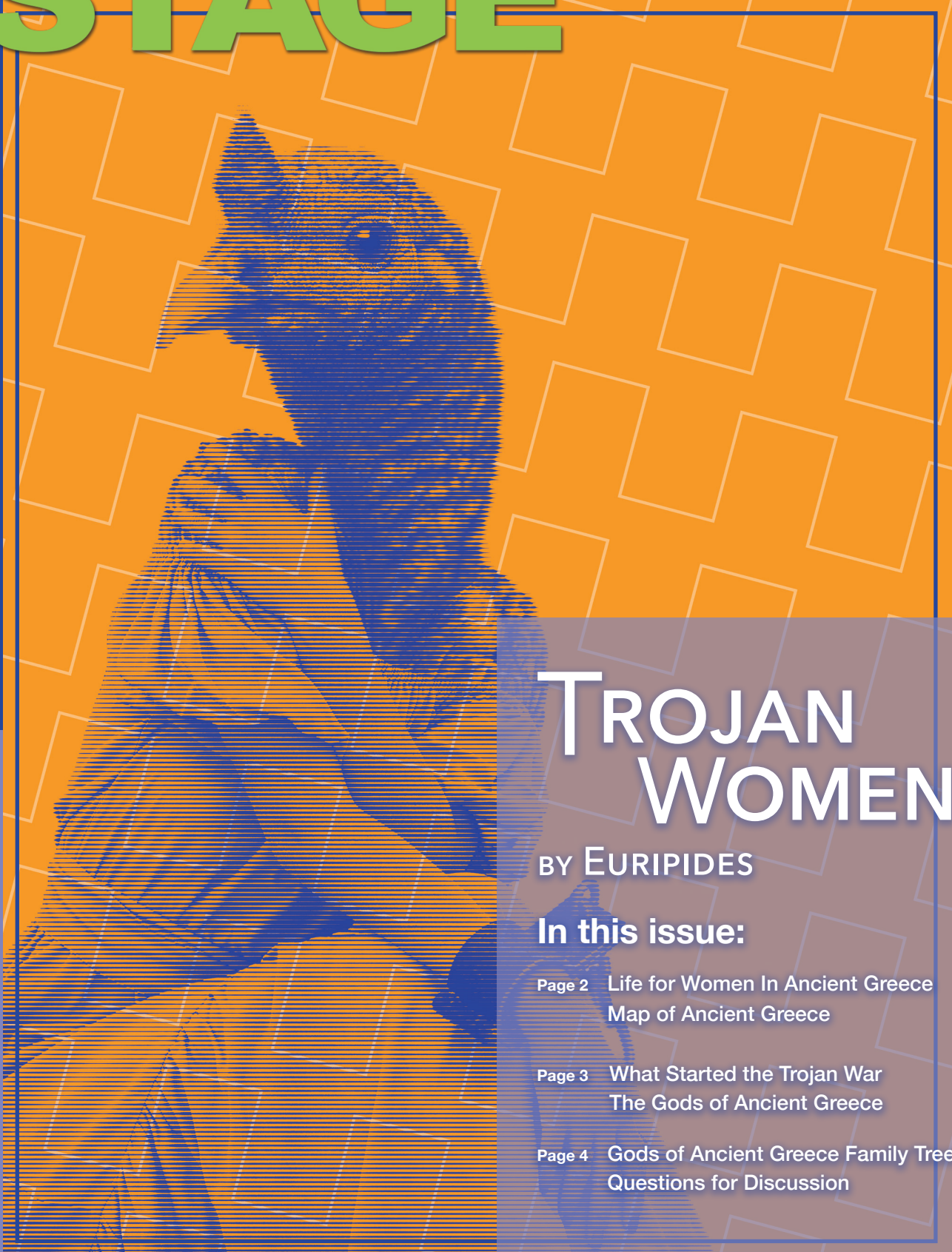


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TROJAN WOMEN

BY EURIPIDES

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The core group of performers you are going to watch tonight have spent the last two months in endless rehearsals, literally lifting one another through this show. In fact, we began our process by learning to safely carry one another, with every person spending some time in the air. On that first day, when they had trust each other and stare down from above, there were some tears. It's funny how the way your body moves can connect to what moves your heart.

And it means a lot to carry another person. In this play, the survivors of the brutal defeat of Troy must carry each other through the grief from their past and sometimes paralyzing fear of what is to come. This is a story that weighs down the heart, so we have attempted in our approach to both honor and battle that weight by staging bodies in perpetual motion. People who face and survive violence of any kind show a sort of visceral resilience and this play's language frames that beautifully. As Hecuba says in her first moments: "Get up. Lift up your head. Fight gravity, go on."

