



# Artemis of the Ephesians

*James Rietveld*

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## **Artemis of the Ephesians** James Rietveld

In perhaps one of the most definitive works on Artemis of the Ephesians ever published, James D. Rietveld, Ph.D., provides a comprehensive examination of the cult statue of Artemis Ephesia, examining her representations throughout the ancient world and discovering that her image cannot be confined to a limited set of explanations, but that Artemis Ephesia was a figure in constant flux, with interpretations dependent on the particular time period and audience viewing it.

Second, personal religious perspectives are investigated in relation to the image and the cult of Artemis in general, providing a counterbalance to many modern studies more focused on the political and social aspects of her cult.

The third section investigates Artemis Ephesia in relation to the city's sacred geography, creating a more contextually discerning view of how her belief system permeated the daily lives of the Ephesians through examining what they left behind in the material culture.

Finally, the fourth section examines how understandings of Artemis Ephesia changed with the spread of Christianity, explaining how this Ephesian goddess eventually succumbed to the forces of this new religious perspective, but also noting how some aspects survived even within this new context.

Ultimately, Artemis Ephesia is revealed as a goddess of protection, the sacred space of her precinct understood as a place of asylum for individuals seeking refuge; a bank for those wishing to secure their material wealth, and a shrine for virgins desiring to protect their chastity. By extension of the Via Sacra, her role as protective mother moved beyond the Temple of Artemis to the city itself. Along with the images of Artemis, the Ephesian letters carried her perceived magical protective powers even further, all along the shores of the Mediterranean and even to the very ends of the Greco-Roman world.

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