

GCSE (9–1)
Prescribed Literary Sources

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

J199
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Myth and Religion (J199/11)

Version 1



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Ovid, *Metamorphoses*: Book 9: 1–272: Achelous and Hercules

Book 9: 1–88 Acheloüs wrestles with Hercules

Theseus, the hero, reputed son of Neptune, asked Acheloüs why he had sighed, and the reason for his damaged forehead: to which the Calydonian river-god, his uncut hair wreathed with reeds, replied: ‘You ask something painful of me. Who wants to recall the battles he has lost? But, I will tell it as it happened: since the shame of being beaten is no less than the honour of having fought. It is a great consolation to me that the victor was so famous.

If her name has ever come to your notice, Deianira was once the most beautiful girl, and the jealous hope of many suitors. When, with them, I entered Oeneus’s house, her father, and the man I sought as my father-in-law, I said: “Accept me as your son-in-law, son of Parthaon.” Hercules, scion of Alceus, said the same. The others gave way before the two of us. Hercules declared that he could offer Jove as his bride’s father-in-law, spoke of his famous labours, and of how he had survived what his stepmother, Juno, had prescribed for him. On my side I said: “It would be shameful for a god to concede to a mortal” – *He* was not yet a god – “In me you see the lord of the waters, that flow in winding rivers, through your kingdom. As your son-in-law I would not be a stranger sent from a foreign shore, but a native, and wedded to your own interests. Only don’t let it harm my case that Queen Juno does *not* hate me, and all the punishment of the labours, she demanded, passed *me* by!”

“Now, listen, Hercules, you, son of Alcmena: Jupiter, whose child you boast of

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being, is either wrongly called your father, or is truly a wrongdoer. You seek your father in a mother's adultery. Choose whether you prefer this fiction of Jove as a father, or to be born the son of shame." As I spoke, he gazed at me fiercely, all the while, and unable to act like a man and control his blazing anger, he merely replied in these words: "My right hand is more powerful than my tongue. As long as I beat you at wrestling, you can win the talking", and he came at me ferociously. I was ashamed to retreat, after my words: I took off my green robes; put up my arms; held my hands, fingers curved, in front of my chest in fighting stance; and readied my limbs for the match. He caught up dust in the hollow of his hands and threw it over me, and, in turn, was, himself, gilded by the yellow sand. Now he caught at my neck, or you might think he caught me, now at my legs, now at my loins: and attacked me from every side. My weight protected me, and his attempts were useless. I was like a massive pile that the roaring flood assaults with all its might: it remains, secure in its own bulk.

We pulled away for a moment, returned to the conflict, and stood firm, determined not to concede. Foot was set against foot, and I pushed at him, with my chest full forward, fingers locked with fingers, and head to head. I have seen two strong bulls come together like that, when they try for the sleekest heifer in the pasture as their prize in the contest. The herd watches in fear, not sure to which one victory will grant overriding supremacy. Three times without success Hercules tried to push my gleaming chest away from him. At the fourth attempt, he broke my grip, loosed himself from my constricting arms, and with a blow of his hand – certainly, I myself confess it is the truth – he turned me about, and clung, with all his weight, to my back.

If you can believe it – I am not seeking to gain false credit by saying it – I seemed to have a mountain pressing on top of me. With difficulty I thrust my arms, pouring with sweat from the great effort it took, under him, and, with difficulty, freed his firm hold on my body. He pressed me hard, as I gasped for breath, prevented me from gathering my strength, and gripped my neck. Then, at last,

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my knee touched the ground, and my mouth tasted sand. Inferior to him in strength, I turned to my magic arts, and slipped from his grasp in the shape of a long snake. But when I had wound my body in sinuous coils, and, hissing fiercely, darted my forked tongue at him, Tiryns's hero laughed, and mocking my magic arts, said: "My task in the cradle was to defeat snakes, and, though you are greater than other reptiles, Acheloüs, how big a slice of the Lernean Hydra would your one serpent be? It was made fecund by its wounds, and not one of its hundred heads was safely cut off without its neck generating two more. I overcame it, and having overcome it, disembowelled that monster, with branching snake-heads, that grew from their own destruction, thriving on evil. What do you think will happen to you, who are only a false snake, using unfamiliar weapons, whom a shifting form hides?"

He spoke and knotted his fingers round my throat. I was suffocating, as if my throat was gripped by a vice, and struggled to tear his thumbs away from my windpipe. Overpowered in this form, only my third, fierce, bull-shape remained. So I fought on, my limbs those of a bull. From the left he threw his arms round my bulging neck; and followed me as I charged off; dragging at me, my horns piercing the hard ground as he pulled me down; and toppling me into the deep sand. As if that was not enough, holding the tough horn in his cruel hand, he broke it and tore it away from my mutilated brow. The Naiades took it, filling it with fruit and scented flowers, and made it sacred: the Goddess of Abundance is rich now because of my horn of plenty."

Book 9: 89–158 The shirt of Nessus

He spoke: and a nymph, one of his attendants, dressed like Diana, her hair streaming over her shoulders, came to them, bringing all of autumn's harvest in an overflowing horn, and, for an aftertaste, delicious fruits. Light gathered, and as the first rays struck the mountain summits, the warriors left, not waiting for the river to flow calmly and placidly or for the falling waters to subside. Acheloüs hid his wild features and his head, marred by its broken horn, in the depths of the waves.

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Nevertheless he only had the loss of that treasured horn, which had been taken from him, to lament: he was otherwise unhurt. Also he hid his loss with a wreath of willow leaves or reeds. But you, fierce Nessus, the centaur, a passion for that same virgin girl destroyed you, hit in the back by a flying arrow.

Hercules, son of Jupiter, on his way to his native city with Deianira, his new bride, came to the swift waters of the River Euenus. The flood was higher than normal, increased by winter rains, with frequent whirlpools, and impassable. He had no fear of going on himself, but was anxious for his bride, when Nessus approached, strong of limb, and knowing the fords. 'With *my* help, Alcides,' he said, 'she will be set down on the far bank. Use *your* strength to swim!' The Theban handed over the Calydonian girl, she, pale with fear, frightened of the river and of the centaur himself.

Straight away, weighed down as he was by his quiver and his lion's skin – he had thrown his club and his curved bow across to the other bank – the hero said: 'Let me endure the river since I have started to cross.' He did not hesitate, and did not search for where the river was calmest, scorning to claim the water's allegiance. He had gained the bank, and was picking up the bow he had thrown, when he heard his wife's voice, and shouted to Nessus, who was preparing to betray his trust: 'Where are you carrying her off to, you predator, trusting in vain to your swiftness of foot? I am speaking to *you*, Nessus, the twice-formed. Listen: do not steal what is mine. If you have no respect for me, the thought of your father, Ixion, on his whirling wheel might prevent this illicit union. However much you trust in your horse-craft, you will not escape. With wounds, not feet, I will follow you.' He made good his last words with his actions, shooting the arrow he fired, across, at the fleeing back. The barbed tip jutted from the centaur's chest. When the shaft was pulled out, blood, mixed with the deadly arrow-poison of the Lernean Hydra, gushed out simultaneously from the entry and exit wounds. Nessus trapped this, and murmured, to himself of course: 'I will not die without revenge' and gave his tunic soaked with warm

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blood to Deianira, whom he had abducted, presenting it to her as if it were a gift for reviving a waning love.

