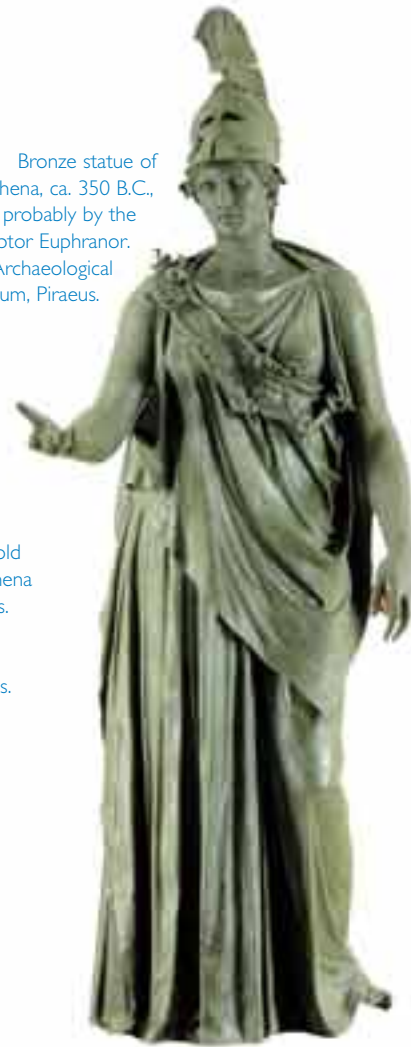
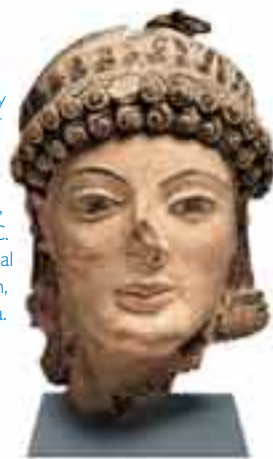


The "Varvakeion Athena", 3rd century A.C. Roman copy in marble of the gold and ivory statue of Athena Parthenos by Pheidias.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

Bronze statue of Athena, ca. 350 B.C., probably by the sculptor Euphranor.
© Archaeological Museum, Piraeus.



Head of a clay statue of Athena from the akroterion of a building, ca. 500-490 B.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Olympia.



Reverse of a Syracusan silver tetradrachm, ca. 410-405 B.C.
© Staatliche Museen, Munzkabinett, Berlin.



Obverse of an Athenian silver tetradrachm, ca. 440-420 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Panathenaic amphora with a representation of Athena Promachos, 363/2 B.C. © National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

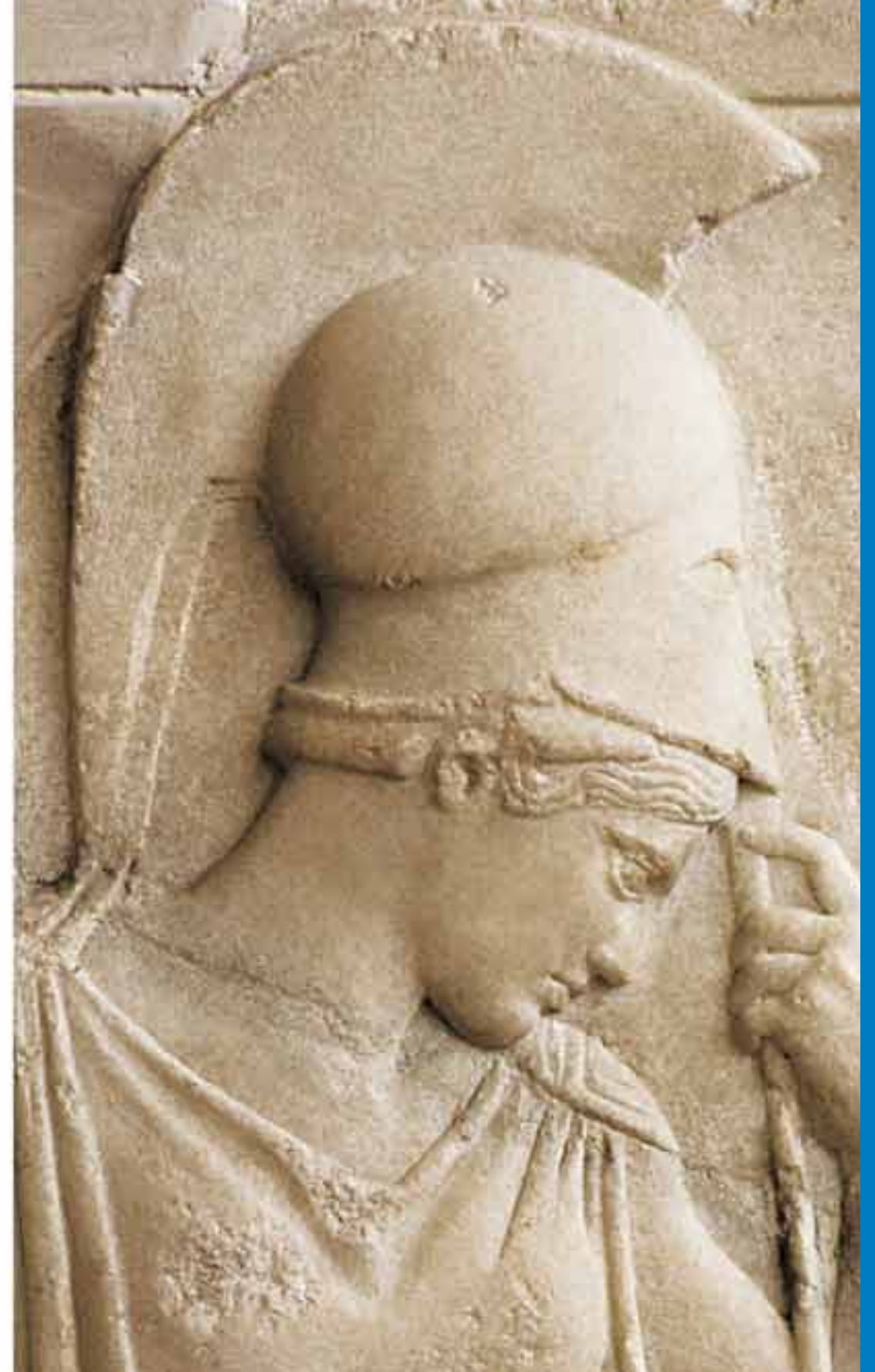


Façade of the Ionic temple, the Erechtheion, on the Athenian Acropolis, last quarter of the 5th century B.C.

The education of Maria Medici, Queen of France, by Athena, Apollo, Hermes and the three Graces, by P.P. Rubens, 1621-1625.
© Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Head from the relief of the "Mourning Athena". The goddess wears a helmet and leans on her spear, ca. 460 B.C. © Acropolis Museum, Athens.



Athena

Roman Minerva



The goddess **Athena** was one of the most important divinities of Mt. Olympus. She was primarily the protectress of ancient Athens, but of many other cities all over Greece as well. She was the goddess of wisdom and war and at the same time of arts and crafts. She was credited with inventions for harnessing nature (the bridle, the ship's hull, the loom, the lathe, the potter's wheel) and the musical instrument, the *aulos*. She was thought to have devised strategies for

carrying out complicated tasks and strategems of war. She was characterised as the virgin goddess, self-reliant and thus self-directed (according to the myth she neither married nor had erotic affairs). Maturity, responsibility and tolerance were likewise her characteristics. With her vote alone she could upset a tie vote in the court, so that the accused could be proclaimed innocent. Today she might be thought of as the goddess of culture.

In **mythology**, according to the Homeric hymn and Hesiod, Athena was the beloved daughter of Zeus and Metis, the personification of wisdom, and her birth was supernatural. When Zeus learned that Metis was to give him a daughter, and then a son who would try to take his throne, he swallowed her. When the time came for the daughter, Athena, to be born, Zeus ordered Hephaistos to open his head with an axe. So it was, that in the presence of the Olympian gods, a fully armed Athena sprang from the head of Zeus to the wonder and pleasure of all. She took part in the Gigantomachy, the battle between the Gods and Giants. She helped Perseus to behead the Gorgon and she was involved in the Trojan War on the side of the Achaian Hellenes because Paris had denied her and Hera the "Apple of Discord". When *Arachne* tried to surpass the goddess in the art of weaving, Athena turned her into the well known spider.

The relationship of the goddess with Athens and Attica is tied to other myths as well, which have inspired splendid works of art. She vied with Poseidon for patronage of the city. With a strike of his trident, Poseidon caused water to gush forth from the rock and where Athena struck with her spear, an olive tree sprang up. The goddess won as patron of the city which still bears her name today.

The ancient Greeks also believed that Athena helped the heroes in their deeds:

Herakles in his labours, the Argonauts in their journey, Odysseus in his crafty plans, such as devising the "Trojan Horse". They said that her first cult statues, her *xoana* (wooden statues), had been sent down from heaven. She raised Erichthonios, son of Hephaistos and Ge (earth), as her own child. When the ancient religion was abandoned, the basic characteristics of Athena, her aspect as virgin goddess, her dignity and kindness, continued unaltered on the Athenian Acropolis in the figure of the *Panaghia*, the Mother of Christ. On the 15th of August, instead of the *Panathenaia*, the Domition of the Virgin was now celebrated. Indeed the Parthenon was consecrated as the Church of the Virgin Mary and continued thus until the 15th century.

The **festivals** in honour of Athena, mainly in Athens and Attica, are well known. The most splendid was the *Panathenaic Festival*, held every year and celebrated with special splendour every four years as the *Great Panathenaia*. In a splendid procession, the people of Athens offered a *peplos* to the *xoanon* of the goddess that stood in the temple of *Athena Polias* (later in the Erechtheion). A hundred bulls were sacrificed in this great festival and there were athletic and artistic contests. The Parthenon frieze gives us an excellent picture of the procession and festival.

In the rite of the *Arrephoria*, two little girls from well-known Athenian families carried the *Arreta* (the cult objects that must not be mentioned) that were entrusted to the girls by the priestess of *Athena Polias*, down to the sanctuary of *Aphrodite in the Gardens*, on the north slope of the Acropolis. This they did in utmost secrecy, in the dark of night. The *Plynteria* were a cleansing celebration that took place around the 10th of June. The *xoanon* of *Athena Polias* was carried to Phaleron where it was washed in the sea and then returned by torch-light. The *Kallynteria*, when the temple of the goddess was cleaned, were celebrated the day before the *Plynteria*. With sacrifices to *Athena Phratia*, the *Apatouria* celebrated the registration of youths in the lists of Athenian citizens who had entered manhood. The *Chalkeia* (from the word *chalkos*, metal) were celebrated by metal-workers and other craftsmen in honour of *Athena Ergane* (of crafts) and Hephaistos. Finally, the *Oschophoria*, a festival of both Athena and Dionysos, celebrated the gathering of the harvest with a procession to the temple of *Athena Skiras* (old name of Salamis) at Phaleron.

Festivals in honour of Athena were celebrated in other cities too. In Boiotia, the *Itonia* (named for the month) at Koronia; in Delphi, festivals in honour of *Athena Pronaia* (who stands before the temple). Other festivals were held at Argos, Corinth, Elis and Sparta.

Athena's **epithets** were connected with the places where she was worshipped and also express the qualities attributed to her. Her best known epithets are *Parthenos* (virgin), *Pallas* and *Glaukopis* (with gleaming eyes). As a warrior goddess she was called *Promachos* (in the front rank of battle), *Soteira* (saviour), *Archegetes* (leader), *Deine* (awe-inspiring), *Ageleie* (gatherer of battle spoils), *Areia* (warrior), *Sthenia* (mighty), *Nikephoros* (bringer of victory), *Epipyrgites* (on the bastion), *Chalinitis* (horse-bridler), *Leitis* (who brings the spoils of war), *Atrytone* (tireless) and *Agestratos* (leader of the army). She was worshipped also as *Athena-Nike* (victory). As protectress of cities (*asty-polis* in Greek) she had the epithets *Polias*, *Poliatis*, *Astyochos*, *Apatouria* and *Phratia*. As *Zosteria* she protected maidens. As *Ergane*, *Kalliergos* and *Moria* (olive tree) she protected crafts and farming. At Sparta she was known as *Chalkioikos* because her statue was housed in some sort of metal cella. The epithets *Taurobolos* and *Tauropolos* came from the sacrifices of bulls (*tauros* in Greek) that were offered to her.

Magnificent **temples** were built for Athena in antiquity. Aside from the archaic temples that were destroyed by the Persians, three classical temples stood on the Athenian Acropolis: the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the temple of *Athena Nike*. All three are preserved in relatively good condition. The exact form and location of the sanctuary of *Athena Ergane* on the Acropolis is not clear. The best preserved temple in Greece, the so-called "Theseion", was dedicated to Athena and her brother Hephaistos. Here the two were worshipped as protectors of artisans. In addition to the Athenian Acropolis, temples of Athena are found all over the ancient Greek world. In Phaleron there was a sanctuary of *Athena Skiras*, in Pallene a sanctuary of *Athena Pallenitis*. At Sounion an Ionic temple was dedicated to *Athena Sounias*; at Delphi, the sanctuary of *Athena Pronaia*. In the Peloponnese, Athena had a sanctuary in the Agora of Sparta, at Corinth she was worshipped as *Athena Chalinites*, at Argos as *Oxyderkes* (sharp sighted) and at Asea as *Soteira* (saviour). Preserved at Tegea is the great 4th century B.C. temple of *Athena Alea* and there are others at Mazi and Prasadaki in Elea and Alipheira in Arcadia, all of the Doric order.

