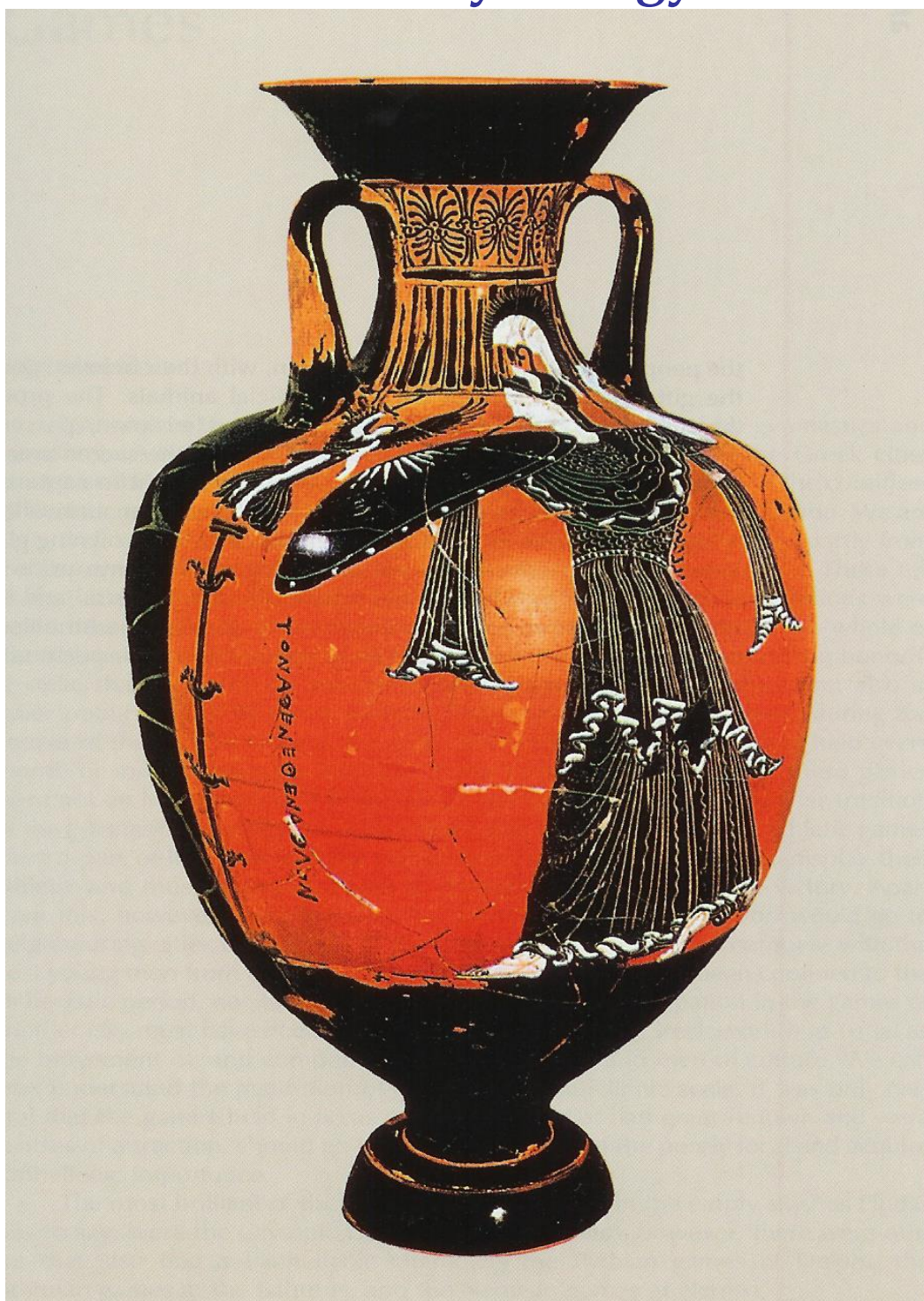


Strand 1:

Part I: Mythology



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1. Greek Religion

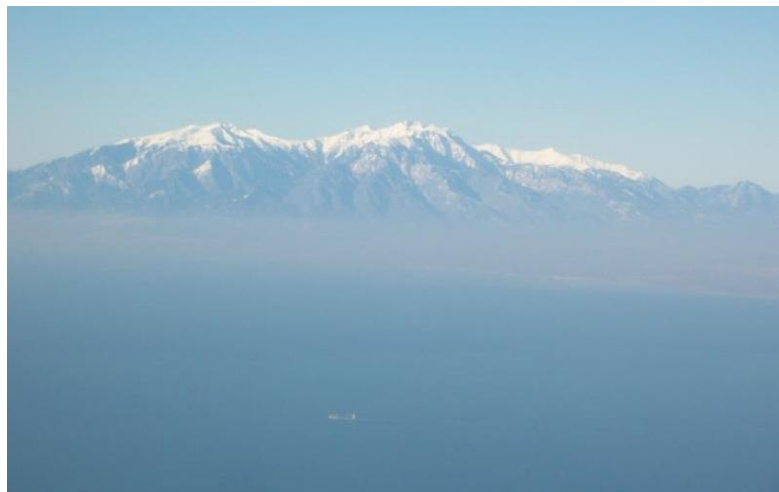


Religion was very important to the ancient Greeks because they believed that it would make their lives better while they were living. They also believed that the gods controlled everything in their lives and it was important to please the gods otherwise they might punish you.

Olympus, the biggest mountain in mainland Greece is 2917 metres high. It is part of a large mountainous area in northern Greece. From the south side the mountain looks bare, grim and uninviting. For much of the year the mountain is covered in snow. It is often surrounded by wisps of clouds, which make it look mysterious. The Greeks believed that Mt Olympus reached the upper air and was chosen as the ideal place in which to live by the gods. In places the rocky peaks looked like huge seats for the gods to sit on. They could look out from here and see all that was taking place below them. They could fly to faraway places and help and protect any mortal who called on them. The people below working in the fields or sailors out at sea could look up at the clouds and imagine that the gods were looking after them.

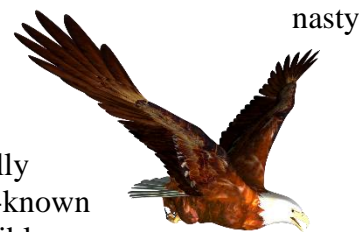
Mt Olympus

The gods of Mt Olympus looked very much like human beings. They even behaved like them and could feel such things as anger, love and jealousy. If there were a war on earth, the gods would take sides and argue among themselves. However, there were important differences between gods and men.



The gods were immortal and instead of blood they had an undying liquid called *ichor*, which made them immortal. Their food, called *ambrosia*, which was very sweet, made them live forever. They were fond of feasts and ate at golden tables. They had a honey drink called *nectar*, which they always drank out of golden cups. In addition, the gods loved the smell of meat being cooked by mortals after a sacrifice. Sacrifices were made by humans as part of ceremonies to honour the gods. The gods were extremely powerful. If they liked the offerings made by humans they could be very kind, but if something angered them they could turn cruel and send things like storms, famines, plagues and earthquakes, illness and even death.

When a god or goddess visited earth, he or she would usually change appearance. Sometimes they could look like a well-known human, sometimes an animal or bird or sometimes be invisible. Zeus quite often disguised himself as an animal.



How it all began....

The Ancient Greeks believed that in the beginning there was nothing but a dark, wide open space called Chaos. Mother Earth was the first to appear, followed by Father Sky. Rains fell from Father Sky to earth and flowers and trees began to appear, rivers flowed and lakes and seas were created.

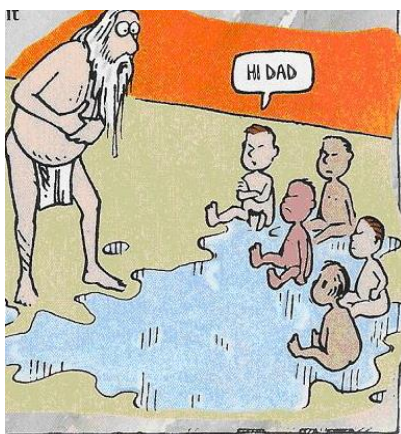


Next, Mother Earth produced the hundred-handed giants and Cyclopes, giants with one eye. They decided to rebel against their father so he locked them up in Tartarus, a dark and gloomy place in the Underworld. Then Mother Earth gave birth to the Titans – more giants, the most famous being Atlas, Rhea and Cronos. The Titans released the Cyclopes from the Underworld and with their help they overthrew Father Sky. Cronos became the leader of the Titans and he had big plans to become the ruler of the universe so he locked the Cyclopes up in Tartarus again so that they wouldn't stop his plans.

Cronos, the mean, nasty, vicious Titan then married his sister Rhea! His mother warned him that he would be overthrown by one of his children just like he had overthrown his father. So every time Rhea gave birth to a child Cronos would eat it. After having five children eaten, Rhea decided enough was enough and was determined her next child would live. When she had a baby son called Zeus, she sent him off to Crete to be looked after by a band of men called the *Curetes*. Then she wrapped a stone up in a blanket and gave it to her husband. Cronos, upon seeing Rhea with another child, promptly ate the stone and did not seem to notice the difference.

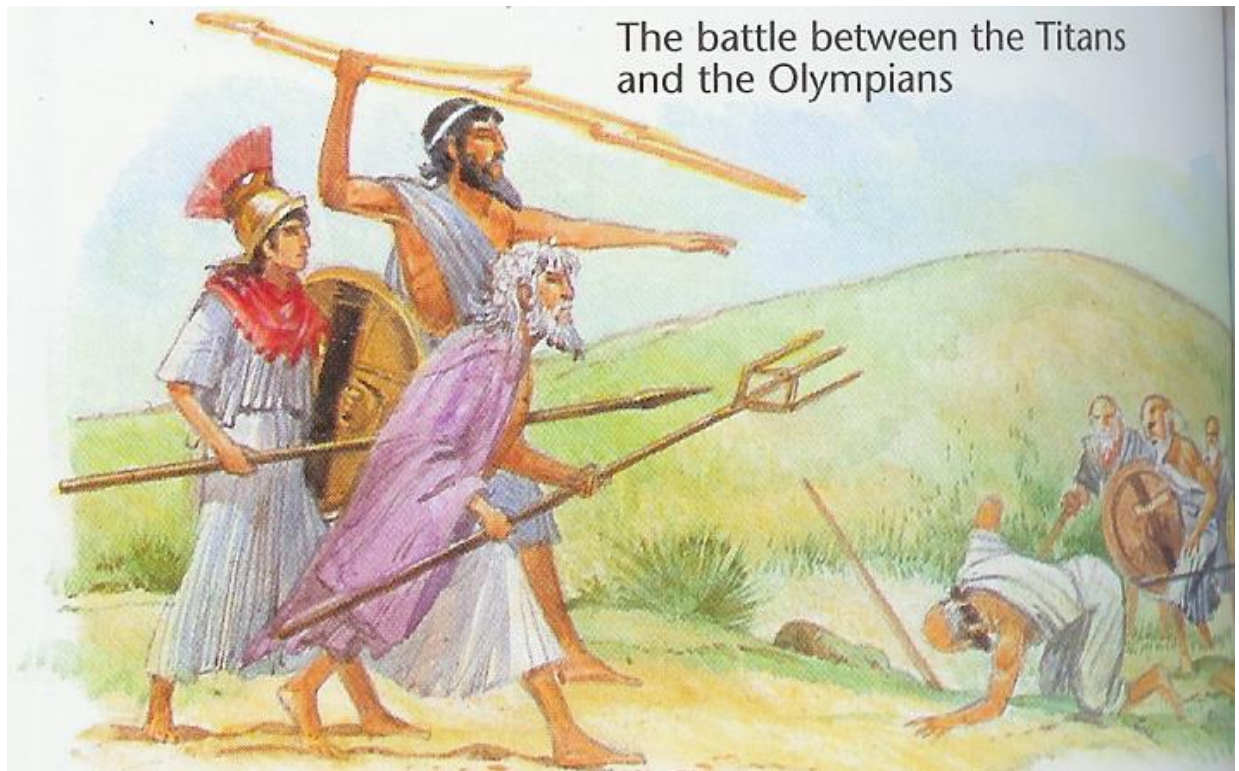


Zeus was hidden in a cave on the island of Crete. He was fed on honey and goats milk and slept in a golden cradle hung from a tree. He was surrounded by the *Curetes*, who clashed their spears and shields together so Cronos could not hear baby Zeus crying.



When Zeus grew up he was determined to overthrow his father. His mother gave him a magic potion, which he put in Cronos' drink, which made him very sick. First he coughed up the blanket with the stone and then he coughed up all his brothers and sisters, Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Poseidon and Hades. Still alive they joined Zeus in a battle against Cronos.

The Cyclopes were released again and they made special weapons for Zeus and his brothers. Zeus was given a thunderbolt, Poseidon was given a three-pronged spear called a trident and Hades was given a helmet, which made him invisible. Cronos and the Titans were defeated and exiled.



The Titan Atlas was given special punishment; he was made to carry the sky on his shoulders. Zeus became supreme ruler of the universe and together with the Olympian gods went to live on Mt Olympus.

The most important Olympian Gods

Greek

Roman

Zeus (M)	Jupiter	King, weather
Hera (F)	Juno	Queen, marriage
Poseidon (M)	Neptune	Sea, earthquakes
Hades (M)	Pluto	Underworld
Hestia (F)	Vesta	Home, hearth
Demeter (F)	Ceres	Crops, harvest
Apollo (M)	Apollo	Hunting, sun, prophecy Medicine, music,
Artemis (F)	Diana	Hunting, wild animals, moon
Aphrodite (F)	Venus	Love, beauty
Athena (F)	Minerva	War, wisdom, crafts
Hermes (M)	Mercury	Messenger God
Hephaestus (M)	Vulcan	Fire, blacksmiths
Ares (M)	Mars	War, violence
Dionysus (M)	Bacchus	Wine, theatre, madness

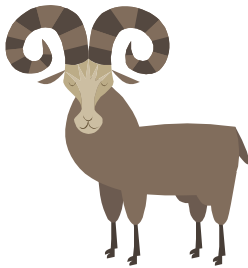
Symbols of the Gods

Zeus	Crown, thunderbolt
Hera	Crown, peacock, apple tree, cuckoo on a sceptre, pomegranate in her left hand
Poseidon	Trident, fish, golden chariot, white horses
Hades	Crown, skulls, tombstones
Hestia	Hearth
Demeter	Corn, poppies
Apollo	Sun, bow and arrow, deer, mouse, lyre
Artemis	Knee-length tunic of saffron with red hem, moon, bow and arrow, deer
Aphrodite	Heart, scallop shell, girdle
Athena	Helmet, spear
Hermes	Winged sandals, round hat, staff with ribbons
Dionysus	Horns and crown of serpents, vines, wine cup, theatre masks
Hephaestus	Forge, hammer, anvil
Ares	Helmet, shield weapons

Prometheus and the Mortals

One of the Greek myths tells us that it was Prometheus with the help of the goddess Athena who created the race of mortals.

When the mortals had been made, the gods called upon Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus and told them to dress the mortals and distribute gifts among them. Epimetheus, however, wanted to do the job himself and his brother agreed to this. So Epimetheus began with the animals. To some he gave strength, to others swiftness. To some he gave great size, while the small ones he provided with an underground home or the ability to fly.

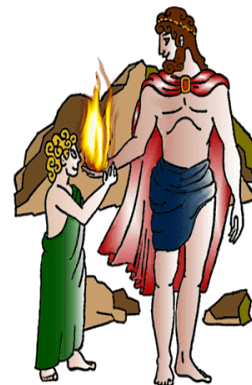


To make sure that none of them should become extinct, he clothed them with thick coats and ways in which they might defend themselves. Epimetheus was not particularly wise and forgot to leave any gift for the race of man. While he was wondering what to do, Prometheus arrived to inspect his brother's work.

He found all the animals well equipped and given excellent characteristics but man naked and unprotected. Prometheus thought about the problem and decided on a course of action. He wanted to improve the living conditions of these backward and primitive humans and hoped he could count on Zeus' support. Prometheus wanted to help the human race as it was, but Zeus wanted to destroy it and create a new and more perfect race. But Prometheus went ahead and helped the human race in two ways, which greatly offended Zeus and led to Prometheus being severely punished.

