

Pallas Athene – The Boardroom Goddess

by Stella Woods www.stellastarwoman.com

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At the beginning of the 19th century, several small planets or asteroids were discovered orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. Almost 200 years later, as the feminist movement moved into full swing, astrologers began to experiment with these new archetypes. The first asteroids to be discovered were named after four major Olympian goddesses – Ceres, Juno, Vesta and Pallas Athene. Ceres Juno and Vesta were the three sisters of Jupiter and Pallas Athene his daughter. All four were important in Greek mythology, overseeing the important initiations and stages of life and interestingly enough, their cults predate those of their male counterparts. Prior to the discovery of these asteroids, astrologers recognised only two female archetypes - the Moon (woman as mother and nurturer) and Venus (woman as seductress and lover). As they gradually began to use the asteroids in chart interpretation, the cults of these ancient goddesses were rediscovered and celebrated. The rise of the feminine had begun!

In this article we will examine the mythology and astrological symbolism of the goddess and asteroid, Pallas Athene.

Pallas Athene was the daughter of Zeus or Jupiter, king of the gods, born from her father's head after he swallowed her mother Metis, a primordial sea goddess who was pregnant with the young Pallas. Not only did Pallas not have a normal birth, she was born fully mature and clothed in a suit of armour! Pallas is the archetype of the proud daughter born of a powerful sky father and an intuitively wise mother. But because, on a conscious level, Pallas knew only her father's masculine, logical and rational ways, she rejected her unconscious and vulnerable feminine side and hid her psychic and intuitive ability beneath her armour.

The Greeks worshipped Pallas as the goddess of wisdom and justice, patroness of the arts and protectress of the state of Athens. Perceptive and wise, her counsel could always be relied upon. She combined the bravery of the warrior with a cool strategic and intellectual approach. Think of a female litigation lawyer or top woman tennis player. Pallas Athene is often pictured with an owl reminding us of her sharpness and ability to see both the light and dark side of any situation. Her intelligence is unmarred by instinct. She is the master of rational, left-brain thinking, fighting the dark and primitive side of existence and preferring justice and law to revenge or retaliation.

We can easily spot the woman who vibrates energetically to the Pallas archetype. She usually has a tough, often androgynous persona, is articulate and intelligent and completely at home in the world of men and business. Men accept her as a comrade or equal. She rarely shows weakness or vulnerability and can feel uncomfortable around women who express these qualities. Once you get to know one of these modern Amazons however, you may notice that she has a fear of success and often feels uncomfortable in traditional male female relationships. After all, she knows she is a woman operating in a man's world. A Pallas woman usually loves and admires her father and enjoys the company of men who will meet her on an intellectual rather than an emotional level. She is often lonely.

Pallas embodies many of the qualities of the air signs with her mental creative urges, especially the fairness and strategic nature of Libra and the intelligence and objectivity of Aquarius. Astrologically, she shows how we deal with the issues of learning, creativity, the arts, politics, healing, alienation from relationships, competition and the fear of success. She also shows us how to become more strategic and deliberate in our actions. On an outer level her story shows how the principle of feminine wisdom can be adapted to the strategic requirements of business and politics. On an inner level her myth traces the evolutions of consciousness whereby the feminine creative and sexual urge (represented by her mother Metis) becomes polarised to

release the masculine creative intellectual impulse (represented by her father Jupiter).

If you are a woman with a prominent Pallas in your chart (e.g. conjunct a personal planet, Ascendant or Midheaven), you are probably wise, intelligent and courageous and have learned to overcome your instinctive nature. You are also likely to be proficient in several of the Pallas areas – the arts, healing, law, justice and political activism. Or you may choose professional success over marriage and motherhood. If you are a man, you are likely to attract intelligent, successful women who defy conventional male/female stereotypes.

Pallas in each of the zodiac signs describes the twelve stages of creative intelligence. For those wishing to read more on this interesting topic, I can recommend Demetra George's excellent book *Asteroid Goddesses*. This is what George has to say about those born with Pallas in the sign of Scorpio. "A penetrating perception and ability to see beneath the surface of things. As a healer Pallas Athene in Scorpio is very strong – piercing to the core of the difficulty and getting to the root of the problem. In addition, employing the techniques of depth psychology that bring the unconscious to conscious awareness.... As part of her healing repertoire, Pallas Athene in Scorpio also uses the technique of sexual therapy and cellular regeneration. Aesthetically this placement expresses the vision of symbolic art, such as mandalas, meanings within meanings or sex as an art form as in Tantra or Kama Sutra. Politically, this is a fearless and ruthless warrior, controlling the power of the masses, and skilled in strategy and espionage. The wisdom of Pallas Athene in Scorpio is the wisdom of insight."