

## GLOSSARY OF GODS, HEROES, AND ANTIHEROES

As a rule, there are many different versions of almost any mythological tale. The compact format of this glossary does not permit us to provide an exhaustive list of versions and sources. Doubtless, assiduous students of mythology will find much to add to our brief descriptions, but we hope these will nonetheless provide a useful reference.

- Achilles**—Greek. Son of Peleus and Thetis. Noblest Greek warrior at Troy.
- Actaeon**—Greek. A hunter who comes upon Diana while she is bathing, and is then turned into stag and torn apart by hounds.
- Adad**—Babylonian god of storms and winds.
- Adonis**—Greek god of vegetation, who is loved by Aphrodite. Can be compared to Egyptian Osiris and Mesopotamian Tammuz.
- Aegisthus, Aegisthos**—Greek. Lover of Clytemnestra and killed by Orestes, her son.
- Aeneas**—Greek. Son of Aphrodite and Anchises. Warrior in the Trojan War and supposed ancestor of the Romans. Hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*.
- Aeolus**—Greek god of the winds, also known as Hippotades.
- Æsir**—Race of Norse gods led by Odin and Thor, living at Asgard.
- Agadzagadza**—Uganda. Lizard who pretends to be the sky god Mugulu, but actually brings about death on earth.
- Agamemnon**—Greek. King of Mycenae; husband of Clytemnestra, father of Iphigenia. Murdered by Clytemnestra for having Iphigenia put to death.
- Agni**—Hindu. Vedic god of fire.
- Aidoneus**—Greek. Another name for Hades, usually in poetry.
- Air-Spirit People**—Native American. Insects; earliest creatures in the Navajo Creation Story. Because of their evil ways, they are forced to wander until they finally escape to higher worlds by flying through a hole in the sky.
- Alcmene**—Greek mortal. Wife of Amphytrion, mother of Heracles by Zeus, granddaughter of Perseus and Andromeda.
- All-Father**—Norse. Another name for Odin.
- Alpheus**—Greek. Hunter who became a river god after pursuing Arethusa, the water nymph who was changed into a spring to escape him.
- Amazons**—Greek. Tribe of warrior women thought to live near the Black Sea.
- Amma**—Egg-shaped creation goddess of Mali. Gives birth to two sets of twins; makes earth from a fragment of the placenta of Ogo, one of her creations.
- Amphitrite**—Greek sea goddess, daughter of Nereus, wife of Poseidon.
- Amphytrion**—Greek. Husband of Alcmene, who was the mother of Heracles.
- Amun**—Egyptian god worshiped in Thebes and Hermopolis. He caused the ram-headed Khnum to create humans from clay.
- Anansi, Nancy**—West African. A trickster figure who can use magic for both good and evil purposes. Many African-American tales about Anansi come from the Ashanti people of Ghana.
- Andromache**—Greek. Wife of Hector, mother of Astyanax, daughter of Eëtion.
- Andromeda**—Greek. Daughter of Cassiopeia and King Cephus of Ethiopia.
- Antigone**—Greek. Daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta; walled up in a tomb as punishment for burying her dead brother, Polyneices. Also sister of Ismene and Eteocles.
- Anu**—Akkadian. Father of the gods; god of the heavens. Counterpart of Sumerian An.
- Anubis**—Egyptian god of the dead who weighs the hearts of the deceased. Portrayed with the head of a jackal. Son of Nephthys and Osiris. Presided over funerals and conducted souls to the underworld.
- Anunnaki**—Sumerian grouping of gods of fertility and gods of the underworld under An and Enlil. They serve as judges, for example, of when men are to die.
- Aphrodite**—Greek goddess of love, born from the sea. Mother of Eros. Counterpart of Roman Venus.
- Apollo**—Greek god of the sun, poetry, music, and medicine. Son of Zeus and Leto, twin of Artemis, father of Asclepius. Worshiped at the oracle at Delphi. Also known as Phoebus.
- Ares**—Greek god of war. Son of Zeus and Hera. Counterpart of Roman Mars.
- Arges**—Greek. One of the Cyclopes. According to Hesiod, a son of Uranus and Gaia.
- Ariadne**—Greek. Daughter of King Minos of Crete and Pasiphae, who gave Theseus the thread that allowed him to escape from the Labyrinth. She was deserted by Theseus on Naxos and later married Dionysus.
- Artemis**—Greek goddess of the hunt. Daughter of Leto and Zeus, sister of Apollo. Associated also with the moon and virginity.
- Aruru**—Akkadian earth goddess who assisted Marduk in creating humans. Counterpart of Sumerian Ki.
- Asa-Thor**—Norse. Son of Thor and his wife, Earth.
- Asclepius**—Greek god of medicine and healing. Son of Apollo; pupil of Chiron, the centaur. Counterpart of Roman Aesclepius.
- Ask**—Norse. First man. Created from an ash tree.
- Astarte**—Phoenician goddess of love and fertility who was associated with Egyptian Hathor.
- Astraea**—Greek goddess of justice. Daughter of Zeus and Themis. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the last of the immortals.
- Athena**—Greek goddess of wisdom and war. Daughter of Zeus, born from his head. Counterpart of Roman Minerva.
- Atlas**—Greek Titan. Son of Iapetus and Clymene. Father of the Hesperides, the Hyades, and the Pleiades. Prometheus' brother, who fought against Zeus and the Olympian gods. He was punished by having to hold the earth and heavens on his back.
- Atropos**—Greek Fate who cuts the thread of human life, bringing about its end.
