

Classical Mythology Exam Review

Dr. Conor Whately

The exam is to be held on Wednesday, December 5, at 1:30-4:30pm, in 4M31.

- The first section of the exam will consist of a host of short answer questions for which you might, for example, have to match points from two columns, or answer multiple choice questions. This will occupy 40% of the exam.
- The second section of the exam will consist of quotations and images, ancient and modern, which will test your basic familiarity of the myths and texts we have covered. You will have to identify the various references included in the passages/images, and in some cases explain them. This will occupy 40% of the exam.
- The third section of the exam will consist of long answer questions. You might, for example, be given a scenario and be asked to find a solution using examples from myth. This will occupy 20% of the exam.

NOTE:

- Ultimately, the exam is not cumulative, as you can see below
- use your lecture notes and the slides
- use theoi.com to fill in the pieces
- be prepared to be asked about the course readings (Homer's *Odyssey*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)

Select Key Topics

Dionysus

THE GOD DIONYSUS	
Parents	Zeus and Semele
Wife	Ariadne
God of	Wine, festivity, madness
Home	Mount Olympus
Symbol	Thyrsus (pine-cone staff)
Sacred Animals	Panther, bull, serpent
Sacred Plants	Grapevine, ivy, bindweed
Retinue	Silenus, Satyrs, Maenads
Other Names	Bacchus, Lyaeus
Roman Name	Liber

- Bacchae or Maenads: female followers
- Satyrs: human + horse/goat
- Bacchus: Dionysus

Myth of Dionysus' birth, his historical origins, his nature, and his worship - Semele

- Olympian god of wine, vegetation, pleasure, festivity, madness and wild frenzy.
- Depicted as either an older, bearded god or an effeminate, long-haired youth.
- His attributes included the thyrsos (a pine-cone tipped staff), a drinking cup and a crown of ivy.
- Usually accompanied by a troop of Satyrs and Mainades (wild female devotees).
- Dionysos was a son of Zeus and the princess Semele of Thebes.
- Semele was the daughter of Cadmus.
- During the course of her pregnancy, the god's jealous wife Hera tricked Semele into asking Zeus to appear before her in his full glory.
- Bound by oath, the god was forced to comply and she was consumed by the heat of his lightning-bolts.
- Zeus recovered their unborn child from her body, sewed him up in his own thigh, and carried him to term.
- After his birth from the thigh of Zeus, Dionysos was first entrusted to the care of Seilenos (Silenus) and the nymphs of Mount Nysa.
- And later to his aunt Ino, Semele's sister, and her husband Athamas.
- Hera was enraged when she learned of the boy's location and drove the couple mad, causing them to kill both their children and themselves.

Dionysus and his worship in Euripides' Bacchae

- The Bacchae is an ancient Greek tragedy, written by the Athenian playwright Euripides.
- The play begins before the palace at Thebes, with Dionysus telling the story of his birth and his reasons for visiting the city.
- Dionysus explains he is the son of a mortal woman, Semele, and a god, Zeus.
- Some in Thebes, he notes, don't believe this story.
- In fact, Semele's sisters, Autonoe, Agave, and Ino, claim it is a lie intended to cover up the fact that Semele became pregnant by some mortal.
- Dionysus reveals that he has driven the women of the city mad, including his three aunts, and has led them into the mountains to observe his ritual festivities.
- He has disguised himself as a mortal for the time being, but he plans to vindicate his mother by appearing before all of Thebes as a god, the son of Zeus, and establishing his permanent cult of followers.
- Dionysus exits to the mountains, and the chorus (composed of the titular Bacchae) enters.
- They perform a choral ode in praise of Dionysus.
- Then Tiresias, the blind and elderly seer, appears.

- He calls for Cadmus, the founder and former king of Thebes.
- The two old men start out to join the revelry in the mountains when Cadmus' petulant young grandson Pentheus, the current king, enters.
- Disgusted to find the two old men in festival dress, he scolds them and orders his soldiers to arrest anyone engaging in Dionysian worship, including the mysterious "foreigner" who has introduced this worship. Pentheus intends to have him stoned to death.
- The guards soon return with Dionysus himself in tow.
- Pentheus questions him, both skeptical of and fascinated by the Dionysian rites.
- Dionysus's answers are cryptic.
- Infuriated, Pentheus has Dionysus taken away and chained to an angry bull in the palace stable, But the god now shows his power.
- He breaks free and razes the palace with an earthquake and fire.
- Dionysus and Pentheus are once again at odds when a herdsman arrives from the top of Mount Cithaeron, where he had been herding his grazing cattle.
- He reports that he found women on the mountain behaving strangely: wandering the forest, suckling animals, twining snakes in their hair, and performing miraculous feats.
- The herdsmen and the shepherds made a plan to capture one particular celebrant, Pentheus' mother.
- But when they jumped out of hiding to grab her, the Bacchae became frenzied and pursued the men.
- The men escaped, but their cattle were not so fortunate, as the women fell upon the animals, ripping them to shreds with their bare hands.
- The women carried on, plundering two villages that were further down the mountain, stealing bronze, iron and even babies.
- When villagers attempted to fight back, the women drove them off using only their ceremonial staffs of fennel.
- They then returned to the mountain top and washed up, as snakes licked them clean.
- Dionysus, still in disguise, persuades Pentheus to forgo his plan to defeat and massacre the women with an armed force.
- He says it would be better first to spy on them, while disguised as a female Maenad to avoid detection.
- Dressing Pentheus in this fashion, giving him a thyrsus and fawn skins, Dionysus leads him out of the house.
- At this point, Pentheus seems already crazed by the god's power, as he thinks he sees two suns in the sky, and believes he now has the strength to rip up mountains with his bare hands.
- He has also begun to see through Dionysus' mortal disguise, perceiving horns coming out of the god's head; they exit to Cithaeron.
- A messenger arrives to report that once the party reached Mount Cithaeron, Pentheus wanted to climb an evergreen tree to get a better view and the stranger used divine power to bend down the tall tree and place the king

in its highest branches.

