

The Three Faces of Hekate - Mystic South Workshop

Description

The Three Faces of Hekate: Hekate is identified as a triple goddess, and today she is often conflated with the maiden, mother, and crone archetypes, but that is a modern construct. Hekate's triplicity goes back to ancient times and is revealed in many ways. Come explore the intricacies of Hekate's threes.

Priestess Shaylee Ayele

Priestess Shaylee Ayele has been a practicing eclectic witch for over 20 years. A member of Beachfyre Coven, she has been the First Officer of Everglades Moon Local Council, the local Florida Chapter of the Covenant of the Goddess. Devoted Priestess of Hekate for more than 15 years, she is also a 3rd-degree Georgian High Priestess and a Priestess for the Mount Shasta Goddess Temple. Shaylee is a guidance reader who works with multiple modalities, including tarot and bones, and has written and led rituals, meditations, and workshops at festivals and metaphysical stores. Shaylee can be found on Instagram or Facebook @wytchyreader or at wytchyreader.com.

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First Slide

Set up the Slide in

Things to Know

Hello Everyone, my name is Shaylee Ayele, and I am blessed to be here today to talk to you all about The Three Faces of Hekate.

I have been working with Hekate for over 15 years and have considered myself a Priestess of Hekate for the last 10 years. I have offered workshops, rituals, and devotionals in her name, and am honored to be a voice for Her in the here and now.

A few things before we begin. First, you will see that I spell Hekate with a “k”, as a personal preference, but when quoting someone, if they use the “c”, I do not change it.

For those who don’t know, BCE means Before Common Era and CE means Common Era, replacing BC and AD with more modern terminology.

I might as well confess that my pronunciation of some of these names is horrible, though I have tried to correct my pronunciation; please be kind.

Lastly, some of what you are going to hear are conclusions I have drawn or my own personal gnosis.

Shameless Plug

Shameless Plug!

I’m also an Intuitive Reader that does readings with

- Bones and Curios
- Tarot & Oracle
- Dice & Other Modalities

If you are interested in a reading or learning more about Hekate, you can reach me by emailing me at Wytchyreader@gmail.com.

Who Is Hekate?

So, Who is Hekate?

Hekate, the name by which we know her today, was first mentioned in Hesiod’s Theogony. Hesiod was an Ancient Greek poet popular in Boeotia (B-O-Shia) during the 8th Century BCE.

In his Theogony, Hesiod tells us that Zeus honored Hekate above all, and, in doing so, allowed her to keep her shares of the earth and sea. He also tells us that she is honored in the starry heavens. So from the beginning of her known history, she is recognized as having authority in 3 different realms: the stars, the seas, and the earth.

Early Depictions of Hekate

Originally, she is depicted as having one face and one body.

As you can see in this 5th-century BCE vase, where she is holding two torches.

Hekate's form would become more prominent with three bodies sometime around the 1st century CE. Later, she would also be depicted as having one body and three heads.

But it wouldn't be until modern times, sometime during the 20th century, that Hekate would become connected to the Maiden, Mother, Crone concept.

Hekate's Origins

Where does Hekate come from?

Her origins have always been a bit of a mystery and something that is still debated today.

Hesiod is the first (that we know of) to use the name Hekate, but she may have origins much older than her name.

Hesiod himself acknowledges her as a Titan, which are older than the Greek Gods themselves.

Hekate's name means "worker from afar," and there are at least two popular beliefs about where her origins may have started, though neither has a lot of information to substantiate the claims.

Thrace

The first theory states that she may be from Thrace (Thray-kay), the geographic area now known as Southeastern Bulgaria, Northeastern Greece, and northern Türkiye.

Some of Hekate's common associations come from Thrace.

Her relationship to the crossroads and her liminality are just two of the possible key components that connect Hekate's origins to Thrace.

Unfortunately, if there is surviving evidence, I am not aware of it.

Caria

The second theory is that she may be from Caria (kah-ree-ah), an area in western Anatolia in what is modern-day south and southwest Türkiye, where Greek tribes colonized sometime around the 13th century BCE. About 5 centuries before Hesiod.

It is believed that Caria (kah-ree-ah) is where the cult of Hekate originated. Here we have actual evidence of Hekate's worship and influence.

This is seen both in Stratonikeia (struh-ton-ee-KAY-uh), the ancient city where we know Hekate served as civic patron and protector goddess, and in Lagina, where Hekate's oldest surviving Temple is found.

The two are separated by an 8-11 kilometer road that is referred to as the Sacred Way, where yearly pilgrimages were undertaken, including a "Key-carrying" ceremony.

Further evidence that at least some of Hekate's origins began here are two very specific epithets that connect her to this region. She is of Caria and of Lagina.

- Kareia 'of Karia', 'Kraus' 'of Karia/Caria'
- Laginitis 'Of Lagina'

Distance Between

The distance between Thrace (Thray-kay) and Caria (kah-ree-ah) was roughly 450 to 600 miles depending on how you got there.

Some of us travel further to get here. For example, I traveled over 650 miles from Southern Miami-Dade County.

In ancient times, this would have been days and weeks of traveling. - It took me less than 12 travel hours in a car. And those of you who flew, it took much less time.

Ancient Greece on Today's Map

Still, it is with Hesiod that her known origin begins, so it is with his version of her that we start.

When Hesiod wrote about Hekate's authority over three realms, we can assume to some degree that he was writing down oral traditions that had been passed down or told to him.

Boeotia (B-O-Shia) was located in what is now southern central Greece.

So, if Hekate's origins began in Thrace (Thray-kay) or Caria (kah-ree-ah), it makes sense that Hekate would be a Titan or Goddess from afar. Caria was more than 400 miles away, and across the Aegean Sea.

And from its southernmost border, Thrace was over 200 miles away, with mountains and rugged terrain in between them. - making it a much longer and harder journey.

Hekate's Realms

If you think about it, stories about this great Titan Goddess having power over the Heavens, the Seas, and the Earth would have been mighty in her tales as Hesiod heard them.

