

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Fuller information can be obtained by consulting the index, in which help as to pronunciation is also given. When a term in this glossary appears in italics, an explanation of the term marked in this way appears elsewhere in the glossary.

Achilles, the outstanding Greek leader in the *Trojan War* and hero of Homer's "Iliad."

Adonis, a handsome youth, beloved of *Venus* and slain by a boar.

aegis, *Minerva's* shield, to which was attached the head of *Medusa*.

Aeneas, the son of *Venus* and the Trojan *Anchises*, hero of Virgil's "Aeneid," and the reputed ancestor of the Roman state.

Aeolus, the keeper of the winds.

Aesculapius, the son of *Apollo* and the god of medicine.

Agamemnon, a Grecian king, commander-in-chief of the Greek troops in the *Trojan War*.

Aicinoüs, king of the *Phaeacians* in the "Odyssey."

Amazons, a band of fierce women warriors.

ambrosia, the food of the gods. It was supposed to give immortality.

Aphrodite, literally "sea foam." (Roman: *Venus*.)

Apollo, god of the sun, of poetry, and of music.

Ares, the god of war. (Roman: *Mars*.)

Argonauts, those who sailed with *Jason* in the "Argo," on his quest of the Golden Fleece.

Artemis, the goddess of the moon, of maidens, and of hunting. (Roman: *Diana*.)

Arthur, King, a British chieftain. With his knights he formed the *Round Table*.

Asgard, the heaven to which the Norse heroes, slain in battle, went.

Athens. See *Pallas Athena*.

Atlas, a *Titan* who held the world on his shoulders.



- Atropos, one of the Three Fates. She cuts the thread of life at the destined moment.
- Aurora, goddess of the dawn. (Greek: *Eos*.)
- Avalon, the Celtic paradise or *Elysium*. To it *King Arthur* retired when fatally wounded.
- Avernus, a lake at the entrance of *Hades*; sometimes a synonym for the infernal regions.
- Bacchus, also called *Liber*, the god of wine. (Greek: Dionysus.)
- Balder, a Norse god, the son of *Odin* and god of spring and sunlight.
- Bellona, goddess of war, called the sister or sometimes the wife of *Mars*.
- Beowulf, hero of the Old English epic which is named after him, and which tells how he rescued mankind from a sea-monster and from a dragon.
- Boreas, the North Wind.
- Brunhild, heroine of the various Norse myths which deal with *Siegfried*. One version of these myths is given in the "Nibelungenlied."
- Cadmus, the brother of *Europa*, who set off to find her, but founded Thebes instead and brought the alphabet to Greece.
- caduceus, *Mercury's* staff, about which two serpents twined. In modern times, the symbol of physicians.
- Calliope, *Muse* of epic poetry.
- Cassandra, to whom *Apollo* gave the powers of prophecy, but whose predictions were doomed never to be believed.
- Castor, the twin brother of *Pollux*. The constellation *Gemini* (the Twins) is named after them.
- centaur, a fabulous creature, half-man, half-horse. The best-known centaur was *Chiron*.
- Cerberus, a three-headed dog who guarded the gates of the infernal regions.
- Ceres, the goddess of sowing and reaping. (Greek: *Demeter*.)
- Proserpina* was her daughter.
- Charon, the ferryman who carried souls over the *Styx* to *Hades*.
- Charybdis, a monster that was a whirlpool, which only *Ulysses* was able to avoid. Opposite was *Scylla*.
- Chimera, a monster, one-third lion, one-third goat, and one-third dragon. She was killed by Bellerophon.
- Chiron, a centaur, the instructor of *Achilles* and *Ascalaphus*.

