

## Explaining the painting “Hermes”

Hermes was the messenger of the ancient Greek gods. He is the god of commerce, wrestling, and other athletic contests, thieving, and everything requiring skill and dexterity. He wore a winged cap and always flew with winged boots. In one hand, he is holding a rod (caduceus) entwined with two serpents and wings. He was the inventor of the lyre. He produced it from a shell of tortoise by drilling holes in the opposite edges and drew cords of linen through them. He exchanged the lyre with Apollo, the sun god, for the caduceus.

**What you see:** A contemporary representation of the god on a typical messenger mission over imaginary Greek islands. The traditional male god is replaced by a goddess and his/her accessories are updated to current times, all as artistic freedom.

### The related symbols and hidden clues:

1. The word “Hermes” in Greek letters is depicted as several imaginary Greek islands.
2. Caduceus. The rod always carried by Hermes as a symbol of peace. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, it became the badge of heralds and ambassadors, signifying their inviolability. The rod had two snakes entwined in opposite direction with their head facing and a pair of wings, as a token of Hermes’ speed was attached to the staff above the snakes. Its similarity to the rod of Asclepius, the healer, resulted in modern times in the adoption of the caduceus as a symbol of the physician and the emblem of the US Army Medical Corps. In the painting, to ease energy demands for flying, the caduceus has its own two wind turbines on hinges for better capture of energy.
3. The planet of Mercury, closest to the sun is shown on the right. The planet is named after Mercurius, the Roman god of trade identified with Hermes. The Greeks called the planet the “Star of Hermes”.
4. A winged cap, the traditional symbol of the god, is assisted by two turbofan jet engines. The cap is also equipped with a satellite communication tower to enhance communication with Zeus, the chief Greek god and his boss and father.
5. The modern Hermes is also equipped with a cell phone in the left hand to improve short distance communication and a mobile compact computer (strapped to the left leg) to store information to be transmitted personally.
6. Winged boots are the most recognizable symbol of the god. To improve flying, the boots are assisted with 4 turbofan jet engines.
7. The lyre (on lower right), the musical instrument that he invented, is equipped with two small jet engines, self-supported by a wind turbine to ease energy requirements.
8. In the lower left side is the Hermai, a stone that marked roads and boundaries often adorned with the carved head of Hermes. In the painting, the distance to Athens is marked.

(This explanation was written in response to requests to explain this work.)