Chiron
Deep-thinking Chiron is the civilized Centaur who trained several famous disciples, being known for his wisdom and justice. Chiron, who was not a drunkard like other CENTAURS, never used his weapons against a man. Instead he spent his Old Age learning about herbs, and teaching to play the lyre to his pupils.

Born a Centaur
Chiron was born in very ancient times, for some have said that he was conceived at the time when Zeus was hiding in Crete, and his father Cronos, anxious to devour the little god, was looking for him throughout the earth. And Chiron, they say, was born a Centaur because Cronos begot him in a horse's shape. Without Chiron, they say, there would not be art of healing. For Asclepius, despite the fact that he was the son of Apollo, the god of healing, learned medicine from the Centaur Chiron. And as it has been pointed out, the art that Asclepius' sons Machaon and Podalirius performed at the time of the Trojan War, as when Machaon cured Menelaus, was the same art that Chiron had taught to his disciple Asclepius. But Chiron taught the art of healing to his other disciples too, for that is what the wounded Eurypylus, says to Patroclus, when they were fighting at Troy:

"I want you to cut out this arrow from my thigh, wash off the blood with warm water and spread soothing ointment on the wound. They say you have some excellent prescriptions that you learnt from Achilles, was taught by Chiron ..." (Eurypylus, to Patroclus, Homer, Iliad 11.829).

Phoenix 2, who later accompanied Achilles to the Trojan War, was blinded by his father King Amyntor 1 of Ormenium, son of Ormenus 3, son of Cercaphus 2, son of Aeolus 1, son of Hellen 1, the eponym of the Hellenes, son of Deucalion 1, the man who survived the Flood. Amyntor 1, doing exactly as Phineus 2, blinded his son on the strength of a false accusation of seduction made against him by Phthia 3, concubine of Amyntor 1. But Peleus brought Phoenix 2 to Chiron, and the Centaur restored his sight.

Lives with wife and mother
Although it has been told that Philyra 1 was turned into a tree when she discovered that she had given birth to a monster, others say that Chiron lived in a cave in Mount Pelion, which is in Magnesia (Thessaly), with both his wife and his mother, and that is what Jason, who was one of the disciples of this Centaur, says:

"... I shall give proof of Chiron's training; for I come from his cave, from the presence of Chariclo and Philyra, where the holy daughters of the Centaur raised me." (Jason to Pellas 1, Pindar, Pythian Odes 4.112).

Chiron and Cyrene
Chiron is regarded as a civilized Centaur, sometimes wiser than the gods, and certainly wiser than men, whom he surpasses in justice. As it is told, not even Apollo knew, or seemed to know, who Cyrene was when he found her near Mount Pelion without spears wrestling alone with a lion. But the god asked the Centaur to leave his cave, and tell him all about her. And Chiron showed amazement at the god's question:

"Do you ask of the maiden's birth? You who know the end supreme of all things, and all the ways
that lead thereto, the number of the leaves that the earth puts forth in spring, the number of the sands that, in the sea and the rivers, are driven before the waves."

(Chiron to Apollo. Pindar, Pythian Odes 9.45).

However, Apollo was not ignorant, says Chiron, but instead reluctant to show his love openly: "Secret, O Apollo! are the keys of wise Persuasion, that unlock the shrine of love; and both gods and men blush to take the pleasure of a bed for the first time openly. For even in your case, for whom it is unlawful to touch on falsehood, a gentle impulse has swayed you to dissemble your words." (Chiron to Apollo Pindar, Pythian Odes 9.39).

After this, Apollo carried Cyrene off to that part of the land of Libya where in later times he founded a city and named it, after her, Cyrene. And this was decided that very day when Apollo saw the girl, for as it is said: "Swift is the achievement, short are the ways of gods, when bent on speed." (Pindar, Pythian 9.68).

Cyrene, who was daughter of King Hypseus, of the LAPITHS, gave birth to Aristaeus, who himself became a disciple of Chiron, and the discoverer of honey and the olive.

