

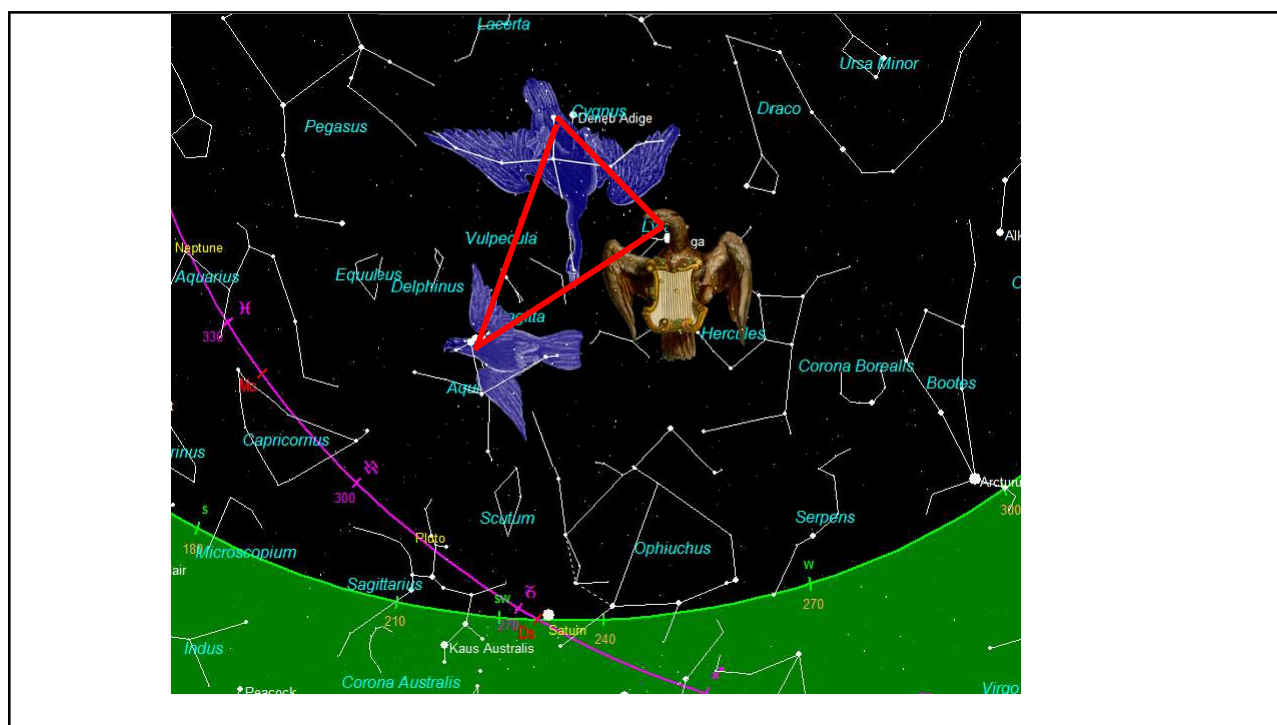
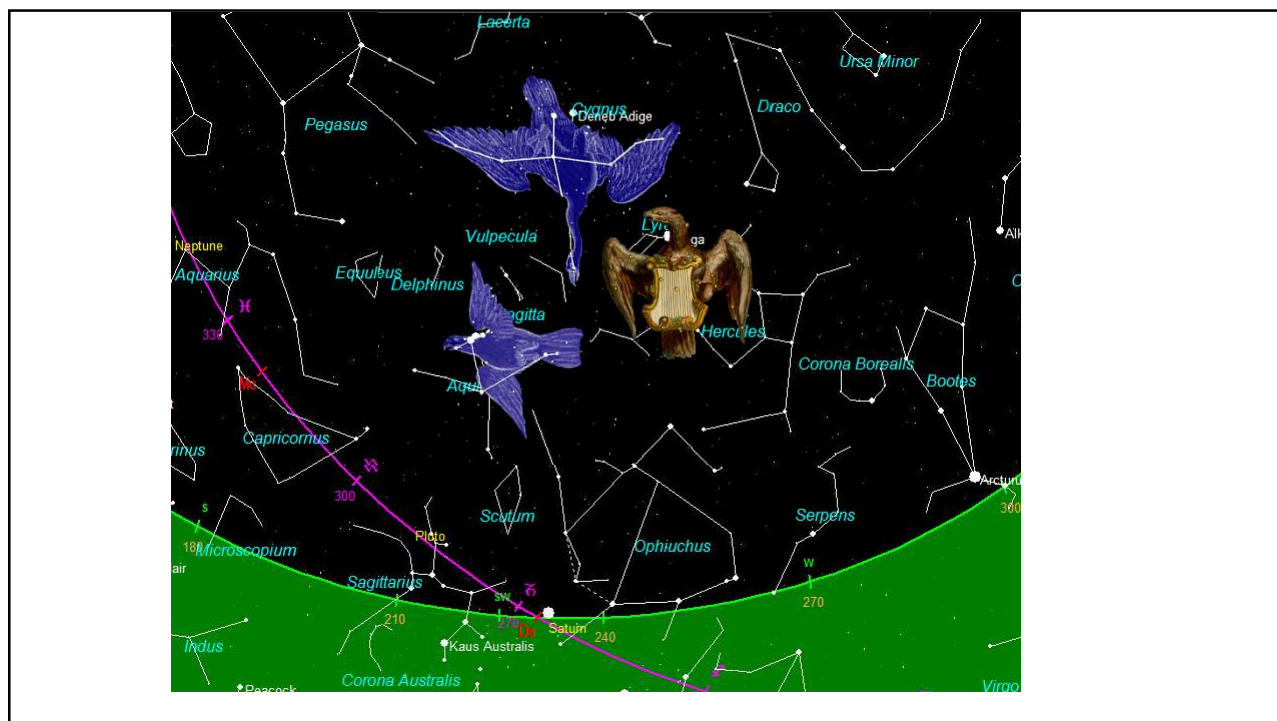


