



## MYTHOLOGY: TIMELESS TALES OF GODS & HEROES

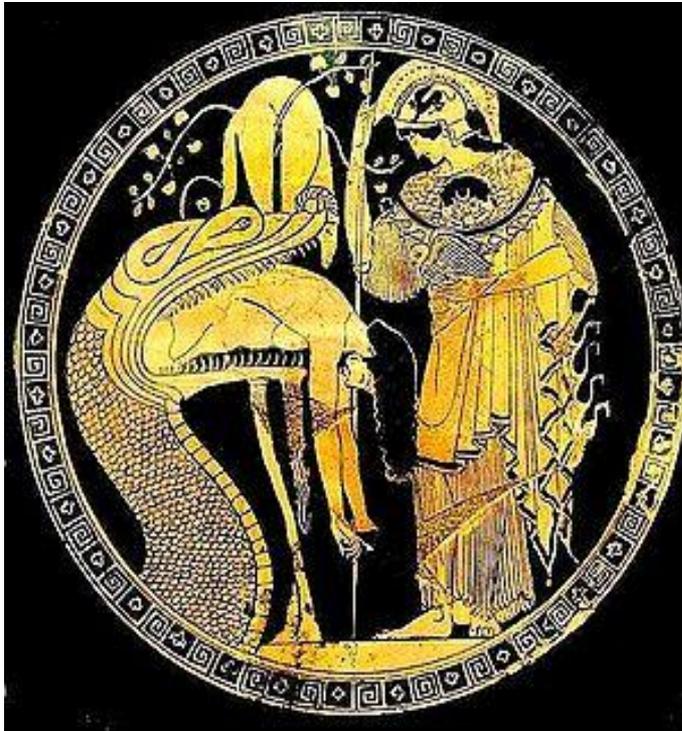
Introduction + Chapter 1

# Purpose: An Account of the World



- ❑ Made up of stories about gods and goddesses
- ❑ Myths are an explanation of something in nature
- ❑ How men came into existence
- ❑ Why thunder and lightning happen
- ❑ Why a volcano erupts or what causes an earthquake
- ❑ Myths are the earliest science – men trying to explain what they saw in the world around them

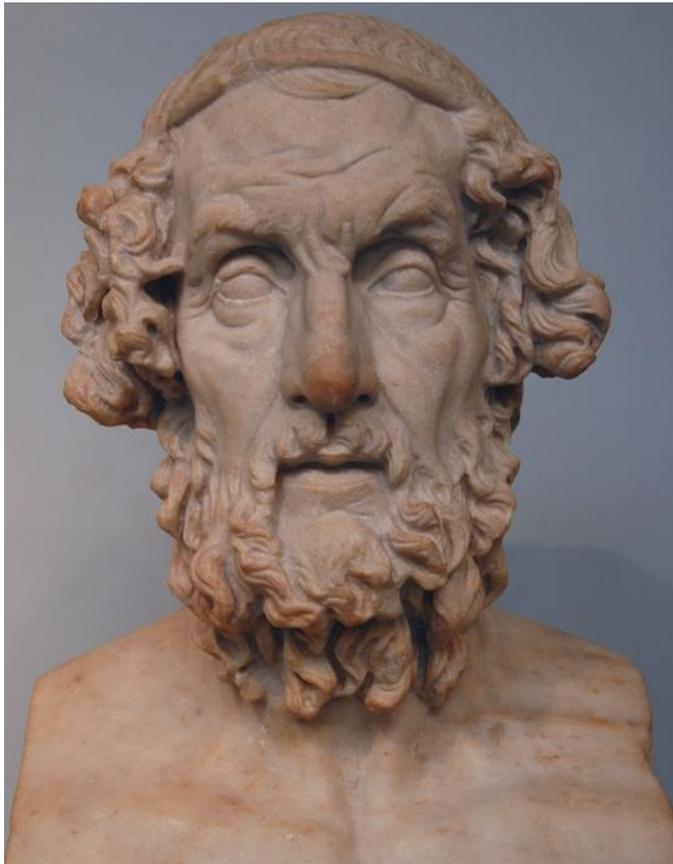
# Purpose: Pure Entertainment



Other myths don't explain anything

- They are written as pure entertainment
- Examples: Quest for the Golden Fleece, the stories of Orpheus and Eurydice; Pygmalion and Galatea
- Myths are also some of the earliest stories of literature

