



Wedgwood Vase, c. 1844

Jasperware

Proctor Collection

Object number: PC. 552

Blue and white copy of Barberini vase; Portland vase

The Portland Vase shows the marriage proposal and acceptance.

Myth: The Marriage of Thetis

Prophecy foretold that if Thetis, a goddess of the seas, were to bear a son with Zeus, the son would grow up to be stronger than his father. Because of this, Zeus, King of the Gods, forced her to marry a mortal in order to protect his own power. Marriage to a mortal man would produce a mortal son and would not be a threat to Zeus.

Peleus, the mortal King of the Myrmidons, was in love with Thetis, so Zeus encouraged him and, though Thetis changed her form to avoid him for a time, Peleus captured her and the two were married. Their son, Achilles, would grow to become one of the great heroes of the Trojan War.