

“Earthshaker”) can function independently as substantives in the manner of kennings, or metaphorical compound words. A few epithets are flexible in this respect. The goddess Athena can be called “Athena” (name alone) or “Pallas Athena” (epithet + name) or simply “Pallas” (epithet alone), with no essential difference in meaning, just as the god Apollon can be called “Apollon” or “Phoibos Apollon” (Latinized form = Phoebus Apollo) or “Phoibos.” Some epithets are applied to more than one deity. Thus Phoibos is an epithet both of Apollon and of Helios, which leads readers sometimes to conclude that the two gods are one, but in classical mythology they are always separate characters.

Suggested reading:

C. F. H. Bruchmann. *Epitheta Deorum quae apud Poetas Graecos Leguntur.*

Supplementband 1, to Roscher. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1893.

Walter Burkert. *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, 184.

Iesse B. Carter. *Epitheta Deorum quae apud Poetas Romanos Leguntur.*

Supplementband 2, to Roscher. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1902.

Ingrid Waern. *Ges Ostea: The Kenning in Pre-Christian Greek Poetry*. Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Bocktryckeri, 1951.

EPONYMY

Derivation of the proper name of a nation, town, river, and so on from a person of like name.

Greek tradition frequently derives the name of a nation or tribe from that of a founding ancestor of like name. The Hellenes, or Greeks, are said to descend from and be named for an ancestor Hellen; the branch of the Greek people called Dorians are descendants of a man named Doros, the Ionians from Ion, the Arcadians from Arkas, and so on, so that Hellen, Doros, Ion, and Arkas are eponyms of the Hellenes, Dorians, Ionians, and Arcadians respectively. Traditional Greek genealogies teem with eponymous ancestors.

Place-names may be traced to an eponym such as a nymph, if female, or a founder or conqueror, if male. Thus the land of Libya, or Africa, was named for the nymph Libya, daughter of King Epaphos of Egypt and his wife Memphis, a daughter of the Nile River (Apollodoros *Library* 2.1.4). The Greek peninsula known as the Peloponnesos, signifying “Pelops’ Island,” was named by the hero Pelops for himself after he gained control of the region. Similarly Rome was founded by a man named Romulus.

In contrast, the eponyms of rivers and bodies of water are regularly persons who, according to legend, drowned in them. The Hellespont acquired its name from the maiden Hellê, who fell from a flying ram and drowned in the waters below (Apollodoros *Library* 1.9.1), and the Icarian Sea similarly got its name from the youth Icarus (Greek Ikaros), who flew with artificial wings composed



Death of Icarus.

of feathers and glue but approached too closely to the sun, so that the glue of his wings melted and he plummeted to his death in the sea below, lending it his name (Apolodoros *Epitome* 1.13).

Stigler's Law of Eponymy states whimsically that "no scientific discovery is named after its original discoverer," if for no other reason than that great discoveries in science are ordinarily multiple rather than the work of a single person. Thus although the guillotine was named for the French physician Dr. Joseph Guillotin, who recommended its use as a painless and humane means of execution, contrary to common belief he did not invent

the device, and he did not like the fact that his name became attached to it. Stigler's Law probably holds true also for mythological eponymy, which presents the past as a series of simple but memorable events.

See also Genealogy

Suggested reading:

Morton S. Freeman. *A New Dictionary of Eponyms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Jim Holt. "Mistaken Identity Theory: Why Scientists Always Pick the Wrong Man." *Lingua Franca* (March 2000): 60.

EREBOS (LATINIZED FORM EREBUS)

Male binatural character who is both a living being and also the physical realm of the human dead.

The primordial being Chaos gave birth without sexual intercourse to Erebus (Darkness) and Nyx (Night), who then mated with each other, producing Aither (Brightness) and Hemera (Day), according to the poet Hesiod (*Theogony* 123–125). In this scheme Erebus is the principle of darkness, personified as a living creature, and Erebus and Nyx issued from Chaos because darkness is a quality of Chaos.

The anthropomorphic aspect of Erebus as male child and father appears only in this genealogical myth, for elsewhere in Greek mythology the physical