Bibliography

Ancient Authors & Works

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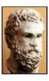
Κουκουβάγια on the bookshelf

The ancient authors and works listed below support the *Genealogical Guide to Greek Mythology*. The *Greek Mythology Link*, being a development of that work, is based on the same sources, but also relies on ancient authors and works not included in the list below.
In one of the tables below, the following will be seen:

Apollodorus is the most complete author: about 19% of all we know about the myths has been mentioned by him. Pausanias and Hyginus share a second place: ca. 12% each. Then comes Homer: ca. 8%. The authors just mentioned represent ca. 50% of all mythological data. The rest of the ancient authors appearing in this list represent the other half, but none of them surpass 5%. Close to 5% are authors such as Ovid and Nonnus. Close to 4% are Hesiod, Virgil and Diodorus Siculus.

These numbers merely reflect the presence of "genealogical data" (i.e the mention or description of characters in the ancient texts), and obviously do not represent an evaluation of the listed works in any other way.

The arguments of the plays by Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles are those found in the editions of the Loeb Classical Library.



Aeschylus 525-546 BC

Agamemnon

When that Helen had fled with Paris to Troyland, her husband Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon, the sons of Atreus and two-throned Kings of Argos, sought to take vengeance on him who had done outrage to Zeus, the guardian of the rights of hospitality. Before their palace appeared a portent, which the seer Calchas interpreted to them: the two eagles were the Kings themselves and the pregnant hare seized in their talons was the city which held Priam's son and Helen and her wealth. But Artemis, she that loves the wild things of the field, was wroth with the Kings: and when all their host was gathered at aulis and would sail with its thousand ships, she made adverse winds to blow; so that the ships rotted and the crews lost heart. Then the seer, albeit in darkling words, spake unto Agamemnon: "If thou wilt appease the goddess and so free the fleet, thou must sacrifice with thine own hand thy daughter Iphigenia." And he did even so, and the Greeks sailed away in their ships. Nine years did they lay siege to Troy town, but they could not take it; for it was fated that it should not be taken until the tenth year.

Now when King Agamemnon fared forth from Argos, he left at home his Queen, Clytaemnestra, Leda's child and Helen's sister (though she had for father Tyndareus, but Helen's was Zeus himself); and in her loneliness and because Agamemnon had slain her daughter, she gave ear to the whisperings of another's love, even of Aegisthus, son of that Thyestes who had lain with the wife of his brother Atreus; and for revenge Atreus slew other of Thyestes's sons and gave their father thereof to eat; and when Thyestes learned whereof he had eaten, he cursed his brother's race.

With the coming of the tenth year of the war, Queen Clytaemnestra, plotting with Aegisthus against her husband's life, ordered that watch be kept upon the roof of her palace at Argos; for a succession of beacon-fires was to flash the news from Troy when the city should be captured by Agamemnon. For weary months the watchman has been on the look-out—but at last the signal blazes forth in the night. In celebration of the glad event, the Queen has altar-fires kindled throughout the city. The Chorus of Elders will not credit the tidings; nor are their doubts resolved until a herald announces the approach of Agamemnon, whose ship had alone escaped the storm that had raged in the night just passed. Welcomed by his Queen, Agamemnon bespeaks a kindly reception for his captive, Cassandra, Priam's daughter, and on his wife's urgence consents to walk to his palace on costly tapestries. Cassandra seeks in vain to convince the Elders of their master's peril; and, conscious also of her own doom, passes within. Agamemnon's death-shriek is heard; the two corpses are displayed. Clytaemnestra exults in her deed and defies the Elders. Aegisthus enters to declare that Agamemnon has been slain in requital for his father's crime. The Elders, on the point of coming to blows with Aegisthus and his body-guard, are restrained by Clytaemnestra, but not before they utter the warning that Orestes will return to exact vengeance for the murder of his father.

Eumenides

The priestess of Apollo discovers Orestes as a suppliant in the inner shrine of the god at Delphi, and fronting him the Erinyes of his mother, a band of fearsome creatures who, wearied with the pursuit of the fugitive have fallen on sleep. Under promise of his support, Apollo bids Orestes flee to Athens, where he shall submit his case to judgement and be released from his sufferings. The ghost of Clytaemnestra rises to upbraid the sleeping Erinyes because of their neglect, whereby she is dishonoured among the other dead. Awakened by her taunts, they revile Apollo for that he has given sanctuary to a polluted man whom they rightly pursue by reason of their office—to take vengeance on all who shed kindred blood.

The scene shifts to Athens, whither his pursuers have tracked their prey. Orestes, clasping the ancient image of Pallas, implores her protection on the plea that the blood upon his hands has long since been washed away by sacred rites and that his presence has worked harm to none who have given him shelter. The Erinyes chant a hymn to bind the soul of their victim with its maddening spell. In answer to Orestes' call, the goddess appears and with the consent of the Erinyes undertakes to judge the case, not by herself alone but with the assistance of a chosen number of her best citizens who are to constitute the jury.

The trial opens with Apollo present as advocate of his suppliant and as representative of Zeus, whose commands he has merely to set forth in all his oracles. Orestes, he declares, slew his mother by his express behest. The accused confesses to the deed but urges in his defence that in killing her husband Clytaemnestra killed his father and that his accusers should justly have taken vengeance upon her. On theri rejecting this argument on the ground that the murderess was not blood-kin to him she murdered, Orestes denies blood-kinship with his mother; in which contention he is supported by Apollo, who asserts that the father alone is the proper parent of the child, the mother being only the nurse of the implanted seed.

Athena announces that the court, the first to try a case of homicide, is now established by her for all time to come. The jury cast their ballots; and the goddess, declaring that it is her duty to pronunce final judgement on the case, makes known that her vote is to count for Orestes, who is to win if the ballots are equally divided. Proclaimed victor by the tie, Orestes quit the scene; his antagonists threaten to bring ruin on the land taht has denied the justice of their cause. It is the part of Athena by promises of enduring honours to assuage their anger; and now no longer Spirits of Wrath but Spirits of Blessing, they are escorted in solemn procession to their sanctuary beneath the Hill of Ares.

The Libation-Bearers

Now when she had slain Agamemnon, Queen Clytaemnestra with her lover Aegisthus ruled in the land of Argos. But the spirit of her murdered lord was wroth and sent a baleful vision to distress her soul in sleep. She dreamed that she gave birth to a serpent and that she suckled it, as if it had been a babe; but together with the mother's milk the noxious thing drew clotted blood from out her breast. With a scream of horror she awoke, and when the seers of the house had interpreted the portent as a sign of the anger of the nether powers, she bade Electra, her daughter, and her serving-women bear libations to the tomb of Agamemnon, if haply she might placate his angry spirit.

Now Princess Electra dwelt in the palace, but was treated no better than a slave; but, before that Agamemnon was slain, her brother, Prince Orestes, had been sent to abide with his uncle Strophius in a far country, even in Phocis. There he had grown to youthful manhood, and on the selfsame day that his mother sought to avert the evil omen of her dream, accompanied by his cousin Pylades, he came to Argos seeking vengeance for his father's murder.

On the tomb of Agamemnon he places a lock of his hair, and when Electra discovers it, she is confident that it must be an offering to the dead made by none other than her brother. She has been recognized by him by reason of her mourning garb; but not until she has had further proof, by signs and tokens, will she be convinced that it is he in very truth.

Orestes makes known that he has been divinely commissioned to his purpose of vengeance. Lord Apollo himself has commanded him thereto with threats that, if he disobey, he shall be visited with assaults of the Erinyes of his father—banned from the habitations of men and the altars of the gods, he shall perish blasted in mind and body.

Grouped about the grave of their father, brother and sister, iaded by the friendly Chorus, implore his ghostly assistance to their just cause. Orestes and Pylades, disguised as Phocian travellers, are given hospitable welcome by Clytaemnestra, to whom it is reported that her son is dead. The Queen sends as messenger Orestes' old nurse to summon Aegisthus from outside accompanied by his bodyguard. The Chorus persuades her to alter the message and bid him come unattended. His death is quickly followed by that of Clytaemnestra, whose appeals for mercy are rejected by her son. Orestes, displaying the bloody robe in which his father had been entangled when struck down, proclaims the justice of his deed. But his wits begin to wander; the Erinyes of his mother, unseen by the others, appear before his disordered vision; he rushes from the scene.

