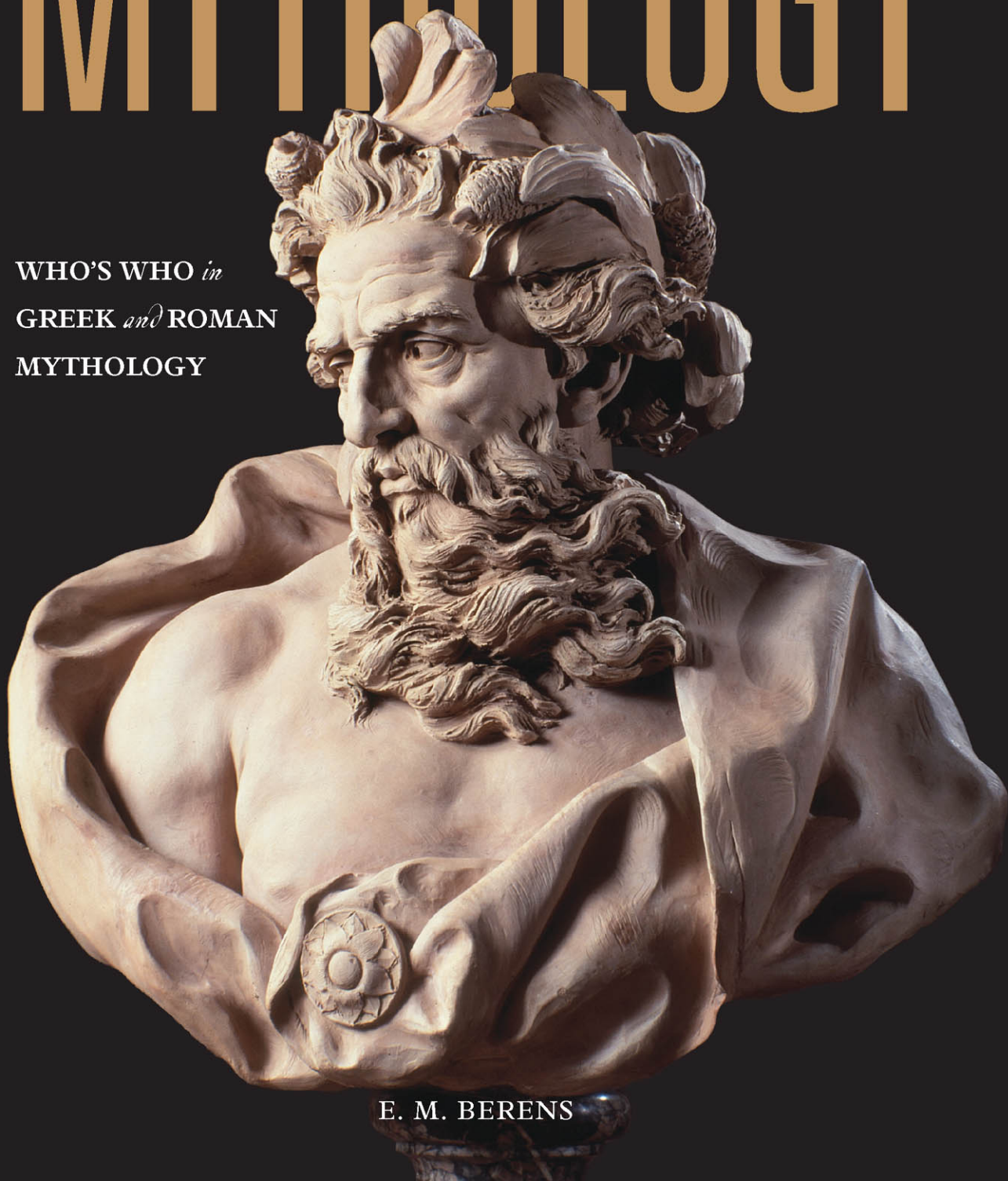


MYTHOLOGY

WHO'S WHO *in*
GREEK *and* ROMAN
MYTHOLOGY



E. M. BERENS

MYTHOLOGY

WHO'S WHO *in* GREEK *and* ROMAN MYTHOLOGY



E. M. BERENS





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TITLE PAGE: Detail from *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*, attributed to the Master of the
White Inscriptions, c. 1475–1483. Heracles slays a Nemean lion as part of his labors.
CONTENTS PAGE: *Venus and a Sleeping Cupid*, Jean-Baptiste Mallet, c. 1810. Venus (Aphrodite),
the most beautiful of the goddesses, has always been a favorite subject of artists.

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INTRODUCTION

Before beginning the many wonderous myths of the ancient Greeks, and the extraordinary number of gods they worshipped, we must first discuss what kind of beings these divinities were.

In appearance, the gods were supposed to resemble mortals, whom, however, they far surpassed in beauty, grandeur, and strength, and stature. They resembled human beings in their feelings and habits, intermarrying and having children, and requiring daily nourishment to replenish their strength and refreshing sleep to restore their energies. Their blood, a bright ethereal fluid called ichor, never engendered disease, and, when shed, had the power of producing new life.