Mortally wounded Chiron was mortally wounded in the following way: Heracles, in his wanderings, came to the cave of the Centaur Pholus, who received him and set roast meat before him. Heracles, then, asked for wine, but Pholus said that he feared to open the jar since it belonged to all CENTAURS in common. After some discussion on this matter, the jar was opened and the CENTAURS, scenting the smell, arrived armed at the cave of Pholus. A battle ensued, and Heracles shot and repelled many of them, who took refuge with Chiron. At that point, Heracles shot an arrow at Elatus, which passed through his arm, sticking in Chiron's knee. Distressed at this, Heracles applied a medicine which the Centaur gave him. But the wound was incurable, because the arrows of Heracles had been dipped in the gall of the Hydra, and were therefore utterly poisonous. However, others have said that it was when Heracles once visited Chiron and they were examining his arrows, that one of them fell on the Centaur's foot, bringing about his death. And still others have said that Chiron himself tried to draw the bow, and the arrow, slipping from his hand, fell on his foot, wounding him.

**His fate foretold by his daughter**

In any case Chiron, who was in pain, wished to die, but, being immortal, he could not. So when Heracles, after some time, released Prometheus, he presented Chiron to Zeus, who consented to die in Prometheus's stead. This had been prophesied by Chiron's daughter, the seeress Ocyrrhoe: "You also, dear father, who are now immortal and destined by the law of birth to last through all the ages, shall some day long for power to die, when you will be in agony with all your limbs burning with the fatal Hydra's blood. But at last, from immortal the gods shall make you capable of death, and the three goddesses shall loose your thread." (Ocyrrhoe to Chiron. Ovid, Metamorphoses 2.649).

This genial Centaur, who renounced immortality, reared famous disciples, and surpassed men in justice, conscientiousness and diligence, was put among the stars, and is known today as the constellation Centaur (Centaurus).

http://goo.gl/Be4Y9
The Greek mythology encircling the figure of Chiron, The Wounded Healer, is of great assistance in helping us acquire a deeper understanding of the archetypal energies reflected by the Chiron in our sky.

**Chiron**

Chiron, a centaur, was known as a wise teacher, healer and prophet.

Chiron's father was the Greek god Kronus (Saturn) and his mother was a beautiful nymph named Philyra.

Kronus was a cruel and devouring father god - and he met the nymph Philyra during one of his many searches for his (then) baby son, Zeus. Kronus was hoping to have some "baby Zeus kabob" for supper that night.

However, upon seeing Philyra, Kronus managed to get sidetracked - instantly getting a serious case of the hots for the nymph. Problem is - though - that the nymph Philyra did not share in his lusty desires.

So Philyra turned herself into a mare in the attempt to flee the unwelcome desirous advances of Kronus. But Kronus likewise transformed himself into a stallion and thus was able to consummate his overwhelming desire to mate with Philyra. Satisfied, Kronus left, never to return.

**Initial Wounding**

But here comes the dreadful tearjerker (pull on your heart strings) part of the story...

Philyra, upon seeing her newborn son Chiron (obviously a centaur), is so disgusted and appalled that she rejects and abandons her child. That's the really bad, tragic news for young Chiron... a child born of a violent rape, is abandoned and rejected by both his parents, the very ones who should have been there to love and nurture young Chiron.

The really good news is that Chiron was later adopted by the Greek sun god Apollo.

Perhaps I should mention here that time and chronology in Greek Mythology is often a wee bit... er... unusual - since Kronus was Apollo's grandfather and Chiron's father. So Apollo is actually Chiron's nephew. So go figure...

Upon becoming Chiron's foster parent, Apollo (god of music, prophecy, poetry and healing) taught Chiron all that he knew.

As a result, Chiron later in life became a powerful mentor to the sons of kings and many of the most famous Greek heroes, including Jason (of the original Jason and the Argonauts), Asclepius (that became a famous healer in his own right), Achilles and Hercules.

**Second Wounding**

Speaking of Hercules (Herakles, for you purists)... Hercules plays a starring role in the continuing
saga of Chiron becoming a wounded healer. Good old Herc always seemed to be at odds with the centaurs (and it was eventually to be a centaur that did him in).

During a skirmish with a rowdy bunch of centaurs (who were all scattering and heading for the hills) - Hercules carelessly, accidentally wounded his friend and mentor, Chiron, in the knee with one of his arrows.

