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The Forerunners of Philosophical Cosmogony

In this long preliminary chapter certain ideas are examined which are not truly 'philosophical'; they are mythic rather than rational in kind, but may nevertheless appear as significant preludes to the sort of attempt to explain the world that began with Thales.

We are not concerned here with pure mythology, but with concepts which, although expressed in the language and through the persons of myth, are the result of a more direct, empirical, non-symbolical way of thinking. These quasi-rationalistic views of the world are most frequently concerned with its earliest history, starting from its actual birth or creation, and overlap the attempt (made most notably by Hesiod in the *Theogony*) to systematize the manifold deities of legend by deriving them from a common ancestor or pair of ancestors at the beginning of the world. Yet the active investigation of the world's ancestry, whether mainly mythical as in Hesiod or mainly rational as in the Milesian philosophers, must have been carried on only by the few. The general structure of the present world, the common environment of experience, was of wider interest; and here a common, naïve, extroverted but nevertheless partly mythical outlook seems to have been widely accepted. It appears from time to time in Homer and is briefly described in § 1. In §§ 2 and 3 two concepts are examined which were later credited with cosmogonical importance by the Greeks themselves, those of Okeanos and of Nyx (Night). §§ 4, 5 and 6 are concerned with four special accounts, all of primarily non-philosophical character but all treating of cosmological topics: first the various cosmogonical ideas associated with Orpheus, then the Hesiodic *Theogony*, then the intriguing but fragmentary views of Alcman and (admittedly at rather disproportionate length) Pherecydes of Syros. Finally in § 7 comes a brief consideration of what was needed for the transition to a more fully rational approach.

On some points reference will be made to the comparative mythology of earlier near-eastern cultures, especially Babylonian, Egyptian and Hittite. There are strong similarities between some of

the Greek cosmogonical stories and the theogonical myths of the great river-civilizations and their neighbours; these similarities help to explain some details of Greek accounts down to and including Thales. Translations of the main non-Greek texts are most conveniently to be found in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton, 3rd ed. 1969), which will be referred to as Pritchard, *ANET*. Useful summaries, all in the Pelican series, are H. Frankfort and others, *Before Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, 1949) originally published as *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago University Press, 1946), O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Harmondsworth, rev. ed. 1961) and G. S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth, 1974), ch. xi.

Little is said in this chapter about the development of the concept of the soul. The Homeric idea of the *psyche* or breath-soul as an insubstantial image of the body, giving it life and surviving it in a wretched, bloodless existence in Hades, is too familiar to need description here. E. R. Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951) and chapter v of Jaeger's *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford, 1947) give a good account of the popular, pre-philosophical idea of the soul. Pythagoras was possibly the first Greek explicitly to treat the soul as something of moral importance, and Heraclitus first clearly indicated that knowledge of it was relevant to knowledge of the structure of the cosmos. Yet the idea that the substance of the soul was related to *aither*, or to the substance of the stars, seems from fifth-century B.C. poetical contexts to have existed for some time already as part of the complex body of popular beliefs, alongside the distinct Homeric concept of a breath-soul. These antecedents will be summarized in the chapters on Thales, Anaximenes and Heraclitus.

The main object of the earliest deliberate efforts to explain the world remained the description of its *growth* from a simple, and therefore fully comprehensible, beginning. Matters concerned with human life seemed to belong to a different type of enquiry – to the poetical tradition, in fact, in which the old inherited assumptions, though sometimes inconsistent, were still regarded as valid. Moreover the world's original state, and the method by which it diversified itself, were often imagined anthropomorphically, in terms of a parent or pair of parents. This genealogical attitude persisted even after the eventual abandonment by the Milesian philosophers of the traditional mythological framework, discussed in §7. It is part of Heraclitus' originality that he rejected such an approach altogether.

1. The naïve view of the world

A popular conception of the nature of the world, which can be traced mainly in scattered references in Homer, is roughly as follows. The sky is a solid hemisphere like a bowl (*Il.* xvii, 425 χάλκεον οὐρανόν, cf. Pindar *Nem.* 6, 3-4; οὐρανόν ἐς πολύχαλκον at *Il.* v, 504, *Od.* iii, 2; σιδήρεον οὐρανόν at *Od.* xv, 329 and xvii, 565. Solidity as well as brightness is presumably conveyed by these metallic epithets). It covers the round flat earth. The lower part of the gap between earth and sky, up to and including the clouds, contains ἀήρ or mist; the upper part (sometimes called the οὐρανός itself) is αἰθήρ, *aither*, the shining upper air, which is sometimes conceived as fiery. At *Il.* xiv, 288 (ἐλάτῃ) δι' ἥερος αἰθέρ' ἴκανε, 'the fir-tree reached through the *aer* to the *aither*'. Below its surface, the earth stretches far downwards, and has its roots in or above Tartarus:

1 Homer *Il.* viii, 13 (Zeus speaks)

ἦ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἡερόεντα
τῇλε μάλ', ἤχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
ἐνθα σιδήρειαι τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
τόσσον ἔνερθ' Αἰδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης.

2 Hesiod *Theogony* 726 (Τάρταρον)

τὸν πέρι χάλκεον ἔρκος ἐλήλαται· ἀμφὶ δέ μιν νύξ
τριστοιχεί κέχυται περὶ δειρήν· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν
γῆς ῥίζαι πεφύασι καὶ ἀτρυγέτοιο θαλάσσης.

1 Or seizing him I will hurl him into misty Tartaros, very far, where is the deepest gulf below earth; *there* are iron gates and brazen threshold, as far beneath Hades as sky is from earth.

2 Around it [Tartaros] a brazen fence is drawn; and all about it Night in three rows is poured, around the throat; and above are the roots of earth and unharvested sea.

The circuit of Tartarus is thus 'brazen' (and so firm, unyielding) like the sky; the symmetry is reflected also in the equal distance between sky and earth's surface, and earth's surface and its foundations – for 'Hades' in the last line of 1 seems to be an illogical variant upon an original 'earth', as in *Theogony* 720 τόσσον ἔνερθ' ὑπὸ γῆς ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης ('as far below, under earth, as sky is distant from it'). There was a certain vagueness about the relationship of Hades, Erebus, and Tartarus, although Tartarus was certainly the lowest part of the underworld. The symmetry between underworld and overworld was not complete; the shape of Tartarus was not

normally conceived as hemispherical, and that of the sky is often complicated by the idea of Mount Olympus merging with it as abode of the gods. A variant conception made the earth stretch downwards indefinitely:

3 Xenophanes fr. 28 (= 180)

γαίης μὲν τόδε πείρας ἄνω παρὰ ποσσὶν ὄραται
ἥ ἐρι προσπλάζον, τὸ κάτω δ' ἐς ἄπειρον ἰκνεῖται.

(Cf. Strabo I, p. 12 Cas.)

3 Of earth this is the upper limit which we see by our feet, in contact with air; but its underneath continues indefinitely.

This is a later formulation, but again a popular rather than an intellectual one.

Round the edge of the earth-disc, according to the unsophisticated view, flowed the vast river Okeanos. This concept was of considerable importance in pre-scientific Greek thought, and is discussed in the section which now follows.

2. Okeanos

(i) *As the river surrounding the earth, and source of all waters*

4 Homer *Il.* xviii, 607 (Hephaistos)

ἐν δὲ τίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο
ἄντυγα πᾶρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο.

5 Herodotus IV, 8 τὸν δὲ Ὠκεανὸν λόγῳ μὲν λέγουσι (*sc.* Ἕλληνες) ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολέων ἀρξάμενον γῆν περὶ πᾶσαν ῥεῖν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐκ ἀποδεικνύσι. (Cf. also *id.* II, 21; II, 23.)

6 Homer *Il.* xxi, 194 (Zeus)

τῷ οὐδὲ κρείων Ἀχελώϊος ἰσοφαρίζει
οὐδὲ βαθυρρεῖται μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο,
ἐξ οὗ περ πάντες ποταμοὶ καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα
καὶ πᾶσαι κρῆναι καὶ φρεῖατα μακρὰ νάουσιν.

4 He put on it the great might of river Okeanos, along the well-made shield's outer rim.

5 They [the Greeks] affirm in words that Okeanos, beginning from the sun's risings, flows round the whole earth, but they give no effective demonstration of this.

6 Him not even Lord Acheloos equals, nor the great might of deep-flowing Okeanos, from whom, indeed, all rivers and all sea and all springs and deep wells flow.

That Okeanos surrounds the circular surface of the earth, though not explicitly stated in the Homeric poems, is suggested in 4 (where the shield made for Achilles is obviously thought of as round), in 8, and by some of the epithets applied to Okeanos – especially ἀψόρροος, 'back-flowing' (which probably means 'flowing back into itself'). Passages in Euripides and others as well as in Herodotus (5) show that the idea of a circular surrounding Okeanos was widely accepted; though occasionally in Homer, especially in the *Odyssey*, a looser usage, as the broad outer sea, had already begun to appear. 4 describes Okeanos as a river, and this too was a commonly accepted view; references are frequent to the streams, ποταί, of Okeanos. As such, it was presumably composed of fresh water, and 6 describes it as the source of all waters, whether fresh or salt, which are enclosed within its orbit, on or under the earth. The idea that salt water is simply fresh water somehow flavoured by the earth was commonly held in the scientific period.

The earth-encircling river differs from other elements of the popular world-picture in that it is not so obviously based on experience. The sky looks hemispherical and, to some eyes, impenetrable; it is called 'brazen', therefore, and treated as ice-like or solid even by Anaximenes and Empedocles. The earth appears to be flat, and the horizon to be circular. Yet experience cannot so easily suggest that the ultimate horizon is bounded by a fresh-water river. Voyagers may have brought back reports of vast seas beyond the Mediterranean, but these would be salt. Springs bubbling up from the earth may suggest underground rivers, but these need not entail a surrounding river. The possibility must be considered, then, that this particular conception originated in the great river-civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and was somehow introduced into Greece and given a specific Hellenic form. It will be seen on pp. 92f. that Thales' idea of the earth floating on water was probably so borrowed; and the coincidences in detail between Greek versions of certain myths, and Babylonian or Hittite versions, prove that conceptions not native either to the Aegean area, or to the proximate culture-centres of the Greek-speaking peoples before their entry into Greece, had embedded themselves in Greek thought even by the time of Hesiod and probably much earlier. Such coincidences are briefly discussed on pp. 43–6. The isolated Homeric references to Okeanos as origin of all things will also appear (pp. 16f.) as a probable allusion to non-Greek mythological ideas. In Babylonian accounts, and in some Egyptian versions, the earth was regarded as drying out, or thrusting itself up, in the midst of the primeval waters.¹ The development of such an

idea is not surprising in Mesopotamia, where the land had indeed been formed from the marshlands between the two rivers; nor in Egypt, where the fertile land emerged each year as the Nile floods receded. The earth that emerges from an indefinite expanse of primeval water will still be surrounded by water. This does seem to provide a plausible, though not a certain, motive for the formation of the Greek concept of Okeanos.² In this popular development of the primeval-water motif the earth is regarded as being solidly rooted, once it has emerged, and the indefinite waste of water (which seems always to have been conceived as having an upper limit, a surface) is contracted into a vast but not necessarily illimitable river.³

¹ Cf. the Babylonian creation-epic, which originated probably in the second millennium B.C.: tablet I, 1-6 (Pritchard, *ANET*, 6of.), 'When on high the heaven had not been named, Firm ground below had not been called by name, Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter, (And) Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all, Their waters commingling as a single body; No reed-hut had been matted, no marshland had appeared. . . ' (Trans. E. A. Speiser. Apsu and Tiamat were the male and female principles of primeval water. Sometimes, but perhaps not here, they represent fish and salt water respectively.) For Egypt cf. e.g. the twenty-fourth-century B.C. text from Heliopolis, *ANET*, p. 3: 'O Atum-Kheprer, thou wast on high on the (primeval) hill. . . ' (The primeval hillock was the first patch of land to rise above the boundless waters; it was located in many different cult-centres, and is symbolized by the pyramid.) Also another version, from the Book of the Dead (in this form, latter part of second millennium): 'I am Atum when I was alone in Nun; I am Re in his (first) appearances, when he began to rule that which he had made.' (Trans. J. A. Wilson. Atum was the creator-god worshipped at Heliopolis and equated with the sun-god Re. Nun is the primeval expanse of waters.)

² In origin 'Ὠκεανός' was perhaps a non-personal descriptive term, conceivably related to Akkadian 'uginna', meaning 'ring', or Sanskrit 'a-śāyāna-h', meaning 'that which surrounds'. Its development as a mythological figure, as sometimes in Homer and Hesiod, must have been comparatively late. See also M. L. West, *Hesiod, Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), p. 201.

³ Okeanos has a further bank in the (probably late) underworld-episode in the *Odyssey* (xxiv, 11) and in Hesiod, where 'beyond Okeanos' (*Theog.* 215, 274, 294) is 'the region no man knows' (M. L. West).

The encircling river was presupposed in the myth that the sun, after crossing the sky with his horses and chariot, sails in a golden bowl round the stream of Okeanos and so arrives back in the east just before dawn:

7 Mimnermus fr. 10 Diehl

Ἡέλιος μὲν γάρ πόνον ἔλλαχεν ἡματα πάντα,
οὐδέ κοτ' ἀμπαυσις γίγνεται οὐδεμία
ἵπποισιν τε καὶ αὐτῷ, ἐπεὶ βοδοδάκτυλος Ἡώς
Ὠκεανὸν προλιποῦσ' οὐρανὸν εἰσαναβή·

τὸν μὲν γὰρ διὰ κῦμα φέρει πολυήρατος εὐνή
 κοιίλῃ Ἥφαίστου χερσὶν ἐλήλαμένη
 χρυσοῦ τιμήεντος, ὑπόπτερος, ἄκρον ἔφ' ὕδωρ
 εὐδονθ' ἀρπαλέως χώρου ἀφ' Ἑσπερίδων
 γαῖαν ἐς Αἰθιοπῶν, ἵνα δὴ θοὸν ἄρμα καὶ ἵπποι
 ἑστᾶσ', ὄφρ' Ἡὼς ἡριγένεια μόλῃ.
 ἐνθ' ἐπεβή(σ)εθ' ἐὼν ὀχέων Ὑπερίονος υἱός.

7 Helios gained a portion of toil for all his days, nor is there ever any rest for his horses and himself, when rosy-fingered Dawn, leaving Okeanos, mounts the sky; for him does his lovely bed bear across the wave, hollow and fashioned by the hands of Hephaestus out of precious gold, and winged; swiftly does it bear him sleeping over the surface of the water, from the dwelling of the Hesperides to the land of the Aithiopes, where his swift chariot and his horses stand till early-born Dawn shall come; there does the son of Hyperion mount his car.

This detail (on which see also Stesichorus fr. 8, 1-4 Page) is not mentioned in Homer.¹ In Egypt the sun was conceived as travelling from west to east in a ship, across the subterranean waters. This may or may not have been the origin of the Greek account; but the choice of a cup or bowl may be based upon the round shape of the sun itself, and suggests a more empirical and not wholly mythopoeic approach. In Heraclitus (227) the sun itself is described as a hollow bowl filled with fire, and there may have been a popular account of this kind which gave way to the more graphic conception of the sun as a charioteer.

¹ The sun rises *from* Okeanos (e.g. *Il.* vii, 422), but there is no suggestion of a vessel of any kind. The refinement of the sun sailing round Okeanos could be post-Homeric. At *Od.* x, 191 the sun goes *under* the earth, but this probably just means 'sets'. The stars in Homer *bathe* in Okeanos (e.g. *Il.* v, 6; xviii, 489); they can hardly all have boats, and might be conceived as going through Okeanos and passing under the earth, though such details need not have been visualized.

(ii) *Okeanos as the source or origin of all things*

8 Homer *Il.* xiv, 200 (repeated at xiv, 301. Hera speaks)

εἶμι γὰρ ὀψομένη πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης,
 Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν...

9 Homer *Il.* xiv, 244 (Hypnos speaks)

ἄλλον μὲν κεν ἐγωγε θεῶν αἰειγενετάων
 ῥεῖα κατευνήσαιμι, καὶ ἂν ποταμοῖο ῥέεθρα
 Ὠκεανοῦ, ὃς περ γένεσις πάντεσσι τέτυκται

Ζηνὸς δ' οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε Κρονίονος ἄσπον Ικοίμην
οὐδὲ κατευνήσαιμ', ὅτε μὴ αὐτός γε κελεύοι.

8 For I am going to see the limits of fertile earth, Okeanos begetter of gods and mother Tethys...

9 Another of the everlasting gods would I easily send to sleep, even the streams of river Okeanos who is the begetter of all; but Zeus son of Kronos would I not approach, nor send to sleep, except that he himself so bid me.

The preceding section outlined the usual account of Okeanos in Homer. In the present passages the description of Okeanos as origin of the gods (**8**) and of all things (**9**) is unique and unexpected, going far beyond what was implied by **6**. It is notable that outside the particular episode in which these two passages occur, the Διὸς ἀπάτη or Deception of Zeus by Hera (*Il.* xiv, 153–360 and xv, *init.*), there is almost nothing in Homer that can reasonably be construed as specifically cosmogonical or cosmological in content; that is, as going beyond the accepted outline of what has been termed the popular world-picture. Even in this episode there is not very much.¹ Indeed, there is little which might not be explained without introducing cosmological interpretations, if a slight oddity of expression is allowed. That might apply even to Okeanos: **8** and **9** need imply little more than that the river of Okeanos is the source of all fresh water (as in **6**); water is necessary for life, therefore life must have originated, directly or indirectly, from Okeanos. This would not explain his parenthood of the gods in **8**, but that could be a poetical extension. It would also involve limiting the application of πάντεσσι in **9** to living creatures and plant-life, but again the same kind of poetic looseness might be presupposed. It must be admitted, however, that the references, if so understood, would be pointlessly abbreviated and give a somewhat bizarre effect.

¹ Namely **14** (Night); *Il.* xv, 189–93 (division of the world between Zeus, Poseidon, Hades); *Il.* xiv, 203f., 274 (= xv, 225), 279 (the only Homeric references to Kronos, the Titans and Tartaros except for two important passages in bk. viii, *Il.* viii, 13ff. and 478ff.); *Il.* xiv, 271; xv, 37f. (two of the four references in Homer to Styx as oath of the gods). The last two cases might be regarded as intrusions with Hesiodic affinities, though they are not derived from the Hesiodic poems that we know.

To Plato and Aristotle, at least, **8** and **9** certainly seemed to have some kind of cosmological relevance:

10 Plato *Theaetetus* 152E ...Ὁμηρος, <ὃς> εἰπὼν "Ὤκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν' πάντα εἴρηκεν ἔκγονα ῥοῆς τε καὶ κινήσεως. (Cf. also **12**.)

11 Aristotle *Met.* A3, 983b27 (following 85) εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱ καὶ τοὺς παμπάλαιους καὶ πολὺ πρὸ τῆς νῦν γενέσεως καὶ πρώτους θεολογήσαντας οὕτως οἶονται (*sc.* ὥσπερ Θαλῆς) περὶ τῆς φύσεως ὑπολαβεῖν· Ὠκεανὸν τε γὰρ καὶ Τηθύν ἐποίησαν τῆς γενέσεως πατέρας καὶ τὸν ὄρκον τῶν θεῶν ὕδωρ, τὴν καλουμένην ὑπ' αὐτῶν Στύγα τῶν ποιητῶν· τιμωτάτον μὲν γὰρ τὸ πρεσβύτατον, ὄρκος δὲ τὸ τιμωτάτον ἐστίν. (Cf. also 15.)

10 ...Homer, who by saying 'Okeanos begetter of gods and mother Tethys' declared all things to be offspring of flux and motion.

11 There are some who think that the very ancient and indeed first speculators about the gods, long before the present age, made the same supposition about nature (*sc.* as Thales); for they wrote that Okeanos and Tethys were the parents of coming-to-be, and the oath of the gods water – that which by the poets themselves is called Styx; for what is oldest is most honourable, and the most honourable thing is used as an oath.

Plato in 10 and elsewhere is obviously not entirely serious in his treatment of Homer as forerunner of the flux-idea assigned to Heraclitus, so we cannot be sure of the precise value he attached to the Homeric Okeanos-passage. Aristotle obviously took it seriously, and later antiquity was persuaded through him to accept Okeanos and Tethys as representative of an early cosmogonical theory, since Eudemus adduced the same passage (obviously following Aristotle in 11) in the Peripatetic history of theology.¹

¹ As we know from the disagreement of Damascius, the Neoplatonist writer, in the last sentence of 16. Cf. Philodemus in 17 and Athenagoras 18, p. 20 Schwartz (DK 18 13); Plutarch *de Is. et Osir.* 34, 364D even assumed that Homer, like Thales, must have got the idea from Egypt.

It has often been assumed that there is another and earlier class of testimony for the cosmogonical importance of Okeanos, namely early Orphic poetry:

12 Plato *Cratylus* 402B ...ὥσπερ αὖ Ὀμηρος "Ὠκεανὸν τε θεῶν γένεσιν" φησιν· καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν· οἶμαι δὲ καὶ Ἡσίόδος. λέγει δὲ πού καὶ Ὀρφεὺς ὅτι

Ὠκεανὸς πρῶτος καλλίρροος ἤρξε γάμοιο,
ὃς ῥα κασιγνήτην ὁμομήτορα Τηθύν ὄπτειν.

