

THE WORLD OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY

GREEK MYTHOLOGY
GODDESSES

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BrightPoint Press

CONTENTS

AT A GLANCE	4
INTRODUCTION	6
GODDESSES IN MYTH	
CHAPTER ONE	12
THE FEMALE OLYMPIANS	
CHAPTER TWO	28
THE TITANESSES	
CHAPTER THREE	42
THE MINOR GODDESSES	
CHAPTER FOUR	58
HOW HAVE GREEK GODDESSES IMPACTED CULTURE?	
Glossary	74
Source Notes	75
For Further Research	76
Index	78
Image Credits	79
About the Author	80

AT A GLANCE

- The Greek goddesses came from a group of myths first told in ancient Greece around 3,000 years ago.
- The Olympians were powerful deities who lived on Mount Olympus. The main Greek goddesses were six of the twelve Olympians.
- The female Olympians included Hera, queen of the heavens, and Zeus's two unmarried daughters, Athena and Artemis.
- Titanesses were the first goddesses before the Olympians.
- The Titaness Rhea saved her son Zeus from his father. The Titaness Metis helped Zeus defeat his father and take control of the world.
- Minor goddesses included the Fates and Furies. The Fates decided the path of each person's life, and the Furies punished wrongdoers.

HOW HAVE GREEK GODDESSES IMPACTED CULTURE?

People once worshipped Greek goddesses. Their myths spread through the ancient world. Many societies adopted the goddesses. They used the deities in their own ways. Images once



The Romans made copies of Greek statues, such as the Athena Parthenos.

represented goddesses, who people thought were real. Later, people created images of the goddesses simply as art. People retold old tales about them. Writers created new ones. Greek goddesses are still present even in modern times.

GREEK GODDESSES IN ANCIENT TIMES

The ancient Greeks held festivals to honor their goddesses. They painted pictures and made sculptures of them. In images, specific objects identified deities. Hera had a crown or a peacock. Demeter carried corn. Athena wore armor. Sometimes she had an owl as a companion. Doves or



The Temple of Artemis was never rebuilt again after being destroyed a second time.

sparrows often accompanied Aphrodite.

Artemis had her bow and arrows.

Greek goddesses had their own temples.

Giant statues of the goddesses stood inside

each temple. The sculptures were made

from precious materials such as gold. The temple of Artemis was built in 550 BCE. It was in what is now Turkey. Artemis's temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The people of Athens built the Parthenon for Athena. They finished the

DESTROYING A WONDER OF THE WORLD

Visitors came from all over to experience the marble Temple of Artemis. In 356 BCE, a man wanted to take advantage of the temple's fame. He wanted people to remember his name forever. He started a fire in the wooden roof beams. The flames spread rapidly. Soon, the temple was destroyed. Authorities banned anyone from saying the man's name. But two writers recorded it. The criminal got his wish to become famous.

building in 432 BCE. This huge temple had images and sculptures from Greek myths.

The Roman Empire controlled all of Greece by 146 BCE. The Romans already had goddesses. But they had few myths of their own. The Romans began identifying Greek gods and goddesses with the similar Roman deities.

Romans took stories from Greek myths and used Roman names. The Romans also created art and built temples for their goddesses. The Temple of Vesta honored the Roman version of Hestia. People considered the temple important

to the well-being of Rome. The Romans also named the second planet from the sun Venus. Venus was the Roman version of Aphrodite.

GODDESSES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

The Middle Ages were the time period from around 500 to 1500. In the Middle Ages, Europeans still talked about Greek goddesses. Some people said Greek myths could have Christian meanings. An example was Demeter's search for Persephone. One writer compared it to the Catholic Church's efforts to rescue lost souls.

GREEK AND ROMAN NAMES OF THE OLYMPIAN GODDESSES



Artemis/Diana



Athena/Minerva



Aphrodite/Venus



Hera/Juno



Hestia/Vesta



Demeter/Ceres

Above, the Greek names are on the left, and the Roman names are on the right.

GLOSSARY

deities

gods and goddesses

divine

having to do with gods or goddesses

immortals

beings who do not die

mortal

unable to live forever

mythology

a society's group of stories about gods and goddesses, heroes, and monsters

nymphs

nature spirits or goddesses who look like beautiful women

prophecy

a statement that something will happen in the future

Renaissance

a time in Europe between the 1300s and the 1600s that featured art and learning inspired by ancient Greece and Rome

vengeance

punishment for a wrong someone has done

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INDEX

- Achilles, 55–57
Aphrodite, 5, 6–7, 25–27, 37, 57, 61, 64, 65
Apollo, 11, 24–25, 36, 38, 48, 51, 70
Arachne, 22
Ares, 6–8, 21, 26, 54
Artemis, 4–5, 9, 11, 20, 24–25, 27, 36–38, 61–62, 65, 70
Athena, 4, 20–24, 26–27, 34, 50–51, 57, 60, 62, 65, 67, 71
Cronus, 29–33, 44
Demeter, 14, 17, 18, 19, 27, 39, 60, 64, 65
Eris, 5, 53–55, 57, 69, 71
Fates, 4, 47–49, 51
Furies, 4, 49–51, 71
Gaea, 28–29, 31, 33, 49
Hades, 17–18, 39, 50
Hecate, 39–41, 70, 72
Hephaestus, 26, 34, 56
Hera, 4, 14–17, 27, 36, 38, 57, 60, 65
Hestia, 14, 18–19, 63, 65
Iliad, 57
Leto, 24–25, 36–38
Metis, 4, 32–34
mortals, 6–7, 20, 22–25, 27, 34, 41, 43, 45, 48–49, 53, 66–67
Muses, 35–36, 37, 68
Nike, 44–47, 69
nymphs, 5, 24, 27, 39, 43–44, 52
Nyx, 42, 47, 49, 54
Olympians, 4, 12–27, 32, 44, 52–53, 55, 65, 71–72
Paris of Troy, 26–27, 57
Persephone, 17–18, 19, 39–40, 64
Poseidon, 21–22, 52
Rhea, 4, 30–31, 69–70
Romans, 5, 63–66
temples, 61–63
Themis, 34–35
Thetis, 5, 52–53, 55–57, 71
Titans, 4, 28–39, 70–71
Trojan War, 5, 21, 26–27, 55–57
Uranus, 25, 28–29
Zeus, 4, 14–15, 18, 20, 25–26, 31–36, 39, 44, 47–48, 52–53, 57