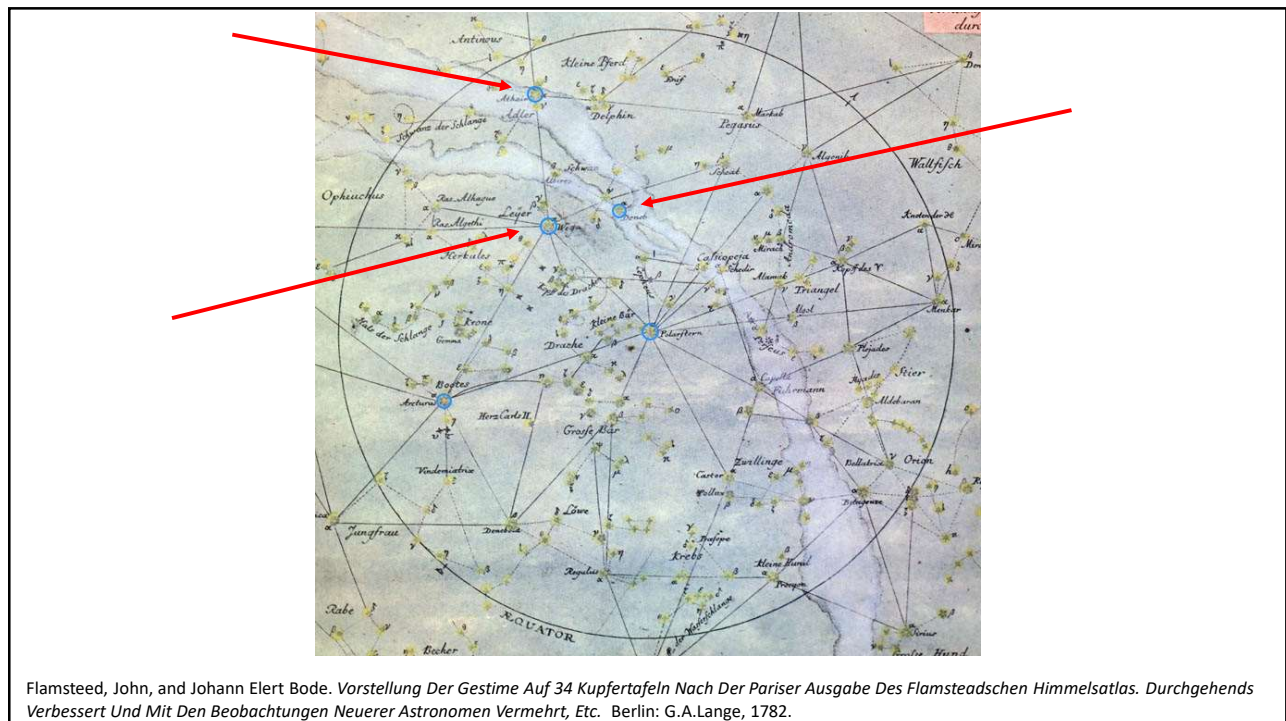
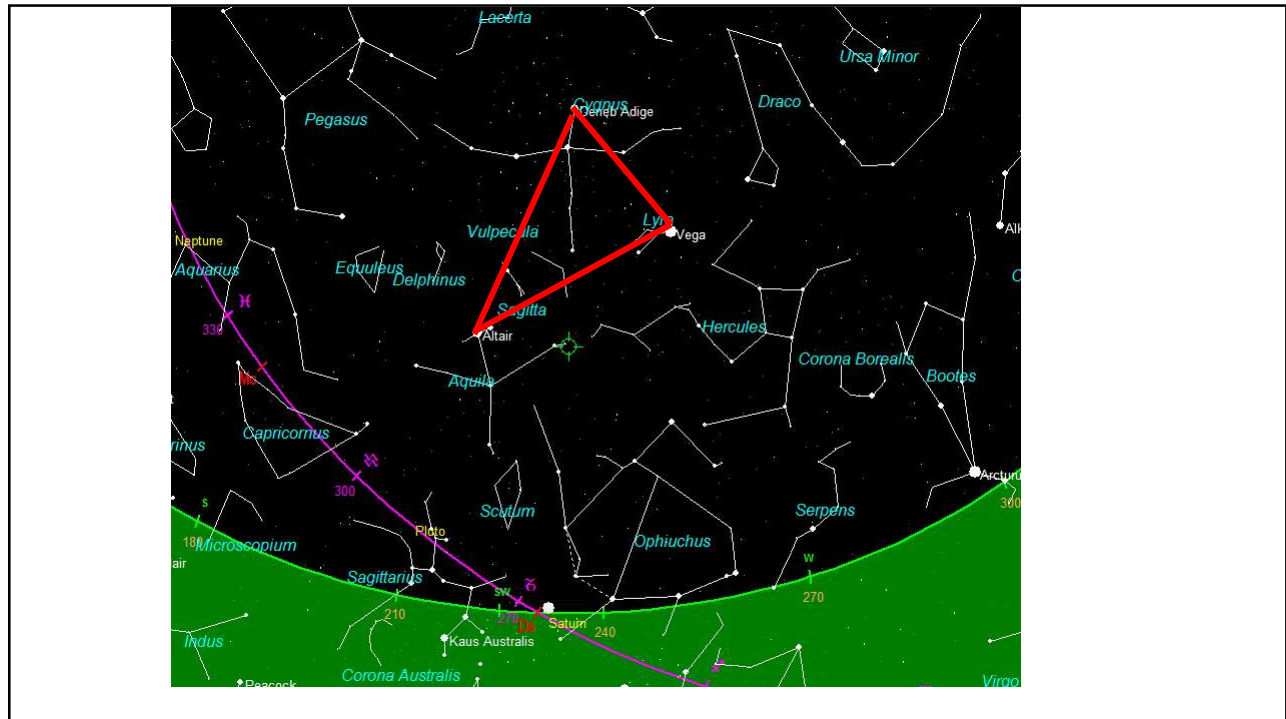
The Summer Triangle and The Stymphalian Birds

