

Mythology

a collection of stories explaining the origin and history of a people

- Since the beginning of time, humans have used art to express themselves.
- People use art to convey their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their cultures, and their understandings of the world.
- Some of the methods of communication humans utilize include painting, sculpture, prose, poetry, and dance.

Intro to Mythology

- In the oral tradition, stories have been transmitted through many generations.
- These tales tell of the achievements of great gods and heroes.
- They also tell of ordinary people in unusual adventures.
- These stories may be classified as myths, legends, or folktales.

Intro to Mythology

- In spite of the fact that we will be discussing **gods and goddesses**, mythology is not a study of religion.
- The Greek gods and goddesses were created by storytellers of the time as a means to explain how things, people, emotions, etc. came into existence.
- They did not have the benefit of advanced science, so they used their imaginations to explain how things came to be.

Intro to Mythology

- **Myths:** stories *intimately* bound up with the traditions of a people. They deal with gods, heroes, religious beliefs, and cultural traits. They explain how the world was created, how people and animals came into existence, and how important customs were established and preserved for their culture. They also explain all kinds of natural phenomena—from rainbows to sunrise.

Myths, Legends, and Folktales

- **Legends:** entertain listeners with a narrative that is supposedly based on fact. Legendary characters usually represent themselves as they perform great feats. Legends may have a strong basis in fact. Legends are told as true. Myths, on the other hand, are told as stories requiring its listeners to believe in the gods who are its characters.

Myths, Legends, and Folktales

- **Folktale:** Folktale is a very broad term that includes all types of traditional narratives. A major characteristic of the folktale is its long and continuing life. It is traditional, handed down from one generation to another. Originality is undesirable. The story is usually preserved intact, most often in oral form.

Myths, Legends, and Folktales

In Greek Mythology

- There were 12 Olympian gods and goddesses in Greek mythology, and most of them “lived” on Mount Olympus.
- The same gods and goddesses existed in Roman culture, though they went by different names.
- The Greeks believed these gods and goddesses took interest in human affairs and behaved in human ways.

The Twelve Great Olympians

- **Zeus**: Ruler of all gods and man. When Zeus defeated his father Cronus, he and his brothers drew lots for their share of the universe. Zeus appointed* himself supreme ruler. He controls the awful thunderbolt and is stronger than all other gods put together.



The Twelve Great Olympians

- He was the God of the sky, rain, lightning and thunder, carrying a thunderbolt as his symbol
- He controlled fate and law
- His symbol is the eagle
- Weapon – thunder bolt and scepter
- Had a very bad temper
- Married sister, Hera

Zeus

*Zeus appointed himself because he was the only surviving child of Cronus. How . . . you ask?—listen for my story because this is pretty interesting STUFF!

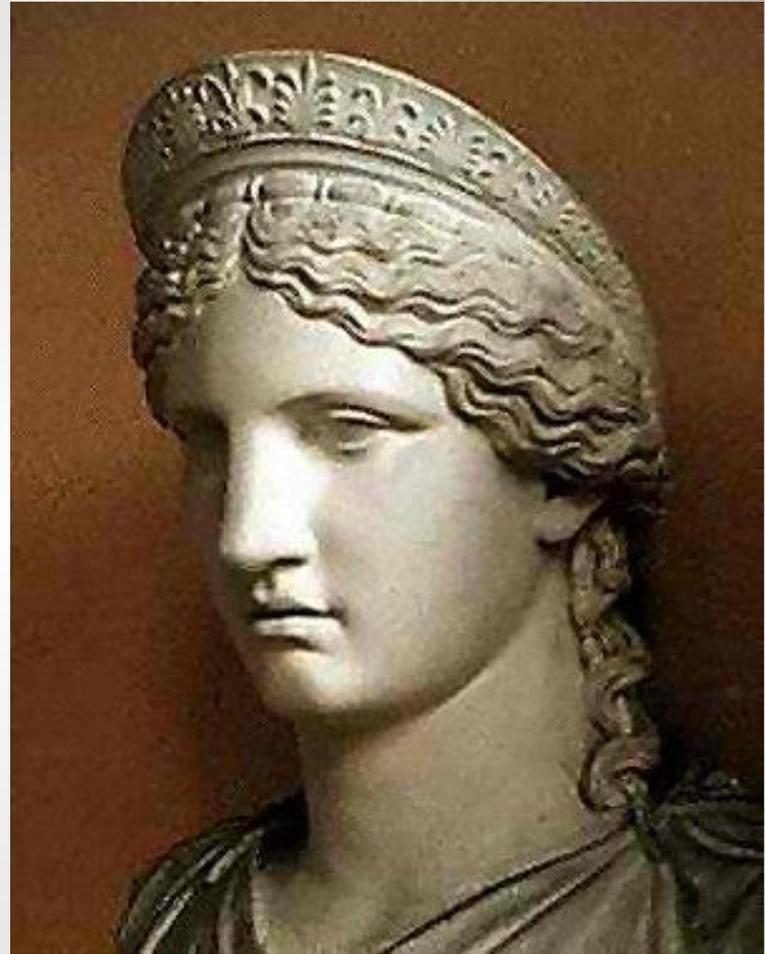
Zeus

Draw a picture of what you believe Zeus to look like.

Zeus



- **Hera**: Zeus' wife and sister is Queen of the gods. She is the special protector of married women. She was an angry* goddess, and she never forgot or forgave an insult to her.



The Twelve Great Olympians

- *Hera was especially angry and jealous because of all the women (human and goddesses) Zeus had affairs with over the course of their marriage.
- Goddess of heaven, marriage, childbirth, empires and kings.
- Symbols – the pomegranate, lotus staff
- Animal symbol - peacock



Hera



Draw a picture of what you believe Hera to look like.

Hera



- **Poseidon**: God of the seas. Zeus' brother. Poseidon was vitally important* to the Greeks as is evident in their stories. The Greeks relied on the kindness of Poseidon for their livelihood. In artwork, he is always shown carrying the Trident—a three-pronged spear.



The Twelve Great Olympians

- Poseidon was important to the Greeks because they relied on the goodness of the seas (weather) for their crops and their livelihoods.
- He was the god of the sea, floods, droughts, and horses.
- Weapon – trident
- He rides horses and dolphins



Poseidon

Draw a picture of what you believe
Poseidon to look like.

Poseidon



- **Hades**: God of the land of the dead*; Hades was unwanted and unwelcome at Olympus**. Known for his unpitying nature, Hades was, nonetheless, not considered an evil god***. He had a helmet that made the wearer appear invisible.



The Twelve Great Olympians

*Though often mistaken by people of varying religions, Hades is not a place for “bad” people when they die. Hades is the place for all “lost souls” (souls of the dead) in Greek Mythology.

**Hades was unwelcome because others were always wary of their fate when Hades was around . . . he announced death. He also resented the fact that he was constantly “trapped” with the spirits and caused arguments among the gods and goddesses when he was around them.

***The other gods and goddesses simply looked at Hades as doing the job he’d been given. They didn’t think he was a scary or hateful god—just a good one at his job.

Hades

- He was in love with Persephone, the daughter of Demeter (who is his sister, which makes Persephone his niece).
- His beast, Cerberus, was a 3 headed dog.



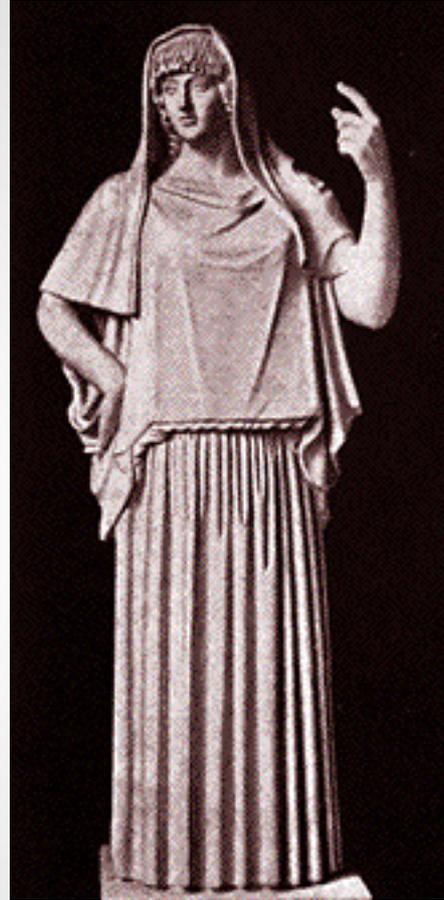
Hades

Draw a picture of what you believe Hades to look like.

Hades



- **Hestia**: Goddess of the Hearth and Home—domestic life*. Zeus' sister and one of the 3 virgin goddesses.



The Twelve Great Olympians

- In ancient Greece the “hearth” did refer to the home fire, but it represented something more sacred. The hearth was the center point of the home, which meant it was the center point of the family.



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Hestia

Hestia is the goddess on whom you call when you're pregnant, if you want your delivery to go easily. She's also the goddess you'd call on if you want to have a smooth and comfortable relationship with your spouse, or if you want to "whip up an amazing dinner" that will make your neighbors jealous of your talents.

Hestia

Draw a picture of what you believe
Hestia to look like.

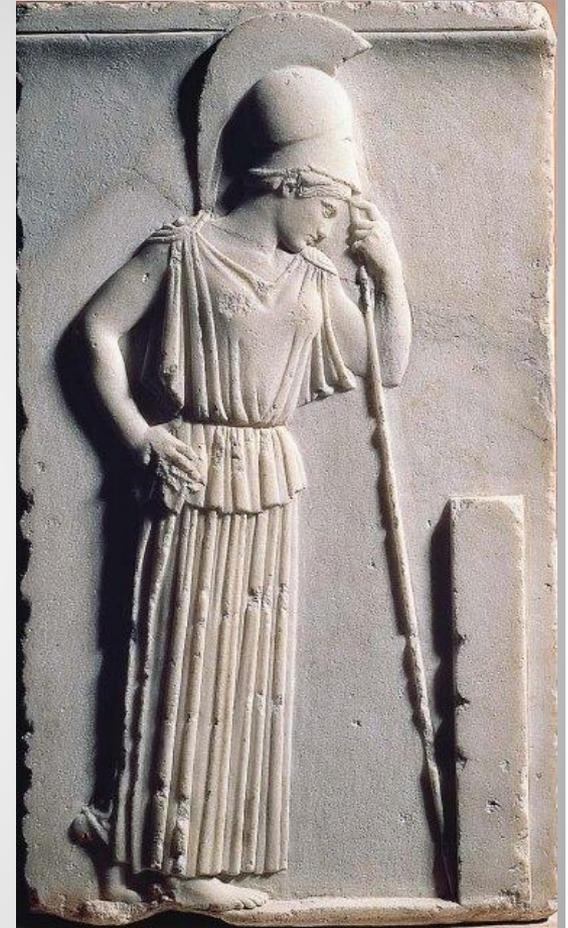
Hestia



*(The remainder of the
12 Great Olympians are
grandchildren of
Cronus, children of his
children—most were
fathered by Zeus.)*

The Twelve Great Olympians

Athena: The goddess of wisdom; she is Zeus's favorite*. She is the second of the virgin goddesses and is often referred to as the Maiden.

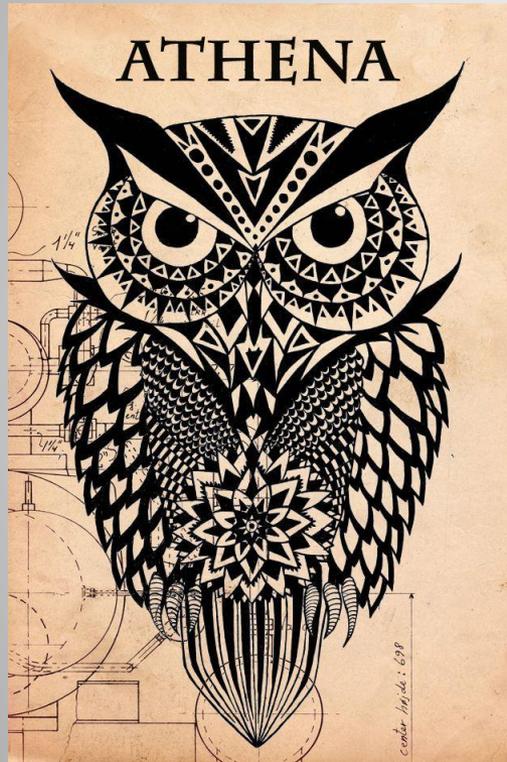


The Twelve Great Olympians

- One day, Zeus couldn't understand the pain he was having in his head. He had a rare, extreme headache that nothing would cure. He'd called on all power of the help that he felt was available to him. Finally, taking his powerful and strong arm, and giving himself an exploding blow on the temple, Zeus received relief, and Athena sprang fully-grown and dressed in armor from his head!

Athena

- Her weapons – spear and shield
- Her symbols – the owl and the olive tree



Draw a picture of what you believe Athena to look like.

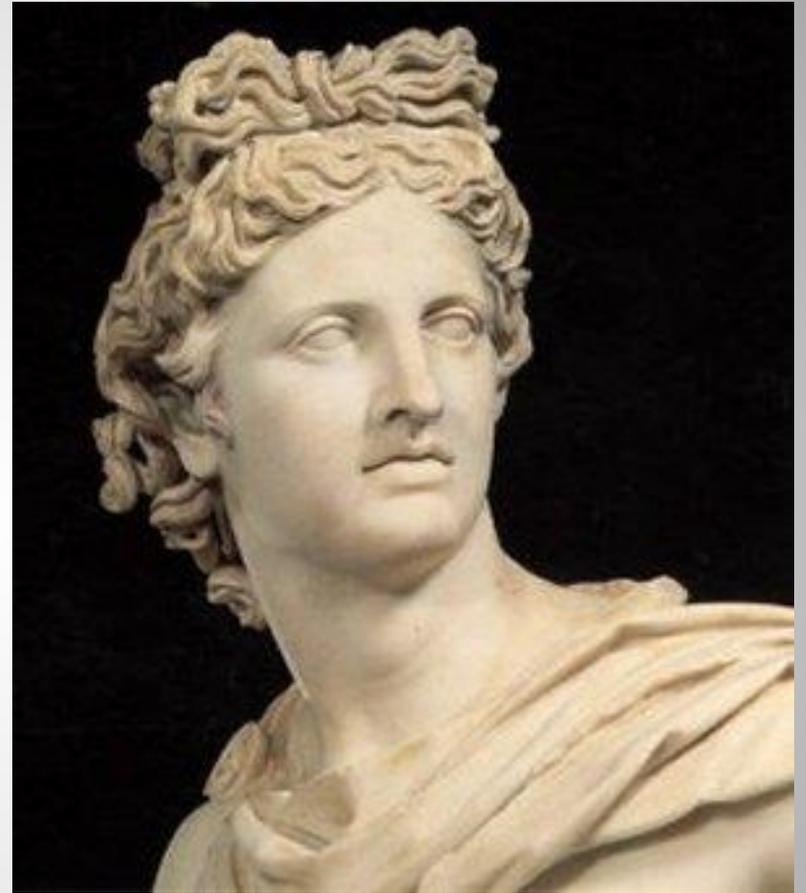
Athena



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Apollo**: A beautiful god and a master musician, Apollo entertains the gods by playing on his golden lyre. He is god of archery, prophecy, and music. He is sometimes called god of the sun, but the actual Sun-god is Helios.



The Twelve Great Olympians

- He is Zeus' son by Leto.
- His weapon – bow and arrow
- His musical instrument – lyre



Draw a picture of what you believe
Apollo to look like.

The Twelve Great Olympians



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Artemis**: The last of the virgin goddesses, Artemis is the goddess of the moon. She is known for having two faces* (or personalities): good and evil. She is also known as the goddess of the hunt**.



The Twelve Great Olympians

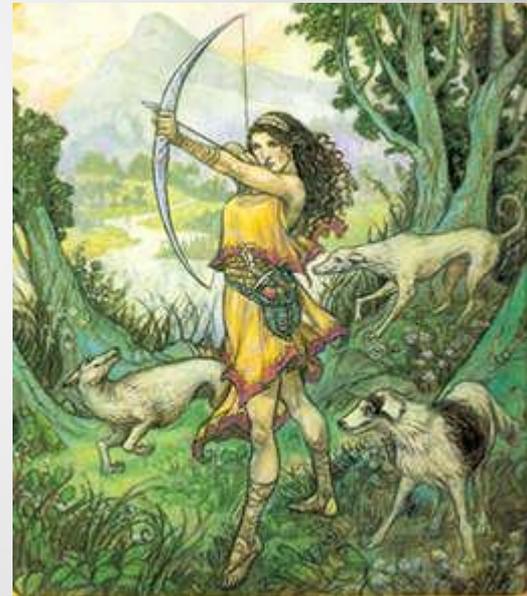
During his return from the Trojan War, some of Odysseus's men killed a pregnant (two infants) deer and didn't tell Odysseus, and they didn't sacrifice the animal(s) to Artemis.

She sent a poisonous serpent to their camp that night . . .

The snake didn't immediately kill its victims, but caused their skin to rot, decay, and have a disgusting odor. They were left on the island to fend for themselves after the others sailed away toward their quest for home.

Artemis

- Parents – Zeus and Leto
- Symbol – Bow, arrows, stags, hunting dog and moon
- Is the twin sister to Apollo



Artemis

Draw a picture of what you believe
Artemis to look like.

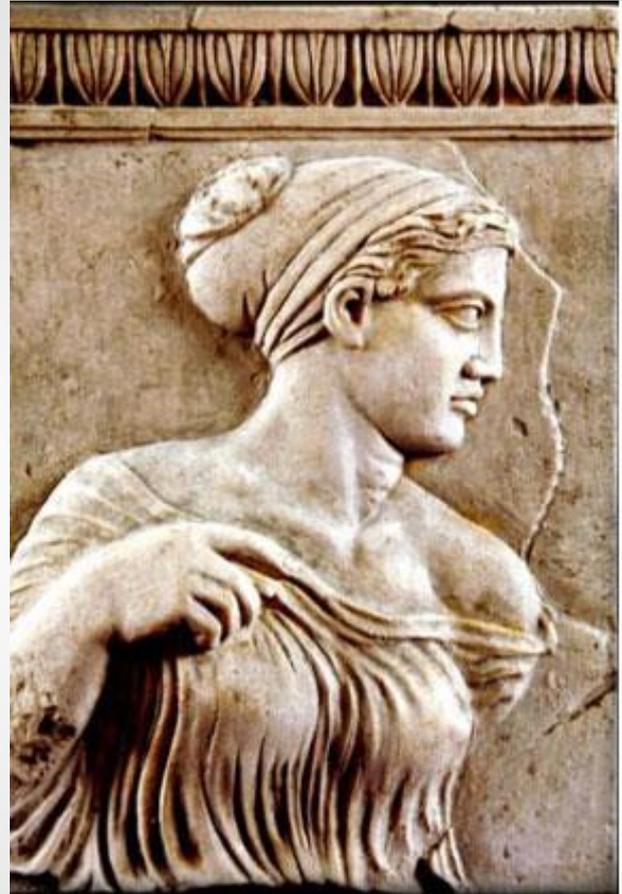
Artemis



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Aphrodite:** Goddess of love and beauty, she is the wife of the ugliest* of the gods, Hephaestus. She is also the goddess you've mostly likely heard something about in pop culture.



The Twelve Great Olympians

The fact that the most beautiful of all the gods/goddesses is married to the ugliest (crippled-there's a story, of course!) of the gods and goddesses is an absolute example of irony at work.

Aphrodite

- Her symbol – the apple, the myrtle wreath, the dove, and scallop shell



Aphrodite

Draw a picture of what you believe
Aphrodite to look like.

Aphrodite



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Hermes**: The god of speed and messages; Hermes is often pictured as having winged sandals*, a winged hat*, and a magic wand.

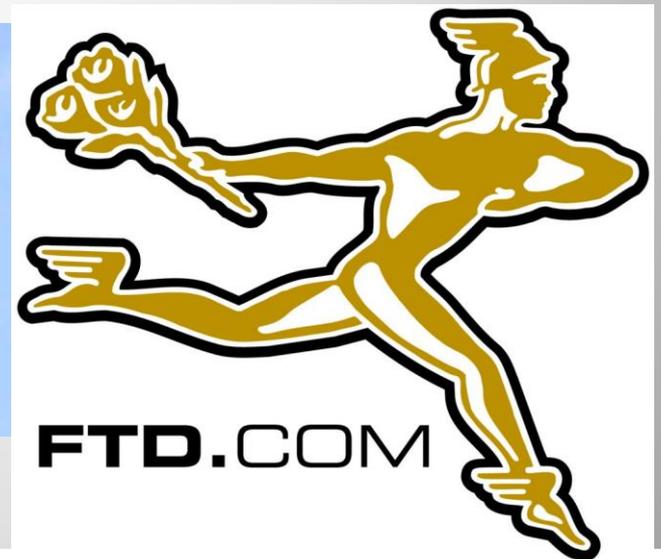


The Twelve Great Olympians

Good-Year Tire and FTD Florist use the winged foot/hat as their companies' logos. Nike incorporates only the wing portion to create its swoosh – giving it the quick like speed quality of Hermes.



Hermes



- Son of Zeus and Maia
- His duty – leading dead souls to Hades and messenger for the gods.

Hermes

Draw a picture of what you believe Hermes to look like.

Hermes



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Ares**: The Greek god of war, Ares is a ruthless god*. Both Zeus and Hera (his parents) hate him**. He figures little in the Greek myths and is little more than a symbol of war.



The Twelve Great Olympians

*He was created out of hate and revenge by his parents, so his life can be nothing but war: fighting, battling, hating, seeking revenge.

**His parents hate him because he reminds them of each other, always taking the side of the "opposite," or the one requested. Everywhere he goes, he creates war.

Ares

- His symbol – bronze-tipped spear
- Outfit – golden armor
- Animal symbol – the vulture and the venomous snake.



Ares

Draw a picture of what you believe Ares to look like.

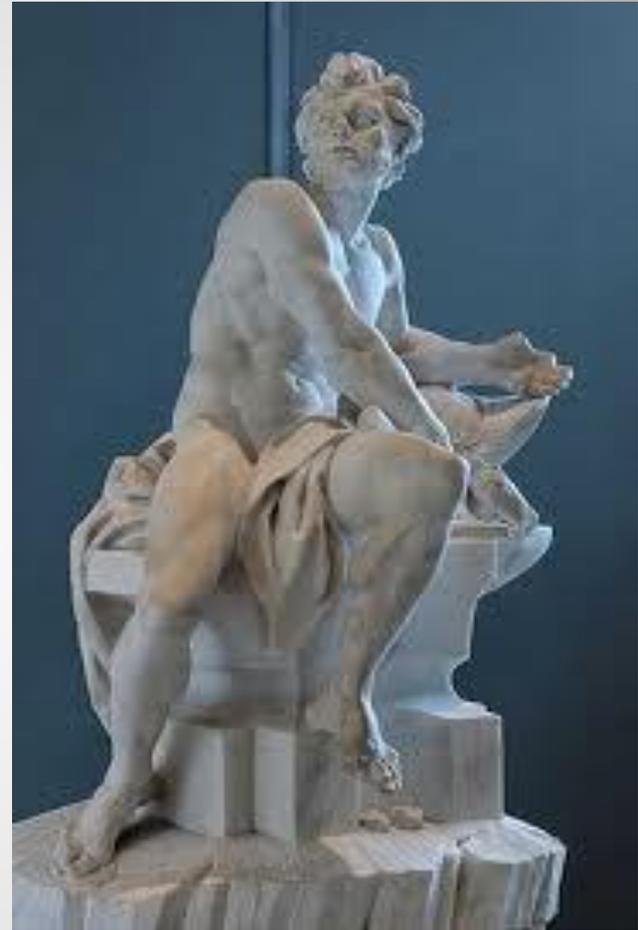
Ares



the 12 Great Olympians



- **Hephaestus**: The god of fire & forge was popular on earth and on Olympus. He was born lame and ugly*, yet the most beautiful of all goddesses, Aphrodite, loved him. Hephaestus forged the gods' armor and built their homes.



The Twelve Great Olympians

*Hephaestus wasn't actually BORN ugly or lame—well, maybe ugly, but we don't know if one caused the other. Hera had Hephaestus without Zeus's help and without having an affair. She was bitter that he had such a strong and wise daughter, Athena, so she decided to have a child without her husband. Zeus was so completely enraged by this birth that he took the small child and FLUNG him to the bottom of Mount Olympus, forever scarring him, leaving him ugly and lame, but his talent and gift (forged) remains.

Hephaestus

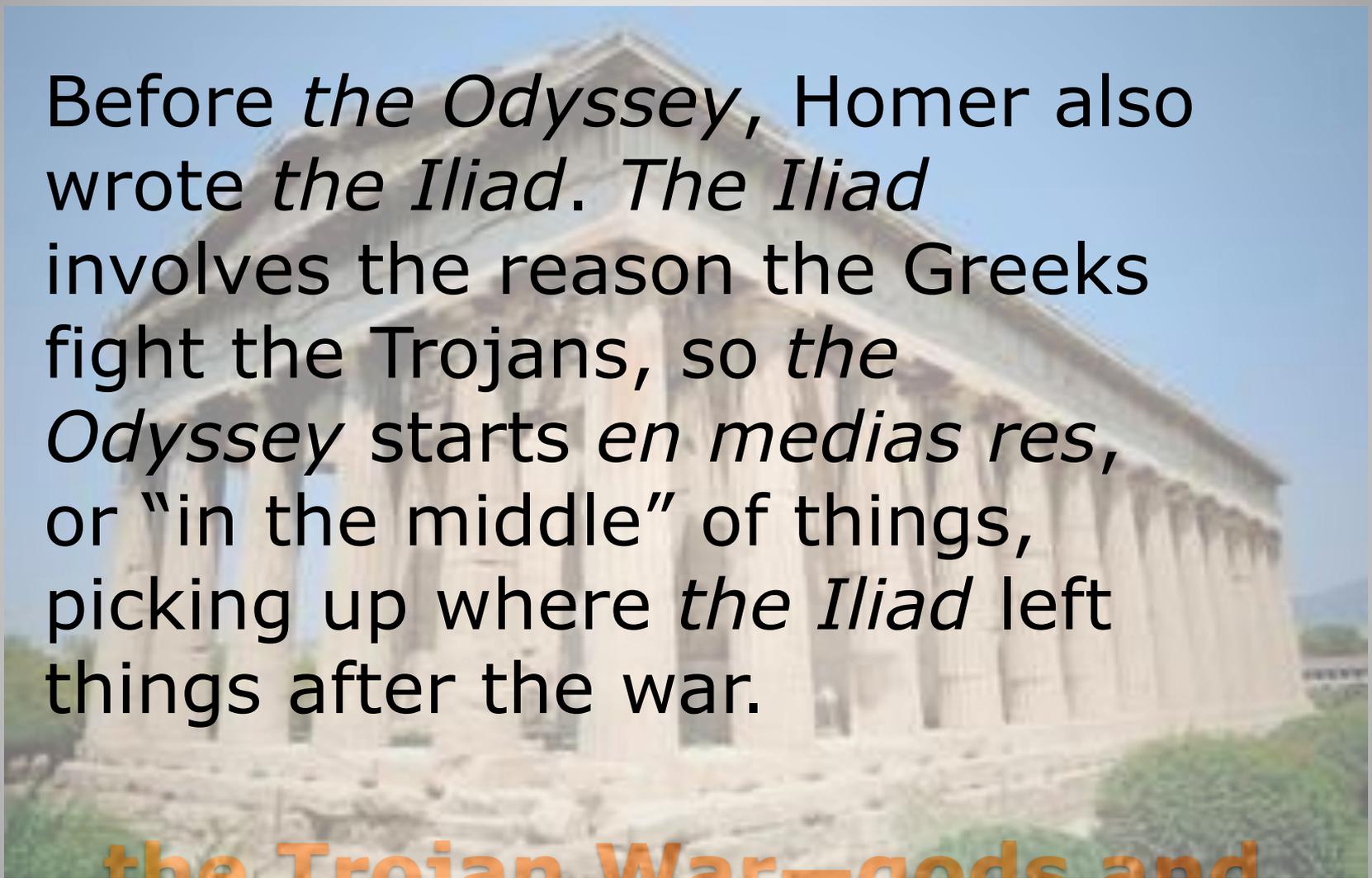
Draw a picture of what you believe
Hephaestus to look like.

Hephaestus



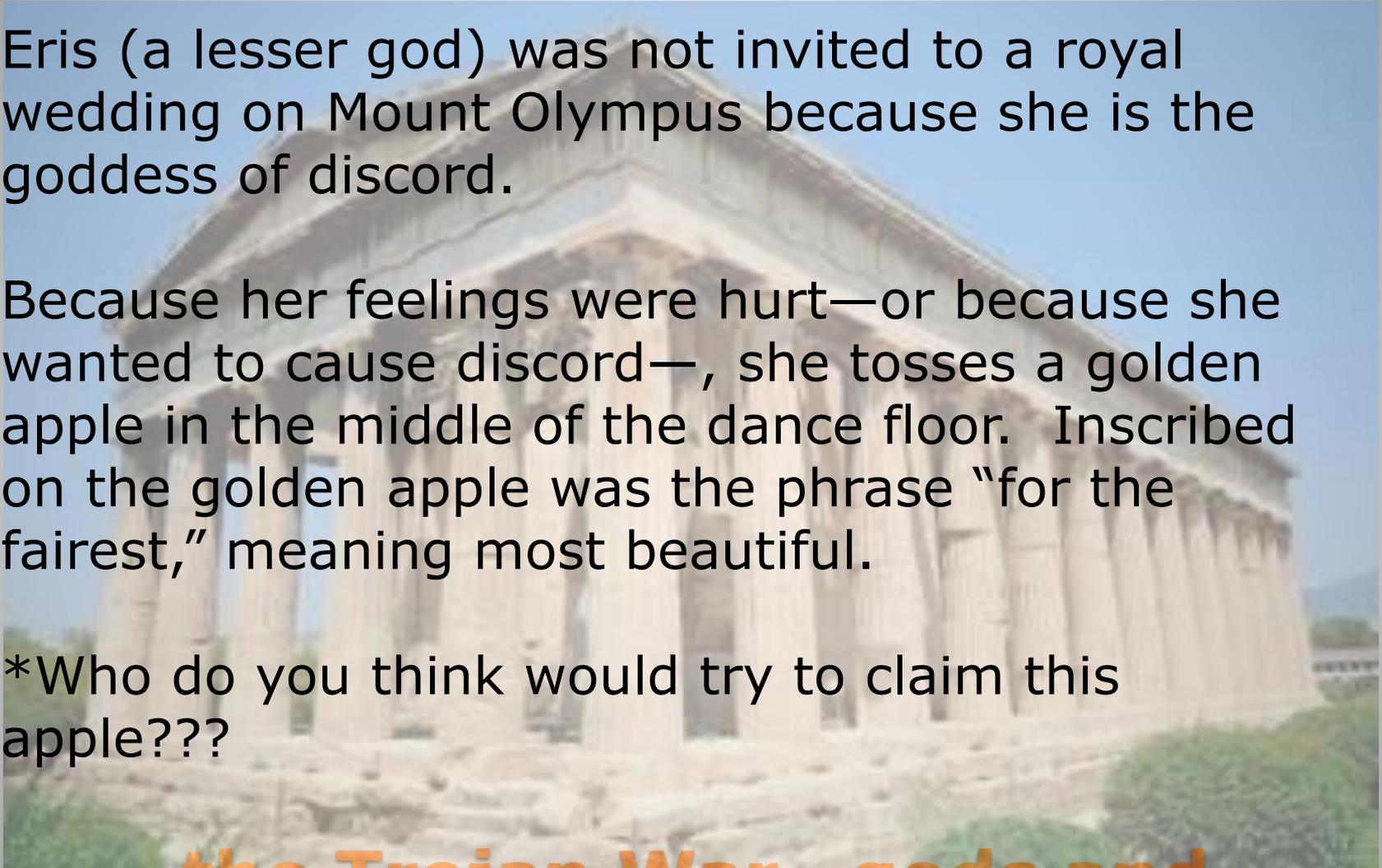
the 12 Great Olympians





Before *the Odyssey*, Homer also wrote *the Iliad*. *The Iliad* involves the reason the Greeks fight the Trojans, so *the Odyssey* starts *en medias res*, or “in the middle” of things, picking up where *the Iliad* left things after the war.

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses: involvement

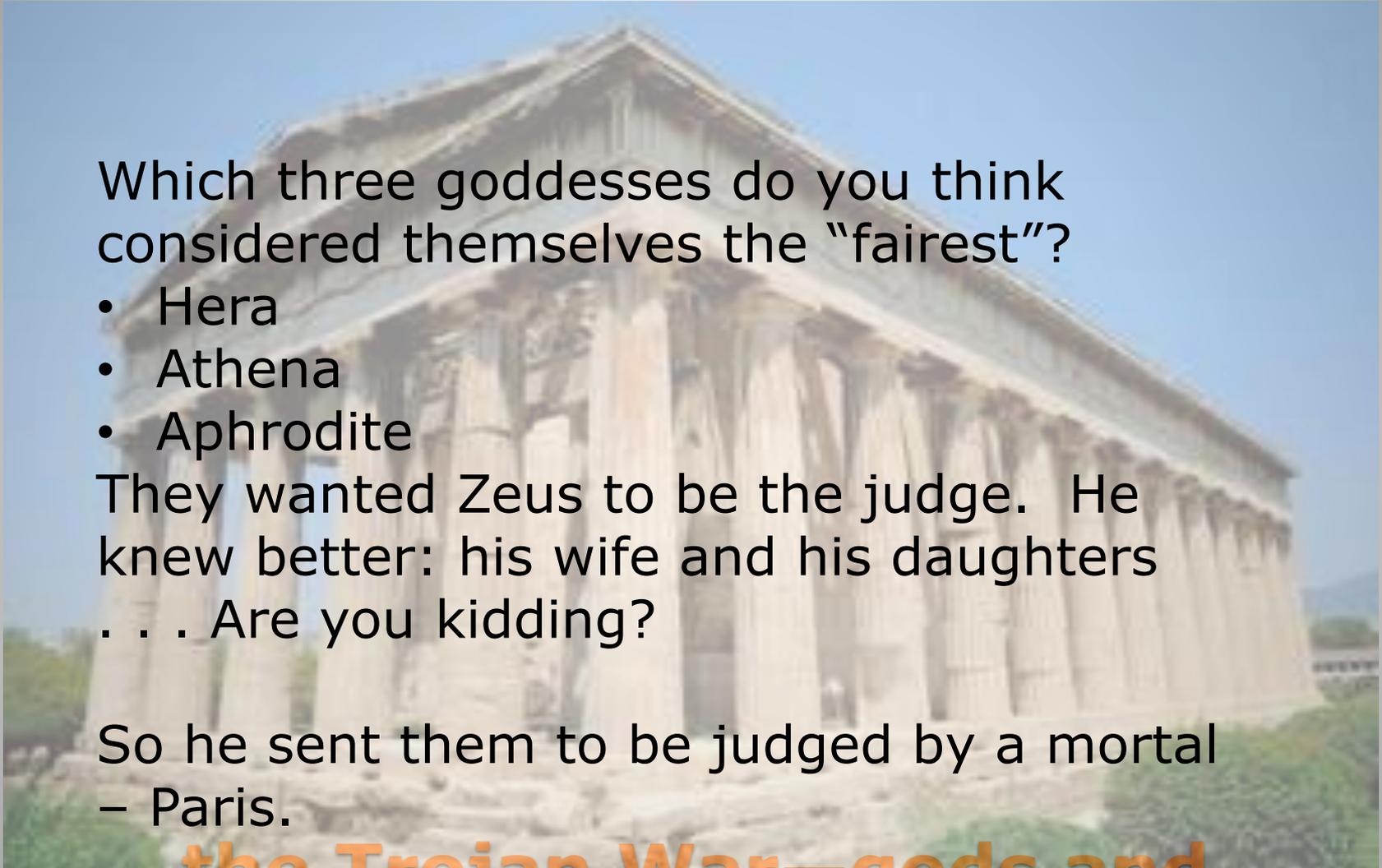


Eris (a lesser god) was not invited to a royal wedding on Mount Olympus because she is the goddess of discord.

Because her feelings were hurt—or because she wanted to cause discord—, she tosses a golden apple in the middle of the dance floor. Inscribed on the golden apple was the phrase “for the fairest,” meaning most beautiful.

*Who do you think would try to claim this apple???

