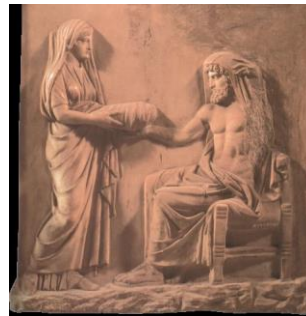
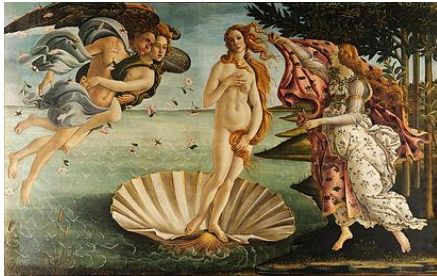


Creation Myths

According to Greek mythology, in the beginning there was nothing. This was called Chaos. From this nothingness came light, Mother Earth (Gaia) and Sky (Uranus) were formed. From Gaia and Uranus came six twins known as the Titans. The six twin Titans were named Oceanus and Thethys, Coeos and Phoebe, Hyperion and Thea, Creos and Themis, Iapetos and Clymene, and finally Cronos and Rhea.

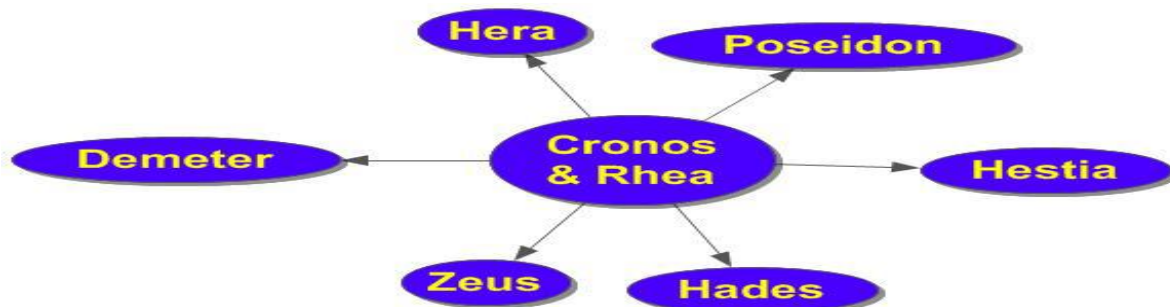
Gaia and Uranus also gave birth to three Cyclopes, three giants, each with fifty heads and one-hundred arms. Uranus disliked his offspring, so he forced them to return to their mother's womb. The pain of carrying the numerous children angered Gaia, and she made a plan for revenge against Uranus. She called upon the Titans to help her. The youngest, Cronos (master of time), came to her aid. Cronos, with his mother's help, created a sickle and cut off his father's genitals when his father came to be with his mother.

Cronos cast the cut off genitals into the sea. According to some versions of the myth, the goddess Aphrodite was created from the blood that dropped into the sea. In addition some of the blood dropped on to the earth creating all types of scary offspring.



After defeating his father, Cronos married his sister Rhea. The two had six children: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon and Zeus. Cronos, after each birth, swallowed the first five children because of a prophecy that claimed one of his children would overthrow him. Rhea tricked Cronos with the sixth child. Zeus, instead of handing Cronos the child, she gave him a rock in a blanket. Cronos swallowed it believing it was the baby. Rhea then smuggled the baby Zeus to the island of Crete to be raised by nymphs.

Zeus grew up on the island of Crete. After he became a young man, he obtained a potion that induced vomiting from a female Titan named Metis. Zeus had his mother Rhea arranged for him to become his father's cupbearer. He slipped the potion into a drink causing Cronos to spit up his brothers and sisters.