13 Plato *Timaeus* 40D-E ...πειστέον δὲ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν ἐμπροσθεν, ἐκγόνοις μὲν θεῶν οὖσιν, ὡς ἔφασαν, σαφῶς δὲ πού τοὺς γε αὐτῶν προγόνους εἰδόσιν... Γῆς τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ παῖδες Ὠκεανὸς τε καὶ

Τηθύς ἐγενέσθην, τούτων δὲ Φόρκυς Κρόνος τε καὶ Ῥέα καὶ ὅσοι μετὰ τούτων...

12 ...as Homer, again, says 'Okeanos begetter of gods and mother Tethys'; and I think Hesiod too. Orpheus, too, says somewhere that 'Fair-streamed Okeanos first began the marriages, who wed Tethys, his sister by the same mother'.

13 ...we must believe those who formerly gave utterance, those who were, as they said, offspring of the gods, and must, I suppose, have truly known their own ancestors:...Okeanos and Tethys were born as children of Ge [earth] and Ouranos [sky], and their children were Phorkys, Kronos, Rhea and their companions...

But the Orphic verses of 12, though established by Plato's time, are not necessarily so early in origin even as the sixth century B.C. (but see pp. 29ff. below for new evidence of relatively early 'Orphic' beliefs). In any case, the view they express does not necessarily differ greatly from that of the Hesiodic *Theogony*, as Plato may have perceived. There, Okeanos, Tethys and the other Titans are born to Gaia and Ouranos at a comparatively late stage from the point of view of cosmogonical production, but it is in their generation that the regular reproduction, by bisexual means, of fully personal figures (as opposed to world-constituents like Tartaros or Pontos) begins. 13, in which 'offspring of the gods' shows that Plato is describing an Orphic view, indicates that according to one Orphic account Okeanos and Tethys were the parents of Titans (including the theogonically vital pair Kronos and Rhea), and not their coevals as in the *Theogony*. That is probably another reason for πρῶτος in the Orphic verses of 12; Okeanos and Tethys are the first fully anthropomorphized couple, prior even to Kronos and Rhea. Hesiod had assigned less importance to Okeanos than might have been expected, especially in view of the well-known Homeric passages 8 and 9; so the Orphic versions presumably emended the Hesiodic account to the extent of putting Okeanos and Tethys one generation earlier than the Titans.

The evidence does not show that there existed in Greece at a comparatively early date a systematic doctrine of the cosmogonical priority of Okeanos. Hesiod gives no indication of it, and later suppositions seem to be based on two unusual Homeric passages, which are left as the only direct evidence for any such cosmogonical theory. They might have meant no more than that water is essential for life, though this would be rather oddly expressed. It was seen in (i) that the idea of an encircling river Okeanos may well have been

adapted from Egyptian or Babylonian beliefs. It was part of those beliefs, too, that the world *originated* from primeval water (see n. 1 on p. 12); the isolated Homeric passages could, then, be a reference to that basic near-eastern assumption. The concept of the encircling river had, of course, become assimilated in Greece at a far earlier date.

3. Night

(i) *In Homer*

14 Homer *Il.* xiv, 258 (Hypnos speaks)

...καί κέ μ' αἰστον ἀπ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε πόντῳ (sc. Ζεύς)
 εἰ μὴ Νύξ δμῆτειρα θεῶν ἑσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν
 τὴν ἰκόμην φεύγων, ὃ δὲ παύσατο χωόμενός περ·
 ἄζετο γὰρ μὴ Νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀποθύμια ἔρδοι.

14 ...and he [Zeus] would have cast me from the aither into the sea, out of sight, had not Night, subduer of gods and men, saved me; to her did I come in flight, and Zeus ceased, angry though he was; for he was in awe of doing what would be displeasing to swift Night.

This is the only place in the Homeric poems where Night is fully personified. Again, as with the two special Okeanos passages, it occurs in the episode of the Deceit of Zeus; and again there is an unusual implication of special power or priority among the gods. Zeus' respect for Night here is certainly strange, and quite unparalleled in Homer and Hesiod. In view of later interpretations it might suggest that the poet of this episode knew some story about Nyx as a cosmogonical figure. But the reference is an isolated one, and might be no more than a poetical development of the idea implicit in the phrase Νύξ δμῆτειρα θεῶν, 'Night subduer of gods': even gods are overcome by sleep, hence even the virtually all-powerful Zeus hesitates to offend Night, the mother of sleep, lest she should subdue him on some unsuitable occasion.

(ii) *An archaic cosmogonical concept according to Aristotle*

15 Aristotle *Met.* N4, 1091b4 ...οἱ δὲ ποιηταὶ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ταύτη ὁμοίως, ἢ βασιλεύειν καὶ ἄρχειν φασὶν οὐ τοὺς πρῶτους οἷον Νύκτα καὶ Οὐρανὸν ἢ Χάος ἢ Ὠκεανόν, ἀλλὰ τὸν Δία. (Cf. *Met.* A6, 1071b27 οἱ θεολόγοι οἱ ἐκ Νυκτὸς γεννῶντες; also *ibid.* 1072a8.)

15 ...the ancient poets similarly, inasmuch as they say that not the first figures have rule and kingship (Night and Ouranos or

Chaos or Okeanos, for example), but Zeus. (Cf. ...those writers about the gods who generate from Night.)

Aristotle thus accepted that there were poets and writers about the gods who put Night 'first', or who generated from Night. He may have had the Homeric passage, 14, in mind; but this alone would hardly motivate his inclusion of Night, and it seems probable that he was thinking partly of 'Orphic' verses (on which see 30, (2) and pp. 32ff.) but also of the post-Hesiodic cosmogonies, compiled mainly in the sixth and fifth centuries, to be described under (iii). In these, Night, which was produced at a very early stage (though not the first) in the Hesiodic cosmogonical account (31), and was classed with Gaia, Okeanos and Ouranos in other more casual references in the *Theogony* (20 and 106f.), is elevated to the first stage of all, either by herself or jointly with other figures, Air or Tartaros. It is natural that both Day and Night should come into being as soon as Sky and Earth have separated, to occupy the gap between the two.

(iii) *In cosmogonies assigned to Orpheus, Musaeus and Epimenides*

16 Damascius *de principiis* 124 (DK 1 B 12) ἡ δὲ παρὰ τῷ Περιπατητικῷ Εὐδήμῳ ἀναγεγραμμένη ὡς τοῦ Ὀρφέως οὔσα θεολογία πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἐσιώπησεν... ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Νυκτὸς ἐποιήσατο τὴν ἀρχήν, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ Ὅμηρος, εἰ καὶ μὴ συνεχῇ πεποιήται τὴν γενεαλογίαν, ἴστησιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀποδεκτὸν Εὐδήμου λέγοντος ὅτι ἀπὸ Ὀκεανοῦ καὶ Τηθύος ἀρχεται...

17 Philodemus *de pietate* 47a (DK 3 B 5) ἐν δὲ τοῖς εἰς Ἐπιμενίδην (sc. ἀναφερομένοις ἔπεσιν) ἐξ Ἀέρος καὶ Νυκτὸς τὰ πάντα συστήναι, <ὥσπερ καὶ> Ὅμηρος <ἀποφαί>νετ' Ὀκεανὸν ἐκ Τηθύος τοὺς θεοὺς γεννᾶν... (Cf. also 27.)

18 Philodemus *de pietate* 137, 5 ἐν μὲν τισιν ἐκ Νυκτὸς καὶ Ταρτάρου λέγεται τὰ πάντα, ἐν δὲ τισιν ἐξ Αἰδοῦ καὶ Αἰθέρος· ὁ δὲ τὴν Τιτανομαχίαν γράψας ἐξ Αἰθέρος φησίν, Ἀκουσίλαος δὲ ἐκ Χάους πρώτου τᾶλλα· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀναφερομένοις εἰς Μουσαῖον γέγραπται Τάρταρον πρῶτον <καὶ Ν>ύκτα.

16 The theology ascribed to Orpheus in Eudemus the Peripatetic kept silence about the whole intelligible realm...but he made the origin from Night, from whom Homer too (even though he does not describe the succession of generations as continuous) establishes the beginning of things; for we must not accept it when Eudemus says that Homer begins from Okeanos and Tethys...

17 In the verses ascribed to Epimenides all things are composed

from Air and Night; as Homer, also, declared that Okeanos begets the gods from Tethys...

18 In some sources all things are said to come from Night and Tartaros, and in some from Hades and Aither; the author of the *Titanomachy* says they came from Aither, and Acusilaus says that the other things come from Chaos, which was the first; while in the verses ascribed to Musaeus it is written that Tartaros and Night were first.

Orphic cosmogonics will be discussed in §4; meanwhile 16 shows that Eudemus did not explain the Orphic priority of Night as being dependent on the Homeric passage, 14.¹ This was because he considered that Homer clearly assigned cosmological priority to Okeanos and Tethys (8, 9). 17 and 18 confirm that there were poetical accounts, composed probably in the late seventh or the sixth century B.C. (and including, perhaps, 'Orphic' poetry, cf. 30, (2)), which made Night (in association with Aer or Tartaros, both conveying the idea of darkness) the origin of the world. But with the exception of 'Αἴρ in 'Epimenides',² the cosmic figures involved are all to be found in the Hesiodic cosmogony proper, 31; and even 'Αἴρ, implying mist and darkness rather than the transparent stuff we call 'Air', is an element of the Hesiodic description although it does not achieve personification – thus in the second stage of production, before Night, comes *misty* Tartaros, Τάρταρά τ' ἡερόεντα (but see p. 35 n. 1). When we see from Damascius' reference to 'Epimenides' in 27 that Night and 'Αἴρ *produce* Tartaros, it begins to look as though these people were working strictly within the limits of the Hesiodic formulation – at least down to the production of an egg (pp. 26–9). That is equally the case with Musaeus³ and Acusilaus⁴ according to 18.

¹ The importance of Night for Orphics is confirmed by 30, the Derveni papyrus. Much later she was described in the Orphic Rhapsodies (see p. 23 n. 1) as a figure of great importance, the near-equal and successor of Phanes-Protogonos: 19 Proclus in Plato *Crat.* 396b (Kern fr. 101) (Φάνης) σκήπτρον δ' ἀριδελκετον εἰς χεῖρεσσιν / θῆκε θεῶς Νυκτός, <[ὅς] ἐστι> βασιληῖδα τιμήν. ([Phanes] placed his famous sceptre in the hands of goddess Night, so that she might have the prerogative of rulership.)

² The hexameter cosmogony and theology ascribed to Epimenides was probably not by him (as Philodemus evidently suspected), but may nevertheless have originated in the sixth century B.C. Damascius, too, stated that Aer and Night were Epimenides' first principles, and gave Eudemus as his source for this (27). Philodemus, therefore, who must also have relied on Eudemus' standard history of theology, provides in 17 an earlier confirmation of Damascius' reliability.

³ The name of Musaeus, mythical disciple of Orpheus and eponymous author

of oracle-literature, tended to become attached to any kind of other-worldly verses – including, evidently, a theogonical poem like that assigned to Epimenides. The late sixth century B.C. is a plausible *terminus ante quem* for such a poem and ascription; compare the case of Onomacritus, who according to Herodotus VII, 6 (DK 2 B 20a) was banished from Athens by Hipparchus when, having been entrusted with the collection and arrangement of Musaeus' oracles, he was found to have inserted a spurious one.

⁴ Acusilaus of Argos (late sixth or early fifth century B.C.) was a genealogist who might well have given a summary and of course unoriginal account of the first ancestors; although some of the material assigned to him was later suspected. According to Damascius (DK 9 B 1) he made a limited rearrangement of the Hesiodic figures which came after Chaos; but he is almost entirely irrelevant to the history of Presocratic thought, and scarcely deserves the space accorded him in DK.

A fresh consideration may be introduced here. After the episode of the defeat of the Titans in the *Theogony* comes a series of passages (734–819) of which some at least are additions to the 'original' text; they are short variant descriptions apparently designed to improve on the integral references to the underworld. If this is so, they belong to the later part of the seventh century B.C. at the earliest, while the early sixth century seems a likelier period for their composition. Thus in 2, which is certainly by Hesiod, Night surrounds the 'throat' of Tartaros, and above are the roots of the earth – in itself probably a genuinely primitive conception. But in 34 (q.v., with discussion on pp. 40f.) this conception is further developed, and the sources and limits of all things are located in the great windy gap which is probably a later specification of Chaos in line 116 (31); the halls of dark night are said to be in or around this χάσμα. It is easy to see that this trend of thought could lead to the elevation of Night to be representative of the original, inchoate state of things. In the original cosmogonical account (31) Night comes at an early and important stage; the tendency to rearrange the Hesiodic figures is already indicated for the sixth century (probably); Homer provided one piece of cryptic encouragement for a further elevation of Night; and added elaborations of the Hesiodic picture of the underworld tended to reinterpret Tartaros and Night as local forms of an originaive Χάος. The new Orphic evidence (pp. 31f.) provides some support for Aristotle's judgement in 15, but even so there seems little indication so far that the idea of an absolute priority of Night occurred early enough, or in a sufficiently independent form, to have had much effect on quasi-scientific cosmogonical thought.

4. Orphic cosmogonies

Several variations in cosmogony were ascribed to Ὀρφικοί, 'Orphics'. These have been described as people who, uniting elements from the cult of Apollo Καθάρσιος, purifier, on the one hand and from Thracian reincarnation beliefs on the other, thought that the soul could survive if it were kept pure, and elaborated a partly individual mythology, with Dionysus as a central figure, to illustrate this theory. The Thracian Orpheus, with his sexual purity, his musical gifts and his power of prophecy after death represented the combination of the two elements; such Orphic beliefs were recorded in sacred accounts, *ἱεροὶ λόγοι*. Now this description would certainly be true, say, of the third century B.C.; but there has been much controversy about how early there appeared a distinct class of people with well-defined and individual beliefs of this kind. One view, well represented by W. K. C. Guthrie in chapter XI of *The Greeks and their Gods* (London, 1950) is that the Orphic doctrine was already set out in sacred books in the sixth century B.C. A completely different view had been advanced by Wilamowitz and, most clearly, by I. M. Linforth in *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley, 1941); he analysed all the then extant texts mentioning Orpheus and Orphics and showed that, at any rate until 300 B.C., the description 'Orphic' was applied to all sorts of ideas connected with practically every kind of rite (τελετή). There were writings attributed to Orpheus, as indeed to Musaeus and Epimenides (see pp. 18f.), as early as the sixth century B.C.; Herodotus knew of Orphics and Pythagoreans sharing a taboo in the fifth; Orphic oracle- and dispensation-mongers were familiar to Plato, and 'so-called Orphic accounts' to Aristotle. But the corpus of individual sectarian literature (of which descriptions of Hades, accounts of theogony and cosmogony, hymns, etc., are known to us) could not for the most part – so Linforth argued – be traced back earlier than the Hellenistic period, and in its present form mostly belongs to the Roman period.

It may be, as Linforth held, that there was no exclusively Orphic body of belief in the archaic age. However, Orpheus was then beginning to be treated as the patron saint of rites and ritual ways of life – and death; and his name, like that of his legendary disciple Musaeus, became attached to theogonical literature of this period. Beliefs about reincarnation were becoming current in the Greek world, particularly on its fringes, and some adherents of these beliefs were calling themselves Ὀρφικοί, as well as Bacchants, by the fifth century. The formation of an exclusive sect with a definite body of relevant sacred literature was beginning even then, as pp. 29ff. will

confirm; other elements are almost certainly later in origin, and often show awareness of the details of oriental cult and iconography.¹ Some of these will be considered next.

¹ Most conspicuously, Time, Χρόνος, as a primary cosmogonical figure may derive from the Iranian hypostatization *Zuran Akarana* (unending time). But this Iranian concept finds its earliest testimony in a late fourth-century B.C. Greek reference by Eudemus as reported in Damascius, and there is no reason to think that it was formulated as early as the Greek archaic period. 'Time' is a sophisticated cosmogonical concept in Plato's *Timaeus*; it was also personified, probably as an etymology of Kronos, by Pherecydes of Syros as early as the sixth century, though probably not with a profound abstract significance (see n. 1 on p. 28 and n. 1 on p. 57). Its oriental derivation in the Orphic accounts is indicated by its concrete shape as a multi-headed winged snake. Such multipartite monsters, as distinct from simpler fantasies like centaurs, are orientalizing in character, mainly Semitic in origin, and begin to appear in Greek art around 700 B.C. They were, of course, extremely popular as decoration during the seventh and the first quarter of the sixth centuries. (Minoan art, too, had had its monsters, mainly dog-headed deities and other relatively simple theriomorphic creations.) That the winged-snake form of Time is much later in its Greek appearances than the orientalizing period in art is chiefly suggested by the identification of an abstraction with such a form. This shows an acquaintance with rather complex eastern (especially Assyrian or Babylonian) modes of thought – something very different from the mere borrowing of a pictorial motif, or even the assimilation of a fully concrete myth-form. Such extravagances of the imagination evoked little sympathy in the Greek mind before the Hellenistic period.

NEOPLATONIC ACCOUNTS OF ORPHIC COSMOGONIES

The later Neoplatonists (fourth to sixth centuries A.D.), and in particular Damascius, with their long schematic allegorizations of earlier mythological accounts, are the most prolific source for Orphic versions of the formation of the world. These writers are more reliable than appears at first sight, since much of their information was derived from summaries of Eudemus' great Peripatetic history of theology. In some cases fragments of late Orphic poetry can be adduced to confirm details of the Neoplatonic descriptions, which are tiresomely diffuse (and are therefore schematized in (ii) and (iii) below) and are expressed in the peculiar terminology of that school. Four accounts of a cosmogony specifically named as Orphic are extant.

(i) *Derivation from Night*

Damascius in 16 (q.v.) stated that according to Eudemus 'the theology ascribed to Orpheus...made the origin of things from Night'. According to the Rhapsodies,¹ Night was the daughter of

Phanes (see n. 1 on p. 19 and n. 3 on p. 24), himself descended from Chronos. She was given prophetic powers by Phanes, succeeded him as ruler, and seems somehow to have given birth for a second time to Gaia and Ouranos.² The secondary and repetitive nature of this production of sky and earth, and the obvious intention to make Phanes the ultimate creator of the world, suggest that Night's cosmogonical priority (as distinct from her undoubted position as a venerable figure among the gods) is here mainly the result of the derivative and syncretistic character of the Orphic theogony.

¹ The so-called Orphic Rhapsodies (ἑποὶ λόγοι ἐν ραψωδίαῖς κδ according to the Suda s.v. 'Ορφεύς), of which many fragments survive (Kern, frs. 59-235), mostly through quotation in Neoplatonic works, are a late compilation of hexameter verses of varying date of composition. Most are post-Hellenistic and many much later. Yet the Derveni papyrus (30) shows that some derive from the fifth or even the sixth century B.C. Nevertheless no other author before the full Christian period seems to have heard of most of them, and it seems highly probable that their elaboration into an Orphic *Iliad* was not taken in hand until the third or fourth century A.D. Genuinely archaic beliefs might, of course, be embedded in some of these verses, late as they are in compilation.

² 20 Orph. Rhaps. fr. 109 Kern (from Hermias) (Νύξ) ἡ δὲ πάλιν Γαίαν τε καὶ Οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔτικτε / δεῖξέν τ' ἐξ ἀφανῶν φανεροῦς οἱ τ' εἰσι γενέθλην. (*And she [Night], again, bore Gaia and broad Ouranos, and revealed them as manifest, from being unseen, and who they are by birth.*) But Phanes had already created Olympus, sun, moon and earth (frs. 89, 96, 91-3, 94 Kern, from the Rhapsodies), and sky is also presupposed.

(ii) 'The usual Orphic theology' in the Rhapsodies

21 Damascius *de principiis* 123 (DK 1 B 12) ἐν μὲν τοίνυν ταῖς φερομέναις ταύταις 'Ραψωδίαῖς 'Ορφικαῖς ἡ θεολογία ἦδε τίς ἐστιν ἡ περὶ τὸ νοητόν, ἣν καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι διερμηνεύουσιν, ἀντὶ μὲν τῆς μιᾶς τῶν ὄλων ἀρχῆς τὸν Χρόνον τιθέντες... (the full description, for which see DK, is lengthy and expressed in difficult Neoplatonic terms. The substance of it is here given schematically:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Χρόνος} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Αἰθήρ} \\ \text{Χάος} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \text{φόν}^2 \text{ [or ἀργῆς χιτῶν,} \rightarrow \text{Φάνης}^3 \\ \text{or νεφέλη]} \quad [\sim \text{Μῆτις,} \\ \text{'Ηρικεπαῖος}] \end{array} \right\}^1$$

... τοιαύτη μὲν ἡ συνήθης 'Ορφικὴ θεολογία.

21 In these Orphic Rhapsodies, then, as they are known, this is the theology concerned with the intelligible; which the philosophers, too, expound, putting Chronos in place of the one origin of all...

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Aither} \\ \text{(Chronos)} \\ \text{Chaos} \end{array} \right\}^1 \rightarrow \text{egg}^2 \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{or shining tunic,} \\ \text{or cloud} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \text{Phanes}^3 \left[\begin{array}{l} \sim \text{Metis,} \\ \text{Erikepaïos} \end{array} \right]$$

...Such is the usual Orphic theology.

