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Macar (*Μάκαρ*) or **Macareus** ('happy', 'blessed'). **1.** A king of Lesbos who is mentioned in the *Iliad*. He was either a son of Crinacus who settled on the island after the great flood or he was a son of Helios and Rhodos who left Rhodes for Lesbos after conspiring with some of his brothers to kill another brother, Tenages. His daughters were Methymna who married Lesbos, the eponym of the island, and Mytilene. [Diodorus 5.56.5, 5.57.2, 5.81.3-8; Hellanicus fr 137; Homer *Il* 24.544] **2.** A son of Aeolus, Hellen's son, who entered into an incestuous relationship with his sister Canace and committed suicide when it became known. In a version from a lost play by Euripides, he was a son of the *Aeolus who was keeper of the winds (whose six sons were married to their sisters in the *Odyssey*), and, after raping Canace and making her pregnant, he suggested to his father that he and all his brothers should marry their sisters. But when Canace was allotted to another brother, the true situation was revealed and Canace committed suicide. [Homer *Od* 10.6-7; Hyginus 242; Plutarch *Moralia* 312c-d] **3.** A priest of Dionysus at Mytilene who killed a man who had deposited some gold with him, and then stole the treasure. A short time later, the elder son of Macareus accidentally slit his brother's throat while they were imitating one of their father's sacrifices, and was killed in his turn by his mother when she saw him standing over his brother's corpse with a blood-stained knife. As soon as Macareus heard of this, he rushed home and killed her too. He was immediately arrested and confessed to his earlier crimes before being put to death. [Aelian *Varia Historia* 13.2]

Macaria (*Μακαρία* – 'happy'). Daughter of Heracles and Deianira. When the Athenians offered refuge to the *Heraclids, they received an oracle that they would defeat Eurysystheus (who had demanded that the Heraclids should be surrendered to him) if a girl of noble birth or, specifically, a daughter of Heracles would willingly sacrifice her life. Macaria volunteered, and took her own life by a spring at Marathon which was named after her. There was also a tradition that she quenched the flames on her father's pyre. [Euripides *Heraclids* 474-596; Pausanias 1.32.5; schol Plato *Hippias Major* 293a]

Machaereus (*Μαχαίρεύς* – 'man with a meat knife'). When sacrifices were offered at Delphi, it was the custom of the Delphians to divide and remove much or all of the meat with special knives. There was a tradition that *Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, met his death because he tried to prevent the Delphians from appropriating the meat while he was making a sacrifice there. In the resulting struggle, one of the Delphians, Machaereus ('Knife-man'), son of Daitas ('Feaster' or 'Divider'), killed him with his knife. [Apollodorus *Ep* 6.14; Pindar *Nem* 7.40-3 with schol]

Machaon (*Μαχάων*). Son of Asclepius and Epione. He and his brother Podalirius, who had inherited their father's skills in the art of healing, led the men of the Thessalian cities of Tricca, Ithome and Oechalia to the Trojan War in thirty ships. Machaon healed the wounded Menelaus with herbs that his father had acquired from Chiron and later, when Machaon was shot in the shoulder by Paris, Nestor rescued him from the battlefield at the urging of Idomoneus, who observed that one healer was more valuable than a number of other men. According to the *Little Iliad*, a later epic in the Trojan cycle, he cured Philoctetes of his snake-wound in the closing stages of the war and met his own death not long afterwards at the hands of *Eurypylus. In other versions he was killed by the Amazon Penthesilea or may have survived to enter Troy as one of the warriors in the *Trojan horse. His bones were recovered by Nestor, who took them back to the Peloponnese. He had a healing cult at Gerenia, the

Messenian city where Nestor had lived as a child. [Apollodorus *Ep* 5.1; Homer *Il* 2.729-33, 4.193-219, 11.506-20; Pausanias 3.26.9; *Little Iliad* 1, 8, 5]

Macris (*Μάκρις*). A daughter of Aristaeus. According to the local tradition, she reared the infant Dionysus on the island of Euboea, which was formerly known as Macris. The child was brought to her by Hermes, and she moistened his parched lips with honey; but when Hera noticed that Macris was rearing a son of Zeus, she expelled her from Euboea (which was sacred to the goddess). Macris went to Scheria, the land of the Phaeacians, where she lived in the sacred cave in which Jason and Medea later spent their wedding-night. Although Apollonius, our main source for this story, says nothing on the matter, his ancient commentators suggest that she took Dionysus with her and reared him in the cave. There was also a tradition that Hera was reared by a Macris in Euboea. [Apollonius 4.1131-40 with schol; schol Homer *Il* 2.535]

Maenads (*Μαινάδες* – 'mad women') also called **Bacchants**. The female companions of *Dionysus, whom he inspired with a divine madness and mass hysteria, due in part to his gift of wine. They followed him (or roamed on their own) through the countryside, and especially over Mount Cithaeron near Thebes, wearing wreaths of ivy, carrying the thyrsus (a wand with vine-leaves twined round it and topped with pine-cones), shrieking or playing hypnotic music on flutes and tambourines. They could be dangerous, stealing or hunting animals, tearing them to pieces and eating them raw, and they caused the deaths of both *Orpheus and *Pentheus. But they themselves were constantly pursued by *Pan and his satyrs, who also followed Dionysus; processions of maenads with their heads thrown back, hair streaming, thyrsus in hand or satyrs chasing maenads were favourite subjects of vase-paintings. [Euripides *Bacchae*; Ovid *Fasti* 4.458, *Met* 11.22-41; Vergil *Aen* 4.300-3]

Maeon (*Μαίων*). **1.** Son of Haemon and a grandson of Creon. When *Tydeus visited Thebes on an embassy before the outbreak of hostilities in the Theban war, fifty of the Thebans under the command of Maeon and Polyphontes ambushed him on his return journey. But Tydeus killed all of them with the sole exception of Maeon, whom he spared in response to signs from the gods. Later, when Tydeus was killed in the fighting at Thebes, Maeon saw to his burial. According to the lost *Antigone* of Euripides, Antigone married Haemon and Maeon was their child. [Apollodorus 3.6.5; Homer *Il* 4.385-400; Pausanias 9.18.2] **2.** Because Homer was known as Maeonides, some claimed that he was the son, adopted son or grandson of a certain Maeon, in one account a king of Lydia. [Pherecydes fr 167; ps. Plutarch *Life of Homer* 3]

Maera (*Μαῖρα* – 'sparkling'). **1.** Daughter of Proetus, a son or grandson of Sisyphus, and Anteia. She wanted to remain a virgin and accompanied Artemis as a huntress, but, after she was seduced by Zeus and gave birth to a son, Artemis shot her because she no longer joined in the hunt; in some accounts, however, she died while still a virgin. It would seem that this was the Maera who was seen by Odysseus in Hades. [Homer *Od* 11.326; Pherecydes fr 170; Pausanias 10.30.2] **2.** A daughter of Atlas who became the wife of Tegeates, founder of Tegea in Arcadia. [Pausanias 8.48.6] **3.** A dog belonging to *Icarius which led his daughter Erigone to his body after he had been killed by Athenian peasants. After she had buried her father, Erigone hanged herself, and Maera kept the wild animals away from her body until he died of hunger; alternatively, in his distress at the death of Erigone, he jumped into a spring called Anigros and polluted its waters. Zeus or Dionysus rewarded his fidelity by transferring him to the stars as the constellation Canis, or, according to a tale from Ceos, he was turned into the

dog-star Sirius which scorched the Cean land to punish the people for receiving his father's murderers. *See* Constellations **36, 36a** .

Magna Mater. *See* Great Mother.

Magnes (*Μάγνης*). The eponym of Magnesia on the Thessalian coast. There were three claimants to this title: **1.** A son of Aeolus and Enarete who married a naiad and fathered two sons, Polydectes and Dictys; they settled in Seriphos and were famous for their association with Perseus. [Apollodorus 1.7.3, 1.9.6] **2.** A son of Zeus by Thyia, daughter of Deucalion, and so the brother of Macedon. [Hesiod fr 7] **3.** The son of Argus, Phrixus' son, and Perimele, the daughter of Admetus; in some accounts, he was the father or grandfather of Hymenaeus, and also the father of Pierus. [Antoninus 23; Apollodorus 1.3.3]

Maia (*Μαῖα* – 'good woman'). A daughter of Atlas by Pleione or a mountain nymph, and the mother of *Hermes. She was shy of company and lived apart from gods and mortals alike in a deep shady cave on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia. Zeus fell in love with her and used to make secret visits to her at dead of night while Hera was asleep. She bore him a son, Hermes, who set out to rustle the cattle of Apollo on the day of his birth; when Maia scolded him on his return he told her that he had no wish to spend his life in a remote and gloomy cave. Despite her son's complaints, her cave was not devoid of luxury, for it was well stored with tripods and cauldrons and it contained, furthermore, closets filled with nectar and ambrosia, gold and silver, and Maia's many robes, some purple and some silvery-white. According to one tradition, Zeus took the infant *Arcas to Maia after his mother's death and asked her to rear him. [Apollodorus 3.8.2, 10.1-2; Hesiod *Theog* 938-9; *Homeric Hymn Hermes*]

Manes. *See* Di Manes.

Manto (*Μαντώ* – 'prophet'). The daughter of the Theban seer Teiresias who was herself a gifted seer. When the *Epigoni captured Thebes, they sent her to Delphi because they had made a vow that they would dedicate the finest of the Theban spoils to Apollo. In one account, they sent her together with her father who died on the way. The Delphic oracle told her and other prisoners from Thebes to found a colony in Asia Minor. After crossing the Aegean, they arrived at Claros (near Colophon) where they were captured by some Cretans who had established a colony there, but when they told *Rhacius, the leader of the Cretans, why they had come, he accepted them as citizens of his colony and took Manto as his wife. In another version, she was told to marry whomever she met as she was emerging from the oracle, and this turned out to be Rhacius, who took her across the sea to Colophon. The seer *Mopsus was her son by Rhacius (or by Apollo). She founded a famous oracle of Apollo at Claros, but wept so bitterly for the fate of her native city Thebes that a spring was formed there from her tears. In a lost play by Euripides, she had two children by *Alcmaeon. There was a stone known as Manto's seat in the temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes. [Apollodorus 3.7.4, 3.7.9; schol Apollonius 1.308; Pausanias 7.3.1, 9.33.1]

Marathon (*Μαραθών*). The eponym of Marathon in north-east Attica. A son of Epopeus, the ruler of the lands around Sicyon and Corinth, he went into exile to escape his father's violence and settled in the region of Marathon. Although he returned home after the death of his father to divide the kingdom between his two sons, Sicyon and Corinthus, he then went back to his adopted homeland. According to another tradition, Marathon was named after an Arcadian of that name who accompanied the Dioscuri when they invaded Attica to recover Helen after her abduction by Theseus. On the advice of an oracle, he allowed himself to be sacrificed in front

of the whole army to ensure its victory. Marathon was sometimes described as a son of Apollo. [Pausanias 2.1.1, 1.15.4; Plutarch *Thes* 32]

Mares of Diomedes. *See* the eighth *labour of Heracles.

Maron (*Μάρων*). Son of Euanthes; a priest of Apollo at Ismaros in Thrace who appears in the *Odyssey*. Out of respect for his office, Odysseus protected Maron and his family when he sacked Ismaros after the end of the Trojan War, and the grateful priest gave him a quantity of gold, a silver mixing-bowl and twelve jars of unmixed sweet wine. Odysseus later used some of this wine to reduce the Cyclops *Polyphemus to a drunken stupor. Because of his wine, Maron came to be associated with Dionysus in the later tradition, and he was sometimes said to have been a son of Oenopion (a son of Dionysus) or even of Dionysus himself. He appears in the late Dionysian epic of Nonnus as an ageing and rather disreputable son of Silenus who accompanied Dionysus to India. [Euripides *Cyclops* 139-43; Hesiod fr 238; Homer *Od* 9.196-211; Nonnus 15.141, 19.167]

Marpessa (*Μάρπησσα* – 'seizing'). Daughter of Evenus, an Aetolian king, and Alcippe or Demonice. *Idas abducted her to Messenia in a winged chariot and her father killed himself after failing to catch up with them. When Apollo, who also wanted to marry her, discovered them together in Messenia, he raised his bow against Idas and tried to take her away from him; but Zeus intervened and allowed her to make her own choice. Fearing that Apollo would abandon her in her old age, she chose to marry Idas; and she bore him a daughter, Cleopatra, who became the wife of Meleager. According to Pausanias, she killed herself when she heard that her husband had been killed in a dispute with the *Dioscuri. [Apollodorus 1.7.8; Homer *Il* 9.553-60 and schol 557; Pausanias 4.2.7]

Mars or **Mavors**. An early Roman god of agriculture and of war, who took over much of the mythology of the *Ares, the Greek god of war. Because war was so vital a part of Roman life, however, Mars was more important than his Greek counterpart, and had some mythology of his own. The birth of Ares from Hera was retold as a virgin birth of Mars from Juno, assisted by a flower provided by *Flora; then the submission of Mars to Venus (an adaptation of the affair between Ares and Aphrodite) was interpreted by Lucretius as the triumph of peace and love over war. Following the Greek tradition of foundation myths, the god consorted with a mortal woman (a Vestal virgin called Ilia or *Rhea Silvia) and fathered twin boys (Romulus and Remus); they grew up in obscurity and as adults were founders of the city of Rome. According to a tale in Ovid Mars loved Minerva, and employed the old Italian goddess *Anna Perenna to intercede for him; she claimed to have brought Minerva to him as a veiled bride, but on raising the veil he discovered that it was the aged Anna herself.

The festivals of Mars were held in his month of March, a key time for agriculture and for preparations for war, related also perhaps to Mars as patron of young men. The woodpecker ('picus') and the wolf were sacred to him and his titles included Gradivus ('marching out'), Silvanus ('of the woodland') and Ultor ('the avenger'); Augustus dedicated a temple to Mars under this last name, Mars Ultor, for his victory over the murderers of Caesar. The drilling ground for soldiers outside the city-gates, the Campus Martius, was named after him, and other Latin tribes claimed a connection with the god – the Sabines, Marsians, Marrucians and Mamertines. The twelve priests of Mars were called Salii and performed war dances at the beginning and end of a military expedition. They were dressed as soldiers and carried shields ('ancilia'), one of which was an original that was said to have fallen from the sky as a gift from the gods and the other eleven were copied from it as a means of protecting the original from theft. The planet Mars ('star of Mars') has its circuit between that of Jupiter and Mercury, and

its reddish fiery colouring was recognised. [Cicero *ND* 2.53, 3.59, 62; Lucretius 1.31-79; Livy 1.20.4; Ovid *Fasti* 3.74-99, 677-96, 5.255-6; *Met* 15.861-2; Vergil *Aen* 1.274, 9.566, 717,] See Ares.

