**Notes:**

**Poseidon**

In Greek mythology, Poseidon was one of the chief Olympian gods. He is primarily known as the God of the sea and of water in general but he was also known as the god of horses, earthquakes, and storms. He is said to be the most primitive of the gods and is portrayed as a powerful bearded man holding a trident in his right hand. He is also often pictured riding in his chariot, pulled by hippocampuses.

**Personality**

Poseidon was considered the most primitive of the gods because his emotions often drowned out rationality. Attributed with violence, vindictiveness, and bad temperament, he was a dangerous and vengeful deity to say the least. He reacted intensely and destructively when provoked.

**Symbolism**

Poseidon’s associated symbols signified his masculinity, sexuality, and fertility. His trident represented his connection as consort of the Great Goddess signifying that he can coexist with her. The horse and bull personify his instinctive drives of our own raw nature.

**Genealogy**

Poseidon was one of the six children birthed from the connection of the Titans, Cronus and Rhea. Thus, his grandparents were the primordial deities Uranus (Ouranos), god of the sky and Gaea, goddess of the Earth. Poseidon had three sisters, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera and two brothers, Hades and Zeus. According to Hesiod, Hestia was the oldest, followed by Demeter, Hera, Hades, then came Poseidon and Zeus. The story behind birth of Poseidon is contained in the myth known as Rhea’s deception. In this myth, Cronus, cognizant that his children are destined to depose him, swallowed his children as they exited the womb. In most accounts of this myth, Zeus is the only one not consumed because Rhea hid his birth and deceived Cronus by giving him a stone to swallow instead of Zeus. Zeus eventually rescues his siblings by causing his father to regurgitate his siblings. In some variations Poseidon was also saved by Rhea who tricked Cronus into thinking that she gave birth to a colt, which he swallowed.

**Women and Children**

* Wife: Amphitrite the Nereid (raped)
  + Delphinus (dolphin) pleaded for their marriage, and she agreed after fleeing
  + Had 1 son & 2 daughters
* Son: Polyphemus the Cyclops
* Son: Triton the merman
* Tyro (lover) and their children Neleus and Pelias
* Mated with Demeter in the form of a stallion
* Scylla (lover)
* Charybdis (daughter of Poseidon and Ge)
* Medusa the Gorgon and their son Pegasus (the winged horse) and Chrysaor (He of the Golden Sword)
* Said to be the true father of Theseus, the great national hero of Athens

**Mythology: Titanomachy**

After Zeus rescued his siblings, he persuaded them into a rebellion against the tyranny of their father. This rebellion is known as the Titanomachy, the ten year war between the Titans and the Olympian gods. Ultimately the Olympians and their allies were successful and overthrew Cronus and the old generation of gods who fought alongside him. The universe then was divided among the three Olympian brothers. Poseidon was allotted the sea and thus became god of the sea.

**Mythology: The Odyssey**

The Odyssey is about the hero Odysseus’ journey home after the Trojan War; however, he is facing many trials and tribulations for 10 years due to the wrath of Poseidon. When Odysseus and his men land in the isle of Cyclops in Sicily, they take and eat everything they see without thinking. When Polyphemus finds them, he is enraged, he eats two men, and imprisons the rest. Each day he eats two of Odysseus’ men in front of them. After eating 6 men, Odysseus takes his club when Polyphemus is not looking, sharpens it, and stabs him in the eye blinding him. When Polyphemus asks who did it, he says his name is “Nobody”, so the cyclops doesn’t have anyone to blame. It isn’t until they escape hiding under the bellies of Polyphemus’ cattle when Odysseus commits to what he did and boasts his name. Polyphemus then begs Poseidon for revenge, and he complies, making his journey home a struggle fighting storms and monsters for years.

**Mythology: Competition for Athens and Argos**

Not content with just the sea, Poseidon competed with Athena for Athens and Troezen, and against Hera for Argos. The contest for Athens was to give the citizens a gift. Athena gave an olive tree and Poseidon stuck his trident into a rock on the acropolis and produced a brackish spring. Athena’s gift was judged more useful, and Poseidon lost the contest and flooded the surrounding plains of Athens and Troezen. Poseidon also lost to Hera in the contest for Argos and in revenge he dried up all the rivers.