¹ Cf. 22 Orph. Rhaps. fr. 66 Kern (from Proclus) Αἰθέρα μὲν Χρόνος οὗτος ἀγήραος ἀφθιτόμητις / γείνατο, καὶ μέγα χάσμα πελώριον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. (*This Chronos, unageing and of imperishable counsel, produced Aither, and a great, mighty gulf here and there.*) Syrianus (fr. 107 Kern) also gave Aither and Chaos as the second stage, but after 'one and the good' as first. The μέγα χάσμα is taken directly from Hesiod *Theogony* 740 (34).

² Cf. 23 Orph. Rhaps. fr. 70 Kern (from Damascius) ἔπειτα δ' ἔτευξε μέγας Χρόνος αἰθέρι διῶ / ὥρεον ἀργυφιν. (*Then great Chronos made in divine aither a silvery egg.*) On the egg see pp. 26-9 below.

³ Phanes, connected by the Orphics with φαίνειν etc., is an exclusive Orphic development, of a comparatively late date, of the Hesiodic cosmogonical Eros (31); also perhaps of the phallus swallowed by Zeus according to 30, (6) and (7). Winged, bisexual and self-fertilizing, bright and aitherial, he gives birth to the first generation of gods and is the ultimate creator of the cosmos.

(iii) *The version of Hieronymus and Hellanicus*

24 Damascius *de principiis* 123 bis (DK I B 13) ἡ δὲ κατὰ τὸν Ἱερώνυμον φερομένη καὶ Ἑλλάνικον (*sc.* Ὀρφικὴ θεολογία),¹ εἴπερ μὴ καὶ ὁ αὐτός ἐστι, οὕτως ἔχει· ὕδωρ ἦν, φησίν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ ὕλη, ἐξ ἧς ἐπάγη ἡ γῆ... See DK for full description, of which a summary is given here:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{ὕδωρ} \\ \text{ὕλη} \rightarrow \text{γῆ} \end{array} \right\} \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Χρόνος ἀγήραος} \\ \text{(a winged, multi-headed, bisexual snake; also called Heracles, and accompanied by Ἀνάγκη and Ἀδράστεια)} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Αἰθήρ} \\ \text{Χάος} \\ \text{Ἔρεβος} \end{array} \right\}^2 \rightarrow \text{ῥών} \rightarrow \text{θεὸς ἀσώματος} \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{having wings and animal heads} \end{array} \right)$$

24 The Orphic Theology which is said to be according to Hieronymus and Hellanicus (if indeed he is not the same man) is as follows: water existed from the beginning, he says, and matter, from which earth was solidified...

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Water} \\ \text{Matter} \rightarrow \text{Earth} \end{array} \right\} \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Unageing Chronos/} \\ \text{Heracles} \\ \text{(with Necessity and} \\ \text{Adrasteia)} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Aither} \\ \text{Chaos} \\ \text{Erebus} \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \text{Egg} \rightarrow \text{an incorporeal god}$$

¹ These authors cannot be identified with certainty. Damascius evidently suspected that they might be the same person, but more probably, for example, one was the epitomizer of the other. Hieronymus may be the author of Phoenician antiquities mentioned at Josephus *Ant.* 1, 94; a winged symbol for El-Kronos comes in 'Sanchuniathon', Eusebius *P.E.* 1, 10, 36 (see p. 41 n.). Hellanicus may have been the father (2nd-1st cent. B.C.) of one Sardon, probably of Tarsus, an Orphic writer mentioned in the *Suda*; this is much more likely than that he was the fifth-century B.C. Lesbian logographer.

² ἐν τοῦτοις ὁ Χρόνος ὦν ἐγέννησεν, says Damascius – i.e. in Aither, Chaos and Erebus. It is not explicitly stated that the 'incorporeal god' comes out of the egg, but he obviously does so; compare 25, and see next note for ἀσώματος.

(iv) *Athenagoras' variant of (iii)*

25 Athenagoras *pro Christianis* 18, p. 20 Schwartz (DK 1 B 13) ... ἦν γὰρ ὕδωρ ἀρχὴ κατ' αὐτὸν (sc. Ὀρφέα) τοῖς ὅλοις, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ὕδατος ἰλὺς κατέστη, ἐκ δὲ ἐκατέρων ἐγεννήθη ζῶον, δράκων προσπεφυκυῖαν ἔχων κεφαλὴν λέοντος, διὰ μέσου δὲ αὐτῶν θεοῦ πρόσωπον, ὄνομα Ἡρακλῆς καὶ Χρόνος. (So far this is almost identical with the version of Hieronymus and Hellanicus.) οὗτος ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἐγέννησεν ὑπερμέγεθες ὦν, ὃ συμπληρούμενον ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ γεγεννηκότος ἐκ παρατριβῆς εἰς δύο ἐρράγη. τὸ μὲν οὖν κατὰ κορυφὴν αὐτοῦ Οὐρανὸς εἶναι ἐτελέσθη, τὸ δὲ κάτω ἐνεχθὲν Γῇ· προῆλθε δὲ καὶ θεὸς τις δισώματος.¹ Οὐρανὸς δὲ Γῇ μιχθεὶς γεννᾷ θηλείας μὲν Κλωθῶ Λάχεσιν Ἀτροπον... (a theogony of the Hesiodic type follows).

¹ γῆ διὰ σώματος MS; em. Lobeck, accep. Diels, Kranz; τρίτος ἤδη ἀσώματος Th. Gomperz. – In any case Phanes is meant. δισώματος and ἀσώματος are easily confused, and we cannot be certain that instances of the latter in the text of 24 are necessarily correct. δισώματος implies 'bisexual' (which Phanes was); 'incorporeal', of a being described as having more than its quota of bodily attributes, and those of a very peculiar sort, is perhaps odd even in a Neoplatonist.

25 ... for water was the origin for the totality of things, according to him [Orpheus], and from water slime was established, and from both of them was generated a living creature, a snake with a lion's head growing on to it, and in the middle of them the face of a god, Heracles and Chronos by name. This Heracles generated a huge egg, which being completely filled by the force of its begetter burst into two through friction. So its top part ended up as Ouranos, and the underneath part as Ge; and a certain double-bodied god also came forth. And Ouranos having mingled with Ge begets, as female offspring, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos...

Of these four types of Orphic-denominated cosmogony, (i) mentions a first stage, Night, that does not occur in the others. Night's

importance in the Orphic pantheon probably depended, directly or indirectly, on modifications to the Hesiodic *schema* of cosmogony and theogony (see §5). Eudemus seems to have known Orphic accounts similar to the earlier versions associated with Epimenides and Musaeus, and the Derveni papyrus (30, (2)) confirms that Night was there given a specific cosmogonical function as a secondary parent of Ouranos and Gaia. (ii) is termed the usual Orphic account presumably because it more or less corresponded with the broad picture given in the late Rhapsodies. (iii) is an elaboration of (ii). It cannot, as it stands, be pre-Hellenistic; its fantastic concrete description of the abstract Chronos is a sign of late origin or at least of late remodelling. (iv) is quoted by a second-century Christian apologist of Neoplatonic leanings; it gives one significant detail, the splitting of the egg to form sky and earth, which is completely absent from the later Neoplatonic accounts. (iii) and (iv) have a first stage, slime in one form or another, which is no doubt an eclectic philosophical-physical intrusion. It might conceivably be taken directly from Ionian systems like that of Anaximander, but is more likely to have come from derivative Stoic cosmogony.

THE EGG IN EARLIER GREEK SOURCES, NOT SPECIFICALLY ORPHIC

26 Aristophanes *Birds* 693 (the chorus of birds speak)
 Χάος ἦν καὶ Νύξ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς,
 Γῆ δ' οὐδ' Ἀῆρ οὐδ' Οὐρανὸς ἦν· Ἐρέβους δ' ἐν ἀπείροσι κόλποις
 τίκτει πρῶτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νύξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ὥον,
 ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλασθεν Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινός,
 στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμῶκεσι δίναις. 697
 οὗτος δὲ Χάει πτερόεντι μιγείν νυχίῳ κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρύν
 ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν ἐς φῶς.
 πρότερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων πρὶν Ἐρῶς ξυνέμειξεν ἅπαντα
 ξυμμιγνυμένων δ' ἐτέρων ἐτέροις γένετ' Οὐρανὸς Ὠκεανὸς τε
 καὶ Γῆ πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἀφθιτον. ὦδε μὲν ἔσμεν
 πολὺ πρεσβύτατοι πάντων μακάρων.

26 First of all was Chaos and Night and black Erebus and wide Tartaros, and neither Ge nor Aer nor Ouranos existed; in the boundless bosoms of Erebus black-winged Night begets, first, a wind-egg, from which in the fulfilment of the seasons ardent Eros burgeoned forth, his back gleaming with golden wings, like as he was to the whirling winds. Eros, mingling with winged, gloomy

Chaos in broad Tartaros, hatched out our race and first brought it into the light. There was no race of immortals before Eros mingled all things together; but as one mingled with another Ouranos came into being, and Okeanos and Ge and the unfading race of all the blessed gods. Thus we are by far the oldest of all the blessed ones.

27 Damascius *de principiis* 124 (DK 3B5; from Eudemus) τὸν δὲ Ἐπιμενίδην δύο πρῶτας ἀρχὰς ὑποθέσθαι Ἀέρα καὶ Νύκτα... ἐξ ὧν γεννηθῆναι Τάρταρον... ἐξ ὧν δύο Τιτᾶνας¹... ὧν μιχθέντων ἀλλήλοις ὦν γενέσθαι... ἐξ οὗ πάλιν ἄλλην γενεάν προελθεῖν.

¹ The manuscript has δύο τινάς, but Kroll's emendation to δύο Τιτᾶνας (accepted by Kranz in DK) is indicated by the etymology implied in the Neoplatonist parenthesis that follows the disputed word, τὴν νοητὴν μεσότητα οὕτω καλέσαντα, διότι ἐπ' ἀμφω 'διατείνει' τό τε ἄκρον καὶ τὸ πέρας. The other omissions in the text as printed above are Neoplatonic paraphrases which throw no light on the interpretation.

27 Epimenides posited two first principles, Air and Night... from which Tartaros was produced... from all of which two Titans were produced... from whose mutual mingling an egg came into being... from which, again, other offspring came forth.

26 was written in 414 B.C. or shortly before. The only thing we can say with certainty about the content of 27 is that it is pre-Eudemian; but in view of the proliferation of mythological accounts in hexameters, concerned with genealogy and therefore liable to begin with a theogony, probably towards the end of the sixth century B.C., it might be tentatively dated between then and the middle of the fifth century (on Epimenides see 17 and n. 2 on p. 19). Thus an egg as an element in cosmogony, which is a typical feature of later Orphic accounts as recorded in the Neoplatonic tradition, is mentioned certainly near the end of the fifth century and probably before that. Were these earlier accounts specifically Orphic in character?

The manner of production of the egg does not differ significantly in the earlier and in the later, definitely Orphic accounts. In the latter, Chronos in a late and bizarre form begets the egg in Aither or in Aither-Chaos-Erebos (23, 24). In 26 *Night* produces the egg in Erebos; in 27 it is begotten by two Titans – presumably Kronos (cf. 52?) and Rhea – who are themselves the product of Air-Night and Tartaros. There is no mention of Chronos, of course, but Pherecydes of Syros (pp. 57–60) had already associated Kronos with Chronos, and there may be a connexion here with the later accounts; see also 52 and discussion.¹ There is a distinct similarity

between what is produced from the egg in the birds' account and in the later Orphic versions; golden-winged Eros is an obvious prototype of the Orphic Phanes.² Yet most of Aristophanes' bird-cosmogony is indubitably derived from the Hesiodic *Theogony*, with appropriate modifications. Chaos, Night, Erebus and Tartaros are involved in the first stages of both accounts; only Earth is postponed in Aristophanes, to be produced (in some ways more logically) simultaneously with Sky. The egg is a 'wind-egg' partly to make it more bird-like, partly because of the traditional windiness of Tartaros (34). So Night, Chaos and Eros are all winged, because this is meant to be a birds' cosmogony. It is a parody of a traditional type of cosmogony; yet the original of a parody must be recognizable, and while the Hesiodic elements are clear enough the egg is non-Hesiodic. Eminently suited to bird-generation as it is, the device is unlikely to have been just invented by Aristophanes for that reason. It must have been familiar as a means for producing, not necessarily a cosmogonical figure, but at least an important deity like Eros.³

¹ The Kronos-Chronos identification was also made in Orphic circles, cf. e.g. Proclus in Plato *Crat.* 396b (Kern fr. 68). This does not imply that Pherecydes was an Orphic or took his ideas from early Orphic sources (though the *Suda* reports, probably on account of these similarities, that he 'collected Orpheus' writings'); rather that the later Orphic eclectics used him for source-material just as they used Hesiod and other early mythological writings. In any case the assimilation of the two names was an obvious move.

² The language of the Rhapsodic account is indeed strongly reminiscent of Aristophanes; compare χρυσείαις πτερύγεσσι φορέυμενος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα (sc. Φάνης), 'Phanes... borne here and there by golden wings' (fr. 78 Kern), with line 697 of 26). ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα in the Orphic verse, as in 22, recalls Hesiod *Theogony* 742 (34), part of the description of windy Tartarus; Hesiod is indeed the chief linguistic and formal model for the Rhapsodies.

³ Possibly the birth of Helen from an egg is significant here; connected with a tree-cult perhaps of Mycenaean origin (M. Nilsson, *Gesch. d. griech. Religion* 1² (Munich, 1967), 22 and 211), she is a ward and representative of Aphrodite-Eros in Homer.

One reason for doubting an early Orphic use of the egg-motif may be that, if there were any such early use, one would expect later applications to be consistent with an earlier tradition, which in a sacred-book sect would tend to be regarded as sacrosanct. Yet three quite different later uses are known. First, the egg simply produces Phanes (21, 24). Secondly, in 25 the upper part of the egg forms the sky, the lower part the earth; the equivalent of Phanes emerges too, and sky and earth then mate as in Hesiod or the popular tradition. Thirdly, certain Orphics used the arrangement of shell and skin (and

presumably also of white and yolk) as an analogue for the arrangement of sky (outer heaven) and aither:

28 Achilles *Isag.* 4 (DK 1 B 12, Kern fr. 70) τὴν δὲ τάξιν ἣν δεδώκαμεν τῷ σφαιρώματι οἱ Ὀρφικοὶ λέγουσι παραπλησίαν εἶναι τῇ ἐν τοῖς ῥοῖς· ὃν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον τὸ λέπυρον ἐν τῷ ῥῳ, τοῦτον ἐν τῷ παντὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ ὡς ἐξήρηται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κυκλοτερώς ὁ αἰθήρ, οὕτως τοῦ λεπύρου ὁ ὕμην.

28 The arrangement which we have assigned to the celestial sphere the Orphics say is similar to that in eggs: for the relation which the shell has in the egg, the outer heaven has in the universe, and as the aither depends in a circle from the outer heaven, so does the membrane from the shell.

RECENT DISCOVERIES AND PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions that might be formed from the evidence presented so far have been given something of a new dimension by recent discoveries. First, the well-known series of gold plates carrying instructions for the dead and found in graves in Magna Graecia and Crete has now been extended by an important new example from Hipponion (modern Vibo Valentia) in southern Italy, inscribed as early as c. 400 B.C. After the usual instructions to the dead person – a woman in this case – not to drink from the spring by the white cypress but from the water flowing out of the lake of Memory further on (on which see G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford, 1971) 355ff.), the text continues as follows:

29 Gold plate from Hipponion (after G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Parola del Passato* 29 (1974), 108–26 and 31 (1976), 458–66), 10–16:

εἶπον· ὅς Γαίας καὶ Ὀρανὸ ἀστερόεντος. 10
 δῖσαι δ' ἐμὶ αὖτος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλὰ δότ' ὀκα
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς Μνεμοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ[ν]α[s].
 καὶ δέ τοι ἔλεῖς(ιν) <ο>Ι ὑπὸ Χθονίοι Βασιλεῖ,
 καὶ δέ τοι δόσοσι πιῖν τῆς Μναμοσύνης ἀπ[ὸ] λίμνας.
 καὶ δέ καὶ συχνὸν ὁδὸν ἔρχεα<ι>, ἅν τε καὶ ἄλλοι 15
 μύσται καὶ βᾶχχοι ἱερὰν στείχοσι κλ<ε>εινοί.

29 Say: '[I am] the son of Earth and starry Sky. I am parched with thirst and am dying; so quickly give me cold water flowing forth from the lake of Memory.' And the Kings of under the earth will pity you, and they will give you to drink from the lake of Memory. And it is a thronged road you are setting out on, a holy

one along which other famous initiates and bacchants are proceeding.

In the concluding verse the typical eschatology of the gold-plate believers is credited, for the first time in the surviving evidence, to 'bacchic initiates' – that is, to followers of Dionysus with secret religious beliefs. Bacchic funerary practices were equated with Orphic ones by Herodotus, II, 81, who added significantly that they were really Pythagorean and Egyptian. G. Zuntz (*op. cit.*) had argued that the gold tablets are specifically Pythagorean, but the connexion with Dionysus here suggests an Orphic association, rather. Herodotus' scepticism implies that there were no clear-cut sectarian divisions, but it is perhaps significant that Dionysus was to become the central figure of the special Orphic myth of the creation of men out of the ashes of the Titans who had killed and eaten the child-god. Moreover there is fresh evidence on this point, also, for in 1951 bone tablets were found in the central sanctuary in Olbia in the Crimea, an ancient Milesian colony; on one of them was scratched, probably in the fifth century B.C., the name 'Orphikoi' and also an abbreviation of 'Dionysus', whose name also occurs on several of the other tablets; see also p. 208 n. 1 and for further discussion the valuable article by M. L. West in *ZPE* 45 (1982) 17–29. It was in Olbia, too, according to Herodotus IV, 78–80, that a king Skyles had become an initiate into the ecstatic cult of Dionysus the Bacchant.

The claim that the soul of the dead person is instructed to make in 29, 10, 'I am the son of Earth and starry Sky', is puzzling in itself, but presupposes a link between the dead person and the early gods. Such a link would be supplied by the (possibly later) myth of Dionysus and the Titans; but a relatively early Orphic interest in the succession of the first nature-gods is now revealed by a remarkable papyrus roll discovered at Derveni near Thessalonica in 1962. Half-burnt over a grave around 330 B.C., the roll contained an allegorical commentary by someone versed in Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia on a theogony attributed several times to Orpheus. The commentary contains no hint of Platonic or Aristotelian influence, and Walter Burkert (e.g. in *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart, 1977), 473) suggests 'scarcely later than 400 B.C.' as probable date of composition. That would put the Orphic theogony itself – it was composed in hexameters, several of which are quoted – into the fifth century B.C., conceivably even into the sixth. A few of the quoted verses are identical or nearly so with bits of the late compilation, the so-called Orphic Rhapsodies, on which see n. 1 on p. 23. That does not alter the fact that much of

the Rhapsodies is Hellenistic or Graeco-Roman, but it shows that the beginnings of beliefs that can be termed specifically Orphic, and were recorded in sacred verses, were much earlier than Wilamowitz or Linforth would have allowed.

A full publication of the papyrus has been delayed for many years, but is now being prepared by Professors Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou of the University of Thessalonica. Until its appearance any discussion must be provisional; but Professor R. Merkelbach has now published his version of the text in an appendix (pp. 1-12) to *ZPE* 47 (1982), and it is from there that the following particularly relevant extracts from the Orphic poem are drawn. Their application and supplementation are sometimes partially determined by their context in the (extremely wild) ancient commentary, which is not quoted here.

30 Selected verses quoted from 'Orpheus' by the Derveni commentator (numbers in parentheses are purely for reference in this book; the roman and arabic figures that follow refer to columns, and lines in each column, respectively):

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| (1) x, 5 | (Κρόνος) ὃς μέγ' ἔρεξεν (τὸν Οὐρανόν) (cf. x, 7-8) |
| (2) x, 6 | Οὐρανὸς Εὐφρονίδης, ὃς πρῶτιστος βασιλεύσεν |
| (3) xi, 6 | ἐκ τοῦ δὴ Κρόνος [α]ὔτις, ἔπειτα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς |
| (4) vii, 1 | ἐξ ἁ[δύτοι]ο... χρῆσαι (sc. τὴν Νύκτα) |
| vii, 10 | [ἡ δὲ] ἔχρησεν ἅπαντα τὰ οἱ θε[μ]ις.]αι |
| (5) ix, 1 | Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ πατρός ἐοῦ πάρα [θε]σφατ' ἀκούσα[ς] |
| (6) ix, 4 | αἰδοῖον κα[τ]έπινεν, ὃς αἰθέρα ἔκθορε πρῶτος |
| (7) xii, 3-6 | πρωτογόνου βασιλέως αἰδοίου, τοῦ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀθάνατοι προσέφυν μάκαρες θεοὶ ἡδὲ θεῖναι καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ κρῆναι ἐπήρατοι ἄλλα τε πάντα [ὄ]σσα τότε ἦν γεγαῶτ', αὐτὸς δ' ἄρα μοῦνος ἔγεντο. |
| (8) xix, 3-6 | ᾿Ωκεανὸς... ἔμησατο... σθένης μέγα... εὐρὺν ῥέοντα, ? sc. ἔμησατο δ' ᾿Ωκεανοῖο μέγα σθένης εὐρὺν ῥέοντος (restit. Burkert, alii) |
| (9) xx, 3 | (σελήνη, cf. xx, 10) ἥ πολλοῖς φαίνει μερόπεςσι ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν |
| (10) xxii, 9-10 | μητρός ἐν φιλότῃ... θέλοντα μιχθῆναι, cf. xxii, 1-2 μη[τρ]ὸς... ἔᾶς, ? sc. μητρός ἔᾶς ἐθέλων μιχθῆναι ἐν φιλότῃ (restit. Burkert, alii) |
| 30 (1) | [Kronos] who did a great deed [to Ouranos] |
| (2) | Ouranos son of Euphronē [Night], who reigned first |

- (3) after him Kronos next, and then counsellor Zeus
- (4) that [Night] prophesied from her inner sanctuary...and she prophesied everything that was lawful for...
- (5) Zeus, having heard the oracles from his father
- (6) swallowed down the phallus [of him] who first leapt up to the upper air
- (7) of the phallus of the first-born king; and from him [it?] grew all the immortal blessed gods and goddesses, and rivers and lovely springs and everything else that was then in being; but he came into being alone
- (8) he devised the great might of Okeanos with broad streams
- (9) [moon] who shines for many mortals over the boundless earth
- (10) wishing to mingle in love with his mother

As might be expected, much of the Orphic theogony revealed by the commentator's quotations closely resembles the Hesiodic theogony, to be considered in §5; it is the departures from it that are interesting and possibly significant. The first king in heaven is Ouranos, Sky; but he is son of Night (2) (i.e. in 30), who therefore occupies the same position as Hesiod's initial Chaos (31, 1) – and bears out Aristotle's information in 15. Kronos now gains the kingship with a 'great (or dreadful) deed' (1), presumably by castrating Ouranos as in Hesiod (39). Next king is Zeus (3), who apparently receives oracles both from Kronos himself (5) and from Night in her sanctuary (4). He is not swallowed by Kronos as in Hesiod (p. 46), rather he himself swallows a phallus (6), indeed the one severed from Ouranos by Kronos (7, 1). As a result of that act he brings everything into being out of himself – gods and goddesses, rivers, springs, everything (7, 2–4), including no doubt Pontos and (8) Okeanos (as in a closely similar passage of the Rhapsodies, fr. 167 Kern) as well as the moon (9). Finally he commits incest with his mother (10) – Rhea, who is probably also identified, here as in the Rhapsodies, with Demeter; the offspring in that case (as Burkert suggests) would be Persephone, with whom he may have then coupled to produce the chthonic form of Dionysus.