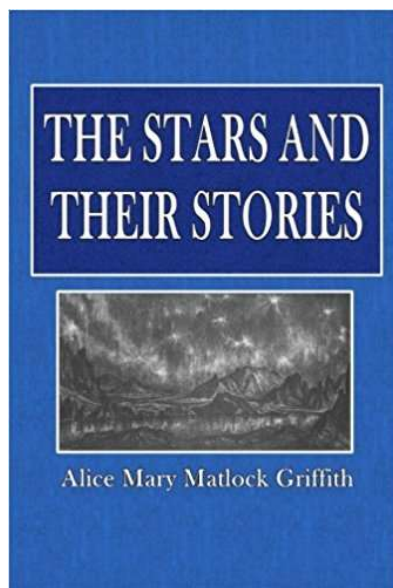
Dr Darrelyn Gunzburg
Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture
University of Wales Trinity Saint David



The Summer Triangle, enclosing a bright swath of the Milky Way, clears the trees around midnight on a recent evening in Duluth, Minnesota. Vega (top), Deneb Adige (left), and Altair (lower right). Photo: Bob King/Sky and Telescope.

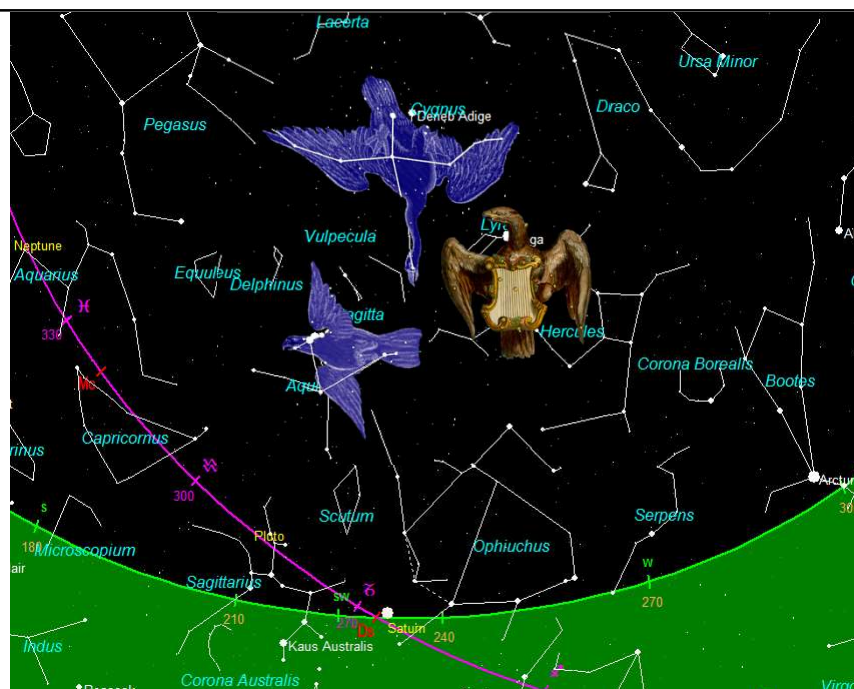


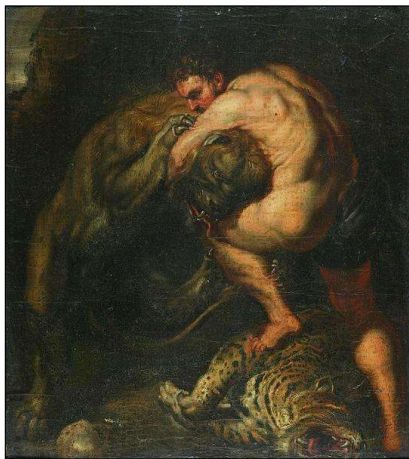
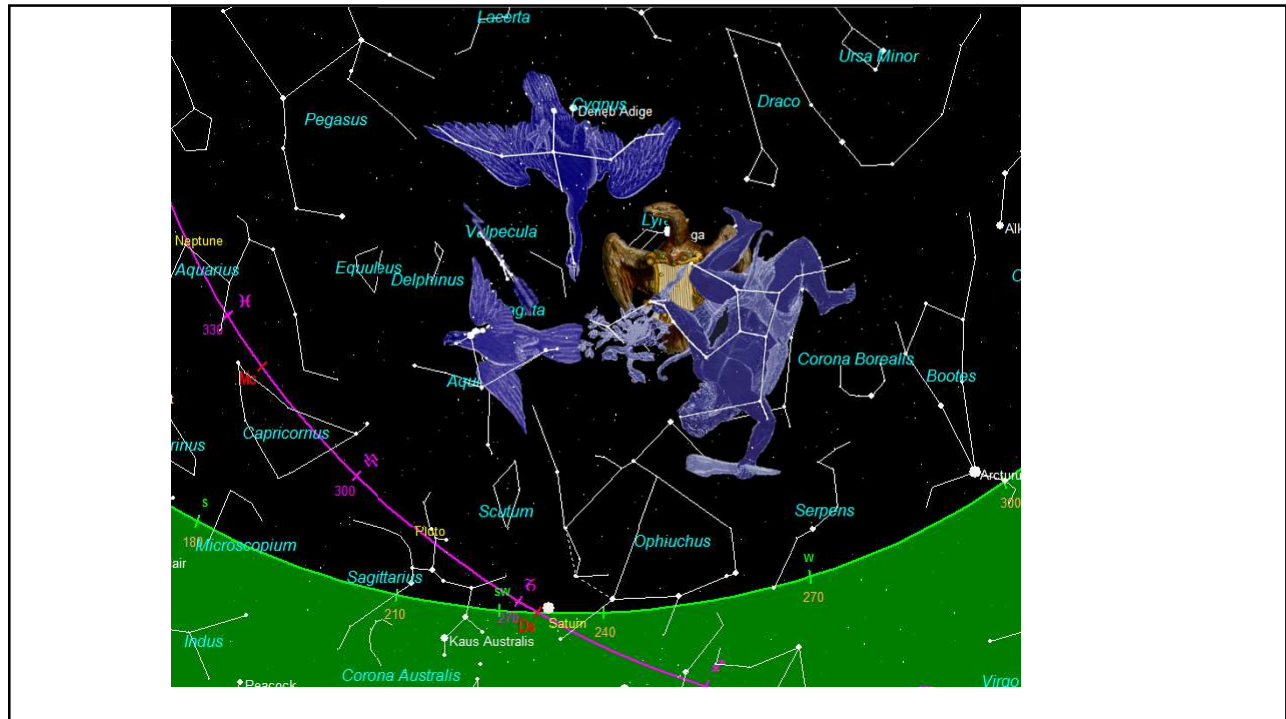




THE WINGED HORSE			
THE WINGED HORSE			23
THE CHIMAERA	Nathaniel Hawthorne		25
PEGASUS IN POUND	Henry W. Longfellow		38
THE SUMMER TRIANGLE GROUP			
THE SUMMER TRIANGLE GROUP			
—THE LYRE, THE EAGLE, THE			
SWAN, THE ARROW, THE			
DOLPHIN			45
THE FINDING OF THE LYRE	James Russell Lowell		49
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE			
	(Abridged) Alfred Noyes		50
THE ROYAL FAMILY			
THE ROYAL FAMILY			61
THE STAR CLUB	Julia E. Rogers		75
ANDROMEDA (abridged)	Charles Kingsley		76
