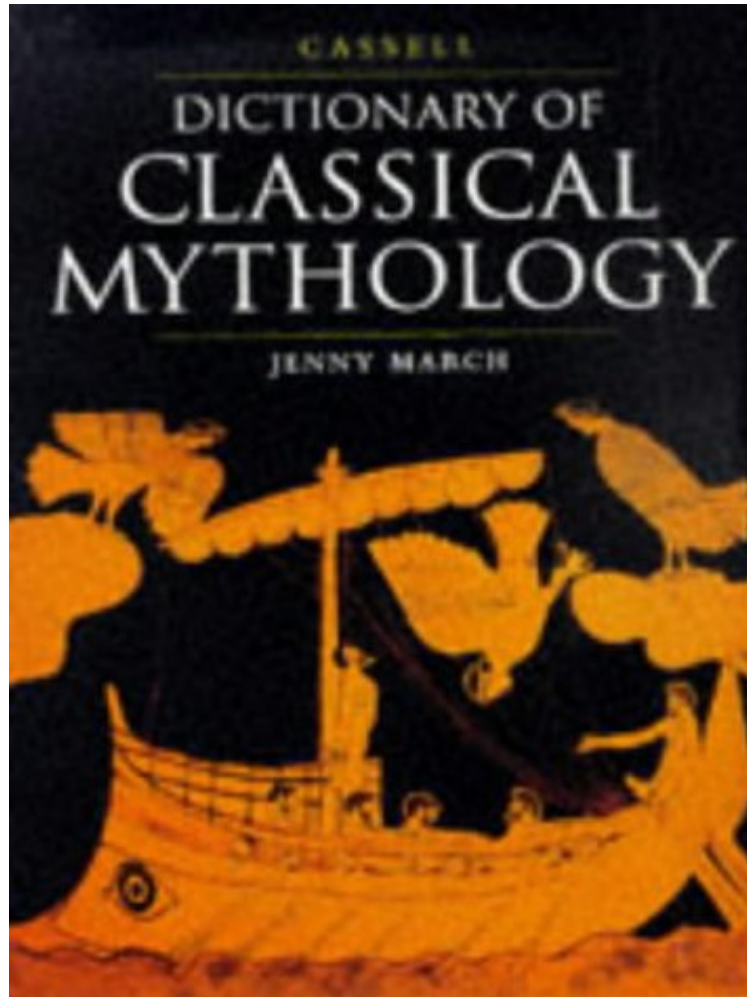


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Cassell Dictionary of Classical Mythology

Jennifer R. March

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Jennifer R. March : Cassell Dictionary of Classical Mythology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cassell Dictionary of Classical Mythology:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A treasure! Best reference book on the topic available!By nbknttMuch more than a dictionary, this is better described as a desk encyclopedia of classical mythology. Tea ching adult-education courses on classical topics, i use this constantly in preparation and recommend it whole-heartedly to my students. Everyone who has bought it loves it.To compare it to other standard works: Bulfinch is a standard, but dated; Graves is more scholarly but very heavy reading and is marred by Insistence on his White Goddess hobbyhorse; Hamilton is too elementary, pitched to a young readership.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An excellent dictionaryBy A CustomerI've read a number of classical dictionaries over the years, and one thing I especially like about this one is that it doesn't restrict its fairly exhaustive listings strictly to ancient sources. It does

sometimes mention modern takes on classical myths, like Kazantzakis's *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* and T.S. Eliot's *Leda and the Swan*. A very good dictionary.⁴ of 4 people found the following review helpful. The best modern encyclopaedia of Greek mythology By Petrushka Although the "Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology" is certainly more popular, Jenny March's "Dictionary" is for my money the best recent encyclopaedia of Greco-Roman myth. I judge this based on the following criteria: (1) Accuracy. Misinformation should not be presented. This ought to be a given. (2) Sources. No encyclopaedia is worth anything if it doesn't present its sources. On this criterion the "Meridian Handbook" and March's "Dictionary" are just about even. You just can't look at classical myths without also looking at the context they come from. This is one of March's great strengths: she always, always, always tells you exactly what the ancient sources are for such-and-such a myth. Without that information, it's impossible to track anything down; with it, you have a complete toolset at your disposal. (3) Depth. This is the area where I think March has a significant edge over the "Meridian Handbook". Where different ancient sources give varying versions of stories, March presents all the information; she never succumbs to the temptation to simplify things down to a single "authoritative" version. (The "Meridian Handbook" isn't *weak* in this area; it just isn't as outstanding as March's "Dictionary".) As an addendum, the best English-language encyclopaedia of classical myth ever written is actually a much older one: that of William Smith, the "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology", published ca. 1850. It has all the merits of March's encyclopaedia and more, but it is also a very, very large dictionary (three enormous volumes). As a compromise between size and thoroughness, March is supreme.