# The Greek Poets



Few chief writers through which we know of Greek mythology

- ❑ The Greeks believed in what they wrote
- ❑ **Homer:** *Iliad*, *The Odyssey* contain the oldest Greek writings, around 1000 BC
- ❑ **Hesiod:** *Theogony* is an account of creation and the generation of the Gods
- ❑ **Pindar:** wrote odes in which myths are told
- ❑ **The tragic poets:** Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote plays on mythological subjects

# The Roman Poets



- ▣ **Ovid:** provided a collection of classical mythology, drawing on all the Greek sources
- ▣ **Virgil:** brought mythological characters to life

# Animistic vs Anthropomorphic gods

- Try to envision yourselves as ancient Greek men and women, living around the dawn of time.
- You've got so many questions. How did we get here? What are we doing here? How are we to get a grip on this concept called life?
- Pretty soon human beings will isolate certain forces in their lives that have power over their lives. For example, tables are not really a power-packed concept in life. They're nice and have their uses—but they are not life altering.
- But, Coffee. Coffee is important. The sun is important. When the sun comes out, crops grow. The earth, that brown stuff below our feet, produces just about everything we eat.
- The ancient Greeks are just like every other ancient civilization scholars know anything about. They try to conceptualize these forces. They try to understand the sun, moon, stars, earth, rivers, mountains, the what have you, by saying, "they're gods." They are gods and goddesses.

# Animistic vs Anthropomorphic gods

- The belief that the forces of nature like the wind, sun and moon are gods and goddesses is known as **animism**. Animism can simply be defined as attributing godhood or goddesshood to inanimate objects or forces of nature.
- **Anthropomorphic**—gods and goddesses who have human form, human shape, human faces, human personalities, human just about everything except for they are more powerful than we are, and they're immortal.

# Animistic vs Anthropomorphic gods

- If you believe in an animistic conception of gods and goddesses, it doesn't matter what you do.
- The sun is a big ball of fire in the sky. There is no point in praying to it. It is a big ball of fire in the sky.
- If, however, we start attributing anthropomorphic characteristics to the big ball of fire in the sky and to the brown stuff that we walk on below, we begin to be able to exert a little control over it.

# THE TITANS

Cronus (Saturn)

Rhea (wife/sister to Cronus)

Ocean (the river that circled the earth)

Tethys (wife of Ocean)

Hyperion (father of the sun, moon, and dawn)

Mnemosyne (Memory)

Themis (Justice)

Ipetus (his sons are more important than him)

- Atlas – bore the world on his shoulders
- Prometheus – the savior of mankind
- Epimetheus – “after thought”

# The Titans (the Elder Gods)



- ❑ Greeks believed that the universe created the Gods
- ❑ Titans were the children of heaven and earth
- ❑ Enormous size and of incredible strength
- ❑ Most important: Cronus (Saturn) – ruled over the titans until his son Zeus dethroned him.
- ❑ Cronus was banished, but the other Titans assumed a lower place

# THE 12 OLYMPIANS

Zeus (Jupiter)

Poseidon (Neptune)

Hades (Pluto)

Hestia (Vesta)

Hera (Juno)

Ares (Mars)

Athena (Minerva)

Apollo

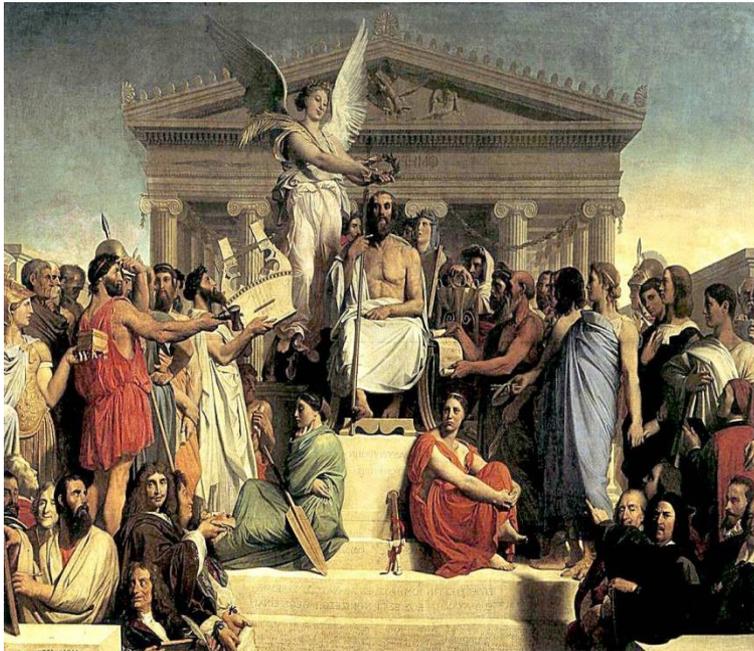
Aphrodite (Venus)

