

THE WOMEN OF WRATH

Sylvia Morna Freitas, Bella Ruiz, and Erinique Robinson



THE FATES (THE MOIRAE)

- ◆ The Moirae are fate personified. Three goddesses who assigned the fate of man.
 - Moira = “One’s share” or “allotted portions”
- ◆ Fate was not fixed. The Moirae took counsel from the gods, and wrote the consequences for one’s actions (“Moirae”)
 - However, even the gods tended to bow to the decisions of the Moirae
 - “. . . it is our common lot to die, and the gods themselves cannot rescue even one they love, when death that stretches all men out lays its dread hand upon him.” (Homer, *Odyssey* 3.235). Athena to Telemachus in Homer’s *Odyssey*.



Weavers, Athenian black-figure lekythos C6th B.C., Metropolitan Museum of Art

MOIRAE MYTH AND ICONOGRAPHY

- ◆ Homer rarely refers to the Moirae in plural, rather saying a single Moira
- ◆ At Delphi, only two Moirae are depicted--a goddess of birth and a goddess of death (“Moirai”)
 - As goddesses of birth, the Moirae are sometimes seen as the Eilethylai (Hera’s daughters, in charge of birth)
 - As goddesses of death, they are associated with the Keres (spirits of violent death)
- ◆ Seen as ugly, old women; sometimes with staffs, sceptres, and crowns, connotating their dominion (“Moirai”).

- ◆ Klotho
 - “The “spinner” spins the thread that creates life
- ◆ Lakheis
 - “Apportioner of lots” measures the length of the string of life
- ◆ Atropos
 - “She who cannot be turned” cuts the thread



Fresques 135-140 Reserves du Musée.

THE FURIES (THE ERINYES)

- ◆ They sprung from the blood of Ouranos (Uranus), when he was castrated by his son Kronos (Cronus) and Gaea
- ◆ Their names were Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone
- ◆ Female Goddesses of vengeance and retribution
- ◆ These Goddesses were to be called upon a victim seeking justice against a criminal
- ◆ They punished men who went against natural order
 - ◆ Particularly concerned with homicide, unfilial conduct, offenses against the Gods, and perjury
- ◆ The wrath of the Erinyes manifested in many ways
 - ◆ The most powerful was “The Curse of the Parent upon the Child” in which the Erinyes were born from
 - ◆ The most severe way it manifested itself was through the tormenting madness inflicted upon a patricide or matricide

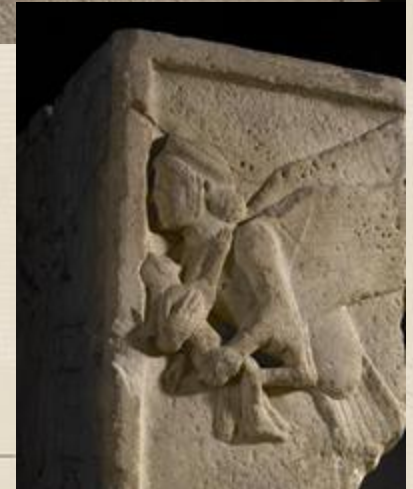
THE FURIES (CONTINUED)

- Murders could possibly suffer illness or disease
- A nation harboring such a crime could possibly suffer dearth and along with it, hunger and disease
- The wrath of the 'Erinyes' could only be placated with the rite ritual purification and the completion of some task assignment for atonement
- The Goddesses were servants of *Hades* and *Persephone*
- Servants in the Underworld where they oversaw the torture of criminals cosigned to the 'Dungeons of the Damned'
- They were depicted as ugly, winged women with hair, arms and waists entwined with poisonous serpents.
- The sisters wielded whips and were clothed either in the long black robes of mourners, or the short-length skirts and boots of huntress- maidens.

THE HARPIES

- ◆ Harpies = “Snatchers”; spirits of sudden, sharp gusts of wind
 - Two or three women with the head of a woman and the lower half of a bird
- ◆ Live in a cave in the Strophades, or in Crete
- ◆ Known as the “Hounds of Zeus”, he sent them to snatch people and things from Earth
- ◆ Possible parents
 - Thaumas and Electra
 - Poseidon
 - Gaea
 - Typhon
 - Phineus (mortal king)

Fellows, Charles. “Harpy Tomb.” The British Museum, Xanthus



THE HARPIES AND THE ARGONAUTS

- ◆ Phineus, King of Thrake, revealed the secrets of the gods
- ◆ Zeus punished Phineus by sending the Harpies to perpetually steal his food
- ◆ The Argonauts arrived at Phineus' castle
- ◆ The Boreades, members of the Argonaut crew with wings, chased the Harpies off



Picart, Bernard. "The Boreades."

