The Chronological Inconsistency in the Narratives of Selected Greek Myths

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Abstract: The research deals with the idea of the inconsistency that occurred among some Greek writers and mythographers regarding the chronological sequence in Greek mythical narratives. The study focuses on a few mythical narratives from the Heroic Age, particularly the myth of the Trojan War, because it includes some stories that are the best examples of chronological inconsistency, in addition to being the most well-known Greek myths ever. The researcher assumes that some Greek mythographers felt the chronological inconsistencies in some mythical narratives within their writings, and then they tried to refute these inconsistencies in different ways that we will discuss in this research. The research is divided into three main axes: the definition of the chronological sequence of myths, some examples of the chronological inconsistency of Greek myths, and the reasons for the existence of these chronological inconsistencies and an attempt to explain them. In this research, the researcher will rely on analytical and comparative approaches.

Keywords: Myth – Greeks – Mythographers – Chronology – Genealogy - Trojan War.

تناقض التسلسل الزمني في روايات بعض الأساطير الإغريقية

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الملخص: يتناول البحث فكرة التناقض الذي وقع فيه بعض الكُتَّاب ومدوني الأساطير من ناحية التسلسل الزمني في الروايات الأسطورية الإغريقية. ويركز البحث على بعض الروايات الأسطورية المتعلقة بالعصر البطولي، وبخاصةً أسطورةِ حرب طروادة؛ لأنها تحتوي على بعض الروايات التي تعد خير مثال على التناقض في التسلسل الزمني، بالإضافة إلى كونها أشهر الأساطير الإغريقية على الإطلاق. ويفترض الباحث شعور بعض مدوني الأساطير الإغريق بالتناقض الزمني في بعض الروايات الأسطورية في ثنايا كتاباتهم، ومن ثم محاولتهم دحض هذا التناقض بأساليب مختلفة سنتعرض لها في هذا البحث. وينقسم البحث إلى ثلاثة محاور رئيسة: التعريف بالتسلسل الزمني في الأساطير، وبعض الأمثلة على تناقض التسلسل الزمني في الأساطير الإغريقية، وأسباب وجود هذا التناقض الزمني في الأساطير ومحاولة تفسيره. وسوف يعتمد الباحث في هذا البحث على المنهجين التحليلي والمقارن.

الكلمات الدالة: أسطورة – الإغريق – مدوني الأساطير – التسلسل الزمني– الأنساب – حرب طروادة.

Introduction:

Greek myths were narrated in the form of episodes, which were supposed to be interrelated, sequential, and chronologically ordered. Despite the mythographers efforts to narrate each mythical episode in the chronological order of events and characters, they made some blunders that illustrate the chronological inconsistencies of these mythical narratives. There is no doubt that Greek myths contain many inconsistencies when it comes to chronological order.

Before highlighting the conflicting narratives in terms of mythical time, it is best to first discuss the chronological order of mythical events and genealogies according to the accounts of Greek mythographers, from the beginnings to their stages of development, and their sense of some inconsistencies in the various mythical narratives.

I- The Mythical Chronological Order:

It is known that Greek myths have moved from the oral stage to the written stage, meaning that the myths were initially narrated orally and passed down from generation to generation through transmission.[1] When mythical stories were written down, poets tried to maintain chronological order in their narratives. Starting with Homer, who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey, he focuses on a specific event in each of his epics, but he relies on foreshadowing and delayed narration since he narrates events that happened before or hints at events in the future.[2]

Ong suggests that Homer certainly heard dozens of singers singing hundreds of songs of different lengths about the Trojan War, and thus Homer had a huge stock of episodes to link together, but without writing, there was no way at all to organize them in a strict chronological order.[3] However, one of the weaknesses of the oral tradition is its inability to maintain an accurate evaluation of the length of the past.[4] The oral poet did not have a list of events, so if he tried to advance his work through a strict chronological order, he would have to set aside one incident or another at some point, where it should be placed sequentially, and he would have to put it in its place later. And if he remembered, on the next occasion, to place the incident in its correct chronological order, he would have to set aside other events or place them in a place that was not their place in the chronological sequence.[5] Homer comes at the end of several generations of traveling epic poets who established the foundations and basic rules of epic art. It was then up to Homer to deal with this epic tradition and renew it in a way that was compatible with the requirements of

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[1] Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1979), 2.

[2] On Homer and the use of myth in his tow epics, see:
Lowell Edmunds, "Myth in Homer," in *A New Companion to Homer*, eds: Ian Morris & Barry Powell (Leiden & New York: Brill, 1997), 415-441.
Françoise Letoublon, "Homer's Use of Myth," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, eds: Ken Dowden & Niall Livingstone (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 27-45.

[3] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 141.

[4] David P. Henige, "Oral Tradition and Chronology," *The Journal of African History* 12, no. 3 (1971): 389.

[5] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 141.

his era and society.[1] The epic cycle is a collection of poems arranged in a circle to present a chronological narrative of the main episodes in Greek myths.[2]

Graf refers to the fact that myths in epic poetry preserve the memory of historical events, and that these myths are governed by a fictional and coherent timeline to a reasonable extent. The fathers of those who fought in Troy belong to the generation of Heracles, who fought Troy under the leadership of Priam's father, Laomedon. Therefore, Priam's sons, not Priam himself, are the ones who fight against the Greeks, and this does not strain the timeline to a degree that exceeds credibility. Also belonging to this generation are those who fought in Thebes and the Argonauts. Myths that are not related to the Trojan War tend to present them as memories of the past, and in this way, they gain some credibility.[3] However, the material used in the epic is not of the kind that can be subject to a long climax, and even if the chapters of the Iliad and the Odyssey were arranged in a strict chronological order, the work as a whole would progress in an ascending form, but it does not have the narrow climactic structure of traditional drama.[4]

As for Hesiod, who seems to be the first to sense the inconsistency in the chronological sequence of genealogies, he composed the poem "Theogony", which begins with the gods and cosmic powers they represent and ends with a list of Zeus' marriages and other gods. At this stage, "Catalogue of Women" begins, tracing their genealogy during the mythical period up to the generation of the heroes of the Trojan War and sometimes to their sons.[5] Hesiod divided the history of the universe in his poem "Works and Days" into five successive "ages" or "races": the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, the Age of Heroes, and the Iron Age.[6] At least the relative chronological sequence of Hesiod's myths is consistent so far, although other myths, such as the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, which was attended by the gods but was immediately before the Trojan War, is a different matter. However, on the one hand, even the arrangement of Hesiod's myths is perplexing, because if Pandora was the first woman, she was created by Zeus's orders as punishment for stealing fire, and men did not have women in the Golden Age.[7]

Local historians in Attica "Atthidographers - Ἀτθιδογράφοι" worked on organizing the mythical tradition, starting with Hellanicus at the end of the 5th century BC. The Athenians introduced new kings to the list of mythical kings to better align the chronological sequence of the Attic myth with that of Greece as a whole, and they had to allocate each fictitious story to a specific rule. In the 5th century BC, there was already one or two works that collected Attic myths together, but most Athenians may have learned them in the form of a mythical cycle, depicted in specific works of art or

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[1] Ahmed Etman, "Tragic Time in Classical Greek Thought," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 9 (1989): 174.

