

THE ORPHIC HYMNS

TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES BY
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Introduction

Discovery and Preservation of the Orphic Hymns

- Probably created around middle of 3rd century AD
- Orphic Literature (theogony appropriated from Hesiod and Homer):
 - The Derveni Papyrus – notable Orphic documents dating from 2nd half of 4th century BC
 - A philosophical interpretation of a theogonic poem he ascribes to Orpheus
 - The Bacchic gold tablets – inscriptions found in graves of persons initiated in the mysteries - dated from 400 BC to 200 AD – instructions for the soul in the underworld
- Orphic literature appropriates much from Homer and Hesiod mythologies

Who Was Orpheus?

- Let's just say that Orpheus was proficient with the lyre
- From the “wilds of Thrace”
- Bard of great renown
- Thought to be earlier than Homer and Hesiod
- Could sway inanimate objects and bring even the lord and lady of the dead to tears
- Knew of secret rites, usually those of Dionysus, particularly those dealing with salvation of the soul after death
- The rites are taught to people through secret rites

The Age of Orphism

- 3rd century AD revived many Dionysian cults
- Tapped into earlier ritual practices such as the Eleusinian mysteries and revered literary sources
- Orphism is a “bricolage” of ideas
- Influenced by Stoicism:
 - Personifications of natural phenomena (Ether, Stars, Physis, Boreas, Zephyros)
 - Prominence of the Fiery element
- Monument to syncretism in the Hellenic and Imperial era
- Participants wanted to protect their lives and save their souls

Orphic Beliefs

- Purification from guilt and *miasma* (pollution) of the soul
- *Katharsis* could free the soul from impurity
- Cosmogony different from Hesiod's Theogony - based on Protogonos
- World hatched from a primordial egg hatched out of the first god, Eros
- Eros was later named Protogonos and Phanes. He then created the world.
- The material part of man, the body, comes from the inheritance of the Titans.
- The spiritual part of man, the soul, comes from Dionysus, immortal son of Zeus

Boundaries and Transitions in Orphism

- Dionysus is a god of transitions
- Descended into the underworld to recover his beloved and came back alive again. Very few survive that journey.
- The moral of the story: Heavenly song can conquer death and so can devotion to a beloved.
- Orpheus is torn to pieces by Thracian maenads, analogous to the death Dionysus also suffered
- Dionysian orgies practiced tearing wild beasts into pieces
- References to Orpheus in Plato's *Republic*

Orphic Rites

- Religious association (*thiasos*)
- Called themselves *mustai*, *mustipoloi*, or *orgiophantiai* (mystic initiates)
- Through prayer (*eukhē*), libation (*loibē*), and sacrifice (*thusia*) invoke various divinities and ask for their blessings
- Secret ceremonies are known as *orgia* or *teletai*
- The Orphic hymns are devotional and redolent with mysticism
- Myrrh was offered to Protogonos
- Connection between perfumes or aromatic substances and ritualistic practices
- Aim at elevation of mood and powerful affirmation of meaningful and bonding presence – mighty words and sacred sounds that flow into the ears and souls of the faithful

Sacred Names as Invocation in the Orphic Hymns

- Use of sacred names in Orphic rites
- Greek tradition of using strings of nouns or epithets addressed to a divinity
 - This rich tradition may go back to pre-Hellenic times
 - For example, Greek religion addresses Virgin Mary by name sacred names, e.g., She of the Seas, She of the Rivers, She of Good Sailing, She of the Shoreline, etc. – may refer to the idea that Virgin Mary inherited aspects of veneration of the sea
- Sacred Names in Islam and Judaic traditions –
 - Muslims believe in divine qualities known by at least 99 different names

Influence of Orphism on Christianity

- When Christianity was flowering in 300 to 500 AD, Orphism was also flowering.
- The Christian faith walked in to places and made accommodations and cultivated the spiritual values of the place
- The old faith possessed a liturgical language ready to be used

The Orphic Hymns

Hekate

- Celestial connections
- Becomes Persephone's attendant and as such is connected with the world of the dead
- She became associated with sinister, dangerous, demonic creature of the night rather than as a beneficial deity.
- Curse tablets invoke her name
- Goddess of the roads – particularly intersections (cf. Vodun Papa Legba)

Prothyraia or Eileithyia

- Goddess of childbirth
- Linked with Artemis and Hekate also associated with childbirth
- Helps Leto give birth on the island of Delos
- Hymn to Apollo
- Daughter of Hera and Zeus
- Also associated with the birth of Herakles

Night

- Night, mother of Sleep, Death, and Dreams
- Delights in quiet, slumber-filled serenity
- Frees us from cares
- Giver of sleep, she gleams in the darkness
- Greek Nux
- Born by parthogenesis
- In Orphism, there are certain personified abstractions which are gods. Night, Death, Sleep, and Dreams are examples.
- In the Orphic theogonies, she is one of the earliest deities.

