

Classical Mythology

LLCU/CMLT 316.010/080



Class 9

The Greek Pantheon, cont.: Athena and Aphrodite

Readings for Tuesday:

Classical Mythology 179-215

****Exam 1 returned next week****

In-class Writing Exercise

Thursday, March 15

“What have you found to be most surprising or unexpected so far from lecture content or readings?”

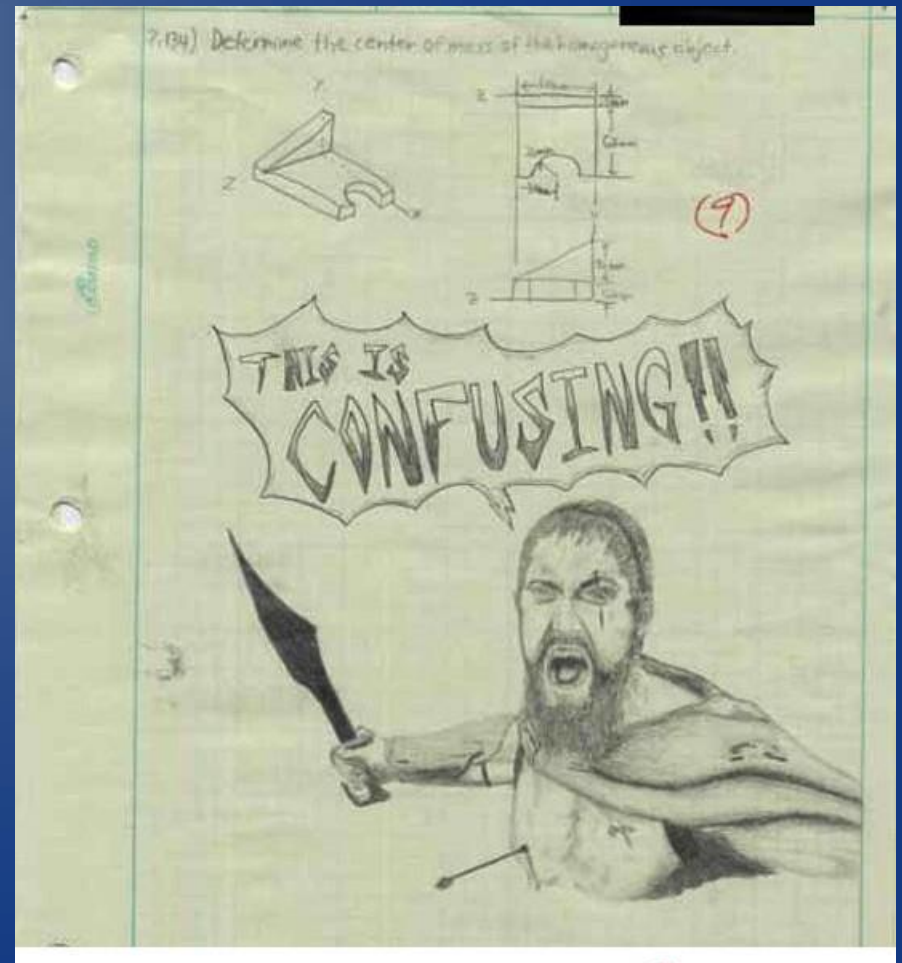
If possible, please bring a sheet of loose leaf to complete your assignment.

I will bring extra sheets, if students are unable / forget.

In-class Writing Exercise

Students will receive full marks (1%) for attempting the assignment.

The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate engagement with material, and to let me hear what you think about the material.



Greek/Roman Goddesses:

Athena (Minerva)

Athena (Roman: Minerva)



Athena (Roman: Minerva)



Common Attributes:

- Depicted with war helmet
- Shield (*aegis* of Zeus), with Gorgons
- Long *peplos* (dress)
- In stories: a perennial virgin (like Artemis)

Athena (Roman: Minerva)



Domains:

- Textile production
- Military strategy
- Wisdom in general
- Patron of Heroes (often assists them in stories)

Athena

Daughter of Zeus and Metis ('Cunning')

.Zeus heard prophecy from Gaia that he and Metis would produce a son that would overthrow him

