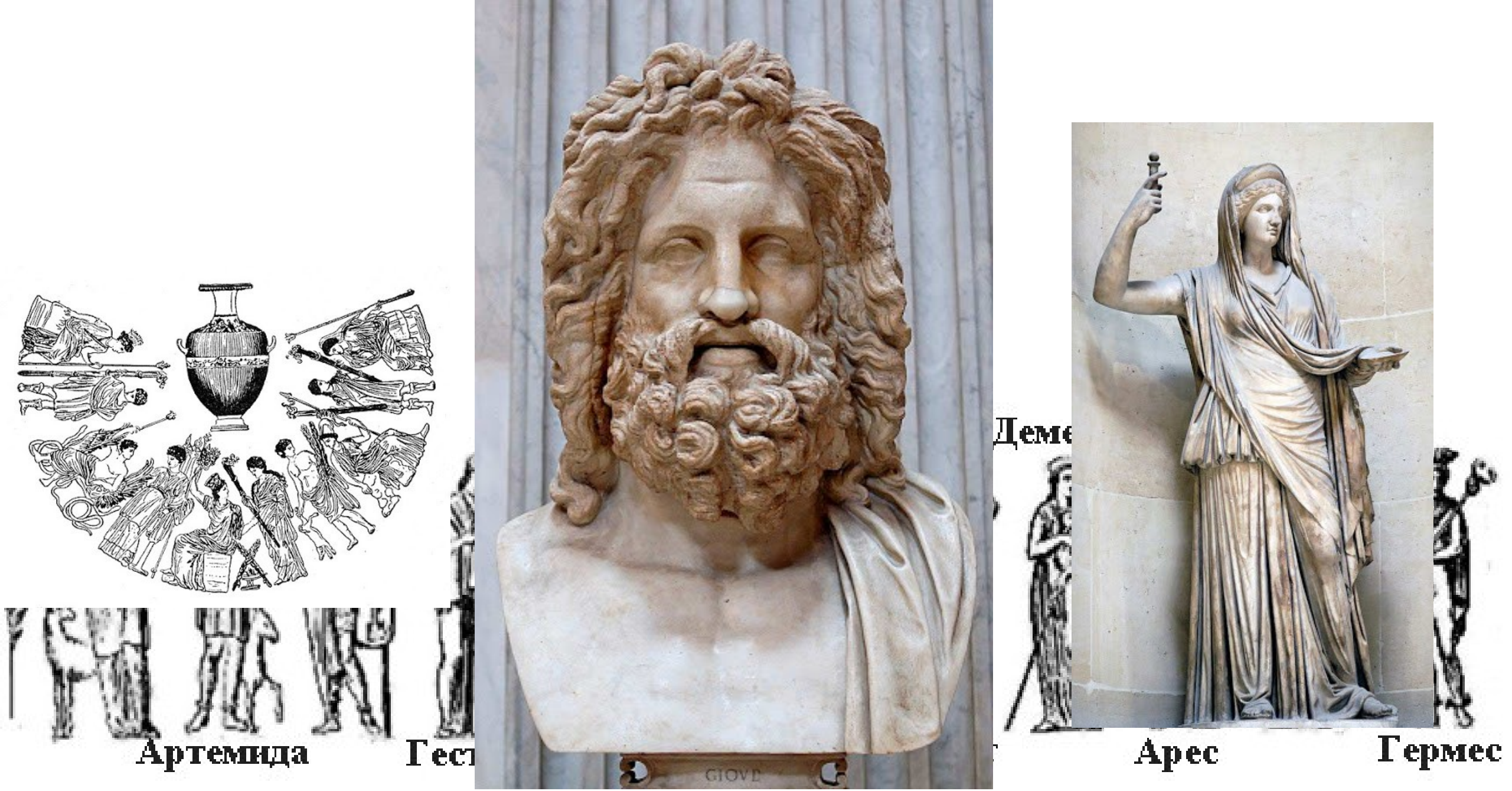


Religious beliefs in Ancient Greece.