Prometheus Bound

When Cronus, the son of Uranus, was king in heaven, revolt against his rule arose among the gods. The Olympians strove to dethrone him in favor of Zeus, his son; the Titans, children of Uranus and Earth, championing the ancient order of violence, warred against Zeus and his partisans. Prometheus, himself a Titan, forewarned by his oracular mother Earth or Themis (for she bore either name) that the victory should be won by craft, whereas his brethren placed their sole reliance on brute force, rallied with her to the side of Zeus and secured his success. His triumph once assured, the new monarch of heaven proceeded forthwith to apportion to the gods their various functions and prerogatives; but the wretched race of man he purposed to annihilate and create another in its stead. This plan was frustrated by Prometheus, who, in compassion on their feebleness, showed them the use of fire, which he had stolen in their behoof, and taught them all arts and handicrafts. For this rebellion against the newly-founded sovereignty of Zeus, the friend of mankind was doomed to suffer chastisement—he must pass countless ages, riveted to a crag on the shores of the Ocean in the trackless waste of Scythia.

But suffering of body or of mind might not quell his spirit, though he is possessed of the sad privilege of immortality. Conscious that he had erred, he is nevertheless fortified by indignation that he had been made the victim of tyranny and ingratitude. Nor is he unprovided with a means to strengthen his resistance and to force the hand of his opressor, whose despotic power has one point of attack. The Titan is possessed of a fateful secret which must be revealed to Zeus if he is not to be hurled from his dominion as his father had been before him. The despot contemplates marriage with Thetis, and should it be brought to pass, the son to be born to him is to prove mightier than his sire. This secret, told Prometheus by his mother, he will not disclose till, in the lapse of ages, Zeus consents to release him from his ignominious bonds; rather than part with it on other terms he defies the thunder and the lightning of the lord of Olympus and, amid the crashing world, is hurled to Tartarus, to the last protesting against the injustice of his doom.

Seven Against Thebes

It had been thrice foretold by Apollo, the lord of Delphi, unto Laius, the King of the Cadmeans, that if he would save his kingdom he must die without offspring. But Laius followed the perverse counsels of his nature and disobeyed the voice of god: he begat a son, whom he would have exposed to his death on Mount Cithaeron; but the babe was rescued by a shepherd who bore him to Corinth, where he grew to manhood, believing himself to be the son of the king of that land, although in fact he had only been adopted by him being childless. But coming to misdoubt his parentage, Oedipus journeyed to Delphi to seek the truth; and when the god declared that he should slay his own father and marry his own mother, he sought to flee such a fate and betake himself far from the land wherein he thought his father and his mother dwelt. But it befell as the god had said: on the way he met and slew, unbeknown to himself, his father Laius: he came to Thebes, destroyed the monster Sphinx that made havoc of the land, married the Queen, even his mother, and begat two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, and two daughters, Antigone and Ismene. But when the truth stood revealed, his mother-wife hung herself, and Oedipus stabbed his eyes that they might not look on the misery he had wrought. And it came to pass thatb his sons, who ruled in his stead alternately, each the space of a year, treated him sore ill, so he cursed them and declared that they should divide their inheritance by the sword. Eteocles would not suffer his brother to hace his time to rule; and to enforce his right Polynices, who had fled to Adrastus, King of Argos, and married the daughter of that prince, mustered a host and sought to take his native town.

At this point the action of the play begins. Warned by the seer Teiresias that the Argives are bent on a supreme assault, Eteocles heartens the burghers, quells the outcries of the daughters of Thebes, frantic at their impending danger, and receives the tidings from a scout that the enemy is advancing against the seven gates. To each of the opposing chieftains as they are described by the scout Eteocles opposes a worthy antagonist, nor will he himself hold back from encountering his brother when he learns that he is to attack the seventh gate. The curse of his father must not stand vefore a soldier's honour. And so the brothers fell, each by the other's hand, and the curse of Oedipus and the warning of Apollo to Laius were fulfilled.

The Suppliant Maidens

Io, daughter of Inachus, King of Argos, was priestess of Hera, whose jealousy of her lord's love for the maiden brought upon her victim marring of mind and body; and she was driven distraught and in the semblance of a heifer made to wander over land and sea until she came to the land of the Nile. There she regained her human form by the mysterious touch of her lover Zeus, and bore a child Epaphus, from whom sprang Libya, and from her Belus and Agenor. Between Belus' two sons, Aegyptus and Danaus, strife arose, and the fifty sons of Aegyptus wished to possess by forced marriage the fifty daughters of Danaus. But the maidens, loathing the violence of their kinsmen, fled amain with their father to Argos, the home of heir primal mother, and besought sanctuary from the king of that land, Pelasgus.

The hesitations of the king to vindicate to the suppliants the right of asylum, the triumph of that right by vote of the people of Argos, the arrival of the suitors in pursuit, preceded by their herald demandind the surrender of the maidens, and his repulse though threatening war, constitute the action of the play.

The sequel was contained in the Egyptians and the Danaids. Danaus, forced to acquiesce in the demands of his nephews, enjoins upon his daughters the duty of killing their bridegrooms on the marriage night. All, save Hypermnestra, obey; she with splendid perfidy spares Lynceus out of love; and when brought to trial is defended by the goddess Aphrodite pleading that love of man and woman is sanctified by the love of Heaven for Earth.

(Orpheus)
Argonautica Orphica. The adventures of the ARGONAUTS. There is information about 30 characters other than the ARGONAUTS.

Apollodorus, AD 100
The Library. The most complete account of the Greek myths, covering almost everything from the creation of the world to the Trojan War. We meet nearly all important characters and many others.

Apuleius, AD 160
The Golden Ass. The only known source for the myth of Eros and Psyche.

Aratus of Soli, 315-245 BC
Phaenomena. Relation of some mythological characters to the stars and constellations. Among others Pegasus, Dike, Andromeda and the PLEIADES.

Apollonius Rhodius, 260 BC
Argonautica. The adventures of the ARGONAUTS. In addition there is information about almost 200 characters other than the ARGONAUTS themselves.

Aristophanes, c. 447-386 BC
The Birds. Contains a cosmogonic exposition which also explains, in a humorous way, the origin of birds.

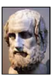
Callimachus, 284 BC
Hymn to Apollo
Hymn to Artemis
On the Bath of Pallas
Hymn to Delos
Hymn to Demeter
Hymn to Zeus
In these hymns Callimachus provides information about 30 other characters, among others Achilles, Tiresias, Atalanta, Io, Callisto, etc.

Cicero, c. 106-43 BC
De Natura Deorum (The Nature of the Gods)
The accounts given in Cicero's work are not presented as true ones, but as an instrument of refutation of the Greek traditional fables in general.

Colluthus, AD 500
The Rape of Helen
Besides Paris and Helen, we may find references to Eris, Hyacinthus, Leto, Ganymedes, Hypnos, etc.

Dionysius of Halicarnasus, 60 BC-AD 7
The Roman Antiquities
Roman extension of the Greek myths. Description of the evolution of the kingdoms founded by Aeneas and followers.

Diodorus Siculus, 80-20 BC
The Library of History



Euripides, 485-406 BC

Alcestis

Apollo, being banished for a season from Olympus, and condemned to do service to a mortal, became herdman of Admetus, King of Pherae in Thessaly. Yet he loathed not his earthly taskmaster, but loved him, for that he was a just man, and hospitable exceedingly. Wherefore he obtained from the Fates this boon for Admetus, that, when his hour of death should come, they should accept in ramsom for his life the life of whosoever should have before consented to die in his stead. Now when this was made known, none of them which were nearest by blood to the king would promise to be his ramsom in that day. Then Alcestis his wife, the daughter of Pelias King of Iolcos, pledged her to die for him. Of her love she did it and for the honour of wifehood. And the years passed by, and the tale was told in many lands; and all men praised Alcestis, but Admetus bore a burden of sorrow, for day by day she became dearer to him, a wife wholly true, a mother most loving, and a lady to her thralls gentle exceedingly. But when it was known by tokens that the day was come, Admetus repented him sorely, but it availed not, for no mortal may recall a pledge once given to the Gods. And on that day there came to the palace Apollo to plead with Death for Alcestis' sake; and a company of Elders of Pherae, to ask for her state and to make mourning for her. And when she was dead, ere she was borne forth to burial, came Hercules, son of Zeus, in his journeying, seeking the guest's right of meal and lodging, but not knowing aught of that which had come to pass. Of him was a great deliverance wrought, which is told herein.