As I noted before, Thrace (Thray-kay) and Caria (kah-ree-ah) are the two most popular beliefs of her Origins. But there is a lot of debate about this, and her origins are very much still a mystery.

This means it is possible that stories of this goddess came from unknown parts, lending more truth to the meaning of her name.

For instance, we know that by the 3rd BCE, five centuries after Hesiod's Theogony, Hekate has ties to Egypt. However debated they may be.

Is it really a stretch that stories of a similar goddess made their way to Hesiod's ears from that region?

Is it conceivable that the many directions her stories carried from is where her connections to the three realms truly begin?

If Hesiod heard stories of Hekate carried from far-off lands that traveled long roads, crossed over mountains high in the sky, and came across the Aegean Sea. And maybe even heard stories from the south or the west of Boeotia (B-O-Shia), traversing the Mediterranean where, to this day, Hekate continues to be, on occasion, merged with Isis.

Is it possible he saw her as being three-realmed because of this?

Dominion of Land, Sea, and Sky

So, Hekate has dominion of the seas, in the stars, and here on earth.

But what does that actually mean?

That's a complicated question with different answers for everyone.

To me, this means that from the beginning, she was a liminal goddess with fingers in every pot she could stick them in.

Beyond Hesiod's Theogony, she can be found in The Orphic Hymns, Ovid, Plato, the Chaldean (Kal-Dee-uhn) Oracle, the Papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt (aka the Greek Magical Papyri or the PGM), and many other Greek and Roman writers, as you can see from the list on the slides.

- Hesiod's Theogony
- The Orphic Hymns
- Ovid
- Plato
- The Chaldean Oracle
- The Papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt (aka the Greek Magical Papyri or the PGM)
- Aeschylus
- Aristophanes
- Sophocles
- Euripides
- Demosthenes
- Lucanus
- Virgil
- Strabo
- Plutarch
- Many more....

Each of these writers tells us a little more about her appearance, her divine roles, and any practices part of her cult or worship. They are also the sources of some, if not most, of the epithets that were attributed to her.

Hekate's Epithets

Hekate has over 200 known epithets. Some have almost no historical data available, while others have more substantial information accessible.

Some of them you have probably already heard of, like Of the Roads, Torchbearer, Key-holder, Savior.

- Enodia 'Of the crossroads', 'Of the Roads', 'Of the Path.'
- Dadophoros 'Torchbearer'
- Kleidouchos / Kleidoukhos 'Key-holder', 'Key-keeper'
- Sôteira 'Savior'

Others probably not so much, like Eater of Filth, The Gorgon, Holy One, or Manifester of Madness.

- Borborophorba 'Eater of Filth'
- Gorgo 'The Grim', 'The Gorgon'

- Hiera 'Holy One'
- Oistrophaneia 'Manifester of Madness'

And in so many ways most of these epithets can be drawn back to Hekate's triplicity.

Hekate's Triplicity

Several of her epithets refer directly to Hekate's Threes.

The epithets listed on the slide speak of the different ways over the years Hekate had been connected to the number three, but as you can see, most of them have nothing to do with the three realms Hesiod has attributed to her.

'Tergeminus (tur-JEM-ih-nus) - Of Triple-Birth',
Thrinakia (thri-NAY-shuh) - 'Triple-pointed' or 'Of three extremes',
Trimorphos (TRY-mor-fus) - 'Three-Formed'

And more....

Even when she is referred to as 'Of Six Hands' or 'Of Six Ways', this can be connected to her three bodies.

Her threes, be it in faces, bodies, necks, heads, forms, roads, voices, sounds, and even extremes, are an indicator, I believe, of how hard it was and is to box Hekate into any one realm or form. How many versions and stories she was merged with, and how many goddesses she was ultimately connected to.

An expression of liminality.

She flowed, morphed, and changed into what she needed to adapt to at that moment, and she continues to do that today.

- Hexacheira 'Of Six Ways', 'Of Six Hands'
- Tergeminus 'Of Triple-Birth'
- Thrinakia 'Triple-pointed', 'Of three extremes', 'Triple'
- Triauchenos 'Triple-necked', 'With Three Necks'
- Triceps 'Three-Formed'
- Triformis 'Three-Bodied'
- Trikaphalos 'Three-headed'
- Trikaranos 'Three-headed', 'Three-faced', 'Triple-headed'
- Triktipos 'Triple-sounding'
- Trimorphos 'Three-Formed'
- Trioditis 'Of the Three ways', 'Of the three roads'
- Triōnymos 'Triple-named'

- Triphthoggos 'Triple-voiced', 'Having Three Voices'
- Triprosôpos 'Triple-faced'
- Triva 'Of the Three Ways', 'Goddess of Three Roads'

Perfect Epithet for Hekate?

One of Hekate's epithets is Ameibousa (a-Me-B-o-sa) or 'One That Transforms'.

This epithet was found inscribed on the Pergamon (PUR-guh-mon) Tablet. Often referred to as the Pergamon Magic Bronze Table, this 3rd-century CE triangular artifact was discovered in the ancient city of Pergamon. Today, that is Bergama, Türkiye, and as you can clearly see, this city lies between the ancient cities of Thrace (Thray-kay) and Caria (kah-ree-ah).

On the tablet, you see three figures that look like the three figures of the triple-headed Hekate. In the descriptions of the tablet, each Hekate has unique tools in their hands. At their feet, the inscriptions read "Amibousa," and over each of their heads you see the individual names of Dione, Phoibie, and Nychie, 3 other epithets associated with Hekate.

- Dione 'Goddess'
- Phoibie/Phoebe 'Bright'
- Nychie/Nychia / Nykhia 'Nocturnal' 'Nocturnal-One' "Goddess of Night"

The tablet itself, while connecting Hekate to this epithet, according to Cassandra Jackson in her published work "She who changes' (Amibousa): a re-examination of the triangular table from Pergamon," is also thought to have served as a part of a ritual to "enliven a statue of Hekate."