The Greeks believed that the mental qualifications of their gods were of a much higher order than those of men, but nevertheless, as we shall see, they were not considered to be exempt from human passions, and we frequently behold them actuated by revenge, deceit, and jealousy. They, however, always punish the evil-doer, and visit with dire calamities any impious mortal who dares to neglect their worship or despise their rites. We often hear of them having visited mankind and partaking of their hospitality, and not infrequently both gods and goddesses become attached to mortals, with whom they unite themselves, the offspring of these unions being called heroes, who were usually renowned for their great strength and courage. But although there were so many points of resemblance between gods and men, there remained the one great distinction: the gods enjoyed immortality. Still, they were not invulnerable, and we often hear of them having been wounded, and suffering in consequence such exquisite torture that they have earnestly prayed to be deprived of their privilege of immortality.

The gods knew no limitation of time or space, being able to transport themselves to incredible distances with the speed of thought. They possessed the power of rendering themselves invisible at will, and could assume the forms of men or animals as it suited their convenience. They could also transform human beings into trees, stones, animals, and other objects, either as a punishment for their misdeeds or as a means of protecting the individual, thus transformed, from impending danger. Their robes were like those worn by mortals, but were perfect in form and much finer in texture. Their weapons also resembled those used by mankind; we hear of spears, shields, helmets, and bows and arrows being employed by the gods. Each deity possessed a beautiful chariot, which, drawn by horses or other animals of celestial breed, conveyed them rapidly over land and sea according to their pleasure. Most of these divinities lived on the summit of Mount Olympus, each pos-

OPPOSITE: *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan*, Joachim Anthonisz. Wtewael, c. 1606–1610. The gods and goddesses often struggled with infidelity. Here, Eros and Apollo uncover Ares (Mars) and Aphrodite (Venus) in bed, to the anger of Aphrodite's aged husband Hephaestus (Vulcan).

sessing his or her individual habitation, and all meeting together on festive occasions in the council-chamber of the gods, where their banquets were enlivened by the sweet strains of Apollo's lyre, whilst the beautiful voices of the Muses poured forth their rich melodies to his harmonious accompaniment. Magnificent temples were erected to their honor, where they were worshipped with the greatest solemnity; rich gifts were presented to them, and animals, and sometimes even sacrifices on their altars.

In the study of Grecian mythology we find the answers to daily recurring phenomena, including those that to us in modern times are known to be the result of certain well-ascertained laws of nature, but to the early Greeks were matters of grave speculation. For instance, when they heard the awful roar of thunder, and saw vivid flashes of lightning, accompanied by black clouds and torrents of rain, they believed that the great God of Heaven was angry, and they trembled at his wrath. If the calm and tranquil sea became suddenly agitated, and the crested billows rose to the height of mountains, dashing furiously against the rocks, and threatening destruction to all within their reach, the Sea God

was supposed to be in a furious rage. When they beheld the sky glowing with the hues of coming day they thought that the Goddess of the Dawn, with rosy fingers, was drawing aside the dark veil of night, to allow her brother, the Sun God, to enter upon his brilliant career. Thus personifying all the powers of nature, this very imaginative and highly poetical nation beheld a divinity in every tree that grew, in every stream that flowed, in the bright beams of the glorious sun, and the clear, cold rays of the silvery

Archaistic relief showing five divinities, c.25 CE–14 BCE. This ancient artifact shows the Olympian gods Zeus, Hera, Athene, Aphrodite, and Apollo.



moon; for them the whole universe lived and breathed, peopled by a thousand forms of grace and beauty.

The most important of these divinities may have been something more than the mere creations of an active and poetical imagination. They were possibly human beings who had so distinguished themselves in life by their preeminence over their fellow mortals that after death they were deified by the people among whom they lived, and the poets touched with their magic wands the details of lives, which, in more prosaic times, would simply have been recorded as illustrious.

It is highly probable that the reputed actions of these deified beings were commemorated by bards, who, travelling from one state to another, celebrated their praise in song; it therefore becomes exceedingly difficult, nay almost impossible, to separate bare facts from the exaggerations that never fail to accompany oral traditions.

In order to exemplify this, let us suppose that Orpheus, the son of Apollo, so renowned for his extraordinary musical powers, had existed at the present day. We should no doubt have ranked him among the greatest of our musicians, and honored him as such; but the Greeks, with their vivid imagination and poetic license, exaggerated his remarkable gifts, and attributed to his music supernatural influence over animate and inanimate nature. Thus we hear of wild beasts tamed, of mighty rivers arrested in their course, and of mountains being moved by the sweet tones of his voice. The theory here advanced may possibly prove useful in the future, in suggesting to the reader the probable basis of many of the extraordinary accounts we meet with in the study of classical mythology.

And now a few words will be necessary concerning the religious beliefs of the Romans. When the Greeks first settled in Italy, they found in the country they colonized a mythology already belonging to its inhabitants the Celts, which, according to the Greek custom of paying reverence to all gods, known or unknown, they readily adopted, selecting and appropriating those divinities which had the greatest affinity to their own, and thus they formed a religious belief that naturally bore the impress of its ancient Greek source. As the primitive Celts, however, were a less civilized people than the Greeks, their mythology was of a more barbarous character, and this circumstance, combined with the fact that the Romans were not gifted with the vivid imagination of their Greek neighbors, leaves its mark on the Roman mythology, which is far less fertile in fanciful conceits, and deficient in all those fairy-like stories and wonderfully poetic ideas which so strongly characterize that of the Greeks.