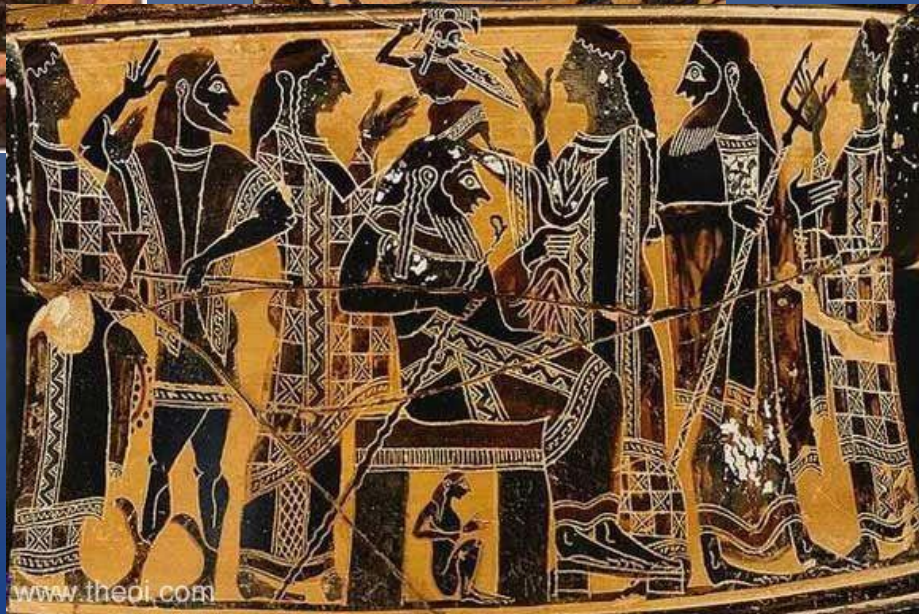
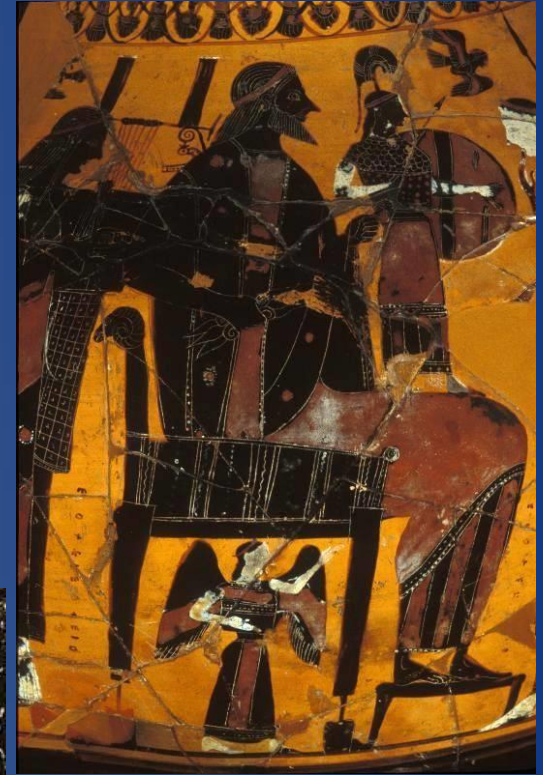
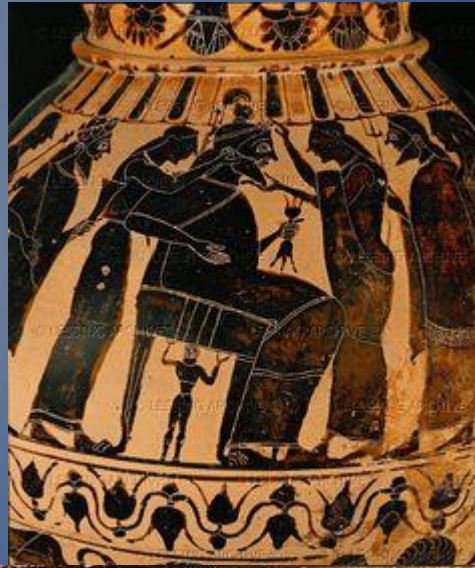
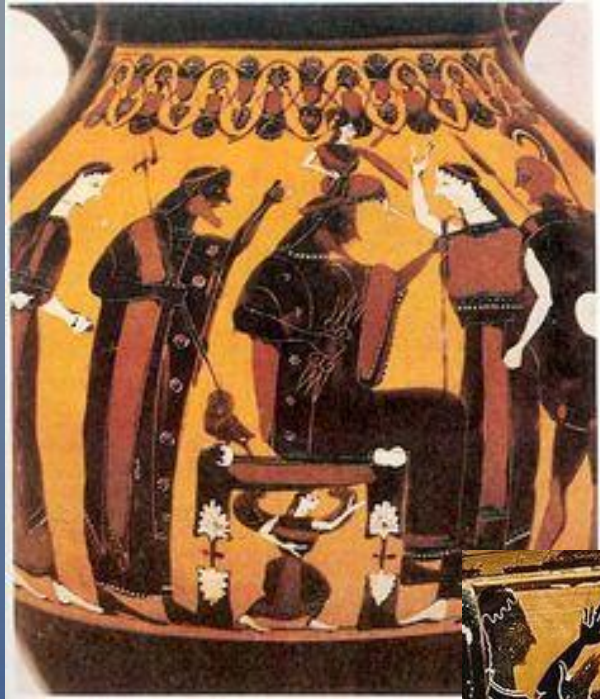
.Zeus swallowed Metis to prevent this

