

Greek Religion

Religion & Myth. The Greeks worshipped two types of gods: Olympian and Chthonic. The twelve Olympian gods were Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, Hestia (Guthrie 111).

Children of Kronos & Rhea

1. **Zeus** was the head god, the god of thunder & lightning. He drew lots with Hades & Poseidon, his brothers, to choose territory. He got heaven & the universe; Poseidon got the sea; and Hades got underworld. They shared dominion over Mt. Olympus and the surface of the world.
2. **Hera** was Zeus' sister & wife. She was very jealous of Zeus's affairs. As his wife, she reigned as the queen of heaven. Hera was the patron of marriage.
3. **Poseidon.** God of the sea.
4. **Demeter.** Zeus' sister. Mother of Persephone. Goddess of agriculture.
5. **Hestia.** Zeus' sister. Goddess of family life & city hearth.

Children of Zeus & Hera.

6. **Athena.** The goddess of wisdom & crafts, both women's crafts (sewing) & men's (tool use, war strategy). She was born from Zeus' head after he swallowed Metis (mind). He swallowed Mentis after learning of a prophecy that if she had a son, he would displace Zeus (Hesiod 143-147).
7. **Hephaestus** (= Vulcan) was born from Hera alone. He was the god of fire & metallurgy. He was also lame. He made thunderbolts for Zeus, and arms for gods & heroes. He Forged under Mt. Olympus & Mt. Etna, and the Cyclopes worked for him.
8. **Ares** (= Mars). son of Zeus & Hera. god of war. His war frenzy contrasts with Athena's rational approach to war.

Children of Zeus & Leto

9. **Apollo.** God of prophecy, purification, healing, sunlight, music
10. **Artemis.** Sister of Apollo. Goddess of moonlight, hunting, animals. Originally a fertility goddess, she became a virgin goddess in Greece but remained a fertility goddess in Ephesus.

Son of Zeus & Maia (daughter to Atlas, she was one of the stars in the Pleiades constellation (Hesiod 67, 149, 363)

11. **Hermes** (= Mercury). Messenger of the gods. Wings on head & feet. Patron of speed & wits, not strength (Guthrie 91). Currently delivers flowers for FTD.

12. **Aphrodite** (= Venus). Goddess of love & beauty. Married to Hephaestus, had affair w/ Ares. Led Paris to take Helen (Hesiod p. 491). Only Artemis, Athena, & Hestia are immune to her (Hesiod xxxviii). Cronus castrated Uranus (heaven) while Uranus was mating with Gaia (earth). Cronus threw down Uranus' testicles; some of which landed in sea, causing foam. Aphrodite emerged from the foam. Predated other Olympic gods. However, in some versions of the myth, she is daughter of Zeus (Odyssey 8. 305).

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