

Dear Colloquium Participants,

My lesson focuses on the *Enuma Elish* so that is, as it were, the assigned reading.

I also include Hesiod's *Theogony* because my lesson assumes familiarity with the text (in the real course the *Theogony* is taught on the class before the *Enuma Elish*). If you'd like to refresh your acquaintance with Hesiod, you are welcome to do so.

Best,

Hanne Eisenfeld

same time, the rise of Christianity imposed a theological model according to which there was only one God who does not change and who does not face any (serious) rivals. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1.1). After the fourth century CE, the Father and the Son were declared to be one and the same deity, so the possibility of conflict within a divine family along Near Eastern and ancient Greek lines was forestalled. However, elaborations on God's creation of the world and on the role of Adam and Eve still occupied a central place in Jewish and Christian texts that fall outside the canonical books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament (Gnostic texts, Christian apocryphal texts, Jewish pseudepigrapha, Kabbalah, the Dead Sea Scrolls), which are still proliferating due to discoveries of new texts (mostly papyri) from the ancient world. †

MESOPOTAMIAN

1.1. BABYLONIAN EPIC OF CREATION: *ENUMA ELISH*

This narrative poem is called *Enuma Elish* after the first two words, "when above," "when on high" (as the book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible was known as *Bereshit*, "when first . . ."). The text, written in seven tablets in fairly complete condition, was discovered in 1849 in the ruins of the Neo-Assyrian palace of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (in today's Mosul, Iraq). It dates to the seventh century BCE. This was only one of several copies that were subsequently discovered at Assyrian and Babylonian sites, and there is little variation among the different copies. Although all existing copies date to the early first millennium BCE, the poem must have been composed in the late second millennium BCE (Late Bronze Age) since it is written in the Old Babylonian form of the Akkadian language. The *Enuma Elish*, like other Near Eastern poetic texts, did not use verses in the formal sense of the word (e.g., constrained by the number of syllables or specific metric patterns, like in Greek and Latin poetry). The poetic tone is instead marked by distinctive language and figures of speech, such as alliteration (repeating the same sound), repetitions, parallelism (repeating the same idea with different words), word play or puns, and metaphors.

The *Enuma Elish* was one of many creation stories in circulation in ancient Mesopotamia. This particular cosmogony was connected with the city of Babylon and recited at the New Year festival at that city in the month of April. The poem narrates the succession and struggles of the first gods and the rise of Marduk (Ashur in the Assyrian version) as the champion who defeated the primeval goddess Tiamat and her allies, who represented the forces of chaos. Marduk is exalted as the new king of the gods and creator of the world as we know it, to whom all owe absolute obedience. The poem ends with the recitation of Marduk's fifty names. In the recitation at the New Year festival, the poem invoked the renewal of order in the universe and of the king's sovereignty, which mirrored the absolute power of Marduk over his allies.

SOURCE: S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford World's Classics, Oxford and New York, 1989, rev. ed. 2000), with minor modifications.

TABLET I

When skies above were not yet named, nor earth below pronounced by name, Apsu, the first one, their begetter and maker Tiamat, who bore them all, had mixed their waters together, but had not formed pastures, nor discovered reed-beds; when yet no gods were manifest, nor names pronounced, nor destinies decreed, then gods were born within them. Lahmu (and) Lahamu emerged, their names pronounced.¹

As soon as they matured, were fully formed, Anshar (and) Kishar were born, surpassing them. They passed the days at length, they added to the years. Anu their

¹ Ea and Damkina in the Assyrian version.

first-born son rivalled his forefathers: Anshar made his son Anu like himself,² and Anu begot Nudimmud (Ea) in his likeness. He, Nudimmud, was superior to his forefathers: Profound of understanding, he was wise, was very strong at arms.

Mightier by far than Anshar his father's begetter, he had no rival among the gods his peers. The gods of that generation would meet together and disturb Tiamat, and their clamour reverberated. They stirred up Tiamat's belly, they were annoying her by playing inside Anduruna. Apsu could not quell their noise and Tiamat became mute before them; however grievous their behaviour to her; however bad their ways, she would indulge them. Finally Apsu, begetter of the great gods, called out and addressed his vizier Mummu, "O Mummu, vizier who pleases me! Come, let us go to Tiamat!"

They went and sat in front of Tiamat, and discussed affairs concerning the gods their sons. Apsu made his voice heard and spoke to Tiamat in a loud voice: "Their ways have become very grievous to me, by day I cannot rest, by night I cannot sleep. I shall abolish their ways and disperse them! Let peace prevail, so that we can sleep."

When Tiamat heard this, she was furious and shouted at her lover; she shouted dreadfully and was beside herself with rage, but then suppressed the evil in her belly: "How could we allow what we ourselves created to perish? Even though their ways are so grievous, we should bear it patiently."

(Vizier) Mummu replied and counseled Apsu; the vizier did not agree with the counsel of his earth mother: "O father, put an end to (their) troublesome ways, so that she may be allowed to rest by day and sleep at night."

Apsu was pleased with him, his face lit up at the evil he was planning for the gods his sons. (Vizier) Mummu hugged him, sat on his lap and kissed him rapturously. But everything they plotted between them was relayed to the gods their sons. The gods listened and wandered about restlessly; they fell silent, they sat mute. Superior in understanding, wise and capable, Ea who knows everything found out their plot, made for himself a design of everything, and laid it out correctly, made it cleverly, his pure spell was superb. He recited it and it stilled the waters. He poured sleep upon him so that he was sleeping soundly, put Apsu to sleep, drenched with sleep. Vizier Mummu the counselor (was in) a sleepless daze. He (Ea) unfastened his belt, took off his crown, took away his mantle of radiance and put it on himself. He held Apsu down and slew him; tied up Mummu and laid him across him. He set up his dwelling on top of Apsu, and grasped Mummu, held him by a nose-rope.

When he had overcome and slain his enemies, Ea set up his triumphal cry over his foes. Then he rested very quietly inside his private quarters and named them Apsu and assigned chapels, founded his own residence there, and Ea and Damkina his lover dwelt in splendour. In the chamber of destinies, the hall of designs, Bel, cleverest of the clever, sage of the gods, was begotten. And inside Apsu, Marduk was created; inside pure Apsu, Marduk was born. Ea his father created him, Damkina his mother bore him.

He suckled the teats of goddesses; the nurse who reared him filled him with awesomeness. Proud was his form, piercing his stare, mature his emergence, he

² Assur (head of the Assyrian pantheon) was assimilated with Anshar from the eighth century onward.

was powerful from the start. Anu his father's begetter beheld him, and rejoiced, beamed; his heart was filled with joy. He made him so perfect that his godhead was doubled. Elevated far above them, he was superior in every way. His limbs were ingeniously made beyond comprehension, impossible to understand, too difficult to perceive. Four were his eyes, four were his ears; when his lips moved, fire blazed forth. The four ears were enormous and likewise the eyes; they perceived everything. Highest among the gods, his form was outstanding. His limbs were very long, his height (?) outstanding.

(Anu cried out) "Mariutu, Mariutu, son, majesty, majesty of the gods!"

Clothed in the radiant mantle of ten gods, worn high above his head five fearsome rays were clustered above him. Anu created the four winds and gave them birth, put them in his (Marduk's) hand: "My son, let them play!"

He fashioned dust and made the whirlwind carry it; he made the flood-wave and stirred up Tiamat. Tiamat was stirred up, and heaved restlessly day and night. The gods, unable to rest, had to suffer. . . . They plotted evil in their hearts, and they addressed Tiamat their mother, saying: "Because they slew Apsu your lover and you did not go to his side but sat mute, he has created the four, fearful winds to stir up your belly on purpose, and we simply cannot sleep! Was your lover Apsu not in your heart? And (vizier) Mummu who was captured? No wonder you sit alone! Are you not a mother? You heave restlessly but what about us, who cannot rest? Don't you love us? Our grip (?) [is slack], (and) our eyes are sunken. Remove the yoke of us restless ones, and let us sleep! Set up a [battle cry] and avenge them! Con[quer the enemy] and reduce them to nought!"

Tiamat listened, and the speech pleased her: "Let us act now, (?) as you were advising! The gods inside him (Apsu) will be disturbed, because they adopted evil for the gods who begot them."

They crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat. They were fierce, scheming restlessly night and day. They were working up to war, growling and raging. They convened a council and created conflict. Mother Hubur, who fashions all things, contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant snakes, sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?). She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood. She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays and made them bear mantles of radiance, made them godlike,

(chanting this imprecation) "Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror! Their bodies shall rear up continually and never turn away!"

She stationed a horned serpent, a *mushbushu*-dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero, an *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a scorpion-man, aggressive *umu*-demons, a fish-man, and a bull-man bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle. Her orders were so powerful, they could not be disobeyed. In addition she created eleven more likewise. Over the gods her offspring who had convened a council for her she promoted Qingu and made him greatest among them, conferred upon him leadership of the army, command of the assembly, raising the weapon to signal engagement, mustering combat-troops, overall command of the whole battle force. And she set him upon a throne:

"I have cast the spell for you and made you greatest in the gods' assembly! I have put into your power rule over all the gods! You shall be the greatest, for you are my only lover! Your commands shall always prevail over all the Anukki!"

Then she gave him the Tablet of Destinies and made him clasp it to his breast: "Your utterance shall never be altered! Your word shall be law!"

When Qingu was promoted and had received the Anu-power and had decreed destinies for the gods his sons, (he said): "What issues forth from your mouths shall quench Fire! Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyze the powerful!"

(*Catchline*) Tiamat assembled his (*sic*) creatures

(*Colophon*) First tablet, "When skies above." [Written] like [its] original [and inspected].

Tablet of Nabu-balatsu-iqbi son of Na'id-Marduk.

Hand of Nabu-balatsu-iqbi son of Na'id-Marduk [. . .].

TABLET II

Tiamat assembled his (*sic*) creatures and collected battle-units against the gods his (*sic*) offspring. Tiamat did even more evil for posterity than Apsu. It was reported (?) to Ea that she had prepared for war. Ea listened to that report, and was dumbfounded and sat in silence. When he had pondered and his fury subsided, he made his way to Anshar his father; came before Anshar, the father who begot him and began to repeat to him everything that Tiamat had planned:

"Father, Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us! She has convened an assembly and is raging out of control. The gods have turned to her, all of them, even those whom you begot have gone over to her side, have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat. Fierce, scheming restlessly night and day, working up to war, growling and raging, they have convened a council and created conflict. Mother Hubur, who fashions all things, contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant snakes, sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?). She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood. She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays, and made them bear mantles of radiance, made them godlike,

(*chanting this imprecation*) 'Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror! Their bodies shall rear up continually and never turn away!'

"She stationed a horned serpent, a *mushbushshu*-dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero, an *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a scorpion-man, aggressive *umu*-demons, a fish-man, and a bull-man bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle. Her orders were so powerful, they could not be disobeyed. In addition she created eleven more likewise. Over the gods her offspring who had convened a council for her she promoted Qingu, made him greatest among them, conferred upon him leadership of the army, command of the assembly, raising the weapon to signal engagement, to rise up for combat, overall command of the whole battle force. And she set her (*sic*) upon a throne:

"I have cast the spell for you and made you greatest in the gods' assembly! I have put into your power rule over all the gods! You shall be the greatest, for you are my only lover! Your commands shall always prevail over all the Anukki!"

"She gave him the Tablet of Destinies and made him clasp it to his breast: 'Your utterance shall never be altered! Your word shall be law!'

"When Qingu was promoted and had received the Anu-power and had decreed destinies for the gods her sons, (he said): "What issues forth from your mouths shall quench Fire! Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyze the powerful!"

Anshar listened, and the report was very disturbing. "Woe!" he cried, he bit his lip, his liver was inflamed, his belly would not rest. His roar to Ea his son was quite weak.

"My son, you who started the fight, you remain responsible for what you have done. You went and slew Apsu, and Tiamat, whom you enraged—where else is an opponent for her?"

