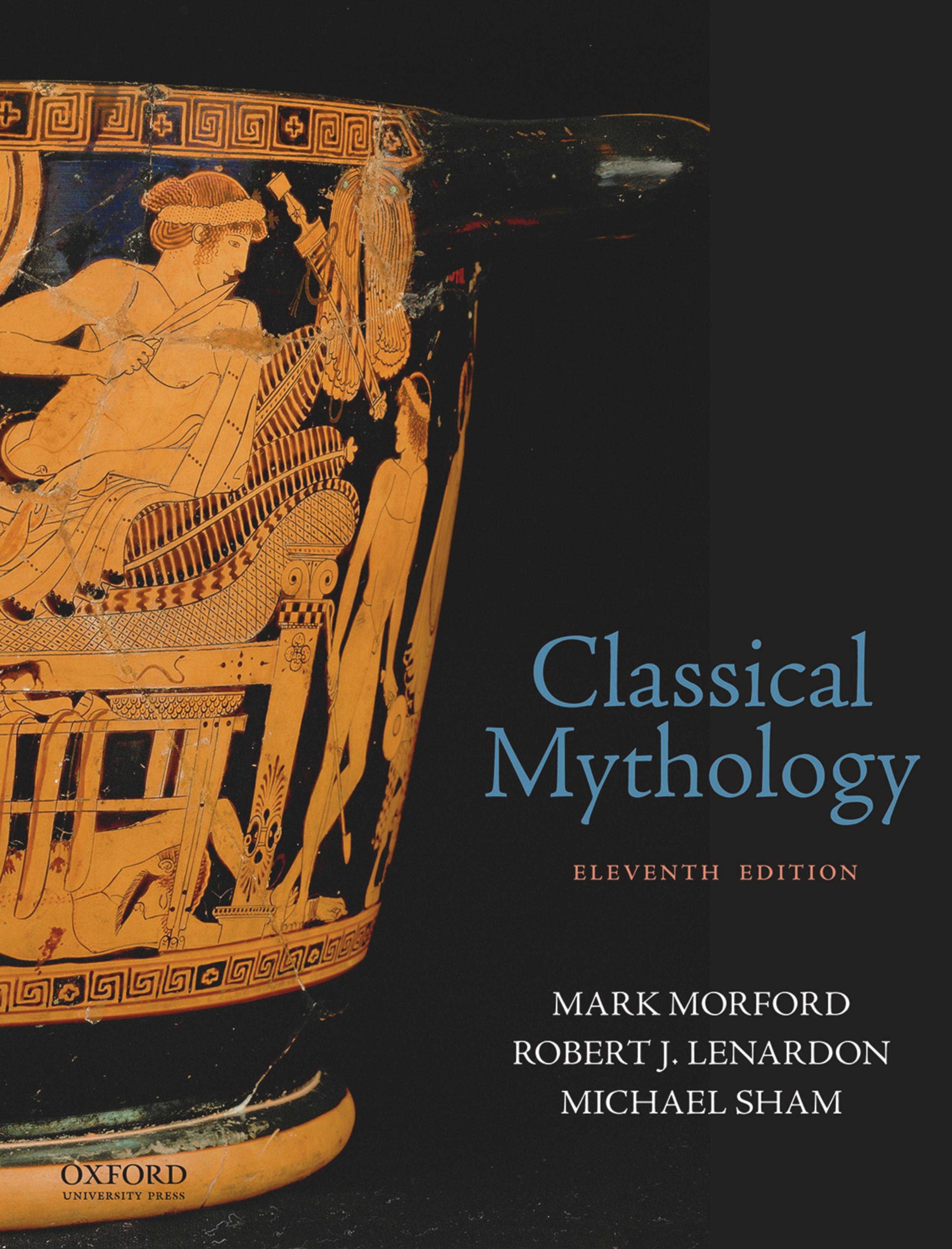

Classical Mythology

ELEVENTH EDITION

MARK MORFORD
ROBERT J. LENARDON
MICHAEL SHAM

OXFORD
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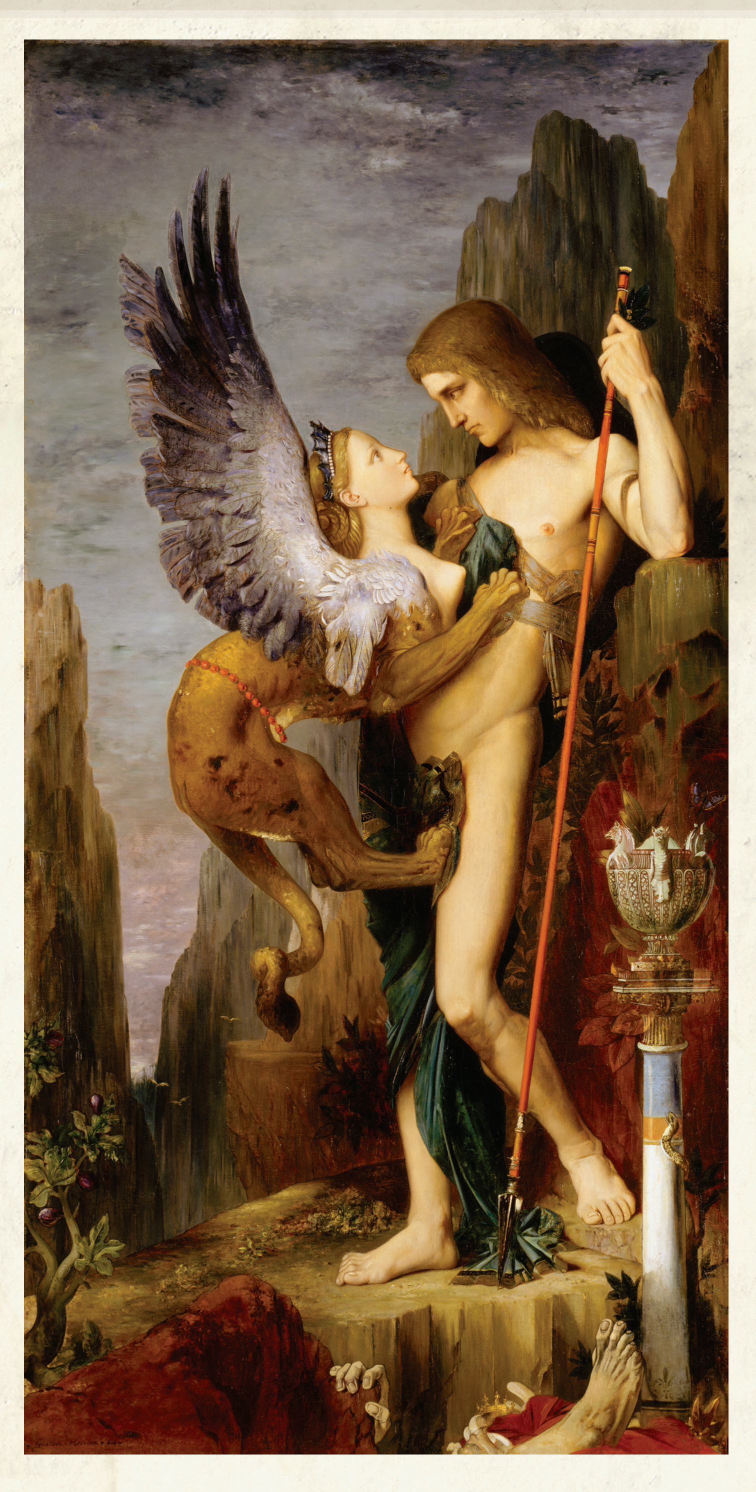

Classical Mythology

ELEVENTH EDITION

Mark P.O. Morford
University of Virginia, Emeritus

Robert J. Lenardon
The Ohio State University, Emeritus

Michael Sham
Siena College

OXFORD NEW YORK
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Dedicated to the Memory of

WILLIAM ROBERT JONES

teacher, scholar, friend

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Cover art: **Athena and Heracles.** Interior of a kylix by the potter Python and painter Duris, ca. 475 B.C.; diameter 13 in. On the viewer's left Heracles sits on a rock, wearing his lionskin and with his club resting beside him. He is refreshed by Athena, who stands opposite and pours wine from an oinochoe (a jug for wine) into a two-handled kylix. She wears the aegis (note the four snakes on the lower right) and holds an owl in her left hand: her spear is held at rest and her helmet rests on a plinth. (*Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY*)

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Preface

IT IS NOW NEARLY fifty years since the manuscript of *Classical Mythology* was submitted to the publishers. The original authors have now revised the book through ten more editions while keeping their research in the field current.

Our work is conceived as a comprehensive source where one may go to explore in depth the nature of the Greek and Roman deities and the heroes and heroines of saga; in a few words, here is a fundamental text for the serious study of the subject of classical mythology. Yet we also have intended to provide a fertile source where one may nourish a sympathetic understanding of the great mythological heritage bestowed by classical antiquity. We also consider the great influence of classical mythology on diverse artistic forms (painting, sculpture, literature, music, opera, dance, theater, and cinema) to be a most enjoyable and rewarding subject, too important to be ignored. The later influence of classical mythology on the arts was originally the subject of Part Four (Chapters 27 and 28), entitled "The Survival of Classical Mythology." This part has been removed from the eleventh edition, but is still available online in what will hopefully be a more useful format. The subject, however, of the influence of classical mythology permeates all aspects of our presentation throughout. The tenacious persistence of Greek and Roman mythology undeniably remains vital and pervasive in our contemporary world. Greek and Roman myths, of indelible beauty and with great power to inspire, present a particularly fertile and inexhaustible venue for the appreciation of the cultural, intellectual, and artistic history of Western civilization.

Originally, Professor Morford and Professor Lenardon each undertook the major responsibility for certain sections—Professor Lenardon wrote Part One (Chapters 1–16) and Chapter 28 in Part Four (now online), and Professor Morford wrote Parts Two and Three (Chapters 17–26) and Chapter 27 (now online). We have continued to use this approach, although in subsequent revisions all three authors have contributed freely throughout the book.

Translations

Successive revisions have been extensive and far-reaching, in grateful response to the many sensitive and appreciative critics over these many years. They have consistently encouraged us to remain firm in our conviction that the literary tradition of Greek and Roman mythology must always remain primary, but they have also confirmed our need and desire to incorporate, in so far as possible, additional comparative and interpretative approaches and more far-reaching evidence from other sources such as archaeology.

Translations of the ancient authors remain extensive, and none has been deleted from this edition. The majority of them throughout the book (except for Chapter 26) are by Professor Lenardon, including all thirty-three of the *Homeric Hymns*; all the important passages in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*; and excerpts (many of them substantial) from Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Plato, and, in Latin, Ovid and Vergil. These texts are interspersed with interpretative commentary and analysis to elucidate their mythological and literary significance and afford insightful and challenging avenues of interpretation.

Shorter excerpts from many other authors are included, such as the lyric poets, the pre-Socratic philosophers, Pindar, and Lucian; and the Latin authors Statius, Manilius, and Seneca.

All translations are our own.

Spelling

Consistency in spelling has proven impossible to attain. In general, we have adopted Latinized forms (Cronus for Kronos) or spellings generally accepted in English-speaking countries (Heracles, not Herakles). Since non-Latinized spelling of Greek names has become fashionable, we include an appendix listing Greek spellings of important names with their Latinized and English equivalents, which will serve as a paradigm of the principles of transliteration.

Art Program

Every aspect of *Classical Mythology*'s design and richly rewarding art program has been given great care and attention as we have prepared the eleventh edition.

The illustrations have been an integral part of the work since its inception. Professor Morford was responsible for their selection and for the captions in the first eight editions; for the ninth edition, the first to appear in full color, the opinions of the many colleagues and reviewers also informed our selections. All three authors have taken part in the selection of illustrations for this new edition, a process that has often required painful decisions about what to leave out, but one that has also led generally to a consensus about what to include. Professor Morford and Professor Sham have divided the responsibility for writing the new captions. As with previous editions, the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* has been an invaluable resource, and as before Professor Morford's own research and visits to museums and exhibitions have been a fruitful source for our selections.

The visual program is further enriched by the "Myth & Culture" feature. In twelve illustrated essays throughout the text, this feature allows a close and careful comparative study of the ways in which mythical figures and episodes have been depicted by different artists in a variety of media. Professor Sham was responsible for the "Myth and Culture" feature.

New to the Eleventh Edition

- **Streamlined presentation**

  The text has been shortened by approximiately eighty pages by the elimination of Part Four, "The Survival of Classical Mythology" (Chapters 27 and 28).

These chapters, which examine the reception of classical mythology in literature, music, dance, and film, can be found on the companion website that accompanies the text (www.oup.com/us/morford) and come with the purchase of all new copies of the text.

- **Audio Recordings**

  Users of *Classical Mythology* consistently praise the book for the quality of the translations of ancient works, all of which were done by the authors. Readers who purchase a new copy of the eleventh edition can now enjoy listening to many of these translations as streaming audio files on the book's companion website www.oup.com/us/morford. The translations that are available in an audio format are indicated in the margin by a icon. Access to the audio recordings can also be purchased directly at www.oup.com/us/morford.

- **Closer Look Image Analyses**

  Free with the purchase of a new copy of the Eleventh Edition, the "Closer Look" image analyses offer the opportunity to examine in detail paintings, frescos, sculpture, mosaics, photographs, and other fine art that represent important episodes from classical myth. Each "Closer Look" includes detailed commentary and guiding questions. Access to the Closer Looks can also be purchased directly at www.oup.com/us/morford.

Please visit https://arc2.oup-arc.com/access/morford-11e for a demo of the audio recordings and Closer Look image analyses.

Additional Learning Resources

The eleventh edition of *Classical Mythology* offers a complete suite of ancillaries for both instructors and students: the Ancillary Resource Center (https://arc2.oup-arc.com/) offers an instructor's manual with outlines of each chapter), commentaries, translations, test questions, a computerized test bank, and PowerPoint slides.

Oxford University Press also extends discounted packaging for customers wishing to assign *Classical Mythology* with any **Oxford World's Classic** text (www.oup.com/us/owc). For more information, please contact your Oxford University Press sales representative at 1-800-445-9714.

Now Playing (ISBN 978-0-19-999734-3)

Designed specifically to accompany *Classical Mythology* and prepared by Professor Sham, *Now Playing: Learning Classical Mythology Through Film* illustrates how classical myths have inspired new adaptations in film, dance, and music, with descriptions from over thirty films and television episodes. Each entry provides a preview of each work, designed to inform an appreciation of the material, an extended treatment of individual scenes, and questions for discussion or written homework assignments. Both instructor and student editions are available. *Now Playing* is free when packaged with the text. Contact your your local OUP sales representative for details.

E-book Options

An e-version of the text can be rented from RedShelf, VitalSource, Chegg, and other preferred vendors.

Acknowledgments

We have received help and encouragement from many colleagues, students, and friends over the years and generous support from numerous people involved in the editorial development, production, and publication of the eleven editions of this book. To all who have contributed so much, we are deeply grateful.

In particular, for this edition we are thankful to Barbara Polowy, director of the Hillyer Art Library at Smith College, and to the following reviewers for criticism and specific suggestions:

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Charles Alton McCloud, through the many editions of the book, generously shared his expertise in music, dance, and theater. His passing in 2014 is still deeply felt.

Mark P.O. Morford

Robert J. Lenardon

Michael Sham

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Available with the purchase of a new copy of the Eleventh Edition, the "Closer Look" image analyses offer the opportunity to examine in detail paintings, frescos, sculpture, mosaics, photographs, and other fine art that represent important episodes from classical myth. Each "Closer Look" includes detailed commentary and guiding questions.

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About the Authors

MARK MORFORD is Professor Emeritus of Classics at the University of Virginia, where he joined the faculty in 1984 after teaching at The Ohio State University for twenty-one years and serving as chairman of the Department of Classics. He also served as Kennedy Professor of Renaissance Studies at Smith College, where he holds a research appointment in the Mortimer Rare Book Room of the Neilson Library. As vice president for education of the American Philological Association, he actively promoted the cooperation of teachers and scholars in schools and universities. Throughout his fifty years of teaching he has been devoted to bringing together teachers of classical subjects and teachers in other disciplines. He has published books on the Roman poets Persius and Lucan and the Renaissance scholar Justus Lipsius (*Stoics and Neostoics: Lipsius and the Circle of Rubens*), as well as many articles on Greek and Roman literature and Renaissance scholarship and art. His book *The Roman Philosophers* was published in 2002, and he is currently working on a new book, *The Ancient Romans*.

ROBERT LENARDON is Professor Emeritus of Classics at The Ohio State University, where he was on the faculty for twenty-five years and served as director of graduate studies in classics. He has taught at several other universities, including the University of Cincinnati, Columbia University, and the University of British Columbia. He was a visiting fellow at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, and has written articles on Greek history and classics and a biography, *The Saga of Themistocles*. He has served as book review editor of the *Classical Journal* and presented radio programs about mythology in music, a subject dear to his heart. The afterlife of classical subjects and themes in literature, music, film, and dance has also become a favorite area of teaching and research. For the fall semester of 2001, he was appointed Visiting Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the University of Louisville, Kentucky. His translations from the *Greek Anthology* have been set to music by Gerald Busby, in a work entitled *Songs from Ancient Greek*, for tenor and piano (premiere, Carnegie Hall, 2005). He is currently completing a history, *Hubris: The Persian Wars against the Greeks*.

MICHAEL SHAM is Professor of Classics at Siena College, where for the past twenty years he has developed a small but vigorous program. He is currently Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Classics at Siena College. Throughout his teaching career he has been dedicated to bringing the value of a classical education to a wider audience. He has worked to bring together

scholars, writers, and artists across traditional academic disciplines to explore the continually renewed vitality of the classical tradition. He has written and spoken on a wide range of scholarly interests, including the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on contemporary American poets and the adaptation and production of Greek tragedy for the contemporary stage. He has himself written an adaption of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* to some acclaim. He was a contributing author to *A Companion to Classical Mythology* (Longman, 1997). He is responsible for the companion website, the Instructor's Manual for *Classical Mythology*, and the *Now Playing* supplement. He is currently working on a book about the influence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* on contemporary culture.

About the Companion Website

www.oup.com/us/morford

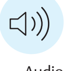
We have consistently, deliberately, and conscientiously developed the website as a valuable pedagogical resource to be used in conjunction with the text of this book, and many of our readers have expressed their gratitude. Therefore, we never intend to insert a box at the end of each chapter with a few names or topics singled out at random as important—such a vain attempt would be not only misleading but virtually useless because of the complexity of our subject. The flashcards (on the website) for each chapter identify the significant names and key terms and also include audio pronunciations (which are essential today, since pronunciation of classical names is a nightmare for students and mispronunciation has too often become the norm for everyone, except for a few).

Here are the vital pedagogical features of the website:

- **Pronunciations**: Names are first introduced with a guide to pronunciation, followed by their Greek spelling and Roman equivalent, for example, Athena [a-thee'– na] or Athene (Minerva). An interactive audio guide to pronunciation has been added (MP3 files).
- **Summaries**: Chapter-by-chapter summaries include synopses of lengthy translations, such as those of the *Homeric Hymns* and Greek drama.
- **Translations**: In successive editions of the book, we have removed a few of our earlier translations to make space for new ones. All translations deleted from any edition of the text appear on the website (e.g., two of Lucian's satires about the Underworld, Homer's account of Proteus, Mimnermus' poem about Helius, and Seneca's depiction of Tantalus).

  The sections of Hesiod's *Theogony* that are excerpted and discussed in the book are presented as a continuous text for reference and study, including lines 1–115, concerning the Muses, which appeared in the seventh edition and were deleted from the text.

  Many more translations are also included that have never appeared in the book, such as Vergil's account of Orpheus and Eurydice (narrated by Aristaeus), which offers rewarding comparison with Ovid's version found in the text, and Catullus' powerful depiction of Cybele and Attis. Like all the other translations and material on the website, these are easily accessed.



- **Audio Recordings**: Those translations in the text that are indicated by an audio icon can be heard by clicking on the Audio Recordings tab.

- **The Closer Look** image analyses can be explored on the website.
- **Ancient Sources**: A comprehensive list of precise references to the ancient authors for the myths and legends, deities, and heroes offers ready access to the primary sources.
- **Works of Art**: We have harnessed the potential of the Internet to search out resources of every sort, particularly in the visual arts. We have included on the website a section entitled Representations in Art in which we discuss the pervasive influence of mythological themes on the visual arts from antiquity to the present day. From Chapters 3–26 we highlight the most important contributions to the visual arts inspired by classical mythology. This section contains links to a wide selection of works available for viewing on the web, so that students may study this artistic legacy for themselves.
- **Bibliographies and Discographies**: The bibliographies are much more extensive than could possibly be included in a textbook. We have enlarged all the bibliographies, which include works in music, dance, and film on CD and DVD. All are keyed to each chapter for easy reference.
- **Comparative Mythology**: We have included a wide variety of concise essays on themes relating to the study of comparative mythology, including Indian, Norse, and Celtic mythology.
- **Quizzes**: A study quiz for each chapter tests student's mastery of the material.
- **Audio flashcards**: Students can both read and listen to the definitions of all the Glossary terms in the text.
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PART ONE

The Myths of Creation: The Gods

William Blake, *The Ancient of Days*

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1

Interpretation and Definition of Classical Mythology

PHAEDRUS: Tell me, Socrates, was it not somewhere around here by the stream of Ilissus that Boreas is said to have carried off Oreithyia?

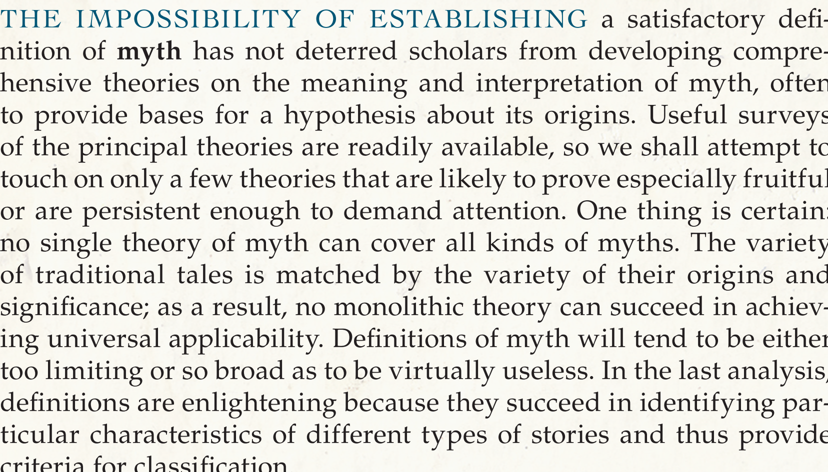
SOCRATES: That's the story.

PHAEDRUS: It ***was*** around here, wasn't it? At any rate, the stream is beautiful, pure and clear, and perfect for young girls to play along.

SOCRATES: No, it was down farther. . . . There is an altar there to Boreas, I think.

PHAEDRUS: I didn't know that. But tell me, Socrates, by Zeus, do you believe this story is true?

—**PLATO, *Phaedrus* 229b**



THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING a satisfactory definition of **myth** has not deterred scholars from developing comprehensive theories on the meaning and interpretation of myth, often to provide bases for a hypothesis about its origins. Useful surveys of the principal theories are readily available, so we shall attempt to touch on only a few theories that are likely to prove especially fruitful or are persistent enough to demand attention. One thing is certain: no single theory of myth can cover all kinds of myths. The variety of traditional tales is matched by the variety of their origins and significance; as a result, no monolithic theory can succeed in achieving universal applicability. Definitions of myth will tend to be either too limiting or so broad as to be virtually useless. In the last analysis, definitions are enlightening because they succeed in identifying particular characteristics of different types of stories and thus provide criteria for classification.

The word *myth* comes from the Greek word *mythos,* which means "word," "speech," "tale," or "story," and that is essentially what a myth is: a story. Some would limit this broad definition by insisting that the story must have proved itself worthy of becoming traditional.[1] A myth may be a story that is narrated orally, but usually it is eventually given written form. A myth also may be told by means of no words at all, for

example, through painting, sculpture, music, dance, and mime, or by a combination of various media, as in the case of drama, song, opera, or the movies.

Many specialists in the field of mythology, however, are not satisfied with such broad interpretations of the term *myth.* They attempt to distinguish "true myth" (or "myth proper") from other varieties and seek to draw distinctions in terminology between myth and other words often used synonymously, such as legend, saga, folktale, and fairytale.[2]

True Myth or Myth Proper and Saga or Legend

As opposed to an all-encompassing definition for the general term *myth*, **true myth** or **myth proper** is used for stories primarily concerned with the gods and humankind's relations with them. **Saga** or **legend** (and we use the words interchangeably) has a perceptible relationship to history; however fanciful and imaginative, it has its roots in historical fact.[3] These two categories underlie the basic division of the first two parts of this book into "The Myths of Creation: The Gods" and "The Greek Sagas."

Folktales and Fairytales

In addition to these two categories there are **folktales**, which are often stories of adventure, sometimes peopled with fantastic beings and enlivened by ingenious strategies on the part of the hero or heroine, who will triumph in the end; their goal is primarily, but not necessarily solely, to entertain. Many of the characters and motifs in folktales are familiar to us all. They are found in both oral and written literature throughout the world, from ancient to the present time, and inevitably will be a source of inspiration for the future, for example, the monstrous giant, the wicked sorceress, the distraught maiden in peril and the special powers of her savior, the wicked sisters, mistaken identity, the imposition of labors, the solving of riddles, the fulfillment of romantic love, and on and on. Among the many folktales in this book, the tale of Cupid and Psyche (see p. 215) offers a particularly splendid example. It begins with "once upon a time" and ends with "happily ever after."

Fairytales may be classified as particular kinds of folktales, defined as "short, imaginative, traditional tales with a high moral and magical content"; a study by Graham Anderson identifying fairytales in the ancient world is most enlightening.[4] It is impossible to distinguish rigidly between a folktale and a fairytale, although perhaps a fairytale is often created especially for the young.

The Problems Imposed by Rigid Definitions

Rarely, if ever, do we find a pristine, uncontaminated example of any one of these forms. Yet, the traditional categories of myth, saga, and folktale are useful guides for any attempt to impose some order upon the multitudinous variety of classical tales.[5] How loose these categories are can be seen, for example, in the legends of Odysseus or of the Argonauts, which contain elements of history (saga) but are full of stories that may be designated as myths and folktales. The criteria for definition merge and the lines of demarcation blur.

Myth and Truth

Since, as we have seen, the Greek word for myth means "word," "speech," or "story," for a critic like Aristotle it became the designation for the plot of a play; thus, it is easy to understand how a popular view would equate myth with fiction. In everyday speech, the most common association of the words *myth* and *mythical* is with what is incredible and fantastic. How often do we hear the expression, "It's a myth," uttered in derogatory contrast with such laudable concepts as reality, truth, science, and the facts?

Therefore, important distinctions may be drawn between stories that are perceived as true and those that are not.[6] The contrast between myth and reality has been a major philosophical concern since the time of the early Greek philosophers. Myth is a many-faceted personal and cultural phenomenon created to provide a reality and a unity to what is transitory and fragmented in the world that we experience—the philosophical vision of the afterlife in Plato and any religious conception of a god are mythic, not scientific, concepts. Myth provides us with absolutes in the place of ephemeral values and with a comforting perception of the world that is necessary to make the insecurity and terror of existence bearable.[7]

It is disturbing to realize that our faith in absolutes and factual truth can be easily shattered. "Facts" change in all the sciences; textbooks in chemistry, physics, and medicine are sadly (or happily, for progress) soon out of date. It is embarrassingly banal but fundamentally important to reiterate the platitude that myth, like art, is truth on a quite different plane from that of prosaic and transitory factual knowledge. Yet, myth and factual truth need not be mutually exclusive, as some so emphatically insist. A story embodying eternal values may contain what was imagined, at any one period, to be scientifically correct in every factual detail; and the accuracy of that information may be a vital component of its mythical raison d'être. Indeed, on one hand, one can create a myth out of a factual story, as a great historian must do: any interpretation of the facts, no matter how credible, will inevitably be a mythic invention. On the other hand, a different kind of artist may create a nonhistorical myth for the ages, and whether or not it is factually accurate may be quite beside the point. A case for discussion is presented by the excerpts from the historical myth of Herotodus, which is translated in Chapter 6.

Myth in a sense is the highest reality, and the thoughtless dismissal of myth as untruth, fiction, or a lie is the most barren and misleading definition of all. The dancer and choreographer Martha Graham, sublimely aware of the timeless "blood memory" that binds our human race and that is continually evoked by the archetypal transformations of mythic art, offers a beautifully concise summation: as opposed to the discoveries of science that "will in time change and perhaps grow obsolete . . . art is eternal, for it reveals the inner landscape, which is the soul of man."[8]

Myth and Religion

As we stated earlier, true myth (as distinguished from saga and folktale) is primarily concerned with the gods, religion, and the supernatural. Most Greek and Roman stories reflect this universal preoccupation with creation, the nature of god and humankind, the afterlife, and other spiritual concerns.

Thus, mythology and religion are inextricably entwined. One tale or another may have been believed at some time by certain people not only factually but also spiritually; specific creation stories and mythical conceptions of deity may still be considered true today and provide the dogma for devout religious belief in a contemporary society. In fact, any collection of material for the comparative study of world mythologies will be dominated by the study of texts that are, by nature, religious. Greek and Roman religious ceremonies and cults were given authority by myths that inspired belief and therefore afford a recurrent theme in the chapters to follow. Among the examples are the worship of Zeus at Olympia, Athena in Athens, and Demeter at Eleusis, as well as the celebration of other mystery religions throughout the ancient world. The ritualist interpretation of the origins of mythology is discussed later in this chapter. Greek religion is discussed in Chapter 6.

Mircea Eliade

Mircea Eliade, one of the most prolific twentieth-century writers on myth, lays great emphasis on the mystical in his conception of myth: he sees myth as a tale satisfying the yearning of human beings for a fundamental orientation rooted in the religious aura of a sacred timelessness. This yearning is fully satisfied only by stories narrating the events surrounding the beginnings and origins of things. Eliade believes that God, once in a holy era, created the world, and this initial cosmogony becomes the origin myth, the model for creations of every kind and stories about them. He conceives, for example, of a ritual or rite having been performed in a sacred place in this sacred timelessness quite beyond the ordinary or profane space in which we live. His concept develops a difficult, complex mysticism. Like a religious sacrament, myth provides in the imagination a spiritual release from historical time. This is the nature of true myths, which are fundamentally paradigms and explanations and most important to the individual and society.[9] This definition, which embraces the explanatory nature of mythology, brings us to another universal theory.

Myth and Etiology

Some maintain that myth should be interpreted narrowly as an explication of the origin of some fact or custom. Hence, the theory is called **etiological,** from the Greek word for cause (*aitia*). In this view, the mythmaker is a kind of primitive scientist, using myths to explain facts that cannot otherwise be explained within the limits of society's knowledge at the time. Again, this theory is adequate for some myths, for example, for those that account for the origin of certain rituals or cosmology; but interpreted literally and narrowly, it does not allow for the imaginative or metaphysical aspects of mythological thought.

Yet, if one does not interpret etiological ("the assignment of causes or origins") too literally and narrowly but defines it by the adjective *explanatory,* interpreted in its most general sense, one perhaps may find at last the most applicable of all the monolithic theories. Myths usually try to explain matters physical, emotional, and spiritual not only literally and realistically but also figuratively and metaphorically. Myths attempt to explain the origin of our physical world: the earth and the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars; where human beings

came from and the dichotomy between body and soul; the source of beauty and goodness, and of evil and sin; the nature and meaning of love; and so on. It is difficult to tell a story that does not reveal, and at the same time somehow explain, something; and the imaginative answer usually is in some sense or other scientific or theological. The major problem with this universal etiological approach is that it does nothing to identify a myth specifically and to distinguish it clearly from any other form of expression, whether scientific, religious, or artistic—that is, too many essentially different kinds of story may be basically etiological.

Rationalism Versus Metaphor, Allegory, and Symbolism

The desire to rationalize classical mythology arose far back in classical antiquity and is especially associated with the name of Euhemerus (ca. 300 B.C.), who claimed that the gods were men deified for their great deeds (see Chapter 27 on the companion website). The supreme god Zeus, for example, was once a mortal king in Crete who deposed his father, Cronus. At the opposite extreme from **euhemerism** is the metaphorical interpretation of stories. Antirationalists, who favor metaphorical interpretations, believe that traditional tales hide profound meanings. At its best, the metaphorical approach sees myth as allegory (allegory is to be defined as sustained metaphor), where the details of the story are but symbols of universal truths. At its worst, the allegorical approach is a barren exercise in cryptology: to explain the myth of Ixion and the centaurs in terms of clouds and weather phenomena is hardly enlightening and not at all ennobling. (For Ixion and the Centaurs, see pp. 119 and 376.)

Allegorical Nature Myths: Max Müller

An influential nineteenth-century theory was that of Max Müller: myths are nature myths, he said, all referring to meteorological and cosmological phenomena. This is, of course, an extreme development of the allegorical approach, and it is hard to see how or why *all* myths can be explained as allegories of, for example, day replacing night or winter succeeding summer. True, some myths are nature myths, and certain gods, for example, Zeus, represent or control the sky and other parts of the natural order; yet, it is just as true that a great many more myths have no such relationship to nature.[10]

Myth and Psychology: Freud and Jung

Sigmund Freud

The metaphorical approach took many forms in the twentieth century through the theories of the psychologists and psychoanalysts, most especially those of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. We need to present at least some of their basic concepts, which have become essential for any understanding of mythic creativity. Freud's views were not completely new, of course (the concept of "determinism," for example, "one of the glories of Freudian theory" is to be found in Aristotle),[11] but his formulation and analysis of the inner world of humankind bear the irrevocable stamp of genius.

Certainly, methods and assumptions adopted by comparative mythologists—the formulations of the structuralists and the modern interpretation of mythological tales as imaginative alleviating and directive formulations, created to make existence in this real world tolerable—all these find confirmation and validity in premises formulated by Freud. The endless critical controversy in our post-Freudian world merely confirms his unique contribution.

Among Freud's many important contemporaries and successors, Jung (deeply indebted to the master but a renegade) must be singled out because of the particular relevance of his theories to a fuller appreciation of the deep-rooted recurring patterns of mythology. Among Freud's greatest contributions are his emphasis on sexuality (and in particular infantile sexuality), his theory of the unconscious, his interpretation of dreams, and his identification of the **Oedipus complex** (although the term *complex* belongs to Jung). Freud has this to say about the story of King Oedipus:

> *His fate moves us only because it might have been our own, because the oracle laid upon us before our birth the very curse which rested upon him. It may be that we are all destined to direct our first sexual impulses toward our mothers, and our first impulses of hatred and resistance toward our fathers; our dreams convince us that we were. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and wedded his mother Jocasta, is nothing more or less than a wish-fulfillment—the fulfillment of the wish of our childhood. But we, more fortunate than he, in so far as we have not become psychoneurotics, have since our childhood succeeded in withdrawing our sexual impulses from our mothers, and in forgetting the jealousy of our fathers. . . . As the poet brings the guilt of Oedipus to light by his investigation, he forces us to become aware of our own inner selves, in which the same impulses are still extant, even though they are suppressed.*[12]

This Oedipal incest complex is here expressed, in the masculine form, of a man's behavior in relationship to his mother, but it also could be expressed in terms of the relationship between daughter and father; the daughter turns to the father as an object of love and becomes hostile to her mother as her rival. For Jung this is an Electra complex.

Dreams for Freud are the fulfillment of wishes that have been repressed and disguised. To protect sleep and relieve potential anxiety, the mind goes through a process of what is termed **dream-work,** which consists of three primary mental activities: "condensation" of elements (they are abbreviated or compressed); "displacement" of elements (they are changed, particularly in terms of allusion and a difference of emphasis); and "representation," the transmission of elements into imagery or symbols, which are many, varied, and often sexual. Something similar to this process may be discerned in the origin and evolution of myths; it also provides insight into the mind and the methods of the creative artist, as Freud himself was well aware in his studies.[13]

Thus, Freud's discovery of the significance of dream-symbols led him and his followers to analyze the similarity between dreams and myths. Symbols are many and varied and often sexual (e.g., objects like sticks and swords are phallic). Myths, therefore, in the Freudian interpretation, reflect people's waking efforts to systematize the incoherent visions and impulses of their sleep world. The patterns in the imaginative world of children, savages, and neurotics are similar and are revealed in the motifs and symbols of myth.

As can be seen from Freud's description in the earlier quote, one of the basic patterns is that of the Oedipus story, in which the son kills the father in order to possess the mother. From this pattern Freud propounded a theory of our archaic heritage, in which the Oedipal drama was played out by a primal horde in their relationship to a primal father. The murder and the eating of the father led to important tribal and social developments, among them deification of the father figure, the triumph of patriarchy, and the establishment of a totemic system, whereby a totem (i.e., a sacred animal) was chosen as a substitute for the slain father. Most important of all, from the ensuing sense of guilt and sin for parricide emerges the conception of God as Father who must be appeased and to whom atonement must be made. In fact, according to Freud, the Oedipus complex inspired the beginning not only of religion but also of all ethics, art, and society.

It is clear that Freud's connection between dreams and myths is illuminating for many myths, if not for all. In addition to the story of Oedipus one might single out, for example, the legend of the Minotaur or the saga of the House of Atreus, both of which deal with some of the most persistent, if repressed, human fears and emotions and, by their telling, achieve a kind of catharsis.

Carl Jung

Jung went beyond the mere connection of myths and dreams to interpret myths as the projection of what he called the **collective unconscious** of the race, that is, a revelation of the continuing psychic tendencies of society. Jung made a distinction between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious: the personal concerns matters of an individual's own life, whereas the collective embraces political and social questions involving the group. Dreams therefore may be either personal or collective.

Thus, myths contain images or **archetypes** (to use Jung's term, which embraces Freud's concept of symbols)—traditional expressions of collective dreams, developed over thousands of years, of symbols on which the society as a whole has come to depend. For Jung the Oedipus complex was the first archetype that Freud discovered. There are many such archetypes in Greek mythology and in dreams. Here are some of the ways in which Jung thought about archetypes, the collective unconscious, and mythology. An archetype is a kind of dramatic abbreviation of the patterns involved in a whole story or situation, including the way it develops and how it ends; it is a behavior pattern, an inherited scheme of functioning. Just as a bird has the physical and mental attributes of a bird and builds its nest in a characteristic way, so human beings by nature and by instinct are born with predictable and identifiable characteristics (cf. Xenophanes, translated on p. 139). In the case of human behavior and attitudes, the patterns are expressed in archetypal images or forms. The archetypes of behavior with which human beings are born and which find their expression in mythological tales are called the "collective unconscious." Therefore, "mythology is a pronouncing of a series of images that formulate the life of archetypes."[14] Heroes like Heracles and Theseus are models who teach us how to behave.[15]

The following are a few examples of archetypes. The **anima** is the archetypal image of the female that each man has within him; it is to this concept that he responds (for better or for worse) when he falls in love. Indeed, the force of an archetype may seize a person suddenly, as when one falls in love at first