Theogony

I begin my song with the Helikonian Muses; they have made Helikon, the great god-haunted mountain, their domain; their soft feet move in the dance that rings the violet-dark spring and the altar of mighty Zeus. They bathe their lithe bodies in the water of Permessos or of Hippokrene or of god-haunted Okeanos. On Helikon’s peak they join hands in lovely dances and their pounding feet awaken desire. From there they set out and, veiled in mist, glide through the night and raise enchanting voices to exalt aegis-bearing Zeus and queenly Hera, the Lady of Argo who walks in golden sandals; gray-eyed Athena, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, and Phoebus Apollo and arrow-shooting Artemis. They exalt Poseidon, holder and shaker of the earth, stately Themis and Aphrodite of the fluttering eyelids, and gold-wreathed Hebe and fair Dione. And then they turn their song to Eos, Helios, and bright Selene, to Leto, lapetos, and sinuous and black Night, and to the holy race of the other deathless gods. It was they who taught Hesiod beautiful song, and the Muses of Olympos, first spoke to me. “Listen, you country bumpkins, you swag-bellied yahoos, we know how to tell many lies that pass for truth, and we know, when we wish, to tell the truth itself.” So spoke Zeus’s daughters, masters of word-craft, and from a laurel in full bloom they plucked a branch, and gave it to me as a staff, and then breathed into me a divine song, that I might spread the fame of past and future, and commanded me to hymn the race of the deathless gods, but always begin and end my song with them. Yet, trees and rocks are not my theme. Let me sing on! Ah, my heart, begin with the Muses who hymn father Zeus and in the realm of Olympos gladden his great heart; with sweet voices they speak of things that are and things that were and will be, and with effortless smoothness the song flows from their mouths. The halls of father Zeus the thunderer shine with glee and ring, filled with voices lily-soft and heavenly, and the peaks of snowy Olympos and the dwellings of the gods resound. With their divine voices they first sing the glory of the sublime race of the gods from the beginning, the children born to Gaia and vast Ouranos, and of their offspring, the gods who give blessings. Then they sing of Zeus, father of gods and men - they begin and end their song with him and tell of how he surpasses the other gods in rank and might. And then again the Olympian Muses and daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus hymn the races of men and of the brawny Giants, and thrill the heart of Zeus in the realm of Olympos. Mnemosyne, mistress of the Eleutherian hills, lay with father Zeus and in Pieria gave birth to the Muses who soothe men’s troubles and make them forget their sorrows. Zeus the counselor, far from the other immortals, leaped into her sacred bed and lay with her for nine nights. And when, as the seasons turned, the months waned, 

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1 Helikon: A mountain, 5,735 ft. high, of central Greece. It was the legendary abode of the Muses and was sacred to Apollo.
2 Muses: the nine daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, each of whom presided over a different art or science, as sources of inspiration
3 Zeus: The principal god of the Greek pantheon, ruler of the heavens, and father of other gods and mortal heroes
4 Aegis: The goatskin shield or breastplate of Zeus or Athena.
5 Hera: The sister and consort of Zeus
6 Argo: a large constellation in the southern hemisphere lying principally between Canis Major and the Southern Cross
7 Athena: The goddess of wisdom.
8 Phoebus Apollo: The god of light; god of prophecy and poetry and music and healing; son of Zeus and Leto; twin brother of Artemis
9 Artemis: The virgin goddess of the hunt and the moon and twin sister of Apollo
10 Poseidon: The god of the waters, earthquakes, and horses, and brother of Zeus
11 Themis: goddess of justice
12 Aphrodite: goddess of love and beauty
13 Hebe: The goddess of youth and spring, cupbearer to the Olympian gods
14 Olympos: the highest point in Greece and home of the mythical Greek gods
15 A proverbial saying meaning, ‘why enlarge on irrelevant topics?’ (Note by Hugh G. Evelyn-White)
16 Gaia: The goddess of the earth, who bore and married Uranus and became the mother of the Titans and the Cyclopes
17 Ouranos, or Uranus: the earliest supreme god, a personification of the sky, who was the son and consort of Gaea and the father of the Cyclopes and Titans
18 Mnemosyne: The goddess of memory, mother of the Muses
many many days passed and a year was completed,
she gave birth to nine daughters of harmonious mind, 
carefree maidens whose hearts yearn for song; 
this was close beneath the highest peak of snowy Olympos,  
the very place of their splendid dances and gracious homes.
The Graces and Desire dwell near them and take part in their feasts. 
Lovely are their voices when they sing and extol for the whole world the laws  
and wise customs of all the immortals.  
Then they went to Olympos, delighting in their beautiful voices  
and their heavenly song; the black earth all about resounded with hymns, and a harmonious tempo arose as they pounded their feet  
and advanced toward their father, the king of the sky who holds the thunderbolt that roars and flames. 
He subdied his father, Kronos, by might and for the gods made a fair settlement and gave each his domain. 