[2] Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology: Based on H.J. Rose's Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

[3] Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction,* translated by Thomas Marier (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993), 76.

[4] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 141.

[5] Graf, *Greek Mythology*, 126.

[6] Hes., Op., 106-201.

[7] G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), 229.

poems, or narrated in relation to worship and rituals. Parker believes that it is possible that many Athenians in the 5th century BC did not think about their myths in an approximate chronological sequence according to mythical time, while many Athenians know the historical chronological sequence of their kings. For Athenians, it does not matter whether Dionysos or Demeter arrived in Attica first, or whether the rape of Cephalus occurred before or after the rape of Oreithyia.[1]

Hecataeus of Miletus' main interest, in his work Genealogies "Γενεαλογίαι", was to put the vast mythical tradition of the Greeks in chronological order through genealogical data. Other Greek historians also shared this interest early on, and their title was "Genealogy". These historians assumed that the myths were clearly interconnected and saw that the myths, as far as we have seen from historical documents, were part of a large puzzle. In organizing the myths, the early historians showed two tendencies. On the one hand, they synchronized the genealogies with increasing accuracy and precision so that the sequence of generations in a particular family tree is the same from one myth to another. On the other hand, they attempted to fill the gap between the end of what we consider the mythical age – the generation of the children of those who fought in Troy – and the beginning of historical memory and documentation.[2] Hecataeus was the first to compile a list of Spartan kings, assuming forty years between each generation.[3]

When we look at Apollodorus, one of the most famous Greek mythographers, we can see that he tried extensively to narrate the myths in a chronological order based on mythical genealogy and the succession of different mythical generations. Apollodorus also attempted to devise a system for genealogies that linked Greece to other ancient regions and peoples.[4]

In many ancient cultures, genealogies, or lists of kings, were the most popular way to measure the past. Oral genealogies transmitted down at different places and times in ancient civilizations indicate certain patterns of chronological distortion.[5] To calibrate dates and times, Greek writers turned to counting generations, sometimes referring to a person being one or two generations before or after another. Generation counting derives primarily from genealogy, which is the principal means of timekeeping in Greek myths. A generation is the natural succession from father to son, traditionally defined as the "average length of time between fathers' births and their children's births." A generation is one-third of a century, and a century is one hundred years, so a generation is

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[1] Robert Parker, "Myths of Early Athens," in *Interpretation of Greek Mythology*, ed: Jan Bremmer (London: Routledge, 1989), 189.

[2] Graf, *Greek Mythology*, 125.

[3] Felix Jacoby, *Atthis: The Local Chronicles of Ancient Athens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 88-89, 306, note 25.
Gaston-Javier Basile, "The Early Greek Prose-Writing Tradition: Bridging the Myth-History Divide," *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 45, no. 2 (2019): 91.

[4] K.F.B. Fletcher, "Systematic Genealogies in Apollodorus' Bibliotheca and the Exclusion of Rome from Greek Myth," *Classical Antiquity* 27, no. 1 (2008): 59.

[5] Henige, "Oral Tradition and Chronology," 389.

approximately thirty-three years. According to some researchers, a generation in Greek myths lasts roughly forty years.[1]

We find that collective time is measured in generations "γενεαί" since the beginning of Greek writing. This term was somewhat ambiguous in its usage, sometimes referring to all the people who occupied the same level in the family tree (parents, grandparents, etc.) and sometimes to a group of people who are viewed mysteriously as contemporaries. Thus, the list of ancestors extends to a certain number of generations, as is the case with the list of previous rulers of the city. Either type of list can provide a preliminary estimate of the generations that can provide a valid calculation of the time between the present and past ages.[2]

For deep social and cultural reasons, genealogy was as important as chronological sequence in this type of thing, and in chains of genealogy, it does not matter much if the son of Aeolus III came before Labdacus II or after him, or whether Theseus killed Procrustes before or after Heracles seized the Erymanthian Boar. Of course, there are some things that are impossible; for example, Heracles or Theseus did not live after the Trojan War. But within these broad limits, mythology is not concerned with time. Genealogies and catalogues are important units in themselves. Hellanicus initially began by comparing different genealogical lines, worrying about chronological inconsistencies, and seeking to synchronize them through certain methods, such as repeating names. This technique was not often imitated in later mythical narratives, although genealogists exploited it with passion.[3]

In terms of mythical genealogy, epic poetry has contributed to creating circles of stories about heroes of specific events as well as establishing good family relationships between different story heroes by arranging the stories in chronological order, so that a sense of mythical chronological sequence has developed. There is an epic aspect, so we can follow the fate of some families in successive generations. Thus, Greek myths are now revealed like history, which could never have been. It is a semi-complete history, or primitive history, or rather a stage in the evolution of the world and humanity. Hesiod's "Theogony" and other authors' "Genealogies" have filled the gap that could have easily existed at the beginning of the world.[4]

It is supposed that the genealogical chronology is a product of genealogy, meaning that genealogy should exist first before it can be used to know the chronological sequence. However, the claim that genealogists were the first chronological historians is a mistake. The chronological sequence is clearly not a product of genealogy but of history. Thus, while interest in genealogy is necessary before developing the genealogical chronology, the opposite is not true at all, as the genealogical chronology is not a necessary or inevitable development arising from pure genealogical interests. Genealogy is an end in

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[1] Alden A. Mosshammer, "Geometrical Proportion and the Chronological Method of Apollodorus," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 106 (1976): 292.
Laura L. Nash, "Concepts of Existence: Greek Origin of Generational Thoughts," *Daedalus* 107, no. 4 (1978): 16.