A long space of intervening time passed by, and the tales of mighty Hercules had filled the world, and overcome his stepmother's hatred. As the victor at Oechalia, in Euboea (where he had avenged an insult offered him by King Eurytus) he was preparing to sacrifice to Jupiter at Cenaeum, when loquacious Rumour, who loves to add lies to fact, and expands from the tiniest truth by her falsehoods, brought her tale on ahead, to your ears, Deianira. She claimed that Hercules, reputed son of Amphitryon, was filled with passion for Iole, daughter of Eurytus.

The loving wife believes it, and terrified at first by the rumour of this new affair, she indulges in tears, and the poor girl vents her misery in weeping. But she soon says 'Why do I weep? That adulteress will laugh at my tears. Since she is coming here, I must plan quickly, while I can, while another has not yet taken my place. Should I complain, or keep silent? Return to Calydon or stay? Should I leave my house? Or, if I can do nothing else, should I at least stand in their way? What if, remembering I am your sister, Meleager, I prepare, boldly, to commit a crime, and, by cutting that adulteress's throat, show what revenge and a woman's grief can do?'

Her thought traced various courses. Of all of them she preferred that of sending the shirt, imbued with Nessus's blood, to restore her husband's waning love. Unwittingly, she entrusted what became her future grief, to the servant, Lichas, he not knowing what he had been entrusted with: and the unfortunate woman, ordered him, with persuasive words, to give the present to her husband. Hercules, the hero, took it, without a thought, and put on the shirt of Nessus, soaked in the poison of the Lernean Hydra.

Book 9: 159–210 The agony of Hercules

He was making offerings of incense and reciting prayers over the first flames, and pouring a libation bowl of wine on to the marble altar. The power of the venom,

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warmed and released by the flames, dissolved, dispersing widely through the limbs of Hercules. With his usual courage, he repressed his groans while he could. When his strength to endure the venom was exhausted, he overturned the altar, and filled woody Oeta with his shouts.

He tries at once to tear off the fatal clothing: where it is pulled away, it pulls skin away with it, and, revolting to tell, it either sticks to the limbs from which he tries in vain to remove it, or reveals the lacerated limbs and his massive bones. His blood itself hisses and boils, with the virulence of the poison, like incandescent metal, dipped in a cold pool. There is no end to it: the consuming fires suck at the air in his chest: dark sweat pours from his whole body: his scorched sinews crackle. His marrow liquefying with the secret corruption, he raises his hands to the heavens, crying: 'Juno, Saturnia, feed on my ruin: feed, cruel one: gaze, from the heights, at this destruction, and sate your savage heart! Or if this suffering seems pitiable even to an enemy, even to you, take away this sorrowful and hateful life, with its fearful torments, that was only made for toil. Death would be a gift to me, a fitting offering from a stepmother.

Was it for this I overcame Busiris who defiled the temples with the blood of sacrificed strangers? For this that I lifted fierce Antaeus, robbing him of the strength of his mother Earth? For this, that I was unmoved, by Geryon's triple form, the herdsman of Spain, or your triple form, Cerberus? For this, you hands of mine, that you dragged down the horns of the strong Cretan bull: that the stables of King Augeas of Elis know of your efforts: the Stymphalian Lake: and the woods of Mount Parthenius, with its golden-antlered stag? For this, that, by your virtue, the gold engraved girdle of Hippolyte of Thermodon was taken, and the apples of the Hesperides, guarded by the sleepless dragon? Was it for this, that the Centaurs could not withstand me, nor the Erymanthian Boar that laid Arcady waste? For this, that it did not help the Hydra to thrive on destruction and gain redoubled strength? What of the time when I saw Thracian Diomedes's horses, fed on human blood, their stalls filled with broken bodies, and, seeing them,

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overthrew them, and finished off them, and their master? The Nemean Lion lies crushed by these massive arms: and for Atlas these shoulders of mine held up the sky. Jupiter's cruel consort is tired of giving commands: I am not tired of performing them.

But now a strange disease affects me that I cannot withstand by courage, weapons or strength. Deep in my lungs a devouring fire wanders, feeding on my whole body. But Eurystheus, my enemy is well! Are there those then who can believe that the gods exist?' So saying he roamed, in his illness, over the heights of Oeta, as a bull carries around a hunting spear embedded in its body, though the hunter who threw it has long gone. Picture him there, in the mountains, in his anger, often groaning, often shouting out, often attempting, again and again, to rid himself of the last of the garment, overturning trees, or stretching his arms out to his native skies.

Book 9: 211–272 The death and transformation of Hercules

Then he caught sight of the terrified Lichas, cowering in a hollow of the cliff, and pain concentrated all his fury. 'Was it not you, Lichas,' he said, 'who gave me this fatal gift? Are you not the agent of my death?' The man trembled, grew pale with fear, and, timidly, made excuses. While he was speaking, and trying to clasp the hero's knees, Alcides seized him, and, swinging him round three or four times, hurled him, more violently than a catapult bolt, into the Euboean waters. Hanging in the air, he hardened with the wind. As rain freezes in the icy blasts and becomes snow; whirling snowflakes bind together in a soft mass; and they, in turn, accumulate as a body of solid hailstones: so he, the ancient tradition says, flung by strong arms through the void, bloodless with fright, and devoid of moisture, turned to hard flint. Now, in the Euboean Gulf, a low rock rises out of the depths, and keeps the semblance of a human shape. This sailors are afraid to set foot on, as though it could sense them, and they call it, Lichas.

But you, famous son of Jove, felled the trees that grew on steep Oeta, and made

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a funeral pyre, and commanded Philoctetes, son of Poeas, who supplied the flame that was plunged into it, to take your bow, your ample quiver, and the arrows, that were fated to see, once more, the kingdom of Troy (as they did when you rescued Hesione.) As the mass caught light from the eager fire, you spread the Nemean Lion's pelt on the summit of the pile of logs, and lay down, your neck resting on your club, and with an aspect no different from that of a guest, reclining amongst the full wine cups, crowned with garlands.

Now the fierce flames, spreading on every side, were crackling loudly, and licking at his body, he unconcerned and scornful of them. The gods were fearful for earth's champion. Saturnian Jupiter spoke to them, gladly, since he understood their feelings. 'O divine beings, your fear for him delights me, and I willingly congratulate myself, with all my heart, that I am called father and ruler of a thoughtful race, and that my offspring is protected by your favour also. Though this tribute is paid to his great deeds, I am obliged to you, also. But do not allow your loyal hearts to feel groundless fears. Forget Oeta's flames! He, who has defeated all things, will defeat the fires you see, nor will he feel Vulcan's power, except in the mortal part that he owes to his mother, Alcmene. What he has from me is immortal, deathless and eternal: and that, no flame can destroy. When it is done with the earth, I will accept it into the celestial regions, and I trust my action will please all the gods. But if there is anyone, anyone at all, who is unhappy at Hercules's deification, and would not wish to grant this gift, he or she should know that it was given for merit, and should approve it, though unwillingly.' The gods agreed. Juno, also, appeared to accept the rest of his words with compliance, but not the last ones, upset that she was being censored.

