

The *Theogony* of Hesiod

Lines 104-125 – Birth of the Earliest Gods

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"Let him hear the advice of Hesiod. . . . The advice of Hesiod is good." — Aristotle

"Lampon . . . greatly honors the sayings of Hesiod, the one he declares and recommends to his sons."
—Pindar

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Birth of the Earliest Gods

Lines 104-125

REJOICE, CHILDREN OF Zeus! And give me a desirable song to sing. Glorify the holy race of the immortals, who always are, the ones born of Earth and starry Sky, and murky Night, and those nourished by the salty Sea.

Tell about how in the beginning the gods came to be—the earth and rivers and the boundless sea, raging with swollen waves, [110] and the shining stars and broad sky above. And tell of the gods that were born from them, the givers of good things. And how they divided the riches among themselves, and how they divided the honors. And also how they first took hold of many-folded Olympus. You Muses, who have your houses on Olympus, tell me these things from the start, beginning with the god who came into being first.

Truly Chaos was born the very first.¹

Yet then came broad-breasted Earth, the forever immovable abode of all the immortals who hold the peak of snowy Olympus and gloomy Tartaros deep within the broad-pathed earth.

[120] And Desire (Eros), the most beautiful of the immortal gods, the one who loosens limbs and conquers the mind in the chest of every god and every human being and the wise counsels therein.

And from Chaos, Darkness² (Erebos) and dark Night (Nyx) were born. Next, Night gave birth to bright upper Air (Aether) and to Day (Hēmera) when she joined in love with Darkness and conceived them and brought them into the world.

So ends Reading 2, "Birth of the Earliest Gods."
See you in Reading 3, "Earth and Sky."

See **Notes** on the next page.

NOTES

¹ Some translators give Chaos as “Chasm,” the great expanse. For more on the nature of Chaos, see the Introduction, “The Big Themes and Ideas of the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*.”

² Generally, Erebus is darkness. More specifically, however, it is the darkness of the deep, of the dead, the nether darkness of the underworld, of Hades and Tartartos.

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