



Classical Greek

Entry Level

Classical Greek

Literature sources booklet

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PROMETHEUS

In a story told by the early Greek poet Hesiod, the Titan Prometheus creates the first human beings. He teaches them skills, and decides to steal fire from heaven to help them.

- 1 ὁ Προμηθεὺς Τιτάν ἦν. σοφὸς ἦν, καὶ ἐποίησε τοὺς
2 πρῶτους ἀνθρώπους ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ γῆς. ἔπειτα δε
3 ἐδίδαξεν αὐτοὺς πολλὰς τεχνὰς. ἀλλὰ οἱ ἀνθρώποι τὸ πῦρ
4 οὐκ εἶχον· οἱ γὰρ θεοὶ μόνοι ἐφυλάσσον τὸ πῦρ. ὁ οὖν
5 Προμηθεὺς, διότι ἐφίλει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐβουλεύσατο τὸ
6 πῦρ ἀπο τῶν θεῶν κλεψαί.

1	Προμηθεὺς acc -εα dat -ει, ὁ	Prometheus
1	Τιτάν, ὁ	Titan (<i>the Titans were the generation of gods older than Zeus</i>)
1	ἐποίησε	he made
2	πρῶτος -η -ον	first
2	ὕδωρ ὕδατος, τὸ	water
2	γῆ γῆς, ἡ	earth
3	ἐδίδαξεν	he taught
3	αὐτοὺς	them
3	πολλὰς	many
3	τεχνη -ης, ἡ	skill
3	πῦρ πυρός, τὸ	fire

4	οὐπω	not yet
4	μονοι	only, alone
5	ἐφιλει	he loved
5	ἐβουλευσατο	(he) planned
6	κλεψαι	to steal

Prometheus succeeds in stealing fire and bringing it to earth, delighting mankind but angering Zeus, whose power is not yet securely established.

7	ἐπει εἰς τον οὐρανον ἀφικετο, ὁ Προμηθευς σπερματα
8	πυρος λαθρα ἐκλεψεν, ἐν ναρθηκι κρυφθεντα. ἐπειτα δε
9	προς την γην ἐβη, και το πυρ τοις ἀνθρωποις ἔδωκεν. οἱ
10	μεν ἀνθρωποι νυν ἔχαιρον, ὁ δε Ζευς ὠργισθη. ὁ γαρ Ζευς
11	βασιλευς των θεων νεωστι ἐγενετο· και διοτι την ἑαυτου
12	ῥωμην ἐφυλασεν, ἐφιλει οὔτε τους ἀνθρωπους οὔτε τον
13	Προμηθεα. ἐβουλευσατο οὖν τον Προμηθεα κολαζειν.

7	οὐρανος -ου, ὁ	heaven
7	ἀφικετο	he arrived
7	σπερματα, τα	seeds
8	λαθρα	secretly
8	ἐκλεψεν	(he) stole
8	ἐν ναρθηκι	in a fennel-stalk (<i>a plant whose pith burns slowly, allowing fire to be carried</i>)
8	κρυφθεντα	hidden

9	ἔδωκεν	he gave
10	ἔχαιρον	(they) were happy
10	ὠργισθη	(he) was angry
11	βασιλευς	king
11	νεωστι	recently
11	ἐγένετο	(he) had become
11	ἑαυτου	his own
12	ῥωμη -ης, ἡ	power
12	οὔτε ... οὔτε	neither ... nor

In order to punish Prometheus, Zeus orders Hephaestus to create the beautiful woman Pandora, and gives her a box for the man who marries her. Prometheus, suspecting a trick, sends Pandora to his brother.

14 ὁ Ζεὺς ἐκέλευσε τὸν Ἥφαιστον γυναῖκα ποιεῖν ἐξ ὕδατος
 15 καὶ γῆς. ἡ γυνὴ καλὴ ἦν, καὶ οἱ θεοὶ δῶρα παρεσχόν, ὥστε
 16 Πανδώρα ἐκλήθη. τέλος δὲ ὁ Ζεὺς κίστην τῇ Πανδώρα
 17 ἔδωκεν. “δῶρον ἔστιν” ἔφη “τῷ γαμουντι.” ἔπειτα δὲ
 18 ἐπέμψεν τὴν Πανδώραν τῷ Προμηθεῖ. ἀλλὰ ὁ Προμηθεύς,
 19 δολὸν ὑποπτεῦων, εὐθύς ἐπέμψεν αὐτὴν τῷ ἀδελφῷ.

