

# Classical Mythology

## LLCU/CMLT 316.010/080



## Class 13

Dionysus and His Retinue

Demeter and Persephone

Readings for Next Tuesday:

*Classical Mythology* 339-356

# Format: Same as Exam 1

## Section 1

- 25 multiple choice questions (1 mark x 25)
- Section 2
  - 15 Short answer questions (2 marks x 15)
- Many questions will focus on the basic pattern
  - god/goddess' relation to other deities
  - identifiable traits *in art*
  - domains of power
  - origin story (location, special birth/upbringing)
  - representative stories (and their significance)
  - relevance to Greek/Roman religion or society
- Like last exam, however, there will be degrees of difficulty for questions, to ensure fair distribution of marks

# Exam 1: Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

- You will have all of class time to write this exam, although most do not need that much
- Covers material up until the end of this class (today's lecture)

## Study Suggestions:

- Concentrate on overlap between the textbook and course content (only a few questions will be from the textbook alone; it is another resource for explanations)
- Stories in *blue headings* (textbook) *and* bolded words are most important; these are your guides
- Words in **Red** on the PowerPoint indicate especially important names/terms (spend some time on these!)
- Useful student resources for the textbook can be found on the syllabus. Do take a look at these; they'll help!

Dionysus and his Retinue:

A god of life and death



# Dionysus: Thyrsus



<http://iris.haverford.edu/athens/files/2009/08/thyrsus-291x300.jpg>

# Dionysus: A god of life and death

Walter Otto:

‘His duality has manifested itself to us in the antitheses of ecstasy and horror, infinite vitality and savage destruction. At the height of ecstasy all of these paradoxes suddenly unmask themselves and reveal their names to be Life and Death.’



# Dionysus: Birth (Zeus and Semele)



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e3/Rubens-Death-of-Semele.jpg/1280px-Rubens-Death-of-Semele.jpg>



# Dionysus: 2<sup>nd</sup> birth



# Dionysus: The Foreign god (?)



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-fVnv4HHlaLU/UQ8Ym6p0m\\_I/AAAAAAAAAB0U/6Yj\\_pvWvAlQ/s400/dionysus-panther04.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-fVnv4HHlaLU/UQ8Ym6p0m_I/AAAAAAAAAB0U/6Yj_pvWvAlQ/s400/dionysus-panther04.jpg)



# Dionysus and the Pirates: His “Homecoming”



# Dionysus and the Pirates: His “Homecoming”

- Dionysus was kidnapped as a youth by pirates because he looked rich (could be ransomed)
- On the ship, only the helmsman thought Dionysus might be more than an aristocrat
- Dionysus bound (but frees himself); all the pirates except for the helmsmen become dolphins





# Dionysus and Pentheus: Euripides' *Bacchae*

- Dionysus makes his way to Thebes to punish the royal house and prove his divine status
- **Pentheus** (his cousin) was a young ruler who hated the Dionysian rituals (negative “cult” associations) and tried to stop them
- Captured the disguised Dionysus and holds him prisoner





# Dionysus and Pentheus

- Dionysus frees himself and causes Pentheus to become possessed
- Convinces Pentheus to spy on his mother Agave (sister of Semele) and his aunts
- They mistake him for a lion cub and dismember him (part of the ritual?)
- They return home with their “prize” only to see the truth



<http://www.antinopolis.org/calendar/pentheus.jpg>

# Dionysus and Pentheus

## Elements:

- .Establishment of Dionysus as god (cf. Hermes)
- .Sacrilege/over-propriety of Pentheus
- .Paradoxical nature of Dionysus: self-control/madness
- .Elements of Dionysian mysteries (religion)

# Dionysus and Ariadne



# Dionysus and Ariadne

Ariadne:

- .Daughter of Minos (Crete)
- .Helped Theseus defeat the Minotaur
- .Abandoned (somehow) on the island of Dia (Naxos)
- .Dionysus either kidnapped or rescued her
- .Perhaps early fertility goddess (Aphrodite)