Lifting and falling, climbing and carrying—all of these actions must necessarily be a collaboration; in our process the performers have had to use their hands and hearts to push themselves up and take one another on their backs. There is probably no better metaphor for the difficult but rewarding nature of an ensemble show.

I'd like to take a moment as well to thank those who carried me through this process, my invaluable collaborators: Liz, Janine, Jen, Jeremy, Chantelle, Laura, Megan, Maddy, Felicia, Carolyn, Laicey, Alex—and the performers themselves. Thank you.

– Lisa Hall-Hagen

LIFE FOR WOMEN IN ANCIENT GREECE



Ancient Greece was a very patriarchal society, meaning it was a man's world. A woman's primary purpose in life was to be married and bring children into the world. When the man of the house was gone during the day, only women were permitted to visit. Not even brothers were allowed to come in. Many households had male slaves to make sure that no man came while the husband was gone. During times of war, it was customary for women to be taken as a slave. Women were considered just as much a spoil of war as gold, treasure, and other valuables would be.

Copy and follow this YouTube link for a quick video about women in ancient Greek culture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8YGuvGvBRw>

or scan this code with a smartphone:





WHAT STARTED THE TROJAN WAR?

It all began with a beauty contest. The gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus were attending a wedding. Eris, the goddess of discord, had not been invited. So to stir up trouble, she threw down a golden apple inscribed, "To the fairest." Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena all claimed it was theirs, and asked Zeus to be the judge.

Zeus appointed Paris, the young, handsome Trojan prince, to be the judge. Athena, goddess of warfare and wisdom, offered him victory in war. Hera, goddess of marriage and wife of Zeus, offered him boundless power. Aphrodite, goddess of love, offered him the most beautiful woman in the world, a Greek queen named Helen. Paris chose Aphrodite.

Paris and Helen left for Troy, but they were pursued by Helen's husband, Menelaus. Menelaus and the Greek army fought Troy for ten years to bring home their lost queen, but Troy was a city surrounded by strong walls and the Greeks could not break through. Finally, they

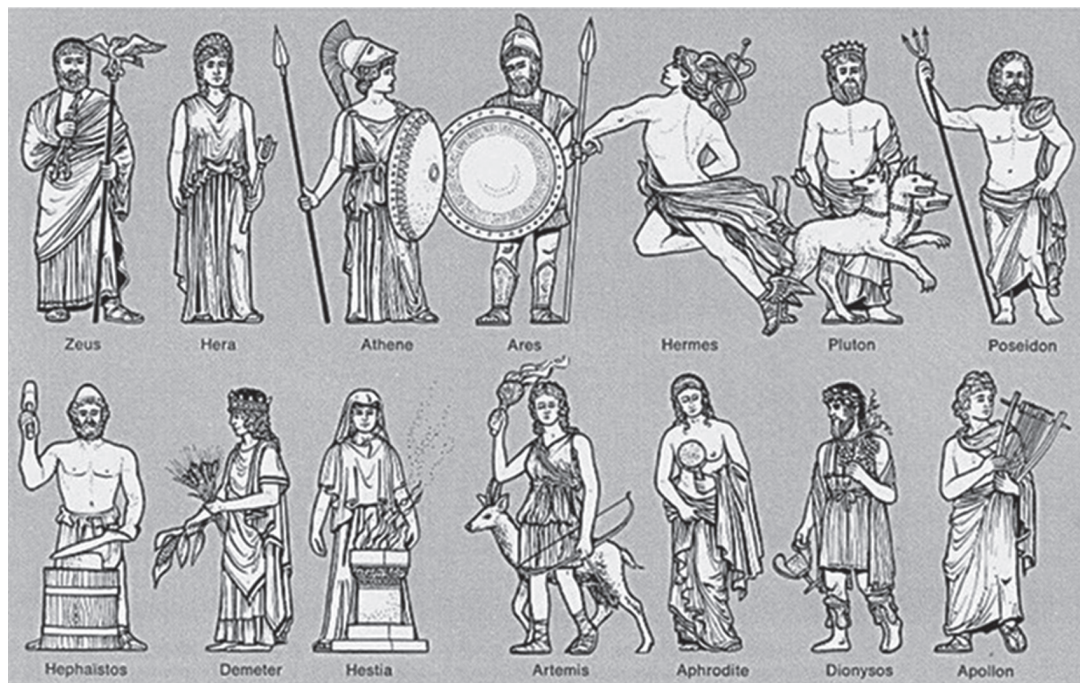
pretended to surrender and leave behind the infamous Trojan Horse as a gift. Secretly the Greek soldiers had hidden inside the horse. When the Trojans pulled the wooden horse inside their city walls, they unknowingly pulled the Greek army in with it, and the Greeks were able to destroy Troy from the inside out.