14	Ἥφαιστος -ου, ὁ	Hephaestus (<i>god of fire and crafts</i>)
14	ποιεῖν	to make
15	παρεσχόν	(they) provided
15	ὥστε	with the result that

16	Πανδώρα -ας, ή	Pandora (<i>literally 'every gift'</i>)
16	έκληθη	she was called
16	τελος	finally
16	κιστη -ης, ή	box
17	έφη	he said
17	τω γαμουντι	for the man who marries her
19	δολος -ου, ό	trick
19	ύποπτειων	suspecting
19	εϑυς	immediately
19	αϑτην	her
19	άδελφος -ου, ό	brother

His brother Epimetheus opens the box, releasing troubles for mankind. Zeus is even angrier because Prometheus has escaped, and orders Hephaestus to fasten him to a rock in the Caucasus.

20	ό οϑν άδελφος, Έπιμηθευς όνοματι, εϑυς άνεφξε την
21	κιστην· έξηλθον νοσοι και λυπαι και παντα κακα ά οί
22	άνθρωποι έτι νυν πασχουσιν. άλλα ό Προμηθευς αϑτος
23	έξεφυγεν, ώστε ό Ζευς έτι μαλλον ώργισθη. νυν οϑν
24	έκελευσε τον Έφαιστον πετρα προσαπτειν τον Προμηθεα
25	έν τω Καυκασω. οϑτως οϑν έκολασθη ό των άνθρωπων
26	εϑεργετης.

20	Ἐπιμηθευς, ὁ	Epimetheus
20	ὀνοματι	by name
20	ἀνεῴξε	(he) opened
21	ἐξηλθον	(they) came out
21	νοσος -ου, ἡ	disease
21	λυπη -ης, ἡ	grief
21	παντα	all
21	ἃ	which
22	ἔτι	still
22	αὐτος	himself
23	ἐξεφυγεν	(he) escaped
23	μαλλον	more
24	πετρα -ας, ἡ	rock
24	προσαπτειν	to fasten
25	ἐν τῷ Καυκασῷ	in the Caucasus (<i>mountainous region near the Black Sea</i>)
25	οὕτως	in this way
25	ἐκολασθη	(he) was punished
25	εὐεργετης, ὁ	benefactor

DEUCALION

In a story told by the myth-collector Apollodorus and the Roman poet Ovid (and similar to the biblical story of Noah), human beings have become wicked and Zeus decides to destroy them with a flood. Much rain falls, and there are many casualties.

- 1 πρωτον μεν οί άνθρωποι άγαθοι ήσαν, έπειτα δε κακοι
 2 έγενοντο. τους γαρ θεους ουτε έσεβοντο ουτε έφοβουντο.
 3 ό ούν Ζευς ώργισθη και ήθελε κατακλυσμω διαφθειρειν
 4 τους άνθρωπους. πολυν ύετον έπεμψεν. ύδωρ πανταχου
 5 ήν. πολλοι άνθρωποι άπεθανον.

1	πρωτον	at first
2	έγενοντο	they became
2	ουτε ... ουτε	neither ... nor
2	έσεβοντο	they worshipped
2	έφοβουντο	they feared
3	ώργισθη	(he) was angry
3	κατακλυσμος -ου, ό	flood
3	διαφθειρειν	to destroy
4	πολυν	much
4	ύετος -ου, ό	rain
4	ύδωρ, το	water
4	πανταχου	everywhere
5	πολλοι	many
5	άπεθανον	(they) died

Zeus is unwilling to destroy the one good man, Deucalion, who is told by his father Prometheus to make a big ship. Deucalion does this, and gets on board with his wife Pyrrha.

6 ἦν δε εἰς ἄνηρ ἀγαθος, Δευκαλιων ὀνοματι. ὁ οὖν Ζεὺς οὐκ
 7 ἠθέλε διαφθειρεῖν τὸν Δευκαλιωνα μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων. ὁ
 8 Δευκαλιων υἱὸς ἦν τοῦ Προμηθεως. ὁ δε πατηρ ἐκέλευσε
 9 τὸν Δευκαλιωνα μεγαλην ναυν ποιησαι. ὁ οὖν Δευκαλιων
 10 ἐπιθετο. ἐπει ἡ ναυς ἐποιηθη, ὁ Δευκαλιων και ἡ γυνη,
 11 Πυρρα ὀνοματι, εἰς τὴν ναυν ἐβησαν. και ἐκει πολλας
 12 ἡμερας ἔμενον.

