

HEPHAESTUS

Hephaestus ([/hiˈfiːstəs/](#), [/həˈfɛstəs/](#) or [/hiˈfɛstəs/](#); [eight spellings](#); [Ancient Greek](#) Ἥφαιστος *Hēphaistos*) is the [Greek god](#) of [blacksmiths](#), [craftsmen](#), [artisans](#), [sculptors](#), [metals](#), [metallurgy](#), [fire](#) and [volcanoes](#).^[1] Hephaestus' [Roman](#) equivalent is [Vulcan](#). In Greek mythology, Hephaestus was the son of [Zeus](#) and [Hera](#), the king and queen of the gods.

As a smithing god, Hephaestus made all the weapons of the gods in Olympus. He served as the blacksmith of the gods, and was worshipped in the manufacturing and industrial centers of Greece, particularly [Athens](#). The cult of Hephaestus was based in [Lemnos](#).^[2] Hephaestus' symbols are a smith's [hammer](#), [anvil](#), and a pair of [tongs](#).

The craft of Hephaestus

Hephaestus had his own palace on Olympus, containing his workshop with anvil and twenty bellows that worked at his bidding.^[7] Hephaestus crafted much of the magnificent equipment of the gods, and almost any finely-wrought metalwork imbued with powers that appears in Greek myth is said to have been forged by Hephaestus. He designed [Hermes'](#) winged helmet and sandals, the [Aegis breastplate](#), [Aphrodite's](#) famed [girdle](#), [Agamemnon's](#) staff of office,^[8] [Achilles'](#) armor, [Heracles'](#) bronze [clappers](#), [Helios'](#) chariot, the shoulder of [Pelops](#), and [Eros'](#) bow and arrows. In later accounts, Hephaestus worked with the help of the [chthonic Cyclopes](#)—among them his assistants in the forge, Brontes, Steropes and Pyracmon.^{[9][10]}

Hephaestus also built [automatons](#) of metal to work for him. This included tripods that walked to and from [Mount Olympus](#). He gave to the blinded [Orion](#) his apprentice [Cedalion](#) as a guide. [Prometheus](#) stole the fire that he gave to man from Hephaestus's forge. Hephaestus also created the gift that the gods gave to man, the woman [Pandora](#) and her [pithos](#). Being a skilled blacksmith, Hephaestus created all the thrones in the Palace of Olympus.^[11]

Fall from Olympus

In one branch of Greek mythology, Hera ejected Hephaestus from the heavens because he was "shrivelled of foot". He fell into the ocean and was raised by [Thetis](#) (mother of Achilles) and the [Oceanid Eurynome](#).^[19]

In another account, Hephaestus, attempting to rescue his mother from Zeus' advances, was flung down from the heavens by Zeus. He fell for an entire day and landed on the island of [Lemnos](#), where he was cared for and taught to be a master craftsman by the [Sintians](#)—an ancient tribe native to that island.^[20] (Hom. Il. i. 590, &c. Val. Flacc. ii. 8.5; Apollod. i. 3. § 5, who, however, confounds the two occasions on which Hephaestus was thrown from Olympus.) Later writers describe his lameness as the consequence of his second fall, while Homer makes him lame and weak from his birth.

Hephaestus and Aphrodite

Hephaestus, being the most unfaltering of the gods, was given Aphrodite's hand in marriage by Zeus to prevent conflict over her between the other gods. The gods were fighting over her so much, they feared that they would lose their peace with one another and go to war on the other gods.

Hephaestus and Aphrodite had an arranged marriage, and Aphrodite, disliking the idea of being married to the unsightly Hephaestus, began an affair with Ares, the god of war.

(Source: Wikipedia. "Hephaestus.")

