The Presocratic Philosophers

Second Edition

G. S Kirk,
J. E. Raven
and M. Schofield

THE PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

The Presocratic Philosophers

A CRITICAL HISTORY WITH A SELECTION OF TEXTS

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To
F. H. SANDBACH

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It is now more than twenty-five years since *The Presocratic Philosophers* first appeared; it has been through many printings since, with minor corrections until 1963 and subsequently without change. During the last few years GSK and JER were conscious that a basically revised edition would soon be needed, if it was not overdue. JER's health was not good and his research interests had become exclusively botanical; he therefore asked GSK to gauge the moment and suggest a third member of the team. As it happened, the part of the book that was primarily JER's called for most revision because of the way scholarly interests had developed; but GSK, too, had been working in other fields and needed a collaborator in the thick of things. MS agreed in 1979 to become a partner in the enterprise, and there was complete accord between all three on how the work should be done.

There are major and important changes in this new edition. MS has completely rewritten the chapters on the Eleatics and Pythagoreans, principally because of work by analytic philosophers on the former and by Walter Burkert (in particular) on the latter – work which has called for some reassessment of the Cornford–Raven view on the interrelations between the two schools. Alcmaeon has been incorporated in these chapters. MS has likewise completely rewritten the chapter on Empedocles to take account of the reinterpretations of J. Bollack, G. Zuntz and others and the controversy these have provoked. It is hoped that the arrangement of the fragments of Empedocles in their probably original order will be found more useful by the reader. The chapter on Anaxagoras, on the other hand, remains largely as JER wrote it; MS has indicated in footnotes how his own solutions (for which see his *An Essay on Anaxagoras*, Cambridge, 1980) might differ here and there, but it was the wish of all three authors that this chapter should remain largely unchanged. Archelaus, too, remains unaltered, and Diogenes is expanded by a single footnote; on the Atomists MS has rewritten the sections on metaphysical principles, on atoms and the void and on the weight of atoms (to take account of the work of D. J. Furley, J. Barnes, D. O' Brien

and others), also on epistemology and ethics – the ethics section being largely the work of Dr J. F. Procopé, to whom we express warm thanks.

The earlier part of the book has been revised throughout by GSK, but with little complete rewriting. Chapter 1, on Forerunners, has been rearranged, abbreviated and simplified in places, and has additional sections on the new Orphic material, on the Alcman cosmogonical fragment and on the movement from myths to philosophy. There has been a spate of publication on the Milesians, Xenophanes and Heraclitus over the last quarter-century, but the effects have been minor compared with those of work on the Pythagoreans and Eleatics and on Empedocles. Account has been taken of the contributions of, in particular, C. H. Kahn (on Anaximander and Heraclitus), J. Barnes and W. K. C. Guthrie, but the interpretation and presentation, despite numerous changes in detail, have not been very drastically altered. That reflects a general conviction that the book should not be radically changed in its approach and emphasis, except where necessary; and also the opinion of GSK, at least, that despite all the dust of battle the real advances, with respect to these earlier thinkers, have been quite small.

A definite improvement, especially for the many readers who use the translations rather than the Greek texts, has been to bring these up into the body of the text. The Bibliography has been brought up to date, and the new Index Locorum is the work of Mr N. O'Sullivan, to whom the authors are most grateful, as they also are to the publishers and printers for their help and their careful treatment of a relatively complicated text. But 'the authors' means, sadly, the surviving ones, for JER died in March 1980, aged 65; his remarkable gifts and lovable personality are well conveyed in *John Raven by his Friends* (published in 1981 by his widow, Faith Raven, from Docwra's Manor, Shepreth, Herts., England). On a happier note it is a pleasure to re-dedicate the book to Professor F. H. Sandbach, whose profound learning is even better appreciated now than it was then.

G.S.K.

June 1983 M.S.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This book is designed primarily for those who have more than a casual interest in the history of early Greek thought; but by translating all Greek passages, and confining some of the more detailed discussion to small-type notes at the end of paragraphs, we have also aimed to make the book useful for those students of the history of philosophy or science who have no previous acquaintance with this important and fascinating field.

Two points should be emphasized. First, we have limited our scope to the chief Presocratic 'physicists' and their forerunners, whose main preoccupation was with the nature (*physis*) and coherence of things as a whole. More specialized scientific interests were simultaneously developing throughout the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., especially in mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine and biology; but for lack of space, and to some extent of evidence, we have not pursued these topics beyond the interests of the chief physicists. We have also excluded the Sophists, whose positive philosophical contribution, often exaggerated, lay mainly in the fields of epistemology and semantics. Secondly, we have not set out to produce a necessarily orthodox exposition (if, indeed, such a thing is conceivable in a field where opinion is changing so rapidly), but have preferred in many places to put forward our own interpretations. At the same time we have usually mentioned other interpretations of disputed points, and have always tried to present the reader with the main materials for the formation of his own judgement.