One day an ox was slaughtered to celebrate an agreement establishing the relationship between the gods and man. Prometheus tricked Zeus. He slaughtered an ox and cut the skin in two. He gave the best part to the humans. In one of the pieces he wrapped up all the lean meat and in the other the fat and the bones and put the two before Zeus for him to choose between them. Zeus chose the half with the bones in it, and then Prometheus gave the lean meat to mankind. So in this way it became practice for men to burn the fat and bones of sacrifices as an offering to the gods and to eat the meat themselves.

As a result of this, Zeus withheld from mankind the gift of fire. Prometheus then brought fire down from the sky, where Zeus had hidden it. He cleverly put the fire into a hollow fennel stalk and gave it to man, teaching them how to keep warm, to cook, to make bricks, tools and utensils, everything needed to give man a comfortable life. Prometheus brought mankind many other blessings as well. He taught them how to plough and all about the arts and sciences.

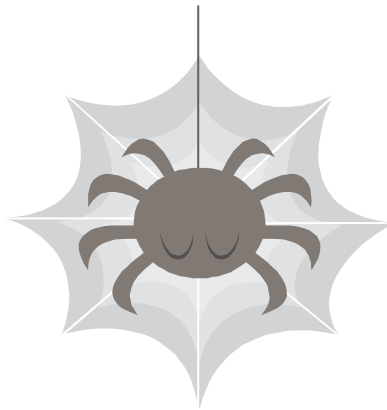


Despite all of his goodness towards mankind, he paid dearly for his lack of respect for Zeus. He was condemned to be tied to a stake on the summit of the Caucasus Mountains. Zeus ordered Hephaestus, the smith god, to make the chains and to ensure Prometheus was tightly secured to the rock. Hermes the messenger god was sent to make sure Hephaestus did his job properly.



Every day an eagle descended upon him and ate his liver, and because Prometheus was an immortal, it grew back again. So the next day the eagle could come and eat it again and again. This torture carried on for many years. Finally the hero Heracles came to Prometheus and released him from his torment.

Arachne



Arachne lived in a small village and was famous for her weaving skill. People from all over Greece would come to watch her at her work and marvel at the beautiful cloth she had woven. When people remarked that you would think she had learnt the art of weaving from Athena herself, Arachne would be offended at this and say “Let her come, and weave against me. If she won she could do what she liked with me”.

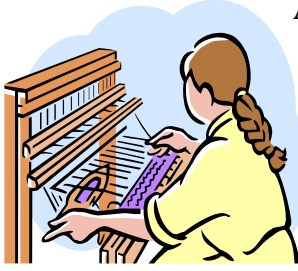
Now, you should never challenge a goddess like this and no sooner than she had uttered these words when Athena disguised as an old woman appeared. She had grey hair, her skin was old and wrinkled and her steps were weak and tottering. Then she said to Arachne “I am old, but my long years bring experience. Do not refuse my advice, do not challenge the goddess Athena and ask her forgiveness for the foolish words you have spoken”.

Arachne grew extremely angry and screamed at the goddess. “Stupid old thing, what is wrong with you is that you have lived far too long. Go away! I am quite able to look after myself. Let Athena come here. Why does she avoid a contest with me?”

“She has come” Athena replied, revealing herself in her true form. Everyone around became fearful and bowed down to the goddess but Arachne showed no such fear. She stupidly issued her challenge to a contest and Athena no longer refused the contest. The looms were set up and the weaving contest began.



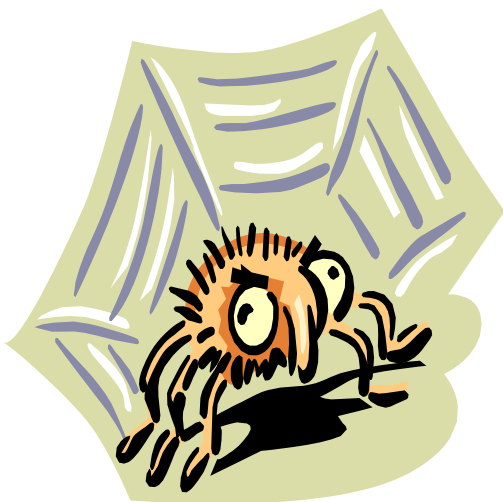
Quickly they worked, with their skilled hands moving backwards and forwards like lightning across the shuttles. Athena in her weaving showed the ancient city of Athens and the story of the quarrel between her and Neptune over the naming of the city. You could see the twelve gods as witness to their contest, Neptune himself striking with his trident a huge barren rock from which a salt-water stream began to flow. Next she wove the olive tree, her present to the people of Athens. They chose her gift and the victory was hers. The city was to be named Athens in her honour.



As for Arachne, the pictures that she wove were of the love affairs of the gods. There was Europa carried away by Zeus, disguised as a bull, Zeus again coming to Danae in a golden shower, to Aegina as a flame, and to Mnemosyne disguised as a shepherd. Each scene was different, and round the edge of the web ran a narrow border filled with designs of flowers and sprays of ivy intertwined.



Furious at the success of the mortal girl, Athena picked up the beautiful cloth woven by Arachne and tore it to pieces. Then she struck poor Arachne with her spindle on the head over and over again. Arachne was mortified and thoroughly humiliated and in her injured pride she put a noose round her neck and hung herself. As she hung from the rope, Athena, in her pity, lifted her body and said: “You may keep your life, you rude and arrogant girl, but you and all your descendants will still hang.”



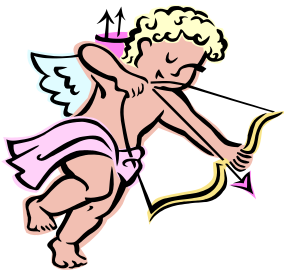
Then she sprinkled over Arachne some magic juices, and immediately her hair fell off. Her nose and ears fell off too, then her head became smaller and all her body shrunk. Her slender fingers were joined onto her body as legs; everything else was stomach. Now, fully turned into a spider, she still spins thread out of her own stomach. Today, her descendants are everywhere, all over the world, exercising her old craft of weaving.

Hades, Demeter and Persephone

When Zeus and his brothers had defeated the Titans and banished them to Tartarus, a new enemy rose up against the gods. They were the giants Typhon, Briareus and others. Some of them had a hundred arms, others breathed out fire. They were finally subdued and buried alive under Mount Etna on the island of Sicily, where they sometimes struggle to get loose and shake the whole island with earthquakes.



One day Hades, god of the Underworld, was alarmed by the violence of the giants trashing about, and feared that his kingdom would be opened for all to see by their struggle. So he left his shadowy realm in a chariot drawn by black horses and went to the island of Sicily and took a tour of inspection to satisfy himself of the extent of the damage. He examined everything and finding there was no weakness was just about to leave to return to the Underworld.



But just then Aphrodite, the goddess of love, saw him and putting her arms around her son Cupid said “Cupid take your arrows and shoot one into the heart of that god who rules the world below. Demeter’s daughter Persephone will remain unmarried if I allow it, so make Hades fall in love with her. Cupid as always was quick to do his mother’s bidding took his quiver and chose one that seemed to him the sharpest and most sure in flight.

In the valley of Enna there is a lake surrounded by woods, which screen it from the hot rays of the sun, and the moist ground is covered with flowers and it is always spring. It was here that Persephone was playing with her companions, gathering lilies and violets and filling her basket with them. Hades saw her, immediately fell in love with her and carried her off; so violent were the feelings that he had. Terrified, the girl kept on calling out for her friends and for her mother – especially for her mother Demeter. In her fright she let her flowers fall and the loss of her flowers made her cry even more. When Hades reached the River Cyane, the river goddess rose up and tried to stop him but Hades struck the riverbank with his trident and the earth opened up and gave him passage to Tartarus.

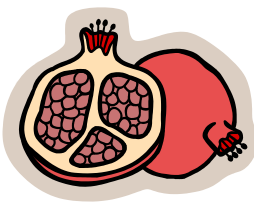


Meanwhile Persephone's terrified mother was searching for her, but searching in vain, through every land and every sea. All day she looked for her daughter and at night she lit two torches from the fire of Etna and continued the search in the cold darkness.

When she came to the river Cyane, she saw Persephone's girdle, which had fallen there when she was carried down into the lower world. She still did not know where her daughter was, but she cursed every land in the world and especially Sicily, saying that they were ungrateful to her and did not deserve to have the fruits of the earth. She broke in pieces the ploughs, brought death upon the farmers and their animals and made the harvest fail and put blights and diseases among the young plants. Now nothing grew but weeds and thorns and thistles. Throughout the world people were dying of famine or plagues, and still Persephone was nowhere to be found.

There is a river called Arethusa, which rises in Greece, then descends into the earth and, after diving below the sea, comes into the light again in Sicily. Now the river goddess raised her head from the water and spoke to Demeter. "O mother of fruit" she said, "do not be angry with this land. It does not deserve your anger, since it did not help in the theft of your daughter. While I was below the earth down in the depths of the lower world, I saw Persephone there with my own eyes. She looked sad and her face showed that she had not yet recovered from her fear, but she reigns there as the great queen of the Underworld, the all-powerful wife of the ruler of the dead."

When Demeter heard these words she was overcome with grief and pain and mounted her chariot and went up to Mt Olympus to consult Zeus. There she stood in indignation before Zeus, and said "Brother, I have come to beg your aid for the child who is yours and mine. She has been carried away by Hades, please make him give her back, your daughter does not deserve to have a robber for her husband."



Zeus replied, "I can understand your feelings, we shall find that no great harm has been done. It was love that caused the theft. If you will approve of the match, Hades would be a very worthy husband for our daughter. But if you are resolved on separating them, Persephone shall return, but only on this one condition, if she has touched no food with her lips while she has been in the world below."

Demeter was determined to have her daughter back, but there was one problem. One day, while Persephone was wandering in the gardens of the Underworld, Hades had given her a red pomegranate from a swaying bough, and she had eaten six grains of the fruit. The only one who saw her do this was a boy called Ascalaphus, who gave evidence against her and so prevented her from returning home. In anger Persephone turned him into a screech owl.



Now Zeus made Demeter settle on a compromise. He divided the year into two parts. Now Persephone is goddess of both worlds and spends half the year with her mother and half with her husband.

The Story of Actaeon

It wasn't Actaeon's fault. You can't blame a man for losing his way in a dark and trackless forest. And that's all that Actaeon did. It was just his bad luck that the goddess Artemis happened to be in the same forest at the same time.

What happened was this...

From dawn, Actaeon and his friends had ranged over the mountains with their packs of hounds. What a day's hunting they had had! By noon, the ground for miles around was red with the blood of the animals they had killed. Actaeon called to his companions, "Lads, let's leave it for today. This heat is almost too much to bear. Look at our spears, our knives and our nets: they are caked with blood. The hounds lie panting on the ground. We are all exhausted from the chase. We've had a great day's sport. Let's stop now. Tomorrow is another day." Actaeon's friends agreed. They gathered up the nets and went their separate ways. Silence fell on those dark and tree-covered slopes.

Poor Actaeon! It was now that Fate took over.

Not far from where he and his friends had ended their hunting, the mountain sloped down into a deep, secluded valley. In its depths was a cool and shady cave with a pool of bright water fed by a waterfall tumbling from the rocks above. This place was sacred to Artemis, the virgin goddess. She used to go there with her nymphs to bathe her weary limbs, hidden from the eyes of men. And that's exactly what she was doing when Fate directed Actaeon to her cave ...and to his death. Artemis' nymphs had just taken her hunting spear from her and had helped her remove her clothes. They were standing around the goddess pouring water over her head and shoulders.



Meanwhile, Actaeon, wandering happily homewards, noticed the entrance to the cave. He went closer pushing further into the cavern. His eyes adjusted to the dimmer light within: he saw the naked nymphs: He heard their screams as they rushed to screen the goddess from his gaze. Too late: Artemis stood, taller than her maids. For a split second, the eyes of man and goddess met. Actaeon stood transfixed, unable to take his eyes away from her naked beauty. A deep blush spread over the goddess' face and shoulders. She turned her body away in anger, yet continued to glare at the intruder. Then, she scooped up a handful of water and with a sudden movement, dashed it into his eyes and shouted, "Now, if you can, go and boast that you saw me naked"

Even as she spoke, antlers began to sprout from Actaeon's head; his arms and legs grew hair and hooves where hands and feet had been. But that was not all—she also filled his

heart with terror. He fled from the scene in panic. He caught sight of his reflection in a pool, and saw he had turned into a deer! He tried to cry out: "What has happened to me?" but no words came. Human tears ran down his cheeks. What was he to do? Where could he go?



But far worse was to come. Suddenly, he heard the sound of barking dogs. His own hounds had picked up the scent! They saw him and charged in mad pursuit. The whole pack came at him....he knew them all, he had trained them all; they were good dogs. Actaeon fled through the trees, his ears filled with the high-pitched yelping of his dogs. He shouted at them, "It's me, Actaeon, your master." His words were in vain. The leading dogs were almost on him.

Overcome by fear and exhaustion, he stopped and turned to face his tormentors. The dogs moved in for the kill. One seized his ankle, sinking his fangs deep into the tender flesh: others made for his legs and forced him to the ground. Now, the whole pack threw themselves onto his body, tearing his animal flesh.

Actaeon did not die alone. His friends arrived on the scene drawn by the noise and delighted with this extra and unexpected excitement. And as they urged on the hounds, they kept shouting for Actaeon. "Where is he? He'll be furious when we tell him what he missed."

These were the last words that Actaeon heard. Wound followed wound until he died. Only then did Artemis goddess of hunting put aside her terrible anger.



Atalanta

Atalanta was a beautiful girl who could run faster than anyone else and that included all the fastest runners among the young men of her time.



One day she went to the oracle and asked the god what man she should marry. The god's reply struck terror into her heart:

"Never marry, Atalanta, it will bring you nothing but disaster".

The poor girl fled from the company of men and lived alone in the woods. However, that did not stop men hearing off her beauty, finding her and pestering her to marry.

Finally, she laid down her conditions to her eager suitors. She said "you may claim me as your wife only if you succeed in outrunning me in a race. If you lose the race, then you lose your life as well". You would have thought that no man would be crazy enough to risk his life in such a race but, one after the other, her beauty dazzled them and they duly lost the race and their lives.

One day, a young man called Hippomenes, was filled with curiosity and came out to watch the race. He was amazed to see the runners lining up to challenge Atalanta. "What fools they are" he said to himself, "to risk their lives just for a women!" The words were barely uttered when Atalanta came to the starting line. He saw her face and her body, stripped for running. His mind and senses went crazy; he felt as if he were going under. Never had he seen such beauty. It was as if he were gazing on Aphrodite herself, the goddess of love. "Now I understand why those men are putting their lives on the line", Hippomenes said.

Suddenly, he desperately wanted Atalanta to win the race so that he might get his chance to claim her. He need not have worried. Atalanta surged ahead and as he watched, she seemed to Hippomenes even more beautiful as she ran to victory. The dejected losers paid the penalty they had agreed to.

Hippomenes stepped forward. "That was too easy a win for you, Atalanta" he said, "Why not test yourself against a real runner? If I win, it will be no disgrace to you to have been beaten by me. I am the son of a king and a great-grandson of Poseidon, god of the sea".

Atalanta looked at this strangely confident young man. What struck her first was his boyish innocence, then his courage in risking everything for her. As she looked at him, she suddenly thought, "I wish he would go away. I don't want him to die". For the first time, she began to feel the stirrings of love for one of her challengers. However, there was no backing out of the race. Her father and the crowd were insisting.

Hippomenes began to pray to Aphrodite, "Goddess, you put this love into my heart, help me to win". Aphrodite moved quickly. Unseen by all but Hippomenes, she gave him three golden apples and showed him how to use them.



