

Pallas Athena, a Revision of the Myth

by Lu Gaitán

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Pallas was born alone, a noble descendant of the great Zeus

Divine, fortunate goddess, shaker of armies, of courageous spirit

Ineffable, illustrious, renowned inhabitress of caves

Who haunts shores and high promontory peaks

Well-shady mountains and slopes solace your spirit

Joyful with weapons, arrogant of mortals' souls with delirium

Martial virgin, of terrible spirit, possessor of terrible spirit

Killer of Gorgon, enemy of the nuptial bed, of the arts, blissful mother

Impetuous, madness for the wicked; for the good, wisdom

Male and female born, begetter of wars, crafty

Of changeable form, serpent, inspiring, honored with great honors

Of the phlegrean giants' exterminator, Amazon

Born in Tritonis, deliverer of evils, victorious divinity

Days and nights, always in my final hours

Hear me, I beseech thee, give me peace of eternal bliss

Contentment and health in happy times

Clear-eyed, wide-eyed, wide-knowing, most suppliant Lady.

So be it. So be it!

- Orphic Hymn to Athena



We know there is a direct connection between astrology and mythology, but this is not neutral, but situated in a time and space, referring to the cultures of Greece and Rome: war was a core ethos, worshipping male gods, with women occupying secondary and suffering positions; mythical stories were instrumental to certain forms of production and organization, being a central part of that society and culture; there is a symbolic counterpart to whatever happens in the economy and society. That is where mythology and astrology come in, and to understand this, I would like to explore the myth of the goddess Pallas Athena.

The best-known version we have about the birth of Pallas Athena is that she was born from her father's head, Zeus, which already gives us a lot of information about the archetype, in which there is an apparent intellectual component. In addition, the goddess is born an adult, which tells us she is already mature and self-centered. People with this powerful archetype tend to be more mental than emotional, more armored, and less soft, which could fit very well with some versions of Sagittarius, Capricorn, and Aquarius. That is the best-known version of the myth, yet other aspects of Pallas Athena come up when we trace the origins of this story back to the matrilineal cultures of Old Europe and Africa. I say "matrilineal" because they were not matriarchal, but there was no domination of women over men. They were societies based on the principle of cooperation and worship of the Great Goddess, animals, and trees; there was a significant advance in agriculture without inequalities between social classes. In addition, people knew that they belonged to a family/clan/tribe because they were born from a woman's womb and not because they received a man's surname. They are said to be matrilineal because they follow the line of the womb, the matria.

So, going back to the goddess that brought me here, Pallas Athena was born in Libya six thousand years ago in Lake Triton, a place that does not exist today but occurs in some scriptures. The African Amazons, a people of warrior women who later appear to be located somewhere in Turkey, are said to have lived in the area of that lake. Pallas Athena has an ancient name: Tritogenia. This name refers to her origins in the water. It also brings valuable information because Pallas, in her best-known version as a strategist, goddess of justice and knowledge, born from the head of Zeus, is closer to the earth

element or air and not so much to water because this, in astrology, speaks of imagination, intuition, and emotions. After her birth, Pallas is found and nurtured by three nymphs. From that point on, she represents the triple Goddess Neith, a goddess depicted with a serpent, who could also incarnate in the figures of Pallas, Athena, and Medusa. How does Neith become the goddess Pallas Athena? Athena accidentally kills her sister Pallas, and, out of sadness, she decides to name herself after her dead sister. Let's say it all: Jupiter distracts Athena, and that's why she kills her. So, here we see the version of Pallas Athena as a goddess who competes with her sisters and is so focused on her task that she doesn't register anything. And when we go further, we see that behind that competition is the father, the patriarchy. Pallas was a protective goddess of the matrifocal order, while Athena was the warrior version. So, the warrior kills the nurturer. The patriarchy defeated Old Europe, and the myths express that.

Around 4000 BC, refugees from Libya who came to the island of Crete brought their goddess, and there she mingled with the cults of Old Europe. "Old Europe" is the name given by Marija Gimbutas, an archaeologist, to the cultures that existed on that continent before the arrival of the warring and invading peoples of the Indus Valley. If we situate it historically, it is the time of the Taurus Era. Those cultures were peaceful, prioritized cooperation over competition, were agricultural (and not cattle-raising), there were no differences in social classes, and they worshipped the Mother Goddess or Great Goddess, as well as trees and animals, among which the bull/cow, snakes, and felines had a central place. Around 2500 B.C., more or less at the time when the Age of Aries began, the warrior peoples who invaded Europe began to arrive, and that is when the mythical stories started to change.

