He was a shaggy bear, rapaciously 50  
Arising. On the deck he made appear  
The fiercely glaring lion. Then in fear  
The sailors hurried to the stern and pressed  
All round about the helmsman, who was blest  
With wisdom. Then the master suddenly  
Was seized on by the lion. Into the sea  
They all leapt, seeing this, and in this way  
Escaped the master's wretched fate, but they  
Changed into dolphins. In his mercy, though,  
Dionysus held the helmsman back, and so 60  
He made him truly happy and addressed  
Him thus: "Take heed, my friend, for you have been  
Blessed by me. I am Dionysus, he  
Who loudly shouts, the son of Semele  
And Zeus." Farewell, fair Semele's offspring.  
Forgetting you, no-one can sweetly sing.

#### VIII - TO ARES

Mighty Ares, with helmet all of gold,  
A charioteer, a shield-bearer, so bold,  
Saviour of cities, harnessed in bronze and strong  
Of arm, and mighty with the spear, who long  
Toils, never tired, father of Victory,  
Olympus' champion, accessory  
Of Themis, rebels' tyrant, governing  
The just, of manliness the sceptred king  
Who wound your fiery sphere up in the air  
Among the sevenfold starry courses, where 10  
In the third firmament you were conveyed  
By blazing steeds, hear me, you who give aid  
To men, who give us youth, a kindly ray  
Shed on my life so that in strength I may  
Drive bitter cowardice away and quell  
My soul's deceitful impulses. As well,  
Restrain my fury, which would make me tread

The ways of bloody strife. Blest one, instead  
Grant me kind peace and let me shun the fate  
Of strife, the violent fiends of death and hate. 20

#### IX - TO ARTEMIS

Muse, sing of Artemis, the archer-maid,  
Far-Shooter's sister, she with whom she played  
When young. Her steeds she waters in Meles,  
Thick with deep reeds, where she, preparing these  
Through Smyrna swiftly drives her golden car  
To viny Claros where, awaiting Far-  
Discharging Artemis, armed with his bow  
Of silver sits the god Apollo. So,  
Hail to all goddesses, but first to you –  
Now I've begun I'll sing another, too. 10

#### X - TO APHRODITE

Of Cyprian Aphrodite I will sing,  
Who gives men lovely bounty, shimmering  
Delightfully with smiles. Goddess, farewell,  
Who in fine Salamis, your kingdom, dwell  
And Cyprus. Be my cheerful muse, for you  
I will remember – and one more song, too.

#### XI - TO ATHENE

The guardian of the city I will sing,  
Pallas Athene, dread one, revelling  
On war, destroying cities and the cries  
Of conflict in the battle, and she flies  
In aid of all the warriors. Goddess,  
Give us good fortune and all happiness!

#### XII - TO HERA

Golden-throned Hera, Rhea's child, I sing,

The queen of all immortals, bettering  
Them all in beauty, both sister and mate  
Of Zeus, who thunders loud. We celebrate  
You. The immortals make Olympus ring  
With awe for you and Zeus, loud-thundering.

### XIII - TO DEMETER

I sing the dread goddess with the rich hair,  
Demeter, and Persephone the fair,  
Her daughter. Guide my song and do not fail  
To keep secure the city. Goddess, hail.

### XIV - TO THE MOTHER OF THE GODS

The mother of all gods and men, pray, sing,  
Clear-voiced Muse – she’s the child of Zeus the king.  
Rattles, timbrels and flutes are her delight,  
The cry of wolves and lions with eyes so bright,  
Echoing mountains, wooded dells. To you  
O sing “Hail” and to other goddesses, too.

### XV - TO HERACLES THE LION-HEARTED

Of Heracles, the strongest man on earth,  
I’ll sing. In Thebes Alcmena gave him birth –  
The city of lovely dances – when she lay  
With dusky-clouded Zeus. Once, many a day,  
He roamed through countless lands and on the sea  
At King Eurystheus’ bidding. Violently  
He acted, suffering much. In joy and fame  
He lives now on Olympus. To him came  
Neat-ankled Hebe who would be his wife.  
Lord, give me wealth and fortune all my life.

10

### XVI - TO ASCLEPIUS

Asclepius the healer I begin

To sing, son of Apollo. It was in  
The Dotian plain where Coronis the fair,  
King Phlegyas' daughter, bore him. He takes care  
Of savage pangs, a joy to men. Hail, lord!  
My prayer to you my song will now afford.

#### XVII - TO THE DIOSCURI

Clear-voiced Muse, sing of the Tyndaridae,  
Castor and Polydeuces, born on high  
Of Zeus. Upon Taygetus' heights the queen  
Leda gave birth to them when she had been  
Subdued in secret by dark-clouded Zeus.  
Swift horsemen, hail, the sons of Tyndareus.