- Circe, a beautiful enchantress, daughter of *Apollo*, who turned *Ulysses'* companions to swine when they landed on her island, but who later yielded to the power of *Ulysses* and restored them to human form.
- Clio, the *Muse* of history.
- Clotho, one of the Three Fates. She spins the thread of destiny.
- cornucopia, the horn of plenty, carried by *Ceres*.
- Cupid, son of *Venus* and god of love. (Greek: *Eros*.)
- Cyclopes, giant one-eyed shepherds. One of them, Polyphemus, was blinded by *Ulysses*. Also, a race of giants, sons of Uranus and Gaea.
- Daphne, beloved and pursued by *Apollo*, she escaped him when her father, a river god, changed her into the laurel-tree.
- Deirdre, the beautiful and tragic heroine of the Irish tale, "The Sons of Usnach."
- Demeter, the goddess of sowing and reaping. (Roman: *Ceres*.)
- Diana, the goddess of the moon, of maidens, and of hunting. Twin sister of *Apollo*. (Greek: *Artemis*.)
- Dido, the Queen of Carthage, one of the principal characters in Virgil's "Aeneid." She killed herself because *Aeneas*, fulfilling his destiny, deserted her and sailed for Italy.
- dryads, nymphs who inhabited trees.
- Elysium, the Greek heaven in which dwell heroes and sages.
- Eadymion, a youth whom *Diana* loved. *Jupiter*, forbidding their marriage, granted him eternal youth and sleep.
- Eos, goddess of the dawn. (Roman: *Aurora*.)
- Eros, son of *Venus* and god of love. (Roman: *Cupid*.)
- Eumenides, the Furies, who pursued those who had committed crimes.
- Europa, whom *Jupiter* in the form of a bull carried from Phoenicia to Crete. Her son Minos became king of that land.
- Euterpe, the *Muse* of music and lyric poetry.
- Excalibur, *King Arthur's* sword.
- fauns, beautiful and divine young men, with tiny horns barely visible, who lived joyously in the woods.
- Frey, the Norse god of fertility, the dispenser of rain and sunlight.
- Freyja, the Norse goddess of love and music and flowers, corresponding to *Venus*.

- Ganymede, cup-bearer to *Jupiter*. He was carried off to *Mt. Olympus* by *Jove's* eagle.
- Gemini, the Twins, *Castor* and *Pollux*, gods of wrestling and boxing.
- Grendel, a sea-monster whom *Beowulf* slew.
- Guinevere, the wife of *King Arthur*, loved by Sir Lancelot.
- Hades, originally another name for *Pluto*, later the name of Pluto's place of abode in the underworld.
- Hagen, a character in the "Nibelungenlied," enemy of *Siegfried*.
- hamadryads, *dryads*, nymphs who lived in trees.
- Harpies, women with claws and wings, horrible to look at, who were sent to punish offenders.
- Hebe, daughter of *Jupiter* and *Juno*, goddess of youth and cup-bearer to the gods.
- Hecate, goddess of darkness, of ghosts, and of barking dogs.
- Hector, the great hero of the Trojans in Homer's "Iliad."
- Helen of Troy, the beautiful wife of *Meneleus*, whom *Venus* promised to *Paris*. Her elopement with the latter caused the *Trojan War*.
- Hephaestus, blacksmith of the gods and husband of *Venus*. (Roman: *Vulcan*.)
- Hera, literally "splendor," the Queen of the Heavens, wife of *Jupiter*, and goddess of marriage. (Roman: *Juno*.)
- Hercules, the powerful son of *Jupiter*, performer of the "Twelve Labors," and greatest hero of the Greeks and Romans. (Greek: *Herakles*.)
- Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and the escort of dead souls on their way to *Hades*. God of merchants and eloquence. (Roman: *Mercur*.)
- Hestia, the goddess of the hearth. (Roman: *Vesta*.)
- Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus in the Last Supper. It was the object of a quest by the Knights of the "Round Table."
- Hymen, the god of marriage.
- Hypnos, the god of sleep.
- Iris, the goddess of the rainbow.
- Janus, the god with two faces, one looking forward, the other backward. He presided over the New Year.
- Jason, a Greek hero, who successfully sought the Golden Fleece, taken from a sacred ram and guarded by a dragon in a temple at Colchis.