.After realizing his hastiness, Zeus was assisted by Hephaestus to “deliver” the child



Athena

Daughter of Zeus and Metis ('Cunning')



Athena

Athena and Arachne

- Rare story of a vengeful Athena
- Arachne praised as magnificent weaver, but did not acknowledge Athena's assistance
- Athena visits Arachne to warn her about insolence
- Arachne ignores advice



<http://quatr.us/greeks/clothing/pictures/weaving.jpg>

Athena

•Athena and Arachne

- They begin a competition
- Athena weaves a tapestry depicting humans being punished by the gods
- Arachne weaves a tapestry depicting instances of gods behaving badly



http://www.greekshops.com/newsletters_archive/June_2012/images/Loom.jpg

Athena

.Athena and Arachne

- . Seeing Arachne's tapestry, Athena beats the maiden
- . The maiden hangs herself
- . Athena transforms Arachne into a spider



Athena

•Athena and Arachne: What's Going On?

- a morality tale, of sorts
- an instance of *gnothi seauton* (“know thyself”)
- Arachne has committed hubris by not acknowledging the benefaction of the goddess
- Arachne is punished



http://www.goddess-athena.org/Museum/Paintings/Arachne/Athena_Arachne_1677.jpg

Athena in Athens: The Contest



http://www.pappalardolio.it/media/athena_poseidon_kekrop.jpg

Athena in Athens: The Contest

Early in Athens' legendary history, the city named "Cecropia" after first king

Competition began for "patron" of the city, waged between Poseidon and Athena

Poseidon promised horses (or salt water); Athena promised the olive tree

Alternatively, outcome decided by a footrace between the gods to the top of the Acropolis (Athena wins)



