

1. Introduction: What is Myth?

muthos: alternative spelling: mythos. The word ‘muthos’ is used in Homer to refer to a formal, authoritative speech, often before an audience. Gradually, however, the meaning of muthos changes over time. In the Classical period, Plato contrasted muthos with logos. In this, he paved the way for the modern interpretation of myth as an untrue story.

trado: The Latin verb ‘trado, tradere’ means “to hand down”. It is where our word tradition comes from.

2. Hesiod: The Creation of the Greek Cosmos

Archaic Period: The Archaic Period of Greece runs from approximately the 8th to the 6th centuries, BCE, and predates the Classical Period. In the archaic period, Greek epic and lyric poetry flourished. Homer, Hesiod, and the author of the Homeric Hymns all composed in the archaic period. See further: Powell, A Short Introduction to Classical Myth, pp. 55-57.

Chaos: The first principle, from which the cosmos emerges. See Theogony lines 115 following.

Epic: The earliest surviving form of Greek literature, epic is a form of poetry that flourished in the archaic period. It began as an oral form (Homer recited the Iliad and the Odyssey from memory) but was later written down. See further Homer, Hesiod, Theogony.

Gaia: Gaia is the Greek goddess of the Earth. She is born after Chaos (Theogony 115 ff.). She partners with Ouranos and gives birth to the race of Titans. Overpowered by the weight of Ouranos, Gaia gives her unborn son, Kronos, a sickle with which to castrate his father.

Muses: Daughters of Memory, the Muses appear at the beginning of the Theogony, and at the beginning of the Iliad and the Odyssey. They are invoked by the epic poet to help him begin and remember his song.

Olympians: The children of the Titans. The most important Olympian is Zeus (king of the gods). Aphrodite is also an Olympian, although she is technically born in an earlier generation. The Olympians get their name from Mt. Olympus, where they live as a somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy family. The Greeks liked to think of the Olympians as being 12 in number, but in practice the number was greater. They are Zeus, Hera, Demeter, Poseidon, Hestia, Hades, Hephaestus, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Hermes, Persephone, Aphrodite, Dionysos (we first meet them in Hesiod’s Theogony, but we will talk alot more about this group of gods as we move through the course).

Ouranos: Son and mate of Gaia, Ouranos is the god of the sky. He is castrated by Kronos in the early part of the Theogony.

Primordial Gods: These are the very first gods to populate the universe in Hesiod’s Theogony. They include Chaos, Gaia, and Ouranos.

Theogony: Epic poem about the origins of the cosmos (a ‘cosmogony’ (birth of the cosmos) as well as a ‘theogony’ (birth of the gods)); composed by Hesiod; Hesiod appears as a character in his own poem in the prologue.

Titans: The children of Ouranos and Gaia as described in Hesiod’s Theogony. Although they live forever, Hesiod refers to them as “the gods from before” (that is, before the reign of Zeus - see Olympians).

3. Battle, Succession, and Interpretation

Athena: (alt. sp = Athene). Goddess of wisdom. Emerges from Zeus’ head in the Theogony. Special protector of Odysseus and Telemachus in the Odyssey (appears to Telemachus in the guise of Mentos and Mentor in bks 1-4).

Kronos: The son of Ouranos, Kronos tries to fight off succession by swallowing his own children. He is a god of the older generation (a Titan), married to Rhea, and father of Zeus and many of the other Olympians. His story is told in the Theogony. In the Roman tradition, Kronos is renamed ‘Saturn’. See further Goya, “Saturn Devouring His own Children (under images).”

Metis: Greek word meaning “cunning”. The first wife of Zeus in the Theogony, whom Zeus swallows when she is pregnant with Athena.

Rhea: Wife of Kronos in the Theogony. Mother of Zeus, whom she hides away to save from Kronos.

Typhoios: Monstrous child of Gaia and Tartaros. Typhoeus challenges Zeus’ rule in the Theogony and is eventually defeated by him. Compare lecture 7, where an alternative version of the birth of ‘Typhaon’ (same god) is given in the Homeric hymn to Apollo.

Zeus: Supremely powerful ruler of gods and men. Zeus is the son of Kronos and the leader of the Olympians. The Theogony tells the story of his succession and celebrates his rule. He appears in many other myths that we will address in this course. In the Iliad, Zeus is the arbitrator of events (he holds the scales which determine Hector must die) and he also presides over Odysseus’ fate on his journey home in the Odyssey (see the council of the gods, Od. 1)

4. Near Eastern Parallels

Enuma elish: see Powell chapter. Babylonian Succession myth featuring the god Marduk and his rise to power.

