

in vestigial form in American society in the form of wariness of Friday the 13th. It is separated from the preceding performance of proverbial lore by a line (845 [765]) that echoes the line that served as introduction to the proverbs ([706] represented here by the title between 780 and 781), and clearly marks the "days" as a new category of useful information whose observance will provide benefit to the listener. The system of numbering is somewhat odd from our perspective, and does not seem to correspond exactly to that of any known Greek community, though in its broad outlines it conforms to patterns found in Athens and other cities. Most dates will be comprehensible if the reader bears in mind that the roughly 30 days of the lunar month are here thought of as three "tens." Thus the "middle fourth" is the fourteenth. In Athens, the third "ten" (the waning moon) was counted backwards, but it is impossible to know whether Hesiod's "fourth of the . . . waning month" is the 24th (counting forward) or the 27th (counting backwards).

864 [778] *Provident One*: "knower" (Gk. *idris*): A kenning for "ant."

THEOGONY

Invocation to the Muses

Begin our singing ^{with} the Helikonian Muses,
Who possess Mount Helikon, high and holy,
And near its violet-stained spring on petalsoft feet
Dance circling the altar of almighty Kronion,

And having bathed their silken skin in Permessos
Or in Horse Spring or the sacred creek Olmeios,
They begin their choral dance on Helikon's summit
So lovely it pangs, and with power in their steps
Ascend veiled and misted in palpable air
Treading the night, and in a voice beyond beauty
They chant:

Zeus Aegisholder and his lady Hera
Of Argos, in gold sandals striding,
And the Aegisholder's girl, owl-eyed Athene,
And Phoibos Apollo and arrowy Artemis,
Poseidon earth-holder, earthquaking god,
Modest Themis and Aphrodite, eyelashes curling,
And Hebe goldcrowned and lovely Dione,
Leto and Iapetos and Kronos, his mind bent,
Eos and Helios and glowing Selene,
Gaia, Okeanos, and the black one, Night, . . .

And the whole eerie brood of the eternal Immortals.

And they once taught Hesiod the art of singing verse,
While he pastured his lambs on holy Helikon's slopes.
And this was the very first thing they told me,
The Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus Aegisholder:

"Hillbillies and bellies, poor excuses for shepherds:
We know how to tell many believable lies,
But also, when we want to, how to speak the plain truth."

30 So spoke the daughters of great Zeus, ^{lethal} mincing their words.
 And they gave me a staff, a branch of good sappy laurel, ^{mention of laurels}
Plucking it off, spectacular. And they breathed into me
A voice divine, so I might celebrate past and future.
 And they told me to hymn the generation of the eternal gods,
 35 But always to sing of themselves, the Muses, first and last.

But why all this about oak tree or stone?

Start from the Muses: when they sing for Zeus Father
They thrill the great mind deep in Olympus,

Telling what is, what will be, and what has been,

40 Blending their voices, and weariless the sound

Flows sweet from their lips and spreads like lilies,

And Zeus' thundering halls shine with laughter,

And Olympus' snowy peaks and the halls of the gods

Echo the strains as their immortal chanting

45 Honors first the primordial generation of gods

Whom in the beginning Earth and Sky bore,

And the divine benefactors born from them;

And, second, Zeus, the Father of gods and men,

Mightiest of the gods and strongest by far;

50 And then the race of humans and of powerful Giants.

And Zeus' mind in Olympus is thrilled by the song

Of the Olympian Muses, the Storm King's daughters.

They were born on Pieria after our Father Kronion
Mingled with Memory, who rules Eleutherae's hills.

55 She bore them to be a forgetting of troubles,

A pause in sorrow. For nine nights wise Zeus

Mingled with her in love, ascending her sacred bed

In isolation from the other Immortals.

But when the time drew near, and the seasons turned,

60 And the moons had waned, and the many days were done,

She bore nine daughters, all of one mind, with song

In their breasts, with hearts that never failed,

Near the topmost peak of snowcapped Olympus.

There are their polished dancing grounds, their fine halls,

65 And the Graces and Desire have their houses close by,

And all is in bloom. And they move in the dance, intoning
 The careful ways of the gods, celebrating the customs
 Of all the Immortals in a voice enchanting and sweet.
 Then they process to Olympus, a glory of pure
 Sound and dance, and the black earth shrieks with delight 70
 As they sing, and the drum of their footfalls rises like love
 As they go to their father. He is king in the sky,
 He holds the vajra thunder and flashing lightning.
 He defeated his father Kronos by force, and He ordained
 Laws for the gods and assigned them their rights. 75

Thus sing the Muses who have their homes on Olympus,

The nine daughters born of great Zeus,

Klio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene,

Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Ourania,

And Kalliope, the most important of all, 80

For she keeps the company of reverend kings.

