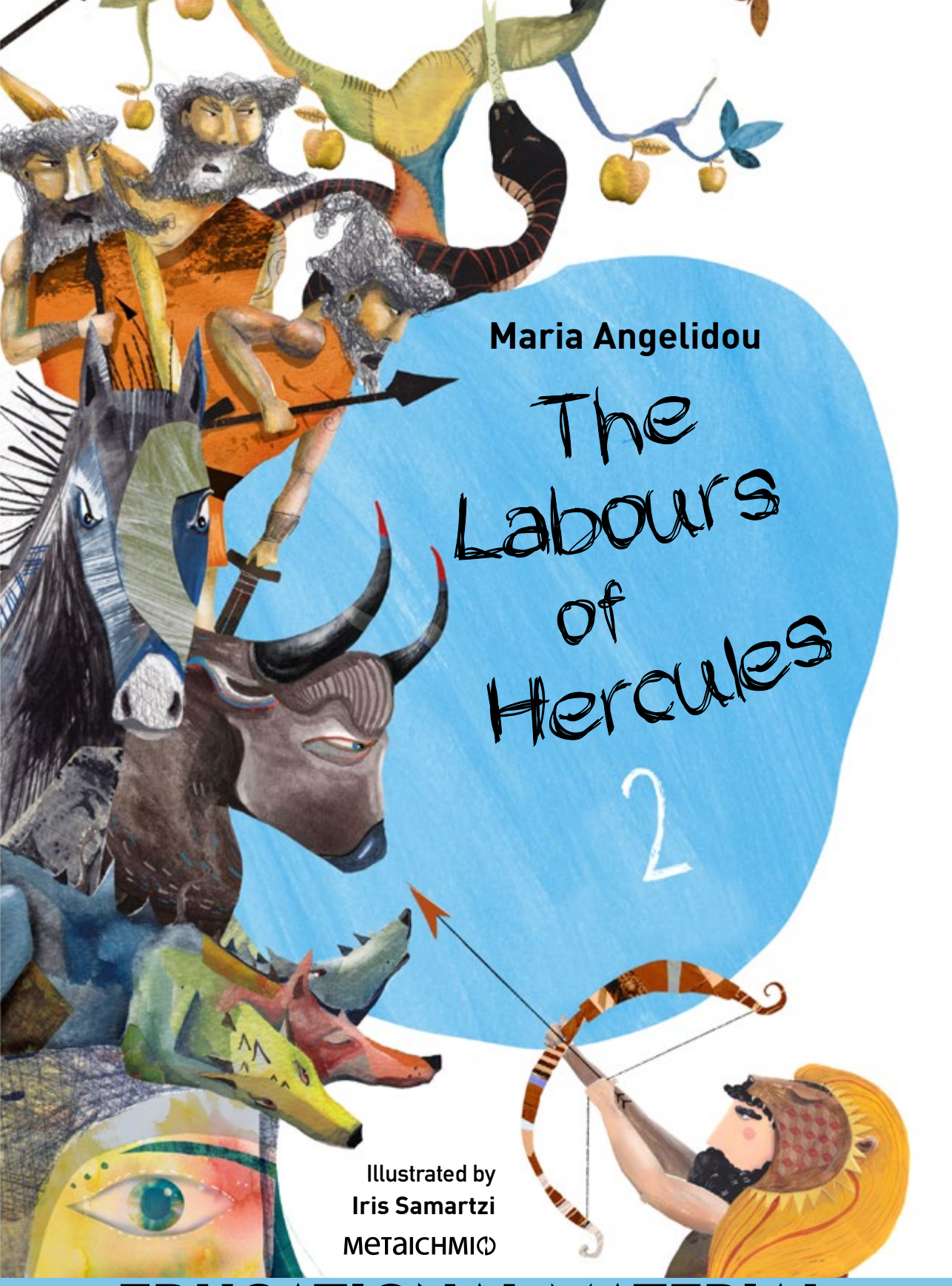


Maria Angelidou

The Labours of Hercules

2

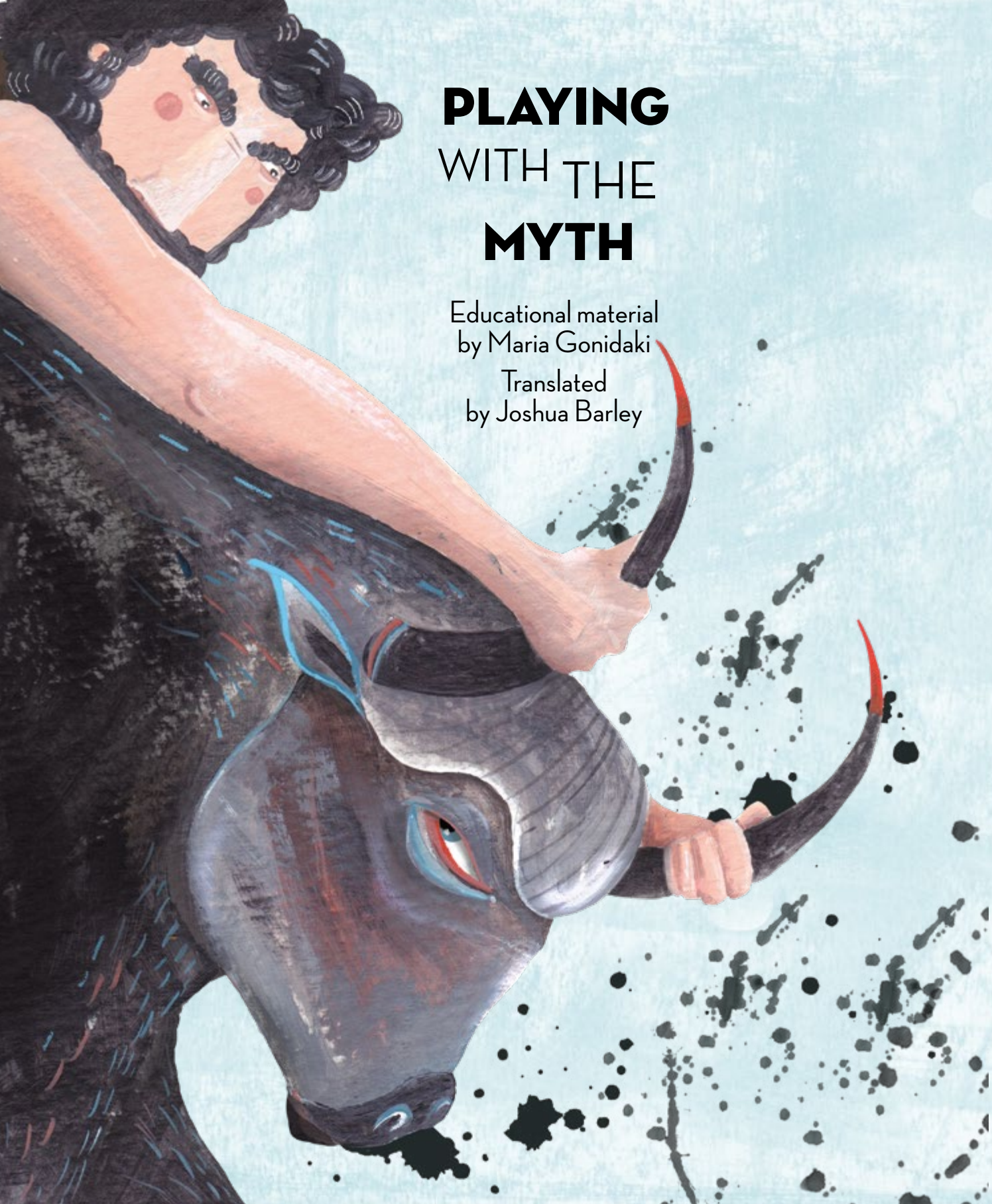
Illustrated by
Iris Samartzi

METAICHMIO

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

The Cretan Bull





PLAYING WITH THE MYTH

Educational material
by Maria Gonidaki

Translated
by Joshua Barley

LET'S LEARN ABOUT...

HERCULES

Hercules is the greatest hero of ancient Greek mythology. His father was Zeus, king of the gods, and his mother was Alcmene, daughter of the king of Mycenae.