[2] Donald Wilson Prakken, *Studies in Greek Genealogical Chronology* (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1943), 5-17.

[3] Robert L. Fowler, "How to Tell a Myth," *Kernos* 19 (2006): 43.

[4] Ken Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 8.

itself; it is concerned with relationships and not an absolute chronological sequence. On the other hand, all chronological orders, whether genealogical or otherwise, belong to the field of history, and the chronological sequence cannot be created except for the needs of historical writing.[1]

In his commentary on Greek mythographers, Fowler says that every myth is supposed to continue or be recorded from the first generation to the last one. There should also be some movement forwards or backwards "analepses or prolepses" along the timeline, except for a small range. In the recording of Greek myths, the mythical narrative does not get interrupted due to the genealogical line when it involves simultaneous events with a different genealogical line. Many mythical characters have ties with other characters in different lines, and it was up to the authors of the extensive genealogies to make significant decisions concerning each character's principal location. In secondary sources, such as various mythical narratives, the character can be briefly mentioned, knowing that the listener or reader can discover more information elsewhere. The narrative remains focused and uninterrupted in this manner. Because one cannot make educated judgments regarding the appropriate lineage to contain the primary position, Genealogies serves as an index. Both Hesiod and mythographers provide a great deal of information in an easily accessible form in this regard.[2] The study of genealogy may appear to be merely a list of names rather than a form of mythical narrative, but every name of a mythical character requires a story, and therefore, genealogy can be the primary source of myth.[3]

Finley discusses the chronological sequence of Greek myths and distinguishes between historical chronological sequence and mythical chronological sequence. He points out that cohesive dates and dating systems are necessary for history, just like accurate measurements in physics. As for mythology, despite providing concrete facts, these facts were separate, as they were not linked to what happened before or after them.[4]

There are three layers to a narrative: the text, the story, and the fabula. What the listener or reader hears or reads is called the text (the first layer), which is a finite and complex set of linguistic signs resulting from the storyteller's narrative or narrative activity. The narrator says, and the subject of their story is the story (the second layer). The story, which is composed of fabula, is viewed from a specific and defined perspective and is the result of focused expressive activity. Focalization does not consist of "vision" alone but includes arrangement and interpretation in short, all mental activities. The subject of the focus is the fabula (the third layer). The fabula, which consists of a logically and temporally ordered series of events, is the result of all types of activities carried out by characters in a fictional world.[5] If there are no exist explicit indications of the temporal relationship between the narrated events in a narrative text, the arrangement in which the events are narrated will be interpreted implicitly as reflecting the temporal sequence: the

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[1] Fordyce Mitchel, "Herodotos' Use of Genealogical Chronology," *Phoenix* 10, no. 2 (1956): 49.

[2] Fowler, "How to Tell a Myth," 42-43.

[3] Graf, *Greek Mythology*, 127.

[4] M.I. Finley, "Myth, Memory, and History," *History and Theory* 4, no. 3 (1965): 285-288.

[5] Irene De Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2004), 31.

narrative arrangement reflects the chronological order of the narrated events.[1] It is worth nothing that there is no sure method to tell if an event occurred at the beginning, middle, or end of a generation or in the life of an individual in Greek mythical narratives.[2]

While attempts to create a chronology of Greek myths have been undertaken, they are not well defined and have many inconsistencies. As an example, there are several versions of the Trojan War myth, and it is unclear which is the correct one.

II- Some Examples of the Chronological Inconsistency in Greek Myths:

The chronological inconsistency of Greek mythical narratives is either in the natural sequence of events or in the chronological sequence of mythical characters, or what is known as genealogy. Some poets, writers, and mythographers have made some mistakes in terms of chronological sequence in their mythical narratives. Here are five examples that illustrate this chronological inconsistency in mythical narratives.

1- Theseus and Helen:

In addition to Paris's kidnapping of Helen, who was then married to Menelaus, some Greek sources narrate her kidnapping as a child by Theseus. Plutarch refers to kidnapping of many women by Theseus, namely Ariadne, Antiope, Hippolyte, Phaedra, Anaxo, Perigone, Alopi, Periboea, Phereboea, Euboea, Aegle, and Helen.[3] Athenaeus, citing Hesiod and Phyrichides, refers to this same list, but adds a woman named Meliboea instead of Periboea.[4] Apollodorus adds the name Melanippe.[5]

Homer did not mention Theseus' abduction of Helen, but in book III of the Iliad, he indicates that Aethra, Theseus' mother, was a servant of Helen,[6] which implies that Theseus abducted Helen beforehand.[7] Pausanias refers to two allusions by lyric poets Alcman and Pindar, where Alcman recounts the Dioscuri's attack on the city of Athens, their seizure of it, and the capture of Aethra, Theseus' mother, while Theseus was absent from Athens.[8] Pindar also recounts that he agrees with this story in his poems and that Theseus wanted to be associated with the Dioscuri, so he abducted Helen.[9] Pausanias also refers to Stesichorus' allusion, in which he recounts that Helen gave birth to a daughter by Theseus, namely Iphigenia, who is the same girl we know as the daughter of Agamemnon

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[1] Rutger J. Allan, "Narrative Immersion: Some Linguistic and Narratological Aspects," in *Experience, Narrative, and Criticism in Ancient Greece: Under the Spell of Stories*, eds: Jonas Grethlein, Luuk Huitink, and Aldo Tagliabue (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020), 23.

[2] Mitchel, "Herodotos' Use of Genealogical Chronology," 49.

[3] Plut., Thes., 29.
Jenifer Neils, "Theseus," In *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC), vol. 7 (Oidipous-Theseus)*. Zürich and München: Artemius Verlag, 1992), 945.

[4] Athen. 13, 557a-b = Hes., Fr. 147- 298 Merkelbach/West and Pherekyd., *FCrH* 3 F I 53.

[5] Apollod., Ep., 1.16.

[6] Hom., Il., 3.143-144.

[7] Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993), 289.

[8] Alc., *PMG* 21. = Paus. 1.41.4 and Schol. Hom. Il. 3.242.

