A96-Roman-Figurine-Female-Vestia-Standing-Terracotta-3rd cent CE



Fig. 1. Roman-Figurine-Female-Vestia-Standing-Terracotta-3rd cent CE

**Case No.: 4**

**Accession Number: A96**

**Formal Label :** Roman-Figurine-Female-Vestia-Standing-Terracotta-3rd cent CE

**Display Description:**

This Roman Figurine of a Female in terracotta dating to the 3rd cent CE suggests an image of Vestia, the household goddess that maintains stability at home in an era of great religious and cultural turmoil. Her origin is to be sought in Ancient Greek religion’s **Hestia** (Ἑστία, "hearth" or "fireside") a virgin goddess of the hearth, architecture, and the right ordering of domesticity, the family, the home, and the state. In Greek mythology, she is a daughter of Cronus and Rhea.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-Graves-1)

Hestia received the first offering at every sacrifice in the household. In the public domain, the hearth of the [*prytaneum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prytaneum) functioned as her official sanctuary. With the establishment of a new colony, flame from Hestia's public hearth in the mother city would be carried to the new [settlement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonies_in_antiquity). Her Roman equivalent is [Vesta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesta_%28mythology%29).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-Lar-2)

Hestia's name means "hearth, fireplace, altar",[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-3) the [*oikos*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oikos), the household, house, or family. "An early form of the temple is the hearth house; the early temples at [Dreros](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreros) and [Prinias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prinias) on Crete are of this type as indeed is the temple of [Apollo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo) at [Delphi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi) which always had its inner *hestia*"[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-4) The Mycenaean great hall (*[megaron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megaron" \o "Megaron)*), like [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer)'s hall of [Odysseus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odysseus) at Ithaca, had a central hearth. Likewise, the hearth of the later Greek [*prytaneum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prytaneum) was the community and government's ritual and secular focus.

Hestia's name and functions show the hearth's importance in the social, religious, and political life of ancient Greece. It was essential for warmth, food preparation, and the completion of sacrificial offerings to deities; in the latter, Hestia was the "customary recipient of a preliminary, usually cheap, sacrifice". She was also offered the first and last libations of wine at feasts.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-5) Her own sacrificial animal was a domestic pig.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-6) The accidental or negligent extinction of a domestic hearth-fire represented a failure of domestic and religious care for the family; failure to maintain Hestia's public fire in her temple or shrine was a breach of duty to the broad community. A hearth fire might be deliberately, ritually extinguished at need, and its lighting or relighting should be accompanied by rituals of completion, purification and renewal, comparable with the rituals and connotations of an [eternal flame](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_flame) and of [sanctuary lamps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctuary_lamp). At the level of the [*polis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polis), the hearths of Greek [colonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonies_in_antiquity) and their mother cities were allied and sanctified through Hestia's cult. Hestia's nearest Roman equivalent, [Vesta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesta_%28mythology%29), had similar functions as a divine personification of Rome's "public", domestic, and colonial hearths, and bound Romans together within a form of extended family. The similarity of names between Hestia and Vesta is, however, misleading: "The relationship *hestia-histie-Vesta* cannot be explained in terms of [Indo-European](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-European_studies) linguistics; borrowings from a third language must also be involved," according to [Walter Burkert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Burkert).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-7)

**LC Classification:** NB150.R57

**Date or Time Horizon:** 3rd cent CE

**Geographical Area: Rome area**



**Map: of Rome. From http://latitude.to/lat/41.90270/lng/12.49624/place/Metropolitan%20City%20of%20Rome%2C%20Italy**

**GPS Coordinates:** 41º54'9.72" N 12º29'46.45" E

**Cultural Affiliation:** Roman Empire

**Geographical Area: Rome**

**Medium:** Terracotta

**Dimensions**: H 123.27 mm, 4.853 in  
**Weight:** 74 g, 2 5/8 oz

**Provenance: old English Collection**

**Condition: original**

**Discussion:** Responsibility for Hestia's domestic cult usually fell to the leading woman of the household, sometimes to a man. Hestia's rites at the hearths of public buildings were usually led by holders of civil office; [Dionysius of Halicarnassus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysius_of_Halicarnassus) testifies that the [*prytaneum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prytaneum) of a Greek state or community was sacred to Hestia, who was served by the most powerful state officials.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-8) Evidence of her priesthoods is extremely rare. Most stems from the early Roman Imperial era, when [Sparta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparta) offers several examples of women with the priestly title "Hestia"; [Chalcis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalcis) offers one, a daughter of the local elite. Existing civic cults to Hestia probably served as stock for the grafting of Greek [ruler-cult](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_cult_%28ancient_Rome%29#Greek) to the Roman emperor, the Imperial family and Rome itself. In Athens, a small seating section at the [Theatre of Dionysus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_Dionysus) was reserved for priesthoods of "Hestia on the [Acropolis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis), [Livia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livia), and [Julia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julia_the_Elder)", and of "Hestia Romaion" ("Roman Hestia", thus "The Roman Hearth" or Vesta). A priest at [Delos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delos) served "Hestia the Athenian [Demos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_rhetorical_terms#Demos)" (the people or state) "and [Roma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roma_%28mythology%29)". An eminent citizen of [Carian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caria) [Stratoniceia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stratonicea_%28Caria%29) described himself as a priest of Hestia and several other deities, as well as holding several civic offices. Hestia's political and civic functions are further evidenced by her very numerous privately funded dedications at civic sites, and the administrative rather than religious titles used by the lay-officials involved in her civic cults.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hestia#cite_note-9)

**Notes**

* 1. *Graves, Robert. "The Palace of Olympus". Greek Gods and Heroes.*
  2. Hughes, James. (1995). *Larousse Desk Reference Encyclopedia*, p. 215. Larousse/[The Book People](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_People).
  3. [R. S. P. Beekes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_S._P._Beekes), *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill, 2009, p. 471.
  4. Burkert, p. 61.
  5. [Homeric Hymn 29, tr. Evelyn-White, Hugh G.](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0138%3Ahymn%3D29:Perseus)
  6. Bremmer, Jan. N., in Ogden, D. (Ed). (2010). *A Companion to Greek Religion*, Wiley-Blackwell, [googlebooks preview, p.134](https://books.google.com/books?id=yOQtHNJJU9UC&pg=PA134&lpg=PA134&dq=%22+customary+recipient+of+a+preliminary,+usually+cheap,+sacrifice%22&source=bl&ots=hd5eMvPrAG&sig=iUdQ31aBlBEPUYOy9AmfEPdy0IE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CCt8T4__KsSG8gPEhYiaDQ&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22%20customary%20recipient%20of%20a%20preliminary%2C%20usually%20cheap%2C%20sacrifice%22&f=false), [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [978-1-4443-3417-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/978-1-4443-3417-3)
  7. Burkert, p. 415, 3.3.1 n. 2.
  8. Kajava, p. 5.
  9. Kajava, pp. 1, 3, 5.
  10. [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod), [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony) [453 ff.](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0020.tlg001.perseus-eng1:453-491)
  11. Kereny, p. 91
  12. [*"Homeric Hymns, To Aphrodite"*](http://www.theoi.com/Text/HomericHymns3.html)*.*
  13. Kajava, pp. 1–2.
  14. Dorter, K. (1971). Imagery and Philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *9* (3), 279–288 (July 1971).
  15. Kereny, p. 92: "there is no story of Hestia's ever having taken a husband or ever having been removed from her fixed abode."
  16. Burkert, p. 170.
  17. Not so for every Greek in every generation, however: in *Odyssey* *14*, 432–436, the loyal swineherd [Eumaeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eumaeus) begin the feast for his master Odysseus by plucking tufts from a boar's head and throwing them into the fire with a prayer addressed to all the powers, then carved the meat into seven equal portions: "one he set aside, lifting up a prayer to the forest [nymphs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nymph) and [Hermes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermes), [Maia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maia_%28mythology%29)'s son." (Robert Fagles' translation).
  18. Kajava, p. 2.
  19. [*Hymn 24 to Hestia*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0138%3ahymn%3d24).
  20. [*Homeric Hymn*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeric_Hymns) *29, To Hestia* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/6/62/PD-icon.svg/15px-PD-icon.svg.png *This article incorporates text from this source, which is in the* [*public domain*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain)*.*
  21. [THE ORPHIC HYMN TO HESTIA](http://www.hellenicgods.org/orphic-hymn-to-hestia)
  22. Friedlander, Paul. (1945). *Documents of Dying Paganism*. University of California Press.
  23. This chart is based upon [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod)'s [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony), unless otherwise noted.
  24. According to [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer), [*Iliad*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliad) [1.570–579](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:1.570), [14.338](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:14.338), [*Odyssey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odyssey) [8.312](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1:8.312), Hephaestus was apparently the son of Hera and Zeus, see Gantz, p. 74.
  25. According to [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod), [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony) [927–929](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+927), Hephaestus was produced by Hera alone, with no father, see Gantz, p. 74.
  26. According to [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod), [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony) [886–890](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+886), of Zeus' children by his seven wives, Athena was the first to be conceived, but the last to be born; Zeus impregnated Metis then swallowed her, later Zeus himself gave birth to Athena "from his head", see Gantz, pp. 51–52, 83–84.
  27. According to [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod), [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony) [183–200](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+183), Aphrodite was born from Uranus' severed genitals, see Gantz, pp. 99–100.
  28. According to [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer), Aphrodite was the daughter of Zeus ([*Iliad*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliad) [3.374](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:3.374), [20.105](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:20.105); [*Odyssey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odyssey) [8.308](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1:8.308), [320](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1:8.320)) and Dione ([*Iliad*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliad) [5.370–71](http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:5.370)), see Gantz, pp. 99–100.

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* [Hesiod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesiod), [*Theogony*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theogony), in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica with an English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White*, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914. [Online version at the Perseus Digital Library](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0130%3Acard%3D1).
* [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer), *The Iliad with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, Ph.D. in two volumes*. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1924. [Online version at the Perseus Digital Library](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0134%3Abook%3D1%3Acard%3D1).
* [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer); *The Odyssey with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, PH.D. in two volumes*. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1919. [Online version at the Perseus Digital Library](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0136%3Abook%3D1%3Acard%3D1).
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