Andromache

When Troy was taken by the Greeks, Andromache, wife of that Hector whom Achilles slew ere himself was slain by the arrow which Apollo guided, was given in the dividing of the spoils to Neoptolemus, Achilles' son. So he took her oversea to the land of Thessaly, and loved her, and entreated her kindly, and she bare him a son in her captivity. But after ten years Neoptolemus took to wife a princess of Sparta, Hermion, daughter of Menelaus and Helen. But to these was no child born, and the soul of Hermione grew bitter with jealousy against Andromache. Now Neoptolemus, in his indignation for his father's death, had upbraided Apollo therewith: wherefore he now journeyed to Delphi, vainly hoping by prayer and sacrifice to assuage the wrath of the God. But so soon as he was gone, Hermione sought to avenge herself on Andromache; and Menelaus came thither also, and these twain went about to slay the captive and her child. Wherefore Andromache hid her son, and took sanctuary at the altar of the goddess Thetis, expecting till Peleus, her lord's grandsire, should come to save her. And herein are set forth her sore peril and deliverance: also it is told how Neoptolemus found death at Delphi, and how he that contrived his death took his wife.

Bacchanals

Semele the daughter of Cadmus, a mortal bride of Zeus, was persuaded by Hera to pray the God to promise her with an oath to grant her whatsoever she would. And, when he had consented, she asked that he would appear to her in all the splendour of his godhead, even as he visited Hera. Then Zeus, not of his will, but constrained by his oath, appeared to her amidst intolerable light, and flashings of heaven's lightning, whereby her mortal body was consumed. But the God snatched her unborn babe from the flames, and hid him in a cleft of his thigh, till the days were accomplished wherein he should be born. And so the child Dionysus sprang from the thigh of Zeus, and was hidden from the jealous malice of Hera till he was grown. Then did he set forth in victorious march through all the earth, bestowing upon men the gift of the vine, and planting his worship everywhere. But the sisters of Semele scoffed at the story of the heavenly bridegroom, and mocked at the worship of Dionysus. And when Cadmus was now old, Pentheus his grandson reigned in his stead, and he too defied the wine-giver, saying that he was no god, and that none in Thebes should ever worship him. And herein is told how Dionysus came in human guise to Thebes, and filled her women with the Bacchanal possession, and how Pentheus, essaying to withstand him, was punished by strange and awful doom.

Cyclops

THE Satyric Drama, of which the Cyclops is the solitary example extant, is especially interesting as being a survival in literature. The Greek drama originally, as being designed for representation at the great annual festival of Dionysus or Bacchus, had for its subject some incident in the adventures of that god or his followers. When, early in the fifth century B.C., it became the rule that each dramatic poet should present a trilogy of tragedies at the Greater Dionysia, it was required that to these should be added a fourth play, founded on the ancient theme, as a concession to the popular feeling connected with the Wine-god's festival, and as a recognition of his presence. As the chorus in such plays was invariably composed of Satyrs, the peculiar attendants of Bacchus, such plays were called Satyric Dramas. In these, incidents in the legends of gods and heroes were treated with an approach to burlesque, the high style of tragedy was abandoned at pleasure, the vocabulary contained many words which were beneath the dignity of the serious drama, the dances were wild, and not always decent, the versification was more irregular, broad and wanton jests were not only admitted, but perhaps even prescribed: in short, the unrestrained licence of the original Dionysia found here its literary expression. The subject of the Cyclops is taken from that adventure of Odysseus which is related with Epic dignity by Homer in the *Odyssey*, Bk. IX. The divergences, rendered inevitable by the special character of the Satyric Drama, are so great that it cannot be affirmed with certainty that this play was really based on Homer.

Electra

WHEN Agamemnon returned home from the taking of Troy, his adulterous wife Clytaemnestra, with the help of her paramour Aegisthus, murdered him as he entered the silver bath in his palace. They sought also to slay his young son Orestes, that no avenger might be left alive; but an old servant stole him away and took him out of the land, unto Phocis. There was he nurtured by king Strophius, and Pylades the king's son loved him as a brother. So Aegisthus dwelt with Clytaemnestra, reigning in Argos, where remained now of Agamemnon's seed Electra his daughter only. And these twain marked how Electra grew up in hate and scorn of them, indignant for her father's murder, and fain to avenge him. Wherefore, lest she should wed a prince, and persuade husband or son to accomplish her heart's desire, they bethought them how they should forestall this peril. Aegisthus indeed should have slain her, yet by the queen's counsel forbore, and gave her in marriage to a poor yeoman, who dwelt far from the city, as thinking that from peasant husband and peasant children theree should be nought to fear. Howbeit this man, being full of loyalty to the mighty dead and reverence for blood royal, behaved himself to her as to a queen, so that she continued virgin in his house all the days of her adversity. Now when Orestes was grown to man, he journeyed with Pylades his friend to Argos, to seek out his sister, and to devise how he might avenge his father, since by the oracle of Apollo he was commanded so to do. And herein is told the story of his coming, and how brother and sister were made known to each other, and how they fulfilled the oracle in taking vengeance on tyrant and adulteress.

Heraclides

Eurystheus, king of Argos, hated Hercules all his life through, and sought to destroy him by thrusting on him many and desperate labours. And when Hercules had been caught up to Olympus from the pyre whereon he was consumed on Mount Oeta, Eurystheus persecuted the hero's children, and sought to slay them. Wherefore Iolaus, their father's friend and helper, fled with them. But in whatsoever city they sought refuge, thence were they driven; for Eurystheus ever made search for them, and demanded them with threats of war. So fleeing from land to land, they came at last to Marathon which belongeth to Athens, and there took sanctuary at the temple of Zeus. Thither came the folk of the land compassionating them, and Eurystheus' herald requiring their surrender, and the king of Athens, Theseus' son, to hear their cause. And herein is told the tale of the war that came of his refusal to yield them up, of the sacrifice of a noble maiden which the Gods required as the price of victory, of an old warrior by miracle made young, and of the vengeance of Alcmena.

Hecabe

WHEN Troy was taken by the Greeks, Hecuba, the wife of Priam, and her daughter, Cassandra the prophetess, and Polyxena, with the other women of Troy, were made slaves, being portioned among the victors, so that Cassandra became the concubine of Agamemnon. But Polydorus, the youngest of Priam's sons, had long ere this been sent, with much treasure of gold, for safe keeping to his father's friend, Polymestor king of Thrace, so that his mother had one consolation of hope amidst her afflictions. Now the host of Greece could not straightway sail home, because to the spirit of their dead hero Achilles was given power to hold the winds from blowing, till meet sacrifice were rendered to him, even a maiden of Troy, most beautiful of the seed royal; and for this they chose Polyxena. And now king Polymestor, lusting for the gold, and fearing no vengeance of man, slew his ward, the lad Polydorus, and flung his body into the sea, so that it was in process of time cast up by the waves on the shore whereby was the camp of the Greeks, and was brought to Hecuba. And herein are told the sorrow of Hecuba and her revenge.

Helen

IT is told that one of the old bards, named Stesichorus, who lived six generations before Euripides; did in a certain poem revile Helen, for that her sin was the cause of misery to Hellas and to Troy. Thereupon was he struck blind for railing on her who had after death become a goddess. But the man repented of his presumption, and made a new song wherein he unsaid all the evil he had sung of Queen Helen, and move into his lay an ancient legend, telling how that not she, but her wraith only, had passed to Troy, while she was borne by the Gods to the land of Egypt, and there remained until the day when her lord, turning aside on the homeward voyage, should find her there. When he had done this, his sight was straightway restored to him. In this play is Helen's story told according to the "Recantation of Stesichorus."

Heracles

Hercules was hated from his birth by Hera, and by her devices was made subject to Eurystheus, king of Argos. At his command he performed the great Twelve Labours, whereof the last was that he should bring up Cerberus, the Hound of Hades, from the Underworld. Ere he departed, he committed Amphitryon his father, with Megara his wife, and his sons, to the keeping of Creon, king of Thebes, and so went down into the Land of Darkness. Now when he was long time absent, so that men doubted whether he would ever return, a man of Euboea, named Lycus, was brought into Thebes by evil-hearted and discontented men, and with these conspired against Creon, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. Then he sought further to slay all that remained of the house of Hercules, lest any should in days to come avenge Creon's murder. So these, in their sore strait, took refuge at the altar of Zeus. And herein is told how, even as they stood under the shadow of death, Hercules returned for their deliverance, and how in the midst of that joy and triumph a yet worse calamity was brought upon them by the malice of Hera.

