

The labours of Heracles

Creon, the king of Thebes, then gave the hero the hand of his daughter, Megara, who bore him five children, but Hera sent Heracles mad and he killed all the children. This was Hera's way of reminding Heracles that he was to enter the service of Eurystheus. Heracles obeyed, and this was when the twelve labours began. These twelve exploits, performed by order of Eurystheus, were sometimes regarded as expiation for the murder of the children borne him

by Megara. At this time Heracles either made or was given his special weapons: he fashioned his club in the valley of Nemea from the trunk of a wild olive; Hermes gave him a sword; and Apollo gave him a bow and arrows. According to other traditions he received everything from his protectress Athena.

The Nemean lion

The first labour was to hunt the Nemean Lion—a prodigious animal, son of Orthrus and brother to the Sphinx of Thebes. This lion lived in a double-mouthed cave; Heracles stopped up one entrance to the cave, and wrestled with the monster until he choked it to death. When the lion was dead, Heracles used the animal's own claws to remove the pelt, which became his armour, and its head served as his helmet.

The hydra of Lerna

The second labour was the destruction of the Hydra of Lerna, the daughter of Echidna and Typhon, who had been reared by Hera herself. The Hydra was a hundred-headed serpent, and its very breath was so venomous that it could destroy life. Heracles cut off these hideous heads, but they grew again at once. So he commanded his nephew Iolaus, who was with him, to seal each wound with a flaming brand. Then he dipped his arrows into the Hydra's blood to make them poisonous.

The boar of Erymanthus

On Mount Erymanthus lived a monstrous boar. Heracles forced the animal to come out of its lair and pushed it into the deep snow that covered the entire countryside. Then, when the animal was tired, he captured it and carried it alive on his shoulders to Eurystheus, who was so afraid that he took refuge in a sunken jar.



The hind of Ceryneia

At Oenoe, near the Hill of Ceryneia, a gigantic hind was destroying crops; she was sacred to Artemis, and it was sacrilege to touch her. Heracles hunted her for the whole of one year. When she was exhausted, he wounded her slightly with an arrow and carried her across his shoulders. As he was crossing Arcadia he met Artemis and Apollo, who wanted the hind back and accused him of intending to kill the sacred animal. But he extricated himself by saying that the affair was the responsibility of Eurystheus, for he himself acted merely on the king's command.

The birds of Stymphalus

In the region of the lake of Stymphalus in Arcadia a dense forest sheltered countless birds, which had originally flocked there when frightened by wolves. They devoured all the fruit and even attacked passers-by. Eurystheus ordered Heracles to destroy them. He could not get them to leave their forest until he had recourse to bronze castanets given to him by Athena and made by Hephaestus. When the birds heard the castanets, they soared upwards, and Heracles killed them with his arrows.

According to another version these birds were vultures that devoured men, and they used their steel feathers to pierce their victims.

The stables of Augeias

At Elis in the Peloponnesus there was a king called Augeias, who was a son of the Sun. He inherited a great fortune in flocks and herds from his father, but he never had the dung removed from his stables, and eventually it spread and made the country sterile. Heracles was given the task of cleansing these stables. First he made the king promise that he would give him a certain sum if he did it in one day. Heracles succeeded by dint of diverting two rivers, Alpheius and Peneius, through the palace yard. But Augeias refused to pay the agreed sum and banished Heracles.

The Cretan bull

The seventh labour took place in Crete, where a monstrous bull was running wild. Who or what it was is not certain. Perhaps Zeus had disguised himself as this bull when he abducted Europa. Perhaps it was the animal that Pasiphaë fell in love with. Perhaps it was a present from Poseidon that Minos had kept in his herd instead of sacrificing it to the god as agreed. The bull had to be brought back alive to Eurystheus. Heracles went to Crete, obtained permission from Minos and captured the bull on the run. Then he brought it back to Greece (some say that he swam back with it) and presented it to his master. Eurystheus offered it to Hera, but the goddess refused to accept the gift and set it free. This was the bull that Theseus had later to conquer on the plain of Marathon as a task set him by Medusa.