Meanwhile, Mulciber had consumed whatever the flames could destroy, and no recognisable form of Hercules remained, no semblance of what came to him from his mother: he only retained his inheritance from Jove. As a snake enjoys its newness, sloughing old age with its skin, gleaming with fresh scales; so,

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when the Tirythian hero had shed his mortal body, he became his better part, beginning to appear greater, and more to be revered, in his high majesty. The all-powerful father of the gods carrying him upwards, in his four-horse chariot, through the substance-less clouds, set him among the shining stars.

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Book 10: 1–64: Orpheus and Eurydice

Hymen, called by the voice of Orpheus, departed, and, dressed in his saffron robes, made his way through the vast skies to the Ciconian coast: but in vain. He was present at Orpheus's marriage, true, but he did not speak the usual words, display a joyful expression, or bring good luck. The torch, too, that he held, sputtered continually, with tear-provoking fumes, and no amount of shaking contrived to light it properly. The result was worse than any omens. While the newly wedded bride, Eurydice, was walking through the grass, with a crowd of naiads as her companions, she was killed, by a bite on her ankle, from a snake, sheltering there. When Thracian Orpheus, the poet of Rhodope, had mourned for her, greatly, in the upper world, he dared to go down to Styx, through the gate of Taenarus, also, to see if he might not move the dead.

Through the weightless throng, and the ghosts that had received proper burial, he came to Persephone, and the lord of the shadows, he who rules the joyless kingdom. Then striking the lyre-strings to accompany his words, he sang: 'O gods of this world, placed below the earth, to which all, who are created mortal, descend; if you allow me, and it is lawful, to set aside the fictions of idle tongues and speak the truth, I have not come here to see dark Tartarus, nor to bind Cerberus, Medusa's child, with his three necks, and snaky hair. My wife is the cause of my journey. A viper she trod on diffused its venom into her body, and robbed her of her best years. I longed to be able to accept it, and I do not say I have not tried: Love won.

He is a god well known in the world above, though I do not know if it is so here: though I do imagine him to be here, as well, and if the story of that rape in ancient times is not a lie, you also were wedded by Amor. I beg you, by these fearful places, by this immense abyss, and the silence of your vast realms, reverse Eurydice's swift death. All things are destined to be yours, and though we delay a while, sooner or later we hasten home. Here we are all bound, this is our final abode, and you hold the longest reign over the human race. Eurydice, too, will

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be yours to command, when she has lived out her fair span of years, to maturity. I ask this benefit as a gift; but, if the fates refuse my wife this kindness, I am determined not to return: you can delight in both our deaths.'

The bloodless spirits wept as he spoke, accompanying his words with the music. Tantalus did not reach for the ever-retreating water: Ixion's wheel was stilled: the vultures did not pluck at Tityus's liver: the Belides, the daughters of Danaüs, left their water jars: and you, Sisyphus, perched there, on your rock. Then they say, for the first time, the faces of the Furies were wet with tears, won over by his song: the king of the deep, and his royal bride, could not bear to refuse his prayer, and called for Eurydice.

She was among the recent ghosts, and walked haltingly from her wound. The poet of Rhodope received her, and, at the same time, accepted this condition, that he must not turn his eyes behind him, until he emerged from the vale of Avernus, or the gift would be null and void.

They took the upward path, through the still silence, steep and dark, shadowy with dense fog, drawing near to the threshold of the upper world. Afraid she was no longer there, and eager to see her, the lover turned his eyes. In an instant she dropped back, and he, unhappy man, stretching out his arms to hold her and be held, clutched at nothing but the receding air. Dying a second time, now, there was no complaint to her husband (what, then, could she complain of, except that she had been loved?) She spoke a last 'farewell' that, now, scarcely reached his ears, and turned again towards that same place.

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The following passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* have been translated by A. S. Kline, and taken from Poetry in Translation website:

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Virgil, *Aeneid*

Book 8: 154–279

Then he replied briefly, so: 'How gladly I know, and welcome you, bravest of Trojans! How it brings back your father's speech, the voice and features of noble Anchises! For I recall how Priam, son of Laomedon, visiting the realms of his sister, Hesione, and seeking Salamis, came on further to see the chill territories of Arcadia. In those days first youth clothed my cheeks with bloom, and I marvelled at the Trojan leaders, and marvelled at the son of Laomedon himself: but Anchises as he walked was taller than all. My mind burned with youthful desire to address the hero, and clasp his hand in mine: I approached and led him eagerly inside the walls of Pheneus. On leaving he gave me a noble quiver of Lycian arrows, a cloak woven with gold, and a pair of golden bits, that my Pallas now owns. So the hand of mine you look for is joined in alliance, and when tomorrow's dawn returns to the earth, I'll send you off cheered by my help, and aid you with stores. Meanwhile, since you come to us as friends, favour us by celebrating this annual festival, which it is wrong

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to delay, and become accustomed to your friends' table.'

When he had spoken he ordered the food and drink that had been removed to be replaced, and seated the warriors himself on the turf benches.

He welcomed Aeneas as the principal guest, and invited him to a maple-wood throne covered by a shaggy lion's pelt.

Then the altar priest with young men he had chosen competed to bring on the roast meat from the bulls, pile the baked bread in baskets, and serve the wine.

Aeneas and the men of Troy feasted on an entire chine of beef, and the sacrificial organs.

When hunger had been banished, and desire for food sated, King Evander said: 'No idle superstition, or ignorance

of the ancient gods, forced these solemn rites of ours, this ritual banquet, this altar to so great a divinity, upon us.

We perform them, and repeat the honours due,

Trojan guest, because we were saved from cruel perils.

Now look first at this rocky overhanging cliff, how its bulk is widely shattered, and the mountain lair stands deserted, and the crags have been pulled down in mighty ruin.

There was a cave here, receding to vast depths, untouched by the sun's rays, inhabited by the fell shape of Cacus, the half-human, and the ground was always warm with fresh blood, and the heads of men, insolently nailed to the doors, hung there pallid with sad decay.

Vulcan was father to this monster: and, as he moved his massive bulk, he belched out his dark fires.