vii			

Alice Mary Matlock Griffiths, *The Stars and Their Stories: A Book for Young People* (New York: H. Holt, 1913).

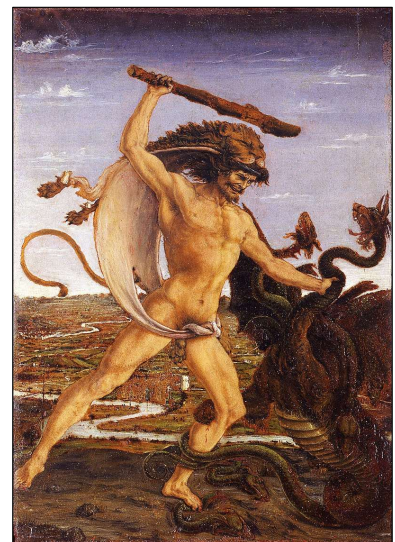




Late 18th or early 19th copy of a reduced original by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), *Hercules Fighting the Nemean Lion*, c.1615, oil on canvas laid on panel, V&A Museum, London. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

THE TWELVE LABOURS OF HERCULES

- Labour 1: The Nemean Lion
- Labour 2: The Lernean Hydra
- Labour 3: The Hind of Ceryneia
- Labour 4: The Erymanthean Boar
- Labour 5: The Augean Stables
- Labour 6: The Stymphalian Birds
- Labour 7: The Cretan Bull
- Labour 8: The Horses of Diomedes
- Labour 9: The Belt of Hippolyte
- Labour 10: Geryon's Cattle
- Labour 11: The Apples of the Hesperides
- Labour 12: Cerberus



Antonio del Pollaiuolo (1429-1498), *Hercules and the Hydra*, c.1475, tempera on panel, 17 cm x 12 cm, Uffizi Gallery. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

