

Ιάσων



JASON



"I'm counting sheep!"

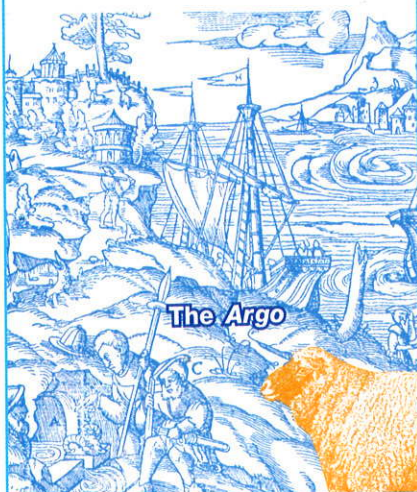
MYTH LOPEDIA



IT'S GREEK TO ME

The 50 Argonauts who accompanied Jason on his quest for the **Golden Fleece** included some of the bravest and strongest heroes and heroines of Greek mythology. Among the notables were:

Atalanta	Orpheus
Meleager	Peleus
Castor and Pollux	Telamon
Heracles	



THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Jason finds the fleece—but it's not an easy job.

Jason was the son of King Aeson and Queen Alcimede of Iolcus. In a struggle for power, Jason's uncle Pelias seized the throne of King Aeson. Then Pelias killed most of Aeson's heirs. Alcimede escaped with Jason and left him in the care of the wise Centaur Chiron.

When he was 20, Jason returned to Iolcus to take back the kingdom that was rightfully his. Pelias promised to make Jason king, but not until Jason acquired the fabled Golden Fleece of Colchis. Jason agreed to the deal, not realizing that Pelias was counting on his nephew to never return from the dangerous quest.

With the help of the goddess Athena, master builder Epeius made Jason a magical ship, the *Argo*, for his quest. The sailors who joined Jason on the quest were known as the Argonauts. On their mission, Jason and the Argonauts overcame stormy seas, terrifying monsters, and the seductive song of the Sirens, island-dwelling women who lured many sailors to shipwreck.

When Jason and the crew arrived at Colchis, King Aietes agreed to give them the Golden Fleece if Jason first completed three tasks. Aietes' daughter Medea, a **sorceress**, had fallen in love with Jason and promised to help him with the tasks.

First, Jason had to yoke together two fire-breathing oxen



and plow a field. Medea gave Jason a special ointment to put on that prevented him from being burned by the oxen's fiery breath while he plowed. With that, he successfully completed the first task.

Next, Jason had to plant dragons' teeth in the soil he had plowed. When the teeth were planted, an army of soldiers sprang up and attacked Jason and his crew. Jason grabbed a boulder and tossed it at the soldiers. Confused, the soldiers began fighting each other until they were all dead.

Finally, Jason had to get past the sleepless dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece. Medea gave Jason a magic potion that put the dragon to sleep. Jason seized the fleece, and he, Medea, and the Argonauts safely returned to the Argo.

JASON AND MEDEA

Jason betrays Medea and pays with his life.

When the Argo returned to Iolcus, Jason presented the Golden Fleece to Pelias. Medea, now married to Jason, knew that Pelias would never give up the throne to his nephew. So she convinced Pelias's daughters that they could restore their father's youth by cutting him up and cooking the pieces.

With Pelias out of the way, Jason seized power. But he was defeated in battle by Pelias's son Acastus, who took over the throne and **exiled** Jason.

Jason and Medea sought **refuge** in Corinth. There, Jason fell in love with Creusa, daughter of King Creon. Jason planned to divorce Medea and marry Creusa, believing he could one day take over Creon's kingdom.

Betrayed, Medea vowed vengeance. She sent Creusa a dress as a wedding gift. When the unsuspecting bride put it on, it stuck to her skin and burned her and her father to death. Medea wasn't done. To further

punish Jason, she killed their two sons. Then she escaped in a **chariot** provided by her grandfather Helios, the sun god, and fled to Athens. Jason returned to Iolcus, where he defeated Acastus and retook the throne. His betrayal of Medea, however, put him out of favor with the gods. Condemned to wander aimlessly, Jason arrived in Corinth, where he lay down to sleep in the shadow of the rotting Argo. The ship collapsed on him and killed him, ending the life of one of the greatest—and sneakiest—Greek heroes.

REALITY CHECK

According to legend, Jason founded the city now known as Ljubljana, capital of the Eastern European nation of Slovenia. The story says the Argo sailed up the Danube River and into the Baltic Sea to the site of Ljubljana, originally called Aemona. The city's coat of arms bears a dragon, a symbol of Jason and his adventures.

Want to know more? Go to:
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