

TAEDA

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Culture and Comites

In this issue, you'll read about some of Rome's cultural and social history and how Roman culture is present in society today!

Our Contributors

MARISSA MALLECK – MJCL president, senior at Detroit Country Day School

CAITLIN CONDON – TAEDA Editor, junior at Mercy High School

KATHERINE YOUNG – MJCL Secretary/Historian, junior at Mercy High School

Hope you're enjoying the issue! Feel free to reach out at michiganMJCL@gmail.com.



ABOUT TAEDA

Salvete, omnes!

The TAEDA, Latin for *torch*, is the Michigan JCL's newsletter for conference updates and articles written by the officers on the classics. Our goal is to inform others about interesting topics in classics that also connect to our current world.

In this issue, we'll cover a variety of topics. You can read all about Roman cuisine, or learn more about the ancient festival Lemuralia. We'll even explore the mythology in Marvel's Eternals!

Take a moment to read these articles and learn more about ancient Greek and Roman culture. We hope you enjoy this issue of the TAEDA, and stay tuned for more! *Valete!*

- Caitlin Condon, TAEDA Editor

The Festival of Lemuralia

Caitlin Condon

As you get ready to celebrate Halloween, have you ever wondered how long this holiday has been around? Although Halloween wasn't celebrated in ancient Rome, they did have a festival that was very similar to All Souls' Day. This holiday was known as Lemuralia.

Lemuralia, one of the Roman holidays pertaining to the dead, was a festival for the souls of the departed. It was celebrated in ancient Rome as far back as the sixth century BCE. It took place on May 9, 11, and 13. The reason it took place in May is because this is when the lemures were believed to have been most restless. This is also the reason why some believe the month of May to be unlucky for marriages.

Lemuralia was said to have been established by Romulus to appease the spirit of Remus, his twin brother, whom he had killed. For this reason, the festival was originally called Remuria. The term *lemures* refers to spirits after they have left the body. They are considered hostile ghosts, unlike the *manes*, or benign spirits, who were honored during Parentalia, a festival in February for honoring deceased family members.

“The overall purpose of Lemuralia was to ward off these lemures, or wandering spirits of the dead.”

The overall purpose of Lemuralia was to ward off these *lemures*, or wandering spirits of the dead. It was rooted in fear of the dead, and involved appeasing or ridding the house of spirits or demons, who were believed to return to visit and sometimes threaten kinfolk. In order to rid themselves of these spirits, the Romans who celebrated Lemuralia walked barefooted, washed their hands three times, and threw black beans behind their backs nine times. A merchants' festival was also held on the third day of Lemuralia, in which merchants sprinkled themselves and their goods with sacred water in the hopes of ensuring a prosperous year for business.

The significance of using beans to rid the house of spirits during Lemuralia is unknown, although beans were often associated with ghosts and supernatural spirits in ancient times. Beans were also a symbol of fertility, so they may have been used to help the ghosts obtain a new life. Spitting out beans was a widely used practice in ancient Greece and Rome to protect against ghosts, and people would often throw black beans on graves to drive out demons.

In conclusion, although the ancient Romans didn't celebrate Halloween, they did have many festivals of their own, and there are often many similarities to the holidays that we celebrate today.

The Influence of Roman Cuisine on Our Food Today

Katherine Young

Many of you without a doubt have indulged in the rich pasta or saucy pizza known in Italian cuisine, but did you know that many of these typical dishes originated in Ancient Rome? In fact, the Romans promulgated the use of both staples and supplementary foods found in our traditional dishes today.

“In ancient Rome, wine was used to please guests and demonstrate status and wealth.”

The influence of the Roman diet not only extends to food, Wine was but also to drinks historically found in all parts of our world. An example of this would be wine. Wine was a staple in Roman households and was served at almost every meal. In ancient Rome, wine was used to please guests and demonstrate status and wealth. The older and richer the wine was, the more wealthy the person handing it out. This still holds true today. The older the wine, the more expensive. A bottle of 100 year old wine can cost anywhere from \$18,000 to \$22,000!

