

= Myrrha =

Myrrha (Greek : ?????) , also known as Smyrna (Greek : ?????) , is the mother of Adonis in Greek mythology . She was transformed into a myrrh tree after having had intercourse with her father and gave birth to Adonis as a tree . Although the tale of Adonis has Semitic roots , it is uncertain from where the myth of Myrrha emerged , though it was likely from Cyprus .

The myth details the incestuous relationship between Myrrha and her father , Cinyras . Myrrha falls in love with her father and tricks him into sexual intercourse . After discovering her identity , Cinyras draws his sword and pursues Myrrha . She flees across Arabia and , after nine months , turns to the gods for help . They take pity on her and transform her into a myrrh @-@ tree . While in plant form , Myrrha gives birth to Adonis . According to legend , the aromatic exudings of the myrrh @-@ tree are Myrrha 's tears .

The most familiar form of the myth was recounted in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid , and the story was the subject of the most famous work (now lost) of the poet Helvius Cinna . Several alternate versions appeared in the *Bibliotheca* , the *Fabulae* of Hyginus , and the *Metamorphoses* of Antoninus Liberalis , with major variations depicting Myrrha 's father as the Assyrian king Theias or depicting Aphrodite as having engineered the tragic liaison . Critical interpretation of the myth has considered Myrrha 's refusal of conventional sexual relations to have provoked her incest , with the ensuing transformation to tree as a silencing punishment . It has been suggested that the taboo of incest marks the difference between culture and nature and that Ovid 's version of Myrrha showed this . A translation of Ovid 's Myrrha , done by English poet John Dryden in 1700 , has been interpreted as a critique of the society of that day linking Myrrha to Mary II and Cinyras to James II .

In post @-@ classical times , Myrrha has had widespread influence in Western culture . She was mentioned in the *Divine Comedy* by Dante , was an inspiration for *Mirra* by Vittorio Alfieri , and was alluded to in *Mathilda* by Mary Shelley . In the play *Sardanapalus* by Byron , a character named Myrrha appeared , whom critics interpreted as a symbol of Byron 's dream of romantic love . The myth of Myrrha was one of 24 tales retold in *Tales from Ovid* by English poet Ted Hughes . In art , Myrrha 's seduction of her father has been illustrated by German engraver Virgil Solis , her tree @-@ metamorphosis by French engraver Bernard Picart and Italian painter Marcantonio Franceschini , while French engraver Gustave Doré chose to depict Myrrha in Hell as a part of his series of engravings for Dante 's *Divine Comedy* . In music , she has appeared in pieces by Sousa and Ravel . She was also the inspiration for several species ' scientific names and an asteroid .

= = Origin and etymology = =

The myth of Myrrha is closely linked to that of her son , Adonis , which has been easier to trace . Adonis is the Hellenized form of the Phoenician word " adoni " , meaning " my lord " . It is believed that the cult of Adonis was known to the Greeks from around the sixth century B.C. , but it is unquestionable that they came to know it through contact with Cyprus . Around this time , the cult of Adonis is noted in the Book of Ezekiel in Jerusalem , though under the Babylonian name Tammuz .

Adonis originally was a Phoenician god of fertility representing the spirit of vegetation . It is further speculated that he was an avatar of the version of Ba 'al , worshipped in Ugarit . It is likely that lack of clarity concerning whether Myrrha was called Smyrna , and who her father was , originated in Cyprus before the Greeks first encountered the myth . However , it is clear that the Greeks added much to the Adonis @-@ Myrrha story , before it was first recorded by classical scholars .

Over the centuries Myrrha , the girl , and myrrh , the fragrance , have been linked etymologically . Myrrh was precious in the ancient world , and was used for embalming , medicine , perfume , and incense . The Modern English word myrrh (Old English : myrra) derives from the Latin Myrrha (or murrha or murra , all are synonymous Latin words for the tree substance) . The Latin Myrrha originated from the Ancient Greek múrr? , but , ultimately , the word is of Semitic origin , with roots in the Arabic murr , the Hebrew m?r , and the Aramaic m?r? , all meaning " bitter " as well as referring to the plant . Regarding smyrna , the word is a Greek dialectic form of myrrha .

