



PELEUS & TELEMON

THE TWINS

Peleus was the father of the noble hero Achilles, but Peleus was also a hero in his own right, and joined the Argonauts on their voyage. Peleus was the son of King Aeacus, who ruled over Aegina, a small island near Athens. Peleus' brothers were Phocas and Telemon. According to legend, Phocas was the king's favourite son. Thus, Peleus and Telemon murdered their brother, either by accident or through jealousy. Consumed with guilt, Peleus then fled to the court of King Eurytion of Phthia in Thelassy, to be purified. After joining Eurytion, Peleus later took part in the Calydonian boar hunt alongside Meleager. Like the later quest for the Golden Fleece, this hunt was attended by a multitude of heroes, including many who later became Argonauts. During the hunt, Peleus accidentally killed his host King Eurytion and once more had to flee, this time to Lolcus, where he was once again purified. Later in his life, Peleus joined the Argonauts on the quest for the Golden Fleece. He played an important role in the voyage, acting as the messenger between the goddess Hera and the other Argonauts.

In another episode, the hero accompanied Hercules on his war against the Amazons. Peleus famously married the sea-nymph Thetis, fathering the hero Achilles. Originally Zeus had wanted Thetis for himself, but he soon learned of a prophecy which stated that Thetis' child would grow up to be greater than his father. Frightened by this oracle, Zeus instead encouraged the mortal Peleus to marry Thetis. Peleus and Thetis' wedding was another major gathering for all the Greek heroes and gods. As the oracle had predicted, the child of this union, Achilles, was indeed a greater warrior than his father. Telemon, like Peleus, is famous for being the father of a greater hero than himself. Telemon is the father of Ajax the Great, who is often called Telamonian Ajax in the Iliad, in honour of the hero's father. After killing his brother Phocas, Telemon fled to the court of the King of Salamis, an island near Athens where he would father Ajax with the king's daughter Periboea. Like his brother Peleus, Telemon joined the Calydonian Boar hunt and eventually became a member of the Argonauts on their quest for the Golden Fleece. During the voyage, the Argonauts discovered that they had left Hercules behind at Mysia, when he had gone to look for his companion Hylas. Telemon argued strongly that the Argo should return to find Hercules, but was ignored. Telemon's loyalty to Hercules is also clear from his other adventures. With his brother, Telemon joined Hercules in his battle against the Amazons. He also accompanied Hercules when he sacked Troy a few years before the Trojan War began, following a dispute with the Trojan king Laomedon. During the sack of Troy, Telemon abducted Laomedon's daughter Hesione, and fathered his other famous son, Teacher, with her. Unlike most Greek heroes, Telemon lived to be an old man, and even outlives his mighty son Ajax. After the Trojan War, his son Teacher returned to Telemon in Salamis, bringing the news of Ajax's death. However, Telemon grew angry that Teacher did not do his family duty of bringing the body back for a proper burial and banished Teacher from Salamis. As a result, the dejected Teacher sailed to Cyprus, where he founded the Cypriot city Salamis, named after his lost homeland.