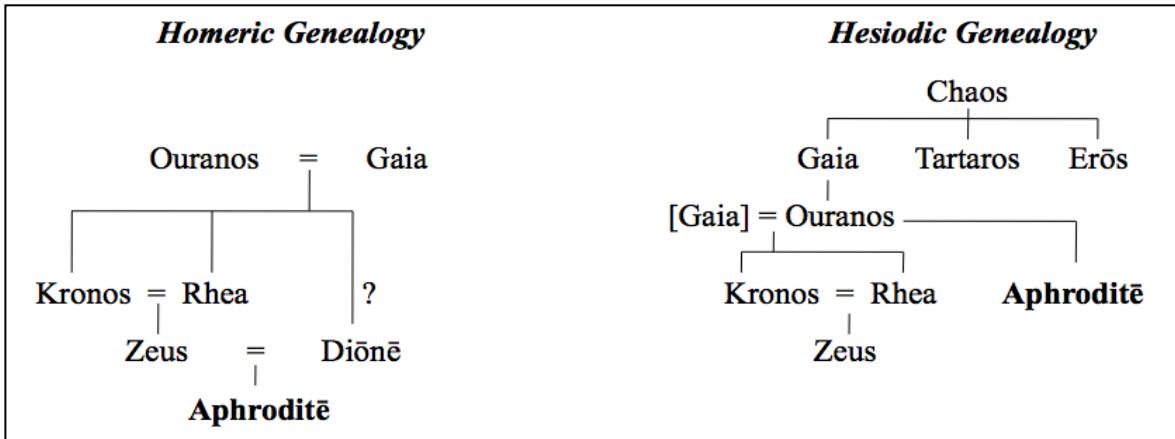




(above) Head of Aphrodite. Detail of Roman copy of original 4th-cent. B.C. statue by Praxiteles. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Harmonizing Rival Myths

1. [Pausanias speaking:] “Are there not two Aphrodites? There is the elder Aphrodite, not born of a mother but the daughter of Heaven [*Uranus*], whence we name her ‘Heavenly’ [*Urania*]; then there is the younger Aphrodite, child of Zeus and Dione, whom we call ‘Vulgar’ [or ‘Popular’, *Pandēmos*].”

Plato, *Symposium* 180d (4th cent. B.C.)

Hesiodic Aphrodite (The Uranian Goddess)

2. “Gods and humans call her Aphrodite; the foam-born goddess because she grew amid the foam [*aphros*]; Cytherea of the beautiful crown because she came to Cythera; and Cyrogenes because she arose in Cyprus washed by the waves . . . Eros attended her and beautiful desire followed her when she was born and when she first went into the company of the gods. From the beginning she has this honour, and among human beings and the immortal gods she wins as her due the whispers of girls, smiles, deceits, sweet pleasure, and the gentle delicacy of love.” Hesiod, *Theogony* 195-206

(8th cent. B.C.; cf. Morford, p. 71)

3. “And Cytherea bore to shield-piercing Ares two terrible gods, Panic [*Phobos*] and Fear [*Deimos*] . . . and [a daughter,] *Harmonia*, whom high-spirited Cadmus made his wife. . . . And Hephaistus, the famous Lame One, made Aglaea, youngest of the Graces, his buxom wife.” *Ibid.* 933, 945



(left) Mask of Phoibos (Pan). Mosaic from Halicarnassus, 4th cent. A.D. British Museum, London.



(above) Three Olympian goddesses: Hestia, Dione, and Aphrodite.
Sculptural remains from east pediment of the Parthenon at Athens, 438-432 B.C.
British Museum, London.

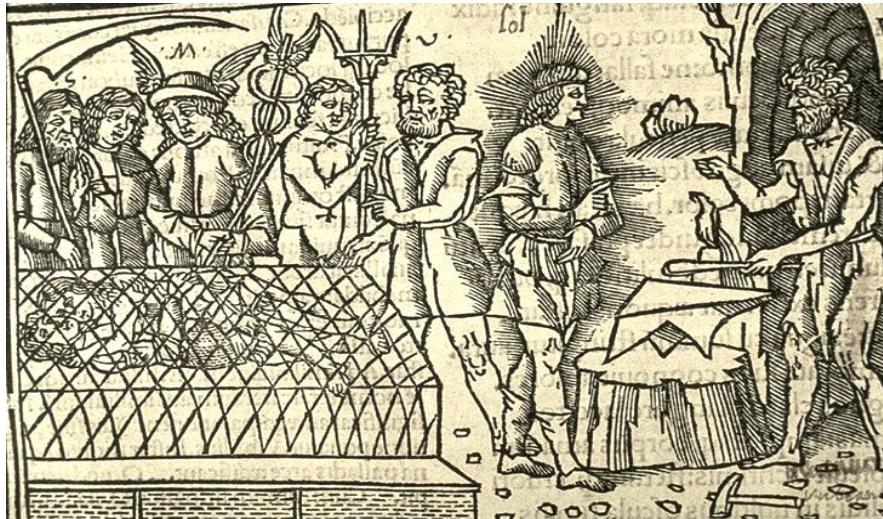
Homeric Aphrodite (Zeus' Daughter)

4. "Aphrodite came to steep Olympus, seat of the gods . . . and fell upon the knees of her mother Dione But the father of men and gods smiled and, calling to golden Aphrodite, said: 'Not to you, my child [*teknon*], have been given the works of war; rather, pursue the lovely works of marriage, and all these things shall be the business of swift Ares and Athena.'"