This is an A-Z guide to the mythology of the classical world, covering all the principal myths, gods and goddesses, together with the personalities, places, animals, monsters, heavenly bodies and events of classical mythology. Background historical and archaeological information is provided. The outline accounts are supplemented by extensive quotations from the original sources, to help bring the narrative to life and show how literary traditions shaped the development of classical mythology.

From Library Journal These two volumes of Greek and Roman mythology cover essentially the same material, though each contains some information the other does not. Dixon-Kennedy's Encyclopedia is relatively easy to read. Entries, in ready-reference format, are short and to the point. Cross references are given, though they are not extensive. Readers will use this as a quick reference source only, leading them to more in-depth searching as their interest dictates. Dixon-Kennedy (*European Myth Legend*, Blandford, 1997) does not offer citations for each entry because he has restricted his research citations to four volumes: Robert Graves's two-volume *The Greek Myths*, Homers *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. All other information, he states in his preface, comes from original personal research. Nonetheless, he includes an extensive bibliography of works that contain essential information to some degree or another. The Cassell Dictionary generally has more extensive entries. Citations are given with each entry, and cross references are included within the text in small capital letters. More resources have been cited in the text, but the bibliography is not quite as extensive as that in the Encyclopedia. This volume includes pictures and photographs, which the other does not, as well as references within entries to the mythological influence on art, literature, and culture. British scholar March also quotes often from classical poets and playwrights where appropriate. In general, the Cassell Dictionary is more scholarly in both content and appearance, while the Encyclopedia is more accessible to younger students. Either is an acceptable addition, depending on the needs of the collection. Katherine K. Koenig, Ellis Sch., Pittsburgh Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist When the keywords classical and mythology bring up more than 500 citations in Books in Print Plus, do we need another dictionary of Greek and Roman mythology? With *Hercules* popular as both a live-action TV show and a Disney animated film, and teachers still giving out Greek and Roman mythology assignments, the answer is yes. This new one should be very helpful to both students and librarians. The author is a distinguished classicist at Oxford University, but her writing is accessible to general readers. The style is more modern than most mythology books, which enhances accessibility. Anglicisms do not interfere with an American's use of the book. The book is in dictionary format with extensive cross-references. Roman names of gods refer the reader to the longer articles on the Greek gods. Where a Roman god was conflated with a Greek (e.g., Jupiter with Zeus or Juno with Hera), his or her distinctly Roman characteristics are described. Entries range from a couple of lines to several two-columned pages. Many of the entries have citations to Greek and Roman literary works, a number of which, such as *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are easy to find in translation in inexpensive paperback editions. March also includes excerpts from the literature in her own translation. Her quotations from *Iliad* about the fate of Astyanax, Hector's little son, are surprisingly moving. All of classical mythology's "usual suspects" (e.g., Apollo, Hercules, Trojan War) are included, with good, clear discussions. More obscure characters are also included, such as the men Cadmus created by sowing dragon's teeth. They are the Spartoi or Sown Men, and March has separate entries for each of them. Cross-referencing seems inconsistent. There is nothing in Sown Men to lead the reader to Cadmus, although there are links to Pentheus, Teresias, and several other entries. At the end of the volume, March includes several appendixes: maps of the classical world, genealogies of gods and mythological families, thumbnail sketches of major classical authors, and a brief bibliography. The genealogies will be useful to students of

Greek drama as well as students of mythology. The book is suitable for large public libraries and their larger branches, academic libraries, and high-school libraries, especially those serving honors literature classes. About the Author Dr Jenny March lectures and publishes extensively on Greek tragedy, Homer, and classical mythology, and is attached to Corpus Christi College, Oxford; her lively enthusiasm for Classics has done much to promote support for the subject, both through publicity work for the Classical Association and as Editor