

Beautiful Evil: Pandora and the Athena Parthenos

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Abstract

The depiction of the Birth of Pandora on the base of the statue of Athena Parthenos has not received all the attention it deserves. This study attempts to place the meaning and function of the myth in the context of both the Parthenon sculptural program as a whole and the Athenian civic ideologies of patriarchy and autochthony. It suggests that the scene operated on several different levels (some of them mundane), but that the relationship of the mortal *parthenos* below to the divine Parthenos above was essentially one of ambiguity, even dissonance. Pandora may, in fact, have functioned as an "Anti-Athena," and the image of her creation may have reinforced the highly gendered social and political realities of fifth-century Athens.*

After passing beneath the west facade of the Periclean Parthenon, with Athena and Poseidon contending over the land of Attica in its pediment and Greeks battling Amazons in its metopes, after passing along either the north flank of the building, with its metopes depicting scenes from the Trojan War, or the south, with (for the most part) Lapiths fighting centaurs, after catching glimpses, through the voids between the columns, of a half-lit grand procession high atop the cella walls, after reaching the east side of the building with its pediment showing the birth of Athena, its metopes depicting the battle of the gods and the giants, and, within, the culmination of the processional frieze and a curious exchange of cloth set between groups of aloof gods, the an-

cient visitor would finally have seen, through opened doors or else upon entering the cella of the temple, the statue of Athena Parthenos. Made of over a ton of gold and ivory plates fastened onto a wooden core, Pheidias's great lost goddess stood a little over 10 m tall, and loomed above a figured base whose meaning has all but been ignored (fig. 1).¹

The typical Greek sanctuary was a highly resonant place. The images that filled its spaces and adorned its buildings commonly depicted versions of many of the same myths or legends, rephrasing them like variations of musical themes, and so a visitor making his way through the place must have read each "new" representation of a given myth with those he had already seen in mind. One's experience of the Acropolis was of this sort—dynamic, cumulative, and cross-referential. The Athena Parthenos was itself a grand recapitulation, an elaborate reprise (and, eventually, it was literally self-reflexive, since it mirrored itself in the water of the shallow basin cut into the floor in front of it sometime after the completion of the statue).² Crowned with an elaborate helmet adorned with griffins, Pegasoi, and a sphinx, the statue was otherwise close to being a chryselephantine double of Pheidias's earlier "Bronze Athena" (the so-called Promachos), a colossal votive that stood guard at the entrance to the Acropolis, just within the Propylaia.³ And it re-presented themes and myths the visitor had seen along the way. On the ex-

* I would like to thank Brunilde S. Ridgway and two anonymous *AJA* reviewers for their many perceptive comments and criticisms. The following abbreviations are used:

Faraone C.A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses* (New York 1992).
Gantz T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1993).
Just R. Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (London 1989).
Leipen N. Leipen, *Athena Parthenos: A Reconstruction* (Toronto 1971).
Loroux N. Loroux, *The Children of Athena* (trans. C. Levine, Princeton 1993).
Nashville B. Tsakirgis and S.F. Wiltshire eds., *The Nashville Athena: A Symposium* (Proceedings, 21 May 1990, Nashville 1990).
Ridgway B.S. Ridgway, *Fifth Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton 1981).
Tyrrell and Brown W.B. Tyrrell and E.S. Brown, *Athenian Myths and Institutions* (Oxford 1991).
All translations are my own.

¹ Pliny *HN* 36.18 gives the height as 26 cubits (ca. 11.5 m), but the dimension he gave probably included the base; see Leipen 23.

² A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven 1990) 157–58. Pausanias (5.11.10) says that water was required to protect the statue's ivory skin; in that case the humidity in the cella might have helped protect the statue's wooden framework as well. On the other hand, as Professor Ridgway has kindly reminded me, Pausanias says some peculiar things about chryselephantine statues (e.g., that the Asklepios at Epidauros was positioned above a cistern, which it was not).

³ For the Bronze Athena, usually dated around 460, see Ridgway 169, and J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period* (London 1985) 203, who notes that the centauromachy on its shield was added by Parrhasios and Mys (Paus. 1.28.2), probably well after the creation of the Athena Parthenos. The later addition to the earlier statue would thus have been an attempt to harmonize further the iconography of the two images, which would have stood as monumental poles marking the progress of any visitor to the Acropolis.



Fig. 1. Model (by N. Leipen) of the interior of the Parthenon with statue of Athena Parthenos. (Courtesy Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)

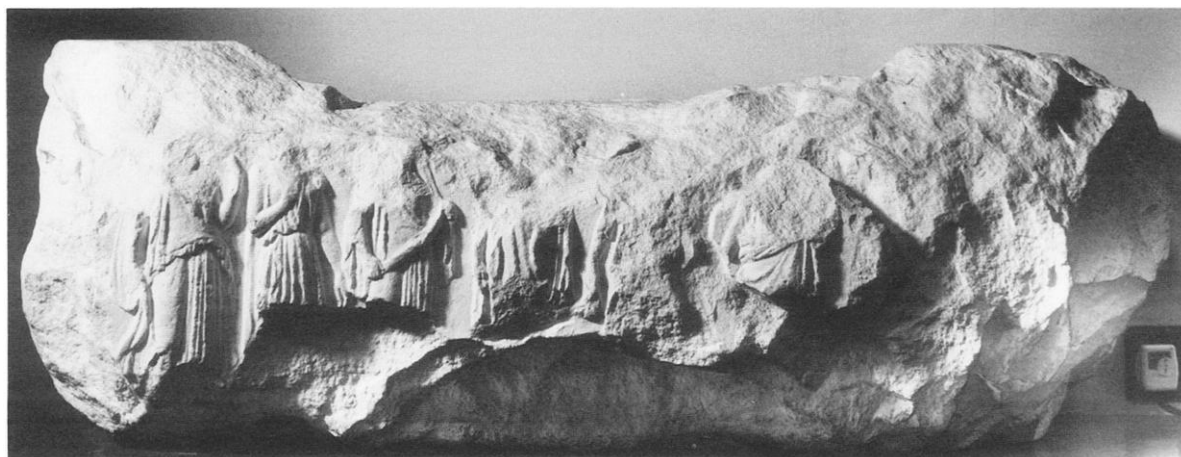


Fig. 2. Base of Hellenistic Athena Parthenos from Pergamon (cast). (Courtesy J. Boardman and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)



