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Chapter 1 : Roman mythology - Wikipedia

*The Mythology of Greece and Rome With Special Reference to Its Use in Art [O. Seemann, G. H. Bianchi] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This scarce antiquarian book is a facsimile reprint of the original.*

Stories pertaining to the Nonae Caprotinae and Poplifugia festivals. The Etruscan city of Corythus as the "cradle" of Trojan and Italian civilization. Religion in ancient Rome Narratives of divine activity played a more important role in the system of Greek religious belief than among the Romans, for whom ritual and cult were primary. Although Roman religion did not have a basis in scriptures and exegesis, priestly literature was one of the earliest written forms of Latin prose. Some aspects of archaic Roman religion survived in the lost theological works of the 1st-century BC scholar Varro, known through other classical and Christian authors.

Capitoline Triad The earliest pantheon included Janus, Vesta, and a leading so-called Archaic Triad of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, whose flamens were of the highest order. According to tradition, Numa Pompilius, the Sabine second king of Rome, founded Roman religion; Numa was believed to have had as his consort and adviser a Roman goddess or nymph of fountains and of prophecy, Egeria. The Etruscan-influenced Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva later became central to official religion, replacing the Archaic Triad – an unusual example within Indo-European religion of a supreme triad formed of two female deities and only one male. The cult of Diana became established on the Aventine Hill, but the most famous Roman manifestation of this goddess may be Diana Nemorensis, owing to the attention paid to her cult by J. Frazer in the mythographical classic *The Golden Bough*. Behind her Iris stands and gestures. On the left Vulcan the blond figure stands behind the wheel, manning it, with Ixion already tied to it. The gods represented distinctly the practical needs of daily life, and Ancient Romans scrupulously accorded them the appropriate rites and offerings. Early Roman divinities included a host of "specialist gods" whose names were invoked in the carrying out of various specific activities. Fragments of old ritual accompanying such acts as plowing or sowing reveal that at every stage of the operation a separate deity was invoked, the name of each deity being regularly derived from the verb for the operation. Tutelary deities were particularly important in ancient Rome. Thus, Janus and Vesta guarded the door and hearth, the Lares protected the field and house, Pales the pasture, Saturn the sowing, Ceres the growth of the grain, Pomona the fruit, and Consus and Ops the harvest. Even the majestic Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, was honored for the aid his rains might give to the farms and vineyards. In his more encompassing character he was considered, through his weapon of lightning, the director of human activity. Due to his widespread domain, the Romans regarded him as their protector in their military activities beyond the borders of their own community. Prominent in early times were the gods Mars and Quirinus, who were often identified with each other. Mars was a god of war; he was honored in March and October. Modern scholars see Quirinus as the patron of the armed community in time of peace. The 19th-century scholar Georg Wissowa [18] thought that the Romans distinguished two classes of gods, the *di indigetes* and the *di novensides* or *novensiles*: Arnaldo Momigliano and others, however, have argued that this distinction cannot be maintained. The Romans commonly granted the local gods of a conquered territory the same honors as the earlier gods of the Roman state religion. In addition to Castor and Pollux, the conquered settlements in Italy seem to have contributed to the Roman pantheon Diana, Minerva, Hercules, Venus, and deities of lesser rank, some of whom were Italic divinities, others originally derived from the Greek culture of Magna Graecia. In BC, Rome imported the cult object embodying Cybele from Pessinus in Phrygia and welcomed its arrival with due ceremony. In some instances, deities of an enemy power were formally invited through the ritual of *evocatio* to take up their abode in new sanctuaries at Rome. Communities of foreigners *peregrini* and former slaves *libertini* continued their own religious practices within the city. In this way Mithras came to Rome and his popularity within the Roman army spread his cult as far afield as Roman Britain. The important Roman deities were eventually identified with the more anthropomorphic Greek gods

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and goddesses, and assumed many of their attributes and myths.

