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CHAPTER 4 – The Origins of The Gods

- Hesiod gave story of Gods as origin of universe
- Cosmogony explains 'origin of the world'
 - Kosmos = world
- Theogony explains "origin of the Gods"
 - Theos = gods
- Hesiod believe cosmogony and theogony the same
- Hesiod's thousand-line poem "theogony" is hymn to Zeus
 - Greek version of Indo-European sky-god

Children of Chaos

- First came Chaos (chasm) → Gaea (mother earth) → Tartarus (bottommost) → Eros (sexual love)
- From Chaos = Erebus (darkness) & Nyx (night)
- Thought that the others were also children of Chaos

Children of Gaea

- Gaea bore Uranus (sky) & Pontus (sea) asexually
- Gaea (earth) + Uranus (sky) = bore 6 male & 6 female Titans
 - Cronus (contends with Uranus for power)
 - Notable Gods = male Oceanus + female Tethys (give birth to all Gods)
- Gaea bore 3 cyclopes (round eyes)
 - Brontes (thunderer), Steropes (flasher), Arges (brightener)
- Hecatonchires (hundred-handers)
 - Cottus, Briareus, Gyes

Hyperion's Children

- Hyperion (sun-god) father of:
 - Helios (sun-god), Selenê (the moon), Eos (the dawn)
- Phaëthon (Oceanid), son of Helios and Clymenê
 - Mother married to king of Ethiopia, assured father was the sun
- For confirmation journeyed to house of Helios
- Helios would grant one wish to prove he was his father
 - Wanted to ride Helios' chariot of the sun across the sky
- Phaethon lost control bolted to earth almost setting it ablaze.
 - Libya scorched; Ethiopian skin burned black
- Zeus bolted him out of sky to save earth, he fell into river Eridanus.
- Selene fell in love with shepherd Endymion
 - Seduced him while he slept in cave
 - Bore him 50 daughters
 - Zeus placed him in eternal sleep so he wouldn't grow old
- Eos loved Tithonus, Trojan Prince

Cronus against Uranus

- Uranus and Gaea bore many children, couldn't come forth
 - Uranus hated his offspring
- As soon as child conceived, Uranus hid it, refusing access to light
 - Kept in womb of earth
- Gaea in pain

- Planning scheme, created grey steel, fashioning terrible sickle
- Only Cronus offered to help mother, others afraid
- He hated his father
- She his Cronus in an ambush and gave him sickle
- Cronus seized Uranus genitals, sliced them off
- Gaea absorbed the drops from them
- years later bore Erinyes, the giants and Melian nymphs
- Cronus cut Uranus during intercourse, finally separating earth and sky
 - World in proper configuration, sky above and earth beneath
 - Separation of the 2 primal elements
- Uranus cursed Cronus.
- Drops of blood on earth gave birth to the furies (Erinyes)
 - Ferocious female spirits, punishing broken oaths and haunt anyone who sheds kindred blood
- Bore nymphs
- Bore Giants will one day bear against Zeus and Olympians.