- Atum**—Egyptian sun god who conducts the final judgment before Osiris. By himself, father of Shu and Tefnut.
- Aurora**—Roman goddess of the dawn. Counterpart of Greek Eos.
- Aya**—Mesopotamian. Dawn, bride of the sun gods.
- Bacchae**—Greek. Female attendants of Dionysus, usually women who participated in orgiastic rites and wild dancing through the mountains called the Bacchanalia.
- Bacchus**—Roman god of wine and revelry. Counterpart of Greek Dionysus.
- Baldr, Balder**—Norse god of light and peace. Son of Odin and Frigg, husband of Nanna; Hodr unwittingly killed him.
- Bastet**—Egyptian goddess who often had the features of a cat. Later identified with Isis.
- Bellerophon**—Greek. Grandson of Sisyphus. Corinthian hero who accomplishes a series of tasks with the help of Pegasus, the winged horse, including killing the Chimera.

- Berserks**—Norse. Warriors who battled with extraordinary fury and energy.
- Bharata**—Hindu. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Rama's half-brother, by Kaikeyi.
- Bor**—Norse, Æsir. Father of Odin.
- Boreas**—Greek north wind, one of the four winds ruled by Zephyrus. Counterpart of Roman Aquilo.
- Bow-Priests**—Southwestern Native American spiritual leaders. As the two brothers in the Zuni Emergence Myth, they use long prayersticks to help their people ascend to the next world.
- Bragi**—Norse god of poetry and elegance. Son of Odin and husband of Idun.
- Briareus**—Greek. Monstrous child of Gaia and Uranus, one of the Hecatoncheires.
- Brontes**—Greek. One of the Cyclopes. Child of Gaia and Uranus.
- Buri**—Norse. First of the gods, ancestor of the Æsir created when the cow Audhumla licked the block of ice in the *Prose Edda*. Father of Bor, who is the father of Odin.
- Cadmus, Cadmos**—Greek. Brother of Europa. Legendary founder of the Greek city of Thebes.
- Centaur**—Greek. Creatures with the upper body of a man and the lower body of a horse, who lived mainly in Thessaly.
- Cerberus, Cerberos**—Greek. Three-headed dog which guards the entrance to Hades.
- Ceres**—Roman goddess of agriculture. Counterpart of the Greek Demeter.
- Chaos**—Greek. The infinite, void or the shapeless universe before creation. Also, the deity ruling it.
- Charon**—Greek. Boatman who ferries the dead across the River Styx into Hades.
- Chiron, Cheiron**—Greek. Centaur who taught many Greek heroes, including Achilles, Asclepius, and Jason.
- Circe**—Greek. Enchantress on the island of Aea where she turns men into swine. Daughter of Helios.
- Clotho**—Greek Fate who spins the thread of life.
- Clytemnestra**—Greek. Daughter of Leda and Zeus, wife of Agamemnon, mother of Orestes.
- Cottos, Kottos**—Greek. Monstrous child of Gaia and Uranus. One of the Hecatoncheires.
- Council of the Gods**—Roman. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, it decides to destroy humankind by a flood.
- Coyote**—Native American. Trickster figure and culture hero; sometimes a malevolent shape-changer. Often travels with a companion such as a fox or bear; credited with introducing work, pain, and death to the world.
- Cretan Bull**—Greek. Savage bull transported by Heracles and allowed to roam near Marathon until captured by Theseus.
- Cronos, Kronos**—Greek. Head of the Titans. Son of Uranus and Gaia, father of Zeus. Counterpart of Roman Saturn.
- Cupid**—Roman god of love. Son of Venus and Mercury or Mars. Counterpart of Greek Eros. Also called Amor.
- Cybele**—Asia Minor. Mother goddess.
- Cyclopes**—Greek. One-eyed giants Brontes, Arges, and Steropes. According to Hesiod, sons of Uranus and Gaia.
- Cythera**—Greek. An epithet of Aphrodite because of her birth from the sea near Cythera. Also the name of a shrine devoted to Aphrodite off the coast of the Peloponneses, where she was said to have been born.
- Daedalus, Daedalos**—Greek. Athenian architect who built the Labyrinth on Crete for King Minos. He made wings for himself and his son Icarus for their escape from Crete.
- Daphne**—Greek nymph. Daughter of the river god Peneus. She was changed into a tree to escape the advances of Apollo, who loved her.
- Dasaratha**—Hindu. Rama's father. King of Ayodhya.
- Deianeira**—Greek. Wife of Heracles, who poisoned him unwittingly by giving him a shirt dipped in the poisoned blood of Nessus. Daughter of Achelous.
- Demeter**—Greek goddess of agriculture, especially grain. Daughter of Cronus and Rhea, mother of Persephone by Zeus. Counterpart of Roman Ceres.
- Demophöon**—Greek. Son of King Celeus of Eleusis and Metaneira; nursed by Demeter.
- Deucalion**—Greek. Son of Prometheus. He and his wife, Pyrrha, were the sole survivors of the Flood.
- Diana**—Ancient Greek goddess of woods and fertility. Later, by identification with the Greek goddess Artemis, she also became goddess of the moon and healing.
- Dionysus, Dionysos**—Greek god of fertility, dreams, and wine. Son of Zeus and Semele, whose father was Cadmus. Counterpart of Roman Bacchus.
- Donar**—Germanic god of thunder, corresponding to the Norse god Thor. Associated with Roman Hercules.
- Ea**—Akkadian god of wisdom and fresh waters; one of the creators of mankind. Son of Apsu and Marduk. Counterpart of Sumerian Enki.
