

Narratives of the Orphic Theogonies:

In the *HHT* water and matter are the first entities according to Damascius' summary (Fr. 75.I). Athenagoras' version varies very slightly, stating that it was water and mud, rather than matter (Fr. 75.II). Earth later came from this matter (Frs. 75.I, 76.I). Water and matter/mud produced Chronos (Time), a monstrous, hybrid god (Frs. 76.I, 76.II); Ananke (Necessity) was united with Chronos (Fr. 77). Chronos, in turn, created Aither, Chaos and Erebus (Darkness) (Fr. 78), and later an egg (Fr. 79.I, II), from which Phanes, another monstrous deity, was born (Fr. 80.I, II). In the process of Phanes' birth the egg was broken into two halves, which became Ouranos and Gaia (Fr. 80.II, IV), who then produced the Fates, the Hekatoncheires (Hundred-Handers), the Kyklopes and the Titans (Fr. 82.I, 83). The later stages of the cosmogony follow the same pattern as Hesiod's *Theogony* until the start of Zeus' reign. In order to become the ruler of the cosmos, Zeus swallowed Phanes and absorbed his creative power (Fr. 85). Later, Zeus mated with Rhea while both of them were in the form of snakes; from this pairing came Kore, who had two faces and horns (Fr. 87). Zeus, again in the form of a snake, then mated with Kore producing Dionysos (Fr. 89.I).

The *RT* follows a very similar pattern. The main difference between the accounts is the position of Chronos; in the *RT* Chronos is the first entity to exist (Fr. 109). Chronos produced Aither and Chaos (Fr. 111); he then produced an egg in Aither (Fr. 114). Again, Phanes is born from this egg (Fr. 121). In this version Phanes produced Night (Fr. 147.I), indeed, in some instances there seem to be three nights (Fr. 147.I). Night then produced Ouranos and Gaia (Fr. 149). Phanes rules the cosmos until he passes his power, symbolised by a sceptre, on to his daughter, Night (Frs. 167-170). She is succeeded by Ouranos (Fr. 174), Kronos (Fr. 190), and Zeus (Fr. 227); at this point Phanes is again consumed by Zeus (Frs. 240, 241). Zeus' wives and offspring in the *RT* include many of the usual Olympians, but Zeus is again the father of Kore by Rhea (Frs. 276, 280), and Dionysos by Kore (Fr. 283). The *RT* also provides a narrative about events after Dionysos' birth: Dionysos was torn apart and consumed by the Titans, and for this crime Zeus struck them with the thunderbolt and destroyed them (Frs. 302, 318). From the soot from the destruction of the Titans and the parts of Dionysos within them, Zeus created humans (Fr. 320). Finally, Dionysos is brought back to life from his heart, which had been saved after his death (Fr. 326).

Homeric Hymn to Apollo

Further yet you went, far-shooting Apollo, until you came to the town of the presumptuous Phlegyae who dwell on this earth [280] in a lovely glade near the Cephisian lake, caring not for Zeus. And thence you went speeding swiftly to the mountain ridge, and came to Crisa beneath snowy Parnassus, a foothill turned towards the west: a cliff hangs over it from above, and a hollow, rugged glade runs under. [285] There the lord Phoebus Apollo resolved to make his lovely temple, and thus he said:

“In this place I am minded to build a glorious temple to be an oracle for men, and here they will always bring perfect hecatombs, [290] both they who dwell in rich Peloponnesus and the men of Europe and from all the wave-washed isles, coming to question me. And I will deliver to them all counsel that cannot fail, answering them in my rich temple.”

When he had said this, Phoebus Apollo laid out all the foundations [295] throughout, wide and very long; and upon these the sons of Erginus, Trophonius and Agamedes, dear to the deathless gods, laid a footing of stone. And the countless tribes of men built the whole temple of wrought stones, to be sung of for ever.

