[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Semiprotected](/wiki/Template:Semiprotected) [Template:Infobox deity](/wiki/Template:Infobox_deity) [Template:Greek myth](/wiki/Template:Greek_myth) **Heracles** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell); [Template:Lang-grc](/wiki/Template:Lang-grc), *Hēraklēs*, from *Hēra*, "[Hera](/wiki/Hera)", and [*kleos*](/wiki/Kleos), "glory"[[1]](#cite_note-1)), born **Alcaeus**[[2]](#cite_note-2) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), *Alkaios*) or **Alcides**[[3]](#cite_note-3) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), *Alkeidēs*), was a [divine hero](/wiki/Hero) in [Greek mythology](/wiki/Greek_mythology), the son of [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus) and [Alcmene](/wiki/Alcmene), foster son of [Amphitryon](/wiki/Amphitryon)[[4]](#cite_note-4) and great-grandson/half-brother of [Perseus](/wiki/Perseus). He was the greatest of the Greek heroes, a paragon of masculinity, the ancestor of royal clans who claimed to be [Heracleidae](/wiki/Heracleidae) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) and a champion of the [Olympian order](/wiki/Twelve_Olympians) against [chthonic](/wiki/Chthonic) monsters. In [Rome](/wiki/Roman_mythology) and the [modern](/wiki/Modernity) [West](/wiki/Western_world), he is known as [***Hercules***](/wiki/Hercules), with whom the later [Roman Emperors](/wiki/Roman_Emperor), in particular [Commodus](/wiki/Commodus) and [Maximian](/wiki/Maximian), often identified themselves. The Romans adopted the Greek version of his life and works essentially unchanged, but added anecdotal detail of their own, some of it linking the hero with the geography of the Central Mediterranean. Details of his [cult](/wiki/Cult_(religion)) were adapted to Rome as well.

Extraordinary strength, [courage](/wiki/Courage), ingenuity, and sexual prowess with both males and females were among the characteristics commonly attributed to him. Heracles used his wits on several occasions when his strength did not suffice, such as when laboring for the king [Augeas](/wiki/Augeas) of [Elis](/wiki/Elis), wrestling the giant [Antaeus](/wiki/Antaeus), or tricking [Atlas](/wiki/Atlas_(mythology)) into taking the sky back onto his shoulders. Together with [Hermes](/wiki/Hermes) he was the patron and protector of [gymnasia](/wiki/Gymnasium_(ancient_Greece)) and [palaestrae](/wiki/Palaestra).[[5]](#cite_note-5) His iconographic attributes are the [lion skin](/wiki/Nemean_Lion) and the [club](/wiki/Club_(weapon)). These qualities did not prevent him from being regarded as a playful figure who used games to relax from his labors and played a great deal with children.[[6]](#cite_note-6) By conquering dangerous archaic forces he is said to have "made the world safe for mankind" and to be its benefactor.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Heracles was an extremely passionate and emotional individual, capable of doing both great deeds for his friends (such as wrestling with [Thanatos](/wiki/Thanatos) on behalf of Prince [Admetus](/wiki/Admetus), who had regaled Heracles with his hospitality, or restoring his friend [Tyndareus](/wiki/Tyndareus) to the throne of [Sparta](/wiki/Sparta) after he was overthrown) and being a terrible enemy who would wreak horrible vengeance on those who crossed him, as Augeas, [Neleus](/wiki/Neleus) and [Laomedon](/wiki/Laomedon) all found out to their cost.

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## Origin and character[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|Heracles capturing the](/wiki/File:0_Plaque_Campana_-_Hercule_capturant_le_taureau_crétois.JPG) [Cretan bull](/wiki/Cretan_bull). [thumb|*The Origin of the Milky Way* by](/wiki/File:Jacopo_Tintoretto_-_The_Origin_of_the_Milky_Way_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg) [Jacopo Tintoretto](/wiki/Jacopo_Tintoretto)

Many popular stories were told of his life, the most famous being [The Twelve Labours of Heracles](/wiki/Labours_of_Hercules); [Alexandrian](/wiki/Alexandria) poets of the [Hellenistic age](/wiki/Hellenistic_age) drew his mythology into a high poetic and tragic atmosphere.[[8]](#cite_note-8) His figure, which initially drew on Near Eastern motifs such as the lion-fight, was known everywhere: his [Etruscan](/wiki/Etruscan_mythology) equivalent was [Hercle](/wiki/Hercle), a son of [Tinia](/wiki/Tinia) and [Uni](/wiki/Uni_(mythology)).

Heracles was the greatest of Hellenic [chthonic](/wiki/Chthonic) heroes, but unlike other Greek heroes, no tomb was identified as his. Heracles was both hero and god, as [Pindar](/wiki/Pindar) says *heroes theos*; at the same festival sacrifice was made to him, first as a hero, with a chthonic [libation](/wiki/Libation), and then as a god, upon an altar: thus he embodies the closest Greek approach to a "[demi-god](/wiki/Demi-god)".[[8]](#cite_note-8) The core of the story of Heracles has been identified by [Walter Burkert](/wiki/Walter_Burkert) as originating in Neolithic hunter culture and traditions of [shamanistic](/wiki/Shaman) crossings into the netherworld.[[9]](#cite_note-9)

### Hero or god[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

Heracles' role as a culture hero, whose death could be a subject of mythic telling (see below), was accepted into the [Olympian Pantheon](/wiki/Twelve_Olympians) during Classical times. This created an awkwardness in the encounter with [Odysseus](/wiki/Odysseus) in the episode of [*Odyssey*](/wiki/Odyssey) XI, called the [Nekuia](/wiki/Nekuia), where Odysseus encounters Heracles in [Hades](/wiki/Hades):

*And next I caught a glimpse of powerful Heracles—*

*His ghost I mean: the man himself delights*

*in the grand feasts of the deathless gods on high...*

*Around him cries of the dead rang out like cries of birds*

*scattering left and right in horror as on he came like night..."*[[10]](#cite_note-10)

Ancient critics were aware of the problem of the aside that interrupts the vivid and complete description, in which Heracles recognizes Odysseus and hails him, and modern critics find very good reasons for denying that the verses beginning, in Fagles' translation *His ghost I mean...* were part of the original composition: "once people knew of Heracles' admission to Olympus, they would not tolerate his presence in the underworld", remarks [Friedrich Solmsen](/wiki/Friedrich_Solmsen),[[11]](#cite_note-11) noting that the interpolated verses represent a compromise between conflicting representations of Heracles.

It is also said that when Heracles died, he shed his mortal skin, which went down to the underworld, and he then went up to join the gods for being the greatest hero ever known.

