

- 61 *The birth of Heracles.* Before Amphitryon arrived in Thebes, Zeus went there one night (making it three times the length of an ordinary night), took the shape of Amphitryon, and slept with Alcmena, to whom he recounted the adventures with the Teleboans. When Amphitryon reached home and saw that his wife was less than overjoyed to have him, he asked her the reason. She pointed out that he had just slept with her the previous night. Amphitryon then learned from questioning Teiresias that Zeus had made love to her. Alcmena bore two sons: to Zeus she bore Heracles, older than his brother by one night, and to Amphitryon she bore Iphicles.
- 62 *Heracles kills the serpents.* When Heracles was eight months old, Hera sent two great serpents to his bed, for she wanted the infant destroyed. Alcmena cried out for Amphitryon, but Heracles woke up and squeezed the serpents to death with his two hands. According to Pherecydes, however, Amphitryon put the serpents in the bed, for he was anxious to determine which child was his: when Iphicles ran away but Heracles stood fast, he knew that Iphicles was his own son.
- 63 *The education of Heracles.* Heracles was taught chariot-driving by Amphitryon, wrestling by Autolycus, archery by Eurytus, armed fighting by Castor, and the cithara by Linus. Linus was Orpheus' brother, who moved to Thebes and became a Theban. He died when Heracles hit him with the cithara. He had spanked Heracles, who in great fury killed him. When Heracles was arraigned for murder, he cited a law of Rhadamanthys, whose opinion it was that a person resisting an unjust punishment was guiltless, and thus he was freed of charge. But Amphitryon, who was afraid he might again do something similar, sent him out to where he kept his herds, and there Heracles grew up, passing everyone

by in size and strength. Just to look at him it was obvious that he was a son of Zeus. For his body was seven feet tall, and from his eyes danced a gleam of fire; and he was a perfect shot with both bow and javelin.

The lion of Cithaeron. In his eighteenth year, still among the herds, Heracles slew the lion of Cithaeron, which used to go down from the mountain and raid the herds of Amphitryon and those of Thespius. When Heracles was bent on catching the lion, he went to see this Thespius, who ruled the Thespians. He was a guest there for fifty days, and after each day's hunt he would spend the night with a different daughter of Thespius (who, with Arneus' daughter Megamede, had fathered fifty girls), for Thespius wanted them all to have a child by Heracles. So Heracles, although he thought he was sleeping with only one of them, actually had sex with them all. Then he subdued the lion, donned the skin, and wore the skull with the jaws apart as a helmet.

Heracles battles the Minyans, and marries Megara. On his way back from the hunt he came across heralds sent by Erginus to collect his tribute from the Thebans. The Thebans paid tribute to Erginus for the following reason. After King Clymenus of the Minyans was mortally wounded with a stone by Perieres, the charioteer of Menoeceus, in a temenos of Poseidon at Onchestus, and as he was being carried half-dead to Orchomenus, his last command to his son Erginus was to avenge his death. So Erginus led a campaign against Thebes, and, after slaying quite a few, swore with them a treaty whereby they would send him one hundred head of cattle a year for twenty years. Now, as Heracles happened upon the heralds on their way to Thebes to collect the tribute, he treated them most shamefully. He cut off their ears, noses, and hands, hung them round their necks with cords, and told them to take these to Erginus and the Minyans as their tribute. Provoked by this, Erginus brought an army against Thebes, but Heracles, who was placed in command with weapons from Athena, slew Erginus, routed the Minyans, and obliged them to pay double tribute to the Thebans. Amphitryon, by the way, met his end in the battle while fighting courageously.

As his reward for bravery, Heracles received from Creon his oldest daughter Megara, by whom he had three sons, Therimachus, Creontides, and Deicoon. Creon married his younger daughter to Iphicles, who already had a son Iolaus by Automedusa, the daughter of Alcathus. After Amphitryon's death Alcmena married Zeus' son Rhadamanthys, who was living in exile in Boeotian Ocaleae.

Arms from the gods. After taking additional lessons in archery from Rhadamanthys, Heracles was given a sword from Hermes, bow and

arrows from Apollo, chest-armor of gold from Hephaestus, and a peplos from Athena. His club he had fashioned himself at Nemea.

