

Classical Mythology

LLCU 316.010/080



Class 15

Perseus and the Age of Heroes

Heroes of Athens

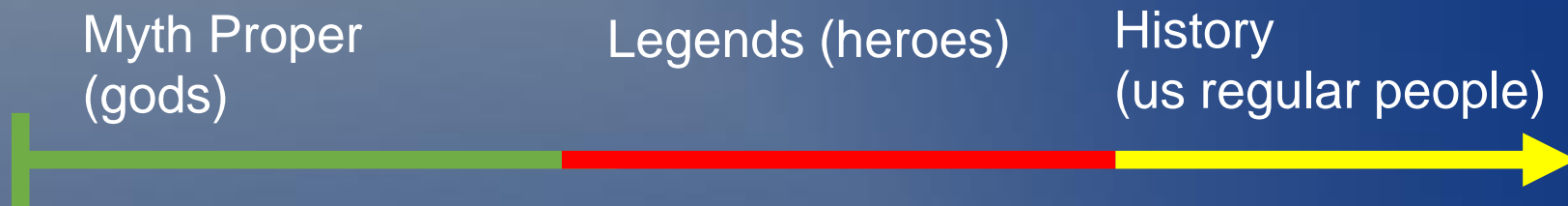
Reminders:

- Next in-class writing assignment this Thursday
 - Question on Canvas Website
- (Honors Section) Reception of Ancient Myth Assignment, Due May 3rd
 - Any questions, let me know!
- (Another Shameless Plug) Athens Study Abroad, W2019: “Victors and Spoils”

The Legend of Perseus

From Myth to Legend

Ancient Concept of Chronology ("What happened before us?")



The closer we come to "history", the more the world looks like it does today
(fewer "monsters", less interaction with gods, etc.)

Legend of Perseus:



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Legend of Perseus: His “Tokens”



Graeae

- Old women sharing one eye and one tooth
- Perseus finds them, and compels them to tell him where the nymphs are who will tell him where to get his “tokens”
- Does so by stealing their one eye



Graeae: *The Dark Crystal*



THE DARK CRYSTAL. A UNIVERSAL RELEASE. © 1982 ENTERTAINMENT LIMITED 101

Legend of Perseus:

Quest for Gorgons:

- .Perseus travels to the edge of the world to find them (North Africa or to the Hyperboreans)

Legend of Perseus:

Ancient Europe (*ca* 400 BCE):



Legend of Perseus:

Quest for Gorgons:



Legend of Perseus:

Quest for Gorgons:

- .Finds the Gorgons sleeping (uses shield); decapitates **Medusa**, puts head in *kibisis*
- .From her head sprang Chrysaor (father of Geryon, important in the Heracles stories) and **Pegasus** (the winged horse)
- .Blood from head produced Libyan snakes (Atlas turned to stone – Atlas range)

Legend of Perseus:

Quest for Gorgons:



Legend of Perseus:

Quest for Gorgons:



Legend of Perseus:

Andromeda (hero finds mate):

- .Daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia (Ethiopia)
- .Poseidon's curse of sea-monster
 - .Cassiopeia said Andromeda was more beautiful than Poseidon's daughters
- .Andromeda given as sacrifice
- .Rescued by Perseus (produced the son Perses)

Legend of Perseus:

Hero Returns:

- .Arriving at Seriphos, Perseus defeats Polydectes; Dictys (with Danae as wife) are left to rule
- .Perseus pursues Acrisius from Argos to Larissa (Acrisius is killed – the prophecy!)
- .Perseus heads to Tiryns, where he exchanges kingdoms with Megapenthes

Legend of Perseus:

Hero Returns (Reintegration into Society):

- Founds Mycenae (famous Bronze age city)
- Children become kings; descendants include Heracles and Eurystheus (persecutor of Heracles)
- This is an unexpected ending; as we'll see, heroes virtually never just “disappear”; they have a strange and unnatural end

Legend of Perseus:

Was Perseus a hero by our standards?

Legend of Perseus:

Greek “heroes”

.Sometimes considered to be not what we might consider a “hero”

1. Defined by noble lineage (can't be a “nobody”); often true identity hidden
2. Usually an exceptional birth/childhood
3. Performs acts that are exceptional (can be *either* good or bad)

Legends of Argos: Another One

Bellerophon:

- .Corinthian hero (grandson of Sisyphus)
- .Exiled from Corinth for blood-guilt (killing brother?) - motif of hero forced on quest
- .Arrived at Tiryns, where Proteus' wife Sthenoboea fell in love with him
- .Sent to Iobates, king of Lycia with letter

Legends of Argos:

Bellerophon:

- .Sent on quests:

- .**Chimera** (Lion+goat+serpent)

- . Amazons

- .Solymi (warriors of Lycia)

- .Helped by Pegasus (given by Poseidon, but Bellerophon needed magic reins, given by Athena)



Legends of Argos:

Bellerophon:

- .Through his exploits, becomes co-ruler of Lycia
- .As part ruler of Lycia, became beloved
- .Set his eyes on the gods, and rode Pegasus to the heavens
- .Zeus sent him off his horse, and spent the remainder of his life wandering the earth (no one wanted to befriend him)

“Bellerophon Tomb,” Tlos (Lycia):



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The foundation of Athens

Legend of Athens:

Cecrops:

- First king of Athens
- Said to have been the first to worship Zeus, build altars, etc.
- Half human, half serpent/fish



Legend of Athens:

Cecrops: *Snakes and the Underworld*



Legend of Athens:

Cecrops: Overseeing Poseidon and Athena



Legends of Athens:

Erichthonius: Born from Hephaestus and Athena (?)

