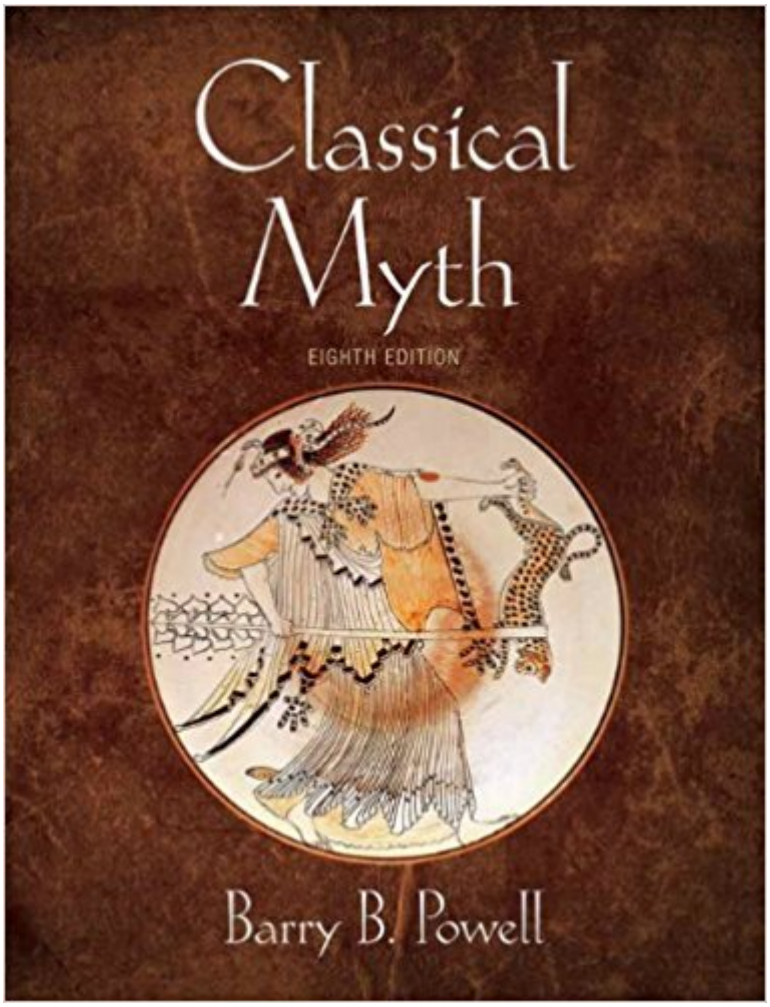
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Classical Myth (8th Edition)



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Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

Barry B. Powell , after graduation from Berkeley and Harvard, taught at Northern Arizona University, then took a job at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he taught for 34 years. He is a master of many languages, both ancient and modern, and for many years taught Egyptian philology and culture at Wisconsin, in addition to courses in Classics. His book Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet, which advanced the thesis that one man invented the Greek alphabet in order to record the poet Homer, has become a classic and changed the way we think about the origins of Western Culture. He has written many other books, including two novels and a book of poetry. His book Classical Myth, is the best-selling book on the topic, and is now in its eighth edition. His book Homer is the best-selling study of this author. The Greeks: History, Culture, and SocietyÃ Â (second edition, with Ian Morris) is widely used in college classrooms. He is currently preparing a translation of the Iliad and the Odyssey. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he and his wife Patricia enjoy the company of their children and grandchildren. Ã Â

I bought this used and it came it good condition. Better than expected. I like this book so much, I didn’t sell it back at the end of the semester.

It arrived in a much better condition than I had expected, so I am pleasantly surprised :)Also, I was supposed to use the 8th Edition for my class, but the 7th Edition was a much cheaper alternative for me. If you’re not looking to break the bank, the 7th edition works great! There aren’t any major differences aside from the page numbering.

I purchased this for a course in Classical Mythology. It is a most interesting class and this book gives a great treatment of the topic. As I had the option to use editions older than 8th for my class, purchasing this 7th edition copy was quite a money-saver.

I just received this book and can’t believe what I’m seeing. I ordered the Powell book because I love the subject and recognize that the author’s work is frequently chosen as an introductory text for courses on Greek and Roman mythology. I blame myself for not paying closer attention to the product description, but this is a relatively small paperback that should be priced at around $25. I

understand that the textbook market allows for insane pricing (and regular "revisions" that force students to purchase new books rather than used versions), but for people like myself (interested non-students), I recommend skipping this purchase unless you have money to burn (or finding an older, used copy in reasonable condition). Eighty bucks is nuts!