- 72 *Heracles goes mad.* Following the battle with the Minyans, it fell to the lot of Heracles to go mad because of the jealousy of Hera. In his madness he threw into a fire his and Megara's children, as well as two belonging to Iphicles. For this he voluntarily banished himself, and was purified by Thespius. He went to Delphi and asked the god where to settle. It was then that he was first called Heracles, by the Pythia, for up to the day before he had been called Alceides. She told him to live in Tiryns, in servitude to Eurystheus for twelve years, and to complete the ten labors assigned him; for thus, she said, when the labors were finished, he would be immortal.
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- 74 *The labors of Heracles: the Nemean lion.* Upon hearing this Heracles went to Tiryns and proceeded to carry out the instructions of Eurystheus. First he was assigned to fetch the skin of the Nemean lion, an invulnerable animal sired by Typhon. As he went out to find the lion, he came to Cleonae, where he was a guest at the home of a poor man named Molorchus. Molorchus wanted to make an animal sacrifice, but Heracles told him to hold off for thirty days, and then, if he returned safe and sound from the hunt, to sacrifice to Zeus Soter, but if he were dead, to sacrifice to Heracles himself as a hero. He then went to Nemea, found the lion, and shot it first with arrows. But when he knew for sure that it was invulnerable, he picked up his club and started after it. It escaped into a double-mouthed cave, but Heracles blocked up one of the mouths, and ran in after the creature through the other. He encircled its neck with his arm, and by squeezing choked it to death. He then draped it over his shoulders and took it back to Cleonae. There he found Molorchus on the thirtieth day about to offer sacrifice to him as a dead man; but he himself sacrificed instead to Zeus Soter, and took the lion on to Mycenae.
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- 76 Eurystheus was dumbstruck by the manliness of Heracles, and thereafter denied him entrance to the polis, bidding him display the results of his labors before the gates. They say that in his panic he even prepared a bronze underground cask to hide in, and that he assigned the labors by way of a herald named Copreus, son of Pelops of Elis. Copreus had slain Iphitus and escaped to Mycenae where he lived after being purified by Eurystheus.
- 77 *The Lernaean Hydra.* For his second labor Heracles was instructed to slay the Lernaean hydra. This beast was nurtured in the marshes of Lerna, from where she would go out onto the flatland to raid flocks and ruin the land. The hydra was of enormous size, with eight mortal

heads, and a ninth one in the middle that was immortal. With Iolaus driving, Heracles rode a chariot to Lerna, and there, stopping the horses, he found the hydra on a ridge beside the springs of Amymone where she nested. By throwing flaming spears at her he forced her to emerge, and as she did he was able to catch hold. But she hung on to him by wrapping herself round one of his feet, and he was unable to help matters by striking her heads with his club, for as soon as one head was pounded off two others would grow in its place. Then a giant crab came along to help the hydra, and bit Heracles on the foot. For this he killed the crab, and called on his own behalf to Iolaus for help. Iolaus made some torches by setting fire to a portion of the adjoining woods, and, by using these to burn the buddings of the heads, he kept them from growing. When he had overcome this problem, Heracles lopped off the immortal head, which he buried and covered with a heavy boulder at the side of the road that runs through Lerna to Elaeus. He cut up the hydra's body and dipped his arrows in its venom.

Eurystheus, however, said that this labor should not be counted among the ten, for Heracles had not overpowered the hydra alone, but only with the help of Iolaus.

The Cerynithian hind. His third labor was to bring back alive to Mycenae the Cerynithian hind. It was at Oenoe, a golden-horned deer sacred to Artemis. In his desire neither to kill nor to wound it, Heracles spent a whole year pursuing it. Finally the animal tired of the chase and took refuge on the mountain known as Artemisium, and from there proceeded to the Ladon river. As it was crossing, Heracles got it with an arrow, hoisted it on his shoulders and pressed on urgently through Arcadia. Artemis along with Apollo accosted him on the way, reached for the hind, and berated him for trying to kill her sacred animal. But Heracles pleaded necessity and said that Eurystheus was to blame, and thus soothed the goddess' wrath; and he brought the animal still living to Mycenae.

The Erymanthian boar. For his fourth labor Eurystheus told him to bring back alive the Erymanthian boar. This animal would set out from the mountain called Erymanthus, and abuse the land of Psophis. As Heracles was travelling through Pholoe, he stopped with a centaur named Pholus, the son of Seilenus and a Melian nymph. To Heracles he served roasted meat, although his own was raw. Heracles asked for wine, but Pholus said that he was afraid to open the cask which was owned jointly by the centaurs. But Heracles told him not to worry, and opened the cask himself. Shortly thereafter, picking up the smell of the wine, the centaurs appeared at Pholus' cave, armed with rocks and clubs

of silver fir. The first two who ventured in, by name Anchius and Agrius, Heracles turned back with a volley of fire-brands; he sent arrows after the others and chased them as far as Malea. There they took refuge with Cheiron, who, after the Lapiths had driven him from Mount Pelion, settled on Malea. Heracles let loose an arrow at the centaurs as they huddled round Cheiron, which penetrated the arm of Elatus and landed in Cheiron's knee. In horror Heracles ran to him, pulled out the arrow and dressed the wound with a salve that Cheiron handed him. The festering wound was incurable, however, and Cheiron moved into his cave, where he yearned for death, but could not die because he was immortal. Prometheus thereupon proposed <Heracles> to Zeus, to become immortal in place of Cheiron: and so Cheiron died.