The Prehomeric religion of Greece is totemic, fetishist and animistic beliefs. Initially, only Chaos existed, the goddess of the Earth, Gaia, originated from him, and the mighty force of Eros, love, was born. He gave birth to darkness and night, from which came light - Ether and day - Hemera. The most powerful deity - **Uranus** - the sky. All other forms of life originated from the combination of earth and sky (Uranus and Gaia). At the beginning of the marriage, formless monsters were born and the father plunged them back into the bowels of the mother until Gaia gave birth to the titans. One of the titans - Kronos-time - dethrones his father from the world throne, depriving him of his procreative power. New forms are not born, mortals themselves reproduce, multiply and die (devoured by time). New forces are beginning to operate in the



The main sources of information about the ancient Greek religion are the works of Homer "Iliad" and "Odyssey" and Gesiod's "Theogony". Based on these works, it can be concluded that the ancient Greek gods were divided into three groups:

- celestial or uranic (Zeus and all Olympic gods);
- underground or chthonic (Hades, Demeter, Erinia);
- earthly or ecumenical (Hestia,

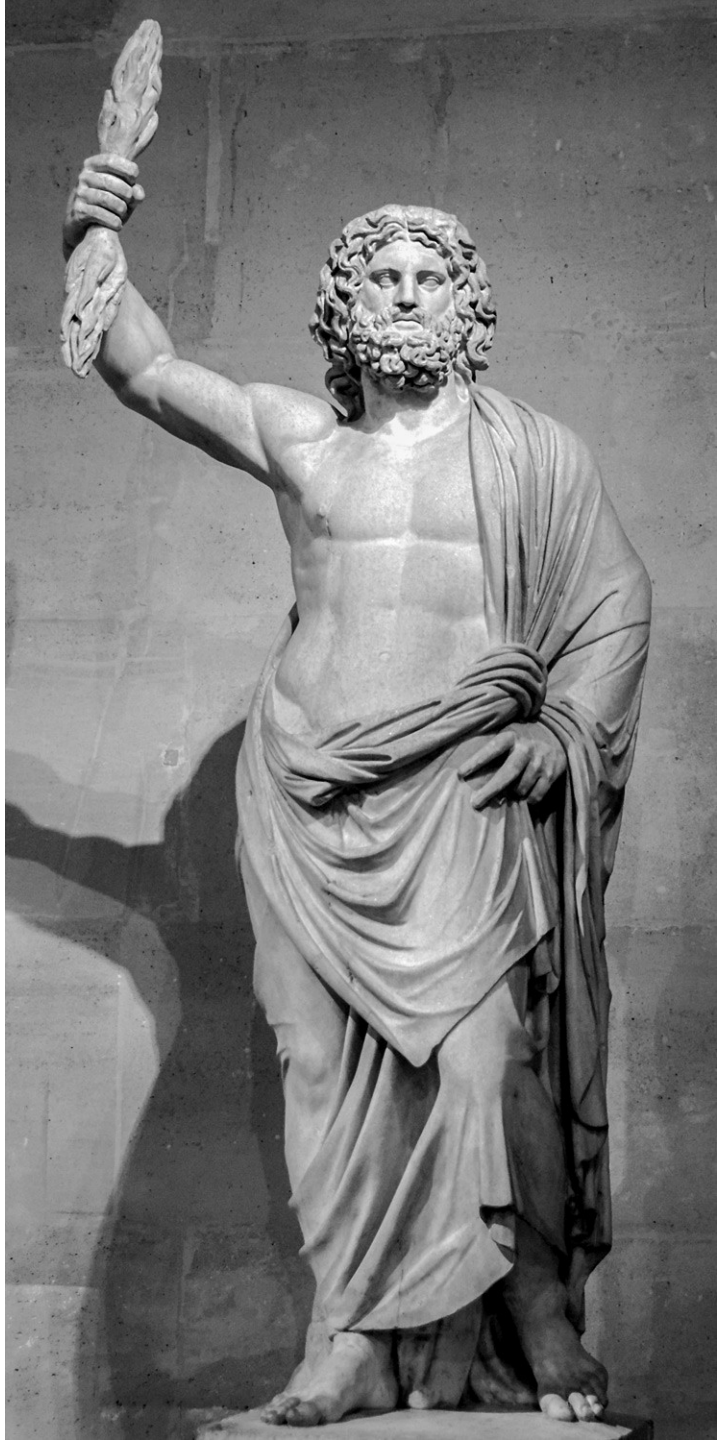


From the Cretan-Micene culture, the Greeks adopted many motives and transferred them to their religion (Athena, Artemis). Homeric religion ("Iliad", "Odyssey") humanizes the gods. The pantheon of gods is headed by Zeus (the son of Kronos and Rhea), who belongs to the third generation of gods who overthrew the titans (in the Roman religion - Jupiter). Kronos, knowing that one of the children would overthrow him, devoured them all, but Rhea hid Zeus, who later grew up in the mountains, overthrew his father and forced him to erupt back all the children. Young gods (erupted children - kronids) settle on Olympus, Zeus is forged by Cyclops lightning and he becomes a thunderer. Zeus's wife is Hera. Poseidon, the lord of the seas, dismisses the Titan of the Ocean, who has recognized the power of the new gods. Zeus's brother Hades is the ruler of the underworld. Lethe gives birth to Apollo and his sister Artemis from Zeus. From the head of Zeus is born Pallas Athena - the goddess of



Zeus - the thunderer