- Then Dionysus, revealing himself, called out to his followers and pointed out the man in the tree.
- This drove the Maenads wild; led by Agave, his mother, they forced the trapped Pentheus down from the tree top, ripped off his limbs and his head, and tore his body into pieces.
- After the messenger has relayed this news, Agave arrives, carrying her son's bloodied head.
- In her god-maddened state, she believes it is the head of a mountain lion; she proudly displays it to her father, Cadmus, and is confused when he does not delight in her trophy, but is horrified by it.
- Agave then calls out for Pentheus to come marvel at her feat, and nail the head above her door so she can show it to all of Thebes.
- But now the madness begins to wane, and Cadmus forces her to recognize that she has destroyed her own son.
- As the play ends, the corpse of Pentheus is reassembled as well as is possible, the royal family devastated and destroyed.
- Agave and her sisters are sent into exile, and Dionysus decrees that Cadmus and his wife Harmonia will be turned into snakes and leads a barbarian horde to plunder the cities of Hellas.

Dionysus & Apollo

- These two gods can be seen as representing rational (Apollonian) and irrational (Dionysian).
- Dionysus and Apollo are both the sons of Zeus and are gods of the creative arts in the Greek tradition.
- Apollo is the god of the sun, of rational thinking and order, and appeals to logic, prudence and purity.
- Dionysus is the god of wine and dance, of irrationality and chaos, and appeals to emotions and instincts.
- Apollo was associated with the Sun; he was the god of light, though his association with light, Apollo comes to represent justice, prophecy, and mental and moral purity, and is the god of healing.
- Because of his own salvation and stories about bringing Semele back to life, Dionysus is associated with death and resurrection.
- Apollo, like Dionysus, inspired poetry and music; unlike Dionysus, however, Apollo's poetry and music are elevated and orderly. He is sober, elegant, and eloquent; he plays the lyre; he is never ecstatic.
- More to add...?

Dionysus & Ariadne

- Ariadne was the immortal wife of the wine-god Dionysus.
- Ariadne, a daughter of King Minos of Krete (Crete), assisted Theseus in his quest to slay the Minotauros (Minotaur) and then fled with the hero

aboard his ship.

- When they landed on the island of Naxos Theseus abandoned her as she slept.
- It was then that Dionysos discovered her and made her his wife.
- More to add...?

Midas, Silenus, the Golden Touch

- more of something here.

Pan and Echo

- Pan was the god of shepherds and hunters, and of the meadows and forests of the mountain wilds.
- Pan was depicted as a man with the horns, legs and tail of a goat, a thick beard, snub nose and pointed ears.
- He often appears in scenes of the company of Dionysos.
- Pan loved Echo, but she did not love him back.
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Echo & Narcissus

- more of something here.

Artemis

THE GODDESS ARTEMIS	
Parents	Zeus and Leto
Goddess of	Hunting, wild animals, children
Home	Mount Olympus
Symbols	Bow and arrows
Sacred Animals	Deer, bear
Retinue	Nymphs
Other Names	Phoebe
Roman Name	Diana

Births of Artemis and Apollo

- Artemis' mother Leto was hounded throughout her pregnancy by the jealous goddess Hera.
- She eventually found refuge on the floating island of Delos.
- There she gave birth to Artemis who assisted her mother as midwife with the birth of her younger twin-brother Apollon.

Niobe & her children

- Artemis and Apollon slew the seven sons and seven daughters of Niobe as punishment for her arrogant boasts that she was superior in motherhood to their own mother Leto.
- Niobe A queen of Thebes in Boiotia (central Greece).
- They killed them because Niobe likened herself to Leto of the fair-colouring and said Leto had borne only two, she herself had borne many.

Actaeon

- Artemis transformed the hunter Aktaeon into a stag, to be torn apart by his own hounds, as punishment for spying on her whilst she bathed.
- Actaeon saw Artemis bathing.
- They say that the goddess changed him on the spot into a deer, and drove his fifty hunting dogs into a frenzy so that they unintentionally ate him.
- When he was no more, they looked for their master with great howls and bays, coming in the course of their search to Kheiron's cave.

Callisto & Arcas

- more of something here.

Orion

- Orion was a handsome giant granted the ability to walk on water by his father Poseidon.
- He served King Oenopion of Chios as huntsman for a time, but was blinded and exiled from the island after raping the king's daughter Merope.
- Orion then travelled across the sea to Lemnos to petition the god Hephaestus for help in recovering his sight.
- Lending him his assistant Kedalion (Cedalion), the god directed the giant to the rising place of the sun where Helios restored his vision.
- Upon returning to Greece, Orion sought out Oinopion to exact his revenge but the king hid himself away in an underground, bronze chamber.
- The giant then retired to the island of Delos or Crete where he became a hunting companion of the goddess Artemis.
- He desired to marry Artemis but her brother Apollo tricked the goddess into shooting him with an arrow as he was swimming far out at sea.
- After his death he was placed amongst the stars as the constellation Orion.

character, appearance, and origins of Artemis

- more of something here.

Artemis vs. Aphrodite in Euripides' Hippolytus.