The trumpet sounded; the runners shot forward, their feet hardly touching the ground as they sped along. Atalanta kept pace with Hippomenes, holding herself back and looking into his face. Then, almost reluctantly, she surged ahead. Hippomenes, at full stretch, his lungs bursting, flung one of the apples past the girl and off to one side. Intrigued by the sudden appearance of the glittering fruit, Atalanta stopped to pick it up. Hippomenes passed her out but within a few short minutes, Atalanta was ahead of him again. He threw the second apple. She stopped briefly again. He was in the lead but not for long. She moved past him. The winning post was in sight. Hippomenes gasped out a last prayer to Aphrodite and hurled the final apple past Atalanta and some distance off the track. She saw the flash of gold and she hesitated, indecisive. But Aphrodite had heard the lover's prayer. Atalanta dashed after the apple, grabbed it and headed for the finishing line. Too late! Hippomenes almost fell across the line. He had won! Atalanta was to be his bride.



But what, you may ask, of the oracle's warning that the marriage of Atalanta would end in tragedy? Oracles are never wrong, alas, and so it proved in this case.

Having gained his heart's desire, Hippomenes completely ignored Aphrodite. No thanks, no prayers, no offerings. You cannot treat gods or goddesses in such a way and not go unpunished. On their way to the home of Hippomenes, the couple came to the temple of Cybele, mother of the gods, a holy place where mortals cannot stay. Aphrodite put it into the hearts of the young lovers not only to rest there all night but also to make love in this sacred place. Cybele, terrible in her anger at this desecration, turned Atalanta and Hippomenes into a lioness and a lion, condemning them to spend their lives in the trackless woods and to draw her chariot whenever she needed them.

Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus, the famous poet and musician, married Eurydice, a beautiful woodland nymph. For a time they were very happy, until disaster struck and plunged Orpheus into the depths of despair and loneliness. One day Eurydice was out walking with her friends in the deep grass when she stepped on a poisonous snake, which bit her ankle. She fell to the ground and no skill of any doctor could save her life.



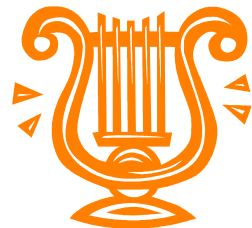
Everyone was in mourning for the young bride. Orpheus sat by himself on the seashore, from daybreak to sunset mourning for his wife to the sad music of his lyre. Orpheus wept and wept so much that he almost lost his beautiful voice. He could not live without his Eurydice, so he decided to go down to Tartarus and get his bride back. Bravely he entered the dark entrance to Hades' kingdom and he began to sing again. The Underworld had never heard such music. Tartarus was still and silent, the souls of the dead no longer fluttered and whispered. Charon the old ferryman stopped rowing and the Furies with the snakes twined in their hair, stood still and for the first and only time their cheeks were wet with tears. Even the dreaded Cerberus lay down and listened to Orpheus' song of love and loss. Hades himself was moved to tears of pity when he heard Orpheus play.

Orpheus stood before Hades and Persephone and still striking music from his lyre he spoke to them. "I have not come here as a robber or to cause trouble in your kingdom. The reason I have come here is my wife. I tried to bear her loss, but it's no use, my love is too strong and I just cannot live without my Eurydice." Hades and Persephone were touched by his words and called for Eurydice. She came still limping from the wound on her foot.

Orpheus then received his wife back, but on one condition: that he should go in front of her and not turn his eyes backwards until he had ascended the steep path from the lower world and had reached the upper air. The journey seemed to take a long time, and Orpheus was not at all sure that Eurydice was behind him. As they reached the light of day, he couldn't bear it a moment longer and he turned around. Eurydice had not quite reached the entrance. Orpheus shrieked with grief as Hermes once more dragged her into the Underworld – this time forever.



Orpheus ran weeping through the woods, playing a sad lament, until he ran into a group of Maenads, female worshippers of Dionysus. Orpheus ignored them and refused to join in their dance in honour of Dionysus. Angered by this, the Maenads tore him apart in a rage, and flung him in the river. The Muses gathered up his torn body and buried him in a grove, and there the nightingales still sing more sweetly than anywhere else in the world. After the funeral Orpheus' soul went down to Tartarus where he joined his beloved Eurydice forever.

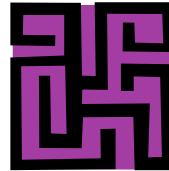




Daedalus and Icarus

Pasiphae was the wife of King Minos, ruler of the island Crete. She was the mother of a strange monster, half-bull, half man, who was called the Minotaur. King Minos desperately wanted to hide this disgrace to his family, so he employed a famous inventor and engineer called Daedalus to make a labyrinth so full of winding passages that the

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monster could be safely shut inside and would never be find his way out.

Daedalus constructed a maze of such a size and with so many misleading paths, that when the work was over, he himself could hardly find his way back to the main entrance. The Minotaur was imprisoned in this well designed maze.

When Daedalus had finished building the labyrinth, he naturally wanted to return to his home in Greece. But because he was so useful as an inventor, Minos refused to let him go, forcing him and his son Icarus to stay in Crete against their will. Finally Daedalus, getting more and more homesick and longing to see his native country, said to himself: "All my ways of escape are blocked by land and by water, but I can see a way through the sky; this is the way I must go."

Then he gathered as many birds' feathers as he could and began working on his latest invention. He took feathers and arranged them in a row, beginning with the smallest ones and putting the bigger ones next, so that they looked as though they had grown in the shape of a wing. He tied the feathers together in the middle with twine, and joined them at the base with wax. Then, when they were arranged and fastened, he gave them all a slight bend, so that they looked exactly like the wings of real birds.



While he was working, his son Icarus stood and watched him. Sometimes, laughing, he went chasing after a feather that the passing breeze blew away; sometimes he pressed his thumbs into the balls of yellow wax. He did not realize that what he was touching was going to be very dangerous to him. When Daedalus had given the finishing touches to his invention, he put on his wings, flapped them up and down and hung poised in the air above the ground.

Then he gave his son instructions on how to fly. 'My advice to you Icarus, is to fly at a moderate height. If you go too low, the seawater will weigh the feathers down; if you go too high, the heat of the sun will melt the wax. So you must fly neither too low nor too high. Then he fitted the wings to his son's shoulders and, as he did so, tears ran down his aged cheeks and his hands trembled. He kissed his son for what was to be the last time, then took to the air and flew on ahead. He called out words of encouragement and taught Icarus to use the fatal wings, constantly looking back.



Down below fishermen, shepherds leaning on their crooks and ploughmen in their fields all looked up in complete amazement at the sight in the sky above them. They thought that as men do not fly these two above must be gods. On and on they flew past the islands of Delos, Paros, Samos and many others. Icarus began to grow in confidence as he soared above the sea and became more daring. Forgetting his father's advice, he soared higher and higher into the sky and as he came nearer and nearer the sun the scorching rays began to soften the wax that kept the feathers together. The wax melted and Icarus found that he was flapping and flapping his arms but without their wings, he had no hold upon the air. He began falling, and quickly fell into the Icarian Sea, which is named after him. Daedalus crying out for his son saw the wings floating on the water. Then he cursed his own invention.



2. Greek Heroes

Perseus



An oracle warned King Acrisius of Argos that a son born to his daughter Danae would kill him. So fearing for his life he quickly locked Danae up in a tower and threw away the key. But Zeus came to her disguised as golden rain, with the result that a son Perseus was born. So Acrisius straightaway stuck daughter and baby into a chest and pushed it out to sea. Perhaps he expected it to sink like a stone, but instead it floated quite easily, washing up on a beach on the island of Seriphos.

Here a fisherman named Dictys came upon the unusual bit of flotsam and adopted a protective attitude toward Danae and her son Perseus. So now Perseus had the advantage of a pure and simple role model as he grew to young manhood.

Then one day Dictys's brother, called Polydectes, who happened to be the king in those parts, took a fancy to Danae and pressed his attentions upon her. "You leave my mother alone," insisted Perseus, clenching his fist. Polydectes pretended to stop, but grew more cunning in the means of achieving his desires.

He made it known that he planned instead to seek the hand of another maiden, one Hippodameia. "And I expect every one of my loyal subjects to contribute a gift to the bride" he said, looking meaningfully at Perseus. "What have you to offer?" When Perseus did not answer right away, Polydectes went on: "A team of horses? A sturdy chariot? Or some very valuable jewellery perhaps?" Perseus fidgeted uncomfortably. "If it meant you'd leave my mother alone, I'd gladly give you anything I owned - which unfortunately is precious little. Horses, chariot, jewellery, you name it - if I had them, they'd be yours. Why, I'd even bring back the head of Medusa herself if I had it in my power." Pausing for a breath against the pitch to which he'd worked himself up, Perseus was shocked to hear Polydectes reply "Done! You said you'd bring me Medusa's head. Well, go ahead and do it."



Medusa by Caravaggio

And so it was that Perseus set out one bright October morning in quest of the Gorgon Medusa. Gorgons are horrible creatures with snake hair, tusks like boars, brazen hands, golden wings and worst of all for Perseus they have the power to turn to stone those who looked at them. Clearly Perseus had his work cut out for him, but fortunately he had an ally in Athena. The goddess of crafts and war had her own reasons for wishing to see the Gorgon vanquished, so she was eager to advise Perseus. Why exactly Athena wanted Medusa dead is not entirely clear, but while still a beautiful young maiden Medusa had done something to offend her. For this crime against a god, Athena turned her into a horrible monster, but apparently this wasn't punishment enough. Now Athena wanted Medusa's head to decorate her own shield, to magnify its power with the Gorgon's terrible gaze.

Athena told Perseus where he could find the special equipment needed for his task. "Go and find the nymphs who guard the helmet of invisibility" she advised Perseus. And where, Perseus inquired, might he find these nymphs? "Ask the Graeae sisters" was the reply. The Graeae sisters were ugly hags and had only a single eye and a single tooth between them. "Where will I find these sisters?" Perseus inquired, "Ask him who holds the heavens on his back, Atlas, the Titan, who pays eternally the price of defying Zeus almighty." "And where's this Atlas?" "Why, that's simple enough - at the very western edge of the world." Before sending him off on this very tangled path, Athena lent Perseus her mirrored shield and suggested how use of it. Perseus soon tracked down Atlas, who grudgingly nodded in the direction of a nearby cave where, sure enough, he found the frightful creatures, the Graeae, and asked them how to find the nymphs.



Yes, they knew where the nymphs lived, but spitefully refused to tell him. Then one sister called out to the others "Give me the eye so that I may see him" and another: "Give me the tooth so that I may bite him." Perseus then stepped close to them, and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. As they groped between themselves, he quickly held out his hand and grabbed the eye. He refused to give it back until they told him what he wanted to know about the location of the water nymphs. They told him to go to the garden of the Hesperides.

At length Perseus found the nymphs and got the special equipment. This consisted of the helmet of invisibility, winged sandals and a special pouch for carrying Medusa's head once he'd chopped it off. Medusa could retain the power of her gaze even in death, and it was vital to hide the head because she still could turn him to stone.

The god Hermes also helped out at this point, providing Perseus with a special cutting implement, a sword or sickle of adamant. Some add that it was Hermes, not the nymphs, who provided the winged sandals.

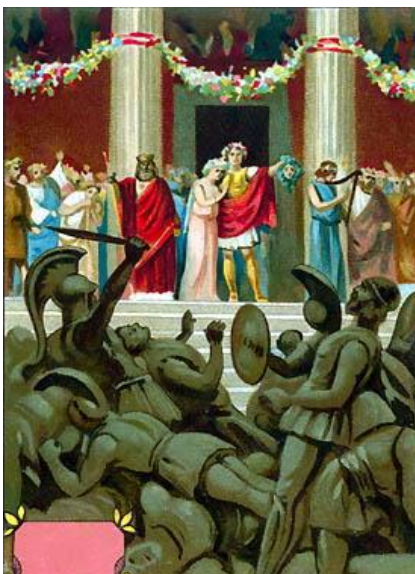


And so Perseus sought out Medusa's lair, surrounded as it was by the petrified remains of previous visitors, and he found the three Gorgons. Two of the Gorgons, Steno and Euryale, lay sleeping heavily with their mighty wings outspread, but Medusa paced to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed her head the snake's heads awoke, and peeped up with their bright eyes and showed their fangs and hissed. Medusa then threw back her wings and showed her claws as Perseus stepped boldly towards her, and looking

steadfastly into his mirror he struck Medusa, chopping her head off in one blow. Just then, the winged horse Pegasus, offspring of Medusa and the warrior Chrysaor (father of Geryon) was born from her severed head.

Then Perseus put on his special getaway gear and departed victoriously before Medusa's sisters could take their revenge. Though these sisters were immortal, Medusa clearly was not.

She died when her head was severed, which required the special cutting implement given to Perseus by Hermes. Yet, even in death Medusa's gaze could turn things to stone, so Perseus quickly stored his trophy in the special sack provided by the water nymphs.



On his return Perseus showed the head to Atlas who was immediately turned into stone. Returning to Seriphos, Perseus put it to good use on King Polydectes, who had gone back to pestering Danae just as soon as Perseus had left. Polydectes made the mistake of being sarcastic about Perseus's conquest of the Gorgon and he and his guests were all turned into stone when Perseus produced Medusa's head.

Finally, when Perseus returned to Argos to visit his grandfather Acrisius, he took part in a discus competition and accidentally fulfilled the prophecy by killing the king while throwing the discus.

The Story of Theseus

Not far across the sea from Athens lies the city of Troezen. Aegeus, King of Athens visited there and he and Aethra, daughter of the King of Troezen, had a child called Theseus. Aegeus returned to Athens leaving Aethra and Theseus behind, but before leaving he took his sword with its ivory sheath and put it under a great rock. He said to Aethra “When the boy is strong enough to lift this rock, let him take his father’s sword and come to me in Athens.



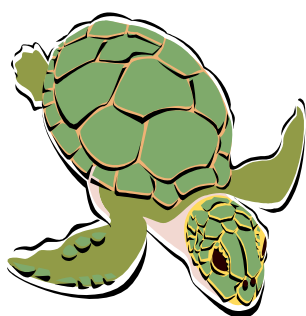
By the time the boy was sixteen he was strong, intelligent and ambitious. When his mother took him to the rock he lifted it easily and took from beneath it the sword in its close fitting scabbard. His next task was to visit his father in Athens. Instead of going there by sea, which was the safe and easy way, he decided to travel by land. Not for a long time had anyone from Troezen dared to go this way for it was through narrow mountain passes infested with horrible robbers and wild beasts.



Now the first part of the journey lay along the seashore and it was not long before Theseus met a giant called Periphetes or ‘Famous’, who was the son of Vulcan god of fire.

He carried a huge iron club with which he would kill all travellers who tried to pass by him. This giant was incredibly strong and had no mercy. However, Theseus being well trained with the sword and quick on his feet had no trouble dealing with this vicious monster. He avoided the great swinging blows of the giant's club and plunged his sword over and over into Periphetes huge body. He then went on his way towards Athens taking with him the huge club as a trophy.

He continued to travel north to the Isthmus of Corinth where two seas are separated by a narrow strip of land. Near here lived the bandit Sinis, also called the 'Pine-bender', because when he captured a traveller he would bend down two pine trees and, after tying their tops to the arms or legs of his miserable victims, he would let the trees go, tearing the unfortunate traveller apart. Sinis, upon seeing Theseus tried to overpower him but was rapidly knocked to the ground with the huge club. Then Theseus bent down two pine trees and gave the robber the same treatment he had been dishing out to those unfortunate to pass his way.



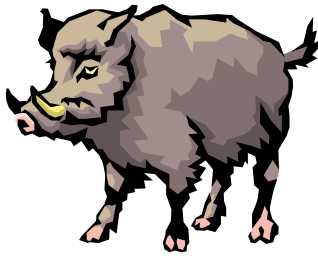
Theseus now turned eastward. Ahead of him on his right was the island of Salamis and on his left the city of Megara. Near here, on cliffs that towered above the sea, lived Sciron, another thug of the most evil fame. First he would rob travellers and then force them to wash his feet in a bronze bowl. While they were doing this, he would suddenly, from where he sat, kick them over the cliff into the sea. Their bodies were devoured by a large tortoise that for many years had swum around the base of the cliffs, fed continually on

human flesh. When Theseus was asked by the cruel murderer to wash his feet he pretended to be willing. But, just as Sciron was about to kick him into the sea, Theseus gripped his foot firmly, swung him round and, grasping him by the shoulder, threw him into the sea below. Far below Theseus could see the head of the huge tortoise coming to the surface for his last meal of men's flesh.