Hermes (Mercury)

Artemis (Diana)

Hephaestus (Vulcan)

# Mount Olympus



- ❑ Called Olympians because Mount Olympus was their home
- ❑ Identified with Greece's highest mountain
- ❑ In *The Iliad* Mount Olympus is a mysterious region far above all the mountains of the earth
- ❑ Entrance was a great gate of clouds
- ❑ Like humans, they ate and slept
- ❑ Feasted on nectar and listened to Apollo's lyre

# Zeus (Jupiter)



- ❑ King of the gods
- ❑ God of the sky and the weather
- ❑ Symbols: Eagle, thunderbolt
- ❑ Son of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Brother of Poseidon and Hades
- ❑ Wrathful, lustful, not all-knowing
- ❑ Married to Hera; ungodly marital behavior, kept “falling in love”
- ❑ Stronger than all gods put together
- ❑ Orchestrated the Trojan war

# Poseidon (Neptune)



- ❑ God of the sea
- ❑ Pictured with a trident (three-pronged spear)
- ❑ Son of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Brother of Zeus and Hades
- ❑ Had splendid palace beneath the sea, but also lived on Olympus
- ❑ Called “earth-shaker”
- ❑ Powerful, secretive
- ❑ Vengeful, usually argumentative with the other gods

# Hades (Pluto)



- ❑ God of Underworld, God of the Dead
- ❑ God of Precious Metals of the Earth
- ❑ Pictured with dark beard, crown, scepter, key, helmet of invisibility, chariot
- ❑ Son of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Brother of Zeus and Poseidon
- ❑ Rarely worshipped
- ❑ Lived mainly in the Underworld
- ❑ Unpitiful, terrible (but not evil)
- ❑ He captured his wife Persephone and brought her to the Underworld

# Hera (Juno)



- ❑ Goddess of Marriage
- ❑ Protector of Married Women
- ❑ Daughter of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Zeus's wife and sister
- ❑ Symbols: Peacock, cow, pomegranate
- ❑ Powerful, bold, and jealous
- ❑ Spends her time punishing the many women Zeus falls in love with
- ❑ Never forgot an injury

# Hestia (Vesta)



- ❑ Goddess of Home and Hearth
- ❑ Symbol: the hearth fire
- ❑ Good-natured and loving
- ❑ Does not appear in myths at all
- ❑ Daughter of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Seven vestal virgins oversee her fire
- ❑ Every meal began and ended with an offering to her

# Ares (Mars)



- ❑ God of war
- ❑ Son of Zeus and Hera
- ❑ Pictured with spear, vulture, dog
- ❑ Terrorized mortals
- ❑ 4 horses: Terror, Fire, Flame, Trouble
- ❑ Depicted as hateful in *The Iliad*
- ❑ Little more than a symbol of war

# Athena (Minerva)



- ❑ Goddess of the city, wisdom, handicrafts, war, and agriculture
- ❑ Symbols: owl, olive
- ❑ Wise and even-tempered
- ❑ Embodiment of wisdom, reason, purity
- ❑ Fierce in battle
- ❑ Sprung from Zeus's head, fully grown and fully armed
  - No mother bore her
- ❑ Mother was Metis

# Hermes (Mercury)



- ❑ God of Travelers, Thieves, and Shepherds
- ❑ Symbols: Winged sandals and hat, magic wand
- ❑ Witty, happy clever, friendly, helpful
- ❑ Son of Zeus and Maia (Maea)
- ❑ Chief messenger and master thief

# Apollo (Apollo)



- ❑ God of Light and Purity
- ❑ Symbols: Mouse, sun dial, lyre
- ❑ Cheerful, sometime jealous
- ❑ Son of Zeus and Leto
- ❑ Perpetually young, handsome, wise
- ❑ Teaches moderation