Myrrh in the Bible is referenced as one of the most desirable fragrances , and though mentioned

alongside frankincense it is usually more expensive . Several Old Testament passages refer to myrrh . In the Song of Solomon , which according to scholars dates to either the tenth century B.C. as a Hebrew oral tradition or to the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century B.C. , myrrh is referenced seven times making the Song of Solomon the passage in the Old Testament referring to myrrh the most , often with erotic overtones . In the New Testament the substance is famously associated with the birth of Christ when the magi presented their gifts of " gold , frankincense , and myrrh " .

= = Myth = =

= = = Ovid 's version = = =

Published in 8 A.D. the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid has become one of the most influential poems by the Latin writers . The *Metamorphoses* showed that Ovid was more interested in questioning how the laws interfered with people 's lives than in writing epic tales like Virgil 's *Aeneid* and Homer 's *Odyssey* . The *Metamorphoses* is not narrated by Ovid , but rather by the characters inside the stories . The myth of Myrrha and Cinyras is sung by Orpheus in the tenth book of *Metamorphoses* after he has told the myth of Pygmalion and before he turns to the tale of Venus and Adonis . As the myth of Myrrha is also the longest tale sung by Orpheus (205 lines) and the only story that corresponds to his announced theme of girls punished for forbidden desire , it is considered the centerpiece of the song . Ovid opens the myth with a warning to the audience that this is a myth of great horror , especially to fathers and daughters :

The story I am going to tell is a horrible one : I beg that daughters and fathers should hold themselves aloof , while I sing , or if they find my songs enchanting , let them refuse to believe this part of my tale , and suppose that it never happened : or else , if they believe that it did happen , they must believe also in the punishment that followed .

According to Ovid , Myrrha was the daughter of King Cinyras and Queen Cenchreis of Cyprus . It is stated that Cupid was not to blame for Myrrha 's incestuous love for her father , Cinyras . Ovid further comments that hating one 's father is a crime , but Myrrha 's love was a greater crime . Ovid therefore blamed it on the Furies .

Over several verses , Ovid depicts the psychic struggle Myrrha faces between her sexual desire for her father and the social shame she would face for acting thereon . Sleepless , and losing all hope , she attempted suicide ; but was discovered by her nurse , in whom she confided . The nurse tried to make Myrrha suppress the infatuation , but later agreed to help Myrrha into her father 's bed if she promised that she would not again try to kill herself .

During the Ceres ' festival , the worshipping women (including Cenchreis , Myrrha 's mother) were not to be touched by men for nine nights ; wherefore the nurse told Cinyras of a girl deeply in love with him , giving a false name . The affair lasted several nights in complete darkness to conceal Myrrha 's identity , until Cinyras wanted to know the identity of his paramour . Upon bringing in a lamp , and seeing his daughter , the king attempted to kill her on the spot , but Myrrha escaped .

Thereafter Myrrha walked in exile for nine months , past the palms of Arabia and the fields of Panchaea , until she reached Sabaea . Afraid of death and tired of life , and pregnant as well , she begged the gods for a solution , and was transformed into the myrrh tree , with the sap thereof representing her tears . Later , Lucina freed the newborn Adonis from the tree .

= = = Other versions = = =

The myth of Myrrha has been chronicled in several other works than Ovid 's *Metamorphoses* . Among the scholars who recounted it are Apollodorus , Hyginus , and Antoninus Liberalis . All three versions differ .

In his *Bibliotheca* , written around the 1st century B.C. Apollodorus tells of three possible parentages for Adonis . In the first he states that Cinyras arrived in Cyprus with a few followers and founded Paphos , and that he married Metharme , eventually becoming king of Cyprus through her

family . Cinyras had five children by Metharme : the two boys , Oxyporos and Adonis , and three daughters , Orsedice , Laogore , and Braisia . The daughters at some point became victims of Aphrodite 's wrath and had intercourse with foreigners , ultimately dying in Egypt .

For the second possible parentage of Adonis , Apollodorus quotes Hesiod , who postulates that Adonis could be the child of Phoenix and Alpheisiboia . He elaborates no further on this statement .