6	ἄνηρ ἄνδρος, ὁ	man (as opposed to woman) t
6	Δευκαλιων acc -ωνα, ὁ	Deucalion
6	ὀνοματι	by name
7	ἄλλοι -ων, οἱ	others
8	Προμηθευς gen -εως, ὁ	Prometheus
8	πατηρ, ὁ	father
9	ναυς acc ναυν, ἡ	ship
9	ποιησαι	to make
10	ἐπιθετο	(he) obeyed
10	ἐποιηθη	(it) was made
11	Πυρρα	Pyrrha
11	πολλας	many
12	ἔμενον	they stayed

When the rain finally stops, the ship is left on a mountain. After Deucalion and his wife have made thank-offerings to the gods, a mysterious voice gives them some puzzling instructions.

13 ἐπει ὁ ὕετος τέλος ἐπαυσατο, ἡ ναυς ἐν ὄρει ἐλειφθη. ὁ
 14 οὖν Δευκαλιων και ἡ Πυρρα ἐξεβησαν. τοις θεοις ἐθύσαν,
 15 διοτι ἐκ κινδυνου ἐσωθησαν. ἐπειτα δε φωνην ἤκουσαν·
 16 “καλυπτετε τας κεφαλαις, και βαλλετε τα της μεγαλης
 17 μητρος ὄστεα εἰς το ὀπισθεν.” ἀλλα ὁ Δευκαλιων και ἡ
 18 γυνη οὐκ ἐγνώσαν τί οἱ λογοι σημαινουσιν.

13	τελος	finally
13	ἐπαυσατο	stopped
13	ἐν ὄρει	on a mountain
13	ἐλειφθη	(it) was left
14	ἐξεβησαν	(they) disembarked
15	ἐσωθησαν	they had been saved
15	φωνη -ης, ἡ	voice
15	ἤκουσαν	they heard
16	καλυπτετε	cover ... !
16	κεφαλη -ης, ἡ	head
17	μητηρ μητρος, ἡ	mother
17	ὄστεα, τα	bones
17	εἰς το ὀπισθεν	behind you

18	ἐγνώσαν	(they) understood
18	τί	what
18	σημαινουσι	(they) meant

Deucalion eventually realises the meaning of the instructions. By carrying them out, he and Pyrrha repopulate the world.

19	ἡ Πυρρα νυν ἔδακρουν. τέλος δε ὁ Δευκαλιων την ἀληθειαν
20	ἠύρεν· “ἡ γη” ἔφη “μητηρ ἔστι παντων. τα της γης ὅσ τεα
21	λιθοι εἰσιν. οἱ θεοι κελευουσιν ἡμας λιθους εἰς το
22	ὀπισθεν βαλλειν.” ὁ οὖν Δευκαλιων και ἡ Πυρρα ἐκαλυψαν
23	τας κεφαλαι και λιθους εἰς το ὀπισθεν ἔβαλον. και οἱ
24	λιθοι οὐς ὁ Δευκαλιων ἔβαλεν ἄνδρες ἐγενοντο· οὐς ἡ
25	Πυρρα, γυναικες. οὕτως οὖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μετα τον
26	κατακλυσμον αὐθις ἐποιοθησαν.

19	ἔδακρουν	(she) was crying
19	ἀληθεια -ας, ἡ	truth
20	ἠύρεν	(he) discovered
20	γη γης, ἡ	earth
20	ἔφη	he said
20	παντων	of all
21	λιθος -ου, ὁ	stone
21	ἡμας	us
22	ἐκαλυψαν	(they) covered

24	οὓς	which
25	οὕτως	in this way
25	μετα + acc	after
26	αὐθις	again
26	ἐποιήθησαν	(they) were made

APOLLO AND DAPHNE

In a story told by the travel writer Pausanias and the Roman poet Ovid, the nymph Daphne avoids men and marriage, preferring to hunt in the forest.

- 1 ἡ Δαφνη νυμφη ἦν. ὁ τῆς Δαφνης πατηρ, ὁ Πηνειος,
 2 ποταμος ἦν και ὁ του ποταμου θεος. πολλοι νεανιαι
 3 ἐδιωκον την Δαφνην διοτι καλη ἦν. ἡ δε Δαφνη οὐκ ἠθελε
 4 γαμεισθαι· ἠθελε γαρ ἄει ἐν τη ὕλη θηρευειν. ἄλλα πολλοι
 5 νεανιαι και θεοι ἐν τη ὕλη πολλακις ἦσαν.

1	Δαφνη -ης, ἡ	Daphne
1	νυμφη -ης, ἡ	nymph (<i>semi-divine nature spirit</i>)
1	πατηρ acc πατερα, ὁ	father
1	Πηνειος, ὁ	Peneius
2	πολλοι	many
2	νεανιαι, οἱ	young men
4	γαμεισθαι	to get married
4	ὕλη -ης, ἡ	forest
4	θηρευειν	to hunt
5	πολλακις	often

Apollo sees the boy-god Eros in the forest with a bow. Resenting a possible rival, the god of archery tells him to throw it away, but Eros refuses.

