



Athena's Influence on Athens through the Analysis of Literary and Art Sources

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“Some of the words you'll find within yourself, the rest some power will inspire you to say.
You least of all – I know – were born and reared without the gods' good will.”

- Athena¹

Abstract: *The Greek's patron goddess Athena played a crucial role in shaping Athenian literature and art during the classical period. According to legend, Athena's invention of the olive tree triumphed over Poseidon's horse in a contest hosted by the Athenian king to decide on a patron for the city. To celebrate Athena's victory, a large acropolis was built in her honor during the fifth century, and she became the main goddess that was worshiped among the Olympians. Athena played an especially important role in the literature of classical sources such as Hesiod, Homer, and Solon. These Greek sources establish much of the reason why Athenians chose this goddess as the patron of their city. While Hesiod and Homer portray the origins and characteristics of Athena, Solon ties these classical sources together and gives a perception of an aspect of "Solonian Athena." Solon in particular explains how ancient Athenians comprehended the epic poetry of the two great poets. Following Solon, the artwork of ancient Athens came to complement the classical literary sources and as a result it offers a more profound window into how Athena's literature influenced many aspects of Athenian life.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, many great cities have emerged as landmarks that stand for innovation and development in their era, and arguably one of the best known is Athens. The leading city of ancient Greece was a democratic city that flourished with philosophers, poets, and politicians during the classical period, a period between 500 and 336 BC.² The city's achievements set the foundation for the further development of western civilization. During the development of the largest and most influential Greek city-state, its patron goddess Athena played a crucial role in shaping many aspects of Athenian life, and this influence is reflected most widely in its literature and art.³

Classical Greek literature is a valuable source for studying the impact of Athena on her patron city Athens because its portrayals of Athena serve as a foundation for the Athenian perspective on their patron goddess. In the classical period, the ancient Greeks experienced a golden age of flourishing and innovation that gave birth to many popular literature genres that have survived to this day. Many different genres, such as poetry, comedy, tragedy, and western philosophy, can be traced back to the time of the Greeks. As the historian Edith Hamilton summarizes,

Greek literature is not done in gray or with a low palette. It is all black and shining white or black and scarlet and gold. The Greeks were keenly aware, terribly aware of life's uncertainty and the imminence of death. Over and over again they emphasize the brevity and the failure of all human endeavor, the swift passing of all that is beautiful and joyful. [...] Joy and sorrow, exultation and tragedy, stand hand in hand in Greek literature, but there is no contradiction involved thereby.⁴

The descriptions of Athena as a protector who brings order and wisdom to Athens in Hesiod, Homer, and Solon illustrate and clarify the core reasons why Athenians would have viewed this particular goddess as the source of the city's cultural virtues. The wide presence of her character in these literary sources also points to the reasons behind her layered history in the daily life of Athenians in the classical period. This layered history is perhaps most visible in the prominent role that she plays in the material culture of Athenian art and architecture.

Greek art complements the picture of Athena in the literary sources in many respects because it gives insight into how Athena permeated many aspects of Athenian social life. Ancient Greek art exists in many forms, perhaps most notably in architecture, sculpture, painting, and pottery. After the defeat of

the Persians in 479 BC, Athens dominated Greece economically, politically, and culturally, and at its pinnacle of power, the Parthenon was built on the Athenian Acropolis in honor of their patron Athena.⁵ Many scholars regard the Parthenon as the finest example of Greek architecture. As John Julius Cooper emphasizes, “even in antiquity, its architectural refinements were legendary, especially the subtle correspondence between the curvature of the stylobate, the taper of the naos walls, and the entasis of the columns.”⁶ The ancient temple housed a variety of forms of art, especially sculptures and reliefs. On the east and west side of the temple, two sets of statues rise above the temple's gates. The two pediments depict two of the most famous myths concerning the goddess Athena found in Greek literary traditions.⁷ This paper will focus on various art forms—particularly vases, coins, reliefs, and statues—that in many ways reflect the literary depictions of Athena, and as a result further illuminate Athena's influence on Athens.

2. THE GODDESS ATHENA IN HESIOD

Though Hesiod is a less familiar name to the common reader when compared to other famous Greek authors such as Plato, Homer, and Aristotle, he nevertheless left a significant mark on Greek literature. This is perhaps most evident in his literary works known collectively as *Theogony* and *Works and Days*.⁸ These are both religious works that provide modern scholars with an insight into the life and society of archaic Greece. The Greek poet Hesiod thus offers valuable insights into the impact of Athena, especially by analyzing how the goddess is described in *Theogony*.

Hesiod's name, in fact, means “he who emits the voice.”⁹ Being active around the years 750 and 650 BC, he is often discussed with Homer, and there has been much controversy around who is the earlier poet.¹⁰ In the second century, the Roman playwright Lucius Accius proposed his case that Hesiod's works had preceded that of Homer.¹¹ While Accius centered his claims around Homeric assumptions predicated upon Hesiodic revelation, most modern investigations point toward the other way.

Epic narrative poetry makes dating poets like Hesiod challenging since there were very minimal personal revelations in such forms of literature. During his writing career, however, Hesiod composed several didactic poems intended to explore and teach various aspects of art, literature, and design. With the combination of these didactic poems and other works attributed to the great Greek poet, scholars have been able to piece together a general biographical background of the great poet. Hesiod's father was a native of the Aeolian port city of Cyme on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, and due to Economic deprivation, he was forced to resettle in the Boeotian village of Greece.¹² This place would later be made famous by the revolutionary author Hesiod.

When looking at Hesiod, his *Theogony* is the most helpful source when trying to examine the influence of Athena on her patron city Athens. Hesiod's *Theogony* is a collection of poems initially written in the epic dialect of Ancient Greek during the 8th-7th century BC, and its content mostly explains the origins and genealogy of the Greek gods. Considered the first known Greek mythical cosmogony, it is often used as a sourcebook for referencing Greek mythology.¹³

The context of Athena's birth story must be first discussed in order to fully understand the myth since the identities and status of each of the characters in the myth are essential. In lines 800-886, Hesiod depicts the difficult success of Zeus over the Titans, claiming the throne of Olympus and becoming the “king and lord of the immortals.”¹⁴ Here, Hesiod first establishes the power and significance of Zeus, and it is this status of Zeus that makes up an exceedingly important aspect of Athena. Then, the birth story begins with the following: the first thing Zeus does as king is to make Metis, an Oceanid that helped Zeus overthrow Kronos (The leader of the Titans), his “first wife.”¹⁵ In *Theogony*, Metis was known as the Titan-goddess of good counsel and “the wisest among gods and mortal men.”¹⁶ The background of the two parents of Athena played a significant role in Athena becoming the goddess of wisdom and war, as her father, Zeus, is the most powerful of all gods, and her mother, Metis, is the “wisest”¹⁷ being on earth. Metis even went on to become a word used to describe a quality that combined wisdom and cunning. Not long after the marriage of the two immortals, Zeus and Metis bore their first child, the “pale-eyed goddess Athene.”¹⁸

What happens next forms a controversial part of the myth. In an effort to avoid the dethronement by the child inside of Metis, which had been prophesied by an oracle, Zeus “tricked her deceitfully with cunning words and put her away in his belly.”¹⁹ Something interesting to note here is the irony implicated by Hesiod. while Metis is portrayed as the “wisest among gods and mortal men”, she is still deceived by Zeus and swallowed.²⁰

Something that must be noted before moving on is that the term Hesiod uses, "Tritogeneia,"²¹ refers to Athena. Athena is often called Tritogeneia in literary works during the Classical period, most notably in Homeric poems and in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Tritogeneia here is intended to refer to the ancient Greek word *trito*. The term most likely translates to the word "head," the term defines Athena as the god that is born from the head of Zeus.²² This would emphasize her qualities as the goddess of wisdom, and her bond with Zeus. There are also other interpretations of this epithet. Some worshippers of Athena link the term Tritogeneia back to the birthplace of Athena at Lake Tritonis, as mentioned in Apollodorus's *Bibliotheca* and Euripides' *Ion*.²³