All this was sung by the Olympian Muses, great Zeus’s nine daughters whose names are Kleio, Euterpe, Thaleia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Ourania, and Kalliope, preeminent by far, the singers’ pride in the company of august kings. 
And if the daughters of great Zeus honor a king cherished by Zeus and look upon him when he is born, they pour on his tongue sweet dew 
and make the words that flow from his mouth honey-sweet, 
and all the people look up to him as with straight justice he gives his verdict and with unerring firmness and wisdom brings some great strife to a swift end. 
This is why kings are prudent, and when in the assembly injustice is done, wrongs are righted by the kings with ease and gentle persuasion. When such a king comes to the assembly he stands out; yes, he is revered like a god and treated with cheerful respect. Such is the holy gift the Muses give men. 
The singers and lyre players of this earth are descended from the Muses and far-shooting Apollo, but kings are from the line of Zeus. Blessed is the man whom the Muses love; sweet song flows from his mouth. A man may have some fresh grief over which to mourn, and sorrow may have left him no more tears, but if a singer, a servant of the Muses, sings the glories of ancient men and hymns the blessed gods who dwell on Olympos, the heavy-hearted man soon shakes off his dark mood, and forgetfulness soothes his grief, for this gift of the gods diverts his mind. 

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

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

Chaos gave birth to Erebus and black Night; then Erebos mated with Night and made her pregnant and she in turn gave birth to Ether and Day. Gaia now first gave birth to starry Ouranos, her match in size, to encompass all of her, and be the firm seat of all the blessed gods. 

She gave birth to the tall mountains, enchanting haunts of the divine nymphs who dwell in the woodlands; and then she bore Pontos, the barren sea with its raging swell. All these she bore without mating in sweet love. But then she did couple with Ouranos to bear deep-eddying Oceanus, and Koios and Kreios, Hyperion and Iapetos, Theia and Rhea, Themis and Mnemosyne, as well as gold-wreathed Phoebe and lovely Tethys. 

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1. Graces: Three sister goddesses, known in Greek mythology as Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, who dispense charm and beauty
2. Kronos, or Chronus: a Titan whose name means “Time,” dethroned by his son Zeus
3. Kleio, or Clio: Muse of history
4. Euterpe: Muse of lyric poetry and music
5. Thaleia, or Thalia: Muse of comedy and pastoral poetry
6. Melpomene: Muse of tragedy
7. Terpsichore: Muse of dancing and choral singing
8. Erato: Muse of lyric poetry and mime
9. Polyhymnia: Muse of sacred song and oratory
10. Ourania, or Urania: Muse of astronomy
11. Kalliope, or Calliope: Muse of epic poetry
12. Tartaros, or Tartarus: The abysmal regions below Hades where the Titans were confined. An infernal region; hell.
13. Eros: The god of love, son of Aphrodite
14. Erebos, or Erebus: The dark region of the underworld through which the dead must pass before they reach Hades.
15. Nymphs: Any of numerous minor deities represented as beautiful maidens inhabiting and sometimes personifying features of nature such as trees, waters, and mountains
16. Pontos: ancient personification of the sea
17. Oceanus, or Oceanos: A Titan god of the outer sea encircling the earth and the father of the Oceanides and the river gods
18. Koios: Titan of the inquisitive mind, his name meaning "query" or "questioning"
19. Kreios: Titan of leadership, domesticated animals and the constellations of heaven
20. Hyperion: Titan, the son of Gaia and Uranus and the father of Helios, the sun.
21. Iapetos: Titan who was the father of Prometheus and Atlas and an ancestor of the human race
22. Rhea, or Rhea: The sister and wife of Cronus and the mother of Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, Poseidon, and Zeus
23. Phoebe, or Phoebe: the virgin goddess Artemis, of the hunt and the moon and twin sister of Apollo
24. Tethys: Titaness and sea goddess who was both sister and wife of Oceanus

