



# CASTOR & POLLUX

## THE TWINS

Also known as the Dioskouroi ('sons of Zeus'), Castor and Pollux were the twin brothers of Helen and Clytemnestra. According to the main version of the legend, the twins were born from an egg when their mother Leda was seduced by Zeus who was disguised as a swan. Another version of the story says that only Pollux is the son of Zeus and immortal, while Castor is the son of Tyndareus and mortal.

The brothers appear in several famous myths, including the Caledonian boar hunt and the legend of the Argonauts. They were protectors of sailors in trouble at sea, and were associated with horses and sports: Castor was known for his skill with horses, while Pollux was famous for his boxing skills.

The twins take part in several important episodes of the Argo's voyage. Pollux famously took part in a boxing match with Amycus, King of the Bebryces, whom he defeated and killed. In another episode, a violent storm suddenly subsided, and two stars appeared on the heads of the Dioskouroi. From that moment on, the twins were worshipped as protectors of shipwrecked or endangered sailors.

During the voyage, the twins are also said to have founded the city of Dioscurias in the black sea. One of the most memorable stories about Castor and Pollux relates to their death. As Castor was a mortal in some versions of the myth, he was doomed to go down to the Underworld when he died, like any other person. But Pollux, who was immortal, offered to give half of his immortality to Castor. And so each twin spent half of his time on Olympus and the other half in the Underworld. Zeus was so impressed with this sacrifice, that he immortalised the brothers in the heavens as the constellation Gemini (the twins).