

Phineus is only another form of Polydektes, and, like him, is turned to stone by the deadly countenance which Perseus holds up before them. His work is done, and with his mother and his bride he re-enters Argos in triumph; but the fate must be accomplished, and Perseus unwittingly becomes the slayer of Akrisios (XXVII.), as Œdipus slays Laios, and as Theseus unknowingly causes the death of his father Aigeus.

In the myth of Kephalos (XXVIII.) the invincible weapons of Perseus reappear in the hands of Artemis, and slay the beautiful and guileless Prokris. Even in the most complicated versions of the tale, the mythical phrases which lie at its root may be traced with the utmost clearness. The very name Prokris denotes dew, and, true to the old saying, the Athenian who had forgotten the meaning of the name, still called her the child of Hersê (the dew). In its simplest form the myth brings before us a series of phrases, each of which furnishes an incident in the story. The dew sparkles on the hill-side (Prokris lies on the slopes of Hymettos). The sun (Kephalos denotes the head of the orb as it rises slowly from the sea) loves the dew (Kephalos loves Prokris). But the dawn loves the sun (Eôs loves Kephalos). The dawn is jealous of the dew (Eôs is jealous of Prokris); and the dew takes a delight in more than one lover, who yet is one and the same; in other words, the dewdrops exhibit a thousand images of the same sun (Kephalos in disguise wins the love of Prokris). The dew flashes for a time with dazzling brightness (Prokris is armed with the spear of Artemis). The sun takes this brightness to himself, while he looks down on the dew (Prokris yields up the spear for the love of Kephalos). The dew lingers latest in the thicket (Prokris watches Kephalos from her secret bower). The dew is dried up and dies as the sun rises in the sky (Prokris is smitten by the spear of Kephalos).

The rest of the tale reproduces the legends of Herakles and Belerophôn. Like them, Kephalos must journey to the west, doing great deeds, and sink as the sun goes down into the waters of the western sea.