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Kronos, the sinuous-minded, was her last-born, a most fearful child who hated his mighty father. Then she bore the Kyklopes, haughty in their might, Brontes, Steropes, and Arges of the strong spirit, who made and gave to Zeus the crushing thunder. In all other respects they were like gods, but they had one eye in the middle of their foreheads; their name was Kyklopes because of this single round eye that leered from their foreheads, and inventive skill and strength and power were in their deeds.

Gaia and Ouranos had three other sons, so great and mighty that their names are best left unspoken, Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges, brazen sons all three. From each one’s shoulders a hundred invincible arms sprang forth, and from each one’s shoulders atop the sturdy trunk there grew no fewer than fifty heads; and there was matchless strength in their hulking frames. All these awesome children born of Ouranos and Gaia hated their own father from the day they were born, for as soon as each one came from the womb, Ouranos, with joy in his wicked work, hid it in Gaia’s womb and did not let it return to the light. Huge Gaia groaned within herself and in her distress she devised a crafty and evil scheme. With great haste she produced gray iron and made a huge sickle and showed it to her children; then, her heart filled with grief, she rallied them with these words:

“Yours is a reckless father; obey me, if you will, that we may all punish your father’s outrageous deed, for he was first to plot shameful actions.”

So she spoke, and fear gripped them all; not one of them uttered a sound. Then great, sinuous-minded Kronos without delay spoke to his prudent mother: “Mother, this deed I promise you will be done, since I loathe my dread name meant 'Parts', 'Shares' or 'Alotted Portions'. Klotho, whose name meant 'Spinner', spun the thread of life. Lakhesis, whose name meant 'Apportioner of Lots' - being derived from a word meaning to receive by lot-, measured the thread of life. Atropos (or Aisa), whose name meant 'She who cannot be turned', cut the thread of life.
and the dreadful anger of these goddesses never abates until wrongdoers are punished with harshness.

Baneful Night bore Nemesis, too, a woe for mortals, and after her Deception and the Passion of lovers and destructive Old Age and capricious Strife.

Then loathsome Strife bore Ponos, the bringer of pains, Oblivion and Famine and the tearful Sorrows, the Clashes and the Battles and the Manslaughters, the Quarrels and the Lies and Argument and Counter-Argument,

Lawlessness and Ruin whose ways are all alike, and Oath, who, more than any other, brings pains on mortals who of their own accord swear false oaths. Ponos sired truthful Nereus, his oldest son, who tells no lies; they call him the old man because he is honest and gentle and never forgetful of right, but ever mindful of just and genial thought.

Then Ponos lay with Gaia and sired great Thaumas, Phorkys the overbearing, and fair-cheeked Keto, and Eurybie, who in her breast has a heart of iron.

To Nereus and Doris of the lovely hair, the daughter of Okeanos, the stream surrounding the earth, a host of godly daughters was born in the barren sea:

Thaumas took as his wife Elektra, daughter of Okeanos, the stream surrounding the earth, and Eurybie, who in her breast has a heart of iron. Phorkys Then Pontos lay with Gaia and sired great Thaumas, Phorkys the overbearing, and fair-cheeked Keto, and Eurybie, who in her breast has a heart of iron. Then Pontos lay with Gaia and sired great Thaumas, Phorkys the overbearing, and fair-cheeked Keto, and Eurybie, who in her breast has a heart of iron.