[9] Pind., Fr., 243 and 258 Maehler. = Paus., 1.41.4.

and Clytemnestra.[1] In one of his fragments, Hellanicus narrates that Theseus, son of Zeus, and Pirithous, son of Poseidon, wanted to marry daughters of Zeus, and after they together abducted Helen, they left the girl in Aphidna with Aethra, the mother of Theseus, and went together to the underworld to abduct Persephone. However, the Dioscuri sacked Attica and captured Aethra to recover their sister, Helen.[2] There is another fragment of Hellanicus in which he says that Theseus abducted Helen when she was seven years old, and Duris says that she was returned after giving birth to Iphigenia.[3] Diodorus Siculus narrates that Helen was only ten years old when she was abducted by Theseus from Sparta and taken to Athens.[4]

Plutarch, in his account of Theseus' abduction of Helen, indicates the age of both:

"ἤδη δὲ πεντήκοντα ἔτη γεγονώς, ὥς φησιν Ἑλλάνικος, ἔπραξε τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἑλένην, οὐ καθ' ὥραν. ὅθεν ὡς δὴ μέγιστον ἐπανορθούμενοι τοῦτο τῶν ἐγκλημάτων ἔνιοι λέγουσιν, οὐκ αὐτὸν ἁρπάσαι τὴν Ἑλένην, ἀλλ' Ἴδα καὶ Λυγκέως ἁρπασάντων παρακαταθήκην λαβόντα τηρεῖν καὶ μὴ προΐεσθαι τοῖς Διοσκούροις ἀπαιτοῦσιν, ἢ νὴ Δία Τυνδάρεω παραδόντος αὐτοῦ, φοβηθέντος Ἐναρσφόρον τὸν Ἱπποκόωντος, ἔτι νηπίαν οὖσαν βιαζόμενον τὴν Ἑλένην λαβεῖν."[5]

"According to Hellanicus, Theseus was fifty years old when he participated in the kidnapping of Hellen, who was not yet of marriageable age. Some writers, who are trying to correct this serious accusation against him say that he did not kidnap her himself, but when she was kidnapped by Idas and Lynceus, he took responsibility for her and took care of her. He did not hand over to the Dioscuri when they demanded her. Alternatively, if you believe it, her father, Tyndareus, entrusted her to Theseus for fear of Enarsphorus, son of Hippocoon, who sought to kidnap Helen by force when she was still a child."

Plutarch presents his audience with a logical narrative that exonerates Theseus as much as possible. Although he acknowledges that Theseus may have been involved in the abduction of Helen when he was fifty years old and she was not yet of marriageable age, he also presents two other versions. Plutarch portrays Theseus as a guardian of Helen on behalf of her kidnappers, Idas and Lynceus, or even at the request of her father, Tyndareus. Ultimately, Plutarch succumbs to justifying the most common narrative,[6] which suggests that the disappearance of Pirithous and the arrest of Theseus were the result of their attempt to abduct Kore, the daughter of the king of the Molossians, neighbors of the Thesprotians in the north. Appropriately named Kore, her mother was Persephone, and her father was Aidoneus.[7] There is a unique narrative in the Hellanicus account, referred to by Plutarch, about the abduction of Helen, that involves the age of both Theseus and Helen at the time of the abduction, and this detail may be a special

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[1] Stesich., *PMG* 191. = Paus. 2.22.6.

[2] Hellanic., Schol. Hom. Il., 3.144. = *FGrHist* 4 F 134 = *FGrHist* 323a F 20.

[3] Dur., FGrHist 76 F 92 = Schol. Lycophr., 513.

[4] Diod. Sic., 4.63.1-4.

[5] Plut., Thes., 31.1. = *FGrHist* 4 F 168a.

[6] Plut., Thes., 31.4.

[7] Stamatia Dova, "Theseus, Peirithoos, and the Poetics of a Failed Katábasis," *Les Études classiques* 83 (2015): 62.

invention of Hellanicus.[1] The relative ages of Theseus and Helen may have been just a function of Hellanicus' own chronology, as he refused to have Theseus be young, while other writers did not specify Theseus' age, making the abduction occur during Theseus' youth.[2] Therefore, we can understand from the stories that did not specify Theseus' age that he abducted Helen while he was young, which contradicts the mythical chronological sequence and makes it an unacceptable mythical story chronologically.

Through all the previous sources, we see that Theseus abducted Helen while she was a child, and we may find a significant chronological inconsistency between the gathering of the Athenian hero Theseus and Helen, who was the main reason for the Trojan War. It is known through other sources that Theseus lived at the time of Heracles,[3] and both lived in the previous generation until the time of the Trojan War. Helen was, in all Greek mythical narratives, not yet an adult when Theseus abducted her, despite differences in accurately determining her age. The traditional writers, Hellanicus of Lesbos, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Pausanias, made her between the ages of seven and ten. The researcher may find that determining the age of both Theseus and Helen in some previous literary sources is an attempt by some writers, historians, and mythographers to make the myth closer to truth and logic, as Theseus was at an advanced age and Helen was in childhood. Therefore, we can say that these writers felt this chronological inconsistency in this myth. But the question here is: what is the motivation for inventing this myth that contradicts time?

We can answer this question by referring to the beginning of the appearance of the mythical hero Theseus as a national hero for all Athenians, in the late 6th century BC and at the beginning of the 5th century BC. Perhaps the Athenian hero Theseus was linked to Helen at some point in the late 6th century BC, with Athens having a prominent position as the capital of the united Greek tribes. The reason for this may have been the desire to involve Athens and its most famous mythical hero in the famous Greek War.[4] Hershkowitz suggests that the myth of Theseus' abduction of Helen played a major role in propaganda in the late 6th century and was a major concern in the battle over Theseus' identity during the same period.[5] Edmunds suggests that Theseus' unsuccessful abduction of young Helen and his reckless attempt to assist Pirithous in abducting Kore would not have caused animosity in the minds of Athenians.[6] Carpenter suggests that around 520 BC, Theseus was primarily known for his fight against the Minotaur, his abandonment of Ariadne, his friendship with the Lapith hero, Pirithous, and his journey to the underworld.

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[1] Aaron Hershkowitz, "Getting Carried Away with Theseus: The Evolution and Partisan Use of the Athenian Abduction of Spartan Helen," in *Myth, Text, and History at Sparta*, ed: Thomas Figueira (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2016), 183.