- Einherjar**—Norse. Spirits of dead warriors who follow Odin to fight on Vigrid at Ragnarok.
- Embla**—Norse. First woman; created by the gods from a tree.
- Enki**—Sumerian god of fresh water and wisdom. Helper of humans. Counterpart of Akkadian Ea.
- Enkidu**—Sumerian. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, human created by Ninsun as a companion for her son, Gilgamesh.
- Enlil, Ellil**—Sumerian king of the gods; god of earth and wind. Father of Ninurta.
- Ennugi**—Mesopotamian. Guardian god of canals.
- Eos**—Greek goddess of dawn. Counterpart of Roman Aurora.
- Epimetheus**—Greek. Son of Iapetus and Clymene, brother of Prometheus and Atlas, husband of Pandora.
- Erebos, Erebus**—Greek. Son of Chaos, brother and husband of Nyx (night). Personification of darkness and the unknown. Also, region of darkness in the underworld where the dead reside.
- Ereshkigal**—Sumerian and Akkadian goddess of death. Queen of the underworld, sister of Ishtar, spouse of Nergal, mother of Ninazu. Another name for Irkalla.
- Eros**—Greek god of love. According to Hesiod, one of the first gods. Counterpart of Roman Cupid.
- Esu-Elegbara**—West African. Trickster who interprets the wishes of the gods to humans and guards the barrier which separates the worlds of the humans and the gods.
- Eteocles**—Greek mortal. Son of Oedipus and Jocasta, who killed his brother Polyneices in a civil war and then died of his wounds.
- Europa**—Greek. Daughter of the king of Phoenicia and Telephassa, sister of Cadmus. Abducted to Crete by Zeus in the form of a bull; Minos was one of her children with Zeus.
- Eurydice**—Greek. Bride of Orpheus confined eternally to Hades after Orpheus failed in his attempt to rescue her. Also called Agriope.
- Eurystheus**—Greek. King of Mycenae who imposed Heracles' labors.
- Faro**—Bambara. Creator of seven heavens.
- Fates**—Greek goddesses of destiny: Clotho, Atropos, and Lachesis. The Greeks called them Moirai, and the Romans called them Parcae.
- Fenrir**—Norse. Monstrous wolf who tries to eat the sun. Son of Loki and Angerboda. At Ragnarok, he swallows Odin and is killed by Vidar.
- Freyja, Freya**—Norse. Vanir fertility goddess who claims half of the fallen warriors in battle. (Odin claims the other half.) Wife of Od, mother of Hnoss, sister of Freyr, daughter of Njord. A shapechanger.
- Freyr, Frey**—Norse. Son of the wind and sea god Njord and brother of Freyja, who controls the sun, rain, and harvest. Originally associated with the Vanir, later with the Æsir. Fertility god of the Swedes in eleventh century.
- Frigg, Frigga**—Norse. Goddess of the heavens and queen of Asgard. Wife of Odin, mother of Baldr. Associated with childbirth.
- Furies, Furiae**—Roman goddesses of vengeance. Counterparts of the Greek Erinyes or Eumenides.

- Gaia, Gaea, Ge**—Greek goddess. Mother Earth. Mother and wife of Uranus; by Uranus, mother of the Titans, Cyclopes, and Hecatonchieres.
- Ganymede**—Greek. Cupbearer of the gods on Mt. Olympus. Son of Tros and Callirhoe. He was taken to Olympus by Zeus and later made immortal.
- Ge**—Another name for the Greek earth goddess Gaia.
- Geb**—Egyptian earth god. Father of Isis and Osiris.
- Gefjon**—Norse. Æsir giantess.
- Giants, Gigantes**—Ancient Greek. Monster children of Gaia who fought the Olympians and were defeated.
- Gilgamesh**—Sumerian. Legendary king, hero of Sumerian and Babylonian epics.
- Graces**—Greek goddesses of grace and beauty: Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia. Daughters of Eurynome and Zeus. Counterparts of the Roman Gratiae.
- Gyges**—Greek. Monstrous child of Uranus and Gaia.
- Hades, Aidoneus**—Greek god of the underworld. Son of Cronus and Rhea, husband of Persephone. Known as Pluto to the Romans. Counterpart of the Roman Dis. Also, a name for the underworld itself.
- Hanuman**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, a noble monkey who leads the monkey army to fight for Rama.
- Harmonia**—Greek. Daughter of Ares and Aphrodite, wife of Cadmus.
- Hathor**—Egyptian goddess of fertility, love, and joy, often represented with the head, horns, or ears of a cow. In some stories, she is the mother of Horus; in others, his consort.
- Hebe**—Greek goddess of youth and spring. Daughter of Zeus and Hera, later wife of Heracles.
- Hecate, Hekate**—Greek. Goddess of the moon, often seen carrying a torch. Also associated with Gaia, the earth, and with the underworld.
- Hecatonchieres**—Greek. Monster sons of Uranus and Gaia who helped Zeus defeat the Titans.
- Hector**—Greek hero in the *Iliad*. Son of Priam of Troy and Hecuba; husband of Andromache.
- Hecuba**—Greek. Wife of King Priam of Troy; mother of Hector, Paris, and Polydorus.
- Heimdall**—Norse god of dawn and light who guards Asgard. At Ragnarok, he blows his horn Gjoll to awaken the gods.
- Hel**—Norse goddess. Daughter of Loki and Angerboda. Rules over Niflheim, the kingdom of death. Also another name for Niflheim, the underworld for the wicked.
