

The Origins of Mortals

LW4U1 - Grade 12 Classical Civilization - Mr. A. Wittmann

Unit 2 - Lecture 3



Creation of Mortals

- ◆ Why is our world the way it is?
- ◆ Where did we come from?
- ◆ Why are we here?
- ◆ Why are we unique?
- ◆ Why do we suffer?
- ◆ Greek myths similar to Sumerian & Biblical myths

Prometheus



- ◆ Prometheus (forethought), the son of the Titans Iapetus and Themis
- ◆ Made man from dust and water
- ◆ Known as protector of mortals
- ◆ Prometheus taught man all the civilized arts & technology
- ◆ Trickster folktale character motif
- ◆ Doublet brother is Epimetheus (afterthought)

Feast at Meconê

- ◆ Zeus cautious of losing power & suspicious of Prometheus
- ◆ Prometheus offers of meat & bone bundles & Zeus chooses the worst
- ◆ Etiological to explain sacrifice to the gods
- ◆ Human eat meat, gods eat bones
- ◆ Zeus removes nature fire Prometheus steals fire & gives it to the mortals
- ◆ Separation between divine & human (fall from grace)
- ◆ Prometheus chained in the Caucasus Mts. Kratos
- ◆ Aeschylus, The Prometheus Bound - Zeus learns to rule justly



16592



Pandora

- ◆ Zeus orders Hephaestus & Aphrodite to make Pandora (woman)
- ◆ Beauty & sexual desire
- ◆ Her jar containing toil, death, disease, sorrow, etc.
- ◆ Married to Epimetheus & they open the jar
- ◆ End of man's Golden Age (now sex, birth, aging & death)
- ◆ All the jars contents released except "hope"
- ◆ Pandora (woman) is punishment
- ◆ Jar is a metaphor for Pandora & childbirth
- ◆ Born of woman exposes you to life of mortal suffering



Hesiod's The Five Races of Man

Golden Age (age of Cronus)

- ♦ live & mingled with the gods, peace & harmony, did not have to work, very old age, youthful appearance, died peacefully, became guardian angels

Silver Age (age of Zeus)

- ♦ age of Zeus, lived 100 years, controlled by mothers, violence, impious, destroyed by Zeus, spirits of the underworld

Bronze Age (flood of Deucalion)

- ♦ made from Ash trees, hardened & tough, bronze weapons, constant warfare, live in Hades

Heroic Age (Mycenaean)

- ♦ only age that improves upon the previous age, died & went to Elysium

Iron Age (Hesiod's time)

- ♦ toil and misery, might makes right, children dishonour their parents, brother vs. brother, no xenia

Deucalion & The Great Flood

- ◆ Universal flood most common story in the world
- ◆ Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Hebrews
- ◆ Zeus investigates the alleged wickedness of humankind
- ◆ In disguise, comes to the house of Lycaon (wolf), king of Arcadia
- ◆ Lycaon feeds him human flesh
- ◆ Zeus knows, & turns him into a wolf (lycanthropy)
- ◆ Comes to the house of pious Deucalion (son of Prometheus)
- ◆ Destroy the world with a flood except Deucalion & Pyrrha

Deucalion & Pyrrha

- ◆ Deucalion and Pyrrha survive on a raft
- ◆ They land on Mt. Parnassus (Delphi)
- ◆ Zeus stops the flood
- ◆ Repopulate the earth with the bones of mother earth
- ◆ Son Hellên eponymous hero of the Greeks



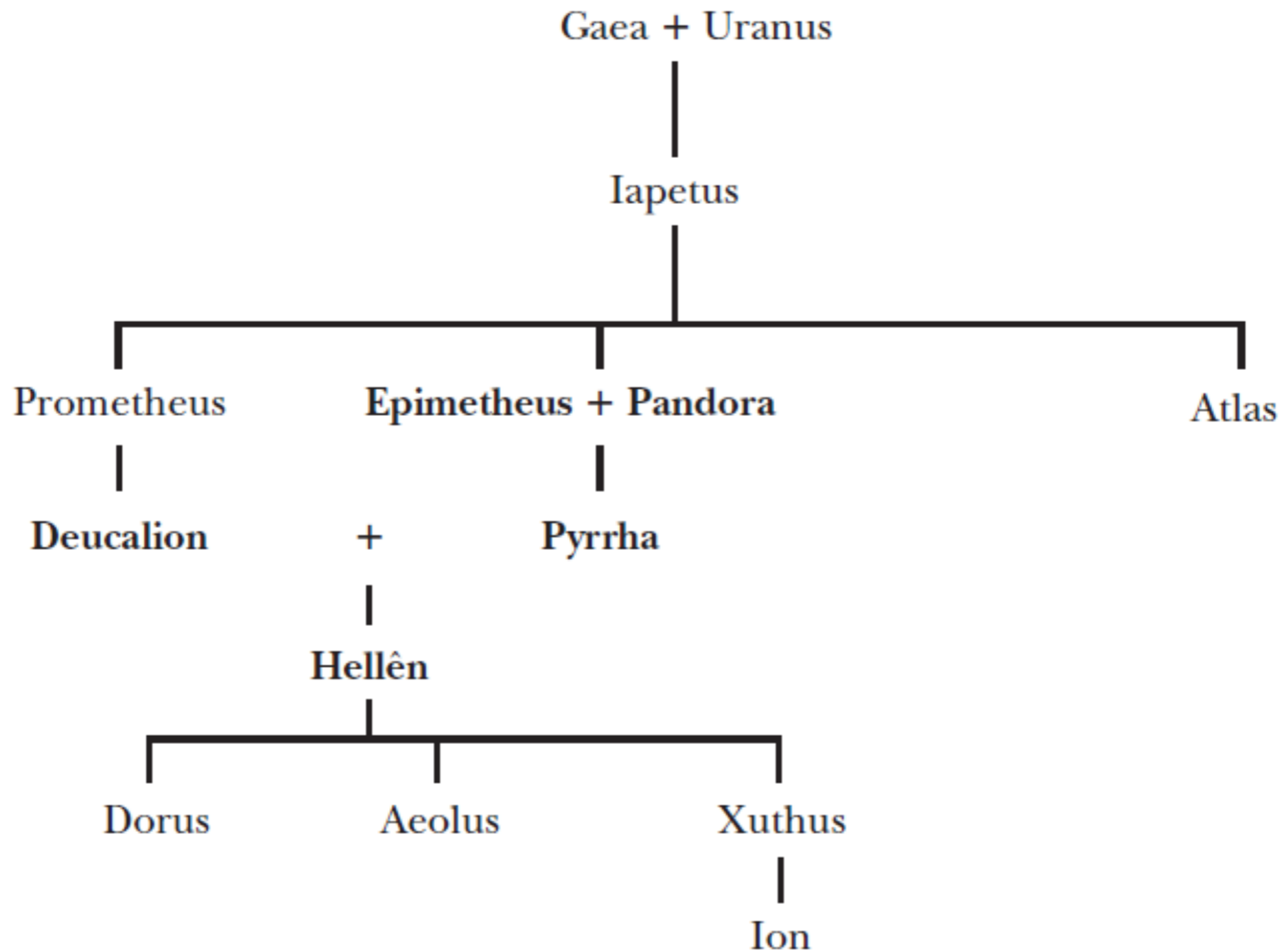


CHART 5 The Descent of the Greek Tribes from the Race of Titans

Themes

- ◆ Men emerge out of the ground or are the product of a craftsman god.
- ◆ There are delays and restarts: it doesn't happen all at once.
- ◆ Gods and human have a common origin, but something happens to cause a break.
- ◆ There is punishment for an offence.

THE END