SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brommer, Frank. *Heracles: The Twelve Labors of the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature.* Translated by Shirley Schwartz. New Rochelle: Caratzas, 1986.

Galinsky, C. Karl. *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptation of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1972.

NOTES

1. The Greek form of his name, which means "glory of Hera," is used here. Its Latin form is Hercules. He is also called Alcides (i.e., descendant of Alcaeus) and sometimes Amphitryoniades (i.e., son of Amphitryon).
2. Licymnius, surviving son of Electryon, was later killed by a son of Heracles.
3. According to Apollodorus, Amphitryon was helped by Creon after ridding Thebes of a monstrous fox with the aid of Cephalus and his magic hound (see pp. 551–552).
4. Eileithyia sat outside Alcmena's door with her hands clasped around her knees in a gesture of sympathetic magic. Alcmena's servant Galanthis broke the spell by rushing out crying, "My mistress has borne a son!" Eileithyia leaped up and unclasped her hands, and the birth took place. She punished Galanthis by turning her into a weasel.
5. Eurytus was grandson of Apollo and king of the Euboean city of Oechalia. See p. 536 for his death at the hands of Heracles.
6. The Cattle of Geryon, the Apples of the Hesperides, and Cerberus.
7. Although female, the hind is always shown with horns. Euripides makes the hind destructive, and some authors call it the Cerynitian hind, from the Achaean river Cerynites.
8. Atlas was the name of a mountain in Arcadia as well as of the more famous range in North Africa.
9. The hind is shown beside the tree of the Hesperides in a vase painting.
10. *Parerga* are adventures incidental to the labors.
11. Pausanias attributes the founding of the games to "Heracles the Dactyl," an attendant of the great Cretan goddess. He had nothing to do with the Greek hero Heracles.
12. The attributes of the birds vary with the imagination of individual authors. See D'Arcy W. Thompson, *Glossary of Greek Birds*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 273. The birds are later encountered by the Argonauts on the Island of Ares (see p. 578).
13. The killing of Cacus is one of the *parerga* to this labor. It is told by Vergil (see pp. 631–632).
14. The Agathyrsi and Geloni were tribes to the north of Scythia, which was the area between the Danube and the Don.
15. His name means "the house of Osiris." Herodotus points out that the Egyptians did not practice human sacrifice.
16. In another version Zeus throws a thunderbolt between Cycnus and Heracles.
17. Vergil describes this in the sixth *Eclogue* (6. 44): *ut litus Hyla, Hyla omne sonaret.*
18. There are many variants of the legend of Telephus, about whom both Sophocles and Euripides wrote tragedies.

19. This is the *cornu copiae* (horn of plenty). Amalthea is the name of a goddess of Plenty and of the goat that suckled the infant Zeus. Ovid says that the horn of Acheloüs became the cornucopia when the Naiads picked it up and filled it with fruit and flowers.
20. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 94.
21. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2. 21–34; Cicero, *De Officiis* 1. 118. The parable has been very important in Western art: see E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheideweg* (Leipzig, 1930).
22. For further discussion, see L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero-Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1921), Chapters 5–7, and G. Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972). The best discussion is that of Burkert, *Structure and History.* For Heracles in art, see Frank Brommer, *Herakles*, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972–1984); vol. 1 has been translated by Shirley J. Schwarz as *Heracles: The Twelve Labors of the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature* (New Rochelle: Caratzas, 1984). See also Jane Henle, *Greek Myths: A Vase Painter's Notebook* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 231–238.
23. For the different versions of her myth, see J. G. Frazer's notes on pp. 181–182 and 303 in vol. 1 of his edition of *Apollodorus* (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1961 [1921]).

CHAPTER

23

THESEUS AND THE LEGENDS OF ATTICA

THE EARLY KINGS AND THEIR LEGENDS

CECROPS, ERICHTHONIUS, AND ERECHTHEUS

The Athenians boasted that they were autochthonous (literally, "sprung from the earth"), that is, that they were not descended from any invaders of Attica. They said that Cecrops, their earliest king, had sprung from the earth and was serpent-shaped in the lower half of his body. He has little importance in legend except as the founder of Attica, which he called Cecropia after himself. It was in his time that the contest between Poseidon and Athena for the possession of Attica took place (see p. 159). Poseidon continued to be an important divinity at Athens, and his worship on the Acropolis was closely connected with that of Athena.

Another early figure in Attic mythology is Erichthonius, who was also partly serpent-shaped and (as the element *-chthon-* in his name implies) sprung from the earth. When Hephaestus attempted to violate Athena, his semen fell on the ground, and from it sprang Erichthonius. Athena took him up and put him in a chest, which she gave to the daughters of Cecrops, Pandrosos, Auglauros, and Herse (or only to Pandrosos), forbidding them to look inside. The sisters disobeyed (see Color Plate 8): driven mad by what they saw (either a pair of snakes or Erichthonius with his snakelike body), they hurled themselves off the Acropolis.[1] After this, Athena took Erichthonius back and brought him up herself. As king of Athens he was credited with instituting the great annual festival of the Panathenaea and setting up the wooden statue of Athena on the Acropolis.

Erichthonius' myth focuses upon his birth, the most important feature of which is that he was "sprung from the earth." He is to some extent confused with his grandson and successor as king of Athens, Erechtheus. Both are in fact forms of Poseidon. Athena prophesied that after his death Erechtheus would be worshiped at Athens with his own cult-site, "ringed around with stones," and that under the title of "Poseidon-Erechtheus he will be offered sacrifices of bulls."[2]

Toward the end of the fifth century, the beautiful temple on the Acropolis known as the Erechtheum was dedicated jointly to Athena Polias (i.e., Athena

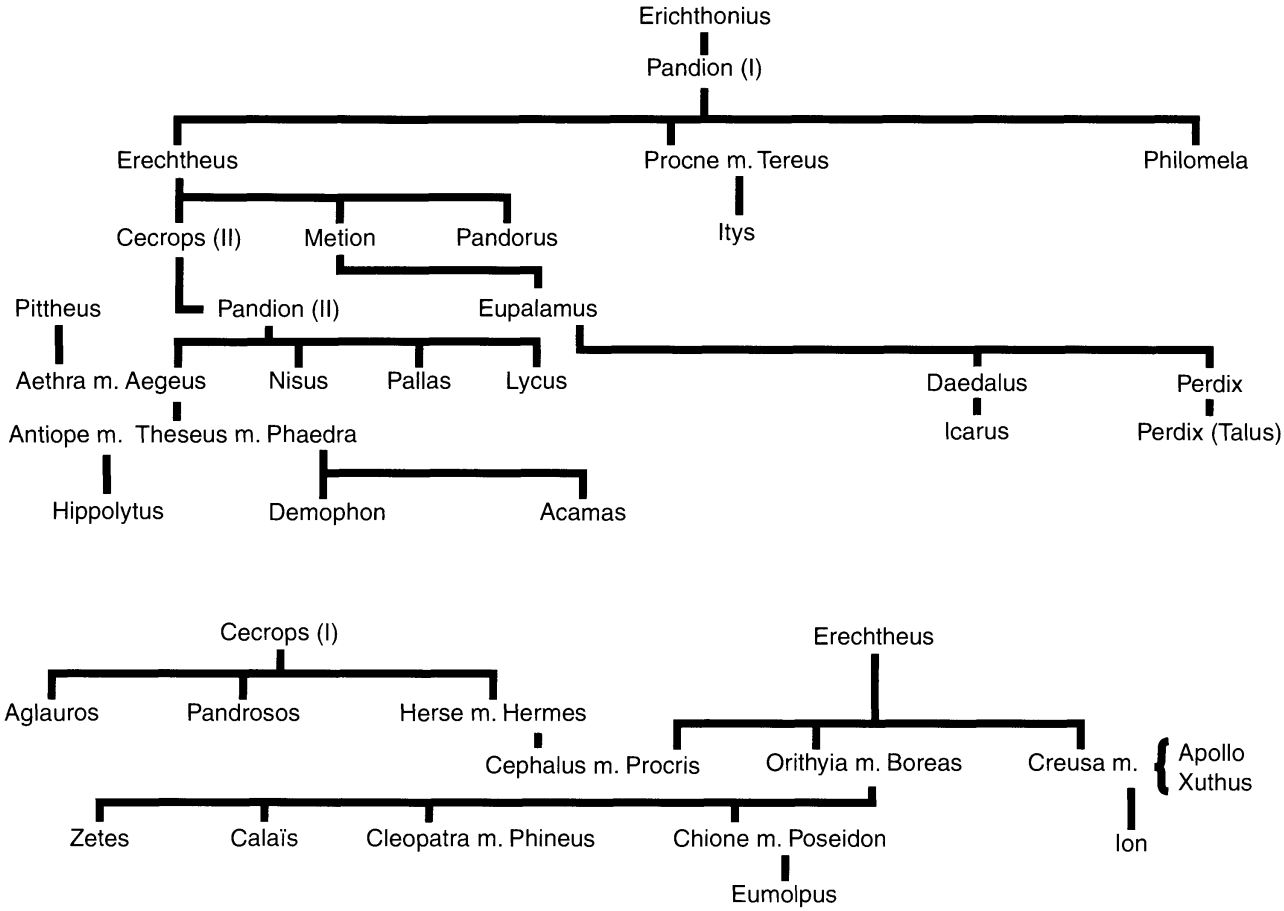
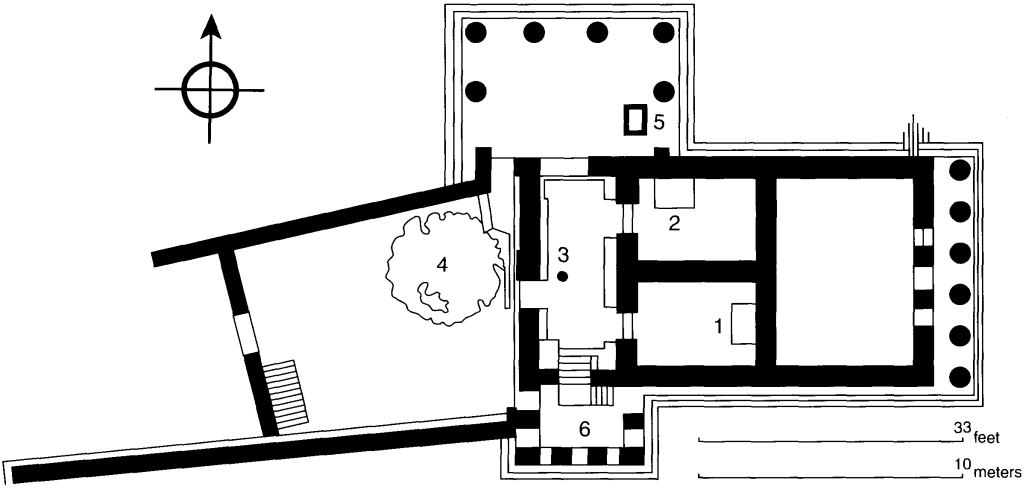


Figure 23.1. The Royal Families of Athens

as Guardian of the City) and Erechtheus.[3] In it were sacred objects associated with the earliest stages of Athenian religion, including the wooden statue of Athena, the tomb of Erechtheus, and the salt spring produced by the blow of Poseidon's trident in his contest with Athena, which was known as "the sea of Erechtheus." In this "sea" were the marks of Poseidon's trident where he struck the earth, and linked to the sanctuary was the olive tree produced by Athena. The temple took the name by which it is generally known, Erechtheum, from Erechtheus-Poseidon; but in antiquity it was known officially as "the temple in which is the ancient statue."

Thus the Erechtheum and its neighboring shrines were closely bound up with the most ancient myths of Athens. It was built upon the Acropolis, the site of the Mycenaean fortress of Athens, and so it linked Athenians to the earliest stages of their city's history. Athena, the great Olympian protectress of the city, here was associated with both her rival Poseidon and her predecessor, the chthonic divinity Erechtheus. Her triumph in the struggle for the honor of protecting the city was visible nearby in the sculptures of the west pediment of the Parthenon.

Erechtheus was important in the mythology of Athens. He successfully defended Athens in her earliest war, the attack of the Eleusinians led by the Thracian Eumolpus, who was a son of Poseidon and ancestor of the hereditary priests of Eleusis. With the approval of his wife, Praxithea, Erechtheus sacrificed one



1. Wooden statue of Athena Polias
2. Tomb of Erechtheus
3. Salt spring
4. Sacred olive tree
5. Zeus' thunderbolt
6. Porch of the maidens (caryatids)

Figure 23.2. Plan of the Erechtheum (After W. B. Dinsmoor)

(or all three) of his daughters to secure the victory for Athens,[4] a myth that has been argued to be the subject of the frieze of the Parthenon (see box on p. 161). In the battle he killed Eumolpus, and for this was himself killed by Poseidon, who thrust him into the earth with his trident. The sacrifice of the daughter was a central theme in Euripides' tragedy *Erechtheus*, in which Praxithea played a prominent part.[5]

In Euripides' tragedy *Ion*, Ion's mother, Creusa, one of Erechtheus' daughters, gives a different version, in which all the daughters of Erechtheus were sacrificed except for herself (*Ion* 277–282):

ION: Did your father Erechtheus sacrifice your sisters?
CREUSA: He hardened himself to kill the maidens as a sacrificial offering for the earth.
ION: How then were you saved alone amongst your sisters?
CREUSA: I was a newborn baby in my mother's arms.
ION: And does a chasm in the earth truly hide your father?
CREUSA: Yes—blows from the ocean-god's trident killed him.

As a final reminder of the importance of Erechtheus in Athenian mythology and the pride of the Athenians in being autochthonous, we quote from the opening lines (824–830) of the beautiful chorus in praise of Athens that Euripides composed for his tragedy *Medea*:[6]

The descendants of Erechtheus are fortunate from of old and children of the blessed gods, [dwelling in] a holy land that has never been conquered, feeding on most famous wisdom and walking lightly through the shining air.

We have earlier mentioned the daughters of Cecrops to whom Athena entrusted the infant Erichthonius (see Color Plate 8). They were three in number, Aglauros, Herse, and Pandrosos, whose names, meaning "bright," "dew," and "all-dew," show that they are truly mythological beings, in origin fertility goddesses.[7]

Ovid tells how Herse was loved by Hermes, who was first noticed by Aglauros as he flew down to the Acropolis. Aglauros asked Hermes for gold as a reward for her help in bringing him to Herse. For this she further angered Athena, who was already angry because of her disobedience in looking inside the chest of Erichthonius. Athena therefore filled Aglauros with envy so that she tried to prevent Hermes from going in to Herse and he turned her into a rock. He then lay with Herse, and their son was Cephalus.

Cephalus and Procris

Cephalus was loved by Eos (Dawn) and was an ally of Amphitryon. In later legend he is the husband of Procris, daughter of Erechtheus. In Ovid's story, he was tempted by Aurora (the Latin form of Eos), who also loved him, to make trial of Procris' faithfulness (see Color Plate 11). In disguise he attempted to seduce her, and when he was on the point of succeeding, revealed himself. In shame Procris

fled and joined Artemis, who gave her a hound, Laelaps, that always caught its quarry, and a javelin that never missed its mark. Later she was reconciled to Cephalus and returned home, bringing with her the magic gifts. According to Ovid, the hound was turned into marble, along with its prey, when Cephalus was hunting near Thebes. The javelin had a longer and more tragic history. Here is part of Ovid's story (*Metamorphoses* 7. 804–859; Cephalus is the speaker):

When the sun's first rays had just begun to touch the topmost peaks, I used to go, like the young man I was, to the forest to hunt. No servants went with me, nor horses, nor keen-scented dogs trained to follow the knotted hunting nets—all I relied upon was the javelin. When my right hand had had enough of killing wild beasts, I would look for the cool shade and the breeze (*aura*) that came from the cold valleys. The gentle breeze would I call for in the midday heat; the breeze would I wait for, refreshment after my labors. "Come, Aura" (for I remember my words), would I sing, "assist me and most pleasing, enter my bosom; be willing to relieve as you do, the heat with which I burn."[8] Perhaps I would add (for this way tended my fate) more endearments and would say, "You are my great pleasure; you restore and refresh me, you make me love the forest and solitary places; may your breath always be caught by my mouth."

Someone listening to my words with their double meaning was deceived; thinking the name of *aura* that I called upon so often was the name of a nymph, she believed that it was a nymph I loved. Soon a rash informer falsely charged me before Procris and repeated the murmurings she had heard. Love is credulous, yet often Procris hesitated and refused to believe the informer; she would not condemn her husband's crime unless she saw it herself.

The next dawn's light had driven the night away: I went to the forest and, successful in the hunt, lay on the grass and said, "Come, Aura, and give relief to my labor." Suddenly I thought I heard a sob as I spoke, yet still as I was saying, "Come, most excellent Aura," a fallen leaf rustled; and, thinking it was a wild animal, I hurled my javelin through the air. It was Procris; and as she held her wounded breast, she groaned "Ah, me." When I recognized the voice of my faithful wife, headlong I ran to her in dismay. I found her half dead, her blood staining her torn clothes, and plucking her own gift, alas, from the wound. Gently I lifted her body, dearer to me than my own . . . and implored her not to leave me, guilty of her death.

Weakened and on the point of death, with an effort she said these few words: "By our marriage vows . . . and by my love that still endures, the cause, even as I am dying, of my death, do not let Aura take my place as your wife." Those were her words, then finally I realized how she had mistaken the name, and told her of the mistake. Yet what use was it to tell her? She fainted away, and her feeble strength failed as her blood flowed out.[9]

Philomela, Procne, and Tereus

The successor of Erichthonius was Pandion, who is famous in legend chiefly for his daughters Philomela and Procne. The Thracian king Tereus came to help

Pandion in a war against Thebes and was rewarded with the hand of Procne. He took her back to Thrace and by her became the father of Itys. Later Philomela came to visit her sister and was attacked by Tereus, who violated her, cut out her tongue, and shut her up in a remote building deep in the forest. Here is how Ovid continues the story (*Metamorphoses* 6. 572–600):

What could Philomela do? Her prison, with its walls of unyielding stone, kept her from flight. Her mouth, dumb, could not tell of the crime. Yet sorrow is inventive, and cunning is an ally in distress. Skillfully she hung the threads from the barbarian loom and interwove purple scenes with the white threads, telling of the crime. She gave the finished embroidery to a servant and by signs asked her to take it to her mistress. The servant, not knowing what she was bringing, obeyed and took the embroidery to Procne. The cruel tyrant's wife unrolled the tapestry and read the unhappy saga of her own misfortunes. She held her peace (a miracle that she could!); sorrow restrained her words.

Now came the time when the Thracian matrons celebrated Bacchus' triennial feast; Night accompanied their rites. Queen Procne left her palace, garbed in the god's ritual dress and holding the instruments of his ecstasy. In a frenzy, with threatening looks, Procne rushed through the forest with a crowd of followers; driven by the madness of sorrow she pretended, Bacchus, that it was your madness. At length she reached the lonely prison and raised the Bacchic cry, *Evoe;* she broke down the doors, seized her sister, and put on her the Bacchic vestments, veiling her face with leaves of ivy. Dragging the stunned Philomela, Procne brought her sister to the palace.

Ovid then tells how Procne decides to revenge herself upon Tereus by murdering their son Itys (636–645):

Without delay, Procne seized Itys. . . . In a distant part of the lofty palace, as he stretched out his hands (for he saw his fate before him) and cried, "Mother, mother," trying to embrace her, she struck him with a sword, where the chest meets the body's flank, and she did not look away. One wound was enough to kill him, but Philomela cut his throat with a knife. They tore apart his body, while it still retained vestiges of life.

Ovid describes, in considerable detail, how the sisters cooked Itys and served him up to Tereus, who recognized too late what he had eaten. The tale continues (666–674):

Now Tereus drew his sword and pursued the daughters of Pandion: you would think that their bodies were clothed with feathers, and indeed they were. One flew to the forest; the other to the roof, and still the murder marked her breast and her feathers were stained with blood. Tereus, rushing swiftly in sorrow and in eagerness for revenge, turned into a bird with crested head; a long beak projects in place of his sword; the bird's name is Epops (Hoopoe), and its face seems armed.

In the Greek version of the story it is the nightingale (Procne) that mourns for her dead son, while the tongueless swallow (Philomela) tries to tell her story

by her incoherent chatter. The Latin authors, however, changed the names, making Philomela the nightingale and Procne the swallow.

The *Ion* of Euripides

Pandion was said to have been succeeded as king by Erechtheus, whose myths we discussed earlier. Among his daughters was Creusa, the heroine of Euripides' play *Ion*. Creusa was the only one of the daughters not to have been sacrificed by her father before the battle against Eumolpus. She was loved by Apollo and bore him a son, Ion, whom she exposed out of fear of her father. Ion was saved by Hermes at Apollo's request and taken by him to Delphi, where he was brought up as a temple servant and became treasurer of the sanctuary. Creusa, meanwhile, was given as wife to Xuthus as a reward for aiding Erechtheus in defeating the Chalcodontids of Euboea. After years of childlessness, Xuthus and Creusa consulted the Delphic oracle as to how they might have children; Xuthus was told to greet as his son the first person he met on going out of the temple.[10] This person was Ion, but Creusa, who did not know that he was her own son, took him for a bastard son of Xuthus and attempted to kill him. The attempt miscarried, and with the intervention of Athena mother and son recognized each other. Xuthus, Creusa, and Ion returned together to Athens, where Ion became the ancestor of the four Ionic tribes (which were the main units of the early Athenian political structure). His descendants colonized part of the coast of Asia Minor and the islands, thereafter called Ionia.[11]

Orithyia and Boreas and Their Children

Another daughter of Erechtheus, Orithyia, was loved by the North Wind, Boreas. He carried her off to Thrace as she was playing by the river Ilissus.[12] In Thrace she became the mother of the winged heroes Zetes and Calaïs, and of two daughters, Cleopatra and Chione. Zetes and Calaïs were prominent in the Argonauts' expedition (see pp. 576–578). Phineus was married to Cleopatra, who was said to have caused the blindness of her stepsons (born to Phineus from another woman) by falsely accusing them of attempting to seduce her. Chione became the mother, by Poseidon, of Eumolpus, whose expedition against Athens we discussed earlier.

The Confused Genealogy of the Kings of Athens

According to Apollodorus, Erechtheus was succeeded by his son Cecrops, and Cecrops by his son Pandion; Cecrops and Pandion thus repeat the names of earlier kings. Pandion was driven out of Attica by his uncle Metion and fled to Megara, where he became the father of four sons: Aegeus, Pallas, Nisus, and Lycus. After Pandion's death, the four brothers recovered the throne at Athens and shared the power; Aegeus, however, as the oldest, was in effect the sovereign, while Nisus returned to Megara as its king.

THESEUS

Aegeus, like Erechtheus, is another form of the god Poseidon. This is indicated by his connection with the Aegean Sea and by the tradition that Poseidon rather than Aegeus was Theseus' father.[13] As king of Athens he was threatened by the opposition of his brother Pallas. Being childless, he was told by the Delphic oracle "not to undo the wineskin's mouth" until he had returned home. Perplexed by this riddle, he asked the advice of Pittheus, king of Troezen, his host on the journey. Pittheus, who understood the oracle, made Aegeus drunk and gave him his daughter Aethra to lie with.[14] When Aegeus left Troezen, he told Aethra that if their child were a boy she must bring him up without saying who his father was. She was to send him to Athens when he was old enough to lift a rock by himself, under which Aegeus would leave a sword and a pair of sandals as tokens by which he could recognize his son. In due time Aethra bore a son, Theseus, who grew up and set out for Athens after securing the tokens.

Theseus is the great national hero of Attica, and Athens came to be the focal point of his legends. His earlier links with Marathon and Troezen were weakened. He is associated with Heracles in some of his adventures, and his deeds are similar to those of Heracles—for example, his ridding the land of brigands and monsters and his expedition against the Amazons. Some of the characters in his saga were themselves heroes with cults of their own, for example, Sciron and Hippolytus. The legends of Theseus have become famous largely through the genius of Athenian writers.[15]

THESEUS' SIX LABORS ON HIS JOURNEY FROM TROEZEN TO ATHENS

The adventures of Theseus fall into fairly well defined groups,[16] of which the first contains six deeds he performed while traveling to Athens from Troezen. Theseus chose the land route so as to expose himself to the challenge of more dangerous adventures.

At Epidaurus he killed the brigand Periphetes, a son of Hephaestus, who was armed with a club and generally called Corynetes (Club Man). Theseus took the club for himself, and it plays no further part in his legend (except in artistic representations).

At the Isthmus of Corinth, he killed the robber Sinis, called Pityocamptes (Pine Bender) from the way in which he killed his victims. He would bend two pine tree saplings to the ground, tie one end of his victim to each of the two trees, and then release the trees. Theseus killed him in this way.

On the border of the Isthmus and the Megarid he killed a monstrous sow near the village of Crommyon. Next he found the brigand Sciron barring his way at the so-called Cliffs of Sciron. Sciron, originally a local hero of neighboring areas,[17] blocked the path along which travelers through the Megarid must

The Labors of Theseus. Attic red-figure kylix, ca. 475 B.C.; height of kylix 5 in.; diameter $12\frac{3}{4}$ in. The cycle of Theseus' labors was often painted on Athenian vases, especially drinking cups (*kylikes*), in the fifth century. This cup is unusual in that the cycle is painted (almost identically, except for the Minotaur) on both the exterior and interior. The interior, with the Minotaur at the center, is shown here. Starting at the top and going in a clockwise direction the labors are: (1) Cercyon; (2) Procrustes; (3) Sciron (note the turtle); (4) the Bull of Marathon; (5) Sinis (Pityocamptes); (6) the Sow of Crommyon. At the center Theseus drags the dying Minotaur out of the Labyrinth to dispatch him with his sword. Periphetes does not appear, since this labor does not enter the cycle until after 475 B.C. *(British Museum, London. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees.)*

go to pass the cliffs and compelled all comers to stoop and wash his feet. He would then kick his victims into the sea, where a gigantic turtle ate them up. Theseus killed him by his own methods.

Drawing closer to Athens, Theseus met Cercyon at Eleusis. Like Sciron, Cercyon was also originally a local hero. He compelled travelers to wrestle with him to the death. Theseus defeated him in wrestling, held him high in the air, and then dashed him to his death upon the ground.

Finally, between Eleusis and Athens, Theseus met the brigand Procrustes (his name means "the stretcher"),[18] who possessed a hammer, a saw, and a bed. He compelled travelers to lie on the bed, and those who were too long for it he would cut down to size; those who were too short he would hammer out until they fit it exactly. He too perished at Theseus' hands in the way in which he had killed his victims.

Theseus Is Recognized by Aegeus

Theseus' arrival at Athens is dramatically described by the lyric poet Bacchylides of Ceos. In reply to the citizens' questions, Aegeus speaks (Bacchylides, *Dithyramb* 18. 16–60):

"A messenger has come, traversing the long road from the Isthmus; incredible are the deeds of a mighty man that he relates. This man killed violent Sinis, strongest of mortals. He killed the man-slaying sow in the glens of Crommyon and killed the cruel Sciron. The wrestling ring of Cercyon has he suppressed; Procoptes [Slicer, i.e., Procrustes] has dropped the mighty hammer of Polypemon [Troubler, i.e., Procrustes' father?], for he has met a more valiant man. I fear what this news portends." "Who is this man?" [ask the citizens, and Aegeus continues]: "Two companions only come with him, says the messenger; upon his shoulders he wears an ivory-hilted sword and in his hand he carries two polished spears; upon his red-haired head is set a Spartan cap, well-made; around his body he has cast a purple tunic and over it a woolen cloak from Thessaly. From his eyes darts blood-red flame, as from Lemnos' volcano. Yet he is but a youth in his first prime, whose skill is in the delight of war and the brazen blows of battle. In quest of shining Athens does he come."

Theseus' arrival was hedged with further danger. Aegeus was married to Medea, who expected their son Medus to succeed as king of Athens. Medea immediately recognized Theseus as Aegeus' son and a rival to Medus, and attempted to have Theseus poisoned before Aegeus could recognize him. She advised Aegeus that the newcomer would be a threat to his power. He should entertain Theseus at a banquet where he would drink poisoned wine, for which Medea would provide the poison. Theseus at the banquet carved his meat with the sword that he had recovered from under the rock at Troezen; Aegeus recognized the sword, dashed the cup of poison out of Theseus' hand, and publicly recognized him as his son and successor.

Pallas, brother of Aegeus, and his sons had hoped and plotted to take over Aegeus' power and resorted to violence upon Theseus' recognition. Theseus killed all the members of one of the two groups into which they had divided, and Pallas himself and his surviving sons ceased to be a threat.

The Bull of Marathon

Theseus' next labor was to catch the bull of Marathon, said to have been the one that Heracles had brought from Crete. He mastered the bull and drove it back

to Athens, where he sacrificed it to Apollo Delphinius. On his way to Marathon an old woman, Hecale, entertained Theseus. She promised she would sacrifice to Zeus if Theseus returned successful, but on his return he found her already dead and ordered that she share the honors henceforth paid to Zeus Hecalus at a local annual festival.

The Minotaur

Androgeos, son of the Cretan king Minos, had been killed in Attica because of the jealousy he aroused by winning all the contests at the Panathenaic games. In revenge Minos mounted an expedition against Athens and her ally, Megara, where Nisus, brother of Aegeus, was king. Megara was attacked first, and some time after its fall Athens made a treaty with Minos, with the provision that at intervals (of one or nine years) seven Athenian youths and seven girls, children of noble families, should be sent to Crete as tribute, there to be shut up in the Labyrinth and devoured by the Minotaur. The victims were chosen by lot and Theseus volunteered to go.[19]

On the voyage to Crete, Minos attacked one of the maidens, Eriboea, who called on Theseus for help. When Theseus intervened, Minos prayed to Zeus for a sign that he was indeed Minos' father (and therefore that his son need be under no restraint in dealing with other men). Zeus sent lightning, and Minos then challenged Theseus' claim to be the son of Poseidon by throwing a ring overboard, which Theseus was to recover. A beautiful poem by Bacchylides describes the sequel (*Dithyramb* 17. 92–116):

The Athenian youths trembled as the hero leaped into the sea, and tears poured from their lilylike eyes as they awaited the sorrow of what had to be. Yet the dolphins, dwellers in the sea, swiftly brought great Theseus to the palace of his father, the ruler of horses. There with awe he saw the noble daughters of rich Nereus, and in the lovely palace he saw his father's own wife, the beauteous Amphitrite, in all her majesty. Round him she cast a purple robe, and upon his thick hair the unwithered wreath, dark with roses, which subtle Aphrodite had given her at her own marriage.

With these gifts (the poet does not mention the ring) Theseus returned miraculously to the ship and so came to Crete. Here the daughter of Minos, Ariadne, fell in love with him and gave him a thread with which he could trace his way back out of the Labyrinth. With this aid he entered the Labyrinth, killed the Minotaur, and emerged unharmed. He then sailed from Crete with his thirteen Athenian companions, taking Ariadne with him.

Ariadne on Naxos

Another tradition, however, makes Ariadne give Theseus a wreath that lights up the darkness of the Labryrinth and so helps him escape. In the poem of Bac-

Theseus and Amphitrite. Attic red-figure cup by the painter Onesimos and signed by the potter Euphronios, ca. 500 B.C.: diameter $15\frac{3}{4}$ in. The boyish figure of Theseus is held up underwater by a tiny Triton, as dolphins cavort to the left. Amphitrite, seated on a stool, holds the wreath in her left hand, as Athena (with helmet, spear, and aegis) looks toward her. This scene anticipates the narrative of Bacchylides by some twenty-five years. *(Paris, Louvre.)*

chylides, this wreath is made the gift not of Ariadne but of Amphitrite, so that Theseus himself brings it to Crete. Ariadne wore the wreath on her flight with Theseus until he deserted her on Naxos and she was found by Dionysus. The god took the wreath and set it in the heavens, where it became the constellation Corona.

Here is Ovid's version of the metamorphosis (*Metamorphoses* 8. 174–181):

Quickly the son of Aegeus sailed to Dia after seizing Minos' daughter, and cruelly left his companion deserted upon that shore. Alone and bitterly complaining, Ariadne found comfort in the embraces of Bacchus, who took the wreath

Death of a Monster, by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). Pencil on paper, 1937; 15 × 22¼ in. The contorted and dying Minotaur sees himself in a mirror held up by a sea-goddess, perhaps Amphitrite herself. Picasso used the violence and horror of the Minotaur to express his anger at the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War; this drawing is dated December 6, 1937, eight months after the bombing of Guernica. *(Lee Miller Archives, Chiddingly, England, © 1998 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SPADEM, Paris.)*

from her brow and placed it in the heavens so that Ariadne might be made famous by a constellation. The wreath flies through the thin air, and as it flies its jewels are turned into fires and become fixed in their place, still with the appearance of a wreath (*corona*).

Ariadne is originally a divine person, perhaps another form of Aphrodite. Hesiod (*Theogony* 947–949) describes her as the "wife of Dionysus, whom Zeus made immortal." Later versions of the Theseus legend make her a forlorn heroine, deserted by her lover Theseus upon the island of Dia (the early name for Naxos) during the voyage back to Athens (see Color Plate 16). Here is the narrative of Catullus (64. 52–59):

Ariadne, with uncontrolled passion in her heart, looking out from the shore of Dia with its sounding waves, saw Theseus receding into the distance with his fleet at full speed. Not yet could she believe her eyes, for she had only just been wakened from deceitful sleep and saw that she was alone, unhappy, upon the

shore. But the young man, forgetful, parted the waves with his oars in flight, leaving his promises unfulfilled to the gusts of wind.

Ovid, who related this legend three times,[20] describes the arrival of Dionysus and his companions (*Ars Amatoria* 1. 535–564):

And now Ariadne beat her soft breast again and again: "My faithless lover has gone," cried she. "What will become of me?" "What will become of me?" she cried; the shore reechoed to the sound of cymbals and the frenzied beating of drums. She swooned in fear, and her words trailed away; no blood remained in her fainting body. Look! here are the maenads, their hair streaming down their backs. Look! here come the dancing satyrs, forerunners of the god. Look! here is old Silenus, hardly able to keep his seat upon the swaybacked donkey. And now came the god in his chariot decked to the top with vines, driving yoked tigers with golden reins. Ariadne lost her color, her voice, her thoughts of Theseus; twice she tried to run away, and twice fear held her rooted. Then said the god: "Behold I am here, a more faithful object of your love. Away with fear! You shall be the Cretan wife of Bacchus. Take the heavens as my gift; you shall be observed in the heavens as a constellation. Often as the Cretan Crown (Corona) will you guide lost sailors." So he spoke and jumped down from the chariot, lest she be alarmed by the tigers, and took her up in his arms, for she could not resist; all things are easy for a god. Some of his followers chant the marriage cry, "O Hymen," and others cry, "*Evoe, evoe;*" so the god and his bride lay together in the sacred bed.

Homer says that Ariadne was killed by Artemis upon Naxos as a punishment for eloping with Theseus when she was already betrothed to Dionysus. Yet another story has her die in Cyprus in giving birth to Theseus' child. When Theseus returned, he instituted a ritual in her honor, and in historical times she was honored under the title of Ariadne Aphrodite, part of the ritual being for a young man to lie down and imitate a woman in childbirth. In all these conflicting stories it is clear that Ariadne is no ordinary mortal and that her partner was not a man, Theseus, but a god.

Theseus Becomes King of Athens

After leaving Dia (Naxos), Theseus went to Delos, where he sacrificed to Apollo and danced the Crane dance (in Greek, *geranos*) with his companions (see p. 611, detail 2). The dance became traditional at Delos, and its intricate movements were said to imitate the windings of the Labyrinth.[21] From Delos he sailed home to Athens. Now he had arranged with Aegeus that he should change the black sail of his ship for white if he had been successful. This he forgot to do, and as Aegeus saw the black-sailed ship approaching, he threw himself from a cliff into the sea, which thereafter was called the Aegean Sea.

So Theseus became king of Athens. He was credited with a number of historical reforms and institutions, including the synoecism of Attica (i.e., the union

Dionysus and Ariadne. Marble sarcophagus, ca. 180 A.D.; width 77 in., height (without lid) $20\frac{1}{2}$ in., height of lid 11 in. Dionysus approaches from the left riding on a chariot drawn by a lyre-playing centaur, behind and to the right of whom a centauress blows on a kind of flute. Before him go Pan and a silenus, and a silenus mask lies on the ground in the left center. A cupid hovers near the god. In the center the god stands, now clothed in a long robe, holding a reversed thyrsus in his left hand, his right hand resting on the leading silenus. He looks toward the sleeping Ariadne, whose robe is being drawn aside by a cupid, while two maenads look back at the god. To the right two maenads are about to attack Pentheus. On the lid are reliefs of the god's thiasos, and a deer is being sacrificed to the right. The waking of Ariadne to the coming of the god of new life was popular in the funerary art of late antiquity as a parable of the waking of the soul to eternal life after death. This sarcophagus is in a tomb in the cemetery under St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. It is not known whether its occupant was pagan or Christian. *(Photo courtesy of the Foto Fabbrica di San Pietro.)*

Dionysus and Ariadne. Bronze krater (the Derveni Krater), second half of the fourth century B.C.; height 35½ in. The krater, which held the ashes of a Thessalian nobleman, was discovered at Derveni, not far from Thessalonike, in 1962. The reliefs on the central panel show Dionysus, naked, seated on a rock with his leg over Ariadne's thigh. She draws her veil aside, the gesture of a bride accepting her husband. Behind Dionysus is a panther, and birds, animals, vines, and ivy ornament the neck and body of the krater. Figures of Maenads flank the divine pair, and in the upper register the seated Dionysus gestures towards a sleeping Maenad. The handles, in the form of serpents, frame the head of a horned god to the left and of Heracles (with lionskin over his head) to the right.

of the different villages into one political unit with Athens as its center) and the refounding of the Isthmian Games (see p. 613).

The Amazons

Theseus joined with Heracles in his expedition against the Amazons, and as his share of the spoil received the Amazon, Antiope, by whom he became the father of Hippolytus. The Amazons in revenge invaded Attica and were defeated by Theseus. During the Amazon attack Antiope died. The battle between Theseus and the Amazons became a favorite theme in Athenian art after the Persian Wars, when the Amazons were seen as symbols of the barbarians, who, like the Persians, had been defeated by the Greeks.[22]

Theseus and Pirithoüs

Pirithoüs, king of the Thessalian tribe of the Lapiths and son of Ixion, was Theseus' friend. Theseus was among the guests at the marriage of Pirithoüs and took part in the fight against the Centaurs, which became an important theme in Greek art.

Theseus and Pirithoüs vowed to help each other in securing a wife. Theseus attempted to take Helen, and Pirithoüs, Persephone. Helen, who at the time was only a child, was kidnapped from Sparta and brought back to Attica, where she was put in the care of Theseus' mother, Aethra, in the Attic village of Aphidnae. While Theseus and Pirithoüs were away on their attempt against Persephone, the Dioscuri invaded Attica and recovered their sister. The Dioscuri were favorably received in Athens itself, where the regent Menestheus instituted a cult in their honor.[23] Aethra was taken back to Sparta as Helen's servant and went with her to Troy.

Pirithoüs met his end in attempting to abduct Persephone. He and Theseus descended to the Underworld where they were held fast in magic chairs. In the Athenian tradition, Heracles interceded for Theseus' release, while Pirithoüs stayed forever in Hades. Thus the Athenian hero was again associated with Heracles, in this case in his last and greatest labor, the conquest of death.

Theseus, Phaedra, and Hippolytus

Theseus was also married to Phaedra, another daughter of Minos, and by her was the father of two sons, Demophon and Acamas. Phaedra (whose name means "bright") may originally have been a Cretan goddess like Ariadne. As we learned in Chapter 10, she fell passionately in love with Hippolytus, Theseus' son by Antiope, but did not tell him of her desire. During an absence of Theseus, her old nurse found out the secret and told Hippolytus. In shame at the discovery of her secret, Phaedra hanged herself and left behind a letter falsely accusing Hippolytus of attempting to seduce her. When Theseus re-

turned, saw Phaedra's corpse, and read the letter, he banished Hippolytus and called on Poseidon to destroy him.[24] As Hippolytus was driving his chariot along the seashore on his way into exile, Poseidon sent a bull from the sea, which so frightened the horses that they bolted, threw Hippolytus from the chariot, and dragged him almost to his death. He was carried back to Theseus and died after a reconciliation with his father, assured by Artemis of his future honor as a hero with a cult.

The legend of Hippolytus owes its fame largely to Euripides, who wrote two tragedies on the subject (one of which is extant), and to Seneca, whose *Phaedra* was the model for Racine's *Phèdre*.[25] In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the drama is set at Troezen; but most other authors make Athens the scene. Hippolytus himself was honored with a cult at Troezen and was closely connected with Artemis, in whose honor he avoided all women. At Athens he was connected with Aphrodite, whose temple on the south side of the Acropolis was called "Aphrodite by Hippolytus." He himself was said to have been brought to life by Asclepius, and in his resurrected form he was absorbed by the Italians with the name of Virbius. His legend is of the greatest literary importance, and it connects Attica and Troezen and links Theseus to the great goddesses worshiped in Crete, Troezen, and Athens.

Theseus as Champion of the Oppressed

In the fifth century, a number of legends were developed in which kings of Athens were portrayed as protectors of victims of tyranny who had been driven from their homes. In Euripides' *Medea*, Aegeus, father of Theseus, promises to protect Medea, who has been exiled from Corinth. Theseus was especially popular in these legends. He generously gave refuge to the exiled Oedipus (see p. 388), and in the *Suppliant Women* of Euripides he champions the mothers of the dead heroes of the Seven against Thebes. Led by Adrastus, the sole survivor of the expedition, they come to Eleusis, where Aethra has come to sacrifice to Demeter. She takes pity on the women and appeals to Theseus to protect them and help them persuade the Theban king Creon to allow them to bury the dead Argive princes. Theseus is at first unpersuaded by her pleas and those of Adrastus, but eventually he relents and attacks Thebes with an Athenian army. He returns victorious, bringing the bodies of the dead Argive leaders, over whom Adrastus makes a funeral oration. The bodies are then cremated, although the pyre of Capaneus is separate from the others because he was killed by the thunderbolt of Zeus, and therefore sacred to the god. In the climactic scene of the tragedy, Evadne, the widow of Capaneus, hurls herself into the flames of his pyre (see p. 399).

The figure of Theseus as the noble king has frequently been portrayed in later literature.[26] He is the compassionate champion of the Argive women in the twelfth book of Statius' *Thebaid*, in which he actually kills Creon. In Chaucer's

Canterbury Tales he is, in "The Knight's Tale," the protector of the Argive women and the wise king. He is "Duke Theseus" rather less loftily in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Other Adventures of Theseus

Theseus was not originally a member of the great expeditions of saga, but so important a national hero naturally came to be included in the roster of heroic adventurers, so that he was said to have been an Argonaut and one of those present on the Calydonian boar hunt. Indeed, "not without Theseus" became an Athenian proverb, and he was called "a second Heracles." His life was said to have ended in failure. He was driven out of Athens, his power usurped by Menestheus, who is mentioned in the *Iliad*'s catalogue of ships as the Athenian leader at Troy. Theseus went to the island of Scyros and was there killed by Lycomedes, the local king. Menestheus continued to reign at Athens but died at Troy. The sons of Theseus then recovered their father's throne. After the Persian Wars, the Greek allies, led by the Athenian Cimon, captured Scyros in the years 476–475 B.C. There Cimon, obedient to a command of the Delphic oracle, searched for the bones of Theseus. He found the bones of a very large man with a bronze spearhead and sword and brought them back to Athens. So Theseus returned, a symbol of Athens' connection with the heroic age and of her claim to lead the Ionian Greeks.

THESEUS IN GREEK TRAGEDY

In a meticulous and lucid study, Sophie Mills distinguishes Theseus in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides as individual and quite different from his depiction in other plays and explains why this is the case.[27] Basic elements in the legend of Theseus—for example, his abduction of Helen, ill-fated journey to the Underworld, Cretan adventure, and the Centauromachy—were developed in Greece long before the fifth century. In Attica, however, with the emergence of democracy and the establishment of the Athenian Empire, an idealized portrait of Theseus was deliberately created to exemplify and glorify the character of the individual, the state, and the empire. The legend of Theseus was cleansed of any dubious traits, and Theseus himself, thus purified, was artfully transformed into an ideological paradigm, an honorable hero, brave and just, representing Athenian intelligence and virtue. This is the Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliants* and *Heracles* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus.* The depiction of Theseus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* offers a striking contrast. He is not represented in this play as the heroic king of Athens, noble model for his city and its citizens; instead he is most realistically portrayed as a vulnerable human being, a tragically flawed individual, whose character and actions are integral to the drama.

DEMOPHON

Theseus' son Demophon helped the children of Heracles (see p. 541), and he has a number of other legends.[28] He loved the Thracian princess Phyllis, and on leaving her in Thrace, he swore to return soon. When he never came back, she hanged herself and became an almond tree. Too late he returned and embraced the tree, which burst into leaf.

CODRUS

The last king of Athens was Codrus, who sacrificed himself for his city. The Peloponnesians invaded Attica, assured by the Delphic oracle that the side would win whose king was killed. When Codrus learned of the oracle, he disguised himself as a peasant and provoked a quarrel with some enemy soldiers, who killed him; the Peloponnesians were defeated.

MINOS

DAEDALUS AND MINOS

Daedalus was son or grandson of Metion, younger brother of Cecrops, and therefore a member of the Athenian royal house. He was a skilled craftsman and inventor; his assistant was his nephew Perdix.[29] One day Perdix invented the saw, getting the idea from a fish's backbone. In a fit of jealousy, Daedalus hurled him from a rock. As he fell, he was turned into a partridge, which still bears the name *perdix.* Being now guilty of homicide, Daedalus had to leave Athens. He went to Crete, where his skill was employed by Minos and Pasiphaë.

Now Minos had prayed to Poseidon to send him a bull from the sea for sacrifice; when Poseidon answered his prayer, Minos was so covetous that he sacrificed another, less beautiful bull, keeping Poseidon's animal for himself. As a punishment, Poseidon caused his wife, Pasiphaë, to fall in love with the bull. To satisfy her passion, Daedalus constructed a lifelike hollow cow in which Pasiphaë was shut up to mate with the bull. Her offspring was the Minotaur. It had a man's body and the head of a bull, and was held captive in the Labyrinth, a mazelike prison of Daedalus' devising. We have already seen how Theseus destroyed it. The famous discoveries at Cnossus in Crete (pp. 40–41) have shown that the bull played a significant part in Cretan ritual, and that a common sacred object was the *labrys,* or double-headed axe, which is certainly to be connected with the word *labyrinth.* The idea of the maze has plausibly been thought to have its origin in the huge and complex palace of Cnossus, with its many passageways and endless series of rooms. Minos and Pasiphaë, like their daughters Ariadne and Phaedra, are probably divine figures; Minos was son and friend of Zeus,[30] while Pasiphaë (All Shining) was the daughter of Helius.

The Flight of Icarus

Daedalus eventually tired of his life in Crete, but Minos would not let him go. He therefore contrived feathered wings, held together by wax, by means of which he and his son Icarus could escape. As they flew high above the sea, Icarus ignored his father's warning not to fly too close to the sun, and as the wax on his wings melted he fell into the sea, which thereafter was called *Mare Icarium* (see Color Plate 19). The story is told by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 8. 200–230):

When Daedalus the craftsman had finished [making the wings], he balanced his body between the twin wings and by moving them hung suspended in air. He also gave instructions to his son, saying: "Icarus, I advise you to take a middle course. If you fly too low, the sea will soak the wings; if you fly too high, the sun's heat will burn them. Fly between sea and sun! Take the course along which I shall lead you."

As he gave the instructions for flying, he fitted the novel wings to Icarus' shoulders. While he worked and gave his advice, the old man's face was wet with tears, and his hands trembled with a father's anxiety. For the last time, he

The Fall of Icarus. By Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525–1569); oil on canvas, 1555, 30 × 44 in. Only the legs of Icarus are visible in the sea near the galleon. The ploughman, the fisherman, and the shepherd, observers in Ovid's narrative, here mind their own business. The partridge (Latin name, *perdix*), too, is Ovidian, a reference to Daedalus' rival and victim Perdix: in Ovid it gloats over the burial of Icarus. *(Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.)*

kissed his son and rose into the air upon his wings. He led the way in flight and was anxious for his companion, like a bird that leads its young from the nest into the air. He encouraged Icarus to follow and showed him the skills that were to destroy him; he moved his wings and looked back at those of his son. Some fisherman with trembling rod, or shepherd leaning on his crook, or farmer resting on his plow saw them and was amazed, and believed that those who could travel through the air were gods.

Now Juno's Samos was on the left (they had already passed Delos and Paros), and Lebinthos and Calymne, rich in honey, were on the right, when the boy began to exult in his bold flight. He left his guide and, drawn by a desire to reach the heavens, took his course too high. The burning heat of the nearby sun softened the scented wax that fastened the wings. The wax melted; Icarus moved his arms, now uncovered, and without the wings to drive him on, vainly beat the air. Even as he called upon his father's name the sea received him and from him took its name.

Daedalus himself reached Sicily, where Cocalus, king of the city of Camicus, received him.[31] Here he was pursued by Minos, who discovered him by the ruse of carrying round a spiral shell, which he asked Cocalus to have threaded. Cocalus gave the shell to Daedalus, who alone of men was ingenious enough to succeed. Minos knew that Daedalus was there when Cocalus gave him back the threaded shell. However, Daedalus still stayed out of Minos' reach, for the daughters of Cocalus drowned Minos in boiling water. There is no reliable legend about the further history or death of Daedalus.

The Family of Minos

Several of the children of Minos and Pasiphaë have their own legends; there were four sons—Catreus, Deucalion, Glaucus, and Androgeos—and four daughters, of whom only Ariadne and Phaedra have important legends.

Catreus, who became the Cretan king, had a son Althaemenes, of whom an oracle foretold that he would kill his father. Althaemenes tried to avoid his fate by leaving Crete and going to Rhodes with his sister Apemosyne.[32] She was seduced by Hermes and killed by Althaemenes as a punishment for her apparent unchastity. Catreus later came to Rhodes in search of his son; he and his party were taken for pirates, and in the ensuing skirmish he was killed by his son. When Althaemenes learned how the oracle had been fulfilled, he avoided the company of other men and was eventually swallowed up by the earth. The Rhodians honored him as a hero.

Of the other sons of Minos, Deucalion (not to be confused with Deucalion of the flood legend) became the father of Idomeneus, the Cretan leader at Troy. As a boy, Glaucus fell into a vat of honey and drowned. Minos could not find him, and was told by the oracle that the person who could find an exact simile for a magic calf in the herds of Minos would be able both to find Glaucus and to restore him to life. This calf changed color every four hours, from white to

red to black; but the seer Polyidus most fittingly likened it to a mulberry, which changes from white to red to black as it ripens. With the help of various birds, Polyidus found Glaucus' corpse in the vat. It was placed in a tomb, and Polyidus was then shut up in the tomb and ordered to bring Glaucus back to life. While he was wondering what to do, a snake came. Polyidus killed it with his sword, whereupon another snake came, looked at the dead snake, and went away, returning with an herb, which it put on the dead snake's body. The dead snake then came to life again, and Polyidus took the herb and used it on Glaucus, who likewise came to life. Even now, Minos was not satisfied; he compelled Polyidus to teach Glaucus the seer's art before he would let him return home to Argos. Polyidus obeyed, but as he left, he told Glaucus to spit into his mouth, whereupon Glaucus forgot all that he had learned.[33]

Androgeos was killed in Attica, and his death led to Minos' expedition and the attack on Megara. The king of Megara, Nisus, had a purple lock of hair, which was the city's talisman, for the city would fall if the lock were cut off. Now Scylla, daughter of Nisus, fell in love with Minos (whom she could see from the city walls). To please him she cut off her father's purple lock and brought it to Minos. When the city fell, Minos rejected Scylla and sailed away; she clung to the stern of his ship and was turned into a sea bird called *ciris*,[34] while Nisus turned into a sea eagle, forever pursuing her.

Select Bibliography

Mills, Sophie. *Theseus, Tragedy and the Athenian Empire.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. An examination of how Theseus became the embodiment of the ideals of Periclean Athens.

Walker, Henry J. *Theseus and Athens.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. A study that explores the image of Theseus in the early period and then in the fifth century through major literary works.

Ward, Anne G., ed. *The Quest for Theseus.* New York: Praeger, 1970. A useful collection of essays on the saga of Theseus.

NOTES

1. According to Ovid, only Aglauros disobeyed Athena.
2. Euripides, *Erechtheus,* frag. 18, 94–98.
3. For the Erechtheum, one might begin by consulting John Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York: Praeger, 1971): entry for "Erechtheum." See also G. P. Stevens and J. M. Paton, *The Erechtheum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927).
4. The sacrifice of a virgin was the original form of the legend. Later versions give her the name of Chthonia (which means "earth woman") and have her sisters take an oath to kill themselves so as to die with her. According to others the names of the daughters of Erechtheus were Pandora, Protogeneia, and Orithyia. Joan B. Connelly suggests (p. 161, note 9) that the subject of the relief on the base of the statue of the Athena Parthenos is the birth of Pandora, daughter of Erechtheus.
5. Euripides' *Erechtheus* survives only in fragments; its ending (including a long speech

from Athena), first published in 1967, has helped fill out many of the missing details of the relationship between the myth of Erechtheus and his cult. Erechtheus took the title of the god who caused his death (i.e., he became Poseidon-Erechtheus). His original status as a hero, with a cult located at the place of his burial, was later confused with that of the god. His daughters had become goddesses with the title Hyacinthides, to be worshiped with annual sacrifices and dances.

6. The lines are sung just after Medea has secured the promise of protection from Aegeus.
7. Pandrosos had her own shrine and cult on the Acropolis, close to the Erechtheum. She was the one of the three daughters of Cecrops, to whom, in some versions, Athena had entrusted Erichthonius. Aglauros was worshiped in a cave on the north side of the Acropolis, while the name *Herse* had been connected etymologically with the festival of the *Arrephoria,* in which two specially chosen young girls carried mysterious objects from the Acropolis by night down to the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros, which was also on the north side of the Acropolis.
8. Ovid plays on words with a double meaning, literal and erotic, for which English has no adequate equivalent.
9. In another version Procris was discovered by Cephalus with a lover. She fled to Minos, king of Crete, who himself fell in love with her. He had been bewitched by his wife, Pasiphaë, so that whenever he lay with a woman he discharged snakes and other creatures. Procris cured him and then lay with him, being rewarded with the gift of the hound and the javelin. Later she returned to Athens and was reconciled with Cephalus.
10. There is a pun here on Ion's name, which is also the Greek word meaning "going."
11. The legend of Ion stems almost entirely from Euripides' play. It explains the historical fact of the colonization of Ionia by mainland Greeks (principally from Athens) during the unsettled period after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization.
12. The chief source is Plato's *Phaedrus* 229, where Socrates rationalizes the legend: "I would say that the North Wind pushed her, as she was playing, down from the nearby rocks. She died in this way; but her death was described as her being ravished by Boreas."
13. And by his link with the cult of Apollo Delphinius, i.e., Apollo as a god of spring, when the sea becomes navigable and the dolphins appear as portents of good sailing weather. See pp. 231 and 251–254.
14. The oracle is difficult to reconcile with this story if the "home" referred to should be Athens. Euripides has Medea cure Aegeus of his sterility after she has joined him in Athens.
15. Theseus was idealized in the latter part of the sixth century B.C. when Pisistratus was tyrant of Athens, and again immediately after the Persian Wars (ca. 475).
16. The most complete source for the legend of Theseus is Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* (early second century A.D.). This biography blurs the lines between mythology, history, and philosophy. For Theseus in ancient art, see Frank Brommer, *Theseus, die Taten des griechischen Helden in der antiken Kunst und Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982).
17. Sciron originally had his own legend and cult at Megara, on the island of Salamis, and in Attica where there were limestone outcrops (his name means "limestone").
18. Procrustes is also called Damastes (Subduer), Procoptes (Slicer), and Polypemon (Troubler). Polypemon may also be the name of his father.

19. According to the fifth-century historian Hellanicus, Minos himself chose the victims and took them on his ship back to Crete.
20. Respectively, in the tenth letter of the *Heroides;* in *Ars Amatoria* 1. 527–564; and in *Metamorphoses* 8. 174–192.
21. This dance was represented on the François Vase (ca. 575 B.C.); see p. 611. At Athens Theseus instituted the *Oschophoria* (carrying of branches) in which two boys disguised as girls carried vine branches in a procession to honor Bacchus and Ariadne.
22. In Athens the battle with the Amazons was depicted in the Hephaesteum and in the Stoa Poecile (Painted Colonnade); it was one of the subjects of the metopes of the Parthenon and was depicted on the shield of Pheidias' statue of Athena Parthenos. It also appeared on the pedestal of the statue of Zeus at Olympia.
23. They were called by the title of *Anakes* or *Anaktes* (Kings), and their temple was called the *Anakeion.*
24. Poseidon was said to have granted Theseus three wishes, of which this was the third. The others were to escape from the Labyrinth and to return from Hades.
25. Twentieth-century dramatic adaptations of the myth include *The Cretan Woman* by Robinson Jeffers and *Desire under the Elms* by Eugene O'Neill.
26. An entertaining novel retelling the life of Theseus in a very compelling fashion is *The King Must Die* (1958) by Mary Renault, who is exceptional in her ability to make classical mythology and legend come alive. Robert Graves is another so gifted, for example, in his novel *Hercules, My Shipmate,* 1945. Renault has a firm grasp of both the ancient sources and modern archaeology, and by her sensitive art she is able to recreate the civilization and the characters in a most credible and exciting manner. Dominant among the many political and religious issues is the overriding motif of Theseus caught in the archetypal battle between matriarchy and patriarchy. This young and inspiring hero could never fall victim to the horrifying, archaic ritual by which the king must die to ensure the dominance and fertility of the earth mother. Renault's sequel *The Bull from the Sea* (1962) depicts the life of the Amazons, one of whom becomes the mother of Hippolytus.
27. Sophie Mills, *Theseus, Tragedy and the Athenian Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
28. He was said to have succeeded Menestheus as Athenian leader at Troy and to have brought his grandmother Aethra back to Athens.
29. The boy is also called Talus and his mother, Daedalus' sister, Perdix.
30. Homer *(Odyssey* 19. 178–179) describes him as the intimate friend of Zeus; and Hesiod (frag. 103) calls him "the most kingly of mortal kings, who ruled over most subjects and held his scepter from Zeus."
31. In the opening lines of the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid,* Daedalus comes to Cumae in Italy.
32. Two other sisters are mentioned: Aërope, who became the wife of a Mycenaean prince (either Pleisthenes or Atreus); and Clymene, who became the wife of Nauplius and the mother of Palamedes.
33. Forgetfulness induced by spitting is a folktale motif, as is also the seer who can understand the ways of birds and snakes.
34. Its identification is unknown. According to Aeschylus, Scylla was bribed by Minos with a golden necklace to betray Nisus.

CHAPTER

24

JASON, MEDEA, AND THE ARGONAUTS

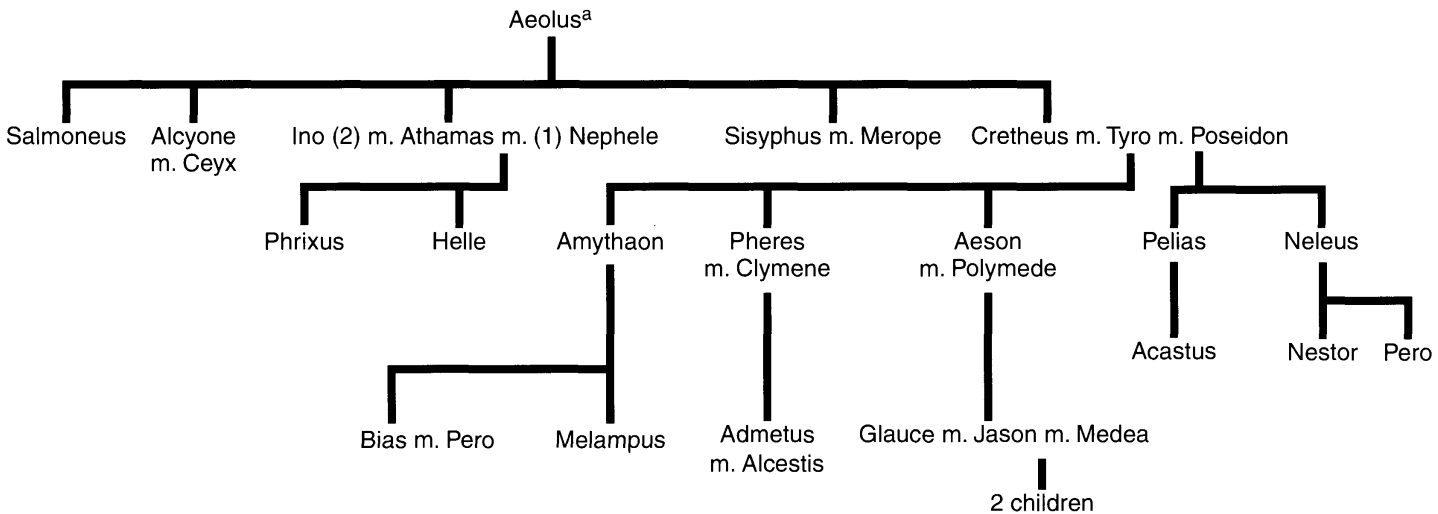
INTRODUCTION: THE MINYAE

The saga of the Argonauts covers much of the Greek world in its geographical scope and includes many of the leading Greek heroes of the age before the Trojan War. The crew of the *Argo* included the flower of Greece, descendants of gods and ancestors of Greek nobles. They are often referred to as Minyae, and among cities that claimed Minyan descent were Iolcus in Thessaly and Miletus in Ionia. Jason belonged to the ruling family of Iolcus, and the Euxine Sea (i.e., the Black Sea), where the main part of the saga takes place, was an area particularly colonized by the Milesians.

The name *Minyae* therefore tells us something about the origin of the saga. Homer calls the *Argo* "all men's concern," reflecting the adventures of the seamen of Mycenaean Greece. Later additions reflect the expansion of the Greeks into the Black Sea area from the eighth century onward. Folktale elements can be seen in the name *Aea* (which means no more than "land") that Homer uses for the country to which the *Argo* sailed, and its king, Aeëtes (Man of the Land). It is a mysterious land on the edge of the world, a suitable setting for a story in which magic and miracle play a big part. The folktale element can further be distinguished in the formal outline of the legend, where a hero is set a number of impossible tasks that he performs unscathed, helped by the local princess, whom he then marries.[1]

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

The saga concerns the quest for the Golden Fleece by Jason and the crew of the *Argo*. The Boeotian king Athamas took as his first wife Nephele, whose name means "cloud." After bearing Athamas two children, Phrixus and Helle, she returned to the sky. Athamas then married Ino, one of the daughters of Cadmus, who attempted to destroy her stepchildren. She also persuaded the Boeotian women to parch the seed grain so that when it was sown nothing grew. In the ensuing famine, Athamas sent to Delphi for advice, but Ino suborned the envoys to report that the god advised Athamas to sacrifice Phrixus if he wanted the famine to end. As he was about to perform the sacrifice, Nephele snatched



[a]This Aeolus was the son of Hellen and is to be distinguished from Aeolus, the king of the winds.

Figure 24.1. The Ancestry of Jason

Phrixus and Helle up into the sky and set them on a golden-fleeced ram that Hermes had given her. The ram carried them eastward through the heavens. Above the straits between Europe and Asia (the Dardanelles), Helle fell off and drowned, and the straits were called the Hellespont after her. Phrixus continued his flight and came to Colchis, at the eastern end of the Black Sea, where King Aeëtes (son of Helius and brother of Circe and Pasiphaë) received him with kindness and gave him his elder daughter, Chalciope, as wife. Phrixus sacrificed the ram to Zeus Phyxius (i.e., Zeus as god of escape) and gave the Golden Fleece to Aeëtes, who hung it up on an oak tree in a grove sacred to Ares, where it was guarded by a never-sleeping serpent. Phrixus himself lived on at Colchis, where he finally died; his four sons by Chalciope—Argus, Melas, Phrontis, and Cytisorus—play a minor part in the Argonauts' saga. The fleece, a golden treasure guarded by a dragon, became a goal for a hero's quest.

Jason and Pelias

Cretheus, brother of Athamas, was king of Iolcus. At his death his stepson Pelias (son of Poseidon and Tyro, wife of Cretheus) usurped the throne and deposed the rightful heir, Aeson, son of Cretheus and Tyro and father of Jason. Jason's mother, Polymede,[2] sent the boy away to the hills to be educated by the centaur Chiron and cared for by Chiron's mother, Philyra. After twenty years Jason returned to Iolcus to claim the throne that rightly belonged to his family. Pelias knew that he was fated to be killed by a descendant of Aeolus, and the Delphic oracle had warned him to "beware of the man with one sandal." He therefore realized that his fate was approaching when Jason appeared wearing one sandal.

On the way down from the hills, Jason had carried an old woman across the river Anaurus in full spate, losing one sandal as he tried to get a foothold in the mud. The old woman was the goddess Hera, who thereafter favored him, just as she remained hostile to Pelias, who had neglected to sacrifice to her. Pelias promised to yield the throne as soon as Jason brought him the Golden Fleece, which Phrixus, appearing to him in a dream, had ordered him to obtain. Whether for this reason or for some other, Jason readily undertook the task.

The Argonauts

In preparation for the expedition, the *Argo* was built, "which . . . first through the Euxine seas bore all the flower of Greece" (Spenser, *Faerie Queen* 2. 12. 44). Its name means "swift," and it was built by Argus, son of Arestor, with the help of Athena. In its bows she put a piece of wood made from an oak of Dodona (where there was an oracle of Zeus), which had the power of speech.

The crew came from all over Greece, motivated by the heroic quality of *arete* (Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 4. 185–188):

> Hera kindled all-persuading sweet desire in the sons of gods for the ship *Argo*, so that none should be left behind to nurse a life without danger at his mother's side, but rather that he should find even against death the fairest antidote in his own courage along with others of his age.

Lists of the names of the Argonauts vary, since the Greeks of later ages were eager to claim an Argonaut for an ancestor. Two heroes who figure prominently in all the lists, Orpheus and Heracles, have no place in the original story. The former is a post-Homeric figure, and the latter, as the most important of the Greek heroes, could hardly be left out of a saga that occurred in his own lifetime. He refused to accept the leadership, in favor of Jason, and he disappeared from the expedition before the *Argo* had even reached the Black Sea.

Of the fifty or so names included among the Argonauts certain groups stand out. These are the heroes from Thessaly, such as Jason, and those from the Peloponnese, such as Augeas, king of Elis; a third group consists of Meleager and other heroes who took part in the Calydonian boar hunt; a fourth includes the parents of Trojan War heroes, such as Peleus (father of Achilles), Telamon (father of Ajax Telamonius), Oïleus (father of Ajax the Less), and Nauplius (father of Palamedes).

Some of the Argonauts had special gifts. These were the seers Idmon and Mopsus; Castor and Polydeuces, excellent as horseman and boxer, respectively, with their later enemies, Idas and Lynceus, the latter of whom had such keen sight that he could see even beneath the earth; Periclymenus, son of Neleus, who could take whatever shape he liked in battle (this was Poseidon's gift); Euphemus, son of Poseidon, who could run so fast over the waves of the sea that his feet stayed dry; Zetes and Calaïs, the winged sons of Boreas; Argus, the skilled shipwright; and finally, the helmsman, Tiphys. Of these, only Polydeuces, Zetes, Calaïs, Argus, and Tiphys have any significant part in the legend as we now have it. Originally, the individual Argonauts must have used their gifts to help Jason perform his otherwise impossible tasks.

The Voyage to Colchis

Hypsipyle and the Lemnian Women

After leaving Iolcus, the Argonauts sailed to the island of Lemnos, where they found only women, led by their queen, Hypsipyle. Aphrodite had punished them for neglecting her worship and had made them unattractive to their husbands. The men therefore had taken Thracian concubines whom they had captured in war. In revenge, the Lemnian women murdered every male on the island, with the exception of the king, Thoas, who was son of Dionysus and father

of Hypsipyle. Hypsipyle first hid him in the temple of Dionysus and then put him in a chest in which he floated to the land of the Tauri (i.e., southern Russia) and there became a priest of Artemis. Meanwhile the Lemnian women received the Argonauts, who stayed on the island for a year. Among the many children born as a result of their stay were the twin sons of Jason and Hypsipyle, Euneos and Thoas (or Nebrophonus). After the departure of Jason, Hypsipyle's deception in saving her father Thoas was discovered and she was driven from the island. Eventually she was captured by pirates and sold into slavery, becoming the servant of Lycurgus, king of Nemea.

In Greece, Hypsipyle became the nurse of the child of Lycurgus, Opheltes (see p. 396). She was eventually brought back to Lemnos by her sons. As a mythological figure Hypsipyle is significant as the queen of a society from which males have been driven out and because of her connection with the founding of the Nemean Games in honor of Opheltes. The Roman epic poet Statius devoted a long episode of his *Thebaid* to her story, as did his contemporary Valerius Flaccus, in his epic *Argonautica.* Ovid made her a romantically deserted heroine in his *Heroides.*

Cyzicus and Cios

After touching at Samothrace, where they were initiated into the mysteries, the Argonauts sailed on to the Propontis and put in at Cyzicus, where the Doliones lived under King Cyzicus, who received them well. In return for this hospitality, Heracles killed the earthborn giants who lived nearby. The Argonauts were driven back to Cyzicus by contrary winds, and in a night battle (for the Doliones took them for night raiders) they killed the king. Next day they helped bury Cyzicus before sailing off again.

Their next port of call was Cios, farther eastward along the Asiatic shore of the Propontis, where they landed so that Heracles could replace his broken oar. Here Hylas was lost and Heracles left the expedition (see pp. 523–533).

Amycus

Next the Argonauts passed into the Euxine (the Black Sea) and came to the land of the Bebryces, a Bithynian tribe whose custom was to compel strangers to box with their king, Amycus, a son of Poseidon, who had never lost a boxing match. Polydeuces fought Amycus and killed him.

Phineus and the Harpies and the Symplegades

Next they came to Salmydessus on the Euxine shore of Thrace, where they were received by King Phineus, a blind prophet.[3] He was tormented by the Harpies, two winged monsters (their name means "the snatchers") who, every time a meal was set before him, swooped down upon it, snatched away most of the

food, and fouled the rest. When the Harpies next appeared, Zetes and Calaïs, the winged sons of Boreas, pursued them with drawn swords to the Strophades Islands, where Iris put an end to the chase by making the sons of Boreas return and the Harpies swear never to go near Phineus again. Phineus foretold the rest of the voyage to the Argonauts and forewarned them of its dangers. He told them of the Symplegades (Clashing Rocks), two huge rocks near the western end of the Black Sea that clashed together driven by the force of the winds. Nothing had ever yet passed between them, and it was fated that they should remain fixed once a ship had made the passage. Phineus advised the Argonauts to release a dove, and if it succeeded in flying between the rocks, then they themselves were to row hard between them as they recoiled. If it failed, they were to turn back. In the event the dove was successful, and the Argonauts, with the help of Athena (or Hera), got through before the rocks clashed for the last time, losing part of the ship's stern ornament. The Symplegades remained fixed, never to threaten seafarers again.[4]

The Voyage through the Euxine Sea

Not far along the Asiatic coast of the Euxine lived the Mariandyni, whose king, Lycus, received the Argonauts hospitably. Here Idmon was killed by a boar, and the helmsman, Tiphys, died. Nevertheless, with the Arcadian hero Ancaeus, son of Lycurgus, as the new helmsman, they sailed on past the land of the Amazons and that of the iron-working Chalybes and came to the Island of Ares, where the Stymphalian Birds (frightened away from Greece by Heracles in his sixth Labor) now lived. These they kept at bay by clashing their shields together. Here they also found Phrixus' four sons, shipwrecked during an attempted voyage from Colchis to Boeotia. They took them on board the *Argo* and found them of no little help when they reached Colchis. Finally, they sailed up the river Phasis to Colchis.