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Zens Jupiter ,-Chief of the celestial deities is Zeus, called by the Komans Jupiter, the controller and ruler of the universe. All the phenomena of the air weresupposedto proceedfrom him. He gathersand dispersethe clouds,castsforth his lightning, stirs up his thunder,sendsdownrain, hail, snow,and fertilising dew on the earth. With his segis-an impenetrable shield hung with a hundred golden tassels,in the midst of which the fearful head of the Gorgonis fastened-he producesstorm,and tempest. The segis,though often meaning shield, is properly a goat-skin fastened to and supporting the true shield; later it appears as a short cloak, and even as a breastplate, covered with scales, and fringed with serpents. It is not often found in representations of Zeus; though a statue of him at Leyden shows it, and in a cameo he is seen with it wrapped around his left arm: The segisusually belongs to Athene, who borrows it from her father in the Iliad. She The Godsof Olympus. In this word we probably see a confusion of two idess, different, though,of similar origin; froia the sameroot that gives us the "springing" goat we have the storm-cloud " tossed " over the sky. The ancients,however, were not content to regard Zeus merely asa personificationof Nature; they regardedhim alsofrom an ethical standpoint, from which side he appearsfar more important and awful. They saw in him a personification, so to speak, of that principleof undeviatingorderand harmonywhich pervadesboth the physicaland moralworld. The strict unalterablelaws by which he rules the community of the gods form a strong contrast to the capriciouscommands of his fatherCronus. HenceZeusis regardedas the protector and defenderof all political order. From,him the kings of the earth receive their sovereignty and rights; to him they are responsible for a conscientious fulfilment of their duties. Those among them who unjustly exceed their powers and pervert justice he never fails to punish. Zeus, moreover,also presidesover councils and assemblies,keeps watch over their orderly course, and suggests to them wise counsels. All civil and political communities enjoy his protection; but he particularly watches over that associationwhich is the basis of the political fabric-the family. The head of every household was therefore, in a certain sense,the priest of Zeus. It was he who presented the offerings to the god in the name of the family. At his altar, which generally stood in the middle of the court in small households this was represented by the hearth , all strangers, fugitives, and suppliants found shelter. The superstition of early times saw in all the phenomenaof the heavens manifestations of the divine will. Thus the chief deity of heaven was naturally regardedas the highest sourceof inspiration, and was believed to reveal his will to men in the thunder, the lightning, the flight of birds, or dreams. As the supreme oracular deity, Zeus not only had an oracle of his own at Do dona in Epirus, which was the most ancient in Greece,but also revealed the future by the mouth of his favourite son Apollo. Though he possessedno proper oracle among the Romans, yet the latter looked with all the more care and anxiety on the phenomena of the air and sky, the right interpretation of which formed a special and difficult branch of knowledge. Zeus wasthe earliest national god of the Greeks. His wor ship extended throughout the whole of Greece,though someof his shrines had a special importance. The most ancient of them was that at Dodona, where the Pelasgian Zeus was worshipped at a time prior to the existence of any temples in Greece. He was here representedin the celebrated form of the sacredoak, in the rustling of whose branches the deity revealed himself to the faithful. He was also worshipped on the summit of Mount Tomarus,at the foot of which lay Dodona-mountain-topsbeing naturally the earliest seats of his worship. But all the earlier shrines were overshadowedby the great national seat of the worship of Hellenic Zeus at Olympia, on the northern banks of the river Alpheus, in Elis, where the renowned Olympian games were celebrated. The magnificent statue of Zeus, by Phidias, was an additional inducement to devotees,who flocked thither from every quarter. Neither was the worship of Jupiter any less extensive in Italy. This, afterbeing nearly destroyedby fire in the time of Sulla, was restored to more than its pristine

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splendour. The original earthen image was replaced by a statue of gold and ivory, the work of the Greek artist Apollonius, after the model of the Olympian Zeus. Before proceeding to discuss the god as he appears in art, we must take a glance at his numerous family. The mythology of the Greeks stands in notorious contrast to that of the Romans, in attributing to Zeus a great number of mortal as well as immortal spouses, and an unusually numerous posterity. Here we must remark that, in spite of the occasional jokes of the comic poets on the numerous amours of the god, and the consequent jealousy of Hera, there was nothing farther from the intention of the Greeks than to represent the supreme deity of heaven as a sensual and lascivious being. The explanation lies partly in the great number of contemporaneous local forms of worship that existed independently of each other, and partly in the fact that the lively fancy of the Greek pictured every new production under the guise of procreation. In that part of mythology which teaches the genealogy of the gods, the earliest wife of Zeus was Metis, the daughter of Oceanus. Zeus devoured her, fearing lest she should bear a son, who would deprive him of the empire it had cost him so much to attain. It was soon after this that he produced Pallas Athene from his own head. His second goddess-wife was Themis, one of the Titans, by whom he became the father of the Fates. Dione appears as the wife of Zeus of Dodona, and the mother of Aphrodite; whilst Arcadian Zeus was wedded to Maia, by whom he had Hermes. The youngest of all his divine wives, who was recognised by later mythology as his only legitimate queen, was his sister Hera. Among his mortal mistresses the most celebrated is Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes, and mother of Dionysus. The mythology of the Romans, as we have already remarked, first depicted Jupiter as devoid of all family ties. It was only after their religion had been Hellenised that men termed him the son of Saturn and Ops, made Juno his wife and Minerva his daughter. Statues of Zeus were necessarily very numerous, both from the great extent of his worship and the great number of his temples that existed in Greece. Of all these the most renowned was the magnificent statue of Zeus at Olympia, the work of the Athenian sculptor Phidias. The figure was seated on a lofty throne, and was more than 40 feet high. It was made of gold and ivory, or more probably a statue of wood was overlaid with plates of ivory and gold. The uncovered parts—the face, throat, breast, and hands—were of ivory. In his right hand was a figure of Victory, also of gold and ivory; in his left was a royal sceptre, on the top of which perched an eagle. The numerous lengthy descriptions that exist can give us but a faint idea of the lofty majesty that the sculptor diffused over the countenance of the god. The object of Phidias was to represent him to mankind, not only as the omnipotent ruler of Olympus, far superior to all gods and men, both in power and wisdom; but also as the gracious father of all, and the kindly dispenser of all good gifts. The hair, which rose straight from the brow, and then fell in equal divisions on either side, imparted to the face a lion-like expression of conscious power. This was rendered still more effective by the high forehead and strongly-formed nose. At the same time, the expression of the slightly-opened lips lent an idea of kindly benevolence. The story goes that Phidias, after completing the statue, prayed of the god a sign that he was well pleased with his work. Zeus thereupon caused a flash of lightning to descend through the open roof of the temple, and thus acknowledged his own image. This sublime masterpiece of Phidias, which was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, continued in existence, though not—Zeus.

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