- 6 ἐκει ὁ Ἄπολλων ποτε εἶδε τον Ἐρωτα. ὁ μεν Ἐρωσ τοξον

7 εἶχεν· ὁ δὲ Ἄπολλων, ὁ τοῦ τοξοῦ θεός, ἐκέλευσε τὸν
 8 Ἔρωτα ἀποβαλλεῖν τὸ τοξόν. “ἐγὼ μὲν τοξότης εἰμι” ἔφη
 9 “καὶ ὁ τοῦ τοξοῦ θεός· σὺ δὲ οὐδὲν εἶ.” ἀλλὰ ὁ Ἔρως οὐκ
 10 ἠθέλε πειθεσθαι.

6	Ἄπολλων acc Ἄπολλωνα, ὁ	Apollo
6	ποτε	once
6	εἶδε	(he) saw
6	Ἔρως acc Ἔρωτα, ὁ	Eros (<i>god of love</i>)
6	τοξόν -ου, τὸ	bow
8	ἀποβαλλεῖν	to throw away
8	τοξότης, ὁ	archer
8	ἔφη	he said
9	οὐδὲν	nothing
10	πειθεσθαι	to obey

Angered, and wanting to punish Apollo, Eros fires at him an arrow which creates love. The god immediately sees and falls in love with Daphne. Eros fires at her a second arrow which destroys love.

11 ὁ Ἔρως, διότι νῦν ὠργίσθη, ἠθέλε κολαζεῖν τὸν Ἄπολλωνα.
 12 ὁ Ἔρως δύο τοξεύματα εἶχεν· τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ
 13 δευτέρων διεφθείρε τὸν ἔρωτα. τῷ δὲ πρῶτῳ τοξεύματι
 14 ἔβαλε τὸν Ἄπολλωνα. ἡ δὲ Δαφνὴ τυχὴ προσεβαινεν, καὶ ὁ
 15 θεὸς ἔρωτα δεινὸν εὐθύς ἐπαθεν. ἐπειτα δὲ ὁ Ἔρως τῷ
 16 δευτέρῳ τοξεύματι ἔβαλε τὴν Δαφνὴν.

11	ὠργισθη	he was angry
12	δυο	two
12	τοξευμα dat τοξευματι pl τοξευματα, το	arrow
12	πρωτος -η -ον	first
12	ἐποιει	(it) created
13	διεφθειρε	(it) destroyed
13	δευτερος -α -ον	second
13	έρως acc έρωτα, ό	love
14	τυχη	by chance
14	προσεβαινεν	(she) was approaching
15	εὐθυσ	immediately

Daphne runs away but is chased by Apollo. She ignores his instruction to stop.

17	ή οὖν Δαφνη, έπει είδε τον θεον, εὐθυσ έφυγεν. και ό
18	Ἄπολλων έδιωξεν την Δαφνην. ή δε νυμφη ταχεως
19	έτρεχεν. ό οὖν θεος έκελευσε την νυμφην παυσασθαι.
20	άλλα ή Δαφνη οὐκ ήθελε πειθεσθαι.

17	έφυγεν	(she) ran away
18	ταχεως	quickly
19	έτρεχεν	(she) was running
19	παυσασθαι	to stop

As they approach the river, Daphne gets tired and asks her river-god father to help. He puts her beyond harm by changing her into a tree whose leaves Apollo continues to love.

21 ὁ Ἄπολλων καὶ ἡ Δαφνὴ πρὸς τὸν ποταμὸν ἔτρεχον. ἡ μὲν
 22 Δαφνὴ νῦν ἔκαμνεν, ὁ δὲ Ἄπολλων ἔτι ταχέως ἔδωκε τὴν
 23 νυμφὴν. ἡ δὲ Δαφνὴ ἠήτησε τὸν πατέρα βοηθεῖν. ὁ οὖν
 24 Πηνειὸς τὴν θυγατέρα εὐθύς εἰς δένδρον μετεβαλεν. καὶ
 25 ὁ Ἄπολλων ἔτι φιλεῖ τὴν δαφνὴν· οἱ γὰρ σεβάζοντες ἐν
 26 ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ ἑορταῖς στεφάνους ἔχουσιν ἐκ τῆς δαφνῆς
 27 ποιηθέντας.