Ameibousa (a-Me-B-o-sa), while not meaning three, clearly has always been associated with Hekate's triplicity and her ability to transform.

This feels like almost the perfect epithet for Hekate, as she definitely knows how to transform.

Now, let's look at her threes through the lens of her three realms.

She is the Goddess in Starry Heavens

She is the goddess in starry heavens...

A moon goddess herself, Hekate is the daughter of Asteria, the Titan goddess of falling stars, astrology, and oneiromancy (oh-NAY-ruh-, man-see), which means divination by dreams.

Hekate is the paternal granddaughter of Krios (KRAY-us), Titan God of Constellations, whose father is Ouranos (aw-raa-nowz), the primordial god of the sky.

Hekate is often connected to and blended with Selene, Artemis, Diana, and other Moon Goddesses. She is honored on the Dark and New Moons and has been honored on these dates since Ancient Greece.

She is also considered the Queen of Witches, who, in the past, needed to do their work at night to remain hidden.

Epithets of the Night and Stars

Epithets like Star-Walker, Laborer of the Moon, Nocturnal-One, Night-Crier, Night-Wanderer, Celestial all speak of her connection to the Night, the skies, and the way Hekate guides us from above.

And although when we think of Hekate in the skies, she is normally cloaked in night!

The night is not her only connection to the sky.

- Astrodia 'Star-walker', 'Star-Courser'
- Meisopomenos 'Laborer of the Moon'
- Melaine 'Black'
- Melaneimôn 'Black-clad', 'Wearing Black'
- Mene 'Moon'
- Noctiluca 'Light of the Night', 'Night Shiner'
- Nychia / Nykhia 'Nocturnal,' 'Nocturnal-One' "Goddess of Night"
- Nyktairodyteira 'Night Riser and Setter', 'She that Rises and Sets by Night'
- Nykteria 'Of the Night'
- Nykti 'Of the Night'
- Nyktiboos 'Night-Shouter', 'Night-Crier'
- Nyktipolos 'Night-Wandering'
- Nyktophaneia 'Night-shining'
- Ourania 'Celestial', 'Heavenly'

Hekate is a Bringer of Light

Hekate is a bringer of Light.

Epithets like Light Bringer, Brilliant, Wide-Shining, Radiant, Holy Light, Bringer of Light to Mortals, and my favorite, She Who Smites with Light, all speak of her connection to light and bringing the light back in from the darkness both on earth and in the skies.

She even has a few epithets that speak of morning light. She is 'Radiant-haired,' Hekate, or Hekate 'With Rays for Hair.' The rays refer to moon and sun rays.

She is also Hekate Rhododaktylos(roh-doh-DACK-tih-los), meaning 'Rosy-Fingered ' or 'Dawning'

Whether she is bringing light to that dark, shining light to you from above, guiding you out of the dark or into the dark, or protecting you from the dark, she is a sky goddess, a celestial deity. She is the goddess you go to when you need a little help from above.

- Aktinochiatis 'Radiant-haired', 'With Rays for Hair' (Moon or Sun rays)
- Hiera 'Holy One'
- Hieros Pyr 'Holy Fire'
- Hypolampteira [Of Unknown Meaning – possibly related to light or brightness]
- Liparokredemnos 'Of the Bright Headband', 'Bright-Coiffed'
- Liparoplokamos 'Brilliant-Braided'
- Maera 'Shining'
- Pasiphaessa 'Wide-Shining'
- Phaesimbrotos 'Bringer of light to mortals'
- Phaennô 'Brilliant'
- Phaethô 'Radiant'
- Phoibie/Phoebe 'Bright'
- Phôs 'Holy light'
- Phôsphoros 'Light-bringer'
- Phôtoplêx 'Who smites with light', 'Who strikes with light'
- Pyriboulos 'Of fiery counsel'
- Rhododaktylos 'Rosy-Fingered' 'Dawning'

Hekate is the Goddess of the Seas

She is the goddess of the seas.

Hekate's rule over the sea, much like that of the stars, comes to her naturally.

Her father, in most stories, is Perses (PUR-seez), the Titan god of destruction. Perses' parents were Krios (KRAY-us) and Eurybia (yuh-RiR-bee-uh). Eurybia (yuh-RiR-bee-uh) is the goddess of POWER OVER and Mastery of the Sea. Going further back, Eurybia's (yuh-RiR-bee-uh) parents are Gaia and Pontos. Pontos is the primordial god of the sea.

In Ancient Greece, Rome, and other societies of the past, especially those who lived close to the sea, the oceans represented power and mystery.

It symbolized bounty, as the food they gathered from it fed them, but it also represented destruction and devastation. Family members could go to sea and never return or return full of riches. Storms could blow in unexpectedly and devastate regions, destroying livelihoods and homes.

A deity connected to the sea and those powers would be mysterious, vengeful, and often unappeasable. Imagine providing offerings for a good fishing expedition and having a hurricane-type storm arrive the next day, and then never seeing your family member again.

You would think that the god or goddess you made your offering to was not satisfied, and instead, you had angered them.

So, if the mysteries of Hekate being from afar, from a foreign way of life, could help explain why they did not please her properly. Why, as Hesiod states, “easily the glorious goddess gives great catch, and easily she takes it away as soon as seen, if so she will.” It makes sense that she would be considered a sea goddess.

Her Sea Epithets

Some of the epithets listed here don't seem to have a connection to the sea at first glance, but I have placed them here because I think that they describe a Goddess that would have come from across the Aegean Sea or even further out, as the stories made their way across seas and oceans.

Oceans are often considered untamable, unconquered, and without borders. Storms can feel wrathful, powerful, destructive, and wild.

Today, when we talk about the seas and oceans, we have so much more information at our fingertips. We hear of the many storms that form, some that make it to land, some that don't. We take voyages across them and eat food from the sea. But we know the migration patterns of the fish and therefore where to catch them, and have sonar that will allow us to cross safely. We know how deep the ocean lies, and we have images of the wild creatures that live in its depths.