Hippolytus

HIPPOLYTA, Queen, of the Amazons, bore to Theseus, king of Athens and Troezen, a son whom he named from her, Hippolytus. Now this youth grew up of all men most pure in heart, reverencing chiefly Artemis the Maiden, Goddess of the Chase, and utterly contemning the worship of Aphrodite. Wherefore the wrath of the Queen of Love was kindled against him, and she made Phaedra, his father's young wife, mad with love for him; and although she wrestled with her malady, and strove to hide it in her heart, till by the fever of it she was brought nigh to death's door, yet in the end it was revealed, and was made destruction to her and to Hippolytus also.

Ion

IN the days when Erechtheus ruled over Athens, Apollo wrought violence to the kings young daughter Creusa. And she, having borne a son, left him, by reason of her fear and shame, in the cave wherein the God had humbled her. But Apollo cared for him, and caused the babe to be brought to Delphi, even to his temple. Therein was the child nurtured, and ministered in the courts of the God's house. And in process of time Erechtheus died, and left no son nor daughter save Creusa, and evil days came upon Athens, that she was hard bestead in war. Then Xuthus, a chief of the Achaean folk, fought for her and prevailed against her Euboean enemies, and for guerdon of victory received the princess Creusa to wife, and so became king-consort in Athens. But to these twain was no child born; so, after many years, they journeyed to Delphi to inquire of the oracle of Apollo touching issue. And there the God ordered all things so that the lost was found, and an heir was given to the royal house of Athens. Yet, through the blind haste of mortals, and their little faith, was the son well-nigh slain by the mother, and the mother by the son.

Iphigenia in Aulis

WHEN the hosts of Hellas were mustered at Aulis beside the narrow sea, with purpose to sail against Troy, they were hindered from departing thence by the wrath of Artemis, who suffered no favoring wind to blow. Then, when they enquired concerning this, Calchas the prophet proclaimed that the anger of the Goddess would not be appeased save by the sacrifice of Iphigenia, eldest daughter of Agamemnon, captain of the host. Now she abode yet with her mother in Mycenae, but the king wrote a lying letter to her mother, bidding her send her daughter to Aulis, there to be wedded to Achilles. All this did Odysseus devise, but Achilles knew nothing thereof. When the time drew near that she should come, Agamemnon repented him sorely. And herein is told how he sought to undo the evil, and of the maiden's coming, and how Achilles essayed to save her, and how she willingly offered herself for Hellas' sake, and of the marvel that befell at the sacrifice.

Iphigenia in Tauris

WHEN Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, lay on, the altar of sacrifice at Aulis, Artemis snatched her away, and bare her to the Tauric land, which lieth in Thrace to north of the Black Sea. Here she was made priestess of the Goddess's temple, and in this office was constrained to consecrate men for death upon the altar; for what Greeks soever came to that coast were seized and sacrificed to Artemis. And herein is told how her own brother Orestes came thither, and by what means they were made known to each other, and of the plot that they framed for their escape.

Medea

WHEN the Heroes, who sailed in the ship Argo to bring home the Golden Fleece, came to the land of Colchis, they found that to win that treasure was a deed passing the might of mortal man, so terribly was it guarded by monsters magical, even fire-breathing bulls and an unsleeping dragon. But Aphrodite caused Medea the sorceress, daughter of Aeetes the king of the land, to love Jason their captain, so that by her magic he overcame the bulls and the dragon. Then Jason took the Fleece, and Medea withal, for that he had pledged him to wed her in the land of Greece. But as they fled, Absyrtus her brother pursued them with a host of war, yet by Medea's devising was he slain. So they came to the land of Iolcos, and to Pelias, who held the kingdom which was Jason's of right. But Medea by her magic wrought upon Pelias' daughters so that they slew their father. Yet by reason of men's horror of the deed might not Jason and Medea abide in the land, and they came to Corinth. But there all men rejoiced for the coming of a hero so mighty in war and a lady renowned for wisdom unearthly, for that Medea was grandchild of the Sun-god. But after ten years, Creon the king of the land spake to Jason, saying, "Lo, I will give thee my daughter to wife, and thou shall reign after me, if thou wilt put away thy wife Medea; but her and her two sons will I banish from the land." So Jason consented. And of this befell things strange and awful, which are told herein.

Orestes

WHEN Orestes had avenged his father by slaying his mother Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus her paramour, as is told in the Tragedy called "Electra," he was straightway haunted by the Erinyes, the avengers of parricide, and by them made mad; and in the torment thereof he continued six days, till he was brought to death's door. And herein is told how his sister Electra ministered to him, and how by the Argive people they were condemned to death, while their own kin stood far from their help, and how they strove against their doom.

The Phoenician Women

When Oedipus, king of Thebes, was ware that he had fulfilled the oracle uttered ere he waas born, in that he had slain his father, king Laius, and wedded his mother Jocasta, he plucked out his own eyes in his shame and misery. So he ceased to be king; but, inasmuch as his two sons rendered to him neither love nor worship, he cursed them with this curse, "that they should divide their inheritance with the sword." But they essayed to escape this doom by covenanting to rule in turn, year by year. So Eteocles, being the elder, became king for the first year, and Polyneices his brother departed from the land, lest any occasion of offence should arise. But when after a year's space he returned, Eteocles refused to yield to him the kingdom. Then went he to Adrastus, king of Argos, who gave him his daughter to wife, and led forth a host of war under seven chiefs against Thebes. And herein is told how the brothers met in useless parley; by what strange sacrifice Thebes was saved; of the Argives' vain assault; and how the brothers slew each other in single combat.

Rhesus

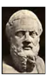
WHEN Hector and the Trojans, as Homer telleth in the Eighth Book of his *Iliad*, had driven the Greeks from before Troy back to their camp beside the sea, the host of Troy lay for that night in the plain overagainst them. And the Trojans sent forth Dolon a spy to know what the Greeks were minded to do. But there went forth also two spies from the camp of the Greeks, even Odysseus and Diomedes, and these met Dolon and slew him, after that he had told them in his fear all that they would know of the array of the Trojans, and of the coming of their great ally, Rhesus the Thracian, the son of a Goddess. And herein is told of the coming of the Thracian king, and of all that befell that night in the camp of the Trojans.

Suppliants

IN the days when Theseus ruled in Athens, there was war between Argos and Thebes. For the two sons of Oedipus, being mindful of their father's curse, that they should divide their inheritance with the sword, covenanted to rule in turn, year by year, over Thebes. So Eteocles, being the elder, became king for the first year, and Polyneices his brother departed from the land, lest any occasion of offence should arise. But when after a year's space he returned, Eteocles refused to yield to him the kingdom. Then went he to Adrastus, king of Argos, who gave him his daughter to wife, and led forth a host of war under seven chiefs against Thebes. But, forasmuch as in going he set at naught oracles and seers, his array was utterly broken in battle, and of those seven captains none returned, but Adrastus only. Thereafter, according to the sacred custom of Hellas, and the law of war, the Argives sent to require the Thebans to suffer them to bear away their slain that they might bury them. For, among the Greeks, if a man being dead obtained not burial, this was accounted a calamity worse than death, forasmuch as he was thereby made homeless and accurst in Hades. Yet did the Thebans impiously and despitefully reject that claim, being minded to wreak vengeance on their enemies after death. Then king Adrastus, with the mothers of the slain chiefs, came to Eleusis in Atlica, and made supplication at the altar of Demeter to Aethra the mother of Theseus, and to the king's self. So Theseus consented to their prayer, and led the array of Athens against Thebes, and there fought and prevailed, and so brought back the bodies of those chiefs, and rendered to them the death-rites at Eleusis.

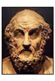
Daughters of Troy

WHEN Troy was taken by the Greeks, the princesses of the House of Priam mere apportioned by lot to the several chiefs of the host. But Polyxena they doomed to be sacrificed on Achilles' tomb, and Astyanax, the son of Hector and Andromache, they hurled from a high tower. And herein is told how all this befell; and beside there is naught else save the lamentations of these Daughters of Troy, till the city is set aflame, and the captives are driven down to the sea.



