

GREEK AND ROMAN DEITIES AT THE VILLA

ZEUS (JUPITER)

The most powerful of all, Zeus was god of the sky and the king of Olympus. His temper affected the weather, and he threw thunderbolts when he was unhappy. He was married to Hera but had many other lovers. His attributes include the oak and the thunderbolt, and he was typically shown seated on a throne holding a scepter.



Enthroned Zeus
Unknown
Greek, about 100 B.C.
Marble
29 1/8 x 18 1/8 x 17 15/16 in.
92.AA.10

Gallery 106, Basilica

This statuette may have served as a cult statue in a private shrine of a wealthy Greek or Roman home. This statuette spent a long period of time submerged in the sea. The right side (facing the object) was probably protected buried in the sand, while the left side was marred by encrustations.



Marbury Hall Zeus
Unknown
Roman, Italy, A.D. 1–100
Marble
81 1/2 in.
73.AA.32

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

Portrayed as a mature bearded man, Zeus sits enthroned in his role as king of the gods. Originally, he would have held his attributes: a scepter and a thunderbolt.

HERA (JUNO)

Hera was goddess of marriage and the queen of Olympus. She was Zeus's wife and sister; many myths tell of how she sought revenge when Zeus betrayed her with his lovers. Her symbols include the peacock and the cow.



Storage Jar with the Judgment of Paris (detail)
Attributed to the Painter of the Wedding Procession
Greek, Athens, about 360 B.C.
Terracotta, pigment, and gold
19 x 10 11/16 in.
83.AE.10

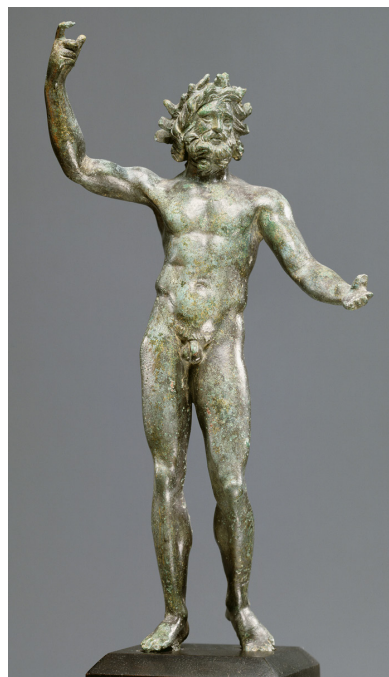
Gallery 110, Stories of the Trojan War

Hera, Queen of the Gods, is recognizable by the crown she wears on her head and the scepter she holds in her right hand. She wears rich jewelry on her neck which, like the crown and scepter, is represented by a gilded relief.

POSEIDON (NEPTUNE)

Poseidon was god of the sea. He was the most powerful god except for his brother, Zeus. He lived in a beautiful palace under the sea and caused earthquakes when he was in a temper. His symbols include the horse and the trident (a three-pronged pitchfork).

Statuette of Poseidon
Unknown
Greek, Eastern Mediterranean,
about 120–100 B.C.
Bronze
6 7/16 in.
96.AB.151



Gallery 104A

Originally, his raised right hand would have rested on a trident or three-pronged fishing spear, and he would have held a dolphin or ship's ornament in his left hand. Even with these attributes missing, the figure's unkempt hair, spiky crown of water plants, and mobile, restless-looking pose identify him as the sea god.

APHRODITE (VENUS)

Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty, and the protector of sailors. She may have been the daughter of Zeus and the Titan Dione, or she may have risen from the sea on a shell. Her symbols include the apple, myrtle tree, and the dove.



Venus-Hygeia

Unknown

Roman, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), about A.D. 200

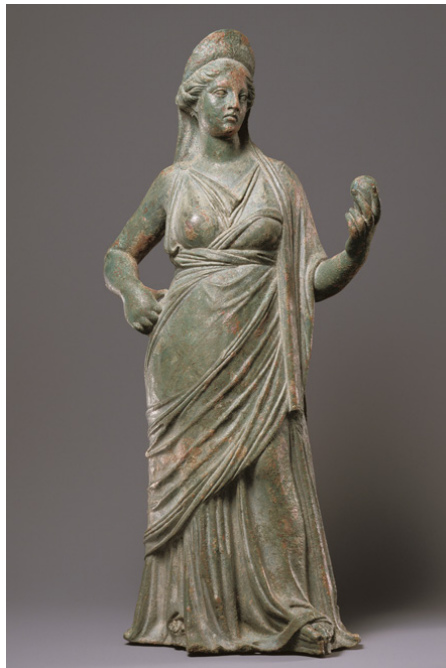
Marble

H: 68 7/8 x W: 20 7/8 x D: 13 3/4 in.

71.AA.338

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

The presence of the small, sleeping Eros, the winged, young god of love, who leans against her leg, and the goddess's hairstyle argue in favor of her identity as Venus.



Aphrodite

Unknown

Greek, 200–150 B.C.

Bronze

14 15/16 x 7 5/16 x 5 3/8 in.