In lines 886 -906, Hesiod continues by describing the Metis' children, which serves as an introduction to Athena. Although he does not mention how the Greek god was born, the poet mentions that the first child born was "Tritogeneia"²⁴, the daughter with "courage and sound counsel equal to her father's".²⁵ Next, Hesiod writes about the prophecy, how it states that Metis will bear another son that would become the "king of gods and men,"²⁶ and he would eventually overthrow Zeus. However, Zeus prevented this by putting Metis "away in his belly first"²⁷ so "the goddess could advise him of what was good or bad."²⁸ Because Zeus swallowed Metis, she was not able to give birth to the destined son. Later in lines 924-926, Hesiod again refers to Athena's birth story and mentions how Zeus, by himself, "fathered the pale-eyed Tritogeneia."²⁹

The nature of Athena's eyes remains a much-debated topic since there are many ways scholars translate Hesiod's description of Athena's eyes. Other than Oxford's translation of "pale-eyed,"³⁰ other popular translations include "bright-eyed"³¹ and "with gleaming eyes."³² The translation of "bright-eyed"³³ seems to make the most sense since Athena was often associated with the symbol of an owl.³⁴ The ancient Greek word *Glaukopis* (γλαυκῶπις) is used to describe Athena's eyes and has the same root as the word *glaux* (γλαύξ), meaning little owl. Owls are often described as "bright-eyed" when seen in the dark, and it would seem appropriate that Athena's eyes would be similar to her symbolic animal.³⁵ Owls are often associated with its wisdom, and linking Athena's eyes with an owl's would signify her wisdom.³⁶ However, one must also notice how the owl also functions as a bird that signifies death and destruction.³⁷ In ancient Athens, the owl was often portrayed on gravestones and vases to symbolize death, and its cry is often used in literary sources to imply doom. The two contrasting explanations for the description of Athena's eyes show the many aspects of Athena, especially how she functioned as wise patron goddess of knowledge while at the same time representing the forces of destruction in war.

In her book *Athena (Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World)*, Susan Deacy supports the arguments about the significance of Athena's eyes by describing them as a "weapon."³⁸ Deacy does this by appealing to the description of Athena's birth story, where she is described as sprinting out of the head of Zeus. When she sprints out of his head, Hepaistos alludes to Athena's eyes by exclaiming that she possesses "fierce eyes."³⁹ The characterization of her eyes as "fierce" appears in many literary references to Athena in the classical texts, especially when such texts describe her contending with adversaries. One example of this occurs when she appears before Achilles in *The Iliad* when he was on the verge of killing Agamemnon. *The Iliad* describes her facial features during this event in the following words, "terribly did her eyes flash."⁴⁰ This shows the contrast between the attractiveness of Athena and "the spectacle of her glaukos stare."⁴¹ The ability of her eyes to convey beauty and peace on the one hand and fierceness on the other forms a common theme throughout *The Iliad*. As Susan Deacy puts it, "Athena is a goddess who embodies various contradictions including masculinity/femininity and war/peace."⁴² Deacy's quote then highlights the complexity of Athena's character, which brings together both a "dangerous warrior"⁴³ as well as a "peace-bringer."⁴⁴

Something that must be noted in this part of the text when Athena is born is the contradiction within the text. While Hesiod states that Metis was Zeus's first wife, he also states that the goddess Athena was "fathered" by Zeus himself.⁴⁵ An appropriate explanation for this is that Hesiod is emphasizing how Athena was not born from Metis, but instead from Zeus himself, therefore concluding that Athena will not overthrow Zeus. An important aspect that should be discussed here is the intimacy between Athena and Zeus. Through portraying a birth scene where Athena is born by Zeus himself, it can be inferred that the god and goddess have a special bond with each other, something that other gods do not share. In essence, the description of the birth of Athena in *Theogony* shows the power and

value that Athena stands for by depicting her family origins and the appearance of her eyes, while also showing the intimate relationship between the goddess and Zeus by portraying the process of Athena's birth.

Hesiod does not provide much information about the details of Athena's birth in his *Theogony*, and we get most details about Athena's birth story from other works such as the *Bibliotheca of Pseudo-Apollodorus*, a source written roughly 500 years after Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁴⁶ Hesiod's focus of his work is mainly on the god Zeus. The context of the text also infers this, as both before and after the myth the text is discussing the history of Zeus, while Athena and Metis were only mentioned to introduce the history of the god of thunder. Zeus is therefore portrayed as the most important and powerful god of all gods, and this makes Athena also powerful due to her special relationship with the god of all gods.

One of the more challenging parts of the story involves the question of Athena's parenthood. In his recent book, *The Birth of Athena*, Norman Brown attempts to resolve the contradiction by interpreting the myth of Prometheus and linking it to the birth of Athena, thereby underscoring the many aspects of Athena and how she has no threat to Zeus.⁴⁷ Many scholars believe that it is necessary to exclude lines 886-900, leaving merely the statement that Athena was born from Zeus's head, and they use the ancient poet Pindar as evidence since Pindar contradicts *Theogony* by making Themis Zeus's first marriage rather than Metis.⁴⁸ However, Brown believes that Hesiod realized his contraction and purposely put it there. In order to truly understand Athena's birth story, he believes that the myth of Prometheus must first be analyzed.

As one of the main stories of *Theogony*, the Prometheus story "tells the conflict between the Metis of Zeus and the Metis of Prometheus."⁴⁹ In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Prometheus is portrayed as a "satanic figure"⁵⁰ that directly led to the fall of man. Brown even goes on to compare Prometheus to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The Prometheus myth portrays a common theme within many religions, the rebellion against a divine ruler. While Hesiod tries to portray an "absolute supremacy"⁵¹ of Zeus, he realizes that the universe still contains disorderly forces that go against "absolute supremacy."⁵² In this case, Prometheus is the "disorderly force."⁵³

Brown points out an important concept in the Prometheus myth, the contrast between Prometheus's "Metis"⁵⁴ and Zeus' "Metis"⁵⁵ (Metis in this context means wisdom and knowledge). Zeus represents the "royal Metis"⁵⁶ the wisdom that comes with being the god of the heavens, while Prometheus is the "technical Metis"⁵⁷, a Metis that leans more toward the side of cleverness and cunning, which, according to Homer, "makes the successful woodcutter, helmsman, and chariot driver."⁵⁸ When we keep the Prometheus myth in mind, Metis can be seen not just as a wise titan-goddess, but more as an ambivalent figure that is more than just wise; she contains the Metis of both Prometheus and Zeus. Containing both Prometheus's Metis and Zeus's Metis, Metis can be a threat to overthrow the gods (Prometheus's Metis), and at the same time be a helpful aid to Zeus (Zeus's Metis). From the abstractness of Metis, we infer an aspect of "creative ingenuity."⁵⁹ If Athena was born the natural way out of Metis, she would have been a threat to overthrow the kingship of Zeus, however, since she was born out of Zeus's head, she is therefore not a risk. The two parts of the story that many find inconsistent are actually what makes the goddess Athena who she is, a powerful goddess that contains the royal Metis of Zeus and the technical Metis of Prometheus, and at the same time, have no threat to the god of thunder.

The establishment of the origins of Athena's wisdom and power in these stories illuminates a significant reason why ancient Athens viewed education and the pursuit of knowledge as such a significant part of a flourishing society. Ancient Athens was a center of education, and most minors were encouraged to memorize poetry by Homer and Hesiod after they were taught to read and write.⁶⁰ Students' engagement with these literary works would have reinforced the value of their own pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. With a supportive state, citizens could enjoy services such as philosophical schools, theaters, sports, music lessons, and cultural festivals. Scholars had the ability to move beyond basic education, and learn complicated topics such as geometry, physics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and art. Athenians believed that Greek education could bring the flourishing of the body, mind, and soul. Their patron Athena had a big influence on their success in the realm of education. The education system of Athens reflects many characteristics of the goddess; Athens taught its citizens technical knowledge, lessons such as reading, writing, blacksmithing, and

commerce, relating to the Prometheus Metis aspect of Athena discussed above. It also taught “royal”⁶¹ knowledge that focused more on the spirit with lessons such as philosophy, relating to the Zeus Metis aspect of Athena discussed above. Hesiod's *Theogony* had a vast influence on ancient Athens, and its portrayal of Athena played a big role in shaping the values of Athenian citizens.