**Psych Perspective:**

We learn that the Poseidon archetype is very suppressive yet also emotional, irrational, and vengeful. "A man (or woman) taken over by his fluctuating subjective feelings, who takes no one else and no situation into consideration is self-centered, emotionally inappropriate, and lacks a sense of proportion" (Bolen). The contest for Athens and Argos is a myth that displays Poseidon's lack of capability for being a proper leader. Not thinking about a proper gift with perks of longevity, health, and success for its patrons was him not thinking like a king, although he demands respect for it. His tantrum after not winning these contests of flooding and drying out the cities also shows how his emotions negatively take control over his actions and selfishly hurts many people. This displays how being over-emotional or not having a wise approach to presenting your desires can hinder your personal desires and growth.

**A Sea of Emotion**

Poseidon’s essence is contained in large bodies of water. Water and emotion are linked symbolically. Water, specifically ocean and sea waters, express very powerful moods and in its depths contain many mysteries much like the human subconscious where our emotions reside. These waters, therefore, reflect the psychological domain that Poseidon personifies.

**Force of Nature & Emotionality**

Poseidon was also God of storms and earthquakes and was dubbed earth-shaker and flood-bringer. The occurrence of destructive tidal waves, floods, storms, and earthquakes are all manifestations of Poseidon. These forces of nature are all representations of Poseidon’s emotionality. Destructive tidal waves and earthquakes share the same destructive qualities as rage. Storms correlate to grief and floods are like when emotions drown out rationality. In dreams, tidal wave, floods and earthquakes are interpreted as the emergence of Poseidon.

**Poseidon the Archetype**

A man (or woman) of the Poseidon archetype is primal, instinctive, and emotional. They are emotionally expressive and aggressive individuals. Being primal and instinctive, they often lack rationality an intelligence. The Poseidon archetype is also relentless in pursuing their desires. Suppression of emotions and desires do not fare well for the Poseidon archetype as it often leads to a violent release. When a person feels intense emotion such as rage, grief, or vengeance, he or she is having firsthand experience of his inner Poseidon.

**Archetype of the King**

Poseidon seeks power over a domain and has entitlement of respect and control like a king. However, being archetypally Poseidon means there is a lack in strategic and rational thinking and is usually a "sore loser".

**Archetype of the Wild Man**

A wild man in Poseidon may be thought of as rejected and devalued and repressed in their unconscious. It could also positively mean that a wild man is a source of strength and power, proud when he is able to help those in need.

**Poseidon in the Father**

If accepted as a child and has had a comfortable place in the world, he can be emotionally responsive, physically demonstrative, and not distant or absent.

If not, he can be a terrible and abusive father. He scares his children with his rage. His sons are offspring of his own worst nature, rapists, destructive monsters, or giant and savage. His daughters are un-noteworthy and are easily bullied.

**Poseidon in Everyman**

Characteristics of Poseidon can be found in everyman. They exist within our innate nature. As we go through life, we will experience episodes of immense emotion that will drown out all other thoughts. This is the expression of Poseidon that is contained within all of us. However, they are expressed, whether it be explicit and lively or repressed in our thoughts, there is no doubt that this force of nature will flood our conscious at some point in our lives.

**Conclusion**

When analyzing the mythological figure in Poseidon, using the nature myth and psychological myth theoretical approaches seem to be the most appropriate. Using these approaches, we can comprehend how the ancient Greeks explained natural phenomena and intense human emotions. When powerful forces of nature wreaked havoc on civilizations, it meant that the gods were upset. In the cases of floods and earthquakes, it was Poseidon’s wrath that was perceived. The depths and mysteriousness of Poseidon’s sea waters were all too similar to the human subconscious that drives emotion. The sudden emergence of storms and destructive tidal waves from seemingly calm waters are metaphorical representations of the human release of bottled-up emotions. Dramatic episodes of nature and human emotion were be explained through Poseidon's manifestation and interpretation. As we can see, Poseidon was a very prominent figure in ancient Greek societies; and like other deities, he represented many inexplicable forces of the natural world.