But it is still a place of many unknown mysteries. It's easy to see how an all-powerful, foreign goddess, who even Zeus honored, could, on one hand, avert a storm and on the other be unconquerable. How that goddess could be of the Harbor yet without borders? It's easy to see how placating Hekate of the sea would have been wise. Honoring her, even wiser.

- Adamantaea 'Unconquerable', 'Untamable Goddess'
- Admêtos 'Indomitable', 'Unconquered'
- Agriope 'Wild-eyed', 'Fierce-faced', 'Savage-watcher', 'wild-voiced'
- Alexeatis 'Averter of Evil'
- Alkimos 'Powerful', 'Strong', 'Stout', 'Brave'
- Amaimaketos 'Unconquerable', 'Raging', 'Invincible', 'Unapproachable', 'Uncontrollable'
- Aphrattos 'Unnamed One'
- Apotropaios 'Averting', 'Averter'
- Azonos 'Without Borders'

- Baridouchos 'Barque-holder', 'Skiff-holder'
- Buthios 'Abysmal', 'Of the Depths'
- Charopos 'Ferocious-aspected', 'Fierce', 'Grim', 'Flashing', 'Bright', 'Having blue-grey eyes', 'of the Sea'
- Einalian 'Of the Sea'
- Limenitis 'Harbor Goddess'
- Limenitikos 'Of the Harbor', 'Harbor Goddess'
- Limenoskopos 'Of the Threshold', 'Watcher of Havens', 'On the Harbor', 'Watching the Harbor'
- Oletis 'Destroyer'

She is a Goddess here on Earth

She is a goddess here on earth...

From the beginning, she is active here on earth, meddling in the lives of men. In Hesiod's Theogony, she is involved in their lives.

"Good is she also when men contend at the games, for there too the goddess is with them and profits them: and he who by might and strength gets the victory wins the rich prize easily with joy, and brings glory to his parents."

She is considered a Queen, a Lady, a Mistress, of the Assembly. Wearer of High Boots? Lover of Dogs.

One who delights mortals.

A hunter, as slayer and more.

These epithets speak of her interactive actions with mankind.

- Agrotera 'Huntress'
- Anassa 'Queen'
- Archikos 'Royal'
- Ariste 'The Best'
- Antania 'Enemy of Mankind'
- Despoina 'Lady', 'Mistress'
- Ekdosis 'Bestower'
- Ekklesia 'Of the Assembly'
- Elaphêbolos 'Deer-huntress', 'Shooter of Deer'
- Ellophonos 'Fawn-slayer'
- Epipurgidia 'on the Tower'
- Eukoline 'Good Tempered'
- Eupatepeia 'Noble-born'

- Hêgemoye 'Queen'
- Iokheaira / Iokheaira 'Arrow-shooter', 'One who Shoots Arrows'
- Kalkaea 'Wearer of High Boots'
- Mageus 'One who Kneads' [Possibly related to Magi]
- Philoskylax 'Lover of Dogs'
- Phoinikopeza 'Ruddy-footed'
- Skylakageia 'Dog-leader'
- Terpsimbrotos 'Delighting men', 'One who delights mortals', 'Gladdens the hearts of men'
- Thêroktomos 'Beast-slayer'

She is an Earth Goddess

She is an Earth Goddess...

Most of us think of the word Chthonic as something or someone that dwells within the earth.

But in Ancient Greece, the word more closely translates to "of the Earth," of the Soil, of the land where humans live. Hekate was directly connected to the land. Both in her interactions with humans and because of how far she had come. The Distances and landscapes she had traveled.

Along with Chthonic, she was a Mountain-roamer, a Giant, Nature personified, the best of the world. Hekate was a meddler; she liked and likes to be involved. It's easy to see how she quickly detoured into the realms of the underworld.

- Amphiphaes 'Circumlucent', 'Natural Barrier'
- Ariste Cthonia 'Best of the World', 'Best in the World'
- Chthonia 'Chthonic', 'Of the Earth'
- Epigeioi 'of the Earth'
- Krataios / Kratais 'Powerful', 'Dominator', 'Of the Rocks'
- Oriplanos 'Mountain-roamer', 'Mountain-Wandering'
- Ouresiphoites 'Wanderer in the Mountains'
- Gigaessa 'Giant'
- Nomaioi 'Pastoral' (Spiritual Care or Countryside)
- Physis 'Nature' (personified)
- Zerynthia 'Of Mount Zerynthia'

Demeter, Persephone, and Hekate

Less than two centuries after Hesiod, sometime between the 7th and 6th Centuries BCE, in the Homeric Hymns, Hekate, for the first time to our knowledge, would be given access to the underworld through her connection to Demeter and Persephone.

“Then bright-coiffed Hecate came near to them, and often did she embrace the daughter of holy Demeter: and from that time the lady Hecate was minister and companion to Persephone.”

From there, Hekate's connection to that realm would only continue to grow.

She is a Goddess of the Underworld

She is a Goddess of the Underworld.

Hekate gained titles such as “of the Underworld”, Queen of the Dead, Killer of Man, Messenger, Eater of Filth, Subterranean, Soul-Guide, Earth Cleaver, Death-Bringer, and so many more...

In Ancient Greece, the Deipnon (Hekate's Supper) was enacted at the end of each of their lunar months on the Dark Moon and was specifically related to her earthly connections.

The supper itself is served to honor Hekate and Her retinue of spirits, appeasing any vengeful ghosts that may be traveling with Her.

Preparation for the Deipnon began with the purifying of the home and was followed by the prepping of food offerings that were traditionally left at a crossroads of sorts, sometimes at literal ones. This supper was enacted to earn Her forgiveness for any slights that were committed during the month.

For some parts of history, and in some parts of the world that honor Hekate, her underworld persona became her predominant one.