Now at last time brought what we wished, the presence and assistance of a god. Hercules, the greatest of avengers, appeared, proud of the killing and the spoils of three-fold

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Geryon, driving his great bulls along as victor,
 and his cattle occupied the valley and the river.
 And Cacus, his mind mad with frenzy, lest any
 wickedness or cunning be left un-dared or un-tried
 drove off four bulls of outstanding quality, and as many
 heifers of exceptional beauty, from their stalls.
 and, so there might be no forward-pointing spoor, the thief
 dragged them into his cave by the tail, and, reversing
 the signs of their tracks, hid them in the stony dark:
 no one seeking them would find a trail to the cave.
 Meanwhile, as Hercules, Amphitryon's son, was moving
 the well-fed herd from their stalls, and preparing to leave,
 the cattle lowed as they went out, all the woods were filled
 with their complaining, and the sound echoed from the hills.
 One heifer returned their call, and lowed from the deep cave,
 and foiled Cacus's hopes from her prison.
 At this Hercules's indignation truly blazed, with a venomous
 dark rage: he seized weapons in his hand, and his heavy
 knotted club, and quickly sought the slopes of the high mountain.
 Then for the first time my people saw Cacus afraid, confusion
 in his eyes: he fled at once, swifter than the East Wind,
 heading for his cave: fear lent wings to his feet.
 As he shut himself in, and blocked the entrance securely,
 throwing against it a giant rock, hung there in chains
 by his father's craft, by shattering the links, behold
 Hercules arrived in a tearing passion, turning his head
 this way and that, scanning every approach, and gnashing
 his teeth. Hot with rage, three times he circled the whole
 Aventine Hill, three times he tried the stony doorway in vain,
 three times he sank down, exhausted, in the valley.

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A sharp pinnacle of flint, the rock shorn away
on every side, stood, tall to see, rising behind
the cave, a suitable place for vile birds to nest.
He shook it, where it lay, its ridge sloping towards the river
on the left, straining at it from the right, loosening its deepest
roots, and tearing it out, then suddenly hurling it away,
the highest heavens thundered with the blow,
the banks broke apart, and the terrified river recoiled.
But Cacus's den and his vast realm stood revealed,
and the shadowy caverns within lay open,
no differently than if earth, gaping deep within,
were to unlock the infernal regions by force, and disclose
the pallid realms, hated by the gods, and the vast abyss
be seen from above, and the spirits tremble at incoming light.
So Hercules, calling upon all his weapons, hurled missiles
at Cacus from above, caught suddenly in unexpected daylight,
penned in the hollow rock, with unaccustomed howling,
and rained boughs and giant blocks of stone on him.
He on the other hand, since there was no escape now
from the danger, belched thick smoke from his throat
(marvellous to tell) and enveloped the place in blind darkness,
blotting the view from sight, and gathering
smoke-laden night in the cave, a darkness mixed with fire.
Hercules in his pride could not endure it, and he threw himself,
with a headlong leap, through the flames, where the smoke
gave out its densest billows, and black mist heaved in the great cavern.
Here, as Cacus belched out useless flame in the darkness,
Hercules seized him in a knot-like clasp, and, clinging, choked him
the eyes squeezed, and the throat drained of blood.
Immediately the doors were ripped out, and the dark den exposed,

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the stolen cattle, and the theft Cacus denied, were revealed to the heavens, and the shapeless carcass dragged out by the feet. The people could not get their fill of gazing at the hideous eyes, the face, and shaggy bristling chest of the half-man, and the ashes of the jaw's flames. Because of that this rite is celebrated, and happy posterity remembers the day: and Potitius, the first, the founder, with the Pinarian House as guardians of the worship of Hercules, set up this altar in the grove, which shall be spoken of for ever by us as 'The Mightiest', and the mightiest it shall be for ever. Come now, O you young men, wreath your hair with leaves, hold out wine-cups in your right hands, in honour of such great glory, and call on the god we know, and pour out the wine with a will.' He spoke, while grey-green poplar veiled his hair with Hercules's own shade, hanging down in a knot of leaves, and the sacred cup filled his hand. Quickly they all poured a joyful libation on the table, and prayed to the gods.

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Homeric Hymn to Heracles the Lion Hearted

Heracles, Zeus' son, I will celebrate, who, greatest and best
of those on earth, was born in Thebes' beautiful places,
Alcmene having slept with the black-clouded son of Cronus:
At one time, by lands and seas impossible to count,
He wandered, sent away by Lord Eurystheus,
Many things he did that were reckless, many things he suffered:
Now, however, in the beautiful abode of snowy Olympus
He dwells, enjoying himself with beautiful-ankled Hebe.
Farewell, lord, Zeus's son: grant both excellence and happiness.

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Homeric Hymn to Demeter**1–104**

I begin to sing of beautiful-haired Demeter, holy goddess – of her and her delicate-ankled daughter whom Hades snatched away, her having been given to him by far-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer. She was playing apart from Demeter, lady of the golden sword and glorious fruits, with the deep-bosomed daughters of Oceanus. They were gathering flowers in a soft meadow; roses and crocuses and beautiful violets, irises also and hyacinths, and the narcissus; which Earth made to grow at the will of Zeus and to please Hades, as a snare for the bloom-like girl. [10] A marvellous, radiant flower, it was a thing of wonder for both immortal gods and mortal men to see. From its root grew a hundred blooms, and it smelled most sweetly, so that all wide heaven above and the whole earth and the salty sea laughed for joy. The girl was amazed and reached out with both hands to take the lovely treat; but the earth with its wide roads opened up there in the Plain of Nysa, and the lord Hades, the Son of Cronos, he who has many names, with his immortal horses, sprang out upon her.

He seized her against her will on his golden chariot and carried her away as she wailed. [20] Then she cried out shrilly with her voice, calling upon her father, the Son of Cronos, the highest and the best. But not one of the immortal gods, nor one of the mortal humans, heard her voice, nor even did the rich fruit-bearing olive-trees. Only the light-hearted daughter of Persaios, Hecate with the bright head-band, heard the girl from her cave, and also lord Helios, Hyperion's bright son. They heard the maiden as she called to her father, the Son of Cronos: but he, all by himself, was seated far apart from the gods, inside a temple where many pray, receiving beautiful sacrifices from mortal humans. [30] She was being taken against her will, at the suggestion of Zeus, by her father's brother with his immortal horses; Ruler of Many, Host of Many, Cronos' many-named son.

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So long as both the earth and the starry sky could be seen by the goddess, and the strong-flowing, fish-filled sea, and the rays of the sun, she still hoped to see her dear mother and the tribe of the immortal gods. So during this time her great heart was soothed by hope, distressed as she was. ... The peaks of the mountains and depths of the sea rang with her immortal voice: and her revered mother heard her.

[40] A sharp pain seized her heart. She tore off the veil from her divine flowing hair with her own dear hands, hurled her dark cloak down from both her shoulders, and sped off searching like a bird of prey over land and sea. But no one would tell her the truth. Not one of the gods, nor one of the mortal humans, nor one of the birds of omen, messengers of the truth, came to her. Thereafter, for nine days the revered Demeter wandered over the earth, with blazing torches in her hands. [50] In her grief not once did she take of ambrosia and nectar, sweet to drink, nor did she bathe her skin in water. But when the tenth bright dawn came upon her, Hecate came to her, with a torch in her hands. She came with a message, and told her story, saying this:

“Revered Demeter, bringer of the seasons, giver of splendid gifts, which one of the gods who dwell in heaven, or which one of the mortal humans seized Persephone and brought grief to your dear spirit? I heard the sounds, but did not see with my eyes who it was. I tell you everything truthfully and in haste.”