- Helen of Troy**—Greek mortal. Daughter of Zeus and Leda, wife of Menelaus of Sparta, sister of Castor, Pollux, and Clytemnestra.
- Helios**—Ancient Greek god of the sun. Son of the Titan Hyperion and Theia, father of Circe and Pasiphae. Represented as driving a chariot across the sky. Counterpart of the Roman Sol.
- Hephaistos**—Greek god of fire, forges, metalwork, and handicrafts. Son of Zeus and Hera, husband of Aphrodite. Counterpart of the Roman Vulcan.
- Hera**—Greek. Queen of the Olympian goddesses. Daughter of Cronus and Rhea, wife of Zeus, mother of Hephaistos, Ares, and Hebe. Counterpart of the Roman Juno.
- Heracles**—Greek. Son of Zeus and Alcmene who gained immortality by completing twelve labors. Counterpart of the Roman Hercules.
- Hermes**—Greek god of travelers, commerce, flocks, and cunning. Son of Zeus and Maia; he conducts souls to the underworld. As a messenger god, he is the counterpart of Roman Mercury.
- Hermod**—Norse. Son of Odin. Rode to Hel to negotiate the return of Baldr to Asgard.
- Hesperides**—Greek nymphs. Daughters of Erebus and Nyx, or of Atlas and Hesperus, or of Phorcys and Ceto. According to Hesiod, guardians of the Golden Apples.
- Hippolyte**—Greek. Daughter of Ares and Queen of the Amazons.
- Hodr**—Norse god who was blind. He was tricked by Loki into throwing a mistletoe branch which killed Baldr.
- Horus**—Egyptian sun god usually portrayed as a falcon or as a man with the head of a falcon. He represented the living king of Egypt. In one of his forms, he was also known as Harpocrates, a child nursing at the breast of Isis. Associated with the Greek Apollo.
- Humbaba, Huwawa**—Sumerian. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, giant guardian of the cedar forest, slain by Enkidu.
- Hyacinthus**—Greek youth loved by, and accidentally killed by, Apollo. The hyacinth flower sprang from his blood.
- Hyades**—Greek nymphs. Sisters of the Pleiades who nurtured the baby Dionysus and as a reward were placed among the stars. Seven stars that make up the face of the bull in the constellation Taurus.
- Hyperion**—Greek Titan. Son of Uranus and Gaia; father of Helios, Eos, and Selene by his sister Theia. Sometimes identified with Helios and Apollo.
- Hyperionides**—Greek. Another name for Helios, the sun; the name means he was the son of Hyperion.
- Iangura**—Nyanga Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sister of Mwindo and wife of Mukiti, the water serpent.
- Iapetos**—Greek Titan. Son of Uranus and Gaia; father of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Atlas by Clymene.
- Indra**—Hindu. Vedic chief god, god of thunder and rain. Leads warriors in battle, sitting in a chariot pulled through the air by green horses.
- Iolaos**—Greek. Heracles' half-brother and son of Iphicles, who accompanied him on some of his adventures.
- Iphicles**—Greek. Son of Alcmene and Amphitryon. Heracles' twin brother, whose birth was hastened by Hera because Zeus had declared that the child about to be born would be the next king of Mycenae.
- Iphigeneia**—Greek. Daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, sister of Orestes and Electra. Agamemnon sacrificed her to Artemis to ensure good winds to take the Greek ships to Troy; Artemis rescued her and she became one of the goddess' priestesses.
- Iris**—Roman goddess of the rainbow. Juno's messenger.
- Irkalla**—Mesopotamian. Another name for Ereshkigal, Queen of the underworld.
- Ishtar**—Assyrian and Babylonian. Goddess of love, fertility, and war. Daughter of Anu. Identified with the Phoenician goddess Astarte and the Sumerian Inanna.
- Isis**—Egyptian goddess of fertility and the moon. Daughter of Geb (earth) and Nut (sky). Mother of Horus, sister and wife of Osiris. Usually represented as a woman with a cow's horns and a solar disk between them. Associated with Greek Artemis.
- Ismene**—Greek. Daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta; sister of Antigone, Eteocles, and Polyneices. She did not join Antigone in the forbidden burial of their slain brother, Polyneices.
- Jatayu**—Hindu. The celestial eagle who guards Sita for Rama; later killed by Ravana.
- Jocasta, Jokasta**—Greek. Wife of King Laius of Thebes, mother and wife of Oedipus. Mother, by Oedipus, of Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles, and Polyneices.
- Jove**—Roman supreme deity. Counterpart of the Greek Zeus. Also known as Jupiter.
- Juno**—Roman queen of the gods, protector of women and marriage. Daughter of Saturn, sister and wife of Jupiter. Counterpart of Greek goddess Hera.
- Jupiter**—Roman. Son of Saturn and Ops. Counterpart of Greek Zeus. Also known as Jove.
- Kaikeyi**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, one of King Dasaratha's three wives. Stepmother of Rama, who forced him into exile so her own son, Bharata, could rule.
- Kaikuzi**—Uganda. Son of Mugulu. In the Creation Story, he helps Kintu in trying to overcome Warumbe, but fails.
- Kali**—Hindu goddess of destruction. Wife of Shiva in his aspect as destroyer. She represents the all-devouring aspect of Devi, the Hindu mother goddess, but also represents positive creativity. Also known as Chandī Durga, Parvati, Sakti, Uma, and Mata.
- Kasiyembe**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Mwindo Epic, Mukiti's head man, who is charged with guarding langura.