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THE SEVENTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE CRETAN BULL

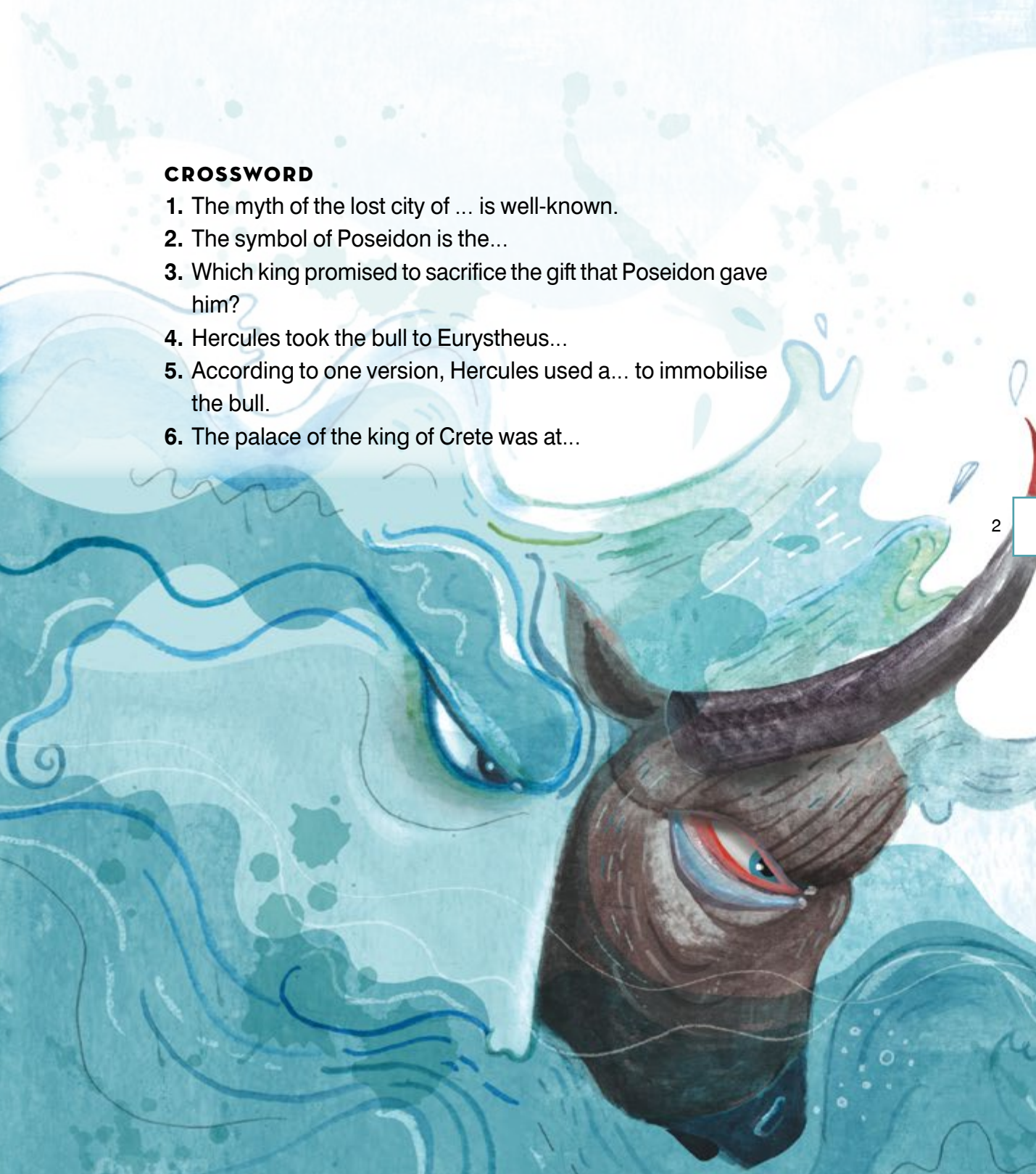
Eurystheus continued to send Hercules from one end of the earth to the other, to set people free from the wild beasts that were wreaking havoc. This time Hercules travelled to Crete to hunt a wild bull.

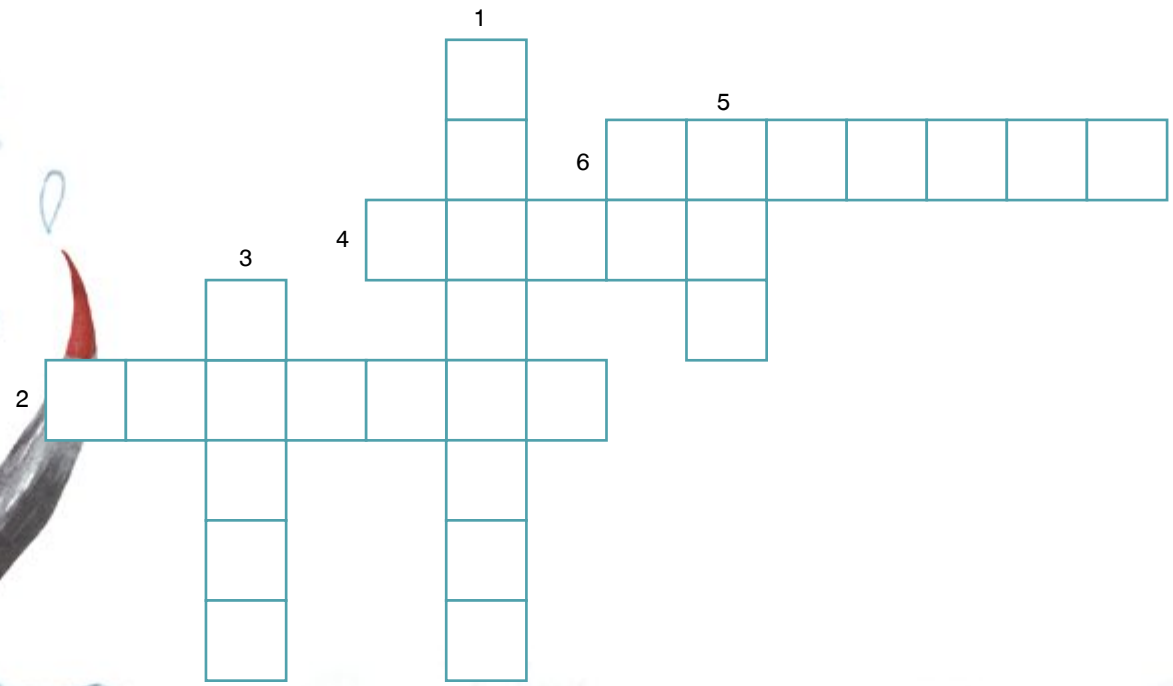
Minos was king of Crete. According to one version of the myth, Poseidon had helped Minos to take power by sending him a bull out of the sea. Minos was supposed to sacrifice this bull to the god. But the king was dazzled by the animal's beauty and he kept it. Poseidon became very angry and made the bull so wild that it caused great damage in the region. According to another version, the enraged bull was the same one that Zeus used to steal queen Europa and bring her to Crete.

Whatever we believe, Hercules again took on the tough job: to bring back the bull alive to Eurystheus. How did he catch it? Here we have two versions again. Some say that he caught it by the horns and tied it up with a rope so it couldn't move. Others say that he used a net. Either way, he managed to immobilise the bull and put it on his back. He took it like that to Eurystheus at Mycenae. The king let the bull go free and it ended up in Attica. Since it also did great damage there, in the end it was killed by Theseus, hero of Athens.

CROSSWORD

1. The myth of the lost city of ... is well-known.
2. The symbol of Poseidon is the...
3. Which king promised to sacrifice the gift that Poseidon gave him?
4. Hercules took the bull to Eurystheus...
5. According to one version, Hercules used a... to immobilise the bull.
6. The palace of the king of Crete was at...





ANSWERS:
1. Atlantis, 2. Trident, 3. Minos, 4. Alive, 5. Net, 6. Knossos.

In the painting below from an ancient Greek vase, Hercules is trying to capture the bull.

- How is he trying to capture it?
- How is the bull depicted?



Metropolitan Museum, New York

On this vase, Hercules is not fighting with the bull, but driving it along to sacrifice it.

- Compare the two paintings from the two vases.
- How does each painting make you feel?
- How is Hercules depicted?