Sky

- Father of all, eternal cosmic element
- Moves around the earth like a sphere
- Motion is a roaring whirl, enveloping all

Ether

- Upper atmosphere is divided into two levels. Above the layer of the air that we breathe is the higher, purer stratum of ether.
- Ether is connected with fire
- Zeus often imagined as inhabiting the ether.
- Sky God lives in the ether
- Ether is the best cosmic element
- Earth, Ocean, Sky, Fire or Ether

Protogonos

- Protogonos means First-born, Primeval
- Also called Phanes, Metis, Eubouleus, Eros
- Sometimes identified with Dionysos
- He is born from an egg
- Time places the egg from which Protogonos is born in ether
- Portrayed with golden wings
- The first king of the universe
- Androgynous
- Phanes may be called “Sun”
- Phanes in antiquity was associated with light

Selene

- Bull-horned moon
- Delights in the quiet and richness of the night
- Best known for love affair with Endymion, famously retold in Keats' famous poem
- The moon has chthonic connotations
- Selene is from Greek *selas* (light, brightness, gleam) – compare to Latin *luna* / *lux*
- Long-cloaked marshal of the stars, the leader of the lesser lights in the sky

Physis

- Physis = nature
- Derived from the Greek verb “phuō” which means “I grow, I am (by nature).”
- Physis is called “self growing” – self-fathered – all partake of you and you alone partake of no one.
- Lovingly mingle and twine, the ever turning swifly stream in an unceasing eddy, flowing in all things, circular and ever changing in form
- Loud-roaring divinity, fire-breathing, life everlasting
- Symbolized in generative pairs
- Ancient philosophical treatises (*Peri phuseōs*) – *De rerum nature* – On Nature – on the nature of things
- In the Pythagorean Golden Verses, Physis is depicted as a priestess in a mystery cult, displaying and showing each sacred object to the initiate
 - Just look at these sacred objects! I give you reality. Life and matter, which move.

Pan

- Woodland god - roamed the mountains, hunted small game and frolicked with nymphs
- Head and body are human and lower parts are capriform
- Connected with sudden bouts of fear or madness (cf English “panic”)
- Reveling lover of frenzy, weaver of playful song, dancing with the nymphs, present in all growth
- The air and the water yield to you
- Come frenzy-loving, spirit-possessed, come to these sacred libations, come and bring my life to a good end.
- Homeric Hymn to Pan - when the parents see him with goat features they run away screaming while Hermes takes him to Olympus
- Pan’s madness could take men and beasts in the lonely places of mountains.
- Often found in a Dionysian *thiasos* (the ecstatic [retinue](#) of [Dionysus](#), often pictured as inebriated revelers)
- Cosmic Pan – combining charming materialism with the sublime power that permeates all creation
- Invented reed pipes (panpipes)
- Pan and Echo

Herakles

- Stout-hearted and mighty, powerful Titan, subdued and tamed savage races
- Twelve deeds of valor stretch from east to west
- Great slayer of monsters in the wild, opening the world for the expansion of civilization
- He becomes a god and is translated to Olympos after he builds his own pyre and immolates himself
- God-man – hero-God
- Pattern of achieving divine status after death
- Golden apples of the Hesperides, symbols of immortality – 11th labor
- Both Herakles and Orpheus return from a trip to the underworld – Herakles is also often depicted wearing the skin of the Nemean Lion as Dionysus wears the skin of a wild animal
- Ritual progression in Orphic rite from Physis (abstraction) to Pan (hybrid) to Herakles
- The forces of nature are invoked in libations before a meal - supposed to have been invoked by Pythagoras (per Iamblichus)
- God-god / Hero god (Herakles) / Man-animal (Pan) / Relation to Timaeus and the creation of form and matter – when form descends into the stone – because it abides
- 12 labors of Herakles are figured on the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia

Kronos

- Kronos, you consume and replenish all things
- Association with Time – (makes him integral deity in Orphic theogonies)
- In the beginning, Earth and Sky gave birth to 3 broods of children, one of which was the Titans. (The others were The Hundred Handers and the Kyklopes.) The youngest Titan was Kronos, who castrates his father, Sky, and frees the Titans.
- Kronos marries his sister Rhea after their father Sky is overthrown, and they conceive children. But Kronos eats his children to prevent them from overthrowing him. Zeus is saved from his father by substituting him for a stone and eventually he overthrows Kronos.
- There develops a long-pitched battle called the Titanomachy between Zeus and the other Titans, who struggle for power.

Titans

- The Titans—six sons and six daughters—were the children of Uranus and Gaea, Sky and Earth.
- The Titans were Kronos, Iapetus, Hyperion, Oceanus, Coeus, Creus, Theia, Rhea, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Tethys, and Themis.
- The Titans, led by Zeus, overthrew Kronos but eventually were overthrown by the Olympians. The enemy Titans were banished to Tartaros.
- According to Hesiod, Kronos sired six children by Rhea: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus in that order. Gaia and Uranus told Kronos that just as he had overthrown his own father, he was destined to be overcome by his own child; so as each of his children was born, Kronos swallowed them.

