

Thalos 396

Chapter 396: The Doctrine of Divine Mass Assault

"Athena, are you insane? What gives you the right to do this?" God of War Ares immediately snapped back.

"Because His Majesty the God-Emperor is absent, and before leaving he told me to act as regent over Mount Olympus," Athena retorted without giving an inch.

God of Light Apollo tried to play peacemaker. "Let's all say a little less. Right now the situation at the front really isn't looking good. The Aesir gods are indeed fierce."

As always, if the blade didn't cut into you, you didn't know the pain.

This cut to a god-king's divine power supply wasn't just simple subtraction. At worst, it was a veiled move to knock the crown off a god-king's head. This kind of thing, touching divine authority, was guaranteed to offend, so Ares jumping up in outrage was understandable.

Athena was smart. She didn't call for cutting everyone's divine power supply—that was common sense. If you cut the supply of the gods actually fighting, you'd be crippling your own arm and dying faster. And she only proposed cutting one god's share, which narrowed the target and avoided turning all the non-combat gods against her.

After a round of shouting, the ever-radiant hearth goddess Hestia stepped forward. "There's no need to argue. Compared to those of you going to the battlefield, I am less important. Start by cutting my divine power supply."

The quarrel in the Olympian temple vanished instantly.

"My apologies, Lady Hestia." Athena had achieved her aim and immediately softened her stance.

The gentle goddess shook her head. "Athena, you should be thinking instead about whether to sound the god-bell to call Zeus back—and... if the war continues to go badly, who will be next."

Who would be next?

That was the real dagger to the heart.

If Hestia hadn't been the one to step forward voluntarily, saying such a thing would have been obvious provocation. But because she had yielded first, it sounded perfectly selfless.

Athena lowered her head in embarrassment.

She definitely had a list in her mind, but this wasn't the time to name it. Besides, Zeus was wandering the world because he could afford to. Before leaving, he had said—unless enemy gods fought their way into the Greek world itself, don't call him back.

That was exactly Athena's dilemma.

From the current situation, things weren't yet disastrous; from the trend, they were heading for disaster.

Right now she was just a paper-patcher, plugging leaks wherever they appeared, but she didn't actually hold true supreme authority. Any sortie by a god-king had to be discussed with the other god-kings.

That was what left Athena helpless.

"I will gather some Olympian true gods and send their avatars to stabilize the front."

Again, she lacked the authority to simply order it, and had to negotiate with the rank below her.

On the other side, in the Golden Palace of Asgard in Ginnungagap, Thalos showed the core gods his latest mind projection: a giant map of the Greek world.

"This world's size really is something," sun god Freyr remarked.

It was indeed no small thing.

Plain Greece itself was small.

The key point—this was Greater Greece.

This territory, converted to the Earth of Thalos's previous life, included all of Greece and Macedonia, with a sphere of influence stretching north to the Black Sea, east to western Turkey (Asia Minor), south to Alexandria in Egypt, and west including not only Italy but even Marseille in France.

Frankly, at its height Greater Greece's borders resembled those of the Roman Empire at its peak. Not quite as large—it covered roughly the central to eastern half of the Mediterranean, rather than turning the whole sea into a Greek lake.

And that was just the land area. The real key was that Greater Greece, beyond claiming over 2.5 million square kilometers of the Mediterranean, also included Atlantis under Poseidon's rule—which, translated, is "the Atlantic Ocean."

Fun fact: the Atlantic Ocean alone covers about 77 million square kilometers.

Vast skies, over half the Mediterranean, plus the Atlantic, plus the underworld of Tartarus beneath land and sea—this was the full version of Greater Greece.

On that foundation, the Greek world, with its massive world volume, had easily crushed a host of West Asian and African pantheons, even a Pacific pantheon they'd somehow encountered.

By comparison, even after Ginnungagap had swallowed the Celtic (British Isles), Sumerian, Egyptian, South American, Slavic, Indian, and Japanese continents and their surrounding seas, it still didn't match the size of Greater Greece.

Here Thalos couldn't resist griping about the Indian world—supposedly a continental-scale world, and maybe once Shiva and the others had considered taking the Indian Ocean, but in practice, because the Indian gods despised the sea, the "ocean" was just a strip twenty kilometers offshore.

Adding it all up, after sending endless heroic scouts across the distorted starfields, Thalos roughly confirmed that the current great Ginnungagap world was about sixty percent the size of Greater Greece.

That was only a rough estimate.

The exact answer might never be known, since the divine power provided by a unit volume of earth-element was far higher than that from water-element—there was no fixed ratio.

In any case, Thalos could only accept that Zeus and the others commanded more natural elements than he did.

And that was just from a visual estimate. In truth, the divine power a pantheon could command depended not only on the four elements in its world, but also on its population and the depth of its faith—complex factors that couldn't be judged by eye or simple measurement.

As for population, never mind Thalos as an outsider—even Zeus probably didn't know how many people lived in his realm.

But considering Greece's slavery-based economy and low productivity, they certainly couldn't match Thalos's people, who had an innate knack for farming.

Thalos's century-plus of effort had made population his biggest advantage.

Now, Ginnungagap's total population was over one hundred million.

That was after Thalos had caught the earth god Geb, the sea and irrigation god Enki, and a host of agriculture-related gods, and put them to work on "divine power seed selection," then applied divine "golden fertilizer" rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, boosting crop yields to hundreds of catties per mu.

Centering on the fertile 17 million square kilometers of South America, this had exploded the population.

That was Thalos's greatest confidence.

Even by Herodotus's Histories and Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian War, ancient Greece's population had been about thirteen million.

That was still utterly dwarfed by Thalos's side.

Moreover, Thalos would bet a copper coin Greece didn't really have that many.

After all, in his original world, modern Greece, with modern agriculture, had just over ten million people. In the slave-era Greek farming level, yields were less than one-eighth of modern. Even with rich fisheries, they couldn't feed ten million.

At most three million, no more.

By that reckoning, today's Greater Greece, counting the slave populations of its vassal worlds, might have twenty or thirty million at most.

Comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the two worlds, Thalos's strategy could now be set.

Namely—the Doctrine of Divine Mass Assault.