Despairing of advice, the prince of good sense, creator of divine wisdom, Nudimmud, with soothing speech, words of appeasement, he answered Anshar his father nicely:

"Father, you are the unfathomable fixer of fates! The power to create and to destroy is yours! O Anshar, you are the unfathomable fixer of fates! The power to create and destroy is yours! For the moment stay quiet at the words I shall tell you. Bear in mind what a good thing I did. Before I slew Apsu, who else could he look to? Now (there are) these (monsters), before I can rush up and extinguish him (Qingu) he will surely have destroyed me! Then what?"

Anshar listened, and the speech pleased him. His heart prompted him to speak to Ea: "My son, your deeds were highly commendable, you can make a strike fierce, unbeatable. Ea, your deeds were highly commendable, you can make a strike fierce, unbeatable. But go towards Tiamat, sooth her uprising, may her fury abate at your spell."

He listened to the words of his father Anshar. He took the road, went straight on his way. Ea went, he searched for Tiamat's strategy, but then stayed silent and turned back. He entered into the presence of the ruler Anshar, in supplication he addressed him:

"My father, Tiamat's actions were too much for me. I searched for her course, but my spell was not equal to her. Her strength is mighty, she is completely terrifying. Her crowd is too powerful, nobody could defy her. Her noise never lessens, it was too loud for me. I feared her shout, and I turned back. But father, you must not relax, you must send someone else to her. However strong woman's strength, it is not equal to a man's. You must disband her regiments, confuse her advice, before she can impose her power on us."

Anshar shouted furiously, he addressed Anu his son: "Steadfast son, heroic *kashushu*-weapon, whose strength is mighty, whose attack is unfaceable, go against Tiamat and stand your ground! Let her anger abate, let her fury be quelled. If she will not listen to your word, speak words of supplication to her, that she may be calmed."

He listened to the words of his father Anshar. He took the road, went straight on his way. He went, he searched for Tiamat's strategy, but then stayed silent and turned back. He entered into the presence of the ruler Anshar, in supplication he addressed him:

"My father, Tiamat's actions were too much for me. I searched for her course, but my spell was not equal to her. Her strength is mighty, she is completely terrifying. Her crowd is too powerful, nobody could defy her. Her noise never lessens, it was too loud for me. I feared her shout, and I turned back. But father, you must not relax, you must send someone else to her. However strong a woman's strength, it is not equal to a man's. You must disband her regiments, confuse her advice, before she can impose her power over us."

Anshar was speechless, and stared at the ground; He gnashed his teeth (?) and shook his head (in despair) at Ea. Now, the Igigi assembled, all the Anukki.³ They sat silently (for a while), tight-lipped.

(Finally they spoke) "Will no (other) god come forward? Is [fate] fixed? Will no one go out to face Tiamat with [...]?"

Then Ea from his secret dwelling called [the perfect] one (?) of Anshar, father of the great gods, whose heart is perfect like a fellow-citizen or countryman (?), the mighty heir who was to be his father's champion, who rushes (fearlessly) into battle: Marduk the Hero! He told him his innermost design, saying: "O Marduk, take my advice, listen to your father! You are the son who sets his heart at rest! Approach Anshar, drawing near to him, and make your voice heard, stand your ground: he will be calmed by the sight of you."

The Lord rejoiced at the word of his father, and he approached and stood before Anshar. Anshar looked at him, and his heart was filled with joy. He kissed him on the lips, put away his trepidation.

(Then Marduk addressed him, saying) "Father, don't stay so silent, open your lips, let me go, and let me fulfill your heart's desire. Anshar, don't stay so silent, open your lips, let me go, and let me fulfill your heart's desire."

(Anshar replied) "What kind of man has ordered you out (to) his war? My son, (don't you realize that) it is Tiamat, of womankind, who will advance against you with arms?"

(Marduk answered) "Father, my creator, rejoice and be glad! You shall soon set your foot upon the neck of Tiamat! Anshar, my creator, rejoice and be glad, you shall soon set your foot upon the neck of Tiamat."

(Anshar replied) "Then go, son, knowing all wisdom! Quell Tiamat with your pure spell! Set forth immediately (in) the storm chariot; let its [...] be not driven out, but turn (them?) back!"

The Lord rejoiced at the word of his father; his heart was glad and he addressed his father: "Lord of the gods, fate of the great gods, if indeed I am to be your champion, if I am to defeat Tiamat and save your lives, convene the council, name a special fate, sit joyfully together in Ubshu-ukkinakku: My own utterance shall fix fate instead of you! Whatever I create shall never be altered! The decree of my lip shall never be revoked, never changed!"

(Catchline)

Anshar made his voice heard

(Colophon)

Second tablet, 'When skies above.' [Written] according to [...]

[...] a copy from Assur.

(Last line damaged)

TABLET III

Anshar made his voice heard and addressed his speech to Kakka his vizier:

"O Kakka, vizier who pleases me! I shall send you to Lahmu and Lahamu. You know how to probe, you are skilled in speaking. Have the gods my fathers

³ The Anukki (also called Anunnaki, Anunna, and Enunaki) are Sumerian old chthonic deities of fertility and the underworld, associated with Anu (sky god). They became judges of the underworld. They are often paired with the Igigi, a Sumerian group of younger sky gods, headed by Enlil.

brought before me; let all the gods be brought to me. Let there be conversation, let them sit at a banquet, let them eat grain, let them drink choice wine, (and then) let them decree a destiny for Marduk their champion. Set off, Kakka, go and stand before them, and everything that I am about to tell you, repeat to them:

'Anshar your son has sent me, he has told me to report his heart's message, to say: Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us! She has convened a council, and is raging out of control. The gods have turned to her, all of them, even those whom you begot have gone over to her side, have crowded round and rallied beside Tiamat. They are fierce, scheming restlessly night and day. They are working up to war, growling and raging. They convened a council and created conflict. Mother Hubur, who fashions all things, contributed an unfaceable weapon: she bore giant snakes, sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang (?). She filled their bodies with venom instead of blood. She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays, and made them bear mantles of radiance, made them godlike:

(chanting this imprecation) 'Whoever looks upon them shall collapse in utter terror! Their bodies shall rear up continually, and never turn away!'

'She stationed a horned serpent, a *mushbushu*-dragon, and a *lahmu*-hero, an *ugallu*-demon, a rabid dog, and a scorpion-man, aggressive *umu*-demons, a fish-man, and a bull-man bearing merciless weapons, fearless in battle. Her orders were so powerful, they could not be disobeyed. In addition she created eleven more likewise. Over the gods her offspring who had convened a council for her she promoted Qingu, made him greatest among them, conferred upon him leadership of the army, command of the assembly, raising the weapon to signal engagement, to rise up for combat, overall command of the whole battle force. And she set him upon a throne:

'I have cast the spell for you and made you greatest in the gods' assembly! I have put into your power rule over all the gods! You shall be the greatest, for you are my only lover! Your commands shall always prevail over all the Anunnaki.'

'She gave him the Tablet of Destinies, and made him clasp it to his breast. 'Your utterance shall never be altered! His (! Your) word shall be law!'

'When Qingu was promoted and had received the Anu-power and had decreed destinies for the gods her sons (he said): 'What issues forth from your mouths shall quench Fire! Your accumulated venom (?) shall paralyze the powerful.'

'I sent Anu, but he was unable to face her. Nudimmud⁴ panicked and turned back. Then Marduk, sage of the gods, your son, came forward. He wanted of his own free will to confront Tiamat. He addressed his words to me,

'If indeed I am to be your champion, to defeat Tiamat and save your lives, convene the council, name a special fate, sit joyfully together in Ubshu-ukkinakku: and let me, my own utterance, fix fate instead of you. Whatever I create shall never be altered! Let a decree from my lips never be revoked, never changed!'

'Hurry and decree your destiny for him quickly, so that he may go and face your formidable enemy!'

Kakka set off and went on his way, and before Lahmu and Lahamu the gods his fathers prostrated himself and kissed the earth in front of them, then straightened

⁴ Sumerian name of Ea.

up and stood and spoke to them: "Anshar your son has sent me. He has told me to report his personal message, to say: 'Tiamat who bore us is rejecting us! . . . (the same message given by Anshar to Kakka above, repeated verbatim, is skipped here).' Hurry and decree your destinies for him quickly, so that he may go and face your formidable enemy."

Lahmu and Lahamu listened and cried out aloud. All the Igigi then groaned dreadfully: "How terrible! Until he (Anshar) decided to report to us, we did not even know what Tiamat was doing."

They milled around and then came, all the great gods who fix the fates, entered into Anshar's presence and were filled with joy. Each kissed the other: in the assembly [. . .] there was conversation, they sat at the banquet, ate grain, drank choice wine, let sweet beer trickle through their drinking straws. Their bodies swelled as they drank the liquor; they became very carefree, they were merry, and they decreed destiny for Marduk their champion.

(*Catchline*)

They founded a princely shrine for him

TABLET IV

They founded a princely shrine for him, and he took up residence as ruler before his fathers (*who proclaimed*):

"You are honoured among the great gods. Your destiny is unequalled, your word (has the power of) Anu! O Marduk, you are honoured among the great gods. Your destiny is unequalled, your word (has the power of) Anu! From this day onwards your command shall not be altered. Yours is the power to exalt and abase. May your utterance be law, your word never be falsified. None of the gods shall transgress your limits. May endowment, required for the gods' shrines wherever they have temples, be established for your place.

"O Marduk, you are our champion! We hereby give you sovereignty over all of the whole universe. Sit in the assembly and your word shall be pre-eminent! May your weapons never miss (the mark), may they smash your enemies! O lord,⁵ spare the life of him who trusts in you, but drain the life of the god who has espoused evil!"

They set up in their midst one constellation,⁶ and then they addressed Marduk their son: "May your decree, O lord, impress the gods' command to destroy and to recreate, and let it be so! Speak and let the constellation vanish! Speak to it again and let the constellation reappear."

He spoke, and at his word the constellation vanished. He spoke to it again and the constellation was recreated. When the gods his fathers saw how effective his utterance was, they rejoiced, they proclaimed: "Marduk is King!" They invested him with scepter, throne, and staff-of-office. They gave him an unfaceable weapon to crush the foe: "Go, and cut off the life of Tiamat! Let the winds bear her blood to us as good news!"

The gods his fathers thus decreed the destiny of the lord and set him on the path of peace and obedience. He fashioned a bow, designated it as his weapon,

⁵ Bel (cf. Hebrew Baal). "Lord" was one of Marduk's titles.

⁶ In other interpretations "one garment."

feathered the arrow, set it in the string. He lifted up a mace and carried it in his right hand, slung the bow and quiver at his side, put lightning in front of him, his body was filled with an ever-blazing flame. He made a net to encircle Tiamat within it, marshalled the four winds so that no part of her could escape: South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, the gift of his father Anu, he kept them close to the net at his side. He created the *imbullu*-wind (evil wind), the tempest, the whirlwind, the Four Winds, the Seven Winds, the tornado, the unfaceable facing wind. He released the winds, which he had created, seven of them. They advanced behind him to make turmoil inside Tiamat.

The lord raised the flood-weapon, his great weapon, and mounted the frightful, unfaceable storm-chariot. He had yoked to it a team of four and had harnessed to its side "Slayer," "Pitiless," "Racer," and "Flyer;" their lips were drawn back, their teeth carried poison. They know not exhaustion, they can only devastate. He stationed on his right Fiercesome Fight and Conflict, on the left Battle to knock down every contender (?). Clothed in a cloak of awesome armor, his head was crowned with a terrible radiance.

The Lord set out and took the road, and set his face towards Tiamat who raged out of control. In his lips he gripped a spell, in his hand he grasped an herb to counter poison. Then they thronged about him, the gods thronged about him; the gods his fathers thronged about him, the gods thronged about him. The Lord drew near and looked into the middle of Tiamat: he was trying to find out the strategy of Qingu her lover. As he looked, his mind became confused, his will crumbled and his actions were muddled. As for the gods his helpers, who march(ed) at his side,⁷ when they saw the warrior, the leader, their looks were strained. Tiamat cast her spell. She did not even turn her neck. In her lips she was holding falsehood, lies, (wheedling):

"[How powerful is] your attacking force, O lord of the gods! The whole assembly of them has gathered to your place!"

