


Women in Antiquity  
SPRING 2024

MEETING 3

### Ancient Goddesses and Gods

- The Aegean world
- The Greeks and their gods
- Pre-Olympian gods
- Strong goddesses and philandering gods
- Medusa and Pandora



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### Five things today

- 1 The Aegean world
- 2 The Greeks and their gods
- 3 Pre-Olympian gods
- 4 Strong goddesses and philandering gods
- 5 Medusa and Pandora

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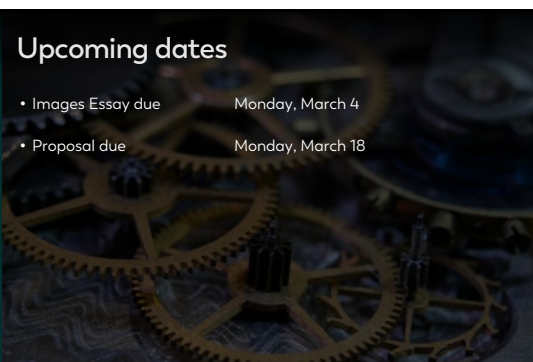
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### Upcoming dates

- Images Essay due Monday, March 4
- Proposal due Monday, March 18



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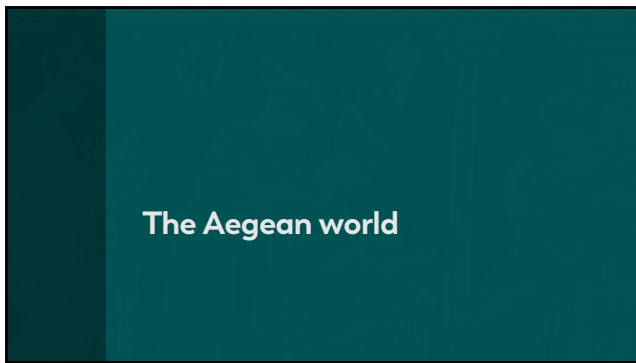
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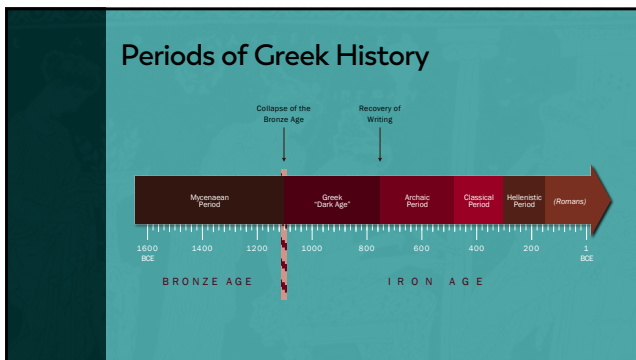
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Bull-leaping



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Mycenaean Greeks



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Homer



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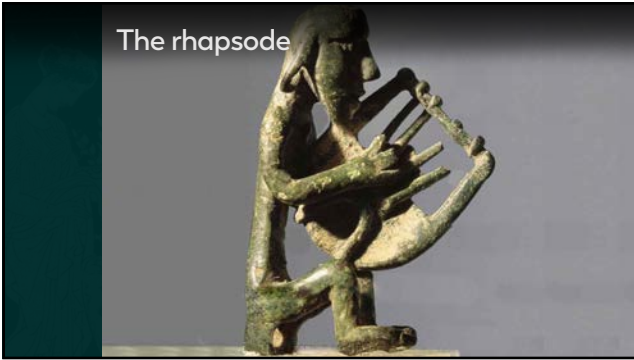
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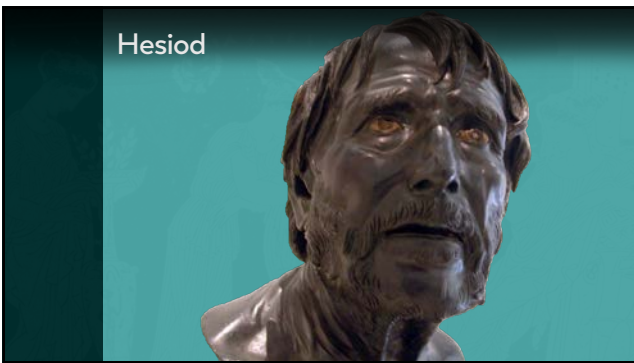
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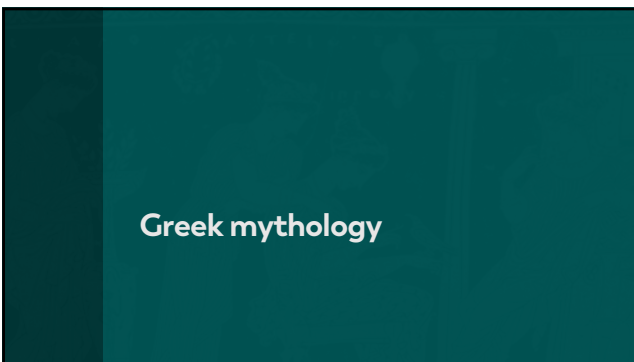
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### The Greeks' relationship with their gods

- No priestly class
- Understanding of the gods comes from literature
- Gods react to mortals' betrayals of the community
- Rarely punish the wrongdoer only, often visiting suffering on family and descendants



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### Great mothers vs. goddesses