The arrows Hercules had chosen to use on this particular day were arrows coated with the blood of the monster Hydra. Arrows coated with the blood of the Hydra were known to cause painful wounds that would never heal.

And being an immortal, Chiron having a wound that would never heal was a way serious problem... Chiron would never be able to heal from the wound caused by Hercules, and being immortal he could never die...

A seriously bad Catch 22...

And so after a long passing of time, with no relief, the wound caused Chiron much severe pain... Hercules (who'd been the one responsible for wounding Chiron in the first place) worked out a deal. ' (Note: For incredibly alert folks - what comes next is a different version, than the one given in the Uranus Rebel section of this site, regarding how the god Prometheus was released from his torment of being daily liver snacks for the eagle of Zeus.)

Prometheus
The Titan god Prometheus had been chained to a rock by Zeus, the chief Olympian god. Being chained to the rock was to be his (Prometheus') punishment for having previously stolen fire from Olympia as a gift to mortals.

Each day (some versions say every other day) Zeus' eagle would come and eat Prometheus' liver. Each night the liver would heal itself. Then the eagle would come again for his liver snacks.

As stipulated by Zeus - Prometheus could only be released if (and when) an immortal offered to go to Tartarus and take his place. Going to Tartarus would mean the immortal was giving up his status as an immortal and would die.

Chiron, being the son of Kronus and half-brother of Zeus, agreed to take the place of Prometheus, and then eventually died. Upon his death, he was then released from his wound that would never heal.

Chiron was then honored with the constellation of Centaurus.

http://goo.gl/rB0xQ
In Greek mythology, Chiron (also Cheiron or Kheiron) (Greek: Χειρών; "hand"[1]) was held as the superlative centaur among his brethren. Like the satyrs, centaurs were notorious for being overly indulgent drinkers and carousers, given to violence when intoxicated, and generally uncultured delinquents. Each Centaur was also wild and lusty. Chiron, by contrast, was intelligent, civilized and kind.[2] He was known for his knowledge and skill with medicine. According to an archaic myth[3] he was sired by Kronos (Cronus) when he had taken the form of a horse[4] and impregnated the nymph Philyra,[5] Chiron's lineage was different from other centaurs, who were born of sun and raincloud, rendered by Greeks of the Classic period as from the union of the king Ixion, consigned to a fiery wheel, and Nephele ("cloud"), which in the Olympian telling Zeus invented to look like Hera. More recent tellings hold that Chiron's peaceful characteristic and intelligence unlike other centaur is because he is taught by Apollo and Artemis at his younger days.

Chiron's haunts were on Mount Pelion; there he married the nymph Chariclo who bore him three daughters, Hippe (Melanippe or Euppe), Endelis, and Ocyrhoe, and one son Carystus.

A great healer, astrologer, and respected oracle, Chiron was said to be the first centaur and highly revered as a teacher and tutor. Among his pupils were many culture heroes: Asclepius, Aristaeus, Ajax, Aeneas, Actaeon, Caeneus, Theseus, Achilles, Jason, Peleus, Telamon, sometimes Heracles, Oileus, Phoenix, and in some stories, Dionysus. According to Ptolemaeus Chennus, quoted in the Library of Photios of Constantinople, Dionysius learned chants and dances, the bacchic rites and initiations from Chiron.[6]

