

Unit 1 - LVL CU

A. ORAL ASSIGNMENT

Olim quidam poeta in insula ad mare habitavit.

Once upon a time a certain poet lived on an island near the sea.

Is habuit formosam uxorem et tres filios,

He had a beautiful wife and three sons,

Cum familia, is vitam beatam agebat.

With his family, he lived a happy life.

Eius filius, nomine Titus, edixerat ipse esse filius Iovis.

His son, named Titus, proclaimed he was a son of Jupiter.

Enim eius fatum erat rex factus. Titus inquit, "Tempus est virtutem praestare."

For his fate was to become the king. Titus said, "It is time to display courage"

Pater eius interrogavit, "Quam ob causam?"

His father asked, "For what reason?"

Titus inrisit, "Cur? Quod dei me demonstraverunt."

Titus laughed mockingly, "Why? Because the gods showed me."

Poeta eius filium narravit, "Sunt poetae, qui reges esse volunt, et reges qui maxime poetae esse volunt,"

The poet told his son, "There are poets who want to be kings, and kings who greatly want to be poets,"

"Semper voles quod non habes."

"You will always want what you do not have."

Titus nec audiebat, namque ignorabat.

Titus did not listen, for he was ignorant.

B. READING

1. THE ARK

Haec narrantur a poetis de Perseo. Perseus filius erat Iovis, maximi deorum; avus eius Acrisius appellabatur. Acrisius volebat Perseum nepotem suum necare; nam propter oraculum puerum timebat. Comprehendit igitur Perseum adhuc infantem, et cum matre in arca lignea inclusit. Tum arcam ipsam in mare coniecit. Danae, Persei mater, magnopere territa est; tempestas enim magna mare turbabat. Perseus autem in sinu matris dormiebat.

TRANSLATION: These things about Perseus are told by the poets. Perseus was the son of Jupiter, the greatest of gods; his grandfather was called Acrisius. Acrisius wanted to kill his grandson, Perseus; for he was afraid of the boy because of an oracle. Therefore he seized Perseus, who was still an infant, and with his mother, shut them in a wooden box. Then he threw the ark into the sea. Danae, Perseus' mother, was greatly afraid: for a great storm disturbed the sea. While Perseus was sleeping in his mother's lap.

The wooden box mentioned above is synonymous with the word, *ark*. I specified it as a wooden box, because its more popular definition as a *ship* or *boat*, such as Noah's Ark from the bible. In Greek mythology arks represent a variety of themes such as unity, deceit, and transformation. Arks also commonly serve as vessels for characters that embark on journeys, physically and metaphorically, as we see here at the start of Perseus' story. As I researched paintings of arks in Greek mythology, I saw many paintings of Pandora's box. But the use of the word "box" and the treasure boxes depicted in many famous paintings stem from a mistranslation, and the "ark" was actually a large storage jar called pithos in Greek. In Judaism and Christianity, they have the Ark of the Covenant, which is an ornate gold wooden box that held two tablets of the Law given to Moses by God in biblical times and was only seen by the high priest of the Israelites on the Day of Atonement.

Ancient Greek poetry painting on a Lekythos (1) and a Hydria (2) depicting the scene of Perseus and Danae being put into an ark by Acrisius.



2. JUPITER SAVES HIS SON

Iuppiter tamen haec omnia vidit, et filium suum servare constituit. Tranquillum igitur fecit mare, et arcam ad insulam Seriphum perduxit. Huius insulae Polydectes tum rex erat. Postquam arca ad litus appulsa est, Danae in harena quietem capiebat. Post breve tempus a piscatore quodam reperta est, et ad domum regis Polydectis adducta est. Ille matrem et puerum benigne excepit, et iis sedem tutam in finibus suis dedit. Danae hoc donum libenter accepit, et pro tanto beneficio regi gratias egit.

Jupiter, however, saw all this, and decided to save his son. And so, he made the sea tranquil, and brought the ark to the island of Seriphus. Polydectes, at that time, was the king of this island. After the ark landed near the seashore, Danae rested on the sand. After a short time, she was found by a certain fisherman, and was led to the house of King Polydectes. He received the mother and child kindly, and he gave them a safe seat in his country. Danae gladly accepted this gift, and thanked him for his great kindness.