### Christian chronology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

In Christian circles a [Euhemerist](/wiki/Euhemerism) reading of the widespread Heracles cult was attributed to a historical figure who had been offered cult status after his death. Thus [Eusebius](/wiki/Eusebius_of_Caesarea), [*Preparation of the Gospel*](/wiki/Preparation_of_the_Gospel) (10.12), reported that [Clement](/wiki/Clement_of_Alexandria) could offer historical dates for Hercules as a king in Argos: "from the reign of Hercules in [Argos](/wiki/Argos) to the [deification](/wiki/Wikt:deification) of Hercules himself and of [Asclepius](/wiki/Asclepius) there are comprised thirty-eight years, according to [Apollodorus](/wiki/Apollodorus_of_Athens) the chronicler: and from that point to the deification of [Castor and Pollux](/wiki/Castor_and_Pollux) fifty-three years: and somewhere about this time was the capture of [Troy](/wiki/Troy)."

[thumb|Temple to Heracles in](/wiki/File:Agrigent_Heraklestempel.jpg) [Agrigento](/wiki/Agrigento)

Readers with a literalist bent, following Clement's reasoning, have asserted from this remark that, since Heracles ruled over [Tiryns](/wiki/Tiryns) in Argos at the same time that [Eurystheus](/wiki/Eurystheus) ruled over [Mycenae](/wiki/Mycenae), and since at about this time [Linus](/wiki/Linus_(mythology)) was Heracles' teacher, one can conclude, based on [Jerome's](/wiki/Jerome) date—in his [universal history](/wiki/Universal_history), his *Chronicon*—given to Linus' notoriety in teaching Heracles in 1264 BCE, that Heracles' death and deification occurred 38 years later, in approximately 1226 BCE.

### Cult[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

The ancient Greeks celebrated the festival of the [*Heracleia*](/wiki/Heracleia_(festival)), which commemorated the death of Heracles, on the second day of the month of [Metageitnion](/wiki/Metageitnion) (which would fall in late July or early August). What is believed to be an [Egyptian](/wiki/Egypt) Temple of Heracles in the [Bahariya Oasis](/wiki/Bahariya_Oasis) dates to 21 BCE. A reassessment of [Ptolemy's](/wiki/Ptolemy) descriptions of the island of [Malta](/wiki/Malta) attempted to link the site at [Ras ir-Raħeb](/wiki/Ras_ir-Raħeb) with a temple to Heracles,[[12]](#cite_note-12) but the arguments are not conclusive.[[13]](#cite_note-13)

## Greek mythology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

### Birth and childhood[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|Heracles strangling](/wiki/File:Herakles_strangling_snakes_Louvre_G192.jpg) [snakes](/wiki/Snake) (detail from an Attic red-figured stamnos, c. 480–470 BCE)

A major factor in the well-known tragedies surrounding Heracles is the hatred that the [goddess](/wiki/Goddess) [Hera](/wiki/Hera), wife of [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus), had for him. A full account of Heracles must render it clear why Heracles was so tormented by Hera, when there were many illegitimate offspring sired by Zeus. Heracles was the son of the affair Zeus had with the mortal woman [Alcmene](/wiki/Alcmene). Zeus made love to her after disguising himself as her husband, [Amphitryon](/wiki/Amphitryon), home early from war (Amphitryon did return later the same night, and Alcmene became pregnant with his son at the same time, a case of heteropaternal [superfecundation](/wiki/Superfecundation), where a woman carries twins sired by different fathers).[[14]](#cite_note-14) Thus, Heracles' very existence proved at least one of Zeus' many illicit affairs, and Hera often conspired against Zeus' mortal offspring as revenge for her husband's infidelities. His twin mortal brother, son of Amphitryon, was [Iphicles](/wiki/Iphicles), father of Heracles' charioteer [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus).

On the night the twins Heracles and Iphicles were to be born, Hera, knowing of her husband Zeus' adultery, persuaded Zeus to swear an oath that the child born that night to a member of the House of [Perseus](/wiki/Perseus) would become High King. Hera did this knowing that while Heracles was to be born a descendant of Perseus, so too was [Eurystheus](/wiki/Eurystheus). Once the oath was sworn, Hera hurried to Alcmene's dwelling and slowed the birth of the twins Heracles and Iphicles by forcing [Ilithyia](/wiki/Ilithyia), goddess of childbirth, to sit crosslegged with her clothing tied in knots, thereby causing the twins to be trapped in the womb. Meanwhile, Hera caused Eurystheus to be born prematurely, making him High King in place of Heracles. She would have permanently delayed Heracles' birth had she not been fooled by [Galanthis](/wiki/Galanthis), Alcmene's servant, who lied to Ilithyia, saying that [Alcmene](/wiki/Alcmene) had already delivered the baby. Upon hearing this, she jumped in surprise, loosing the knots and inadvertently allowing Alcmene to give birth to Heracles and Iphicles.

[thumb|Heracles as a boy strangling a snake (marble, Roman artwork, 2nd century CE)](/wiki/File:Herakles_snake_Musei_Capitolini_MC247.jpg)

Fear of Hera's revenge led Alcmene to expose the infant Heracles, but he was taken up and brought to Hera by his half-sister [Athena](/wiki/Athena), who played an important role as protectress of heroes. Hera did not recognize Heracles and nursed him out of pity. Heracles suckled so strongly that he caused Hera pain, and she pushed him away. Her milk sprayed across the heavens and there formed the Milky Way. But with divine milk, Heracles had acquired supernatural powers. Athena brought the infant back to his mother, and he was subsequently raised by his parents.

The child was originally given the name Alcides by his parents; it was only later that he became known as Heracles.[[4]](#cite_note-4) He was renamed Heracles in an unsuccessful attempt to mollify Hera. He and his twin were just eight months old when Hera sent two giant snakes into the children's chamber. Iphicles cried from fear, but his brother grabbed a snake in each hand and strangled them. He was found by his nurse playing with them on his cot as if they were toys. Astonished, Amphitryon sent for the seer [Tiresias](/wiki/Tiresias), who prophesied an unusual future for the boy, saying he would vanquish numerous monsters.