Rhea

- A Titan, daughter of Earth and Sky, Kronos' consort, the mother of Zeus
- Holds a position of prestige, as wife of Kronos
- Lover of battle, dances to the sound of drums and cymbals. In Bacchic rituals, percussive instruments are associated with Rhea (The Bacchae)
- Percussion instruments are also associated with ecstatic elements of Kybele's cult
- The shield-bearing Kouretes dance to drums to protect Zeus. Rhea hands a stone to Zeus and shields the baby boy in the noise.
- Sacred chariot of Rhea is drawn by bull-slayers
- In the Orphic myth of creation, Protogonos and Night give birth to Earth and Sky.

Zeus

- Ruler of the universe, creator of universal order
- The thunderbolt is his scepter
- After dividing the universe among his brothers, he takes on a series of wives
- Household deity, weather god, Panhellenic god symbolizing common Greek culture
- Protects the sanctity of oaths. Responsible for justice and order, the underlying principles of human community.
- Once Zeus and Hera are reached, we move from cosmogony to theogony. Gradual movement from abstractions to concrete anthropomorphism.

Hera

- Associated with air and life-giving rains
- Daughter of Kronos and Rhea, and sister-wife of Zeus
- Constantly bickering with Zeus, pursuing his lovers and illegitimate children
- Particularly adamant in pursuing Herakles
- Her role in cult is largely in maintaining social order. Worshipped as a civic goddess, particularly of marriage, one of the most important institutions in the ancient world.
- Often associated with clouds, the loci of the thunder and lightning

Poseidon

- Son of Titans Kronos and Rhea, brother of Zeus and Hades
- God of the sea, when the world was divided after the Titanomachy, Poseidon gained control of the sea
- Power over ships – worshipped in particular by communities whose livelihood depended upon the sea
- God of earthquakes, “shaker of the earth”
- God of horses, urge horses and chariots on
- Poseidon, like Zeus, is the father of many children, some of whom are heroes (e.g., Theseus, Persephone, Pegasos)
- Poseidon married the marine-goddess Amphitrite, eldest child of Nereus, first born son of Pontos (the Sea), a marital alliance which secured his dominion over the sea. Their son was the fish-tailed god Triton.

Plouton

- Son of Kronos and Rhea and brother to Zeus and Poseidon
- Pluto is another name for Hades
- His throne rests on a dark realm, the realm of windless Hades
- Master of the depths of the earth, and by extension, the whole earth – power to pass between the lands of life and death
- The “psukhai” (spirits, souls) of the dead are portrayed as wandering on asphodel meadows. They cannot speak until they drink blood, one of the vital forces that makes life possible
- “ploutos” means wealth
- Master of death and master of mortals – intimately connected with both life and death – Lord of the dead and provider of the fruits of the earth, including mineral wealth
- What makes us different than a god? We belong to the realm of Pluto

Zeus the Thunderbolt

- Brings storms and hurricanes, mighty gales, hurls roaring thunder
- The anger of the sea waves and the mountain peaks all know his power
- Thunder and lightning are supplied to Zeus by his uncles, the Kyklopes, out of gratitude for his releasing them from the underworld:
 - Brontes - thunder
 - Steropes – flash
 - Arges – brightness
- The lightning bolt of Zeus can make short work of mortals who transgress boundaries and commit acts of hubris

Astrapaios Zeus

- "Astrapaios" means "of lightning"
- The flash of lightning is distinguished by the Greeks from the thunder itself
- The metaphor of being struck by lightning (fire) would purify their *psukhe* in preparation for death.

To the Sea, Nereus, The Nereids

- The Sea
 - The sea is associated with the Titaness Tethys, wife of Okeanos
 - The sea is the mother of dark clouds, where the clouds and winds are born
- Nereus
 - Nereus is the oldest child of Pontos and a male personification of the sea.
 - Father of the Nereids, "the Old Man of the Sea"
- The Nereids
 - There are usually 50 Nereids
 - Thetis and Amphitrite, wife of Poseidon, are the most famous Nereids
 - Importance in folk religion, wide-spread and localized
 - May have nursed Dionysos
 - They revel in the waves, carrying connotations of maenadic frenzy

Proteus

- Like Nereus, Proteus is “an old Man of the Sea”
- Shape-shifting abilities / Contains all forms in himself
- Shape-shifting and prophecy often combine in stories about Proteus

The Earth – Gaia or Gē

- Quasi-personified figure of the productive powers of the land and procreation in general
- A generic mother goddess
- Born after Khaos, she parthenogenetically gives birth to Sky, Pontos, and the Mountains.
- She then mates with sky to produce the Kyklopes, the Hundred-Handers (Hekatoncheires), and the Titans