Curse tablets petitioning Hekate have been found as far back as the 5th Century BCE. Her connection to magic and the supernatural world grew stronger over time, with many invoking her for assistance in matters of the occult, witchcraft, and the unseen forces of the universe.

While she was once revered as a protector of the home, travelers, and childbirth, her association with the underworld and the realms of the dead slowly began to overshadow some of Her more benevolent roles. Even today, you will find plenty of people who know and work with Hekate for her “Darker” side and know little to nothing about the rest of her connections to the other realms.

- Aidōnaia ‘Goddess of Hades’, ‘Of the Underworld’
- Aimopotis ‘Blood-drinker’, ‘Murderer’
- Anassa Eneroi ‘Queen of the Dead’
- Androphonos ‘Killer of Men’
- Angelos ‘Messenger’
- Aōroboros ‘Devourer of the Prematurely Dead’, ‘Devourer of the Untimely Dead’
- Apanchomene ‘The Hanged One’
- Borborophorba ‘Eater of Filth’

- Chrysosandalaimopotichthonia 'Goddess of the Lower World Wearing Golden Sandals and Drinking Blood'
- Eidôlios 'Phantasmal', 'Ghostly'
- Gorgo 'The Grim', 'The Gorgon'
- Hersechthonia 'Speaking From Below'
- Kapetoktypos 'Tomb-disturber', 'Causing the Noise of Lamentation'
- Katachthonia 'Subterranean'
- Kthonia 'Of the Underworld', 'Of the Earth'
- Nekuia / Nekyia 'Goddess of death', 'Mistress of corpses'
- Nerteria 'Infernal', 'Subterranean', 'Nether One'
- Nerterios 'Infernal', 'Subterranean', 'Nether One'
- Nerteron Prytanin 'Mistress of the Dead'
- Pege Psychon 'Source of Souls'
- Psychopompe 'Soul-Guide'
- Pyrtania 'Invincible Queen of the Dead', [Possibly related to 'Council Chamber']
- Reskichthon / Rexichthon 'Bursting forth from the Earth', 'Earth-Cleaver'
- Tartarouchos / Tartaroukhos 'Ruler of Tartarus', 'Controller of Tartarus'
- Thanatêgos 'Death-Bringer'
- Tymborychos 'Gravedigger', 'Grave-Robber'

Hekate's Fires

One of the exceptions to this seems to be her connection to fire. Hekate is a torchbearer, and everyone recognizes her as one.

Hekate's torches are an essential part of her. She is regularly depicted holding one or two torches. Though it is not clear when in history Hekate acquired her torches, as her affiliation to fire is not mentioned in Hesiod's Theogony. What we do know is that by the time Homer wrote the Homeric Hymns, he described Hekate as a torch-bearer. It is possible they were always with her.

The earliest known depictions of Hekate holding Her torches are found in 5th-century BCE Classical Greek vase paintings like the one you see on screen.

Hekate's fires fit into her Starry realms as a light-bringer, her Earthly connections as a provider of fire, and her Underworld connections as the torch that lights her way through it.

We can even manage to connect her fires to the seas as Hekate Limenoskopos (lih-MEN-oh-SKOH-pohs), 'Watching the Harbor,' you know, lighthouses and lighthouse keepers.

Hekate's fires are everywhere.

- Dadophoros 'Torchbearer'

- Dadouchos 'Torch-bearer'
- Lampadephoros 'Lamp-bearer', 'Torch-bearer', 'Who Warns of Nighttime Attack'
- Lampadios 'Lamp-bearer', 'Torch-bearer'
- Pyriphoitos 'Fire-walker'
- Pyripnos / Pyripnoa 'Fire-breather', 'Breathing Fire'
- Pyrophoros 'Fire-bearer', 'Torch-bearer'

Beyond Her Three Realms

Moving beyond the three realms, Hekate continues to be seen as three-faced in her liminality.

She is a key-holder, a gatekeeper, a guide.

From the Earth - to the gates of the underworld - to the realm of Hades. From the space in which you are in, to the door or gate that allows you to transition, and then into another space.

She is a Spinner of Fate, a goddess beyond space and time.

From the here - to the shift - to the there. She isn't held to one space, to a specific time; instead, she does the controlling.

She is a Moon Goddess in all her phases.

At each turn, she has the power to be in three spaces.

Her ability to watch, advise, or participate are all aspects of her three faces.

Key-Holder, Gatekeeper, Guide

She is a guide.

Another key aspect of hers that she has carried for a long time is her connection to the crossroads. The Crossroads, a liminal space where you can forge ahead, turn in a different direction, and occasionally turn back the way you came. Hekate is there to guide you.

Here Hekate's epithets refer to her as of the Roads, General, Charioteer, Companion, Leader.

- Einodia Thygater Demetros 'Daughter of Demeter, who is of the Road'
- Elateira 'Driver', 'Charioteer'
- Enodia 'Of the Crossroads', 'Of the Roads', 'Of the Path'
- Ephodia 'Traveling Expenses', 'Provisions for the Road', 'Traveling Supplies', 'Resources'

- Prokathegetis 'She who goes down before', 'Leader', 'Teacher', 'Guide'
- Propolos 'She Who Leads', 'Guide', 'Companion', 'Servant'
- Prothegetis 'Leader'
- Stratêlatis 'Leader of hosts', 'General'

She is a gatekeeper.

Hekate was often found linked to boundaries and thresholds, including the gates of cities and towns. At these gates, Hekate was thought to watch over people, guarding them from evil spirits and malevolent forces.

She was known as a Guardian, one before the gates, of the Vestibule or before the house, Overseer, She Who Meets.