The part of the book dealing with the Ionian tradition, including its forerunners and also the atomists and Diogenes (i.e. chapters I–VI, XVII and XVIII), with the note on the sources, is by G. S. Kirk, while the part dealing with the Italian tradition, and also the chapters on Anaxagoras and Archelaus (i.e. chapters VII–XVI), are by J. E. Raven. The contributions of each author were of course subjected to detailed criticism by the other, and the planning of the book as a whole is by both.

The scale of different sections of the book is admittedly rather

variable. Where the evidence is fuller and clearer – particularly where considerable fragments survive, as for example in the case of Parmenides – the commentary can naturally be shorter; where the evidence is sparser and more confusing, as for example in the case of Anaximander or the Pythagoreans, our own explanations must be longer and more involved. Chapter 1 in particular, which deals with a part of the subject which is often neglected, is perhaps more detailed in parts than its ultimate importance demands, and non-specialists are advised to leave it until last.

Only the most important texts have been quoted, and those in an inevitably personal selection. For a nearly complete collection of fragments and testimonies the reader should turn to H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (5th and later editions, Berlin, 1934–54, edited by W. Kranz). This fundamental work is referred to by the abbreviation DK. Where a DK number (e.g. DK 28A 12) is appended to the reference of a passage quoted in the present work, this means that DK, in the section referred to, quotes more of the passage in question than we do. DK references are omitted where less, or no more, of the text is given, and also in the case of fragments (where the fragment-number, always in Diels' numeration, is the same as the number in the relevant B-section in DK). Where supplements occur in texts quoted, without further information, they are usually by Diels, and reference may be made to the textual notes in DK.

We are obviously indebted to many friends for suggestions and help; and also, as goes without saying, to previous writers like Zeller, Burnet, Cornford, Ross and Cherniss. Many of these debts are recorded in the text. For typographical advice and assistance we are indebted to the printing staff of the Cambridge University Press. H. Lloyd-Jones and I. R. D. Mathewson read the proofs and made many valuable suggestions. Another outstanding contribution was made by F. H. Sandbach, whose numerous acute and learned comments on the final draft were of the utmost value, and to whom, as an unworthy offering, we should like to dedicate this book.

G.S.K.
J.E.R.

Cambridge
May 1957

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations may be mentioned; others should be self-evident:

ACPA	H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore, 1944).
AGP	*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie.*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology.*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard (2nd ed., Princeton, 1955).
CP	*Classical Philology.*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly.*
DK	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 5th to 7th eds., by H. Diels, ed. with additions by W. Kranz. (The 6th and 7th eds. are photographic reprints, 1951–2 and 1954, of the 5th, with Nachträge by Kranz.)
EGP	John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed., London, 1930 (a reprint with corrections of 3rd ed., 1920).
GGN	*Nachrichten v. d. Gesellschaft zu Göttingen* (Phil.-hist. Klasse).
HGP	W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, in 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1962–81).
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies.*
J.Phil.	*Journal of Philology.*
KR	G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957).
LSJ	Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, 9th ed., 1925–40, revised by H. Stuart Jones and R. McKenzie.
PCPS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society.*
Rh. M.	*Rheinisches Museum.*
Σ	Scholion or scholiast.
SB Ber.	*Sitzungsberichte d. preussischen Akademie d. Wissenschaft.*
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim (Leipzig, 1903–5).
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Sources for Presocratic Philosophy

A. Direct quotations

The actual fragments of the Presocratic thinkers are preserved as quotations in subsequent ancient authors, from Plato in the fourth century B.C. to Simplicius in the sixth century A.D., and even, in rare cases, to late Byzantine writers like John Tzetzes. The date of the source in which a quotation occurs is not, of course, a reliable guide to its accuracy. Thus Plato is notoriously lax in his quotations from all sources; he often mixes quotation with paraphrase, and his attitude to his predecessors is frequently not objective but humorous or ironical. The Neoplatonist Simplicius, on the other hand, who lived a whole millennium after the Presocratics, made long and evidently accurate quotations, in particular from Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia; not for the sake of literary embellishment, but because in his commentaries on the *Physics* and *de caelo* of Aristotle he found it necessary to expound Aristotle's views on his predecessors by setting down their actual words. At times Simplicius did this at greater length than was essential because, as he tells us, a particular ancient work had become so rare.