3. ATHENA IN HOMER

Whereas Hesiod focuses on the origins of Athena, the descriptions of Athena in Homer offer more about the goddess's influence and relationship with the heroes and gods around her, while also further completing Athena's character. The great epic Greek poet was active in the same era as Hesiod, and he portrays an Athena with similar qualities as the ones described in Hesiod's *Theogony*. At the same time, he adds many unique qualities to Athena, most notably her identity as a supporting patron to heroes, her patience and wisdom, and her warlike qualities. Homer is the author of arguably two of the most influential works of all literature, *The Iliad*, and *The Odyssey*. Although Homer is known as the “poet sovereign,”⁶² king of all poets, there is actually very little known about his personal life. While there are up to seven cities that claim to be the birthplace of the poet, modern scholars place him in Ionia,⁶³ an ancient region on the western coast of Anatolia, south of current-day Izmir. Homer's literary activity took place mainly during the late 8th century BC when he composed the two oldest extant works of western literature, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Athena plays a crucial role as a mentor to the heroes in both of these works. Most modern scholars would categorize Homer's works as epic poetry, that is, lengthy narrative poems that describe the deeds and obstacles a hero encounters as he goes on a quest. *The Iliad* will be the focus of the following section, as the way Athena is depicted in *The Iliad* plays a crucial role in shaping how Athenians viewed their patron goddess, serving as a foundation for many aspects of their city Athens. In *The Iliad*, Athena plays a major role as a mentor to the heroes and understanding her virtues in this role clarifies much of the reason why Athenians held a deep regard for her during this period.

Although Homer composed *The Iliad* centuries before the classical period of Greece, it was still very influential as Homer's works were a large portion of Greek education. For this reason, the study of *The Iliad* provided a common set of values that were accepted by the Greeks. As R. L. Hunter, states in his recently published book, *The Measure of Homer: The Ancient Reception of the Iliad and the Odyssey*, “The Homeric poems were at the basis of ancient education,”⁶⁴ as “for centuries, to learn to read in school was to learn to read Homer.”⁶⁵ More importantly, Homer's works, most notably *The Iliad*, “penetrated all levels of society.”⁶⁶ Homer is “never really absent”⁶⁷ from any Greek poems or verses, as it is his works that served as a fundamental example for generations of writers. For example, Homeric words and phrases offered a model to describe virtues. An example being having the “eyes like a cow,”⁶⁸ which means that the person has large or beautiful eyes. As this evidence shows, although Homer was active many years before the classical age of Athens, his works undoubtedly left a large imprint on Athens.

The Iliad contains 15693 lines and is divided into 24 books, illustrating a story starring many legendary heroes who played a part in the Trojan War. This mythological war was fought between the city of Troy (Trojans) and Mycenaean Greek states (Achaeans). The Greek gods were also split between two sides, with Aphrodite, Apollo, and Ares being the main figures that supported the Trojans while Hera, Poseidon, and Athena fought for the Achaeans. Throughout the story, Athena supports many heroes such as Diomedes, Odysseus, and most importantly, Achilles. While there were many minor conflicts during the war, the story follows a quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles, both of whom are fighting for the Trojans. As a hot-headed warrior, Achilles gets into many conflicts with both Trojans and Achaeans, and although Zeus has forbidden divine interference in the war, Athena acts as his mentor and tries to guide the great warrior to control his temper and eventually achieve victory.

Athena has interactions with many heroes in *The Iliad*, most notably Odysseus, Diomedes, and Achilles. Throughout the Trojan War, Athena guides, inspires, and advises each hero to incorporate honor, courage, and wisdom during conflicts, and helps them achieve success. This reflects many of Athena's own qualities. In book 2 of *The Iliad*, Athena warns Odysseus of holding his men back from readying the ships for retreat. She tells him, “No, don't give up now. Range the Achaean ranks, with your winning words, hold back each man you find, don't let them haul their rolling ships to sea!”⁶⁹ Odysseus, realizing that he was talking to a goddess, quickly runs to stop his troops, and gives a

speech to Agamemnon, "what a humiliation it would be to hold out so long, then sail home empty-handed. Courage, my friends, hold out a little longer. Till we see if Calchas divined the truth or not. We all recall that moment—who could forget it?"⁷⁰ With Odysseus's speech, the armies are aroused, and the Achaeans get ready to keep fighting. This is an important part of the literary work because it displays Athena as a mentor, granting Odysseus wisdom and helping him find his sense of honor, as honor plays a very important role in Athena's incentives. In *The Iliad*, while some Gods like Aphrodite and Hera fight for the outcome of the war, most divine intervention is due to more important reasons, the honor and glory that come with the success of their supported side. Athena passes her virtues of honor to Odysseus through her guidance, and this reflects the way in which she values glory.

In *Greek Gods, Human Lives: What We Can Learn from Myths*, Mary R. Lefkowitz provides additional insight into the value that honor would have held as an attribute of Athena and the rest of the Greek gods.⁷¹ While gods do intervene for justice, most of the time, the Greek gods intervene in human conflicts for their honor. Many Greek dramas portray the significance of honor, perhaps most notably *Hippolytus* and *The Bacchae*, both by Euripides. In these two plays, the gods become angry because a mortal refuses to pay proper tribute to him/her. In the *Hippolytus*, Aphrodite states how "I respect those who honor my power, but I throw down those who regard me with arrogance. For this is true even among the race of gods: they enjoy receiving honor from men."⁷² In this way, Lefkowitz shows how Athena would have greatly valued honor and as a protector would have passed this value on to Odysseus.

While Athena's interaction with Odysseus shows her virtue of honor, her support of Diomedes illustrates courage. Book 5 of *The Iliad* shows Athena's support of Diomedes. In war, Athena grants Diomedes strength lending him courage and cleverness. "Then Pallas Athena granted Tydeus' son Diomedes strength and daring so the fighter would shine forth and tower over the Argives and win himself great glory."⁷³ Here, Athena helps Diomedes achieve his full potential as a warrior as a war goddess and aids him toward glory. Throughout the war, Diomedes prays to Athena, "Hear me, daughter of Zeus whose shield is thunder, tireless one, Athena! If you ever stood by father with all your love amidst the blaze of battle, stand by me--do me a favor now, Athena. Bring that man into range and let me spear him!"⁷⁴ Athena then grants Diomedes his "father's strength,"⁷⁵ allowing him to charge into war with bravery. With Athena's support, the Greek hero even charges at the god Apollo, attempting to harm him with his spear. In lines 496 of book 5 of *The Iliad*, Homer describes how "Diomedes, loosing his war cry, charged Aeneas though what he saw was lord Apollo himself, guarding, spreading his arms above the fighter, but even before the mighty god he would not flinch."⁷⁶ It is evident here how big of an impact Athena has on Diomedes, as with the goddess of wisdom as a mentor, Diomedes does not "flinch,"⁷⁷ even against a god. At the end of book 5, Athena even joins Diomedes in war, fighting side by side in his chariot, reminding Diomedes of her protection and taking away his fear. At this juncture, Homer emphasizes, "A twist of her wrist and the man hit the ground, springing aside as the goddess climbed aboard, blazing to fight beside the shining Diomedes."⁷⁸ The concept of how Athena instills courage as a patron to heroes is discussed in Walter Burkert's *Greek Religion*. He states how "graciously stood beside the victorious warriors in real battle and stirred up courage in their hearts."⁷⁹

Not only does the goddess of wisdom instill courage, but she also displays the virtue of discipline and patience. Most notable is the special bond that Athena develops with the character Achilles. While Achilles is a very courageous and honorable warrior, what he lacks is reason and calmness in war, and that is what Athena tries to teach him. In book 1 of *The Iliad*, when Achilles has a conflict with Agamemnon, Athena tries to calm him down by providing him with knowledge and experience: "But come, cease from strife, and do not grasp the sword with your hand. With words indeed taunt him, telling him how it shall be."⁸⁰ After this, she promises "hereafter three times as many glorious gifts shall be yours on account of this arrogance."⁸¹ While Achilles wants to deal with problems using force and violence, Athena proposes to use words. Achilles accepts Athena's advice: "I must when the two of you hand down commands, Goddess, a man submits though his heart breaks with fury."⁸² By avoiding violent conflict, Athena has prevented a disastrous situation that would cause only harm to the Achaeans, and Athena's transmission of her wisdom has calmed Achilles, giving him more self-control and therefore making him stronger. In book 21, Achilles almost drowned in a river, and he laments that if he dies here, he will never gain the honor he deserves. Athena reassures him, saying

that "It's not your fate to be swallowed by a river: he'll subside, and soon-you'll see for yourself."⁸³ This calms Achilles down, and with Athena's advice, Achilles is able to see his goal more clearly. Then, Athena states that Achilles must keep fighting until he has "ripped away Prince Hector's life,"⁸⁴ and once he does so, he must return "back to the ships."⁸⁵ While Athena reminds Achilles of his goal, she also sets a limit for Achilles, so he does not lose control. Although he is a great warrior, shortness of temper and recklessness in battle form weaknesses for Achilles, and as a mentor, Athena attempts to pass along her wisdom and provide him with patience and cunningness in battle.