Some elements of the much later Rhapsodic account are present in all this, but others are excluded – notably the winged god Phanes (see n. 3 on p. 24). But Phanes was swallowed by Zeus in the depths of Night according to the Rhapsodies (fr. 167 Kern), and so it looks

as though a later bowdlerizing taste replaced the phallus by Phanes. Where does the phallus come from? Obviously, like most other details of the Succession-myth (pp. 44f.), from near-eastern sources. In the Hurrian-Hittite Kumarbi myth, described on p. 46, it is Kumarbi that cuts off the sky-god's phallus; he swallows it, becomes pregnant with the weather-god, and has a painful delivery. This seems to have been too strong meat for Hesiod or his closer sources; the act of castration survives (see 39 below), but the phallus is then simply thrown into the sea; any swallowing is by Kronos (equivalent in other respects to Kumarbi) *of his children* – a somewhat tamer conception, also a probable theme of folktale. It begins to appear as though 'Orpheus' preserved the original oriental account whereby a god becomes pregnant by swallowing the severed phallus; however, it is not the castrator himself that does so, nor is this the means whereby he is displaced by the weather-god. Rather the weather-god (Zeus) swallows the phallus, which seems to have been preserved as a symbol or instrument of generation in order to give birth to the whole universe in a second and final act of creation – just as Phanes will do, indeed, in the later Rhapsodic account.

The relevance of Orphic beliefs to Presocratic philosophy is still, even in the light of the new evidence, fairly slight. Fresh support is given to the priority of Night, perhaps related to the Hesiodic idea of initial Chaos, as also to a wide variety of cosmogonical and theogonical elaborations of Hesiod in the fifth and even perhaps the sixth century B.C. Orphic departures from Hesiod are not numerous judging by the Derveni papyrus, but are significant in that they seem to restore and to develop motifs from the near-eastern Succession-myth which Hesiod himself had toned down, especially over Zeus' pregnancy and subsequent birth of the whole of nature. That makes it more likely that Pherecydes of Syros (§6B), and perhaps certain sixth-century Presocratics too, were indebted to Asiatic sources for otherwise unattested ideas. Apart from that, the main originality of the Derveni theogony may have lain in the conception of the single creator-god, combining the demiurgical powers of Babylonian Marduk (see p. 43) with the sexual-generation theme of the Hesiodic *Theogony*. But it is in the new aspect of the gold-tablet material that the greatest interest may ultimately lie; for that does much to confirm that there were people in the fifth century B.C., at least, who related cosmogonic speculation to concern with the fate of the soul after death. That is something the initiates at Eleusis do not seem to have done, and it does much to account for the productive and comprehensive world-view of Heraclitus in particular.

5. The Hesiodic cosmogony, and the separation of earth and sky

There is an obvious sense in which Hesiod should have been directly considered before this, since his *Theogony* and *Works and Days* were both composed probably in the early seventh century B.C., and many of the themes developed by 'Orphics' and others, and already discussed, are clearly influenced here and there by his treatment. Yet they belong to a tradition of popular, non-analytic ideas about the world and its development that found occasional expression in Homer (see §§ 1-3). Hesiod, on the other hand, although he worked only a generation or so later than the composer (or composers) of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, represents an apparently quite new attempt to systematize the ancient myths. He too deals with the relations of gods and goddesses to each other and to more primitive powers, but with the evident intention not only of reducing age-old mythical material to some kind of order but also of demonstrating the ultimate sources of Zeus' authority and grandeur. It is the cosmogonical developments described in the *Theogony*, which led up to that, that are singled out for special attention in the pages which follow; but *Works and Days*, with its emphasis on Zeus' eventual rule of the world in accordance with Order or Justice (*Dikē*), was also a probable if less obvious influence on Presocratic ideas – especially, through Heraclitus, on the concept of an underlying arrangement of the cosmos, on which see further § 7 below.

31 Hesiod *Theogony* 116

Ἦ τοι μὲν πρῶτιστ' Ἥχας γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα	116
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ,	117
Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης, ¹	119
ἥδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,	120
λυσιμελής, πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων	
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.	
ἐκ Ἥχας δ' Ἐρεβὸς τε μέλαινά τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο·	
Νυκτὸς δ' αὖτ' Αἰθήρ τε καὶ Ἥμέρη ἐξεγένοντο,	
οὓς τέκε κυσαμένη Ἐρέβει φιλότῃτι μιγείσα.	125
Γαῖα δὲ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγένεατο Ἴσον ἑαυτῇ	
Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπττοι,	
ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ.	
γένεατο δ' Οὐρεα μακρά, θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους	
Νυμφέων, αἱ ναίουσιν ἄν' οὐρεα βησσηέντα.	130
ἥ δὲ καὶ ἀτρύγετον πέλαγος τέκεν, οἶδαμι θυῖον,	

Πόντον, ἄτερ φιλότητος ἐφίμερον· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 Οὐρανῷ εὐνηθεῖσα τέκ' Ὠκεανὸν βαθυδίνην,
 Κοῖόν τε Κρίόν θ' Ὑπερίονά τ' Ἰαπετόν τε...²

31 Verily first of all did Chaos come into being, and then broad-bosomed Gaia [earth], a firm seat of all things for ever, and misty Tartaros in a recess of broad-wayed earth, and Eros, who is fairest among immortal gods, looser of limbs, and subdues in their breasts the mind and thoughtful counsel of all gods and all men. Out of Chaos, Erebus and black Night came into being; and from Night, again, came Aither and Day, whom she conceived and bore after mingling in love with Erebus. And Earth first of all brought forth starry Ouranos [sky], equal to herself, to cover her completely round about, to be a firm seat for the blessed gods for ever. Then she brought forth tall Mountains, lovely haunts of the divine Nymphs who dwell in the woody mountains. She also gave birth to the unharvested sea, seething with its swell, Pontos, without delightful love; and then having lain with Ouranos she bore deep-eddyding Okeanos, and Koios and Krios and Hyperion and Iapetos...

¹ Line 118, ὁθανάτων οἱ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόντος Ὀλύμπου, is inorganic and quite inappropriate here, and has been omitted. It occurs in the medieval MSS, but is absent from quotations by Plato (*Symp.* 178b) and ps.-Aristotle (*M.A.G.* 1, 975a11), as well as by Sextus Empiricus and Stobaeus. Line 119 was also omitted in these quotations (as, apparently, in the copy used by Zeno of Citium: *SVF* 1, 104-5), and a scholiast remarks ὁθετεῖται ('it is marked as spurious'); yet it is quoted in its correct place by Chalcidius (*in Tim.* 122), who omitted 118. Plato's continuation of 117 by 120 is not necessarily significant; he was solely interested in Eros, and quoted what was relevant to Eros and no more. The scholiast's doubt, and post-Platonic omissions, may have originated in Plato's omission; or the line may have been felt to be incongruous, having been added at the time when the variant descriptions of Hades accrued (p. 20).

² The list of Titans is completed in the lines that follow; Gaia's subsequent offspring are patently non-cosmological. At 154ff. comes the story of the mutilation of Kronos (39). At 211ff. there is a reversion to the production of personified abstractions, e.g. by Night and Strife, but they have no cosmological significance.

The author of the *Theogony* decided to trace back the ancestry of the gods to the beginning of the world, and 31 is his account of the earliest stages, in which the production of cosmic constituents like Ouranos (sky) gradually leads to the generation of vague but fully anthropomorphic mythical persons like the Titans. This poetical cosmogony, composed presumably early in the seventh century B.C., was not, however, *invented* by Hesiod; its occasional irrationality and redupli-

cation of stages indicate that it is a synthesis of at least two earlier variant accounts. For example, Erebos (which may be of Hittite etymology), although there is some vagueness about it in Homer, must be locally related to the whole complex Gaia-Hades-Tartaros ('Ερέβεσφιν ὑπὸ χθονός at *Theogony* 669); yet it is produced a stage later than Gaia and Tartaros. It might be explained as a local differentiation, as Mountains and Sea (Pontos) are produced as local differentiations from Earth; but in that case it should naturally originate from Tartaros or Gaia and not from Chaos. It is grouped with Night, no doubt, because it shares a major characteristic (darkness), as Aither is grouped with Day. Generation is of opposites (e.g. of Aither and Day by Erebos – whose neuter gender does not inhibit parental activities – and Night), or of similars (Erebos and Night from Chaos, see p. 41), or of local differentiations. Some births, however, cannot be explained on any of these principles – notably that of Ouranos from Gaia. Again, there is inconsistency over the method of production. Eros is produced at the first stage of differentiation, presumably to provide an anthropomorphic, sexual explanation of subsequent differentiation. It is not, however, consistently used. Gaia produces Pontos 'without love' at 132; Night mates with Erebos at 125 but produces again 'without sleeping with anyone' at 213; Chaos at 123, and Gaia again at 126, produce independently though Love is already in existence. Immediately after producing Pontos independently at 132, Gaia produces the more fully personalized Okeanos by mating with her son and consort Ouranos.¹

¹ In view of his cosmological importance as the surrounding river (§ 2) one would expect Okeanos to occur earlier, rather than later, than Pontos, which can properly be regarded as a detail of the earth. The production of Okeanos by Gaia and Ouranos may have a rationalistic motive, since the surrounding stream forms the point of contact between earth and the enclosing bowl of sky.

'First of all Chaos came-to-be': the primacy of Chaos is remarkable, and a careful enquiry must be made into what Hesiod is likely to have meant by Χάος here. Three interpretations may be rejected immediately: (i) Aristotle (*Phys.* Δ1, 208b29) took it to mean 'place'. But interest in this and related spatial concepts probably began with the Eleatics, much later than the *Theogony*, and finds its first major expression in Plato's *Timaeus*. (ii) The Stoics followed Zeno of Citium (e.g. *SVF* 1, 103), who perhaps took the idea from Pherecydes of Syros (DK 7 B 1a), in deriving χάος from χέεσθαι and therefore interpreting it as what is poured, i.e. water. (iii) The common modern sense of chaos as disorder can be seen e.g. in Lucian *Amores* 32, where Hesiod's

χάος is interpreted as disordered, shapeless matter. This, again, may be Stoic in origin.

The noun is derived from $\sqrt{\chi\alpha}$, meaning 'gape, gap, yawn', as in $\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$, $\chi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$, etc. Of the certain uses of the word before 400 B.C., one group simply refers to the cosmogonic Χάος of this passage (so Acusilaus in 18, Aristophanes *Birds* 693, *Clouds* 627); the other group has the special meaning 'air', in the sense of the region between sky and earth, the region in which birds fly (so Bacchylides 5, 27, Euripides fr. 448 (Nauck²), Aristophanes *Clouds* 424, *Birds* 1218). One may suspect that Bacchylides' poetical and perhaps original use of the highly individual phrase $\epsilon\nu \acute{\alpha}\tau\rho\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega \chi\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota$ (as that in which the eagle flies – the free air, as opposed to earth or sea) was consciously imitated by Euripides and Aristophanes, either lyrically (*Birds* 1218) or as a convenient though not necessarily serious interpretation to be placed on the cosmogonical *chaos* of Hesiod. The evidence, then, does not point to an extensive use of χάος as the space between sky and earth, though such a use was certainly known. Here we must consider another instance of the word in the *Theogony* itself:

32 Hesiod *Theogony* 695 (Zeus hurls thunderbolts at the Titans)

ἔξεε δὲ χθών πᾶσα καὶ Ὠκεανοῖο ῥέεθρα
πόντος τ' ἄτρυγτος· τοὺς δ' ἄμφεπε θερμὸς αὐτμὴ
Τιτῆνας χθονίους, φλόξ δ' αἰθέρα δῖαν ἴκανε
ἄσπετος, ὅσσε δ' ἄμερδε καὶ ἰφθίμων περ ἐόντων
αὐγὴ μαρμαίρουσα κεραυνοῦ τε στεροπῆς τε.
καῦμα δὲ θεσπέσιον κατέχευεν Χάος· εἴσατο δ' ἅντα 700
ὀφθαλμοῖσι ἰδεῖν ἢ δ' οὐασι ὅσσαν ἀκοῦσαι
αὐτῶς ὥς εἰ Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε
πίλνατο· τοῖος γάρ κε μέγας ὑπὸ δοῦπος ὀρώρει...

32 The whole earth boiled, and the streams of Okeanos, and the unharvested sea; and them, the earth-born Titans, did a warm blast surround, and flame unquenchable reached the holy aither, and the darting gleam of thunderbolt and lightning blinded the eyes even of strong men. A marvellous burning took hold of Chaos; and it was the same to behold with the eyes or to hear the noise with the ears as if earth and broad heaven above drew together; for just such a great din would have risen up...

There has been dispute about which region of the world is represented by Χάος in line 700. Either (a) it represents the whole or part of the underworld – there is a parallel for this usage at *Theogony* 814 (35), perhaps one of the added variants (see pp. 20 and 40); or (b) it

represents the region between earth and aither. But (a) would be difficult: why should the *heat* penetrate to the underworld (the concussion of missiles does so at 681ff., but that is natural and effective)? The Titans are not in the underworld, but on Mount Othrys (632); we have been told that the flash reaches the upper air, and it is relevant to add that the heat, also, filled the whole intermediate region. The following lines imagine earth and sky as clashing together – again, the emphasis is certainly not on the underworld. An objective judge would surely conclude that Χάος at line 700 describes the region between earth and sky.

In view of the basic meaning of χάος (as a gap, i.e. a bounded interval, not 'void' or anything like that),¹ and of one certain fifth-century usage as the region between sky and earth, and of another use of the word in the *Theogony* in which the meaning is probably the same, serious attention must be paid to an interpretation propounded most notably by Cornford (e.g. *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge, 1952) 194f.), that Χάος γέγερ' in the first line of 31 implies that *the gap between earth and sky came into being*; that is, that the first stage of cosmogony was the separation of earth and sky. This would not be consistent with one existing and indubitable feature of the cosmogony, the postponement of the birth of Ouranos until a second stage, at lines 126f. (Production from Chaos, lines 123ff., and from Gaia, 126ff., may take place simultaneously.) Apart from this peculiarity, the other conditions fit the proposed interpretation; earth, with its appendage Tartaros, appears directly the gap is made; so does Eros, which in its most concrete form as rain/semen exists between sky and earth according to poetical references.² It seems not improbable that in the Hesiodic scheme the explicit description of the formation of Ouranos has been delayed through the confused use of two separate accounts (a confusion which can be paralleled from other details of the scheme), and that it is implied in line 116 at the very first stage of cosmogony. The separation of sky and earth is certainly reduplicated in the *Theogony*, in a fully mythopoeic form, in the story of the mutilation of Kronos (39); though reduplication of accounts of a different logical character (quasi-rationalistic and mythical) is easier to accept than reduplication on the same, quasi-rationalistic level.

¹ A comparison has often been drawn between χάος and *ginnunga-gap* in the Nordic cosmogony. This *gap* (which, however, preceded the creation of the giant from whom earth and sky were made) has been taken to imply simply an indefinite empty space: but it is important to observe that in Snorri's schematization it is conceived as being terminated by the realm of ice (*Niflheim*) to the north and that of fire (*Muspellsheim*) to the south. This certainly does not

invalidate the supposition that χάος implies primarily a region of vast size, but secondarily and implicitly its boundaries.

² Not in Homer or Hesiod; most notably in 33 Aeschylus fr. 44, 1-5 (from the *Danaids*)

ἔρᾳ μὲν ἀγνὸς οὐρανὸς τρῶσαι χθόνα,
ἔρως δὲ γαῖαν λαμβάνει γάμου τυχεῖν.
δμβρος δ' ἀπ' εὐνατῆρος οὐρανοῦ πεσών
ἔκυσε γαῖαν· ἡ δὲ τίκτεται βροτοῖς
μήλων τε βοσκὰς καὶ βίον Δημήτριον.

(*Holy sky passionately longs to penetrate the earth, and desire takes hold of earth to achieve this union. Rain from her bedfellow sky falls and impregnates earth, and she brings forth for mortals pasturage for flocks and Demeter's livelihood.*) This idea of the rain actually fertilizing the earth may be of great antiquity.

Cornford's interpretation may be helped by the verb used to describe the first stage of cosmogony: not ἦν but γένετ', perhaps implying that Χάος was not the eternal precondition of a differentiated world, but a modification of that precondition. (It is out of the question that Hesiod or his source was thinking of the originative substance as coming into being out of nothing.) The idea that earth and sky were originally one mass may have been so common (see pp. 42-4) that Hesiod could take it for granted, and begin his account of world-formation at the first stage of differentiation. This would be, undoubtedly, a cryptic and laconic procedure; and it seems probable that something more complicated was meant by Χάος γένετ' than, simply, 'sky and earth separated' – though I am inclined to accept that this was originally implicit in the phrase. The nature of the gap between sky and earth after their first separation may well have been somehow specified in the popular traditions on which Hesiod was presumably drawing. There was, conceivably, an attempt to imagine what would be the appearance of things when there was simply dark sky, and earth, and the gap between. Here we must turn for assistance to two of the elaborations (see p. 20) on the Hesiodic description of the underworld.

34 Hesiod *Theogony* 736

ἔνθα δὲ γῆς δνοφερῆς καὶ Ταρτάρου ἡερόεντος
πόντου τ' ἀτρυγέτοιο καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος
ἐξεῖς πάντων πηγαὶ καὶ πείρατ' ἔασιν
ἀργαλέ' εὐρώεντα, τὰ τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ,
χάσμα μέγ', οὐδέ κε πάντα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν
οὔδας ἴκοιτ', εἰ πρῶτα πυλέων ἔντοσθε γένοιτο.
ἀλλὰ κεν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα φέροι πρὸ θύελλα θυέλλης
ἀργαλέη· δεινὸν δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
τοῦτο τέρας· Νυκτὸς δ' ἑρεβεννῆς οἰκία δεινὰ
ἔστηκεν νεφέλης κεκαλυμμένα κυανέησιν.

740

745

35 Hesiod *Theogony* 811 (following a repetition of lines 736–9, *vide* 34)

ἐνθα δὲ μαρμάρεαι τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδὸς
ἀστεμφής, ῥίζησι διηνεκέεσσιν ἄρηρως,
αὐτοφυής· πρόσθεν δὲ θεῶν ἔκτοσθεν ἀπάντων
Τιτῆνες ναίουσι, πέρην Χάεος ῥοφεροῖο.

34 There of murky earth and misty Tartaros and unharvested sea and starry sky, of all of them, are the springs in a row and the grievous, dank limits which even the gods detest; a great gulf, nor would one reach the floor for the whole length of a fulfilling year, if one were once within the gates. But hither and thither storm on grievous storm would carry one on; dreadful is this portent even for immortal gods; and the dreadful halls of gloomy Night stand covered with blue-black clouds.

35 There are gleaming gates, and brazen threshold unshaken,
fixed with continuous roots, self-grown; and in front, far from all
the gods, dwell the Titans, across murky Chaos.

