

Draco

There are at least two stories about the Dragon. According to one the Dragon was one of the monsters fighting with the Titans, the elder gods, in the cosmic war in which the younger Olympian gods overturned their elders to take command of the universe. Towards the end of that war, the Dragon confronted the goddess

Athena. She grabbed it by the tail and with a mighty hurl it into the sky. The Dragon was spinning in chaotic flight. It struck the dome of heaven and became twisted up in knots by the rotation of the sky. Because the Dragon struck the sky in the cold regions near the north celestial pole, it froze in place before it untwisted the knots in body. And so we see it twisted up in the sky to this day.

In another story the Dragon is the dragon Ladon which guarded the legendary tree on which grew the beautiful apples of gold. The tree belonged to the goddess Hera, the spouse of Zeus. It was the hero Hercules who killed the Dragon. The Eleventh Labor of Hercules was to steal the apples from the golden tree. Hercules killed the Dragon with arrows poisoned with the blood of the Hydra, and with the aid of Atlas, made off with the apples from the tree. After the loss of the apples, Hera placed the Dragon into the sky as the constellation of Draco.