- Kausalalya**—Hindu. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, one of King Dasaratha's three wives. Mother of Rama.
- Kintu**—Uganda. Semilegendary first king, and also a legendary immortal figure involved in the creation of the world.
- Kore, Core**—Greek. Persephone, especially as a symbol of virginity. "Kore" means "maiden."
- Kronides**—Greek. Another name for Zeus, meaning "son of Cronus."
- Labdacus**—Greek. Father of Laius, grandson of Cadmus. Legendary king of Thebes.
- Lachesis**—Greek Fate who determines the length of the thread of life. A personification of destiny.
- Laius**—Greek. King of Thebes. Great-grandson of Cadmus, husband of Jocasta, father of Oedipus, by whom he was killed.
- Lakshmana**—Hindu. Rama's half-brother by Sumitra. Made immortal because he took his own life to spare Rama from death.
- Laomedon**—Greek. King of Troy. Father of Priam and Hesione.
- Leda**—Greek. Mother of Castor, Pollux, Helen, and Clytemnestra by Zeus, who came to her in the form of a swan. Wife of King Tyndareus of Sparta.
- Leto**—Greek. Mother of Apollo and Artemis by Zeus. Counterpart of the Roman Latona.
- Leucothea**—Greek sea goddess who protected sailors. In the *Odyssey*, she saved Odysseus after Poseidon capsized his vessel.
- Leviathan**—Judeo-Christian. Biblical sea monster that embodies all evil.
- Lisa**—Benin. Fon (Dahomey) people. Son of Nana Boluku, who completes the task of creating the universe with his sister Mawu.
- Loki**—Norse trickster god of discord and mischief who lives in Asgard. Son of Laufey and the giant Farbauti, brother of Byleist and Helbindi, husband of Sigyn, and father of Nari. Also the father of Fenrir, Jormungand (the Midgard Serpent), and Hel by the giantess Angrboda. He tricked Hodr into killing Baldr.
- Loricus**—Icelandic. Nobleman of Thrace. Foster father of Thor. In the *Prose Edda*, Thor kills Loricus and his wife and takes over Thrace.
- Lugulbanda**—Mesopotamian. A king of Uruk, god and shepherd, father and protector of Gilgamesh.
- Maenads**—Greek. Female worshippers of Dionysus. Also called Bacchantes.
- Maia**—Greek. Eldest of the Pleiades. Daughter of Atlas and Pleione, mother of Hermes by Zeus.
- Marduk**—Babylonian head god, son of Ea. Originally a god of thunderstorms; later, a chief Sumerian deity. Creator of the universe from the body of Tiamat.
- Maricha**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, Rakshasa demon, Ravana's adviser.
- Mars**—Roman god of war and agriculture. Counterpart of the Greek Ares.
- Mawu**—Benin. Fon (Dahomey) people. Daughter of Nana Boluku, who completes the task of creating the universe with her brother Lisa.
- Medea**—Greek Enchantress. Daughter of Aeëtes, wife of Jason and then King Aegeus of Athens, niece of Circe. Helped Jason get the Golden Fleece and killed their children when he deserted her.
- Medusa**—Greek. Monster daughter of Phorcys and Ceto who could turn people to stone by looking at them. She is the only of the three Gorgons to be mortal, and was killed by Perseus.
- Megara**—Greek. Daughter of Creon, wife of Heracles. Heracles killed their children in a fit of madness.
- Menelaus**—Greek. Husband of Helen, brother of Agamemnon. King of Sparta at the time of the Trojan War.
- Mercury**—Roman god of commerce, travelers, science, and thievery. Son of Jupiter and Maia. Counterpart of Greek Hermes. Also known as Hermanubis in Rome, a combination of Hermes and Anubis.
- Metaneira**—Greek. Wife of King Celeus of Eleusis who took Demeter in to nurse her child.
- Metis**—Greek Titan. First wife of Zeus, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, mother of Athena. Athena was born from Zeus' head after he had swallowed Metis. Her name means "wisdom" or "thought."
- Midgard Serpent**—Norse serpent curled around the edge of the earth (Midgard). Son of Loki and the giantess Angrboda. Killed by Thor at Ragnarok. Poison from the Serpent then kills Thor.
- Mimir**—Norse being who lives in the roots of Yggdrasil and guards a spring. Odin receives great wisdom through his advice.
- Minos**—Greek. Son of Zeus by a human mother, Europa. King of Crete who ordered Daedalus to build the Labyrinth. Husband of Pasiphae, father of Ariadne and Androgeus. After his death, he became a judge in the lower world.
- Minotaur**—Greek monster offspring of Pasiphae and King Minos. He lived in the Cretan Labyrinth, feeding on human flesh, until Theseus, helped by Ariadne, killed him.
- Mnemosyne**—Greek Titan. Goddess of memory. Daughter of Uranus and Gaia, mother of the Muses by Zeus.
- Mugulu, Gulu**—Uganda. An important sky deity. Father of Warumbe, the god of death.
- Muisa**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. A god of the underworld. Father of Kahindo, spirit of good fortune.
- Mukiti**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Water serpent who marries Iangura, sister of Mwindo.
- Muses**—Greek. Nine sister goddesses of arts, sciences, poetry, and song: Calliope, Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, and Urania. Daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Counterparts of the Roman Camenae.
- Musoka**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Female water spirit for whom the Nyanga have a special cult.
- Mwindo**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Hero who exhibits miraculous traits even at birth and performs extraordinary deeds with the help of the gods.
