

## AN ASTEROID ORACLE: *The Ancient Feminine Wisdom of Asteroid Goddesses and Heroines*

The 2006 Wellspring AstroLog ([www.astrolog.com.au](http://www.astrolog.com.au)) released a special addition of goddess oracle cards, based on twelve potent asteroid goddesses. In this article Brian Clark explores the mythology and meaning of twelve of the asteroid goddesses including Ceres, Juno, Pallas Athena, Vesta, Hygeia, Ariadne, Europa, Pandora, Mnemosyne, Hecate, Cassandra, and Medea. In June 2006 Esoteric Technologies ([www.esotech.com.au](http://www.esotech.com.au)) released a goddess report written by Brian Clark and Stephanie Johnson which details each of these goddesses in signs and houses. For details on how to purchase this report or the report writer, contact Astro\*Synthesis at the Chiron Centre. In 2008 US Games, Inc. ([www.usgamesinc.com](http://www.usgamesinc.com)) will release the *Ancient Feminine Wisdom of Goddesses and Heroines*, an oracular deck of 52 goddesses designed by Kay Steventon with the text written by Brian Clark

# ASTEROID ORACLE

## The Ancient Feminine Wisdom of Asteroid Goddesses and Heroines

### INTRODUCTION: Celebration of the Goddess

The Goddess is the custodian of the Greater Mysteries and the primal world of archetypal forces. As representative of the world soul she engages us in the sacred rites of nature and reanimates life through the cycles of birth and death. Goddess culture flourished in the prehistoric period when magical consciousness prevailed, supernatural forces were deified and natural forces were revered. As consciousness developed through its phases the wisdom of the goddess was buried beneath the rational constructs of a scientific knowledge that erased the mysteries from life and excluded the magical processes.

With the advent of the asteroids the wisdom of the goddess is once again available to consciousness. Goddess wisdom revels in the ancient wisdom of cycles, the intelligence of the inner life, the sanctity of divination, the mystery of healing and the necessity for sacrifice and ritual. The ancient feminine wisdom of the goddesses embraced all phases of life, celebrated its mysteries, ritualised its passages and knew the power of the natural world.

### ASTEROID GODDESSES AND HEROINES

The maxim 'as above, so below' underpins the philosophy of astrology. Inner and outer lives are woven together through investing the celestial sphere with meaning. Therefore when astronomical discoveries are made astrologers find new meaning and revelation in them. Astrological tradition suggests that with the major discovery of a planet the collective is confronted with the conscious awakening of an archetypal force that may have previously lain dormant or been repressed. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century dawned such a discovery was made reawakening the feminine power and wisdom of the Goddess.

Late in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Johannes Kepler first suggested that there might be a planet between the orbit of Mars and Jupiter. Nearly two centuries later the publication of Bodes Law reiterated this possibility. Based on the theory that all the planets were in a harmonic distance from the Sun the law suggested there should be a planet orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. When Uranus was discovered in 1781 its distance from the Sun conformed to the law giving greater weight to the theory of the missing planet. Finally on

New Years Eve 1800 a Sicilian astronomer spotted a new body in the region and named it Ceres after the patron goddess of his homeland. To the Sicilians Ceres favoured their island and it was here they claimed Hades abducted her daughter.

One year later its orbit was confirmed and although small in comparison to the other planets the missing planet had become visible. But early in 1802 another body was sighted between Mars and Jupiter and named Pallas Athena. Astronomers wondered if a planet had exploded in this region and therefore more would be discovered. And they were. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century over 400 hundred of these small planets had been named.

It was not until the early 1970's as the woman's movement began to accelerate that astrologers began to take note of the significance of these new bodies, which were named asteroids. In 1973 an ephemeris of the first four discoveries was printed and the astrological community began to experiment with these new archetypes. The first four asteroids were named after the Olympian goddesses who had been previously unnamed in the astrological planetary pantheon: Ceres, Juno and Vesta were the three sisters of Jupiter while Pallas Athena was his daughter. All four were prominent in Greek myth and their cults predated their male counterparts. Previously in the astrological pantheon only the Moon and Venus were available to represent the lineage of the feminine traditions. Renewed images of the feminine had now appeared in the astrological tapestry. As astrologers began using these potent images of the asteroids the cults of the ancient goddesses were rediscovered paralleling the cultural reclamation of feminine power. With the discovery of the asteroids and their use in astrology the ancient feminine wisdom of the goddess was brought to consciousness.

<b>Asteroid Goddesses and Heroines</b>	<b>Asteroid Number Year Discovered</b>	<b>Oracular Keywords</b>	<b>Astrological Correlations</b>
<b>Ceres</b>	1 1801	Mother-Daughter Child Care Renewal Nourishment	Closely aligned with the archetypes of Pluto and the Moon and especially strong when the Moon aspects Pluto. Her process may enter our lives when Pluto transits the Moon or the 4 <sup>th</sup> house.
<b>Pallas Athena</b>	2 1802	Intelligence Strategy Arts and Crafts Justice Diplomacy	Athena is sympathetic to the air signs especially the justice and strategy of Libra and the intelligence and objectivity of Aquarius. She is aligned with the masculine archetypes of Mars and Uranus and close to Jupiter, her father's realm.
<b>Juno</b>	3 1804	Equal Relationship Social Rituals Feminine Beauty Power in Relationship	Goddess of Marriage and social customs she reverberates with Libra and the 7 <sup>th</sup> house. Her passionate side is reflected through the 8 <sup>th</sup> principle of Scorpio and interchanges between these two astrological principles reflect the goddess.
<b>Vesta</b>	4 1807	Inner Life Devotion Service Sacred Space	Vesta is the spirit of the 6 <sup>th</sup> house, the domain of the sacred in the everyday, the rituals of work and well-being. Planets in Virgo respond to the archetype as do inner planets aspecting Saturn, the need for authenticity.
<b>Hygeia</b>	10 1849	Physical Health Mental Well Being Diet and Exercise Wholistic Healing Integration	The axis of health in the horoscope is the 6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> polarity. The Sun symbolises the vitality and the ascendant suggests how we conduct that vital life force. Chiron is the archetype of healing. Hygeia is very much concerned with these principles.
<b>Ariadne</b>	43 1857	Patterns in Family and Relationship Betrayal Awakening Transformation Soul Mate Labyrinth	Ariadne's story plumbs the depths of the water houses. She leaves the familial terrain of the 4 <sup>th</sup> house to be abandoned by her lover in the labyrinth of the 8 <sup>th</sup> but awakens to her divine connection in the 12 <sup>th</sup> . Neptune aspects to Venus or Mars may highlight these themes. Ariadne's process is revealed with transits to planets in the 8 <sup>th</sup> house or Pluto transiting Venus or Mars.
<b>Europa</b>	52 1858	Success Resourcefulness Fertile Productive Pleasure Abundance and Wealth	Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn and their rulers Venus, Mercury and Saturn represent the earth instinct. Of all three signs Taurus is the sign most closely aligned with Europa's passions and power. Planets in Taurus or the second house constellate the mythic pattern while transits through the second house or to Venus may evoke issues concerning values and resources
<b>Pandora</b>	55 1858	Hope Innovation Curiosity Unexpected Change agent Rebellious	Pandora is a change agent and therefore may be sudden and unexpected like Uranus. Her curious nature and marking of threshold change is Mercurial linking Mercury and Uranus. As an agent of transformation she has a Plutonic essences as well. Planets in Gemini or Mercury aspects to Uranus or Pluto.

<b>Mnemosyne</b>	57 1860	Memory Creativity Inspiration Music, Poetry and the Arts Story Telling Imagining	The Moon records, reflects and reveals every heartbeat, breath and nuance of primitive life therefore the progressed Moon evokes memory as it progresses through the horoscope. Aspects between the Moon and Mercury as well as other planets aspecting these planetary archetypes reveal the process of feeling and rational memory.
<b>Hecate</b>	100 1868	Crossroads and Thresholds Transition Magic Nightmares Clairaudience	Aspects to Mercury may signal how we might manage crossroads, our facility for change and adaptability. Crossroads in the life cycle are mapped out by the cycle of the slower moving planets while personal crossroads are reflected in the transits of the transpersonal planets to the personal ones. Note the South Node of the Moon.
<b>Cassandra</b>	114 1871	Prophecy Clairvoyance and Mediumship Disbelief Chaos	Cassandra revels in the world of Neptune – the archetype of the medial woman. Aspects between Mercury and Neptune, or Mercury in Pisces reflect Cassandra. Interconnections between Jupiter and Pluto may also ignite a similar pattern.
<b>Medea</b>	212 1880	Magical Power Rejuvenation Herbal Knowledge Witch/Healer	Medea is similar to the archetypes of Pluto and Scorpio, as she understands the process of metamorphosis. Planets in the Eighth House or in aspect to Pluto may conjure up the potent magic of Medea.