In an article titled "Athena in The Iliad by Ancient Literature,"⁸⁶ Clark Roomland analyzes how Athena helps Achilles achieve success and reach the best version of himself through self-control and limiting his belligerence. In *The Iliad*, Ares and Athena are two gods/goddesses that are often compared since they both represent war and take opposite sides. Roomland proposes that Athena has won the conflict with her brother because she is "civilized, intelligent, and controlled,"⁸⁷ whereas her brother is "focused on the violence and bloodlust."⁸⁸ Athena's virtue of discipline has helped her through the war, and it is this discipline that Athenians greatly value from their patron goddess. Throughout the story, Achilles shows many signs of recklessness and impatience, and Athena's "calm, cool-headed counsel"⁸⁹ is the reason for the Achaeans' success, as without her, "Ares may have taken advantage of Achilles' recklessness to bring disaster for the Greeks."⁹⁰ As a mentor, Athena guides his warriors and teaches them the importance of "taking a thoughtful and practical approach to battle and seeking counsel, rather than relying on rage and brute strength."⁹¹ While a fighter can possess great physical strength, if they do not know how to wield it, their strength dissolves into nothingness. Athena's virtues of patience and discipline are greatly reflected in Athens, where Athenians greatly value cunningness and cleverness in battle. While a soldier can die a glorious death in battle, they are truly respected if they are able to hold back and return back home after a victory.

In addition to examining how Homer portrays Athena's interactions with heroes, it is important to observe the attributes that he attaches to her. An examination of these attributes points further to the significance that she held as the patron goddess of the city of Athens. In Homer's works, he underscores many attributes of Athena, most notably her identity as a virgin goddess, her intimate relationship with Zeus, and her warlike characteristics. These traits are referenced countless times. For instance, in lines 733-742 of book 5 of *The Iliad*, Homer describes a scene where Athena arms for war in the palace of Zeus. "But Athena, daughter of aegis-holder Zeus, dropped to her father's floor her supple robe of many colors, which she herself had made and worked by hand."⁹² Here Athena's identity as the daughter of Zeus is emphasized. The aegis described here is a device that is carried by Athena and Zeus, a distinct shield that sometimes features the head of a Gorgon. The aegis is one of Zeus's most powerful tools, and by allowing Athena to access his shield, it shows how much Zeus honors his favorite daughter.

In Burkert's *Greek Religion*, he describes the origins and functions of the aegis. The aegis is a very powerful weapon for Athena, as "whenever she raises up the aegis her enemies are overtaken by panic and soon are lost."⁹³ The aegis is made out of goat skin, a feature referring to a special goat sacrifice part of the cult of Athena in Athens. This goat, according to myth, was a monster, a gorgo, that was killed and skinned by Athena herself.

In lines 439, Homer describes how "while Athena, child of Zeus whose shield is thunder, letting fall her supple robe at the Father's threshold- rich brocade, stitched with her own hands' labordonned the battle-shirt of the lord of lightning, buckled her breastplate geared for wrenching war."⁹⁴ Here, Athena wearing the tunic of Zeus also hints toward the theme of the bond between Athena and Zeus as the "child of Athena,"⁹⁵ and the depiction of the goddess of wisdom getting ready for war shows the warlike qualities of the goddess. In book 28 lines 1-9 of *The Homeric Hymns*, Homer describes Athena as "glorious goddess, grey-eyed, of many wiles, having a relentless heart, virgin, revered, city-guarding, valiant, Tritogeneia,"⁹⁶ giving us valuable insight into Homer's impression of Athena. Since Homer was a vastly popular author during the classical age of Athens, and his works were commonly studied, Homer's impression of Athena is especially valuable since his view would have influenced and served as a foundation for most Athenian citizens. Athena's physical attributes, "glorious"⁹⁷, "grey-eyed"⁹⁸ are described here, and these are very common descriptions for Athena, the grey-eyed referring to her symbol of the owl. However, many of Athena's inner attributes are also described

here: “of many wiles”⁹⁹, “having a relentless heart”¹⁰⁰, “virgin”¹⁰¹, “revered”¹⁰², “city guarding”¹⁰³, and “valiant”¹⁰⁴. Athena has always been described as an accommodating mentor in Homer’s works, helping many heroes such as Achilles and Odysseus go back home, however, the emphasis on her “virgin” identity is worthwhile for discussion. Why is Athena’s virgin attribute so important? How does her virgin identity influence her patron city of Athens?

Here it is necessary to first define the Greek word *parthénos*. The word *parthénos*, a word often associated with Athena, directly translates to “virgin.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, the name of Athens’s iconic building the Pantheon came from the word *parthénos*.

To answer the question of why Homer constantly emphasizes the virgin attribute of Athena, it is crucial to look to other primary sources to establish a well-rounded perspective on Athena’s attribute of virgin. *The Eumenides* is an ancient Greek tragic play written in the year 458 BC, by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus, a poet often described as the father of tragedy. Lines 736-738 of *The Eumenides*, give an insight into the deeper meaning of Athena’s virgin identity: “For there is no mother who bore me, and I praise the male in all respects, except for marriage, with my whole heart, and I am entirely my father’s.”¹⁰⁶ Athena herself explains that because of her identity as a virgin, she only belongs to her father. This comes back to the theme of the closeness between Athena and Zeus. But what does this mean for the Athenians? Why is this significant? Lines 997 to 1002 of *The Eumenides* illustrate an epigram (a short poem): “Hail people of the city, sitting next to Zeus, dear ones of the virgin who is dear to you, learning restraint in the fullness of time. You who are under Pallas’s wings her father holds in reverence.”¹⁰⁷ This shows how, as the patron of the city, not only was Athens protected by Athena, but her father Zeus also provided protection to the city. Through the emphasis on Athena’s virgin attribute, Homer has shown her intimate relationship with Zeus and therefore shows how Zeus was backing her daughter’s favorite city Athens. This will be further developed later in the text when analyzing the works of Solon.

This aspect of an intimate relationship between Zeus, Athena, and Athens is shown in a recent study by Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies, where scholars investigated the Parthenon in ancient Athens. The Parthenon is an Athenian temple situated on the Athenian Acropolis, Greece, constructed between 447 and 432 BC. Harvard scholars believe that the Pantheon is a structure that displayed Athena’s aspect of *parthénos* through its structure and the sculptures inside the Pantheon. On the temple’s east side, the *gigantomachy*, the war between the Olympians and the Giants, is shown, and Athena is shown fighting beside her father, Zeus. Here, the theme of the relationship between the goddess of wisdom and her father is represented again. “In the eyes of Athenians what could be more reassuring, or more potent, than an alliance of their city goddess with the father of gods and men?”¹⁰⁸ The Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies show how as a patron goddess, “Athena offered to Athens not only her own protection, which she had always provided as city goddess but also the protection of her father Zeus.”¹⁰⁹ With Zeus depicted “standing behind his warrior daughter,”¹¹⁰ the Athenians would be more confident in their city being one favored by the god of thunder. It is important to note here how the *gigantomachy* is a Panhellenic myth, in which the descriptions and concepts of the gods refer back to Homer’s poems. This shows how Homer greatly influenced not only the beliefs of Athenians but also their religious festivals and architecture.

