

HERCULES/HERACLES.

- Son of ZEUS (a god) and ALCMENE (mortal, the queen of Thebes). ZEUS disguised himself as AMPHRITON (her husband) who was returning from a conflict with pirates who had killed Alcmene's brothers. (*Zeus wanted a mortal son to help him in a forthcoming conflict with the GIANTS. He wanted him to become ruler of Mycenae or Tyrins, strongholds close to Argos.*) They had intercourse resulting in a pregnancy.
- AMPHRITON returned that night and intercourse again occurred, the net result being a case of heteropaternal superfecundation. The prophet TEIRESIAS explained the situation when the pair went to see him on account of the telling of the same stories of Amphrition's adventures twice in one night. The result being that Alcmene was carrying twins, Hercules (son of Zeus) and Eurystheus (son of Amphrition)
- HERA (Goddess, wife of ZEUS) was furious with Zeus behaviour as she wanted Alcmene's son to be High King as a descendant of Perseus, i.e. the son of Amphitriton. (*She had many occasions to be offended by Zeus' frequent sexual escapades and took revenge on the offspring, hence her hatred of Hercules during his life and her repeated attempts to cause him grief.*) She therefore made Zeus swear an oath that the child born on the anticipated date to a member of the House of Perseus would be High King. Once sworn, she arranged for the premature birth of Eurystheus whilst getting EILEITHYIA (Goddess of childbirth) to delay the birth of Hercules by sitting crosslegged with her clothing tied in knots and in this manner could have delayed the birth indefinitely. However, Galanthis, Alcmene's servant, told her the child had been delivered, she jumped up in surprise and Hercules was born on the same night.
- It was still uncertain as to the which boy belonged to which father but when Hera sent a pair of deadly serpents to kill Hercules in his crib he was found the next day playing with them having strangled them .