In northern Greece, there is the sanctuary of *Athena Parthenos* at Kavala and she had temples also at Nea Peramos, Philippoi, Amphipolis and Thasos.

Likewise in the islands, the temple of the Athenians in Delos, and another temple at Karthaia in Kea were dedicated to the goddess as well as the temple of *Athena Lindia* on the acropolis of Lindos in Rhodes. Three temples have been identified in the district of Lasithi in Crete, at Ierapetra, Itanos and on the Samonian promontory.

In Asia Minor, finally, there are three well-known temples at Priene, Assos and on the Pergamon acropolis.

Representations of the goddess Athena are found on many vases of the late archaic and classical periods. The two most splendid statues of the goddess on the Athenian Acropolis (the *Parthenos* and the *Promachos*, both works of Pheidias) are known only in copies. Displayed in the Piraeus Museum is a bronze statue of Athena, a fine work of the 4th century B.C. The goddess was represented in the pediments of the Parthenon and her figure likewise appears on the Parthenon frieze, the frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi, in the pediment of the *Archaia Naos* of the Athenian Acropolis, at Olympia in the metopes showing the "Labours of Herakles", and in the frieze of the great altar of Zeus from Pergamon. Many other statues of the goddess are preserved as well, both originals and ancient copies.

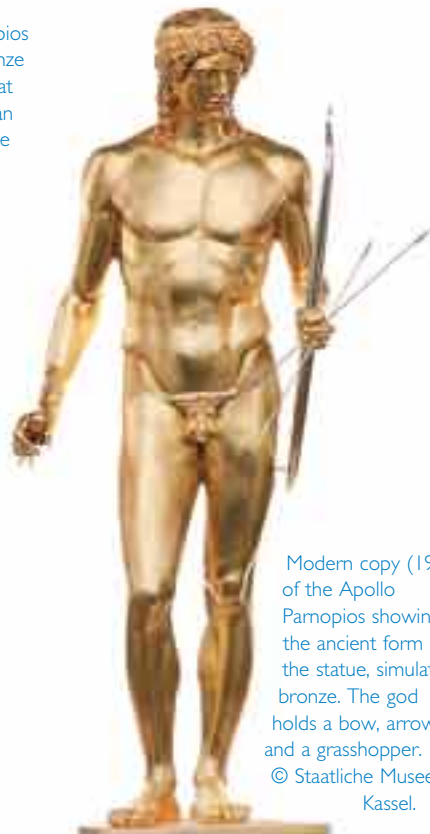
Athena's **symbols** were the owl (*Athena noctua*), the helmet, the *aegis* (a protective goatskin, a kind of shield) given by her father, the *gorgoneion* (the apotropaic head of the Gorgon Medusa) worn on her *aegis* or as a device on her shield, her spear, the spindle and the olive. Very often she is shown in warrior attire.



The "Kassel Apollo", 1st-2nd century A.C. Roman marble copy of the Apollo Parnopios (ca. 450 B.C.), a bronze statue by Pheidias that stood on the Athenian Acropolis. © Staatliche Museen, Kassel.



White ground kylix with a representation of Apollo holding a lyre and making an offering. A crow observes the scene, ca. 480 B.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Delphi.



Modern copy (1992) of the Apollo Parnopios showing the ancient form of the statue, simulating bronze. The god holds a bow, arrow and a grasshopper.
© Staatliche Museen, Kassel.



Reverse of a silver stater of the Delphic Amphiktyony. Apollo, seated on the "omphalos", holds a laurel branch. Shown beside him are his kithara and tripod, ca. 336 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



View of the archaic poros temple of Apollo in the Agora of Corinth, 6th century B.C.



Modern copy (1992) of the Apollo Parnopios showing the ancient form of the statue coloured as it might have been in antiquity. The god holds bow, arrow and laurel.
© Staatliche Museen, Kassel.

The myth of Apollo and Daphne, by L. Bernini, 1622-1624.
© Villa Borghese, Rome.



Head of Apollo from the east frieze of the Parthenon, ca. 440 B.C. © Acropolis Museum, Athens.



Apollo

Roman Apollo



For the ancient Greeks [Apollo](#) was a god of many facets. He was the personification of sunlight, the god of music, of poetry, of harmony, of logic; his sphere included prophesy as well. He was believed to carry out the desires of Zeus. He was the punisher of hubris, the protector of dynasty founders and the colonists of cities. He was the healer of pain and the purifier of crime. He was also considered to be the most handsome of the Olympian gods, "the most beautiful of the immortals".

Apollo was worshipped in Greece as early as Mycenaean times and his cult was connected with Crete and the Eastern civilisations. In those days he was thought to represent the yearly renewal of nature and the life-giving Sun. This was an aspect later retained in his cult by farmers who worshipped him as *Sitalkas* (tiller of the soil), *Pamopeios* (who drove out grasshoppers), *Smintheus* (destroyer of mice) and *Sauroktonos* (lizard slayer). By the end of the 8th century, one of the Homeric hymns gives most of the information we have about the ancient myths connected with the god.

According to [myth](#), Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto and his twin sister was Artemis. Hera, who was exceedingly jealous of Leto, did not allow earth to receive her anywhere for childbirth. The island of Delos, which up to that time had floated freely in the waters of the Aegean, became anchored and received Leto who gave birth to Apollo and to Artemis, in front of a palm tree next to the river Inopos. The myth says that brilliant light poured down on the Aegean and "with gold all Delos blossomed". Mythology tells us that Apollo played the *kithara* and the lyre, accompanied by the nine Muses (*Apollo Mousegetes*, leader of the Muses), while the *Charites* (graces) danced. He went down to Delphi where with his bow and arrow he killed Python, the frightful dragon of Mt. Parnassos, whence his epithets *Pythios*, *Pythoktonos*, *Pytheus*. Then he established his oracle and organised the sanctuary helped by men who

came from Knossos in Crete. His prophesies were given by *Pythia*, the priestess of the god who sat on a tripod within the temple. There were other oracles too where Apollo made known the desires of the gods, at Ptoon in Boiotia, and in Asia Minor, at the Didymaion of Miletos and at Klaros.

The ancient Greeks created many myths about the handsome god. He became a shepherd in the employment of Admetos in Thessaly to atone for the murder of Python. In Sparta, while throwing the diskos, by mistake he killed Hyakinthos (local hero) and later he assumed his identity. He played an important part in the Trojan War and helped to kill Achilles. He was connected with nymphs and mortal women with whom he had at least fifteen sons, the most important of which were Asklepios and Orpheus. Well known is the myth of the metamorphosis of the nymph Daphne, the daughter of the river Peneios, who fled to avoid Apollo's advances, into a laurel tree.

The [festival](#) of the *Thargelia* was celebrated in Attica around the middle of May in honour of the *Delian Apollo*. This occurred before the harvest was collected, with ceremonial purification of all defilement and the offering of the *thargelos* (the first harvested grain). The festival of the *Pyanopsia* was celebrated in the autumn with the ritual procession of the *eiresione*, the harvest wreath consisting of an olive branch decorated with fruit and sheep's wool, a thank-offering for a good harvest.

In Sparta the *Hyakinthia*, in honour of Hyakinthos, were celebrated around the end of July with *enagismo*i, liquid offerings to the dead. This entailed a great festival with a variety of spectacles and a procession from Sparta to the temple at Amyklai where a *chiton* (a robe) was presented to the cult statue. Celebrated in Sparta too were the *Karneia* in honour of *Apollo Kameios* (named after the month).

The *Pythia* was one of the four great panhellenic festivals and it was held every five years on the Krisaion plain, near Delphi. Originally it comprised music and singing contests; later on, athletic contests were added.

The [epithets](#) of Apollo are connected with myths and with various locations in Greece. He was worshipped as *Epikoureios* (helper) in Phigaleia in memory of his having saved the area from the plague. In the islands he was worshipped as *Delphinios*, (like the dolphin, protector of men at sea); also as *Aktios* (protector of coastal dwellers), *Embaseios* (protector of those who go down to the sea in ships) and *Euryalios* (with extensive power). In the Athenian Agora he was worshipped as *Patroos* (father of the tribe) and in Eretria as *Daphnephoros* (laurel-crowned). The name *Loxias* (oblique) reflects the obscurity of some of his oracles and *Hekatebolos* (far-shooting) refers to his ability with the bow and arrow.

Numerous too are the [sanctuaries](#) and temples of the god. They are widespread. In Athens, on the north side of the Acropolis, was the sanctuary of *Apollo Hypoakraios* (below the heights). There was a temple of *Apollo Patroos* in the Athenian Agora

and a temple of *Apollo Delphinios* south of the temple of Olympian Zeus. The best known sanctuary was at Delphi. At Thermon and at Kalydon there were the very early temples of *Apollo Thermios* and *Apollo Laphrios* (who takes the spoils of war). At Thebes stood the temple of *Apollo Ismenios* (the Ismenian hill was sacred to Apollo). The Boiotian Ptoon sanctuary has already been mentioned. At Eretria stood the well-known temple of *Apollo Daphnephoros*. At Arta, in ancient Ambrakia, a Doric temple of Apollo has been found. There are sanctuaries of the god also at Prodomos in Karditsa in Thessaly, on the acropolis of Thasos, at Amphipolis and at Philippi.

In the Peloponnese, in the Argolid near the sanctuary of Asklepios in Epidauros stood the sanctuary of *Apollo Maleata* and at Argos was the sanctuary of *Apollo Deiradiotes* (Apollo of the ridge). At Bassai, not far from Andritsaina, stands one of the finest architectural monuments of ancient Greece, the temple of *Apollo Epikoureios*, a work of the architect Iktinos. There was also the sanctuary at Amyklai near Sparta, and at Longa in Messenia. Especially noteworthy, is the sanctuary at Corinth, where an archaic temple of Apollo is still quite well preserved.

The *Delian Apollo* had temples in the island of Delos itself and in the island of Naxos, while preserved on the southern coast of the island of Chios are a few remains of a fine Ionic temple of *Apollo Phanaios* (*phaino*, to bring to light, to disclose). The god had his temple too at the town of Karthaia in the island of Kea. In the island of Lesbos stood a temple of *Apollo Nappaios* (of the forests). Two temples were dedicated to the god in the island of Rhodes (*Apollo Erethimios*, the wrathful, and *Apollo Pythios*). In Crete we have the temple of *Apollo Dreros* (a toponym), dated to 640 B.C., and *Apollo Tarraios* in the prefecture of Chania. There are sanctuaries of the god also at the town of Gortyna, and an open-air sanctuary in the Samaria Gorge.

There are many [representations](#) of Apollo in ancient art. He is shown beardless, often nude and always beautiful. The best known statues of the god are those in the west pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, in the friezes of the Parthenon and the Treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi, the "Omphalos Apollo" in the National Archaeological Museum and the Pheidias statue representing Apollo Pamopios, identified as the "Kassel Apollo". The Naxian colossal Apollo at Delos is dated to 600 B.C.

The [symbols](#) of the god were the tripod, the *kithara*, the lyre, the bow and quiver (just as his sister Artemis) and the *omphalos* of Delphi, as the centre of the world. His special plants were the laurel (*daphne*) and the palm, and his favorite animals were the swan, the dolphin and the crow.



Exterior of a red-figured kylix with a representation of Ares and Aphrodite, ca. 520 B.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Tarquinia.



Obverse of a silver drachm of Phallana in Thessaly, ca. 320 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.

Statue of Ares seated in repose, known as the "Ares Ludovisi". Roman copy in marble of an original bronze statue attributed to the sculptor Skopas, ca. 330 B.C.
© Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome.



View of the area of the temple of Ares in the Ancient Agora of Athens.

Mars at Rest, by D. Velasquez, ca. 1636-40.
© Museo Prado, Madrid.



Aphrodite, Eros and the Graces disarming Ares, by J. David, 1824.
© Musées Royaux d'Art et d' Histoire, Bruxelles.



Head of Ares from a relief, ca. 193-211 A.C. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Ares

Roman Mars



For the ancient Greeks, [Ares](#) was the god of war and warriors. He was the personification of pitiless struggle and for him war was an end in itself. Information about him is limited and comes mainly from Homer's Iliad and from the eighth Homeric hymn, which, however, appears to be considerably later than the others.

[Mythology](#) tells us that he was son of Zeus and Hera and that he took part in the Gigantomachy. *Deimos* (terror) and *Phobos* (fear) were his children and they followed him into battle. Children of Ares were also *Eris* (strife), the *Keres* (fates) and *Enyo* (the personification of war). With Aphrodite he had a daughter, the nymph *Harmonia* (harmony) who married Kadmos, the mythical founder of Thebes. For the Thebans, therefore, Ares was the first ancestor of their royal line. Ares had other children too: among them Diomedes, the mythical king of the Thracians, and the Amazons, an army of warlike females whose kingdom was believed to lie somewhere in the Caucasus or Scythia.

In the Odyssey we have a detailed narrative of a lively myth about Aphrodite who, while the wife of Hephaistos, had an affair with Ares. The two lovers were surprised by Hephaistos who threw a huge net around them and turned them over to the derision of the Olympian divinities.