4. THE SOLONIAN ATHENA

The period of Solon and the description of Athena in his Fragment 4 form a crucial stage in the development of the mythology of the goddess. Solon’s conception of Athena as the exclusive goddess of the city of Athens provides a new perspective on the goddess by referring to her as one who cares for and plays an active part in the lives of Athenian citizens. In this way, Solon’s view of Athena moves beyond Hesiod and Homer by offering a more explicit connection between the goddess and Athenian life and religion. While these earlier classical sources provide a fundamental characterization of the goddess Athena, Solon uses these characterizations to establish a relationship between the goddess and the city of Athens. The references to Athena in the Athenian poet Solon, then, form a pivotal transition in our knowledge about the goddess Athena. It is for this reason that scholars interpret Solon’s fragments as giving us what we might call “Solonian Athena,”¹¹¹ which emphasizes her intimacy with Zeus and her love and protection for her patron city of Athens.

Solon was an Athenian poet most remembered for his efforts to reform political, economic, and moral problems in Archaic Athens. Although his attempts failed in the short term, Solon's works are often credited for laying the foundations of Athenian democracy. Solon lived centuries later than Homer and Hesiod between 630-560 and just about a century before the classical age of Greece (500-366). Due to this, he was greatly influenced by the two great epic poets, and many of his works reflect and analyze ideals that were portrayed in the *Theogony* and *The Iliad*.

In an article titled "Solon writes back: Another Reading of *Dikē* in Ancient Hellenic Poets," Rafael Guimaraes Tavares da Silva explores Solon's adjustments and additions to the Hellenic tradition of justice.¹¹² He does this by comparing the poems of Homer and Hesiod with Solon's fragments. The concept of *dikē* is defined as a "characteristic, traditional, proper behavior," or a justice system within a community. Rafael refers to a scene in *The Iliad* where this concept is portrayed. Two men were arguing over the blood money of a man who was killed, and the crowd around them were judging on who the money belonged to. Rafael explains that the legal procedures depicted in this scene show how justice to Homer is a "process achieved through oral persuasion and oral conviction" for resolving conflicts.¹¹³ This portrayal of justice repeats itself throughout Homer's *The Iliad*. Rafael also examines the poems attributed to Hesiod and explains how he interprets *dikē* as a legal process, and the "penalty for the violation of legal process", and he views Zeus as the ultimate bastion of Justice.¹¹⁴ Living in later times, Solon was greatly influenced by these views, and he expanded the Hellenistic view of justice. Hesiod's influence on Solon can be seen through this quote: "[n]early all of the themes of Solon 4 appear in Hesiod's poetry, primarily in the Works and Days, but also the Theogony. Solon 4 is characterized by the same nexus of thought that pervades the Works and Days."¹¹⁵ Rafael concludes that while Homer and Hesiod focus more on an oral justice based on divine power, Solon deals with written accounts of justice based on written applications of laws. As this example shows, Homer and Hesiod's influence on Solon can be seen clearly in Solon's literary work.

The critical part of Solon's fragments for our investigation of Athena appears in Fragment 4, which contains a statement about why Athens "will never be destroyed."¹¹⁶ Throughout the Fragment, the theme of the Solonian Athena and Athenians protection of Athens is developed. Fragment 4 reads:

Our city will never be destroyed by a dispensation from Zeus or the plans of the blessed immortal gods for truly a great-hearted daughter of a mighty father Pallas Athena holds her hands over it. The townsmen themselves by their foolishness desire to destroy the great city, persuaded by material goods, and the mind of the people's leaders is unjust; they are about to suffer many pains from great hubris. For they do not understand how to restrain their excess nor to order the present festivities of the banquet in calmness.

.....

They grow rich, persuaded by their unjust deeds.

.....

Sparing the wealth of neither public nor sacred treasuries with rapaciousness they rob from one another, and fail to guard the sacred foundations of Justice who silently knows what is and what was, and, in time, surely comes to exact retribution later. And now this inescapable wound comes to the entire city, which falls swiftly into an evil slavery. It awakens civil strife and sleeping tribal war, which destroys the beautiful youth of many; and from its troubles the much-loved city is swiftly worn out, friendships destroyed in unjust factions. These evils turn on the people; and of the poor many are brought into foreign lands, sold and bound in shameful fetters.

.....

Thus the public evil comes to the house of each man, it jumps high over the court-yard fence, breaks down the locked door, and finds any man for certain, even if he flees into the farthest corner of his bedroom. These things my heart prompts me to teach the Athenians: how Lawlessness brings the worst evils to the city, and Lawfulness manifests good order and everything perfect, and often puts fetters on the evil-doers. It smoothes what is rough; quells anger, dims hubris and shrivels the flowering bud of arrogant destruction. It straightens crooked judgments, calms overbearing deeds, stops the deeds of civil strife, and stops the anger of

grievous conflict. It is by this that all things to men are perfect and reach their peak. It awakens civil strife and sleeping tribal war, which destroys the beautiful youth of many; and from its troubles the much-loved city is swiftly worn out, friendships destroyed in unjust factions. These evils turn on the people; and of the poor many are brought into foreign lands, sold and bound in shameful fetters.

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Here in this fragment, we see a couple of important attributes of Athena, namely, her intimacy with her father Zeus and her "Pallas"¹¹⁸ aspect. The fragment's allusion to Athena is also important because it explicitly associates the goddess with the city, describing her as the protector of Athens.

According to Maria Nossia Fantuzzi's commentary on Solon's fragments, Solon's use of epithets and expressions in his fourth fragment gives a "hymnodic tone."¹¹⁹ As a result, studying Solon's choices of epithets gives an insight into his perspective of Athena's influence. First of all, Solon uses the epithet of "Μεγάθυμος,"¹²⁰ an epithet normally used in Homeric poems to describe soldiers and warriors. This shows how Solon is underscoring Athena as an "adjuvant of warriors."¹²¹ Furthermore, Solon uses the epithet "ἐπίσκοπος" a term used before Solon as a way to describe a spy watchful of enemy movements and herdsmen careful about their flocks.¹²² This term is used in *The Iliad* when Andromache is mourning Hector's death, and from this, it can be seen how Solon wants us to relate back to this scene when reading his fragment. From this scene, Solon sets up a contrast between Troy and Athens by emphasizing the idea of a protective "guardianship,"¹²³ and implying that, "unlike Troy, Athens enjoys an extremely potent immortal influence even if the city's internal enemies (the citizens themselves) are doing their best to bring the city to the same ruin that Troy had seen."¹²⁴ Next, the epithet "ὄβριμοπάτρῃ"¹²⁵ is used by Solon, and this epithet "reaffirms the power that Athena derives from being the daughter of Zeus, born fully armed from his head."¹²⁶ This would "further guarantee that their favor for Athens would endure and that they would continue to protect Athens' interests."¹²⁷ In addition, something that should be noted here is Solon's use of the expression "keeping one's hands over something or someone."¹²⁸ This idiom is frequently used as early as Homer to indicate a protective attitude on the part of the gods. As a result, the use of this idiom here in Solon's fragment also functions to portray Athena as the immediate protector of the city of Athens. From Solon's unique use of epithets and expressions, we can see how he uses Homeric sources and further analyzes these sources through his own perspective of Athena.

Solon's Fragment 4 illustrates Athena's significance to Athenian citizens by exploring the unique relationship between the goddess and the city. Solon establishes this unique relationship by drawing a contrast between the lawlessness of the region of Attica and the hope that Athenians would embrace a more civilized character. At the beginning of the fragment, Solon describes Athens as "our city"¹²⁹ and in doing so he invites the audience to join him as "fellow citizens who care about the city"¹³⁰ and experience Athena's protection. By contrast, when Solon refers to Attica in the fragment he employs third person language. For instance, in line 5 he acknowledges the "townsmen"¹³¹ but refers to them as "themselves." Attica refers to the geographical region of east-central Greece and its chief city Athens. Since Solon has invited the audience to join him, it would be expected that Solon would use the first or second person language to associate himself with the Atticans. However, Solon's use of third person to describe the Atticans, who are deceived by their "foolish desire,"¹³² does not form part of Solon's audience.¹³³ Solon explains that they deserve to be excluded from the protection of their patron goddess, because they are unjust and seek to use the city for their own advantage, "yielding to the persuasion of material goods."¹³⁴ This concept of lawlessness, a theme repeatedly mentioned by Solon throughout Fragment 4, is the reason for the exclusion of the Atticans. Solon warns his fellow Athenians of this lawlessness and hopes that Athena's protection can bring them the civil and order

that allows the Athenians to flourish. The act of Athena “hold[ing] her hands”¹³⁵ over the Athenians is not merely a form of physical protection from intruders, but more of a protection that allows the Athenians to live in order. The exclusive attention from Athena to her patron city of Athens shows the unique harmony between the Athenians and Athena, further binding Athena to the population of Athens.