[2] Elizabeth Irwin, "The Hybris of Theseus and the Date of the Histories," in *Source References in Herodotus – Herodotus' Sources: Conference in memoriam Detlev Fehling, Classica et Orientalia,* eds: kai Ruffing & Boris Dunsch (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2013), 11.

[3] As Apollodorus narrates, Theseus joined Heracles in his campaign against the Amazons. Apollod., Ep., 1.16.

[4] Laurie Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 27-28.

[5] Hershkowitz, "Getting Carried Away with Theseus," 174.

[6] Lowell Edmunds, *Greek Myth* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 33.

By 510 BC, new scenes suddenly appeared on Attic pottery, competing Theseus' heroic deeds with some of the heroic deeds of Heracles.[1]

Among the new scenes depicting Theseus in the last quarter of the 6th century BC is his abduction of Helen. Pausanias narrates that he saw some artistic scenes depicting both Theseus and Pirithous carrying Helen.[2] There is a scene on an Attic red-figure amphora by the Athenian painter Euthymides, dating to around 510 BC, depicting the abduction of Helen. Theseus is holding a woman named Korone, while another woman named Helen tries to stop him, followed by his companion Pirithous. Carpenter suggests that the potter may have inadvertently reversed the names of the women, and this portrayal describes the famous abduction of Helen by Theseus.[3] It is noteworthy here that Helen was depicted in the scene of her abduction by Theseus as an adult woman, which is completely contradictory to the mythical chronology, as it is unreasonable for Theseus to have lived at the same time of Helen. Thus, we can say that the myth of Theseus' abduction of Helen evolved from the hero's abduction of young Helen to her abduction in her youth, where it was important to focus on the event itself regardless of the plausibility of the chronological sequence in the mythical narrative.

Finally, we can say that the reason for the emergence of the myth of the abduction of Helen by the Athenian hero Theseus is the conflict between Athens and Sparta, where Helen represents Sparta and Theseus represents Athens as the mythical hero of the city. In addition, we can explain the emergence of the myth as a phenomenon of mythical attachment that arose to promote Theseus as a new mythical hero of Athens, in addition to the Athenian tendency to link Theseus to Helen and then link the Athenian hero to the famous Trojan War. All of this was the reason for the emergence of a myth that may be temporally disjointed and characterized by some inconsistencies in the mythical chronological sequence.

2- Electra, a daughter of Atlas:

There is another chronological inconsistency found in Apollodorus' narrative about Electra, daughter of Atlas and mother of Dardanus, the great-grandfather of the Trojans. Electra is one of the Pleiades, daughters of Atlas.[4] Hesiod narrates that Zeus fathered a son named Dardanus with Electra, who left from Samothrace to Troy.[5] Apollodorus refers to Electra as the mother of both Iasion and Dardanus by Zeus. Apollodorus made a mistake in the chronological sequence when he narrated that Zeus raped Electra on Olympus in front of the Palladium statue, then threw the statue and the goddess Ate to the ground on Ilus the Younger, grandson of Dardanus, the son of Electra, in the land of

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[1] Thomas H. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 160.

[2] Paus., 3.18.15; 5.19.2-3.

[3] Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece*, 166.
Martin Schneegans, "Theseus, the Hephaisteion and the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion. A Case of Bipolarity in Athens of the Fifth Century BC," (Master Thesis: The Univ. of Oslo, 2016), 32.

[4] Hes., Fr., 1. = Schol. Pind. Nem., 2.12; Apollod., Bibl., 3.12.1; Apollon. Rhod., 1.916; Lycophr., Alex., 71.
There are many characters bearing the name Electra in Greek myths, and what is meant here is Electra, the daughter of Atlas, who is not Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon, and she is also not Electra, the daughter of Oedipus, and she is also not Electra, the daughter of Oceanus.

[5] Hes., Fr., 102 Evelyn-White (Catalogues of Women).

Ilion.[1] It is known that Ilus was the grandson of Dardanus, and he had previously given birth to Dardanus, the grandfather of Ilus. This is regardless of the fact that Electra was one of the nymphs who lived for long periods of time, unlike mortal humans.

One of the narratives suggests that Electra lived until the fall of Troy and turned into a single star among a constellation of seven that is not easily visible. She could not bear to witness the destruction of Troy, so she either closed her eyes, moved away, or out of grief, abandoned her sisters and became a star or a comet.[2] The chronological inconsistency in the myth of Electra by Apollodorus is an example of the inconsistency into which the mythographer himself falls without attempting to provide a justification, reason, or appropriate narrative to correct this inconsistency and make it logical.

3- Hesione:

Hesione is the daughter of Laomedon, the king of Troy, and therefore the granddaughter of Ilus, the founder of the city of Ilion. Myth has it that when Laomedon refused to give the reward agreed upon by the gods Apollo and Poseidon for building the walls of Troy, the gods sent a sea monster to destroy the city. A prophecy emerged that the only way to save Troy was to sacrifice Laomedon's daughter, Hesione, so she was tied to a rock awaiting her death. But the Greek hero Heracles, who happened to be in Troy, killed the sea monster and saved Hesione in exchange for Laomedon's divine horses. When Laomedon refused to give Heracles the horses they had agreed upon, Heracles left and returned to Troy with six ships to fight against Troy. He killed Laomedon and all his sons, except Podarces, who was later named Priam, meaning "the ransomed one", and gave Hesione to Telamon as a war prize in gratitude for his help. Hesione redeemed her brother Priam by giving Heracles her golden veil. Heracles put Priam on the throne of Troy. Hesione later gave birth to a son from Telamon named Teucer.[3]

Dares Phrygius (3rd century AD) narrates that after many years of Hesione being abducted outside Troy, Priam, the King of Troy, sent a messenger to Telamon, demanding the return of his sister Hesione, but Telamon refused his request.[4] This was the reason why Priam did not order Paris to return Helen when his son abducted Menelaus' wife from Sparta. Hesione never returned to Troy, but her son Teucer did, because he was one of the leaders of the Greek army during the Trojan War, to the point that he entered the wooden horse, and participated in the fall of Troy, the homeland of his ancestors. The presence of Hesione during the time of the Trojan War may be attributed to the comparison between the abduction of Helen by the Trojans and the abduction of the Trojan Hesione by the Greeks, which led to the chronological inconsistency in Hesione's life that made some sources indicate that she lived in more than one generation.

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[1] Apollod., Bibl., 3.12.3.
Homer tells how Zeus swore that Ate should never again come to Olympus, and how he seized her by the head and flung her from heaven. Hom., Il., 19.126-131.