Marsyas (*Μαρσύας*). A Phrygian Satyr or Silenus who challenged Apollo to a musical contest; he was named variously as the son of Olympus, Hyagnis, or Oeagrus (all mythical musicians). He played on the double flute (or, in some accounts, on shepherd's pipes) invented by Athena. Because Hera and Aphrodite had made fun of her when she played her flute, Athena had visited Mount Ida and viewed her reflection in a spring as she blew into the instrument; when she had found that it caused her cheeks to puff out and made her look ugly, she discarded her flute, and it was later recovered by Marsyas. In one account, Marsyas himself warned her that the flute distorted her face. After long and careful practice, Marsyas became such a skilful player that he dared to measure his skill on the flute against Apollo's on the lyre. Apollo agreed to compete with him on the understanding that the winner should do what he liked with the loser, and duly won, though more by ingenuity than skill. For he played his instrument upside down and challenged Marsyas to do the same, which was naturally impossible on a wind instrument. In one account, the god resorted to this trick after the Muses had initially judged in favour of Marsyas. When each of the contestants played his own instrument, Marsyas was judged the superior, but then Apollo changed the rules and won the contest by singing in harmony to his lyre. After defeating Marsyas, Apollo tied him to a tree and stripped him of his shaggy hide, or asked a Scythian to do so. His skin could be seen in the market-place at Celaenae in southern Phrygia. Herodotus, our earliest source for Marsyas, mentions that his hide was exhibited there and that Apollo had flayed him, but makes no reference to a musical contest. It was said that the River Marsyas, a tributary of the Maeander that rose at Celaenae, was first formed from the blood of Marsyas, or, in Ovid's version, it was formed from the tears of the nymphs, satyrs and local people who mourned his death. [Apollodorus 1.4.2; Diodorus 3.59.1-5; Herodotus 7.26; Hyginus 165; Ovid *Met* 6.382-400; Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.2.8]

Mecisteus (*Μηκιστεύς*). Son of Talaus and Lysimache, and a brother of Adrastus, king of Argos. According to the *Iliad*, he came to Thebes for the burial of Oedipus and defeated all the Thebans in the funeral games. He is sometimes said to have been one of the seven Argive champions during the first Theban War (although he is not included in most surviving lists). Since Herodotus mentions that he was killed at Thebes by *Melanippus, he probably played a role in the war in early epic. His son Euryalus was one of the *Epigoni. [Apollodorus 3.6.3; Homer *Il* 23.677-80; Herodotus 5.67; Pausanias 9.18.1]

Medea (*Μήδεια* – 'cunning woman'). Daughter of Aeetes, king of Colchis, and Eideia, and a granddaughter of Helios (the Sun); she was an enchantress who became the wife of *Jason after helping him to fulfil the tasks imposed on him by her father and thus win the golden fleece. When Jason arrived at her father's court, Aphrodite caused Medea to fall in love with him, and she told him to rub his body and his shield, spear and sword with a special ointment which would make him invulnerable to the fire breathed by the bronze-hoofed bulls and to the weapons of the warriors who sprang from the dragon's teeth; she also advised him to throw a stone or stones amongst the latter to provoke them to fight amongst themselves. As a result, he was able to accomplish the seemingly impossible tasks. During the following night Medea fled from the palace to join the Argonauts, and helped Jason to seize the fleece by lulling the guardian serpent to sleep with her incantations and magical potions. (In some accounts, however, Jason killed the snake without Medea's assistance.) As dawn arrived, she embarked on the *Argo* with Jason and sailed away from her native land with the *Argonauts.

At the suggestion of Jason, Medea had seized her infant brother Apsyrtus from the palace; and, when Aeetes set out in pursuit, she cut up the child and threw the pieces of his body into the water, causing her father to fall behind as he delayed to gather them up. In the later version by Apollonius, Apsyrtus joined the pursuit as a grown man and Medea lured him into an ambush to be killed by Jason; *see* Apsyrtus. In any event, Zeus was angered by the murder of Apsyrtus, and the Argonauts were told to sail to the island of Circe in the western Mediterranean for purification.

After their visit to Circe, the Argonauts called in at the island of the Phaeacians (here identified with Corcyra). It happened that some of the Colchians who had set out in pursuit of the Argonauts called in at the same time and asked the king, Alcinous, to surrender Medea, threatening war if he refused. After consultation with his wife Arete, Alcinous decided that he would allow her to be returned to her father if she were still a virgin, but not otherwise. So before he could announce his decision to the Colchians, Arete hastily arranged for Medea to marry Jason and spend the night with him in the sacred cave of *Macris, which was afterwards known as the cave of Medea.

When the Argonauts finally arrived at Jason's native city of Iolcus, Medea contrived the death of Pelias to avenge his ill-treatment of her husband and father-in-law *Aeson. She went to the palace, won the confidence of the daughters of Pelias, and persuaded them that she could rejuvenate their ageing father. To demonstrate her powers, she slaughtered and dismembered a ram, and restored it to life again as a lamb by boiling its remains in a cauldron together with some magic potions. The princesses, who were thoroughly convinced, chopped up their father and put him into the cauldron, but Medea made no use of her magical powers on this occasion and he did not revive. His son Acastus saw to his burial and expelled Jason and Medea from the land; alternatively Jason gained possession of the kingdom, but handed it over to Acastus of his own free will and departed with Medea. Although it is often suggested in later sources that Medea merely tricked the princesses into believing that she had revived the ram, a genuine rejuvenation was well within the powers of the sorceress of the earlier tradition. In the *Returns*, an early epic in the Trojan cycle, she turned the aged Aeson into a vigorous young man by boiling herbs in a golden cauldron, and some even said that she rejuvenated her husband.

In most accounts Jason and Medea went to Corinth after their departure from Iolcus (although there was an epic tradition that they went to the island of Corcyra). Creon, king of Corinth, offered them refuge and they lived happily together until Jason wanted to strengthen his position in the city by putting Medea aside and marrying the king's daughter, Glauce. Incensed by his treachery and ingratitude, Medea sent her two children to the palace with a poisoned robe and diadem as gifts for the bride. When Glauce put them on, they burst into flame, causing her to die and her father too when he tried to come to her rescue. Medea completed her vengeance on Jason by killing their own two children after agonising over her love for them and the desire to cause Jason the greatest hurt; she then went in triumph to Athens in a chariot drawn by winged dragons provided by her grandfather Helius.

Such was the account in Euripides' *Medea*, which became the standard version in later times. According to the local tradition, however, the two sons of Medea were killed by the Corinthians themselves, who stoned them to death because they had taken the fatal presents to Glauce; *see* Mermerus. The early Corinthian poet Eumelus has a different account in which Medea herself became the ruler of Corinth, in conjunction with her husband, for Helius had originally awarded Corinth to her father, and it was ruled by a collateral line after his departure to Colchis; when this line died out, the Corinthians invited Medea to become their ruler. She bore a number of children to Jason while she was there, but as each was born, she buried it away in the precinct of Hera in the hope of making it immortal. In the event they all died, and when Jason found out, he refused to forgive her and sailed back to Iolcus. Faced

with these circumstances, Medea too decided to leave and transferred the throne to Sisyphus. In a later variant, the Corinthians killed the seven daughters and seven sons of Medea because they objected to being ruled by a foreigner and a sorceress.

According to Euripides' *Medea*, *Aegeus, king of Athens, had met Medea as he was passing through Corinth after consulting the Delphic oracle about his failure to have children. Without revealing her grisly plans, she had persuaded him to promise her refuge in Athens if she used her potions to cure him of his childlessness. After her arrival in Athens, she married him, or at least lived with him, and bore him a son Medus. When her position and the prospects of her son were subsequently threatened by the arrival of *Theseus, the son whom Aegeus had previously fathered at Troizen, she persuaded Aegeus that the newcomer was plotting against him. Although Aegeus tried to cause his death by sending him out against the bull of Marathon and then offering him a drink containing poison provided by Medea, he discovered his son's identity just in time and Medea's intrigue was exposed.

When Medea and her son were then banished from Athens by Aegeus or his son, she returned to her native Colchis, and ended her days there. Finding that her father had been expelled from his throne by his brother Perses, she or her son killed Perses and restored the throne to Aetes. There was also a tradition that she married an Asian king and that Medus was her son by that marriage. *See* Medus. Some said that she contracted a posthumous marriage with Achilles and lived with him in the Isles of the Blessed or on *Leuce. [Apollodorus 1.9.23-8, Epit 1.5-6, 5.5; Apollonius 3-4 and schol 4.814; Diodorus 5.51-2, 4.54-6; Euripides *Medea* with schol 10, 264 and arg.; Hyginus 21-7; Ovid *Met* 7.297-349; Pausanias 2.3.7-8, 8.11.2-3; Pherecydes fr 32, 113; Plutarch *Thes* 12]

Medon (*Μέδων* – 'ruling'). **1.** An illegitimate son of Oileus by Rhene, and the half-brother of the Locrian *Ajax, but Medon was not associated with him because he had to go into exile at Phylace in Thessaly after killing a relative of Eriopis, the wife of Oileus. He later set out for Troy with *Philoctetes' contingent, and took command of it when Philoctetes was abandoned at Lemnos on the outward journey. Aeneas killed him in the final year of the war. [Homer *Il* 2.716-28, 13.693-7, 15.332] **2.** A herald at the court of Odysseus who looked after *Telemachus when he was a child. Although he worked for the suitors during the absence of Odysseus, he informed Penelope of their plans to kill Telemachus. When Odysseus massacred the suitors, Telemachus asked that Medon should be spared. [Homer *Od* 4.675-715, 22.357-8] **3.** Son of Codrus, king of Athens. When he quarrelled over the succession with his younger brother Neileus, who refused to accept him as king because he was lame in one foot, the Delphic oracle adjudicated in favour of Medon. But it was often said that Codrus was the last king of Athens and that Medon took power as the first *archōn* ('senior magistrate'). [Pausanias 7.2.1]

Medus (*Μήδους*). Son of Aegeus and *Medea, he the eponym of the Medes, whose empire lay to the south-west of the Caspian Sea. When Medea was expelled from Athens for trying to kill Theseus, she fled to Asia with her son, and he conquered the native peoples in the area, which then was known as Media. In some accounts, he first went to Colchis with Medea and restored her father Aetes to the throne by killing Perses, a brother who had displaced him. In early epic, however, Jason and Medea were said to have had a son Medeus, who may also have been regarded as the eponym of the Medes. According to a conflicting tradition in a further complication recorded by Diodorus Medea travelled to Phoenicia after leaving Athens and then to the area later known as Media, where she married the king and bore him a son Medus, who succeeded to the throne and named the people after himself. [Apollodorus 1.9.28; Diodorus 4.55.7-56.1; Hesiod *Theog* 1001; Hyginus 27]

Medusa (*Μέδουσα*). One of the three *Gorgons. When *Perseus had to fetch a Gorgon's head, he took that of Medusa because she alone was mortal. As he cut her head off, Pegasus and Chrysaor, two children whom she had previously conceived by Poseidon, sprang from her body. Hesiod says that she had slept with the god on a soft meadow amongst spring flowers, and, according to later authors, she had been exceptionally beautiful, with lovely hair as her crowning glory. But Athena transformed her into a monster and the hair into snakes either because of her seduction by Poseidon (in one version this had taken place in the goddess's temple) or because she claimed to rival the goddess in beauty. Medusa's head could turn anyone who looked on it into stone even after Perseus had cut it off; he used it against Polydectes and the people of Seriphos and, in some accounts, against Phineus, Proetus and others; *see* Perseus. Some said that the poisonous snakes of Libya sprang from the drops of her blood that fell to ground as Perseus was flying over Africa. *Sterope later kept a lock of her hair to protect her native city, and *Asclepius used some of her blood to revive the dead. The Argives claimed that Medusa's head was buried under a mound by the market-square in Argos. In early epic Jason and Medea were said to have had a son Medeus, who may also have been regarded as the eponym of the Medes. [Apollodorus 2.4.2-3; Apollonius 4.1513-7; Hesiod *Theog* 274-83; Ovid *Met* 4.790-803; Pausanias 2.21.5; Pindar *Pyth* 10.44-8] (**GIII**)

Megaera (*Μέγαιρα*). One of the *Erinyes, also known as Fates or Furies. her name is first given in Vergil's *Aeneid*. [Apollodorus 1.1.4; Vergil *Aen* 12.845-8]

Megapenthes (*Μεγαπένθης* – 'greatly grieving'). **1.** The only son of Proetus and Stheneboea. Proetus gave him this name because of he was greatly distressed by the madness of his daughters, the *Proetides. Megapenthes succeeded Proetus as king of Tiryns, but when *Perseus inherited the throne of Argos after accidentally killing his father Acrisius, he asked Megapenthes to exchange Tiryns for Argos because he had no desire to succeed to his father's kingdom after causing his death. When Megapenthes died, Argos passed to his son Anaxagoras. [Apollodorus 2.4.4; Pausanias 2.16.3] **2.** The son of Menelaus by a slave woman, Pieris or Tereis or Teridae. He was given this name because there was great distress in Menelaus' household after the abduction of Helen. After his return from Troy, Menelaus married him to a Spartan woman, the daughter of a certain Alektor. As an illegitimate son he had no claim to the Spartan throne, and Menelaus was succeeded by his nephew Orestes. According to a Rhodian tradition, he and Nicostratus drove Helen into exile after the death of Menelaus, causing her to seek refuge at Rhodes. [Apollodorus 3.11.1; Homer *Od* 4.10-14, 15.99-123; Pausanias 2.18.5, 3.19.9]

