**Classics 1 Lesson 2: Clash of the Titans**

**The 2nd and 3rd Generation:**

The original gods are a fairly important but limited bunch that explain major and obvious world features like night and day, or the sky and the sea, but they don’t offer much explanation for everything else that goes on – thankfully the 2nd and 3rd generation of gods have that covered, and even some of life's most minor occurrences are explained by the existence of these deities!

Uranus (or Ouranos) and Gaia had children together, if you’re thinking, isn’t she his mum, then yes, there’s quite a lot of that in the myths, and a lot of brothers and sisters having offspring still to come. Some of their children were monsters of sorts, the Hecatoncheires (or hundred-handers) who were Giants that had 100 hands, and the Cyclopes who were Giants with one eye, but their most significant offspring were the Titans. There were twelve gods known as the **Titans**, and these are the second generation of Greek gods, but sometimes known as the first **Olympians**. They are called Olympian because they are believed to have lived at the top of Mount Olympus, and the Titans were the rulers of the world, which you might have realised didn’t have any people yet (we’ll come to that in the next lesson).

The Titans are worthy of further study in their own right, but the most important among them were Cronus and his sister Rhea, who were effectively the King and Queen of the Titans, and who would go on to be the parents of the next generation of the gods. Cronus took that role rather violently from his father, Uranus, after mutilating him with a sharp weapon called a scythe. This was partly in revenge for the way that Uranus had treated his non-Titan children, the monsters who he abandoned and sent to live in the underworld, which had upset Gaia.

Cronus, having now taken over, made the same mistake in abandoning the monsters and he was warned that he too would be overthrown by one of his children. To stop that happening he had a policy of eating his children as soon as they were born, which was going well until his wife, Rhea, decided to swap her 6th child for a rock, which he swallowed without checking, and sent the child off to be brought up secretly; his name was Zeus.

When Zeus was older, he took his revenge on Cronus, pretending to be a servant (Cronus assumed all his children were eaten) until he had Cronus’ trust and could give him a drink that would make him sick. He vomited up, fully grown, the children that he had already eaten, as well as a rock that he didn’t remember eating (sometimes this story is told differently, where Zeus cuts his brothers and sisters out of Cronus). Zeus revealed who he was, and that he was coming to take over now, and this could only lead to one thing, a massive and bloody civil war between the Titans (or second generation gods) and the third generation gods, known as the **Titanomachy**, or Clash of the Titans.

**The Titanomachy:**

In this massive family feud Cronos’ six children; Zeus, Hestia, Hera, Demeter, Poseidon and Hades, joined forces with the Cyclopes and Hecatoncheires to fight against the Titans. As the Titans were family to the new gods, not every Titan stood with Cronos, so two Titans; Prometheus (a very important part of the next lesson) and Themis, joined the 3rd generation gods.

The war itself lasted ten years, but as all of the main characters are gods, and gods are immortal, all of them survived the war. There are a few things which make the Titanomachy significant, including some event which would be important in later myths. The Cyclops fought on Zeus’ side and created his famous thunderbolt for him as a weapon to use in the war, and to thank him for releasing them from Tartarus (the underworld). On the Titan side, Atlas was the second most important figure in the war, and therefore after the war his punishment was different from the other titans, as he was made to hold the world up forever. The other Titans, but not those who fought on Zeus’ side, were imprisoned in Tartarus to be guarded by the Hecatoncheires.

**The Gods of Olympus:**

The six children of Cronos were clearly at the top of the world having won the Titanomachy, with Zeus their leader (just like Cronos, the youngest child was the one who took over from his father – though Zeus might also be considered the oldest as the others had to be “born again” by being rescued from Cronos’ stomach). Zeus though, wanted to achieve that perfect number twelve that is so important to the gods, and he brought some other gods, mostly his own children, into the group to be the mighty Gods of Olympus that oversaw the world. These gods were Athena, Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Hephaestus, Hermes and Aphrodite – you may have gathered that this adds to thirteen gods, but Hades, Zeus’ brother, was not a God of Olympus, as he had somewhere else to be.

**The Underworld:**

After the Titanomachy, Zeus took control of the earth and the skies, but that left the sea, which Poseidon was given, and the **underworld**, which became ruled by Hades (and is sometimes referred to itself as Hades).

The underworld is of huge importance to Greek mythology, just as the afterlife is an important part of most mainstream religions. Concern over the fate that awaits us after our death, and fear of death, are a common theme throughout history, and Greek mythology had clear ideas about what happened to people who died.

Hades ruled over the whole realm, which was divided into sections, and a whole host of interesting characters were involved in ferrying people who had died to be judged and sent to the correct place. Whilst Elysium represented the pinnacle of the afterlife, a heaven of sorts, the majority of “normal” people were believed to spend their days relatively bored in Asphodel Fields, whilst those who had sinned gravely were subjected to terrible fates in Tartarus. These included the majority of the Titans and was guarded by the Hecatoncheires.

A number of significant myths and stories mention or take place in the underworld, so it represents an important part of the Greek mythology. Your task this week is based around the underworld for that reason.

**Classics 1 Task 2: Clash of the Titans**

Please complete this week’s task as a word document and return it as an attachment on teams.

**Part A:**

This week’s main task is to produce some research on the underworld (Hades) by studying the following myths and including them in a factfile. You should write an intro section in which you write about the underworld itself and how it was organised, for which you might find this video useful - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMeNMdLMVN0> before writing a short section on each of these myths, each of which has a short video to help you with your research:

* The myth of Sisyphus - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4pDUxth5fQ>
* The myth of Orpheus - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhaepLsP5eg>
* The myth of Tantalus - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPnGLla-iRA>

**Part B:**

Throughout the lesson there were some words in **bold**. This task is entirely optional, but you may wish to continue your own glossary of key terms as you go through the unit.

**Next Time:**

In the next lesson we will learn about the birth of man (and woman!) and use some of the myths to learn about the relationship between the Gods of Olympus and the people of earth.

**Further Reading:**

If you enjoyed the origin story of the Greek myths and want to learn more about the family tree and how the gods were related, then this video is exceptional: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7F16sC860s>

Should you wish to learn more about the underworld and in great detail, then this podcast, which lasts an hour, is highly recommended. It is episode 60 and starts with a lengthy advert so it starts properly from 3 minutes and 30 seconds in: <http://www.thehistoryofancientgreece.com/search?q=underworld>