Chapter One

MAJOR DIVINITIES

OPPOSITE: *Phaeton Driving
the Chariot of Apollo*,
Jean Jouvenet, c. 1680.

Many myths change depending on who is telling them. Here, Phaethon's pride leads him to foolishly ask to drive the Sun God's chariot, which in some myths is not Helios, but Apollo (Helios's successor).

URANUS AND GÆA § CŒLUS AND TERRA

The ancient Greeks had several different theories with regard to the origin of the world, but the generally accepted notion was that before this world came into existence, there was in its place a confused mass of shapeless elements called Chaos. These elements becoming at length consolidated (some say by Uranus himself), resolved themselves into two widely different substances, the lighter portion of which, soaring on high, formed the sky or firmament, and constituted itself into a vast, overarching vault, which protected the firm and solid mass beneath.

Thus came into being the two first great primeval deities of the Greeks, Uranus and Gæa (or Ge). Uranus, the more refined deity, represented the light and air of heaven, possessing the distinguishing qualities of light, heat, purity, and omnipresence, whilst Gæa, the firm, flat,¹ life-sustaining earth, was worshipped as the great all-nourishing mother. Her many titles refer to her more or less in this character, and she appears to have been universally revered among the Greeks, there being scarcely a city in Greece which did not contain a temple erected in her honor; indeed Gæa was held in such veneration that her name was always invoked whenever the gods took a solemn oath, made an emphatic declaration, or implored assistance.

OPPOSITE: *Victory, Janus, Chronos and Gæa* by Giulio Romano, c. 1532–1534. Earth mother Gæa clutches a snake as she crouches by Cronus's feet. Nike (Victory) flies overhead and Janus, the God of Gates, sits nearby.

THE MARRIAGE of URANUS AND GÆA

Uranus, the heaven, was believed to have united himself in marriage with Gæa, the earth; and a moment's reflection will show what a truly poetical, and also what a logical idea this was; for, taken in a figurative sense, this union actually does exist. The smiles of heaven produce the flowers of earth, whereas his long-continued frowns exercise so depressing an influence upon his loving partner, that she no longer decks herself in bright and festive robes, but responds with ready sympathy to his melancholy mood.

The first-born child of Uranus and Gæa was Oceanus,² the ocean stream, that vast expanse of ever-flowing water that encircles the Earth. Here we meet with another logical though fanciful conclusion, which a very slight knowledge of the workings of nature proves to have been just and true. The ocean is formed from the rains which descend from heaven and the streams which flow from earth. Therefore, by making Oceanus the off-

¹ The early Greeks supposed the Earth to be a flat circle, in the center of which was Greece. Oceanus, the ocean stream, encircled it; the Mediterranean flowed into this river on the one side, and the Euxine, or Black Sea, on the other.

² Owing to the vagueness of the various accounts of creation, the origin of the primeval gods is variously accounted for. Thus, for instance, Oceanus, with some, becomes the younger brother of Uranus and Gæa.



spring of Uranus and Gæa, the ancients were merely asserting that the ocean is produced by the combined influence of heaven and earth, whilst at the same time their fervid and poetical imaginations led them to see in this, as in all manifestations of the powers of nature, an actual, tangible divinity.

Uranus, the heaven, the embodiment of light, heat, and the breath of life, produced offspring who were of a much less material nature than his son Oceanus. These other children of his were supposed to occupy the intermediate space that divided him from Gæa.



The Untangling of Chaos, or the Creation of the Four Elements, Hendrik Goltzius, 1589. This panel from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shows Uranus separating sky and earth.

Nearest to Uranus, and just beneath him, came Aether (Ether), a bright creation representing that highly rarified atmosphere which immortals alone could breathe. Then followed Aër (Air), which was in close proximity to Gæa, and represented, as its name implies, the grosser atmosphere surrounding the Earth in which mortals could freely breathe, and without which they would perish. Aether and Aër were separated from each other by divinities called Nephelæ. These were their restless and wandering sisters, who existed in the form of clouds, ever floating between Aether and Aër. Gæa also produced the mountains, and Pontus (the sea). She united herself with the latter, and their offspring were the sea-deities Nereus, Thaumás, Phorcys, Ceto, and Eurybia.

DARKNESS *and* NIGHT

Co-existent with Uranus and Gæa were two mighty powers who were also the offspring of Chaos. These were Erebus (Darkness) and Nyx (Night), who formed a striking contrast to the cheerful light of heaven and the bright smiles of earth. Erebus, the predecessor of Hades, reigned in that mysterious world below, where no ray of sunshine, no gleam of daylight, nor vestige of health-giving terrestrial life ever appeared. Nyx, the sister of

Erebus, represented Night, and was worshipped by the ancients with the greatest solemnity.

Uranus was also supposed to have been united to Nyx, but only in his capacity as God of Light, he being considered the source and fountain of all light, and their children were Eos (Aurora), the Dawn, and Hemera, the Daylight. Nyx on her side was also doubly united, having been married at some indefinite period to Erebus.