So spoke Hecate. She received no response from the daughter of beautiful-haired Rhea, [60] instead she sped off with her, holding blazing torches in her hands. They came to Helios, the watchman of gods and men, stood in front of his horses and the divine goddess asked:

“Helios, respect me as a god to a goddess if ever with word or deed I have pleased your heart and spirit. The girl born to me, my sweet offspring, glorious in form – I heard her cries resounding through the barren air, as if she were suffering violence; though I did not see it with my own eyes. But you look down through the bright air on the whole world with your sunbeams. [70] Tell me the

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truth about my dear child, if you have seen her, what god or mortal man has taken her from me by force, against her will, and gone away.”

So she spoke. The son of Hyperion answered with these words:

“Daughter of beautiful haired Rhea, Lady Demeter, you shall know the truth; for I stand in great awe of you, and pity you as you as you grieve over your delicate-ankled daughter. No other of the immortal gods is to blame, only cloud-gathering Zeus who gave her to Hades, his own brother, to call his blushing bride. [80] Into the murky darkness he carried her off with his horses, as she screamed wildly. But, goddess, stop your great lamentation, you must not uselessly hold onto terrible anger. It is not shameful to have, of all the immortals, Hades Ruler of Many as a son-in-law; your own brother and kin. And as for honour, he got his third when the world was divided in the beginning, and dwells with those whose ruler he was destined by lot to be.”

So saying, he called to his horses. At his rebuke they swiftly drew the speeding chariot, like birds of prey.

[90] A more terrible, more dreadful grief came upon Demeter’s spirit. Therefore, in her anger at the son of Cronos of the dark clouds, she abandoned the assembly of the gods and high Olympus. She went among the cities and rich fields of men, for a long time disguising her form. Not one of the men who saw her, recognised her, nor did any of the deep-girded women. Until, one day, she came to the house of skilful Celeos, who was then ruler of fragrant Eleusis. She sat down near the road, her dear heart full of sorrow, at the well called Parthenion (the Virgin’s Place), from which the people of the city drew water.

[100] She sat in the shade – an olive tree had grown overhead – looking like an old woman, born long ago, cut off from childbearing and the gifts of garland-loving Aphrodite. Such are the nursemaids of the children of law-giving kings, and housekeepers in echoing halls.

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But when they had finished they rushed from their toil and each man went home. Golden-haired Demeter, however, sat there, staying far away from all the blessed immortals, reduced to yearning for her deep-bosomed daughter. She made the grimmest and most brutal year for men on the all-nourishing earth. No ground sent up seeds, for Lady Demeter kept them hidden. Many oxen dragged the bent ploughs over the fields in vain. Much white barley fell upon the ground to no purpose.

[310] By means of painful famine, she would have destroyed the whole mortal race and deprived the glorious dwellers of Olympus the honour of gifts and sacrifices, if Zeus had not noticed and pondered upon this in his heart.

First he sent golden-winged Iris to summon beautiful-haired Demeter who was so lovely in form. Zeus spoke, and she obeyed the dark-clouded son of Cronos, and ran across the divide between heaven and earth on swift feet. She approached the city of fragrant Eleusis, and found Demeter, dark-veiled, in her shrine, and addressed her with winged words:

[320] 'Demeter, father Zeus, whose wisdom never dies, orders you to come back to the family of everlasting gods. Go, and do not let my message from Zeus be useless.'

In this way she begged her: but Demeter's heart was not persuaded by her. Then the father sent in turn the blessed immortal gods: coming one after another they implored her and offered plentiful gifts of great beauty, as well as any honours she might want among the immortal gods. But none could persuade her heart nor her mind as she raged in her soul: [330] she firmly refused these pleas. She asserted that she would never come up to fragrant Olympus, nor let the ground send up one seed, before she saw with her own eyes her fair-eyed girl.

When Zeus, wide-eyed and loud-thundering, heard this, he sent the slayer of

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Argus, with his staff of gold, to Erebus; so that Hades, having been persuaded by his words, would lead sacred Persephone out of the murky darkness below to the light among the gods; so that her mother could see her with her own eyes and end her rage. [340] Hermes did not disobey, and hurriedly plunged into the depths of the earth, leaving behind the seat of Olympus.

He found him, the lord, inside the house sitting on a couch with his revered wife, who was there much against her will due to her longing for her mother – still she was far away, devising a wicked plan to avenge these deeds of the blessed gods. Standing close by them, the mighty slayer of Argus spoke:

“Dark-haired Hades, who rules those who have died, father Zeus ordered me to lead noble Persephone out of Erebus so that her mother can see her with her eyes and stop her terrible rage and anger against the gods. [350] She is devising some great scheme to make the feeble tribe of earth-born men perish by hiding seeds below the ground, and thus bring an end to worship of the immortals. Her anger is terrible, and she does not even spend time with the gods, but sits far away in her fragrant shrine at Eleusis with its rocky city.

So he spoke. Hades, lord of the dead, smiled grimly, and did not disobey the command of Zeus the King. Swiftly he ordered skilful Persephone:

[360] ‘Go, Persephone, to your dark-veiled mother. Keep the spirit in your breast kindly; don’t be too angry for all you could be. I will not be a shameful husband to you amongst the immortals, being the brother of Zeus the Father. Here you will rule all that lives and moves, receiving the greatest honours amongst the immortals. Those who do wrong and do not appease your power with sacrifices, reverently performing rites, and giving rich gifts, will have punishment for all their days.

[370] So he spoke, and skilful Persephone rejoiced, swiftly leaping up in delight. But he secretly gave her one seed of a honey-sweet pomegranate to eat, peering around him, for fear that she would stay for all her days elsewhere

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alongside dark-veiled and revered Demeter. Hades the Ruler of Many yoked his immortal horses before his golden chariot. She got in the chariot also, alongside the mighty slayer of Argus who, seizing reins and whip in his dear hands, dashed out through the hall; for him they flew eagerly. [380] Swiftly they accomplished the long journey. Neither sea nor the water of rivers nor grassy mountain peaks slowed the speed of those immortal horses; they sliced through the thick air above them as they went. He halted them, where Demeter of the beautiful garlands was staying, in front of her fragrant shrine. On seeing them she eagerly darted forward, like a Maenad down a thickly forested mountainside. Persephone on the other side, when she saw the beautiful eyes of her own mother, jumped out of the chariot and left the horses behind to run and throw herself onto her, hugging her tight. [390] She, however, holding her dear child in her own arms, suddenly suspected some trick in her heart. Grimly stepping back, she restrained her affection, and spoke:

“Child, you didn’t eat any food while you were down below, did you? Speak out, don’t hide anything, so that we both know. For if you have not, you shall come back from hated Hades and live alongside me and your dark-clouded father, the son of Cronos, honoured by all the immortals. But if you did eat, you will go back again to the depths of the earth, to live for a third part of the seasons each year. [400] The other two parts however, you shall live alongside me and the other immortals. When earth blooms with the fragrant blossoms of spring of every kind, then from the murky dark again you will rise up, a great marvel to gods and mortal men. Tell me how he snatched you to the murky darkness, and by what trick the strong lord, the Host of Many, deceived you.’

