

The Era of Zeus

Search the GML
 advanced

"For there are new rulers in heaven, and Zeus governs with lawless customs; that which was mighty before he now brings to nothing..." (Chorus of *Oceanids*, Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 150).

Brief recapitulation

Having examined the myth of *The Ages of the World*, we may now turn to some basic features of "the Era of Zeus". As we learn, first from Hesiod, and then from Apollodorus:

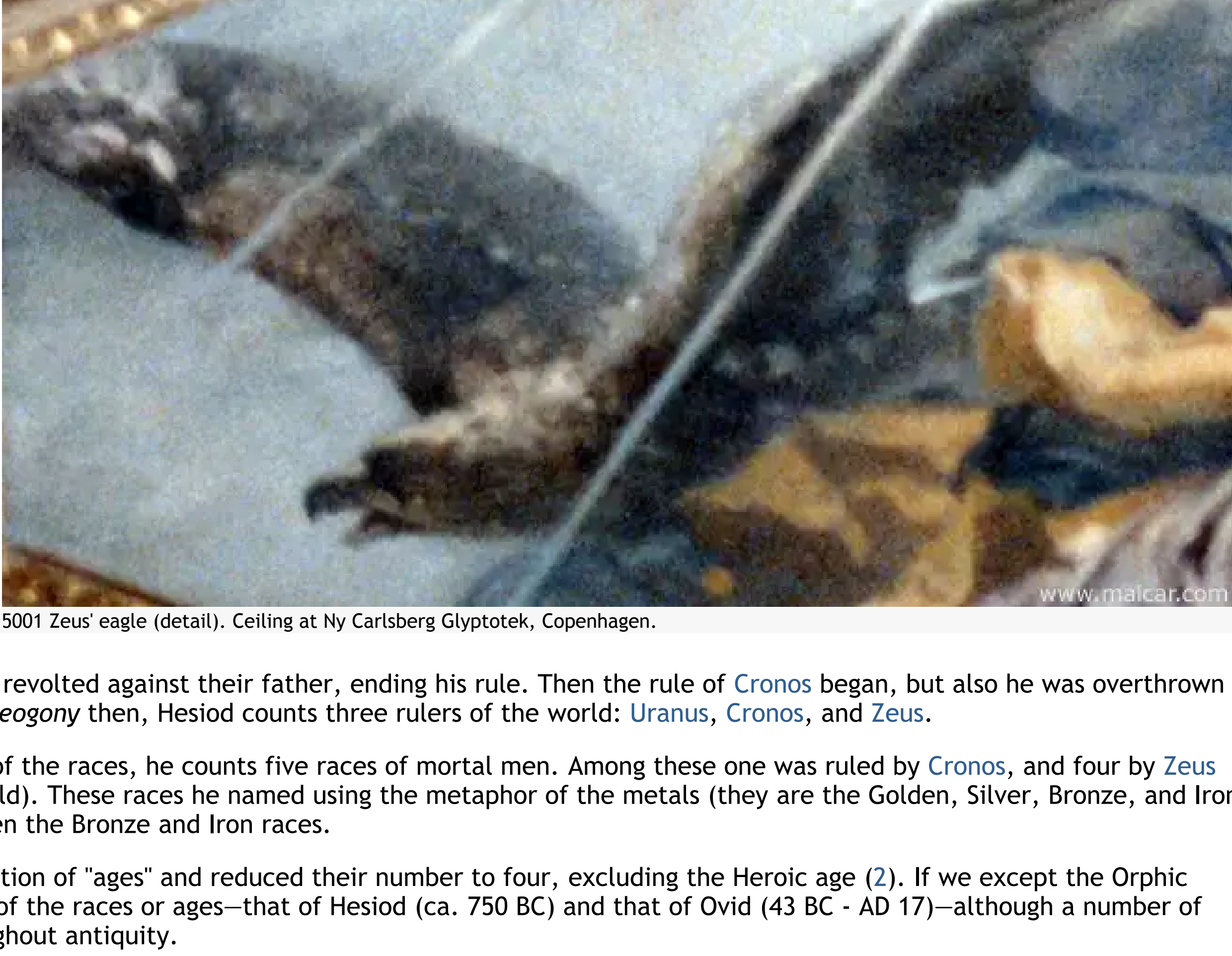
"Uranus was the first who ruled over the whole world." (*Library* 1.1.1).

Uranus (Sky) is both the son and husband of **Gaia** (Earth). She is

"... the ever-sure foundation of all the deathless ones who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus..." (Hesiod, *Theogony* 117).

and he

"... an ever-sure abiding-place for the blessed gods." (Hesiod, *Theogony* 126).



