

Introduction to the Olympian Gods and Goddesses

Origins

- Precursors to the Gods=Titans
- Rhea and Cronus had children
 - Cronus ate them as they were born
 - When Zeus was born (the youngest), Rhea fed Cronus a rock instead
 - Zeus was raised on Crete by Nymphs
 - He grew up and overthrew his father, freeing his siblings: Hades, Poseidon, Demeter, Hera, Hestia

Zeus

- Roman Name: Jupiter
- King of the Gods
- Zeus and his brothers drew lots for their dominions
 - He drew the Earth and Sky
- Married to Hera
 - Cheats a lot
- Animal: eagle
- Weapon: thunder bolt
- Other symbol: oak tree

Poseidon

- Roman Name: Neptune
- Zeus' older brother
- God of the sea
- Married to Amphitrite, a minor sea goddess
- Sacred animal: horse
- Weapon: trident

Hades

- Roman Name: Pluto
- Zeus' older brother
- King of the Underworld
- Not a bad character to the Romans
- Married to Persephone (daughter of Zeus and Demeter)
- Animal: Cerberus, the 3-headed dog
- Weapon: bident

Hera

- Roman name: Juno
- Sister to Zeus, Poseidon, Hades
- Married to Zeus
- Queen of the Gods, Goddess of Marriage
- Animal: peacock

Demeter

- Roman name: Ceres
- Sister to Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hera
- Not married, but has children
- Goddess of grain and the harvest
- Symbol: cornucopia (the horn of plenty)

Hestia

- Roman name: Vesta
- Sister to Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Demeter
- Virgin goddess
- Goddess of the hearth
- More important in Roman mythology
 - Vestal Virgins=prestigious priestesshood

Athena

- Roman name: Minerva
- Patron goddess of Athens
- Daughter of Zeus and Metis

–Zeus swallowed the pregnant Metis and gave birth the Athena from his head

- Goddess of wisdom, battle strategy, and handicrafts
- Animal: owl
- Virgin goddess
- Symbol: Aegis (bronze shield/breastplate with the head of a gorgon)

Artemis

- Roman Name: Diana
- Twin sister to Apollo
- Daughter of Zeus and Leto, a female titan
- Goddess of the Moon and the Hunt
- Virgin Goddess who especially distrusted men
- A Goddess of Childbirth

–she helped her mother deliver twin brother Apollo immediately after she was born

- Sacred animal=deer

Apollo

- Roman name=Apollo
- Twin brother to Artemis
- Son of Zeus and Leto
- Considered the most handsome God
- Depicted as a beardless young man
- God of: sun, music, archery, and prophesy
- Symbol=lyre, laurel wreath
- Very influential oracle at Delphi that the Greeks would consult for answers to important life questions, both in Mythology and real life

Hephaestus

- Roman Name=Vulcan
- 2 Origins
 - 1.Son of Zeus and Hera
 - 2.Son of Hera alone (she did it out of spite for Zeus' many affairs)
- Considered ugly
- Only God who was lame
 - Hera was so disgusted with him at birth she threw him off Mt. Olympus, damaging his leg
- God of blacksmiths (and blacksmith to the Gods)
 - Forge located under Mt. Etna in Sicily
- Married to Aphrodite

Ares

- Roman name=Mars
- Only confirmed offspring of marriage of Zeus and Hera
- God of war
- Usually depicted in battle armor
- Not married, but often had affairs with Aphrodite

Aphrodite

- Roman name: Venus
- Origin story:
 - born from the foam of the sea
 - Zeus castrated his father, whose genitals fell into the ocean, and Aphrodite was born
- Most beautiful goddess
- Goddess of love and beauty
- Often depicted with seashells
- Sacred animal=dove
- Married to Hephaestus, but had many affairs

Hermes

- Roman Name=Mercury
- Son of Zeus and Maia
- Often depicted as a beardless youth, but less attractive than Apollo
- Messenger of Gods, God of travelers
- Psychopompos: one who guides dead souls to the Underworld
- Symbols: winged sandals and winged hat

- Symbols: Caduceus: staff with entwined snakes

Dionysus

- Roman name= Bacchus
 - God of wine and parties
 - Wife=Ariadne
 - Youngest Olympian God
 - Son of Zeus and Semele
 - Hestia gave him her seat on the Olympian Council
 - thus the council remained at 12
 - Depicted with grape vines in hair
 - Often pictured on wine goblets because when Greeks drank wine they believed they were ingesting some of his essence
- Dionysus Twice Born
- Semele: mortal princess, slept with Zeus
 - Hera got angry
 - Appeared to Semele in form of her sister
 - Convinced Semele to ask to see Zeus' true form
 - Semele did, but Zeus' form caused her to burn to death
 - He took the unborn Dionysus and sewed him into his thigh
 - Dionysus was born again on Mt. Pramnos

Summary

- 12 True Olympians
- 2 quasi-Olympians