96.AB.149

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

The statuette holds the golden apple, which Paris, a Trojan Prince, awarded Aphrodite as a prize in a beauty contest with Hera and Athena. This contest eventually led to the most famed conflict in antiquity, the Trojan War.

APOLLO

Apollo was the god of music and healing. He was also an archer and hunted with a silver bow. Apollo was the son of Zeus and the Titan Leto, and was the twin of Artemis. His symbols include the laurel tree, the crow, and the dolphin.



Statuette of Apollo

Unknown

Greek, Eastern Mediterranean, about 100 B.C.

Silver

7 7/8 in.

96.AM.304

Gallery 104A

This silver statuette depicts Apollo. It originally held a lyre in its left arm; the right hand may have held the lyre's pick.



Mixing Vessel with Apollo and Artemis (detail)

Attributed to the *Palermo Painter*

Greek, Lucania, South Italy, about 415–400 B.C.

Terracotta

22 1/16 x 13 3/8 in.

85.AE.101

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

Apollo holds a kithara (a stringed instrument similar to a lyre), denoting his role as god of music.

ARTEMIS (DIANA)

Artemis was the goddess of the hunt and the protector of women in childbirth. She hunted with silver arrows and loved all wild animals. Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and was the twin of Apollo. Her symbols include the cypress tree and the deer.



Mixing Vessel with Apollo and Artemis (detail)
Attributed to the Palermo Painter
Greek, Lucania, South Italy, about 415–400 B.C.
Terracotta
22 1/16 x 13 3/8 in.
85.AE.101

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

The Greek mixing vessel shows Artemis, Apollo, and their mother Leto. The twin gods Apollo and Artemis occupy the center of the scene. Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, is accompanied by her sacred deer.



ATHENA (MINERVA)

Athena was the goddess of wisdom. She was also skilled in the art of war and helped heroes such as Odysseus and Hercules. Athena sprang full-grown from the forehead of Zeus and became his favorite child. Her symbols include the owl and the olive tree.



Prize vessel from the Athenian Games
Attributed to the *Marsyas Painter*
Greek, Athens, 340–339 B.C.
Terracotta
30 7/8 x 15 7/16 in.
79.AE.147

Gallery 211, Athletes and Competition



Water Jar with an Owl (detail)
Attributed to the Group of the Floral Nolans
Greek, Athens, about 480–470 B.C.
Terracotta
14 3/16 to 14 1/2 x 11 5/8 in.
86.AE.229

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

At times, deities could be identified by their attributes alone. On this vase, the owl and olive branches represent the goddess Athena, patron goddess of Athens.

HERMES (MERCURY)

Hermes was the messenger god, a trickster, and a friend to thieves. He was said to have invented boxing and gymnastics. He was the son of Zeus and the constellation Maia. The speediest of all, he wore winged sandals and a winged hat, and carried a magic wand.



Hermes
Modern Bronze Statue

Outer Peristyle Garden

This bronze statue is clearly identifiable as Hermes by the winged boots he wears, one of the attributes of the messenger god.



Mixing Vessel with Apollo and Artemis (detail)
Attributed to the Palermo Painter
Greek, Lucania, South Italy,
about 415–400 B.C.
Terracotta
22 1/16 x 13 3/8 in.
85.AE.101

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

The Greek mixing vessel shows Artemis, Apollo, and their mother Leto. Hermes is depicted on the left side of the vase leaning on a pillar with his name written on it. This figure can be identified as Hermes (he carries the caduceus, a short staff entwined with serpents).

DEMETER (CERES)

Demeter was the goddess of the harvest. The word "cereal" comes from her Roman name *Ceres*. She was the sister of Zeus. Her daughter, Persephone, was forced to live with Hades in the Underworld each winter; during this time, Demeter let no crops grow. Her symbol is wheat.



Mixing Vessel with Triptolemos
Attributed to the Syleus Painter
Greek, Athens, about 470 B.C.
Terracotta
14 1/2 x 14 1/16 in.
89.AE.73

Gallery 104, Gods and Goddesses

Demeter holds out the grain to hand it to Triptolemos. According to the myth, Demeter chose to teach Triptolemos the art of agriculture, and, from him, the rest of Greece learned to plant and reap crops. He flew across the land on a winged chariot while Demeter and Persephone cared for him, helping him to complete his mission of educating the whole of Greece in the art of agriculture.

DIONYSOS (BACCHUS)

Dionysos was the god of wine, which he invented. In ancient Greece Dionysos was honored with springtime festivals that centered on theater. Dionysos was the son of Zeus and Semele, a mortal. His symbols include ivy, the snake, and grapes.

Head of the Young Bacchus
Unknown
Roman, A.D. 1–50
Bronze and silver
8 1/2 in.
96.AB.52



Gallery 114, Dionysos and the Theater

Dionysos, the god of wine, wears an ivy wreath hung with leaves and berries. In Hellenistic and Roman art, Dionysos is a beardless youth, similar to images of the god Apollo, which sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between the two gods. On this head, the ivy wreath identifies the god as Dionysos.