The Birth of Aphrodite, Monsters and Sea Deities

- Hesiod describes birth
 - Slashed testicles carried in sea, oozing white foam for years
 - Within it, grew up a maiden, drifted to Cythera then Cyprus
 - Aphrodite rose from sea (“Foamborn”, or Cytherea for island she was first seen)
 - Eros and Desire walked besides, she joined gods
- Sea foam mixed with semen until from “foam” she appeared
- Aphrodite = sexual love, represents irresistible sexual desire, destructive power of sex
- Gaea/Uranus bore Titans, the Cyclopes and Hecatonchires
- Gaea/Pontus (her son) bore:
 - Ceto “sea monster” (wale or enormous shark)
 - Child The Graeae “grey ones” (fair-cheeked hags, grey from birth)
 - Nereus (wise old man of the sea) prophetic deity, change shape at will into fire, leopard, serpent, tree
 - Sired the 52 Nereids (group of sea-spirits, live at bottom of sea on thrones, embody gentle aspect of sea) – best known is Thetis (also change shape), mother of Achilles
 - Nemean (lion)
- Monster means “that at which you point in surprise” – depicted mixture animal/human
- Greek art, human headed birds the Harpies “snatchers”, grandchildren G/P
 - Appear form nowhere, carry away living
- Sirens: song leads sailors to deaths
- Sphinx: “strangler”, deadly spirit of plague
- Gorgons: women body, wings, snakes for hair, board tusks teeth
- Geryon, Heracles enemy: 3 bodies joined at waist; dog Orthus had 2 heads
- Echidna: women waist up, serpent below “glimmering flesh-eater in the inky caverns of hallowed earth” Hesiod
- Cerberus: 50 headed (or 3) hound guarded Hades realm
- Hydra: water-serpent “watery” (maybe 7 heads)
- Chimera: “she-goat”, lion with snake tail, goat’s head growing on back

Zeus Against Cronus: The Battle with The Titans

- Uranus had tyrannised Gaea with his sexual demands

- Overthrowal of Uranus = Cronus became first king of the world
- Told by his parents that he would fall victim to one of his children – planned to swallow them whole (Hestia, Hera, Hades, Poseidon and Zeus)
- Rhea went to her parents for advice – journey to Crete to bear Zeus
 - He was brought up by nymphs on milk from the goat Amalthea and honey from Melissa, the ‘bee’
 - Infant cries dulled with clashing cymbals of the Corybantes/Curetes
- Instead gave Cronus a stone = omphalos, “navel”
- Zeus eventually forced Cronus to vomit up his children in reverse order and stone came out first
 - This stone displayed in Apollo’s shrine at Delphi
 - Priests poured oil and unspun wool decorated it during festivals
- Zeus and his siblings then took Mount Olympus (Hades = underworld) – Titans resented their rule
- Attacked them = Titanomachy
 - Only the Titan Themis and her son Prometheus abstained and joined Zeus’ side
- Zeus learned from Gaea he could only win with help of the three Hecatonchires (hundred-handers) their names were Cottus, Briareus, Gyes according to Hesiod– released them and Cyclops from Tartarus where Uranus had imprisoned them
 - Nourished with nectar and ambrosia
 - Cyclops made thunderbolt for Zeus
- Successful war and Zeus cast the Titans into Tartarus – separated by the sky which Atlas was made to hold up to keep barrier between Sky and Earth

Zeus’ battle with Typhoeus

- Gaea – even though she helped him – now resented his rule
- Slept with Tartarus and gave birth to Typhoeus – Typhon
- Had a serpentine dragon coming out of his shoulder
- Zeus struck him with lightning bolt
- The Olympians fled to Egypt – disguised themselves as animals
- Wrestled and Typhoeus seized the sickle and sliced out the sinews of Zeus’ hands and feet – stored in a jar
 - Carried the limp god to a cave in Cilicia and his sinews under a bearskin and placed a dragon to guard the cave
- Hermes and goat-shaped spirit Aegipan slipped past Typhoeus – restores sinews to Zeus – mounted winged horses and pursued Typhoeus flinging thunderbolts
- Buried him beneath Mount Etna in Sicily

Zeus’ battle with the giants

- the logic of the succession myth (that like his father/grandfather- he will be overthrown)
 - to avoid this – Zeus married cleverness, the Oceanid Metis
 - Metis already pregnant with Athena
 - Learned from Uranus and Gaea that his wife’s next child, after Athena, would depose him
 - Zeus swallowed Metis whole- cleverness becoming a part of him
 - Got a headache – either Prometheus or Hephaestus struck his head with an axe and out sprang Athena
- Zeus had defied the prophecy by thwarting the biological logic according to which only females give birth
- Urged by Gaea – The Giants attacked Olympus (Giants made from Uranus’ severed genitals)
 - Gigantomachy -hurling rocks and trees into the sky