86 The remaining centaurs fled this way and that, some to Mount Malea, Eurytion to Pholoe, and Nessus to the Euenus river. The rest were taken in at Eleusis by Poseidon, who hid them away on a mountain. As for Pholus, as he was pulling an arrow out of a corpse, he marvelled that such a little object could destroy such enormous adversaries. Just then it slipped from his hand, fell on his foot and instantly killed him. When Heracles returned to Pholoe, he found Pholus dead, so he buried him and proceeded on to find the boar. By shouting he routed it from a clump of trees, forced it into heavy snow until it weakened, then snared it with a noose and took it back to Mycenae.

88 *The stables of Augeias.* The fifth labor assigned to Heracles by Eurystheus was to remove the manure of the cattle of Augeias in one day. Augeias was king of Elis, in some accounts a son of Helius, in others of Poseidon, and in still others of Phorbas. He owned many herds of cattle. Heracles approached him and, keeping quiet about his assignment from Eurystheus, said merely that he would remove the manure in one day in return for a tenth of the cattle. Convinced that this was impossible, Augeias agreed, and his son Phyleus was the witness. Heracles proceeded to divide the foundations of the corral, and then diverted the neighboring streams Alpheius and Peneius so that they flowed into this trough and out another escape-gate that he had fashioned. But when Augeias found out that Eurystheus had ordered this labor, he refused to pay, and even denied that he had promised to pay, and said that he was willing to go to court on that point. When the judges were seated, Phyleus was called by Heracles to testify. He said that Augeias had indeed agreed to pay Heracles. Augeias became irate, and before the vote was taken he ordered both Phylus and Heracles to get out of Elis.

91 Phyleus went to Dulichium to live, and Heracles made his way to the home of Dexamenus in Olenus. He found his host about to be com-

pelled to announce the engagement of his daughter Mnesimache to the centaur Eurytion. As Eurytion came to claim his bride, Dexamenus asked Heracles for help, and Heracles slew Eurytion.

As for Eurystheus, once again he refused to accept the labor, saying that it had been done for hire.

The Stymphalian birds. For his sixth labor Heracles was ordered to drive off the Stymphalian birds. At the polis of Stymphalus in Arcadia was a lake called Stymphalis in a dense growth of trees. Great numbers of birds gathered there for safety, in fear of being seized by the wolves. Heracles was stumped by the problem of driving the birds out of the woods, but Athena got some bronze noise-makers from Hephaestus and gave them to him, and by shaking these from a mountain adjacent to the lake he frightened the birds. Not enduring the racket, they flew up in fear, and in this manner Heracles reached them with his arrows.

The Cretan bull. His seventh labor was to bring back the Cretan bull. According to Acusilaus this was the bull that carried Europe for Zeus, but others say that it was the bull that was sent by Poseidon out of the sea, the time that Minos said he would sacrifice to Poseidon whatever appeared from the sea. When he saw the beauty of the bull, he allegedly sent it out to his herds and sacrificed another one to Poseidon; this angered the god who turned the bull wild. Heracles arrived in Crete on his mission, asked for help from Minos, was told to do his own fighting and capturing, did just that, and took the bull back to Eurystheus. When he had shown it, he let it loose. The bull wandered to Sparta and over all of Arcadia, then crossed the Isthmus and went as far as Marathon in Attica where it molested the natives.

The mares of Diomedes. The eighth labor was to bring the mares of Diomedes of Thrace to Mycenae. Diomedes, son of Ares and Cyrene, was king of the Bistones, a militant Thracian tribe, and owned man-eating mares. So Heracles set out by sea with a group of voluntary followers, and, after subduing the stable attendants, he drove the mares to the sea. As the armed Bistones came to rescue them, Heracles gave them over to Abderus for safekeeping. Abderus was Hermes' son, a Locrian from the town of Opus, and Heracles' lover. The mares destroyed him by dragging him along after them. Heracles took on the Bistones, killed Diomedes, and forced the others to take flight. He founded a polis named Abdera beside the grave of his dead Abderus. Then he took the mares back and gave them to Eurystheus, who released them. They went to the mountain called Olympus where the wild animals destroyed them.

