



MYTHOLOGY MATTERS

Greece Iceland Finland Poland Latvia Spain Italy

The compilation of expressions is the work of the students and teachers of the:

- Vocational Senior High School of Agria - EPA.L Agrias GREECE
(coordinator of the project)
- Vesilahden ylaaste, Vesilahti, FINLAND
- Grunnskolin i Breiddalshreppi, Breiddalsvik, ICELAND
- Istituto Tecnico Commerciale Salvatore Satta di Nuoro, Nuoro, ITALY
- Friendly Appeal Cesis State Grammar School, Cesis, LATVIA
- Zespol Szkol Ponadgimnazjalnych, Czaplinek, POLAND
- Institut Andreu Nin, El Vendrell, SPAIN

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Greece

Iceland




Finland

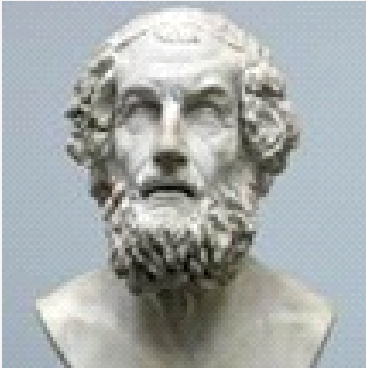

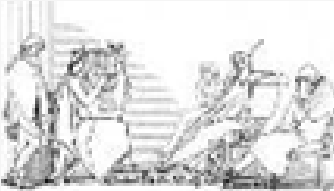

Poland

Latvia




Spain



Italy

Native language	Picture	English language	History
<p>Ήφαιστος</p>		<p>Hephaestus</p>	<p>He is one of the 12 Greek gods of mountain Olympus, son of Zeus and Hera. He was handicapped and so ugly that, when his mother saw the baby, she threw him off mountain Olympus into the deep sea. Fortunately, Thetis and Eurynomi, daughters of the Titans, saved him. When he grew up he became a highly qualified blacksmith and jeweller and his mother invited him back to Olympus and gave him as husband to the most beautiful goddess, Aphrodite.</p> <p>Hephaestus became the god of blacksmiths, metalworking, carpenters, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metallurgy, fire, and volcanoes.</p> <p>Despite his disability, Hephaestus was worshipped as a god.</p>
<p>Θεά Αθηνά</p>		<p>Goddess Athena</p>	<p>She was born from the head of Zeus wearing metal armour, which was somewhat strange.</p> <p>Although a woman, Athena was an important goddess, one of the 12 Olympian gods, and always appeared wearing a metal armour, which is usually associated with men.</p>
<p>Διόνυσος</p>		<p>Dionysus</p>	<p>He was a mythological god, son of Zeus, born from his leg. He was not one of the twelve Olympian gods. He was neither a child nor an adult but an eternal teenager, very naughty, crooked and cunning. He was worshipped at the festivity of vegetation, fertility and the holy madness induced by wine. His rituals were known for the ecstasy and the orgiastic phrenitis.</p> <p>Despite his peculiar conduct, he was a popular god.</p>

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<p>Όμηρος</p>		<p>Homer</p>	<p>He is the well-known author of the Iliad and the Odyssey, perhaps the most important epic poems in the ancient Greek literature. He was believed to be blind.</p> <p>People at that time believed that singers and poets were blind but had a divine voice or extremely good memory to make up for their disability. Therefore, although blind, Homer was a very famous man.</p>
<p>Φήμιος</p>		<p>Femius</p>	<p>According to Homer's Odyssey, Femius was a singer at the palace of Odysseus in Ithaca. He stood by Odysseus' wife, Penelope, for more than a decade, during Odysseus' absence in the Trojan War.</p> <p>Everyone in the palace believed that he had a divine voice although he was blind.</p>
<p>Δημόδοκος</p>		<p>Demodocus</p>	<p>According to Odyssey, he was a blind, but also divine, singer on the island of Phaeacians, today Corfu island.</p> <p>Despite his handicap, the people of the island thought very highly of him.</p>
<p>Τειρεσίας</p>		<p>Tiresias</p>	<p>He was a blind male oracle of god Apollo in Thebes. According to one myth, it was Goddess Athina who blinded him, because he saw her naked while washing her hair. According to another story, it was Hera that blinded him. There was a dispute between Zeus and Hera on whether men or women enjoy sexual intercourse more. Tiresias, having been a female for some time, confirmed that women enjoy it more. That irritated Hera because her secret was revealed.</p> <p>Although blind, Tiresias was the most famous oracle and the official counsellor of the kings in Thebes.</p>

Native language	Picture	English language	History
<p>Ευρύκλεια</p>		<p>Eurycleia</p>	<p>She was the nanny of Odysseus, a slave bought by his father, Laertis. She was the one who recognised Odysseus on his return to Ithaka, noticing the scar on his knee that was inflicted by a boar. Although Euryklia was a servant, Laertis valued and trusted her a lot.</p>
<p>Μήδεια</p>		<p>Medea</p>	<p>She was the daughter of the king of Colchis, Aetis. She learnt the art of witchcraft from her aunt Kirki. Although she was an immigrant and a witch, she got married to Jason, the leader of the Argonauts.</p>
<p>Κένταυρος Χείρων</p>		<p>Centaur Chiron</p>	<p>He was believed to be half horse and half man, a creature of teratogenicity. However, he was a very knowledgeable creature in the fields of astrology, herbal medicine, war, hunting and so on and, thus, the teacher of many heroes. Despite his strange appearance, Chiron was a very important creature.</p>
<p>Μινώταυρος</p>		<p>Minotaur</p>	<p>He was believed to be a creature with a bull's head and a man's body, a creature of teratogenicity. He was the son of Pasiphae, wife of king Minos, and the bull that Poseidon, the god of sea, had given to king Minos as a gift. He was put in a maze, at the basement of King Minos Palace in an attempt to be hidden from people's eyes.</p>

Native language	Picture	English language	History
<p>Ερινύες</p>		<p>Erinyes (The Furies)</p>	<p>They were female chthonic deities of vengeance, who punished criminals and the people who harboured them. They inflicted madness, illness, even death. They were ugly and horrifying. They had snakes instead of hair, a dog's head, a coal black body, a bat's wings, and eyes that spit blood.</p> <p>Ugliness and wickedness went together in this case and people did not want such creatures among them.</p>
<p>Μαινάδες</p>		<p>Maenads</p>	<p>They were female followers of Dionysus, possessed by the god, who acted erratically, performing supernatural acts and being sexually active in a society that valued chastity. Despite their mad and immoral manners, their elevated role in the revered religion of Dionysus, made them celebrated figures in society.</p>
<p>Ξένιος Ζευς</p>		<p>Xenios Zeus</p>	<p>Zeus, the first of the Gods on Mount Olympus, was the protector of all strangers. Together with Xenia Athena and the Dioskouri, Castor and Pollux, protected all strangers. In ancient Greece, “philoxenia” was believed to be an act of virtue. The word is composed of philo = friend and xenos = stranger.</p> <p>Offering hospitality to strangers was a divine order; maltreating them was a sin.</p>

Native language	Picture	English language	History
<p>Μέδουσα</p>	 <p>Medusa (painting by Caravaggio)</p>	<p>Medusa</p>	<p>She was one of the three Gorgons and a mortal being. The myth has it that she was a very beautiful priestess of Athena but when Poseidon fertilised her in Athena's temple, the goddess got very angry at her and turned her into a horrible monster. She was so ugly that whoever saw her got literally petrified. Finally Perseus killed her with Athena's help. The latter put Medusa's head on her shield because the head, even dead, could still petrify whoever looked at it.</p> <p>Ugliness is a form of punishment and ugly creatures wreak disaster.</p>
<p>Κύκλωπας Πολύφημος</p>		<p>Cyclops Polyphemus</p>	<p>He was a terrifying and wild giant, son of Poseidon, the god of the sea. He lived in a cave where he trapped Odusseus and his companions and started eating them one by one. Odysseus killed him and he managed to escape with the companions that had managed to survive. But Poseidon got very angry at the murder of his son and threw Odysseus into many tempests during his voyage home.</p> <p>Creatures that were bigger than average and had some kind of dysmorphia were thought to be wicked and uncivilized. At the same time, Poseidon accepted his monstrous offspring and took revenge on the people who killed his son.</p>

CONCLUSION

Our study of myths related to creatures that suffered some kind of handicap or were peculiar in some way, did not provide conclusive evidence as to the attitudes of ancient Greeks towards diversity. Various factors, apart from the beings themselves, affected people's stance. Therefore, beings who belonged to some revered group, had some talent or contributed to the well-being of society enjoyed inclusion. Blind people were almost consistently thought to be charismatic. People, like Hephaestus, who proved their value in the course of their lives, were also elevated to a higher status. Yet, there were cases of people who got 'punished' into a lower status, like Medusa, beings who were accepted by some but rejected by others, like Polyphemus, and beings that were excluded throughout their lives.

Latvian mythology is mythology of nature- the ancient Gods are closely connected with trees, plants, water and earth. Every nature phenomenon has its Mother- in Latvian mythology there are more than a hundred Mothers, for example, Mother of Wind, Mother of Forest, Mother of Sea... . Mothers are women's spirits who are present at all moments of life. Mothers have two natures- they are both the givers and guardians, as well as blighters. The human's attitude and behaviour determine whether they get blessing or hardships and obstacles. Mothers are supernatural beings, who, if necessary, appear with a face of an elderly woman or of a young and beautiful girl and they control the human heart.

For Latvian farmstead it is characteristic to have home spirits who have to be honoured, regaled because people who want to have good life wish to obtain the favour of the home spirits. The home spirit can be a toad, a grass snake that means an animal.

In Latvian mythology alongside with the mythical beings there are also human beings: an orphan, a beggar or a person with disabilities. Usually in mythology these characters feature the changing life- the fate gives luck after sufferings as well as they characterise the human nature judging by their attitude to the people fined by life.

Many nations are mentioned in Latvian mythology, mainly the neighbouring ones- Lithuanians, Estonians and Russians. Attitude towards neighbouring nationalities is different- it is possible to celebrate together, to marry, to find support in case of threat, to fight in wars.

A distinctive character in mythology – strangers. This character is usually used with the meaning of “something threatening, strange that must be repelled”. Latvian mythology is characterised by the opposites- their own people and the strangers. By repelling the strangers the people of the kin become a united force.



After having analysed our legends, we have found two legends where we can appreciate two cases of exclusion.

The first example we find it is in the legend of the 'The Bruc's Drummer' This legend places us in times of Napoleon and his army who wanted to occupy Spain with the aim of conquering Portugal.



On their way to Portugal, when the French army were in Catalonia, they found the opposition of Catalan people and when the French army reached the mountainous area of Montserrat a small army formed by brave volunteers that wanted to block the French advance went out to their encounter. Among all the volunteers there was a boy called Isidre who wanted to enrol himself in the militia but he wasn't fit enough to hold a weapon. When the adults saw him arrive they began to laugh at him and sent him home because a boy could do nothing in front of the powerful French army.

Isidre didn't give up and with the help of a drum hid in the rocks of the mountain, and when the army approached he began to play the drum with a deafening sound, the sound increased with the help of the layout of the mountains, this made believe the French army that they had a huge militia in front of them and ran away in terror.

We find exclusion in this legend because the solution to a big difficulty can come from an inexperienced mind.



The second legend is the mediaeval legend of Saint George; in this legend a dragon terrifies the citizens of the town of Montblanc. The citizens, who are really scared of the beast, feed it with animals but when they run out of them they begin to offer it the young girls of the city, until it comes the turn to the king's daughter. The day when the dragon has to eat the princess a knight called George appears and kills the dragon and saves the princess.

In that case exclusion is found in the offers done to the Dragon so that he is only offered young girls and no boys. Besides, the solution to the problem is also provided by a man.



To sum up, after studying several legends of our mythology, we conclude that the theme of inclusion does not come up. However, we found two examples of exclusion which we think they can be reflected in our current society, so that we have to consider children's opinion and we have to foster equality of sexes.

Among the myths and legends of Sardinia related to social inclusion (and exclusion), S'Accabadora is one of the most fascinating and mysterious figures, also because there are no written records or photos that testify her real existence in the ancient Sardinian society. However, over the centuries, several people have told the same story about this woman, describing the same figure wandering at night in the streets of the villages whenever she was “on duty”.

“S'Accabadora” was a middle aged woman dressed in black and the face covered by a long shawl. She was called by the parents of the infirm in order to kill him/her, but it was up to her whether to kill the sick person or not, according to his/her conditions. She came at night because no one could see her, and in order to disappear once she had finished her job. She was appointed by the community to apply euthanasia. According to the legends, she used a hammer (made in wood) to put an end to the suffering of the dying person. At the moment of the execution, all the relatives had to walk out of the room, and brought out of the room all the sacred symbols and images, because the catholic church would never accept such a ritual.

Then she started the ritual with prayers and at the end of them, she killed him/her with a strike on the forehead.

The community always accepted her because she played an essential role for the old rural society and its strict rules. In former times this was a common habit and only a woman could both give the death to people and bring new people to life. People say that sometimes the woman who gave the death and new life was the same person, only she wore black clothes when she gave the death and she came only at night, while she wore light colors when she assisted pregnant women in labour.





Before reading: teacher asks students to answer the question: „Who is an orphan?“.

The legend of Bakers

Long, long time ago there was a nice young boy called Eustachy. He didn't know his parents as they died due to a mysterious sickness when he was scarcely a few days old. His mother's sister, Rozalia took him to her house to bring him up. She was an old childless woman who only took him in because of the fortune that was left after Eustachy's parents' death.