Jason at Colchis

Jason's Tasks

At Colchis, Aeëtes was prepared to let Jason take the fleece only if he first performed a series of impossible tasks. These were to yoke a pair of brazen-footed, fire-breathing bulls, the gift of Hephaestus to Aeëtes, and with them plow a large field and sow it with dragon's teeth, from which would spring up armed men, whom he would then have to kill.[5]

Medea's Role

Medea, Aeëtes' younger daughter, now enters the saga and brings to it elements of magic and folktale. Through the agency of Hera and Aphrodite, she fell in

love with Jason and agreed to help him at the request of Chalciope, mother of Argus (who had returned to Colchis with the Argonauts). She was herself priestess of Hecate, as skilled in magic as her aunt Circe. She gave Jason a magic ointment that would protect him from harm by fire or iron for the space of a day. So he plowed the field with the fire-breathing bulls, and he threw a stone among

Jason Is Disgorged by the Dragon that Guards the Golden Fleece. Athenian red-figure cup by Douris, ca. 470 B.C.; diameter $11\frac{3}{4}$ in. Athena (not Medea) watches the bearded dragon disgorge Jason. She holds an owl and wears the aegis. The fleece hangs on the tree in the background. There are no literary sources for this version of the myth. *(Museo Nazionale di Villa Guilia, Rome, Italy/Alinari/Art Resource, New York.)*

the armed men who sprang from the dragon's teeth to set them fighting one another. Then he took the fleece, with Medea's help, drugging the serpent with herbs that she had provided.

Euripides, however, in his tragedy *Medea*, gives Medea a larger part in performing the tasks and gaining the fleece. She, rather than Jason, is the dragon-slayer, as she reminds Jason (*Medea* 476–482):

> I saved you, as all the Greeks know who embarked with you on the ship *Argo*, when you were sent to master the fire-breathing bulls with yokes and sow the death-bringing field. I killed the serpent, which unsleeping guarded the golden fleece, twining its many coils around it, and I brought you the light of salvation.

In the vase-painting reproduced on page 579 Jason's part is even less heroic, as he hangs limply from the jaws of the serpent while Athena (not Medea) stands before him.

Ovid's Narrative

Ovid's account restores Jason's heroic stature. It begins the day after Medea's meeting with Jason at the shrine of Hecate (*Metamorphoses* 7. 100–158):

> The next dawn had put to flight the gleaming stars when the people assembled in Mars' sacred field and took their place on the higher ground. The king himself sat enthroned among his army, conspicuous by his purple robe and ivory scepter. The brazen-footed bulls puffed forth fire from their adamantine nostrils, and the grass burned at the touch of their breath. . . . Yet Jason faced them; with threatening look, they turned their awesome faces toward him as he came, their horns tipped with iron; with their cloven hooves they pounded the dusty earth and filled the place with their bellowing and clouds of smoke. The Argonauts were petrified with fear. On came Jason and felt not their fiery breath, so great was the power of [Medea's] drugs. He stroked their deep dewlaps with fearless hand and compelled them, driven beneath the yoke, to draw the plow's heavy weight and tear open the soil as yet unplowed. The Colchians were amazed, while the Argonauts shouted encouragement and strengthened Jason's spirits.
>
> Next he took the serpent's teeth in a bronze helmet and sowed them in the plowed field. The soil softened the seed, which had been smeared with strong poison, and the teeth grew and became new bodies. Just as a baby takes on human form in its mother's womb and inside its whole body grows in due proportion, only to issue into the outside world when it is fully formed, so, when the forms of men had been made in the womb of the pregnant earth, they rose from the mother-furrows, and, yet more miraculously, at their birth clashed their weapons.
>
> When the Greeks saw these warriors preparing to hurl their sharp spears at the head of the young Thessalian, their eyes and spirits were lowered by fear. Medea, too, who had made him safe from attack, grew pale when she saw so many enemies attacking the solitary young hero. . . . Jason threw a heavy rock into the middle of the enemy and turned their attack from himself to them: the

earthborn brothers killed each other and fell in civil war. The Greeks applauded and eagerly embraced the victor.

It remained yet to put to sleep with drugs the wakeful serpent. It was the fearsome guardian of the golden tree, a monster with a crest, three tongues, and curved teeth. This serpent Aeson's heroic son fed with a soporific herb and repeated thrice a charm that brought peaceful sleep. When sleep came upon those eyes that it had not visited before, Jason took the gold, and in the pride of his spoils, took her who had made possible his success, a second prize. Victorious he returned to the harbor of Iolcus with his wife.

Jason Takes the Golden Fleece. By Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640); oil on panel, 1636, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$ in. Jason jauntily passes by the statue of Mars [Ares], with the fleece draped over his left arm. He is dressed as a Roman soldier. Rubens follows the narrative of Hyginus, who said that Phrixus dedicated the fleece in the temple of Mars, rather than the narrative given here. Note the absence of Medea or Athena as Jason's helpers. *(Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.)*

The Return of the Argonauts

Pindar's Narrative

Ovid's narrative focuses upon Jason the hero, winner not only of the fleece, the prize of his quest, but also of the princess Medea. He set sail with her, pursued by the Colchians under the leadership of Medea's brother, Apsyrtus, whom he killed in an ambush near the mouth of the Danube.[6] Pindar gives the earliest continuous account of the capture of the fleece and the return journey. The poem is addressed to Arcesilas, king of Cyrene and winner of the chariot race at Delphi in 462 B.C.[7] Pindar's narrative begins after Jason has successfully completed plowing with the fire-breathing bulls (*Pythian Odes* 4. 239–254):

> His companions stretched out their welcoming hands to the valiant hero, and they crowned him with garlands of grass and congratulated him with honeyed words. Then [Aeëtes] the wonderful child of the Sun told him of the shining fleece, where the knives of Phrixus had stretched it out. And he did not expect that Jason would complete that labor. For the fleece lay in a thicket, the lair of a serpent, held in its fearsome jaws, and the serpent in thickness and length was greater than a fifty-oared ship which the blows of iron have built.
>
> He killed the grey-eyed spotted serpent, O Arcesilas, and he stole Medea with her connivance, and she caused the death of Pelias. And they came to the waves of Oceanus and the Red Sea and the nation of the women of Lemnos, who had killed their men. And there they showed their strength in physical contests with clothing for the prize, and there they lay together.

Pindar's narrative is brief and clear. Jason, as befits the hero of the quest, himself performed the final labor, took the prize, and returned home with the princess. Their journey took them to the ends of the earth (for the River of Ocean encircles the earth; see Figure 24.2, p. 585) and to the mysterious but unspecified "Red Sea," which in Pindar's time usually meant the Indian Ocean. Earlier in the poem, Medea had referred to the journey during which "relying on my counsel we carried the sea-ship on our shoulders for twelve days, hauling it up from Ocean, across the desert lands" (4. 26–28). Although the twelve-day portage appears to have taken place in Africa, Pindar seems rather to be describing a voyage whose details are set in a mythological landscape (indicated by the River of Ocean beyond the boundaries of the world) than in any particular lands. Lemnos is a recognizable place in the Greek world, and Pindar places the Lemnian episode during the return. He adds the celebration of the Lemnian Games, which evidently were part of the funerary ritual in honor of the dead men of Lemnos, with a cloak as the appropriate prize for a festival that marked also the resumption of marriage.

Apollonius' Narrative and the Marriage of Jason and Medea

Apollonius of Rhodes takes the Argonauts up the Danube, across to the head of the Adriatic, then up the mythical Eridanus River and across to the Rhone, down

which they sailed to the Mediterranean Sea. Here they sailed to the western coast of Italy, where they visited Circe (the aunt of Medea), who purified Jason and Medea from the pollution caused by Jason's murder of Apsyrtus. After this, they encountered many of the same dangers described by Odysseus—the Planctae, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Sirens.

Next they came to the land of the Phaeacians, still pursued by the Colchians. Medea appealed to Queen Arete for protection, and she and the king, Alcinoüs, agreed not to give Medea up if she were already married to Jason. That night they celebrated the marriage, and the Colchians gave up their pursuit. Resuming their journey, the Argonauts sailed to Libya, where they were stranded on the shoals of the Syrtes. They carried the *Argo* on their shoulders to Lake Tritonis (a twelve-day journey), past the garden of the Hesperides. On the way Mopsus was killed by a snake. From the lake, they made their way back to the Mediterranean, guided by the sea-god Triton.[8]

Talus

Another adventure took place off the coast of Crete. The island was guarded by the bronze giant Talus, who walked around it three times a day and kept strangers from landing by throwing rocks at them. His life depended on a membrane (or bronze nail) that closed the entrance to a vein above one ankle. If this were opened, the ichor (the divine equivalent of human blood) would flow out and he would die. The Argonauts caused this to happen and thus Talus perished.[9]

The End of the Journey

Finally the Argonauts reached Iolcus and there the saga (like the epic of Apollonius) ends. Jason handed the fleece over to Pelias, and he dedicated the *Argo* to Poseidon at the Isthmus of Corinth. Years later, he was struck on the head and killed by a piece of timber from its stern that fell upon him.

The geographical details of the return of the Argonauts are confused and largely fanciful. The time when the saga was taking its final form (i.e., in the archaic period, before the sixth century) was one of expansion and discovery in the Greek world, when Greeks traveled far to the east and west for trade and colonization, venturing as far as Russia and North Africa. The voyage of the *Argo* perhaps recalls actual voyages, but it is impossible to attempt to match details from Pindar and Apollonius with actual places.[10]

Jason and Medea in Greece

Iolcus

At Iolcus, Pelias refused to honor his pact with Jason, and Medea therefore contrived to cause his death. Making a display of her magic arts, she rejuvenated Jason's father, Aeson, by cutting him up and boiling him in a cauldron along

GEOGRAPHY AND MYTH

It is tempting to try to trace the journeys of the heroes of saga: Odysseus and Jason are prime tempters. The map given here shows diagrammatically how the contemporaries of Pindar saw their world. Neither Pindar nor Apollonius can be used as sources for geographical identification: their world is one of the literary imagination, even though real places are named in their poems. Archaeologists, however, have shown that there is some basis for the identification of Colchis with an area in modern Georgia, the territory that lies to the east of the Black Sea, occupied in antiquity by farmers and metal-workers at least since the third millennium B.C. Greek trading settlements have been found dating from about 550 B.C., that is, about a century before Pindar's poem. The mythological river Phasis is safely identified with the modern river Rioni, and the modern town of Vani was the most prosperous ancient city, corresponding to the mythical Colchis. Beyond these facts, and the fact that the area in Greek times was rich in gold, copper, and iron, there can be no certainty in making geographical identifications. The modern equivalent of gold is perhaps oil, for an oil pipeline is being built across Georgia from the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan to the Black Sea coast.

with magic herbs, and then rejuvenated an old ram as well. Persuaded by these examples, the daughters of Pelias tried to rejuvenate their father in the same way. But Medea did not give them the magic herbs, and their attempt led only to his death.

Corinth

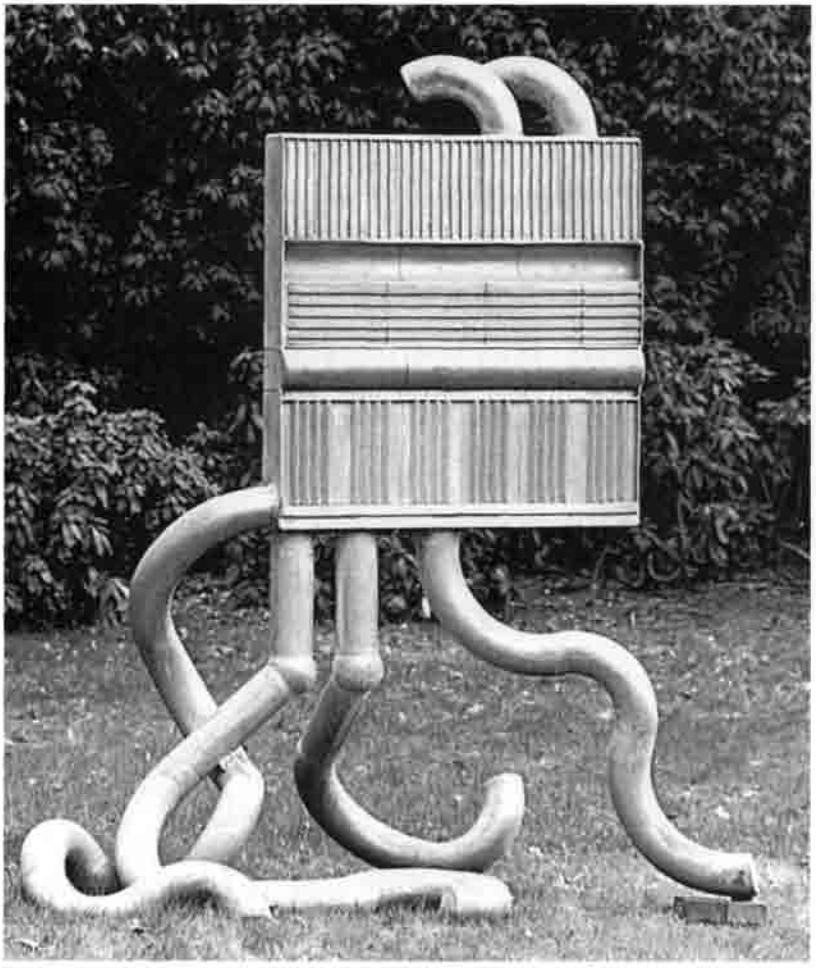
Thus Jason was revenged on Pelias, but he did not gain the throne of Iolcus; for being defiled by the murder of Pelias, he and Medea were driven out of the city by Acastus, son of Pelias. They went to Corinth, the setting for Euripides' tragedy *Medea.* The connection between Medea and Corinth was made as early as the eighth century by the Corinthian poet Eumelos. In his version, Aeëtes and his brother Aloeus were the sons of Helius and Antiope. Helius divided his lands between the brothers, so that Aloeus inherited Arcadia and Aeëtes received "Ephyra," which Eumelos identified with Corinth. Aeëtes then went to Colchis, leaving Corinth in the hands of a regent. Later the Corinthians summoned Medea from Iolcus to be their queen. Thus Jason became king of Corinth through his marriage with Medea, who meanwhile had resisted the advances of Zeus out of respect for Hera (who was especially worshiped at Corinth). As a reward, Hera promised to make Medea's children immortal. Medea therefore concealed her children in the sanctuary of Hera, believing that in this way she would make them immortal, but they died and were honored with a cult. Medea refers to this in her final speech to Jason in Euripides' tragedy (*Medea* 1378–1383):

Figure 24.2. Map of the World According to the Ideas of Hecataeus of Miletus (ca. 500 B.C.). The River of Ocean is assumed to run around the edge of the inhabited world, which is divided into Europe and Asia. (© *Laszlo Kubinyi, 1994.*)

> I shall bury them with my hand, carrying them into the sanctuary of Hera Akraia [Hera of the Acropolis], so that none of my enemies can violate them by digging up their graves. And I shall impose upon this land of Sisyphus [Corinth] a solemn feast and ritual for the future, in return for this impious murder.

The death of the children of Jason and Medea therefore was a central feature in the original myth.

Another variant, however, named Creon as king of Corinth and the enemy of Medea, who killed him and left her children in the sanctuary of Hera when she fled to Athens. They were killed by Creon's family, who said that Medea had killed them. This version was the foundation of Euripides' powerful drama,



Medea, by Eduardo Paolozzi (b. 1924). Welded aluminum, 1964; height 81 in. The machine parts threateningly imply the destructive power of the barbarian princess. The mythological title suggests an allegorical meaning for the work without precise narrative content. *(Courtesy of Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands.)*

in which Jason and Medea lived in Corinth as exiles from Iolcus. Jason divorced Medea to marry Glauce (also called Creusa), the daughter of King Creon. In revenge, Medea sent her two children with a robe and a crown as wedding gifts to Glauce. The magic ointment with which Medea had smeared the gifts burned Glauce and Creon to death. After this, Medea killed her children as a final act of vengeance against Jason and escaped to Athens in a chariot drawn by winged dragons provided by her grandfather Helius. In the final scene of the drama,

Medea Leaves Corinth in a Chariot Drawn by Dragons. South Italian krater, attributed to the Policoro Painter, ca. 400 B.C.; height 20¼ in. Medea, wearing oriental cap and dress, drives a chariot sent by the Sun, whose rays encircle her. Winged Furies look down on the human figures below—on the left, Jason railing at Medea, and on the right the children's tutor and Medea's nurse mourning over the bodies of the two children, which are draped across an altar. A spotted feline reacts energetically to the dragons. The painting represents the final scene of Euripides' *Medea.* *(The Medea Krater. Earthenware with slip decoration and added red, white, and yellow, late fifth–early fourth century B.C. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 91.1.)*

Medea appears in the chariot high above the stage holding the bodies of her murdered children, triumphing over Jason and foretelling his miserable end. Jason lived on at Corinth, and Medea was given asylum at Athens by King Aegeus.

Athens

While at Athens, Medea was said to have become the mother of Medus by Aegeus. Later she nearly caused Aegeus to poison his son Theseus (see p. 557). Failing in this, she fled from Athens to Persia, where Medus established the kingdom of Media. Medea herself eventually returned to Colchis, and the rest of her legend is lost in the ingenious fancies of individual authors.

Interpretations of the Saga

The Argonauts in Later Literature

The saga of Jason and the Argonauts has been filtered through literary interpretations as much as any other Greek saga.[11] It was known to Homer (who does not mention Medea), and it formed part of the epics of the eighth-century Corinthian poet Eumelos. In the third century B.C. it was the subject of the epic *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, and this was translated or adapted by more than one Roman epic poet. The unfinished *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, dating from the second half of the first century A.D., includes much of Apollonius' narrative, to which Valerius added episodes of his own, including the rescue of Hesione by Hercules and Telamon (see pp. 443 and 527). Statius, as we noted earlier, included a lengthy account of the legend of Hypsipyle in his *Thebaid.*

In drama, the *Medea* of Euripides has been a powerful influence, inspiring tragedies by Ovid (now lost), Seneca (which survives), and, in the twentieth century, Robinson Jeffers (*Medea*, 1946), to say nothing of many versions by French and German playwrights. It is one of the most frequently performed Greek tragedies in our contemporary theater. The saga appealed especially to the Victorians. William Morris' long narrative poem, *The Life and Death of Jason*, was published in 1867 and soon became popular. Its seventeen books cover the whole of Jason's saga, including the events in Corinth and his death. It owes as much, however, to Morris' feeling for medieval chivalry as to the classical epics, and Jason is a less ambiguous hero than he is in Apollonius or Euripides. Episodes from the saga were brilliantly narrated in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales* (1853) and Charles Kingsley's *The Heroes* (1855). These versions were written with a strong moral bias toward courage and adventure, and they are, as Michael Grant has happily described them, "brisk, antiseptic narratives . . . jolly good hero-worshipping yarns, without esoteric overtones or significances."[12]

The Hero's Quest

Jason's legend is better seen as a Quest using Propp's model. This view makes many of the folktale elements fall into a coherent structure. At the same time,

much of the saga goes back to the earliest stages of Greek mythology, not excepting Medea, whose status as the granddaughter of the Sun must once have been more important than her functions as a magician. By far the most powerful interpretation of her part in the saga is the tragedy of Euripides, produced at Athens in 431 B.C. While Euripides concentrates upon the psychology of Medea and explores the tensions in her relations with Jason, he also makes Medea into a quasi-divine being in the final scene, as she leaves in the chariot of the Sun. Medea is older (in terms of the development of the myth) and grander than the romantic heroine of Apollonius and Valerius Flaccus, and more formal than the driven, deserted, and clever heroine of Euripides. She and many of the other leading characters in the saga have attributes that point to elements in the myth that are both earlier and more significant than the quasi-historical tale of adventure that it has become.

Additional Reading

Jason and Medea in Euripides

This summary of Euripides' *Medea* with commentary centers around a translation of the three scenes in which Jason and Medea appear together. Euripides begins with one of his typical prologues (cf. the *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchae* in Chapters 10 and 13), with a monologue that provides essential background and sets the scene for the tragedy to follow. The very first line that the Nurse utters is fraught with foreboding: "How I wish that the ship *Argo* had never winged its way between the dark Clashing Rocks into the land of the Colchians." After they had come to Corinth, Jason and Medea and their two sons led a happy life, but now all is enmity between husband and wife. Jason has abandoned Medea and their children and married Creusa (also called Glauce), daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. Medea is beside herself with anguish and rage, and the Nurse is terrified at the thought of what Medea might do; she even fears for the safety of the children, whom Medea has come to loathe because of their father. In the following scene between the Nurse and the Tutor, we learn further that Creon is about to exile both Medea and her children from the city. Medea enters, lamenting, crying out that she wants to die and eventually winning over the Chorus, women of Corinth, to her side by appealing to their common plight as women, which includes the virtual impossibility of finding a good husband. Her appeal, beginning with the words (215) "Women of Corinth," is reminiscent of Phaedra's to the women of Troezen in the *Hippolytus* (p. 214) and is equally laden with issues that belong to fifth-century Athens as much as to Mycenaean Greece.

Creon enters, and his first outcry is to order Medea and her children to leave Corinth at once and go into exile. He is afraid of Medea's rage and her dire threats of terrible retaliation against the royal family, and, since he knows about her notorious skill in evil arts, he wants to assure, in particular, the safety of his daughter. We witness in the exchange that follows Medea's subtle guile, as she

cleverly manipulates Creon to soften, with assurances of his safety, and made sympathetic to her plight he yields to her plea that she remain for only one day. In Robinson Jeffers' paraphrase, Medea begs, "lend me this inch of time. . . ." [13] What possible harm could this unfortunate woman do in such a brief period?

When Creon leaves, Medea confides in the Chorus with brutal frankness. She tells them that she would never have fawned upon this man, unless she were plotting revenge, and he is a fool to have given her this one day to accomplish her revenge; and she openly reveals some possible courses her actions might take to murder with impunity Creon himself, his daughter, and her husband.

The next scene presents the first encounter between Medea and Jason (446–626):

JASON: Now is not the first time but many times before I have seen your fierce temper and how it is an evil, impossible to cope with. You could have stayed in Corinth and kept your home, if only you had easily submitted to the decisions of those in power, but instead, because of your unreasonable arguments you will be exiled from this land. It doesn't matter to me. Go on forever, if you like, telling everyone that Jason is the vilest of men. But for what you have said against the ruling family, consider it pure luck that you are being punished only with exile. I, to be sure, have always tried to assuage the fury of the outraged king but you never give up your stupidity, with your continual abuse of the royal family. And so you will be thrown out of this land.

Nevertheless, even after all this, I have not disowned those dear to me, and I have come to provide for your well-being, woman, so that you will not go into exile with the children, penniless and in need of anything. Exile brings in its train many hardships and indeed even if you hate me, I would not be able to think badly of you, ever.

MEDEA: O most vile human being in every way. These are the worst words that I can find with which to accost you verbally for your lack of manliness. You have come to me, you have come, even though you are most hateful to the gods, and not only to me and the entire human race. This is not courage nor even audacity to do wrong to dear ones and then look them in the face–this is shamelessness, a disease, the greatest of all the vices among human beings. Yet you did well to come here, for after I have told you how evil you are, my soul will be lightened and you will suffer pain because of what you hear.

From first things first I will begin what I have to say. I saved you, as all the Greeks know who embarked with you on the ship *Argo,* when you were sent to master the fire-breathing bulls with yokes and sow the death-bringing field. I killed the serpent, which unsleeping guarded the golden fleece, twining its many coils around it, and brought you the light of salvation. I myself betrayed my father and my home and came to Iolcus, below Mt. Pelion, with you, I too much in love but not too wise. And I murdered Pelias at the hands of his own daughters, in a most dreadful way to die, and ruined his home. After benefitting from all these things that I did, you, vilest of men, have betrayed me. You have taken a new wife, although children had been born to us. Indeed, if you were still childless, you might have been forgiven for desiring this second marriage. No

more is there trust in your oaths to me. I am not able to discern whether you think the gods you swore by then no longer still rule or that new divine ordinances are now to be followed among human beings, since you know full well that you have not been true to what you swore to me. Oh, my poor right hand, which you clasped so many times and my poor knees, how they were clutched for nothing by a base man, and how I have been cheated of my hopes.

Still I will share my dilemma with you as though you were a friend. What helpful solution can I expect from you? Nevertheless, I will do so, for having been asked what I should do, you will appear all the more vile. Where can I turn now? To the house of my father which I betrayed for you by coming to your fatherland or to the wretched daughters of Pelias? A fine reception I would receive in their home, I who killed their father. And so this is my predicament. I have made my loved ones at home hate me and, because of what I did for you, I have made enemies of those whom I should never have wronged. As a reward for these services, you have made me so happy, I am sure, in the eyes of many women. In you I possess an amazing and trustworthy husband, if I am thrown out of this land and wander an exile bereft of friends, with my children, alone and abandoned. A fine reproach for a newly married bridegroom that his children wander as beggars and I do too, the one who saved you.

O Zeus, who gave to human beings sure signs for gold that is counterfeit, why is there no birthmark stamped on the skin, by which one must recognize the man who is base?

CHORUS: Terrible is the rage and very difficult to heal, when loved ones battle it out.

JASON: I must, as it seems, not be a bad speaker but just like a trusty captain of a ship reef up the sails and ride out from under the stormy verbiage of your busy tongue. While you exaggerate excessively your kindness to me, I consider Aphrodite alone of gods and mortals to be the savior of my expedition. You do have a clever mind but it would be invidious to go through the story of how Eros with his unerring arrows compelled you to save my life. But I will not go into the many details. Where you did help me, however, you got more in return for my safety than you gave, as I will explain. First, you dwell in the land of Hellas instead of a barbarian country and you experience justice and the exercise of laws, without the mere gratification of force. All Hellenes have come to know that you are wise and you have gained a reputation. But if you were still living at the very end of the earth, you would be of no account. I would rather have the good fortune of an outstanding reputation than a house full of gold or the power to sing a more beautiful song than Orpheus.

So much then I say to you about my labors. After all you started this contest of words. With respect to your reproaches against me concerning my marriage into royalty, I will prove to you that in this first of all I was wise, next that I was not driven by sex and finally that I acted as a great friend to you and to my sons.

Now, now, Medea, be quiet.

After I moved here from the land of Iolcus, bringing with me the burden of many hopeless misfortunes, what luckier find could I have come upon than this: to marry the daughter of the king, even though I was an exile. It was not that I

loathed your bed, your accusation that so galls you, and I was not anxious to outrival those who have many children. The ones I have are enough and I have no complaint. But my purpose was to insure that we should live well, this is of the greatest importance, and not be in want, knowing full well that every one takes pains to avoid a friend who is poor. Also I wanted to bring up my children in a manner that was worthy of my house and to father brothers and sisters for the children born of you. I wanted to treat them all alike and, having established one unified family, I would be blessed with happiness. For you, why is there need of children? For me, it is profitable to benefit the ones I already have by means of those whom I hope will be born. I haven't planned badly, have I? Even you would agree, if only the marriage and matter of sex did not gall you so. You women think everything depends on sex! If any trouble happens on that score, you turn the best laid, finest plans into causes for hostility. Men ought to be able to beget children from some other source and the female gender should not exist. Then evil would not exist for human beings.

CHORUS: Jason, you have made your arguments look good but, nevertheless, to me, even if I am speaking against you point of view, you seem not to act justly in betraying your wife.

MEDEA: To be sure I am at odds with many people about many things. For to me the man who is unjust and born a clever speaker incurs the heaviest retribution, because overly confident that he can cover up his wrongs beautifully, he stops at nothing in his tongue-wagging arguments. But he is not as clever as all that. And so it is with you. Do not now become a specious liar and a devastating talker against me, for one word will lay you out. If you were not a coward, you should have persuaded me to agree before making this marriage, but not without saying a thing to your loved ones.

JASON: You would have given me splendid support, I imagine, if I had told you about the marriage, you, who not even now can bring yourself to abandon your overwhelming rage.

MEDEA: It was not this consideration that controlled your behavior but rather you thought that as you grew older a foreign marriage was likely to end badly.

JASON: You can be sure of this: it was not on account of a woman that I made this marriage with the daughter of a king, to which I am committed but, just as I said before, it was because of my wish to save you and to beget royal children as brothers and sisters to my own children, a bulwark for our family.

MEDEA: I do not wish to have a life of good fortune that causes pain nor a prosperity that galls my heart.

JASON: Do you not know how you must change your wish to show yourself the wiser? Wish that your best interests not appear painful and that you do not think that you are unfortunate when you are fortunate.

MEDEA: Continue with your hubris, since there is a refuge for you but I will go from this land, an abandoned exile.

JASON: You choose this yourself. Don't blame anyone else.

MEDEA: What did I do? I didn't take a wife, and betray you.

JASON: You uttered unholy curses against the royal house.

MEDEA: Yes, and I am a curse to your house too.

JASON: I will not debate the matter any further but, if you want to accept any

financial help for the children and yourself in your exile, say so. Know that I am ready to give with an ungrudging hand and to send introductions to my friends who will treat you well. You are crazy not to want to accept these offers, woman. If you forget your rage, you will have the more to gain.
MEDEA: I would never use the help of your friends and I would not accept anything from you, so don't give me anything. For gifts from an evil man hold no benefit.
JASON: Well then, I call the gods as witnesses that I want to do everything for you and the children. What is good for you isn't to your liking but you push away your friends by your audacity. Therefore you suffer all the more.
MEDEA: Go, for you must be possessed by longing for your newly won girl, being so long away from the palace. Play your role as bridegroom; Perhaps—and with god's help I will say this—you have made such a marriage that will end up to your grief.

Within the framework of a heroic myth, we witness a mundane and frighteningly real confrontation between a man and a woman, husband and wife, once a marriage is over. It is difficult to sympathize with Jason, arrogant and cold, who immediately takes the stance of the tolerant and benevolent provider, even though it is Medea, he claims, who is in the wrong. It is true, as we have learned from Creon himself, that Medea's rage and deadly threats against the royal family have been the reasons for her exile, but, in Medea's view, no other recourse is possible except vengeance against her enemies. When Medea lists her services to Jason, including betrayal of her family and country, murder, and even the slaying of the dragon, the eternal question immediately arises: should the continuation of a marriage be based upon debts from the past? Her appeal to earlier pledges and oaths perhaps has a greater religious and moral authority. It seems that her foreign marriage with Jason holds no legal validity for Jason in Corinth.

When Jason lists the blessings that he has conferred upon Medea in return, he presents us with one of the many fascinating issues raised by the play. He boasts that he has brought Medea to a system of justice in an enlightened land, far superior to that of her own barbarian country, where brute force is the rule. For Medea, no justice at all exists in a land where she can be treated with such injustice, and vengeful violence represents to her an earlier and better standard of morality.

One of the most heartless responses to Medea is Jason's claim that she had no choice in her actions; all that she did for him she did under the compulsion of an overwhelming love, inspired by Aphrodite and Eros. He never mentions any kind of affection that he might have once held for her. It is most rewarding to read the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes for his version of the events in Colchis and the beginnings of the relationship between Jason and Medea. In Book 3 Apollonius draws a justly admired portrait of Medea as a woman smitten by love, and he seems to take his cue from these lines of Jason in Euripides.

When Medea, at the court of Aeëtes, first set eyes on Jason an invisible Eros, crouched low at Jason's feet, shoots an arrow directly at Medea, and she is consumed with the flame of passion. Eventually, though, Jason too is touched by feelings of love.

In Euripides, Jason's rhetoric is that of the exemplary sophist, one who by clever and devious arguments can make or try to make the worse cause seem the better. To Medea all his words are specious and insincere, designed to disguise the fact that he is a base and cowardly man and his actions despicable. But at least some of his arguments may be true and very understandable, however morally dubious and unforgivable. Despite all of Medea's help, Jason did not realize his ultimate goal, to become the king of Iolcus. The murder of Pelias, orchestrated by Medea, failed in its purpose and Jason had to flee with Medea to Corinth. Now, his days of glory past, his shattered hopes inspire a desperate ambition. As he explains, his marriage into the royal family is calculated and pragmatic, his golden opportunity, a last chance for power and success. Less credible may be his contentions that his actions are not motivated by passion (the beautiful young princess holds no sexual attraction for him) and that his plans were designed to help Medea and the children; yet, apparently he had not expected them to be exiled and perhaps he did have in mind a prosperous future in which they might be included. Medea is not above sophistry herself: she claims that Jason has left them destitute, while at the same time refusing to accept the liberal help that he offers.

To continue with Euripides, Aegeus, the king of Athens, arrives in Corinth (a lucky coincidence that does not seem too contrived in the momentum of performance). He has been to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi to inquire about a cure for his inability to beget children and is on his way to consult with Pittheus, king of Troezen, about the response before he returns home. Medea tells Aegeus about her husband's cruel betrayal and her imminent exile and makes him feel pity toward her plight and critical of Jason's behavior. She begs Aegeus to receive her into his house in Athens as a suppliant, never to give her over to her enemies in pursuit, and she in return will, through her knowledge of medicines, cure him of his childlessness.[14] Aegeus agrees to this exchange of favors first because of the gods (her salvation is a just cause) and then because of her benefit to him. Medea, however, must leave Corinth by her own devices because Aegeus as a guest there does not want to offend his hosts by interfering. If Medea does reach Athens, Aegeus promises to protect her, since he is a just king. At Medea's insistence, he swears a solemn oath by Earth, the sacred light of Helius, and all the gods that he will do what he has promised.

Once again Medea has duped a king. Now she has made her escape secure, eliciting a safe refuge from Aegeus, who is ignorant of what she is planning to do. It may be that Euripides ironically depicts his Athens, so renowned in myth and drama for being a righteous champion of the oppressed, as the deceived protector of a murderer, whose victims include her own children.

Medea now exults before the Chorus, calling upon Zeus, the justice of Zeus, and the light of the Sun in her victory over her enemies. She goes on boldly to reveal fully the exact details of her plans for what she in actual fact will accomplish. The laughter of one's enemies is intolerable; they must pay. We learn as well, amidst her anguished groans, her chilling decision to kill her children. Has the realization of Aegeus' desperation over his childlessness steeled her for the decision to commit this atrocity? Jason, with god's help, will never see alive his children born by her, and he will never have other children by his new bride. Medea claims she would never want to be considered weak, passive, or base. No, just the opposite, she, like those whose life is most renowned, is hurtful to enemies and kindly to friends. Among her enemies now, it seems, are her children by Jason. And so she begins her plans for destruction by sending the Nurse to summon Jason, and she artfully feigns reconciliation in this second scene between the two of them (866–975):

JASON: I have come at your command. For even though you bear ill will, I would still not fail to come, but I will hear you out. What is it now that you want from me, woman?

MEDEA: Jason, I beg you to forgive what I have said. It is only fair that you bear with my rages now, since many have been the acts of love between us in the past. I have argued the case with myself and am full of self-reproach. "Stubborn fool, why am I so insane and hostile to those who are making good plans and why do I persist in my enmity against the rulers of this land and against my husband, who is doing for us what is most advantageous by marrying a princess and begetting children who will be as brothers and sisters to my own. Will I not cease from my anger? What is wrong with me, the gods are providing for me well. I have children and I know that we are being exiled from this land and are in need of friends." I mulled over these considerations and realized my great lack of foresight and my useless rage. And so now I applaud and think that you are most wise and reasonable to take on this marriage for us. I am the foolish one. I ought to share in your plans, join you in carrying them out, stand by our nuptial bed, and take joy in my support of your marriage. But we women are what we are, I don't say evil, but just women. You should not imitate our nature or respond to our childishness with childishness. I give in and admit that I was not thinking right then, but now I have come to a better understanding of this situation.

O children, children, here, come out of the house, come out. Embrace your father, greet your father with me, and along with your mother be reconciled and turn from our former enmity against a loved one. We have made peace and our anger has given way. Take his right hand. Alas for me when I think about any of the possible hidden misfortunes in store. O my children, will you stretch out your dear hands so, throughout a long life? Poor me, how prone to weep and full of fear. Now that I have at long last ended the quarrel with your father, I have drenched your tender faces with my tears.

CHORUS: Fresh tears have started in my eyes too. May the present evil not proceed any further and increase.

JASON: I approve, woman, of all this and I do not blame your former hostility. It is to be expected that women become enraged when a husband secretly makes a deal for a marriage of a different sort. But your heart has changed for the better and you have come to recognize the winning plan. This is the behavior of a reasonable woman.

For you, children, your father, thoughtful and concerned, has provided great security, with the help of the gods. For I believe that you with your new brothers and sisters will be foremost in this land of Corinth in time to come. Only you must grow to manhood. Both your father and whatever god is kindly will take care of the rest. May I see you coming to young manhood, strong and victorious over my enemies.

You there, Medea, moist with fresh tears. Why do you turn away, so pale? Why are you not happy to hear what I have been saying?

MEDEA: It is nothing. I was thinking about these children here.

JASON: Bear up now, for I will take care of them.

MEDEA: I will bear up. I will not distrust your words but a woman is by nature feminine and prone to tears.

JASON: Why, then, do you cry over these children too much?

MEDEA: I gave birth to them. When you prayed that the children might live, I wondered if this would happen and pity overwhelmed me.

But I have told you only some of the reasons for you having to come to talk to me and now I will mention the others. Since the rulers of this land have decided to banish me, this is the best thing for me too, I know full well, not to live here and be in your way or theirs since I seem to be a menace to the royal house. I, for my part, am resigned to go into exile, but the children, beg Creon that they not be exiled too so that they may be brought up by your hand.

JASON: I don't know if I can persuade him, but I will try.

MEDEA: Then you beg your wife to ask her father not to exile the children.

JASON: Certainly, I'll do it and I think I will persuade her.

MEDEA: If she is a woman like the rest, you will, and I will help you in this. I will send her gifts, which I know are by far the most beautiful of any on this earth today, an exquisite robe and a diadem of gold, and the children will bring them. But one of the servants here must bring them out as quickly as possible. Your bride will be blessed by happiness forever, since she has found you, the best of men, to be her husband and been given this treasure, which Helius, father of my father, gave to his descendants.

Take these bridal gifts, children, into your hands, carry them, and give them to the princess, the happy bride. Certainly she will accept these gifts with which she can find no fault.

JASON: O foolish woman, why do you empty your hands of these things? Do you think the royal household is in need of fine robes, or gold; do you really think so? Keep these things; do not give them away. For if my wife prizes me at all, she will prefer to oblige me rather than accept treasures, I am quite sure.

MEDEA: No, you must not dissuade me. They say gifts persuade even the gods and for mortals gold is more powerful than a thousand words. Divine luck is hers; now god blesses her good fortune. She is young and a princess. I would give my life and not only gold to repeal the exile of my children.

But children, when you both have entered the rich palace, entreat the new bride of your father, my mistress, and beg her that you not be banished from this land. Give here these treasures and, most important of all, she must accept these gifts into her own hand.

So go quickly as possible! May you succeed and come back to your mother, good messengers of what she is longing to hear.

Pompous Jason is fooled by obsequious flattery into believing Medea has accepted the wisdom of his actions. She fully understands how to play upon the foibles of his character and make him completely blind to the treachery in hers, which he fails even to suspect despite his knowledge of their past. The scene confirms Jason's love for his sons, and there is an ominous irony in Medea's tears, which he does not understand.

There follows a terrifying scene between Medea and her blameless children, exposing her pain and agonized indecision in the face of their loving tenderness. Then comes the return of the messenger from the palace who describes for an exultant Medea, relishing every exquisite detail, the horrifying deaths of the bride Creusa and her father Creon. Convinced by Jason, the princess accepted the beautiful gifts from the children. As the poisoned robe and diadem consumed her, her father rushed to save her but he became fused in her struggles to escape and they died in agony together. With this news of her success, Medea decides with finality that her children (who will be killed anyway, she assumes, because of what she has done) must die by her own hand. We hear their piteous cries from within, as Medea kills them with a sword.

Upon the deaths of Creusa and Creon, Jason rushes to confront Medea and the play ends with this final confrontation (1291–1414):

JASON: You women standing near the door, is she still inside the house, Medea, the one who has done such terrible things, or has she made her escape in flight? To be sure, she will have to hide in the depths of the earth or soar aloft on wings to the heavens above, if she is to avoid paying retribution to the royal house. Does she imagine that she will flee from here unpunished for having killed the sovereigns of this land? Still I am not as concerned about her as I am about my children. Those whom she has wronged will take care of her punishment but I have come to save the life of my sons so that the next of kin may do them no harm by exacting vengeance for the unholy crime committed by their mother.

CHORUS: Jason, poor man, if you knew the depths of your misfortune, you would not have spoken these words.

JASON: What do you mean? Can it be that she wants to kill me too?

CHORUS: Your children are dead, murdered by their mother.

JASON: Woe is me! What are you saying? Woman, how you have destroyed me.

CHORUS: You must understand that your children are no longer alive.

JASON: Where has she killed them, within the house or outside?

CHORUS: Open the doors and you will see the slaughter of your sons.

JASON: Quickly, servants, unlock the doors and open them up so that I may see this two-fold evil, my dead sons and her, their killer, whom I will kill in just retribution.
MEDEA: Why do you rush at the doors and attempt to unlock them in order to find the corpses and their murderer? Stop your efforts. If there is anything you want of me, say what it is that you wish, but you will never be able to touch me. Helius, the father of my father, has given me this chariot, a defense against the hand of an enemy.
JASON: O hatred personified, most detestable abomination to the gods, to me, and to the whole race of human beings. You who gave them birth brought yourself to drive a sword into your own children and kill them and destroy me too by making me childless. Having done this, you still look upon the sun and the earth, even though you dared this most impious deed. May you die! Now I am sane; but then I was insane when I brought you out of a barbarian land from your house to a home among the Hellenes, you, a great evil, the betrayer of your father and the country that nourished you. The gods have brought down upon me the avenging spirit that should have been meant for you, for it was you who killed your brother at the hearth before you even set foot on the *Argo*, my ship with its beautiful prow. You began with actions like these. Now after you had married a man like me and borne me children, you murdered them because of sex and jealousy. There are no women in Hellas who would ever dare such a thing. Instead of one of them, I preferred to marry you, a hateful union and ruinous for me, you, a lioness, not a woman, more savage in nature than Scylla in her Tuscan waters. But I would not be able to sting you, however endless my reproaches, since you have such an inbred brazen hostility. Go to perdition, evildoer, child-killer! All I have left is to bewail my ill-fate.

From my new bride and marriage I will not derive any joy and benefit and as for my boys whom I raised, I will not be able to speak to them again alive but I have lost them.
MEDEA: I would have gone on at length to respond to these words of yours, if Zeus, the father, did not understand what I did for you and what you did to me. You were not about to spend a happy life laughing at me after you had dishonored our bed, nor were the princess and Creon, who gave her to you in marriage, about to throw me out of this land, with impunity. And so call me a lioness if you wish and Scylla who lives in the Tuscan sea. I have stung you in the heart, as I had to do.
JASON: You yourself also feel the pain and share in my misfortune.
MEDEA: Only too true, but the pain is soothed if you cannot laugh at me.
JASON: O my children, fated with such a wicked mother!
MEDEA: O my sons, you were destroyed by your father's sick treachery!
JASON: Now then, it was not my hand that killed them.
MEDEA: No, it was your hubris and your newly arranged marriage.
JASON: Do you really believe it right to kill them, just because of a marriage?
MEDEA: Do you really think that this painful insult is trivial to your wife?
JASON: To a wife who is sensible, but to you everything is vile.
MEDEA: These children are no more. This will sting you.
JASON: These children are alive, alas, spirits of vengeance down upon your head.

MEDEA: The gods know who began this suffering.
JASON: They know, to be sure, your hateful mind and heart.
MEDEA: Go ahead and hate! I loathe your bitter, barking voice.
JASON: As I do yours. Our separation is only too easy.
MEDEA: How so? What shall I do? For I too want it desperately.
JASON: Let me bury these corpses and mourn over them.
MEDEA: Certainly not! I will bury them by my own hand, bringing them to the sanctuary of Hera Akraia in Corinth, so that no one of my enemies will violate their graves by tearing them up. In this Corinthian land of Sisyphus I will institute a holy festival and religious rites forevermore, in expiation for this impious murder. I myself will go to Athens in the land of Erechtheus to live with Aegeus, son of Pandion. But you, as is fitting for a base coward, will die an unheroic death, struck on the head by a piece of your *Argo*, having witnessed the bitter end of my marriage to you.
JASON: May the avenging Fury of the murdered children destroy you, and also Justice, avenger of blood-guilt.
MEDEA: What god or divine spirit will hear you, false liar, and betrayer of oaths.
JASON: Oh, alas, you polluted murderess of children!
MEDEA: Go home and bury your wife.
JASON: I am going, bereft of my two sons.
MEDEA: Your mourning has not really begun yet, old age is left for you to grieve.
JASON: O children, so very dear!
MEDEA: To their mother, not you.
JASON: And yet you killed them.
MEDEA: Yes, to cause you pain.
JASON: Oh, poor wretch that I am, how I long to embrace my children and kiss their dear lips.
MEDEA: Now you speak to them, now you greet them with love, before you rejected them.
JASON: By the gods, let me touch the soft and gentle bodies of my sons.
MEDEA: That is impossible. You ask in vain.
JASON: Zeus, do you hear all this? How I am driven away, the treatment I suffer from this polluted, child-slaying lioness. But insofar as I have the power and am able, I offer up my lament and call upon the gods to witness how you killed my sons and prevented me from touching them and burying their bodies. How I wish that I had never begotten them to see them dead by your hand.

Poor Jason! He had approved when Medea killed more than once on his behalf; now true recognition has come at last (but too late) that she is a murderess. For Medea, her hatred of Jason and the compulsion to cause him the ultimate pain are more powerful than her love for her children and her own suffering wrought by their murder. How unbearable for us is the slaughter of sweet, young innocence to satisfy cruel, selfish, and ruthless passions. Both Medea and Jason are responsible for the tragedy, but Medea's claim that Jason, not she, is the real perpetrator must surely be the ultimate sophistry of all! In this horrifying

denouement, Euripides' masterful use of the deus ex machina illuminates the profundity of his art. It is Medea herself who acts as the deus ex machina, the protagonist integral to the whole plot who provides its resolution from without (not unlike Dionysus in the *Bacchae*). When Medea appears untouchable, above Jason in the chariot sent by her grandfather Helius, she becomes transformed and takes on the attributes of a primordial deity who has with divine impunity meted out the cruel and terrible vendetta of an older order of justice.

No other play illustrates more succinctly how our reactions to a work of art are inevitably determined by who we are, what we believe, and what we have experienced. Its ruthless delineation of character and motivation and the relentless power of its emotional and cathartic impact never fail to elicit the most conflicting judgments and vehement interpretations; the arguments will surely go on forever.

Select Bibliography

Clauss, James J., and Sara Iles Johnston, eds. *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Pucci, Pietro. *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Romey, K. M. "Land of the Golden Fleece." *Archaeology* 54.2 (2001), pp. 28–31.

NOTES

1. Sources for the saga are the Greek epic *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes (third century B.C.) and the Latin epic *Argonautica* by Valerius Flaccus (late first century A.D.). Pindar's complex fourth *Nemean Ode* (ca. 460 B.C.) is the most poetic account, and Ovid (early first century A.D.) has a brief narrative in Book 7 of the *Metamorphoses*. Graham Anderson, *Fairytale in the Ancient World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 72–82, analyzes the fairytale motifs in the story.
2. Her name is also given as Alcimede or Amphinome.
3. He was the son of Poseidon and the husband of Cleopatra, daughter of Boreas. Different reasons are given for his blindness.
4. Clashing rocks called *Planctae* (Wanderers) appear in the Argonauts' return voyage and in the *Odyssey*. Herodotus calls them *Cyaneae* (Dark-rocks).
5. The teeth came from the Theban dragon killed by Cadmus (see p. 378), and had been given to Aeëtes by Athena.
6. Apollodorus has Medea take Apsyrtus on the *Argo* and delay the pursuers by cutting him up and throwing his limbs piecemeal into the sea.
7. The earliest epic narratives of the saga were part of the *Corinthiaka* and *Naupaktika* of the Corinthian poet Eumelos (ca. 730 B.C.). Only a few lines survive.
8. Triton gave a clod of earth to the Argonaut Euphemus as a token that his descendants would rule in Libya. From it grew the island of Thera, from which eventually the Greek colony of Cyrene was founded in Libya by the descendants of Euphemus.
9. There are many different accounts of the origin, functions, and death of Talus.
10. See Janet R. Bacon, *The Voyage of the Argo* (London: Methuen, 1925), Chapter 9. For

an attempt to retrace the journey, see T. Severin, *The Jason Voyage: The Quest for the Golden Fleece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

11. For a discussion of some literary and artistic interpretations, see James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston, eds., *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
12. Michael Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962; New York: Mentor Books, 1964), p. 302 of the London edition. A modern verse epic is by John Gardner, *Jason and Medeia* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973).
13. Robinson Jeffers, *Medea* (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 25.
14. For the problem in reconciling the oracle received by Aegeus with Medea's promise to cure him of childlessness, see p. 355 with note 14, on p. 571.

CHAPTER

25

MYTHS OF LOCAL HEROES AND HEROINES

Every district in the Greek world had its local heroes and heroines, whose legends were often associated with local cults. Some of these became famous throughout Greece, for example, Theseus of Athens and Bellerophon of Corinth. Some were important local heroes who are known for their spectacular punishments, like Ixion of Thessaly and Sisyphus of Corinth. Some, like Melampus of Thessaly, attracted folktales and cult practices that spread their fame to other areas. Some, like Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe, have become famous because their legend has been preserved by a master storyteller like Ovid. In this chapter we discuss some of the legends that are associated with particular localities.

THESSALY

IXION

Pindar tells the myth of Ixion, king of the Lapiths, son of Phlegyas (*Pythian Odes* 2. 21–48):

They say that Ixion, upon the winged wheel that rolls in every direction, by the orders of the gods says this to mortals: "pay back the one who does you good with gentle recompense." He learned this clearly. For he obtained a sweet life among the children of Cronus, yet he did not long enjoy happiness. For with mad thoughts he loved Hera, whom the bed of Zeus with its many pleasures had as his portion. But Pride urged him on to overbearing folly, and soon the man obtained a special woe, suffering what was reasonable. Two crimes bring him lasting labor: the first, because he was the first hero to shed kindred blood amongst mortals, not without clever planning; the second, that he made trial of the wife of Zeus in the deeply hidden marriage chamber. But his unlawful passion cast him into overwhelming evil when he approached the bed, since he lay beside a cloud, ignorant man, a sweet deception. For in appearance it was like the daughter of Cronus, the greatest of the daughters of the son of Uranus. The hands of Zeus put it there to deceive him, a beautiful cause of suffering. And he accomplished his own destruction, bound to the four spokes. Cast down in ineluctable fetters he proclaims his message to all. To him she [i.e., the cloud, *Nephele*] bore a monstrous child, alone, without the Graces, a solitary child that

had no honor amongst human beings nor in the homes of the gods. This she nursed and named it Centaurus. And it mated with the mares in Magnesia, in the foothills of Pelion, and from them sprung a wondrous host, like both parents, below like their mother, above like their father.

We have already encountered Ixion as a sinner being punished in the Underworld (p. 345). Originally his punishment was in the sky. He was the first to shed kindred blood. He invited his father-in-law Eïoneus to come and collect the price that Ixion was to pay for his bride, Dia. Eïoneus came, but fell into a pit of burning coals that Ixion had dug and camouflaged. Since this was a new crime, no mortal was able to purify Ixion, and Zeus himself purified him, receiving him as a guest at his own hearth. Yet Ixion repaid him with a second crime, the attempt on Hera. Pindar describes the deception practiced by Zeus and the punishment of Ixion, bound to the wheel.

Centaurs and Lapiths

The cloud (Nephele) that Ixion had impregnated gave birth to the monster Centaurus, which mated with the mares that grazed the slopes of Mt. Pelion and became the father of the Centaurs, creatures with a human head and torso and the legs and body of a horse. The most famous centaur was Chiron, who differs from the others in that he was wise and gentle, skilled in medicine and music.[1] Pindar calls him the son of Cronus and the nymph Philyra. The other centaurs are generally portrayed as violent beings, and their best-known legend is that of their fight with the Thessalian tribe of the Lapiths.

The Lapith chieftain Pirithoüs was the son of Ixion, and the centaurs were invited to his wedding. At the feast they got drunk and attempted to carry off the bride, Hippodamia, and the other Lapith women. The violent scene was frequently represented in Greek art, for example, in the west pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia and in the metopes of the Parthenon at Athens. The battle is described at length in the twelfth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses.*

Another Lapith was Caeneus. Born a girl, Caenis, she was seduced by Poseidon, who then granted her anything she wanted. She asked to be turned into a man and to become invulnerable. As a man, Caeneus set up his spear and ordered people to worship it. This impiety led Zeus to bring about his death. During the battle at the wedding of Pirithoüs and Hippodamia he was attacked by the centaurs, who buried him under the enormous pile of tree trunks that they hurled at him. Either his body was driven down into the Underworld by their weight or else a yellow-winged bird emerged from the pile, which the seer Mopsus announced to be Caeneus transformed.

Peleus

On the southern border of Thessaly lies Phthia, and its prince was Peleus, the father of Achilles. He was the son of Aeacus, king of Aegina, and brother of Telamon. For killing his half-brother Phocus, he had to leave Aegina and came

Deïdamia and Eurytion. Marble group from the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, ca. 460 B.C. The wife of Pirithoüs, Hippodamia (or Deïdamia) fights off the drunken centaur, Eurytion, at her wedding feast. This is the principal group to the viewer's left of Apollo, the central figure (see p. 246). *(Olympia, Museum.)*

to Eurytion of Phthia, who purified him and gave him part of his kingdom. Peleus accompanied Eurytion on the Calydonian boar hunt (see pp. 608–612) and accidentally killed him with a javelin intended for the boar. He went into exile again, and was purified by Acastus, son of Pelias and king of Iolcus.

Now the wife of Acastus, Astydamia, fell in love with Peleus; and when he refused her advances, she accused him before her husband of trying to seduce her.[2] Rather than kill his guest, Acastus took him hunting on Mt. Pelion, where he left him asleep, but not before hiding his sword (a gift from Hephaestus) in a pile of dung. Peleus awoke to find himself surrounded by wild animals and centaurs, who would have killed him had not Chiron protected him and given him back his sword.[3]

When Zeus avoided a union with Thetis, whose son was destined to be greater than his father (see pp. 90 and 147), she was given to Peleus because of his virtue. The wedding feast was celebrated on Mt. Pelion, and all the gods and goddesses came as guests. With them came Eris (Discord) as an uninvited guest, bringing the apple that eventually led to the judgment of Paris and the Trojan War. Peleus returned to Phthia where he became the father of Achilles. Thetis soon left Peleus, angry because he interrupted her while she was making Achilles immortal.[4]

After the death of Achilles, Peleus defended Andromache at Delphi against Orestes and Hermione, who had killed his grandson Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. At the end of Euripides' tragedy *Andromache,* Thetis reappears and promises Peleus immortality and eternal reunion with her in her ocean dwelling.

Salmoneus

A group of Thessalian stories is associated with the family of Aeolus (see Figure 24.1, p. 574). Salmoneus, a son of Aeolus, left Thessaly and founded Salmone in Elis. He dressed himself as Zeus and imitated the god's thunder and lightning by driving in a chariot with brazen vessels attached to it and hurling lighted torches until Zeus killed him with his thunderbolt. Vergil describes his crime and fate (*Aeneid* 6. 585–594):

> I saw Salmoneus also being cruelly punished, who imitated the flames of Jupiter and the thunder of Olympus. He drove arrogantly through the Greek states and the city in the middle of Elis, riding in a chariot drawn by four horses, and he demanded that he be honored like a god. He was mad, because he tried to imitate the storm-clouds and the lightning that cannot be imitated with bronze and the clatter of horses' hooves. But Jupiter, all-powerful, hurled his thunderbolt through the thick clouds and cast him headlong down with a violent whirlwind.

Ceyx and Alcyone

Ceyx, king of Trachis and son of Eosphoros (Lucifer, the Morning Star), and his wife Alcyone, daughter of Aeolus, called themselves Zeus and Hera. They were

punished by being turned into sea-birds. In Ovid, however, they are romantic lovers. Ceyx left Trachis on a sea voyage and drowned during a storm. Alcyone, who had been left in Trachis, learned of her husband's death in a dream. She found his corpse washed up on the shore and in her grief she became a sea-bird. As she flew by the corpse and touched it, it came to life and became a bird. For seven days each winter Aeolus forbids the winds to blow while the halcyon (*alcyone*) sits on the eggs in her nest as it floats upon the waves.

Tyro

Tyro, daughter of Salmoneus, was loved by Poseidon, who disguised himself as the Thessalian river Enipeus (Homer, *Odyssey* 11. 245):

> In the form of Enipeus did the Earthshaker lie by her at the mouth of the eddying river. About them rose a crested wave, mountainous in size, which hid both god and mortal woman.

The children born of this union were twins, Neleus and Pelias. Pelias became king of Iolcus, while Neleus founded Pylos (in Messene), which was sacked by Heracles. Neleus and all his sons, save only Nestor, were killed.[5] Tyro later married her uncle Cretheus, the founder and king of Iolcus, and by him she became the mother of Aeson, Pheres, and Amythaon. Aeson was the father of Jason, and Pheres, founder of Pherae, was the father of Admetus, husband of Alcestis. In order to marry Alcestis, Admetus had to perform the task of harnessing a lion and a boar together to a chariot.[6]

Bias and Melampus

The children of Amythaon were Bias and Melampus (see Figure 24.1, p. 574). Melampus was a seer with the power of understanding the speech of animals. He had honored a pair of snakes killed by his servants by burning their bodies and rearing their young, who later licked his ears and so enabled him to understand the tongues of animals and birds, and from them know what was going to happen.

Bias was a suitor for the hand of Pero, daughter of Neleus, for whom the bride-price was the cattle of Phylacus, the king of Phylace (in Phthia). He appealed to Melampus for help, and Melampus agreed to get the cattle, even though he knew he would have to spend a year in prison at Phylace. The cattle were guarded by a monstrous dog, and Melampus was caught in the act of stealing them and imprisoned. After nearly a year, he heard two woodworms saying to each other that they had very nearly finished gnawing through the roof-beams of the cell. He insisted on being moved to another cell, and shortly afterward the first cell collapsed. Phylacus then set Melampus free and asked him how to cure the impotence of his son Iphiclus. Melampus agreed to tell him

on condition that he be given the cattle. He sacrificed a pair of bulls, and from a vulture that was feeding on their flesh, he learned that Iphiclus' debility was the result of being frightened as a child while watching his father gelding some rams. On that occasion, Phylacus had stuck the knife, still bloody, into an oak tree, and the tree's bark by now covered it over. If it could be found and the rust from its blade scraped off and put in Iphiclus' drink for ten days, his impotence would cease. All this came to pass and Iphiclus became the father of two sons, Podarces and Protesilaüs. Melampus was given the cattle, which he drove back to Pylos and handed over to Neleus. In return he got Pero and gave her to Bias.

The myth of Melampus is like the tenth Labor of Heracles. He must bring back cattle from a distant place guarded, like Geryon's Erythia or Hades itself, by a dog. Like Heracles, Melampus is the bringer of cattle and even the conqueror of death itself.[7]

Other legends of Melampus are located in the Peloponnese. According to Herodotus (2. 49), he introduced the rituals of Dionysus to Greece. At Tiryns the daughters of King Proetus resisted Dionysus, who caused them to rush over the countryside, leaving their homes and killing their children. In return for half of the kingdom, Melampus cured the madness of the daughters of Proetus by joining a group of strong young men in performing a kind of war dance, although one daughter, Iphinoë, died during the pursuit. This myth was connected with the festival of the Agriania, which involved a ritual pursuit of women by night and a return the next day to the normal order of society. It was celebrated at Orchomenus and at many other places in Greece.

Amphiaraüs, a seer and one of the Seven against Thebes, was a descendant of Melampus. The wife of Proetus, Stheneboea, is prominent in the myth of Bellerophon (see pp. 613–615).

Boeotia

The principal myths of Boeotia are those of Thebes, involving the families of Cadmus and Laius (see Chapter 17). At Orchomenus, the daughters of Minyas resisted Dionysus and were driven mad, tearing apart one of their children, chosen by lot, and rushing out of the city. Unlike the daughters of Proetus, the Minyads did not return to normal life; they became winged creatures of the night, either owls or bats. Clymene, however, one of the daughters of Minyas, appears as the wife of five different husbands and thus becomes both the aunt of Jason (through her marriage to Pheres) and the mother (by Iasus) of Atalanta.

The Loves of Helius

As wife of Helius (the Sun), Clymene became the mother of Phaëthon (see pp. 57–58). Helius also loved the Eastern princess Leucothoë, daughter of the Persian king Orchamus. Disguising himself as Eurynome, her mother, he seduced

her. Another of the lovers of Helius, the Oceanid Clytië, jealous because Helius preferred Leucothoë to her, told Leucothoë's father of the affair. Orchamus buried Leucothoë and Helius was too late to save her. He shed drops of nectar on her corpse, which grew into a frankincense tree. Clytië could not persuade Helius to forgive her nor could she recover his love. She sat, following the Sun's progress with her eyes until she turned into a sunflower, which forever turns its face toward the sun.

Trophonius

The famous oracle of Trophonius was situated at Lebadeia in northern Boeotia. He is a chthonic hero (his name means "he who fosters growth") and he was therefore consulted in a subterranean setting with an awesome ritual. His legend is similar to the story of the Egyptian Pharaoh Rhampsinitus (Rameses), which Herodotus tells (2. 121). Trophonius and his brother Agamedes were skilled builders, sons of Erginus of Orchomenus. They built for King Augeas of Elis (or, as some say, the Boeotian king Hyrieus) a treasury with a movable stone, which they used to steal the king's treasure. In time the king set a trap for the unknown thief, and Agamedes was caught. At his own suggestion his head was cut off by Trophonius, who then escaped carrying the head. He fled to Lebadeia, where he was swallowed up by the earth and thereafter worshiped as a god.

Pindar (frags. 2–3), however, has a different story of the brothers' death, one very similar to Herodotus' story of the Argives Cleobis and Biton (see pp. 136–137). In this version, Trophonius and Agamedes built the temple of Apollo at Delphi.[8] When they asked the god for their wages, he said he would pay them on the seventh day. On that day they fell asleep, never to wake.

Aetolia

The Calydonian Boar Hunt

Among the descendants of Aeolus was Oeneus, king of Calydon and father of Heracles' wife Deïanira; his son was Meleager. Shortly after the birth of Meleager, the Fates (Moirai) appeared before his mother, Althaea, and told her that Meleager would die when a log, which was burning on the hearth, had burned out. Althaea snatched up the log, extinguished it, and kept it in a chest. Years later, when Meleager was a young man, Oeneus offended Artemis by failing to sacrifice her share of the first fruits, and she sent a huge boar to ravage Calydon.

Meleager gathered many of the noblest Greek heroes to hunt the boar, and with them came Atalanta, daughter of the Boeotian king Schoeneus. In the hunt, after several heroes had been killed, Atalanta was the first to wound the boar. Meleager gave it the coup de grâce and therefore received the boar's skin, which he presented to Atalanta. His uncles, the brothers of Althaea, were insulted at

being given less honor than Atalanta, and in the ensuing quarrel Meleager killed them. In grief and anger at their deaths, Althaea took the unburned log from its chest and cast it on the fire. As it burned to ashes, Meleager's life ebbed away. Both Althaea and Meleager's wife Cleopatra hanged themselves, while the women who mourned for him at his funeral became guinea fowl, which the Greeks called *meleagrides*.

This is Ovid's version of the Calydonian boar hunt. Homer, however, says that Artemis sent the boar to ravage the land during a war between the Calydonians and the Curetes. Meleager killed it and led the Calydonians in the battle against the Curetes over the boar's body. But his mother Althaea cursed him "because of the murder of her brother" and called on Hades to kill him (*Iliad* 9. 553–572). Meleager withdrew in anger. Then he relented, went back into battle, and saved Calydon. Homer says that the Calydonians did not reward him as they had promised, and he implies that Meleager died as a result of Althaea's curse.

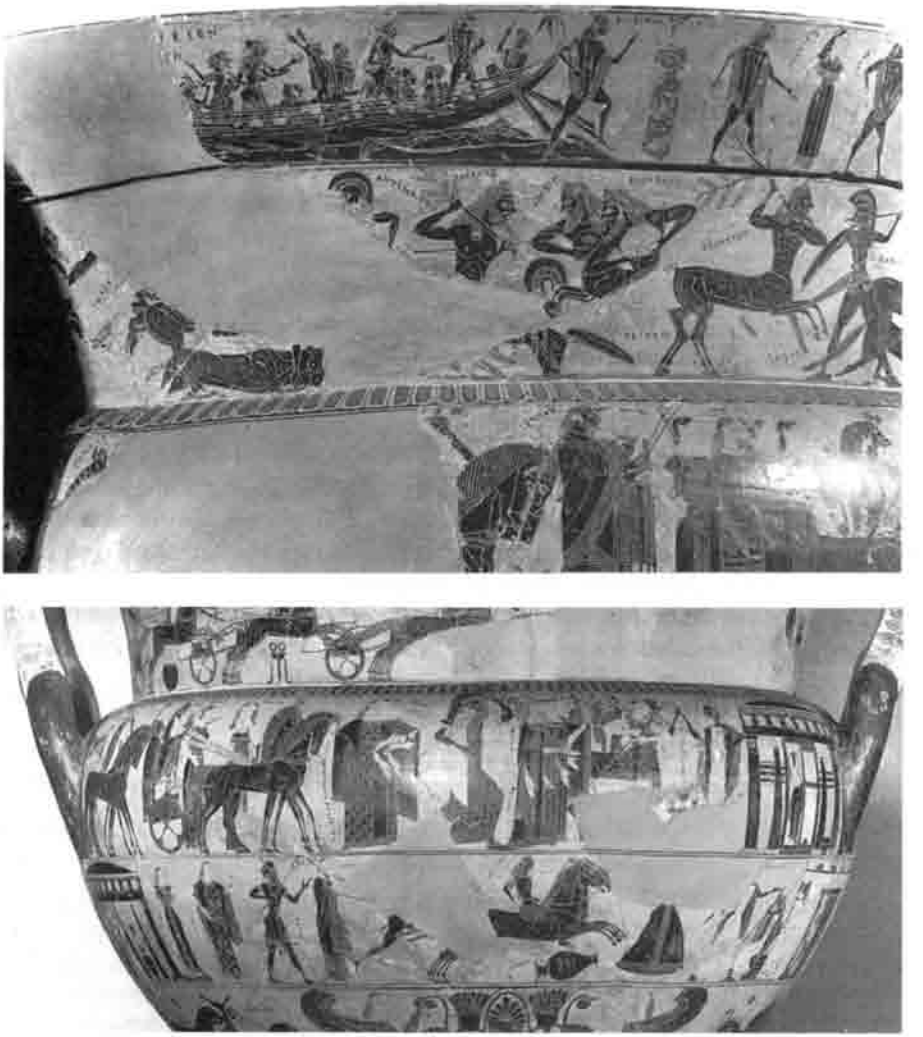
In the Underworld, Meleager's ghost talked with Heracles, and in Bacchylides' fifth *Epinician Ode* (93–154) he tells Heracles his story, in which the Homeric details of the boar and the battle with the Curetes are combined with the burning log:

> There [i.e., in the battle with the Curetes] I killed with many others Iphiclus and Aphares, my mother's swift brothers; for bold Ares does not distinguish a friend in war, but blind are the weapons hurled from one's hands. My mother, ill-fated and unfearing woman, planned my death. She burned the log that brought me a speedy death, taking it from the cunningly made chest. It had the *Moira* [i.e., allotted portion] fated to be the limit of my life. And my sweet life ebbed, and I knew that I was losing my strength—alas!—and unhappily I wept as I breathed my last, leaving lovely youth.

In this version, although Meleager accidentally kills his uncles in battle, their sister still avenges their death, her ties to her father's family being even stronger than those to her son. As Bacchylides also tells us, Heracles responded to Meleager's story with a promise to marry Deïanira, Meleager's sister, when he returned to the world of the living (see p. 529).

Nowhere in Homer or Bacchylides is there any mention of Atalanta, nor is there any complete account of her part in the legend earlier than Ovid. She appears in the François Vase, which was made in about 575 B.C., a century before Bacchylides' poem. About 165 years later, in 411–410 B.C., Euripides says in his play *Phoenissae* (1104–1109) that Atalanta's son, Parthenopaeus, one of the seven heroes who attacked Thebes, had the device on his shield of "Atalanta subduing the Aetolian boar with her arrows shot from afar," whereas in the François Vase she brandishes a hunting spear and marches in the second rank, behind Meleager and Peleus. Finally, her companion on the vase is named Milanion, who wins the Arcadian Atalanta as his bride in yet another tale.

The François Vase. Attic black-figure krater by the potter Ergotimos and the painter Kleitias, ca. 575 B.C.; height 30 in. There are four bands of mythological scenes, a fifth band with plants and animals, a battle of pygmies and cranes on the foot, and more figures, including Ajax carrying the corpse of Achilles, on the handles. (*Detail 1, below*) The first detail shows the top bands on one side: Meleager and Peleus thrust at the Calydonian boar with their



spears, with Atalanta and Milanion behind them. A dead hound and hunter lie on the ground, and other hunters (all named) attack or prepare to attack the beast. The band below shows the chariot race from the funeral games for Patroclus: Diomedes leads Damasippus, and the prize, a tripod, is shown below to the left. (*Detail 2, top*) The second detail shows the top bands on the other side: Theseus and the Athenian boys and girls (thirteen in the complete band) begin the Crane dance [see p. 561 for the location of the Dance at Delos, not Crete] that celebrates their release, as the sailors in the Athenian ship that will take them home cheer. One sailor swims eagerly to land. In the band immediately below is the battle of Centaurs and Lapiths. (*Detail 3, bottom*). In the third detail, the band below the chariot race shows the wedding procession of Peleus and Thetis, who are on the chariot to the left. The lower band shows Achilles pursuing Troilus: on the left is the fountain-house where Polyxena (sister of Troilus) had been drawing water. To its right a Trojan woman gesticulates in alarm, and next to her (in order) are Thetis, Hermes, and Athena, the latter urging on Achilles (the top half of whose body is missing). Troilus rides a horse beside a second riderless horse, and beneath lies Polyxena's amphora, which she has dropped in her flight. She runs in front of Troilus (her top half is missing) toward the walls of Troy, from which two armed warriors, Hector and Polites, are emerging. In front of Troy sits Priam, who is receiving a report from Antenor about the danger to Troilus. *(Museo Archeologico, Florence. Photograph courtesy of Hirmer Verlag, München.)*

From all this we can conclude that several legends have been conflated around Meleager and Atalanta, whose myths were originally separate. Ovid created a unified narrative from these different elements.

