

11-15-2013

Furies

Vassiliki Panoussi

College of William and Mary, panoussi@wm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/asbookchapters>



Part of the [Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Panoussi, V. (2013). Furies. R. Thomas and J. Ziolkowski (Ed.), *The Virgil Encyclopedia* (pp. 514-515). Wiley-Blackwell.
<https://scholarworks.wm.edu/asbookchapters/58>

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Arts and Sciences at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Arts & Sciences Book Chapters by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

written just two years before his death (but not delivered; see INAUGURATION POEMS, AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL), portrayed himself as an American Virgil, ushering in

The glory of a next Augustan age
Of a power leading from its strength and pride,
Of young ambition eager to be tried,
Firm in our free beliefs without dismay,
In any game the nations want to play.
A GOLDEN AGE of poetry and power
Of which this noonday's the beginning hour.

("For John F. Kennedy, His Inauguration"
71–77; compare *E.* 4.1–10; *A.* 6.791–95)

See also *ECLOGUES*, RECEPTION OF

References

- Cook, R. 1974. *Robert Frost: A Living Voice*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
Cox, S. 1957. *A Swinger of Birches: A Portrait of Robert Frost*. New York: New York University Press.
Frost, R. 1995. *Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays*. New York: Library of America.
Frost, R. 2007. *The Collected Prose of Robert Frost*. Edited by M. Richardson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Thompson, L. 1966–76. *Robert Frost*. 3 vols. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

MICHAEL B. SULLIVAN

fruits see PRODUCE

Fucinus lacus The Fucine lake was a water-filled natural basin in Samnium in south-central ITALY, bordered by Lucania, CAMPANIA, Apulia and Latium (see LATIUM AND LATINI). It was known for flooding and fertilizing the surrounding lands, but also for harboring malaria. Although the lake had no visible outlet, it was believed that the river Pitonius flowed through the lake without their waters mixing (see PLINY THE ELDER, *Natural History* 2.224). Virgil describes the lake joining other parts of the landscape in mourning the DEATH of UMBRO (*A.* 7.759). The Roman emperor Claudius and Hadrian both attempted to drain the Fucine lake, a feat finally achieved by Alessandro Torlonia in 1875.

See also LAKES; RIVERS; WATER

Reference Works

Barrington 44 E2

PRUDENCE J. JONES

Fuga see PERSONIFICATION

Fugitives see AGRARIANISM, SOUTHERN

Fulgentius Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, author active in mid-sixth-century North Africa; he has sometimes been identified with Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe (ca. 467–533 CE), but this identification is now generally rejected. His *Expositio continentiae Virgilianae* (Exposition of the Content of Virgil) is a dialogue in which the poet's shade appears to the author and offers him an allegorical explication of *A.* (see ALLEGORY). Fulgentius' AENEAS is an allegorical everyman; the EPIC details his birth, early training, and education in virtue. *A.* 1 and *A.* 6 receive the fullest treatment; the second half of the poem is dealt with in more cursory fashion. The work circulated widely in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (some thirty manuscripts survive), and influenced the allegorical commentary ascribed to BERNARDUS SILVESTRIS. It may have inspired similar readings by PETRARCH (*Seniles* 4.5) and Cristoforo LANDINO (*Disputationes Camaldulenses* 3–4). It is uncertain whether it was known to DANTE, though the interaction between the learned pagan Virgil and his Christian pupil is strikingly reminiscent of that found in the *Divine Comedy*. Virgilian characters (e.g., the HARPIES and CACUS) also appear in Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* (Mythologies), a compendium of myths with allegorical interpretations.

GREGORY HAYS

funeral (games) see ATHLETICS

Furies SUPERNATURAL beings associated with FUROR ("fury," "ANGER," "madness"). A collective deity for the punishment of sins in HOMER, they are given the individual NAMES TISIPHONE, ALLECTO, and MEGAERA by subsequent authors, including Virgil. Throughout *A.*, Furies are named

with the Greek terms *Erinyes* and *Eumenides*; the LATIN terms *Furiae* and *Dirae* (from the adjective *dirus* “dire” or “dreadful”) also appear to apply to them interchangeably. According to SERVIUS on A. 4.609, the Furies live on earth, the *Dirae* in heaven, and the *Eumenides* in the UNDERWORLD, but this schematization is clearly late. Human beings are also associated with Furies (e.g., HELEN at A. 2.573; DIDO at A. 4.376, 4.474; CLYTEMNESTRA at A. 4.472), as are the monstrous HARPIES (A. 3.252; compare Homer, ODYSSEY 20.78; AESCHYLUS, *Eumenides* 50–51; APOLLONIUS OF RHODES, *Argonautica* 2.220). The Furies display chthonic attributes: they dwell in Hades (A. 6.280–81; 6.289), their mother is personified Night (A. 12.845–47; see PERSONIFICATION), and they have serpentine hair and wings (A. 12.848; see SNAKES).