Fig. 3. Lenormant Athena (second/third century A.D.). (Courtesy National Archaeological Museum, Athens)

terior of the shield of the Athena Parthenos was the battle of Athenians and Amazons again (the subject of the west metopes); on the interior (partly obscured by the coiling serpent that, in Pausanias's less than definitive phrase, "would be Erichthonios")⁴ was the battle of gods and giants (the subject of the east

metopes); and on her sandals were Lapiths fighting centaurs (south metopes). Amazons, giants, centaurs—the hubristic enemies of order and justice, defeated by the forces of civilization and *sophrosyne* (moderation, self-control), the latter the province of Athena herself, the goddess who literally held Victory in the palm of her outstretched right hand (the same Nike who, in east metope 4, crowned the triumphant goddess as she drove her opponent to the ground).⁵

But on the base of the colossal statue, right at eye level,⁶ carved in marble relief (or else consisting of gilded bronze figures doweled onto a marble background), was a story of another sort: the creation of Pandora, the clay statue that was the first mortal woman, the beautiful progenitor of all women, and the cause of evil in the world. It has always seemed a surprising choice for the pedestal of the Athena Parthenos, this monument to Athenian greatness, this embodiment of Athens at the height of its power and prosperity, this image of a goddess whose very name echoed each time the Athenians named themselves. The sheer oddity of the choice helps explain why so few modern studies of the sculptural program of the Parthenon do more than what Pausanias did in the second century A.D., when he simply noted the subject of the pedestal in his famous guidebook and moved on.⁷

There is, it is true, a little more information than this. According to Pliny, 20 gods—he does not name them—were represented at the *genesis* (he uses the Greek word for "birth" or "creation," as if he were quoting from another, Greek source).⁸ One Hellenistic and one Roman copy of the Athena Parthenos—a 3-m-tall Athena from Pergamon and the small, unfinished Lenormant statuette in Athens (figs. 2 and 3)—give a very rough idea of how the figures were disposed, though the cast of characters is much reduced on both. A couple of Neo-Attic and Roman reliefs have been thought to reproduce parts of the original, though there are grounds for reasonable doubt.⁹ Altogether the evidence is not much, but

⁴ Paus. 1.24.7.

⁵ See B.S. Ridgway, "Images of Athena on the Akropolis," in J. Neils ed., *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens* (Hanover 1992) 119–42, esp. 133–34.

⁶ The height of the entire base (frieze plus lower and upper moldings), according to G.P. Stevens's estimate, was 1.437 m; the figured frieze itself was perhaps 0.75 m. See G.P. Stevens, "Remarks upon the Chryselephantine Statue of Athena in the Parthenon," *Hesperia* 24 (1955) 240–76, and Leipen 23–24. Stewart (supra n. 2) 158, gives a height of 0.60 m for the frieze.

⁷ Paus. 1.24.7. It is perhaps symptomatic that in the many papers edited by E. Berger in the massive and influ-

ential *Parthenon-Kongress Basel* (Mainz 1984), the name "Pandora" appears only twice in passing (178, 208).

⁸ Pliny *HN* 36.19. Cf. D. and E. Panofsky, *Pandora's Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol* (New York 1962) 9.

⁹ Leipen 25; Ridgway 165. The figure of Zeus, and perhaps Hephaistos and Athena, too, on the well-known Madrid Puteal, once commonly thought to have been inspired by the Parthenon's east pediment, may instead have been based on figures from Pandora's creation; see M. Robertson, "The South Metopes: Theseus and Daidalos," in *Parthenon-Kongress Basel* (supra n. 7) 208. Others believe the puteal is based on prototypes no earlier than the fourth century; see, e.g., G. Despinis, *Parthenoneia* (Athens 1982) 104–10.



Fig. 4. Athena Parthenos (Nashville, Tennessee), by Alan LeQuire, 1990. (Photo G. Layda for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, courtesy Wesley Paine and the Nashville Parthenon)

that has not stopped some scholars from reconstructing the whole base on paper, naming all 21 figures and putting them in order, or the sculptor Alan LeQuire from recreating it to scale in Nashville (fig. 4).¹⁰ Perhaps more significant than the speculative reconstruction of a work that no longer exists, however, is the recognition that the relationship of Pandora to the Parthenos was complex and ambiguous, and that the scene of her creation was an im-

portant element in the ideological fabric of the Parthenon and the Periclean Acropolis as a whole.¹¹

It is fair to assume that the “average” Classical Greek was familiar with the outlines of the story of Pandora as the epic poet Hesiod related it, and Hesiod related it twice.¹² First, the shorter and probably earlier version given in the *Theogony*. Angry that Prometheus has stolen fire and given it to mortal men, Zeus took his revenge:

¹⁰ For a review of the history of reconstructions, see Leipen 25–26. LeQuire himself has aptly remarked “I felt I had some freedom with the base composition, since there is so little evidence for it”; see A. LeQuire, “Athena Parthenos: The Re-Creation in Nashville,” in *Nashville* 10.

¹¹ The relatively few scholars who have commented on the meaning of the Pandora scene include Leipen 26 (who nonetheless devotes only a single paragraph to its significance, stressing the positive aspects of the story of Pandora’s birth); K. Jeppesen, “Bild und Mythos an dem Parthenon: Zur Ergänzung und Deutung der Kultbildaus schmückung des Frieses, der Metopen und der Giebel,” *ActaArch* 34 (1963)

59; J.J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (Cambridge 1972) 98–99; Pollitt, “The Meaning of Pheidias’ Athena Parthenos,” in *Nashville* 21–23; and Loraux 114–15.

