

Topic Page: [Hephaestus \(Greek deity\)](#)

Definition: **Hephaestus** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Ancient Greek god of fire and crafts. Son of Zeus and Hera, he is equivalent to the Roman Vulcan. Blacksmith and armourer to the Olympian gods, with a forge under Etna, he is depicted as crippled and uncouth.



Image from:

[Hephaestus, god of fire, bronzework, and... in Encyclopedia of Disability](#)

Summary Article: **Hephaestus**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

In Greek mythology, the god of fire and metalcraft (Roman **Vulcan**); the lame son of Zeus and Hera; and in Homer's *Odyssey*, husband of Aphrodite, goddess of love. He created armour for the Greek hero Achilles, Harmonia's magic necklace, and other objects famed in legend.

Myth According to Homer, Hephaestus was born lame and thrown down from Olympus by Hera immediately after birth. Rescued by the sea goddesses Eurynome and Thetis, he dwelt in their undersea grotto for nine years before returning to Olympus. He was then hurled earthwards a second time by Zeus, for taking his mother's part in a quarrel. He fell for a whole day, landed in the evening on the island of Lemnos, but returned to Olympus once more. Later writers attributed his lameness to this fall.

His workshop contained an anvil and 20 pairs of bellows which worked spontaneously at his bidding. It was originally sited in his palace in Olympus, where he was said to have made all the palaces of the gods, but later accounts placed the forge beneath various volcanoes.

In Homer's *Iliad*, Charis was depicted as the wife of Hephaestus, while according to the later Greek poet Hesiod, she was the goddess Aglaia, youngest of the three Graces.

Worship His original place of worship was probably Mount Olympus in Lycia, where natural gases still escape from the soil. The cult spread to other places in Asia Minor and to some islands, notably Lemnos. It reached Athens in about 600 BC, but did not appear to penetrate further into mainland Greece. He was also adopted in volcanic regions; for instance from the Lipari Islands, the cult spread to Sicily and parts of Campania.

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