

Actually Out of Africa: Exploring the Influence of Africa on Greece Through Mythology

Lavonia Duncan

Advised by Professor Hans-Friedrich Otto Mueller



Religious Influences

- Many Greek scholars went to Egyptian temples and universities to study. The knowledge they brought back would have been introduced to Greek society.
- Herodotus is known for using Greek Gods to identify their Egyptian counterparts.
- The Egyptians used appellations of 12 gods and the Greeks adapted this for the 12 gods of Olympus.
- The Egyptians being one of the oldest civilizations also assigned altars, images, and temples to their gods.



Deity Parallels According to Herodotus cont.

- Many of the parallels are made based on different elements related to the god.
- Ptah and Hephaestus
 - Ptah was said to have a deformity while Hephaestus was imperfect compared to the other gods and had a limp.
 - They were both creators and artisans. They were also patrons of artists.
- Horus and Apollo
 - They both had dominion over the sun.
 - Horus was the protector of Kings and the symbol of his eye is used as a protection amulet while Apollo was the protector of the young.
- Osiris and Dionysus
 - They both have some representation in fertility.
 - They both had a double birth and have phallic symbols.
- Isis and Demeter (Io)
 - Isis and Demeter were both mother goddesses of fertility of the earth. Demeter was the goddess of fertile and cultivated soil while Isis assisted Osiris with civilising Egypt.
 - Isis and Demeter had a similar story where they both suckled a baby and put him in flames to make him immortal but the mothers seeing their babies in flames, pulled the baby out and the rituals were stopped.
 - Isis' connection to Io came from the fact that her symbol was a cow and Io was turned into a cow.
- Set /Apophis and Typhon
 - Set and Typhon were both Gods who represented evil.
 - Set was the God of destruction and Typhon was the god of monsters and a monster himself.
- Bubastis and Artemis
 - Both goddesses related to the moon and were skilled hunters

Deity Parallels According to Herodotus cont.

- Neith and Athena
 - They were both warrior goddesses
 - They were both skilled in domestic arts like weaving
- Amun and Zeus
 - They were both the supreme ruler of the gods.
 - They both had domain over the sky.
- Hathor and Aphrodite
 - They were both goddesses of love and fertility.
 - They were both seen as the most beautiful.
- Khonsu and Herakles
 - They were both known as travellers. As a god of the moon he would travel across the sky the same way the moon does. Herakles was a hero who travelled to complete his trials and to protect people.
- Min and Pan
 - They were both fertility gods associated with nature.
 - They are both also associated with male sexuality
- Apis and Epaphus
 - Considered the same person because he was they were the son of Zeus and Io when she was a cow.
 - Known as the bull god and became a king of Egypt and was the founder of Memphis, Egypt.



Deity Parallels According to Herodotus

Greek God	Egyptian God
Hephaestus	Ptah
Apollo	Horus
Dionysus	Osiris
Demeter (Io)	Isis
Typhon	Set/ Apophis
Artemis	Bubastis (Bast)
Athena	Neith
Zeus	Amun
Aphrodite	Hathor
Herakles	Khonsu
Pan	Min
Epaphus	Apis

Conclusions

- Herodotus identifies some of the Egyptian Gods with their Greek parallels based on symbols, powers, and other similarities.
- Herodotus is hinting at a universality among gods of different cultures.
- He believes that the Greeks adopted many different features and figures from Egyptian Religion.

References

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