501 Zeus eagle (detail). Ceiling at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

Among the children of **Uranus** and **Gaia** were the **Titans**, who revolted against their father, ending his rule. Then the rule of **Cronos** began, but also he was overthrown by his son—**Zeus**—who inaugurated a third reign (1). In the *Theogony* then, Hesiod counts three rulers of the world: **Uranus**, **Cronos**, and **Zeus**.

When in *Works and Days* the same author narrates the myth of the races, he counts five races of mortal men. Among these one was ruled by **Cronos**, and four by **Zeus** (there was no race of mortal men when **Uranus** ruled the world). These races he named using the metaphor of the metals (they are the Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron races), except for one—the Heroic race—which comes between the Bronze and Iron races.

Although Hesiod spoke of "races", posterity introduced the notion of "ages" and reduced their number to four, excluding the Heroic age (2). If we except the Orphic doctrines, there are only two complete versions of the myth of the races or ages—that of Hesiod (ca. 750 BC) and that of Ovid (43 BC - AD 17)—although a number of important details have been provided by other authors throughout antiquity.

What is "an age"? A period of time with certain characteristics. What is "a race"? A breed of mortal men with certain characteristics. If a certain race coincides with a certain age, both arising and ending simultaneously, then it could be indifferent whether we talk of "race" or "age". We may say that the age was called after the characteristics of the race or that the race was called after the age (if we gave pre-eminence to a *Zeltgeist* or "spirit of an age"). An "age" could also be defined after its ruler, and in that sense, we could even distinguish "an age of Uranus". But since there were no mortal men at that time, we leave it aside ...

The Hesiodic account shows that every race has a ruler, but also that one ruler may govern several races: **Zeus** created three races of mortal men, of which he destroyed one and will destroy another; he also ruled over yet a fourth which destroyed itself. The Hesiodic myth of the races may be summarized as follows:

| Races | Made by | Ruled by | Disappearance |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Golden | "The Olympians" | Cronos | Covered by the earth |
| Silver | "The Olympians" (Zeus) | Zeus | Destroyed by Zeus , then covered by the earth. |
| Brazen | Zeus | Zeus | Destroyed by war |
| Heroic | Zeus | Zeus | Destroyed by war, except the best who dwell in the Islands of the Blest, ruled by Cronos . |
| Iron | Zeus | Zeus | Zeus will destroy it |

Complete account at: *Works and Days* 106-200

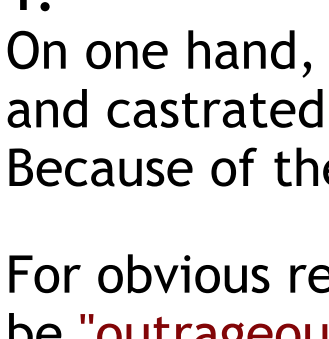
When comparing Hesiod's account in *Theogony* 453ff. with his references to the Golden race in *Works and Days* 110, this question arises: How could the Olympians—"the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus"—have made a Golden Race flourishing under the reign of **Cronos** if they had been devoured by him (except **Zeus**, who was in hiding)? We may surmount this difficulty regarding "Olympus" as the ruler's seat in Heaven (whether the ruler is a Titan god or "a god") as Virgil seems to do when he says (in *Aen.* 8.313): "First from heavenly Olympus came Saturn ..." For we cannot assume that the Golden Race was created after **Zeus** released the Titans; that would rather be the rule of **Cronos** over the Islands of the Blest. Plato writes:

(523a) "Now in the time of **Cronos** there was a law concerning mankind, and it holds to this very day amongst the gods, that every man who has passed a just and holy life departs after his decease (523b) to the Isles of the Blest, and dwells in all happiness apart from ill; but whoever has lived unjustly and impiously goes to the dungeon of requital and penance which, you know, they call Tartarus." (Plato, *Gorgias*).

But such a "law concerning mankind" during the time of **Cronos** could not apply to the Hesiodic golden race, who were incapable of evil. There were no laws and no judges in the age of **Cronos**, as also Ovid informs us:

"Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right." (*Metamorphoses* 1.89).