- 98 *The Belt of Hippolyte.* For his ninth labor Heracles was told by Eurystheus to fetch him the belt of Hippolyte. She was ruler of the Amazons, a most warlike tribe who lived by the Thermodon river. They practised a life of fortitude, and if they ever had sex and bore children, they reared the girls, squeezing off their right breasts so that they could throw spears easily, but leaving the left for nursing. As a symbol of her preeminence among them, Hippolyte was possessor of the belt of Ares.
- 99 Heracles was sent after this belt because Eurystheus' daughter Admete wanted it. So he took a band of volunteers and sailed off on one ship, touching first at the island of Paros, where lived the sons of Minos, by name Eurymedon, Chryses, Nephalion, and Philolaus. Now it happened that two men from the ship went ashore, where they were murdered by the sons of Minos. In outrage Heracles promptly slew the sons and kept the rest of the population under heavy siege until they sent an embassy to invite him to take any two men he wanted to replace the two who were murdered. So he ended the siege, and took with him the sons of Minos' son Androgeos, whose names were Alcaeus and Sthenelus. He then went to Lycus, son of Dascylus, in Mysia, and was entertained <by him. When Lycus and> the king of the Bebryces went to war, Heracles helped Lycus out, and slew many, including King Mygdon, the brother of Amycus. He also appropriated a large section of Bebrycian land and gave it to Lycus, who gave all of it the name of Heracleia.
- 100 Sailing on to the harbor of Themiscyra, he was met by Hippolyte, who wanted to know why he had come. She promised him the belt, but Hera in the guise of an Amazon woman went through the crowd saying that the new arrivals were kidnaping the queen. The women thereupon armed themselves and rode down to the ship on horses. When Heracles saw that they were armed, he smelled a trap, so he killed Hippolyte and took the belt, and after a skirmish with the women he sailed off to Troy.
- 101 He found the polis in dire straits because of the wrath of Apollo and Poseidon. For these two, in a desire to make a trial of the hybris of Laomedon, came in human form and contracted the building of a wall round Pergamum for a fixed fee. But when they had finished, Laomedon did not pay them, so Apollo sent a pestilence upon them, and Poseidon sent a sea monster which would come inland on a flood-tide
- 102 and grab people on the plain. Oracles proclaimed that there would be release from these adversities if Laomedon were to set his daughter Hesione out as a meal for the sea monster, so he fastened her to the rocks by the seaside. When he saw her lying there, Heracles promised to save her in return for the mares which Zeus had donated as satisfaction

for the abduction of Ganymedes. Laomedon agreed to this, and so Heracles slew the monster and rescued the girl. But Laomedon remained unwilling to meet his obligations, whereupon Heracles threatened Troy with future war and left.

He then put in at Aenus, where he was the guest of Poltys. As he was leaving he shot with his arrow and killed an hybristic man named Sarpedon, Poltys' brother and a son of Poseidon, on the shore at Aenus. Arriving at Thasos, he overpowered the Thracians who lived there and gave the island to the sons of Androgeos as their home. From Thasos he went on to Torone, where he was challenged to a wrestling match by Polygonus and Telegonus, sons of Poseidon's son Proteus. He killed them both. Then he took the belt back to Mycenae and gave it to Eurystheus.

The cattle of Geryon. The tenth labor assigned Heracles was to fetch the cattle of Geryon from Erytheia. Erytheia was an island, now called Gadeira, lying near the ocean. On it lived Geryon, son of Chrysaor and Oceanus' daughter Callirrhoe. He had the bodies of three men, joined into one at the belly, but splitting into three again from the flanks and thighs down. He owned crimson-colored cattle, which were herded by Eurytion and protected by Orthus, the hound with two heads born of Echidna and Typhon. As Heracles proceeded through Europe to these cattle, he killed many wild animals, paid a visit to Libya, and went on to Tartessus where he set up two steles opposite each other at the borders of Europe and Libya, as commemorative markers of his trip. Then, when Heliuss made him hot as he proceeded, he aimed his bow at the god and stretched it; Heliuss was so surprised at his daring that he gave him a golden goblet, in which he crossed the ocean. When he reached Erytheia he camped on Mount Abas. The dog smelled him there and went after him, but he struck it with his club, and when the cowherd Eurytion came to help the dog, he slew him as well. Menoetes, who was there tending the cattle of Hades, reported these events to Geryon, who overtook Heracles by the Anthemus river as he was leading away the cattle. They fought, and Heracles slew Geryon with an arrow. He then loaded the cattle into the goblet, sailed back to Tartessus, and returned the goblet to Heliuss. As he passed through Abderia he came to Ligystine, where Poseidon's sons Ialebion and Dercynus tried to seize the cattle, but he slew them and went on through Tyrrhenia.

