

THE CADUCEUS

Compiled by

Campbell M Gold

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Healing

The caduceus is a winged staff entwined with one or more snakes, which is derived from the rod of Asclepius, who was the son of the Greek God, Apollo.

The caduceus is an ancient symbol of healing, and the rod is often used in medical logos.



The rod of Asclepius and the caduceus

In Greek mythology, Asclepius was the god of medicine; and he had six daughters, *Hygieia*, *Aglea*, *Aceso*, *Laso*, *Meditrina*, and *Panacea* who symbolized cleanliness, healing, and medicine. "Panacea" means "all healing" and is a spiritual term which is still used today.

Asclepius was the son of Apollo and Coronis, who was raised by the centaur, Chiron, when his mother, Coronis, was executed for betrayal.

Moreover, it was Chiron who gave Asclepius his medical knowledge.

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The Herald's Staff

The caduceus is also a herald's staff, and is a symbol which represents Hermes (or the Roman Mercury), and by association it represents the trades, occupations or undertakings associated with this god.

Hermes (or Mercury) is depicted with wings on his sandals, and is therefore the speediest of all the gods. Because of his speed, Hermes was empowered with the role of messenger and of the conductor of souls to the Underworld.

Hermes was the only Olympian god who had the authority, symbolised in the caduceus, to visit Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld.



The Roman God, Mercury, holding the caduceus

The herald's symbol (caduceus) is typically depicted as a staff, often short, which is entwined by two serpents in the form of a double helix - the staff is often surmounted by wings.

The staff authorizes the bearer to gain entry everywhere (heaven, earth, and hell).



This staff was also borne by Iris, the messenger of Hera.

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