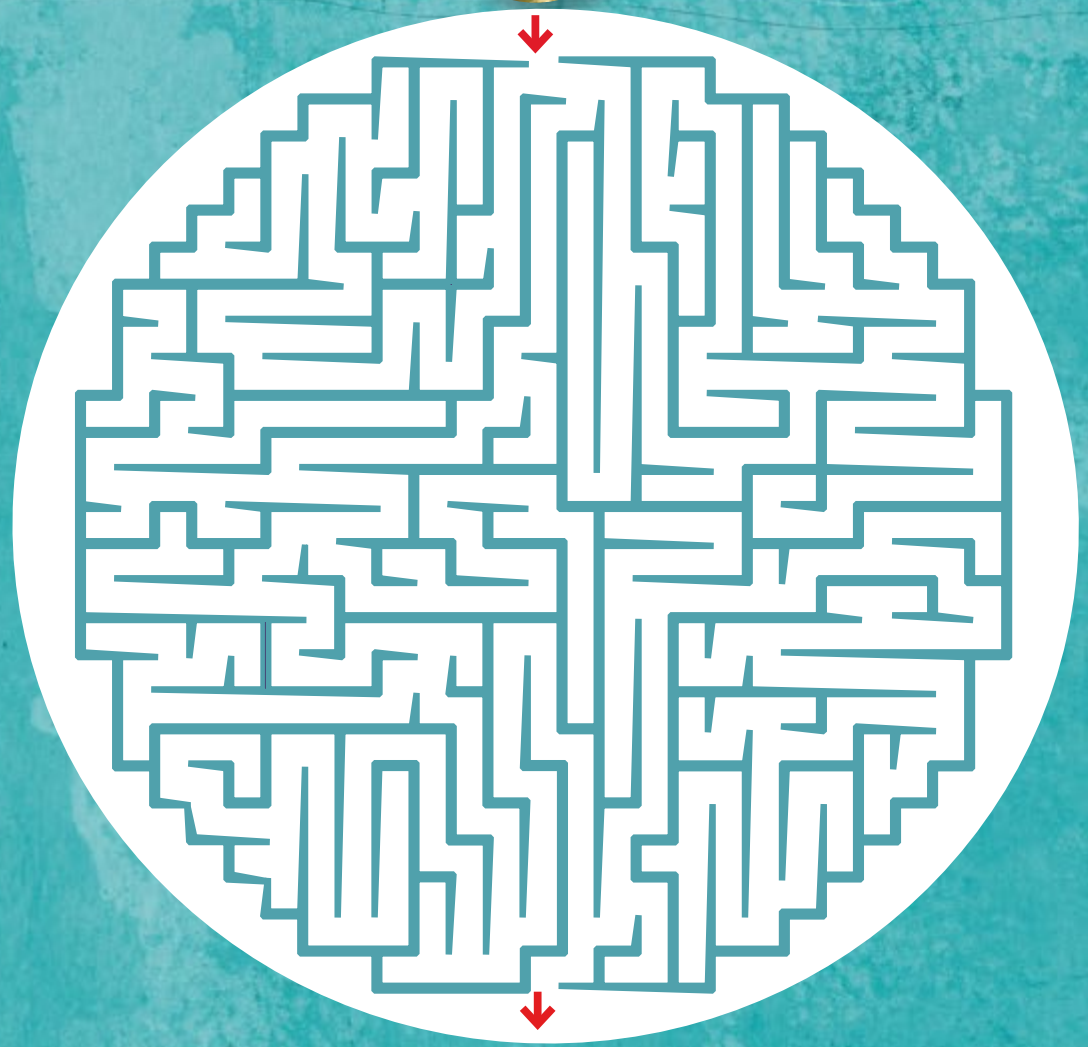


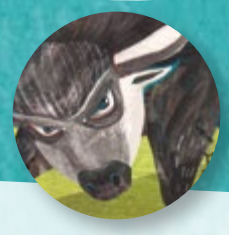
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



- Help Hercules reach the bull.







REMEMBER

In the palace of Knossos there was a labyrinth, made by Daedalus, where the mythical Minotaur lived.

- The illustrator has drawn the lost city of Atlantis – the mythical city now underwater – in her own way. Draw your own ‘Atlantis’ from your imagination.

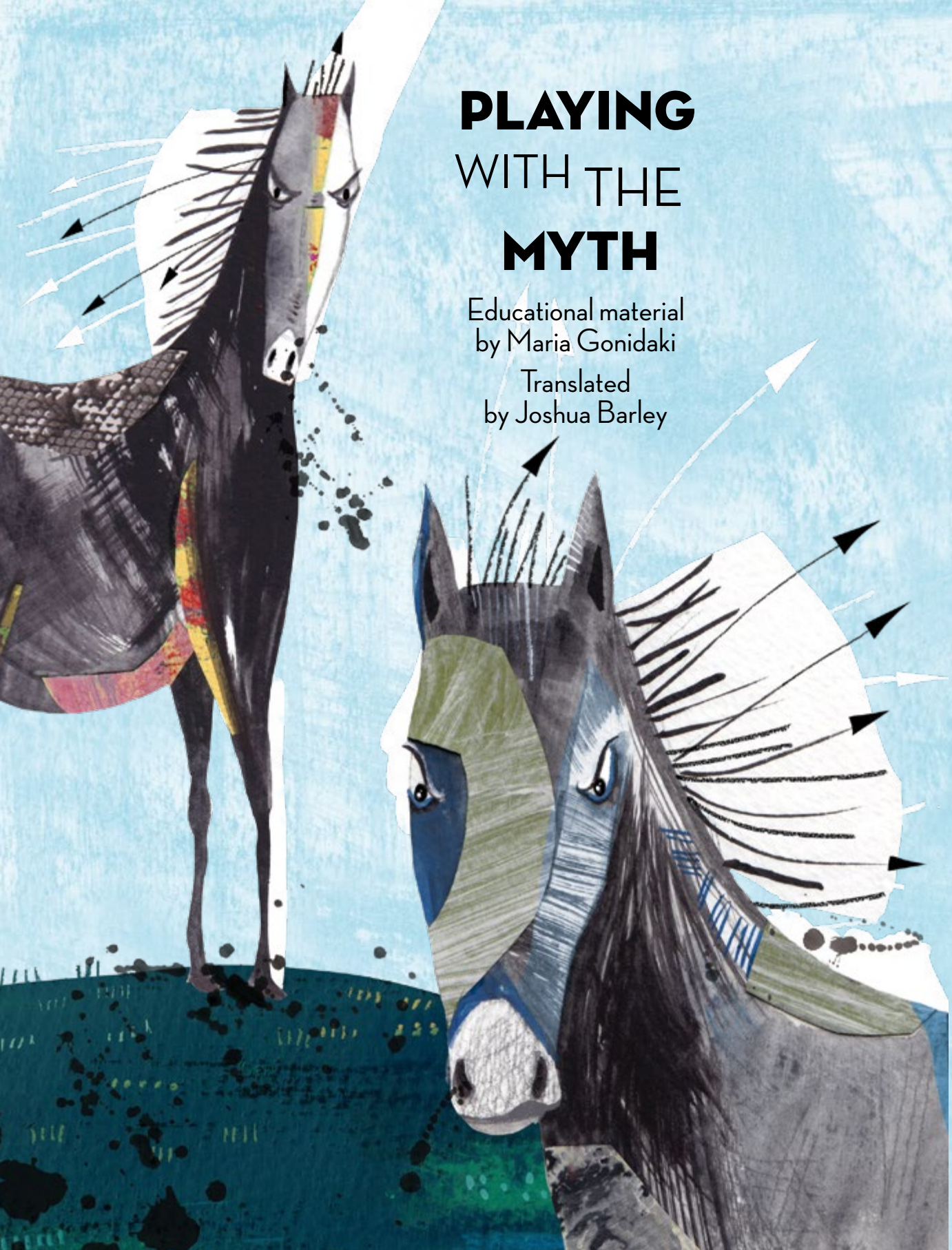


LEARN THIS TOO

Have you heard about tsunamis? They are great waves in the sea that cover seaside areas at great speed, usually caused by a powerful underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. They cause huge damage and kill many people. Look up this phenomenon in an encyclopaedia or on the internet.

The Horses of Diomedes





PLAYING WITH THE MYTH

Educational material
by Maria Gonidaki

Translated
by Joshua Barley

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THE EIGHTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE HORSES OF DIOMEDES

In Thrace there lived a wild people – the Bistones. Their king was Diomedes, son of the god Ares and of Cyrene. Diomedes had four ferocious mares. Their names were Podagros, Lampon, Xanthos and Deinos. These terrifying horses ate human flesh, and fire flared out of their nostrils. Diomedes fed them either on foreigners passing through his country or on his subjects that he didn't like. He kept them tied up with thick iron chains in his stable and he had many strong guards watching over them.

Eurystheus set Hercules the task of bringing back these horses alive. The hero sought the help of some exceptional men for the labour. Among them was his friend Abderos. They all came to Thrace in a ship and went to Diomedes' palace. Hercules killed the guards, took the horses and put them on the ship. He set Abderos to guard them, while he and the other men went to face Diomedes and his army. Hercules killed Diomedes and the Bistones retreated. But when Hercules and his comrades returned to their ship, they found that the horses had made mincemeat of Abderos. Dismayed by the loss of his friend, Hercules bound the horses with thick chains, buried the luckless hero and founded the city of Abdera beside his friend's tomb. Then he set sail for Mycenae. Hercules gave the horses to Eurystheus, but the king let them go free. The horses ended up on Olympus, where other wild beasts ate them.

According to another version of the myth, Hercules went by himself to Thrace and caught the horses after giving them Diomedes himself to eat. That's how he punished Diomedes for the wrong he had done!

WORDSEARCH

Find the names of characters that appear in this labour of Hercules.

U	O	L	Y	M	P	U	S	Z	E
A	R	E	S	L	Z	W	O	P	U
B	E	Y	H	D	U	L	H	Y	R
D	O	X	P	Φ	D	A	E	X	Y
E	W	T	O	Z	E	M	R	E	S
R	N	Y	D	K	I	P	C	S	T
O	G	I	A	T	N	O	U	S	H
S	P	J	G	I	O	N	L	L	E
G	W	J	R	K	S	R	E	A	U
F	O	X	O	T	M	P	S	M	S
O	L	Y	S	N	O	S	N	T	H
A	B	I	S	T	O	N	E	S	L
X	A	N	T	H	O	S	Y	N	W

ANSWERS:
Abderos, Ares, Bistones, Deinos, Eurystheus, Hercules, Lampon, Xanthos, Olympus, Podagros

WORD GAME

The horses of Diomedes were all female and they are also referred to as «The Mares of Diomedes». Fill in the blanks so that the word MARES appears vertically.