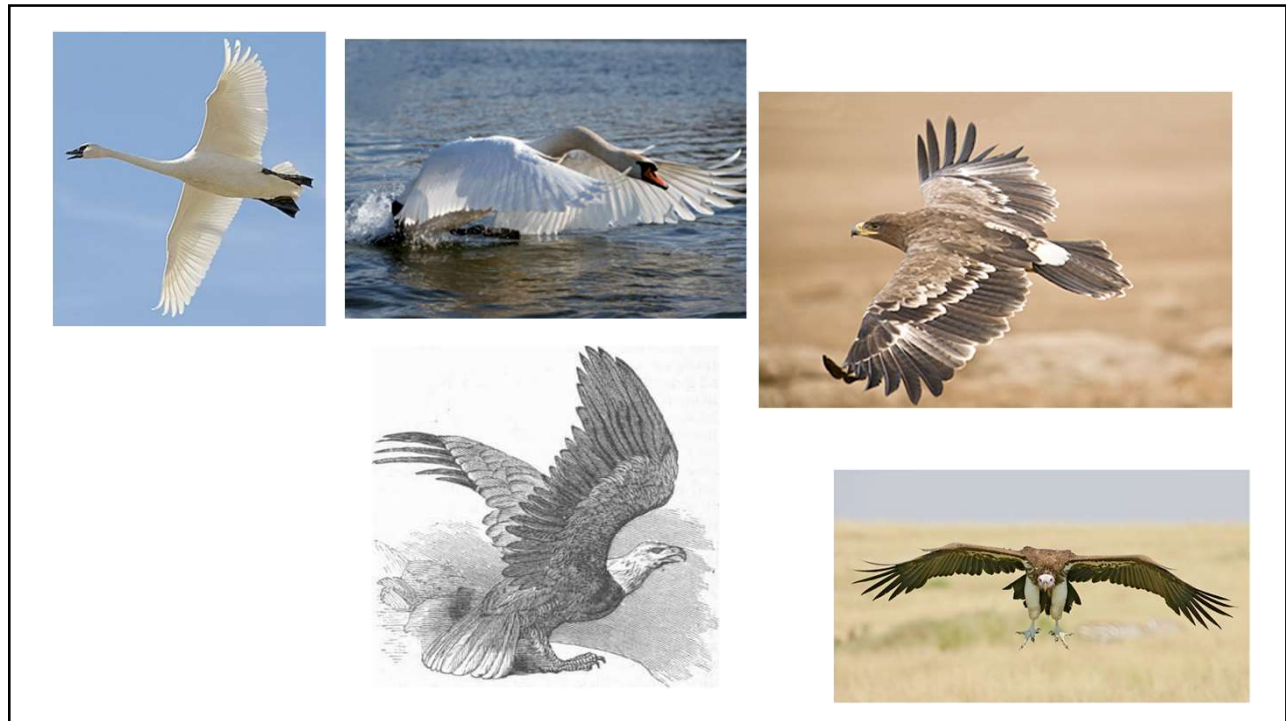


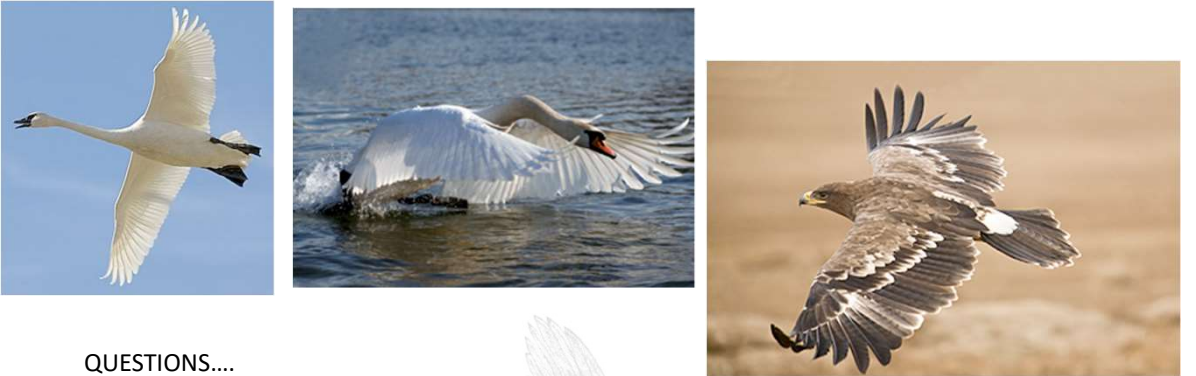
The story of the Stymphalian Birds was captured in written sources via the Twelve Labours of Hercules from Apollonius Rhodius (fl.third century BCE) to Strabo (c.64 BCE—c.24 CE), Hyginus (c.64 BCE—17 CE), and Pausanias (c.120—180 CE), who all noted these Ornithes Stymphalides which haunted Lake Stymphalos on the island of Ares in Arcadia.

HERAKLES SHOTS THE STYMPHALIAN BIRDS WITH A SLING
 British Museum, London, United Kingdom.
 Catalogue No.: London B163.
 Attic Black Figure Amphora - Attributed to Group E
 Date: c.560 - 530 BCE Period: High Archaic



Map of Ancient Greece, showing Lake Stymphalos in a valley in northwestern Arcadia, Greece. Map: National Geographic.

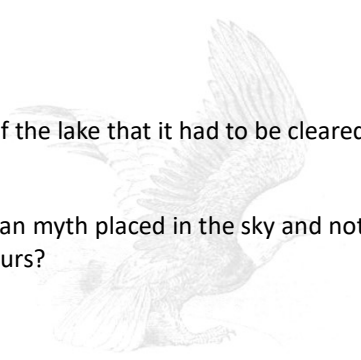




QUESTIONS....