For the third option , he quotes Panyasis , who states that King Theias of Assyria had a daughter called Smyrna . Smyrna failed to honor Aphrodite , incurring the wrath of the goddess , by whom was made to fall in love with her father ; and with the aid of her nurse she deceived him for twelve nights until her identity was discovered . Smyrna fled , but her father later caught up with her . Smyrna then prayed that the gods would make her invisible , prompting them to turn her into a tree , which was named the Smyrna . Ten months later the tree cracked and Adonis was born from it .

In his *Fabulae* , written around 1 A.D. Hyginus states that King Cinyras of Assyria had a daughter by his wife , Cenchreis . The daughter was named Smyrna and the mother boasted that her child excelled even Venus in beauty . Angered , Venus punished the mother by cursing Smyrna to fall in love with her father . After the nurse had prevented Smyrna from committing suicide , she helped her engage her father in sexual intercourse . When Smyrna became pregnant , she hid in the woods from shame . Venus pitied the girl 's fate , changing her into a myrrh tree , from which was born Adonis .

In the *Metamorphoses* by Antoninus Liberalis , written somewhere in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. , the myth is set in Phoenicia , near Mount Lebanon . Here King Thias , son of Belus and Orithyia , had a daughter named Smyrna . Being of great beauty , she was sought by men from far and wide . She had devised many tricks in order to delay her parents and defer the day they would choose a husband for her . Smyrna had been driven mad by desire for her father and did not want anybody else . At first she hid her desires , eventually telling her nurse , Hippolyte , the secret of her true feelings . Hippolyte told the king that a girl of exalted parentage wanted to lie with him , but in secret . The affair lasted for an extended period of time , and Smyrna became pregnant . At this point , Thias desired to know who she was so he hid a light , illuminating the room and discovering Smyrna 's identity when she entered . In shock , Smyrna gave birth prematurely to her child . She then raised her hands and said a prayer , which was heard by Zeus who took pity on her and turned her into a tree . Thias killed himself , and it was on the wish of Zeus that the child was brought up and named Adonis .

= = Interpretation = =

The myth of Myrrha has been interpreted in various ways . The transformation of Myrrha in Ovid 's version has been interpreted as a punishment for her breaking the social rules through her incestuous relationship with her father . Like Byblis who fell in love with her brother , Myrrha is transformed and rendered voiceless making her unable to break the taboo of incest .

Myrrha has also been thematically linked to the story of Lot 's daughters . They live with their father in an isolated cave and because their mother is dead they decide to befuddle Lot 's mind with wine and seduce him in order to keep the family alive through him . Nancy Miller comments on the two myths :

[Lot 's daughters '] incest is sanctioned by reproductive necessity ; because it lacks consequences , this story is not a socially recognized narrative paradigm for incest . [...] In the cases of both Lot 's daughters and Myrrha , the daughter 's seduction of the father has to be covert . While other incest configurations - mother @-@ son , sibling - permit consensual agency , father @-@ daughter incest does not ; when the daughter displays transgressive sexual desire , the prohibitive father appears .

Myrrha has been interpreted as developing from a girl into a woman in the course of the story : in the beginning she is a virgin refusing her suitors , in that way denying the part of herself that is normally dedicated to Aphrodite . The goddess then strikes her with desire to make love with her father and Myrrha is then made into a woman in the grip of an uncontrollable lust . The marriage between her father and mother is then set as an obstacle for her love along with incest being forbidden by the laws , profane as well as divine . The way the daughter seduces her father

illustrates the most extreme version a seduction can take : the union between two persons who by social norms and laws are strictly held apart .

James Richard Ellis has argued that the incest taboo is fundamental to a civilized society . Building on Sigmund Freud 's theories and psychoanalysis this is shown in Ovid 's version of the myth of Myrrha . When the girl has been gripped by desire , she laments her humanity , for if she and her father were animals , there would be no bar to their union .