The horses of Diomedes

Diomedes, king of Thrace and son of Ares, possessed four mares that fed on human flesh. Heracles went to Thrace and set Diomedes himself before the mares, and they devoured him.

The girdle of the Amazon

Eurystheus had a daughter, Admete, who wanted the girdle of Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons. This girdle had been given to the queen by Ares himself. Heracles set off with some companions and reached the Amazons. Hippolyta willingly agreed to give him her girdle, but Hera provoked a quarrel between the Amazons and Heracles' followers. A battle followed. Heracles, thinking that he had been betrayed by Hippolyta, killed her.

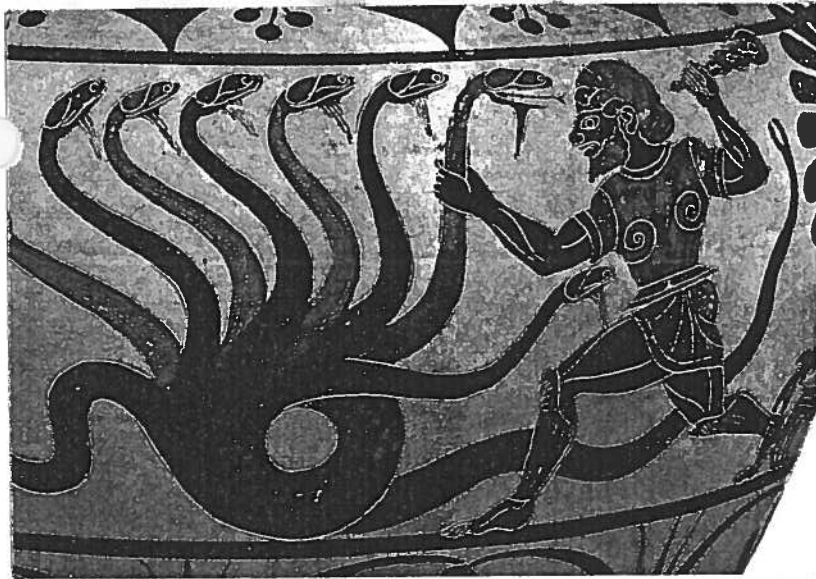
The cattle of Geryon

The last three labours took Heracles far from the known world. Eurystheus sent him first to seek the cattle of Geryon, the son of Chrysaor. The cattle were guarded by the herdsman Eurytion and his dog Orthrus on the island of Eurytheia. This island lay in the far west, beyond Oceanus. To cross the ocean, Heracles borrowed the 'goblet of the Sun', in which the solar star sailed back to his palace every evening on the other side of the world. Heracles had to threaten the Sun with his arrows before he was offered the loan of the goblet. In the same way he had to intimidate Oceanus to avoid being pitched about violently on the waves during his crossing. Finally, he reached the sacred island, where he struck Orthrus, the 'sheep-dog', with his club and killed him. In the end Geryon, the cattle-owner himself, came to the aid of his men, and was slain in the same way. Then Heracles returned as he had come, disembarking at Tartarus Tartessus. There he set up two pillars, which mark the edge of Oceanus (the 'Pillars of Oceanus', which nowadays are called the Rock of Gibraltar and Cape Ceuta). Then he set out on a long journey through Spain and Gaul on his way back to Greece. He was attacked on the way by innumerable brigands, particularly in the region of Liguria, in the plain of Crau, where he stoned his enemies with boulders given him by Zeus, and which even today still bestrew the countryside. At Rome he had to fight Cacus, the brigand of the Aventine Forest. When he finally got back to Argos he offered the rest of Geryon's herd in sacrifice to Hera.

The dog Cerberus

The eleventh labour took Heracles to the underworld to seek the dog Cerberus. Before his departure he was initiated into the mysteries of Eleusis, and so learned how to reach the kingdom of Hades and, even more important, how to get back again.

Heracles went through the 'jaws of Hell', which lay off Cape Taenarum. A few spirits of the dead tried to bar his way, notably the Gorgon Medusa, but the hero



surmounted the obstacles, and presented himself to Hades. The latter agreed to let him have Cerberus if he could master him with his own hands. This Heracles did. Whereupon he returned with his prisoner to Eurystheus, who in fear and trembling had taken refuge in his sunken jar. Not knowing what to do with the dog, Heracles took it back to Hades.