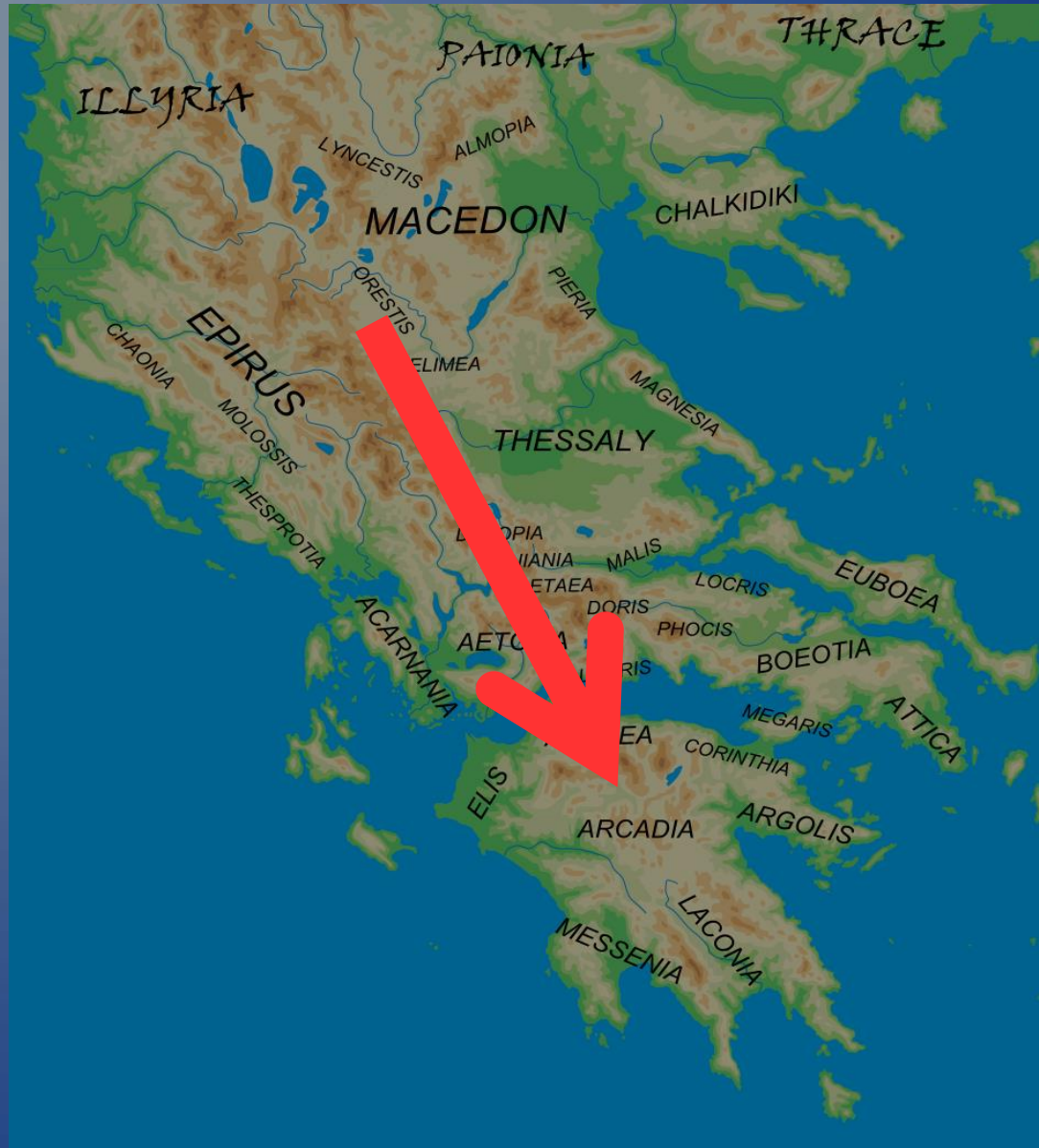


# Pan: Deity of the Wilderness



<http://www.theoi.com/image/K22.8Pan.jpg>

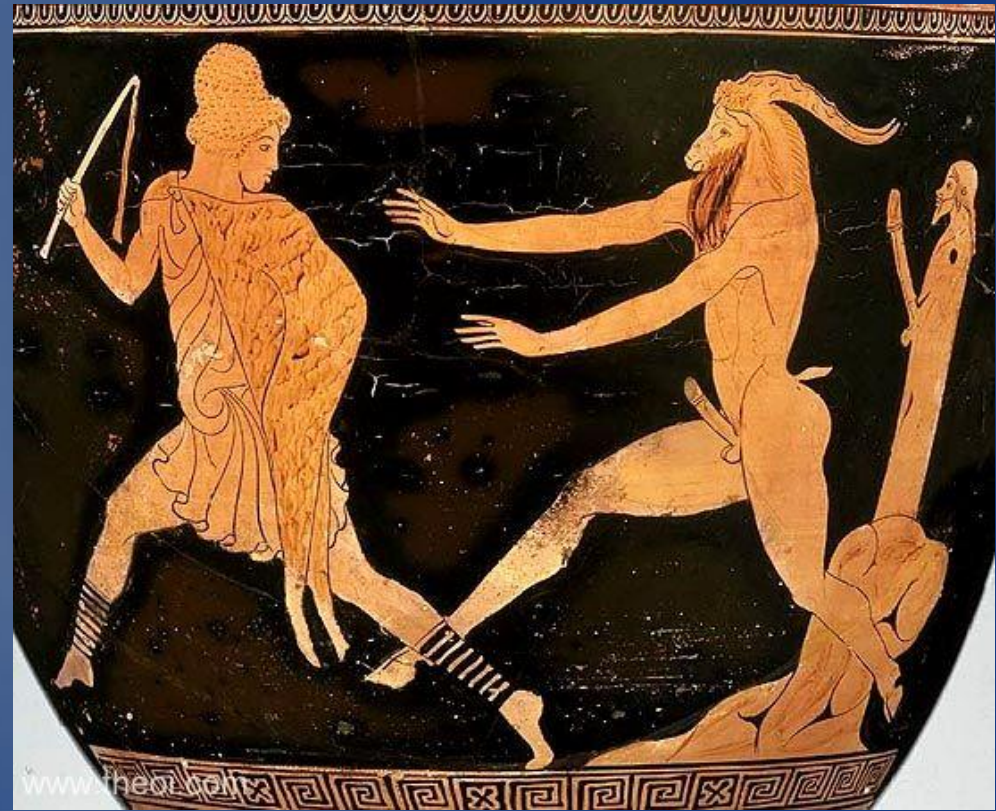
# Arcadia: Home of Pan





# Satyr

- Half man, half animal (usually a goat, but sometimes a horse or other hoofed animal)
- Overindulges in sex (often pursues female followers of Dionysus) and alcohol
- Sometimes interpreted as “proxy” for male desires (or representation of extremes)



# Silenus: The Older, Drunker Satyr (and sometimes guardian of the young Dionysus)





# Maenads/Bacchae

- Mythical women followers of Dionysus (note they are fully human; not “hybrids”)
- Are “possessed” by the ecstasy of Dionysus
- Partake in *sparagmos* (tearing of flesh) and *omophagos* (eating of uncooked flesh)



# Maenads/Bacchae



[http://wp.patheos.com.s3.amazonaws.com/blogs/askangus/files/2013/09/396px-Dancing\\_maenad\\_Python\\_BM\\_VaseF253.jpg](http://wp.patheos.com.s3.amazonaws.com/blogs/askangus/files/2013/09/396px-Dancing_maenad_Python_BM_VaseF253.jpg)



# Maenads/Bacchae



# Mythical Retinue of Dionysus

- .Exemplified by undermining of social norms
- .Maenads: sexually promiscuous, revel in drink, practice *sparagmos* (tearing flesh) and *omophagos* (eating of uncooked meat)
- .Physically anomalous (part human, part horse/goat), revel in drink, sexually promiscuous
- .In reality, activities of many men (but perhaps anxiety about them)