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She [Echidna] bore Chimaira, mighty, dreadful, huge and fleet-footed, who breathed forth a ceaseless stream of fire. She had three heads, one of a glowering lion, another of a goat, and yet another of a savage dragon; her front was a lion, her back a dragon, and her middle a goat, and she breathed forth an awesome stream of gleaming fire. Pegasos and noble Bellerophon slew her. Orthos covered her, and she bore the destructive Sphinx, a scourge for the Kadmeans, and then the Lion of Nemea, who was reared by Hera, the glorious wife of Zeus, and settled on the hills of Nemea as a scourge to mankind. There was his abode and from there he preyed on the tribes of men and lorded it over Apesas and Nemean Tretos, but the strength of mighty Herakles subdued him.

Keto then lay in love with Phorkys and bore her youngest, a ghastly snake that guards the all-golden apples, lurking in his lair in the gloom of earth’s vast limits. This is the brood born of Phorkys and Keto.

Tethys bore to Okeanos the whirling rivers, Neilos and Alpheios and deep-eddying Eridanos, Strymon and Maiandros and fair-flowing Istrus, Phasis and Rhosos and Acheiolois of the silver swirls, Nessos, Rhodios, Hepapoteros, and Haliakmon, Grenikos, Aisepos, and divine Simoeis, Peneios, Hermos, and fair-flowing Kaikos, great Sangarios, Ladon, and Parthenios, Euenos, Ardeskos, and divine Skamandros. She gave birth to a throng of holy daughters, who with the Rivers and lord Apollo nurture men throughout the earth, for this is the task that Zeus has given them. They are (Removed: partial list of names) and Styx¹, who holds the highest rank.

These are the eldest daughters born to Tethys and Okeanos. But there are many others. Okeanos has three thousand slender-ankled daughters - splendid children of goddesses - who roam in beies and haunt the earth and the depths of the waters alike. And there are as many tumbling and rushing rivers, all sons of Okeanos and queenly Tethys. It is hard for a mortal to recite the names of all, but those who live by them know each of their names.

Theia yielded to Hyperion’s love and gave birth to great Helios² and bright Selene³ and Eos⁴, who brings light to all the mortals of this earth and to the immortal gods who rule the wide sky. Eurybia⁵, the radiant goddess, lay in love with Kreios and gave birth to great Astraios⁶ and to Pallas⁷ and then to Perses⁸, who surpassed all in wisdom. Eos shared love’s bed with Astraio and bore him the mighty-spirited winds, bright Zephyros and gusty Boreas and Notos.

After them Eos the early-born brought forth the dawn-star, Eosphoros, and the glittering stars that crown the heavens. Styx, the daughter of Okeanos, lay in love with Pallas and in his mansion gave birth to Zelos⁹ and fair-ankled Nike¹⁰, and then she bore two illustrious children, Kratos¹¹ and Bia¹². These two have no home apart from Zeus, nor seat nor path, except the one to which he leads them, but their place is with Zeus of the roaring thunder.

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

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

² Astraios: the titan of the stars and planets, as well as the practice of astrology
³ Pallas: the titan of war-craft and the Greek military campaign season of late spring and early summer
⁴ Perses: the titan of destruction, the sack of cities, and burning of the grain fields in war, as well as the withering of crops caused by summer droughts
⁵ Zelos: the female spirit of eager rivalry, emulation, envy, jealousy and zeal
⁶ Nike: the female spirit of victory
⁷ Kratos: the spirit of strength, might, power and sovereign rule
⁸ Bia: the female spirit of force, power, might, bodily strength and compulsion
⁹ Leto: the goddess mother of the major Olympian gods Apollo and Artemis. She was usually worshipped in conjunction with her children.
¹⁰ Asteria: titans of falling stars and the art of communicating with the spirits of the dead in order to predict the future
¹¹ Hekate: the underworld goddess of witchcraft was the only child of the titaness Perses and Asteria. From her parents she inherited powers over the earth, sea and heavens.
Rheia succumbed to Kronos’s love and bore him illustrious children,

but Zeus the counselor and father of gods and men, whose heart knows no mercy in his subterranean dwelling, and the rumbling Earthshaker,”

But majestic Kronos kept on swallowing each child as it moved from the holy womb toward the knees; his purpose was to prevent any other child of the Sky Dwellers from holding the kingly office among immortals.

