

Olympic Council: The Trojan War

Crisis Background Guide



LFMUNC I

Background Guide

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Introduction

The world has changed drastically. Over a millennia ago, animals bounded across the Earth, filling the emptiness that had once existed. The Titans, your predecessors, saw the creation of these creatures and decided to govern them as they deemed just. This changed when the Titan King, Kronos, was driven mad. Kronos had succeeded his father Ouranos, the primordial god of the sky, through unfair means. With the help of Gaea, the Earth Goddess, as well as four of his brothers, Kronos butchered Ouranos. Being immortal, this did nothing more than condemn Ouranos to his abode. He now rests in the sky, enjoying a state of bliss, separated from the rest of the world. With the death of his father, Kronos received the mantle of king, but at a cost. He was condemned to a life of madness, forever bedridden with the fear that his own children would one day usurp him. How correct he had been. He took the Titaness Rhea for a wife, a poor decision considering his fear, as Rhea was the Titaness of motherhood. It was inevitable that she would one day bear his children. This she did, giving birth to the first six Olympians. In the order in which they were born, Kronos imprisoned them, trapping them within himself. He swallowed Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon, souring the opinion other Titans had of him. Zeus, the sixth son of Rhea and Kronos, was hidden from him in hopes that he would one day lead the revolution that freed his brethren. Enjoying a childhood hidden away from the Titan king, Zeus was taught of his fathers weaknesses, of the natural order, and of many philosophies that would dictate the quality of life under his rule. He entered Kronos's fortress, a stronghold on the highest peak in Greece, Mount Othrys, as a cupbearer. From here, he won the Titan lord's affection, quickly becoming his favorite servant. He seized this opportunity to end Kronos's reign of terror forever, taking charge of the world with a just and fair hand. One night, Kronos called for a council of his most trusted advisors. It was not a matter of great importance, but the council burned midnight oil and required large amounts of food and drink, the latter of which fell to Zeus to oversee. After hours of entertaining the intoxicated Titans, Zeus brought out one last round of drinks. This batch of nectar, as the immortals called it, was mixed with mustard. Zeus had concocted this drink in hopes of causing Kronos to release his siblings. His ploy was a success. As the Titan lord brought the cup to his lips, a sinister gleam entered Zeus's eyes. Standing

silently to one side of the room, he watched as his father downed the mug. Eyes suddenly bulging, Kronos doubled over, and spewed out 5 fully grown Olympians. The other Titans doubled over as well, all to shocked from the turn of events, and all incapacitated from the foul tasting nectar that they had just swallowed. Zeus herded his stunned siblings across the earth, where the influence of the Titans was weak. From here, they marshalled their forces and waged war on the Titans for nigh over a century. The war was bloody, with each immortal having to be incarcerated before they could truly not be considered a threat. With all their resources depleted, the Olympians and their allies tried for one final push. They scaled Mount Olympus, the second tallest mountain in Greece at the time, and stormed Mount Othrys. Their ploy was a success. Not only were they able to incarcerate the Titans, locking them in the depths of Tartarus, an evil pit within the Earth, but leveled Mount Othrys. Now, Olympus stands as the tallest mountain in Greece, scraping Ouranos's vast expanse as Orthys once did. Atop Mount Olympus, Zeus constructed a startling white palace, one in which his siblings, their allies, and their children could spend their days in. Thus, the world entered a new age, the age of the Olympians.

The War Begins

Power has been known to change a person. It is a sad fact of life that the weak-minded are born into power, those people who lack humility, those so selfish and greedy that they refuse to share even a morsel of their food, are granted enough power to shape the course of mankind. Three goddesses, Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena, are prime examples of this phenomenon. This happened when the most benevolent of men wed a maiden fair and lovely. So pleased was Zeus by their choice in one another that he mandated all the gods, barring Eris the goddess of discord and confusion, attend the wedding. On the appointed date, all the immortals arrived at the site of the wedding, all except Eris. She dared not disobey Zeus, her lord and master, but intended to spread discord by any means possible. As the ceremony drew to a close, a golden apple was cast by Eris, landing at Zeus's feet. Inscribed on the fruit was the phrase: "For the fairest."

