

Pallas Athene, the Warrior Queen

By Marcha Fox

Astronomical Description

Pallas, the second asteroid to be discovered after Ceres, was found in the main asteroid belt by Heinrich Wilhelm Matthäus Olbers on March 28, 1802. She has a diameter of 538 kilometers and an orbital period of 4.61 years. The orbit's inclination is a steep 43 degrees to the ecliptic. At its brightest, Pallas has a magnitude of 6, which is just barely visible in dark skies to the naked eye. Her surface is dark and probably similar to carbonaceous meteorites in composition.

Mythological Background

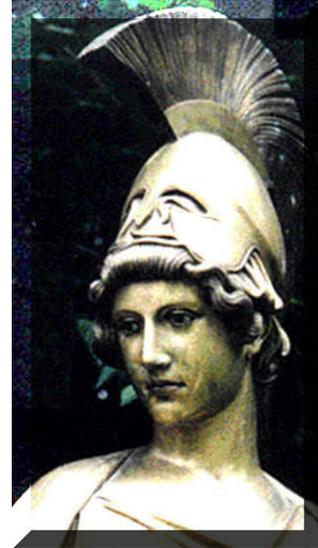
Also known as the virgin goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athene was ranked so high by the Greeks that only Jupiter/Zeus out-ranked her. Of course the reason for this is the fact that it was Jupiter who "birthed" her, at least according to Homeric legend which declared she sprang from the head of her father as a full-grown warrior queen, clad in armor and bellowing a victory shout. Only to someone like Jupiter would such a woman be considered "Daddy's Little Girl."

Pallas' inception, however, predates the Greeks, going back to Libya approximately 6,000 years ago. Their legends state that she was born on the shores of Lake Triton, the area around which is home to several tribes of African Amazons. After her birth, three Libyan nymphs raised her as the goddess, Neith. When the Libyans arrived in Crete around 4,000 BC, they brought her along and passed on the legend. The Greeks eventually embellished the tale, claiming Pallas' mother to be Metis, the Titan sea goddess who helped Jupiter/Zeus prevail over his father, Cronus, by giving him the ancient equivalent of Ipecac so that he would cough up his swallowed children. Of course Zeus, who felt it his godly duty to mate with anything female, particularly those that showed him any kindness, pursued her until he managed to get her pregnant. Shortly thereafter, however, Gaia and Uranus warned Mr. Stud Muffin that Metis' child would become king of gods and men. This, of course, was not good news as this would displace Jupiter/Zeus from his godly position. Thus, he did what any Greek god would do and consumed her whole.

For whatever reason, probably as the result of extreme indigestion, Jupiter/Zeus contracted a blinding headache. Being a bit inclined toward drama, he had someone split his head open with a double-edged axe and *Poof!* Pallas Athene was born. Is it any wonder she was his favorite?

There are numerous tales and stories associated with Pallas Athene, including her name, which was originally simply Athene. One day she was sparring with her foster sister, Pallas, daughter of a local sea-god and more than likely a cousin, when Daddy Jupiter distracted her, causing her to accidentally kill her sister. As part of her grief, she set her name before her own.

She was seen as a protector of cities, a prophetess, and invincible in battle. Mythologically, she helped Hercules with his labors, assisted Odysseus in his voyage from Troy, and gave Perseus a hand disposing of Medusa. She also gave Athens the gift of the olive tree, beating out Poseidon's gift of the horse. To appease him, the gods deprived Athenian women of their citizenship, their vote, and the right to give their children their surname. Thus, from that point on, women began to lose their rights and this was blamed on Athene.



This was further reinforced in the trial of Orestes, which boiled down to who the true parent of a child was, the mother or father. Since Pallas Athene was born of a man, she testified that it was the male parent who was most important. Apollo, who defended Orestes, also stated that the mother only provided a place for the seed implanted by the male to grow. Needless to say, this did not exactly move feminism forward.

Nonetheless, Pallas Athene was highly revered. Men could relate to her because she clearly identified closely with them, though her feminine compassion and wisdom definitely leaked through. She was a great tactician and strategist and, while she was always portrayed as a beautiful woman, the softer side of her female nature was not apparent. She was seen as their intellectual equal, yet cloaked in feminine insight, understanding, and logical problem solving versus the male inclination to either pull out their sword or eat anything that got in their way.

