2021-2022 Medusa Mythology Project

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hero** | **Keywords** | **Books** |
| Theseus | -Aethra  -Ariadne  -Hecale  -Heracles  -Leos  -Pirithous | -Plutarch, Life of Theseus 31**(See A below)**  -Ovid, Heroides 10 **(See B)**  - Metamorphoses 8 **(See C)**  -Plutarch, Life of Theseus 14  -Plutarch, Life of Theseus 31  -Plutarch, Life of Theseus 13  -Plutarch, Life of Theseus 31 and 35\*\* |
| Jason | -Argonauts  -Cyzicus  -Hera  -Hypsipyle  -Medea  -Phineus | -Apollonius, Argonautica 1**(See D)**  -Apollonius, Argonautica 1  -Apollonius, Argonautica 1; Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 1**(See E)**  -Apollonius, Argonautica 1  -Apollonius, Argonautica 3-4; Euripides, Medea **(See F)**  -Apollonius, Argonautica 2 |
| Odysseus | -Achilles  -Alcinous and Arete  -Athena  -Calypso  -Circe  -Diomedes  -Eumaeus  -Hermes  -Nausicaa  -Philoetius  -Telemachus  -Trojan War | -Ovid, Metamorphoses 13; Homer, Iliad 9  -Homer, Odyssey 6-8 **(See G)**  -Homer, Odyssey 1-3, 5-7, 13, 16, 22, 24  -Homer, Odyssey 5  -Homer, Odyssey 10-11  -Homer, Iliad 9-11 **(Se H)**  -Homer, Odyssey 14, 21, 22  -Homer, Odyssey 5, 10  -Homer, Odyssey 6  -Homer, Odyssey 20-24  -Homer, Odyssey 1-2, 15-16, 22  -Homer, Iliad 1-5 |
| Psyche | -Ants  -Ceres  -Eagle  -Juno  -Mercury  -Proserpina  -Salacia  -Tower  -Venus  -Zephyr | -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6 **(See I)**  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 4  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 6  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass  -Apuleius, The Golden Ass 4  Note: plan on reading Books 4-6, since Psyche is mentioned in all of them. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Schedule of Readings and Discussion** | |
| October meeting (Start on Theseus) | For October meeting, read Plutarch’s “Life of Theseus”, available at link below. |
| November meeting (finish Theseus and start Jason) | Read Heroides for Nov. meeting, start Ovid’s Metamorphoses in September – discuss at November meeting. (can start on Euripedes’ Medea too). |
| December meeting (finish Jason and start on Odysseus) | Start Argonautika in October, discuss at December meeting; make sure you’ve read Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 1 for December, plus Euripides’ play Medea. |
| January meeting (finish Odysseus) | Should have started The Odyssey and Books 1-10 of The Iliad in November, discuss at December/January meeting. |
| February meeting (Finish Psyche) | Read The Golden Ass for February meeting.  Note, we take the exam at beginning of March, so will not have the March meeting before the exam). We’ll be reviewing and quizzing as we go, so you’ll have review materials available before exam. |
| March meeting | Discuss anything members choose |

General Comments: For some of the readings, we will only be doing the books/epistles/chapters listed by the Medusa Exam syllabus, but for others, it would be a shame to read only particular chapters and out of order, at that! Homer’s Odyssey and Argonautika need to be read from beginning to end, and that is what I’d like to do. Ovid’s Metamorphoses is more a collection of disparate stories (not just one narrative arc), but it is an incredible work of art that has influenced artists and writers for centuries and I’d like to read it properly as well. So, it is a good idea to get these books early and start reading them early so you have time to enjoy them before discussing them together.

**Required Books/Texts, which ones, where to get, any links to free translations.**

1. Plutarch, Life of Theseus: <https://www.theoi.com/Text/PlutarchTheseus.html> From the website: “PLUTARCH was a Greek historian and writer who flourished in Greece in the late C1st and early C2nd A.D. His extant works include the Parallel Lives, Moralia and Questions. Plutarch approaches both as an historian and rationalizes the fantastic elements of their stories.”. You can buy his entire Lives, which contains biographies of famous Romans and heroes – you certainly don’t need to – and a good one is the one from Loeb Classical Library, which is the same translator as the theoi.com link above (Bernadette Perrin). And if you’d like to listen to her translation, Librivox has done a free recording, available here: <https://archive.org/details/parallel_lives01_0810_librivox1> (you can also download Librivox for free on your phone/tablet and just search for “Plutarch Lives, volume 1”).

Note: the numbers refer to the chapter (very short, 2-4 paragraphs, for the most part) which are in Roman numbers on the link above.

1. Ovid’s Heroides. From Theoi.com site: “OVID was a Latin poet who flourished in Rome in the late C1st B.C. and early C1st A.D., during the reign of the Emperor Augustus. His works include the Heroides, a collection of poems in the form of letters from heroines to their loves.”. There are 21 epistles (poems) in his Heroides, so pay attention to the number of the epistle you need to read for each hero.

For Theseus, you need to read epistle#10 (named X. ARIADNE TO THESEUS) available here: <https://www.theoi.com/Text/OvidHeroides2.html> Please note that this is a 1931 translation and will require repeated reading. There is a modern translation by Paul Murgatroyd, but it is an expensive book and not readily available used or in libraries. For one epistle, we’ll tackle it together in a meeting and make sure we figure it out.

