Kinds of animals
After 20 years of work, the great digital and multilingual Etymological Dictionary of Greek Mythology (Dizionario Etimologico della Mitologia Greca multilingue On Line (DEMGOL) is now (2013) operational. It will be of great benefit to Schools and Universities that count humanities among their program of studies, and where approaching a knowledge which is the basis of European and more widely Western cultures’ development is deemed useful.

The DEMGOL, which has been translated almost entirely from Italian to Spanish and Portuguese, and partially to French and Catalan, provides teachers and students with immediate information about mythical names (especially of minor characters), with selected sources checked first-hand and available in the most reliable and recent editions. We hope to move forward with the British translation, as only few items are now available in English. These details are supplied with an instantaneous effectiveness that is seriously lacking while consulting traditional printed volumes. Above all, DEMGOL provides a reliable etymology of these names, along with a brief discussion on any other interpretations that - according to the analysis and examination of the research of ancient and modern linguists - appear to be refused. When necessary, names and terms of mycenaean origin are carefully indicated. A precise etymological index of “Nomina Homerica” is about to be completed as a special section of the Dictionary.

We must not overlook the images (and links) apparatus, whose enlargement is in progress. This does not claim to document the immense amount of ancient iconic representations of Greek myth (for which there are already huge iconographic Lexicons, usually very expensive), but seeks to highlight the survival and effectiveness of “mythical” models in the arts and in modern culture, including mass-media, from the Renaissance to present day and future.

Our most important achievement is the preparation of all the resources in digital formats that will be available as PDF and E-PUB. This will enable international users, from Brazil to France, from Argentina to Italy, from Mexico to Angola, to consult DEMGOL by any Internet device such as Netbooks, Tablets, Smartphones, and of course standard PCs and Macs.

The work began in 1992 with Carla Zufferli’s PhD thesis, and is now carried out under the direction of Ezio Pellizer, with the past and present collaboration of many GRIMM members: Francesca Marzari, Luisa Benincampi, Stefano Di Brazzano, Alberto Cecon, Alberto Pavan, Illaria Sforza, Ingrid Leschiutta; Francesca Marzari and Françoise Létoublon (HOMERICA group, Grenoble) worked at the French translation; the Spanish translation was carried out by Álvaro Ibáñez (Granada) and José Antonio Clúa Serena (Barcelona) and is currently mainly performed by Diana De Paco Serrano (Murcia). In Brazil Matheus Trevizam, Tereza Virginia, Manuela Ribeiro Barbosa, and Antonio Orlando Dourado Lopes are very active. The Catalan translation progresses especially thanks to Vicky Alsina, Daniel Ramon, Xavier Riu e Nereida Villagra.
Ἀκαλανθίς
ACALANTIS
Daughter of King Pierus of Macedonia. With her eight sisters she dared compete with the Muses in song, and for this they were transformed into birds: Acalantis become a goldfinch (Anton. Lib. *Metam.* 9).

The name means precisely "goldfinch" (D'Arcy Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, pp. 30 ss.) and derives from ἄκανθα, which refers to various spiny plants like the thistle, with metathesis from *ἀκανθαλίς*.

Theme: Transformation

Ἀγρών
AGRON
Name of an inhabitant of the island of Cos who, along with his sisters Byssa and Meropis, worshiped only the Earth and insulted the other gods, who in revenge transformed him into a plover (Anton. Lib. *Met*. 15, from Boios, *Ornithogonia*).

It possibly derives from ἄγρος, "field, land" and means something like "lover of fields", "man of the country."

Theme: Transformation

Βαλίος
BALIOS or BALIUS
One of the two immortal horses of Achilles (Xanthus), son of Zephyrus and the Harpy Podarge, who was given to Peleus by Poseidon, perhaps on the occasion of Peleus' wedding to Thetis. The third horse of Achilles' team was Pedasus, who was killed in battle. 2. The horse of Celmis (or Schelmis) beaten in a race by the mare of Erechtheus, named Podarce (Nonn. *Dionys* 37, 334-337). 3. One of the dogs of Actaeon, in Apollod. *Bibl.* 33, 4, 4.

