

THE MERIDIAN HANDBOOK OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

FORMERLY TITLED: CROWELL'S HANDBOOK OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY



BY EDWARD TRIPP

The Meridian Handbook of
**CLASSICAL
MYTHOLOGY**

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Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology*

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A MERIDIAN BOOK

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For Rhoda

Preface

This book is a collection of stories. It is intended not to expound the myths of Greece and Rome, but to tell them in a readable and convenient form. It is not concerned with cult; and it ventures into interpretation of the myths only where description of the gods' functions makes interpretation unavoidable. I hope, however, that it will prove useful to readers of western literatures from Classical times to the present, since these literatures abound in allusions to mythology. I hope, too, that the stories will be enjoyed for their own sake.

For the most part, the myths have been drawn from those Classical works most likely to be read by the layman, and from the principal ancient collections of mythology. The more obscure sources, and those that contain little myth, did not add much to Classical mythology and hardly influenced the versions found in later writings, so I have not often consulted them. I have turned to reference books only in search of clues to points that I might otherwise have missed.

Sources include the epics of Homer, Vergil, and Apollonius Rhodius; all of Greek tragic drama; the poems of Hesiod; the Homeric Hymns; Pindar's odes; Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; and three of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. The *Library* of Apollodorus and Pausanias' *Description of Greece* were especially valuable sources. I turned to Herodotus for traditions of the origins of nations and cautiously consulted Diodorus Siculus where he seemed not to have tampered much with a myth. A few glancing references to myths came from Vergil's minor poems. Hyginus' *Fabulae* and *Poetica Astronomica*, for all their author's carelessness, helped to supply details not to be found elsewhere. Finally, I disregarded my own rule of avoiding obscure works whenever interesting bits of information turned up in fragmentary works of comparatively early date, such as those from the Epic Cycle.

An alphabetical arrangement seemed desirable for reference purposes. The alphabet is, however, a mixed blessing when one deals with a subject so tortuously interconnected as mythology. The writer is faced with a choice of producing a few long articles and a vast number of cross references (thereby defeating the purpose of the alphabetical arrangement) or allowing a great deal of information to be repeated in two or more entries, which considerably increases the size of his book. I have chosen a middle course. With some exceptions, each major myth is told once in full, in an entry on one of its prin-

PREFACE

cial characters. Details about lesser characters that are peripheral to the main story are related in separate entries on those characters.

Cross references are fairly plentiful, but it should be noted that they are used only when the entry to which the reader is referred contains additional information about the entry in which the reference is made. It can generally be assumed that, if a character mentioned in an entry sounds interesting enough to warrant pursuing him further, he will have an entry of his own.

If there is relatively little Roman mythology in this book, it is because there is little of it to record. As H. J. Rose has written in his *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, "Italian gods were vague personalities, with definite and limited functions, and are not thought of as marrying, having children, forming connexions of love or friendship with mortals, or doing any of the things which Greek imagination ascribed to the Olympians." Something is known of Roman cult, but that does not fall within the scope of this book. Little is left but Roman traditions of their origin as a people, as recorded by, among others, the poets Vergil and Ovid and the historians Livy and Plutarch. Rose warns that "the overwhelming majority of [the traditions] are not genuine popular native traditions at all, but comparatively late, artificial tales, put together either by Greeks or under Greek influence." Nevertheless I have included many of these legends, up to that of the expulsion of the Tarquins, for their intrinsic interest.

A major problem in retelling myths is that of synthesis. Many of the stories are found in bits and pieces in a variety of sources written over a period of centuries. When these sources disagree, it is necessary in a serious reference work to give all significant versions, rather than discard those that cannot be tailored to a neatly plausible continuity. The resulting prevalence of phrases such as "some say" and "others say" does not enhance the elegance of the narrative, but that is a small enough price to pay for completeness and fidelity. I have ignored variant accounts only when the differences seemed inconsequential or the result of simple mistakes in recording the statements of earlier writers, as is often the case in Hyginus' two books.

A subtler difficulty arises when accounts do not actually contradict one another but may be suspected of arising from different traditions, or when one seems transparently "literary." The comprehensive European dictionaries of mythology solve this problem by fragmenting the myths according to incident and source. This approach is desirable in works intended for the use of scholars, but it is disastrous to readability.

Since the process of accretion through which the myths developed will be of only passing interest to most readers of this handbook, I have combined disparate, though not contradictory, elements into single narratives. In the longer stories, I have generally indicated major breaks in the tradition (as, for instance, in the case of Odysseus' career after the point at which Homer leaves him at the end of the *Odyssey*), and I have used various means to sepa-

rate incidents that seem to me uneasy companions. Such decisions are, however, highly subjective.