Aristotle, like Plato, gave comparatively few direct quotations, and his main value is as a summarizer and critic of earlier thinkers. Apart from Plato, Aristotle, and Simplicius, the following notable sources of *verbatim* extracts may be singled out for special mention:

(i) Plutarch, the Academic philosopher, historian and essayist of the second century A.D., in his extensive *Moral Essays* made hundreds of quotations (often expanded, interpolated or partly reworded by himself) from the Presocratic thinkers.

(ii) Sextus 'Empiricus', the Sceptic philosopher and physician of the late second century A.D., expounded the theories of Aenesidemus, who lived some two centuries earlier and himself relied to a great extent on Hellenistic sources. Sextus quotes many early passages bearing on cognition and the reliability of the senses.

(iii) Clement of Alexandria, the learned head of the Catechetical school, lived in the second half of the second century A.D. and the early years of the third. A convert to Christianity, Clement nevertheless maintained his interest in Greek literature of all kinds, and used a wide knowledge and a remarkable memory to point his comparisons between paganism and Christianity with frequent quotations from the Greek poets and philosophers (chiefly in his *Protrepticus* and the eight books of *Stromateis* or *Miscellanies*).

(iv) Hippolytus, a theologian in Rome in the third century A.D., wrote a *Refutation of all Heresies* in nine books, which attacked Christian heresies by claiming them to be revivals of pagan philosophy. For example, the Noetian heresy was a revival of Heraclitus' theory of the coincidence of opposites – a contention which Hippolytus attempted to substantiate by the quotation of no less than seventeen sayings of Heraclitus, many of them otherwise unknown.

(v) Diogenes Laertius compiled, probably in the third century A.D., a trivial but from our point of view important *Lives of Famous Philosophers* in ten books. In his biographical and doxographical notices, derived mainly from Hellenistic sources, he included occasional short quotations.

(vi) John Stobaeus, the fifth-century A.D. anthologist, assembled in his *Anthologium* educative extracts from the whole range of Greek literature, but with special emphasis on ethical sayings. Many Presocratic fragments (notably of Democritus) are preserved by him, often in a somewhat impure form. Stobaeus' main sources were the handbooks and compendia which proliferated in the Alexandrian period.

In addition to the main sources noted above, quotations from the Presocratics occur sporadically elsewhere: in the Epicurean Philodemus; in Stoics like Marcus Aurelius and eclectics like Maximus of Tyre; in Christian writers other than Clement and Hippolytus, for example in Origen; occasionally in Aetius (see B, 4, *b*; direct quotations in Aetius are rare); in technical authors like Galen the doctor, Strabo the geographer and Athenaeus the anthologist of food and drink; and, not least important, in Neoplatonic writers from Numenius, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus (the last two of whom wrote on Pythagoras) down to Proclus and, of course, the invaluable Simplicius.

To conclude these notes on the sources of direct quotations, it must be emphasized that the author of a direct quotation need not have seen the original work, since summaries, anthologies and compendia of every kind, known as early as Hippias (p. 96 n. 2) and produced

in large numbers in the three centuries following the foundation of Alexandria, were regarded as an adequate substitute for most prose originals of a technical nature.

B. Testimonia

(1) PLATO is the earliest commentator on the Presocratics (though there were occasional references in Euripides and Aristophanes). His comments, however, are for the most part only casual ones, inspired, like many of his quotations, by irony or amusement. Thus his references to Heraclitus, Parmenides and Empedocles are more often than not light-hearted *obiter dicta*, and one-sided or exaggerated ones at that, rather than sober and objective historical judgements. Provided this is recognized, Plato has much of value to tell us. One passage, *Phaedo* 96ff., gives a useful but brief survey of fifth-century physical preoccupations.

(2) ARISTOTLE gave more serious attention to his philosophical predecessors than Plato had done, and prefaced some of his treatises with formal surveys of their opinions, notably in *Metaphysics* A. However, his judgements are often distorted by his view of earlier philosophy as a stumbling progress towards the truth that Aristotle himself revealed in his physical doctrines, especially those concerning causation. There are also, of course, many acute and valuable criticisms, and a store of factual information.

(3) THEOPHRASTUS undertook the history of previous philosophy, from Thales to Plato, as part of his contribution to the encyclopaedic activity organized by his master Aristotle – just as Eudemus undertook the history of theology, astronomy and mathematics and Menon that of medicine. According to Diogenes Laertius' list of his works, Theophrastus wrote sixteen (or eighteen) books of *Physical Opinions* (or *Opinions of the Physicists*; the Greek genitive is Φυσικῶν δοξῶν); these were later epitomized in two volumes. Only the last book, *On sensation*, is extant in its greater part; but important extracts from the first book, *On material principles*, were copied down by Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*. (Some of these extracts Simplicius derived from lost commentaries by the important Peripatetic commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias.) In this first book Theophrastus treated the different thinkers in roughly chronological order, adding their city, patronymic, and sometimes date or mutual relationship. In the remaining books the order was chronological only within the main logical divisions. In addition to the general history Theophrastus wrote special works on Anaximenes,

Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, and (in several volumes) Democritus. These have unfortunately perished; presumably Theophrastus went to greater pains to consult the original sources for these thinkers. From the available evidence, however, his judgements even on them were often derived directly from Aristotle, without much attempt to apply a new and objective criticism.