Mother of the Gods, the Phrygian goddess Kybele

- Earth fertility goddess
- “Frenzy-loving nurturer of life” - Wild music and dancing, ecstatic possession and ritual madness, close connection of her worship with the mountains
- Her worship was for the most relegated to the marginal members of society and were held in low regard. Her wandering beggar-priests were called *mētragurtai* (collectors for mother) and *kubēboi*.
- “The queen whom the drum delights” - Drums and other percussive instruments such as cymbals, clappers, and castanets are frequently found in the iconography of Kybele and Dionysos

Hermes

- “the guide of the flying sandals, a man-loving prophet to mortals, a vigorous god, who delights in exercise and in deceit”
- Wields the dreaded, respected weapon of speech, graceful talk, and mindfulness
- All his functions boil down to the essential idea of his ability to negotiate boundaries and bridge gaps
- Leads the souls of the dead into the afterworld
- His ability to journey anywhere make him an ideal messenger
- God of heralds and diplomats, a profession which requires the skill of speaking well. He is a god of language.
- Knows how to deceive with words
- Also the god of thieves
- Brings profit, a piece of good luck was called a “hermaion”
- God of physical exercise and athletics

Persephone

- Sole daughter of Demeter and Zeus
- Usually closely associated with her mother in cult
- Often merely known as “Kore” (maid)
- In Orphic myth, Mother of the Erinyes, queen of the nether world
- Through her marriage with Hades, Persephone is the queen of the dead
- Persephone is life and death to toiling mortals, nourishing all but killing them, too.
- Her chthonic connection is stressed in the Orphic magical papyri where she is identified with Moon, Hekate, and Artemis.
- Fertility goddess

Dionysos

- The god of liquid fertility: semen, blood, water, wine, honey, milk
- God of opposites: peaceful and warlike, human and animal, sober and drunk, alive and dead, sacred and profane
- The suffering god is sometimes identified with the sacrificial bull
- Dionysian worship
 - Come blessed and leaping god and bring abundant joy to all
 - *Enthousiasmos* (the god inside), belief that the god enters the worshippers and possesses them, leading to a state of *ekstasis* (standing outside oneself)
 - Recitation of hymns evoke the Dionysian spirit, *enthousiasmos* of language that transports worshippers beyond quotidian existence to touch the divine
 - Important part of maenadism is *sparagmos* (ripping apart of wild animals by frenzied women) and *omophagia* (eating of raw flesh)
 - Leaping, frolicking, gamboling, prancing – expressions of abandon in ecstatic cult
 - Loudness is characteristic of his worship
- Wrathful Dionysos
 - All-roaring and frenzied Bacchos, armed with the thrysos and wrathful in the extreme. Examples of his wrath abound in mythology – sometimes the thrysos is used as a weapon

Other Names for Dionysus

- Dionysus Liknites – Dionysus of the Cradle
 - Liknite - comes from the word “liknon” for winnowing fan, a common cult object in Dionysian mysteries
- Perikionios – “twined around the pillar”
 - after the palace of Kadmos had been blasted by Zeus, ivy enveloped it to protect the infant Dionysus therein
- Lysios Lenaios – Lysios means he that frees, sets loose, the redeemer
 - Lenaios is from the word “lenos” – of the wine press
 - Lenaia festival became an official venue for performance of comedy – not as popular as the Greater Dionysia
 - Wine releases us from cares, the happiness it brings, and the ever-present danger of disorderly conduct – giving a temporary respite from daily existence
 - Wine can be thought of as the god himself, when ingested, possess the worshipper (enthousiasmos) and effects a state of *ekstasis*
 - Wine becomes a healer for men’s pain

God of Feasts

- Maenadic processions proceed at night, guided by torchlight
- They brandish *thrysi* and wear fawn-skins.
- The ivy-wreathed group, the *thiasos* heads to the mountains, where animals are ripped apart (sparagmos) and raw flesh is devoured (omophagia)
- Madness is a common theme as many divinities either bring it or have the ability to cure it
- Dionysos' connection with madness is facilitated by his connection with wine and intoxication
- The normal order of the world is subverted

Kouretes

- A band of armed young men connected with Krete – “howling mountain men whose feet pound the ground”
- Dance about the infant Zeus and clatter their arms in order to muffle the sound of his crying.
- In Greek cult, young men sometimes danced in armor, the most famous dance of which is called the *pyrrhikhē*.
- Bronze-beating Kouretes, equipped with bronze clappers and cymbals
- Also associated with protecting sailors from drowning at sea.
- Associated with the winds (both powerful and destructive and gentle and beneficial) and dangers at sea

Athene

- Great Zeus bore her by himself – He swallows Athena’s mother, Metis (Counsel, Resourcefulness, Wisdom) before she gives birth. Eventually, Hephaistos splits his head open with an axe and out pops a fully armed goddess, shouting a lusty battle cry.
- Brave in the din of war, however she is more interested in the intellectual aspects of strategy and tactics
- Her domain is wind-swept hilltops, shaded mountains
- Blessed mother of the arts
- Goddess of handiworks – weaving, carpentry
- She is invested in human civilization
- Often worshipped in fortifications built on top of hills and mountains to defend the polis
- Athena slayed the giant Gorgo in the Gigantomachy, strips him of his breastplate adorned with snakes, the aegis. The aegis is a common prop for Athene in literature and iconography.