# Social/Religious Functions of Dionysus

# Theatre of Dionysus, Athens

## The Origin of Western Theatre





# Theatre: Pronomos Vase

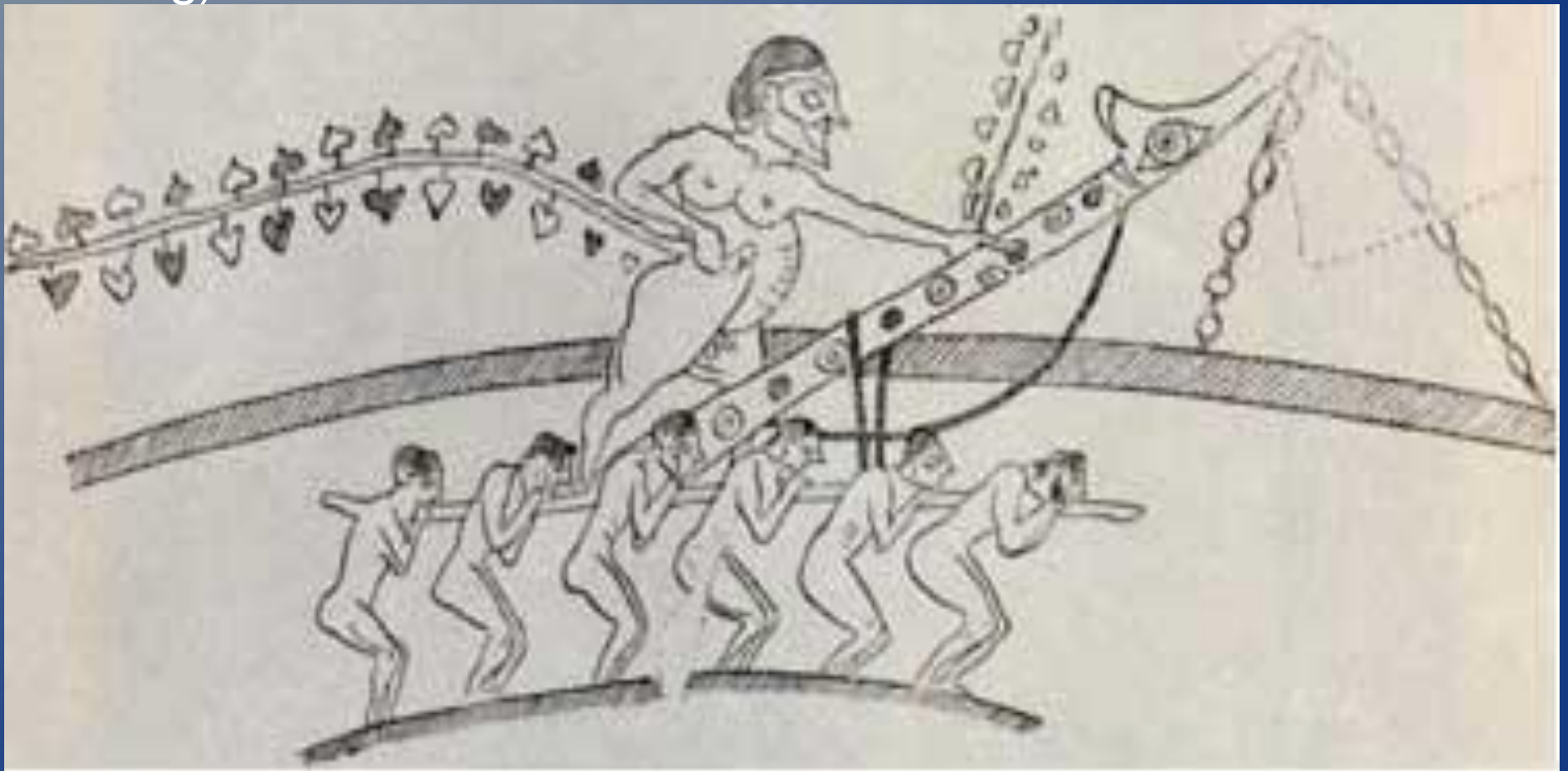
Depicts actors getting into role of character (becoming “inspired” by Dionysus)

- Greek name for “actor”:  
“hypocrits”
- Essentially a person becoming someone else temporarily



# Dionysian Procession (Athens to Eleusis)

- Exemplified by lewd behavior (verbal abuse, sexual imagery)
- Social function seems to be a “release valve” (the more ordered a society, the greater the need to “act out” in a formal setting)



