

Classical Mythology

LLCU 316.010/080



Class 17

Icarus, Orpheus, and Heracles

Notes:

I'm hoping to get Exam 2 grades back on Thursday (at the very latest, posted on Canvas during the weekend)

Third writing assignment *next* Tuesday (April 24)

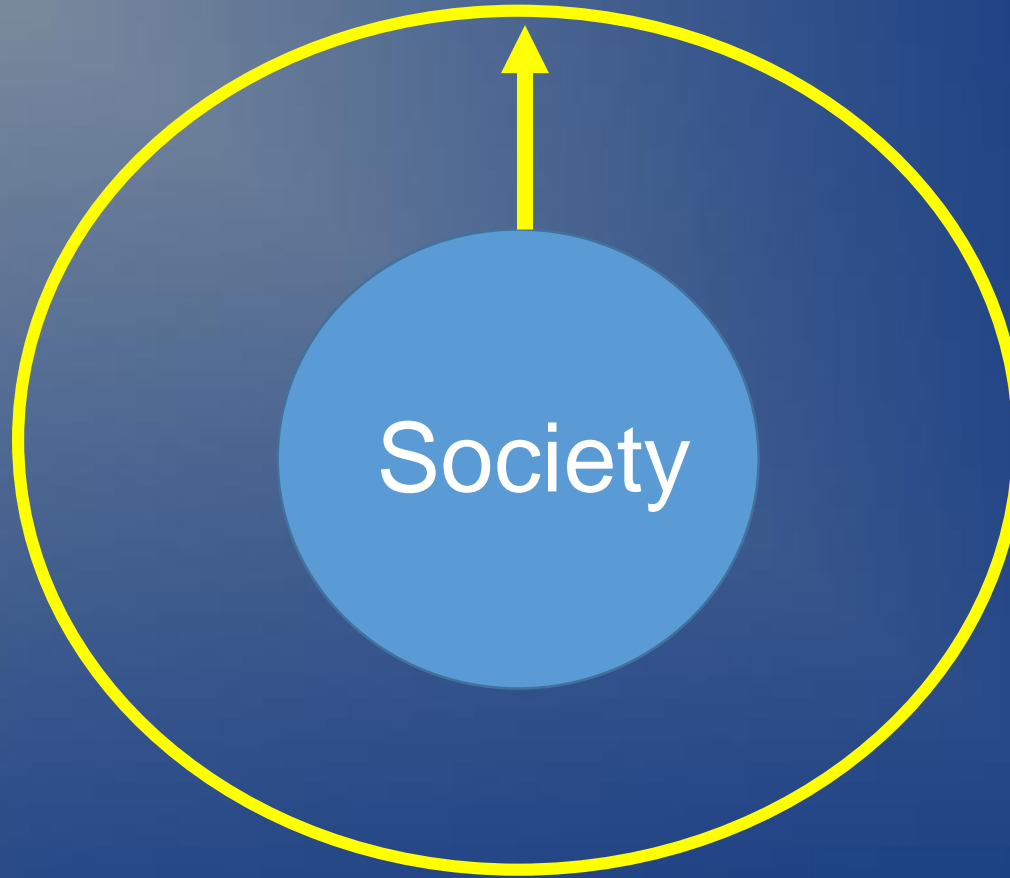
“Are there any modern heroes (real or fictional) that you think resemble ones we have seen in class so far? Provide a brief justification.”

Theseus: And His Exploits



The Hero's Struggle

A Hero: Exceptional, famous,
risk-taking



The Hero's Struggle

A Hero



Daedalus and Icarus:



Daedalus and Icarus:

- . Daedalus from Athens
- .Exiled to Crete for killing his nephew Perdicas (jealous because Perdicas invented the saw)
- .Eventually wanted to leave Crete, but Minos wouldn't let him
- .Designed wings so he and his son could fly off the island)



Daedalus and Icarus:

Ovid, *Met.* 8:

[Daedalus]: '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.'

Daedalus and Icarus:



Daedalus and Icarus:



Daedalus and Icarus:

The Golden Mean: Important Ancient Notion

- .Follow prudent council

- .Know your place in life

BUT...