- Nambi**—Uganda. Daughter of Mugulu (Gulu), an important sky god.
- Namtar**—Sumerian and Akkadian demon of the underworld; the negative aspect of fate. Personification of death.
- Nana Boluku**—Benin. Androgynous creator of the universe for the Fon (Dahomey) people. Daughter Mawu and son Lisa complete the creation.
- Narcissus**—Greek. Beloved of Echo. Son of the river god Cephisus and the nymph Lirioppe. Fell in love with his own reflection in a pool and wasted away from unfulfilled desire.
- Nephilim**—Judeo-Christian. Biblical reference to a bygone race of mighty creatures or giants.
- Nephtys**—Egyptian. Sister of Isis and Osiris; sister and wife of Seth.
- Neptune**—Roman god of the sea. Counterpart of Greek Poseidon.
- Nereids**—Greek. Group of 50 sea nymphs who were the daughters of Nereus and the Oceanid Doris.
- Nergel**—Akkadian. Ruled the world of the dead with Ereshkigal. He helped cause the Flood by pulling out the great dams.
- Nerthus**—Germanic goddess of fertility, joy, and devotion. Visited her people in a wagon. Later, her characteristics are associated with Frey and the Vanir.
- Nessus**—Greek. Centaur killed by Heracles as he attempted to seduce his wife, Deianeira. Before he died, Nessus gave her the poisoned shirt that caused Heracles' death.
- Nidhogg**—Norse. Serpent in Niflheim who gnaws at the root of Yggdrasil, the World Tree.
- Ninsun**—Sumerian goddess noted for wisdom. Wife of Lugulbanda, mother of Gilgamesh.
- Ninurta**—Sumerian and Babylonian god of war, wells, and irrigation; the south wind. Son of Enlil.
- Njord**—Norse. Vanir god of ships and the sea. Father of Freyr and Freyja. Husband of Skadi.
- Nkuba**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Husband of Chinawezi, the mother of all things; father of Gihanga, a

- cultural hero who brought prosperity and founded the mythical kingdom of Rwanda. He and Chinawezi divided the world, and he moved to the sky to become the god of lightning, bringing life-giving rain.
- Noah**—Judaean-Christian. Father of the only family spared by the Flood in Genesis.
- Norns**—Norse equivalents of the Greek Fates, goddesses who control the destinies of humans. Counterparts of the Anglo-Saxon Wyrð and similar to the Greek Moirai and the Roman Parcae.
- Nut**—Egyptian goddess of the sky. Mother of Osiris.
- Nyamwindo**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mother of Mwindo.
- Nymphs**—Greek. Protective lesser deities dwelling in rivers, streams, fountains, mountains, and woods.
- Oceanus**—Greek Titan. Son of Uranus and Gaia. With Tethys, his wife, father of the river gods, and nymphs of the rivers and seas.
- Ocyrhoe, Okyrhoe**—Greek. Daughter of Charon.
- Odin**—Norse. Æsir god of war, wisdom, and poetry. Husband of Frigg, son of Bor and Bestla. Counterpart of the Germanic Wotan and Anglo-Saxon Wodan.
- Odysseus**—Greek. King of Ithaca. Husband of Penelope, father of Telemachus. Leader in the Trojan War and hero of the *Odyssey*. His Latin name is Ulysses.
- Oedipus**—Greek. Son of Laius of Thebes and Jocasta. Murders Laius and unwittingly marries his mother. With her, he fathers Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles, and Polyneices.
- Ogo, Yurugu**—Mali. Consort of Amma in creating humans.
- Orpheus**—Greek god of music and poetry. Son of Calliope, and husband of Eurydice, whom he followed into the underworld after her death. Hades gave permission for him to lead her back to earth, but he violated the interdiction not to look back.
- Osiris**—Egyptian chief deity, judge of the dead. Killed and dismembered by his brother Seth, and reassembled by his sister and wife Isis. Usually represented as a man with a beard wearing an *atef* crown and partly wrapped as a mummy.
- Pan**—Greek god of the woods, fields, and flocks. Represented with the upper body of a man and the legs (and sometimes horns and ears) of a goat.
- Pandora**—Greek. The first woman, created by Hephaistos at the command of Zeus. Wife of Epimetheus. She opened the box (or jar) that had been given her, unwittingly releasing all evils that could affect been humans.
- Paris**—Greek. Son of Priam of Troy and Hecuba, brother of Cassandra. Helped by Aphrodite, to whom he had awarded the apple of discord in a beauty contest. Abducted Helen, causing the Trojan War.
- Pasiphae**—Greek. Wife of King Minos of Crete, mother of Ariadne, and of the Minotaur by the Cretan Bull.
- Patroclus**—Greek. Hero in the Trojan War. Son of Menoetius, friend of Achilles. He was slain by Hector.
- Pemba**—Bambara. Mali. Creator of earth with Faro, who descended from the sky. Twin of sister Musokoroni.
- Penelope**—Greek. Wife of Odysseus who rejected suitors while he was gone, fighting at Troy.
- Pentheus**—Greek. Son of Agave and Echion, King of Thebes. In Euripides' play, *The Bacchae*, he is forced to accept the worship of Dionysus.
- Persephone**—Greek. Daughter of Demeter by Zeus. Abducted to Hades, but allowed to return to earth for part of the year. Counterpart of the Roman Proserpina.
- Perseus**—Greek. Son of Zeus by the human Danae. Founder-king of Mycenae. Slayer of the Gorgon Medusa with the help of Hermes and Athena. He later saved Andromeda from a sea monster.