(4) THE DOXOGRAPHICAL TRADITION. (*a*) *Its general nature.* Theophrastus' great work became the standard authority for the ancient world on Presocratic philosophy, and is the source of most subsequent collections of 'opinions' (δόξαι, ἀρέσκοντα or *placita*). These collections took different forms. (i) In close reproductions of Theophrastus' arrangement each major topic was considered in a separate section, the different thinkers being treated successively within each section. This was the method of Aetius and his source, the '*Vetusta Placita*' (see p. 5). (ii) Biographical doxographers considered all the opinions of each philosopher together, in company with details of his life – supplied, to a large extent, by the febrile imaginations of Hellenistic biographers and historians like Hermippus of Smyrna, Hieronymus of Rhodes and Neanthes of Cyzicus. The result is exemplified in the biographical medley of Diogenes Laertius. (iii) Another type of doxographical work is seen in the Διαδοχαί, or accounts of philosophical successions. Its originator was the Peripatetic Sotion of Alexandria, who around 200 B.C. wrote a survey of previous philosophers arranged by schools. The known thinkers were related to each other in a descending line of master and pupil (here Sotion was extending and formalizing a process begun by Theophrastus); in addition, the Ionian school was clearly distinguished from the Italian. Many of the patristic doxographical summaries (notably those in Eusebius, Irenaeus, Arnobius, Theodoretus – who, however, also made direct use of Aetius – and St Augustine) were based on the brief accounts in the Succession-writers. (iv) The chronographer Apollodorus of Alexandria composed, in the middle of the second century B.C., a metrical account of the dates and opinions of the philosophers. This rested partly on Sotion's division into schools and masters, partly on the chronology of Eratosthenes, who had sensibly assigned dates to artists, philosophers and writers as well as to political events. Apollodorus filled in the gaps left by Eratosthenes, on very arbitrary principles: a philosopher's *acme* or period of chief activity was assumed to be at the age of forty, and was made to coincide with the nearest of a number of major chronological epochs, for example the capture of Sardis in 546/5 B.C. or the foundation of Thurii in 444/3. Further,

a supposed pupil was always made forty years younger than his supposed master.

(*b*) *Aetius and the 'Vetusta Placita'*. Two extant doxographical summaries, closely resembling each other, were independently derived from a lost original – the collection of *Opinions* made by Aetius, an otherwise unknown compilator, probably of the second century A.D., whose name is known from a reference in Theodoretus. These extant summaries are the *Epitome of Physical Opinions*, in five books, which falsely claims to be by Plutarch; and the *Physical Extracts* which appear in book I (for the most part) of Stobaeus' *Anthologium*. (From the former, which was widely read, are derived notices in pseudo-Galen, Athenagoras, Achilles and Cyril.) Diels in his great *Doxographi Graeci* arranged these two sources in parallel columns as the *Placita* of Aetius. This forms our most extensive, if not always our most accurate, doxographical authority.

Aetius' work was based, not directly on Theophrastus' history, but upon an intermediate summary of it produced, probably, in the Posidonian school in the first century B.C. This lost work was named by Diels the *Vetusta Placita*. In it Stoic, Epicurean and Peripatetic opinions were added to those recorded by Theophrastus, and much that was derived from Theophrastus was subjected to Stoic reformulation. Aetius himself added further Stoic and Epicurean opinions, as well as a few definitions and introductory comments. A direct use of the *Vetusta Placita* was made by Varro (in Censorinus' *de die natali*), and is seen also in the brief doxography in Cicero, *Academica priora* II, 37, 118.