The certain fisherman had a name, Dictys, and he played a significant role in Perseus' life. In the passage above the reader may assume that Polydectes would have been the one to raise Perseus, acting as the new father figure in his life, but they'd be wrong! Dictys was a fisherman but he was also the brother of King Polydectes and son of a water nymph (a reasonable explanation of why he's a fisherman and not just a noble.) Dictys discovers Danae and Perseus by catching them in one of his fishing nets, after being granted to stay on the island of Seriphus, Dictys takes them in. Dictys raised Persues like his own son. When Persues goes to kill Medusa, Polydectes harassed and threatened Danae to marry him, Dictys accompanies Danae when she seeks refuge at the temple. When Perseus came back to Seriphus after killing Medusa he became enraged by Polydectes' deceit. So after turning Polydectes and the nobles with him to stone, he crowns Dictys and his wife, Clymene, the new rulers of Seriphus.

Paintings that depict the scene of Dictys discovering Danae and Perseus.



3. PERSEUS IS SENT ON HIS TRAVELS

Perseus igitur multos annos ibi habitabat, et cum matre sua vitam beatam agebat. At Polydectes Danaen magnopere amabat, atque eam in matrimonium ducere volebat. Hoc tamen consilium Perseo minime gratum erat. Polydectes igitur Perseum dimittere constituit. Tum iuvenem ad se vocavit et haec dixit: “Turpe est hanc ignavam vitam agere; iam dudum tu adulescens es. Quo usque hic manebis? Tempus est arma capere et virtutem praestare. Hinc abi, et caput Medusae mihi refer.”

And so Perseus lived there for many years, and was living a happy life with his mother. But Polydectes loved Danae greatly, and wanted to marry her. However this plan was by no means pleasing to Perseus. Therefore Polydectes decided to send Perseus off. Then he called the young man aside and said: "It is a shame to lead this lazy life; now, you have been young for too long. How long will you remain here? It is time to take hold of your armor and display courage. From here go forth, and bring back to me the head of Medusa."

In grade 9 English, we learn about the heroic pattern. The key elements/phases of the heroic pattern; birth, destiny, the quest, the journey home, the reward and the romantic elements.

Firstly, heroes almost always have a strange birth and are descendants of the gods, commonly being demi-gods. Although Jason, for example, the leader of the Argonauts, wasn't a demigod, but was the great-grandson of Hermes. Same for Odysseus, who was a descendant of Zeus and Hermes. Most mythological heroes have divine/supernatural origins to some degree.

Secondly, heroes have a preset destiny, receiving prophecies or divine blessings as a child. The child must also be able to prove they can perform a great feat from events that happen in their childhood such as Heracles killing two venomous snakes.

Thirdly, there is the quest, as shown in this passage. In order for the young man to prove his status as a hero, he must undertake a dangerous quest. After the completion of the quest, the hero's objective should be fulfilled.

Fourthly, the journey home, after the quest is finished, many heroes find themselves confronted with many obstacles trying to get home. In many cases, for Jason, Odysseus and Persues, it takes the hero longer to get home than the quest itself.

Finally, the rewards and romantic elements. Usually rewards and romantic elements went hand in hand, it meant materialistic gain, fame or honor for the hero as well as gaining a wife or lover. These rewards were typically short-lived, almost like the creators felt compelled to destroy the heroes after they reach new heights of power. Some examples being Perseus accidentally killing his grandfather or Jason facing exile. Old age for a hero was either obscure or inglorious, almost like it was embarrassing for a hero to die at an old age instead of dying for a noble cause. I suspect this is the same sentiment people have for soldiers, some veterans are revered while others are forgotten and often ridiculed.

4. PERSEUS GETS HIS OUTFIT

Perseus ubi haec audivit, ex insula discessit, et postquam ad continentem venit, Medusam quaesivit. Diu frustra quaerebat; namque naturam loci ignorabat. Tandem Apollo et Minerva viam demonstraverunt. Primum ad Graeas, sorores Medusae, pervenit. Ab his talaria et galeam magicam accepit. Apollo autem et Minerva falcem et speculum dederunt. Tum postquam talaria pedibus induit, in aera ascendit. Diu per aera volabat; tandem tamen ad eum locum venit ubi Medusa cum ceteris Gorgonibus habitabat. Gorgones autem monstra erant specie horribili; capita enim earum anguibus omnino contexta erant. Manus etiam ex aere factae erant.

TRANSLATION: When Perseus heard this, he left the island, and when he came to the mainland, he sought Medusa. He sought for a long time in vain; for he was ignorant of the nature of the place. At last Apollo and Minerva showed him the way. He first came to the Graea, Medusa's sisters. From them he received winged sandals and a magic helmet. Apollo and Minerva gave him a sickle and mirror. Then, having put on his winged sandals, he ascended into the air. For a long time he flew through the air; at last, however, he came to the place where Medusa dwelt with the other Gorgons. But the Gorgons were monsters of a terrible appearance; for their heads were completely covered with snakes. Their hands were also made of brass.

