

GODS AND GODDESSES

The Ancient Greeks believed in many different gods and goddesses, also known as Immortals, each one concerned with particular aspects of life or death. They thought of them as similar to humans, with feelings such as love, hate, or anger. Here are the most important ones. In brackets, you can see how to pronounce their names.

AEOLUS (ee-oh-luss)

Aeolus was the keeper of the winds. He was usually helpful, but was sometimes unable to keep the winds under control.

APHRODITE (aff-ro-die-tee)

Aphrodite, the daughter of Uranus and wife of Hephaestus, was the goddess of love and beauty. She was born in the sea and rode to shore on a shell. Charming but



vain, she had many admirers because of her great beauty.

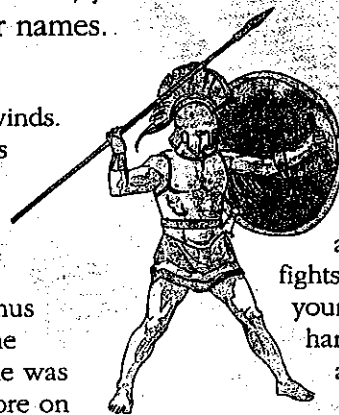
One of them was Ares, which made Hera very jealous. Aphrodite was thought to have provoked the Trojan War, by promising Helen to Paris, if he judged her the most beautiful goddess. Her symbols were roses, doves, sparrows, dolphins and rams.

APOLLO (a-poll-o)

Apollo was the god of the Sun, light and truth, and controlled the Sun's movement across the sky. Apollo was also patron of the arts and was a skilled musician. He was the



brother of Artemis and very protective of his mother and sister. He killed his mother's enemy, the serpent Python, when it was sheltering in the shrine at Delphi, and made Delphi his Oracle. His symbol was a laurel tree.



ARES (are-eez)

Ares was the god of war. He had a violent temper and was always picking

fights. He was young, strong and handsome, and an expert but jealous lover.

He once had to stand trial for murder in Athens, on the hill of the Areopagus, which was named after him. His symbols were a burning torch, a spear, dogs and vultures.

ARTEMIS (are-tem-iss)

Artemis was the moon goddess and huntress. She never married, was fiercely independent and could be merciless in her vengeance. Her silver arrows brought plague and death, but she also had healing powers. She protected young girls and pregnant women and was the mistress of wild animals. Her symbols were cypress trees, deers and dogs.



ASCLEPIUS (ass-klep-ee-us)

Asclepius, the god of medicine, was the son of Apollo and Coronis. He had been a mortal and a very successful doctor. But he was very proud of his skills and went too far by bringing the dead back to life. He was killed by Zeus and then revived to become a god himself.

ATHENE (a-thee-nee)

Athene was born from the head of Zeus after he swallowed the Titaness Metis in the form of a fly. Athene was the goddess of wisdom and war and the patron goddess of Athens. She rarely lost her temper, but if angered she could be deadly. Her symbols were the owl and the olive tree.



DEMETER (de-meet-a)

Demeter was the goddess of the earth, plants and harvests. She was helped by her daughter, Persephone, but when Persephone was kidnapped by Pluto to be his wife, Demeter abandoned her duties to go in search of her. Her symbol was a sheaf of wheat or barley.



DIONYSUS (die-on-eye-sus)

Dionysus was born from the thigh of Zeus. He was the god of wine and plays. He journeyed around the world, teaching people how to make wine from grapes. He led a wild, pleasure-filled life, attended by fanatical followers, especially female creatures called Maenads. He became cup-bearer to the gods.



EOS (ee-oss)

Eos was goddess of the dawn, and made the Sun rise every morning when she drove her chariot across the skies. She had been cursed by Aphrodite to fall in love with many different men, after she had an affair with Aphrodite's lover, Ares.

ERIS (air-iss)

Eris was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, and goddess of spite. She was troublesome and vengeful and helped to cause the Trojan War.

