

gion beyond the Peloponnese, calling the inhabitants Dorians after himself. Aiolos reigned in Thessaly, naming the inhabitants Aeolians. And Xouthos received the Peloponnese as his lot. He had two sons Achaïos (Latinized form = Achaeus) and Ion, from whom the Greeks known as Achaeans and Ionians have come. The descendants of Deukalion and Pyrrha settled in different places, and many of them gave their names to their regions or to their descendants.

### **The Gods Establish Their Cults**

Around this point in the chronology, Greek mythology is so rich in stories that I must be content to exemplify. Many myths recount how individual deities acquired their spheres of influence and established their major cults on earth, and other myths tell of the mating of gods and human beings. The relative sequence of these myths relative can be difficult to decide, since they may be self-contained narratives.

#### ***The Eleusinian Mysteries***

Zeus had wed his sister Hera, and Poseidon had wed the Nereid Amphitritê, but their brother Hades had no mate. Zeus allowed him to abduct Persephonê, Zeus's daughter by Demeter, though Zeus said nothing of this arrangement to Demeter, who would have regarded the match as undesirable, or to his daughter, whose intention at that time was to remain a maiden. So one day as the girl gathered flowers in a meadow, the earth gaped open and Hades burst forth on his chariot, seized her, and carried her down to Erebus, his subterranean kingdom. In the guise of an old woman, Demeter searched the earth for her missing daughter. Although her quest was unsuccessful, she encountered kindly persons, including the Eleusinians, whom she rewarded with the extraordinary gift of wheat and its cultivation. They in turn shared the seeds of this grain with others until the entire inhabited world abounded in it. The goddess also established her special rites at Eleusis, the Eleusinian Mysteries. After she learned that Persephonê had been abducted by Hades, Zeus dispatched Hermes to the realm of the dead to bring Persephonê back, and mother and daughter were joyously reunited, but when Demeter discovered that Persephonê had eaten food in Erebus, a mere pomegranate seed, she understood that Persephonê would belong partly to the death realm forever. Thereafter Persephonê lived half of the year with her spouse in Erebus and half with her mother and the other immortals in the upper world. Persons who have been initiated into the Mysteries confront death more optimistically.

### ***The Delphic Oracle***

Shortly after his birth on the little isle of Delos, Apollon declared that his provinces of interest would be the lyre, the bow, and prophecy. With the last of these in mind he set out in search of a place to build an oracular temple where humans might offer sacrifice to him and he might prophesy. Deciding upon a site on Mount Parnassos, he laid out its foundations and human craftsmen completed the work. But the project was threatened by a monstrous dragon that dwelled at a nearby spring and wrought much destruction in the land, killing the inhabitants and their sheep. Apollon shot the monster with an arrow, and she perished and rotted (Greek *pytho* = rot) on the spot, for which reason the place was named Pytho and the god himself called Pythian Apollon. After that it was safe for men to sacrifice there. Now the god needed priests for his new sanctuary. Spotting a ship bearing Cretans from Knossos, Apollon took the form of a dolphin and leaped onto the vessel, and the ship no longer obeyed its rudder but made its way to Krisa, the port of Pytho. Taking the form of a youth, Apollon revealed his identity to the seafarers, informing them that they had been selected to manage his temple. He bade them sacrifice to him as Apollon Delphinios (Apollon of the Dolphin), after which he led them singing up the slope of Parnassos to his temple. Later the city of Pytho was renamed Delphi.

### ***Who Will Possess Athens?***

Just as according to one tradition the brothers Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades drew lots for possession of the three principal domains of the cosmos (the sky, the sea, and the death realm), so also the gods once decided to take individual possession of different cities where they would receive worship. Athena and Poseidon both went to Attica to compete for possession of that region. As evidence of his claim to the place, Poseidon struck a rock on the Acropolis with his trident, and the sea poured forth. For her part Athena planted an olive tree. Sitting as judges, the gods awarded the country to Athena, who named the city Athens after herself. In anger Poseidon flooded the nearby Thriasian plain. In historical times Poseidon's miracles—a well of sea water and the imprint of his trident upon a rock—could be seen on the Athenian acropolis, along with Athena's olive tree.

### ***Bacchic Rites***

The youngest of the Olympians, Dionysos, went to different cities, introducing his rites accompanied by a virtual army of bacchae, or female celebrants, whom he equipped with wands called thyrsi. In most communities the population welcomed him, but at other times an impious person denied his divinity, as

happened, for example, at Thebes. When Dionysos arrived there, he induced the women to leave their homes and revel on Mount Cithaeron, but the local monarch, Pentheus, was indignant at these proceedings and went to the mountain to spy on the revelry. He was discovered by the bacchantes, and in a state of madness his mother, Agauê, who was among the god's celebrants, tore him apart limb from limb in the belief that he was a wild animal. The Thebans learned firsthand the terrible consequences of denying the power of Dionysos.

### ***The Arts of Civilization***

Just as wheat and its cultivation came from Demeter and viticulture and wine-making from Dionysos, so also most of the other important elements of culture and civilization were introduced by individual gods. Thus the art of the smithy came from Hephaistos, war from Ares, hunting from Artemis and Apollon, the institution of kingship from Zeus, and so on. Or, as a Greek poet put it, smiths belonged to Hephaistos, warriors to Ares, hunters to Artemis, lyre-players to Apollon, and kings to Zeus. The deity in each case was the inventor or discoverer or owner of the art, and humans were their pupils. If a man was a king, it was because Zeus made him one, and it was Zeus who watched how the man behaved and who rewarded him accordingly, so that a monarch's prosperity or lack of it was an index of divine judgment on him.

In some instances a god instructed humans once and for all in an art, as Demeter did. In other instances gods worked through an intermediary. After Artemis and Apollon invented hunting, they gave it as a gift to the good centaur Cheiron, who taught it to his fosterlings and pupils, some twenty-one heroes including Nestor, Hippolytos, Achilleus, Meleager, Odysseus, and Palamedes, and from them the knowledge of hunting spread to other men. Or sometimes a deity taught his or her craft repeatedly and unseen. So Athena has placed a knowledge of weaving into the minds of individual maidens at different times.

### **The Mating of Gods and Humans**

Much mating took place between mortals and immortals. The underlying cause of this activity was Aphroditê, who made individual immortals feel erotic desire for individual mortals, resulting in the birth of the demigods, or heroes, who were partly divine but ultimately mortal. After a time Zeus wished this sexual mixing to stop, so that he caused Aphroditê herself to feel sexual longing for a mortal man, after which the humiliated goddess ceased bringing about the mating of immortals and mortals. The cessation of this sexual activity heralded