### Youth<!--Linked from 'The Choice of Hercules'-->[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

After killing his music tutor [Linus](/wiki/Linus_(mythology)) with a [lyre](/wiki/Lyre), he was sent to tend cattle on a mountain by his foster father Amphitryon. Here, according to an allegorical [parable](/wiki/Parable), "The Choice of Heracles", invented by the sophist [Prodicus](/wiki/Prodicus) (c. 400 BCE) and reported in [Xenophon's](/wiki/Xenophon) [*Memorabilia*](/wiki/Memorabilia_(Xenophon)) 2.1.21–34, he was visited by two allegorical figures—Vice and Virtue—who offered him a choice between a pleasant and easy life or a severe but glorious life: he chose the latter. This was part of a pattern of "ethicizing" Heracles over the 5th century BCE.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Later in [Thebes](/wiki/Thebes,_Greece), Heracles married King [Creon's](/wiki/Creon) daughter, [Megara](/wiki/Megara_(mythology)). In a fit of madness, induced by Hera, Heracles killed his children by Megara. After his madness had been cured with [hellebore](/wiki/Hellebore) by Antikyreus, the founder of [Antikyra](/wiki/Anticyra),[[16]](#cite_note-16) he realized what he had done and fled to the [Oracle of Delphi](/wiki/Delphi). Unbeknownst to him, the Oracle was guided by Hera. He was directed to serve King [Eurystheus](/wiki/Eurystheus) for ten years and perform any task Eurystheus required of him. Eurystheus decided to give Heracles ten labours, but after completing them, Heracles was cheated by Eurystheus when he added two more, resulting in the Twelve Labors of Heracles.

### Labours of Heracles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|The fight of Heracles and the](/wiki/File:Herakles_lion_Louvre_F33.jpg) [Nemean lion](/wiki/Nemean_lion) is one of his most famous feats. (Side B from a black-figure Attic amphora, c. 540 BCE) [thumb|upright|His 11th feat was to capture the apple of](/wiki/File:Hercules_Musei_Capitolini_MC1265_n2.jpg) [Hesperides](/wiki/Hesperides) (Gilded bronze, Roman artwork, 2nd century CE)

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Driven mad by Hera, Heracles slew his own children. To expiate the crime, Heracles was required to carry out ten labors set by his archenemy, [Eurystheus](/wiki/Eurystheus), who had become king in Heracles' place. If he succeeded, he would be purified of his sin and, as myth says, he would be granted immortality. Heracles accomplished these tasks, but Eurystheus did not accept the cleansing of the Augean stables because Heracles was going to accept pay for the labor. Neither did he accept the killing of the Lernaean Hydra as Heracles' nephew, [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus), had helped him burn the stumps of the heads. Eurystheus set two more tasks (fetching the Golden Apples of Hesperides and capturing [Cerberus](/wiki/Cerberus)), which Heracles performed successfully, bringing the total number of tasks up to twelve.

Not all writers gave the labours in the same order. The [*Bibliotheca*](/wiki/Bibliotheca_(Pseudo-Apollodorus)) (2.5.1–2.5.12) gives the following order:

1. Slay the [Nemean Lion](/wiki/Nemean_lion).
2. Slay the nine-headed [Lernaean Hydra](/wiki/Lernaean_Hydra).
3. Capture the [Golden Hind of Artemis](/wiki/Ceryneian_Hind).
4. Capture the [Erymanthian Boar](/wiki/Erymanthian_Boar).
5. Clean the [Augean](/wiki/Augeas) stables in a single day.
6. Slay the [Stymphalian Birds](/wiki/Stymphalian_birds).
7. Capture the [Cretan Bull](/wiki/Cretan_Bull).
8. Steal the [Mares of Diomedes](/wiki/Mares_of_Diomedes).
9. Obtain the girdle of [Hippolyta](/wiki/Hippolyta), Queen of the [Amazons](/wiki/Amazons).
10. Obtain the cattle of the monster [Geryon](/wiki/Geryon).
11. Steal the apples of the [Hesperides](/wiki/Hesperides) (he had the help of Atlas to pick them after Hercules had slain [Ladon](/wiki/Ladon_(mythology))).
12. Capture and bring back [Cerberus](/wiki/Cerberus).

### Further adventures[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

After completing these tasks, Heracles joined the [Argonauts](/wiki/Argonauts) in a search for the [Golden Fleece](/wiki/Golden_Fleece). He also fell in love with Princess [Iole](/wiki/Iole) of [Oechalia](/wiki/Oechalia). [King Eurytus of Oechalia](/wiki/King_Eurytus_of_Oechalia) promised his daughter, [Iole](/wiki/Iole), to whoever could beat his sons in an archery contest. Heracles won but Eurytus abandoned his promise. Heracles' advances were spurned by the king and his sons, except for one: Iole's brother [Iphitus](/wiki/Iphitus). Heracles killed the king and his sons–excluding [Iphitus](/wiki/Iphitus)–and abducted Iole. Iphitus became Heracles' best friend. However, once again, Hera drove Heracles mad and he threw Iphitus over the city wall to his death. Once again, Heracles purified himself through three years of servitude—this time to Queen [Omphale](/wiki/Omphale) of [Lydia](/wiki/Lydia).

### Omphale[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Omphale](/wiki/Omphale) was a queen or princess of [Lydia](/wiki/Lydia). As penalty for a murder, imposed by [Xenoclea](/wiki/Xenoclea), the [Delphic Oracle](/wiki/Pythia), Heracles was to serve as her slave for a year. He was forced to do women's work and to wear women's clothes, while she wore the skin of the [Nemean Lion](/wiki/Nemean_Lion) and carried his [olive-wood](/wiki/Olive-wood) club. After some time, Omphale freed Heracles and married him. Some sources mention a son born to them who is variously named. It was at that time that the [cercopes](/wiki/Cercopes), mischievous wood spirits, stole Heracles' weapons. He punished them by tying them to a stick with their faces pointing downward.

### Hylas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

While walking through the wilderness, Heracles was set upon by the [Dryopes](/wiki/Dryopes). In [Apollonius of Rhodes'](/wiki/Apollonius_of_Rhodes) [*Argonautica*](/wiki/Argonautica) it is recalled that Heracles had mercilessly slain their king, [Theiodamas](/wiki/Theiodamas), over one of the latter's bulls, and made war upon the Dryopes "because they gave no heed to justice in their lives".[[17]](#cite_note-17) After the death of their king, the Dryopes gave in and offered him Prince [Hylas](/wiki/Hylas). He took the youth on as his weapons bearer and beloved. Years later, Heracles and Hylas joined the crew of the [*Argo*](/wiki/Argo). As Argonauts, they only participated in part of the journey. In [Mysia](/wiki/Mysia), Hylas was kidnapped by the nymphs of a local spring. Heracles, heartbroken, searched for a long time but Hylas had fallen in love with the nymphs and never showed up again. In other versions, he simply drowned. Either way, the *Argo* set sail without them.

### Rescue of Prometheus[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Hesiod's](/wiki/Hesiod) [*Theogony*](/wiki/Theogony) and [Aeschylus'](/wiki/Aeschylus) [*Prometheus Unbound*](/wiki/Prometheus_Unbound_(Aeschylus)) both tell that Heracles shot and killed the eagle that tortured [Prometheus](/wiki/Prometheus) (which was his punishment by Zeus for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to mortals). Heracles freed the [Titan](/wiki/Titan_(mythology)) from his chains and his torments. Prometheus then made predictions regarding further deeds of Heracles.