Gods live in another world. There are a lot of them, of all the gods there are twelve Olympian gods, but the most important of them is Zeus. Zeus in Greek mythology is the supreme god. God of thunder and lightning. His mother Rhea, and his father Kronos, having overthrown him, Zeus became the lord of people and gods. Zeus is his name of purely Indo-European origin and means "bright sky". As you remember, Zeus saved her mother. When his father Kronos swallowed his children so that they would not conquer his power, Rhea, having given birth to Zeus, hid, and gave the father a stone, and so he saved himself and his brothers and sisters. But there is another version, according to her version, Rhea gave birth to Zeus in the cave of Mount Dikta and entrusted his upbringing to the kurets and Koribants who fed him with the milk of the goat Amalfea. It was in Crete that the most ancient fetishistic symbols of veneration of Zeus of Crete were preserved: a double ax (labrys), a magic weapon that kills and gives life, a destructive and



Poseidon

Poseidon in Greek mythology - one of the gods - Olympians, the ruler of the seas, controlling them with a trident; son of Kronos and Rhea, brother of Zeus and Hades. Having cast the lot with them, after the overthrow of his father, he divided the dominion over the world and received the sea for his inheritance. Olympic Poseidon is associated precisely with the sea element, although some of his epithets speak of a former connection with the land, which he fertilized, knocking out moisture from the sources with a trident.

Many myths describe Poseidon's violent disposition, his desire to stand on a par with Zeus, to overthrow him. Poseidon's wife, Amphitrite, gives birth to Triton, the lord of the depths of the sea. His offspring from other goddesses and mortals are menacing and terrible: Orion, Aloads, Amik, Antey, Polyphemus, Busiris, Skirion and Kerkion. The image of Poseidon is closely associated with horses, his son Pegasus. Another animal of Poseidon is the bull, in the image of which he connects with Pasiphae.



Hades

Hades was the ruler of the underworld, the kingdom of the dead. He guarded the dead with jealousy, rarely allowed them to return to earth. He owned all the precious stones and metals of the earth. Hades rode a golden chariot drawn by black horses. Hades "rich" is called Pluto, because he is the owner of innumerable human souls and treasures hidden in the earth. Hades is the owner of a magic helmet that makes him invisible; This helmet was later used by the goddess Athena and the hero Perseus, who procured the head of the Gorgon. Hades was deceived by the cunning Sisif, who once left the kingdom of the dead. In Greek mythology of the Olympic period, Hades is a minor deity.Hades never had a wife, since no one wanted to live with him in the underworld,