Perseus is given many divine artifacts/boons to aid his quest, from Apollo he gains a sickle, from Minerva/Athena he gains a mirror. He also gets his hands on the helm of Hades and the Talaria of Mercury, (Hermes' winged shoes) from the three sisters of fate. What interested me the most is the helm of Hades, which belonged to Hades/Pluto. When the three brothers, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades all have their respective protections, the lighting bolt, trident and helm. The helm of invisibility is one of Hades' symbols of power, but it made me wonder, you don't really see Zeus giving out his lightning bolt, or Poseidon his trident, so why is Hades the only one freely sharing his helm in myths? There's no definite answer for that question, but it seems like Hades may be more of a benevolent god than most would assume. It is hard to fit figures in Greek Mythology into the dichotomy of good and evil. The idea of Hades as some sort of evil god who is out for souls or seeks to overthrow the other gods appears nowhere in actual classical mythology. Due to modern media, people often associate the dead and the underworld with the modern Christian definition of Hell, causing people to believe the distorted caricature of Hades.



Perseus and the Graeae by Edward Burne-Jones (1892). (1)

Perseus with the Head of Medusa by Benvenuto Cellini. (2)



C. WRITING; 7 Discussion Posts

As I was researching the location of Argos, I was wondering why we map the way we do. Which led to me researching cartography. Cartography is both the art and science of mapmaking. Cartography can be traced back to every ancient civilization. Early cartographers used whatever was around them to create maps, primarily for safety or religious purposes. The possible oldest map was carved on a mammoth tusk, it had representations of a mountain, river, valleys and routes around Pavlov in the Czech Republic, it dates back to about 25,000 BC. The ancient Greeks and Romans had significant contributions to the field of cartography and helped shape it to what it is today. Ptolemy, a Greek geographer and astronomer, compiled the most influential work of the time in his book, "Geographia" which became the foundation for mapmaking in Europe for centuries. It was translated into Latin in 1406 by the Italian Jacopo D'Angelo. Ptolemy's most significant contribution to cartography and geography was introducing the concepts of latitude and longitude, allowing people to easily make an exact copy of his map.

D. INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

1. *Nepotem* - meaning grandson, daughter or descendant. The word *nepotem* closely related to words such as *nepotism* or *nephew*. The word *nepotism* means favoritism based on kinship, or the act of granting privileges to relatives or close friends in an occupation. I find it fitting that *nepotism* is derived from French, *népotisme*, which is from Italian *nepotismo*, from *nepote* meaning "nephew," and finally going back to Latin, *nepotem* (nominative case of *nepos*) which means "grandson, nephew". Historically, the practice of granting privileges to a pope's "nephew" was a euphemism for granting the position to his biological son.
2. *Benigne* - meaning kindly, benevolently, obligingly. The word *benigne* stood out to me because it reminded me of the word *benign* which means gentle or in a medical sense, not harmful in effect. An example of the word benign in the medical field is a benign tumor, which is an abnormal but noncancerous collection of cells that stay in their primary location without invading other sites of the body. They do not require treatment and are harmless. They can form anywhere on or in your body.
3. *Harena* - meaning sand, grains of sand, seashore, desert. The word *harena* does not resemble words that are often associated with sand or beaches in English. But after searching up the etymology, the word *harena* is closely related to the words *arenaceous* or *arena*. Which actually makes lots of sense, because arenas are usually sandy and Roman amphitheaters were strewn with sand to soak up the blood. *Arena* meaning "place of combat," which is directly derived from Latin *harena* "place of combat, enclosed space

in the middle of Roman amphitheaters," originally meaning "sand, sandy place" which is a word of uncertain origin, perhaps from Etruscan.

4. *Carta* - meaning paper, papyrus, or record, letter, book/writings. Which is related to many words in English such as cartography, carton, charter, cartridge, card and more. What caught my eye was the Magna Carta which literally means "great charter." This was the earliest document to express the idea that the monarch and his government were not above the law and was issued in June 1215. It aimed to stop monarchs from abusing their powers and imposed restrictions on royal power by establishing law as a power itself.
5. *Medusa* - the only mortal gorgon sister and a prominent figure in Greek mythology. Medusa is a very popular figure in Greek Mythology and holds many significant meanings in modern day society. The word *Medusa* is very fascinating because it's the genus name for jellyfish, meaning it's the first word of a binomial scientific name and it's always capitalized. Jellyfish' zoological name was chosen by Carl Linnæus, a Swedish botanist, because of the creature's long tentacles. The name *Medusa* in Latin comes from Greek *Medousa*, meaning "guardian," which is the feminine present participle of the verb *medein* meaning "to protect, rule over."