Of these, **34** is evidently an attempt to improve 726-8 (**2**), where Tartaros (perhaps its upper part) is said to be surrounded by Night, and above it are the roots of earth and sea. In *πείρατ'* there is a more exact reversion to the apparent source of **2**, i.e. *Il. viii*, 478-9, *τὰ νεῖατα πείραθ' . . . γαίης καὶ πόντοιο*; while *πηγαί* are introduced as being especially appropriate to the sea. 740ff. are a special and peculiar development of 720ff. **35**, on the other hand, which follows a repetition of the first four lines of **34**, begins with a slightly altered line (*Il. viii*, 15) from the Homeric description of Tartaros (**1**), then continues with the 'roots' of **2**, quite vague this time, and ends with the *χάσμα μέγ'* of 740 repeated as *Χάος*. Both passages contain inconsistencies compatible with their being somewhat superficial expansions; for example the alteration of the reasonable idea that the roots of earth are above Tartaros to the idea that the 'sources and boundaries' of earth, sea, sky and Tartaros are in Tartaros (**34**). What is interesting is the further description of Tartaros as a *χάσμα μέγ'*, a great gulf or chasm (cf. Euripides *Phoen.* 1605), full of storms and containing the halls of Night. In **35** this gulf is described as 'gloomy Chaos' (we need not concern ourselves with its peculiar geography, except to note that Chaos is not absolutely unbounded). This must contain a reference to the initial *Χάος* of line 116 (**31**), and it seems reasonable to suppose that the author or authors of these expansions understood the initial *Χάος* to be dark and windy, like Tartaros. This interpretation gains some support from the fact that in the original

cosmogonical account Erebus and Night (both, presumably, gloomy) are produced from Chaos.

The evidence seems to point to the following conclusion. For Hesiod's source, at all events, the first stage in the formation of a differentiated world was the production of a vast gap between sky and earth. By Hesiod the emphasis is placed on the nature of the gap itself, not on the act of separation which produced it. The gap is conceived as dark and windy – because either and sun had not yet come into being, and night and storms go together. The same kind of description is applied, quite naturally, to the lightless gulfs of Tartaros; and sometimes Tartaros is considered in terms of, or actually as part of, the original gap.¹

¹ G. Vlastos (*Gnomon* 27 (1955), 74–5) finds 34 significant for the origin of Hesiod's cosmogonical Χάος, and even suggests that it was from here that Anaximander got the idea of τὸ ἀπειρον. U. Hölscher, too (*Hermes* 81 (1953), 391–401), has completely rejected the Cornford interpretation, and takes Χάος to be a dark and boundless waste. He supports this by the assumption that a cosmogony, attributed to Sanchuniathon (a Phoenician said to have lived before the Trojan war) by Philo of Byblus *ap. Eusebium P.E.* 1, 10, is really of great antiquity, much older than Hesiod. According to the summary in Eusebius the first state of things was gloomy, boundless air and wind (χάος θολερὸν, ἐρεβώδες is one of its descriptions). When this 'passionately desired its own ἀρχαί' (whatever that may mean) there was intermixture. *Mot* (some kind of slime) was produced, and became the sowing of creation. Now it is true that the discoveries at Ras Shamra and elsewhere have shown (a) that some motifs in Greek mythology originated long before Homer and Hesiod, and outside Greece; (b) that Phoenicia had its own versions of myths about the early history of the gods, in the second millennium B.C., and was a meeting-place of cultures. It is also true that in the theogony attributed to Sanchuniathon, after the cosmogonical summary, there is one detail (a deity, Eliun, in the generation before Ouranos) which does not correspond with Hesiod and does correspond with the cognate Hittite account of the second millennium (see pp. 45f.). But this may be a detail of the genuine and ancient local cosmogonical tradition, which could be incorporated at any date: it does not prove that every part of the whole farrago assigned to Sanchuniathon (Hermes Trismegistus and all) has any claim to incorporate ancient material. In particular, it does not even begin to suggest that the cosmogonical account is anything but what it appears to be, i.e. a Hellenistic eclectic pastiche of Hesiod and later cosmogonical sources (there is a possible mention of an egg). To use it as a means of interpreting Χάος in the *Theogony*, and of showing that the idea of an originative windy darkness was already established for Hesiod to assimilate, must be considered interesting rather than scientific.

THE SEPARATION OF EARTH AND SKY IN GREEK LITERATURE

36 Euripides fr. 484 (from *Melanippe the Wise*)

κούκ ἐμός ὁ μῦθος ἀλλ' ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάρα,
 ὡς οὐρανὸς τε γαῖα τ' ἦν μορφῇ μία·
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐχωρίσθησαν ἀλλήλων δίχα
 τίκτουσι πάντα κἀνέδωκαν εἰς φάος,
 δένδρη, πετεινά, θήρας, οὓς θ' ἄλμη τρέφει,
 γένος τε θνητῶν.

37 Diodorus I, 7, 1 (DK 68B 5, 1) κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τῶν ὅλων σύστασιν μίαν ἔχειν ἰδέαν οὐρανόν τε καὶ γῆν, μεμειγμένης αὐτῶν τῆς φύσεως· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα διαστάντων τῶν σωμάτων ἀπ' ἀλλήλων τὸν μὲν κόσμον περιλαβεῖν ἅπασαν τὴν ὀρωμένην ἐν αὐτῷ σύνταξιν...¹

38 Apollonius Rhodius I, 496

ἦιδεν δ' ὡς γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς ἡδὲ θάλασσα
 τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι μὴ συναρηρότα μορφῇ
 νεῖκεος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο διέκριθεν ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα·
 ἡδ' ὡς ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἐν αἰθέρι τέκμαρ ἔχουσιν
 ἄστρα σεληναίη τε καὶ ἡελίοιο κέλευθοι...²

36 And the tale is not mine but from my mother, how sky and earth were one form; and when they had been separated apart from each other they bring forth all things, and gave them up into the light: trees, birds, beasts, the creatures nourished by the salt sea, and the race of mortals.

37 For by the original composition of the universe sky and earth had one form, their natures being mingled; after this their bodies parted from each other, and the world took on the whole arrangement that we see in it...

38 He sang how earth and sky and sea, being formerly connected with each other in one form, through destructive strife separated apart each from the other; and how stars, moon and the sun's paths have forever in the aither a firm boundary...

¹ The cosmogony and anthropogony in this first book of Diodorus (who, shortly after this passage, quoted 36) were ascribed by Diels to Democritus. There is no mention of atoms, as Cornford noted; but some details of later stages may nevertheless come from the Μικρὸς διάκοσμος (p. 405 and n.). The development of society is similar to that described by Protagoras in the Platonic dialogue. The whole account is eclectic, but its main features are of fifth-century origin and predominantly Ionian character; as such it may well embody traditional cosmogonical ideas.

² Orpheus is the singer. The cosmogony has nothing in common with special 'Orphic' accounts (§4); Apollonius would naturally put into Orpheus' mouth the most primitive-sounding version that he knew.

It has been suggested above that the implied, although not emphasized, first stage of the Hesiodic cosmogony was the separation of sky and earth. That this idea was familiar enough in Greece is shown by 36-8. Only 36, admittedly, is even as early as the fifth century; but it is particularly important as explicitly describing the separation of sky and earth as being passed on from mother to child, i.e. as a popular and traditional account. No scientific parallel is known; though the idea may have been merged with specialized Ionian theories as in 37 and its continuation.

SEPARATION IN NON-GREEK SOURCES

The splitting of earth from sky is a cosmogonical mechanism that was widely used, long before the earliest known Greek cosmogonical ideas, in the mythological accounts of the great near-eastern cultures. (It is in fact common to many different cultures: cf., most notably, the Maori myth of the separation of Rangi (sky) and Papa (earth) by their constricted offspring, a close parallel to 39.) Thus a gloss from the end of the first millennium B.C. on the Egyptian Book of the Dead explains that 'Re began to appear as a king, as one who was before the liftings of Shu had taken place, when he was on the hill which is in Hermopolis' (*ANET*, 4). Shu is the air-god which is sputtered out by Re and lifts the sky-goddess, Nut, from the earth-god, Keb. In the Hurrian-Hittite 'Song of Ullikummi' (*ANET*, 125; Gurney, *The Hittites*, 190-4) Upelluri, a counterpart of Atlas, says: 'When heaven and earth were built upon me I knew nothing of it, and when they came and cut heaven and earth asunder with a cleaver I knew nothing of it.' In the Babylonian Creation-epic (iv, 137ff.; *ANET*, 67) Marduk splits the body of the primeval water-goddess Tiamat and makes one half of it into sky (containing the celestial waters) and the other half into Apsu, the deep, and Esharra, the 'great abode' or firmament of earth. This is the first stage in the composition of the world as we know it, though a secondary stage in the far older history of the Babylonian pantheon. In another, later Semitic version, Genesis i, the primeval waters are similarly divided: 'And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters

which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.' (Gen. i, 6-8.)¹

¹ The opening words of the first chapter of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void', are a confusing anticipation of what is to follow. The initial state is boundless, dark water; the first stage of differentiation is the separation of the waters into those of the sky and those of the earth. The anticipation in the initial summary provides a parallel for the reduplication involved in the Hesiodic cosmogony (p. 38).

The separation of sky and earth was implied, therefore, in various non-Greek mythological accounts older than Hesiod. It will be seen in the next section that Hesiod's description of the earliest generations of gods is a version of a basic near-eastern myth, which is also reproduced in an extant Hurrian-Hittite form. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the separation-motif appearing in Hesiod – whether implicitly in the quasi-rationalistic *Χάος γένετ'* of the formal cosmogony, or more explicitly, but in fully mythopoeic guise, in the mutilation-story now to be considered.

THE MUTILATION-MYTH IN THE THEOGONY

39 Hesiod *Theogony* 154

ὄσσοι γὰρ Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἐξεγένοντο,
 δεινότατοι παίδων, σφετέρῳ δ' ἤχθοντο τοκῇ
 ἐξ ἀρχῆς· καὶ τῶν μὲν ὅπως τις πρῶτα γένοιτο
 πάντας ἀποκρύπτασκε, καὶ εἰς φάος οὐκ ἀνίεσκε,
 Γαίης ἐν κευθμῶνι, κακῷ δ' ἐπετέρπετο ἔργῳ
 Οὐρανός· ἡ δ' ἐντὸς στοναχίζετο Γαῖα πελώρη
 στεينوμένη· δολίην δὲ κακὴν τ' ἐφράσσατο τέχνην. 160
 ... εἶσε δὲ μιν (sc. Κρόνον) κρύψασα λόχῳ· ἐνέθηκε δὲ χερσὶν
 ἄρπην καρχαρόδοντα, δόλον δ' ὑπεθήκατο πάντα. 175
 ἦλθε δὲ Νύκτ' ἐπάγων μέγας Οὐρανός, ἀμφὶ δὲ Γαίῃ
 ἱμεῖρων φιλότῃτος ἐπέσχετο καὶ ῥ' ἐτανύσθη
 πάντῃ· ὃ δ' ἐκ λοχεοῖο παῖς ὠρέξατο χειρὶ
 σκαιῇ, δεξιτερῇ δὲ πελώριον ἔλλαβεν ἄρπην
 μακρὴν, καρχαρόδοντα, φίλου δ' ἀπὸ μήδεα πατρός 180
 ἔσσυμένως ἤμησε, πάλιν δ' ἔρριψε φέρεσθαι
 ἐξοπίσω...

(The drops of blood fertilize Gaia and generate Furies, Giants and Melian nymphs; the severed parts fall into the sea, and from the foam Aphrodite is born.)

39 All who came forth from Gaia and Ouranos, the most dire of children, from the beginning were hated by their own begetter; and just as soon as any of them came into being he hid them all away and did not let them into the light, in the inward places of Gaia; and Ouranos rejoiced over the evil deed. And she, prodigious Gaia, groaned within, for she was crowded out; and she contrived a crafty, evil device... she sent him [Kronos] into a hidden place of ambush, placed in his hands a jagged-toothed sickle, and enjoined on him the whole deceit. Great Ouranos came bringing Night with him, and over Gaia, desiring love, he stretched himself, and spread all over her; and he, his son, from his place of ambush stretched out with his left hand, and with his right he grasped the monstrous sickle, long and jagged-toothed, and swiftly sheared off the genitals of his dear father, and flung them behind him to be carried away...

The details of the present version suggest that Ouranos *did* separate from Gaia, in the daytime at least: but why in this case could not Gaia emit her offspring during his absence? It is probable that in other versions of the story Ouranos covered Gaia continuously (as Rangi covers Papa in the Maori myth), so that in a manner of speaking 'sky and earth were one form'. There can be little doubt that this crude sexual account envisages, on another and less sophisticated plane, the same cosmogonical event that is implied first by Χάος γένηται and second by Γαῖα... ἐγένετο ἴσον ἑαυτῇ Οὐρανόν in the deliberate cosmogony of 31.¹

¹ The most obvious parallel for the repetition in mythopoeic form of an event that has already been accounted for in a quasi-rationalistic and much more sophisticated summary is seen in Genesis: the abstract Elohim of the first chapter is replaced by the fully anthropomorphic and much cruder Jahweh of the second, and the vague 'God created man in his own image' of chapter i is repeated in a far more graphic and more primitive form in the second chapter, where Jahweh creates man out of dust and breathes life into his nostrils. (For man formed from clay cf. e.g. the Old Babylonian text *ANET*, 99 col. b, as well as the Greek Prometheus-myth.)

That some of the contents of the *Theogony* are of non-Greek origin and of a date far earlier than Hesiod's immediate predecessors is most strikingly shown by the parallelism between the Hesiodic account of the succession of oldest gods and the Hittite Kumarbi-tablet, of Hurrian origin and in its extant form dating from around the middle of the second millennium B.C.¹ In the Hittite version the first king in heaven is Alalu, who is driven out by the sky-god Anu; Anu is deposed by the father of the developed gods, Kumarbi (equivalent

to Kronos 'father of the gods'). As Anu tries to escape into the sky Kumarbi bites off, and swallows, his member. On being told that he has become impregnated with the storm-god and two other 'terrible gods', Kumarbi spits out the member, which impregnates the earth with the two other gods; Kumarbi cannot, however, rid himself of the storm-god, and eventually gives birth to him. With the help of Anu, it is evident, the storm-god (to whom the Greek equivalent is obviously the thunder-and-lightning god Zeus) deposes Kumarbi and becomes king in heaven. The similarities to the Greek myth are obvious: the succession sky-god, father of gods, storm-god is common to each; so is the emasculation of the sky-god by Kumarbi/Kronos, and the impregnation of earth by the rejected member. There are, of course, significant differences too; the Hittite version (like other near-eastern accounts) has a god, Alalu, before the sky-god; what *Kronos* swallows is a stone (by mistake for the storm-god, *Theog.* 468ff., and after swallowing all his other children); and it is Rhea, not he, that bears the storm-god Zeus. It is thought that in the broken part of the Hittite tablet there may have been some reference to Kumarbi eating a stone, but this is uncertain. It should be noted that in Hesiod, also, the sky-god (with Gaia) helps the storm-god to survive. The Hittite version carries no implication that the emasculation of the sky-god was concerned with the separation of sky from earth; indeed, no earth-goddess is involved. This is an important difference, but it suggests, not that the Greek separation-motive had no second-millennium archetype, but that the Greek version incorporates variants which do not happen to be found in the Hittite account. The Greek version was not derived specifically from the Hittite, of course; there was a widely diffused common account, with many local variants, of which the Hittite tablet gives one version and Hesiod another – a version, moreover, which had suffered the vicissitudes of transmission to a younger and very different culture.

¹ For the Kumarbi tablet see *ANET*, 120-1; Gurney, *The Hittites*, 190-2; R. D. Barnett, *JHS* 65 (1945), 100f.; H. G. Güterbock, *Kumarbi* (Zürich, 1946), 100ff.; G. S. Kirk, *Myth, its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley and Cambridge, 1970), 214-19. The 'Song of Ullikummi' (see p. 43) records, on separate tablets, the further doings of Kumarbi while he is king in heaven; that sky and earth had been separated is plainly implied there.

6. 'Mixed' theogonies

(A) ALCMAN

The Spartan lyricist Alcman was active around 600 B.C., and it was a great surprise when the publication of Oxyrhynchus Papyrus no. 2390 in 1957 revealed that one of his poems had contained a kind of theogonical cosmogony ('in this song Alcman concerns himself with nature' as the commentator put it, fr. 3, col. i, 26), perhaps arising out of an invocation of the Muses as children of Earth. Of the poem itself we have the merest glimpses; the papyrus (of the second century A.D.) preserves parts of a prose commentary, crudely Aristotelian in character, on the poem, which was evidently quite puzzling and had attracted several other attempts at interpretation (col. i, 27f.). The central part of the commentary is as follows in 40; but it is important to note that it also contained lemmata, that is, short phrases from Alcman on which the comment was hung, and that ἐκ δε τῷ π[early in col. ii (line 3), followed by the explanation πόρον ἀπὸ τῆς πορ.[in line 6, shows by the dialect form τῷ for τοῦ that Alcman himself undoubtedly did use the term πόρος – with which τέκμων, a poetical form in any case, is firmly associated. Other lemmata (which follow 40) are πρέσγ[υς and then ἄμάρ τε καὶ σελάνα καὶ τρίτον σκότος, that is, 'venerable' and 'day and moon and, third, darkness'.

40 Alcman fr. 3 (Page), col. ii, 7–20

ὥς γὰρ ἦρξατο ἡ ὕλη κατασκευα[σθῆναι
 ἐγένετο πόρος τις οἶονεῖ ἀρχή· λέγει
 οὖν ὁ Ἀλκμάν τὴν ὕλην πάν[των τετα-
 ραγμένην καὶ ἀπόητον· εἶτα [γενέ- 10
 σθαι τινά φησιν τὸν κατασκευά[ζοντα
 πάντα, εἶτα γενέσθαι [πό]ρον, τοῦ [δὲ πό-
 ρου παρελθόντος ἐπακολουθῆ[σαι] τέ-
 κμων· καὶ ἔστιν ὁ μὲν πόρος οἶον ἀρχή, τὸ δὲ τέ-
 κμων οἶονεῖ τέλος. τῆς Θέτιδος γενο- 15
 μένης ἀρχή καὶ τέ[λ]ο[ς ταῦτ]α πάντων ἐ-
 γένε[τ]ο, καὶ τὰ μὲν πάντα [ὁμο]ῖαν ἔχει
 τὴν φύσιν τῇ τοῦ χαλκοῦ ὕληι, ἡ δὲ
 Θέτις τ[ῇ] τοῦ τεχνίτου, ὁ δὲ πόρος καὶ τὸ τέ-
 κμων τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ τῷ τέλει... 20

40 For when matter began to be arranged there came into being a kind of way [or passage, *poros*], as it were a beginning [or origin,

archē]. So Alcman says that the matter of all things was disturbed and unmade; then someone [masculine] came into being who was arranging everything, then a way [*poros*] came into being, and when the way had passed by, a limit [or goal, *tekmōr*] followed on. And the way is like a beginning [or origin], whereas the limit is like an end [or limit, *telos*]. When Thetis had come into being these became beginning and end of all things, and the totality of things has a similar nature to that of the bronze material, Thetis to that of the craftsman, and the way and the limit to that of the beginning and the end...

The commentator assimilates Alcman to Aristotle's discussion of the four 'causes' – that is, preconditions or aspects of physical existence – in *Physics* B. There is indeed an obvious resemblance between Thetis (especially if we accept that her name might have been associated with the root meaning of τίθεναι, θέσθαι, i.e. to place or set in place) and the efficient cause or craftsman, as also of Poros and the formal cause, and Tekmōr and the final cause; but Alcman was certainly thinking in less abstract and perhaps less analytical terms than that. Quite what his line of thought was has been matter for much recent speculation, none of it really compelling: *tekmōr* (the vacillation over whether or not to print a capital letter is deliberate) is the *sign* that shows the *way* or *poros* (so Burkert); *poros* represents *paths* in the primeval sea, *tekmōr* *signs* of direction through it (West) – or the stars (Vernant); Poros is 'apportionment' (cf. πέπρωται < *πόρω) to balance Aisa in Alcman fr. 1, 13 (on which see further p. 49) (Page). Thetis is of course a sea-goddess, which accounts for West's attractive conjecture; but her name, with the possible derivation noted above, together with an ancient cult of her in Sparta itself, may be more germane. For Poros and Tekmōr we must hesitate between more concrete and more abstract meanings, with a natural inclination to the former: between physical path or track, and the way or means of passage or progress; and between visible sign, mark or limit, and end or culmination (both of these being Homeric). And the degree of abstraction or the reverse must correspond for the two different terms; thus 'limit' in a more concrete sense might conceivably be Okeanos (cf. §2), especially if Thetis has her sea-goddess connotation among others; but it is not easy to see what the 'path' might then be.

The lemma about *skotos*, darkness, conceivably suggests an affinity with Night (§3). The commentator (24f.) set darkness at the stage at which matter was still 'unseparated', which means that 'and,

third' (in relation to day and moon) has to be given a logical and not a chronological sense. He continued by saying that 'there came into being by the agency of [...] way and limit and darkness', in which the lacuna presumably contained the name of Thetis. Darkness here may represent the primeval state, akin to Hesiod's Chaos (§5), despite the commentator's implication at this point that it is not prior to *poros* and *tekmōr*.

Difficulties are compounded by the probability that in the fragmentary verses 13f. of Alcman's fr. 1 (Page), the 'Partheneion', Poros was linked with Aisa as 'eldest of the gods'. The commentator on v. 14 there (Page, *Lyrica Graeca Selecta* (Oxford, 1968) p. 6) makes the remarkable suggestion that Poros is the same as Hesiod's Chaos, although the context itself, defective though it is, would seem to require man's destiny or portion as the general sense of both Aisa and Poros – which is why Page suggested a connection with the root of *πέρωμαι* etc. for the latter, rather than the more obvious *περάω* etc. It seems not improbable, however, that the link with Hesiodic Chaos is derived by the Partheneion-commentator from our cosmogonical fragment; and it may give a clue to the sense of Poros there, whatever its role in the Partheneion. Yet *poros*, *qua* passage or way, cannot be identical with Chaos in the sense of dark, unformed matter (or anything like that); it must succeed or impinge upon it, as the commentator in 40, 8–12 implies. The mention of Hesiod is interesting nevertheless, and may suggest, what we might otherwise be inclined to suspect, that Alcman like other dabblers in cosmogonical matters was always aware of the Hesiodic account in the background.