Herodotus, 484-430 BC
History

Hesiod, 700 BC
Catalogues. Collections of scholiasts on Hesiod, among which the so called *Catalogues of Women and Eoiae*.
Shield of Heracles.
Theogony.
Works and Days



Homer, c. 750 BC (and *Homeric Hymns*)
The Iliad
The Odyssey
Homeric Hymns : *to Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Asclepius, Demeter, Dionysus, Helius, Hermes, Pan, and Selene*

Hyginus, before AD 207
Poetica Astronomica. The myths in relation to the stars and constellations.
Fabulae. The Fabulae tell the stories of about 1200 mythical characters. Like Apollodorus, Hyginus attempts to present a complete catalogue of the myths.

Antoninus Liberalis, AD 100
Metamorphoses. Folklore-like short stories.

Longus, AD 200
Daphnis and Chloe. Love story.

Manilius, AD 10
Astronomica. The myths in connection with stars and constellations.

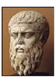
Nonnos, 5th Century AD
Dionysiaca. The god Dionysus wages war against India reaching farther than Alexander the Great.

Ovid, 43 BC-AD 17
Fasti. Poetical description of the Roman year.
Heroides. Twenty one letters from women to their lovers: Penelope to Odysseus, Briseis to Achilles, etc.
Metamorphoses. One of the main sources to the Greek myths including some Roman extensions.

Parthenius of Nicaea, 1st Century BC
Love Romances. Short stories. Some of them do not need to be regarded as myths.

Pausanias, AD 150
Description of Greece. Hellas seen by a sharp mind. Entertaining descriptions of cities, landscapes, monuments, etc., followed by many mythological accounts, often commented by the author. Some episodes, like the legendary version of the colonization of Ionia, or the return of the HERACLIDES are narrated in detail.

Pindar, 518-438 BC
Odes: *Isthmian, Nemean, Olympian, and Pythian*



Plato, 427-347 BC
Critias. The myth of Atlantis.
Phaedrus. Offspring of Achelous.
The Republic. The parentage of the MOERAE. More about Ajax the Salaminian.
Timaeus. On the offspring of Oceanus.

Plutarch, AD 45-120
Moralia: *Greek Questions. Roman Parallel Stories*
Parallel Lives: *Alcibiades, Cimon, Lysander, Numa, Pyrrhus, Romulus, Solon, Theseus.*

Propertius, born 50 BC
Elegies

Quintus Smyrnaeus, AD 400
The Fall of Troy. This epic work resumes the story where the *Iliad* finishes.

Sophocles, 495-406 BC

Ajax

THE arms of Achilles, claimed by Ajax as the bravest warrior in the host, were through intrigue given to Odysseus, and Ajax vows vengeance both on the winner and on the awarders of the prize. But Athena, his patron goddess, whom his arrogance has estranged, sends him a delusion so that he mistakes for his foes the sheep and cattle of the Greeks. Athena, when the play opens, is discovered conversing with Odysseus outside the tent of Ajax ; she will show him his mad foe mauling the beasts within. The mad fit passes and Ajax bewails his insensate folly and declares that death alone can wipe out the shame. His wife Tecmessa and the Chorus try to dissuade him, but he will not be comforted and calls for his son Eurysaces. The child is brought, and after leaving his last injunctions for his brother Teucer, Ajax takes a tender farewell. He then, fetches his sword from the tent and goes forth declaring that he will purge himself of his stains and bury his sword. Presently a Messenger from the camp announces that Teucer has returned from his foray and has learnt from Calchas, the seer, that if only Ajax can be kept within the camp for that day all may yet be well. The Chorus and Tecmessa set forth in quest of Ajax, and Tecmessa discovers him lying transfixed by his sword. Teucer finds the mourners gathered round the corpse and is preparing to bury him, when Menelaus hurries up to forbid the burial. After an angry wrangle with Teucer, Menelaus departs, but is succeeded by Agamemnon, who enforces his brother's veto and is hardly persuaded by Odysseus to relent. Ajax is carried by his Salaminians to his grave, a grave (so they prophesy) that shall be famous for all time.

Antigone

Antigone, daughter of Oedipus, the late king of Thebes, in defiance of Creon who rules in his stead, resolves to bury her brother Polyneices, slain in his attack on Thebes. She is caught in the act by Creon's watch-men and brought before the king. She justifies her action, asserting that she was bound to obey the eternal laws of right and wrong in spite of any human ordinance. Creon, unrelenting, condemns her to be immured in a rock-hewn chamber. His son Haemon, to whom Antigone is betrothed, pleads in vain for her life and threatens to die with her. Warned by the seer Teiresias Creon repents him and hurries to release Antigone from her rocky prison. But he is too late: he finds lying side by side Antigone who has hanged herself and Haemon who also has perished by his own hand. Returning to the palace he sees within the dead body of his queen who on learning of her son's death has stabbed herself to the heart.

Electra

Orestes, admonished by the Delphic oracle to avenge his murdered father, sets forth for Mycenae accompanied by his aged Paedagogus and Pylades. When in sight of the palace they lay their plot. The Paedagogus is to present himself as a Phocian messenger and announce to Clytaemnestra that Orestes has been killed in a chariot race at the Pythian games. Meanwhile Orestes and Pylades are to make funeral offerings at the tomb of Agamemnon and then, disguised as Phocians, to carry to the Queen a funeral urn, telling her it holds the ashes of Orestes. Clytaemnestra, warned by an evil dream, sends Chrysothemis to pour a libation on the tomb. Electra meets her on the way thither and persuades her to leave these impious offerings and take instead such gifts as the two sisters can make to their father's ghost. Clytaemnestra enters with a handmaid bearing fruits to be laid on the altar of Apollo. She rates Electra for being abroad without her leave, and defends her past acts against Electra's reproaches. The announcement of a messenger ends the altercation, and the Queen hears with feigned sorrow and ill-concealed joy the news of Orestes' death, and invites the messenger to accompany her to the palace. Chrysothemis returns from the tomb, reporting that someone has been there before her, has wreathed the mound with flowers, and left on the edge a lock of hair. Who can it be but Orestes ? Electra disabuses her, repeating the messenger's sad tale, and entreats her aid in executing the resolve to slay with her own hands their unnatural mother and her paramour. Orestes joins them with Pylades and attendants bearing the funeral urn. She takes the urn in her hands and makes her moan over her lost brother. As they converse together Orestes by degrees reveals himself and discloses his purpose. With Pylades he enters the palace, and shortly a death-shriek is heard. He comes forth, and in answer to Electra replies that all is well in the house. Aegisthus is seen approaching, exultant at the report: he has heard of Orestes death. Electra confirms it, and bids him enter the palace and see with his own eyes the corpse. At his bidding the palace doors are thrown open and on a bier is seen a veiled corpse. Aegisthus lifts the face cloth and beholds the corpse of Clytaemnestra with Orestes standing hard by. He knows that his fate is sealed, and is driven at the sword's point by Orestes to be slain in the hall where Agamemnon was slain. The Chorus of free Mycenaean women hail the death of the usurper which ends the curse on the house of Atreus.

Oedipus at Colonus

Oedipus, the blind and banished King of Thebes, has come in his wanderings to Colonus, a deme of Athens, led by his daughter Antigone. He sits to rest on a rock just within the sacred grove of the Furies and is bidden depart by a passing native. But Oedipus, instructed by an oracle that he had reached his final resting-place, refuses to stir, and the stranger consents to go and consult the Elders of Colonus (the Chorus of the Play). Conducted to the spot they pity at first the blind beggar and his daughter, but on learning his name they are horror-stricken and order him to quit the land. He appeals to the world-famed hospitality of Athens and hints at the blessings that his coming will confer on the State. They agree to await the decision of King Theseus. From Theseus Oedipus craves protection in life and burial in Attic soil; the benefits that will accrue shall be told later. Theseus departs having promised to aid and befriend him. No sooner has he gone than Creon enters with an armed guard who seize Antigone and carry her off (Ismene, the other sister, they have already captured) and he is about to lay hands on Oedipus, when Theseus, who has heard the tumult, hurries up and, upbraiding Creon for his lawless act, threatens to detain him till he has shown where the captives are and restored them. In the next scene Theseus returns bringing with him the rescued maidens. He informs Oedipus that a stranger who has taken sanctuary at the altar of Poseidon wishes to see him. It is Polyneices who has come to crave his father's forgiveness and blessing, knowing by an oracle that victory will fall to the side that Oedipus espouses. But Oedipus spurns the hypocrite, and invoices a dire curse on both his unnatural sons. A sudden clap of thunder is heard, and as peal follows peal, Oedipus is aware that his hour is come and bids Antigone summon Theseus. Self-guided he leads the way to the spot where death should overtake him, attended by Theseus and his daughters. Halfway he bids his daughters farewell, and what followed none but Theseus knew. He was not (so the Messenger reports) for the gods took him.