Nike

- Popular cult figure
- Famous sculpture of Nike of Samothrace
- Role in warfare – martial motif
- Glory that comes from strife
- Boasting after the onslaught
- Goddess of victory

Apollon

- You make everything bloom with your versatile lyre
- Your mode is Doric
- Leto, daughter of Titans, and Zeus are his parents
- Slayer of Python, slew a dragon at Delphi - crowed over the corpse that it rot on the spot
 - Greek verb “pυthō” means “I rot”
- Famous for his role in divinations
- Sickness and healing of sickness are within his jurisdiction
- God of archery
- Music, dance, and festivities are dear to him
- God of the lyre, protects poets
- Idealized as a paragon of male beauty

Apollon (cont'd.)

- Identification with the sun
- Apollo's role as the god of light. Apollo's chief epithet was Phoebus (Φοῖβος, *Phoibos* literally "bright")
- Slaying of the python is associated with the Pythian games, great Panhellenic event, with musical and athletic contests
- Sakadas won the competition for the creation of the Pythia "nome", a piece used to symbolize Apollo's victory over the serpent, a standard piece in the aulete's repertoire.
- Associated with the theme of cosmic harmony. Ptolemy (2nd c. AD) wrote *Harmonics* with a description of the Dorian tonos being associated with the equinoxes and the poles. The Dorian mode has characteristics of being steady, calm and restrained. The Dorian tonos is the means between extremes.
- Association of sun and cosmic harmony.
- "*mēden agan*" (nothing in excess) inscribed on the temple of Apollo

The Workshop of Dionysus Euterpe Conference 2018

- Athenaisos Paian
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<http://www.doublepipes.info/euterpe-2018-preparation/>

See also iTunes music songs in Dorian mode

Leto

- Daughter of Titans, Phoibe and Koios
- Mother of twins
- Her importance is fully derived from her children Apollo and Artemis
- Leto bore Phoibos and arrow-pouring Artemis

Artemis

- The wilderness is her domain, particularly forests and mountains
- Loves to hunt wild animals with her bow and arrow, yet she also protects them
- Assists in childbirth, even though she is a virgin goddess
- Protects and nurtures the young
- Dark side: connection with human sacrifice – Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigeneia as recompense for the offending Artemis
- Associated with nymphs who attend her as she roams in the countryside
- She is a leader of dance and song and her brother Apollo often provides the music
- Dances of young girls are a prevalent feature of her worship
- Became associated with Kybele through shared association with mountains and lions
- Artemis also merges with the Moon, associated with Hekate
- Concern with childbirth and the moon link her to Eileithyia

Titans

- 12 beings born of Earth and Sky along with the Kyklopes and the three Hundred-Handers.
- After their defeat by Zeus, they are cast down into Tartaros, a particularly gloomy part of the underworld
- One version of the story has Hera sending the Titans after the baby Dionysos because she is jealous. Zeus sends a thunderbolt at the Titans, burning them to bits, but only after they have eaten most of the baby Dionysos except for his heart, which Athena saves.
- Zeus uses the heart to recreate Dionysos (twice-born) by placing the heart in his thigh

Korybas

- Singular form of Korybanes, a group of priests of Kybele known to practice rites to cure madness
- Rites of Korybantes have to do with 3 brothers, 2 of which kill the third then cover his body with a purple cloth and bury it in the foothills of Mt. Olympus. The spirit of Korybas thus becomes a restless spirit roaming the earth and wreaking vengeance by driving those he encounters to madness.
- An analogue of the murdered Dionysos

Eleusinian Demeter

- Deo, divine mother of all, goddess of many names (just like Virgin Mary)
- Goddess of agriculture, especially cereals and their cultivation
- Present at sowing, heaping, and threshing, spirit of the unripe fruit
- One of the “original six” Olympians born from Kronos and Rhea
- One of the most important fertility goddesses in the Greek pantheon, often identified with the earth herself
- Homeric Hymn to Demeter is the source of the myth about the abduction of Persephone
- The account of this abduction and Demeter’s search for Persephone becomes the foundation myth of the Eleusinian mysteries
- Torch-bearing: Torches are typically used in processions celebrating fertility deities; just as Demeter carried a torch while fasting and searching for her daughter
- Participants in the Eleusinian mysteries would walk from Athens to Eleusis at night by torchlight with song, dance, and bawdy banter

