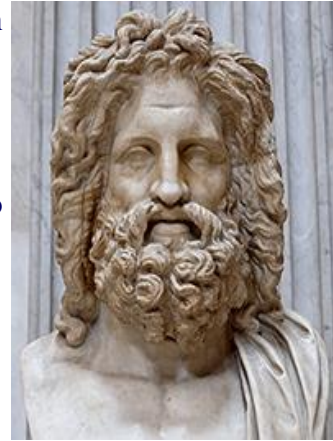


# Zeus

Zeus was the god of the sky and ruler of the Olympian gods. Zeus overthrew his Father [Cronus](#). He then drew lots with his brothers [Poseidon](#) and [Hades](#). Zeus won the draw and became the supreme ruler of the gods. He is lord of the sky, the rain god. His weapon is a thunderbolt which he hurls at those who displease him. He is married to [Hera](#) but, is famous for his many [affairs](#). He is also known to punish those that lie or break oaths.



Zeus, the great presiding deity of the universe, the ruler of heaven and earth, was regarded by the Greeks, first, as the god of all aerial phenomena; secondly, as the personification of the laws of nature; thirdly, as lord of state-life; and fourthly, as the father of gods and men.

As the god of aerial phenomena he could, by shaking his aegis, produce storms, tempests, and intense darkness. At his command the mighty thunder rolls, the lightning flashes, and the clouds open and pour forth their refreshing streams to fructify the earth.

As the personification of the operations of nature, he represents those grand laws of unchanging and harmonious order, by which not only the physical but also the moral world is governed. Hence he is the god of regulated time as marked by the changing seasons, and by the regular succession of day and night, in contradistinction to his father Cronus, who represents time absolutely, i.e. eternity.

As the lord of state-life, he is the founder of kingly power, the upholder of all institutions connected with the state, and the special friend and patron of princes, whom he guards and assists with his advice and counsel. He protects the assembly of the people, and, in fact, watches over the welfare of the whole community.

As the father of the gods, Zeus sees that each deity performs his or her individual duty, punishes their misdeeds, settles their disputes, and acts towards them on all occasions as their all-knowing counsellor and mighty friend.

As the father of men, he takes a paternal interest in the actions and well-being of mortals. He watches over them with tender solicitude, rewarding truth, charity, and uprightness, but severely punishing perjury, cruelty, and want of hospitality. Even the poorest and most forlorn wanderer finds in him a powerful advocate, for he, by a wise and merciful dispensation, ordains that the mighty ones of the earth should succour their distressed and needy brethren.

# Poseidon

God of the sea, protector of all waters. Poseidon is the brother of [Zeus](#). After the overthrow of their Father [Cronus](#) he drew lots with [Zeus](#) and [Hades](#), another brother, for shares of the world. His prize was to become lord of the sea. He was widely worshiped by seamen. He married [Amphitrite](#), a granddaughter of the Titan [Oceanus](#).



At one point he desired [Demeter](#). To put him off Demeter asked him to make the most beautiful animal that the world had ever seen. So to impress her [Poseidon](#) created the first horse. In some accounts his first attempts were unsuccessful and created a variety of other animals in his quest. By the time the horse was created his passion for Demeter had cooled.

His weapon is a trident, which can shake the earth, and shatter any object. He is second only to Zeus in power amongst the gods. He has a difficult quarrelsome personality. He was greedy. He had a series of disputes with other gods when he tried to take over their cities.

# Hades

Hades is the brother of [Zeus](#). After the overthrow of their Father [Cronus](#) he drew lots with [Zeus](#) and [Poseidon](#), another brother, for shares of the world. He had the worst draw and was made lord of the [underworld](#), ruling over the dead. He is a greedy god who is greatly concerned with increasing his subjects. Those whose calling increase the number of dead are seen favorably. The [Erinyes](#) are welcomed guests. He is exceedingly disinclined to allow any of his subjects leave.

He is also the god of wealth, due to the precious metals mined from the earth. He has a helmet that makes him invisible. He rarely leaves the underworld. He is unpitying and terrible, but not capricious. His wife is [Persephone](#) whom Hades abducted. He is the King of the dead but, death itself is another god, [Thanato](#)

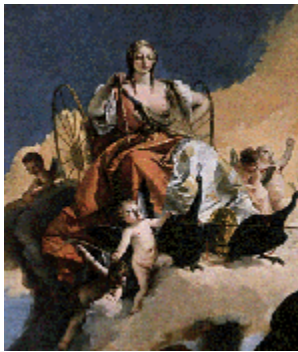


# Hera

Hera is [Zeus](#) wife and sister. She was raised by the Titans [Ocean](#) and [Tethys](#). She is the supreme goddess, goddess of marriage and childbirth and takes special care of married women.