Eustachy didn't experience any happiness in his aunt's house. She treated him in an undignified manners from the very beginning. She was mean and angry all the time. Although he was a polite and trouble-free child, she never rewarded him with at least a hug or a warm word. In contrary she exploited him and forced to do all the heavy work at home and around it as well as in the field. She treated him as a farmhand without giving him a little bit of warmth or affection. He never rebelled but was hardworking and obedient. However, one day he decided to leave his aunt and see the world. His aunt didn't mind it, she even found it a good way of getting rid of this excess as she was living in a constant fear that one day the boy could find out about his parents' fortune.

Having been stopped by nobody, a young boy set out on his journey and was wandering from a village to a village. To survive he was taking up any kind of work. Once he was a sheperd, the other time a lumberjack and the other time he was scything. Wherever he was, everybody loved him and admired him for his hardworking, politeness and cheerfulness. However, this kind of life started becoming tiring to Eustachy and more and more often he was thinking of settling somewhere for good. Yet as an orphan he was afraid that this dream of having his own place would never come true as people without parents and closest ones deserve no happiness. One sunny morning, however, he saw a tiny sign of hope. The day was very sunny and Eustachy being heating by the sun forgot about his misery. He reached a little settlement full of green areas, flowers and old tall trees. And just behind the forest he saw a huge windmill. 'It is surely a mill', he thought, 'Maybe I will find a job for me there?' and decided to head for it. After a few steps he was stopped by the voice just behind him. It was a young sheperd calling him. He told him that the mill hadn't been working for many years and villagers do not go into the forest as weird and odd things had happened there after the miller death. Whoever entered the area, never came back.



'It is an ideal place for me', thought Eustachy. 'I don't have my own place so I will be more than happy to be able to live there. I am brave enough and have experienced so much in my life that I can face it without any fear', he said to the shepherd and waved goodbye. He safely reached the mill and was astonished by the view he saw. The mill was in a perfect condition and situated in a lovely place. The young man immediately started to work. In time he opened a bakery and soon became famous. People from remote places were coming to buy flour and bread from him. Shortly he started looking for people to help him run the mill and found a young beautiful girl – Katarzyna. After some time they fell in love with each other and got married. More and more people were coming to see famous baker and miller and settle nearby the mill. Even though Eustachy was getting older and older and his hair was becoming greyer and greyer, he kept a smile on his face until the last days of his life. And the town was called Bakers in honour of Eustachy.

After reading the legend: teacher asks students to describe Eustachy according to the text.

Teacher asks students to answer the questions:

Did Eustachy have a nice and safe childhood? Why? / Why not?

Was Eustachy self-confident? Why? / Why not?

Do we treat orphans the same way nowadays?

What other colloquial meaning does the word "orphan" have?

In Polish if a person is called colloquially *orphan* he/she has no support or help from family, relatives or friends, this person is lonely and abandoned. Colloquially it also means that this person doesn't deal well with problems in his/her life. She/He is incompetent.

Inclusion and exclusion in the Finnish National Epic Kalevala

We have studied our regional legends in Vesilahti and our national epic Kalevala and we haven't found any legends about characters who despite their vulnerability or disability would have been accepted by the society. On the contrary, there is a ballad about a young man, Kullervo who was handsome and physically powerful and possessed magical powers since his childhood, however he humiliated and rejected by his family.

At Vesilahti Secondary School the curriculum includes the study of Kalevala in the 9th grade. Students make their own interpretations of Kalevala poems: games, posters or “movie trailers”. This trailer was filmed by 9th graders in the spring 2018 and the synopsis is written by Anna-Emilia Sorvoja, Michaela Jokiniemi and Emilia Permi, class 9A.



Scene 1: Narrator telling about this story's harsh and sad nature. Be prepared because this story doesn't have a happy beginning, end or a funny joke in the middle.

Scene 2: Kullervo's uncle Untamo had driven all Kullervo's family away, except for Kullervo and his mom who were kept with Untamo and his family as slaves. Kullervo was a threat to Untamo's family because of his strength and Untamo had tried to kill him many times because of that.



Scene 3: Finally, Untamo gave up and sold Kullervo to Smith Ilmarinen for some old iron

Scene 4: Ilmarinen's wife the daughter of north didn't like Kullervo's bad attitude to working. To teach Kullervo a lesson she put a stone inside Kullervo's lunch bread



Scene 5: Finally, it was time for Kullervo to take a break. Kullervo tried to cut a piece of his bread but his dad's old knife snapped straight from the middle. Kullervo was filled with rage for the Daughter of North and decided to drive a wolf after her.



Scene 6: Kullervo realized what he had done and ran away to the woods. In the woods he met a fortune teller. The fortuneteller understood who Kullervo was and told about his family who was alive and living well in the woods without Kullervo knowing.

Scene 7: He went back to his family and soon after that his sister killed herself. Kullervo's father blamed him for his daughter's death and all his family turned against him



Scene 8: Kullervo had nothing to live for anymore so he decided to go on his last trip and get revenge on Untamo for everything he had done to his family. And that was the end to Kullervo's sad story

Link to the video: <http://youtu.be/NNGTg6ajAdY>

Exclusion

In the original poem the most important point is Kullervo meeting with his sister who is believed to be dead. Before that Kullervo has been living with his uncle Untamo who has tried to kill Kullervo several times but Kullervo is protected by magical powers and survives.

Because of his wild and care-free nature Kullervo is not a good worker. To punish Kullervo for being too lazy his wife makes Kullervo herd their cows and bakes stones in the bread Kullervo takes with him. Kullervo breaks his knife, the only memento of his father, when cutting the bread. Kullervo is mad with rage and invokes wolves and bears to kill the wife.

Kullervo finds his own family when he returns to his homestead, everybody is alive except for his sister. He is sent to pay taxes and on the way he meets a young girl and seduces her with his good looks, beautiful words and gold. When the girl realizes that Kullervo is actually his brother she commits suicide by jumping into the rapids. Kullervo is ashamed of what he has done, returns home and tells what has happened. At this point Kullervo understands that he has done wrong and gives up his carefree attitude and wild ways. Still, his family doesn't see the change and they reject him.

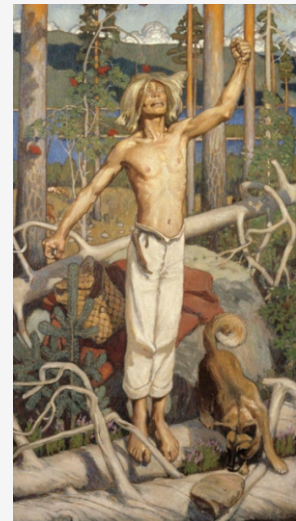
Kullervo is full of hate against his uncle who he sees as the reason to all his misfortune.



Kullervo leaving for war, Akseli Gallén -Kallela

Kullervo's family tries to dissuade him from revenging, but he is blinded by hate and all he wants is retaliation. His family say that they won't mourn for him, they reject him because of his deeds and his wild character. Kullervo refuses to listen and goes to war full of false pride and sounding his horn. He receives a magical sword from the highest god Ukko and uses it to kill his uncle and all his tribe.

When Kullervo returns home he finds out that all his family is dead and flees in the forest. However, he can't find any shelter there, instead he finds the place where he seduced his sister but realizes that no plants grow on the spot. Kullervo decides to take his own life, he asks his sword if it would like to drink his blood and as the sword accepts it says it has drunken innocent and guilty blood before. Kullervo throws himself on his sword and dies.



The Curse of Kullervo, Akseli Gallén-Kallela

Cultural influence

The tragic ballad of Kullervo has had a lot of influence on the Finnish culture and it has been interpreted by many different artists in many different times. Many plays and operas have been written by different Finnish novelists and composers. Even J.R.R. Tolkien was inspired by this legend and wrote his very first published book *The Story of Kullervo* in 1914-1915.

There are several paintings inspired by Kullervo's story, the paintings above are by Akseli Gallén Kallela who was the most famous of the painters in the Golden Era of Finnish Art and who wanted to emphasize our own cultural heritage as a source of inspiration. The most famous musical composition is *Kullervo Symphony* by the Finnish national composer Jean Sibelius. It's a symphonic poem for orchestra, men's chorus and two soloists, a baritone and mezzosoprano. The text is the original Kullervo poem from *Kalevala*.

A link to the Kullervo Symphony: <https://bit.ly/2wMxadS>

Even the lyrics of modern metal bands like Amorphis have been influenced by Kullervo's story and the band dedicated its album "Eclipse" to the legend of Kullervo.

A link to "House of Sleep": <https://bit.ly/2NSngST>



Odin was the god of wisdom and poetry and is also associated with magic. Odin rides on an eight-legged horse called sleipnir. He is the one-eyed All-Father, who sacrificed his eye in order to see everything that happens in the world. Odin sacrifices his physical body to gain a cosmic understanding of reality. The depictions of a one-eyed Odin represent the sacrifice of the earthly in exchange for the divine

Tyr is the ancient god of war and the bravest of the gods. At one point in time, the gods decided that the wolf Fenrir could no longer go free. They wanted to lock him up onto a chain. But he broke every chain they tried to put on him. Finally, they had the dwarves make a magical chain. But Fenrir sensed what the gods would do. So Fenrir asked that one of them put his hand into his mouth. Knowing that if Fenrir was left unfettered, he would have grown strong enough to kill all the God's and destroy the world. Tyr was the only one who had the courage. When Fenrir sensed he had been tricked, he bit off Tyr's hand. Tyr remained handless forever. **The handless is an icon for courage, newer related to weakness.**



Elves appear frequently in Icelandic mythology The Icelandic elves, are their own species. Huldufólk (hidden people), the elves of Iceland live in enchanted rocks and cliffs where they lead lives that are very similar to those lead by humans. The huldufólk are said to be tall and handsome, while the Elves are said to be rather strange, with oddly proportioned features and long spindly legs. Even today, many people believe in these creatures and respect them. Changes have been made on roads and buildings to preserve and not upset the creators.

GEOPHYSICAL PHENOMENA



Greece

Iceland

Finland

Poland

Latvia

Spain

Italy

Geophysical Phenomena in the Greek Mythology

Introduction

Ancient Greeks and other peoples, who lived at times when science didn't exist, tried to explain the changes in their environment (geological, climatic and other changes) creating myths. It is said that the fear towards the unknown and, at the same time, the desire to learn and understand, led people to the development and communication of myths which explained the creation and function of the natural world.

A significant part of the Greek mythology narrates the geophysical evolution of the place and 'explains' natural phenomena. In other words, it features a geological-geomythological dimension. And that's no wonder since Greece is located at the meeting point of two tectonic plates and is a place where earthquakes occur and volcanoes are active, which means that the landscape undergoes changes; the coastline changes, land appears where there was water and so on.

The Greek Mythology is, actually, the oldest history of the people who lived in an area which was, later, named Greece. Myths such as the Titanomachy and the Gigantomachy, the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the birth of Hellene, Hercules deeds (mainly related to water) and deities who control natural phenomena have come to explain the inexplicable. The following are just some of the myths and mythical figures related to the geophysical phenomena.

Aeolus

Aeolus was the god of the winds. He had a big bag where he kept all the winds and released them at the orders of the Olympus gods.

Dardanos' Cataclysm

Dardanos, the son of Zeus and Electra (daughter of Atlas) was in Samothrace, a Greek island in Northeast Aegean Sea, during a cataclysm that flooded the greatest part of the island. According to Geology Professor Ilias Mariolakos, the cataclysm occurred 12,500 years ago and is the oldest one in the Greek and World Mythology.

A detailed narration of the events is given by Diodorus from Sicily, a Greek historian and writer, who lived 10,000 years after the cataclysm.

Deucalion and Pyrrha



Deucalion's cataclysm occurred around 10000 BC. Zeus had decided to exterminate all wicked people except for Deucalion and Pyrrha. To save themselves, Deucalion made an ark and filled it with the necessary supplies. The ark sailed for 9 days and then 'sat' on top of Mount Atho in Macedonia or Mt Parnassus in central Greece or Mt Othris in Thessaly. After the cataclysm, Deucalion and Pyrrha created new 'people' by throwing stones behind them. Stones were considered to be the bones of the earth.

The myth is related to the prehistoric people's tendency to move to highlands, next to lakes and rivers, where the environment was 'calmer' in order to avoid the frequent flooding of the coastal areas.

Enceladus

He was a Giant, the son of Gaia and Uranus. Giants were divine but mortal creatures. Their power was so great that they, themselves, couldn't often control it.

At some point, gods and Giants argued and a battle that lasted 30 years broke out. Goddess Athena led the gods 'army' and Enceladus was the leader of the Giants. According to one myth, Athena beat Enceladus by throwing Sicily on him and covering him with Mt Aetna.



Ancient story-tellers said that every time Enceladus turned and breathed, the mountain shook and trembled and fire, smoke and lava came out of its crater. Even today when an earthquake occurs people in Greece talk about Enceladus

Hephaestus

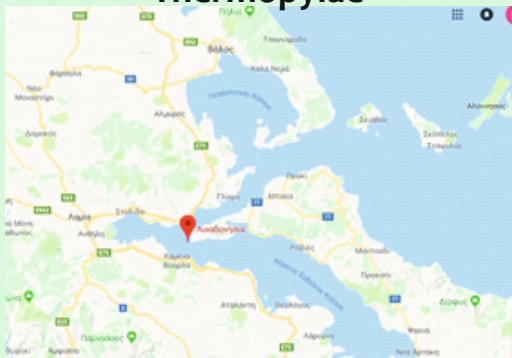


Hephaestus was the god of the fire, the sky and the earth and of all the arts and crafts related to them, such as the processing of copper and all other metal. He was the son of Zeus and Hera.