Megara (*Μεγάρα*). Daughter of Creon, king of Thebes, and the first wife of Heracles. Creon offered her to Heracles as a reward for his valour in defeating the Minyans of Orchomenus, who had been exacting a tribute from the Thebans. She bore several sons to her husband (although there was no agreement on their names and the number is usually three but sometimes seven), but he killed all of them by hurling them into a fire during a fit of madness sent on him by Hera, or according to Euripides, in three separate slayings. It was to atone for this crime that he performed his twelve labours. Although he was sometimes said to have killed Megara at the same time, it was generally assumed that she survived and that Heracles dissolved their marriage, which was clearly doomed, after completing his labours. He then passed her on to Iolaus as a reward for his help during the labours. In the *Odyssey*, she was one of the celebrated women who were seen by Odysseus in Hades. (Euripides *Heracles*; Apollodorus 2.4.11, 7.8; Homer *Od* 11.269-70; Hyginus 32]

Megareus (*Μεγαρεύς*). Son of Poseidon and Oenope, daughter of Epopeus (or a son of Onchestus, Hippomenes or Aegeus), he gave his name to Megara on the western border of Attica. According to the Boeotian tradition, he was a Boeotian from Onchestus who came to the aid of Nisus, king of Megara, when Megara was attacked by Minos; after he was killed in battle, he was buried in the city, which was then named Megara instead of Nisa as previously. But, according to the Megarians, Megareus married Iphinoe, daughter of Nisus, and lived under the rule of his father-in-law until he succeeded him; later, when his son Euippus was killed by the lion of Cithaeron, Megareus offered his daughter Euaechme and the succession to anyone who killed the lion, and this was achieved by *Alcathous. [Apollodorus 3.15.8; Pausanias 1.39.5, 1.43.4-5]

Meges (*Μέγης*). A son of Phyleus and Ctimene or Timandra. Meges was one of Helen's suitors and led the men of Dulichium and the Echinadian islands (at the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf) to Troy in forty ships. He makes occasional appearances in the *Iliad*, which mentions his prowess as a spear-man; and in the *Sack of Troy*, a later epic in the Trojan cycle, he was wounded in the arm by a Trojan called Admetus during a night attack. He was shipwrecked and killed during his return voyage. [Homer II 2.625-30 and passim; Pausanias 10.25.2]

Melampus (*Μελάμπους* – 'black foot'). Son of Amythaon and Eidomene and brother of Bias, Melampus was famous for his prophecies. He was born at Pylos in Messenia and acquired his prophetic powers while he was living in the countryside nearby. When his servants had killed some snakes which had made their home in a tree outside his house, he cremated their bodies and reared their offspring; the young snakes later crept up to him while he was asleep and purified his ears with their tongues, giving him the power to understand the voices of birds and animals. In another version of the story, he once went to stay with a king called Polyphontes, who killed a snake after it had crept forward and killed his attendants during a sacrifice; Melampus buried it and reared its young, which rewarded him by licking his ears and so giving him prophetic powers. He also learned how to make use of sacrificial victims for divination, and profited from a meeting with Apollo by the banks of the River Alpheius to become the finest diviner of his day.

Melampus made good use of his newly acquired powers when his brother Bias asked for his help in winning a bride, for Bias wanted to marry Pero, the daughter of the king of Pylos, who had so many suitors that her father Neleus had promised her to the one who brought him the cattle of Phylacus, which were kept under close guard in Thessaly. Melampus predicted that he would be caught as he tried to steal them, but that he would come to possess them after he had been imprisoned for a year. Bias was captured and kept under guard just as he had predicted, and, when the year was nearly over, he learned from a conversation between two wood-worms in the roof of his cell that they had almost eaten through the roof-beam. He called at once to the couple who were guarding him and asked them to carry him out. They picked up his bed, the man grasping the head of it and the woman its foot; and as just as they were leaving the room, the ceiling collapsed killing the woman, who had ill-treated Melampus during his captivity. The surviving guard informed Phylacus, the owner of the cattle, of all that had happened. Realizing that Melampus was an excellent diviner, Phylacus asked him to cure his son, *Iphiclus; he had been gelding some rams when he had chased after his young son with the bloodstained knife in his hand, and had given the boy such a shock that he had become impotent. Melampus promised to cure Iphiclus in return for the cattle, and then offered a sacrifice to Zeus and summoned all the birds. A vulture told him the cause of the young man's impotence and disclosed that he would be cured if rust were scraped from the

knife and given to Iphiclus in a drink for ten consecutive days. When the cure was duly achieved, Melampus drove the cattle of Phylacus to Pylos as the dowry for his brother's bride.

According to the *Odyssey*, Melampus went into exile a short time later after taking revenge on Neleus, who had seized much of his property during his absence, but it was commonly accepted in the later tradition that he was invited to Argos some time afterwards to cure the daughters of Proetus (or the Argive women generally). In the account by Pherecydes, Proetus, king of Tiryns in the Argolid, offered Melampus a share of his kingdom and the choice of one of his daughters in marriage if he would cure his daughters of their madness, which had lasted for ten years. Since Hera had inflicted the madness on them after they had mocked her temple by comparing its poverty with the wealth of their father's palace, Melampus achieved the cure by appeasing the goddess with supplications and sacrifices, and then chose Iphianassa as his wife. In another tale, Melampus cured a wider outbreak of madness which was inflicted on the women of Argos by Dionysus during the reign of Anaxagoras, the grandson of Proetus. As a reward for his services, Melampus demanded that Anaxagoras should divide the kingdom into three and give equal shares to himself and to Bias. According to Herodotus, our earliest source for the story, Melampus had first demanded half of the kingdom for himself and raised the demand when the Argives came back to him later after they had rejected his original terms.

The account offered by Apollodorus combines these two stories which were of separate origin into one. When Melampus demanded a third of the kingdom for curing the daughters of Proetus and the king refused to pay such a price, not only did the madness of his daughters grow worse, but the other women of Argos went mad also, and they abandoned their homes, killed their children and ran off into the wilderness. Under these circumstances, Proetus agreed to pay the demanded fee, but Melampus then demanded a share for Bias also. Melampus and some of the young men of Argos pursued the women with loud cries and ecstatic dancing, and chased them out of the mountains and into Sicyon. Although the eldest daughter of Proetus met her death during the pursuit, the other two were cured and married Melampus and Bias. *See* Proetides.

By his wife Iphianassa (or Iphianeira, a sister of Anaxagoras) Melampus had several children including Antiphates and Mantius. He thus became the founder of an Argive royal line and the ancestor of some famous seers, notably Amphiaraus, Polyidus and Theoclymenus. [Apollodorus 1.9.11-12, 2.2.2; Diodorus 4.68.4-6; Herodotus 9.34; Homer *Od* 11.281-97, 15.225-48; Pausanias 2.18.4; Pherecydes fr 33, 114]

Melaneus (*Μελανεύς*). A son of Apollo; the founder of Oechalia (variously located in Euboea, Thessaly and Messenia) which was named after his wife Oechalia. His son Eurytus was famous for his conflict with Heracles, who later sacked Oechalia. He and his descendants were particularly skilled in archery. [Hesiod fr 26; Pausanias 4.2.2, 3.10]

Melanion (*Μελανίων*). Son of Amphidamas, an Arcadian king. According to the Arcadian tradition, he was the suitor of Atalanta who won her hand in a bridal race and was subsequently transformed into a lion together with his bride; *see* Atalanta. He and Atalanta were cousins, and Parthenopaeus was their son. [Apollodorus 3.6.3, .9.2]

Melanippe (*Μελανίππη* – 'black mare'). **1.** Daughter of Aeolus and *Hippe (or Hippo), the daughter of Chiron. She bore twin sons, Aeolus and Boeotus, to Poseidon. In one version of her story, she hid them in a cow-shed and her grandfather Hellen argued that they should be burnt in the belief that they were the unnatural offspring of one of the cows, but they survived and the truth about their birth was finally brought to light. In another version, her children were exposed and then reared by the wife of *Metapontus in Italy. Diodorus 4.67.3-4; Ennius

fr *Melanippe*; Hyginus 186] **2.** The sister of Hippolyte, Queen of the Amazons. In some accounts of the ninth *labour of Heracles, he captured her and then ransomed her to acquire the belt of Hippolyte. He caught her single-handedly in an ambush or he seized her at the end of a battle in which she had commanded the Amazons, although, according to another version, she was killed by Telamon, an ally of Heracles. [Apollonius 2.966-9; Diodorus 4.16] **3.** A name for the Amazon abducted by Theseus. *See* Antiope.

Melanippus (*Μελάλλιπος* – 'black horse'). Son of Astacus, a descendant of one of the *Sparti, he was a leading Theban warrior during the first *Theban war and killed two of the Argive champions, Mecisteus and *Tydeus. After Melanippus had inflicted a fatal wound on Tydeus, *Amphiaraus killed Melanippus; Athena was ready with an ointment to make Melanippus immortal but Amphiaraus thwarted her by cutting off the head, and tossed it to Tydeus, who swallowed down the brains as he lay dying. [Apollodorus 3.6.8; Ovid *Ibis* 427-30; Pausanias 9.18.1; Pherecydes fr 97]

Melanthius (*Μελάλλιος* – 'black flower'). A goatherd from Ithaca, who, although the son of Odysseus' faithful servant Dolius, sided with the suitors. As he was driving his goats to the palace to provide meat for the suitors, he met Eumaeus and the disguised Odysseus, whom he reviled and even kicked. Later, after he had provided the suitors with weapons from the store-room, he was tied up there on the orders of Odysseus. After the massacre of the suitors, he was punished by having his nostril, ears, hands and feet cut off, and his entrails drawn out and thrown as raw meat to the dogs. [Homer *Od* 17.212-57, 22.135-98, 22.474-7 and 20-21 *passim*]

Melantho (*Μελλιανθή*). **1.** A daughter of Deucalion. According to one account, she was the mother of *Delphus, who was conceived when Poseidon had intercourse with her in the form of a dolphin (*delphis*). [Ovid *Met* 6.120; Tzetzes *Lyc* 208] **2.** Daughter of Dolius and sister of Melantheus; a maidservant in the palace of Odysseus. Although Penelope had brought her up as if she were her own daughter, she sided with the suitors and slept with one of them, Eurymachus. She also abused Odysseus would have been included with the women who were hanged after the massacre of the suitors. [Homer *Od* 18.321-39, 19.65-95]

Melantheus (*Μελλιανθεος*). Son of Andropompus and Henioche and a descendant of *Nestor. When he and other members of his family were expelled from Pylos by the *Heraclids, he went to Athens, where he killed Thymoetes, the last descendant of Theseus to rule the city, and made himself king. In another version he lived in Athens as a private citizen until a war broke out between the Athenians and the Boeotians, and when it was decided that the issue should be settled by single combat between the king of Athens and Xanthus, the king of the Boeotians, Thymoetes was so alarmed that he offered the kingdom to anyone who would confront Xanthus, and Melantheus took up the challenge. As the two opponents were marching out to fight, Melantheus saw a phantom following Xanthus and cried out that he had broken the rules by bringing a supporter, and when Xanthus looked backwards in astonishment, Melantheus struck him with his lance and killed him. The Athenians commemorated this strange incident by offering annual sacrifices to Zeus the Deceiver. Melantheus welcomed the Ionians to Athens when they were expelled from their earlier home in the Peloponnese. He was succeeded by his son *Codrus, who was generally regarded as the last king of Athens. There was a tradition that the Delphic oracle had advised Melantheus to settle wherever feet and a head were set before him, and that when he called in at Eleusis, near Athens, the priestesses, who had eaten all the meat from the sacrifices, offered him all that was left – the feet and a head. [Athenaeus 96de; Conon 39; Herodotus 1.147, 5.65; Pausanias 2.18.7]

Meleager (Μελέαγρος). Son of Oineus (or Ares) and Althaea. On the day of his birth or soon after, the *Moirae (Fates) appeared in his mother's room and revealed that his life would come to an end when a log burning on the hearth was fully consumed. According to Hyginus, two of the Moirae declared that the child would be noble and brave, and the third, Atropos, that he would live only as long as the log remained unconsumed. Althaea immediately leapt up and snatched the log from the fire, and placed it in a chest for safe-keeping.

When Meleager set off to join the *Argonauts, Oineus asked his half-brother Laocoon and his brother-in-law Iphiclus to accompany his young son as mentors. According to Apollonius, he killed two warriors during a battle with the Doliones, and even offered, despite his youth, to perform the perilous tasks imposed by *Aeetes (which were subsequently achieved by *Jason). In a Hellenistic account recorded by Diodorus, he was even said to have killed Aeetes in battle. In early myth, however, he was famous for his role in a single adventure, the hunt for the *Calydonian boar. Artemis had sent this boar to ravage his father's Aetolian kingdom because Oineus had once forgotten her as he was offering sacrifices to all the gods; and Oineus or Meleager himself summoned the bravest heroes from all parts of Greece to hunt it down.

After nine days of feasting, they and Meleager set out for the chase. According to Bacchylides, the hunt lasted for ten days, and it was generally agreed that the monstrous boar wounded many of the hunters and even killed some of them, notably Ancaeus and Hyleus. According to Apollodorus, the boar was brought down in three stages: *Atalanta shot it in the back with an arrow, Amphiaraus struck it in the eye, and Meleager finally killed it by stabbing it in the side; in Ovid's account, Atalanta inflicted the first wound in the ear, and Meleager struck it in the back with a spear and then killed it by plunging his spear into its shoulder. It was agreed in almost all accounts that Meleager dealt the death-blow. Meleager awarded the boar's hide, the prize of honour which would normally go to the person who had killed it, to Atalanta who had struck the first blow. This became the cause of a dispute between Meleager and his maternal uncles, the sons of Thestius, who were aggrieved that the prize had been awarded to a woman; they tried to take it away from her, asserting that it belonged to them by right of birth if Meleager, who had actually killed the boar, chose not to take it. Meleager killed them in a fury and returned the hide to Atalanta. When Althaea heard that he was responsible for the death of her brothers, she was so angry that she took the log out of the chest and rekindled it, causing her son's death.