The apples of the Hesperides

Finally, Eurystheus demanded the 'golden apples' from the garden of the Hesperides. The Hesperides, whose name means 'the nymphs of evening', had set a hundred-headed dragon to watch over their garden; it was the offspring of Echidne and Typhon. Heracles set off. As he was crossing Macedonia he met Cycnus, son of Ares, and killed him. Then he went through Illyria and reached the mouth of Eridanus (the Po), where he was told by nymphs that the only creature who knew the way that he must take was the sea-god Nereus. He gained access to Nereus, took him prisoner, put him in chains and then forced him to speak.

From that point Heracles' itinerary becomes well-nigh impossible to follow. He went to Libya, where he had to combat the giant, Anteus, the son of Earth, who renewed his strength every time he touched the ground. Heracles could defeat him only by raising him in his arms. Then he crossed Egypt, where he killed King Busiris, who offered all strangers in sacrifice to the gods; then he was to be found in Arabia, where he killed Emathion, son of Tithonus. Reaching the Red Sea, he embarked again in the 'goblet of the Sun' and came to the Caucasian Mountains, where he freed Prometheus by killing the eagle that gnawed away perpetually at its unhappy victim's liver. In gratitude Prometheus helped him by divulging that he would not be able to pick the miraculous apples himself, but would have to get Atlas to pick them for him. So he went to find Atlas, who had the task of holding up the sky on his shoulders, and he offered to take his place while he went to pick the desired fruit. Atlas acquiesced, brought back the apples, and then declared that he would go and give them to Eurystheus himself. Heracles pretended to agree, but simply asked Atlas to slip a cushion on his shoulder. The latter made to do so without suspecting a trick, but while he was holding the sky Heracles escaped with the apples, leaving Atlas with his burden.

When Eurystheus was given the marvellous apples, he offered them in sacrifice to Athena, who asked Heracles to return them, for Fate had decreed that they should not be found anywhere else on earth.

Text: World Mythology; edited by Pierre Grimal; NY: Galley Books; 1965; p. 141-3.

Illustrations: Art And Myth In Ancient Greece; T.H. Carpenter; NY: Thames and Hudson; 1990.

be well. But why had he spared Iole? News from the fighting had told Deianira that Iole had attempted to kill herself, rather than be taken. What did Heracles want with her? He, meanwhile, was preparing a sacrifice on the Cenaean headland to celebrate his victory, and had sent his herald Lichas to ask Deianira to send him fresh clothing, a new shirt and a short tunic of the kind he usually wore. The request seemed to point the way for Deianira: she gave Lichas a new tunic for her husband, and a new shirt. The shirt was anointed with the blood of the dying Nessus. Lichas hurried away with them to deliver them to Heracles.

The centaur had his revenge. He knew that Heracles' arrows had been dipped in the blood of the Hydra and carried fatal poison: even while he was dying he could feel it racing through his own blood. Heracles dressed in his fresh clothes, and went about his sacrifices—and was suddenly gripped with agony. The poison charred his flesh and he knew he would soon die. He called his son, Hyllus, and begged him to make a funeral pyre on the summit of nearby Mount Oeta. Hyllus did what his father asked, and promised to make Iole his wife.

The pyre was ready, and Heracles, writhing in agony, was carried there by Hyllus and Iolaus. But neither of them could bring themselves to kindle the flames. In the end Heracles called on a passing shepherd boy, who obeyed him without hesitation. The grateful hero, at last able to die and escape his pain, gave the boy his bow, his quiver and his arrows, and mounted his funeral pyre. He used his club of olive wood for a headrest, and spread his lion skin cloak over his chest, while the grieving Iolaus, his son Hyllus, and the shepherd boy stood by. The boy's name was Philoctetes. Suddenly the flames themselves were blasted by thunderbolts and the pyre and its burden reduced to ashes. Zeus had claimed his son, and taken him to Olympus before he died.

