

Greek Gods & Goddesses: The Olympians

12 immortals who dwelt in a palace on Mount Olympus



Zeus

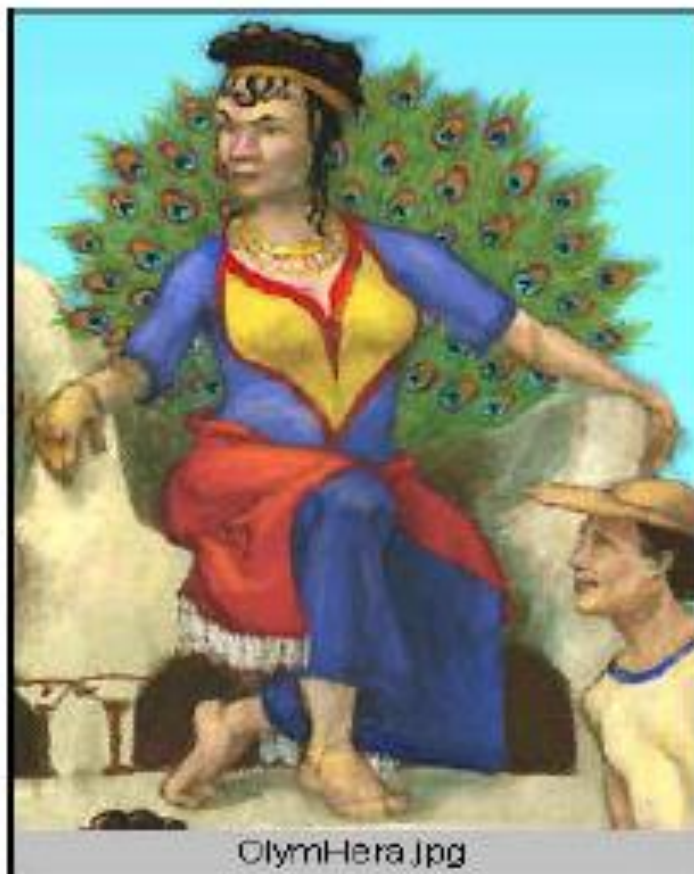


- Supreme God of the Olympians
- Youngest son of Titans Cronus and Rhea
- His siblings: Posiedon, Hades, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera

Zeus

- He and his siblings fought to gain control of the universe from the Titans and Cronus (his father)
- He and his brothers (Poseidon and Hades) divided up creation with Zeus receiving the sky as his domain. He was also accorded supreme authority on earth and on Mount Olympus.

Hera



- Goddess of marriage
- Wife of Zeus and Queen of the Olympians
- She took many forms, among them that of a bird.

Hera

- *Interesting Fact:* Hera hated the great hero Heracles since he was the son of her husband Zeus and a mortal woman. When he was still an infant, she sent snakes to attack him in his crib.
- Hera was worshipped throughout Greece, and the oldest and most important temples were dedicated to her.

Poseidon



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- God of the sea, earthquakes, and horses
- One of the supreme Gods of Mount Olympus, but he spent most of his time in his watery domain.

Poseidon

- Brother to Zeus and Hades
- Married to the sea-nymph, Amphitrite
- As the god of horses, he would often adopt the shape of horse.
- *Interesting fact:* When the Olympians gained control of the universe, they agreed that the earth would be ruled jointly, with Zeus as king. This led to a number of territorial disputes among the gods. Poseidon vied to be the ruler of Athens. He demonstrated his power by striking the Acropolis with his three-pronged spear, which caused a spring of salt water to emerge.

Hermes

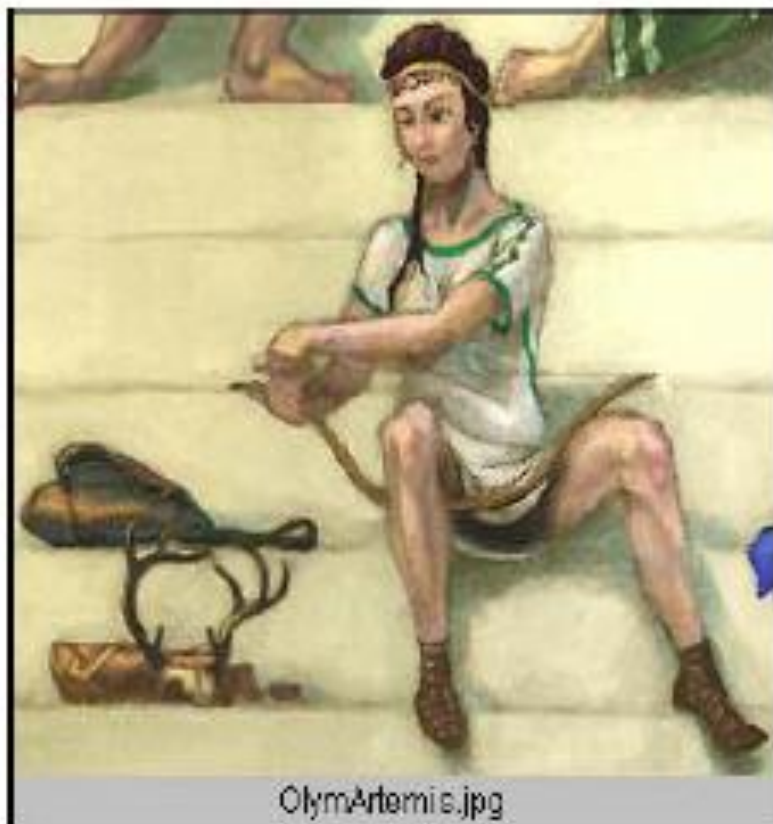


- Hermes was the messenger of the gods and the guide of dead souls to the Underworld.
- Son of Zeus and a mountain nymph

Hermes

- Hermes symbol was his staff. This was a willow wand with entwined ribbons.
- One of his jobs was to guide dead souls to the underworld, so he was often shown in wide-brimmed sun hat of straw. This hat represented his travels.
- *Interesting fact:* on his very first day of life, Hermes found the empty shell of a tortoise and perceived it to be useful as a sounding chamber. Stringing sinews across it, he created the first lyre.