Kingship in Heaven: Hittite succession myth that details story of Kumarbi, and the birth of storm-god Teshub from Kumarbi’s body.

Kumarbi: Servant of Anush who replaces him in succession for royal/divine power. Bites off Anush’s genitals, swallows his semen, and becomes pregnant with the storm god Teshub, whom he gives birth to through the “good place” (thought to be his penis).

Marduk: The supreme god in Babylonian mythology, featured in the Nr. eastern text called the Enuma elish.

Song of Ullikummi: Hittite myth which continues Kingship in Heaven. Tells of birth of stone child Ullikummi and his fight with the storm god Teshub.

Succession Myth: A kind of myth which deals with the succession of sons over fathers over a number of generations. Many Greek and Near Eastern myths use this format to tell of how a divinity came to be a supreme ruler.

5. The Myth of Prometheus and the Origin of Women

Age of Heroes: See ‘Ages of Man’ (ID). Hesiod Works and Days. The group of mythological heroes who died in the Trojan and Theban wars.

Ages of Man: Hesiod, Works and Days pp. 26-29. the five ages (also called ‘races’) of mankind are Gold, Silver, Bronze, Heroic, Iron. You should know all of these individually for an ID, but when discussing one or another on an ID you should also be able to put them into context in relation to one another. Through the ages of man Hesiod tells a story of the gradual decline and generation of the human race and their lot upon the earth.

Bronze Age of Man: See ‘Ages of Man’ (ID). Hesiod Works and Days pp. 26-29. Hard, warlike group. Violent. Killed one another off in war. This group has nothing to do with the so-called “Bronze Age” period of Greek history.

Elpis: The Greek word for ‘hope’ and ‘expectation.’ Elpis is the only thing left inside Pandora’s jar when she opens it in the Works and Days (lines 115 ff.)

Epimetheus: Hesiod, Theogony, Works and Days. The slow-witted brother of Prometheus who accepts Pandora as a bride.

Golden Age of Man: These men lived in the ‘golden age’ - the time when men lived without toil or disease, under the rule of Kronos. Hesiod Works and Days (see also ‘Ages of Man’ ID).

Iron Age of Man: See ‘Ages of Man’ (ID). The worst age for mankind. This is the age of toil, disease, good mixed with evil. Pandora seems to have in some ways set this age in motion by opening up her jar.

Pandora: Hesiod, Theogony, Works and Days. Pandora is the first woman, and creates the race of women. She is manufactured by Zeus and the other gods in return for (and as punishment for) Prometheus’ theft of fire. Pandora is married to Epimetheus and opens up the jar that she was given (and told not to open) with disastrous results for the history of human kind.

Prometheus: Hesiod Theogony and Works and Days. Prometheus is a Titan who tricks Zeus twice, first through the fixing of the sacrifice, second by stealing fire back for men. In later traditions, such as Aeschylus’ play Prometheus Bound, Prometheus is represented explicitly as a culture - hero (a little bit of extra info not mentioned in lecture). Although a god, Prometheus is often associated with man and humankind. He is punished by Zeus for his transgressions.

Silver Age of Man: See also ‘Ages of man’ (ID); Hesiod Works and Days. Men lived as children for 100 years, and then died after a brief adolescence. Did not honor gods.

6. Sexual Desire & Finishing Pandora

Aineias: Son of Anchises and Aphrodite, Aeneas is a hero in the Trojan War.(You can spell his name either way).

Aphrodite: Goddess of Love, born from the genitals of Ouranos in Hesiod’s Theogony.She also features as the lover of Anchises and mother of Aineias in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite. See further her role in Homer’s Iliad and - eventually - Virgil’s Aeneid.

Danae: Danae is the mother of the hero Perseus. Her father locks her up in a room, but Zeus still manages to impregnate her through a shower of gold.

Eos and Tithonos: Eos (the goddess of Dawn) falls in love with the mortal Tithonos. She asks Zeus to grant him immortality but forgets to ask for eternal youth...

Ganymede: Beautiful boy whom Zeus falls in love with and takes up to Olympus to be his cup-bearer. Ganymede receives immortality and eternal youth.