The Arcadian Atalanta

Atalanta, daughter of the Boeotian Schoeneus, is easily confused with Atalanta, daughter of the Arcadian Iasus. The latter also is a virgin huntress who joins in the Calydonian boar hunt and the Argonauts' expedition. As a baby she was exposed by her father and nurtured by a bear that suckled her until some hunters found her and brought her up. Grown up, she was recognized by her father, but she refused to let him give her in marriage unless her suitor could beat her in a footrace. Those who lost were executed. After many young men had died in the attempt, Milanion (also called Hippomenes) raced her. He had three golden apples given him by Aphrodite. These he dropped one by one during the race so as to delay Atalanta. So he won the race and his wife, but in their impatience to lie together they made love in a sacred place (a precinct of either Zeus or Cybele), and for this sacrilege they were turned into a lion and lioness.

Corinth

The Corinthian poet Eumelos identified the Homeric "Ephyra" with Corinth. Homer (*Iliad* 6. 152–159) says:

> There is a city, Ephyra, in a corner of horse-rearing Argos, and there lived Sisyphus, who was the most cunning of men, Sisyphus, son of Aeolus. He was father to Glaucus, and Glaucus was father to virtuous Bellerophon, to whom the gods gave beauty and lovely manliness. But Proetus devised evil against him in his heart and drove him out from the people of Argos, since Bellerophon was a better man than he. For Zeus had made him subject to Proetus.

Originally Ephyra was no more than a minor city in the kingdom of Argos (which includes Tiryns, normally given as the city ruled by Proetus), and its rulers, Sisyphus and his grandson Bellerophon, were minor chieftains subject to the king of Argos. By identifying Ephyra with Corinth, Eumelos magnified the status of the city and of its rulers. According to him, Sisyphus became the king of Corinth (which had been founded by the son of Helius, Aeëtes) after Medea left. Others make Sisyphus the founder of Corinth.

Sisyphus

Sisyphus, a son of Aeolus and brother of Salmoneus, Cretheus, and Athamas, came from Thessaly to Ephyra. Ino, the wife of his brother Athamas, leaped into the sea with her child Melicertes and became the sea-goddess Leucothea, while her child

became the god Palaemon (see note 3 on p. 304). Melicertes' body was brought ashore on the Isthmus of Corinth by a dolphin. Sisyphus found and buried it, instituting the Isthmian Games in the child's honor. At first the games were mainly religious and ritualistic; Theseus is said to have founded them a second time and thus given them the athletic character that they acquired in historical times.

The legends of Sisyphus are less concerned with him as king than as the craftiest of men. One story makes him the father of Odysseus, whose mother, Anticlea, he seduced before she married Laertes. Anticlea's father was the master thief Autolycus, son of Hermes, who gave him the power to steal whatever he wished undetected. For a long time he was in the habit of stealing Sisyphus' cattle until Sisyphus branded the animals on their hooves and so easily recognized and recovered those that Autolycus had stolen. The two heroes became friends, and Autolycus allowed Sisyphus to lie with Anticlea. Thus (in this version) Sisyphus, not Laertes, was really the father of Odysseus.

Sisyphus' greatest exploit was outwitting Death (Thanatos) himself. In its simplest form it is alluded to by the seventh-century poet Alcaeus of Lesbos (frag. 110. 5–10):

> For Sisyphus also, the son of Aeolus, thought that he was the cleverest of men to overpower Death. Yet, although he was crafty and crossed swirling Acheron twice (avoiding his destiny), the King [Zeus], son of Cronus, devised labor for him beneath the black earth.

Sisyphus aroused the anger of Zeus by telling the river-god Asopus that Zeus had carried off his daughter Aegina, and Zeus sent Death to carry Sisyphus off. Sisyphus chained Death, and as long as he was bound, no mortals could die. Eventually Ares freed Death and handed Sisyphus over to him, but before he went down to the Underworld, Sisyphus left instructions with his wife, Merope, not to make the customary sacrifices after his death. When Hades found that no sacrifices were being made, he sent Sisyphus back to remonstrate with Merope. So he returned to Corinth and stayed there until he died in advanced old age. It was for his revelation of Zeus's secret that he was punished in the Underworld by having to roll a huge rock uphill only to have it roll down again (see p. 333).

Sisyphus, therefore, combines a number of heroic and folktale elements in his legend. He is the founder of a city and of games and rituals in honor of a god. But he is also the trickster, peer of the master-thief Autolycus, and deceiver of Death itself.

Bellerophon

The greatest of Corinthian heroes was Bellerophon, grandson of Sisyphus. His legend is told in Homer by the Lycian leader Glaucus, when he meets Diomedes in battle. It is set both in the Argolid and in Asia Minor. Bellerophon may even have been introduced into Greek legend from the East.

Born in Corinth, he left home, perhaps because of blood-guilt after unintentionally killing a brother, and went to the court of Proetus, king of Tiryns, who purified him. There Proetus' wife Stheneboea (or Antea, as Homer calls her) fell in love with him. When he rejected her, she accused him before Proetus of trying to seduce her. Proetus therefore sent Bellerophon to his wife's father Iobates, king of Lycia, with a sealed letter that told of Stheneboea's accusation and asked Iobates to destroy Bellerophon. Accordingly, Iobates sent the hero on a number of dangerous expeditions (Homer, *Iliad* 6. 179–193):

> First he bid him kill the fearsome Chimaera, which was of divine, not mortal, breed—a lion in its forepart with a serpent's tail and in the middle a goat, and it breathed fire. He killed it, trusting in the gods' signs. Next he fought the mighty Solymi, and this was his most violent battle with men. Third, he slew the warrior Amazons. And as he returned, the king devised another plot against him; he chose the most valiant men in all Lycia and set them in ambush. Not one of them returned home, for gallant Bellerophon killed them all.
>
> So when the king realized that he was truly of divine descent, he kept him there in Lycia and gave him his daughter and the half of his kingdom.

Bellerophon became the father of Hippolochus (Glaucus' father) and of Isandrus, who was killed fighting the Solymi, and of a daughter, Laodamia. She was loved by Zeus and by him became the mother of Sarpedon, whom Patroclus killed at Troy. Laodamia was "killed by Artemis in anger," and Bellerophon ended his days in sorrow; "hated by the gods he wandered over the Alean plain alone, eating out his heart and avoiding the paths of men." (Homer, *Iliad* 6. 200–202).

In Homer, Bellerophon is the hero who performs certain tasks and wins the prize of a kingdom and a princess. His tragic end, to which Homer refers in vague terms, is the theme of Euripides' tragedy *Bellerophon*, in which Bellerophon tries to mount to heaven itself and fails.

Both Euripides and Pindar introduce the winged horse Pegasus into the myth of Bellerophon. Poseidon gave it to him, but he could not master it, as it stood by the Corinthian spring Pirene, until Athena appeared to him in a dream and gave him a magic bridle with golden trappings (Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 13. 63–92):

> Much did he labor beside the spring in his desire to harness the offspring of the snake-girdled Gorgon, until the maiden Pallas brought him the gold-accoutred bridle, and quickly his dream became reality. "Are you sleeping," said she, "King, descendant of Aeolus? Come, take this charm to soothe the horse and sacrifice a white bull to your forefather Poseidon, the Tamer of Horses."
>
> These were the words which the maiden with the dark aegis seemed to speak as he slept; he leaped to his feet and took the divine object that lay beside him. And strong Bellerophon, after all his efforts, caught the winged horse by putting the gentle charm around its mouth. Mounting it straightway, he brandished his arms, himself in armor of bronze. With it he slew the archer army of women, the Amazons, shooting them from the unpeopled bosom of the cold upper air, and he slew the fire-breathing Chimaera and the Solymi. His fate I shall not mention; the ancient stalls of Zeus's stable in Olympus shelter the horse.

Bellerophon, then, met his end in attempting to rise too high. This theme of Euripides' *Bellerophon* is also expressed in Pindar's words (*Isthmian Odes* 7. 60–68):

> If any man sets his eye on a distant target, he is too short to reach the brass-paved home of the gods. For winged Pegasus hurled his rider Bellerophon, who wished to enter the palaces of Heaven and join Zeus' company.

Euripides also wrote a tragedy, *Stheneboea*, in which Bellerophon returned to Tiryns after his labors in Lycia and killed Stheneboea by luring her onto Pegasus and throwing her down as they flew high over the sea. For Euripides, Bellerophon's end is that of a human being who fails in a high endeavor, but originally he must have been punished, like Tantalus and Ixion, because he abused the friendship of the gods. Neither of Euripides' plays is extant.

Arion of Lesbos

Herodotus (1. 23–24) tells the story of the musician Arion of Lesbos. He had traveled round Greece and the Greek cities of Italy teaching the ritual of Dionysus, particularly the singing of the dithyramb, the sacred choral song performed in honor of the god. He was particularly favored by Periander, tyrant of Corinth, and he decided to return to Greece from Italy in a Corinthian ship. Plotting to steal the money Arion had gained from his performances in Italy, the sailors threw him overboard, allowing him first to give a final performance standing on the stern of the ship. When he jumped into the sea, a dolphin saved him and carried him on its back to the sanctuary of Poseidon at Cape Taenarum (the southern cape of the Peloponnese). From there he made his way back to Corinth, where he told Periander what had happened and appeared at Periander's behest to confound the sailors when they told him that Arion was safe in Italy.

Periander was a historical figure who ruled over Corinth around 600 B.C., and Arion was perhaps also historical. He was credited with the invention of the dithyramb. Dionysus is associated with dolphins in the myth of the sailors narrated in the seventh *Homeric Hymn* (see pp. 295–296), and Herodotus tells how there was a statue of a man on a dolphin (said to have been dedicated by Arion himself) in the temple of Poseidon at Taenarum. Thus the story of Arion is undoubtedly connected with the worship of Poseidon and Dionysus.

Other Peloponnesian Legends

Arethusa

The river-god Alpheus loved the nymph Arethusa, a follower of Artemis.[9] As he pursued her along the river bank, she prayed to Artemis, who covered her with a cloud; as the god watched the cloud, both it and the nymph melted into a stream for which Artemis cleft the earth. Flowing underground (where it was united with the waters of Alpheus) and under the sea, it emerged at Syracuse in Sicily, where it is still called by the same name, the fountain Arethusa.

Iamus

A daughter of Poseidon, Evadne, left her newborn son Iamus, whose father was Apollo, on the banks of the Alpheus. Evadne's foster father Aepytus, aware of her condition, inquired about the child at Delphi and learned that he would be the greatest of human seers. He returned, found the child (who had been miraculously fed on honey by two serpents), and brought him up. When he grew up, Poseidon and Apollo brought Iamus to Olympia, where he received the gift of prophecy. His oracle, says Pindar, was established by Heracles upon the altar of Zeus at Olympia.[10]

The Islands

The Aegean islands with the most important religious cults were Delos and Samothrace. At Delos Apollo was honored (see Chapter 11), and in the mysteries on Samothrace the Cabiri were worshiped as "the great gods" (*theoi megaloi:* see p. 365).

Delos

Delos was the home of Anius, son of Apollo, who was both his father's priest and king of the island at the time of the Trojan War. He had three daughters, Elaïs (Olive Girl), Spermo (Seed Girl), and Oeno (Wine Girl), who received from Dionysus the power of producing, respectively, oil, grain, and wine. Agamemnon attempted to compel them to go to Troy with the Greeks to supply the army with these provisions. As they resisted and tried to escape, Dionysus turned them into white doves; ever after, doves were sacrosanct at Delos.

Ceos

Ceos was the home of Cyparissus, a boy loved by Apollo. His sad story is told by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 10. 106–142). On the island was a beautiful stag, a favorite of Cyparissus, which he accidentally killed with his javelin. As he grieved he became a tree, the cypress, ever after called by his name and associated with mourning.

Ovid (*Heroides* 20 and 21) also relates how a Cean girl, Cydippe, was loved by Acontius, a youth who was not her social equal. He left in her path an apple on which were inscribed the words, "I swear before Artemis to marry only Acontius." She picked it up and read the words out loud, thus binding herself by the vow. Each time her parents found a suitable husband for her, she fell so ill that she could not be married; eventually the truth was revealed, and she and Acontius were united.

Rhodes

The island of Rhodes was sacred to Helius, the Sun. When Zeus was dividing up the lands of the world among the gods, Rhodes had not yet appeared above

the surface of the sea. Helius was accidentally not given a share, but he refused Zeus' offer of a redivision, for he could see the future island below the sea, and he took it as his possession when it appeared. There he loved the island's nymph Rhode, and one of her seven sons became the father of the heroes of the three principal cities of Rhodes, Camirus, Ialysus, and Lindos. Even late in historical times, the people of Rhodes threw a chariot and four horses into the sea every October as a replacement for the old chariot and horses of the Sun that would be worn out after the labors of the summer.

Rhodes was associated with several figures of saga. From Egypt came Danaüs, who visited the island on his journey to Argos and there founded the great temple of Athena at Lindos. A son of Heracles, Tlepolemus, murdered his uncle Licymnius at Tiryns, and on the advice of Apollo fled to Rhodes. He later led the Rhodian contingent in the Trojan War. Rhodes was also the home of the Telchines, who were skilled craftsmen and metal-workers. They were also credited with having the evil eye; and for this reason (says Ovid), Zeus drowned them in the sea.

Lesbos

On the island of Lesbos lived Macareus, a son of Aeolus, whose story was told by Euripides in his lost play *Aeolus.* He fell in love with his sister Canace and by her became father of a child. When Aeolus discovered the truth, he sent Canace a sword with which to kill herself, and Macareus also committed suicide.

Cyprus

The island of Cyprus is especially associated with Aphrodite (Venus), who was worshiped particularly at Paphos. For the story of Pygmalion and Galatea, parents of Paphos, who gave his name to the city, see pages 175–177. In the Cypriot city of Salamis lived Anaxarete, who scorned her lover, Iphis. In despair, he hanged himself at the door of her house, yet she still showed no pity. As she was watching his funeral procession pass her house, she was turned into stone. Ovid says that her stone figure became the cult statue of Venus at Salamis, with the title of Venus the Beholder (*Venus Prospiciens*).

Crete

Crete is the setting for Ovid's legend of Iphis, daughter of Ligdus (different from the boy Iphis who loved Anaxarete). Her mother Telethusa, when pregnant, was ordered by Ligdus to expose the baby if it proved to be a girl. Encouraged by a vision of the Egyptian goddess Isis, Telethusa kept the baby girl, giving her a name suitable either for a boy or a girl and dressing her like a boy. Thus deceived, Ligdus betrothed Iphis to another girl, Ianthe, whom Iphis did indeed come to love. On the night before they were to be married, Telethusa prayed to Isis to pity Iphis

and Ianthe (for Ianthe was ignorant as yet of the real sex of her lover). The goddess heard her prayer: Iphis became a boy and next day married his Ianthe.

Asia Minor

Dardanus

Electra, daughter of Atlas, had two sons by Zeus, Iasion and Dardanus. On the death of Iasion in Samothrace, Dardanus sailed to the Troad, where Teucer, son of the river-god Scamander, was king. There Dardanus married the king's daughter and built a city called by his name. On the death of Teucer, the land was called Dardania and its inhabitants (as in Homer) Dardani. From Dardanus was descended the Trojan royal house.

Hero and Leander

Leander, a young man from the city of Abydos on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont, loved Hero, priestess of Aphrodite in Sestos on the European shore. He swam the Hellespont each night to visit her, guided by a light that she placed in a tower on the shore. One stormy night the lamp was extinguished, and Leander, bereft of its guidance, drowned. Next day his body was washed up on the shore near the tower, and Hero in grief threw herself from the tower to join her lover in death.

Baucis and Philemon

This chapter ends with three stories related by Ovid that are almost certainly not Greek in origin, although the names of the principal characters are Greek. From Phrygia comes the legend of Baucis and Philemon, a poor and pious old couple who unwittingly entertained Zeus and Hermes in their cottage. The gods, who had not been received kindly by anyone else on their visit to the earth, saved Baucis and Philemon from the flood with which they punished the rest of Phrygia, and their cottage became the gods' temple (see Color Plate 21). Being granted one wish each, they prayed that they might together be priest and priestess of the shrine and die together. And so it happened; full of years, they simultaneously turned into trees, an oak and a linden.

Byblis and Caunus

Byblis, daughter of Miletus, fell in love with her brother, Caunus. Unable either to forget her love or to declare it, she wrote a letter to Caunus confessing it. In horror he left Miletus (the city named after his father), and Byblis followed him. Still unable to achieve her desire, she sank down to the ground in exhaustion and became a fountain that was called by her name.

Pyramus and Thisbe, by Hans Wechtlin (ca. 1480–ca. 1526). Chiaroscuro woodcut, ca. 1515; $10^1/_2 \times 7$ in. Ovid's tale is set in a German Renaissance landscape. Thisbe comes upon Pyramus dying beneath the mulberry tree. The Latin inscription means: "Pyramus, Thisbe's lover, shows by his death what power raging Love, clinging to his bones, has in his veins." The blindfolded Cupid on the fountain further alludes to Pyramus' love, which so blinded him to rational thought that he rashly took his own life. *(German. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 50.396.)*

Pyramus and Thisbe

Ovid's setting for the story of Pyramus and Thisbe is Babylon. Perhaps Cilicia in southern Asia Minor is the home of the legend, for the river Pyramus was there, and the name Thisbe was variously associated with springs in Cilicia or Cyprus.

Pyramus and Thisbe were next-door neighbors in Babylon, forbidden by their parents to marry or even to meet each other. They conversed through a crack in the common wall of their houses and arranged to meet at the tomb of Ninus outside the city. Thisbe arrived first only to be frightened by a lioness that had come to drink in a nearby fountain. As she fled, she dropped her veil, which the lioness mangled with her jaws, bloodstained from a recent kill. Pyramus came and found the footprints of the lioness and the bloodstained veil. He concluded that the lioness had eaten Thisbe and fell on his sword; as he lay dying, Thisbe returned and in grief killed herself with the same sword. They lay together in death beneath a mulberry tree, whose fruit, which before had been white, henceforward was black, in answer to Thisbe's dying prayer that it be a memorial of the tragedy.

This is one of Ovid's most beautifully told stories (*Metamorphoses* 4. 55–166), of which a paraphrase is at best a pale reflection. The structure of the tale was used by Shakespeare for the main plot of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its meetings outside the city and lovers' errors, while countless people have enjoyed Shakespeare's hilarious yet pathetic burlesque of the tale presented by the "rude mechanicals" in the last act of the play.

NOTES

1. He taught Achilles, Jason, and Asclepius.
2. Pindar calls her Hippolyta. Similar stories are those of Bellerophon and Stheneboea and the biblical Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39).
3. The magic sword is a folktale element in the legend.
4. Either by dipping him in the river Styx or by burning away his mortality (see pp. 312–313 for the similar story of Demophoön).
5. Homer (*Iliad* 11. 682–704) says that Neleus survived into old age.
6. For her recovery from the Underworld by Heracles, see p. 527.
7. There are many folktale elements in the legend, for example, the bridegroom's task, the magician who can understand the speech of animals, and the cure of disease by sympathetic magic (cf. Telephus, p. 454).
8. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (see p. 248) the god himself lays the foundations of the temple.
9. According to the sixth-century poetess Telesilla, Alpheus loved Artemis herself.
10. Divination was practiced by inspecting entrails of victims sacrificed at the altar, and Iamus was asked for omens.

PART THREE

The Nature of Roman Mythology

CHAPTER

26

ROMAN MYTHOLOGY AND SAGA

The fundamental differences between Greek and Roman mythology account for the dominant influence of Greek myths over native Italian myths and Roman legends. The Italian gods were not as generally anthropomorphic as the Olympian gods, about whom the Greeks developed legends that they expressed in poetry and art of great power. The Roman gods were originally associated more with cult than with myth, and such traditional tales as were told about them did not have the power of Greek legends. In the third century B.C., when the first historians and epic poets began to write in Latin, the influence of Greek literature was already dominant. Many of the early authors were themselves Greeks, and were familiar with Greek mythology. Thus many Roman legends are adaptations of Greek legends, and to a varying extent they owe their present form to sophisticated authors such as Vergil and Ovid.

Roman mythology nevertheless had an independent existence in the cults of Roman religion and the legends of early Roman history. The roots of Roman religion lay in the traditions of pre-Roman Italic peoples such as the Sabines and Etruscans. The native Italian gods, however, became identified with Greek gods—Saturnus with Cronus, Jupiter with Zeus, and so on. The poet Ennius (239–169 B.C.) came from southern Italy and spoke Greek, Oscan, and Latin. He equated the twelve principal Roman gods with the twelve Olympians as follows:[1]

Iuno (Hera), Vesta (Hestia), Minerva (Athena), Ceres (Demeter), Diana (Artemis), Venus (Aphrodite), Mars (Ares), Mercurius (Hermes), Iovis (Zeus), Neptunus (Poseidon), Vulcanus (Hephaestus), Apollo.

Of these only Apollo is identical with his Greek counterpart. Of the others, the Italian fertility spirit, Venus, becomes the great goddess underlying the fertility of nature and human love. In contrast, the great Italian agricultural and war deity, Mars, is identified with Ares, one of the less important Olympians. The others more or less retain their relative importance.

As a result of these identifications Greek myths were transferred to Roman gods. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, most of the myths of the Olympians are Greek, although the names of the gods are Roman. Some genuinely Roman or Italic legends, however, have been preserved in the poetry of Ovid, Vergil,

and Propertius (to name the three most important poets in this respect) and in the prose writers Cicero, Varro (a polymath and antiquarian who died at the age of eighty-nine in 27 B.C.), and Livy. The outline of other legends can be recovered from what is known of the cults and rituals of Roman divinities. Especially important in this respect is Ovid's *Fasti*, in which he describes the festivals of the first six months of the Roman calendar. He tells many legends of the gods, while describing their cults and explaining the origins of their rituals.

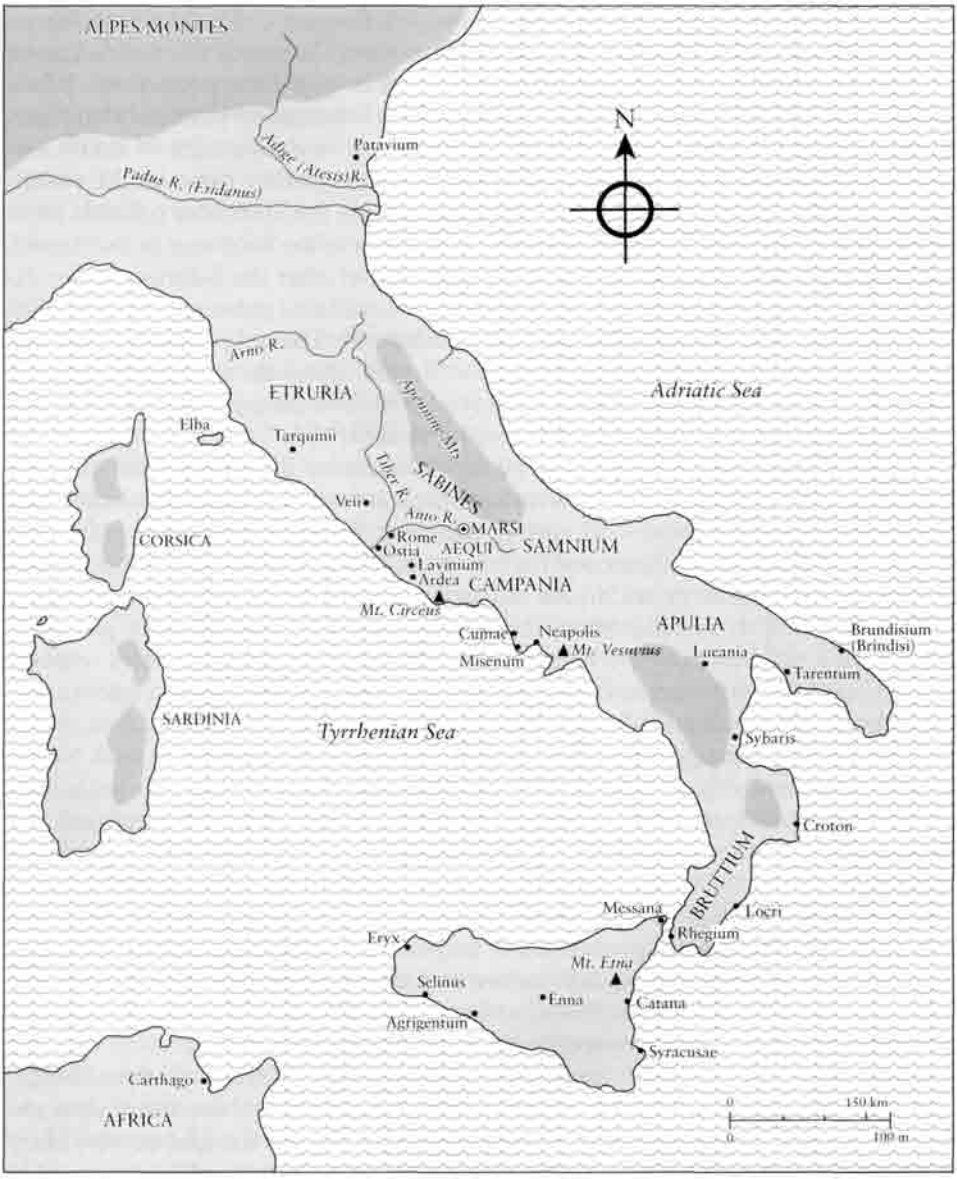
Legends attached to the early history of Rome are the Roman equivalent of saga. A few of these are associated with specific local heroes, of whom the most important are Aeneas and Romulus. A large group of legends associated with the early history of Rome idealized the past, and their central figures exemplify Roman virtues. Such idealizing was especially practiced in the time of Augustus (who reigned from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14), a period of reconstruction and revival of the supposed principles of the early Romans. All the authors named here as sources for Roman mythology were contemporaries of Augustus, and of them, only Varro (fifty-three years older than Augustus) and Cicero (forty-three years older) died before the Augustan reconstruction had begun. Thus the definition of myth as a "traditional tale" has a special coloring in Roman mythology. Livy justifies the process of idealization in the "Preface" to his history (sects. 6–10):

> I do not intend to accept or deny the truth of traditional legends about events before and during the founding of the city. These are more suitable for poetic fables than for reliable historical records. But one can excuse ancient legends because they make the origins of the city more august by uniting human and divine actions. If any nation has the right to consider its origins sacred and to ascribe them to the gods, it is the Roman people, for they claim that Mars is their ancestor and the father of the founder [Romulus].

The Italian Gods

Janus, Mars, and Bellona

Among the gods of the Roman state, Janus takes first place; in formal prayers to the gods he was named first. He is a very ancient deity, and he has an equivalent in the Etruscan god, Culsans. He is the god who presides over beginnings, and in this connection we preserve his name in the month that begins our year. It is likely, however, that in his earliest form he was connected with water, especially with crossing places and bridges. Thus in the city of Rome there were five shrines to Janus, all placed near crossings over the river or watercourses, and he was intimately connected with the boundaries of the earliest settlements at Rome, the approaches to which required crossing the Tiber or one of its tributary brooks. As the city expanded, these early crossing-places lost their importance, and Janus' original functions were obscured. Yet they can be detected in later times; the gates of his shrine near the Argiletum entrance to the Forum were open in time of war and closed in time of peace. They were closed by Au-



Map 26.1. Roman Italy and Sicily

gustus with great ceremony, for example, to mark the end of the protracted civil wars that brought him to power. In the early days of Rome, the bridges would have been broken when the city was threatened by an enemy; an analogy for opening the gates of Janus in time of war would be raising a drawbridge over a moat.

In later times, "Janus" was used not only as the name of a deity but also as a common noun (a janus), which Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* 2. 67) defined as "a crossing-place with a roadway," in this recalling the god's early functions. While Janus' significance as a god of bridges waned, he attracted to himself other functions; he was the god of going in and coming out, and therefore of doors, entrances, and archways, as well as of beginnings. In another form, as the youthful god Portunus, he was god of harbors (which are the entrances to lands from overseas) and ferries. Portunus helped the winners of the boat race in the *Aeneid*.

There are few legends of Janus; it was said that after the Sabines, under Titus Tatius, had captured the Capitol they were kept from entering the Forum by jets of boiling water that Janus caused to gush forth. The only ancient statues of Janus surviving are two four-faced marble "herms" upon the parapet of the Pons Fabricius in Rome; on coins he is portrayed with two faces, for as a god of entrances and exits he could look both before and behind.

The Italian deity Mars (or Mavors) was much more important than Ares, his Greek equivalent. In origin he was an agricultural deity worshiped by many Italian tribes. His association with spring, the time of regeneration and growth, is shown by the use of his name for the month of March, which began the Roman year in the pre-Julian calendar. As an agricultural god, he is associated with a number of rural deities like Silvanus and Flora; the latter supposedly provided Juno with a magical flower whose touch enabled her to conceive Mars without any father. Mars sometimes has as his consort the Sabine fertility goddess Nerio, who is often identified with Minerva. Ovid tells how Mars asked Anna Perenna (the ancient goddess of the year) to act as his go-between with Nerio. After he had made love to Nerio, he found on unveiling her that his bride was none other than Anna, who was old and wrinkled and thoroughly enjoyed her deception. This, says Ovid, was the origin of jokes and obscenities at marriage parties.

Just as the Roman people turned from farming to war, so Mars became a war god, and this aspect became more important than his agricultural character. Sacrifices were offered to him before and after a battle, and a portion of the spoils was dedicated to him. The most famous of his temples at Rome was that of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger) vowed by Augustus at the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.) and dedicated forty years later. The Campus Martius (Field of Mars) was the open space outside the gates of the ancient city where the people assembled under arms and practiced their military skills. As the god of war, Mars often had the title Gradivus (perhaps meaning "the marcher"); he was also closely associated with the Sabine war deity Quirinus, with whom Romulus was later identified. In battle, Mars was generally accompanied by a number of lesser deities and personifications, of whom the war goddess Bellona is the best known. Bellona herself was often identified with the Greek personification of war, Enyo (connected with the title of Ares, *Enyalios*), and a temple was first dedicated to her in Rome in 296 B.C.

Mars is particularly associated with two animals, the wolf and the woodpecker. A she-wolf suckled his sons, the infants Romulus and Remus. The woodpecker, *picus*, was said in one legend to have been a Latin king Picus, whose wife was the nymph Canens (Singer). Circe, the magician, tried to seduce him, and when he rejected her, she turned him into a woodpecker. After searching in vain for him for six days and six nights, Canens wasted away into nothing more than a voice.

JUPITER

The great Italian sky-god was Jupiter, the forms of whose name are etymologically connected with those of other Indo-European sky-gods, including Zeus. At the end of the regal period (509 B.C.) the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was built on the Capitoline Hill and the great sky-god became localized in a temple with a statue like a Greek city god. He shared the temple with Juno, the chief Italian goddess of women, and Minerva, an Italian fertility and war goddess who at Rome was worshiped principally as the patroness of handicrafts and wisdom. These three deities formed the "Capitoline triad."

Jupiter was called by many titles. In his temple on the Capitol he was worshiped as Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Best and Greatest). The great ceremonial procession of the Triumph wound its way through the Forum up to this temple. The triumphing general was robed as if he were a god, proceeding in his chariot amid the cheering crowds, with his soldiers around him and his prisoners before him. On the Capitoline Hill he sacrificed to Jupiter, acknowledging by this ritual that Jupiter was the source of Roman greatness and military might.

As sky-god, Jupiter directly influenced Roman public life, in which the weather omens of thunder and lightning, his special weapons, played an important role. After lightning had struck, a ritual purification or expiatory rite was required, and Jupiter himself was said to have given King Numa the original instructions for the sacrifice. Advised by the nymph Egeria, Numa captured the two forest divinities, Picus and Faunus, on the Aventine Hill and compelled them to tell him how to summon Jupiter. When Jupiter himself came, Numa asked what objects were necessary for the expiatory rite. "A head," the god replied, and Numa interrupted with "of an onion." "Of a man," Jupiter went on, and Numa added "a hair"; finally Jupiter demanded "a life." "Of a fish," said Numa, and Jupiter good-naturedly agreed to accept these objects (the head of an onion, a human hair, and a fish) as part of the expiatory ritual. Ovid's narrative (*Fasti* 3. 285–346), which is summarized here, explains why these objects were offered instead of a human sacrifice, almost certainly the original form of expiation.

Jupiter also promised to give Numa a sign to support Rome's claim to exercise power over other communities. In full view of the people of Rome, he caused a shield (*ancile*) to fall miraculously from heaven. This *ancile* was of the

Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Marble panel relief from the attic of the west side of the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, ca. 115 A.D.; height of panel, $90\frac{1}{2}$ in. Jupiter, the central figure in the Capitoline triad, hands his thunderbolt, symbol of power, to Trajan, who appears in the corresponding panel on the other side of the central inscription on the attic. The arch was erected to celebrate the completion of the Via Traiana, the road from Rome to Brindisi, where it left the old Appian Way. In the background are other Olympian gods: Hercules to the left (behind Minerva), Apollo, Venus, and Mercury (with his winged cap). *(Photo Alinari.)*

archaic figure-eight shape; since it was a talisman of Roman power, Numa had eleven others made exactly like it, so that it would be hard to steal the genuine *ancile*. The twelve *ancilia* were kept in the Regia (the office of the Pontifex Maximus, the official head of the hierarchy of the state religion)[2] and were used by the priests of Mars, the Salii, in the sacred war dance they performed each spring. As they danced, they sang an ancient hymn containing the words *mamuri veturi*, whose meaning had long since been forgotten. According to tradition, the craftsman who made the eleven false *ancilia* was named Mamurius, who asked for his name to be included in the hymn as a reward.

The many titles of Jupiter indicate his supreme importance in all matters of the state's life in war and peace. As Jupiter Latiaris, he was the chief god of the Latins, worshiped by the Romans in an annual ceremony upon the Mons Albanus (the modern Monte Cavo) twenty miles from Rome. As the god before whom the most solemn oaths were sworn, he was closely associated with the goddess Fides (Good Faith) and identified with the old Sabine god Dius Fidius. Oaths sworn by Dius Fidius had to be sworn under the open sky (Jupiter's realm). The Latin deity Semo Sancus (the name comes from the same root as *sancire*, the Latin word for ratifying an oath) is also identified with Dius Fidius and Jupiter.

Another title of Jupiter is Indiges, by which he was worshiped near the river Numicus. The word *Indiges* has never been explained. It evidently refers to a state god, and the Di Indigetes were a well-known group of gods whose exact role remains unknown. Livy believed that Aeneas was worshiped as Jupiter Indiges after his death beside the river Numicus. Ovid tells the story (*Metamorphoses* 14. 598–608):

> [Venus] came to the shore at Laurentum, where the waters of the river Numicus, concealed by reeds, wind into the nearby sea. She commanded the river to wash away from Aeneas all that was mortal and to carry it away silently into the sea. The horned river-god performed the commands of Venus and purified all that was mortal of Aeneas and cleansed it with his waters. The best part of Aeneas remained. His mother [Venus] anointed the purified body with divine perfume; she touched his face with ambrosia and sweet nectar and made him a god. Him the people of Quirinus [i.e., the Romans] hailed as "Indiges," and received him with a temple and altars.

Juno

Juno, the second member of the Capitoline triad, was originally an independent Italian deity who presided over every aspect of the life of women. She was especially associated with marriage and (as Juno Lucina) childbirth. The festival of Juno Lucina, the Matronalia, was celebrated in March as a spring festival, when all nature was being renewed. Juno was also worshiped as Juno Moneta on the Arx (Citadel), the northern peak of the Capitoline Hill. Moneta means "adviser" (from the same root as the Latin word *monere*), but the word survives

in the English word "mint," for Juno's temple on the Arx was next to the Roman Mint, which was known as *ad Monetam*.

Another title of Juno was Juno Regina (Queen Juno). Livy (5. 21) describes how Juno was invited by the Romans to leave the Etruscan city of Veii after its defeat in 396 B.C. At Rome Camillus dedicated a temple in her honor on the Aventine Hill. The ritual of persuading an enemy's gods to leave their city was called *evocatio* (calling out). By accepting the invitation the goddess was believed to have come willingly to her new home in Rome, while the Etruscans were deprived of her protection.

Under the influence of Greek literature, Juno, the great Italian goddess of the life of women, became the wife and sister of Jupiter. In the *Aeneid* she has a prominent role in opposing the fated success of Aeneas, but eventually Jupiter and Fate are superior and she accepts the union of the Trojan newcomers and the indigenous Italian tribes.

Minerva

Minerva, the third member of the Capitoline triad, was also an Italian deity, introduced to Rome by the Etruscans. She became identified with Athena and Athena's legends, so it is hard to distinguish her original functions. She may have been a war goddess, for she shared her great festival, the Quinquatrus, with Mars, whose consort, the Sabine goddess Nerio, was often identified with her. Her chief importance for the Romans, however, was as the goddess of all activities involving mental skill. She was the patroness of craftspeople and skilled workers, among whom Ovid (in his invocation to Minerva in the *Fasti*) includes authors and painters.[3] She was also the goddess of schoolchildren, and Quinquatrus was the time both of school holidays and the payment of school fees.

Divinities of Fire: Vesta, Vulcan, and Cacus

The most important of the other Roman state gods who were of Italian origin were the two concerned with fire, Vesta and Vulcan (Volcanus). Vesta (whose name is etymologically identical with the Greek Hestia) was the goddess of the hearth, the center of family life. Since the state was a community of families, it had a hearth with an ever-burning fire as the symbolic center of its life. The fire was kept alight in the round temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum and tended by the six Vestal Virgins. These were daughters of noble families who entered the service of Vesta before their tenth birthday and remained until their fortieth year or even longer. Their life was hedged with many taboos and rituals, and their vow of chastity was strictly observed. The Vestals were treated with the highest honor, and were some of the most important persons in the hierarchy of Roman state religion. Their offices and living quarters were in the Forum, next to the Regia.

The second Roman king, Numa, was said to have founded the cult of Vesta. The myths of Vesta are few and uninteresting. Ovid (*Fasti* 6. 319–338) tells how the fertility god Priapus tried to seduce her and was prevented by the braying of a donkey. He gives another version of the story (see pp. 636–637), in which the nymph Lotis is the intended victim of Priapus.

Closely associated with Vesta were the household spirits of the Romans, the Penates, whose name derives from the *penus*, or store cupboard, source of food and therefore symbol of the continuing life of the family. Originally the spirits on whom the life and food of the individual family depended, they became an essential part of the life of the state. The Romans were vague about their number or identity, and a useful definition is that of Servius (fourth century A.D.), "all the gods who are worshiped in the home." The Penates were originally Italian and were especially worshiped at the Latin town of Lavinium. It was said that when an attempt was made to remove them from Lavinium to Alba Longa they miraculously returned to their original home. At Rome they became identified with the Trojan gods entrusted by Hector to Aeneas on the night of Troy's destruction and brought by him to Italy. Among the sacred objects kept in the *penus Vestae* (i.e., the sacred repository in the temple of Vesta) was the Palladium, the statue of the Trojan Athena given by Diomedes to one of Aeneas' followers. When the temple of Vesta was burned in 241 B.C., the consul L. Caecilius Metellus earned great glory by saving the Palladium with his own hands, yet he was blinded for the act because he had looked upon a sacred object that it was not lawful for a man to see.

Vulcan (Volcanus) was the chief Italian fire-god, more important than his Greek equivalent, Hephaestus. The Greek god was the god of industrial, creative fire, while Vulcan was the god of destructive fire and a potent power to be worshiped in a city frequently ravaged by conflagrations.[4] Through his identification with Hephaestus, Vulcan acquired creative attributes shown by his other name, Mulciber (He who tempers). Vergil has a fine description of Vulcan's smithy deep below Mt. Aetna (*Aeneid* 8. 424–438):

> The Cyclopes were working the iron in the vast cave, Brontes and Steropes and naked Pyracmon. In their hands was a thunderbolt, partly finished and partly yet to be finished, one of very many which the Father (i.e., Jupiter) hurls to the earth from all over the sky. They had put onto it three rays of twisted rainstorms, three of watery clouds, three of red fire and the winged south wind. Just then they were adding the terrifying lightning to the weapon and the penetrating flames of [Jupiter's] anger. In another part they were working on the chariot of Mars and its winged wheels, with which he stirs up men and cities. They were busily polishing the fearsome aegis, the weapon of aroused Minerva, with serpents' scales and gold. It had entwined snakes and the Gorgon's head itself turning its gaze.

The Italian fire-god, Cacus, was associated with Vulcan. Vergil narrates how he was killed by Hercules (*Aeneid* 190–267). Cacus had stolen the Cattle of Geryon

from Hercules and had hidden them in his cave on the Aventine Hill. Here is the climax of the fight, when Hercules has broken open the cave of Cacus (*Aeneid* 8. 247–261):

> Hercules overwhelmed Cacus from above with missiles, Cacus who had been suddenly trapped by the unexpected daylight, shut in his rocky cave and bellowing as he was not used to do. Hercules summoned up all his weapons and attacked him with branches and huge boulders. But Cacus (who had no escape from the danger) belched forth (a miracle to narrate) clouds of smoke, enveloping his cave in blind darkness and taking away the sight from Hercules' eyes. He filled the cave with the smoky blackness of night and darkness mixed with fire. Brave Hercules did not put up with this: he leaped headlong through the fire, where the waves of smoke were the thickest and the black clouds billowed through the cave. Here he held Cacus knotted in his grip, as he vainly belched forth fire in the darkness. Clinging tight he throttled him, so that his eyes burst out and no blood was left in his throat. Then the doors of the black cave were wrenched off and it was suddenly thrown open. Displayed to the sky were the stolen cattle and the theft that Cacus had denied, and the monstrous corpse was dragged out by its feet. The people could not have enough of gazing on the terrible eyes of the monster, on the face and the chest with its bristling hair and the throat with fire extinct.

Vergil's narrative ostensibly explains the origin of the worship of Hercules at the Ara Maxima, an ancient cult-site in the low-lying ground (called the Forum Boarium) between the Aventine and the Tiber. But he makes a monster of the ancient Italian fire-god, whose name survived in the *Scalae Caci* (Steps of Cacus), a pathway leading up onto the corner of the Palatine Hill that was associated with the earliest settlement on the site of Rome.

Agricultural and Fertility Divinities

Saturn, Ceres, and Their Associates

Saturn was an ancient god, perhaps of Etruscan origin. His temple dated from the early days of the Republic, and beneath it was the state treasury. His origins are obscure; he was an agricultural deity, and his festival, the Saturnalia, celebrated on December 17, was perhaps originally connected with the winter grain sowing. Like many other country festivals, it was accompanied by a relaxation of the normal social inhibitions. This was a prominent feature of the Saturnalia in historical times, when slaves were allowed freedom of speech. The Saturnalia came to be linked with the festival of Ops, which was celebrated two days later, and eventually the festival period lasted for a week.

Saturn was very soon identified with the Greek Cronus, and like him was believed to have ruled over a golden age. Rhea, the Greek consort of Cronus, was likewise identified with Ops, the Italian goddess of plenty, who was the partner of Saturn in popular mythology. His partner in cult, however, was the

obscure Italian deity Lua. In the cult of Ops, her partner was Consus, an Italian harvest deity, whose festival, the Consualia, was celebrated in both August and December. Livy tells us that the seizure of the Sabine women took place at the games held during the Consualia.

Agricultural deities were very prominent in early Roman religion, and others besides Mars, Saturn, and their associates were connected with the fertility of the land. The cult of Ceres at Rome went back to the earliest days of the Roman Republic, when in 493 B.C. a temple on the Aventine was dedicated to Ceres, Liber, and Libera. Ceres was identified with Demeter, Liber with Dionysus, and Libera with Kore (i.e., Persephone, Demeter's daughter). Thus the Eleusinian triad of Demeter, Kore, and Iacchus/Bacchus had its exact counterpart at Rome. The mythology of Ceres and Liber is entirely Hellenized, and the ritual of worship in their temple was Greek, even the prayers being spoken in Greek. The wine-god Liber, however, did not share in the ecstatic aspects of Dionysus.

The Aventine temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera was also important as a political and commercial center. It was a center of plebeian activity, and was especially connected with the plebeian aediles and tribunes. In front of it was the headquarters of the state-subsidized grain supply (*statio annonae*).

Also associated with Ceres was the Italian earth-goddess Tellus Mater, with whom she shared the festival of the sowing of the seed (*feriae sementivae*) in January. Thus the grain was watched over from seed to granary by three divinities—Ceres before it was sown, Tellus Mater when it was put in the earth, Consus when it was harvested and stored.

Two minor fertility goddesses were Flora and Pomona. The former was the goddess of flowering, especially of grain and the vine. In Ovid she is the consort of the West Wind, Zephyrus, who gave her a garden filled with flowers. Here is how she describes it (Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 209–230):

> I have a fertile garden in the lands that are my wedding gift, filled with noble flowers by my husband, who said, "Be ruler, O goddess, over flowers." As soon as the dewy frost is shaken from the leaves . . . the Hours come together clothed in many colors and gather my flowers in lightly woven baskets. Then come the Graces, twining flowers into garlands. . . . I was the first to make a flower from the blood of the boy from Therapnae [Hyacinthus]. . . . You too, Narcissus, keep your name in my well-tended garden. . . . And need I tell of Crocus and Attis and Adonis, the son of Cinyras, from whose wounds I caused the flowers to spring that honor them?

In this passage Ovid uses Greek mythology to give substance to the Italian fertility goddess. The Greek figures of Zephyrus, the Seasons (in Latin, *Horae*) and Charites (Latin, *Gratiae* or Graces), and the youths who were changed into flowers give a narrative element to Flora, who otherwise has no myths. Ovid has created a Roman mythology from the Greek stories. His description of the garden of Flora, moreover, was the inspiration for Nicolas Poussin's famous

painting with this title, now in Dresden. In this work Poussin has gathered six of the young men and women who were changed into flowers and were celebrated as the subjects of Ovid's stories.

Even with divinities for whom there was no Greek equivalent, Ovid created stories in the Greek manner that gave them character and substance. Pomona, goddess of fruit that can be picked from trees, was linked by Ovid with an Etruscan deity, Vertumnus, whose name appears to be connected with the Latin word *vortere*, which means "to turn" or "to change." An old statue of Vertumnus stood not far from the Forum in Rome, the subject of a poem by Propertius, who was a contemporary of Ovid.

In Ovid's story, Pomona had a garden from which she excluded her lovers, among them Vertumnus, who could change himself into different shapes. Disguised as an old woman, he approached Pomona and advised her to marry Vertumnus. This he did so successfully (his advice included the cautionary tale of Iphis and Anaxarete, narrated earlier, p. 617) that he resumed his natural appearance as a young man and won Pomona's love. The legend of Pomona and Vertumnus has been one of the most popular of Ovid's stories and has been the subject of innumerable paintings and musical works (see Color Plate 15).

The deities who presided over the livestock of the farm were called Pales. Originally a pair, their name was later used for one deity, either male or female. The festival of Pales, the Parilia (or Palilia), was celebrated in April and was also considered to be the anniversary of the founding of Rome.

Forest Divinities: Silvanus and Faunus

Silvanus (Forester) and Faunus (Favorer) were gods of the woods and forests. Silvanus had to be propitiated when a forest was being cleared or trees felled. In the *Aeneid*, Faunus is the son of Picus and grandson of Saturn, and the father of Latinus by an Italian birth-goddess, Marica. Originally he was a woodland spirit, occasionally mischievous but generally favorable to the farmer who worshiped him. His consort (or daughter) was Fauna, who was identified with the Bona Dea (Good Goddess), a divinity worshiped only by women. Both Faunus and Silvanus were identified with the Arcadian pastoral god Pan. Faunus and Fauna were further identified with minor gods of woodland sounds because they were considered responsible for strange and sudden forest noises. Thus (according to Livy) the night after a closely fought battle against the Etruscans, the Romans heard Silvanus (whom Livy here confuses with Faunus) cry out from a nearby forest that they had won the victory, with the result that the Etruscans acknowledged defeat and returned home. Faunus also had oracular powers; Latinus consulted him about the prodigies that accompanied the arrival of Aeneas in Italy, and Numa received advice from him in a time of famine.

Faunus was officially worshiped at Rome and had a temple on the Tiber island. His festival was in December, but he was closely connected with the more

famous festival of the Lupercalia, which took place in February. The Arcadian king Evander was said to have come to Rome and there to have founded the first settlement upon the Palatine Hill. On the side of the hill is a cave, the Lupercal, where the she-wolf (*lupa*) was later believed to have suckled Romulus and Remus. Here Evander worshiped his Arcadian god Pan, who was the equivalent of Faunus. Thus Faunus was connected with the Lupercalia, whose central ritual was a sacrifice in the Lupercal, at which two young noblemen were smeared with the victims' blood. They were called the *Luperci,* and after the sacrifice they ran nearly naked around the boundary of the Palatine, striking the women they met with leather straps. Barren women, it was believed, became fertile by this act.

Ovid relates a folktale explaining the nudity of the Luperci. Hercules and the Lydian queen Omphale came once to a cave where they exchanged clothes while supper was being prepared. After the meal they went to sleep, still each in the other's clothes. Meanwhile, Faunus had determined to seduce Omphale. He entered the cave and lay with the person dressed as a girl. His reception was far from warm, and ever after he ordered his followers (i.e., the Luperci) to be naked at his cult, to prevent the repetition of so painful a mistake.

Garden Divinities: Venus and Priapus

Venus was an Italian fertility goddess whose original functions are not known. She was worshiped in a number of places under titles that indicate that she had as much to do with luck and the favor of the gods as with beauty and fertility, and she was apparently particularly the protectress of gardens. A temple to her was dedicated at Rome in 295 B.C. with the title *Venus Obsequens* (Venus who is favorable) the same title as in Plautus' comedy *Rudens,* which takes place in front of her temple by the seashore in Libya. During the fourth century, contact with the Greek world led to identification of Venus with the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite.

In 217 B.C., after the Roman defeat at the battle of Lake Trasimene, the dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator consulted the Sibylline books, which ordered him to dedicate a temple on the Capitoline Hill to Venus Erycina. Eryx, at the western end of Sicily, was the site of a great temple to the Phoenician fertility goddess Astarte, who later became identified with Aphrodite and then with Venus. The dedication of the temple of Venus Erycina in 215 was significant in the development of the worship of Venus at Rome. In that year a *lectisternium* was also conducted, a festival at which the statues of the gods were laid out on couches, two to a couch, and offered a banquet while supplication was made to them. The ceremony had first been conducted at Rome in 399 for six gods. The ceremony of 215 was the first in which the twelve great gods were so honored, and Ennius' lines naming them (see p. 623) described this event. In the *lectisternium* Venus was paired with Mars. Thus she gained in status, since Mars was acknowledged as the ancestor of the Romans.

In about 55 B.C. Lucretius began his poem with an eloquent invocation to Venus as the creative principle of life. The opening lines of the poem transfer the majesty and creative power of the Greek Aphrodite to a Roman context (*De Rerum Natura* 1. 1–13):

> Mother of the descendants of Aeneas, bringer of pleasure to gods and men, nurturing Venus, beneath the gliding constellations of heaven you fill the ship-bearing sea and the fruitful lands. Through you all living things are conceived and at birth see the light of the sun. Before you, O goddess, the winds withdraw, and at your coming, the clouds in heaven retreat. For you the variegated earth puts forth her lovely flowers, for you the waters of the sea laugh and the sky at peace shines, overspread with light. For you the West Wind, creator of life, is unbarred. You first, O goddess, and your coming do the birds of the air salute, their hearts struck by your power.

At about the time that Lucretius was writing his poem, the Roman general Pompey dedicated a temple in his theater (the first permanent stone theater at Rome) to Venus Victrix (Bringer of Victory). The family of Julius Caesar traced its ancestry back to her, and he dedicated a temple to her in his forum (which was completed by Augustus). Her connection with Troy led to her importance in the *Aeneid* as the mother of Aeneas. More than a century later, Hadrian dedicated one of Rome's most magnificent temples to the two goddesses, Venus Felix (Bringer of Success) and Roma Aeterna, thus uniting the personification of the city with its divine ancestress.

The shrine of Venus Cloacina stood in the Forum Romanum. Cloacina was presumably the goddess of the Cloaca, the Etruscan drainage system that drained the Forum area and allowed the city of Rome to develop in the low-lying ground from the sixth century onward. How this goddess was identified with Venus is unknown. Among Italian divinities connected with the success of agriculture was Robigo, the goddess of blight, whose festival, the Robigalia, was celebrated in April. She was offered the gruesome sacrifice of a dog and a sheep so that the growing crops would not be attacked by mildew. Naming a divinity after a natural feature (good or ill) is typical of Roman religion.

The protector of gardens, Priapus, was orginally Greek. He was represented by a wooden statue, painted red, with an enormous erect phallus. His principal cult in the Greek world was at Lampsacus (a city overlooking the Hellespont), where he was offered the sacrifice of a donkey (see Color Plate 6). Ovid explains the choice of this victim in this story (*Fasti* 1. 415–440):[5]

> Red Priapus, the ornament and guardian of gardens, loved Lotis, above all the Naiads. She laughed at him scornfully. It was night, and [the Naiads], made drowsy by wine, lay in different places overcome with sleep. Lotis, just as she was, tired by play, slept farthest away on the grassy ground beneath the branches of a maple. Up rose her lover, and holding his breath he silently made his way on tiptoe to the nymph's resting place. Even now he was balancing [on tiptoe]

on the distant grass, yet she still was sleeping soundly. He rejoiced; and lifting her dress from her feet, he had happily begun to reach his longed-for goal. But look! The donkey, Silenus' mount, began ill-timed braying. Up leaped the terrified nymph and pushed Priapus away, arousing the whole wood as she fled. But the god, all too ready with his obscene member, was an object of ridicule to all by the light of the moon. The source of the noise paid the penalty with his life, and this is the victim that is pleasing to the god of the Hellespont.

Water Gods: Portunus and the Gods of Rivers and Springs

Water gods were important to the Italian farmer. Each river and spring had its deity, who needed to be propitiated by offerings. Tiberinus, god of the river Tiber, was propitiated each May when twenty-seven straw dummies, called *Argei*, were thrown into the river from the Pons Sublicius, the wooden bridge of the early city. This ceremony was attended by the *pontifices* (priests of the state religion) and the Vestal Virgins, but even the Romans did not know its origin. Propitiation of a potentially damaging god by means of dummies (substitutes for human sacrifice) is as likely an explanation as any.

Neptunus, later identified with Poseidon, was originally a freshwater divinity whose festival occurred in July, when the hot Italian summer was at its driest. Portunus also was an old Italian god, originally the god of gates (*portae*), but later the god of harbors (*portus*), whose temple was near the Aemilian Bridge in Rome. Vergil makes him help Cloanthus to victory in the boat-race in the *Aeneid* (5. 241–243). He was also identified with the Greek sea-god Palaemon, originally Melicertes (see note 3, p. 304). Both of the Roman sea-gods, therefore, were originally freshwater divinities, who acquired their attributes as sea-gods from Greek mythology.

Of the river-gods, the most important was Tiberinus, and bridging his river was a significant religious matter. The Pons Sublicius (mentioned earlier) was administered by the *pontifices* (whose title may originally have meant "bridge builders"), and there were various religious taboos involved in its construction and administration. Tiberinus himself plays an important role in Book 8 of the *Aeneid* when he appears to Aeneas in a dream and tells him that he has arrived at his final home. He shows him the sign of the sow and her thirty piglets, and he calms his waters so that the boat of Aeneas can move smoothly upstream to Pallanteum (*Aeneid* 8. 31–96).

Springs of running water were under the protection of the nymphs. In the Forum at Rome was the spring of Juturna, who in Vergil appears as the sister of Turnus and the victim of Jupiter's lust. She was worshiped in the Forum and the Campus Martius, and the headquarters of the city's water administration lay in her precinct. Her festival was the Juturnalia. After the battle of Lake Regillus in 496 B.C. the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux) watered their horses at her spring in the Forum. Their temple was next to her precinct.

Outside the Porta Capena at Rome were a spring and a small park dedi-

cated to the Camenae, water-nymphs of great antiquity but unknown origin. Later they were identified with the Greek Muses. The Vestals drew water from the fountain of the Camenae for the purification of the temple of Vesta. Closely associated with the spring of the Camenae was the nymph Egeria, said to have been the counselor and consort of Numa, to whom so much of Roman religious custom was ascribed. Egeria is also found in the precinct of Diana at Aricia, and her spring was one of those that fed Lake Nemi. She was the helper of pregnant women and may indeed have once been a birth-goddess. Another nymph associated with the Camenae is Carmentis (or Carmenta), who also has the double association with water and with birth. As a water-nymph she shared the festival of Juturna, and she is sometimes named as the mother of Evander, the king of Pallanteum, an earlier city on the site of Rome. Like the Parcae (the Roman birth-goddesses identified with the three Fates) she had prophetic powers, as is indicated by her name, for *carmen* means a song or prophetic utterance.

Diana

The Italian goddess Diana was worshiped at Aricia with a cult that was established by members of the Latin League. Aricia is near Lake Nemi, which was known as "Diana's mirror," perhaps indicating her association with the moon, reflected in the waters of the lake. This cult was the starting point for Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough.* The priest of Diana at Aricia was a fugitive slave, who had the title of "King of the Grove" (*rex nemorensis*). He became priest by killing his predecessor in single combat, having challenged him by plucking a bough from a sacred tree. As priest he always went armed, watching for the successor who would kill him. It is likely that the sacred grove was originally an asylum for runaway slaves and the sacred bough was the branch carried by suppliants at an altar.

Diana was concerned with the life of women (especially in childbirth). She was often identified with the Italian goddess Lucina, who brought babies into the light (Latin, *lux, lucis*), although Lucina was more commonly a title of Juno.

Diana was also worshiped at Mt. Tifata near Capua. It is possible that this is where she began to be identified with Artemis. Through Artemis she acquired her powers as goddess of the hunt and (as Hecate) her association with the Underworld. At Rome she was worshiped upon the Aventine Hill, and her cult was established by Servius Tullius. Like her cult at Aricia, it was originally shared by members of the Latin League, being situated outside the early city's walls. Under Augustus her status as sister of Apollo was emphasized and was dramatically expressed in Horace's *Carmen Saeculare,* sung at the celebration of the Secular Games in 17 B.C. by antiphonal choirs of boys and girls, standing respectively upon the Palatine and Aventine hills.

Horace embodies the triple functions of Diana (as Artemis, mistress of animals; Lucina, goddess of childbirth; and Hecate, goddess of the Underworld) in the following hymn, in which he dedicates a pine tree to her (*Odes* 3. 22):

> Guardian of mountains and woods, virgin, you who, when called upon three times, hear women laboring in childbirth, three-formed goddess, let the pine that overshadows my villa be yours, to which I will gladly sacrifice at the end of each year the blood of a boar as it prepares the sideways slash [of its tusk].

At Aricia the resurrected Hippolytus was identified with the minor Italian divinity, Virbius, and associated with Diana. Both Vergil and Ovid tell his story, in which he is put under the protection of the nymph Egeria, and Vergil suggests that it was because of his violent death in a chariot crash that horses were excluded from Diana's shrine.

Mercury

In early Rome the god Mercury (Mercurius) was worshiped as a god of trading and profit (the Latin word *merces* means "merchandise"), and his temple stood by the Circus Maximus in the busiest commercial center of Rome. As a character in Plautus' play *Amphitruo*, he describes himself still as the god of commerce and gain. As he came to be identified with the Greek Hermes, however, he acquired Hermes' other functions—musician, messenger of Jupiter, and escort of the dead. Horace, who elsewhere called himself *mercurialis*, that is, a lyric poet under the special protection of Mercury, inventor of the lyre, addressed a hymn to Mercury that elegantly combines his functions (*Odes* 1. 10):

> Mercury, eloquent grandson of Atlas, who with language and the rules of the well-mannered gymnasium cleverly fashioned the crude manners of new-made humankind, of you shall I sing, messenger of great Jupiter and the gods, inventor of the curved lyre, clever at concealing with light-hearted theft whatever you like. Apollo laughed at you when he found his quiver missing as he threatened you, a child, unless you returned his stolen cattle. Indeed, with you as guide rich Priam left Troy and unnoticed passed by the proud sons of Atreus, the watch-fires of the Thessalians, and the enemy camp. You bring back the souls of the good to the blessed fields; and with your golden wand you restrain the weightless crowd [of ghosts of the dead], welcome to the gods on high and in the Underworld.

Thus the Roman Mercury adopts the functions that were described in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (see Chapter 12), in Priam's journey to the tent of Achilles in Book 24 of the *Iliad*, and in escorting the dead suitors to the Underworld in the opening lines of Book 24 of the *Odyssey* (where the "golden wand" of Hermes is described).

Divinities of Death and the Underworld

We have already seen (in Chapter 15) something of the Roman idea of the Underworld and its system of rewards and punishments. This conception, which is found principally in Vergil, is literary and sophisticated, derived from differ-

ent philosophical, religious, and literary sources, most of them Greek. The native Italian ideas of the Underworld and its spirits originated in the simple religion of the early agricultural communities. The spirits of dead ancestors were propitiated at the festival of the Parentalia that took place from February 13 to 21 (which in the old Roman calendar was the last month of the year). During this period, no one got married, the temples were closed, and offerings were made to the spirits by the head of the family as a guarantee of their friendliness to the family in the ensuing year. The Parentalia was a family celebration. Its gods were simply "gods of the ancestors" (*divi parentum*), without names and without mythology.

The festival of the Lemuria was celebrated in May. The head of the family would propitiate the Lemures, spirits who could do great harm to the household. The ceremony was conducted by night with a magic ritual—the paterfamilias was barefoot, his fingers and thumb forming an "O," his hands ritually washed before he threw behind him black beans for the Lemures to pick up, while uttering nine times a formula intended to drive the spirits from the house.

Ovid identifies the Lemures with the Manes, who were synonymous with the dead. Each person has his or her Manes, and epitaphs conventionally began with *Dis Manibus Sacrum*, "sacred to the divine Manes of . . . ," followed by the person's name.

The Manes, the Parentalia, and the Lemuria, which involve no mythology or legend, are far removed from Vergil's elaborate Underworld, which was derived mostly from Greek sources. From the Etruscans the Romans learned to propitiate the dead by offering human blood spilled on the earth. This is the origin of the gladiatorial games, which were first celebrated at Rome in 264 B.C. at the funeral games for Decimus Junius Brutus. The Etruscans shared with the Greeks many Underworld divinities, such as Charon and Persephone, and added some of their own, such as the demon Tuculcha. The Underworld itself in Roman literature is commonly called Orcus (sometimes personalized as a god) and its ruler was Dis Pater, whose name (Dis = *dives*, "wealth") is the equivalent of the Greek Pluto. The worship of Dis Pater was established at Rome in 249, although he was certainly known there long before. He and Proserpine shared a cult at an underground altar in the Campus Martius, whose precinct was called Tarentum (the etymology of the name is still unexplained), and its cult was associated with the festival of the Secular Games.

The burial goddess, Libitina, was Italian; but her name, origin, and associations have never been satisfactorily explained. Her name was used by the later poets as synonymous with Death, and undertakers were known as *libitinarii*.

Lares and Genius

The Lares were divinities often linked with the Penates. The origin and etymology of their name are unknown. Although they have been identified

with spirits of the dead, particularly of ancestors, the Lares were probably household spirits in origin who could bring prosperity and happiness to the farmer and his farm.

This agricultural origin survived in the Compitalia (crossroads festival), a winter feast celebrated when work on the farm had been completed. A crossroads in primitive communities was regularly the meeting point of the boundaries of four farms, and the Lares honored at the Compitalia were the protecting spirits of the farms. At each crossroads was a shrine, with one opening for each of the four properties. The farmer would hang a doll in the shrine for each free member of his household and a ball of wool for each slave. This seems to have been a purification ritual at the end of the farmer's labor, when substitutes for the human beings were hung up to be purified by the air.

The Lares are basically kindly spirits, protecting the household. Transferred from farm to city, they kept this function, and each house had its *Lar familiaris* to whom offerings of incense, wine, and garlands were made. In Plautus' play *Aulularia*, the *Lar familiaris* speaks the prologue and describes how he can bring happiness and prosperity if he is duly worshiped; if he is neglected, the household will not prosper. Just as each household had its Lar, so the city had its Lares (called the *Lares praestites* or "guardian Lares"), who were worshiped on May 1. Augustus revived the celebration of the Compitalia in the city by instituting shrines of the Lares Compitales in each of the 265 *vici* or subdivisions of the city. In this function, according to Ovid, the Lares "protect the crossroads and are constantly on guard in our city" (*Fasti* 2. 616). At the city Compitalia, the Lares were worshiped together with the Genius of Augustus himself.

The Lares were also protectors of travelers by land (*Lares viales*) and by sea (*Lares permarini*). In 179 B.C. a temple was dedicated to the Lares Permarini to commemorate a naval victory over King Antiochus eleven years earlier.

The Genius represented the creative power of a man, seen most especially in the *lectus genialis*, or marriage bed, symbol of the continuing life of the family. It was associated more generally with the continued well-being of the family. Slaves swore oaths by the Genius of the head of the family, and offerings were made to it on his birthday. For women, the equivalent of the male Genius was her Juno.

Non-Italian Gods

Hercules

Several foreign deities had an important place in Roman religion. In most cases, they came from Greece or the East, and their arrival can often be dated.

The earliest newcomer was the Greek Heracles, called Hercules at Rome. Livy says that when Romulus founded the city the cult of Hercules was the only foreign one that he accepted. We have seen how Hercules visited Rome with the

Cattle of Geryon and there killed the monster Cacus (pp. 631–632). To commemorate the event, his cult was established, either by Hercules himself or by Evander, in the Forum Boarium (the cattle market between the Circus Maximus and the Tiber). His precinct there was the Ara Maxima (Greatest Altar), and the cult was in the hands of two noble families until 312 B.C., when it was taken over by the state. The Forum Boarium area was a natural landing place on the Tiber, and it was among the earliest commercial quarters of the city. Since Hercules was the patron of traders, this area was appropriate for his worship. Like Mercury, Hercules brought luck (including chance finds) and profit, and successful traders dedicated a tithe of their profits to him. Besides the Ara Maxima there were at least twelve shrines or temples dedicated to him in the city.

The Dioscuri

The Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, were worshiped from the time of the early Republic. After they appeared at the battle of Lake Regillus (probably in 496 B.C.) a temple in the Forum was dedicated to them both, although its official name was the Temple of Castor. In the battle the Romans were being hard pressed by the Latins, when the Dioscuri appeared before them on horseback and led them to victory. They then appeared in the Roman Forum and announced the victory. After watering their horses at the fountain of Juturna they vanished. The appearance of the Dioscuri in battle is fairly common in ancient legend, and they were said to have appeared at other battles in later Roman history. They came to Rome from the Greek cities of southern Italy (perhaps from Tarentum) after a period as important deities at Tusculum, a Latin city near Lake Regillus. At Rome they were especially the patrons of horsemen and of the knights (i.e., the economic and social class below the senators). Only women swore by them, using the oath *ecastor*.

The Sibylline Oracles

An even older arrival in Rome than the Dioscuri were the Sibylline oracles, which were traditionally associated with the Greek colony of Cumae. Collections of oracles written in Greek hexameters were common throughout the Greek world; they were especially associated with the Sibyls, prophetesses said to be inspired by Apollo. The Cumaean Sibyl was said to have been granted a life of one thousand years by Apollo, who withheld the compensation of eternal youth (see pp. 234–235). She was Aeneas' guide in the Underworld.

A well-known legend tells how the Sibylline books came to Rome. The Sibyl mysteriously appeared before the last Roman king, Tarquinius Superbus, and offered to sell him nine books of oracles for a high price; when he refused, she burned three of the books and offered the remaining six at the same price. Again he refused, and again she burned three books and offered the last three at the

same price. This time, acting on the advice of the augurs (an important group of priests), Tarquin bought the books. The Sibyl handed them over and promptly disappeared. The books were stored in the Capitoline temple of Jupiter, to be consulted only on the orders of the senate—for guidance in times of calamity and perplexity or during a pestilence or after the appearance of disturbing prodigies. The priests who had charge of them were prominent citizens. The books were considered so important that after they were destroyed in the Capitoline fire of 83 B.C., a new collection was made, which Augustus later deposited in the base of the statue of Apollo in his new temple on the Palatine Hill. The Sibylline books are an example of early Greek influence at Rome. They also were influential in bringing new cults to Rome. For example, they advised the introduction of the cults of Ceres, Liber, and Libera in 496 B.C. and of Apollo in 433.

Apollo and Aesculapius

Apollo—the only one of the great Greek gods not to change his name at Rome—arrived as the result of a pestilence, and his temple was dedicated in 431 B.C., two years after the Sibylline books had been consulted. Until the time of Augustus, this remained his only temple at Rome. Except for his cult under Augustus and, to a lesser extent, under Nero, he was never as prominent at Rome as he was in the Greek world. He was worshiped originally as Apollo Medicus (corresponding to his Greek title of Paean, the Healer). Later his other attributes and interests were introduced, and in 212 the Ludi Apollinares (Games of Apollo, an annual festival), were instituted. Augustus had a special regard for Apollo, and in 28 B.C. he dedicated a magnificent new temple to him on the Palatine Hill.

In 293 B.C., during an epidemic, the Sibylline books counseled bringing Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, to Rome from Epidaurus. He came in the form of a sacred serpent; when the ship bringing him came up the Tiber to Rome, the serpent slipped onto the island that is in the middle of the present-day city and there made its home. A temple to Aesculapius (his Latin name) was built on the island and his cult was established.

Cybele

In 205 B.C., during another period of public distress, the Sibylline books advised the Romans to bring in the Phrygian mother-goddess Cybele, known also at Rome as the Magna Mater (Great Mother). After a visit to Delphi, a solemn embassy went to the city of Pessinus in Phrygia, where it received a black stone that was said to be the goddess. It was brought to Rome with much ceremony; a temple was built on the Palatine Hill, and the festival of the Megalensia was instituted in honor of Cybele. The ecstatic nature of her worship was exceptional at Rome. Her priests (known as Galli) practiced self-castration, and until the reign of Claudius, Roman citizens were forbidden to become Galli. The Megalensia,

however, and its processions, celebrated in April, were a colorful and popular feature of the Roman religious calendar. Lucretius (2. 614–624) and Ovid (*Fasti* 4. 181–186) have left vivid descriptions of the Galli with their wild music, and Catullus (Poem 63) has brilliantly told the myth of Attis (see pp. 178–179).

Other Eastern gods made their way to Rome, especially in the time of the empire. The Egyptian Isis, the Asiatic Ma, the Syrian Baal, and the Persian Mithras were widely worshiped (see pp. 365–367).