Then, most beautiful Persephone spoke in reply: ‘When luck-bringing Hermes, the swift messenger from his father the son of Cronos and the others in Heaven, came to me bidding me to come back from Erebus, so that you would see me with your eyes, and stop your dreaded rage and anger against the immortals, [410] immediately I leaped up joyfully: but he secretly fed me the seed of a

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pomegranate, a honey-sweet food, and forced me to eat, though I was unwilling. Also, I will tell you how he snatched me due to the shrewd cunning of the son of Cronos, my father, carrying me to the depths of the earth. I will go through it all, as you ask.

All of us were in a glorious meadow, Leucippe, Phaino and Electra and lanthe and Melita and Iache and Rhodeia and Kallirhoe and Tyche and Ochyrhoe, like a budding flower, and Chryseis and Ianeira and Acaste and Admete. Rhodope and Pluto were there also, and seductive Calypso, and the Styx and Urania and lovely Galazaura and Pallas who causes battles, and Artemis who shoots arrows. We were playing and picking the beautiful flowers in our hands, the soft crocus mixed with irises and hyacinths, carpets of roses and lilies, wondrous to behold, and narcissus, which the wide earth grew like a crocus. And I joyfully picked them. But then the earth beneath my feet gave way, [430] and the mighty Lord, the Host of Many, sprang from it in his golden chariot and carried me away beneath the earth by force, much against my will. I shouted in my loudest voice. Though they cause me grief, all these things I tell you truthfully."

So then they spent the whole day with their souls united, tenderly embracing one another often which warmed heart and soul; ending the pain of their souls. They gave and received joy to each other. Hecate with her bright headband drew near them, and embraced the daughter of holy Demeter many times: [440] from this time on the Lady became servant and friend to her.

All-seeing and loud-thundering Zeus sent a messenger to them, lovely-haired Rhea, to bring dark-veiled Demeter to join the family of the gods. He promised to give her whatever honours she chose for herself from the immortal gods. He nodded his agreement that as the years come around, the girl will spend a third of the year in the murky dark, but two thirds of it with her mother and the other immortals. So he spoke and the goddess did not ignore the message of Zeus. Eagerly she shot down from the heights of Olympus and came to Rharus, [450] previously a fertile and life-giving land but not life-giving at that time,

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rather it stood unused and without leaves: the white barley had been hidden as part of the plan of delicate-ankled Demeter. But afterwards there would soon be tall ears of corn rippling, and the fat furrows on the ground would be heavy with corn to be tied with bands into sheaves. She landed there first from the barren air, and the goddesses were glad to see each other, rejoicing in their hearts.

Then Rhea with her bright headband addressed Demeter in this way:

"[460] Come child, wide-eyed Zeus the loud-thunderer summons you to come and join the family of the gods. He promised to give you whatever honours you choose for yourself from the immortal gods. He nodded his agreement that as the years come around, the girl will spend a third of the year in the murky dark, but two thirds of it with her mother and the other immortals. Thus he has said it shall be accomplished: he has nodded his head in agreement. But come, my child, and obey; do not rage continuously at the son of Cronos who is dark with clouds. Right now, make the life-giving seeds grow tall for men."

[470] So she spoke. Queen Demeter did not disobey. At once she sent up seeds through the fertile ground: all the broad earth was heavy with flowers and leaves.

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Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives: Comparison of Theseus and Romulus*

Chapter 1

And so these are the things of any value that I have learned about Romulus and Theseus, things that agree with my own opinion, and they are the following.

First of all, it seems that out of personal choice, with nobody forcing him, but when it was possible for Theseus to reign without fear at Troezen, having inherited considerably glorious power, of his own accord reached out after great achievements. Romulus, however, to escape present slavery and threatened punishment, according to Plato, became brave merely through fear. His fear of extreme suffering meant that he came to accomplish great things out of sheer necessity.

Then there comes his greatest deed, which was to destroy one particular tyrant of Alba. Whereas, as mere trifles and mini-dramas, the other was the destroyer and punisher of Sciron, Sinis, Procrustes, and Corynetes; terrible tyrants who he drove away from Greece, before those saved by him even knew who he was.

Theseus might have come to Athens trouble-free by sea with no foul play at the hands of pirates, whereas it was not possible for Romulus to be without trouble with Amulius alive. There is strong evidence for this; he [Theseus], although not suffering any wrong himself, set out on behalf of others against villains. But they [Romulus and Remus] as long as they themselves had not suffered badly at the hands of a tyrant, ignored wrong done to all. And indeed if it was great to be wounded fighting the Sabines, and destroying Acron, and defeating many enemies in battle, we may compare to these deeds, on the part of Theseus, the battle of the Centaurs and the attack against the Amazons. And as for the

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deeds Theseus dared regarding the Cretan tribute when he voluntarily sailed with young maidens and youthful boys; offering himself as food for some wild beast, or sacrificial victim for the tomb of Androgeus, or – and this is the mildest form of the story – to be enslaved to some arrogant and hostile men without glory in shameful service. Whatever the reason, there is no word grand enough for his courage, or greatness of spirit, or sense of justice on behalf of the common people, or yearning for honour and excellence. So, to me it seems that the philosophers do not explain love badly as ‘careful attention towards the gods and the protection of the young’. For Ariadne’s love, more than all, seems to be the work of a god scheming, in order to save the man. There is no point accusing the lover, but instead wonder that all men and women were not affected in this way: if she alone suffered this I would say, for my part, that she was worthy of the love of a god, since she was a lover of honour and goodness, and a lover of the best of men.

Chapter 2

Both of them had strong statesmanlike natures, and yet neither of them followed a particularly kingly path, deviating from it and undergoing a change; one favouring the people, the other tyranny. Each of them made the same mistake, but as a result of different passions. For it is necessary for the man who rules to look after his own position first, which is achieved by steering clear of what is not right as much as by embracing what is. A man who either surrenders his control or tightens his grip on power does not remain either a king or a leader; instead he becomes a demagogue or a despot, and creates hatred and disdain in those he leads. One of these, however, seems to be the result of easiness and goodwill, the other of selfishness and severity.

Chapter 3

Again, if it is necessary to point out that bad luck does not come entirely from divine fate, but instead to refer to the ethics and morals that exist in people, nobody would excuse that man [Romulus] of being foolhardy for having a hasty

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temper and irrational anger in matters regarding his brother, nor the other one [Theseus] for those regarding his son. Nevertheless, we more easily excuse anger provoked by a stronger cause, in the same way as being struck by a more savage blow. Since the conflict for Romulus arose from a proposal considering the common good, there could be no good reason for his flying into such a passion. Theseus however, with regards to his son, was overcome by love and jealousy and the false accusations of a woman; the power of which few men alive have escaped. What is more, the passion of Romulus resulted in action and a deed that had a most unfortunate result, whereas the anger of Theseus went only as far as the words and blasphemies and curses of an old man, whilst in other things it can be suggested that the boy was a victim of fortune. On account of these things a person would give their vote to Theseus.