21	ἔτρεχον	(they) were running
22	ἔκαμνεν	(she) was getting tired
22	ἔτι	still
23	ἠήτησε	(she) asked
23	βοηθεῖν	to help
24	θυγατὴρ acc θυγατέρα, ἡ	daughter
24	μετεβαλεν	(he) changed
25	φιλεῖ	(he) loves
25	δαφνὴ -ης, ἡ	laurel
25	σεβάζοντες, οἱ	worshippers
26	ἑορτὴ -ης, ἡ	festival
26	στεφάνος -ου, ὁ	garland
27	ποιηθέντας	made

POLYCRATES AND THE RING

In a story told by the historian Herodotus, Polycrates is warned by his friend Amasis that the gods may resent his power and prosperity: to avoid their anger, he should throw away his most valuable possession.

1 ὁ Πολυκρατης τυραννος ἦν της Σαμου. μεγαλην ἀρχην
 2 εἶχε, και πολυν χρυσον. ἀλλα ὁ Ἄμασις, φιλος του
 3 τυραννου, ἐπιστολην ἐπεμψε· “χαιρω μεν διοτι ἀρχην
 4 και χρυσον ἔχεις. φοβουμαι δε διοτι οἱ θεοι φθονουσιν
 5 εἰ τις ἀει εὐτυχει. κελευω σε ἀποβαλλειν το ἀξιωτατον
 6 κτημα. οὕτως γαρ ἀποτρεψεις την των θεων ὀργην.”

1	Πολυκρατης acc -η, ὁ	Polycrates (<i>ruled about 538-522 BC</i>)
1	τυραννος -ου, ὁ	ruler
1	Σαμος -ου, ἡ	Samos (<i>island off modern Turkey</i>)
1	ἀρχη -ης, ἡ	empire
2	πολυν	much
2	χρυσος -ου, ὁ	gold
2	Ἄμασις, ὁ	Amasis
3	ἐπιστολη -ης, ἡ	letter
3	χαιρω	I am happy
4	φοβουμαι	I am afraid
4	φθονουσιν	(they) are jealous

5	εἰ τις	if someone
5	εὐτυχει	(he) is fortunate
5	ἀποβαλλειν	to throw away
5	ἀξιωτατον	most valuable
6	κτημα, το	possession
6	οὕτως	in this way
6	ἀποτρεψεις	you will avoid
6	ὀργη -ης, ἡ	anger

Having decided to throw away a gold ring, Polycrates sails far from land and throws it into the sea.

7	ὁ Πολυκρατης εἶχε δακτυλιον χρουσου. το δακτυλιον
8	ἀξιωτατον ἦν. ὁ Πολυκρατης ἐβουλευσατο ἀποβαλλειν το
9	δακτυλιον, και οὕτως ἀποτρεπειν την των θεων ὀργην.
10	ἐπλευσεν οὖν ἕκας ἀπο γης και το δακτυλιον εἰς την
11	θαλασσαν ἐβαλεν.

7	δακτυλιον -ου, το	ring
8	ἐβουλευσατο	(he) decided
9	ἀποτρεπειν	to avoid
10	ἐπλευσεν	he sailed
10	ἕκας	far away
10	γη γης, ἡ	land

A few days later a fisherman catches a particularly fine fish and decides to present it to Polycrates instead of taking it to market.

12 μετα ὀλιγας ἡμερας ἰχθυσ μεγας και καλος ἐληφθη. ὁ
 13 ἄλιευς ἤνεγκε τον ἰχθυν προς την του τυραννου οἰκίαν.
 14 ἐπει ἀφικετο, ὁ ἄλιευς εἶπε· “διοτι ὁ ἰχθυσ μεγας και
 15 καλος ἐστιν, οὐκ ἐθελω προς την ἀγοραν φερειν. δωρον
 16 γαρ ἐστιν ἄξιον του τυραννου.”

12	μετα + acc	after
12	ὀλιγας	a few
12	ἰχθυσ acc -υν, ὁ	fish
12	ἐληφθη	(it) was caught
13	ἄλιευς, ὁ	fisherman
14	ἀφικετο	he arrived
16	ἄξιος -α -ον	worthy

Polycrates is initially delighted with the gift. But when his slaves are cutting up the fish, they make a remarkable discovery, which alarms him.

17 ὁ οὖν Πολυκρατης ἐχαιρε και ἐδεξατο το δωρον. ἐπει δε
 18 οἱ του τυραννου δουλοι διετεμνον τον ἰχθυν, ἠύρον ἐν τη
 19 γαστρι το δακτυλιον. ἐφερον οὖν το δακτυλιον προς τον
 20 τυραννον. ὁ δε Πολυκρατης νυν οὐκ ἐχαιρεν· ἐγνω γαρ το
 21 των θεων ἐργον.

17	ἐχαιρε(ν)	(he) was happy
17	ἔδεξατο	(he) received
18	διετεμνον	(they) were cutting up
18	ηύρον	they found
18	ἐν τη γαστρι	in its stomach
20	ἔγνω	he recognised

When Amasis hears the news, he too is alarmed. Shortly afterwards, events show that these anxieties were well founded.