As Zeus picked up the fruit, Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena all looked at him, expecting the apple to be given to them. Each wanted the title of fairest for herself. Zeus was placed in a predicament. As king of the gods, he had to be as just a ruler as possible. This meant that he could not take the side of any one goddess. Any ruling he made would result in a powerful enemy, one that could change the dynamic of the Olympians'. Despite knowing this, the three goddesses pressed Zeus to choose between them. Refusing to do so, Zeus sought out a third party, a mortal shepherd by the name of Paris, to judge the three beings.

Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena all presented gifts to Paris in order to sway him in their favor. Hera promised him a kingdom, as well as an empire the size of Greece under his command. Athena promised him unmatched prowess on the battlefield, as well as the known world as his empire. Aphrodite promised him the hand of the fairest maiden in the world, as well as a kingdom. It was this offer that appealed to him, as Paris deemed Aphrodite the fairest and loveliest of all the goddesses. True to her word, Aphrodite beguiled Helen of Sparta, a daughter of Zeus who was considered to be the most beautiful woman, causing her to fall in love with Paris. Upon her urging, Paris headed to Troy, being named a prince as soon as he entered the gates of the city. With his new status, Paris marched to Sparta, whisking away Helen after learning that her husband, King Melaneus of Sparta, was on a campaign. Melaneus, as one would expect, was enraged upon finding that Helen had been abducted. Finding that Paris was the culprit, Melaneus declared war on Troy, asking all of Greece to follow him in his quest for vengeance.

The weight of his decision could not be fathomed by any mortal, as almost all of the Olympians' had some relation to one of the parties, and were thus bound to either the Greeks or to the Trojans. You have witnessed the Olympians choose sides, some guiding the anger of the Greeks while others feel the need to defend the love that Paris and Helen share. You must shape the course of this war. The Olympic Council holds the power to force both sides to come to a peaceful agreement, as well as the influence to wipe both nations from existence. Keep your wits about you, and don't lose sight of yourself as you enter the storm of confusion that is the Trojan war.

Questions to Consider:

- Who is responsible for starting this war?
- Is a change in power necessary to keep peace on Mount Olympus?
- Are there deeper motives behind this war than those that meet the eye?

Dossier of Roles

(Please note that roles may have been slightly modified for the committee)

Zeus:

- He is the god of the sky and thunder. Zeus is married to Hera and has sired Ares, Hephaestus, and the divine twins Artemis and Apollo. His symbols include the thunderbolt, the eagle, bull, and oak. He is respected as the leader and all-father of the gods and often uses violence to get this way. As ruler of the gods, he has strived to be an impartial ruler and could not decide in the end which goddess was the fairest. As of now, Zeus is looking to restore peace and has not clearly stated a side.

Hera:

- Hera is the goddess of women, family, childbirth, and marriage. Hera is the wife and sister of Zeus. She serves as the patroness of marriage and protectioness of marriage, presiding over weddings and blessing marital unions. Her symbols include *poloa* and the peacock. Hera is one of the 3 goddesses who argued over the apple and, as a part of her resentment towards Aphrodite, favors the Greeks.

Poseidon:

- Poseidon is the god of the sea, storms, earthquakes, and sailing. He is the brother of Zeus and is regarded as the father of horses. Atlantis is Poseiden's domain, and is thought to have been of his making. His most notable children include Triton, Chrysaor, and Pegasus. He has been portrayed as benevolent and sailors pray to him for a safe voyage, often having bulls sacrificed in his honor. Some years ago, Poseidon was sent by Zeus to serve the King of Troy, Laomedon. Laomedon promised rewards for labor, and had Poseidon single handedly construct a wall around the citadel of Troy. Upon completing

this task, Poseidon requested a gift in return for his services and was refused. Zeus forbade him from taking outright revenge, but since then, Poseidon has sunk all Trojan ships.

Demeter:

- Demeter is the goddess of agriculture and harvest. Some of her children include Arion, Persephone, and Plutus. She taught the mortal Triptolemus to farm, and he then passed on the knowledge to all of the rest of Greece. Demeter is on bad terms with Hades due to his wedding of her daughter Persephone without her consent, but is generally peaceful towards all who respect their farmers. Her symbols include the cornucopia, swine, and grain. She believes that Helen was abducted from Sparta, much like her own daughter Persephone, and has opposed the Trojans throughout this war.