Death
His nobility is further reflected in the story of his death as Chiron sacrificed his life, allowing mankind to obtain the use of fire. Being the son of Kronos, a titan, he was immortal and so could not die. So it was left to Heracles to arrange a bargain with Zeus to exchange Chiron's immortality for the life of Prometheus who had been chained to a rock and left to die for his transgressions. Chiron had been poisoned with an arrow belonging to Heracles that had been treated with the blood of the Hydra, or, in other versions, poison that Chiron had given to the hero when he had been under the honorable centaur's tutelage. This had taken place during the visit of Heracles to the cave of Pholus on Mount Pelion in Thessaly when he visited his friend during his fourth labour in defeating the Erymanthian Boar. While they were at supper, Heracles asked for some wine to accompany his meal. Pholus, who ate his food raw, was taken aback. He had been given a vessel of sacred wine by Dionysus sometime earlier, to be kept in trust for the rest of the centaurs until the right time for its opening. At Heracles' prompting, Pholus was forced to produce the vessel of sacred wine. The hero, gasping for wine, grabbed it from him and forced it open. Thereupon the vapours of the sacred wine wafted out of the cave and intoxicated the wild centaurs, led by Nessus, who had gathered outside. They attacked the cave with stones and fir trees. Heracles was forced to shoot many arrows (poisoned, of course, with the blood of the Hydra) to drive them back. During this assault, Chiron was hit in the thigh by one of the poisoned arrows. After the centaurs had fled, Pholus emerged from the cave to observe the destruction. Being of a philosophical frame of mind, he pulled one of the arrows from the body of a dead centaur and wondered how such a little thing as an arrow could have caused so much death and destruction. In that instant, he let slip the arrow from his hand and it dropped and hit him in the hoof, killing him instantly. However this story is open to controversy, because Prometheus was a Titan and should have been immortal anyway.
Ironically, Chiron, the master of the healing arts, could not heal himself, so he willingly gave up his immortality. He was honoured with a place in the sky, for the Greeks as the constellation Centaurus.

Chiron saved the life of Peleus when Acastus tried to kill him by taking his sword and leaving him out in the woods to be slaughtered by the centaurs. Chiron retrieved the sword for Peleus. Some sources speculate that Chiron was originally a Thessalian god, later subsumed into the Greek pantheon as a centaur.

**Disciples**

1. **Achilles** - When Achilles' mother Thetis left home and returned to the Nereids, Peleus brought his son Achilles to Chiron, who received him as a disciple, and fed him on the innards of lions and wild swine, and the marrow of she-wolves. Actaeon - Actaeon, who was bred by Chiron to be a hunter, is famous for his terrible death; for he, in the shape of a deer, was devoured by his own dogs. The dogs, ignorant of what they had done, came to the cave of Chiron seeking for their master, and the Centaur fashioned an image of Actaeon in order to soothe their grief.

2. **Aristaeus** - The Muses were, according to some, those who taught Aristaeus the arts of healing and of prophecy. Aristaeus discovered honey and the olive. After the death of his son Actaeon he migrated to Sardinia.

3. **Asclepius** - The great medicine of Asclepius is based on Chiron's teaching. Apollo killed Asclepius' mother Coronis while still pregnant but snatched the child from the pyre, bringing him to Chiron who reared him and taught him the arts of healing and hunting.

4. **Jason** - Aeson gave his son Jason to the Centaur Chiron to rear at the time when he was deposed by King Pelias. Jason is the Captain of the Argonauts.

5. **Medus** - Medus, who some call Polyxenus and others Medeus, is the man after whom the country Media was called. He was the son of Medea by either Aegeus or by Jason. Medus died in a military campaign against the Indians.

6. **Patroclus** - Patroclus' father left him in Chiron's cave, to study, side by side with Achilles, the chords of the harp, and learn to hurl spears and mount and ride upon the back of genial Chiron.

7. **Peleus** - Peleus, father of Achilles, was once rescued by Chiron: Acastus, son of Pelias, purified Peleus for having killed (undesignedly) his father-in-law Eurytion. However, Acastus' wife, Astydameia, fell in love with Peleus, and as he refused her she intrigued against him, telling Acastus that Peleus had attempted to rape her. Acastus would not kill the man he had purified, but took him to hunt on Mount Pelion. When Peleus had fallen asleep, Acastus deserted him, hiding his sword. On arising and looking for his sword, Peleus was caught by the centaurs and would have perished, if he had not been saved by Chiron, who also restored him his sword after having sought and found it. Chiron arranged the marriage of Peleus with Thetis, bringing Achilles up for her. He also told Peleus how to conquer the Nereid Thetis who, changing her form, could prevent him from catching her. In other legends, it was Proteus who helped Peleus. When Peleus married Thetis, he received from Chiron an ashen spear, which Achilles took to the war at Troy. This spear is the same with which Achilles healed Telephus by scraping off the rust.