- Mortal Heracles, son of Zeus, joined him – an oracle declared that the gods could not win without a mortal's assistance
- Divided the world among Zeus, Hades and Poseidon

Prominent Themes in the Greek Creation Story

- Divine myth – its subject is the actions of gods and the description of grand events
- h/w owe a lot of folktale – gods act like ogres, goddesses behave as sexual victims, trickster gods, dangerous enemies, and protectors
- the theogony/cosmology = gradual ascent to power of male over female
- social ideal of male led world
- however, Gaea/Earth still the basis of everything
- Titans as untamed forces of nature
- Zeus acted as a statesman – righting wrongs of the past by released Cyclops and hundred-handers who became mercenary soldiers

Eastern Creation stories

- Greek accounts taken from earlier Eastern cultures

The Babylonian Enuma elish

- Recited on 4th day of the New Year's festival in Babylon in honour of god of the city, Marduk – magical power to renew the world every year
- Poem opens with gods of the waters, male Apsu and female Tiamat who mingled together
- Had Lahmu and Lahamu – h/w had more powerful offspring by Tiamat – Anshar and Kishar
- Anshar and Kishar bore Anu (Ea also born in this generation too)
- Apsu annoyed by their disturbance despite Tiamat trying to stop him – Apsu set out to destroy their offspring
- Officer Mummu encouraged him
- Gods heard of plan to destroy them – only Ea (cleverness) was he able to remain calm
 - Cast a spell over Apsu and Mummu into deep sleep then killed Apsu and strung a rope through Mummu's nose
- Ea built his house on top of the dead Apsu
- Ea and his wife soon gave birth to Marduk = god of Babylon
- Tiamat had changed tune and now wanted to destroy them
 - Got an army of monsters to help her and chose a new husband Kingu
- Ea, nervous, went to sky-god Anshar – told him to go to war
- Broken tablet but it is Anu who fights Tiamat- defeated
- Then Anshar remembered Marduk – to fight but on condition that he receives absolute power when he wins
 - “he fired his arrow, it burst her belly, carved through her guts and split the heart, wrecked and extinguished her life. He threw down the corpse and trod upon it”
- Army of monsters tried to flee- Marduk caught them in his net and bound them
- Marduk imprisoned Kingu and took control over the Tablet of Destiny that Tiamat had given Kingu
- Marduk built a large temple and cult centers for Anu Enlil and Ea
- Delivered Tablet of Destiny to Anu and presented his captives before the gods
- Announced another plan
 - “mash blood together and bones and make a primeval human” – made humans from blood of Kingu and Ea made labour to be a human's lot
- Divided gods among sky and earth – completed great ziggurat/palace of Babylon

Observations: Cosmogony and Dragon Combat

- Enuma elish – both life-giving and life-destroying
- Like Hesiod – formation and organisation of the world/human society is a process and can change
- A younger generation opposes, overcomes and controls/destroys the older generation, until the present world-order comes into being

The Hittite Kingship in Heaven

- Other eastern myths come from the Indo-European Hittites – ruled central Anatolian plain in Late Bronze Age
- Hittite poem: Kingship in Heaven
- Alalush was king of heaven
- After nine years his servant – Anush made war and was successful
- Anush after 9 years made war with his servant – Kumarbi
 - However was not successful
- Kumarbi bit off Anush's genitals – had swallowed his sperm which Anush has put storm-god, the river Aranzakh and heavy Tasmishu
- Spit out from his mouth – tablet breaks off
- Argument between Anush and storm god (still inside Kumarbi) on how he should escape – came out of his penis
- Storm-god = Teshub did escape and overthrew him

Observations: The Succession Myth in the Near East and Hesiod

- Primordial gods' resistance to change leads to a battle in which new gods overthrow the elders
- Succession motif again
- In both theogony and Enuma = first generation gods are primal pairs and male hate their children
- Starts in disorder than a universe that is monarchic, patriarchal state