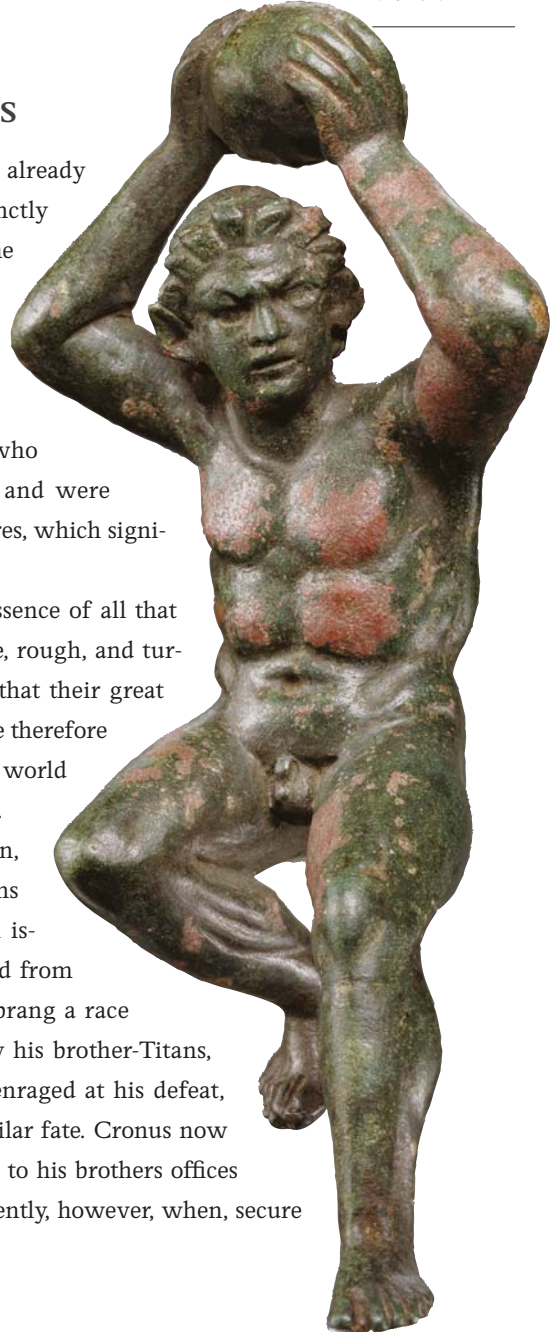
A bronze statuette of a Giant hurling a rock, c. 200–175 BCE. Giants were often portrayed fighting with crude weapons made from the Earth.

THE GIANTS *and* THE TITANS

In addition to those children of heaven and earth already enumerated, Uranus and Gæa produced two distinctly different races of beings called Giants and Titans. The Giants personified brute strength alone, and could shake the universe to produce earthquakes, but the Titans united their great physical power to intellectual qualifications variously developed. There were three Giants—Briareus, Cottus, and Gyges—who each possessed a hundred hands and fifty heads, and were known collectively by the name of the Hecatoncheires, which signified hundred-handed.

Now Uranus, the chaste light of heaven, the essence of all that is bright and pleasing, held in abhorrence his crude, rough, and turbulent offspring the Giants, and moreover feared that their great power might eventually prove hurtful to himself. He therefore hurled them into Tartarus, that portion of the lower world that served as the subterranean dungeon of the gods.

In order to avenge this oppression of her children, Gæa instigated a conspiracy on the part of the Titans against Uranus, which was carried to a successful issue by her son Cronus. He wounded his father, and from the blood of the wound that fell upon the earth sprang a race of monstrous beings also called Giants. Assisted by his brother-Titans, Cronus succeeded in dethroning his father, who, enraged at his defeat, cursed his rebellious son, and foretold to him a similar fate. Cronus now became invested with supreme power, and assigned to his brothers offices of distinction, subordinate only to himself. Subsequently, however, when, secure



of his position, he no longer needed their assistance, he basely repaid their former services with treachery, made war upon his brothers and faithful allies, and, assisted by the Giants, completely defeated them, sending those who resisted his all-conquering arm down into the lowest depths of Tartarus.

CRONUS § SATURN

Cronus was the God of Time in its sense of eternal duration. He married Rhea, daughter of Uranus and Gæa, a very important divinity, to whom a section will be devoted hereafter.

Cronus is often represented as an old man leaning on a scythe, with an hourglass in his hand. The hourglass symbolizes the fast-fleeting moments as they succeed each other unceasingly; the scythe is emblematical of time, which mows down all before it.

ZEUS *and* THE TITANOMACHIA

OPPOSITE: *Cronus Carrying off Two Infants* by Lazar Widmann, c. 1742. Fearing they would steal his throne, Cronus swallowed all of his children until he had Zeus, who was rescued by his mother, Rhea.

Cronus's and Rhea's children were three sons: Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus; and three daughters: Hestia, Demeter, and Hera. Cronus, having an uneasy conscience, was afraid that his children might one day rise up against his authority, and thus verify the prediction of his father Uranus. In order, therefore, to render the prophecy impossible of fulfillment, Cronus swallowed each child as soon as it was born,³ greatly to the sorrow and indignation of his wife Rhea. When it came to Zeus, the sixth and last, Rhea resolved to try and save this one child, at least, to love and cherish, and appealed to her parents, Uranus and Gæa, for counsel and assistance. By

their advice she wrapped a stone in baby clothes, and Cronus, in eager haste, swallowed it, without noticing the deception. The child thus saved, eventually, as we shall see, dethroned his father Cronus, became supreme god in his stead, and was universally venerated as the great national god of the Greeks.