Legends of the Founding of Rome

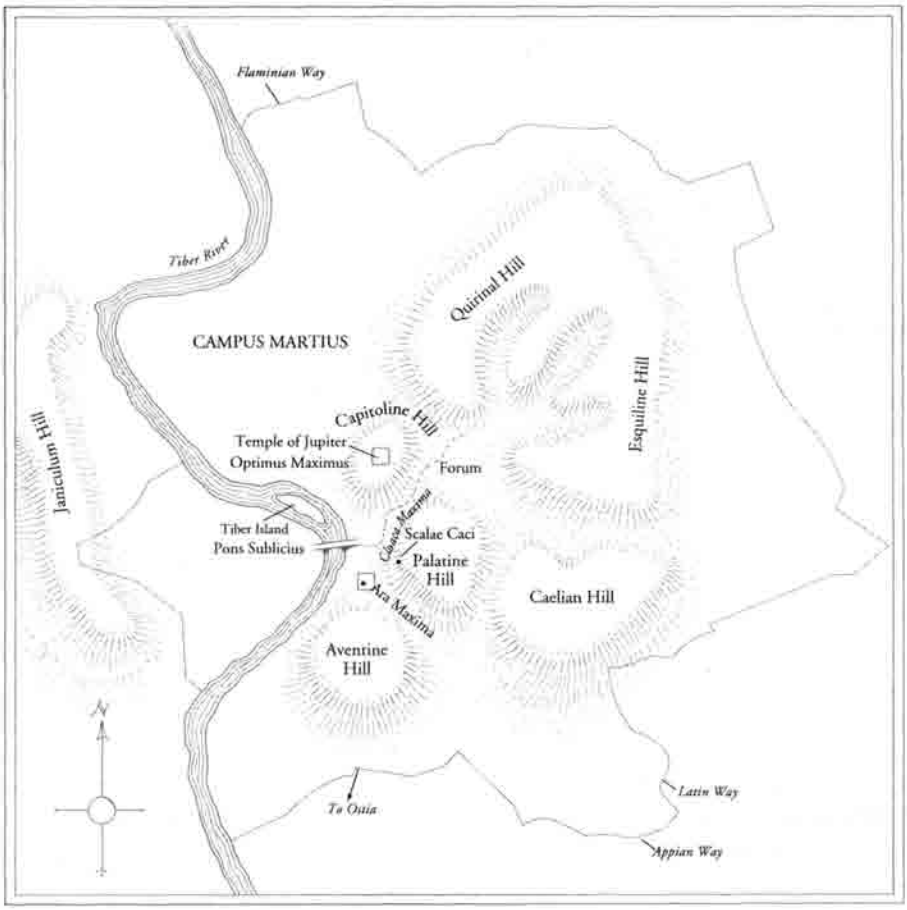
Aeneas and Romulus

The origins of Rome traditionally went back to Aeneas, whose son Iulus (also called Ascanius) was ancestor of the *gens Iulia,* the family of Augustus.[6] But Aeneas left Troy some 475 years before the traditional date for the founding of Rome in 753 B.C. The gap between the two dates was filled by a line of kings at the Latin city of Alba Longa. Aeneas succeeded in establishing a foothold in Latium but died soon after. Iulus then founded Alba Longa, and from there Romulus came eventually to found Rome itself. The earliest settlement at Rome may indeed date from the eighth century B.C., and it is also known that early Rome was an alliance of villages on the different hills by the Tiber, which in time were unified. As Rome became a city, it was sometimes under the control of neighboring peoples (the Tarquins, the fifth and seventh kings of Rome, were Etruscans, and the sixth king, Servius Tullius, may have been Etruscan), but by the early part of the fifth century, the city was strong enough to assert its independence. Then it extended its control over the Etruscan cities and the Sabine and Latin tribes, whose customs and gods it often absorbed. The legendary connection between Rome and Alba Longa is historically likely. That between Rome and Troy is more doubtful.

Aeneas: The Tradition before Vergil

In the foundation myth that connects Rome with Troy, the central figure is Aeneas, son of Aphrodite and Anchises. In the *Iliad* he was an important warrior but inferior to the Trojan champion Hector. When he meets Achilles in single combat (*Iliad* 20. 158–352), he is saved from death by Poseidon, who makes this prophecy (*Iliad* 20. 300–308):

> Come, let us lead him away from imminent death, lest Zeus be angry if Achilles kill him. For he is fated to escape, so that the race of Dardanus may not perish without seed and invisible. For Zeus loved Dardanus most of all his children whom mortal women bare to him. Already Zeus is angry with the family of Priam. Now indeed strong Aeneas and his children's children will rule over the Trojans.



Map 26.2. Map of Early Rome. (© *Laszlo Kubinyi, 1994.*)

Thus there was Homeric authority for the development of Aeneas' saga after the fall of Troy. There are many irreconcilable variations in his legend before Vergil, but his wanderings over the Aegean and Mediterranean and his arrival in Italy seem to have become traditional quite early, and he was associated with a number of shrines of Aphrodite in the areas to which he was said to have traveled. The fifth-century Greek historian Hellanicus recorded his arrival in Italy, and he was well known to the Etruscans. At Veii, for example, a number of statuettes have been found, dating from about 500 B.C., showing Aeneas carrying Anchises from Troy, and the same scene appears on seventeen Greek vases from the same period found in Etruria. His travels were narrated in the epics on the Punic Wars by Naevius (who died shortly before 200) and Ennius, and it is possible that Naevius introduced his meeting with Dido into the tradition.

The early Roman historians also developed the legend of Aeneas. Around 200 B.C. Fabius Pictor, who wrote in Greek, described his arrival in Italy and the founding of Alba Longa by Ascanius (Iulus) thirty years later. In his *Origines*, the founder of Latin historiography, Cato the Elder (who died in 149), brought Aeneas to Italy, where he married Lavinia and founded the city of Laurolavinium (which is evidently the same as Lavinium) in an area called the *ager Laurens*. In this version, Latinus fought against Aeneas, while both Turnus and Aeneas perished in a later battle, and the Etruscan warrior Mezentius was killed by Ascanius in a third battle. Ascanius then left Laurolavinium to found Alba. Finally, Cato calculated that there were 432 years between the fall of Troy and the founding of Rome by Romulus.

This is the basic version of Aeneas' myth, which is also told with some variations by Livy, Vergil's contemporary. All these stories make Aeneas fight with the indigenous inhabitants (called *Aborigines* by Cato and Livy), marry a local princess (Lavinia), found a city (Lavinium), die, become a god, and leave Ascanius, now called Iulus, as his successor. Ascanius then founds Alba, and some four hundred years later Romulus founds Rome itself from Alba.

VERGIL'S *AENEID*

This was the material from which Vergil created his epic, the great national poem of Rome, combining Homeric conventions, Greek mythology, and Roman ethical and historical insights. It records the events of a distant mythological past, yet it has reference to the events and hopes of Vergil's own day, when Augustus was rebuilding the Roman state after decades of civil war and instability. In the prologue, Vergil links Roman history to the mythological tradition and focuses on the hero Aeneas, survivor of the fall of Troy and ancestor of Rome's leaders (*Aeneid* 1. 1–7):

> Of war and a man I sing, who first from Troy's shores, an exile by the decree of fate, came to Italy and Lavinium's shores. Much was he tossed on sea and land by the violence of the gods, because of cruel Juno's unforgetting anger. Much, too, did he endure in war as he sought to found a city and bring his gods to Latium. From him are descended the Latin people, the elders of Alba, and the walls of lofty Rome.

According to Vergil, Aeneas sailed by way of Thrace and Delos to Crete, where he stayed a year, believing that this was the place from which Dardanus came and that therefore it was the future home foretold him by the oracle at Delos. But a pestilence and a vision of the Penates led him to sail in search of Italy, which proved to be Dardanus' original home. He sailed to Epirus, where Helenus and Andromache had settled. Here Helenus foretold some of his future wanderings, and in particular told of their ending, which Aeneas would know had come when he saw a white sow with thirty piglets on a river bank in Italy. This prophecy complemented one that Aeneas received from the Harpy Celaeno,

who foretold that he would reach Italy and would only found his new city when hunger had compelled the Trojans to eat the tables upon which their food lay.

Leaving Helenus, Aeneas reached Sicily, sailing past the shore of southern Italy and avoiding the perils of Charybdis. A direct link with Odysseus was provided by the appearance of one of his men, Achaemenides, a survivor of the adventure with the Cyclopes, who warned Aeneas of Polyphemus and other dangers. It was in Sicily, too, that Anchises died and was buried.

The fall of Troy and Aeneas' wanderings to this point are narrated by him to Dido in Books 2 and 3 of the *Aeneid*. The poem begins with a storm that scatters Aeneas' fleet after setting sail from Sicily. The survivors were reunited in northern Africa, where Dido, queen of Carthage, hospitably received them. She fell deeply in love with Aeneas, who would himself have been content to stay with her had not Mercury appeared to him and gave him Jupiter's orders to sail away to fulfill his destiny in Italy. As he left, Dido laid a curse on Aeneas and his descendants that they should always be the enemies of Carthage, and then killed herself with the sword that Aeneas had given her.

Aeneas sailed back to Sicily and was welcomed by the king of Egesta, the Trojan Acestes. Here he celebrated funeral games in honor of Anchises, during which the Trojan women, incited by Juno, set fire to some of the ships, the rest being saved by Jupiter in a miraculous rainstorm.[7] Aeneas left some of his followers behind in Sicily and now sailed on to Italy where he reached Cumae. Here the Sibyl foretold the wars he must fight in the new land and escorted him to the Underworld, where he talked with many of the dead whom he had known in his past life. The climax of his visit to the Underworld was his meeting with Anchises, who foretold the greatness of Rome and showed him a pageant of future Romans. The visit to the Underworld is the turning point in Aeneas' saga; after it, he is sure of his destiny and determined to settle in Italy, whatever obstacles have to be surmounted.

From Cumae, Aeneas sailed to the mouth of the Tiber, where the prophecy of Celaeno was fulfilled; as the Trojans ate the flat cakes upon which their food was placed, Iulus said, "Why, we are even eating our tables!" In Latium, King Latinus had betrothed his daughter Lavinia to the prince of the tribe of the Rutuli, Turnus. Worried by prodigies, Latinus consulted the oracle of Faunus, who advised him to give Lavinia to a foreigner instead. Latinus attempted to obey this advice by giving Lavinia to Aeneas, but Juno sent the Fury Allecto to madden Turnus and Lavinia's mother Amata, so that they violently opposed Aeneas.

War became inevitable, and Latinus was powerless to prevent it. Turnus and the Latins, with other Italian leaders (notably the Etruscan exile Mezentius), opposed the Trojans, who had for allies the Etruscans under Tarchon and the men of Pallanteum, Evander's city on the future site of Rome. Aeneas' visit to Evander had been preceded by the vision of the river-god Tiberinus. Evander himself showed Aeneas the city that was to become Rome and sent back with him his own son, Pallas, who later was killed by Turnus. After ferocious battles

between the Latin allies and the Trojans Aeneas killed Turnus in single combat. At this point the *Aeneid* ends.

This bald outline hardly reveals the extraordinary power of Vergil's poem. Writing in the epic tradition of Homer, he created a new kind of Roman epic. We illustrate three of his innovations—his use of Jupiter and prophecy to combine myth and Roman history; his creation of a different kind of hero, in some ways like Achilles and Odysseus, but differing completely in the Roman nature of his *pietas* (a virtue that includes a sense of duty and service); and finally, the prominent role he gives to Dido.

Jupiter in the *Aeneid*

In the *Aeneid* the traditional Olympian figure of Zeus-Jupiter becomes identified with destiny or fate. Therefore his prophecies are especially important, and through them Vergil links mythology and Roman history to make the destiny of Rome both noble and inevitable.

In Book 1, Aeneas is driven to land near Carthage by a storm raised by Juno and Aeolus, and Venus complains to Jupiter of the sufferings of her son. In reply Jupiter foretells his glorious destiny and that of his Roman descendants. Here are a few lines from this prophecy (*Aeneid* 1. 267–279):

> But young Ascanius, who now has assumed the additional name of Iulus . . . will complete thirty mighty cycles of the rolling months as king, and he will transfer his kingdom from its place at Lavinium and will found with much force Alba Longa. Here the family of Hector will rule for three hundred whole years, until the royal priestess Ilia, pregnant by Mars, will bear twin children. Then Romulus, rejoicing in the tawny covering of the skin of the wolf (his nurse), will succeed as ruler of the race and will found the city of Mars and call its people Romans after his own name. For them I give no limits of events or time: I have given them empire without end.

This sense of high destiny, in which the traditional myths serve a historical purpose, is repeatedly emphasized by Vergil, in Aeneas' visit to the Underworld in Book 6 (see Chapter 15), in the description of his shield at the end of Book 8, and in the final prophecy of Jupiter in Book 12 (830–840). By these means Vergil preserves the Homeric figures of the Olympian gods, but Jupiter is a more powerful figure than Zeus, while the other gods play their traditional roles, favoring one side or the other. Juno is hostile to Aeneas and favors those who would divert him from his destiny, notably Dido and Turnus, while Venus consistently favors her son and intercedes with Jupiter for him.

Aeneas: A New Epic Hero

Aeneas is motivated by *pietas*, which leads him to leave ease and comfort to pursue a destiny of which he does not become fully aware until after his visit to the

Underworld. He is a wanderer, like Odysseus, in search of a home; and he is the son of a goddess, like Achilles, terrible in single combat. But he is also an exile, who has been defeated in a great war and has seen his city destroyed. His character is epitomized in the scene where he leaves Troy with Anchises, symbol of the past, on his shoulders, while holding the hand of Ascanius, hope of the future (see pages 477–478). When we first meet Aeneas in the storm in Book 1, he wishes he were dead and his "limbs were loosened with cold fear" (1. 92–96), yet on coming to land he speaks to his followers words that show his patience, courage, and hope (*Aeneid* 1. 198–207):

My companions—for we are not inexperienced in adversity—O friends who have suffered worse, the god will bring an end to these things also. You came to the fury of Scylla and the sounding rocks, you experienced the cave of the Cyclops. Recall your courage and dismiss dejected fear. Perhaps we shall be glad to remember these things also in the future. Through varied fortunes, through so many dangers, we go to Latium, where fate shows us a peaceful home. There the kingdom of Troy is destined to rise again. Endure, and keep yourselves for prosperous times!

Yet Aeneas' path is never simple. In Carthage he loves and is loved by Dido, and in a last interview with her he tells her that he must obey Jupiter, whose messenger Mercury has appeared to him, however unwillingly (4. 356–361):

Now also the messenger of the gods sent from Jupiter himself has brought his orders flying swiftly through the air. I myself saw the god in the clear light entering the city and with my own ears I heard him speak. Do not inflame me and yourself with your complaints. I go to Italy not of my own will.

In the last part of the poem, Aeneas must fight a terrible war against the Rutulians, led by Turnus, and their allies. In the final scene of the poem, Aeneas and Turnus meet in single combat, and the poem ends with the death of Turnus, who has pleaded with Aeneas for his life. Turnus had earlier killed Pallas, son of Evander, Aeneas' host at Pallanteum, and put on his victim's sword-belt. Here are the last fifteen lines of the poem (12. 938–952):

Aeneas stood armed eager to attack, surveying [Turnus], and he kept his hand from striking. Even now more and more Turnus' appeal had begun to deflect him as he hesitated, while the ill-starred belt came into his view high on [Turnus'] shoulder and the well-known studs glittered on the boy Pallas' strap. Turnus had felled him with a [fatal] wound and wore his enemy's fittings on his shoulders. Aeneas gazed profoundly at the reminder of his savage grief and at the spoils; and on fire with rage and terrible in his anger, he spoke: "Will you, wearing the spoils taken from my friends, be snatched from me? Pallas with this blow sacrifices you and exacts payment from your sinful blood."

With these words in hot anger he sank the sword in Turnus' chest. His limbs collapsed in the coldness [of death] and his life fled with a groan complaining to the Underworld.

Thus at the end Aeneas is overcome by anger mixed with devotion to his dead friend. Vergil leaves us in doubt—is the *pietas* of Aeneas weaker than his passion? Is he after all a hero motivated by passion like Achilles, rather than the Roman hero inspired by *pietas*? Vergil leaves his readers to decide.

Dido

The greatest obstacle to Aeneas' success is Dido, queen of Carthage and favorite of Juno. In the tradition before Vergil she was called Elissa, a princess of Tyre, married to Sychaeus, who was murdered by her brother, Pygmalion. She escaped from Tyre (taking with her Pygmalion's treasure) and came to north Africa where, as Dido (which in Punic means "Virgin"), she founded Carthage, whose territory she was given by the local prince, Iarbas. Vergil makes her a gracious queen, a leader whom he likens to the goddess Diana. She welcomed the Trojan survivors of the storm, and Aeneas is moved as he sees the history of his own sufferings at Troy portrayed on the city's temple. When Dido first appears, she is likened to Diana herself; all is light and activity. She graciously invites the Trojans to her palace, for, she says, "I also was tossed about with many sufferings and Fortune finally wished me to settle in this land. Not without experience of evil, I know how to help the unfortunate" (*Aeneid* 1. 628–630).

But destiny is against Dido; Venus and Juno conspire to make her fall in love with Aeneas; and after he has recounted to her the fall of Troy and his wanderings, she is stricken with love, likened by Vergil to a wounded deer. Her passion is described in Book 4, along with the hunt and her union with Aeneas, the complaint of her rejected suitor Iarbas to his father, Jupiter (who had seduced Iarbas' mother), the appearances of Mercury urging Aeneas to leave, the final confrontation of Dido and Aeneas, Aeneas' departure, and Dido's decision to die. Before she dies Dido utters a curse on Aeneas and his descendants (4. 607–629):

> O Sun, you who traverse all earth's works with your flames, and you, O Juno, mediator in these troubles and witness, and Hecate, called on with weird cries by night at the crossways in the cities, and dire avenging goddesses (*Dirae*), and gods of dying Elissa [i.e., Dido], accept my words and hear my prayer! If it is necessary for his cursed head to reach harbor and come to land, and if Jupiter's fate so demands and this ending is fixed, then let him beg for help, harried by war with a brave and well-armed people, an exile with no home, torn from the embrace of Iulus, and let him see the untimely death of his companions. And when he has yielded himself to the terms of an unfair peace then may he not enjoy his kingdom nor the light he longed for. Let him fall before his time and lie unburied on the shore. This is my prayer, this is my final word as I shed my blood. Then may you, O my Tyrians, harass his family and all his future descendants with hatred and send this offering to my ashes. Let there be no love, no treaty between our peoples. May you arise, some avenger, from my bones, and may you pursue the Trojan settlers with fire and sword, now, in the future,

Dido and Anna, by Washington Allston (1779–1843). Oil on millboard, 1809(?); 24 × 18 in. Anna comforts her sister, while Aeneas stealthily slips away from the palace to the waiting fleet in the background. In this unfinished painting Allston's focus is the closeness of the sisters rather than the solitary tragedy of Dido. *(Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Miami, Florida, Gift of the Washington Allston Trust. Courtesy of Lowe Art Museum.)*

> whenever time gives you strength. This is my curse—shore with opposing shore, sea with sea, arms with arms, let them and their descendants fight!

Vergil has again united myth and history, for Dido's curse vividly reminds the reader of Rome's times of greatest danger, the wars against Carthage. But in Dido, Vergil also created a character who has always aroused the sympathy of his readers—we are reminded of Augustine, who confessed that he shed tears

for Dido before he did for Christ. As with Aeneas and his legend, Vergil took the traditional story of the founding of Carthage by the Phoenician queen Elissa and transformed the saga into profoundly moving tragedy.

Other Characters in the *Aeneid*

The *Aeneid* is full of characters and scenes that have become part of traditional Roman legend. Besides the fall of Troy, Vergil takes Aeneas to the future site of Rome, where he is welcomed by the Arcadian king Evander and hears the story of Hercules and Cacus. We have seen in Chapter 15 how Aeneas visits the Underworld. In Book 7 we see how Juno rouses the malevolent powers of the Underworld in her attempt to thwart the fulfillment of destiny. Aeneas' enemy Turnus is, like Dido, a victim of destiny, both a cruel warrior and a gallant champion of his people. Mythical Italian characters are vividly portrayed, Nisus and and his lover, Euryalus, who died tragically during a nocturnal patrol; the warrior maiden Camilla, leader of the Volscians, who could run over the fields of ripe grain without bruising the crops and over the waves of the sea without her feet touching the water (7. 808–811); Mezentius, "despiser of the gods," the Etruscan leader who in other versions of the saga survived the war and was later killed by Ascanius. In the *Aeneid*, both he and his son, Lausus, are killed by Aeneas. Camilla is killed by the Etruscan Arruns, who is himself killed by Diana's follower Opis in punishment for killing her favorite.

The Death of Aeneas

The *Aeneid* ends with the death of Turnus. The saga continues with Aeneas' marriage to Lavinia and his founding of Lavinium. He died in battle after only three more years and became a god, being worshiped with the divine title *Indiges*.[8]

Anna and Anna Perenna

The myth of Anna, Dido's sister, is related by Ovid (*Fasti* 3. 523–656) in connection with the New Year's festival (celebrated in March, originally the first month of the Roman calendar) in honor of Anna Perenna. Anna fled from Carthage, which had been occupied by Iarbas, and came to Melita (Malta). Here her brother Pygmalion, who had killed Dido's husband Sychaeus and driven her from Tyre, found her and demanded that she be handed over. Fleeing again, she was shipwrecked off the coast of Latium, reaching land in Aeneas' territory in the *ager Laurens*. Aeneas found her and gave her a refuge in his palace, but Lavinia out of jealousy plotted to kill her. Warned by Dido in a dream, Anna fled once more and came to the bank of the river Numicus, where Aeneas' followers searched for her. Here is how the story ends (*Fasti* 3. 651–656):

> They came to the banks [of the Numicus], where her footsteps were. The river, which knew [what had happened], stopped the flow of his silent waters. Anna

herself seemed to speak: "I am a nymph of the peaceful Numicus. I hide in the river that flows year round (*perenne*) and my name is Anna Perenna." Immediately they feasted in the meadows where they had wandered in their search and celebrated the day and themselves with copious wine.

Thus Ovid identified Anna, sister of Dido, with Anna Perenna, the Italian goddess of the New Year, whose festival was marked by feasting in the open air, drinking, and lovemaking.

Romulus and the Earliest Legends of Rome

Romulus and Remus

The last king of Alba Longa was Amulius, who had usurped the throne from his brother Numitor. Numitor's daughter was Rhea Silvia, also called Ilia, whom Amulius attempted to keep from marriage by making her a Vestal Virgin. Mars loved her, however, and she bore him twin sons, Romulus and Remus, whom Amulius ordered to be thrown into the Tiber. But the servants pitied them and left them by the edge of the river, which was in flood. When the waters receded, the twins were safe on dry ground, where they were found by a she-wolf, who suckled them. The place was marked by the Ficus (fig tree) Ruminalis, a name that is related to the word *rumis*, a teat. It grew near the Lupercal cave below the Palatine Hill, which was the site of Evander's city, Pallanteum.

The babies were found by one of Amulius' shepherds, Faustulus, who brought them to his home, where he and his wife Acca Larentia brought them up. When they were grown up, they made their living, it was said, by attacking brigands and relieving them of their spoils. Eventually Remus was arrested and brought before Numitor, but his punishment was prevented by the appearance of Romulus, who related the story told to him by Faustulus of the twins' rescue. So grandfather and grandsons recognized each other, and together they brought about the death of Amulius and the restoration of Numitor to the throne of Alba. Romulus and Remus then left Alba and founded their own city at the site of their miraculous rescue from the Tiber.

The theme of fraternal rivalry now appears in the story of Romulus and Remus, and it led to the death of Remus. To decide which should give his name to the city, Romulus and Remus resorted to augury, that is, taking omens from the flight of birds. Here is how Ennius describes the scene (*Annales* 1, frag. 47):

Then caring with great care and desiring to rule they give their attention to auspices and augury. Remus takes his place on the hill and alone watches for a favorable bird. But handsome Romulus watches from the heights of the Aventine, observing the race of high-flying birds. Their contest was whether to name the city Roma or Remora. All [the people] were in suspense as to who would be their leader. Straightway the bright light came forth, struck by the rays [of the

Mars and Rhea Silvia, by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). Oil sketch on canvas, 1616–1617; $21\frac{1}{2} \times 29\frac{1}{4}$ in. Mars, in armor, rushes impetuously toward the Vestal Virgin. Already a cupid has removed his helmet, and another (with a quiver of arrows) is unbuckling his breastplate. Rhea looks at him with mixed emotions, including fear and love. The setting is the temple of Vesta, whose sacred fire burns on the altar in front of the Palladium. The sketch may have been intended for a tapestry, since Athena's spear and shield are reversed (her shield would normally be on the left arm) and Mars' sword is on his right side. *(Courtesy of the Collections of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Vaduz Castle.)*

> sun], and at the same time high up a bird flew on the left, by far the most beautiful bird of augury. At the same time the golden sun rose, and thrice four sacred bodies of birds flew from the heavens and settled in the lucky places of good omen. Then Romulus saw that the throne and land of the kingdom had been given to him as his own by augury.

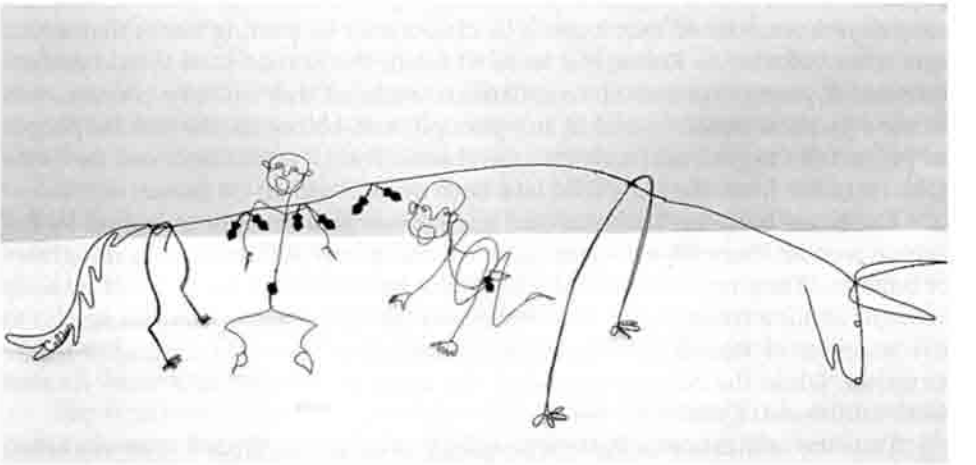
In Ennius' account, Romulus and Remus watch from different parts of the Aventine and the birds appear only to Romulus. In later versions, Romulus watched from the Palatine Hill, Remus from the Aventine. The first omen, six vultures, appeared to Remus, and then twelve appeared to Romulus. In the ensuing quarrel as to whether the winner was he who saw more birds or he who saw the omen first, Remus was killed. Romulus gave his name to the new city of Rome and became its king.

Ennius, however, gave a different version of Remus' death, which was followed by Livy and Ovid. Romulus began to build his city on the Palatine, and when the walls had risen a little way, Remus scornfully leaped over them and was killed by his brother because he had acted as an enemy, for a friend enters a city by the gate.

Romulus and the Sabines

Romulus now set about establishing his kingdom and laying the foundations of Rome's political structure. In order to increase the population, he declared the area between the two parts of the Capitoline Hill an *asylum* (i.e., a sanctuary where any man could be assured of freedom from violence or prosecution). To this place men came from many directions to become Rome's future citizens. There was a shortage of women, however, and attempts to remedy this situation led to a long series of incidents involving the Romans and the Sabines.

In the first place, the surrounding tribes refused requests from Roman embassies for young women to be wives for Roman men. Romulus decided therefore to use deceit and force. Men and women from the Sabine tribes were invited to attend the festival games of the Consualia. At a given signal, the Roman men seized the young Sabine women, whose relatives fled. Such an act could not go unavenged, and the Sabines, under the leadership of Titus Tatius, organized themselves for war on the Romans. In the first encounter, Romulus killed



Romulus and Remus, by Alexander Calder (1898–1976). Wire sculpture, 1928; 31 × 112 in. This large construction is a witty reinterpretation of the famous Etruscan bronze "Capitoline Wolf" in Rome suckling the mythical founders of Rome. *(Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photograph by Robert E. Mates. © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 1998 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.)*

the king of the Sabine town of Caenina and dedicated his armor to Jupiter Feretrius (perhaps Jupiter "to whom one brings"). This was the first of only three occasions in the history of the Roman Republic that a Roman commander dedicated the armor of an enemy commander whom he had personally slain; such dedications were known as the *spolia opima* (the finest trophy). In the second battle, when Romulus was again victorious, Hersilia, the wife of Romulus, acted as conciliator and persuaded her husband to accept the defeated Sabines as Roman citizens.

Finally the Sabines attacked Rome itself and through the treachery of Tarpeia captured the Capitoline Hill. In the legend Tarpeia was the daughter of the Roman commander upon the Capitol; greedy for gold, she agreed to let the Sabines in if they would give her "what they had upon their left arms"—meaning their gold bracelets. After the capture, they crushed her to death under their shields, for the left arm is the shield arm. Although they were masters of the citadel, the Sabines could not capture the Forum—its entrance was barred by miraculous jets of boiling water emitted by Janus. In the low ground where the Forum lay, fierce fighting took place, and the Sabines were successful until Romulus turned the tide of battle by vowing a temple to Jupiter Stator (Jupiter the Stayer).

The next stage of the battle is associated with a cavity in the Roman Forum called the Lacus Curtius. The fiercest of the Sabine soldiers was Mettus Curtius, who rode on his horse into the marshy ground and miraculously escaped from his pursuers. The low-lying depression was named after him. Livy also gives another (more patriotic) account of the Lacus Curtius, which has proved more popular. In 362 B.C. a chasm mysteriously opened up in the Forum, and the soothsayers announced that it could be closed only by putting into it that which was most valuable to Rome; if it were so filled, the Roman state would endure forever. A young Roman, Marcus Curtius, realized that military courage was Rome's greatest treasure, and in full panoply and before the assembled people he prayed to the gods and rode into the chasm. Thus it was closed, and the place took its name from the hero who had been swallowed up by the earth.

The battle between Romulus and the Sabines was brought to an end by the Sabine women themselves, wives (and now mothers) of Romans and daughters of Sabines. They ran into the middle of the battle and by their direct appeals brought about a truce. Peace was made, and the Sabines and Romans agreed to live together at Rome, with Titus Tatius becoming Romulus' colleague in the kingship, while the Sabines provided the name by which the Roman citizens were addressed, *Quirites.*[9]

Thus the unification of the two peoples was achieved. Titus Tatius was killed some years later by the people of Lavinium. Romulus himself, after a long reign, disappeared while reviewing his army in the Campus Martius, amid thunder and lightning. He became the god Quirinus, and appeared to a farmer, Proculus Julius, who reported his final words. They eloquently embody the ideals that later Romans attributed to the founder of their state (Livy 1. 16):

"Go," said he, "and tell the Romans that it is the gods' will that my city of Rome should be the capital of the world. Let them exercise their military skill and let them know—and let them tell their descendants—that no mortal power can resist the Romans."

Some of the saga of Romulus is rooted in fact, as has been proved by recent archaeological discoveries. Much of his legend, however, is literary invention. Romulus himself is the eponym of Rome, to whom many features of the Roman constitution are ascribed. His deification is problematic, since Quirinus was a Sabine god with whom Mars was associated. Sometimes his name stands by itself; sometimes it is attached to Mars (Mars Quirinus) or to Janus, Jupiter, or even Hercules. One ancient Roman scholar (Servius on *Aeneid* 1. 292) described Quirinus as "Mars when he presides in peacetime." The idea of a god of a military state when it is not at war is particularly suitable for Romulus, organizer of the peaceful state and successful leader in its first wars. Quirinus, moreover, being Sabine, is suitably fused with the Roman Romulus; there were separate communities with different cultures upon the Palatine, Oppian, and Quirinal hills in the eighth century B.C. and the legend of a fusion, symbolized by the god Romulus-Quirinus, is supported by archaeological evidence.

Other Characters in the Legend of Romulus

Several other characters in the Romulus legend are divine. Faustulus, the shepherd who reared the twins, may have some connection with Faunus, since the root of his name is the same and has the connotation of "favoring" or "bringing increase." Cato and Varro, followed by Ovid, connected Acca Larentia, Faustulus' wife, with the festival of the Larentalia on December 23, at which offerings were made to the dead, but her exact divine function is unknown. It has been suggested that her name, Acca, is the same as the Sanskrit word for "mother," and that she was therefore the *mater Larum*, mother of the Lares (although the *a* of *Larentia* is long and that of *Larum* is short). All that can be said with certainty is that both Acca and Faustulus are old divinities whose precise attributes and functions had been forgotten by the time of the early Roman writers.

Hersilia, the wife of Romulus, became Hora Quirini, the consort of the deified Romulus. Almost certainly her name, Hora, meant "the power" or "the will" of Quirinus, and this was her original function, before the myth made her the wife of the mortal Romulus.

The treacherous Tarpeia gave her name to the Tarpeian Rock, from which criminals were thrown to their deaths. She too was divine, for libations were offered at her tomb. Although Livy makes her a Sabine, her name is Etruscan.

Some of the elements in the legend explain features of the Roman constitution. The dual kingship of Romulus and the colorless Titus Tatius foreshadows the collegiate principle of Republican magistracies, in particular the dual consulship.

LEGENDS OF THE REGAL PERIOD

The period of the kings (which traditionally ended in 509 B.C.) and of the early Republic is full of stories that are more myth than history. We give a few examples here.

THE HORATII

In the reign of the third king, Tullus Hostilius, there was war between Rome and Alba Longa, which ended in the destruction of Alba. At an earlier stage, the two sides agreed to decide the issue by a battle between champions, three brothers on each side; the Alban champions were the Curiatii, the Romans were the Horatii. Two Romans were quickly killed, but the third, who was unwounded, separated and dispatched singly his wounded opponents. Now his sister had been betrothed to one of the Curiatii; and as her brother was triumphantly entering Rome, bearing the spoils of the dead Curiatii, she cried out in grief. Horatius killed her immediately for her inopportune and unpatriotic gesture. As a murderer, he was condemned to death, but on appeal to the people, he gained a reversal of the verdict because of his popularity as a courageous soldier. He underwent a ritual purification by offering a sacrifice and passing with veiled head beneath a kind of yoke or crossbar (i.e., a horizontal beam supported by two upright poles). The crossbar was called the *tigillum sororium* and was flanked by two altars, one dedicated to Janus Curiatius, the other to Juno Sororia.

The association of Horatius with the *tigillum sororium* was the result of confusing the archaic title of Juno Sororia with the Latin word *soror,* a sister. Passing under the yoke was indeed a ceremony of purification, but, as the titles of the two divinities prove, the purification in this case was of boys and girls reaching the age of puberty. The boys, initiated at the altar of Janus Curiatius, went out to their first battle, and on their return they were purified from blood-guilt by passing beneath the *tigillum.* Juno Sororia likewise presided over the initiation of girls into adult life. Other details of the legend are etiological. The appeal of Horatius explains the Roman citizen's right of appeal to the people. The legend of the Horatii and Curiatii may have derived from five ancient mound tombs, in two groups of two and three, respectively, outside Rome in the direction of Alba. Another ancient stone tomb stood near the place where Horatia was said to have been killed by her brother.

THE TARQUINS AND SERVIUS TULLIUS

The last three kings of Rome were Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Tarquinius Superbus. The two Tarquins were Etruscans, and Servius probably was

The Oath of the Horatii. By Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825); oil on canvas, 1785, $128^1/_4 \times 168$ in. David moved from Paris to Rome in order to imbibe the classical inspiration necessary for this huge and heroic painting. The scene is based not on Livy, but on Corneille's tragedy *Horace* (1640) and Noverre's ballet (1782) on the same theme. The elder Horatius, holding the brothers' swords, administers the oath to the brothers, who salute with military precision, which indicates (for David's patrons) patriotic self-sacrifice but bears more ominous associations for modern viewers. On the right, in the background, the mother of the three brothers comforts her grandchildren, and, in front, Sabina (wife of one of the brothers and sister of the Curiatii) and Camilla (sister of the Horatii and engaged to one of the Curiatii) mourn for their coming bereavement. *(Paris, Louvre.)*

Etruscan, although his name is Latin. Servius was a founder and organizer of Roman institutions second only to Romulus, and a number of legends gathered round him. His mother, Ocrisia, was a slave who had been captured in war and assigned to the household of Tarquinius Priscus. She was of the royal house at Corniculum. According to the legend, Servius' father was the son of Vulcan, who miraculously appeared in phallic form to Ocrisia as she was sitting by the fire in the palace. When Servius was a baby Vulcan showed his favor by causing a miraculous flame to play around the child's head without harming him. Favored by such portents, Servius was assured of special treatment in the palace;

he was brought up in the king's family and married to his daughter. When Tarquin was murdered his widow, Tanaquil, skillfully arranged for the transfer of power to Servius.

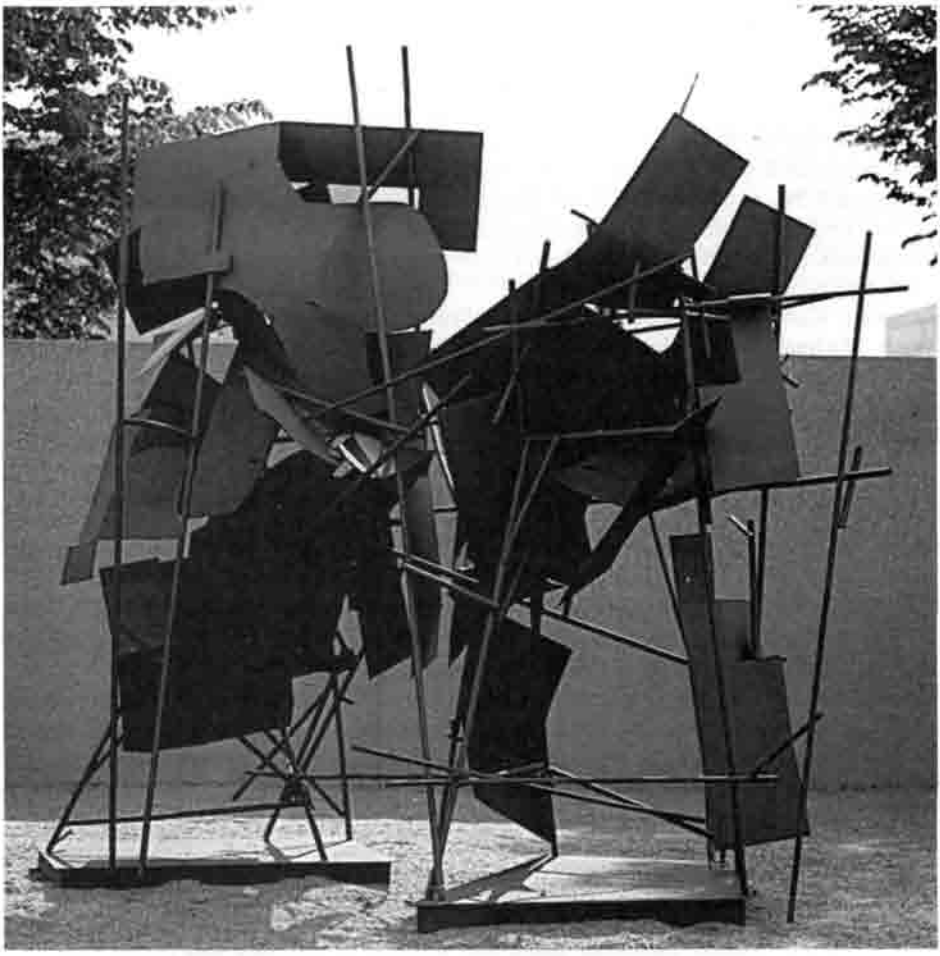
Apart from his political and military reforms, Servius is credited with introducing the cult of Diana to Rome. Like King Numa he is said to have had a divine counselor and consort, in this case the goddess Fortuna. His death was said to have been caused by his daughter Tullia, who was married to Arruns, the son of Tarquinius Priscus, while her sister (also called Tullia) was married to his brother Tarquinius. She had her husband and her sister murdered and then married Tarquinius, whom she urged to usurp the throne and murder Servius. The corpse of Servius lay in the street called the Clivus Urbius; Tullia drove her coach over her father's body; because of the crime, the name of the street was changed to Vicus Sceleratus (Crime Street).

Lucretia and the End of the Monarchy

Thus Tarquinius Superbus (the proud) became king; in the historical tradition he is a tyrant, and his expulsion led to the establishment of the Roman Republic. The crime that caused his removal became one of the most famous of Roman legends. In the Roman army during the siege of the Rutulian capital of Ardea were a number of young nobles, including Tarquinius Collatinus and Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the Roman king. Full of wine one evening, they rode off to pay surprise visits to their wives in order to see who was the most virtuous and faithful. Alone of all whom they visited, the wife of Collatinus, Lucretia, was acting in a chaste and matronly way; they all judged her to be the best and returned to camp. Now Sextus Tarquinius was so taken by Lucretia's beauty that he returned alone to Collatia some nights later and surprised and violated her. Next day she sent for both her father and her husband, who came together with Lucius Junius Brutus. She told them what had happened and made them promise to avenge themselves on her attacker. Then she plunged a dagger into her heart.

Lucretia's martyrdom led to the end of the monarchy. Tarquinius Superbus was driven into exile with two of his sons. Sextus Tarquinius went to the Latin town of Gabii, where he was murdered. Rome became a republic, the chief power being exercised by two praetors elected annually (the title was changed to "consuls" some sixty years later), one of whom was Brutus.

The early centuries of the Roman Republic were idealized by historians and poets. As early as the fourth century, legends were created about Roman leaders to express heroic and moral ideals. In the view of Georges Dumézil, the legends of the monarchy and early Republic reflect the tripartite organization of Indo-European society (for there were three tribes in early Rome), which he classifies by function, that is, priest-kings, warriors, and food producers. He believes that the traditional tales enshrined in the historians (most notably the early books of Livy) were the genuine myths of this society. This view is controversial, but



Rape of Lucrece, by Reuben Nakian (1897–1986). Steel, 1953–1958; height 144 in. Nakian has transformed conventional representations of the scene into a violent confrontation of abstract forms constructed from steel plates and pipes. The intimidating figure on the left, topped by a helmetlike shape, threatens the slighter figure on the right, who starts back from the attacker, while she leaps (we can imagine) to the ground from her bed. Nakian's disjointed shapes starkly express the breakdown of moral and social order represented by the crime of Tarquinius. *(Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1974. Photograph by Lee Stalsworth.)*

it does recognize the peculiar ability of the Romans to make national heroes of their historical figures, as Livy saw. Nevertheless, the stories of these early Roman heroes belong more to the realm of history than to that of pure myth, and we end our survey of Roman mythology with the end of the Roman monarchy.[10]

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beard, Mary, North, John, and Price, Simon. *Religions of Ancient Rome,* Vol. 1: *A History;* Vol. 2: *A Sourcebook.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. A survey of religious life in Rome from the foundations of the city to its conversion into Christianity, with visual evidence and pertinent texts in translation.

Bremmer, J. N., and Horsfall, N. M. *Roman Myth and Mythography.* London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1987.

Donaldson, Ian. *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and Its Transformations.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Galinsky, Karl G. *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Grant, Michael. *Roman Myths.* New York: Scribner, 1971.

Griffin, Jasper. *Virgil.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. A brief but perceptive introduction to the poet.

Hardie, P. *Vergil (Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics, No. 28).* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. A valuable survey of every aspect of Vergil's work.

Harrison, S. J., ed. *Oxford Readings in Virgil's Aeneid.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. An important collection of essays by leading scholars.

McAuslan, I. and P. Walcot. *Vergil (Greece and Rome Studies).* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. The most helpful collection of essays on its subject.

Richardson, L. *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. This work gives much valuable information about the religious significance of places and buildings in the city.

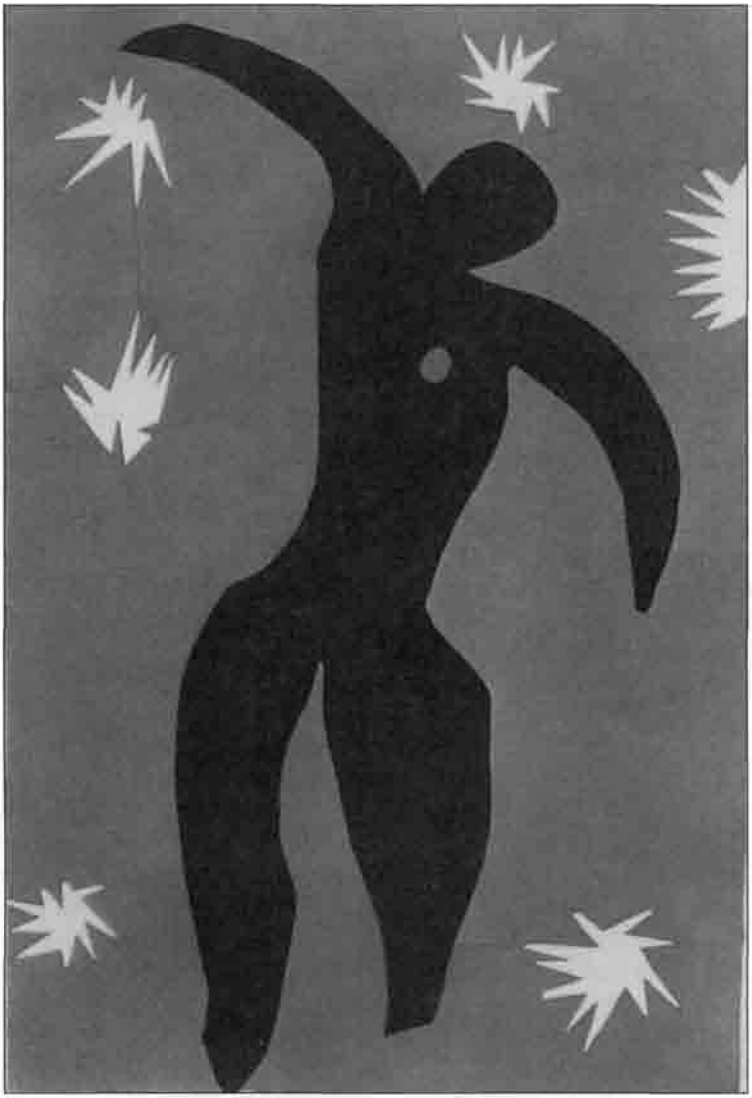
Spaeth, Barbette Stanley. *The Roman Goddess Ceres.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. Spaeth reconstructs what Ceres meant to her worshipers and argues against the feminists who make her a role model for liberation and independence.

Wiseman, T. P. *Remus: A Roman Myth.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. A historical analysis of the origins and development of the foundation legend of Rome.

NOTES

1. Because of the demands of the Latin hexameter, the gods are not named in order of importance. Ennius' forms are given, but we refer to Mercury and Jupiter (for Mercurius and Iovis).
2. Augustus continued to live on the Palatine Hill after he became Pontifex Maximus in 12 B.C.
3. Her name seems to be connected with the Latin words for mind (*mens*) and remembering (*meminisse*).
4. Some years after the great fire of A.D. 64 the emperor Domitian set up altars to Vulcan in every one of the fourteen districts of Rome.
5. Ovid tells the same story of Priapus and Vesta at *Fasti* 6. 319–346. The story of Lotis is the subject of Bellini's painting *The Feast of the Gods* (see Color Plate 6).
6. R. Ross Holloway, *The Archaeology of Early Rome and Latium* (New York: Routledge, 1996). An overview that includes the recent archaeological discoveries relating to early Rome, such as the shrine of Aeneas at Lavinium and the walls of the Romulan city on the Palatine.
7. These ships reached Italy and were turned into sea-nymphs by Cybele, who, as the Phrygian goddess, protected ships made from Phrygian trees (*Aeneid* 10. 220–231).

8. See p. 629 for Ovid's account of Aeneas' death and his epithet. The meaning of the title *Indiges* is not certain. A group of gods were called the *Di Indigetes,* and certain gods (e.g., Jupiter and Sol) were sometimes worshiped with this epithet. Aeneas was sometimes called *Pater Indiges.*
9. The etymology of *Quirites* is unknown. It has the same root as the god Quirinus and the Quirinal Hill. The Romans wrongly connected it with the Sabine town Cures.
10. See Georges Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion.* Translated by P. Knapp, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For further reading in Roman mythology we particularly recommend the following: Michael Grant, *Roman Myths* (Harmondsworth and Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973; reprint, New York: Dorset, 1984).



PART FOUR

The Survival of Classical Mythology

CHAPTER

27

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN LITERATURE AND ART

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

THE DECLINE OF THE GODS OF THE GREEK CITY-STATE

The connection between religion and the state in classical Greece is evident in Greek drama and in the sculpture of the great temples. The gods and their myths were central in the life of the city-state, which reached its climax in many parts of the Greek world during the fifth century B.C. In the following century the self-confidence of many city-states was weakened in part by political strife and warfare, in part by the need for alliances with other Greek cities or with non-Greek peoples. Citizens were less motivated by patriotism to make great sacrifices on behalf of their city, whose gods were no longer ubiquitous in its life. They were less relevant to a world where citizens sought from religion comfort for their individual concerns.

The process of undermining Homeric religion had begun centuries earlier, when the Ionian philosophers began to explain the place of human beings in the macrocosm in nontheological terms. A whole world separates Hesiod's cosmogony and theogony from the Ionians' theories about the universe. Anaximenes of Miletus (ca. 545 B.C.), for example, said that air was the elemental substance of the universe (including the gods) and did not hesitate to refer to it as *theos* (God). Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 500) taught that fire was the prime element and further criticized the rituals of Homeric religion, in particular its central feature, the animal sacrifice; purifying oneself with blood, he said, was like washing in mud. The most outspoken of these early critics was Xenophanes of Colophon (ca. 525), who attacked Homeric anthropomorphism: "Homer and Hesiod," he said, "have attributed to the gods everything that is shameful and a reproach among mortals: theft, adultery, and deceit" (frag. 11 [Diels]). Toward the end of the fifth century, the criticisms of the philosophers were widely accepted among thoughtful people, whose confidence in the old order and established religion was shaken by the political, moral, and intellectual upheavals that surrounded them. In the period of the Peloponnesian War (431–404), the Sophists (professional philosophers) were to be found lecturing in many Greek

cities. Their skepticism about traditional religion caused a strong conservative reaction, which finds its expression in Aristophanes' play the *Clouds* (423) and in the condemnation and execution of Socrates (who was not a Sophist) in 399. The charges against Socrates show how serious was the debate about the gods of the state (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1. 1):

> Socrates is guilty of refusing to recognize the gods recognized by the state and introducing other, new gods. He is also guilty of corrupting the young.

About twenty-five years later, Plato banished Homer from the educational curriculum of his ideal state because he believed the Homeric gods and their myths set a bad moral example for the young. People turned more and more to philosophy for assurance, and the great philosophical schools—such as the Academy of Plato—were founded during the fourth century B.C.

ALEXANDRIANISM

The conquests of Alexander the Great renewed the influence of Oriental ideas and religions in the Greek world. He and his father, Philip II of Macedon, further weakened the independence of Greek city-states and loosened the hold of traditional religion. The period after Alexander's death in 323 B.C. is called the Hellenistic Age, which continued until the final absorption of Greece into the Roman Empire in 146 B.C. The intellectual center of the Greek world in the Hellenistic Age was the Egyptian city of Alexandria, and its library was the greatest of the Greek centers of scholarship. Here in the third century scholars were interested in traditional mythology, which they explained and classified or used as a source of learned allusions. Callimachus (ca. 265) was the most distinguished of the Alexandrian scholar-poets. Amongst his works was the *Aetia* (*Causes*), a poem more than four thousand lines in length, of which only about four hundred survive, containing many myths and legends about the origins of customs, institutions, and historical events. He also wrote six hymns modeled on the *Homeric Hymns.* Among his contemporaries were Apollonius of Rhodes, who wrote an epic on the Argonauts, and Theocritus of Cos, whose poems included episodes from the sagas of Heracles and the Argonauts. Often, however, the Alexandrians used mythology as a source for literary ornamentation or learned allusion.

One of Callimachus' *Aetia* was adapted by Catullus in his sixty-sixth poem, "Berenice's Lock," and we give here a few lines whose ingenuity is typical of the Alexandrian use of mythological allusion. Berenice was queen of Egypt, wife of Ptolemy III, who vowed to dedicate a lock of her hair if her husband returned safe from a campaign in Syria. After the lock disappeared from the temple where it was dedicated, it was identified with a newly discovered constellation, *coma Berenices.* The lock of hair is the speaker (Catullus 66. 51–56):

> The sisters of the lock that had just been cut off were mourning my fate, when the twin of Ethiopian Memnon arrived on hovering wings, the horse that be-

longs to Locrian Arsinoë, and he lifted me up and flew off through the dark upper air and placed me in the chaste lap of Venus.

It would take a learned reader to understand that the "twin of Memnon" is the West Wind, here identified with the winged horse Pegasus. Pegasus is made the servant of Arsinoë, wife of King Ptolemy II, who after her death was deified as Aphrodite Zephyritis (her title coming from the place Zephyrium, but punningly interpreted to mean "having power over Zephyrus," that is, able to send the West Wind on errands).

The Alexandrians and their Roman followers were not always so ingenious in their allusions. Catullus himself created the finest narrative of the myth of Ariadne and Theseus in his sixty-fourth poem, and the Alexandrian taste for romantic detail was brilliantly united with mythological narrative in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, the master storyteller.

Thus the myths enjoyed a revival in the Alexandrian tradition, which at its best led to entertaining and often moving narratives, and at its worst to a paralyzing use of ingenious allusion. In art also, the search for ingenious expression of a particular emotion, or for a particular effect on the viewer, led to works such as the *Hermes* of Praxiteles, whose technical brilliance should be compared with the dignity of the Apollo of the temple of Zeus at Olympia. The *Demeter* of Cnidus, however, dating from the later part of the fourth century, showed that artists could still represent the majesty of the Olympian gods (see page 308).

In the thousand years between the rise of Alexandrianism and the early Middle Ages (i.e., ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 700) the survival of classical mythology was ensured both by the uses to which it was put and by its critics. We discuss four of these modes of survival: (1) Euhemerism; (2) mythographers and handbooks; (3) astronomy and astrology; and (4) pagan and Christian critics.

Euhemerism

The work of Euhemerus of Messene (ca. 300 B.C.), which achieved an influence out of all proportion to its merits, took a different approach to the traditional myths. The theory of *Euhemerism* states that the gods were originally men who had been kings or otherwise distinguished men. Euhemerus claimed in his book *The Sacred Scripture* to have journeyed to the Indian Ocean and, on an island there, to have seen a golden column in the temple of Zeus, upon which were inscribed the deeds of Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus. From this he discovered that the gods were human beings deified for their great deeds. Euhemerus' book was translated into Latin by Ennius (ca. 180) and summarized in Greek by the historian Diodorus Siculus (ca. 30); Ennius' version was summarized by the Christian writer Lactantius (ca. A.D. 300).

Euhemerism owed its importance in the Christian era to the fact that it provided pagan material with which to attack the pagan gods. St. Augustine, writing around A.D. 415, explained the errors of pagan religion "most reasonably,"

he said, "by the belief that the pagan gods were once men" (*De Civitate Dei* 7. 18). The seventh-century bishop Isidore of Seville began his chapters on the pagan gods with the Euhemeristic statement: "Those whom the pagans call gods are said to have once been men" (*Etymologiae* 8. 11). Isidore tried to give historical dates for the men who became gods, and his summary of world history (*Etymologiae* 5. 39) did not distinguish between myth and history. Thus he dated as "historical facts" the invention of the lyre by Hermes and Heracles' self-immolation. Euhemerism survived throughout the Middle Ages, and it was an important element in the survival of the gods of Greek mythology.

Mythographers and Handbooks of Classical Mythology

Mythographers, who summarized and classified Greek mythology, demonstrate another aspect of scholarly interest in mythology. The Alexandrian polymath Eratosthenes (ca. 225 B.C.) and the Athenian scholar Apollodorus (ca. 145) are known to have written handbooks on mythology, now lost, and their names are attached to two surviving mythological compendia. That of "Apollodorus" (perhaps ca. A.D. 120) is the most complete and contains versions of many of the legends that are still useful. The shorter work of pseudo-Eratosthenes, called *Catasterisms*, deals exclusively with metamorphoses of people into stars. Astral legends are an aspect of Alexandrianism, and genuinely early Greek astral myths are rare (the myth of Orion is one example). The *Catasterisms*, however, include forty-four such legends, for example, the origins of the Great Bear (Callisto), the signs of the Zodiac, and the Milky Way. These legends are not myths in the strict sense, but they are a significant element in the survival of some of the persons named in classical mythology.

We give two examples of these catasterisms. In the tenth, the constellation Gemini (the Twins) was formerly the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux):

> They exceeded all men in brotherly love, for they never quarreled about power or about anything else. So Zeus, wishing to make a memorial of their unanimity, called them, "the Twins" and placed them together among the stars.

In *Catasterism* 44, the origin of the Milky Way is given thus:

> The sons of Zeus might only share in divine honors if Hera had suckled them. Hermes, therefore (so they say), brought Heracles at his birth to Hera and held him to Hera's breast and she suckled him. But when she realized it was Heracles, she shook him off and the excess milk spurted out to form the Galaxy.[1]

A few other mythological handbooks still survive. In the first century B.C. Parthenius compiled a collection of love stories for the use of the Roman poet Gallus. A Latin compendium was made in about A.D. 160 by an author who called himself Hyginus (the name of the librarian of the Emperor Augustus around 10 B.C.), containing summaries of more than 250 legends. The *Mitologiae*

ORion:hunc a zona & reliquo corpore æquinoctia-
lis circulus diuidit cum tauro decertantem colloca
tum:dextra manu clauam tenentem & incinctum
enſe:ſpectantem ad occaſum:& occidentem exorta
ſcorpionis poſteriore parte & ſagitario exoriente:
cum cancro autem toto corpore pariter exurgentem.Hic habet
in capite ſtellas tres claras.in utriſq; humeris ſingulas.in cubito
dextro obſcuram unam.in manu ſimilē unā.in zona tres.in eo
quo gladius eius deformatur tres obſcuras.in utriſq; genibus
ſingulas claras.in pedibus ſingulas obſcuras.Omnino ſunt de-
cem & ſeptem.

Orion. Woodcut from *Hygini Poeticon Astronomicon Liber,* T. de Blavis, Venice, 1488. Hyginus' mythological summary was printed by Erhard Radtolt at Venice in 1485, the first printed book to have woodcuts illustrating the constellations named after mythological figures and emblems. His blocks were used by other printers: in the case of Orion, de Blavis reversed the figure (Orion wields the club in his left hand). Orion is represented as a medieval knight whose armor overwhelms the seventeen stars of the constellation. *Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room.*

of the African bishop Fulgentius (late fifth century A.D.) summarized and explained the pagan myths. These works, whatever their literary worth, at least helped keep the myths alive through the early Middle Ages.

Astronomy and Astrology

The names of mythology often survived through astronomy and astrology. We have already mentioned the interest of the Alexandrians in astral legends. The astronomical poem *Phaenomena*, by Aratus (a Greek from Asia Minor, ca. 275 B.C.), was one of the most popular of all Hellenistic works. It was translated into Latin by several authors (including Cicero), and more than two dozen ancient commentaries are known. Astrology, however, was more significant in the survival of the pagan gods. It had been important in the East since the time of the Sumerians and became popular in the Greek world after the conquests of Alexander. Before the Hellenistic Age the Greeks had been skeptical about astrology, but after the fourth century B.C. the influence of the stars on human life was widely studied and feared.

Astrology was not confined to the uneducated or the superstitious; it was encouraged by the Stoic philosophers, and among the Romans even so rational a man as Cicero admitted that there was "divinity in the stars." Astrologers believed in the sympathy of the heavenly bodies and human beings. Human life, they said, was bound up with the movements of the heavenly bodies, so that the stars came to have the power formerly held by the gods. It was an easy step then to give them the names of gods and to link these names with existing legends. Moreover, as countless peoples and religions were included in the Roman Empire, a host of foreign gods joined the classical pantheon, and they transformed the images of the classical gods. This process is especially clear in the influence of Egyptian religion and its mother-goddess, Isis, and in the representations of gods in the religions of the Near East such as Mithraism.

One great Roman poem on astrology survives, the *Astronomica* of Manilius, written early in the first century A.D. Manilius recognized the authority of Homer and other Greek poets, but he found traditional mythology to be too restrictive. In Book 2, he recalls the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (*Astronomica* 2. 1–7):

> The greatest of poets with his sacred mouth sang of the struggles of the Trojan people, of the king and father of fifty princes [Priam], of Hector conquered by Achilles and Troy conquered after Hector, and the wanderings of the leader [Odysseus] . . . and his final battle in his own land and in a home taken captive [i.e., by the suitors].

Manilius goes on to praise Hesiod and other poets, showing that Greek mythology still exerted a strong influence on even the most rational of poets. In Book 3, however, he shows how he needed to go beyond the traditional themes of mythology and epic (*Astronomica* 3. 1–13):

> Lead me on, O Muses, as I rise to new themes and dare things greater than my strength, not afraid to enter woods not yet visited. I try to extend your bounds and to bring new treasure to poetry. I shall not tell of the war coming into being to destroy the heaven [i.e., the war of the giants], nor of the unborn baby [Dionysus] buried by the flames of the thunderbolt in its mother, nor of the kings [i.e., Agamemnon and the Greek leaders] bound by their oath, nor of Hector ransomed for his cremation as Troy was falling, and Priam bringing him [back to Troy]. I shall not tell of the Colchian woman [i.e., Medea] selling the kingdom of her father and dismembering her brother for love, nor of the crop of warriors and the cruel flames of the bulls and the watchful dragon, nor of the years restored [i.e., to Aeson], nor the fire lit by gold [i.e., the killing of Glauce and Creon], nor [Medea's] children sinfully conceived and more sinfully murdered.

In the next century (ca. A.D. 140) the Greek-Egyptian astronomer and mathematician Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus) published his astrological treatise, the *Tetrabiblos,* which explained the heavenly bodies and the nature of their influence upon human character and action.

Christianity was unable to resist the popularity of astrology. St. Augustine vigorously attacked it in his *City of God* (especially in Book 5), yet even he believed that the stars did have an influence, to which God and human free will were nevertheless superior. In any case, astrology was too much a part of late classical and early medieval culture to be extirpated. It therefore survived the coming of Christianity and with it the classical gods prolonged their existence, often, it is true, in scarcely recognizable forms.

Pagan and Christian Critics

Even the critics of mythology acknowledged its uses. As early as 55 B.C. the Roman poet Lucretius found the names of the gods useful as symbols (*De Rerum Natura* 2. 655–660):

> Let us allow a man to use "Neptune" and "Ceres" for "sea" and "grain," "Bacchus" for the proper word "wine," "mother of the gods" for "earth," provided that he does not in fact allow his mind to be touched by base superstition.

Elsewhere in *De Rerum Natura* (3. 978–1023) Lucretius interprets myths allegorically, so that the sinners in the Underworld (Tantalus, Tityus, Sisyphus) become allegories of human passions. He comments on Tityus as follows (3. 992–994):

> Tityus is in us here, whom the birds tear as he lies in the throes of love and as painful anxiety eats him up or as the cares of some other desire consume him.

By rationalizing the myths writers such as Lucretius were also ensuring their survival. This also was the case when they were attacked by the Christian Fathers. Augustine's goal in writing his *City of God* (ca. A.D. 420) was, in his words, "to defend the City of God against those who prefer their gods to its founder," that is, preferring the gods of classical mythology to Christianity. Yet Augus-

A VOICE FROM THE END OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Boethius (524–480 B.C.) wrote his *Consolation of Philosophy* during the last year of his life, while he lay in prison in Pavia awaiting execution. Writing in classical Latin, he imagines a woman who personifies Philosophy instructing him, prose dialogue alternating with poems in a variety of meters. Boethius uses mythology to confirm philosophical doctrine. Orpheus (3. 12) is an example of one who disobeyed through love the laws of moderation. Boethius describes the traditional features of the Underworld, yet "Orpheus saw, lost, killed his own Eurydice." Those who seek the higher good will lose it if they look back to Tartarus. Again, Odysseus was saved by Hermes from the power of Circe (4. 3.), unlike his men. Her herbs cannot change the hearts of human beings, but such poisons "drag a human being down from himself. . . . They flow in insidiously: not harming the body they rage in the wounded mind."

Finally, after Philosophy has told Boethius that human beings must shape their own fortunes (4. 6), the following poem (4. 7) uses Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Heracles as examples of heroes who overcame great adversity to achieve their goals (although Agamemnon and Iphigenia paid a heavy price). "Go on, brave human beings," sings Philosophy, "where the high road of heroic examples leads. . . . Earth, if you rise above her, rewards you with the stars."

Boethius found in classical mythology examples to instruct and encourage human beings in adversity. Whether or not he was a Christian (and he almost certainly was), for him the ancient legends still had a power to illuminate the precepts of reason.

tine, Jerome, and other Christian Fathers actually helped to prolong the life of the classical legends. The myths survived not only in classical literary texts but also in Christian literature and works of art. The process of absorption and mingling during late antiquity and the Middle Ages reached its climax in the work of Dante, who used, criticized, and, in the process, vindicated the classical myths.

The mythological figures, then, did indeed survive, despite the passing of the religion that created them. In Western literature they were used as symbols or as allegories; they became vehicles for romantic storytelling or were identified with constellations. They traveled to the East, to be depicted in Arab manuscripts in forms very different from their Greek originals. However changed they were, the important fact is that they survived, and at the end of the Middle Ages they took out a new lease on life that still endures.

LITERARY USES OF THE MYTHS

OVID IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

A new age in European literature, beginning toward the end of the eleventh century, has rightly been called an Ovidian Age, since Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were

supremely important in bringing about the revival of classical mythology that reached its climax in Renaissance literature and art. In the Middle Ages classical and biblical history and mythology were mingled without distinction between history and legend. In the period of the eleventh to the thirteenth century Ovid's tales were retold not merely for their own sake, but also as vehicles for moralizing allegory. The goddesses and heroines of the *Metamorphoses* even appear as nuns in one work, and a whole series of poems and prose works explain the *Metamorphoses* in Christian terms.

This process reached its zenith with the enormous *Ovide Moralisé* of the early fourteenth century, a French reworking of the *Metamorphoses* in which the legends were interpreted as moral allegories. As an example we give a translation (from a fifteenth-century French prose summary of the poem) of one of several interpretations of the legend of Apollo and Daphne:

> Here we may suppose that by the maiden Daphne is meant the glorious Virgin Mary, who was so lowly, pure, and beautiful that God the Father chose her to conceive his only Son by the work of the Holy Spirit. She carried him for nine months and then bore him, virgin before the birth and at the birth; virgin after the birth she remained without ever losing her virginity. This sovereign Virgin is the laurel, always green in virtue, which God planted in the garden of his paradise.

A similar approach is to be found in the translation (from the French of Raoul le Fèvre) of the *Metamorphoses* by William Caxton (*Ovyde Hys Booke of Methamorphose*, 1480):

> Another sentence may be had for the storye of Daphne which was a ryght fayre damoysel. . . . On a tyme he [Apollo] fonde her alone and anone beganne to renne after her. And she for to kepe her maydenhode and for to eschewe the voice of Phebus fledde so faste and asprely [roughly] that al a swoun [all of a sudden] she fel down dede under a laurel tree. In which place she was entered [interred] and buryed without deflourynge or towchynge of her vyrgynyte. And therefore fayneth the fable that she was chaunged and transformed into a laurel tree, whiche is contynuelly grene. Which sygnefyeth the vertu of chastete.[2]

Quaint as the medieval uses of Ovid may seem, they show a lively interest in classical mythology. Ovid's legends were to return in their full glory in the art and poetry of the Renaissance, and his poem still remains the single most fruitful ancient source of classical legend.

Medieval use of classical mythology was not limited to allegory. The romantic side of Ovid's legends was often preserved. The "most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby" presented by the "rude mechanicals" in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has several predecessors in French, Italian, and English. They appear in Chaucer and Boccaccio, in the songs of the medieval troubadours, and in the twelfth-century *Piramus et Tisbé*. All go back finally to Ovid.

The Trojan Legend in the Middle Ages

A different romantic tradition is embraced by the medieval versions of the Trojan legend. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a number of epic *romances* were composed with classical themes. The most influential of these was the *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Ste. Maure, a 30,000-line romance written around 1160. In scope it extends from the Argonautic expedition through the founding and destruction of Troy to the death of Odysseus. Benoît was using two Latin prose versions of the Trojan legend as his sources. The first, by Dictys Cretensis, describes the war and the returns from the Greek point of view. It is a forgery of uncertain date (second to fourth century A.D.), purporting to be a translation from the Greek version of a diary written on bark in Phoenician script by Dictys of Crete during the Trojan War. The second of Benoît's sources, the *De Excidio Troiae* of Dares Phrygius, is likewise a late Latin forgery (perhaps of the sixth century A.D.), purporting also to be a translation from the Greek, this time of the eyewitness diary of the war from the Trojan point of view kept by the Phrygian Dares. These works were thought to be better sources than Homer because they were apparently written by eyewitnesses. They also had realistic details about the war and its participants and romantic elements. They appealed to medieval tastes and they are, through Benoît, the ancestors of much writing on the Trojan legend. Joseph of Exeter, for example, wrote a Latin verse paraphrase of Dares, which Chaucer used as a source for his *Troilus and Criseyde* (ca. 1380). The legend of Troilus and Cressida, indeed, which was first elaborated by Benoît, went through several stages of transformation. Benoît's narrative was paraphrased in Latin by an Italian, Guido delle Colonne (ca. 1275), and Guido was put into French by Raoul le Fèvre (1464). The French version was used by Chaucer and Caxton, who were the principal sources for Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida.* Here are a few lines from Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historye of Troye:*

> Whan Troylus knewe certaynly that Breseyda [Cressida] shold be sente to her fader he made grete sorowe. For she was his soverain lady of love, and in semblable wyse Breseyda lovyd strongly Troylus. And she made also the grettest sorowe of the world for to leve her soverayn lord in love. There was never seen so much sorowe made betwene two lovers at their departyng. Who that lyste to here of alle theyr love, late [let] hym rede the booke of Troyllus that Chawcer made wherein he shall fynde the storye hooll [whole] whiche were to longe to wryte here.[3]

Dante

Dante (1265–1321), the last of the great medieval writers and the forerunner of the Italian Renaissance, took Vergil as his guide in the *Inferno* and named Homer and Ovid among the "great shades" of classical authors inhabiting the Inferno.

Thus the importance of three of the principal sources for classical legends (Homer, Vergil, and Ovid) was confirmed.

The Italian Renaissance

The figures of classical mythology first returned to their classical forms in Italy, after the centuries of metamorphosis. Their revival was part of the Renaissance ("rebirth") of classical Greek.[4] During the fourteenth century scholars journeyed to Byzantium, where they learned Greek. If they were lucky or persistent, they also acquired manuscripts of classical Greek authors, which they brought back to Italy. Thus the study of classical Greek (which had been limited during the preceding centuries) was expanded. Petrarch (1304–1374) and Boccaccio (1313–1375) learned classical Greek, and the latter's teacher translated Homer and some Euripides into Latin. The most powerful impetus to the revival of Greek studies came from the capture of Byzantium by the Turks in 1453, for many Greek scholars fled to Italy bringing with them manuscripts of classical authors. They taught Greek to Italian humanists, although it is hard to say how many of these were learned enough to be able to read a Greek text with ease.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Italian scholars hunted for classical manuscripts, which they copied in the libraries of monasteries, and even stole. Petrarch, for example, possessed and copied two manuscripts by Livy. Boccaccio possessed copies of Varro and Apuleius, while others—of whom Coluccio, Poggio, and Politian are the most distinguished—formed extensive classical libraries and commented upon the classical works. Thus by the time classical authors began to be printed (Cicero's *De Oratore* was printed at Subiaco in 1465) there was a large corpus of fairly reliable texts.

Another aspect of the Italian Renaissance was the publication of mythological handbooks, often illustrated with woodcuts.[5] The earliest was Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum* (1371), which was first printed in 1472 at Venice. Giraldi's *De Deis Gentium* was published in 1548, and the *Mythologiae* of Conti (Natalis Comes) in 1551. These were written in Latin, while in Italian Vincenzo Cartari published his *Le Imagini degli Dei Antichi* at Venice in 1556. These handbooks gave basic narratives for writers and artists to draw on, and their woodcuts provided basic iconographies for artists to copy or elaborate. They were a significant element in the recovery of the classical forms of the gods.

Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Chaucer's "Knight's Tale"

Petrarch and Boccaccio used classical mythology in their poems—Petrarch in his Latin epic *Africa*, and Boccaccio in his Italian epic *Teseida (Theseid)*. Chaucer used the *Teseida* as his principal source for "The Knight's Tale" (ca. 1387), the first of his *Canterbury Tales*. The tale begins at the point in the Theban legend when the

Seven have failed and their widows come to Attica and ask Theseus for help. Chaucer's Theseus is Duke of Athens, whose virtues are more typical of the ideal medieval leader than of the classical epic hero. In telling of the theater in which the jousting is to take place, Chaucer describes three "oratories" of Mars, Venus, and Diana. We give part of the description of Diana's oratory, which combines Ovidian mythology and medieval allegory ("The Knight's Tale" 2051–2072):

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee.
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee [Callisto],
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre [star];
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre [further];
Hir sone is eek [also] a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane [Daphne], y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte [was called] Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon [Acteon] an hert [stag] y-maked,
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten [eaten] him, for that they knewe him naught.
Yet peynted was a litel further-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.

Thus Chaucer, drawing on Boccaccio, embellished his tale with legends drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Pastoral

In Italy pastoral Latin poetry, modeled on the *Eclogues* of Vergil, was composed during the Renaissance. In these poems, the form and language are Vergilian, while the characters have classical names with figures from classical mythology used for ornament and allusion. The setting is Renaissance Italy; for example, in the *Eclogues* of Sannazaro (1458–1530), Vergilian shepherds have become Neapolitan fishermen, who on one occasion meet with Proteus and a band of Tritons as they are sailing back from Capri. The classical conventions of pastoral were widely used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England and France, and they influenced the development of opera and masque, especially in France.

England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Translations of Ovid

In England classical mythology was widely used. Ovid was the most popular source, and the *Metamorphoses* were known to educated people in Latin, French, or English versions. The English version by Arthur Golding (1567), preeminent in the latter part of the sixteenth century, was used by Shakespeare. Although it was clear and faithful to the text of Ovid, its fourteen-syllable lines hardly did justice to Ovid's swift-moving energy. The translation of George Sandys (1626) largely took its place, and was in part successful because of the tighter rhythm of its ten-syllable heroic couplets. Here are the opening two lines of the poem in Golding's version, then in Sandys':

(G) Of shapes transformde to bodies straunge, I purpose to entreate;
Ye gods vouchsafe (for you are they that wrought this wondrous feate). . . .
(S) Of bodies chang'd to other shapes I sing.
Assist you gods (from you these changes spring). . . .

Sandys (1578–1644) worked on his translation during the voyage from England to Virginia, where he was treasurer of the Virginia Company, and he completed it during his time in Jamestown. He probably returned to England in 1626 to see to its publication. *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished* is therefore the first verse work in English (other than a ballad, *Good Newes from Virginia,* about the vengeance taken by the settlers for the Indian massacre of 1622) completed in America. Its importance was assured by the second edition, published at Oxford in 1632, which included an allegorical commentary and a full-page woodcut to illustrate each of the fifteen books.[6] The commentary interpreted the legends in moralizing or Christian terms, but Sandys excelled his predecessors in the breadth of his learning and the incisiveness of his prose. Here are some of his comments on the transformation of Arachne (for her story, see pp. 164–166):

These personages, with the places, being woven to the life by Arachne, she incloseth the web with a traile of Ivy; well suting with the wanton argument and her owne ambition. Worne in garlands at lascivious meetings; and climing as ambitious men, to compasse their owne ends with the ruin of their supporters. Minerva tears in peeces what envy could not but commend, because it published the vices of great ones; and beats her with the shuttle to chastise her presumption: who not induring the indignity hangs her selfe; and is by the Goddesse converted into a Spider: that she might still retain the art which she had taught her, but toile without profit. For uselesse and worthlesse labors are expressed by the spiders web: by which the Psalmist presents the infirmity of man, and vanity of his actions.

SHAKESPEARE, MARLOWE, AND SPENSER

English authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made extensive use of classical mythology, in drama and narrative poems, as ornaments in lyric poetry and by means of mythological allusion in prose and verse works. Allusions were not always explicit. For example, when Ben Jonson addresses the moon as "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair," he is alluding to Artemis (Diana). In William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *Twelfth Night*, the Duke imagines himself to be Actaeon as he recalls his first sight of Olivia (1. 1. 19–23):

O! When mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence.
That instant was I turn'd into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.

Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598, completed by Chapman) and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) are outstanding examples of narrative poems drawn from Ovid's legends. In drama, history rather than mythology more commonly provided Renaissance authors with material, but one distinguished exception is Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, published in 1604 and, in a revised version, in 1616. Marlowe (1564–1593) makes the mythological Helen a symbol of surpassing sensual beauty, an object of Faustus' desire. Here are the famous lines in which Faustus embraces Helen (*Doctor Faustus* 1328–1334):

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
And burn't the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!
Her lips suck forth my soul. See where it flies!
Come, Helen, come give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven be in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.

Masques were dramatic productions, usually allegorical in nature, in which the characters were drawn from classical mythology. The most distinguished example of the genre is Milton's *Comus* (1634), which combines a pastoral setting with classical allegory. Another example is the masque in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Act 4, scene 1). The custom of having aristocrats dress up as classical gods and goddesses survived in France and England well into the eighteenth century.

Ovid's Metamorphosis English'd. By George Sandys, 1632. Engraving for Book 3 by Francis Clein and Salomon Savery. Each book of the poem was prefaced by a full-page illustration, giving a summary representation of the book's legends. Book 3 is devoted to the Theban legends: the death of Semele appears on the upper right; the battle of the Spartoi in the right center; Cadmus, after killing the dragon in the lower right, looking up at Mars [Ares] in the sky; Actaeon in the lower left. *(Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room.)*

More important was the use of mythology for didactic purposes, as allegory, or as symbolic of universal truths, especially in the works of Spenser and Milton. In the second book of Edmund Spenser's (1552–1599) *Faerie Queen* (1596), Guyon journeys with the good Palmer and destroys the evil Bower of Bliss. On the way he is tempted by the Sirens and he is only saved from destruction by the "temperate advice" of the Palmer. In this episode the classical Sirens are symbolic of evil, and Homer's Odysseus has become a Christian holy man. In Book 2, Canto 12, Spenser alludes to Homer's tale of Ares and Aphrodite when the enchantress throws "a subtile net" over Guyon and the Palmer, and he alludes to Ovid's Arachne in the description of her delicate silk dress ("More subtile web Arachne cannot spin"). The enchantress herself, with her bewitched animals, is the Homeric Circe. Thus Spenser uses several classical legends in his allegory of Temperance.

Milton

Of all English writers John Milton (1608–1674) displays the deepest knowledge and most controlled use of classical mythology. In an allusion to the Adonis legend, he describes the Garden of Eden as a "spot more delicious than those gardens feigned or of revived Adonis," combining ornamental simile and adverse judgment. In *Paradise Lost* (1667) his classical allusions are especially associated with Satan and his followers, and Hell is peopled with the full complement of the classical Underworld. The violence of the fallen angels is described in a simile drawn from Heracles' death (*Paradise Lost* 2. 542–546):

As when Alcides, from Oechalia crowned
With conquest, felt th'envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
Into th' Euboic sea.

This passage is followed by another describing the more peaceful fallen angels in terms of Vergil's Elysian Fields. Throughout Milton's poetry, classical mythology is intertwined with biblical and contemporary learning. Like the Christian Fathers, Milton knew classical mythology so well that he felt it necessary to appeal to the superiority of Christian doctrine. In the invocation to his Muse, Urania, he follows his description of the fate of Orpheus (whose mother, the Muse Calliope, could not save him), with these words (*Paradise Lost* 7. 1–39):

So fail not thou, who thee implores
For thou are heav'nlie, shee an empty dreame.

The tension between classical paganism and puritan Christianity is yet more explicitly put by Milton's contemporary, Abraham Cowley:

Still the old heathen gods in numbers (i.e., poetry) dwell.
The heav'nliest thing on earth still keeps up hell.

France in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The great dramas of the French Renaissance were founded on classical sources, although their themes were more often taken from Roman history than from mythology. Thus Garnier (1534–1590) wrote tragedies on the themes of Phaedra (*Hippolyte*) and Antigone (*Antigone*). The first tragedy of Corneille (1606–1684) was *Médée* (1635), and Racine (1639–1699) likewise wrote his first tragedy, *La Thébaide* (1664), on a theme drawn from classical mythology, the legend of the Seven against Thebes. His *Andromaque* (1667) deals with the legend of Andromache and Pyrrhus, with the significant variation that Astyanax is supposed to have survived the fall of Troy. By far the greatest of Racine's mythological tragedies is *Phèdre* (1677), based largely on the *Hippolytus* of Euripides and the *Phaedra* of Seneca.

Classical mythology was the principal source for court entertainments under Louis XIV and Louis XV, whose reigns spanned the period from 1643 to 1774. In these productions members of the court appeared as mythological beings or as characters from classical pastoral poetry. They included music and dancing as well as words, and they were performed in elaborate settings, often designed by the most prominent artists of the day. They were operas, in which the singing predominated, or court ballets, in which dancing was more prominent. The earliest French opera was *Pomone*, by Robert Cambert, produced in 1671. Ovid's legend of Pomona and Vertumnus was one of many classical tales used by court composers (including the great French masters Lully and Rameau) for their operas and court ballets. Toward the end of the long reign of Louis XV, critics such as Denis Diderot attacked the frivolity of such artificial productions and related works of art such as the mythological paintings of François Boucher (see Color Plate 15). Their opinions helped turn contemporary taste toward the high seriousness of historical subjects (drawn especially from Roman Republican history as portrayed by Livy and Plutarch) and away from mythology.

The burlesques of Paul Scarron (1610–1660) comically deflated the pretentions of classical epic and mythology. The best known of these was his unfinished parody of the *Aeneid*, *Virgile Travesti*. Scarron was a serious writer, and he was most unfortunately imitated in a host of tasteless and less skillful travesties in England.

Classical mythology was also the basis of important French prose works, of which the most significant was the *Télémaque* of Francois Fénelon (1651–1715), a didactic romance published in 1699. The basis of this work is the first four books of the *Odyssey*, in which Telemachus, accompanied by Minerva, travels from Ithaca in search of Ulysses. Into these adventures were worked Fénelon's moral and political precepts.

Classical mythology, therefore, had been an inseparable part of French literary and artistic life in the two centuries before the French Revolution. By then it

had lost its freshness, and its use eventually became too formal for it to continue to be inspiring. Voltaire (1694–1778) ironically views the rise and fall of the influence of classical mythology in France in his late poem addressed to Pindar:

Sors du tombeau, divin Pindare,
Toi qui célébras autrefois
Les chevaux de quelques bourgeois
Ou de Corinthe ou de Mégare;
Toi qui possédas le talent
De parler beaucoup sans rien dire;
Toi qui modulas savamment
Des vers qui personne n'entend,
Et qu'il faut toujours qu'on admire.
[Come out of your grave, divine Pindar, you who in other times used to celebrate the horses of some rich citizens, whether from Corinth or Megara; you who possessed the gift of speaking much without saying anything; you who skillfully modulated lyrics that no one listens to and everyone must always admire.]

Germany in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The renaissance of classical studies took place later in Germany than in Italy, France, Spain, Austria, the Netherlands, and England. Although there had been fine classical scholars in German universities and princely courts since the sixteenth century, the classical renaissance did not reach its full vigor there until well into the eighteenth century. It differed also from the classical renaissance elsewhere in that the Greeks were admired more than the Romans, and Homer and the Greek gods reigned supreme. A short work by J. J. Winckelmann (1717–1768) led to revived interest in Greek sculpture and its ideals. This was *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (*Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*), published in 1755. Its influence grew with the publication in England of Stuart and Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens Measured and Delineated* (1762), which directed attention to Greek buildings and the sculpture that decorated them. Winckelmann's ideas spread with the publication, in 1766, of Lessing's *Laocoön*, which encouraged viewers to admire and become emotionally involved in works of Greek sculpture.

Thus Germany was prepared for the emergence of a group of great poets whose inspiration was drawn from Greece, and through them Greek mythology enjoyed a new life. The first of these were Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805). Schiller's poem *The Gods of Greece* (*Die Götter Griechenlands*), which appeared in 1788, laments the passing of the world of Greek mythology and contrasts it with the materialism that the poet perceived in the Christian world around him.

Goethe was constantly inspired by the classical myths. He wrote a drama on *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (first in prose, 1779, then in verse, 1788) and a long succession of lyric poems evoking Greek mythology. Sometimes the Greek myths symbolized freedom and clarity (as in his *Ganymed*, where Ganymede expresses his joy at union with Zeus), sometimes they are the vehicle for expression of human independence and dignity, as in his *Prometheus*:

Hier sitz ich, forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
Zu leiden, zu weinen,
Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich,
Und dein nicht zu achten,
Wie ich!
[Here I sit, I make human beings in my image, a race that will be like me, to suffer, to weep, to enjoy and to be glad, and to pay no attention to you, as I do!]

Goethe's most powerful evocation of Greek mythology is his use of Helen in *Faust*, Part 2, completed in 1832, the year of his death. Helen, whom Faust loves and loses, symbolizes all that is beautiful in classical antiquity, most specifically the beauty of Greek art. Goethe's Helen is more complex than Marlowe's (discussed earlier), for she represents the power and beauty of classical humanism. Here are Faust's words when he first sees the phantom of Helen, the ideal of classical beauty (*Faust* 2. 1. 6487–6500):

Have I still eyes? Is the spring of beauty most richly poured deep into my soul? My fearsome journey has brought a blessed prize. How empty was the world to me and closed! What is it now since my Priesthood? For the first time worth wishing for, firm-founded, everlasting! Let my life's breath die if ever I go back from you! The beauty that once enchanted me, that in the magic glass delighted me, was only a foam-born image of such beauty! You are she, to whom I give the rule of all my strength, the embodiment of my passion, to you I give longing, love, worship, madness!

Later Faust travels to Greece and there is united with Helen. Here are his words of happiness as he looks forward to "years of happiness" with Helen in Arcadia, the pastoral landscape of perfect bliss (2. 3. 9562–9569):

So has success come to me and you; let the past be behind us! O feel yourself sprung from the highest god! You belong solely to the first [the ancient] world. No strong fortress should enclose you! Eternally young, Arcadia, Sparta's neighbor, surrounds us, there to stay in full happiness!

The third of the great German poets inspired by Greek antiquity was Hölderlin (1770–1843), whose work was most deeply infused with longing for the world of Greek mythology and with regret for its passing. "We have come too late," he says (*Brot und Wein* 7): "the gods still live, but above our

heads in another world." In the same poem he evokes the landscape of Greek mythology:

> Come to the Isthmus! There, where the open sea roars by Parnassus and the snow shines on the Delphic cliffs! There, to the land of Olympus, there on the heights of Cithaeron! There, under the pine trees, under the clusters of grapes, whence Thebe and Ismenus [flow and] roar in the land of Cadmus below, whence comes the god and where he points back as he comes!

Hölderlin evokes the places associated with the great Olympian gods, Poseidon, Apollo, Zeus, and Dionysus, but "gone are the thrones and the temples," and Delphi is silent. Yet Greece still was a source of inspiration, and throughout his work, Hölderlin used Greek mythology to contrast the excitement and purity of its world with the harsher reality of his own day. This kind of escapism was a positive influence on the romantic poets in Germany and England.

England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Dryden and Pope

During the eighteenth century, classical influences reached their zenith in English literary circles. Unlike the fashionable writers who inhabited court circles in France, the English authors succeeded in keeping the classical tradition alive and vigorous over a longer period. There were, of course, many jejune uses of classical myths as ornament or mere allusion. The lack of patronage comparable to that of the courts of Louis XIV and XV meant less brilliant achievements in painting and music, but the independence of British authors led to a vigorous use of classical literature. English taste inclined more to Roman models than to Greek and to history and satire rather than to epic and tragedy. Of authors after Milton, Dryden and Pope were especially important influences for the survival of classical mythology.

John Dryden (1631–1700), although a seventeenth-century figure, exercised such influence as critic, translator, and poet that he established criteria for poetry for the first half of the eighteenth century as well. For our survey, his importance lies especially in his monumental achievements as a translator, mostly from Latin authors, including much of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His translation of Vergil, in which other translators collaborated, was published in 1693. Dryden successfully employed the heroic couplet as the proper meter for the translation of epic, and the style of his translation certainly affected the way in which his readers approached classical mythology. Pope described it as follows (*Imitations of Horace: The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* 267–269):

> . . . Dryden taught to join
> The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
> The long majestic march and energy divine.

The dignity and energy of Dryden's heroic couplets were also attributes of the classical figures who appeared in them. As an example of Dryden's style, we quote his translation of Ovid's description of Triton blowing his horn (*Metamorphoses* 1. 447–461):

The billows fall, while Neptune lays his mace
On the rough sea, and smooths its furrow'd face.
Already Triton at his call appears
Above the waves; a Tyrian robe he wears,
And in his hand a crooked trumpet bears.
The sovereign bids him peaceful sounds inspire,
And give the waves the signal to retire.
His writhen shell he takes, whose narrow vent
Grows by degrees into a large extent;
Then gives it breath; the blast, with doubling sound,
Runs the wide circuit of the world around . . .
The waters, list'ning to the trumpet's roar,
Obey the summons and forsake the shore.

A greater poet was Alexander Pope (1688–1744), whose translation of the *Iliad*, published in 1720, was for many decades the way by which readers in Britain and America became familiar with Homer and the world of Greek mythology. Pope succeeded in his "first grand duty" as a translator, which was "to give his author entire . . . [and] above all things to keep alive the spirit and fire which make his chief character" (from the preface to the *Iliad*). The translation, however, is as much a creation of Pope's time and taste as it is Homeric, and many would agree with Thomas Jefferson, who said: "I enjoyed Homer in his own language infinitely beyond Pope's translation of him." Like Dryden's translations, however, Pope's *Iliad* created a certain view of the Greek gods and their myths, which not only spread knowledge of them but also established the criteria by which they were valued. Here are a few lines from Pope's translation, in which Achilles swears his great oath at the height of his quarrel with Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1. 233–247):

"Now by this sacred sceptre hear me swear,
Which never more shall leaves or blossoms bear,
Which sever'd from the trunk (as I from thee)
On the bare mountains left its parent tree:
This sceptre, form'd by temper'd steel to prove
An ensign of the delegates of Jove,
From whom the power of laws and justice springs
(Tremendous oath! inviolate to kings);
By this I swear—when bleeding Greece again
Shall call Achilles, she shall call in vain.
When, flush'd with slaughter, Hector comes to spread
The purpl'd shore with mountains of the dead,
Then shalt thou mourn the affront thy madness gave,

Forced to deplore when impotent to save:
Then rage in bitterness of soul to know
This act has made the bravest Greek thy foe."
He spoke; and furious hurl'd against the ground
His sceptre starr'd with golden studs around:
Then sternly silent sat.

Romantics and Victorians

By the end of the eighteenth century, Pope's heroic couplets were no longer considered the appropriate vehicle for classical myths. Like the German romantic poets mentioned earlier, English poets used the myths to express the effect of classical literature and art on their own emotions. John Keats (1795–1821) was inspired by the Greeks, although he knew no Greek, and expressed his admiration and enthusiasm in the sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* and the *Ode on a Grecian Urn.* He used the myth of Diana and Endymion as the basis of his long poem *Endymion,* in which other myths (Venus and Adonis, Glaucus and Scylla, Arethusa) were included. His slightly older contemporary and friend, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), was very widely read in the classics and translated many Greek and Roman works. His drama *Prometheus Unbound* used the Aeschylean hero to express his views on tyranny and liberty. Prometheus is the unconquered champion of humanity, who is released from his agony while Jupiter is overthrown. "I was averse," said Shelley, "from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind." Thus, in the tradition of Aeschylus and Euripides, Shelley changed the myth for his own moral and political purposes. His poems are full of allusions to classical mythology. One of the greatest, *Adonais,* is his lament for the death of Keats, whom he portrays as the dead Adonis. Aphrodite (Urania) mourns for him, as do a succession of personifications, including Spring and Autumn (*Adonais* 16):

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling [growing] buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais.

Shelley and the Romantics anticipate the uses of classical myths in nineteenth-century literature, art, and education.[7] In England the classics remained the foundation of formal schooling, and the knowledge of classical mythology was widespread if not very deeply understood. Increasingly the learning of classical literature was linked to morality, a process that was furthered by the doctrines of Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), who in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) saw

"Hebraism" and "Hellenism" as the inspiration of modern ideals. The latter, he said, aimed at seeing "things as they really are." Nevertheless, there were many creative uses of the classical myths. Arnold himself was a very good classicist and translator and a gifted critic and poet, who looked back to the classical world for the "moral grandeur" that he found to be missing in his own age.

Many other poets used the classical myths for their own purposes; in *Ulysses* (1833, published in 1842) Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1883) used the hero setting forth once more "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield," as an example for the poet who must continue "going forward and braving the struggle of life." The epic *Life and Death of Jason* (1867) by William Morris was unusual in scale, since most authors, poets, and novelists (of whom George Eliot was perhaps the most imbued with knowledge of the classics) preferred to use themes from classical literature for shorter poems, allegory, or allusion. The influence of Homer was especially strong in the ideals of English education, where the *arete* of Achilles was thought to inspire physical courage and manly vigor. At the same time, the aristocratic milieu of Homeric action appealed to the sentiment of educated Victorians, who had little sympathy for the Homeric Thersites. Nevertheless, it was not so much the individualism of Achilles as the group discipline of Sparta that proved to be a more important influence, and lessons were learned more from classical history than from mythology.

Classical mythology also became the object of serious study by linguists and anthropologists, of whom Max Müller (1823–1900), professor of comparative philology at Oxford, was the earliest and in some ways the most influential and most misleading (see p. 7). Once scholars began to develop unitary theories of mythology, the creative use of classical mythology was threatened. Yet, as we have seen in the twentieth and now in our own century, the myths have refused to die, and they still inspire writers, artists, and musicians.

Classical Mythology in America

The Seventeenth through the Nineteenth Centuries

The hard life and grinding work ethic in colonial America left little opportunity for the study of classical mythology, even though Sandys' translation of Ovid was largely written in Virginia. Americans in colonial times read Homer (in Pope's translation), Vergil (more in Dryden's translation than in Latin), and Ovid (both in Latin and in Sandys' translation and in the literal prose translation of John Clarke, published in London in 1742) and included Vergil and Ovid in the school curriculum, not always with approval. Cotton Mather (1663–1728) believed that classical poetry was frivolous and dangerous for the soul: "Preserve the chastity of your soul from the dangers you may incur, by a conversation with the Muses, that are no better than harlots," he said in 1726. The great Boston teacher, Ezekiel Cheever, warned his pupils not to be charmed by Ovid's *Meta-*

morphoses and reminded them of the example of "young Austin" (St. Augustine), who wept for Dido when he should have shed tears for Christ.[8]

More powerful voices attacked the primacy of the classics in education on utilitarian grounds or because they were thought to be a sign of the subservience of America to the Old World. Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1837 spoke for the intellectual independence of America: "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe." Noah Webster in 1783, Francis Hopkinson in 1784, Benjamin Rush in 1789, Thomas Paine in 1795—all spoke eloquently for broadening the base of American education. Although the classical languages remained an essential part of college entrance requirements (and therefore of the school curriculum) until the twentieth century, the arguments of Webster and Rush were effective, and the moral arguments that supported the classics in Europe (especially in Britain) were less widely heard in America. Nevertheless, the study of mythology was still thought to have some value, and Thomas Bulfinch, whose *Age of Fable* was published in 1855, believed that it could promote virtue and happiness even if it was not useful knowledge.

Nathaniel Hawthorne quite purposefully pursued a moral goal in retelling the myths in his *Wonder Book* (1851) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853). In the preface to the former, he said that the myths were "legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality." Thus in the story of the Apples of the Hesperides ("The Three Golden Apples") Hercules is imagined to feel regret that he had spent so long talking to the Graeae, and Hawthorne comments:

> But thus it always is with persons who are destined to perform great things. What they have already done seems less than nothing. What they have taken in hand to do seems worth toil, danger, and life itself.

It is difficult to combine this attitude with Ovid's stories of the gods in love or with the shameful acts of many heroes. Hawthorne simply left out Theseus' desertion of Ariadne and Jason's of Medea. "The objectionable characteristics seem to be a parasitical growth, having no essential connection with the original fable" (from "The Wayside," in *Tanglewood Tales*). Jupiter becomes consistently dignified: in the tale of Baucis and Philemon ("The Miraculous Pitcher"), Philemon is impressed by the disguised god:

> Here was the grandest figure that ever sat so humbly beside a cottage door. When the stranger conversed it was with gravity, and in such a way that Philemon felt irresistibly moved to tell him everything which he had most at heart. This is always the feeling that people have, when they meet with anyone wise enough to comprehend all their good and evil, and to despise not a tittle of it.

Indeed the bowdlerization of Ovid was both a feature of school texts in the nineteenth century and a reason for his decline. George Stuart (1882), in his widely used text, omitted all the love stories (even Daphne!), except for those

involving boys (Hyacinthus was included), and chose to emphasize manly courage and violence, along with the most desiccated grammar. This approach could, and did, lead only to the death of mythology as a living subject of study and pleasure.

The Twentieth Century

In the twentieth century, the traditional tales took on vigorous new life. In part this was the result of studies in comparative anthropology and psychology, which led to new versions of the old legends. We can only mention here a few examples from a vast number. Isamu Noguchi's sets for the ballet *Orpheus* (1948) are one example (see p. 359); John Cheever's story "The Swimmer," a retelling of the saga of Odysseus with a sardonic ending, is another. Several films described in Chapter 28 are clearly indebted to the theories of Jung and Freud. Among poets, Ezra Pound (1885–1972) used classical mythological allusions throughout his poems. Like Pound, T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) spent his creative years in Europe, having gained a classical education in America. His poetry and plays are full of allusions to classical mythology, and his play *The Family*

POETRY AND MYTHOLOGY

In modern times the classical myths have constantly inspired poets, whether as sources for Jungian archetypes, for political and moral allegory, or for discussion of social, religious, and psychological problems. At the gates of the twentieth century stands Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), whose *New Poems* (1907) include the profoundly moving *Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes*, in which the description of the upward path from the Underworld rivals Vergil's evocation of the downward path in *Aeneid* 6 (see p. 340: "they went, dim figures, in the shadows of the lonely night"). Eurydice already belongs to another world; she follows Orpheus uncertainly, "uncertainly, gently and without patience," words repeated as Orpheus sees her descending once more, "her steps hobbled by the long winding-sheets." In 1923 Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* explored the nature of poetry and its fame: "only he who has lifted his lyre already among the shades may have unending praise. . . . Only in the Double-realm are the voices eternal and gentle" (1. 9).

Proto-feminist H. D. (Hilda Doolittle, 1886–1961) constantly returned to classical mythology for her images, nowhere more intensely than in *Eurydice* (1915), in which Eurydice is the speaker and the focus: "So you have swept me back,/I who could have walked with the live souls/above the earth. . . . So for your arrogance/and your ruthlessness/I have lost the earth . . . before I am lost,/hell must open up like a red rose/for the dead to pass."

From Rilke to Rita Dove, classical mythology lives in poetry, above all in the myth of Orpheus—singer, musician, and poet immortal.

Reunion (1939) is based on the saga of the House of Atreus. So also is the trilogy by Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), where the saga is set in nineteenth-century New England. O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms* (1924) sets the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus in New England in 1850. Robinson Jeffers (1887–1962) adapted Euripides' *Medea* in 1947 and *Hippolytus*, entitled *The Cretan Woman*, in 1954.

More recently feminist theories and interpretations (discussed on pp. 17–18) have given new life to many classical myths, particularly those involving the tragic heroines (e.g., Clytemnestra, Antigone, Medea, Phaedra), who stand as universal examples of leaders, victims, destroyers, mothers, daughters, wives, or lovers. The feminist approach has led also to a deeper understanding of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which young women so often are portrayed as victims.

Other Modern Uses of Classical Mythology

In Europe and elsewhere, classical myths were a rich source of inspiration in modern times. Among the most famous and complex works is *Ulysses* (1922), by James Joyce (1882–1941), in which the events of Bloomsday (June 16, 1904) are narrated in chapters that roughly correspond to episodes in the *Odyssey*. The hero, as is often the case in modern adaptations of classical saga, is antiheroic; but the transformation of the world of Odysseus into Dublin in 1904 is both faithful to Homer and original. The work owes much to psychological discoveries, especially those of Freud; yet in the Circe episode (set in a Dublin brothel with Bella as Circe), the substance of the allegory is also close both to Homer and to Spenser (discussed earlier).

Metamorphosis itself is the theme of *The Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*, 1915), by Franz Kafka (1883–1924), in which again Freudian psychology enriches the theme of human transformation into a "monstrous bug" (or "vermin"). While there is no direct derivation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the theme itself is common to Ovid and Kafka. To give one example from many, Ovid's Io (Book 1) is alienated, like Kafka's Gregor Samsa, from her family by her metamorphosis, and we observe her tragedy, like his, through the medium of her human mind. In French literature, the Theban saga and the myth of Orpheus have both been especially popular. The dramas of Jean Anouilh (1910–1987) include *Eurydice* and *Antigone* (as well as *Médée*). In the first named, Orpheus is a café violinist, Eurydice an actress, and Death a commercial traveler. Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) wrote *Orphée* (1927), *Antigone* (1928), and *La machine infernale* (1934) on the Oedipus theme. André Gide (1869–1951) turned to the myths of Philoctetes (1897) and Narcissus (1899) to discuss moral questions; and his play *Oedipe* (1926) discusses the "the quarrel between individualism and submission to religious authority." Finally, *Amphitryon 38* (1929), by Jean Giraudoux (1882–1944), owes its serial number, according to the author, to the thirty-seven previous dramatizations of the myth that he had identified. Giraudoux also wrote a one-act play,

The Apollo of Bellac, in which the god appears as a nondescript inventor. Better known is his play *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (*The Trojan War Will Not Take Place,* 1935), translated by Christopher Fry with the title *Tiger at the Gates.* In this play, Hector and Ulysses agree that Helen will be returned to Menelaus and so the war will be avoided. But a drunken incident nevertheless precipitates the fated hostilities, and at the end Cassandra prophesies the inevitable action of Homer's *Iliad*—"and now the Grecian poet will have his word." The renowned Marguerite Yourcenar (1903–1987) has two plays inspired by Greek mythology: *Electre ou la chute des masques* (*Electra or the Fall of the Masks,* 1954), concentrating on Orestes' return before the murders, and *Qui n'a pas son minotaure?* (*To Each His Minotaur,* 1943), about the legend of Theseus.

In literature in Spanish, the Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) was especially provocative in his use of classical mythology, whose importance to him is indicated by the title of his best-known collection of short stories, *Labyrinths* (1953; translated into English, 1962). "The Immortal" begins with the antique dealer Joseph Cartaphilus of Smyrna offering the Princess of Lucinge a six-volume set of Pope's *Iliad.* A little later he dies during a voyage to Smyrna on the ship *Zeus,* but he leaves in one of the volumes a manuscript relating his experiences in many ages as a kind of Odysseus. His account ends:

> "I have been Homer; shortly I shall be No One, like Ulysses; shortly I shall be all men; I shall be dead."

On quite a different scale, the enormous *Odyssey, A Modern Sequel* of the Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis (1938; translated into English, 1958) also takes Odysseus beyond the limitations of place. He travels through the world until his search for a perfect society is transformed into a search for himself, ending with his isolation in the Antarctic, where death comes gently to him, as Tiresias had foretold in the *Odyssey.*

It is not surprising that our survey ends with Homer, the first and greatest creator of the literature of classical mythology. The myths and sagas, like the great mythical figures of the gods and heroes, have proved indestructible because of their universal quality, expressed in the words of Borges and interpreted in countless works of poets, dramatists, and other writers for the greater part of three thousand years.

Classical Mythology in Art

Classical Mythology in the Art of Late Antiquity

Despite the decline of the influence of the gods in the life of the cities and individuals, they continued to be a source of allegory, especially in funerary art. With the spread of inhumation (from about A.D. 140), wealthy patrons commissioned reliefs on sarcophagi (i.e., marble or stone coffins), whose mytho-

logical subjects were allegories of the resurrection of the soul (the finding of Ariadne by Dionysus, illustrated on page 562, was especially popular in this connection), the triumph of virtue over evil (e.g., the Labors of Heracles or scenes of battles with the Amazons), or hope for everlasting life (symbolized especially by Dionysus and the vine). These subjects were equally appropriate for pagan and Christian patrons, and so classical mythology continued to provide material for artistic representations even after the triumph of Christianity.

Here are a few examples from the third and fourth centuries. In the cemetery beneath St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican is a third-century wall mosaic showing Christ with the attributes of Apollo as sun-god (see Color Plate 3). He ascends in the chariot of the sun, whose rays, as well as the cross, emanate from his head, while in the background the vine of Dionysus is both a decorative and a symbolic feature. Also in the third century, Christ appears as Orpheus in a fresco in a Christian catacomb in Rome, and a century later Hercules is shown killing the Hydra in another Christian catacomb fresco. In the fourth century, a Christian woman, Projecta, had her splendid silver-gilt wedding casket decorated with figures of the Muses and of sea-gods and goddesses attended by mythological monsters. The Muses and sea divinities appear in mosaics from the provinces, including Britain and Germany, and the myth of Actaeon is the subject of a third-century mosaic from Cirencester (the Roman Corinium) in Britain.

Of all mythological figures Dionysus proved the most durable, in part because the vine was a powerful symbol in Christian allegory, in part because Dionysus and his myths were associated with mysteries that gave hope of salvation to individuals. The myth of Ariadne (mentioned earlier) often appears for this reason. In the Church of Santa Costanza at Rome, built in the fourth century to house the sarcophagi of members of the Christian emperor Constantine's family, the vault mosaics show Dionysus and the vintage in a Christian context. The vintage is again the subject of the reliefs on the sarcophagus of Constantine's daughter. In contexts that may be Christian or pagan, Dionysus and his maenads, along with Hercules and his lion, appear on the silver dishes from the fourth century that were found at Mildenhall in Britain. An opponent of Dionysus, the Thracian king Lycurgus, is the subject of a floor mosaic now in Vienna and of a famous glass cup (see Color Plate 4), both showing Lycurgus trapped in the god's vine.

Scenes from classical mythology continued to inspire painters of manuscript illuminations. For example, the "Vatican Vergil" manuscript of about A.D. 400 has forty-one miniatures, and there are ten in the so-called *Vergilius Romanus* manuscript, which dates from about 500. Mythological figures maintained their classical forms better in the Byzantine East than in the West. They appear in manuscripts, on ivory plaques and boxes, and in many other media, including silver work, pottery, and textiles.

Mythological Representations and the Stars

We have seen how the mythological figures survived in astronomy and astrology, and they were frequently depicted in astronomical and astrological manuscripts. The ninth-century manuscripts of Aratus (in Cicero's Latin translation) show Perseus still in recognizable classical form, with cap, sword, winged sandals, and Gorgon's head, and ancient classical forms still appear in a few manuscripts as late as the eleventh century.

Two other traditions, however, combined to change the classical gods beyond recognition, the one Western and the other Eastern. In the West, the artist would plot the position of a constellation and then link up the individual stars in the form of the mythological figure whose name the constellation bore. Since the artists were more interested in the pictorial qualities of the subject, the illustrations were usually astronomically inaccurate. In the East, however, the approach was scientifically more accurate, since the Arabs used Ptolemy's astronomical work, which (by a corruption of the word *megiste* in the Greek title) they called *Almagest*. The Arab artists therefore plotted the constellations accurately, while the mythological figures took on new forms. Hercules appeared as an Arab, with scimitar, turban, and Oriental trousers; Perseus carried, in place of the Gorgon's head, a bearded demon's head, which gave its name *Algol* (Arabic for "demon") to one of the stars in the constellation of Perseus. (See the sky-map illustrated on p. 697.)

Some of these changes went back to Babylonian religion. In the Arab manuscripts Mercury is a scribe and Jupiter a judge, just as in Babylonian mythology the god Nebo had been a scribe and Marduk a judge. Even in the West, in thirteenth-century Italian sculpture, Mercury appears as a scribe or teacher, Jupiter as a monk or bishop, and other classical gods take on similar guises.

Mythological Handbooks and Their Iconography

We have already mentioned the importance of handbooks in the survival of classical mythology. In the later Middle Ages handbooks appeared giving detailed instructions for the appearance of the gods, for it was important in astrology and magic to have an accurate image of the divinity whose favor was needed. One Arab handbook appeared in a Latin translation in the West after the tenth century with the title *Picatrix*, and contained, besides magic rituals and prayers, fifty detailed descriptions of gods. Some, like Saturn with "a crow's head and the feet of a camel," were changed into Oriental monsters; but in some, for example, Jupiter, who "sits on a throne and he is made of gold and ivory," the classical form remains.

An important iconography in this period was the *Liber Ymaginum Deorum* of "Albricus" (perhaps Alexander Neckham, who died in 1217), which was certainly used by Petrarch in his description of the Olympian gods (*Africa* 3. 140–262), from which we give a short extract (140–146):

> First is Jupiter, sitting in state upon his throne, holding scepter and thunderbolt. Before him his armor bearer [the eagle] lifts the Trojan boy [i.e., Ganymede] above the stars. Next with more stately gait, weighed down with gloomy age, is Saturn; with veiled head and a gray cloak, holding a rake and sickle, a farmer in aspect, he devours his sons.

A third type of handbook is represented by the *Emblemata* of Andrea Alciati (1531), in which woodcuts of gods, virtues and vices, proverbs and aphorisms, and many other subjects were depicted, each with a few lines of Latin elegiac couplets, usually containing a moral lesson. Friendship, for example, was represented by a vine with clusters of grapes entwined round the trunk of a leafless elm. Alciati concluded: "[The vine] warns us by its example to choose friends whom the final day with its laws may not part from us." In 1571 a Latin commentary was added to the *Emblemata* by the French jurist Claude Mignault, which was extensive and important in its own right. The expanded work was frequently reprinted, including duodecimo editions small enough to be carried in the pocket or saddlebag of an artist or sightseer. Alciati's *Emblemata* was one of the most important sources for the "correct" use of mythological figures as symbols or allegories, and his emblems can often be found in paintings of the later Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Two other handbooks were equally important. The *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa was published in 1593 and reissued with woodcuts in 1603. Ripa's commentary, which was in Italian, separated the mythological figures from their narrative contexts, so that they often became abstractions with a moral meaning. This approach was valuable for artists who wished to employ allegory, and the book was translated and reissued frequently until the end of the eighteenth century.

The other important iconography was the *Imagines* of Philostratus, a Greek work of the third century A.D. describing an art collection in Naples. It was translated into French by Blaise de Vigenère in 1578 and reissued in a splendidly illustrated version in 1614, with woodcuts, explanatory poems, and commentary containing a very wide range of classical myths.

Classical Mythology in Renaissance Art

The classical gods had survived in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, but in many disguises. Renaissance artists gave them back their classical forms. In Florence, Botticelli (1444–1510) combined medieval allegory with classical mythology in his allegorical masterpieces, *The Birth of Venus*, *Primavera*, *Venus and Mars*, and *Pallas and the Centaur*. In Venice, Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516), Giorgione (1478–1510), and his pupil Titian (1487–1576) also drew on a variety of traditions while representing the myths more or less in agreement with the handbooks. Great artists, of course, like the four named here were hardly limited by these criteria, as can be seen in Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* (see Color Plate 6).

Sky Map of the Northern Hemisphere, by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). Woodcut, 1515; $16\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{3}{4}$ in. The Latin title means "Figures of the northern sky with the twelve signs of the Zodiac." Dürer's sky-maps are patterned on Arab celestial maps, but this is one of the earliest Renaissance works in which the classical figures resume their classical forms. Hercules (seen just below and to the right of center) has his club and lionskin; Perseus (just above and to the left of center) holds the Gorgon's head (*caput Meduse*) instead of the Arabic monster, Algol. Individual stars are indicated by numbers corresponding to Books 8 and 9 of Ptolemy's *Almagest.* The signs of the Zodiac encircle the map, and in the corners are three ancient writers on astronomy and one medieval scholar: Aratus of Cilicia (third century B.C.); Ptolemy of Egypt (second century A.D.); Al Sufi, written here as Azophi (Abdul Rahman, Arab astronomer of the tenth century A.D.); and Manilius of Rome (early first century A.D.). Dürer made the original version of this map in 1503, showing the heavens as they were in 1499–1500. *(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1951.)*

Besides the painters already mentioned, Michelangelo at Florence and Rome, Correggio at Ferrara, and both Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto at Venice were sixteenth-century masters who found inspiration in classical mythology. One of the most extensive mythological programs is the great series of paintings by the Carracci brothers in the Gallery of the Farnese Palace at Rome (1597–1604) depicting the triumph of Love by means of one classical legend after another.

Two other Renaissance works show how the classical gods recovered their antique forms. One is the map of the sky published in 1515 by the German Albrecht Dürer in which the classical forms of the Western astronomical tradition combine with the scientific accuracy of the Arabs. Dürer gave the mythological figures their ancient forms; Hercules is a Greek once more and recovers his club and lionskin.

The second work is the decoration of the Vatican Stanza della Segnatura by Raphael, after 1508. Here the classical, allegorical, and Christian traditions combined to exalt the glory of the Church and its doctrine. In the place of honor (though not supreme) was Apollo, surrounded by the Muses, the poets of antiquity, and Renaissance humanists. Classical mythology and Renaissance humanism had achieved the perfect synthesis.

Illustrated Editions of Ovid

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Ovid's works were repeatedly issued in illustrated editions, which were frequently used as sources by artists. The series began with a prose translation of the *Metamorphoses* known as the *Grande Olympe*, published at Paris in 1539. The most important of the early editions was that of Bernard Salomon, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, published at Lyons in 1557 and reissued at Lyons in 1559 (in Italian) and at Antwerp in 1591. A German translation of the *Metamorphoses* was issued by Virgilio Solis at Frankfurt in 1563, and another at Leipzig in 1582, while an Italian translation by Andrea d'Anguillara was published at Venice in 1584.

The most influential editions were those of Antonio Tempestà and George Sandys. Tempestà published *Metamorphoseon sive Transformationum Ovidianarum Libri Quindecim* at Amsterdam in 1606. His book consists of engravings of 150 scenes from the *Metamorphoses* without text, and it became an important sourcebook of classical stories for painters. The importance of Sandys lay rather in his connection of pictures with the text and commentary, which we have mentioned earlier. In his preface to the 1632 edition he says:

> And for thy farther delight I have contracted the substance of every Booke into as many Figures . . . since there is betweene Poetry and Picture so great a congruitie; the one . . . a speaking Picture, and the other a silent Poesie: Both Daughters of the Imagination.

Sandys was helped by the outstanding quality of his artist, Francis Clein, and his engraver, Salomon Savery. They engraved a full-page illustration

for each book of the poem, in which the stories of the book were represented, choosing more often the moment of greatest drama rather than the moment of metamorphosis. In addition Clein designed a splendid title page and a portrait of Ovid, each decorated with allegorical figures from classical mythology.

The principle of the interaction of words and pictures has remained a regular feature of the influence of Ovid since the publication of Sandys' 1632 edition. Ovid is the most visual of poets, and his landscapes and narrative invite pictorial representation, as can be seen in a large number of school editions of the *Metamorphoses*.

European Art of the Seventeenth through the Nineteenth Centuries

Rubens

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) found in classical mythology a constant source of inspiration throughout his career. During his years in Italy, between 1600 and 1608, he studied and copied classical works of art and became thoroughly familiar with the representations of classical mythology. He already had a good knowledge of Latin literature, and through his brother, Philip (an excellent classicist), he had access to the brilliant circle of humanists that centered on his fellow countryman, Justus Lipsius. Rubens painted great numbers of scenes in which he showed with energy and brilliance his understanding of classical mythology.

In his last years, Rubens was commissioned to decorate the hunting lodge of King Philip IV near Madrid with a series of paintings illustrating the legends in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Rubens, who began the commission in his sixtieth year, completed no less than 112 oil sketches, of which about forty-five survive (see pages 275, 538, and 654). Only a handful of the final full-size paintings survive, still to be seen together in Madrid. This series is perhaps the most ambitious of all the illustrated Ovids, and the oil sketches are among the most beautiful of all the Baroque representations of classical myths. Rubens also turned to Homer and Statius for inspiration for his designs for the tapestries portraying the life of Achilles. Most of these oil sketches can still be seen together in Rotterdam.

Poussin

Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), although French by birth, spent nearly all his productive life in Rome, and, like Rubens, he never ceased to draw inspiration from the classical legends and to meditate on their deeper meaning beyond the narrative. Among painters he is the most intellectual interpreter of

the classical myths, and those who wish to understand best what "classicism" means in the centuries following the Renaissance should study the long series of drawings and paintings done by Poussin on mythological themes (see Color Plates 11 and 13).

Other Painters

From the time of Poussin to our own day, artists have returned again and again to the classical myths, and the ancient gods and heroes have survived in art as in literature. We cannot here satisfactorily survey even a corner of this vast field of study, but we can refer to some important stages in the use of classical myths by artists.

Painters in France and Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used classical myths for narrative paintings on a heroic scale, for these were considered to belong to history painting, the most highly esteemed genre. The leading painter at the court of Louis XV, François Boucher (1703–1770), produced a long series of classical scenes, often pastoral and usually erotic (see Color Plate 15). In the last third of the eighteenth century, this somewhat sentimental approach to classical mythology gave way to a sterner view of the classical past, which placed a high value on the moral lessons to be drawn from history. In the nineteenth century, therefore, when painters in England and France returned to subjects taken from classical mythology, their approach tended to be moralistic, paralleling (as far as art can parallel literature) the approach typified by Hawthorne and Kingsley, discussed earlier.

TWO ROMANTIC IDEALISTS

Gustav Moreau (1826–1989) and Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) were profoundly inspired by classical mythology, and their art goes far beyond the morality and symbolism of many of their contemporaries. Moreau's great paintings *Prometheus, Oedipus,* and *Heracles* (all reproduced in this volume) probe the meaning of the classical texts and express a heroic humanism appropriate for the challenges of his time. In England, Burne-Jones, who shared with William Morris the ideals of the pre-Raphaelite movement, returned again and again to the classical myths to support his search for purity and beauty in the past. In *The Tower of Brass* (1888), he focuses on Danaë's feelings as the tower is built, not on the lust of Zeus and the anger of Acrisius. In the *Pygmalion Series* (1878) and the *Perseus Series* (1887), Burne-Jones turns from the anger of the gods and the violence of the hero to the ideals of piety, chivalry, and chaste love. Yet these very ideals involve the psychological and sexual tensions that Freud (1856–1939) at the same time was beginning to explore.

Classical Mythology in American Art

During the first century of the American Republic, mythological subjects were often copied by schoolgirls from engravings (the illustrations for Pope's translation of the *Iliad* were a favorite source) or were imaginatively treated by women in their spare time at home (see pages 60, 465, and 486). Artists who studied in Europe copied paintings of classical subjects and exhibited them when they returned. The earliest such exhibition, given in Boston in 1730 by John Smibert (1688–1751), aroused great public interest. Ten years earlier, a Swedish immigrant, Gustavus Hesselius (1682–1755), painted the earliest known American mythological works, *Bacchus and Ariadne* (now in Detroit) and *Bacchanal* (now in Philadelphia).

While the leading American painters (such as Copley, West, Allston, and Vanderlyn) sometimes painted mythological subjects, American taste soon turned to historical themes and to the dramatic potential of the American landscape. One of the best American mythological paintings is John Vanderlyn's *Ariadne*, painted in 1811 and now in Philadelphia (see Color Plate 16). It depicts the scene described in Ovid's *Heroides* 10. 7–10, as Ariadne wakes to find herself deserted. When it was first exhibited it aroused interest and controversy. But by Vanderlyn's time it was already clear that American painters would find material in sources other than classical mythology.

In sculpture, however, the classical influence continued to be strong. Horatio Greenough (1805–1852) used Pheidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia as the basis for his seated statue (1832–1839) of George Washington, now in the National Museum of American History but planned originally for the Rotunda of the Capitol. On the sides of Washington's throne are mythological reliefs, on one side Apollo as the sun-god rising into the sky with his chariot and on the other the infants Heracles and Iphicles with the serpents sent by Hera. Greenough wanted Heracles to be an allegory of North America, which "struggles successfully with the obstacles and dangers of an incipient political existence."

A group of expatriate American artists living in Rome is described in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1859). Among these was Harriet Hosmer (1820–1908), whose busts of *Medusa* (illustrated on p. 511), and *Daphne* (both completed in 1854) were meant to express her views on celibacy and beauty. Her *Oenone* was based on Tennyson's poem *Oenone* rather than directly on Ovid's *Heroides*.

Classical Mythology Since 1900

Classical mythology has continued to be a vigorous source of inspiration for artists since 1900. In France and Spain especially, Georges Braque (1882–1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) returned frequently to classical themes. Perhaps

the most famous example of such inspiration is Picasso's long series of works involving the legend of the Minotaur, which he used (especially in the period of the Spanish Civil War) to comment on the horror and violence of much of modern life as he observed it (see the illustration on p. 560).

In recent decades, artists have interpreted the classical myths allegorically, as we have seen with Noguchi's use of the myth of Orpheus. Many artists have been influenced by psychological theories, especially those of Freud, and the series of works by Reuben Nakian on *Leda and the Swan* is an outstanding example. Many artists have returned to literal representations of the myths, including David Ligare, whose *Landscape for Philemon and Baucis* we reproduce as Color Plate 21, and Milet Andrejevič, whose *Apollo and Daphne* is set in a city park. A group of Italian neoclassicsts has revived the mythological tradition in Italy, of whom Carlo Maria Mariani is the best known. All in all, it can be said that the classical tradition in mythology will continue to inspire all who care for the creative use of the imagination.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Don Cameron. *Mysteriously Meant.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970. Deals with the rediscovery of pagan symbolism and the uses of allegory in the Renaissance.

Bush, Douglas. *Mythology and the Renaissance: Tradition in English Poetry.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; New York: Norton, 1963. Includes a chronological list of poems on mythological subjects.

———. *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937; New York: Norton, 1963.

Carpenter, T. H. *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1990.

Condos, Theony. *Star Myths of the Greeks and Romans; A Soucebook.* Phanes, 1997. Includes the only surviving works on the constellation myths from antiquity: an epitome of *The Constellations* of Eratosthenes, never before translated into English, and the *The Poetic Astronomy* of Hyginus; also commentaries on each constellation myth.

Cumont, Franz. *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism.* New York: Dover, 1956 [1911]. Reprint of English translation (London: Routledge, 1911) of *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Paris, 1906). Chapter 7 is an good introduction to ancient astrology.

Galinsky, Karl G. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources.* 2 vols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. An excellent resource.

Gilbert, Stuart. *James Joyce's Ulysses.* London: Faber & Faber, 1930.

Gordon, R. K., trans. *The Story of Troilus,* as told by Benoît de Ste. Maure (*Le Roman de Troie*), Giovanni Boccacio (*Il Filostrato*), Geoffrey Chaucer (*Troilus and Criseyde*), and Robert Henryson (*The Testament of Cresseid*). Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching 2. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1978.

Hamburger, Käte. *From Sophocles to Sartre: Figures from Greek Tragedy Classical and Mod-*

ern. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982 [1962]. Ten major characters from Greek tragedy are discussed with reference to treatments by twenty-eight modern playwrights.

Kalil, L., ed. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologicae Classicae.* 8 double vols. Zurich and Munich: Artemis, 1981–1997. The most complete source for ancient representations of classical myths, with extensive essays (in English, French, German, or Italian), photographs, and bibliography for each entry.

Kossman, Nina, ed. *Gods and Mortals: Modern Poems on Classical Myths.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1971]. A most impressive collection by internationally renowned poets.

Mayerson, Philip. *Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music.* Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2001. An exceptionally well-written survey designed to increase understanding of works of literature, art, and music inspired by classical mythology.

Orgel, Stephen. *The Renaissance and the Gods.* New York and London: Garland Press, 1976. The principal Renaissance mythographies, iconologies, and iconographies have been reissued in a fifty-five volume facsimile series.

Pearcy, Lee. *The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid, 1560–1700.* Hamden: Archon Press, 1984.

Reid, Jane Davidson. *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts 1300–1900s.* 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. The most comprehensive reference work listing works of art, music, and literature, with bibliography.

Scherer, Margaret R. *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature.* 2d ed. New York: Phaidon, 1964. A study of black- and red-figure vases that illustrate thirty well-known myths.

Seznec, J. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. First published in French as *La Survivance des dieux antiques.* Studies of the Warburg Institute. 11. London, 1940.

Shapiro, H. A. *Myth into Art: Poet and Painter in Classical Greece.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Starnes, DeWitt T., and Talbert, Ernest W. *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955.

Van Keuren, Frances. *Guide to Research in Classical Art and Mythology.* Chicago: American Library Association, 1991. A bibliographical reference book, clearly arranged by topic and period.

Weitzmann, Kurt. *Age of Spirituality.* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979. This catalogue of the art of the late antique and early Christian worlds contains an authoritative account of the uses of classical mythology in the art of late antiquity.

NOTES

1. *Gala* is the Greek word for milk, hence *Galaxy* for the Milky Way.
2. Chapter 18 in the Phillips manuscript of Caxton's translation now at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Transcribed from the facsimile edition published by G. Braziller (New York, 1968).
3. Taken from *Recuyell*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London: D. Nutt, 1894), p. 604.
4. For the transmission of Greek and Latin literature, see L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars,* 3d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Chapter 4 is valuable for the revival of Greek studies.

5. See D. T. Starnes and E. W. Talbert, *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955; reprint, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973).
6. Reissued in facsimile, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).
7. See Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), especially pp. 174–191 ("The Gods of Greece") and Chapter 9 ("Homer"). Less spirited but more thorough is Frank Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), especially Chapters 3 ("Greek Mythology and Religion") and 4 ("The Reading of Homer"). Both books deal with the decades before and after the Victorian Age.
8. See Meyer Reinhold, *Classical Americana* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), and (for the eighteenth century) *The Classick Pages* (University Park: American Philological Association, 1975).

CHAPTER

28

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN MUSIC, DANCE, AND FILM

MYTHOLOGY IN MUSIC

EUROPEAN BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The topic of classical mythology in music is vast, rich, and important; we can only attempt to suggest the significance and vitality of Greek and Roman inspiration in this fascinating and rewarding area. Opera provides the most obvious focal point for such a cursory discussion, yet, as will be seen, works in every genre have been inspired by ancient Greece and Rome. Our major concern is the treatment of mythological themes but, on occasion, we include a few important works dealing with legendary subjects in Greek and Roman history. Fortunately, the ever-expanding repertoires of the recording companies are making even the more esoteric works accessible. A veritable gold mine of musical compositions on classical themes of every sort and period is now available, with great promise of many more to come; and contemporary, live performances continue to be ever more adventuresome. To derive the most value from this entire chapter, recent, complete catalogues of compact discs, cassette tapes, videos, and DVDs will be a great asset. Be aware that recordings come and go at a disturbing rate.

Galilei and the Camerata. Music and myth were closely related in the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Drama, for example, was rooted in music and the dance, and its origins were religious.[1] Music was also linked with drama in the Middle Ages, in the liturgical mystery and miracle plays, and again the impetus was religious. During the Renaissance, with its veneration of antiquity, tragedy and comedy were often inspired by Greek and Roman originals, and quite elaborate musical choruses and interludes were sometimes added. The years ushering in the Baroque period (ca. 1600–1750), however, provide the real beginning for our survey.

In 1581, Vincenzo Galilei (father of the renowned astronomer), spokesman for a literary and artistic society of Florence called the Camerata, published *Dialogo della Musica Antica e della Moderna.* The revolutionary goals of the

Camerata were inspired by a reaction against the prevailing polyphonic style of music—intricate and multitextured in its counterpoint, with words sung by several voices to create a tapestry of sound. Texts set to music in this way could not be understood; Galilei suggested a return to the simplicity of ancient Greek music and drama. Now Galilei and company knew very little about the actual musical setting of a Greek play by Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides (for that matter, we do not know much more), but they believed that ancient drama was sung in its entirety, not realizing fully the distinction between the episodes and the choral interludes. We can agree, however, that Greek musical settings must have been simple in terms of instrumentation and melodic harmony. Choral music was generally accompanied by the *aulos*, or *auloi* (double-pipe)—often translated as "flute" but actually more akin to a modern oboe.

The Camerata argued that words should be clearly heard and understood and the melodic line should reflect and underscore the meaning and emotion of the text. Their new style was appropriately labeled monodic (as opposed to polyphonic); it represents in large part the declamatory element that survived in opera as *recitativo*, or recitative—spoken dialogue lightly accompanied by music (of various kinds depending on period and composer), to be distinguished from set melodic pieces—arias, duets, trios, and so on.

In 1594 or 1597, members of the Camerata produced what may be called the first opera; its title was *Dafne* and its theme reflected the spell cast by the ancient world. Ottavio Rinuccini wrote the text (which is still extant); Jacopo Peri composed the music, with the help of Jacopo Corsi (some of whose music is all that survives); and Giulio Caccini may have contributed as well. A second opera followed, *Euridice*, which has survived and on occasion receives scholarly revivals. Peri again wrote most of the score, but apparently Caccini added some music and then composed another *Euridice* of his own.

Monteverdi, Cavalli, Cesti, and Bach. The first genius in the history of this new form was Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643); his first opera, *Orfeo* (1607), lifts the musical and dramatic potential initiated by his predecessors to the level of great art appreciated in performance to this day. The subjects of some of his subsequent works reveal the power and impetus provided by Greece and Rome: *Arianna* (her "Lament," which is all that survives, is still popular today), *Tirse e Clori, Il Matrimonio d'Alceste con Admeto, Adone, Le Nozze d'Enea con Lavinia, Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria,* and finally *L'Incoronazione di Poppea,* which is based upon Roman history.

Monteverdi's pupil, Pier Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676), wrote more than forty operas. Among his best known are *Giasone* (*Jason*) and *Ercole Amante* (*Hercules in Love*).

Cavalli's contemporary, Marc Antonio Cesti (1623–1669), is said to have composed more than one hundred operas; of the eleven surviving, *Il Pomo d'Oro* (*The Golden Apple*), which deals with the contest for the Apple of Discord, was the

most famous—a superspectacle in five acts and sixty-six scenes, including several ballets in each act and requiring twenty-four separate stage sets. And thus opera developed in Italy. The list of composers is long and the bibliography of their many works inspired by classical antiquity impressive; particularly startling is the number of repetitions of favorite subjects.

Many of the operatic composers of the early period wrote cantatas as well. As examples of this musical form, we shall mention three works by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) in the catalogue of his secular cantatas. Some of these he himself entitled *dramma per musica*, and modern critics have gone so far as to label them "operettas." In Cantata 201 (*Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*), Bach presents the contest between Phoebus and Pan as a musical satire aimed at a hostile critic of his works, Johann Adolph Scheibe. The text is derived from Ovid's version. Mt. Tmolus and Momus, god of mirth, award the victory to Pan, while Midas is punished with a pair of ass' ears. The "Hunting Cantata" 208 has the myth of Diana and Endymion as its theme. Finally, Cantata 213 (*Hercules auf dem Scheidewege*) depicts Hercules at the crossroads; he rejects the blandishments of Pleasure in favor of the hardship, virtue, and renown promised to him by Virtue (see p. 540). The more familiar *Christmas Oratorio* uses the musical themes of this cantata.

Blow, Purcell, Lully, and Handel. In England during the Baroque period, plays with incidental music and ballet became very much the fashion; these led eventually to the evolution of opera in a more traditional sense. John Blow (1649–1708) wrote a musical-dramatic composition, *Venus and Adonis*. Although the work bears the subtitle "A masque for the entertainment of the king," it is in reality a pastoral opera constructed along the most simple lines.

It was Blow's pupil, Henry Purcell (1659–1695), who created a masterpiece that has become one of the landmarks in the history of opera, *Dido and Aeneas*. The work was composed for Josias Priest's Boarding School for Girls, in Chelsea; the libretto by Nahum Tate comes from Book 4 of Vergil's Aeneid.[2] The artful economy and tasteful blending of the various elements in Purcell's score have often been admired. Dido's lament ("When I am laid in Earth") as she breathes her last is a noble and touching aria.

In France, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), a giant in the development of opera, produced *Cadmus et Hermione* in collaboration with the poet Philippe Quinault; this was the first of a series of fifteen such tragic operas (twelve of them to texts by Quinault). Some of the other titles confirm the extent of the debt to Greece and Rome: *Alceste, Thesée, Atys, Proserpine, Persée, Phaéton, Acis et Galatée.*

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) was the most significant heir to the mantle of Lully. He too created many operas and opera-ballets on Greek and Roman themes, for example, *Hippolyte et Aricie, Castor et Pollux, Dardanus*, and *Les Fêtes d'Hébé.*

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) was one of the greatest composers of the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a prolific musician, and although the general public knows him primarily for his oratorios, he was very much concerned with the composition of operas. In fact many of his oratorios on secular themes are operatic in nature and, although intended for the concert hall, are much closer to the theater than to the church; some deal with mythology, for example, *Semele* and *Hercules.* Handel wrote forty operas and fortunately revivals and recordings have become more frequent in recent years to reveal their abundant riches. Many of Handel's operas are based on history, for example, *Attone, Agrippina, Giulio Cesare,* and *Serse;* some are more strictly mythological—*Acis and Galatea* (a pastorale), *Admeto,* and *Deidamia.*

Gluck, Piccinni, Sacchini, and Haydn. Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787) is the composer of the earliest opera to maintain any kind of position in the standard repertoire, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (first version, 1762). This beautiful work, restrained in its passion and exquisite in its melody, remains one of the most artistically rewarding settings of the myth. The libretto, by Raniero Calzabigi, proved a great help to Gluck, whose avowed purpose was to compose music that would best serve the poetry and the plot. Musical extravaganzas with artificial and even absurd plots and the immoderate intrusion of ballet and spectacle had become too fashionable. As a result Gluck and Calzabigi desperately felt a need for reform. It was appropriate that Gluck should resort to the same theme as that of his idealistic predecessors. Orpheus' arias expressing his anguish at the loss of his wife, "*Che puro ciel*" and "*Che farò senz' Euridice,*" well illustrate the highest embodiment of these ideals. In the first version of Gluck's opera, the role of Orfeo was written for a castrato—a male who had been castrated and therefore sang soprano and who undertook both male and female roles. When Gluck wrote a second version of the opera for production in Paris in 1774, he reworked the role for a tenor. It is now usually sung by a mezzo-soprano or contralto; but performances and recordings may be found sung by both male and female voices.

Gluck again worked with Calzabigi for *Alceste* (first version, 1767). Derived from Euripides' play, it is another impressive achievement more monumental in character than *Orfeo,* but nevertheless equally touching in its nobility and sentiment. Their third collaboration, *Paride ed Elena,* although originally a failure, sounds most enjoyable today. Subsequent operas by Gluck are *Écho et Narcisse, Iphigénie en Aulide,* and *Iphigénie en Tauride;* the latter two are particularly melodic and compelling. Richard Wagner admired and reworked the score of *Iphigénie en Aulide* to create the version that is usually performed. Early in his career, before he had established his identity as an operatic reformer (1747), Gluck composed a serenata, *Die Hochzeit von Herkules und Hebe,* to a libretto that had previously been set to music and reused music from some of his previous operas. The theme of the marriage of Heracles and Hebe was appropriate for a work performed at the marriage celebration of the Electoral Prince of Saxony.

Niccolò (or Nicola) Piccinni (1728–1800), a rival of Gluck (they were both commissioned by the French Opéra to write an *Orfeo*), composed more than one hundred operas, many of them on classical subjects.

There are many other important composers of the eighteenth century who were classically inspired. Antonio Sacchini (1730–1786) wrote a *Dardanus* and a popular masterwork, *Oedipe à Colone.*

Luigi Cherubini (1760–1842) deserves special mention for his excellent *Médée,* an opera on occasion revived for a prima donna of the caliber of Magda Olivero or Maria Callas who can meet the technical and histrionic demands of the title role.

The renowned Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) composed an *Orpheus and Euridice* (*L'Anima del Filosofo ossia Orfeo ed Euridice*), which is considered by many to be the finest of his many operas. The orchestral introduction of his Oratorio, *The Creation,* is a Representation of Chaos.

Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) had an inspired interest in mythological and legendary themes. When only eleven years old, he wrote a short opera, *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (1767). The Latin text by Father Rufinus Widl transforms this famous tale of homosexual passion into a romantic, heterosexual triangle: Zephyrus (West Wind) falls in love with Hyacinthus' sister, who also happens to be the beloved of Apollo. Other youthful works by Mozart deal with Roman history as legend: *Mitridate, Rè di Ponto* (1770), based upon Racine's play about King Mithridates, a "theater serenade," *Ascanio in Alba* (1771), and *Il Sogno di Scipione* (1772). The latter, a serenata, has a text by Metastasio, derived from Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (*Dream of Scipio*), wherein Scipio Aemilianus experiences a vision of an Elysium that is Platonic to be sure but also, in its chauvinism and substance, very much like the Elysium of Vergil. In 1775, Mozart completed *Il Re Pastore,* a charming addition to the mythology of Alexander the Great; Alexander has liberated Sidon from its tyrant and appoints a Shepherd King in his place. Mozart's *Idomeneo, Rè di Creta* (1781) is a fascinating opera, well worth investigation. Mozart's much-loved and admired opera *The Magic Flute* (1791) is significant for the mythographer because of its Masonic symbolism and motifs. The matriarchal Queen of the Night, the ritual worship of Isis and Osiris, and the ordeals that the hero Tamino must endure for the revelation of the Mysteries all represent universal, thematic patterns. Mozart's last opera, *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791), is based on Roman history.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) found some direct influence from Greece and Rome. His *Coriolanus* Overture, inspired by the legendary Roman hero, might be mentioned; more to the point is his ballet music *The Creatures of Prometheus.* The thematic material of this work seems in a special way to epitomize the indomitable spirit of the composer. He arranged it as a set of variations for piano; and it appears again in the final movement of his great Third Symphony (the *Eroica*). The whole aura of defiance conjured up by the romantic im-

age of the life and music of Beethoven is strikingly parallel to that evoked by the Titan Prometheus. At any rate, Beethoven's career provides the chronological and spiritual link between eighteenth-century classicism and nineteenth-century romanticism.[3]

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) gives us a *Song of the Fates* (*Gesang der Parzen*), for chorus and orchestra and a *Song of Lamentation* (*Nänie*), which bewails the death of beauty, with references to Hades, Orpheus, Aphrodite and Adonis, Achilles, and Thetis.

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) in the Overture to his opera *Tannhaüser* and the Venusberg scene that follows (with its depiction of a voluptuous Venus and her carnal abode) delineates, unforgettably, the archetypal conflict between sacred and profane love.

Schubert, Wolf, Liszt, and Franck. The German *Lied* of the nineteenth century embodies much of the passion and longing that are the exquisite torture and delight of the romantic soul. The musical mood runs parallel to that of the *Sturm und Drang* movement in literature as typified by the works of Goethe.

Several of the songs of Franz Schubert (1797–1828), for example, are set to poems on ancient themes, not only by Goethe but also by Schiller and other poets: "Amphiaraos," "Der Atlas," "Atys," "Dithyrambe," "Elysium," "Fahrt zum Hades," "Fragment aus dem Aeschylus" (a chorus from the *Eumenides*), "Ganymed," "Die Götter Greichenlands," "Freiwilliges Versinken" (with reference to Helios), "Gruppe aus dem Tartarus," "Heliopolis 1," "Hippolit's Lied," "Klage der Ceres," "Lied eines Schiffers an die Dioskuren," "Memnon," "Der Musensohn," "Orest auf Tauris," "Der entsühnte Orest," "Orpheus," "Philoktet," "Prometheus," "Uranien's Flucht," and "Der zürnenden Diana." Also by Schubert are two lovely duets, "Hektors Abschied" and "Antigone und Oedip."

Two songs (texts by Goethe) by a later romantic composer, Hugo Wolf (1860–1903), "Prometheus" and "Ganymed," are staples of the lieder repertoire.[4] Wolf's one symphonic work, a tone poem entitled *Penthesilea*, is an interesting piece of program music that is not as well known.

Other fine examples of the genre of the symphonic poem are offered by Franz Liszt (1811–1886), a sublime *Orpheus* and stirring *Prometheus*, and by César Franck (1822–1890), a beautiful *Psyché*.

Other Major Composers of the Nineteenth Century and into the Twentieth Century. The operatic achievements of the nineteenth century are among its most conspicuous glories, but by then Greek and Roman themes were no longer dominant and as much in vogue. Yet *Der Ring des Nibelungen* by Richard Wagner (1813–1883) offers exciting parallels for the study of classical mythology, particularly since he was so profoundly influenced by the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus.[5] Operas like Bellini's *Norma* (the tragic story of a Druid priestess) are, it is true, built upon Roman legendary themes, but such an exception only brings home to us more forcefully the changes being wrought in subject matter and style. It is nev-

ertheless rash to generalize. Out of the countless number of works on ancient themes, we list only a few by some major composers as representative.

Charles Gounod (1818–1893), most famous for his *Faust* and *Romeo and Juliet*, wrote a significant opera *Philémon et Baucis*.

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869) created a monumental work with *Les Troyens*, one of the most important masterpieces ever created on an ancient mythological subject. The work, which draws heavily upon Vergil, consists of two parts: *La Prise de Troie* (based upon Book 2 of the *Aeneid*) and *Troyens à Carthage* (the Dido and Aeneas episode from Book 4). Berlioz also wrote an affecting cantata, *La Mort d'Orphée*, for voice and orchestra.

Arrigo Boito (1842–1918) wrote both the music and the libretto of his opera *Mefistofele*, after Goethe's *Faust*, in which Helen of Troy plays such a pivotal and symbolic role.

Jules Massenet (1842–1912), especially beloved for his *Manon* and *Werther*, composed the opera *Bacchus and Ariane*.

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), admired for his songs and chamber music, also wrote two mythological operas, *Prométhée* and *Pénélope*.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian composer Sergei Ivanovich Taneiev (1856–1915), a pupil of Tchaikovsky, completed his impressive *Oresteia*, based on Aeschylus.

Zdenêk Fibich (1850–1899), a Czech romantic composer, created a monumental melodrama for the stage, the trilogy *Hippodamia* in three parts, *The Courtship of Pelops, The Atonement of Tantalus*, and *Hippodamia's Death*.

Verismo opera, which became the rage at the turn of the century because of the genius of composers like Giacomo Puccini, turned away from classical themes in favor of the realistic and shocking or the Oriental and exotic; yet the realistic Ruggiero Leoncavallo (1858–1919), famous for his *Pagliacci*, also wrote an *Edipo Rè* (posthumously produced). This was in keeping with the trend in the twentieth century of returning to classical subjects.

Thus, Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882–1973) used the Orpheus theme for a trilogy, *L'Orfeide*, and his *Ecuba* (1941) is modeled on Euripides.

Max Bruch (1836–1920) has given us *Odysseus*, a vocal and choral masterpiece popular in Bruch's lifetime, which treats episodes from Homer.

Among the operas of Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) are *L'Orestie d'Eschyle*, a trilogy comprising *Agamemnon, Les Choéphores*, and *Les Euménides*, composed to a translation by Paul Claudel; *Les Malheurs d'Orphée*; *Médée*; and three short operas (each only about ten minutes long): *L'Enlèvement d'Europe, L'Abandon d'Ariane*, and *La Délivrance de Thésée*. He also wrote an orchestral work, *La Muse Ménagère*, which also became a piano suite. He composed incidental music for Paul Claudel's satiric drama *Protée*, which told of the sad and hopeless love of the aged prophet Proteus for a young girl. The work was rescored as an orchestral symphonic suite, *Protée*.

The Swiss composer Arthur Honegger (1892–1955) wrote an impressive opera, *Antigone*, set to a libretto by Jean Cocteau based upon Sophocles.