(*But he ignored her blandishments*) The Lord lifted up the flood-weapon, his great weapon and sent a message to Tiamat who feigned goodwill, saying:

"Why are you so friendly on the surface when your depths conspire to muster a battle force? Just because the sons were noisy (and) disrespectful to their fathers, should you, who gave them birth, reject compassion? You named Qingu as your lover, you appointed him to rites of Anu-power, wrongfully his. You sought out evil for Anshar, king of the gods, so you have compounded your wickedness against the gods my fathers! Let your host prepare! Let them gird themselves with your weapons! Stand forth, and you and I shall do single combat."

When Tiamat heard this, she went wild, she lost her temper. Tiamat screamed aloud in a passion, her lower parts shook together from the depths. She recited the incantation and kept casting her spell. Meanwhile the gods of battle were sharpening their weapons.

⁷ The scene of the chief god entering battle (in the Assyrian version Assur) accompanied by the gods was depicted on the doors of Senacherib's New Year Temple, which are described in an inscription.

Face to face they came, Tiamat and Marduk, sage of the gods. They engaged in combat, they closed for battle. The Lord spread his net and made it encircle her, to her face he dispatched the *imbullu*-wind, which had been behind: Tiamat opened her mouth to swallow it, and he forced in the *imbullu*-wind so that she could not close her lips. Fierce winds distended her belly; her insides were constipated and she stretched her mouth wide. He shot an arrow, which pierced her belly, split her down the middle and slit her heart, vanquished her and extinguished her life. He threw down her corpse and stood on top of her.

When he had slain Tiamat, the leader, he broke up her regiments; her assembly was scattered. Then the gods her helpers, who had marched at her side, began to tremble, panicked, and turned tail. Although he allowed them to come out and spared their lives, they were surrounded, they could not flee. Then he tied them up and smashed their weapons. They were thrown into the net and sat there ensnared. They cowered back, filled with woe. They had to bear his punishment, confined to prison. And as for the dozens of creatures, covered in fearsome rays, the gang of demons who all marched on her right, he fixed them with nose-ropes and tied their arms. He trampled their battle-filth (?) beneath him. As for Qingu, who had once been the greatest among them, he defeated him and counted him among the dead gods,⁸ wrested from him the Tablet of Destinies, wrongfully his, sealed it with (his own) seal and pressed it to his breast.

When he had defeated and killed his enemies and had proclaimed the submissive (?) foe his slave, and had set up the triumphal cry of Anshar over all the enemy, and had achieved the desire of Nudimmud, Marduk the warrior strengthened his hold over the captive gods, and to Tiamat, whom he had ensnared, he turned back. The Lord trampled the lower part of Tiamat, with his unsparing mace smashed her skull, severed the arteries of her blood, and made the North Wind carry it off as good news.⁹ His fathers saw it and were jubilant: they rejoiced, arranged to greet him with presents, greetings gifts.

The Lord rested, and inspected her corpse. He divided the monstrous shape and created marvels (from it). He sliced her in half like a fish for drying: half of her he put up to roof the sky, drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it. Her waters he arranged so that they could not escape. He crossed the heavens and sought out a shrine; he leveled Apsu, dwelling of Nudimmud.

The Lord measured the dimensions of Apsu and the large temple (Eshgalla), which he built in its image, was Esharra: in the great shrine Esharra, which he had created as the sky, he founded cult centers for Anu, Ellil, and Ea.

(*Catchline*)

He fashioned stands for the great gods

(*Colophon*)

146 lines. Fourth tablet 'When skies above.' Not complete. Written according to a tablet whose lines were cancelled.

Nabu-belshu (son of) Na'id-Marduk, son of a smith, wrote it for the life of himself and the life of his house, and deposited (it) in Ezida.

⁸ The precise implication of "dead gods" is not clear.

⁹ In ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt the north wind was considered the most favorable wind.

TABLET V

He fashioned stands for the great gods. As for the stars, he set up constellations corresponding to them. He designated the year and marked out its divisions, apportioned three stars each to the twelve months. When he had made plans of the days of the year, he founded the stand of Neberu to mark out their courses, so that none of them could go wrong or stray.

He fixed the stand of Ellil and Ea together with it, opened up gates in both ribs, made strong bolts to left and right. With her liver he located the heights; he made the crescent moon appear, entrusted night (to it) and designated it the jewel of night to mark out the days:

"Go forth every month without fail in a corona, at the beginning of the month, to glow over the land. You shine with horns to mark out six days; on the seventh day the crown is half. The fifteenth day shall always be the mid-point, the half of each month. When Shamash looks at you from the horizon, gradually shed your visibility and begin to wane. Always bring the day of disappearance close to the path of Shamash,¹⁰ and on the thirtieth day, the [year] is always equalized, for Shamash is (responsible for) the year. A sign [shall appear (?)] sweep along its path. Then always approach the [...] and judge the case. [...] the Bowstar to kill and rob.

(15 lines broken) At the New Year's Festival (. . . fragmentary passage skipped).

Marduk [...] He put into groups and made clouds scud. Raising winds, making rain, making fog billow, by collecting her poison, he assigned for himself and let his own hand control it. He placed her head, heaped up [...]. Opened up springs: water gushed out. He opened the Euphrates and the Tigris from her eyes,¹¹ closed her nostrils [...]. He piled up clear-cut mountains from her udder, bored water-holes to drain off the catch water. He laid her tail across, tied it fast as the cosmic bond, and [...] the Apsu beneath his feet. He set her thigh to make fast the sky, with half of her he made a roof; he fixed the earth. He [...] the work, made the insides of Tiamat surge, spread his net, made it extend completely. He [...] heaven and earth [...] their knots, to coil [...].

When he had designed its cult, created its rites, he threw down the reins (and) made Ea take (them). The Tablet of Destinies, which Qingu had appropriated, he fetched and took it and presented it for a first reading (?) to Anu.¹² [The gods (?) of] battle whom he had ensnared were disentangled (?); he led (them) as captives into the presence of his fathers. And as for the eleven creatures that Tiamat had created, he [...] smashed their weapons, tied them at his feet, made images of them and had them set up at the door of Apsu: "Let this be a sign that will never in future be forgotten!"

The gods looked, and their hearts were full of joy at him. Lahmu and Lahamu and all his fathers embraced him, and Anshar the king proclaimed that there should be a reception for him. Anu, Enlil, and Ea each presented him with gifts.

¹⁰ Alluding to the moon's disappearance on the eastern horizon (sunrise).

¹¹ The word for "eyes" also means "springs."

¹² Anu or Ea (reading is ambiguous).

[...] Damkina his mother exclaimed with joy at him; she made him beam [inside (?) his fine (?) house. He (Marduk) appointed Usmu, who had brought his greetings present as good news, to be vizier of the Apsu, to take care of shrines. The Igigi assembled, and all of them did obeisance to him. The Anunnaki, each and every one, kissed his feet. The whole assembly collected together to prostrate themselves.

[...] they stood, they bowed, "Yes, King indeed!" [...] his fathers took their fill of his manliness, [they took off his clothes] which were enveloped in the dust of combat. [...] the gods were attentive to him. With cypress [...] they sprinkled (?) his body. He put on a princely garment, a royal aura, a splendid crown. He took up a mace and grasped it in his right hand. [...] his left hand. [...] He set a [*mushbushu*-dragon (?) at his feet, placed upon [...] slung the staff of peace and obedience at his side.

When the mantle of radiance [...] and his net was holding (?) fearful Apsu, a bull [...]. In the inner chamber of his throne [...]. In his cellar [...]. The gods, all that existed [...] Lahmu and Lahamu [...] made their voices heard and spoke to the Igigi: "Previously Marduk was (just) our beloved son but now he is your king. Take heed of his command."

Next they spoke and proclaimed in unison: "LUGA-DIMMER-ANKIA is his name.¹³ Trust in him! When they gave kingship to Marduk, they spoke an oration for him, for blessing and obedience. Henceforth you shall be the provider of shrines for us. Whatever you command, we shall perform ourselves."

Marduk made his voice heard and spoke, addressed his words to the gods his fathers: "Over the Apsu, the sea-green dwelling, in front of (?) Esharra, which I created for you, (where) I strengthened the ground beneath it for a shrine, I shall make a house to be a luxurious dwelling for myself and shall found his cult centre within it, and I shall establish my private quarters, and confirm my kingship. Whenever you come up from the Apsu for an assembly, your night's resting place shall be in it, receiving you all. Whenever you come down from the sky for an assembly, your night's resting place shall be in it, receiving you all. I hereby name it Babylon, home of the great gods. We shall make it the centre of religion."

The gods his fathers listened to this command of his,

(a very fragmented passage follows, in which the gods rejoice at Marduk's foundation of Babylon and once more acclaim him as king; skipped here)

(Catchline)

When Marduk heard the speech of the gods

(Colophon)

Fifth tablet, 'When skies above'

Palace of Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

TABLET VI

When Marduk heard the speech of the gods, he made up his mind to perform miracles. He spoke his utterance to Ea, and communicated to him the plan that he was considering: "Let me put blood together, and make bones too. Let me set up

¹³ Sumerian for "King of the gods of heaven and earth."

primeval man: Man shall be his name. Let me create a primeval man. The work of the gods shall be imposed (on him), and so they shall be at leisure. Let me change the ways of the gods miraculously, so they are gathered as one yet divided in two."

Ea answered him and spoke a word to him, told him his plan for the leisure of the gods: "Let one who is hostile to them be surrendered (up), let him be destroyed, and let people be created (from him). Let the great gods assemble, let the culprit be given up, and let them convict him."

Marduk assembled the great gods, gave (them) instructions pleasantly, gave orders. The gods paid attention to what he said. The king addressed his words to the Anunnaki: "Your election of me shall be firm and foremost. I shall declare the laws, the edicts within my power. Whosoever started the war, and incited Tiamat, and gathered an army, let the one who started the war be given up to me, and he shall bear the penalty for his crime, that you may dwell in peace."

The Igigi, the great gods, answered him, their lord Lugal-dimmer-ankia, counselor of gods: "It was Qingu who started the war, he who incited Tiamat and gathered an army!"

They bound him and held him in front of Ea, imposed the penalty on him and cut off his blood. He created mankind from his blood,¹⁴ imposed the toil of the gods (on humanity) and released the gods from it.

When Ea the wise had created mankind, had imposed the toil of the gods on them—that deed is impossible to describe, for Nudimmud performed it with the miracles of Marduk—then Marduk the king divided the gods, the Anunnaki, all of them, above and below. He assigned his decrees to Anu to guard, established three hundred as a guard in the sky; did the same again when he designed the conventions of earth, and made the six hundred dwell in both heaven and earth.

When he had directed all the decrees, had divided lots for the Anunnaki, of heaven and of earth,¹⁵ the Anunnaki made their voices heard and addressed Marduk their lord: "Now, O Lord, that you have set us free, what are our favors from you? We would like to make a shrine with its own name. We would like our night's resting place to be in your private quarters, and to rest there. Let us found a shrine, a sanctuary there. Whenever we arrive, let us rest within it."

When Marduk heard this, his face lit up greatly, like daylight: "Create Babylon, whose construction you requested! Let its mud bricks be moulded, and build high the shrine!" The Anunnaki began shoveling. For a whole year they made bricks for it. When the second year arrived, they had raised the top of Esagila in front of (?) the Apsu; they had built a high ziggurat for the Apsu. They founded a dwelling for Anu, Ellil, and Ea likewise.

In ascendancy he settled himself in front of them, and his "horns" look down at the base of Esharra.¹⁶ When they had done the work on Esagila, (and) the Anunnaki, all of them, had fashioned their individual shrines, the three hundred Igigi of heaven and the Anunnaki of the Apsu all assembled. The Lord invited the gods

¹⁴ It is unclear whether the subject is Marduk or Ea.