Anxious to preserve the secret of his existence from Cronus, Rhea sent the infant Zeus secretly to Crete, where he was nourished, protected, and educated. A sacred goat, called Amalthea, supplied the place of his mother, by providing him with milk; nymphs, called Melissæ, fed him with honey, and eagles and doves brought him nectar and ambrosia.⁴ He was kept concealed in a cave in the heart of Mount Ida, and the Curetes, or priests of Rhea,

³ The myth of Cronus swallowing his children is evidently intended by the poets to express the melancholy truth that time destroys all things.

⁴ Nectar was the drink, and ambrosia the food of the gods.





by beating their shields together, kept up a constant noise at the entrance, which drowned the cries of the child and frightened away all intruders. Under the watchful care of the nymphs the infant Zeus thrived rapidly, developing great physical powers, combined with extraordinary wisdom and intelligence. Grown to manhood, he determined to compel his father to restore his brothers and sisters to the light of day, and is said to have been assisted in this difficult task by the goddess Metis, who artfully persuaded Cronus to drink a potion, which caused him to give back the children he had swallowed. The stone that had counterfeited Zeus was placed at Delphi, where it was long exhibited as a sacred relic.

Cronus was so enraged at being circumvented that war between the father and son became inevitable. The rival forces ranged themselves on two separate high mountains in Thessaly; Zeus, with his brothers and sisters, took his stand on Mount

Olympus, where he was joined by Oceanus, and others of the Titans, who had forsaken Cronus on account of his oppressions. Cronus and his brother-Titans took possession of Mount Othrys, and prepared for battle. The struggle was long and fierce, and at length Zeus, finding that he was no nearer victory than before, bethought of the existence of the imprisoned Giants, and knowing that they would be able to render him most powerful assistance, he hastened to liberate them. He also called to his aid the Cyclops (sons of Poseidon and Amphitrite),⁵ who had only one eye each in the middle of their foreheads,

⁵ The Cyclops are generally mentioned as the sons of Uranus and Gæa, but Homer speaks of Polyphemus, the chief of the Cyclops, as the son of Poseidon, and states the Cyclops to be his brothers.

and were called Brontes (Thunder), Steropes (Lightning), and Pyracmon (Fire-Anvil). They promptly responded to his summons for help, and brought with them tremendous thunderbolts that the Hecatoncheires, with their hundred hands, hurled down upon the enemy, at the same time raising mighty earthquakes, which swallowed up and destroyed all who opposed them. Aided by these new and powerful allies, Zeus now made a furious onslaught on his enemies, and so tremendous was the encounter that all nature is said to have throbbed in accord with this mighty effort of the celestial deities. The sea rose as high as mountains, and its angry billows hissed and foamed; the earth shook to its foundations, the heavens sent forth rolling thunder, and flash after flash of death-bringing lightning, whilst a blinding mist enveloped Cronus and his allies.

And now the fortunes of war began to turn, and victory smiled on Zeus. Cronus and his army were completely overthrown, his brothers dispatched to the gloomy depths of the lower world, and Cronus himself was banished from his kingdom and deprived forever of the supreme power, which now became vested in his son Zeus. This war was called the Titanomachia, and is most graphically described by the old classic poets such as Hesiod.

With the defeat of Cronus and his banishment from his dominions, Cronus's career as a ruling Greek divinity entirely ceased. But being, like all the gods, immortal, he was supposed to be still in existence, though possessing no longer either influence or authority, his place being filled to a certain extent by his descendant and successor, Zeus.

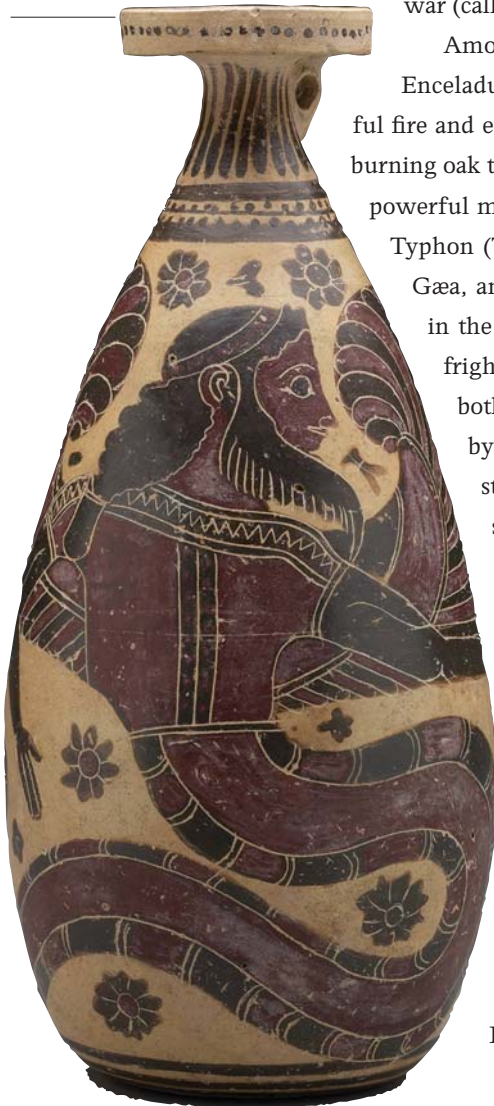
OPPOSITE: **Saturn** by Hendrik Goltzius, 1592. This engraving of the Roman version of Cronus, Saturn, was the first in a series called *The Set of the Antique Gods*.