1. _ _ _ _ _ _
2. _ _ _ _ _ _ _
3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. _ _ _ _ _
5. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

1. The name of one of the four horses...
2. Hercules' club was one of his...
3. Hercules' friend who was killed by the horses.
4. The horses had deadly iron...
5. Eurystheus sent the horses to Olympus where every year certain ... come out and eat them.

ANSWERS:
1. Lampon, **2.** Weapons, **3.** Abderos, **4.** Teeth, **5.** Monsters

Look at the painting below from an ancient Greek vase.

- Who is the hero that is painted? How do we recognise him?
- How do you interpret his facial expression and body position?



Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Now look at the picture made by this book's illustrator.

- How does she represent the same myth?
- What similarities and differences do you notice between the painting on the vase and the illustration below?



REMEMBER

Black-figure style: a technique of decorating ancient vases in which the figures are in black and the background is the colour of clay.

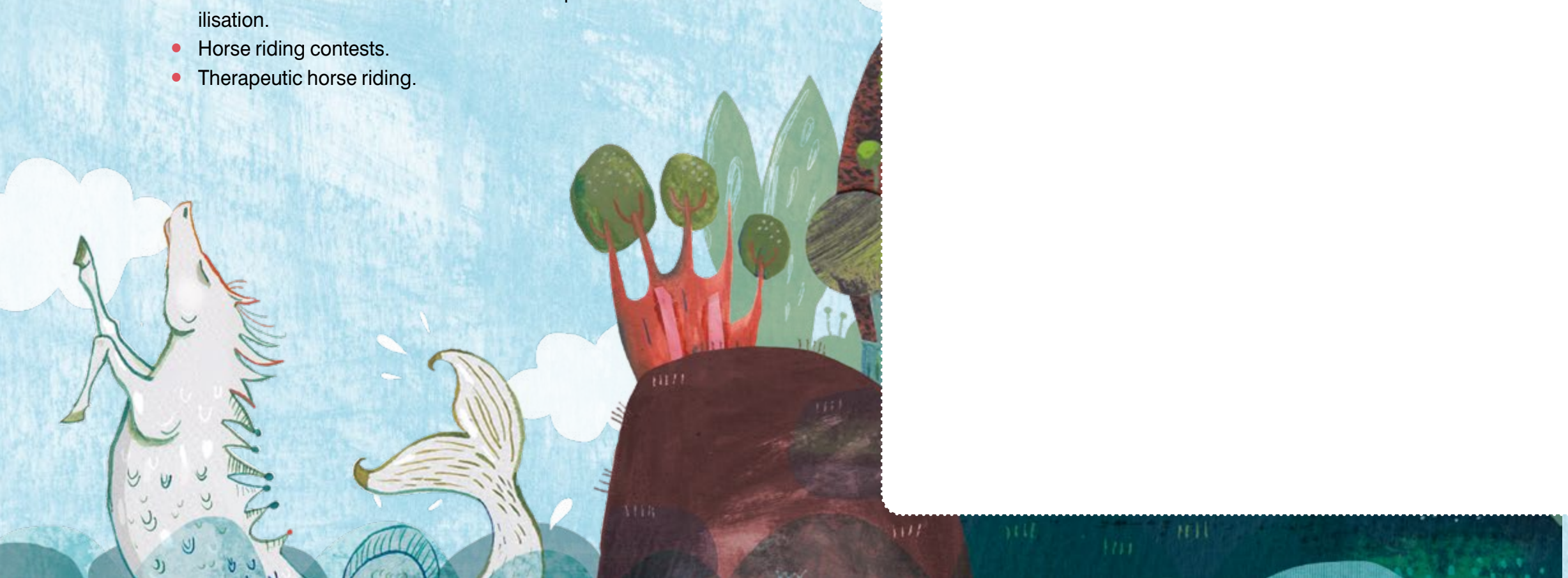
The **horse** since ancient times until today has been a companion to humans in peace and war. The horse has a special place in Greek tradition.

- The horses that pulled the golden chariot of the Sun.
- Centaurs.
- Pegasus, Perseus' winged horse.
- The horses of Diomedes.
- Bucephalus, Alexander the Great's horse. According to tradition, this horse was descended from the horses of Diomedes.

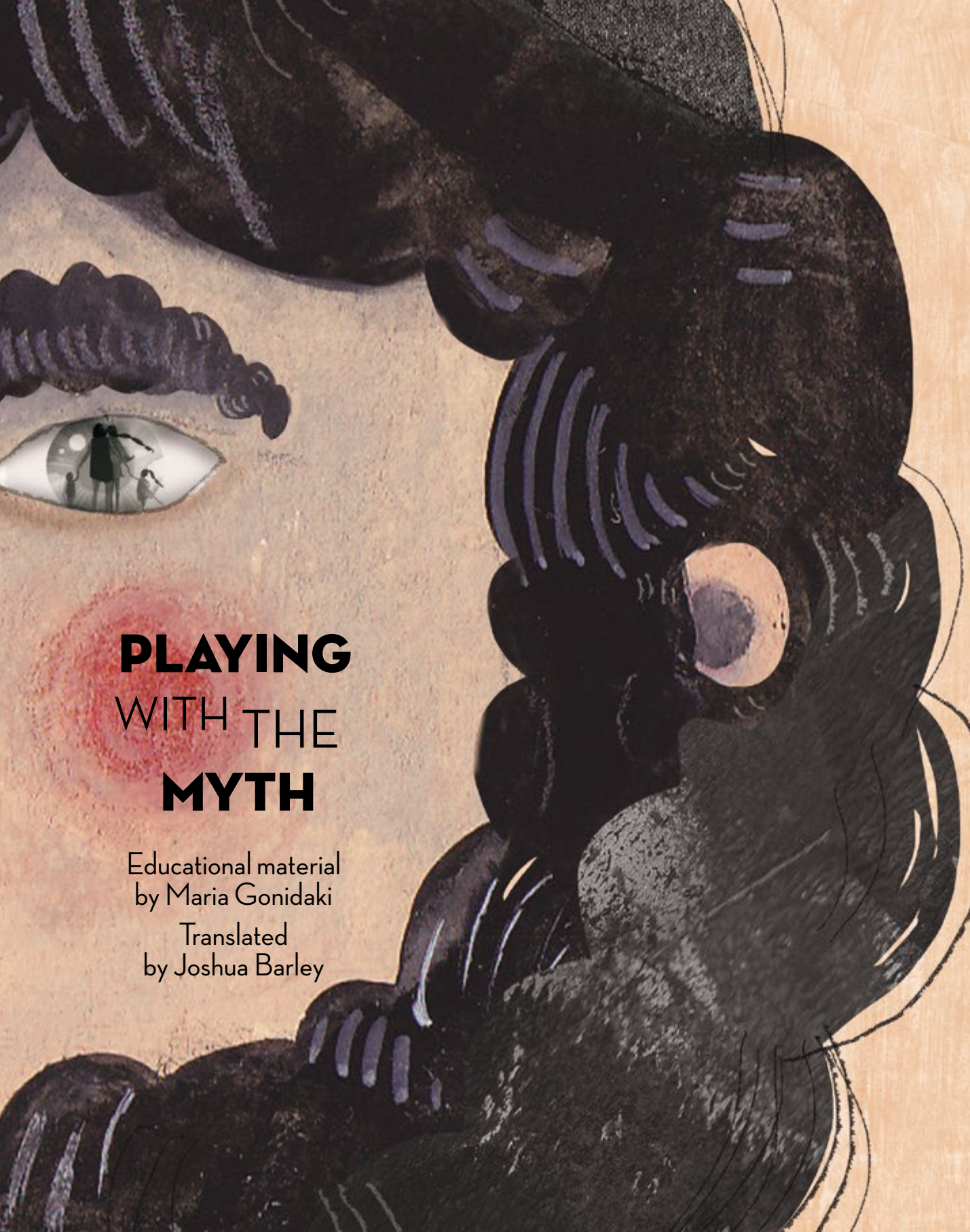
Look up in an encyclopaedia or on the internet about the following:

- The evolution of the horse as an animal species.
- Horse taming.
- Different breeds of horse.
- The contribution of the horse to the development of civilisation.
- Horse riding contests.
- Therapeutic horse riding.

Draw your own horse: wild or tame, with wings or pulling a chariot, white, black or brown.




The Girdle
of
Hippolyta



PLAYING WITH THE MYTH

Educational material
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THE NINTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE GIRDLE OF HIPPOLYTA

In order to fulfil Eurystheus' wishes, Hercules went from one edge of the world to the other. For his ninth labour, he reached the Black Sea. There, in the city of Themiskyra, lived the famous warrior-women, the Amazons. All day long they exercised, went hunting and fighting, while the men did the household chores.