When the daughters of great Zeus will honor a lord

Whose lineage is divine, and look upon his birth,

They distill a sweet dew upon his tongue,

And from his mouth words flow like honey. The people 85

All look to him as he arbitrates settlements

With judgments straight. He speaks out in sure tones

And soon puts an end even to bitter disputes.

A sound-minded ruler, when someone is wronged,

Sets things to rights in the public assembly, 90

Conciliating both sides with ease.

He comes to the meeting place propitiated as a god,

Treated with respect, preeminent in the crowd.

Such is the Muses' sacred gift to men. 95

For though it is singers and lyre players

That come from the Muses and far-shooting Apollo

And kings come from Zeus, happy is the man

Whom the Muses love. Sweet flows the voice from his mouth.

For if anyone is grieved, if his heart is sore

With fresh sorrow, if he is troubled, and a singer 100

Who serves the Muses chants the deeds of past men
Or the blessed gods who have their homes on Olympus,
He soon forgets his heartache, and of all his cares
He remembers none: the goddesses' gifts turn them aside.

- 105 Farewell Zeus's daughters, and bestow song that beguiles.
Make known the eerie brood of the eternal Immortals
Who were born of Earth and starry Sky,
And of dusky Night, and whom the salt Sea bore.
Tell how first the gods and earth came into being
110 And the rivers and the sea, endless and surging,
And the stars shining and the wide sky above;
How they divided wealth and allotted honors,
And first possessed deep-ridged Olympus.

- Tell me these things, Olympian Muses,
115 From the beginning, and tell which of them came first.

The First Gods

- Gaia* In the beginning there was only Chaos, the Abyss,
But then Gaia, the Earth, came into being,
Her broad bosom the ever-firm foundation of all,
under And Tartaros, dim in the underground depths,
120 And Eros, loveliest of all the Immortals, who
Makes their bodies (and men's bodies) go limp, *hammer*
Mastering their minds and subduing their wills.

- Erebus* From the Abyss were born Erebus and dark Night.
And Night, pregnant after sweet intercourse
125 With Erebus, gave birth to Aether and Day.

- Ouranos* Earth's first child was Ouranos, starry Heaven,
Just her size, a perfect fit on all sides.
And a firm foundation for the blessed gods.
And she bore the Mountains in long ranges, haunted
130 By the Nymphs who live in the deep mountain dells.
Then she gave birth to the barren, raging Sea
Without any sexual love. But later she slept with
Ouranos and bore Ocean with its deep currents,

And also: Koios, Krj^{os}, Hyperion, Iapetos,
Theia, Rheia, Themis, Mnemosyne,
Gold-crowned Phoibe and lovely Tethys.

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The Castration of Ouranos

After them she bore a most terrible child,
Kronos, her youngest, an arch-deceiver,
And this boy hated his lecherous father.

She bore the Cyclopes too, with hearts of stone,
Brontes, Steropes and ponderous Arges,
Who gave Zeus thunder and made the thunderbolt.
In every other respect they were just like gods,
But a lone eye lay in their foreheads' middle.
They were nicknamed Cyclopes because they had
A single goggle eye in their foreheads' middle.
Strong as the dickens, and they knew their craft.

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And three other sons were born to Gaia and Ouranos,
Strong, hulking creatures that beggar description,
Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges, outrageous children.
A hundred hands stuck out of their shoulders,
Grotesque, and fifty heads grew on each stumpy neck.
These monsters exuded irresistible strength.
They were Gaia's most dreaded offspring,
And from the start their father feared and loathed them.
Ouranos used to stuff all of his children
Back into a hollow of Earth soon as they were born,
Keeping them from the light, an awful thing to do,
But Heaven did it, and was very pleased with himself.

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Vast Earth groaned under the pressure inside,
And then she came up with a plan, a really wicked trick.
She created a new mineral, grey flint, and formed
A huge sickle from it and showed it to her dear boys.
And she rallied them with this bitter speech:

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"Listen to me, children, and we might yet get even
With your criminal father for what he has done to us.

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