

THE OLYMPIANS™

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To Mike "Arch-Angel" Fox, Indra "Cloak" Lim, Derek "Shadow-Guy" Steele, Jon "Mapleleaf" Voss, Tom "The Monkey" Marsilje, Jennifer "Jenni" Gustafson, my entire family and Mrs. Sharon Rocker

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INTRODUCTION

What is a myth? The word is derived from the Greek *mythos*, meaning "story" or "words". However, to the ancient Greeks, myths were more than mere stories; they were part of everyday life. Before science and experimentation, men had no way to understand natural phenomena such as thunder and lightning, so they made up myths to explain them. It was easier to say that mighty Zeus hurled his lightning bolts than it was to face the mysteries of the unknown. Zeus could be worshipped and given sacrifices; his wrath could presumably be appeased.

The Greek myths are fascinating works of literature that are still important to us in our world today. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are considered to be two of the greatest stories of all time. By reading the myths we can learn about the society of the ancient Greeks in an interesting and enjoyable way.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contained within *The Olympians* is a complete history of the Olympian gods, from their extra-dimensional origins to their re-emergence on twentieth century Earth. Also included is a god template and full write-ups (which include Powers, Characteristics, Disadvantages, background, tactics, and current activities) for each major god. Less important gods receive shorter write-ups, and some are merely described.

The Olympians also includes short write-ups of important demigods, and detailed descriptions of significant creatures and locations found in Greek mythology. Finally, this book presents the Game Master with a number of scenario ideas.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Although this organization book is designed to introduce the gods of ancient Greek mythology into a GM's campaign, it can be used in a number of different ways. While the GM can choose to accept the book as it's written, taking it in its entirety, he might merely allow certain aspects, perhaps constraining the gods to Olympus. Another interesting possibility is a campaign with player-controlled gods.

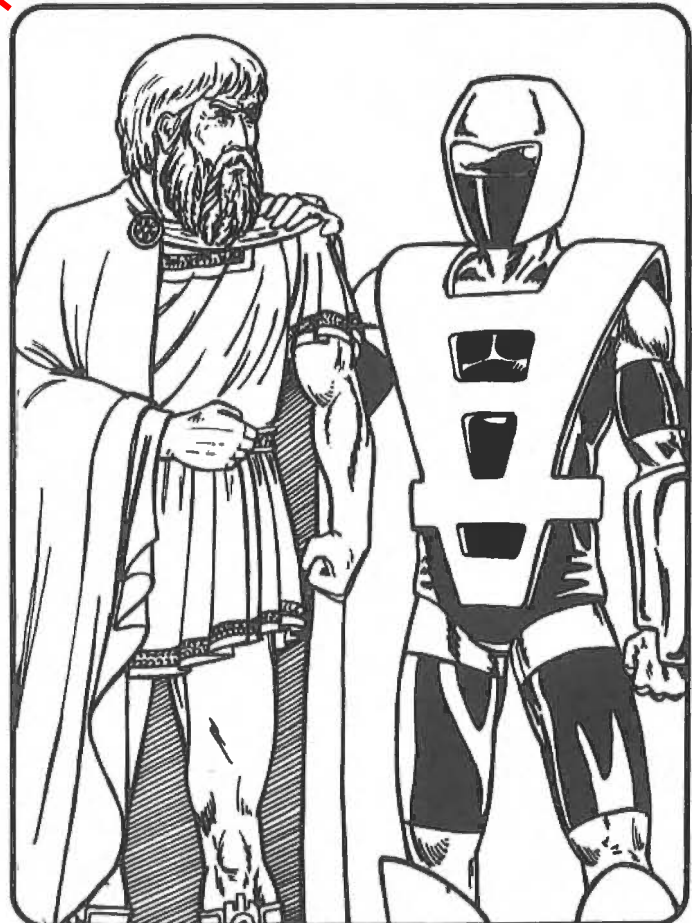
The gods in this book are extremely powerful; any single god is a match for several standard superheroes. This conforms to the treatment of the gods in comic books; any time that the gods are involved in an adventure the stakes are presumably high.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This book is not meant to be an exact representation of ancient Greek mythology. If the Gamemaster disagrees with something, he should feel free to alter it however he wishes. Also, it must be made clear that, for the purpose of this book, the Olympians did exist. Therefore, they affected the course of history in the world in which they existed, even though they were, rather obviously, unable to do so in the real world. Additionally, I must stress that this product is not intended to be anti-Christian; the Greek "gods" are not actually divine beings. They are simply fictional extra-dimensional life forms gifted with extraordinary abilities.