¹² The extensive literature on the myth itself includes O. Lendle, *Die ‘Pandorasage’ bei Hesiod* (Würzburg 1957); G.S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley 1970) 226–32; P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore 1977) 82–115; M. Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York 1985) 213–40; J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* (New York 1990) 183–201; Gantz 155–58; and Loraux 72–110.

At once, as the price of fire, he made an evil thing for men, for the far-famed Lame One [Hephaistos] molded out of earth [γαίης] the likeness of a modest maiden [παρθένω] as the son of Kronos wished. And the gray-eyed goddess Athena girded her and dressed her in silvery clothes, and over her head she spread with her hands a cunningly wrought veil, a wonder to see. Over this around her head she set a crown of gold which the far-famed Lame One made himself, working it with his own hands, a favor to Father Zeus. On this were fashioned many cunning things, a wonder to see: many of the wild beasts that live on land or in the sea he worked upon the crown—great grace shone out from it—wondrous creatures, like living, roaring things. But when he had made this beautiful evil [καλὸν κακὸν], the price of good, he led her out to where the other gods and men were, as she delighted in the dress the Gray-Eyed One, daughter of a mighty father, gave her. Wonder seized the immortal gods and mortal men when they saw this sheer trick, for which men have no remedy [ἀμήχανον]. For from her comes the race of female women, a great misery, who live with mortal men as companions not in grievous poverty but only in times of plenty. As when in vaulted hives bees feed their drones, partners in evil things—the bees work hard all day long from dawn to setting sun and lay down white combs, while they stay in the sheltered hives and collect the labor of others for their own bellies—even so Zeus thundering on high created women as an evil for mortal men, doers of grievous works. And he gave another evil, as the price of good: Whoever, avoiding marriage and the troubles women cause, does not marry, he reaches deadly old age without anyone to care for him, and though he does not lack means while he lives, his kinsmen divide up his property when he dies. But for him whose lot is marriage, and who has a dutiful wife suited to his ways, evil ceaselessly fights with good . . . (*Theog.* 570–610)

The image-woman formed by Hephaistos and outfitted by Athena has no name in the *Theogony*. She does in the second version told early on in *Works and Days*, where more gods and goddesses participate in the creation. Again, Zeus, angry at Prometheus's theft of fire, ordains punishment for men:

"I will give men as the price of fire an evil, in which all men will delight in their hearts, an evil they will warmly embrace." Thus he spoke, and the father of gods and men laughed out loud. He ordered far-famed Hephaistos at once to mix earth [γαῖαν] with water, and to put into it human voice and strength, but to give her a face like an immortal goddess, the charming, lovely shape of a maiden [παρθενικής]. And he told Athena to teach her women's work [ἔργα], how to weave the intricate loom. And he told Aphrodite to pour golden grace upon her head and painful desire and cares that weaken limbs. And he ordered Hermes, the Messenger, Slayer of Argos, to put into her the mind of a bitch and a treacherous nature.

Thus he commanded, and they obeyed lord Zeus, son of Kronos. At once the famed Lame One molded out of earth the likeness of a modest maiden [παρθένω] as the son of Kronos wished, and the gray-eyed goddess Athena girded her and dressed her. Around her body the divine Graces and Lady Peitho [Persuasion] put chains of gold, and her head the fair-haired Hours wreathed with flowers of spring. [And Pallas Athena fit all manner of adornment to her form.] And the Messenger, Slayer of Argos, into her heart put lies and wily words and a treacherous nature according to the will of loud-thundering Zeus. And the herald of the gods gave her voice, and he named the woman Pandora, because all of the gods who live upon Olympus gave her a gift, a sorrow to men who eat bread. But when he finished this sheer trick, without remedy [ἀμήχανον], the father sent the famed Slayer of Argos, swift messenger of the gods, to take her to Epimetheus as a gift. And Epimetheus did not think how Prometheus had told him never to accept a gift from Olympian Zeus, but to send it back, lest it prove to be an evil for men. But when he took the gift, when he had the evil, he understood. Before this the races of men lived upon the earth free from evils, free from hard work, and without painful diseases that bring fates down upon men. [For mortal men in the midst of evil quickly grow old.] But the woman, lifting the great lid of the jar [πίθου] with her hands, scattered them abroad, and wrought ruinous sorrows for men. Only Hope [Ἔλπις] remained within the jar, in its unbreakable home, under the rim, and did not fly out the opening. Before that could happen the lid of the jar stopped her [by the will of aegis-bearing, cloud-gathering Zeus]. But the others, thousands of miseries, wander among men. The earth is full of evils, and the sea is full. Diseases, moving of themselves, visit men by day and by night, bearing evils for men in silence, since wise Zeus took from them their voices. And so there is no way to escape the mind of Zeus. (*Op.* 57–105)

Now, the average Athenian is not likely to have committed these long passages to memory (though fifth-century rhapsodes would have), and there were undoubtedly other vernacular traditions concerning Pandora that the fifth-century visitor to the Parthenon would also have known. As we shall see, there may even have been more than one Pandora. But one of the things that still makes the myth seem such a strange choice for the base of the Athena Parthenon is that, after Hesiod, we hear practically nothing else about her in the literary record—not even in the vicious iambic assault on women composed by Semonides, where (though he treats the origins of women very differently) one might expect to find at least some reference.¹³ We know that sometime in the fifth century (perhaps as early as the 460s, perhaps much later) Sophocles wrote a satyr-play

¹³ Diehl, *Anth. Lyr. Graec.* 7; Loraux 89–110.