Yet Poros and Tekmōr, no less than Thetis, are definitely non-Hesiodic (and are not apparently orientalizing either). They tantalize us – but what might they have implied for the Presocratics? No important or specific influence at any rate; but they demonstrate that cosmogonical speculation *was* in the air around Thales' time, not only in Ionia but also amid the very different cultural environment of mainland Greece – of Sparta, indeed, which Anaximander seems to have visited a generation later (pp. 103–5). Moreover that kind of cosmogonical imagination was not simply concerned with the elaboration or minor rearrangement of traditional Hesiodic concepts (as 'Epimenides' had been, see §3 (iii)), but extended to novel metaphorical applications of broad general ideas like those included in the range of meanings that can be assigned to *tekmōr* – with which one might be tempted to connect Anaximander's more prosaic obverse, τὸ ἄπειρον or the Indefinite.

(B) PHERECYDES OF SYROS

This Pherecydes was a mythographer and theogonist, and must be distinguished from the fifth-century Athenian genealogist of the same name, also from a later and less important Lelian.¹ According to Aristotle he was not entirely mythological in his approach:

41 Aristotle *Met.* N₄, 1091b8 ... ἐπεὶ οἱ γε μεμειγμένοι αὐτῶν (sc. τῶν θεολόγων) [καὶ] τῷ μὴ μυθικῶς ἅπαντα λέγειν, οἷον Φερεκύδης καὶ ἑτεροὶ τινες, τὸ γεννηῆσαν πρῶτον ἄριστον τιθέασι, καὶ οἱ Μάγοι.

41 ...since the 'mixed' theologians, those who do not say everything in mythical form, such as Pherecydes and certain of the others, and also the Magi, make the first generator the *best* thing.

¹ F. Jacoby, *Mnemosyne* 13 (3rd series), 1947, 13ff., finally discredited Wilamowitz's theory that 'Pherecydes' was a generic name attached to all early Ionian prose writing not specifically ascribed, as 'Hippocrates' became attached to all medical literature.

DATE

Pherecydes was active in the sixth century B.C., perhaps around the middle of it. Ancient authorities diverge: according to one tradition he was roughly contemporary with the Lydian king Alyattes (c. 605–560 B.C.) and the Seven Sages (conventionally dated around Thales' eclipse, 585/4, or the archonship of Damasias, 582/1); according to another, dependent on Apollodorus, his *acme* was in the 59th Olympiad, 544–541 B.C., and he was a contemporary of Cyrus.¹ The Apollodoran dating thus makes him a generation younger than Thales and a younger contemporary of Anaximander. It accords with the later Pythagorean tradition which made Pythagoras bury Pherecydes (p. 52), though this event was itself probably fictitious. None of these chronological traditions looks particularly historical, and we know that such synchronisms were assigned by the Hellenistic chronographers largely on *a priori* grounds. Yet interest in Pherecydes was certainly alive in the fourth century B.C. (a crucial era for the transmission of information about the archaic period), and the broad limits of dating, i.e. in the sixth century, are unlikely to be wrong.

¹ The early dating is seen e.g. in the Suda (DK 7A2) and in Diog. L. 1, 42 (DK 9A1, after Hermippus). The later dating appears e.g. in Diog. L. 1, 118 (after Aristoxenus) and 1, 121 (after Apollodorus) – see DK 7A1; also in Cicero *Tusc.* 1, 16, 38 (DK 7A5), Pliny *N.H.* vii, 205, Eusebius *Chron.* (DK 7A1a).

PHERECYDES' BOOK

42 Diogenes Laertius 1, 119 σώζεται δὲ τοῦ Συρίου τό τε βιβλίον ὃ συνέγραψεν οὐ ἡ ἀρχή· Ζᾶς μὲν καὶ Χρόνος ἦσαν αἰεὶ καὶ Χθονίη... (for continuation see 49).

43 Suda s.v. Pherecydes ἔστι δὲ ἅπαντα ἃ συνέγραψε ταῦτα· Ἑπτάμυχος ἦτοι Θεοκρασία ἢ Θεογονία. (ἔστι δὲ Θεολογία ἐν βιβλίοις ἱέχουσα θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ διαδοχάς.)

44 Diogenes Laertius 1, 116 τοῦτόν φησι Θεόπομπος πρῶτον περὶ φύσεως καὶ θεῶν γράψαι. Cf. Suda s.v. Pherecydes πρῶτον δὲ συγγραφήν ἐξενεγκεῖν πεζῷ λόγῳ τινὲς ἱστοροῦσιν.

42 There is preserved of the man of Syros the book which he wrote of which the beginning is: 'Zas and Chronos always existed and Chthonie...'

43 Everything he wrote is as follows: Seven Recesses or Divine Mingling or Theogony. (And there is a Theology in ten books containing the birth and successions of the gods.)

44 This man is said by Theopompus to have been the first to write on nature and the gods. – Some relate that he was the first to bring out a book in prose.

According to 42 Pherecydes' book (or what was taken for it) survived in Diogenes' time, the third century A.D. The opening words might be known well enough from the entry in Callimachus' catalogue of the Alexandrian library (the patronymic, omitted here, was given shortly before as Βάβυος, 'son of Babys'). That the book survived the burning of the Library in 47 B.C. may be confirmed by a longer quotation, 50; though this and other fragments could have survived through the medium of handbooks or anthologies. The title is given in 43. 'Ἑπτάμυχος', '(of) seven recesses', seems to be the book's true title; variants descriptive of the contents are added, as often, but are probably of later origin.¹ The 'ten-volume theology' is probably a confusion with a ten-volume work on Attic history (itself beginning, no doubt, from gods and heroes) ascribed to the Athenian Pherecydes in the lines that follow in the Suda. The precise reference of the cryptic and unusual title '(of) seven recesses' is very obscure: see pp. 58f. 44 exemplifies the widespread tradition that this was the earliest prose book. What Theopompus (fourth century B.C.) must actually have said is that Pherecydes first wrote about the gods *in prose*, as opposed to e.g. Hesiod. Prose annals were presumably recorded before Pherecydes, but he and Anaximander (whose book

may have been roughly contemporary, and might possibly be assigned to 547/6 B.C., pp. 101f.) might well have been the first substantial prose writers to have survived.

¹ Some incline to accept 'five recesses' from 50 as the title, with Diels followed by Jaeger and others, on the strength of Damascius' statement there that the divine products of Chronos' seed, when disposed in five recesses, were called ΠΕΝΤΕΜΥΧΟΣ.

HIS LIFE AND LEGEND

(i) *The connexion with Pythagoras*

Many miracles were attributed to Pherecydes, e.g. predictions of an earthquake, a shipwreck, the capture of Messene. These were variously located: in Sparta, near Ephesus, in Samos, in Syros, and so on. The difficulty is that the same miracles were also attributed to Pythagoras. Apollonius the paradoxographer, not certainly using Aristotle, said that 'Pythagoras afterwards indulged in the miracle-working, τερατοποιία, of Pherecydes' (DK 14, 7); and it was certainly accepted in the Peripatetic circle that when Pherecydes fell ill of louse-disease in Delos his disciple Pythagoras came and cared for him until his death (Diog. L. 1, 118, Diodorus x, 3, 4; DK 7A1 and 4). So Aristoxenus asserted, and Dicaearchus too according to Porphyry *Life of Pythagoras* 56. Porphyry also related (as quoted by Eusebius, DK 7A6) that according to the fourth-century B.C. writer Andron of Ephesus the miracles belonged properly to Pythagoras; but that Theopompus plagiarized the miracle-stories from Andron and, to disguise his theft, assigned them instead to Pherecydes and slightly altered the localities involved. Andron was far from critical, however, since he invented another Pherecydes of Syros, an astronomer (Diog. L. 1, 119, DK 7A1); and Porphyry's explanation of the divergence is unconvincing. The confusion and disagreement which patently existed in the fourth century show that reliable details of the life of Pherecydes were lacking. If Pherecydes had been a sage of the type naturally to attract miracle-stories (as Pythagoras was), the connexion between two similar contemporaries would have been invented whether it existed or not; but apart from the feats otherwise attributed to Pythagoras, Pherecydes seems to have had little of the shaman or magician about him. It has been suggested that the whole tissue of legend might have arisen from a well-known fifth-century B.C. comment:

45 Ion of Chios *ap. Diogenem Laertium* i, 120 Ἴων δ' ὁ Χίος φησι περὶ αὐτοῦ (*sc. Φερεκύδου*):

ὥς ὁ μὲν ἡγορέη τε κεκασμένος ἤδ' ἐκαὶ αἰδοῖ
καὶ φθίμενος ψυχῇ τερπνὸν ἔχει βίον,
εἵπερ Πυθαγόρης ἐτύμως σοφός, ὃς περὶ πάντων
ἀνθρώπων γνώμας εἶδε καὶ ἐξέμαθεν.

45 Ion of Chios says about him [Pherecydes]: 'Thus did he excel in manhood and honour, and now that he is dead he has a delightful existence for his soul – if Pythagoras was truly wise, who above all others knew and learned thoroughly the opinions of men.'

As H. Gomperz maintained (*Wiener St.* 47 (1929), 14 n. 3), this probably means no more than 'If Pythagoras is right about the survival of the soul, then Pherecydes' soul should be enjoying a blessed existence'. It might have been misinterpreted, even in antiquity, to imply a friendship between the two men, and have encouraged the transference to Pherecydes of stories about Pythagoras. Elaborate biographical accounts were invented on the slightest pretext, especially in the third and second centuries B.C. (see e.g. p. 182); even so one hesitates to suppose that the fourth-century controversy can have been founded on evidence so slight as Ion's little encomium. Yet none of the evidence on this point looks at all convincing, and it is as well to preserve a high degree of scepticism about the relationship between the two men.

(ii) *Alleged access to Phoenician secret books*

46 Suda s.v. Pherecydes διδασκῆναι δὲ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Πυθαγόραν λόγος, αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ ἐσχηκέναι καθηγητήν, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἀσκήσαι κτησάμενον τὰ Φοινίκων ἀπόκρυφα βιβλία. (See also 60.)

46 There is a story that Pythagoras was taught by him; but that he himself had no instructor, but trained himself after obtaining the secret books of the Phoenicians.

The assertion that Pherecydes was self-taught probably means no more than that no teacher could conveniently be supplied for him when his complete biography came to be written. That he used Phoenician secret books (an unlikely story) is another piece of speculation of the type beloved by the biographical compilers. Yet it must have had some foundation, and may be based on apparently oriental motifs in his thought; he was later connected with Zoroastrianism (n. 2 on pp. 65f.), and the battle of Kronos and Ophioneus,

like that of Zeus and Typhoeus in Hesiod, had important Phoenician affinities (p. 68).

(iii) *The solstice-marker*

47 Diogenes Laertius I, 119 σῶζεται δὲ τοῦ Συρίου τό τε βιβλίον ... (cf. 49) ... σῶζεται δὲ καὶ ἡλιοτρόπιον ἐν Σύρῳ τῇ νήσῳ.

48 Homer *Od.* xv, 403-4, with scholia

νῆσός τις Συρίη κικλήσκεται, εἴ που ἀκούεις,
'Ορτυγίης καθύπερθεν, ὅθι τροπαὶ ἡλείοιο.

ὅθι τροπαὶ ἡλείοιο] ἔνθα φασὶν εἶναι ἡλίου σπήλαιον, δι' οὗ σημαιοῦνται τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου τροπὰς (QV). οἶον ὡς πρὸς τὰς τροπὰς ἡλίου, ὃ ἔστιν ἐπὶ τὰ δυτικὰ μέρη ὑπεράνωθεν τῆς Δήλου (BHQ). – οὕτως Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Ἡρωδιανός (H).

47 There is preserved of the man of Syros the book... [cf. 49] ...and there is preserved also a solstice-marker in the island of Syros.

48 'There is an island called Syrie – perhaps you have heard of it – above Ortygie, where are the turnings of the sun.'

Where are the turnings of the sun] They say there is a cave of the sun there, through which they mark the sun's turnings (QV). As it were toward the turnings of the sun, which is in the westward direction, above Delos (BHQ). – So Aristarchus and Herodian (H).

The implication in 47 that a solstice-marker preserved in Syros in Diogenes' time had belonged to, or been used by, Pherecydes must be approached with caution. (A solstice-marker is a device to mark the point at which the sun 'turns' on the ecliptic, at midsummer or midwinter.) There seems to be some connexion with a cryptic couplet in Homer, 48. The scholia show that two alternative interpretations of this couplet were known in Alexandria: either (a) ὅθι τροπαὶ ἡλείοιο describes Syrie (rather than Ortygie), and means that there was there a bearing-marker in the form of a cave; or (b) the meaning is that Syrie lies 'above', i.e. north of, Ortygie, and also west of it, where the sun 'turns' in the sense of setting.¹ Both (a) and (b) improbably assume that Ortygie represents Delos, and Syrie Sýros (which lies some twenty miles slightly north of west from Delos).² Now whatever the intended meaning of the Homeric phrase,³ there evidently was a sun-cave reported from Syros in the Alexandrian period, and this is presumably the form of marker that Diogenes referred to three or four centuries later. We hear of another type of

natural solstice-marker from Itanos in Crete in the fourth century B.C., and such things must have been relatively common for calendar purposes. The sun-cave in Syros cannot, it seems, have been the original motive of the Homeric reference, but it was nevertheless seized upon at a later date (and certainly, one would think, later than Pherecydes) in an attempt to explain the description in the *Odyssey*. Whatever its antecedents, it would as a matter of course have become associated with the island's most notable inhabitant, Pherecydes. Although there is no other evidence that he was a practical scientist, many other sixth-century sages, especially the Milesians, were known to have had applied as well as theoretical interests; and it would be almost inevitable for an Alexandrian scholar, for instance, automatically to provide a historical association between the only two apparently scientific products of Syros – Pherecydes and the solstice-marker. Reluctant as one is, therefore, to disconnect such a pleasing device from such an intriguing man, extreme scepticism again seems desirable.

¹ This sense of τροπαί is absolutely unparalleled and highly improbable, especially since τροπαί ἡλίου are mentioned three times in the Hesiodic *Works and Days*, always meaning solstice. But (a), as well as (b), is virtually impossible; for even though τροπαί ἡλίου can, and indeed does, mean 'solstice' or 'solstices', it cannot conceivably in any kind of Greek mean a device (whether a cave or anything else) for marking or observing solstices.

² There were other actual Ortygias as well as Delos (to which the name is only applied in contexts which could have been affected by learned speculation on 48): notably the island forming part of Syracuse, and a precinct near Ephesus. Ὀρτυγίη means 'of the quail' (ὄρτυξ), and might be applied to any locality at which quails habitually rested in their migrations between Egypt and the north. One difficulty in identifying Ortygie with Delos is that the two places are distinguished in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (16); another is that Συρία has a short upsilon and Σύρος a long one. The connexion of Syrie with Syracuse is also philologically improbable. H. L. Lorimer (*Homer and the Monuments* (London, 1950), 80ff.) argued for Συρία referring to Sýria (which, she maintained, might have been naïvely taken for an island), and for τροπαί meaning 'sunrise', i.e. the east. But it seems impossible that Syria should be termed an island; and the Phoenicians would hardly have been conceived as spending a whole year trading with a place so near their own country (cf. *Od.* xv, 455).

³ ὅθι τροπαί ἡλίου could describe either Syrie or Ortygie. Here another observation of Miss Lorimer's is of great importance: the only other place in Homer where Ortygie is mentioned is *Od.* v, 123, where Orion, having been carried off by Eos, is slain in Ortygie by Artemis. The implication is that Ortygie was the dwelling-place of Eos, the dawn, and therefore that it lies in the east. Miss Lorimer thought that solstices could not carry a directional meaning. But, since solstices would normally be observed at sunrise and in summer, and so in the north-east-by-east direction, that is what the phrase might suggest. Thus the intention may be to indicate the general direction of this probably mythical

Ortygie. In fact the dwelling-place of Eos was often conceived as being *Aia*, commonly identified with Colchis; and Colchis does lie roughly north-east-by-east from the centre of the Ionian coastline.

THE CONTENTS OF HIS BOOK

(i) *The primeval deities; initial creation by Chronos; the recesses*

49 Diogenes Laertius i, 119 σώζεται δὲ τοῦ Συρίου τό τε βιβλίον ὃ συνέγραψεν οὗ ἡ ἀρχή (Fr. 1) Ζᾶς μὲν καὶ Χρόνος ἦσαν αἰεὶ καὶ Χθονίη· Χθονίη δὲ ὄνομα ἐγένετο Γῆ, ἐπειδὴ αὐτῇ Ζᾶς γῆν γέρας διδοῖ.

50 Damascius *de principiis* 124 bis Φερεκύδης δὲ ὁ Σύριος Ζάντα μὲν εἶναι αἰεὶ καὶ Χρόνον καὶ Χθονίαν τὰς τρεῖς πρώτας ἀρχάς... τὸν δὲ Χρόνον ποιῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ γόνου ἑαυτοῦ πῦρ καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ ὕδωρ... ἐξ ὧν ἐν πέντε μυχοῖς διηρημένων πολλὴν ἄλλην γενεάν συστήναι θεῶν, τὴν πεντέμυχον καλουμένην, ταῦτόν δὲ ἴσως εἰπεῖν πεντέκοσμον.

49 There is preserved of the man of Syros the book which he wrote of which the beginning is: 'Zas and Chronos always existed and Chthonie; and Chthonie got the name of Ge, since Zas gave her Ge as a present [*or prerogative*].'

50 Pherecydes of Syros said that Zas always existed, and Chronos and Chthonie, as the three first principles... and Chronos made out of his own seed fire and wind [*or breath*] and water... from which, when they were disposed in five recesses, were composed numerous other offspring of gods, what is called 'of the five recesses', which is perhaps the same as saying 'of five worlds'.

Zas and Chronos and Chthonie 'always existed': this resolves the difficulty of creation *ex nihilo*. An analogous declaration is seen, some two generations later, in Heraclitus' world-order, which no god or man made, but always was, and is, and shall be (217); and a little later still in Epicharmus fr. 1 (DK 23B1 – probably genuine), where the case is explicitly argued. But already in the sixth century B.C. the divinity assigned to Anaximander's ἀπειρον and Anaximenes' air probably implies that these, too, had always existed. It is surprising to find this concept stated so explicitly, of plural beings and in a theogonical context, at this relatively early date. Yet the gods who always existed are probably conceived as original forms (by etymology) of conventional figures from the traditional theogony; and one of them is 'Time', which might naturally be felt, without any deep abstract reflexion, to have been unborn. Thus Pherecydes was not trying to solve a logical difficulty about creation so much

as to substitute a new first stage, dependent on etymology and particularly on a new understanding of Kronos the father of the gods, for the imprecise, if more rationalistic, 'Chaos came into being' of Hesiod.

The names are unusual. Ζᾶς (accusative Ζάντα) is obviously an etymological form of Ζεύς, and is perhaps intended to stress the element ζα- (an intensive prefix), as in ζάθεος, ζαῖης. Χθονίη, from χθών, is presumably intended to represent Earth in a primitive role, perhaps as the abode of chthonic daimons, and at all events with stress on its under-parts. As for Χρόνος, it has been argued, notably by Wilamowitz, that the true reading must be Κρόνος: Kronos played an important part in Pherecydes' theogony according to one extant fragment, 57, and 'Time' is a sophisticated cosmogonical concept for the sixth century B.C. But Χρόνος, which is widely supported in the sources, is almost certainly correct; the other two figures are etymologizing variants of well-known theogonical figures, and we naturally anticipate a similar case with the third. The substitution of Χρόνος for Κρόνος is just what we should expect here.¹ It appears likely that by the later stages of the theogony the primeval trio assumed their familiar form as Zeus, Kronos and Hera.² That Pherecydes was addicted to etymologies emerges clearly from our scanty evidence; thus, in addition to the idiosyncratic derivations of names already discussed, Χάος was perhaps connected by him (as later by the Stoics) with χέεσθαι (p. 60 n.), and so interpreted as water; Rhea was called Ῥῆ (DK 7 B 9), and perhaps connected with ῥεῖν etc.; Okeanos was called Ogenos (53); the gods called a table θωωρός, 'watcher over offerings' (DK 7 B 12).

¹ Wilamowitz roundly declared that 'Time', as a cosmogonical god in the sixth century, was impossible. Certainly the abstraction implied in the χρόνου δίκη (Solon, see 111), or τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν (Anaximander, see 110), is less startling in its implications, as are the Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ of Pindar *Ol.* 2, 17 and the hypostatized Time of tragedy; though the two last instances provide some parallel. The Iranian cosmogonical Time, *Zerān Akarana*, was introduced as a refinement of Mazdaism and cannot be assumed earlier than the fourth century B.C. (n. on p. 22), though the possibility of oriental influence in this respect cannot be entirely discounted. The Chronos of the late Orphic cosmogonies was presented in a Hellenistic shape, and cannot be taken as any kind of parallel or precedent for the sixth century B.C. The connexion of Kronos with Chronos was certainly made by later Orphics (cf. e.g. Kern *Orph. Frag.* fr. 68), but according to Plutarch (*de Is. et Osir.* 32) this was a common Greek identification; we cannot say whether or not Pherecydes was the originator.

