

Content

Chapters:

4. The Origins of The Gods
5. The Origins of Mortals
6. Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, and Hades
7. Apollo
8. Hermes, Pan, Hephaestus, and Ares
9. Aphrodite, Artemis, and Athena
10. Demeter and Related Myths
11. Dionysos
12. The Underworld
13. Introduction to Heroic Myth
14. Perseus
15. Heracles
16. Theseus
17. Myths of Crete
18. Oedipus and The Myths of Thebes
19. Jason and the Argonauts
20. The Trojan War
21. The Fall of Troy and its Aftermath
22. The Return of Odysseus
23. Aeneas
24. Legends of Early Rome

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
- Phaëthon 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