Iolaus instituted the worship of Heracles, and Hyllus duly married the Princess Iole. But they returned to Trachis to find that Deianira, in anguish at what she had unwittingly done, had hanged herself. On Olympus, Hera was at last reconciled to Heracles, and adopted him as her son. The Olympians gave him a great welcome, and he became the husband of Hebe.

Heracles' name, 'glory of Hera', suggests an origin among people who revered the goddess Hera. This could have been Argos, and Heracles was also associated with the city of Tiryns which is in Argos. Eurystheus, King of Argos, could well have been his overlord.

The stories of Heracles and his servitude are

pre-Hellenic and his birth is recounted in the *Iliad* (Book XIX). The Dorian invaders of the Peloponnese found the cycle of hero-myths already in existence, and lost no time in adapting them to fit their own ancestry. The term Heraclidae was used in describing how the seed of the mighty hero was connected with the royal house of Argos.

See also Alcmene, Cercopes, Chiron, *Heracles* (Euripides), Heraclidae, Laomedon, Nestor, Peleus, Philoctetes, Priam, Theseus.

HERACLES A tragedy by Euripides. The date of its first production is uncertain but it is believed to have been written about 408 BC.

The theme is the madness of Heracles, and Euripides makes free use of the characters and events of the cycle of myths about him. He places the episode of Heracles' insanity after his Eleventh Labour, rather than before the Labours were undertaken.

While Heracles is away on the quest for Cerberus, the crown of Thebes is usurped by Lichas, who murders King Creon and threatens the life of Heracles' family. They have taken refuge in the sanctuary of Zeus; with them is the aged Amphitryon. Lichas will not dare violate their sanctuary but he knows he must destroy them—or risk their vengeance in the future. He decides to burn the temple.

Heracles returns, and the tables are turned. He kills Lichas and looks forward to peace with his family. Euripides has the spiteful Hera strike him with madness at this point; she sends Lyssa (frenzy) to earth accompanied by her messenger, Iris. Iris will direct Lyssa in what Hera commands. In the play Heracles kills his wife Megara as well as the children.

The resolution of the play is its chief interest. Heracles could be destroyed by what has happened: but his nature proceeds from his father, the mighty Zeus, and from time to time that is going to be too much for any man to bear. It has enabled him to perform mighty deeds but it also has to be endured, Theseus tells him at the end of the play. Theseus has come to help his friend with an army, having heard of the usurper Lichas and the danger to Heracles' family. He rouses Heracles from his frozen grief, warning him that Hera looks like enjoying a triumph. Heracles has his humanity and the great love his friends bear him—even were Zeus *not* his father, Heracles must yet acknowledge the god that is in every man. The play ends with Heracles to some degree reconciled to life. He leaves with Theseus, who will be his host in Athens and perform the purification rites, and care for Heracles until he is recovered.

HERACLES, LABOURS OF I The Nemean Lion Heracles' First Labour was to kill and flay the gigantic lion which was the offspring of Selene, goddess of the moon. When the creature was born she regarded it with horror—and then dropped it on earth. It fell near the city of Nemea in Argos and made its home in a cave with two openings. Selene was content to leave it there, until her wrath was aroused by the denial of a sacrifice to her by the local people; then she let it loose to prey on them. The lion proved invulnerable to all weapons, so Heracles blocked up one opening of the cave and entered by the other, and used his club to fight the beast with. When it showed signs of weakening he dropped his club and choked it to death. He flayed it with one of its own claws, and bore the pelt back to King Eurystheus. Some versions say that this was the lion's skin he habitually wore, others that his cloak came from the lion he killed on Mount Kithaeron.

II The Hydra of Lerna The Hydra was a serpentine monster, the offspring of Typhon and Echidne, and nurtured by Hera in the hope of defeating Heracles. Lerna stood near the sea about five miles from the city of Argos; it later became famous as sacred ground, revered by the worshippers of Dionysus and Demeter. In Heracles' time the Hydra had its lair in a grove of plane trees near the source of the river Amymone, and it haunted a nearby swamp. Heracles called in the help of his nephew Iolaus, and first tried driving the nine-headed monster from its lair by firing burning arrows in; but Hera intervened by sending a huge crab to worry at Heracles' legs. He managed to crush the crab by stamping on its shell—then the Hydra emerged, and charged at Heracles. The monster's breath was deadly and Heracles had to work at furious speed to cut off its heads. But the heads grew again, until Iolaus brought firebrands and cauterised the stumps as the heads fell. Eight of them were disposed of in this way, but the ninth—the principal head—was immortal. Heracles took the evil thing, still hissing, and buried it deep in the ground. Before leaving the scene, he dipped his arrows in the Hydra's blood to make them more deadly.