Homer, *Iliad* 5.367f., 426ff. (8th cent. B.C.)

5. "[The minstrel] took up the lyre and began to sing beautifully of the love of Ares and Aphrodite with the fair crown: how first they lay together by stealth in the home of Hephaestus. He gave her many gifts and defiled the marriage bed of lord Hephaestus."

Homer, *Odyssey* 8.256ff. (cf. Morford, pp. 128f.)



Vulcan (Hephaestus) entraps Venus (Aphrodite) and Mars (Ares) in a net.
Saturn (Cronus), Mercury (Hermes), Neptune (Poseidon) and Sol (Helius) look on.
From a copper engraving (cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 8).

A Double Legacy

6. "Exquisitely enthroned, immortal Aphrodite, / weaver of charms, child of Zeus, / I beg you, reverend lady, / do not crush my heart / with sickness and distress. / But come to me here, / if ever once before you heard my cry from afar and listened / and, leaving your father's house, / yoked your chariot of god. // Beautiful birds drew you swiftly / from heaven over the black earth / Swiftly they came and you, / O blessed goddess, / smiling in your immortal beauty asked / what I wished to happen most / in my frenzied heart. // 'Who is it this time you desire / Persuasion [*Peitho*] entice to your love? / Who, O Sappho, has wronged you? / For if she runs away now, / soon she will follow; /

if she rejects your gifts, / she will bring gifts herself; / if she does not now, / soon she will love, / even though she does not wish it.' // Come to me now too, / free me from my harsh anxieties; / accomplish all that my heart longs for. / You, your very self, / stand with me in my conflict [lit. 'be my comrade-in-arms (*symmachos*)].'

Sappho, "Hymn to Aphrodite"

(7th/6th cents. B.C.; cf. Morford, pp. 219f.)



The Seduction of Demonassa, with Peitho (Persuasion) and Eros.

(*Aphrodite gave Demonassa to Phaon, the ferryman of Lesbos.*)

Attic red-figure kylix by Meidias Painter, c. 410 B.C.

J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

Armed and Dangerous

7. "On the summit of the Acrocorinth is a temple [*naos*] of Aphroditē. The images are of 'Aphroditē Armed' [*Hōplismenē*], Hēlios, and Erōs with a bow."

Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.5.1 (2nd cent. A.D.)

Aphrodite Pandēmos

8. "*Pandēmos Aphroditē*. This is what they used to call the goddess established near the old agora [of Athens], because of the fact that long ago the people [*dēmos*] gathered in the agora for assemblies . . . *Pandēmos* means 'common to all.'" Suda, s.v. "Pandēmos Aphroditē"

(Byzantine encyclopedia, 10th cent. A.D.)

9. "When Theseus had united into one state the many Athenian demes, he established the cults of Aphrodite *Pandēmos* and of Persuasion [*Peitho*]." Pausanias, *op. cit.* 1.22.3

Two Platonic Myths

10. [*Pausanias speaking:*] "Since there are two Aphrodites, there must also be two Loves [*Erōte**]. . . . Of the two loves, one should be called Vulgar [or 'Popular', *Pandēmos*], as a co-worker [*synergos*] with one of those goddesses, the other Heavenly [*Ouranios*]. . . . Now the Love that belongs to the Vulgar Aphrodite . . . is what we see in less noble men, who love women as well as boys; they are in love with bodies [*sōmata*] rather than souls [*psychai*]. . . . This Love proceeds from the goddess who is by far the younger of the two, sharing in her origin both feminine and masculine. But the other Love belongs to the heavenly goddess who is elder and partakes only of the masculine, having no share of insolence [*hybris*]. Those who are inspired by this love turn to the male."

Plato, *Symposium* 180d-181c (not in Morford)

*Plato uses the dual Greek form, i.e., two Erotes.

11. [*Aristophanes speaking:*] "[O]ur nature long ago was not the same as it is now, but different. In the beginning humankind had three sexes, not two, male and female, as now; but there was, in addition, a third, which partook of both the others; now it has vanished and only its name survives*. . . . Furthermore, every human being was in shape a round entity, with back and sides forming a circle; he had four hands, an equal number of feet, one head, with two faces exactly alike but each looking in opposite directions Their strength and might were terrifying; they had great ambitions, and they

made an attack on the gods Zeus declared that he had a plan. ‘I think that I have a way,’ he said, ‘whereby mortals may continue to exist but will cease from their insolence [*akolasia*] by being made weaker’ With these words he proceeded to cut human beings in two And so when their original nature had been split in two, each longed for his other half, and when they encountered it they threw their arms about one another and embraced in their desire to grow together again [I]f a man united with a woman, they would propagate the race and it would survive, but if a male united with a male, they might find satisfaction and freedom to turn to their pursuits and devote themselves to the other concerns of life. From such early times, then, love for one another has been implanted in the human race, a love [*erōs*] that unifies in his attempt to make one out of two and to heal and restore the basic nature of humankind.”

Ibid. 189d-191d (cf. Morford, pp. 209f.)

*i.e. ‘androgynous’ (androgynon), of which *Hermaphrodite* is the mythical expression.



The Sleeping Hermaphrodite. Roman marble statue, 2nd cent. A.D.
Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome.