

POSEIDON



MYTHOLOGICAL GODS!

Where's the party?



A Look-It-Up Guide to the Gods of Mythology

MEGAN E. BRYANT

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CONTENT CONSULTANT

William Hansen
Professor Emeritus of Classical Studies and Folklore
Indiana University, Bloomington

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POSEIDON

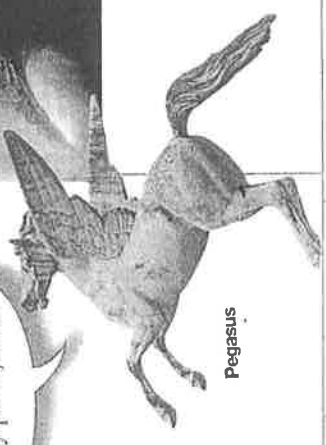
ALL WASHED UP

I'm so blue today. I have to get out of this funk. Should I sink a ship? I could flood a city, but I promised Zeus I wouldn't do that anymore. Cause a drought? No, it takes too long to see the effects. Earthquakes are fun—or I could send a sea monster to land!

Maybe I'll just find a new girlfriend. After all, who can resist *me*, the god of the sea?

I feel an earthquake coming on.

Go to your happy place, Dad!



Pegasus

REALITY CHECK
The 2006 movie *Poseidon* is about a luxury ocean liner named SS *Poseidon* that is capsized by a 150-foot rogue wave in the middle of the ocean on New Year's Eve. What happens next? You'll have to see for yourself!
Want to know more? Go to: www.10min.com

Profile of Poseidon

Sounds Like: put-sle'-don

Roman Name: Neptune

Aliases: Equester, Hippius, Seisichthon

Generation: Titan
 Olympian
 Other

Divine Powers: God of the sea, earthquakes, and horses

Attributes: Bull
Chariot
Coral palace
Dolphin
Horse
Trident

Top 10 Things to Know About Me:

1. My dad, Cronus, swallowed my siblings and me (except for Zeus).
2. When I'm in a bad mood, look out for floods, earthquakes, and stormy seas!
3. After Zeus, I'm the most powerful god.
4. Athena and I competed for the patronage of the city of Athens. She won so it was named after her.
5. I was part of a plot to overthrow Zeus. He punished me with a year of hard labor.
6. Demeter turned into a mare to escape me, so I turned into a stallion and attacked her.
7. I created the first horse.
8. The king of Troy tried to cheat me so I sent a monster to attack his city!
9. I had many love affairs and lots of children.
10. Amphitrite didn't want to marry me but my pal Delphinus convinced her to. I was so grateful that I turned her into a constellation—the Dolphin.

Family, Flings, Friends, and Foes

▼ Parents
Cronus and Rhea

▼ Siblings
Zeus

Hades

Demeter

Hera

Persephone

▼ Spouse
Amphitrite

▼ Offspring
Triton

Orion

Pegasus

▼ Flings
Medusa

Demeter

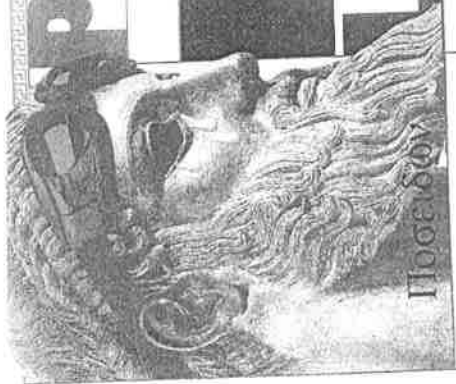
Thetis

▼ Friends
Apollo

Delphinus

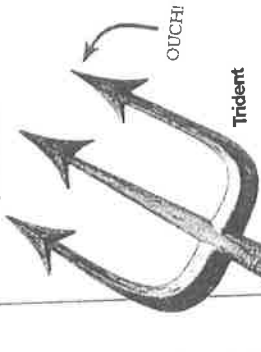
▼ Foes
Athena

The Trojans



POSEIDON "Water, water, everywhere." ENCYCLOPEDIA

"Watch out for my bad moods, dudes!"



