

Women in Antiquity
SPRING 2025

MEETING 3

Ancient Goddesses and Gods

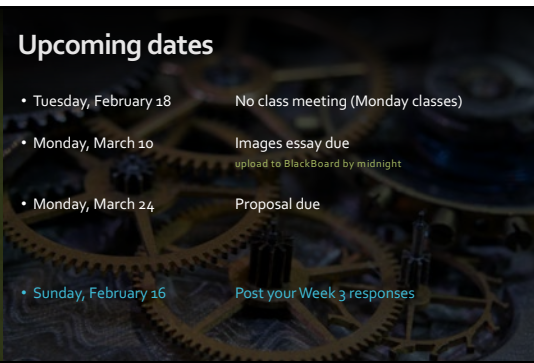
- The Aegean world
- The Greeks and their gods
- Pre-Olympian gods
- Strong goddesses and philandering gods
- Medusa and Pandora



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Upcoming dates

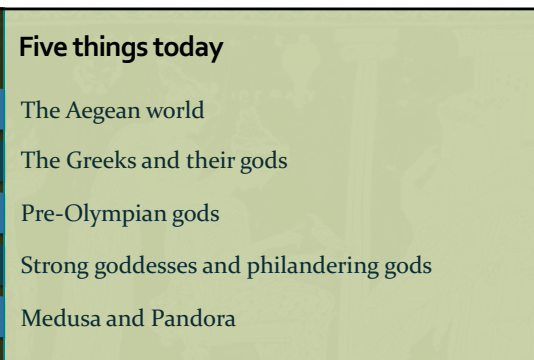
- Tuesday, February 18 No class meeting (Monday classes)
- Monday, March 10 Images essay due
upload to BlackBoard by midnight
- Monday, March 24 Proposal due
- Sunday, February 16 Post your Week 3 responses



2

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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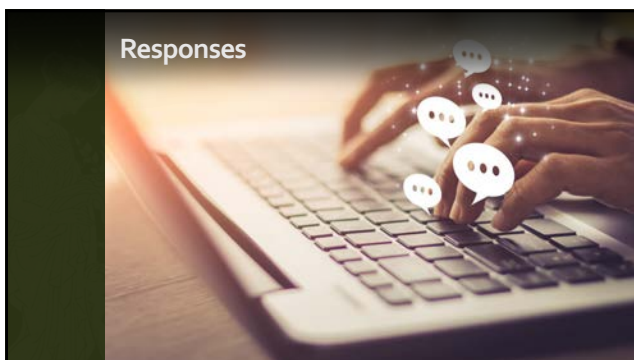
Quiz #1: Ancient Goddesses and Gods

- According to Pomeroy, Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom, is "the most complex of the goddesses" because
 - She has a complicated love life
 - She works all day and parties all night
 - ☒ She possesses both masculine and feminine qualities
 - She has seven statues
- A double standard seen in stories about the gods' and goddesses' relationships is
 - Goddesses are expected to sleep only with other gods, but gods can sleep with whoever
 - ☒ Goddesses can sleep with women but gods can never sleep with men
 - Gods can give fruit baskets and gifts to their lovers, but goddesses can't
 - Cursing your lover can only be done on Sundays
- The "virginal" Olympian goddesses (that is, goddesses who are unmarried and not bound to a male god) include all of the following [Click Here](#)
 - Athena
 - Artemis
 - Hestia
 - ☒ Hera
- In the readings (Pomeroy or Hesiod), which goddess's story stood out to you? Why?

