

Classical Mythology

LLCU/CMLT 316.010/080



Class 5

The Greek Pantheon: The Rule of Zeus and Hera

Thursday's Readings

Classical Mythology: 127-135

(recommended, but not on syllabus: 168-178)

Looking Ahead:

****Exam 1: Thursday, March 1****

Exam Outline: Thursday, February 22

The Bronze Age (?)

The Story of Lycaon: Man Becoming Animal



The Bronze Age and the “Great Flood”

Deucalion and Pyrrha:

- Deucalion (son of the Titan Prometheus) and Pyrrha (daughter of the Titan Epimetheus) were able to get to a boat, and were the only Iron Age humans to survive
- Made it to mount Parnassus, and prayed to the goddess Themis
- Zeus took pity on the two survivors and stopped the flood

‘The Iron Age’ (?)

Deucalion and Pyrrha:

- When the water receded, the prayed to Themis for the answer how to repopulate the earth
- Themis gave them an opaque response: loosen your clothing (an act of piety) and toss the bones of your mother behind you

'The Iron Age'

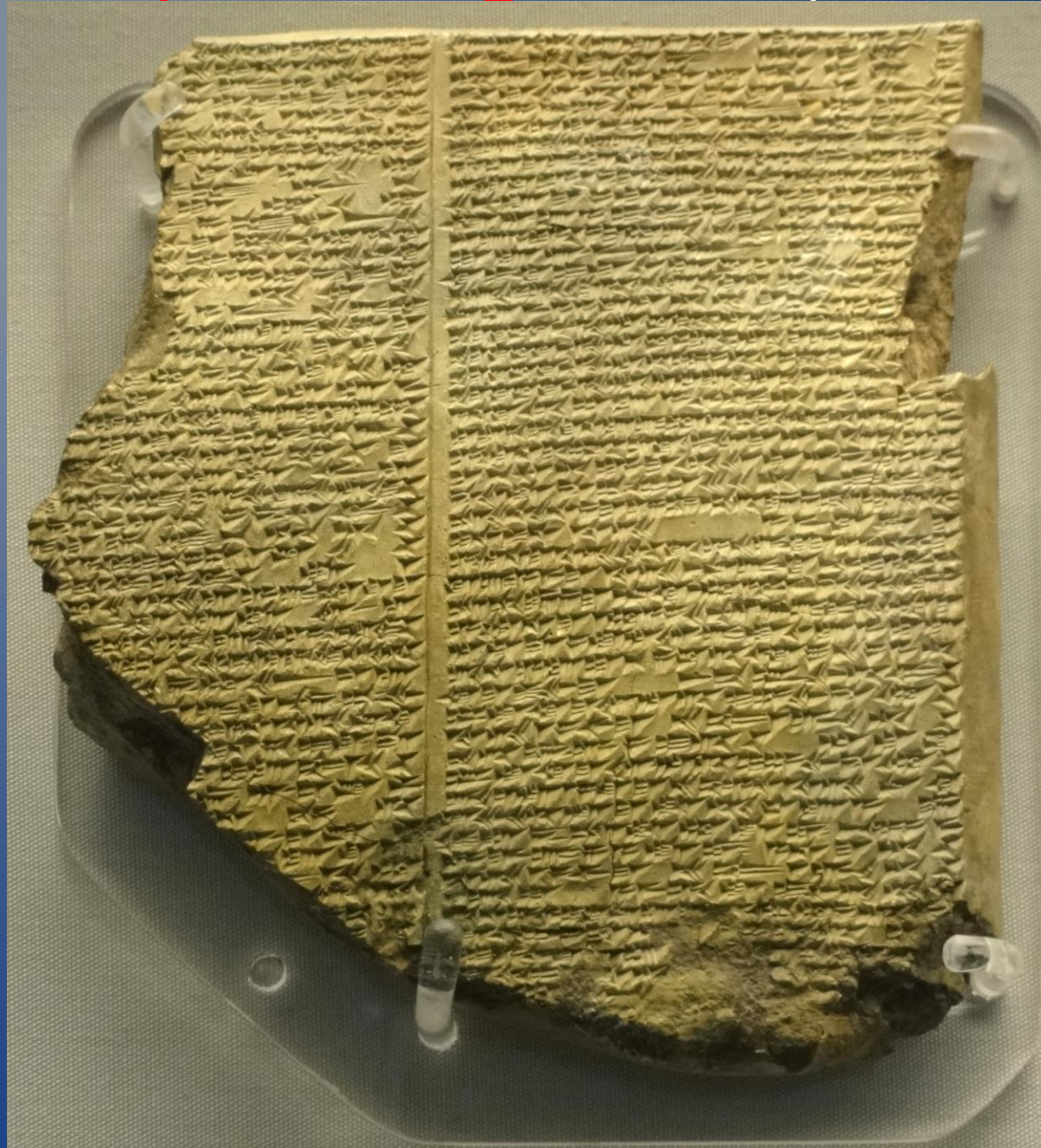
Deucalion and Pyrrha:



Flood Motifs



Flood Motifs: **Epic of Gilgamesh** (*ca.* 2100 BCE)



Flood Motifs: Story of Gilgamesh



Flood Motifs: Story of Utnapishtim



Flood Motifs:

- Potentially suggests cultural contact (Near Eastern movement)
- Place of humans in the universe – inherent sin of human kind (we are inclined to do wrong, and are therefore subject to punishment)
- Wrath and benevolence of gods

...back to Zeus

This was an young Zeus:

- What people worshipped in Greece/Rome was a (somewhat) different, older, and sometimes more level-headed Zeus

But the ethics of Zeus (and other deities) still remained questionable:

Xenophanes (6th century BCE):

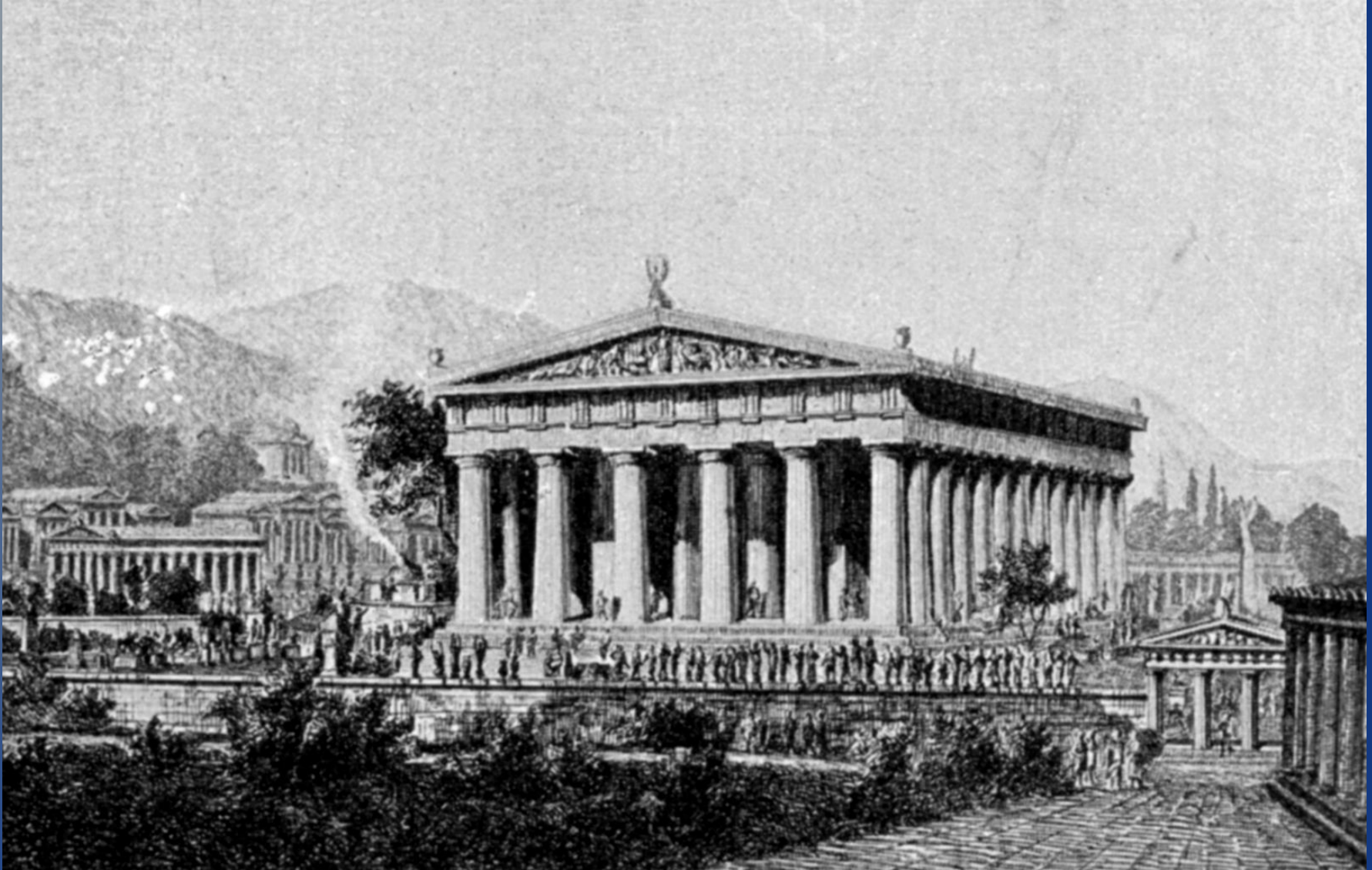
‘Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other.’

