

ATHENA

In [Greek religion](#) and [mythology](#), **Athena** or **Athene** (/əˈθiːnə/ or /əˈθiːniː/; **Attic**: Ἀθηνᾶ, *Athēnā* or Ἀθηναία, *Athēnaia*; **Epic**: Ἀθηναίη, *Athēnaiē*; **Ionic**: Ἀθήνη, *Athēnē*; **Doric**: Ἀθάνα, *Athānā*), also referred to as **Pallas Athena/Athene** (/ˈpæləs/; Παλλὰς Ἀθηνᾶ; Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη), is the goddess of wisdom, courage, inspiration, civilization, law and justice, just warfare, mathematics, strength, strategy, the arts, crafts, and skill. [Minerva](#) is the [Roman goddess identified with](#) Athena.^[3]

Athena is also a shrewd companion of [heroes](#) and is the [goddess](#) of heroic endeavour. She is the [virgin](#) patroness of [Athens](#). The Athenians founded the [Parthenon](#) on the [Acropolis](#) of her namesake city, [Athens](#) (Athena Parthenos), in her honour.^[3]

Athena's veneration as the patron of Athens seems to have existed from the earliest times, and was so persistent that archaic myths about her were recast to adapt to cultural changes. In her role as a protector of the city (*polis*), many people throughout the Greek world worshiped Athena as *Athena Polias* (Ἀθηνᾶ Πολιάς "Athena of the city"). The city of [Athens](#) and the goddess Athena essentially bear the same name (*Athena* the Goddess, *Athenai* the city) while it is not known which of the two words is derived from the other.^[4]

Roman fable of Arachne

The [fable](#) of [Arachne](#) is a late Roman addition to Classical [Greek mythology](#)^[37] but does not appear in the myth repertoire of the Attic vase-painters. Arachne's name simply means *spider* (αράχνη). Arachne was the daughter of a famous dyer in [Tyrian purple](#) in Hypaipa of [Lydia](#), and a weaving student of Athena. She became so conceited of her skill as a weaver that she began claiming that her skill was greater than that of Athena herself.

Athena gave Arachne a chance to redeem herself by assuming the form of an old woman and warning Arachne not to offend the deities. Arachne scoffed and wished for a weaving contest, so she could prove her skill.

Athena wove the scene of her victory over [Poseidon](#) that had inspired her patronage of Athens. According to Ovid's Latin narrative, Arachne's tapestry featured twenty-one episodes of the infidelity of the deities, including [Zeus](#) being unfaithful with [Leda](#), with [Europa](#), and with [Danaë](#). Athena admitted that Arachne's work was flawless, but was outraged at Arachne's offensive choice of subjects that displayed the failings and transgressions of the deities. Finally, losing her temper, Athena destroyed Arachne's tapestry and loom, striking it with her shuttle.

Athena then struck Arachne with her staff, which changed her into a spider. In some versions, the destruction of her loom leads Arachne to hang herself in despair; Athena takes pity on her, and transforms her into a spider. In the aforementioned version, Arachne wove scenes of joy while Athena wove scenes of horror.

The fable suggests that the origin of weaving lay in imitation of spiders and that it was considered to have been perfected first in [Asia Minor](#).

(Source: Wikipedia. "Athena.")