Oedipus the king

To Laius, King of Thebes, an oracle foretold that the child born to him by his queen Jocasta would slay his father and wed his mother. So when in time a son was born the infant's feet were riveted together and he was left to die on Mount Cithaeron. But a shepherd found the babe and tended him, and delivered him to another shepherd who took him to his master, the King of Corinth. Polybus being childless adopted the boy, who grew up believing that he was indeed the King's son. Afterwards doubting his parentage he inquired of the Delphic god and heard himself the weird declared before to Laius. Wherefore he fled from what he deemed his father's house and in his flight he encountered and unwittingly slew his father Laius. Arriving at Thebes he answered the riddle of the Sphinx and the grateful Thebans made their deliverer king. So he reigned in the room of Laius, and espoused the widowed queen. Children were born to them and Thebes prospered under his rule, but again a grievous plague fell upon the city. Again the oracle was consulted and it bade them purge themselves of blood-guiltiness. Oedipus denounces the crime of which he is unaware, and undertakes to track out the criminal. Step by step it is brought home to him that he is the man. The closing scene reveals Jocasta slain by her own hand and Oedipus blinded by his own act and praying for death or exile.

Philoctetes

NINE years before the play begins Philoctetes, afflicted by a noisome wound, had been landed by the Greek chiefs on the desert island of Lemnos. He bore with him the famous bow and arrows of Heracles; and without these, as a seer afterwards declared to them, Troy could not be taken. So Odysseus was commissioned to bring back by force or fraud the hero and his arms, and he took with him, to aid him in his purpose, the son of Achilles, Philoctetes' dearest friend. When the play begins Odysseus has landed and is instructing Neoptolemus in his part. He is to find Philoctetes and reveal who he is, but pretend that he has come to take him back, not to Troy, but home to Greece. Neoptolemus at first indignantly declines the task and is hardly persuaded to play the traitor. He meets Philoctetes coming forth from his cave, makes himself known, and, to gain his confidence, relates fictitious wrongs that he, too, has suffered at the hands of the Greeks. He consents to take Philoctetes home, but as they are starting for the ship a merchant-captain appears (a sailor disguised by Odysseus) who tells them that the Greek captains have sent in pursuit of both. They hasten their departure, but first visit the cave that Philoctetes may fetch away the simples he needs to dress his wound. As he is leaving the cave Philoctetes is seized with a paroxysm of pain. Knowing that after such attacks deep slumber is wont to follow, he entrusts his bow and arrows to Neoptolemus who swears to keep them safe and restore them to their owner. On awakening he demands his bow, but Neoptolemus refuses to give it back and confesses the plot that Philoctetes now suspects. Stung by the denouncement of his treachery and the pathetic appeal to his better nature, Neoptolemus repents him and is in the act of restoring the bow, when Odysseus, who has been watching the scene in hiding, appears to prevent him. The bow Odysseus will have; Philoctetes may go or stay as he chooses. The pair depart together for the ships and Philoctetes is left behind with the chorus of sailors who endeavour to persuade him to return with them. But he is obdurate and they are about to leave him when Neoptolemus is seen hurrying back with the bow, closely followed by Odysseus who tries in vain to arrest him and threatens to denounce him as a traitor to the host. Philoctetes regains his bow and would have used it to let. fly a mortal shaft at Odysseus, had not Neoptolemus stayed his hand. Again he is urged to go back to Troy and again he refuses. Neoptolemus true to his word, reluctantly agrees to convey him home. At this point an apparition is seen in the air above them, the divine form of Heracles, sent by Zeus from Olympus to bid Philoctetes go back to Troy with Neoptolemus and so fulfil the oracle. At last he bows to the will of Heaven.

Trachiniae

DEIANIRA, alarmed at the long absence of her husband, resolves to send their son Hyllus in quest of his father. When he left home Heracles had told her that in fifteen months would come the crisis of his fate—either death or glory and rest from his toils. As she meditates, Lichas, the henchman of Heracles, comes in sight, tells her that his master is safe and will shortly follow. He is now at Cape Cenaeum in Euboea, about to raise an altar to Zeus in honour of his victories. With Lichas are a train of captive maidens and among them she espies Iole. By cross-questioning she learns that Heracles has transferred to Iole his love, and determines to win it back by means of a love-charm that the Centaur Nessus had left to her as he lay dying. So she sends by the hand of Lichas a festal robe besmeared with what proves to be a burning poison. Too late she discovers her mistake. The flock of wool that she had used to apply the charm and flung away smoulders self-consumed before her eyes. Hyllus returns from Euboea and denounces his mother as a murderer, describing the agonies of his tortured father. At the news Deianira passes within the house and slays herself with a sword. The dying Heracles is borne home on a litter. He gives his last injunctions to Hyllus, to bear him to Mount Oeta, there burn him on a pyre, and then to return and take Iole to wife. With a bitter word against the gods who have thus afflicted their own son, the noblest man on earth, Hyllus gives an unwilling consent.

Statius, AD 48-96
Achilleid. On Achilles.
Thebaid. On the Seven Against Thebes.

Strabo, 64 BC-AD 25
Geography. Work containing various mythological accounts.

Tryphiodorus, AD 450
The Taking of Ilios. On the fall of Troy.

Valerius Flaccus, AD 80
Argonautica. The expedition of the ARGONAUTS.

Virgil, 70-19 BC
Aeneid. Aeneas leaves Troy, comes to Italy, fights his enemies and founds a new kingdom.
Georgics. Didactical poems with mythological accounts on Orpheus and Eurydice, Aristaeus, etc.

Conon, fl. 36 BC-AD 17
Narratives (Diegeseis). Collection of fifty tales, preserved in the epitome of Photius in his *Bibliotheke*. Photius was a Byzantine scholar and Patriarch of Constantinople in AD 858-67 and 878-86. Recent edition: Malcolm Kenneth Brown, The Narratives of Konon. Text, Translation and Commentary on the Diegeseis. Beitrage zur Altertumskunde 163. München, Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2002. Pp. viii + 406. ISBN 3-598-77712-4.

Other ancient authors consulted for writing the *Greek Mythology Link*:
Aelian (*Varia Historia*), Aristotle, Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae*), Aulus Gellius (*Attic Nights*), Bacchylides (*Odes*)Boethius (*Consolation of Philosophy*), Cicero (*Letters to Atticus*), Clement of Alexandria (*Exhortation to the Greeks*), Dares, Dictys, Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*), Epictetus (*Discourses*), Livy (*History of Rome*), Lucian (*Works*), Lycophron (*Alexandra*), Musaeus (*Hero and Leander*), Plotinus (*Enneads*), Seneca (*Tragedies*), Suetonius (*Lives of the Caesars*), Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War*), Virgil (*Eclogues*), Xenophon (*Symposium*), etc.

Table 1: Ancient Sources in Chronological Order

The quantitative relevance of an author is measured mainly through the occurrence of mythological names, and is expressed below by the percentage (%) of mythological data found in each author.