- Hippolytus is an Ancient Greek tragedy by Euripides, based on the myth of Hippolytus, son of Theseus.
- The summary of the play:
 - Theseus, the king of Athens, is serving a year's voluntary exile after having murdered a local king and his sons.
 - His illegitimate son is Hippolytus, whose birth is the result of Theseus's rape of the Amazon Hippolyta.
 - Hippolytus has been trained since childhood by the king of Troezen, Pittheus.
 - At the opening of the play Aphrodite, Goddess of love, explains that Hippolytus has sworn chastity and refuses to revere her.
 - Instead, he honours the Goddess of the hunt, Artemis. This has led her to initiate a plan of vengeance on Hippolytus.
 - When Hippolytus went to Athens two years previously Aphrodite inspired Phaedra, Hippolytus' stepmother, to fall in love with him.
 - Hippolytus appears with his followers and shows reverence to a statue of Artemis, a chaste goddess; a servant warns him about slighting Aphrodite, but Hippolytus refuses to listen.
 - The chorus, consisting of young married women of Troezen, enters and describes how Theseus's wife, Phaedra has not eaten or slept in three days.
 - Phaedra, sickly, appears with her nurse. After an agonizing discussion, Phaedra finally confesses why she is ill: she loves Hippolytus.
 - The nurse and the chorus are shocked. Phaedra explains that she must starve herself and die with her honour intact.
 - However, the nurse quickly retracts her initial response and tells Phaedra that she has a magical charm to cure her.
 - However, in an aside she reveals different plans.
 - The nurse, after making Hippolytus swear not to tell anyone, informs Hippolytus of Phaedra's desire and suggests that Hippolytus consider yielding to her.
 - He reacts with a furious tirade and threatens to tell his father, Theseus, everything as soon as he arrives.
 - Phaedra realizes disaster has fallen. After making the chorus swear secrecy, she goes inside and hangs herself.
 - Theseus returns and discovers his wife's dead body.
 - Because the chorus is sworn to secrecy, they cannot tell Theseus why she killed herself.
 - Theseus discovers a letter on Phaedra's body, which falsely asserts that she was raped by Hippolytus.
 - Enraged, Theseus curses his son either to death or at least exile.
 - To execute the curse, Theseus calls upon his father, the god Poseidon, who has promised to grant his son three wishes.
 - Hippolytus enters and protests his innocence but cannot tell the truth

- because of the binding oath that he swore.
- Taking his wife’s letter as proof, Theseus exiles his son.
- The chorus sings a lament for Hippolytus.
- A messenger enters and describes a gruesome scene to Theseus; as Hippolytus got in his chariot to leave the kingdom, a bull roared out of the sea, frightening his horses, which dashed his chariot among the rocks, dragging Hippolytus behind.
- Hippolytus seems to be dying. The messenger protests Hippolytus’ innocence, but Theseus refuses to believe him.
- Theseus is glad that Hippolytus is suffering and about to die.
- But then the goddess, Artemis, appears and rages at Theseus for killing his own son; she brutally tells him the truth: there was no rape, Phaedra had lied, his son was innocent.
- Theseus is painfully devastated by this revelation.
- Hippolytus is carried in physically battered and barely clinging to life.
- In the last moments of the play, Hippolytus forgives his father, kind words are exchanged between father and son, and then Hippolytus dies.
- In this play:
 - all characters, the humans and gods, have imperfections and can be jealous and brutal in vengeance.
 - They all have blindnesses that keep them from seeing and understanding others with empathy and these blindnesses result in tragedy.
 - The play presents two goddesses who represent two aspects of the human spirit in conflict: One aspect is love, represented by Aphrodite and personified by Phaedra.
 - The second aspect is what the play refers to as *sophrosyne*, which is represented by Artemis and personified by Hippolytus.
 - *Sophrosyne* can be defined in part as being chaste, pure, clear-headed and untainted by sexual desire.

Apollo

THE GOD APOLLO	
Parents	Zeus and Leto
God of	Music, prophecy, healing, archery
Home	Mount Olympus
Symbols	Lyre, bow
Sacred Animals	Swan, raven
Sacred Plants	Laurel, larkspur, cypress
Retinue	Muses
Other Names	Phoebus
Roman Name	Apollo

Apollo & Delphi

- Python was a monstrous dragon-serpent set by Gaia to guard the sacred oracle of Delphi.
- According to some, the creature was born from the rotting slime left behind by the Great Deluge.
- When the god Apollo laid claim to the shrine, he slew Python with a volley of a hundred arrows.
- The oracle and festival of Delphi were afterwards named Pytho and Pythian from the rotting (pythô) corpse of the beast.
- Some say Apollon slew the monster to avenge his mother Leto who had been relentlessly pursued by the dragon during her long pregnancy.

Pythia

- more of something here.

Cassandra

- Cassandra, was a daughter of King Priam and of Queen Hecuba of Troy in Greek mythology.
- She was admired by the god Apollo, and he offered her the gift to see the future in order to win her heart.
- Cassandra agreed to be his lover in return to his gift, but after receiving the gift, she went back on her word and refused him.
- Apollo was angered that she lied to and deceived him, but since he couldn't take back a gift already given, he cursed her that though she would see the future accurately, nobody would ever believe her prophecies.
- Thus, Cassandra was cursed to utter prophecies that were true but that no one believed.

Daphne

- Daphne was a Naiad-nymph of the river Ladon of Arkadia or the Peneios (Peneus) in Thessalia.
- She was loved by the god Apollo who pursued her until she grew exhausted and cried out to Gaia for help.
- The goddess transformed into a laurel tree which Apollo then adopted as his sacred plant.

Coronis

- more of something here.
a. Asclepius
– more of something here.

Alcestis of Euripides

- more of something here.

Apollo and Marsyas

- marsyas was a Phrygian Satyr who invented the music of the flute.
- He found the very first flute which had been crafted but cast away by the goddess Athena who had been displeased by the bloating of the cheeks.
- Marsyas later challenged the god Apollo to a musical contest but lost when the god demanded they play their instruments upside-down in the second round, a feat ill-suited to the flute.
- As punishment for his hubris, Apollo had Marsyas tied to a tree and flayed alive.
- The rustic gods then transformed him into a stream.