¹⁵ Inheritances and land were divided by lot (see also in *Atrubasis*, Part 2, document 1.a).

¹⁶ Either the construction's pinnacles or an allusion to crowns with bull horns worn by the gods.

his fathers to attend a banquet. In the great sanctuary which he had created as his dwelling: "Indeed, Babili (is) your home too! Sing for joy there, dwell in happiness!"

The great gods sat down there, and set out the beer mugs; they attended the banquet. When they had made merry within, they themselves made a *taqribtu*-offering in splendid Esagila. All the decrees (and) designs were fixed. All the gods divided the stations of heaven and earth. The fifty great gods were present, and the gods fixed the seven destinies for the cult. The Lord received the bow, and set his weapon down in front of them. The gods his fathers looked at the net which he had made, looked at the bow, how miraculous her construction, and his fathers praised the deeds that he had done. Anu raised (the bow) and spoke in the assembly of gods, he kissed the bow. "May she go far!" He gave to the bow her names, saying: "May Long and Far be the first, and Victorious the second; her third name shall be Bowstar, for she shall shine in the sky."

He fixed her position among the gods her companions. When Anu had decreed the destiny of the bow, he set down her royal throne. "You are highest of the gods!" And Anu made her sit in the assembly of gods. The great gods assembled and made Marduk's destiny highest; they themselves did obeisance.

They swore an oath for themselves, and swore on water and oil, touched their throats.¹⁷ Thus they granted that he should exercise the kingship of the gods and confirmed for him mastery of the gods of heaven and earth.

Anshar gave him another name: ASARLUHI: "At the mention of his name we shall bow down! The gods are to pay heed to what he says: his command is to have priority above and below. The son who avenged us shall be the highest! His rule shall have priority; let him have no rival!

"Let him act as shepherd over the black-headed people,¹⁸ his creation. Let his way be proclaimed in future days, never forgotten. He shall establish great *nindabu*-offerings for his fathers. He shall take care of them, he shall look after their shrines. He shall let them smell the *qutrinnu*-offering, and make their chant joyful.

"Let him breathe on earth as freely as he always does in heaven. Let him designate the black-headed people to revere him, that mankind may be mindful of him, and name him as their god. Let their (interceding) goddess pay attention when he opens his mouth.

"Let *nindabu*-offerings be brought [to] their god (and) their goddess. Let them never be forgotten! Let them cleave to their god. Let them keep their country pre-eminent, and always build shrines. Though the black-headed people share out the gods.

"As for us, no matter by which name we call him, he shall be our god. Come, let us call him by his fifty names! His ways shall be proclaimed, and his deeds likewise!

"MARDUK

"Whose father Anu designated him at the moment of his birth, to be in charge of pasturage and watering places, to enrich their stalls, who overwhelmed the riotous ones with his flood-weapon and saved the gods his fathers from hardship.

¹⁷ A gesture that accompanied treaty oaths, as attested in the Old Babylonian Period.

¹⁸ That is, dark-haired, which was a way of referring to human beings in general, though a deliberate contrast with fair-haired people predominating in other regions is possible.

"Let THE SON, MAJESTY OF THE GODS be his name! In his bright light may they walk forever more: The people whom he created, the form of life that breathes. He imposed the work of the gods (on them) so that they might rest. Creation and abolition, forgiveness and punishment—Such are at his disposal, so let them look to him.

"MARUKKA—he is the god who created them. He pleases the Anunnaki and gives rest to the Igigi.

"MARUTUKKU—he is the help of country, city, and his people. Him shall the people revere forever.

"MERSHAKUSHU—fierce yet considerate, furious yet merciful. Generous is his heart, controlled are his emotions.

"LUGAL-DIMMER-ANKIA—his name which we gave him in our assembly. We made his command higher than the gods his fathers.

"He is indeed BEL of the gods of heaven and earth, all of them, the king at whose instruction the gods are awed above and below.

"NARI-LUGAL-DIMMER-ANKIA is a name that we have given him as director of all the gods, who founded our dwellings in heaven and earth out of difficulties, and who shared out the stations for the Igigi and Anunnaki. At his names may the gods tremble and quake in (their) dwellings.

"ASARLUHI (first) is his name, which his father Anu gave him, he shall be the light of the gods, strong leader, who like his name is the protecting spirit of god and country. He spared our dwellings in the great battle despite difficulties.

"Second, they called him Asarluhi as NAMTILA, the god who gives life, who restored all the damaged gods as if they were his own creation. Bel, who revives dead gods with his pure incantation, who destroys those who oppose him but [. . .] is the enemy.

"Asarluhi third as NAMRU, whose name was given (thus), the pure god who purifies our path."

Anshar, Lahmu, and Lahamu called his three names; they pronounced them to the gods their sons:

"We have given him each of these three names. Now you, pronounce his names as we did!"

The gods rejoiced, and obeyed their command. In Ubshu-ukkinakku they deliberated their counsel:

"Let us elevate the name of the son, the warrior, our champion who looks after us!"

They sat in their assembly and began to call out the destinies, pronounced his name in all their rites.

(Catchline)

Asare, bestower of plough land, who fixes (its) boundaries

TABLET VII

(This tablet continues the recitation of the fifty names of Marduk. The names are difficult to interpret, belonging mostly to Sumerian gods into whom Marduk was assimilated, with the exception of Addu, the West Semitic storm god also known as Haddad or Adad. Only the closing lines of the tablet are reproduced here.)

With fifty epithets the great gods called his fifty names, making his way supreme. May they always be cherished, and may the older explain (to the younger). Let the wise and learned consult together, let the father repeat them and teach them to the son. Let the ear of shepherd and herdsman be open, let him not be negligent to Man-Iuk, the Ellil of the gods. May his country be made fertile, and himself be safe and sound.

His word is firm, his command cannot alter; no god can change his utterance. When he is angry, he does not turn his neck (aside); in his rage and fury no god dare confront him. His thoughts are deep, his emotions profound; criminals and wrongdoers pass before him.

He (the scribe?) wrote down the secret instruction which older men had recited in his presence, and set it down for future men to read.

May the [people?]'s of Marduk whom the Igigi gods created weave the [tale?] and call upon his name in remembrance (?) of the song of Marduk who defeated Tiamat and took the kingship.

1.2. THEOGONY OF DUNNU

This story survives in a single copy found in the city of Sippar in the nineteenth century. Although the text itself is Late Babylonian (ca. 1000–750 BCE), it contains an older theogony from Dunnu, a small city in Babylonia, prominent in the early second millennium BCE. This theogony shows how cosmogonic stories from different places and traditions within Mesopotamia could vary dramatically. In contrast with the Babylonian epic of creation *Enuma Elish* (document 1.1), this theogony presents earthly entities as the primordial creators, followed by a chain of sons who all kill their fathers and marry their mothers or sisters in a violent model of succession of kingship only broken at the New Year, when for the first time a son does not kill his father in order to succeed him. The story fits within the general pattern of the “succession myth” (e.g., Hesiod’s *Theogony* in document 1.5 and the Hittite *Song of Birth* in Part 3, document 4.b). The *Theogony of Dunnu*, however, contains the longest and most homicidal chain of succession of all the comparable stories. The shift in modus operandi introduced by Hayyashum with the New Year (he imprisons his father), in turn, is comparable with Zeus’ behavior toward his father Kronos in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (document 1.5).

SOURCE: S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford World’s Classics, Oxford and New York, 1989, rev. ed. 2000), with minor modifications.

At the very beginning (?) [Plough¹⁹ married Earth] and they [decided to establish (?)] a family (?) and dominion. “We shall break up the virgin soil of the land into clods.” In the clods of their virgin soil (?), they created Sea.

¹⁹ *Harab*, “plough” in Akkadian, is related to North-West Semitic *brb*, “sword” (e.g., in Hebrew), and Greek *harpe*, sickle, the instrument with which the castration of the Sky was performed in Hesiod’s *Theogony*.

The furrows, of their own accord, begot the Cattle God. Together they built Dunnu forever (?) as his refuge (?).

Plough made unrestricted dominion for himself in Dunnu. Then Earth raised her face to the Cattle God his son and said to him, “Come and let me love you!” The Cattle God married Earth his mother, and killed Plough his father, and laid him to rest in Dunnu, which he loved. Then the Cattle God took over his father’s dominion. He married Sea, his older sister.

The Flocks God, son of the Cattle God, came and killed the Cattle God, and in Dunnu laid him to rest in the tomb of his father. He married Sea his mother. Then Sea slew Earth her mother. On the sixteenth day of Kislimu, he took over dominion and rule.²⁰

[The Flocks God]²¹ the son of the Flocks God married River, his own sister, and killed (his) father the Flocks God and Sea his mother, and laid them to rest in the tomb undisturbed (?). On the first day of Tebet, he seized dominion and rule for himself.

The Herdsman God son of the Flocks God married his sister Pasture-and-Poplar, and made Earth’s verdure abundant, supported sheepfold and pen to feed (?) creatures of field and fen, and [...] for the gods’ requirements. He killed [...] and River his mother and made them dwell in the tomb. On the [...] day of Shabat, he took over dominion and rule for himself.

Haharnum son of the Herdsman God married his sister Beletseri and killed the Herdsman God and Pasture-and-Poplar his mother, and made them dwell in the tomb. On the sixteenth day of Addar, he took over rule (and) dominion.

[Then Hayyashum] son of Haharnum married [...] his own sister. At the New Year he took over his father’s dominion, but did not kill him, and seized him alive. He ordered his city to imprison his father [...] and [...]

(about 38 lines missing, then 20 fragmentary lines which mention Nusku, Ninurta, and Ellil)

EGYPTIAN

1.3. EGYPTIAN COSMOGONIES

The sources for Egyptian creation myths are too scattered and varied to give a remotely representative sample in this volume. Even though some creation myths (such as the Heliopolitan cosmogony) became widely known throughout the country, there was no unifying mythology. Each major city had its own unique pantheon and mythology. Allusions to creation are ubiquitous in Egyptian funerary texts, ranging from the third-millennium BCE *Pyramid Texts* (Old Kingdom) and the later *Coffin Texts* (Middle Kingdom, first half of the second millennium BCE) to countless papyri with individualized selections of religious texts (e.g., from the so-called *Book of the Dead*). Before the different

²⁰ The sequence of months corresponds to December–January–February–March, the last four months of their year, which began in April.

²¹ Author’s restoration: If the sequence follows a consistent pattern, there would have been two “Flocks” gods, as suggested by Lambert (see Dalley’s note).

every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

(31) God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2. (1) Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. (2) And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. (3) So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (4) These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

(See continuation in Part 2, document 3.)

GREEK

1.5. HESIOD'S THEOGONY

Hesiod's *Theogony* (or "birth of the gods") was probably composed at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century BCE. Together with Homer, Hesiod is the first Greek author whose works have survived. We know very little about the author himself, besides the (probably) autobiographical details he offers in his other poem, *Works and Days*, according to which he lived in Boiotia (west of Attica), where his father settled after coming from Kyme in Asia Minor. Like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Theogony* is composed in **dactylic hexameters**, the standard verse for orally transmitted epic poetry. All of these epics invoke the Muses, daughters of Memory, illustrating the reliance of the singer of tales on his memory, crucial in a preliterate world. Furthermore, the poems by Homer and Hesiod established a written tradition of hexametric poetry. Their style, including formulae and **epithets** for gods and heroes, became a model for future mythical narratives. The "Homeric" vocabulary and meter were later also used for magical spells, funerary epigraphs, and other expressions that echoed the authority of these ancestral mythical and heroic narratives.

The *Theogony* narrates both the origins of the universe and the gods and the struggle among the gods to hold power. Thus, it starts off as a cosmogony, relying heavily on genealogies and in some aspects echoing the contemporaneous birth of natural philosophy, which sought to understand the origins and organizational principles of the physical world. Hesiod then moves on to a mythical story proper, revolving around the succession of fathers and sons: Ouranos (Sky), Kronos, and Zeus. In a sense, the poem could be considered a "Hymn to Zeus" since it climaxes with the figure of the sky god as the young victorious figure who overthrows the old gods and establishes a new order in the world. In contrast, humankind appears only marginally, in the story about Prometheus, although arguably in a pivotal part of the epic.