² Chthonie gets the name of Ge, Earth, at a subsequent stage, presumably when Zas presents her with the cloth embroidered with earth in 53. But at that point she apparently takes over the control and guardianship of marriages; this was

Hera's prerogative (as Γαμηλιά) according to the general view, and in so far as Chthonie-Ge is the wife of Zas-Zeus she is also thought of as becoming Hera. Hera was probably not an earth-goddess in origin, but there are other isolated cases where she replaces Gaia; for example, she appears to be the mother of Typhaon in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, 35 ff., also in Stesichorus (*Et. Magn.* 772. 50); cf. 52, and Virgil *Aen.* iv, 166.

Damascius in 50 is following Eudemus. Chronos makes fire, wind and water out of his own seed,¹ and this is implied to take place at an early stage. The episode cannot be entirely invented, though it would not be surprising if some details were distorted. One is reminded of Egyptian cosmogonical accounts in which the first world-constituents are produced by the onanism of a primeval god, notably that of Atum-Re mentioned in the Memphis theology (*ANET*, 5); and also of the mutilation of Ouranos by Kronos in 39, where certain mythological figures are begotten by Ouranos' member and the blood from it. The idea that the human seed is creative, and therefore that a primary deity's seed is cosmogonically creative, is neither surprising nor illogical. What is surprising here, however, is the things which are thus created: they smack of fifth-century four-element theory, earth being omitted because already accounted for in the very name of Chthonie-Ge. πνεῦμα looks suspiciously anachronistic, even though Anaximenes emphasized its importance at roughly this period (pp. 144 ff.). These substances cannot have formed the raw material of later cosmic arrangement, for according to 50 what they produce is not a world but deities of some kind. In fact, we would suggest that the seed producing fire, wind (πνεῦμα) and water is probably a later rationalizing interpretation, perhaps Stoic in origin but based on the Aristotelian concept (itself to some extent indebted to Diogenes of Apollonia, cf. 616 *fin.*) that the human σπέρμα, seed, contains σύμφυτον πνεῦμα, innate breath, which is also described as being 'hot' and aitherial (cf. e.g. *de gen. animalium* B3, 736b33 ff.). In accounts of early Stoic physiology, too, the seed is described as πνεῦμα μεθ' ὕγρου ('breath with moisture', Arius Didymus on Zeno) and is associated with πνεῦμα ἑνθερμον, 'warm breath'. It therefore seems probable that the three unexpected products of Chronos' seed – fire, wind and water – are an intrusive later interpretation of the nature of the seed itself, and that originally it was Chronos' semen that was placed in the recesses. As for these, the seven in the title as given in the Suda might be obtained by adding to the five recesses connected with Chronos in 50 the two other pre-existing deities Zas and Chthonie, the latter of which, certainly, had a local and indeed a recess-like connotation.

Alternatively all seven recesses could have been part of Chthonie; it is notable that the Babylonian world of the dead was conceived as having seven regions,² and in the myth of the Descent of Ishtar, Ishtar has to pass through seven gates (*ANET*, 107f.).³

¹ Or possibly, if Kern's αὐτοῦ for MS ἐαυτοῦ is right, out of Zas'. But there is no essential conflict with 41, where τὸ γεννησάν πρῶτον must be Zas-Zeus; for it is Zas who first creates the parts of the world (53), while Chronos produces theogonical, not cosmogonical, constituents.

² In the first eleven chapters of the Hippocratic treatise *Περὶ ἑβδομάδων* the world is divided into seven parts to correspond with the seven parts of the human body. Some scholars date this fragmentary and unattractive work in the sixth century B.C. There seem to be no strong grounds for such an early date, and stylistically a fourth-century A.C. origin is more probable.

³ Compare the doors and gates that Porphyry found in Pherecydes: 51 Porphyrius *de antro nymph.* 31 ... τοῦ Συρίου Φερικύδου μυχοῦς καὶ βόθρους καὶ ἀντρα καὶ θύρας καὶ πύλας λέγοντος καὶ διὰ τούτων ἀνιττομένου τὰς τῶν ψυχῶν γενέσεις καὶ ἀπογενέσεις (...when Pherecydes, the man of Syros, talks of recesses and pits and caves and doors and gates, and through these speaks in riddles of the becomings and deceases of souls). The recesses, pits and caves suggest that something more elaborate than mere depressions in the earth was in question.

A possible clue to the production by Chronos from his own seed appears in the following:

52 Σ b in *Homeri Il.* II, 783 φασὶ τὴν Γῆν ἀγανακτοῦσαν ἐπὶ τῷ φόνῳ τῶν Γιγάντων διαβαλεῖν Δία τῇ Ἥρᾳ τὴν δὲ πρὸς Κρόνον ἀπελθοῦσαν ἐξεπιτεῖν τὸν δὲ δοῦναι αὐτῇ δύο ᾠὰς, τῷ ἰδίῳ χρίσαντα θορῶ καὶ κελεύσαντα κατὰ γῆς ἀποθέσθαι, ἀφ' ὧν ἀναδοθῆσεται δαίμων ὁ ἀποστήσων Δία τῆς ἀρχῆς. ἡ δέ, ὡς εἶχεν ὀργῆς, ἔθετο αὐτὰ ὑπὸ τὸ Ἄριμον τῆς Κιλικίας. ἀναδοθέντος δὲ τοῦ Τυφῶνος Ἥρα διαλλαγεῖσα Διὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐκφαίνει· ὁ δὲ κεραυνώσας Αἴτην τὸ ὄρος ὠνόμασεν.

52 They say that Ge in annoyance at the slaughter of the Giants slandered Zeus to Hera, and that Hera went off and told Kronos about this. He gave her two eggs, smearing them with his own semen, and telling her to store them underground: from them, he said, a daimon would be produced who would displace Zeus from power. And she in her anger put them under Arimon in Cilicia. But when Typhon had been produced, Hera had become reconciled to Zeus, and revealed everything; and Zeus blasted Typhon and named the mountain Aetna.

The exegetical class of older Homeric scholia retains much learned material from the Hellenistic era (so H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* I (Berlin, 1969), xii). This particular comment adds a Homeric

clement (Arimon) to those seen in fifth-century poetry (Pindar *Pyth.* 1, 16ff., Aeschylus *Pr.* 351ff.). Orphic influence is also possible, although the eggs are placed not in the windy wastes of Aither or Erebus (as in the Rhapsodic account) but in Gaia. That Kronos not Chronos is named is not necessarily important (see p. 57). The notable thing is that Kronos impregnates two eggs (why two?) *with his own seed*, and that the eggs have to be placed *underground*, κατὰ γῆς, possibly in a recess of some kind – here, under a mountain. From the eggs, when fertilized by the seed, comes Typhon/Typhocus, an analogue of Pherecydes' Ophioneus (pp. 66ff.). There does seem to be a striking parallel with the cryptic mention of Chronos' seed in 50; if so, it provides some confirmation of the speculation that some kind of theogonical figure or figures ('numerous other divine offspring') came directly from Chronos' seed.¹ It makes a faint possibility, too, that generation from an egg (but not of cosmological constituents) occurred in Pherecydes (see pp. 26–9) – though this device became so popular in Hellenistic and later accounts that it might well have been imposed on a simpler story.

¹ Porphyry (cf. DK 7B7) mentioned people who took what he called τὴν ἐκπορὴν, in Pherecydes, to refer to semen; though they applied the same interpretation to Hesiod's Styx and Plato's Ameles. H. Gomperz (*Wiener St.* 47 (1929), 19 n. 10) suggested that Chronos produced a generation of primeval deities from the ἐκπορὴ, just as his later form Kronos did from Rhea; this would in fact fit in with the suggestion made above, that fire, wind and water are an intrusive gloss. The connexion of Rhea, called 'Pῆ by Pherecydes (DK 7B9), with ἐκπορὴ seems quite possible. A further but more remote possibility is that Chronos' semen became primeval water. We are told in one source (Achilles *Iag.* 3, DK 7B1A) that Pherecydes, like Thales, declared the element to be water, which he called χάος (presumably deriving it from χέεσθαι, if the whole thing is not Stoic accommodation). The Suda, too, says that 'he imitated the opinion of Thales' (DK 7A2); though Sextus, on the other hand, said that his principle was earth (DK 7A10). Great penetration is not to be sought in these interpretations, but it does seem probable that Pherecydes understood Hesiod's Chaos in a special sense, perhaps because of a specious etymology. The surviving fragments show that there was no question of water coming first; but the special interpretation of Chaos may have been connected with Chronos' seed at a relatively early stage of cosmic development.

(ii) *The wedding of Zas and Chthonie and the embroidering of the cloth*

53 Grenfell and Hunt *Greek Papyri* Ser. II, no. 11, p. 23 (3rd cent. A.D.) (DK 7B2) αὐτῷ ποιοῦσιν τὰ οἰκία πολλά τε καὶ μεγάλα. ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα ἐξετέλεσαν πάντα καὶ χρήματα καὶ θεράποντας καὶ θεραπαίνας καὶ τὰλλα ὅσα δεῖ πάντα, ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα ἐτοῖμα γίγνεται τὸν γάμον ποιεῦσιν. κάπειδὴ τρίτῃ ἡμέρῃ γίγνεται τῷ γάμῳ, τότε

Ζᾶς ποιεῖ φᾶρος μέγα τε καὶ καλὸν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ <ποικίλλει Γῆν> καὶ Ὠγη<νόν καὶ τὰ Ὠ>γηνοῦ <δῶματα *** [col. 2] βουλόμενος> γὰρ σέο τοὺς γάμους εἶναι τούτῳ σε τι<μῶ>. σύ δέ μοι χαῖρε καὶ σὺνισθι. ταῦτά φασιν ἀνακαλυπττήρια πρῶτον γενέσθαι ἐκ τούτου δὲ ὁ νόμος ἐγένετο καὶ θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθ<ρώποι>σιν. ἡ δὲ μι<ν ἀμείβε>ται δεξα<μένη εὐ τὸ> φᾶ<ρος>...¹

¹ The attribution to Pherecydes, and the supplements of <ποικίλλει...> to <δῶματα>, are confirmed by Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* vi, 9, 4, Φ. ὁ Σύριος λέγει Ζᾶς ποιεῖ φᾶρος... Ὠγηνοῦ δῶματα. Other supplements by Blass, Weil, Diels; text as in DK, except for alterations to the slightly erroneous record there of gaps in the papyrus.

53 His halls they make for him, many and vast. And when they had accomplished all these, and the furniture and manservants and maidservants and everything else necessary, when everything was ready, they hold the wedding. And on the third day of the wedding Zas makes a great and fair cloth and on it he decorates Ge and Ogenos and the halls of Ogenos*** 'for wishing [*or some such word*] marriages to be yours, I honour you with this. Hail to you, and be my consort.' And this they say was the first Anacalypteria: from this the custom arose both for gods and for men. And she replies, receiving from him the cloth....

The marriage is between Zas and Chthonie, as is confirmed by 56. Zas' declaration 'desiring [*or some such word*] marriages to belong to you' suggests strongly that Chthonie is here partially equated with Hera, the goddess of marriage (n. 2 on pp. 57f.). The preparations are of a fairy-tale quality, and are carried out by unspecified agents. On the third day of the wedding festivities¹ Zas makes a great cloth, decorating it with Ge (earth) and Ōgēnos (evidently Pherecydes' name for Okeanos).² He presents it to Chthonie; the gift of this representation of Ge seems to be what was referred to in 49, where Chthonie took the name Ge 'since Zas gave her earth as a gift [*or prerogative*]'. With the cloth he also gives her Ogenos, which may be regarded as a part of the earth's surface in the broad sense but is not a prerogative of Chthonie in the way that Ge is. Chthonie initially represents the solid structure of earth rather than its variegated surface, Ge and Ogenos. Now the main question is whether the weaving or embroidering of earth and Okeanos is an allegory of an actual creation-act. It seems probable that it is; otherwise, what is the point of Zas undertaking this odd and unmasculine task – one very different, for example, from Hephaestus' decoration of the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* book xviii? Not simply

to symbolize the gift of Ge, or as a mythological precedent for the Anacalypteria, the Unveiling of the bride; there is this aetiological element in the story, as is explicitly stated, but the gift need not have been of this bizarre kind if it had no more significance than that of an Unveiling-gift.³ A more positive indication is provided in the following:

54 Proclus in *Tim.* II, p. 54 Diehl ὁ Φερεκύδης ἔλεγεν εἰς Ἐρωτα μεταβεβλήσθαι τὸν Δία μέλλοντα δημιουργεῖν, ὅτι δὴ τὸν κόσμον ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων συνιστάς εἰς ὁμολογίαν καὶ φιλίαν ἤγαγε καὶ ταυτότητα πᾶσιν ἐνέσπειρε καὶ ἔνωσιν τὴν δι' ὅλων διήκουσαν.

54 Pherecydes used to say that Zeus had changed into Eros when about to create, for the reason that, having composed the world from the opposites, he led it into agreement and peace and sowed sameness in all things, and unity that interpenetrates the universe.

The whole of this from ὅτι δὴ onwards is palpably Stoic interpretation with a slight Neoplatonic colouring, and tells us nothing about Pherecydes. The first statement, however, that Zeus turned into Eros when about to create, must be based on something in Pherecydes. It suggests first that Zas did undertake some kind of cosmogonical creation, and secondly that he did so as Eros, or at least in some erotic situation. This might appear to mean no more than the liaisons and births of the *Theogony*; but that some particular description was envisaged is shown also by 56, in which a specific Eros exists between Zas and Chthonie.⁴ This tells us clearly that Zas' creation is concerned with an erotic situation between himself and Chthonie; the wedding itself may, therefore, be meant, and since we hear nothing of any offspring of cosmogonical relevance, while the depiction of earth and Okeanos (whether surrounding river, or sea in general) is the prelude to the consummation of the marriage and could well represent a cosmogonical act, we may provisionally accept that such is the case – especially after consideration of 55 below.

³ Wedding ceremonies took three days in all, the final unveiling accompanied by gifts, and the consummation, taking place on the third; so Hesychius s.v., who put the ἀνακαλυπτῆρια on the third day, though all other ancient authorities (none of them early) imply that the whole ceremony took only one day.

² Ogēnos (Ogēnos in Lycophron and Stephanus of Byzantium) is an odd variant of Ὠκεανός, on which see p. 12 n. 2. Pherecydes' use of it is another indication of his preference for archaizing or etymological forms.

³ A πέπλος was given to Harmonia by Cadmus at their wedding (Apollodorus III, 4, 2), but we are not told that it was decorated in any particular way, and

Cadmus did not make it. Nor does there seem to be more than an adventitious connexion with the *ἱερὸς γάμος* at Plataea (cf. L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* 1 (Oxford, 1896), 244), in which a statue carved from an oak-tree was dressed as a bride to represent Hera.

⁴ Cf. the golden-winged Eros who is imagined as groomsman at the wedding of Zeus and Hera in the hymeneal song in Aristophanes, *Birds* 1737 ff.

(iii) *The winged oak and the cloth*

55 Isidorus (the Gnostic, 1st-2nd cent. A.D.) *ap.* Clement. Al. *Strom.* vi, 53, 5 (DK 7B2) ... ἵνα μάθωσι τί ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπόπτερος δρυὶς καὶ τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ πεποικιλμένον φᾶρος, πάντα ὅσα Φερεκύδης ἀλληγορήσας ἐθεολόγησεν, λαβὼν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Χάμ προφητείας τὴν ὑπόθεσιν.

56 Maximus Tyrius iv, 4, p. 45, 5 Hobein ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ Συρίου τὴν ποίησιν σκόπει καὶ τὸν Ζῆνα καὶ τὴν Χθονίην καὶ τὸν ἐν τούτοις Ἔρωτα, καὶ τὴν Ὀφιονέως γένεσιν καὶ τὴν θεῶν μάχην καὶ τὸ δένδρον καὶ τὸν πέπλον.

55 ...that they may learn what is the winged oak and the decorated cloth upon it, all that Pherecydes said in allegory about the gods, taking his idea from the prophecy of Ham.

56 But consider also the work of the man of Syros, and Zas and Chthonie and the Eros between them, and the birth of Ophioneus and the battle of gods and the tree and the robe.

We learn in 55 that the embroidered cloth (i.e. that given by Zas to Chthonie in 53) was somehow on a winged oak; this must also be what 'the tree and the robe' refer to in 56. One modern suggestion (by H. Gomperz, *Wiener St.* 47 (1929), 22) is that the oak represents the frame of the loom on which Zas made the cloth. This involves taking ὑπόπτερος to mean simply 'swift', with total suppression of the concrete wing-image; there is no parallel for such a use with a concrete subject. More serious, a loom could hardly be called an *oak-tree*, simply, even in a fantastic context. According to another interpretation (Diels, *SB Ber.* 1897, 147f.) the oak resembles the mast on which Athene's *peplos* was carried in the Panathenaic procession. It is true that 56 uses the word πέπλος, and 'winged' might be explained as describing the cross-piece on which the robe was hung; but there is really no reason whatever for thinking of the Panathenaia, and to refer to the mast as an oak would be distinctly odd.¹ Both Diels and K. von Fritz (author of the article on Pherecydes in Pauly-Wissowa) believed that an allegorical version of *Anaximander* is also in question: the earth is shaped like a tree-trunk because it is

cylindrical as in Anaximander (see 122); it is described as a tree because Anaximander said that a sphere of flame fitted round air and earth like the bark round a tree (121); the earth is winged because it floats free in space (123); the embroidering of its surface is reminiscent of Anaximander's map (pp. 104f.); and the treatment of Okeanos as an integral part of the earth's surface is a new development found also in Anaximander. But none of these arguments is valid, let alone cogent: the shape of the earth cannot be represented by the shape of the trunk alone, which is not the only or even the most conspicuous part of an oak-tree; Anaximander's bark round a tree is a *simile*; 'winged', if it is to be given an abstract connotation at all, would tend to mean 'swift-moving' rather than 'floating'; Anaximander's map had no known connexion with his cosmology; and the tendency to integrate Okeanos with the inner seas is occasionally detectable even in Homer. Other alleged borrowings from Anaximander (Time, and γόνος ~ γόνιμον) are no more convincingly in favour of an interpretation which von Fritz was over-optimistic in calling 'practically certain'.

¹ Diels, followed by e.g. Jaeger, Mondolfo and von Fritz, was impressed by the whole context (DK 7 B 5) of 59 below, where Origen reports that Celsus interpreted certain rites and mythological incidents as symbolizing the subjection of matter by god. Two passages in Homer, then Pherecydes' description of Tartaros (59), and finally the Panathenaic *peplos* are so interpreted; the last is said to show 'that a motherless and immaculate deity prevails over the boastful Earthborn', and it did, of course, traditionally represent the victory of Athena over Enceladus in the battle of gods and giants. The interpretation is quoted as a separate instance, parallel to the Pherecydes extract because adduced as another illustration of the same thesis; but there is nothing to suggest that Pherecydes should be interpreted in terms of the Panathenaia.

The following interpretation is proposed as more probable than any of those described above. The oak represents the solidly fixed substructure and foundations of the earth (the 'frame' of the earth, Zeller suggested). Its trunk and branches are the support and roots of the earth. That the earth has roots is part of the popular world-picture (pp. 9f.), and a tree's branches, in winter, appear as large inverted roots. That the roots of earth *and* sea were sometimes conceived as being above Tartarus, and that Tartarus itself could be imagined as a narrower pit beneath, is clearly shown by the important description at *Theogony* 726ff., already quoted as 2: 'Around Tartarus a brazen fence is drawn; and all about it Night in three rows is poured, around the throat; and above are the roots of earth and unharvested sea.' The throat or neck that is Tartarus (or a part of it) corresponds with the trunk of the oak-tree, the roots

which are above it correspond with the branches.¹ The oak is 'winged' partly, at least, because of the spreading, wing-like appearance of these same branches. On them Zas has laid the cloth embroidered with Earth and Ogenos; these represent the earth's surface, flat or slightly convex, rather, as indeed it appears to be. We cannot say whether Ogenos is conceived as a surrounding river or as the sea. The oak is specified because it is associated more than any other tree with Zeus (cf. the prophetic oaks in his shrine at Dodona, *Od.* xiv, 328), and because of its notable strength and the great spread of its branches. Thus according to the interpretation offered here Zas must have chosen, or magically grown, a broad oak as the foundation of the earth; or (following a suggestion by T. B. L. Webster) he summoned an oak from afar which magically flies to him, using its branches as wings. Zas then weaves a cloth, decorating it with earth and Okeanos, and lays the embroidered cloth on the outspread branches of the oak to form the earth's surface.²

¹ 59 mentions Tartaros below the earth, which suggests that Pherecydes broadly accepted the popular world-picture, not the rationalized construction of Anaximander. The kind of world-tree postulated above must be distinguished from e.g. the Scandinavian world-tree *Yggdrasil*, whose branches form the heavens, not the support for the earth's surface; though the roots of the tree are regarded as supporting the earth.