### Heracles' constellation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

On his way back to [Mycenae](/wiki/Mycenae) from [Iberia](/wiki/Iberia), having obtained the Cattle of [Geryon](/wiki/Geryon) as his [tenth labour](/wiki/The_Twelve_Labours), Heracles came to [Liguria](/wiki/Liguria) in North-Western [Italy](/wiki/Italy) where he engaged in battle with two giants, [Albion](/wiki/Alebion) and [Bergion](/wiki/Bergion) or Dercynus, sons of [Poseidon](/wiki/Poseidon). The opponents were strong; Hercules was in a difficult position so he prayed to his father [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus) for help. Under the aegis of Zeus, Heracles won the battle. It was this kneeling position of Heracles when he prayed to his father Zeus that gave the name [Engonasin](/wiki/Engonasin#History) (*"Εγγόνασιν"*, derived from "εν γόνασιν"), meaning "on his knees" or "the Kneeler", to the constellation known as [Heracles' constellation](/wiki/Hercules_(constellation)). The story, among others, is described by [Dionysius of Halicarnassus](/wiki/Dionysius_of_Halicarnassus).[[18]](#cite_note-18)

### Heracles' sack of Troy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

Before [Homer's](/wiki/Homer) Trojan War, Heracles had made an expedition to Troy and sacked it. Previously, Poseidon had sent a sea monster to attack [Troy](/wiki/Troy). The story is related in several digressions in the *Iliad* (7.451-453, 20.145-148, 21.442-457) and is found in Apollodorus' [Bibliotheke](/wiki/Bibliotheca_(Pseudo-Apollodorus)) (2.5.9). This expedition became the theme of the Eastern pediment of the [Temple of Aphaea](/wiki/Temple_of_Aphaea#Eastern_pediment). [Laomedon](/wiki/Laomedon) planned on sacrificing his daughter [Hesione](/wiki/Hesione) to Poseidon in the hope of appeasing him. Heracles happened to arrive (along with [Telamon](/wiki/Telamon) and [Oicles](/wiki/Oicles)) and agreed to kill the monster if Laomedon would give him the horses received from Zeus as compensation for Zeus' kidnapping [Ganymede](/wiki/Ganymede_(mythology)). Laomedon agreed. Heracles killed the monster, but Laomedon went back on his word. Accordingly, in a later expedition, Heracles and his followers attacked Troy and sacked it. Then they slew all Laomedon's sons present there save [Podarces](/wiki/Priam), who was renamed Priam, who saved his own life by giving Heracles a golden veil Hesione had made. Telamon took Hesione as a war prize; they were married and had a son, [Teucer](/wiki/Teucer).

### Other adventures[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Prose](/wiki/Template:Prose)

* Heracles defeated the [Bebryces](/wiki/Bebryces) (ruled by King [Mygdon](/wiki/Mygdon_of_Phrygia)) and gave their land to Prince [Lycus](/wiki/Lycus_(son_of_Dascylus)) of [Mysia](/wiki/Mysia), son of [Dascylus](/wiki/Dascylus).
* He killed the robber [Termerus](/wiki/Termerus).
* Heracles visited [Evander](/wiki/Evander_(philosopher)) with [Antor](/wiki/Antor), who then stayed in Italy.
* Heracles killed King [Amyntor](/wiki/Amyntor) of the [Dolopes](/wiki/Dolopes) for not allowing him into his kingdom. He also killed King [Emathion](/wiki/Emathion) of [Arabia](/wiki/Arabia).
* Heracles killed [Lityerses](/wiki/Lityerses) after beating him in a contest of harvesting.
* Heracles killed [Periclymenus](/wiki/Periclymenus) at [Pylos](/wiki/Pylos).
* Heracles killed [Syleus](/wiki/Syleus_(mythology)) for forcing strangers to hoe a vineyard.
* Heracles rivaled with [Lepreus](/wiki/Lepreus_(mythology)) and eventually killed him.
* Heracles founded the city [Tarentum](/wiki/Taranto) (modern [Taranto](/wiki/Taranto) in Italy).
* Heracles learned music from [Linus](/wiki/Linus_(mythology)) (and [Eumolpus](/wiki/Eumolpus)), but killed him after Linus corrected his mistakes. He learned how to wrestle from [Autolycus](/wiki/Autolycus). He killed the famous boxer [Eryx](/wiki/Eryx) of [Sicily](/wiki/Sicily) in a match.
* Heracles was an [Argonaut](/wiki/Argonauts). He killed [Alastor](/wiki/Alastor) and his brothers.

[thumb|upright|Heracles killing the giant,](/wiki/File:Herakles_och_Antaios,_Nordisk_familjebok.png) [Antaeus](/wiki/Antaeus)

* When [Hippocoon](/wiki/Hippocoon) overthrew his brother, [Tyndareus](/wiki/Tyndareus), as King of [Sparta](/wiki/Sparta), Heracles reinstated the rightful ruler and killed Hippocoon and his sons.
* Heracles killed [Cycnus](/wiki/Cycnus), the son of [Ares](/wiki/Ares). The expedition against Cycnus, in which Iolaus accompanied Heracles, is the ostensible theme of a short epic attributed to [Hesiod](/wiki/Hesiod), [*Shield of Heracles*](/wiki/Shield_of_Heracles).
* Heracles killed the [Giants](/wiki/Giants_(Greek_mythology)) [Alcyoneus](/wiki/Alcyoneus) and [Porphyrion](/wiki/Porphyrion).
* Heracles killed [Antaeus](/wiki/Antaeus) the giant who was immortal while touching the earth, by picking him up and holding him in the air while strangling him.
* Heracles went to war with [Augeias](/wiki/Augeias) after he denied him a promised reward for clearing his stables. Augeias remained undefeated due to the skill of his two generals, the Molionides, and after Heracles fell ill, his army was badly beaten. Later, however, he was able to ambush and kill the Molionides, and thus march into Elis, sack it, and kill Augeias and his sons.
* Heracles visited the house of [Admetus](/wiki/Admetus) on the day Admetus' wife, [Alcestis](/wiki/Alcestis), had agreed to die in his place. By hiding beside the grave of Alcestis, Heracles was able to surprise Death when he came to collect her, and by squeezing him tight until he relented, was able to persuade Death to return Alcestis to her husband.
* Heracles challenged wine god [Dionysus](/wiki/Dionysus) to a drinking contest and lost, resulting in his joining the [Thiasus](/wiki/Thiasus) for a period.
* Heracles also appears in [Aristophanes'](/wiki/Aristophanes) [*The Frogs*](/wiki/The_Frogs), in which Dionysus seeks out the hero to find a way to the underworld. Heracles is greatly amused by Dionysus' appearance and jokingly offers several ways to commit suicide before finally offering his knowledge of how to get to there.
* Heracles appears as the ancestral hero of Scythia in Herodotus' text. While Heracles is sleeping out in the wilderness, a half-woman, half-snake creature steals his horses. Heracles eventually finds the creature, but she refuses to return the horses until he has sex with her. After doing so, he takes back his horses, but before leaving, he hands over his belt and bow, and gives instructions as to which of their children should found a new nation in Scythia.

