

Table of Contents

Introduction: Myth as a human condition.....	1
1. Myth through the ages: Crafting realities in a mythopoeic key	9
Myth and environment.....	13
Myth and culture.....	14
Myth and world-view.....	15
Myth and science	15
Myth and politics	18
2. Myth and knowledge – An intimate yet little known relationship	25
Balancing views on the relationship between myth-making, historiography and philosophy.....	25
Myth-making as an integral part of ancient knowledge-construction	27
The reflection of mythic traditions in cultural memory	28
Positions of ancient historians and philosophers vis-à-vis myth.....	30
<i>Mythos</i> and <i>logos</i> : a case of competing modes of enquiry?.....	34
3. Exploring the world through myth: The organic whole and its mythopoeic conceptualizations.....	37
Narration and its mythopoeic conceptualizations	38
Mythic cosmology and the impact of the supernatural	42
The world of gods and mythical heroes in epic poetry	44
Interactional patterns of gods and mortals in Greek theater.....	51
The necessity of using myth when addressing the public in Greek antiquity .	53
4. History before writing: Foundational myths as building-blocks for knowledge-construction.....	57
Myths as indicators of cultural fusion: The Greeks' encounters with their predecessors and how these contacts are reflected in the mythical tradition ..	58
The mythical ages of humankind and the rise of civilization.....	66
Celebrating cultural achievements in Greek mythology: Mythical perceptions of the origins of agriculture, wine and olive cultivation, weaving, metallurgy.....	71
Demeter and her gift of agriculture.....	72
Dionysos and his gift of wine	75
Athena and her gift of the olive tree	76

Athena and her gift of weaving.....	77
Hephaistos and his gift of metallurgy	80
Themis and her gift of customary law.....	83
5. Myth-making as social and political agency: Myths as vehicles for group solidarity and ethnic self-identification.....	87
Myth as tradition.....	87
The popularity of mythical genealogies for Greek aristocratic lineages.....	89
Myths to live by: The significance of oracles and their pronouncements.....	99
The political impact of myth: Athena and Erechtheus in the foundation myth of the Athenian state	103
The need of innovation: Mythical traditions in the horizon of time.....	106
6. Preconditions for the making of history and of philosophy: The inter-relation of orality and literacy.....	109
Getting writing right: The impact of writing as an information technology ...	110
Deconstructing modern myths about writing Greek	113
Tracing the ancestry of Linear A: Continuity and transformations in the Balkanic-Aegean convergence zone.....	117
Tracing sources of Linear B (other than Linear A): The legacy of the Danube script in the Cycladic Islands and on the mainland.....	120
The Old European legacy in the Cycladic Islands.....	121
The Old European legacy on the mainland	122
The legacy of Linear B: Safeguarding continuity for literacy in the Greek world.....	124
Minoan literacy and the Cyprian connection: The emergence of Cypro-Minoan and Cypriot-Syllabic	125
Myths about the role of the alphabet and the true story of the Greek letters.....	128
Orality and literacy in classical antiquity.....	133
How to use language properly for writing history and rendering philosophical discourse?	137
7. Conceptualizing divinely inspired order: The endeavour of pre-Socratic philosophers to rationalize mythical truths	141
Competing modes of enquiry: Questioning traditions and mythic experiences.....	143
Myth and reasoning: A crucial linkage in allegorical interpretation.....	150
Picking up the threads: The rope model of repetitive continuity of ideas.....	153

Reflecting on nature and cosmic order: Some influential pre-Socratic philosophers.....	157
Parmenides.....	159
Anaxagoras.....	163
Protagoras.....	163
Xenophanes.....	164
Democritus.....	165
Herakleitos (Heraclitus).....	166
The legacy of the pre-Socratics.....	168
8. Myth into historiography: Herodotus and his mytho-historical world.....	173
The problem of continuity: How to describe events since Deukalion and the Great Flood?.....	179
The endeavour of Herodotus: Ancient explanations for the clash of civilizations.....	185
How to read myth in the <i>Histories</i>	191
Herodotus as myth-maker: Crafting a myth about the rise of democracy.....	196
The pragmatic-political framework set up by Cleisthenes in his reforms.....	197
The covert trend of self-administration and self-determination in the village communities (demes).....	200
The myth of Athenian democracy as the hub of freedom.....	204
9. Myth into philosophy: Plato as mythologist.....	209
Plato's respect for old traditions and mythic truths.....	213
Myth as a tool of philosophical reasoning: Plato's use of traditional myths and his invention of new ones.....	215
Plato's concept of "a probable story" (<i>eikos mythos</i>).....	219
Plato's concept of "divine law".....	224
The issue of gender as a topic in Plato's <i>Laws</i>	227
The general assessment of gender roles (book VII: 804d-806c).....	229
The aim of legislation to achieve virtue; (book VI: 770c-d6).....	230
The question of public activities for women (book VI: 781a2-b4) and of holding public offices (book VI: 785b2-9).....	230
Musical education and entertainment for the sexes (book VI: 764c-765a; book VII: 802a-e).....	232
The issue of women as soldiers in the army (book VII: 804d-805a).....	232
The scope of marriage (book VI: 783e ff.).....	233
The issue of childbearing and motherhood (book VI: 785b, 833c-d, 834a-d, 947b-d).....	233

10. Hellenistic transformations: Stigmatizing myth as source of knowledge	235
Plato's Academy: Rise and decline of a civic institution of learning	235
Consequences of specialization of Hellenistic thought: Losing sight of the organic whole	239
Hellenistic mythography as literature for entertainment	241
In the aftermath of antiquity: A major rescue operation to secure Hellenistic sources	242
Epilogue: The ideology of myth-dismissal and the cult of reason in the New Era	245
Bibliography	253
List of figures	275
Index	277