

p.s. Fortuna

Praises & Supplications

For the Goddess

by E. Sylvia Simpson

This book is dedicated to all lost and found animal friends
and to those who lovingly care for them.

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Preface

I began sharing my interest in the Goddess Fortuna with online communities in 2009. One of the first things I noticed was a common belief that She “didn’t have any stories”, that She “represented a concept” and not a “real” flesh-and-blood sort of Goddess. She wasn’t Diana, whom everyone has heard of, nor was She Lakshmi the Hindu wealth Goddess, or even Arachne who, at least, had a memorable fable. Hardly anyone seemed to know about the Goddess Fortuna, especially me!

Fortunately, Thalia Took’s wonderful “Obscure Goddess Online Directory” was ranking high in the search engines at the time, and hopefully still is. Despite complaints from my peers her amateur research lacked the footnotes of academia, the threads in Thalia’s fabric of Fortuna’s tapestry held strong. Numerous anonymous Wikipedians, and resources like A.S. Klein’s online translation of Ovid’s *Fasti*, helped me verify the stories, characters, and flesh out the “real” Goddess Fortuna. Who did Fortuna represent, how was She real, and what did She believe in?

I discovered one basic fact: The Goddess Fortuna is reliable and discrete; a divine princess who is here to stay, and not to show off. Despite changes in religious and spiritual expression since the days of the Roman Empire, She hasn’t changed much, and She never really left us. She graced the Rota Fortunae of the Middle Ages, and appeared as a winged angel in one of the first known tarot’s Wheel of Fortune. She inspired a 20th century television show, numerous spin-offs and games. Her statues show up in casinos; Her name graces an elaborate Las Vegas swimming pool.

It’s not that the Goddess Fortuna doesn’t have stories. She does. Aesop tells several stories of Fortuna (as the Greek Tyche) which tell how little She has changed, and how little we have changed at the same time. A common thread is wise guidance offered to humans, humans who are at risk of either ignoring Fortuna’s advice or taking Her for granted, and humans who choose to blame Fortuna for things which are our own fault. It’s hardly a surprise to hear “Fortuna has no stories”, when we are in the habit of paying attention to flashier or more dramatic Goddesses.

Very pretty contemporary statuettes of the Goddess Fortuna portray Her blindfolded; carelessly

spilling coins from an overturned cornucopia. I once purchased a lovely statuette in this iconic style, which I eventually placed on a high shelf amidst other wonderful objects. I can look up and marvel as I imagine those coins dropping down to me from above. In real life, Fortuna has not actually opened doors to tons of money, despite my diligent efforts to improve my career over the years. Clearly, to me at least, Fortuna does not understand money the same way that I do.

Eventually a second style of Fortuna statuette appeared for sale; a small gypsum replica, far less beautiful than the first. Sexy, low-cut blouses, Barbie-perfect thighs peeking through slit skirts and gaudy jewelry are nowhere to be seen in this humble statue. Her face does not show classic symmetry, and her details are a little sketchy. True to form, though, the replica shows a serious Goddess in a traditional pose, dressed very modestly in Roman garb, with a securely held, upright cornucopia full of precious and valuable produce to provide for Her people. A deity.

I've kept this little, traditional replica in a small wall niche for several years, at a height where the activity of my household takes place. Here is where incense is close at hand, candles are lit, the intentions are set and divination takes place. One day, as I lit a candle, my hand brushed against Her, and She toppled down into my kitchen sink, breaking off her cornucopia. I felt Her sadness at all the destruction of Her statues over the centuries, and glued the piece back on with care. I'm comfortable with this humble, repaired replica, and greatly appreciate both statues.

Contemporary spiritual and magical correspondences for the Goddess Fortuna focus strongly on portraying Her as a bringer of wealth prosperity, rather than in Her traditional role as a bringer of "good fortune" of an abundant fruit harvest, and all the other types of luck for which the ancients named Her. In a search for Her symbols, I discovered there is not a lot of agreement for what actually belongs to the Goddess Fortuna. Different aspects of this Goddess have inspired many different and wonderful ideas.

My favorites from Her contemporary symbolism include:

Color: gold, yellow; colors of success, the sun, and the harvest.

Symbols: The cornucopia, filled with fruit.

Amulet: The Tarot major arcana Wheel of Fortune card.

Mineral: Aventurine, which comes in a wide range of colors.

Plant or scent: Bergamot fruit, an ingredient that gives Earl Grey tea its delicious distinction.

Day: Any day, or every day, when it's convenient. For example: Sunday for Good Fortune, Monday as Juno's daughter, Tuesday for goal setting, Wednesday for divination, Thursday as Jupiter's daughter, Friday as Fortuna-Venus, Saturday for harvest from the earth.

Compass Directions: East, for the rising sun and the spring season; a beginning point for the turning of Her wheel. South, for the noonday sun and the summer season; the fruit harvest.

Numerous ancient epithets of the Goddess appear on websites like Wikipedia. They might look something like this:

Primigenia, Virilis, Virginalis, Venus, Fors, Redux, Muliebris, Equestris, Huiusque Diei, Privita, Publica...

How to choose? My advice, from personal experience, is don't worry about the epithets. Aspects were important, in ancient times, for members of a vast Roman republic who all worshipped Fortuna. These ancients may have felt a need to distinguish a prayer for good luck with their newborn from good luck in the battlefield. If you enjoy studying aspects, go for it. However; I believe contemporary practice doesn't need to make such distinctions. It's enough, for this Goddess, that we recognize, respect, and remember Her on a regular basis as one female deity.

If Her correspondences and symbols don't resonate with you, don't worry about that either. Remember those Aesop fables I mentioned earlier? Aesop and the Orphic hymns are in perfect agreement as to what the Goddess Fortuna prefers: the scent of Frankincense. In my opinion, this is the most powerful way to reach the Goddess Fortuna; either through anointing a candle with (diluted) frankincense essential oil or burning incense (pure, stick or cone). I like to do this daily, or at least once a week, to become more and more actively present in a caring, spiritual energy.

Fortunately, the worst ancient ways of worship are obsolete these days. However; it's nice to find appropriate, acceptable symbols and correspondences from the distant past. Here are a

few:

Offering: frankincense, according to Greek authors from antiquity.

Colors: purple, red, yellow; colors of harvest fruits, as shown in the colors of Her gowns on ancient painted frescos.

Amulet: Roman coins and intaglio jewelry were engraved with deities. Images may show Fortuna with a cornucopia, and coins often spell out Her name and/or epithet as well.

Symbols: Rudder or globe; symbolizing navigation by ship and world travel.

Minerals: Romans intaglios appear to be mostly made of carnelian gemstone, and set in gold or silver. Larger statues were usually of marble or bronze, and statuettes might also be made of bronze.

Plant or scent: all harvest fruits, e.g. grapes, apples, occasional exotic fruits like pineapple

Consort: Bonus Eventus, a masculine harvest deity, as seen on ancient Roman coins.