It is my hope that this book can bring some of the wonder, magic, and imagination of the ancient Greek myths to the game of *Champions*. GMs are encouraged to expand and alter the myths contained in this book to make them their own and, perhaps, with their players, forge new legends.

Kurt Dershem



HISTORY



This section briefly describes the history of the Greek gods, from their extra-dimensional beginnings to their sudden reappearance on Earth in the late 20th century. It does not, however, include the histories of individual gods; those can be found in the "Background" section of the character write-ups.

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

There once existed a dimension in which time, as humans understand it, had no meaning. It was called Chaos and was, according to no less an authority than John Milton, a "vast immeasurable abyss, Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild." This dimension's sole occupant was an incredibly powerful, sentient entity which was composed entirely of energy; it was known as the One. The One lived a peaceful, contemplative existence, completely unaware of the Earth or any other dimensions.

The One's tranquil life came to a sudden and violent end when an explosion of unknown origin erupted within its dimension. The entity, mortally wounded, fled to the Earth's dimension through the rift which had been opened by the explosion. The portal had appeared at the peak of Mount Olympus in ancient Greece, around the year 3000 B.C. In order to survive, the One adapted to the new world and took the form of Gaea, the Earth-Goddess. Gaea created a husband for herself, a being known as Uranus, and with him had many children. The two beings utilized their tremendous powers to reshape the One's shattered dimension and created a city in which their offspring could live: Olympus. They also created Tartarus, a huge, cavernous Underworld, which was designed to house the spirits of the dead.

The Titans, Gaea and Uranus' offspring, were twelve in number, six male and six female. Their father feared that they might someday overthrow him, and banished them to Tartarus. He ruled Olympus for a short while, treating his wife

very badly. Gaea became indignant and asked the Titans to defeat Uranus, promising to free them and provide them with weapons. Only one Titan, Cronus, was brave enough to carry out his mother's wishes. After being released by Gaea from the Underworld, he courageously fought and defeated his father. Cronus then freed his brothers and sisters from their imprisonment and, after marrying his sister, Rhea, assumed control of Olympus.

THE AGE OF THE TITANS

The Titans had many children (called gods), and ruled tyrannically over them for nearly a thousand years. They imposed strict laws upon their offspring and forced Gaea to create subservient monsters (giants and the one-eyed cyclopes); these monsters helped enforce the laws. One of

the Titans' statutes forbade contact with humans and promised cruel punishment for any god caught on Earth. The Titans feared that the gods might find allies among the humans, thereby gaining enough strength to revolt. Ironically, the cause of the Titans' defeat lay within their own creations.

The leader of the gods, Zeus, persuaded the cyclopes to secretly forge thunderbolts for him. The cyclopes were quick to agree, having grown tired of the harsh treatment they had endured throughout the Titans' oppressive, thousand-year rule. The thunderbolts were deadly weapons and were composed of a magical form of energy discovered by Zeus on his latest clandestine voyage to the Earth. Because of a unique quality in the magic used to fashion the weapons, only Zeus was able to wield them. Using the thunderbolts, Zeus slew his father, banishing Cronus' soul to Tartarus. Zeus forced the other Titans to sur-

render but, confident in the power of his thunderbolts, granted them complete amnesty and allowed them to remain in Olympus.



THE COUNCIL OF ZEUS

Following his triumph over the Titans, Zeus gathered together all of the gods and announced his plans. He told the Olympians (as the gods now called themselves) that each of them would have authority over a different part of the world. They drew lots to determine the order of choosing and, eventually, each received a different portion over which to rule (Poseidon, for example, became the Ruler of the Seas). Zeus declared that Olympus would remain the province of all gods and that he would be their ruler, possessing final authority in all matters.