In addition to wine, Rome introduced the simple food of pasta. Pasta noodles are used in a wide variety of ways in many different countries today. Bread and grain was a major part of the Roman diet, leading to new and inventive foods like the pasta noodle. Just as the Romans derived much of their diet from grain staples, we Americans also rely on these staples with examples like bread and beans. Furthermore, complimentary foods such as dried fruits, leafy greens, mushrooms and olives were enjoyed in meals of the Roman empire as they are today. Some of these foods have now been repurposed and edited with newly discovered seasonings, and some have become stand alone snacks and meals. Moreover, meats such as lamb, mutton, and beef were enjoyed during Roman *cenae*, or dinners. Presently, humans consume around 350 million tons of meat a year globally.

Many common aspects of Roman life have influenced our culture, food, and society, with one of the most identifiable being our cuisine. Whether you are enjoying a simple or complex meal, there will be at least one food that connects back to the cuisine of ancient Rome.



MCU *Eternals*: Mythology is Eternal

Marissa Malleck

WARNING: Spoilers for *Eternals* in this article!

The Marvel Cinematic Universe movie, *Eternals*, was released on November 5, 2021 and follows ten new immortal beings gifted with an array of superpowers. The ten Eternals are superheroes who have protected Earth from evil deviants for thousands of years. The Eternals are also loosely based on characters from mythology, including many Greek and Roman myths!

Thena is a fierce warrior who can create weapons out of cosmic energy. Her name comes from Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom. The goddess Athena is commonly depicted holding a spear and shield, which are the same weapons that Thena favors.

Makkari's name resembles that of the Roman god Mercury, whom she is also based on. Mercury is the god of travelers and merchants, so Makkari possesses superhuman speed as a tribute to the god Mercury.

Ajak is loosely based on Ajax the Greater from Greek mythology. Ajak and Ajax are both great warriors. Ajak is the powerful leader of the Eternals on Earth.

Ikaris' story is based on Icarus in Greek mythology, the boy who flew too close to the sun with wax wings and fell to his death. Ikaris is gifted with the ability to fly and flies into the sun in shame after he attempts to betray the Eternals. The message of the Icarus myth is to warn people to not be too arrogant. Ikaris' story follows the same message after he underestimates the Eternals and fails in his betrayal.

When spoken, Sersi sounds like Circe, the powerful sorceress in Greek mythology. Sersi is able to manipulate matter, similar to Circe's magical abilities. Circe famously turns Odysseus' crew into pigs in Homer's *Odyssey*, though Sersi can only manipulate inanimate objects.



Gilgamesh is the strongest Eternal who gets his namesake from Mesopotamian mythology and The Epic of Gilgamesh. While not from Greek or Roman mythology, Gilgamesh possesses great strength which resembles that of the hero-king Gilgamesh from the myths.

Kingo is named after the Babylonian god Kingu. Kingu's blood was used to create the first humans on Earth according to myth. Similarly, Kingo in *Eternals* loves humans and the Earth and chooses to protect them from the evil Deviants.

Druig does not have a specific counterpart in mythology but may be based on Dolos, a minor Greek god. Dolos is the god of trickery. While Dolos cannot control minds like Druig, he may have been an inspiration for the Eternal's ability to trick people.

Phastos is the inventor in the group of Eternals. He creates hundreds of inventions to benefit humans on Earth. Phastos received his namesake from Hephaestus, the Greek god of blacksmithing and inventions.

Sprite is not based on any figure from mythology, but she is credited with creating mythology in the movie. Sprite has the ability to create illusions, which she uses to tell stories to humans and create myths throughout her thousands of years on Earth.

The stories and messages found in ancient mythology live on today through new adaptations and even box-office movies like *Eternals*. I highly recommend watching *Eternals* and finding the abundant mythology references!