In his poem, Hesiod collects and structures information that had previously circulated through oral tradition in songs and stories, and so the *Theogony* functions as a catalogue of supernatural beings (e.g., gods, nymphs, monsters) and

their genealogies. Given the loss of those previous (nonwritten) stories, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of innovation by Hesiod in respect to his sources. Like Homer, he must have creatively reworked, reorganized, and possibly completely altered existing traditions to his liking or that of his audience. The epic poems of Hesiod and Homer, like Greek poetry generally afterward, were meant to be recited or sung with the accompaniment of music on social occasions such as banquets, funerals, artistic contests, games, and other festivities.

SOURCE: Hesiod, *Theogony*.

Translated by C. López-Ruiz.

(Invocation to the Muses)

Let us begin to sing of the Helikonian Muses, who hold high and sacred Helikon; around a dark-violet spring, with tender feet, they dance, and around the altar of the very powerful son of Kronos; after washing their delicate skin in the spring of Parmessos or of the Horse or of sacred Olmeios, at the highest point of Helikon they performed choral dances, beautiful, lovely ones, and they rolled down with their feet. Starting to move from there, covered in much mist, (10) they moved at night uttering a very beautiful voice, celebrating Zeus, aegis-bearing, and Lady Hera of Argos, who wears golden sandals, and the daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, bright-eyed Athena, and Phoibos Apollo and Artemis, fond of arrows, and Poseidon, who holds the earth, the earth-shaker, and revered Themis and Aphrodite of vivid glance, and golden-crowned Hebe and fine Dione, and Leto and Iapetos, and crooked-minded Kronos and Dawn (Eos), and great Sun (Helios) and shining Moon (Selene), (20) and Earth (Gaia) and great Ocean (Okeanos) and black Night (Nyx) and the holy family of the other ever-existing immortals.

(How the Muses gave Hesiod his song)

They are the ones who once taught Hesiod beautiful song as he was tending his sheep at the foot of sacred Helikon. This speech the goddesses addressed to me first, the Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus: "Rustic shepherds, lowly and disgraceful, nothing but stomachs! We know how to tell many fantasies that seem real, and we know, if we want, how to sing of real things."

So they said, the articulate daughters of mighty Zeus, (30) and they gave me a branch of flourishing laurel for a scepter after plucking it, a remarkable one; then they inspired in me divine voice, so that I could celebrate the things to come and those past, and they ordered me to sing hymns of the family of the happy ever-existing ones, but to sing to *them* always first and last.

(Second invocation to the Muses; how the Muses are the poets of Olympus)

(Addressing himself) But what do I care about these things of tree or stone?³⁷ Hey, you! Let us begin with the Muses, who, singing hymns to father Zeus, cheer up

³⁷ It is unknown what this allusion to "tree and stone" means. Hesiod is probably referring to a proverb that somehow encapsulates his previous digression.

his great heart inside Olympos, recounting the present, the things to come, and those past, coming together with their sound, as their tireless voice flows pleasant from their mouths; (40) the halls of their father, loud-sounding Zeus, rejoices at the flowery voice of the goddesses as it spreads out, and the peak of snowy Olympos resounds, the house of the immortals.

Sending forth their immortal voice, first they praise in their song the venerable race of the gods from the beginning, whom Earth and broad Sky (Ouranos) begat, and those who were born from them, gods, providers of goods. Then, secondly, they celebrate Zeus, father of gods and men, as they, the goddesses, start and end their song, how he excels among the gods and is the greatest in power. (50) And then, singing of the race of human beings and mighty Giants, they please the mind of Zeus inside Olympos, the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis.

(The Muses' birth, place in Olympos, and names)

Mnemosyne (Memory) bore them in Pieria, sleeping with the father, the son of Kronos—she, the guardian of the hills of Eleuther—as a forgetfulness of evils and relief from troubles. For nine nights wise Zeus slept with her, climbing up into the sacred bed, away from mortals. But when a year had passed and the seasons turned around as the months wasted away, and many days were completed, (60) she bore nine girls, all of the same mind, with a spirit free of sorrow, in whose heart the song dwells—at a small distance from the highest peak of snowy Olympos. There they have their radiant choruses and beautiful mansions, and by them the Graces and Desire have their houses in the midst of feasts; and they sing emitting from their mouths a lovely voice, and they celebrate the allotments and noble customs of all immortals, emitting their very lovely voice.

They then went to Olympos, rejoicing in their beautiful voice, with a divine song; and around them the black earth resounded as they sang, (70) and a lovely sound rose from under their feet as they returned to their father. He is king in the sky; he himself holds the thunder and kindled lightning, after defeating by force his father Kronos. Fairly in each detail, he distributed to the immortals their portions and declared their privileges. These things, then, the Muses sang, they who hold Olympian mansions, the nine daughters begotten by great Zeus: Klio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polymnia, Ourania, and Kalliope³⁸—she is the principal among them all, (80) for she accompanies revered kings as well.

(The Muses give kings the gift of soothing and persuasive speech)

Whomever they honor, the daughters of great Zeus, and behold at the moment he is born among the Zeus-bred kings, they pour a sweet dew upon his tongue, and gentle words flow from his mouth; and from that moment all the people look up to him as he resolves disputes with right judgment; and, speaking confidently, he

³⁸ Their names mean: “she who glorifies” (Klio), “she who delights well” (Euterpe), “the blooming one” (Thalia), “she who sings” (Melpomene), “she who delights in dance” (Terpsichore), “the lovely one” (Erato), “she of many hymns” (Polymnia), “the heavenly one” (Ourania), and “she of the noble voice” (Kalliope).

quickly puts an end even to a great quarrel. For this is why sensible men are kings,³⁹ because, when people are being wronged in the assembly, they manage to retribute things easily, (90) exhorting with smooth words. And as he goes up to the gathering, they appease him as a god, with gentle reverence, and he stands out among the gathered ones. Such is the sacred gift of the Muses to men.

(The Muses inspire poets, who soothe the afflictions of men)

For it is surely from the Muses and far-shooting Apollo that men who sing and play the lyre are at ease upon the earth, but kings owe it to Zeus; and fortunate is that man, whomever the Muses love; the voice flows sweet from his mouth. For if someone, even with sorrow in his recently-battered spirit, is drying up with affliction in his heart, yet when a poet, (100) a servant of the Muses, sings of the famous deeds of men of old and of the blessed gods who hold Olympos, right away he forgets his troubles and does not remember his sorrows at all; for the gifts of the goddesses quickly turned them away.

(Third invocation to the Muses)

Rejoice, daughters of Zeus, and give me a lovely song; celebrate the holy family of the ever-existing immortals, who were born of Earth and starry Sky, and of dark Night, those whom salty Sea (Pontos) nourished. Tell how at first the gods and the earth came into being, and the rivers and infinite sea, raging with waves, (110) and the shining stars and wide sky up there, and those who were generated from them, the gods who provide, and how they divided their resources and how they distributed their honors, and also how in the beginning they got hold of very rugged Olympos. Tell me these things, Muses who have Olympian dwellings, from the beginning, and say what came first of these things.

(First elements and first gods)

Surely first of all Chaos⁴⁰ came into being, and then Earth (Gaia) of wide bosom, the always-safe sitting place of all the immortals who hold the peak of snowy Olympos, and steamy Underworld (Tartaros), at the bottom of the wide-pathed earth and Love (Eros), (120) who is the fairest among the immortal gods, the limb-looser, and among all the gods and men he dominates the mind and the thoughtful counsel in their breasts.

From Chaos Darkness (Erebos) and black Night were generated, and from Night in turn Aither and Day came forth, whom she bore becoming pregnant from her intimate union with Darkness. Earth engendered first starry Sky, equal to herself, to cover her from all sides, so as to be the ever immovable seat of the blessed gods, and she bore the high mountains, graceful shelters of the goddesses, (130) the Nymphs, who live on top of mountains of many glens. And she, without desirable love-making, also bore Pontos, the barren sea, raging with swell.

³⁹ The phrase is ambiguous and could be understood also as “this is why kings are sensible (wise, reasonable) men” or “this is why there are sensible kings.”

⁴⁰ What Hesiod meant by *chaos* is uncertain since this is its first appearance in Greek and later uses probably derive from Hesiod's. It is usually understood as “chasm, void.”

(Birth of the Titans, Cyclopes, and hundred-banded Giants)

But after that, lying in bed with Sky she bore Ocean of deep whirls and Koios and Kreios and Hyperion and Iapetos and Theia and Rhea and Themis and Mnemosyne and Phoebe of the golden wreath and lovely Tethys. And after these crooked-minded Kronos was born, the youngest, most terrible of the children, and he hated his vigorous begetter. And then she bore the Cyclopes, who have violent hearts, (140) Thunder and Lightning and tough-hearted Brightness, who gave Zeus thunder and contrived the thunderbolt. These were really similar to the gods in every other respect but a single eye was set in the middle of their forehead; "Cyclopes" was their assigned name, because one circle-shaped eye was set in their foreheads; strength and violence and contrivances accompanied their actions.

Earth and Sky engendered yet another three sons, great and mighty, not to be named: Kottos and Briareos and Gyges, arrogant children. (150) One hundred arms sprang from their shoulders, indescribable, and fifty heads for each one grew from their shoulders upon their sturdy limbs; and the mighty strength in their great form was unfathomable.

(Kronos castrates Ouranos, i.e., Sky)

And so, these were all those born from Earth and Sky, most frightful of children, and they were hated by their begetter from the start; and as soon as one of them was born, he would keep secluding them in Earth's hiding place, and would not let them come up, and Sky took pleasure in this evil deed; but she kept groaning inside, the tremendous Earth, (160) feeling bloated, and so she thought of a deceitful, evil trick.

At once fabricating a type of grey adamant she fashioned a sickle and showed it to her dear children. And she said, giving them courage, afflicted though she was in her own heart: "Children of mine and of a reckless father, if you would be willing to obey me, we would avenge your father's evil outrage; for he was the first to conceive unseemly actions."

So she said, and, as it turned out, fear got hold of them all, and not one of them made a sound. But great crooked-minded Kronos, taking courage, addressed his noble mother with answering words: (170) "Mother, I might be able to accomplish this task, if I undertake it, since I do not care for our abominable father; for he was the first to conceive unseemly actions."

So he said, and tremendous Earth rejoiced in her great chest. She made him sit and hid him in an ambush, and placed in his hands the sharp-toothed sickle, and she explained the whole trick to him. And great Sky came, bringing night along, and extended himself up against and around Earth, with desire for love-making, and stretched out in every direction; but his son reached out with his left hand, while he grasped in his right one the tremendous sickle, (180) long and sharp-toothed, and with vehemence he reaped the genitals away from his own father, and threw them back to be dispersed behind him.

(Creatures born from Sky's severed genitals, including Aphrodite)

And these (the genitals) did not escape his hand in vain: For as many drops of blood as shot forth from them, Earth received them all; and as the years sailed

around she bore the mighty Erinyes and the great Giants, dazzling in their armor, holding long spears in their hands, and the Nymphs which they call Melian⁴¹ upon the infinite earth.

As for the genitals, as soon as he had cut them off with the adamant and had thrown them down to the agitated sea, far from dry land, (190) the waters carried them for a long time, and around them a white foam rose up from the immortal flesh; and inside this grew a girl. First she approached divine Kythera, and from there she arrived later to Cyprus, surrounded by currents. And out came the beautiful revered goddess, and all around grass grew from under her delicate feet. Gods and men call her Aphrodite, the "foam-born"⁴² goddess, and well-garlanded Kythereia—Aphrodite, because she grew in the foam; and then Kythereia, because she reached Kythera—and Cyprogeneia, because she was born in very wavy Cyprus, (200) and also "congenial," because she appeared from genitalia.⁴³ Eros (Love) accompanied her, and beautiful Desire, from the moment she was born and went into the tribe of the gods; and so from the start she had honor and received as her lot a fate among human beings and immortal gods: virginal secrets, smiles and deceits, sweet pleasure, love-making, and kindness.