He was the 'human' god of fire, in every form and use: from the thunder and the lightning in the sky to the volcano on the earth as well as to the fire of inspiration and creation inside people.

The Greek word for 'volcano' comes from the name 'Hephaestus' ('ifestio'). Obviously, the people of that time, imagined that under a mountain that emitted smoke and fire accompanied by thunderous sounds hid the lab of a god. Hephaestus smithy was also thought to be under Aetna, Vesuvius and in Aeolis islands.

Hercules and Lichas - Thermopylae



Hercules went to Evia, an island very close to central continental Greece, to offer sacrifices to Zeus. When Hercules' wife found out that he had fallen in love with Ioli, he sent him a tunic soaked in a love potion together with the poison of Lernaean Hydra. But when he wore it, it got stuck on his body and burnt his flesh. That hurt tremendously. Since the cloth was brought to Hercules by Lichas, Hercules held Lichas responsible for his suffering and hurled him into the sea. From the pieces of Lichas' body, the Lichades islands were formed.

The islands are, actually, the result of volcanic activity and are made of volcanic stones. As Hercules' blood was still boiling with Lernaean Hydra's poison causing him great pain, to escape his torment, Hercules fell into some nearby springs. Since then, the waters of these springs are burning hot and emit a horrible smell. For this reason, the area is called Thermopyles. ('Thermo' means 'hot' and 'Pyles' means 'gates')

In the same area, Spercheios river waters fall into the sea. According to Hesiod, this is a river god, the son of Titan Oceanus and Titaness Tethys.

Hercules and Achelous

Achelous, the son of Oceanus and Tethys, was in love with Deianira. He had a body like a snake and changed forms (bull, dragon etc.). Hercules wanted Deianira too so they fought for her. During the fight, Hercules cut one of Achelous' horns. Hercules' fight against Achelous depicts the diversion of a torrentous (bull-like) river.



Achelous has the body of a snake because the river forms meanders. And when Hercules cuts a horn, a meander of the river is cut and is offered as arable land for cultivation. That land is, actually, Amaltheia's horn or the horn of abundance.

Hercules and the Lernaean Hydra



The Lernaean Hydra was immortal and lived in Lerna, a marshland in the south of Argos in the Peloponnese. When Hercules cut a head, two new ones were generated. Only by burning them, could he stop the multiplication. As for the last head, which was central and immortal, he cut it and buried it deep into the earth so that it couldn't be resurrected. From the Lernaean Hydra's blood Hercules made his arrows poisonous

The fact behind the myth is that Lerna was a lake with a lot of 'heads', springs and streams, which overflowed and turned the place into a dangerous-for-the-health marshland. Therefore, Hercules' deed was a beneficial act, which freed the people from the catastrophic influence of the marsh. The reappearing heads may mean the springs and streams that filled the lake with water and reappeared every time it rained. If they were blocked, they appeared in another place. The central head was the central spring, which never dried up. The monster's nest was next to a spring, after all. The burying of the immortal head may refer to excavations for the creation of a ditch for the unwanted waters of the central spring or of another spring. The burning of the heads means the artificial draining of the ground or the river banks.

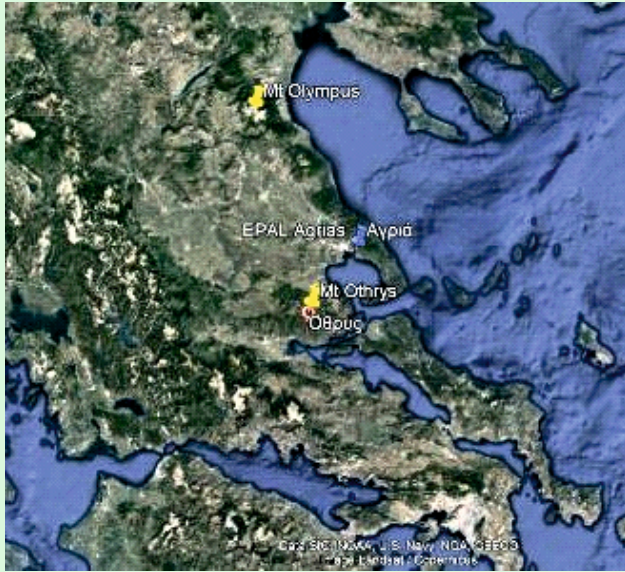
Poseidon



God Poseidon, Zeus' brother, dominated the water: the lakes, the rivers, the springs and especially the seas. His symbol was the trident, with which he speared the sea and the rocks and caused either tempests, catastrophes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and the like or calm, stability, even the emersion of land and the spurt of water. The landscape of Greece is made up, among others, of rounded sandy beaches, steep and rocky beaches, coastline cliffs, rocks in the sea and volcanoes.

The ancient Greeks believed that all these were formed with Poseidon's trident. And given that all volcanoes were in the Aegean Sea, Poseidon's role in their activation was undoubted.

Titanomachy and Gigantomachy



The Titanomachy was the war between the Titans, who were fighting from Mt Othrys, and the gods, who were on Mt Olympus. It lasted ten years and the winners were the gods, who shared the loot.

The area of the Titanomachy is characterised by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, which shape the natural environment. The end of the Titans means that the natural phenomena have stopped being so intense and that the natural environment isn't a critical factor for the survival of the prehistoric man. The same area is also the battlefield for the Gigantomachy, the fight between the Olympus gods and the Giants.

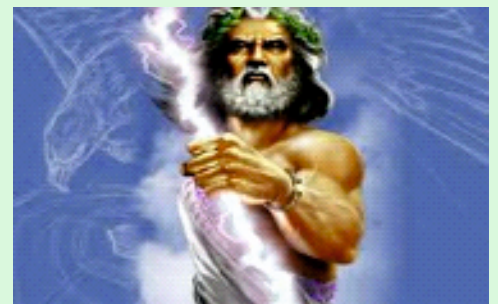
It all started when Zeus beat Cronus and the Titans and dumped them in Tartarus, a deep abyss of torment. Gaia felt hatred for Zeus and the other gods and their children and roused the Giants. The war went on and on for years but the gods could not win. Then goddess Athena learnt about an ancient oracle, which said that the Giants would lose only if some mortals fight by their side, and invited Hercules and Dionysus to the battle. As a result, the gods won.

During the fight, Poseidon cut off a piece of Kos island and with that he buried Giant Polyvotus, thus, creating Nisyros, an island in south-east Aegean Sea. The island is volcanic, with an active volcano, and one of its craters is called Polyvotus.

Zeus

Zeus, the son of Cronus and Rea, was the father of gods and men and ruled over the Olympus gods.

Before the Olympian gods, the Titans ruled the world and Zeus had to fight against them to get the power. Gaea advised him to free the Cyclopes and they, in return, gave him thunder and lightning as a present. Zeus also used a thunderous cloud or a storm as his shield. That was made for him by Hephaestus.



Zeus has always been a 'weather' god. He controlled lightning, thunder and rain. In the epic poem Iliad, he sent his thunders against his enemies.

In 1752 the thunder stopped being a divine power and was recognized as a natural phenomenon. Benjamin Franklin managed to produce the first artificial thunder and proved that it is the result of an enormous electrical charge in the sky which is opposite to the electrical charge of the Earth.



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Canary Islands Legend

Plato spoke of Atlantis as the most advanced village of humanity, full of riches and wisdom. Its habitants the Atlanteans and its capital: Atlantis, crowned by the Temple of Poseidon. The habitants of the lost continent, degenerated into all kinds of perversions over the centuries and Zeus punished them in the course of a night causing a great cataclysm by which Atlantis disappeared.



According to the Canarian Legend, only the peaks of its mountains, which would be the islands of Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands and Cape Verde, were visible on the surface of the lost continent. These islands would come to shape the peaks of Atlantis. But the temples and their palaces were under the waters of the ocean from which it would have taken its name; The Atlantic Ocean. "Today it's sturdy palaces are inhabited by dolphins and algae cover the meadow ..."

By Marta Muñoz

The Pyrenees

Thousands of years ago, the lands that today occupy the Pyrenean Valleys, on which we ski, hike and do rural tourism, were under the control of Tubal. In those dark times in which the gods of Olympus reigned over the face of the earth and human beings were no more than mere puppets with which the deities had fun, Tubal reigned over these lands that we inhabit today, and had a beautiful daughter called Pyrene.

The chronicles tell that Pyrene was so supremely beautiful, that many people fell ill with love to see her while she walked through the woods. But for many men who were behind her, Pyrene's heart was reserved for Hercules, the famous Greek hero with whom the young princess was sneaking into the woods.

But despite being hidden, the love of the couple was discovered by Tubal. Angered by the lovers, Pyrene's father banished Hercules, while Pyrene, abandoned by sadness, was still roaming the woods in the hope that her beloved Hercules would return there to seek her and flee together.

One fine day, while Pyrene was walking through the woods waiting for Hercules, he met Geryon, a horrible three-headed being who wanted to possess the young princess. Fortunately, Pyrene managed to escape, but Geryon, eager to make the girl his own, burned the forest so he could not hide.

Then, the legend tells that an eagle that witnessed everything, warned Hercules, who went quickly to the place to rescue his beloved, although when he arrived, Pyrene was about to exhale his last breath. Taking his beautiful beloved in his arms, Hercules declared his eternal love, moments before Pyrene passed away.



Nayra Hernández

Broken by pain, Hercules buried his love, placing huge stones on Pyrene's body.

The hero worked with such passion, that Hercules came to erect enormous mountains of stone to hide the body of already beautiful princess.

And so, according to the legends, the Pyrenees were born. From the love of Hercules and the beautiful Pyrene, giving rise to the most beautiful and impressive mountain range of the Iberian Peninsula, in the image of the beauty of the young princess

LLAC DE BANYOLES

In the 8th century. A beast of terrible dimensions had found shelter in a deep cavern on the shores of Lake Banyoles, in Gerona. The animal is described as having a thick skin of scales provided with sharp spines on the spine and with large wings although, due to its great weight, it was impossible to fly. He could only walk with his huge legs and, in doing so, the earth rumbled in his wake.

They say that he spit fire through his eyes and that his breath was so foul that he could poison the water, dry the fields and transmit diseases to animals and people. His great appetite led him to devour hundreds of cattle belonging to the locals of the region, and even began to disappear some neighbors in the area.

The neighbors, who had begun to take refuge inside the wall for fear of attacks, requested help from Charlemagne's troops who were stationed in Gerona, during one of his raids against the Arabs, but he could not defeat him.

After this unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the animal, the inhabitants of the area turned to Mer, a well-known natural Franciscan from Narbonne, went to meet the dredger and began to pray before her, which managed to calm the animal and take it meekly to the village.

It is said that, after this event, the dragon returned to its lair in the lake and there, since then, it remains submerged under the waters, from which it emerges at times to satisfy its appetite with the fish that inhabit the lake of Banyoles.



Sheila Cuervo

The salt grinder

Once upon a time there were two brothers. One was a simple fisherman, very poor, but a very good person. The other was a boat captain, very rich, but selfish and avaricious. One day, the fisherman, who had not eaten for days because the fishing was going badly, went to his brother's house to ask him for some help. The captain, refused him and made him out of the house.

Then, the poor fisherman found an old woman who asked him what was going on. The fisherman explained it and, suddenly, the old woman offered a magic windmill to the fisherman. You just had to say "grinder, grind" and the grinder made real wishes. Then, to stop it, it was necessary to say "grinder, stop grinding".

The fisherman tried it and his wishes came true immediately: good food appeared and, in the garden, fruit trees full of fruit began to grow.

With his belly full, the fisherman took his treasure and went to his brother's house to teach him that wonder. The captain, seeing that the fortune of his brother came from a simple grinder, convinced his brother to lend him that grinder. The fisherman tried to teach the captain the magic words to make the grinder work, but the captain didn't listen him. He took the windmill, ran to the ship, and quickly went to the sea. "I want salt" the captain shout, "grinder, grind".

And the grinder began to grind salt and more salt and more salt ...

So much, that filled to spill the cellar and the cover. And when it was about to cover the pole, the ship began to sink. The captain ran by the ship shouting like a crazy person: "stop, grind", "do not grind anymore" ...

But nothing, since he did not say the correct magic phrase, the grinder milled and milled, and in the end the ship sank, and along with the ship also sank the grinder, which under the water continued to grind and grind salt .And that's why sea water is salty, because the grinder is still grinding.



Marina Rull

The legend tells that in the Middle Ages there were some galley ships in Ebro Delta. In them, there were kept some prisoners who were enemies of the Kingdom of Catalonia and Aragon. They were forced to work from sunrise to sunset draining the wetlands that were infested of mosquitoes and leeches.



One day in December, Saturn and Venus were aligned with the moon. An enormous crevice was opened to Hell under their influence. The convicts received the malefic effects of the stars and released their spirits out of their bodies. Some of them became evil ghosts and some others began to eat up one to another.



People from nearer villages could hear terrible dying screams and howling. The next morning, nothing could be said about the fears of the previous night. There wasn't anybody who could tell what had happened.

Nowadays, old people from Deltebre and Poblenou tell about those ghostly creatures known by the name of Marfantos and say that when Saturn, Venus and The Moon line up with the Ports mountains a crack opens towards hell and they appear to look for any breath to feed themselves and spread their evil spell.