A supreme operatic masterpiece is the *Oedipe* of the Romanian composer Georges Enesco (1881–1955); the brilliant score is set to a libretto by Edmond Fleg, which embraces the whole legend of Oedipus.

Equally magnificent in its own way is *King Roger* by Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), a profound reinterpretation of the *Bacchae*; the Pentheus figure is transformed into the historical twelfth-century King Roger of Sicily, who faces the emotional challenge of the mysterious Shepherd and his religious message.

Hans Werner Henze (b. 1926) wrote an opera based on Euripides, *The Bassarids*, another name for the *Bacchae*.

Yannis Xenakis (b. 1922), born in Greece, is representative of modern attitudes, innovations, and techniques. A mathematician and architect as well as a musician, Xenakis is a champion of mathematical and automatic music; in theory and in practice he attempts to unite (in the ancient tradition of Pythagoras) numbers and harmonies, with the help of modern electronic equipment. Among Xenakis' compositions are an *Oresteia* and a *Medea*, which employ orchestra and chorus.

Another Greek composer, Mikis Theodorakis (b. 1925), has won worldwide renown for both his outspoken politics and his many and varied musical scores, including a *Lyrical Trilogy*, comprising operatic settings of Euripides' *Medea* and Sophocles' *Electra* and *Antigone*.

The twelve-tone (or "atonal") school of musical composition founded by Arnold Schönberg has produced some works on classical themes; for example, Egon Wellesz (1885–1974) wrote *Alkestis* (1924, libretto by Hofmannsthal) and *Die Bakchantinnen*, both from Euripides.

We end this section with *Jocaste* by Charles Chaynes (b. 1935). Fiercely feminist, this opera is intended to set free the traditional Jocasta and to speak to all women who have been victimized by the selfishness of men. From Sophocles and Euripides, Jocasta, who survives after Oedipus has blinded himself, becomes the focal point of the tragedy.

Orff and Strauss. Carl Orff (1895–1982) has won considerable and deserved renown with his operatic treatment of mythological subjects. In 1925 he adapted Monteverdi's *Orfeo;* he wrote an *Antigonae* and subsequently *Oedipus der Tyrann*, both of which follow Sophocles closely. His *Prometheus* is a dramatic tour de force, which is of special interest to classicists since it is actually set to the classical Greek text of Aeschylus.

The operas of Richard Strauss (1864–1949) are among the greatest of the twentieth century. His reworkings of Greek myth in terms of modern psychology and philosophy are among the most rewarding artistic products of this or any other age. Strauss was fortunate in having as his librettist for most of these the brilliant dramatist Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929). Their collaboration for *Elektra* (1909), a work based upon Sophocles but startling in the originality of its conception, is a brilliant opera.[6] Both Hofmannsthal and Strauss were fas-

cinated by the new revelations made by Sigmund Freud, particularly in his writings about hysteria. Hofmannsthal, seeing in Electra a classic study of neurosis, brilliantly adapted Sophocles' play to highlight its psychological insights for modern times. Sophocles' superb recognition scene between Electra and Orestes becomes even more overpowering when enhanced by Strauss' music, which evokes the passion of a love duet. In this scene in Sophocles, Orestes expresses his concern that Electra's intense emotions might overwhelm her. In the opera, after the murder of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and amidst the triumph of Orestes, Electra actually dies after an ecstatic dance of joy, succumbing to physical exhaustion and psychological devastation, wrought by cruel injustice, ingrained hatred, and the engulfing fulfillment of brutal vengeance. Of prime interest for the creation of this masterpiece is another important opera, *Cassandra* by Vittorio Gnecchi (1876–1954), which influenced Strauss.

Strauss and Hofmannsthal again worked together to create the charming and sublime *Ariadne auf Naxos* (original version of 1912, redone in 1916); this opera within an opera focuses upon the desolate and abandoned Ariadne, who longs for death but finds instead an apotheosis through the love of Bacchus. The last three mythological operas of Strauss do not deserve the relative neglect they have suffered. *Die Aegyptische Helena* (1929, again Hofmannsthal is the librettist) plays upon the ancient version of the myth that distinguishes between the phantom Helen who went to Troy with Paris and the real Helen who remained faithful to Menelaus in Egypt. *Daphne* (1938, text by Joseph Gregor) is a most touching treatment of the same subject as that of the very first opera; its final scene (for soprano and orchestra) depicts a magical and evocative transformation that soars with typical Straussian majesty and power. Gregor was also the librettist for *Die Liebe der Danae* (1940), although he drew upon a sketch left by Hofmannsthal. The plot evolved from an ingenious amalgamation of two originally separate tales concerning Midas and his golden touch and the wooing of Danaë by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold.

English Composers of the Twentieth Century. English composers of the twentieth century have been prolific in their use of classical themes.

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) deserves special mention. *Young Apollo* (1939), a youthful "fanfare" for piano solo, string quartet, and string orchestra, depicts in sound the sun-god as a new and radiant epitome of ideal beauty. In 1943, Britten wrote incidental music for a radio drama by Edward Sackville-West, *The Rescue,* based on Homer's *Odyssey;* and afterwards reworked his score into a concert version, entitled *The Rescue of Penelope.* His chamber opera *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) is a taut and concise rendition of the Roman legend; the libretto by Ronald Duncan is derived from the play by André Obey, *Le Viol de Lucrèce.* Britten offers a simple and affecting composition, *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* (1951), for oboe solo (*Pan, Phaethon, Niobe, Bacchus, Narcissus,* and *Arethusa*). Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice* (1973), based upon the celebrated novella by

Thomas Mann, also treats the idea of beauty through important archetypal images. This story about a famous writer, Aschenbach, who becomes enamored of the beautiful boy Tadzio, is framed in terms of concepts of love and beauty that are familiar from Plato's *Symposium*; the structure is also mythological because of the Nietzschean conflict between a restrained Apollo and a passionate Dionysus for the soul of the creative artist. Interwoven as well are the allegorical themes of disease, plague, and death, which go as far back as the *Iliad* and gain a specially potent classic expression in Sophocles' *Oedipus.* Also among Britten's last compositions is *Phaedra* (1975), a cantata to a text from Racine's play (in a verse translation by Robert Lowell), written expressly for the mezzo-soprano Janet Baker.

William Walton (1902–1983) wrote a striking operatic version of an episode in the Trojan War, *Troilus and Cressida,* based upon the medieval romance.

Arthur Bliss (1891–1975) turned to Greek themes with his cantata, *Hymn to Apollo*; an opera, *The Olympians*; and a symphony for orator, chorus, and orchestra entitled *Morning Heroes*—the latter written as a tribute to his brother and his comrades who died in the Great War of 1914–1918; among the texts used are Hector's Farewell to Andromache (*Iliad* 6) and Achilles Goes Forth to Battle (*Iliad* 19).

Michael Tippett (1905–1998) wrote both the text and the music for an imaginative operatic treatment of the Trojan War (largely inspired by the *Iliad*), *King Priam.* From this work, he extracted one of Achilles' songs (with guitar accompaniment) and added two others, all focusing upon the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, to create an effectively terse and tragic cycle, *Songs for Achilles* ("In the Tent," "Across the Plain," and "By the Sea").

Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934) provided (to accompany a text by Peter Zinovieff) a lament upon the sorrow and death of Orpheus for soprano soloist, *Nenia, the Death of Orpheus,* which relies upon striking gymnastic effects both instrumental and vocal. Nenia is a funeral dirge or the Roman goddess thereof. Birtwistle and Zinovieff have since expanded this work into a larger-scaled operatic composition of note, *The Mask of Orpheus.*

Operetta and Musical Comedy. Other musical genres have inevitably been influenced by classical mythology and legend. The boisterous, satiric, and melodic works of Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880) provide splendid introductions to the world of light opera and operetta. His opera bouffe *Orphée aux Enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) is an absolute delight; surely everyone has heard from this score some version of the can-can, which Offenbach immortalized. Equally witty and entertaining is his later *La Belle Hélène* (*The Beautiful Helen*). Amid its tuneful arias is the famous "Judgment of Paris."

Another charming operetta is by Franz von Suppé (1819–1895), *Die Schöne Galathée* (*The Beautiful Galatea*). In this musical treatment of the story of Pygmalion, the sculptor despairs of the woman whom he has brought to life; she is so flirtatious and troublesome that, to his relief, Venus grants his request

that Galatea be changed back into a statue once again. In the same spirit is an operetta by Henri Christine, *Phi-Phi* (1918). Phi-Phi is the nickname of the famous sculptor Pheidias; but this treatment of the historical Pheidias, Pericles, and Aspasia belongs to the realm of legend.

Operetta has had an important history. For the classicist, we may isolate from the works of Gilbert and Sullivan the obscure *Thespis*, which is on a Greek and Roman theme. Yet, in this genre, Americans have made their own striking contribution to musical theater; and in its brashness or in its earnestness the American musical has developed a characteristic style and coloring all its own, as we shall see in the next section.

The American Contribution

Who Is an American Composer? The complex questions of who is an American composer and whether or not characteristics peculiar to American music and dance can be identified are conveniently and justifiably answered by a profound quip made by the renowned American composer and critic Virgil Thomson: "It's very easy to write American music. All you need to be is American, and then write any kind of music you wish."[7] American composers, and choreographers as well, must be identified as those who are American citizens, either by birth or naturalization; also included are some who never became American citizens at all but who, nevertheless, have established such a career in America that inevitably one must categorize them as American. To give but one example, Gian Carlo Menotti (the composer of Martha Graham's dance, *Errand into the Maze*) is rightfully considered an American composer since his lengthy career has been based in the United States; yet he has never given up his Italian citizenship, and he now lives in a castle in Scotland.

The American Debt to Greece and Rome. Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) epitomized the spirit of many American composers:[8]

> *Of course my music is eclectic; all music is. Any composer's writing is the sum of himself, of all his roots and influences. I have deep roots, each different from one another. They are American, Jewish, and cosmic in the sense they come from the great tradition of all music. I have been as influenced by Handel and Haydn as by jazz, folk songs, Hassidic melodies, or prayers I heard as I child. My music is not one or the other but a mixture of all. I can only hope it adds up to something you could call universal.*[8]

Bernstein might well have added the powerful influence of Greece and Rome. He himself has composed a *Serenade*, after Plato's *Symposium*, an orchestral work with sections bearing the names of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Aristophanes, Erixymachus, Agathon, Socrates, and Alcibiades. Considered by many to be one of the finest of Bernstein's classical works, it was performed as a ballet choreographed by Herbert Ross. In his notes for the piece, Bernstein wrote: "If there is a hint of jazz in the celebration, I hope that it will not be taken as anachronistic

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S VERSION OF ARISTOPHANES

Of great interest to those who wish to confirm Bernstein's classical roots is a letter written by John W. Darr (Harvard class of 1941) to the *New York Times* (November 4, 1990), which states that perhaps the first musical score written and directed by Bernstein for public performance (to critical acclaim) was for the production of Aristophanes' *Peace* in Sanders Theater of Harvard University in 1941. Bernstein's contribution was announced as an "original modern score for chorus and orchestra by the brilliant young composer Leonard Bernstein." Darr was leader of the chorus for the production. Years later as fifth-grade teacher at the Midtown Ethical Culture School in Manhattan, he got in touch with Bernstein about doing a production of *Peace*. Bernstein let Darr use the score, and his revival of the work was a memorable experience for those involved.

party music, but rather the natural expression of a contemporary American composer imbued with the spirit of that timeless dinner party."

Certainly one will find compositions by Americans (just as we have seen in the case of European composers) on classical themes of every sort, in every kind of musical genre and style: symphonic, operatic, chamber, vocal, choral, instrumental, classical, popular, jazz, rock, atonal, twelve-tone, serial, minimalist, and so on.[9]

Inspiration from Greece and Rome is often given a unique color and meaning in terms of things American, for example, in an art form that Americans have made very much their own, musical theater. Three such works in particular illustrate the successful metamorphosis of things classical into pure Americana: *The Golden Apple,* which turns Homeric epic into an American saga; *Gospel at Colonus,* which transposes the spirituality of Sophocles into a black American gospel service; and *Revelation in the Courthouse Park,* a chilling and profound dramatic allegory embracing American rock, sex, religion, and the philosophical message of Euripides' *Bacchae.*

The Beginnings of American Music. The beginnings of music in America are characterized by the European background and fierce religious devotion of the New England colonists, who considered the singing of psalms an integral part of their new lives, as it had been of their old ones. The Puritan ministers of New England preached about the need for better singing, and the result was the first American music textbook, *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes,* by the Rev. John Tufts (a graduate of Harvard College), published in 1721; with it came the important development in American music known as the singing-school movement. Many groups for singing-school instruction sprang up and itinerant singing masters began their careers; from them emerged a group of American composers or "tunesmiths," sometimes designated as the First New England

School. These musical pioneers published hundreds of such "tunebooks," collections of hymns, songs, and anthems, which are still sung today and continue to be an inspiration for American composers. Initial musical developments in America were dominated by the Bible and Christianity, not the classics.

Francis Hopkinson and The Temple of Minerva. A wave of immigration following the consolidation of the United States brought with it many enriching foreign influences, among them those of the great European master composers. As a result the American idiom of the Yankee tunesmiths became modified, broadened, or submerged. In the context of these new developments in music emerged the two earliest composers who may be confidently identified as native-born Americans, James Lyon and Francis Hopkinson, both of whom also figured prominently in the world of sacred music in Philadelphia, a Quaker center.

It is upon Francis Hopkinson (1737–1791) that our survey now must focus, one of the new breed of cultured artists who helped immeasurably in the fostering of urban secular music in the eighteenth century;[10] he has good claims to be honored (with deference to Lyon) as the very first native American composer, and the influence of the classics upon him is very much apparent.

In 1788, Hopkinson dedicated a set of *Songs for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano* to George Washington, remarking in the dedication that "I cannot, I believe, be refused the credit of being the first native of the United States who has produced a musical composition."[11] Gummere, in his survey of Hopkinson's importance, comments that this "volume of songs, dedicated to Washington, who acknowledged the honor in a note that sustained the metaphor of Orpheus throughout the first paragraph, is no whit inferior to many English Elizabethan madrigals."[12] The first composition we can unequivocally attribute to a native American is a song by Hopkinson dated 1759, "My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free."[13]

Hopkinson, a member of the first graduating class of the College of Philadelphia in 1757, was indeed a man of many parts: besides being a composer, he was also a virtuoso musician on the harpsichord; he was trained in the classics and was an essayist and satirist, and his satire embraced criticism of dry teaching of Latin and Greek grammar; he studied and practiced law and was judge of the Admiralty; as a politician, he was a member of Congress and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; he was an inventor and a designer of the American flag; and he was a poet. Many of his poems contain classical allusions.[14]

It is as the poet of the classic-laden libretto for the work entitled *America Independent* or *The Temple of Minerva* (first performed on December 11, 1781) that Hopkinson is vital for our topic. He was the composer too, in the sense that he chose the music for his text.[15] The significance of this surviving work in the political and musical history of America cannot be overestimated. It provides us with firsthand evidence for the highly charged emotions of the American patri-

ots who were fighting for a new and independent nation—the fulfillment and reality of an idealistic vision of freedom—and it celebrates in particular America's alliance with France in the pursuit of this quest for independence—to be "great and glorious, wise and free." The libretto for *America Independent* provides us with one of our earliest extant, original musical texts, imbued with a patriotism clothed, very startlingly, in classical allusion. The Minister of France entertained a "very polite circle of gentlemen and ladies" that included "General Washington and his lady" with an elegant concert consisting of the "*Oratorio*," written and set to music by Hopkinson. Sarah Bach, the daughter of Benjamin Franklin, was present at this first performance and could not keep from crying upon hearing the stirring lines of the Roman goddess Minerva proclaiming that if the sons of America "united stand, great and glorious shall she be."[16]

The work is described in contemporary sources as an oratorical or musical entertainment; others have labeled it a pageant, dramatic allegorical cantata or an allegorical political opera; it is even extravagantly claimed to be the first American grand opera. The scene is set in the temple of Minerva and begins with the appeals of suppliants for the goddess to reveal the future. Here are a few excerpted lines from this surprising text:

> Great Minerva! Hear our pray'r,
> What the Fates ordain, declare;
> Thus before thy throne we bow,
> Hear, oh Goddess! hear us now.

The High-Priest of Minerva continues the supplication.

> Daughter of Jove! from thy resplendent throne,
> Look, with an eye of blessing down;
> Whilst we our sacred song address . . .
> And to thy praise
> Our voices raise,
> In carols of triumphant joy.

> Adore the great daughter of Jove!
> Behold, how resplendent with light,
> On a cloud, she descends from above . . .
> She comes to reply to your pray'r;
> And now what the Fates have ordain'd,
> Minerva herself shall declare

The Doors of the Sanctuary open; Minerva appears and for the future predicts happiness and prosperity in these lines:

> Jove declares his high command,
> Fate confirms the great decree;
> If her sons united stand
> Great and glorious shall she be. . . .
> She, like the glorious sun

Her splendid course shall run. . . .
The gods decree
That she shall be
A nation great. . . .

And the suppliants respond:
. . . Let loud paeans rend the skies;
Great Minerva Pow'r divine!
Praise! exalted praise be thine.

The Development of Musical Theater. As far as theatrical performances for the public were concerned, the struggle for their maintenance and survival in the eighteenth century confirms the strong religious puritanism of early America. For many years anti-theater laws in Boston (1750) and Philadelphia (1778) were inhibiting, but it was impossible to suppress the need and desire of those who would promote and attend the theater. By the end of the century, such laws were either repealed or safely ignored and a vigorous theatrical life in America began to flourish.

Music was an integral part of the theater of the eighteenth century since much of the repertoire for the early companies included the English type of ballad-opera (i.e., plays interspersed with music) that was usually compiled from miscellaneous sources. Then at the end of the century came a piece that foreshadowed important developments in American musical theater; as Sonneck perceptively observed: "In 1797 a form of entertainment was introduced in New York for which I believe the Americans to be peculiarly gifted: the melodrama."[17] This portentous form of entertainment was, significantly enough, initiated by a work with a classical theme: *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus, in the Isle of Naxos*, in one act, its text of unknown authorship; its advertisement claimed, "Between the different passages by the actors, will be Full Orchestral Music, expressive of each situation and passion. The music composed and managed by Pelissier." It is not an unlikely conjecture that some songs may have been included along with the background music. The composer, Victor Pelissier, a French musician, first appeared in Philadelphia in 1792; he became associated with the Old American Company, for which he arranged and adapted foreign ballad-operas and composed original scores.

In the development of the American musical over the years, two on mythological themes may be singled out. *Adonis* (1884), by Edward Everett Rice (1848–1924), was a "burlesque-extravaganza" based vaguely on the theme of Pygmalion and Galatea. With 603 performances, it had the longest run in Broadway history up to that time.[18] *Up and Down Broadway* (1910), a musical revue by Jean Schwartz, had Apollo and the other gods arrive in New York determined to reform taste in the theater, but they finally come to the conclusion that they do not know as much about good entertainment as Broadway does. With them is Momus. The song, "Chinatown, My Chinatown," originated in this show; the

THE MYTHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

A study of the evolution of the national anthem of the United States reveals that it was derived from music that had once been a setting for words on a classical theme. A succinct summary of the origin and development of "The Star-Spangled Banner" is given by Hitchcock:

> *The song destined to become the national anthem was anything but patriotic to begin with. Addressed "to Anacreon in Heav'n," the tune later sung as The Star-Spangled Banner originated as a British drinking song, celebrating the twin delights of Venus and Bacchus. Taken up by Americans, it was given new patriotic words in 1798 by a (not THE) Thomas Paine, who sang of "Ye sons of Columbia, who bravely have fought/For those rights, which unstained from your Sires had descended." The Star-Spangled Banner text, which was composed in 1814 by Francis Scott Key after the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British, was applied to the old tune, and the resulting song was made the national anthem in 1931.*[19]

A bronze statue of Orpheus by the sculptor Charles Niehaus stands at the entrance to Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, as a monument to Francis Scott Key. It was dedicated by President Warren Harding in 1922.

cast included Irving Berlin and Ted Snyder, who sang interpolated songs of their own. The plot is similar to that of an earlier show, *Apollo in New York*, produced by W. E. Burton and his troupe in 1854.

The Boston Group or Second New England School. In the second half of the nineteenth century, classical music of substance and quality came to be written by native American composers. American music may, with some justice, be said to begin with John Knowles Paine (1839–1906), the educational father of many important and influential American composers, musicians, and critics. Paine, who became an excellent organist, studied music in Europe, particularly in Germany, and became a professor of music at Harvard; his compositions deeply reflect his European training. The influence of Bach and German romantics such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms, in particular, is strong; but Paine is an American, and his works are in their own right powerful and original, as are those of many of his contemporaries and disciples, who were not untouched by the influence of classical themes. Paine himself was sometimes inspired by Greece and Rome; he composed music for a production at Harvard of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1881) in the original Greek. His other compositions include an orchestral piece, *Poseidon and Amphitrite, an Ocean Fantasy*, and a cantata, *Phoebus Arise*.

Three other important composers out of the many comprising The Boston Group should be singled out for their use of classical themes. George Whitefield Chadwick (1854–1931), a church organist who studied in Germany and became the director of the New England Conservatory of Music, wrote three *Concert*

Overtures, each bearing the name of a Muse: *Thalia, Melpomene*, and *Euterpe; Adonais, Elegiac Overture*, for orchestra, written as a memorial to a friend; and the symphonic fantasy for orchestra, *Aphrodite* (1912).

Frederick Shepherd Converse (1871–1940) studied in Munich and in America with Paine and Chadwick, and he taught at the New England Conservatory and Harvard. One of his orchestral works is a concert overture, entitled *Euphrosyne*; two others are inspired by Keats: *Festival of Pan, a Romance* and *Endymion's Narrative, a Concert Overture*, not strictly programmatic but intended to reflect upon Endymion's emotional changes in the poem.[20]

Henry Kimball Hadley (1871–1937) became one of the most prolific of Chadwick's students, a veritable "Henry Ford of American composers." Among his classically inspired works is an opera, *Cleopatra's Night* (with Frances Alda as Cleopatra), which was produced at the Metropolitan Opera in 1920 with some acclaim. The libretto is by Alice Leal Pollock, adapted from *Une Nuit de Cléopâtre*, by Theophile Gautier. He also composed the music for *The Atonement of Pan*, a festival play or masque written by Joseph D. Redding; a concert overture, *Hector and Andromache*; and a piano solo, *Dance of the Satyrs*.

It has far too long been fashionable among some critics to be supercilious and derogatory about these early American composers. At last many of their works are being performed and recorded, and we can hear them for ourselves and appreciate their virtues.[21] Now, so to speak, the floodgates of American musical composition have been thrown open.

Some Important Musical Developments. Among the important developments in the twentieth century, that of electronic music, which began in Europe (e.g., Xenakis and Wellesz, identified earlier), deserves to be singled out because of the significant classically inspired works in that medium. Among the pioneers in the evolution of electronic music in America was Milton Babbitt (b. 1916), a trained mathematician who turned to the serious study of music. He became intrigued with the twelve-tone techniques of the Europeans Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, and was determined to turn them into a real system. Thus he developed a "systematic serial composition," or "serialism"; and to him belongs the first serial work ever written. He was also the first to compose an extended composition for the synthesizer (1961). Babbitt, combining synthesized sound with live performance in new and vital ways, has written the highly acclaimed *Philomel* (1964) for soprano, recorded soprano, and synthesized tape, set to a poem by John Hollander that is based on Ovid's legend of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela. There are three sections: Philomel flees through the forest, vocalizing sounds that play upon the names Philomel and Tereus; then an Echo Song follows after Philomel is transformed into a nightingale; finally, the nightingale realizes her full voice and new power:

> *On the tape the voice of Bethany Beardsley is now near, now far in the stereo spectrum, sometimes electronically distorted, sometimes singing in chorus, sometimes echoing or*

harmonizing with the live soprano. . . . The vocal part, which ranges from F sharp below middle C to B above the staff, also requires spoken pitches. . . . The form of the music relates clearly to that of the text, with articulative synthesized interludes at appropriate points.[22]

The following is a selective discussion of composers who illustrate the variety of new musical techniques used in compositions on mythological themes.

Marvin David Levy (b. 1932) has given us an opera based on Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, with libretto by H. Butler, first performed at the Metropolitan Opera in 1967. It is generally atonal, with a strong sense of drama and theater and special electronic sound effects prepared by Vladimir Ussachevsky (1911–1990), another important pioneer in electronic music. Levy revised the work for a production at the Chicago Lyric Opera in 1999.

Echoi (1963) by Lukas Foss (1922–), is numbered I, II, III, and IV; Foss is inspired by the story of Echo.

Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), who adopted various styles in his career (jazz idiom, romanticism, and atonality), wrote several classically inspired works: *Orpheus und Eurydike* (1923); *Leben des Orest* (or *Orestes*, 1929); *Cefalo e Procri* (1933); *Tarquin* (1941); *Pallas Athena Weint* (1950), about the downfall of democracy in Athens as pertinent to the contemporary scene; and *Medea* (1952), a dramatic monologue for voice and orchestra with text, after Euripides, by Robinson Jeffers.

John C. Eaton (b. 1935) has won particular acclaim for his opera *The Cry of Clytaemnestra* (1979). The libretto by Patrick Creagh is based loosely on Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. This is a powerful work, with moments of soaring lyricism and dramatic in its manipulation of electronic effects, whose organization depends upon dissonance, including successive shrieks by Clytemnestra as she reveals her shifting psychological and emotional states in a series of dream sequences. He has also composed a large-scale opera, *Heracles* (1964), to a libretto by Michael Fried, after Sophocles' *The Women of Trachis* and Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*. His *Ajax* (1972), in a series of dream sequences, is for baritone and orchestra.

Typical of the work of innovators who experiment is that of Larry Don Austin (b. 1930), whose compositions first combined jazz with atonality and eventually employed computer-generated and -assisted techniques. Several of his compositions are multimedia productions and suggest classical influence: for example, *Catharsis* (for Two Improvisational Ensembles, Tape and Conductor, 1967) embodies the improvisational techniques he named his "open style." Other works include *Roma: A Theater Piece in Open Style* (1965); *The Maze* (1966), a theater piece in open style for percussionists, dancer, tape, and films; *Phoenix*, for four-channel tape; and *Agape*, a celebration or electronic masque or rock mystery play for soprano and baritone soloists, dancers, actors, rock band, chorus, and tapes (1970).

Attis (in two parts, completed in 1980), by Albert Moeus (b. 1920), is scored for soprano and tenor soli, chorus, percussion, and orchestra, using the Latin text of Catullus. Moeus developed a technique he calls systematic chromatism.

Part I of *Attis* caused a furor when first performed by the Boston Symphony in 1960 because of its shocking and violent mood of pagan ritual.

Philip Glass (b. 1937) is most famous as the proponent of a musical style known as minimalism. *The CIVIL WarS* is a large multimedia work created by him and Robert Wilson for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles (1984), but it was never performed completely. The Rome Section is a self-contained part (Act 5) with text in Latin, Italian, and English. In the last scene Hercules, who comes to earth to help humans, raises the Olympic torch as he returns to heaven. More to the point, Glass also has *Orphée* (1993), an operatic redoing of Jean Cocteau's classic movie for the stage, and the first of a trilogy followed by Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1994) and *Les Enfants Terribles* (1995).

Finally, we single out four women composers who have been innovators in their treatments of mythology in music.

Louise Juliette Talma (1906–1996) composed *The Alcestiad* (1958), with libretto by Thornton Wilder, her most successful work. Talma, dean of women composers, combined twelve-tone music with tonal lyricism, and hers was the first opera by an American woman to be mounted by a major European company (its premiere was in Germany, not the United States).

Thea Musgrave (b. 1928) has won a measure of renown. Her chamber opera *Voice of Ariadne* (1973), with libretto by Amalia Elguera, is based on Henry James' *The Last of the Valerii.* A statue depicts Ariadne, who is not seen; for her a taped voice is used with electronic sounds to depict the sea and distance. An Italian count is infatuated with the legend of Ariadne; he alone can hear her voice and he falls in love with her. In the end, his American wife takes on the guise of Ariadne and wins him back. Musgrave is fond of the flute: *Orfeo I* (1975), for flute and prerecorded tape, is an improvisation on a theme; *Orfeo II* is another version for solo flute with the music on the tape distributed among fifteen strings; and *Orfeo III. An Improvisation on a Theme* is for solo flute and string quintet. The flute represents Orpheus, and all other characters are portrayed by the strings. Her *Narcissus* (1988) employs solo flute with digital delay.

Julie Kabat (b. 1947) set *Evadne,* one of *Five Poems* by H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), to music. Evadne reminisces ecstatically about her love with Apollo. Two of the other songs are entitled *Oread* and *Fragment 113* (a poem based on Sappho's "Neither honey or bee for me"). Kabat uses unusual instruments in unusual combinations, in this case, voice, glass harmonica, saw, and violin.

Jean Eichelberger Ivey (1923–) offers a feminist interpretation, *Hera, Hung from the Sky,* for mezzo-soprano, seven winds, three percussion, piano, and electronic tape (1973, premiere). The poem by Carolyn Kizer reinterprets the myth from a contemporary woman's point of view: The goddess Hera is punished by her husband Zeus for her presumption "that woman was great as man."

Harry Partch. Among all the composers strongly influenced by Greek and Roman themes, Harry Partch (1901–1976) may perhaps be called the most gen-

uinely American and the most original. Independent and iconoclastic, he spent part of his life as a hobo during the Depression. He was at the same time a most knowledgeable musician and highly literate academic who taught, held research posts, and accepted grants. His musical theater pieces (original as they are) have something in common with those of the European Carl Orff, whose musical treatments of Greek tragedy have a powerful, theatrical impact. Partch's dramatic break with European and American musical tradition came in 1930, when he burned his own previous compositions (fourteen years' worth) in an iron potbellied stove. He would turn his back on the traditional, forge a new music to be played on new instruments of his own making, and train musicians for performance. He explains:

> *I am first and last a composer. I have been provoked into becoming a musical theorist, an instrument builder, a musical apostate, and a musical idealist, simply because I have been a demanding composer. I hold no wish for the obsolescence of the widely heard instruments and music. My devotion to our musical heritage is great—and critical. I feel that more ferment is necessary to a healthy musical culture. I am endeavoring to instill more ferment.*[23]

Partch called his new musical language "monophony," built upon a forty-three-tone-to-the-octave just scale. He designed the original instruments required to play his unique compositions from fuel tanks, Pyrex jars, and a wide variety of modified musical instruments. His music and his musical theater are as much influenced by the Far East as by Western Europe. His *Oedipus* and *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* are classical in their inspiration, and his *Delusion of the Fury* is Oriental; its themes, including the release from the wheel of life and death, come from Japanese Noh drama and West African folktale.[24]

Partch originally used the translation of W. B. Yeats for his setting of *Oedipus* (1952), which was entitled *Sophocles' King Oedipus*. Because he could not get permission from Yeats' literary agent to release a recording, in 1954 he revised the score for enlarged instrumentation, setting it to his own translation; the final revision of his operatic dance-drama *Oedipus* was made in 1967. His treatment confirms the reason he was attracted to mythology: "There's so much basic in it." Yet he felt that his *Oedipus* was too firmly rooted in the ancient past, and he wanted to strive for more contemporary relevance—hence his Americanization of Euripides.

Partch's *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* (1960) is based on the *Bacchae* of Euripides. He wrote his own controversial libretto, in which the character of Dionysus is depicted in the image of Elvis Presley, but based the text for the choruses on Gilbert Murray's translation.

Because of the many difficulties involved in a performance of *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* (with its unorthodox score and orchestra requiring the playing of unorthodox instruments), any staging of the work is a rare and momentous theatrical event; and so when it was elaborately produced in Philadelphia

in 1987 (in a production that was recorded) and revived in 1989 in New York, it aroused varied and widespread critical response. This is Partch's most grandiose musical theater piece. A mobile marching brass band juxtaposes music in a traditional style; the action requires singers, actors, dancers, acrobats, tumblers, gymnasts, baton-twirlers, fire-throwers, and a filmed fireworks display. The scenario alternates between ancient Thebes and the courthouse park (in Greek revival style) of a small midwestern town in the 1950s. Each major singer plays two roles—Dion, rock star (a pop idol archetype for Elvis Presley) and Hollywood King of Ishbu Kubu with his fanatic female followers is also Dionysus, god of the frenzied Bacchae; Sonny, a young, disturbed man in the courthouse park, becomes Pentheus, the youthful king of ancient Thebes; and Mom, devotee of Ishbu Kubu and mother of Sonny, plays her alter ego Agave, mother of Pentheus and leader of the Bacchae. The action is that of ritual theater; lines are spoken or declaimed with or without music, amidst the more purely musical episodes; and it is not the music itself that matters as much as the theatrical impact and the universal import of the imaginative and provocative libretto. Partch explains: "Dion, the Hollywood idol, is a symbol of dominant mediocrity, Mom is a symbol of blind matriarchal power, and Sonny is a symbol of nothing so much as a lost soul, one who does not or cannot conform to the world he was born to." (See the box on p. 290).

Other works by Partch are influenced by classical mythology. *Ulysses at the Edge* (1955) is a "small chamber work" that appears in other versions as *Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World* and *Ulysses Turns Homeward from the Edge of the World*. Partch, in reminiscence of his hobo years, thought of Ulysses as another wanderer like himself. This piece eventually became the fifth part of *The Wayward*, a collection of his compositions on American themes. *Castor and Pollux* (1952) is called *A Dance for the Twin Rhythms of Gemini*. It is one part of a three-part work, *Plectra and Percussion Dances*, subtitled *Satyr-Play Music for Dance Theater*. The work has two sections, one for Castor, the other for Pollux; each section is in four parts: (1) Leda and the Swan, (2) Conception, (3) Incubation (or Gestation), (4) Chorus of Delivery from the Egg. Partch reveals that from the moment of insemination, each egg uses exactly 234 beats in cracking. *Daphne of the Dunes* (1958, rev. 1967) was originally the music score for a film. Partch collaborated with the Chicago experimental filmmaker Madeline Tourtelot in the making of six films. One of them was *Wind Song*, a study of nature and a modern version of the myth of Daphne and Apollo, for which Partch composed and performed the sound track. Another of their collaborations was for the movie *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* (1961).

Barber, Stravinsky, and Some of the Many Others. One of the foremost American composers is Samuel Barber (1910–1981), whose popularity has been maintained (despite bitter, adverse criticism) because of the universal persistence of his melodic neo-romanticism. His *Andromache's Farewell* (1963) for soprano and

orchestra is a moving setting of Andromache's farewell to Astyanax from Euripides' *The Trojan Women,* in a new translation by John Patrick Creagh. A messenger has come to tell Andromache that she must relinquish her son Astyanax to the Greeks, who have decided to hurl the boy to his death from the walls of Troy. Andromache begins with the words, "So you must die, my son."

Barber also has provided *Incidental Music for a Scene from Shelley,* inspired by a short passage in Act 2, scene 5, of *Prometheus Unbound* that calls for music.

One of Barber's greatest works is based on Roman legendary history. Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* is truly an American opera of stature in the grand tradition. The first performance (1966) was commissioned for the inauguration of the new Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center. Alvin Ailey was the choreographer and Franco Zeffirelli the librettist, designer, director, and producer; the grandiose vulgarity of his production was in large part responsible for the initial critical failure of this work. Barber made extensive revisions, along with his friend Gian Carlo Menotti, who replaced Zeffirelli as the librettist. The opera was revived with success by the Chicago Lyric Opera and telecast in December 1991.

Barber's score for *Medea,* a ballet by Martha Graham, is discussed later in this chapter.

Works by many other composers are not insignificant. For example, Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) was also drawn to classical subjects. His *Oedipus Rex* is perhaps his most significant achievement on a classical theme—a highly stylized opera-oratorio, liturgical, ritualistic, and statuesque, composed to a Latin text provided by Jean Cocteau, who condensed Sophocles' play into six episodes (Stravinsky gave Cocteau's French version to Jean Danielou to translate into Church Latin). This ecclesiastical work, in spirit more akin to a Christian morality play than to ancient Greek drama, is scored for six solo voices, a narrator, a male chorus, and orchestra; surprisingly enough, many of its musical themes are adapted from Verdi's *Aida.*

Stravinsky also composed *Perséphone* (1934). Called a melodrama (i.e., a work with spoken, not sung, recitative accompanied by instruments), it incorporates mime, spoken dialogue, dance, and song and utilizes orchestra, narrator, tenor soloist, chorus, and dance; the text by André Gide is inspired by the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter.* There are three sections: Persephone abducted; Persephone in the Underworld; and Persephone restored.

Stravinsky's collaboration with Balanchine is discussed later in this chapter.

Elliott Carter (b. 1908) gave us *Syringa* (1978), for mezzo-soprano, bass (or baritone), guitar, and ten instruments, with text by John Ashbery ("Houseboat "). This original work is a cantata, chamber opera, polytextual motet, and vocal double concerto all in one. The music is responsive to Ashbery's modern text—ironic, campy, and lyrical. His Orpheus becomes a modern poet who despairs of the futility of his art; the mezzo declaims Ashbery's poetry in a flat, prosaic manner; the bass-baritone, with intense emotion, intones a collage of classical

Greek texts collected by Carter; and the work celebrates the "time" that gave birth to an egg. The potpourri of Greek texts is drawn from the Orphicorum Fragmenta, Aeschylus, Plato, Hesiod, Euripides, Mimnermus, Archilochus, Sappho, Ibycus, Homer, and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes.*

Carter has also composed incidental music for Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Plautus' *Mostellaria.* When Carter was director of the music department at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland (in the 1940s), he taught not only music but also subjects in the fields of Graeco-Roman history and language. His preoccupation with classical mythology is further shown in his ballet score for *The Minotaur,* discussed later in this chapter.

Ned Rorem (b. 1923), an author and musician who is particularly acclaimed as an American composer of songs, has written two classically inspired songs for voice and piano: "Philomel" (text by R. Barnefield) and "Echo's Song" (poem by Ben Johnson). He also has a cantata for voices and piano on ten poems by Howard Moss, entitled *King Midas* (of the golden touch). Moss tells us in the notes for the recording (Phoenix PACD 126):

> *King Midas went through many transformations; two themes emerged originally: "the King, himself, mourning the horrors of transforming the world into gold," and "the wish fulfilled becoming a scourge" (Be careful what you ask for; you may get it). . . . If you can imagine a King walking down Fifth Avenue, about to deposit an accumulation of goldleaf at the Chase Manhattan bank, you'd have a notion of what I was after.*

Marc Blitzstein (1905–1964) wrote *The Harpies* (1931), a comic chamber opera that satirizes earlier mythological operas and parodies contemporary musical styles with jazz and spicy slang, in a libretto (by the composer) based upon the legend of Jason and the Argonauts and their encounter with Phineus and the Harpies.

A work based on the legendary Julius Caesar is one of the few operas composed to an overtly homosexual plot: *Young Caesar* (1971) by Lou Harrison (b. 1917–) was originally written for puppets, with singers in the pit and employing adapted and original instruments. It has been revised for a big stage with singers and performed by the Gay Men's Chorus of Portland. The story is about Caesar's youthful homosexual affair with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia.

The renowned critic and composer Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) wrote *Seven Choruses from the Medea of Euripides* (1934), for women's voices a capella and percussion ad lib (translations by Countee), and *Oedipus Tyrannos* (1941), Sophocles' text, in Greek, for men's voices, winds, and percussion.

The following are just a few among the many works by women composers that touch upon classical themes:

- Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912–1990), *Nausicaa* (1957). The libretto by Robert Graves and A. Reid is derived from Graves' novel *Homer's Daughter,* a work strongly influenced by Samuel Butler's *The Authoress of the Odyssey;* the central thesis is that Nausicaa (not Homer) is responsible for the com-

position of the Odyssey. Solo roles are sung in English, choral episodes are in Greek, and the score is strongly influenced by Greek folk music.

- Betsy Jolas (b. 1926), *Le Cyclope* (1986), after Euripides, *Cyclops*, and *Schliemann* (1969). Libretto based upon the play by Bruno Bayen. The character of Heinrich Schliemann is illuminated through the fantasy of the fullfillment of a childhood dream; at age forty-seven he leaves New York to discover ancient Greece and marry Helen of Troy.
- Margaret Garwood (b. 1927), *The Trojan Women* (1967, rev. 1979). Libretto by H. A. Wiley, after Euripides.
- Eleanor Everest Freer (1864–1942), *The Masque of Pandora* (1928). Libretto by the composer, after Longfellow.
- Isadora Freed (1900–1960), *Pygmalion*, symphonic rhapsody (1926).
- Vivian Fine (1913–), *Paean* (1979), for tenor-narrator, brass ensemble, female chorus. A dramatic cantata presenting lines from Keats' "Ode to Apollo"; *Song of Persephone* (1964), for solo viola; and *The Confession* (1963), for voice, flute (alto flute), violin, viola, cello, and piano. Inspired by Racine's *Phaedra*, there is speaking as well as singing in this piece.

Some important treatments of Sophocles, in addition to the works of Carter and Thompson mentioned earlier, include the following:

- Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938), *Antigone-Legend* (1982). The text is a poem by Bertholt Brecht (189 lines in dactylic hexameter), written in 1947 when he was adapting Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* for the stage.
- Seymour Shifrin (1926–1979), *Cantata to the Text of Sophoclean Choruses* (1957). The choruses (for mixed chorus and full orchestra) are Lament for Oedipus, "What can the shadow-like generations of man attain" (from *King Oedipus*, translated by W. B. Yeats); Ode, "Love, unconquerable, Paean, God of many names,/ O Iacchos"; and Ode II, "I have seen this gathering sorrow from time long past" (from *Antigone*, translated by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald).
- Tobias Picker (b. 1954), *Emmeline* (1996). Based on the novel by Judith Rossner, a powerful retelling of the Oedipus legend set in the eastern United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

The following are works based on the legend of Medea:

- Alva Henderson (b. 1940), *Medea* (1972). Henderson also wrote the libretto, after Robinson Jeffers' adaptation of Euripides.
- Jonathan Elkus (b. 1931), *Medea* (1963). Libretto by the composer, after Euripides.
- Benjamin Lees (b. 1924), *Medea in Corinth* (1970). Libretto by Robinson Jeffers, after Euripides. This opera was broadcast by CBS television, May 26, 1974, starring Rosalind Elias.

- Jacob Druckman (b. 1928), *Prism*, 1980. Inspired by the Medea myth and scored for large orchestra, with an electric harpsichord and augmented percussion section. Druckman also composed *Medea, a Sex-War Opera*, which was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera (1985). The original libretto by Tony Harrison (after Euripides) introduces references to other literary and musical versions up to the present. John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* was the work chosen instead and performed (1992). Druckman explains the reasons why his commission was ill-fated: "The project was not canceled because of disapproval of the music but for reasons of deadline. In fact the Met never saw the music that had been completed at the time of the cancellation."[25]

Finally, two works on the theme of Orpheus:

- Lukas Foss (1922–), *Orpheus* (1972). Originally a concerto for viola or 'cello (i.e., violoncello) or violin and chamber orchestra (strings, piano strings, oboes, harp, and chimes). In 1983 an extended violin duet was added and the "new" work became *Orpheus and Euridice.*
- The song *Orpheus with his Lute*, by William Schuman (1910–1992), is a setting to music of verses from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Act 3, scene 3 (see the box on p. 361). Schuman also has a version for flute and guitar and as well a reworking of the song, entitled *In Sweet Music, Serenade on a Setting of Shakespeare*; the text appears only at the beginning and end; the singer, for the most part, hums and sings without text, accompanied by flute, viola, and harp. Another reworking of this music by Schuman is orchestral, *Song of Orpheus, Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra.* The beautiful lines of Shakespeare have been set to music by several other composers, including Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Marc Blitzstein.

Popular Music and Rock. The revolution in music caused by the development of electronic instruments (particularly the guitar) has led to the evolution of the musical idiom and style called "rock." It is refreshing (but perhaps not surprising) to find that in rock music, too, there exists a repertoire inspired by classical themes. The legend of Icarus appears to be a favorite: for example, "Icarus Ascending" by Steve Hackett, "Flight of Icarus" by the heavy metal group Iron Maiden, and "Icarus, Borne on Wings of Steel" by Kansas. The song "Icarus" by Ralph Towner has become the theme music of the Consort of Paul Winter, whose concerns are with nature and ecology (see *Missa Gaia*, later in this chapter). "The Fountain of Salmacis" is a song by the group Genesis; an instrumental piece, "The Waters of Lethe," was composed by Tony Banks, the keyboard player in Genesis."The End" is an Oedipal song by Jim Morrison and his rock group The Doors. Others worth singling out are "Cassandra" by Steve Hackett, "Achilles Last Stand" by Led Zeppelin, "The Three Fates" by Emerson, "Pegasus" by the Allman Brothers Band, "Jason and the Argonauts" by XTC, "Daphne" by Kayak, and "Lysistrata" by Utopia.

Paul McCartney has given us a *Venus and Mars Rock Show;* William Russo, *Antigone,* a rock musical, and *The Bacchae,* a rock cantata. Of some interest is *Orpheus and Eurydice,* a rock opera in Russian by Alexander Zhurbin (who now lives in the United States), which has won a measure of renown and notoriety. A work by the rock group Manowar, *Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts,* deals with episodes from the *Iliad,* including the death of Patroclus and the mutilation of Hector's corpse by Achilles.

Other works on mythological themes are "Atlantis" by Donovan Leitch, "Calypso" by Suzanne Vega, "Athena" by Peter Townshend, and "The Minotaur" by Dick Hyman and his Electric Eclectics. The second of the seven parts of Scott Cossu's *Wind Song* is entitled "Demeter/Rejoicing."

Odysseus and the *Odyssey* in particular have inspired more lengthy and ambitious works. Examples include "Tales of Brave Ulysses" by Cream; David Bedford's *The Odyssey,* an entire album that musically presents major episodes in the story; and Bob Freedman's *The Journeys of Odysseus,* a jazz suite for chamber orchestra. Sections are entitled "Prologue (Dawn)," "Sea Voyage," "The Eaters of the Lotos," "Polyphemus," "Erebos (Conversation with the Shades)," "Construction of the Raft," "The Song of the Sirens," "The Besting of the Suitors," and "Epilogue (Offering to the Gods)." The composer observes: "At the beginning of each section you will hear a brief spoken quotation from Homer. It is meant to set the tone for the episode. What each individual will experience or 'hear into' the music depends totally on his own imagination and sensitivity."[26] Particularly appealing in its melodies and imaginative in its lyrics is *Ulysses, the Greek Suite* by Michael Rapp. Songs illuminate the theme of Ulysses' trials and his homecoming: the Lotus Eaters, Polyphemus, Circe, Hades, the Sirens, and Scylla and Charybdis; and Penelope is given some lovely, introspective songs expressing her fears and her hopes. In the category of more traditional popular music are songs associated with particular singers that have become perennial favorites, for example, "Stupid Cupid," sung by Connie Francis; "Venus," by Frankie Avalon; "Venus in Blue Jeans," by Jimmy Clayton; and "Cupid," by Sam Cooke. From the many songs about love, we add "Cupid's Boogie," "Cupid's Ramble" (for voice and piano), and "Cupid and I," from the operetta *The Serenade* by Victor Herbert.

From the musical *Leave It to Jane* (1917), by Jerome Kern (words by P. G. Wodehouse), come two songs, "The Siren's Song" and "Cleopatterer"; the latter was sung by June Allyson in the movie *Till the Clouds Roll By.*

A composition by Chip Davis, *Impressions of Greek Mythology,* has the following sections:

- "Rhodes," inspired by the myth that on the island of Rhodes Helios "took the sun up every morning with his winged horse chariot," has sections entitled "Twilight;" "Night Festival" (using authentic ancient instruments, including a cithara made by the composer from a depiction on a sixth cen-

tury B.C. vase); "Sunrise" ("The god, Helios, readies his chariot to take up the sun from the crystal gates of the horizon of the ocean. The wings flap, the horses whinny in the clouds as the ocean disappears").

- "Come Home to the Sea," described by Davis as "about the joy and power of the ocean . . . as heard in the conversation between the two dolphins."
- "Olympics," which relates the games to the founding of the festival by Zeus or Heracles.
- "Nepenthe," indebted to the scene in the *Odyssey* in which Telemachus visits Menelaus and Helen and the pain-banishing drug *nepenthes pharmacon* is added to the wine.
- "Orpheus," with sections entitled "Descent into the Underworld" ("the seal on the gate pops with the hiss of the snake that bit Orpheus' wife"), "Dialog with the Devil" ("the little flute sound represents Orpheus asking questions answered by the fuzz guitar sound of the devil"), and "Ascent from Hell."
- "Sirens," divided into "Crash and the Call," "The Dance," "The Singing Contest" [with the Muses], and "Farewell."

A classic of new age music is *Missa Gaia* (*Earth Mass*) (1981) by Paul Winter. This work is inspired by universal ecological concerns (scientific, mythical, and spiritual) expressed by words and music in the religious context of the Christian Mass. It embodies freely traditional parts of the service (e.g., Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei) with sections entitled "Return to Gaia" and "Dance of Gaia" in a modern celebration of the earth that highlights pagan connotations inherent in the classical Greek concept of all-embracing Gaia. The section "Return to Gaia" is described as a "dream fantasy, of seeing Gaia (the Earth) from space; inspired by the words of astronaut Rusty Schweichart, the first man to walk in space without an umbilical." Fr. Benedict Groeschel captures the spirit of the piece: "In choosing the words and format of the Mass, Paul Winter has done more than simply select a musical form familiar to western audiences. . . . [H]e means to bring together into a hymn of praise, music ancient and modern, drawn from the Catholic liturgy as well as primitive religion, music inherent in the sounds of earth's creatures, animate and inanimate. *Missa Gaia* is literally meant to be a call to worship addressed to all creation."[27]

Rick Wakeman and Ramon Remedios have composed *A Suite of the Gods*, a collection of new age songs for tenor, keyboards, and percussion: "Dawn of Time," "The Oracle," "Pandora's Box," "Chariot of the Sun," "The Flood," "The Voyage of Ulysses," and "Hercules."

The American Musical. Among the classics we must certainly place *My Fair Lady* (1956) by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, another adaptation of the legend of Pygmalion via Bernard Shaw. Some other Broadway musicals that may

delight the heart of the classicist perhaps are not so widely known. This and other musicals that also appear in film versions are discussed in this section.

In 1923, Harry (Harold) Ruby composed *Helen of Troy*, with lyrics by B. Kalmar and a libretto by G. S. Kaufman and M. Connelly. Better known is the high-spirited musical by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, *By Jupiter* (1942), derived from Julian Thompson's play *The Warrior's Husband*, which starred Katharine Hepburn. The story is based on Hercules' ninth Labor, his quest for the magical girdle of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons. On this expedition, as we know, Theseus joins Hercules and receives the Amazon Antiope as his share of the spoils. In *By Jupiter*, we are given a light-hearted picture of Hippolyta's queendom, where the women are rulers and warriors and the men take care of domestic duties. Among other things, the Greeks conquer the Amazons through the invincible power of love, and Sapiens (known as Sappy), the timid husband of Hippolyta, becomes the rightful king. Rodgers and Hart felt that this amusing treatment of the conflict between the Greeks and the Amazons had serious and timely things to say about relationships between men and women.

The musical *Out of This World* (1950) is a witty satire on the amatory pursuits of Jupiter by the master, Cole Porter. The plot bears some resemblance to the legend of Amphitryon, revolving as it does upon Jupiter's infatuation with a lovely American mortal. During previews in Boston, there was trouble with the censor because of the lyrics, thought to be too risqué; the scanty dress of the performers; and an evocative ballet sequence directed by Agnes de Mille. Despite striking visual effects and an excellent cast, *Out of This World* did not have a long run on Broadway. Nevertheless, both the score and the lyrics are vintage Cole Porter.

Another work on Amphitryon, *Olympus on My Mind* (1986), is an entertaining, lightweight musical comedy of no great consequence; the book and lyrics by Barry Harman were "suggested by" the *Amphitryon* of Heinrich von Kleist; music is by Grant Sturiale. Jupiter, Alcmena, Mercury, a slave Sosia, and his wife Charis offer plenty of humorous antics revolving around mistaken identities; they are assisted by an amusing chorus made up of Tom, Dick, Horace, and Delores.

Still another variation on the same theme is by Richard Rodgers, *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938), with lyrics by Lorenz (Larry) Hart and based on Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*, which is reminiscent of Plautus' *Menaechmi* and *Amphitryo.* This lovely score and delightful romp (also made into a movie) revolves around a confusion about the twin Antipholuses, accidently separated shortly after birth, and their twin servants, both named Dromio.

In this context must be mentioned *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), by Stephen Sondheim, who also wrote the book. Based upon various plays of Plautus, this musical is a clever, funny, and melodic amalgamation of all the basic archetypes and stereotypes (both in characterization and plot) of new comedy. Indeed, one of the very best Plautine comedies has been

created by Americans! As too often is the case, it seems miraculous that this classic of musical theater was ever produced. The stars, Zero Mostel and Phil Silvers, at first didn't want to do it (because it was "old shtick"); there was trouble with directors and writers, who withdrew for all sorts of reasons. The musical opened in New Haven to disastrous reviews but was a triumph on Broadway and became a superb movie.

Stephen Sondheim also wrote the score for *The Frogs*, Burt Shevelove's adaptation of Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1974) starring Larry Blyden and featuring, as Chorus members, Meryl Streep, Christopher Durang, and Sigourney Weaver, staged by the Yale Repertory Theatre in the Yale swimming pool.[27]

The Happiest Girl in the World (1961) is based ("with a bow to Aristophanes and Bulfinch") very loosely upon the *Lysistrata.* The musical comedy becomes mythological indeed as a result of the inclusion of the deities Diana and Pluto. Although the essential idea concerning Lysistrata's scheme for ending the war by abstaining from sexual relations with the men remains firmly intact, this Lysistrata is no longer truly Aristophanic but merely "naughty but nice," in the spirit of the operettas of Offenbach; in fact a potpourri of Offenbach's tunes has been adapted to provide the musical score. The clever lyrics are by E. L. Harburg, famous for other musicals and, in particular, for the Academy Award–winning song "Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz.*

One of the most creative of modern musical adaptations is *The Golden Apple*, designated significantly as a musical play. The text by John Latouche and music by Jerome Moross received great acclaim and indeed won the Drama Critics Award for the best musical of the 1953–1954 season. This colorful retelling of the legend of the Trojan War is set in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century and is both serious and comic—all in all, pure Americana. The scene is the small town of Angels' Roost (in the state of Washington, famous both for Mt. Olympus and for apples), where the rich old sheriff Menelaus has married Helen, a sexy and bored farmer's daughter. (The langorous ballad "Lazy Afternoon," sung by the original Helen, Kaye Ballard, was a highlight). The local heroes have returned from the Spanish-American War; and Ulysses, in particular, is happily reunited with his faithful wife, Penelope. A county fair and a church social are organized to celebrate the homecoming, and the women bring their cakes and pies to be judged in a contest. Jealous old Mother Hare contributes the golden apple ("symbol of our proud state of Washington"). Just in time, a young and attractive traveling salesman named Paris descends in a balloon to act as "impartial" judge and award the apple to Lovey Mars, wife of a military man and vehement about utilizing her flair for matchmaking.

Paris runs off with Helen to nearby Rhododendron, but Ulysses and his men track her down and send her home in disgrace. They themselves dally in the big city to face numerous temptations, among them Madame Calypso, a most scandalous hostess, and Circe, the woman without mercy who turns water into gin and men into swine. Of course, Ulysses realizes the folly of his ways and, like

the good American that he is, returns home a second time to his beloved Penelope, whom he surprises as she is busily at work in the company of her sewing bee.

In a different vein and musical style is another startlingly original conception, *The Gospel at Colonus* (1983), wherein Sophocles' play *Oedipus at Colonus* is successfully reinterpreted in the contemporary setting of an American gospel service. The text (often a close adaptation of the original) by Lee Breuer works in beautiful collaboration with the idiomatic score by Bob Telson. The agonized spirituality of the Greek play becomes transformed into a biblical parable of human fate and divine redemption that finds natural expression in the ecstatic intensity of black religious fervor. Among the many highlights is the incorporation of the most famous choral ode from Sophocles' *Antigone*, extolling the wondrous nature of man.

Ernest Ferlita's *Black Medea: A Tangle of Serpents*, a play with music and dance, opened at Audelco's Annual Black Theater Festival at the City University of New York (1987). More famous is *Marie Christine* (1998), a musical by composer-lyricist Michael John LaChiusa and director-choreographer Graciela Daniele, a quasi-operatic musical version of *Medea* set in the 1880s amidst the Creole society of New Orleans and the corrupt politics of Chicago. The transition of time and setting does not really work, and the weaknesses in the libretto and disappointing musical score make this *Medea* a pretty dull evening in the theater.

From reports it would be at least more entertaining, albeit less intellectual, to be able to see a revival of *Home Sweet Homer* (1974), a musical based on the *Odyssey*. Erich Segal (*Love Story*) wrote the book, and Mitch Lee (*Man of la Mancha*) wrote the music. It starred Yul Brynner, who toured in it cross-country for a year before it was scheduled to open on Broadway. Another musical comedy based on the *Odyssey*, *Fabulous Voyage* (1946) by Milton Babbitt, has never been produced at all, but in 1988 three songs from it were sung at Alice Tully Hall in New York City.

Finally, those of us who like comedy in music can enjoy the works of Peter Schickele, (b. 1935), alias P. D. Q. Bach (1807–1742)?: a cantata, *Iphigenia in Brooklyn*, and the hilarious *Oedipus Tex*, set in the Old West. This comic dramatic oratorio (1986) was later staged as an opera. Tex shoots some fellows riding on a rig, solves the riddle posed by Big Foot, and marries Billie Jo Casta. Also funny is a song by Tom Lehrer, "Oedipus Rex." Lehrer writes both the words and the music for his humorous songs for voice and piano.

Mythology in Dance

This brief survey concentrates upon developments in the United States by major choreographers, who made a specialty of creating dances on Greek and Roman themes. European antecedents, however, have not been ignored; included in our listing of works are many of European origin that have been revived and adapted to become classics throughout the world.

Isadora Duncan: Pioneer Champion of the Greek Ideal

Isadora Duncan (1877–1927) was born in San Francisco. At a young age she became interested in the dance but soon rebelled against the strictures of classical ballet and the frivolities of the music hall to develop her own method of freedom and expression in dance movement, in tune with her artistic and spiritual response to nature. Her autobiography reveals her fundamental accord with the classical Greek spirit:

> *I was born by the sea, and I have noticed that all the great events of my life have taken place by the sea. My first idea of movement, of the dance, certainly came from the rhythm of the waves. I was born under the star of Aphrodite, Aphrodite who was also born on the sea, and when her star is in the ascendant, events are always propitious to me.*[29]

In Chicago in 1895, at age eighteen, Isadora danced for Charles Fair, manager of the Masonic Roof Garden, billed as "The California Faun." Not long afterward in New York her appeal to the manager Augustin Daly confirms her conviction that she was transforming Greek dance into a new American expressiveness:

> *I have discovered the dance. I have discovered the art which has been lost for two thousand years. You are a supreme theatre artist, but there is one thing lacking in your theatre which made the old Greek theatre great, and this is the art of the dance—the tragic chorus. Without this it is a head and body without legs to carry it on. I bring you the dance. . . . I am indeed the spiritual daughter of Walt Whitman. For the children of America I will create a new dance that will express America.*[30]

Duncan was much attracted to the music of Ethelbert Nevin, a composer with whom she did concerts in New York but who died young. One of her important early Greek dances (1898) was *Narcissus*, choreographed to his music; a favorable review describes her performance:

> *Narcissus is another charming bit of pantomime. The fabled youth is depicted staring at his own image in the water, first startled at its sudden appearance, then charmed, fascinated at his mirrored beauty. Becoming more and more enamored, the dancer leans forward, seemingly viewing herself from side to side, sending kisses to the liquid image, stepping across the shallow brook and still finding the figure reflected from its surface. The poetry of motion, the first start, the gradually growing conceit, the turning and bending, the ecstasy of delight at finding himself so beautiful are all most convincingly enacted by the pretty dancer.*[31]

Duncan gave other performances in New York, assisted by her sister and her brother Raymond, the latter reading selections from Theocritus and Ovid as an accompaniment to her dances, with music provided by a concealed orchestra. These were not so favorably received and, in 1899, the family went to London, hoping to find understanding. Duncan tells us:

> *. . . [W]e spent most of our time in the British Museum, where Raymond made sketches of all the Greek vases and bas-reliefs, and I tried to express them to whatever music*

seemed to me to be in harmony with the rhythms of the feet and Dionysiac set of the head, and the tossing of the thyrsis. We also spent hours every day in the British Museum Library. . . .[32]

Charles Hallé, director of the New Gallery, which had a central court and fountain surrounded by plants, flowers, and banks of palms, had the idea that Isadora should give three performances there, which included a dance to music from Gluck's *Orfeo* and illustrations in dance of passages chosen from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the *Idylls* of Theocritus, read by the Greek scholar and mythographer Jane Harrison and accompanied by a small orchestra. Also on the programs were discussions by the artist Sir William Richmond on dancing in its relation to painting, by the classical scholar Andrew Lang on dancing in its relation to the Greek myth, and by the composer Hubert Parry on dancing in its relation to music. A contemporary magazine article commented that from her time spent in the British Museum, Duncan analyzed and memorized "the steps and attitudes of the classic nymphs of antique art. Her work is thus the result of the application of poetic intelligence to the art of dancing, and her aim is to study nature and the classics and abjure the conventional."[32]

Thus from the beginning, Duncan's attitudes and methods were established. She studied art in the museums of the world; became an ardent admirer and friend of the sculptor Rodin, as he was of her; and never lost her fervor for the Greek ideal. Her visit to Greece (1903–1904) was particularly ecstatic and she presented there (with ten Greek boys) a singing and acting rendition of Aeschylus' *Suppliants*; her art was religious, not a copy of but inspired by the art of ancient Greece. "Out of that has come my dancing, neither Greek nor antique but the spontaneous expression of my soul lifted up by beauty"; her purpose was not to imitate but to re-create the Greek ideal in herself "with personal inspiration: to start from its beauty and then go toward the future."[34] She toured Europe extensively but returned only once to the United States; she became closely associated with France and with Russia (she opened schools in Paris and in Moscow). Both her personal life and public career were turbulent and iconoclastic, and her triumphs were tempered by tragedy.

Duncan's legacy embraced her liberating influence from tradition; her creation of plotless or "pure" dances; her use of great music, especially symphonic music; her invention of expressive movements, as in her portrayal of the damned in *The Dance of the Furies*; and her employment of political, social, and moral themes, along with Greek mythology.[35] It is true that modern dance in the United States stems most directly from Duncan's pioneering contemporaries, Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis and their pupils, for example, Martha Graham. Yet these dancers and others were deeply influenced by Duncan. Revivals and re-creations of Duncan dances (for example, the *Three Graces* and *Cassandra)* have become popular.[36]

Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis

One of the many contributions of Ted Shawn (1891–1972) to American dance was his proud celebration of the male dancer; the all-men's company that he eventually founded was a realization of "the Greek ideal of the perfect body moving in strength, beauty, eloquence."[37] He tells with good humor of his brave fight against prejudice as he brought his dances inspired by Greece and Rome to Americans:

> *On the morning of January 2, 1914, I dropped off the train at Gallup, New Mexico, where I was to play a one-night stand with a company that carried my own name. . . . How would the male citizenry react to a man garbed in a flame-colored chiton as I would be that night when I performed my Greek dance? I formulated a dreadful answer. Behind the footlights I would be at the mercy of any cowpoke who chose to spatter lead on the stage while he yippied, "Dancer in the red nightshirt, boy. Dance." . . . My sudden panic was not as unreasoned as it may seem. . . . A fraternity brother in Denver, frankly appalled by my announced intention of becoming a dancer, had closed an impassioned harangue with a flat statement, "But, Ted, men don't dance." In vain I countered that men performed ritual dances in many countries of the world, that he and I together had enjoyed performances by Mikhail Mordkin, partner of Pavlova, and by Theodore Kosloff of the Gertrude Hoffman Company. "Oh, those people," he dismissed them with a shrug. He admitted, though grudgingly, that dancing might be all right for aborigines and Russians, but contended vehemently that it was hardly a suitable career for a red-blooded American male.*[38]

Shawn tells of other significant events in these early years. At a Long Beach studio in Los Angeles he made a movie for the Thomas A. Edison Company, *The Dance of the Ages*, based on a sketchy scenario: "I wrote a thread-thin dance history beginning in the Stone Age, progressing through the glorious ages of Egypt, Greece, and Rome into Medieval Europe, and ending with the contemporary dance of the United States."[39] Thus Greek and Roman themes appeared early in Shawn's repertoire. With Norma Gould, he gave ballroom exhibitions, which included a dance entitled *Diana and Endymion*.

In 1914 he met Ruth St. Denis (1877–1968) in her studio in New York; they were married on August 13. They coined the word *Denishawn*, which was used during their many years together to designate their schools and their company. Their first dance school was opened in Los Angeles. The composer Louis Horst was among those who joined them; he was their pianist-conductor for eight years. Among their many pupils who were to become distinguished pioneers in modern dance were Doris Humphries, Charles Weidman, and Martha Graham (she was one of the dancers in the Denishawn ballet *Soaring*, symbolizing Venus' birth from the sea foam).

Among the many Denishawn dances inspired by ancient Greece was *Greek Scene* (1918), choreographed by Ruth St. Denis, with music by Debussy and Gluck; its four parts indicate the frame of reference: *Pas de Trois, Greek Veil Plastique, Greek Dancer in Silhouette,* and *Dance of the Sunrise.* One of the more ambitious works of

Denishawn (with a cast of 170!) was a dance pageant (1916) that depicted first the customs and then the concepts of the afterlife in Egypt, India, and Greece. Shawn tells us about its hit number (for sixteen male dancers), the "Pyrrhic Dance:"

> *The first number I ever choreographed for an all-male ensemble . . . Pyrrhic dances which date from ancient Greece, originally were part of military training and symbols of victory. My interpretation was not a revival of the Greek classic form but an attempt to capture the spirit of the original. Sixteen men dancers, leaping and jumping with power, muscles, and virile strength, created an impact that thrilled the pageant's audiences and won paragraphs of newspaper praise. Many years elapsed before I formed my own group of men dancers but after the reception of the "Pyrrhic Dance" I always had in the back of my mind plans, choreographies, and dance themes suitable for men dancers.*[40]

Shawn's choreography for Aeschylus' *Persians* perhaps offers the best example of his devotion to his male dancers and his inspiration from ancient Greece. The first chorus of Aeschylus' play was danced and sung by twenty-five men. The music was by Eva Sikelianos, who taught the dancers to sing the text (in a new stark English translation) to her music, composed in an ancient Greek modal style. For Shawn this correct treatment of the chorus was an epic-making experience. The performers were all men, who sang with the power of men's voices in the open air as they danced and offered the "best example of what the real Greek chorus must have been like." A silent (very faded) film of this performance and a separate audiotape of Shawn's remarks are to be found in the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Dance Collection in the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center.

Shawn would do for the male dancer what Isadora Duncan had done for the female. In his own words he justifies fairly and succinctly the claim that he and St. Denis are the true father and mother of American dance:

> *The Denishawn Dancers filled all the requirements to be called a Ballet, and the first truly American Ballet: the Company were all American born, trained by Ruth St. Denis and myself, who were American born; we were the first dance company to give a program in which all the music was composed by Americans, the first to use indigenous themes for choreographic treatment (American square dance, cowboys, Indians, negro spirituals, the folk legends of America and dances about American historical characters). Costumes and decor were all designed and executed by Americans. . . . We had the courage to end Denishawn at its peak of success and world fame, so that we both could again be free to explore. . . . I set out to fight the battle of the legitimacy of dancing as a profession for men, and to form my company of men dancers. With the ending of Denishawn, I had bought an old farm house and barns in the Berkshire Hills in southwest Massachusetts, which place had been called for over a century: Jacob's Pillow. Here . . . I formed the company billed as "Shawn and his Men Dancers." . . . In 1942 [at Jacob's Pillow] the first theatre ever designed, built and used exclusively for the art of the dance opened its doors. . . .*[41]

And now after Shawn's death, Jacob's Pillow, this American shrine to dance performance and education, continues to flourish and inspire year after year.[42]

The following are more examples of classically inspired Denishawn dances, choreographed by Shawn:[43]

- *Diana and Endymion* (part 4 of *Grecian Suite*), 1914.
- *Pan and Syrinx* and *The Pipes of Pan*, 1914. Music by Delibes.
- *Gnossienne* or *A Priest of Knossos*, 1919. Music by Erik Satie. Shawn, as a priest of ancient Crete, danced a ritual at the altar of the snake-goddess.
- *Death of Adonis* (or *Adagio Pathétique*), 1924. Music by Godard. "He performed nude (except for fig leaf), his body made up to simulate marble as he moved through a plastique."[44]
- *Death of a God*, 1929. Music by Debussy. Shawn and fourteen dancers.
- *Les Mystères Dionysiaques*, 1920. Music by Massenet.
- *Orpheus*, 1928. Music by Liszt.
- *Prometheus Bound*, 1929. Shawn's "Prometheus is man of any age seeking to free himself of bondage."[45]
- *Death of the Bull God*, 1929. Music by Griffes.
- *Orpheus Dionysus* (with Margarete Wallman, choreographer), 1930. Music by Gluck.
- *O, Libertad*, 1937 (after Denishawn). Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers. Music by Jess Meeker. A kind of history of the United States with a section on the Olympic Games.[46]

Martha Graham

Martha Graham (1894–1991) was one of the most original and American innovators in modern dance; she preferred to call it contemporary dance because "modern dance dates so quickly," as she observed in her autobiography, *Blood Memory*.[47] She explained her early and abiding fascination with Greek myth: "I remember how father used to recite stories to us from Greek mythology. My days would be filled with these tales, these word paintings. . . ." Eventually two preoccupations dominated her career: "My interest was in America and the women of classical Greece."[48] In 1914, while still in high school, she first saw Ruth St. Denis dance and she became enamored of this "goddess figure." In 1919 she enrolled in the Denishawn school in Los Angeles and made her debut, at age twenty-two, in the Denishawn dance pageant of Egypt, Greece, and India. In 1923 she left Denishawn to accept a role in the *Greenwich Village Follies*, and from there went on to evolve her own persona as an artist and a dancer. "I felt I had to grow and work within myself. I wanted, in all my arrogance, to do something in dance uniquely American."[49] Graham has influenced many important dancers, among them Doris Humphrey, nicknamed "Doric" Humphrey by the composer Louis Horst "because she was always doing Greek dances."[50]

MARTHA GRAHAM AND JOSEPH CAMPBELL

A dancer in Martha Graham's company was Jean Erdman, wife of the famous mythographer Joseph Campbell. Graham had this to say about Campbell's influence:

> *Joe was a luminous being in all our lives, one who opened gates to mysteries past through his knowledge and insight into the myths and legends that touch all civilizations. . . . He enabled us to treasure and to use the past and to recognize the blood memory within each of us. I have so often said that dance should illuminate the landscape of man's soul, and in my journey through that landscape Joe was a profound influence.*[51]

This concept of soul was vital to Martha Graham's vision; as opposed to the discoveries of science that "will in time change and perhaps grow obsolete . . . art is eternal, for it reveals the inner landscape, which is the soul of man."[52]

A Graham dance inspired by mythology elucidates the myth from the point of view of the heroine; it is an exploration of the inner world of the feminine soul or, better, psyche, with all of the Freudian implications that this word evokes. Another vital element in her art was its sublime eroticism: "I know my dances and technique are considered deeply sexual, but I pride myself in placing on stage what most people hide in their deepest thoughts."[53] Graham's company, which she founded in 1926, is the oldest continuously performing American dance company, whose future, alas, is in jeopardy in the year 2002. Her first ensemble consisted of a trio of three women; this was expanded in 1929 to a larger all-female group; with the addition of permanent male dancers the company came into being in 1938.