EC. Mother goddesses in various cultures make a connection between female fertility and

 - architecture
 - ☒ agriculture
 - archeology
 - astrophysics
- The pre-Olympian god Chronos is known for all of the following [Click Here](#)
 - Castrating his father with a sickle
 - Swallowing his own children
 - ☒ Being defeated by Zeus with the help of his wife Hera
 - Flailing weekly in perennate juice

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Questions about whatever

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The Epic of Gilgamesh

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Primary Source Reading

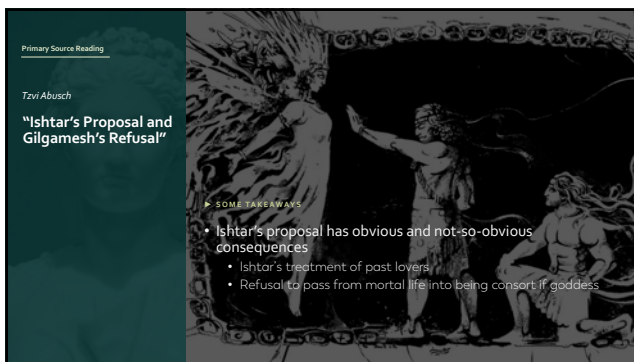
The Epic of Gilgamesh,
Tablet 6: "Ishtar and
the Bull of Heaven"



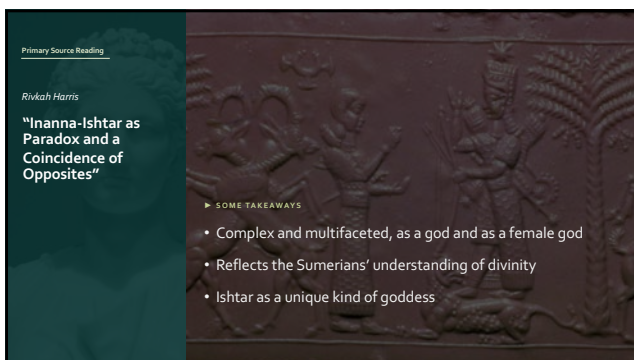
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The Aegean world

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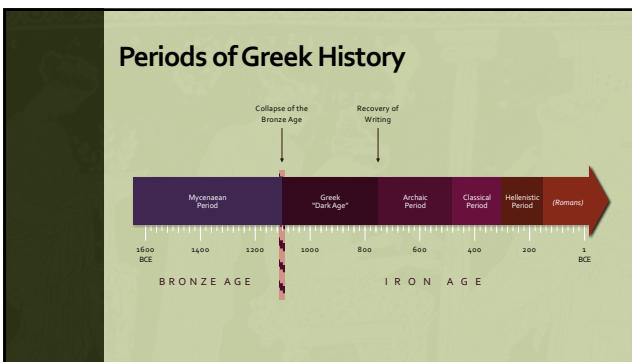
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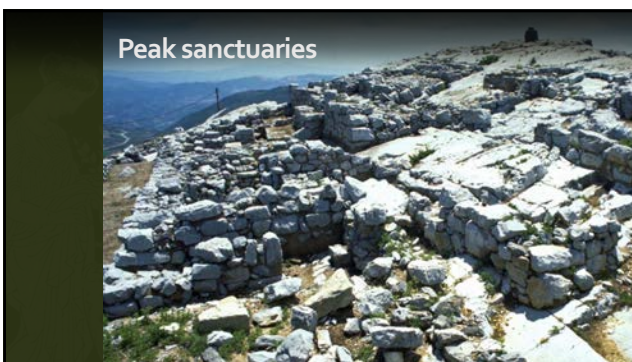
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Mycenaean Greeks



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Homer



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The rhapsode



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Hesiod



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Greek mythology

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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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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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Zeus



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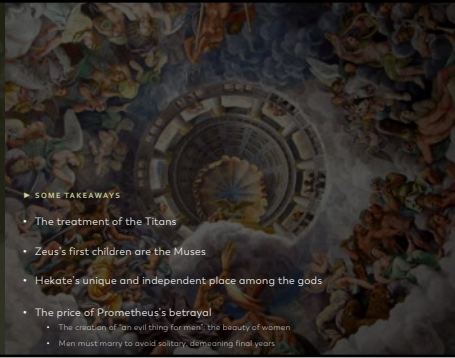
Primary Source Reading

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 man and thing forgotten: the beauty of women
 - Men must marry to avoid misery, during their first years