Historical Periods	Authors Greek / Latin	%	Works	Description
Early and Middle Bronze Age (3000-1600 BC) Greek immigration 2200 BC Cretan palaces: 1950 BC	See also Historical Context of the Myths			
Mycenaean Age (1600-1200 BC) Minoan collapse: 1500 BC. Destruction of the Mycenaean citadels in the decades around 1200 BC.	Linear B, deciphered 1952. Linear B is a script developed from the Minoan Linear A (still undeciphered), used by the Mycenaeans between ca. 1500 BC and 1100 BC.	--	Names of gods appear on a clay tablet from Pylos [see for example "Crete and Mycenae: Problems of Mythology and Religious History", in *Greek and Egyptian Mythologies*, compiled by Yves Bonnefoy (University of Chicago Press, 1992).	
Dark Age (1200-800 BC)	Oral tradition	--	The myths, sang by the itinerant *aoidoi*, and rhapsodes	
Phonetic alphabet: c. 800 BC	Greek Phonetic Alphabet			
Archaic Period (800-480 BC) First Olympiad: 776 BC Foundation of Rome: 751 BC	**Homer**, c. 800 BC	8	*The Iliad*	Epic poem
			The Odyssey	Epic poem
			Homeric Hymns	Invocations to the gods
	Hesiod, 800 BC	4.6	*Theogony*	Poem describing the origin of the gods. The most complete version on the subject.
			Catalogues	Poem enumerating heroines, their adventures and descendants.
			Shield of Heracles	Poem telling some adventures of Heracles.
			Works and Days	Didactic poem with pratical instructions and ethical maxims.
	The Cyclic Poets, 7C or 6C AD (works generally ascribed, therefore repeated):			
	Agias of Troezen	0.28	*The Returns (Nostoi)*	Fragments of these works, and abridgments by Photius (fl. AD 870) remain. Translation: *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns, and Homerica* - Hugh. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library [1914] 1982.
	Anonymous		*The Thebaid*	
	Antimachus of Theos		*The Epigoni*	
	Arctinus of Miletus, 776 BC		*The Titanomachy* *The Aethiopis* *The Sack of Ilium* *The Returns (Nostoi)*	
	Cinaethon of Lacedaemon		*Oedipodea* *The Little Iliad*	
	Eugammon of Cyrene, 568 BC		*The Telegony*	
	Eumelus of Corinth, 730 BC		*The Titanomachy* *The Returns (Nostoi)*	
	Diodorus of Erythrae		*The Little Iliad*	
	Hegesias of Salamis		*The Cypria*	
	Lesches of Mytilene, 660 BC		*The Little Iliad*	
	Stasinus of Cyprus		*The Cypria*	
	Thestorides of Phocaea		*The Little Iliad*	
Classical Period (480-323 BC) From the Persian Wars to the death of Alexander.	**Aeschylus**, 525-456 BC	0.5	Several plays	See Bibliography
	Pindar, 518-438 BC	1	*Odes*	Poems dedicated to athletic victors with multiple mythical references.
	Sophocles, 495-406 BC	0.5	Several plays	See Bibliography
	Euripides, 485-406 BC	1.5	Several plays	See Bibliography
	Herodotus, 484-430 BC	1	*History*	'The father of history' includes several myths in his historical accounts.
	Aristophanes, c. 447-386 BC	0.04	*The Birds*	Contains a cosmogonic exposition explaining humorously the origin of birds, but the exposition itself has mythological interest.
	Plato, 427-347 BC	0.3	*Critias*	Myth of Atlantis.
			Phaedrus	Minor references.
			The Republic	Myth of Er
			Timaeus	Minor references.
Hellenistic Period (323-31 BC) From the death of Alexander to the fall of Alexandria (but Greece became a Roman province in 146 BC).	**Aratus of Soli**, 315-245 BC	0.08	*Phaenomena*	Didactic poem dealing with astronomy.
	Callimachus, 284 BC	0.3	*Hymns*	In several hymns to the gods the poet informs on other characters as well.
	Apollonius Rhodius, 260 BC	1.8	*Argonautica*	Epic poem in four books, telling the story of Jason and the Argonauts.
	Cicero, 106-43 BC	0.3	*The Nature of the Gods*	Several accounts on the gods presented with the purpose of refuting the Greek traditional tales.
	Diodorus Siculus, 80-20 BC	4.4	*The Library of History*	History of the world with many myths recorded.
Imperial Age (31 BC-AD 600) End of West Rome AD 476	**[Orpheus]**, ?	0.4	*Argonautica Orphica*	Account on the expedition of the Argonauts.
			Orphic Hymns	Invocations
	Dares the Phrygian, ?	--	*History of the Fall of Troy*	Complete account from the incident between the Argonauts and the Trojans to the fall of Troy.
	Virgil, 70-19 BC	4	*The Aeneid*	Epic poem relating the wanderings of Aeneas and his arrival to Italy.
			Georgics	Didactic poem dealing with rural gods, and serving as a manual of farming as well.
	Strabo, 64 BC-AD 25	2	*Geography*	Extensive work dealing with geographical and historical subjects, and describing customs and traditions as well.
	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 60 BC-AD 7	1.5	*The Roman Antiquities*	Work dealing with the history of Rome from the mythical beginnings to the First Punic War.
	Propertius, born 50 BC	0.4	*Elegies*	Love poems with mythical references.
	Ovid, 43 BC-AD 17	6	*Metamorphoses*	A Poem in 15 books collecting important myths.
			Fasti	A poem in six books, having by subject the Roman calendar, in which relevant traditions (mythical, historical and astronomical) are described
			Heroides	Twenty-one imaginary letters of heroines to their lovers.
	Conon, fl. 36 BC-AD 17	--	*Narratives (Diegeseis)*	Collection of fifty tales, preserved in the epitome of Photius in his *Bibliotheke*. Photius was a Byzantine scholar and Patriarch of Constantinople in AD 858-67 and 878-86.
	Parthenius, 1st c. BC	1	*Love Romances*	Collection of prose outlines of love stories.
	Statius, AD 48-96	2.6	*Thebaid*	Epic poem about the war of the Seven Against Thebes.
			Achilleid	Epic poem (unfinished) covering the first years of Achilles, his education and his mother's fears.
	Plutarch, AD 45-120	1.3	*Parallel Lives*:	Fifty biographies of historical and also mythical characters. See which lives are mythologically relevant at Bibliography, Ancient Authors.
			Moralia (Greek and Roman Parallel Stories)	The *Moralia* are treatises on various subjects. They include not few mythical accounts.
			Moralia (Greek Questions)	
	Valerius Flaccus, AD 80	2	*Argonautica*	Unfinished epic poem in eight books on the expedition of the Argonauts. It tells the story up to the escape of the Argonauts from Colchis and the murder of Medea's brother Apsyrtus.
	Apollodorus, AD 100	19	*The Library*	This is the most complete ancient mythographic compilation available. After a Theogonical introduction, Apollodorus goes through the description of several mythological families, such as that of Deucalion, that of Inachus, Atlas, etc. This work, including its *Epitome*, covers the Trojan War, the Returns of the Achaean leaders, and the wanderings of Odysseus.
	Antoninus Liberalis, AD 100	2	*Metamorphoses*	Series of mythological tales (41 fables of metamorphoses).
	Pausanias, AD 150	12	*Description of Greece*	Mythical and historical accounts, and description of Greek landmarks. In addition to many tales, throne succession in several cities, and the return of the Heraclides are described in detail.
	Apuleius, AD 160	0.01	*The Golden Ass*	A Latin novel. The only known source for the myth of Eros and Psyche.
	Longus, AD 200	0.06	*Daphnis and Chloe*	Novel depicting a pastoral love story.
	Manilius, AD 10	0.05	*Astronomica*	Latin didactic poem on celestial phenomena.
	Hyginus, before AD 207	12	*Fabulae*	Large mythographic compilation organized in 277 short sections, providing many interesting versions of the myths.
			Poetica Astronomica	Astronomical manual based on Greek mythological accounts.

	Dictys of Cnossus, 4C AD?	--	*Journal of the Trojan War*	Account on the fall of Troy. Perhaps a translation from a document going back to 3C AD.
	Nonnos, 5C AD	5	*Dionysiaca*	Epic in 48 books narrating the adventures of Dionysus in India.
	Tryphiodorus, AD 450	0.3	*The Taking of Ilios*	Epic poem. Almost seven hundred remaining lines deal with the events between the episode of the Wooden Horse and the sacrifice of Polyxena.
	Quintus Smyrnaeus, AD 400	3.3	*The Fall of Troy*	Epic poem, completing the story of the Trojan War.
	Colluthus, AD 500	0.1	*The Rape of Helen*	Epic poem giving an account of the Judgement of Paris and his seduction of Helen.