In Fragment 4, Solon warns the Athenians of Dysnomia, a deity that symbolizes lawlessness, then emphasizes Athenians protection over this lawlessness. In line 29, Solon expresses how a failure to guard “the sacred foundations of Justice” would eventually lead to many consequences. The city would fall into “evil slavery,”¹³⁶ “civil strife,”¹³⁷ and “sleeping tribal war.”¹³⁸ The only solution to this, is the opposite of Dysnomia, Eunomia, translated to order.¹³⁹ This Eunomia “stops excess, wipes out hybris, withers the flowers of Ruin, softens arrogant deeds,”¹⁴⁰ and can only be achieved through practicing self-restraint. Solon is hoping that with Athena “hold[ing] her hands”¹⁴¹ over Athens, as mentioned at the beginning of the fragment, Athens could practice order and prevent the consequences that come with lawlessness.

The relationship that Athena and Zeus share with Athens forms a crucial element in Solon's contribution to the mythology of the goddess. C.J. Herington provides a valuable insight on this topic in his paper “Athena in Athenian Literature and Cult.”¹⁴² Herington points out how Solon emphasizes Athena's role as the patron of Athens as compared to the multiple identities that Homer grants Athena, such as her role in the Trojan War. He further points out that there is a hierarchy in Solon's descriptions, “Zeus – his favorite daughter – that daughter's favored city.”¹⁴³ This concept of a special bond is referred to as “Solonian”¹⁴⁴, and Athens's own “Solonian Athena”¹⁴⁵ is a fundamental idea that Athens is built on. Herington explains that Solonian Athena is mostly presented in two ways: Athenian perception of Athena's birth story and ancient Athenian politics.

As explained earlier in this paper, the first mention of Athena's birth is by Hesiod in his *Theogony*, and this version of the myth grew in popularity in the second quarter of the sixth century, as shown by vase paintings. Due to the influence of Solon, the Athenian interpretation of the myth was focused on the “miraculous and unparalleled origin of Athena from Zeus alone,”¹⁴⁶ and from this, the Athenians came to the conclusion that “if Athena stands in such a unique relationship with the Father of the Gods, so will the city which Athena uniquely favors.”¹⁴⁷ This underlying concept would become “the most important single constant in Athenian politics throughout the period from Solon to Pericles (Pericles lived 75 years later than Solon. He was born around the time 496 BC).”¹⁴⁸

As Athens began to shift toward democracy, Athena, although previously honored by tyrants, was “received with even greater fervor”¹⁴⁹ because the citizens of the democracy looked up to Athena as a supporting patron behind their transition. As Athena's importance and influence grew, many temples were built on the Acropolis in honor of the Solonian Athena, and the prosperity she provided. Some examples are the Parthenon, Erechtheion, and the Temple of Athena Nike. The details of Athena in architecture will be mentioned further in the paper. Many plays were also composed under Solon's ideals of Athena, one example being Aeschylus's *Eumenides*. Herington states how Athena is depicted as a different character from the Athena in Homer, but rather her qualities are “purely Athenian.”¹⁵⁰ In Aeschylus's play, the Solonian concept of Athena is further stressed through the depiction of her birth story, being “indeed a motif of crucial importance to the entire action of the *Oresteia*.”¹⁵¹ These examples illustrate how popular the “Solonian”¹⁵² aspect of Athena became throughout the classical age, and how Athena was present in the lives of Athenian citizens.

The analysis of Hesiod, Homer, and Solon offered above allows us to see the development of Athena throughout early Greek literature. One of the main observations that we can see is how Athena's portrayal in literature directly affects her city of Athens. An analysis of her characteristics and role in early Greek poetry paves the way for a clearer understanding of how she came to be associated with Athens specifically and why she would have formed such a powerful patron for the city. While Hesiod and Homer offer a picture of her many attributes, Solon directs these attributes more specifically to the city of Athens, thereby creating an inextricable link between her protective qualities and the prestige of Athens. As a result, this aspect of Athena's history allows for a clearer understanding of her role in Greek art.

5. THE PLACE OF ATHENA IN ATHENIAN ART OF THE CLASSICAL ERA

While the literary descriptions of Athena offer insight into the different attributes of the goddess, art from the classical period provides a broader picture of her functions in Athenian civil life. Artwork forms a crucial data source for the study of Athena because artwork existed in most sectors of Athenian life, and only by linking Athenian artwork with the ancient literary descriptions of the goddess can her influence be truly be understood. To be more specific, the function of the visual imagery of Athena was related to concerns over the protection of houses, the stability of the economy, the celebration of the abundance of resources she provided citizens, her protection and care for the citizens, and the presence of Athena during Athens's pinnacle of power. All this evidence together shows that her cult permeated all sectors of Athenian life, from daily objects, coins, athletic games, and funerary cults, to monumental temple rituals. Please refer to the index of images after the conclusion to see the works discussed in this section.

The Black Attic Ware Tripod

We might start with a focus on private life and how a person would have encountered and interacted with the goddess in material forms in the house. A domestic object would be seen every day and would therefore play a significant role in the lives of Athenians. One of the more important items in a domestic context would have been what is called an attic black-figure tripod in which Athenians would store prestigious liquids and makeup, most notably perfume.

The portrayal of Athena in the posture of a warrior on the Attic black-figure tripod conveys a sense of the goddesses' protection of the household that used the object. These objects were often used in house settings, especially elite homes in ancient Greece. This particular tripod dates to the sixth century and features a scene of Athena's birth story narrated in Hesiod's *Theogony*. It includes a depiction of the goddess arising out of Zeus' head and standing in battle position with a spear and shield as if ready to take on any enemy. This illustration of Athena echoes many scenes of Homer's *The Iliad*, where Athena dresses up for and helps her heroes in war. For example, in book 5, Athena "puts on the tunic of cloud-gatherer Zeus and armed herself with weapons for tear-bringing war."¹⁵³ While the portrayal of the goddess on this object may echo Homer's *The Iliad*, its location in the house points to a concern to direct this attribute of Athena to the household and private matters.

We can gain further insight into the significance of this vessel by asking about the specific imagery that is portrayed on it. This vessel depicts the scene of the birth of Athena, relating to Hesiod's *Theogony*. There are many features and themes of Hesiod's *Theogony* shown in the tripod *kothon*. To begin with, while the vase portrays many characters, it is significant that Metis remains absent. This aspect of the visual design may reflect the description of the birth-scene in *Theogony*, specifically when Hesiod states that Zeus, by himself, "fathered the pale-eyed Tritogeneia."¹⁵⁴ By doing so, the C painter emphasizes the intimacy between Zeus and Athena, or the "Solonian"¹⁵⁵ aspect Athena, where Athena "holds her hands"¹⁵⁶ over her patron city Athens and the people in it.

Ancient Greeks believed that wearing perfume was a way to please the gods and they used perfume in their rituals and festivities. The ritual value of perfume in festivities and in daily life was related to the desire to receive protection from the gods. By having Athena portrayed on the containers for perfume, the object brings together concern for rituals in daily life and the goddess. This is also shown in the form of the tripod. The triangular shape of the tripod *kothon* suggests that it was designed for maximum stability, and its relatively small size implies that it held a prestigious liquid that was valuable to ancient Athenian citizens – perfume. The stability of the tripod would prevent waste of the scented oil by tipping over the vase, and there might have been a lid that would have curtailed evaporation. This would make sense because ancient Greeks considered perfume to be a gift from the gods, shown by how most perfumes were named after Greek goddesses, and because of this, the Athenians would have needed to be careful not to show any disrespect to the goddess by losing any of the perfume.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, before attending important festivals or rituals, Athenians would take perfume oil out of the tripod depicting Athena and this would show their respect and support for Athena, as well as show Athena's protection for the citizens as their patron goddess.

