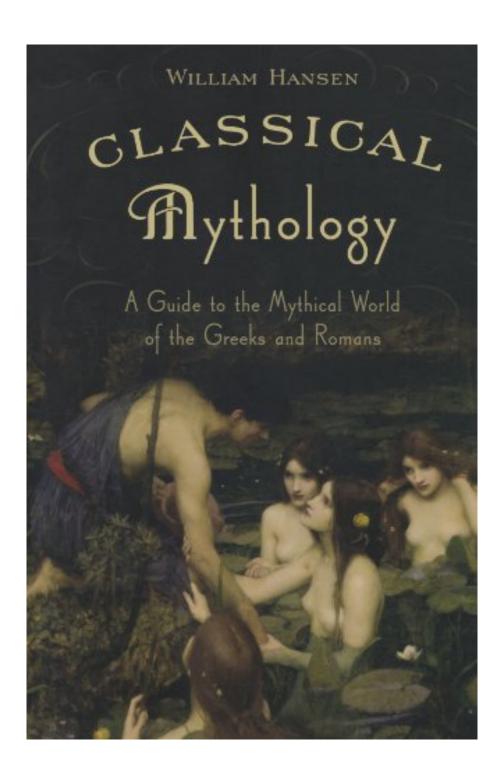


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"Hansen's book offers a superb example of a folkloristic approach to classical mythology. Far from novel, that approach goes back at least to Wilhelm Grimm and maybe even to Herodotus. Hansen's deployment of this approach is one of the best to date."--Robert A. Segal, Journal of American Folklore

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The birth of Aphrodite, the Trojan Horse, Zeus disguised as a swan. These and other classical myths and legends are usually encountered separately, but together they make up a coherent, multigenerational saga of epic battles, bizarre metamorphoses, immortal heroes, and all-too-human gods--a fantastic world recognizably real to its audience. Classical Mythology offers newcomers and long-time enthusiasts new ways to navigate the world of Greek and Roman myths, beginning by exploring the landscapes where the myths are set. It then provides a richly detailed timeline of mythic episodes from the origin of the cosmos to the end of the Heroic Age--plus an illustrated mythological dictionary listing significant characters, places, events, objects, and concepts.

Whether you wish to explore the world that gave rise to ancient mythology or research a specific piece of the whole, this handbook is the best introduction available to an extraordinary cast of characters (gods, nymphs, satyrs, monsters, heroes) and the natural and supernatural stages upon which their fates are played out.

Features

- · A detailed timeline serves as a convenient "episode guide" chronicling events described in classical mythology
- \cdot A comprehensive A-Z section offers a quick way to identify the gods, mortals, events, and objects that are key to specific myths and legends

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False Promises lead to great disappointment.

By Amazon Customer

There are good and bad things to say about William Hansen's Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans.

Let me start with the many good things: 1) It's approach, by classifying myths and folktales into specific patterns, is educative and interesting. 2) It is well-written and comprehensive. 3) Most of the information inside is accurate. 4) It is easy and enjoyable to read. 5) Most importantly, in my opinion, it corrects four of the common mistakes found in many books on Classical Mythology - Gaia was not the daughter of Khaos in Hesiod, but the second being born from creation; Khaos was not chaotic (as in English), but open space or air; Apollon (yes Apollon) was not a sun god originally, though he later might have been worshipped as such. The sun god is Helios; and Artemis was never worshipped as a moon goddess. This honor belongs to Helios' sister, Selene.

Unfortunately, the good points about this book do not outweigh my major complaint. This might not be Hansen's fault, actually. The back cover states clearly under "Features" that the book contains "A detailed timeline [which] serves as a convenient 'episode guide' chronicling events described in classical mythology." I have read the book and then flipped through it page by page, just in case, to find said "timeline" with absolutley NO luck. It is not there (at least not in my copy). As I am a student of myth, I have already read all of the stories and myths. I actually purchased this book BECAUSE of the promised timeline. So, in the end, money I spent for a timeline yielded nothing.

Another issue I had is with a few instances of incorrect information. The book presents itself as educative. As a college instructor and avid reader, I have encountered many errors in recounting myths in my time. When an educative book contains an error I cannot help but to feel frustrated because I know that this will just perpetuate the error. I only have two complaints about this. 1) Hansen seems to not realise that Okeanos (Ocean) was a fresh-water deity, we misuse the term. He refers to the daughters of Okeanos, the Okeanids, as sea nymphs. 2) More importantly, I believe for the sake of myth in his section on the Titans is very inaccurate. Hansen seems to claim that all of the Titans fought against the Olympians during the great war between the two. However, neither the female Titans (or Titanides) nor Okeonos was involved. He even uses Themis as an example of a Titan who does not match the Olympian prowess . . . but the point is moot since she did not fight them anyway. In fact, Themis was Zeus' second wife and by her he fathered the Horae (Season.) Themis actually was said to live with the Olympians as she represented divine order. He also fathered the Muses by Mnemosyne. The other Titanides (his mother Rheia, Theia, Phoibe, and Tethys) were never said to participate in the war. Okeonos likewise did not, and, in fact, Zeus rewarded him for not taking up the Titans cause. Hansen also claims that Zeus punished the Titans forever in Tartaros, but Zeus actually was said to have allowed at least Kronos freedom as Kronos rules over the Isle of the Blessed.

For those who do not care about the timeline I mention, this book might have more stars. But, this was the sole reason for which I purchased the book. So, I can only give the book 3 stars. It gets 3, as opposed to 2, because I was so happy to read Hansen say that Gaia was the second being after creation and not, as often mistaken, the child of Khaos.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Classical Mythology

By Trisha Coughlin

This well-done book on classical mythology is a great read and well worth the price. Comparable topic

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