- Antaia Theou 'She Who Meets'
- Epiteichea 'The Stronghold', 'Fort'
- Empyllos 'At the Gate'
- Ephoros 'Guardian', 'Overseer'
- Episkopos 'Guardian', 'One who Watches Over', 'Overseer'
- Hegemonen 'Guide'
- Helike 'Revolving' Phylakê 'Protector', 'Guardian', 'Who Keeps Watch and Ward'
- Prodomos 'Of the Vestibule', 'Before the House'
- Propylaia 'One Before the Gate'
- Prothyraea 'Before the Gate'
- Rêksipylê 'Door-breaker', 'Gate-breaker'
- Rixipyle / Rexipyle 'She Who Throws Down The Gates'
- Strophaiia 'Standing as a porter at the door hinge'

She is a key-holder.

Like her torches and the crossroads, key holder or key keeper is a prominent epithet. Keys are needed to let you into gates and homes. They are an extension of her guardian aspect.

Keys unlock the thresholds between realms. They keep some out and let some in. They are the tool that unlocks the liminal spaces. Hekate is said to be one of the few deities with keys to the underworld, allowing her to travel between earth and Hades.

She is also the keeper of the keys to the Cosmos.

- Kleidouchos / Kleidoukhos 'Key-holder', 'Key-keeper'
- Pantos Kosmou Kleidokhos 'Keeper of the Keys of the Cosmos'

A Spinner of Fate, A Goddess Beyond Space & Time

A Spinner of Fate, a goddess beyond space and time.

Hekate's three faces also symbolize her ability to see beyond time and space. This made her a powerful figure in terms of witchcraft, magick, and the unseen world. Hekate's presence in ancient rituals often involved the use of symbolic items, such as keys, torches, and serpents, which further emphasized her role as a guardian of hidden knowledge, the keeper of secret paths, and the spinner of fates.

She is All-Knowing, Eternal, Savior, Supreme, Many-formed, Unbound, With Forethought...the Supreme World Soul. Hekate sees far beyond into the future, can look into the past of what was, and is present in the action of today.

- Aenaos 'Eternal'
- Agia 'Sacred', 'Holy'
- Aiônos 'Eternal'
- Ambrotos 'Immortal'
- Anima Mundi 'the supreme World Soul'
- Athanatos 'Immortal', 'Of Immortal Fame'
- Azostos 'Ungirt', 'Without a Belt', 'Unbound'
- Autophyês / Autopheus 'Self-generating'. 'Self-begotten'
- Daeira 'The Knowing One'
- Epaine 'Awe-Inspiring', 'Glorious', 'Sublime'
- Empyrios 'Empyrean'
- Epiphanestate Thea 'the Most Manifest Goddess'
- Hecatoncheires 'Hundred-handed'
- Klôthaiê 'Spinner of fate'
- Kyria 'The Powerful', 'The Supreme'
- Medeousa / Medusa 'Protector', 'Guard', 'Gorgon'
- Moira 'A Share', 'Fate'
- Noeros 'Intellective,' "Divine Intellect"

- Pangaios 'World-Wide' - also the name of a mountain
- Pege 'Source'
- Polykleitos 'Famed', 'Much Renowned', 'Far-Famed'
- Polylokamos 'Of Many Tentacles', 'With Many Feelers'
- Polymorphos 'Many-formed', 'Of many forms'
- Polyônymos 'Many-named', 'Of many names'
- Promêthikos 'With forethought'
- Sôteira 'Savior'
- Zatheiê 'Divine'
- Zatheos 'Divine'

She is a Moon Goddess in all Her Phases.

She is a Moon Goddess in all Her phases.

Returning temporarily to the starry realms, Her three faces are a reflection of Hekate, the Moon Goddess.

New to Full, Full, and Full to Dark.

This might also explain why she is sometimes seen as four-faced. New/Dark Moon to Waxing Moon to Full Moon to Waning Moon and back to New/Dark Moon, four phases of the moon. In addition, if you consider the underworld a separate realm from the earthly one, then she would have dominion over four realms, not three.

She is also sometimes viewed as dual-faced. Light and Dark, Day and Night, Bright One or Terrible.

She is so often seen and worked with in such multiple ways almost simultaneously that one could relate to why and how she is seen as having more than one head or body.

But we return to three because no matter how many faces, bodies, roads, or realms she divided into, three is the consistent number when it comes to Hekate.

- Amphiprosopos 'Double-faced'
- Amphistomos 'Double-mouthed'
- Meisopomenos 'Laborer of the Moon'
- Monoprosopos 'With One Face'
- Tetrakephalos 'Four-headed'
- Tetraoditis 'Of the Four ways', 'Of Four roads', 'Haunting Crossroads', 'Four-Road's Mistress'
- Tetraônymos 'Four-named'
- Tetraprosôpos 'Four-faced', 'Four-Headed'
- Tetraprosôpinos 'Four-faced'

Moving Beyond Her Threes, Maybe?

Moving beyond her threes. Maybe?

Hekate is so diverse that even if we tried, you can't fit her into even this one peg of threes. Some of her epithets will never fit into that description, but even then, she isn't one to shy away.

She is terrible and dominating in an all-expansive way. Quick to Anger, Ruin-bringer, Bender of proud necks; you don't mess with or anger Hekate.

- Bolos 'Far-Thrower',
- Brimô 'Angry-One', 'Terrifying'
- Damnamene 'Means of Constraint'
- Damnomeneia 'Dominating Force'
- Damnodamia 'Subduer of Subduers'
- Deinos 'Terrible'
- Kardiodaitos 'Heart-Eater', 'Feasting on Men's Hearts'
- Katakampsypsychenos 'Bender of proud necks'
- Meisoponeros 'Vice-Hating'
- Oroboros 'Tail-Eating'
- Oxythymia 'Gallows', 'Quick to Anger'
- Philêremos 'Lover of Solitude'
- Phoberos 'Terrible', 'Fearful'
- Phthorênês 'Ruin-Bringer', 'Corruptor'
- Polyôdynos 'Full of Pain', 'One who suffers much'

She is loving and kind, patient, helpful, golden-crowned, Crowned with splendor.