² A clue to the meaning of the winged oak and the cloth is apparently given by Isidorus' comment in 55 that Pherecydes 'took the supposition from the prophecy of Ham'. Unfortunately, little can be determined about this work. Harnack suggested that Ham in this context is a name for Zoroaster (Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénistes* II (Paris, 1938), 62 n.); this identification was occasionally made, cf. *op. cit.* I, 43; II, 49-50. Zoroaster was well established as a sage by the early Hellenistic period, and Aristoxenus had stated that Pythagoras visited Zoroaster in Babylon (Hippolytus *Ref.* I, 2, 12; DK 14, 11). Of the vast mass of pseudo-Zoroastrian literature produced in the Hellenistic epoch, there was a work *On Nature* in four books, and special accounts of the magical properties of stones and plants, as well as descriptions of Hades. The book on nature seems to have contained nothing of cosmogonical interest, but, like the rest, to have dealt with astrology, minerals and so on. A second wave of Zoroastrian literature was produced in the first two centuries A.D. by various Gnostic sects - in the Clementine apocrypha, by the Sethians, by the disciples of Prodicus. More of genuine Zoroastrianism (dualism of good and evil, importance of fire) was to be found in these works than in the earlier group. It is a question to which group Isidorus was referring; though the facts that Isidorus' father Basilides inclined to Iranian dualism, and that the Ham-Zoroaster identification is probably first found in a Gnostic source, suggest that it was the later one. On the other hand Isidorus is less likely to have been taken in by a product of his own age. But in neither group can we detect anything which might have been regarded as a significant precedent for the winged oak or the embroidered cloth; we cannot even assume that Isidorus was struck by the oriental character of Pherecydes'

allegory, since much of the Greek Zoroastrian literature was not oriental in origin or colouring. One cannot be certain that Pherecydes' allegory had not itself been absorbed into some pseudo-Zoroastrian source, and so misled Isidorus.

(iv) *The fight between Kronos and Ophioneus*

57 Celsus *ap. Origen. c. Celsum* vi, 42 (DK 7B4) Φερεκύδην δὲ πολλῶ ἀρχαιότερον γένόμενον Ἡρακλείτου μυθοποιεῖν στρατείαν στρατεία παραταττομένην καὶ τῆς μὲν ἡγεμόνα Κρόνον <ἀπο>διδόναι, τῆς ἑτέρας δ' Ὀφιονέα, προκλήσεις τε καὶ ἀμίλλας αὐτῶν ἱστορεῖν, συνθήκας τε αὐτοῖς γίγνεσθαι ἵν' ὁπότεροι αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν Ὠγηγόν ἐμπέσωσι, τούτους μὲν εἶναι νενικημένους, τοὺς δ' ἐξώσαντας καὶ νικήσαντας, τούτους ἔχειν τὸν οὐρανόν.

58 Apollonius Rhodius i, 503 (following 38)

(Ὀρφεύς) ἦειδεν δ' ὥς πρῶτον Ὀφίων Εὐρυνόμη τε
 Ὠκεανὶς νιφόεντος ἔχον κράτος Οὐλύμποιο·
 ὥς τε βίῃ καὶ χερσὶν ὁ μὲν Κρόνῳ εἶκαθε τιμῆς,
 ἡ δὲ Ῥέη, ἔπεσον δ' ἐνὶ κύμασιν Ὠκεανοῖο·
 οἱ δὲ τέως μακάρεσσι θεοῖς Τιτῆσιν ἀνασσον,
 ὅφρα Ζεὺς ἐτι κοῦρος ἐτι φρεσὶ νήπια εἰδῶς
 Δικταῖον ναῖεσκεν ὑπὸ σπέος...

59 Celsus *ap. Origen. c. Celsum* vi, 42 (DK 7B5) ταῦτα δὲ τὰ Ὀμήρου ἔπη οὕτω νοηθέντα τὸν Φερεκύδην φησὶν (*sc. Κέλσος*) εἰρηκέναι τὸ (fr. 5) Κείνης δὲ τῆς μοίρας ἐνερθέν ἐστιν ἡ Ταρταρίη μοῖρα· φυλάσσουσι δ' αὐτὴν θυγατέρες Βορέου Ἀρπυιαὶ τε καὶ Θύελλα· ἐνθα Ζεὺς ἐκβάλλει θεῶν ὅταν τις ἐξυβρίσῃ.

57 Pherecydes, who lived much earlier than Heraclitus, made the myth that army was drawn up against army, and he gave Kronos as leader of one, Ophioneus of the other, and recounted their challenges and struggles, and that they made an agreement that whichever of them fell into Ogenos, these were the vanquished, while those who thrust them out and were victorious were to possess the sky.

58 He [Orpheus] sang how first of all Ophion and Eurynome, daughter of Okeanos, held sway over snowy Olympus; and how by strength of hands the former yielded his lordship to Kronos, the latter to Rhca, and they fell in the waves of Okeanos; and the other two meantime held sway over the blessed gods, the Titans, while Zeus, still a boy and still having childish thoughts in his heart, dwelt by the Dictaeon cave...

59 [Celsus] says that with this interpretation of these Homeric lines in mind Pherecydes has said: 'Below that portion is the

portion of Tartaros; the daughters of Boreas, the Harpies, and Storm, guard it; there Zeus expels whosoever of the gods behaves insolently.²

Pherecydes evidently described in some detail an encounter between Kronos (probably derived from the primeval deity Chronos: see p. 57) and Ophioneus, the preliminaries of which appear in 57. This must form part, at least, of 'the battle of gods' in Maximus' summary (56). Ophioneus is obviously connected with ὄφις, snake, and is a snake-like monster of the type of Typhoeus in the Hesiodic *Theogony* (line 825, Typhoeus had a hundred snake-heads). The battle with Kronos is otherwise known from rare Hellenistic references, of which the description in 58 is the most important. There, Ophion (as he is there called) has a consort, the Oceanic Eurynome, while Kronos is helped by Rhea. There are enough divergences to suggest that Apollonius is not merely copying Pherecydes,¹ and it seems that there was an old story, not mentioned in Hesiod, which formed part of the manifold lost mythology of Kronos and related his encounter with a monster. In Pherecydes the victor is to have possession of the sky (and so become, or remain, supreme god); according to Apollonius in 58 (supported by a scholion on Aristophanes *Clouds* 247) Ophion and Eurynome had already ruled on Olympus and were trying to repel a challenge. There may be a reference here to the concept of Okeanos and Tethys as the first gods (8, 9); Eurynome was a daughter of Okeanos,² and with Ophion may represent a second generation replacing, somehow, that of Ouranos and Gaia. Yet in Pherecydes there is nothing to suggest that Ophioneus had ever ruled the sky; Maximus in 56 mentions 'the birth of Ophioneus and the battle of gods', which may suggest that Ophioneus was, like Typhoeus in Hesiod, an unsuccessful challenger for power; and Tertullian (*de corona* 7, DK 7B4) asserted that according to Pherecydes Kronos was the first king of the gods. Further, Pherecydes cannot have accepted the usual view, seen in Apollonius, that Zeus was a child in Crete during part of the reign of Kronos. The primeval Zas probably turned into Zeus (*Zeus* not *Zas* occurs in 59; though this could be due to carelessness in the transmission), just as Chronos probably turned into Kronos, and this would scarcely be by the medium of a birth. In Pherecydes, as in the common version, Kronos-Chronos must have eventually been deposed by Zas, to be despatched below the earth (as in Homer, *Il.* xiv, 203f., and Hesiod). Unfortunately 59, which locates the 'portion' of Tartaros below, presumably, that of Gaia (rather than of Hades in the sense of *Il.* viii, 16), does not mention

Kronos; it seems to come from a description of the assignment of parts of the cosmos to different deities, which followed Zeus' final subjection of his adversaries in Homer and Hesiod also.

¹ Nor need we believe that Apollonius was reproducing an ancient Orphic account. There is a great deal in this cosmogony and theogony as sung by Orpheus in the *Argonautica* that is not Orphic (see also 38 and n. 2 on p. 43).

² Also at *Il.* xviii, 398ff.; *Theog.* 358. At *Theog.* 295ff. another Oceanid, Callirhoe, produced the snake-woman Echidna, who mated with Typhaon.

The battle of Kronos against Ophion has obvious correspondences with that of Zeus against Typhoeus in the *Theogony*. The cosmic fight with a snake-god is not, of course, exclusive to Greece, but is found all over the Near East long before Hesiod, in both Semitic and Indo-European contexts. Compare the fight of Marduk with the serpent-aided Tiamat in the Babylonian creation-myth (*ANET*, 62ff.); the victory of the storm-god over the dragon Illuyanka in the Hurrian-Hittite story of that name (*ANET*, 125f.; Gurney, *The Hittites*, 181ff.); and the nightly overcoming of the dragon Apophis by the Egyptian sun-god Re in his journey under the earth (*ANET*, 6-7). The battle between Zeus and Typhoeus-Typhon (who was equated with the Egyptian Seth) was in later accounts, though not in Hesiod, located in Cilicia, especially on Mount Casius near the proto-Phoenician Minoan *entrepôt* of Ras-Shamra/Ugarit. It clearly coincided with a local version of the sky-god and snake-monster motif, and this correspondence may have been the chief motive for the assertion that Pherecydes borrowed from the Phoenicians:

60 Philo Byblius *ap.* Eusebium *P.E.* i, 10, 50 παρά Φοινίκων δὲ καὶ Φερεκύδης λαβὼν τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἐθεολόγησε περὶ τοῦ παρ' αὐτῷ λεγομένου Ὀφιονέως θεοῦ καὶ τῶν Ὀφιονιδῶν.¹

¹ It is a question whether the Ὀφιονίδαι are literally 'the children of Ophioneus', or simply his army or supporters, cf. 57. If the former, one may compare the monsters born to Typhaon by Echidna at *Theogony* 306ff. – though these are not involved in the Typhoeus episode.

60 From the Phoenicians Pherecydes, too, took his impulse, when he wrote about him whom he called the god Ophioneus, and the children of Ophioneus.

The earlier parallel of the Hesiodic Typhoeus makes it unnecessary to suppose that Pherecydes was borrowing directly from an oriental source, and one may wonder whether the reference in the *Suda* (46) to his access to Phoenician secret books was based on anything more than the Ophioneus-Typhon comparison.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS IN PHERECYDES' BOOK

The evidence reviewed in the preceding pages presents us with a number of phases described by Pherecydes: (a) the three pre-existing deities; (b) the making by Chronos out of his own seed of things disposed in five recesses, which produce other generations of gods; (c) the making of the cloth by Zas, the depiction on it of Earth and Ogenos, the wedding of Zas and Chthonie, and the presentation of the cloth, followed (?) by the spreading of it over the winged oak; (d) the battle between Kronos and Ophioneus; (e) the assignment of portions to different deities, perhaps implied in 59.

Several incidents must have taken place about which we possess no information; for example, Chronos-Kronos was presumably supplanted by Zas-Zeus, as in the common account, but Pherecydes' views here are unknown. Another problem is the birth of Ophioneus mentioned in Maximus' summary, 56: who were the parents? It seems unlikely that Zas and Chthonie were (although all mythological weddings have offspring, and we do not know the offspring of this particular one), since it must be assumed that the battle of Kronos and Ophioneus, the reward of which is possession of the sky, takes place either during or as a prelude to the rule of Chronos-Kronos, which seems to have preceded the wedding of Zas and Chthonie and the assumed creation of earth and Okeanos. But a difficulty arises here. In the fight between Ophioneus and Kronos the loser is to be he who falls into Ogenos; but according to the creation-allegory interpretation Ogenos is made at the wedding of Zas and Chthonie, which should therefore precede and not follow the Ophioneus-fight. This difficulty applies to all reconstructions that make the weaving of the cloth a creation-allegory; for Chronos' mastery of the sky is suggested by all the other evidence (especially 50 and the analogy of the Homeric-Hesiodic account) to have preceded the period of Zas' activity. Either, therefore, Pherecydes was inconsistent in presupposing Ogenos before it had been formally created; or Ogenos existed *before* it was woven into or embroidered on the cloth; or Ogenos is not an original element in Celsus' account of the Kronos-Ophioneus fight. The last of these hypotheses is not impossible. A somewhat different version of this encounter is known from the Hellenistic period, and is best seen in 58. There Ophion and his bride Eurynome, the daughter of Okeanos, ruled the sky, but were forcibly displaced by Kronos and Rhea and *fell into the waves of Okeanos*. Falling into Okeanos makes sense for an *Oceanid* and her consort; but in Pherecydes there seems to be no place for a female consort of any

kind, let alone an Oceanid. It is possible, therefore, that Celsus or his source transferred into the Pherecydes version a detail from a rather different Hellenistic version, and adapted it to the known Pherecydean terminology.

Yet if Zas and Chthonie cannot *jointly* have produced Ophioneus after their wedding, it remains true that the earth-goddess Chthonie-Ge is the obvious parent for a snake (whose home is traditionally in the earth), just as Gaia is normally the mother of the snakish Typhoeus. A liaison between Zas and Chthonie *before* their marriage (as suggested by *Il.* xiv, 296) would fit the order of 56: the passion of Zas and Chthonie, the birth of Ophioneus, the battle of gods, the tree and the robe (and, therefore, the marriage). But there is no strong reason for assuming that Maximus set down these themes in the exact order in which they occurred in Pherecydes' book; and the dramatic force of the description of the wedding, which has obvious literary pretensions, would undoubtedly be weakened if Zas and Chthonie had been living together for ages beforehand. It seems more probable that if Ophioneus was the child of Chthonie the father, if any, was other than Zas. Here Chronos springs to mind. His seed was placed in 'recesses', presumably in the earth, according to 50; and there was a story, known only from 52 and not connected there with Pherecydes, that Kronos impregnated two eggs with his seed, gave the eggs to Hera to place underground, and so produced the snakish Typhoeus (to whom Ophioneus is similar). If this is the case, Chronos with Chthonie would produce Ophioneus and, perhaps, other monsters; Ophioneus would attack Chronos (already perhaps called Kronos) and be defeated; Zas in his turn would attack and overthrow Kronos, and would marry Chthonie, now to be called Ge and in some ways to become equivalent to Hera; in so doing he would create earth and sea as we know them (the existence of sky being somehow presupposed, perhaps implicit in Zas himself). How Zas subjected Kronos we do not know; it might be thought that Ophioneus was acting as his agent, but in view of 58 it *must* be assumed that Ophioneus was defeated and that Kronos was deposed by some other means. In this case the order of events might be: three pre-existing deities; Chronos rules the sky, plants his seed in Chthonie; birth of Ophioneus (with other chthonic creatures); Ophioneus challenges Kronos, but fails; Kronos somehow subjected by Zas; marriage of Zas and Chthonie-Ge-Hera, and creation of our world; apportionment of spheres, Zeus' enemies in Tartaros. But it must be emphasized that most of this is very speculative indeed.¹

¹ Plato probably had Pherecydes in mind in 61 *Sophist* 242C-D: μῦθόν τινα ἑκάστος φαίνεται μοι διηγεῖσθαι παῖσιν ὡς οὖσιν ἡμῖν, ὁ μὲν ὡς τρία τὰ ὄντα, πολεμεῖ δὲ ἀλλήλοις ἐνίοτε αὐτῶν ἅττα πη, τότε δὲ καὶ φίλα γιγνόμενα γάμους τε καὶ τόκους καὶ τροφάς τῶν ἐγγόνων παρέχεται... (*Each seems to me to tell us a kind of story, as though we were children, one saying that existing things are three, and that certain of them in some way fight with each other at times, and at times they become good friends and provide marriages and births and nurturings of their offspring...*)

CONCLUSION

In spite of all uncertainties, Pherecydes is not a negligible figure in the history of Greek cosmogonical speculation. As Aristotle wrote in 41, his approach is not purely mythical. The assertion that three deities always existed implies a rational amendment of the traditional genealogical pattern; yet the method of creation pursued by Chronos is as crudely anthropomorphic as anything in Hesiod, to whom he is obviously indebted for the broad outline of the succession-myth. The allegory of the decorated cloth, if correctly interpreted, is genuinely mythic, and that shows that Pherecydes accepted the naïve but not unempirical view of the structure of the world outlined in §1. His interest in etymology and consequent handling of the first gods is the first clear manifestation of a way of thinking conspicuous in Aeschylus and Heraclitus, and it evidently still impressed Orphic eclectics of three and more centuries later. Pherecydes was an individualist both in his handling of the traditional stories of the gods and in his use of uncommon motifs. There is little indication of any very direct near-eastern influence, except conceivably in the seven recesses; but oriental motifs are none the less relatively dense. Moreover there is one general respect in which his narrative is closer to oriental accounts than to Greek ones. It is evident that in his book many incidents concerning the three pre-existing deities were related before the cosmogony proper (that is, the formation of earth and Ogenos) was reached. This may be compared with the Babylonian creation-myth, for example, where the splitting of Tiamat to form sky and earth comes only at the end of a long saga of the gods; and contrasted with the Hesiodic *Theogony*, where the cosmic constituents are produced almost immediately and as prelude to the history of the gods. But this may be simply because Hesiod, and not Pherecydes and the Babylonian cosmogony, is quasi-rationalistic.

7. Toward philosophy

The ideas considered so far, whatever their occasional stirrings of scientific interest, have been bound up with the whole background of gods and myths, and the shape and development of the world are seen primarily in their terms. Much of the progress toward something approaching philosophy is made by transcending that kind of world-view and reaching after a more direct, less symbolic and less anthropomorphic one. Defining the twists and turns of that progress has been a favourite occupation of modern scholars, but the matter is less straightforward than is often assumed.

One of the cruder guesses is that what was principally required was the abandonment of personification, so that the interplay of sky and earth (for example) need no longer be seen in terms of a sexual relation between Ouranos and Gaia; cosmic components could be directly identified, much as Empedocles' 'roots' were, and organizing principles could be expressed as forces of separation and aggregation, for example, rather than as Ares and Aphrodite or even War and Harmony. In fact the Presocratics were slow to reject entirely these useful and malleable symbols – they had, of course, to disappear eventually, at least before anything resembling logic could appear – and often contented themselves, like Heraclitus, with reinterpreting their functions and values. Even the very idea of personification had not been wholly anti-rational. The division of the world between a plurality of deities and daimons with different properties and powers was in itself a valuable act of classification; what was ultimately retarding was the *institutionalizing* of a mode of interpretation that men are apt to overplay even at their most rational, namely by seeing the world in human terms as animate or even purposive. In particular, the genetic model of nature differentiating itself out of primordial 'parents' proved hard to abandon; but Heraclitus, for one, succeeded, in part at least by confronting that particular mythico-religious model (exemplified most plainly in Hesiod's *Theogony*) with another and even more powerful one, exemplified in *Works and Days*, of Zeus eternally ruling the developed world with the assistance of Justice.

It is important not to exaggerate the sheer irrationality of the world-view that the Presocratic tradition came to build upon and eventually overthrow. That it had strong elements of un-reason, here and there, is of course incontrovertible; but at the same time ancient Greece in Homer's age (the latter part of the eighth century B.C.), or even in the period he purported to describe (say the thirteenth

century B.C.), was in no real sense a primitive place. Both the administrative structure of the latter and the literary perception and organization of the former are strong evidence of both logical and psychological refinement. The Homeric conception of Odysseus, for instance, is of a man capable, in most ways at least, of philosophy – distinguished not so much by ‘cunning’ as by the power of analysing complex circumstances and making rational choices as a result. We see this when he debates the detailed alternatives open to him, and their multiple possibilities of consequence, as he swims despondently off the rocky coast of Scheria in *Odyssey* book v. His relation to gods and goddesses, even to Athena, is almost incidental to most of his decisions and behaviour; he is a rational man with a strong sense of what properly counts in human existence.

In a rather different way Hesiod, too, though ostensibly a purveyor of a mythical and therefore ultimately irrational picture of the world, was exercising a useful kind of reasonableness in grading and synthesizing tales from different regions and with different emphases. But he did much more than that – more, too, than gathering together the interesting cosmogonical themes of §5. For the plan of compiling a systematic cosmogony and theogony on the one hand, followed by an examination of the rule of order (or its perversion) in the developed world on the other, is one that presupposes a comprehensive view of the world (its organization and principle of operation as well as man's part within it) which is un-philosophical only because of the symbolic language of myths in which it is expressed and, admittedly, to some extent conceived. It is for that reason that scholars have from time to time been tempted to treat Hesiod as the first Presocratic philosopher; but between him and Anaximander, for instance, there is an enormous gulf whose nature it is important to glimpse even if we cannot fully understand it.

For the transition from myths to philosophy, from *muthos* to *logos* as it is sometimes put, is far more radical than that involved in a simple process of de-personifying or de-mythologizing, understood either as a rejection of allegory or as a kind of decoding; or even than what might be involved (if the idea is not complete nonsense) in an almost mystical mutation of ways of thinking, of intellectual process itself. Rather it entails, and is the product of, a change that is political, social and religious rather than sheerly intellectual, away from the closed traditional society (which in its archetypal form is an oral society in which the telling of tales is an important instrument of stability and analysis) and toward an open society in which the values of the past become relatively unimportant and radically fresh

opinions can be formed both of the community itself and of its expanding environment.

It is that kind of change that took place in Greece between the ninth and the sixth centuries B.C. — a change complicated, to be sure, by the exceptional persistence of non-literacy there. The growth of the *polis*, the independent city-state, out of earlier aristocratic structures, together with the development of foreign contacts and a monetary system, transformed the Hesiodic view of society and made the old divine and heroic archetypes seem obsolete and, except when they were directly protected by religious cult, irrelevant. Much, no doubt, of the rational undertone of the Homeric tradition, as well as the classificatory craft of Hesiod, survived; but in the speculative and cosmopolitan societies of Ionia, not least in Miletus itself, they took on a sharper form and were applied, without too much distraction from myths and religion, to a broader and more objective model of the world.