Hera's marriage was founded in strife with Zeus and continued in strife. Zeus courted her unsuccessfully. He then turned to trickery, changing himself into a disheveled cuckoo. [Hera](#) feeling sorry for the bird held it to her to warm it. Zeus then resumed his normal form and took advantage of her. She then married him to cover her shame.

Once when [Zeus](#) was being particularly overbearing to the other gods, [Hera](#) convinced them to join in a revolt. Her part in the revolt was to drug [Zeus](#), and in this she was successful. The gods then bound the sleeping [Zeus](#) to a



couch taking care to tie many knots. This done they began to quarrel over the next step. [Briareus](#) overheard the arguments. Still full of gratitude to [Zeus](#), Briareus slipped in and was able to quickly untie the many knots. [Zeus](#) sprang from the couch and grabbed up his thunderbolt. The gods fell to their knees begging and pleading for mercy. He seized [Hera](#) and hung her from the sky with gold chains. She wept in pain all night but, none of the others dared to interfere. Her weeping kept [Zeus](#) up and the next morning he agreed to release her if she would swear never to rebel again. She had little choice but, to agree. While she never again rebelled, she often intrigued against [Zeus](#)'s plans and she was often able to outwit him.

Most stories concerning [Hera](#) have to do with her jealous revenge for [Zeus](#)'s infidelities. Her sacred animals are the cow and the [peacock](#). Her favorite city is Argos.

# Apollo

Apollo is the son of [Zeus](#) and [Leto](#). His twin sister is [Artemis](#). He is the god of music, playing a golden lyre. The Archer, far shooting with a silver bow. The god of healing who taught man medicine. The god of light. The god of truth, who can not speak a lie.

One of [Apollo](#)'s more important daily tasks is to harness his chariot with four horses and drive the Sun across the sky.

He is famous for his oracle at Delphi. People traveled to it from all over the Greek world to divine the future.

His tree was the laurel. The crow his bird. The dolphin his animal.



# Athena



[Athena](#) is the Greek virgin goddess of reason, intelligent activity, arts and literature. [Athena](#) is the daughter of [Zeus](#). She sprang full grown in armour from his forehead, thus has no mother. She is fierce and brave in battle

but, only wars to defend the state and home from outside enemies. She is the goddess of the city, handicrafts, and agriculture. She invented the bridle, which permitted man to tame horses, the trumpet, the flute, the pot, the rake, the plow, the yoke, the ship, and the chariot. She is the embodiment of wisdom, reason, and purity. She was [Zeus's](#) favorite child and was allowed to use his weapons including his thunderbolt. Her favorite city is Athens. Her tree is the olive. The owl is her bird. She is a virgin goddess.



# Aphrodite

Aphrodite is the goddess of love, desire and beauty. In addition to her natural gifts she has a magical girdle that compels anyone she wishes to desire her. There are two accounts of her birth.

She is the wife of [Hephaestus](#). The myrtle is her tree. The dove, the swan, and the sparrow her birds. Her favorite lover is the god of war, Ares. She represented affection and the attraction that binds people together.





# Hermes

He was the cleverest of the Olympian gods, and messenger to all the other gods.



Hermes is the son of [Zeus](#) and [Maia](#). He is Zeus messenger. He is the fastest of the gods. He wears winged sandals, a winged hat, and carries a magic wand. He is the god of thieves and god of commerce. He is the guide for the dead to go to the underworld. He invented the lyre, the pipes, the musical scale, astronomy, weights and measures, boxing, gymnastics, and the care of olive trees.



