

Artemis the goddess of the moon and hunt essay sample

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



ARTEMIS was the great Olympian goddess of hunting, wilderness and wild animals. She was also a goddess of childbirth, and the protectress of the girl child up to the age of marriage. Her twin brother Apollon was similarly the protector of the boy child. Together the two gods were also bringers of sudden death and disease—Artemis targetted women and girls, and Apollon men and boys. In ancient art Artemis was usually depicted as a girl dressed in a short knee-length chiton and equipped with a hunting bow and quiver of arrows. Some of the best known myths featuring the goddess include:- * Her birth, immediately following which she assisted her mother in the birth of her twin brother Apollon; * The Trojan War where she was beaten by Hera in an angry contest of the gods; * The hunter Aktaion who encountered the goddess whilst she was bathing and was turned into a stag; * The Alloadai giants who attempted to storm Olympos but were tricked by Artemis into killing each other;

* The sacrifice of Iphigeneia whom King Agamemnon offered to her for the passage of the Greek fleet to Troy; * The giant Orion, a close companion of the goddess, who was slain by the goddess or her jealous brother; * The Kalydonian boar sent by Artemis to ravage Kaldyon; * The nymph Kallisto, a companion of Artemis, who was seduced by Zeus in the guise of the goddess. This site contains a total of 15 pages describing the goddess, including general descriptions, mythology, and cult. The content is outlined in the table below. Quotes for these pages are still being compiled (see bottom of this page for status). ENCYCLOPEDIAARTEMIS, one of the great divinities of the Greeks. Her name is usually derived from artemês, uninjured, healthy, vigorous; according to which she would be the goddess

<https://assignbuster.com/artemis-the-goddess-of-the-moon-and-hunt-essay-sample/>

who is herself inviolate and vigorous, and also grants strength and health to others. (Plat. Cratyl. p. 406, b. ; Strab. xiv. p. 635; Eustath. ad Hom. pp. 32, 577, 1732.) According to the Homeric account and Hesiod (Theog. 918) she was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, whence Aeschylus (Sept. 148) calls her *lêtôgeneia*. She was the sister of Apollo, and born with him at the same time in the island of Delos.

According to a tradition which Pausanias (viii. 37. § 3) found in Aeschylus, Artemis was a daughter of Demeter, and not of Leto, while according to an Egyptian story (Herod. ii. 156) she was the daughter of Dionysus and Isis, and Leto was only her nurse. But these and some other legends are only the results of the identification of the Greek Artemis with other local or foreign divinities. The place of her birth is for the same reason not the same in all traditions : some say that it was the grove of Ortygia near Ephesus (Tacit. Annal. iii. 61; Schol. ad Pind. Nem. i. 1), others that it was Crete (Diod. v. 72), and others again, that she was the sister of Apollo, but born somewhat earlier, so that she was able to assist Leto in giving birth to Apollo. (Orph Hymn. 34. 5; Spanheim, ad Callim. p. 476, &c.) In the description of the nature and character of this goddess, it is necessary to distinguish between the different points of view from which the Greeks regarded her, and also between the really Greek Artemis and certain foreign divinities, who for some resemblance or another were identified by the Greeks with their own Artemis.

1. Artemis as the sister of Apollo, is a kind of female Apollo, that is, she as a female divinity represented the same idea that Apollo did as a male divinity.

This relation between the two is in many other cases described as the relation of husband and wife, and there seems to have been a tradition which actually described Artemis as the wife of Apollo. (Eustath. ad Hom. p. 1197.) In the character of sister of Apollo, Artemis is like her brother armed with a bow, quiver, and arrows, and sends plague and death among men and animals : she is a *thea apollousa*. Sudden deaths, but more especially those of women, are described as the effect of her arrows. (Hom. Il. vi. 205, 427, &c., xix. 59, xxi. 483, &c.; Od. xi. 172, &c., 324, xv. 478, xviii. 202, xx. 61, &c., v. 124, &c.) She also acts sometimes in conjunction with her brother. (Od. xv. 410; Il. xxiv. 606.) As Apollo was not only a destructive god, but also averted the evils which it was in his power to inflict, so Artemis was at the same time a *thea sôteira*; that is, she cured and alleviated the sufferings of mortals.