http://goo.gl/F6ygB
The wisest and justest of all the centaurs. He was the instructor of Achilles, whose father Peleus was a friend and relative of Chiron, and received at his wedding with Thetis the heavy lance which was subsequently used by Achilles. According to Apollodorus, Chiron was the son of Cronus and Philyra. He lived on Mount Pelion, from which he, like the other centaurs, was expelled by the Lapithae; but sacrifices were offered to him there by the Magnesians until a very late period, and the family of the Chironidae in that neighbourhood, who were distinguished for their knowledge of medicine, were regarded as his descendants. Chiron himself had been instructed by Apollo and Artemis, and was renowned for his skill in hunting, medicine, music, gymnastics, and the art of prophecy. All the most distinguished heroes of Grecian story are, like Achilles, described as the pupils of Chiron in these arts. His friendship with Peleus, who was his grandson, is particularly celebrated. Chiron saved him from the hands of the other centaurs, who were on the point of killing him, and he also restored to him the sword which Acastus had concealed. Chiron further informed him in what manner he might gain possession of Thetis, who was doomed to marry a mortal. He is also connected with the story of the Argonauts, whom he received kindly when they came to his residence on their voyage, for many of the heroes were his friends and pupils. Heracles too was connected with him by friendship; but one of the poisoned arrows of this hero was nevertheless the cause of his death, for during his struggle with the Erymanthian boar, Heracles became involved in a fight with the centaurs, who fled to Chiron, in the neighbourhood of Malea. Heracles shot at them, and one of his arrows struck Chiron, who, although immortal, would not live any longer, and gave his immortality to Prometheus. According to others, Chiron, in looking at one of the arrows, dropped it on his foot, and wounded himself. Zeus placed Chiron among the stars. He had been married to Nais or Chariclo, and his daughter Endeis was the mother of Peleus. Chiron is the noblest specimen of a combination of the human and animal forms in the ancient works of art; for while the centaurs generally express the sensual and savage features of a man combined with the strength and swiftness of a horse, Chiron, who possesses the latter likewise, combines with it a mild wisdom. He was represented on the Amyclean throne of Apollo, and on the chest of Cypselus. Some representations of him are still extant, in which young Achilles or Erotes are riding on his back.

http://goo.gl/8cLWS
In Greek mythology, Chiron (Χείρων) ("hand") — sometimes spelled Cheiron — was held as the superlative centaur over his brethren. Like the satyrs, centaurs were notorious for being overly indulgent drinkers and carousers, given to violence when intoxicated, and generally uncultured. Chiron, by contrast, was intelligent, civilized and kind. Sired by Cronus when he had taken the form of a horse and impregnated the nymph, Philyra, Chiron came from a different lineage than other centaurs. He was the father of Ocyrhoe with the nymph Chariclo and lived on Mount Pilion (or Pelion).

A great healer, astrologer, and respected oracle, Chiron was most revered as a teacher and tutored Asclepius, Theseus, Achilles, Jason and Heracles. He had the gift of guiding his pupils to uncovering their highest potential and discovering their destiny. When the centaurs drank and partied themselves to extinct, Chiron became the last remaining centaur. His nobility is further reflected in the story of his death as Chiron sacrificed his life allowing mankind to obtain the use of fire. He died from one of Heracles' arrows that were treated with a poison that Chiron had given to the hero when he had been under the honorable centaur's tutelage (see: Erymanthian Boar). Chiron willingly gave up his immortality and was placed in the sky as the constellation Centaurus.

Chiron saved the life of Peleus when Acastus tried to kill him by taking his sword and leaving him out in the woods to be slaughtered by the centaurs. Chiron retrieved the sword for Peleus. Some sources speculate that Chiron was originally a Thessalian god, later subsumed into the Greek pantheon as a centaur.

Chiron has been adapted for fictional works, most notably in Dante's The Divine Comedy, in which he is the chief guardian of the seventh circle of Hell. John Updike's novel The Centaur is an expansion and interpretation of the story of Chiron, set in the context of 20th century small-town America. Chiron's name, and the underlying mythology, serves to inform many of the root words connected with the ancient healing arts.

http://goo.gl/6XWvw
Chiron is the father of the medical art in Greek mythology, for without him there would be no medicine. It was Chiron, the wise old Centaur, who taught the art of healing to Asclepius and others.

Chiron was the good centaur – sober and civilized, and not at all given to rowdiness and drunken revelry like the others. Chiron was certainly wiser than men, whom he surpassed in justice; and sometimes, he was even wiser than the gods.