Next Theseus came across the strong man Procrustes who wrestled with all travellers and, when he had overcome them, he would make them lie down on his bed. If their bodies were too short for the bed he would rack their arms and legs with weights or hammer them out until they were long enough to fit. If they were too tall to lie on it, he would chop pieces off their limbs until they fitted exactly. Theseus, after wrestling for long with him, threw him to the ground. Then he bound him to his own bed, and though here his body was exactly the right length Perseus cut off Procrustes head.



Theseus was now close to Athens and had conquered all the human enemies he had met on his way. What he met next was an enormous sow, which for a long time had terrorized the villagers in the districts near Athens. .



She was a gigantic creature, strong and savage, and used to root up the crops with her huge snout, drag down vines and kill and eat young children and defenceless old people.

Theseus went out to hunt this sow and each time she swept past him he planted a hunting spear in her back. Finally, with a blow of the club he had taken from Periphetes he killed the sow, enabling the country people to work in their fields without fear.



At last, he reached the top of a hill and saw below him the city of Athens. He drew nearer and came to the Acropolis where his father's palace stood. He was sure that his father Aegeus would receive him kindly. However, he very nearly met his death at his father's hands. Medea the cruel witch who had fled to Athens after cruelly murdering her own children was now under the protection of Aegeus. Aegeus had made use of her magical powers and had a son by her. Medea knew Theseus was on his way to Athens and was determined that her own son would have the throne after Aegeus' death. So she pretended to Aegeus that a stranger was coming to the palace to murder

him, and instructed Aegeus not to get into conversation with Theseus, but instead to give him a cup of wine into which she had put deadly poisons.

Aegeus believed her, and when Theseus arrived and stood before him, he himself handed to his son the poisoned cup. Theseus raised it to his lips and was about to drink when, at the last moment, Aegeus noticed at Theseus' side the ivory scabbard of the sword he had left long ago under the rock in Troezen. He dashed the cup from Theseus and folded him in his arms. He turned angrily to the woman who had so nearly made him a murderer of his son. But Medea, knowing that it was time to leave, made a hasty retreat in her serpent drawn chariot.



Even now Theseus and his father were not entirely safe in Athens. Pallas and his fifty sons tried to seize the kingdom from Aegeus, but after fierce fighting Theseus, with a small company of friends, killed every one of them. Also at this time the whole plain to the north of Athens called Marathon was being ravaged by a ferocious great bull. Theseus went out to Marathon alone, captured the bull alive, bound it with ropes and brought it back to Athens. There, after a triumphant procession through the streets, he sacrificed it to Athena the goddess of the city.

The joyful people gladly proclaimed Theseus as their future king and were so grateful and appreciative that he had driven from their country and its surroundings both robbers and wild beasts.

Theseus and the Minotaur



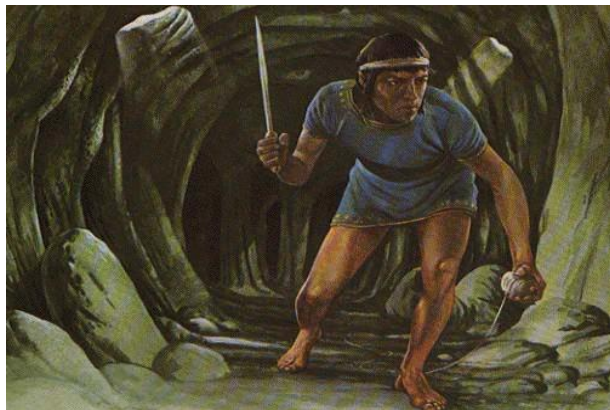
Theseus brought peace and security to Athens and the surrounding countryside. But still every year Athens had to make a cruel sacrifice to Minos, King of Crete. Minos had a son, a famous wrestler, who had been murdered by the Athenians and he refused to make peace except on the condition that every year the Athenians should send him seven young men and seven girls. These young people were to be put into the famous labyrinth, which Daedalus had built and there they were to be devoured by the monstrous creature, half man, half bull, which was known as the Minotaur. The Athenians were forced to accept these conditions, for King Minos ruled the seas with a very

powerful navy and army and every year without fail the Athenians set out for Crete in a ship, which carried black sails as a sign of mourning.

When Theseus heard about the cruel fate of the young Athenians, he decided to volunteer to be of the seven young men sent to Minos. Aegeus was quite reluctant to let him go, but Theseus insisted. Finally his father agreed and told him “If you are successful and come back alive, change the sails of your ship to white, so that I may know at once that you are safe.”

When Theseus and the other thirteen victims arrived at the great city of King Minos they were entertained for one night in the palace. The next day they were to be sent to wander the countless passages in the maze until they were eaten by the monstrous Minotaur. While Theseus entertained and impressed King Minos with stories of his past heroic adventures, the King’s daughter, Ariadne, fell madly in love with him and could not bear the thought that so handsome and brave a young man should die. She was determined to help him, and so, on the next day, when the fourteen young Athenians were led to the entrance of the maze, Ariadne took Theseus aside and gave him a sword and a ball of wool to help him kill the Minotaur and find his way back out of the maze. She told him, “In return for helping you I want you to take me back with you to Greece and make me your wife.” Theseus readily agreed and made his way into the labyrinth. He told the young Athenians not to worry as shivering and crying they were pushed through a large iron door.

Theseus quickly tied the string to his belt, dropped the ball and walked forward. For long he wandered in complete silence and then he heard the noise of heavy breathing. He advanced cautiously to the corner and looking round he saw a monstrous shape. Standing with his head lowered was the figure of a giant, but on the massive neck and shoulders was not a human head but the head of a bull with huge horns. Theseus seized one of the



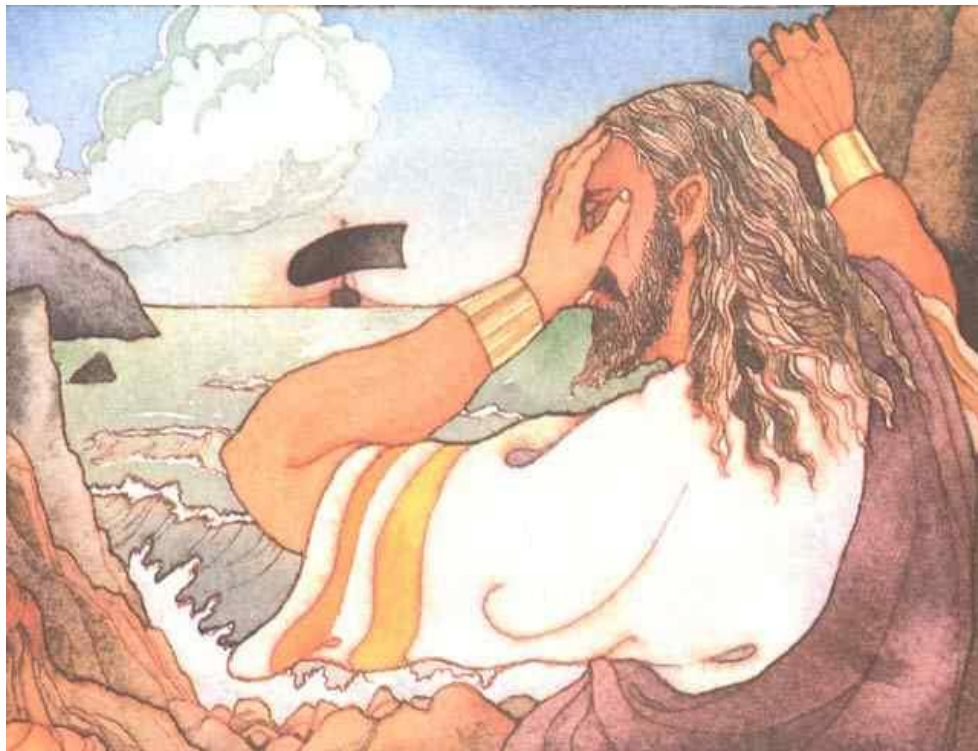
creature's horns and violently threw the head back while he buried his sword in the thick muscles of its neck. The Minotaur shook his head and fell backwards. Theseus stood over the beast stabbing it with his sword until the struggle was over. Picking up the ball of wool he began to retrace his steps to the place where he had left his companions.

Ariadne was waiting for them and hid them until nightfall. In the dark they reached their ship, hoisted the sails and escaped. On their return voyage they stopped for the night at the island of Naxos. Here something very strange and cruel happened. He and his companions rose at dawn and sailed away, leaving Ariadne asleep on the shore. When she awoke she saw the ship far away on the horizon and realised that she had been tricked. She cursed Theseus and alone and miserable she wandered on the rocky shores grieving for what might have been.

Just then the god Dionysus arrived in a chariot drawn by tigers and lynxes. Dionysus fell madly in love with her and made her his wife.



And as for Theseus, he sailed on towards Athens, but forgot his father's instructions about changing the sails. When Aegeus watching from the cliffs, saw a ship with black sails believed that his son was dead, threw himself down into the sea. So the day of Theseus's triumphal return was also a day of mourning his father's death.

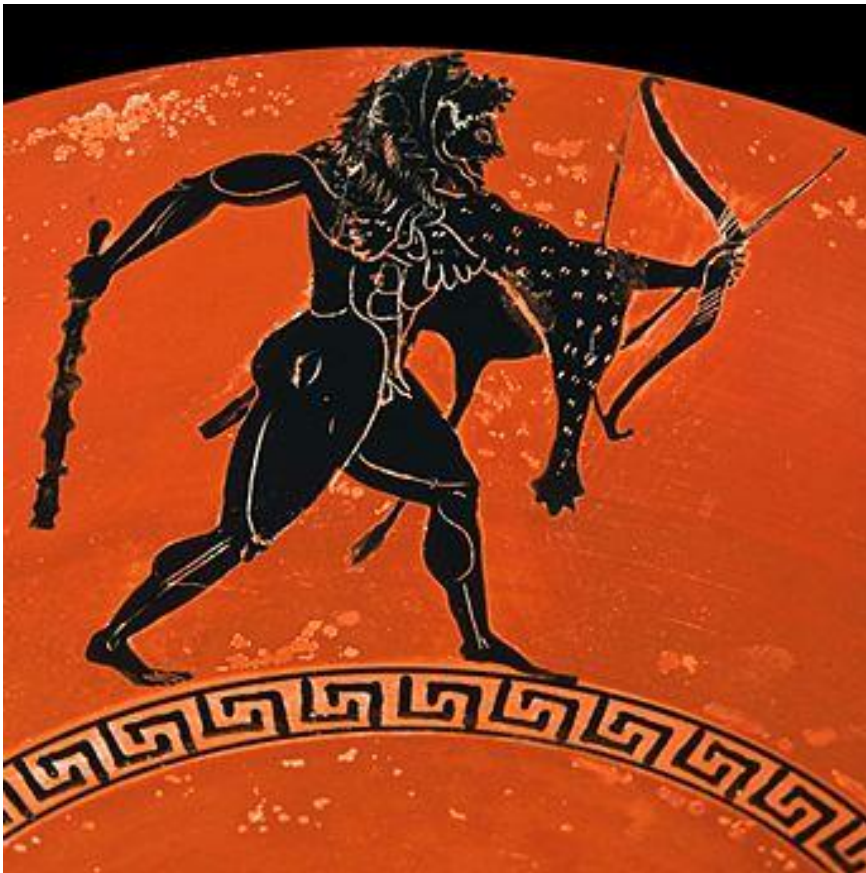


The Labours of Heracles

Heracles was the strongest of all the heroes. He was the son of Zeus and the mortal, Princess Alcmena, and the great-grandson of Perseus who killed Medusa the Gorgon. All through his life he was pursued by the hatred of Hera who was jealous that Zeus had run off with his mother. When Heracles was a baby Hera tried to destroy him by sending two great snakes to attack him while he lay sleeping in his cradle. He awoke and grasped their necks in his hands and strangled them both.

Before he was eighteen he had done many famous deeds in the country of Thebes, and Creon the king was so impressed with his bravery and valour gave him his daughter Megara in marriage. Heracles and Megara were happy together and had lots of children. One day Hera looked down from Olympus and seeing how happy Heracles was with his family a fit of anger came over her. She sent down a horrible black cloud of madness to attack Heracles. As soon as it touched him, he imagined he was surrounded by wild beasts, so he killed them all. When the cloud drifted back to Olympus he discovered that Megara and all his children were dead.

In his horror and shame he went to Delphi to consult the Oracle of Apollo. He asked the oracle how he could be purified of his terrible crime and was told to go to Mycenae and obey all the commands of the cowardly King Eurystheus. So Heracles came to the gates of Mycenae to report to Eurystheus for orders, and for the next ten years he had to do everything that Eurystheus said. Heracles hoped that one day he would be able to forget the terrible thing he had done.



The Nemean Lion



The very first task that Heracles ever had to perform for King Eurystheus was to kill the Nemean lion. The lion was a most dreadful beast and had been terrorizing all the countryside to the north. Heracles took his bow and arrows and set off. He met no one on the way to Nemea, the lion had eaten them all. So he had to search a long time before he found the lion's cave. Heracles hid in a bush and shot several arrows at the huge beast but the arrows just bounced off and had no effect on the tough skin. But as the beast sprung at Heracles he half stunned it with the twisted knotted club that he'd had as a boy for protecting sheep. Then closing in he seized the lion by the throat with his bare hands and strangled it to death.

The people of Mycenae gasped as they saw the lion draped around Heracles' neck. He walked straight into the throne room of the palace and dumped the dead animal at Eurystheus' feet. Eurystheus shrieked in terror and shouted to Heracles to take it away. So Heracles did indeed take it away and skinned it and made the head into a helmet, which he wore whenever he went into a battle.

It was after this that the cowardly Eurystheus ordered a great bronze jar to be made, and he decided to hide in it if ever Heracles should bring such a fierce beast near him again.



The Hydra and the Sacred Deer

The next task given to Heracles by Eurystheus was to destroy a huge water snake, called the Hydra, which lived in the sludgy squelchy marshes of Argos. It had its lair underneath a tall plane tree right in the middle, where it writhed and wriggled in an out of the filthy water hissing and spitting smelly poison from its fifty venomous heads. Heracles set out from Mycenae with his friend and companion Iolas, and in the swamp they found the Hydra. With his great club Heracles began to crush the beast's heads, afterwards cutting them off with his sword.



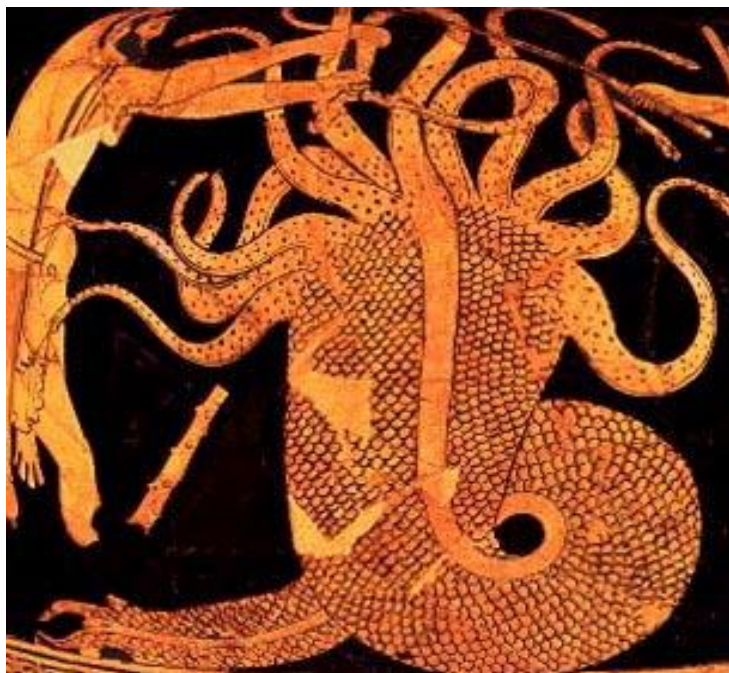
Yet the more Heracles worked at the task the more difficult it became. For every time he cut off one of the heads two other heads with forked and hissing tongues immediately sprang.