22	ἐπει ὃ Ἄμασις περι του δακτυλιου ἤκουσεν, οὐκετι ἠθελε
23	φιλος εἶναι του τυραννου. και οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον
24	οἱ Περσαι ἔλαβον την Σαμον και ἀπεκτειναν τον
25	Πολυκρατη. και ἡ του τυραννου μεγαλη εὐτυχια οὕτως
26	ἔτελευτηθη.

22	περι + gen	about
22	ἤκουσεν	(he) heard
22	οὐκετι	no longer
23	εἶναι	to be
23	οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον	not much later
24	Περσαι, οἱ	the Persians
25	εὐτυχια	good fortune
26	ἔτελευτηθη	(it) was ended

LEONIDAS AND THE 300 SPARTANS AT THERMOPYLAE

In a story told by the historian Herodotus, the Persians led by Xerxes are invading Greece in 480 BC. The other Greeks at the mountain pass of Thermopylae prepare to retreat, but Leonidas with his 300 Spartans decides to stay. Xerxes sends a spy to find out about the Spartans.

1 ἐπει οἱ Περσαι προσεβαινον, οἱ ἐν Θερμοπυλαις Ἕλληνες
 2 παρεσκευαζον ἀναχωρεῖν. ὁ δὲ Λεωνίδας, ὁ τῶν
 3 Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλεὺς καὶ στρατηγός, ἐβουλευσατο
 4 μετὰ τῶν τριακοσίων ἐκεῖ μενεῖν. ὁ οὖν Ξερξὴς ἐπέμψε
 5 κατασκοπὸν ὡς πευσομένον ποσοὶ εἰσὶν οἱ
 6 Λακεδαιμόνιοι, καὶ τί ποιοῦσιν.

1	Περσαι -ων, οἱ	Persians
1	προσεβαινον	(they) were approaching
1	Θερμοπυλαι -ων, αἱ	Thermopylae (<i>place in central Greece approached by narrow mountain pass</i>)
1	οἱ ἐν Θερμοπυλαις Ἕλληνες	the Greeks in the Thermopylae
2	παρεσκευαζον	(they) were preparing
2	ἀναχωρεῖν	to retreat
2	Λεωνίδας, ὁ	Leonidas
3	Λακεδαιμόνιοι -ων, οἱ	Spartans
3	βασιλεὺς acc -εα, ὁ	king
3	ἐβουλευσατο	(he) decided
4	τριακοσίοι -ων, οἱ	300
4	μενεῖν	to stay
4	Ξερξὴς, ὁ	Xerxes

5	κατασκοπος -ου, ό	spy
5	ώς πευσομενον	in order to find out
5	ποσοι εισιν	how many they were
6	τί ποιουσιν	what they were doing

When the spy reports the strange behaviour of the Spartans, Xerxes is perplexed.

7	ό κατασκοπος ειδη τους μεν γυμναζομενους, τους δε την
8	κομην κτενιζομενους. ό δε Ξερξης έπει ταυτα τα δεινα
9	ήκουσεν, ουκ έγνω τους Λακεδαιμονιους ουτω
10	παρασκευαζομενους ανδρειως μαχεσθαι. ό ουν Ξερξης εν
11	απορια ην.

7	ειδη	(he) saw
7	τους μεν ... τους δε	some ... others
7	γυμναζομενους	exercising
8	κομη -ης, ή	hair
8	κτενιζομενους	combing
8	ταυτα	these things
9	ήκουσεν	he heard
9	έγνω	(he) realised that
9	ουτω	in this way
10	παρασκευαζομενους	were preparing themselves
10	μαχεσθαι	to fight
11	εν απορια	in perplexity

After waiting four days, Xerxes sends his troops to capture the pass, but despite fighting bravely they suffer heavy casualties at the hands of the Spartans.

- 12 ὁ Ξερξης προ της εισβολης τεσσαρας ἡμερας ἔμενεν.
 13 ἐπει δε οἱ Λακεδαιμονιοι οὐκ ἀπηλθον, ἐπεμψε την
 14 ἑαυτου στρατιαν ἵνα λαβοι την εισβολην. ἀλλα οἱ
 15 Λακεδαιμονιοι ἀνδρειως ἔμαχοντο την εισβολην
 16 φυλασσοντες, και ἀπεκτειναν πολλους των Περσων. ὁ οὖν
 17 Ξερξης ἐτι μαλλον ἐν ἀπορια ἦν.