That Myrrha is transformed into a myrrh tree has also been interpreted to have influenced the character of Adonis . Being the child of both a woman and a tree he is a split person . In Ancient Greece the word Adonis could mean both " perfume " and " lover " and likewise Adonis is both the perfume made from the aromatic drops of myrrh as well as the human lover who seduces two goddesses .

In her essay " What Nature Allows the Jealous Laws Forbid " literary critic Mary Aswell Doll compares the love between the two male protagonists of Annie Proulx ' book *Brokeback Mountain* (1997) with the love Myrrha has for her father in Ovid 's *Metamorphoses* . Doll suggests that both Ovid 's and Proulx ' main concerns are civilization and its discontents and that their use of images of nature uncovers similar understandings of what is " natural " when it comes to who and how one should love . On the subject of Ovid 's writing about love Doll states :

In Ovid 's work no love is " taboo " unless it arises out of a need for power and control . A widespread instance for the latter during the Roman Empire was the practice by the elite to take nubile young girls as lovers or mistresses , girls who could be as young as daughters . Such a practice was considered normal , natural .

Cinyras ' relationship with a girl on his daughter 's age was therefore not unnatural , but Myrrha 's being in love with her own father was . Doll elaborates further on this stating that Myrrha 's lamenting that animals can mate father and daughter without problems is a way for Ovid to express a paradox : in nature a father @-@ daughter relationship is not unnatural , but it is in human society . On this Doll concludes that " Nature follows no laws . There is no such thing as " natural law " " . Still , Ovid distances himself in three steps from the horrifying story :

First he does not tell the story himself , but has one of his in @-@ story characters , Orpheus , sing it ; second , Ovid tells his audience not even to believe the story (cf. quote in " Ovid 's version ") ; third , he has Orpheus congratulate Rome , Ovid 's home town , for its being far away from the land where this story took place (Cyprus) . By distancing himself , Doll writes , Ovid lures his audience to keep listening . First then does Ovid begin telling the story describing Myrrha , her father and their relationship , which Doll compares to the mating of Cupid and Psyche : here the lovemaking occurs in complete darkness and only the initiator (Cupid) knows the identity of the other as well . Myrrha 's metamorphosing into a tree is read by Doll as a metaphor where the tree incarnates the secret . As a side effect , Doll notes , the metamorphosis also alters the idea of incest into something natural for the imagination to think about . Commenting on a Freudian analysis of the myth stating that Ovid " disconcertingly suggests that [father @-@ lust] might be an unspoken universal of human experience " Doll notes that Ovid 's stories work like metaphors : they are meant to give insight into the human psyche . Doll states that the moments when people experience moments like those of father @-@ lust are repressed and unconscious , which means that they are a natural part of growing and that most grow out of it sometime . She concludes about Ovid and his version of Myrrha that : " What is perverted , for Ovid , is the use of sex as a power tool and the blind acceptance of sexual male power as a cultural norm . "

In 2008 the newspaper *The Guardian* named Myrrha 's relationship with her father as depicted in *Metamorphoses* by Ovid as one of the top ten stories of incestuous love ever . It complimented the myth for being more disturbing than any of the other incestuous relationships depicted in the *Metamorphoses* .

= = Cultural impact = =

= = = Literature = = =

One of the earliest recordings of a play inspired by the myth of Myrrha is in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, written in 93 A.D. by the Roman @-@ Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. A tragedy entitled *Cinyras* is mentioned, wherein the main character, Cinyras, is to be slain along with his daughter Myrrha, and "a great deal of fictitious blood was shed". No further details are given about the plot of this play.

Myrrha appears in the *Divine Comedy* poem *Inferno* by Dante Alighieri, where Dante sees her soul being punished in the eighth circle of Hell, in the tenth bolgia (ditch). Here she and other falsifiers such as the alchemists and the counterfeiters suffer dreadful diseases, Myrrha's being madness. Myrrha's suffering in the tenth bolgia indicates her most serious sin was not incest but deceit. Diana Glenn interprets the symbolism in Myrrha's contrapasso as being that her sin is so unnatural and unlawful that she is forced to abandon human society and simultaneously she loses her identity. Her madness in Hell prevents even basic communication which attests to her being contemptuous of the social order in life.