Chapter 4

That man [Romulus] could be considered superior as he rose to greatness from the lowest beginnings. In fact, he and his brother were known as slaves and the children of swineherds before being freed, then freeing almost all the Latins. They gained all at once the most glorious names: killers of enemies and saviours of family and the Kings of tribes and the founders of cities; not emigrants, as Theseus was, who built one dwelling-place by combining many, destroying many cities named after Kings and ancient heroes. In fact, Romulus did these things later, forcing enemies to give up their homes and, defeated, to give themselves up to their conquerors. But at first he acquired land for himself – a country, a kingdom, a race, marriages, family all at the same time – not by removing or enlarging what already existed, but by creating it from where it had not existed; destroying nothing and killing nobody. He was a benefactor to those that were homeless and in need who wanted to be part of a community and to be citizens. It is true, he did not kill robbers or villains, but he did subdue nations in war, laid cities low, and triumphed over kings and commanders.

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Chapter 5

As for Remus', shall we say, misfortune, there is some disagreement as to who was the culprit, with the majority of the blame being attributed to others. Clearly he [Romulus] did save his mother from catastrophe, and set his grandfather, who was living in shameful and dishonourable slavery, on the throne of Aeneas. Moreover he willingly helped in many things, doing him no harm, not even by accident. However, Theseus, forgetful and negligent about the order regarding the sail, would only just, I think, even with a lengthy defence and lenient judges, escape the crime of parricide. In fact, one particular Attic gentleman, seeing that it is virtually impossible for those who wish to defend him, pretended that Aegeus, as the ship was approaching, ran up to the Acropolis in his eagerness to see, tripped up and fell; as though he were accompanied by no retinue, or was hurrying on a path to the sea without there being any kind of attendant present.

Chapter 6

Finally, there is ample evidence regarding the crimes of Theseus with respect to his rape of women. First, because there were so many: he snatched Aridne and Antiope and Anaxo of Troezen. To all these add Helen; he being past his prime, while she was not yet in full bloom, but rather an immature child, while he was of an age too great even for lawful marriage. Next, because of this reason: that the daughters of those of Troezen and Laconia and the Amazons were no more worthy than those from the Athenians, the daughters of Erectheus and Cecrops, to bear his children. But it is to be suspected that these things were done out of lust and hedonism. Romulus, on the other hand, at first snatched approximately eight hundred women, but, so it is said, took only one for himself, Hersilia, whilst the others he distributed to the best of the citizens. Then, after these things, he displayed honour, affection and justice towards the women; making that deed of violence and injustice, into a most honourable one, and one most developing a harmonious community. In this way, he mixed and joined the races with

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each other, and with these actions provided for future generations a source of goodwill and power. Time is a witness of the respect, love and stability which he established in marriage. In two hundred and thirty years no man dared to leave his wife, nor wife dared to leave the partnership of her husband. However, just as a remarkable number of Greeks can tell you the first patricide or matricide, in the same way all Romans know that Spurius Carvilius was the first to divorce his wife, charging her with childlessness. These deeds, due to such a long stretch of time, favour that man [Romulus], as due to that connection by marriage, the kings shared power, and the nations shared citizenship. Whereas as a result of the marriage of Theseus there was no friendship or common enterprise, nor did it initiate any symbolic gesture; but instead enemies, wars, the slaughter of citizens and finally the destruction of Aphidnae, and a narrow escape from the fate suffered by the Trojans thanks to Paris, due to the compassion of the enemy who they worshipped, proclaiming them to be gods. However, the mother of Theseus was not only at risk, but suffered the same things as Hecuba, having been left behind and deserted by her son. Unless, indeed, her being a captive is merely invention, since this kind of lie, and many others of the same kind, exist when mythic tales are told regarding a god that moves amongst men. For example, the tales told of divine intervention in their lives are in great contrast; the saving of Romulus occurred due to much goodwill from the gods, but the oracle given to Aegeus, to keep clear of a foreign woman, would suggest that it was against the wishes of the gods for Theseus to be born.

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Livy, *The History of Rome*

1.0–1.1

1.0

I do not know whether I would achieve anything worthy of the effort involved, if I were to write down the history of the Roman people from the foundation of the city. Nor would I dare to say it if I did know, since naturally I think that the theme is not only old, but also clichéd; as long as the constant succession of new writers believe either that the information they present is more accurate, or that their writing will improve upon the less sophisticated efforts of the ancient authors. But, however this will turn out, it will be a pleasure to have done everything in my power to commemorate the deeds of the greatest and most powerful people on earth. And, if my own reputation is to become obscure in such a great crowd of writers, then I would be cheered by the greatness and renown of those who take the limelight from my name. Besides, my subject is one which involves huge exertion: it must look back over more than seven hundred years, and has advanced from small beginnings to the present day, where it considers itself burdened by its own greatness. I also have no doubt at all that for the majority of readers, the earliest origins and the period which follows them will offer little enjoyment. They will hasten to the present, in which the might of a long-distinguished people is consuming itself. I, on the contrary, will seek an additional reward for my efforts in this task, so I might look away from the troubles which our age has witnessed for so many years. I will achieve this so long as I devote my entire mind to these ancient records and am not distracted, nor privy to any of the cares which, even if they could not divert a

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writer's soul from the truth, might still cause it anxiety.

It is not my intention either to confirm or deny the traditions which came before the city was founded, or whilst it was in the process of being built; they are more suited to decorating the stories of the poet than the uncorrupted records of the historian. This indulgence is granted to the ancients; by mixing human actions with divine ones, they might make the origins of cities more sacred. But, if it is appropriate for any nation to claim its beginnings are sacred and refer back to divine founders, then Rome is that nation. Her military fame is so great that when she claims that her founder and her father's founder was Mars, the races of mankind should submit to this with as good a grace as they submit to the Roman empire. But I will give no particular importance to stories such as these, no matter how they are regarded and judged. These are the questions upon which I would like every reader to focus his mind: what was life like? What about its customs? Through which men, and by which policies in war and peace was the empire established and made to grow? Then let him consider how, just as discipline has declined little by little, morals were first to diminish, and sank lower and lower before beginning the headlong plunge which has brought us to the present day. Now, we can neither endure our vices nor their cures.

What makes the study of history particularly wholesome and fruitful is this: the viewing of lessons from every experience, set forth clearly as if upon a monument. From these, you can choose for yourself and your own republic what to imitate, and avoid what is shameful from its beginning and shameful at its end. As for the rest, either my passion for my work deceives me, or no other state was ever greater, or more virtuous, or richer in good examples; nor did greed and decadence make their way into society so late anywhere else; nor were modest means and frugality held in such honour and esteem. The less wealthy a man was, the less was his greed; recently, riches have given rise to avarice, and excessive pleasures have produced a longing to carry luxury and desire to the point of personal and universal ruin.

