

APOLLO

Apollo ([Attic](#), [Ionic](#), and [Homeric Greek](#): Ἀπόλλων, *Apollōn* (gen.: Ἀπόλλωνος); [Doric](#): Ἀπέλλων, *Apellōn*; [Arcadocypriot](#): Ἀπειλῶν, *Apeilōn*; [Aeolic](#): Ἄπλων, *Aploun*; [Latin](#): *Apollō*) is one of the most important and complex of the [Olympian deities](#) in [classical Greek](#) and [Roman religion](#) and [Greek](#) and [Roman mythology](#). The ideal of the *kouros* (a beardless, athletic youth), Apollo has been variously recognized as a god of light and the sun, truth and prophecy, healing, plague, music, poetry, and more. Apollo is the son of [Zeus](#) and [Leto](#), and has a twin sister, the chaste huntress [Artemis](#). Apollo is known in Greek-influenced [Etruscan mythology](#) as *Apulu*.

As the patron of [Delphi](#) (*Pythian Apollo*), Apollo was an [oracular](#) god—the prophetic deity of the [Delphic Oracle](#). Medicine and healing are associated with Apollo, whether through the god himself or mediated through his son [Asclepius](#), yet Apollo was also seen as a god who could bring ill-health and deadly [plague](#). Amongst the god's custodial charges, Apollo became associated with dominion over [colonists](#), and as the patron defender of herds and flocks. As the leader of the [Muses](#) (*Apollon Musegetes*) and director of their choir, Apollo functioned as the patron god of music and poetry. [Hermes](#) created the [lyre](#) for him, and the instrument became a common [attribute of Apollo](#). Hymns sung to Apollo were called [paeans](#).

In Hellenistic times, especially during the 3rd century BCE, as *Apollon Helios* he became identified among Greeks with [Helios](#), [Titan god of the sun](#), and his sister Artemis similarly equated with [Selene](#), Titan [goddess of the moon](#).^[1] In Latin texts, on the other hand, [Joseph Fontenrose](#) declared himself unable to find any conflation of Apollo with [Sol](#) among the [Augustan poets](#) of the 1st century, not even in the conjurations of [Aeneas](#) and [Latinus](#) in *Aeneid* XII (161–215).^[2] Apollo and Helios/Sol remained separate beings in literary and mythological texts until the 3rd century CE.

Youth

Four days after his birth, Apollo killed the [chthonic](#) dragon [Python](#), which lived in [Delphi](#) beside the [Castalian Spring](#). This was the spring which emitted vapors that caused the oracle at Delphi to give her prophecies. Hera sent the serpent to hunt Leto to her death across the world. To protect his mother, Apollo begged [Hephaestus](#) for a bow and arrows. After receiving them, Apollo cornered Python in the sacred cave at Delphi.^[74] Apollo killed Python but had to be punished for it, since Python was a child of [Gaia](#).

Hera then sent the giant [Tityos](#) to kill Leto. This time Apollo was aided by his sister Artemis in protecting their mother. During the battle Zeus finally relented his aid and hurled Tityos down to [Tartarus](#). There he was pegged to the rock floor, covering an area of 9 acres (36,000 m²), where a pair of [vultures](#) feasted daily on his liver.

Niobe

[Niobe](#), the queen of [Thebes](#) and wife of [Amphion](#), boasted of her superiority to Leto because she had fourteen children ([Niobids](#)), seven male and seven female, while Leto had only two. Apollo killed her sons, and Artemis her daughters. Apollo and Artemis used poisoned arrows to kill them, though according to some versions of the myth, a number of the Niobids were spared ([Chloris](#), usually). Amphion, at the sight of his dead sons, either killed himself or was killed by Apollo after swearing revenge.

A devastated Niobe fled to [Mount Sipylus](#) in [Asia Minor](#) and turned into stone as she wept. Her tears formed the river [Achelous](#). Zeus had turned all the people of Thebes to stone and so no one buried the Niobids until the ninth day after their death, when the gods themselves entombed them.

(Source: Wikipedia. "Apollo.")