Mother Antaia: Demeter

- After Persephone's disappearance, she wanders the earth disguised as an old woman. When she reaches Eleusis, she becomes nurse to Demophoön, son of the king of Eleusis. She was seen trying to put the child in a fire to make him immortal but the mother cries out and Demeter leaves Eleusis in anger. Before she leaves, however, she orders that a temple be built there in her honor.
- After this, she takes to wandering and causes a great famine. Both humans and gods suffer as they are unable to receive the sacrifices they so crave. Hades finally gives in and agrees to let Persephone return because she has already tasted the pomegranate seeds which ensure that she cannot remain permanently in the land of the living.
- Myth explains the origins of the seasons

Iambe / Baubo

- In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, she is brooding in the palace at Eleusis until an old woman named Iambe tells her jokes that make her laugh.
- She asks for a drink of water, barley-meal, and pennyroyal and breaks her fast. This drink, the *kukeon*, is drunk by the initiates at the Eleusinian Mysteries.
- Orphic version of the myth replaces Baubo for Iambe, who gets the mourning mother to laugh by exposing her pudenda and then offers her the *kukeon* she had earlier refused.

The Seasons - *Horai*

- The Seasons
 - Hesiodic genealogy makes them daughters of Zeus and Themis (established custom or law)
 - Like their mother, they represent an aspect of cosmic order
- Names of the Horai are:
 - Eunomia (law-abiding) – mother of the Graces
 - Dike (justice)
 - Eirene (peace)
- In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, they clothe Aphrodite when she emerges from the sea and adorn her with ornaments
- Unsurprisingly, they are associated with Persephone's return to earth in spring, with circling dances and personifications of spring dancing
- The idea of renewal is also important to Dionysos
- The Fates are half-sisters of the Seasons – often linked in cultural contexts
- The Graces take part in the dance as well, as they are paradigmatic of feminine beauty and charm: The Graces are:
 - Euphrosyne – Joyfulness
 - Aglaia - brightness
 - Thalia - bloom
- One of the most beautiful scenes in Greek literature is from Homeric Hymn to Apollo where there is a scene which skilfully captures the joie de vivre

From Homeric Hymn to Apollo

Glorious Leto's son, as he plays a refrain on his hollow
lyre, sets forth on his journey to go toward Pytho the rocky,
clad in ambrosial fragrant apparel; and under the golden
plectrum the lyre in his hands sends forth a delectable clangor.
Thence from the earth he departs to Olympos as speedy as
thought and
goes to the palace of Zeus and the rest of the gods in
assembly;
straightway to the immortals the lyre and the song are
enthralling;
all of the Muses together in lovely antiphonal voices
hymn the ambrosial gifts that the gods enjoy, and the sorrows
which men under the hands of the deathless gods ever suffer,
living without understanding and helpless, nor are they ever
able to find any cure for their death or defense against old age.

Meanwhile the Graces with beautiful hair and the jovial Seasons,
Hebè, Harmonia too, and the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodité,
enter the dance—by the wrists of their hands they hold one another;
singing and dancing with them is a maid not ugly or little,
rather indeed very tall to behold, and of wondrous appearance,
Artemis shooter of arrows, the maid brought up with Apollo;
Ares among them too, and the keen-eyed slayer of Argos,
frolic, the while on his lyre Lord Phoibos Apollo is playing,
high and resplendently stepping, with radiance shining around him,
glittering bright from his feet and his skillfully woven apparel.
Deep in their great hearts then as they look upon him are his
mother,
Leto with tresses of gold, and his sire, Zeus counselor, gladdened,
watching their much-loved son as with deathless gods he is sporting.

Semele

- Daughter of Kadmos, founder of Thebes
- Zeus falls in love with her and they have an affair which makes Hera jealous and she gets Zeus to promise to appear to Semele as she does to Hera. Zeus complies and appears in his full stature as the god of thunder and lightning and Semele is burned to a crisp
- Zeus notices that Semele is pregnant, however and he takes the unborn child Dionysos and sews it into his thigh until the child is ready to be born.
- Baby Dionysos is raised by nymphs as nurses

Nymphs

- Connect with forests, trees, mountains, springs and meadows
- Dryads are nymphs of the trees (Greek “drus”)
- Oreads are nymphs of the mountains (Greek “oros”)
- Naiads are nymphs of the springs (from Greek “nao” – I flow)
- Rustic and pastoral settings away from civilization are their domain
- Caves and grottos are their favorite haunts
- Nymphs were widely worshipped in antiquity, usually connected with a particular locality