Dante had already shown his familiarity with the myth of Myrrha in a prior letter to Emperor Henry VII, which he wrote on 17 April 1311. Here he compares Florence with "Myrrha, wicked and ungodly, yearning for the embrace of her father, Cinyras"; a metaphor, Claire Honess interprets as referring to the way Florence tries to "seduce" Pope Clement V away from Henry VII. It is incestuous because the Pope is the father of all and it is also implied that the city in that way rejects her true husband, the Emperor.

In the poem *Venus and Adonis*, written by William Shakespeare in 1593 Venus refers to Adonis' mother. In the 34th stanza Venus is lamenting because Adonis is ignoring her approaches and in her heart @-@ ache she says "O, had thy mother borne so hard a mind, She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind." Shakespeare makes a subtle reference to Myrrha later when Venus picks a flower: "She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears, Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears." It has been suggested that these plant juices being compared to tears are a parallel to Myrrha's tears being the drops of myrrh exuding from the myrrh @-@ tree.

In another work of Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), it has been suggested that he has made another reference. In act 5, scene 2 the main character Othello compares himself to a myrrh tree with its constant stream of tears (Myrrha's tears). The reference is justified in the way that it draws inspiration from Book X of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, just like his previously written poem, *Venus and Adonis*, did.

The tragedy *Mirra* by Vittorio Alfieri (written in 1786) is inspired by the story of Myrrha. In the play, Mirra falls in love with her father, Cinyras. Mirra is to be married to Prince Pyrrhus, but decides against it, and leaves him at the altar. In the ending, Mirra has a mental breakdown in front of her father who is infuriated because the prince has killed himself. Owing that she loves Cinyras, Mirra grabs his sword, while he recoils in horror, and kills herself.

The novella *Mathilda*, written by Mary Shelley in 1820, contains similarities to the myth and mentions Myrrha. Mathilda is left by her father as a baby after her birth causes the death of her mother, and she does not meet her father until he returns sixteen years later. Then he tells her that he is in love with her, and, when she refuses him, he commits suicide. In chapter 4, Mathilda makes a direct allusion: "I chanced to say that I thought Myrrha the best of Alfieri's tragedies." Audra Dibert Himes, in an essay entitled "Knew shame, and knew desire", notes a more subtle reference to Myrrha: Mathilda spends the last night before her father's arrival in the woods, but as she returns home the next morning the trees seemingly attempt to encompass her. Himes suggests that the trees can be seen as a parallel to Ovid's metamorphosed Myrrha.

The tragedy *Sardanapalus* by George Gordon Byron published in 1821 and produced in 1834 is set in Assyria, 640 B.C., under King Sardanapalus. The play deals with the revolt against the extravagant king and his relationship to his favourite slave Myrrha. Myrrha made Sardanapalus appear at the head of his armies, but after winning three successive battles in this way he was eventually defeated. A beaten man, Myrrha persuaded Sardanapalus to place himself on a funeral pyre which she would ignite and subsequently leap onto - burning them both alive. The play has been interpreted as an autobiography, with Sardanapalus as Byron's alter ego, Zarina as Byron's

wife Anne Isabella , and Myrrha as his mistress Teresa . At a more abstract level Myrrha is the desire for freedom driving those who feel trapped or bound , as well as being the incarnation of Byron 's dream of romantic love . Byron knew the story of the mythical Myrrha , if not directly through Ovid 's *Metamorphoses* , then at least through Alfieri 's *Mirra* , which he was familiar with . In her essay " A Problem Few Dare Imitate " , Susan J. Wolfson phrases and interprets the relation of the play *Sardanapalus* and the myth of Myrrha :

Although [Byron 's] own play evades the full import of this complicated association , Myrrha 's name means that it [the name 's referring to incest , red .] cannot be escaped entirely - especially since Ovid 's story of Myrrha 's incest poses a potential reciprocal to the nightmare Byron invents for *Sardanapalus* , of sympathy with the son who is the object of his mother 's ' incest ' .