[300] But near by was a sweet flowing spring, and there with his strong bow the lord, the son of Zeus, killed the bloated, great she-dragon, a fierce monster wont to do great mischief to men upon earth, to men themselves and to their thin-shanked sheep; for she was a very bloody plague. [305] She it was who once received from gold-throned Hera and brought up fell, cruel Typhaon to be a plague to men. Once on a time Hera bare him because she was angry with father Zeus, when the Son of Cronos bare all-glorious Athena in his head. Thereupon queenly Hera was angry [310] and spoke thus among the assembled gods:

“Hear from me, all gods and goddesses, how cloud-gathering Zeus begins to dishonor me wantonly, when he has made me his true-hearted wife. See now, apart from me he has given birth to bright-eyed Athena [315] who is foremost among all the blessed gods. But my son Hephaestus whom I bare [317a] was weakly among all the blessed gods and shrivelled of foot, a shame and a disgrace to me in heaven, whom I myself took in my hands and cast out so that he fell in the great sea. But silver-shod Thetis the daughter of Nereus [320] took and cared for him with her sisters: would that she had done other service to the blessed gods! O wicked one and crafty! What else will you now devise? How dared you by yourself give birth to bright-eyed Athena? Would not I have borne you a child —I, who was at least called your wife [325] among the undying gods who hold wide heaven. [325a] Beware now lest I devise some evil thing for you hereafter: yes, now I will contrive that a son be born me to be foremost among the undying gods —and that without casting shame on the holy bond of wedlock between you and me. [330] And I will not come to your bed, but will consort with the blessed gods far off from you.”

When she had so spoken, she went apart from the gods, being very angry. Then straightway large-eyed queenly Hera prayed, striking the ground flatwise with her hand, and speaking thus:

[335] "Hear now, I pray, Earth and wide Heaven above and you Titan gods who dwell beneath the earth about great Tartarus, and from whom are sprung both gods and men! Harken you now to me, one and all, and grant that I may bear a child apart from Zeus, no wit lesser than him in strength —nay, let him be as much stronger than Zeus as all-seeing Zeus than Cronos." [340] Thus she cried and lashed the earth with her strong hand. Then the life-giving earth was moved: and when Hera saw it she was glad in heart, for she thought her prayer would be fulfilled. And thereafter she never came to the bed of wise Zeus for a full year, [345] nor to sit in her carved chair as aforetime to plan wise counsel for him, but stayed in her temples where many pray, and delighted in her offerings, large-eyed queenly Hera. But when the months and days were fulfilled [350] and the seasons duly came on as the earth moved round, she bore one neither like the gods nor mortal men, fell, cruel Typhaon, to be a plague to men. Straightway large-eyed queenly Hera took him and bringing one evil thing to another such, gave him to the dragoness; and she received him. [355] And this Typhaon used to work great mischief among the famous tribes of men. Whosoever met the dragoness, the day of doom would sweep him away, until the lord Apollo, who deals death from afar, shot a strong arrow at her. Then she, rent with bitter pangs, lay drawing great gasps for breath and rolling about that place. [360] An awful noise swelled up unspeakable as she writhed continually this way and that amid the wood: and so she left her life, breathing it forth in blood. Then Phoebus Apollo boasted over her:

"Now rot here upon the soil that feeds man! You at least shall live no more to be a fell bane to men [365] who eat the fruit of the all-nourishing earth, and who will bring hither perfect hecatombs. Against cruel death neither Typhoeus shall avail you nor ill-famed Chimera, but here shall the Earth and shining Hyperion make you rot."

[370] Thus said Phoebus, exulting over her: and darkness covered her eyes. And the holy strength of Helios made her rot away there; wherefore the place is now called Pytho, and men call the lord Apollo by another name, Pythian; because on that spot the power of piercing Helios made the monster rot away.

Empedocles

(57) On it (the earth) many heads sprung up without necks and arms wandered bare and bereft of shoulders. Eyes strayed up and down in want of foreheads.

(58) Solitary limbs wandered seeking for union.

(59) But, as divinity was mingled still further with divinity, these things joined together as each might chance, and many other things besides them continually arose.

(60) Shambling creatures with countless hands.

(61) Many creatures with faces and breasts looking in different directions were born; some, offspring of oxen with faces of men, while others, again, arose as offspring of men with the heads of oxen, and creatures in whom the nature of women and men was mingled, furnished with sterile parts.