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses involvement



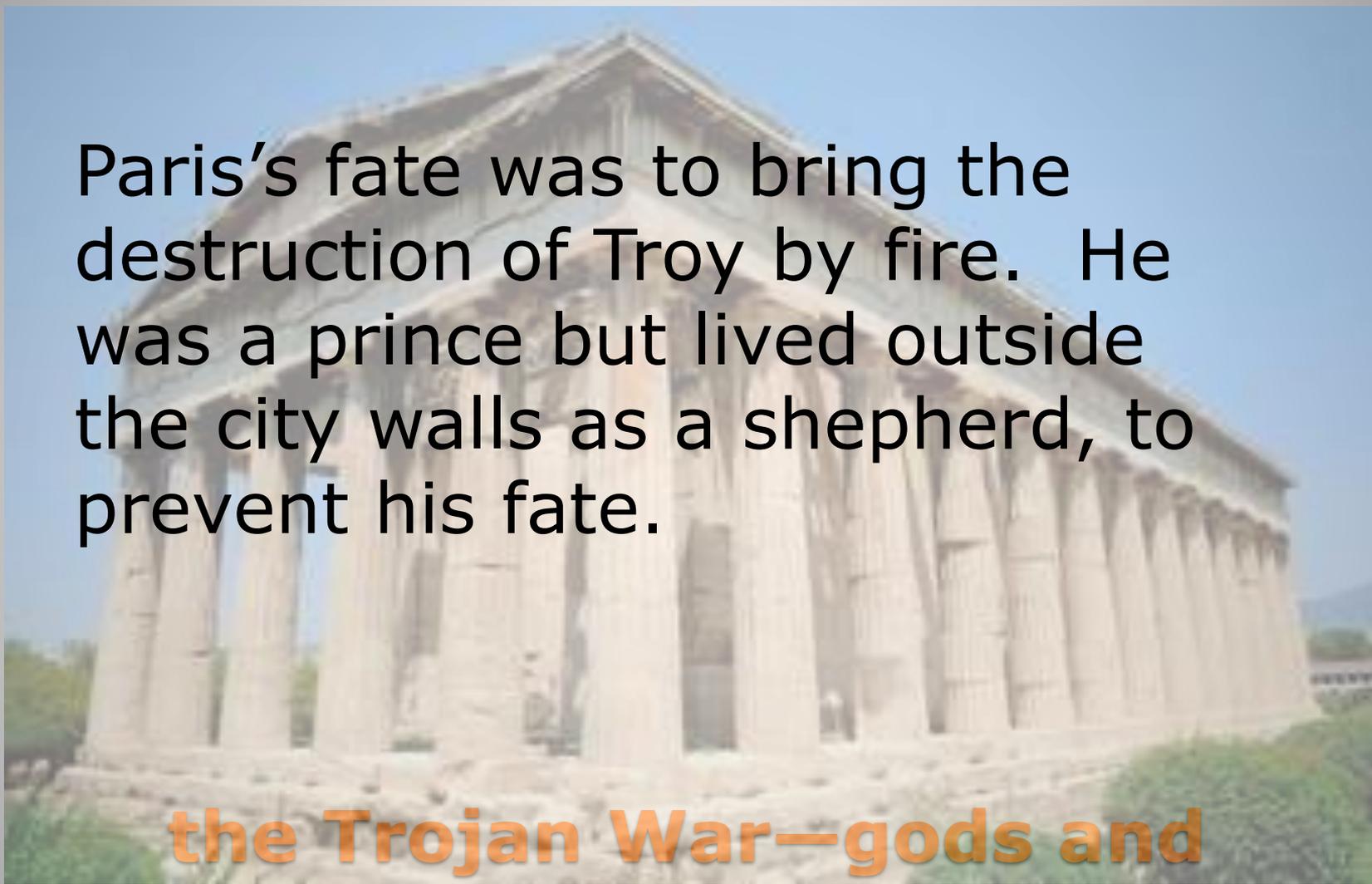
Which three goddesses do you think considered themselves the “fairest”?

- Hera
- Athena
- Aphrodite

They wanted Zeus to be the judge. He knew better: his wife and his daughters . . . Are you kidding?

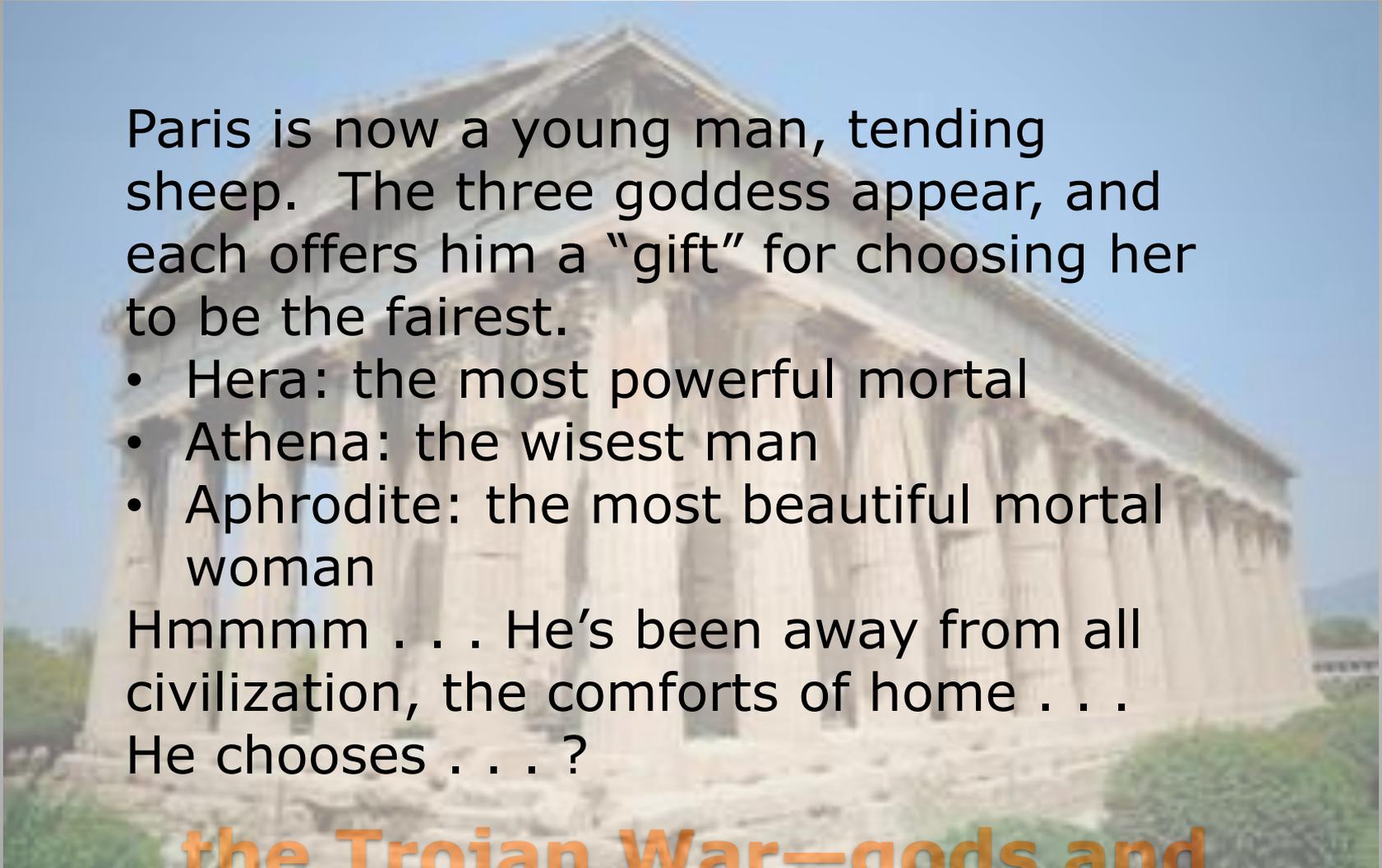
So he sent them to be judged by a mortal
– Paris.

