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Apollo

 William Shakespeare said it best when he wrote, “The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo” (“Apollo Quotes”). The god of musicians, Apollo, was one of the most famous gods of his time (“Greek Gods and Goddesses”). Most Americans recognize the name Apollo from the many missions to the moon, but Apollo was a rare god who transcended both Greek and Roman Mythology.

 Apollo was one of the many sons of the Greek God Zeus and his lover Leto. He also had a twin sister named Artemis (Gill). As Apollo was also known in the Roman world, his parents were knows as Jupiter and Latona and his sister Venus (“The God Apollo”). Unlike many of the other male gods, Apollo did not have much of a family life. He never married, although he fathered many sons. One of his sons was the god of healing, Asclepius (Gill). Asclepius’ birth is a famous one in Greek Mythology, because his jealous father became enraged when he found out that Asclepius’ mother, Coronis, was engaged. He decided to punish her by burning her to death, even though she was pregnant. Luckily, Apollo was able to rescue Asclepius before he died. (Thomas). Despite his violent tendencies, he was well loved by the Greeks and Romans.

 Just like the other gods, Apollo was put in charge of a variety of areas. According to Robert Gill, “Apollo is a many-talented Greek god of prophecy, music, intellectual pursuits, healing, plague, and sometimes, the sun” (“The God Apollo”). As he was the god of music, he was often seeing carrying instruments, such as a lyre (Thomas). In terms of special powers, Apollo did not have as many as other gods. While he was the god of healing, he could also bring illness. According to the article “The God of Apollo,” “Apollo carried an arrow that could bring the plague to any city” (Gill). Just like his father, Apollo had a nasty temper!

 When looking at pictures of the Greek god Apollo, he shares a resemblance to his Roman counterpart. Most pictures show Apollo was a “beardless young man” (“Apollo”). He was often depicted carrying a silver bow and a lyre (Thomas). According to Dan Hunterton, “Apollo is the Sun God and he is often painted as having curly blonde hair and blue eyes” (“The Sun God”). As previously mentioned, Apollo had a bit of a nasty temper. He was known to be jealous, vindictive and cruel (Gill). While well-loved among the greeks, he was not loved by the goddesses (Thomas)!

 Apollo is usually associated with quite a few objects and animals. Some of his objects include: “the tripod, omphalos, lyre, bow and arrows” (Thomas). As for animals, Apollo is often associated with a hawk, raven, crow, swan, fawn, roe, snake, mouse, grasshopper and griffin (Gill). All of these objects and items are associated with both the Greek and Roman version of Apollo (Thomas).

 Many interesting stories are associated with the God Apollo. The Greeks used to associate him with the rising and setting of the Sun. The Greeks believed that “Apollo would tie the Sun to his chariot and drag the Sun across the Earth in the morning and evening” (Thomas). Once, Apollo infuriated his father Zeus because he attacked a Cyclops with a lightning bolt in retaliation for Zeus’ attack on Asclepius. Zeus was so infuriated with his son, that he punished him to a year of hard labor (“The God Apollo”).

 In our modern World, the name Apollo has appeared quite often. NASA used the name Apollo for the Apollo Space Missions that ran from 1963-1972. The famous Apollo 13 mission is one that many Americans often remember (Gill). Apollo also made a famous appearance in a Star Trek episode where he aimed to “find followers to worship him” (“The God Apollo”). While he may not have been as famous as his father, his legacy still lives on today.

 In conclusion, Apollo was a rare god who was known to both the Greeks and the Romans. His stories still exist today and his temple still stands in Greece (Gill). Next time the Sun rises or you listen to a song, try to think of the god who inspired that. As Matthew Arnold wrote “Tis Apollo comes leading/his choir, the Nine/the leader is fairest/but we are all divine” (“Apollo Quotes”).

Works Cited

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