Table 2: Quantitative relevance of authors and works

Authors and Works are listed in decreasing order according to the amount of mythological data they provide. This merely quantitative relevance has been measured mainly the occurrence of names, and is expressed below by the percentage of mythological data represented by each author. The percentages do not amount to a full 100% because some details have been omitted from the list. Other ancient authors consulted for writing the *Greek Mythology Link* such as Aristotle, Athenaeus, Aulus Gellius, Boethius, Clement of Alexandria, Conon, Dares, Dictys, Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*), Epictetus, Livy, Lucian, Lycophron, Musaeus, Seneca, Suetonius, and certain contributions by Plato (besides those mentioned below), etc. are not included in this evaluation. But the general picture shown by the table should not be significantly altered if they were.

Colour key	Diverse subjects or collections
	Single subject (usually Epics)
	Astronomy
	Hymns, Odes, Elegies, and other shorter poems, usually referring to several subjects.

%	**Authors Greek / Latin**	**Works**	**Description**
19%	Apollodorus AD 100	*The Library*	This is the most complete ancient mythographic compilation available. After a Theogonical introduction, Apollodorus goes through the description of several mythological families, such as that of Deucalion, that of Inachus, Atlas, etc. This work, including its *Epitome*, covers the Trojan War, the Returns of the Achaean leaders, and the wanderings of Odysseus.
12%	Pausanias AD 150	*Description of Greece*	Mythical and historical accounts, and description of Greek landmarks. In addition to many tales, throne succession in several cities, and the return of the Heraclides are described in detail.
12%	Hyginus c. AD 200	*Fabulae*	Large mythographic compilation organized in 277 short sections, providing many interesting versions of the myths.
		Poetica Astronomica	Astronomical manual based on Greek mythological accounts.
8%	Homer c. 750 BC	*The Iliad*	Epic poem.
		The Odyssey	Epic poem.
		Homeric Hymns	Invocations to the gods
6%	Ovid 43 BC-AD 17	*Metamorphoses*	A Poem in 15 books collecting important myths.
		Fasti	A poem in six books, having by subject the Roman calendar, in which relevant traditions (mythical, historical and astronomical) are described
		Heroides	Twenty-one imaginary letters of heroines to their lovers.
5%	Nonnos 5th c. AD	*Dionysiaca*	Epic in 48 books narrating the adventures of Dionysus in India.
4.6%	Hesiod c. 700 BC	*Theogony*	Poem describing the origin of the gods. The most complete version on the subject.
		Catalogues	Poem enumerating heroines, their adventures and descendants.
		Shield of Heracles	Poem telling some adventures of Heracles.
		Works and Days	Didactic poem with pratical instructions and ethical maxims.
4.4%	Diodorus Siculus 80-20 BC	*The Library of History*	History of the world with many myths recorded.
4%	Virgil 70-19 BC	*The Aeneid*	Epic poem relating the wanderings of Aeneas and his arrival to Italy.
		Georgics	Didactic poem dealing with rural gods, and serving as a manual of farming as well.
3.3%	Quintus Smyrnaeus AD 400	*The Fall of Troy*	Epic poem, completing the story of the Trojan War.
2.6%	Statius AD 48-96	*Thebaid*	Epic poem about the war of the Seven Against Thebes.
		Achilleid	Epic poem (unfinished) covering the first years of Achilles, his education and his mother's fears.
2%	Valerius Flaccus AD 80	*Argonautica*	Unfinished epic poem in eight books on the expedition of the Argonauts. It tells the story up to the escape of the Argonauts from Colchis and the murder of Medea's brother Apsyrtus.
2%	Antoninus Liberalis AD 100	*Metamorphoses*	Series of mythological tales (41 fables of metamorphoses).
2%	Strabo 64 BC-AD 25	*Geography*	Extensive work dealing with geographical and historical subjects, and describing customs and traditions as well.
1.8%	Apollonius Rhodius 260 BC	*Argonautica*	Epic poem in four books, telling the story of Jason and the Argonauts.
1.5%	Euripides 485-406 BC	Several plays	See list of plays in Table II.
1.5%	Dionysius of Halicarnassus 60 BC-AD 7	*The Roman Antiquities*	Work dealing with the history of Rome from the mythical beginnings to the First Punic War.
1.3%	Plutarch AD 45-120	*Parallel Lives*:	Fifty biographies of historical and also mythical characters. See which lives are mythologically relevant at Bibliography, Ancient Authors.
		Moralia (Greek and Roman Parallel Stories)	The *Moralia* are treatises on various subjects. They include not few mythical accounts.
		Moralia (Greek Questions)	
1%	Herodotus 484-430 BC	*History*	'The father of history' includes several myths in his historical accounts.
1%	Pindar 518-438 BC	*Odes*	Poems dedicated to athletic victors with multiple mythical references.
1%	Parthenius 1st C. BC	*Love Romances*	Collection of prose outlines of love stories.
0.5%	Aeschylus 525-456 BC	Several plays	See list of plays in Table II.
0.5%	Sophocles 495-406 BC	Several plays	See list of plays in Table II.
0.4%	Propertius born 50 BC	*Elegies*	Love poems with mythical references.
0.4%	(Orpheus)	*Argonautica Orphica*	Another major account on the expedition of the Argonauts.
0.3%	Tryphiodorus AD 450	*The Taking of Ilios*	Epic poem. Almost seven hundred remaining lines deal with the events between the episode of the Wooden Horse and the sacrifice of Polyxena.
0.3%	Callimachus 284 BC	*Hymns*	In several hymns to the gods the poet informs on other characters as well.
0.3%	Cicero 106-43 BC	*The Nature of the Gods*	Several accounts on the gods presented with the purpose of refuting the Greek traditional tales.
0.3%	Plato 427-347 BC	*Critias*	Source of the myth of Atlantis.
		Phaedrus	Offspring of Achelous.
		The Republic	Information about parentage of the MOERAE. Information about Ajax the Salaminian.
		Timaeus	Information about the offspring of Oceanus.
0.1%	Colluthus AD 500	*The Rape of Helen*	Epic poem giving an account of the Judgement of Paris and his seduction of Helen.
0.08%	Aratus of Soli 315-245 BC	*Phaenomena*	Didactic poem dealing with astronomy.
0.06%	Longus AD 200	*Daphnis and Chloe*	Novel depicting a pastoral love story.
0.05%	Manilius AD 10	*Astronomica*	Latin didactic poem on celestial phenomena.
0.04%	Aristophanes c. 447-386 BC	*The Birds*	Contains a cosmogonic exposition explaining humorously the origin of birds, but the exposition itself has mythological interest.
0.01%	Apuleius AD 160	*The Golden Ass*	A Latin novel. The only known source for the myth of Eros and Psyche.

Table 3: Works arranged according to the chronological order of the mythical events they narrate. The table includes works on particular subjects; larger collections of myths have been excluded.

Colour key	Jason and the Argonauts
	Related to Thebes
	Related to the Trojan War
	Returns and wanderings after the fall of Troy
	Vengeance and adventures of Orestes

Order of Events	**Works of authors other than playwrights. Greek / Latin**			**Playwrights**		
				Aeschylus	**Sophocles**	**Euripides**
1	*Theogony* Hesiod					
2				*Prometheus Bound*		
3				*The Suppliant Maidens*		
4						*Bacchanals*
5	*Dionysiaca* Nonnos					
6						*Ion*
7	*Argonautica Orphica*	*Argonautica* Apollonius R.	*Argonautica* Valerius F.			
8						*Alcestis*
9	*Shield of Heracles* Hesiod					*Heracles*
10					*Trachiniae*	*Medea*
11						*Hippolytus*
12					*Oedipus the king*	
13					*Oedipus at Colonus*	
14	*Thebaid* Statius			*Seven Against Thebes*		*The Phoenician Women*
15					*Antigone*	
16						*Suppliants*
17	*Achilleid* Statius					
18	*The Rape of Helen* Colluthus					*Helen*
19						*Iphigenia in Aulis*
20	*The Iliad* Homer					*Rhesus*
21					*Ajax*	
22					*Philoctetes*	
23	*The Fall of Troy* Quintus S.	*The Taking of Ilios* Tryphiodorus				*Hecabe*
24						*Daughters of Troy*
25	*The Odyssey* Homer			*Agamemnon*		*Cyclops*
26	*The Aeneid* Virgil			*The Libation-Bearers*	*Electra*	*Electra*
27						*Orestes*
28				*Eumenides*		
29						*Iphigenia in Tauris*
30						*Andromache*
31						*Heraclides*

Related sections More books on myths (Amazon), Bibliography (modern authors)

Sources
Abbreviations