

Teaching notes on 9.04a Constellation myths

Slide 1

Learning objective: To discover the myths associated with star constellations.

After saying 'salve' to Lucundus, mouse-clicks on this slide will make Lucundus ask, "quid tibi maxime placet... cygnus aut aquila?" This means (literally) "What (quid) is pleasing (placet) to you (tibi) the most (maxime), swan (cygnus) or (aut) eagle (aquila)?" or, in more natural English, "What do you like best, swans or eagles?" Mouse-click reveals the possible replies:

[mouse-click] cygnus mihi placet – I like swans*

[mouse-click] aquila mihi placet – I like eagles

*We'll see Cygnus cropping up again in this lesson as a constellation.

Slide 2

We're going to explore constellations today, and mouse-click reveals the etymology of this word.

Slide 3

Mouse-click illustrates that the modern devices we use for navigation weren't available to the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Instead, they used the stars in the night sky to navigate around the Mediterranean and beyond.

Slide 4

An illustration how a random collection of stars can be more memorable when formed into a picture with an accompanying story. Here on mouse-click we see the construction of the constellation of Orion.

Slides 5-6

...illustrate two more constellations and their associated myths.



The class are then prompted to move onto their worksheet where they can read some constellation myths and then try to find where these constellations are in the map of the night sky of the Northern Hemisphere.

Slide 7

...reveals where all the constellations are hidden.

Slide 8

The plenary slide:

Question 1 Why were the stars in the night sky so important to Ancient Greeks and Romans? [They used them to navigate in the absence of GPS and iPhones]

Question 2 Name a constellation around which the Ancient Greeks built a myth. [Take your pick from any of the ones we covered in the lesson. There are even more, which may make an interesting homework or research assignment.]

Question 3 quid tibi maxime placet, cygnus aut aquila? ['cygnus!' for swan supporters and 'aquila!' for eagle enthusiasts]