## MYTHIC GODDESSES AND HEROINES

Mythology serves as a psychological record of human development recording the imagination and symbols of the culture. Mythic stories speak to the inner life as they deal with universal themes and truths illustrating the archetypal forces that influence the course of the human drama. In archaic societies myths offered an explanation of the world and its creation, the cycle of birth, growth and death, how things came into existence as well as how they disappeared. In contemporary times we have scientific explanations for many of the ancient mysteries, but myth is just as valuable to help us to imagine our own origins and invest our lives with meaning. Mythic themes stir the imagination and broaden the horizon of the individual's story placing it in a context of a larger story.

Mythology is the link between the magical phase of being when consciousness participates in nature and the rational phase when we are separated from the natural world. The magical phase embraces the culture of the Great Goddess when life is full of mystery and wonder and we are one with the natural order, not separated or expelled from it. In this phase all nature is sacred as all life is invested with the divine. The asteroids are surrogates of the Great Goddess and reconnect us to her culture. As emissaries the asteroid goddesses and heroines invest life with the sacred, value imagination and mystery and inspire ritual and sacrifice in order to reconnect to the wellsprings of her magical forces.

While the myths of the goddesses and heroines were reshaped and distorted to conform to current socio-political and religious attitudes their archetypal essence underpins their myths. Following is a summary of their genealogy and mythic tradition. Let the myths resonate with your imagination and speak to you in their own way.

Asteroid Goddess/ Heroine	Mythic Dynasty	Mythic Process and Tradition
<b>Ceres</b>	Olympian Goddess, Demeter. Daughter of the Titan Cronus and Rhea and mother of Persephone.	The Corn Goddess who personifies the agricultural cycle of fertility and harvest, as well as loss and renewal through her daughter Persephone.
<b>Pallas Athena</b>	Olympian Goddess, daughter of Zeus.	The wisdom of reflection and strategy.
<b>Juno</b>	Olympian goddess, Hera. Daughter of the Titan Cronus and Rhea and mother to Ares, Hephaestus and Hebe.	The Goddess of Marriage and Social Customs who oversees the seasons of a woman's life.
<b>Vesta</b>	Olympian Goddess Hestia, daughter of the Titan Cronus and Rhea.	The Goddess of the Hearth who embodies sacred space.
<b>Hygeia</b>	The healing dynasty of Asclepius. Sister of other minor healing deities and heroes including Panacea, Machaon and Podalirius.	The Goddess of Health, the giver and preserver of well being whose function is to maintain a healthy relationship between body and soul.
<b>Ariadne</b>	Minoan dynasty. Daughter of King Minos and Queen Pasiphaë, granddaughter of Helios and Zeus. Sister of Phaedra and half-sister to the Minotaur.	Leaving home. Ariadne represents the marriage to the divine after the trials of betrayal and abandonment.
<b>Europa</b>	Phoenician princess, sister to Cadmus. Matriarch of the Minoan dynasty, mother to King Minos and grandmother of Ariadne and Phaedra.	Innocence and adventure. The creative and earthy process that supports and guides worldly success.
<b>Pandora</b>	Shaped by Hephaestus as the first woman and married to Epimetheus and mother of Pyrrha.	The first woman who brings the gift of hope.
<b>Mnemosyne</b>	A Titaness, daughter of Uranus and Gaia. Mother to the Muses.	Memory. The enchantment and power of re-membering.
<b>Hecate</b>	Daughter of Perses and Asteria, granddaughter of Phoebe, the Titaness of lunar divination.	Underworld goddess represented in her three-fold nature as the goddess of the crossroads and the guardian of transitions.
<b>Cassandra</b>	Trojan dynasty. Daughter of Priam and Hecuba, twin sister to Helenus and sister to seventeen other siblings including Paris and Hector.	Oracular Ability. Cassandra knows the feminine mysteries of divination in a modern world that devalues the sacred tradition.
<b>Medea</b>	Princess of Colchis, granddaughter of Helios and niece of Circe.	Magic. Medea is the great sorceress of the Greek myths knowledgeable in herbs, healing and the art of metamorphosis.

## **CERES: EARTH MOTHER**

### *The Cycle of Renewal*

Ceres is the Roman agricultural goddess whose gift of grain, '*cereal*', was distributed to mankind as thanksgiving for the release of her beloved daughter from the underworld and also as an eternal symbol of the continuity of life. Ceres is the goddess of agriculture who instinctually knows the cycle of loss, death and rebirth through her attachment to her beloved daughter.

The Roman goddess was modeled on her Greek counterpart Demeter whose central myth focused on the loss of her daughter, Persephone. It was this myth, which inspired the greatest initiation rites in the ancient world - the Eleusinian Mysteries. These mysteries reenacted the terrifying journey of Persephone into the underworld and through these rituals both male and female participants faced their terror of death and became thankful for the gift of life.

Ceres, corn goddess, patron of farm life and vegetation is both an agricultural and underworld deity. She is an earth mother who presides over the cycle of fertility, birth, harvest, decay, death and rebirth. From the archaic period the goddess protected and insured the fertility and propagation of the crops and livestock. Her sanctuaries were placed near arable land, outside cities, where pilgrims would come to petition the goddess for a fertile crop and feast on the abundant gifts of food that the goddess provided. Her myth was more ancient than her male contemporaries and reached back to the epoch when deities of the underworld (death) and the earth (life) were one. Ceres represents both loss and harvest and her classical story embraces each aspect in the myth of her daughter who becomes the Queen of the Underworld.

The myth of Ceres/Demeter and her daughter is a heartbreaking narrative of closeness, separation, grief and reunion, the motivation behind the establishment of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The brutal breaking of their attachment is the impetus that allows each woman to develop independently of one other into sovereignty over their own sphere. Since antiquity this poignant portrait of the mother-daughter bond has probably been the most cherished of all the Greek myths. The classical myth is also remarkable as it places the feminine characters at the heart of the narrative with the male gods on the periphery honouring a sacred and profound feminine story. Ceres myth was first told in a hymn to the great goddess Demeter.

Kore, the innocent maiden Persephone, was playing in a meadow gathering flowers when the earth rumbled beneath her and broke open. Suddenly from the chasm in the earth a chariot drawn by four black horses appeared. In the chariot was Hades, the Lord of the Underworld, who seized her. As she struggled to break free the chariot carrying them disappeared into the black hole. Demeter wandered aimlessly in

search of her daughter. No mortal or god could help her with information about her daughter's disappearance. Finally after nine days she met Hecate, the goddess of the crossroads. Hecate heard Persephone screams, the only clue to the abduction.

Demeter raged and withdrew the gift of fertility from the earth causing a great famine. She also withdrew herself from the company of the gods and in disguise wandered amongst mortals unnoticed. Grief-stricken, depleted and withered, Demeter wandered to Eleusis where she met the daughters of the local king who pitied her and brought her home. Their mother gave Demeter the task of caring for her infant son. Demeter nursed him on ambrosia and nectar and every night she would baptise the infant in fire in order to render him immortal and safeguard him from the fate of the eternal cycle of life, death and rebirth. However one evening the Queen interrupted Demeter in the middle of her ritual and screamed in fear for the boy's safety. At that moment the cycle of mourning was broken. Demeter cast off her old age, changing her size and appearance to reveal herself as the great goddess and commanded the king to build her a great temple and introduce her worship to the people of Eleusis.

However Demeter was still furious at the abduction of her daughter and withheld the new crop's seed so the earth continued to be barren. Zeus intervened and demanded Demeter return to Olympus and fulfil her duties. Demeter refused. Finally Zeus in his anguish agreed to release Persephone from the underworld so the crops would grow again. Persephone was eager to be reunited with her mother. But before she left the underworld Hades gave her a pomegranate seed to ingest. Innocently Persephone took the seed and swallowed it now binding her eternally to this place. Having eaten in the underworld meant Persephone now belonged here.

Demeter and Persephone's reunion was ecstatic and both rejoiced at the sight of one another even though they knew they would not be together as in the past. As the nourishing caring mother Ceres indicates the necessity to nurture a creative project even if that means letting it go. By letting go of an attachment a phase of the cycle ends and prepares us for a new beginning. On a divinatory level Ceres suggests the relinquishing of a bond so that a new phase of relationship can begin. When the card is chosen it heralds the advent of a more mature phase of the cycle. Energy previously withheld, imprisoned feelings or an aspect of ourselves that has felt violated can be released so that a new course of life may unfold.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Loss is intricately woven into the tapestry of life; attachment, separation and loss are part of life's greatest mystery. Feminine wisdom knows that grief is only one phase of the great wheel, and mourning allows the process to be complete so that we may let go and life may be renewed.