According to Dimitra Voudouri and Christine Tesseromatis's article "Perfumery from Myth to Antiquity," ancient Greeks thought that the use of perfume was taught by the Olympian Gods themselves.¹⁵⁸ This is also supported in mythology, as many stories attribute the existence of herbs to

certain goddesses and nymphs, thus, Olympian Gods make up the perfume's significance. For example, the myrtle, a plant often used to make perfume, derives its meaning from the goddess Aphrodite. Greek myth states that one day Aphrodite was bathing in a lake, and she was startled when she was disturbed by a satyr. She fled and eventually hid behind a bush of myrtle, which saved her from the aggressive satyrs. Because of this, the myrtle, and its perfume, became a symbol of love and marriage. As a result, the association between perfume and the goddess in the myth may provide further explanation for Athenian's protection in domestic environments.

The Tetradrachm Coin

We can broaden our understanding of Athena's impact in society by moving from a focus upon the house to a consideration of her role in the city's economy. Whereas the tripod offers a picture of Athena's role in the domestic environment, Athena's depiction on the Tetradrachm Coin symbolizes her importance in daily life and in the economy of Athens. The Tetradrachm Coin was actively used from 490-322 BCE and depicts the side view of Athena's face on one side and her symbol of an owl on the other. The significance of the Tetradrachm Coin stems from its small size, its portability, and its abundance in Athenian life. Compared to the other artifacts examined in this paper, the Tetradrachm Coin forms the smallest object, but also the most abundant, as Athens' many silver mines provided vast amounts of bullion that allowed it to be used as a common medium of exchange for all classes, from nobility to peasants. All the citizens in the city of Athens would have possession of this coin, and this shows how Athena's guardianship extends everywhere in the daily life of Athenians.

An article by Rachel Griffith explores the significance of ancient coins, including what a representation of a figure on the coin would mean.¹⁵⁹ Unlike vases or temples, coins do not generally have a single owner. Because they are passed on frequently, coins are used as a form of propaganda and communicating civic pride. In ancient times, forms of public communication were not well developed, and coins were one of the best ways to spread political messages. Athena's illustration on the coin therefore is an efficient way to spread the message of civic pride and divine guardianship.

The Burgon Vase

While the use of coins would have brought Athenians in contact with the goddess in many sectors of society, her use in festivals and religious rituals signified the centrality that she held in celebrations of the city's economic bounty. The illustration of Athena on an immense Vase known as the Burgon Vase displays Athena in a warrior pose together with an inscription that reads "I am one of the prizes of Athens." This inscription informs us that the object and its contents were prizes given to the winner of the Panathenaic games. The Panathenaic games were held every four years as a celebration of athletics and the arts and in this way they brought great unity among Athenians of all social classes to honor the goddess Athena. By portraying Athena on a prize of such a religious festival, the Athenians are celebrating the accordance of Athenians.

The article "Ancient Festivals and Their Cultural Contribution to Society" by Ioanna-SoultanaKotsori discusses the unity that the Panathenaic games brings to the city of Athens in the name of Athena. According to Kotsori, the Panathenaic games were formed to celebrate Athena's triumph over Poseidon in becoming their patron. This festival would "bring unity among the people of Athens," as people of all social classes, from nobles and merchants to peasants, would be present at the "most prestigious games for the citizens of Athens."¹⁶⁰

The illustration of Athena on the immense Burgon Vase with a height of 61.2 cm also displays Athena's guidance in the field of agriculture. The Burgon Vase is also known as a Panathenaic amphora, a large vessel that is used to store large quantities of agriculture harvest, most notably olive oils, and is gifted to the champions of the Panathenaic games. By illustrating a warrior Athena on a vase used to store large quantities of agricultural harvest, the artist who produced it emphasizes Athena's protection and assistance in agriculture.

The Journal of the Carleton University Classics Society published by the Carleton University Classics Society examines the significance of olives in the Athenian society and how it symbolizes flourishing. To begin with, olives played a noteworthy role in funeral practices, as people would place corpses on a bed of olive leaves. Olives trees are known to be evergreens, and their function in

burial practices would therefore be to symbolize “the continuation of life.” Olive oils were also used to make perfume, which was a “luxury item in antiquity” only available to upperclassmen who could afford it. As a prize for the Panathenaic games, a festival “employed to create social cohesion and a common identity,” olive oil puts emphasis on the flourishing of Athens, most notably its agricultural flourishing. This is also evident in how the Panathenaic games are synchronized with the cycle of olive harvest. Because the festival is active during the harvesting season of olives, the festival is celebrating the agricultural produce from a year’s hard work.

The Marble Relief of Mourning Athena

Since hoplite service in the military was compulsory in the classical age, warfare was an especially prominent aspect of Athenian life, with entire age groups being called to service of war. Athena's influence in this realm of society is evident in a marble relief discovered in the acropolis dated to 460 BC. The relief features Athena leaning over a fallen soldier's tombstone in a mourning position. The disposition of the goddess in the relief expresses the close relationship that the goddess shared with Athenian warriors. This monumental relief shows the goddess in a position of lament as she looks over a soldier from Athens's grave. In doing so, the relief expresses her role as the patron goddess of those citizens who fought to defend the city and a guardian for the dead soldiers through the afterlife. Athena's role as a guardian in the afterlife is evident in the Iliad and Odyssey, where Athena notably guides Hercules and Odysseus through their obstacles in the underworld.

In a recent published journal published by Center of Open Access in Science, the cult of Itonia Athena was a popular cult that worshipped Athena in association with chthonic Hades, the lord of the underworld, making Athena the “mistress” of the underworld.¹⁶¹ The term Itonia is an epithet of Athena worshipped widely in many places in ancient Greece. Many ancient sculptures portray the Itonia Athena; the Itonia Athena from the Agoracritus' bronze complex, a famous sculpture that contributed to the Parthenon, and the representation of a ring stone Florence, where Athena is depicted as the “Lady of the Underworld,” standing near the three-headed Cerberus. The depiction of the goddess on this marble relief may reflect one of her cult titles "Itonia Athena." This title often emphasizes her warlike qualities. Alkaios, a famous Greek poet from the 7th century, describes Athena as “πολεμάδοκε,” (she who brings the war or she who gives fights). Because of this, Itonia Athena is often considered as “the protector of warriors.” In fact, the epithet Itonia refers to warfare, directly translating to “aggressive, adventurous.” Athena's warlike qualities are crucial in her identity of the mistress of the dead because as the goddess of war, she “fed Hades with the dead.” In the Mourning Athena, the Itonia aspect is evident, as both her warlike qualities and her association with the underworld is portrayed.

The East Pediment of the Parthenon

When Athens reached the pinnacle of its power around 500 BCE, Athena would crown its most famous architecture across the whole of Greece, the Parthenon. In the 5th century BC, the empire stretched from the West Mediterranean to the Black Sea, and new concepts such as democracy were introduced. The flourishing of Athens supported one of the biggest projects ever constructed in Greece, the construction of the Parthenon. The Parthenon was a temple built on the Acropolis of Athens between 447 and 438 BC, and it was mainly attributed to the patron goddess of the city, Athena. The building was decorated with marble structures that represented Athenian religion and cult. By focusing upon Athena's connection to the Parthenon we can complement the picture of her in the house with a more public and monumental function. Whereas the tripod located her influence in household and private matters, her appearance on the Acropolis associates her more directly with the civic and regional power of Athens.