From Athenian tradition comes the myth of Ares' trial for the murder of Halirrhothios, son of Poseidon. It was decided that the twelve Olympian gods would comprise the lawcourt responsible for trying murder cases. Since Ares murdered Halirrhothios because he caught him raping his daughter Alkippe, he was acquitted by the court. The trial occurred on a rocky hill near the Acropolis, which from then on was known as the Areopagus.

Another version of the myth says that in the time of Theseus, when the Amazons invaded Attica, they siezed the rock, offered a sacrifice to their father, Ares, and then gave the rock his name.

Ares' nature explains why there was no special festival in his honour. Homer describes the character of the god in the Iliad. He is the archetypal warrior, strongly built and fleet of foot, who leaps maniacally into the battle fray, bellowing his war-cry as loudly as ten thousand men. The poet emphasises the difference between the warrior goddess Athena, who fights for a purpose, and Ares who was so bloodthirsty that even his father Zeus detested him. As Herodotos tells us, the ancient Greeks believed that Ares was worshipped also by barbarians, the Thracians and the Scythians.

Ares' [epithets](#) are recorded as *Chalkeus* (brazen), *Brisarmatos* (hard-pressing charioteer), *Teichosiplektes* (stormer of cities), *Alloprosallós* (fickle, like the wind blowing now hot, now cold), *Aphneios* (rich). In Lakonia he was worshipped as *Theritas* (meaning perhaps «fierce», although Pausanias in III.19.8 records also a tradition that the epithet came from Thero, said to have been his nurse) and *Enyalios* (from his daughter's name Enyo, who was the personification of war).

There was probably a [sanctuary](#) of Ares during the 5th century B.C. at Achamai in Attica where there is some evidence for a cult of the god. In Augustus's time, the cult was transferred to the Athenian Agora where it was established in a Doric temple of the classical period, which in turn had been brought to the Agora from the sanctuary of *Athena Pallenitis* and reassembled. There Pausanias saw the statue of Ares next to those of Athena and Aphrodite. The temple, which thus housed three different cults, was perhaps better known as the temple of Ares. During the same period a temple of *Mars Ultor* (Ares the Avenger) was erected in Rome when Augustus overcame the murderers of Caesar. Sanctuaries of the god are known also at Philippi in Macedonia and Elounda in the province of Lasithi in Crete.

There are many [representations](#) of the god in vase painting and in sculpture. The Roman statue of Ares seated in repose, is similar to his figure on the Parthenon frieze. This famous statue, is known as the "Ares Ludovisi". It is a copy of a work attributed to the sculptor Skopas. Well known too is the statue known as "Ares Borghese" in the Louvre, a copy of a work attributed to the sculptor Alkamenes.

Ares' [symbols](#) are his weapons, his spear, his helmet and the torch. His sacred animal is the dog. Apple twigs decorated the animals sacrificed to Ares.



Red-figured lekythos with a representation of Artemis accompanied by a deer with her bow and arrow, 480-470 B.C.
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Bronze statue of Artemis, ca. 350 B.C., probably by the sculptor Euphranor.
© Archaeological Museum, Piraeus.



The sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron. The Stoa of the Bears, ca. 420 B.C.



Obverse of a gold half-stater of Pyrrhos of Epeiros, 278-276 B.C.
© British Museum, London.



Obverse of a silver stater of Stymphalos, Arcadia, ca. 350 B.C.
© Bibliothèque Nationale - Cabinet des Médailles, Paris.



Bronze statue of Artemis (H. 1.65 m.) The goddess, nude, with her bow and accompanied by her dog, by P. Manship, 1925.
© National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Head of Artemis from the east frieze of the Parthenon, ca. 440 B.C. © Acropolis Museum, Athens.



Artemis

Roman Diana



Artemis was worshipped in ancient Greece as the goddess of wild nature, of forests, mountains, springs and wild animals. Like Athena and Hestia, according to mythology, she never married. She was the archetypal solitary, free and independent young woman who lived close to the natural world. The ancient Greeks believed that she protected the fruits of the earth, the young, as well as women in childbirth; that she was occupied with the hunt; that she was accompanied by Nymphs and *Charites* (graces) and had virginal beauty.

Greek **mythology** tells us that Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, twin sister of Apollo and born in Delos. Her special functions varied in different parts of Greece and she was of course, as nurse of living beings connected with the great goddess of the earth's fertility whose worship was widely known in Asia Minor. Her largest sanctuary was in Ephesos. She was also connected with the moon as was her brother, Apollo, with the sun. Artemis, as mistress of the world of wild animals, as *Potnia Theron* (mistress of animals), seems to have been worshipped in Greece from very early times. In classical times she had different characteristics and she was worshipped in various ways in different places. In Attica she was connected with childbirth and the raising of children. As *Locheia* (she who presides over childbirth) and *Eileithyia* (she who comes in the hour of need, hence goddess of childbirth), she protected mother and child during pregnancy and in birth and as *Paidotrophos* and *Kourotrophos* (nourisher of infants) she helped with the rearing of children. In her temple at Brauron in Attica, women dedicated their garments after childbirth and they brought their infants and little girls, dressed as little bears, to dance in her honour the "Dance of the Bears". The *Brauroneion*, a sanctuary in the form of a large stoa on the Athenian Acropolis was dedicated to the goddess.

In Arcadia, in the wilds of Mt. Eurymanthos and Mt. Taygetos, she was supposed to have hunted wild animals with bow and arrow. She was called *Koryphaia* (leader) and *Kallisto* (epithet, from a nymph who became a bear).

At Sparta, in the Sanctuary of *Artemis Orthia* (standing), there were contests in withstanding pain, the ritual flagellation of the *Ephebes*, whose blood was shed on the altar of the goddess. The *Bomonikes Ephebe* (the boy who won the prize for enduring the whipping at the altar) could erect his portrait statue in her precinct.

In Delos, where they believed that she protected seafarers, she was known as *Ekbateria* (who brings seafarers safely home), *Euporia* (who facilitates and brings wealth), *Euploia* (who gives a good sea voyage).

In Tauris (contemporary Crimaia) she was identified with Iphigeneia, a phenomenon connected with her worship at Brauron. In a number of Greek myths she appears as vindictive and hard, as at Aulis where the sacrifice of Iphigeneia was required because Agamemnon had boasted that his aim with the bow and arrow was better than hers; in the myth of Aktaion where she changed him into a deer and his own dogs tore him to pieces because he had seen the goddess nude; and in the myth of Niobe where, with Apollo, she killed Niobe's 14 children because Niobe had boasted that she had more children than Leto.

In classical times, her most important **festival** in Attica was the *Brauroneia*. This was celebrated with greater brilliance every four years. The procession started at the Brauroneion on the Acropolis and went to the sanctuary at Brauron. In the *Elaphebolia* she was offered cakes in the form of deer. At the yearly festival of the *Agrotera*, initiated after the victory of Marathon, 500 goats were sacrificed to the goddess. In the festival of the *Mounychia* there was a procession to the sanctuary of *Artemis Mounychia* in Piraeus and a mock naval battle was performed. The *Amarousia* were held in Marousi with a procession and naval games (in memory of the battle of Salamis); in Patras the *Laphria* were celebrated with a great fire. This is described by Pausanias.

Artemis had more than 200 **epithets** in antiquity that were connected with her special aspects or the location of her sanctuaries: *Brauronia* (of Brauron), *Bendis* (a Thracian divinity assimilated by Artemis), *Locheia* (in childbirth), *Paidotrophos* (rearing of children), *Kourotrophos* (nursing of infants), *Soteira* (savior), *Tauropolos* (worshipped at Tauris), *Agrotera* (huntress), *Hegemone* (leader), *Karyatis* (of Karyai), *Limnatis* (of the lakes), *Potamia* (of the rivers), *Prostateria* (protectress) and so on. She was also known as *Diktyna* (goddess of nets), as *Britomartis* (sweet virgin) and a festival was held in Delos known as the *Britomartia*. She was connected also with tree cult: At Sparta she was worshipped as *Lygodesma* (because her *xoanon* , the wooden statue, was bound

by osiers to hold it upright) and in Arcadian Orchomenos, as *Kedreatis* (because her *xoanon* was placed in the hollow of a cedar trunk).

Many **sanctuaries** and temples that were dedicated to the goddess Artemis are known through the ancient sources and from monuments that have survived or been discovered in excavations.

At Athens, as already noted, there was an important sanctuary of *Artemis Brauroneia* on the Athenian Acropolis and next to the Ilissos river stood the Ionic temple of *Artemis Agrotera*. At Piraeus there was the sanctuary of *Artemis Mounichia*. Preserved at Brauron are a large part of the classical stoa of the sanctuary and the foundations of a temple of the late 6th century B.C. Remains of the sanctuary of *Artemis Tauropolos* in the Demos of Halai Araphenides have been discovered at Loutsia in Attica. Preserved at Eleusis are the foundations of a temple of *Artemis Propylaia* and foundations of a temple has been revealed at Aulis too.

In Aetolia, at Calydon, there is a sanctuary of *Artemis Laphria* with remains of a temple of the beginning of the archaic period.

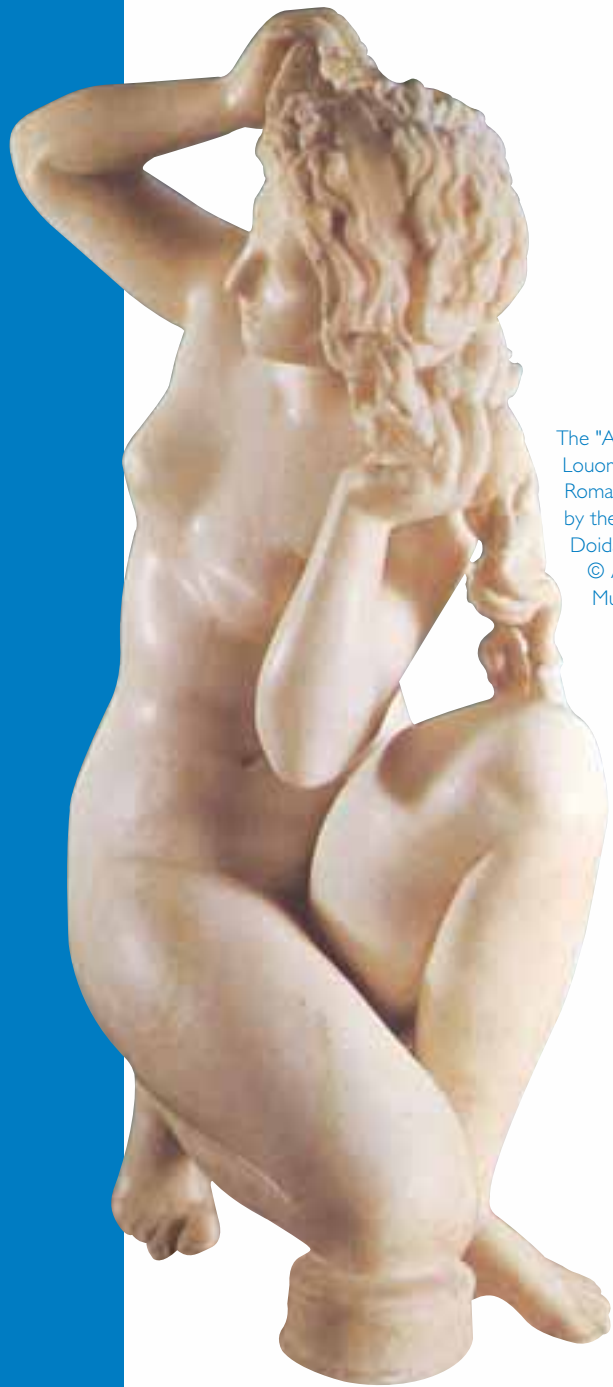
In the Peloponnese, equally early is the temple found recently at Ano Mazaraki in Achaia. Remains of a temple of the 4th century, in very bad condition, have been found at the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros. At Lycosoura in Arcadia there was a temple of *Artemis Hegemone*, at Mantinea, a sanctuary and temple of *Artemis Kourotrophos*. At Sparta, the sanctuary of *Artemis Orthia* is known in its Roman form with a little shrine and a theatrical layout. A temple also stood at ancient Messene.

In northern Greece, Thasos and Philippi too had temples sacred to the goddess and *Artemis Tauropolos* had a sanctuary at Amphipolis.

At the Delion in Paros she had a little Doric shrine and at Delos yet another temple. In addition, there was a temple of Artemis at Myrina in Lemnos. In Corfu stood the great pseudo-peripteral archaic temple known, from its pedimental decoration, as the "Gorgon Temple" with whom Artemis is associated. *Artemis Britomartis* was worshipped at Elounda in Crete.

We have many **representations** of the goddess on pottery and in sculpture. In classical times Artemis was always depicted dressed in multi-folded garments. Her bronze statues in Piraeus are well known as are also the dedicatory reliefs from Brauron and the so-called "Artemis of Versailles".

Symbols of the goddess were the bow and quiver, the crescent moon, deer, hunting dogs, the bull and the bear. Frequently she is associated with the cypress.