According to an alternative tradition, the dispute over the hide led to a full-scale war between Meleager and the Calydonians on the one side and the sons of Thestius and the Curetes or Pleuronians on the other. In the *Iliad*, which makes no mention of the log or of Atalanta, the conflict was provoked by Artemis as a further stage in her revenge on *Oeneus and his people, and the war progressed badly for the Curetes who were confined within their walls. But Althaea was so distressed by the death of one (or possibly more) of her brothers who had been killed during the hostilities that she prayed to Hades and Persephone for the death of Meleager, causing him to withdraw from the fighting in anger. The threat from the enemy grew ever more urgent while he remained in his house with his wife Cleopatra, and a succession of delegations visited him to beg him to rejoin the fight, first the priests, then his father, then his sisters and mother and his closest comrades, but only when his wife reminded him of the terrible fate that awaits a fallen city did he finally agree to fight. He warded off the enemy, and in subsequent accounts which follow this pattern, he met his own death in the fighting. There was also a version from early epic in which Meleager was shot down by Apollo as he was fighting against the Curetes, or, according to the lyric poet Bacchylides, he killed two of his uncles inadvertently during the fighting and his mother reacted by rekindling

the log. It was usually said that Althaea killed herself after the death of her son; for the fate of his sisters, *see* Meleagrides.

Meleager had married Cleopatra, daughter of Idas and Marpessa, and, in one early epic account, she bore him a daughter, Polydora, who became the wife of *Protesilaus, and some said that Parthenopaeus was Meleager's son by Atalanta. According to Bacchylides, Heracles met Meleager in Hades when he went down to fetch Cerberus and was so touched by Meleager's moving account of his premature death that he wept for the first time in his life; when he asked the dead hero whether he had an unmarried sister of a similar nature to himself, Meleager told him of his sister *Deianira, and she eventually became Heracles' second wife. [Apollodorus 1.8.2-3; Bacchylides 5.76-175; Diodorus 4.34; Hesiod fr 25; Homer *Il* 9.529-99; Ovid *Met* 8.270-546; Pausanias 10.31.2]

Meleagrides (*Μελεαγρίδες*). The sisters of *Meleager who so wept for their dead brother that Artemis took pity on them and changed them into guinea-fowl (*meleagrides*) by touching them with her wand. The goddess then transferred them to the island of Leros, where guinea-fowl were kept as temple-birds. But Dionysus intervened to save two of the sisters, Deianira and Gorge, who became the wives of Heracles and Andraemon respectively. [Antoninus 2; Ovid *Met* 8.526-46]

Melia (*Μελία*). **1.** A daughter of Oceanus who bore Phoroneus (otherwise regarded as earth-born) and Aegialeus to the Argive river-god Inachus. In some accounts, she was also the mother of Phegeus and Mycene. [Apollodorus 2.1.1; schol Homer *Od* 2.120] **2.** A daughter of Oceanus who bore Ismenius, the god of the river Ismenios near Thebes, and the seer Tenerus to Apollo. [Pausanias 9.10.5, 9.26.1; schol Pindar *Pyth* 11.5] **3.** A Bithynian nymph who bore Amycus to Poseidon. [Apollonius 2.4]

Meliae (*Μελίαι* – 'ash-trees'). The ash-tree nymphs. According to Hesiod, they were born from the drops of blood that fell to earth from Uranus' severed genitals. Although Hesiod states elsewhere that the bronze race sprang from Meliae, this could mean either from the trees or the nymphs, and in one tradition the human race as a whole sprang from ash-trees. As with other nymphs, Meliae sometimes cared for the young, and it was said that the infant Zeus was reared by the Meliae of Mount Dicte in Crete. [Hesiod *Theog* 186-7, *Works* 144-5; Callimachus *Hymn* 1.45-6]

Meliboea (*Μελίβοια* – 'honey-sweet shout'). **1.** A daughter of Oceanus; in some accounts, the wife of Pelasgus and mother of Lycaon. [Apollodorus 3.8.1] **2.** A daughter of Amphion and *Niobe. When the children of Niobe were shot by Artemis and Apollo because of their mother's arrogance, in one version Meliboea and Amyclas were spared because they prayed to Leto for help. Meliboea was so frightened by the massacre of her brothers and sisters that she turned pale, and was therefore known as *'Chloris' from then on. She and her brother went to Argos, where they built a shrine in honour of Leto; Meliboea was victor at the first *Heraean Games there. [Pausanias 2.21.10, 5.16.4]

Meliboeus (*Μελίβοιος*). The shepherd, named in a late source but not in Sophocles' play, who rescued the infant Oedipus after he had been exposed. [Suda *s.v.* Oedipus]

Melicertes (*Μελικέρτης* – 'honey-sweet power'). The younger son of Athamas and Ino. His mother jumped into the sea with him, or she threw him into a cauldron of boiling water and then jumped into the sea with her dead child; for the circumstances, *see* Athamas. Melicertes became a minor sea-god under the name of *Palaemon, and his mother was from then on

called Leucothea. A dolphin carried his body ashore, depositing it at Crommyon on the eastern shore of the Isthmus of Corinth. Sisyphus, king of Corinth, saw to his burial and founded the Isthmian games in his honour. [Apollodorus 3.4.3; Pausanias 1.44.11, 2.1.3]

Melisseus (*Μελισσεύς*). An early king of Crete and the father several daughters named variously as *Adrasteia, Ida, Cynosura, Amaltheia and Melissa who cared for the infant Zeus on Mount Ida. [Apollodorus 1.1.6]

Melissus (*Μέλισσος* – 'honey man'). A Corinthian, son of Habron. He had a handsome son Actaeon, who was killed as Archias, one of the *Heraclids, was attempting to abduct him. Melissus prayed to the gods for vengeance and then hurled himself from a cliff. When Corinth was struck by a plague and drought, the oracle ordered instructed the people to appease Poseidon and avenge Actaeon. As a result, Archias had to leave Corinth forever and sailed away to found Syracuse. [schol Apollonius 4.1212]

Meliteus (*Μελιτεύς*). Son of Zeus and the nymph Othreis, and the founder of Melite in south-eastern Thessaly. When his mother abandoned him in the woods for fear of Hera's jealousy, Zeus arranged for him to be fed by bees (*melissai*, hence his name). In obedience to an oracle that told him to rear his brother who was being nourished by honey, the shepherd Phagrus, a son of Apollo by the same nymph, recovered him and brought him up. [Antoninus 13]

Melpomene (*Μελπομένη*). One of the nine *Muses. She was patron of tragedy and had a tragic mask as her attribute. [Hesiod *Theog* 77]

Melus (*Μήλος* – 'apple' and 'sheep'). A Delian who appears in a late transformation myth. After he had settled on Cyprus, Cinyras, the king of the island, chose him as a companion for his son *Adonis and offered him a relative, Pelia, in marriage. When the young Adonis was killed, Melus hanged himself on an apple-tree (*melos*), which was named after him. Aphrodite turned him into the fruit of the tree and transformed his wife Pelia, who also hanged herself, into a dove (*peleia*). Their son Melus returned to Delos, and, because he was the first man to shear the wool from sheep and use it to make clothing, sheep (*mela*) were named after him. [Servius on *Eclogue* 8.37]

Membliarus (*Μεμβλίαρος*). Son of Poicles, and a Phoenician who accompanied *Cadmus in the search for Europa after she had been abducted by Zeus. When they arrived in the island of Calliste (i.e. Thera, modern Santorini) in the southern Aegean, Cadmus installed Membliarus there as ruler, with some Phoenician followers. Eight generations later, the descendants of Membliarus relinquished the throne to *Theras, a direct descendant of Cadmus who named the island after himself. [Herodotus 4.147; Pausanias 3.1.7-8]

Memnon (*Μέμνων* – 'steadfast'). Son of Eos (Dawn) and Tithonus, and one of the last important allies of the Trojans during the Trojan war. He was king of the Ethiopians, and, in the earliest tradition, his kingdom would have been situated in a mythical eastern region at the edges of the earth as appropriate for a son of the Dawn, but most surviving sources place his kingdom in Syria or Persia. Herodotus regarded Susa, the administrative capital of the Persian empire, as the city of Memnon, and this remained a favourite choice. Some claimed that Memnon was a vassal of *Teutamus, who reigned at Susa; however in later times, when the Ethiopians came to be identified primarily with the black peoples of Africa, some authors explained that Memnon was an African king who had led an army of Ethiopians into Asia and established himself at Susa or elsewhere.

Memnon played a leading role in the *Aethiopsis*, the epic that followed the *Iliad* in the Trojan cycle, arriving at Troy with his Ethiopian followers after the death of the Amazon Penthesileia. As the son of a goddess and the owner of a suit of armour fashioned by Hephaestus, he resembled Achilles and provided a worthy opponent for him in his last heroic duel. Although the details of the story have been lost, we know that Thetis told Achilles about him and that he killed *Antilochus and many others before he was slain in turn by Achilles. Since Antilochus was an intimate friend of Achilles, the plot of the *Aethiopsis* bore some resemblance to that of the *Iliad*, in which another such friend, Patroclus, was killed by a major opponent and then avenged by Achilles. There was a story, similar to that of *Eurypylyus, that Priam had bribed Tithonus to send his son to Troy by sending him a golden vine.

At the request of Eos, Zeus conferred immortality on Memnon. His corpse was buried by the River Asopus in the Troad, carried there by the winds, according to the late epic of Quintus of Smyrna. For the birds that fought a battle over his tomb, *see* Memnonides. Ovid was the first author to suggest that the tears of Eos for her dead son are the source of the morning dew. One of the two gigantic statues outside the temple of Amenophis III at Luxor in Egypt was known to the Greeks as the colossus of Memnon, and was said to make a mournful sound each morning when it was struck by the light of the rising sun. [Apollodorus *Ep* 5.3; Herodotus 5.54; Ovid *Met* 13.578-622; Pausanias 1.42.2; Pindar *Pyth* 6.28-42; Proclus on *Aethiopsis*; Q Smyrnaeus 2; Servius on *Aeneid* 1.493]

Memnonides (*Μεμνονίδες*). The birds of *Memnon. After the death of her son Memnon, Eos asked Zeus to grant him some special honour to bring consolation to her in her grief. All at once a host of birds rose from the ashes on Memnon's funeral pyre and flew around it three times, uttering a piercing lament on each circuit. On the fourth circuit, they divided into two flocks which fought a violent battle until all the birds had fallen back into the ashes as a funeral offering to the dead hero; the battle of the birds was repeated each year. In other accounts, the companions of Memnon were transformed into birds as they grieved for the dead hero, and each year, on the anniversary of his death, they would honour Memnon by sprinkling dust or water on to his grave and by fighting their battle in the air above. Some said that they spent the rest of the year in Memnon's Ethiopian homeland. [Dionysus *Av* 1.8; Ovid *Met* 13.600-62; Pausanias 10.31.2; Q Smyrnaeus 2.549-85; Servius on *Aen* 1.751]

Memphis (*Μέμφις*). A daughter of the Nile. She became the wife of *Epaphus, the son who was borne to Zeus by Io after she had wandered from Argos to Egypt; Epaphus founded the city of Memphis in his wife's name. She bore him a daughter Libya, who became the mother of Agenor and Belus, the ancestors of the two main branches of the Inachid family. [Apollodorus 2.1.4]

Menelaus (*Μενέλαος* – 'strength of the people'). Son of *Atreus, king of Mycenae, and Aerope (or of Pleisthenes, son of Atreus, and Cleola), and the younger brother of *Agamemnon. Although little is recorded about his early life in surviving sources, the basic pattern is clear. When Aegisthus killed Atreus to place his father *Thyestes on the Mycenaean throne, Menelaus left Mycenae with Agamemnon and, either at once or subsequently, the brothers took refuge with *Tyndareus, king of Sparta. Menelaus married *Helen, and later succeeded to the throne of Tyndareus, who was left without a male heir after the departure of the *Dioscuri; and Agamemnon had recovered the Mycenaean throne when he and Menelaus ousted Thyestes. According to the Byzantine scholar Tzetzes, the two brothers were rescued by their nurse after the murder of Atreus and taken to Polyphides, king of Sicyon, who sent them on to Oeneus in Calydon; not long afterwards Tyndareus (who was in exile in Calydon after Hippocoön had expelled him from Sparta) took them back to the Peloponnese. When

they both subsequently returned to Mycenae, Thyestes took sanctuary at the altar of Hera and was allowed to depart after he had sworn an oath that he would remain in exile on Cythera.

For the story of how Menelaus came to be chosen above the other suitors as the husband of Helen, *see* Helen. They had a daughter Hermione soon after their marriage and, in some accounts, a son Nicostratus after the Trojan war. Their life passed without incident until *Paris arrived in Sparta. Having no reason to suspect that he had come with dishonourable intentions, Menelaus entertained him at his palace for nine days, and on the tenth, when he had to depart for Crete to attend the funeral of his grandfather Catreus, Menelaus left Paris in his wife's care, asking her to provide him with all that he required. But while he was away, Paris not only abducted his wife but much of his treasure too. As soon as Iris, the divine messenger, informed him of all that had happened, Menelaus hurried back to Greece and asked Agamemnon to assemble a force for an expedition against Troy, which involved all the former suitors of Helen, according to the oath which they had sworn to Tyndareus. Menelaus himself visited Pylos to enlist the aid of Nestor, and they travelled through much of Greece gathering allies. At this period, Menelaus is said to have fathered an illegitimate son, Megapenthes ('Great Distress') by a woman of the palace. For the part Menelaus played in the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter at Aulis *see* Iphigenia.

Menelaus led the Lacedaemonians to Troy in sixty ships. Just before or shortly after the landing, he and Odysseus visited Troy as ambassadors to seek the return of Helen and the stolen treasures. Although they received a hospitable reception from Antenor, their demand was rejected by the Trojan assembly. Menelaus played a significant role in the battle-scenes in the *Iliad*. He agreed to settle the dispute by single combat with Paris and soon gained the upper hand, seizing Paris by his helmet and dragging him toward the Greek lines, but he was robbed of victory by the intervention of Aphrodite, who cut the chin-strap of Paris' helmet and enveloped him in a mist to remove him from the battlefield. Not long afterwards, Pandareus broke the truce by shooting an arrow at Menelaus, who suffered no more than a superficial wound because Athena turned the arrow from its course; subsequently he had to be restrained from engaging with Hector. Menelaus wounded Helenus and killed three other Trojans in the fighting around the ships; and he and Meriones carried the body of Patroclus from the battlefield.

