

Lysistrata as Athena
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Aristophanes wrote the comedy *Lysistrata* as a dream for peace when the people of Athens were suffering one of their worst crises since the Persian War. Having just received word that their naval expeditionary force had met with total destruction in Sicily, the Athenians were left with virtually no navy and no hope. The Spartan army had set up a stronghold in Attica, and the people feared the Spartan navy would attack the Athenian harbor at Peiraeus. It was far better to be at peace than to be at war. Aristophanes created his heroine Lysistrata, who in order to force the issue of peace, coordinated a sexual boycott soliciting the help of Greek women from Athens as well as the neighboring city-states. Aristophanes correlated a strong connection between his main character and Athena, creating an association between Lysistrata, the Acropolis and the goddess, by superimposing Athena's attributes and the nature of her birth onto his main character. He embodies in his main character the same three basic characteristics of Athena: wisdom, prowess, and masculinity.

The main attributes of Athena include the aegis. She is the patroness of crafts and of domestic arts. Her skills include those of military and political advice. She is also the deification of wisdom and good counsel. She is proficient in the taming and training of horses, interested in ships, and contributed to music by her invention of the flute. Aristophanes incorporates these attributes in snapshot portrayals of Lysistrata, by the music of the chorus, the usage of military jargon, armor, her good counsel, weaving symbolisms, as well as the primary location of the play, the Acropolis, home to the Parthenon. This paper compares the two, as Lysistrata organizes the women and their boycott to its successful conclusion, when the heroine appears at the gates of the Acropolis. The final view the audience has, as the portals to the Acropolis open, is of Lysistrata, dressed in the aegis of Athena, culminating the connection to the heroine and the goddess, virtually making them as one.

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