Many important scores by prominent American composers were commissioned by Graham for her innovative dances.

One work choreographed by Graham and danced by three males, *Bas Relief* (1926, music by Cyril Scott), is influenced by the ancient world. Also, her dance *Tanagra* (1926), to music by Satie, confirms her early commitment to the Greek spirit; Louis Horst described the work: "An expression of a classical figure, performed with an effective use of draperies, it was the last dance still showing a definite influence of Denishawn background."[54] In addition to her works on Greek myth, many of Graham's dances have universal spiritual motifs that are significant for the classicist. A good example out of many is *Primitive Mysteries* (Hymn to the Virgin, Crucifixus, Hosanna, 1931; music by Louis Horst). This work "was not a piece about Catholicism exclusively, although she had spoken of Mary the Virgin when working on it with her dancers; rather it was a piece about religious feelings in general. . . ." This "Spanish-Indian brand of Christian ritual" could be classical; Graham was the Virgin or any "sacred ritual figure" of religious myth.[55] Another work, *Celebration* (1934; music by Louis Horst), which has no story, suggests things Greek. With reference to this work in particular, comments may be aptly framed in Greek terms about the "enlarged beings" of Graham's dances,

who "draw virtue and strength from a Dionysiac joy in movement." Graham perfected her chorus of dancers as an ensemble and dramatic force so that they became the "inspired damsels of the Bacchae; Euripides would have understood."[56]

The list of dynamic and imaginative works for dance theater by Martha Graham solely on Greek themes is most impressive:[57]

- *Night Journey* (1947). Music by William Schuman. Graham states in her notes: ". . . it is not Oedipus who is the protagonist. The action turns upon that instant of Jocasta's death when she relives her destiny, sees with double insight the triumphal entry of Oedipus, their meeting, courtship, marriage, their years of intimacy which were darkly crossed by the blind seer, Tiresias, until at last the truth burst from him." To enhance appreciation of Martha Graham's genius one should read her own lengthy analysis of her "highly erotic dance" between Jocasta and Oedipus.[58] *Night Journey* provides the very best introduction to Graham's art. It is concise, taut, and concentrated (about a half hour in length), and its stylized and simple sets by Isamu Noguchi enhance the intensity of the action: a bed, where Jocasta conceived and gave birth to Oedipus, their marriage-bed, and the setting for her suicide; and a rope, which in the episodes of the dance becomes the binding umbilical cord, the entangling thread of fate, and the noose of death.
- *Suite from Alceste* (1926). Music by Gluck. Danced by Graham, Trio, and five other dancers, including males.
- *Alcestis* (1960). Music by Vivian Fine. The cast: Alcestis, Thanatos, Admetus, Hercules, and thirteen dancers.
- *Errand into the Maze* (1947). Music by Gian Carlo Menotti. In her program notes Graham describes the work: "There is an errand into the maze of the heart's darkness in order to do battle with the Creature of Fear [the Minotaur]. There is the accomplishment of the errand, the instant of triumph, and the emergence from the dark."
- *Cave of the Heart* (1947). Music by Samuel Barber. Original title, *Serpent Heart* (1946). Barber notes that both he and Graham did not wish to make a literal use of the legend; the mythical Medea and Jason "served rather to project psychological states of jealousy and vengeance which are timeless." Barber rearranged and rescored some of this material for an orchestral ballet suite (*Medea*) and then fashioned one continuous orchestral study of Medea herself (*Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*).
- *Ekstasis* (1933). Music by Lehman Engel. A solo on the legend of Medea.
- *Clytemnestra* (1958). Music by Halim El-Dabh, whose score is operatic with a soprano and bass as narrators in concert dress. A full-evening tour de force in which the following characters appear: Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, Iphigenia, Electra, Cassandra, Helen of Troy, Agamemnon, Orestes, Hades, Paris, the watchman, ghost of Agamemnon, and Messenger of Death.

- *Electra* (1931). For the first time Graham appeared in a production of a legitimate play, produced by a company associated with the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Cast as The Dancer, Graham choreographed her three solos: Dance of the Fury, Lament over the Urn, and a final Dance to lead the chorus.
- *Dithyrambic* (1931). Music by Aaron Copland (piano variations). A barbaric solo dance expressing the passion of the dionysiac dithyramb.
- *Bacchanale* (1931) and *Bacchanale No. 2* (1932). Music (for piano, four hands) by Wallingford Riegger (1885–1961), who wrote many scores for the leading figures in modern dance in the 1930s.
- *Lucrece* (1932). A dramatic adaptation by André Obey of Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucretia*, in which narrators recited the story while actors mimed; Graham was movement and staging consultant to Katharine Cornell and Guthrie McClintic for the production.
- *Tragic Patterns* (1932). Music by Louis Horst. *Three Choric Dances for an Antique Greek Tragedy*: Chorus for Supplicants, Chorus for Maenads, and Chorus for Furies. Also performed as a solo.
- *Cortege of Eagles* (1967). Music by Eugene Lester. Hecuba and Polymnestor are the central tragic figures; a list of the other principal dancers suggests the scope of the action: Andromache, Charon, Hector, Achilles, Priam, Polydorus, Paris, Helen, Astyanax, and Polyxena.
- *Phaedra* (1962). Music by Robert Starer. Cast: Phaedra, Hippolytus, Aphrodite, Artemis, Theseus, Pasiphae, and seven bull dancers.
- *Phaedra's Dream* (1983). Music by Crumb.
- *Andromache's Lament* (1982). Music by Samuel Barber.
- *Circe* (1963). Music by Alan Hovhaness. The characters are Circe, Ulysses, Helmsman, Snake, Lion, Deer, and Goat. The program notes explain: "The world Ulysses sees, in Martha Graham's adaptation of the myth of Circe, is his own: that inner world of bestialities and enchantments where one discovers what it costs to choose to be human."
- *Persephone* (1987). Music by Igor Stravinsky (Symphony in C). Program notes explain: "Demeter, Goddess of the Harvest, searches for her daughter Persephone, abducted into the Underworld. Until her return, the earth remains barren."

George Balanchine

George Balanchine (1904–1983), born in St. Petersburg, Russia, was trained in the Imperial Theater Ballet School, studied music at the Conservatory, was a member of the company of the State Theater of Opera and Ballet, and became the leader of an independent group of dancers called the Young Ballet. In 1924

he defected to western Europe, met the renowned impresario Serge Diaghilev, and was appointed ballet master of *Les Ballet Russes*, where he choreographed major works. In 1933, this talented artist steeped in Russian and European ballet tradition was brought to the United States by the wealthy American Lincoln Kirstein, who was determined to establish classical ballet in his own country. Thus the American Ballet and its School of American Ballet, and eventually Ballet Caravan, were formed under Balanchine's direction.

Balanchine, in the composition of his ballet *Apollon Musagète* for the first time, in 1928, had collaborated with Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), who wrote the original score; Balanchine later described this collaboration as the turning point in his creative life. He was driven to develop for this twentieth-century score his own new concept of dance:

> *His re-use of Goleizovsky's "Sixth position," in which the toes and the heels of the feet are touching, although "modern," held a suggestion of archaic Greek sculpture; there were syncopated movements and whole passages without a single classical ballet step.*[59]

Apollo (the title from 1957) became a cornerstone of Balanchine's career in America. His American Ballet gave its premiere performance April 27, 1937, at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The world premiere, however, was given in Paris in 1928 by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, with Stravinsky conducting. The work has been revised several times; in 1979 for a revival with Mikhail Baryshnikov, Balanchine eliminated nearly the first third of the score; his original version is very much to be preferred. After Leto's labor and the birth and youth of Apollo, two goddesses present him with a lute and teach him music. Apollo plays the lute and dances. The three Muses enter and Apollo presents each with an emblem of her art. Calliope receives a stylus and tablet and personifies poetry and rhythm; Polyhymnia represents mime; and Terpsichore, who combines poetry and gesture in dance, is honored by Apollo, who dances a solo variation and a pas de deux with her. Apollo and the Muses join in a final dance and ascend to Parnassus. Another landmark of Balanchine's neo-classicism was his *Orpheus*, again with music by Stravinsky, who, as he was writing the score, worked more closely than ever with Balanchine. After *Orpheus* had its premiere in New York, the City Center of Music and Drama felt compelled to invite Balanchine's Ballet Society to become its permanent ballet company. *Orpheus* was on the program of the inaugural performance of Balanchine's New York City Ballet on October 11, 1948. A brief summary of the action goes as follows: Orpheus weeps for Eurydice and friends sympathize; The Dark Angel leads Orpheus to Hades. Orpheus meets the threats of the Furies and the Lost Souls implore Orpheus to continue his song. Hades is moved; Orpheus' eyes are bound and Eurydice is returned to him. When Orpheus tears the bandage from his eyes, Eurydice falls dead. The Bacchantes attack and tear Orpheus to pieces. Apollo appears, wrests the lyre from Orpheus, and raises his song heavenward.

In 1957, again to music by Stravinsky, Balanchine choreographed a ballet entitled *Agon* (the Greek spelling of this Greek word for contest is actually used), which with *Apollo* and *Orpheus* was by intention to complete a Greek triad for performance by the New York City Ballet.[60]

Finally we mention Balanchine's *Electronics* (New York City Ballet, 1961), with music by Remil Gassman in collaboration with Oskar Sala (for an electronic tape). In this dance, Zeus, Mercury, and the other Olympians rule in a space age of science fiction.

Other Dance Works

- *God the Reveler* (1987). Choreographer, Erick Hawkins. Music by Alan Hovhaness. Erick Hawkins Dance Company. Dionysus battles unsuccessfully with death; after his entrails are eaten by Titans, he is reborn. The dance ends with a revel ("a kind of antique hoedown") for the god and his maenads and satyrs. Erick Hawkins (1909–1991), an important figure in American dance, has been deeply influenced by the Greeks (as well as by Zen Buddhism). He majored in classics at Harvard and worked with George Balanchine; he was the first male dancer to join Martha Graham's company in 1938, and she created some of her best male roles for him. He married Graham, and the ending of their marriage caused her much unhappiness.
- *The Minotaur* (1947). Choreographer, John Taras. Music by Elliott Carter. Ballet Society, New York. Lincoln Kirsten invited Carter to write the score and Balanchine helped adapt the story for the stage. Motives reflect fragments of ancient Greek music, for example, the Epitaph of Seikilos and the hymns to Apollo inscribed on the Delphic Treasury of the Athenians. The dance is in two scenes: King Minos' Palace in Crete; and Before the Labyrinth. Among the episodes depicted are the following: Queen Pasiphaë dances frantically with the sacred bull; Pasiphaë's heartbeat becomes the pounding of hammers used in the building of the Labyrinth amidst the howling of their offspring, the Minotaur, who is to be imprisoned; various dances go on to depict Ariadne's love for Theseus, her help in the killing of the Minotaur, and her abandonment. Carter composed an abbreviated version of his score, *The Minotaur, Suite from the Ballet*.
- *Ovid, Metamorphoses* (1958). Choreographer, Herbert Ross. Music by Arnold Schönberg (*Sonata for Violin and Piano*). American Ballet Theatre Workshop. Cast: Io and the Cloud, Narcissus and Echo, Daphne and Apollo, Calpurnia, Caesar, and Venus.
- *Ulysses' Bow* (1984). Music by John Harbison. Sections are entitled Prelude: Premonitions; Ulysses' Return; Ulysses and Argos; The Suitors; While the Suitors Sleep; Penelope; Penelope's Dream; The Trial of the Bow;

The Ritual of Purification; Reunion. The work is the second part of an evening-length ballet, yet to be staged; the first part is called Ulysses' Raft, and it uses the same themes and structure. The composer first wanted to tell this story as a dance piece while watching a televised performance of Monteverdi's opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. Harbison was attracted to the scenes, which were to him "visually indelible" and "scenically extraordinary."

- *Achilles Loved Patroclus* (1993). Choreogapher, Bill T. Jones. Music by John Oswald. A solo dance.
- *The Bull Dancers* (1963). Choreographer, Lawrence Gradus. Music by Jacques Ibert (*A Louisville Concerto*). American Ballet Theatre Workshop. Events in the bull arena leading up to Theseus' slaying of the Minotaur.
- *Judgment of Paris* (1940). Choreographer, Antony Tudor. Music by Kurt Weill (selections from *Die Dreignoschenoper*). American Ballet Theatre. World premiere, London Ballet (1938). In this comic ballet, a drunken Englishman must choose among three Parisian prostitutes. Video: Anthony Tudor. A Dance Horizons Video. In a brief section Agnes de Mille expresses her delight in the role of Venus.
- *The Moirai* (1961). Music by Hugh Aitken. The José Limón Dance Company.
- *Diana and Actaeon*, a pas de deux (1973). Choreographer, Rudolf Nureyev, from the original by Agrippina Vaganova. Music by Cesare Pugni, arranged by John Lanchbery. American Ballet Theatre. Video: World premiere of Nureyev's staging (taped for television), NBC, 1963, with Nureyev and Svetlana Beriosova.
- *Antigone/Rites for the Dead* (1989). Film: Eclipse Productions. Amy Greenfield, Producer/Director. Various composers. Bertram Ross (Oedipus) and Janet Eilber.
- *Persephone* (1991). Choreographer, Ralph Lemon. Music by Anthony Davis (*Maps, Violin Concerto*). Ralph Lemon Dance Company. The myth of Demeter and Persephone.
- *Orpheus Portrait*, a pas de deux (1991). Choreographer, Kent Stowell. Music by Liszt. Pacific Northwest Ballet.
- *Nymphs and Satyr.* Music by Howard Hanson, who from the score composed a ballet suite (1979). The ballet was premiered by the Chautauqua Ballet. The music, adapted from an earlier sketch for a solo clarinet fantasy, reveals the composer's personal style of bucolic tone painting. The ingratiating melody of the Scherzo originated in a tune Hanson improvised as he sang to his Irish terrier Molly and offered her dog biscuits. He provides a synopsis of the work in the notes to the recording (Bay Cities BCD-1005): "Destiny moves the nymphs on a journey. As they travel they

express their joy of life. Satyr is touched on the shoulder by Destiny and he joins the nymphs in their expression of happiness. At the end, Satyr is left alone, contemplating life and friendship."

- *The Sphinx* (1951). Choreographer, David Lichine. Music by Henri Sauguet. Originally *La Rencontre* (Les Ballets des Champs-Elysée, Paris, 1948). Oedipus solves the riddle of the Sphinx.
- *The Relativity of Icarus* (1974). Choreographer, Gerald Arpino. Music by Gerhard.
- *Icarus at Night* (1991). Choreographer, Christopher Gillis. Music by Brahms (*String Sextet No. 1*). Paul Taylor Dance Company.
- *Icarus* (1964). Choreographer, Lucas Hoving. The José Limón Dance Company. A classic of the modern dance, performed by several companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
- *Dionysus*, a dance film (1963). Film-maker's Corp., Charles Boultenhouse, producer/director. Music by Teiji Ito. The portrayal of the psychology of the Euripidean characters is enhanced by photographic tricks; Louis Falco as Dionysus, Anna Duncan as Agave, and Nicholas Magallanes as Pentheus.
- *Dido and Aeneas* (1989). Choreographer, Mark Morris. Music by Purcell (*Dido and Aeneas*). A performance of the complete opera (both words and music) is used as the ballet score. The controversial Morris dances the roles of both Queen Dido and the Sorceress!
- *L'Amour et son Amour*. Choreographer, Jean Babile. Music by César Frank (*Psyche*). Scenery and costumes by Jean Cocteau. American Ballet Theatre (1951). World premiere, Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, Paris (1948). The story of Cupid and Psyche.
- *Helen of Troy* (1942). Choreographer, David Lichine. Music by Jacques Offenbach (*La Belle Hélène*, arranged by Antal Dorati). American Ballet Theatre. A comic version of the Trojan War, employing the score and décor of the version by Michel Fokine, but completely different in choreography and treatment. Cast: Helen, Paris, Menelaus, Zeus, Calchas, Aphrodite, Athena, Hera, Hermes, and Hymen.
- *Afternoon of a Faun* (1941). Choreographer, Yura Lazovsky, from the original by Vaslav Nijinsky. Music by Claude Debussy. American Ballet Theatre. Originally *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (Les Ballets Russes de Diaghilev, 1912).
- *The Transformations of Medusa*. In *The Jean Erdman Video Archives, vol. 1: The Early Dances* (1989), which presents re-creations of Erdman's work after she left the Martha Graham Dance Company; also included is a dance entitled *Hamadryad*.

- *The Stone Medusa* (1969). Choreographer, Richard Elis. Music by Hector Villa-Lobos (*Uirapura*, Symphonic Poem). The Illinois Ballet performs this dance about Medusa, based on the myths of both Medusa and Pygmalion. Video by Orion Dance Films.
- *Medea* (1979), a ballet from the Soviet Union. Choreographer, Georgiy Aleksize. Music by Revaz Gabichvadze. Offers a more traditional version danced by a Russian cast; available on video.
- *Medea* (1780), ballet d'action by Jean Georges Noverre, the father of modern ballet, has been re-created for today, staged and choreographed by Judith Chazin-Bennahum and presented by the University of New Mexico Department of Theater and Dance with a chamber ensemble in full period costume of the eighteenth century and accompanied by sixteen musicians. The Dance Horizons Video includes the documentary *Recreating Medea* by Mariel McEwen.
- *Daphnis and Chloe* (1982). Choreographer, Graeme Murphy (The Sydney Dance Company). A provocative and daring production, not least of all because of its frank sensuality. The scenario is based on the novel by Longus, and the famous score is by Maurice Ravel. On video.
- Birgit Akesson, a noted Swedish dancer, choreographed several mythological ballets for the Royal Swedish Ballet, including *Sysyfos* (1957), *Minotauros* (1958), *Ikaros* (1963), and *Nausikaa* (1966).
- The famous Danish choreographer, Flemming Flindt, created for the Dallas Ballet a powerful *Phaedra* (1986), based on Euripides. The score by Philip Glass is most effective.

Mythology in Film

This brief survey concentrates on movies that seem to be available, particularly on videotape, videodisc, or DVD, which may be judged of some interest and significance. Even the most casual perusal of films that deal with the ancient world reveals an impressive number of treatments. We omit with regret the many adaptations of Greek and Roman history, legendary or otherwise, but begin by mentioning one in this genre because of its mythological and musical interest: *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (directed by Stanley Donen, 1954), a gem of a Hollywood musical, based very loosely upon the accounts by Plutarch and Livy of the rape of the Sabine women in the early saga of Rome and reset in the American Old West (from *Sobbin' Women* by Stephen Vincent Benet). The dances are choreographed by Michael Kidd, the songs are by Johnny Mercer, and the stars are Howard Keel and Jane Powell, joined by dancers including Tommy Rall and Jacques d' Amboise.

Everyone should enjoy the movie versions of two musicals discussed earlier that derive from Plautus: Rodgers and Hart's *The Boys from Syracuse* (1940),

starring Allan Jones and Martha Raye and directed by Edward A. Sutherland, which includes a spirited chariot race finale and an added song, "The Greeks Have No Word for It"; and the delightful *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966), for which Stephen Sondheim wrote both the music and the book, starring Zero Mostel and Phil Silvers and directed by Richard Lester.

Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* (1964) is also a musical delight, particularly for Rex Harrison's Professor Henry Higgins. The play upon which it is based, George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, may also be enjoyed in its classic movie version (1938), starring Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller.

The Broadway musical by Kurt Weill, *One Touch of Venus* (1948), based on *The Tinted Venus* by F. Annstey and adapted by S. J. Perelman and Ogden Nash, has been considerably modified for the screen; yet it remains amusing enough as it tells about a statue of Venus (Ava Gardner) in a department store that comes to life and falls in love with a window dresser (Robert Walker).

The powerful *Gospel at Colonus* (discussed in the previous section) is another musical now available for viewing; this is a piece that definitely should be seen and not just heard.

Performances of dance, some of which are on film, are discussed in the previous section. Operatic performances are also available on video. Of note are Tippett's *King Priam* (Kent Opera) and two Glyndebourne Festival Opera productions, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (with Janet Baker) and Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.

A contemporary version of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, staged by Harry Kupfer (The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden), has Orpheus sung by a male alto, Jochen Kowalski, in leather jacket and with electric guitar, pursuing his Eurydice, who has died in a car accident. Yet another video, this time the French version of Gluck's opera, is conducted by John Eliot Gardiner and directed by Robert Wilson. From the same conductor and director comes a performance of Gluck's *Alceste*, starring Anne Sofie von Otter. Three interpretations of Strauss's *Elektra* have been filmed, one from the Metropolitan Opera with Birgit Nilsson in the title role and Leonie Rysanek as Chrysothemis, another (directed by Götz Friedrich and shot on the outskirts of Vienna amidst filth and rain) with Leonie Rysanek as Electra and Karl Böhm conducting the Vienna Philharmonic, and a third starring Eva Marton with the Vienna State Opera conducted by Claudio Abbado. We also have a choice of two performances of Mozart's *Idomeneo*, one from Glyndebourne and one from the Metropolitan Opera, the latter starring Luciano Pavarotti, in a production by the controversial Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. *Ariadne auf Naxos* from the Metropolitan Opera stars Jessye Norman. Norman also appears as Cassandra in the Metropolitan's production of Berlioz' *Les Troyens*, in a cast that includes Placido Domingo as Aeneas. Finally, Offenbach's delightful operetta, *La belle Hélène*, is available, conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

The Trojan War

It may surprise all but the die-hard movie buff that many films inspired by Greece and Rome were made between the years 1888 and 1918. We shall begin, however, with *Helen of Troy,* produced by Warner Brothers in 1955, with Rossana Podesta as Helen and a musical score by Max Steiner. This epic is lavish in its production but, alas, weak in its script. Of a much lower caliber are two other cinematic treatments: Steve Reeves as Aeneas in *The Avenger,* also titled *Last Glory of Troy;* and *Colossus and the Amazon Queen* (1964), with Rod Taylor, Dorian Gray, and Ed Fury, a tale about two veterans of the Trojan War and their encounter with the Amazons; the main virtue of this romantic comedy is that its humor is intentional.

Roman Legend

Gate of Hell (director, Hiroshi Inagaki, 1955) is a tragedy of a warrior's desire for a married noblewoman set in twelfth-century Japan and based on the rape of Lucrece. It won an Academy Award for the best foreign film of 1954.

In a much lighter vein is *Jupiter's Darling,* starring Esther Williams and Howard Keel and directed by George Sidney, an amusing musical about Hannibal based on Robert E. Sherwood's play *Road to Rome.* Equally mythological is *Roman Scandals.* A fellow from Oklahoma (Eddie Cantor) dreams his way back to an ancient Rome that enjoys Busby Berkeley musical numbers.

In addition to the Hollywood grand epics, countless movies of lesser stature dealing with early legendary Rome are available, for example, *Romulus and Remus* and Roger Moore in *The Rape of the Sabines.*

Ulysses and the *Odyssey*

Ulysses (1954), an Italian film with English dialogue, has rightly received critical acclaim for its cinematic techniques and performances by Kirk Douglas (as Ulysses) and Silvana Mangano, who offers haunting portrayals of both Penelope and Circe. Viewers may judge for themselves the highly acclaimed Hallmark made-for-television movie *The Odyssey* (1997). For us it was a disappointment. Armand Assante set the tone by making the hero a bore; Bernadette Peters as Circe played Bernadette Peters; beautiful Isabella Rossellini, who should have been an ideal Athena, forgot she was a goddess and became the chum next door; and so on. The great actress Irene Papas as Anticlea did her valiant best with the banal script in these surroundings. Yet a very campy Hermes added a brief moment of relief and some visual effects were impressive, for example, angry Poseidon and the sea.

A contemporary, topical, and yet mystical reuse of the Odysseus' theme has been made by the distinguished Greek director Theo Angelopoulos. In *Ulysses'*

Gaze (1995). Mr. A (played by Harvey Keitel), a famous Greek-American director, returns to Greece and the Balkans in search of the lost films of the pioneering Manakia brothers, which they made in 1903. His personal and professional odyssey, which crisscrosses the Balkans and culminates in war-torn Sarajevo, involves many powerful and poetic episodes, including his encounters with women, and juxtaposes present and past in provocative images. Hailed as a masterpiece and condemned as pretentious and tiresome, this epic movie (almost three hours long) contains much beautiful and evocative cinematography. *O Brother, Where Art Thou* (2000), a comedy with American folk and traditional music directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, is very loosely but brilliantly based on the *Odyssey;* George Clooney (Ulysses), John Turturro, and Tim Blake Nelson are escapees from a chain gang in the South during the Depression of the 1930s. Their encounter with the Sirens is particularly funny, amidst many amusing, thought-provoking, and heart-warming scenes.

Hercules

There are several movies about the hero Hercules; some freely manipulate legendary material, while others (e.g., *Hercules and the Moon Men*) make little or no attempt to remain faithful to antiquity. Although these films are of dubious quality, two are worth mentioning: *Hercules* (1959) and *Hercules Unchained* (1959), both starring bodybuilder Steve Reeves, attempt to recapture aspects of the original legend and offer a modicum of entertainment, if one is not too discriminating. *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules* is a very funny screwball comedy for those who like this sort of thing. In the world of Heraclean films, the popular television series *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, starring Kevin Sorbo (with Anthony Quinn as a bumbling Zeus), however juvenile at times, deserves credit for some clever reworking of material that is still recognizably classical and for employment of certain stunning special effects. Some of the titles are *Heracles: In the Underworld, The Circle of Fire and the Amazon Women,* and *The Lost Kingdom.* There is also *The Xena Trilogy*, recounting the adventures of Hercules (Sorbo again) with "the beautiful and deadly princess Xena": *The Warrior Princess, The Gauntlet,* and *Unchained Heart.* Disney's movie *Hercules* (1997) provides good family entertainment and animation that is clever, for example, friezes and vase-paintings that spring delightfully to life. This is myth-making of independent spirit, a takeoff and transformation of the character bearing the unique creative stamp of Disney, like it or not. Disney fans should consult the beautiful and informative book *The Art of Hercules: The Chaos of Creation.*[61]

Jason and the Argonauts

An important mythical adaptation, *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963, directed by Don Chaffey), is especially noteworthy for its exciting special effects by Ray

Harryhausen and a musical score by Mario Nascimbene, conducted by Bernard Herrmann. Well worth seeing and whatever its faults (among them the performance of a Medea weakened by the screenplay), this movie seems like a masterpiece when compared to the TV version, *Jason and the Argonauts* (2000), in which the role of Medea is by no means its greatest weakness. The Jason (Jason London) is an expressionless youth who acts like a zombie; in fact almost the whole cast (several of them of some repute) exhibits a blank lethargy of nonacting (or is it bad acting?) that is oppressive. The legend is drastically transformed and often one is pressed to ask, "Why not leave well enough alone?" The Argonauts become a grubby and motley crew and include one woman, Atalanta, of course in love with Jason. Special effects are unimpressive, when not ludicrous—the best being the Harpies who plague Phineus in his home (a beehive tomb!); the most wrong-headed, Poseidon, the god portrayed as a monstrous and ugly giant. The lout Heracles does not leave the expedition early and forms a special bond with Jason (no Hylas here!). The vacuous and limp direction is by Nick Willing, who cannot even control incorrect and inconsistent pronunciation of names (a failing far too common generally today). The highlight (or lowlight) of this travesty occurs when Orpheus gives the name of his wife in Italian (shades of Gluck!)!

The Plays of Euripides

Artful and compelling is the controversial Italian film *Medea* (1970), directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini. Bold in its depiction of the bloodier and more brutal elements and fraught with interpretive insight, it is by no means confined to the events of Euripides' play but includes the essential episodes in the entire tragedy of Medea and Jason. Particularly astonishing is the depiction of the archetypal, ritualistic sacrifice of the young male to ensure Mother Earth's fertility and the renewal of the crops. For many, the major asset of this movie is opera star Maria Callas, who offers her only nonsinging cinematic appearance as Medea.

Another adaptation of the Medea story, *A Dream of Passion* (1978), directed by Jules Dassin, presents the tragic and harrowing study of a modern-day Medea in Greece, played most realistically by Ellen Burstyn. In addition, Melina Mercouri convincingly portrays an aging actress who is engaged in a performance of the *Medea* of Euripides. Thus this gripping film also offers, among its many riches, scenes from the play, in both modern Greek and English. The American poet Robinson Jeffers wrote an artful adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* in 1947; Judith Anderson created the title role, and her striking performance is preserved. A revival of Jeffers' play starring Zoe Caldwell, also a fine Medea (with Judith Anderson as the nurse), is also available in its Kennedy Center production (1983). From Sweden comes a *Medea* (1963) directed for television by Keve Hjelm, and for Danish television the enigmatic director Lars von Trier created a beautifully stark and powerful interpretation in his version of Euripides (1987), based on a

script by Carl Theodor Dryer; the chilling horror of the murder of the children is devastating. Startling, to say the least, is a production of *Medea* by the New York Greek Drama Company in the original Greek of Euripides, with English subtitles; the actors wear masks, and William Arrowsmith provides introductory comments that tell us why we should appreciate this strange attempt at authenticity.[62]

The highest standard for the filming of Euripidean plays has been set by the Greek director Michael Cacoyannis: his *Electra* (1962), with Irene Papas; *The Trojan Women* (1971), with Katharine Hepburn, Vanessa Redgrave, and Irene Papas; and *Iphigenia* (1977), with Irene Papas, should not be missed. Each of these movies is a masterpiece in its own way, full of passion and meaning for today. The performance of Papas in all three is outstanding: she is totally different and thoroughly convincing in the diverse roles of Electra, Helen, and Clytemnestra. The genius of Cacoyannis becomes all the more evident in comparison with a movie like *Bacchantes*, directed by George Ferroni—an embarrassing travesty of Euripides to be avoided by all but the insatiably curious.

A video (offered by Creative Arts Television), *Andre Serban: The Greek Trilogy* (1974), presents excerpts from the experimental productions, off Broadway, of this flamboyant director: Euripides' *Electra*, *Medea*, and *The Trojan Women.*

Of great interest is the movie of Eugene O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms* (1958); this version of the Hippolytus legend, set in New England, also combines thematic elements from the legends of Oedipus and Medea; Anthony Perkins, Sophia Loren, and Burl Ives give strong performances. Anthony Perkins is also the Hippolytus figure in a modern adaptation of *Phaedra* (1962), directed by Jules Dassin and also starring Melina Mercouri. Although heavy-handed and at times absurd, this movie has some power.

Oedipus and Antigone

Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is presented in the ancient Greek theater of Amphiaraion, with the actors wearing masks. James Mason plays Oedipus; Claire Bloom, Jocasta; and Ian Richardson, Tiresias. This abridged performance includes narration by Anthony Quayle. Among other performances of *Oedipus the King*, a version directed by Tyrone Guthrie (1957) should be singled out. This film of a performance of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Players of Canada employs William Butler Yeats' translation. Although not entirely a cinematic success, its professionalism and its use of striking masks are of great interest. A strong British version (1967), starring Christopher Plummer, Orson Welles, and Lilli Palmer, makes more of an attempt to transform the play into a movie.

The film by the Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Oedipus Rex* (1967), includes many unforgettable episodes from the saga, for example, the brutal exposure of the infant Oedipus and later his youthful and bloody encounter with his father; such amplifications reveal psychoanalytic insight and a personal and

modern vision. One of the finest productions of all three Theban plays of Sophocles (*Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus,* and *Antigone*) was done for BBC Television, in a new translation by the director Don Taylor, with a cast that includes John Gielgud, Claire Bloom, and Anthony Quayle, all of whom are superb. A movie version of *Antigone,* written and directed by George Tzavellas, in Greek with English subtitles, has the incomparable Irene Papas in the title role as its greatest strength. A production of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* for *Great Performances* on PBS Television, starring Genevieve Bujold, Stacy Keach, and Fritz Weaver, may be obtained from Broadway Theatre Archive. *Antigone: Rites of Passion,* a powerful movie by Amy Greenfield, adds a wonderful dimension of music and dance to the drama.

Not to be ignored is *Oedipus Wrecks,* one of three short films included in the movie *New York Stories,* directed by and starring Woody Allen, about a fifty-year-old neurotic lawyer tormented by the specter of his nagging mother.

THE *ORESTEIA*

An unusual production of Aeschylus' *Oresteia,* by the National Theatre of Great Britain, directed by Peter Hall, employs both a new rhyming translation by Tony Harrison and the stylized use of masks; although in many ways dramatically intense and well worth seeing, the overall conception verges at times on the monotonous. Of historic and histrionic importance is the movie version (1947) of Eugene O'Neill's American Oresteia, *Mourning Becomes Electra,* particularly for the performances (very much in the grand manner) of Katina Paxinou and Michael Redgrave, but Rosalind Russell is miscast as Electra. A production of the play for *Great Performances* on PBS Television, starring Bruce Davison, Joan Hackett, and Roberta Maxwell is fortunately available from The Broadway Theatre Archive. The Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini recounts his preparations for a film made in Africa of a modern version of the *Oresteia* (which he never lived to complete) in *Notes for an African Orestes;* he documented local rituals and searched local villages in Uganda and Tanzania for likely candidates and situations for the filming. This is a study of specialized interest, to be sure, even though it attempts, not always successfully, to illuminate many parallels between political and social issues in the ancient trilogy and those of Africa in the twentieth century.

ORPHEUS

Among the more significant treatments of ancient mythology are modern retellings of the Orpheus legend. The problematic but arresting play *Orpheus Descending,* by Tennessee Williams, has become a noteworthy film (under the title *The Fugitive Kind*), thanks to its stars, Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, Joanne Woodward, Maureen Stapleton, and Victor Jory. The words of Marlon Brando in the brief opening scene of the movie speak volumes. The name of this

Orpheus sounds like Savior, he wears a snake-skin jacket to attest to his underworld connections, and he is devoted to his guitar, "a life-long companion."

The Brazilian *Black Orpheus* (1959), directed by Marcel Camus, with a relentless but compelling musical score by Antonio Carlos Jobim and Luis Bonfa, which sets the myth in Rio at carnival time, has deservedly won critical acclaim and popularity. Indeed, it attests to the universal humanity of the myth that transcends race, color, locale, and time. Also from Brazil comes *Orfeu*, directed by Carlos Diegues, about the love of a famous musician, with an added milieu of drugs and gangs and its own arresting soundtrack by Caetano Veloso. Both movies are based upon the play by the Brazilian Vinicius de Moraes. Also, everyone should experience more than once the exciting and evocative *Orphée* (1949) of Jean Cocteau, a landmark in the history of the cinema. He reshapes the myth in a setting in Paris on the Left Bank in the 1940s. This Orpheus is in love with Death, named The Princess, and his entrance to the Underworld is through a mirror. Cocteau's obsession with the Orphic archetype appears in his last movie, *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1959), which offers plenty of mythological allusion. Along with these two, his first movie (1930), *The Blood of a Poet*, which explores themes of artistic creation, poetry, death, and rebirth in sequences of dreamlike imagery, makes up what may be called Cocteau's Orphic trilogy. The DVD release of this trilogy includes many priceless bonuses, including transcripts of Cocteau's insightful essays for each movie and two illuminating documentaries. Mirrors, through which we see the ravages of time, and the stealthy approach of death are recurrent images reflecting his fascination with death and the interplay of dreams and reality.

Various Themes

The legend of Perseus has received imaginative and entertaining treatment in *Clash of the Titans* (1981), with a star-studded cast including Harry Hamlin, Laurence Olivier, and Maggie Smith. Despite its misleading title, this movie has many strengths that have not always been justly appreciated, among them a chilling decapitation of Medusa (imaginatively set in the Underworld),[63] an exhilarating depiction of the flying horse Pegasus, and the addition of Bubo, a mechanical owl straight out of science fiction. Special effects are by Ray Harryhausen (who surpasses his splendid work for *Jason and the Argonauts*), and the stirring music is by Laurence Rosenthal. Not in the same class is *The Gorgon*, a horror vehicle for Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. For those interested in the humorous, the historic movie of Max Reinhardt's production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935) has James Cagney as Pyramus and Joe E. Brown as Thisbe and may be compared to a more recent version (1968) with a stellar British cast. In *Seven Faces of Dr. Lao* (1964), an elderly Chinese man in a circus (Tony Randall) is a master of disguises who gives us a vision of Medusa and Pan. *Time Bandits* (1981) has as one of its sequences an episode with

Sean Connery playing Agamemnon. The episode "Who Mourns for Adonais" from the television series *Star Trek* presents Apollo, as the last of the Olympian gods, who demands to be worshiped.

We find a modern depiction of a muse in three movies: *The Muse* (1999), directed by Albert Brooks, with Sharon Stone, an extravagant and eccentric muse who makes extraordinary demands upon a screenwriter in return for the creative inspiration she can bestow; *Down to Earth* (1947), directed by Alexander Hall, with Rita Hayworth as the muse Terpsichore, who comes to earth to make a Broadway producer fix a new musical because she is irate that she is portrayed as too modern and sexy; and *Xanadu* (1980), directed by Robert Greenwald, a remake of *Down to Earth* as a vehicle for Olivia Newton-John, a muse who, this time, helps two friends open a roller disco (Gene Kelly also stars).

In *The Midas Touch* (1997), directed by Peter Manoogian, a twelve-year-old boy who is granted his wish to have the Midas touch; a Hungarian movie with the same title (1989), directed by Geza Beremenyi, tells the story of a flea merchant who possesses the golden touch.

Cupid (Costas Mandylor) comes to earth and falls in love in the romantic *Love Struck* (1997). In an even more lightweight movie, Vanna White proves that she cannot act, as Venus in *Goddess of Love* (1988). Woody Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite* (1995) offers amusing testimony of the power of love, along with a parody of Greek tragedy. Much more serious, horrifying, and certainly not for everyone is *Ted and Venus* (1992), directed by Bud Cort, who also plays Ted, about a misfit who ardently pursues the woman of his dreams (an allegorical Venus).

We are all enriched by meaningful and stimulating cinematic treatments of mythology and legend; and in our search for movies on Greek and Roman themes, those that deal with comparative thematic material should not be forgotten. The film *Dragonslayer* (1981), for example, which is based on Anglo-Saxon myth, exploits one of the most dominant themes in all mythology. *The Wicker Man* (1973) presents with chilling insight an archetypal pattern of demonic ritual and human sacrifice. The popular movies about Superman and Tarzan certainly can be related to the archetypes of classical saga. *Superman* (1978, the first of the series with Christopher Reeve) presents a disarming variation of the patterns in the birth, childhood, and adventures of a hero; and the version of the Tarzan legend called *Greystoke* is of particularly high caliber and worth mentioning not only for its own sake but also for the opportunity to point out that Tarzan has been identified as an Odyssean type of hero.[64] There is something of the *Iliad* (emotionally and spiritually) in the heroic sadness and epic devotion of *The Deer Hunter* (1978), and the protagonist of *Angel Heart* (1987) suffers in his ignorant guilt like an Oedipus. *Voyager* (1991) too is profoundly Greek in its mood and intensity because of its themes of family, incest, and fate; also steeped in the atmosphere of Greek tragedy is *Jean de Florette* (1987), as is made overtly clear in the dialogue of its equally fine sequel *Manon of the Spring* (1987). *Pretty Woman* (1990) is yet another metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Galatea; *She's All*

That (1999) presents a teenage version about a high school student who bets that he can transform a nonentity into a prom queen.

Finally, on video is *The Mythology of Star Wars*, an interview with director George Lucas by Bill Moyers, which explores such universal themes as the Journey and the Quest and the symbolism of light and darkness in the movie (1977). The fantasy and excitement of folktale and legend have been transported to outer space with familiar structures and motifs. Another good comparative example from the genre of science fiction is *Dune* (1984), although the novel is better than the movie. And so it goes.

This highly selective review is intended only as a mere sampling of the richness and variety in the treatment of Greek and Roman themes readily to be found in works by artists of every sort. Nevertheless, even the briefest account cannot help but forcefully remind us once again of the potent inspiration that classical mythology has provided and continues to provide for all facets of creative artistic expression.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

MUSIC

Anderson, E. Ruth. *Contemporary American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1976.

Bordman, Gerald. *American Musical Theatre, A Chronicle.* 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. An invaluable record, season by season.

Burbank, Richard. *Twentieth Century Music: Orchestral, Chamber, Operatic, & Dance Music 1900–1980.* New York: Facts on File, 1984. An invaluable year-by-year chronicle under the headings "Opera," "Dance," "Instrumental and Vocal Music," "Births, Deaths and Debuts," and "Related Events."

Chase, Gilbert. *America's Music.* 2d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966.

Constantine, James S. "Vergil in Opera." *Classical Outlook* 46 (1969), pp. 49, 63–65, 77–78, 87–89.

Dickinson, A. E. F. "Music for the Aeneid." *Greece & Rome* 6 (1959), pp. 129–147.

Ewen, David. *American Composers, A Biographical Dictionary.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982.

———. *The New Encyclopedia of the Opera.* New York: Hill & Wang, 1971.

Gilmore, Bob. *Harry Partch, A Biography.* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998.

Grout, Donald Jay. *A Short History of Opera.* 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.

Gummere, Richard M. *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition, Essays in Comparative Culture.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

———, **and Stanley Sadie, eds.** *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music.* London: Macmillan; New York: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1993.

Lang, Paul Henry. *Music in Western Civilization.* New York: Norton, 1941.

Levine, Robert. *Guide to Opera & Dance on Videocassette.* Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Consumers Union, Consumer Reports Books, 1989.

McDonald, Marianne. *Sing Sorrow: Classics, History, and Heroines in Opera.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Martin, George. *The Opera Companion to Twentieth Century Opera.* New York: Dodd, Mead, 1979.

Partch, Harry. *Bitter Music, Collected Journals, Essays, Introductions, and Librettos.* Edited by Thomas McGeary. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

———. *Genesis of Music.* 2d ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1974, [1949].

Poduska, Donald M. "Classical Myth in Music." *Classical World* 92, 1 (1999), pp. 195–275. A guide to CD recordings listed by subject.

Reis, Claire R. *Composers in America, Biographical Sketches of Contemporary Composers with a Record of Their Works.* Rev. ed. New York: Da Capo Press., 1977 [1930].

Sadie, Stanley, and John Tyrrell, eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* 2d ed. 29 vols. London: Macmillan; New York: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 2000.

———. *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera.* 4 vols. London: Macmillan; New York: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1992.

Traubner, Richard. *Operetta: A Theatrical History.* New York: Doubleday, 1983.

DANCE

Anderson, Jack. *Ballet and Modern Dance: A Concise History.* 2d ed. A Dance Horizons Book. Hightstown, N.J.: Princeton Book Co.

Blair, Fredrika. *Isadora, Portrait of the Artist as a Woman.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986.

Buckle, Richard, in collaboration with John Tara. *George Balanchine, Ballet Master.* New York: Random House, 1988.

Humphrey, Doris. *Doris Humphrey: An Artist First Centennial Edition.* A Dance Horizons Book. Hightstown, N.J.: Princeton Book Co., 1972. An autobiography, edited and completed by Selma Jeanne Cohen.

De Mille, Agnes. *The Life and Works of Martha Graham.* New York : Random House, 1991.

Duncan, Isadora. *My Life.* New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927.

Graham, Martha. *Blood Memory.* New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Loewenthal, Lillian. *The Search for Isadora: The Legend and Legacy of Isadora Duncan.* A Dance Horizons Book. Hightstown, N.J.: Princeton Book Co., 1993.

McDonagh, Don. *Martha Graham.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973 (rev ed. with "Choreochronicle," 1975).

Morgan, Barbara. *Martha Graham, Sixteen Dances in Photographs.* Rev. ed. Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Morgan & Morgan, 1980 [1941]; among the various essays are "Martha Graham: A Perspective" by George Beiswanger and "Choreographic Record" by Louis Horst.

Shawn, Ted, with Grey Poole. *One Thousand and One Night Stands.* New York: Doubleday, 1960 (reprinted with a new introduction by Walter Terry; New York: Da Capo Press, 1979).

Spain, Louise, ed. *Dance on Camera, A Guide to Dance Films and Videos.* Latham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 1998. Revised edition of *The Dance and Film Video Guide* published in 1991 by the Dance Films Association. A helpful resource for locating distributors and resources.

Terry, Walter. *Isadora Duncan, Her Life, Her Art, Her Legacy.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963.

FILM

Evans, Arthur B. *Jean Cocteau and His Films of Orphic Identity.* Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1977.

Mackinnon, Kenneth. *Greek Tragedy into Film.* London: Croom Helm, 1986.

Martin, Mick, and Marsha Porter. *Video Movie Guide 2001.* New York: Ballantine Books.

McDonald, Marianne. *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made Visible.* Philadelphia: Centrum, 1983.

Solomon, Jon. *The Ancient World in the Cinema.* Rev. ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001 [1978].

Winkler, Martin, ed. *Classics and Cinema.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1991].

NOTES

1. For a survey, see M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
2. For the history of the musical treatment of Vergilian themes and characters, see A. E. F. Dickinson, "Music for the Aeneid," *Greece & Rome* 6 (1959), pp. 129–147; and James S. Constantine, "Vergil in Opera," *Classical Outlook* 46 (1969), pp. 49 ff. Cavalli wrote *La Didone* in 1641. A libretto by Metastasio, *Didone Abbandonata,* was first set to music by D. A. Sarro (1724); subsequently many other composers set this same poem to music, among them Luigi Cherubini (1786).
3. Liszt and more recently Owen Jander (a musicologist) connect the brief second movement of Beethoven's lovely *Concerto No. 4 in G* (for piano and orchestra) to the Orpheus myth: the pianist represents Orpheus and the orchestra represents the Furies, whom an ever more assured soloist gradually tames in their alternating utterances.
4. A pioneer in setting the poems of Goethe and Schiller (among others) to music was Johann Friedrich Reichhart (1752–1814), for example, "Prometheus" (Goethe) and "Aeneas zu Dido" (Vergil/Schiller). It is a rewarding pleasure to make musical comparisons, e.g., the setting of Goethe's "Prometheus" by Reichhart, Schubert, and Wolf.
5. See Michael Ewans, *Wagner and Aeschylus: The Ring and the Oresteia* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982). Of historical interest is a mammoth work inspired by Wagner's *Ring,* a cycle of operas entitled *Homerische Welt* by August Bungert (1845–1915), which failed to win favor.
6. Inspired by the Trojan Cycle is an opera in one act by Othmar Schoeck (1886–1957), *Penthesilea* (1925, after Kleist), which may be compared, not unfavorably, to Strauss' *Elektra* for dramatic impact and musical idiom.
7. Quoted, without specific reference, by Ned Rorem, "In Search of American Opera," *Opera News* 56, 1 (July 1991), p. 9.
8. Quoted in David Ewen, *American Composers, A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982), p. 65.
9. An indigenous development, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was the emergence of jazz in New Orleans, a new musical genre created by black musicians who blended tribal African music with European and American styles. This along with the creation of blues and ragtime (of whom Scott Joplin was the king) came to be regarded as epitomizing American folk art. Classical composers sometimes use ele-

ments of jazz, blues, and ragtime to give to their works a particularly American originality and flavor.

10. Gilbert Chase, *America's Music*, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), identifies (in Chapters 5 and 6) these artists as emigrant professionals and gentlemen amateurs; among the best known of the latter are Thomas Jefferson, not a musician but an aristocratic patron; Benjamin Franklin, a practicing musician who may have composed; and Francis Hopkinson.
11. The dedication is reprinted in *The American Composer Speaks, A Historical Anthology, 1770–1865*, ed. Gilbert Chase (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 39–40.
12. Richard M. Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition, Essays in Comparative Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 142–143.
13. H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall 1969), p. 5.
14. His well-known *Battle of the Kegs* includes a prefatory metaphor of the Trojan horse. "A poem of 1762 on the benefits of science opens with a Horatian tribute, making mention of the muses, Helicon, Maecenas (in the guise of Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton), and Aeneas, with descriptions of an ideal college curriculum"; Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*. While admitting that Hopkinson is not a poet of great prominence, Gummere calls him "almost a cross between Horace and Petronius." See also George Everett Hastings, *The Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926).
15. Oscar Sonneck wrote the pioneering work on Hopkinson: *Francis Hopkinson, the First American Poet-Composer (1737–1791) and James Lyon, Patriot, Preacher, Psalmodist (1735–1794); Two Studies in Early American Music* (Washington, D.C.: H. L. McQueen, 1905). For Sonneck the music that accompanied Hopkinson's libretto was not extant. Gillian B. Anderson, however, has been responsible for a realization of the score, which she has recorded (The Colonial Singers and Players, Gillian B. Anderson, Director. LP Musical Heritage Society, MHS 3684). Her notes explain that she discovered documents that enabled her to identify almost all the music that Hopkinson chose with excellent taste, for it is beautiful and sophisticated, drawn from composers such as Handel and Arne. Anderson also warns that musically "we know with certainty only the names of the tunes to which most of the words were sung," and refers to a performing edition of the work "for a discussion of the different choices of performing forces" that may be made: *Francis Hopkinson, America Independent, or, The Temple of Minerva* (Washington, D.C.: C.T. Wagner Music Publishers, 1977).
16. A description of this first performance of *America Independent* appeared in *The Freeman's Journal*, Philadelphia, December 19, 1781.
17. Sonneck, quoted in Gerald Bordman, *American Musical Theater, A Chronicle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). p. 6.
18. Bordman, *American Musical Theater*, pp. 78–79.
19. Hitchcock, *Music in the United States*, pp. 17–18; three versions of the anthem (from among the many variations) are printed as Nos. 113–115 in *Music in America: An Anthology from the Landing of the Pilgrims to the Close of the Civil War, 1620–1865*, ed. W.Thomas Marrocco and Harold Gleason (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1964).
20. Converse wrote a fairy tale opera, *The Pipe of Desire*, the first American opera to be produced at the Metropolitan (1910).

21. These pioneering American composers began to become unfashionable in the 1920s when Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and later Ned Rorem and many other American composers went to continue their education in France, not Germany. It became very much the musical vogue to go to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, a passionate follower of Stravinsky. These innovative Francophiles were determined to create a new American style, and looked upon the likes of Paine, Chadwick, and Converse as academic careerists and facile imitators of German romantic composers such as Brahms. Another reason for the unfair dismissal of these American pioneers (which persists to this day) was the general hostility of an emerging new avant-garde, who championed atonality and innovation to the detriment of traditional, tonal, and melodic composition.
22. David Hamilton in his notes for the recording (New World Records 80566-2).
23. Harry Partch, *Bitter Music, Collected Journals, Essays, Introductions, and Librettos*. Edited with an introduction by Thomas McGeary (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). p. ix (frontispiece).
24. An important half-hour film documentary on Partch is entitled *The Dreamer That Remains*.
25. Letter to the *New York Times* (January 12, 1992).
26. Notes to the recording by Jim Shey (Fresh Aire VI, American Gramophone AGCD-386) relate the piece to the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, where the sailors are turned into dolphins, and to a scene from Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, about the worship of Isis.
27. In an essay for the recording, Living Music Records LMR-2.
28. Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 65–68 and 162–164; included is a priceless photograph of the Yale production of the *Frogs*.
29. Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), p. 10.
30. Ibid., pp. 30–31.
31. Review from *The Director*, March 1898, quoted by Fredrika Blair, *Isadora, Portrait of the Artist as a Woman* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), p. 27.
32. Duncan, *My Life*, pp. 54–55.
33. Quoted in Blair, *Isadora*, p. 36.
34. Quoted in Walter Terry, *Isadora Duncan, Her Life, Her Art, Her Legacy* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963), pp. 36 and 100; A flood of imitators were able neither to understand nor to follow her concept of the Greek ideal. Terry discusses successors (e.g., Shawn, Graham, and Balanchine, among others) who have, like Duncan, found a pathway, not an end, in Greek culture, and describes the potent and indelible inspiration Greek antiquity has had upon them all (p. 104): "In her own day, she was hailed by the Greeks themselves as the one who had rediscovered the secret of 'the age of Greece's greatness.' This discovery, which few of her contemporaries in the theatre, in the press and in her public truly understood, has been bequeathed to her successors who have used and are using the stimulation provided by the Greek ideal in a new renascence of the art of dancing."
35. Blair, *Isadora*, in her last chapter on "Isadora's Legacy" (pp. 400–497), offers an excellent summary.
35. The following videos are some of the important reconstructions of Duncan's life and choreography: *The Enduring Essence: The Technique and Choreography of Isadora Duncan, Remembered and Reconstructed by Gemze De Lappe*—Ms. De Lappe describes her

Duncan training and illustrates six dances (including "Three Graces") with a class at Smith College; *Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul*—a documentary narrated by Julie Harris that includes "Dance of the Furies," "Dance of the Blessed Spirits," and "Narcissus," performed by the Oakland Ballet; and *What Is New* (Series, Magic of the Dance)—narrated by Margot Fonteyn, with a short film of Duncan dancing in a garden. There are two film biographies: *Isadora Duncan, The Biggest Dancer in the World* (1966), Kit Parker Films—an inventive biography by the iconoclastic director Ken Russell, with Vivien Pickles as Isadora; also *Isadora* (1968)—directed by Karel Reisz, starring Vanessa Redgrave. See Louise Spain, ed., *Dance on Camera, A Guide to Dance Films and Videos* (Latham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 1998).

37. Terry, *Isadora Duncan,* p. 102.
38. Ted Shawn with Gray Poole, *One Thousand and One Night Stands* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), pp. 10–11.
39. Ibid., p. 15.
40. Ibid., p. 66. Information for this dance, choreographed by Shawn and St. Denis, is as follows: *Dance Pageant of India, Greece and Egypt (or Life and Afterlife in Egypt, Greece and India),* 1916. Music by Meyrowitz, De Lachau, Nevin, and Halverson. The section on Greece was subdivided: Plastic; Figures from an Amphora; Dancers with Musical Instruments; From a Grecian Vase; and Greek Youth.
41. Ted *Shawn,Thirty-three Years of American Dance (1927–1959) and the American Ballet* (Pittsfield, Mass.: Eagle Printing and Binding Co., 1959), pp. 4–6. Beginning in 1915, Denishawn toured the United States and the world until 1931; then, beginning in 1933, Shawn and his Men Dancers toured for seven years in over 750 cities in the United States, Canada, Cuba, and England, presenting over 1259 performances; in their repertoire were many dances related to Greek and Roman themes.
42. Ted Shawn, *How Beautiful upon the Mountain, A History of Jacob's Pillow,* 3d ed. (n.p., 1947).
43. See Christina L. Schlundt, *The Professional Appearances of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, A Chronology and Index of Dances 1906–1932* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1962). The following videos offer insight into the careers and choreography of Shawn and St. Denis: *Denishawn, The Birth of Modern Dance* and *The Men Who Danced,* a nostalgic reunion of members of Shawn's all-male troupe, founded in 1933, that offers a history of life and performance at Jacob's Pillow. For these and other videos and films see Spain, *Dance on Camera.*
44. Terry, *Isadora Duncan,* pp. 101–102. This dance is on the Denishawn video.
45. Ibid., p. 102.
46. Ibid., p. 102, comments that *O, Libertad,* "his greatest group work . . . restated in contemporary dance terms the ceremonial of the threshing floor and its testimony to love, life, death and afterlife."
47. Martha Graham, *Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 236.
48. Ibid., pp. 27 and 234.
49. Ibid., p. 120.
50. Ibid., p. 75.
51. Ibid., p. 263.
52. Ibid., p. 4.
53. Ibid., p. 211.
54. Quoted in Barbara Morgan, *Martha Graham, Sixteen Dances in Photographs* (Dobbs

Ferry, N.Y.: Morgan & Morgan, 1980), p. 160. Another work, danced by three males, *Bas Relief* (1926, music by Cyril Scott), is also influenced by the ancient world.

55. Don McDonagh, *Martha Graham* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975 [1973]), pp. 80–81 and 85.
56. George Beiswanger, quoted in ibid., p. 146.
57. The following three Martha Graham works are easily found on video: *Night Journey; Errand into the Maze;* and *Cave of the Heart.* The video *Martha Graham, an American Original in Performance,* includes both *A Night Journey* and *A Dancer's World,* in which she talks about her philosophy as she prepares for her role as Jocasta in a rehearsal of *Night Journey.* Also *Martha Graham, the Dancer Revealed* presents interviews of major figures in the world of dance and excerpts from her works. A special issue of *Dance Magazine* (July 1991), devoted to Graham is particularly helpful: an article by Virginia Brooks (pp. 62–63) discusses Graham's films and where to find them. For these and other videos and films see Spain, *Dance on Camera.*
58. Graham, *Blood Memory,* pp. 212–217.
59. Richard Buckle, *George Balanchine, Ballet Master* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 45.
60. An excerpt from *Apollo* is found on video: *The Balanchine Library, The Balanchine Celebration, Part 1;* and *Ballet with Edward Villella,* New York City Ballet (Coronet); also an excerpt from *Agon: Peter Martins: A Dancer.* The video *Stravinsky* gives some emphasis to the collaboration between the composer and the choreographer. For these and other videos and films see Spain, *Dance on Camera.*
61. Stephen Rebello and Jane Healey, *The Art of Hercules: The Chaos of Creation* (New York: Hyperion, 1987).
62. The New York Greek Drama Company also offers *Songs of Sappho,* a re-creation in ancient Greek of excerpts.
63. For an intelligent assessment see Peter W. Rose, "Teaching Greek Myth and Confronting Contemporary Myths," in Martin M. Winkler, ed., *Classics and Cinema* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1991 [*Bucknell Review* 35, 1]), pp. 17–39.
64. Erling B. Holtsmark, *Tarzan and Tradition: Classical Myth in Popular Literature* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Only a few of the basic works in English have been listed. Subsidiary references can be found in the notes and in particular in the bibliographies at the end of chapters.

HANDBOOKS AND SURVEYS

Gayley, Charles Mills. *The Classic Myths in English Literature and in Art.* New ed. New York: Ginn & Co., 1939 [1911].

Graf, Fritz. *Greek Mythology: An Introduction.* Translated by Thomas Marier. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993 [1987].

Grant, Michael. *Myths of the Greeks and Romans.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962; New York: Mentor Books, 1964.

Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths.* 2 vols. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1993 [1955].

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology.* New York: Mentor Books, 1969 [1942].

Harris, Stephen L., and Platzner, Gloria. *Classical Mythology.* 3d ed. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.

Hathorn, Richmond Y. *Greek Mythology.* Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1977.

Kerényi, C. *The Heroes of the Greeks.* New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Kirkwood, G. M. *A Short Guide to Classical Mythology.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1959.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. New York: Prometheus Press, 1960.

Lefkowitz, Mary R. *Women in Greek Myth.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Mayerson, Philip. *Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music.* Newburyport, Mass.: Focus Publishing, 2001 [1971].

Powell, Barry B. *Classical Myth.* 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Reinhold, Meyer. *Past and Present: The Continuity of Classical Myths.* Toronto: Hakkert, 1972.

Rose, H. J. *A Handbook of Greek Mythology: Including Its Extension to Rome,* 6th ed. London: Methuen, 1958; New York: Dutton, 1959.

Ruck, Carl A. P., and Danny Staples. *The World of Classical Myth: Gods and Goddesses, Heroines and Heroes.* Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1994.

Sergent, B. *Homosexuality in Greek Myth.* With a preface by G. Dumézil. London: Athlone Press, 1987.

Glossary of Mythological Words and Phrases in English

Many of us talk the language of myth without even realizing it. Myth encompasses a tradition, a repository of images, themes, motifs, and archetypes that can serve to give human speech resonance beyond its immediate context. When Hamlet compares his murdered father to his uncle as Hyperion to a satyr, he speaks a powerful shorthand; the images conveyed by these two personages do more to express his inner state than if he were simply to speak admiringly of the one and disparagingly of the other. Often we use mythological references in our everyday speech, blissfully unaware that many of our common everyday expressions find their origin in the mythic traditions of Greece and Rome; one can use the word *chaotic* without knowing its ultimate source. The following list briefly explains the original mythological meaning of some of the more common terms that have entered our language.

Achillean/Achilles' heel/Achilles' tendon Achilles was the son of the mortal Peleus and the nymph Thetis. A warrior of legendary prowess in battle and the hero of Homer's *Iliad*, he was essential to the Greek war effort against Troy. To describe someone as Achillean is to mark that person as invincible or invulnerable, or nearly so. Achilles himself had one vulnerable spot. His mother dipped the infant Achilles in the magical waters of the river Styx in a vain attempt to render him immortal; she grasped him by the heel in order to submerge him in the stream, thereby leaving one spot on his body susceptible to injury. Paris took advantage of this weakness and with Apollo's help delivered the fatal arrow to Achilles' heel. An Achilles' heel refers to the one assailable feature or weakness a person may have; in anatomy the Achilles' tendon stretches from the heel bone to the calf muscle.

Adonis Adonis was such a handsome youth that Aphrodite herself found him irresistible. A capable hunter, he disregarded the warnings of the goddess to retreat in the face of a boar that stood its ground and sustained a fatal injury from a charging boar's tusk. A grieving Aphrodite sprinkled nectar on the blood-soaked ground and the anemone blossomed forth. To call a man an Adonis is to draw attention to his beauty.

aegis The aegis is the shield of Zeus (originally a "goatskin"), which thunders when he shakes it. Athena also bore the aegis, often tasseled and with the head of Medusa affixed, its petrifying power still intact. This divine shield afforded safety and security, and so to be under the aegis of an individual or of an institution is to be favored with protection, sponsorship, or patronage.

Aeolian harp or lyre Aeolus was put in charge of the winds by Zeus. He kept watch over his subjects in a cave on the island of Aeolia. An Aeolian harp is a box-shaped musical instrument across which strings are strung; the strings vibrate when wind passes across them.

Amazon The Amazons were a warrior-race of women from the North who joined battle with a terrifying war-cry. They were the equal of men in the field. They came to be seen as haters of men, women who sought foreign husbands, only to kill their sons and raise their daughters as Amazons. Later tradition has it that they cut off their right breasts to become better archers. A vigorous and aggressive woman today might be deemed an amazon, while also conveying the idea of enormous physical stature. Often it is a derogatory term. The Amazon ant is a species of red ant that captures the offspring of other species and turns them into slaves.

ambrosia/ambrosial The Greek gods on Olympus took food and drink as mortals do. But since the gods are of a different order from mortals, so too is their sustenance. Ambrosia, culled from the regions beyond the Wandering Rocks, served variously as food for the gods, as unguent or perfume, or as fodder for horses. It is often coupled with nectar, which provided drink for the Olympians. Both words derive from roots that indicate their power to bestow immortality and stave off death. Today ambrosia can refer to a dessert of fruit and whipped cream or, especially when joined with nectar, any gourmet masterpiece. Generally, ambrosial has come to indicate anything fit for the gods or of divine provenance, or anything delicious or fragrant. See **nectar**.

aphrodisiac According to Hesiod, Aphrodite was born of the foam around the severed genitals of Uranus, a fitting beginning for a divinity whose concern is the sexual. From her name comes the noun aphrodisiac, denoting anything that has the power to excite the sexual passions.

apollonian Apollo had as his pur-view the arts, prophecy, and healing. At his chief shrine at Delphi the watchword was "Know thyself," the beginning and principal aim of human understanding. He is the god of rationality, harmony, and balance, known by the epithet Phoebus, "bright" or "shining," by which he is equated with the Sun and more broadly the order of the cosmos. The adjective apollonian describes that which partakes of the rational and is marked by a sense of order and harmony. Its opposite is dionysian, which describes unbridled nature, the frenzied and the irrational. These polarities, the apollonian and the dionysian, were recognized by the Greeks as twin aspects of the human psyche. See **bacchanal**.

apple of discord All the gods and goddesses were invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, save one, Eris or "Strife." To avenge this slight, this goddess of discord tossed into the wedding hall a golden apple with the inscription "For the Fairest." It was immediately claimed by three rival goddesses: Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Zeus refused to decide the issue, but instead gave it to Paris, the son of Priam, king of Troy, to settle. The Judgment of Paris, as it has come to be known, bestowed the apple on Aphrodite, who had promised to Paris the most beautiful woman in the world, namely Helen, wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. The abduction of Helen by Paris was the cause of the ten-year siege and destruction of Troy under the onslaught of the Greek forces, pledged to wreak vengeance on the seducer. The apple of discord describes any action or situation that causes dissension and turmoil and is more trouble than it is worth.

arachnid Arachne was a common girl with a remarkable skill in weaving. She won such fame that Athena, slighted and envious, challenged Arachne to a contest. Athena wove themes, including the fate of foolish mortals who dared to vie with the gods. Arachne depicted the gods' compromising love affairs. Outraged, Athena struck the girl with her shuttle and, after Arachne hanged herself, in remorse transformed Arachne into a spider, so that she and her species might practice her art of weaving forever. An arachnid refers to any of the various arthropods of the class Arachnida, including the spider.

Arcadia/arcadian Arcadia is the central mountainous region of the Peloponnese. Often it is described in idyllic terms: the ideal land of rustic simplicity, especially dear to Hermes, the home of Callisto (the favorite of Artemis), the usual playground of Pan; for the bucolic poets, Arcadia is a place where life is easy, where shepherds leisurely tend their flocks and pursue romantic dalliances. Thus Arcadia becomes that imagined primeval terrain, where human beings lived in contentment and harmony with the natural world. Arcadian refers to any place or time signifying the simple, rustic, pastoral life of a golden age lost.

Argus/argus-eyed One of Zeus' sexual escapades involved the maiden Io. In an attempt to keep Hera from discovering the truth of his dalliance, Zeus transformed Io into a cow. Hera, not easily thrown off the scent of her husband's affairs, prevailed upon Zeus to give her the cow as a present and an assurance of his good faith, after which Hera enlisted the aid of Argus, a giant with one hundred eyes, to keep a close watch over the poor girl. In English one who is ever-vigilant or watchful can be called an Argus or be described as argus-eyed.

Atlas/Atlantic/atlantes/Atlantis Atlas was a titan who opposed Zeus in the battle between the Olympians and the earlier generation of Titans. The defeated Titans were condemned to Tartarus, but Atlas was punished with the task of supporting upon his shoulders the vault of the heavens, thereby keeping the earth and sky separate. Through a mistaken notion that this vault, sometimes depicted as a sphere, was actually the earth, Atlas has given his name to that particular kind of book which contains a collection of geographical maps. It was not until the Flemish cartographer Gerhardus Mercator (1512–1594) depicted on the frontispiece of his atlas the titan carrying the earth that the association became fixed. The plural of atlas has given us the architectural term atlantes, which refer to support columns formed in the shape of men, corresponding to the maiden columns known as caryatids. Atlas endured his torment at the western edge of the world and so has given his name to the ocean beyond the straits of Gibraltar, the Atlantic, as well as to the Atlas mountains in northwest Africa. The mythical island of Atlantis was located, according to Plato, in the western ocean.

Augean Stables/Augean One of Heracles' Labors, performed in service to King Eurystheus, was to clean the stables of King Augeas of Elis. King Augeas had not cleaned his stalls for some years and the filth and stench had become unbearable. Heracles agreed to the task and succeeded in diverting the course of two rivers to achieve his aim. The term Augean Stables has since become a byword for squalor. Augean describes anything that is extremely filthy or squalid.

aurora australis/borealis Aurora was the Roman goddess of the dawn (the Greek Eos). The sons of Aurora and the titan Astraeus were the four winds: Boreas, who blows from the north; Notus, the southwest; Eurus, the east; and Zephyrus, the west. The

spectacular streaks of light that appear in the sky at night are a result of the effect of the particles of the sun's rays on the upper atmosphere. Seen especially at the poles, in the Northern Hemisphere they are called the northern lights or the aurora borealis, and in the South, the aurora australis, Auster being the Roman name of the southwest wind.

bacchanal/baccanalia/bacchanalian/bacchant/bacchante/bacchic Dionysus, the Roman Bacchus, was the god of wine, frenzied music and dance, and the irrational. He presided over ecstatic, sometimes orgiastic rites, which involved initiation and drove the participants into another plane of perception as they became possessed by the deity. He is usually represented in the midst of a retinue of female worshipers, known as maenads, bacchae, or bacchantes (the feminine singular is bacchante; a male follower is a bacchant, plural bacchants); he is also attended by male satyrs, mischievous and lecherous creatures, half-human and half-animal. Wine proved a powerful conduit to the ineffable, amidst rituals that included the rending of a sacrificial victim and the eating of its raw flesh. Dionysiac rites among the Romans became known as Bacchanalia, and the sometime extreme behavior of the initiates provoked the Roman Senate to outlaw them in 186 B.C. Thus we derive the words bacchanal and bacchanalia to refer to any debauched party or celebration. Bacchanal, bacchant, bacchante, and bacchae can be used to characterize an overzealous partygoer. The adjectives bacchanalian and bacchic describe any exuberant, drunken revelry. See **dionysian** and **apollonian**.

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts/I fear Greeks even when they bear gifts The fall of Troy was finally accomplished by a ruse of the Greeks. They constructed an enormous, hollow, wooden horse, into which they hid some of their best fighters. The horse was left behind as the rest of the Greek host sailed off to the nearby island of Tenedos and waited. The treacherous Sinon convinced the Trojans to drag the gift into the city, despite the warnings of Laocoön, a priest of Poseidon. In Vergil's account, Laocoön implored his countrymen not to bring the treacherous horse into Troy, crying, "I fear Greeks even when they bear gifts" (*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*). Two serpents emerged from the sea to strangle Laocoön and his two sons. The Trojans were convinced that they should accept the horse and thus wrought their own destruction. Laocoön's utterance has become a warning to beware of treachery and look for the hidden motives behind even the most fair-seeming generosity.

boreal Boreas, the north wind, has given us this adjective, which refers to the region of the world from which his blasts come. See **aurora**.

by Jupiter/by Jove/jovian/jovial Jupiter was the Roman counterpart of Zeus, the supreme god and father. He was a god of the sky and his name is derived from Indo-European roots *dyaus/pitr*, which literally mean god/father. In Latin the common oath "by Jupiter" would be rendered "pro Jove" (Jove being a different form of his name). In the Christian tradition there is no religious significance to this exclamation, but English writers, by using it as an expression of surprise or pleasure, avoided taking God's name in vain; thus "by Jupiter" or "by Jove" was used to replace the offensive "by God." To describe someone or something as jovian means that one partakes of that awe-inspiring majesty that is particular to a supreme god. Many mythological names also found a new existence in the field of astrology. Since it was felt that the heavenly bodies influence the life of humans on earth, celestial bodies were given appellations drawn from mythology, for example Jupiter became the name not only of a god but also of a planet. Those who were born under the influence of the planet Jupiter were said to be of a cheerful disposition, hence the meaning of the adjective jovial.

Cadmean Victory Cadmus was informed by the oracle at Delphi that he would establish a great city. When he eventually found the site of the future Thebes, he prepared to sacrifice to the gods in thanksgiving. He soon discovered that the local spring from which he needed to draw water for a proper sacrifice was guarded by a serpent. He sent his men to dispatch the monster and bring back the ritual water. All of his men failed in the attempt and Cadmus eventually took it upon himself to kill the serpent. Though Cadmus was ultimately victorious, he now found himself bereft of his comrades and despaired of establishing his realm. A Cadmean Victory has come to mean a victory won at great loss to the victor.

caduceus In Latin the herald's staff was known as the caduceum, derived from the Greek word *keryx*, or herald, and his staff the *kerykeion*. Hermes, as divine messenger, was invariably depicted with the caduceus, which was represented as a staff with white ribbons or intertwined snakes. The white ribbons may have indicated the inviolability of his office. The image of intertwined snakes may have been drawn from the Near Eastern use of copulating snakes as a symbol of fertility, for Hermes was a fertility god. The staff of Hermes became confused with the staff of Asclepius, the renowned mythic physician and son of Apollo, because some stories about Asclepius involved snakes and the reptile has the ability to slough its old skin and seemingly be "reborn," and so had associations with healing.

calliope Calliope was one of the nine Muses, who gives her name to the musical instrument the calliope, made up of tuned steam whistles and played like an organ; it is also the name for the California hummingbird. See **muse**.