Clàudia Vidal

Garrotxa origins

This legend has its origins in La Garrotxa, a region of Catalonia, that has a zone full of volcanoes. Many years ago Olot village was being destroyed by volcanoes. The legend says people believed that in the year 1500 the village would disappear, because it had volcanoes all around. Santa Maria, Montalivet, Montsacopa, Sant Francesc... were and are some of the volcanoes that settle these lands.

The days before the catastrophe was supposed to occur, everyone was worried. Some people even left the village and moved away with their families. The day came and it seemed to be true, because some volcanoes had been causing earthquakes the days before. At 5 am in the morning everyone who was sleeping woke up because of the eruption of three volcanoes at the same time. When the lava began going down, like if some magician had done something, a lot of water from the Fluvià river began to extinguish the lava. The population attributed the miracle to God, and they named the principal spring that the river had left, the God spring.

The years passed and when the land calmed down, to show the power of God, the Church built hermitages in the craters of the volcanoes.



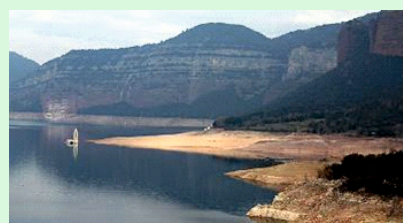
Paula Niño

The Sau giant

A long time ago, there was a giant that couldn't fall asleep, because if he did, he would turn into stone. He used to help the Sau villagers cultivating the land to keep himself awake.

But one day, there was an awful storm, and he had to help all the villagers to reach a safe place. At the end, he was really tired, and accidentally, he fell asleep, turning himself into a big mountain.

People invented this tale because there is a mountain in "The Sau reservoir" that looks like a giant's head with a big nose.



David Castro

Vesuvius



Vesuvius is a volcano located in Italy, in the gulf of Naples. It is one of the most active volcanoes of continental Europe and one of the most studied and dangerous in the world, due to the high population of the surrounding areas and its explosive features. With a height of 1.281 meters, the volcano rises on the current Mountain Somma.

The first studies on this volcano date back to 1841, thanks to King Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies. Mount Vesuvius is also a milestone during the Giro d'Italia, where cyclists travel along Italian roads every year.

The eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, an announced tragedy

The first eruption of Vesuvius was in 79 A.D., while the last one took place in 1944.

Before then there had been other earthquakes that alarmed the people living nearby. However, no one would have thought that these earthquakes would lead to a volcano eruption. The first real blow was in 62 A.D., when a violent earthquake devastated the entire area near the volcano. The episode is known because it happened just as Emperor Nero was busy singing in a theater in Naples. The mountain shook violently and a large number of houses was pulled down by the earthquake. The subsequent period of tranquility, however, encouraged the reconstruction of collapsed buildings and life began to flow again. Then, between August 20 and 24, 79 A.D. a highly frequent series of earthquakes hit the area near Vesuvius. In Pompeii the water springs dried up, someone escaped, but most of the inhabitants did not let themselves be influenced by the tremors and went on with their usual life.

The eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, what happened in Pompeii.



Vesuvius woke up at nine in the morning of August 24th, but the actual eruption only began around one in the afternoon. A cloud of gas, ashes and fragments rose about 20 km above the volcano and darkened the sun. As the lava flowed down, some people left the city in a hurry, while others, completely unaware of what was happening, hid in the cellars and other sheltered areas. They died unaware, in the penumbra created by the cloud that had obscured the sun during the following hours, suffocated by heat and toxic gases when the first big flow reached the city.

Modern Pompeii

Casualties were over two thousand and Vesuvius underwent radical change.

Nowadays, Pompeii is a small town close to Naples, with a population of 25180 inhabitants, in the southern region called Campania. The modern Pompeii was founded after the construction of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary, which was consecrated in 1891. This is why Pompeii is a religious and touristy center which attracts visitors worldwide. People travel there both for its unique, huge archaeological area and also for its sanctuary.



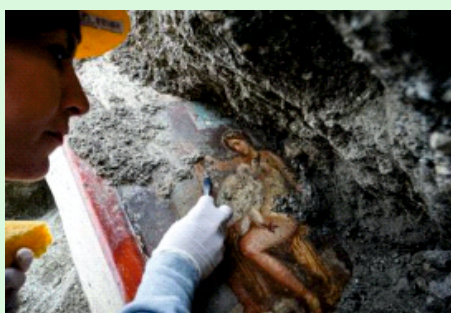
The myth of the raging Vulcan - Pompeii

The God of the earth and fire was peaceful, kind and loving. He reigned on a vast, mountainous land full of lush plains and fields. He gave warmth to his people and kept the land and soil fertile so that their crops could grow strong. In return, his people were supposed to honour the land, taking only what they needed.

It was known throughout the land that the Earth was precious and not to be abused or wasted, and his people took great care to do so. One day, a stranger came to the land. He brought with him new ways of sowing crops, which was fast, but was wasteful. The consequence of such waste was that great areas that had been fertile farming land became barren and unproductive. The people forgot their pledge to Vulcan, and forgot the value of the Earth.

One day, the god looked at his lands and people and saw what they had done. He was furious, and erupted burying Pompeii in 79 A.D. Following the terrible eruption came the idea that every eruption of Vesuvius corresponded to divine wrath; the punishment of God against the Vesuvian people who led a life of vices and luxuries, punished for not honouring the divine will. From that moment on, Vesuvius was identified as the mouth of Hell, or as a symbol of evil.

A new discovery



Precious and provocative, a large fresco has been found on the wall of a small bedroom inside one of the villas in Pompeii. It is a portrait of Leda and the swan making love. According to the myth, Zeus turned himself into a swan to seduce Leda, the queen of Sparta and four children were born, one of whom is the beautiful Helen of Troy.

The creation of the Vistula river

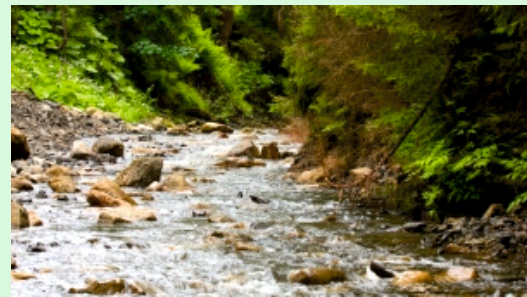
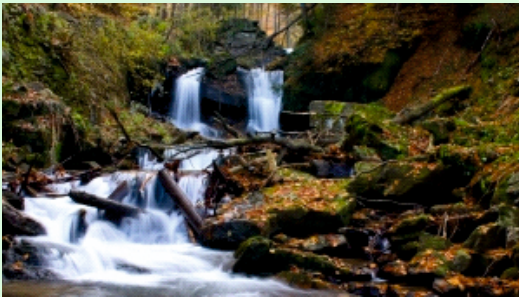


Once upon a time, a powerful king of mountains Beskid lived in a huge castle among high majestic mountain peaks. The king had a wife Borana, who was a queen of forests, and three children: Lan, Białka and Czarnocha. The couple lived together for long happy and peaceful years. But unfortunately, one day they all sank into despair of mourning after the king's death. Heartbroken Borana called all her children to fulfill her husband's will and hand over the power to them. "Dear children it's the time to divide out the power and your father's honours" said the queen and she took the sceptre, raised it and said "Let the mountains be wild and exuberant so nobody else apart from my dead husband would have the power over them." Once she said it she pointed at her son Lan with the sceptre. "You will have the power over fields and meadows. Make them fertile and never let those who cultivate them suffer from thirst." Then she pointed at her daughters and said " Białka and Czarnocha you are taking over the power over water. Spread it well so that Lan's fields and meadows will always be fertile and people as well as animals will have enough water and no valleys will ever suffer from drought." Then she addressed all of them and said " Now go and be the authority over what you were given" she finished and said on her throne.

Full of life and happiness Blanka quickly ran out of the castle and went down to the valley upon the mountains leaving the stream of water behind her. Careful and sensible Czarnocha went down among rocks in a safer way leaving a stream of water behind her as well. When they met together, they decided to continue their journey together. Unluckily, they were stopped by a huge rock which was guarded by a knight Czarnoch. "Why do you want to leave our land, royal daughters?" he asked. "What are you going to look for in unknown remote northern countries?" said the knight trying to convince the girl to stay in the valley. Sisters were enchanted by the beauty of the valley they reached and decided to make it even more beautiful by spreading more water. Full of water Valley order the knight to let the girls pass and asked them to spread the water all over the world. But the cunning knight who was afraid that he would never see the sisters again, gave them an idea " The north is threatening and dangerous. Don't go there. You can send a wave instead and ask it to check other lands and come back with the news for you." Sisters agreed with the knight and did as he told them. When he moved the rock they sent the first wave, which they called Wyszła, to the north and ordered it to come back with the news from the north.

Wyszła was floating through plains, forests and rocks slowly forgetting about its mission. Amazed at the allure and charm of the land she was passing, she was heading forward, farther and farther, getting bigger and bigger and adding other rivers. One day she felt the taste of salty water and spotted enormous sea in front of it.

Delighted with the view, Wyszła let the sea waves give in to its abyss and never went back to two sisters who were waiting for the wave to come back. They were sending new waves to bring Wyszła back to them without any results. None of the waves ever came back as they were kept by the allure of the Baltic sea. In time, two mountain rivers (two sisters) were named Biała Wisetka and Czarna Wisetka in honour of two royal daughters. The river which came into the connection of two streams was called Wisła (Vistula in English) which derived from the name of the first wave.



- * The Vistula river in Polish is Wisła, the first wave was called Wyszła, which is quite similar.
- * Białka became Biała Wisetka. Biała means white in English and Wisetka, which is diminutive form of Wisła.
- * Czarnocha became Czarna Wisetka. Czarna means black in English.

Brave Giewont



A long time ago, when the world was full of strange creatures, that nobody remembers any more, lived a dragon with magical power in the depths of boundless seas which was able to change into any animal, creature or even human not losing his power. Yet, his power was nothing compared to the power of love which kindled his heart to a beautiful girl named Magura. Although the dragon was a cunning creature, he had fallen in love with the girl and decided to spend the rest of its life with her. It changed into a human and lived happily for many years with his wife and children sharing love and the joy of life. Thanks to the dragon's magic power the couple grew old but the longer the dragon stayed in a human silhouette, the faster he was losing his power.

Just before Magura's death, the dragon confessed to his spouse the whole truth about his power. Magura made him promise to pass the power to their children so that they could also grow old happily. Convinced by his wife the dragon called their children and asked them to tell them both who they would like to become for the rest of their lives. Each of them was telling their parents who they would like to be in the future.

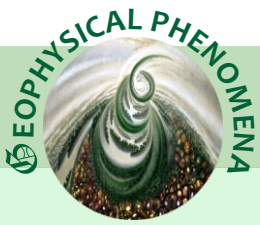
The oldest Harvan said "Father, I want to be a hunter of the world, rule forests and seas. Please, make my fishing nets full of fish constantly so that my brothers and sisters will never suffer from hunger". The dragon gave his son what he wanted: the wisdom necessary at the sea and cleverness required in primeval forests.

Then the second son Muran approached and said " Father I want to be a builder, founding towns and castles so that my siblings will have the place to live". The dragon gave him the wisdom of builders so as his building would last forever.

Then the third son Garluch came up to them and said " Father I want to be a musician who will make my siblings' lives joyful and pleasant in the moment of either their happiness or sadness." So the dragon gave him the voice not comparable with others.

Then the fourth son Krywan came up and said " Father I want to be a master of armour, make armour and weapons which will protect us from the danger of the world. The dragon gave him a skilful right hand and the knowledge of smithery profession that is still well known all over the world.

Then the fifth son Woloszyn approached. " Father I want to be a shepherd and pasture the cattle and pigs so that in winter when seas are frozen and animals are hidden deep in the forest my siblings will not die from hunger, so that I could bestow a goat's cheese and cow's milk to them and feed them. The dragon gave him a 'shepherd's hand' so that the cattle and pigs that will be supervised by Woloszyn will grow abundantly.



Poland

The last son who was supposed to get the power from his father was Giewont. "Father it is common knowledge that we are not alone in the world. I want to be a knight whose power will hold enemy armies back and chase away bandits. To make sure that your children are safe and have a happy life on the fertile land." And so the dragon made his sixth son a strongman and a master of sword who was unbeatable.

The rest of his power the dragon left for his daughter Osobita. The youngest of his daughters and a hundred years younger than her brothers. He gave her beauty, unique in the world and the heart pure so that she will never become vain.

When Osobita became 20 years old, young men were coming from different tribes to marry her. Both parents were dead at that time so the head of the family was Harvan who always asked his brothers for advice and was listening to his sister. Unfortunately, Osobita didn't like any of the candidates and refused to marry them. She did so because she had a dream that one day a powerful prince from the north will come to her and she wanted it to come true one day. Her brothers though were anxious as those tribes from the north were well known for their cruelty and they often attack Harvan's fishermen at the sea so that Giewont had to intervene in that matter.

Those northern tribes were ruled by powerful and merciless king Frost with his sister Winter beautiful but unfortunately less beautiful than Osobita and jealous of it. The king got to know about Osobita's peculiar beauty and with his whole heart wanted to have her at his side. Jealous Winter, who wanted to be one and the only beauty in the world, decided to support his brother in his venture because this way she would get rid of her female rival. Winter and king Frost were trying for many years using many tricks to kidnap beautiful Osobita but unluckily for them Giewont always appeared in time to save his sister. Eventually, Winter and Frost came up with an idea to seduce Giewont and freeze him for good using their power. So Winter set out for the journey heading south in order to meet his knight. Pretending to be in trouble Winter cried for help. Giewont who was just nearby heard her cries and ran to help her. Since then they were meeting regularly and spending a lot of time together when finally Giewont realized that he was in love with Winter. They were wandering together in the primeval forest when they got tired and fell asleep and just then Frost attacked Giewont and froze him for good.