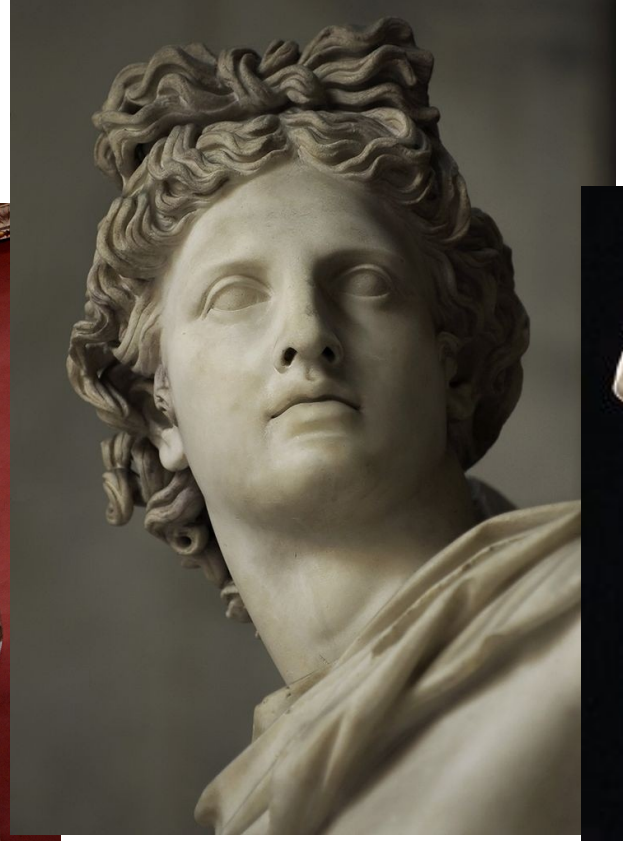




Demeter, the goddess of fertility, the patroness of agriculture.



Hera the queen of the gods, sister and wife of Zeus; patroness of



Apollo in Greek mythology and religion is the son of Zeus, god - healer and soothsayer, patron of art.



Artemis is the daughter of Zeus and Leto, the twin sister of Apollo. She was the patroness of the moon and



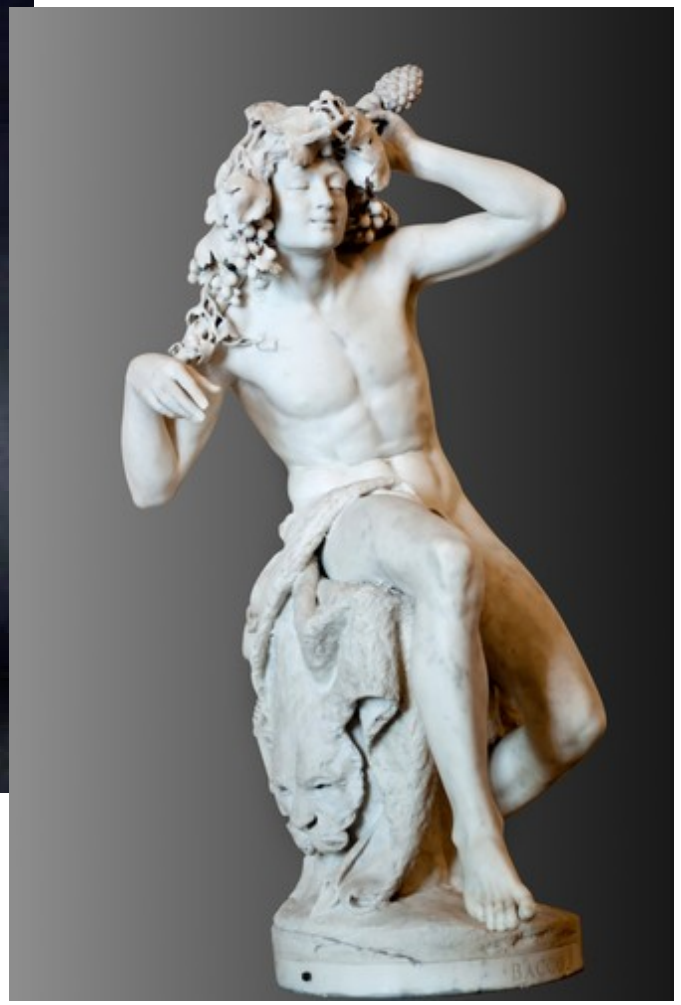
Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty. Aphrodite was presented as the goddess of fertility, eternal spring and