[2] Diod. Sic., 13.54.5.

[3] Hom., Il., 5.638-643; Schol. Hom. Il., 20.145; Apollod., Bibl., 2.5.9; 2.6.4.

[4] Dar. Phryg., 5.

4- Achilles:

It is known that Achilles was the son of the mortal Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis.[1] It is also known that the Trojan War began at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis because of the golden apple thrown by the goddess Eris at the wedding, which the three goddesses contended for. Zeus restored the handsome young man Paris, son of Priam,[2] to judge the contest. It is natural that Achilles was not yet born at this time. The sources do not tell us exactly when the Trojan War broke out after the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, but it is clear that it did not take long for the war to erupt after the wedding. After Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite, the goddess arranged for Paris to visit Sparta to meet his lover, Helen, and bring her back to Troy. Then the Achaeans gathered their forces to sail to Troy, either to return Helen to Sparta or to wage a fierce war on Paris, his father, King Priam, and all of Troy.

The important question here is: how old was Achilles, the son of Peleus and Thetis, when he participated with the Achaeans in the Trojan War? It is certainly unreasonable for Achilles to have participated in the Trojan War as a child. There is another extremely important issue that confirms what we are talking about in terms of the chronological inconsistency in Achilles' age in the Trojan War. Some sources relate that Thetis gave birth to seven children before Achilles, but they all died due to her attempt to grant them immortality, which ultimately failed. This means that Achilles was not the first child of Peleus and Thetis, which means that there was a long time between the parents' wedding and the birth of the hero Achilles.

There is an important reference in Apollodorus where he tells us that when Achilles was nine years old, the seer Calchas declared that Troy could not be taken without Achilles. Thetis knew that her son would die if he went to war, so she disguised him in girls' clothing and handed him over to Lycomedes, king of Scyros, in the form of a girl.[3] The researcher believes that Apollodorus' reference to Achilles' age of nine has an important significance in terms of the chronological inconsistency in the age of the hero who participated in the Trojan War. Perhaps Apollodorus felt the chronological inconsistency in relation to Achilles' age and his participation in the Trojan War, so he specified his age at nine to make his age during the war more reasonable and logical, thus making the chronological sequence more believable to later listeners or readers. The timing of when Clachas announced this prophecy is unclear from the reference: either the prophecy was announced at the beginning of the Trojan War when Achilles was nine years old, and Achilles joined the war, which lasted ten years, in its final year, which means that he was about eighteen years old, or the prophecy was announced in the last year of the war, and this is not consistent with the logic that Achilles participated in the war as a child of nine years old.

There is nothing in Greek literary sources that indicates that the hero Achilles grew quickly from childhood to youth, but there is evidence that gods grew rapidly, such as the god Zeus, who matured from childhood to youth in a short period of time, as Callimachus tells us in his "Hymn to Zeus".[4] The goddess Athena also emerged fully mature and

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[1] Hom., Il., 20.207ff; Plat., Resp., 391c; Apollod., Bibl., 3.13.6; Apollon. Rhod., 4.757ff.

[2] Cypr., Fr., 1; Apollod., Ep., 3.2; Paus., 15.9.5.

[3] Apollod., Bibl., 3.13.8.

[4] Callim., Hym., 1.55-57.

armed from the head of Zeus.[1] Heroes, like humans, have a life cycle of childhood, adolescence, youth, manhood, old age, and death. There are some mythical characters who represent local heroes, such as Demophon in Eleusis, whom the goddess Demeter nursed with Ambrosia and Nectar and burned away his mortal parts with fire, causing the child to grow quickly and unnaturally into youth.[2] Therefore, in the case of Achilles, there is no evidence in the sources to suggest that he grew abnormally, and the evidence for this is that Achilles went through the natural stages of human development: childhood, adolescence, and youth, where his mother Thetis dipped him in Styx to make him immortal, sent him to Scyros in adolescence to hide him so he would not participate in the war, and he participated in the Trojan War in his youth. Therefore, we must deal with the character of Achilles in a normal chronological manner, just like humans.

As we have seen, some researchers have suggested that ancient readers and listeners did not know or consider the issue of chronological inconsistency as a crisis in their myths; they only knew that Achilles was a great hero and that he had extraordinary strength, courage, and good looks, as described by Homer and other poets and mythographers.

5- Sarpedon:

The character Sarpedon is one of the most important examples of the chronological inconsistency in Greek myths. Sarpedon, in Homer's Iliad, was an ally of Troy from Lycia, and was the son of Zeus and Laodamia, the daughter of Bellerophon and the Lycian princess Philonoe,[3] with no connection to Crete at all. In Hesiod's version, he is the brother of both Minos and Rhadamanthus, also sons of Zeus and Europa.[4] This means that there are two individuals named Sarpedon, both of whom are sons of Zeus. At first glance, it may seem that they are two different people, and the age difference between the two is at least a generation. Perhaps Homer himself felt the chronological inconsistency in Sarpedon's life, which is why Zeus only gave birth to Minos and Rhadamanthus from Europa, so he did not mention Sarpedon of Crete at all.

Gantz refers to the existence of three different narratives related to the genealogy of Sarpedon, the hero of the Trojan War: In Homer's Iliad, Zeus begat two sons with Europa, namely Minos and Rhadamanthus.[5] Meanwhile, Sarpedon, who was an ally of Troy, was the son of Zeus and Laodamia, the daughter of Bellerophon, and the Lycian princess Philonoe, with no clear connection to Crete. However, in the classical tradition, Sarpedon is known as the Cretan son of Zeus and Europa and the brother of Minos. According to one commentator in Book XII of the Iliad, as cited by Hesiod and Bacchylides, Europa bore three sons to Zeus in Crete: Minos, Sarpedon, and Rhadamanthus.[6]

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[1] Apollod., Bibl., 1.3.6.

[2] HH., 2.231-254.

[3] Hom., Il., 14.321-322.

[4] Hes., Fr. 19 Evelyn-White (Catalogues of Women) = Schol. Hom. Il., 12.292.

[5] Hom., Il., 14.321-322; Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 210-211.

[6] Hes., Fr., 89 Most = Schol. Hom. Il., 12.397 = Hes., Fr., 140 Merkelbach-West = Bacchyl., Fr., Snell-Machler.