Thus, for instance, she healed Aeneas, when he was wounded and carried into the temple of Apollo. (Il. v. 447.) In the Trojan war she sided, like Apollo, with the Trojans. The man whom she looked graciously upon was prosperous in his fields and flocks, his household was thriving, and he died in old age. (Callim. Hymn. in Dian. 129, &c.) She was more especially the protectress of the young, whence the epithets *paidotrophos*, *kourotrophos*, and *philomeirax* (comp. Diod. v. 73); and Aeschylus (Agam. 142) calls her the protectress of young sucking-animals, and of the game ranging through the forests of the mountains. Artemis thus also came to be regarded as the goddess of the flocks and the chase: she is the huntress among the immortals ; she is called the stag-killer (*elaphêbolos*), the lover of the tumult connected with the

chase (keladeinê), and agrotera. (Il. xxi. 511, 485, &c.; Hom. Hymn. in Dian. 10.) Artemis is moreover, like Apollo, unmarried; she is a maiden divinity never conquered by love. (Soph. Elect. 1220.) The priests and priestesses devoted to her service were bound to live pure and chaste, and transgressions of their vows of chastity were severely punished. (Paus. vii. 19. § 1. viii. 13. § 1.)

She was worshipped in several places together with her brother; and the worship of both divinities was believed to have come from the Hyperboreans, and Hyperborean maidens brought sacrifices to Delos. (Herod. ii. 32, 35.) The laurel was sacred to both divinities, and both were regarded as the founders and protectors of towns and streets. (Paus. i. 38. § 6, iii. 24. § 6, viii. 36, in fin. ; Aeschyl. Sept. 450; Callim. Hymn. in Dian. 34.) There are, however, some points also, in which there is no resemblance between Artemis and Apollo : she has nothing to do with music or poetry, nor is there any trace of her having been regarded as an oracular divinity like Apollo. Respecting the real and original character of Artemis as the sister of Apollo, we encounter the same difficulties as those mentioned in the article Apollo, viz. as to whether she was a purely spiritual and ethical divinity, as Müller thinks, or whether she was the representative of some power in physical nature; and the question must be decided here in the same manner as in the case of Apollo.

When Apollo was regarded as identical with the sun or Helios, nothing was more natural than that his sister should be regarded as Selene or the moon, and accordingly the Greek Artemis is, at least in later times, the goddess of

the moon. Buttmann and Hermann consider this idea of Artemis being the moon as the fundamental one from which all the others are derived. But, at any rate, the idea of Artemis being the goddess of the moon, must be confined to Artemis the sister of Apollo, and is not applicable to the Arcadian, Taurian, or Ephesian Artemis. 2. The Arcadian Artemis is a goddess of the nymphs, and was worshipped as such in Arcadia in very early times. Her sanctuaries and temples were more numerous in this country than in any other part of Greece. There was no connexion between the Arcadian Artemis and Apollo, nor are there any traces here of the ethical character which is so prominent in Artemis, the sister of Apollo. These circumstances, together with the fact, that her surnames and epithets in Arcadia are nearly all derived from the mountains, rivers, and lakes, shew that here she was the representative of some part or power of nature.

In Arcadia she hunted with her nymphs on Taygetus, Erymanthus, and Maenalus; twenty nymphs accompanied her during the chase, and with sixty others, daughters of Oceanus, she held her dances in the forests of the mountains. Her bow, quiver, and arrows, were made by Hephaestus, and Pan provided her with dogs. Her chariot was drawn by four stags with golden antlers. (Callim. Hymn. in Dian. 13, 81, 90, &c.; Apollod. ii. 5. § 3; Pind. Ol. iii. 51.) Her temples and sanctuaries in Arcadia were usually near lakes or rivers, whence she was called *limnêtis* or *limnaia*. (Paus. ii. 7. § 6, iii. 23. § 6, iv. 4. § 2, 31. § 3, viii. 53. § 5.) In the precincts of her sanctuaries there were often sacred wells, as at Corinth. (Paus. ii. 3. § 5, iii. 20. § 7.) As a nymph, Artemis also appears in connexion with river gods, as with Alpheius, and thus

it is intelligible why fish were sacred to her. (Diod. v. 3.)³. The Taurian Artemis.

