

Introduction to Humanities
Chapter 2
The Myth of Theseus and the Minotaur

(From: <http://www.theoi.com/Ther/Minotauros.html>)

Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3. 8 – 11 (trans. Aldrich) (Greek mythographer C2nd A.D.) :

"Minos aspired to the throne [of Krete], but was rebuffed. He claimed, however, that he had received the sovereignty from the gods, and to prove it he said that whatever he prayed for would come about. So while sacrificing to Poseidon, he prayed for a bull to appear from the depths of the sea, and promised to sacrifice it upon its appearance. And Poseidon did send up to him a splendid bull. Thus Minos received the rule, but he sent the bull to his herds and sacrificed another . . . Poseidon was angry that the bull was not sacrificed, and turned it wild. He also devised that Pasiphae should develop a lust for it. In her passion for the bull she took on as her accomplice an architect named Daidalos . . . He built a woden cow on wheels, . . . skinned a real cow, and sewed the contraption into the skin, and then, after placing Pasiphae inside, set it in a meadow where the bull normally grazed. The bull came up and had intercourse with it, as if with a real cow. Pasiphae gave birth to Asterios, who was called Minotauros. He had the face of a bull, but was otherwise human. Minos, following certain oracular instructions, kept him confined and under guard in the labyrinth. This labyrinth, which Daidalos built, was a "cage with convoluted flexions that disorders debouchment."

Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3. 213 :

"The god [Delphoi oracle] told them [the Athenians] to give Minos whatever retribution he should chose . . . He ordered them to send seven young men and seven girls, unarmed, to be served as food to the Minotauros. The Minotauros was kept in a labyrinth, from which there was no escape after one entered, for it closed off its imperceivable exit with convoluted flexions. It had been constructed by Daidalos."

Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca E1. 7 – 1. 9 :

"Theseus was on the list of the third tribute to the Minotauros (some day he volunteered) . . . [Ariadne] pleaded with Daidalos to tell her the way out of the labyrinth. Following his instructions, she gave Theseus a ball of thread as he entered. He fastened this to the door and let it trail behind him as he went in. He came across the Minotauros in the furthest section

of the labyrinth, killed him with jabs of his fist, and then made his way out again by pulling himself along the thread."

Callimachus, Hymn 4 to Delos 311 ff (trans. Mair) (Greek poet C3rd B.C.) :
"[Theseus] escaped the cruel bellowing and the wild son of Pasiphae [the Minotauros] and the coiled habitation of the crooked labyrinth."