

Greek mythology and the historical timeline of greece



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Throughout Greek mythology, there are many trends that can be recognized from simply looking at events from a bigger frame. One of the best trends that can be seen is that between the historical and anthropological timeline and the succession from Chaos to man. The historical and anthropological timeline shows an increase in complexity starting with the Pre-Greeks during the Paleolithic Age to the Romans and the Hellenistic Age. The same increase in complexity can be seen as Greek mythology is told, beginning with Chaos and ending with humans.

From the ancient times to around 7000 BC, man was at his most primitive state. During this Paleolithic Age, Greece was inhabited by Pre-Greeks, who would eventually leave and not contribute to the future of Greeks. The same simplicity can be seen in the beginning of Greek mythology. There was one and only one state originally, Chaos. Chaos is shapeless, unorganized, lifeless matter. There was no sun, no moon, and no air. The earth did not have life and the sky did not have any light. Both the Pre-Greeks and Chaos are the beginning pieces in their individual developing stories. They occupied the area in which the stories developed. Chaos occupied the entire universe and the Pre-Greeks occupied Greece.

After the Paleolithic Age, came the Neolithic Age, which was from 6000 BC to 3000 BC. During this time, people began rudimentary farming with the three main elements in the ground: olives, wheat, and grapes. They also stayed in one place and did not want to expand beyond their original area of settlement. Similar events can be seen in mythology. After Chaos, four major elements took part in the beginning of creation: Gaea, Erebus, Tartarus, and

Eros. These were the foundation for the rest of the God population as were the ancient Greeks during the Neolithic Age.

Following the Neolithic Age came the Early to Mid Bronze Age, which occurred from 3000 BC to 1600 BC. During this Age, Minoans and Indo-European dominated Greece. These people were very agricultural and worshipers of the goddesses of fertility. The Minoans started building elaborate palaces toward the end of the Early Bronze Age. This shows a small development in thought from simple agriculture to buildings. Indo-Europeans, who were estimated to be around 2100 BC, began speaking an early form of Greek. This language is the basis for many world languages today. Also, a division of people began to appear. Society was divided into kings/priests, warriors, and food producers. This time period is represented in mythology thru Gaea and Uranus as well as Mountains and Pontus. Gaea and Uranus were still the same as the last generation but now there is mating for the first time. This is important because this is the first of three sacred marriages and it sets the pattern for the future. They are, also, now beginning to have more and more gods and spreading their reigns, just like the Indo-Europeans planned.

The Late Bronze Age was from 1600 BC - 1150 BC. This time was also known as the Mycenaean Age. Indo-Europeans began to take over Mycenaean cities including Mycenae, Thebes, Athens, Orchomenus, and Pylos. All of these cities were very important and are involved in future battles. Troy was burnt and rebuilt twice. This age was ruled by powerful and rich warrior kings. This was also an age where the first fully developed writing system, Linear B, was created. This age corresponds with a time in mythology where powerful Gods

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ruled. Uranus is extremely powerful and is always taking advantage of Gaea. They have 3 types of children: Cyclopes, Hecatonchires, and the Titans. There were 12 Titans in all: swirling (1) Oceanus, (2) Coeus, (3) Crius, (4) Hyperion, (5) Iapetus, (6) Theia and (7) Rhea, (8) Themis, (9) Mnemosynê, (10) Phoebê, (11) Tethys, and (12) Cronus. All of these children are extremely powerful and all were capable of strength and some thought. This comparison shows some leadership and loyalty as well as progress and evolution of mind. Cronus will stand out as the leader and some of his brothers and sisters will be loyal to him. While Cyclopes and Hecatonchires are just pure strengths, the Titans do have the power to use thought to help them defeat all their adversaries.

After the Bronze Age comes the Dark Age (1150 BC - 800 BC). In this age, the Great Mycenaeans' palaces were destroyed. This age was full of war, fighting, illiteracy, plagues, and petty kings. There was social disorganization, depopulation, and impoverishment. Full of fighting and hatred, this age is mirrored in mythology with the battle between Cronus and Uranos. During this time, Uranus was constantly raping Gaea and Gaea was suffering from rape and from losing all of her children. Every time Uranus and Gaea would birth a child, Uranus would stuff the newborns back into Gaea. This action shows that Uranus is disregarding any logic and just using his strength. Throughout Greek mythology, there seems to be a trend of attempting to put all children in some sort of captivity because the father is afraid of being overthrown. Cronus was the last child and was very angry when Uranos was raping his mother, Gaea, and thus he castrated Uranos with a sickle. This begins the tradition of succession from father to son. This

was a small step forward in the evolution of the mind and refined behavior. Cronus uses his logic to end the suffering of his mother by destroying the source of the suffering.