The Silver race was also created by "the Olympians", but was destroyed by **Zeus**. The Brazen, Heroic and Iron ages were made by **Zeus** and ruled by him. On the wars that destroyed the Brazen race Hesiod gives no details, but we learn that the wars which destroyed most of the Heroic race were those of **Thebes** and **Troy**. The Iron race is Hesiod's own, and should also be our own. For we have not yet witnessed the destruction of the race he announced, and also Roman authors from seven or eight centuries after Hesiod believed they lived in the Iron Age. There is no disagreement on this issue: for one reason or another no one thinks he lives in the Brazen Age—even less in the Silver or Golden. It is true that our age may be given other names such as "Atomic Age" or "Space Age". However, the myth of the ages is not based on technological milestones, being rather a description of the decay of man's spiritual qualities. Accordingly, the "Iron Age" of myth should not be confused with that age of iron which History affirms dawned about 1000 BC. (3)



The two faces of Cronos

Even a superficial look at the myths "proper" (i.e. the divine myths or tales concerning, not heroes but gods) will show **Cronos**—**Zeus'** father and predecessor—under two contradictory lights.

1. On one hand, **Cronos** is "wily" and "most terrible" (Hes.*The.*137). We also learn (175ff.) how he, having received a jagged sickle from his mother, ambushed his father and castrated him. (4) Later, as both Hesiod (*The.* 453-467ff.) and Apollodorus (1.1.5) narrate, **Cronos** devoured his offspring (except **Zeus**, who dethroned him). Because of these and other events, Titanic brutality became proverbial. (5)

For obvious reasons, also **Uranus** condemned **Cronos** and the **Titans**, denouncing their insolence and violence (Hes.*The.*209). And in general we notice that the **Titans** can be "outrageous" or indulge in "mad presumption and exceeding pride" like **Menœtius** (514), or be "full of wiles" like **Prometheus** (510), or easy to deceive like **Epimetheus** whose scattered brain made of him from the first "a mischief to men who eat bread" (512).

We may add that as **Cronos**/Saturn was later identified with **Chronos** (Time), he also became the underlying cause of decay and the bringer of old age. But there is probably no original mythological ground for this identification which nevertheless reaches us from antiquity.

2. On the other hand, Hesiod calls them "the former Titan gods" (*prōterai theoi*), which means they were no daemons or evil spirits. Also Pausanias characterizes them as gods:

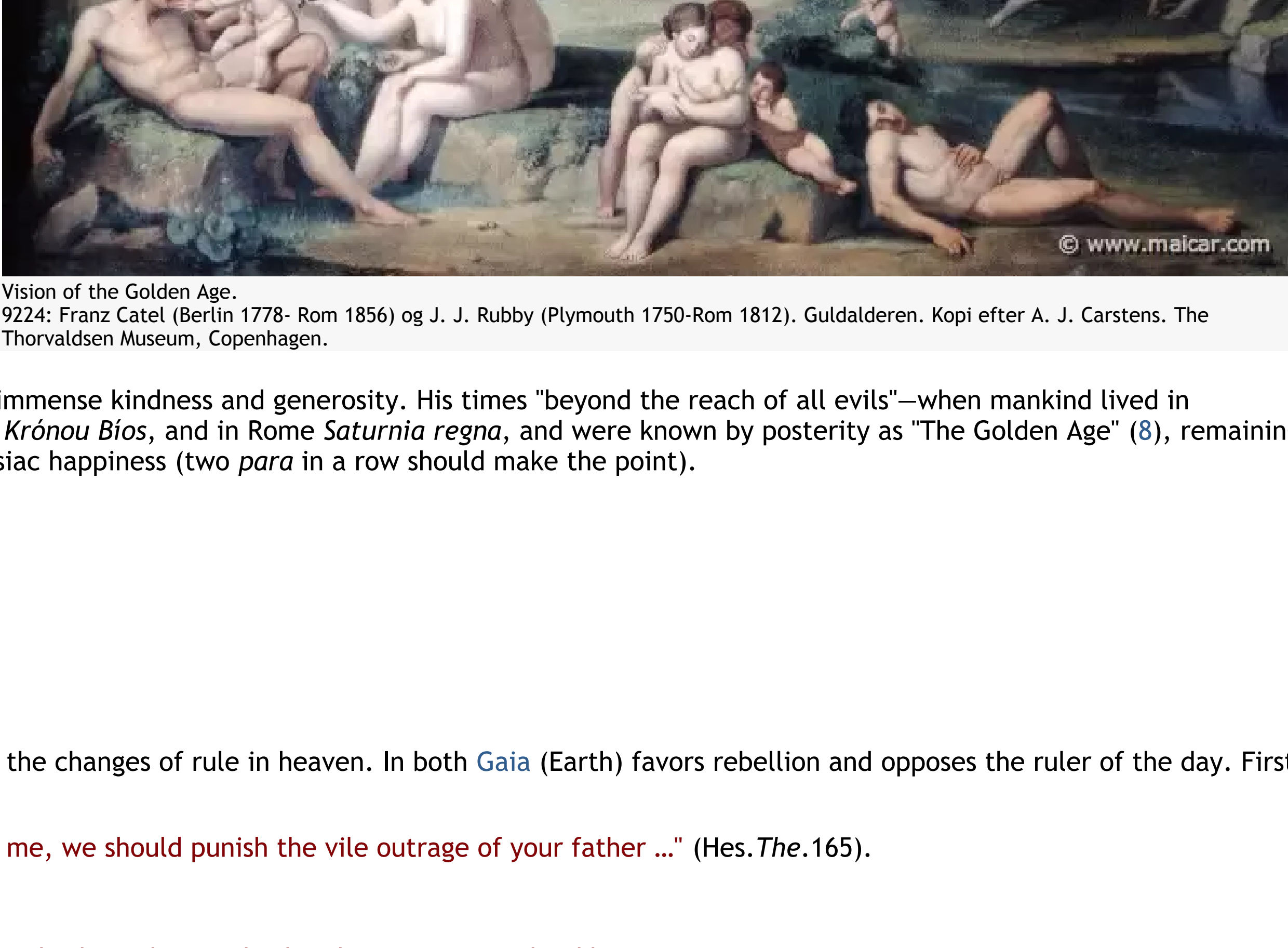
"The first to introduce Titans into poetry was Homer, representing them as gods down in what is called Tartarus; the lines are in the passage about **Hera's** oath. From Homer the name of the Titans was taken by Onomacritus, who in the orgies he composed for **Dionysus** made the Titans the authors of the god's sufferings." (*Description of Greece* 8.37.5). (6)

