

## Athena Parthenos: Athenian Cultural Imperialism and the Patriarchy

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**Abstract :** The Parthenon occupies a dominating position on top of the ancient Acropolis of Athens, giving the Greek world a clear view of the ancient city's patron goddess, Athena. The technically refined nature of the fifth century B.C. temple, combined with the colossal statue of Athena Parthenos, has been considered a monumental tribute to Athenian hubris. The Parthenon specifically calls on Athena's main personage as a goddess who creates and advances culture, a notion the Athenians specifically portray in her epithet as a parthenos or a virgin. This paper builds off of the modern research of R. F. Hooker, C. J. Herington and Susan Deacy, who discuss the evolution of Athena and distinguishes the significance of the Parthenos epithet attached to Athena on the Acropolis. The use of Parthenos suggests the Athenians intentionally portrayed a virginal Athena to reaffirm the presence of the patriarchy within the Greek world of the fifth century, specifically seen in the scene of Athena's birth on the Parthenon. The suggestive subjugation of Athena to the patriarchy serves to establish a patriarchal presence within the Acropolis while simultaneously exposing the rise of Athenian hubris following the Persian War. Various elements of the Parthenon, from its pediments to the monumental statue inside, show Athena as a goddess reduced to mere womanhood in the presence of the patriarchy, a function that emphasizes the Athenian hubris displayed throughout the Parthenon.

**Keywords :** ancient history, greek mythology, women studies, religion

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