Furies

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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

MICHAEL B. SULLIVAN

fruit  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 Virgilianaee (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 Megaira 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 ephrasis). 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

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