Aimee Hinds, "Entry on: Barbie® Classical Goddess™ Collection (Series): Goddess of Spring™ Barbie® Doll by Mattel, Inc. ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1184. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Mattel, Inc.

Barbie® Classical Goddess™ Collection (Series): Goddess of Spring™ Barbie® Doll

United States of America (2000)

TAGS: Chloris Flora





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

General information	
Title of the work	Barbie® Classical Goddess™ Collection (Series): Goddess of Spring™ Barbie® Doll
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Mattel Inc., *Goddess of Spring™ Barbie® Doll*. November 1, 2000.
Official Website	barbie.mattel.com (accessed:February 16, 2021)
Genre	Collectables*, Dolls*
Target Audience	Young adults (Mattel suggest that this doll is for adult collectors, which they define as those aged 14 and up)
Author of the Entry	Aimee Hinds, University of Roehampton, hindsa@roehampton.ac.uk
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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Creators

Mattel, Inc. (Company)

Logo retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: January 11, 2022).

Mattel Barbie

Originally launched in 1959, Barbie was founded by businesswoman, inventor, and co-owner of Mattel, Ruth Handler as an opportunity for girls to play with dolls that allowed them a wider range of imaginative roles, in line with the range of toys available to boys at the time. From the early 1960s, Barbie has had over 200 careers to date.

Source:

barbie.mattel.com (accessed: January 27, 2020).

Prepared by Aimee Hinds, University of Roehampton, aimee.hinds89@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This collector's edition doll depicts the *Goddess of Spring*, and is not attributed to a specific goddess but could represent either the Greek Chloris or Roman Flora (or possibly both). The doll is dressed in a pale purple crepe peplum-style dress with chiton-style draped sleeves. The hem of the peplum is decorated with floral motifs, and she wears a golden necklace. She holds two overflowing bouquets aloft, one in each hand, and wears a flower in her long auburn hair (although the image from Mattel illustrates the doll with apparently curly hair, the doll has sleeker, smoother curls in line with the other two dolls in the series, *Goddess of Wisdom* and *Goddess of Beauty*, both also surveyed on this database).

The text on her box describes the myth of the Goddess of Spring (although it mixes up her Greek and Roman names, ascribing Flora to the Greeks and Chloris to the Romans), describing her as the "mother of the flowers". The text explains that she asked for protection of the flowers from Zephyrus, "her own great love", and names her as a "symbol of romance and rebirth". Like the other dolls in the series, the box text emphasises the timelessness of the Greco-Roman deities and their world, and justifies their relevance today.

Analysis

This doll is unlike the other two in the *Classical Goddess* series (*Goddess of Wisdom* and *Goddess of Beauty*, also surveyed in this database), in that she is representative of a minor goddess, perhaps explaining the singular focus on her association with flowers in the box text. The conflation of the Greek and Roman deities is not as straightforward here as with the other two *Classical Goddess* dolls; while Chloris is the Greek name and Flora the Latin (the box text mixes these up), in some versions of Roman mythology – most notably in Ovid's *Fasti* (5.195-200) - both Chloris and Flora are the same figure, with Chloris, a nymph, having been transformed into Flora, a goddess. While Chloris/Flora is best known from the *Fasti*, that version her story is very different to the one presented by this doll, which references the romantic aspect of her association with flowers through her marriage to Zephyrus. In the *Fasti*, it is clear that (as in the case in many of such myths) the union between Chloris and Zephyrus is one of forced sexual assault; while the Flora of the *Fasti* enjoys her role as goddess of spring, she is aware of the violence

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inherent in her elevation to the position. As the doll's box text (along with the others in the series) emphasises romance, the positioning of Zephyrus as a romantic partner is unsurprising, fitting the story into Barbie's realm (of fashion, femininity and platonic romance) and making the doll generally more suitable for younger people and children.

The romantic element of the doll is part of a push towards the traditional; in all the dolls in this series, this is underscored by the linking of the idea of the "classic" (the series itself is called "Classical Goddesses") with the Greco-Roman past; this is largely achieved through the box text, which in this case emphasises the timelessness of the doll. This prioritising of the classic and traditionalism becomes a method of presenting Barbie's femininity (white, Western, and specifically refracted through beauty and fashion*). Unlike the *Goddess of Wisdom* doll, which works to eliminate certain aspects of Athena/Minerva's character to leave a romanticised version, it is likely that Chloris/Flora was chosen for this series for her romantic potential, with her association with flowers and spring.

As a collector's item, the doll is not meant to be played with (collectable Barbies lose much of their value once removed from the box). This is indicated – perhaps more so than with many dolls with either no or more robust accessories - by the doll's floral garlands, and her open-armed pose which suggest her identity and is directly referenced in the box text ("Her arms outstretched, she carried glorious purple bouquets, the beautiful blossoms fresh and fragrant").

Much like the *Goddess of Wisdom* doll, the doll's dress is pseudo-historical, and would have been easily identifiable with Greco-Roman history and myth when this doll was produced. However, her flowing gown makes her more easily identifiable as a figure from a different tradition; for example, *the Goddess of Wisdom* doll is reminiscent of Arwen from the *Lord of the Rings* films. The *Goddess of Spring* appears to be have similar influences, and would look equally at home in that film series. This is probably due to a deliberate alignment with established historical precedents cast by earlier fantasy films (the dress of both dolls is also not dissimilar to medieval-inspired dress in some 1980s fantasy films), but the resurgence of the cinematic fantasy genre – and its associated dress – shortly after the release of these dolls may be responsible for the move towards the more modern, fashion inspired dress on the later *Goddess* series (2008 *Medusa*, 2009 *Aphrodite* and 2010 *Athena*, all also surveyed on this database)

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to avoid confusion with characters from such films. The dolls other inspirations seem to include Pre-Raphaelite paintings (see, for example, Evelyn De Morgan's *Flora* [1894], or Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Proserpine* [1874] and *Bocca Baciata* [1859]). She also appears to be influenced by contemporary images of Mother Earth (for example, see Bette Midler as Mother Earth in "Time Warner presents The Earth Day Special" in 1990).

* Kristina Milnor,"Barbie® as Grecian Goddess™ and Egyptian Queen™: Ancient Women's History by Mattel®", *Helios* 32.2 (2005): 215–233, 222.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Chloris Flora
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Appearances Femininity Gender Gender expectations/construction Gender, female Girls Past Play* Pop culture references Religious beliefs Romance

Further Reading

Barbie, *About Barbie*, barbie.mattel.com (accessed: February 16, 2021).

Barbie, *Goddess of Spring Barbie*, barbie.mattel.com (accessed: February 16, 2021).

Milnor, Kristina, "Barbie® as Grecian Goddess™ and Egyptian Queen™: Ancient Women's History by Mattel®", *Helios* 32.2 (2005): 215–233.

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