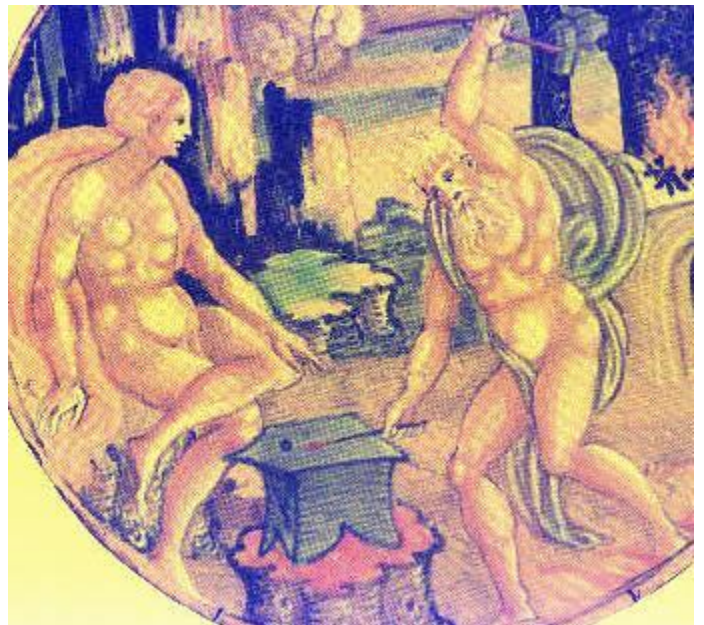
# Artemis

She was goddess of the hunt, the moon, and the natural environment. Artemis is the daughter of [Zeus](#) and [Leto](#). Her twin brother is [Apollo](#). She is the lady of the wild things. She is the huntsman of the gods. She is the protector of the young. Like [Apollo](#) she hunts with silver arrows. She became associated with the moon. She is a virgin goddess, and the goddess of chastity. She also presides over childbirth but goes back to causing Leto no pain when she was born. She became associated with Hecate. The cypress is her tree. All wild animals are scared to her, especially the deer.



# Hephaestus

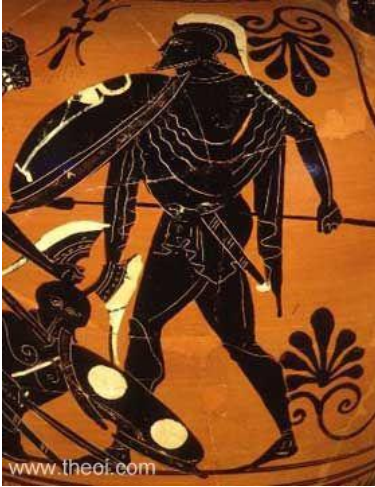
Hephaestus is the son of [Zeus](#) and [Hera](#). Sometimes it is said that Hera alone produced him and that he has no father. He is the only god to be physically ugly. He is also lame. Accounts as to how he became lame vary. Some say that Hera, upset by having an ugly child, flung him from [Mount Olympus](#) into the sea, breaking his legs. Others that he took Hera's side in an argument with Zeus and Zeus flung him off Mount Olympus. He is the god of fire and the forge. He is the smith and armorer of the gods. He uses a volcano as his forge. He is the patron god of both smiths and weavers. He is kind and peace loving. His wife is [Aphrodite](#). Sometimes his wife is identified as Aglaia.



ARES was the great Olympian god of war, battlelust, civil order and manly courage. In Greek art he was depicted as either a mature, bearded warrior dressed in battle arms, or a nude beardless youth with helm and spear. Because of his lack of distinctive attributes he is often difficult to identify in classical art. He is considered murderous and bloodstained but, also a coward. His bird is the vulture. His animal is the dog.

Known for:

- [The slaying of Adonis](#), his rival for the love of Aphrodite, in the guise of a boar;
- [The transformation of Kadmos](#) of Thebes and his wife Harmonia into serpents;



## Demeter

Demeter is the goddess of corn, grain, and the harvest. She is the daughter of [Cronus](#) and [Rhea](#). It is [Demeter](#) that makes the crops grow each year. The first loaf of bread from the harvest is sacrificed to her. Demeter is the goddess of the earth, of agriculture, and of fertility in general.

Sacred to her are livestock and agricultural products, poppy, narcissus and the crane.



Demeter is intimately associated with the seasons. Her daughter [Persephone](#) was abducted by [Hades](#) to be his wife in the [underworld](#). In her anger at her daughter's loss [Demeter](#) laid a curse on the world that caused plants to wither and die, the land become desolate. [Zeus](#) became alarmed and sought Persephone's return. However, because she had eaten while in the underworld Hades had a claim on her. Therefore, it was decreed that [Persephone](#) would spend four months each year in the underworld. During these months [Demeter](#) greaves her daughters absence, and withdraws her gifts from the world, creating winter. Her return brought the spring.

Demeter is also known for founding the Eleusinian Mysteries. These were huge festivals held every five years. They were important events for many centuries. Yet, little is known of them as those attending were sworn to secrecy. The central tenet seems to have been that just as grain returns every spring after its harvest and wintery death, so too the human soul could be reborn after the death of the body.