Virgil frequently PUNS on the ancient ETYMOLOGY of their name, *deum ira* “the wrath of the gods” (e.g., A. 3.215), especially when he connects them with WAR. For instance, JUNO employs the Fury Allecto as the instigator of the clash between Trojans and Latins (A. 7.323–571), while a Fury is used as a metonymy for TROY’S destruction (A. 2.337–38; see SA 22). Furies are also identified with DISCORDIA, as in the DESCRIPTION of the battle of ACTIUM on the SHIELD OF AENEAS (A. 8.701–3; see also ECPHRASIS). Yet at the end of the poem they are found on JUPITER’S threshold and are described as inducing FEAR among mortals and inflicting illness (recalling G. 3.551–53, where Tisiphone emerges from Stygian darkness as the PLAGUE gathers strength), DEATH, and war as punishment (A. 12.845–52).

In two instances (A. 4.469, 6.571–72) the Furies are described as being in *agmina*, an odd term to use for a threesome. On the basis of SCHOLIA that are preserved in an eleventh-century manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 7930), it has been hypothesized that Virgil was aware from VARRO that the three sisters had the Roman names *Agmentis*, *Pecmentis*, and *Furina*, and that by *agmina* he alludes to the first and last of these (Waszink 1963).

References

- Waszink, J.H. 1963. “Agmina Furiarum.” *Harvard Theological Review* 56: 7–11.

furor Literally “fury” or “MADNESS.” Instances of *furor* are found in Virgil’s work in the context of martial ANGER and bloodlust, god-inflicted madness, and similarly inflicted or otherwise generated erotic madness. It is mostly present in A., where it is often personified as a SUPERNATURAL force akin to or caused by the *Furiae* (“FURIES”), to which it is etymologically linked (see ETYMOLOGY; PERSONIFICATION). Both words derive from the verb *furere* “to rage” or “to be crazed”; related adjectival forms include *furialis* (e.g., A. 7.375 of the Fury ALLECTO’S venom), *furibundus* (e.g., A. 4.646 of DIDO), and *furiatus* (e.g., A. 2.407 of COROEBUS’ state of mind). *Furor* affects both male and female characters and all animate beings (G. 3.242–44; compare G. 3.266–83, where it afflicts mares at the climax of this lengthy passage; see ANIMALS, DOMESTIC), although WOMEN or female deities appear more susceptible to it (see GENDER).

Furor is a major theme connected with LOVE in humans and animals (G. 3.209–83) and also causes the downfall of ORPHEUS in his fateful backward glance at EURYDICE (G. 4.494–95, where Eurydice imputes her own and Orpheus’ downfall to *furor*). This recalls the erotic *furor* of GALLUS, for which he claims there is no remedy (E. 10.60 *medicina furoris*). Similarly in A., erotic *furor* characterizes Dido’s love for AENEAS (e.g., A. 4.65–66) and the madness that results from his abandonment of her (e.g., A. 4.501). The word or related forms appear sixteen times in connection to Dido, more than any other character in the EPIC. Once stricken by *furor*, women are described as engaging in maenadic behavior, either metaphorical (e.g., Dido at A. 4.300–301; the SIBYL at A. 6.77–78) or literal (AMATA at A. 7.373–405), often resulting in SUICIDE (e.g., Dido at A. 4.645–47; Amata at A. 12.601–3; see MAENADS; METAPHOR).

Furor is also found in nature, affecting inanimate forces such as WINDS (e.g., A. 1.51, 2.304), the SEA (A. 1.107), RIVERS (A. 2.498), rain (A. 5.694), FIRE (A. 4.670) or animals (G. 3.266 of horses, with reference to HIPPOMANES, on which see Thomas 1988, 2: 94–95; compare G. 3.458 of ailing sheep). Images of fire and madness are employed in the description of disease, in particular the PLAGUE (G. 3.440–566). Here we find vocabulary very similar to that which is used to describe the symptoms of love. Instances of *furor* in nature and in animals