What was the value of the lake that it had to be cleared of these birds?

Why was this Herculean myth placed in the sky and not the other eleven labours?





Left: Heracles attacking the Stymphalian birds with a sling, Attic black figure amphora, c.540 BCE (Museum No. 1843,1103.40). Image: British Museum. Right: Diosphos Painter, Heracles and the Stymphalian birds, Attic black-figure amphora, H: 20.40 cm, D: 11.90 cm, 500-490 BCE, Louvre Museum. Image: Wikimedia Commons.



Model of the Temple of Artemis at Miniaturk Park, Istanbul, which recreates the probable appearance of the first temple. Photo: Zee Prime/Wikimedia Commons.



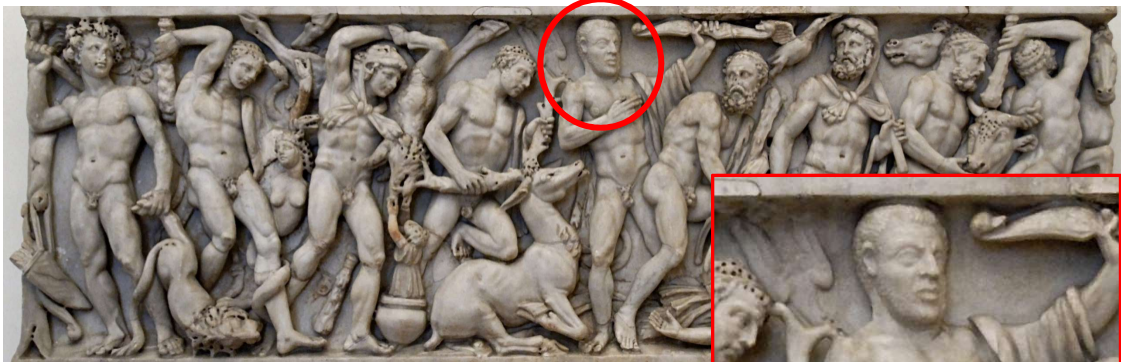
Hercules presents Athena with a Stymphalian Bird, West Metope 3, the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, c.470 BCE—c.457 BCE, Archaeological Museum of Olympia. Photo: Joanbanjo/Wikimedia Commons.



Silver *obolus* (a Greek silver coin worth a sixth of a drachma)
c.370-350 BCE, from Stymphalos depicting Heracles wearing a lion
skin, and a Stymphalian bird and inscription ΣΤΥΜΦΑΛΙΑ on reverse.
Image: CNG coins.



Mythological frieze
sarcophagus showing
the Labours of
Hercules, c.240-250 CE.
Museo Nazionale
Romano, Palazzo
Altemps, Rome (Inv.
8642). Photo: Marie-
Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia
Commons.



Mythological frieze
sarcophagus showing
the Labours of
Hercules, c.240-250 CE.
Museo Nazionale
Romano, Palazzo
Altemps, Rome (Inv.
8642). Photo: Marie-
Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia
Commons.



Mythological frieze
sarcophagus showing
the Labours of
Hercules, c.240-250 CE.
Museo Nazionale
Romano, Palazzo
Altemps, Rome (Inv.
8642). Photo: Marie-
Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia
Commons.

'Equipping these mythological characters with portrait features of the deceased was a way to make the metaphorical connection between them emphatic: it demanded that the viewer read the mortal through the mythic, and the mythic through the mortal.'

Mont Allen, *Why Does Hercules Look Like Uncle Rufus?*, to Roman Sarcophagus News (blog), 2014, <http://www.montallen.com/roman-sarcophagus-news-blog/previous/2>.



Within each constellation, the three bright stars of **Deneb Adige** in Cygnus, **Altair** in Aquila, and **Vega** in Lyra—the stars that constitute what is known today as the Summer Triangle—also carry a great deal of mythology:

for the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom, **Deneb Adige** was considered the birth canal of Nut, the great starry sky goddess, and from this place the Sun, Ra, was born anew every winter solstice;

for the Greeks, **Vega** was the lyre of Orpheus, a Greek hero who could visit the Underworld and return;

for the Romans **Altair** was linked with the eagle and they would release eagles over the pyres of dead emperors, believing the eagle would carry the newly-dead soul back to the land of the immortals.

The vulture was also particularly important in Egypt, where it was worshipped as Mut, Isis, or Nekhbet and was considered the origin of all things.

All three stars thus embody **myths of death and rebirth**, echoing the Greek understanding of Hercules as the quintessence of pathos and the path to immortality, and the Roman understanding of Hercules who, as a dead man, gains a place in the heavens.



Pausanias' *Description of Greece* (1485), Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.
Image: Web Gallery of Art.

'In Stymphalos there is also an old sanctuary of Stymphalian Artemis, the image being of wood, for the most part gilded. Near the roof of the temple have been carved, among other things, the Stymphalian birds. Now it was difficult to discern clearly whether the carving was in wood or in gypsum, but such evidence as I had led me to conclude that it was not of gypsum but of wood. **There are here also maidens of white marble, with the legs of birds, and they stand behind the temple.'**

Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume Iv: Books 8.22-10 (Arcadia, Boeotia, Phocis and Ozolian Locri)*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library 297. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935, 8.22.4



Archaic perfume vase in the shape of Siren, c. 540 BCE, Walters Art Museum. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Women and birds have previously been twinned in mythology in connection with violence and destruction.