- Phaethon**—Greek. Son of Helios and Clymene. Borrowed the chariot of the sun and was struck down by Zeus when he came dangerously close to earth.
- Phoebe**—Greek Titan. Daughter of Uranus and Gaia, mother of Leto. Later identified with the moon, Artemis, and the Roman goddess Diana.
- Phoebus**—Greek. Epithet of Apollo as the sun god. The name means "radiant" or "bright."
- Pholus**—Greek. Centaur killed accidentally by Odysseus' poisoned arrow.
- Pluto**—Greek name for Hades, meaning "wealthy one" or "wealth giver."
- Polyneices**—Greek. Son of Oedipus and Jocasta, brother of Antigone, Ismene, and Eteocles. He killed his brother Eteocles in a civil war, and died of his wounds.
- Poseidon**—Greek god of the sea and earthquakes. Son of Cronus and Rhea, brother of Zeus, husband of Amphitrite, father of Pegasus by Medusa. Counterpart of the Roman Neptune.
- Powakas**—Southwest Native American. Evil creatures that cause others to become evil. In the Hopi Creation Story, almost all are shut out of society.
- Priam**—Trojan. King at the time of the Trojan War. Husband of Hecuba, father of Hector, Paris, Polydorus, and Cassandra. Killed during the capture of Troy.
- Prometheus**—Greek Titan. Son of Iapetus and Clymene, brother of Epimetheus and Atlas, father of Deucalion or Pyrrha. Stole fire from Olympus for humans and was punished by Zeus by being chained to a rock where an eagle ate his liver daily. Rescued by Heracles. The name means "forethought."
- Proserpina**—Roman counterpart of the Greek Persephone.
- Proteus**—Greek god of the sea. Served Poseidon; a shapechanger.
- Psyche**—Greek. A personification of the soul who, in the form of a beautiful girl, was loved by Eros (Cupid) and became his wife.
- Ptah**—Egyptian god who created the universe. Menes, the King of the first dynasty, established his temple at Memphis.
- Pyrrha**—Greek. Daughter of Epimetheus. With her husband, Deucalion, sole survivor of the Flood.
- Rakshasas**—Hindu. Demons who are hostile to humans. They are shapechangers who sometimes eat human flesh. In the *Ramayana*, Ravana belongs to this group.
- Rama**—Hindu. Hero of the *Ramayana*. Any of the three avatars of Vishnu: Balarama, Parashurama, or Ramachandra.
- Ravana**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, a rakshasa, a monster with 10 heads and 20 arms. King of Ceylon who abducts Sita and is later defeated by her husband, Rama.
- Raven**—Native American. One of the animal deities of many peoples in the northwest area of North America who bring fire, rain, natural features, and order to society. They are tricksters and sometimes also shapechangers.
- Re, Ra**—Egyptian. A sun god whose cult was centered in Heliopolis; worshipped throughout ancient Egypt as the creator of the universe. Usually represented as a falcon-headed man with the solar disk and *uraeus* (a rearing cobra with a swollen neck) on his head.
- Rhea**—Greek Titan, mother goddess. Daughter of Uranus and Gaia; sister and wife of Cronus; mother of Zeus, Demeter, Hades, Hera, Poseidon, and Hestia.
- Romulus**—Roman. Founder of Rome in 753 B.C.E. and first king. Son of Mars and Rhea Silvia. With his twin brother Remus, he was abandoned, nursed by a she-wolf, and raised by a shepherd. Later made into a god by the Romans.
- Satrughna**—Hindu. Rama's half-brother by Sumitra; twin of Lakshmana.
- Saturn**—Italo-Roman god. "Hellenized" in the third century B.C.E. Counterpart of the Greek Cronus; father of Jupiter and ruler during the Golden Age.
- Satyrs**—Greek. Wild woodland deities who are part human, part horse, and sometimes part goat. As attendants of Dionysus (Bacchus), they are preoccupied with drinking and lovemaking. Counterparts of the Roman Fauns.
- Semele**—Greek. Daughter of Cadmus of Thebes and Harmonia, mother of Dionysus by Zeus.

- Seth**—Egyptian. Osiris' brother and murderer. Represented as a donkey or other mammal and considered a personification of the wind. According to Plutarch, counterpart of Greek Typhon.
- Shamash**—Mesopotamian sun god. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, he provides fierce winds to help Gilgamesh and Enkidu defeat Humbaba.
- Sheburungu**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Name given to Ongo, the creator god.
- Shemwindo**—Nyanga. Democratic Republic of the Congo. Banyanga chief, father of Mwindo, brother of Iyngura.
- Shiva, Siva**—Vedic, and later Hindu, god of destruction, sensuality, and aestheticism. His name means "the Destroyer." Third member of the Trimurti, with Brahma, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Preserver. Sometimes a helper of humans.
- Shu**—Egyptian god of the air. Created by Atum. Father of Nut.
- Siddhartha**—Vedic. Epithet of Buddha meaning "he who has attained his goal."
- Siduri**—Mesopotamian goddess of brewing and wisdom. Advises Gilgamesh about mortality, as well as revealing how he might find Utnapishtim.
- Sif**—Norse goddess. Wife of Thor.
- Sisyphus**—Greek. Son of Aeolus. Mythical king of Corinth punished by having to roll a boulder uphill for eternity in Hades.
- Sita**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, wife of Rama, daughter of Mother Earth and King Janaka; incarnation of Lakshmi, Vishnu's wife. Abducted by Ravana and later rescued.
