Jean Menzies, "Entry on: Fleecing Olympus by Passport Games Studio , Cecilia Hyland, Eric Hyland", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/959. Entry version as of November 08, 2026.

Passport Games Studio , Cecilia Hyland , Eric Hyland

Fleecing Olympus

United States (2018)

TAGS: Achilles Aphrodite Apollo Ares Artemis Athena Fates Golden Fleece Hades Hera Heracles Hermes Odyssey Pandora's Box Perseus Poseidon Trojan Horse Zeus



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Fleecing Olympus
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
Official Website	passportgamestudios.com (accessed: August 29, 2019, currently inactive).
Genre	Card games*
Target Audience	Children ((suggested age of players is specified as 14+ on box))
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Creators



Passport Games Studio (Company)

Passport Games is a small independent table top game company based in the U.S.A.

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Cecilia Hyland (Author)

Eric and Cecilia Hyland are a husband and wife team who create tabletop games together. Their current portfolio includes four different tabletop games. As of 2019, they live and work out of Michigan, U.S.A.

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Additional information

Summary

Fleecing Olympus is a 3–6 player table top game consisting of character cards, playing cards, and gems. The aim of the game is to be the player with the most gems in their hand when the playing cards run out. At the beginning of each round, the players are dealt one of nine possible character cards at random. Each character card represents an ancient Greek god or goddess who the player will henceforth be known as throughout the game. The character cards, which consist of Zeus, Hera, Aphrodite, Athena, Artemis/Apollo, Hermes, Hades, Poseidon or Ares, each come with a unique playable ability loosely inspired by the god or goddess themselves. Each player is then dealt twenty gems and five playing cards with which to begin the game. The playing cards depict various artefacts from ancient Greek mythology such as Pandora's 'box' and the Golden Fleece, each of which performs a different action in the game. Players then proceed to bet against one another using two dice to decide on the number of gems at stake and playing cards to up the ante or reverse the odds. Once all of the playing cards have been used by the players whichever 'god' or 'goddess' has the highest number of gems is victorious.

Analysis

Fleecing Olympus is an interesting combination of ancient Greek mythology and popular modern gameplay based around wagering. This is one of those games where the Greek mythology could easily be replaced with various other pop-culture references or specially created characters and cards. The decision by the creators to go with ancient gods and goddesses at the centre of their game, however, is a successful one. This is no mere surface-level flinging together of random Greek myths, but the playing cards and character deck demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the mythology with which they are dealing.

Each character card depicts a god or goddess, apart from Artemis and Apollo, who share a card as 'the twins.' With each character card comes special abilities that only that player can use. Some of these abilities draw on the characterisation of the Greek gods themselves. For example, Zeus, as king of the gods, can take advantage of any other god's powers to win the game and Aphrodite is able to share cards with others, presumably because of her association with love. On the other hand, it is difficult to draw a clear parallel between some

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of the other gods and goddesses' abilities in the game and their powers in mythology. For example, Poseidon and Hades can simply draw extra cards from the deck.

The correlation between myth and gameplay is perhaps more overt in the playing cards. There are four categories of playing cards: fate, destiny, legend, and greed – elements that could all be described as part of Greek mythology. Within these four categories, there are fifteen distinct card types, each of which depicts a different symbol from myth.

The largest category comprises the destiny cards, of which there are six. There is Perseus' aegis, which depicts a shield bearing the image of Medusa's severed head. This recalls the story of Perseus who uses his reflective shield to allow him to defeat the gorgon Medusa without looking into her eyes. The image itself, however, is one more commonly associated with the aegis of Athena in ancient Greek art. Similarly, there is the shield of Achilles. This card demonstrates an impressive level of detail in rendering the ekphrasis first described in book eighteen of Homer's *Iliad*. There are also destiny cards depicting the Trojan Horse and Pandora's box, repeating the common misrepresentation of Pandora's vessel. Less explicit is the seed of deceit. When accompanied by an image of an open pomegranate, however, it can be instantly recognised as a reference to the seeds eaten by Persephone which prevented her from leaving the underworld entirely. Lastly, there are the scales of justice, which are presumably a reference to the goddess Themis.

For each of the other three categories there are three cards. The three fate cards all aptly carry a symbol of one of the three Moira, goddesses of fate. These are: Lachesis' lots, Clotho's threads, and Atropos' shears. Each of these cards has an effect on the metaphorical 'fate' of the game by altering the wager between the two players currently pitted against one another.

The three legend cards all depict items used or worn by the legendary Greek hero and half mortal Herakles. There is his bow and his sword but there is also the shirt of Nessus that resulted in his death.

Lastly there are the three greed cards. There is the lotus fruit, which references the lotus trees from book nine of Homer's *Odyssey* whose fruit causes any who ate it to lose their memories. Then there is the Golden Fleece, which Jason was sent to obtain from King Aeson of

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Iolchos by his uncle Pelias. The is also Aeolus' bag of wind, given to Odysseus by Aeolus for safe keeping opened by the crew who, in their greed for the gold they believed concealed inside, unleashed them during their sea-voyage to great catastrophe.

While the scope of the game limits the powers available to the cards, the level of diversity in mythological images cannot be criticised. The cards themselves, whether characters cards or playing cards, depict a wide range of imagery from Greek mythology. Some images, such as the Trojan Horse and Pandora's Box, are not uncommon features of popular culture, but others are perhaps more surprising to see included: Achilles's shield or the tools of the fates for example.

The plastic jewels that players play for do not appear to have any specific relation to Greek mythology; perhaps instead the game-makers might have used ambrosia as fodder for the Olympians' wagers. The research that has gone into this game, which is not aimed towards classicists, but game enthusiasts in general, however, is impressive. Anyone can play this game, but it would come as no surprise if those that do find a new curiosity for Greek mythology blossom within themselves.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Achilles Aphrodite Apollo Ares Artemis Athena Fates Golden Fleece Hades Hera Heracles Hermes Odyssey Pandora's Box Perseus Poseidon Trojan Horse Zeus

Addenda

Playing time: c. 30–45 min.

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