Leda: Zeus has sex with Leda in the form of a swan, and Helen is an offspring of their union.

Troy: site of Judgment of Paris and the Trojan War. Located on west coast of Asia Minor (Turkey).

7. Growing Up as a God

Apollo: Son of Zeus and Leto, sister of Artemis.

Apollo's 3 timai are the bow, the lyre, and prophecy. Born in Delos, Apollo founds a sanctuary at Delphi.

Delphi: Homeric hymn to Apollo. Site of Apollo's sanctuary and oracle in Northern Greece (see map in Athanassakis).

Hera: Hera is the wife of Zeus and queen of the gods. Her special province is marriage. Ironically, her own marriage to Zeus is full of problems.

Hermes: The trickster god who is born from Zeus and Maia. He begins life in relative obscurity but works his way into the Pantheon, where he takes on the honors or attributes (timai) of messenger, shepherd, and companion to mortals. He is also the god of boundaries and travel.

Homeric Hymns: see Athanassakis (intro). A collection of hymns in honor of the gods, composed in the archaic period. They are called 'Homeric' because they follow Homer's style, although were most likely not the work of the same author of the Iliad and/or Odyssey. The hymns celebrate the lives of the Olympian gods.

8. Mothers and Daughters

aetiological myth: An example of a myth that explains something about a custom, ritual, or natural/scientific phenomena in ancient society, or even why something was named the way it was.

Demeter: Sister of Zeus and mother of Persephone (with Zeus). Founds mystery religion at Eleusis with Persephone. Goddess of agriculture and grain.

Demophoon: Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Son of the mortal woman Metaneira, whom Demeter comes to in disguise as a mortal nursemaid. Demeter attempts to make him immortal and ageless by putting him in the fire every night and anointing him with ambrosia. Compare to other mortals who attain or almost attain divine status.

Eleusynian Mysteries: Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Secret mystery rites for initiates, located at Eleusis, and presided over by Demeter and Persephone.

Hades: Brother of Zeus who is given the realm of the Underworld (also called Hades) by Zeus as his timE. Marries Persephone in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.

Persephone: Persephone is abducted into the Underworld by Hades in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. She works out a compromise with her new husband so that she can spend 2 thirds of the year with her mother and a third underground with him. Persephone shares with Demeter the rites of the Eleusynian Mysteries.

9. Iliad: Gods and Men

Achilles: Iliad. Greatest hero of the Achaeans, son of Peleus and Thetis. Argues with Agamemnon and sits out much of the fighting in the Iliad, because his honor has been insulted. Kills Hector in book 22.

Agamemnon: Iliad; we will also encounter him in Odyssey books 1-4 and Aeschylus' Oresteia. Leader of the Achaeans (Greeks) at Troy, argues with Achilles. Brother of Menelaus.

Homer: Iliad; Odyssey; Oral poet, composer of Iliad and Odyssey. Active in about the 8th century BCE (much about him is unknown). See further Muses, epic.

kleos: Iliad, Odyssey. Greek word meaning fame, honor, reputation. a marker of heroic status.

Thetis: Iliad; Theogony. Daughter of Nereus (old man of the sea), an immortal who is married to the mortal man Peleus and who gives birth to Achilles.

10. Immortal but Troubled

Hector: Iliad. Greatest hero of the Trojans, the tragedy of his death closes the Iliad. Brother of Paris, killed by Achilles. (I will introduce Hector as an official ID on Wednesday as we have a few slides left to go from the Iliad).

Hephaestus: Iliad; Theogony; Works and Days; (later: Odyssey); Lame smith god of the Olympians, makes the Olympians laugh at the end of Iliad I.

Sarpedon: Iliad. Son of Zeus who dies in book 16 of the Iliad. Zeus is torn over whether to save his son or whether to let him die as fate has appointed.

11. Back on Ithaca

nostos: Odyssey. 'homecoming' (we get our word nostalgia, homesickness from this word). Word used to describe the returns of the Greek heroes from Troy after the city has been captured. The story of Odysseus' nostos to Ithaca is told in the first 12 books of the Odyssey, but in many ways his true nostos, his real return home, does not take place until the very end of the poem.

Orestes: Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra who avenges his father's death as told in Book 1 of the Odyssey.

Phemius: Oral poet (bard) in Odyssey who sings to keep the suitors entertained (book 1).