# Artemis (Diana)



- ❑ Goddess of the Hunt and Moon
- ❑ Symbols: Cyprus tree, wild animals, deer
- ❑ Aloof, majestic, nature-loving
- ❑ Quick to anger, athletic
- ❑ Daughter of Zeus and Leto
- ❑ Twin of Apollo
- ❑ Skilled archer
- ❑ Lived among virgin nymphs

# Hephaestus (Vulcan)



- ❑ God of Fire and Forge
- ❑ Symbols: fire, quail
- ❑ Modest and helpful
- ❑ Son of Zeus and Hera
- ❑ Ugly and lame
- ❑ Helped by cyclopes in underground forges
- ❑ Taught men to use fire

# Aphrodite (Venus)



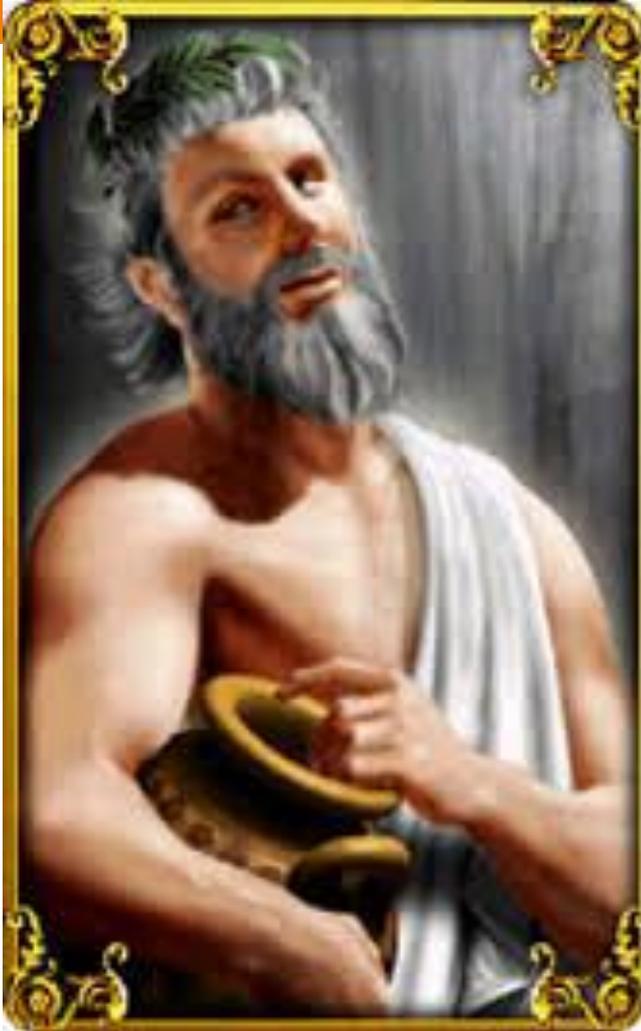
- ❑ Goddess of Love and Beauty
- ❑ Symbols: dove, rose, apple
- ❑ Seductive, irresistible, sometimes treacherous
- ❑ She sprung from the foam of the sea
- ❑ Hephaestus won her hand, not heart
- ❑ In love with Ares
- ❑ Led Paris to Helen of Troy

# Demeter (Ceres)



- ❑ Goddess of fertility, grain, and the harvest.
- ❑ Daughter of Cronus and Rhea
- ❑ Perceived as kind and generous
- ❑ Preferred to be near soil on earth
- ❑ “Ruled” earth
- ❑ Greeks relied on her to provide them food.
- ❑ Held the powers of destruction and creation
- ❑ Zeus was her lover; Persephone their daughter

# Dionysus (Bacchus)



- ❑ Son of Zeus and Semele, but born out of Zeus's side after Semele burst into flames
- ❑ God of wine and revelry
- ❑ The ultimate "party God"
- ❑ Was driven mad by Hera, who was jealous of Semele
- ❑ Rescued Ariadne and married her
- ❑ Punished those who offended him with madness

# Persephone (Proserpine/Proserpina)



- ❑ Goddess of the Underworld
- ❑ Daughter of Zeus and Demeter
- ❑ Carried off by Hades to live with him in the underworld
- ❑ Hades made Persephone eat pomegranate seed – meaning she would return to him.
- ❑ In her terrible grief over her daughter, Demeter withheld her gifts from the earth. Nothing grew, no seed sprung up. She would withhold her gifts until she could see Persephone
- ❑ Story explains the seasons – Persephone would spend winter in Hades