Sirens were women with the legs of birds who lived on small islands surrounded by cliffs and rocks, the Sirenum scopuli, and who were said to lure sailors to their death by their sweet singing (Homer, *Odyssey*, 12.39 and 158-9; Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 5.864).

Harpies were birds with the heads of maidens, personifying the wind and its destructive nature during storms (Homer, *Odyssey*, Book 20. 66 and 77).

Artemis was, however, the patron of birds, of lakes and hunting bows, and her principal attributes were the golden bow, quiver, and arrows. The bird-footed maidens accompanying the goddess at her Temple express this ornithological association between Artemis and her worship at Stymphalos. Rather than being destroyers of men, their placement suggests they are acting as temple guardians, preserving her sanctity.

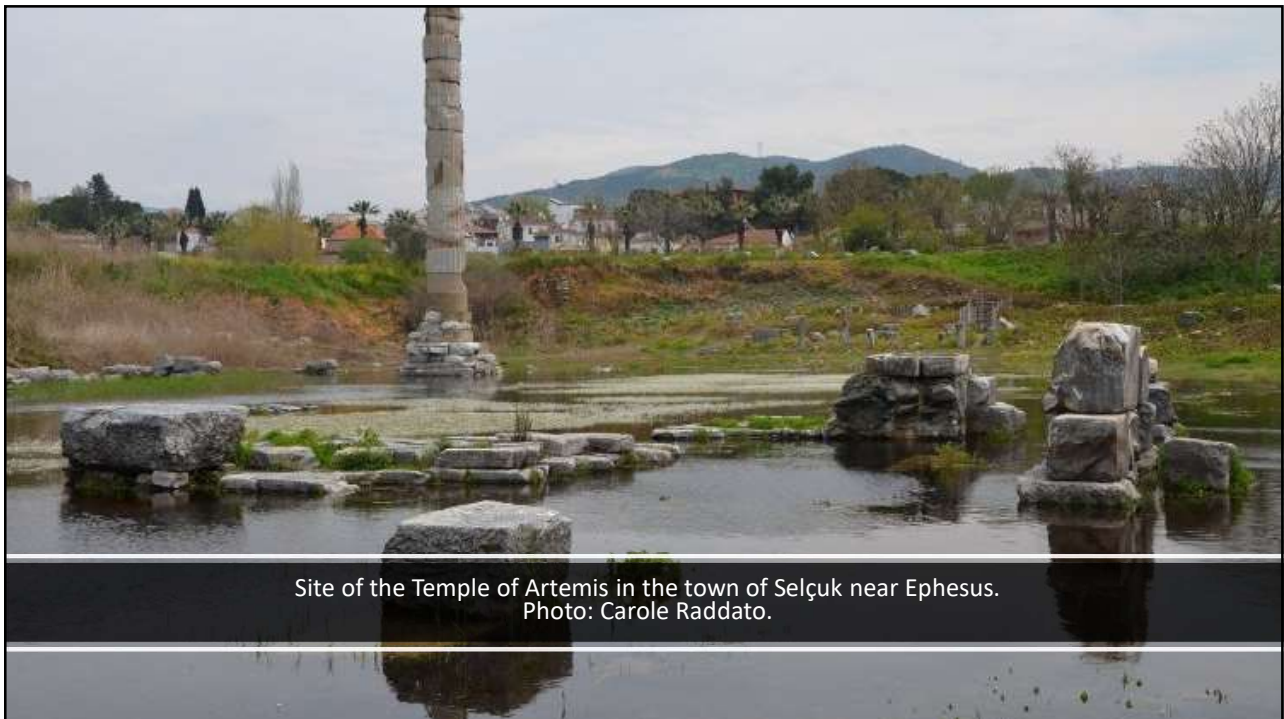
Stymphalos



Map of Ancient Greece, showing Lake Stymphalos in a valley in northwestern Arcadia, Greece and Ephesus in Turkey. Map: National Geographic.



Model of Temple of Artemis, Miniaturk Park, Istanbul, Turkey. One of the Seven Wonders of the World. c.550 BCE Ephesus. Image: Creative Commons.



Site of the Temple of Artemis in the town of Selçuk near Ephesus.
Photo: Carole Raddato.



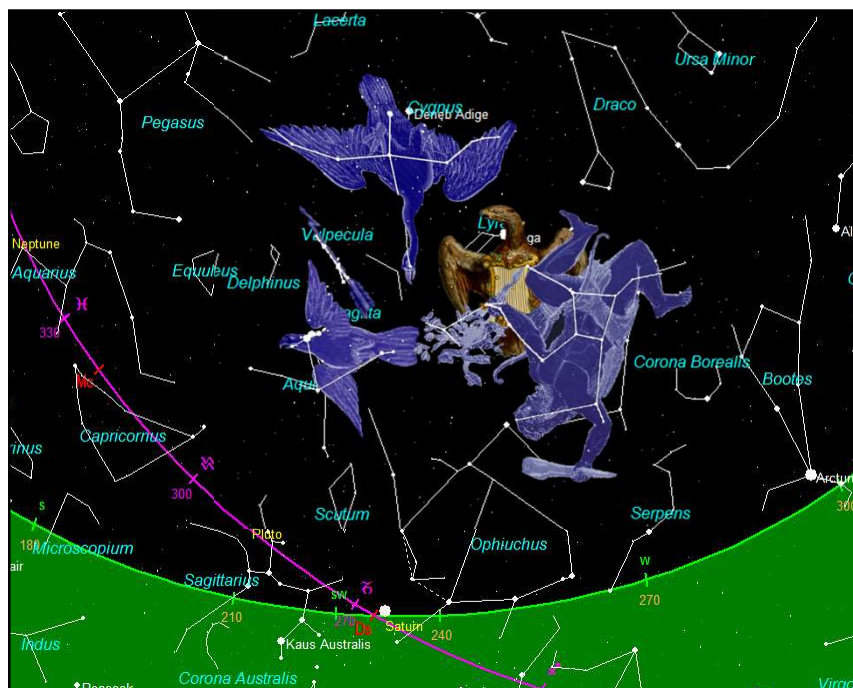
The 'Beautiful Artemis' of Ephesus. 1st century CE Roman copy of the cult statue of the Temple of Ephesus. Museum of Ephesus (Turkey). Image: Creative Commons.