And their father, great Sky, started calling his sons "Titans" as a nickname, thus reproaching them, whom he had begotten; for he said that they had "attempted"⁴⁴ to perform a great deed (210) with recklessness, and that there would be a punishment for it later on.

(Night and her offspring)

Night bore frightful Doom and black Fate and Death, and bore Sleep, and brought forth the tribe of Dreams. Second, she bore Blame and painful Lament—gloomy Night, without sleeping with any of the gods; and the Hesperides, who, beyond the glorious Ocean, take care of the beautiful golden apples and the trees that bear this fruit. And the Moirai (Destinies) and the ruthlessly avenging Fates: (the Moirai) Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropo, who give mortals good and evil to have, just as they are born, (220) and (the Fates) who follow closely the transgressions of men and gods, and the goddesses do not cease from their terrible anger until they exact a harsh punishment on whoever acts wrongly.

Deadly Night also gave birth to Nemesis (Retribution), a pain for mortal men; and afterwards she bore Deceit and Intimacy and wretched Old Age, and she bore stubborn-hearted Strife. And then abominable Strife bore painful Toil and Forgetfulness and Famine and tearful Sorrows, and Fights and Battles and Murders and Manslaughters and Quarrels and Lies and Stories and Polemics, (230)

⁴¹ These seem to be the Ash-Tree Nymphs, from whom humankind was born according to some traditions (see also *Theogony* 563, *Works and Days* 145).

⁴² The name was thought to derive from the Greek word for foam, *aphros*.

⁴³ A pun is made between *philommeidea*, literally "lover of smiles," and *medea*, "genitals." We follow G. Most (Loeb edition, 2006), who renders her epithet as "genial" (my "congenial") to reflect a similar pun.

⁴⁴ The poet plays with *Titenas* (Titans) and *titainontas* "attempting" (from *teino*, "stretch by force; aim at"), resonating even with *tisin*, "punishment," in line 210.

and Lawlessness and Ruin, similar to one another, and Oath, who surely troubles earthly men the most, when someone deliberately swears a false oath.

(233–269 skipped: Account of the offspring of Sea [Pontos]: Nereus, Thaumás, Phorkys, and Keto. Nereus, also called the “Old Man,” is the father, with Doris, of the fifty sea nymphs called Nereids, whose names are given here; account of the offspring of Thaumás.)

(Offspring of Phorkys and Keto)

(270) To Phorkys Keto bore old women of beautiful cheeks, gray-haired from their birth, the ones whom immortal gods and men who walk on earth call Graias, and Pempredo of the noble robe and Enyo with the saffron robe, and the Gorgons, who live beyond famous Ocean at the limit, towards the night, where the Hesperides of acute voice are: Sthenno and Euryale and Medusa, who suffered sorrows. She was mortal, while the other two are immortal and ageless; but only by her side the dark-haired one (Poseidon) lay down in the midst of a soft meadow and spring flowers.

(280) When Perseus cut her head off from her neck, great Chrysaor and the horse Pegasos sprang forth from it. The one had this given name because he was born besides the springs (*pegai*) of Ocean, and the other one for holding a golden sword (*chryseon aor*) in his hands. And the one (Pegasos) flew away, leaving behind the earth, mother of flocks, and reached the immortals; and he dwells in Zeus’ house, bringing thunder and lightning to wise Zeus.

And Chrysaor bore three-headed Geryon, mingling in love with Kallirhoe, the daughter of famous Ocean. This one, in turn, was slain by the force of Herakles (290) by his rolling-footed cattle in Erytheia, surrounded by currents, on that very day, when he drove the cattle of broad foreheads to sacred Tiryns, after crossing the strait of Ocean and killing Orthos and the cowherd Eurytion in the steamy stable beyond the famous Ocean.

And she⁴⁵ gave birth to another indescribable monster, in no way similar to mortal men or immortal gods, inside a hallow cave: Echidna, divine and strong-hearted, half a nymph of vivacious eyes and beautiful cheeks, but half a monstrous serpent, terrible, huge, (300) specked, bloodthirsty, under the hidden places of the blessed earth. Down there she has a cave, under a hollow rock, far from the immortal gods and from mortal men, for that is where the gods assigned her famous mansions to live in. And she keeps watch amidst the Arimoi, under the ground, baneful Echidna, undying nymph and unaging for all her days.

And they say that Typhon mingled in love with her, he who is terrible, arrogant, and lawless, with the maiden of vivacious eyes; and once impregnated she bore children of strong hearts: First she engendered the dog Orthos to serve Geryon, (310) and yet second she bore something indescribable, not to be mentioned, bloodthirsty Cerberus, the bronze-sounding dog of Hades, with fifty heads, shameless and powerful; and still third she engendered the Hydra of Lerna, of perverse mind, whom Hera, the goddess of white arms, raised, immensely irritated at Herakles’ strength. Even this one the son of Zeus, scion of Amphitryon, wiped out

⁴⁵ Unclear who is the subject, probably Keto or Medusa.

with pitiless bronze, together with bellicose Iolaos; Herakles did, by the counsel of Athena, leader of hosts.

But she had also given birth to Chimaera, who breathes invincible fire, (320) terrible and huge, swift-footed and powerful. Three were her heads: one of a lion of flashing eyes, another of a she-goat, and another of a snake, a mighty dragon. [A lion in front, a dragon behind, and a she-goat in the middle, snorting a terrible force of burning fire.]⁴⁶ Pegasos and excellent Bellerophon took the life of this one.

But, overpowered by Orthos, she (Echidna) in turn had given birth to the lethal Sphinx, ruin for the Kadmeians,⁴⁷ and to the lion of Nemea, whom Hera then raised, the illustrious spouse of Zeus, settling it in the hills of Nemea, a pain for human beings. (330) While living there it went about snaring the tribes of men, and ruled over Tretos of Nemea and over Apesas; but the vigor of the Heraklean force overpowered him. And lastly Keto, mingling in love with Phorkys, bore a terrible serpent, which guards the all-golden apples at the great limits in the caverns of the dark earth. This is the offspring of Ketos and Phorkys.

(Descendants of the Titans)

(Lines 337–382 skipped: Children of Ocean: Catalogue of rivers and spring nymphs, known as Oceanids, who protect youths; only a small portion of the thousands of rivers and Oceanids are provided, for “the name of all of them is difficult for a mortal man to say, but each of those who live around one of them knows them.” Children of Theia with Hyperion: Helios [Sun], Selene [Moon], and Eos [Dawn]; children of Eurybe and Kreios; children of Eos [Dawn] and Astraios: the winds [Zephyros, Boreas, and Notos] and the stars.)

(Styx and her offspring, her connection with Zeus)

And Styx, daughter of Ocean, mingling with Pallas, gave birth in her mansions to Rivalry (Zelos) and Victory (Nike) of beautiful ankles, and she engendered also Power (Kratos) and Force (Bia), remarkable children. Their house is not apart from Zeus, and there is neither residence nor path but that through which Zeus leads them, but they always sit by Zeus, the loud-thunderer. For this is how Styx planned it, the eternal daughter of Ocean, (390) on that day, when the Olympian lightener (Zeus) summoned the immortal gods to high Olympos, and said that, whoever of the gods would fight with him against the Titans, he would not deprive him of his privileges, but each one would keep what he had before among the immortal gods. And he added this, that whoever had been without honor and privilege under Kronos, would have honor as well as privilege, as it is right. So eternal Styx came first to Olympos with her children, by the counsel of her dear father; and Zeus honored her and gave her abundant gifts. (400) For he established her as the great oath of the gods, and for her children to live with him for all days. And so he fulfilled from start to end for everyone, just as he had promised; for he is greatly powerful and rules.

⁴⁶ These lines probably did not belong in the original text but were added (interpolated) later and are identical with those in *Iliad* 6.181–182.

⁴⁷ The descendants of Kadmos, founder of Thebes, whom the Sphinx besieged until it was defeated by Oedipus.

(Offspring of Phoebe and Koios)

And Phoebe in turn went to the very desirable bed of Koios; and thereafter, a goddess pregnant from the love of a god, gave birth to Leto of the dark robe, always soothing, kind to both human beings and immortal gods, soothing from the beginning, the nicest inside Olympos. And she gave birth to renowned Asteria, (410) whom Perse once led to his great house to be called his dear wife.

(Hakate and her powers)

And she (Asteria) became pregnant and bore Hakate, whom Zeus, son of Kronos, honored above all; for he procured for her magnificent gifts: to hold a share of the earth and of the barren sea. And she also received her share in honor from the starry sky, and she is most honored among the immortal gods. For even now, whenever one of the terrestrial men propitiates her performing good sacrifices according to tradition, he invokes Hakate; and great honor follows easily that man, whose prayers the goddess accepts with benevolence, (420) and she also bestows on him fortune, since she surely has this power. For as many as were born from Earth and Sky and obtained an honor, among them all she has a part, and not even the son of Kronos violated or took away all that she obtained among the Titans, the former gods, but she holds it, just as the partition was first made at the beginning. Neither did she, on account of being a single child, partake less in honor and privileges in the earth and the sky and the sea, but rather even more, since Zeus honors her.

By whomever she wishes, she stands grandly and helps him. (430) In the assembly, whoever she wishes excels among the people, and when men march armed into man-killing war, there the goddess is present, and to those she wishes she grants victory, in her benevolence, and offers glory. In a trial she sits next to revered kings. She is good, besides, when men compete in an athletic match; there the goddess also stands by their side and helps them; and the one winning by force and strength easily carries a handsome price and rejoices, and gives his parents glory.

And she is good at assisting horsemen, whomever she wishes. (440) And to those who work the gray turbulent sea and who pray to Hakate and the loud Earth-Shaker (Poseidon), she would easily grant abundant fish, the glorious goddess, but she easily would take it away just as it appeared, if so she fancied. And she is good at augmenting the livestock in the stables, together with Hermes. The herds of cattle and the broad flocks of goats, and the herds of wooly sheep, if she so wishes in her heart, from few she multiplies them, and from many she makes them fewer.

So is she honored, despite being the only child of her mother, with prerogatives among all the immortals. (450) And the son of Kronos established her as nurse of children, of all those who after her saw with their eyes the light of Dawn of many gleams. So was she a nurse of children from the start, and these were her prerogatives.

(Children of Rhea and Kronos [Olympian gods]; Kronos is deposed by Zeus)

Rhea, conquered by Kronos, bore illustrious children: Hestia, Demeter, and Hera of the golden sandals, and powerful Hades, who inhabits his residence under the earth and has a ruthless heart, and the resounding Earth-Shaker (Poseidon), and wise Zeus, father of both gods and men, due to whose thunder the wide earth trembles. But great Kronos started gulping them down, (460) as each of them reached

their mother's knees coming out of her holy womb, with the following reasoning, that no other of the brilliant descendants of Sky might hold the royal honor among the immortals. For he had learned from Earth and starry Sky that he was to be overpowered by his own child, through the plans of great Zeus. So mighty he was. And at least about this he was not neglectful, but watch he kept swallowing his children; and Rhea felt horrible sor-

But when she was about to give birth to Zeus, father of both gods, at that moment she begged her own dear parents, (470) Earth and starry Sky, to devise a plan, so that she could go unnoticed as she gave birth to her dear child, to avenge the vengeful spirits of her father and her children, whom great-minded Kronos had gulped down. And they paid much heed to their dear daughter and obeyed her, and they both related to her everything that was bound to happen with king Kronos and his strong-hearted son. And they sent her to Lyktos, a rich land of Crete, just as she was about to give birth to the youngest of her children, great Zeus. Tremendous Earth received him in broad Crete, (480) to raise him and take care of him.

