

In this topic, we will learn about the myth surrounding the naming of Athens and the role Theseus played in the development of Athens. For Rome, we will explore the role Aeneas played in the founding of Rome, as well as the myth of Romulus and Remus. While exploring both cities we will look at how and why the myths of are depicted as they are and what they meant to Athenians and Romans.







## The Naming of Athens: Athena and Poseidon

1	Origins	The story of Athens' naming has not been recorded in one definitive version anywhere. Essentially, it has been reconstructed through examining existing evidence, and stories that have been passed down.
2	West Pediment of Parthenon	The most obvious source of evidence is the West Pediment of the Parthenon. Although it has not survived it does show the story of Poseidon and Athena's attempts to claim the <b>patronage</b> (to support the city) by offering the people of Athens a gift.
3	Pausanias	Despite the West Pediment not surviving, we know what it did look like due to the Greek geographer, Pausanias, who drew and wrote about it in detail.
4	Background	The legend starts with King Cecrops founding a city in Attica (region of Greece) and him needing a name for it. At this time, gods travelled the land seeking cities to lay their patronage on. As Cecrops gave worship to Poseidon and Athena, both arrived at the city to claim it for themselves.
5	Poseidon's Claim	Poseidon arrived first and struck the centre of the Acropolis with his trident created a hole in the ground. From this hole, sea water sprang up.
6	Athena's Claim	Athena arrived next and she planted an olive tree on the Acropolis.
7	Athena Awarded Patronage	<b>Zeus</b> and <b>Cecrops</b> judged the gifts. Poseidon gave water but it was salty and was largely unusable. Athena's gift was central to the Greeks' way of life, both as food and oil. Weighing these up, Athena was judged the victor and she named the city after herself.

## Theseus: Early-Life and Importance to Athens

8	Importance to Athens	Although not the founder of Athens, as its king, <b>Theseus</b> made Athens the most influential city in Greece, united all of Attica under its rule, and he reformed how Athens was run and governed.
9	Theseus' Parents	Theseus is the son of <b>King Aegeus</b> of Athens, and <b>Aethra</b> , the daughter of King Pittheus of Troezen, a small city south of Athens.
10	Poseidon	After becoming pregnant, <b>Aethra</b> experienced a dream in which <b>Athena</b> commanded her to travel to the island of Sphairia. As she lay on the shore, <b>Poseidon</b> visited her and coupled with her so the child she carried now had both human and godly characteristics.
11	Rivalry	<b>King Aegeus</b> was concerned that now he had an heir to his throne, Theseus' cousins would be jealous and try to kill him. To avoid this he left <b>Aethra</b> and <b>Theseus</b> in Troezen.
12	Challenge	<b>Aegeus</b> left <b>Theseus</b> a challenge to prove his worth as king. He left his sword and sandals under a rock and told <b>Aethra</b> that if <b>Theseus</b> was worthy, he would be able to lift the rock and return the sword and sandals to him.
13	Challenge Accepted	When <b>Theseus</b> came of age, he was told of his parentage and accepted his father's challenge. He easily lifted the rock and took the sandals and sword. He now had to return them to Athens.
14	Return to Athens	<b>Theseus</b> had two options to return to Athens: (1) the easy route via sea which <b>Aethra</b> and <b>Pittheus</b> begged him to take or, (2) the difficult route by land which was full of dangers featuring villains and monsters. <b>Theseus</b> took option two inspired by his cousin <b>Heracles</b> .
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## The Labours of Theseus

19	Labour 1: Periphetes - The Club Bearer	Periphetes was a handit that would stand at the side of the road, jump out and beat travellers to death with his club. Theseus spotted him before he could pounce, grappled with him, then beat him with his own club which he then kept.	
20	Labour 2: Sinis - The Pine Bender	Sinis was a robber that would tie his victims to the ends of bent pine trees, then release the trees which would tear his victims in two. Theseus tied Sinis to two trees and had him ripped in half.	
21	Labour 3: Crommyonian Sow	The Crommyonian Sow was terrorising the region. Two versions exist which see the sow as a female pig, the other was a female thief who was nicknamed a 'sow' due to her beast-like behaviour. Each version sees Theseus kill the sow.	
22	Labour 4: Sciron	Sciron was an old man who would sit on a path by a cliff's edge. He would ask passers-by to wash his feet then kick them off the cliff before they were eaten by a giant turtle. Theseus caught the old man and flung him off the cliff.	
23	Labour 5: Cercyon	As a show of strength, King Cercyon would challenge visitors to a wrestling match with the winner becoming king. Theseus defeated Cercyon and became King of Eleusis but did not stay as he wanted to be King of Athens.	
24	Labour 6: Procrustes	Procrustes used to invite travellers to stay in his magical bed. Once accepted, they would lay on the bed. If they were too short, he would stretch them out; if they were too tall, he would use his axe to chop off their feet or head. Theseus persuaded Procrustes to test it, and Theseus quickly cut off his head.	

## Theseus Returns to Athens

25	Theseus remains anonymous	When <b>Theseus</b> arrives in Athens he does not reveal who he is to <b>King Aegeus</b> (his father) until he had a plan. Unfortunately, <b>Aegeus'</b> wife, <b>Medea</b> , knew who he was and persuaded <b>Aegeus</b> that he was a threat. He had to prove his heroism by defeating the <b>Bull of Marathon</b> that was terrorising the region.	
26	The Bull of Marathon	In fact, the bull was the same bull that <b>Heracles</b> had driven back from Crete. <b>Theseus</b> , like <b>Heracles</b> , easily took control of the bull and rode it back to Athens to scenes of great joy, before he sacrificed it to <b>Athena</b> .	
27	Medea Dies	Having failed to see <b>Theseus</b> die, <b>Medea</b> chose to poison him but she failed. During the sacrifice of the Marathon Bull, <b>Theseus</b> pulled out his sword to carve the meat. <b>Aegeus</b> instantly recognised the sword, and in the excitement knocked over the poison meant for <b>Theseus</b> .	
28	Theseus becomes heir to Athens	<b>Aegeus</b> declared <b>Theseus</b> his heir to the throne and the citizens of Athens were jubilant.	
29	The Minotaur	Each year, seven girls and boys were sent to Crete by Athens as sacrifice to the <b>Minotaur</b> . <b>Theseus</b> , thinking this was unjust, volunteers and hopes to kill the <b>Minotaur</b> (half bull, half human). <b>Theseus</b> defeats the <b>Minotaur</b> in his labyrinth before fleeing Crete.	
30	Theseus becomes King of Athens	Upon his return to Athens, <b>Theseus</b> was supposed to show a white sail if he was alive and successful, a black one if he was not. <b>Theseus</b> forgot to change the sail to white, and <b>King Aegeus</b> , seeing the black sail, commits suicide at the thought of having lost his long-lost son. <b>Theseus</b> , in tragic circumstances, would become King of Athens.	