Then Hera sent a huge crab to help the Hydra, and it nipped Heracles' toes till he shrieked and stamped on its shell, crushing it to death. Iolas saw his friend was in trouble, so he set some branches on fire, rushed in and burnt the stumps where Heracles had cut the Hydra's heads off.

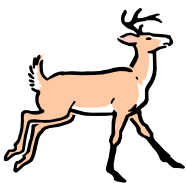


This stopped the new ones growing and finally Heracles had put an end to the foul hissing snake. Then he dipped his arrows in the Hydra's poison, making them so dangerous that the slightest wound from one would kill any living thing.



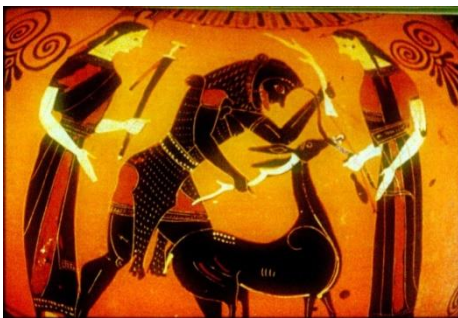


Eurystheus next ordered Heracles to capture and bring back alive a deer sacred to the goddess Artemis and famous for its speed. She had been too fast even for Artemis to catch, and so lived in the woods, where Artemis declared her sacred and under her protection.



King Eurystheus heard about the famous hind from Hera, and he knew how much it would annoy Artemis if it were caught. For a whole year Heracles pursued this animal in valleys and forests but was completely outdistanced. But by the end of the year it was weary of the long hunt and could run no longer and finally Heracles caught up with it.

He seized it with his strong hands, tied its forelegs and then its hind legs together, put the beast over his neck and was about to return to Eurystheus. Suddenly a bright light shone in front of him and he saw standing in the middle of the light the goddess Artemis who was staring at him angrily.

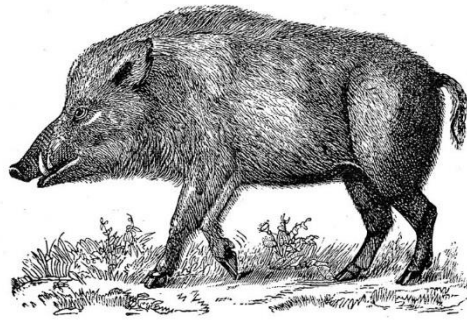


Heracles knelt down before Artemis and explained why he was taking the deer to Eurystheus. He promised her that once the deer had been brought to the palace it would be set free. Artemis listened to his explanation and allowed him to go on his way. The deer stayed only two days in Eurystheus' palace gardens, and then it jumped over the wall and ran back to the woods.

The Wild Boar of Erymanthus

Heracles was not to be allowed to rest. Eurystheus now ordered him to go out to the mountains of Erymanthus and bring back the great wild boar that for long had terrorized the entire neighbourhood. Eurystheus believing that Heracles would fail commanded him to bring back the boar alive.

Heracles gathered his weapons and wrapped himself up warmly. It was winter, and snow was falling as he slipped out of the palace gates. He was sure this task would be no problem.



Heracles chased the great boar up to the deep snow in the passes of the mountains. The animal's short legs soon grew weary of ploughing through the stiff snow, and Heracles caught up with it when it was exhausted and panting in a snowdrift.

He bound it firmly and slung the great body over his back. Eurystheus was so frightened at the sight of the huge tusks and flashing eyes he hid for two days in the huge urn that he had had made especially for him.

The Augean Stable

The next task that Heracles was ordered to do would have seemed impossible to anyone. There was a king of Elis called Augeas who was very rich in herds of goats and cattle. His stables held three thousand oxen and for ten years these stables had never been cleaned. The dung and the muck stood higher than a house, hardened and caked together. The smell was so bad that the herdsmen could not bear to go near the stables. Heracles was now ordered to clean these filthy buildings



Heracles was not going to be beaten by a bit of muck. He sat in the middle of a herd of black and red cows, scratching his head and thinking hard. Then he had an idea!

Heracles made the great river Alpheus change its course and come foaming and roaring through the filthy stables. In less than a day, all the dirt was cleared and rolled away to the sea. The river then went back to its former course and for the first time in ten years the stone floors and walls of the enormous stables shone gleaming white and clean. Heracles returned to Mycenae ready to undertake whatever new task was given to him by Eurystheus.



The Stymphalian Birds



Again Heracles was ordered by Eurystheus to destroy creatures that were harmful to men. This time they were huge birds, like cranes or storks but much more powerful which devoured human flesh and lived around the black waters of the Stymphalian Lake. They lived in the reeds and rocky crags in huge numbers and Heracles was at a loss how to draw them out of their hiding places.

Then Athena came to his aid and gave him a rattle made of brass. The noise of this rattle drove the great birds into the air in throngs. Heracles followed them with his arrows, which rang upon their horny beaks and legs but stuck firm in the bodies that tumbled one after another into the lake. The whole flock of monsters was entirely destroyed and now only ducks and harmless water birds nest among the reedy shores.



The Cretan Bull

After killing the Stymphalian birds Heracles was ordered to go to Crete and bring back alive a huge bull, which was laying the whole island to waste. Bare-handed and alone he grappled with this bull, and once again when he brought the animal back to Mycenae, Eurystheus fled in terror at the sight of both Heracles and of the great beast which he had captured.

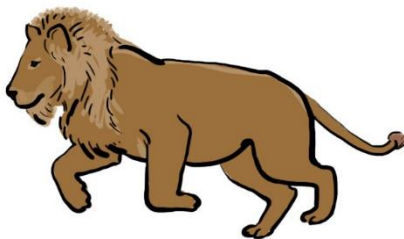
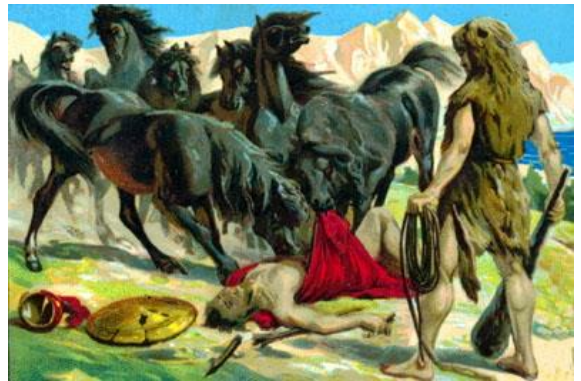


The Man-Eating Mares



Heracles' next task took him to the north of Thrace, where King Diomedes, a strong and warlike man savagely fed his famous mares on human flesh ruled. When King Diomedes saw Heracles he was delighted because he thought to himself that a huge man like Heracles would be enough to feed his horses on for a whole week.

But of course Heracles conquered the king in battle, and gave his body to the very mares, which had so often fed upon the bodies of the king's enemies. He brought the mares back to King Eurystheus, who again was terrified at the sight of such fierce and spirited animals. He ordered them to be taken to the heights of Mount Olympus and there to be given to Zeus. But Zeus had no love for these creatures and on the rocky hillsides they were devoured by lions, wolves and bears.



The Amazons

Next Eurystheus commanded Heracles to go to the land of the Amazons and bring back the magic girdle of their Queen Hippolyta. Now the Amazons were fierce women warriors who liked nothing better than a good fight. So Heracles thought he had better take all his weapons, just in case they were too strong for him. But when he landed his boat a huge woman came running to greet him. She welcomed him to their land and invited him to a feast to be held in his honour.



When Queen Hippolyta saw Heracles she was so impressed with his strength that she agreed to give him her girdle as a present. Hera had disguised herself as one the Amazons so that she could spy on Heracles and was disgusted when she saw how easily Heracles was accomplishing the task, so she spread rumours that Heracles was going to kidnap Hippolyta and carry her off. This made the other Amazons very angry indeed.



As Queen Hippolyta strode down to the shore the morning after the feast to give Heracles her girdle, the other Amazons mounted their horses and charged up behind her, shooting arrows as they galloped. Heracles leapt at poor Hippolyta and tore the girdle out of her hand.

Then he fought his way through the whole army of Amazons to get back to his boat. He leapt aboard and set sail at once. As soon as he got back to Mycenae he handed the magic girdle over to Eurystheus.



The Cattle of Geryon

Heracles had now travelled in the south, the north and the east. His tenth labour was to be in the far west beyond the country of Spain, in an island called Erythia. Here lived the giant Geryon, a great monster with three bodies and three heads. Along with his two-headed dog he looked after huge flocks of oxen. Eurystheus sent Heracles to this land to take the cattle and destroy the giant. On the way at the very entrance to the Atlantic he set up two great landmarks, ever afterwards known by sailors as the Pillars of Heracles. Heracles had no boat in which to travel over to Geryon's island so he persuaded the sun god Helios to loan him one.



Heracles landed on the huge island. It was covered in flat grassy plains, on which several herds of fat red cattle were grazing.



As soon as he set foot on land, a huge two-headed dog rushed at him barking ferociously. Heracles wrestled it to the ground and threw it into a bush. He set out towards the cattle, but before he could reach them, a hideous giant who was Geryon's shepherd attacked him. Heracles knocked him over and pushed him into a water hole. He was just rounding up the last cow when he heard a great roar. Geryon himself was running out from his palace.

Undaunted, Heracles calmly fixed three arrows to his bow, and shot Geryon in each of his three bodies. As the arrows pierced Geryon's bodies, Heracles finished him off with his club and the giant sank to the ground, quite dead. Heracles loaded the cattle onto the boat and sailed back to the mainland.



Just as he was approaching Mycenae, Hera sent a cloud of her most vicious gadflies to sting the cows and they scattered everywhere. But of course Heracles managed to round up the entire herd, and got them all back to Mycenae presenting them to Eurystheus as requested.

The Garden of the Hesperides

At this stage, Heracles had completed ten labours and thought that he had finished paying for his awful crime. However, Eurystheus argued otherwise and made him do two more labours because he said that Heracles had been helped by Iolas with the Hydra and the river had helped him clean out Augeas' stable.

So Heracles was told to fetch some of the golden apples of the Hesperides. These apples grew in a garden west even of the land of Atlas. The Hesperides were three nymphs who looked after the orchard, which was given by Zeus to Hera as a wedding present. It was also guarded by a great snake that never sleeps and coils its huge folds around the trees.



No one except the gods knew exactly where this beautiful and remote garden was, and Heracles had to get help in finding its location. Athena told him to consult the nymphs near the river Po in Italy. Their advice was to find Nereus the ancient god of the sea who knew the past, present and future. Heracles was told to wait until he was asleep and then to grasp him tightly and not let go until he had answered the question. Heracles did as he was advised and the old god woke up with a jump and turned into a hissing snake, then into a lion, a tiny mouse, a worm, and finally a raging fire. But Heracles did not let go and at last Nereus turned back into himself and gave directions to the garden of the Hesperides.



It was a long and difficult journey to the garden and he had many adventures. On the way he passed Prometheus, still chained to the rock in the Caucasus, and still having his liver torn out by a giant eagle every morning. Heracles took aim, shot the eagle with his arrow, then took his knobbly club and started to bash and bang at Prometheus' chains. He soon had the old Titan free.

When Heracles reached Hera's garden he found it surrounded by a high wall and guarded by three nymphs and an enormous serpent. Heracles decided to ask Atlas to help him get the apples. Atlas gave Heracles the sky to hold and having successfully bypassed the serpent and the nymphs he picked three shining golden apples from the tree. But when he got back to Heracles he was enjoying his freedom so much he was reluctant to take his old job back and offered to take the apples to Eurystheus himself. Heracles had to think quickly and pretended to agree and asked Atlas to hold the sky up just for a second or two while he got a cushion to pad his sore shoulders. Atlas put the apples on the ground and held the sky again and Heracles quickly retrieving the apples ran off as fast as he could.



Eurystheus was amazed to see the apples but soon they began to lose their glossy shine so Athena carried them back to the place from where they came, and then once more they glowed gold among the other golden apples that hung upon the tree.

The Guardian of the Underworld

Now had come the time for the twelfth and last of the labours that Heracles had to do for Eurystheus. This labour would seem to just about everyone the most difficult of them all. Heracles was commanded to descend into the lower world of Tartarus, and bring back from the kingdom of Persephone and Hades the terrible three-headed watchdog Cerberus.



The entrance to the Underworld was very hard to find, and Heracles spent a long time looking for it. But finally he took the dark path and descended into the depths below. When he reached the river Styx, he aimed an arrow at the old boatman Charon and ordered him to take him across the river. Charon started rowing as fast as he could and the ghosts on the far side rustled as he brushed through them. Then he passed the Furies, not afraid of their frightful eyes beneath the writhing serpents in their hair. He passed by great criminals such as Sisyphus and Tantalus.

Finally he came into the terrible presence of Hades who sat on a dark throne with his young wife Persephone beside him. Heracles explained the reason for his coming. Hades told him he could take Cerberus up to the upper air as long as he used no weapon, but only used his bare hands. Heracles thanked Hades for giving him the permission he had asked.



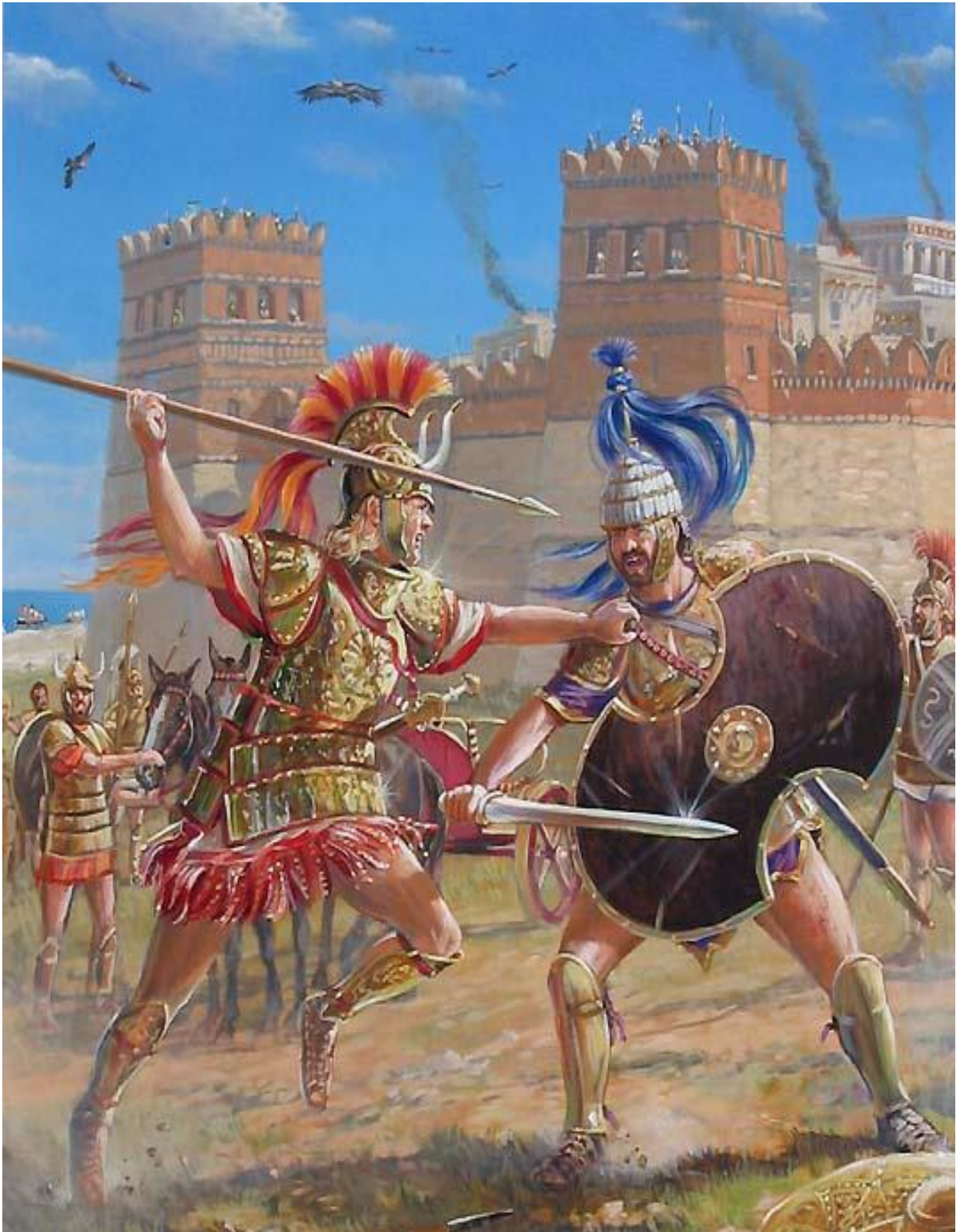


Then he started to wrestle with Cerberus. Cerberus bit with all three mouths, and his snake mane hissed and spat, but Heracles hung on and on until Cerberus gave up and lay down. Heracles then dragged him to earth into the light of day and Cerberus whimpered as the bright sunshine hit his eyes and he started to bark. Great drops of saliva flew from his jaws, and as they landed on the fields, they turned into the poisonous yellow flowers we call aconites.