The monumental sculpture of Athena on the east pediment of the Parthenon displays in large relief the power that the goddess exerted over Athens. Everything about this particular work of art is about the size and the location of the Parthenon on the acropolis of the city. The acropolis functioned as a place for ceremonial worship, a monument for democracy, and a tribute to Athenian military victory for the city of Athens and would have produced much of the way that Athenians would have thought about their relationship with the gods. In this case, the relief features Athena standing prominently next to Zeus and facing him in order to emphasize her close relationship with the chief god of the Pantheon. In this way, we might look at the relief as giving visual expression to what Solon describes as the

Solonian Athena, where Athena is Zeus's favorite daughter, Athens is Athena's favorite city, and because of this, both Zeus and Athena will grant the city their protection. The absence of Metis in the reliefs furthers this connection to Solon's view of Athena and Zeus, as it emphasizes how Athena solely belongs to Zeus.

In his article "Athena and Athens in the East Pediment of the Parthenon", Evelyn B. Harrison highlights the importance of the intimate relationship that the goddess shares with Zeus and how this aspect of their relationship relates to Solon's fragments. Harrison first discusses why Athena is portrayed with a spear and shield. "The goddess is not preparing to rush off into battle. She is about to pause and strip the divine armor from her immortal shoulders while Zeus rejoices in his newborn daughter."¹⁶² By showing this intimacy, the Solonian aspect of Athena is evident. Zeus cares for her daughter Athena, Athena cares for her city Athens, therefore Zeus also cares about the city of Athens.

In Harrison continues to discuss the significance of the Parthenon and what the portrayal of Athena in the Parthenon would have meant to Athenians.. "In no other Greek Temple was the sculptural decoration so directly related to the resident divinity as in the Parthenon."¹⁶³ In the Doric frieze of the Parthenon, the wide central part of an entablature, is decorated for the repetition of mythological themes, themes that "were employed with a more concentrated symbolism in the cult statue itself."¹⁶⁴ The symbolism that Harrison mentions here is a common topic in Greek art, the triumph of civilization over the uncivilized, barbarians. After the Persian war, ancient Athenians would have seen Athens as the protagonist of the struggle, and by portraying the myths of the birth of Athena, they would have stressed the position of their city goddess as the favorite daughter of Zeus and their city as the favorite of Athena. Harrison states that this special relationship between Athena and Zeus was "probably one of the most important reasons for choosing the birth of Athena rather than any other of her myths for the front gable of their temple."¹⁶⁵ The positions of the gods in the Pediment support this, as the central position is occupied by Zeus and Athena. Zeus is the "supreme being."¹⁶⁶ the most powerful god of the Olympians, and Athena is the patron goddess of Athens. As Harrison puts it, "the special relationship of Athena to Zeus"¹⁶⁷ that is depicted in the east pediment "expresses the preeminence of Athens not only in wealth and power but in all the higher forms of human achievement."¹⁶⁸ The Parthenon was built not only to honor Athena but also to celebrate the successes that the city of Athens achieved under the protection of their patron goddess.

6. CONCLUSION

While most people are somewhat aware of Athena's critical role in Greek literature, fewer people recognize her significance in everyday life in Athens. By examining the material culture of the cult of Athena, it is clear how Athena significantly influenced the lives of ancient Athenians. Many sources describe Athena's roles in literature, and many sources describe Athenian religious art, however, very few examine their complementary relationship. I believe that by examining two different perspectives on a topic, the answer becomes more apparent, and by incorporating both the literature and art aspects of Athena, they do not merely supplement each other but build onto each other, giving a fuller and complete image of Athena's cult during the classical age. This paper, by doing this, has contributed a complete picture of Athena in Athens and added another piece of the puzzle to complete the image of religion in ancient Greece. While I treated literature and art, her impact upon Greek culture extended well beyond these domains, music and drama to be two examples. There are many layers to Athena's presence in Athens, and it is absurd to only view this question on the surface level. Athena's influence stretch much past what is discussed in this paper, and her impact extend to even the modern day, where she plays a big role in pop culture, and is used as a symbolization for many virtues pursued today: intelligence, wisdom, reasoning, creativity, and logic. Only when a historical topic is considered from many facets can we see through the layers of obstacles brought about by time, and by completing the puzzle one piece at a time, we are answering the question of why our world is how it is today.

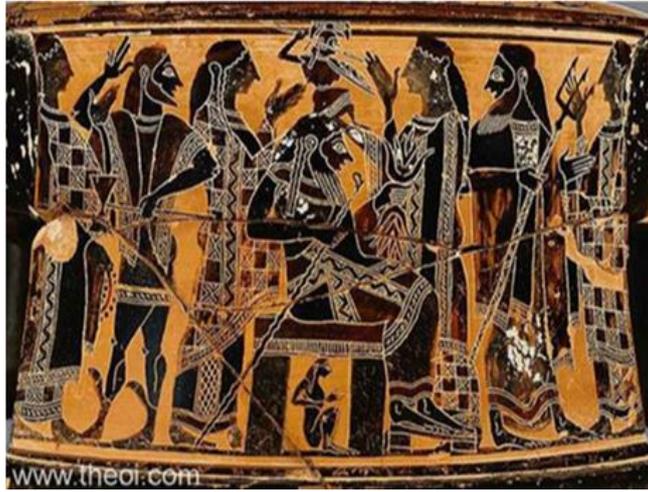


Figure1. (*Black Attic Ware Tripod*)

Artist: *Attributed to C Painter; Date:* 570 - 565 B.C.



Fig2. (*Tetradrachm Coin depicting the Goddess Athena*)

Artist: *Ancient Greek; Date:* 490 BCE - 322 BCE

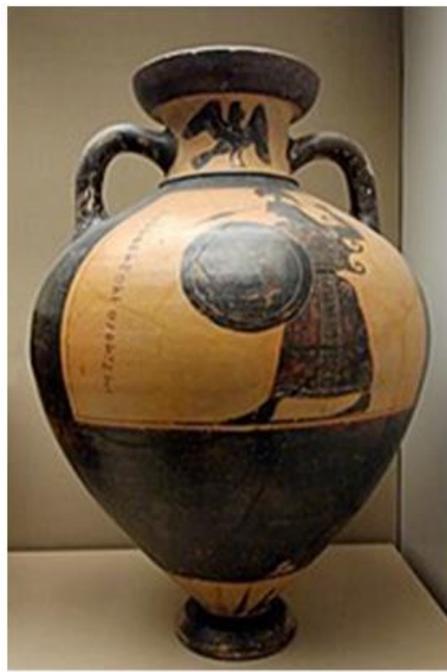


Fig3. (*The Burgon Vase*)

Artist: *Attributed to the Burgon Group; Date:* 560 BC



Fig4. (Marble Relief of Mourning Athena)

Artist: Ancient Athenian; **Date:** 460 BC



Fig5. (East Pediment of Parthenon)

Artist: Attributed to many artists, primarily Agoracritos and Phidias; **Time Period:** 432 BC

¹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), vol. 3, 29-32.

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⁴ Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2017), 22.

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⁶ John Julius Norwich, *Great Architecture of the World* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1991), 63.

⁷ Evelyn B. Harrison, "Athena and Athens in the East Pediment of the Parthenon," *American Journal of Archaeology* 71/1 (1967): 27-58; Joan B. Connolly, "Parthenon and Parthenoi: A Mythological Interpretation of the Parthenon Frieze," *American Journal of Archaeology* 100/1 (1996), 53-80.

⁸ See Martin Litchfield West, *Hesiod Works and Days* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Catherine M. Schlegel and Henry Weinfeld, *Works and Days: A Translation and Commentary for the Social Sciences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

⁹ Derek Collins, "Hesiod and the Divine Voice of the Muses," *Arethusa*, 32/3 (1999), 241.

- ¹⁰ West, *Theogony and Works and Days*, vii.
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- ¹³ On the contribution of Hesiod to Greek mythology, see Jasper Griffin, "Greek Myth and Hesiod," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, eds. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 72–92.
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- ¹⁸ Ibid.
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- ²⁰ Ibid.
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- ²² Elani Temperance, "The Unique Title "Tritogeneia," [Blogspot.com](https://blogspot.com), 19 Sept. 2022, baringtheaegis.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-unique-title-tritogeneia.html. Accessed 19 Sept. 2022.
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- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ West, *Theogony*, 30.
- ²⁷ Ibid, 29.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
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- ⁴² Ibid, 28.
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- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
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⁶⁶Ibid.

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¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 68.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 69.

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