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But complaints are unlikely to be agreeable, even when they might seem necessary. So, let the beginning of all such projects be without them. We would be better off to begin with good omens and, if we historians had the same customs as the poets, prayers to the gods and goddesses, so they might grant us success in the great task we have undertaken.

1.1

First of all, it is generally agreed that when Troy was captured, furious, vengeful anger fell upon the other Trojans. Only two, Aeneas and Antenor, were kept from all the punishments of war by the Achaeans; this was because of a long-standing pact of friendship, and how they had always advocated peace and the return of Helen. They then suffered a variety of adversities. Antenor was with a crowd of Eneti, who had been exiled from Paphlagonia in a revolt, and were looking for a home and a ruler, as they had also lost their king, Pylaemenes, at Troy. They came with Antenor to the innermost cove of the Adriatic Sea. There they drove out the Euganei, who lived between the sea and the Alps, and the Trojans and Eneti took over the land. In fact, the first place they came to is called Troy, and the name of the district is "Trojan", but the people as a whole are known as the Veneti.

Aeneas was driven from his home by a similar disaster, but the fates guided him to a greater destiny, and he came first to Macedonia. From there he was carried off to Sicily in his search for a homeland, and from Sicily held his course across the sea to the land of Laurentum. This place is also called Troy. When the Trojans landed there, they set about driving spoils from the fields, since, after their endless wanderings, they had no belongings apart from their arms and their ships. But King Latinus and the Aborigines, who occupied the land at that time, rushed from their city and their fields, armed to hold off the force of the invaders.

From this point, there are two versions of the story. Some say that when Latinus was defeated in battle he made peace with Aeneas, and later, an alliance of marriage. Others claim that when battle lines had been drawn, Latinus

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advanced before the trumpet had sung the starting signal, and, surrounded by his generals, called the leader of the foreigners to a conference. Then he asked: who were they; where had they come from; what misfortune had made them leave their home; and what were they looking for when they came to Laurentum? He learned that the throng were Trojans, and their leader was Aeneas, son of Anchises and Venus; their fatherland had been burned and they were driven from their home to find a new place to settle, and somewhere they could build a city. He admired the fame of the people, and the hero, with his spirit equally prepared for war and peace, and so gave his hand in a pledge of eternal friendship. Then the leaders made a treaty, and the two armies saluted one another. Aeneas received Latinus' hospitality, and Latinus, in the presence of his household gods, added domestic treaty to public treaty by giving his daughter's hand in marriage to Aeneas. This event confirmed the Trojans' hope that they had at last brought their wanderings to an end, in a permanent settlement. They built a town, which Aeneas named Lavinium, after his wife. After a short while, the new marriage produced a son, and his parents named him Ascanius.

1.3.7–1.4

1.3

... Then came the reign of Silvius, the son of Ascanius, born, as one might expect, in the forest. He fathered Aeneas Silvius, and he in turn fathered Latinus Silvius. He established several colonies, where the people were known as the Ancient Latins; the family name 'Silvius' was retained by all those who ruled at Alba. From Latinus came Alba; from Alba, Atys; from Atys, Capys; from Capys, Capetus; and from Capetus, Tiberinus. Tiberinus was drowned when crossing the River Albula, and so gave it the name, 'Tiber', which is well-known by later generations. Then came the reign of Tiberinus' son Agrippa, and after Agrippa, Romulus

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Silvius, who inherited the throne from his father. After Romulus was struck by lightning and killed, power was passed down from him to Aventinus. This king was buried on the hill which is now part of the city of Rome, and bears his name. Proca's reign came next; he fathered Numitor and Amulius, and left the ancient kingdom of the Silvian race to Numitor, who was the eldest. Force, however, proved stronger than their father's wishes or respect for elders: Amulius drove out his brother and seized the throne. He piled crime upon crime and murdered his brother's son, then he appointed his brother's daughter, Rhea Silvia, a Vestal as an apparent act of honour. In fact, by designating her for permanent virginity, he was depriving her of ever having children.

1.4

I believe, however, that the fates were intent on founding this great city, and aiding the beginnings of an empire second only to the heavens. The Vestal was abducted, and when she had given birth to twin boys, claimed that Mars was the father of her uncertain children; whether she believed it, or because it seemed more honourable if a god was responsible for her misdeed. But neither gods nor men protected her or her offspring from the king's cruelty: he called for the priestess to be fettered and imprisoned, and the boys to be thrown into the river. By some divine providence, the Tiber had burst its banks into stagnant pools, and gave no access whatsoever to its regular course. Despite the river's unusually gentle flow, the men who had taken the twins were given some hope they would drown, as they were only babies. So, they went to carry out the king's command and threw the boys into the closest overflow pool, where the fig tree Ruminalis (formerly Romularis, so they say) now stands. At this time, the area was an unoccupied wilderness.

The story goes that when the floating basket, in which the twins had been abandoned, was left in the dry by the receding water, a thirsty she-wolf came down from the mountains and turned her path toward their cries. She offered the babies her teat to suckle so gently that the king's herdsman came across her

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licking them with her tongue; tradition names this man Faustulus, and says that he took them to his home and gave them to his wife, Larentia, to raise. Some believe that Larentia was nicknamed “she-wolf” amongst the shepherds due to her promiscuity, and from this, the marvellous story emerged. So the twins, born and raised in this way, began to roam the mountain glens as soon as they had passed the threshold of adolescence, hunting game (they neglected neither the homestead nor the flocks). From doing this, they grew strong in body and soul, and would not only take on wild beasts, but attack robbers laden with plunder. They would divide up what they took amongst the shepherds, with whom they shared their troubles and jokes, and their gang of young men grew bigger each day.

1.6.3–1.7.3

1.6

... So the state of Alba was given over to Numitor, and Romulus and Remus were seized by a desire to found a city in the land where they were abandoned, and then raised. The Alban and Latin populations were both too large, and then there were the shepherds on top of their numbers. Altogether, it was easy for them to hope that both Alba and Latium would seem small next to the city they would build. Their grandfather’s curse; kingly greed, and the ugly dispute which arose from it, on a perfectly civilised occasion; interrupted these deliberations. Since they were twins and could not be distinguished by age, it was decided that the gods who protected those places should send an augury which would decide the name of the new city, and, when it had been built, who would govern it. Romulus took the Palatine as his place for observing the augury, and Remus, the Aventine.

Notes

1.7

Remus was the first to receive the augury: six vultures. Just as that omen had been reported, twice the number appeared to Romulus, and each king was saluted by their own followers: the first group prioritised time as a mark of honour, and the second, the number of birds. They entered a verbal conflict, which then turned to an angry struggle leading to bloodshed. In the ensuing clash, Remus was cut down. The more popular story is that Remus leapt over the new walls in mockery of his brother, so Romulus killed him, and added these words as a rebuke: "So anyone who leaps over my walls will die!" So Romulus gained sole power, and when the city was established, it took its founder's name. First, he fortified the Palatine, upon which he himself had been raised. He made sacrifice to other gods according to Alban ritual, but used Greek custom for Hercules, according to the instructions of Evander. ...

Notes



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