Apollo and Pan

- The story of Marsyas' contest with Apollon is sometimes told of the Arkadian god Pan.

Nature of Apollo

- more of something here.

Underworld

Ovid's Metamorphoses

- something

Orpheus & Eurydice

- something

Accounts of the underworld (Homer, Vergil, Plato)

- something

The sinners

- something

Geography – Tartarus, Elysian fields

Heroes/Sagas

The hero is saga & folktale

- something

Bellerophon

- something

Meleager

- something

Atalanta

- something

Gilgamesh & Enkidu

- **Gilgamesh**, king of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk, who was two-thirds god and one-third man.
- He was physically beautiful, immensely strong, and very wise, but he was a cruel despot.
- He lorded over his subjects, raped women, accomplished his building projects with forced labor, and his exhausted subjects groaned under his oppression.
- So basically, the gods heard his subjects' pleas and decided to keep Gilgamesh in check by creating a wild man named **Enkidu**, who was as magnificent as Gilgamesh.
- Enkidu became Gilgamesh's great friend, and Gilgamesh's heart was shattered when Enkidu died of an illness inflicted by the gods. Gilgamesh then traveled to the edge of the world and learned about the days before the deluge and other secrets of the gods, and he recorded them on stone tablets.
- The summary of the epic poem:
 - The epic begins with Enkidu. He lives with the animals, suckling at their breasts, grazing in the meadows, and drinking at their watering places. A hunter discovers him and sends a temple prostitute into the wilderness to tame him.
 - When Enkidu sleeps with the woman, the animals reject him since he is no longer one of them; now, he is part of the human world.
 - Then the harlot teaches him everything he needs to know to be a man.
 - Enkidu is outraged by what he hears about Gilgamesh's excesses, so he travels to Uruk to challenge him.

- When he arrives, Gilgamesh is about to force his way into a bride’s wedding chamber.
- Enkidu steps into the doorway and blocks his passage and the two men wrestle fiercely for a long time, and Gilgamesh finally prevails.
- After that, they become friends and set about looking for an adventure to share.
- Gilgamesh and Enkidu decide to steal trees from a distant cedar forest forbidden to mortals.
- But a terrifying demon named **Humbaba**, the devoted servant of **Enlil**, the god of earth, wind, and air, guards it.
- The two heroes make the perilous journey to the forest, and, standing side by side, fight with the monster.
- With assistance from **Shamash** the sun god, they kill him.
- Then they cut down the forbidden trees, fashion the tallest into an enormous gate, make the rest into a raft, and float on it back to Uruk.
- Upon their return, **Ishtar**, the goddess of love, is overcome with lust for Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh spurns her.
- Enraged, the goddess asks her father, **Anu**, the god of the sky, to send the *Bull of Heaven* to punish him.
- The bull comes down from the sky, bringing with him seven years of famine.
- Gilgamesh and Enkidu wrestle with the bull and kill it.
- The gods meet in council and agree that one of the two friends must be punished for their transgression, and they decide Enkidu is going to die.
- He takes ill, suffers immensely, and shares his visions of the underworld with Gilgamesh.
- When he finally dies, Gilgamesh is heartbroken.
- Gilgamesh can’t stop grieving for Enkidu, and he can’t stop brooding about the prospect of his own death.
- Exchanging his kingly garments for animal skins as a way of mourning Enkidu, he sets off into the wilderness, determined to find Utnapishtim, a sage that survived the Great Flood (think of him as the Mesopotamian Noah).
- After the flood, the gods had granted Utnapishtim eternal life, and Gilgamesh hopes that Utnapishtim can tell him how he might avoid death too.
- Gilgamesh’s journey takes him to the twin-peaked mountain called Mashu, where the sun sets into one side of the mountain at night and rises out of the other side in the morning.
- Utnapishtim lives beyond the mountain, but the two scorpion monsters that guard its entrance refuse to allow Gilgamesh into the tunnel that passes through it.
- Gilgamesh pleads with them, and they relent.
- After a harrowing passage through total darkness, Gilgamesh emerges into a beautiful garden by the sea.

- There he meets **Siduri**, a veiled tavern keeper, and tells her about his quest; she warns him that seeking immortality is futile and that he should be satisfied with the pleasures of this world.
- However, when she can't turn him away from his purpose, she directs him to **Urshanabi**, the ferryman.
- Urshanabi takes Gilgamesh on the boat journey across the sea and through the *Waters of Death* to Utnapishtim.
- Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the flood—how the gods met in council and decided to destroy humankind.
- **Ea**, the god of wisdom, warned Utnapishtim about the gods' plans and told him how to fashion a gigantic boat in which his family and the seed of every living creature might escape.
- When the waters finally receded, the gods regretted what they'd done and agreed that they would never try to destroy humankind again.
- Utnapishtim was rewarded with eternal life.
- Men would die, but humankind would continue.
- When Gilgamesh insists that he be allowed to live forever, Utnapishtim gives him a test: if you think you can stay alive for eternity, he says, surely you can stay awake for a week.
- Gilgamesh tries and immediately fails.
- So Utnapishtim orders him to clean himself up, put on his royal garments again, and return to Uruk where he belongs.
- Just as Gilgamesh is departing, however, Utnapishtim's wife convinces him to tell Gilgamesh about a miraculous plant that restores youth.
- Gilgamesh finds the plant and takes it with him, planning to share it with the elders of Uruk.
- But a snake steals the plant one night while they are camping.
- As the serpent slithers away, it sheds its skin and becomes young again.
- When Gilgamesh returns to Uruk, he is empty-handed but reconciled at last to his mortality.
- He knows that he can't live forever but that humankind will.
- Now he sees that the city he had repudiated in his grief and terror is a magnificent, enduring achievement—the closest thing to immortality to which a mortal can aspire.