## PALLAS ATHENA: THE WISDOM OF THE WARRIOR

### *Reflection and Strategy*

The architectural masterpiece, the Parthenon, was dedicated to the goddess whom the classical Athenians cherished. Pallas Athena was their advocate for law and order, the teacher of household arts like spinning, weaving, and cooking, as well as their protector and defender. As their goddess of war she helped the Greeks defeat Troy, the Athenians repel the Persians; as their goddess of useful and decorative arts she inspired them to build exceptional monuments and temples. The goddess of merciful justice transformed the law courts and at the dawn of the fifth century she inspired the democratic shift in Athenian politics. Athena was the revered goddess of the Athenians who celebrated her birthday each year with a great festival and procession through the Agora up to the Acropolis.

As a multi-tasked goddess many images are associated with Pallas Athena but it is the owl that reminds us of her wisdom. Her intelligence is 'bright-eyed' and sharp, focused on the immediate, located in the present, aligned with the head and not the instinct. Pallas Athena embodies the rational and encourages left-brain thinking. Her wisdom controls the instincts, learning to direct them into heroic pursuits to eradicate what is dark and primitive. She is civilising and organising, bringing culture and cultivation to mankind. Justice and law are part of her new order replacing retaliation and revenge.

Strategic, reflective and controlled her craft and skill is mirrored in the multiplicity of devices she offered man, the fertility of her ideas and the usefulness of her inventions and techniques. As *Pronoai* she is 'before knowing' embracing forethought and strategic thinking. As a warrior queen she was born from the forehead of her father Zeus, fully armoured and mature, suggesting that the wisdom of goddess had been reborn into a new order. As father's special daughter Pallas Athena mirrored the rational intelligence and counsel of Zeus. Metis, the mother of Athena, was an ancient goddess of wisdom known as Wise Counsel or Cunning Intelligence. She knew the feminine mysteries, the intelligence articulated by the heart and the inner world of instinct and intuition. From her Pallas Athena inherited another kind of wisdom: the wisdom of intuitive knowing often experienced in the belly as a 'gut instinct'. It is a knowing that may speak through symptoms or disease, through creativity or craft, or radiate through stillness and tranquillity or even erupt in anger or hostility. It is a wisdom born out of an intimate connection between mind and matter, a fluid way of being the ancient Greeks knew as *sophia*.

Athena is a proud daughter born from a power struggle between her powerfully dominant father and her intuitively wise mother. Consciously Athena only knows her father's way and the new order. Born of

man, like Eve, this myth is often cited when tracing the emergence of 'father-right' from the long held tradition of 'mother-right'. The daughter is now aligned with the sky father who colludes in rejecting the earth mother. The tables have turned in the familial pattern and now it is father and daughter colluding against mother, no longer mother conspiring with her youngest son against the father. When Athena emerges she reflects the need for logic and rationality rather than feeling and instinct. Her path follows the reason of the head, aligned with her father, not the impulse of the heart, the vulnerable feminine side that she has not been nurtured by.

Like Eve, Athena's feminine legacy is not so easily erased. Both their myths contain the image of the snake, a sacred symbol of their legacy of feminine wisdom, healing and regeneration. By the classical period Athena's wisdom became subjugated to Zeus. Shaped by the masculine wisdom becomes linear, logical and rational. *Metis* is no longer acknowledged as her other parent. The internal wisdom of cycles, intuitive knowing and the complexity of intrapsychic understanding becomes concealed under Athena's armour.

Athena is also associated with the arts of healing, health and regeneration. As Athena *Nike* she was the goddess of Victory, first victorious in war and later a victor on the sports field. Athena signalled victory and as a patron of heroes she was also known as the goddess of the near, as she was always close to the hero and a staunch supporter of the heroic. As the goddess of war and defender of her father's realm Athena became aligned with the hero as his guide and protector. In mythic portrayals of the hero, Athena stands behind or beside him as his staunch ally against the monstrous and dark forces. When Pallas Athena appears she encourages us to be heroic and battle the regressive forces of our instinctual nature. When we choose Pallas Athena it is necessary to reflect on the situation and not react emotionally, detaching enough to formulate a decisive plan of action. On an oracular level the card suggest the need to be the wise warrior and use strategy and cunning. On a divinatory level the card suggests the individual may be torn between the head and the heart but Pallas encourages us to be heroic and choose the course that will champion our cause. An enmeshed situation demands reflection, objectivity and disengagement.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Reflection and meditation develop out of the turmoil of chaos and uncertainty, helping us to become more strategic and deliberate in our actions. *Metis* is the valued intelligence that guides our instincts and plans strategically and arises into consciousness at exactly the right moment. Pallas Athena discerns and through reflecting on emotionally entangled situations allows consciousness to develop.

## **JUNO: SOCIALISING THE SOUL**

### *Customs and Rituals*

Juno *Regina* shares the honour of the highest deity in the Roman pantheon as queen next to her husband-brother Jupiter, king of the gods. Each woman had their own guardian spirit named *juno*, who guided their transitions into the stages of motherhood and marriage. As a light bringer she was also invoked for protection during childbirth. As the goddess of marriage her Roman name Juno was the derivative of June, the season of the bride. Women celebrated her annually in the festival of *Matronalia*. By the Roman period Juno had become emblematic of the woman as wife and citizen presiding over social customs and duties. In earlier Greek myths Juno was a powerful goddess in her own right known as Hera, the adored feminine deity of many powerful city-states.

The derivation of Hera's name may be related to Hora or season, as she is custodian of the seasons of a woman's life. On the Olympian pantheon she was the goddess of marriage and embodied social ritual and custom. At her cult in Argos young girls ran races to prepare for their marriage and the rituals of womanhood. In the Greek myths Hera was a wife and unlike her husband Hera does not have affairs. However in Greek myth Hera also seeks revenge upon her husbands' liaisons with others. By the classical period the tales of Zeus and Hera rival contemporary soap operas where the cycle of betrayal, outrage and revenge is the central plot. Hera consistently plots revenge against Zeus' lovers and children from these affairs. However there was an earlier time when the Olympian couple was not always locked in power struggles or scheming and bullying each other. This was when they first fell in love in the palace of their aunt and uncle where they were being hidden, protected by their mother Rhea from the familial wars that were raging with their father. Here in the great palace beneath the sea, they consummated their relationship, a relationship that was to remain secret for nearly 300 years. Underpinning the later myths are fragments, which reveal Hera was an ancient goddess before she became aligned with her brother in a sacred marriage.

Epithets of Hera such as 'cow-eyed' refer to her earlier association with the earth and agriculture, while her epithet 'of the white arms' may link her to an association with the Moon. She is often depicted in three phases as the maiden, the fulfilled and the solitary, a trinity of aspects represented by Hebe, Hera and Hecate. Hebe was the daughter of Hera and the cupbearer to the Gods who became married to Heracles after his apotheosis to Olympus. In this aspect Hera is the maiden, the youth and the aspect of the feminine that retains her virginity, even in relationship. The central phase was motherhood, wifedom and a woman of power. Local folklore suggested she bathed in the streams of Argos where she was able to regain her virginity lost in the marriage with Zeus. Hecate was associated with the final phase embracing Hera's

aloneness and need for solace. At times Hera would leave Zeus to go off on her own to pursue her needs for privacy, renewal and worship.

Hera was indigenous to Greece long before Zeus was triumphant. The cult of Hera may have been so powerful that unlike the other goddesses Zeus was unable to be dominant, settling instead for an equal relationship. Her cult on Samos and in Argos are linked to the prehistorical period. On Samos one of the first mammoth stone temples of the archaic period was built in honour of Hera. Similarly her temple at Olympus predates the magnificent one built for Zeus. No doubt Hera is an older goddess like Demeter and Hestia, her sisters who were born to Cronus and Rhea before their brothers. However to incorporate Hera into the politics on Olympus she became the wife of Zeus and mother to his children.

Another mythic fragment, which suggests Hera is a powerful ancient goddess, is her link to Heracles. Even though their relationship is estranged Heracles is named for the great goddess. His name literally translates into the glory of Hera. Hera whose name closely resembles hero is aligned with the greatest of all heroes, Heracles and plays a potent role in many heroic sagas. Their antagonistic relationship ironically spurred him on to become the greatest hero and ironically myth depicts Hera as his mother-in-law. No longer the object of her scorn Hera has challenged Heracles to become the hero. As mother-in-law she models a strong and uncompromising woman who demands the hero be the best man for her daughter.