THE DIVISION *of* THE WORLD

Zeus and his brothers, having gained a complete victory over their enemies, began to consider how the world that they had conquered should be divided amongst them. At last it was settled by lot that Zeus should reign supreme in heaven, whilst Hades governed the lower world, and Poseidon had full command over the sea, but the supremacy of Zeus was recognized in all three kingdoms, in heaven, on earth (in which of course the sea was included), and under the earth. Zeus held his court on the top of Mount Olympus, whose summit was beyond the clouds; the gloomy dominions of the lower world soon took own the name of their ruler, Hades; and Poseidon reigned over the sea. It will be seen that the realm of each of these gods was enveloped in mystery. Olympus was shrouded in mists, the lower world was wrapt in gloomy darkness, and the sea was (and indeed still is) a source of wonder and deep interest. Hence we see that what to other nations were merely strange phenomena, served this poetical and imaginative people as a foundation upon which to build the wonderful stories of their mythology.

The division of the world being now satisfactorily arranged, it would seem that all things ought to have gone on smoothly, but such was not the case. Trouble arose in an unlooked-for quarter. The Giants, those hideous monsters (some with legs formed of serpents)

Alabastron with Typhon, c. 610–600 BCE. This ancient terracotta vase, called an alabastron, depicts Typhon, who was so terrifying that he chased Zeus’s enemies all the way to Egypt.



who had sprung from the earth and the blood of Uranus, declared war against the triumphant deities of Olympus, and a struggle ensued that, because of Gæa having made the Giants invincible as long as they kept their feet on the ground, was wearisome and protracted. Gæa’s precaution, however, was rendered unavailing by pieces of rock being hurled upon them, which threw them down, and their feet being no longer placed firmly on their mother-earth, they were overcome, and this tedious war (called the Gigantomachia) at last came to an end.

Among the most daring of these earth-born Giants were Enceladus, Rhœtus, and the valiant Mimas, who, with youthful fire and energy, hurled against heaven great masses of rock and burning oak trees, and defied the lightnings of Zeus. One of the most powerful monsters who helped the Giants in this war was called Typhon (Typhœus). He was the youngest son of Tartarus and Gæa, and had a hundred heads, with eyes that struck terror in the beholders, and filled them with awe-inspiring voices frightful to hear. This dreadful monster resolved to conquer both gods and men, but his plans were at length defeated by Zeus, who, after a violent encounter, succeeded in destroying him with a thunderbolt, but not before he had so terrified the gods that they had fled for refuge to Egypt, where they metamorphosed themselves into different animals and thus escaped.

The ROMAN SATURN

The Romans, according to their custom of identifying their deities with those of the Greek gods whose attributes were similar to their own, declared Cronus to be identical with their old agricultural divinity Saturn. They believed that after his defeat in the Titanomachia and his banishment from his dominions by Zeus, he took refuge with Janus, king of Italy, who received the exiled deity with great kindness,

and even shared his throne with him. Their united reign became so thoroughly peaceful and happy, and was distinguished by such uninterrupted prosperity, that it was called the Golden Age.

Saturn is usually represented bearing a sickle in the one hand and a wheat-sheaf in the other. A temple was erected to him at the foot of the Capitoline Hill, in which were deposited the public treasury and the laws of the state.

RHEA § OPS

Rhea, the wife of Cronus, and mother of Zeus and the other great gods of Olympus, personified the earth, and was regarded as the Great Mother and unceasing producer of all plantlife. She was also believed to exercise unbounded sway over animal creation, most especially over the lion, the noble king of beasts. Rhea is generally represented wearing a crown of turrets or towers and seated on a throne, with lions crouching at her feet. She is sometimes depicted sitting in a chariot, drawn by lions.

The Elements Paying Tribute to Friendship,
Louis-Simon Boizot,
c. 1783. Rhea was often
shown with lions at her
feet, such as in this marble
relief.



The principal seat of her worship, which was always of a very riotous character, was at Crete. At her festivals, which took place at night, the wildest music of flutes, cymbals, and drums resounded, whilst joyful shouts and cries, accompanied by dancing and loud stamping of feet, filled the air.

The CRETAN CYBELE

Rhea was introduced into Crete by its first colonists from Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and in this country she was worshipped under the name of Cybele. The people of Crete adored her as the Great Mother, more especially in her signification as the sustainer of the vegetable world. Seeing, however, that year by year, as winter appears, all her glory vanished,

OPPOSITE: *Cybele before the Council of the Gods*, Pietro de Cortona, 1633. Rhea was known as Cybele when she was first introduced to Crete by colonists from Phrygia.

her flowers faded, and her trees became leafless, they poetically expressed this process of nature under the figure of a lost love. She was said to have been tenderly attached to a youth of remarkable beauty, named Atys, who, to her grief and indignation, proved faithless to her. He was about to unite himself to a nymph named Sagaris, when, in the midst of the wedding feast, the rage of the incensed goddess suddenly burst forth upon all present. A panic seized the assembled guests, and Atys, becoming afflicted with temporary madness, fled to the mountains and destroyed himself.