Telemachus: Odyssey 1-4. Son of Odysseus and Penelope, just reaching age of manhood when Odyssey opens.

Telemachy: Odyssey. A name given to the first four books of the Odyssey, because Odysseus does not appear until book 5. The Telemachy can be thought of as a 'mini-Odyssey' - Telemachus' wanderings to different areas of Greece in search of news (more accurately the kleos) of his father.

Xenophanes: (Dowden, "Greeks on Myth" in course reader). Presocratic philosopher who criticized Homer and Hesiod for their portrayal of the gods (too immoral, too anthropomorphic).

12. What's the Son of a Hero to Do? - Telemachus

Eidothea: Odyssey 4. Sea goddess. Daughter of Proteus (although she, like Telemachus in book 1, isn't entirely sure of this). Aids Menelaus in his journey home.

Helen: Odyssey 4. Wife of Menelaus. Telemachus visits her in Sparta in the Telemachy. Known for her wiles as well as her beauty.

Menelaus: Odyssey book 4. Brother of Agamemnon, husband of Helen. Telemachus visits him in book 4 of the Odyssey and Menelaus tells him about his nostos via Egypt.

Metrodorus: "Greeks on Myth". Allegorist from the 5th c. BCE who believed that the gods in Homer represented different parts of the human body and that the heroes represented different elements of the universe (sun, moon, etc.).

Nestor: Odyssey book 3. Oldest of the Greek heroes who fought at Troy. Telemachus visits him in Pylos in Od. 3

Penelope: Wife of Odysseus and mother of Telemachus. She is under increasing pressure to marry one of the suitors. See further Linda Pastan "At the Loom," "Rereading the Odyssey in Middle Age".

Proteus: Odyssey 4; Old man of the Sea who can change into many shapes at will. Father of Eidothea.

Theagenes: Presocratic physical allegorist from late 6th c. BCE. He believed that we should think of the gods in Homer as elements such as fire, water, air. See further Dowden, "Greeks on Myth"

13. Myth and the Fantastic

Calypso: Odyssey bk. 5. Goddess who inhabits island of Ogygia and who detains Odysseus there for a number of years.

Nausicaa: Odyssey book 6. Phaeacian princess who is told in a dream by Athena to wash her clothes at the river in preparation for marriage. There she meets Odysseus.

Odysseus: Greek hero of Homer's Odyssey. Marked by his cunning, cleverness, and ability to endure pain and suffering. Also appears in the Iliad. Favorite of Athena.

Phaeacians: Odyssey books 6-13. Somewhat fantastic and otherworldly race of people who are nevertheless human. They entertain Odysseus and escort him back to Ithaca.

xenia: Odyssey. Ancient Greek practice of guest-friendship.

14. Telling Myths and Rationalizing Them

allegory: see Dowden and Graf. An ancient myth theory used by the Presocratics (eg. Theagenes, Metrodorus) and the Stoics, among others, to rationalize and interpret the hidden meaning behind myth.

Demodocus: Od. 8. Blind bard among the Phaeacians on Scheria. Sings at the feast set up to honor the stranger Odysseus. See further Song of Ares and Aphrodite.

Schliemann: Heinrich Schliemann was a late 19th century amateur archaeologist who excavated at Troy and Mycenae, using Homer as his guide.

Song of Ares & Aphrodite: Od. 8. The adulterous affair between Ares and Aphrodite, and their capture by Aphrodite's husband Hephaestus, is told by Demodocus in book 8 of the Odyssey. Some ancient Greeks tried to rationalize this story through allegory.

Stoics: Philosophers from the Hellenistic and Roman periods who continued the tradition of allegorizing Greek myth, especially through etymology (the meaning of words, or in this case, mostly the names of gods).

15. Table Manners

Aeolus: Odyssey bk. 10. King who lives on floating island with his 6 daughter and 6 sons. Gives Odysseus a bag of winds to aid him in his passage home.

Laestrygonians: Odyssey book 10. Fantastic giant people who spear Odysseus' men like fish when they pull into their harbor.

Lotus Eaters: Odyssey 9. Group of people who feed Odysseus' crew the lotus, which causes them to forget their homeland.

Polyphemus: Odyssey bk 9. Cyclops, son of Poseidon, who traps Odysseus in his cave and eats several of his men. Curses Odysseus when he finds out his name.

Poseidon: Odyssey; God of the sea, brother of Zeus and Hades. Develops a hatred of Odysseus during his nostos.