After Paris had been killed by Philoctetes, Menelaus mutilated his body. He entered Troy as one of the warriors in the Trojan horse, and, during the sack of the city, he and Odysseus hurried to the house of Deiphobus, who had married Helen after the death of Paris. He found Helen there and took her back to the Greek ships after killing Deiphobus. According to a tradition from early epic, he had intended to kill her, but he was so overwhelmed by her beauty when he caught sight of her naked breasts that he threw his sword down. Some said that he intervened when the Greek troops wanted to stone her.

After the sack, Menelaus quarrelled with Agamemnon in front of the army, arguing that they should make an immediate departure rather than delay to appease Athena for the sacrilege committed by the Locrian *Ajax. As a result of their disagreement, he departed before Agamemnon, and passed safely across the Aegean with Nestor and Diomedes. But, as he and Nestor were passing the southern tip of Attica, he delayed to bury his steersman, Phrontis; when he resumed his voyage, his fleet was caught by a storm off Malea at the south-eastern tip of the Peloponnese. He divided the fleet into two, and some of the ships were driven to Gortyn in Crete and wrecked, but Menelaus was carried safely to Egypt with the other five ships, and he remained in that area for some years amassing large quantities of treasure. He wandered around much of the southern Mediterranean during this period, visiting Cyprus, Phoenicia, Libya and even Ethiopia.

When he wanted to return home, he was becalmed for twenty days at Pharos, an island near the mouth of the Nile, until Eidothea, the daughter of *Proteus, took pity on him and

advised him to interrogate her father, the old man of the sea. Menelaus and three of his companions wrapped themselves in seal-skins and lay in wait in the cave where Proteus took his noontide nap amongst the seals, and when Proteus lay down to sleep, they seized him and kept a tight grip on him despite his many transformations. He then revealed that the gods would grant a safe passage to Menelaus and his companions if they offered appropriate sacrifices to Zeus and the other gods before embarking. Menelaus finally arrived back in Sparta eight years after the war and just after Orestes had avenged the murder of Agamemnon by killing Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. (For the tradition that the Helen at Troy was merely a phantom and that Menelaus recovered the true Helen at the court of Proteus, king of Egypt; *see Helen*).

Menelaus resumed his life with Helen at the palace at Sparta as if her infidelity and the long years of war were no more than a distant memory. The gracious tenor of their life is portrayed in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*. Proteus had prophesied to Menelaus that he would be exempt from death because he was married to a daughter of Zeus, and that when the time came for him to die, he would be transferred to Elysium to live a life of bliss. In early epic and elsewhere, Menelaus was generally depicted as a brave man and a worthy leader, although he was somewhat overshadowed by Agamemnon, but in Attic tragedy he was sometimes presented in a less favourable light, as a Spartan who was tainted with the arrogance, cruelty and lack of scruples that the Athenians liked to attribute to their traditional enemy. [Apolodorus 3.10.8, *Ep* 5-6; Euripides *Andromache*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Orestes*, *Troades*; Herodotus 2.112; Homer *Il* 2.581-90, 3.21-94 and *passim*, *Od* 3 and 4 *passim*; Sophocles *Ajax*;

Menestheus (*Μενεσθεύς* – 'divine strength'). Son of Peteos, he was a descendant of Erechtheus and thus a member of the Athenian royal line. The Dioscuri made him king of Athens when they came to recover Helen after she had been abducted by *Theseus. When Theseus returned from Hades and his sons had fled to Euboea, Menestheus drove him from Athens, and Theseus took refuge in Skyros, where he died. Menestheus was sometimes presented as a rabble-rouser who sowed discontent among the people to further his advance to power, in contrast to Theseus as a constitutional ruler who cared for the common good. Menestheus led the Athenians to Troy in fifty ships, and, according to the *Iliad*, no one apart from Nestor could rival him in the art of marshalling chariots and warriors. There was disagreement on his subsequent fate. He may have been killed at Troy, and Acamas and Demophon, the sons of Theseus, recovered their father's throne, or he returned safely to Athens and continued to rule there; in another version he went to Melos and ruled there instead. [Apolodorus *Ep* 1.23-24, 6.15; Homer *Il* 2.546-556; Plutarch *Thes* 32-5]

Menippe (*Μενίππη*). *See* Metioche.

Menoceus (*Μενοικεύς* – 'strength of the house'). **1.** The son of Oclaus, and a member of a side-branch of the Theban royal family descended from Pentheus, he was the father of Creon, king of Thebes. [Apolodorus 3.5.8; schol Euripides *Phoenissae* 942] **2.** Son of Creon and Eurydice. During the *Theban war (1), the seer Teiresias (or the Delphic oracle) announced that the safety of Thebes would be secured only if Menoceus willingly sacrificed himself for the city, for Ares, who still needed to be appeased for the slaying by *Cadmus of his dragon, demanded the death of a man who was descended from the Sparti through both parents and had never slept with a woman, and only Menoceus fulfilled these requirements. Although Creon tried to prevent him from obeying the oracle, Menoceus managed to escape his supervision and hurled himself from the walls, falling to his death at the place where the

dragon had been killed, or else he killed himself in front of the gates. His grave lay near the Neistian gate. [Euripides *Phoenissae* 911ff; Pausanias 9.25.1]

Menoetes (*Μενοίτης*). Son of Ceuthonymus, he was the herdsman of the cattle of Hades. After Heracles had stolen the cattle of Geryon in the island of Erytheia in the extreme west, Menoetes, who was pasturing the cattle of Hades in the area, informed Geryon. Later, when Heracles slaughtered one of the cattle of Hades in the Underworld to procure blood for the souls, Menoetes challenged him to a wrestling match. Although Heracles seized him round the middle and broke his ribs, Persephone intervened to save his life. [Apollodorus 2.5.10-12]

Menoetius (*Μενοίτιος*). **1.** Son of the Titan *Iapetus and the Oceanid Clymene. Hesiod says that Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt and sent him down to Erebus because of his presumption and arrogance, and, according to Apollodorus, it was during the conflict with the Titans. All the sons of Iapetus were hostile to Zeus when he was trying to establish his power, and were severely punished [Apollodorus 1.2.3; Hesiod *Theog* 507-16] **2.** Son of Actor and Aegina, and the father of Patroclus; he lived at Opus in central Greece. When Patroclus killed the son of Amphidamas in a quarrel over dice, Menoetius took him to Peleus in Thessaly to be brought up in exile. Apollonius and later authors include this Menoetius among the *Argonauts, and, according to local tradition, he was a friend of Heracles and inaugurated the annual heroic sacrifice offered to him at Opus, consisting of a boar, a bull and a ram. [Apollodorus 1.9.16; Diodorus 4.39.1; Homer *Il* 11.765-90, 23.83-90; Pindar *Ol* 9.69-70]

Menthe (*Μέντη* – 'mint'). A nymph of the Underworld. When Hades, who had previously been her lover, abducted Persephone, she boasted that she was more beautiful than Persephone and that Hades would soon come back to her. Persephone punished Menthe by transforming her into a mint plant, or else Persephone's mother Demeter trampled her into the earth and a mint plant sprang up at the spot. [Ovid *Met* 10.729; Strabo 8.3.14]

Mentor (*Μέντωρ*). Son of Alcimus, he was an Ithacan nobleman and a friend of *Odysseus. When Odysseus left for Troy, he asked Mentor to take charge of his household, and at the Ithacan assembly, Mentor dared to criticise the behaviour of the suitors. Athena regularly assumed his form when she wanted to advise or accompany Telemachus, but, when she appeared to Odysseus in the guise of Mentor to encourage him before the massacre of the suitors, he suspected that this was really the goddess. [Homer *Od* 2.226-51 and *passim*]

Mercury (lat. Mercurius – 'quicksilver'). The Roman god Mercury is almost indistinguishable from Hermes, his Greek counterpart. Like him he is child of Zeus/Jupiter and Maia, acts as patron of trade and rhetoric and messenger of the gods but also has the character of thief and trickster. He carries the magic wand called the *caduceus, a purse, winged sandals for speed and either his helmet of invisibility or a traveller's hat. Plautus made him the companion of Jupiter (and co-seducer) in his comedy on the seduction of Alcmene, the *Amphitryon*; Vergil elaborates on the details of his flight and landing as he comes to tell Aeneas to leave Dido. When Mercury was taking the gossiping Lara to the underworld on Jupiter's orders (after her tongue had been torn out) he fell in love with her, and she bore to him the twin Lares. his temple of mercury at Rome was in the commercial quarter, and erect 495 BC. The 'shining star' which is the planet Mercury circles below Mars and close to Venus. [Cicero *ND* 2.53, 3.56; Ovid *Fasti* 2.603-16; Plautus *Amphitryon passim*; Vergil *Aen* 4.238-278] See Hermes, Lar.

Meriones (*Μηριόνης*). A Cretan whose father, Molus, was either an illegitimate son or a brother of Deucalion, king of Crete. With *Idomoneus, the son and successor of Deucalion, as his senior partner, Meriones led the Cretans to Troy in eighty ships, and he is often mentioned in the battle-scenes in the *Iliad*. He wounded Deiphobus and killed or wounded several others, and he and Menelaus removed the body of Patroclus from the battlefield. As one of the finest archers in the Greek army, he won the archery contest at the funeral games for Patroclus; and he was fortunate in returning safely to Crete after the war. His grave was shown to visitors at Cnossos, where he was buried with Idomoneus and honoured with him in hero-cult. In the *Iliad*, he was the owner of the famous boar's tusk helmet, the design of which dated back to the Mycenaean era. [Diodorus 5.79.4; Homer *Il* 2.649-52, 10.260-71, 17.715-48, 23.850-83]

Mermerus (*Μέρμερος*). Son of *Jason and *Medea. When Jason planned to put Medea aside to marry Glaucus, the daughter of the king of Corinth, Medea sent Mermerus and his brother Pheres to Glaucus with the robe and diadem that burnt her flesh and caused her death; before taking flight to Athens, Medea killed the two children as a final act of vengeance against Jason. According to a local tradition, however, the Corinthians stoned the boys for taking the deadly gifts to Glaucus, and, when their own children began to die, an oracle told them to offer annual sacrifices to Medea's boys to atone for their murder, and to raise a monument to Deima, the god of terror. The sacrifices were continued (with children in black clothes and with shorn heads) until Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in the second century BC. In an early epic, the *Naupactia*, Jason left for Corcyra (Corfu) after the death of Pelias, and Mermerus was killed by a lioness while hunting. [Apollodorus 1.9.28; Pausanias 2.3.6-7, 3.8.9]

Merope (*Μερόπη*). **1.** Daughter of Atlas and Pleione, and one of the *Pleiades; she married Sisyphus, king of Corinth, and was the mother of Glaucus and grandmother of Bellerophon. Because she was ashamed at having been the only Pleiad to marry a mortal, she shines with a lesser brilliance in the star-cluster of the Pleiades than her sisters (although some said that the paler star was that of her sister *Electra. [Apollodorus 3.10.1; schol Homer *Il* 18.486] See Constellation **22a (Cii.)** **2.** Daughter of Oenopion, king of Chios, and Helice. Orion fell in love with her and cleared Chios of wild animals to win her father's favour, but Oenopion was reluctant to give his daughter to him and constantly deferred the wedding, until Orion broke into her bedroom one night in a fit of drunkenness and raped her. Oenopion caught him in the act and blinded him. [Apollodorus 1.4.3; ps.Eratosthenes *Catast* 32; Hyginus *Astr* 2.34; Parthenius 20] **3.** Daughter of Cypselus, king of Arcadia, and the wife of Cresphontes, the first Heraclid king of Messenia. After her husband and two eldest sons had been assassinated, the Messenian throne was seized by *Polyphontes, who forced Merope to marry him, but her surviving son *Aepytus, who had escaped, returned and killed his stepfather. [Apollodorus 2.8.5; Pausanias 4.3.6; Hyginus 137] **4.** The wife of Polybus, king of Corinth, who reared *Oedipus after he had been exposed on Mount Cithaeron by his father. She was otherwise known as Periboea. Oedipus grew up believing that she was his true mother, until it was revealed that this was *Jocasta. [Apollodorus 3.5.7; Sophocles *Oedipus* 775]

Meropis (*Μεροπίς*). The central figure in a transformation story by the Hellenistic poet Boios. Eumelus, an early inhabitant of Cos, had three children – Meropis, Byssa and Agron – who worshipped the earth and were consequently rewarded with abundant crops. They never mixed with other people, and, when the two sisters were asked to sacrifice to Athena and Artemis and Agron to pour libations to Hermes, Agron not only rejected the request but added insulting remarks about the gods. One night, the gods in question visited the family in human disguise, and Hermes invited Agron and his father to a feast in his honour whilst Athena and

Artemis invited the two sisters to rites in their sacred grove; when the gods were greeted with contempt, they transformed all four of the humans into birds. Meropis became a little owl, Byssa a *byssa*, another type of owl, and Agron a *charadrios*, a species of plover; when Eumelus reproached Hermes for having transformed his son, the god turned him into a *nyktikorax* (night-raven), a bird which presages death. [Antoninus 15]

Merops (*Μέρωψ*). **1.** King of Percote on the Hellespont who had the gift of prophecy. His daughter Arisbe was the first wife of Priam, and Merops taught her son Aesacus the art of dream interpretation. Although he tried to persuade his sons Adrastus and Amplius not to fight for Troy, they ignored the warning and were killed by Diomedes. His other daughter, Clite, married Cyzicus. [Apollodorus 3.12.5; Homer *Il* 2.228-34, 11.328-34] **2.** A king of the Ethiopians who brought up *Phaethon, the son who had been borne to Helios (the Sun) by his wife Clymene. [Ovid *Met* 1.763; Strabo 1.33] **3.** Son of Triopas, he was an early king of Cos and his son gave the island its name. After the death of his wife, the nymph Echemeia (who had been killed by Artemis because she had stopped honouring the goddess), Merops was so grief-stricken that he wanted to kill himself, but Hera took pity on him. She transformed him into an eagle, and then placed him in the sky as the constellation Aquila (the Eagle). Alternatively *Rhea turned him into an eagle because he had entertained her at his home, and he continued to associate with the gods as the bird of Zeus. [schol Homer *Il* 24.293; Hyginus *Astr* 2.16] See Constellation **9**.