(*c*) *Other important doxographical sources*. (i) *Hippolytus*. The first book of his *Refutation of all Heresies*, the so-called *Philosophoumena* once attributed to Origen, is a biographical doxography containing separate accounts of the main philosophers. The sections on Thales, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus, the Eleatics and the Atomists come from a trifling biographical summary and are of small value, unlike those on Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Archelaus and Xenophanes, which come from a fuller and much more valuable biographical source. At many points the comments of the second group are more detailed, and less inaccurate, than the corresponding ones in Aetius. (ii) *The pseudo-Plutarchean Stromateis*. These short 'Miscellanies' (which must be distinguished from the *Epitome*, from Aetius, also ascribed to Plutarch) are preserved by Eusebius; they come from a source similar to that of the second group in Hippolytus. They differ in that they concentrate on the subject-matter of the earlier books in Theophrastus, those that dealt with the material

principle, cosmogony, and the heavenly bodies; and they contain much verbiage and pretentious interpretation. However, some important details are preserved which do not occur elsewhere. (iii) *Diogenes Laertius*. Apart from biographical details culled from many sources, some useful chronological data from Apollodorus, and deplorable epigrams from the pen of Diogenes himself, the opinions of each thinker are usually set out in two distinct doxographical notes: the first (what Diogenes called the κεφαλαιώδης or summary account) from a worthless biographical source like that used by Hippolytus in the first group, and the second (the ἐπὶ μέρους or detailed account) from a fuller and more reliable epitome like that used by Hippolytus for his second group.

(5) CONCLUSION. It must be remembered that many writers who were independent of the direct Theophrastean tradition are known to have devoted special works to the early philosophers. For example the fourth-century B.C. Academic, Heraclides of Pontus, wrote four books on Heraclitus, and so did the Stoic Cleanthes; while Aristotle's pupil Aristoxenus wrote biographies which included one of Pythagoras. Allowance must be made, therefore, for the possibility of isolated non-Theophrastean judgements appearing in later eclectic sources like Plutarch or Clement; though most such judgements that we can recognize show signs, nevertheless, of Aristotelian, or of Stoic, Epicurean, or Sceptic, influence. Theophrastus remains the main source of information, and his work is known to us through the doxographers, through the quotations by Simplicius, and through the extant *de sensu*. From these it is evident that Theophrastus was strongly influenced by Aristotle – who, as has been stated, did not aim, as Theophrastus should have done, at extreme historical objectivity. Theophrastus was no more successful than is to be expected in understanding the motives of an earlier period and a different world of thought; a further defect was that, once having extracted a general pattern of explanations, particularly for cosmological events, he tended to impose it, perhaps too boldly, in cases where he lacked full evidence – cases which seem to have been not infrequent. Thus it is legitimate to feel complete confidence in our understanding of a Presocratic thinker only when the Aristotelian or Theophrastean interpretation, even if it can be accurately reconstructed, is confirmed by relevant and well-authenticated extracts from the philosopher himself.

CHAPTER I

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; οὐρανὸν 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 (ἐλάτη) δι' ἠέρος αἰθέρ' ἵκανεν, '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 ἠερόεντα
τῆλε μάλ', ἦχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
ἔνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
τόσσον ἔνερθ' Ἀΐδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης.

2 Hesiod *Theogony* 726 (Τάρταρον)
τὸν πέρι χάλκεον ἕρκος ἐλήλαται· ἀμφὶ δέ μιν νὺξ
τριστοιχεὶ κέχυται περὶ δειρήν· αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν
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, Erebos, 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 πεῖρας ἄνω παρὰ ποσσὶν ὁρᾶται
ἠέρι προσπλάζον, τὸ κάτω δ' ἐς ἄπειρον ἱκνεῖται.
(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 πὰρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο.

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

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

τῷ οὐδὲ κρείων Ἀχελώιος ἰσοφαρίζει
οὐδὲ βαθυρρείταο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο,
ἐξ οὗ περ πάντες ποταμοὶ καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα
καὶ πᾶσαι κρῆναι καὶ φρείατα 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, ῥοαί, 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*, 60f.), '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-çáyāna-ḥ', 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

Ἠέλιος μὲν γὰρ πόνον ἔλλαχεν ἤματα πάντα,
οὐδέ κοτ' ἄμπαυσις γίγνεται οὐδεμία
ἵπποισίν τε καὶ αὐτῷ, ἐπεὶ ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠὼς
Ὠκεανὸν προλιποῦσ' οὐρανὸν εἰσαναβῇ·

τὸν μὲν γὰρ διὰ κῦμα φέρει πολυήρατος εὐνὴ
κοιίλη Ἡφαίστου χερσὶν ἐλήλαμένη
χρυσοῦ τιμήεντος, ὑπόπτερος, ἄκρον ἐφ' ὕδωρ
εὖδονθ' ἁρπαλέως χώρου ἀφ' Ἑσπερίδων
γαῖαν ἐς Αἰθιόπων, ἵνα δὴ θοὸν ἅρμα καὶ ἵπποι
ἑστᾶσ', ὄφρ' Ἠὼς ἠριγένεια μόλῃ·
ἔνθ' ἐπεβή⟨σεθ' ἐ⟩ῶν 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 μέν κεν ἔγωγε θεῶν αἰειγενετάων
ῥεῖα κατευνήσαιμι, καὶ ἂν ποταμοῖο ῥέεθρα
Ὠκεανοῦ, ὅς περ γένεσις πάντεσσι τέτυκται·

Ζηνὸς δ' οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε Κρονίονος ἄσσον ἰκοίμην
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 ...Ὅμηρος, ⟨ὃς⟩ εἰπὼν "Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν' πάντα εἴρηκεν ἔκγονα ῥοῆς τε καὶ κινήσεως. (Cf. also **12**.)