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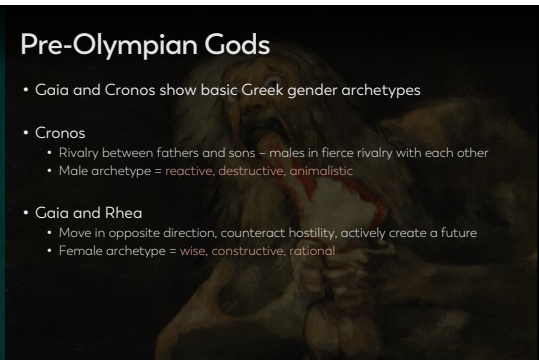
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### Pre-Olympian Gods

- Gaia and Cronos show basic Greek gender archetypes
- Cronos
  - Rivalry between fathers and sons – males in fierce rivalry with each other
  - Male archetype = reactive, destructive, animalistic
- Gaia and Rhea
  - Move in opposite direction, counteract hostility, actively create a future
  - Female archetype = wise, constructive, rational



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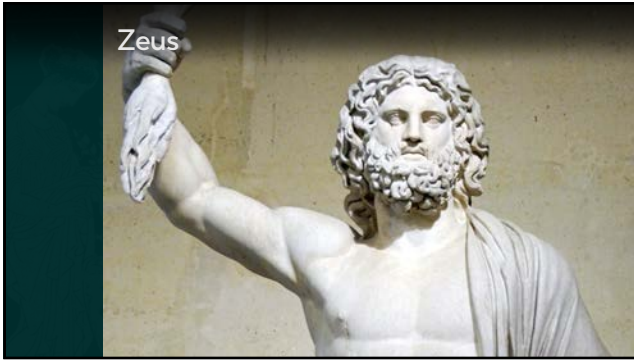
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Primary Source Reading

Hesiod  
Theogony

► SOME TAKEAWAYS

- The treatment of the Titans
- Zeus's first children are the Muses
- Hekate's unique and independent place among the gods
- The price of Prometheus's betrayal
  - The creation of "an evil thing for men": the beauty of women
  - Men must marry to avoid solitary, demeriting final years

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Birth of Athena

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Artemis

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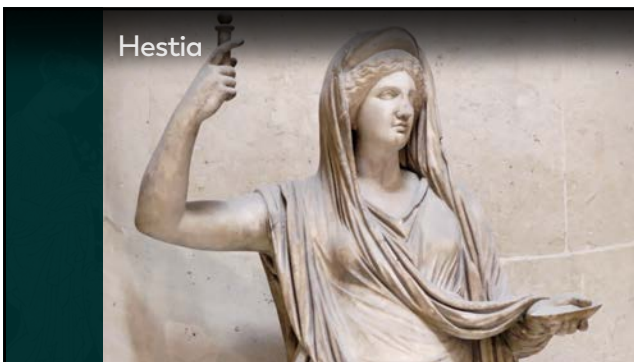
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Hestia

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**Secondary Source Reading**

From *I. Zetlin*

**“Signifying Difference: The Myth of Pandora”**

► **SOME TAKEAWAYS**

- Pandora and Hekate
  - Pandora – represents rupture between gods and mortals
  - Hekate represents intermediation between divine and mortal
- Pandora seen as an image of the gods and something new and different
  - Evolution from the divine to the mortal (I)
  - Power of reason and ability to grow

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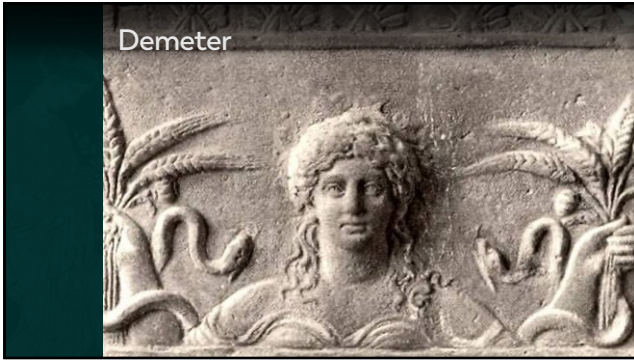
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Demeter

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**Secondary Source Reading**

Lucia Nixon

**“The Cults of Demeter and Kore”**

► **SOME TAKEAWAYS**

- Collective religion – public festivals in agora
- Cults and rituals – Some just for women
  - Libet and Iguineau sacrifices
  - Severe about Demeter and Kore/Persephone
- Nice contrast to father/son hostility among gods
  - Parolai (and fertility, human fertility)
  - Agricultural evolution makes possible creation of the future (grow a community)
- Demeter represents ultimate capacity of humans not just to survive but to grow

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Demigods and Monsters

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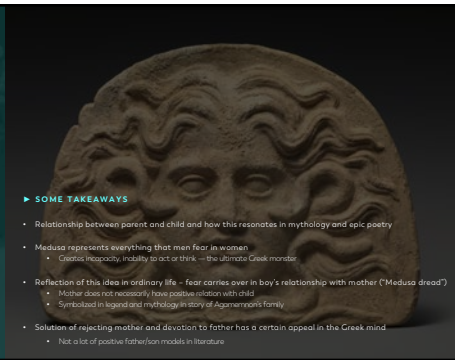
Secondary Source Reading

Philip E. Slater

### "The Greek Family in History and Myth"

► SOME TAKEAWAYS

- Relationship between parent and child and how this resonates in mythology and epic poetry
- Medusa represents everything that men fear in women
  - Creases (hospacity, inability to act or think) — the ultimate Greek monster
- Reflection of this idea in ordinary life — fear carries over in boy's relationship with mother ("Medusa dread")
  - Mother does not necessarily have positive relation with child
  - Symbolized in legend and mythology in story of Agamemnon's family
- Solution of rejecting mother and devotion to father has a certain appeal in the Greek mind
  - Not a lot of positive father/son models in literature



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