

The Eve Adler Department of Classics Presents:

Ocean

in Greco-Roman Myth & Thought

James Romm

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Hendrik Goltzius, 1588
National Gallery of Art,
Washington DC

Both a “he” and an “it,” found on both Greek world-maps and on the Athenian tragic stage, sporting a serpentine lower body or crab-claw horns, Okeanos — Ocean — has one of the most complex constructs of any ancient mythic figure. The Greek historian Herodotus targeted Ocean for an acute attack on poetic fictions, starting a debate that echoed down through later Greek geography. In Rome, Seneca the Younger saw Ocean as the source of a coming apocalypse, seemingly anticipating modern ecological nightmares. In this illustrated talk, I will survey the many facets of Ocean in Greco-Roman mythology and science, in an attempt to find unity in a diverse and ever-changing tradition.

Friday, October 9th

12:15 PM, lunch will be provided

Twilight Hall 201