Artemis



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- Virgin goddess of the hunt
- She helped women in childbirth but also brought sudden death with her arrows

Artemis

- Daughter of Zeus and Leto
- Sister to Apollo
- She is usually depicted as a young woman wearing buckskins and carrying a bow.
- *Interesting fact:* Apollo noticed that Artemis was spending a lot of time hunting with the giant, Orion, and he decided to put an end to the relationship. So, he challenged Artemis to prove her skill at archery by shooting at an object floating out at sea. Her shot was perfect. The target turned out to be the head of Orion.

Ares



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- God of war
- Son of Zeus
- He was handsome and cruel in his appearance.

Ares

- Ares is often shown carrying a bloodstained spear, and his throne on Mount Olympus was said to be covered in human skin.
- *Interesting fact:* Although he is an immortal deity, he was almost killed when he was defeated by Heracles in battle and then stuffed into a jar by two giants.

Hephaestus



- Lame god of fire and crafts
- Son of Zeus and Hera
- He limped because he was born with an impairment that hindered his walking

Hephaestus

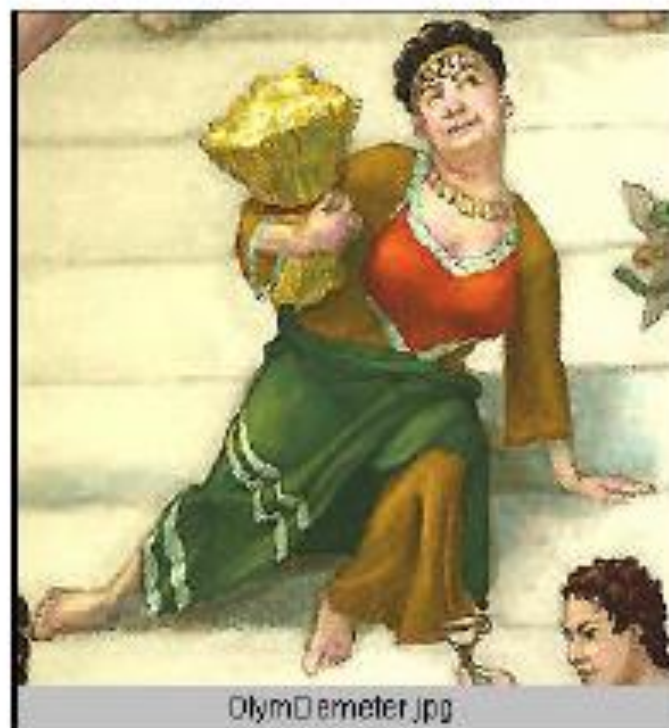
- *Interesting fact:* Hephaestus accomplished many great works of craftsmanship, such as the marvelous palaces that he built for the gods on Mount Olympus

Dionysus



- God of wine
- Dionysus was the son of Zeus and the mortal heroine, Semele
- *Interesting fact:* he saved his mother from the Underworld after Zeus consumed her in lightning.

Demeter



- Goddess of agriculture
- Sister of Zeus and mother of Persephone
- Often shown carrying a bundle of grain

Demeter

- *Interesting fact:* Demeter's daughter, Persephone, was gathering flowers one day when the earth opened up and Hades, King of the Dead, emerged from the Underworld. He took Persephone and carried her off to his realm, where she became his queen. Demeter was heartbroken and wondered the earth looking for her daughter. During this time the crops withered, and it became an endless winter. Hades eventually surrendered Persephone for one half of the year – the spring and summer seasons. During the other half of the year that she spends in the Underworld coincides with the barren season

Apollo



- God of prophecy, music, and healing
- Brother of Artemis
- Often shown playing the lyre, and it is said that he invented the lute

Apollo

- *Interesting fact:* Apollo won several musical contests by playing the lyre. One time he beat Pan, who competed on his own invention – the shepherd's pipe. On this occasion, King Midas had the bad sense to say that he preferred Pan's music, which caused Apollo to turn his ears into those of an ass.

Aphrodite



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- Goddess of love, beauty and fertility
- One legend states that she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. Another legend says that she was born from sea-foam

Aphrodite

- She has no distinct attributes except her beauty.
- She is associated with the dove
- *Interesting fact:* the Trojan Prince, Paris, was asked to judge which of the three Olympian goddesses (Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena) were the most beautiful. He chose Aphrodite over Hera and Athena. These two hoped to bribe him with power, but Aphrodite offered the love of the most beautiful woman in the world

Athena



- Goddess of crafts and the domestic arts and also those of war
- She was the patron goddess of Athens
- Her symbol is the owl

Athena

- She is the daughter of Zeus
- *Interesting fact:* Both Athena and her brother, Poseidon, wanted to be the patron deity of Athens. Athena proved her worthiness for this honor by causing an olive tree to spring up on the Acropolis. Poseidon struck the ground and caused a spring of water to gush forth. But, because he was the god of the sea, the water was salty. The Athenians considered Athena's gift to be more useful, so she became the city's patron deity.

THE END