The legends of this goddess are mystical, and her worship was orgiastic and connected, at least in early times, with human sacrifices. According to the Greek legend there was in Tauris a goddess, whom the Greeks for some reason identified with their own Artemis. and to whom all strangers that were thrown on the coast of Tauris, were sacrificed. (Eurip. Iph. Taur. 36.) Iphigeneia and Orestes brought her image from thence, and landed at Brauron in Attica, whence the goddess derived the name of Brauronia. (Paus. i. 23. § 9, 33. § 1, iii. 16, in fin.) The Brauronian Artemis was worshipped at Athens and Sparta, and in the latter place the boys were scourged at her altar in such a manner that it became sprinkled with their blood. This cruel ceremony was believed to have been introduced by Lycurgus, instead of the human sacrifices which had until then been offered to her. (Dict. of Ant. s. v. Braurônia and Diamastigôsis.)

Her name at Sparta was Orthia, with reference to the phallus, or because her statue stood erect. According to another tradition, Orestes and Iphigeneia concealed the image of the Taurian goddess in a bundle of brushwood, and carried it to Aricia in Latium. Iphigeneia, who was at first to have been sacrificed to Artemis, and then became her priestess, was afterwards identified with the goddess (Herod. iv. 103; Paus. i. 43. § 1), who was worshipped in some parts of Greece, as at Hermione, under the name of Iphigeneia. (Paus. ii. 35. § 1.) Some traditions stated, that Artemis made Iphigeneia immortal, in the character of Hecate, the goddess of the moon. A

kindred divinity, if not the same as the Taurian Artemis, is Artemis taurobolos, whose worship was connected with bloody sacrifices, and who produced madness in the minds of men, at least the chorus in the *Ajax* of Sophocles, describes the madness of Ajax as the work of this divinity. In the legends about the Taurian Artemis, it seems that separate local traditions of Greece are mixed up with the legends of some Asiatic divinity, whose symbol in the heaven was the moon, and on the earth the cow.

4. The Ephesian Artemis was a divinity totally distinct from the Greek goddess of the same name. She seems to have been the personification of the fructifying and all-nourishing powers of nature. It is an opinion almost universally adopted, that she was an ancient Asiatic divinity whose worship the Greeks found established in Ionia, when they settled there, and that, for some resemblance they discovered, they applied to her the name of Artemis. As soon as this identity of the Asiatic goddess with the Greek Artemis was recognised, other features, also originally peculiar to the Greek Artemis, were transferred to her; and thus she is called a daughter of Leto, who gave birth to her in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. Her original character is sufficiently clear from the fact, that her priests were eunuchs, and that her image in the magnificent temple of Ephesus represented her with many breasts (*polumastos*).

The whole figure of the goddess resembled a mummy : her head was surmounted with a mural crown (*corona muralis*), and the lower part of her body, which ended in a point, like a pyramid upside down, was covered with figures of mystical animals. (Strab. xiv. p. 641; Paus. iv. 31. § 6, vii. 5. § 2.,

The symbol of this divinity was a bee, and her highpriest bore the name of king (essên). Her worship was said to have been established at Ephesus by the Amazons. (Paus. ii. 7. § 4, viii. 12. § 1; Hesych. and Suid. s. v. essên.) Respecting some other divinities, or attributes of divinities, which were likewise regarded as identical with Artemis in Greece, see Britomartis, Dictynna, and Eileithyia. The Romans identified their goddess Diana with the Greek Artemis, and at a comparatively early time they transferred to their own goddess all the peculiar features of the Greek Artemis. The worship of Artemis was universal in all Greece, in Delos, Crete, Sicily, and southern Italy, but more especially in Arcadia and the whole of the Peloponnesus.