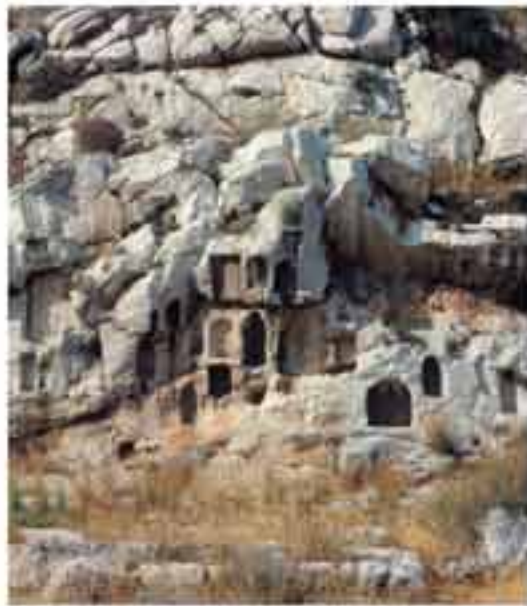


The "Aphrodite Louomene" as a miniature work of art (H. 8,5 cm.) of rock crystal, 1st century B.C.
© J.P. Getty Museum, Los Angeles



The "Aphrodite Louomene", ca. 100 B.C. Roman copy of a work by the sculptor Doidalses.
© Archaeological Museum, Rhodes.

The "Aphrodite Louomene" as a miniature figure decorating the head of a gold pin, 3rd century B.C.
© Benaki Museum, Athens.



Open-air sanctuary of Aphrodite at Daphni, with niches cut in the rock-face for dedications.



Attic white-ground pyxis with a scene showing Aphrodite talking with her son, Eros, ca. 460 B.C.
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Detail from the painting "The Birth of Aphrodite", by S. Boticelli, ca. 1483. © Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



Reverse of a gold stater of Salamis in Cyprus. Aphrodite is shown crowned and wearing earrings and a necklace, 381-332 B.C.
© Greek private collection.



Exterior of a red-figured kylix with a representation of the "Judgement of Paris". © Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Head of the goddess from the group of "Aphrodite, Pan and Eros", ca. 100 B.C. Found in Delos. © National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Aphrodite

Roman Venus



Aphrodite was the goddess of beauty and love. Her importance to the ancient Greeks, however, did not end there, for she embodied the great forces of nature that perpetuate life in the world, the forces that unite sky and earth to create the gifts of nature, plants and animals. In Plato's Symposium and in late classical times, a clear distinction is made between *Aphrodite Ourania* (of the heavens), who represented pure love and protected family and fertility, and *Aphrodite Pandemos* (of all the *deme*, thus everybody), who protected free relationships and physical love.

These late rationalisations do not diminish the complexity and contradictions with which Aphrodite is portrayed in Greek **mythology**. According to one version she was the daughter of *Ouranos* (sky). When Kronos cut off the sexual organs of his father Ouranos and threw them into the sea of Paphos in Cyprus, Aphrodite was born of the sea-foam as *Aphroessa* (from the foam of the sea), *Pontogenes* (sea-born) and *Anadyomene* (risen from the sea). Another version says that Aphrodite was the daughter of Zeus and Dione.

Her cult unquestionably comes from the east; Herodotos is clear about this. Paphos in Cyprus and the island of Kythera in Greece were the places where her cult entered the Aegean area and Greece. The myth tells us that with Aphrodite came also *Harmonia* (harmony) the Hours, *Peitho* (persuasion), her children *Eros* (love) and *Himeros* (the idea of sexual desire), and especially the *Charites* (the graces). The *Charites* wove her clothing, they bathed her, perfumed her and accompanied her in dancing.

In the Odyssey, Aphrodite was the wife of Hephaistos, whom she deceived with Ares. According to Hesiod, she was the wife of Ares by whom she gave birth to Eros, Himeros, *Phobos* (fear) and *Deimos* (terror). She was connected also with Poseidon, with whom she bore Eryx (a hero) and Rhodos (who gave her name to the island). With Dionysos she bore Priapos (symbol of fertility) and with Hermes, Hermaphroditos. She caused various mortal women to fall in love with calamitous results, such as Medea with Jason, Ariadne with Theseus, Helen with Paris. In the Trojan War she sided with the Trojans, showing favour to Paris who had awarded her the "Apple of Discord", considering her to be more beautiful than Athena and Hera. Aphrodite herself was known to have fallen in love with mortals, including Adonis, Phaon (a hero from Lesbos), Phaethon and Anchises, with whom she bore Aeneas, hero of the Trojan War and founder of cities. In the myth of Adonis, who remained half the year in Hades and the other half with the goddess, scholars see a symbolic revival of nature each spring.

In addition to the **epithets** already mentioned, Aphrodite has yet others: *Pasiphae* (who appears to all), *Pasiphaessa*, *Pontoa* (cast up by the sea), *Enalia* (of the sea) and *Thalassaie* (as protectress of sea-farers), *Paphia* (the Paphian) *Kytheria* (the Kytheran) and *Epitragia* because goats were sacrificed in her honour.

Little is known about the cult and **festivals** of Aphrodite. Aromatic oils and the burning of incense, however, are known to have been important. In the sanctuary of *Aphrodite in the Gardens* at Athens, an inscription was found pertaining to the festival of Eros, her son.

There are literary references to many **sanctuaries** of Aphrodite, especially in the islands and in Asia Minor. In Athens, the goddess had sanctuaries, perhaps open-air, such as the sanctuaries of *Aphrodite in the Gardens* on the north slope of the

Acropolis and of *Aphrodite Hegemone* in the Ancient Agora. Another sanctuary lay beside the Sacred Way at Daphni. Little niches in the rock face that held offerings can still be seen today. There was a temple, now destroyed, on the north slope of the Kolonos Agoraios hill overlooking the Ancient Agora.

The goddess was worshipped at Thespiiai in Boiotia as *Aphrodite Melaina* and, according to Pausanias, there was an open-air sanctuary of the goddess in Thebes.

In the Peloponnese, on Acrocorinth she was worshipped as *Aphrodite Akraia* (of the heights). Open-air sanctuaries existed perhaps as well at Sikyon and Hermione. Epidauros had a temple sacred to the goddess, and there was a sanctuary of *Aphrodite Erikyne* in Arcadia. The sanctuary of *Aphrodite Ourania* (of the heavens) in the island of Kythera was well known.

Rhodes and Kos in the Dodekanese, as well as Melos in the Cyclades, had their sanctuaries too. At Mesa in Lesbos there was a temple sacred to the goddess and Lemnos and Samos each had their sanctuaries.

She was worshipped likewise in Crete, where she had sanctuaries at Axos in the territory of Rethymnon and, with Hermes, at Syme Viannou.

In Cyprus at Amathos remains of her temple have been found and at Paphos, a sanctuary of Roman times.

Finally, a large and splendid temple was dedicated to the goddess at Aphrodisia in Asia Minor.

Of the many **statues** of Aphrodite, the best known are the "Aphrodite of Melos", today in the Louvre, the *Knidia* of Praxiteles, her statue in the east pediment of the Parthenon and the Rhodian "Aphrodite Louomene" (bathing) by the sculptor Doidalses. To these may be added the relief of the goddess on the "Ludovisi Throne" in Rome.

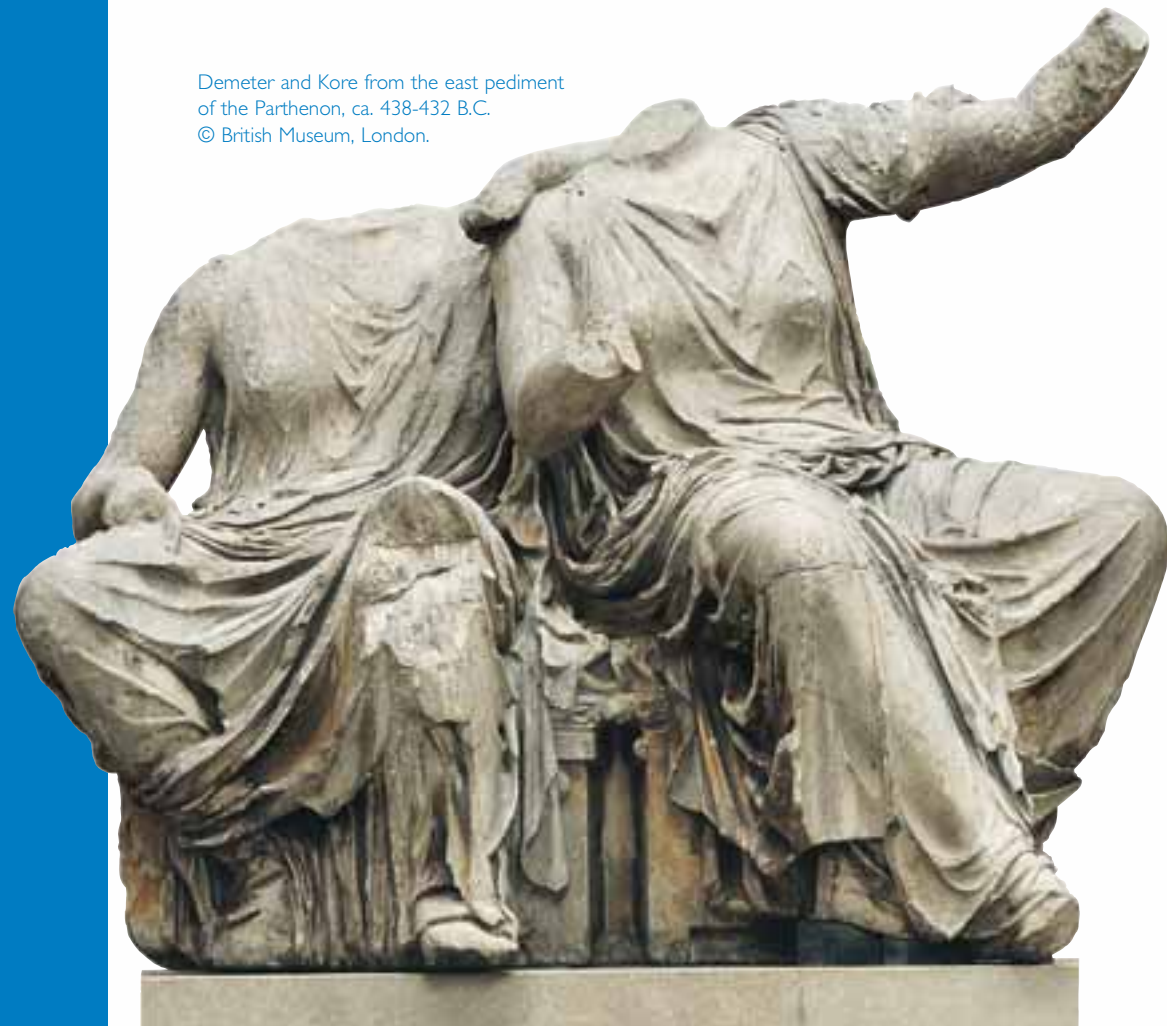
The **symbols** of Aphrodite were doves, geese and her favorite flower, the rose. She is depicted with richly embroidered garments – woven and sewn by the Charites and the Hours – or she is represented nude, especially in the later works of art. She is often shown emerging from an open shell or accompanied by her son Eros who holds a bow.



Head of Demeter from the big dedicatory relief of Eleusis, 440-430 B.C.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Head of Persephone from the big dedicatory relief of Eleusis, 440-430 B.C.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Demeter and Kore from the east pediment of the Parthenon, ca. 438-432 B.C.
© British Museum, London.



Obverse of a silver tetradrachm of Agathokles of Syracuse, with the head of Persephone, ca. 310-304 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Obverse of a silver stater of the Delphic Amphiktyony, with the head of Demeter, ca. 336 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Red-figured crater with a scene showing Demeter welcoming her daughter who is being led by Hermes to the Upper World. Hekate lights the way with her torches, pointing out the road, ca. 440 B.C.
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



The temple of Demeter at Sangri in Naxos, ca. 530 B.C. It stood in an agricultural part of the island and had the characteristic Telesterion form.



The return of Persephone. Hermes delivers Kore to her mother, Demeter, by Fr. Leighton, 1890-91. © City Art Gallery, Leeds.

Dedicatory relief showing Demeter and Kore, ca. 480 B.C. Demeter is enthroned, holding her scepter, and Kore holds two torches. © Archaeological Museum, Eleusis.



Demeter & Kore

Roman Ceres and Porsepina



Demeter was the goddess of cultivated fields, protectress of agriculture and grain. She taught mankind to cultivate the earth and she was closer to mortals than any other divinity. Under certain circumstances of initiation, she even offered them the prospect of a happy life after death. The personality of Demeter was defined also by her relationship with her daughter. She is the mother of **Persephone**, Queen of the Underworld, with whom she forms a divine pair, a conception that surpasses mythology and becomes basic for comprehending the symbolism of this mystery cult in antiquity.

Mythology tells us that Demeter was the daughter of Kronos and Rhea and that with Zeus she conceived Persephone or *Kore* (daughter). Some believed that with the hero Iasion she had a son as well, named *Ploutos* (wealth), who symbolized the plentiful produce of the earth.