At that very moment Winter cried loud as she realized she loved Giewont deeply. Her love was so strong that she decided to stay with her love one forever. So she laid down next to him.

Broken Osobita suffering from her brother's death didn't accept Frost again. He got furious and in revenge comes back every year with strong winter.

And Giewont tightly covered with Winter looks at Zakopane.



Giewont is a mountain massif in the Tatra Mountains of Poland, and is 1,895 metres AMSL at its highest.

Zakopane is a town in the extreme south of Poland. It lies in the southern part of the Podhale region at the foot of the Tatra Mountains.

Geophysical phenomena in Finnish mythology

The study of Kalevala, the Finnish epic in form of poems, is part of the Finnish language curriculum throughout secondary school. Students study Kalevala from different angles and as multidisciplinary themes.

In the 7th grade students start by studying what myths are and then write their own interpretations of the stories in Finnish language classes and paint pictures during art classes.

Every year the 9th graders first study the poems of Kalevala and then write scripts and film either movies or movie trailers about the stories of Kalevala. It is also possible to create a boardgame or write and perform a rap on Kalevala poems.

Geophysical phenomena in Finnish mythology, 9th grades

The creation of the world

In the next example 9th students have chosen the first poem of Kalevala which tells how the world was created.

In the beginning of Kalevala Ilmatar (Goddess of air) lands in a sea, where wind and water weigh her down. A bluebill makes a nest on her knee and lays eggs. The eggs fall off and break when Ilmatar moves. The broken eggs make the earth, the sky, the sun and the moon and the stars and clouds as well as iron. Later Ilmatar gives birth to the first human, Väinämöinen, who is already an old and wise man when he is born. Väinämöinen finishes the ground, mountains and lakes.



Painting by Milla Pesonen, 9th grade: Ilmatar



Kalevala trailer by Oili Vastamaa, Jonna Heinälähti, Santeri Hirvikoski, Veera Ojala, 9th grade: Bluebill eggs on Ilmatar's knee about to fall down



Kalevala trailer by Oili Vastamaa, Jonna Heinälähti, Santeri Hirvikoski, Veera Ojala, 9th grade: Väinämöinen singing

Geophysical phenomena, 7th grades

7th graders started studying mythology by wondering, what myths really are and writing their own creation stories about natural events. Here is an explanation for the Northern Lights in the Finnish mythology.

Firefox

Once upon a time there was a firefox. The firefox had a shimmering tail that, when in contact with the various objects, caused a light phenomenon just as the fur flew if they were touched in dry air.

The firefox stayed mostly in its cave. The cave was deep in the forest. So it was rarely seen. That's why the secret dream of every hunter was to catch it someday. The capture of the firefox meant fulfillment of the wishes, for it had been said that the firefox's capturer should be rich and famous.

On one frosty night the firefox went running. Its fur rambled into trees and its tail touched the snow on the ground. hat made the northern lights appear in the sky. It was the sting of a firefox's tail, the sparks that fluttered in the sky.

translation (based on folklore stories) and painting of Firefox by Jessica Goebeler



Then the 7th grade students wrote their own interpretations of the geophysical phenomena during Finnish classes. Here are the topics:

Write your own story about how:

The moon and stars were created

Thunder was created

Fire was created

Day and night were created

Darkness was banished in midwinter

The seasons came to be

The ice on the lake came to be

Freezing cold temperatures?were created

The northern lights were made

A reef was made

What makes sunsets so beautiful

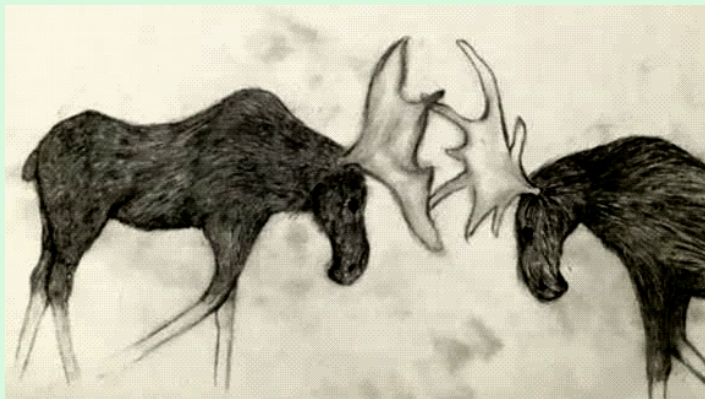
What causes solar eclipses

We heard many interesting new myths. Two of them are here:

How thunder was created

Long before humans, there was The Great Forest, which covered the whole northern hemisphere. In the Forest there were all kinds of animals from small to huge. But the biggest ones were two stags (male deer). Their hooves pounded lakes into the earth, their legs were as huge as the biggest trees and horns cut edges into clouds. Their constant battle for the dominion of the forest caused harm for the other animals of the forest.

The animals of the forest organized The Meeting of The Great Forest. They decided to exile the stags above the clouds, where they could fight all they ever wanted. And so the stags were sent to the skies. Even today you can hear, how they smash their antlers together. Above the clouds the coldness makes their fur electrify, and it is conducted through the clouds. That is what we call "Thunder".



Text and painting by Anni Nieminen

The moon and the stars

A long time ago, when all the gods we know were young, the moon was born. Back then they knew only one light, the sun. The sun had to rest, too. When it rested, all land was left in the dark. That dark time was called night.

The time moved on and people wanted more and more. They wanted light for the nights to come. The king of the gods, Vasilias, wanted it the most. He started to think how to make light without the sun: how to make light from nothing. People and gods all around the world came to his palace to tell their ideas.

A sage from the edge of the world had an idea. They could sacrifice a sheep for the sun. Vasilias sacrificed a sheep, but nothing happened.

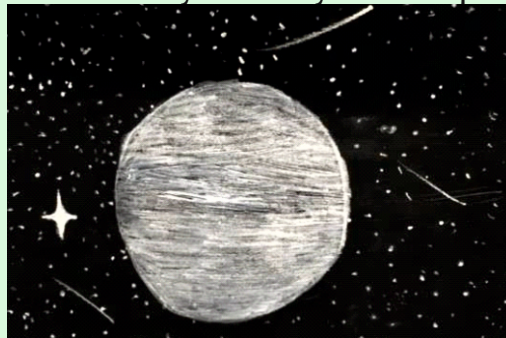
Someone suggested that maybe a human sacrifice could work. It didn't work as wanted, but the next night a tiny dot of light worked in the sky.

Inspired by the dot, Vasilias' army sacrificed more people. But the only light in the night sky were those little dots, stars.

There was a rebellion against the king of the gods. It grew bigger and bigger, until it was a war. More and more stars appeared in the night sky, but the light wasn't enough for Vasilius for he was so greedy. At last, when the king of the gods was thinking, a group of rebels arrived at his palace, asking Vasilius to stop killing innocent people.

They killed Vasilius, for he had killed so many innocent people. The next night, a large light ball appeared in the sky. All the land was filled with pale light. Nobody enjoyed the light, because so many were mourning for their loved ones.

That is how the moon and the stars were born to give light in the night. They were born out of sadness and pain, and maybe that is why so many feel hopeless longing, when they look at the night sky.



Text and painting by Inkeri Ylivinkka

Geophysical expressions in Finnish language

There are several expressions in the Finnish language to describe weather or other geophysical phenomena. Their origin is Kalevala but also in folklore. One of the best-known expressions describes thunderstorm. Here is an example of the stories behind geophysical expressions.

Ukonilma?

What is it?

Ukonilma weather means thunderstorm, in other words, thunder and lightning when it is raining.

Where does it originate from?

Ukonilma was believed to originate from the activities of a Finnish god of weather called Ukko Ylijumala (the highest god). When Ukko did something, it could start a thunderstorm. The reason for a thunderstorm to begin was that Ukko drove with his carriage across the sky or when he did something with grand gestures for example cut the crops with a scythe.

When he drove with his carriage, flashes of lightning came from sparks of the wheels and the rumbles came from the rolling wheels. A thunderbolt could also be from the hit of Ukko's weapon or tool. If a thunderbolt hit someone, it meant that Ukko Ylijumala had got angry at that person. In a nutshell: when Ukko was driving with his coaches or flailing with something, we could see lightning in the sky.

Ukko Ylijumala

"Ylijumala" can be translated into English as Supreme god but in this case it's more like that Ukko was living highest in the sky. Ukko was also the justice of the skies' court. Ukko had become more important when humans moved into the Iron Age because of the past god of weather, Ilmarinen, had become a mere smith. Also, farming had become more important and along with that the weather and its changes had also gained a whole new meaning.

In stories Ukko had a weapon but what that weapon was, we are not sure. The most popular guess was perhaps a battle-axe made of stone that came to Finland with the people of the Battle-Axe Culture. Ukko's weapon could've also been a sword or even a bow.

Other information

People believed that Ukonilma (thunder) also had healing abilities. It could at least heal lumbago. Because of that there were spells to ask Ukko to start threshing, which in turn would start a thunderstorm. In Finnish language the word "Ukkonen" (thunder) came from Ukko's name. Ukko also means an older man in Finnish language.



Text compiled by Tarkos Niemirepo, painting by Milana Mustajärvi and Roosa Hella

More information on Ukko Ylijumala

In the following link to a PowerPoint Presentation by 7th grade students you can find more information on the Finnish supreme god, Ukko Ylijumala.

Ukko Ylijumala (Eng)

Geophysical Phenomenon and mythology

Creation of the world - Ymir (mir)



Ymir is the first giant in the world, and the world was created from the remains of him and all the giants have come from him. Ymir occurred when the frost of Niflheim was mixed with Mspellsheim's fires.

The brothers Odin, Vil and We killed Ymi and formed the world. They created the ground from the body, they used the bones in rocks and mountains, but their teeth were in the rocks, in the winds and in the fjords. From the hair they made trees and bushes. The sea was formed from the blood, they threw the brain up in the air and it became the clouds, and the skull became the sky. To fasten the sky there were four dwarfs named North, South, East and West, lay on the four corners of the earth and hold the sky up to the eternal son. Odin placed an invisible giant in a fire at the end of the earth, causing him to blow the wings so that wind was formed, The brothers threw the sparks up toward the inside of the skull, these sparks gleamed at night and this is what we call the stars, the sun and the moon.

Thor – (Þór)



Thor (Þór) was one of the most important gods in Norse mythology. He was the son of Odin (Ódinn) and Frigg, the earth goddess. Thor was considered the storm-weather god of sky and thunder and also a fertility god. Thor was the strongest of all the gods and the protector of mankind in Midgard.

Thor had a hammer named Mjöllnir, and it can be said that the hammer was his symbol.

With the hammer he fought with the giants, Thor drove into a chariot that two oxen dragged, they called Tannggrisnir (Teeth grinder) and Tanngjóster. (Teeth barer) When Thor was riding in his goat-drawn chariot, his incessant fighting with the giants was perceived as thunder and lightning in Midgard. (the world of the humans) The heavens shook and the people in Midgard could hear the loud sounds from the wheels, and saw the sparks and lightning from the wheels as Thor flew across the sky. When storms came, people knew that Thor was fighting on their behalf.

There are numerous Latvian myths and tales telling about the origin of lakes, rivers, caves, hills and rocks. God, nature forces, different animals and birds are involved in the creation. Different varieties exist about the same geophysical phenomena.

Creation of earth



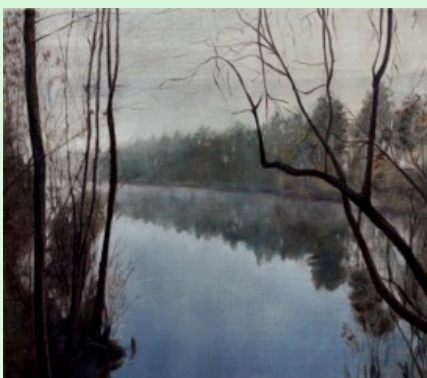
Once upon a time, when the Earth was not yet created, Devil was God's servant. God wanted to create the Earth and ordered Devil to hurry up and bring him some rubbish. Devil ran at a lightning's speed down underground. A lot of little pieces of rubbish were floating in the air there. Devil wondered to himself what these mysterious little things were and swallowed a handful of them. He then grabbed two more handfuls and brought them to God.

God then sowed the rubbish in the soil, saying: "May it grow and blossom!". At the exact moment the Earth appeared with all its trees and animals. Devil felt that the rubbish which he had swallowed earlier was starting to rise and grow in his stomach, too. He quickly turned away from God so that He would not notice.

Devil could not contain the growing rubbish pieces any longer. Big lumps of earth started to fly out of his mouth. They flew all over the newly created Earth, falling to the ground here and there. The fallen lumps turned into mountains and valleys.

God was furious about such a mischief and since then Devil has not served to God ever again.

How river Gauja originated



A fox was walking to Lake Alūksne to drink, but felt that edge of the bank started to bend inside. So she turned around and ran away. While running she could still feel water under her feet. This is how the River Gauja originated. Along which way the fox was running, the same way the Gauja was chasing the fox- that is why the Gauja has such character: strong, always changing.

HOW GUTMANA CAVE* EMERGED?