One day when Hercules, one of his pupils, was visiting Chiron, they were examining one of his arrows. One of them fell on Chiron's thigh, inflicting an agonizing wound. The wound was so painful that Chiron wanted to die, but, being immortal, he couldn't.

After Hercules released Prometheus, whom Zeus had imprisoned for giving the gift of fire to man, Chiron willingly gave up his life and consented to die in Prometheus' place. The genial centaur Chiron had renounced immortality, taught man the art of medicine, reared many famous disciples, and surpassed men in justice, conscientiousness and diligence. In recognition of these monumental accomplishments, Chiron was immortalized after his death and accorded a place amongst the stars, in the constellation Centaurus.

Chiron embodies the spirit of compassion and selfless service that all good physicians must have to master and practice the medical art. Through his supreme sacrifice, willingly given, Chiron gave mankind the art of healing.

Chiron's agonizing wound symbolizes the transformative power of illness and affliction. Through pain and suffering, our personal wounds, both psychic and physical, can transform themselves into sources of great moral and spiritual strength.

http://goo.gl/6XZxU
Chapter 2
HALF-HUMANS AND OTHER ODD CREATURES

According to the ancient Greek storytellers, in the Age of Heroes there existed a race of beings called centaurs. Each had the upper body of a human, including a man's head, chest, and arms. But a centaur's lower body was equine. It featured four legs, ending in hooves, and a bushy tail.

Apollo's Offspring
A story from that era said that these odd-looking creatures had been spawned by a human named Centaurus. His father was the god Apollo. One of the most versatile of the Greek deities, Apollo oversaw prophecy, healing, poetry, archery, and music. The story claimed that Apollo once had an affair with an attractive nymph named Stilbe. She lived near Mount Pelion, in Thessaly. That region, in central Greece, was known for its many fine horses. Soon after her union with the handsome Apollo, Stilbe gave birth to Centaurus.

An alternative myth said that Centaurus was the son of a man named Ixion and a cloud that a god had disguised to look like a woman. Whoever Centaurus' parents were, as a young man he mated with several Thessalian mares. They then gave birth to the centaurs.

As it turned out, these horse-men did not reflect very well on their father or grandparents. A majority of the centaurs were vulgar, messy, and foul-mouthed. They spent much of their time partying, drinking, and telling one another jokes and racy stories.

Though crude, the centaurs were normally no threat to their human neighbors. In fact, the two races often got along quite well. One exception was when the horse-men got drunk, at which time they could get both unruly and quarrelsome.

Centaurs and Drink
A tribe of Greeks known as the Lapiths saw the drunken centaurs in action. The Lapiths dwelled in a part of Thessaly not far from the caves and groves where the centaurs made their own homes. The king of the Lapiths, Pirithous, was a warm, hospitable man. So when he was planning his wedding feast, he thought it would be a neighborly gesture to invite the centaurs.
Most of the horse-men gladly accepted the invitation. At first the festivities were pleasant and convivial. But after a while the centaurs did what they did best. They partied hard and got drunk. Suddenly they started saying that they owned the Lapiths’ land. Not only that, the centaurs owned the people who lived on that land. Although these claims were false, at that moment the tipsy horse-men believed them. So they tried to grab and run off with the Lapith women. One centaur, Eurytion, went so far as to seize Pirithous’ bride, Hippodamia.

The Centauromachy
Some of the Lapith men tried to reason with the centaurs. But this proved fruitless. So the men lost their tempers, drew their swords, and attacked the centaurs. What had started as a happy celebration quickly turned into a bloody fight. The Lapith women were rescued but dozens of centaurs were killed or wounded in the process. Later Greeks called this battle the Centauromachy, which they frequently depicted in paintings and sculptures. Some of the magnificent sculpted figures on Greece’s most famous temple—the Parthenon, in Athens—were Lapiths clashing with centaurs.

A Poor Host
Another peaceful occasion that escalated into a brawl between humans and centaurs involved the renowned Greek hero Heracles (Hercules to the Romans). One day the barrel-chested strongman was passing through an area in which many centaurs lived. A horse-man named Pholus recognized Heracles. Hoping to make a good impression, Pholus invited the traveler to dinner. Also invited were several other centaurs, who viewed Heracles as a celebrity and wanted to meet him.