IT'S GREEK TO ME

After the Olympians defeated the Titans in the ten-year battle known as the Titanomachy, Zeus and his brothers Hades and Poseidon drew lots to decide which realm each would rule. Zeus became the ruler of the heavens; Hades, the Underworld; and Poseidon, the sea. The three shared rule of the earth.

HORSING AROUND

Horses are sacred to the god of the sea. Poseidon, the god of the sea, was also the god of horses. According to one story, Poseidon and the goddess Athena competed to win patronage of (and naming rights to) the city of Athens. Poseidon invented the horse, although other stories say he gave the city a useless fountain. However, Athena invented the olive tree, which was deemed far more useful to the city since it provided food, oil, and wood for burning. So she was awarded the patronage and Athens was named for her. In another story, Poseidon was enamored of the goddess Demeter, who



Has anyone seen my snooker?

transformed herself into a mare in an attempt to run away from him. Poseidon then transformed himself into a stallion to capture her. The two became the parents of the winged horse Pegasus. Poseidon also mated with the Gorgon Medusa before she was turned into a hideous monster. Later, when the hero Perseus killed Medusa, the winged horse Pegasus sprang from her severed neck.



Sea Monster

GROUCH OF THE SEA

Moody Poseidon sets out for revenge.

Poseidon was one of the groddiest, most spiteful gods of Olympus. When he was in a foul mood, Poseidon enjoyed turning up terrible storms at sea, or sending floods to destroy the land. When the city of Athens chose Athena over Poseidon as its patron, he got even by sending a flood.

After Zeus forbade him to flood any more cities, Poseidon found new ways to get revenge, such as drying up rivers and streams, causing terrible droughts, or sending earthquakes. Poseidon was even involved in a plot to overthrow Zeus—a BIG mistake. Zeus punished Poseidon by forcing him to do hard labor,

Poseidon's Quick and Easy Everyday Revenge Ideas!

Floods: Fast, easy, and catastrophic!

Horrible storms: So simple—just a swirl of my trident and the seas start churning. One hour prep.

Droughts: Easy to cause, but you've got to be patient to see the results.

Sea monster attack: Send in the monsters, then watch the people scream and run!

Sinking ships: No explanation necessary!

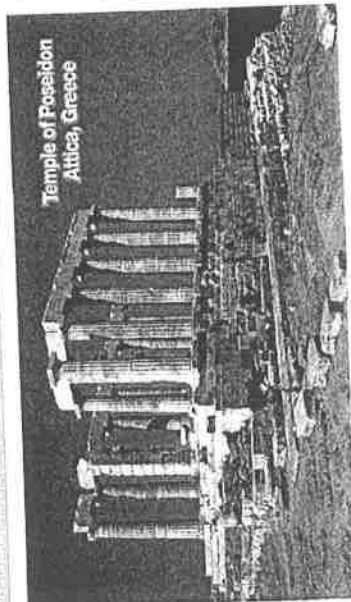
MONSTER CONNECTION

The god of the sea has many associations with monsters.

All sea monsters were part of Poseidon's domain, and he enjoyed sending them to terrorize humans. Because he had been caught with a beauty named Medusa in one of Athena's temples, the angry goddess turned Medusa into one of the most hideous creatures of all time.

Poseidon fathered many amazing offspring, including the winged horses Pegasus and Arion. His romance with the sea nymph Scylla resulted in her transformation into a monster. She had been a lovely sea nymph when Poseidon fell in love with her. But his wife, Amphitrite, put a stop to their affair by turning Scylla into a hideous monster with six dog heads and twelve dog legs. Scylla spent the rest of her life attacking ships and eating sailors.