And if the Titans were gods, then we may ask: Can a god ever be evil? Euripides makes **Iphigenia** say: "That any god is evil I do not believe," (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 390), but we cannot know for certain (unless we resolved that any divine being who is not good cannot be called "a god"—if that helps). More important, however, is that we learn through the same Hesiod that a golden race of mortal men lived when **Cronos** reigned in heaven:

"And they lived like gods (115) without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died, it was as though they were overcome with sleep, and they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, (120) rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods." (7)

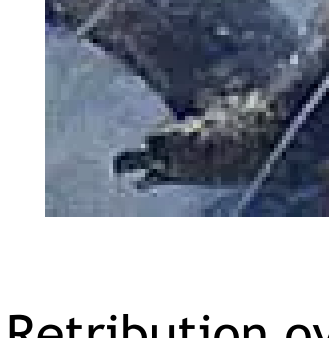
Reading this passage, it is easy to forgive **Cronos'** "crimes" against other deities, and conclude that, after all, such deeds do not concern us—wretched mortals as we are:

"... with the gods may No mortal himself At any time measure." (Goethe, *Limits of Humanity*).



Vision of the Golden Age. 9224: Franz Cabel (Berlin 1778- Rom 1856) and J. J. Rubby (Plymouth 1750- Rom 1812). Guldalderen. Kopi after A. J. Carstens. The Thorvaldsen Museum, Copenhagen.

In *Works and Days*, the poet invites us to admit that **Cronos** was a gentle ruler towards mankind—the gentlest—a ruler of immense kindness and generosity. His times "beyond the reach of all evils"—when mankind lived in happiness, peace and abundance—were called in Hellas *o pi Krónou Bios*, and in Rome *Saturnia Regna*, and were known by posterity as "The Golden Age" (8), remaining in the collective memory of mankind as a paradigm of paradisiac happiness (two *para* in a row should make the point).



The erratic Earth

As we learn through Hesiod, two violent revolutions achieved the changes of rule in heaven. In both **Gaia** (Earth) favors rebellion and opposes the ruler of the day. First she incites the **Titans** against **Uranus**:

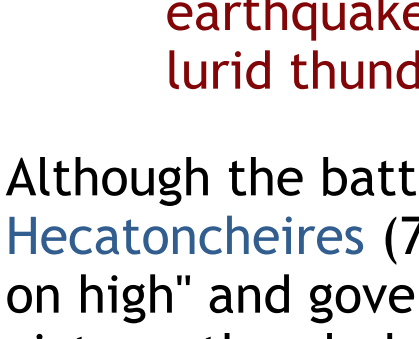
"My children, gotten of a sinful father, if you will obey me, we should punish the vile outrage of your father ..." (Hes.*The.*165).