Athena in Greek mythology is the goddess of war and victory, as well as wisdom, knowledge of



Hephaestus, the god of fire, patron saint of blacksmithing



Dionysus, the god of the fruiting forces of the earth, viticulture and winemaking



Hermes, the son of Zeus, is a quick messenger of the gods, as well as the patron saint of merchants, artisans, travelers and thieves

Temples

The Greeks thought that the gods have the same needs as people, so they believed that they should have places on earth where they could live, holidays when they can have fun, rituals for them.
Temples were erected as earthly dwellings of the gods. The main structure of the temples arose on the basis of the royal halls of the Mycenaean era.
In the dark ages, the temple consisted of a main room, or cella, and a portico with columns. In celle there was a statue of a god, it is called a cult statue.
The next more perfect temple style arose in the early archaic period. The front of the temple was a portico, or pronaos, and the temple was completed with an opistode.
The next temple of the late archaic period was on the platform towards the exit. It was surrounded by a hidden row of columns, or peristyle.
In Athens, the Parthenon temple was built in 448 - 438. BC. It was built of marble, all structures were surrounded by a peristyle, outside the temple was decorated with friezes and statues depicting mythological scenes. The statues were painted in vibrant colors. The iconic statue of the goddess Athena was made of gold and ivory, and its height was equal to twelve meters.

Athena held in one hand Nike, the goddess of victory, and a spear and shield in the other. There was an altar next to the temple, located in front of the main entrance.

Festivities

The Greeks held many cult holidays in honor of their gods - they wanted to appease the gods and convince them to fulfill the wishes of people. It could be a plea for a rich harvest or victory in a war. The holidays consisted not only of some cult ceremonies - athletic competitions, theatrical performances were also dedicated to the gods. To appease the deity, they did exactly what could be especially pleasant for him. For example, at the Pythian Games dedicated to Apollo, the winners were crowned with laurel wreaths, which was the sacred tree of Apollo.

The most important holiday in Athens was the Great Panathenes - in honor of the goddess Athena. They took place every four years and lasted several days. During the holidays, music sounded, sports competitions were held. The culmination of the holiday was a huge procession from the Dipylon gate to the Erechtheion temple on the Acropolis. During the procession, a specially tailored dress was presented to a wooden statue of Athena, which, according to legend, descended here from the sky in ancient times.

The spring festival, which was called anfesteria, was held in Athens annually in February. At this time, wine of the new harvest was being sold, and the statue of Dionysus, the god of wine, was solemnly brought into the temple. On the last day of

Antiquity did not know an influential **priesthood** like the religions of the ancient Near East, a kind of corporation that possessed significant wealth and instruments of political influence. But, despite this, the development of religious traditions made it inevitable the presence of special people who were engaged in the performance of religious rituals in accordance with all existing prescriptions. The presence of a priest was also often an important condition, without which the sanctuary could not function normally: a minister was needed who would maintain order and ritual purity of the sacred place, and supervise the work of the sanctuary.The priest in ancient religion was not an exclusive performer of sacrifices: if necessary, a sacrifice could be made by every person who had sufficient ritual purity for this, and not only a free resident of the polis, but even a slave.

Oracles and signs.