Eurystheus asked Hercules to bring back the girdle – the belt – of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, for his daughter, Admiti. This belt was a gift of the god Ares, Hippolyta's father, and symbolised the power of Hippolyta over the other Amazons. Hercules, however, did not set out alone on this journey. This time he took many brave young men in his boat to help him. When they arrived in the harbour of the Amazons, according to one version of the myth, Hippolyta went to meet them with her entourage. When Hercules told her why they had come, she agreed to give him her girdle. But Hera transformed herself into an Amazon and persuaded the Amazons in the city that the foreigners had come to take power and that they must fight them. In the battle that followed, Hercules and his companions killed many Amazons, among them their queen. They took the girdle and went home.

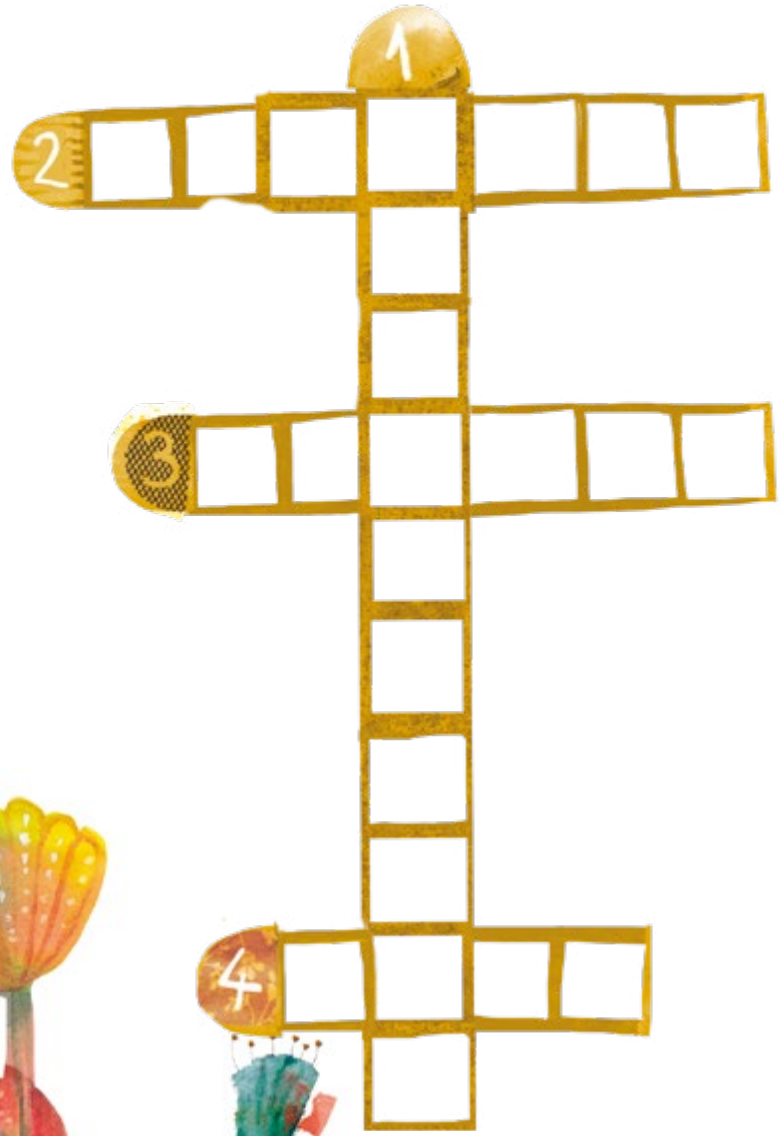
According to another version, the Amazons immediately attacked Hercules' men (again at the instigation of Hera). They were defeated, however, and many of them were killed. Hippolyta was taken prisoner, and Hercules took her belt and handed it over to Eurystheus.

DO YOU REMEMBER...

Why Hera won't stop pestering Hercules and making his life difficult?

CROSSWORD

1. The city of the Amazons.
2. The Amazons did a lot of this.
3. The daughter of Eurystheus.
4. The girdle of Hippolyta was a gift from...



TRUE OR FALSE?

	T	F
1. On this adventure, Hercules travelled alone.	☐	☐
2. The Amazons were descended from Zeus.	☐	☐
3. The girdle of Hippolyta was the symbol of her power.	☐	☐
4. This was the final labour of Hercules.	☐	☐
5. The Amazons danced as they fought.	☐	☐

Answers: **1.** Themiskyra, **2.** Hunting, **3.** Admiti, **4.** Ares

- Look at the painting below from an ancient Greek vase. Try to answer the following questions:
  - Who is the young man sitting down? What is he holding?
  - What is the figure opposite him holding? What is she giving him?
  - What are the other figures in the painting doing?
  - Which version of the myth does the ancient painter want to depict: the seizure of the girdle after a fight or duel, or the peaceful handing-over of the girdle from the Amazons to Hercules?



Naples, Archaeological Museum



- Now look at what the Amazons are wearing.
  - Do their clothes look like Hercules' and his companions'? What does the ancient painter want to show by making this difference?
  - Draw your own Amazon.



THE AMAZONS DANCED AS THEY FOUGHT…

- Look up in an encyclopaedia or on the internet about Pyrrichio, the ancient Greek war dance, in which the dancers held shields and spears and wore helmets.

- Read again how the labour ends (‘Hercules won… he didn’t give a second glance to anything he saw on that journey’) according to the author.

  Now write your own version of the end of the story.

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The Cattle of Geryon









PLAYING WITH THE MYTH

Educational material by Maria Gonidaki
Translated by Joshua Barley





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THE TENTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE CATTLE OF GERYON

In this labour, Hercules undertook to bring the cattle of Geryon to Eurystheus. Geryon was a terrifying monster with three bodies joined in the middle. He lived on the island of Erytheia, at the western end of the world, beyond the Great Ocean. Geryon had a herd of beautiful cattle with red coats. They were guarded by his cowherd, Eurytion, alongside a ten-headed dog with a snake for a tail – Orthrus.

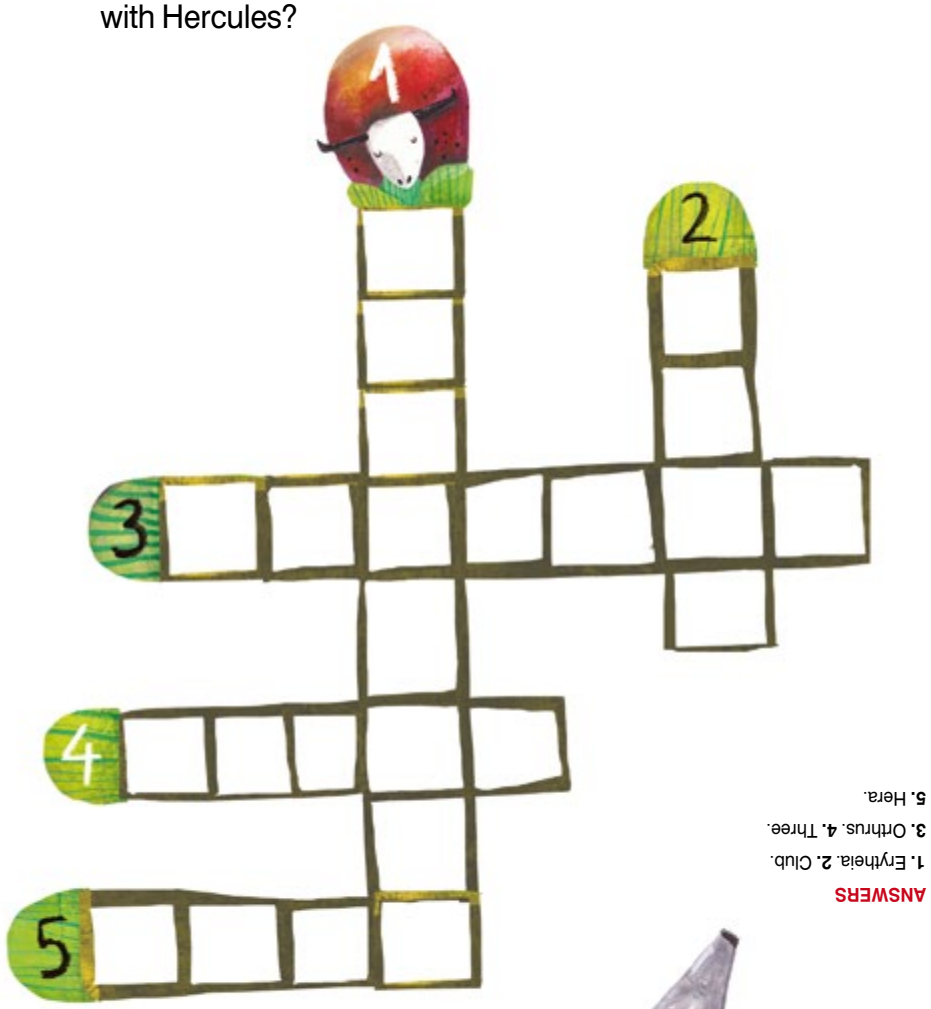
Hercules set out from Mycenae for the far west. On the way, he defeated wild beasts and evil people. In order to cross the Ocean and reach Geryon's island, he used the vessel of the sun: the chariot that Helios, the sun god, tied his horses to when he went to fetch the light of day. When Hercules arrived in Erytheia, he knocked out Orthrus with his club and then killed Eurytion. He rounded up the cattle, and while he was going to the sea he came face to face with Geryon. Hercules killed him, crossed the Ocean, handed the vessel back to Helios and began his return journey.