#### XVIII - TO HERMES

I sing Cyllenian Hermes, him who slew  
Argos. Cyllene's lord – Arcadia's, too,  
So rich in flocks – luck-bringing messenger  
To all the gods. When Zeus had lain with her,  
Maia, the child of Atlas, bore him. She  
Would ever shun the immortals' company,  
Remaining shyly in her dark cave where  
At dead of night the nymph with the rich hair  
Would lie with Zeus when white-armed Hera, bound  
In sweet sleep, lay. No god or mortal found  
Them out. Hail, Zeus' and Maia's son. To you  
I've sung a song – I'll sing another too.

10

#### XIX - TO PAN

O Muse. Of Hermes' darling son tell me,  
Goat-footed, horned, lover of revelry.  
In wooded glades with dancing nymphs he'll tread  
While they climb high upon a sheer cliff's head  
To call on Pan, the shepherd-god, whose hair  
Is long and shaggy. Each white crest's his lair,  
Each rocky peak. Through the close shrubbery  
He'll roam about, now struck with ecstasy



Sing, clear-voiced Muse, of him who captured fame  
For great inventions – Hephaestus by name.  
With bright-eyed Athene he showed to all men,  
Who'd dwelt in mountain grottos until then  
Like wild beasts, glorious crafts. But, having kenned  
These things, within their houses they now spend  
All year at ease in peace. Be kind to me,  
Hephaestus, and give me prosperity.

#### XXI - TO APOLLO

Even the swan, Apollo, clearly sings  
Of you as he alights with beating wings  
Beside the eddying Peneus. First and last  
The minstrel with his sweet tongue, holding fast  
His high-pitched lyre, sings of you. Hail, lord.  
I hope my song your favour will afford.

#### XXII - TO POSEIDON

I'll sing of great Poseidon. It is he  
Who shakes the very earth and fruitless sea.  
God of the deep, you're lord of wide Aegae  
And Helicon. A twofold office by  
The gods was given you, Earth-Shaker: you  
Recover ships and break in horses, too.  
Hail, Holder of the Earth, hail, dark-haired lord.  
Blest be, be kind! To sailors help afford!

#### XXIII - TO THE MOST HIGH SON OF CRONUS

Of Zeus, the chief of all the gods, I'll sing,  
The greatest lord of all, all-noticing,  
Fulfiller, who whispers profundity  
To Themis as she sits, obediently  
Leaning towards him. Great, all-seeing son  
Of Cronus, grant to us your benison.

#### XXIV - TO HESTIA

You, Hestia, who at goodly Pytho  
Tend the holy house of Apollo,  
Far-Shooter, soft oil ever from your hair  
Dripping, who with omniscient Lord Zeus share  
All wisdom, come into this house; advance  
And with your kindness my song enhance.

#### XXV - TO THE MUSES AND APOLLO

The Muses, Zeus and Phoebus shall give birth  
To my song: that there are minstrels on this earth  
And lutanists is due to the Muses and  
To Phoebus. Kings, though, are from Zeus. How grand  
He sounds who's dear to the Muses, for how sweet  
He sings! Hail, Zeus's children! Hail, and greet  
My song with approbation, and now you  
I will remember – and another song, too.

#### XXVI - TO DIONYSUS

Of loud and ivied Bacchus hear my lay,  
The splendid son of glorious Semele  
And Zeus, received by all the Nymphs, whose hair  
Is rich, from his father Zeus. With every care  
They nursed and nurtured him in Nysa's dells,  
Where, in a cave exuding pleasant smells,  
Zeus wished him reared, gods' darling. But once raised  
By the goddesses, in hymns often praised,  
He'd roam the wooded valleys, garlanded  
Thickly with bay and ivy, and he led  
The Nymphs. The never-ending wood would sound  
With their outcry. So, Bacchus, who abound  
In clusters, hail. May we come gladly here  
Next season and thenceforth for many a year.

10

#### XXVII - TO ARTEMIS

Of Artemis, whose shafts are gold, I sing,  
Hurrahing to her hounds and revelling  
In archery, stag-shooter, virgin miss,  
Gold-sworded Phoebus' sister – Artemis  
Across dark hills and windy peaks will pace,  
Her gold bow drawn, rejoicing in the chase  
And shooting grievous shafts, and at the sound  
Of groaning beasts, the dusky wood all round  
Echoed amazingly. The earth and sea  
Both shook. But the bold goddess whirlingly 10  
Dealt death to the animal world. Once satisfied,  
This huntress puts her slackened bow aside.  
To her dear brother's mansion now she flies  
To make arrangements there in rich Delphi  
For the Muses' and the Graces' dance. When she  
Has hung her weapons up, then, gracefully  
Arrayed, she leads the dances, while they sing  
Their songs with heavenly voices, recounting  
How trim-legged Leto bore her progeny  
Supreme among the heavenly company 20  
In thought and deed. Children, all hail to you.  
I shall recall you – and another song, too.