Cassandra Trojan Cassandra, daughter of Priam and Hecuba, was amorously pursued by the god Apollo. Having at first agreed to succumb to his advances, she was awarded the gift of prophecy, but later, when she changed her mind and refused him, Apollo punished her. She would remain a prophetess, but would never be believed. Cassandra's predictions were invariably of disaster, foretelling the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra or the destruction of Troy through the ruse of the Trojan Horse. A Cassandra today is anyone who utters dire warnings of the future, regardless of their truth.

Calypso/Calypso music Calypso ("she who hides or conceals") was the daughter of Thetis and either Atlas, Nereus, or Oceanus. Odysseus was detained on her island home of Ogygia for seven years with the promise that she would make him immortal. Though he enjoyed her bed, each day he would weep and look longingly over the sea to his homeland, Ithaca. Eventually Zeus sent Hermes to inform Calypso that she must give up Odysseus. Calypso music, derived from the name of the nymph, originated on the islands of the West Indies and features topical or amusing themes.

catamite Zeus was so impressed with the beauty of the Trojan youth Ganymede that he took the form of an eagle and brought him to Olympus to become the cupbearer of the gods. The Latin rendering of Ganymede's name was Catamitus, and his relationship with Zeus (or Jupiter) was interpreted by some as overtly homosexual to lend divine authority to ancient pederastic practices; today a catamite is still the designation for a boy used for pederastic purposes.

Cerberus Cerberus, the hound of the underworld, stood guard at the gates of Hades and prevented those not permitted from entering. He is usually described as a beast with three heads and the tail of a dragon. When Aeneas journeyed to the lower regions under the guidance of the Sibyl, he brought along a medicated cake to drug the animal and ensure their safe passage. To throw a sop to Cerberus means to give a bribe and thereby ward off an unpleasant situation.

cereal Ceres (the Roman counterpart of Demeter) was goddess of grain and the fertility of the earth. From her name is derived the Latin adjective Cerealis (having to do with Ceres and the grain), from which comes our English word cereal.

chaos/chaotic Whether Chaos is to be understood as a void or a primordial, formless, undifferentiated, and seething mass out of which the order of the universe is created, it is the starting point of creation. This unformed beginning is contrasted with later creation, a universe called the cosmos, a designation meaning, literally, harmony or order. The sky and the stars, the earth and its creatures, and the laws and cycles that direct and control creation seem to exhibit the balance, order, and reason that the mind discerns in the natural world. For us chaos, together with its adjective chaotic, simply means a state of confusion. See **cosmos**.

Chimera/chimerical/chimeric A wild, hybrid creature, the Chimera had the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent, and it breathed fire. It was killed by the Corinthian hero Bellerophon on one of his journeys. Today a chimera is a fantastic delusion, an illusory creation of the mind. It can also refer to a hybrid organism, usually a plant. Chimerical and Chimeric refer to something as unreal, imaginary, or fantastic. These adjectives can also signify that one is given to fantasy.

cornucopia The Latin cornucopia means "horn of plenty." There are two stories about this horn, which bestows upon the owner an endless bounty. Zeus, in his secluded infancy on Crete, was nursed by a goat named Amalthea, which was also the name of the goddess of plenty. One of the horns of this goat was broken off and became the first cornucopia. The horn of plenty is also associated with Hercules. In order to win Deianira as his bride, he had to defeat the horned river-god Acheloüs. In the struggle, Hercules broke off one of the horns of the river-god but after his victory returned the horn and received as recompense the horn of Amalthea. Ovid, however, relates that the horn of Acheloüs became a second horn of plenty. Today the cornucopia is a sign of nature's abundance, and the word comes to mean a plenteous bounty.

cosmos/cosmic/cosmology/cosmetic/cosmetician Cosmos refers to the universe, and all that is ordered and harmonious. The study of cosmology deals with the origin and structure of the universe. The adjective cosmic may designate the universe beyond and apart from the earth itself, or it may in a generalized sense describe something of vast significance or implication. Akin to the word cosmos are various English words derived from the Greek adjective cosmeticos. Cosmos means not only order and harmony, but also arrangement and decoration; thus a cosmetic is a substance that adorns or decorates the body, and a cosmetician the person involved with cosmetics. See **chaos**.

cupidity The Latin word *cupidus* (desirous or greedy) gave rise to Cupido, Cupid, the Roman equivalent of the Greek god of love, Eros. In early representations he is a handsome youth, but he becomes increasingly younger and develops his familiar attributes of bow and arrow (with which he rouses passion both in gods and mortals) and wings, until he finally evolves into the Italian *putti* or decorative cherubs frequently seen in Renaissance art. From the same root is derived cupiditas to denote any intense passion or desire, from which we derive cupidity (avarice or greed). See **erotic**.

cyclopean There were two distinct groups of giants called the Cyclopes, whose name means circle-eyed and indicates their principal distinguishing feature, one round eye in the center of their foreheads. The first, offspring of Uranus and Ge, were the smiths who labored with Hephaestus at his forge to create the thunderbolt for Zeus, among other masterpieces. The second group of Cyclopes were a tribe of giants, the most important of whom is Polyphemus, a son of Poseidon encountered by Odysseus. The word cyclopean refers to anything that pertains to the Cyclopes or partakes of their gigantic and powerful nature. Thus the Cyclopes were said to be responsible for the massive stone walls that surround the palace-fortresses of the Mycenaean period. And so cyclopean is used generally to describe a primitive building style, which uses immense, irregular, stone blocks, held together by their sheer weight without mortar.

cynosure The constellation Ursa Minor ("little bear") was called Kuno-soura ("the dog's tail") by the astronomer Aratus, who saw in it one of the nymphs who raised the infant Zeus. Long a guiding star for seafarers, it has given us the word cynosure, which can describe anything that serves to focus attention or give guidance.

demon/demoniac/demonic/demonology In Greek *daimon* was a word of rather fluid definition. In Homer the Olympians are referred to as either gods (*theoi*) or *daimones* ("divine powers"). In later literature the *daimones* became intermediate beings between gods and men, or often the spirits of the dead came to be called *daimones*, especially among the Romans. *Daimon* could also denote that particular spirit granted to each mortal at birth to watch over its charge. This corresponds to the Roman *Genius*, a vital force behind each individual, originally associated with male fertility and particularly with the male head of a household. Later it became a tutelary spirit assigned to guide and shape each person's life. With the triumph of Christianity, all pagan deities were suspect, and *daimon*, viewed solely as a power sprung from the devil, became our demon (any evil or satanic spirit). As an adjective demoniac or demonic suggests possession by an evil spirit and can mean simply fiendish. As a noun demoniac refers to one who is or seems possessed by a demon. Demonology is the study of evil spirits. As for genius, it has come to denote a remarkable, innate, intellectual or creative ability, or a person possessed of such ability. Through French we have the word genie, which had served as a translation of *Jinni*, spirits (as in the Arabian Nights) that have the power to assume human or animal form and supernaturally influence human life.

dionysian The dionysiac or dionysian experience is the antithesis of the apollonian, characterized by moderation, symmetry, and reason. See **apollonian** and **bacchanal**.

echo There are two major myths that tell how the acoustic phenomenon of the echo arose. According to one, Echo was originally a nymph who rejected the lusty advances of the god Pan. In her flight she was torn apart by shepherds, who have been driven into a panic by the spurned god, Pan. The second version involves the mortal Narcissus. Echo had been condemned by Hera to repeat the last utterance she heard and no more. It was in this state that Echo caught sight of the handsome Narcissus. Narcissus, a youth cold to all love, rejected the amorous advances of Echo, who could now only mimic Narcissus' words. Stung deeply by this rebuff, she hid herself in woods and caves and pined for her love, until all that remained of the nymph was her voice. As for Narcissus, too proud in his beauty, he inevitably called down upon himself the curse of a spurned lover. Narcissus was doomed to be so captivated by his own reflection in a pool that he could not turn away his gaze, even to take food and drink. He wasted away and died. From the spot where he died sprang the narcissus flower. Narcissism has come to mean an obsessive love of oneself. As used in psychoanalysis it is an arrested development at an infantile stage characterized by erotic attachment to oneself. One so afflicted with such narcissistic characteristics is a narcissist. See **panic** and **narcissism**.

Electra complex Comparable to the Oedipus complex in the development of the female is the Electra complex, a psychotic attachment to the father and hostility toward the mother, a designation also drawn from myth. Electra was the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, a young woman obsessed by her grief over the murder of her beloved father and tormented by unrelenting hatred for her mother who killed him. See **Oedipus**.

Elysian Fields/Elysian/Elysium In Vergil's conception of the Underworld there is a place in the realm of Hades reserved for mortals who, through their surpassing deeds and virtuous life, have won a blessed afterlife. It is named the Elysian Fields or Elysium, and the the souls who inhabit this paradise live a purer, more carefree, and pleasant existence. The adjective Elysian has come to mean blissful.

enthusiasm In cultic ritual, particularly Dionysiac, the initiate was often thought to become possessed by the god and transported to a state of ecstatic union with the divine. The Greeks decribed a person so exalted as being *entheos*, "filled with the god," which gave rise to the verb *enthousiazein*. Thus the English word enthusiasm, meaning an excited interest, passion, or zeal. See **bacchanal**.

erotic/erotica/eratomania To the Greeks Eros was one of the first generation of divinities born from Chaos; he was also said to be the son of Aphrodite and Ares. From the Greek adjective *eroticos*, we derive erotic, which describes anyone or anything characterized by the amatory or sexual passions. Erotica is a branch of literature or art whose main function is the arousal of sexual desire. Erotomania is an obsessive desire for sex. See **cupidity**.

eristic Eris was the goddess of "strife" or "discord," responsible for all the dissension arising from the Apple of Discord, which she threw among the guests at the wedding banquet of Peleus and Thetis. Thus is derived the term eristic, which as an adjective means pertaining to argument or dispute; as a noun it refers to rhetoric or the art of debate. See **Apple of Discord**.

Europe Europa was the daughter of Agenor, king of Tyre in Phoenicia. Zeus, disguised as a white bull, enticed the girl to sit on his back and then rushed into the sea and made his way toward Greece. When they reached Crete, Zeus seduced Europa, who bore a son named Minos and gave her name to a foreign continent. The word Europe itself may be of Semitic origin, meaning the land of the setting sun.

Faunus/faun/fauna/flora Faunus, whose name means one who shows favor, was a Roman woodland deity. He was thought to bring prosperity to farmers and shepherds and was often depicted with horns, ears, tail, and sometimes legs of goat; therefore he was associated with the Greek god Pan and also Dionysiac satyrs. A faun comes to be another name for a satyr. Faunus' consort was Fauna, a female deity like him in nature. Flora was another, though minor, agricultural deity, a goddess of flowers, grain, and the grapevine. When we talk of flora and fauna, we refer, respectively, to flowers and animals collectively.

Furies/furious/furioso The Erinyes (Furies) were avenging spirits. They sprang from the severed genitals of Uranus when drops of his blood fell to the earth. They pursued those who had unlawfully shed blood, particularly within a family. They were said to rise up to avenge the blood of the slain and pursue the murderer, driving the guilty to madness. As chthonic deities they are associated with the Underworld and are charged with punishing sinners; they are usually depicted as winged goddesses with snaky locks. In English fury can refer to a fit of violent rage or a person in the grip of such a passion, especially a woman. The Latin adjective *furiosus* has given us our adjective furious as well as the musical term furioso, which is a direction to play a piece in a turbulent, rushing manner.

Gaia Hypothesis Gaia (or Ge), sprung from Chaos, is the personification of the earth. Her name has been employed in a recent coinage called the Gaia Hypothesis, a theory that views the earth as a complete living organism, all of its parts working in concert for its own continued existence.

genius The Latin word *Genius* designated the creative power of an individual that was worshiped as a mythological and religious concept. See **demon**.

gorgon/gorgoneion/gorgonian/gorgonize The Gorgons were three sisters who had snakes for hair and a gaze so terrifying that a mortal who looked into their eyes was turned to stone. Medusa, the most famous of the three, was beheaded by Perseus, aided by Athena and Hermes. Perseus gave the head to Athena, who affixed it to her shield (see **aegis**). The head of the Gorgon was often depicted in Greek art in a highly stylized manner; this formalized depiction is called a gorgoneion. Today a gorgon can mean a terrifying or ugly woman. There is also a species of coral known as gorgonian with an intricate network of branching parts. The verb to gorgonize means to paralyze by fear.

halcyon/halcyon days The mythical bird called the halcyon is identified with the kingfisher. Ceyx and Alcyone were lovers. Ceyx, the king of Trachis, was drowned at sea. Hera sent word to Alcyone in her sleep through Morpheus, the god of dreams, that her husband was dead. Alcyone in her grief was transformed into the kingfisher; as she tried to drag the lifeless body of Ceyx to shore, he too was changed into a bird. The lovers still traverse the waves, and in winter she broods her young in a nest that floats upon the surface of the water. During this time, Alcyone's father, Aeolus, king of the winds, keeps them from disturbing the serene and tranquil sea. Today, the halcyon days are a period of calm weather dur-

ing the winter solstice, especially the seven days preceding and following it. Halcyon days can also describe any time of tranquillity.

harpy The Harpies ("snatchers"), daughters of Thaumas and Electra, were originally conceived of as winds, but eventually came to be depicted as bird-like women who tormented mortals. The Argonauts rescued Phineus, the blind king and prophet of Salmydessus, whose food was "snatched" away by these ravenous monsters. Today when we call someone a harpy we evoke images of these vile, foul-smelling, predatory creatures; or harpy simply means a shrewish woman.

hector Hector was the greatest warrior of the Trojans, who was defeated by his counterpart on the Greek side, Achilles. To hector means to bluster and bully. The noun hector denotes a bully. The connection between the noble Hector and this later conception originated in the Middle Ages, when Hector was portrayed as a braggart and bully.

heliotrope/heliotropism, etc. Helius was god of the sun. The Greek root trop- refers to a turning in a certain direction. Heliotropism is a biological term that refers to the growth or movement of an organism toward or away from sunlight. A heliotrope is a genus of plant that behaves in that manner. Several scientific or technical words derive from the name of the sun-god; for example, a heliostat is an instrument that uses a mirror to reflect sunlight; heliotherapy, treatment by means of the sun's rays; heliotype is a photomechanical process of printing a plate, or the printing plate itself produced in this fashion; a heliograph is an instrument used to photograph the sun; and heliocentric refers to anything that has the sun as a center or is relative to the sun.

Hercules/herculean/Hercules' club Her-cules, in Greek Heracles, was the greatest hero in the ancient world, who wore a lionskin and brandished a club. He achieved countless remarkable exploits and is most famous for twelve canonical Labors. To describe someone as herculean is to liken him to Hercules in strength and stature. Any effort that is herculean requires a tremendous exertion or spirit of heroic endurance. The Hercules is a constellation in the northern hemisphere near Lyra and Corona Borealis. A shrub indigenous to the southeastern United States and characterized by prickly leaves and large clusters of white blossoms is known as Hercules' club.

hermetic/hermeneutic/hermeneutics/hermaphrodite The god Hermes became associated with the Egyptian god Thoth and received the appellation Trismegistus ("thrice-greatest"). A number of works on occult matters, known as the Hermetic Corpus, were attributed to Hermes Trismegistus; today hermetic refers to occult knowledge, particularly alchemy, astrology, and magic. From this notion of secret or sealed knowledge hermetic comes to mean completely sealed; a hermetic jar is one closed against outside contamination. From Hermes' primary function as a bearer of messages came the Greek *hermeneus* ("interpreter") and the phrase *hermeneutike techne* ("the art of interpretation"). Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, and hermeneutic, as adjective or noun, connotes an interpretive or explanatory function. Hermaphroditus, the beautiful son of Hermes and Aph-rodite, was bathing in a pool when the nymph Salmacis caught sight of him and was filled with desire. She plunged into the water and entwined her limbs around him. He fought her efforts to seduce him but her prayer to the gods that they might become united into one being was granted. A hermaphrodite has the genitalia and secondary sexual characteristics of both males and females.

hydra Heracles' second Labor was to encounter the Hydra, a nine-headed serpent which would grow back two heads for every one that was severed. Every time he clubbed off one of the heads he cauterized the stump so that another could not grow. A hydra is a polyp with a cylindrical body and tentacles surrounding an oral cavity, and it has the ability to regrow itself from cut-off parts. A hydra can also be a destructive force that does not succumb to a single effort. The Hydra is a constellation in the equatorial region of the southern sky near the constellation Cancer.

hymen/hymeneal Hymen was the god of marriage who was invoked during the wedding ceremony with the chant "O Hymen, Hymenaeus"; thus he was the overseer of hymeneal or marriage rites. Originally the Greek word *hymen* referred to any membrane, but today the hymen is a membranous fold of tissue that covers the outer orifice of the vagina.

hyperborean The Hyperboreans were a mythical race that inhabited a paradise in the far north, at the edge of the world, "beyond" (hyper) the reach of the north wind (Boreas) and his arctic blasts. In English hyperborean merely means arctic or frigid.

hypnosis/hypnotic, etc. Hypnos, son of Nyx (Night) and brother of Thanatos (death), was the god of sleep and father of Morpheus, the god of dreams. Hypnosis is a sleeplike condition in which the person becomes susceptible to suggestion. Hypnotic, as an adjective, means to pertain to or induce hypnosis. As a noun it refers to the person hypnotized, something that promotes hypnotism, or means simply a soporific, that which induces sleep. Hypnogogic refers to

a drug that produces sleep or describes the state immediately preceding sleep, while hypno-pompic refers to the state imme-diately preceding awakening; both states may be marked by visual or auditory hallucination as well as sleep-induced paralysis. Hypnophobia is a pathological fear of sleep.

Icarian/Icarian Sea Daedalus had crafted out of wax and feathers two pairs of wings to escape from the imprisonment imposed by King Minos of Crete, one pair for himself and one for his young son, Icarus. Heedless of his father's advice, the young Icarus flew too close to the sun. The wax of the wings melted and the boy fell into the sea. That part of the Mediterranean along the coast of Asia Minor into which he fell ever after carried his name and would be known as the Icarian Sea. Icarian denotes acts that are reckless and impetuous and lead to one's ruin.

ichor Gods, although immortal, can suffer wounds. Human blood does not flow from those wounds but instead a clear, rarefied liquid—divine ichor. In English ichor can refer to a fluid, like blood, or, in pathological terms, a watery substance discharged from wounds or ulcers.

iris/iridescent Iris was the goddess of the rainbow (the meaning of her name). The adjective iridescent describes anything that gleams with the colors of the rainbow. The iris is the colored portion of the eye that contracts when exposed to light. It is also a genus of plant that has narrow leaves and multicolored blossoms.

junoesque Juno was the mighty and majestic queen of the Roman Pantheon, wife and sister of Jupiter, identified with the Greek Hera. To describe someone as junoesque is to liken her to the goddess in stature and stately bearing.

labyrinth/labyrinthine In Crete, King Minos had Daedalus construct a maze in which to imprison the monstrous Minotaur. Theseus' greatest achievement was to kill the Minotaur and, with the help of Ariadne's thread, find his way out of the maze, which was known as the Labyrinth. Excavations of the complex and vast palace of Cnossus in Crete with its network of rooms seem to substantiate elements of this legend. A labyrinth is a maze, and the adjective labyrinthine describes something winding, complicated, and intricate. Labyrinth can also denote anatomical features marked by connecting passages, in particular the structures of the internal ear.

Lethe/lethargy/lethargic/Lethean Lethe was the river of "forgetfulness" in the Underworld. From it souls would drink and forget their experiences upon being reincarnated. Lethe refers today to a state of oblivion or forgetfulness; lethargy and lethargic denote a state of persistent drowsiness or sluggishness; Lethean characterizes anything that causes forgetfulness of the past.

lotus/lotus-eater Odysseus was driven to North Africa and the land of the Lotus Eaters, who consumed the fruit of the lotus and lived in a continual state of dreamy forgetfulness and happy irresponsibility. Today a lotus eater is anyone who succumbs to indolent pleasure. The lotus, a small tree of the Mediterranean, produces the fruit supposedly consumed by the Lotus Eaters; it is also an aquatic plant indigenous to southern Asia.

maenad A maenad is a female worshiper of Dionysus. See **bacchanal**.

March/martial/martial law Mars was the Roman god of war, equated with the Greek Ares. He personified the conflict of battle in all its brutality and bloodshed. The adjective martial means of or pertaining to battle; when the military authority usurps the power of civil authority, the population is said to be under martial law. Also the name of the month March is derived from Mars.

matinee/matins Matuta was a minor Roman deity, the goddess of the dawn (in Latin dawn is *tempus matutinum*). Through French, we have matinee, a theatrical or cinematic performance given in the daytime, and matins (also called Morning Prayer), the first division of the day in the system of canonical hours of the monastic tradition.

mentor In Book One of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus' palace is ravaged by suitors for the hand of his wife, Penelope. His son Telemachus, daydreaming of his father's return, is incapable of action. Athena, in the guise of Odysseus' trusted counselor, Mentor, comes to Ithaca to rouse Telemachus and give him advice and hope. Thus mentor means a trusted guardian and teacher.

mercury/mercurial Mercury was the Roman equivalent of the Greek Hermes. This fleet-footed messenger of the gods has given us the word mercury, a silver metallic element that at room temperature is in liquid form, also called "quicksilver" because of the nature of its movement. In astrology, Mercury is the name given to the planet closest to the Sun, around which it completes one revolution in eighty-eight days. In botany, it refers to a genus of weedy plants. To describe someone as mercurial is to impart to the individual craftiness, eloquence, cunning, and swiftness, all attributes of the god. It can also simply mean quick or changeable in temperament, either from the nature of the god or the influence of the planet.

Midas'/ass's ears/Midas touch/the golden touch Apollo and Pan entered into a musical contest. When Apollo was judged victorious by the mountain-god Tmolus, Midas, the king of Phrygia, disagreed. For his lack of perception Apollo transformed Midas' offending ears into those of an ass. To have ass' ears means that one lacks true musical judgment and taste. On another occasion, the god Dionysus granted Midas' wish that whatever he might touch be turned into gold. To his despair, Midas found that even as he put food and drink to his mouth it was transmuted into gold. Dionysus granted him relief by telling him to bathe in the river Pactolus, whose bed became golden. To have the golden touch or Midas' touch means to be successful in any endeavor.

money/monetary In the Temple of Juno Moneta ("money," "mint") was housed the Roman mint. The epithet Moneta means "the warner" and refers to an important legend regarding her temple. When Rome was threatened in 390 B.C. by an invasion of Gauls, the sacred geese in Juno's temple began to squawk, rousing the Romans to battle. Moneta, through the Old French *moneie*, has given us the word money; the adjective monetary, "pertaining to money," comes from the stem monet-.

morphine Morpheus was the god of dreams, or more particularly the shapes (*morphai*) that come to one in dreams. Later he became confused with the god of sleep and it is from this confusion that the meaning of morphine comes. Morphine, an addictive compound of the opium plant, is used as an anaesthetic or sedative. The compounds that include the stem morph-, such as metamorphosis (a transformation into another shape or state of being), are drawn from the Greek word *morphe* ("shape" or "form") and not the god Morpheus.

muse/music/museum/mosaic The nine Muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne ("memory"), whose province was inspiration in the arts, particularly poetry and music; from Muse we derive the word music. The Greek word *mouseion* ("place of the Muses"), in Latin *museum*, has given us museum, a place for displaying works of artistic, historical, or scientific interest. From the adjective *mousaicos* ("pertaining to the Muses") comes mosaic, a picture or design made up of small colored tiles or stones.

narcissism/narcissist/narcissistic/narcissus Narcissism refers to a psychological state in which the person has a pathological attachment to oneself. See **echo**.

nectar Nectar is the special drink of the gods, usually paired with their food, ambrosia. Nectar has come to mean any refreshing drink, the pure juice of a fruit, or the liquid gathered by bees from the blossoms of flowers, used in making honey. See **ambrosia**.

nemesis Nemesis is the goddess of vengeance who brings retribution to those who have sinned, especially through *hubris* ("overweening pride"). A nemesis denotes the following: the abstract idea of retributive vengeance; the agent of retribution; an invincible rival in a contest or battle; or a necessary or inevitable consequence.

nestor Nestor, the oldest and wisest of the Greek kings at Troy, lived to see three generations of heroes. A brave and strong warrior when young, in old age he was prized for his good counsel and his oratory. Homer tells us that his speech flowed more sweetly than honey. When a politician or statesman today is called a nestor, it is these qualities of wisdom, good counsel, and oratory that are emphasized.

nymph/nymphomania/nympholepsy Nymphs are beautiful, idyllic goddesses of wood and stream and nature, often the objects of love and desire. A nymph today may simply mean a remarkably attractive young woman, but if she were to suffer from nymphomania ("nymph-madness"), she would be suffering from sexual promiscuousness. Nympholepsy (from lepsis, "a seizing"), on the other hand, refers to the madness that assails one who has glimpsed a nymph. It can also denote a strong desire for what is unattainable (Cf. **satyr/satyriasis**).

ocean In mythology the world is a disc circled by a stream of water, the god Oceanus, who is the father of the Oceanids, that is, all the lesser rivers, streams, brooks, and rills that flow over the earth. Today ocean can refer to the entire body of salt water or any of its major divisions covering the globe.

odyssey Homer's *Odyssey* recounts the return of Odysseus to Ithaca, his wife, Penelope, and his son, Telemachus. After ten years of war at Troy, Odysseus found the day of his return postponed for another ten years by the god Poseidon. On his extended travels he overcame many challenges before winning his homecoming. An odyssey has come to mean a long, tortuous period of wandering, travel, and adventure, often in search of a quest, both literally and spiritually.

Oedipus/Oedipal complex King Laius of Thebes was given a prophecy that his wife, Jocasta, would bear a son who would kill his father and marry his mother. They did have a son, whose name was Oedipus, and when he grew up he killed his father and married his mother, despite all that was done to avert the prophecy and destiny. Sophocles' masterpiece, *Oedipus the King*, inspired Sigmund Freud to crystal-

lize one of his major, defining ideas on the nature of the human psyche and infantile sexual development; the Oedipus complex is the term he used to describe the natural progression of psychosexual development in which the child has libidinal feelings for a parent of the opposite sex and hostility for the parent of the same sex. The term Oedipus complex refers to the male child. See **Electra complex**.

Olympic Games/olympian The Greek gods had their homes on the heights of Mt. Olympus in northern Greece, and so were called the Olympians. The term olympian carries with it notions of the new order ushered in by Zeus and his family and also distinguishes these gods in their sunlit heights from the chthonic ("of the earth") deities, who have associations with the gloom of the underworld. Therefore olympian means towering, awesome, and majestic, akin to the gods of Olympus. The adjective can also refer to one who competes in or has won a contest in the Olympic Games, but this designation is derived from the ancient Olympic Games, celebrated at Olympia, which was a major sanctuary of Zeus in the Peloponnese.

paean Paean was an epithet of the god Apollo, invoked in a cry for victory in battle or for deliverance from sickness. A paean thus became a song of thanksgiving. Today it refers to a song of joy or praise, whether to a god or a human being.

palladium As a child Athena had a special girlfriend named Pallas, with whom she used to play at war. During one of their skirmishes Athena inadvertently killed Pallas, and in her memory she built a wooden statue of the girl. This statue was thrown down to earth by Zeus, where it became known as the Palladium, and became for the Trojans a talisman for their city; as long as they had possession of it, the city would stand. Thus the English palladium means a protection from harm for a people or state, a lucky charm.

Pandora's box Pandora was the first woman, given to men as punishment for Prometheus' theft of fire. Sent with her was a jar, which, when opened, released all the ills that now plague human beings. Later this jar became a box, and now Pandora's box refers to something that should be left unexamined lest it breed disaster.

panic Panic describes a state of great fear and anxiety with an attendant desire for flight, which was considered inspired by the god Pan. See **echo**.

phaëton Helius, the sun-god, assured Phaëthon that he was truly his father and swore an oath that his son could have anything he desired. Phaëthon asked that he be allowed to drive his father's chariot across the sky. Helius could not dissuade the boy, and Phaëthon could not control the horses and drove to his death. A phaeton has come into English as a four-wheeled chariot drawn by two horses or an earlier type of convertible automobile.

priapism/priapic Priapus was the ithyphallic son of Aphrodite. He is most often depicted with an enormous and fully erect penis. Priapic is an adjective referring to priapian characteristics. Priapism is a pathological condition in which the penis is persistently erect.

procrustean/procrustean bed Procrustes (the "one who stretches") was encountered by Theseus. He would make unwitting travelers lie down on a bed. If they did not fit it exactly, he would either cut them down or stretch them out to size. The adjective procrustean refers to someone or something that aims at conformity through extreme methods. A procrustean bed decribes a terrible, arbitrary standard against which things are measured.

Prometheus/promethean The god Prometheus ("forethought"), son of the titan Iapetus, was the creator of humanity and its benefactor. He bestowed upon mortals many gifts that lifted them from savagery to civilization. One of his most potent benefactions was fire, which he stole from heaven in a fennel stalk to give to mankind, a boon expressly forbidden by Zeus. As a punishment for his championship of human beings in opposition to Zeus, Prometheus was bound to a rocky crag and a vulture ate at his liver, which would grow back again for each day's repast. Thus the name Prometheus becomes synonymous for the archetypal champion, with fire his symbol of defiance and progress. The adjective promethean means courageous, creative, original, and life-sustaining. Beethoven's music may be called promethean, and Mary Shelley called her gothic horror novel *Frankenstein, A Modern Prometheus*.

protean Proteus was a sea-god who could change shape and who possessed knowledge of the future. To obtain information, one had to grapple with him until his metamorphoses ceased. Protean means of changeable or variable form, or having the ability to change form.

psyche/psychology, etc. The Greek word for the soul was *psyche*. The myth of Cupid and Psyche can be interpreted as the soul's longing for an eventual reunification with the divine through love. For Freud psyche means mind and psychic refers to mental activity; many English derivatives describe the study of the mind and the healing of its disorders: psychology, psychiatry, etc. In psychoanalytic terms, the

soul is the mind, the seat of thoughts and feelings, our true self, which seeks to orient our lives to our surroundings.

python Apollo established the major sanctuary for his worship and his oracle at Delphi, but to do so he had to kill the serpent that guarded the site. He named his new sanctuary Pytho, from the rotting of the serpent after it had been killed (the Greek verb *pythein* means to rot); or the serpent's name was Python. A python today belongs to a particular family of nonvenomous Old World snakes.

Rhadamanthus/Rhadamanthine or Rhadamantine Rhadamanthus, along with Minos and Aeacus, is one of the judges in the Underworld. Rhadamanthus and Rhadamanthine describe anyone who is rigidly just and strict.

rich as Croesus Croesus was the king of Lydia who possessed great wealth that became legendary. Thus to emphasize their possession of extreme riches we describe a person as "rich as Croesus."

saturnalia/saturnian/saturnine/saturnism The titan Saturn (equated with the Greek Cronus) castrated his father, hated his children, devoured them, and was castrated and overthrown by his son Zeus. After his defeat, Saturn ruled over the Golden Age of the world; according to Roman mythology, he fled to the west and brought a new golden age to Italy. Originally Saturn was an old Italic diety of the harvest; the Romans built a temple to Saturn on the Capitoline Hill and each December celebrated the winter planting with the Saturnalia, a time of revelry and the giving of presents. Saturnalia today denotes a period of unrestrained or orgiastic revelry. Saturn gives his name to the sixth planet from the sun, the second largest planet in the solar system after Jupiter. Anyone born under the influence of Saturn may have a saturnine temperament, which is to say gloomy or melancholy, characteristics of the god who castrated his father and was overthrown. Saturnian simply means pertaining to the god or the planet Saturn. The planet Saturn was also associated with the element lead, and so the term for lead poisoning is saturnism.

satyr/satyriasis Satyrs were male woodland deities with the ears and legs of a goat who worshiped Dionysus (Bacchus), god of wine, often in a state of sexual excitement. A satyr today is nothing more than a lecher. A man who has an excessive and uncontrollable sexual drive suffers from satyriasis. See **nymph/nymphomania/nympholepsy**.

Scylla and Charybdis Scylla, once a beautiful maiden, was transformed into a hideous creature with the heads of yapping dogs protruding from her midriff. Charybdis was a terrible whirlpool. Both these dangers were said to lurk in the Strait of Messina between southern Italy and Sicily, a terror to sailors who endeavored to navigate these waters. The phrase between Scylla and Charybdis is much like the English between a rock and a hard place; it denotes a precarious position between two equally destructive dangers.

siren/siren song The Sirens were nymphs (encountered by Odysseus) often depicted with birdlike bodies, who sang such enticing songs that seafarers were lured to their death. A siren has come to mean a seductive woman. It can also denote a device that uses compressed steam or air to produce a high, piercing sound as a warning. A siren song refers to something bewitching or alluring that also may be treacherous.

sisyphean Sisyphus was a famous resident of Hades who was condemned to roll an enormous rock up a hill only to have it fall back down, a punishment for revealing the secret of one of Zeus' love affairs. A sisyphean task has become a term for work that is difficult, laborious, almost impossible to complete. See **tartarean** and **tantalize**.

sphinx The sphinx terrorized Thebes before the arrival of Oedipus (see **Oedipal complex**). She was a hybrid creature with the head of a woman, body of a lion, wings of an eagle, and the tail of a serpent. She punished those who failed to answer her riddle with strangulation (the Greek verb *sphingein* means to strangle). At some point the Greek sphinx became associated with Egyptian iconography, in which the sphinx had a lion's body and a hawk's or man's head. When we liken someone to a sphinx, we have in mind the great riddler of the Greeks and not the Egyptian conception. A sphinx is an inscrutable person given to enigmatic utterances (the Greek word *ainigma* means a riddle).

stentorian Stentor, the herald of the Greek army at Troy, could speak with the power of fifty men. Today we may liken a powerful orator to Stentor and designate the effect of his voice as stentorian.

stygian Across the river Styx, the "hateful" river that circles the realm of the Underworld, the ferryman Charon transports human souls to Hades. The gods swear their most dread and unbreakable oaths by invoking the name of the river Styx. Stygian describes something to be linked with the infernal regions of Hell, something gloomy or inviolable.

syringe Syrinx ("pan-pipes") rejected the god Pan and was turned into a bed of reeds from which he fashioned his pan-pipes. A syringe is a device made up of a pipe or tube, used for injecting and ejecting liquids. Syringa is a genus of plants used for making pipes or pipestems.

tantalize Tantalus, who through *hubris* tried to feed the gods human flesh, is punished by being in a state of perpetual thirst and hunger, food and drink always just beyond his reach. To tantalize is therefore to tease and tempt without satisfaction. See **sisyphean** and **tartarean**.

tartarean Tartarus is the region in the realm of Hades reserved for the punishment of sinners, among whom are those who have committed the most heinous crimes and suffer the most terrible punishments. The adjective tartarean refers to those infernal regions. See **sisyphean** and **tantalize**.

terpsichorean From Terpsichore, one of the nine Muses, comes the adjective terpsichorean, which refers to her special area of expertise, dancing. See **Muse**.

titan/titanic The twelve Titans, the second generation of gods, born of Ge and Uranus, were of gigantic stature, most of them conceived of as natural forces, and although defeated and punished by Zeus, virtually invincible. Their massive strength is preserved in the adjective titanic, which was also the name given to the ocean vessel thought to be unsinkable. To call someone a titan is to emphasize one's enormous mastery and ability in any field or endeavor.

Trojan horse The Trojans were fooled and dragged into their city a large, wooden horse, which deceptively contained in its belly enemy Greek soldiers; the result was the utter destruction of Troy. In computer terminology, a Trojan horse is a potentially dangerous piece of software, disguised as harmless but a destructive application, which also may be downloaded from a website or as an e-mail attachment. It is different from a computer virus because it does not replicate itself.

typhoon Zeus' struggle with the dragon Typhon (also named Typhaon or Typhoeus) was the most serious battle that he had before finally consolidating his rule. Typhon had one hundred heads and tongues, fire shot out of his eyes, and terrible cries bellowed from his throats. The word typhoon, meaning a severe tropical hurricane that arises in the China Sea or the western Pacific Ocean, comes from the Chinese *ta* ("great") and *feng* ("wind"), but the form of the word is influenced by the name Typhon.

venereal/venery/veneration Venus was the powerful Roman goddess of love, equated with the Greek Aphrodite, who was born from the foam around Uranus' castrated genitals. Her dominant sexual aspect is made clear by the nature of her origin. The adjective venereal denotes a sexually transmitted disease, and the noun venery is indulgence in sexual license. Veneration, however, is the act of showing respectful love, adoration, or reverence.

volcanic/volcano/volcanism/volcanize/volcanology, etc. (each of these words may also be spelled with vul-) The Roman god Vulcan, identified with the Greek Hephaestus, was the supreme craftsman of the gods. His helpers were three Cyclopes and his forge was located in various places, but most often under Mt. Aetna in Sicily, or similar volcanic regions, which betray its presence. A volcano is a vent in the earth's crust that spews forth molten material and thereby forms a mountain. Volcanism or vulcanism refers to any volcanic force or activity. To vulcanize is to subject a substance, especially rubber, to such extremes of heat that it undergoes a change and thereby becomes strengthened. Volcanology is the scientific study of volcanic phenomena.

Wheel of Fortune Fors or Fortuna was an Italic fertility goddess who controlled the cycles of the seasons and became associated with the Greek conception of good or bad fortune (*tyche*). She is often represented holding the cornucopia in one hand and a wheel in the other, to signify the rising and falling of an individual's prospects. From that iconography comes wheel of fortune, a device used in a game of chance. See **cornucopia**.

zephyr Zephyrus is the west wind (see **aurora borealis**), which signals the return of spring. Today a zephyr is a pleasant, gentle breeze, as well as a reference to any insignificant or passing thing.

THE GREEK SPELLING OF NAMES

In the transliteration of Greek into English, the letter upsilon (υ) usually appears as y. The letter χ usually becomes ch but sometimes kh; both forms are given below. The following changes are to be noted in the Latin and English spelling of Greek words*:

k = c:	Kastor = Castor
ai = ae, or e:	Graiai = Graeae; Klytaimnestra = Clytaemnestra, Clytemnestra
ei = e or i:	Medeia = Medea; Kleio = Clio
ou = u:	Medousa = Medusa
oi = oe:	Kroisos = Croesus
oi = i:	Delphoi = Delphi
final e = a:	Athene = Athena
final on = um:	Ilion = Ilium
final os = us:	Hyllos = Hyllus

Achaia, Akhaia = Achaea
Acheloos, Akheloos = Acheloüs
Acheron, Akheron = Acheron
Achilleus, Akhilleus = Achilles
Admetos = Admetus
Adrastos = Adrastus
Agathyrsos = Agathyrsus
Agaue = Agave
Aglaia = Aglaea
Aglauros = Aglaurus
Akamas = Acamas
Akarnania = Acarnania
Akastos = Acastus
Akestes = Acestes
Akis = Acis
Akontios = Acontius
Akrisios = Acrisius
Aktaion = Actaeon
Aia = Aea
Aiaia = Aeaea
Aiakos = Aeacus
Aias = Ajax
Aietes = Aeëtes
Aigeus = Aegeus
Aigialeia = Aegialia
Aigimios = Aegimius
Aigina = Aegina
Aigis = Aegis
Aigisthos = Aegisthus
Aigyptos = Aegyptus
Aineias = Aeneas
Aiolos = Aeolus
Aipytos = Aepytus
Aisakos = Aesacus
Aison = Aeson
Aithra = Aethra
Aitolia = Aetolia
Alekto = Alecto
Alexandros = Alexander
Alkestis = Alcestis
Alkibiades = Alcibiades
Alkeides = Alcides
Alkinoos = Alcinoüs
Alkmaion = Alcmaeon
Alkmene = Alcmena
Alkyone = Alcyone
Alkyoneus = Alcyoneus
Alpheios = Alpheus
Althaia = Althaea
Althaimenes = Althaemenes
Amaltheia = Amalthea
Amphiaraos = Amphiaraüs
Amyklai = Amyclae
Amykos = Amycus
Anios = Anius
Ankaios = Ancaeus
Antaios = Antaeus
Anteia = Antea
Antikleia = Anticlea
Antilochos, Antilokhos = Antilochus
Antinoos = Antinoüs
Apsyrtos = Apsyrtus
Arachne, Arakhne = Arachne
Areion = Arion
Areiopagos = Areopagus
Arethousa = Arethusa
Argos = Argus
Aristaios = Aristaeus
Arkadia = Arcadia
Arkas = Arcas
Askanios = Ascanius
Asklepios = Asclepius
Asopos = Asopus
Atalante = Atalanta
Athene = Athena
Augeias = Augeas
Autolykos = Autolycus

Bakchos, Bakkhos = Bacchus
Boiotia = Boeotia
Briareos = Briareus

C, *see* K
Chairephon, Khairephon = Chaerephon
Chalkiope, Khalkiope = Chalciope
Chariklo, Khariklo = Chariclo

*This list of major Greek names is not exhaustive but selective to illustrate the rules of transliteration.

Cheiron, Kheiron = Chiron
Chimaira, Khimaira = Chimaera
Chronos, Khronos = Chronus
Chrysippos, Khrysippos = Chrysippus
Chthonios, Khthonios = Chthonius

Daidalos = Daedalus
Danaos = Danaus
Dardanos = Dardanus
Deïaneira = Deïanira, Dejanira
Deidameia = Deidamia
Delphoi = Delphi
Deukalion = Deucalion
Dikte = Dicte
Dionysos = Dionysus
Dioskouroi = Dioscuri
Dirke = Dirce

Echemos, Ekhemos = Echemus
Elektra = Electra
Elysion = Elysium
Epeios = Epeus
Epigonoi = Epigoni
Epikaste = Epicasta
Erebos = Erebus
Erytheia = Erythia
Eteokles = Eteocles
Euadne = Evadne
Euboia = Euboea
Eumaios = Eumaeus
Euneos = Euneus
Europe = Europa
Eurykleia = Euryclea
Eurydike = Eurydice

Gaia = Gaea
Galateia = Galatea
Ganymedes = Ganymede
Glauke = Glauce
Glaukos = Glaucus
Graiai = Graeae

Haides = Hades
Haimon = Haemon
Hekabe = Hecabe, Hecuba
Hekate = Hecate
Hekatoncheires, Hekatonkheires = Hecatonchires
Hektor = Hector
Helenos = Helenus
Helios = Helius
Hephaistos = Hephaestus
Herakles = Heracles, Hercules
Hippodameia = Hippodamia
Hippolyte = Hippolyta
Hippolytos = Hippolytus
Horai = Horae
Hyakinthos = Hyacinthus
Hyllos = Hyllus

Iakchos, Iakkhos = Iacchus
Iason = Jason
Ikarios = Icarius
Ikaros = Icarus
Ilion = Ilium
Inachos, Inakhos = Inachus
Iokaste = Jocasta
Iolaos = Iolaus
Iolkos = Iolcus
Iphigeneia = Iphigenia
Iphikles = Iphicles
Iphiklos = Iphiclus
Iphimedeia = Iphimedia
Iphitos = Iphitus
Ithaka = Ithaca

J, *see* I

Kadmos = Cadmus
Kaineus = Caeneus
Kalchas, Kalkhas = Calchas
Kallidike = Callidice
Kalliope = Calliope
Kallisto = Callisto
Kalypso = Calypso
Kanake = Canace
Kapaneus = Capaneus
Kassandra = Cassandra
Kassiepeia = Cassiepea
Kastor = Castor
Kerkops = Cercops
Kelaino = Celaeno
Keleus = Celeus
Kentauros = Centaurus, Centaur
Kephalos = Cephalus
Kerberos = Cerberus
Kerkopes = Cercopes
Kerkyon = Cercyon
Keto = Ceto
Keyx = Ceyx
Kirke = Circe
Kithairon = Cithaeron
Kleio = Clio
Klymene = Clymene
Klytaimnestra = Clytaemnestra, Clytemnestra
Knossos = Cnossus
Kodros = Codrus
Koios = Coeus
Kokytos = Cocytus
Kolchis, Kolkhis = Colchis
Kolonos = Colonus
Komaitho = Comaetho
Korinthos = Corinthus, Corinth
Koronis = Coronis
Kreon = Creon
Kreousa = Creusa
Kroisos = Croesus
Kronos = Cronus
Kybele = Cybele
Kyklops = Cyclops
Kyknos = Cycnus
Kyparissos = Cyparissus
Kypros = Cyprus
Kythera = Cythera
Kytisoros = Cytisorus
Kyzikos = Cyzicus

Labdakos = Labdacus
Laios = Laius
Lakedaimon = Lacedaemon
Laodameia = Laodamia
Learchos, Learkhos, Learchus

Leukippe = Leucippe
Leukippos = Leucippus
Leukothea = Leucothea
Leukothoe = Leucothoe
Likymnios = Licymnius
Linos = Linus
Lykaon = Lycaon
Lykia = Lycia
Lykomedes = Lycomedes
Lykurgos = Lycurgus
Lykos = Lycus
Lynkeus = Lynceus

Makareus = Macareus
Makaria = Macaria
Machaon, Makhaon = Machaon
Mainas = Maenas, Maenad
Medeia = Medea
Medousa = Medusa
Meleagros = Meleager
Meliai = Meliae
Melikertes = Melicertes
Menelaos = Menelaüs
Menoikeus = Menoeceus
Minotauros = Minotaurus, Minotaur
Musaios = Musaeus
Mousa, Mousai = Musa, Musae, Muse, Muses
Mykenai = Mycenae, Mycene
Myrtilos = Myrtilus

Narkissos = Narcissus
Nausikaa = Nausicaa
Neoptolemos = Neoptolemus
Nessos = Nessus
Nykteus = Nycteus

Oidipous = Oedipus
Oinomaos = Oenomaus
Okeanos = Oceanus
Olympos = Olympus
Orchomenos, Orkhomenos = Orchomenus
Oreithyia = Orithyia
Orthros = Orthrus
Ourania = Urania
Ouranos = Uranus

Palaimon = Palaemon
Palladion = Palladium
Panathenaia = Panathenaea
Parnassos = Parnassus
Parthenopaios = Parthenopaeus
Patroklos = Patroclus
Pegasos = Pegasus
Peisistratos = Pisistratus
Peneios = Peneus
Penthesileia = Penthesilea
Peloponnesos = Peloponnesus, Peloponnese
Periklymenos = Periclymenus
Persephone = Proserpina
Perikles = Pericles
Phaiakes = Phaeaces, Phaeacians
Philoktetes = Philoctetes
Phoibe = Phoebe
Phoibos = Phoebus
Plouton = Pluton, Pluto
Ploutos = Plutus
Podaleirios = Podalirius
Poias = Poeas
Polybos = Polybus
Polydeukos = Polydeuces
Polyneikes = Polynices
Polyphemos = Polyphemus
Priamos = Priamus, Priam
Prokne = Procne
Prokris = Procris
Prokrustes = Procrustes

Rheia = Rhea
Rhesos = Rhesus

Salmakis = Salmacis
Satyros = Satyrus, Satyr
Schoineus, Skhoineus = Schoeneus
Seilenos = Silenus
Seirenes = Sirenes, Sirens
Sibylla = Sibylla, Sibyl
Sisyphos = Sisyphus
Skeiron = Sciron
Skylla = Scylla
Stheneboia = Stheneboea

Tantalos = Tantalus
Tartaros = Tartarus
Telemachos, Telemakhos = Telemachus
Teukros = Teucer
Thaleia = Thalia
Thorikos = Thoricus
Thrinakie = Thrinacia
Tityos = Tityus
Troizen = Troezen

U, *see* Ou

Xanthos = Xanthus
Xouthos = Xuthus

Zephyros = Zephyrus, Zephyr
Zethos = Zethus

Captions for Color Plates 1–10

1. *Jupiter and Thetis*, by J. A. D. Ingres (1780–1867). Oil on canvas, 1811; 136 × 101 in. In this huge painting, Jupiter is enthroned among the clouds with his attributes, the scepter and the eagle. Thetis kneels and touches Jupiter's chin in a gesture of supplication. To the left Juno (Hera) appears threateningly, and reliefs of the battle of gods and giants decorate the base of Jupiter's throne.

2. *Dionysus*. Kylix by Exekias, ca. 530 B.C.; diameter 4½ in. The scene depicts the story told in the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*. The god reclines on the pirates' ship, round whose mast a grape-laden vine entwines itself. The crew have leaped overboard and have been transformed into dolphins.

3. *Christus Apollo*. Vault mosaic, third century A.D.; height of vault 72 in. Christ is shown with the attributes of the sun-god (Apollo or Helius), ascending into the vault of the sky on a chariot drawn by four white horses (two are missing from the damaged part). The rays emanating from his head form a cross. Across the background trails the ivy of Dionysus, another pagan symbol of immortality used in early Christian art. This vault mosaic is in a Christian tomb in the cemetery beneath the basilica of St. Peter's in the Vatican.

4. *The Lycurgus Cup*. Glass, early fourth century A.D.; height 6½ in. The Thracian king Lycurgus is trapped in the vine of Dionysus (who appears on the other side of the cup, along with a nymph, a satyr, and Pan), as a punishment for his persecution of the god. The axe with which he tried to cut down the vine lies useless behind his left foot. This "cage cup" is carved from green glass, which is translucent red when placed in front of light. The glass has been undercut to show the agony of Lycurgus in high relief. The gilt-bronze rim is a nineteenth-century addition.

5. *The Rape of Helen by Paris*, attributed to a follower of Fra Angelico. Oil on wood, ca. 1450; 20 × 24 in. The companions of Paris carry Helen (distinguished by her central position and headdress) and three of her companions from a temple (as related by Dares Phrygius) to a waiting ship, accompanied by a cupid in the foreground. Paris may be the central figure in the group on the left. This octagonal painting was originally a panel in a wedding chest, perhaps as a warning of the dangers of marital infidelity.

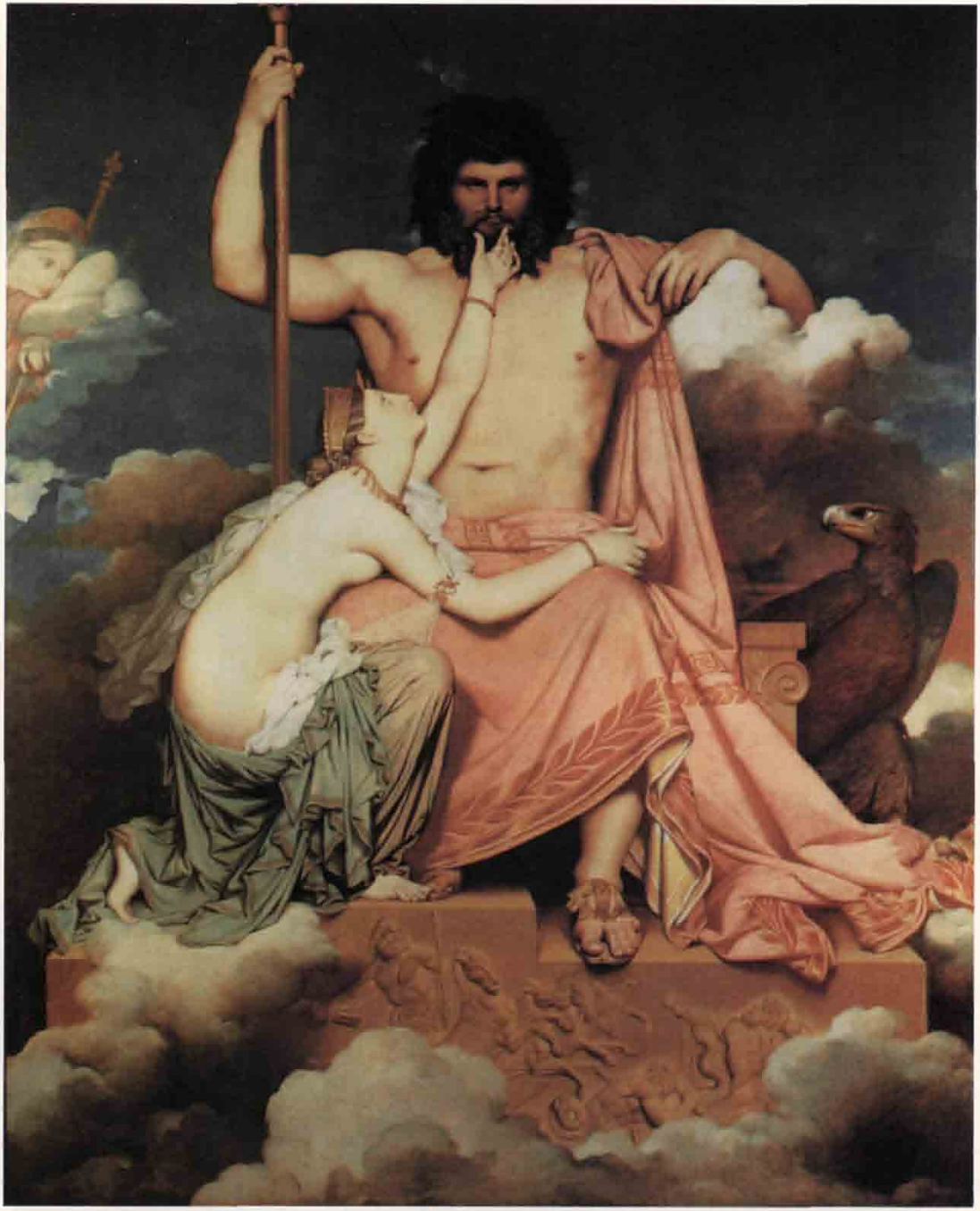


PLATE 1 *Jupiter and Thetis*, by J. A. D. Ingres. *(Musée Granet, Palais de Malte, Aix-en-Provence, France. Photograph by Bernard Terlay.)*

Captions to color plates precede and follow this insert.

PLATE 2 *Dionysus*, kylix by Exekias. *(Museum Antikes Kleinkunst, Munich. Reproduced by permission of Hirmer Verlag, München.)*

PLATE 3 *Christus Apollo. ([Vatican: St. Peter's, Mausoleum of the Julii, Rome, Italy] Scala/Art Resource, NY.)*

PLATE 4 *The Lycurgus Cup. (London: Copyright British Museum.)*

PLATE 5 *The Rape of Helen by Paris,* attributed to a follower of Fra Angelico. *(London: National Gallery. Reproduced by Courtesy of the Trustees.)*

PLATE 6 *The Feast of the Gods,* by Giovanni Bellini with additions by Titian. *(Washington, D.C., ©1993 National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, Courtesy of the National Gallery.)*

PLATE 7 *Venus and Adonis*, by Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari). *([Madrid, Spain, Prado] Scala/Art Resource, NY.)*

PLATE 8 *The Discovery of the Infant Erichthonius*, by Peter Paul Rubens. (*Courtesy of the Collections of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Vaduz Castle.*)

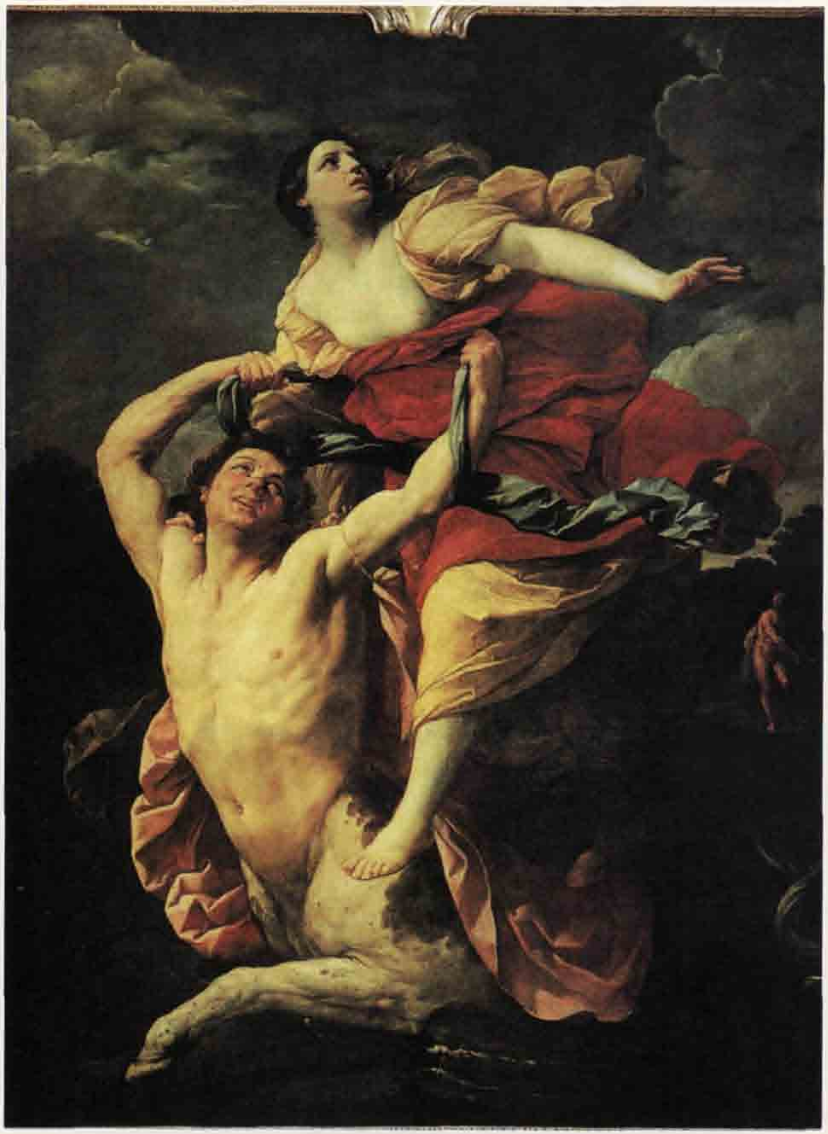


PLATE 9 *Deïaneira abducted by the Centaur Nessus*, 1620–1621, by Guido Reni. *([Louvre, Dept. des Peintures, Paris, France] © Photograph by Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.)*

PLATE 10 *Las Hilanderas* (*The Weavers*), by Diego Velazquez. *(Madrid, Prado.)*

6. *The Feast of the Gods*, by Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516), with additions by Titian. Oil on canvas, 1514; 67 × 74 in. Painted when the artist was eighty-four years old, this painting has been called "both mysterious and comic." Its subject is the attempt of Priapus to rape the nymph Lotis (cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 1.391–440 and 6.319–346, where the intended victim is Vesta), shown on the right. The gods appear as young Renaissance men and women: Jupiter (drinking from a cup) is in the center, Mercury (wearing a helmet) reclines in the left center foreground, and a group consisting of a satyr, Silenus, and Dionysus (kneeling on one knee) is on the left. Between Dionysus and Silenus is the donkey whose braying woke Lotis.

7. *Venus and Adonis*, by Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari, 1528–1588). Oil on canvas, 1584; $83\frac{1}{2} \times 75$ in. Adonis sleeps in the lap of Venus, who fans him with a small flag. A cupid restrains one of the hounds, eager for the hunt that will bring the death of Adonis. Veronese transforms the text of Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 10.529–559), and the last moments of the lovers together are enriched by the splendid colors of their robes, while the darkening sky foreshadows the tragedy.

8. *The Discovery of the Infant Erichthonius*, by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). Oil on canvas, ca. 1616; 85 × 125 in. Rubens has painted the moment when Aglauros has opened the basket containing Erichthonius and shows him to her sisters, Pandrosos (on the right) and Herse (on the left) with a brilliant red robe. Cupid gestures towards her as the future bride of Mercury. Behind is a fountain of the many-breasted Artemis, whose fertility is echoed by the herm of the lascivious god Pan, on the left. The identity of the old woman is not known.

9. *Nessus and Deianeira*, by Guido Reni (1575–1642). Oil on canvas, 1623; 104 × 77 in. Reni painted a series of four scenes from the life and death of Heracles for Ferdinando Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, in 1621. When the original *Nessus and Deianeira* was removed to Prague (where it still is) during the sack of Mantua by the troops of Charles V, Reni replaced it with this splendid and romantic interpretation of the myth. The young centaur, triumphant in his conquest, bears off Deianeira, who twists away as she realizes the fate that has overtaken her, while Heracles in the background takes an arrow from his quiver. Thus Reni focuses on the joy of the centaur, soon to be turned to tragedy for himself, Deianeira, and Heracles. The contrast with the stark realism of the Attic artist's painting on the seventh-century B.C. vase on page 536 is a remarkable example of the way in which the same myth can inspire different emotions. (*Paris, Musée du Louvre.*)

10. *Las Hilanderas (The Weavers)*, by Diego Velazquez (1599–1660). Oil on canvas, ca. 1657; $66\frac{1}{2} \times 98$ in. (as shown); enlarged in the eighteenth century to 87 × 114 in. In the foreground tapestry weavers are at work, with an older woman to the left and a young one to the right as the principal figures. In the background women view the completed tapestry, in which the helmeted Athena is about to strike Arachne with her shuttle, in anger at her subject, *The Rape of Europa*. Velazquez has included reference to Titian's *Rape of Europa*. (*Madrid, Prado.*)

Captions for Color Plates 11–21

11. *Cephalus and Aurora*, by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). Oil on canvas, ca. 1630; 38 × 51½ in. Cephalus gazes at a portrait of Procris, held up to him by a cupid, as he resists the advances of Aurora. In the background Pegasus waits to pull the chariot of the Dawn. The sleeping god with the urn is a river-god used by Poussin to signify a mythological landscape.

12. *The Forge of Vulcan*, by Diego Velázquez (1599–1660). Oil on canvas, 1630; 88 × 114 in. Velázquez has painted the moment when Helius tells Hephaestus that his wife, Aphrodite, is making love to Ares (Homer, *Odyssey* 8.270–271). At the appearance of Helius in the forge Hephaestus and his four assistants stop their work on a suit of armor (perhaps for Ares himself), stunned by the news. Helius, whose white flesh, blue-thonged sandals, and orange robe contrast with the burly torsos of the blacksmiths, is both sun-god and Apollo, god of poetry (as his laurel wreath indicates). The rays from his head illuminate the dark forge, while the exquisite white jug on the mantelpiece provides another focus of light on the opposite side of the painting. Velázquez catches the intersection of divine omniscience and the blacksmith's toil without diminishing the wit and pathos of Homer's tale. The great anvil in the left foreground, we know, waits for Hephaestus to forge on it the inescapable metal net that will trap the lovers.

13. *The Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite*, by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). Oil on canvas, ca. 1637; 45 × 58 in. Amphitrite is at the center, accompanied by Nereids and Tritons as she rides over the sea in her shell drawn by four dolphins. Neptune comes alongside his bride in a chariot drawn by four sea-horses. Above, winged cupids (one with butterfly's wings and one with a wedding torch) strew flowers, and in the background to the left ride two cupids, above whom fly the swans of Venus. Poussin exuberantly reinterprets a theme found in Roman floor mosaics and in Raphael's fresco *Galatea* (ca. 1512) in the Villa Farnesina at Rome.

14. *Pilgrimage to the Island of Cythera*, by Antoine Watteau (1684–1721). Oil on canvas, 1717; 51 × 76 in. To the right, three pairs of lovers prepare to embark for Cythera (or, perhaps, to sail from the island), while below five other couples approach the richly ornamented galley, whose shell motifs recall the birth of Venus. An armless herm of Venus looks down on the lovers from the wood on the right. It is garlanded with flowers and Cupid's bow and arrows are tied to it by a ribbon. A half-naked cupid, seated on his quiver, tugs at the skirt of one of the lovers, and other cupids fly through the air (one with a torch) and around the galley. The spirit of love fills Watteau's exquisite landscape, in which eighteenth-century lovers find joy in the timeless mythological setting. Watteau submitted this painting to the French Academy as his "reception piece," and he painted a second version (now in Berlin) in 1718. The Academy gave it the title *Une feste galante* (a courtly celebration), but Watteau's title more accurately expresses the power of the goddess who rules the island of Cythera.

PLATE 11 *Cephalus and Aurora,* by Nicolas Poussin. *(London, National Gallery. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees.)*

PLATE 12 *The Forge of Vulcan,* by Diego Velázquez. *([Madrid, Museo del Prado] Scala/Art Resource, NY.)*

Captions to color plates precede and follow this insert.

PLATE 13 *The Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite*, by Nicolas Poussin. *(Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The George W. Elkins Collection.)*

PLATE 14 *Pilgrimage to the Island of Cythera,* by Antoine Watteau. *([Paris, France: Musée du Louvre] Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.)*

PLATE 15 *Earth: Vertumnus and Pomona*, by François Boucher. *(Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio: Museum Purchase, Derby Fund.)*

PLATE 16 *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos*, by John Vanderlyn. *(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison [The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection.])*

PLATE 17 *Jupiter and Semele,* by Gustave Moreau. *(Paris, Musée Gustave Moreau.)*

PLATE 19 *Icarus*, by Henri Matisse. *(New York, Museum of Modern Art, The Louis E. Stern Collection. Photograph ©1994 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ©1994 Succession H. Matisse, Paris/Artists Society [ARS], New York.)*

PLATE 18 *Pandora*, by Odilon Redon. *(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Alexander M. Bing, 1959.)*

PLATE 20 *Hector and Andromache*, by Giorgio de Chirico. *(Milan, Italy: Fondazione Gianni Mattioli. © Foundation Giorgio de Chirico/VAGA, New York 1994. Photograph courtesy of Scala/Art Resource, NY.)*

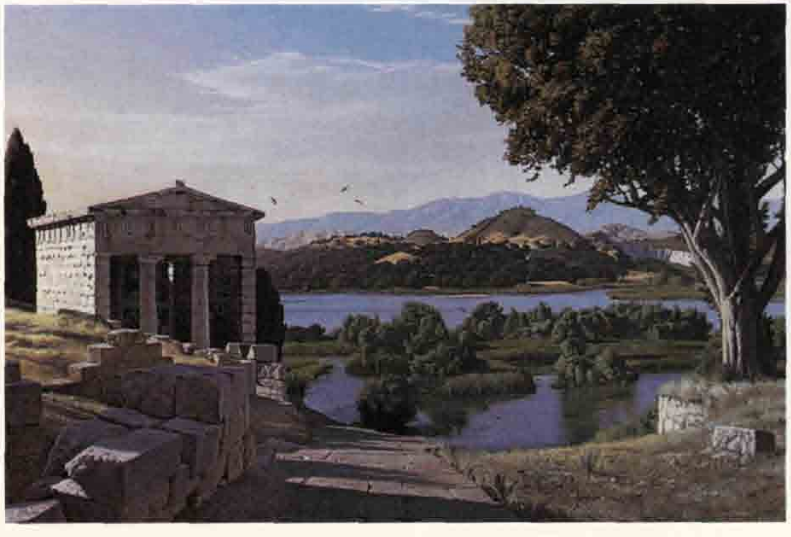


PLATE 21 *Landscape for Philemon and Baucis*, by David Ligare. *(Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum. Courtesy of the Wadsworth Atheneum, Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection. Photo by Joseph Szaszfai.)*

15. *Earth: Vertumnus and Pomona*, by François Boucher (1703–1770). Oil on canvas, 1749, $34\frac{1}{2} \times 53\frac{1}{2}$ in. *Earth* is one of a planned series representing the Four Elements by means of classical myths. The legend of Pomona and Vertumnus illustrates the fertility and variety of Earth. Pomona is shown as a beauty at the court of Louis XV in a pastoral scene such as was produced in the court ballets and operas at Versailles. The deception of Vertumnus is indicated by the mask held up by the cupid, and his intentions are made clear by the lascivious head of Pan on the urn at the right and by the fountain on the left with Cupid riding a dolphin.

16. *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos*, by John Vanderlyn (1775–1852). Oil on canvas, 1814; 68×87 in. Ariadne lies asleep, unaware that Theseus (who can be seen in the background at the right) is setting sail. Painted in Paris, this is one of the earliest nudes by an American painter to have been exhibited in America. Vanderlyn hoped that his masterpiece "while not chaste enough . . . to be displayed in the house of any private individual . . . [would] attract a great crowd if exhibited publicly."

17. *Jupiter and Semele*, by Gustave Moreau (1826–1898). Oil on canvas, 1895; $83\frac{1}{2} \times 46\frac{1}{2}$ in. This exuberant representation should be compared with the economical sketch by Rubens (shown on page 271). Jupiter, young and beardless, sits enthroned ("like an Indian Rajah," it has been said) with the dying Semele over his right knee. His eagle, with open wings, is at the base of the throne, behind the figure of Pan. At the bottom is the "realm of Erebus," and all around are symbolic figures drawn from Moreau's reading of Ovid and modern literature, with architectural details and ornamentation from Greek and oriental traditions. Moreau considered this work to be his masterpiece, yet it was never publicly exhibited. (*Paris, Musée Gustave Moreau*).

18. *Pandora*, by Odilon Redon (1840–1916). Oil on canvas, ca. 1910; $56\frac{1}{2} \times 24\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pandora, holding her box, is framed by jewellike flowers, but above her is a leafless tree. Redon used symbols "to clothe ideas in a sensuous form" (in the words of the *Symbolist Manifesto* of 1886). This painting is nearly contemporary with Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Like Freud, Redon used the symbols of mythology to express his innermost ideas and emotions.

19. *Icarus*, by Henri Matisse (1869–1954). Stencil print of a paper cutout, 1947; $16\frac{1}{2} \times 25\frac{1}{2}$ in. This is Plate 8 (p. 54) in Matisse's *Jazz* (Paris: Tériade, 1947). The plates were printed from paper cutouts pasted on and painted through stencils. He wrote the text in his own firm handwriting, and opposite *Icarus* is the last of seven pages titled *L'Avion* (The Airplane). Matisse reflects on the freedom in space experienced by air travelers, then he concludes "Ought one not to make young people who have finished their studies take a long journey in an airplane." The red heart of Icarus—symbol of his courage and creativity—stands out in the black silhouette against the sky and stars that he tried, and failed, to reach.

20. *Hector and Andromache*, by Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978). Oil on canvas, 1917; $35\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$ in. Husband and wife, mannequins backed by receding frames, part at the Scaean Gate in an austere, stagelike setting with receding perspective. They are sheathed in geometrically shaped metallic plates, and the baby Astyanax is reduced to a steel wedge with a black disk for his head. De Chirico's images of the intersection of war and the family are a disturbing interpretation of Homer's moving scene.

21. *Landscape for Philemon and Baucis*, by David Ligare (b. 1945). Oil on canvas, 1984; 32×48 in. The cottage of Baucis and Philemon has become a temple, while they have been transformed into the intertwined trees on the right. The lake conceals the homes of the villagers who were so inhospitable to Zeus and Hermes. The size of the trees and the ruinous state of the temple indicate that the metamorphosis took place long ago.

INDEXES

INDEX OF AUTHORS, ARTISTS, COMPOSERS, AND TITLES

This index is particularly useful for finding information about material in Chapters 27 and 28 (on the survival of Greek and Roman mythology) and identifying the ancient sources used throughout the book.

GLOSSARY/INDEX OF MYTHOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSONS, PLACES, AND SUBJECTS

A simple guide to pronunciation follows most words in this index. The long vowels are to be pronounced as follows: ā (cape), ē (bee), ī (ice), ō (boat), and ū (too). Syllabification is marked by a prime mark (′) and a hyphen (-). Syllables that precede the prime are stressed. **Note:** Pictorial representations are in **bold-face** type.