Juno and Hera are the composite that portray the seasons of a woman's life as well as the evolution of woman's roles. The *juno* in contemporary woman has new power and possibilities and the card is an invitation to challenge the constructs of the social roles that are inhibiting. As a partner and equal Juno is supportive, enterprising, challenging and confronting helping shape potentiality into reality. On a divinatory level the card may be chosen when a woman is considering a change of social roles, or a mother, wife or sister in a man's life is entering a new phase of life that demands new customs and routines. Juno appears when social rituals and customs need to be executed to insure that the course of life is successful. The card highlights power in intimate relationships and the urge to strive towards a more equal and meaningful partnership, therefore when the card is drawn it suggests that intimate issues in one-to-one relationships may be on the agenda.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Status and achievement in the world are intricately aligned with social customs and tradition. Equality in relationship is necessary at all stages of the life cycle to insure both inner and outer fulfillment. Juno's ancient legacy is equal relationship and through her archetypal experience one becomes aligned with their heroic self.

## **VESTA: THE INNER LIFE**

### *Honouring sacred space*

The cult of the Roman goddess Vesta was connected to the Greek Hestia. However the Roman archetype had considerably altered from her Hellenic counterpart. By the Roman period the sacrament of virginity was literalised, no longer conceptualised as a psychic state but now institutionalized as a spiritual way of being. Priestesses of Vesta, known as Vestal Virgins, served the goddess for a period of thirty years. While the position was privileged it also was one of great piety, devotion and responsibility. Vestal Virgins tended the sacred flame and guarded the Palladium, the secret objects brought from Troy to preserve the memory of the ancient city and protect the new satellite city of Rome. However in ancient Greece Hestia was the embodiment of an internal and sacred space not a religious institution. Vesta's heritage reaches back to the traditions of honouring the authenticity of the inner life as symbolised by the spirit of the sacred flame, not a system of regulations.

In ancient Greece the goddess received the highest respect. Acknowledged as the deity mankind must first honour when feasting and drinking the goddess embodied grace and virtue. Veiled and virginal her sanctuaries were places of refuge, asylum and political peace. Constant, focused and disliking change Vesta is the hearth, a symbol for both the centre and the focus of the home as well as the metaphor for family life and the family circle. As custodian of the hearth she is central to psychic life representing the sacral centre, the goddess who honours sacred space and protects holy images. She embodies spatiality, conferring safe places to congregate, mediating soul by giving it a hallowed place to be acknowledged. As a virgin (unto herself) goddess Vesta is the custodian of soulful space personifying the stillness at the centre of our busy everyday lives. As goddess of hospitality she also welcomes travellers across the threshold offering sanctuary and hospice. Vesta is the continuity of family life and the coherence it brings to our everyday experiences. Vesta was the first-born child, the first devoured by Saturn and the last one to be disgorged from his belly. Therefore she represents the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the eternal cycle. Vesta is not a part of the outer rim of the cycle but situated at its centre, personifying stillness, discretion, centering and immobility, aspects of her Greek counterpart, Hestia.

Few Greek myths remain of Hestia; she is rarely personified, no statues or temples remain, yet at times in the archaic period she was the most honoured goddess, worshipped at the centre of the city and the centre of the Greek household. By the classical period Hestia was not included as one of the twelve Olympians having been replaced by Dionysus. Hestia and her brother Hades are the only two siblings who remain detached from the Olympian family dramas and feuds. Unlike their brothers, Poseidon and Zeus, or their

sisters, Hera and Demeter, they are not identified with their family of origin or their siblings. Their places are internal, interior and introverted. Few images or alters survive as reminders of their worship or importance in cult. There were virtually no temples erected to them and they were seldom represented in art, sculpture or vase painting. Neither were they parents to heroes like their siblings. As gods of place both Hestia and Hades have been re-placed and dis-placed which are potent clues as to what we culturally and psychologically have done with these archetypal energies. In a modern context this place of Hestia, as a metaphor for the hearth of inner life, has become dis-placed, re-placed by the rush and busyness of the outer world. When the inner life is sidelined and banished to the fringes of society, anxiety, terror and panic can no longer be constrained in the community. Hestia reflects the need for solace, quiet and retreat into the inner sanctuary of the Self.

As an image of centre, Hestia is not personified or remembered by statues or temples but manifests through the sense of centring. She is the central point; the meeting place the fires of the home, the hearth, the Omphalos as the symbol for the centre of the Earth. In antiquity her sanctuaries were non-warring zones, places of political peace. Plato remarked, 'when the Gods warred, only Hestia did not take part' which characterised the goddess' propensity to non-involvement. In the earlier myths of Hestia she resisted the advances of both her brother Poseidon and her nephew Apollo and was honoured with remaining eternally virginal, symbolic of her attachment to the inner life. She is the aspect of self, which can never be violated or abused and always able to access the soul. Hestia is central to psychic life and expressions like 'can't settle down', 'off centre', 'being off base' remind us of being out of touch with Hestia. As the hearth she is a guide to the inner life and the central image around which soulful images can constellate. She represents sacred space, the meditative moment the soul of place and the feeling of home.

On a divinatory level the card suggests the need to centre so that anxiety and panic can be contained. The card may suggest that the outer life needs to be nourished and refreshed through a break, time away, a retreat or a sabbatical. The card reflects the need to create some daily rituals that promote a meditative and quiet space so that we can be hospitable to all our thoughts and feelings, especially those that have been ignored or not acknowledged.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Vesta is the inner instinct that honours soul by giving it a sacred place, an altar, a quiet moment. She represents hospice and offers hospitality to the aspects of self that feel displaced and dislocated. As the hearth light she offers stillness, quietude, meditation and solitude in the midst of the everyday. The inner life is the container for anxiety and despair as well as a refuge from the pollution of daily life.

## **HYGEIA: THE SOUL OF HEALTH**

### *Divine well-being*

In the ancient Greek sanctuaries of healing statues of Hygeia, the goddess of health, reminded the pilgrim of the archetypal quest for wholeness and well being. Adorned with a simple garment Hygeia was often represented as youthful, radiant and smiling, attributes that are companions of health. Either she is holding or feeding a snake. Carrying a bowl of food or water Hygeia is generally represented tending the sacred snakes that were housed in the temples on the sanctuaries of healing. Sometimes she is presented holding a wreath of laurel, combing victory with health, or other plants known for their medicinal properties, a motif that links her to an ancient tradition of woman healers, herbalists and midwives.

Hygeia's intimate relationship with the serpent recalls her link to the ancient goddesses of healing and nature. Earth and Mother goddesses were accompanied by serpents and the ancient belief was that they transmitted the power of healing and prophecy. As a symbol of both regeneration and divination serpents were sacred to the goddess who gave them sanctuary in the bosom of the earth. Later the cult of sacred snake was adapted and serpents were included in the rituals at the sanctuaries that offered healing and spiritual guidance. The ancients also saw the sacred serpent dwelling in the body and when awakened it could offer illumination, vitality and the radiance of well being. As nature became less mysterious snakes became demonised, no longer transmitting the ancient wisdom of healing but transporting demonic and darker forces.

Hygeia nurtures and tends the snake revering its sacred power to rejuvenate and shed its old ways. She celebrates its dark chthonic force and recognises the divine mystery of illness and health. Like her ancient ancestors, Hygeia honoured the union between the natural and supernatural worlds knowing that health and well being depended on bringing them both into a cohesive whole. Goddess wisdom also knew that all of nature was animated by spirits which could be petitioned through magical and religious ritual in an attempt to restore equilibrium and well being. Hygeia is the modern surrogate of the ancient goddesses who honour the great mystery of healing.

To the Greeks Hygeia personified health, that mysterious amalgam of well-being, wholeness and happiness. She emerged in the classical period when the cult of Asclepius became widespread and flourished throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Hygeia was mainly represented as the daughter of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, although sometimes known as his wife. Her numerous statues equal those of Asclepius and in the cult of healing she was revered and equal to the god himself. Interestingly the popularity of temple medicine practiced at the sanctuaries of Asclepius paralleled the growth of rational

medicine that had emerged through the teachings of Hippocrates. Hygeia stands at the crossroads of magico-religious healing rituals and contemporary medical practice, holding the tension between the two but allowing each to co-exist. She embraces wholistic healing in every manifestation as she is dedicated to the pursuit of health.