At Rhegium one bull broke loose from the herd, fell quickly into the sea, and swam across to Sicily. Then, crossing the neighboring land, it came to the plain of Eryx, who was king of the Elymians and a son of Poseidon. He let the bull mix in with his own herds. Heracles left the

cattle in the cave of Hephaestus and went off on a search for the bull. When he found it among the herds of Eryx, the latter said that he would not give it up unless Heracles beat him at wrestling. Heracles bested him three times and killed him in the process. He recovered the bull and drove it with the others to the Ionian sea, but as he came to the rivulets of the sea Hera inflicted a gadfly on the cattle, and they scattered into the foothills of the Thracian mountains. Heracles chased and caught some of them, which he led to the Hellespontus, but those left behind turned wild. Heracles blamed the Strymon river for his difficulty in gathering the cattle and, where it had previously been a navigable stream, he made it unnavigable by filling it in with rocks. Then he returned and gave the cattle to Eurystheus, who sacrificed them to Hera.

113 *The apples of the Hesperides.* The labors were completed in eight years and one month. But since Eurystheus had accepted neither the labor of Augeias' cattle nor the labor of the hydra, he ordered Heracles to get golden apples from the Hesperides as an eleventh labor. These apples were not, as some maintain, in Libya, but rather were with Atlas among the Hyperboreans. Ge had given them to Zeus when he married Hera. An immortal serpent guarded them, the child of Typhon and Echidna, with one hundred heads which spoke with many voices of various types. With it the Hesperides themselves were posted as guards, by name Aegle, Erytheia, Hesperia, and Arethusa.

114 Heracles set out and reached the river Echedorus, where he was challenged to a duel by Cycnus, son of Ares and Pyrene. Ares seconded Cycnus and got the match going, but then a thunderbolt fell between them and broke up the duel. Heracles continued by foot through the Illyrians' land and hurried on to the Eridanus river where he found the nymphs who were daughters of Zeus and Themis. They showed him Nereus. Heracles took hold of him as he lay sleeping, and bound him fast as Nereus changed himself into all sorts of shapes; he did not let him loose until Nereus told him where the apples and the Hesperides were. When he found out, he proceeded through Libya, which was ruled by Poseidon's son Antaeus, who forced strangers to wrestle and then killed them. When Heracles was forced, he clasped Antaeus in his arms, lifted him into the air, weakened him and killed him. For it happened that Antaeus was stronger when his feet were on the ground, which is why some said he was a son of Ge.

116 After Libya Heracles pressed on through Egypt. The king of Egypt was Busiris, a son of Poseidon and Epaphus' daughter Lysianassa. He obeyed a certain oracle by sacrificing strangers on an altar of Zeus. For

nine years Egypt had been gripped by a famine, which would end, according to a skilled prophet from Cyprus named Phrasius, if annually they sacrificed a male stranger to Zeus. So Busiris first sacrificed the prophet himself and continued sacrificing new arrivals. Thus even Heracles was seized and led to the altars, but he broke his bonds and killed both Busiris and his son Amphidamas.

117 Moving on through Asia, Heracles stopped at Thermydrae, the port of the Lindians. There he released one of a pair of oxen from the wagon of a cattle-drover, which he then sacrificed and dined upon. The drover, unable to help himself, stood on a mountain and called down curses on him. From that act even now, whenever they sacrifice to Heracles, they accompany it with execrations.

118 As he passed Arabia, Heracles slew Tithonus' son Emathion. Then after proceeding through Libya to the sea beyond, he appropriated the goblet from Helios. When he reached the mainland on the other side he killed with an arrow the eagle on the Caucasus, the product of Echidna and Typhon that had been eating the liver of Prometheus. Then he selected for himself a restraining bond of olive, and released Prometheus; and he offered Zeus Cheiron, who was willing to die in <Heracles'> place.

119 Prometheus advised Heracles not to go after the apples himself, but rather to relieve Atlas of the celestial sphere and dispatch him. So when Heracles reached Atlas among the Hyperboreans, he remembered Prometheus' advice and took over the sphere. Atlas picked three apples from the garden of the Hesperides, then returned to Heracles. Not wanting to hold up the sphere, <he told Heracles that he should carry the apples back to Eurystheus, and that Heracles could hold up the sky in his place. Heracles agreed, but by a trick gave the sphere back to Atlas. On the advice of Prometheus he asked Atlas to take the sky while he> put a cushion on his head. Hearing this, Atlas set the apples down on the ground, and relieved Heracles of the sphere. Thus Heracles picked them up and left. (Some say, however, that he did not take the apples from Atlas, but killed the snake that guarded them, and picked them himself.) Returning with the apples, he gave them to Eurystheus, who made a present of them to Heracles. But Athena retrieved them from him and took them back, for it was not permitted by divine law to locate them anywhere else.

