

## Pandora's Initiatory Transition from Maiden to Woman in Hesiod

Since Henri Jeanmaire's seminal work *Couroi et Courètes*, many scholars have turned their attention to how female figures in Greek mythology transform from young, unwed virgins to adult (often married) women (for bibliography, see Dodd and Faraone), with some arguing that these coming-of-age narratives serve as parallels to the real-world initiation through marriage that girls in ancient Greece were expected to undergo (e.g., Lincoln on Persephone, Tyrrell on Antigone). Amidst this growing body of scholarship, the figure of Pandora is curiously absent, despite her status as the prototypical model of all Greek women, according to Hesiod. This paper seeks to reintroduce Pandora to the conversation surrounding narratives of female initiation, first by outlining how her clothing and adornments in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* mark her transformation from a maiden-like figure to a woman, and then by arguing that this transformation makes her an ideal prototype for all mortal women, who were expected to undergo analogous social initiations through marriage.

The first portion of my paper will explore how Pandora completes the transition from maiden to woman. Although scholars have analyzed Pandora's characterization as *parthenos* or *parthenos*-like in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (Hurwitt, Vernant), none have noted that this designation disappears by the end of her creation, at which she becomes *gyne*. These two terms, of course, carry very different cultural associations, marking Pandora's significant, condensed transformation from unmarried virginal girl to married woman. Furthermore, I note that Pandora's transformation is not spontaneous, but rather stems from the gifts she receives from the divinities involved in her creation. Of these gifts, Hesiod emphasizes headgear, invoking a well-established connection between marriage and adornment (particularly veils) in

ancient Greek culture (Carson). This is especially apparent in the *Theogony*, the longer of the two accounts, when Pandora is adorned with three pieces of headgear simultaneously - a veil (καλύπτρην, 574), garlands of flowers (στεφάνους νεοθηλέος ἄνθεα ποίης, 576), and a golden crown (στεφάνην χρυσέην, 578). Thus, adapting Lissarague's model of how the Homeric heroic identity emerges from the conjunction of body and armour, I argue that Pandora's identity as a married woman arises from the combination of her *parthenos*-like physical form and the adornments she receives from the goddesses. The adornments, therefore, do not just signal her transformation from maiden to woman, they themselves trigger it.

The second part of my paper addresses how these adornments parallel the specific ritual practices and states of being that are necessary for initiation in the real world. Because Pandora's identity as a married woman does not arise spontaneously, her transformation is analogous to the process by which girls attain newly gendered, adult identities through marriage. I argue that Hesiod highlights this parallel through an emphasis on the evolving legitimacy of Pandora's identity throughout her creation. In both *Works and Days* and the *Theogony*, Pandora initially exists as an object that is only *like* a maiden (merely an eidolon or copy of a living human being, as Vernant points out), and she achieves full personhood over the course of her creation, ultimately being referred to as τήνδε γυναῖκα in *Works and Days* (80) and the progenitor of womankind in *Theogony* (ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων, 590). Pandora is thus brought even closer to other, mortal women through her initiatory experience, an appropriate ending for the prototypical model of womanhood. I conclude that Hesiod's depiction of Pandora's creation provides an excellent (if misogynistic) example of female initiation, demonstrating both the degree to which it depended on social processes (such as particular

ornamentation), and its importance for all women in ancient Greek culture, whose identities were also constructed and legitimized through their initiation into marriage.

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