After Cronus overthrows Uranus, he mates with Rhea and has the Olympians: Demeter, Hera, Hestia, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. This time, Cronus uses some logic and decided to swallow the newly born so that they don't escape. He saw that the when the women carry the children, it fails. Rhea becomes enraged and decides to make a plan to get her children out of Cronus. She uses logic and fools Cronus into eating a rock in baby's clothing. This rock was supposed to be Zeus and it had an emetic on it. Once Cronus ate the rock, he threw up and all the other Olympians came out. Zeus then had the task of dethroning Cronus. Cronus was very angry with this and began to fight Zeus by putting him thru many challenges. The Olympians side together with Themis, Prometheus, Cyclopes, and the Hecatonchires and fight all the other Titans in the world in the infamous Titanomachy. Zeus leads the Olympians to a victory but isn't done with the challenges. Next comes Typhoeus, who is equally matched with Zeus physically. However, Zeus has Typhoeus beat when it comes to brains, and he uses this to his advantage by throwing Mt. Etna at Typhoeus and throwing a lightning bolt right after. This traps Typhoeus under Mt. Etna. After Typhoeus came the Giants. The Giants are from the severed genitals of Uranus. With the help of logic and Hercules, Zeus is able to defeat them and finally overthrows Cronus. Zeus's battles fits quiet well between the Dark Ages and the Archaic Age. Throughout Zeus's struggles, there is a clear movement from ruthless fighting to logical fighting. This is seen from the transition from the wars in

the Dark Ages to the insightfulness and knowledge of the Archaic Period.

Most of these battles are ruthless and full of hatred. However, Zeus is slowly moving away from using strength to win battles and starts to use his brain to win battles. As Zeus becomes more knowledgeable, his opponents become more powerful. This shows that the more knowledgeable will win over the more powerful.

The Archaic Period (800 BC - 490 BC) came right after the Dark Age. This was when the Greek alphabet was officially invented with vowels and constants. This is also when the Greek polis was developed. People belonged to certain geographic areas and not just by family ties. People began to develop trade and began cultural and national expansion.

Commerce depended on the sea because it was one of the few modes of transportation. Thus, boats and rafts were very popular during this time. At the end of the Archaic period, conflicts with Persia rise and Persia conquers the Greek cities on the western coast of Turkey. This time period is paralleled in Greek mythology to the life of Zeus and the life of his brothers and sisters. This is when the Olympians begin to settle into Olympus. They begin to have some peacefulness for a bit as Zeus is making the transition from son to Ruler of the Sky. This is also the period where Coeus and Phoebe begin their family and Oceanus and Tethys begin theirs as well. More " Tribes" are beginning to develop within the mythology world as it happened in the real world.

After the Archaic period came the Classical Period (490 BC to 323 BC).

Democracy in Athens began and the main ideology of this democracy was that all free men had a stake in the city and a role to play in its

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administration. Philosophy and science also developed in this time period. Also, all the Greeks began to be inspired by their national pride and their military prowess. Greek cities fought between each other but, in the end, they all recognized all of them are Hellenes. They did not want to be similar to the barbaroi surrounding them. One of the major wars between Greeks during this time period is the Peloponnesian War. This war was mainly between Sparta and Athens. This civil war took its toll on all parties involved. There was one major leader during this age, Alexander the Great. He is known as one of the best leaders and one of the most strategic commanders. His death, in 323, marked the end of the Classical Period. This time is mirrored to the Olympians normal day life in Olympus. Zeus is the ruler and there is a time of overall peace. While there may have been disputes between the Olympians, they were mostly passive. This is also the time when Zeus was worried about who would overthrow him. Zeus marries Metis and has children. However, this is not a sacred marriage because Metis is not an Earth goddess. Zeus and Metis have children and the development of child imprisonment continues. Zeus gets Metis pregnant and then eats her. We have now moved from putting the children inside the mother, then putting them inside the father, and now we're putting them inside the mother inside the father. However, Metis annoys Zeus while inside him and Prometheus breaks open Zeus's head. Out of his head, comes Athena. This however is a special case because the Child is a girl, not of a sacred marriage, and is born out of Zeus, not Metis. Thus, she can't overthrow him and Zeus finally succeeded in ensuring he is not overthrown. Democracy, Philosophy, and knowledge are mirrored from the Classical period to mythology. There is some Democracy through out Olympus and Zeus begins

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to show more and more knowledge, with the incident dealing with Athena. After Metis, Zeus marries Hera to have the 3rd and final sacred marriage.

From 323 BC to 30 BC, the Hellenistic Period was upon Greece. During this time period, the Greek Culture became the “ universal” culture in the areas around the Mediterranean Sea. The center of Greece was moved to Alexandria. In 146 BC, Greek was conquered by Rome, ending Greece’s run of almost 7000 years. This is similar to the creation of man. Mythology takes a turn from stories of Gods to stories of men and a similar transition is seen from the Greeks to the Romans. There are a few sketches of the creation of man: (1) Zeus makes man of mud, (2) Prometheus makes men of mud, (3) Zeus floods the entire earth, and Deucalion and Pyrrha survive and repopulate the Earth, and (4) The 5 Ages. Overall, this shows a transition from the Gods to the mortals and can be paralleled in the archeological time period of the Hellenistic Period.

As shown, Greek mythology and the historical and anthropological timeline of Greece show great parallelism with many trends forming. The historical and anthropological timeline shows an increase in complexity starting with the Pre-Greeks during the Paleolithic Age to the Romans and the Hellenistic Age. The same increase in complexity can be seen as Greek mythology is told, beginning with Chaos and ending with humans. Gods become more logical and less violent and this is shown in the transition of Greek history.