One day, while Kore was gathering flowers Plouton, the God of the Underworld, suddenly appeared and snatched her up in his chariot and disappeared with her beneath the earth. In frightful agony, Demeter left Mt. Olympus and began wandering in search of her daughter. After nine days she came to Eleusis. There the local king, Keleos, received her, even though she was disguised as a poor old woman and he placed his infant son in her care. After an unsuccessful attempt to make the baby Damophon, immortal, she revealed her divinity and asked that a temple be built in her honour, to which she retired in deep sorrow. The result was that earth ceased to produce its fruit and sickness spread throughout

the world. Zeus then sent Hermes to Plouton to demand that he set his wife, Persephone, free to return to earth. A pomegranate seed, however, that Persephone ate before she left Hades was enough to bind her forever with the Underworld, where she was obliged to stay for four months of every year. The other eight months she was allowed to stay above, on earth with her mother. Thus Kore has a double nature. With her mother she supervises the fertility of earth and the harvest, yet she is the Queen of the Dead as wife of Plouton. The symbolism of the withering of plants during the winter months and their renewal brought by spring is very clear. The myths do not end here, however. The two goddesses send Triptolemos (identified by some as Damophon, the son of Keleos) up in a winged chariot to fly throughout the world to teach mankind how to cultivate grain. They then taught the Eleusinians the meaning of death and opened for them the prospect of eternal life with the *Eleusinian Mysteries*, as they became known.

As might be expected, these unique characteristics of Demeter have become the subject of extensive study by scholars. The divine couple, Mother-Daughter, was already in evidence in prehistoric times. The **festival** of the *Thesmophoria*, a celebration of fertility in which only women participated, appears to go back to very ancient rural rites. At the end of June, on the 12th of the month Skirophorion, in the festival of the *Skira*, offerings were thrown into chasms in the rocks: pigs "for the productivity of animals", and branches of cone-bearing pines "for the productivity of plants". These offerings were known as *thesma*, (things that had been stowed away or laid down). Four months later, at the end of October in the festival of the *Thesmophoria*, when the *thesma* had decayed, the women withdrew them and took them to altars. Each farmer received a small portion which he mixed with the grain to be planted in order to ensure a rich crop.

In the *Eleusinia*, the greatest mystery festival of ancient religion, the priests were all men and the emphasis was on the idea of life after death and the initiated participated in a ceremony that was carried out in strict secrecy within a closed area, the Telesterion. It is not by chance that the cult of Demeter outlived all the other cults of antiquity, persisting to the end of Roman times.

Another of the goddess's festivals was the *A/oa* (threshing floor), held in mid-January. In Homer the two goddesses have separate cults since it is mainly Demeter that belongs to the Olympian company of gods.

In addition to *Eleusinia*, *Deo*, *Gephyraia* and *Kabireia* (all connected with her cults in specific places), the **epithets** of Demeter include *Thesmophoros*, *Megalartos*, *Megalomazos* (who brings much bread and quantities of grain), *Karpophoros*, *Sito*, *Imalis* (abundance). The word *demetriaka* (cereals) in modern Greek is derived from the name of the goddess.

The most important **sanctuary** of Demeter was the one in Eleusis, dominated by the Telesterion. Second was the Eleusinion on the north side of the Athenian Acropolis on the Panathenaic Way; yet another sanctuary at the Acropolis was that of *Demeter Chloe* slightly to the west. Corinth too had a sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. At Hermione and at Sparta, there were temples of *Demeter Chthonia* (of the Underworld) in which both mother and daughter were worshipped as the same divinity. There were *Thesmophoria*, sanctuaries where the special cult was held, in Pella, Delos and in Samos at Pythagoreion.

At Sangri in Naxos are the ruins of a large Telesterion-like building that probably belonged to Demeter. Sanctuaries of the goddess are also recorded in Thasos and in Crete, at Knossos and at Hyrtakina, in the prefecture of Chania.

Representations of Demeter and Kore occur frequently in sculpture and vase painting. The two goddesses are often shown together with Triptolemos. The two reliefs from Eleusis are well known as is also the group of Demeter and Kore from the east pediment of the Parthenon. The return of Kore from the Underworld, accompanied by Hermes, was a popular theme.

The **symbols** of Demeter are the torch (which was carried by initiates during the *Eleusinian Mysteries*), her sceptre and ears of wheat. When Demeter and Kore are shown together, Kore holds the torches as Queen of the Underworld. Sacred to Demeter was the pig, to Persephone the cock.



Bronze statuette of Zeus, ca. 450 B.C.
The god is shown hurling his thunderbolt.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Bronze head of Zeus from Olympia, 520-510 B.C.
The eyes of the god were inlaid.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Red-figured amphora with a representation of Zeus holding a thunderbolt and an eagle, ca. 480 B.C.
© Musée du Louvre, Paris.



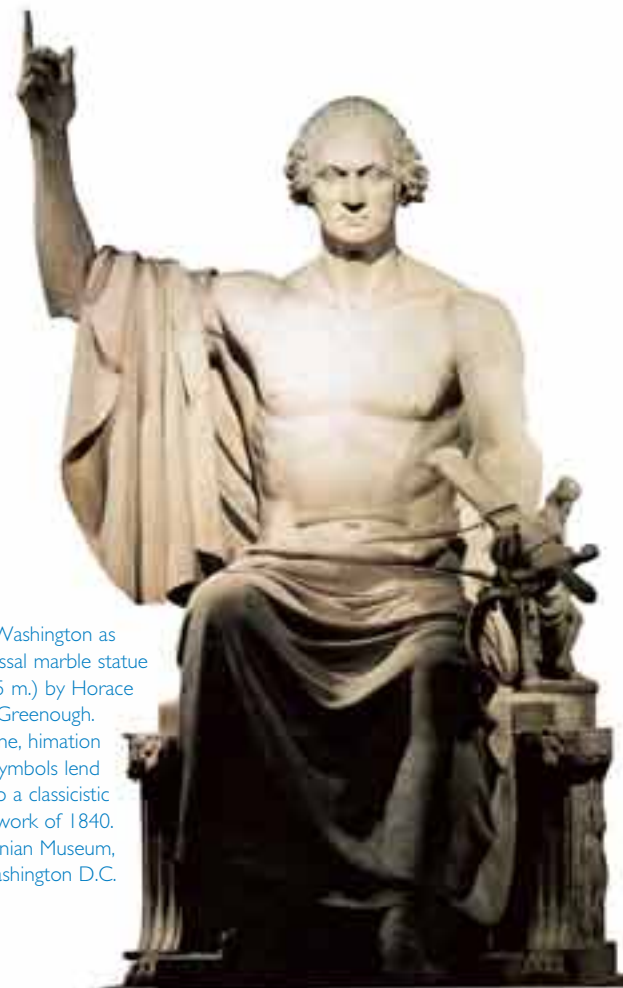
Reverse of a silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy I. Zeus is represented enthroned, with his eagle and his thunderbolt, 320 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Obverse of a silver didrachm of Elis, showing the head of Zeus crowned with laurel, ca. 360 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



View of the temple of Zeus Olympios in Athens, as it was finished by the emperor Hadrian in A.D. 132. It was the largest temple in Greece, of the corinthian order, octastyle, dipteral with 104 columns.



George Washington as Zeus. Colossal marble statue (H. 3.35 m.) by Horace Greenough.
The throne, himation and symbols lend majesty to a classicistic work of 1840.
© Smithsonian Museum, Washington D.C.



Head of Zeus from Mylasa in Asia Minor, ca. 350-340 B.C. It is thought to have been inspired by the gold and ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia, by Pheidias. © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Zeus

Roman Jupiter



Zeus, for the ancient Greeks, was father of the gods and of mankind. He was the main deity who knew and saw all, the lord of the heavens and master of atmospheric phenomena. In addition to the power he wielded, he was characterised by justice and ethical perfection: he rewarded excellence and punished evil. He knew what the future held and he could pronounce oracles (as at his oracle at Dodone) or send *Diosemia* (portent-bearing omens). For the ancient Greeks he was *Hypsibremetes* (the high thundering god) who hurled from on high his thunderbolts. He was *Nephelegeretes* (who sent rain from the clouds), but as *Maimaktes* (stormy) he caused damaging storms. It was believed that he punished those who did not listen to his orders. Yet he was *Xenios* (hospitable) who protected the act of hospitality.

Homer tells us that this supreme god was the father of gods and of men. According to Hesiod's Theogony, he was the brother of Poseidon and of Plouton, god of the Underworld, the husband of Hera and father of the other Olympian divinities. The Titans Kronos and Rhea were his parents.

According to the **myth** Kronos, knowing that Zeus would one day dethrone him, decided to swallow him, but Rhea tricked him by giving him a stone wrapped up in a bundle instead of the real baby, which she hid in Crete. Amaltheia, a goat, fed the baby Zeus with her milk and the Kouretes drowned out the sounds of the infant's cries by beating their bronze shields. After the Gigantomachy and the Titanomachy, Zeus was imposed and with the other gods he ruled the world from his home on the peaks of Mt. Olympus.

Hera was the wife of Zeus and their sacred marriage was the archetype of mortal marriages. Their children were Hephaistos, Ares, Eileithyia and Hebe. Mythology tells of Zeus' erotic affairs with goddesses, nymphs and mortal women: with Metis, goddess of prudence and discretion, he had a daughter, the goddess Athena. Demeter bore him Persephone. With Leto he produced Apollo and Artemis, with Semele Dionysos, with Maia Hermes, with Alkmene Herakles, with Danae Perseus and with Thetis Achilles. The myth of Europe, the daughter of *Okeanos* (ocean), is well known. Zeus, in the form of a bull, carried her off to Crete, thus giving her name to all Europe. The power and universal presence of Zeus was expressed also by his many metamorphoses.

The cult of Zeus is very early and there is evidence for its existence throughout Greece and the Greek colonies. In Athens a number of festivals were held in his honour: the *Diasia* in early spring, the *Dipolieia*, after the harvest, held on the Acropolis (where there was a sanctuary of *Zeus Polieus*), the *Pompaia* at the beginning of winter and the *Diesoteria* with a procession of thanks and with contests. In the mountain sanctuaries of Zeus, in many parts of Greece, there were religious processions accompanied by prayers for rain: the citizens of Demetrias made sacrifices to *Zeus Akraios* (Zeus who lives in the mountain tops) on the heights of Mt. Pelion. Similar sacrifices are known in the sanctuary of *Zeus Lykaios* in Arcadia, on Mt. Apesa in Corinthia and in Crete. The cults of Zeus at Olympia and at Nemea were of panhellenic character. Both were sanctuaries where athletic contests were held in his honour that were of special significance for the ancient Greeks. Participation in the games was in essence an offering to the god just as were sacrifices and gifts. The god shared in the victory and fame, offering panhellenic recognition. The sanctuary of Dodone was especially important. It was visited by many who came to consult the oracle and receive advice from the priests who interpreted the whispering of the leaves of the venerable oak trees that were sacred to the god.

His **epithets** were many and reflect his special features: *Hypatos* (the highest), *Megistos* (the greatest), *Aristos* (the best), *Polieus* (protector of the city), *Eleutherios* (the deliverer), *Herkeios* (protector of the house), *Soter* (Saviour), *Ktesios* (protector of property), *Meilichios* (the friendly [euphemistically]), *Horkios* (invoked at an oath, god who watches over fulfillment of oath), *Aitherios* (ethereal), *Ikmaios* (sender of cool meltemi winds), *Euanemos* (giver of fair winds), *Alexikakos* (who

wards off mischief), *Genethlios* (protector of family as tutelary god), *Patroos* (ancestral divinity, also protector of patrimony), *Panellenios* (of all the Greeks) or *Hellaneios* (as in Aigina), *Horkeios* (who watches over the fulfillment of oaths), *Philios* (of friendship) and others.

The oldest **temples** of Zeus were those built by the tyrants during the 6th century B.C., such as the gigantic temple at Acragas in Sicily (known as the "Temple of the Giants") and the first Olympieion of Athens, a Doric temple on the site of the present temple, which was not finished until Hadrian's time. Zeus had also other temples in Athens: on the Acropolis, dedicated to *Zeus Polieus*, and in the Ancient Agora where he was worshipped as *Zeus Agoraios*. There was a sanctuary of *Zeus Meilichios* at Zea in Piraeus. An important temple of Zeus stood at Stratos in Akamania.

The sanctuaries of Zeus did not always include temples. In very early times worship appears to have taken place in the open air, of main importance being the altars. The altar at Olympia was grand, with a huge cone of sacrificial remains and ashes. The temple at Olympia was famous in antiquity not only for its magnificent architecture but also because it held the chryselephantine cult statue of the god, a work of Pheidias and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In the Peloponnese too, at Nemea there was an important temple of the 4th century, relatively well preserved today. Another temple is known at Aigeira in Achaia. In addition, there were sanctuaries of the god on Mt. Lykaion in Arcadia. In Epeiros, Dodone was the location of the very famous sanctuary and oracle. There were other temples at Rhodotopi in Ioannina and in north Greece, at Philippoi and Chalkero near Kavala. In Crete Zeus was an important divinity with the temple of *Zeus Diktaios* at Palaikastro and a sanctuary at Elounda in Lasithi and he was worshipped in the Idaion Cave as well.

In **ancient art** Zeus is always portrayed as dignified, bearded, usually enthroned but also standing to hurl his thunderbolt. The famous bronze head from Olympia, now in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, is a splendid and imposing work of art.