At that time, forms of production also changed: from agriculture to cattle raising, peace to war, classless society to slavery. Then, the birth of Pallas from the head of Zeus is, from the historical perspective, what marks the passage from matrilineal societies to patriarchy; it is the annulment of the previous legacy because there is no mother, only a father. Pallas, in the best-known stories, was the favorite daughter of Zeus. So, what today we call daddy issues, that little thing we women have in our minds, was already present in Greek mythology. In short, daddy issues refer to the infatuation of female daughters with their fathers, the idealization, and the need to be approved, loved, and congratulated by them. That is closely associated with the Pallas archetype. Think also of the more common forms of fatherhood, where males are busy with world affairs and have no time or energy to connect with their daughters.

In this study of the myth of Pallas that came from the great astrologer Demetra George, I was surprised when I discovered that this goddess was associated with the figure of the serpent. Esoteric traditions say that taking micro-doses of venom from some snakes enables divinatory visions, that is, being clairvoyant. For this reason, snakes are a symbol of prophecy. In astrology, these reptiles belong to the sign of Scorpio. They change their skin regularly, as do people with a strong presence of Scorpio and Pluto energy, who go through crises and rebirths more or less cyclically. In turn, the figure of the Ouroboros, the serpent that eats its tail and symbolizes life-death-life cycles is also associated with the sign of Scorpio, even though we know about cycles of life-death-life thanks to the lunar phases. So, a Cancerian/lunar version of the serpent also appears. Recall that in Libya, the place of origin of Pallas Athena, this triple goddess was called Neith and had the form of a snake.

In addition, Pallas carried on her shield the head of Medusa, which has serpents instead of hair. Medusa was the queen of an Amazon tribe of Libya and was one of the incarnations of the triple Goddess Neith. She was a beautiful woman, raped by Poseidon in Athena's temple. Athena blames Medusa for the rape she suffers and turns her into a snake-headed monster, a being who is very dangerous and petrifies men with her gaze. Here, it is interesting to note the associations between the gaze, the serpent, and sexuality, attributes that are also present when we speak of Scorpio. Finally, the hero Perseus cuts off Medusa's head and gives it to Athena to carry on her shield. That version of Pallas Athena is very unsupportive and defends the new patriarchal order.

So, adding up all the stories, Athena kills her two sisters and thereby strips herself of companionship, her connection to prophecy, and instinct because animals, in myths, tell us about the power of the instinctual, with the snake as an almost universal embodiment of sexuality. Athena goes from being a virgin goddess - independent and wild - to a goddess who remains isolated and prioritizes reason without emotion, forgetting her animal side.

On the other hand, it is interesting that Pallas Athena is the protective goddess of the city of Athens. For that, she had to face Poseidon, the god of the sea, who lost the battle for the city's patronage. Poseidon was indignant and threatened the gods with destroying everything. The gods, to calm him down, took

away the citizenship and the right to vote from the women of the city of Athens, as well as the right to give their children their surname. At that precise moment, the men began to pass their surnames to their children. In the myth, the passage from the old matrilineal order to patriarchy appears again.

Athena, the guardian of Athens, has a giant statue built in her honor on the Acropolis, next to a snake. Somehow, the symbolism of Old Europe survives and appears in different ways. Athena is also said to have been the mother of the serpent child Erichonius, who later became king of Greece. That brings a record of Athena not only as a warrior but also as a mother and guardian. Thus, other references to this archetype appear, more associated with Cancer and the Moon.

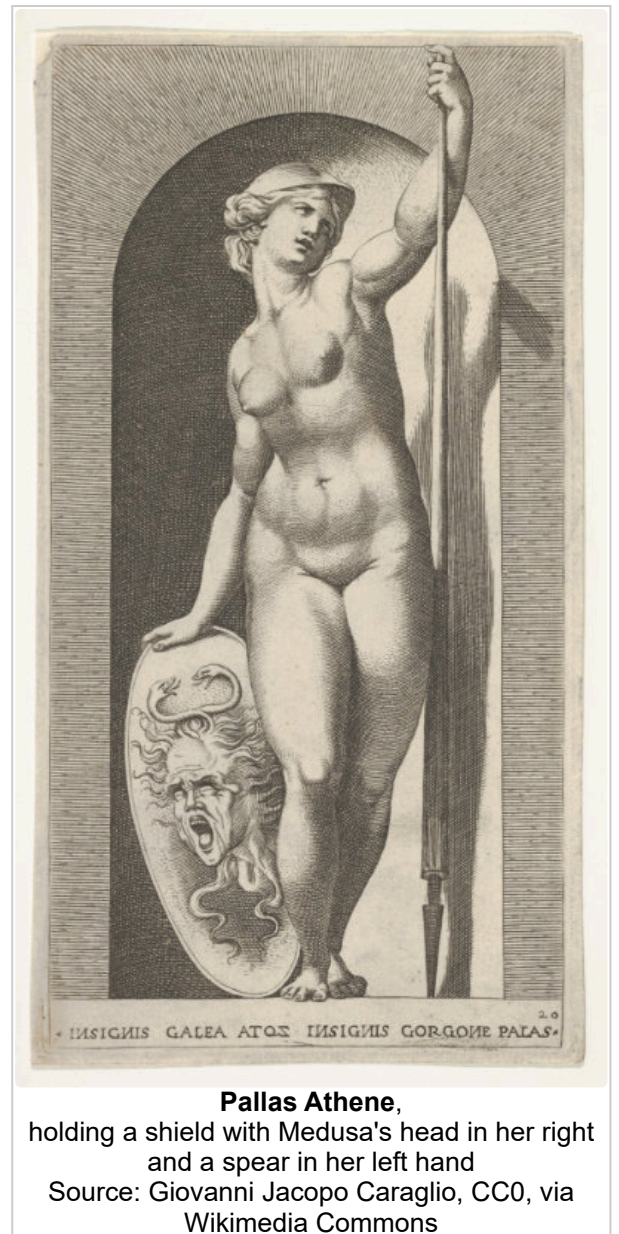
In addition to the archetype, Pallas Athena is an asteroid in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. It is a sort of bridge between the personal and the social. It is nine months in each sign and will speak to us of our strategist and wise side but also of our guardian, creative, visionary, and healing side.