Pallas Athene was given credit for inventing the flute, trumpet, potter's wheel and earthenware vessels, the plough, rake, and ox-yoke, to name a few. She was seen as the goddess of arts and crafts and all artisans, including all smith trades. Cooking, handwork, spinning, and weaving were also in her purview as well as healing. Obviously, she was quite talented, which earned her rulership over the domain of creativity. She was also active politically and had no problem taking charge. Nonetheless, in various ways she betrayed her gender by siding with the male point of view rather than defending her own.

Astrological Implications

Pallas Athena possessed all the positive feminine traits but none of the negative or ultra-fem characteristics, *i.e.* moodiness, vindictiveness, or the qualities of the classic seductress that make men mere putty in a female's hands. While in some respects, from the male point of view, she was the perfect woman, nonetheless, she was more of a big

sister type than the soft, vulnerable, subordinate female that most men wanted for a mate. She held the potential to be their best friend or companion, but lacking the typical feminine wiles, she also didn't captivate the male of the species, either. She was as smart as they were, possibly smarter, and didn't play the gender game trying to impress anyone with her sexuality. She was what she was, for which she didn't apologize or make any attempt to impress anyone. She was the ideal female companion who didn't put any demands on men. She had the intelligence, wisdom, and talents to be entirely self-sufficient, yet also didn't inspire the protective, domineering, or sexual inclinations of the average male. She was more like a "buddy" who didn't compete with their conquests, yet didn't inspire their protection, either, since she was perfectly capable of taking care of herself.

This is truly the dilemma of many women in today's world. They can make as much money or even more than any man and can take care of their own needs, yet their longing for an equal companion is often frustrated since men gravitate toward women who need their protection. Pallas women are the strong career women of today, who can take care of themselves. Nonetheless, they are often lonely in their lack of having the male - female relationships that they desire. As patroness of the arts as well as crafts, Athene helps men and women alike find creative fulfillment in areas other than relationships. Depending on the Sign and House in which she's placed, she brings the strength of feminine wisdom to bear along with all the various talents noted above.

For example, Indira Gandhi had Pallas in Scorpio, her 3rd House, indicating passion of thought in an inherently feminine manner. Trine Pluto in the 11th House showed harmonious and transformational influences on the masses with a square to Neptune in the 12th bringing in spirituality and idealism that conflicted with many of her more practical thoughts. Sextile Mars in her 1st House of personality brings out the drive and example she displayed. Quincunx Jupiter in her 10th House of career and reputation shows the adjustments required of her as a public figure.

Hillary Clinton has Pallas in Aquarius, her Natal 9th House of social interactions. It's trine Uranus in her 12th House of Gemini, showing a logical path to achieve her dreams to bring about change. It also squares Jupiter in her 6th House of work, implying a conflict relative to her inflated beliefs regarding work in the social arena.

Pallas Athene is truly a figure to whom modern women can identify in large numbers. They're immersed in a man's world with admiration not always coming for the characteristics they like most to tout. Suppressing your femininity to gain favor is simply the way it's done in today's world. Pallas Athena doesn't just reflect the dilemma of the modern career woman. She invented it.

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Marcha Fox has a bachelors degree in physics from Utah State University and has worked at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas for over 20 years. She began studying astrology over twenty-five years ago with the intent of debunking it and instead became convinced of its credibility and astounded by its accuracy. She is currently an advanced student pursuing her diploma from OCA. The mother of six

children and grandmother of (currently) 15, she has had a statistically significant sampling of astrological test subjects within her close perusal for many years. Much to the mortification of her offspring, some of these long-time observations are documented in her sign write-ups.

As a physicist she is deeply aware that the most profound questions in the universe are yet unanswered. When those answers are found, she believes that the truth and mechanism of astrology will be among them. She has worked with the space shuttle in a variety of capacities ranging from engineer to manager for most of her career. As that program fades into the sunset she hopes to do the same and focus her sights on a new career in astrology. Marcha is a Capricorn with a Virgo rising and Gemini Moon. She welcomes your comments at astrogoddess@ValkyrieAstrology.com.

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