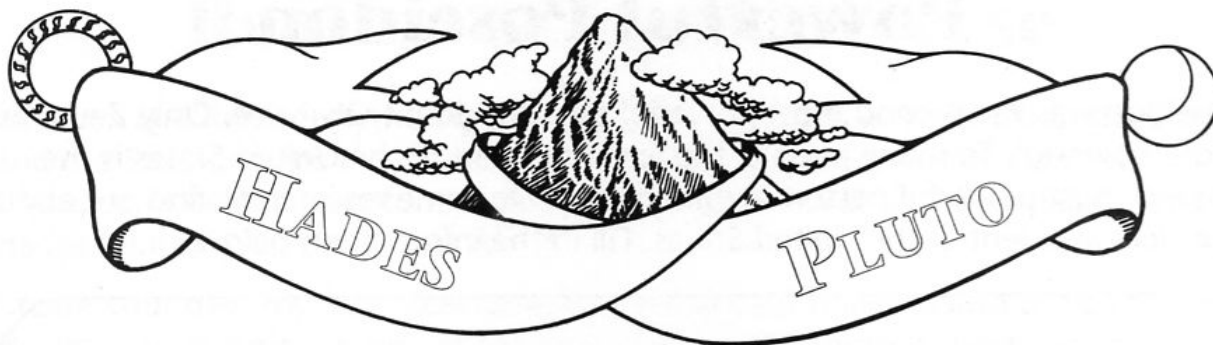




Eros was a lesser Olympian, not a major god. He was the promoter of love, and the son of Aphrodite and Hermes. His symbols were a bow and arrows, and he shot arrows into the hearts of people, arrows which they felt as love. He is usually pictured wearing wings and sometimes has his eyes closed. (Remember the saying "Love is blind"?) When the Romans adopted Eros as part of their mythology, they called him Cupid.



Hades was the ruler of the Lower World and the god of wealth. The gate to the Lower World was guarded by Cerberus, the 3-headed dog. Before entering the Lower World, the dead were ferried across the River Styx, which separated the Lower World from the rest of the universe. Hades owned all of the wealth that came out of the ground: gold, silver, gems. Zeus was his brother, and Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, was his queen. Hades drove a black chariot pulled by six black horses. The Romans called him Pluto.

HEPHAESTUS



VULCAN



Hephaestus was the son of Zeus and Hera. He was so ugly when he was born, Hera threw him off Mt Olympus and he became lame in one leg. Zeus made him the Blacksmith God, creating weapons and metalworking, and gave him a forge inside Mt Aetna. He is also God of Fire, so fire, an anvil, and the hammer are some of Hephaestus' symbols. Another is a bird called a quail (which waddles when it walks). He is married to Aphrodite and the Romans call him Vulcan.

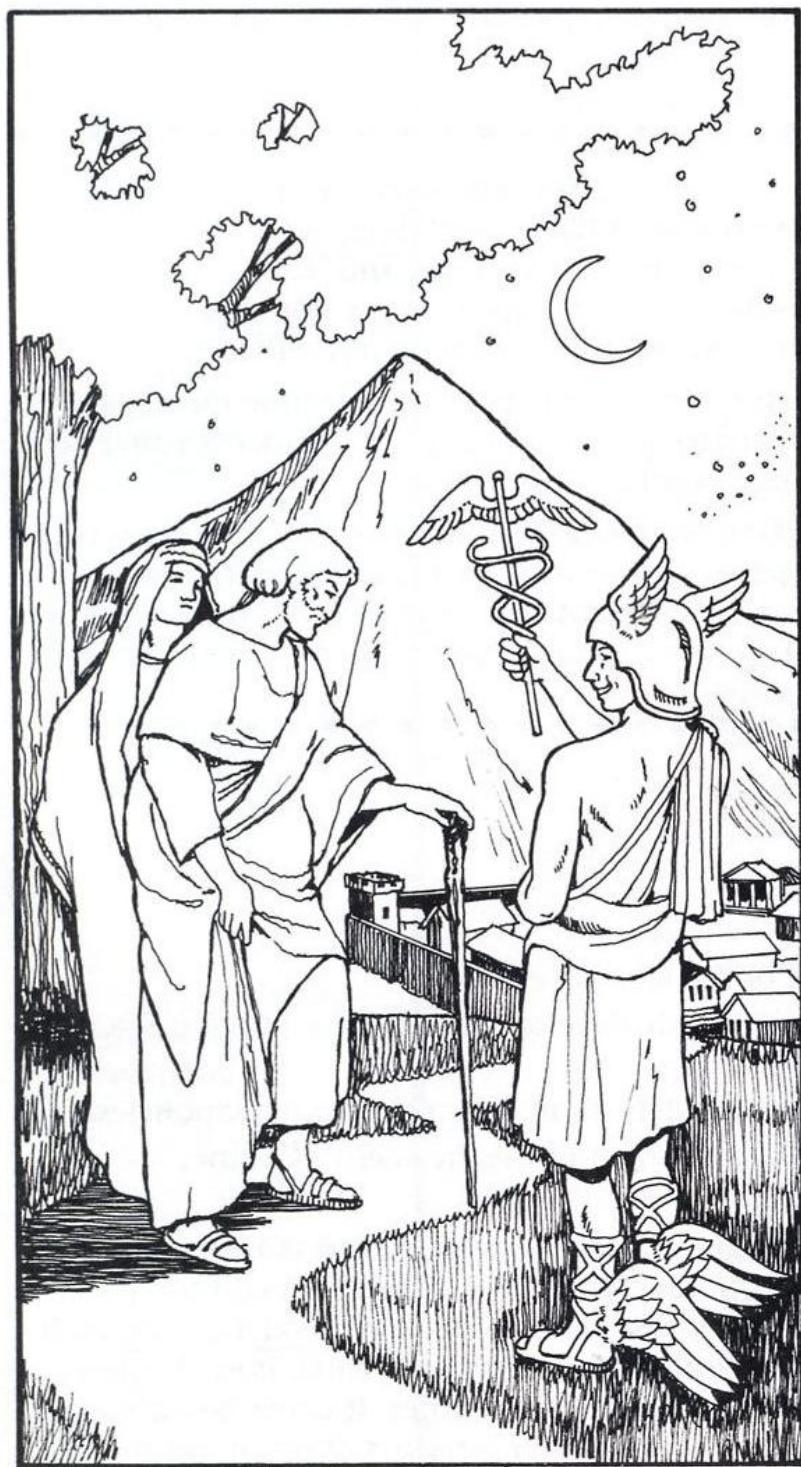
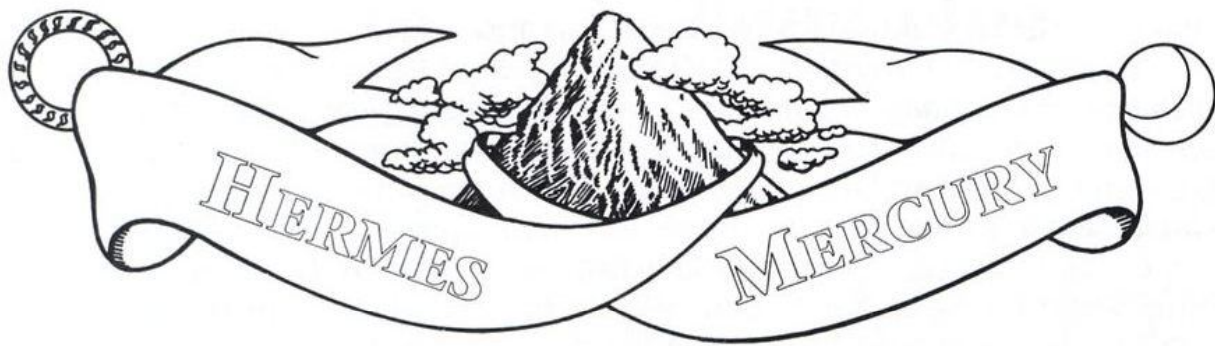


HERA

JUNO



Hera was the wife of Zeus and the protector of marriage and women. Her name means "Splendor of Heaven" or "The Lady." Women everywhere worshiped Hera. Her help was especially important during childbirth. Her husband, Zeus, spent a lot of time with other women, which made Hera jealous. She spent much of her time trying to destroy Zeus and punish his lady friends. Hera wore golden sandals, sat on a golden throne, and rode in a golden chariot. She kept a peacock as a pet. The Romans had their own name for the wife of Jupiter. It was Juno.



Hermes was the messenger of the Olympians and the special herald of Zeus, his father. He could fly and was as swift as the wind. He wore wings on his helmet and sandals. He had many tasks to perform, including watching over travelers and leading the dead to the Lower World. He carried a caduceus (wand) decorated with twining snakes. Hermes sang with a sweet, strong voice, and he played the flute and the lyre. The Romans called him Mercury after they made him part of their mythology.

HESTIA

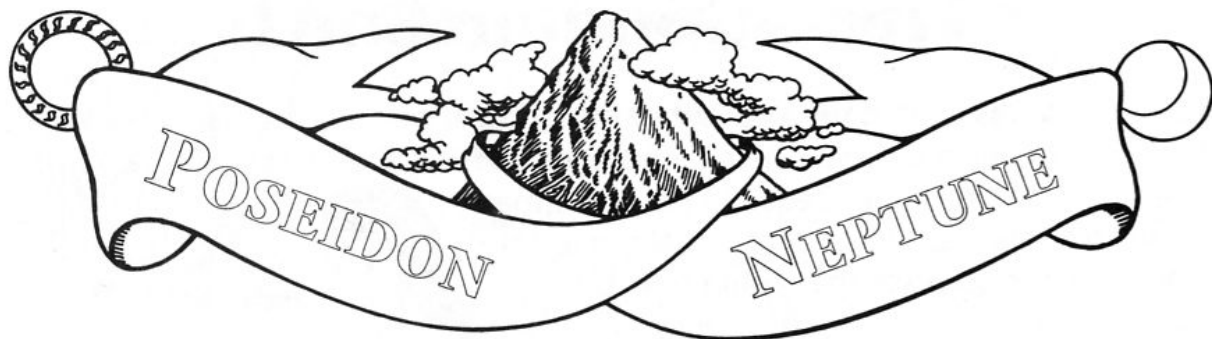


VESTA

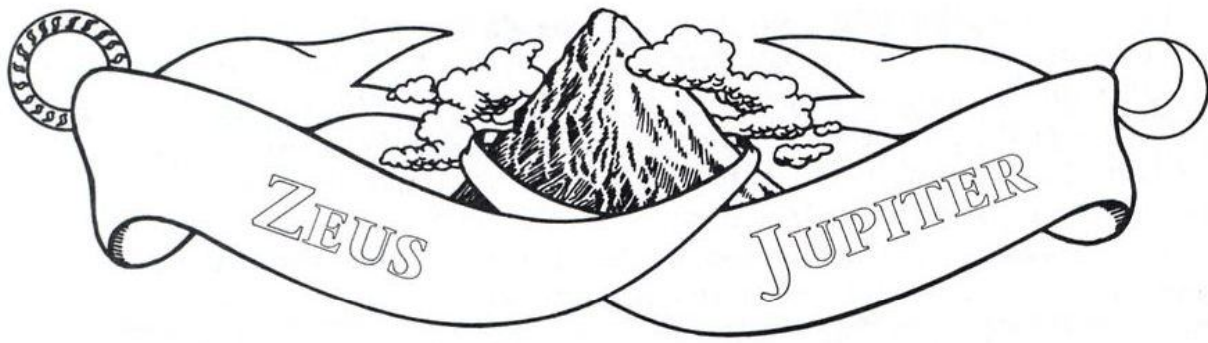


Hestia (Vesta)

Hestia was best known for her pure and simple life. She was one of Zeus' sisters and was said to be the only major goddess who did not marry and have children. On Mount Olympus she preferred a plain, wooden throne and the color brown. Hestia was considered the goddess of the hearth and home, with her major symbol being the hearth fire (lit fireplace). In Roman myth, she was called Vesta.



Poseidon was the ruler of the sea, second in power only to his brother Zeus. He unleashed the fury of the sea on those who angered him. He was married to Amphitrite, but like Zeus, he fell in love with many other women. His place was at the bottom of the sea, but he went to Mt. Olympus whenever he wished. His symbol of power was the trident, a three-pronged spear. Poseidon created the horse and is the patron of horse races. His own horses had brass hooves and golden manes. The sea became smooth when they pulled his chariot over it. The Romans gave the name Neptune to their sea god.



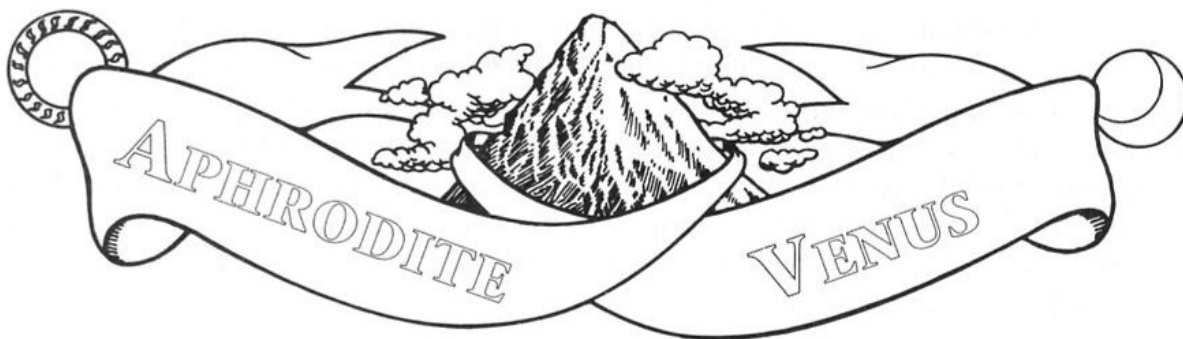
Zeus, the king of the gods, lived on Mt.

Olympus with his wife, Hera. He was the most powerful of all the Olympians and ruled both heaven and earth.

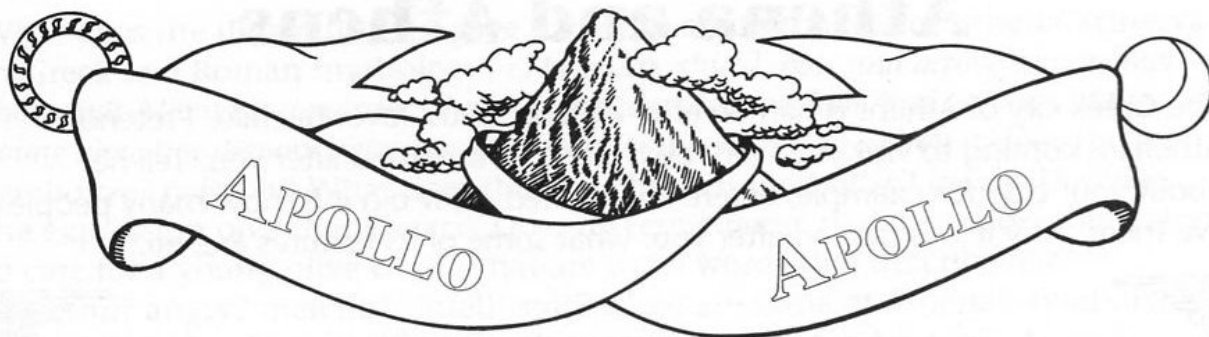
He controlled the movements of the sun and moon and turned summer into fall and winter into spring. When angered, he hurled thunderbolts down on the earth.

Despite his temper, Zeus was the wisest and fairest of all the immortals who lived on Mt. Olympus.

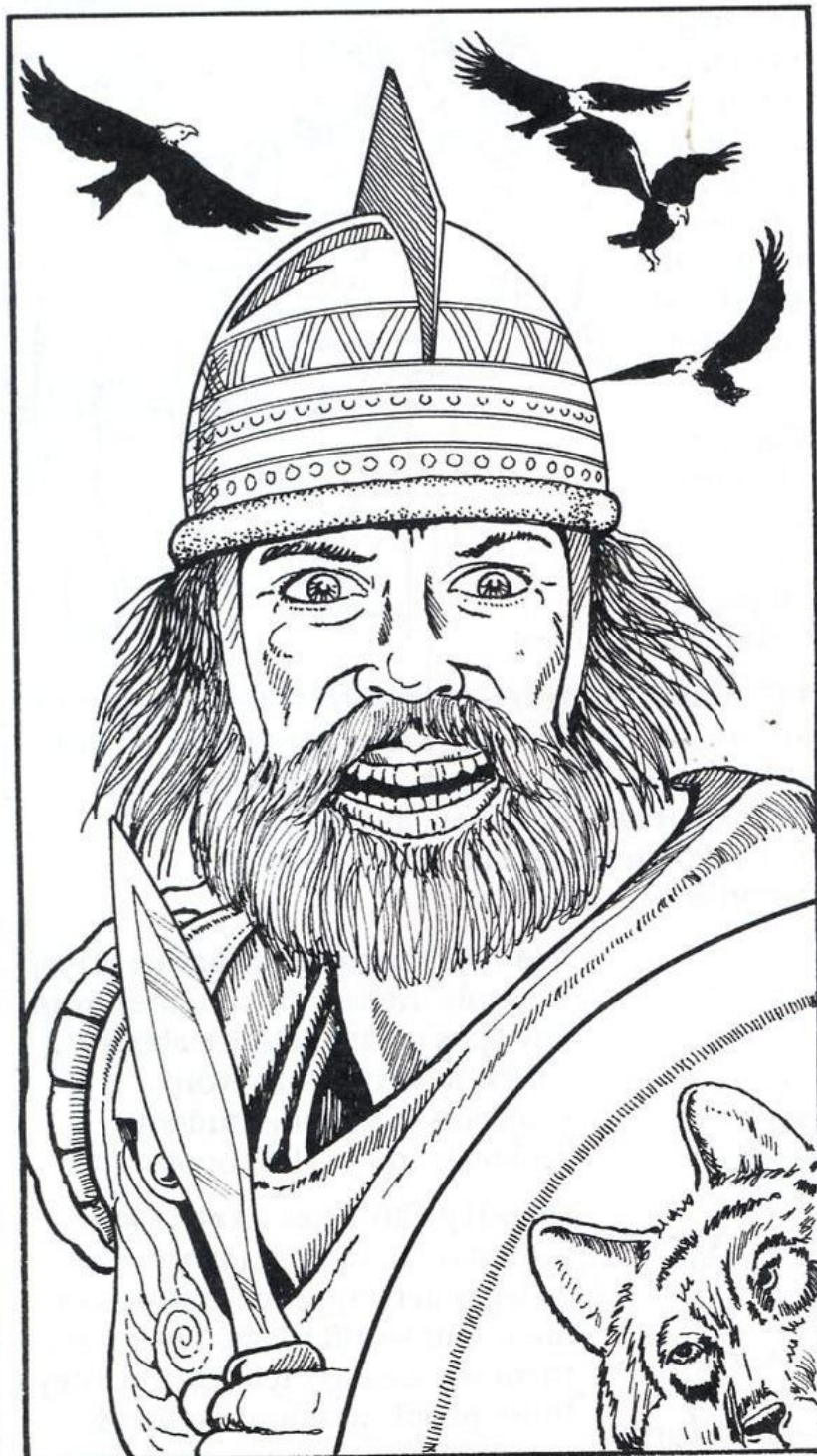
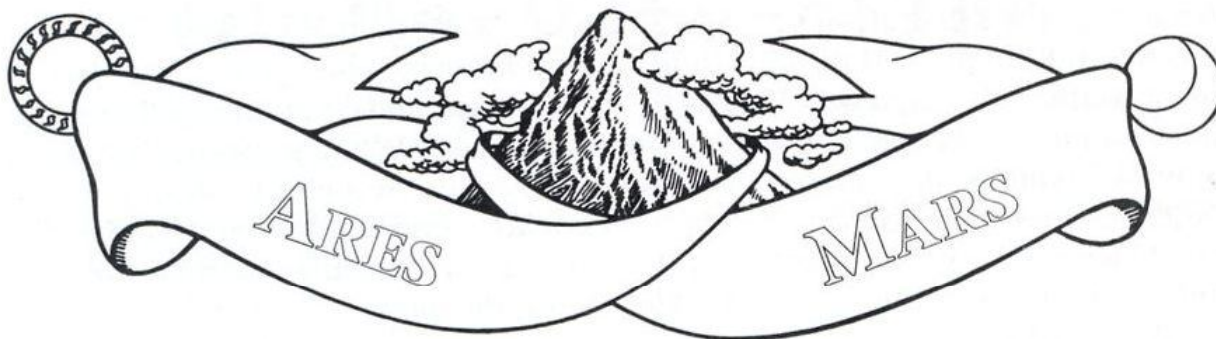
His special messenger was the eagle. The Romans had a similar god. They called him Jupiter.



Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty. Her name means "Born of the Foam" because legend says that she rose up from the sea foam before making her way to Mount Olympus. Aphrodite wore a magic belt that made men fall in love with her. She was happiest in a garden with flowers all around. Aphrodite's husband was Hephaestus, god of the forge, and Eros was her son. Her animal companions—the dove, dolphin, and swan—were with her constantly. The Romans adopted her into their mythology and called her Venus.



Apollo was a fearsome warrior who, unlike Ares, fought only when necessary. He represented the Greek ideal of a good-hearted, handsome youth. He could fire an arrow into a dragon one minute and play a sweet melody on his golden lyre the next. Apollo healed the sick and spread happiness wherever he went with his beautiful poetry. During the day, he ruled the sun, and once a year, Apollo brought the seasons of spring and summer. Greeks in the city of Delphi were especially devoted to Apollo. They built a grand temple in his name and believed that he spoke to them through the voice of a priestess.



Ares was dedicated to war and cruelty, and he joined in wars on earth whenever he could. Sometimes he even tried to start wars among people who wanted to live in peace, although he did not always succeed. He was the son of Zeus and Hera, but they detested his hatefulness and violence. Ares was a grim warrior who carried a shield and dagger. His sons were named Terror, Dread, Panic, and Fear. Even before the Romans had any contact with Greece, they had a similar war god. They called him Mars.