The Olympians agreed to end the ban on contact with humans and decided to present themselves to the Greeks as gods. Because the One first entered Earth's dimension through a portal atop Mt. Olympus, the gods were bound to the Greek land and its peoples. They lived like Greeks, spoke the Greek language (although they possess the ability to comprehend virtually any language) and followed Greek traditions. To make the Greeks revere them they invented the creation myths, which told how they had fashioned the Earth and everything that lived on it from the swirling void called Chaos.

THE AGE OF THE GODS

When the Greeks first encountered the Olympians they were amazed by the gods' incredible powers and quickly abandoned their old religion, which involved the worship of such natural objects as the sun, the moon, and the elements. Because they were similar to human beings, the gods shared man's basic need to be loved and accepted. Due to their arrogance and the fact that they felt they were greatly superior to humans, however, the gods demanded ardent worship and commanded that huge, elaborate temples be built in their honor in the Greek city-states.

Although the Olympians reveled in their worshippers' adoration, they severely punished those who did not adhere to their commands. The god's influence helped to advance the Greeks' already sophisticated culture and, despite frequent quarrels between the city-states, Greek society flourished. This age of Greek prosperity was the greatest the world had ever known and produced such minds as Homer, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Herodotus, Euripides, and Sophocles.

THE RETURN OF THE TITANS

Over the years, the Olympians became complacent in their undisputed rule of Olympus. Thus, they did not notice when the Titans — who had grown dissatisfied under Olympian domination — freed Cronus from Tartarus. Cronus then used his extensive knowledge of magic to trap Zeus before he even knew that Cronus had escaped. The remaining Olympians feared that the Titans might gain strength from Earth (and harm the gods' worshippers). Uniting their powers, the gods sealed the rift between Earth and Olympus. They then concentrated their efforts on defeating the Titans.

The Greeks were perplexed by the gods' sudden departure. Even this seemed less important when the Romans invaded and conquered *all* the Greek city-states. Although the Romans never actually encountered the Olympians, they did imitate the Greeks and adopted the worship of the absent gods. However, the Romans never had personal interaction with the gods, and this accounts for the Roman view of the gods as more idealized and less human.



THE GREAT WAR

Eventually, Hermes managed to free Zeus, but the Olympians were overpowered by the combined might of the Titans and the giants, and were driven from the city of Olympus. Because the cyclopes had been captured by the Titans, Zeus was unable to use his thunderbolts to defeat his enemies as he had two thousand years earlier. The Olympians retreated to a far corner of their dimension and held a council to decide the best course of action.

At this meeting it was decided that the messenger of the gods, Hermes, would use his magical helm to render himself invisible while the other gods launched a major assault on the Titans' stronghold, Olympus. While the Titans were distracted, Hermes would free the cyclopes and lead them to the relative safety of the Olympians' encampment. The gods would hold the Titans at bay while the cyclopes' forged more of the thunderbolts. The plan worked flawlessly, and the Olympians valiantly defended their encampment while the one-eyed giants completed the construction of the magical thunderbolts.

When the Titans discovered that Zeus had regained his thunderbolts, they tried to flee but found that they could not escape his fury. The King of the Gods slew every Titan but Gaea, who had not participated in the revolt. Zeus was unable to punish the giants, since they had taken refuge deep within a swamp near the entrance to Tartarus. Following the battle, Hades, the god of the underworld, created the monstrous three-headed dog Cerberus to ensure that the Titans would never escape his realm.

THE RETURN TO EARTH

The gods had been significantly weakened by the power loss which resulted from the closing of the portal to Earth. They knew that a new rift would be very difficult to open. Although they were eventually successful in breaching the barrier between dimensions, they were unable to determine the exact point in the timestream at which they would arrive. Consequently, they appeared over two thousand years later than they had intended, in the late twentieth century.

The Olympians found themselves in a world which was dramatically different than the one which they had left. Their religion had died out with the spread of Christianity; the world now believed the Olympians to be nothing more than myths.

Having expended much of their energy reopening the gate, the Olympians were now much less powerful and were unable to make a second attempt to return to ancient Greece. Faced with no alternatives, they resolved to make the best of their situation.

The gods reacted differently to the return to Earth; their personal thoughts concerning the modern world can be found in the "Current Activities" section of their individual entries. The majority of Earth's population is unaware of the Olympians' existence and, if they have heard of the gods, most believe them to be super-heroes/villains who have assumed ancient Greek aliases.