- Love, shortened form of *Jupiter*.
- Juno, the Queen of the Heavens, wife of *Jupiter*, and goddess of marriage. (Greek: *Hera*.)
- Jupiter, the King of the Heavens and father of gods and men. The supreme ruler of all beings, he sent rain, snow, thunder, and lightning. (Greek: *Zeus*.)
- Kriemhild, heroine of the "Nibelungenlied" and wife of *Siegfried*.
- Laësis, the Fate who tells *Atropos* when to cut the thread of life.
- Lares, gods of the house, fields, and roads.
- Lavinia, daughter of King Latinus, who, though betrothed to Turnus, was given in marriage to *Aeneas*.
- Liber, the god of wine. (Roman: *Bacchus*.)
- Loki, the Norse god of strife.
- Manannan, the god of sailors and merchants in Celtic mythology.
- Mars, the god of war. (Greek: *Ares*.)
- Medusa, one of three women of dreadful aspect called Gorgons, whose appearance was believed to freeze beholders to stone.
- Melpomene, the *Muse* of tragedy.
- Meneleus, husband of Helen and a leader of the Greeks in the *Trojan War*.
- Mercury, the messenger of the gods and the escort of dead souls on their way to *Hades*. God of merchants and eloquence. (Greek: *Hermes*.)
- Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and weaving, who sprang full-grown from the forehead of *Jupiter*. She carried the *aegis*. (Greek: *Athena*.)
- Minotaur, the huge monster, half-bull, half-man, who fed on seven Athenian youths and seven Athenian maidens sent as a tribute to Crete each year. He was finally slain by *Theseus*.
- Memnosyne, the goddess of memory and the mother of the *Muses*.
- Morpheus, the son of *Somnus*, god of sleep, and himself god of dreams.
- Muses, the daughters of *Jupiter* and *Memnosyne*, who presided over the arts and sciences.
- Myrmidons, the soldiers of *Achilles* in the *Trojan War*.
- myth, an account of the deeds of a god or of a being of supernatural powers. It gives, frequently, an explanation of some practice, belief, institution, or natural phenomenon.
- naiads, nymphs who inhabited springs, brooks, fountains, and rivers.

Nausicaä, the daughter of *Alcinous*, king of the Phaeacians, who, in the "Odyssey," discovered *Ulysses* shipwrecked on the shores of her father's kingdom and was willing to marry him.

nectar, the drink of the gods.

Neptune, god of the sea, brother of *Jupiter*. (Greek: *Poseidon*.)

Nereids, the fifty sea-nymphs who waited on *Nephtune*.

Nestor, the oldest of the Greek leaders in the *Trojan War*. He was noted for his wisdom.

Nibelungs, the supernatural beings who guarded the *Nibelung* hoard until *Siegfried* wrested it from them.

Norns, the three Fates of Norse literature.

Odin, the supreme god of the Norsemen, corresponding to *Jupiter*.

Odysseus, the Greek name for *Ulysses*.

Oedipus, son of King *Laius* and Queen *Jocasta* of Thebes, who was fated to kill his father and marry his mother.

Olympus, Mt., the home of the gods.

oreads, nymphs who lived in the hills and valleys. One of these nymphs was *Echo*.

Ossian, the son of *Finn*, a hero in Celtic mythology. He was also a famous bard.

Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom and weaving. (Roman: *Minerva*.) Athens was named after her.

Pan, the good-natured musician with horns and hoots whose name signifies "all." He was the god of nature.

Pandora, the first woman in Greek mythology. She received as a wedding gift from the gods a box wherein were contained all evils and diseases; when she opened the box, they flew out to torment mankind, leaving only *Hope* behind.

Paris, the son of *Priam*, who judged *Venus* the most beautiful of the goddesses, awarded to her the *Apple of Discord*, obtained *Helen* as a reward, and thus started the *Trojan War*.

Parnassus, Mt., the favorite haunt of *Apollo* and the *Muses*.

Pegasus, a winged horse, whom *Minerva* tamed and gave to the *Muses*. He was the mount of *Bellerophon* when that hero killed *Chimera*.

Penates, gods of the house, especially of the storeroom.

Phoebus Apollo. See *Apollo*.

Pluto, the god of the underworld and of riches, brother of *Neptune* and *Jupiter*. (Greek: *Hades* or *Dis*.)

Pollux, twin brother of *Castor*.

Polyhymnia, the *Muse* of sacred poetry.

Pomona, goddess of gardens and fruit-trees.

Poseidon, god of the sea. (Roman: *Nephtune*.)