On this journey he defeated beasts and bandits and improved the lives of lots of people. He went through many different lands and they all wanted to get their hands on his herd. He drove them off, however, and handed the cattle over to Eurystheus, who sacrificed them to Hera.

According to another version of the myth, the cattle of Geryon lived in Iberia, at the edge of the world, where Chrysaoras was king. He had a lot of gold, as his name suggests ('chrysos' means gold in Greek). Hercules organised a military campaign with forces from all over Greece, and they came back victorious.

CROSSWORD

1. What was Geryon's island called?
2. Hercules killed Eurytion with his...
3. What was the name of the ten-headed dog that guarded the cattle?
4. How many heads did Geryon have?
5. Who was the goddess who tried to help Geryon in his fight with Hercules?





ANSWERS

1. Erytheia. **2.** Club.
3. Orthrus. **4.** Three.
5. Hera.

THE CATTLE OF GERYON

In Greek myth, apart from the red-coated cattle of Geryon, there were also red cattle on the island of the sun-god Helios. In the Odyssey, we read that Odysseus' companions, when they were returning to Ithaca, stopped off at this island and ate the cattle, even though Odysseus had warned them that the gods would be enraged at this lack of respect. His companions, however, didn't listen to him and they paid with their lives, for the gods sent a storm and they all drowned, apart from Odysseus.

Cows are sacred in India. They roam freely on the roads and people revere them and look after them.

Look up in an encyclopaedia or on the internet how humans benefit from raising cattle. Write down what you find.

- How did they raise them in the past and how do they do it today?
- What are the positive and negative points of the contemporary method of raising these animals?
- How are cows raised in your country?



THE VESSEL OF THE SUN

- Hercules used the vessel of the sun to reach Erytheia. Look how this scene is painted on an ancient vase and how the illustrator of the book represents it.
- What differences do you see? How is the sea painted?



Rome, Vatican Museum



- Now draw the vessel as you imagine it yourself.

On the vases below, the fight between Hercules and Geryon is painted. Look at them closely. Write down the names of the heroes.

.....

.....



Munich, Archaeological Museum

.....

.....

READ MORE

Black-figure style: a technique of decorating ancient vases in which the figures are in black and the background is the colour of clay.

How are the characters of Hercules and Geryon represented?

- On both of the vases, a goddess is standing next to Hercules and protecting him. Which goddess is it and which features helped you to recognise her?

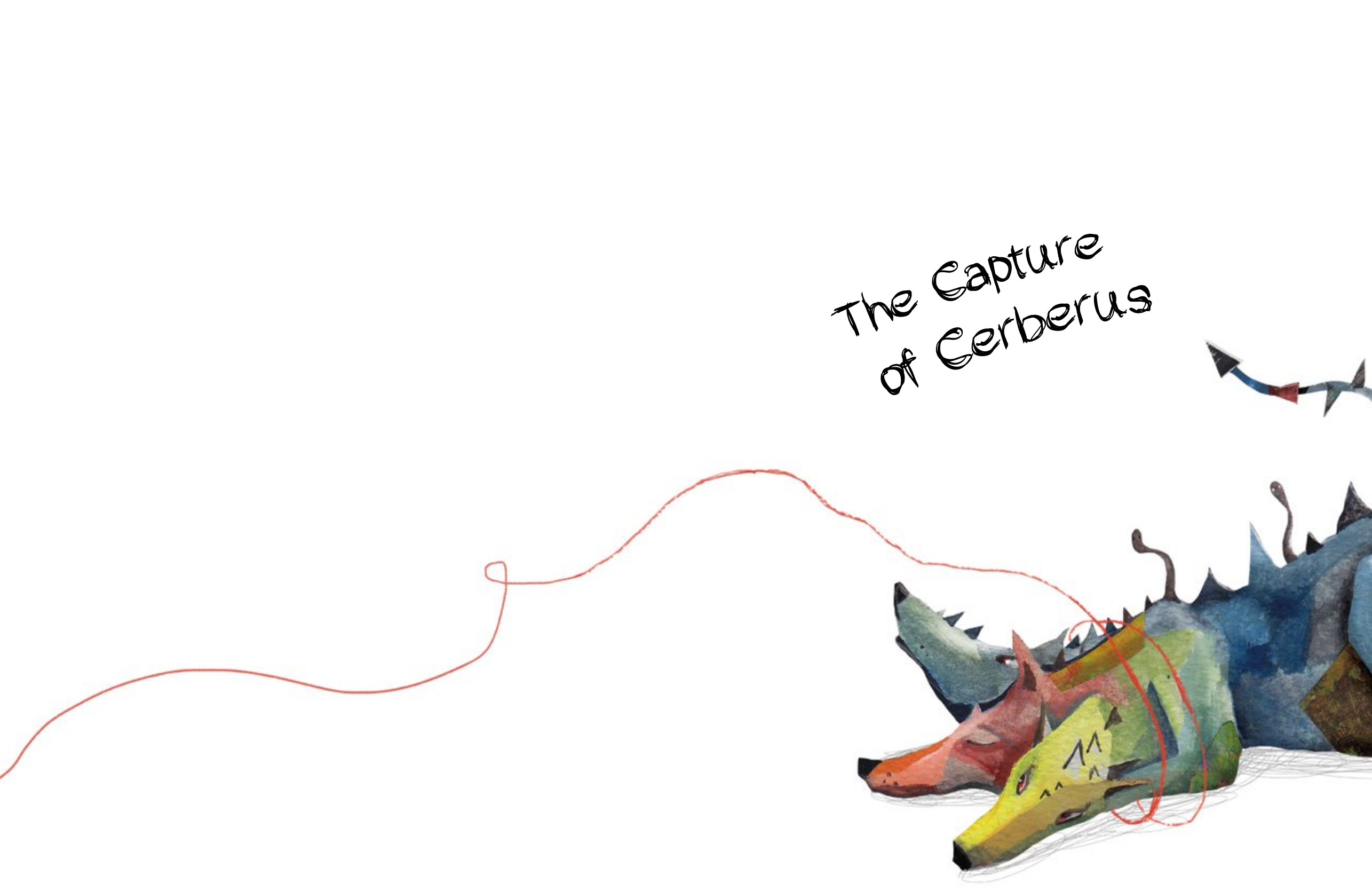


Munich, Archaeological Museum

READ MORE

Red-figure style: a technique of decorating ancient vases in which the figures are the colour of clay, and the background is black.

The Capture of Cerberus



PLAYING WITH THE MYTH



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Translated
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THE ELEVENTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE CAPTURE OF CERBERUS

There was nowhere that Eurystheus did not send Hercules! He even asked him to go to the Kingdom of the Dead to bring back Cerberus. Cerberus was a dog-monster with fifty heads and a snake for a tail: he had three heads at the front and the rest were on his back. He was the guardian of the Underworld and obeyed the commands of the god Hades.

Before going down to the depths of the earth, Hercules first went to the sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis, to ask for the support of the goddess. He needed it because Demeter's daughter, Persephone, was Hades' wife and she lived with him in the Underworld for six months of the year, while the other six months she was with her mother.

After Hercules had taken part in the rituals to honour the goddess, he went down and asked Hades and Persephone if he could take Cerberus to show him to Eurystheus. Hades agreed on the condition that the hero would take the monster only with his hands, without using his weapons. Hercules kept his promise, defeated the beast with the strength of his hands and took him to Eurystheus. From his fear, the king hid himself in a jar. Then, when he had completed his labour, Hercules returned Cerberus to Hades (to the Land of the Dead).

THINK ABOUT THIS...

Hercules' return from the Land of the Dead shows that the hero defeated death: it prepares us for the immortality and deification of Hercules.

WORD GAME

When you fill in the horizontal blanks, the name of the beast that Hercules defeated in this labour will be written vertically.

1. Eurystheus was king of...
2. Hades' wife.
3. One of Cerberus' sisters.
4. This was Hercules' eleventh...
5. Cerberus' mother.
6. Hercules sought help from this goddess.
7. Cerberus' brother.
8. The river of the Underworld.





Answers: **1.** Mycenae, **2.** Persephone, **3.** Chimera, **4.** Labour, **5.** Echidna, **6.** Demeter, **7.** Orthrus, **8.** Styx

According to one version of the myth, Hercules went down to the Underworld through an entrance at Cape Tenaro, in Laconia, and he came up at the exit near Tiryns. Look closely at the map and mark the two places.



LABYRINTH

Help Hercules go down to Hades, get Cerberus and then find the exit to Tiryns.



In the painting below, from an ancient red-figure vase, we see Hercules with Cerberus.

- Which features indicate that the figure on the left is Hercules?
- Look at the expression on the hero's face. In what manner is he attempting to defeat the beast?



Paris, Louvre Museum

- Look how the beast in the vase-painting is depicted compared to the picture by the modern illustrator. Draw your own version.