The sacrifices offered to the Brauronian Artemis consisted of stags and goats; in Thrace dogs were offered to Artemis. Among the animals sacred to the Greek Artemis we may mention the stag, boar, dog, and others; the fir-tree was likewise sacred to her. It is impossible to trace the various relations in which Artemis appears to us to one common source, or to one fundamental idea: the very manner in which such a complicated mythus was formed renders the attempt futile, or, to say the least, forced. In the case of Artemis, it is evident, that new elements and features were added in various places to the ancient local mythus; the worship of one divinity is identified with that of another, and the legends of the two are mixed up into one, or those of the one are transferred to the other, whose legends then sink into oblivion.

The representations of the Greek Artemis in works of art are different accordingly as she is represented either as a huntress, or as the goddess of

the moon; yet in either case she appears as a youthful and vigorous divinity, as becomes the sister of Apollo. As the huntress, she is tall, nimble, and has small hips; her forehead is high, her eyes glancing freely about, and her hair tied up behind in such a manner, that some locks float down her neck; her breast is covered, and the legs up to the knees are naked, the rest being covered by the chlamys. Her attributes are the bow, quiver, and arrows, or a spear, stags, and dogs. As the goddess of the moon, she wears a long robe which reaches down to her feet, a veil covers her head, and above her forehead rises the crescent of the moon. In her hand she often appears holding a torch. Source: Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology.

HYMNS TO ARTEMIS

I) THE HOMERIC HYMNS

Homeric Hymn 9 to Artemis (trans. Evelyn-White) (Greek epic C7th to 4th B. C.) : “ Mousa, sing of Artemis, sister of the far-shooter (hekatos), Parthenosthe virgin who delights in arrows (iokheaira), who was fostered with Apollon. She waters her horses from Meles deep in reeds [a river in Lydia], and swift drives her all-golden chariot through Smyrna to vine-clad Klaros (Claros) where Apollon god of the silver bow (argyrotoxos), sits waiting for far-shooting delighter in arrows (hekatebolon iokheaira). And so hail to you, Artemis, in my song and to all goddesses as well. Of you first I sing and with you I begin; now that I have begun with you, I will turn to another song.” Homeric Hymn 27 to Artemis :

“ I sing of Artemis with shafts are of gold (khryselakatos), strong-voiced (keladeine), the revered virgin (parthenon aidoine), dear-shooting (elaphebolos), delighter in arrows (iokheaira), own sister to Apollon of the golden sword (khrysaor). Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the chase, and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains tremble and the tangled wood echoes awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earth quakes and the sea also where fishes shoal.

But the goddess with a bold heart turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts: and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, then the huntress who delights in arrows (theroskopos iokheaira) slackens her supple bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother Phoibos Apollon, to the rich land of Delphoi, there to order the lovely dance of the Mousai (Muses) and Kharites (Charites, Graces). There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows, and heads and leads the dances, gracefully arrayed, while all they utter their heavenly voice, singing how neat-ankled Leto bare children supreme among the immortals both in thought and deed. Hail to you, children of Zeus and rich-haired Leto! And now I will remember you and another song also.” Homeric Hymn 5 to Aphrodite 18 ff :

“ Artemis with shafts of gold (khryselakatos) loves archery and the slaying of wild beasts in the mountains, the lyre also and dancing and strong-voiced song and shady woods and the cities of upright men.” II) HELLENISTIC HYMNS