16. Meeting with the Dead

Cattle of the Sun: Odyssey 12. Immortal cattle of Helios whom Tiresias warns Odysseus not to eat, on any account. His men fall victim to their hunger and eat the cattle. The gods punish Odysseus' crew

with a storm, killing all of them (except Odysseus) at sea.

Circe: Odyssey book 10. Immortal daughter of Helios. Lives on an island visited by Odysseus and turns some of his men into pigs. She then sleeps with Odysseus and he lives with her for a year.

Elpenor: Od 10-12. Member of Odysseus’ crew who falls from the roof of Circe’s house at the end of book 10, whom Odysseus meets in the underworld, and whom he buries on Aeaëa at the beginning of book 12.

Scylla and Charybdis: Odyssey 12. monsters whom Odysseus and his crew must pass by (and Odysseus must pass again after losing his crew). Scylla lives high up in a cliff on a rock face and eats several members of Odysseus’ crew; Charybdis is a whirlpool who sucks everything down into herself and eventually spits it all back out.

Sirens: Odyssey 12. Figures who sing alluringly to Odysseus and try to tempt him to pull in and listen to his song. Circe warns Odysseus that no-one who pulls in to the island ever leaves, which is why he fills his crews’ ears with wax and has himself bound to the mast.

17. Back at Argos

Aegisthus: Lover of Clytaemestra, plays a minimal role in killing of Agamemnon in Aeschylus. Aegisthus is the last remaining son of Thyestes (the only one not to be eaten).

Aeschylus: Athenian playwright of the 5th century BCE (Classical period), wrote the Oresteia which consists of three plays: Agamemnon; Libation Bearers; Eumenides (aka “The Kindly Ones”).

Cassandra: Aeschylus’ Agamemnon. priestess of Apollo, daughter of Priam. Broke her word to Apollo and was cursed with knowing the truth but never being believed. Brought back as a war prize by Agamemnon and killed by Clytemnestra.

Clytemnestra: In the Odyssey, left under the charge of a poet by husband Agamemnon when he went to war, but still seduced by Aegisthus (Od. 3. 255-300, p.36). In Aeschylus’ Agamemnon, kills Agamemnon upon his return from war and is in turn killed by Orestes. Also plays an important role throughout the trilogy. Alternative spelling: Clytaemestra.

eagles and hare: Aeschylus’ Agamemnon. image used by the chorus in their first song to describe omen that made Artemis angry with pity. The eagles rip open the belly of a hare and eat its unborn young.

House of Atreus: Aeschylus’ Oresteia. household that begins with Tantalus but which is first officially cursed with Pelops and his dishonorable actions during the chariot race. Pelops’ sons Atreus and Thyestes fight, continuing the curse, and it is then passed down, through Atreus, to his son Agamemnon (and his son after him... when will it ever end?).

Hubris: A kind of pride associated with overreaching or overstepping one’s boundaries. The effects of hubris are explored particularly in tragedy.

sacrifice of Iphigeneia: Aeschylus’ Agamemnon. Demanded by Artemis in response to seeing the omen of the eagles and hare, to atone for the spilling of innocent blood at Troy.

18. What’s the Son of a Hero to Do? - Orestes

Classical Period: See also archaic period; tragedy. Follows the Archaic period in Greece, often described as the ‘golden age’ of Greek arts and literature. Athens is a very prominent city in

the Classical period.

Clytaemestra’s Dream: Aeschylus, Libation Bearers. Clytaemestra dreams in the Libation Bearers that she has given birth to a serpent who bites her breast when she feeds it. The dream prompts her to send libations to the tomb of Agamemnon

Electra: Aeschylus’ Libation Bearers. Daughter of Agamemnon and Clytaemestra, helps plot with Orestes to kill Aegisthus and her mother.

Furies: Aeschylus, Libation Bearers and Eumenides. These gruesome creatures are the avenging spirits who chase and torment Orestes after he kills his mother.

Libation Bearers: The second play in the trilogy of the Oresteia, following the Agamemnon and coming before the Eumenides. This play takes its name from the chorus of women who bring libations to Agamemnon’s tomb.

Tragedy: An art form that developed in Athens in the Classical period, performed in a large open air theater, with a chorus and 2 or 3 actors (depending on the playwright) playing all of the characters. In the vast majority of cases, tragedy drew its subject matter from myth.