# Eros (Cupid)



- **God of love**
- **The Son of Aphrodite (in some myths)**
- **He Has Two Types of Arrows**
  - ▣ **One Type Causes Intense Infatuation**
  - ▣ **The Other Hardens the Heart**

# LESSER GODS OF OLYMPUS



# Hebe



- ❑ **The goddess of youth**
- ❑ **Daughter of Zeus**
- ❑ **Cupbearer to the gods**
- ❑ **Married Hercules**

# Iris (Isis)



- Goddess of the Rainbow
- Servant to Hera
- Messenger goddess

# The Graces



- Three Goddesses of Grace and Beauty
- “They give life its bloom.”
- Aglaia (Splendor)
- Euphrosyne (Mirth)
- Thalia (Good Cheer)

# The Muses



- **nine sisters—daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (memory).**
  - ▣ **Clio-** the muse of history
  - ▣ **Urania-** the muse of astronomy
  - ▣ **Melpomene-** the muse of tragedy
  - ▣ **Thalia-** the muse of comedy
  - ▣ **Terpsichore-** the muse of dance
  - ▣ **Calliope-** the muse of epic poetry
  - ▣ **Erato-** the muse of love poetry
  - ▣ **Polyhymnia-** the muse of songs to the gods
  - ▣ **Euterpe-** the muse of lyric poetry

# Gods of the waters

- **Ocean-** a titan—Lord of the river Ocean—a great river encircling the earth. His wife was also a titan (Tethys). The Oceanids—nymphs of this great river—where their daughters. The gods of all rivers on earth were their sons.
- **Pontus-** means Deep Sea. He was a son of Mother Earth. And he is the father of Nereus—a sea god
- **Nereus-** a.k.a- Old Man of the Sea (the Mediterranean) his wife was Doris—a daughter of Ocean. They had 50 lovely daughters, the nymphs of the Sea—Nereids. One Nereid—Thetis was the mother of Achilles. Another Nereid named Amphitrite was Poseidon's wife.
- **Triton-** the trumpeter of the Sea. His trumpet was a great shell. He was the son of Poseidon and Amphitrite.
- **Proteus-** sometimes said to be the son of Poseidon, sometimes his attendant. He had the power of foretelling the future and of changing his shape at will
- **Naiads-** were also water nymphs. They live in brooks, springs, and fountains.



# THE UNDERWORLD

# Tartarus and Erebus



- **Tartarus**- the deeper division of the underworld
- **Erebus**- where the dead pass as soon as they die
  - Sometimes there is no distinction between the two— Tartarus is usually a name for the entire lower region

# Charon



- **The boatman who ferries the souls of the dead across the water to the farther bank, where stand the gate to Tartarus**
- **Charon will only allow souls into his boat who had the passage money placed on their lips when they died and who were duly buried**

# Cerberus



- **Three-headed, dragon-tailed dog who permits all spirits to enter but none to return**

# The Three Judges



- **Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus—judges who pass sentences and send the wicked to everlasting torment and the good to a place of blessedness called the Elysian Fields**

# The Rivers



- ❑ **Phlegethon-** the river of fire
- ❑ **Styx-** the river of unbreakable oaths by which the gods swear
- ❑ **Lethe-** the river of forgetfulness

# The Furies (Erinyes)



- ❑ **Punishers of evildoers—Tisiphone, Megaera, and Alecto**
- ❑ **Beings Who Were Born from the Blood of Ouranos**
- ❑ **Usually punished those who killed their parents.**