And when **Cronos** agrees, she

"... rejoiced greatly in spirit, and set and hid him in an ambush, and put in his hands (175) a jagged sickle ..."

Later (464), we learn that **Gaia** and **Uranus** prophesied to **Cronos** that he was destined to be overcome by his own son. It was then that **Cronos** started to swallow his offspring. But when **Rhea** wished to save her son (**Zeus**) from being swallowed, **Gaia** and **Uranus** devised a plan to rescue the child, and **Gaia** helped her daughter in several ways (9) for the benefit of **Zeus** and the ruin of **Cronos**, whom she before had helped to seize power.

At first glance Earth's behavior could look erratic, but we are told more than once that all this was unconditionally (10) bound to happen.



The weapons of Zeus

Retribution overtook **Cronos** for two crimes: the castration and dethroning of his father, and the swallowing down of his own offspring (472). **Cronos** was defeated after a ten years long heavenly war, targetly by the new weapons of **Zeus**:

"From Heaven and from Olympus (690) he came immediately, hurling his lightning; the bolts flew thick and fast from his strong hand together with thunder and lightning, whirling an awesome flame."

Hesiod describes the destructive power of **Zeus'** weapons thus:

"The life-giving earth crashed around in burning, and the vast wood cracked loud with fire all about. (695) All the land seethed, and Ocean's streams and the unfruitful sea. The hot vapor lapped round the earthborn Titans: flame unspokeable rose to the bright upper air: the flashing glare of the thunderstone and lightning blinded their eyes for all that they were strong. (700) Astounding heat seized Chaos; and to see with eyes and to hear the sound with ears it seemed even as if Earth and wide Heaven above came together; for such a mighty crash would have arisen if Earth were hurled to ruin, and Heaven from on high were hurling her down; (705) so great a crash was there while the gods were meeting together in strife. Also the winds brought rumbling earthquake and duststorm, thunder and lightning and the lurid thunderbolt, which are the shafts of great Zeus ..." (7)

Although the battle is finally won by the stones of the **Heatoncheires** (714ff.), we learn that the new ruler "thunders on high" and governs by the same weapons that gave him victory: thunderbolt, thunder, and lightning:

"In them he trusts and rules over mortals and immortals." (Hes.*The.*506).

Until then, Earth had hidden them (505), but the **Cyclopes** gave them to him (140, 504), and **Pegasus** fetches them for him (285), and now the wide earth is shaken by the thunder of **Zeus** (459).

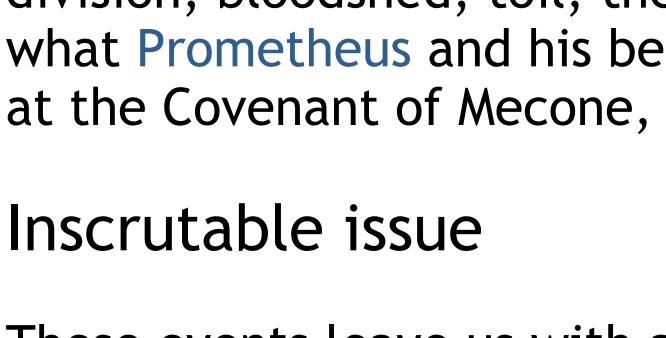
Age of Division

Combining several sources, we may list some features of the reign of **Cronos** and watch how they were reversed under the rule of **Zeus**:

Some point out that **Cronos**, by castrating his lustful father, separated Sky and Earth (11). But the division of the world becomes even more apparent when the era of **Zeus** begins:

"And in three-fold wise are all things divided, and unto each hath been apportioned his own domain. I verily, when the lots were shaken, won for my portion the grey sea to be my habitation for ever, and Hades won the murky darkness, and **Zeus** won the broad heaven amid the air and the clouds; but the earth and high Olympus remain yet common to us all." (Poseidon to **Iris**. *Hom. Il.*15.187).

Division also prevails between men and gods, and among men. Follow comments on the points above (3 to 7):



The Covenant of Mecone

A new covenant is arrived at during the banquet of Mecone (Hes.*The.*535ff.) when **Prometheus** instituted the first blood sacrifice, apportioning what belonged to the gods and what belonged to mortal men. Also the division of humans into men and women must be traced to that first sacrifice. For **Prometheus** attempted to deceive **Zeus** with the portions, and as a consequence **Zeus** hid fire from men. Then **Prometheus** stole fire from heaven, but as a price for it **Zeus** sent **Pandora**, from whom womankind descends. Humans were thus divided into two kinds (men and women), being separated from the gods except for one last tenuous link: the blood sacrifice.