Sarpedon was Minos' brother, and this means that Sarpedon was born at least two generations before the Trojan War. Hesiod may have attempted to solve this problem by suggesting that Zeus granted him an exceptional privilege to live longer than ordinary humans, perhaps for three generations, as mentioned by Apollodorus, despite a gap in Hesiod's account at this point. Some later writers preferred to reconcile this late genealogy with Homer's genealogy by assuming that there were two characters named Sarpedon: one was born to Europa in Crete and the other was his grandson who bore the same name and led the Lycians to Troy. In this case, Sarpedon the Cretan had a son in Lycia named Euandrus, who married Deidamia, the daughter of Bellerophon, and from her Sarpedon the Homeric was born.[1]

There is a fragment from Hesiod's Catalogue of Women, preserved on papyrus paper with many holes. This fragment recalls the children of Zeus from Europa, and while the papyrus only retains the name of Rhadamanthus, there is enough space for the names of Minos and Sarpedon. The rest of the piece seems to involve the deeds of Sarpedon in Troy.[2] There is also a fragment from Aeschylus' play the Carians that refers to Sarpedon as the third son of Zeus and Europa after Minos and Rhadamanthus.[3] In this fragment, Sarpedon fights in Troy while Europa eagerly awaits news of his fate. The same genealogy appears in Euripides' play Rhesus.[4] In another version by Dictys of Crete, Sarpedon is the son of Xanthus and Laodamia,[5] while Clement reports that he is the son of Zeus and Hippodamia.[6]

The presence of Sarpedon represents a chronological and genealogical inconsistency, as he was the brother of Minos and lived three generations before the Trojan War. In some versions, Hesiod suggested that Zeus granted Sarpedon the gift of long life. Apollodorus, who may have relied on Hesiod's version, states that Zeus allowed his son Sarpedon from Europa to live for three generations.[7] However, other versions indicate that Sarpedon was two different characters. According to the Cretan myth, Sarpedon was the son of Zeus and Europa, and the brother of Minos and Rhadamanthus. He fathered a son named Euandrus, who married Deidameia, the daughter of Bellerophon, and fathered Sarpedon the younger, who fought in Troy.[8]

There is another topic that is closely related to our study, which is the idea of repeating names in Greek myths, such as Sarpedon, who appeared in two different eras, and some mythographers claimed that the gods had blessed him with life more than once. The researcher sees this view as an attempt to escape the chronological inconsistency of the character of Sarpedon. The characters Electra and Ilus stress this idea.

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[1] Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology*, 350.

[2] Hes., Fr., 90 Most = P. Oxy., 1358 Fr., Col. 1, 6-13: P. Rein., 77 = Hes., Fr., 141 Merkelbach-West.

[3] Aesch., Fr., 99; Gantz, *Early Greek Myth,* 210-211; Alan H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus: Fragments. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein.* Loeb Classical Library 505 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2009), 110-111.

[4] Eur., Rh., 29. See also Hdt., 1.173.1-3.

[5] Dict., 2.11.

[6] Clem., Rec., 10.21.

[7] Apollod., Bibl., 3.1.1-2.

[8] Diod. Sic., 5.78.1, 5.79.3.

III- Interpretations of the Chronological Inconsistency in Greek Myths:

The previously mentioned chronological inconsistencies in some mythical narratives can be attributed to one of two things: either the author made an error in the chronological mixing of a particular mythical character, or the genealogy of that character was mixed up in multiple narratives. The following summarizes the causes of the chronological inconsistency in Greek mythical narratives:

A- One of the main reasons for the chronological inconsistencies in Greek myths is the transformation of the myth from oral to written. As Conradie sees it, the written myth differs from the oral myth in many ways, and as soon as the myth is committed to writing, it tends to become more stable in form. Myths became more organized, and some mythographers attempted to eliminate the inconsistencies and contradictions in Greek myths.[1] During the transition of Greek myths from oral to written, mythographers made a mistake in the mythical genealogical sequence. Due to their collection of many mythical circles, the possibility of error is present, but the question here is: did the Greeks themselves make this mistake in the mythical genealogy and the confusion between the generations of heroes or the mythical figures attributed to the age of heroes? The researcher believes that it is unlikely that the mythical tradition of the ancient Greeks has made a mistake in the mythical genealogical sequence. Therefore, it is possible that the multiplicity of mythical narratives has led to confusion in genealogy.

B- There is no doubt that the main reason for the chronological inconsistency in Greek mythical narratives is the multiplicity of narrators. Researchers found in such chronological inconsistencies evidence of multiple authors, which sometimes made the unitarians feel compelled to deny their existence altogether, somewhat unconvincingly. There was a different approach to interpreting these chronological inconsistencies as errors committed by a poet immersed in oral tradition. In oral composition, it was suggested that the focus should only be on what is immediately at hand and not notice the chronological inconsistency.[2] Despite the inconsistency in the chronological sequence that occurs due to multiple narrators, the mythographer himself may fall into confusion in the chronological sequence due to a mistake in the chronological order of events, as Pindar reversed the chronological sequence of two journeys of Heracles to the Hyperboreans, the first journey when he pursued the hind while serving Eurystheus (line 28), and the other when he brought the olive trees he wanted to Olympia. Pindar reversed the chronological sequence of events.[3] And in his study on Catullus, Weber refers to one of his stories, in which Catullus narrates that the sea voyage of Theseus to Crete precedes the first ship ever to sail in the Argonautica, while Theseus' adventures in general are delayed many years after the Argonautica. Weber believes from his perspective that Catullus was not unaware of this chronological inconsistency, but rather was fully aware of the difference between his narrative and the traditional chronological sequence.[4]

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[1] P.J. Conradie, "The Literary Nature of Greek Myths: A Critical Discussion of G.S. Kirk's Views," *Acta Classica* 20 (1977): 53.

[2] Jonathan Burgess, "Neoanalysis, Orality, and Intertextuality: An Examination of Homeric Motif Transference," *Oral Tradition* 21, no. 1 (2006): 167-168.

[3] Adolf Köhnken, "Mythical Chronology and Thematic Coherence in Pindar's Third Olympian Ode," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 87 (1983): 52.

[4] Clifford Weber, "Two Chronological Contradicions in Cattulus 64," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983): 263-271.