EROS (ear-oss)

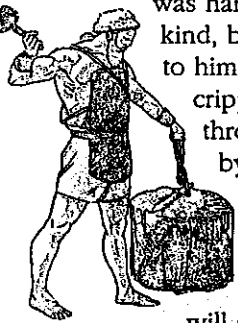
Eros made couples fall in love, even if they were unsuited. He could be mischievous, but got into trouble himself by falling in love with the mortal (human) Psyche, when he was accidentally grazed with his own arrow. The problem was solved when Zeus made Psyche immortal.

HEBE (hee-bee)

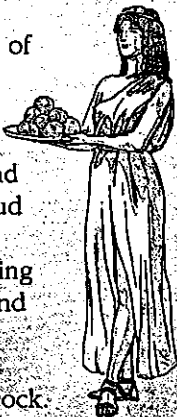
Hebe was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, and cup-bearer to the gods. She was thought to have married the Greek hero Heracles after he was made a god.

HEPHAESTOS (heff-eyestoss)

Hephaestus, the patron of craftsmen, was hard-working and kind, but life was unkind to him. As a child he was crippled after being thrown from Olympus by his bad-tempered mother, Hera. Aphrodite was forced to marry him against her will and he suffered from her constant infidelities.

**HERA** (hear-a)

Hera was the daughter of Cronos and Rhea, and sister and wife of Zeus. As the protector of women and marriage, she was proud and jealous, and spent much of her time chasing her husband's lovers and punishing them. Her symbols were the pomegranate and peacock.

**HERMES**

(her-meez)

Hermes was energetic and mischievous as a child and stole cattle from Apollo. But he won Apollo's forgiveness by inventing the lyre and giving it to him. To keep him out of trouble, Zeus made him messenger to the gods, and patron of voyagers and thieves. He wore a winged hat and carried a staff.

**HESTIA** (hess-tee-a)

Hestia, goddess of the hearth, was very popular, as she protected people's homes. Every family had a shrine dedicated to her.

Hestia was quiet and gentle and did not get involved in the jealous quarrels that blew up on Mount Olympus. She eventually gave up her place on Olympus to Dionysus.

PAN (pan)

Pan, son of Hermes, was god of nature, shepherds and sheep. He fell in love with a nymph (a type of lesser goddess) called Syrinx, but she escaped by turning into a bed of reeds. Pan used them to make musical pipes to play on.

PERSEPHONE (per-seff-on-nee)

Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter, helped her mother with growing things and harvests. She was kidnapped by Pluto to be Queen of the Underworld, but she was very unhappy. So a bargain was struck: she spent half the year with her mother (spring and summer), and half with Pluto (autumn and winter). According to the Greeks, this was the origin of the seasons.

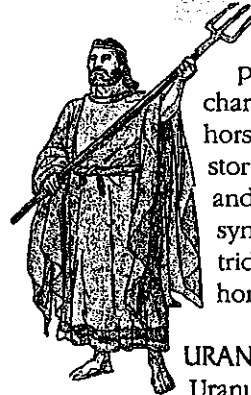
PLUTO (plue-toe)

Pluto was the brother of Zeus and Hera, and King of the Underworld (beneath the Earth). He drove a gold chariot with black horses and guarded the dead jealously. Pluto was extremely rich, as he owned all the precious stones and metals inside the Earth.

**POSEIDON** (poss-eye-don)

Poseidon was the brother of Zeus and Hera, and King of the Oceans.

He lived in an underwater palace, rode a gold chariot with white horses, and controlled storms, sea monsters and earthquakes. His symbols were a trident, dolphins and horses.

**URANUS** (you-rain-us)

Uranus was the sky. He and Mother Earth created all living things, including some monstrous children. Heartless and cruel, he imprisoned some of his children and Mother Earth turned against him.

ZEUS (zyooss)

Zeus, the ruler of the gods, was married to his sister, Hera. He had one son and two daughters by her: Ares, Eris and Hebe. But his relationship with Hera was very explosive. He had many love affairs with mortal (human) women, appearing to them in many different disguises - as a bull, a swan, or a shower of gold. His symbols were the thunderbolt, the eagle and the oak tree.