12	προ + gen	in front of
12	εισβολη -ης, ἡ	mountain pass
12	ἔμενεν	(he) stayed
13	ἀπηλθον	(they) went away
14	ἑαυτου	his own
14	ἵνα λαβοι	in order to capture
15	ἔμαχοντο	(they) fought
16	φυλασσοντες	guarding
16	πολλους	many
17	ἐτι	still
17	μαλλον	more

A local man shows the Persians a path through the mountains (avoiding the pass). They approach by night. When the Spartans realise what has happened, they are still determined to fight on.

18 τη δε ὑστεραία ἄνθρωπος τις ἐπιχωριος ἐδειξε τοις
 19 Περσαις ἀτραπον δια των ὄρων εἰς Θερμοπυλας
 20 φερουσαν. οἱ οὖν Περσαι της νυκτος προσεβαινον. ἐπει δε
 21 οἱ Λακεδαιμονιοι ἐγνωσαν τους Περσας ἀφικομενους, ἐτι
 22 νυν ἠθελον διακινδυνευειν.

18	τη ὑστεραία	on the next day
18	τις	a certain
18	ἐπιχωριος -ον	local
18	ἐδειξε	(he) showed
19	ἀτραπος -ου, ἡ	path
19	δια των ὄρων	through the mountains
20	φερουσαν	leading
20	της νυκτος	by night
21	ἐγνωσαν	(they) realised that
21	ἀφικομενους	had arrived
22	διακινδυνευειν	to endure danger to the end

Leonidas is unselfishly keen to fight because of an oracle. He is killed along with almost all his men.

23 ὁ δε Λεωνιδας αὐτος ἠθελε μαχεσθαι δια μαντειον· ὁ γαρ
 24 θεος ἐφη δειν ἢ την Σπαρτην αἰρεθηναι, ἢ τον βασιλεα
 25 ἀποθανειν. οἱ οὖν τριακοσιοι Λακεδαιμονιοι ἐν ταις
 26 Θερμοπυλαις ἐμενον και ἐμαχοντο· σχεδον παντες ἐκει
 27 ἀπεθανον, και ὁ Λεωνιδας αὐτος.

23	αὐτος	himself
23	δια μαντειον	because of an oracle
24	έφη	(he) said that
24	δειν	it was necessary (for) + acc.
24	ή ... ή	either ... or
24	Σπαρτη -ης, ή	Sparta
24	αίρεθηναι	to be captured
25	άποθανειν	to be killed
26	έμενον	(they) stayed
26	σχεδον	almost
26	παντες	all
27	άπεθανον	(they) were killed

ALEXANDER AND THE GORDIAN KNOT

In a story told by the historian Arrian, Alexander the Great comes to the city of Gordium, named after Gordius, a poor farmer who lived long ago and was the father of Midas.

- 1 ὁ Ἄλεξανδρος εἰσηλθεν εἰς τοπον τινα Γορδιον
 2 καλουμενον. ὁ τοπος το ὄνομα ἔχει ἀπο ἀνθρωπου των
 3 παλαι. ὁ γαρ Γορδιος πενης ἦν. οἰκιαν μικραν ἐν τοις
 4 ἀγροῖς εἶχεν. ἦν δε τῷ Γορδιῷ υἱος, Μιδας καλουμενος.

1	Ἄλεξανδρος -ου, ὁ	Alexander (<i>the Great</i> , 356-323 BC)
1	εἰσηλθε(ν)	(he) came into
1	τοπος -ου, ὁ	place
1	τινα	a certain
1	Γορδιον -ου, το	Gordium (<i>city in modern Turkey</i>)
2	καλουμενος -η -ον	called
2	ὄνομα, το	name
3	παλαι	long ago
3	Γορδιος -ου, ὁ	Gordius
3	πενης, ὁ	poor man
4	Μιδας, ὁ	Midas

Back in the time of Gordius, there is unrest in the city. The citizens receive a puzzling oracle, which they are discussing when Midas brings his father's produce to market.

5 ἐν τῇ πόλει ἦν στάσις μεγάλη. καὶ οἱ πολῖται ἐθαύμασαν
 6 ἐπεὶ μαντεῖον ἀπο τῶν θεῶν ἤκουσαν· “ἀμαξα ἄξει ὑμῖν
 7 σωτήρα· βασιλεὺς γενήσεται, καὶ παύσει τὰ ἐν τῇ πόλει
 8 κακά.” ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ πολῖται περὶ τοῦ μαντείου ἔλεγον, ὁ
 9 Μίδας εἰσηλθὲν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν· καρπὸν γὰρ ἀπο τῶν
 10 ἀγρῶν ἔφερον ἐν τῇ τοῦ Γορδίου ἀμαξῇ.