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Artemis



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Hestia



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Aphrodite



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Birth of Aphrodite



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Hera

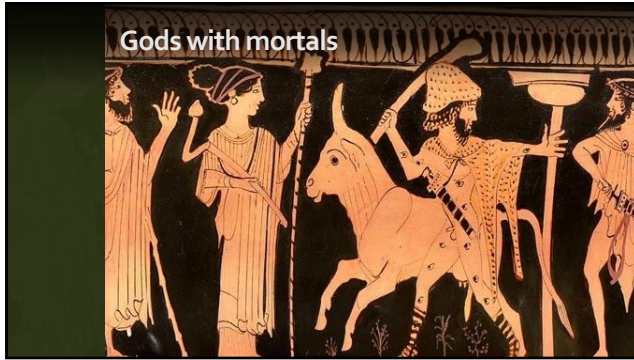


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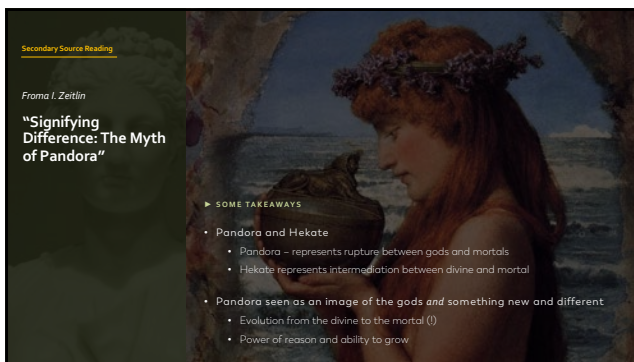
Hekate



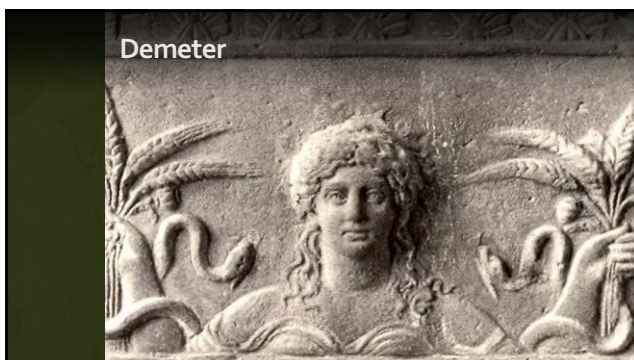
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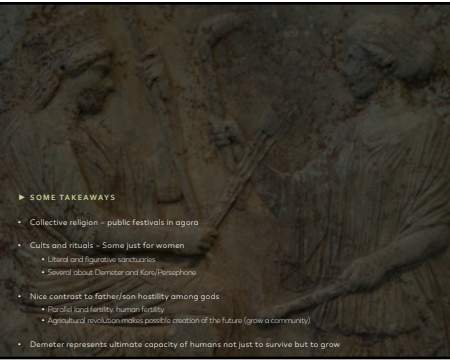
Secondary Source Reading

Lucia Nixon

"The Cults of Demeter and Kore"

► SOME TAKEAWAYS

- Collective religion – public festivals in agora
- Cults and rituals – Some just for women
 - Literal and figurative sacrifices
 - Served about Demeter and Kore/Persephone
- Nice contrast to father/son hostility among gods
 - Paradox: land fertility, human fertility
 - Agricultural revolution 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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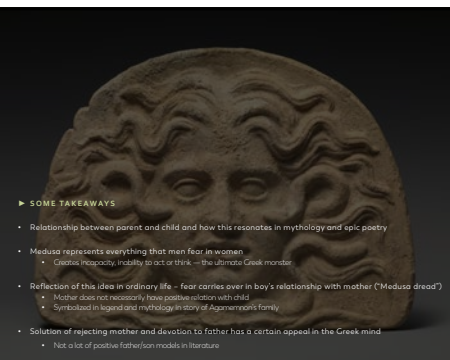
Secondary Source Reading

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
 - Creates incestuous, 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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