- .Fortune favours the bold (*fortes fortuna iuuat*)

- .Julius Caesar: 'the die has been cast' (*alea iacta est*)

Orpheus:



.From **Thrace**

.Son of Oeagrus (king)
OR **Apollo** and the
Muse Calliope

.Lover, not a fighter

.Married Naiad nymph
Eurydice

Orpheus: Thrace



Orpheus: Pathetic Fallacy

- His music was so powerful that animals and even the earth itself could be moved by it
- Pathetic Fallacy: the animal and physical world cares about us humans and responds to us



Orpheus and Eurydice:

- . Eurydice bit by a snake and dies
- . Orpheus, grieving, attempts to go to the underworld to bring her back
- . Convinces Hades and Persephone through music
- . The hitch: he must go ahead of her and cannot look back
- . He of course does



Orpheus and Eurydice:

Elements:

- .Snake-bite killed Eurydice (chthonic powers)
- .Orpheus a different type of hero (anti-hero?) - achieving quest through beauty, not violence
- .Divine advice/warning not followed
- .Parallels to Demeter and Persephone
 - .The possibility to death and rebirth

Orpheus and Eurydice: The Lost Lover



Orpheus' Death (Ciconian Women):



Orphic Cult:

Elements:

- .Orpheus considered to be a prophet (composed religious documents)
- .Considered to be (more or less) foreign in the Greek world
- .Intertwined with both Dionysus and Apollo
- .Transmigration of the soul or “reincarnation” (cf. Pythagoreanism)

Orphic Cult:

Elements:

- .Transmigration of the soul:

- .Proclus (5th cent. CE)

- .‘Therefore the soul of man, changing in the cycles of time, enters into various creatures; now it enters a horse, again it becomes a sheep or as one of the tribe of chill serpents creeps on the sacred ground.’

Orphic Cult:

Petelian Tablet: Text of Orphic Cult



Orphic Cult:

Petelian Tablet

“I am a child of Earth and of starry Heaven, yet my race is of Heaven.”

We call this “mysticism”: The notion that we have the spark of divinity within us

Orphic Cult:

Orphic Cosmogony:

- .1st Chronos (time) and Ananke (necessity)
- .Then **Phanes** (the creator of everything – from an egg)
- .Phanes was first ruler of the universe
- .Gave power to Nyx (night)
- .Who then gave power to Ouranos, etc.

Orphic Cult:

Orphic Cosmogony: Phanes



Orphic Cult:

Orphic Cosmogony:

- .Zeus swallowed Phanes – becomes 2nd creator, marries Persephone and creates **Zagreus**
- .Titans tear apart Zagreus
- .Zeus turns them to ashes (lightning bolt), but Zagreus' heart survives
- .Heart placed in Semele, producing Dionysus
- .Humans are made from the ashes of the Titans: hence, our spark of divinity

Heracles: His Origins

Heracles:



.Son of Zeus and **Alcmene**

.Theban

.Greek/Roman archetype
for the 'hero'

.Through his exploits
becomes immortal –
escapes mortal existence

Amphitryon:

- .Heracles' stepfather
- .Exiled from Mycenae for killing his brother Electryon (Electryon's daughter Alcmene became Amphitryon's wife)
- .Amphitryon helped the Theban king Creon to defeat the Teleboans (King Pterelaus – daughter Comaetho)

Birth of Heracles:

- Zeus visits Alcmaeon one night in the form of her husband Amphytrion
- Amphytrion visits Alcmaeon soon afterwards
- Amphytrion gives birth to step-brother twins: Heracles (son of Zeus) and **Iphicles** (son of Amphytrion)



Birth of Heracles:

- .Zeus proclaimed that a child born that day would be of his blood and ruler over all around him
- .Hera, angry at Zeus, hastened the birth of Sthenelus' son, **Eurystheus** (grandson of Zeus) – in Mycenae
- .Eurystheus will become the person who sends Heracles on his “12 Labors”