The chief of Livs** Ringolds went to war. He left his beautiful wife at home and warned her to be faithful and wait for him. The wife waited and waited for him and then cheated on him. When her husband returned from war, she regretted bitterly and asked for his forgiveness. But Ringolds did not forgive her. He ordered to bury her alive. Now, there underground she is still crying. Her tears have turned into a spring which reaches the surface of the ground. And during a period of time this spring has eroded the sandstone and forms Gutmana Cave.

*Gutmana Cave, located on the right bank of the River Gauja old valley, is the largest cave in the Baltics (500m³) and the most popular nature monument among tourists in Latvia. It is shrouded in legends and permeated with ancient energy. A small spring flows through the cave.

**Livs: Finno-Ugric ethnic group, nowadays only 250 Livs live in Latvia.

How river Daugava originated

When God had created the Earth, all its surface was covered by water. Then God ordered all birds and animals to dig the River Daugava and also other rivers and lakes to let the excess water flow away and become so clean that could be used for drinking. All birds and animals obeyed him except the Oriole. She said, "Why to strive so hard if I can just drink from the dew." God, when he heard her say that, declared: "Let it remain this way for ever!" So since then the Oriole drinks only from the dew. If there has not been rain for some time, she sadly cries. But she is not allowed to drink another water or she will die."

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 painted by: Vitolds Kucins, Kristīne Rozenberga



Medicina in Mythology



Greece

Iceland

Finland

Poland

Latvia

Spain

Italy

Medicine and Greek Mythology

For the ancient people, mythology was a way to explain what was happening around them. At the time, they had no knowledge of viruses so illness was something inexplicable. Therefore, they attributed it to gods; it could be a punishment from gods to the people who had failed to honour them or just a means the gods used to achieve their goals.

Very often an illness started unexpectedly when the gods sent their arrows to their victim. In the case of Niobe, who boasted of her seven daughters and seven sons suggesting that she was better than Leto, the gods punished her hubris by killing all fourteen children with their arrows. However, arrows could cure too.

Moreover, it seems that the ancient Greeks knew about the infections caused by rodents or by other causes. For example, they prayed to Smintheus Apollo, the god of rats, to save them from a plague or they created the myth of Hercules and his twelve deeds to describe improvements on the land in order to sanitise infected areas. Such myths were the ones related to the Lernean Hydra and the Augeas' stables.

Concluding, in the Greek mythology there are quite a few figures related to health and medicine, the most well-known being Asclepius. As for the cures, these were mostly based on herbs, which are abundant in the Greek nature. The text that follows offers further insights into medicine embedded in mythology.

A. Mythological figures related to Medicine

1. Asclepius (Ασκληπιός)

Asclepius was the god of Medicine and was worshipped all over Greece in ancient times.



Although his father, Apollo, was the god of cure, it was Centaur Chiron who brought him up and taught him the art of Medicine. Moreover, goddess Athena offered him the valuable blood of Medusa. The blood coming from the left side of Medusa was poisonous and could kill people, while the blood coming from the right side could cure them.

Asclepius and Epione had five daughters

a. Aegle (Αίγλη): She was a secondary goddess and her name means "brightness". She is related to the glow of the human body when someone is healthy, especially after going through some illness. Some people believe that her name was an honour to Medicine. Aegle was also the name of Asclepius' mother; that's why he was called by an adjective deriving from the name Aegle.



b. Aceso (Ακεσώ) The origin of her name is the Ancient Greek verb "ακέομαι" /akeome/, meaning "I cure". She was the goddess of the process of curing. She was worshipped in Epidaurus, just like her sisters, as a goddess.

c. Iaso (Ιασώ) : She Iaso was a secondary goddess with a human look related to the sacred notion of cure. In Greek "Ιασις" /iasis/ means cure. She was worshipped as a goddess in Epidaurus.



d. Panacea (Πανάκεια) : She was a humanlike goddess related to cure as a result. She was mainly worshipped in Attica and the islands of Kalymnos and Kos as well as in other places.

Today the word 'panacea' describes something that people believe will solve all problems.



e. Hygeia : She was a goddess that personified the health of the body and the soul. She was mostly associated with the prevention of illness and the maintenance of good health.

2. Apollo (Απόλλων)



Apollo was one of the twelve gods of Olympus mountain, god of light, music, medicine, art and prophecy.

He fell in love with Coronis, princess of Thessaly in Greece, and they gave birth to a baby. He named the baby Asclepius and gave him to Centaur Chiron on Mt Pelion to bring him up.

3. Centaur Chiron (Κένταυρος Χείρωνας)

Centaur Chiron, the son of Saturn and the nymph Philyra, was a wise creature who had the upper body of a man and the lower body of a horse.

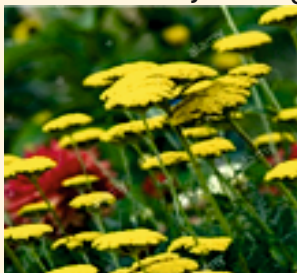
He was an important figure in the Greek mythology both due to his relation to cure and the natural sciences of the ancient world and due to the instruction of heroes.



He lived in a cave on Mt Pelion in Greece and taught astrology, botanology (i.e. therapy with herbs), the arts of cure, hunting and the war and helped his students develop their talents, which were actually the gifts of the gods. Among his students were Achilles, Jason, Hercules and Asclepius.

B. Therapy with herbs

In the Greek mythology the theme of curing with herbs is very common. For example:



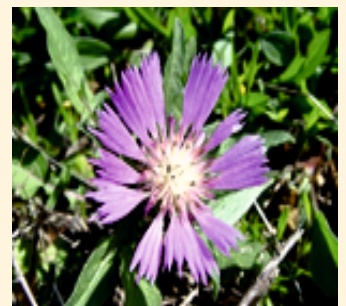
a) During the Trojan War Achilles gave his soldiers the Achillia plant to stop the bleeding.

b) Rosemary was thought to be the elixir of youth and a symbol of beauty, a present of goddess Aphrodite to people. It is an energizing plant that boosts the blood circulation.

c) When Hercules wounded Centaur Chiron with a poisonous arrow, the latter used the plant Centaurea to stop the poison.

d) In Odyssey, Penelope gives herbs to her son Telemachus to soothe his sorrow, caused by the presence of suitors.

e) Witch Kirke in Odyssey made a beverage of herbs which caused amnesia and forgetfulness to Odysseus companions. Her wish was to keep them on her island forever.



f) In Iliad, Menelaus was cured with medicines made of herbs when an arrow wounded him. The medicine was made by Centaur Chiron.

g) When Aeneas was wounded, goddess Aphrodite cured him with dittany, collected in Crete. The same plant she used to soothe her pain during labour.



h) The gods of Mt Olympus came together to define which plants would be therapeutic. They decided that Cistus would cure the warriors injured in battle. But the goddesses reacted because they felt that Cistus would be effective for beauty - the inner and the outer. Therefore, Cistus was given two attributes: therapeutic and cosmetic.

The information was collected from the following websites:

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Medicine and Mythology

Idunn

Iðunn (Idunn) and Eir were goddesses of medicine



Idunn was actually the kind of youth where she kept the apples that kept the gods young. Every day every god ate one apple, but these magic pieces made the gods always young and beautiful. Idunn was also the caregiver and she smelled like the flowers. When she walked around fields and meadows she did not form a footprint, but she was left with flowers but between them and her were quite unique connections.

Idunn was the wife of Bragi, the god of poetry and eloquence, and the patron of skalds or poets.

One time Idunn and her apples were kidnapped by the giant Thjassa and remembered the least that the gods had lost their youth for the future. However, it did not come with the help of Loki, who, however, had a large part in her disappearance, they were able to reach her and her apples again.

The story begins with the journey of Odin, Loki and Hoenir from their home in Asgard to some desolate place where food was hard to find. Eventually, they found a herd of oxen in an open valley and began cooking it. When they thought that the ox was cooked, it was still raw.

Above them, a big eagle was sitting on an article and he offered them to help them in exchange for a portion of it.

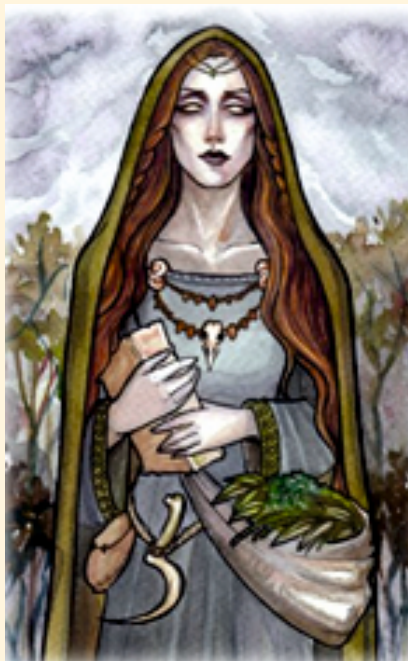
In a few minutes the meat cooked. But before they knew, the eagle had eaten nearly all the meat and Loki became so angry that he took a big stick and was going to beat the eagle. The rod, however, sticks under his wings and before Loki knew he was high up, stuck to the eagle.



Loki asked the eagle to let go, but the eagle refused it unless he got Idunn and her apples instead. After Loki had promised the eagle to give him Idunn and the apples, the eagle let go and Loki and his friends returned home to Asgard. Loki enticed Idunn to the woods by telling her that he had found even more beautiful apples than those she had. When they were out in the woods, the eagle came, grabbed Idunn and fled home with her. The eagle was none other than Thjosi giant. The gods quickly realized that Idunn had disappeared because when her apples disappeared, the old age began to move over them.

They soon realized that Loki was responsible for this, They found Loka , and ordered him to return Idan home. Loki then borrowed Freyja's raffle and flew to Thrymheim. There he saw Idunn and picked her up and planned to fly with her back home. Thjosi the giant flew after them. The gods, who waited at home in Asgard, saw where Loki approached with Idan in his arms, but behind them, the eagle approached very quickly. Loki, however, reached into Asgard just before the eagle, but when he came near, the gods attacked him and killed him. The gods were very glad to get Idan and her apples back home and now thought the danger was over, but it wasn't.

Eir



Eir ("mercy") was also a goddess who was capable of healing and She knew the secret powers of herbs, with which she could even resurrect the dead

Her name means " healer".

In Edda's string, she is said to be a valkyr, but it is a female character from a Nordic mythology who had the role of fetching fallen soldiers and bringing them to Valhalla.

As a Valkyrie, Eir accompanied her battle-sisters. While the other Valkyries chose the slain, Eir would choose who would live and recover and return to health. As a chooser of life and death, she is sometimes associated with the Norns. Although Snorri does not explicitly name her as one of the asunjar, he does not name every goddess counted in this number. He does however go on to say that Eir is among the most important of all goddesses.

Mistletoe

The Goodes of Love, named Frigg thought that the Mistletoe was a sacred plant. It was because when her son, Baldur dreamt for his death, Frigg called for all nature forces: Air, fire, earth and water, to prevent her son to get hurt in any way. The mystery plant mistletoe was something she overlooked because it didn't live in the earth or on the earth but on the stem of the apple tree.



Loki, Baldur enemy did seek this opportunity and made an arrow from the Mistletoe; then asked Baldur brother to throw it at him and Baldur died immediately. The death of Baldur was a great mourning to Frigg and for three days all the nature forces tried to bring him back to live, without any results. The legend says that Frigg cried every day because of her great grief and her tears turned into white berries that we can find of the plant Mistletoe today.

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Photo obtained from a dataset on the Internet

Medicine in Kalevala

The best-known medical substance in Kalevala is honey. Akseli-Gallen-Kallela's painting Lemminkäinen's mother portrays a part of the 15th poem where Lemminkäinen's mother has collected the bits and pieces of her dead son from the River Tuonela and sends a bee to collect honey which she could then use to revive her son.

First, the bee goes to a forest, Tapiola. Lemminkäinen doesn't wake up from the dead after this, and his mother sends the bee on its second journey, to the land behind seven seas. Even then the son doesn't wake up, and the bee is sent up to the heaven to collect honey and when the bee returns with honey that wakes Lemminkäinen's soul from eternal sleep.

the 15th poem: Resurrection

She said with this word
 she spoke with this speech:
 "Bee, bird of the air
 fly there a third time
 high up into heaven
 above nine heavens!
 There is a mead in plenty there
 honey to the heart's content
 with which once the Creator
 sang charms and the pure God talked
 the Lord anointed his brood
 injured by an evil power.
 Dip your wings in mead, and your
 feathers in melted honey
 bring mead on your wing
 and bear honey on you
 to be ointment for the sick
 to pour on the injuries!"



Original painting: Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1897)



A naïve painting: Emma Lintula, 9th grade

The bee, kindly bird
 managed to put this in words:
 "But how am I to get there-
 I, a puny man?"
 "You will get there easily
 trip there handsomely-
 over the moon, underneath
 the sun, between heaven's stars.
 for one day you will flutter
 to the moon's brow-bones
 for another you will whizz
 to the Great bear's shoulder blades
 for a third you will soar up
 on to the Seven Stars' back;
 then 'tis a mite of a way
 a tiny circuit
 to where God the holy lives
 To the blessed one's dwellings.'

Emma Lintula tells about her painting:

"I chose Akseli Gallen Kallela's work Lemminkäinen's mother, because it is one of the most beautiful moments in Kalevala. The coloring is excellent and powerful. I wanted to bring something new to it, but keep the old theme. My little sister's toy sloth inspired me to add sloths to the work. I tried to keep the coloring same, but otherwise I let my imagination go wild. I painted the work using aquarel colours. The end result was not what I was expecting, but I think I'm happy with it. Painting was the best part of the work."

