

## The Goddess Fortuna

The ancient Roman Goddess Fortuna was a complex deity with a many faceted personality that was externalized in the devotional names used to her at her shrines. This Goddess could be a mean unforgiving entity if you caught her dispensing her wares on a bad hair day. On her best Good Hair Day, she was Lady Luck. On her Nightmare from Elm Street Days, you did not want to know her ,much less call out her name. Here are some examples of names and invokings at her shrines that had to do with getting her out of a bad mood and protecting yourself from it potential :

Fortuna dubia (dubious)

Fortuna brevis( short lived)

Fortuna mala( evil luck)

She was a Goddess whom you hope you had not offended. And woe to he or she who did !

There was however, another side to Fortuna which made her beloved by millions :

Her Lady Luck powers and her powers to ward off bad fortune.

Here are some of her beneficent aspects and appellations :

Fortuna Annonaria (Luck of the Harvest))

Fortuna Primigenia (Goodfortune for the Firstborn)

Fortuna Virilis ( Luck in one's career)

Fortuna redux (Safe journey)

Much like the later Christians who made deals with their Monotheistic God in the form of : Lets make a Pact, she was very effective in furthering the one ingredient necessary in all religions: faith and belief.

After intolerant Christianity eradicated the pagan gods and goddesses, Fortuna became easily transmogrified and incorporated into the Christian theology of casus or causation and was a very handy tool for the Christian philosophers in spreading their dogma of everything good or bad being part of God's hidden plan. However, because scripture could not explain all of the questions of life, Fortuna crept back into popular acceptance albeit modified to fit the language and mores of changing epochs. She was there but you just couldn't say so.

The idea of a Wheel of Fortune manifested itself in the medieval era in the form of huge stained glass windows in Cathedrals such as the one in Amiens, France. Carl Orff's Carmina Burana

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi (Fortune, Empress of the World)

O Fortuna

O Fortuna O Fortune,  
 velut luna like the moon  
 statu variabilis, you are changeable,  
 semper crescis ever waxing  
 aut decrescis; and waning;  
 vita detestabilis hateful life  
 nunc obdurat first oppresses  
 et tunc curat and then soothes  
 ludo mentis aciem, as fancy takes it;  
 egestatem, poverty  
 potestatem and power  
 dissolvit ut glaciem. it melts them like ice. Sors immanis Fate - monstrous  
 et inanis, and empty,  
 rota tu volubilis, you whirling wheel,  
 status malus, you are malevolent,  
 vana salus well-being is vain  
 semper dissolubilis, and always fades to nothing,  
 obumbrata shadowed  
 et velata and veiled  
 michi quoque niteris; you plague me too;  
 nunc per ludum now through the game  
 dorsum nudum I bring my bare back  
 fero tui sceleris. to your villainy. Sors salutis Fate is against me  
 et virtutis in health  
 michi nunc contraria, and virtue,  
 est affectus driven on  
 et defectus and weighted down,  
 semper in angaria. always enslaved.  
 Hac in hora So at this hour  
 sine mora without delay  
 corde pulsum tangite; pluck the vibrating strings;

quod per sortem since Fate  
sternit fortem, strikes down the string man,  
mecum omnes plangite! everyone weep with me!