Unfortunately for all involved, Pholus was not a very good host. Like most centaurs, he had poor table manners, and he didn’t know how to treat human guests. As a result, Heracles felt offended. An argument erupted and it soon led to a fight in which some of the horse-men were killed. Pholus was among the casualties.

The Civilized Centaur
One of the centaurs was very much unlike his equine brethren. His name was Chiron and he lived in a large cave on a slope of Mount Eetion. A highly accomplished individual, he was known all across Greece for his kindness, compassion, wisdom, and generosity. Chiron was the son of Cronus, leader of the first race of gods, the Titans, and a nymph named Philyra. Among the civilized centaur’s close friends was the god Apollo. Like Apollo, Chiron became adept at archery and the arts.
Because Chiron was so civilized and wise, kings, queens, and on occasion even gods, sent their sons to live with him in his cave. There he tutored them in all manner of physical and intellectual pursuits. As a result boys who already possessed much potential were able to realize it. They became outstanding or famous, or both, for their abilities and achievements. They included Achilles, the most formidable of the Greeks who fought at Troy; the great hunter Actaeon; Asclepius, the god of healing; and the hero Jason, who captured the fabulous Golden Fleece.

**Release from Pain**
As the son of a Titan, Chiron enjoyed the gift of immortality. However, he could feel pain. This became a serious problem when, according to legend, he tried to remove an arrow from a wounded fellow centaur. It turned out that the arrow had been dipped in poison. So when the tip scratched Chiron's finger, he became ill. His pain grew so terrible that he wanted to die, so he gave his immortality to someone else. Ancient accounts vary on who the recipient was. In this way the most famous and best-liked centaur died.

**Griffins: Strange Beaked Beasts**
Centaurs, satyrs, and flying horses featured prominently in ancient Greek art. Their images were frequently shown on vases, bowls, and walls. Another fabulous creature that appeared often in both paintings and sculptures was the griffin. It had the body of a lion and the head, wings, and beak of an eagle.

Griffins had no major roles in any Greek myths. But they were mentioned in several classical Greek writings. Supposedly they lived far to the north of Greece in a land few humans had visited. They were said to guard a large collection of gold and other valuables there.

It appears that Greek images of griffins were based on weird-looking skeletons found in the distant region, which was east of the Black Sea. The skeletons belonged to lion-sized animals with four legs. They also had big, birdlike beaks. Modern experts think these skeletons were those of a small dinosaur called the protoceratops. The Greeks knew nothing about dinosaurs, of course. So they did not realize the bones were millions of years old. They assumed they belonged to a bizarre creature still living beyond the Black Sea, and they called it the griffin.
**CHIRON**

A leading figure among the centaurs, an immortal half-human, half-horse; sage, prophet, teacher, and healer.

Chiron was unusual among the centaurs because he did not lead an indulgent lifestyle of chaotic drinking and carousing (most centaurs were notorious for their violence and vulgarity when they were drunk). By contrast, Chiron was known for his wisdom and good behavior. He was tutor to many Greek heroes, including Heracles, Achilles, Theseus, and Jason, with the ability to enable his pupils to reach their highest potential and discover their true destiny. He was also an astrologer who could read a person's fate in the stars.

Chiron was conceived when Cronus took the form of a horse and coupled with the nymph Philyra, which accounts for his different ancestry from the other centaurs. As a child of Cronus, Chiron was immortal, but he nobly sacrificed his immortality after being wounded in a skirmish. This happened when his former pupil Heracles was dining with his friend Pholus in a cave; vapors from their wine wafted outside and intoxicated a bevy of centaurs gathered there. Driven wild by the heady fumes, the centaurs attacked the cave with rocks and branches, while Heracles fought back by shooting arrows poisoned with Hydra's blood. During the conflict, an arrow struck Chiron by mistake. Although he was a master of herbal medicine, the man-horse was unable to heal himself. His agony prompted Prometheus to appeal to Zeus to shed Chiron's immortality so that he could die. Zeus agreed. As a token of respect for Chiron, Zeus gave the honorable centaur pride of place in the heavens by setting him as the constellation Sagittarius.