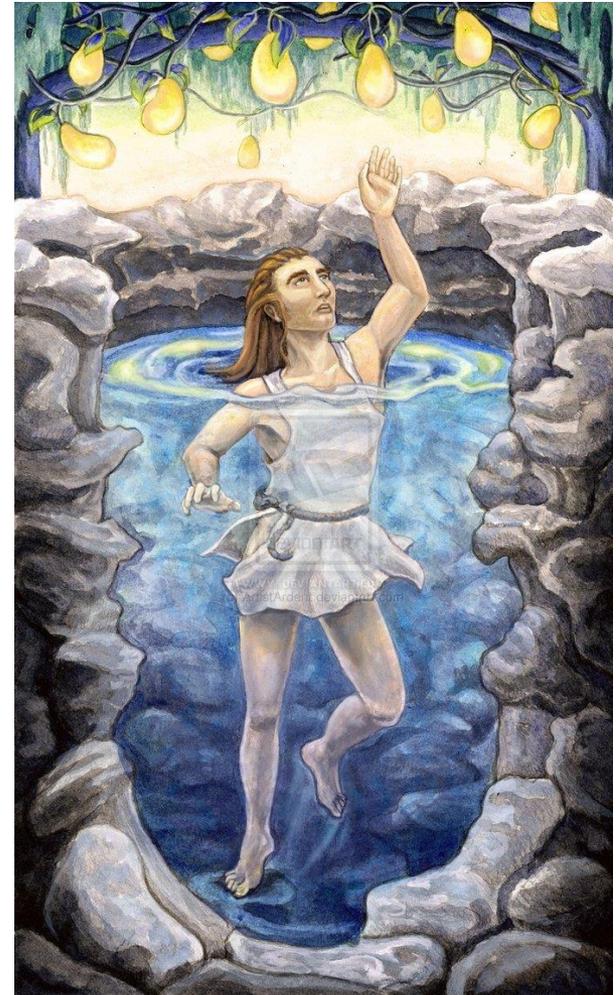
# The top 53 sinners of Greco-Roman antiquity

- **Ixion-** tried to rape Hera
- Ixion's punishment is to spin round and round on a burning ring of fire.



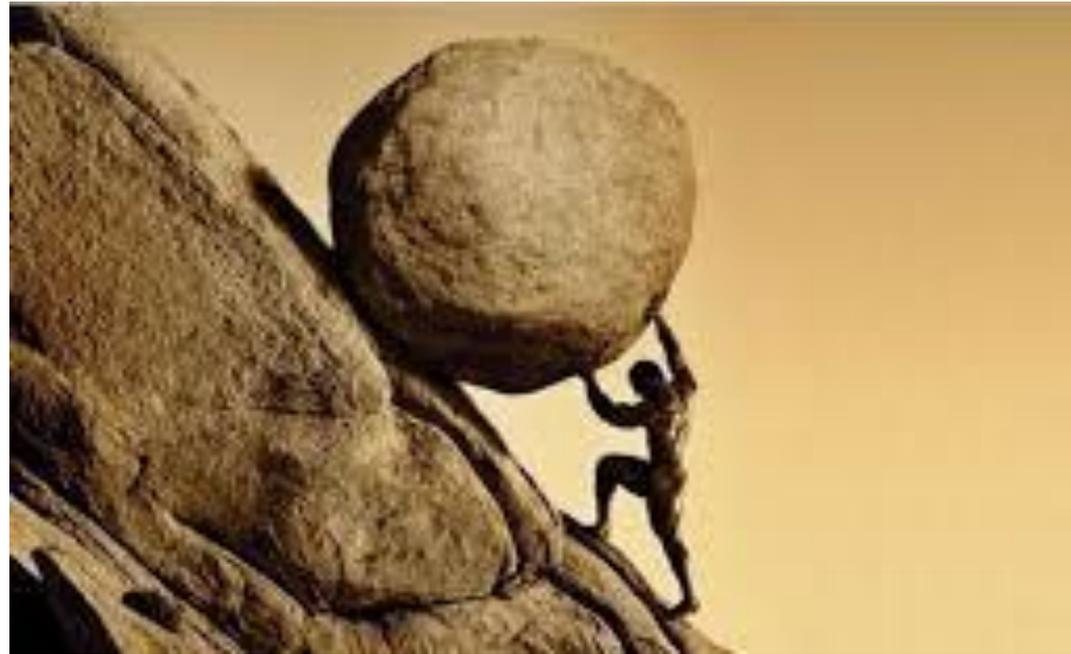
# The top 53 sinners of Greco-Roman antiquity

- ❑ **Tantalus**- fed his son to the gods and goddesses
- ❑ Tantalus is being punished by being placed in water up to his waist with a fruit tree just out of reach over his head. Every time he bends down to drink the water, the water recedes. Every time he reaches up to grab a piece of fruit, the branch pulls away from him.



# The top 53 sinners of Greco-Roman antiquity

- **Sisyphus**- cheated death
- Zeus sentenced him to roll a rock up a hill. As soon as he gets the rock up to the top of the hill, it rolls down. That's what he gets to do for all infinity.