In the ancient community disease was portrayed as a possession by a demon, the intrusion of a spirit or the curse of a god. In the cult of Asclepius illness was seen to be more the call of the divine, the voice that echoed the split between body and spirit. It was the illness that called the pilgrim to the temple to restore equilibrium and well being. At the temple the patient would prepare for an encounter with the god often by fasting, bathing or meditating. Then the patient was escorted into the temple where they would lie down and fall into a deep sleep wherein the god would appear to them in a dream. Once contact with the god had been made through the inner process of the dream the patient would be restored to health. In the healing sanctuaries of Hygeia health was evoked through contact with the divine in the inner sanctuary of the soul. Yet synchronous with these practices were medical doctors who suggested that disease was a natural occurrence and not of the god's making. Hence Hygeia eventually became associated with mental health and well being as rational medical doctors gained a stronghold on the health of the physical body.

When Hygeia is chosen we are reminded that health is the alignment of body and soul, heart and mind, outer success and inner peace. One at the expense of the other constellates dis-ease in the temperament which may manifest as a physical symptom, mental anguish or emotional pain. Hygeia is the personification of Health who calls us into the inner sanctuary of the soul to restore health and regain equilibrium. On a divinatory level Hygeia will be chosen when the healing of a situation is imperative. Rational healing is not the only answer. It must be accompanied by attending to the root cause, which ultimately is the illness in the soul. In a psychological sense Hygeia is soul of health, the urge to attend to psyche and its needs by nurturing our deeper urges and impulses. Feeding the snakes is a metaphor for nurturing the dark and mysterious aspects of the soul and attending to the unconscious. On an oracular level Hygeia heralds a period of health after we have attended to the deeper yearnings of the soul.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Health is forged through the alliance of the natural with the supernatural, the right brain with the left, the inner world with the outer, the serpent with the soul. Hygeia reminds us that health is an archetypal image embedded in the psyche. When the soul is not nourished or attended it speaks through illness and disease.

## **ARIADNE: THE LABYRINTH OF THE SOUL**

### *Authentic Relationship*

Daughter of the great dynasty of Knossos, Ariadne's fate was overshadowed by the curse that plagued her family. In the guise of a great white bull, Zeus had abducted her grandmother Europa from Phoenicia and brought her to Crete. Her mother Pasiphaë had also become enamoured by a great bull. Ariadne participated in the family fate: as Pasiphaë's daughter her lifeblood was impassioned and as Europa's granddaughter her destiny was to abandon her ancestral home.

Poseidon cursed Ariadne's family when her father Minos refused to sacrifice his most magnificent bull to the god. Spurned, the god aroused Pasiphaë's shameful lust for the impressive bull that became embodied in her bull-son, the Minotaur, human from the shoulders down. Banished into the labyrinthine blackness below the palace Ariadne's half-brother, the Minotaur, fed on sacrificial children sent from Athens every nine years. Heroic Theseus was one of fourteen youths sent to Crete to face death at the hands of the Minotaur.

When Theseus arrived to participate in the bull games Ariadne's passions were ignited when she saw him for the first time. Beguiled by the handsome hero, Ariadne devised a plan for Theseus to slay the Minotaur and return safely through the dark tunnels of the labyrinth. For her complicity Theseus promised he would marry her and take her away to Athens. Unconscious that her fate was enmeshed with the god Dionysus and not Theseus Ariadne set upon her course to help her lover and in turn betray her family.

Through the dark labyrinthine tunnels Theseus crawled, quietly, mindful not to make sounds that would waken the sleeping Minotaur. Wrapped around his wrist was a ball of yarn, tied to the pillar at the entrance of the maze, which unravelled as he made his way through the dangerous tunnels. Ariadne's thread was the umbilical cord that connected him to the outer world and guaranteed his return after he killed the Minotaur. That evening Ariadne escaped with Theseus. In the dark Mediterranean night they set sail for a victorious return to Athens. Leaving behind her father and sacrificing her brother she surrendered to the passion that burned inside, the rapture only Aphrodite could inspire, a similar fervour that had inflamed her mother and grandmother. The next night Ariadne and her lover reached the island Naxos. Exhausted by travelling and fatigued from the emotional turmoil that had preceded their escape they collapsed into a deep sleep. But as the rays of the morning sun lit her face Ariadne awoke to discover her lover had vanished. At the edge of the shore she saw the sails of his ship in the distance. Athena had carefully woken Theseus before dawn, setting him on his course home without Ariadne. Abandoned, betrayed and used, Ariadne descended into her own labyrinthine world on the shores of Naxos.

Blinded by her passions Ariadne had been complicit in her abandonment. In betraying her family to follow her hero she had set the cycle of betrayal in motion. Projecting her heroic self onto Theseus had left her separated from her own centre. Alone Ariadne was forced to connect with her internal world. At this threshold Ariadne experienced an epiphany of Aphrodite the goddess who ignited the passionate fires that led to her suffering. Appearing to Ariadne the goddess revealed her true fate: she would wed her real soul mate, the divine Dionysus. Dionysus celebrated their sacred marriage by offering Ariadne the crown as the symbol of their intimacy and eternal union.

Ariadne's myth portrays the heart's painful journey when connection to the inner self is severed and sacrificed to the lover. Ariadne followed her lover's course rather than her own internal labyrinthine journey losing her genuine direction. Using the thread, the symbolic connection to her inner core, to serve the hero Ariadne lost contact with her own inner wisdom. Abandoned she was no longer able to define herself exclusively through a partner; therefore a more authentic sense of self could emerge. The painful process of confronting her naïve trust and blind faith in Theseus enabled her renewal and redemption. In psychological terms a more divine sense of union is possible when projections onto the other are consciously relinquished. Dionysus embodies a woman's masculine spirit enabling her to define herself in terms of her own needs and not through someone else.

When this card is chosen it reveals the course of the heart encouraging the individual to acknowledge that the threads to their inner self are tenuous and must be honoured in relationship. On a divinatory level the card suggests an awakening after a period of loss or betrayal. A deeper connection in relationship is possible. Ariadne celebrates a more intimate connection with the heart, whether that is through a personal relationship, a new creative endeavour or a new course of life. On an oracular level Ariadne appears when it is imperative to reflect on the course of a relationship to discover its authenticity.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Abandonment is an archetypal process that strips away the mind's illusions in order to hear the calling of the true self. Confronted by the painful reality of being left the individual is forced to relinquish their hopes and fantasies in order to awaken to the authentic path of the heart. Ariadne embodies the soul in relationship that must first experience the painful course of the labyrinth before a divine connection can be realised.

## **EUROPA: THE SOUL OF THE EARTH**

### *Harnessing the power of the Bull*

Underneath the Cretan palace of Knossos hidden in a labyrinthine chamber lived a bull-man, the Minotaur, the shameful shadow of the Minoan clan. Two generations earlier the story began when Zeus shape-shifted into a beautiful white bull to seduce a young Phoenician princess named Europa. Like the gods of the old religion Zeus took the shape of a virile and magnificent bull to mesmerise the innocent girl who was unaware that her destiny would instigate the founding of two great dynasties as well as the eponymous continent named for the virgin Zeus had abducted.

Europa had been playing in a field gathering spring flowers to make garlands when she became enthralled by a large charismatic bull that meandered into the meadow. Possessed with desire to know the bull, she moved closer. Zeus, the bull-god, knelt before her gently beckoning Europa onto his back. She dared to climb upon him, and then slowly he took her step-by-step across the meadow towards the sea. With the power of a great god, the bull strode the waves across the sea to Crete. Europa clung tightly to the powerful bull, as she rode farther and farther away from her homeland. Zeus had made his conquest. He took Europa as his lover, fathering three children by her; one was Minos the founder of the Cretan dynasty.

Europa's father summoned his sons and instructed them to search for their sister and not to return home until the task had been accomplished. Cadmus set out on the quest, eventually journeying to Delphi to ask the oracle where he could find his sister. The oracle advised Cadmus to relinquish the quest for his sister, as *his* fate was to found the city of Thebes. In order to find the location he must follow a cow until it came to a place where it would lay down due to exhaustion. Europa had been abducted by a god disguised as a bull; her brother Cadmus is led by a cow to his destiny. Both siblings' destiny is to found a great dynasty guided by the commanding and enterprising bovine instinct. Like the zodiacal sign of Taurus the bull symbolises inherent resource and power and the ability to either cultivate land or build structures that create wealth.

