

MYTHOLOGY OF GREECE AND ROME – WEEK 1

- Greek and Roman mythology – polytheism, anthropomorphism, reflects cultural values and concerns. Gods are not infallible; no intelligent creator of the universe.
- Main origin myths from Hesiod (Greek) and Ovid (Roman, much later)
- In the beginning – CHAOS (Nothingness/Void). His wife – Nyx/Nox (Night). Primordial elements.
- Their son – Erebus (Darkness) **overthrows** Chaos and marries Nyx. Obsession with being **overthrown**!
Erebus and Nyx have two children – Aether (Light) and Hemera (Day). First light/sex.
- Aether and Hemera **overthrows** Erebus and Nyx.
- Their child Eros/Amor/Love – brings forth procreation.
- Creates GAEA (earth – 1st real deity is female) and Pontus (sea). Gaea/Ge = “geology”.
- Earth is a flat disk surrounded by the River Oceanus. Mt. Olympus at the center.
- Gaea creates URANUS/Ouranos (Heaven). Gaea and Uranus **overthrow** Aether and Hemera.
- Uranus and Gaea have 3 sets of children. Uranus is afraid of being **overthrown**.
 - 12 Titans, including CRONUS/SATURN and RHEA. Other Titans: Sons – Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus. Other daughters: Ilia/Theia, Themis, Tethys, Mnemosyne, and Phoebe. Not allowed to emerge/be born.
 - Cyclopes (one-eye) – Thunder, Lightning, Sheet-Lightning
 - Hecatonchires/Centimani (100 hands).
- Some moons of Saturn named after Titans, e.g., Titan, Enceladus, Rhea, Dione, Iapetus.
- Gaea raises a rebellion to **overthrow** Uranus. His youngest son Cronus emasculates him with a scythe. Aphrodite = “foam-born”. Cronus shown with scythe as his attribute.
- He divides the world among his siblings (forces of nature). Confused with Chronos=Time.
- Cronus (Saturn) marries his sister Rhea (Cybele/Ops) and they have 6 children. Another sky god/earth goddess=fertility.
- Afraid of being **overthrown**, Cronus devours each child as it is born. Rhea hides the youngest JUPITER/ZEUS/JOVE and gives Cronus a stone to swallow instead. Jupiter grows up on Crete. The goat Amalthea=Capricorn.
- Zeus **overthrows** Cronus, and makes him throw up his siblings. They become the first OLYMPIANS – Juno/Hera, Neptune/Poseidon, Pluto/Hades, Vesta/Hestia, Ceres/Demeter. Some Titans support Jupiter.

- Cronus leads the remaining Titans in a war against the Olympians (Titanomachy = civilization vs. barbarism). The Hecatonchires, Cyclopes, and some Titans fight for the Olympians. Cyclopes make Jupiter's thunderbolts, their WMD. Titans are defeated and thrown into Tartarus. ATLAS holds up the world as punishment.
- Then Gaea creates the Giants from the blood of Uranus, and other monsters (e.g., the dragon Typhoeus, Enceladus -under Mt. Aetna) to fight the Olympians (Gigantomachy).
- The world divided by lot among Jupiter and his brothers – he takes the sky/heaven, Neptune takes the seas/rivers, and Pluto takes the underworld.
- Creation of man – by PROMETHEUS (Forethought) from clay and water in the shape of the gods. Minerva/Athena gives him a soul. Prometheus steals fire for man (ultimate power). Jupiter punishes Prometheus by chaining him to a rock and having an eagle eat his liver daily. Hercules eventually frees him. The drama *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus.
- To punish man, Jupiter creates the first woman PANDORA (All-Gifts) who marries Prometheus' brother Epimetheus (Hindsight). She opens her box and lets all evils into the world. Only Hope is left. Hesiod called her "a beautiful evil", like a Greek Eve.
- Four or Five Ages of Man – Golden (Eden-like), Silver, Bronze, Heroes and Iron. Everything declines from age to age. Iron Age is so bad Jupiter sent a great flood.
- Only people left are DEUCALION and PYRRHA on Mt. Parnassus (like a Greek Noah). Throw "their mother's bones" behind them to repopulate the world. Their son is Hellen – Hellas, Hellenic.