### Lovers[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

#### Women[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

##### Marriages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|The *topos* of Heracles suckling at Hera's breast was especially popular in](/wiki/File:Hera_suckling_Herakles_BM_VaseF107.jpg) [Magna Graecia](/wiki/Magna_Graecia), here on a mid-4th-century [Apulian](/wiki/Apulia) painted vase; [Etruscan mythology](/wiki/Etruscan_mythology) adopted this iconic image

During the course of his life, Heracles married four times. His first marriage was to [Megara](/wiki/Megara_(mythology)), whose children he murdered in a fit of madness. Apollodoros ([*Bibliotheke*](/wiki/Bibliotheke)) recounts that Megara was unharmed and given in marriage to [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus), while in [Euripides'](/wiki/Euripides) version Heracles killed Megara, too.

His second wife was [Omphale](/wiki/Omphale), the [Lydian](/wiki/Lydia) queen or princess to whom he was delivered as a slave.

His third marriage was to [Deianira](/wiki/Deianira), for whom he had to fight the river god [Achelous](/wiki/Achelous) (upon Achelous' death, Heracles removed one of his horns and gave it to some nymphs who turned it into the [cornucopia](/wiki/Cornucopia).) Soon after they wed, Heracles and Deianira had to cross a river, and a [centaur](/wiki/Centaur) named [Nessus](/wiki/Nessus_(mythology)) offered to help Deianira across but then attempted to [rape](/wiki/Rape) her. Enraged, Heracles shot the centaur from the opposite shore with a poisoned arrow (tipped with the Lernaean Hydra's blood) and killed him. As he lay dying, Nessus plotted revenge, told Deianira to gather up his blood and spilled semen and, if she ever wanted to prevent Heracles from having affairs with other women, she should apply them to his vestments. Nessus knew that his blood had become tainted by the poisonous blood of the Hydra, and would burn through the skin of anyone it touched.

Later, when Deianira suspected that Heracles was fond of [Iole](/wiki/Iole), she soaked a shirt of his in the mixture, creating the [poisoned shirt of Nessus](/wiki/The_Shirt_of_Nessus). Heracles' servant, [Lichas](/wiki/Lichas), brought him the shirt and he put it on. Instantly he was in agony, the cloth burning into him. As he tried to remove it, the flesh ripped from his bones. Heracles chose a voluntary death, asking that a [pyre](/wiki/Pyre) be built for him to end his suffering. After death, the gods transformed him into an immortal, or alternatively, the fire burned away the mortal part of the demigod, so that only the god remained. After his mortal parts had been incinerated, he could become a full god and join his father and the other Olympians on [Mount Olympus](/wiki/Mount_Olympus_(Mountain)). He then married [Hebe](/wiki/Hebe_(mythology)), his fourth and last wife.

##### Affairs[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Another episode of his female affairs that stands out was his stay at the palace of [Thespius](/wiki/Thespius) king of [Thespiae](/wiki/Thespiae), who wished him to kill the [Lion of Cithaeron](/wiki/Lion_of_Cithaeron). As a reward, the king offered him the chance to make love to his daughters, all fifty of them, in one night. Heracles complied and they all became pregnant and all bore sons. This is sometimes referred to as his Thirteenth Labour. Many of the kings of ancient Greece traced their lines to one or another of these, notably the kings of [Sparta](/wiki/Sparta) and [Macedon](/wiki/Macedon).

Yet another episode of his female affairs that stands out was when he carried away the oxen of [Geryon](/wiki/Geryon), he also visited the country of the [Scythians](/wiki/Scythians). Once while he was asleep there, his horses suddenly disappeared, and when he woke and wandered about in search of them, he came into the country of [Hylaea](/wiki/Hylaea_(geography)). He then found the [dracaena](/wiki/Drakaina) of [Scythia](/wiki/Scythia) (sometimes identified as [Echidna](/wiki/Echidna_(mythology))) in a cave. When he asked whether she knew anything about his horses, she answered, that they were in her own possession, but that she would not give them up, unless he would consent to stay with her for a time. Heracles accepted the request, and became by her the father of [Agathyrsus](/wiki/Agathyrsus), [Gelonus](/wiki/Gelonus), and [Scythes](/wiki/Scythes). The last of them became king of the [Scythians](/wiki/Scythians), according to his father's arrangement, because [he](/wiki/Scythes) was the only one among the three brothers that was able to manage the bow which Heracles had left behind, and to use his father's girdle.[[19]](#cite_note-19)

#### Men[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[thumb|Heracles and](/wiki/File:Hercules_and_Iolaus_mosaic_-_Anzio_Nymphaeum.jpg) [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus) (Fountain mosaic from the [Anzio](/wiki/Anzio) Nymphaeum) As a symbol of masculinity and warriorship, Heracles also had a number of male lovers. [Plutarch](/wiki/Plutarch), in his *Eroticos,* maintains that Heracles' male lovers were beyond counting. Of these, the one most closely linked to Heracles is the [Theban](/wiki/Thebes,_Greece) [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus). According to a myth thought to be of ancient origins, Iolaus was Heracles' charioteer and squire. Heracles in the end helped Iolaus find a wife. Plutarch reports that down to his own time, male couples would go to Iolaus's tomb in Thebes to swear an oath of loyalty to the hero and to each other.[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21) One of Heracles' male lovers, and one represented in ancient as well as modern art, is [Hylas](/wiki/Hylas). Though it is of more recent vintage (dated to the 3rd century) than that with Iolaus, it had themes of mentoring in the ways of a warrior and help finding a wife in the end. However it should be noted that there is nothing whatever in Apollonius's account that suggests that Hylas was a sexual lover as opposed to a companion and servant.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Another reputed male lover of Heracles is Elacatas, who was honored in [Sparta](/wiki/Sparta) with a sanctuary and yearly games, Elacatea. The myth of their love is an ancient one.[[23]](#cite_note-23) [Abdera's](/wiki/Abdera,_Thrace) eponymous hero, [Abderus](/wiki/Abderus), was another of Heracles' lovers. He was said to have been entrusted with—and slain by—the carnivorous mares of Thracian [Diomedes](/wiki/Mares_of_Diomedes). Heracles founded the city of Abdera in [Thrace](/wiki/Thrace) in his memory, where he was honored with athletic games.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Another myth is that of [Iphitus](/wiki/Iphitus).[[25]](#cite_note-25) Another story is the one of his love for [Nireus](/wiki/Nireus), who was "the most beautiful man who came beneath Ilion" ([*Iliad*](/wiki/Iliad), 673). But Ptolemy adds that certain authors made Nireus out to be a son of Heracles.[[26]](#cite_note-26) [Pausanias](/wiki/Pausanias_(geographer)) makes mention of [Sostratus](/wiki/Sostratus_of_Dyme), a youth of Dyme, [Achaea](/wiki/Achaea), as a lover of Heracles. Sostratus was said to have died young and to have been buried by Heracles outside the city. The tomb was still there in historical times, and the inhabitants of Dyme honored Sostratus as a [hero](/wiki/Hero).[[27]](#cite_note-27) The youth seems to have also been referred to as [Polystratus](/wiki/Polystratus).