# The top 53 sinners of Greco-Roman antiquity

- **Tityus-** attempted to rape Leto, mother of Artemis and Apollo
- He's staked out on the ground and vultures tear out his liver every day



# The top 53 sinners of Greco-Roman antiquity

- ❑ **49 Danaides-**  
killed their ancient Egyptian husbands
- ❑ They are sentenced to filling up their dad's bathtub with water using urns that have holes in the bottom.



# OTHER PEOPLE AND CREATURES



# Castor and Pollux



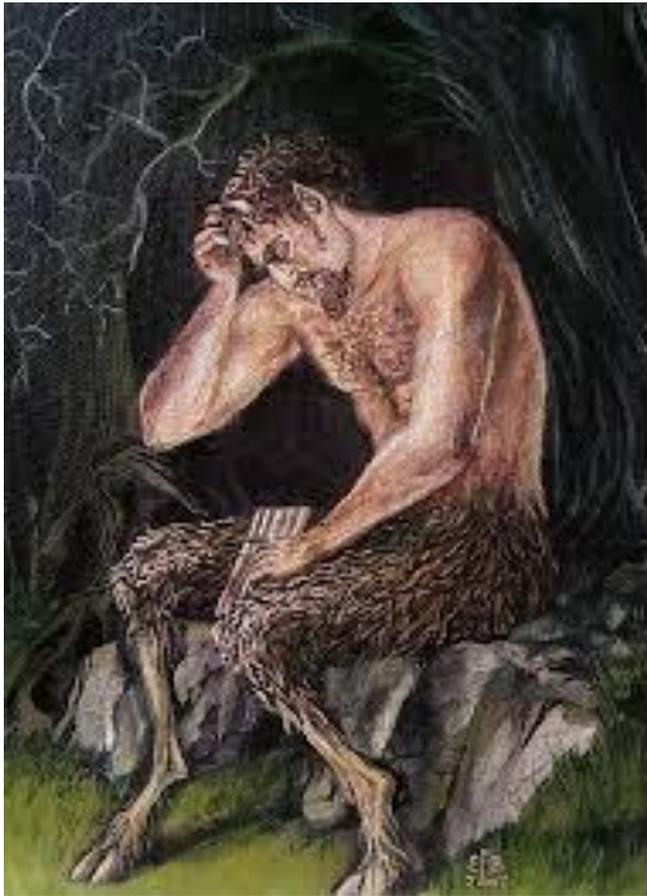
- **Two brothers who have different stories about them**
- **They are also known as the Gemini constellation**

# Pan



- **Hermes' son.**
- **God of goat herders and shepherds**
- **All wild places were his home**
- **The word "Panic" is derived from his name**

# Satyrs



- **Goat-men. Their home was in the wild places of earth**

# Types of Nymphs



- Nymph
  - ▣ Any of the minor divinities of nature in classical mythology represented as beautiful maidens living in mountains, forests, trees, and waters
- Dryad
  - ▣ A wood nymph whose life is bound up with that of her tree
- Naiad
  - ▣ A type of nymph who presides over fountains, wells, springs, streams, and brooks

# Aeolus



- ❑ **King of Winds**
- ❑ **He lived on earth on an island called Aeolia**
- ❑ **Assists Odysseus on his Journey**

# Centaur



- ❑ **Half men/half horse**
- ❑ **Savage creatures**
- ❑ **However, Chiron was known for his goodness and wisdom**

# Gorgons



- **Three sisters**
  - ▣ **Two of them were immortal**
- **They were dragon-like creatures with wings, whose look turned men to stone**
  - ▣ **Medusa**
- **Phorcys, son of the Sea and Earth was their father**

# Graiae



- ❑ **Sisters to the Gorgons**
- ❑ **Three gray women who had one eye that they shared**
- ❑ **They lived on the farther bank of Ocean**

# Sirens



- ❑ Lived on an island in the Sea
- ❑ They had enchanting voices
- ❑ Their singing lured sailors to their death
- ❑ It was not known what they looked like for no one who saw them ever returned

# The Fates (Moirae)



- Give to men at birth both evil and good
  - ▣ There were three of them
- Clotho, the spinner—who spun the thread of life
- Lachesis, the disposer of lots—who assigned each man his destiny
- Atropos, she who could not be turned—who carried the shears and cut the thread of life



END