In 1997 the myth of Myrrha and Cinyras was one of 24 tales from Ovid 's *Metamorphoses* that were retold by English poet Ted Hughes in his poetical work *Tales from Ovid* . The work was praised for not directly translating , but instead retelling the story in a language which was as fresh and new for the audience today as Ovid 's texts were to his contemporary audience . Hughes was also complimented on his achievements in using humour or horror when describing Myrrha or a flood , respectively . The work received critical acclaim winning the Whitbread Book Of The Year Award 1997 and being adapted to the stage in 1999 , starring Sirine Saba as Myrrha .

In 1997 American poet Frank Bidart wrote *Desire* , which was another retelling of the myth of Myrrha as it was presented in the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid . The case of Myrrha , critic Langdon Hammer notes , is the worst possible made against desire , because the story of Myrrha shows how sex can lead people to destroy others as well as themselves . He comments that " the " precious bitter resin " into which Myrrha 's tears are changed tastes bitter and sweet , like *Desire* as a whole " . He further writes : " The inescapability of desire makes Bidart 's long story of submission to it a kind of affirmation . Rather than aberrant , the Ovidian characters come to feel exemplary " .

= = = John Dryden 's translation = = =

In 1700 English poet John Dryden published his translations of myths by Ovid , Homer , and Boccaccio in the volume *Fables , Ancient and Modern* . Literary critic Anthony W. Lee notes in his essay " Dryden 's *Cinyras and Myrrha* " that this translation , along with several others , can be interpreted as a subtle comment on the political scene of the late seventeenth @-@ century England .

The translation of the myth of Myrrha as it appeared in Ovid 's *Metamorphoses* is suggested as being a critique of the political settlement that followed the Glorious Revolution . The wife of the leader of this revolution , William of Orange , was Mary , daughter of James II . Mary and William were crowned king and queen of England in 1689 , and because Dryden was deeply sympathetic to James he lost his public offices and fell into political disfavor under the new reign . Dryden turned to translation and infused these translations with political satire in response - the myth of Myrrha being one of these translations .

In the opening lines of the poem Dryden describes King Cinyras just as Ovid did as a man who had been happier if he had not become a father . Lee suggests that this is a direct parallel to James who could have been counted as happier if he had not had his daughter , Mary , who betrayed him and usurped his monarchical position . When describing the act of incest Dryden uses a monster metaphor . Those lines are suggested as aimed at William III who invaded England from the Netherlands and whose presence Dryden describes as a curse or a punishment , according to Lee . A little further on the Convention Parliament is indicted . Lee suggests that Dryden critiques the intrusiveness of the Convention Parliament , because it acted without constituted legal authority . Finally the daughter , Mary as Myrrha , is described as an impious outcast from civilization , whose greatest sin was her disrupting the natural line of succession thereby breaking both natural as well as divine statutes which resulted in fundamental social confusion . When Myrrha craves and achieves her father 's (Cinyras ') bed , Lee sees a parallel to Mary 's ascending James ' throne : both daughters incestuously occupied the place which belonged to their fathers .

Reading the translation of the myth of Myrrha by Dryden as a comment on the political scene ,

states Lee , is partly justified by the characterization done by the historian Julian Hoppit on the events of the revolution of 1688 :

To most a monarch was God 's earthly representative , chosen by Him for the benefit of His people . For men to meddle in that choice was to tamper with the divine order , the inevitable price of which was chaos .

= = = Music = = =

In music , Myrrha was the subject of an 1876 band piece by John Philip Sousa , Myrrha Gavotte and in 1901 , Maurice Ravel and Andre Caplet each wrote cantatas titled Myrrha . Caplet finished first over Ravel who was third in the Prix de Rome competition . The competition required that the candidates jumped through a series of academic hoops before entering the final where they were to compose a cantata on a prescribed text . Though it was not the best musical piece , the jury praised Ravel 's work for its " melodic charm " and " sincerity of dramatic sentiment " . Musical critic Andrew Clements writing for The Guardian commented on Ravel 's failures at winning the competition : " Ravel 's repeated failure to win the Prix de Rome , the most coveted prize for young composers in France at the turn of the 20th century , has become part of musical folklore . "

Italian composer Domenico Alaleona 's only opera , premiering in 1920 , was entitled Mirra . The libretto drew on the legend of Myrrha while the music was inspired by Claude Debussy 's Pelléas et Mélisande (1902) as well as Richard Strauss ' Elektra (1909) . Suffering from being monotonic , the final showdown between father and daughter , the critics commented , was the only part really making an impact . Mirra remains Alaleona 's most ambitious composition and though the music tended to be " eclectic and uneven " , it showed " technical enterprise " .