http://www.pappalardolio.it/media/athena_poseidon_kekrop.jpg

Athena in Athens: Olive Tree



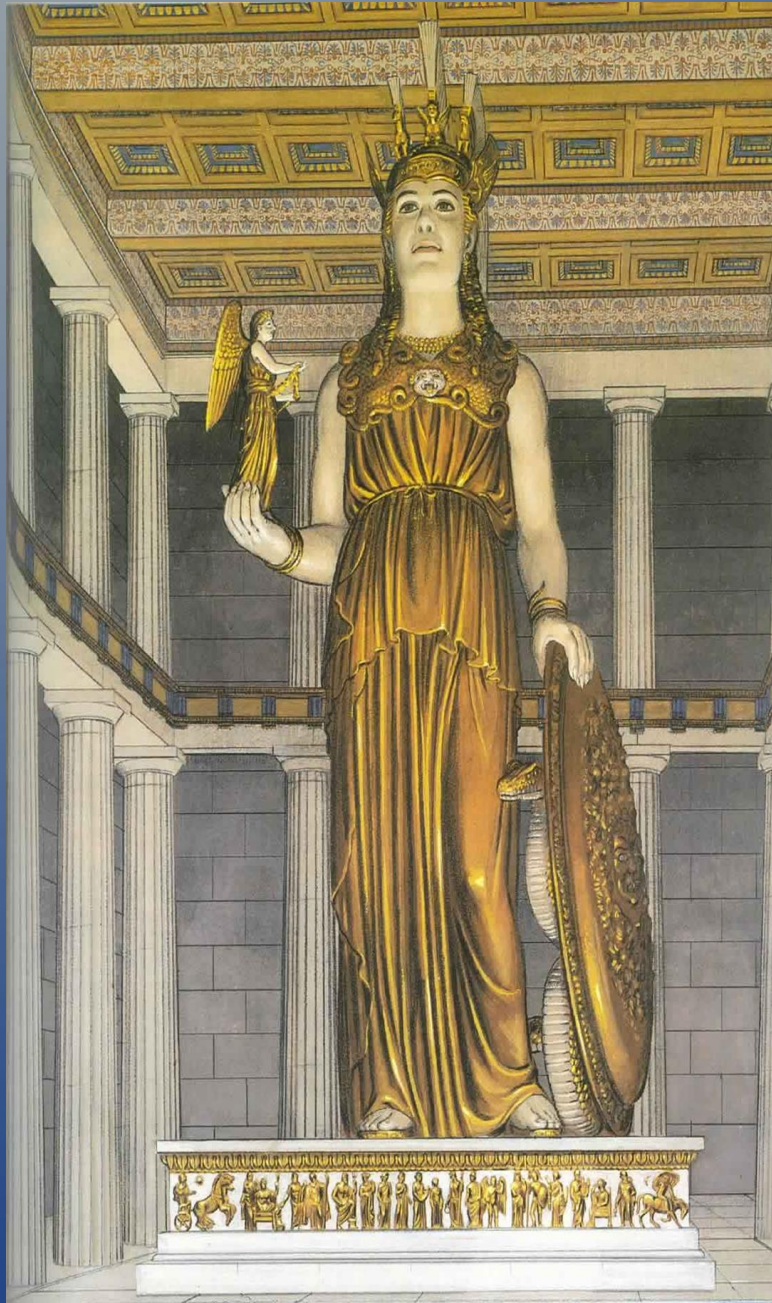
Athena in Athens

.Use of Myth as Propaganda



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/The_Parthenon_in_Athens.jpg

Athena in Athens



• **Athena Parthenos** (“Athena the Maiden”) situated in Parthenon

• *Nike* in her hand

• Story of Pandora on base

• Amazons (vs. Athens) and Gigantomachy on shield (along with gorgon head)

• Battle of Lapiths (neighboring community) and centaurs on sandals

Athena in Athens

.Use of Myth as Propaganda: Panathenaia

- . “Panathenaia” introduced as a public festival in honor of Athena
- . Among the events were the ceremonial “dressing” of Athena with a new gown and sporting events
- . Became a “Panhellenic” (“all of Greece”) event — but focused on Athenian excellence



Athena

.Use of Myth as Propaganda: Panathenaia

- . A virgin goddess who is “liminal” – contains both male and female attributes (as expected by ancient Greeks)
- . Her roles and responsibilities are extensions of this liminal role and her parentage: Zeus and Metis (Cunning)
- . Classical literature is saturated with references to Athena because of the prominence of Athenian literature in surviving material

Aphrodite and Eros

Aphrodite (Venus)

Recall: According to Hesiod, born from the testes of Uranus



Aphrodite: Appearance



Early Depictions

.Dressed as matron
(married woman)

Aphrodite: Appearance



.Fabric becomes
thinner

Aphrodite: Appearance

And thinner...



Aphrodite: Appearance



Later (late Classical-Roman)

.More provocative

Aphrodite: Myths

Two general elements:

- Erotic love an imperative of living things
- Avoiding it leads to self-destruction
- (Subtext: partaking in erotic love is a way to show reverence towards Aphrodite)

Eros

- .Son of Aphrodite
- .Primordial being
- .(with Gaia)



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Eros_bobbin_Louvre_CA1798.jpg
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Eros

- Later (as Roman 'Cupid' or 'Amor')

- Boy god

- with bow and arrow

- 'Shoots' mortals
to make them fall
in love



Roman poet Virgil

‘Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus Amori.’

‘Love conquers all. We too must fall to Love.’

Eclogue 10