11 Aristotle *Met.* A3, 983b27 (following 85) εἰσὶ δέ τινες οἳ καὶ τοὺς παμπαλαίους καὶ πολὺ πρὸ τῆς νῦν γενέσεως καὶ πρώτους θεολογήσαντας οὕτως οἴονται (*sc.* ὥσπερ Θαλῆς) περὶ τῆς φύσεως ὑπολαβεῖν· Ὠκεανόν τε γὰρ καὶ Τηθὺν ἐποίησαν τῆς γενέσεως πατέρας καὶ τὸν ὅρκον τῶν θεῶν ὕδωρ, τὴν καλουμένην ὑπ' αὐτῶν Στύγα τῶν ποιητῶν· τιμιώτατον μὲν γὰρ τὸ πρεσβύτατον, ὅρκος δὲ τὸ τιμιώτατόν ἐστιν. (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 1 B 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 Ὅμηρος ''Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσίν' φησιν 'καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν'· οἶμαι δὲ καὶ Ἡσίοδος. λέγει δέ που καὶ Ὀρφεὺς ὅτι

Ὠκεανὸς πρῶτος καλλίρροος ἦρξε γάμοιο,
ὅς ῥα κασιγνήτην ὁμομήτορα Τηθὺν ὄπυιεν.

13 Plato *Timaeus* 40D–E ...πειστέον δὲ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν ἔμπροσθεν, ἐκγόνοις μὲν θεῶν οὖσιν, ὡς ἔφασαν, σαφῶς δέ που τούς γε αὑτῶν προγόνους εἰδόσιν· ...Γῆς τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ παῖδες Ὠκεανός τε καὶ

Τηθὺς 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' ἄιστον ἀπ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε πόντῳ (*sc.* Ζεύς)
εἰ μὴ Νὺξ δμήτειρα θεῶν ἐσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν·
τὴν ἰκόμην φεύγων, ὁ 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 Νὺξ δμήτειρα 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 ταύτῃ ὁμοίως, ἢ βασιλεύειν καὶ ἄρχειν φασὶν οὐ τοὺς πρώτους οἷον Νύκτα καὶ Οὐρανὸν ἢ Χάος ἢ Ὠκεανόν, ἀλλὰ τὸν Δία. (Cf. *Met.* Λ6, 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 οὖσα θεολογία πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἐσιώπησεν...ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Νυκτὸς ἐποιήσατο τὴν ἀρχήν, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ Ὅμηρος, εἰ καὶ μὴ συνεχῆ πεποίηται τὴν γενεαλογίαν, ἵστησιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀποδεκτέον Εὐδήμου λέγοντος ὅτι ἀπὸ Ὠκεανοῦ καὶ Τηθύος ἄρχεται...

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

18 Philodemus *de pietate* 137, 5 ἐν μέν τισιν ἐκ Νυκτὸς καὶ Ταρτάρου λέγεται τὰ πάντα, ἐν δέ τισιν ἐξ Αἴδου καὶ Αἰθέρος· ὁ δὲ τὴν Τιτανομαχίαν γράψας ἐξ Αἰθέρος φησίν, Ἀκουσίλαος δὲ ἐκ Χάους πρώτου τἄλλα· 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 cosmogonies 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 Ἀήρ in 'Epimenides',[2] the cosmic figures involved are all to be found in the Hesiodic cosmogony proper, **31**; and even Ἀήρ, 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' ἠερόεντα (but see p. 35 n. 1). When we see from Damascius' reference to 'Epimenides' in **27** that Night and Ἀήρ *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 Musaeus[3] and Acusilaus[4] 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) σκῆπτρον δ' ἀριδείκετον εἶο χέρεσσιν / θῆκε θεᾶς Νυκτός, ⟨ἵν' ἔχῃ⟩ βασιληίδα 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 theogony 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 20*a*) 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 originative 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 'Ορφικοί, '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 'Ορφικοί, 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 *Zvran 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

