Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Athena, Greek Goddess of Wisdom and War by Heather E. Schwartz, Susan C. Shelmerdine", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1085. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

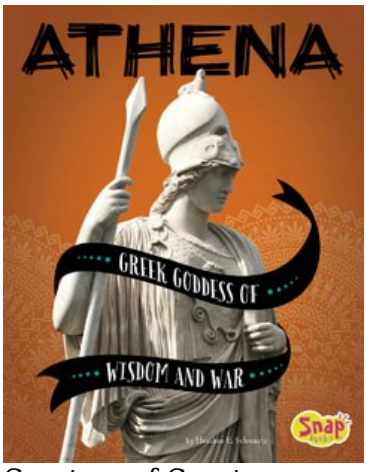
Heather E. Schwartz , Susan C. Shelmerdine

Athena, Greek Goddess of Wisdom and War

United States of America (2019)

TAGS: Arachne Ares Athena Athens Gaia / Gaea Homer Perseus Poseidon Trojan War





Courtesy of Capstone publishing.

General information	
Title of the work	Athena, Greek Goddess of Wisdom and War
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America; Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2019
First Edition Details	Heather E. Schwartz, *Athena, Greek Goddess of Wisdom and War*, "Legendary Goddesses". North Mankato: Snap Books (Capstone Press), 2019, 32 pp.
ISBN	9781543559156 pb
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Children (6–8 year olds)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
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Creators



Heather E. Schwartz (Author)

Heather E. Schwartz is an award-winning American children' book author. She has written content for Disney, Sesame Street, National Geographic Kids magazine and more. Among her books are: The Basics of Game Design, The History of Gaming, Carli Lloyd: Soccer Star, Simone Manuel: Swimming Star, Women Sports Stars.

Source:

Official website (accessed: July 19, 2020).

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Susan C. Shelmerdine is a professor of Classical Studies at the University of North Carolina., Greensboro. She received her Ph.D. University of Michigan in 1981. She researches Greek and Latin pedagogy and in early Greek poetry.

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Additional information

Summary

This book is part of a *Legendary Goddesses* by Capstone publishing, a set of short informational books on ancient goddesses, which includes books on Aphrodite, Hera, Diana, Freya, Hathor and Isis. The book provides numerous facts on the goddess Athena, such as myth and cults, supplemented by photos and illustrations (from various picture archives such as Alamy, Getty and many more listed in the book's inner cover). The photos in the book are accompanied by explanatory notes which describe the illustrated scenes. The book also contains short facts about the goddess which are scattered across the chapters.

The book offers a brief and adapted information on myths related to Athena. The myths included are: the Judgment of Paris and the Trojan War, in which Athena is described as fighting with the Greeks and even giving them the idea to build the Trojan Horse; Athena's anger at Tiresias; her inventions (rake, plough, yoke, flute). Ares is described as opposed to Athena; where he is the embodiment of the brutal aspects of war, she was considered "more civil and just" (p. 7). Also included are Athena's family tree, the 12 Olympians, Athena's contest with Poseidon, her assistance to Perseus and Hercules, her feud with Arachne, the city of Athens, Athena's costume and symbols, festivals, her appearance in literature, from Homer to Riordan and on TV (*Clash of the Titans* 1981 and 2010, Disney's *Hercules* 1997 and *Hercules: The Animated Series*, *Percy Jackson*).

Analysis

The book offers an overview of the goddess and her cult. It is a part of a series of informational texts that use a mixture of storytelling, and archival images to present the goddess Athena. The goddess' flaws (jealous, angry) are presented as well as her merits (powerful, wise). There is a moral aim for this presentation, as the author says, "as these stories show, the Greek gods and goddesses weren't perfect. Athena and all the others had both virtues and shortcomings, just like humans." (p. 17). This is a very clear explanation for the readers who may be encountering the Greek pantheon for the first time. It explains the anthropomorphic appearance and conduct of the Greek gods, who were far from being perfect or even righteous.

Athena is presented as a key figure in the Greek pantheon and her superior intellect and innovations are emphasized, but also her temper

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and jealousy. She was a strong goddess, but not perfect, which makes her relatable to humans.

As in other books in this series, the author explains to the readers about the inter-marriages of the gods. The author notes that it was commons for the Greek gods and goddesses to marry their family members "the gods were all relatives of Gaia, so marrying other gods often meant marrying siblings or other close family members. As part of myths, the gods did not have to follow the usual practices of humans" (p. 9). This is an attempt to explain this intricate issue to young readers who may be alarmed by the breaking of a very strong modern social taboo. Explaining that all the gods were in fact the children of Gaia gives the readers a sense of time- this happened long ago when the gods were initially created so they were all created by the same parent. Naturally the readers need to be familiar with the character of Gaia in order to understand this.

The other explanation the author offers refers to the nature of the gods is as "part of myths' that is, we may guess, they are an invention, creature of fiction in stories. For the ancient Greeks (at least most of them) the gods were real in some form or another, even if they did not believe in the myths; the myths had their won functions in society. The gods married each other not because they are "made-up" and therefore do not need to follow human law, but because that as immortal gods, who created humans, they did not need to follow human laws.

The last part on reception of the Athena in books and TV connects the ancient myths to modern cultural lives and shows the readers the predominance of myth even today.

This book is aimed at the general public, mainly young readers, who may wish to know more about the goddess of the ancient World. It is a short book yet it tries to include various information of the goddess. The book is written in clear language and not in an academic style. The academic consultant may have checked the facts and added more information on the goddess. The connecting to the pop culture presentation of the goddess may appeal to readers and help them recognize this mythological character in connection with her appearance in modern literature and cinema. Furthermore, listing her modern "appearances" make the goddess appear relevant for our modern times and not just an old relic of the past.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Arachne Ares Athena Athens Gaia / Gaea Homer Perseus Poseidon Trojan War
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Family Revenge

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