Cybele, moved with sorrow and regret, instituted a yearly mourning for his loss, when her priests, the Corybantes, with their usual noisy accompaniments, marched into the mountains to seek the lost youth. Having discovered him⁶ they gave full vent to their ecstatic delight by indulging in the most violent gesticulations, dancing, shouting, and, at the same time, wounding and gashing themselves in a frightful manner.

The ROMAN OPS

In Rome the Greek Rhea was identified with Ops, the Goddess of Plenty, the wife of Saturn, who had a variety of appellations. She was called Magna-Mater, Mater-Deorum, Berecynthia-Idea, and also Dindymene. This last title she acquired from three high mountains in Phrygia, whence she was brought to Rome as Cybele during the second Punic war, 205 BCE, in obedience to an injunction contained in the Sybilline books. She was represented as a matron crowned with towers, seated in a chariot drawn by lions.

⁶ Possibly an image of him placed in readiness.



ZEUS § JUPITER



A relief of Zeus, c. 1–150 CE. This piece of silver may have originally been attached to a piece of armor, like a ceremonial shield.

Zeus,⁷ the great presiding deity of the universe, the ruler of heaven and earth, was regarded by the Greeks first, as the God of Aerial Phenomena; second, as the personification of the laws of nature; third, as lord of the state; and fourth, as the father of gods and men.

As the God of Aerial Phenomena Zeus could, by shaking his ægis,⁸ produce storms, tempests, and intense darkness. At his command the mighty thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and the clouds opened and poured forth their refreshing streams to nourish the ground below.

As the personification of the operations of nature, Zeus represented those grand laws of unchanging and harmonious order, by which not only the physical but also the moral world is governed. Hence he is the God of Regulated Time as marked by the changing seasons, and by the regular succession of day and night, in contradistinction to his father Cronus, who represented time absolutely (that is, eternity).

As the lord of the state, he was the founder of kingly power, the upholder of all institutions connected with the state, and the special patron of princes, whom he guarded and assisted with his advice and counsel. He protected the assembly of the people, and, in fact, watched over the welfare of the whole community.

As the father of the gods, Zeus saw that each deity performed his or her individual duty, punished their misdeeds, settled their disputes, and acted toward them on all occasions as their all-knowing counselor and mighty friend.

⁷ From *Diaus*, the sky.

⁸ A sacred shield made for Zeus by Hephæstus, which derived its name from being covered by the skin of the goat Amalthea, the word Ægis signifying goat's skin.

As the father of men, he took a paternal interest in the actions and well-being of mortals. He watched over them with tender solicitude, rewarding truth, charity, and uprightness, but severely punishing perjury, cruelty, and want of hospitality. Even the poorest and most forlorn wanderer found in him a powerful advocate, for he, by a wise and merciful dispensation, ordained that the mighty ones of the earth should aid their distressed and needy brethren.

As the worship of Zeus formed so important a feature in the religion of the Greeks, his statues were necessarily both numerous and magnificent. He is usually represented as a man of noble and imposing mien, his countenance expressing all the lofty majesty of the omnipotent ruler of the

Photographic print of the Temple of Jupiter Olympus, c. 1850–1880. The ruins of Zeus's temple in Athens, Greece.





universe, combined with the gracious, yet serious, benignity of the father and friend of mankind. He may be recognized by his rich flowing beard and thick masses of hair, which rise straight from his high and intellectual forehead and fall to his shoulders in clustering locks. His head is frequently encircled with a wreath of oak leaves. His nose is large and finely formed, and his slightly opened lips impart an air of sympathetic kindness that invites confidence. He generally bears in his uplifted hand a sheaf of thunderbolts, just ready to be hurled, whilst in the other he holds the lightning.

The most celebrated statue of the Olympian Zeus was that by the famous Athenian sculptor Phidias, which was forty feet high, and stood in the temple of Zeus at Olympia. It was formed of ivory and gold, and was such a masterpiece of art that it was reckoned among the Seven Wonders of the World. It represented the god, seated on a throne, holding in his right hand a life-sized image of Nike (the Goddess of Victory), and in his left a royal sceptre, surmounted by an eagle. It is said that the great sculptor had concentrated all the marvelous powers of his genius on this sublime conception, and earnestly entreated Zeus to give him decided proof that his labors were approved. An answer to his prayer came through the open roof of the temple in the shape of a flash of lightning, which Phidias interpreted as a sign that the God of Heaven was pleased with his work.

Zeus is almost always accompanied by an eagle, which either surmounts his sceptre, or sits at his feet. This royal bird was sacred to him, probably from the fact of its being the only creature capable of gazing at the sun without being dazzled, which may have suggested the idea that it was able to contemplate the splendor of divine majesty unshrinkingly.

The oak tree, and also the summits of mountains, were sacred to Zeus. His sacrifices consisted of white bulls, cows, and goats.