Messene (*Μεσσήνη*). Daughter of Triopas, an Argive king, and the wife of Polycaon, the first king of Messenia. As the younger son of Lelex, the first king of Laconia, Polycaon lived at Sparta as a private citizen until, at the urging of his proud and ambitious wife, he gathered forces from Laconia and Argos and founded a kingdom in the fertile territories to the west; he named the land Messenia after her. There was a temple in the main city which contained a magnificent statue of Messene made of gold and Parian marble. [Pausanias 4.1.1-2, 4.31.11 and passim]

Mestra (*Μήστρα*). The daughter of *Erysichthon, a Thessalian king. Poseidon became her lover and gave her the power to transform herself at will. She used this power to help her father, who was in constant need of money because Demeter had afflicted him with insatiable hunger. He raised money by selling her repeatedly as a slave to different masters, but she escaped and went home to him on each occasion by turning herself into an animal or bird. According to the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, Sisyphus acquired her from Erysichthon as a wife for his son Glaucus, and fell out with her father when she kept returning home (possibly in animal form); but it was not the will of Zeus that she should bear children to Glaucus, and Poseidon took her to Cos where he fathered a son, Eurypylus, by her. Some said that Bellerophon was her son by Poseidon. [Antoninus 17; Hesiod fr 43; schol Homer *Il* 6.191; Tzetzes *Lyc* 1391-6; Ovid *Met* 8.845-77]

Metabus (*Μέταβος*). **1.** Another name for *Metapontus. **2.** King of the Volscians of Latium, and the father of *Camilla. Because of his violence, he was expelled from his city of Privernum and lived in the wilds with his daughter. [Vergil *Aen* 11.539-66]

Metanira (*Μετάνειρα*). The wife of Celeus, king of Eleusis. When *Demeter visited Eleusis in the guise of an old woman, Metanira received her into her home and entrusted her son Demophon (or Triptolemus in some later accounts) to her care. [*Homeric Hymn Demeter* 160-288; Ovid *Fasti* 4.502-60]

Metapontus (*Μετᾶποντος* – 'overseas'). A son of Sisyphus or Alybas who gave his name to Metapontium, a Greek colony on the Tarentine Gulf in southern Italy. When he told his wife, Theano, that he would put her aside if she failed to have any children, she adopted two foundlings, Boeotus and Aeolus, and passed them off as her own sons. Subsequently, however, she gave birth to two sons of her own; and, because her husband favoured the first two, she finally revealed the truth to her genuine sons and persuaded them to attack the foundlings with their knives during a hunting-trip. But the foundlings, who were sons of Poseidon, overpowered and killed the sons of Theano with the god's aid, and Theano stabbed herself when her sons' bodies were brought to the palace. The foundlings fled to the shepherds who had originally discovered them, and Poseidon then revealed to them that they were his sons by *Melanippe. They rescued their mother, who had been blinded and imprisoned by her father for giving birth to them illegitimately, and took her to Metapontus. Poseidon restored Melanippe's sight and she told Metapontus of Theano's treachery; he then married her and adopted her sons. In another version the first wife of Metapontus was called Siris, and the attempt on the life of the foundlings was made by her brothers. [Athenaeus 523d; Hyginus 186] *See* Arne (1).

Methymna (*Μήθυμνα*). Daughter of Macareus or Macar and wife of *Lesbos, she gave her name to the second city of Lesbos. Her children were Hicetaon and Helicaon, who were killed when Achilles attacked the city of Methymna during the Trojan war. [Parthenius 21]

Metioche (*Μητιόχη*), with her sister Menippe, also called the **Coronides**. Metioche and Menippe were the two daughters of Orion who lived in Boeotia. When their land was struck by a plague, oracles advised that two maidens should sacrifice themselves to appease the gods below, and the daughters of Orion responded by crying out three times to them and then cutting their throats with the shuttles from their looms. Feeling pity for them, Persephone and Hades made their bodies vanish and caused two comets to rise up into the sky in place of them. Or according to Ovid, who seems to have misinterpreted his Greek source, two young men called the Coronae rose up from their ashes. [Antoninus Liberalis 25; Ovid *Met* 13.685-99]

Metion (*Μητίων* – 'planner'). Son of Erechtheus, king of Athens, and Praxithea. His eldest brother Cecrops succeeded to the Athenian throne, but Cecrops' son Pandion was later driven from the throne by the sons of Metion, who ruled in Athens until they were expelled in their turn by Pandion's sons. The ancient mythographers link Daedalus to the Athenian royal line by making him a grandson (through Eupalamus) of Metion or even his son, whereas the Sicyonians claimed that he was the father of their eponym, Sicyon. [Apollodorus 3.15.1-8; Pausanias 1.5.3-4, 2.6.3]

Metis (*Μῆτις* – 'wise counsel'). The personification of practical or cunning intelligence. According to Hesiod, she was a daughter of Tethys and Oceanus, and Zeus took her as his first wife because she was wisest amongst gods and mortals, and even though she tried to escape him by taking on many forms. But when Uranus and Gaia advised Zeus that she would give birth to two children, first a daughter who would be his equal in strength and understanding and then a son who would become king of the gods, he swallowed her, so that he would take in her outstanding intelligence, and only the daughter might survive. In due course *Athena, his clever and warlike child by Metis, was brought to birth, adult and fully armed, from his head.

In some later accounts, Zeus had intercourse with Metis after his marriage to Hera, being so annoyed when Hera brought Hephaestus to birth without sex that he resolved to do the

same, and achieved it in some sense by swallowing Metis and then producing Athena from his head. According to Apollodorus, Zeus enlisted the help of Metis to force Cronus to disgorge his swallowed children, and she provided a potion for that purpose. Some said that she made the aegis for Athena. [Apollodorus 1.2.1; Hesiod *Theog* 358, 886-900, fr 343]

Mezentius (*Μεζζέντιος*). 'Despiser of the gods', Mezentius was an Etruscan king who had been exiled by his people but had then become a strong ally of *Turnus in his fight against Aeneas and the Trojans after their landing in Italy. Despite reports of his cruelty from *Evander, the ally of Aeneas, Mezentius is shown as a brave fighter in the *Aeneid*, refusing to take unfair advantage. When he is wounded his son Lausus tries to protect him but is killed by Aeneas; Aeneas next turns on the wounded father, strikes his horse from under him, and then, when he is trapped under the animal, taunts him and delivers the death blow to his throat. In Ovid's version Mezentius joins Turnus on the promise of the year's vintage whereupon Aeneas vows the vintage to Jupiter; 'the better vow prevails', and Mezentius falls to Aeneas. [Ovid *Fasti* 4.880-96; Vergil *Aen* 7.647-54, 8.481-93, 10.729-908, 11.5-8]

Midas (*Μίδας*). The son and successor of Gordias, first king of the Phrygians. In some accounts his mother was the goddess Cybele. While he was an infant, ants carried grains of wheat to his mouth as a sign that he would be the richest of mortals. It was said that he sent his judgement throne to Delphi and so was the first foreigner to dedicate an offering there. Midas appears in three celebrated tales, two of them relating to the capture of the nature-spirit Silenus.

Midas arranged for the capture of Silenus because he wanted to interrogate him and learn from his wisdom. Silenus was caught in Phrygia in a state of drunkenness after Midas had ordered that wine should be mixed into the spring where he used to drink; in another version he was caught in Macedonia near the Gardens of Midas, a place which was famous for its wild roses. When Midas asked him what was best and most desirable for human beings, Silenus was unwilling to answer; but when he was forced to speak, he asked Midas why he was being forced to tell him what it was better for him not to know, for a life lived in ignorance of its own ills brings the least pain. Silenus then stated that it was best for men and women not to be born at all, and, if one is unfortunate enough to be born, the second best thing is to die as quickly as possible. Theopompus, a historian of the fourth Century BC, reported a speech by Silenus about various peoples who lived on the continent beyond the outer Ocean. All who lived there were reputed to be blessed by nature and prosperous, but when some men from one of the cities on the continent crossed over the Ocean to the land of the *Hyperboreans, they were so appalled at the wretched state of the people there who were regarded as the happiest in the world that they turned back and travelled no further.

The other story involving Silenus first appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While Dionysus was travelling through Phrygia with his retinue, Silenus became separated from the others because of his age and the amount of wine he had drunk, and he was captured by the local peasants who bound him with chains of flowers and took him to Midas. Recognizing him as a companion of Dionysus, Midas entertained him for ten days and nights and then returned him to Dionysus. In gratitude, Dionysus offered Midas the choice of whatever he wished, and the king asked that all that he touched should be turned to gold, and the wish was granted. In delight, Midas turned sods of earth, ears of corn, apples, the pillars of his doorways and even drops of water as he washed into shining gold. But when he tried to eat and drink, his food also turned to solid gold and his wine to a flow of molten gold. Tormented by hunger and thirst, Midas came to hate what he had so desired, and prayed to Dionysus to revoke his gift. The god told him to wash himself in the spring of the River Pactolus in the Lydian mountains; when he did so, he was cured of his strange affliction, and the power to

create gold passed from Midas to the river. Ever since, the sands of the Pactolus have been a rich source of gold.

As a result of these experiences, Midas learned to despise wealth, and he went to live in the country as a devotee of the god*Pan. One day, while singing on Mount Tmolus and playing his rustic music to the local nymphs, Pan made disparaging remarks about Apollo's music, and the two gods decided to compete with one another in a musical contest with Tmolus, the god of the mountain, as judge. When Tmolus declared that Apollo's lyre was superior to Pan's pipes, everyone agreed with his judgement with the sole exception of Midas, so to punish Midas for his lack of discrimination, the indignant Apollo changed his ears into those of an ass. In another version of the story, Apollo did this when Midas was chosen to judge the musical contest between Apollo and *Marsyas and decided in favour of Marsyas. Although Midas concealed his disfigurement by wearing a turban, his barber discovered his secret while cutting his hair and soon betrayed it in an unexpected way. Since the barber was unable to keep silent and yet too frightened to tell anyone else, he dug a hole in the ground and whispered the secret to the earth; after he had replaced the soil, the bed of reeds which sprang up at the spot repeated his words to all the world whenever they were rustled by the breeze, saying over and over again, 'Midas has ass's ears'. [Aelian *VH* 3.18, 12.45; Aristotle fr 44; Cicero *Div* 1.36; Herodotus 1.14, 8.138; Hyginus 191, 274; Ovid *Met* 11.90-193; Pausanias 1.4.5; Servius on *Aen* 10.142; Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.2.13]

Miletus (*Μίλητος*). A Cretan son of Apollo who founded Miletus on the west coast of Asia Minor. There were conflicting traditions about the name of his mother and the cause of his banishment from Crete. In one account, in which his mother was given as Areia, daughter of Cleochus, two sons of Europa, *Minos and *Sarpedon, both fell in love with him and competed for his favours; when Miletus preferred Sarpedon, Minos drove the pair of them into exile – Miletus settled in Caria and Sarpedon in Lycia. In another version the mother of Miletus was Acacallis, daughter of Minos, who exposed him in the wood for fear of her father. But Apollo arranged for him to be suckled and protected by wolves and then he was reared by some shepherds. Later, when his grandfather Minos conceived a passion for him, he fled to Caria on the advice of Sarpedon. Again, according to Ovid, Miletus was the son of a certain Deione, and he fled to Caria when the ageing Minos suspected that he was conspiring against him. In his new homeland, he married Eidothea, daughter of Eurytus, a Carian king, or Cyane, daughter of the local river-god Maeander, and fathered two children, Caunus and Byblis. [Antoninus 30; Apollodorus 3.1.2; Ovid *Met* 9.443-53; Pausanias 7.2.3]

Milky Way (*Γαλαξίας κύκλος*, Latin 'lacteus circulus'). The nature of this milky circle in the sky was explained in many different ways. The early atomist philosopher Democritus came closest to the truth when he suggested that it consists of a multitude of small stars packed closely together. As with the constellation myths, most mythical accounts of its origin were devised in the Hellenistic period. **1.** Hermes carried the newly-born *Heracles up to Olympus to be suckled by Hera, and, when the goddess realized that this was the illegitimate child of Zeus (or was informed of it by Hermes), she thrust him away and some milk spilled from her breast into the sky to form the Milky Way. In other versions Hermes (or Zeus or Athena) applied the child to her breast while she was asleep, and she thrust him away when she awoke, or Heracles suckled so greedily that he was unable to keep all the milk in his mouth or else caused Hera to push him away because of the pain. In all cases, Heracles was put to her breast at the will of his father Zeus to make him immortal, and Hera had to be tricked into suckling him because of her hostility to her husband's child. The episode inspired memorable paintings by Tintoretto and Rubens. Although a similar tale was told of Hermes, another illegitimate son of Zeus, that version never became as popular. **2.** In the late Dionysian epic of Nonnus,

Zeus asked Hera to offer her breast to Dionysus in India to make him immortal, promising to reward her by placing a circle in the heavens which would be known as Hera's milk. **3.** When Rhea gave Cronus a stone in place of the new-born Zeus, she pretended to suckle the supposed child to allay her husband's suspicions, and as she pressed some milk from her breast while doing so she produced the Milky Way. **4.** Although it was suggested at an early period that the Milky Way represents the track scorched into the sky by the sun in its daily passage, its position in the sky does not correspond to the path of the sun, and this discrepancy provided scope for the invention of mythical explanations. Perhaps the Milky Way represented the course that Helios (the Sun) originally followed before he altered his course in horror when *Atreus fed the children of *Thyestes to their father, or it represents the irregular course followed by *Phaethon when he tried to drive the chariot of Helios through the sky, or the trajectory of a star displaced by Phaethon during his wild journey. **5.** The Milky Way was also seen as the path followed by the gods when they ascend to Olympus. **6.** Eschatological speculations about the Milky Way were more serious in their intent. In this context it was supposed to be the path followed by the dead as they ascend to their final dwelling place, or it is itself the abode of the virtuous dead, and their souls are the source of its light. [Cicero *Dream of Scipio* (*Rep* 6.18-25); Diodorus 4.9.6; psEratosthenes 44; Hyginus *Astr* 2.43; Ovid *Met* 9.441-53; Pausanias 9.25.2; Plato *Tim* 41-2]

Minerva. An ancient Italian, perhaps Etruscan, goddess, she was patron of a variety of skills including those of craftsmen, poets, doctors and of women in the home. Minerva was easily assimilated to the Greek goddess Pallas Athena and took over her attributes and mythology; in one version of the final destiny of her statue, the *Palladium, it was kept at Rome under the protection of Vesta. Minerva had a temple near Rome on the Aventine which was the headquarters of craftsmen and writers, and a shrine on the Caelian Hill dedicated to her as Minerva Capta (but Ovid could not explain the name); her festivals were in March and in June (which was in particular a holiday for flute-players). Most importantly, she was, with Jupiter and Juno, the third in the triad of divinities worshipped on the *Capitol and in the main provincial cities. Athena's role as defender of the city was played down in Rome as the role belonged there more to Mars, so although Minerva is generally portrayed with a helmet on her head she is otherwise in civilian dress, holding in her hand an owl – the 'owl of Minerva' and symbol of her wisdom. [Cicero *ND* 1.83, 100, 2.67, 3.53, 59; Ovid *Fasti* 3.809-34] *See* Athena.

