

ORFEO

The story of Orpheus is one of the most well-known in Greek mythology and has been told and retold throughout the centuries in various forms. The most famous tragedy involving Orpheus is his attempt to rescue his beloved wife, Eurydice, from the underworld. The story goes that Eurydice died shortly after their marriage, bitten by a serpent. Heartbroken by his loss, Orpheus decided to descend into the underworld to try to retrieve her.

On his journey, he sought the entrance to the underworld on the slope of a mountain, entering a cave that descended into the depths. Using his lyre, Orpheus charmed Cerberus, the three-headed guardian, and persuaded Hades, the god of the underworld, to allow him to take Eurydice back to the world of the living. However, Hades imposed a condition: Orpheus must walk ahead of Eurydice and not look back until they were both out of the realm of death.

On their way back, Orpheus walked in front of his wife, leading her back towards the cave entrance. To ensure she was following behind him, the hero listened for the sound of Eurydice's footsteps. However, as they approached the cave entrance, they passed by a waterfall. The noise of the falling water masked the sound of Eurydice's footsteps, so Orpheus, unaware, looked back. To his dismay, the musician watched as Eurydice was dragged back into the depths once again, this time beyond his reach.

When Orpheus emerged from the cave, he fell to his knees, burying his fingers in the ground and crying inconsolably. It is said that this place is located in the Rhodope Mountains (Bulgaria) and that from the grieving musician's fingers, rivers descended from the mountains.

Comprehension Questions

1.- What was Orpheus's occupation?

2. What caused Eurídice to be dragged back to the underworld again?

3. According to legend, how did the rivers of the Rhodope Mountains originate?