Because this book is designed as a companion to reading, I have usually placed the principal emphasis in my retellings on those versions of myths that are best known to modern readers of the Classics. The tragic fate of Oedipus, for example, is most familiar to us from the plays of Sophocles, though Homer's references to him give evidence of a very different and presumably earlier tradition. Where stories are unlikely to be known to many readers in any form, I have generally chosen to emphasize the earlier versions that seem to reflect popular myth rather than literary invention. I have, however, sometimes deviated from both of these practices in favor of basing an entry mainly on the work of some Classical mythographer such as Apollodorus, when he had dealt with it in a particularly thorough and continuous narrative.

Rather than interrupt the flow of the stories with citations of sources, I have placed them at the ends of entries or, in the case of long entries on the sagas, at the ends of sections. Citations are not intended to be complete. I have seldom referred to sources that merely corroborate statements made in better-known or fuller sources, or that deal with inconsequential details, unless they seemed for some reason more than usually interesting. All citations refer to editions included in the Loeb Classical Library, except for the works of Hyginus, which are available in English only in a 1960 translation by Mary Grant.

The time would seem to be long overdue in which we can spell Greek names in direct transliteration instead of in latinized form. Because, however, this book will generally be turned to from books that use the old-fashioned traditional spellings, I have regretfully bowed to the convention and used them myself throughout the text. The pronouncing index gives the Greek spellings as well as the Latin.

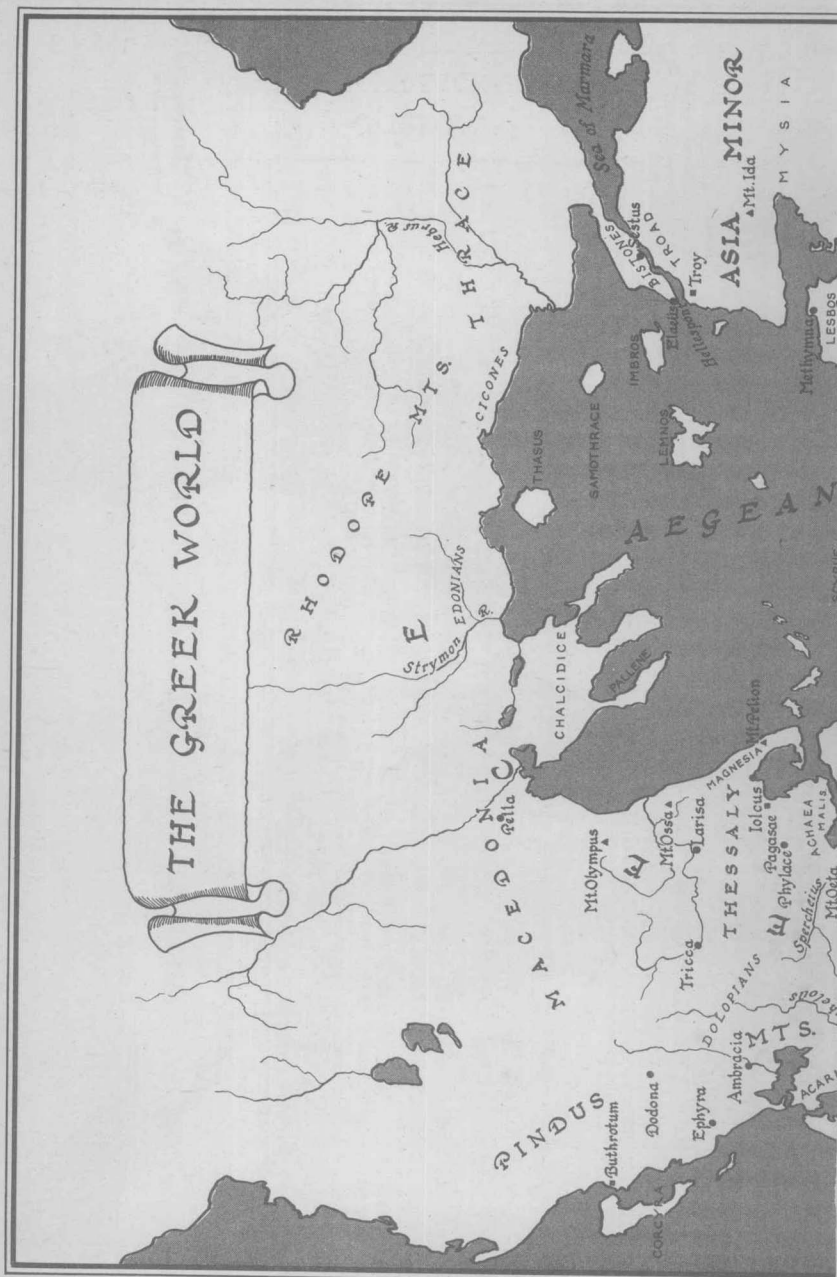
I am indebted for various kinds of aid and encouragement to Professors Konrad Gries and Lillian Feder, both of Queens College of the City University of New York, and to Professor Cedric H. Whitman of Harvard University. I owe them equally my gratitude and acknowledgment of the fact that they are in no way responsible for any deficiencies this book may have. My editors at the Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Miss Joan Cenedella and Mrs. Carol B. Cutler, devoted many hours of patient and diligent work to the improvement of the manuscript, and I thank them for their collaboration.



THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD



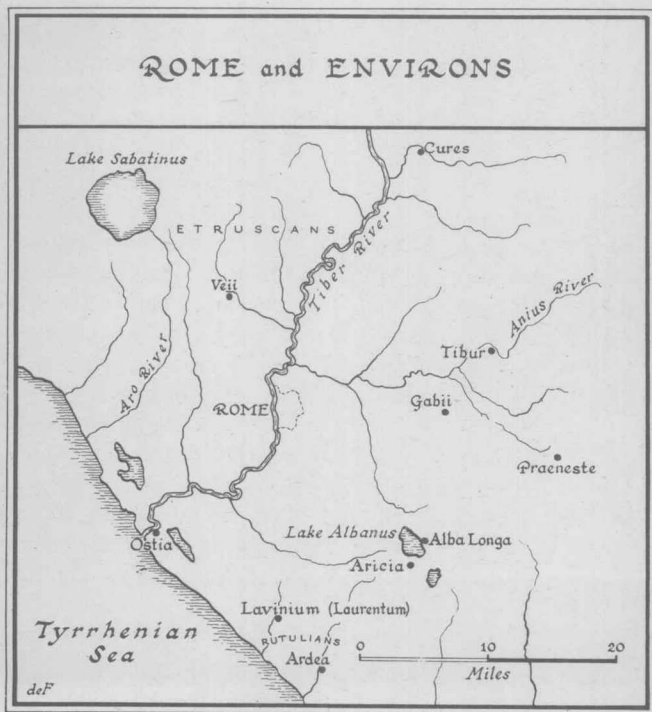
THE GREEK WORLD





ANCIENT ITALY





A

Abantes. A Euboean tribe. The Abantes were named for Abas, about whom little is known. Under Abas' son Chalcodon, they engaged in an unsuccessful struggle for power with Thebes. Chalcodon's son, Elephenor, later gave sanctuary in Euboea to the two sons of Theseus, king of Athens. Still later, he led the Euboean forces to the Trojan War. Large numbers of Abantes were among the Greek migrants who colonized various cities of Ionia, in Asia Minor.

Abas (1). A king of Argos. Abas, a son of Lynceus and Hypermnestra, was a great warrior and succeeded his father on the throne. He married Aglaea, a daughter of Mantineus, who bore him twin sons, Acrisius and Proëtus, and a daughter, Idomene. Abas also had a bastard son, Lyncus. Hyginus [*Fabulae* 244] mentions that Abas avenged Lynceus by killing Megapenthes, but nothing more is known of the incident. Abae, in Phocis, is said to have been named for Abas. [Apollodorus 2.2.1-2.]

Abas (2). A son of Melampus and Lysippe. Abas was the father of Coeranus and of Lysimache, who married Talaüs.

Abas (3). The eponym of the Abantes tribe of Euboea. Little is known of Abas except that he was the father of Chalcodon, the Euboean hero.

Abdera. A Thracian city near the mouth of the Nestos River (now the Mesta) opposite the island of Thasus. Abdera was founded by Heracles in honor of Abderus.

Abderus. A son of Hermes from Opus, in Locris. Abderus is generally said to have been a young lover of Heracles. Heracles left him to guard the notorious man-eating mares of the Bistonian king Diomedes and returned to find that the youth had been eaten. He built the city of Abdera in Abderus' memory.

Absyrtus. See APSYRTUS.

Abydus. A city on the Asian side of the Hellespont. Abydus, like many other cities on either side of the Hellespont, was allied with Troy in the Trojan War. It is better remembered, however, as the home of Leander, in the Hellenistic romance of Hero and Leander, than as the site of events in mythology.