- Skadi**—Norse. Wife of Njord.
- Sphinx**—Greek. Monster usually represented with the head and breast of a woman, the body of a lion, and wings of an eagle. Lurked outside Thebes, killing all who could not solve her riddle. When Oedipus solved it, she killed herself.
- Spider Grandmother**—Native American. One of several spider figures who help humans, often by using magic.
- Steropes**—Greek. According to Hesiod, one of the Cyclopes.
- Strife**—Greek. Another name for Eris. Counterpart of the Roman Discordia.
- Sugreeva**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, Monkey King who helps Rama find Sita.
- Sumitra**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, one of Dasaratha's three wives and mother of Lakshmana and Satrugna, the half-brothers of Rama.
- Surt**—Norse. Muspell giant and ruler who is to defeat Freyr and destroy the world by fire at Ragnarok.
- Syrdon**—Legendary figure in Ossetic myth who shares many of Loki's characteristics.
- Tammuz**—Sumerian and Babylonian shepherd god who took the place of his wife Inanna or Ishtar in the underworld. The name means "faithful son."
- Tawa**—Native American. Hopi Sun Spirit, creator of the first world.
- Tefnut, Tefenet**—Egyptian. Moisture, created by Atum, along with Shu, Air, in the first stage of creation.
- Telemachus**—Greek. Son of Odysseus and Penelope. Helped his father kill Penelope's suitors.
- Teliko**—Bambara. Mali. Begotten by Yo, the creative spirit. Spirit of the air who gives birth to aquatic twins from whom come all humans.
- Tethys**—Greek. Titan daughter of Gaia and Uranus. Mother, by Oceanus, of Metis and Proteus.
- Themis**—Greek. Daughter of Gaia. Goddess of order, justice, and the seasons. Mother of the Fates.
- Theseus**—Greek. Son of Poseidon. Kills the Minotaur and marries the Amazon queen Hippolyte.
- Thetis**—Greek sea goddess. Achilles' mother.
- Thökk**—Norse. Giantess who refused to weep for the dead Baldr, thus preventing him from escaping from Hel.
- Thor**—Germanic. Æsir god of thunder, lightning, rain, and fertility, who lived in Asgard. Son of Odin. Known for his strength, size, and appetite.
- Thoth**—Egyptian god of writing and knowledge, represented as an ibis.
- Tiamat**—Babylonian goddess identified with water. Killed by Marduk, who created the universe from her body.
- Titans**—Greek. Monster children of Uranus and Gaia. Ruled the universe until they waged war with the Olympian gods and lost to Zeus.
- Tiwaz**—Ancient Germanic god of the sky and war. Associated with the Norse Tyr and Anglo-Saxon Tiu.
- Triton**—Greek sea god. Son of Poseidon and Amphritite. Represented with human head and upper body, and the lower body of a fish, blowing on a conch shell.
- Ture**—African tradition. Zande people. Spider trickster.
- Tyche**—Greek goddess of chance, therefore of luck. Associated with the Roman Fortuna.
- Typhon, Typhoon**—Greek monster. Opponent of Zeus, according to Hesiod.
- Tyr**—Norse god of war and strife. Son of Odin who lost his hand to Fenrir the wolf. Counterpart of the Anglo-Saxon Tiw.
- Uranus, Ouranos**—Greek. Original god of the sky. Husband and son of Gaia; with her, father of the Titans and Cyclopes.
- Urshanabi**—Mesopotamian. Ferryman of Gilgamesh to Utnapishtim in the land of Dilmun.
- Utgard-Loki**—Norse. In the *Prose Edda*, when Thor and Loki visit Giantland, Utgard-Loki uses trickery to defeat them in contests.
- Utnapishtim**—Mesopotamian. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the sole survivor of the flood with his wife. Made immortal by the gods. Gilgamesh seeks him out in order to gain immortality.
- Vali**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, elder brother of Sugreeva, who has banished him.
- Vali**—Norse, Æsir. Son of Odin who avenges Baldr.
- Valkyries**—Norse. Warrior goddesses, attendants of Odin who choose who will die in battle, and wait on the dead warriors in Valhalla.
- Vanir**—Norse family of gods, including Frey and Freyja, who granted peace and plenty.
- Venus**—Italo-Roman fertility goddess. Adopted by the Romans who identified her with the Greek Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty.
- Vidar**—Norse. Son of Odin who avenges his father by killing Fenrir at Ragnarok.
- Vishnu**—Hindu. Most important and supreme god, who was worshipped also in the earlier Vedic tradition.
- Vishwamritra**—Hindu. In the *Ramayana*, a sage who travels with Rama and counsels him.
- Vulcan**—Early Roman god of fires and metalworking. Son of Jupiter. Counterpart of the Greek Hephaistos.
- Water Spider**—Native American. One of several spider figures helpful to humans. In the Zuni Emergence Myth, the creature who helps the people locate the middle of the world.
- Wodan**—Anglo-Saxon chief god. Counterpart of the Norse Odin and Germanic Wotan. The Romans equated him with Mercury.
- Wotan**—Germanic chief god. Counterpart of Norse Odin and the Anglo-Saxon Wodan.
- Ymir**—Norse. Primeval giant killed by Odin and his brothers, who used parts of his body to create the world. Also called Aurgelmir.
- Yo**—Bambara. Creative spirit. Gives birth to Faro, Pemba, and Teliko.
- Zeus**—Greek. Chief sky god. Defeated the Titans to become ruler of the universe from Mt. Olympus. Counterpart of the Roman Jupiter.