Athena:

- Athena is the goddess of wisdom and warfare. She is the patron goddess of Athens, a major kingdom, and believes in fair judgment. She has no children but supports a mortal by the name of Odysseus. Earlier in the year, Athena lost a weaving contest to a mortal by the name of Arachne. Ashamed and outraged with the turn of events, Athena turned Arachne into the first spider. Her symbols include the loom, the owl, and an olive tree. Troy's vast army is not known for the squishing of spiders, nor for their tactful strategies. They prefer to rush blindly into battle, rarely. In this war, she favors the Greeks.

Apollo:

- Apollo is the god of archery, medicine, the sun, prophecy, diseases, and is the protector of young men. He is a fickle deity, having not a care in the world. He is the twin brother to Artemis and a son of Zeus. Soon after his birth, Apollo slew the Great Snake Python, allowing for prophecies to once again be distributed to the world. His symbols include the sun, lyre, the bow and arrow, a three-footed stool, and a laurel tree. In response to

Poseidon's obvious hate for the Trojans, Apollo was sent to destroy the Greeks in this war.

Artemis:

- Artemis is the goddess of the hunt, the moon, the wilderness, the wild animals, chastity, and is the patron and protector of young girls. She vowed to never marry and thus became one of the maiden goddesses. Artemis is the twin sister to Apollo. She is the leader of the hunt, a band of maidens that roam about the wild places of the world, hunting whatever they deem fit. Her symbols include a bow, arrows, a quiver, hunting knives, deer, a moon, and cypress. Alongside her twin brother, Apollo, though some say out of spite for Hera, she protects the Trojans.

Ares:

- Ares is the god of war, courage, prisoners, weapons, and is the firstborn of Zeus and Hera. He loves Aphrodite, wife of Hephaestus, and has been having an affair with her since the first century of their marriage. During battles, he is known to walk among men, killing and maiming with pleasure. He is the patron god of the Spartans and imbues them with strength and valor in battle. His symbols include the sword, spear, shield, helmet, chariot, a flaming torch, dog, boar, and vulture. Having been persuaded by Aphrodite, he actively supports the Trojans.

Hephaestus:

- Hephaestus is the god of blacksmiths, metalworking, carpenters, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, stone masonry, technology, fire, metallurgy, fire, and volcanoes. According to myth, he is the son of solely Hera, and having no father, was born deformed and crippled, causing Hera to cast him off of Mount Olympus because of his deformity. He is married to Aphrodite and serves as the blacksmith to the gods. Well aware of his wife's infidelity, Hephaestus strives to catch Ares and Aphrodite when they are together, having trapped

them together in a golden net some 5000 years prior to this conflict. Hephaestus is particularly worshipped in the industrial area of Greece like Athens. His symbols include a hammer, anvils, tongs, and volcanoes. He has continuously supported the Trojans in this conflict.

Aphrodite:

- Aphrodite is the goddess of love and beauty, as well as liege lord to Eros, god of attraction (better known by Roman name of Cupid). Upon request, Eros descends from her palace, floating on feathery wings, and pierces the heart of a mortal with a tipped arrow. Should the arrow be black, the mortal will hate the next person they glance at. Should it be gold, the mortal will fall in love with the next person they glance at. It is believed that this was the sorcery that caused Helen of Sparta to elope with Paris of Troy. Often associated with her are her symbols of doves, myrtles, swans and roses -- fitting for the most lovely goddess of Olympus, who had been brought into the world by the sea (she and Poseidon share no family ties). She sides with the Trojans -- having been very much involved with the war and protecting Paris as well as her son, Aeneas, a mighty warrior, during battle.

Hermes:

- Hermes is the god of boundaries, roads, and travelers, thieves, athletes, shepherds, commerce, speed, cunning, wit, sleep, and is the divine messenger of the gods. He is also the protector of heralds, travelers, thieves, merchants, and orators. Hermes can move quickly between the mortal and divine worlds aided by his winged sandals. Once you have died, he escorts your soul to the abode of Hades, where you will be judged and sent to spend the rest of eternity either in punishment, or in utter and forever bliss. His symbols include the rooster, the tortoise, a satchel or pouch, a winged helmet, and the caduceus. He currently supports the Greeks, though it is thought to be out of rivalry with Apollo rather than benevolence.

Dionysus:

- Dionysus is the god of the grape harvest, winemaking, and wine, agricultural fertility, orchards and fruit, vegetation, insanity, festivity, and theatre. According to myth, he blessed King Midas with the golden touch. He is considered a nature god and invented the process of growing grapes and making wine. His parties are renowned for being wild and crazy. Dionysus' symbols include the grapevine, bull, panther, ivy, a goat, masks, and chalice. His loyalties have wavered, but for now, has supported the Greeks.

Hestia:

- Hestia is the goddess of the hearth, home, domesticity, family, and the state. She is one of the virgin goddesses and is the firstborn child of Kronos and Rhea. Hestia receives the first offering at every sacrifice in the household. She gave up her seat on the Olympian council, making way for Dionysus but unbalancing the council to 5 females and 7 males. Her symbols include the hearth and the fire. Hestia is constantly striving for peace, and is known to solve conflicts among the Olympians. She, like Zeus, has not outrightly supported a side in this war.

Hades:

- Hades is the god of the dead and king of the underworld. He has control of all things underneath the earth. Although he is from the first generation of the Olympian gods, he is not considered a part of the Olympian council and may only visit Mount Olympus on the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year. He is married to Persephone. His symbols include the cornucopia, cypress, keys, serpents, mint plants, white poplar, dog, pomegranate, sheep, cattle, screech owl, horse, chariot, and his three-headed dog, Cerberus. His list of troubles began and ends with war, as every dead soul eventually ends up in his hands. He, because of the extra work it makes for him, hates conflict, and wishes that mankind would be considerate enough to stop fighting amongst themselves.

Thanatos:

- Thanatos is the personification of non-violent death. He is the son of Nyx and Erebus, the twin of Hypnos, and brother to the Keres (female death spirits). During battles, he flies about on dark feathery wings, causing death to overcome soldiers unfortunate enough to fall prey to their attackers intentions. In times of peace, he comes knocking on your door, reaping your soul as soon as you answer his call. Though frightening, mortals do not hate Thanatos, for he severs their soul from their bodies only when the Fates have deemed fit. His symbols include the theta, poppies, butterflies, swords, and inverted torches. For Death to pick a side would wreak havoc upon the battlefields of Troy. Knowing this, the deities of the underworld, Thanatos included, have abstained from choosing a side in this war.

Nike:

- Nike is the goddess of victory. She is the daughter of the Titan Pallas and the goddess Styx. Nike flies around after a battle, rewarding the victors with glory, fame, and a wreath of laurel leaves. Nike, along with her siblings, are close companions of Zeus. She has been numerously depicted with famous athletes and is a common sculpture in commemorating victories. Her symbols include golden sandals, wings, and wreaths. She is currently neutral and will stay that way for now for if she chooses a side, victory will be granted to one side immediately.

Hecate:

- Though a Titan, Hecate is regarded as an Olympian. She is a maid to Persephone, and aided her mother Demeter during her quest to “rescue” Persephone from Hades. She is the goddess of crossroads, magic, doorways, and holds some sway in the Underworld. Her symbols include the torch, a woman with three heads, monsters, and anything unusual or supernatural. Hecate is known to have sided with the gods in their conquest against Kronos and his Titans, but still holds grudges against them for stripping her race of power over the cosmos. She has been known to act out of her own self interest rather

than for the benefit of those who worship her. Dark tales and rumors have been spread about those who seek mastery over magic through worship of her, with maidens going mad, losing their senses, or simply dying for no apparent reason. The Trojans have shown more respect for her than the Greeks have, causing for her affections to lie with them.

Nemesis:

- Nemesis, of all the gods and goddesses, is feared the most. She is the embodiment of revenge, spreading hate and a lust for justice amongst not only mortals, but the olympians and other immortal beings as well. She and Eris are perhaps responsible for nearly all of the conflicts that take place, with other beings rarely having influence in fights. Nemesis is the daughter of the Underworld and the embodiment of night, Nyx. Her symbols are the sword, whip, dagger, measuring rod, scale, and bridle. It is said that she peered into the future some years ago, and knowing what was to occur, changed the course of events to reward one of her followers. This story attributes the birth of Helen to Nemesis, though whether there is any truth in this statement has yet to be confirmed by Apollo's oracle. Nemesis understands Melaneus lust for vengeance, and has supported the Greeks in their conquest.

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