19. Myth and the City (Aeschylus’ Eumenides)

Areopagus: Aeschylus, Eumenides. The Areopagus was a rocky hill in Athens which gave its name to the court where homicide trials took place. This is also where Aeschylus has Orestes’ crime tried in the last play of the trilogy. This is an Aeschylean invention to the myth.

Eumenides: Aeschylus’ Oresteia. In Greek this word means the “Kindly Ones”. It is the name given to the Furies at the end of the trilogy when Athena offers them a benevolent role in her city.

Furies: Aeschylus, Libation Bearers and Eumenides. These gruesome creatures are the avenging spirits who chase and torment Orestes after he kills his mother.

20. Know Yourself (Sophocles’ Oedipus the King)

Sophocles: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Sometimes claimed to be the greatest of the 3 playwrights. Author of Oedipus the King, Antigone, Oedipus at Colonus, and other plays. Was known for his portrayal of complex and strong characters.

Oedipus: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Child of Jocasta and Laius, but brought up in Corinth as the child of Polybus and Merope. Fated to kill his father and marry his mother. See further Freud, Levi-Strauss, Propp (lecture 21). His name means “swollen foot”.

Tiresias: Odyssey book 11; Oedipus the King; the Bacchae. Theban prophet whom Odysseus meets in the Underworld and who gives him advice on his journey home. He also appears as a character in Oedipus the King and Euripides’ Bacchae.

Jocasta: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Mother and wife of Oedipus; sister of Creon. Queen of Thebes who hangs herself when she discovers her unwitting crime. See also Odyssey 11. 275 ff.

Laius: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Father of Oedipus, wife of Jocasta, son of Labdacus. Laius fell in love with and abducted the son of Pelops (this was before he returned to Thebes and married Jocasta). In some versions of the myth Pelops cursed him for his transgression.

Sphinx: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Monstrous being who terrorizes Thebes and whom Oedipus

releases them from by being the only man wise enough to answer her riddle.

Delphic Oracle: Best known of Greek oracles, consulted on personal and political matters. Founded by Apollo and consulted by both Oedipus and Orestes.

21. Oedipus - Levi-Strauss, Propp, Freud

autochthony: Levi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth”. We learned a few lectures ago that ‘chthonic beings’ such as the Furies, are particularly connected with the earth. Autochthony is the phenomenon of actually being born from the earth, rather from a set of human parents. Many cultures have myths about the autochthonous origins of mankind (where men are born from mud, stones, etc.), at the same time as they have other myths telling of the origins of man from 1 or 2 parents. When Oedipus at the end of Sophocles’ Oedipus the King starts to call Mount Cithaeron his parent, we can see this also as an attempt to distance himself from parent-birth and associate himself with autochthony.

Cadmus: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Founder of Thebes, who kills the dragon and sows its teeth into the earth. From them spring up the Spartoi (sown men), who fight one another. The remaining few become leaders of the founding families of Thebes.

Freud: Inventor of psychoanalytic theory. Freud identified the ‘Oedipus Complex’. See his essay on the Oedipus myth assigned for the course

Levi-Strauss: A French structural anthropologist, born in 1908. Author of many books that dealt with myth and mythic structures, including “The Raw and The Cooked,” and an analysis of the Oedipus myth. See also universalism, and explanation of his chart on images page of course website.

22. Know Your God: The Bacchae

Actaeon: Euripides’ Bacchae. Cousin of Pentheus and daughter of Autonoe who is torn apart by his own hunting dogs after bragging that he is a better hunter than Artemis.

Agave: Euripides’ Bacchae. Daughter of Cadmus and mother of Pentheus, she is driven wild by Dionysus and ends up tearing her son to pieces in a sparagmos. Only at the end of the play does she see clearly and realise what she has done.

Dionysus: Euripides’ Bacchae. The last god to join the Pantheon, Dionysus is portrayed as a new god in the Bacchae who asserts his divinity and role in a city which had refused to take his birthright seriously. He is associated, among other things with wine and theater.

Euripides: Euripides was the third of the three best-known Athenian tragic playwrights, and author of the Bacchae. Euripides was known for his witty and subversive style.

Mount Cithaeron: Sophocles’ Oedipus the King; Euripides’ Bacchae. The mountain on the outskirts of the city of Thebes on which Oedipus is abandoned and to which the women run when driven into a divine state of ecstasy by Dionysus.