The **symbols** of Zeus, which we see in many works of ancient art, are the thunderbolt, his sceptre, oak leaves and the eagle.



Relief of Dionysos shown reposing on a rock with Ariadne. Detail on the gilded bronze crater from Derveni, ca. 350 B.C. © Archaeological Museum, Thessalonike.



Interior of a red-figured kylix with a scene of Dionysos in a state of sacred inebriation. The god is playing the barbiton and he is accompanied by two Satyrs playing the krotala, ca. 480 B.C. © Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.



View of the sanctuary of Dionysos on the south slope of the Acropolis; the theatre of Dionysos, is directly connected with the temples of the god to the south.



Obverse of a silver tetradrachm of Mende in Macedonia. Dionysos is shown seated backwards on a donkey and holding a kantharos, ca. 425 B.C. © Numismatic Museum, Athens.

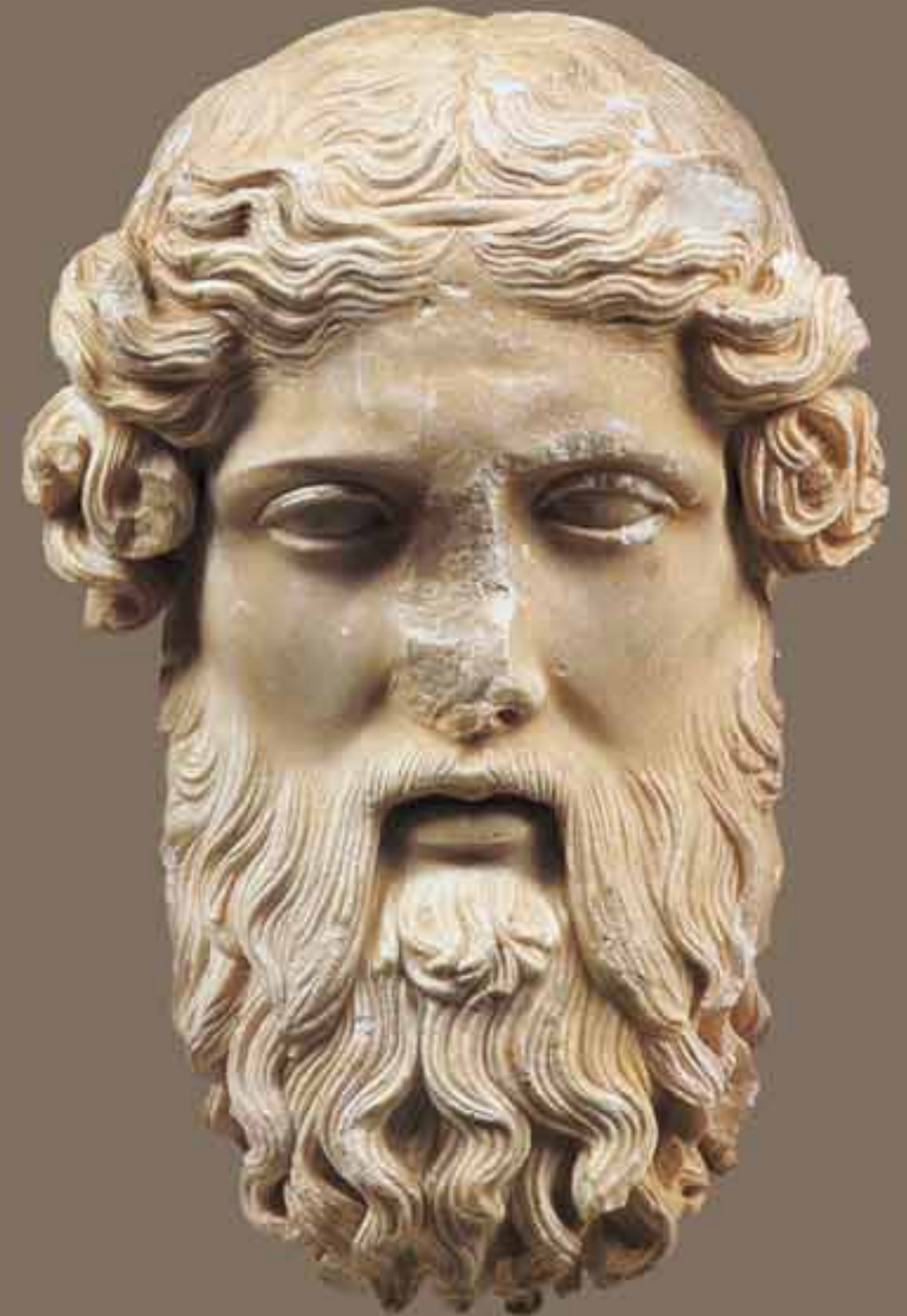
The young Dionysos crowned with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, by M. Carravagio, ca. 1600. © Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



Marble altar from the sanctuary of Dionysos in Athens. It is decorated with masks, rosettes and garlands of leaves and fruit from ivy and grapevines, ca. 100 B.C.



Head of Dionysos, 1st century B.C. Thought to be inspired by an original of the 4th century B.C. © National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Dionysos

Roman Bacchus



Dionysos was the god of vineyards, of wine, of ecstatic dance. The fertility and productivity of the earth also lay in his domain. To describe precisely his special character is difficult; he appears to have embodied also a sense of the powers of the subconscious, which were expressed by ecstasy, inebriation and enthusiasm that surpassed logic. It is characteristic that he was able to transmit *mania*,

inspired frenzy, as much to his opponents as to his followers. To his followers *mania*, with wine and dance, provided a happy solution to sadness; to those who rejected him, it came as incurable madness.

The theory that the cult of Dionysos arrived late in Greece (based on the fact that Homer virtually ignores him) no longer holds, since the name appears on the Linear B tablets. Yet the Greeks of classical times considered the illogical, maniacal element of the personality of the god as something foreign to their outlook.

According to the Greek **myths**, Dionysos was born of the union of Zeus and Semele, daughter of Kadmos, the king of Thebes. She asked him to appear before her in all his godly grandeur, and when he did so, in his chariot and with his thunderbolts, her parental palace burst into flames and Semele was consumed. The coolness of an ivy vine protected her lifeless body, so that Zeus was able to take the infant she carried and sew him up within his thigh. Whence Dionysos was born. Hermes then took him to the Nymphs to be raised within a cave hidden by vines.

Later on, Dionysos travelled throughout the world to spread knowledge of viticulture and to spread his cult. Mythology tells us that with him came a *thiasos* (a company) of strange beings, Satyrs and Silens, Nymphs and Maenads, women dedicated to the god. In Attica he was received by Ikarios on the northern slopes of Mt. Pentelikon and the god taught him how to grow vines and how to make wine.

The ancient myths tell also about the attack on the god by Tyrrhenian pirates and how he changed them into dolphins. They tell us too about his marriage with Ariadne who had been abandoned by Theseus in Naxos. Born from this marriage were *Oinopion* (wine-drinker), *Euanthe* (blooming, flowery) and *Staphylos* (bunch of grapes). It was believed that he managed to bring his mother Semele up from the Underworld.

But some mythological matter, as we know, are contradictory. The orgiastic worship of Dionysos was thought by some to have come from Thrace. Yet the Athenians called him *Eleuthereus*, after Eleutherai, a town on the border between Attica and Boiotia.

The most probable is that the cult of Dionysos originated in the city of Thebes, the palace of prehistoric Kadmeia. This must be related to his connection with the Oracle of Delphi and his cult there. The tale of Pentheus, king of Thebes, who was torn to pieces by the Bacchai because he refused to allow them into the cult of the god, shows how brutal Dionysos could be toward those who were against him.

The **cult** of Dionysos retained its original character on Mt. Parnassos where, early in December, the *orgia* (orgiastic dances) were celebrated by women only, Maenads or Thysiadaï, members of the *thiasos* who carried in one hand a *thyrsos*, a staff wound round with ivy leaves, and in the other hand a *pyrsos* or fire-brand. Calling on the god, they fell into Bacchic frenzy, a sort of religious hysteria. *Auloi* (pipes) and tympana led the *thiasos*.

In Athens the festivals had a different character. The *Great Dionysia en Astei* (in the city) were a festival lasting many days. It took place at the end of March, by today's calendar, in memory of the transferal of the ancient *xoanon* (wooden statue) of the god from Eleutherai to the precinct of Dionysos on the south slope of the Acropolis. The extravagant element was apparent on the second day of the festival when the citizens revelled in the streets with songs, dances and practical jokes. The next four days were devoted to dramatic performances and the yearly theatrical contest. This was a serious event of great importance for the public life of ancient Greeks and for their philosophy. The *kat' Agrous* (rural) *Dionysia* were celebrated in the middle of winter. The farmers came to Athens in their waggons. They masqueraded and shouted out derisory remarks as they circulated. They also danced the *Askolia* on full *askoi* (wine-skins) that had been smeared with oil. Jolity reigned.

The *Anthesteria* (festival of flowers) were held at the end of February-beginning of March. At that time they presented the early spring flowers and made liquid offerings. The festivities included a "Sacred Wedding" between the god and the wife of the King-Archon, perhaps in memory of the story of Theseus and Ariadne. The festival concluded with the *Chytroi* (pot-feast), a day devoted to the dead and to *Hermes Psychopompos*, guide of souls.

The festival of the *Lenaia*, with the ecstatic dances of the Maenads, was held at the sanctuary of *Dionysos Lenaïos*, its location still unknown.

It is worth noting that there were *Dionysiai* in antiquity. These were guilds of citizens who honoured Dionysos, as in Piraeus, Tanagra, Rhodes and Teos in Asia. There were also guilds of "artisans in the entourage of Dionysos", actors and people connected with the theatre.

The known **epithets** of Dionysos are *Dimetor* and *Dissitokos* (twice born), *Merotraphes* (thigh-bred), *Pyrigenes* (fire-born), *Liaios* (who dispels sorrow), *Lenaïos* (of the wine-press), *lakchos* and especially *Bacchus*. From this epithet come the *Bacchai-Mainadai* and the verb *baccheuo* (to celebrate with Bacchic or frenzied revelry).

To Dionysos we owe, directly or indirectly, the theatres as **architecture**, that were built throughout the Greek world from the 5th century B.C. on. On the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis stood the sanctuary of Dionysos with a theatre and two temples, an older and a newer one. In Athens too was the sanctuary of *Dionysos in Limnai* (in the marshes). Mt. Pentelikon had its sanctuary too, in what was then the Demos of Ikarios. Other sanctuaries were at Thorikos, at Eleutherai and in the island of Kea.

An exceedingly ancient sanctuary is recorded on the acropolis at Thebes (where the cult statue was a pillar covered with bronze). There were also temples in Eretria, Old Epidauros and at Iria in the island of Naxos. There was a large altar to the god in the island of Kos. In northern Greece there were sanctuaries in the island of Thasos and Mt. Pangaion.

More important and larger temples were to be found in Asia Minor at Pergamon and at Teos, the work of the great architect Hermogenes.

In earlier **art** Dionysos is represented as bearded. Preserved in Naxos is an early colossal statue of the god, unfinished and still lying in the ancient quarry. Later on he appears as a beardless youth with long hair. He is dressed, as a rule, in long chiton and usually wears a crown of ivy. Representations of the god and his retainers are numerous on pottery. Notable is the depiction of Dionysos and Ariadne on the famous bronze, silver and gold Derveni crater. Praxiteles' statue of Hermes holding the infant Dionysos in his arms is well known. The god is frequently portrayed on mosaic floors.

Symbols of the god were the *thyrsos* (a staff wound round with vines and ending in a pine cone), a drinking vessel known as a *kantharos*, the ivy vine, grape vines, theatre masks and the *phallos* as a symbol of fertility. His special animals were the goat, the donkey and the panther.



Head of Hermes from a Hermaic stele. Roman copy of the 1st century A.C. The original (ca. 430 B.C.) by the sculptor Alkamenes, stood next to the Propylaia of the Acropolis. © Acropolis Museum, Athens.



The Hermes by Praxiteles, ca. 330 B.C.. He is holding the baby Dionysos in his arms. © Archaeological Museum, Olympia.



Bronze statuette of Hermes, ca. 530 B.C. The god is holding a ram. © National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Red-figured amphora with a representation of Hermes. He wears winged sandals, holds the kerykeion and has scales for weighing the souls of the dead, late 5th century B.C. © Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Reverse of a silver didrachm of Pheneos in Arcadia. The god is holding his kerykeion and little Arkas, ca. 370 B.C. © Numismatic Museum, Athens.



The first Greek postage stamp, 1861. Hermes, god of communications, is the symbol of the Greek Postal Service.



View of the sanctuary of Hermes Akakesios in the Agora of Megalopolis in Arcadia. © Photograph Pedro Olalla.



The Medici Hermes, by Jean de Boulogne (Giambologna), mid-16th century. © National Museum of the Bargello, Florence.

Head of the statue of Hermes by Praxiteles, ca. 330 B.C. © Archaeological Museum, Olympia.