Europa's son Minos claimed the throne of Crete with the blessing of the god Poseidon, his great grandfather who offered him a gift from the sea. A sacred white bull majestically arose out of the ocean and Minos promised to return it to the god in sacrifice. However the bull was so regal and powerful, Minos decided not to sacrifice the majestic bull but substitute it for a prized white bull from his own herd. Outraged at the deceit, the earth-shaker Poseidon cursed the Minoan dynasty provoking Pasiphaë, Minos' wife, to be sexually obsessed with the beautiful god-like bull. Her craving led to her becoming pregnant

with her monstrous son, the Minotaur. Minos' greed and failure to respect the laws of the gods produced a monster that had to be buried beneath the surface of the family in the labyrinthine dungeons of the palace. Buried shame or repression lurking under the atmosphere of the family home eventually surfaces through the next generations. This became evident through the fate of Europa's granddaughters daughters Ariadne and Phaedra. The myth the Greeks retold was a variant of a much earlier motif when the bull was consort of the earth goddess. Europa is the ancient goddess whose earthy instinct is powerful and resourceful. Europa heralds contact with the ancient feminine instincts that generate the power to create abundance.

Throughout the myth of Europa the bull image reoccurs. It is a multi-dimensional symbol of earthy passions, desires, magnetism, wealth and potency whose shadow is greed and lust. The Great Bull of Heaven was an image of archaic power, fertility and enterprise. The appearance of the heavenly bull of Taurus heralded spring when the bountiful Earth became carpeted with wildflowers and the cycle of courtship began. The great bull is engaging and charismatic constellating the generative power of the feminine. Aphrodite who symbolises the beauty, sensuality and attractiveness of this archetype is the persuasive erotic power that draws Europa, Pasiphaë, Ariadne and Phaedra into her domain. Europa embodies the wealth and majesty of the bull, its earthy passions and its worldly triumphs. On an oracular level the card heralds a transforming period where the passions and ambitions are reined in to lay foundations for the future. The goddess forecasts an intense period of growth in resources and wealth. On a divinatory level it augurs the seminal phase of a fertile period where future goals are conceived and put in motion. Europa, as the bull-goddess, reclaims the power to construct and direct the course of her own life. When the card is chosen it suggests the individual's present course is to construct a solid foundation that will secure the rapid growth of resources. This present period is a touchstone for the future expansion of capital and possessions.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Europa embodies the ability to ride the bull, harness its power and give birth to its resourceful creativity. Innately she is the image of feminine power, guidance and direction. Embodying earthy instincts she knows how to cultivate the earth and create abundance through her passionate, attractive and commanding nature.

## **PANDORA: A GIFT OF HOPE**

### *Hopeful*

Pandora's story was written eight centuries before Christ in the epoch when gender roles were rigidly defined. Yet the mythic plot echoes timeless motifs, even ones used in contemporary science fiction. In Greek myth Pandora is the first woman, mother of all mortal women, created by the gods to assert their superiority over mankind. Cast as a femme fatale, a 'beautiful evil', she possesses a jar filled with toxins designed to pollute the race of mankind. Alluring, yet dangerous, Pandora represents a vestige of the ancient goddess culture threatening the emergent patriarch. Yet she also transports an indelible gift from the goddess embedded at the bottom of the urn.

Three centuries later her myth was carved on the marble base underpinning the spectacular cult statue of Athena. When designing the Parthenon and its decorations the Athenians chose the myth of Pandora to be the motif at Athena's feet. On the pedestal of the colossal statue suppliants to Athena were reminded of the creation of the first woman and the plagues she brought to bear on humanity, a striking contrast to Athena who brought victory and pride to the Greeks. Like Athena Pandora's birth was unusual. Fashioned out of the earth at the command of Zeus, Pandora was the instrument designed to punish mankind for the unsanctioned possession of fire stolen by Prometheus.

Zeus was furious when Prometheus stole fire from heaven, smuggling it in a fennel stalk and distributing it to mankind. With the theft the distance between man and god narrowed, as fire was the alchemical agent that would refine raw materials and promote the development of mankind. As the human race developed there would be less need for the gods. Zeus' revenge was to send a 'gift' to man that would counterbalance the profit mankind gained from using fire. To date men had lived without evil in a golden age, which now would come to an end through the guile of a beautiful woman.

Zeus instructed the smith-god Hephaestus to fashion a beautiful maiden resembling a goddess out of clay and water. Athena was to teach the phantom how to weave a web, Aphrodite was instructed to make her seductive and Hermes, the trickster-god, was to teach her how to be deceitful. Adorned with beautiful garments from the Charities Zeus breathed life into Pandora, who was given as a gift to Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus. In her hands she carried an intricately designed urn, the dowry Zeus had given her. Shut inside it was all the evils, storms and plagues that bring misfortune to mankind. Instructed not to accept any gifts from Zeus, Epimetheus became enchanted by the beautiful Pandora and forgot his brother's warning. Pandora opened the jar and before she could close the lid disease, old age, pain, toil,

death and all the other ills that plague humanity spilled out. When she was finally able to seal the jar nothing remained except Hope, trapped at the bottom. In their benevolence the gods had insured an antidote for suffering. Pandora offers hope when all else has failed.

The myth of Pandora was included in Greek literature synchronous with the time that the myth of Eve appeared in Jewish writings. In both myths Pandora and Eve become the patriarchal scapegoat for all of humanity's troubles aligning feminine power with evil. This mythic misogyny demarcates the epoch when masculine values were dominant and feminine values were denigrated, even demonised. Pandora and Eve became the composite projection of evil, blamed for their lack of foresight, chaos and feelings. Underlying the mythic stratagem was a motif from an earlier period when goddess culture was dominant.

In Greek Pandora translates into 'all gifts' and her entry into Greek myth suggested this name because the gods of Olympus each gave her a gift. However this mythic thread is probably an inversion from earlier goddess culture when Pandora may have referred to the goddess giving gifts. Gift giving became an essential component of Greek culture and this inverted fragment reminds us of the abundant side of the goddess who offers us the cornucopia of plenty. Pandora is chthonic, born of the earth like Gaia, supplying the gifts of life. And the gift of life she brings that cannot be destroyed is Hope. On a psychological level hope is the mechanism that breathes life into the soul after it has been bruised and deflated.

Pandora emerges at a critical time historically and psychologically. She enters Greek myth when the goddess culture has waned and been rejected and man is no longer in favour with the gods. Psychologically Pandora appears to offer hope in devastating times. She brings a powerful gift that cannot be destroyed by life's ills. Hope is the life force that survives the disaster evoking images of healing and improvement. When Pandora is chosen she confronts us to delve into the deepest part of ourselves to tap the reservoir of faith. Having survived the projections and denigration of the other Pandora resurrects life once again through the auspices of hope. On an oracular level Pandora appears at a crucial juncture psychologically when it is important not to project our prejudices and biases onto others. Pandora also appears when regressive fantasies about the past may stand in the way of progress and integration.

**Feminine Wisdom:** No matter how devastating the goddess is benevolent in nature through her gift of hope. Embedded in every disaster is the gift of renewal through the auspices of faith and hope. Illness, destruction, old age and pain are part of feminine wisdom and this knowledge stands in direct contorts to masculine fantasies of a Golden Age and Garden of Eden.

## **MNEMOSYNE: THE SOUL OF MEMORY**

### *Re-membering and Enchantment*

The faculty of memory was so important to the ancients that it was personified as a goddess. In Greek cosmogony Mnemosyne was the daughter of Uranus and Gaia, a pre-Olympian goddess who characterised Memory. Being one of the original deities Mnemosyne is the custodian of memory before the advent of writing, literacy, books, recordings and computers. She embodies the voice of an oral culture that communicates from the soul through stories, pictures, metaphors and body language. Mnemosyne finds her voice through the poetry of images revealing her memoirs through a dream, a feeling, a response, a longing or a sudden thought that darts into consciousness. Embedded in the fragments of a song, a myth, or a fairy tale linger ancient truths that awaken the goddess. Dwelling in the soul Mnemosyne unexpectedly arouses memory through our senses and bodily reactions.

To the ancient Greeks memory was a goddess residing in the heart. Memory was soulful, an aspect of psyche that was creative and evocative and the ancients also saw the goddess as mother of the Muses. Goddess culture honoured her form through three phases and originally Mnemosyne was celebrated through the Muses of meditation, memory and song. In early myth the Muses were the triune aspect of memory who inspired poetry and song. As rational science and beliefs began to emerge the seat of memory began to shift to the brain, aligning memory with a more logical and calculating experience rendering Mnemosyne a passive goddess who collected and stored life's impressions. Later myth suggested there were nine muses. Zeus visited Mnemosyne for nine nights and was the father of her nine daughters, the Muses, the inspiration and manifestation of the soul of memory. As mistress of healing and prophecy the Muses inspired and taught others to contact a deeper knowing through their imagination and creativity which guarded the wellspring of memory. As custodians of the arts each had a sphere of influence which they inspired and animated with ancient images and recollections. History, Music, Comedy, Tragedy, Choral Dance and Song, Lyric Poetry, Religious Dance, Astronomy and Epic Poetry were the personifications of the ancient goddess of memory. Apollo, lord of the rational sphere, became their guardian and leader.