Special servants ensured the functioning of the **oracles**, with the help of which the questioners had the opportunity to receive an answer from God and its interpretation. In ancient Greece, the services of oracles were resorted to for a variety of reasons, and the information that has come down to us shows that it was customary to ask deities both the most insignificant or ridiculous, as well as the most serious questions. One questioner is looking for an answer to the question whether he is in fact the father of his child, the other is interested in whether his cloak was stolen from him or if he lost it. The oracles were asked questions such as

Heroes of Ancient Greece

The history of the heroes belongs to the so-called classical or Olympic period of Greek mythology. From the marriages of the Olympian gods with mortals, heroes were born. They were endowed with tremendous strength and superhuman capabilities, but did not possess immortality. The heroes had to fulfill the will of the gods on earth, bring order and justice into people's lives. With the help of their divine parents, the heroes performed all sorts of feats. The heroes were highly revered, the legends about them were passed down from generation to generation. The hero must fulfill the will of the Olympians on earth among people, follow the order of life and observe justice, measures, laws. Usually the hero is endowed with superhuman capabilities, he is not immortal. There are myths about the attempts of the gods to make heroes immortal. The desire to upset the balance of forces between death and the immortal world is punished by Zeus. This is well represented in the Hercules myth. The most difficult feat of Hercules in the service of Eurystheus was his last, twelfth feat. He had to go to the great titan Atlas, who holds the firmament on his shoulders, and get three golden apples from his gardens, which were watched by the Atlas daughters - Hesperides. These apples grew on a golden tree grown by the goddess of the earth Gaia as a gift to the great Hera on the day of her wedding with Zeus. To accomplish this feat, it was necessary first of all to find out the way to the

Achilles, or Achilles, is a character in ancient Greek mythology, a participant in the Trojan War, one of the main characters in Homer's Iliad. He belonged to the Aeakid family, was the son of Peleus and Nereis Thetis.



HERCULES, the most famous of the heroes of classical Greek mythology (called Hercules by the Romans), who performed many great deeds. Stoic philosophers of the Hellenistic and Roman eras saw in him, distinguished by strength, courage, endurance and good nature, the ideal of courage and virtue. Hercules is the son of Zeus from Alcmene, to whom Zeus appeared in the guise of her husband Amphitryon. Alcmene gave birth to two sons at once: Iphicles, the son of Amphitryon, and Hercules, the son of Zeus. Heracles is often called Amphitrionias ("son of Amphitryon") or Alcides (named



Similarity between the myths of Hercules and Gilgamesh

The main theme of the exploits of Hercules is the performance of a series of fights in order to become the beloved of Admeta, Auga, Athena or Hippolyta - in a word, the queen, whatever name she bears.

The performance of the tenth feat could initially be very important for this topic, especially if this feat testifies to the custom of the patriarchal Greeks to ransom the bride for the money received from the sale of stolen cattle. In Homeric Greece, women were rated a certain number of livestock, as is still done in some regions in east and central Africa. However, gradually the myth was overgrown with alien elements, including a visit to the western Island of Death and a safe return from there with prey. **In the eleventh tablet of the Babylonian creation myth, Gilgamesh makes a journey similar to the one that Hercules made to Erythia**, namely to the tomb island, having swum for this the waters of death and using his clothes as a sail. This coincidence further points to the similarity between the myths of Hercules and Gilgamesh. Perhaps they are based on a common Sumerian source. Like Hercules, **Gilgamesh kills a monstrous lion and wears his skin; seizing the horns, he overcomes the heavenly bull; finds the mysterious flower of eternal youth**; **travels with the sun god; visits Inanna's garden, where, after killing a snake that has settled in a wonderful tree, he receives as a reward two sacred objects from the underworld**. The









The ancient anthropomorphism of the ancient gods inherited from the deep archaic, their variability and passion could not correspond to the social ethical ideal - a person who was looking for moral perfection in life could not seriously take the stories about endless deceptions, frauds and adultery committed by the gods. In art, especially in theatrical performances of that time, the obscene elements of myths were specially emphasized. All the fornication of the gods was demonstrated in every detail, counting on base laughter. This kind of epiphany took place even in mimes. But if in the time of the classics such images were not destructive for religion, then in an age of general decay for paganism this turned out to be the last blow.