

LGBTQ+ Representation in Greek Mythological

APOLLO

Apollo was the god of the sun. He was said to have had the first same-sex relationship in Greek history with the Thracian singer Thamyris. He went on to be the lover of the prince of Macedonia, Prince Hyacinthos. In the world of the Greek gods, he married the Greek god of marriage, Hymen, in a same-sex union.



ARTEMIS

The twin sister to Apollo, Artemis was the goddess of the hunt. By some accounts, she was an asexual virgin. However, others believed her to be a lesbian with several nymph and goddess lovers. Ancient gay and lesbian Greeks worshipped her as Artemis Orthia, a symbol of the LGBTQ+ community.

ZEUS

Zeus was god of thunder and lightning and ruled over all of the Greek gods. He was infamous for having sexual relations with various women, producing many offspring. However, he also maintained a sexual relationship with a young mortal boy named Ganymede. This relationship represented the ancient Greek custom of "paiderastia," where men would have erotic relationships with adolescent boys on the side.



HERMAPHRODITUS

The child of Hermes and Aphrodite was approached as a child by the nymph Salmacis, who attempted to seduce the child and asked the gods for their forms to be permanently joined. The result transformed Hermaphroditus into an intersex person, often depicted in art as having womanly breasts and form but with male genitalia. They are perhaps the earliest literary reference to an intersex person.

HERCULES

Hercules is said to have had several male companions that helped him along his many adventures, such as Lolaus who helped him defeat Hydra, the nine-headed snake monster. This relationship was enshrined in Thebes, where ancient Greek male couples would exchange vows and pledges with their same-sex partner.



APHRODITE

Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty. While most famous for maintaining a relationship with Ares, the god of war, she also had several erotic relationships with women. Many considered her to be one of the greatest allies to lesbians and homosexuals due to her message of love and beauty in all of its forms. The phrase "love is love" could have originated with her.