Macrobius (390-430 CE) in *Artemis*: 778, described the Ephesian Artemis as being a 'hurler of swift shafts'. [1] Although writing some eight hundred years later than Xenophon of Athens, Macrobius' description may have been carried across the Aegean to the Stymphalian Artemis and become embedded into the Herculean myth of the ferocious Stymphalian Birds.

1. David A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Volume V: The New School of Poetry and Anonymous Songs and Hymns*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, Loeb Classical Library 144 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp.82-85.

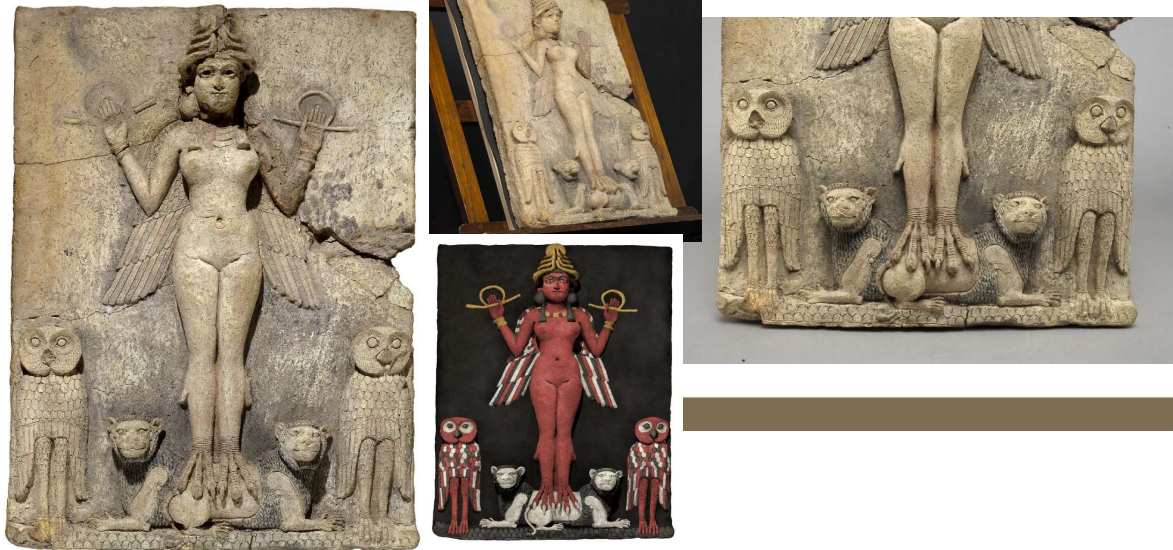
The 'Beautiful Artemis' of Ephesus. 1st century CE Roman copy of the cult statue of the Temple of Ephesus. Museum of Ephesus (Turkey). Image: Creative Commons.



Aratus (315-240 BCE) described the constellation as On His Knees (The Kneeler) and The Phantom or Silhouette, a constellation so old and ancient that '... no-one can divine / The sure form or vocation of this sign...'

Aratus, *Phaenomena*, trans. Aaron Poochigian, Johns Hopkins New Translations from Antiquity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p.3.





Burney Relief, The Queen of the Night, 19th century BCE- 18th century BCE, Mesopotamia, fired clay, pigment, 49.5 cm x 37 cm x 4.8 cm. Image: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Flamsteed, John, and Johann Elert Bode. *Vorstellung Der Gestirne Auf 34 Kupfertafeln Nach Der Pariser Ausgabe Des Flamsteedschen Himmelsatlas. Durchgehends Verbessert Und Mit Den Beobachtungen Neuerer Astronomen Vermehrt, Etc.* Berlin: G.A.Lange, 1782.

Ovid. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, translated by Allen Mandelbaum. Harcourt Brace & Co, New York, 1993.

Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume Iv: Books 8.22-10 (Arcadia, Boeotia, Phocis and Ozolian Locri)*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library 297. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Rhodius, Apollonius. *Argonautica*. Translated by William H. Race. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Secondary Sources

Griffiths, Alice Mary Matlock. *The Stars and Their Stories: A Book for Young People*. New York: H. Holt, 1913.

Littrow, Joseph Johann von. *Atlas Des Gestirnten Himmels Für Freunde Der Astronomie*. Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1866.

Moore, Patrick. *Patrick Moore's History of Astronomy*. 6th ed. London: Macdonald & Co., 1983.

Rey, H. A. *Find the Constellations*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954.

Taylor, George (1971). *The Roman Temples of Lebanon, Beirut: Dar elMashreq*.