The ox slaughtered by **Prometheus** at Mecone has been remembered at least in two ways. On one hand it was the first of a long chain of blood sacrifices which at any time could reestablish or reinforce the covenant between the new ruler of heaven and the race of mortal men and women inhabiting earth. On the other hand, the generic ox was also remembered by a series of authors (among which **Aristus**, **Virgil**, **Ovid**, **Seneca**, **Aelian**, etc.) as an eloquent milestone in the history of human evolution, which for these authors rather means "decay" (since they generally believe that mortal men go from bad to worse and from worse to worst). The sacrificed ox then allowed man to preserve his weakened relation with the gods, but it also came to represent his cruelty and ingratitude. For, as the story goes, man first yoked the ox and forced it to work for him, and at a later age he devoured the same animal that had helped him.

The sacrifice at Mecone, although performed by **Prometheus**, was approved by **Zeus**, who accepted one of the portions as his own. **Prometheus** disguised the portions so that **Zeus** would choose the inferior one, but from the Hesiodic account we learn that **Prometheus** could not deceive the god:

"Zeus whose wisdom is everlasting, saw and failed not to perceive the trick ..." (Hes.*The.*550).

Zeus accepts the inferior (12) portion knowingly, and thereby obtains a reason for hiding fire and the fruits of the earth which men must now seek through hard work. But if **Zeus** allowed the first Promethean trick, could he not have allowed the second one: the theft of fire? In any case, as a result of this second trick **Pandora** was sent down to earth.

Thus the Age of **Cronos** is reversed. From now on humans will be born from sexual intercourse, they will shed the blood of animals and suck their juices, and they will earn their sustenance by forcing the earth through hard toil. They may use fire as a tool for survival, but they will also burn and cook each other with it. So besides the benefits derived from fire and crafts, also division, bloodshed, toil, theft, punishment, and retaliations are what **Prometheus** and his beloved race of mortal men obtained at the Covenant of Mecone, when "The Era of **Zeus**" dawned.

Inscrutable issue

These events leave us with at least one inscrutable issue: Why should **Zeus** seek reasons to put a heavier burden upon mankind?

Because of these accounts (the Covenant of Mecone, and the myth of the Five Ages), some scholars and writers have called **Zeus** "morose" and "pessimistic", and his terms "simplistic" and "idiosyncratically negative". Also we are often reminded that Hesiod was "a small farmer", a circumstance apparently limiting his good judgement. But if his profession, besides being a poet, were that relevant, then we would have to consider that Homer, besides being a poet, was perhaps just "a vagabond".

Apparently Hesiod has deserved this criticism for exposing the hostility of **Zeus** towards mankind, and the decadence of man. He identified his own race as "the iron race" and wished to have been born either before or afterwards his time. That could be pessimistic enough, but that "afterwards" shows that Hesiod envisaged a new, better race, succeeding the iron race, which could be taken as an "optimistic" trait. The idea of palingenesis or recurrence (contemplated by **Plato** and **Virgil**) may be regarded as an attempt to solve the difficulty posed by the dark sides of the era of **Zeus** (see also *Recurrence*).

Notes

(1) These divine rebellions leave us with three rulers (**Uranus**, **Cronos**, and **Zeus**), but this does not automatically mean "three ages". There is a survey of theogonic variations at *Myths of Creation*, but we may here mention yet another one. Apollonius Rhodius (fl. ca. 260 BC) describes in his *Argonautica* one of the myths of Orpheus:

"And he sang how first of all Ophion and Eurynome, daughter of Ocean, held the sway of snowy Olympus, and how through strength of arm one yielded his prerogative to **Cronos** and the other to **Rhea**, and how they fell into the waves of Ocean; but the other two meanwhile ruled over the blessed Titan-gods, wily **Zeus**, still a child and with the thoughts of a child, dwelt in the Dictaean cave; and the earthborn **Cyclopes** had yet not armed him with the bolts, with thunder and lightning ..." (1.503)

In this account, **Cronos** overthrows, not his father **Uranus**, but Ophion. The latter's rule is also mentioned by Nonnos (*Dionysiaca* 2.573), and in 12.44 the name of the lord Ophion appears, along with his deeds, mentioned in a tablet, being followed by the deeds of **Cronos**, whom Nonnos distinguishes from **Chronos** (Time), the father of the **Horae** (Hours, Seasons, or Ages). As we may learn from Nonnos 41.399 the tablet of Ophion, though being "old as the infinite past", contains oracles for the future.