Pentheus: Euripides’ Bacchae. Son of Agave, grandson of Cadmus, Pentheus is the king of Thebes who tries to resist the introduction of the religion of Dionysos to his city in the Bacchae.

Semele: Euripides’ Bacchae; Ovid’s Metamorphoses (coming soon). Semele is the mother of Dionysos, burned to death in the thunderbolt that Zeus came to her as in bed. She is the Theban daughter of Cadmus and sister of Agave.

sparagmos: Euripides’ Bacchae. The ritual

tearing to pieces of a live animal or human body, which is associated with the cult of Dionysos. Pentheus experiences a sparagmos at the hands of his bacchant relatives in Euripides’ Bacchae.

23. Looking Backwards - The Fall of Troy

Aeneas: Son of Anchises and Venus / Aphrodite, Aeneas is chosen by destiny to lead the remaining Trojans to found a new city after the fall of Troy. He is the “man” whom Virgil refers to in the first line of the poem, and he is the central figure throughout. Aeneas is a variant spelling for Aineias (the child whom Aphrodite refers to in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite).

Aeneid: Epic poem written by the Roman poet Virgil, written during the age of Augustus (left unfinished at Virgil’s death in 19 BCE). The Aeneid tells the story of Aeneas’ journey from Troy to Italy, where he founds the race that will one day become the Romans.

Anchises: Mortal whom Aphrodite falls in love with and sleeps with, conceiving the child Aineias. He also appears in Virgil’s Aeneid.

Ascanius: Virgil’s Aeneid. Son of Aeneas and Creusa, Ascanius is the hope of the future race of Rome. His name is also Ilius (from Ilium, another name for Troy), which gets changed to Iulius when he rules in Italy. See Aeneid p. 9.

Household gods: Virgil’s Aeneid. The Roman household gods are called the Lares and the Penates. They symbolize the hearth and the supply of food. Aeneas brings them with him from Troy to Italy. He escapes from Troy at the end of book 2 carrying his father Anchises, his son Ascanius, and the household gods. This displays his sense of duty (pietas) to family, household, and ultimately - since he is off to found the future race of Romans - community.

Neoptolemus: Also known as Pyrrhus, Neoptolemus is the son of Achilles. We hear about him from Odysseus in book 11 of the Odyssey. Aeneas tells the story of how Neoptolemus sacked Troy in book 2 of the Aeneid.

pietas: Virgil’s Aeneid. The Roman word for loyalty, duty, or piety. This quality characterizes Aeneas for much of the epic, and especially at the beginning of the poem. Pietas is a distinctively Roman quality, and creates a different kind of hero than the one we are used to from the Greek tradition.

Romulus and Remus: Virgil’s Aeneid p.13. The twin sons of Ilia and Mars, suckled by a she-wolf. Together they build the city of Rome but Romulus kills Remus (in some versions because he jumped over an unfinished wall: a bad omen) and gives his name to Rome. The Romans dated the founding of Rome to 753 BCE.

24. Looking Forwards - Towards the Foundation of Rome

Carthage: Aeneid bks 1, 4. Carthage is the new city being built by queen Dido in the Aeneid. It is the favorite city of Juno and will eventually become Rome’s greatest enemy. Carthage rose to great prominence as a super-power in the 3rd century BCE. This led to clashes with Rome in the 3rd and 2nd centuries, BCE (the 3 Punic Wars). Carthage was eventually destroyed by Rome.

Dido: Aeneid books 1, 4, 6. Dido is the queen of Carthage, a new city in North Africa which she has escaped to from Tyre (modern Lebanon) after learning that her brother secretly killed her husband. Visited by Aeneas on his way to Italy, she has a love affair (what she thinks is a marriage) with him that ends disastrously, not only for her but also for the future relations of Carthage and

Rome.

Golden Bough: Aeneid book 6. Aeneas must find and pull up the golden bough in order to gain entry to the underworld. He later gives the bough to Charon, the ferryman of the dead, in order to get a passage over the river.

Parade of Heroes: Aeneid book 6. This is the parade of future heroes in Rome that the now dead (died at end of book 3) Anchises shows to Aeneas in the Underworld. In this way Virgil is able to dramatically reveal all the future heroes of Italy and Rome, from Aeneas down to Augustus and Marcellus, the adopted son of Augustus who tragically died young at around the time of the Aeneid’s composition.