OPPOSITE: ***Jupiter, Léon Davent, 1547. This French etching shows Zeus surrounded by other Olympian gods.***

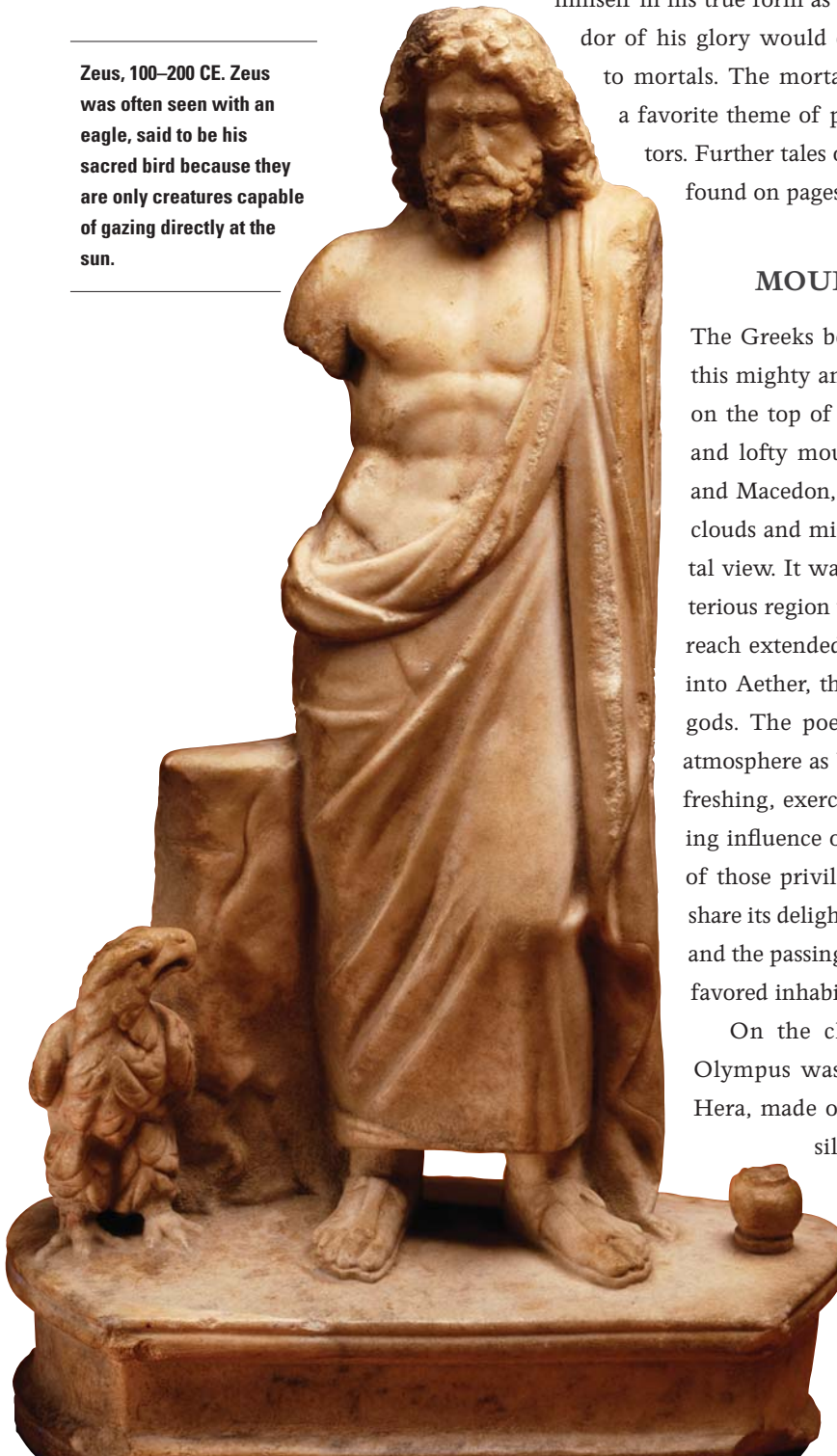
THE LOVES *of* ZEUS

Zeus had seven immortal wives—Metis, Themis, Eurynome, Demeter, Mnemosyne, Leto, and Hera. In the stories of Zeus and most of his goddess wives we find that an allegorical meaning is conveyed. His marriage with Metis, who is said to have surpassed both gods and men in knowledge, represents supreme power allied to wisdom and prudence. His union with Themis, the Goddess of Justice, typifies the bond that exists between divine majesty and justice, law, and order. Eurynome, as the mother of the Graces, supplies the refining and harmonizing influences of grace and beauty, whilst the marriage of Zeus with Mnemosyne typifies the union of genius with memory.

In addition having seven immortal wives, Zeus was also allied to a number of mortal maidens whom he visited under various disguises, as it was supposed that if he revealed himself in his true form as king of heaven the splen-

dor of his glory would cause instant destruction to mortals. The mortal consorts of Zeus were a favorite theme of poets, painters, and sculptors. Further tales of their adventures can be found on pages 22–27.

Zeus, 100–200 CE. Zeus was often seen with an eagle, said to be his sacred bird because they are only creatures capable of gazing directly at the sun.



MOUNT OLYMPUS

The Greeks believed that the home of this mighty and all-powerful deity was on the top of Mount Olympus, a high and lofty mountain between Thessaly and Macedon, whose summit, wrapt in clouds and mist, was hidden from mortal view. It was supposed that this mysterious region that even a bird could not reach extended beyond the clouds right into Aether, the realm of the immortal gods. The poets describe this ethereal atmosphere as bright, glistening, and refreshing, exercising a peculiar, gladdening influence over the minds and hearts of those privileged beings permitted to share its delights. Here youth never aged and the passing years left no traces on its favored inhabitants.

On the cloud-capped summit of Olympus was the palace of Zeus and Hera, made of burnished gold, chased silver, and gleaming ivory.

Lower down were the homes of the other gods, which, though