



AESCULAPIUS (*es"kułçpius*)

In Greece he is known as Asclepius. Apollo persuaded Zeus to make Aesculapius the patron god of medicine. As a result, his followers were healers and doctors. He was the son of Apollo and Coronis. His first teacher was the wise centaur Chiron. When Aesculapius became so skillful in healing that he could revive the dead, Zeus killed him.



BACCHUS

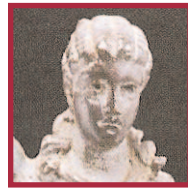
In Greece he was known as Dionysus. Bacchus is the god of wine and mysteries. He is viewed as the promoter of civilization, a lawgiver, and lover of peace — as well as the patron deity of agriculture and the theater. From Bacchus we get the word bacchanalia — a drunken feast.

CERES

In Greece she was known as Demeter. Ceres is a goddess of agriculture and fertility. Farmers worshiped her. From her Roman name, Ceres, we get the word cereal. Ceres/Demeter was the goddess of growing things. But she also gave the Romans winter, when nothing grows. Demeter is the mother of Persephone.

CUPID

He is known as Eros in Greece. Cupid is the god of erotic, romantic love. So, naturally, lovers left him offerings. Son of Aphrodite and often depicted as blindfolded because “love is blind.”



DIANA

She is known as Artemis in Greece. She is the virgin goddess of the hunt and the protector of animals and children. Her followers include pregnant women and hunters. She is the twin sister of Apollo. All animals are sacred to her, but especially the deer. She presides over childbirth.



FORTUNA

In Greece she is also known as Tyche (*pronounced tee-chee*) the blind Greek goddess of fortune. In Northern Africa she was the Egyptian goddess of fortune. As the Roman Empire spread, gods of Rome were often combined with other regional gods. She was the goddess of luck, but luck can be good, bad and often capricious. Such was and is Lady Fortune.

HECATE

She based on a Thracian goddess of the moon and often confused with Diana and Persephone. She was the goddess of the dead. She taught witchcraft and sorcery. Her origins are likely pre-Olympian. Much later and into the middle ages, Hecate was associated with witchcraft.



HERCULES

He was known as Heracles in Greece. He was a mortal who achieved divinity upon his death. He was a protector of the weak and famous for his 12 labors.

JANUS

He had no Greek counterpart. He was the god of beginnings and endings, the doorkeeper of heaven and thus, guardian of all doorways. Janus has two faces, one looks forward and one looks back. Doors to his temple were open in time of war, shut in time of peace. He lends his name to the first month of the year — January.



JUPITER

Also known in Rome by Father Jove (*Latin jovis pater*). His Greek counterpart is Zeus (*also known as Zeus-Serapis and Zues-Hades at certain times*). Jupiter is King of the Gods, and Ruler of the Universe. His followers look to him for justice and protection. Married to Juno, he is the father of many of the gods by his wife Juno and a host of others — some mortal and some immortal. His weapon is the thunderbolt made for him by Vulcan, and he has the power to place man among the stars (*the Pleiades*).



LARES

These are the household gods, the spirits of ancestors. They offer protection for the home. They are represented by a dancing youth holding a horn cup and bowl.

LEANDER

Leander was a tragic figure, but not a god. He swam the Hellespont nightly to see Hero (*a priestess of Venus*); drowned in storm. The heartbroken Hero cast herself into the sea.

MARS

Often incorrectly associated with Ares, the Greek God of War. His beginnings are actually very old. He was originally a god of agriculture. When the first armies of Rome were gathered, the generals recruited soldiers from among the farmers. The farmers brought Mars with them and over time, he became the god of war. He was also credited with being the father of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome. So every Roman considered himself a son of Mars. He was loyal, fierce, brave and very athletic. Mars is nothing like his Greek counterpart who was evil and hated by everyone — even his fellow gods.



MERCURY

He is known in Greece as Herm or Hermes. Mercury is the messenger of the gods. He is a patron of science and commerce. Among his followers are shepherds, travelers, thieves and merchants. Mercury wore a winged cap and winged shoes. He is said to have invented the lyre, which he traded to Apollo for his caduceus — a staff entwined with snakes.



MINERVA

She is known as Athena in Greece. She is considered to be the virgin goddess of warriors, poetry, medicine, wisdom, commerce, crafts, and inventor of music. Her followers include doctors, craftsmen, writers and schoolmasters. Minerva is usually depicted wearing a coat of mail and a helmet, and carrying a spear.

MITHRAS

Mithra was originally a Persian god of the sun. Once adopted by the Romans, Mithras became the god of kings, justice and contracts. He was a deity particularly favored by soldiers, who were bound in loyalty to their rulers and is often described as the soldier god. No women were allowed to worship Mithras.

NEREIDS

These sea nymphs were attendants to Neptune, the god of the sea. Few have myths of their own, but they were famous for helping Ulysses when he encountered Scylla and Charybdis.

ORPHEUS

This Greek is the famous musician and son of Apollo and the Muse Calliope; he is also the husband of Eurydice. In Greek mythology, supposedly, the music of his lyre was so beautiful that when he played, wild beasts were soothed, trees danced, and rivers stood still.

PAX

She was known in Greece as Eirene. Pax is the goddess of peace and the patroness of Emperor Antoninus Pius. She is often depicted in art and on coins with olive branches, a cornucopia and a scepter.

PRIAPUS

He was a fertility god and he was used to ward off strangers. In the Greek religion he was a fertility god of gardens and herds, and the son of Aphrodite and Dionysus. He was represented as a grotesque little man with an enormous phallus. Priapus was important in fertility rites.

ROMA

She personified the Roman state. She was primarily a provincial goddess whose followers were the people in the countryside outside Rome. She appears on early coins, often sitting on a pile of arms as a symbol of victory.

SALUS

In Greece she was known as Hygeia. She is the personification of health. She is the daughter of Aesculapius. From her Greek name we get our word hygiene. From her Roman name we get a toast: *Salud!* It means “to your health.”

SERAPIS

This god is a perfect example of synchronicity. He was a Greek-Egyptian god said to have attributes of Zeus (*Jupiter*) and Osiris. His popularity began to spread in the 2nd Century BC from its origins in Alexandria.

SILVANUS

He is known as Pan in Greece. Silvanus is a god of the forests, groves, and wild fields. His followers include slaves, beekeepers, farmers, hunters and he is the patron of shepherds. Half man/half goat, he was renowned for his vulgarity.

TITAN/SOL

In Greece he is Helios, the god of the sun. He was often referred to simply as Titan, especially in Rome, where he was also known as Sol, and where he was an important god.



VENUS

To the Greeks, she was Aphrodite. She was the Roman goddess of love and beauty, but originally a vegetation goddess and patroness of gardens and vineyards. The dictator Sulla made her his patroness, and both Julius Caesar and the emperor Augustus named her the ancestor of their (*Julian*) family.

VESTA

Sometimes she is equated with the Greek goddess Hestia, but Vesta predates Greek or Roman times. She is the goddess of the hearth and home and all home altars paid homage to her. Vesta had a temple in the Forum where her priestesses, the Vestal Virgins, tended an eternal flame.

TRITON

He is a Greek demigod of the sea. In Greek mythology, he is the son of Poseidon. He was a creature of the sea, the upper half of his body being human, the lower fishlike.