Fig. 5. British Museum D4. White-ground cup by the Tarquinia Painter, ca. 460. (Courtesy British Museum, London)

entitled *Pandora, or the Hammerers*¹⁴—only a few unhelpful words come down to us—but otherwise ex-tant Archaic and Classical Greek poetry does not deal with her again.¹⁵

Greek artists were not much interested in her, either. There is no certain representation of Pandora at all earlier than the fifth century, and only a few representations from before or around the time of the Parthenon. On the best of these images, she is not even Pandora, exactly: on an Attic white-ground cup of around 460 B.C. by the Tarquinia Painter, Athena and Hephaistos (they are young gods, almost childlike) adorn their new and apparently still inanimate creation with crown and peplos precisely as they do in the *Theogony*, but the woman is labeled “Anesidora” (fig. 5).¹⁶ The name, written above her in the field, means “she who sends up gifts,” and many modern philologists agree that “Pandora” means

¹⁴ T.B.L. Webster, *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play* (BICS Suppl. 20, 1967) 150–51; E. Simon, “Satyr-plays on Vases in the Time of Aeschylus,” in D. Kurtz and B. Sparkes eds., *The Eye of Greece: Studies in the Art of Athens* (Cambridge 1982) 123–48, esp. 145–46; Gantz 163–64.

¹⁵ Pausanias (1.24.7), noting the subject of the base, says that “Hesiod and others” wrote poetry about Pandora, but he does not say who the “others” were. Sappho seems to have been one of them, in a lost poem (fr. 207 Lobel and Page). Aeschylus, apparently, was not: at least he drops Pandora from any role in the narrative of the *Prometheus Bound*. An oblique reference to Pandora may be found in Euripides, fr. 429.

¹⁶ British Museum D4; ARV² 869.55. See LIMC I, 790–91, s.v. Anesidora (E. Simon).

¹⁷ Op. 81–82. Faraone 102; M.L. West, *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 155–72; W.J. Verdenius, *A Commentary on Hesiod: Works and Days, vv. 1–382* (Leiden 1985) 58–59,

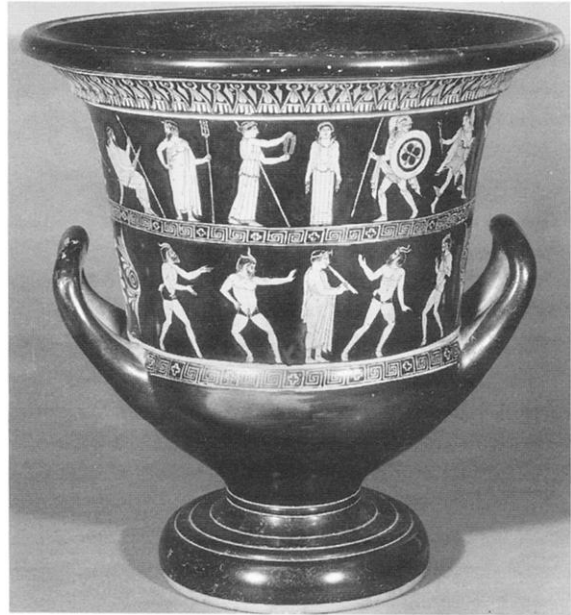


Fig. 6. British Museum E467. Red-figure krater by the Niobid Painter, ca. 460. (Courtesy British Museum, London)

roughly the same thing—“she who gives all gifts.” But that is not what Hesiod says it means: he goes out of his way to tell us that she got the name because all the gods gave *her* a gift.¹⁷ Now, Hesiod’s etymology might be novel or it might be wrong, but most later Greeks are likely to have accepted it: for them, the name probably meant “she who was *given* all gifts.” The gift-giving was, in any case, the subject of another pre-Parthenon-era vase (by the Niobid Painter), where a frontal woman (whether she is Anesidora or Pandora the vase does not say) receives a crown from Athena in the presence of six other gods (to the left, Iris, Zeus, Poseidon, and to the right, Ares, Hermes, and, probably, Aphrodite; oddly, Hephaistos is missing) (fig. 6).¹⁸

reading the Greek another way (“because all the gods on Olympos gave her *as* a gift”), suggests the name means “present of all the gods,” a translation that Vernant (supra n. 12) 190, and Gantz 156, support. See also Pucci (supra n. 12) 97–98, who suggests Hesiod was purposefully ambiguous, playing upon all three meanings of the name (“giver of all gifts,” “she who was given all gifts,” “gift of all the gods”).

¹⁸ BM E 467 (ca. 460); ARV² 601.23. See Webster (supra n. 14) 150 (AV 17). The Pans or goat-men and flute-player in the zone below may not be related. A contemporary fragmentary rhyton by the Sotades Painter (BM E 789) also represents Pandora; ARV² 764.9; Leipen 25. A later cup by the Codros Painter in Naples, with figures of Prometheus and Peitho among others, may possibly represent Pandora’s birth; ARV² 1269.6. For the imagery of Pandora, see also M. Maaskant-Kleibrink, “The Stuff of Which Heroines Are Made,” *BABesch* 64 (1989) 1–49.



Fig. 7. Oxford G 275, ca. 450. (Courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

As far as we can tell from the sketchy scenes on the two later copies of the Athena Parthenos (figs. 2–3), the depiction of the myth of Pandora on the base of the High Classical statue was drawn from the same iconographic tradition seen on these Early Classical vases, with the gifted creation disposed frontally and the gift-giving gods aligned on either side.¹⁹ But there was another, non-Hesiodic tradition: a number of red-figure vases, some still dated before the beginning of the Parthenon, show Pandora rising from the earth, only half there, a chthonic