Hermes

Roman Mercury



Hermes had various capacities according to the ancient Greeks, who believed that his sphere included the divine realm of Mt. Olympos, the world of mankind and Hades, the Underworld. He was the god of perpetual motion, of communication, of exchange –including that of trade–, of roads, of good luck. He was the messenger who carried out the commands of Zeus as well. In a strange way, while he protected commercial gain, he protected gain from fraud, deceit and theft. For the ancient rural communities in Greece, he was the caretaker of grazing herds of goat and sheep, cattle, horses and mules. Later on, he became the friendly *Psychopompos* (leader of souls) who showed the dead the way down to the World of Shades. He also protected music and athletic games and he was known as *Logios*, a connoisseur of clear expression. Hermes' cult was panhellenic and its roots lay in the Mycenaean world.

According to **mythology**, Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maia, the daughter of Atlas. Thus he was the brother of Apollo with whom he had close ties. The Homeric hymn tells us that he was born on Mt. Kyllene in Arcadia and that as an infant one day old, he stole fifty head of cattle from Apollo in Pieria. These he drove –making them march backwards– into a cave in Pylos, giving them up only after Zeus commanded him to do so. Hermes invented the *lyra* (stringed instrument with tortoise-shell sounding-board), which he gave to

Apollo who in turn gave him the gold *kerykeion*, symbol of his high calling as herald of the gods. He was believed to have begotten many children, mainly with the Nymphs. Some of these were Eudoros with Polymela, Samon (who gave his name to Samothrace) with Rhene, Pan with Dryope, and Autolykos, the grandfather of Odysseus, with Philonis. With Aphrodite he bore Hermaphroditos.

The name Hermes is thought to have come from the word *Herma*, the stone-piles placed along the ancient roads as primaeval monuments to the god. A chance and unexpected find was known as an *Hermaion*, an unsolicited gift from the god of luck without any requirements attached. He was honoured as *Enodios* (by the way-side) and *Hermes Odios*, guardian of roads and travellers. Square pillars with his portrait head on top (*Hermaic stelai*) were set up at crossroads, gateways and house entrances.

Hermes indeed played an important part in many of the ancient myths. As *Psychopompos* he helped Persephone to return from Hades. He helped Herakles in his descent to Hades in order to catch Kerberos, the three-headed dog who guarded the entrance to Hades. He played a similar role in the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. As *Oneiropompos* (bringer of dreams) and *Hegetor* (guide), Hermes gave mortals peaceful sleep and dreams.

The **cult** of Hermes began in the Arcadian mountains and spread in various forms throughout Greece. In Athens, the third day of the *Anthesteria* (festival of flowers), known as *Chytroi* (pot-feast), was dedicated to him as protector of the dead. His worship took the form of a mystery cult in Imbros and in Samothrace, where he was worshipped together with other chthonic divinities or, as Herodotos says, with the Kabeiroi. He was especially honoured by athletes in the palaistra and the gymnasia, as is evident in the Megalopolis stadium where there was a temple and altar of Hermes and Herakles.

Hermes' **epithets** were relatively numerous. He was called *Argeiophontes* because, on Zeus' orders, he killed the many-eyed Argos who, on Hera's instigation, had kept Io hostage. As his father's herald he was known as *Trochis* (messenger, runner) and *Dios Keryx* (herald of Zeus). He was *Syskopos* (sharp sighted). As protector of herds, *Nomios* (the pastoral god), *Agroter* (the country god), *Tyreuter* (from the cheese

that was produced in the sheep-folds), *Melosios* (protector of flocks) and *Epimelios* (guardian of flocks). As protector of trade, *Agoraios* (of the market), *Kerdoos* (of gain), *Kerdemporos* (of success in trade), *Empolaios* (god of commerce). For his guile, his inventiveness and his thefts he was known as *Pheletes* (the thief), *Phileton Anax* (chief of thieves), *Klepsiphron* (dissembler) and *Polytropos* (crafty). The epithets *Pompaaios* (escort of the souls of the dead) and *Psychopompos* (guide of the souls of the dead) have to do with his responsibilities to the Underworld.

Relatively few sanctuaries of Hermes are known. In north Greece there were sanctuaries of Hermes at Philippoi, Drama, and, as we have noted, in the islands of Imbros and Samothrace; likewise in the Peloponnese at Megalopolis and on Mt. Lykaion. There was a sanctuary of *Hermes Charitodotos* (giver of favours) in the island of Samos and he was also worshipped with Aphrodite in the Heraion of Samos. In the prefecture of Rethymnon in Crete, two open-air sanctuaries in caves are known, one of *Hermes Kranaios* in Patsos, the other of *Hermes Tallaaios* in Melidoni. In Crete too, at Syme Viannou there was a very early sanctuary of Aphrodite and *Hermes Kedrites* (juniper or cedar divinity).

Iconographically, as seen on the Hermaic stelai and in vase painting of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., Hermes is always depicted with thick hair and a beard. Later on he is shown as a beardless youth, often nude, carrying his symbols. Much admired in antiquity was his statue in Tanagra as *Moschophoros* (carrying a calf), a work by the sculptor Kalamis. The Hermes by Praxiteles and the "Hermes of Andros" were also famous. On the façade of the large Macedonian tomb of the Leukadians, Hermes is depicted as *Psychopompos*.

Hermes' **symbols** are the *kerykeion*, his winged sandals and *pilos* (felt cap), his purse and the traveller's wide brimmed hat, the *petasos*. He is sometimes accompanied by Nymphs and the goat-legged Pan. He is associated with the cedar tree and the ram.



Relief showing Hera in a scene from the Gigantomachy that decorated the frieze of the Siphnian Treasury, ca. 525 B.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Delphi.



Relief representing Zeus and Hera from the east frieze of the Parthenon, ca. 440 B.C.
© British Museum, London.



Obverse of a silver drachm of Argos with the head of Hera wearing a polos decorated with palmettes, earrings and a necklace, ca. 370-350 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Interior of a white-ground kylix with a representation of Hera. The goddess is depicted in luxurious clothing, wearing a diadem and holding her scepter, ca. 470-460 B.C.
© Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlungen, Munich.



The temple of Hera at Olympia, ca. 468-460 B.C.



Hera and Argos. Hera is decorating the tail of the peacock with Argos' eyes, by P.P. Rubens, ca. 1611.
© Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.

Head of a statue of Hera from her sanctuary at Argos, ca. 420 B.C. © National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Hera

Roman Juno



In archaic and classical Greece, **Hera** was worshipped as the supreme goddess, wife of Zeus, queen of the heavens, protectress of marriage, family and women. She had many of the powerful qualities of her husband: she was connected with the phenomena of the sky, she had divine inspiration, pride and gentleness.

Scholars believe that her cult was very early in the Greek world. It was well established in Mycenaean times at Argos, Sparta and Mycenae and her cult existed also in the colonies of Magna Graeca.

Mythology tells us that Hera was the daughter of Kronos and Rhea, who were also the parents of Zeus. She was the paradigm of the honourable wife, yet she could be severe and revengeful, as we see in the well known myth of Paris with the "Apple of Discord". The harmonious existence of the divine couple was continuously shaken by the faithlessness of Zeus and the jealousies of Hera who pursued not only the temporary mistresses of Zeus (Io, Leto, Semele, Alkmene), but also their children, Dionysos, Herakles and others. She was the protectress of the Argonauts and of Jason in particular. She took the part of the Greeks in the Trojan War. The "many-eyed" Argos, a beast with a

hundred eyes who watched over the heifer Io on orders from Hera, was put to sleep and slain by Hermes. The goddess, overcome with sorrow, placed Argos's eyes in the tail of her sacred bird, the peacock. In another myth, while Hera slept, the infant Herakles was placed at her breast to nurse so that he would become immortal. Hera awoke and threw off the baby. Her milk ran out and formed the galaxy. Many believed her to be the mother of Eileithyia, the goddess who protected women in childbirth. According to Hesiod, she was the one who had raised the lion of Nemea, later killed by Herakles.

Similar in some ways to the **cult** of Zeus, the cult of Hera too had altars on the mountain tops. In every place, however, her temples are clearly earlier than those of Zeus, Olympia providing a good example. Clay models of temples found show that as early as geometric and early archaic times there were temples dedicated to the goddess.

In antiquity, sacrifices to Hera were usually made before a wedding. Every four years important festivals were held at her sanctuary, the Heraion, in Olympia that included the presentation of a *peplos* (in which the *xoanon* of the goddess was arrayed) and running races for maidens. At the Heraion at Argos too, contests and sacrifices were held in her honour: there was a great procession symbolising the sacred marriage ceremony with Zeus. It went to the Heraion with the priestess of Hera in a chariot drawn by white heifers. Maidens, married women and armed youths accompanied the chariot, followed by one hundred cows for sacrifice. In yet another festival at Argos, known as the *Aspis* (the shield), Hera was worshipped as a war goddess.

The *Daidala* (festival of wooden figures) were a celebration shared by many Boiotian cities. It was held as a minor festival every 5-7 years, with a major festival every 60 years. Its origin was very ancient indeed and was described in a myth: Hera at one time abandoned Zeus and, he, to deceive her, organised a mock wedding with a *xoanon* that was disguised as a bride. Hera herself, full of jealousy, entered the procession and the wedding continued with the goddess participating. In the *Great Daidala*, the fourteen *xoana* from the *Lesser Daidala* of the years between with a new *xoanon* dressed as a bride that was provided by the Plataians, were burned. Sacrifices followed with a procession that went up to the peak of Mt. Kithairon to a sanctuary of Zeus.

Elsewhere, other festivals in Hera's honour were held in Arcadia, in the cities of Euboia, in a sanctuary outside of Knossos in Crete and in the Greek colonies of Magna Graeca.

Hera's **epithets** are *Akraia* and *Bounaia* (since she was worshipped on the mountain peaks), *Chrysothronos* (with a throne of gold), *Sebaste* (venerable), *Teleia* (perfect), *Kyriarchos* (dominant), *Boöpis* (with large eyes like a bovid), *Leukolenos* (white-armed), *Gamelios* (of weddings), *Nympheuomene* and *Zugia* (patroness of marriage).

The goddess's main **sanctuaries**, which also contained important temples, are located in the island of Samos, in Argos and in Olympia. There was also a Heraion in Delos. Plataia had a splendid sanctuary with a temple containing a famous statue of Hera by Praxiteles. From the beginning of the archaic period, Hera was worshipped as *Akraia* and *Limenia* (of the harbour) in Perachora, west of Loutraki. There was a temple also in Hyrtakina in the prefecture of Chania in Crete. The best preserved of the architectural monuments dedicated to Hera are two temples in South Italy at Poseidonia (Paestum), near Naples.

In **ancient art**, Hera is always portrayed attired, dignified and with her symbols. Nothing remains, unfortunately, of the great chryselephantine cult statue, a work of Polykleitos, that was in the Heraion at Argos. We have only Pausanias' description. The goddess was depicted as enthroned and crowned. She held a sceptre with a cuckoo on top and in her other hand a pomegranate. Other important statues have come to light in Samos and at Olympia. Well-preserved reliefs portraying the goddess are found on the friezes of the Parthenon and the Siphnian Treasury in Delphi.

Symbols of the goddess are the pomegranate, signifying fertility and conjugal love, the sceptre (in earlier works of art), the *polos* (a tall crown) and the diadem. Her sacred animal is the cow; sacred to her also are the peacock and the cuckoo. The osier or chaste-tree was her sacred plant.



Lamp fragment with a representation of Hephaistos, 3rd century A.C. The god holds a torch and wears a pilos and exomis.
© Ancient Agora Museum, Athens.



Lamp with a representation of Hephaistos, 2nd century B.C. The god wears a pilos, exomis and boots. He is holding a shield. Depicted in the background are a cuirass, greaves and helmet.
© Ancient Agora Museum, Athens.



Bronze statuette of Hephaistos, Roman period. The god wears a pilos, exomis and boots.
© British Museum, London.



Relief representing Hephaistos and Athena from the east frieze of the Parthenon, ca. 440 B.C.
© British Museum, London.



Interior of a red-figured kylix, ca. 480 B.C. Hephaistos is depicted making the arms of Achilles. Thetis receives them.
© Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, Berlin.



The temple of Hephaistos in the Ancient Agora of Athens, the so-called "Theseion", ca. 449-444 B.C. This is the best preserved ancient temple in Greece.

Hephaistos, from the group "The Trojan War", a sculpture of steel and clay.
Sir Anthony Karo, 1990.
© Sir Anthony Karo, England.



Head of Hephaistos. Roman copy probably of a cult statue by the sculptor Alkamenes that was in the so-called "Theseion" at Athens.
© Vatican Museums, Rome.



Bronze coin of the island of Lipara, Sicily, showing Hephaistos.
Above: Reverse side. The god is holding a hammer and tongs.



Below: Obverse side. The god is wearing a pilos.
2nd-1st century B.C. © Collection: Welfare Foundation for Social and Cultural Affairs, Athens.

Hephaistos

Roman Vulcan



Hephaistos was the god of fire both on earth and in the heavens. He was the tamer of fire and he forged objects of metal. Mythology portrays him as the god of creative works, sculpture, modelling, metal-working, the forging of armour. He was a goldsmith and patron of artisans. In the Homeric epics his work is greatly admired and described in detail. His cult in classical

Athens bespeaks the love and admiration of the inhabitants for fine works of metal and ceramic, in the making of which fire was the indispensable element.

Clearly he was viewed by the ancient Greeks not only as an Olympian divinity but also, since he was lame, as an individual with "special needs", to put it in modern terms, who developed an inventive mind and great skill with his hands.