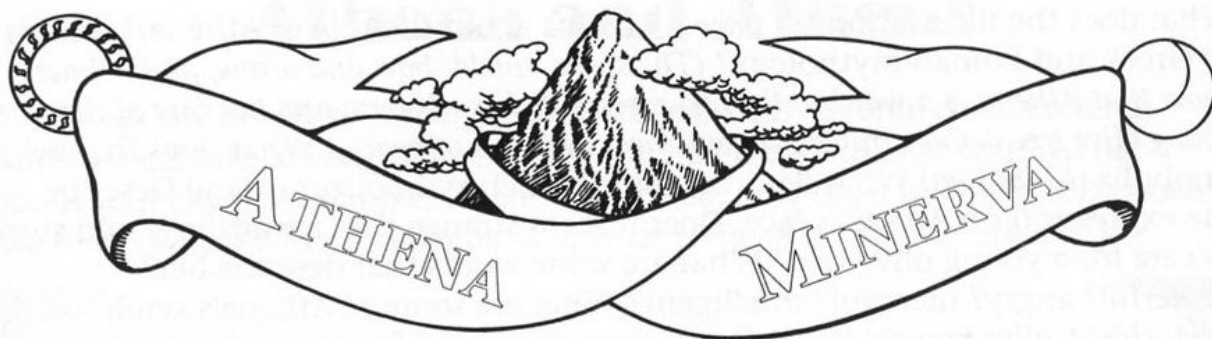
ARTEMIS



DIANA



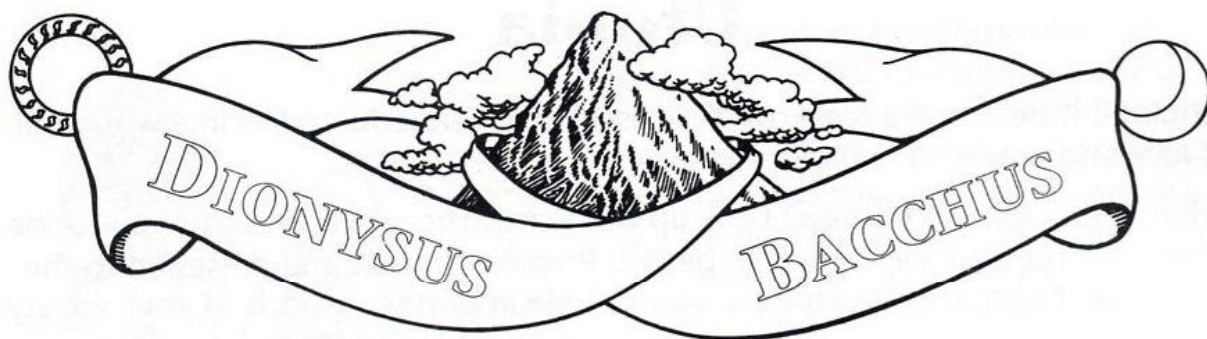
Artemis was the goddess of hunting and the moon. Her many symbols included a stag, bow and arrow, and a crescent moon. She and her twin brother Apollo were known as the Twins of Light. She can also be called Phoebe, which means “bright” or “radiant”. Artemis is the protector of single women and the various creatures of the forest. The Romans adopted her and called her Diana.



Athena was a warrior who hated war. She fought only when she had to defend the forces of good in the world. Athena's magic shield turned her enemies to stone, and she never lost a battle. She sprang fully grown from the head of Zeus, holding a spear and bellowing a war cry. She was Zeus' favorite child and often he would let her control the lightning and storms. As fearsome as Athena was, she loved wisdom and peace more than anything else. She encouraged learning in the fields of mathematics and agriculture. She also created the olive tree, which continues today to be a symbol of peace. The Romans worshiped a similar goddess whom they called Minerva.



Demeter was the goddess who watched over the sowing and reaping of grain and agriculture in general. The Greeks believed she made the earth fertile so crops would grow, flowers would bloom, and fruit would ripen. Demeter is symbolized by sheaves of wheat. She was the sister of Zeus. Her daughter, Persephone, was the queen of Hades. The Romans called her Ceres.



Dionysus was the Greek god of wine and revelry (partying). But he also promoted the law, civilization, and peace. He ruled animal life and vegetation. He was a son of Zeus and was married to Ariadne. Dionysus is often pictured with vine leaves on his head and sometimes riding on a tiger. He is usually cheerful and friendly. The Romans adopted Dionysus into their mythology and called him Bacchus.