The 15th poem: Resurrection (The Bee)

And the bee rose from the earth
the mead-wing from the hummock;
now it fluttered of
whizzed on little wings.
It flew beside the moon`s ring
the sun`s border it skirted
past the Great Bear`s shoulderblades
the back of the Seven Stars;
it flew to the Almighty`s chamber.
There ointment is being made
and salvas are being made
in pots of silver
and in pots of gold:
honey boiled in the middles
at the brims melted butter
mead at the south tip
at the north end salves.
The bee, the bird of the air
then got enough mead
honey to its heart's content.
a little time passed:
now it comes panting
arrives doubled up
with a hundred hornfuls in its arms
a thousand other bulges-
this one honey, that water
the other the best ointment.



A naïve painting: Arttu Pekola 9th grade

Arttu Pekola tells about his painting:

"I chose the bee as my subject. By reading poems I got a good idea, which would be somewhat easy to execute. At first I was going to put an odd looking bee over some flower, but because I got an idea about birds wings, so I decided to put it flying between the trees.

I used oilpastels.

My work didn't turn out to be very good. I had to change my plan too much along the way, because my skills weren't enough to do everything and I'm not the best with oilpastels. My bee turned out to look scarily like a beaver looking ball. I don't believe I've learned much from this work."

Traditional medicine

Elias Lönnrot collected Kalevala poems on his trips to Karelia in Eastern Finland. Poem 15 describes the use of honey and different herbs to resurrect Lemminkäinen, it is the most important poem about medicine in Kalevala. Lönnrot was also interested in botanics and published the first Finnish herbarium Flora Fennica in 1860. The Finnish plants have been described in detail and the book also contains pictures of plants. Natural herb remedies were used to cure illnesses and to ease pain until the 19th century. The 9th grade students studied the use of honey and herbs for healing health problems.

Honey

- Was used as a health conservator and life returner
- Was used to heal and cleanse wounds
- Given internally to cleanse blood
- Destroys bacteria and stops them from growing
- Can cause death because of pollen
- Giving honey to an under one- year-old child contains a risk of getting botulism
- Helps with burns and lip herpes
- Protects from tissue damages from hydrogen peroxide
- Is used in taking care of ear infections and preventing food poisoning
- Extends lifespan



Plantain (*Plantago major*)

- Used as medicine for stomach and intestine diseases
- Leaves are believed to work like band-aid
- Leaves are picked up during flowering



Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*)

- Leaves and branches were used to make a potion that could heal rheumatism and convulsive cough attacks
- Berries were also used to improve urination
- Could be given to children to heal pertussis
- Seeds can be used to make pills that lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, ease period pain, cradle cap, skin diseases and hangover



Wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*)

- Was used to heal rheumatic diseases, gout, kidney diseases, diarrhoea and general condition
- The penicillin from mouldy strawberries was used to heal eyes
- Was also used for curing arthritis, stone disease and jaundice
- Little children can often be oversensitive to wild strawberries and garden strawberries
- Pregnant women can't eat strawberry leaves
- Leaves can be used to make tea
- Leaves are picked from May to June
- Increases urine secretion
- Strawberry juice can be used as a medicine for children's rashes and head scabs
- Advice for heartburn: "If you take the first strawberry you see in spring and hold it in your mouth and then stick it in between two rocks, your heartburn will go away for the whole year".



Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

- Was used to cure dog bites, abscesses, asthma, scabs, nose bleed, haemorrhoids and constipation
- Was used as snus
- Was believed to Increase hair growth
- Hitting with nettle branches was used to cure nettle-rash, rheumatic diseases and in a hot sauna
- Was used to cure toothache
- Stops internal bleeding

Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)



- Helps with sleeplessness
- Can be used as a cough medicine after simmering in a hot oven
- Cleanses blood
- Helps with bladder and kidney problems, also with gout and rheumatic diseases
- Can be used to heal urethritis
- Broth made of young heather twigs eases nervous tension
- Was used to disinfect the intestine

Texts by Saara Kovero, Inga-Riina Linjama and Emilia Permi

Translation into English by Emilia Permi, Enni Ojala and Anna-Emilia Sorvoja

Paintings by Saara Kovero

Kalevala-inspired spells for modern teens

Inspired by the Mythology-project, the 9th grade students wrote spells for modern problems in the Finnish language lessons:

How to remove a gaming

addiction

Remove games from my day,
Boring, useless computers.
Remove the phone, hide it,
Important skills brought back.
Fitting sociality,
Dreams unbelievable,
Magnificent imagination,
New friends.

Remove games from my day,
Boring, useless computers.

Inga-Riina Linjama and Saara Kovero

How to stop root growth in your hair

Root growth you are horrible

Why do you have to always grow?

I don't want to color thy away,

Every third week it would be

Could they stop coming back

So I don't have to shave my head
bald.

(Oregano and Basil should be smoked
during the spell)

Johanna Järvinen and Enni Ojala

Help in growing curls

Grow hairs curly,

Turn the whole head frizzy,

Turn the clock thrice

And curls will come surely.

Emilia Ylinen, Melina Hutko and Aapo Virola

How to sleep 8 hours in 4 hours

Double the sleep
Remove the bathroom breaks
Express tickets to dreamland
The train of the exhausted
Take a teddy bear with thee
and the strongest coffee
Take thy bed with you
And nobody shall judge thee.
Anna-Emilia Sorvoja, Emilia Permi and
Michaela Jokiniemi

How to remove pimples/zits

Cleanse, cleanse the beautiful
face of mine.
Cleanse the filth from my
beautiful face.
Wash, wash the beautiful face of
mine.
And soon will shine again
The beautiful face of mine.
Aada Torkkeli

For banishing sugar desire

Constant desire ruthless
Impossible feeling.
Teeth's problem tooth troll.
Harmful, unpleasant chap
Wretched, mean thief
Repeating teeth brushing is
Voming by you.
You are disturbing my thoughts
everything else you are pushing
From your way.
Fade away, you idiot packass,
That my teeth aren't going to
Have hole sploch.
Nea lähdekorpi, Pihla Kraft, Laura Suutari

Complete Kalevala poem 15 on finding honey

Poem 15

"Tiny bee, thou honey-birdling,
 Lord of all the forest flowers,
 Fly away and gather honey,
 Bring to me the forest-sweetness,
 Found in Metsola's rich gardens,
 And in Tapio's fragrant meadows,
 From the petals of the flowers,
 From the blooming herbs and grasses,
 Thus to heal my hero's anguish,
 Thus to heal his wounds of evil."
 Thereupon the honey-birdling
 Flies away on wings of swiftness,
 Into Metsola's rich gardens,
 Into Tapio's flowery meadows,
 Gathers sweetness from the meadows,
 With the tongue distills the honey
 From the cups of seven flowers,
 From the bloom of countless grasses;
 Quick from Metsola returning,
 Flying, humming darting onward,
 With his winglets honey-laden,
 With the store of sweetest odors,
 To the mother brings the balsam.
 Lemminkainen's anxious mother
 Takes the balm of magic virtues,
 And anoints the injured hero,
 Heals his wounds and stills his anguish;
 But the balm is inefficient,
 For her son is deaf and speechless.
 Then again out-speaks the mother:
 Lemminkainen's Restoration.
 "Little bee, my honey-birdling,
 Fly away in one direction,
 Fly across the seven oceans,
 In the eighth, a magic island,
 Where the honey is enchanted,
 To the distant Turi-castles,

Flies one day, and then a second,
 On the verdure does not settle,
 Does not rest upon the flowers;
 Flies a third day, fleetly onward,
 Till a third day evening brings him
 To the island in the ocean,
 To the meadows rich in honey,
 To the cataract and fire-flow,
 To the sacred stream and whirlpool.
 There the honey was preparing,
 There the magic balm distilling
 In the tiny earthen vessels,
 In the burnished copper kettles,
 Smaller than a maiden's thimble,
 Smaller than the tips of fingers.
 Faithfully the busy insect
 Gathers the enchanted honey
 From the magic Turi-cuplets
 In the chambers of Palwoinen.
 Time had gone but little distance,
 Ere the bee came loudly humming
 Flying fleetly, honey-laden;
 In his arms were seven vessels,
 Seven, the vessels on each shoulder;
 All were filled with honey-balsam,
 With the balm of magic virtues.
 Lemminkainen's tireless mother
 Quick anoints her speechless hero,
 With the magic Turi-balsam,
 With the balm of seven virtues;
 Nine the times that she anoints him
 With the honey of Palwoinen,
 With the wonder-working balsam;
 But the balm is inefficient,
 For the hero still is speechless.
 Then again out-speaks the mother:
 "Honey-bee, thou ether birdling,

To the chambers of Palwoinen;
 There the honey is effective,
 There, the wonder-working balsam,
 This may heal the wounded hero;
 Bring me of this magic ointment,
 That I may anoint his eyelids,
 May restore his injured senses."
 Thereupon the honey-birdling
 Flew away o'er seven oceans,
 To the old enchanted island;
 Steep thy plumage in His sweetness,
 Hither bring the all-sufficient
 Balsam of the great Creator;
 This will still my hero's anguish,
 This will heal his wounded tissues,
 This restore his long-lost vision,
 Make the Northland hills re-echo
 With the magic of his singing,
 With his wonderful enchantment."
 Thus the honey-bee made answer:
 "I can never fly to heaven,
 To the seventh of the heavens,
 To the distant home of Ukko,
 With these wings of little virtue."
 Lemminkainen's mother answered:
 "Thou canst surely fly to heaven,
 To the seventh of the heavens,
 O'er the Moon, beneath the sunshine,
 Through the dim and distant starlight.
 On the first day, flying upward,
 Thou wilt near the Moon in heaven,
 Fan the brow of Kootamoinen;
 On the second thou canst rest thee
 On the shoulders of Otava;
 On the third day, flying higher,
 Rest upon the seven starlets,
 On the heads of Hetewanè;

Fly a third time on thy journey,
 Fly away to high Jumala,
 Fly thou to the seventh heaven,
 Honey there thou'lt find abundant,
 Balsam of the highest virtue,
 Only used by the Creator,
 Only made from the breath of Ukko.
 God anoints his faithful children,
 With the honey of his wisdom,
 When they feel the pangs of sorrow,
 When they meet the powers of evil.
 Dip thy winglets in this honey,
 Here the magic bee, selecting,
 Culls the sweet, life-giving balsam,
 Gathers too, heart-easing honey,
 Heavy-laden hastens homeward.
 Time had traveled little distance,
 Ere the busy bee came humming
 To the anxious mother waiting,
 In his arms a hundred cuplets,
 And a thousand other vessels,
 Filled with honey, filled with balsam,
 Filled with the balm of the Creator

Short the journey that is left thee,
 Inconsiderable the distance
 To the home of mighty Ukko,
 To the dwellings of the blessed."

Thereupon the bee arising,
 From the earth flies swiftly upward,
 Hastens on with graceful motion,
 By his tiny wings borne heavenward,
 In the paths of golden moonbeams,
 Touches on the Moon's bright borders,
 Fans the brow of Kootamoinen,
 Rests upon Otava's shoulders,
 Hastens to the seven starlets.,
 To the heads of Hetewan?,
 Flies to the Creator's castle,
 To the home of generous Ukko,
 Finds the remedy preparing,
 Finds the balm of life distilling,
 In the silver-tinted caldrons,
 In the purest golden kettles;
 On one side, heart-easing honey,
 On a second, balm of joyance,
 On the third, life-giving balsam.

Living water



Once upon a time in an old cottage among the mountains lived a poor widow. She had a very severe life. All her life she worked very hard and there were days when she had not much to eat. One day she got seriously ill. Getting weaker and weaker she worried only about her only child Jasiiek who was still very young. When she felt really weak, she asked her son to go to the herbalist in the village to get some herbs from her.

When the boy got to the herbalist, she told him the sad news that his mother was so weak and so sick that no herbs would ever cure her, the only help could be the living water. 'Where can I find such water?', he asked. 'On the top of Saturday mountain there is a living spring but you must be extremely careful because the spring is guarded by evil spirits, werewolves and witchers. One who gets scared by them turns into a stone' said the herbalist. 'I need to go there', said the boy. The woman nodded her head and gave him a little clay jug for water.

Jasiiek set off immediately. After two days of walking, he reached the mountain and started climbing it to get to the top where the spring was. Going up he noticed a lot of stones of human shapes. He knew that they were the daredevils who dared to come there. He didn't go far when he heard the noise of the avalanche of stones. He gritted his teeth and hurried up without even a glimpse behind him. When the noise of the falling stones died down, the howling of wolves sounded in the distance giving him the creeps but he dashed forward. When he felt the teeth of witchers biting his calves, he couldn't stand it any longer and yelled 'Go away! Leave me! I am not going back! No!'. Suddenly in the middle of his way up, a beautiful girl stood in front of him on the path and said 'Jasiiek, come with me. You look so tired. Please come with me, you will rest a little bit, you will eat something and forget about your worries'. 'Go away' he snarled at her and at the same moment a knight appeared in a shiny armor. The knight started waving his sword. 'Go away! I am not afraid of you' said Jasiiek. 'I will give you as much gold as you only want', tempted the knight. Jasiiek closed his eyes and passed the knight quickly. Then he heard somebody crying. 'That is not a moment to worry about others. I need to be strong', thought the brave boy and stepped on the very top of Saturday mountain.



