

# Cunning and ingenious war gods

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“ The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”- Sun Tzu. War is not won by the sheer amount of troops involved but by the strategies used to win.

In old mythologies, there were countless gods and goddesses who are said to have blessed humans with their gifts and inventions. These gifts could bring a golden age to humanity, but it can also destroy them if not wielded carefully. Some used it well, but the others, it ended poorly. Oftentimes, humans thought rash and insulted the gods, thinking that the humans have superior skills. For example, Arachne who challenged the goddess of crafts, Athena, to compete in a weaving contest. In the end, the gods will always win. Gods are not to be messed with, especially those with war gifts. War gods and goddesses are quite cunning and ingenious when going forth to battle. Some are masterminds in strategic planning or just plain brutal in the battlefield.

Both Roman and Greek gods have separate gods and goddesses of war, each with different personalities and gifts, although they're mostly counterparts of each other. In Roman and Greek mythology, 3 war gods prove to be the most influential—Athena, Ares, and Enyo, who are the Greek gods of war as well as their Roman counterparts. The 3 gods and goddesses have different purposes in war, and they often cooperate in the battlefield together, thus creating an overwhelming enemy in battle.

Athena, whose Roman counterpart is Minerva, is the goddess of wisdom, handicrafts, courage, inspiration, and strategic warfare . Both Athena and Minerva are gods of strategic warfare, but are worshipped differently as

Minerva is considered as a lesser goddess– Minerva was hardly associated to war. In Roman mythology, Minerva was the goddess of medicine, crafts and commerce, but is later identified as a goddess of war after the influence of the Greek goddess Athena. Athena was famed for her intelligence and strategic calculations that led to countless victories, without losing much men unlike Ares , and that makes her one of the most important goddesses for the Greeks. She is often seen carrying her father Zeus' thunderbolt or spear, as well as bringing her shield, Aegis, namely into battle. Though Minerva can be considered as a goddess of war, the goddess Bellona is who the Romans truly worship as a goddess of war . In Roman mythologies, Bellona is considered to be the war goddess as she was the one who led the Romans to countless victories.

Bellona, whose Greek counterpart is Enyo, is a Roman goddess of war . Also known as Duellona, she is often referred to the Greek goddess Eris too, although Eris' counterpart is the Roman goddess Discordia. The goddess is often portrayed carrying the Aegis, a torch, spear and wears a plumed helmet. Bellona has an important role in Roman tales, as her joint temple with Mars' Campus Martius is where war is officially declared. Both Bellona and her Greek counterpart Enyo is often associated to the god of war Mars, whose Greek counterpart is Ares. Many often call her Mars' companion or sister, or even Mars' daughter in some versions. They work together

Ares is the Greek god of war. He takes his place among the other gods, Athena and Enyo who fights closely behind him. Both he and his Roman counterpart Mars are quite the opposite from his associate Athena. While

Athena manages war strategies, Ares is the untamed side of war. In Greek mythology, Ares is seen as aggressive and is an overwhelming force in battle, while in Roman mythology, Mars is seen to be less aggressive and more understanding. They represent the uglier and messier sides of war—the violence, brutality and slaughters. But as dangerous and dominating that he seems, Ares is also known to be a coward. Whenever he receives injury during a war, even the slightest of injuries, he would run back from the front lines and cry out in agony. He is also often associated to humiliation, as most stories often depict him in humiliating situations, for example the incident with Aphrodite and Hephaestus.

Athena could also be said to be too proud. During the Trojan war, Odysseus and Ajax competed for the arms of Achilles, and Athena supported Odysseus. When Ajax knew, he became jealous and planned to murder Odysseus, but Athena knew and she drove him mad. This means that when the goddess is in favour of someone, she will make sure that he/she will thrive and so that nothing stops him. Instead of driving Ajax mad, she could've hinted Odysseus that he was going to be murdered, so that the contest for the arms of Achilles could still take place. But because of her pride in Odysseus, she drove Ajax mad so that Odysseus doesn't need to stop in his journey. In another occasion where Arachne challenged Athena to a weaving contest, Athena proclaimed herself as the winner. If another god or goddess had intervened to become the judge, the contest would've been fairer and Athena wouldn't have to brag.

Despite the gods and goddesses' war gifts, they still have weaknesses. The gods and goddesses may be ingenious and cunning, but they are also cowards and are quite human like. They too, have weaknesses like any other human. But what distinguishes humans from the gods are their gifts and how they are used. Gifts of a god may or may not create utter destruction, so gods must be wise in using their gifts and humans must consider their choices when dealing with a higher being, as in most cases, gods and goddesses are quite ingenious and cunning.