Minos (*Μίνως*). Son of Europa and Zeus, and the elder brother of *Rhadamanthys and *Sarpedon. After the death of Asterion, king of Crete, who had married Europa and had adopted her sons, Minos fought with Sarpedon for the throne and expelled him to Asia Minor. In other accounts, the two brothers quarrelled because both of them fell in love with the same boy, Miletus, and, when Miletus favoured Sarpedon, Minos expelled the pair of them. Again, it is said that they quarrelled and went to war over a boy called Atymnius. Since his claim to the throne in any case met with opposition, Minos prayed to Poseidon to provide divine confirmation by sending a bull from the sea, promising to sacrifice it to the god as soon as it appeared; but when the bull emerged, it proved to be such a magnificent animal that Minos mixed it in with his other cattle and sacrificed another instead. Enraged by the broken vow, Poseidon turned the bull wild and caused *Pasiphae, the wife of Minos, to conceive a passion for it. She consulted with *Daedalus, who built a wooden cow for her, and the bull mated with her as she crouched inside it, causing her to conceive the *Minotaur. The monster was then hidden away in the labyrinth, which was also built by Daedalus. In another version of this story, it had been the custom of Minos to pick out the finest bull from his herds each year for sacrifice to Poseidon, but one year this bull was so exceptionally beautiful that he sacrificed

another instead, and the god became angry with him for that reason. Minos and Pasiphae had four sons, Catreus, Deucalion, Glaucus, and Androgeos, and four daughters, Ariadne, Phaedra, Acalle (or Acacallis) and Xenodice. He also had several illegitimate children by the nymphs Paria and Dexithea, but he was less successful in his pursuit of *Britomartis. Pasiphae was so exasperated by his many infidelities that she put a spell on him, causing him to ejaculate snakes, scorpions and millipedes whenever he slept with another woman, with fatal effect on her. But one of his lovers, *Procris, cured him by means of a magical potion in exchange for two gifts –the dog Laelaps that always caught its prey, and a javelin that never missed its mark.

In view of the importance of Crete during the Bronze Age and its admired constitution in later times, it is understandable that Minos should have been regarded as an exceptionally wise and powerful ruler. The constitution was generally credited to Minos (although his brother Rhadamanthys was a competitor for the honour). There was a story that Minos used to visit Zeus in his cave on Mount Ida every ninth year to consult him directly about his law-making. As the first ruler to realize the potentialities of sea-power, he used his navy to extend his empire to the islands of the Aegean. (Thucydides drew a parallel between his Aegean empire and that of the Athenians in the classical period.) Minos gained such a reputation for his justice that he became the judge (or one of the judges) of the dead in the Underworld. In the *Odyssey*, he is described as seated with his golden sceptre in his hand and the shades of the dead clustered round him seeking judgements on their disputes; in other sources he was said to have judged those who were newly dead on their past lives. There was, however, a dissenting tradition, especially fostered at Athens, which presented Minos as a brutal tyrant.

The story of Minos' conflict with Athens was one of that most important elements in his mythology. The war was provoked by the murder of his son *Androgeos, who was killed in Attica during the reign of Aegeus after competing in the Panathenaic games. Minos was told of his son's death as he was sacrificing to the Charites (Graces) on the island of Paros. According to a local story which explained the Parian custom in such sacrifices, Minos removed the garland from his head and silenced the flutes, but continued with the sacrifice. Soon afterwards, he deployed his naval power to attack Athens, and met with some initial success when he captured neighbouring Megara, which was ruled by Nisus, a son of Pandion, the previous king of Athens. His victory was aided by the treachery of *Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, who fell in love with Minos and caused the death of her father by pulling out a purple hair on which his life depended. But Minos was less successful in the main war, which dragged on for a considerable time since the forces were evenly matched. He finally resolved the stalemate by praying to his father Zeus, who sent a famine and plague against the city. After an unsuccessful attempt to appease the gods by sacrificing the *Hyacinthides, the Athenians consulted the Delphic oracle, which advised them to compensate Minos for the death of his son in any way that he demanded. He asked that they should send seven boys and seven girls to Crete every nine years to serve as food for the Minotaur, and the tribute continued to be sent until the Minotaur was finally killed by *Theseus, the son of Aegeus. Rightly suspecting that *Daedalus had offered invaluable advice to Theseus, Minos threw him into prison together with his son Icarius, but they escaped on wings constructed by Daedalus. Although Icarius flew too high and was killed, Daedalus made his way to Sicily and took refuge at the court of *Cocalus in Camicos. Minos set off in search of him and travelled from land to land, producing a spiral sea-shell at every place that he visited and offering a reward to anyone who could draw a thread through it, for he believed that only Daedalus was clever enough to do so, and so would reveal himself. When Minos arrived at Camicos, Cocalus took the shell in secret to Daedalus, who solved the puzzle by tying a thread to an ant and sending it through the shell. As soon as Minos saw the threaded shell, he realized that Daedalus was hiding there and demanded his surrender. Cocalus promised to hand the fugitive over to him

and offered him his hospitality in the meantime, but while he was staying there, the daughters of Cocalus killed Minos by pouring boiling water (or in one account, pitch) over him as he was taking a bath. Some said that Daedalus helped in the murder by fitting a pipe into the roof above the bath as a conduit for the lethal liquid. [Apollodorus 3.1.2, 15.1, *Ep* 12-15; Diodorus 4.60-62; Herodotus 1.171; Homer *Il* 13.448-53, 14.322, *Od* 11.568-71; Pausanias 1.1.2-4, 17.3, 19.4; Plato *Gorgias* 523; Vergil *Aen* 6.432]

Minotaur (*Μινώταυρος* – 'Minos-bull'). A Cretan monster; the offspring of *Pasiphae, wife of *Minos, and a bull. Poseidon had inspired Pasiphae with a passion for the bull because Minos had failed to sacrifice it in accordance with a previous vow. She consulted with Daedalus, who built a wooden cow and told her to crouch inside it; and, after the bull had mated with her, she gave birth to a child with a bull's head and a human body. Although he was commonly known as the Minotaur, it was said that his proper name was Asterion or Asterius (which was the name of the adoptive father of Minos). He was shut away in the labyrinth, which was built by Daedalus at the request of Minos, and was fed on the boys and girls who were sent as a regular tribute from Athens. He was finally killed by *Theseus when the young hero was sent as a member of the tribute. [Apollodorus 3.1.3-4; Diodorus 4.77.1-4; Hesiod fr 145; Plutarch *Thes* 15]

Minyads (*Μινυάδες* – 'small women'). These were Leucippe, Arsippe and Alcathe, the three daughters of Minyas. When they chose to stay at home weaving rather than joining the other women of Orchomenus in roaming the mountains as *maenads, Dionysus visited them in the guise of a young girl and urged them not to scorn his rites. But they did not listen to him, and in his anger, the god turned himself into a bull, a lion and then a leopard, and caused nectar and milk to drip from the ceiling. The three sisters were terror-struck, and in a fit of madness brought on by the god they tore apart Hippasus, the young son of Leucippe, as a sacrifice to him. They then roamed the mountains with the other maenads, until Hermes touched them with his wand to turn them into a bat, an owl and a *byssas*, creatures which flee the light of the sun. According to Aelian, they were transformed after the other maenads had driven them away because they were polluted by the murder of the child. In the more restrained account by Ovid, there was no murder and they were turned into bats inside their house. [Aelian *VH* 3.42; Antoninus 10; Ovid *Met* 4.1-41, 4.388-415]

Minyas (*Μινύας* – 'small'). King of Orchomenus, an important Mycenaean centre in Boeotia who gave his name to the Minyans, a people primarily associated with the town. He was said to have been a son of Chryses and the father of Orchomenus, the eponym of the city, or a son of Poseidon by Hermippe, Orchomenus' wife. Since his city was proverbial for its wealth, it was assumed that Minyas himself must have been wealthy, and the Orchomenians pointed to his magnificent treasure-house – a Mycenaean bee-hive tomb. He was the father of the Minyads and of Clymene, wife of Phylacus or Cephalus, and of Elara, mother of Tityus. [schol Apollonius 1.230; Hesiod fr 30.75; Pausanias 9.36.3-4, 38.2; schol Pindar *Isth* 1.79]

Misenus (*Μισσηνός*). A trumpeter and companion of Hector who joined *Aeneas and the band of Trojans on their voyage to Italy to find a new homeland. When the ships had pulled into Cumae Misenus rashly challenged the gods to a musical contest, whereupon *Triton, who played a seashell type of trumpet, promptly drowned him. Before Aeneas could enter the Underworld with the Sibyl she told him to bury Misenus (as well as find the Golden bough). The description of the funeral rites of Misenus on the headland that was named after him is one of the most detailed accounts of an ancient burial that has survived. [Vergil *Aen* 6.149-235]

Mnemon (*Μνήμων* – 'remembering'). Knowing that her son Achilles was fated to die prematurely at the hand of Apollo if he killed a son of Apollo, Thetis told Mnemon to accompany him on the voyage to Troy to remind him continually of this; but when the Greeks attacked Tenedos, which was ruled by a son of Apollo called *Tenes, Mnemon forgot to remind him and so Achilles killed Tenes and ensured his own early death. On learning of his negligence, Achilles struck Mnemon in the chest with his sword and killed him. [Lycophron 240-3 with schol]

Mnemosyne (*Μνημοσύνη* – 'memory'). One of the Titans, daughter of Uranus and Gaia, and the personification of Memory. According to Hesiod, Zeus entered her bed far apart from all the other gods for nine successive nights, and she subsequently gave birth to the nine *Muses at Pieria near Mount Olympus. She was particularly respected and invoked by early poets, for they depended on memory and Mnemosyne represented the power which alone made it possible for detailed knowledge of events from the mythical past to be preserved. So it is that, when the young Hermes sings a theogony in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, he honours Mnemosyne before all the other gods. Hesiod mentions that there was a cult of Mnemosyne at Eleutherae on Mount Cithaeron; and she had cults elsewhere in conjunction with the Muses.

There are references in eschatological texts to a spring of Mnemosyne in the Underworld. Those who drank from it would retain their memory, whereas those who drank from the waters of *Lethe (Forgetfulness) would forget all that had happened to them in their past life. Those who consulted the oracle of *Trophonius had to drink successively from two neighbouring springs: that of Lethe, to clear their mind of past memories, and then that of Mnemosyne, to remember all that would be revealed to them on their descent. [Hesiod *Theog* 53-62, 135, 915-7; *Homeric Hymn Hermes* 429-30; Pausanias 9.39.4]

Mnestheus. A Trojan descended from Assaracus (an ancestor of Aeneas) who accompanied Aeneas to Italy. He figured in the boat-race in Sicily, one of the events in the funeral games celebrated in honour of Aeneas' father Anchises. In the incident Vergil suggested that the Memmii, a Roman family prominent in his own time, were descended from this Mnestheus. [Vergil *Aen* 5.116-248]

Moirae (*Μοῖραι*, Latin 'Parcae'). The Fates, the goddesses who appointed people's individual fates, especially with regard to the time of their death. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, they are described as the daughters of Nyx (Night), and, later in the poem, as daughters of Zeus and Themis. The latter genealogy suggests that their power was derived from Zeus as an aspect of right order. It seems to have been widely assumed, however, that the Moirae had a certain independent power, in the sense that Zeus or the other gods could not interfere with a person's *moira* or fate once it had been established. They were usually pictured as spinners who spun out the thread of a person's life and cut the thread to bring it to an end. It was generally accepted that they were three, and called Clotho (the Spinner), Lachesis (the Apportioner), and Atropos (the Unavertable).