Humbaba,

- But a terrifying demon named **Humbaba**, the devoted servant of **Enlil**, the god of earth, wind, and air, guards it.

Ishtar and the bull of heaven

- Upon their return, **Ishtar**, the goddess of love, is overcome with lust for Gilgamesh, but Gilgamesh spurns her.
- Enraged, the goddess asks her father, **Anu**, the god of the sky, to send

the *Bull of Heaven* to punish him.

Utnapishtim

- Utnapishtim is a character in the Epic of Gilgamesh who is tasked by Ea to abandon his worldly possessions and create a giant ship to be called Preserver of Life.
- He was also tasked with bringing his wife, family, and relatives along with the craftsmen of his village, baby animals, and grains.

Perseus

- He was the son of the Argive princess Danae who was locked away in a bronze chamber by her father Acrisius who lived in fear of a prophecy that he would one day be killed by her son.
- The god Zeus, however, infiltrated her prison in the guise of a golden shower and impregnated her.
- When Acrisius discovered the child, he placed the two in a chest and set them adrift at the sea.
- They were carried safely to the island of Seriphos where they were offered refuge by the kindly, fisherman Diktys.
- He is a kind fisherman whose brother, Polydectes, is the cruel ruler of the area.
- Polydectes soon wants to get rid of Perseus and marry Danaë, so he comes up with a plan to kill the young man: he convinces Perseus to go kill Medusa, the horrible Gorgon—an impossible feat for a mortal.
- The gods favor Perseus, however: he receives a mirrored shield from Athena, a magic sword from Hermes, and information on the location of the nymphs of the North—the only ones who know how to kill the Gorgon—from the Graiae, three supernatural gray sisters with only one eye among them. Perseus craftily steals the eye the Graiae share and refuses to return it until they help him.

Graeae

- Graeae were two, some say three, sea hags (old women) who personified the white foam of the sea.
- They were grey-haired from birth and shared amongst themselves a single, detachable eye and tooth.
- The hero Perseus stole these when he was searching for the Medusa, compelling the hags to reveal the location of their sister.

Medusa – gorgons

- He eventually reaches the mystical land of the Hyperborean nymphs, who give him winged sandals that allow him to fly, a wallet that expands to

hold anything, and a cap that makes its wearer invisible.

- With these, Hermes' sword, and Athena's mirrored shield—which enables him to avoid looking directly at the Gorgons, which would turn him to stone—he creeps into the Gorgons' cave while they are sleeping.
- The two gods point out Medusa, the only mortal one.
- While looking at her in the mirror, Perseus chops off her head and puts it in the magic wallet, then begins to fly home.
- According to late classical poets, Medusa was once a beautiful woman who was transformed into a monster by Athena as punishment for lying with Poseidon in her shrine.
- Earlier Greek writers and artists, however, simply portray her as a monster born into a large family of monsters.

Andromeda

- Along the way, he comes upon Andromeda, a princess who has been chained to a rock because her mother, Cassiopeia, has offended the gods.
- A sea serpent is about to eat Andromeda, but Perseus cuts off its head and takes Andromeda as his wife.
- He returns home to find that Polydectes has driven his mother and Dictys into hiding.
- Perseus goes to Polydectes' palace where all the evil men of the kingdom are gathered.
- He marches into the meeting and reveals Medusa's head, turning all the men to stone.
- He lives happily ever after but only after unwittingly fulfilling the prophecy of the Oracle: while participating in a discus-throwing contest, Perseus accidentally hits and kills a spectator, who is, unbeknownst to him, his grandfather Acrisius.
- More to add???

Jason & Medea

- Medea was the daughter of King Aetes of Colchis in Greek mythology, and wife of the mythical hero Jason.
- Jason was an ancient Greek mythological hero who was the leader of the Argonauts whose quest for the Golden Fleece featured in Greek literature.
- He was the son of Aeson, the rightful king of **Iolcos**.
- He was married to the sorceress Medea.
- He was also the great-grandson of the messenger god Hermes, through his mother's side.

Golden Fleece

- The Golden Fleece is the fleece of the gold-haired winged ram, which was held in Colchis.

- The fleece is a symbol of authority and kingship.
- It figures in the tale of the hero Jason and his crew of Argonauts, who set out on a quest for the fleece by order of King Pelias, in order to place Jason rightfully on the throne of Iolcus in Thessaly.
- Through the help of Medea, they acquire the Golden Fleece.
- The story is of great antiquity and was current in the time of Homer (eighth century BCE).
- The tale of the Golden Fleece begins when Athamas, king of Orchomenus, had left his wife Nephele, to marry Ino, who was a daughter of Cadmus, the legendary king of Thebes.
- In order to secure that her own son would inherit the kingdom, Ino plotted the destruction of Athamas's son, Phrixus and his daughter Helle.
- To that end, she damaged all of the seed grain in the kingdom.
- When the crops failed, messengers were sent to the Delphic oracle for guidance.
- Ino then bribed the returning messengers to change the oracle: Phrixus must be sacrificed!
- Athamas reluctantly agreed to heed the false oracle.
- But just as he raised the knife over his son on the altar, a wondrous, golden winged ram appeared, taking both Phrixus and Helle on his back to carry them away.
- While they were crossing the strait which separates Europe from Asia, the girl slipped and fell into the water.
- She was drowned; and the strait was named after her Hellespont (Sea of Helle).
- The boy came safely to land to the country of Colchis on the Black Sea.
- Although the Colchians were fierce people, they were kind to Phrixus and their king, Aetes, let him marry one of his daughters.
- In gratitude to god Zeus for having being saved, Phrixus sacrificed the ram and gave his golden fleece as a present, to king Aetes.