There is also a series of lovers who are either later inventions or purely literary conceits. Among these are [Admetus](/wiki/Admetus), who assisted in the hunt for the [Calydonian Boar](/wiki/Calydonian_Boar);[[28]](#cite_note-28) [Adonis](/wiki/Adonis);[[29]](#cite_note-29) [Corythus](/wiki/Corythus);[[29]](#cite_note-29) and [Nestor](/wiki/Nestor_(mythology)), who was said to have been loved for his wisdom. His role as lover was perhaps to explain why he was the only son of [Neleus](/wiki/Neleus) to be spared by the hero.[[30]](#cite_note-30) A [scholiast](/wiki/Scholia) on [*Argonautica*](/wiki/Argonautica) lists the following male lovers of Heracles: "Hylas, [Philoctetes](/wiki/Philoctetes), Diomus, Perithoas, and Phrix, after whom a city in [Libya](/wiki/Libya) was named".[[31]](#cite_note-31) Diomus is also mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium as the eponym of the [deme](/wiki/Deme) Diomeia of the Attic [phyle](/wiki/Phyle) Aegeis: Heracles is said to have fallen in love with Diomus when he was received as guest by Diomus' father Collytus.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Perithoas and Phrix are otherwise unknown, and so is the version that suggests a sexual relationship between Heracles and Philoctetes.

### Children[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|Heracles and his child](/wiki/File:Herakles_and_Telephos_Louvre_MR219.jpg) [Telephus](/wiki/Telephus). (Marble, Roman copy of the 1st or 2nd century CE) All of Heracles' marriages and almost all of his heterosexual affairs resulted in births of a number of sons and at least four daughters. One of the most prominent is [Hyllus](/wiki/Hyllus), the son of Heracles and [Deianeira](/wiki/Deianeira) or [Melite](/wiki/Melite_(naiad)). The term *Heracleidae*, although it could refer to all of Heracles' children and further descendants, is most commonly used to indicate the descendants of Hyllus, in the context of their lasting struggle for return to Peloponnesus, out of where Hyllus and his brothers - the children of Heracles by Deianeira - were thought to have been expelled by Eurystheus.

The children of Heracles by Megara are collectively well known because of their ill fate, but there is some disagreement among sources as to their number and individual names. Apollodorus lists three, Therimachus, Creontiades and Deicoon;[[33]](#cite_note-33) to these Hyginus[[34]](#cite_note-34) adds Ophitus and, probably by mistake, Archelaus, who is otherwise known to have belonged to the Heracleidae, but to have lived several generations later. A scholiast on [Pindar'](/wiki/Pindar) s odes provides a list of seven completely different names: Anicetus, Chersibius, Mecistophonus, Menebrontes, Patrocles, Polydorus, Toxocleitus.[[35]](#cite_note-35) The divine sons of Heracles and [Hebe](/wiki/Hebe_(mythology)) are [Alexiares and Anicetus](/wiki/Alexiares_and_Anicetus).

Other well-known children of Heracles include [Telephus](/wiki/Telephus), king of [Mysia](/wiki/Mysia) (by [Auge](/wiki/Auge)), and [Tlepolemus](/wiki/Tlepolemus), one of the Greek commanders in the [Trojan War](/wiki/Trojan_War) (by Astyoche).

There is also, in some versions, reference to an episode where Heracles met and impregnated a half-serpentine woman, known as [Echidna](/wiki/Echidna_(mythology)); her children, known as the Dracontidae, were the ancestors of the House of Cadmus.

According to [Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus), a line of 22 [Kings of Lydia](/wiki/List_of_Kings_of_Lydia) descended from Hercules and Omphale. The line was called Tylonids after his Lydian name.