122 *Cerberus, the twelfth labor.* As a twelfth labor Heracles was to fetch Cerberus from Hades' realm. Cerberus had three dog-heads, a serpent for a tail, and along his back the heads of all kinds of snakes. As Heracles was on the verge of leaving, he went to Eumolpus at Eleusis with

- the desire to be initiated into the mysteries. He was unable to view the mysteries because he had not been purified of the murder of the centaurs, so Eumolpus purified and then initiated him. When he reached Laconian Taenarum, where the entrance to the descent into Hades' realm is located, he entered it. All the souls who saw him ran away, except Meleager and Medusa the Gorgon. Heracles drew his sword against the Gorgon, assuming her to be alive, but from Hermes he learned that she was an empty wraith.
- 124 As he approached the gates of Hades' realm, he came across Theseus along with Peirithous, who had courted Persephone with matrimonial intentions and for this reason was held fast, as was Theseus. When they saw Heracles they stretched forth their hands as if to rise up with the help of his strength. He did in fact pull Theseus up by the hand, but when he wanted to raise Peirithous, the earth shook and he let go. But he did roll the stone off Ascalaphus.
- 125 Then, desiring to supply the souls with blood, he slaughtered one of Hades' cattle. Their keeper Menoetes, son of Ceuthonymus, challenged Heracles to a wrestling match. Heracles hugged his torso and broke his ribs, but set him down at the request of Persephone.
- Heracles asked Pluto for Cerberus, and was told to take the hound if he could overpower it without using any of the weapons he had brought with him. He found Cerberus at the gates of Acheron, and there, pressed inside his armor and totally covered by the lion's skin, he threw his arms round its head and hung on, despite bites from the serpent-tail, until he convinced the beast with his choke-hold. Then, with it in tow, he made his ascent through Troezen. After showing Cerberus to Eurystheus, he took it back to Hades' realm.
- As for Ascalaphus, Demeter turned him into a horned owl.
- 127 Eurytus, Iole, and the death of Iphitus. After his labors Heracles returned to Thebes. He gave Megara to Iolaus and, thinking of marriage himself, he learned that Eurytus, the ruler of Oechalia, had announced the marriage of his daughter Iole as prize to the man who could out-
- 128 shoot himself and his sons with the bow and arrow. So Heracles went to Oechalia and beat them; but he did not get married, for although the oldest son Iphitus thought that Heracles should have Iole, Eurytus and the other sons refused, alleging fear lest he should sire children and
- 129 once again slay them. Shortly thereafter, when Autolycus stole some cattle from Euboea, Eurytus assumed that Heracles was the culprit, but Iphitus would not believe it and went to see Heracles. He found him returning from Phrae where he had rescued the dead Alcestis for Admetus, and he invited him to help look for the cattle. Heracles promised

to do so, and entertained Iphitus; but then he went mad again and threw him from the Tirynthian walls.

At Delphi. In a desire to be purified after this murder, Heracles went to Neleus, ruler of the Pylians. But Neleus, who was a friend of Eurytus, turned him away, so Heracles went to Amyclae where he was purified by Deiphobus, son of Hippolytus. But he was struck down with a severe illness because of the murder of Iphitus, and he went to Delphi to inquire about a cure. When he got no oracular reply from the Pythia, he decided to pillage the temple, and did in fact make off with the tripod in order to start his own oracle. Apollo engaged him in battle, but Zeus sent a thunderbolt between them; and after they had been

131 separated in this manner, Heracles received an oracle. He was told that the cure for his disease consisted of his being sold into bondage for three years, and of giving satisfaction for the murder in the form of payment to Eurytus.

Omphale. When the oracle had been given, Hermes put Heracles up for sale. Omphale, daughter of Iardanus, bought him. She was queen of the Lydians, having inherited the rule from her husband Tmolus when he died. Now Eurytus did not acknowledge the payment when it was

132 brought to him, but Heracles as Omphale's slave seized and tied up the Cercopes near Ephesus; and he killed Syleus <in his vineyard> where he used to force passers-by to till the soil, killed him along with his daughter Xenodoce, after first <digging up> his vines, roots and all. And when he was on the island of Doliche, he saw the body of Icarus washed up on the shore, so he buried it and renamed the island Icaria. For this Daedalus made a life-size likeness of Heracles at Pisa. Heracles

133 came across it at night, failed to recognize it, and hit it with a rock. It was while Heracles was serving Omphale that the voyage to Colchis and the Calydonian boar hunt took place, and it was during this period that Theseus en route from Troezen cleaned up the Isthmus.