Temple of Poseidon
Attica, Greece

CITY SLICKER

The world's water isn't enough for Poseidon.

Poseidon was the god of the sea but that didn't mean he wasn't a serious force to be reckoned with on land. In fact, the sea god was very interested in what happened on land. He competed with Athena for patronage of Athens, creating the first horse (or fountain) in an attempt to win the city.

According to some stories, Poseidon struck his trident in the ground, creating an impressive geyser of water—but since it was salt water, it was undrinkable and useless to the people of Athens.

Poseidon was also frequently involved in battles with other gods for control of islands. He fought Hera for Argolis; when he lost, he dried up all the rivers in

the area. He battled with Dionysus for the island of Naxos. He also fought against Helios for Corinth, and was granted control of the **isthmus**. Poseidon even fought against the great Zeus for the island of Aegina!

REALITY CHECK

The nation of Greece is made up of over 6,000 islands. Only 227 are inhabited.



many islands

“Islands in the ocean should be mine, all mine!”

LOVE UNDER THE SEA: PRINCESS IN CHAINS

Poseidon's bride-to-be can run, hero thwarts Poseidon's but she can't hide forever! Plans.

Like his brother Zeus, Poseidon had many loves. His first love was a sea **nymp**h, Thetis, who was one of the Nereids. Poseidon was desperate to marry her—until he heard a **prophecy** that Thetis's son would be greater than his father. Suddenly, Thetis was not such an appealing match, so Poseidon turned his attention to another Nereid, Thetis's sister Amphitrite. But Amphitrite wanted nothing to do with the moody, bullying sea god. She hid from him so well that not even the powerful Poseidon could find her. A dolphin named Delphinus tracked down Amphitrite, convinced her to marry Poseidon, and then brought her back to the sea god. Amphitrite and Poseidon were promptly wed, and Poseidon was so grateful to Delphinus that he placed him among the stars as the Dolphin constellation.



Poseidon

monster unless Andromeda was sacrificed.

To end the siege of Ethiopia, the princess was chained to a cliff by the sea and left there to die. Lucky for her, the hero Perseus rescued her and turned Cetus into stone, using the **severed** head of the Gorgon Medusa. Later, the hero and the princess were married and became king and queen of the Greek city of Tiryns.

Perseus turns a sea monster to stone.



Perseus

Cetus

Andromeda

“Nereids, Oceanads—who Naiads—who can keep them all straight?”

WIDE WORLD OF WATER

Even Poseidon needs a little help ruling the world's waters.

With a planet covered by bodies of water, including thousands of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and oceans,

Poseidon relied on many less powerful **deities** to help him control them all. There were many

sea nymphs: Nereids, the daughters of Nereus and Doris, were found in Mediterranean waters; Naiads presided over

freshwater streams and springs; and Oceanids were found in salt waters like the oceans. A river god ruled each river. If a river or

stream dried up, the nymph or god associated with it would die, which made Poseidon's punishment of drought all the more

dangerous.

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Poseidon

Poseidon, «*puh SY duhn*», was the Greek god of the sea, earthquakes, and horses. The Romans identified him with their god Neptune. Poseidon was the son of Rhea and Cronus, members of a race of gods called the Titans. The gods Zeus and Hades were Poseidon's brothers. When the three brothers drew lots to divide the universe, Poseidon received the sea as his domain, Zeus the heavens, and Hades the underworld. All three brothers ruled the earth, but Zeus was in charge.



Picture
Greek gods
Poseidon and
Apollo

Poseidon's wife was the sea goddess Amphitrite. They had two daughters and a son, the sea god Triton. Poseidon's offspring from countless love affairs included the magical horses Pegasus and Arion and the giants Antaeus and the one-eyed Polyphemus. In the epic poem the *Odyssey*, Poseidon hated the Greek hero Odysseus (Ulysses in Latin) for blinding Polyphemus. In some myths, Poseidon was also the father of the mortal hero Theseus.