Eurystheus took one look at the terrifying beast, and fainted back into his jar. Heracles didn't know what to do with Cerberus so he took him back to Tartarus and gave him back to Hades. His twelve tasks were finished and he was a free man at last. Zeus was proud of his son, and vowed that one day he should come and live on Mt Olympus. But this did not happen for some time yet as Heracles travelled around Greece for many more years before that happened, performing greater and greater deeds.



3. The Trojan War



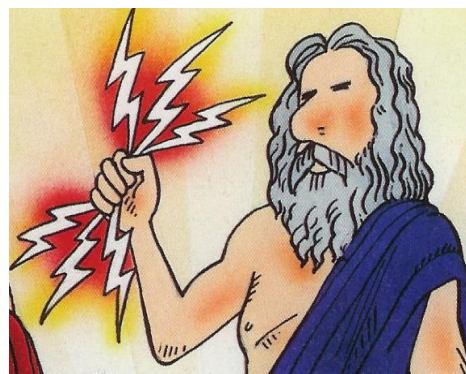
The Judgement of Paris



Peleus and Thetis were getting married. Peleus was a mortal man but Thetis was a goddess, a water nymph who lived in the sea. Because Thetis was a goddess, all the other gods were invited to the wedding except for one goddess called Eris. This was because she was the goddess of Strife or Trouble and everywhere she went she liked to cause problems, the more serious the better.

On the day of the wedding all the guests were assembled at Mt Olympus celebrating the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, when suddenly the door opened and Eris entered intent on causing mischief. In her hand she had an apple, on it the words inscribed were 'For the fairest'. She bent down and rolled the apple towards three of the most beautiful of the goddesses, Hera, Athena and Aphrodite.

Immediately they began to fight over the apple. They wanted to be judged the most beautiful of the goddesses. They went to Zeus king of the gods and asked him to decide who should have the apple. Zeus decided not to give his judgement; perhaps he did not want to cause trouble for himself with the two goddesses who were not chosen! He certainly did not want a row with his wife Hera. So he sent them to Mount Ida to ask the shepherd there called Paris to decide who was the most beautiful of the goddesses. Zeus sent the messenger god Hermes with them.





Hermes leading Aphrodite (with her son Eros) and Athena who is probably looking back at Hera who is not shown in the painting.

They are on their way to Mt Ida to ask Paris to decide who is the most beautiful.

Now, Paris was no ordinary shepherd but was really the son of the King of Troy. There was a prophecy told to his parents when he was born that when he grew up he would bring great destruction to the city of Troy. So his parents Priam and Hecabe reluctantly and with great sorrow asked a servant to kill Paris. The servant took baby Paris out onto the mountainside but he could not bring himself to kill him so he gave him to a childless shepherd and his wife to look after. Paris grew up to be a very good with animals, he was not only a good shepherd but was excellent with horses, and he was also extremely handsome. When Paris saw the gods arriving he was frightened and when Hermes told him what he had to do he was even more terrified. He knew that when he had made his judgement he would offend the other two goddesses, and that might cause him a lot of trouble.

But, he had been asked to do this by almighty Zeus himself and you cannot refuse any request made by the king of the gods. So reluctantly he set about his fearful task. Straight away the deities began bribing him. Hera offered him land and riches. Athena offered him wisdom and victory in battle, and Aphrodite the love goddess offered him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris was really taken with the idea of having the most beautiful woman in the world and so chose Aphrodite.

Now, Helen of Sparta was the lady in question. Unfortunately she was already married to Menelaus king of Sparta. This did not stop Paris; he now found out at this time that he was really the son of king of Troy and went to the city to see his parents. They were delighted that he was alive and when he asked for a ship to go to Sparta they gladly gave it to him. His brothers and sisters were not too happy as they remembered the prophecy told about him. Paris went to Sparta and King Menelaus welcomed him to the palace. When Menelaus was away Paris kidnapped Helen and sailed away with her to Troy. It is very likely that Aphrodite meddled in this by putting a spell on Helen to make her fall in love with Paris. When Menelaus came home and found out that Paris had kidnapped his wife he was naturally furious. He went to his brother Agamemnon who was king of Mycenae and asked him to help get Helen back. They saw this as a huge insult to the men of Greece and asked the other kings and princes of Greece to help get Helen back and teach the Trojans a lesson. They assembled a huge fleet of ships together. This was the start of the famous Trojan War, which lasted ten years.

Iphigenia at Aulis

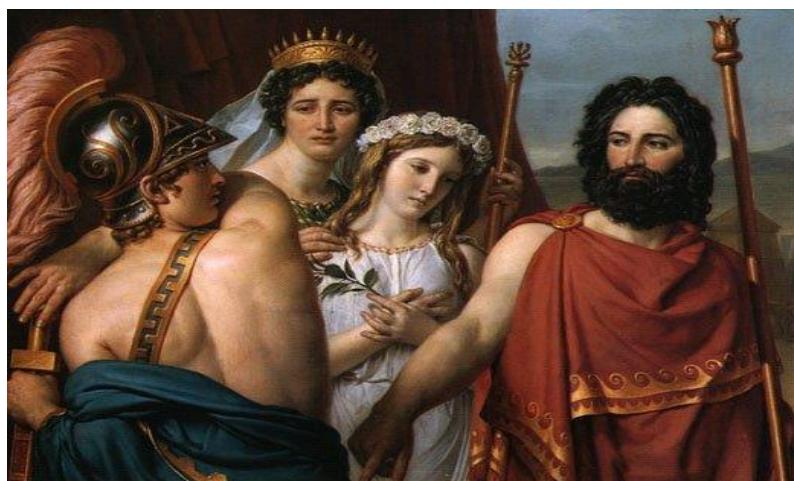
The Greeks assembled at Aulis and set sail for Troy with Agamemnon in command of the whole army. Achilles was admiral of the fleet and Odysseus second in command. Nestor the old hero of Pylos was Agamemnon's chief adviser. Achilles did not prove to be a very good Admiral for he led the fleet so badly that they landed in Mysia, several hundred miles south of Troy. Realising their mistake they set sail again but a fearful storm drove them back towards Greece.

The following spring they assembled again at Aulis and made ready for the invasion of Troy. But a dead calm lay over all the sea for day after day, and they could not sail. At last the prophet Calchas arose and said:

‘King Agamemnon, the goddess Artemis has caused this calm, to punish you for boasting that you were a better shot than she is. And you will never sail to Troy until you sacrifice to her your daughter Iphigenia.’ Agamemnon was filled with grief and at first wished to abandon the whole expedition, but after thinking about it he sent Odysseus to fetch Iphigenia. ‘Tell my wife Clytemnestra that Iphigenia is to come here as a bride. Achilles wishes to marry her and will not set sail for Troy until after the wedding.’ Believing this, Clytemnestra set out herself with her daughter and arrived at the Greek camp. Here she met Achilles, and greeted him as her future son-in-law: but he was amazed, for not only had he heard nothing of the matter, he was already married to Deidamia!



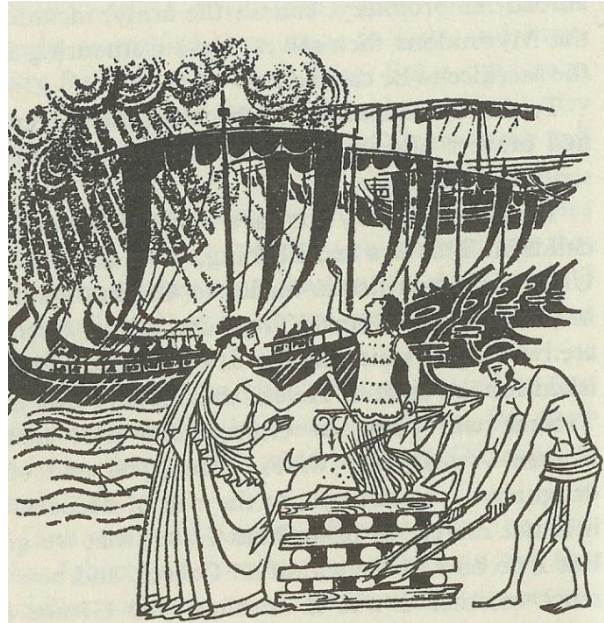
Soon Clytemnestra discovered what her husband was up to and begged Achilles to save Iphigenia. Achilles was extremely annoyed with the trick Agamemnon had played on his wife and daughter and wanted to help Iphigenia. But Calchas had told the army that they could not sail until Iphigenia was sacrificed and all the army were waiting for the sacrifice to be carried out.



Agamemnon had a real dilemma. He thought about his options, saying to his wife, “I must make this sacrifice or we will never reach Troy. If Paris goes unpunished for the theft of Helen the men believe that the Trojans will come to Greece and steal more women. It is not just for Menelaus that we must go, but for all of Greece.” Clytemnestra was furious that her husband could even consider killing their child.

Then Iphigenia herself spoke out and said, “I have chosen death, and I choose honour. With me rests the freedom of our beloved land and the honour of our women through many years to come. My death will save them and my name will be blessed as the name of one who freed Greece from fear and slavery.”

So Iphigenia hailed by the army went bravely to her death. But Artemis took pity on her youth and on her great courage. As the knife was actually falling and the fire lighting, she snatched her away and set a deer in her place.



After that the wind rose strongly from the west and the great fleet of ships set out in the direction of Troy. When the Greeks finally landed in Troy, the Trojan War began.



The Wrath of Achilles



Months dragged on into years and still Troy stood. The Greeks still hoped that they could force the Trojans to come out and fight. They widened the area of the war, launching far ranging raids on towns up and down the coast, which left a trail of destruction wherever they went. The bravest of the warriors captured war spoils, which is anything of value such as gold, jewellery, bronze cauldrons, beautiful woven tapestries and even female captives.

During a raid on one town along the coast, Agamemnon captured a beautiful girl called Chryseis and Achilles took a beautiful girl called Briseis. Unfortunately Chryseis was the daughter Chryses, a priest of Apollo. He was naturally distressed at losing his beloved daughter and so came to the Greek ships carrying his emblem of the god and also a huge ransom for his daughter's return. Agamemnon was very rude, hurling insults at Chryses and told him to get out of the Greek camp.

Chryses prayed to Apollo and the god was quick to avenge his priest by sending down a plague to scourge the army. First the animals began to die and then the soldiers fell sick too. The plague raged for nine days. Everywhere smoke rose from the funeral pyres as the soldiers burned their dead comrades. Finally Achilles called an emergency assembly to find out what was the cause of the plague. He called on the prophet Calchas to tell them why the plague was killing the animals and men. At first Calchas was reluctant to speak. Achilles grew angry and asked Calchas why he would not help the Greek army.

Calchas said that he would speak but that his answer would make Agamemnon very angry. He asked Achilles to swear an oath to protect him should Agamemnon attack him. Achilles gave his word and finally he told the men that Apollo was angry with Agamemnon for insulting his priest Chryses and that he should give the girl back to her father. Agamemnon was livid and turned on Achilles in fury. "If I must give up the girl," he shouted "you must replace her with another just as beautiful. " "How about Briseis, the girl you chose?" "Yes, I'll have her."

Achilles was beside himself with anger. He reached for his sword and would have killed Agamemnon on the spot if the goddess Athena had not appeared to him. He was the only one to see the goddess. "Put away your sword, Achilles, insult and cut him with words instead. Your day of revenge will come," the goddess told him.



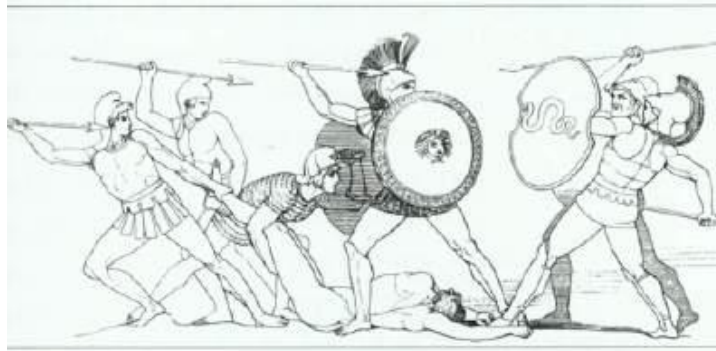
Achilles turned on Agamemnon again shouting abuse at him. "You miserable scoundrel. Take the girl if you must but I warn you, this is the last order I shall ever take from you. One day you will need me desperately but you will have to fight without me and without my men the Myrmidons. This I swear, and when the Trojan warrior Hector stands victorious, surrounded by Greek dead, you will regret this day."

And so Achilles withdrew from the war taking his Myrmidons with him and returned to his tent. Nestor the elderly king of Pylos, tried to calm them down. He was like a father to them all. He begged Agamemnon not to take Achilles' girl, but Agamemnon stubbornly refused to back down.

Agamemnon sent two heralds to Achilles' tent to take Briseis away. They were afraid of what Achilles might do to them, but he told them that his anger was with Agamemnon and he wished to do them no harm. Patroclus, Achilles' best friend and companion brought Briseis out to the heralds, and she was led away to Agamemnon.

Achilles then went to the seashore and cried out to his mother Thetis. She heard his cries and came up to console him. He poured out his sorrows and she promised to seek the help of Zeus, the king of the gods. Thetis found the great god sitting alone on the highest peak of Mount Olympus. Zeus listened sympathetically as Thetis told him how disgracefully her son had been treated. She appealed to him to let the Trojans start winning the war and in this way the Greeks would miss Achilles and realise they were wrong to insult him. Agamemnon would then have to grovel before Achilles or see his army wiped out. The King of the gods was worried. He knew Hera his wife would not be happy if she knew he was helping Thetis. After some persuasion he told Thetis he would help Achilles. He nodded his head and all of Mount Olympus shook.

The Death of Patroclus



Patroclus, Achilles' best friend and companion, came to Achilles in distress and told him that the Trojans had reached the Greek ships and were about to set them on fire, and that many of the Greek army had been wounded including Agamemnon, Odysseus and Diomedes. But still Achilles refused to fight. Patroclus told Achilles "You have to save the Greeks" but Achilles refused to listen; he could not let go of his anger over Briseis and wanted Agamemnon to admit that he was wrong.

Patroclus had a plan. He asked Achilles if he could lead the Myrmidons into battle. Achilles decided to allow Patroclus to lead his men into battle, but told him that he must only push the Trojans away from the ships and not to go towards the city of Troy.



The Trojans then started setting fire to the ships. Patroclus put on Achilles' armour - he did not take Achilles' spear because only Achilles could lift it. The Myrmidons gathered and Achilles talked to them. He told them to have courage to fight the Trojans. Achilles prayed to Zeus and asked that Patroclus stop the Trojans from burning the ships and that Patroclus comes back safely. Zeus listened, but only granted half of Achilles' request.