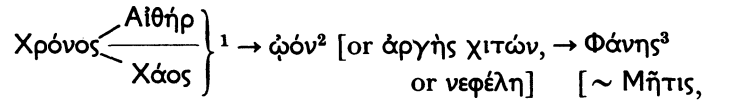
Phanes (see n. 1 on p. 19 and n. 3 on p. 24), himself descended from Chronos. She was given prophetic powers by Phanes, succeeded him as ruler, and seems somehow to have given birth for a second time to Gaia and Ouranos.[2] The secondary and repetitive nature of this production of sky and earth, and 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 (ἱεροὶ λόγοι ἐν ῥαψῳδίαις κδ̄ according to the Suda s.v. 'Ορφεύς), of which many fragments survive (Kern, frr. 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 Γαῖάν τε καὶ Οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔτικτε / δεῖξέν τ' ἐξ ἀφανῶν φανεροὺς οἵ τ' εἰσὶ 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 (frr. 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 I B 12) ἐν μὲν τοίνυν ταῖς φερομέναις ταύταις 'Ραψῳδίαις 'Ορφικαῖς ἡ θεολογία ἥδε τίς ἐστιν ἡ περὶ τὸ νοητόν, ἣν καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι διερμηνεύουσιν, ἀντὶ μὲν τῆς μιᾶς τῶν ὅλων 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:



...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...

(Chronos → Aither, Chaos)[1] → egg[2] [*or* shining tunic, → Phanes[3] *or* cloud] [~ Metis, Erikepaios])

...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 δίῳ / ὠεὸν ἀργυφιον. *(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:

(ὕδωρ, ὕλη → γῆ) → Χρόνος ἀγήραος (a winged, multi-headed, bisexual snake; also called Heracles, and accompanied by Ἀνάγκη and Ἀδράστεια) → (Αἰθήρ, Χάος, Ἔρεβος)[2] → ὠόν → θεὸς ἀσώματος (having wings and animal heads)

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...

Water, Matter → Earth → Unageing Chronos/Heracles (with Necessity and Adrasteia) → (Aither, Chaos, Erebos) → Egg → 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.* I, 94; a winged symbol for El-Kronos comes in 'Sanchuniathon', Eusebius *P.E.* I, 10, 36 (see p. 41 n.). Hellanicus may have been the father (2nd–1st cent. B.C.) of one Sandon, 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 τούτοις ὁ Χρόνος ᾠὸν ἐγέννησεν, says Damascius – i.e. in Aither, Chaos and Erebos. 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 I B 13) ...ἦν γὰρ ὕδωρ ἀρχὴ κατ' αὐτὸν (*sc.* Ὀρφέα) τοῖς ὅλοις, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ὕδατος ἰλὺς κατέστη, ἐκ δὲ ἑκατέρων ἐγεννήθη ζῷον, 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 ᾠόν, ὃ συμπληρούμενον ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ γεγεννηκότος ἐκ παρατριβῆς εἰς δύο ἐρράγη. τὸ μὲν οὖν κατὰ κορυφὴν αὐτοῦ Οὐρανὸς εἶναι ἐτελέσθη, τὸ δὲ κάτω ἐνεχθὲν Γῆ· προῆλθε δὲ καὶ θεός τις δισώματος.[1] Οὐρανὸς δὲ Γῇ μιχθεὶς γεννᾷ θηλείας μὲν Κλωθὼ Λάχεσιν Ἄτροπον... (a theogony of the Hesiodic type follows).

[1] γη 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 Νὺξ Ἔρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς,
Γῆ δ' οὐδ' Ἀὴρ οὐδ' Οὐρανὸς ἦν· Ἐρέβους δ' ἐν ἀπείροσι κόλποις
τίκτει πρώτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νὺξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ᾠόν,
ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλαστεν Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινός,
στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμώκεσι δίναις. 697
οὗτος δὲ Χάει πτερόεντι μιγεὶς νυχίῳ κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρὺν
ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν ἐς φῶς.
πρότερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων πρὶν Ἔρως ξυνέμειξεν ἅπαντα·
ξυμμιγνυμένων δ' ἑτέρων ἑτέροις γένετ' Οὐρανὸς Ὠκεανός τε
καὶ Γῆ πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἄφθιτον. ὧδε μέν ἐσμεν
πολὺ πρεσβύτατοι πάντων μακάρων.