He had learned from Gaia and starr Ouranos that he, despite his power, was fated to be subdued by his own son, a victim of his own schemes. Therefore, he kept no blind watch, but ever wary he gulped down his own children to Rhea’s endless grief. But as she was about to bear Zeus, father of gods and men, she begged her own parents, Gaea, that is, and starr Ouranos, to contrive such a plan that the birth of her dear child would go unnoticed and her father’s Erinys would take revenge for the children swallowed by majestic, sinuous-minded Kronos. And they listened to their dear daughter and granted her wish and let her know what fate had in store for King Kronos and his bold-spirited son. And so they sent her to Lyktos, in the rich land of Crete, just as she was about to bear the last of her children, great Zeus, whom huge Gaia would take into her care on broad Crete, to nourish and foster with tender love.

She carried him swiftly in the darkness of night, and Lyktos was the first place she reached; she took him in her arms and hid him inside the god-haunted earth in a cave lodged deep within a sheer cliff of densely wooded Mount Aigaion.

But to the great Lord Kronos, king of the older gods, who with flaming thunderbolt struck Menoitios and cast him into murky Erebus for his folly and reckless flaunting of manliness. By harsh necessity, Atlas supports the broad sky on his head and unwearying arms, at the earth’s limits, near the clear-voiced Hesperides, for this is the doom decreed for him by Zeus the counselor. With shackles and inescapable fetters Zeus riveted Prometheus on a pillar - Prometheus of the labyrinthine mind; and he sent a long-winged eagle to swoop on him and devour the god’s liver; but what the long-winged bird ate in the course of each day grew back and was restored to its full size. But Herakles, the mighty son of fair-ankled Alkmene, slew the eagle, drove the evil scourge away from the son of Iapetos and freed him from his sorry plight, and did all this obeying the will of Olympian Zeus, who rules on high, to make the glory of Herakles, child of Thebes, greater than before over the earth that nurtures many. Zeus so respected these things and honored his illustrious son that he quelled the wrath he had nursed against Prometheus, who had opposed the counsels of Kronos’s mighty son. When the gods and mortal men were settling their accounts

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1 Klymene: the titan of renown, of both fame and infamy.
2 Atlas: the younger titan of astronomy, endurance and daring spirit. He presided over the fixed stars (or constellations), holding the heavens upon his shoulders and revolving the constellations on their axis
3 Menoitios: the titan of violent anger, rash action, and human mortality. Zeus struck him down with a thunderbolt and sent him to Erebus (the Underworld) as punishment for his hybrisitic behaviour
4 Prometheus: the titan of forethought and crafty counsel. He was given the task of creating mankind out of clay. But in the quest to better the lives of his creation, he stole fire from the gods of heaven and cheated them out of the best share of the sacrificial portion. Zeus was wroth and chained him to Mount Caucasus where a gigantic Eagle fed daily on his ever regenerating liver. Generations later Herakles slew the eagle and freed the Titan from his torture.
5 Epimetheus: the titan of afterthought, the father of excuses. He was given the task of creating the creatures of the earth. At the same time his brother, Prometheus, was creating mankind and, seeing the formidable abilities Epimetheus had given his creations, stole fire from heaven to assist his. Zeus in anger at this crime ordered the gods to mold Pandora, the first woman, and sent her to Epimetheus as his bride armed with a great jar. Pandora, succumbing to curiosity, opened it releasing all of the harmful daimones the gods had trapped within (the children of Nyx and of Eris) to forever plague mankind. Only Hope (Elpis) remained behind to comfort them.
at Mekone, Prometheus cheerfully took a great ox, carved it up, and set it before Zeus to trick his mind. He placed meat, entrails, and fat within a hide and covered them with the ox’s tripe, but with guile he arranged the white bones of the ox, covered them with glistening fat, and laid them down as an offering.

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

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

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

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

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

690  They pitted themselves against the Titans in relentless battle with huge boulders in their stout hands. The Titans, for their part, strengthened their ranks and both sides eagerly gave proof of mettle and might of hand.

