

THE CURSE OF ATREUS

The sad (and gruesome) fate of Atreus and his family was a popular subject in ancient literature, especially Greek and Roman tragedy.

Filii Pelopis erant Atreus Thyestesque. Thyestes uxorem Atrei corrumpit; tum Atreus vitium invenit et tolerare non potest. Insidias igitur contra fratrem cogitat: "Ira me movet! Filios parvos mei fratris necabo secaboque. Tum membra coquam et Thyestae cenam dabo.," Necat pueros; Thyestes suos filios mortuos in mensā videt. O miser Thyeste! Nihil nunc habes. Sed, o Atreu, propter tua magna vitia filii tui magnas poenas dabunt. In animis filiorum tuorum manebit tua culpa antiqua; erit perpetua. Quid debemus de tuis insidiis cogitare, o Atreu? Tuam iram non poteris superare; mala igitur erit semper tua fama. Te tuamque vitam pauci boni, sed multi mali laudabunt.

Vocabulary help:

Pelpos, Pelopis, m: Pelops, a mythical Greek king -- 3rd declension

Atreus, ei (vocative-Atreu), m., Atreus

Thyestes, -ae, m., Thyestes

Corrumpto, -ere: to seduce

Uxor, uxoris, f., wife

Invenio, -ire (4th conjugation verb) find, discover

Tolero, -are, to bear, tolerate

Neco, -are: kill

Seco, -are; cut up

Membrum, -i, n., limb, body part

Coquo, -ere, to cook

Cena, -ae, f, dinner, meal

Suus, -a, -um: his own

Mortuus, -a, -um: dead

Mensa, -ae, f., table

Miser, *misera*, *miserum*, unfortunate

Nunc, now

Translation:

Fold to hide translation until after your work is complete:

Translation: The sons of Pelops were Atreus and Thyestes. Thyestes seduces the wife of Atreus; then Atreus discovers the sin and cannot bear it. Therefore, he thinks up a plot against his brother: "Anger forces me! I will kill and cut up my brother's little sons. Then I will cook their limbs and I will give dinner to Thyestes." He kills the boys; Thyestes sees his own dead sons on the table. O wretched Thyestes! Now you have nothing. But, O Atreus, because of your great sins, your sons will pay the great price. Your ancient fault will remain in the hearts of your sons; it will be everlasting. What ought we to think about your plot, O Atreus? You were not able to overcome your anger; therefore your reputation will always be evil. Many evil men--but few good men--will praise you and your life.