Patroclus led the Myrmidons out. He went on a killing spree and began to push the Trojans back away from the Greek ships. Hector, the best of the Trojan warriors moved the Trojans back towards Troy.



Patroclus went to the city walls and three times he tried to climb it but was knocked down by Apollo, who told him that he would not take the city nor would Achilles. Patroclus then went into the thick of the fighting killing many Greek warriors. He then killed Hector's Charioteer Cebriones and smashed his face with a stone. Patroclus continued fighting until Apollo intervened and knocked his helmet off and loosened his armour, and then Euphorbos a Trojan warrior hit him with a spear on the back between the shoulders. Finally Hector stabbed him with spear in the belly. As he lay dying Patroclus told Hector that he had been victorious only because Apollo had helped, and that Achilles in turn would kill Hector.

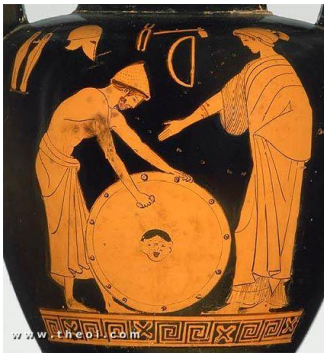
A furious fight then broke out between the Greeks and Trojans over the body of Patroclus. The Trojans stripped him of his armour (Achilles' armour) but finally Menelaus recovered the body. Achilles was overcome with grief, remorse and anger when he heard the news of his friend's death. He vowed to get revenge on Hector and return to the battlefield.

The Death of Hector

When Achilles learned of the death of Patroclus, he burst into tears, tearing his hair and throwing himself on the ground. His mother, Thetis, heard his sorrowful lament and came to comfort him. She pointed out that if Achilles avenged Patroclus, he himself would be killed. Despite his mother's warning, however, Achilles chose to undertake this risk, so great was his love for Patroclus. Thetis therefore promised to have new armour made for her son from the god Hephaestus to replace the armour that was captured by Hector.

The sight of his dead comrade's body intensified Achilles' sorrow, and all of the Greeks joined Achilles in mourning. Achilles vowed to kill Hector and to slaughter twelve Trojan warriors on the funeral pyre of Patroclus. Meanwhile, Patroclus' dead body was washed clean and laid out in state in Achilles' tent.

At a Trojan council of war that night, Polydamas suggested that the Trojan army remain in the city and fight off any Greek assault from the protection of the battlements. The return of Achilles to the Greek army would make it too dangerous to fight in the open, he said. Hector refused to listen to this advice, however, and insisted that the Trojan army stay outside on the battlefield.



On Mt Olympus, Thetis called upon Hephaestus. She told the god about all that had taken place on the battlefield that day, and asked him to provide new armour for her son. Hephaestus agreed and made a marvellous and beautiful set of armour for Achilles. The new shield alone was a masterpiece, being built up of five layers and having on it a representation of the signs of the zodiac and of two cities engaged in all the peaceful and warlike activities of mankind. When the armour was finished, Thetis took it, and, thanking Hephaestus, went to present it to her son.

The next day the Trojans, under orders from Hector, stayed on the battlefield outside the city. Achilles wearing his new armour made his way from the Greek camp killing and slaughtering many Trojans. Achilles and his men now trapped the Trojans outside and they were unable to return to their city. Apollo who was on the Trojan side then (to help his favourites) disguised himself as a Trojan called Agenor and led Achilles away from the gates of Troy. The Trojans now were able to make their way into the safety of the city.

Apollo then began to mock Achilles. "Son of Peleus, why are you chasing me on those swift feet of yours? You are a man and I am an immortal god." Achilles was furious, but knew he could not fight a god. He replied, "I would certainly pay you back if only I had the power". King Priam and Queen Hecabe begged their son to come back inside the gates, Priam telling Hector that Achilles was far stronger and quite ruthless, and that he had already killed many of Priam's sons. But Hector would not listen.

Hector then thought about his situation and said that he had put the Trojan army in danger by not bringing them home sooner. He said that he would feel shame if he did not stand up to Achilles. He wondered about making a bargain with Achilles, giving

him Helen and all her property, everything that Paris had brought back and dividing the wealth of Troy, to give to Menelaus and Agamemnon. But then he realised that Achilles would show him no pity and would kill him.

Achilles then approached looking like a god of war. Hector fled in terror with Achilles in pursuit. Zeus thought about saving Hector and was reminded by Athena that Hector was fated to die. Zeus then told Athena to act as she wanted, in helping Achilles. Achilles was still chasing Hector; Apollo had given Hector extra strength so Achilles was unable to catch him. He had chased him three times around the city. Achilles nodded to his men not to shoot at Hector – he wanted the glory of killing him for himself. Zeus then put the lives of the two men on his golden scales and Hector's life sank down, meaning that he was about to die. Apollo now deserted him. Athena went to Achilles and told him that she would help him by persuading Hector to fight.

She then disguised herself as Deiphobus, Hector's brother. Hector welcomed her, not realising that it was really Athena in disguise. Athena led him forward to fight. Hector tried to make a bargain with Achilles, that if he should kill Achilles he would not dishonour his body and he asked the same in return from Achilles. Achilles refused and said that he would never forgive Hector for what he had done.

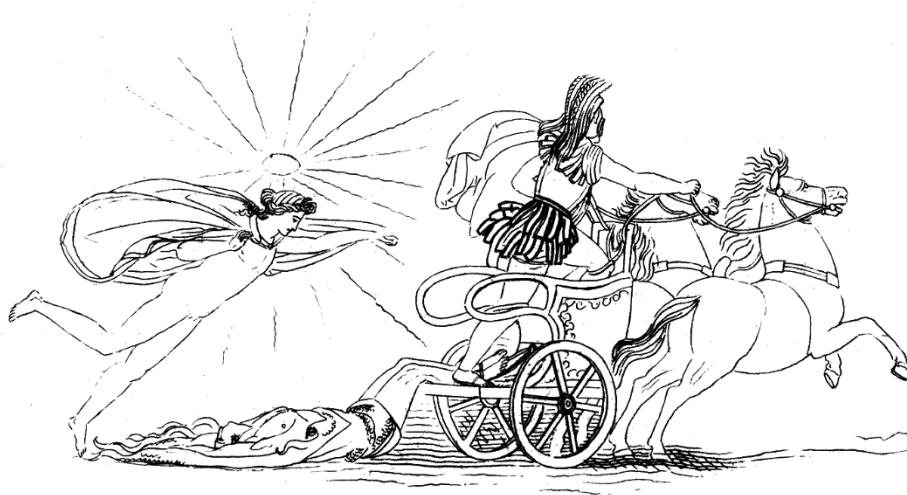


Achilles then hurled his spear at Hector who managed to avoid it. Hector then threw his spear at Achilles and hit his shield. Unfortunately for Hector it did not penetrate the shield but fell off onto the ground. Hector called to Deiphobus for another spear but Deiphobus had vanished. He then realised that Athena had tricked him and resolved to fight with great glory. Achilles then sprang at him and drove his spear into Hector's neck. This was the one point that was not protected by armour. Hector's windpipe was cut and he crashed to the ground and Achilles exclaimed, "Hector, no doubt you imagine as you stripped Patroclus, that you would be safe."

Down by the hollow ships a man much better than Patroclus had been left behind. It was I, and I have brought you down. So now the dogs and birds of prey are going to mangle you foully, while we Greeks will give Patroclus full burial honours."

Hector pleaded with Achilles "I entreat you, by your knees, by your own life, and by your parents, do not throw my body to the dogs by the Greek ships but take a ransom for me. My father and my mother will give you bronze and gold in plenty. Give up my body to be brought home, so that the Trojans and their wives can cremate it properly." Achilles would not agree and said that the dogs would get his body.

Hector, with his last dying breath, made a prophecy for Achilles' future. He told Achilles that Paris would kill him out by the Scaean gate helped by the god Apollo. Achilles said that he would welcome death when Zeus and the other gods wished it to be. He then took his spear out of Hector's body and the Greeks came running up. They gazed in wonder at Hector then began stabbing him saying, "Well, well! Hector's certainly softer to handle now than when he set the ships on fire!" Achilles then stripped the body of its armour.



Achilles then foully maltreated the body of godlike Hector. He sliced into the tendons at the back of both feet and between the heel and ankle, inserted leather straps and then tied them to his chariot. He then dragged poor Hector away to the Greek camp. Apollo protected Hector's body from disfigurement.

Hecabe tore her hair and screamed out aloud. Priam groaned piteously, and the Trojans in the town took up a cry of grief. Priam wanted to go after Achilles to get his son back but the people stopped him. He said if only he could have died in my arms! Then we could have wept and lamented for him to our hearts' content I and the mother who brought him, to her sorrow into the world.' Hecabe led a lament for her son saying, "Why should I live and suffer now that you are dead."

Hector's wife Andromache had not yet heard the news. She was at home working, weaving flowers onto a purple robe for Hector. She had just called to one of her maids to heat water in a cauldron so that Hector could have a bath when he came home from battle. She heard the cries then from the battlements and she began to shake.

She called to her maids. "Come with me, I must see what has happened". She rushed out of the house like a mad woman and when she came to the tower she saw her husband being dragged off by Achilles to the Greek ships. She fainted and the women crowded around her to support her. When she recovered, she wailed, "Hector, what unhappiness is mine! Your son is no more than a baby, the son we got between us, we unhappy parents. You will be no joy to him, Hector, now you are dead, nor he to you."

Andromache said that even if her son survived this war, nothing remained for him except hardship and distress. Others will take over his lands. Without a father he will be treated like an orphan, and will be jeered by those who have fathers. She said that Hector would be eaten by the wriggling worms, when the dogs have had their fill. She said that she was going to burn all the clothes that the women had made for Hector.

Priam and Achilles



Everyday Achilles, still grieving, dragged Hector's body three times round Patroclus' tomb. For eleven days the gods looked on in anger and pity for Hector. Apollo protected the body of Hector from disfigurement and wrapped him in his golden aegis so that his flesh would not tear when he was being dragged along. The gods urged Hermes to steal the body of Hector but Hera, Poseidon and Athena were against this. Apollo spoke out for Hector and called the gods cruel, saying that Hector sacrificed properly to the gods, and he should be allowed to have proper funeral rights. Hera was angry with this and pointed out that Hector was a mere mortal whereas Achilles was the son of Thetis. Zeus then intervened in the quarrel and said that Hector was his favourite in Troy and sent Iris to Thetis to tell her to come to Olympus. Thetis was in her cavern surrounded by other nymphs crying about her son Achilles, whom she knew was destined to be killed in Troy. Thetis was sent by Zeus to tell Achilles that the gods were angry and that he must release the body of Hector for ransom.

Iris also went to Priam and told him that he should bring a ransom to Achilles. He was to take only one herald to drive the wagon to carry the body of Hector. When Hecabe heard what Priam was doing she screamed "Are you mad? Once you are in his power, once he sets his eyes on you – that flesh-eating, faithless savage – he will show you no mercy at all, nor the slightest respect." But, Priam was determined to go and said that Achilles could kill him by the ships once he has taken his son in his arms. He took robes of great beauty, cloaks, blankets, tunics and gold as the ransom from the chest.



Hecabe then told Priam to make a libation to Zeus to pray for a safe return. Priam did so and Zeus sent an eagle across the town as a sign that he would keep Priam safe and everyone rejoiced. Priam then set out with the herald. Seeing them Zeus took pity and sent his son Hermes in disguise to accompany them.

Hermes told Priam that he was a Myrmidon and a Lieutenant of Achilles. Priam asked him about Hector and was told that his body was still intact, his flesh not decayed, but that Achilles was still dragging him around the camp. He told Priam that the gods must have been looking after Hector because there was not a mark on him.



Still disguised, Hermes escorted them towards the Greek camp. When they arrived, Hermes put the sentries to sleep and brought Priam through the gate to Achilles' hut. Then Hermes told Priam who he really was and that Zeus had sent him. He told Priam to clasp Achilles' knees and remind him of his father Peleus. Achilles had just finished eating and was with Automedon and Alcimedon. Priam did as Hermes had advised, and clasped Achilles by the knees and kissed Achilles hands, those terrible, man-slaying hands that had killed so many of his sons. He reminded Achilles of his own father, who knew that his son was still alive and could look forward to seeing Achilles come back home from Troy.



He told him that most of his sons had fallen in action and that Achilles had killed his favourite son Hector. He said that he had brought a ransom to get Hector's body back. Achilles understood Priam's suffering and tears came into his eyes. Both men began to cry, Priam for Hector, and Achilles for his father and Patroclus.

Achilles asked Priam to sit down but Priam told him he did not want to sit down, but instead wanted his son back now. Achilles was still dangerous, and became angry "Do not stir my heart any further in its grief, or I may not spare you either in my hut, old man". Achilles then asked his servant women to wash the body of Hector and dress him in fine clothes. His attendants then placed Hector onto the cart. Achilles called to Patroclus not to be angry with him for releasing Hector and told Patroclus that he had been given a fine ransom. Priam and Achilles then shared supper together and Achilles told his attendants to prepare a bed outside in the portico. He did not want Priam to be seen by the Greeks. Priam then went to bed but as he lay sleeping, Hermes, fearful for Priam's safety came and told him to leave immediately.

When Priam was nearing the city, his daughter Cassandra was the first to see him. Andromache and Hecabe came to meet him lamenting Hector. When Hector had been brought inside the palace Andromache led a lament for her husband Hector. She said that he was too young to die and leave her widowed and little Astyanax without a father. Hecabe also lamented her son, saying that he was her dearest son, and that Achilles had taken her other sons.



Then Helen spoke, and said that she wished that she had died before Paris had brought her to Troy. She said that she had never heard a harsh or spiteful word from Hector. Others in the palace had insulted her, Hector's brothers, sisters, brothers' wives and even his mother, although not Priam.

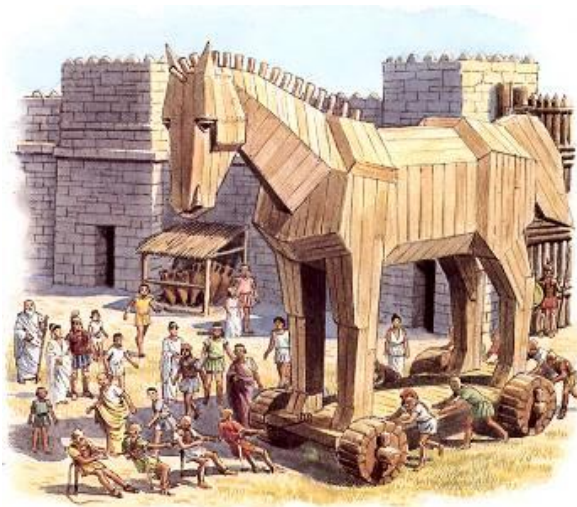
Over nine days the Trojans gathered a huge supply of wood. On the tenth day they made a pyre and put Hector's body on it and lit it. The next day they put out the fire with wine and Hector's brothers and sisters and friends collected his white bones. They wrapped them in soft purple clothing and put them in a golden coffin, which they immediately lowered in a hollow grave. They made a grave mound then had a glorious feast.

The Wooden Horse of Troy



The war dragged on and was in its tenth year. At this stage Achilles was dead, as Paris with the help of Apollo shot an arrow at Achilles hitting him in his heel and fatally wounded him.

Then Odysseus, helped by the goddess Athena, came up with an idea of how the Greeks could get inside the walls of Troy: A great horse of wood was constructed with a hollow belly that could hold many warriors. In the darkness of night, the horse was brought to the Trojan plain. Odysseus and some of his men were hidden inside the horse.