The view from there was breathtaking and under the rock Jasiek found a spring with water flowing out from it, which was crystal clear and had intense blue colour. Above the spring a magnificent falcon was flying and when it saw Jasiek it sat on his shoulder carefully and gave him a green twig and just flew away. Leaving the place, he soaked the twig with the spring water and on his way down, he was touching wretches turned into rocks to get the cast away from them.

There were knights, peasants as well as the young and old. All of them were thanking Jasiek for giving them freedom and their lives back. They all formed a procession and walked back to their homes with him.

When Jasiek finally got home, his mother had already died. His eyes filled up with tears but he believed that the living water will bring his mother back to living. He carefully dropped a few drops on his mother and in that very moment she slowly opened her eyes. He gave her some water from the jug and she fully regained her strength. She could get up and leave her bed. She even started singing just like she used to.

From that very moment there were no worries or problems in that little cottage in the middle of the mountains but happiness and joy.

There is no spring on the Saturday mountains any more. There are only rocks left which Jasiek didn't disenchant.

Even nowadays water has its magical power. There are millions of people making a pilgrimage to saint places to get some water that flows there.

HEALING POWER OF WATER

In many Latvian tales we can read about the power of water that can be used for healing different health problems. Mainly these tales tell about the water in springs.

SPRING OF LIFE

When going to Tirzas Church there is a small spring in the meadow on the right the water of which people have always used as remedy. Everybody who goes to the spring to get water throws there a coin and wishes that a cripple will take it. Once a small boy took the coin. He went to the shop, bought a bun and ate it. After three days his face began to swell and he became blind. His mother asked him if he had taken the money from the spring. Then the boy told that he had taken the money, bought the bun and eaten it. His mother took a coin, put it in the spring and washed the boy's face with the spring water. The boy recovered at once.

There grew a bird-cherry tree by the spring and it was considered that the water gets power from it.

Another tale about a spring opposite Tirzas church tells that this spring was considered to be sacred. People considered that many illnesses can be cured by this water, especially when it is done on Midsummer Night. Therefore at that time it looked like a marketplace, ill people came from faraway places. Ill and weak horse were taken there, people were undressed and the water was poured over them. Some people took the water with them in barrels and bottles, others threw silver coins into the spring.

SPRING OF BLUE HILL

Blue Hill is covered by thick, mostly pine forests. On the top of the hill there is a round and clear hillock. In the middle of it there is a lower place telling that previously there was a hole. Old people tell that in old times in this place there was a spring which had so big power that it cured any ill person, but only ill people could wash themselves in it. In the spring dwelt a spirit that asked people to give a thing as a donation for healing them. Once an ignoble women washed her child's dirty diapers in the spring. The spirit got angry and ran away taking the water.

There are numerous tales about different springs and the ailments they treat. There is a spring whose water heal eye problems, abscess and festers. Once a hunter after long walking was not able to make a single step. He sat by a Bog Spring, put his feet in its water and continued walking without any problems. In some springs water heals also nerve problems or any abnormality. But people had to donate to the spring, keep it sacred and observe the rules.

Goddess Mara



Mara in Latvian folklore, also in folk songs is often mentioned as the goddess of the earth. Goddess of creation, and goddess of the death. In Latvian understanding, Mara appears as a woman in white clothes, sometimes as a milky cow, snake or as a toad. Mara is a life giver and taker. Granting of Life (also called as the gift of Mara) is featured in folk songs a lot, characterizing mostly the place where it takes place. This place is called the Mara's lap, bathhouse, chair, the room full of cradles. Swinging in a cradle causes movement, but the movement causes life, which is granted by Mara. Mara also appears as the fisher of life from waters. In a couple of folk songs children are called in different names of fish. After the birth of the child, Mara receives thanksgiving gift from her mother and the newborn's name.

Mara's essence is not only positive, but also negative, which is deprivation of life. It might seem strange, that in these folk songs the goddess is also called dear Mara. This might be based on an old idea, what could be the need for graces. Calling the goddess with respect also was to possibly prevent pain and suffering. In these cases it was a formula of meaning: "Mara, be kind to me!"

God Thunder

Once Devil stole God Sun and locked it in hell behind nine doors. God went to look for Sun. When he came to the hell he met the Devil's eldest son, he was God's godson. God asked him whether his father had stolen the Sun. Yes, said the godson, his father had locked the Sun behind nine doors.

The Devil was angry and cut his son in nine pieces. In spite of what had happened, God took these pieces and threw them over the thunder: three pieces were stroke by the thunder, three hit the lightning and three were growling.



Standing in the air, the thunder draws water from seas, lakes, rivers and then in the form of rain pours it on the Earth. But because draw is big and heavy it makes a terrible sound - a thunder strike.

The thunder itself rarely strikes, but his son strikes more often although his father doesn't like it. But if the thunder ever strikes in the right place then you can find there an arrow or a bullet which will be able to help cure various diseases.

Once during the hay harvest time a man went to cut a wooden card so he could bring the dry hay home. The card was not even ready when the old thunder man started thundering and promised a heavy rain. The man was angry because he didn't want the hay to get wet. He took an axe, showed it to the Thunder man and said "If you thunder and wet my hay, then I'll throw the axe at your teeth."

But when he said these words, a lightning stroke the man. Once, when thunder clouds were coming a man ran to the meadow where the willow bush was growing. He stood in the middle of the bush and bent its branches to the both sides. He was doing that because he wanted the clouds with rain to go to the both sides away as the branches.

Plants that heal



In Latvia, it is very popular to heal yourself with the help of plants. For foreigners it often seems very weird, on how plants can help. They are so many and they can help against so many illnesses, that it seems unreal.

With plants which are prepared in different ways it is possible to keep your health strong, dissolve kidney stones, clear organism, stabilize nerve system, lose extra weight, to cure bone and joint disorders. They can help against gynecological illnesses. With plants, you can fight against diabetes, tumor, high blood pressure, and lack of potency, skin illnesses and many more!

Over the time, medicine has evolved like this:

around 2000 BC - Come, try these plants

1000 AD - Plants are poisonous, go to a healer.

1850 - Healers are witches, come, drink this mixture.

1940 - This mixture is snake poison! Try this pill.

1970 - Pills aren't effective, try antibiotics.

2000- Antibiotics aren't effective anymore, try these plants!

After so many years, we have returned to plants once again.

Some examples how plants were used according to Latvian mythology:

Yarrow - clears organism, helps against cough, pain and infections, reduces menstrual bleeding.

Meadowsweet - helps against cough as well. Helps against insomnia and can be used to stimulate hair growing.

St. John's wort- helps against depression, helpful against stomach infections and cures different kinds of wounds.

These and many more can be used as teas, however, a very effective way is to use dried powders of these plants. These plants are collected in special vegetation periods and are prepared with care, in low temperature, so they do not lose all the healing components and properties in them.

These are only a few of the long list of plants that we can use, to fight for our health against a lot of illnesses. If you feel the need for nature to help you with health - Latvia is the place to come for help.

Sources:

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Latviešu tautas teikas (vēsturiskās teikas), Zinātne, 1988. 460 lp.

Paintings by Latvian artist Ansis Cirulis.

A. Spanish Mythological figures related to medicine

1. The Witch

For Catalan people, the witch is a mortal woman that acquires magic powers thanks to her relationship with the divinities of nature. Persecuted during centuries for possessing an ancestral popular wisdom, they were feared or admired so that she could cure sicknesses of the body and of the soul, but also they could provoke evil eye. She is skillful in reaching big speeds up of a broom to go at an aquelarre, or to places like the Canigó, the Pedraforca, the Montseny, the Mount Bell and many of other Catalan mountains



Furthermore it is said that this character has arrived from several places and origins, but they have been known by women specialist on the popular medicine knowing all remedy herbs, curative prayers.

2. The Trementinaires

The "Trementinaire" dedicated their lives to travel the world, probably their area, to sell the trementine (resin from the fir tree) and the remedy herbs. They normally went to sell it along the areas of Vansas's Valley and Tuixent (Barcelona) in the XIX and XX century.



3. The Celts in Cantabria

In the North of Spain, it is believed that the Celts had some environmental elements possessed a divine or sacred way of being. Among them we have the trees and specially the oaks and holm oak from where the druids got the mistletoe, a plant attributed with curative and magic features.



4. The "Encontráu"

It is a peculiar element of the Hurdana folk medicine from Extremadura, which establishes the origin in an evil in the malignant emanation of the spirit of wild animals. In the Hurdes "encontráu" is an urticaria transmitted by animals. If in the middle of the field an animal is observing someone, even if he/ she does not see it, the animal can transmit it. Also, if you step where a certain animal has passed.

The Hurdana women, when they went to the countryside and had to place their child somewhere on the ground, they said before "jusa el encontráu!" to avoid the effects of this in case the area was contaminated. To remove the encounter once it has contracted you have to sweep it and "jusearlo" (drive it away).

The damaged areas of the skin, previously smeared with flour, are swept with wild plants, picked up if possible in a place close to where the encounter was caught, or, according to other versions, with clothes from someone named Juan or María and of the opposite sex to that of the patient, and at the same time an incantation is recited in which the greatest possible number of animals should be mentioned, in the hope of being able to correctly mention the one that caused the disease. For some animals there are certain stereotyped formulas, often rhymed:

Si es de lagartija, ¡jusa a la rejendrija!

Si es de sapu, ¡jusa al buracu!

Si es de culebrón, ¡jusa al buracón!

Si es de gallina, ¡jusa al polleru!

Si es de lobu, ¡jusa al monti!

¡Jusa de tolos bichus, de los que m'acuerdu y de los que nu m'acuerdu!

It is preferable that such a ceremony will be done by the *zajoril* (wise men, respected by the community, who kept and transmitted the *Hurdana* folk wisdom) of the corresponding farmhouse.

B.Medicine and Spanish Mythology

1.The «Hypericum oil»

This is one of the plants that has become associated to the summer solstice. Called *pericó* or *hiperic*, also know for the generic name of Saint Joan's Herb for the fact that the maximum of its blossoming falls around of this date. It is also called "herb of the joy", since the plant it is also famous for its curative properties, that is why it has been used like a traditional remedy and is still used today.



Photo 1.Hiperic flower



Photo 2:The leaves

The first part of this denomination, the genre *Hypericum*, makes reference to its use at the religious venerations of the antiquity, it was put on religious images as a way of offering, *hyper* ("for on") and *eíkon* ("image").

Properties:

Since the Ancient times, the hypericum has been considered a magic plant. It was used to throw devils and bad spirits, where many upside down bunches were displayed in different parts of the house. In the Middle-Ages the hypericum began to be used to combat spells, curses and some psychological disorders, that is why the plant acquired the popular name of herb of the witches.

The traditional usage of it in Catalonia and in the Valencian Community is in the shape of oil "the bumps' oil" since it contains hypericin, an element with high levels of vitamin E, that has cellular regenerative properties.



Photo 3: "The bump's oil"

Links

The witch's picture:

Witch at the Calendar 2017 of Catalan mythology (Anna's Illustration Ribot-Urbita)

Hipérico's pictures:

Photo 1. Hiperic flower

<https://monnaturapirineus.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/foto-1.jpg>

Photo 2: The leaves.

<https://monnaturapirineus.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/foto-2.jpg>

Photo 3: " the bump's oil"

<https://monnaturapirineus.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/toto3.jpg>

Cantabria's myth:

<https://images.app.goo.gl/kUHXzVNBBJXiWJWz9>

Trementinaire's picture

<https://images.app.goo.gl/kUHXzVNBBJXiWJWz9>

Myrtle is nowadays globally known as the central ingredient of a famous liqueur produced in Sardinia, "Mirto". However, very few people know that this herb has been employed since ancient times for its therapeutic properties. Infact its essential oil is balmy and antiseptic and the tannins it contains have an astringent and antibacterial effect, recommended in case of bronchial disorders. (Pic 2)



(Pic. 1)

According to an old legend, a young girl called Myrsine was an excellent athlete. During an Olympic competition she won over a boy, who couldn't bear such embarrassing defeat and killed her. The goddess Pallas transformed her dead body into a strong plant of myrtle. (pic. 3) That is why, for many centuries, this plant was used to make crowns for the winners of the Olympic games. Also the Romans knew myrtle, and considered its leaves to have purifying powers. During the middle ages its flowers were used to produce the perfume called "water of angels"



(Pic. 2)



(Pic. 3)

Thyme

Thyme is quite common in Sardinia and includes different varieties, which all have medicinal properties, although the "creeping thyme" is the most beneficial one: the infusion of its leaves is an excellent tonic for digestion and can alleviate respiratory diseases, while its essential oil has antiseptic properties and eases rheumatism pain and joint pain. (pic.4)



(Pic. 4)

During the Middle Ages its cooking and therapeutic properties were so well known that Charlemagne ordered that thyme had to be cultivated and grown in every garden and monastery of his realm. Saint Ildegarda, the famous herbalist, used thyme for plague and lice.

(pic. 5) When listing the virtues of thyme, "Four thieves vinegar" must be mentioned. It was the cure for all sufferings, especially for plague. An old legend says that during the pestilence in Toulouse in 1630, four thieves robbed all the houses of those afflicted with plague, regardless of the risk of being infected. They were finally caught and condemned to death, and just before being hanged, they made an agreement with the judge: they would reveal the secret of their good health and in exchange they would be set free.



(pic. 5)

The secret was that twice a day, they put a few drops of this vinegar (a mixture of thyme, lavender, rosemary and sage) on their wrists and temples.

This remedy is still on sale nowadays.

Pallas painted by Botticelli

Pictures related to Myrtle