

The Marriage of Peleus & Thetis

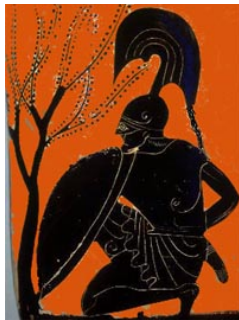
[Groton & May, Chapter 18]

Peleus

was a mortal man, the son of Endeis and Aeacus, king of Aegina. As a young man, Peleus and his brother, Telemon were involved in the murder of their half-brother, Phocus. In exile, he married Antigone, then accidentally killed her father, Eurytion. After Antigone killed herself, Peleus again went into exile where he met his next wife.

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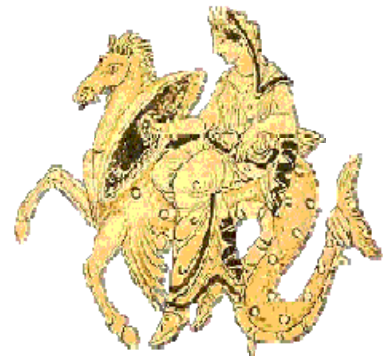
Achilles



Portrait of Achilles from a Greek Black-figure vase, c. 530 BC

Thetis

was a sea nymph, one of the fifty daughters of Nereus, termed Nereids, described by Homer as, "silver-footed."



The Nuptials

The wedding was planned by Zeus (Jupiter) himself and took place on Mt. Pelion. Mortals and immortals alike were invited and all were required to bring gifts. Poseidon (Neptune) gave Peleus a pair of immortal horses, named Balius & Xanthus. The wedding is described by the Greek playwright, Euripides, in "Iphigenia at Aulis" and by the Latin poet, Catullus in poem 64.

Discordia [Greek, Ερις]

The goddess of discord and the personification of strife, Discord was the only immortal not invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Angered, she threw out a golden apple inscribed with the words, "For the Fairest." Three goddesses, Hera (Juno), Aphrodite (Venus), and Athena (Minerva), immediately begin to quarrel over the apple. Jupiter handed the decision over to the Trojan, Paris, who awards the apple to Aphrodite. Venus in turn offers him Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta.



the golden apple

Ovid: *The Metamorphoses*

[Wheelock, Chapter 18]



A statue of Apollo & Daphne inspired by Ovid's story in Book 1.

Quick Facts about *The Metamorphoses*

- ★ written in 15 books
- ★ contains the stories of 247 different transformations
- ★ begins with Chaos and the creation of the world
- ★ ends with the deification of Julius Caesar
- ★ contains its own "Little Aeneid", an abbreviated version of Vergil's tale
- ★ completed in 8 AD
- ★ written in hexameter
- ★ modeled on Hesiod's *Theogony*
- ★ other than transformation, love is a main theme
- ★ Ovid's *Metamorphoses* inspired numerous later authors and artists

Ancient Thought on Life, Death & the Soul

Contemplation of the soul began with the Greek philosophers, specifically Plato and Aristotle. The Greeks used the word, $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, similar to the English word, psyche, to represent the soul. Plato believed that the soul was a mark of all living things responsible for thought and sensory perception. The soul was where virtues such as courage and justice resided and was what separated the living from the dead. In death, Plato believed that the soul departed from the body and traveled to the Underworld where it existed as a shade or ghost. He purported that the soul was immortal and therefore could never be destroyed. He reasoned that only things made of visible parts could be dissolved and since the soul cannot be seen, it cannot be dissolved, even in death. In contrast, Aristotle and many later Hellenistic thinkers believed that Plato was wrong and that the soul was corporeal and thus was lost at death.

created by Jessica Fisher, 2007