#### Children and consorts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Colbegin](/wiki/Template:Colbegin)

1. Megara
   1. Therimachus
   2. Creontiades
   3. Ophitus
   4. Deicoon
2. Omphale
   1. [Agelaus](/wiki/Agelaus)
   2. [Tyrsenus](/wiki/Tyrsenus)
3. Deianira
   1. Hyllus
   2. [Ctesippus](/wiki/Ctesippus)
   3. Glenus
   4. Oneites
   5. [Macaria](/wiki/Macaria)
4. Hebe
   1. [Alexiares](/wiki/Alexiares_and_Anicetus)
   2. [Anicetus](/wiki/Alexiares_and_Anicetus)
5. Astydameia, daughter of Ormenius
   1. Ctesippus
6. Astyoche, daughter of [Phylas](/wiki/Phylas)
   1. [Tlepolemus](/wiki/Tlepolemus)
7. [Auge](/wiki/Auge)
   1. [Telephus](/wiki/Telephus)
8. Autonoe, daughter of Piraeus / Iphinoe, daughter of Antaeus
   1. Palaemon
9. Baletia, daughter of Baletus
   1. Brettus[[36]](#cite_note-36)# Barge
   2. Bargasus[[37]](#cite_note-37)# [Bolbe](/wiki/Bolbe)
   3. [Olynthus](/wiki/Olynthus_(mythology))
10. [Celtine](/wiki/Celtine)
    1. Celtus
11. [Chalciope](/wiki/Chalciope)
    1. [Thessalus](/wiki/Thessalus)
12. Chania, nymph
    1. Gelon[[38]](#cite_note-38)# The [Scythian](/wiki/Scythia) [dracaena](/wiki/Drakaina) or [Echidna](/wiki/Echidna_(mythology))
    2. Agathyrsus
    3. Gelonus
    4. Skythes
13. [Epicaste](/wiki/Epicaste)
    1. Thestalus
14. Lavinia, daughter of [Evander](/wiki/Evander_of_Pallene)[[39]](#cite_note-39)## Pallas
15. Malis, a slave of Omphale
    1. Acelus[[40]](#cite_note-40)# [Meda](/wiki/Meda_(mythology))
    2. [Antiochus](/wiki/Antiochus_(mythology))
16. [Melite (heroine)](/wiki/Melite_(heroine))
17. [Melite (naiad)](/wiki/Melite_(naiad))
    1. Hyllus (possibly)
18. [Myrto](/wiki/Myrto_(mythology))
    1. [Eucleia](/wiki/Eucleia)
19. Palantho of [Hyperborea](/wiki/Hyperborea)[[41]](#cite_note-41)##Latinus[[39]](#cite_note-39)# Parthenope, daughter of [Stymphalus](/wiki/Stymphalus)
    1. Everes
20. [Phialo](/wiki/Phialo)
    1. Aechmagoras
21. [Psophis](/wiki/Psophis_(mythology))
    1. [Echephron](/wiki/Echephron)
    2. [Promachus](/wiki/Promachus)
22. [Pyrene](/wiki/Pyrene)
    1. none known
23. Rhea, Italian priestess
    1. [Aventinus](/wiki/Aventinus_(mythology))[[42]](#cite_note-42)# [Thebe (daughter of Adramys)](/wiki/Thebe_(daughter_of_Adramys))
24. [Tinge](/wiki/Tinjis), wife of Antaeus
    1. [Sophax](/wiki/Sufax)[[43]](#cite_note-43)# 50 daughters of Thespius
    2. 50 sons, see [Thespius#Daughters and grandchildren](/wiki/Thespius#Daughters_and_grandchildren)
25. Unnamed [Celtic](/wiki/Celts) woman
    1. Galates[[44]](#cite_note-44)# Unnamed slave of Omphale
    2. Alcaeus / [Cleodaeus](/wiki/Cleodaeus)
26. Unnamed daughter of Syleus (Xenodoce?)[[45]](#cite_note-45)# Unknown consorts
    1. Agylleus[[46]](#cite_note-46)##Amathous[[47]](#cite_note-47)##Azon[[48]](#cite_note-48)##[Chromis](/wiki/Chromis_(mythology))[[49]](#cite_note-49)## Cyrnus[[50]](#cite_note-50)##[Dexamenus](/wiki/Dexamenus)[[51]](#cite_note-51)##Leucites[[52]](#cite_note-52)##[Manto](/wiki/Manto_(mythology))
    2. [Pandaie](/wiki/Pandaie)
    3. [Phaestus](/wiki/Phaistos#Iron_Age) *or* Rhopalus[[53]](#cite_note-53)

[Template:Colend](/wiki/Template:Colend)

### Death[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[thumb|*Death of Hercules* (painting by](/wiki/File:Muerte_de_Hércules,_por_Zurbarán.jpg) [Francisco de Zurbarán](/wiki/Francisco_de_Zurbarán), 1634, Museo del Prado)

This is described in [Ovid's](/wiki/Ovid) [*Metamorphoses*](/wiki/Metamorphoses) Book IX. Having wrestled and defeated [Achelous](/wiki/Achelous), god of the Acheloos river, Heracles takes [Deianira](/wiki/Deianira) as his wife. Travelling to [Tiryns](/wiki/Tiryns), a [centaur](/wiki/Centaur), [Nessus](/wiki/Nessus_(mythology)), offers to help Deianira across a fast flowing river while Heracles swims it. However, Nessus is true to the archetype of the mischievous centaur and tries to steal Deianira away while Heracles is still in the water. Angry, Heracles shoots him with his arrows dipped in the poisonous blood of the [Lernaean Hydra](/wiki/Lernaean_Hydra). Thinking of revenge, Nessus gives Deianira his [blood-soaked tunic](/wiki/Shirt_of_Nessus) before he dies, telling her it will "excite the love of her husband".[[54]](#cite_note-54) Several years later, [rumor](/wiki/Rumor) tells Deianira that she has a rival for the love of Heracles. Deianira, remembering Nessus' words, gives Heracles the bloodstained shirt. Lichas, the herald, delivers the shirt to Heracles. However, it is still covered in the Hydra's blood from Heracles' arrows, and this poisons him, tearing his skin and exposing his bones. Before he dies, Heracles throws [Lichas](/wiki/Lichas) into the sea, thinking he was the one who poisoned him (according to several versions, Lichas turns to stone, becoming a rock standing in the sea, named for him). Heracles then uproots several trees and builds a [funeral pyre](/wiki/Funeral_pyre) on [Mount Oeta](/wiki/Mount_Oeta), which [Poeas](/wiki/Poeas), father of [Philoctetes](/wiki/Philoctetes), lights. As his body burns, only his immortal side is left. Through Zeus' [apotheosis](/wiki/Apotheosis), Heracles rises to Olympus as he dies.

No one but Heracles' friend [Philoctetes](/wiki/Philoctetes) ([Poeas](/wiki/Poeas) in some versions) would light his funeral pyre (in an alternate version, it is [Iolaus](/wiki/Iolaus) who lights the pyre). For this action, Philoctetes or Poeas received Heracles' bow and arrows, which were later needed by the Greeks to defeat Troy in the Trojan War.

Philoctetes confronted [Paris](/wiki/Paris_(mythology)) and shot a poisoned arrow at him. The Hydra poison subsequently led to the death of Paris. The Trojan War, however, continued until the [Trojan Horse](/wiki/Trojan_Horse) was used to defeat [Troy](/wiki/Troy).

According to Herodotus, Heracles lived 900 years before Herodotus' own time (c. 1300 BCE).[[55]](#cite_note-55)

## Hercules in Rome[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) In Rome, Heracles was honored as *Hercules*, and had a number of distinctively Roman myths and practices associated with him under that name.

## In Egypt[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus) connected Heracles to the [Egyptian](/wiki/Egypt) god [Shu](/wiki/Shu_(Egyptian_deity)). Also he was associated with [Khonsu](/wiki/Khonsu), another Egyptian god who was in some ways similar to Shu. As Khonsu, Heracles was worshipped at the now sunken city of [Heracleion](/wiki/Heracleion), where a large temple was constructed.

But most often the Egyptians identified Heracles with [Heryshaf](/wiki/Heryshaf), transcribed in [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) as *Arsaphes* or *Harsaphes* (Ἁρσαφής). He was an ancient [ram](/wiki/Ram_(sheep))-[god](/wiki/God) whose cult was centered in [Herakleopolis Magna](/wiki/Herakleopolis_Magna).

## Heracles in other cultures[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[thumb|Hellenistic-era depiction of the](/wiki/File:Bistoon_Kermanshah.jpg) [Zoroastrian](/wiki/Zoroastrian) divinity [Bahram](/wiki/Verethragna) as Hercules carved in 153 BCE at [Kermanshah](/wiki/Kermanshah), [Iran](/wiki/Iran).[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Via the [Greco-Buddhist](/wiki/Greco-Buddhist) culture, Heraclean symbolism was transmitted to the far east. An example remains to this day in the [Nio](/wiki/Nio) guardian deities in front of Japanese Buddhist temples.