III The Erymanthian Boar Heracles' Third Labour was to capture alive the great boar which terrified the people who lived near the wooded slopes of Mount Erymanthus in Arcadia. He drove the creature into deep snow on the higher slopes of the mountain, and when it could no longer run he leapt on to its back and chained its legs together. He carried it back to Argos to show

it to King Eurystheus and prove that the Labour had been carried out. The sight of it, struggling in its chains and snorting with fury, terrified the King, who climbed into a deep bronze jar and hid there until the beast was taken away.

IV The Hind of Ceryneia The hind of Ceryneia was one of five; the goddess Artemis had run down four of them in Thessaly, and harnessed them to her chariot. The fifth escaped and ran free on a hill near Ceryneia; it had brazen hooves and strangely—for a hind—horns, which shone like gold. It was sacred to Artemis and Heracles, while he was required to capture it and take it alive to Argos, could not harm it in any way. He simply ran it to exhaustion, and then, carrying it across his shoulders, set off for Argos. Heracles had not gone far before he encountered Artemis—in an angry mood. What was he doing to her creature, and where was he going with it? Heracles explained what was required of him: the one responsible was really Eurystheus. Artemis then allowed him to proceed, on condition that, once the Labour was proved to have been performed, the hind was set free.

V The Stymphalian Birds The woods around Lake Stymphalus in Arcadia had become infested with noisy birds, which plundered the cultivated fields and plagued the people with their unceasing noise. In this Labour Athene came to the help of Heracles. She persuaded Hephaestus to make a rattle out of bronze, and gave it to Heracles. He stood on Mount Cyllene, overlooking the lake, and swung the rattle. The noise was shattering—and totally unfamiliar. The birds rose in alarm, clouds of them. Heracles repeated the noise, and the birds panicked, flying in circles and blundering into each other. Heracles kept up the dreadful noise until the birds, terrified, flew away to the east. They were never seen again.

VI The Augean Stables Augeas, King of Elis, possessed more flocks and herds than any man on earth; by a divine dispensation his livestock was immune from disease and Augeas did not waste time or labour, therefore, in keeping his stables and byres clean. His own animals were not affected, and Augeas had no care for the swarms of flies and the stench of dung that tormented everyone else. Eurystheus ordered Heracles, for his Sixth Labour, to clean out the Augean stables in a single day. Heracles breached the walls of the royal enclosure, which stood knee-deep in filth. Then he feverishly dug a channel to the walls from the river Alpheus and diverted the course of the

waters. The river cleansed the stables and, resuming its normal course farther on, carried all the filth down to the sea.

VII The Cretan Bull Eurystheus next sent Heracles to the island of Crete, where a great bull roamed at liberty, terrifying the people and trampling vines and crops wherever it roamed. In some versions the bull is identified with the one sent by Poseidon, which sired the Minotaur on Queen Pasiphae. King Minos offered any help that he could give, but Heracles managed to capture the bull himself, single-handed, and then took it across the sea to Argos. Eurystheus was as frightened of the bull as he had been of the boar, so he dedicated it to Hera—the great goddess of Argos—and then set it free. Hera was not pleased: the bull really came from Heracles, as she knew very well. She drove it out of Argos and it made its way across the Isthmus to Marathon, where it was later captured again by Theseus.

See also Theseus.

VIII The Horses of Diomedes This Diomedes (not to be confused with the Achaean hero of the *Iliad*) was the son of the god Ares and the nymph Cyrene, and King of the Bistones in Thrace. He kept a team of war horses which he fed on human flesh—usually that of wayfarers who fell into his hands. It was Heracles' task to bring the horses back to Argos. When he arrived in Thrace Heracles went to Diomedes' stables and overpowered the grooms; then he made a single halter to which he tied all four horses, and hauled them, rearing and kicking, out of their stable. The noise was considerable and the alarm was raised; Diomedes and his guards were soon on the spot to see what the disturbance meant. The King attacked Heracles, who let go of the horses and felled him with his club, and then dealt with the guards. While he was thus engaged the horses ate their master—and at once became quite tame. They followed Heracles all the way back to Argos and gave him no more trouble.