goddess like Gaia herself. On a red-figure volute krater in Oxford, for example, Zeus and Hermes stand by while Epimetheus, hammer in hand, receives an elaborately crowned Pandora (labeled, this time) as she emerges from the ground; Eros hovers overhead, anticipating their marriage (fig. 7).²⁰ On a few other mid-century vases satyrs wield hammers as a woman emerges from the earth, and though it cannot be proven that they all illustrate Sophocles' satyr-play, or even that all the women are Pandora (Persephone and Aphrodite are other possibilities),²¹ they seem to reflect a tradition in which Pandora (or at least *a* Pandora) was released from the earth by hammering upon the ground—perhaps even a primordial tradition in which Pandora was herself an earth-goddess (or the name a cult epithet for Gaia, Mother Earth), and thus really a “giver of all gifts” after all.²² It may be that the Athenians, in fact, conflated two Pandoras: a primeval earth-goddess, on the one hand, and the first woman, the product-artifice of the Olympian gods, on the other. But, as M.L. West has noted, “there is nothing in the form or behaviour of [the Hesiodic] Pandora that a chthonic nature helps to explain.”²³ And, again, to judge from the remains on the bases of the Pergamon and Lenormant Athenas (figs. 2 and 3), the iconography of the chthonic, partial, and profile Pandora does not seem to have informed the image on the base of the Parthenos. We may fairly conclude that it was something like the Hesiodic tradition—a tradition that inspired the iconography of passive, frontal woman and active, attendant divinities—upon which Pheidias and his audience relied. This does not mean, of course, that Pheidias felt compelled to “illustrate” faithfully the Hesiodic (or any other) text: the 20 divine witnesses on the base noted by Pliny are more than Hesiod allows (and Hesiod was never a particularly fertile source for Archaic and Classical Greek artists in any case). Still, it is likely that across the reflecting pool in front of the Parthe-

¹⁹ A similar composition can be restored for a very fragmentary, very high relief frieze in Pentelic marble from the Athenian Agora that might have represented Pandora's birth (there were at least 25 figures depicted); see E.B. Harrison, “The Classical High-Relief Frieze from the Athenian Agora,” in H. Kyrieleis ed., *Archaische und klassische griechische Plastik 2* (Mainz 1986) 109–17. Harrison dates this frieze (formerly associated with the Temple of Ares) to around 420, and so it could have been influenced by the scene on the base of the Athena Parthenos. Its original location and function are open questions. Harrison speculates it might even have once adorned an important structure on the Acropolis itself: the Great Altar of Athena (117). If the frieze did originally come from the Acropolis, and if it did represent Pandora, then it would be another instance of icon-

ographic cross-reference and mythological resonance in the Classical sanctuary.

²⁰ Oxford G 275 (ca. 450); see A.D. Trendall and T.B.L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London 1971) 33.

²¹ M. Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 1992) 164.

²² See J.E. Harrison, “Pandora's Box,” *JHS* 20 (1900) 99–144, esp. 105–106, and P. Lévêque, “Pandora ou la terrifiante fémininité,” *Kernos* 1 (1988) 49–62; but see Loraux 84, 115 n. 17, and 241. For the bountiful gifts of Earth, see Pl. *Menex.* 238. We know from Pausanias (1.31.4) that Anesidora could indeed be a cult epithet for earth goddesses such as Demeter.

²³ West (supra n. 17) 165.

nos, on virtually the same level, the visitor to the Parthenon and a full frontal Pandora confronted each other.

It is sometimes difficult to see the exact relationship between what is depicted on the base of an ancient Greek cult-statue and the statue itself. For example, it is not immediately clear why Pheidias chose "the birth of Aphrodite from the sea" as the subject for the base of the great chryselephantine statue of Zeus he made at Olympia after leaving Athens around 438.²⁴ Yet it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that whatever Pandora, the first mortal woman and mother, was doing on the base of the Athena Parthenos, the motherless virgin goddess, Pheidias was attempting to say something about her gender—"the race of female women," as Hesiod puts it. The question, of course, is, what? For some possible answers we need to address the broader implications of the mythological construction of gender, patriarchy, and autochthony on the Parthenon and the Acropolis.

As Roger Just has noted,²⁵ it may from time to time have struck a few Athenians—the residents of a city that was run in virtually every way by and for men—as strange that their patron divinity was female, and there is a hint of such temporary puzzlement in Aristophanes' *Birds*, where the founders of Cloudcuckooland doubt that any state could be well governed whose patron goddess dresses up like a man (and whose men act effeminately).

Chorus: What god, then, shall be our city's protector?

For whom shall we weave the peplos?

Eueipides: Why not keep Athena as City-Goddess [Πολιάδα]?

Pisthetairos: How could a city be well ordered where a woman-god stands in full armor, and Cleisthenes works the loom?

(Ar. *Au.* 826–31)

²⁴ Paus. 5.11.8. On the other hand, the birth of Erichthonios may for good reason have appeared on the base of Hephaistos and Athena (his "parents") in the Hephaisteion, and the associations between the cult-statue of Nemesis (goddess of divine wrath and retribution) at Rhamnous and the scenes on her base are also easier to grasp; see E.B. Harrison, "Alkamenēs' Sculptures for the Hephaisteion," *AJA* 81 (1977) 137–78, 265–87, 411–26; and Stewart (supra n. 2) 165.

²⁵ Just 279.

²⁶ See, e.g., C.J. Herington, *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias* (Manchester 1955) 56–57.

²⁷ We are told that women (like children) were forbidden from making contracts concerning anything worth more than one *medimnos* of barley; see M.R. Lefkowitz and M.B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*² (Baltimore 1992)

They consequently reject the androgynous Athena and, not surprisingly, choose a cock to be their patron deity (no gender confusion or half measures for them). For Aristophanes, not much was sacred. But Athens, after all, was hardly the only Greek city with a patron goddess, and there was nothing Classical Athenians could do about it, anyway. The association between the city and the goddess was simply too ancient, and the identification between its ideology and mythology and her character, her paradigm, too complete.²⁶

It is by now a truism to say that Classical Athens, like any Greek polis, was essentially a "men's club," a bastion of male privilege, and that women were generally relegated to the background of society, in subordinate, passive positions. Though the women of Athens were the mothers, daughters, and sisters of citizens, they were not citizens themselves in the usual (or constitutional) sense of the term. They possessed no true political rights (they could not attend, much less vote, in the citizen assembly), they could not sit on juries in citizen courts, they did not control whatever property may technically have been attached to their name, they were not autonomous individuals before the law (they were always under the authority of a male guardian, or *kyrios*, usually father or husband, and so were perpetual minors),²⁷ and their proper place was in the home, where their principal function was to raise children who nonetheless "belonged" entirely to the father. It has also become commonplace to assert that the Greek word for "the Athenians" (the masculine οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι) linguistically excluded women from the polis, that there is no certain feminine equivalent (no αἱ Ἀθηναῖαι), and that without a word for it the notion of "female citizen" could not exist.²⁸

In fifth-century Athens, as in most other places at most other times, there was no doubt a difference

64 (no. 83, Isaeus 10.10); and Just 29.