26 First of all was Chaos and Night and black Erebos and wide Tartaros, and neither Ge nor Aer nor Ouranos existed; in the boundless bosoms of Erebos 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 (DK3B5; from Eudemus) τὸν δὲ Ἐπιμενίδην δύο πρώτας ἀρχὰς ὑποθέσθαι Ἀέρα καὶ Νύκτα...ἐξ ὧν γεννηθῆναι Τάρταρον...ἐξ ὧν δύο Τιτᾶνας[1]...ὧν μιχθέντων ἀλλήλοις ᾠὸν γενέσθαι...ἐξ οὗ πάλιν ἄλλην γενεὰν 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' ἄμφω '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, Erebos 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 φορεύμενος 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 Mycenean origin (M. Nilsson, *Gesch. d. griech. Religion* I[3] (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 I B 12, Kern fr. 70) τὴν δὲ τάξιν ἣν δεδώκαμεν τῷ σφαιρώματι οἱ Ὀρφικοὶ λέγουσι παραπλησίαν εἶναι τῇ ἐν τοῖς ᾠοῖς· ὃν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον τὸ λέπυρον ἐν τῷ ᾠῷ, τοῦτον ἐν τῷ παντὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ ὡς ἐξήρτηται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κυκλοτερῶς ὁ αἰθήρ, οὕτως τοῦ λεπύρου ὁ ὑμήν.

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· ὑὸς Γαίας καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.
δίψαι δ' ἐμὶ αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλὰ δότ' ὃ[κα
ψυχρὸν ὕδορ προρέον τᾶς Μνεμοσύνες ἀπὸ λίμ[ν]α[ς].
καὶ δέ τοι ἐλεῦσ(ιν) ⟨ο⟩ἱ ὑπὸ Χθονίοι Βασιλῆι,
καὶ δέ τοι δόσοσι πιῆν τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπ[ὸ] λίμνας.
καὶ δὲ καὶ συχνὸν hοδὸν ἔρχεα⟨ι⟩, ἄν τε καὶ ἄλλοι
μύσται καὶ βάχχοι hιερὰν 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 πρώτιστος βασίλευσεν
(3)	xi, 6	ἐκ τοῦ δὴ Κρόνος [α]ὖτις, ἔπειτα δὲ μητίετα Ζεύς
(4)	vii, 1	ἐξ ᾧ[δύτοι]ο...χρῆσαι (*sc.* τὴν Νύκτα)
	vii, 10	[ἡ δὲ] ἔχρησεν ἅπαντα τά οἱ θέ[μις.....]αι
(5)	ix, 1	Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ πατρὸς ἑοῦ πάρα [θέ]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 ἠδὲ θέαιναι καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ κρῆναι ἐπήρατοι ἄλλα τε πάντα [ὅ]σσα τότ' ἦν γεγαῶτ', αὐτὸς δ' ἄρα μοῦνος ἔγεντο.
(8)	xix, 3–6	Ὠκεανός...ἔμησατο...σθένος μέγα...εὐρὺ ῥέοντα, ? *sc.* μήσατο δ' Ὠκεανοῖο μέγα σθένος εὐρὺ ῥέοντος (*restit.* Burkert, *alii*)
(9)	xx, 3	(σελήνη, *cf.* xx, 10) ἣ πολλοῖς φαίνει μερόπεσσι ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
(10)	xxii, 9–10	μητρὸς ἐν φιλότητι...θέλοντα μιχθῆναι, *cf.* xxii, 1–2 μη[τρ]ὸς...ἑᾶς, ? *sc.* μητρὸς ἑᾶς ἐθέλων μιχθήμεναι ἐν φιλότητι (*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 πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα 116
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί, 117
Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῷ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,[1] 119
ἠδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, 120
λυσιμελής, πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.
ἐκ Χάεος δ' Ἔρεβός τε μέλαινά τε Νὺξ ἐγένοντο·
Νυκτὸς δ' αὖτ' Αἰθήρ τε καὶ Ἡμέρη ἐξεγένοντο,
οὓς τέκε κυσαμένη Ἐρέβει φιλότητι μιγεῖσα. 125
Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἶσον ἑαυτῇ
Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,
ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί.
γείνατο δ' Οὔρεα μακρά, θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους
Νυμφέων, αἳ ναίουσιν ἀν' οὔρεα βησσήεντα. 130
ἡ δὲ καὶ ἀτρύγετον πέλαγος τέκεν, οἴδματι θυῖον,

Πόντον, ἄτερ φιλότητος ἐφιμέρου· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Οὐρανῷ εὐνηθεῖσα τέκ' Ὠκεανὸν βαθυδίνην,
Κοῖόν τε Κρῖόν 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, Erebos and black Night came into being; and from Night, again, came Aither and Day, whom she conceived and bore after mingling in love with Erebos. 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-eddying Okeanos, and Koios and Krios and Hyperion and Iapetos...

[1] Line 118, ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος 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.X.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 ἀθετεῖται ('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 (Ἐρέβεσφιν 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* I, 103), who perhaps took the idea from Pherecydes of Syros (DK 7 B 1*a*), 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