In the most common reading about this asteroid and this archetype, we say that Pallas is powerful among women dedicated to science, politics, and leading work teams, but also rules art, especially embroidery, pottery, and weaving. I say this because the goddess gave humans the gift of art. In addition, Pallas Athena has a healing aspect. She is said to have given Aesculapius, the creator of medicine, some blood that served as an antidote to revive the dead and regenerate the living.

Astrologically, Pallas governs techniques that integrate mind and body, especially visualization, guided meditation, mind control, hypnosis, and affirmations, as well as forms of medicine such as acupuncture, homeopathy, macrobiotics, or ayurveda. So, if you have this powerful archetype/asteroid in your chart, you tend to be attracted to these subjects. The technical aspects to know if you have this powerful asteroid in your chart are: it is in houses 1, 4, 7, 10, or 12; in challenging aspect to the Sun, the Moon, or the ruler of the Ascendant.

Pallas Athena, then, has a fierce side, a creative side, and a healing side. Courage and bravery are attributes of this archetype. There is a significant aspect mentioned in psychology. Sometimes, we come across a person who is very focused on her business, active, and very good at what she does but is afraid of doing well because someone may punish her, which happened when Athena defeated Poseidon in the dispute for the city's patronage. She wins, but women lose their rights. It is a fear of success because women know that advancing and occupying places of prominence in this world provokes attack or retaliation. So, part of the challenge that comes with this archetype is to deal with those fears. And, of course, there is also the version of Pallas that is very competitive and doesn't register anything in its wake.

In 2023, the asteroid Pallas will be in Cancer and Leo. I think one of the enormous challenges will be to take care and be guardians of our own, to dare to create and express publicly who we are. Visualizations or guided meditations go very well with this transit and, in a way, will collaborate with the challenges of Saturn in Pisces: learning to manifest what we imagine and to let our prophetic gifts grow and mature. Metaphysics also has a lot of this goddess because we deal with the seven laws of the universe, and thanks to these rules, we can manifest in matter. It is an unasked-for piece of advice, but if you can, study metaphysics and investigate this path. There is much to do in this field: we need to learn how to manifest rain in drought areas and where there are fires, as well as lobbying governments and corporations. After all, Pallas Athena is the embodiment of spiritual wisdom but also a connoisseur of the affairs of this world, the power, the institutions, the traditions, and the matter. I think we are very used to



Pallas Athene,

holding a shield with Medusa's head in her right
and a spear in her left hand

Source: Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio, CC0, via
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making visualizations for us to do well in work and love, but we do not do it for the collective. It will also be a year to commit to the things that make our hearts beat, ignite us, and make us passionate. Be brave.

As in many other times, Humanity is transitioning to a New Age. We are no longer making the passage from Taurus to Aries but from Pisces to Aquarius. That translates into a change of paradigms, an extremely uncomfortable moment, yet allowing us to create other narratives. Therefore, it is essential to know that there are other forms of social and political organization, other forms of production, and other ways of conceiving the sacred if we do not remain locked in this way of living, believing it is the only one possible. I do not think we are in a position to recreate the time of the Age of Taurus, nor do I think it makes much sense, but I believe we can bring some of that imagery to this moment and begin to try other forms. Especially for those of us engaged in astrological study, research, or outreach and want astrology to have roots in our world. With greater or lesser awareness, we are operating on the symbolic field of the collective of which we are a part. The goddess Pallas Athena is named after one of the dead sisters and carries a shield that protects her in battles, with the Medusa's head right at the level of her heart: the defeated survives for whoever is willing to see it and give it place, for whoever dares to take on the task of this time.