PANDORA

- ◆ The first mortal woman who was formed out of clay by the gods.
- ◆ Prometheus was assigned the task of creating the race of man. He afterwards grew displeased with the mean lot imposed on them by the gods and so stole fire from heaven.
 - ◆ Zeus in revenge and commanded Hephaestus and the other gods to create Pandora, endowing her with beauty and cunning. He then had her delivered to Prometheus' foolish younger brother Epimetheus as a bride.
 - ◆ By her charms and beauty should bring misery upon the human race.
- ◆ Hermes took her to Epimetheus, who forgot the advice of his brother Prometheus, not to accept any gift from Zeus, and from that moment all miseries came down upon men.



Epimetheus and the birth of Pandora

PANDORA (CONT.)

- ◆ Athena dressed and adorned her, taught her needle-work and weaving; Aphrodite bestowed her grace and allure on her; the Charites and Peitho gave her jewelry; the Horai crowned her with spring flowers; and Hermes taught her all manner of guile and deceit, and granted her the gift of speech. He named her 'Pandora' because all the Olympians were presenting her to men as a gift and affliction.
- ◆ In later traditions, Pandora bore Epimetheus a daughter, Pyrrha, the first woman to be born by natural process.



Creation of Pandora.

PANDORA'S JAR

- ◆ Zeus gave Pandora a storage jar as a wedding gift in which she opened, releasing the swarm of evil spirits trapped inside.
 - ◆ The spirits would forever after plague mankind and only Hope remained behind, a singled blessing to ease mankind's suffering.
- ◆ In the postclassical arts Pandora's became confused with the box Psyche was forbidden to open, so "Pandora's box" became proverbial for a present that seems valuable but is in reality is a curse.



Pandora opening the jar and letting the chaos out.

CONNECTIONS

- ◆ 3 Furies, 3 Fates, 3 Harpies
- ◆ "The triad is the number of the complete whole, inasmuch as it contains a beginning, a middle, and an end. Nature herself has provided us with this number for use in the holy service of the gods" (qtd.in Lease 69).
- ◆ Pandora released the Keres (spirits of violent death)
- ◆ The Fates send the Furies and Keres to punish men
- ◆ They were all depicted as ugly, grotesque women



Museum, The B. "Pandora Receiving Gifts from the Gods."



Phineus and the Harpies



William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Orestes Pursued by the Furies

WORKS CITED

"Eileithyia." Encyclopedia Mythica. Encyclopedia Mythica, 21 Apr. 1997. Web. 2 Apr. 2021.

Fellows, Charles. "Harpy Tomb." The British Museum, Xanthus, 2021, www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1848-1020-1.

Fresques 135-140 after J.-C., Ostia Antica, Reserves du Musée. 5822

Hard, Robin, and H J Rose. *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology : Based on H. J. Rose's Handbook of Greek Mythology*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2003. *ProQuest Ebook Central* (pg.95), <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.cod.idm.oclc.org/lib/cod/detail.action?docID=180229>.

"Harpy." Harpy | Facts, Information, and Mythology, 3 Mar. 1997, pantheon.org/articles/h/harpy.html.

"HARPYIAI." HARPIES (Harpyiai) - Bird-Women Monsters & Storm Spirits of Greek Mythology, www.theoi.com/Pontios/Harpyiai.html.

Lease, Emory B. "The Number Three, Mysterious, Mystic, Magic." *Classical Philology*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1919, pp. 56–73. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/263620. Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.

"Moirae." Encyclopedia Mythica. Encyclopedia Mythica, 3 Mar. 1997. Web. 2 Apr. 2021.

"MOIRAI." MOIRAE (Moirai) - The Fates, Greek Goddesses of Fate & Destiny (Roman Parcae), Theoi, 2017, www.theoi.com/Daimon/Moirai.html#Titles.

WORKS CITED (CONTD.)

Museum, The B. "Pandora Receiving Gifts from the Gods." World History Encyclopedia. World History Encyclopedia, 26 Jul 2015. Web. 06 Apr 2021.

"Pandora ("Giver of All")." In *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, by Jennifer R. March. 2nd ed. Oxbow Books, 2014.
https://cod.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/oxbocm/pandora_giver_of_all/0?institutionId=2869

Phineus and the Harpies, Athenian red-figure hydria C5th B.C., The J. Paul Getty Museum

Picart, Bernard. "The Boreades." Greek Mythology Gallery, Carlos Parada, 1997,
www.maicar.com/GML/000PhotoArchive/Picart/slides/3118detail.html.

Weavers, Athenian black-figure lekythos C6th B.C., Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/>

William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Orestes Pursued by the Furies, 1862. Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia