Peter Komak

Greek Mythology: The Complete Guide to Greek Gods & Goddesses, Monsters, Heroes, and the Best Mythological Tales!

United States of America (2018)

TAGS: Aphrodite Apollo Artemis Atalanta Athena Ergane Bellerophon Dionysus / Dionysos Hades Hera Heracles Hermes Hestia Hyacinth Meleager Pandora Perseus Poseidon Theseus Titans Trojan War Zeus





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General information	
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Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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Creators



Peter Komak (Author)

No information is available.

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Additional information

Summary

As the name of the book suggests, it offers brief and adapted myths from Greek mythology. The book offers encyclopaedia-like lists of numerous deities and mythological chatterers. All receive a brief paragraph for minor or marginal deities (for example Ananke, Dione, Argus Panoptes and more) and longer descriptions for major deities, such as the Olympic gods or several Titans. The book covers the following themes/myths: What is Greek mythology?; Primordial deities (like Aether and Chaos, the deities are alphabetically displayed) Olympian Gods (including Hades yet without Demeter and Dionysus); Titan Gods (including less familiar ones such as Asteria, Astraeus, Clymene, Coeus, Crius and more); Heroes (Atalanta, Bellerophon, Heracles, Meleager, Perseus, Theseus); Monsters and Creatures; Stories about Zeus (Typhon, island of Aegina, bees, greedy ant, tortoise), Heracles' 12 labours; Hyacinth, Pandora's box, Trojan War (narrated from the wedding of Peleus and Thetis up to its aftermath: what happened to Neoptolemos, Nestor, Ajax, Philoctetes, Menelaus and the murder of Agamemnon,); other mythological stories (creation of the universe, creation of man, Amalthea's horn, Ages of men).

Analysis

The book offers a lexical knowledge of various mythological deities, creatures as well as selected myths, some of them rather obscure (for example the story of Zeus and the tortoise, or Ash Tree Nymphs). Hence, the book captures the diverse, rich fantastic nature of Greek mythology with its plethora of marvellous characters. Yet, there are some inaccuracies and the author's moral judgment can be seen in some of the passages.

The reason that this book seems to be aimed at older readership is that it includes mention of rape. The author narrates that Zeus transformed himself into a cuckoo and when Hera picked the bird he transformed back to his usual form and raped her, "To cover up this shameful act, Hera had no choice but to marry Zeus." [location 189). Yet, while Pausanias mentions that Zeus turned into a cuckoo to seduce Hera, he does not mention rape (*Description of Greece* 2. 17. 4). The rape of a goddess is not a trivial matter, as can be seen from Athena's escape from Hephaestus (Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3. 187). The following comment that Hera had to marry Zeus to cover up the shame of rape feels anachronistic, perhaps even puritan, and does

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not follow the usual custom of Greek mythology with its multiple instances of sexual violence.

A similar moral evaluation appears in the description of Medusa, as part of the gorgons in the "monsters" chapter. It is noted that "She had taken the oath of celibacy and was a priestess of Athena. It is said that Poseidon was awestruck by her beauty and tried to win her over. Charmed by Poseidon, Medusa forgot her oath of celibacy and fell in love with him. She ended up marrying him. Athena was furious about her breach of oath and went on to punish Medusa." [location 542]. Here, the rape is not mentioned as Medusa seems to be blamed for falling for Poseidon and willingly sleeping with him.

Regarding the Olympian gods, the author notes about Hestia, "Although she was an Olympian God by birth, Dionysus was responsible for stripping her of this status." [location 216].

Yet, this version does not appear in the ancient sources regarding both deities.

Similarly, Zeus is described as a "friend of Princes" [location 234] which is quite an obscure remark.

Concerning Heracles, the author notes that "he was neither wise nor intelligent." He does not give his background and later discusses his tasks as repentance for the killing of his family. Hera's involvement is not mentioned. In reference to Theseus, his intelligence is mentioned, yet not his killing of the Minotaur or his abandonment of Ariadne. The Minotaur is also not mentioned in the "monsters" chapter. Perhaps the author deemed these stories as more familiar and did not wish to repeat them.

The last example features Pandora. The author notes that "She was created under the order of Zeus, and was formed from clay, sculpted by Hermes." [location 751]. While Hermes was greatly involved in the shaping of Pandora, he did not physically create her. The author narrates the story and uses it to explain the more common idiom of Pandora's box: "The phrase 'Pandora’s box' stems from this story, and is often used to describe a taking a seemingly small and innocent action that then creates a lot of problems!" (pp. 766–767). Hence the author connects the ancient myth with current modern language in order to connect the ancient past to modern young readers. He also explains how the box is a 16th-century translation to Latin from the

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Apollo Artemis Atalanta Athena Ergane Bellerophon Dionysus / Dionysos Hades Hera Heracles Hermes Hestia Hyacinth Meleager Pandora Perseus Poseidon Theseus Titans Trojan War Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Death Emotions Heroism Journeys Revenge

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