The popularity of Classical Myth as a text for college classes is quite understandable; Classical Myth is a useful synthesis of textbook- and sourcebook-style material. The writing is engaging and the level of detail is appropriate--enough to challenge students but not so much as to overwhelm. Moreover, the third edition offers several significant improvements over the second edition. Let me share a few of the changes that jumped out at me:The chapters on the Olympian gods have been re-organized so that chapter six covers Zeus and Hera, chapter seven covers the male Olympians, and chapter eight covers the female Olympians. In the previous edition, the logic of the division of deities was less clear--chapter six covered Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Hestia, Hades and Aphrodite; chapter seven treated Apollo and Artemis; and chapter 8 discussed Hephaestus, Ares, Athena, and Hermes.There is also a new chapter, chapter twelve, entitled "Introduction to Heroic Myth." It is a short chapter which introduces students to the idea of the hero. Although the chapter is new, much of the material it contains is actually not new--it comes from chapter fifteen in the previous edition which was a discussion of myths related to Heracles. In my opinion, this chapter could usefully be expanded--it is quite short, and there is a great deal that can be said about the figure of the hero in myth and in interpretation of myth which is not said here.Finally, lists of key terms have been added at the end of each chapter, an addition which may be useful to students.However, I have a few quibbles with aspects of the previous edition that still appear in the third edition. Let me offer two general reflections and then one very specific objection.First, although Powell does use footnotes, they generally only gloss material that may be confusing for students. Like many other authors of textbooks on mythology, he usually doesn’t indicate from what source or sources the various parts of the myths he is describing come. Of course, his text isn’t intended for serious scholarly use and most scholars no doubt know where to turn for more detailed information. But students who want to track down the original sources will often be left in the dark by Powell’s presentation of the myths. Since, however, I don’t believe I’ve every seen a handbook of mythology that noted sources in this way, Powell really cannot be faulted for his decision.Second, Classical Myth is, like all handbooks of mythology, selective. Powell generally focuses on the most important and famous variants of the myths he discusses. This is quite appropriate for a textbook, but it is also somewhat deceptive. Students may come away with the erroneous impression that an established

"canon" of Greek myth existed. I think a few more examples of variant versions of myths would help students appreciate that the stories that appear in Classical Myth represent only a few versions of the many disparate, often contradictory, stories of the gods and heros that were told by the Greeks.Finally, getting down to specifics, in the chapters on the Olympian gods, Powell asserts confidently that "by the sixth century...a body of twelve Olympian gods and goddesses had been recognized." He admits that the list was somewhat flexible--sometimes Dionysus replaces Hestia. But for the Greeks, the list was not nearly so fixed (back to my objections about creating a false sense that there was a mythological "canon"). It is clear, both from the text in chapter six and from the accompanying chart, that Powell includes Hades as one of the Olympians. This perplexes me-as far as I can tell Hades was not usually included among the Olympian deities at all. According to Eudoxus, a student of Plato, the twelve are Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, and Hestia. In other words, Eudoxus omits Hades and prefers Hestia to Dionysus. (Chart 6.1, which lists the Olympian deities, has undergone some revision from the previous edition; chart 6.1 in the second edition, properly I think, omitted Hades. But in the new edition, Hades has been added to the chart, with the result that thirteen deities appear in bold, not twelve, adding to the confusion.)Just a few more minor quibbles: the Orphic material still appears in the chapter on death rather than in the chapters on creation where, I think, it more appropriately belongs. And Powell's enthusiasm for the Greek alphabet--which seems somewhat idiosyncratic to me--is still apparent, though less so than in the previous edition in which he referred to the "limitations inherent in prealphabetic writing." I think the Hittite Telepinus myth should be included--or at least mentioned -among the myths on the Great Goddess. And finally I would particularly like to know the origin of the claim that temple prostitution occurred at Cythera.Overall, however, I like Classical Myth, and I do feel that the third edition is an improvement over the second. Using Classical Myth and, perhaps, a few inexpensive paperback editions of Hesiod and Greek plays, it's possible to teach a class on Classical Mythology. By collecting the myths from other cultures--especially the Eastern myths--Powell has taken a lot of hard work out of teaching this subject. I also find the companion website constructed by Prentice Hall to be an amazing resource--well designed, well executed, and most comprehensive.

I rent this book for the new semester. This book's condition is not really good. The bottom left corner was damaged. Looks like it has been used for a long time with many wrinkled pages. (I am saying this just to prove its original condition prior to my rent)

I enjoyed the content of this textbook as it was presented with good detail and precise vocabulary. There's not too much extra fluff and gets down to the point of the different myths. I would not re-read it beyond the classroom required readings though.

It was in great shape and provided me with the adequate resources needed for my Greek Mythology class.

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