²⁸ See Loraux 116–20 and 247–48, who points out that even the phrase *Attikai gynaiikes*, "women of Athens (or Attika)" is rare; also E. Kearns, "Saving the City," in O. Murray and S. Price eds., *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 337 and n. 23. But a possible exception exists at *JG* I³ 35, lines 4–5, where the priestess of Athena Nike is to be chosen "from all the Athenians," with the implication that, at least in the realm of religion, women qualified; R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford 1988) 107–11 (no. 44). For a review of the linguistic evidence and an argument that language did not exclude women from the polis, see C. Patterson, "Hai Attikai: The Other Athenians," *Helios* 13 (1986) 49–67.

between theory and practice, between ideology and reality,²⁹ and the status of women was somewhat more complicated than the truisms allow. Athenian women were not completely downtrodden, and their position was not uniformly bleak. While their role in civic life was certainly severely restricted, they were not locked up behind closed doors, and their influence behind the scenes, in private life, in the community of Athenian families, and in the religious sphere could be great. They could work and apparently even own businesses. They could accompany their fathers, husbands, and sons to sacrifices and they could make dedications to the gods in their own name (the proportion of women's dedications on the Archaic and Classical Acropolis is, in fact, surprisingly high): to judge from a number of expensive votives we know were offered by women, they could prosper.³⁰ They could leave their houses on festival days (there were even separate women's festivals, such as the Thesmophoria). They could attend weddings, funerals, and, probably, dramatic performances (if they had the permission of their *kyrios*).³¹ The course of their lives was marked by public service or duties as *arrhephoroi*, *arktoi*, and *kanephoroi*.³² And, of course, they functioned as priestesses in major cults (those of Athena Polias and Athena Nike, for example). While political rights may have been denied them, Athenian women were in other con-

texts active members of the larger community after all.

A few years before construction of the Parthenon commenced, just when an "Athenian woman" was becoming, in fact, a matter of great significance. In 451/0 Pericles passed a law that redefined Athenian citizenship: one now had to have an Athenian mother as well as an Athenian father to qualify.³³ The Periclean citizenship law has seemed to some to indicate an improvement in the prevailing attitude toward Athenian women in the middle of the century, and it has even been suggested that their new legal importance is reflected in the prominence of women (idealized like everyone else) at the eastern ends of the Parthenon frieze or in the large number of female figures depicted in the west pediment.³⁴

But like Sophoclean and Euripidean tragedies, which, though they have their share of powerful and sympathetic women characters, were nonetheless directed toward a "notional audience" of men, and like Classical statues of women both mortal and immortal, whose "ideal spectator" was also male,³⁵ the Parthenon sculptural program's audience was undoubtedly male as well. The women in the pediment and frieze were surely the expressions of a male ideology, represented as conforming to male norms: the female spectator herself was "conventionally invisible." And in any case the meaning and intent of the citi-

²⁹ A point made by B.S. Strauss, "The Impact of Democracy on Society and Economy," *AJA* 98 (1994) 292–93 (abstract).

³⁰ In a well-known relief from the Acropolis (Acropolis Museum 581), for example, a family consisting of a mother, father, two boys, and a girl lead a sacrificial sow to Athena; see J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period* (New York 1978) fig. 258. For women's dedications on the Acropolis, see D. Harris, "Greek Sanctuaries, Forgotten Dedicants: Women, Children, and Foreigners in the Parthenon, Erechtheion and Asklepieion," *AJA* 97 (1993) 337 (abstract).

³¹ See J. Henderson, "Women and the Athenian Dramatic Festivals," *TAPA* 121 (1991) 133–47. Henderson argues that Athenian drama, even if performed before a mixed audience, nonetheless primarily addressed men. Noting the "conventional invisibility" of women in Athenian public life generally, he suggests that in the theater (as in the courts and assembly) "the women's world and the character of women might be portrayed and discussed, but only by men for a notional audience of men" (146).

³² *Ar. Lys.* 641–47.

³³ *Arist. Ath. Pol.* 26.4; *Plut. Vit. Per.* 37.3; C. Patterson, *Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451–50 B.C.* (New York 1981); Loraux 119–20; J.K. Davies, *Democracy and Classical Greece*² (Cambridge, Mass. 1993) 60 and 92; and, most recently, A.L. Boegehold, "Perikles' Citizenship Law of 451/0 B.C.," in A.L. Boegehold and A.C. Scafuro eds., *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* (Baltimore 1994) 57–66.

³⁴ J.B. Connelly, "The Parthenon Frieze and the Sacrifice of the Erechtheids," *AJA* 97 (1993) 309–10 (abstract). The logic that the large number of women depicted in the Parthenon sculptures somehow reflects a new "privileging" of Athenian women in the mid-fifth century would, however, seem also to dictate the conclusion that women were just as privileged on the sixth-century Acropolis, full as it was of korai in marble and terracotta (unless the Acropolis korai invariably represent goddesses; see B.S. Ridgway, "Birds, 'Meniskoi,' and Head Attributes in Archaic Greece," *AJA* 94 [1990] 583–612; and Ridgway, *The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture*² [Chicago 1993] 147–51). In a paper presented at Princeton on 18 September 1993 ("The Web of History: A Conservative Reading of the Parthenon Frieze"), E. Harrison, though disagreeing with Connelly in major respects, suggested that the citizenship decree does indeed explain the prominence of women in the frieze, and that the *kanephoroi* are shown identifying themselves by indicating the names of their fathers and mothers to an anonymous interrogator.