Polytheism:

Addresses the complexity of human experience



• Temple of Zeus at Olympia:



• Temple of Zeus at Olympia:

Some Domains of Zeus:

- Oaths
- Justice
- Hospitality
- Assemblies (Gatherings of People)



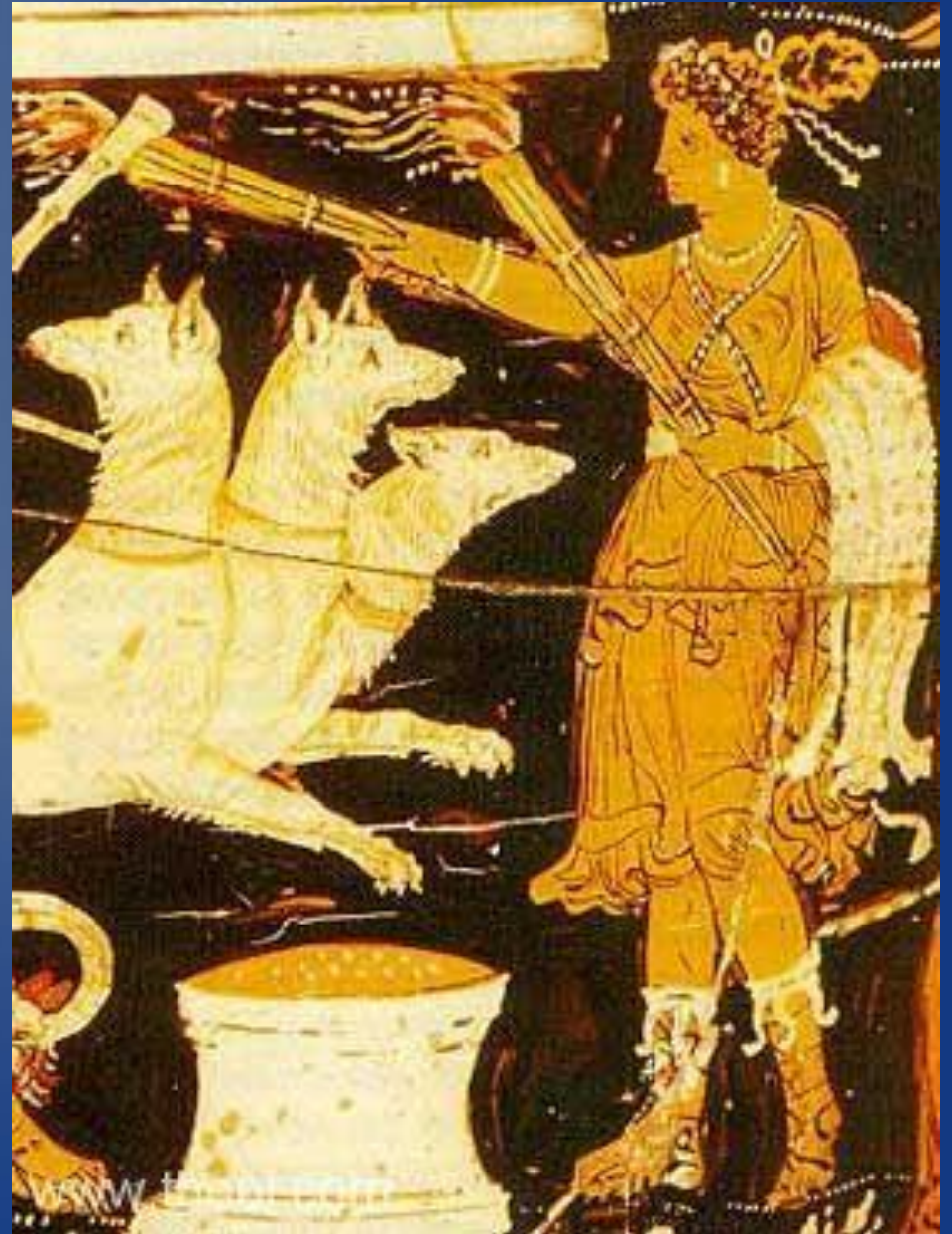
© M. Larrinaga

Two Marginalized Goddesses: Hecate and Hestia

Two Marginalized Goddesses: Hecate and Hestia

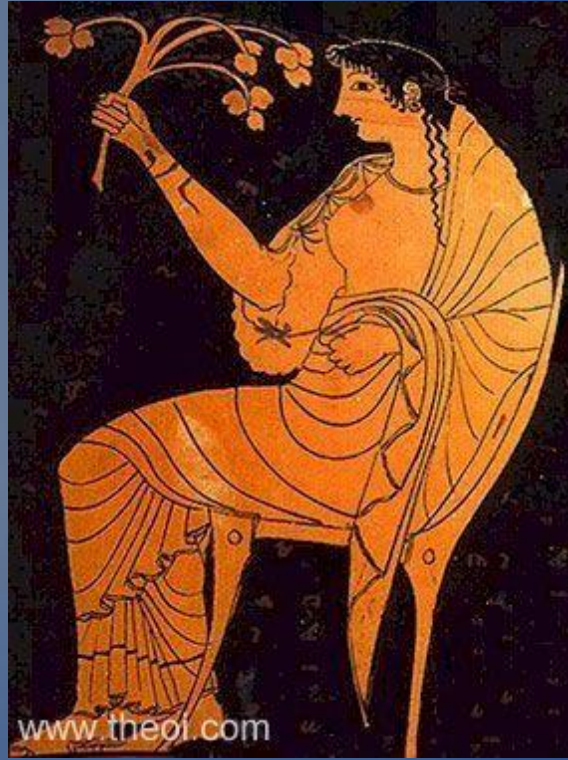
Hecate (Daughter of Titans Perses and Asteria)

- In Hesiod, given high place among the gods (goddess to pray to if you really want something; has power in both the sky and on Earth)
- Later, relegated to the Underworld; goddess of sorcery (dark magic)



Hestia (sister of Zeus), goddess of the hearth

- often difficult to distinguish from other goddesses in iconography
- Rarely appears in mythology
- Is just “there” as a protector of the household



Zeus and Hera

Zeus: Sky

Hera: Earth

Divine model
of husband and
wife



The Age of Zeus



Attributes:

- Identified by his lightning bolt (and sometimes his *aegis*/shield)
- Special animal: eagle
- Depicted as a middle-aged deity (similar to other sons of Kronos and Rhea, Hades and Poseidon)

- Besides the Sky/Thunder god, he has a variety of roles for humans, including hospitality (*xenia*) and the importance of oaths: upholds societal values

Zeus and Hera

(Hera usually important as partner/foil to Zeus)



Hera's Attributes:

- Depicted as a matron (older married woman), often with a veil suggesting modesty; like others from earlier generations, e.g. Demeter, Hestia
- Very few other telling iconographic features (usually identified by her older age and proximity to Zeus in images)
- Special animal: the peacock

Hera's Roles:

- Goddess of marriage and childbirth; queen of heaven
- “Divine” royalty, and thus expects a great degree of respect and loyalty (gasp! Even from her husband Zeus)
- Prides herself on her beauty and dignity

The Union of Zeus and Hera

- Zeus first mated with Themis, Eurynome, Demeter, Memory, Leto (and maybe Dione, in alternate birth story for Aphrodite)
- Without the knowledge of their parents (Cronos and Rhea), Zeus began to court Hera to be his wife