#### XXVIII - TO ATHENA

Of Pallas Athene I begin my lay,  
Famed goddess, clever, staunch, with eyes of grey,  
Pure, city-saviour, full of bravery,  
Of Triton born, wise Zeus's progeny –  
From his dread head he bore her, all arrayed  
In armour flashing gold. When the gods laid  
Their eyes on her, awe seized them all. Bounding  
From Zeus's head, she stood there brandishing  
A spear. Then great Olympus horribly  
Reeled at the sight of her, while fearfully 10  
The earth cried out, the sea shook and was smashed  
With dark waves; of a sudden white foam splashed.  
The bright sun his swift steeds some long time stayed  
While from her frame Athene doffed and laid  
Aside her armour. Wise Zeus then was glad.  
And so, daughter of Zeus, who's always had  
The aegis in his hand, all hail to you.  
I will recall you – and another song, too.

## XXIX - TO HESTIA

Hestia, where gods and men in great homes dwell  
You've gained a constant place; splendidly well  
You're honoured. Mortal banquets without you  
Do not exist; sweet wine – which is your due –  
Both first and last is not poured anywhere  
But to you. Phoebus Apollo, too, who bear  
The gold rod, the gods' messenger, both you  
And holy, dear Hestia, come and dwell  
In this grand house together. You know well 10  
Men's noble deeds, so make them wise and strong.  
Daughter of Cronus, listen to my song,  
And Hermes, too, for now I welcome you.  
I shall recall you – and another song, too.

## XXX - TO EARTH THE MOTHER OF ALL

I'll sing the mother of all, well-founded Earth,  
The eldest being, who throughout the girth  
Of all the world, feeds everyone, on sea  
And land and in the air. All progeny,  
Both fruits and children, come from her. You may  
Give life to men or else take it away,  
O queen. That man is rich whom you delight  
To prize – he has it all. His fields are bright  
With corn, his herd is large. His house is full  
Of luxury. Such men as he will rule 10  
Cities of lovely women formally:  
Great riches follow them; their sons will be  
Blithe always, while their daughters will cavort  
In flowery bands and jubilantly sport  
Over the fields of flowers. It is thus  
With those you honour, holy, bounteous  
Goddess. O mother of the gods, all hail,  
The wife of starry heaven. Do not fail  
To cheer me for this song I sing to you.  
I will recall you – and another song, too.

## XXXI - TO HELIOS

Daughter of Zeus, Calliope, now sing  
Of bright Helios, whom the far-glistening  
And cow-eyed one engendered by the son  
Of Earth and starry heaven. Hyperion  
Married that glorious maid, his sister, who  
Bore rosy-armed Eos, Selene, too,  
Rich-tressed, and strong, godlike Helios – all three  
Delightful. Helios, gazing piercingly  
Beneath his golden helmet, as he goes  
On his chariot, on gods and mortals glows, 10  
His bright locks streaming down arrestingly,  
Screening his far-seen features gracefully.  
He wears a garment, finely-spun and fair,  
That gleams about him, fluttering in the air,  
And stallions carry him; then, at one spot,  
He stays his steeds and gold-yoked chariot  
And at the zenith takes his rest and then  
In fine style drives them through the heaven again  
To Ocean. Hail to you, lord. Liberally  
Delight my heart. With you my poetry 20  
Began, so I will praise the half-divine  
Whose deeds the Muses have induced to shine.

#### XXXII - TO SELENE

And next, o sweet-voiced Muses, progeny  
Of Zeus, well-skilled in singing, sing for me  
Of the long-winged Moon whose sheen embraces Earth  
Out of her heavenly head and thus gives birth  
To beauty from her light. The air, unlit  
Before, now by the golden crown of it  
Shines, and her rays display a beaming path,  
When fair and bright Selene takes a bath  
In Ocean, putting on a robe a gleam  
From far away. She yokes her strong-necked team 10  
Of shining, long-maned steeds. With all their might  
She drives them, mid-month at approaching night.  
Then is her orbit full and every beam,  
As she increases, shines its brightest gleam,  
A certain token and a sign to men.  
The son of Cronus lay with her, and then  
She bore Pandeia, in the company  
Of gods the fairest. Bright divinity,

Mild, white-armed, bright-tressed queen, Selene, hail.  
I'll leave you now so I may sing the tale 20  
Of glorious demi-gods, whom minstrels praise,  
Serving the Muses in delightful lays.

### XXXIII - TO THE DIOSCURI

O bright-eyed Muses, sing the history  
Of the Tyndaridae, the progeny  
Of trim-legged Leda – Castor, who can tame  
All steeds, and Polydeuces, free from blame.  
Beneath great Mt. Taygetus she lay  
With Zeus of the Dark Clouds and bore them – they  
Save men and swift ships when the ruthless sea  
Rages with squalls: then sailors guarantee  
White lambs for them when to the prow they go.  
Strong winds, however, force the ship below 10  
The surface. But all of a sudden they  
With tawny wings dart forward and allay  
The cruel blasts and still the foaming sea –  
Fair tokens and release from misery.  
The sight of them brings gladness to the men  
Because they now have rest from toil. Hail, then,  
Tyndaridae, swift horsemen, to you two.  
I will recall you – and another song, too.