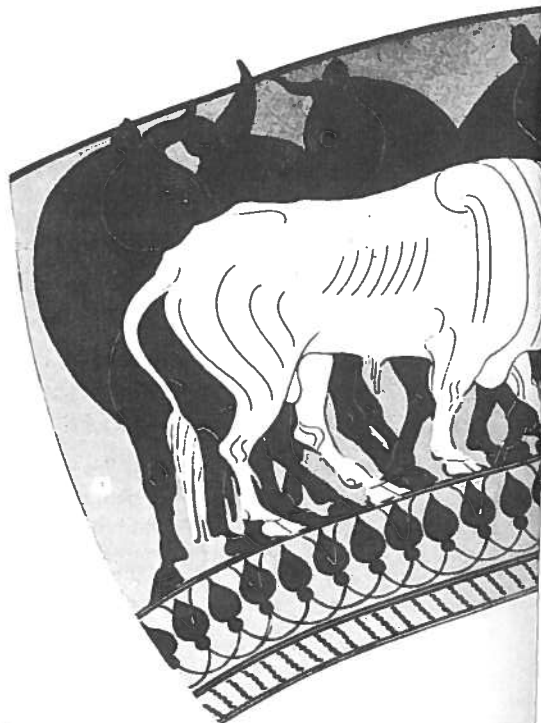
See also *Alcestis* (Euripides).

IX The Girdle of the Amazon In the temple of the goddess Hera in Argos there was shown, in classical times, an article which was known as the girdle of Hippolyta, the Amazon Queen. The Amazons were purely creatures of imagination and Eurystheus' demand that Heracles bring him the girdle of Hippolyta can be likened to the familiar folk-tale motive of such things as the search for a talisman which is the property of some strange, not quite human, race of people. But one

version of the story says that when he arrived in the Amazons' country Heracles found himself as much admired by Hippolyta as he was later to be by Omphale, and was *offered* the girdle. Another version says that the Queen's name was Antiope, in another she is Melanippe. At all events Heracles did succeed in stealing the girdle, whereupon the Queen made war on Athens because Theseus—the King—had been Heracles' ally in the theft. Theseus captured Hippolyta and made her his wife.

See also Amazons, Antiope, Hippolyta, Theseus.

X The Cattle of Geryon Geryon's father was Chrysaor, the son of Medusa and Poseidon who was born at the moment of Medusa's death. His mother was Callirhoë, daughter of the Titan, Oceanus. Geryon had three heads and was the strongest man on earth; his kingdom was in the most westerly part of the world and his fine red cattle were the envy of everyone—including Eurystheus, who sent Heracles to steal them. Heracles set out for the far west in a great golden cup given him by Helios, the sun god, and when he reached the extremity he erected the Pillars of Heracles where Europe and Africa face each other



across the straits (the Pillars are now identified as the mountains on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar). When he got to Geryon's kingdom he had first to kill Eurytion, Geryon's herdsman, the monstrous two-headed dog, Orthrus, and finally Geryon himself. Hera herself tried to help Geryon, but she fled when an arrow from Heracles wounded her in the breast. He loaded the cattle into the golden cup, made a sail of his lion skin, and made his way safely back to Argos, where he was able to return the gift of Helios and deliver the cattle to Eurystheus.