Heracles takes Troy. After the servitude, and cured of his illness,

134 Heracles gathered together a force of volunteer noblemen and sailed against Ilium in eighteen fifty-oared ships. Landing at Ilium, he put Oicles in charge of guarding the fleet, and set out with the other nobles to attack the polis. But Laomedon and his host went to the ships and slew Oicles as he opposed them. Then he was driven back by the men with Heracles and placed under siege. When the siege was in operation,

135 Telamon was first to penetrate the wall and enter the polis, and Heracles was second. Seeing that Telamon had preceded him, and unwilling to have anyone considered a stronger man than he, he went to Telamon with his sword drawn. Observing this, Telamon started piling together

stones lying nearby, and when Heracles asked him what he was doing, he said he was building an altar to Heracles Callinicus. Heracles praised him for this, and after he had taken the polis and killed Laomedon and his sons (except Podarces) with his arrows, he gave Laomedon's daughter Hesione to Telamon as a prize of valor, and agreed to her taking along any of the captives she chose. She selected her brother Podarces, but Heracles said that he was first of all a slave whom she must ransom. So as he was put on the block, she removed the veil from her head and bought him with it; and from that time forward Podarces was called Priamus.

137 *He destroys Cos.* As Heracles was sailing away from Troy, Hera sent raging storms upon him. Zeus was angered by her act and hung her from Olympus. Heracles sailed to Cos, where the Coans thought that he was leader of a fleet of buccaneers, and tried to prevent their landing by hurling stones. But Heracles used force and took the place by night, slaying the king Eurypylus, son of Astypalaea and Poseidon. In the course of the battle Chalcodon wounded Heracles, but Zeus snatched him up and no harm was done. When Heracles had destroyed Cos, he found his way with Athena's help to Phlegra where he helped the gods reduce the Giants.

139 *He slays Augeias and founds the Olympic games.* Soon thereafter he led a campaign against Augeias with an Arcadian army and a collection of volunteers from among the noblemen of Hellas. When Augeias heard of this war threat, he made Eurytus and Cteatus the generals of the Eleian army. These two men shared one body, and at that time surpassed all men in strength. They were the sons of Moliene and Augeias' brother Actor (although some say Poseidon was the father).

140 Now in the midst of the campaign Heracles took sick, and because of this he made a truce with the Molionidae. But later, when they learned that he was ailing, they attacked his force and took many lives. Thereupon Heracles retreated, but still later, during the third Isthmian games, to which the Eleians sent the Molionidae, he ambushed and slew them at Cleonae, and then led a force against Elis and took it. After slaying Augeias along with his sons, he brought Phyleus home and gave him the rule. He established the Olympic games, and built an altar for Pelops and six altars for the twelve gods.

142 *Heracles at Pylos.* Following the conquest of Elis, Heracles made a campaign against Pylos, and when the polis was his he slew Neleus' bravest son Periclymenus, who fought by changing his shape. He also killed Neleus and his sons, with the exception of Nestor, who was a youngster being raised among the Gerenians. In the course of the battle Heracles wounded Hades as he helped out the Pylians.

Against the sons of Hippocoon. After Pylos he led a force against Lacedaemon, anxious to go after the sons of Hippocoon, against whom he nursed a grudge both for their alliance with Neleus in the battle, and even more because they had slain the son of Licymnius. He had been looking at Hippocoon's palace when a Molossian dog ran out at him. When he fended it off with a stone, the sons of Hippocoon rushed out and killed him with their clubs. Heracles gathered an army against the Lacedaemonians to avenge his death. When he reached Arcadia he told Cepheus that he would be honored to have him and his twenty sons as allies, but Cepheus declined, for he feared to leave Tegea lest the Argives march against it. Whereupon Heracles, who had received from Athena a lock of Gorgon's hair in a bronze urn, gave it to Cepheus' daughter Sterope, with instructions to hold it up three times from the walls in the event of an invasion, and, if she didn't look in front of her, the enemy would reverse its direction. Since that was so, Cepheus and his sons joined the expedition, and all died in battle, along with Heracles' brother Iphicles. But Heracles killed Hippocoon and his sons, and conquered the polis. He brought in Tyndareos and granted him the sovereignty.

Auge. On his way past Tegea Heracles deflowered Auge, without realizing that she was the daughter of Aleus. She gave birth to her child secretly and placed it in the temenos of Athena. Since the land was being ravished by a pestilence, Aleus entered the temenos and there tracked down the evidence of his daughter's travail. He set the infant out for exposure on Mount Parthenius, but by divine providence it was saved. For a doe that had just given birth suckled it, and shepherds retrieved it and called it Telephus. Aleus gave Auge to Poseidon's son Nauplius to sell abroad, and he gave her to Teuthras, the lord of Teuthrania, who married her.