Mythology tells us that Hephaistos was the son of Zeus and Hera, while according to Hesiod, Hera conceived him on her own. He was lame from birth and Hera therefore threw him into the sea where he was saved by Thetis and Eurynome, marine divinities. Other myths say that Zeus hurled him from Mt. Olympos to the island of Lemnos where he was rescued by the mythical inhabitants of the island, the semi-barbarian Sintians. To appease his mother, after nine years he sent her a throne of gold. When she sat on it, however, she was trapped by an invisible net that the god had placed there. So Hephaistos was summoned to Mt. Olympos, but his return was only possible after Dionysos managed to make him drunk. The lame and awkward god is associated with other myths as well. He assisted in the birth of Athena by opening the head of Zeus with his axe; out of clay he fashioned Pandora, wife of Epimetheus; with the help of *Kratos* and *Bia* (strength and force) he pinned the Titan Prometheus to a peak in the Caucasos. He also revealed the faithlessness of his wife Aphrodite to the Olympian divinities by means of the invisible net again. He pursued Athena with erotic intent, in the end fertilising the Earth which gave birth to Erichthonios, whom he gave to Athena to raise as her own child. The ancient Greeks also believed that Hephaistos was the father of the Kabeiroi (who had a mystery cult in Boiotia, Lemnos and Samothrace). His home and his workshops were thought to be inside volcanos, Sicilian Aetna in particular.

The Homeric epics tell us about the god's numerous magnificent creations, the *Hephaistoteukta* (creations wrought by Hephaistos): the thrones of Zeus and of Hera, the chariot of Helios (sun), the golden cuirasses of Herakles and of Diomedes, Ariadne's crown, Harmonia's necklace, Apollo's arrows, the wine craters (large wine cups) of Dionysos, the arms of Achilles, especially his famous shield, and also the bronze palaces of the gods on Mt. Olympos. We learn about the bronze giant Talos and the two gold servants–automatons (the robots of antiquity) that served the lame god.

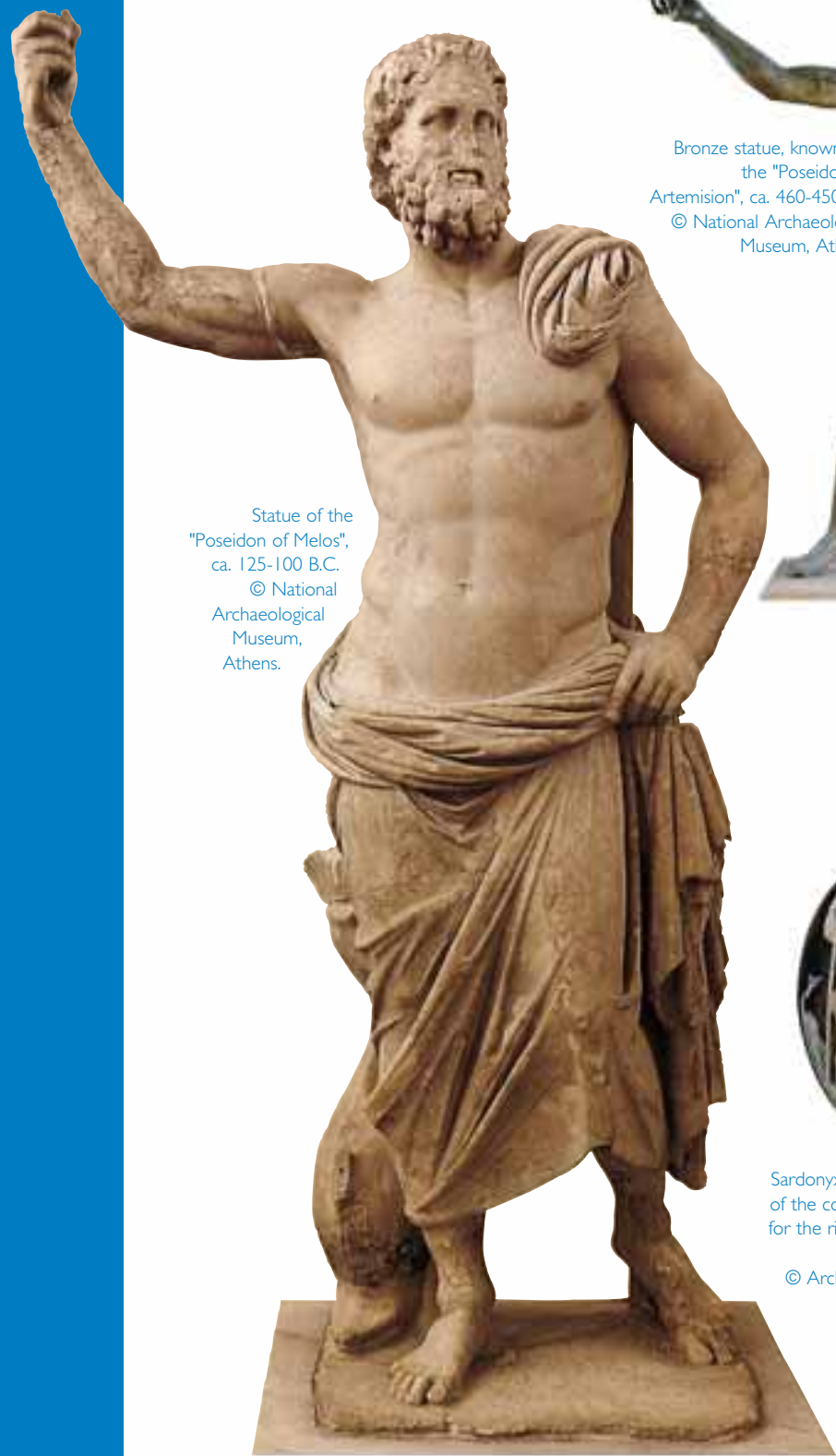
Festivals in honour of Hephaistos were held at various places. In Lemnos, for nine days all fires were kept extinguished. The *Hephaisteia* or *Chalkeia* in Athens were celebrated with sacrifices and torch-races. At Athens he was honoured at an altar together with the Titan Prometheus, who was a mythological parallel to the god; these were the "fire-bearers" who had introduced fire and its uses to mankind.

Hephaistos' **epithets** are *Chalkeus* (smith), *Kyllopodion* (club-footed) and *Amphigyeeis* (lame in both legs).

The most important **temple** of Hephaistos was the so-called "Theseion" in the Athenian Agora, still well preserved. Worshipped there together with Hephaistos was Athena, likewise protectress of artisans and handicrafts, as *Hephaistia* and as *Ergane*. Another temple of Hephaistos is mentioned as being in Lemnos.

In **art**, Hephaistos is represented as robust, always bearded, clad in an *exomis* (tunic exposing one shoulder) or short *chiton*, bare-footed or wearing boots, sometimes with a cap such as worn by the artisans. His cult statue in the Hephaisteion ("Theseion") was a splendid work by Alkamenes. Hephaistos is depicted in relief in the friezes of the Parthenon and of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi. He appears also in many mythological scenes on pottery of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.

Symbols of the god are the hammer, the smith's tongs, the double axe and his cane. He is frequently shown mounted on a donkey.



Statue of the "Poseidon of Melos", ca. 125-100 B.C.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Bronze statue, known as the "Poseidon of Artemision", ca. 460-450 B.C.
© National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Sardonyx cameo with a representation of the contest of Athena and Poseidon for the right to be protector of Athens, 2nd century A.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Naples.



Attic red-figured hydria with a representation in relief of the contest of Athena and Poseidon, ca. 350 B.C.
© Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.



Attic red-figured hydria with a depiction of the contest of Athena and Poseidon, ca. 400 B.C.
© Archaeological Museum, Pella.



The temple of Poseidon at Sounion, ca. 444-440 B.C.

Reverse of a silver tetradrachm of Demetrios Poliorketes of Macedonia, showing Poseidon hurling the trident, ca. 301-295 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



Obverse of a silver tetradrachm of Antigonos Doson of Macedonia, depicting the head of Poseidon crowned with seaweed, ca. 227 B.C.
© Numismatic Museum, Athens.



"The Horses of Poseidon", by Walter Krane, 1893.
© Neue Pinakothek, Munich.



Head of Poseidon from the east frieze of the Parthenon, ca. 440 B.C. © Acropolis Museum, Athens.



Poseidon

Roman Neptune



In the eyes of the ancient Greeks, **Poseidon** was lord of the watery element, god of the seas, of springs, of lakes and rivers. He was one of the most powerful of the Olympian divinities, brother of Zeus and of Plouton. His realm extended even to the depths of the earth, for it was he who caused earthquakes and made the earth stable in relation to the sea. His name is written on the Linear B tablets of Pylos and thus it is clear that he was worshipped as early as Mycenaean times.

According to **mythology**, Poseidon was the son of Kronos and Rhea. Zeus himself refers to him as "most august and best of the gods". With his wife, Amphitrite, he lived in a golden palace in the depths of the sea and he flew over the surface of the sea in a golden chariot drawn by wild horses accompanied by nymphs and sea creatures, tritons, hippocamps (a mythical creature, half-horse, half-serpent) and dolphins. He had taken part in the Gigantomachy and the Titanomachy and won recognition as rugged and irascible. The myths tell us that with nymphs and mortals he produced many children; also beasts and violent beings (such as the Laestrygonians, Pegasos, the Cyclops Polyphemos, Chrysaor, Geryon and Antaios). He produced others too who became

mythical kings and founders of dynasties in the Greek world (such as Neleus, Phaeax, Nauplios, Minyas, Eumolpos, Pelias and Theseus). With Rhode (a nymph) he produced Ialysos, Kameiros and Lindos who gave their names to the three cities of the island of Rhodes). With Apollo he is supposed to have built the walls of Troy, but in the Trojan War he supported the Greeks. His anger against Odysseus who had blinded his son, the Cyclops Polyphemos, is a basic theme of the epic. Athenian mythology tells of the contest between Poseidon and Athena for patronage of the City of Athens, a division of domain reflected elsewhere too. Poseidon rules the waves but shipbuilding is in the domain of the goddess. He fathers Pegasos, but it is Athena who shows Bellerophon how to tame him and it is she who provides him with halter and reins.

In an effort to appease the lord of the high seas, the **cult** of Poseidon spread throughout the Aegean. The *Isthmian Games*, celebrated every three years, was a panhellenic festival held in his honour at Isthmia, near Corinth. It included athletic contests, horse races and music contests. Others of his many sanctuaries likewise held festivals in his honour.

The **epithets** of Poseidon reflect his powers. Since he brought about earthquakes and subsidence, he was called *Enosichthon* (earth-shaker), *Seisichthon* (earthquaker), *Damasichthon* (earth-subduer), *Ges Kinetes* (mover of Earth), *Gaieochos* (controller of Earth), *Mochleuter* (heaver of Earth and Sea). The epithets he was given for protection against such natural destruction were *Hedraios* (firmly founded), *Asphaleios* (the securer) and *Themeliouchos* (layer of firm foundations). His connection with sweet water was reflected in the epithets *Krenaios* (ruler of springs), *Petraios* (cleaver of rocks) and *Epilemnios* (ruler of lakes). He was known as *Eurymedon* (wide-powered)) and *Eurykreion* (wide-ruling) in connection with the universality of his power. The epithet *Hippios* implies his connection with horses. After the Persian fleet was destroyed by a storm at Artemision in 480 B.C., he was honoured as *Soter* (saviour).

Many **sanctuaries** of the god have survived. On the Athenian Acropolis, part of the Erechtheion was sacred to Poseidon and he had his own altar. At Sounion, a splendid temple of classical times, fairly well preserved, was sacred to the god.

In northern Greece, there are sanctuaries of the god at the island of Thasos (shared with Herakles) and at Poseidi in the Chalkidike.

In the Peloponnese, a fine sanctuary and temple were established at Isthmia, where the *Isthmian Games* took place. Known too are the sanctuaries of *Poseidon Hippios* at ancient Mantinea and at Asea in Arcadia. Sparta had a sanctuary of *Poseidon Asphaleios* and there were still others at Hermione, Pheneos, Arcadian Orchomenos and Tegea. In the Odyssey, the kings of Pylos, descendants of Neleus, made sacrifices to Poseidon in his sanctuary there. The god appears also to have had a very ancient sanctuary in a cave at Tainaron (Cape Matapan). There were temples also in Poros at Kalauria (in the sanctuary known as the Poseidonion) and in Tenos.

In Crete at the site of Tsitsikana in the Chania area, the god was worshipped in a rural sanctuary.

Found at two splendid sanctuaries on the coast of Asia Minor are monumental altars, one at Monodendri south of Miletos, the other at Mykale, in the sanctuary known as the Panionion.

In the world of **art**, Poseidon is always represented as bearded. It is not easy to distinguish him from Zeus if his symbols are not shown. This is the case with the large bronze statue, a splendid work of classical art, found at the Artemision and now in the Archaeological Museum of Athens. The statue known as the "Poseidon of Melos", in the Archaeological Museum of Athens, is well known. Poseidon appears on the Parthenon frieze and in the west pediment of the temple in the scene of Athena's triumph in the contest for patronship of Athens. On two fine vases of the 4th century B.C. the same scene is shown.

Poseidon's **symbols** are his trident, with which he stirred the waters of the sea, his horses, dolphins and various beasts of the sea who followed in his train. Sacred to the god were seaweed and the pine tree.