The oceanid **Euryome** is also mentioned by Hesiod and Apollodorus, who call her mother of the **Charites** and of the river god **Asopus**. In Homer *Iliad* 14.200, we learn that from her father **Oceanus** the gods were sprung—"an idea that **Plato** follows in *Timaeus* 40e.

Scholars tell us that the account of Ophion is probably "Orphic", by which they usually mean that it is late or unreliable. Also H. C. Baldry writes that according to Proclus, Orpheus distinguished three races of men—the golden, the silver, and the Titanic—but points out that this "doctrine" was a "deliberate divergence" from Hesiod. (2) **Caréginé** writes:

"Originally there were three races or ages. Hesiod, however, described five of them, since he did not wish to identify our heroes either with the race of bronze or with his own race, that of iron." (*The Gods of the Greeks*, XIII, 7).

Given the strength that the number four has won in this tradition, it is not difficult to agree with the assumption that the ages could have been originally four ... But since we have no evidence of it—Hesiod being our first and therefore "original" source—we cannot figure out how this author knows that "originally" there were four ages.

(3) Some have sought the origin of the myth of the ages in trivial historic events. This relapse into euhemerism provides an example:

"Silver is the metal of the Moon-goddess. The third race were the earliest Hellenic invaders: Bronze Age herdsmen ... The fourth race were the warrior-kings of the Mycenaean Age. The fifth were the Dorians of the twelfth century B.C., who used iron weapons and destroyed the Mycenaean civilization." (Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* 5.1).

Some could also argue that the iron metaphor cannot be conceived without the metal, and that by knowing its date (ca. 1000 BC) we may deduce the date of the metaphor (which must come after). But unfortunately, chronologies change continuously as "new evidence surfaces", and the metaphors themselves could have changed through periods unknown.

(4) We are told that the moral sense of later times found this tale utterly "barbarous". Therefore, the shocked sensibility of modernity either condemned the tale or else explained it in a more symbolic way (humanity had already progressed enough, and no longer would suffer such displays of cruelty and barbarism). Thus we may read in *Plato's Republic* 377e, the remembered lie about:

"There is, *first of all*," I said, "the greatest lie about the things of greatest concernment, which was no pretty invention of him who told how **Uranus** did what Hesiod says he did to **Cronos**, and how **Cronos** in turn took his revenge; (378a) and then there are the doings and sufferings of **Cronos** at the hands of his son. Even if they were true I should not think that they ought to be thus lightly told to thoughtless young persons."

And in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* ii.24.63ff.:

"...an ancient belief prevailed throughout Greece that **Caelus** (**Uranus**) was mutilated by his son **Saturnus** (**Cronos**), and Saturn himself thrown into bondage by his son **Jove** (**Zeus**): now these immoral fables enshrined a decidedly clever fiction (*physica ratio*)." (10)

In Cicero's text, this *physica ratio* becomes clear with the help of etymology, and through the identification of **Cronos** and **Chronos** we arrive to the perspicacious insight that "Time devours the ages" (*consumit aetas temporum*).

(5) A remembered episode showing their cruelty describes their attack against **Zagreus** (the first of two or maybe three **Dionysus**). The **Titans** are said to have destroyed the god with an infernal knife, cutting him into pieces. **Dionysus** appeared, for some time, in different shapes until he finally collapsed. The story suggests that even a god may die, but it is also told that the **Titans** boiled him, and that his members were afterwards brought together by **Demeter**, who thus allowed his rebirth. Otherwise it is told that after the **Titans** dismembered **Dionysus**, son of **Zeus** and **Persephone**, the god gave his son's heart, torn to bits, to **Semele** in a drink, and she was thus made pregnant (Dio.3.62.6; Hyg.*Fab.*167; Nonn.6.169ff.).

(6) Close to this passage, Pausanias describes an image: "... By the image of the Mistress (**Persephone**) stands **Anytus**, represented as a man in armour. Those about the sanctuary say that the Mistress was brought up by **Anytus**, who was one of the **Titans**, as they are called."

(7) The question of who created the races and how they disappeared is examined with more detail at *The Ages of the World*.