Silenos Satyros

- Traditional members of the Dionysian *thiasos* are:
 - The *silens/satyrs*
 - Half-man / half-beast, covered with hair
 - Hedonistic lifestyle
 - Laughing, drinking, dancing, chasing after nymphs
 - Popular on vase paintings
 - Silenos is found drunk in the garden of Midas, king of Phrygia. When the king returns the lost satyr to Dionysos, he grants to the king a “golden touch”
 - Might not have fit in that well with Orphism because of the serious cosmic and eschatological themes found in the mysteries
 - All-night character of Dionysian worship
 - Despite their unrestrained temperament, they do have divine wisdom, though
 - The Bacchae (maenads)

Aphrodite

- Goddess of love, beauty, and sexual relations
- Born from foam (greek “aphros”)
- When she rises from the sea, the Seasons are there to clothe her (see Botticelli’s painting “Birth of Venus”)
- As goddess of beauty, she often consorts with other beautiful goddesses, such as the Seasons and the Graces
- Common epithet is “philommedes” (“fond of genitals”)
- Associated with Semitic goddess Astarte and Egyptian Isis

Chthonic Hermes

- Dwells on the road all must take, the road of no return by the Kokytos, one of the rivers of the underworld
- Hermes plays the role of psukhopompos, guides the souls of the dead
- “*psukhais pompos*” means “the souls you bring”
- Brings souls to their destined harbor when their time has come
- The powers of sleep often merge with the powers of death

Eros

- Winged archer who runs swiftly on a path of fire
- *Puridromos* – he who runs swiftly on a path of fire
- Cosmic force of love and attraction is essential to the chain of copulations that underlies the anthropomorphizing tales of creation
- Eros is one of the oldest divinities in Hesiod, coming after Khaos and coeval with Earth and Tartaros
- In Plato's *Symposium*, the nature of Eros is discussed
- Both Eros and Dionysus have the ability to cause madness

The Fates - *Moirai*

- The Fates:
 - Three sisters responsible for certain inevitable things in the cosmos
 - They apportion destinies, apportion limits on a cosmic level
 - Airy, invisible, inexorable, being to men the same as necessity
- Greek "*moira*" – means "lot or portion" – represent what is allotted in life, the portion of life one receives
- Hesiod shows them as daughters of Zeus and Themis, symbolically marking them as part of the divine order, just as it does with their sisters, the Seasons
- Symbolism of Spinning:
 - Atropos, Lakhesis, Klotho (the Spinner, the Alloter, the Irreversible)
 - Every life is a thread that Klotho provides, Lakhesis measures out, and Atropos cuts at the moment of death
 - Metaphor of the "thread of life"
 - Metaphor of weaving is very old theme in Greek literature
- They ask questions in terms of "who is giving this" rather than "what is causing this"

Graces

- Greek – *Kharites*
- Associated with beauty, merriment, and good cheer
 - “Mothers of joy”
- Daughters of Zeus and Eunomia (one of the Seasons):
 - Aglaia – Splendor
 - Thalia – Festivity
 - Euphrosyne – Joy
- Attendants for the goddess Aphrodite
- They bring beauty by apportioning cosmic limits

Dike (Right), Dikaiosunē (Justice) and Nomos (Law)

- Dike - Right
 - The all-seeing eye, seated upon the sacred throne watching
 - “To gaze as the eye of Dike”
 - Crushes the unjust with just retribution but is a gentle goddess towards the just
- Dikaiosunē – Justice - most important virtue in Greek ethical thought
 - Virtually synonymous with Dike
 - The “balance of mighty scales” – Balance, equality, and fairness
 - You receive what you deserve
- In The Theology of Arithmetic, the Pythagoreans considered the tetrad (four) to embody Justice –
 - [area of square = perimeter]
- Nomos – Law
 - Sets a fair limit and preserves nature’s balance
 - Of the gods Nemesis, Dike, and Dikaiosune, and Nomos, only Nomos is a male, with law elevated as a cosmic principle

Ares, God of War

- Ever-bespattered with blood, Ares finds joy in killing
- Son of Hera and Zeus
 - Ares portrays blood and guts aspect of war
 - Athena represents the strategic intellectual side of war
- Negative treatment of Ares shows the Greek distaste for the violence of war
- Perceived strong opposition between war and the arts

Hephaistos

- Hephaistos:
 - Blacksmith of the gods
 - Aphrodite is Hephaistos' wife
 - Son of Zeus and Hera, born lame
- After Hera tries to throw him out of Olympos, he gets retribution by constructing a chair that binds her fast to it when she sits in it. Dionysos gets Hephaistos drunk and brings him to Hera for a reconciliation.
- Characteristics of cleverness, inventiveness
 - As divine artisan, creates wondrous things, fine jewelry
 - Fine teacher – teaches fine crafts and skills to man, who he elevates from savagery to civilization
- Closely associated with fire – fire rituals and rekindling ceremonies – acknowledged the central role of fire in civilization
 - Cosmic fire, cultural fire, individual fire
 - Belief that the soul was composed of fire
- Demiurge from Plato's Timaeus is also an artisan – *demiourgos* means worker for the people