The Apples of the Hesperides





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THE TWELFTH LABOUR OF HERCULES: THE APPLES OF THE HESPERIDES

At the marriage of Zeus and Hera, all the gods brought the couple excellent gifts. Earth (the grandmother of the gods) brought golden apples to the bride, and whoever ate one of them would remain young forever. Hera was so delighted that she ordered their seeds to be sown in the garden of the gods. This garden was at the end of the world, near where Atlas, the Titan, held up the sky. Three girls, the Hesperides, guarded the trees and its apples, but the main guardian was a huge serpent, Ladon, who had a hundred heads and never slept.

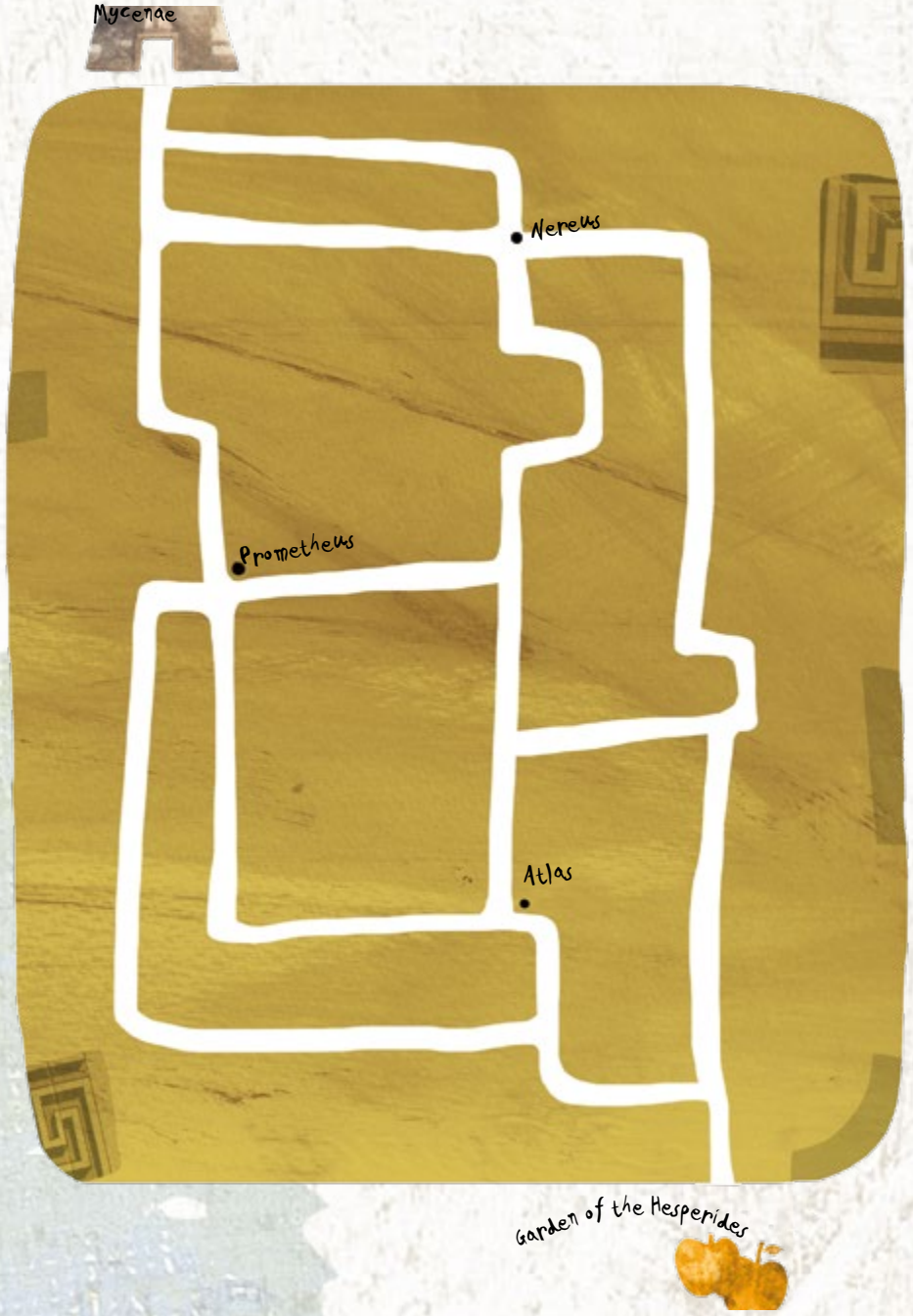
When the order came from Eurystheus, Hercules set out to get the apples of the Hesperides. After much wandering, and following the advice of a wise old man – Nereus – and the demi-god Prometheus, he reached Atlas and asked him to bring him the golden apples. Atlas accepted because that was the only way he would have a break from holding up the heavy sky. Hercules took his position and Atlas found the Hesperides. They put the serpent to sleep with magic potions and took the apples. Atlas returned to Hercules but he did not want to take the sky back onto his shoulders. Hercules pretended that he would hold it forever, if Atlas could just hold it for a moment while the hero put a cushion on his shoulders. Atlas believed him and Hercules took the apples and handed them over to Eurystheus, successfully completing the labour. According to another version of the myth, Atlas showed Hercules the way to the garden, and he killed the serpent and took the apples.

THINK ABOUT THIS...

In this labour, Hercules takes the food that brings eternal youth and immortality. This is his final labour, therefore the hero himself achieves immortality.

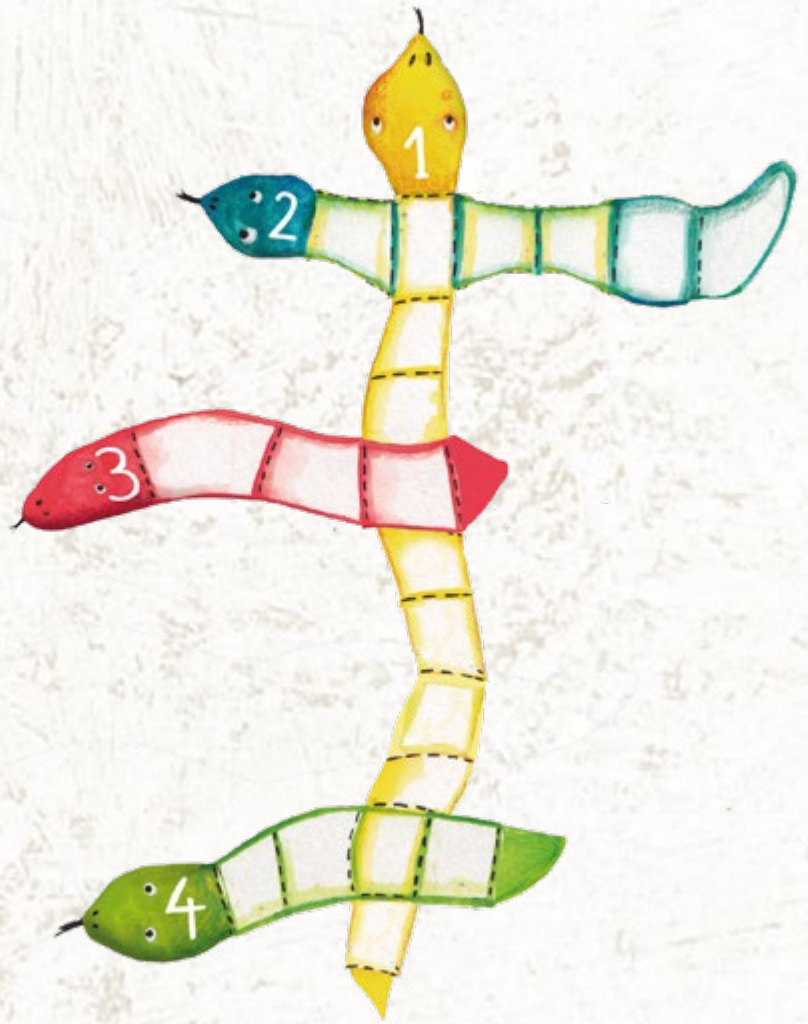
LABYRINTH

Help Hercules reach the Garden of the Hesperides. Be careful, however, because he must first meet **Nereus**, **Prometheus** and then **Atlas**: if he does not receive their wise counsel, he will not succeed!