(8) Posterity reacts towards the myths in innumerable ways, but three are common: 1) Myths are "useful" because we learn how primitive societies were thought and lived—this is an external attitude; 2) Myths tell truths that, after all, are not so difficult to interpret if we are bold enough—this is a more internal attitude preferred by "humanists", psychoanalysis, etc.; 3) Myths are "just myths", i.e. archaic nonsense. Naturally, all three lead from each other. Concerning the Golden Age, writes Robert Graves in *The Greek Myths* 5.1: "Though the myth of the Golden Age derives eventually from a tradition of tribal-subservience to the Bee-goddess, the savagery of her reign in pre-agricultural times had been forgotten by Hesiod's day, and all that remained was an idealistic conviction that men had once lived in harmony together like bees." This assertion could be as easy to prove as the Hesiodic (Ch. III, 2). H. J. Rose says on the myth of the "ages" and seems to be rather a quasi-philosophical speculation than a tradition. But H. C. Baldry, in his article "Who Invented the Golden Age?" tells us that the idea of a happier existence was well known to Hesiod's audience, and indeed is "a traditional belief going back beyond any extant classical literature".

(9) English translations of Hesiod 477-485 (for example Evelyn-White's or Dorothea Wender's) appear to say that **Gaia**, and not **Rhea**, gave **Cronos** the stone to swallow. But modern authors, dictionaries and manuals have since long ago followed exclusively the version saying that **Rhea** gave her husband the stone wrapped in swaddling clothes as if it were the baby **Zeus**. This version is originally found in the works of Apollodorus and Pausanias among other ancient sources. The name of the subject in verse 485 of the *Theogony* is not mentioned, but the Hesiodic context suggests, in more than one way, that **Gaia** and not **Rhea** gave the stone to **Cronos**.

(10) "Unconditionally", that is, no conditions were attached to the fall of **Cronos**. In other prophecies, an event may be prevented "if" things are done in a certain way. **Zeus** himself could have dethroned "if" he had married **Thetis**. "If" **Laius** had obeyed the oracle, he would not have been killed by his son **Oedipus**.

(11) Some Freudians believe that **Cronos'** hatred against his father **Uranus** was sexually motivated. They explain that he felt guilty for desiring his mother and hating his father, and as a result he feared castration. Then, as his fear was stronger than his guilt, he preemptively castrated his father. Now, if someone asked why **Cronos** did not marry his mother after the deed, they would first answer that his guilt was then stronger than his fear. But afterwards they would add that **Rhea** was a doublet of **Gaia**, which could mean that **Cronos** married his mother after all. From such answers we may derive that **Gaia** just desired, by inciting **Cronos** against his father, acting as a doublet of **Rhea** and desired her own son. In such a scheme **Cronos** must be the doublet of **Uranus**, so **Gaia** just desired her own husband. And **Cronos**, by castrating his father, (castrated himself like **Atis** and the worshippers of **Cybele**) out of fear of being castrated. Fortunately, the Freudians tell us that these things happen unconsciously.

(12) On which was the choicest portion of the sacrificial ox writes Jean-Pierre Vernant in his "Sacrifice in Greek Myths":

"The choice portion in **Prometheus's** eyes, that is, the edible portion that he intended to keep for men by giving it the false appearance of being inedible, turned out to be the bad portion. The bones burned to ashes on the altar constituted the only authentically good portion. For by eating the meat, men behaved like gluttons or 'bellies' (*gasteres oion*). If they took pleasure in feeding on the flesh of a dead animal, if they had a pressing need for such nourishment, it was because their constantly recurring hunger involved exhaustion, fatigue, aging, and death. By contenting themselves with the smoke from the bones, by living of smells and fragrances, the gods revealed themselves to be of an altogether different nature. They were the Immortals who live forever, eternally young, whose existence involved no perishable element, nor any contact with the realm of the corruptible."

Bibliography

H.C. BALDRY: "Who Invented the Golden Age?" (The Classical Quarterly, Volume 46 (N.S.: 2), 1952), and "Hesiod's Five Ages" (Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume 17, No. 4, October 1956).

JEAN-PIERRE VERNANT: "Sacrifice in Greek Myths" in *Greek and Egyptian Mythologies*, compiled by Yves Bonnefoy (The University of Chicago Press 1991).

CARL KERÉGINÉ: *Prometheus, Archetype Image of Human Existence* (Princeton University Press 1991 (1963)), *The Gods of the Greeks* (Thames & Hudson 2000 (1951))

ROBERT GRAVES: *The Greek Myths* (Penguin Image of Human Existence) (1955).

MARK P. O. MORFORD & ROBERT J. LENARDON: *Classical Mythology* (Oxford University Press 2003)

H. J. ROSE: *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (1928) (Routledge, London and New York 1991).