700  They hurled whining missiles at one another and the rousing shouts when both sides clashed with deafening clamor reached the starry heavens. Zeus could no longer hold back his fighting spirit, which straightway surged to fill his heart and showed all his strength, as from the sky and from Olympos he advanced with steady pace amid flashes of lightning and from his stout hand let fly thunderbolts that crashed and spewed forth a stream of sacred flames. The life-giving earth burned and resounded all over and the vast forest groaned, consumed by fire. The whole earth and Ocean’s streams seethed, and so did the barren sea; then the heated vapor engulfed the earth-born Titans and towering flames licked the bright sky.

710  For all the Titans’ might, the blazing flash of thunderbolt and lightning blinded their eyes. Wondrous conflagration spread through Chaos, and to eyes and ears it seemed as though what they saw and heard was the collision of the Earth and the wide Sky above. For so vast a crash could only arise if earth collapsed under collapsing sky; such was the uproar of the battling gods. The winds churned quaking land, dust, and thunder, lightning, too, and glowing thunderbolts, great Zeus’s weapons, and they swept the noise and clamor into the midst of the warring hosts. Unbearable din hovered above the horrid fray. Both sides gave proof of strength, and then the scales of the conflict tipped; before, each side charged against the other and fought a grisly and stubborn battle. But now Kottos and Briareos and war-hungry Gyges in the front lines stirred up bitter battle and from their stout hands hurled three hundred boulders in thick-falling volleys that threw a mantle of darkness over the Titans. And though the Titans’ spirit was bold, they were vanquished and then hurled beneath the earth of the wide paths and bound with racking chains as deep down below the earth as the sky is high above it; so they were cast deep down into gloomy Tartaros.

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

730  There, too, dwell the children of black Night, Sleep and Death, the awesome gods who are never seen by the rays of the blazing sun when it rises on the sky, or moves on its downward path. Of these, the one wanders over land and broad-backed sea, ever at peace and ever gentle to mortals, but the other, a ghoul even the gods detest, has a heart of iron and feelings hard as bronze, and no man gripped by him can free himself again. There too stand the echoing halls of Hades, whose sway is great, and of awesome Persephone. A hideous and ruthless hound guards the place skilled in an evil trick: wagging his tail and wriggling his ears, he fawns on those who enter, but he does not let them out again; instead, he lies in wait and devours those he catches outside the gates of sovereign Hades and of awesome Persephone.
There dwells a goddess loathed by the gods,
dreadful Styx, eldest daughter of Ocean, whose stream
flows back on itself; she dwells apart from the gods
in a stately palace roofed by lofty rocks and ringed
by silver pillars that tower into the sky.
Seldom does fleet-footed Iris, the daughter of Thaumas,
roam on the broad-backed sea to bring her a message
when strife and quarrel arise among the immortals
and when one of the Olympian dwellers lies.
Then Zeus sends Iris far away to fetch in a golden jar
the legendary cold water by which the gods swear great
oaths,
water that tumbles down from a steep and soaring rock.
This water flows through the black night
from a sacred river, far below the earth of the wide paths.
It is a branch of Ocean allotted one tenth of the water;
the other nine parts wind round the earth and the broad-
backed sea
and, silver-swirled, cascade into the briny deep,
but this one branch - this bane for the gods - runs off a cliff.
If any one of the gods who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus
pours a libation of this water and then swears a false oath,
he lies breathless for no less than a full year’s course;
and he cannot come close to ambrosia and nectar
for nourishment, but no longer able to speak or breathe
lies in bed, wrapped in the shroud of evil coma.
And when the illness is over at the long year’s end,
another, even harsher, trial is in store for him.
For nine years he is an outcast to the eternal gods
and does not mingle with them at council or feast
for nine full years, but on the tenth he joins again
the meetings of the gods whose homes are on Olympos.
Such is the oath the gods made of the primeval and immortal
water of Styx that gushes through a rugged place.
There, in proper order, lie the sources and the limits
of black earth and of mist-wrapped Tartaros,
of the barren sea, too, and of the starry sky,
and they are grim and dank and loathed even by the gods.