Memory's daughters are the muses, the ones who inspire and enchant the soul. Through her and her daughters we are able to engage in weaving the fragments of memory together to evoke meaning. Mnemosyne re-minds us to re-member the ancient ways. The goddess of Memory is not just a passive recorder of experience and events but a poetic and heart-rending process that inspires the imagination.

Mnemosyne re-collects the emotional experiences, feelings and impressions of our life. She is the archive of all that we have tasted, touched, wanted, smelt and felt. Her memories are stored in the psyche as images, symbols, feelings, impressions and instincts or become imprinted in the body, in the adrenal or olfactory glands, the tension in the muscles, allergies and illnesses. Mnemosyne is rhythmic and reflective, not linear, evoking dreams, images, songs that give continuity to our life's narrative. Memory and imagination are woven together when Mnemosyne and her daughters are aroused.

To the ancients the sacred sanctuary of Mnemosyne and the Muses was the museum. These ancient shrines dedicated to the goddess ceded to the structures we know today as museums where we house the great works of the imagination. On an inner level the museum is the sphere of Mnemosyne where impressions and feelings from the past are evoked in the present situation. On a divinatory level the card suggests that the cycle of remembrance is important to consider now as feelings from the past are flooding into the current situation. Remembering and reliving earlier emotional experiences creates greater awareness about instinctual responses and feelings as memory helps to differentiate our feelings from our fantasies, our intuition from our hope. Memories are in high focus and the goddess asks you to consider and honour them as part of your mythmaking. As an agent of healing Mnemosyne evokes feelings and images that are ready to be released. The card implies a state of musing and inspiration by gathering the fragmented threads of the past together to weave a new pattern.

On an oracular level the card suggests that it is important to remember the past cycle to imagine and create the next. When the card appears it is time to draw together the fragments of the past through memory gathering them together in a museum, whether that be a creative project, a photo album, a scrapbook, a painting, a story, or simply creating time to muse over the past. Memory is evoked through images, feelings, dreams, aches and pains in order to help us remember the fullness of life.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Through Mnemosyne the goddess helps us remember images and impressions from previous phases of our life in order to give meaning, context and insight into these experiences. She acts as a loosening agent, allowing buried complexes, taboo feelings, repressed memories to breathe again to find some place in the sunlight of consciousness. She connects passages of time together. Links can be made back to times in the previous cycle allowing space for the process of reflection and musing.

## **HECATE: THE SOUL IN TRANSITION**

### *Crossroads*

In the oldest reference to Hecate in Greek literature she is the granddaughter of Phoebe, a Titaness associated with the moon and oracular divination. In this genealogy she is the cousin of Artemis, a deity to whom she is closely connected. Hecate is a powerful goddess who bestows innumerable gifts on mankind and rules over earth, sea and sky. Her exaltation in Hesiod's *Theogony* suggests she was an important deity whose role as intermediary between gods and men was highly valued.

Hecate became associated with the dark phase of triple goddess who embraced the spheres of heaven (Selene), earth (Artemis) and underworld (Persephone). Her initial association with the underworld was as an attendant to Persephone. It was Hecate who heard Persephone's screams when Hades dragged her down into the netherworld. Hecate was also present when Hermes escorted Persephone out of the underworld. As a guardian of the threshold Hecate witnessed Persephone's descent and release. Her cave is located between the earth and the underworld confirming Hecate's role as an intermediary, bound to neither world but in between both.

As a threshold goddess Hecate is encountered when the paths of our lives converge and we are uncertain which fork in the road to follow. Throughout antiquity she was worshipped at the intersection of roads and by Roman times she was known as Hecate *Trivia*, the goddess of the three ways. On the night of the New Moon pots of food were left at the crossroads as votive offerings to the goddess. 'Hecate's suppers' honoured the transition of one lunar cycle to the next on the night that the old month ended. Statues with three bodies and three heads were erected at crossroads for travellers to leave offerings and say prayers to Hecate for guidance across an important threshold.

As liminal places where travellers pass from one world into another, crossroads were often associated with spirits and shades. Hecate became aligned with ghosts and hallucinations as the ancient Greeks attributed the power to conjure up the dead and the phantoms of the imagination with her. Known as the leader of souls she was associated with magic, divination and contact with the shades of the dead. By the classical period Hecate had become affiliated with witchcraft and magic, known as the goddess of ghosts and night terrors. Her companions were dogs. As guardians of thresholds and instinctually able to trace a scent hounds represented Hecate's instinctual wisdom. By later antiquity Hecate had become the patroness of witchcraft.

Hecate's triple aspect was also reflected in the phases of the Moon. As 'Mistress of the Moon' Hecate governed its dark phase. Sappho called her the 'Queen of the Night' and as a light bearer she often carried two torches. Knowing the wisdom of cycles and their triune phases of birth, death and rebirth the lunar goddess also represented the menstrual crossroads in a woman's life cycle. As a birth goddess she was an intermediary figure not only for souls departing their body but also for souls entering a new one. Hecate appears at the threshold of change in women's lives as she enters a new phase of the life cycle. As a lunar goddess associated with fertility rites she is aware of the richness of the dark and hidden treasures. In her dual role as guardian of the threshold and Queen of the Night she knows that every decision taken at the crossroads must come from a deeper level of soul.

Since her early depiction in epic Hecate has become denigrated, often portrayed as a negative and a dangerous demon of the dark. Disassociated from the totality of the lunar cycle she has become identified only with its dark phase. Fear of the dark, death and the underworld were projected onto Hecate who represented the dismembered connection to the feminine wisdom of cycles. However her ancient myth reminds us of her perpetual role as an intermediary and attendant at the crossroads. As a goddess of liminality we meet her on the precipice of change, at crossroads, on doorways, in transition. During these times of initiation Hecate helps us to accept our disorientation between two ways of being.

On an oracular level Hecate's appearance suggests a crossroads, a transition and encourages the individual who has drawn the card to not look back to the past or rush forward into the future. Crossroads suggest the inevitability of choice and the entrance into a period of reorientation and change. Hecate is petitioned at crossroads to relieve the anxiety, insecurity and uncertainty that accompany transition. As custodian of the crossroad Hecate is not identified with the road that has been travelled nor the road that leads to the future. Her territory is betwixt and between, a liminal space not representative of the world before or after. She sees all ways and knows that transitional time is as much about processing the past as it is imaging the future. In liminality there are no fixed points of reference as the self is detached from what has passed; what is ahead is unknown therefore confusion, doubt and not knowing are an integral part of this transitory period. When this card is drawn the unconscious is revealing the wisdom of transition and encourages the process to unfold organically.

**Feminine Wisdom:** At crossroads in our lives time is suspended while we reorient ourselves to a new way of being. Confusion, loss and disconnection are natural moods during this phase as we let go of what has been in order to greet what may be. Rituals help to navigate the crossroads and manage the transition.

## **CASSANDRA: THE PROPHETIC SOUL**

### *Embracing the Vision*

Cassandra stood on the walls of Troy and watched Paris' ship enter the harbour. Her brother had returned from Sparta having seduced Helen away from her homeland to bring her to live in Troy as his wife. With the blessings of Aphrodite Paris and his lover Helen had snuck away from her palace undetected and sailed across the Aegean to Asia Minor. A dark cloud shrouded the ship as it anchored. When Cassandra watched her brother and Helen disembark and approach the city gates she was flooded with images of Troy's destruction, filling her with an ominous and terrible feeling. Possessed by this eerie perception she uttered a warning to the crowd that was gathered at the gates to welcome the couple. From deep inside she divined the future: Helen's entrance into the city would lead to its destruction. Ignoring Cassandra and her prophecy the crowds turned away to welcome the new royal couple into their city. Time and time again her message was rejected and ridiculed. Ten years later a similar scenario would unfold. Cassandra would warn the Trojans not to accept the wooden horse into their city. Once again no one would heed her accurate predictions. The Greeks, angry at Helen's abduction, sacked Troy and left the city in ashes.

Cassandra was one of the daughters of the royal family of Troy, a sister to both Paris and Hector and twinned to her brother, Helenus. When the twins were infants they accompanied their parents to the temple of Apollo to celebrate a festival in honour of the oracular god. During the ritual the twins fell into a deep sleep. Two temple snakes slithered into their basket as they slept and bit them on their ears injecting the gift (or poison) of prophecy into them. From that day both Cassandra and Helenus were known for their prophetic nature.