Jason, Aeson, & Pelias

- After the death of King Cretheus, the Aeolian **Pelias** usurped the Iolcan throne from his half-brother **Aeson** and became king of **Iolcus** in Thessaly (near the modern city of Volos).
- Because of this unlawful act, an oracle warned him that a descendant of **Aeolus** would seek revenge.
- Pelias put to death every prominent descendant of Aeolus he could, but spared Aeson because of the pleas of their mother Tyro.
- Instead, Pelias kept Aeson prisoner and forced him to renounce his inheritance.
- Aeson married **Alcimedea**, who bore him a son named Jason.
- Pelias intended to kill the baby at once, but Alcimedea summoned her kinswomen to weep over him as if he were stillborn.
- She faked a burial and smuggled the baby to Mount Pelion.

- He was raised by the centaur **Chiron**, the trainer of heroes.
- When Jason was 20 years old, an oracle ordered him to dress as a Magnesian and head to the Iolcan court.
- While traveling Jason lost his sandal crossing the muddy Anavros river while helping an old woman (Hera in disguise).
- The goddess was angry with King Pelias for killing his stepmother Sidero after she had sought refuge in Hera's temple.
- Another oracle warned Pelias to be on his guard against a man with one shoe.
- Pelias was presiding over a sacrifice to Poseidon with several neighboring kings in attendance.
- Among the crowd stood a tall youth in leopard skin with only one sandal.
- Pelias recognized that Jason was his nephew.
- He could not kill him because prominent kings of the Aeolian family were present.
- Instead, he asked Jason: "What would you do if an oracle announced that one of your fellow-citizens were destined to kill you?" Jason replied that he would send him to go and fetch the Golden Fleece, not knowing that Hera had put those words in his mouth.
- Jason learned later that Pelias was being haunted by the ghost of Phrixus.
- Phrixus had fled from Orchomenus riding on a divine ram to avoid being sacrificed and took refuge in Colchis where he was later denied proper burial.
- According to an oracle, Iolcus would never prosper unless his ghost was taken back in a ship, together with the golden ram's fleece.
- This fleece now hung from a tree in the grove of the Colchian Ares, guarded night and day by a dragon that never slept.
- Pelias swore before Zeus that he would give up the throne at Jason's return while expecting that Jason's attempt to steal the Golden Fleece would be a fatal enterprise.
- However, Hera acted in Jason's favour during the perilous journey.

Voyage of the Argonauts

- more of something here.

Hypsipyle, Harpies, clashing rocks, etc.

- more of something here.

Colchis – deeds & the dragon/serpent

- more of something here.

The return

- more of something here.

Medea scorned

- more of something here.

Heracles

Amphitryon, Alcmena, Zeus

- Heracles was the son of the affair Zeus had with the mortal woman Alcmena.
- Zeus made love to her after disguising himself as her husband, Amphitryon, home early from war
- Amphitryon did return later the same night, and Alcmena became pregnant with his son at the same time, a case of heteropaternal superfecundation, where a woman carries twins sired by different fathers.

Madness of Heracles

- After killing his music tutor Linus with a lyre, he was sent to tend cattle on a mountain by his foster father Amphitryon.
- Later in Thebes, Heracles married King Creon's daughter, Megara.
- In a fit of madness, induced by Hera, Heracles killed his children by Megara.
- After his madness had been cured with hellebore by Antikyreus, the founder of Antikyra, he realized what he had done and fled to the Oracle of Delphi.
- Unbeknownst to him, the Oracle was guided by Hera.
- He was directed to serve King 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.

12 labours/athloi

- Heracles was commanded by the Delphic Oracle to perform twelve labors for King Eurystheus of Mycenae.
 1. Slay the Nemean Lion.
 - Nemean Lion was a large lion whose hide was impervious to weapons.
 - It plagued the district of Nemea in the Argolis.
 - King Eurystheus commanded Heracles to destroy the beast as the first of his twelve Labours.
 - The hero cornered the lion in its cave and seizing it by the neck wrestled it to death.
 - He then skinned its hide to make a lion-skin cape, one of his most distinctive attributes.
 2. Slay the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra.
 - Lernaean Hydra was a gigantic, nine-headed water-serpent, which haunted the swamps of Lerna.

- Heracles was sent to destroy her as one of his twelve labours, but for each of her heads that he decapitated, two more sprang forth.
 - So with the help of Iolaus, he applied burning brands to the severed stumps, cauterizing the wounds and preventing the regeneration.
 - In the battle he also crushed a giant crab that was sent by Hera beneath his heel which had come to assist the Hydra.
3. Capture the Cerynitian Hind.
- Cerynitian Hind was a golden-horned deer sacred to the goddess Artemis.
 - Heracles was sent to fetch it as one of his twelve labours.
 - After chasing the animal for a full year he finally captured it on Mount Artemision in Arkadia (Arcadia).
 - The goddess Artemis complained about the treatment of her deer whose horn had broken off by the hero in the struggle.
 - He nevertheless managed to persuade her to let him borrow it for the completion of his Labour.
4. Capture the Erymanthian Boar.
- Erymanthian Boar was a gigantic boar which ravaged the farmlands of Psophis in western Arkadia (Arcadia).
 - Heracles was sent to capture it as one of his Twelve Labours.
 - After chasing the boar through the deep winter snows of Mount Erymanthos, he netted it and brought it back alive to Eurystheus.
 - The king, terrified at the sight of the deadly beast, leapt into a buried pithos jar for safety.
5. Clean Augeias' stables
- Augeias (Augeas) was a king of Elis in the western Peloponnesos who possessed an enormous herd of cattle.
 - Heracles was commanded by King Eurystheus to clean Augeias' stables as one of his Twelve Labours.
 - The hero accomplished this by diverting the waters of the river Alpheios (Alpheus) through the plain, washing the manure away.
 - When Augeias refused him the promised payment, Heracles swore revenge and, after his Labours were complete, gathered an army to invade the country.
 - The king at first repelled the hero with the help of several allies, including his nephews, the twin Molionidai, and Amarynkeus.
 - Heracles was also struck down by illness, further stalling the campaign.
 - After his recovery, he ambushed and slew the twins at Kleonai (Cleonae) before launching a second invasion.
 - This time he conquered the country, slaying King Augeias in battle.
 - To celebrate his victory Herakles founded the Olympic Games near the Eleian town of Pisa.
6. Slay the Stymphalian Birds.