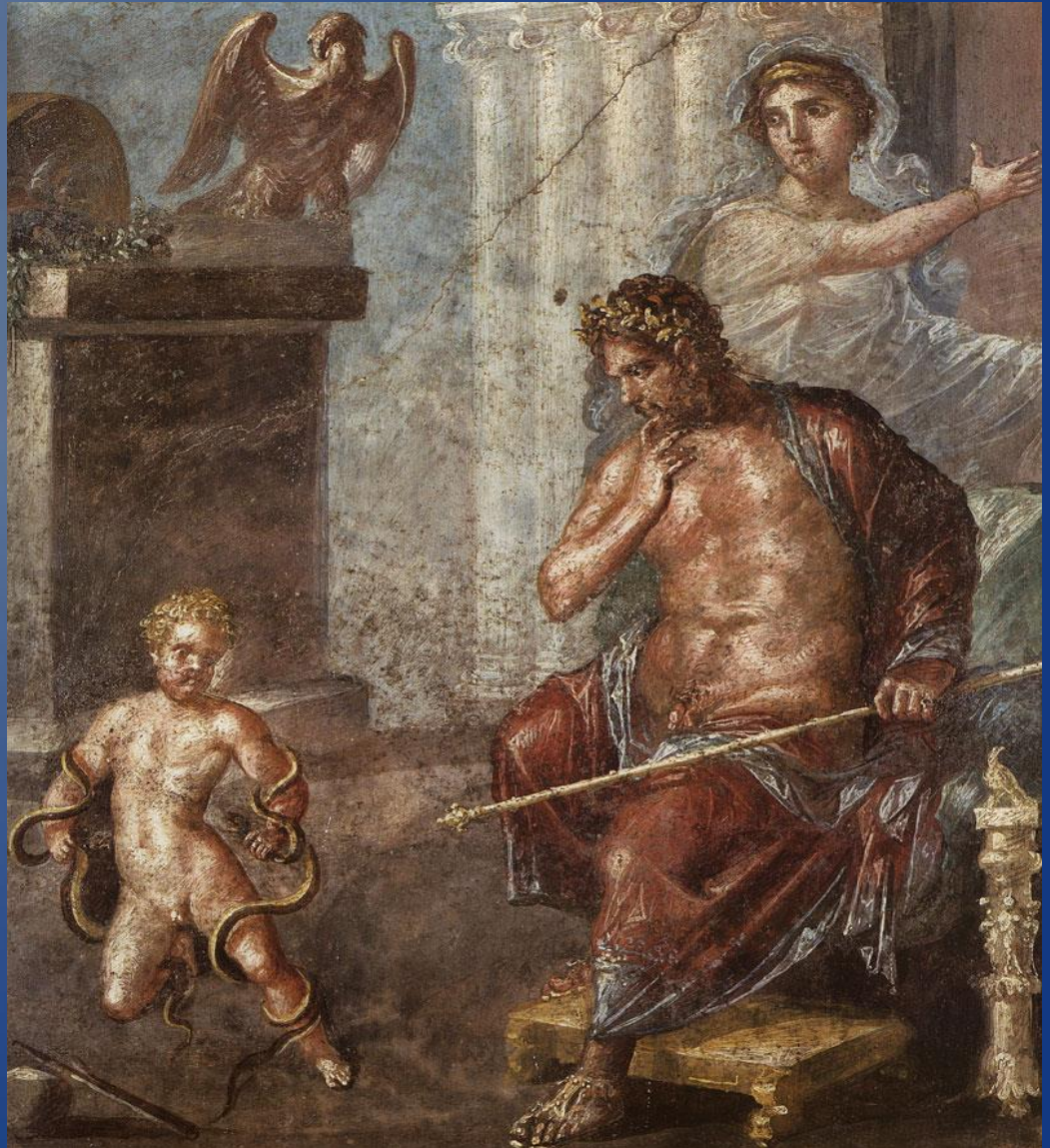
Birth of Heracles: The Milky Way



<http://astrophoto.com/JonTalbotandMilkyWay.jpg>

Birth of Heracles:

- Hera attempts to “punish” Heracles for being the son of that cheating husband of hers
- Sends two snakes to kill the infant
- Heracles easily fends them off



Heracles' Upbringing:

Education:

- Amphitryon – chariot racing
- Autolycus – wrestling
- Eurytus – archery
- Linus – lyre

Heracles' Early Exploits:

.Mount Cithaeron – defeats lion



Gilgamesh