C- Using Greek myth in different aspects led to chronological inconsistencies, such as political, social, religious, etc. For example, for political reasons, certain episodes in the mythical journey of Theseus were developed to express the Athenian self-concept.[1] Some critics have found it likely that myth began as simple tales that later acquired the specific characteristics of myths; in other words, the various functions of myth (effectiveness, interpretive, etc.) formed the stories from the beginning. The primitive myth model is based on a hypothetical model that may be overly simplistic, where the narrative of the stories follows itself relatively quickly to the development of the language itself, and its first themes are actual experiences or simple structures built upon.[2] In other words, simple stories of myths always precede functional myths, and there are mythical narratives that come about through specific functional needs.

The myth of the Trojan War included a collection of other stories that were gradually added over time. It was considered the most important event in Greek history, and every Greek hero had to have some connection to it. This is why the chronological sequence is sometimes illogical, as the original story is buried under a series of subsequent additions.

The year 500 BC was a turning point in Greek myths, and we find ourselves in a new world of semi-historians presenting the slogans of the mythical period, called "mythographers", such as Acusilaus of Argos, Pherecydes of Athens, and Herodorus of Heraclea. At the same time, the era of monsters and the hero Heracles in all forms of art had ended. Interest in Heracles had declined in Athens, and interest in the new hero Theseus as a symbol of the new democracy in 509 BC had increased. The portrayal of the hero Theseus and his heroic deeds increased in many different forms of art. The 5th century was a golden age for myths, as the works of ancient poets found new expression among mythographers.[3]

The Greeks and all their different cities sought to trace their genealogy back to an accepted deity and connect their mythical ancestors to as many famous past events as possible. The simultaneous crowding of famous events and prominent ancestors led to competition in creating repeated and conflicting claims. Some of the competing claims stood side by side, and their inconsistencies were not resolved, while others arrived at a peaceful solution, as in the non-controversial duplication of the adventures of Heracles by the Athenian hero Theseus.[4] We can say that this was the main reason for the emergence of the phenomenon of mythical affiliation. The practice of linking an individual to their family with the heroes and gods of the mythical past was not limited to aristocratic households; Herodotus mentions that even Hecataeus claimed to be descended from a deity in the sixteenth generation, yet the names of the fourteen intervening ancestors were not recorded.[5]

D- The phenomenon of duplicating the names of mythical characters in various mythical narratives has led to contradiction or confusion in the chronological sequence of myths. Greek myths aim to talk about the distant past, which must be defied on a chronological

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[1] Graf, *Greek Mythology*, 138.

[2] Kirk, *Myth*, 281.

[3] Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology*, 9-11.

[4] Mitchel, "Herodotos' Use of Genealogical Chronology," 50.

[5] Hdt., 2.143; Graf, *Greek Mythology*, 129.

basis in the Mycenaean era, but believe that it misunderstands the purpose of it, no matter how desperate we are for such information. Myth is deceptive because its narratives about people and individuals are usually designed to form identities and make statements. In fact, given the myth's tendency to invent names, general main characters, and individuals on whom major events in history are focused, it is not an exaggeration to say that there is no single individual in myths that we can believe existed.[1]

E- The confusion in mythical genealogy led to the chronological inconsistency of mythical events. For example, Pausanias records a narrative of two generations of Muses, the first being the daughters of Uranus and Gaia,[2] and the other being daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne.[3] There is also a rare narrative by Euripides in his play "Medea" that refers to Muses being daughters of Harmonia,[4] the daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, which contradicts the myth in which they were dancing at the wedding of Harmonia and Cadmus. This inconsistency is an example of the inaccuracy of chronological sequence in Greek mythical narratives.

Conclusion:

Greek myths represent many different stories, not written by a single narrator but by several narrators in different eras. These narrators had to ensure accuracy in their writings, especially in terms of the chronological sequence of these mythical stories. There is no doubt that there are some chronological inconsistencies in these myths, either because of the author himself or because of the multiplicity of narrators, which causes the story to differ from one narrator to another. Myth writers collected their stories from the oral traditions of their societies, and hence it can be difficult for a mythographer, who may make mistakes, especially due to his life in a somewhat primitive society that does not know much about reading or writing. The researcher assumed that some mythographers felt some of the chronological inconsistencies, starting with Homer, who remained silent about some of the narratives or genealogies that may have led to an error in the chronological order or confusion. Then Hesiod tried to write a huge work on mythical genealogy, which was the beginning of laying the cornerstone for a chronological order of multiple mythical gods and characters. Then there were some writers, historians, and mythographers who tried to put a semi-historical narrative of heroes and mythical characters in a chronological narrative without contradicting the chronological sequence in their minds, such as Hellanicus, Hecataeus, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, etc. As for the myth itself, it was placed in the past, and the past has a chronological order that extends from the origin of the world and the gods to the age of heroes, which continues to the present. It was necessary to constantly adapt the myths to new social and political circumstances, as Greek myths were an open and constantly changing system.

Trying to impose a chronological order on the sequence of mythical events can lead to false simplicity. This means that when the chronological order is ignored, one risks oversimplifying the complexity of myths and their various stories. In addition, ignoring the chronological order can lead to confusion and misunderstanding of the events that

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[1] Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology*, 44.

[2] Schol. Pind. Nem., 3.16; Paus. 9.29; Diod. Sic., 4.7.

[3] Hes., Th., 52, 915; Hom., Il., 2.491, Hom., Od., 1.10; Apollod., Bibl., 1.3.1.

[4] Eur., Med., 829-834.

occur in myths. If one is not aware of the supposed order of events, they may not be able to interpret the stories correctly or even understand them at all. Furthermore, ignoring the chronological order can lead to misleading or even incorrect assumptions about myths. For example, if one assumes that a certain event occurs before or after another, while it does not actually happen, their understanding of the story may be incomplete or inaccurate. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the chronological order when studying Greek myths to gain a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the stories.

The chronological inconsistencies were not limited to individual stories but were observed throughout the entire myth. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that myths were composed by multiple authors and oral narrators over a long period of time, during which some details in the mythical narrative may have been changed. In addition, many myths have been reinterpreted and adapted to suit different cultural contexts. The chronological inconsistency in the mythical narratives can be directly attributed to the fact that myths were derived from a diverse set of sources, and the absence of a unified source for myths means that there is no single documented version. As a result, it may be difficult to understand the timeline of stories and characters, and the intended chronological order is often unclear.

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