Sibyl: Aeneid book 6. Priestess and prophet of Apollo at Cumae (Italy) who guides Aeneas to and through the Underworld.

25. Delicious Myths

Atreus: Aeschylus’ Oresteia; Seneca’s Thyestes. Grandson of Tantalus who plots horrible revenge for brother Thyestes in Seneca’s play.

Nero: Seneca’s Thyestes. As the fifth emperor of Rome, Nero built the Domus Aurea and was known for his excessive behavior.

Seneca: Roman philosopher and playwright from the time of Nero. Composer of the play the Thyestes. Connections to the court of Nero and forced to commit suicide by him.

Tantalus: Seneca’s Thyestes; House of Atreus (ID); Odyssey 11; Aeneid 6. Eternally punished in Underworld for carving up his son Pelops and serving him to the gods for dinner. Tantalus appears as a ghost at the opening of Seneca’s play.

Thyestes: Seneca’s Thyestes; Aeschylus’ Oresteia; House of Atreus (ID). Brother of Atreus - sleeps with Atreus’ wife and ends up eating his own children in Seneca’s play.

26. Ovid, Metamorphoses I

Daphne: Ovid Metamorphoses. The story of Daphne and Apollo introduces the theme of erotic love in Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Daphne is chased by Apollo and turns into the laurel tree. She is one of several characters in the poem who are loved by/ raped by/ escape attentions of a god.

Io: Ovid, Metamorphoses. Io is yet another virgin whose beauty catches the eye of a god - in this case Jove’s, who rapes her under a dark cloud so that Juno will not be able to see. Io is turned into a cow and sadly scratches her name in the dust for her father to realise who she is.

Metamorphoses: Ovid Metamorphoses. The title of Ovid’s epic poem, which collects together a whole array of myths from Greco-Roman culture. Composed in the first decade of the 1st century CE (either finished just before or just after Ovid is exiled by Augustus in 8 CE). Metamorphosis means change.

Ovid: Ovid was a contemporary of Vergil’s and a poet of the Augustan age. He wrote the Metamorphoses.

Syrinx: Ovid, Metamorphoses. Syrinx is a water nymph loved by Pan. She flees from him and is turned into reeds, becoming the pan pipe. Her story is inset into the story of Io.

27. Ovid, Metamorphoses II

Daedalus: Ovid Metamorphoses; Vergil, Aeneid (beginning of book 6). Daedalus is a master craftsman (he built the labyrinth which held the minotaur). Held in exile on Crete, he devises wings for his son, Icarus, and himself to escape. Icarus

falls to his death after flying too close to the sun.

Orpheus: Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Orpheus is so upset at the death of his wife (on their wedding day) that he goes down to the Underworld and charms its inhabitants with his song (including Persephone). She allows him to take Eurydice out of the underworld as long as he doesn’t look back at her on the journey out. But Orpheus unfortunately looks back, and loses Eurydice for a second time.

Philomela: Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Philomela is the sister of Procne, who is raped by Procne’s husband, Tereus, and locked up in the woods. Tereus cuts Philomela’s tongue out, to stop her from reporting the deed, but she weaves the story into a tapestry and sends it to her sister. Procne rescues Philomela and the two punish Tereus by serving him up his son, Itys, to eat.

Procne: Daughter of King Pandion of Athens, sister of Procne, wife of Tereus, mother of Itys. Serves Itys to Tereus. Ovid Metamorphoses. Turns into a swallow or nightingale.

Pygmalion: Ovid, Metamorphoses. Pygmalion lived on the island of Cyprus and shunned the company of women. Instead he build a statue for himself of a woman who was so beautiful that he fell in love with her. Aphrodite granted his request that the statue come to life under the hands of this master craftsman.

Tereus: Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Husband of Procne. Rapes Philomela and is served his son Itys to eat in revenge.

28. Conclusion

Icarus: Ovid Metamorphoses, Vergil Aeneid 6. Son of Daedalus who did not heed his father’s advice and flew too close to the sun, causing the wax on his home-made (by Daedalus) wings to melt. The fall of Icarus is painted by Brueghel and written about in a poem by W. H. Auden.

Myrrha: Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Myrrha developed an all-consuming lust for her father, which she acted on with the help of her nurse. When her father discovers their crime she runs away and is transformed into the Myrrh tree. The child Adonis is born from the tree.