Deianeira. In Calydon Heracles courted Deianeira, the daughter of Oeneus, and for her hand in marriage wrestled with Achelous. Achelous took the form of a bull, but Heracles knocked off one of his horns. He then married Deianeira. Achelous retrieved his horn by trading Heracles the horn of Amaltheia for it. Amaltheia, a daughter of Haemonius, had the horn of a bull, which, according to Pherecydes, could provide bounteous amounts of food or drink, whichever one wished for.

Heracles accidentally kills Eunomus. Heracles went with the Calydonians on a campaign against the Thesprotians, and took the polis of Ephyra, which Phylas ruled. He had sex with the king's daughter Astyoche, and fathered Tlepolemus. While there he sent word to Thespius to keep seven of his sons, to send three to Thebes, but to send the

- 150 remaining forty to colonize the island of Sardo. After this, while dining with Oeneus, he struck with his knuckles and killed Eunomus, a son of Architeles and a relative of Oeneus, as he was pouring water over his hands. Now the father of the boy pardoned Heracles, inasmuch as it had been an unintentional accident, but Heracles preferred to obey the law and put himself in exile, and he decided to go to Ceyx in Trachis.
- 151 *Nessus*. With Deianeira he made his way to the Euenus river, where Nessus the centaur had set up business ferrying travelers for a fee, maintaining that he had received the franchise from the gods because of his moral rectitude. Heracles crossed the river on his own, but when Nessus
- 152 demanded payment even so, he let him conduct Deianeira across. En route he tried to rape her. Heracles heard her scream, and shot Nessus in the heart with an arrow when he had landed. As Nessus was dying, he called Deianeira to him and told her that if she wanted a love-potion to use on Heracles, she should mix the semen which he had spilled on the ground with the blood that was flowing from the wound made by the arrowhead. She did this, and kept the potion with her.
- 153 *Theiodamas*. Proceeding through the land of the Dryopes without any food, Heracles came across Theiodamas driving two oxen. He sacrificed one of them and prepared a feast. Then, when he reached Trachis, he was welcomed by Ceyx, and he subdued the Dryopes.
- 154 *Heracles slays Coronus, Laogoras, Cycnus, and Amyntor*. Still later, after he had set out from Trachis, he gave his support to Aegimius, king of the Dorians. For the Lapiths, under the command of Coronus, were fighting Aegimius over border disputes, and when he came under siege, he invited Heracles to help out in return for a share of the land. So Heracles came to the rescue, slew Coronus among others, and handed
- 155 the liberated country in its entirety back to Aegimius. He also killed King Laogoras of the Dryopes, an hybriistic ally of the Lapiths, along with his children, as he was having a banquet in the temenos of Apollo.
- As he passed Itonus Heracles was challenged to a duel by Cycnus, son of Ares and Pelopia; Heracles took him on, and killed him. When he came to Ormenium, Amyntor, the king there, refused him passage, and tried to prevent his progress with weapons. So Heracles killed him as well.
- 156 *Heracles slays Eurytus, takes Iole captive*. Back at Trachis he gathered together an army to march against Oechalia, for he wished to take vengeance on Eurytus. With allies in the form of Arcadians, Melians from Trachis, and Epicnemidian Locrians, he slew Eurytus together with his sons, and seized their polis. He buried the dead from his own troops, namely Ceyx's son Hippasus and two sons of Licymnius, Argeius and Melas; then he plundered the polis and led Iole off as a spear-captive.

The death of Heracles. Anchoring at Ceneum in Euboea, he built an altar to Zeus Ceneus on the promontory, and before making sacrifices he sent his herald Lichas on to Trachis to fetch a white robe for the occasion. From Lichas Deianeira learned about the affair with Iole. In fear lest Heracles desire Iole more than herself, and in her belief that the blood of Nessus was truly a love-potion, she doused the robe with it. Heracles put it on and started the sacrifice, but as soon as the robe 158 grew warm the hydra's venom began to cook his flesh. He caught up Lichas by the foot and hurled him <into the Euboean sea>, then tore off the robe, which stuck to his body so that he ripped off his flesh along with it. In this state he was conveyed by ship to Trachis, where 159 Deianeira, when she learned what had happened, hanged herself.

Heracles instructed Hyllus, his oldest son by Deianeira, to marry Iole when he grew up; he then made his way to Mount Oete (a Trachinian mountain), and there he fashioned a pyre, climbed onto it, and ordered it to be lit. When no one was willing to do this, a passer-by named 160 Poeas, who was out looking for his sheep, set it afire. In return Heracles presented Poeas with his bow. As the pyre burned, it is told that a cloud came underneath Heracles, and lifted him up to the sky with a crack of thunder. From that time he achieved immortality, and when Hera's enmity changed to friendship, he married her daughter Hebe, who bore him sons Alexiades and Anicetus.

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