Poseidon's attendants were the sea gods Phorcys, Proteus, and Nereus, and sea nymphs called *Nereids*. Like other sea deities, Poseidon often changed his shape. He drove a horse-drawn chariot and carried a three-pronged spear called a *trident*.

Contributor:

- Nancy Felson, Ph.D., Professor of Classics, University of Georgia.

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Poseidon

The legendary Greek god of water as well as an Olympian god, Poseidon's name could be interpreted as "lord of the earth" or "husband of the earth." Poseidon was the son of the Titan gods Cronos and Rhea, the brother of Hades and Zeus, and husband to Amphitrite. In different traditions, Poseidon varied from being the older or younger brother of Zeus. Poseidon was known for carrying a trident and was often depicted with dolphins or fish. He was identified with the Italian god Neptune.



Since Zeus was the chief Olympian god, Poseidon was often regarded as the oldest son, especially during classical period mythology. Once Cronos was deposed by his sons, Poseidon became the ruler of the ocean, and he could then calm water or cause storms. Despite his association with the ocean, many ancient sites of worship dedicated to Poseidon were inland, as Poseidon was also believed to be a god of freshwater, and therefore springs, pools, streams, or cleft rocks were connected with him. Poseidon was not a god of rivers, however, as other deities individually controlled their own rivers.

Poseidon was also revered as a god of earthquakes, and it was believed that he could cause coastal landslides by waving his trident. Poseidon was associated with horses. Scholars believe that the earliest people who brought horses to Greece were responsible for introducing the worship of Poseidon to the land.

Poseidon fathered many children. Most were giants or such monsters as Polyphemus, a Cyclops who was blinded by Odysseus. Two sons of Poseidon, Neleus and Pelias, became the ancestors of two royal families, located in Messenia and Thessaly. Some traditions state that Poseidon was the father of the hero Theseus. With Medusa, Poseidon produced the winged horse Pegasus. Poseidon was married to the Nereid Amphitrite, but they did not have any children together.

The Isthmia, located near the Isthmus of Corinth, was the sanctuary dedicated to Poseidon. The Isthmian Games were held there in his honor, and the Greeks competed in athletic events. In the fifth century BCE, near Sunium in Attica, boat races in honor of Poseidon were also held every four years. He was also known to be worshipped in many areas throughout Arcadia and Boeotia.

Poseidon often lost contests to other gods. For example, he lost the particular worship of such towns as Aegina to Zeus, Naxos to Dionysus, and Delphi to Apollo. A famous myth concerning such contests was the dispute between Poseidon and Athena over Athens, which also left Poseidon defeated.

Animals sacrificed to Poseidon were bulls or stallions and sometimes horses. In Greek art, depictions of Poseidon are sometimes identical to depictions of Zeus, unless such identifiers as sea creatures or a trident accompany them to make a distinction. Often, Poseidon was illustrated riding in a chariot pulled by creatures that were half serpent, half horse.

Poseidon had a long history with Troy, as he was said to have helped in the construction of the Trojan walls, but

when he was not paid the prearranged salary, he sent a sea-monster to attack Troy. Thereafter, Poseidon became antagonistic towards Troy; however, he saved the Trojan warrior Aeneas before Achilles could kill him.

Poseidon was equated with the Italic god of freshwater, Neptune. Once Neptune was linked with Poseidon, he also became god of the sea. Because of his association with both fresh and salt water, he was considered the patron of water travel. A festival dedicated to Neptune, the Neptunalia, occurred on July 23. Scholars believe the purpose of the event was to pray for water during the hottest times of the year. There remains evidence of worship to Neptune in Rome before 399 BCE, and there also was a temple dedicated to him in the Circus Flaminius in Rome.

Further Reading

Rose, Herbert Jennings. *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: An Introduction to Greek Mythology*. New York: New American Library, 1976.

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