Carrying him through the swift black night, she arrived there, first to Lyktos; taking him in her arms she hid him in a deep cave, under the deep hiding places of divine earth in the Aigaian mountain, dense in woods. And, wrapping a great stone in swaddling-clothes, she delivered it to him, to the great lord son of Sky, king of the early gods; which then he took with his hands and put down into his belly, the wretch, without even suspecting that behind him, in place of the stone, undefeated and untroubled, his own son remained, (490) who soon was going to take away his privilege, conquering him with force and his hands, and then rule among the immortals.

And quickly thereafter the strength and splendid limbs of the lord grew; and, after a year had passed, fooled by the loquacious suggestions of Earth, great crooked-minded Kronos brought up again his offspring, defeated by his son's tricks and force. But first he vomited the stone, which he had swallowed last; this Zeus fixed on the earth of wide paths in sacred Pytho, in the valleys under mount Parnassos, (500) to be a memorial in the future, a wonder for mortal human beings. And he freed his fathers' brothers⁴⁸ from their horrible bonds, the sons of Sky, whom his father had bound foolishly. And they repaid him in gratitude for his kind deeds, and gave him thunder and smoky thunderbolt and lightning, which huge Earth had concealed before. Relying upon these he rules over mortals and immortals.

(Children of Iapetos)

Iapetos married Klymene, beautiful-ankled daughter of Ocean, and climbed up into the same bed with her. And she bore him Atlas, a child of strong spirit, (510) and gave birth to the very famous Menoitios and to Prometheus ("Forethought"), versatile, of sharp mind, and to clumsy Epimetheus ("Afterthought"), who became a disgrace from the beginning for men who survive on bread. For he was the first to accept a woman designed by Zeus, a maiden. Far-sounding Zeus threw arrogant

⁴⁸ Referring to the Cyclopes.

Menoitios down into the dark, smiting him with burning thunderbolt on account of his recklessness and his excessive prowess. Atlas, in turn, holds the broad sky by hard obligation, at the limits of the earth in front of the Hesperides of acute voice, making it stand with his head and his tireless arms. (520) For this is the portion that wise Zeus gave him. And he bound Prometheus with painful fetters, the resourceful plotter, with hard bonds which he dragged through the middle of a pillar. And he set on him a long-winged eagle: she would eat his immortal liver, but it would grow the same all through the night, as much as the long-winged bird had eaten the whole day. This one Herakles killed, the mighty son of Alkmene of beautiful ankles, who defended the son of Iapetos from the evil plague and liberated him from his afflictions; not without the consent of Olympian Zeus, who rules on high, (530) so that the fame of Theban-born Herakles would be even greater than before on the fertile earth. So in respect for this, he honored his celebrated son. Angry though he was, he ceased the rage he used to have before, as Prometheus would challenge the counsels of the powerful son of Kronos.

(Prometheus' tricks)

For when the gods and mortal men were sorting things out at Mekone,⁴⁹ he (Prometheus) presented a great ox, after dividing it with great anticipation, trying to trick Zeus' mind.

For first he set down for him the meat and the entrails, rich in fat, placed inside skin, hiding them in the ox's stomach. (540) And then, in turn, he set down for him the white bones of the ox, in a deceitful trick, well arranged, hiding them in gleaming fat. And surely then the father of men and gods addressed him: "Son of Iapetos, eminent among all lords, O friend, how unfairly have you divided up the portions." So he said teasing him, Zeus who knows eternal plans, to which in turn responded crooked-minded Prometheus, with a half smile, for he had not forgotten the deceitful trick: "Zeus, most glorious, greatest among the eternal-born gods, among these choose whichever your heart inside your chest bids you."

(550) So he said as he plotted deception; but Zeus, who knows eternal plans, realized it and did not fail to recognize the deceit. And he was contemplating in his spirit evils for mortal men, ones that he surely was going to accomplish. And finally with both hands he lifted the white fat, and became furious in his chest, and rage reached his spirit, when he saw the white bones of the ox, part of the deceitful trick. And since this moment the tribes of men upon the earth burn white bones for the immortals on top of smoky altars. And cloud-gatherer Zeus addressed him, greatly enraged: "Son of Iapetos, who knows counsels better than anyone, (560) O friend, it seems you did not forget your deceitful tricks yet."

So said in anger Zeus, who knows eternal plans. And from then onwards, always mindful of his rage, he did not give the Meliai⁵⁰ the force of relentless fire for mortal

⁴⁹ The precise meaning of these words is unclear as *ekrinonto* (a plural middle voice form from *krino*, "split, divide, choose") can also mean "were separating," and we do not know what the object of the verb is. It could be gods and human beings themselves or something else, like adjudicating the sacrificial offerings to each group, as the story seems to indicate.

⁵⁰ This refers to the Ash-Tree Nymphs (see note 41 on page 37).

men who dwell upon the earth. But the noble son of Iapetos fooled him completely by hiding the far-seen flame of relentless fire in a hollow cane; this in turn bit deeply the spirit of high-thundering Zeus, and he was furious in his heart, when he saw among men the far-seen flame of fire.

(Creation of the first woman)

(570) But at once he prepared an evil for humanity, in exchange for the fire; for the very renowned Lame one (Hephaistos) fashioned from earth the likeness of a maiden, by the plans of the son of Kronos; and the goddess of bright eyes, Athena, girded her and adorned her, with a silvery dress; and with her own hands she hung down from her head an embroidered veil, a marvel to see. And around her temples Pallas Athena placed lovely flourishing garlands, flowers from the meadow. And around her head she placed a golden headband, which the very renowned Lame one had made with his own hands, to please the father Zeus. (580) In it he had fashioned many designs, a marvel to see, all the terrible beasts that the main-land and the sea nourish; many of these he put in it, and beauty breathed upon them all, marvelous, looking like living creatures with voice.

But once he made a beautiful evil thing to pay for the good one,⁵¹ he took her where the other gods and human beings were, embellished with the adornment of the bright-eyed one, fathered by a mighty one;⁵² and wonder possessed both immortal gods and mortal men, when they saw the thorny deception, irresistible for men. (590) For the race of female women springs from this one, [for from her is the destructive race and tribe of women,]⁵³ a great pain for mortals, dwelling together with men, no companions in destructive poverty but only in wealth. Just as when the bees inside vaulted beehives maintain the drones, who only partake in base deeds, and while the ones strive all day until the sun goes down, every day, and set up the white honeycombs, the others, remaining inside, sheltered by the hives, reap the labor of others into their own stomachs; (600) just in such way high-thundering Zeus set up women as an evil for mortal men, partakers in troublesome actions.

But another disgrace he provided in exchange for the good: whoever does not want to marry, escaping marriage and the mischievous works of women, arrives at deadly old age without an attendant; and he who did not lack sustenance while he was alive, now that he is dead his relatives share out his livelihood. But the one in whose destiny is marriage, and who acquires a decent wife, suited with intelligence, for this one, with the passing of time, the evil is balanced out with the good (610) in a steadfast manner; and yet he who obtains shameless progeny lives with constant anguish in his mind, in his spirit, and in his heart, also an evil that has no relief.

Thus it is not possible to cheat or elude the mind of Zeus. For not even the son of Iapetos, Prometheus, the savior, escaped his heavy anger, but by necessity, astute though he was, a great chain held him down.

⁵¹ That is, to pay for the stolen fire.

⁵² Athena.

⁵³ This (or the previous) line probably does not belong in the text.

(Zeus' war with the Titans or Titanomachy)

When their father (Sky) first became irritated with Obriareos,⁵⁴ and with Kottos and Gyges,⁵⁵ he bound them with strong bonds, envious of their excessive prowess and also of their appearance and their size; (620) he made them dwell under the broad-pathed earth. There they were, withstanding pain, dwelling under the earth at the edge, at the limits of great earth, suffering much and for long, holding great grief in their heart. But the son of Kronos, together with the other immortal gods whom beautiful-haired Rhea bore in love with Kronos, brought them up to the light again, following the advice of Earth.

For she had explained to them everything in detail, that it was with these that they would attain victory and splendid boast. For they had long been fighting, enduring distressful pain, (630) the Titan gods and all those who were born from Kronos, confronting one another in mighty clashes; some, the illustrious Titans, from high Othrys, and the others from Olympos, the gods who give boons, whom beautiful-haired Rhea bore sleeping with Kronos.

By then, they had been fighting for ten full years, constantly enduring distressful battle against each other. Neither was there a solution for their difficult strife nor an end for either side, but the outcome of the war had been stretched even. However, when he offered them⁵⁶ supplies, (640) nectar and ambrosia, which the gods themselves eat, and the vigorous spirit had been restored in the chests of them all, [as they received the nectar and desirable ambrosia] then the father of men and gods addressed them:

"Listen to me, splendid sons of Earth and Sky, so I can say what my spirit in my chest tells me to. For a very long time already we have been fighting against each other, over victory and power, every day, the Titan gods and all of us descended from Kronos. But now show me your great strength and your invincible arms (650) in deadly combat against the Titans, remembering our kind friendship, and how you reached again the light after suffering so many things under an insufferable bond, thanks to our counsel, from under a murky fog."

So he said, and in turn blameless Kottos responded to him at once: "Sir, it is not an unknown thing that you are talking about, but we also know that you excel in thoughts and excel in intelligence, and that you emerged as the defender of the immortals against cold ruin. And through your careful plans we were released back again from under a murky fog, from under unpleasant bonds, (660) O son of the lord Kronos, after suffering hopeless pains. So also now, with determined mind and well-disposed spirit we will defend your power in dreadful battle, storming the Titans in mighty clashes."

So he said; and the gods, givers of boons, approved after hearing his speech; for their spirit was craving war even more than before; and they provoked undesirable war, all of them, female and male alike, on that very day, the Titan gods and all those descendant from Kronos, and those whom Zeus brought to the light from the darkness under the earth, (670) terrible and powerful, who possessed a superb strength.

⁵⁴ That is, Briareos, in a variant form of the same name.

⁵⁵ These are the Hundred-Handers, mentioned in *Tb.* 147 ff.

⁵⁶ Zeus to Briareos, Kottos, and Gyges.

One hundred arms sprang from their shoulders, equal for all of them, and fifty heads for each one grew from their shoulders upon their sturdy limbs. Then they took position against the Titans in miserable combat, holding enormous rocks in their sturdy hands. And the Titans reinforced their ranks with determination; and both sides showed the work of their arms and their force, and the boundless sea resounded terribly, and the earth roared greatly, and the broad sky moaned as it trembled, (680) and high Olympos shook from the ground under the rush of the immortals, and the deep quake reached from their feet to steamy Tartaros, and the loud sound of the unspeakable clashes and of the powerful blows.

In such way they shot resounding missiles at each other. And the voice of both sides reached the starry sky as they called on each other; for they clashed in a loud war-cry. But Zeus could not contain his strength anymore; instead, his heart filled with strength at once and showed his full force; and he advanced at the same time from the sky and from Olympos (690) continuously shooting lightning, and the thunderbolts flew packed together out of his sturdy hand, with thunder and lightning, whirling about a sacred and intense flame. And all around the life-giving earth roared as it burned, and all around the immense woods crackled loudly. The whole earth boiled, and the streams of Ocean and the barren sea; and a hot breath surrounded the earthly Titans, and an unspeakable flame reached the divine aether, and the luminescent shine of the thunderbolt and lightning blinded their eyes, powerful though they were, (700) and an astonishing heat invaded the chasm, and to look directly at it with your eyes and to hear its sound with your ears seemed just like when earth and broad sky from above approached⁵⁷; for this kind of great roar would arise from below as she was crushed down and he rushed down from above.

Such noise the gods produced as they merged in strife. At the same time, the winds spread the commotion and the dust and the thunder and the lightning and the lazing thunderbolt, the shafts of great Zeus, and brought the cry and the screaming to the middle of both sides. An unspeakable din of deadly strife (710) rose, and it became clear where the dominating action was. The battle tilted to one side; for before, charging against each other they had fought incessantly in mighty combats. But then Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges, insatiable of war, were among the first ones to provoke a violent battle; then they threw three hundred stones from their sturdy arms, one after the other, and they covered the Titans with their darts. Indeed, they sent them under the earth of wide paths and they bound them with hard bonds, after defeating them with their hands, high-spirited though they were, (720) so far below the earth as the sky is from the earth.