THE GODS OF ANCIENT GREECE

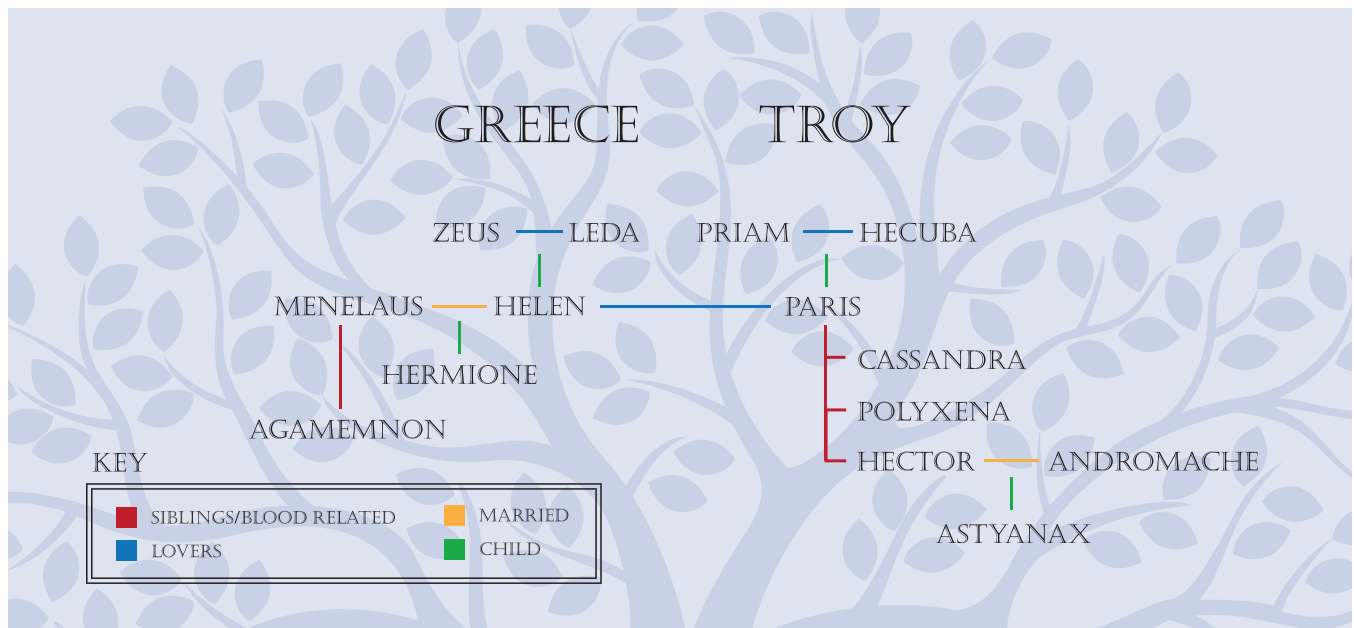
The Pantheon of gods and goddesses were a very real presence in the minds of the ancient Greeks. They were actual higher beings with the power to influence, dominate, and potentially ruin the lives of mortals. The will of the gods was not a matter to be trifled with. To anger any resident of Mount Olympus was to ensure divine vengeance would be exacted upon you.

Copy and follow this YouTube link for a quick, crash course video on the Olympians.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJCm8W5RZes> or scan



GODS OF ANCIENT GREECE FAMILY TREE



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you think Helen was brought to Troy against her will?
- Who do you think is most responsible for the destruction of Troy?
 - Paris, Helen, Menelaus, or the gods?
- Can you relate to the Trojan Women?
 - What would you do if you were in their situation?
 - Would you react differently?
- Sometimes ancient cultures seem extremely foreign and strange to us today.

What similarities can you find between the world then and the world now?
- Helen grew up in Sparta, a Greek city state where women had more privilege compared to others. Spartan girls learned combat with boys, received an education, and had a voice, overall.

How do you think this background factored into Helen's relationship with the Trojan women?

 - With Hecuba?
 - With Menelaus?

SOURCES

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CREDITS

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