- Stymphalian Birds were a flock of man-eating birds which haunted Lake Stymphalis in Arkadia (Arcadia).
 - Herakles' destroyed them as the sixth of his twelve labours, employing a rattle to rouse them from the thick vegetation surrounding the lake and then felling them with his arrows or a sling.
7. Capture the Cretan Bull.
- The Cretan Bull was a handsome bull sent forth from the sea by Poseidon.
 - Queen Pasiphae of Crete lusted after the animal and coupled with it by hiding inside a wooden cow crafted by the artificer Daedalus.
 - She later gave birth to the Minotaur, a man with the head of a bull.
 - Heracles was commanded to fetch the Cretan Bull as one of his Twelve Labours.
 - Upon completion of this task he set the creature free and it eventually found its way to the Athenian town of Marathon where it laid waste to the countryside.
 - There it was finally destroyed by the hero Theseus.
8. Steal the Mares of Diomedes.
- Diomedes was a barbaric king of the Bistonian tribe of Thrake who fed his mares on a diet of human flesh.
 - Herakles was sent to fetch these horses as the eighth of his twelve Labours.
 - He captured the beasts alive and left them in the care of his young squire Abderos while he went off to deal with King Diomedes.
 - He returned to discover the boy had been devoured by the mares and in anger fed them their master's corpse which stilled their unnatural appetites.
9. Obtain the belt of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.
- Hippolyta was so impressed with Hercules that she gave him the girdle without argument, perhaps while visiting him on his ship.
 - Then the goddess Hera, making herself appear as one of the Amazons, spread a rumor among them that Hercules and his crew were abducting their queen, so the Amazons attacked the ship.
 - In the fray that followed, Hercules slew Hippolyta, stripped her of the belt, fought off the attackers, and sailed away.
10. Obtain the cattle of the monster Geryon.
- Geryon was a three-bodied, four-winged giant who lived on the island of Erytheia in the westernmost reach of the earth-encircling river Oceanus.
 - He possessed a fabulous herd of cattle whose coats were stained red by the light of the sunset.
 - Heracles was sent to fetch these as one of his twelve labours.

- The hero reached the island by sailing across the Oceanus in a golden cup-boat borrowed from the sun-god Helios.
 - There he encountered and slew the cattle-herder Eurytion, the two-headed guard dog Orthus, and finally three-bodied Geryon himself.
 - With this task complete the hero herded the cattle into his boat and led them back to the Greek Peloponnese.
11. Steal the apples of the Hesperides
- The Hesperides were the goddess-nymphs of evening and the golden light of sunsets.
 - They were the daughters of either Nyx (Night) or the heaven-bearing Titan Atlas.
 - The Hesperides were entrusted with the care of the tree of the golden apples which had been presented to the goddess Hera by Gaia (the Earth) on her wedding day.
 - They were assisted by a hundred-headed guardian-Dragon (Dragon).
 - Herakles was sent to fetch the apples as one of his twelve labours and, upon slaying the serpent (Ladon), stole the precious fruit.
 - (he had the help of Atlas to pick them after Hercules had slain Ladon).
 - Athena later returned them to the Hesperides.
 - The Hesperides were also the keepers of other treasures of the gods; Perseus obtained from them the artifacts he needed to slay the Gorgon Medusa.
12. Capture and bring back Cerberus.
- Cerberus was the gigantic, three-headed hound of Hades which guarded the gates of the underworld and prevented the escape of the shades of the dead.
 - Cerberus was depicted as a three-headed dog with a serpent's tail, mane of snakes, and a lion's claws.
 - He used the souls to help convince Hades to hand over the dog.
 - He agreed to give him the dog if he used no weapons to obtain him.
 - Heracles succeeded and took the creature back to Mycenae, causing Eurystheus to be fearful of the power and strength of this hero.

Heracles the avenger

- more of something here.

The death of Heracles – Nessus, Deianira, Iole

- Iole:
 - After completing these tasks, Heracles joined the Argonauts in a

- search for the Golden Fleece.
- He also fell in love with Princess Iole of Oechalia.
- King Eurytus of Oechalia promised his daughter, 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.
- Heracles killed the king and his sons—excluding 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 of Lydia.
- Nessus and Deianira:
 - His third marriage was to Deianira, for whom he had to fight the river god Achelous (upon Achelous' death, Heracles removed one of his horns and gave it to some nymphs who turned it into the cornucopia).
 - Soon after they wed, Heracles and Deianira had to cross a river, and a centaur named Nessus offered to help Deianira across but then attempted to 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, she soaked a shirt of his in the mixture, creating the poisoned shirt of Nessus.
 - Heracles' servant, 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 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.
 - He then marries Hebe.