Certainly by the end of the fifth century there is increased debate over traditional roles of gender in both drama (e.g., Aristophanic comedy) and philosophy; see Henderson (supra n. 31) 145 and n. 48.

³⁵ See Henderson (supra n. 31) and R. Osborne, "Looking on—Greek Style. Does the Sculpted Girl Speak to Women Too?" in I. Morris, *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge 1994) 81–96.

zanship law are far from clear. On one level, its passage surely indicates not only an overabundance of citizens but also the rising value of Athenian citizenship under the democracy (citizens were paid for certain public duties, and they had rights others did not). The law could also have helped alleviate pressures that an expanding population put upon the finite land of Attica, and thus upon the court system: the number of qualified citizen heirs was reduced at a stroke. But whatever its practical justifications and applications, the law was broadly an illiberal device to restrict the franchise—to define and exclude. It established the “purity” of Athenian bloodlines and protected them from contamination: rather than elevating Athenian women per se, the law kept them from marrying metics or foreigners, just as it kept Athenian men from marrying metic or foreign women.³⁶ It is, in short, hard to see a champion of women’s rights in the Pericles who proposed the statute and whose famed Funeral Oration (at least in Thucydides’ reconstruction) ended with an abrupt and grudging acknowledgment of the existence of war widows and a simple, sexist warning that the greatest glory for a woman is not to be talked about by men for good or ill.³⁷ The citizenship law, whatever its original intent, did not stick in any case (it had to be reenacted in 403/2) and certainly was not enough to overturn the prevailing popular sentiment that women were by nature lustful, irrational, immoderate creatures who needed constant restraint, and that the stability of the state depended upon keeping them under strict control.³⁸

Whatever the differences between theory and practice in Athenian attitudes toward women, the sculptural program of the Parthenon was a monument to theory. Motherhood, for example, was conspicuously absent in the east pediment of the building, where the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus was shown. Though the reconstruction of the center of the composition continues to be a matter of enormous dispute,³⁹ Zeus, all agree, was certainly there. But Metis, the goddess who conceived Athena and

whom Zeus swallowed before she could give birth to a son mightier than he, certainly was not.⁴⁰ There was no visual clue that she still putatively resided in Zeus’s belly, and, unseen, Metis did not exist. The well-known story of Athena’s birth from Zeus’s head could therefore only have seemed to validate the superiority of the male and the claims of the father, especially in the light of the famous scene in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, performed in Athens in 458, just a decade before the Parthenon was begun.⁴¹

Orestes is on trial for murdering his mother, Klytemnestra, the murderer of his father, Agamemnon. Acting as his advocate, and arguing that it is worse for the wife to kill the husband than for the son to kill the mother in revenge, Apollo, the quintessential male, announces the remarkable theory that the mother is no parent at all but just the incubator for the seed planted by the father (“the one who mounts”). Apollo literally points to Athena as proof:

There can be a father without a mother. There, close by, stands my witness: the daughter of Olympian Zeus, who did not grow in the darkness of the womb but the sort of child no goddess could bear.

Apollo’s science goes unchallenged (Aeschylus’s audience could not have known how cockeyed it is), and, as she casts the decisive vote acquitting Orestes, Athena gives her reason:

There is no mother who gave birth to me, and I praise the male in all things, except for marriage, with all my heart, and am firmly on the father’s side.
(Aesch. *Eum.* 662–66, 736–38)

This is the myth, science, and verdict of patriarchy. Athena is its defender. She is its basis and its verification (and the fact that Zeus gave birth to a perfect daughter, while Hera, by herself, could only engender the crippled Hephaistos,⁴² again argues for the superior role of the male). Her father’s daughter in every way (like the east pediment, the *Eumenides* omits any mention of Metis), Athena has not even passed through a woman’s birth canal, and, born fully formed, she has not even experienced childhood and

³⁶ See E. Badian, “The Peace of Callias,” *JHS* 107 (1987) 13: “The Citizenship Decree erected an impassable barrier between Athens and her allies and stopped for all time the intermarriages that must have resulted from the constant travel by Athenians to allied cities and the visits of large numbers of allies to Athens as the hegemonial power.” In this light, the decree was an instrument of the broader ideology of autochthony (see below) that established the Athenians as “the master race.” See also P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 334.

³⁷ Thuc. 2.46.

³⁸ When, in *Medea* (573–75), Jason declares that it would

have been better for men if women had never existed—“Then life would have been good”—he obviously lacks Euripides’ own sympathy toward women, but expresses what must have been a common view. See Just 60–61, 273.

³⁹ See now O. Palagia, *The Pediments of the Parthenon* (Leiden 1993).

⁴⁰ For Metis, see *Theog.* 886–900; and Gantz 51.

⁴¹ For a reappraisal of the Aeschylean trilogy as a “gynocentric document,” see F.I. Zeitlin, “The Dynamics of Misogyny: Myth and Myth-making in the *Oresteia*,” *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 149–84.

⁴² Hes. *Theog.* 927–29.

its attendant weaknesses. The myth and premise of her extraordinary birth—represented for all to see at the east end of the Parthenon—reduces, even renounces, the natural role of women, and so elevates the masculine.

According to an account preserved in Augustine's *City of God*, the contest between Athena and Poseidon (represented in the Parthenon's other pediment) even explained and justified the existence of patriarchy itself.⁴³ In this version of the myth (Augustine claims Varro as his source), both the men and the women of Bronze Age Athens, ruled by King Kekrops, voted on which divinity would be their patron. All the men voted for Poseidon, all the women for Athena, and since there was one more woman than man in the primeval city, Athena carried the day. Poseidon then flooded Athens in anger—"demons" act that way, Augustine notes—and could only be appeased by the triple punishment of Athenian women: they were disenfranchised, their children were to take their fathers' names, and they were no longer to be called Athenians. Though he cites the authority of Varro, Augustine was not beyond putting his own spin on the tale. But there is nothing to suggest that the story was original with Varro, either, and in outline the myth could well be far older, even Classical: it was perhaps a fifth-century version, not Pericles' citizenship law, that explains the large number of women in the west pediment.⁴⁴ In any case, that this "foundation myth" of Athenian patriarchy exists at all suggests that sexual politics could be read in, or into, some of the most prominent images of the Classical Acropolis even in antiquity.