XI The Stealing of Cerberus Eurystheus may have wanted to dispose of Heracles once and for all in setting him this terrible task—he ordered him to go to the kingdom of Hades and steal the fearful watchdog of the infernal regions. But this time both Athene and Hermes gave him help. Hermes, the conductor of souls, showed him the way, and Athene stayed close by to reassure him. When he arrived at the Styx, Heracles succeeded in bullying the scowling Charon into rowing him across, and when he stepped ashore in the nether world he saw a shade approaching him. He drew his bow, but Hermes told him that it was Meleager's shade, and that he had nothing to fear

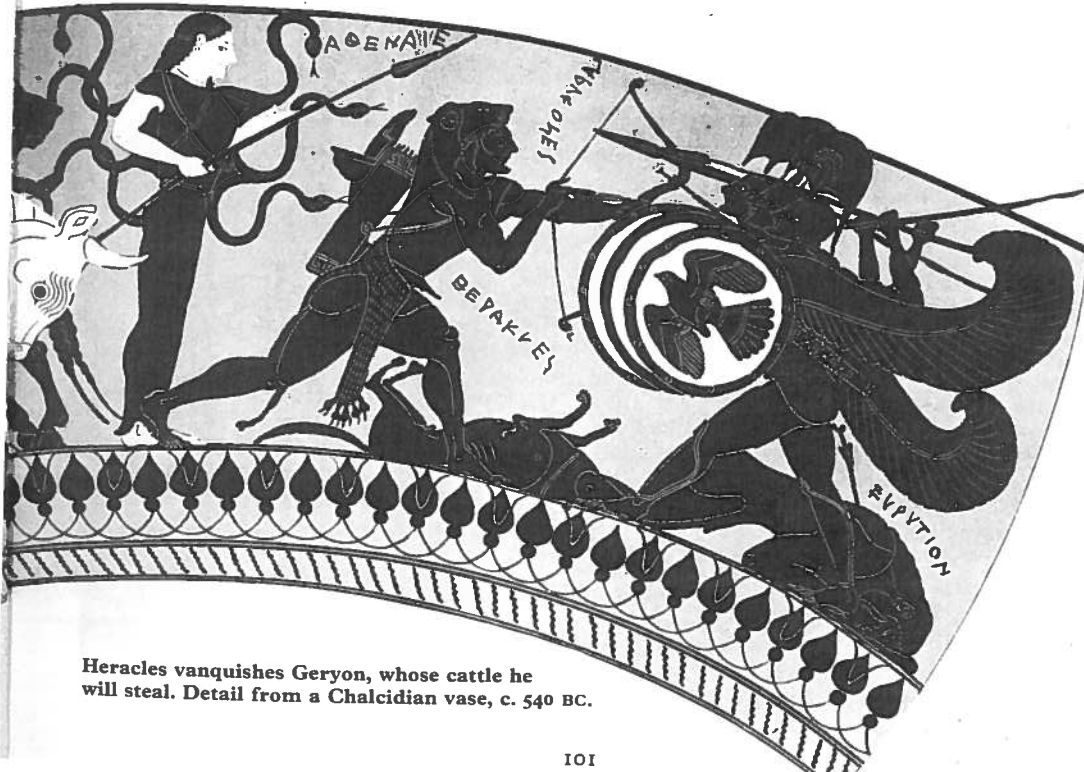
from the dead. Out of the meeting with Meleager came Heracles' eventual marriage to Deianira, who was Meleager's sister.

Heracles next encountered Hades himself, who denied him any further passage and challenged his right to be there at all. A struggle followed, in which Hades was wounded and left lying inside the gate of his own kingdom. He told Heracles to take Cerberus—if he could. Heracles found the great dog on its chain and seized it by the throat. At once the three heads tried to attack, and Cerberus lashed about with his powerful tail. Heracles hung on grimly, and Cerberus relaxed into unconsciousness. Athene was ready to help him back to the Styx with his burden, and rowed him across to the other side.

Eurystheus may have been surprised to see Heracles alive—when he saw the three slaving heads and the huge dog they belonged to he was frightened out of his wits, and leapt back into the safety of his great bronze jar.

See also Meleager.

XII The Apples of the Hesperides In a garden in the far west, on Mount Atlas, there was an apple tree that bore golden fruit. It was a present from Gaia to Hera on her marriage to Zeus, and she



Heracles vanquishes Geryon, whose cattle he will steal. Detail from a Chalcidian vase, c. 540 BC.

planted it in the garden to be cared for by the Titan, Atlas, and his daughters, the Hesperides. Hera also set the dragon, Ladon, to guard the precinct—the whereabouts of which was unknown to mortals. Heracles' last task for the hated Eurystheus was to collect some of the golden apples. Atlas, meanwhile, had taken part in the Titans' rebellion against the Olympians, and his punishment was to support the vault of heaven on his shoulders. The dragon, and his daughters, still guarded the golden apples.