Asklepios

- Apollo rescues Asklepios and entrusts him to the wise centaur Kheiron who instructs him in the arts of medicine
- Asklepios becomes the world's greatest physician
- Came to be regarded as divine
- Temples for healing dedicated to Asklepios
- Incubation – worshippers would spend the night in the god's temple in hopes of receiving a dream vision that would bring healing
- Hygeia – Health - usually conceived of as the daughter of Asklepios

The Erinyes – The Furies

- The Erinyes
 - Tisiphone - “vengeance for murder”
 - Allekto – “unceasing”
 - Megaira – “grudge”
- Group of female divinities who take vengeance for criminal acts
 - Particularly concerned with slaughtering kin and breaking of one’s oath
- Raise Bacchic cries, active at night, rabid, they howl and wear animal skins
 - in a dank cave by the sacred water of the Styx, the river of Hate
 - Snake-haired, many-shaped goddesses of fate
- Represent the negative aspects of transgressing boundaries
- Closely associated with the Eumenides, the “kindly disposed ones”, fertility goddesses with chthonic associations
- Ability to destroy or nurture life
- Invocation of a deity by a euphemistic name was felt to increase the chance that the divinity would appear in friendly guise
- Often identified with the Eumenides, the “kindly-disposed ones”, - chthonic female divinities and fertility goddesses

Tyche

- Tyche is the Greek word for “fortune” or “chance”
- Hesiod counts Tyche as one of the Oceanids
- By 4th century BCE, Tyche becomes an abstraction for “Lady Luck”
- Who may bring unexpected fortune or disaster to an enterprise
- Some conceived of a personal Tyche that accompanies one throughout life and is responsible for a person’s fortunes in life

Daimon

- Vague appellation of divine force, usually not personified
- All divinities are a daimon and human beings become daimons after they die
- Daimon can be considered as a sort of “blank check” for causal explanations of things – something happened because a god willed it thus
- Agathos Daimon – could be a household god – *ploutodoten* – giver of wealth
- Hierarchy of daimones

Muses

- Deities of poetry and song
 - Pictured as graceful and benevolent deities - inspire artists and poets and frequently sing as Apollo plays lyre
 - Their holy voices, combined with Apollo's lyre, delight the gods and set the young divinities dancing
 - Nourish the soul – mistresses of the mind's power
 - Early poets often began their song with an appeal to the Muses
 - Orpheus as a poet is naturally connected with the Muses
- 9 daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne – (Hesiod's Theogony)
 1. Kleio Celebrator
 2. Euterpe Well-Pleasing
 3. Thaleia Abundance
 4. Melpomene Singer
 5. Terpsichore Joy in Dance
 6. Erato Lovely
 7. Polymnia Many Hymns
 8. Ourania Heavenly
 9. Kalliope Pretty Voice
- Dedicating an institution of higher learning to the Muses was widespread
 - Plato established a *Mouseion* in the district of Akademos
 - Most famous was the *Mouseion* at Alexandria

Themis

- Themis means “established custom or law” – a class of deities personified as abstractions
- Themis and Zeus are the parents of the Seasons
- Associated with prophecy and oracles
- Apollo’s predecessor at Delphi - Delphic oracle originally belonged to Earth but she gave it to her daughter Themis, who then ceded it to Apollon as a gift

The Four Winds

- Winds like other natural phenomena in the ancient world, were objects of worship and veneration
- The Anemoi – The Four Winds
 - Boreas North Wind –
 - Boreas was considered as Thracian and as such, wild, rude and uncouth
 - Huffs and puffs
 - But the winter breezes bring the spring
 - Eurus East
 - Zephyr West
 - Warm gentle breeze
 - Born of the sea – loved by harbors
 - Soft wind brings us ethereal wonders of the open sea
 - Notus South
 - Father of rain

Okeanos

- Water surrounds the earth
- Okeanos, from you comes all the rivers and the flowing waters
- Okeanos, ageless eternal father
- Thales, earliest pre-Socratic philosopher, theorized that water was the first principle
- Close your eyes. You lie on the earth surrounded by the dome of the sky, surrounded by water, holding a fiery ember in your soul

Hestia

- Hestia means “hearth”
- Despite her Olympian status, she never becomes fully anthropomorphized

Sleep and Dreams

- Along with the race of Dreams and Death, is the child of night
- Oblivion is the granddaughter of Night and so is a niece of Death and Sleep
- Oblivion (Greek Lethe) has close associations with Death
 - Oblivion causes us to forget cares
- Dreams are the sons of Sleep
- Interpretation of dreams is one of the oldest forms of divination, both in cult and literature

Death

- Greek “Thanatos”
- The body is a kind of prison for the soul
- Descent to and return to the domain of the dead – “katabasis”
 - Herakles
 - Theseus
 - Odysseus
 - Aineias