1. Ovid’s Metamorphoses: Ovid was This is the most famous of Ovid’s books and well worth getting a copy. There are multiple translations (many available online), but an excellent modern translation has been done by Charles Martin, which might be at your library and is definitely available used (I like Alibris – search for Charles Martin, Ovid Metamorphoses). I have an extra copy I can loan out for the project, let me know if you’d like it. If you want additional essays and criticism, Norton has an edition as well: <https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393925340/about-the-book/product-details>

Other translations:

1. Arthur Golding’s translation, done in 1857 (this would have been the translation Shakespeare would have read – many scholars think Metamorphoses was one of his favorite books): <https://sourcetext.com/arthur-goldings-ovids-metamorphoses/> It isn’t easy to read, but I might print a page of one of the stories to compare with another translation. Just for fun.
2. The Allen Mandelbaum translation is another excellent one, and is an older book so easily found used. I have a copy of this, and we’ll compare translations with this one too.
3. Mary M. Innes is an older translation (1950s), but is a straightforward prose translation of the lines, or in other words, she tells you what the Latin says line for line. I have a copy of this one as well, and will bring to meetings.
4. Apollonius, Argonautica, or Argonautika. The Argonautika is the only surviving epic of the Hellenistic era (from 3rd century BC, or the Greek Golden Age; Homer is much older, from 8thC BC) and is a retelling of the tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece. The Wikipedia entry is not a bad place to start if you want to know more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argonautica>

There have been only a few modern translations (last 30 years), but the best one (by consensus) is Peter Green. Unfortunately, this book is a little expensive, even used. A new copy is 30$, and a used copy in good condition is around 20$. Do check at your library for copies, and if you can’t get library copies of the Peter Green book, the following will work too:

1. The Richard Hunter translation is most definitely a good translation and is more readily available used for a few dollars. It is part of the Oxford World Classic series, so it comes with bonafides. ISBN is 978-0199538720. It also might be available at your library.
2. Librivox has a recording of Argonautika, but I am not too sure which translation they are using (maybe the Seaton one?): <https://librivox.org/the-argonautica-by-apollonius-rhodius/>
3. The Seaton translation from 1912: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13977> (I know the Gutenberg website looks sketchy, but it is trustworthy). If you don’t mind reading from a screen, it is at Theoi.com too: <https://www.theoi.com/Text/ApolloniusRhodius1.html> Seaton is an older translation (1914) but is serviceable.
4. Apollodorus, Bibliotheca – since we are only reading one of the chapters, see <https://www.theoi.com/Text/Apollodorus1.html> for a free copy.
5. Euripides’ play, Medea: Medea has seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years, especially as women classicists and feminists have re-interpreted Medea and her actions as she sought revenge against Jason. The Wikipedia site on Medea has a long list of film, TV, and theater productions: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medea_(play)>

As for translations, you can try any of the following – do note that Medea is a drama and not very long at all.

1. <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/medea.html> This is an older translation by Coleridge (done in late 1800s/early 1900s). Will be hard to read (old-fashioned language) but he retains the poetry of the original.
2. Diane Arnson Svarlien translation – an intelligent modern translation, highly thought of – your library might have this.
3. Otherwise, look and see what your library has, they should have something. There are many translations out in the world.
4. Homer’s Odyssey: this is a book that doesn’t require much introduction and even though it is thought to be over 2500 years old, it still holds up today.

Translations:

1. The big three translations are Richmond Lattimore (the one I read first, in college and still read today because he keeps Homer’s line counts and syllables in English), Robert Fitzgerald (takes liberties with the meter and line counts to make the English more modern and ostensibly understandable) , and Robert Fagles (the most recent of the 3, very nice combination of keeping the poetry along with making the English work). You should be able to find one of these in your library, or used for a very reasonable price.
2. Emily Wilson’ translation: <https://www.emilyrcwilson.com/the-odyssey> This just came out in the last few years and I loved it. It is the first major translation of Homer by a woman and it shows in how she translates Penelope’s and Circe’s sections. However, it has the same problem as Peter Green’s Argonautika: very new, expensive, and not too many used copies available. But if your library has it, grab it! If needed I’ll copy pertinent sections from my copy to share with everyone.
3. Homer’s Iliad – if you think people like arguing about the best translations of The Odyssey, you should look up “best translations of The Iliad”. But again, the big three for Homer (Lattimore, Fagles, and Fitzgerald) won’t steer you wrong and are readily available in libraries and used. If we had more time, we’d ready The Iliad in full, but I think after reading the first 10 books, you’ll be hooked anyway and will want to finish it on your own.
4. Apuleius, The Golden Ass: This is a surprisingly modern book, considering it was written around 2000 years ago, and is funny, raunchy in spots, and contains fantastical elements. Wikipedia has a good summary about Apuleius and the plot of The Golden Ass, how this book influenced other authors, and a list of translations: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Golden_Ass>

You should be able to find this in your library, here’s also a Penguin Classics version for free on Archive: https://archive.org/details/TheGoldenAss\_201509/page/n125/mode/2up