5	στάσις, ἡ	civil unrest
5	πολῖται, οἱ	citizens
6	μαντεῖον -ου, τό	oracle
6	ἤκουσαν	they heard
6	ἀμαξα -ης, ἡ	cart
6	ἄξει	(it) will bring
6	ὑμῖν	for you
7	σωτήρ acc σωτήρα, ὁ	saviour
7	βασιλεὺς voc βασιλεῦ, ὁ	king
7	γενήσεται	he will become
8	περὶ + gen	about
9	καρπὸς -ου, ὁ	produce

The citizens hail Midas as the saviour promised by the oracle. He becomes king, ends the city's troubles, and leaves his father's cart in the temple as a thank-offering.

11 οἱ δὲ πολῖται εἶπον· “ὦ ξενε, ὦ βασιλεῦ, εἰς καιρὸν
 12 παρεῖ.” ὁ οὖν Μίδας βασιλεὺς ἐποιήθη. καὶ ἐπεὶ ἐπαύσε

13 τα ἐν τῇ πόλει κακά, τὴν ἀμαξάν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐλίπεν ὡς

14 χαριστήριον.

11 εἰς καιρὸν at the right time

12 παρῆι you have come

12 ἐποίηθη (he) was made

13 ὡς as

14 χαριστήριον -ου, τό thank-offering

Many generations later, the cart is still there. It is honoured for its age, its association with Midas, and an intricate knot in the rope attaching its yoke.

15 καὶ μετὰ πολλὰς γενεὰς ἡ ἀμαξά ἐτι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἦν, καὶ

16 τιμὴν μεγάλην εἶχεν. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ παλαιὰ ἦν, καὶ ἐν

17 αὐτῇ ὁ Μίδας εἰσηλθὼν ὡς βασιλεὺς· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐν τῷ τοῦ

18 ζυγοῦ δεσμῷ ἦν ἄμμα δεινὸν καὶ πολυπλοκόν, ὥστε

19 οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο λύειν.

15 μετὰ + acc after

15 πολλὰς many

15 γενεὰ -ας, ἡ generation

15 ἐτι still

16 τιμὴ -ης, ἡ honour

16 πρῶτον μὲν first of all

16 παλαιός -α -ον old

17	αὐτή	it
18	ζυγόν -ου, τό	yoke
18	δεσμός -ου, ό	fastening
18	άμμα, τό	knot
18	πολυπλοκος -ον	intricate
18	ώστε	with the result that
19	οὐδεις	no-one
19	έδυνατο	(he) was able

A story circulating in the city prophesies a great future for anyone who can unfasten the knot. Alexander responds to the challenge with a drastic solution.

20 και λογος τις έν τη πολει ήν· “όστις λυσει το άμμα,
 21 βασιλευς της Ἰσσιας γενησεται.” ό οὖν ἸΑλεξανδρος, έπει
 22 τον λογον ήκουσεν, εις το ιερον εισηλθεν. την δε άμαξαν
 23 και το άμμα ειδεν. έπειτα δε μαχαιραν έλαβεν και
 24 διεκοψε το άμμα· άπατη ήν, άλλα μεγαλοπρεπης.

20	τις	a certain
20	όστις	whoever
21	Ἰσσια -ας, ή	Asia
22	ήκουσεν	he heard
23	ειδεν	he saw
23	μαχαιρα -ας, ή	sword

24	διεκοψε	he cut through
24	ἀπατη -ης, ή	cheating
24	μεγαλοπρεπης	magnificent

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

The following are suggestions of the sorts of questions and topic areas that could be explored in relation to the topics in this booklet. Teachers are however free to set any tasks in line with the specification.

1 PROMETHEUS

To what extent do you admire and sympathise with Prometheus in this story?
(400 words)

Myths often explain how features of life and the world originated. In what ways does this story do so?
(200 words)

2 DEUCALION

How important is the interaction of gods and human beings in this story?
(400 words)

How similar is this story to other flood stories from around the world?
(200 words)

3 APOLLO AND DAPHNE

How are the gods portrayed in this story?
(400 words)

How would you describe the atmosphere of the story?
(200 words)

4 POLYCRATES AND THE RING

How does Herodotus make this a dramatic and exciting story?
(400 words)

Does the story suggest that Amasis was right about the gods?
(200 words)

5 LEONIDAS AND THE 300 SPARTANS AT THERMOPYLAE

How are Leonidas and his 300 Spartans shown in this story as heroic despite their defeat?
(400 words)

How does the geography of Thermopylae contribute to the excitement of the story?
(200 words)

6 ALEXANDER AND THE GORDIAN KNOT

How is the character of Alexander portrayed in this story?
(400 words)

Why do you think Arrian tells the history of the cart in so much detail?
(200 words)

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