Callimachus, Hymn 3 to Artemis (trans. Mair) (Greek poet C3rd B. C.) : “ Of Artemis we hymn–no light thing is it for singers to forget her – whose study is the bow and the shooting of hares and the spacious dance and sport upon the mountains. [The story of her birth and childhood follow, see The Childhood of Artemis for this part of the hymn.] . . . The fourth time [Artemis shot her bow]–not long was it ere thou didst shoot at the city of unjust me, those who to one another and those who towards strangers wrought many deeds of sin, forward men, on whom thou wilt impress thy grievous wrath. On their cattle plague feeds, on their tilth feeds frost, and the old men cut their hair in mourning over their sons, and their wives either are smitten or die in childbirth, or, if they escape, bear birds whereof none stands on upright ankle. But on whomsoever thou lookest smiling and gracious, for them the tilth bears the corn-ear abundantly, and abundantly prospers the four-footed breed, and abundant waxes their prosperity: neither do they go to the tomb, save when they carry thither the aged. Nor does faction wound their race–faction which ravages even the well-established houses: but brother’s wife and husband’s sister set their chairs around one board . . . Lady, of that number be whosoever is a true friend of mine, and of that number may I be myself, O Queen.

And may song be my study forever. In that song shall be the Marriage of Leto; therein thy name shall often-times be sung; therein shall Apollon be and therein all thy labours, and therein thy hounds and thy bow and thy chariot, which lightly carry thee in thy splendour, when thou drivest to the house of Zeus . . . But when the Nymphai encircle thee in the dance, near

the springs of Aigyptian (Egyptian) Inopos [on the island of Delos] or Pitane [in Aiolia or Lakonia]—for Pitane too is thine—or in Limnai [in Lakonia] or where, goddess, thou camest from Skythia to dwell, in Alai Araphenides [i. e. Brauron in Attika], renouncing the rites of the Tauroi [of Skythia], then may not my kine cleave a four-acred fallow field for a wage at the hand of an alien ploughman; else surely lame and weary of neck would they come to the byre, yea even were they of Stymphaian breed, nine years of age, drawing by the horns; which kine are far the best for cleaving a deep furrow; for the god Helios never passes by that beauteous dance, but stays his car to gaze upon the sight, and the lights of day are lengthened.

Which now of islands, what hill finds most favour with thee? What haven? What city? Which of the Nymphai (Nymphs) dost thou love above the rest, and what heroines hast thou taken for thy companions? Say, goddess, thou to me, and I will sing thy saying to others. Of islands, Dolikhe [Ikaria] hath found favour with thee, of cities Perge [in Pamphylia], of hills Taygetos [in Lakedaimonia], the havens of Euripos [Euboia]. And beyond others thou lovest the Nymphe of Gortyn, Britomartis, slayer of stags, the goodly archer . . . Yea and Kyrene thou madest thy comrade, to whom on a time thyself didst give two hunting dogs, with whom the maiden daughter of Hypseus beside the Iolkian tomb won the prize. And the fair-haired [Prokris] wife of Kephalos, son of Deioneus, O Lady, thou madest thy fellow in the chase and fair Antikleia [mother of Odysseus], they say, thou didst love even as thine own eyes.

These were the first who wore the gallant bow and arrow-holding quivers on their shoulders; their right shoulders bore the quiver strap, and always the right breast showed bare. Further thou didst greatly commend swift-footed Atalanta, the slayer of boards, daughter of Arkadian Iasios, and taught her hunting with dogs and good archery . . . Lady of many shrines, of many cities, hail! Khitone (Goddess of the Tunic), sojourner in Miletos; for thee did Neleus [i. e. the founder of Miletos] make his Guide, when he put off with his ships from the land of Kekrops [i. e. Attika]. Khesias (Lady of Khesion) and Imbrasia (Lady of Imbrasos), throned in the highest, to thee in thy shrine did Agamemnon dedicate the rudder of his ship, a charm against ill weather, when thou didst bind the winds for him, what time the Akhaian ships sailed to vex the cities of the Teukroi [i. e. the Trojans], wroth for Rhamnusia Helene. For thee surely Proitos established two shrines, one of Artemis Kore (Maidenhood) for that thou didst gather for him his maiden daughters, when they were wandering over the Azanian hills; the other he founded in Lousa to Artemis Hemere (the Gentle), because thou tookest from his daughters the spirit of wildness.