The Moirae in person in mythical narratives on only a few occasions. Pindar occasionally introduced them into his poems, suggesting, for instance, that they attended the births of Artemis, Apollo and Iamus. Ovid is our earliest surviving source for the most famous story about the Moirae, that they appeared at or shortly after the birth of *Meleager and declared that his life would come to an end when a log burning on the hearth was fully consumed. In another incident, according to a tale from Aeschylus, Apollo plied them with wine to induce them to agree that another person could offer to die in place of *Admetus. Otherwise, Apollodorus reports that they contributed to the quelling of two early revolts against Zeus by

killing the Giants Agrius and Thoon with bronze cudgels, and by tricking Typhon into eating some fruits that diminished his strength. [Aeschylus *Eumenides* 723-8; Apollodorus 1.6.2-3, 8.2; Hesiod *Theog* 217, 901-6; Ovid *Met* 8.451-7; Pindar *Ol* 6.41-2]

Molionids (*Μολιονίδαι*). The twin brothers Eurytus and Cteatus, who were sons of Poseidon by Molione, wife of Actor. It was generally believed that they were joined together at the waist to form a composite being with two heads, four arms and four legs (although this is not directly stated in the earliest source for them, the *Iliad*). As nephews of Augeias, king of Elis, they came to his aid when he was attacked by *Heracles, and they wounded Heracles, forcing him to retreat. Finding that he was unable to defeat them in a fair fight, Heracles ambushed and killed them at Cleonae in north-western Argos as they were travelling to the Isthmian games. This was a serious crime because everyone involved in the panhellenic games was protected by a religious truce, and the Eleans demanded that Heracles should be executed. When the Argives rejected this demand and the Corinthians refused their subsequent request that Argos should be excluded from the truce associated with the games, the Eleans decided to stay away from the Isthmian games ever afterwards. In the *Iliad*, Nestor tells of their part in an earlier war, between the Eleans and the Pylians: at that time they were young and inexperienced and Nestor would have killed them if Poseidon had not shrouded them in a thick mist; they did however defeat Nestor later in a chariot race at the funeral games for *Amaryncus. Eurytus and Cteatus married TheraePHONE and Theronice, the twin daughters of Dexamenus, king of Olenus, and their respective sons, Thalpius and Amphimachus, were amongst the leaders of the Eleans at Troy. [Apollodorus 2.72; Homer *Il* 2.620-1, 11.709-52, 23.629-642; Pausanias 5.2.1-2]

Molorchus (*Μόλορχος*). A peasant who lived at Cleonae in the Argolid, south-west of Corinth. Heracles stayed with him before setting out on his first *labour, that against the Nemean lion (which had killed Molorchus' son). Molorchus wanted to slaughter his only ram in his honour, but Heracles told him to wait thirty days and then sacrifice it to Zeus the Saviour if he returned safely, or to Heracles himself as a dead hero if he failed to return. Heracles killed the lion on the final day, but he fell asleep afterwards and then had to hurry back to Molorchus, plucking some wild celery to make a ritual crown. He arrived back at the last moment as Molorchus was about to make the sacrifice to Heracles. The sacrifice was made to Zeus instead, and Heracles founded or reorganized the Nemean games, dedicating them to Zeus and establishing a crown of wild celery as the victor's prize. [Apollodorus 2.5.1; Vergil *Georg* 3.19 with Probus; schol Statius *Theb* 4.160]

Molossus (*Μολοσσός*). Son of Neoptolemus and Andromache, and eponym of the Molossians, a people of Epirus in north-western Greece. *Neoptolemus had travelled to their land after the Trojan war on the advice of Thetis (or of the seer Helenus) and established himself as their king. Andromache, who had been awarded to Neoptolemus as a slave during the division of the spoils at Troy, bore a son to him there, Molossus, and he ruled the after his father's death, and named them after him. For the story of an attempt on his life, *see* Hermione. [Apollodorus *Ep* 6.12; Pausanias 1.11.1-2]

Molus (*Μόλος*). The illegitimate son of Deucalion, king of Crete (or of his brother), and the father of Meriones, the companion of Idomoneus at Troy. There was an unusual festival at Crete in which the image of a headless man was exhibited. It was said that this represented Molus, whose body had been discovered without a head after he had tried to rape a nymph. [Apollodorus 3.3.1; Diodorus 5.79.4; Plutarch *Moralia* 417e]

Mopsus (*Μόψος*). **1.** Son of Rhacius (or Apollo) and *Manto, daughter of Teiresias. He acted as seer at the oracle of Apollo at Claros in Lydia in succession to Manto, and also expelled the Carians from the area; some regarded him as the founder of Colophon. When *Calchas, another famous seer, came to Colophon after the Trojan war, Mopsus defeated him in a divination contest. Calchas started the contest by asking Mopsus how many figs a certain tree was carrying, and Mopsus replied that it was carrying ten thousand, which turned out to be correct. But when Mopsus asked Calchas how many piglets a pregnant sow was carrying, Calchas' reply was wrong, whereas Mopsus correctly predicted nine piglets, that all would be male and that they would be born the next day at the sixth hour. Calchas was so distressed by his defeat that he died. In Conon's version, there was a long rivalry between the two seers and, when Mopsus demonstrated his superiority by rightly predicting that Amphimachus, king of the Lycians, would be defeated in a war although Calchas had predicted victory, Calchas committed suicide. Amphilocheus, a son of the seer Amphiarus, came to Colophon at the same time, and he and Mopsus subsequently travelled to Mallos, a coastal town in south-eastern Asia Minor, where they founded a famous joint oracle. When Amphilocheus returned after spending a year away in Argos, Mopsus refused to accept him back, and they fought a duel with one another and both were killed. In their posthumous existence, however, they continued to deliver oracles together at Mallos. [Apollodorus *Ep* 6.3-4; Conon 6; Lycophron 426-30 and schol; Strabo 14.1.27, 14.5.16] **2.** A Lapith, son of Ampyx (or Apollo) and Chloris; a Thessalian seer. Apollo taught him how to practise divination by observing bird flights. He joined the *Argonauts and, together with Idmon, served as their soothsayer. He died from a snake-bite in Libya during the return voyage, and his companions gave him a swift burial when the poison began to rot his flesh from within, but in another account he survived to reach Jason's native city of Iolcus and boxed with Admetus at the funeral games for Pelias. [Apollonius 1.65-6, 3.916-8, 4.1518-36; Pausanias 5.17.10]

Mormo (*Μορμώ*). Naughty children were told that Mormo would bite them if they misbehaved. Like other nursery bogies, she was a ghostly female being of indeterminate form. [Theocritus 15.40; Xenophon *Hellenica* 4.4.17] *See* Lamia.

Morning star. *See* Eosphorus.

Morpheus (*Μορφεύς*). In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, one of the thousand sons of Somnus (Sleep). He moved swiftly through the darkness on silent wings and assumed human form to appear to people in dreams, for example when he appeared to in the form of *Ceyx to his wife Alcyone. His brother Phobetor was responsible for dreams involving animals and Phantastes for inanimate objects. [Ovid *Met* 11.633-56]

Mucius Scaevola. *See* Scaevola.

Muia (*Μυῖα* – 'fly'). According to a little fable recounted by Lucian, Muia competed with Selene for the love of Endymion. Although very beautiful, she talked and sang to excess, and when she tried to awaken Endymion from his perpetual sleep by chattering and singing, Selene turned her into a fly, a pest which constantly disturbs people's sleep. [Lucian *Praise of Fly* 10]

Munichus (*Μούνιχος*). The central figure in a Hellenistic transformation story. Munichus, son of Dryas, was a skilled diviner who ruled the Molossians of north-western Greece. He and his wife Lelante had four children, all of excellent character, Alcandrus, Megaletor, Philaeus and Hyperippe. One night, robbers attacked their protective fortress in the countryside and set fire

to it. Because of their piety, Zeus saved Munichus and his wife and children from death by fire by transforming them into birds. Munichus became a buzzard, Alcandrus a wren, Megaletor an *ichneumon* (the species is unknown), Philaeus a bird known as a *kyon* ('dog') and Lelante a green woodpecker. These birds live together in the woods, but Hyperippe, who plunged into water to escape the flames, was turned into a sea-bird, the shearwater (*aithuia*). [Antoninus 14]

Musaeus (*Μουσαῖος* – 'belonging to the Muses'). A mythical musician and poet associated with *Orpheus and with the Eleusinian Mysteries. His connection with Orpheus was given variously as his son, his pupil or his teacher; but Musaeus was also said to be a son of Eumolpus, the mythical founder of the Eleusinian Mysteries, or of the musician Antiphemus. Musaeus presided over the Mysteries in the earliest times and, according to some late authors, he was married to an Eleusinian, Deiope or Antiope, who was an attendant of Demeter. Before Heracles descended to Hades to fetch Cerberus, he was initiated into the Mysteries at Eleusis by Musaeus, and was the first foreigner to be accepted; Vergil portrayed Musaeus as a distinguished inhabitant of Elysium who gives the Sibyl instructions for finding Aeneas' father Anchises. In classical and later times Musaeus was well-known as the author of apocryphal poems, including prophetic verses and a theogony, which were thought to be older than those of Homer and Hesiod. In a famous passage in the *Republic*, Plato tells how travelling priests and prophets would use the books of Musaeus and Orpheus in purificatory rituals which supposedly ensured that their clients would meet with a happy fate in the life to come. [schol Aristophanes *Frogs* 1065; Aristotle 843b4-5; Diodorus 4.25.1; Herodotus 8.96; Pausanias 10.7.2, 12.6; Plato *Apology* 41a, *Rep* 364b-e; Vergil *Aen* 6.666-78]

Muses (*Μοῦσαι*, Latin 'Camenae'). The number and parentage of the Muses varied, but generally they were accepted as the daughters of Zeus and *Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, and although there are three of them in Hesiod and in others four or seven eventually nine was the standard sum, conceived of the nine nights in which Zeus was said to have slept with Mnemosyne. It was an obvious and appropriate combination to link the supreme divinity of Zeus with the skill of memory for the generation of the inspirers of poetry and the harbingers of cultural pursuits. The Muses were said to have been born in Peiria at the foot of Mount Olympus, and then to have moved from there to Mount Helicon and Mount Parnassus. Hesiod gives a moving account of a direct meeting with them at Helicon where they give him the authority to sing of the gods in his *Theogony*. At Parnassus they were led by Apollo, and had a temple by the Castalian spring. They lamented at the funeral of Patroclus, sang songs of celebration at the weddings of Harmonia and Thetis and entertained at Olympus. Presumption of musical ability invited their anger, as when they blinded *Thamyris, took away the Sirens' wings and transformed the daughters of Pierus into birds. Generally they were the inspiration for song and poetry and it was customary to invoke them at the opening of a poem or when a particular feat of memory was needed as in the Catalogue of the Ships in the *Iliad*. They rarely have individual histories except when one (usually Calliope) is named as the mother of a gifted singer, as of Orpheus or Linus. The standard list with their areas of expertise is as follows: Calliope (epic), Clio (history), Erato (love songs), Euterpe (lyric poetry), Melpomene (tragedy), Polymnia (religious song), Terpsichore (dancing), Thalia (comedy) and Urania (astronomy). The word 'museum' means 'temple' or 'meeting-place' of the Muses. [Cicero *ND* 3.54; Hesiod *Theog* 1-115; *Homeric Hymn Apollo* 191-93, Artemis 14-16; Homer *Il* 1.1, 2.483-7, 14.508, 16.112, *Od* 1.1, 8.62-73, 24.60-61; Ovid *Met* 5.254-5, 294-345; Pausanias 1.19.5, 30.3, 3.17.5, 9.29.1-6; Pindar *passim*; Vergil *Ecl* 4.1, *Aen* 1.8, 9.774-7]

Myles (*Μύλης* – 'miller'). The son of Lelex, the earth-born first king of Laconia, and the father of Eurotas (although some said that Eurotas was the son of Lelex). He invented the mill-stone and used it to mill grain at Alesiai ('Grinding-ground') near Therapne. [Apollodorus 3.10.3; Pausanias 3.1.1, 20.2, 4.1.1]

Myrmidons (*Μυρμιδόνες* – 'ants'). The people of *Achilles' country in the south of Thessaly. They took their name from Myrmidon, son of Zeus and Eurymedusa, who married a granddaughter of Hellen. In Ovid's story the Myrmidons were originally ants, but, in Strabo's rationalisation, they were so called from their industry and diligence. [Hyginus 52; Ovid *Met* 1.654; Strabo]

Myrina (*Μύρινα* – 'myrtle'). **1.** The eponym of the main city on Lemnos, she was the wife or daughter of *Thoas. [schol Apollonius 1.601] **2.** There is a reference in the *Iliad* to the tomb of Batieia in the Troad, known to the gods as the tomb of Myrina. Some later authors claimed that this Myrina was an Amazon who had founded Myrina in Mysia and other cities, and a Hellenistic writer, Dionysius Skytobrachion, made her the heroine of an extraordinary historical romance which presented the Amazons as a people of Libyan origin. As their queen, Myrina led them to victory against the neighbouring Atlantians and the Gorgons (here a tribe of female warriors), and then conducted them into Egypt, where she reached an accommodation with the king, Horus. Then, after slaughtering many Arabians and conquering Syria, she established a kingdom in Asia Minor (the homeland of the Amazons in traditional myth). Later, however, she was defeated and killed by an army of Thracians, and successive defeats by the Thracians caused the Amazons to return to Libya. [Diodorus 3.54-5; Homer *Il* 2.811-14 and schol]

Myrmex (*Μύρμηξ*). A girl from Attica who won the favour of Athena because of her chastity and cleverness. When she later betrayed Athena by revealing her invention of the plough to human beings as if she herself had invented it, the goddess punished her by turning her into an ant, an animal which feeds on the grain produced with the aid of the plough. [Servius on *Aen* 4.402]

Myrrha (*Μύρρα* – 'myrrh') or **Smyrna** (*Σμύρνα*). Daughter of Theias, king of Assyria, or of Cinyras, she was famous as the mother of Adonis. Because Myrrha had failed to honour Aphrodite (or had boasted that she had lovelier hair than the goddess, or her mother had boasted that her child was more beautiful than the goddess), Aphrodite inspired her with an incestuous passion for her father. With the help of her nurse, Myrrha slept with her father for twelve nights under cover of darkness, but when he realized who she was he drew his sword and chased after her. She prayed to be removed from human sight, and the gods took pity on her and turned her into a myrrh-tree which weeps aromatic tears of myrrh (*myrrha* or *smyrna* in Greek, hence her alternative names). In due course *Adonis was born from the tree. According to Ovid, Myrrha wandered the world for nine months after her father discovered her identity, and was transformed and gave birth in Arabia, the main source for myrrh in ancient times. [Antoninus 34; Apollodorus 3.14.4; Hyginus 58; Ovid *Met* 10.298-502; schol Theocritus 1.107]

Myrtilus (*Μυρτίλος* – 'myrtle'). A son of Hermes by Cleobule, daughter of Aeolus, or by a daughter of Danaus. Myrtilus was the charioteer of *Oenomaus who forced the suitors of his daughter Hippodameia to compete with him in a chariot-race. When Oenomaus engaged in the bridal-race with *Pelops, Myrtilus ensured that his master was killed by failing to insert the axle-pins into his chariot or by inserting pins made of wax. Pelops had bribed him to do

this by promising half the kingdom or a night with Hippodameia. But Pelops killed Myrtilus shortly afterwards, either to avoid paying the reward, or because Myrtilus tried to rape Hippodameia, or because she falsely accused him of doing so. Pelops threw him from his chariot at the southern tip of Euboea so that he fell into the part of the Aegean that was known thereafter as the Myrtoan Sea; as Myrtilus was falling, he cursed the house of Pelops, a curse that was fulfilled through Pelops and his descendants. His father Hermes placed him in the sky as the constellation Auriga (the Charioteer). [Apollodorus *Epit* 2.6-8; Euripides *Orestes* 988-96 and schol 990; Hyginus 84, *Astr* 2.13; Pausanias 8.14.10-11; Pherecydes fr 37; Servius on *Georgic* 3.7] See Constellation **19**.