# Demeter and Persephone

# Demeter and Persephone





# Demeter and Persephone

- .Demeter: mother/earth goddess – associated with grain (name means either “mother-goddess” or “Earth-goddess” in Greek)
- .Persephone: maiden/earth goddess – associated with budding vegetation

# Demeter and Persephone





# Demeter and Persephone

- Demeter and Persephone in the woods
- Persephone playing with friends, but lured away (perhaps by a patch of flowers)
- Hades snatches Persephone and takes her below to the Underworld
- Helios saw exactly what happened; Hecate only heard the commotion



<http://thomascotterill.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/rape-of-persephone-by-luca-giordano.jpg>



# Demeter and Persephone

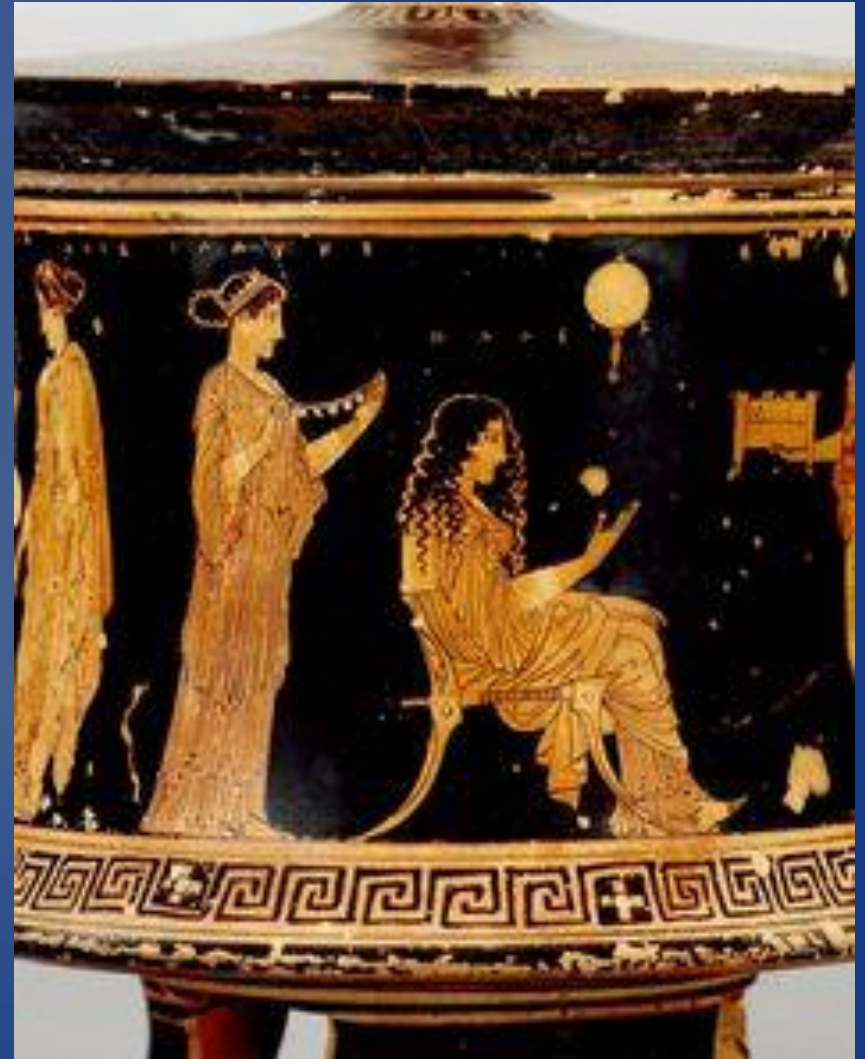


<http://artipeeps.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/bernini-rape-of-persephone-sculpture.jpg>

# Athenian Marriage

## Athenian Marriage

- Women married around 15 years of age; men around 30
- Often, women would first meet husband on wedding day
- Likely traumatic time for woman (and her parents) leaving her home for her husband's



# Demeter and Persephone

Demeter wanders with a torch looking for her daughter

- Hecate told Demeter what she had heard
- They went to Helios to ask him: were told Hades was the culprit, but added that he was a suitable husband
- Demeter, beside herself with grief, wandered Greece