Having the gift of sight Cassandra entered the temple to serve Apollo being called to her vocation as his Pythia, the voice of the oracular god. However Apollo fell in love with her and demanded she reciprocate his desire. But Cassandra refused to consummate the relationship preferring to worship the god in spirit, not body. Enraged Apollo found a way to avenge her rejection. Knowing he could not retract the gift of prophecy that he had given her when she was so young he cursed her so no one would ever believe her prophecies. The god begged her for one kiss and Cassandra consented. As she opened her mouth to kiss the god Apollo breathed his curse into her insuring others would no longer value her prophetic vision. He turned his back on her, condemning Cassandra to see the perilous future yet never able to be understood or believed. Cassandra, cursed by the narcissistic god for rejecting him, was later violently assaulted by Ajax upon the altar of Athena when the Greeks were ransacking Troy. After the sack of Troy the leader of the Greek fleet Agamemnon took her as his slave back to his palace of Mycenae. As she approached the

mammoth walled city her images of destruction became more and more intense. Racked by the violent visions she screamed a warning for Agamemnon to not enter the palace foreseeing his brutal murder at the hands of his wife. In her heart she also knew that entering the city with him would result in her own death.

Cassandra personifies the medial woman whose intuitive faculties and understanding of the unconscious patterns are not welcomed in an ordered rational society. She sees what others are too fearful to see and exposes the inevitable patterns that underpin the situation. In an atmosphere of control and denial Cassandra is marginalised and demeaned becoming the projective reflection of the fear of chaos and uncertainty. Disbelief and ignorance render her wisdom impotent. When dark feelings, dread or grief are repressed in the atmosphere Cassandra is the medium of their expression. Her curse is that she is not identified with her feelings leaving her unable to connect or be understood. Her feelings are identified as autonomous ravings abandoning her to the sidelines of society. In a psychological context Cassandra's ego identity has collapsed through her symbiotic alliance with the unexpressed shadow lurking in the atmosphere. Cassandra is able to sense what is taboo and un-lived but unable to remain separate from it.

Cassandra represents the archetype of medial knowledge. Unlike the ancient world there are no longer sanctuaries or sacred places to honour her way of knowing. When the card appears it suggests the need to be aware and respectful of collective messages that arise in us even though they may not be understood or valued by others. She reflects the need to be aware of our medial skills and intuitive knowledge and seek training to help strengthen the ability to use this skill and not be overwhelmed by it. When Cassandra appears she encourages the individual to find a voice for the medium through understanding the symbols, images, signs and omens of unconscious language. She embodies the ancient ways of knowing in a culture that no longer values prophecy and divination. Her knowledge is not objective but oracular. To embrace Cassandra we must abandon logic, separateness and rationality and enter into the irrational world where meaning is revealed through feeling and connectedness. However Cassandra reminds us that in a scientific and ordered society our knowing may be rejected. Cassandra encourages us to have the strength of our convictions and a strong and healthy identity about our beliefs. When the card is chosen we may be seeking a message of guidance but the answer is all around us: in the rustling of the leaves, the flight of the birds, the synchronous movement of the planets, slips of the tongue or in the dream world.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Oracular knowing springs out of the collective through an unconscious and unbound participation with everything in the environment. When boundaries are blurred and the veil between the worlds is lifted we enter into a participation mystique with the spirits of the world beyond us and may be called to act as a vessel for their message.

## **MEDEA: HERBALIST AND HEALER**

### *The Season of the Witch*

Medea, a princess of Colchis, was known as the 'wise one' for her skill of healing and proficiency at using drugs and herbs. Colchis, which gives its name to Colchicum, the meadow saffron, was a kingdom on the Eastern shores of the Black Sea, considered a foreign, barbaric land through the eyes of a civilised Greece. Medea's ancestors were linked to both the sun and healing long before Apollo became the god associated with these realms. Helios, Medea's grandfather, was the Sun god of the old order, born a Titan's son. Her aunt Circe was a sorceress, a magician, herbalist and healer who knew the ancient ways of plants and spices and how to cast spells. Circe had trained Medea as a young woman in the arts of sorcery, magic and herbalism, teaching her how to mix potions, direct spells and rearrange matter. Medea was also a priestess in the temple of Hecate, honouring the goddess of the dark night and magic. Hecate guided her instincts. As a medical intuitive she knew the magical properties of herbs, the appropriate plants for healing, homeopathic tinctures and the process of preparing and administering these remedies in her cauldron. As the surrogate of Hecate Medea knew the timing of the lunar cycle and how to draw down the moon when ritual and ceremony was needed.

However Medea was unable to withstand the unholy alliance of the goddesses Hera and Athena who petitioned Aphrodite to conspire with them and cause the princess to fall in love with Jason. Medea became enchanted by Eros and fell in love with the Greek hero, who had come to Colchis to retrieve the Golden Fleece. Medea helped Jason achieve this impossible task with the help of special ointments, incantations and timing. Medea enabled Jason, her heroic/lover, to succeed at the trials set before him but in helping Jason be successful Medea had to betray her family and flee her homeland.

On their flight from Colchis Medea visited her aunt Circe who absolved her of her betrayal and eventually Medea arrived at Jason's birthplace, at the foot of Mount Pelion in Thessaly. When she arrived in her new homeland Medea used her great skill at the arts of magic and herbs to rejuvenate Jason father but also used her sorcery to trick the king's daughters into unintentionally killing their father. To prepare for this procedure Medea disappeared for nine days collecting the special drugs and herbs that she needed. As the Moon swelled she returned, sacrificed to her goddess Hecate, then used drugs to help Aeson, Jason's father, fall into a deep sleep. She then cut his throat to let the old blood run out, dismembered him, putting the pieces in a cauldron with the liquid herbs she had prepared. Jason's father emerged from the cauldron rejuvenated, forty years younger. Medea's spell captured the daughters of Pelias, the wicked uncle of Jason who had usurped his rightful claim to the throne. The daughters also wished to rejuvenate their father and

Medea said she would perform the task again. The daughters prepared their father by dismembering him, however this time Medea did not put the herbs in the cauldron and their father never emerged.

Having been responsible for the murder of the king Medea and Jason once again were forced to escape. While fleeing Medea's herbal bag broke open spilling her drugs seeding the plains of Thessaly with an abundance of healing and magical herbs. As the first sorceress to perform rituals in Thessaly Medea is the seminal figure behind the region being known as 'the land of the witches'. Her myth intimates that she introduced woman's herbal knowledge from Asia Minor into Greece.

In later myth Medea is usually remembered, not as the skilled healer, but as a revengeful and spurned partner, a woman caught in the grip of jealousy for which she had no antidote. By the classical period the playwrights depict Medea consumed with rage murdering her own children to avenge Jason's infidelity. However Medea is more a reminder of the great respect and knowledge of healing, herbs and magic that was brought to the West and then subtly ignored and eventually demonised. Underpinning the myth are fragments of an older tradition. Jason's name means 'healer' and his partnership with Medea complements the old ways of healing before the emergence of rational medicine and the demonisation of magic.

As botany evolved away from gathering herbs and digging roots of the pastoral communities to empirical and detailed research purification ceremonies and the use of herbs became replaced by manmade drugs and prescriptions. The connections to the more instinctual, chthonic and natural ways of healing were left behind. Traces of magic, ritual healing and evoking the spirit of the disease began to disappear in the Western medical tradition. Left to carry the ancient process of magic was Medea the embodiment of the archetypal witch. As a heroine Medea champions the feminine wisdom that intuitively knows how to cooperate with nature and her cycles. She instinctually knows the right time to perform rituals and ceremonies to evoke the healing spirits or exorcise the demons. When the card is chosen the unconscious reveals the need to explore the ancient feminine traditions of herbalism, witchcraft and magic ritual.

**Feminine Wisdom:** Intuitively we know the natural cycle of the body and what it needs to be well. Medea reminds us to honour the ancient custom of relating to the plant world, the wisdom of nature and the powerful healing and transforming properties embedded in the natural world. Instinctually the witch is the instinct that draws us to remedies and potions at the right time and is the urge to create ritual and ceremony to evoke the powers of the goddess.

## EPILOGUE

Innately the goddess celebrates the full cycle of life and reveres the life force inherent in every manifestation. All is one and consciousness is inclusive, eternal and forever connected to its natural source.

*I died to mineral and plant became  
Died from the plant and took a sentient frame  
Died from the beast and donned a human dress  
When by my dying did I ere grow less?*

-Rumi