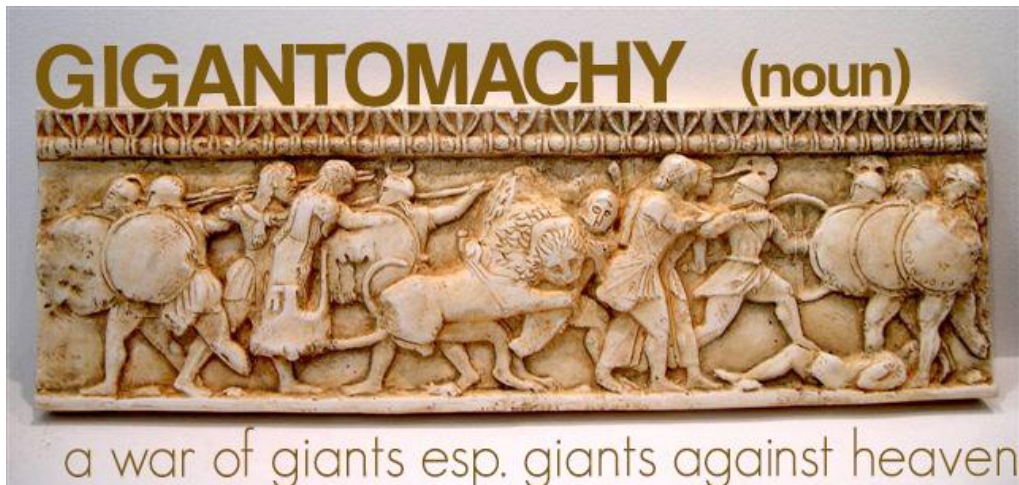


The five siblings were so grateful for the rescue that they wanted Zeus to become the leader of the Olympians. Cronos feared the rising power of Zeus. He tried to rally the Titans to join him to defeat Zeus and his siblings. He was not able to get the Titan women to join him. Two of the men, Prometheus and

Epimetheus actually joined the Olympians against their fellow Titans. The rest of the Titan men chose Atlas to lead the battle against the Olympians.

For ten years, the Titans and the Olympians fought with neither side able to gain a lasting advantage. Gaia advised Zeus to free the Cyclopes and the hundred headed Giants from Tartarus (a place in the underworld) and persuade them to join his side. Zeus went down to Tartarus, killed the monster which guarded the prisoners, and released them. In return for their freedom, the Cyclopes and the Giants became allies with Zeus tipping the scale of power to the Olympians.

The Cyclopes gave Zeus the power over thunder and lightning. Then gave the helm of darkness to Hades and to Poseidon they gave a trident (three-pronged spear). Hades used the helm of darkness to steal away Cronus' weapons and Poseidon came at him with the trident. The distraction allowed Zeus to strike with lightning, and he downed Cronus. With the defeat of Cronus and the added power of the Cyclopes and Giants, the Olympians were able to defeat the Titans. The Titans who participated in the war, were imprisoned in Tartarus. Atlas was given a special punishment for his role in the war. He was required to hold up the sky.



The Gigantomachy was probably the most important battle that happened in Greek mythology. It was a fight between the Giants or Gigantes, sons of Gaea and Uranus, and the Olympian gods who were trying to overthrow the old religion and establish themselves as the new rulers of the cosmos.

According to the most detailed source for this battle, what started the war was the Giant Alcyoneus stealing the cattle of god Helios. A prophecy had it that the Giants would only be defeated if a mortal was to help the gods. To protect her children, Gaea tried to find a plant that would shield the Giants from any harm; however, Zeus stopped Eos (Dawn), Selene (Moon) and Helios (Sun) from shining, and took every single plant for himself. When the battle began, Heracles fought Alcyoneus; however, the Giant would not die as long as he stepped on the soil of his homeland. With Athena's advice, Heracles dragged Alcyoneus away from his homeland, and killed him. The other Giants had similar fates; Dionysus killed Eurytus; Athena buried Enceladus under Sicily; Hermes killed Hippolytus; and so on. Many of the Giants were buried under islands. In fact, some believed that the earthquakes and the volcanic eruptions were caused when the Giants moved in their tombs.