With a recessive accent, Balios, is simply derived from βαλιός, "speckled, spotted".

Βασιλίσκος
BASILISK
A serpent of small size, no more than twelve inches long (about a hand’s length), marked by a white spot on the head, is also distinguished from other snakes by traveling upright rather than slithering (*erectus in medio incedens*; Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 8, 33, 78; Aelian. *Hist. anim.* 2, 5). One is tempted to identify it with the cobra. Lucan (*Bell. Civ.* 724-26) mentioned its death-bringing hiss, including it in his comprehensive "catalogue" of snakes, to which Dante alludes in the Circle of Hell dedicated to thieves (*Inf.* 24, 85 ff.) Not only its touch, but its breath is destructive, wherever it appears (*exurit herbas, rumpit saxa*). Its venom can pass through objects, if it is true that one time, as Pliny says, a rider and his horse were destroyed by poison traveling up the long spear used for killing the serpent, cf. also Aelian. *Nat. anim.* 2, 5. The power of its gaze is terrible: anyone who meets it dies. The only way to look upon it is through the reflection of a mirror, just as Perseus had done with Medusa, from whose blood all the reptiles of Libya arose (Lucan. *Bell. Civ.* 696 ff.). Alexander the Great, during his campaign in India, to defeat the horrible creature (cf. Leo Neapol. *Hist. de prelis* Alex. Magni rec. l. 3, p. 320, sec. X) used the stratagem of putting mirrors on the shields of his soldiers. The basilisk’s mortal enemies are the weasel and the cock: the first kills him with its own smell (Plin. *Nat. hist.* 8, 33, 79); the second protected travelers who passed through Libya (Aelian. *Nat. anim.* 3, 31). In Late Antique and Medieval bestiaries its nature is linked to that of its enemy the cock; it too can go on all fours, or can assume plumage while keeping a reptilian tail: thus arose the *basilgallo* (*basilcock* in Chaucer). In the Middle Ages it had a negative connotation, at
times relating it to the Devil (or Antichrist), to the sinner, or heresy. To St. Antony of Padua (Sermoni) it represented wrath. Cecco d'Ascoli, who was burned at the stake in 1327 on the charge of sorcery, records that "the basilisk is the Lord of serpents" (Acerba, 30). The preconception has biblical roots: Isaiah (59, 5) mentions a poisonous reptile, the Hebrew tsepha, that in the translation of the Septuagint became βασιλίσκος and in the Vulgate basiliscus. It likewise occurs in Jeremiah 8, 17 and in Psalms, 91, 13. Modern translations, more cautiously, prefers "asp, viper, serpent".

The etymology is simple: βασιλίσκος, diminutive of βασιλεύς (a word already attested in Mycenaean, qa-si-re-u), means "little king", lat. basiliscus and regulus, designating the "king of the serpents", due to its terrible powers, in spite of its small size.

Ξάνθος

XANTHOS

A frequent name of men and horses, such as: 1. The immortal horse of Achilles, given to Peleus by Poseidon, who was given the ability to speak by Hera in order to inform the hero of his coming death (Hom. Il. 19, 404-424), 2. One of the horses belonging to Hector (Hom. Il. 8, 184-190), 3. One of the horses of the Dioscuri (Stesich. Fr. 178.1, vv. 2 P., apud Etym. Magnum s. v.), and finally 3. One of the horses of Diomedes, king of Thrace (Hygin. Fab. 30, 9). It is also the name of a Nereid, in the feminine form in -ή, Hesiod. Theog. 356.

The name derives from ξανθός, "blond, fair-haired" (attested as an anthroponym already in Mycenaean: ka-sa-to, PY An 39.6), etymology unknown. Frisk (Gr. Et. Wört., s. v. ξανθός) and Pokorny (Indog. Etym. Wört., p. 533) doubt its relation to the root kas-, kas-no-, "gray", Lat. canus, with the ending -dho- and disappearance of the root syllable *ks-en-dho: but this derivation does not seem plausible in sense or form. Hester ("Lingua" 13, 1965, p. 361) suggests a Pelasgian origin from *keu-, *k+u x or *kand-, Lat. candidus.

Theme: Prophecy