Theseus

- Theseus, a hero of Greek mythology, is best known for slaying a monster called the Minotaur.
- Poseidon was his father.
- Theseus was raised in his mother's land.
- When Theseus grew up and became a brave young man, he moved the rock and recovered his father's tokens.
- His mother then told him the truth about his father's identity and that he must take the sword and sandals back to king Aegeus to claim his birthright.
- To journey to Athens, Theseus could choose to go by sea (which was the safe way) or by land, following a dangerous path around the Saronic Gulf, where he would encounter a string of six entrances to the Underworld, each guarded by a chthonic enemy.
- Young, brave, and ambitious, Theseus decided to go alone by the land route and defeated a great many bandits along the way.

Labours of Theseus (6)

1. Theseus and Periphetes
 - When Theseus arrived at Epidaurus, he met Periphetes. Periphetes, (also known as Corynetes or the Club-Bearer) was a son of Hephaestus and Anticleia.
 - Periphetes was lame in one leg and in some versions, had one eye like a Cyclops.
 - He roamed the road from Athens to Troezen where he robbed travelers and killed them with his bronze club.
 - Theseus killed him by tricking him into giving him the club to check if it really were bronze.
 - Theseus then bashed him in the head and killed him.
2. Theseus and Sinis
 - An Isthmian outlaw, Sinis, who would force travelers to help him bend pine trees to the ground, but as soon as the pine neared the ground, Sinis would use its momentum to kill the helper.
 - He then attach the victim to the branch and let the tree reassert itself, tossing the victim to his death.
 - According to some version, Sinis tied people to two pine trees that he bent down to the ground, then let the trees go, tearing his victims apart.
 - When Theseus approached, Sinis asked for the customary help, but instead of having the opportunity to kill his helper, his helper killed him, using the method Sinis had used on so many others.
 - Sinis had a daughter of remarkable beauty and stature, called Perigune.
 - After Theseus killed her father, she fled, and Theseus was sought her

everywhere.

- She came into a place overgrown with brushwood shrubs, and asparagus-thorn, there, and prayed and begged them, to gave her shelter, and promised that if she escaped she would never cut them down nor burn them.
 - But Theseus calling upon her, and giving her his promise that he would use her with respect, and offer her no injury.
 - She revealed herself and Theseus had sex with her.
 - She later bore Theseus's first male heir, Melanippus.
 - Perigune later married Deioneus of Oechalia.
3. Theseus and The Crommyonian Sow
- The Crommyonian Sow a monstrous wild pig which terrorized the countryside around Crommyon, north of the Isthmus.
 - The Crommyonian Sow was the pet of an old witch named Phaea.
 - In some version the Crommyonian Sow was described as an offspring of Typhon and Echidna.
 - When Theseus arrived at Crommyon, he killed the Crommyonian Sow and its mistress.
4. Theseus and Sciron
- An Isthmian outlaw, Sciron was the son of either Pelops or Poseidon.
 - He lived at the Sceironian Rocks, a cliff on the Saronic coast of the Isthmus of Corinth.
 - Sciron robbed travelers passing the Sceironian Rocks and forced them to wash his feet.
 - When they knelt before him, he kicked them over the cliff into the sea, where they were eaten by a monstrous sea turtle.
 - Theseus killed him in the same way, by pushing him off the cliff.
5. Theseus and Cercyon
- Cercyon was the King of Eleusis, and a very strong man.
 - Cercyon stood on the roads around Eleusis and challenged passers-by to a wrestling match.
 - The loser (always the passer-by) was murdered, though Cercyon promised his kingdom to anyone who won.
 - He was eventually beaten and killed by Theseus, who took over the kingdom of Eleusis.
 - Theseus won owing to his skill, rather than superiority in brute physical strength.
6. Theseus and Procrustes
- Procrustes was the son of Poseidon with a stronghold on Mount Korydallos at Erineus, on the sacred way between Athens and Eleusis.
 - There he had an iron bed, in which he invited every passer-by to spend the night, and where he set to work on them with his smith's hammer, to stretch them to fit.
 - In some version, if the guest proved too tall, Procrustes would amputate the excess length; nobody ever fit the bed exactly, because secretly Procrustes had two beds.

- Theseus turned the tables on Procrustes, cutting off his legs and decapitating him with his own axe.

Bull of Marathon

- When Theseus arrived at Athens, he did not reveal his true identity immediately.
- Aegeus gave him hospitality but was suspicious of the young, powerful stranger's intentions.
- Aegeus's wife Medea recognised Theseus immediately as Aegeus' son and worried that Theseus would be chosen as heir to Aegeus' kingdom instead of her son Medus.
- She tried to arrange to have Theseus killed by asking him to capture the Marathonian Bull, an emblem of Cretan power.
- When Theseus returned victorious to Athens, where he sacrificed the Bull, Medea tried to poison him.
- At the last second, Aegeus recognised the sandals and the sword, and knocked the poisoned wine cup from Theseus's hand.
- Thus father and son were reunited, and Medea, it was said, fled to Asia.

Pasiphae

- more of something here.

King Minos & the Minotaur

- more of something here.

Daedalus & Icarus

- more of something here.

Theseus & Ariadne

- more of something here.

Other myths of Theseus

- more of something here.

Oedipus & Thebes

Oedipus, Laius, Jocasta/Iocasta

- more of something here.

The Sphinx & the riddle

- more of something here.

Antigone

- more of something here.

Trojan War & the Odyssey

Sack of Troy – death of Achilles, wooden horse

- more of something here.

The Aeneid – Aeneas’ escape from Troy

- more of something here.

Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Iphigenia

- more of something here.
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Orestes, Electra

- more of something here.
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Odyssey – life of Odysseus

- In The Odyssey, Homer repeatedly refers to Odysseus as a “man of many twists and turns,” a “sacker of cities,” and a “great teller of stories.” He does not refer to him as “son of Neleus,” because Neleus was the father of Nestor. Odysseus’ father was Laertes.

Final episode of Netflix’s Troy – reception of the war

- more of something here.