- Arêgos 'Helper'
- Chrysostephês 'Golden-crowned'
- Chrysosandalos 'of Golden Sandals'
- Chrysostephanos 'Golden-Crowned', 'Crowned with Splendor'
- Erôtotokeia / Erototokos 'Bearer of love', 'Producing Love', 'Who Bore Love'
- Megiste 'Greatest'
- Nyssa 'Goader', 'Goal', 'Beginning', 'Turning Post', 'Ambition'
- Tlêtê / Tletos 'Patient'

Here opposites know no bounds.

One could say that it is her liminality, her ability to move in-between spaces, that gives her the capacity to have such opposing forces.

So maybe they fit into her threes because she can bridge these worlds because of her transformative nature.

Her Animal Faces

She is so transformative; she has the ability to shift forms. Often appearing to have animal heads or bodies.

Hekate has many animals connected to Her retinue. Some are more often connected to her than others. Dogs or Wolves, Horses, and Snakes are common ones, but she is also connected to deer, cows, oxen, dragons, lions, toads, bulls, and many others.

But these epithets do more than connect her to these animals; they show that she can become them.

She is Horse-faced, She-wolf, lioness, She-Toad, Bull-headed. She morphed and transformed as she pleased.

But even here, she is often depicted as having 3 animal heads or a human head and two animal heads. A triplicity that I believe also reflects her ability to transform and traverse across realms. Her animal faces are a reflection of her liminality.

- Arkuia / Arkyia 'Spinner of webs', 'Entrapper.'
- Boôpis 'Cow-eyed'
- Booporos 'Ox-Herder' Drakaina 'Serpent', 'Dragon'
- Hippokyon 'Mare Bitch', 'Horse Dog'
- Hippoprosopos 'Horse-Faced'
- Ippokyôn 'Mare-Dog', half dog/ half horse
- Ippoprosôpos 'Horse-faced'
- Keratôpis 'Horned-faced', 'Horned Looking'
- Keroeis 'Horned'
- Kunolygmatos 'Doglike Howler', 'Who howls doglike'
- Kynokephalos 'Dog-Headed'
- Kynolygmate 'Howling Like a Dog', 'Who Howls Dog-like'
- Kyôn 'Bitch', 'Dog'
- Kyôn Melaina 'Black Bitch', 'Black Dog'
- Leaina 'The Lioness'
- Lykaina 'She-wolf'
- Lyko 'She-wolf', 'Wolf-formed'
- Mormo 'She-Monster'
- Opheôplokamos 'Coiled with Snakes', 'With Snaky Curls'
- Phroune 'Toad', 'Frog', 'She-Toad'
- Pyridrakontozônos 'Girt with flaming serpents'
- Speirodukantonozonos 'Girt with Serpent Coils'
- Taurodrakaina 'Bull-Dragon', 'half bull/ half serpent'
- Taurokarênos 'Bull-headed'
- Tauromorphos 'Bull-formed'

- Taurôpis 'Bull-faced'
- Taurôpos 'Bull-aspected'
- Therobromon 'Roaring like a Wild Beast', 'Of the City of the Beast'
- Zônodrakontis / Zonodrakontos 'Encircled by Serpents', 'Covered in Snakes', 'Intertwined with Snakes'

Potnia Theron

Of Course, Hekate doesn't just transform into animals; she also controls, speaks, and leads them. She is a Mistress of Animals, 'Lady of Wild Beasts.'

For example, Hekate's hounds are always by her side.

Black dogs have been with Hekate since at least the 5th Century BCE, where surviving literary references appear in Euripides' plays. Since then, they have remained faithful wherever she goes.

She is also known to rejoice in deer, hold lions, and herd bull.

She is certainly wild enough to do so.

- Agallomenen Elaphoisi 'Rejoicing in Deer'
- Empousa / Empusa [Of unknown meaning, related to the monster Empusa and the idea of phantoms and specters]
- Eurippa 'Horse-finder'
- Hipparete 'Horse-Speaker'
- Kynegetis 'Leader of Dogs'
- Leontoukhos 'Holding a Lion'
- Potnia Theron 'Mistress of Animals', 'Lady of Wild Beasts'
- Tauropolos 'Bull-Herder'

Taking on the Mantle of Maiden, Mother, Crone

Ultimately, I'm not surprised that she has added the Maiden, Mother, Crone aspect to her repertoire. As I said in the beginning, she is an ever-changing, ever-flowing deity that seems to adapt no matter where she goes.

The archetype of Maiden, Mother, and Crone has been around for a long time, having roots in other stories and mythologies. But it was Robert Graves, particularly with his book *The White Goddess*, that added the influence to the archetype that modern pagans, witches, and Wiccans are drawing from today. Though I don't believe he called Hekate specifically an MMC Triple

Goddess, he does refer to her triplicity, and it was his interpretation that has led to Hekate being connected to this archetype.

However, Hekate's connection to the Maiden, Mother, Crone archetype is based on more than just her obvious connections to threes.

The following epithets speak of them.

She is not a Mother?

She is not a Mother?

It seems the only two places Hekate didn't stick her fingers in, per se, in ancient history were as a mother or a crone.

But both can be argued to some degree.

We can say she wasn't a mother figure. She is never really depicted as motherly in any of her known stories.

She might or might not be the mother of Skylla (sill-uh), Kirke, Medea, or Aigialeus.

And when she is mentioned as their mother, it is a mention, not a story of motherhood. Only in the PGM is she ever given any epithets that specifically relate to her being a mother, and two of those three epithets refer to her as being the mother of all.

But still she has other epithets that give the mother archetype some weight. She is a mother, bearing beautiful offspring, soothing one. All-nurturing.

Hekate gets connected to All quite a bit, actually. All-giver, All-sustaining, All-protecting, All-seeing, and more...but despite this fact, most of these aren't specifically about motherhood.

We can interpret most of Her Alls as having a motherly role, should we choose to.

She is also, from the beginning, a nurse of the young, a power bestowed by Zeus in Hesiod's Theogony; once again, even though a midwife is not necessarily a mother, it is definitely a motherly type of role.