[Herodotus](/wiki/Herodotus) also connected Heracles to [Phoenician](/wiki/Phoenicia) god [Melqart](/wiki/Melqart).

[Sallust](/wiki/Sallust) mentions in his work on the [Jugurthine War](/wiki/Jugurthine_War) that the Africans believe Heracles to have died in [Spain](/wiki/Spain) where, his multicultural army being left without a leader, the [Medes](/wiki/Medes), [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people), and [Armenians](/wiki/Armenians) who were once under his command split off and populated the Mediterranean coast of Africa.[[56]](#cite_note-56) Temples dedicated to Heracles abounded all along the Mediterranean coastal countries. For example, the temple of *Heracles Monoikos* (i.e. the lone dweller), built far from any nearby town upon a promontory in what is now the [Côte d'Azur](/wiki/Côte_d'Azur), gave its name to the area's more recent name, [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco).[thumb|upright|The protector](/wiki/File:Museum_für_Indische_Kunst_Dahlem_Berlin_Mai_2006_015.jpg) [Vajrapani](/wiki/Vajrapani) of the [Buddha](/wiki/Buddha) is another incarnation of Heracles ([Gandhara](/wiki/Gandhara), 1st century CE)

The gateway to the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean, where the southernmost tip of Spain and the northernmost of Morocco face each other, is, classically speaking, referred to as the [Pillars of Hercules/Heracles](/wiki/Pillars_of_Hercules), owing to the story that he set up two massive spires of stone to stabilise the area and ensure the safety of ships sailing between the two landmasses.

## As a name[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

In various languages, variants of Hercules' name are used as a male given name, such as [Hercule](/wiki/Hercule_(disambiguation)) in French, [Hércules](/wiki/Hércules) in Spanish, Iraklis ([Template:Lang-el](/wiki/Template:Lang-el)) in Modern Greek and [Irakliy](/wiki/Irakliy) in Russian.

Also, there are many teams around the world which have this name or have Heracles as their symbol. The most popular in [Greece](/wiki/Greece) is [G.S. Iraklis Thessaloniki](/wiki/G.S._Iraklis_Thessaloniki).

## Spoken word myths[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

**Bibliography of reconstruction:** [Homer](/wiki/Homer), *Odyssey*, 12.072 (7th century BCE); [Theocritus](/wiki/Theocritus), *Idylls*, 13 (350–310 BCE); [Callimachus](/wiki/Callimachus), *Aetia (Causes)*, 24. Thiodamas the Dryopian, Fragments, 160. Hymn to Artemis (310–250? BCE); [Apollonios Rhodios](/wiki/Apollonios_Rhodios), *Argonautika*, I. 1175–1280 (c. 250 BCE); [*Bibliotheca*](/wiki/Bibliotheca_(Pseudo-Apollodorus)) 1.9.19, 2.7.7 (140 BCE); [Sextus Propertius](/wiki/Sextus_Propertius), *Elegies*, i.20.17ff (50–15 BCE); [Ovid](/wiki/Ovid), *Ibis*, 488 (AD 8–18); [Gaius Valerius Flaccus](/wiki/Gaius_Valerius_Flaccus), *Argonautica*, I.110, III.535, 560, IV.1-57 (1st century); [Hyginus](/wiki/Gaius_Julius_Hyginus), *Fables*, 14. Argonauts Assembled (1st century); [Philostratus the Elder](/wiki/Philostratus_the_Elder), *Images*, ii.24 Thiodamas (170–245); [First Vatican Mythographer](/wiki/First_Vatican_Mythographer), 49. Hercules et Hylas

## Ancestry[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

Source:[[57]](#cite_note-57)[Template:Familytree/start](/wiki/Template:Familytree/start)

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## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

Other figures in Greek mythology punished by the gods include:

* [Atlas](/wiki/Atlas_(mythology))
* [Ixion](/wiki/Ixion)
* [Medusa](/wiki/Medusa)
* [Prometheus](/wiki/Prometheus)
* [Sisyphus](/wiki/Sisyphus)
* [Tantalus](/wiki/Tantalus)
* [The Danaides](/wiki/The_Danaides)

Figures resembling Heracles in other mythological traditions:

* [Agilaz](/wiki/Agilaz)
* [Beowulf](/wiki/Beowulf)
* [Samson](/wiki/Samson)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

* [Heracles at Theoi.com](http://www.theoi.com/greek-mythology/heracles.html) Classical literature and art
* [Timeless Myths – Heracles](http://www.timelessmyths.com/classical/heracles.html) The life and adventure of Heracles, including his twelve labours.
* [Heracles, Greek Mythology Link](http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Heracles1.html)
* [Heracles (in French)](http://www.insecula.com/contact/A004087.html/)
* [Vollmer: Herkules (1836, in German)](http://www.vollmer-mythologie.de/heracles/)
* [Burkert, Walter](/wiki/Walter_Burkert), (1977) 1985. *Greek Religion* (Harvard University Press).
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

* Padilla, Mark W. (1998). "Herakles and Animals in the Origins of Comedy and Satyr Drama". In *Le Bestiaire d'Héraclès: IIIe Rencontre héracléenne*, edited by Corinne Bonnet, Colette Jourdain-Annequin, and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, 217-30. Kernos Suppl. 7. Liège: Centre International d'Etude de la Religion Grecque Antique.
* Padilla, Mark W. (1998). "The Myths of Herakles in Ancient Greece: Survey and Profile". Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

* [Template:Commonscatinline](/wiki/Template:Commonscatinline)

[Template:Greek mythology (deities)](/wiki/Template:Greek_mythology_(deities)) [Template:Twelve tasks of Hercules](/wiki/Template:Twelve_tasks_of_Hercules) [Template:Hercules media](/wiki/Template:Hercules_media)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Heracles](/wiki/Category:Heracles) [Category:Argonauts](/wiki/Category:Argonauts) [Category:Greek culture heroes](/wiki/Category:Greek_culture_heroes) [Category:Greek mythological hero cult](/wiki/Category:Greek_mythological_hero_cult) [Category:Heroes who ventured to Hades](/wiki/Category:Heroes_who_ventured_to_Hades) [Category:Offspring of Zeus](/wiki/Category:Offspring_of_Zeus) [Category:Demigods of Classical mythology](/wiki/Category:Demigods_of_Classical_mythology) [Category:Oracular gods](/wiki/Category:Oracular_gods) [Category:Savior gods](/wiki/Category:Savior_gods)