Acacallis or **Acalle.** A daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë. Acacallis became pregnant by Apollo and was banished by her father to Libya. There she bore Amphithemis, who is also called Garamas. The Cretans claimed that she was also the mother, by Hermes, of Cydon, eponym of the Cretan city of Cydonia,

although the Arcadians say that Cydon was a son of Tegeates and migrated to Crete. Some say that Acacallis also had a son, Miletus, by Apollo. [Pausanias 8.53.4; Apollonius Rhodius 4.1489-1494.]

Acamas. A son of Theseus and Phaedra. When Theseus was exiled from Athens, Acamas and his brother Demophon were sent for safety to King Elephenor in Euboea. They grew up there and accompanied Elephenor to the Trojan War, where they were able to rescue their grandmother, Aethra, from Helen. On the return voyage Acamas stopped in Thrace and married Phyllis, daughter of the Bisaltian king. He declined the kingdom, which was offered as a dowry, and, leaving Phyllis behind, sailed away, promising to return at a specified time. As he left, Phyllis gave him a box which, she said, contained an object sacred to the goddess Rhea. She warned him never to open it unless he had given up the intention of returning. Acamas sailed to Cyprus and, finding it pleasant, settled there. When he did not return at the appointed time, Phyllis cursed him and hanged herself. Eventually Acamas opened the box and, terrified by its contents, galloped wildly away on his horse until he was thrown and died by falling on his own sword. According to another version of the tale, Acamas returned to Thrace. When he embraced the bare almond tree that grew on Phyllis' grave, it burst into leaf.

The same story is told of Demophon in some sources [Apollodorus "Epitome" 6.16-17; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 59, 243], but it conflicts in that case with the usual tradition that Demophon ruled Athens after Menestheus and also with the fact that a promontory in Cyprus was named for Acamas. On the other hand, Acamas was named by the Athenians among the eponyms of the ten tribes. [Apollodorus "Epitome" 1.18, 1.23, 5.22.]

Acarnan. A son of ALCMEON and Callirrhoë. After avenging their father's death, Acarnan and Amphoterus settled Acarnania with colonists from Epeirus.

Acarnania. That part of the Greek coastal territory on the Ionian Sea opposite the islands of Cephallenia and Leucas. Acarnania was traditionally settled by the sons of Alcmeon with colonists from Epeirus, to the north.

Acastus. A king of Iolcus. Acastus was the only son of Pelias, king of Iolcus. His mother was either Anaxibia, daughter of Bias, or Phylomache, daughter of Amphion. In defiance of his father's orders, Acastus sailed with the Argonauts under Pelias' enemy Jason. Some say that, on their return, Jason, after taking Iolcus, generously turned it over to Acastus. The more usual story is that Acastus and the Iolcans expelled Jason and his wife, Medea, for their treacherous murder of Pelias. In any case, Acastus' first act as king was to hold funeral games for his father, which were attended by all the Argonauts. Later, he went on the Calydonian boar hunt.

Acastus married Astydameia or else Hippolyte, daughter of Cretheus, and had three daughters—Laodameia, Sterope, and Sthenele—and sons whose names are unknown. PELEUS [A, C], Acastus' fellow Argonaut, came to Iolcus after murdering Phocus or accidentally killing Eurytion, and Acastus purified

him. When the guest spurned the advances of Acastus' wife, she told Acastus that he had tried to violate her. Acastus would not kill a man whom he had purified, but, as they were hunting on Mount Pelion, he stole Peleus' sword, hoping that the centaurs would kill him. The Centaur Cheiron saved Peleus, however, and he returned. With the aid of Jason and the Dioscuri, he destroyed Iolcus and killed Acastus' wife. Some say that he killed Acastus as well, but others claim that Acastus, or his sons, later exiled Peleus from his kingdom of Phthia. Acastus was still alive when LAODAMEIA's husband, Protesilaüs, was killed in the Trojan War. [Apollodorus 1.9.10, 1.9.16, 1.9.27, 3.13.2-3, "Epitome" 6.7; Pindar, *Nemean Odes*, 4.]

Acca Larentia. See LARENTIA.

Acestes. A king of Eryx, in western Sicily. Acestes, the son of a Trojan mother and the river-god Criniscus, was descended from Eryx, the eponym of his land. He entertained AENEAS [B] and his followers on their way to Italy. The less vigorous members of Aeneas' company remained in Eryx and founded a town that they named Acesta in the king's honor.