- Geneteira 'Mother'
- Kalligeneia 'Bearing Beautiful Offspring'
- Melinoe 'Soothing One'
- Paggennêteira 'Mother of All'
- Pammêtôr 'Mother of All'

- Pandamateira 'All-tamer', 'All-powerful', "All Subduer", 'Master of all
 - Pandôteira 'All-giver', 'One who gives everything', 'Bestower of Everything', Bounteous'
 - Panopaia 'All-seeing', 'One who sees everything', 'Panorama'
 - Pantrephô / Pantrophos 'All-nurturing', 'All-sustaining', 'who feeds all'
 - Pasikrateia 'Universal Queen', 'All-powerful', 'who dominates all'
 - Pasimedeonsa 'All-guarding', 'All-protecting'
 - Pasimedousa 'Ruling Over All'
 - Polyboteira 'Generous Giver of Nourishment'
 - Zootrophos 'Nourisher of Life'
-
- Eileithyia 'Nurse of Childbirth', 'Goddess of Midwives'
 - Genetyllis 'Birth-Helper', 'Goddess of Childbirth', 'Midwife'
 - Kourotophos 'Child's Nurse', 'Nurse of Youths'
 - Lochias 'Protector of birth', 'Goddess of Childbearing'
 - Paiônios 'Healer'

She is also not a Crone?

She is also not a Crone?

There are no mentions of her being old or a hag until modern times. Not even in Shakespeare is she referred to as old. Instead, she is described as a mysterious and powerful figure, especially in Macbeth. Though in many cases, she is portrayed as old or crone-ish in the productions of the plays, she is never described as being one. And when she is referred to as an elder or ancient, as she is in the PGM, that title can be connected to the Titan she is.

Still, she is often thought of as vengeful and has been connected to curses and necromancy. All things that have unfortunately also been connected to many other goddesses that appear in hag form.

So it is easy to see how she began making connections to being seen in the form of a Crone.

- Presbeira 'Ancient', 'Elder'
- Daidalos 'Cunning'
- Damasandra 'Dominator of Men', 'Subduer of Men'
- Dasplêtis 'Horror', 'Frightful-one'
- Doloessa / Doloëis 'Astute-one', 'Subtle', 'Wily', 'Cunning'
- Epi-tymbidia 'Sepulchral' (Tomb related)
- Karko 'Lamia', 'Child-Eating', 'Nocturnal Spirit'
- Oistrophaneia 'Manifester of Madness'

- Oistroplaneia 'Spreader of Madness', 'Causing the Wanderings of Madness'
- Oksyboê 'Shrill-screamer', 'Shrieker'world
- Sarkophagos 'Flesh-Eater'
- Skotia / Skotios 'Somber', 'Of the Dark', 'Of the Gloom'
- Thea Deinos 'The Dread Goddess'
- Tymbidian 'Sepulchral' (Tomb related)

She is a Maiden!

She is a Maiden!

Despite these assumptions and conclusions of Mother and Crone, neither description is true when it comes to Hekate being described in terms of age. When you can find a description that relates to her physical appearance, she is referred to as a maiden, dame, virgin, bride, fairest. All terms that indicate youth.

She is considered lovely and energized, golden-faced, and delicate. Not terms typically applied to either mothers or crones. But as we have seen, not even direct descriptions of youth can box Hekate into just being a maiden.

Now that Hekate has been given this mantle, though, it only adds to her triplicity. She may not have started as a Maiden, Mother, Crone, but like with each epithet she has gathered and title she has gained, Hekate expands to accept and embrace her new roles.

- Abronoê 'Gracious-minded', 'Providing Grace', 'Gracious'
- Aglaos 'Radiant'
- Aizêios 'Vigorous'
- Atala 'Tender', 'Delicate'
- Atasthalos 'Pretentious', 'Reckless', 'Presumptuous'
- Basileia 'Queen', 'Princess'
- Chrysôpis 'Golden-faced'
- Eranne 'Lovely'
- Erannos 'Lovely'
- Ergatis 'Energizer'
- Êrigeneia 'Daughter of morning', 'Early-born'
- Indalimos 'Beautiful'
- Kalliste 'Fairest'
- Kore 'Maiden'
- Nymphen 'Bride'
- Parthenos 'Virgin'
- Podarkê 'Quick-footed', 'Fleet-footed'

More Epithets

Throughout this presentation, I have used Hekate's epithets to explore the aspects of Hekate's threes.

But I must tell you, there are still a dozen or so of Her epithets that don't fall into the concepts that I have tried to explain here.

Some refer to possible locations of worship, others to her heritage or description, and some that we have no idea. Epithet meanings that have been lost to time.

To me, this is just another reflection of how expansive and unboxable Hekate is.

She is the force of three in all its magickal manifestations. From the beginning, she has been connected to the number three, and she will continue to add layers of three to her retinue long after we are gone.

Hail Hekate! Goddess of Threes!

- Aktiophis [Of Unknown Meaning]
- Dione 'Goddess'
- Kelkaia [Of Unknown Meaning] - possibly referring to a location
- Krokopeplos 'Saffron-Cloaked'
- Leukophryne 'White-Browed', 'Of the White-Browed Hill' 'from the ancient Phrygian town of Leucophrys' (Shares with Artemis) - Next to Caria/Karia
- Monogenes 'Only Child'
- Munychia [Of Unknown Meaning] - possibly referring to a location
- Opaon 'Follower'
- Pandina [Of Unknown Meaning – Possibly related to 'whirling' or 'rotating']
- Panta Ephepousa [Of Unknown Meaning]
- Patrogenes 'Father-Begotten'
- Persia 'Persian' 'Daughter of Perses'
- Pharaea 'Of Pharaea', 'Daughter of Zeus and Pheraea'
- 'Prostistos 'Primordial', 'The Very First'

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Images

[The sending of Triptolemos and Hecate guiding Demeter and Persephone, red-figure hydria attributed to The Painter of London E183](#), c. 430 BCE. Source: The British Museum, London.