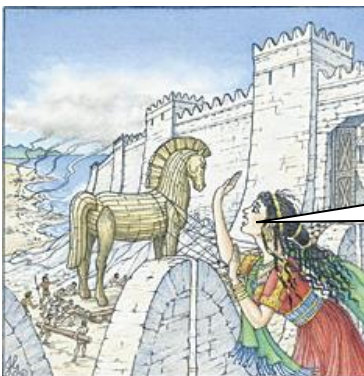


The Story

Unable to break down the walls of Troy, the Greeks sailed off, leaving behind a giant wooden horse. Sinon, a man left behind by the Greeks, claimed it was because he had a fight with his enemy Odysseus and was left behind for the Trojans to kill him. He told the Trojans that the Greeks had left and were now sailing towards Greece and that the Horse was a sacrifice to Athena. In reality it was all a trick, Sinon was a Greek spy, the Greeks were hiding on

an island called Tenedos off the Trojan coast, and the huge horse had Greek warriors inside. Both Priam's daughter Cassandra and the prophet or seer Laocoon warned against accepting the gift. But no one ever listened to Cassandra's warnings, a punishment for having accepted the gift of prophecy from Apollo and then refusing to sleep with him.

Laocoon prodded the belly of the horse with a spear, convinced that it was all a trick. Later when he was making a sacrifice, Athena sent two huge serpents from the sea to crush him and his sons.

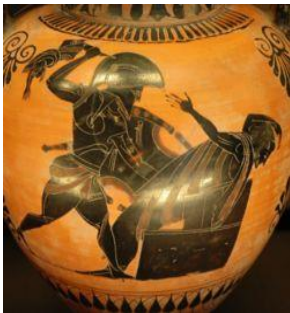


"I fear the Greeks,
even those bearing
gifts." – Cassandra

The death of Laocoon and his sons.



Convinced, the Trojans took the horse inside the walls, though they had to break down part of one of their gates to do so. That night, Sinon signalled to the Greek ships that had left the island of Tenedos and were waiting off the coast of Troy. Then the men inside the horse led by Odysseus emerged to open the gates of Troy to their comrades.



The Greeks burned Troy and killed King Priam quite brutally on the altar in his palace, thousands of Trojan men were slaughtered and the women taken as captives or war prizes. Agamemnon took Cassandra as his captive, Neoptolomeus son of Achilles took Hector's wife Andromache, and Astyanax the baby son of Hector was killed, his head dashed against a wall lest he grow up to seek revenge. Hera and Athena finally got their revenge on Paris. His city and family totally destroyed.

Agamemnon Returns Home



Menelaus wanted to sail at once while the winds were favourable. However, his brother Agamemnon wanted to first sacrifice to Athena. But Menelaus refused to stay saying that she had defended the Trojan city for far too long. So sadly the two brothers parted on bad terms and were never to see each other again. Menelaus was caught in a terrible storm sent by Athena and lost all but five vessels. He was blown off course to Crete and then to Egypt and spent the eight years trying to get back to Sparta.

In contrast, Agamemnon reached Mycenae safely along with his mistress Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam. Hera had rescued Agamemnon from the fierce storm, which had destroyed many of the returning Greek ships and drove Menelaus to Egypt.



While Agamemnon had been away, she had an affair with Aegisthus and was ruling Mycenae with him. Clytemnestra had small cause to love Agamemnon after he had



allowed the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis. together Aegisthus and Clytemnestra plotted to kill Agamemnon. Fearing that he might return home unexpectedly she wrote to Agamemnon and asked him to light a beacon on Mount Ida when Troy fell. Cunningly, she arranged for a chain of fires to relay his signal all the way to Mycenae. At last one dark night they saw the distant beacon blaze and Aegisthus and Clytemnestra waited for his homecoming with a gruesome murder planned.

No sooner had he disembarked, than he bent down to kiss the soil, weeping for joy. Aegisthus had already chosen twenty of the boldest warriors, posted them in ambush

inside the palace, ordered a great banquet, and then mounting his chariot, rode down to welcome Agamemnon.

Clytemnestra greeted her travel-worn husband with every appearance of delight, unrolled a crimson carpet for him, and led him inside, where slave girls had prepared a warm bath. Cassandra remained outside the palace refusing to enter, crying that she smelt blood. But as usual, everyone thought she was crazy. Agamemnon had washed himself and had one foot in the bath and one on the floor, eager to join the banquet in the palace.



Clytemnestra came forward with a towel as if to wrap it around him. Instead she threw it over his head, and it worked like a net as he furiously tried to free himself. Aegisthus rushed forward with a two-edged sword and stuck Agamemnon twice. He stumbled back and fell into the bath and Clytemnestra getting her revenge at last, beheaded him with an axe. She then rushed outside to kill Cassandra with the same weapon. A fierce battle raged in the palace between the supporters of Agamemnon and of Aegisthus. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra won and were rulers in Mycenae once more.

The Vengeance of Orestes

Orestes was the young son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. On the night of the killing of his father, Electra, his sister, helped by Agamemnon's old tutor, wrapped him in a robe and smuggled him out of the city. This saved him from being killed by Aegisthus. After hiding among the shepherds of the River Tanus, the tutor took him to Crisa where he learnt with grief that Agamemnon's body had been flung out of the house and hastily buried by Clytemnestra.

Aegisthus reigned in Mycenae for seven years, riding in Agamemnon's chariot, wearing his robes and spending the riches of the palace. But it was Clytemnestra who was the true ruler of Mycenae. Aegisthus lived in fear of vengeance, never passed a single night in sound sleep and surrounded himself with a trusted bodyguard. By this time Electra, Orestes' sister, had been married off by Clytemnestra to a penniless peasant and was living in poverty in the countryside.

Orestes, now grown to manhood, visited the Delphic Oracle to ask whether he should destroy his father's murderers. The answer was that he should avenge the murder and also he had the blessing of not only Apollo but Zeus too. So Orestes secretly returned to Mycenae determined to destroy Aegisthus and his mother.

Electra welcomed him with delight and together they plotted to kill their own mother. Electra went to the palace and did not tell Clytemnestra about Orestes' return. After a little time Orestes knocked at the palace gate, Clytemnestra herself came out but did not recognise her son. Orestes pretended to bring news of Orestes death and Clytemnestra welcomed him in at once and sent for Aegisthus.



Unsuspectingly, Aegisthus entered the palace. Orestes had no difficulty in drawing his sword and cut Aegisthus down. Clytemnestra, then recognising her son, pleaded with him to spare her, but he would not soften and quickly beheaded her.



Orestes went into exile for one year, wandering over land and sea, constantly pursued by the Furies. The Furies were women creatures with hissing snakes who pursued those who had committed awful crimes making them go mad with remorse. Finally Orestes went on trial in Athens and Apollo appeared as counsel for the defence, arguing that Orestes had been justified in killing Clytemnestra.

When the vote of the jury was equal, Athena gave the casting vote in Orestes' favour. So he was honourably acquitted of his crime, the Furies had to retire and he returned home to rule in Mycenae.

4. The Story of Aeneas



Aeneas leaves Troy

As Troy burned, Aeneas's mother Venus appeared and told her son to flee. Aeneas had seen Helen hiding beside a temple and was filled with a burning anger and wanted to kill her. Venus said it was not the fault of Paris or Helen but it was the gods who were to blame for the fall of Troy. Aeneas then made his way to his father's house with the help of his mother. After finally persuading his father to leave Troy, Aeneas picked up the statues of the family gods (Penates) and then lifted his father Anchises onto his back, as he was an old and feeble man. Aeneas took Ascanius his young son by the hand and his wife Creusa walked beside them. They arranged to meet their friends and servants outside Troy near Mount Ida.



When Aeneas arrived at the hill he realised his wife was not there. He was very upset and rushed anxiously back to Troy. He searched the burning city for his wife but could not find her, fearing that the Greeks must have killed her. Finally her ghost appeared and she told Aeneas not to grieve but to go to a new land where he would marry a new queen.

Aeneas was broken-hearted at the loss of his wife and returned to the hill where the others were waiting. They built ships and set out on their journey, intending to find a new life in a new city.



They first arrived at Thrace and it was here that Aeneas decided to build a city and to call it after himself. But to his horror, when the Trojans began to prepare the ground, blood oozed from the roots of the plants. Aeneas then found out it was the burial place of Polydorus, a son of King Priam. He had been killed by his treacherous host, the King of Thrace, who had promised King Priam that he would keep his son safe. As the land was polluted Aeneas moved on.

His next place was to the island of Delos sacred to Apollo. Aeneas wanted to consult the oracle of Apollo about his future. The oracle told him to move on to the place of his ancestors. Anchises his father interpreted this to be the island of Crete.

The Trojans went to Knossos in Crete. One legend said the Trojan ancestors were from Crete, but while sleeping Aeneas had a dream. The Penates appeared and told him to go to Italy, and then realising that he also had ancestors living in Italy, Aeneas left Crete and set sail for a new land.



Aeneas and the Trojans next stopped at the Strophades Islands in the Ionian Sea. Here they met the awful Harpies, creatures with women's faces and the bodies of fierce birds. Calano, one of the Harpies, shrieked at Aeneas that Italy was place they should go. After that they passed by Ithaca, the home of Odysseus, and arrived in Actium.

After holding the Trojan games here they moved on to Buthrotum. Aeneas was surprised and delighted to meet Andromache here. Andromache was the wife of Hector the Trojan leader who had been killed by Achilles during the war. She was now married to Helenus another son of Priam. Helenus then appeared, he had built the new city to resemble Troy. Aeneas called it the 'Little Troy.' Helenus was a prophet and told Aeneas that he would know when to build a city, when he saw a sign – a white sow with thirty young piglets. Before they left, Andromache gave gifts to Ascanius who reminded her of her little dead son, Astyanax.



After some time they arrived in Sicily and stopped at the Cyclops Harbour. Just then a stranger who was dirty and hungry appeared from the forest. He was Achaemenides. He said that he was Greek and had been left there by Odysseus. He described the giants and Polyphemus the one eyed giant whom Odysseus had blinded. They decided not to go near Scylla and Charybdis, which were between Sicily and the toe of Italy. Scylla was a huge many-headed

monster that loved eating sailors and Charybdis was a whirlpool into which many a ship had been lost.

Aeneas took the longer journey around Sicily instead and stayed at Drepanum. Shortly after this Anchises died and Aeneas was filled with grief. He set out for the coast of Italy. Latium was his destination, for this is where he was to build his new city, but Juno was determined to cause trouble for the Trojans.

Juno did not like them because of the Judgement of Paris but also because she knew that the Romans, future descendants of Aeneas, would one day destroy her favourite city Carthage. So she asked Aeolus, the god of the Winds, to start a storm. Aeneas and the Trojans were caught out at sea in the ferocious gale. When Neptune saw the storm he was angry and stilled the wind and waves and Aeneas, exhausted, made for the nearest coast, which was Africa.

Aeneas, Carthage and Dido



Aeneas and most of his ships were washed up on the coast of North Africa. After hunting and feeding his people, Aeneas set out with his friend Achates to explore the surrounding territory. On his way he was met by his mother Venus disguised as a hunting girl. She told Aeneas all about Dido the queen of Carthage. She had escaped from Tyre away from her brother Pygmalion. She had been deeply in love with her husband Sychaeus, but Pygmalion killed him. She had to escape to avoid being killed also. She was now

establishing a new future for her people by building a new city in Carthage. She was a very beautiful woman, as beautiful as the goddess Diana. Dido had taken an oath to her dead husband never to marry again.

Venus shrouded Aeneas in a mist to protect him and guided him towards Carthage. When Aeneas arrived in Carthage he could see Dido directing the building work. He saw the temple to Juno, which featured pictures of the Trojan War including Aeneas himself. When Aeneas introduced himself to Dido he was given great hospitality and invited to stay in Carthage. She was especially interested to hear of Aeneas' account of his experience in the Trojan War and his wanderings since then.

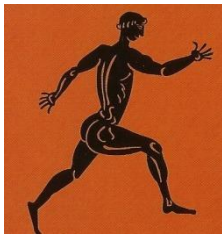
Juno and Venus both plotted to make Aeneas fall in love. Venus sent Cupid (in the form of Ascanius) to give presents to Dido, and Cupid would then make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. Dido felt a little uneasy about falling in love with Aeneas and did not want to betray her husband's memory. She discussed this with her sister Anna who gave many persuasive reasons why she should love again. She was lonely and had no children and Pygmalion could come from Tyre at any time. Enemies on all sides in Africa also surrounded her, so if she married Aeneas he could make her happy and protect Carthage

The next day Aeneas and Dido went hunting. The gods sent a heavy shower and they sheltered in the same cave where they made love. Dido and Venus considered that this was a marriage. Aeneas did not, although he liked Dido very much. After some time living in Carthage Jupiter sent Mercury to tell Aeneas that he must do his duty and continue to Italy. Aeneas was upset but knew he must carry out the God's command and he wondered how to tell Dido. He ordered his men to prepare the boats. Dido then realised that he was leaving and became very angry. She ranted and raved, calling him a traitor. She felt she had let herself and her people down. She asked Anna to persuade Aeneas not to leave.



But for Aeneas, following the will of the gods was more important, so he decided he must leave. Dido asked Anna to build a pyre so that she could burn everything associated with Aeneas. Anna, not realizing what Dido really intended to do, had a huge pyre built. When Anna was gone, Dido lit the pyre, stepped onto it and died. Aeneas had already left with the Trojans and was heading for Sicily. From the sea he saw the flames and guessed what Dido had done.

Aeneas lands in Cumae



Aeneas and his men arrived in Sicily for the second time. This is where Anchises had died one year earlier and Aeneas now decided to have games in his father's honour. Before the games he went to Anchises' burial mound and offered sacrifices. Then the games began with all the Trojan men taking part. There was a boat race, a running race, archery competition, boxing competition and finally a parade of horses led by Ascanius.

But then Juno decided to interfere again and make life difficult for Aeneas. She disguised herself as one of the Trojan women and went among them. She sent them all mad and in their madness they set fire to the ships. Ascanius rushed to put the fire out. Aeneas who had now been wandering for seven years despaired, wondering if he would ever get to build his own city. He thought about staying in Sicily. But the prophet Nautes told him to continue his journey with a smaller group and leave the older people behind in Sicily to found a city of their own.

Aeneas then sailed for the coast of Italy and landed at Cumae. Here he met the Sibyl, a priestess of Apollo. Aeneas saw the golden temple at Diana's wood, which Daedalus had built when he finally landed after his flight. Aeneas wanted to go into the Underworld to see his father but for this he needed to find the Golden Bough. Venus sent two doves to show Aeneas where to find this magical tree branch. Aeneas then descended into the Underworld with the Sibyl who acted as his guide.



He crossed the river Styx in Charon's boat and on the other side was confronted by Cerberus the huge three-headed hound of Tartarus. The Sibyl gave him drugged honey cakes and made him sleep. Aeneas then met the spirit of Dido. She was still very angry and refused to speak to him. She coldly turned away and drifted into the woods where her husband Sychaeus was waiting. He also met many of his friends and heroes, both Trojan and Greek, who had died in the Trojan War. Then he met his father Anchises, who showed him spirits of men who would later become very important people in Rome.



Augustus first Emperor of Rome

He saw Silvius, his future son, by the queen he would marry when he arrived in Latium. He saw Romulus, son of Mars who gave Rome its name. He saw The Kings of Rome, including Numa, who would give Rome her laws. Finally he saw Augustus who would become the first Roman Emperor. Bidding a tearful farewell to his father, Aeneas left the Underworld.

Aeneas then sailed up the river Tiber from Cumae where he met Latinus, King of Latium. Turnus a local prince was to marry Lavinia, the daughter of King Latinus, but a prophet told Latinus that his daughter would marry a stranger. When Latinus met Aeneas he thought the prophecy had come true and decided his daughter should marry Aeneas instead. Turnus was infuriated that this stranger should come to Latium and take his bride. He declared war on Aeneas and the Trojans.



Venus got Vulcan to make new armour for Aeneas just like Thetis did for her son Achilles during the Trojan War. War raged on in Italy and finally Aeneas killed Turnus in a single combat. The war ended after this with peace between the Latins and the Trojans.

Aeneas married Lavinia and had a son. He built a city called Lavinium and ruled for three years. Then Ascanius, also known as Iulus, took over from his father. Ascanius built a city at Alba Longa and ruled for thirty years. His descendants were kings of Rome for three hundred years. One of these kings was Numitor who had a daughter called Rhea Silvia. She had twins by Mars god of war, called Romulus and Remus. According to legend it was Romulus her son who founded the city of Rome in 753 BC.