Achaea. A region of the Peloponnesus on the Gulf of Corinth between Elis and Sicyonia and north of Arcadia. Achaea was originally named Aegialus, perhaps for Aegialeus, an early king of Sicyonia. When the Thessalian Xuthus was banished from Athens, he settled in Aegialus with his sons, Achaeüs and Ion, and died there. Achaeüs went to Thessaly and succeeded, with the aid of Aegialian and Athenian allies, in recovering the throne that his father had lost. He named that part of Thessaly Achaea, for himself. Ion, meanwhile, began gathering forces to seize power in Aegialus, but King Selinus forestalled this move by marrying his only daughter, Helice, to Ion and adopting him as heir to the throne. Upon Selinus' death, Ion became king and renamed the land Ionia.

The sons of Achaeüs, Archander and Architeles, went to Argos and married Scaea and Automate, daughters of King Danaüs. The brothers became so influential there that the Argives were called Achaeans. Much later, at the return of the Heraclids, these Achaeans were driven from the region about Argos. They moved northward, under the leadership of Tisamenus, and offered to settle peaceably in Ionia. But the Ionians, fearing that Tisamenus' prestige would soon make him dominant in the state, refused his request. The Achaeans then invaded the land and drove out the Ionians, who took refuge in Attica. Tisamenus died in the fighting; his sons survived and renamed the land Achaea. They shared the rule with two Spartans of ancient lineage, Preuges and his son Patreus; the latter founded Patrae. (See also ACHAEANS.)

Achaea. A region in southern Thessaly. According to Homer [*Iliad* 2.681-685], this Achaea was near Phthia and Pelasgian Argos. These three territories participated in the Trojan War under Achilles' leadership. Achaea was named for Achaeüs, son of Xuthus, who had been expelled from Thessaly by his brothers. When Xuthus died, Achaeüs returned to Thessaly and, on the death of

Aeolus, regained his father's lost throne and renamed the territory for himself.

Achaeans. The inhabitants of either of the two Greek regions known as Achaea. Homer, however, regularly applied the name Achaeans (Achaioi) to all the Greek forces in the Trojan War; but he also said [*Iliad* 2.681-685] that the name was particularly used for a people of southern Thessaly who, together with two other local tribes, the Myrmidons and the Hellenes, were led to the Trojan War by Achilles. It is not known how common was Homer's broader use of the name. In spite of the respect generally shown to Homeric traditions, later writers generally used the name Hellenes to distinguish Greeks from foreigners. Many modern scholars assign arbitrary meanings to the two words, calling "Hellenes" all the Indo-European tribes that are believed to have invaded Greece from the north over a period of many centuries and reserving the term "Achaeans" for a particular wave in the tide of emigration. Just when the Achaeans arrived, to what degree they differed from earlier or later Hellenic groups, and what happened to them are questions that remain to be answered.

Greek traditions traced the Achaeans to the same source as the other main branches of the Hellenes: the family of Aeolus, king of Thessaly. Aeolus, a son of Hellen, gave his name to the Aeolians; the Dorians were named after his brother Dorus; Aeolus' nephews Ion and Achaeüs were eponyms of the Ionians and the Achaeans. According to Pausanias, writing a thousand years after the *Iliad* was written, Achaeüs ruled the Thessalian Achaea known to Homer. His sons emigrated to Argos and became so prominent there that they were able to rename the Argives Achaeans in honor of their father. The Greek troops at Troy were presumably called Achaeans because they were dominated by Argive leaders. At the time of the Dorian invasion, the Argive Achaeans were driven to the northern part of the Peloponnesus, known as Aegialus, and conquered it. They expelled the IONIANS and gave the region the name of Achaea, which it retained under the Romans.

Although it is hard to see why there is no mention of local Achaeans in the many myths of the southern Peloponnesus, the broad outlines of this tradition lend some support to the historical view that the people whom scholars call the Achaeans were a group of Hellenic tribes that entered Greece through Thessaly after the Ionian invasion and before that of the Dorians. During the last few centuries of the Mycenaean era, probably the fourteenth through the twelfth centuries B.C., they formed the ruling classes of many regions of Greece and, perhaps, of certain coastal areas of Asia Minor, where they came into contact with the Hittite Empire. They were the leaders of the Greeks who attacked Troy. The DORIAN invasion drove a considerable group of them to their last stronghold in the northern Peloponnesus, to which they bequeathed their name. Traditions recorded by Pausanias of relations between the rulers of Peloponnesian cities and the Dorian invaders suggest that, in many regions, the Achaean population, doubtless combined with many survivors from earlier in-