Abstract

Family relationships in Greek myth are currently displayed graphically using conventional genealogical chart structures (e.g. Gantz 1993; Smith & Trzaskoma 2007; Fowler 2013). Such family trees construct linear relationships which privilege genetic models of inheritance; they do not easily accommodate the complexities of mythic data. No visual language – in either analogue or digital realms – is able to capture the instances of autochthony, parthenogenesis, and non-standard birth that occur in the Greek mythic storyworld. In addition, this tradition is rife with incest, intergenerational relationships, uncertainty and contestation, which likewise are not easily communicable.

This project uses MANTO, an expertly-curated relational dataset of entities with stable LOD identifiers from Apollodorus’ *Library*and *Epitome* (2nd c CE). It uses the subset of genealogical interactions to create a public web interface that offers user-friendly and intuitive access to the data, while also providing references to the ancient source material. Through this web interface, users can search for Greek entities of their choice, and graphs of the entity’s relationships will be dynamically generated. These graphs will show the standard genealogies of these entities – ancestors and descendants – but also draw focus to the relationships that are unusual. By interacting with these elements, users can explore the interplay between the relationship data, the source material, and also experience the commentary on the unusual elements of Greek mythology. The graphing algorithms created for this project will be inspired by existing directed acyclic graphing algorithms and open-source data visualisation techniques, however they will be repurposed to accommodate for the complexities of the Greek mythology relationships. Multiple methods of linkage and node representation are considered to determine the most intuitive and relevant connection formats to highlight these complexities.

This project’s graphic language provides not merely an essential tool for accessing and understanding the Greek mythic tradition; it also shows up the inherent gaps in our usual conceptions of family dynamics. We exist in a world in which artificial insemination, adoption, polyamory, and blended families are facts of life, and in which cloning and genetic modification are on the horizon. Conventional family trees are too narrowly constrained by linear, hierarchical conceptions to display such complexity.

**References:**

Fowler, Robert L. Early Greek Mythography. Vol. 2. Oxford: OUP, 2013.

Gantz, Timothy. Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Smith, R. Scott, and Stephen M. Trzaskoma. Apollodorus’ Library and Hyginus’ Fabulae: Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology. Indianapolis, IN, 2007.