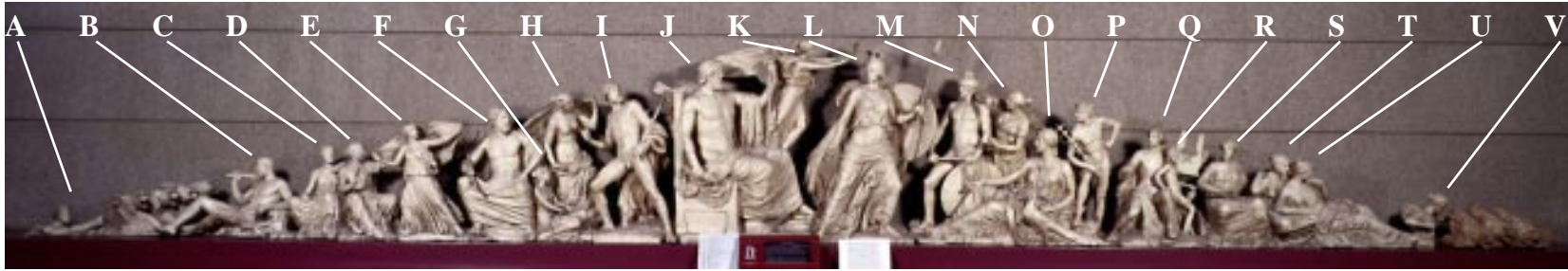


East Pediment

The model of the east pediment sculpture depicts the myth of the birth of the goddess *Athena*. *Zeus*, the god of the sky and ruler of the gods, began to suffer with a terrible headache which grew progressively worse. The other gods asked *Zeus'* son *Hephaestus*, blacksmith of the gods, if he would try to cure *Zeus'* headache. *Hephaestus* hurled his ax into *Zeus'* skull and split his head open. This did not hurt *Zeus* because he was immortal. *Athena* leapt out of *Zeus'* head fully grown and completely armored. The only one of the Olympians who was not afraid and understood the importance of this birth was the goddess of victory, *Nike*. She came forward to crown *Athena* with a laurel wreath, symbol of victory.



A HELIOS - The God of the sun who drives his chariot through the sky, pulled by steeds representing the four seasons. Preceded by his sister *Eos*, the "rosy fingered dawn" of Homer, he replaces his other sister *Selene*, the goddess of the moon.

B DIONYSUS - Contemporary scholars identify this figure as the God of wine and revelry. *Dionysus'* mother, *Semele*, was killed due to *Hera's* cunning, forcing *Zeus* to snatch *Dionysus* from her body and thrust him into his thigh from which he was later birthed. Older texts identify him as *Herakles*, half mortal, half divine, son of *Zeus* and *Alkmene*, best known for performing twelve seemingly impossible labors. Usually identified by his club and a lion skin cloak.

C PERSEPHONE - Daughter of *Demeter*. She was abducted by *Hades* to be his queen in the underworld. Because *Persephone* had tasted the food of the dead, she was forced to return to *Hades* for several months each year, during time *Demeter* again makes the earth barren.

D DEMETER - Goddess of grains and fertility, sometimes associated with Mother Earth. She refused to let any grains grow until *Hades* returned her daughter, *Persephone*. Usually portrayed fully clothed, holding grain.

E IRIS - Goddess of the rainbow, and a messenger for the Gods, particularly *Hera*.

F POSEIDON - God of the sea, horses and earthquakes. He, *Zeus*, and *Hades* are brothers who chose their domain by lot. Usually represented with a full beard and thick long hair. Always represented holding his trident, the three-pronged spear which calms or agitates the waves.

G HEBE - Goddess of youth who was first a cup bearer to the gods. Daughter of *Zeus* and *Hera*. Wife of *Herakles*.

H APHRODITE - Goddess of Love. She was the wife of *Hephaestus*. Commonly portrayed with either a golden apple or her son, *Eros*, god of love.

I HEPHAESTOS - God of time, metal working and the forge. Husband of *Aphrodite*. He was the only God portrayed with a physical abnormality - he was lame. He is usually shown at work, with his hammer or with a crutch.

J ZEUS - King of the Olympian Gods. Husband of *Hera*, notoriously unfaithful. *Athena* was birthed from his head after he had swallowed her mother *Metis*, to prevent her from birthing a son that would overthrow him.

K NIKE - Goddess of Victory. She was the only one of the Olympians to recognize *Athena* at

birth and is portrayed here in the act of placing a laurel wreath upon *Athena's* brow.

L ATHENA - Goddess of wisdom, warfare and the useful arts. Patron Goddess of Athens. Was born from *Zeus'* head fully grown and armored after *Hephaestus* struck *Zeus* in the head with his axe to relieve *Zeus'* headache. Animals sacred to her are the owl, the deer, and the snake.

M ARES - God of War. He is said to be quarrelsome, fickle in allegiance, blood-thirsty and crude yet is one of *Aphrodite's* favorites. Usually seen with armor, spear, shield, burning brand, vultures, or carrion dogs.

N ARTEMIS - Goddess of chastity, the moon and the hunt. *Apollo's* twin sister. Known by her bow, quiver of arrows, hunting dogs, stag and crescent- moon crown.

O HERA - Goddess of marriage and childbirth. Wife and sister of *Zeus*. Mother of *Ares*, *Hephaestus*, *Hebe*, and *Ilithyia* by him.

P HERMES - Messenger to the gods, particularly *Zeus*. He protects travelers and mediates disputes. Known by his *caduceus* (winged staff with twining snakes) traveler's cap or winged sandals.

Q APOLLO - God of music, civilization and light (in the intellectual sense), and like his twin sister *Artemis*, a renowned archer. Portrayed frequently with a laurel wreath on his head, holding his bow, or playing his lyre. Physically graceful and athletic.

R GANYMEDE - Cup bearer to the Gods. He was a beautiful young prince of Troy who was abducted to serve the Olympians. He was given eternal youth and immortality as compensation.

S,T,U - Originally identified as the three Fates, the ultimate powers over individual destiny: *Clotho* (S) spins the thread of life, *Lachesis* (T) measures it, and *Atropos* (U) cuts it. The British Museum has re-identified these figures as *Hestia* (S), goddess of the hearth; *Dione* (T), cult partner and consort of *Zeus*, mother of *Aphrodite*; and *Aphrodite* (U), mentioned above.

V SELENE - The goddess of the moon, sister of *Helios*. She is driving four steeds who represent the four seasons. She was responsible for moving the planets through the sky with her chariot.