More recently , Kristen Kuster created a choral orchestration , Myrrha , written in 2004 and first performed at Carnegie Hall in 2006 . Kuster stated that the idea for Myrrha came when she was asked by the American Composers Orchestra to write a love @-@ and @-@ erotica themed concert . The concert was inspired by the myth of Myrrha in Ovid 's Metamorphoses and includes excerpts from the volume that " move in and out of the music as though in a dream , or perhaps Myrrha ? s memory of the events that shaped her fate , " as described by Kuster .

= = = Art = = =

The Metamorphoses of Ovid has been illustrated by several artists through time . In 1563 in Frankfurt , a German bilingual translation by Johann Posthius was published , featuring the woodcuts of renowned German engraver Virgil Solis . The illustration of Myrrha depicts Myrrha 's deceiving her father as well as her fleeing from him . In 1717 in London , a Latin @-@ English edition of Metamorphoses was published , translated by Samuel Garth and with plates of French engraver Bernard Picart . The illustration of Myrrha was entitled The Birth of Adonis and featured Myrrha as a tree delivering Adonis while surrounded by women . In 1857 French engraver Gustave Doré made a series of illustrations to Dante 's Divine Comedy , the depiction of Myrrha showing her in the eighth circle of Hell .

In 1690 , Italian Baroque painter Marcantonio Franceschini depicted Myrrha as a tree while delivering Adonis in The Birth of Adonis . The painting was included in the art exhibition " Captured Emotions : Baroque Painting in Bologna , 1575 @-@ 1725 " at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center in Los Angeles , California which lasted from December 16 , 2008 through May 3 , 2009 . Normally the painting is exhibited in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (English : Dresden State Art Collections) in Germany as a part of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (English : Old Masters Picture Gallery) .

In 1984 , artist Mel Chin created a sculpture based on Doré 's illustration of Myrrha for the Divine Comedy . The sculpture was titled " Myrrha of the Post Industrial World " and depicted a nude woman sitting on a rectangular pedestal . It was an outdoor project in Bryant Park , and the skin of the sculpture was made of perforated steel . Inside was a visible skeleton of polystyrene . When finished , the sculpture was 29 feet tall .

= = = Science = = =

Several metamorphosing insects ' scientific names reference the myth . Myrrha is a genus of ladybug beetles , such as the 18 @-@ spot ladybird (*Myrrha octodecimguttata*) *Libythea myrrha* , the club beak , is a butterfly native to India . *Cupido myrrha* is a rare species of butterfly named by Herrich @-@ Schäffer found on Mount Erciyes in south @-@ eastern Turkey . *Catocala myrrha* is a synonym for a species of moth known as married underwing . In total the United Kingdom 's Natural History Museum lists eight Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) with the myrrha name .

Myrrh is a bitter @-@ tasting , aromatic , yellow to reddish brown gum . It is obtained from small thorny flowering trees of the *Commiphora* genus , which is a part of the incense @-@ tree family (Latin : *Burseraceae*) . There are two main varieties of myrrh : bisabol and herabol . Bisabol is produced by *C. erythraea* , an Arabian species similar to the *C. myrrha* , which produces the herabol myrrh . *C. myrrha* grows in Ethiopia , Arabia , and Somalia .

A large asteroid , measuring 124 kilometres (77 mi) is named 381 Myrrha . It was discovered and named at January 10 , 1894 by A. Charlois at Nice . The mythical Myrrha inspired the name and her son , Adonis , is the name given to another asteroid , 2101 Adonis . Using classical names like Myrrha , Juno , and Vesta when naming minor planets was standard custom at the time when Myrrha was discovered . It was the general opinion that using numbers instead might lead to unnecessary confusion .