Heracles had first to find out *where* the garden was, so he went to Nereus, the ancient god of the sea. Nereus refused to tell him—he was a mere mortal. Heracles seized the god and swore he would not let him go until he delivered the information. Nereus finally yielded, but advised him that it would be better if he asked Atlas, who knew where to find the tree, to gather the fruit for him. So Heracles made his way to the garden of the Hesperides. He asked Atlas to get the apples for him—but Atlas told him of the dragon, which he feared. Heracles took his bow and was able to kill the dragon—a deed for which Hera would certainly make him pay.

Atlas then protested that someone would have to relieve him of his burden while he gathered the golden fruit: Heracles shouldered the mighty weight and Atlas went off for the apples. He returned with three of them—but he was reluctant to resume the burden of the sky. He undertook to go to Argos himself with the apples—Heracles could carry the weight while he was gone. Heracles was alarmed by the proposal, feeling certain that Atlas would never return. He pretended to agree, and asked Atlas to take the weight while he adjusted his lion skin on his shoulders to carry it more comfortably. Atlas put down the three apples, and Heracles put the sky back on the Titan's shoulders. Then he made off with the apples as quick as he could. The apples were shown to Eurystheus and the Labours were complete. Eurystheus knew better than to keep the apples, and handed the golden fruit back to Heracles, who gave them to Athene, who sped back to the Hesperides and restored them to Hera's garden. Hera, however, was by no means mollified; Heracles had killed her dragon and despoiled her garden, and some versions of the stories about the hero say that his madness was inflicted *after* he had performed the Twelve Labours.

See also Atlas, Hesperides, Nereus.

HERACLIDAE The descendants of Heracles, as conceived by the Dorian invaders of the Peloponnese to give support to their contention that

the royal house of Argos was connected with the great Argive hero. After the defeat and death of Eurystheus by Iolaus at Athens, Hyllus consulted the oracle at Delphi to discover when the children of Heracles could return to their home in Argos. The oracle told him at the time of the third harvest. Hyllus understood this to mean in the third year, and followed the advice. He entered the Peloponnese at the head of an army, but was defeated and killed in a battle near the Isthmus of Corinth. The Heraclidae withdrew.

A hundred years later a descendant of Hyllus, Temenus, consulted the oracle again, and received the same reply. Temenus was puzzled at first but then understood; the 'third harvest' was the third harvest of men—the third generation, of which Temenus was one. The Heraclidae tried again, this time following the oracle's advice to enter by way of Elis, and taking a 'three-eyed man' for a guide. When they landed in Elis they met an Aetolian, Oxylus, who was riding a mule. The mule had only one eye, and Oxylus guided them on their quest for the lands of their fathers. They succeeded this time, and divided the land between them. Argos went to Temenus, Messene to Cresphontes; the twins Procles and Eurysthenes took possession of Sparta, where they founded the dual kingship for which Sparta was known in historical times.

HERCULES The Roman form of Heracles. The Argive hero's cult found its way to Rome by way of the Greek colonists of Sicily and Magna Graecia. The appearance of Hercules in the *Aeneid* (Book VIII) is almost certainly an invention of Virgil's and without a true mythological base, though it is possible that the Romans also had a folk memory of a great hero of giant strength. Hercules' altar in Rome, the Ara Pacis, stood in the Forum Boarium, between the Palatine Hill and the Tiber, a spot connected with the story of Hercules and the giant, Cacus.

HERMAPHRODITUS The son of Hermes and Aphrodite. The nymph Salmacis fell in love with him when she saw him bathing in her spring but he rejected her advances. She prayed to be united with him eternally in one body, and when he next came to the spring wound herself around his limbs. Her prayers were answered, hence the use of the name Hermaphroditus to describe one person in which the two sexes were united. Sal-

Hermes carrying the infant Dionysus to the safety of the nymphs of Nysa. Copy of a Praxitelean original in the museum at Olympia.