Priam, King of *Troy* and father of *Hector*, *Paris*, and *Cassandra*.

Prometheus, the *Titan* who created man and stole fire for him. For the latter offense, *Jupiter* chained him to a rock, where a vulture ate part of his liver, which constantly grew whole again. He was finally released by *Hercules*.

Proserpina, the daughter of *Ceres*, whom *Pluto* loved and kidnaped while her mother was away. She became queen of the underworld. (Also called *Persephone*.)

Psyche, the wife of *Cupid*, who almost surpassed *Venus* in beauty.

Puck, a mischievous sprite in Celtic belief, also known as *Robin Goodfellow* and *Hobgoblin*.

Ragnarok, a day, according to Norse mythology, when the powers of good and evil will wage a great battle for supremacy. Also explained as the "twilight of the gods."

Romulus, son of *Mars* and *Sylvia Rhea*, the mythical founder of *Rome*.

Round Table, an association of knights, headed by *King Arthur* and sworn to deeds of chivalry.

Saturn, the ruler of the universe before *Jupiter*, his son, wrested his power from him. Also the god of agriculture.

satyrs, clownish deities of the woods and fields, half-goats, half-men. Attendants of *Bacchus*.

Sylla, a six-headed monster who lived in a cave opposite the whirlpool *Charybdis*. She seized six of *Ulysses'* crew.

sibyl, a prophetess.

Siegfried, the hero of the "Nibelungenlied." He slew a dragon and became invulnerable (save for one spot) in his blood, won the treasure of the *Nibelungs*, married *Kriemhild*, and was killed by the treachery of *Hagen*.

sirens, maidens who enticed sailors to destruction by their enchanting songs.



Somnus, god of sleep.

Stryx River, the dark stream which wound seven times around *Hades*.

Telemachus, the faithful son of *Ulysses*.

Terpsichore, the *Muse* of dancing.

Thalia, the *Muse* of comedy.

Thanatos, the god of death, twin-brother of *Somnus*.

Themis, goddess of law and equity, the mother of the Fates.

Theseus, an Athenian hero, slayer of the *Minotaur*.

Thor, the Norse god of thunder.

Titans, children of Uranus and Gaea. Larger than men, they were not so big as were their brothers, the *Cyclopes*. They were overthrown by the gods.

totem, the sign of an animal held sacred by the American Indians and other primitive peoples.

trident, the three-pronged spear (originally a fish-hook) used by *Nephtune* to stir up storms.

Trojan War, the battles involved in the siege of Troy, which lasted ten years, caused by Helen's elopement with Paris. The "Iliad," the "Odyssey," and the "Aeneid" all tell stories of this siege.

twilight of the gods, the final destruction of the Norse deities in a great struggle between them and the forces of evil. See *Ragnarok*.

Ulysses, king of Ithaca, a Greek hero in the Trojan War.

Urania, the *Muse* of astronomy.

Valhalla, the castle of *Odin*, where dead warriors were received, and where they feasted and fought perpetually.

Valkyries, beautiful maidens who searched on battlefields for slain heroes to escort to *Valhalla*.

Venus, a daughter of *Jupiter*, the goddess of love and beauty. (Greek: *Aphrodite*.)

Vertumnus, god of the changing year and the giver of fruits.

Vesta, the goddess of the hearth. Her temple in Rome was tended by the Vestal Virgins. (Greek: *Hestia*.)

Vulcan, the lame blacksmith of the gods and husband of *Venus*. (Greek: *Hephaestus*.)

Weird Sisters, the three Fates of the Norsemen. One told of the past, another of the present, the third of the future. The "witches" in "Macbeth" are these three sisters.

wooden horse, the strategy by which the Greeks entered Troy: a huge wooden horse, in which some Greeks hid while the rest of the Greek army pretended defeat and withdrew. The Trojans broke down part of their walls to get it into the city, and that night were wiped out by the Greek warriors who came into the city.

Yggdrasil, a tree in Norse mythology, representing the whole universe.

Zephyrus, the west wind.

Zeus, the King of the Heavens, and father of gods and men. The supreme ruler of all beings. (Roman: *Jupiter*.)