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

1 Typhoeus: a monstrous immortal storm giant who was
defeated and imprisoned by Zeus in the pit of Tartaros. He
was the source of all devastating storm winds which issued
forth from this nefarious realm
Zeus, king of the gods, took as his first wife Metis, a mate wiser than all gods and mortal men. But when she was about to bear gray-eyed Athena, then through the schemes of Gaia and starry Ouranos he deceived the mind of Metis with guile and coaxing words, and lodged her in his belly. Such was their advice, so that of the immortals none other than Zeus would hold kingly sway. It was fated that Metis would bear keen-minded children, first a gray-eyed daughter, Tritogeneia, who in strength and wisdom would be her father’s match, and then a male child, high-mettled and destined to rule over gods and men. But Zeus lodged her in his belly before she did all this, that she might advise him in matters good and bad.

His second wife was radiant Themis; she bore the Seasons, Lawfulness and Justice and blooming Peace, who watch over the works of mortal men, and also the Fates, to whom wise Zeus allotted high honors. These are Lachesis, and Atropos, and they give mortals their share of good and evil. Then Eurynome, Ocean’s fair daughter, bore to Zeus the three Graces, all fair-cheeked, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and shapely Thalia; their alluring eyes glance from under their brows, and from their eyelids drips desire that unstrings the limbs. After Zeus slept with Demeter who nurtures many, she bore white-armed Persephone, whom Aidoneus snatched away from her mother with the consent of wise Zeus. Then he fell in love with Mnemosyne the lovely-haired, who gave birth to the gold-filleted Muses, lovers, all nine, of feasts and of enchanting song. Leto lay in love with aegis-bearing Zeus and gave birth to Apollo and arrow-shooting Artemis, children comelier than all the other sky-dwellers. Last of all, Zeus made Hera his buxom bride, and she lay in love with the king of gods and men and bore Hebe and Ares and Eileithyia.

Then from his head he himself bore gray-eyed Athena, weariless leader of armies, dreaded and mighty goddess, who stirs men to battle and is thrilled by the clash of arms. Hera wrangled with her husband and because of anger, untouched by him, she bore glorious Hephaistos who surpasses all the other gods in craftsmanship. From the union of rumbling Poseidon and Amphitrite came the great Triton, whose might is far-flung, an awesome god dwelling in a golden house that lies at the sea’s bottom, near his cherished mother and lordly father. Now to shield-shattering Ares Kythereia bore the dreaded twins Fear and Panic who with Ares, sacker of cities, force men to flee in disorder from the thick array of battle. Harmonia, too, the wife of bold Kadmos, was her daughter. Maia, daughter of Atlas, shared the sacred bed of Zeus and gave birth to Hermes, renowned herald of the gods. Semele, daughter of Kadmos, yielded to Zeus’s lust, and she, a mere mortal, is now the divine mother of the dazzling and deathless god in whom many exult. Alkmene gave birth to invincible Herakles after she had lain in love with Zeus the cloud gatherer. And Hephaistos, the lame smith of widening fires, took as his buxom bride Aglaia, the youngest of the Graces. Golden-haired Dionysos took blond Ariadne, daughter of Minos, to be his buxom bride, and then Zeus made her ageless and immortal. Herakles, mighty son of fair-ankled Alkmene, accomplished his grim labors and took Hebe, daughter of great Zeus and gold-sandaled Hera, to be his noble spouse on snowy Olympus. Blessed is he! His exploits all finished, he is now among the gods, griefless and ageless forever. Perseis, Ocean’s famous daughter, bore to Helios, who never wearies, both Kirke and King Aietes. Then Aietes, son of Helios who shines his light on mortals through divine decree, married Idyia of the blooming cheeks, daughter of Oceanos, the river whose stream rings the earth; under the spell of golden Aphrodite she yielded to her husband’s desire and bore fair-ankled Medea.