(Description of the underworld and Styx)

For such is the distance to the steamy underworld (Tartaros) from the earth: for a bronze anvil, falling from the sky for nine nights and days, would reach the earth on the tenth; [so in turn is the distance from the earth to the steamy underworld:] so in turn a bronze anvil, falling from the earth for nine nights and days, would reach the underworld on the tenth. Around it a bronze fence stretches out, and on both sides of it a three-layered night wraps it around its neck; what is more, above it grow

⁵⁷ Probably referring to when they mated in primordial times.

the roots of the earth and the barren sea. There is where the Titans are hidden, under a dark fog, (730) by the designs of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, in a dank region, at the limits of the tremendous earth. And they have no way out, for Poseidon installed bronze gates, and a wall extends from both sides.

(734–745 *Skipped: probably interpolated lines, which add no significant information*)

In front of these (gates) the son of Iapetos⁵⁸ holds the wide sky, making it stand on his head and his tireless arms, immovable, just where Night and Day passing very close exchange greetings as they pass through the great bronze threshold; (750) the one is going to step inside, and the other is going out the doors, and never does the house hold them both inside, but always one of them, going out of the house, turns over the earth, while the other, going inside the house, awaits the time of her trip, until it arrives; the one holds for those on earth much-seeing light, while the other holds Sleep (Hypnos) in her arms, brother of Death (Thanatos), lethal Night, totally covered in murky fog. And inside the children of Night have their homes, Sleep and Death, terrible gods. (760) Never does the bright Sun look upon them with his rays when he goes up to the sky or down from the sky. While one of them goes around gently over the earth and the broad back of the sea, and is soothing for men, the other has an iron core, a bronze heart in his ruthless chest: he keeps whomever among mortals he gets hold of, and he is hateful even for the immortal gods.

There stand, in front, the resounding houses of the earthly god, [powerful Hades and awesome Persephone,] and a fearful dog guards them in the front, (770) ruthless, and he has an evil trick: upon those going in, he fawns in the same way with his tail and with both ears, but he does not let them go out again; instead he is vigilant and bites whomever he catches going outside the gates [of Powerful Hades and awesome Persephone].

There dwells a goddess hateful to the immortals, terrible Styx,⁵⁹ the oldest daughter of Ocean, of circular flow. Far from the gods, she dwells in a famous mansion vaulted with tall rocks; and from all sides around it leans on silver columns, approaching the sky. (780) And rarely swift-footed Iris, the daughter of Wonder (Thaumas), travels there with a message over the broad back of the sea. Whenever strife and quarrel arise among the immortals and then one of those who have Olympian mansions lies, Zeus would send Iris to bring a great oath from afar, the renowned water in a golden receptacle, cold, which flows from the high steep rock; and under the broad-pathed earth it flows abundant from the sacred river through the dark night. A branch of Ocean, a tenth part, she had been apportioned. (790) Nine times around the earth and the broad back of the sea, spinning in silver whirls he falls into the sea, and she, as one of them, flows forth from the rock, a great pain for the gods: Whoever among the immortals who hold the summit of snowy Olympus swears a false oath as he pours it, lies without breath for the duration of a full year, and he cannot go near the nourishment of ambrosia and nectar, but lies down without air and without voice in a covered bed, and an evil deep sleep covers him.

⁵⁸ Atlas.

⁵⁹ Hesiod makes a pun between the name Styx and the adjective *stygeros*, "hateful, abominable" (as if we had used "stigmatized," for instance).

And yet, when he has completed this malady at the end of the year, (800) a new trial replaces the other, a more difficult one: for nine years he stays apart from the gods, who live forever, and he never partakes in their council or in their banquets, for all of nine years; but on the tenth he participates again in the assemblies of the gods, who hold Olympian mansions. As such an oath the gods established the imperishable water of Styx, the one of old, which flows forth through a coarse region.

That is where the sources and the ends of the dark earth and the steamy underworld and the barren sea and the starry sky all lie in succession, (810) disturbing, dank, which even the gods hate. And that is where the marble gates and the bronze threshold are, unshakable, well fitted with unending roots, self-generated; and beyond, apart from all the gods, live the Titans, at the other side of the gloomy chasm. But the famous helpers of loud-crashing Zeus inhabit houses in the foundations of the Ocean, Kottos and Gyges; as for Briareos, since he was noble, the deep-sounding Earth-shaker made him his son-in-law, and he gave him to marry Wave-Walker (Kymopoleia), his daughter.

(*War with Typhoeus or Typhonomachia*)

(820) Yet after Zeus had driven the Titans away from the sky tremendous Earth bore her youngest child, Typhoeus,⁶⁰ in love with Tartaros, thanks to golden Aphrodite. His hands are of the kind that attain deeds by strength,⁶¹ and his feet are tireless, those of this powerful god; and off his shoulders he has one hundred heads of a snake, a terrible serpent, licking with dark tongues; and on these awful heads two eyes glittered under his eyebrows like fire; and from each of his heads fire burned as he stared; (830) and the voices in all of the terrible heads uttered an indescribable sound of different kinds: for sometimes they would make a sound as if for the gods to understand,⁶² but other times the sound of a proud, loud-bellowing bull, wild in his strength, and yet other times that of a lion who has pitiless spirit, and another in turn one similar to cubs, a marvel to hear, and another in turn he whistled, and the high mountains echoed from below.

And an incredible deed would have been accomplished on that day, and he would have ruled over mortals and immortals, if at that point the father of men and gods had not acutely realized it. He thundered hardly and loudly, (840) and all around the earth resounded in a terrifying way, and also the wide sky above and the sea and the streams of Ocean, and the underworld of the earth. And Olympus shook greatly under his immortal feet as the lord launched himself forward, and the earth groaned in response. And a fire took hold of the dark-blue sea under both the thunder and lightning and the fire from such a monstrosity of hurricanes and winds and flaming thunderbolt. The whole earth boiled, and also the sky and the sea; and then tall waves swelled on both sides of the coast, around and about, under the impetus of the gods, and a ceaseless commotion arose. (850) Hades trembled, he who

⁶⁰ Presumably the same creature as the one mentioned as Typhon in *Tb.* 306.

⁶¹ The Greek text of this line is corrupt and the meaning is not clear, so any translation is a mere guess.

⁶² That is, like human speech.

rules over the deceased under the earth, and so did the underworld Titans, who live around Kronos, because of the ceaseless din and the terrifying fight.

But when Zeus indeed gathered his strength and took his weapons, thunder, lightning, and flaming thunderbolt, he struck him jumping from Olympos; and so he wrapped in flames all the awful heads of the terrible monster. And when he had overpowered him, slashing him with blows, he collapsed with lame limbs, and tremendous earth groaned. A flame then emerged from the thundering lord (860) in the creeks of the rugged dark mountain, as it was hit, and the tremendous earth was much burned by the awful smoke, and it melted like tin heated with skill by vigorous men in well-perforated melting pots, or like iron, which, even being the hardest, overpowered by scolding fire in mountainous creeks, melts down on the divine earth by the works of Hephaistos. So now melted the earth with the spark of flaming fire. Then, aggravated in his spirit, Zeus hurled him into the broad underworld.

It is from Typhoeus that the humid force of blowing winds comes, (870) except that of Notos and Boreas and clearing Zephyros; for these are from the gods by lineage, a great benefit for mortals. But the other breezes blow randomly over the sea; these are the ones that, falling onto the murky sea, as a great sorrow for mortals, rush in a dangerous hurricane; and they all blow from here and there, scatter ships and destroy sailors; and there is no escape from the disaster for men who stumble upon them in the sea. And these, in turn, also upon the boundless, flower-bearing earth destroy the cherished works of dirt-born men, (880) filling them with dust and troubling confusion.

(Zeus secures his power)

Next, after the blessed gods had completed their toil and by force had assigned the prerogatives for the Titans, then surely they encouraged Zeus, the far-sounding Olympian, by the advice of Earth, to be king and rule over the gods; and he made a fair distribution of prerogatives for them.

(Zeus marries Metis and gives birth to Athena)

Then Zeus, as king of the gods, took Metis⁶³ as his first wife, who knows the most among both gods and mortal men. But just when she was about to give birth to the bright-eyed goddess Athena, he completely tricked her mind with deceit (890) and with wily words, and then he gulped her down into his belly, by the advice of Earth and starry Sky: for they had so advised him, lest another of the eternal-born gods hold the royal honor instead of Zeus. For it was decreed that children of superior mind would be born from her: first the bright-eyed girl, Tritogeneia,⁶⁴ possessing strength equal to her father and intelligent counsel, but after she was going to give birth to a son, a king of gods and men, who would have an arrogant heart. But before that Zeus gulped her down into his belly, (900) and so the goddess would advise him on both good and evil.

⁶³ Metis, which means "wisdom," "skill," was born from Tethys and Okeanos, who were among the Titans (while Zeus and the Olympian gods descend from younger Titan Kronos) (*Tb.* 133–137).

⁶⁴ Athena.

(Lines 901–924 are a list of the wives that Zeus takes after Metis and the children they bore to Zeus. These wives are Themis, Eurynome, Demeter, Mnemosyne, Leto, and Hera.)

But he himself, from his head, gave birth to bright-eyed Athena, (925) the terrible mistress, bellicose, army-leader, invincible, for whom din and wars and battles are pleasing. But Hera was both furious and aggravated with her husband, and without mingling in love, gave birth to famous Hephaistos, who excels among all in Olympos with his skills.

(Lines 930–962 continue the list of goddesses who bore children to Zeus; then follows a catalogue of goddesses or women descended from gods who bedded with mortal men and the godlike offspring they bore; the last lines, 1019–1022, are themselves the beginning of a separate poem that continues this genealogical theme, only partially preserved, called the "Catalogue of Women.")

1.6. THE DEMIURGE, FROM PLATO'S *TIMAEUS*

Plato was born to a noble Athenian family sometime near the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE), around either 428–427 or 424–423 BCE, and died at around age 80, in 348–347 BCE. As a young man he made the acquaintance of Socrates (ca. 470–399 BCE), under whose influence he developed an abiding love for the philosophical life. Not long after Socrates' execution, Plato began to compose philosophical dialogues, a practice he continued until his own death some fifty years later. Working from a plot of land in a grove beyond the city walls, where a shrine to a hero called Hekademos stood, he founded and supervised a philosophical school known to us as the "Academy." This school became the first institution of "higher education," from where Plato conceived and disseminated ideas of such astonishing depth and beauty that their influence upon the development of Western civilization is hardly calculable. Strictly speaking, we can classify Plato's literary output as philosophy, but his dialogues are also much more than philosophy—and into many of these dialogues Plato wove his famous myths.

It would be comforting if we had only to name Plato as author of the myths and to produce a brief, general biography of the man. The problem is that, despite our possessing so many of Plato's works (and we may very well have his entire oeuvre), his mind remains elusive. We know nothing of his motivations and intentions as an author, for neither he nor any one of his intimates or associates left reliable information directly pertaining to these matters. Nothing prevents us from drawing inferences from the texts themselves, of course, but this procedure has its limitations and yields no certain truths. Plato famously makes no appearance in the world of his dialogues (he is mentioned by name in three places, but he never speaks). Within this world, the philosophy is articulated by others—most often, of course, by Socrates. Yet in the telling of the myths even Socrates is frequently displaced: although he narrates the *Republic's* "Myth of Er," he attributes this description of the underworld to an eyewitness who had died and come back to life (*Republic* 614b; see Part 6, document 10); he implies that the poet Stesichoros is in some way responsible for the myth in his second speech in the *Phaedrus* (244a; not in this volume); Protagoras, the sophist, delivers the myth in the dialogue bearing his name (Part 2, document 6);