CROSSWORD

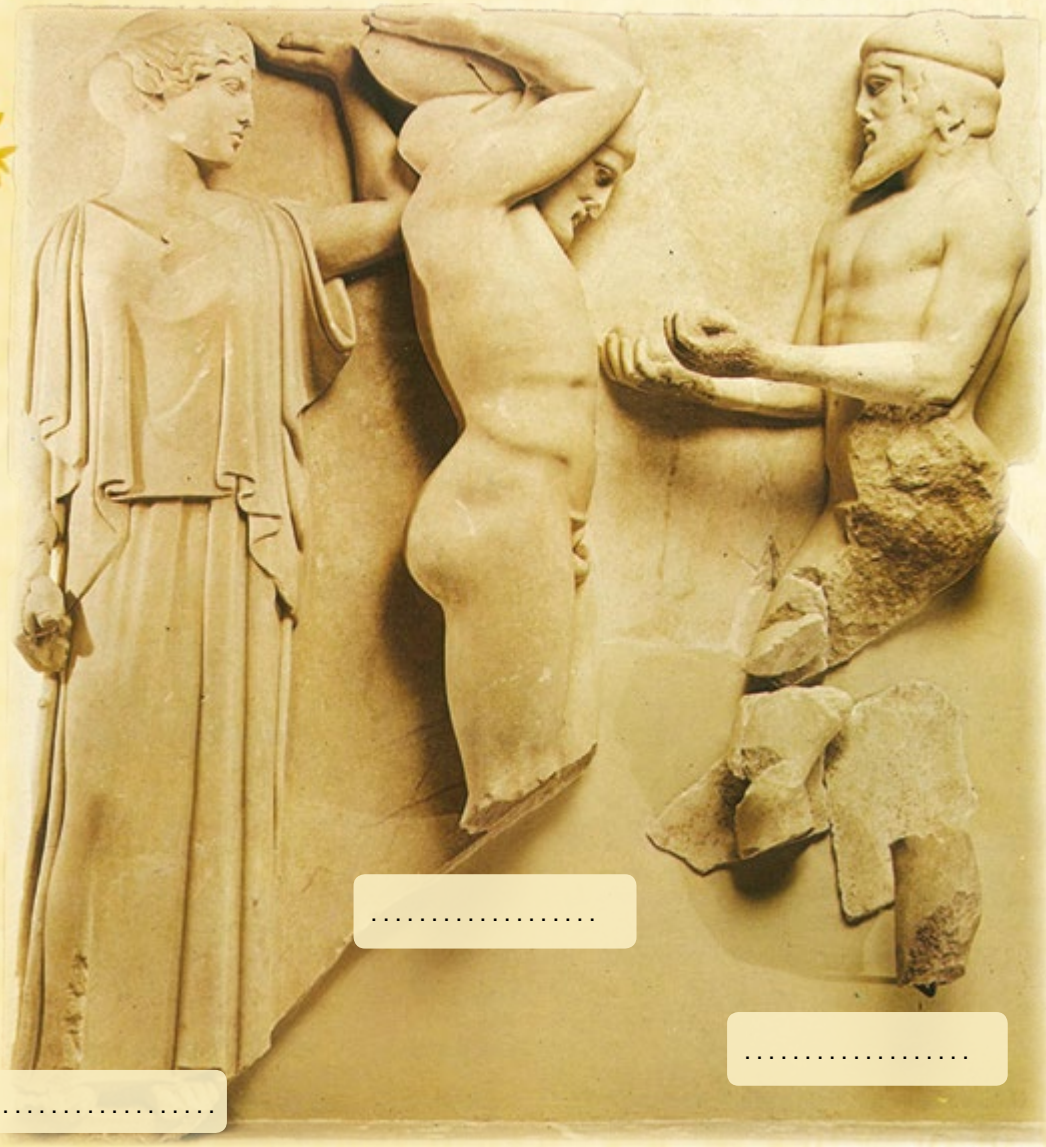
1. Who did Hercules give the apples to?
2. The wise prophet that counseled Hercules.
3. Atlas carried the... on his shoulders.
4. Gaia gave Hera the golden apples when she married...



ANSWERS: 1. Eurystheus. 2. Nereus. 3. Sky. 4. Zeus

Look at the relief below from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia.

- In your opinion, which figures are depicted? Write their names in the blanks.



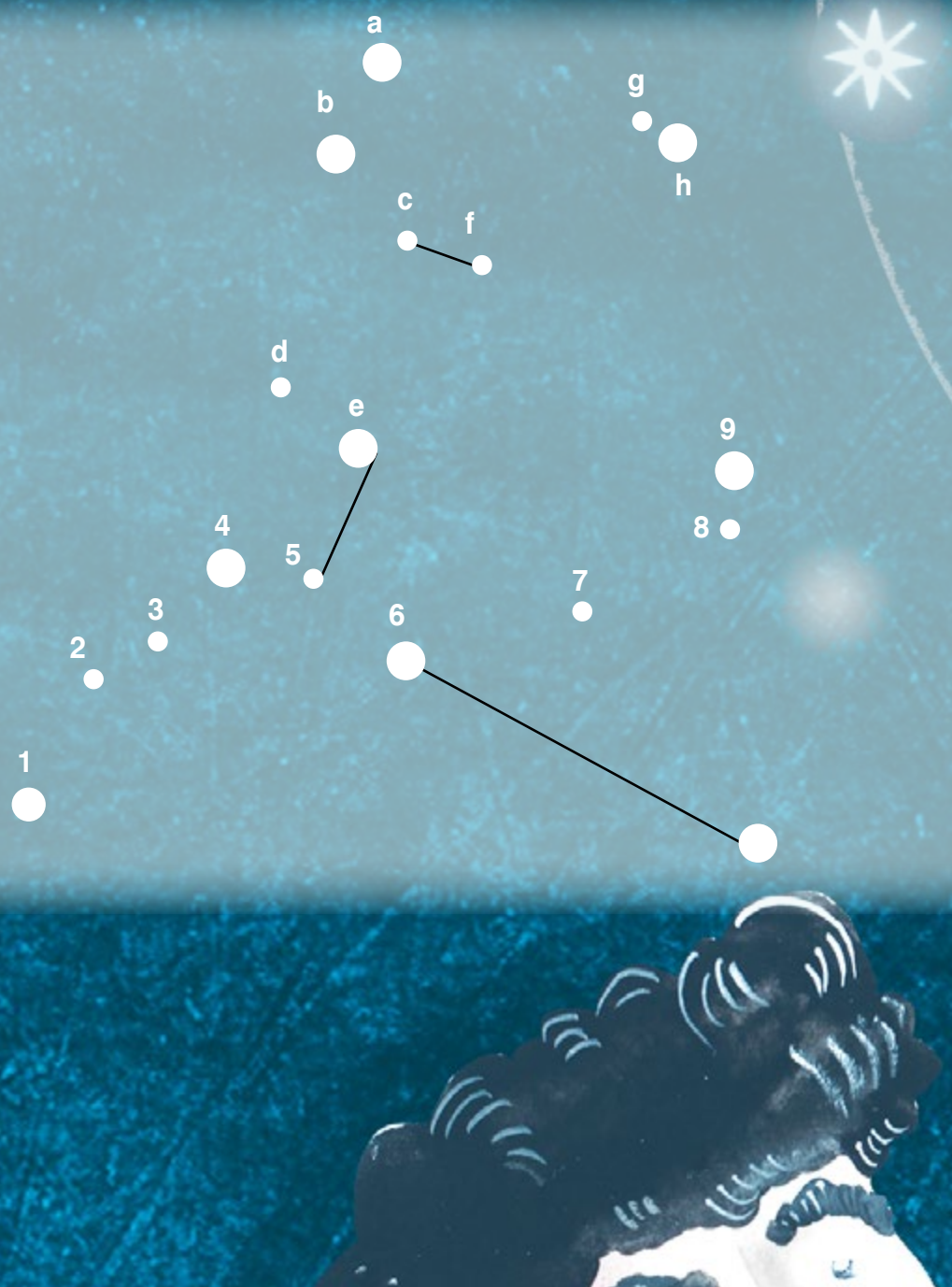
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Olympia, Archaeological Museum

Join the numbers 1 to 9 and the letters ‘a’ to ‘h’, and you will see the constellation of the Great Bear, which Hercules saw in the sky when he took it on his shoulders.



In the painting of the myth below, from an ancient Greek vase, Hercules is in the Garden of the Hesperides. Look at the picture and complete the dialogue between Hercules and the girl. What do you think he said to her to persuade her to give him the apples?

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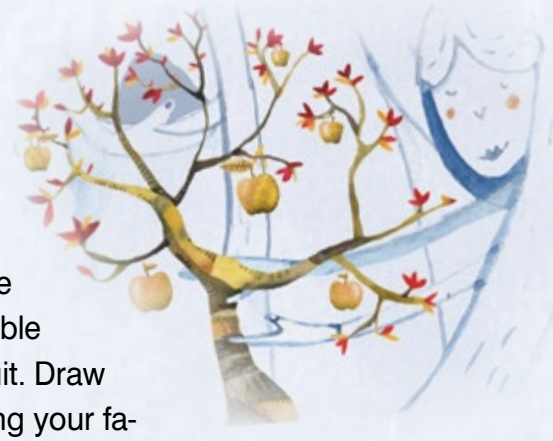
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London, British Museum

- How is Hercules presented to us in this picture? Does it show us the powerful and invincible hero at the time of his fight, or the calm and good-natured man who, apart from his bodily strength also has other gifts?



In order to find the tree (or the trees) with the golden apples, Hercules went to the end of the world. Every tree, however, is valuable because it gives us its 'golden' fruit. Draw your own tree and colour it in using your favourite colours. Then look at how the illustrator of the book drew the trees.

DON'T FORGET

Every tree and plant needs care and attention. When it receives it, it can pay you back!