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

1 Metis: the titaness goddess of good counsel, advise, planning, cunning, craftiness and wisdom. She was also one of the Okeanides.
2 Tritogeneia: an epithet meaning “born from the head”
3 Eurynome: the titaness of flowery water-meadows and pasturelands. She was also one of the eldest of the Okeanides.
4 Aglaia: the Goddess of beauty, splendour, glory, magnificence and adornment
5 Euphrosyne: the goddess of good cheer, joy, mirth and merriment
6 Thalia: goddess of festive celebrations and rich and luxurious banquets
7 Demeter: goddess of festive celebrations and rich and luxurious banquets
8 Persephone: the beautiful Queen of the Underworld and the Great Goddess of the Eleusinian Mysteries
9 Aidoneus: another name for Hades, king of the underworld and the god of the mineral wealth of the earth. In the division of the world amongst the three sons of Kronos he inherited the dark realms of Erebus, while his brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, won the sky and the sea respectively. The Greeks had many names for Hades for they feared to invoke this terrible god by calling out his true name.
10 Ares: the great Olympian god of war and battle
11 Eileithyia: the goddess of childbirth and women's labour
12 Hephaistos: the great Olympian god of fire, metalworking and crafts
13 Triton: a sea-god son of Poseidon who, with his conch-shell trumpet, stilled the ocean's waves
14 Maia: the eldest of the seven star-nymphs of the constellation Pleiades. She was a shy goddess who dwelt alone in a cave on Mount Kyllene. There she had many a secret encounter with Zeus and bore him the god Hermes. Later she was placed amongst the stars with her sisters as the constellation Pleiades.
15 Hermes: the great Olympian god of markets, travel and trade, herds and flocks, heralds, gymnasiuims and athletes. He served as messenger, scribe, and herald for the other gods
16 The mortal Semele gave birth to Dionysus, the great Olympian wine, festivals, revelry and parties, the theatre, madness, drunkenness and insanity
and bore them children with divine looks.
Radiant Demeter, a goddess, and Iasion\(^1\), a hero,
coupled with passion on a field plowed three times,
in the rich soil of Crete; their child, noble Ploutos\(^2\),
wanders everywhere on land and broad-backed sea
and grants the bliss that comes from great wealth
when he comes into the hands of those he meets.
Harmonia\(^3\), daughter of golden Aphrodite,
bore to Kadmos\(^4\) Ino and Semele and fair-cheeked Agaue;
Autonoe, too, who became the bride of lush-haired Aristaios,
and then, Polydorus - all in turret-crowned Thebes.
Kallirhoe, Ocean’s daughter, spell-bound by golden
Aphrodite,
coupled in love with stout-hearted Chrysaor
and bore a son surpassing all men in strength,
Geryones, whom brawny Herakles slew
in sea-stroked Erytheia, to win the ambling oxen.
To Tithonos Eos bore bronze-gearied Memnon,
king of the Ethiopians, and also lord Emathion.
The blossom of her love for Kephalos was a splendid son,
high-honored Phaethon, a man of godlike beauty;
when he was still in the tender blossom of luxuriant youth,
a child lost in innocent thought, smile-loving Aphrodite
swooped down on him and carried him away to her temple
1020 to be keeper of its holiest part, a luminous demigod.
Then Jason, through the decrees of the undying gods,
took as his bride the daughter of Aietes, the Zeus-cherished
king,
after he had accomplished many grim labors on orders from
Pelias,
the great and brazen king, whose deeds were shameless folly.
These done, Jason suffered no few hardships
and then on a swift ship sailed to Iolkos, whence he brought
a bright-eyed maiden who became his buxom wife.
And Jason, shepherd of the people, made her submit
to his passion, and she bore Medeios, a son fostered
on the mountains
by Philyra’s son, Cheiron, and great Zeus’s design was
fulfilled.
Then come the daughters of Nereus, old man of the sea:
the exalted goddess Psamathe, incited by golden Aphrodite,
lay with Aiakos in love and gave birth to Phokos;
and then Thetis, the silver-sandal goddess, became the wife
of Peleus and bore lion-hearted Achilleus, breaker of men.
Fair-wreathed Kythereia gave birth to Aineias,
after she and the hero Anchises tenderly coupled
on the wind-swept peaks of many-folded Ida.
And Kirke, daughter of Helios Hyperionides,

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

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

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

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

4 \textit{Kadmos}: the legendary founder of Thebes