For thee, too, the Amazones, whose mind is set on war, in Ephesos beside the sea established an image beneath an oak trunk, and Hippo [an Amazon queen] performed a holy rite for thee, and they themselves, O Oupis Queen, around the image danced a war-dance—first in shields and armour, and again in a circle arraying a spacious choir. And the loud pipes thereto piped shrill accompaniment, that they might foot the dance together (for not yet did they pierce the bones of the fawn [to create flutes], Athene's handiwork, a

bane to the deer). And the echo reached unto Sardis and to the Berekynthian range [in Phrygia]. And they with their feet beat loudly and therewith their quivers rattled. And afterwards around that image was raised a shrine of broad foundations. That it shall dawn behold nothing more divine, naught richer. Easily would it outdo Pytho [Delphoi].

Wherefore in this madness insolent Lygdamis threatened that he would lay it waste, and brought against it a host of Kimmerians which milk mares, in number as the sand; who have their homes hard by the Straights of the cow, daughter of Inakhos. Ah! Foolish among kings, how greatly he sinned! For not destined to return again to Skythia was either he or any other of those whose wagons stood in the Kaytrian plain [of Lydia]; for thy shafts are ever more set as a defense before Ephesos. O Mounikhia (Lady of Mounykhia), Limenoskope (Watcher of Harbours), hail, Pheraia (Lady of Pherai)! Let none disparage Artemis. For Oineus dishonoured her altar and no pleasant struggles came upon his city. Nor let any contend with her in shooting of stags or in archery. For the son of Atreus [Agamemnon] vaunted him not that he suffered small requital. Neither let any woo the Maiden; for not Otos, nor Orion wooed her to their own good. Nor let any shun the yearly dance; for not tearless to Hippo [an Amazon queen] was her refusal to dance around the altar. Hail, great queen, and graciously greet my song.” III) THE ORPHIC

HYMNS

Orphic Hymn 2 to Prothyraea (trans. Taylor) (Greek hymns C3rd B. C. to 2nd A. D.) : “ To Prothyraia [Artemis], Fumigation from Storax. O venerable Goddess, hear my prayer, for labour pains are thy peculiar care. In thee,

when stretched upon the bed of grief, the sex, as in a mirror, view relief. Guard of the race, endued with gentle mind, to helpless youth benevolent and kind; benignant nourisher; great nature's key belongs to no divinity but thee. Thou dwellest with all immanifest to sight, and solemn festivals are thy delight. Thine is the task to loose the virgin's zone and thou in every work art seen and known. With births you sympathise, though pleased to see the numerous offspring of fertility. When racked with labour pangs, and sore distressed the sex invoke thee, as the soul's sure rest; for thou Eileithyia alone canst give relief to pain, which art attempts to ease, but tries in vain. Artemis Eileithyia, venerable power, who bringest relief in labour's dreadful hour; hear, Prothyraia and make the infant race thy constant care." Orphic Hymn 36 to Artemis :

" To Artemis, Fumigation from Manna. Hear me, Zeus' daughter, celebrated queen, Bromia and Titanis, of a noble mien: in darts rejoicing, and on all to shine, torch-bearing Goddess, Diktyнна divine. Over births presiding, and thyself a maid, to labour pangs imparting ready aid: dissolver of the zone, and wrinkled care, fierce huntress, glorying in the sylvan war: swift in the course, in dreadful arrows skilled, wandering by night, rejoicing in the field: of manly form, erect, of bounteous mind, illustrious Daimon, nurse of humankind: immortal, earthly, bane of monsters fell, 'tis thine, blest maid, on woody mounts to dwell: foe of the stag, whom woods and dogs delight, in endless youth you flourish fair and bright. O universal queen, august, divine, a various form, Kydonian power, is thine. Dread guardian Goddess, with benignant mind, auspicious come, to mystic rites inclined; give earth a store

of beautiful fruits to bear, send gentle peace, and health with lovely hair,
and to the mountains drive disease and care.”