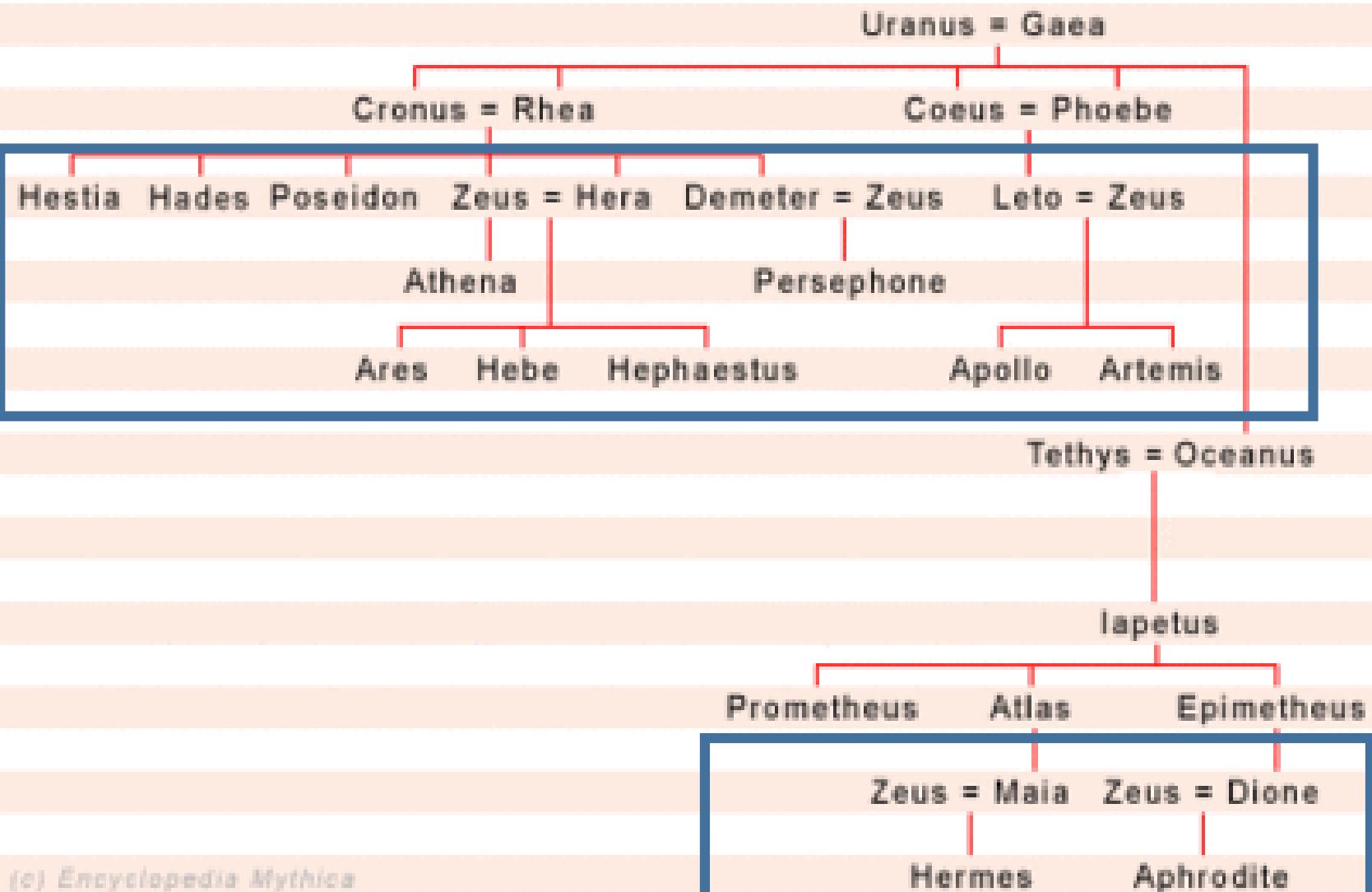
The Union of Zeus and Hera: the “Cuckoo Bird” or “Hoopoe”



The Olympians (and their mothers)

Topic for next few weeks

The Principal Gods



Zeus and infidelity

Zeus and **Io**

Zeus
“seduces” Io

turns her into
a cow to
hide her
from Hera



Zeus and infidelity

Zeus and Io: **Argus** Panoptes

Hera sends Argus to watch her new “pet” Io

Argus never sleeps;
always on lookout

Hermes kills Argus; Hera puts
his “eyes” on her bird
(the peacock)