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses involvement



Paris's fate was to bring the destruction of Troy by fire. He was a prince but lived outside the city walls as a shepherd, to prevent his fate.

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses involvement



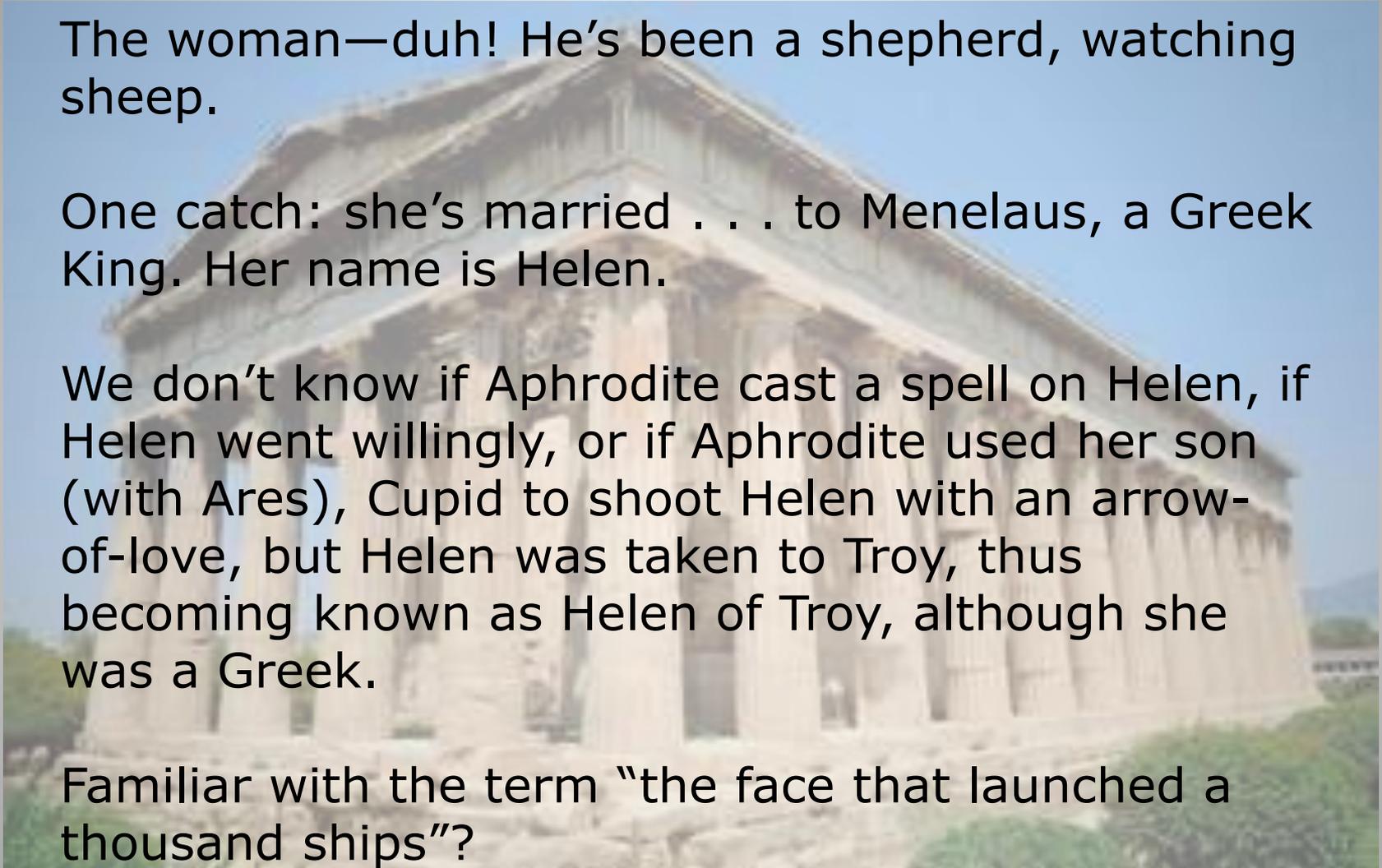
Paris is now a young man, tending sheep. The three goddess appear, and each offers him a “gift” for choosing her to be the fairest.

- Hera: the most powerful mortal
- Athena: the wisest man
- Aphrodite: the most beautiful mortal woman

Hmmmm . . . He’s been away from all civilization, the comforts of home . . .

He chooses . . . ?

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses involvement



The woman—duh! He's been a shepherd, watching sheep.

One catch: she's married . . . to Menelaus, a Greek King. Her name is Helen.

We don't know if Aphrodite cast a spell on Helen, if Helen went willingly, or if Aphrodite used her son (with Ares), Cupid to shoot Helen with an arrow-of-love, but Helen was taken to Troy, thus becoming known as Helen of Troy, although she was a Greek.

Familiar with the term "the face that launched a thousand ships"?

the Trojan War—gods and goddesses involvement