

Notes on Quiz #1: Ancient Goddesses and Gods

1. According to Pomeroy, Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom, is “the most complex of the goddesses” because:
 - a. She has a complicated love life
 - b. She works all day and parties all night
 - c. She possesses both masculine and feminine qualities
 - d. She has seven uteruses

The text draws attention how she's presented as a "masculine woman": female in appearance and in some aspects (olive fertility, handicrafts), but associated with traditionally “male” elements (warrior goddess, protector of the citadel, depicted with armor and weapons, patroness of particular warriors; goddess of industry and manufacture (but also spinning and weaving); also wisdom, later appropriated by Greek men as a male attribute). Disguising herself as a man is also unusual. She’s a virgin, born of man, not woman, and identifies the father as the true parent.

Adding to her complexity is the fact that more stories and plays have survived depicting her, placing her in many diverse contexts.

2. A double standard seen in stories about the gods’ and goddesses’ relationships is:
 - a. Goddesses are expected to sleep only with other gods, but gods can sleep with whoever
 - b. Goddesses can sleep with women but gods can never sleep with men
 - c. Gods can give fruit baskets and other gifts to their lovers, but goddesses can’t
 - d. Cursing your lover can only be done on Sundays

Pomeroy notes a double standard wherein goddesses are expected to have sex with individuals close to them in rank—male gods or demigods/heroes—but gods fornicate with all sorts. Gods’ relations with mortals (mostly Zeus and Apollo) tend to result in suffering, revealing the vulnerability of the women and the male gods’ tendency to exploitation.

3. The “virginal” Olympian goddesses (that is, those who are unmarried and nonmonogamous) include all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. Athena
 - b. Artemis
 - c. Hestia
 - d. Hera

Athena, Artemis, and Hestia were all seen as “virginal”—i.e., they were not married or in a monogamous relationship. Hera, the goddess of marriage, had a husband, Zeus.

4. Mother goddesses in various cultures make a connection between female fertility and
 - a. architecture
 - b. agriculture
 - c. archeology
 - d. astrophysics

Mother goddesses like Gaia or Ge represented a connection between the earth, fertility, and agriculture—that food is born of the fertile mother earth.

5. The pre-Olympian god Cronus is known for all of the following EXCEPT:

- a. Castrating his father with a sickle
- b. Swallowing his own children
- c. Being defeated by Zeus with the help of his wife Rhea
- d. Bathing weekly in goats' milk

The Titan Cronus was indeed known for castrating his father with a sickle, swallowing his own children to defy a prophecy his son would surpass him, and being defeated by Zeus with the help of his wife Rhea.