If patriarchy was one of the underpinnings of ideology of the Acropolis, autochthony was another, and autochthony was, of course, embodied in the figure of Erechtheus/Erichthonios, the hero whose avatar coiled itself up inside the shield of the Athena Parthenos.⁴⁵ Like Athena, Erechtheus/Erichthonios

was born in extraordinary circumstances, as the result of Hephaistos's premature ejaculation and the spontaneous generation of the child from the sperm that the virgin Athena wiped off and threw upon the earth. In other words, the birth of the hero was the paradigm for autochthony. But, in fact, many other legendary Bronze Age kings of Athens—Kekrops, Kranaos, Amphictyon—were also sprung from the earth. The notion (repeated over and over again in the speeches of Athenian orators such as Demosthenes and Lysias and in the dialogues of Plato) that the Athenians were, alone of all the Greeks, indigenous, native to the land they inhabit, lay at the heart of the Athenian contention that they were by that very reason homogeneous, legitimate, and inherently just. The same people, say both Thucydides and Thucydides' Pericles, had always occupied the land of Attica, and they were, according to a messenger in Herodotos, the oldest race, the only Greeks who were not immigrants.⁴⁶ The Athenians thus considered themselves distinct from and superior to the rest of the Greeks—the descendents of Pelops, Kadmos, and so on—whom they regarded as latecomers and invaders, populations that were barbarian by nature and Greek only by custom. The chauvinistic premises of autochthony are, first, that the Athenians were unadulterated by hateful "others" and, second, that they, like their paradoxical patron goddess, were uncontaminated by the (mortal) feminine. The myths of autochthony, then, established the difference, purity, and homogeneity of the Athenians. They were thus fundamental to Athenian narcissism, self-representation, and even democracy.⁴⁷

By worshipping Athena, a female goddess who was not of woman born, who is herself a "mother" without having experienced either intercourse or the pangs of childbirth, who androgynously carries the armaments of men, who in myth is essentially Zeus's "right-hand man," his enforcer, who embodies

⁴³ August. *De civ. D.* 18.9. See S. Pembroke, "Women in Charge: The Function of Alternatives in Early Greek Tradition and the Ancient Idea of Matriarchy," *JWarb* 30 (1967) 1–38; also Loraux 113–16; Tyrrell and Brown 180–81; and D. Castriota, *Myth, Ethos, and Actuality: Official Art in Fifth-Century B.C. Athens* (Madison 1992) 145–47. While Patterson (supra n. 28) is tempted to "dismiss the story from the ranks of Athenian myth" (62), she also concedes its origins may lie in the Classical period (60).

⁴⁴ Palagia (supra n. 39) 40.

⁴⁵ On the identity of Erechtheus and Erichthonios, see R. Parker, "Myths of Early Athens," in J. Bremmer ed., *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London 1988) 187–214, esp. 200–202; also Gantz 233–35.

⁴⁶ Thuc. 1.2.6, 2.36.1; Hdt. 7.161.3; cf. Pl. *Menex.* 245d.

⁴⁷ For autochthony as a major subject of Athenian myth and discourse, see Loraux 37–71. Also, Tyrrell and Brown 138; Castriota (supra n. 43) 143–49; and N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* (Cambridge, Mass. 1986) 148–50, 277–78, 284, where she argues not only that "autochthony may even serve as an etiological myth for [the] exclusion of women [from Athenian society]" but also that the city described in Athenian funeral orations (*epitaphioi*) is "without gender"—virtually like, we may note, Athena herself. For the democratic value of autochthony, which applied to all Athenians and so masked the real differences in status and genealogy among them, see W.R. Connor, "The Problem of Athenian Civic Identity," in Boegehold and Scafuro (supra n. 33) 38.

all those virtues and characteristics (self-control, wisdom, rationality) that mortal women were not supposed to possess,⁴⁸ who, as she says in the *Eumenides*, sides with the male in almost all things, and who thus, in short, rises “above her sex,”⁴⁹ Athenian society negated Athena’s sexuality and her gender. She is not just *parthenos* and chaste, she is virtually sexless, and her mythology, as well as that of Erechtheus/Erichthonios, made the reproductive function of the female in general minor or even irrelevant.⁵⁰ It could even be argued that in her adoption and legitimization of Erechtheus/Erichthonios, and in her immediate appointment of the daughters of Kekrops as nurses for the boy, Athena performs less as an Athenian “mother” than as an Athenian “father,” more paternally than maternally. Hephaistos may be the child’s biological father, but Athena functions as his social and civic one.⁵¹

Other popular myths in the art of the Acropolis participated in the citadel’s representation and assertion of patriarchy: the battle of the Greeks against the Amazons, for example, depicted on the east metopes and on the exterior of the shield of the Athena Parthenos, where Theseus and the Athenians defended the Acropolis from alien warrior-women who, unlike the warrior-goddess Athena, were not *parthenoi*, who cut off their right breasts so they could pull their bows and arrows without interference, and whose men stayed home and took care of the children—whose matriarchal society, in other words, is the opposite of the Athenian and who must therefore be defeated at all costs.⁵² Still, the Parthenon program was not simply an essay on sexual politics: its disputation on gender was but one expression of a broader intellectual or philosophical position. The fifth-century Athenian (like Greeks in general) saw or constructed the world in terms of polarities or oppositions—culture and nature, human and animal, rational and irrational, Greek and barbarian, and so on—in which the first terms of every pair (culture, human, rational, Greek) constituted the norm and the ideal. In such an intellectual context, it is not surprising that the imagery of the Parthenon addressed many of these other antitheses as well.

For example, the battle of Lapiths and centaurs, depicted in the south metopes and on the sandals of the Athena Parthenos, clearly presented the struggle between civilized humanity and instinctive bestiality. So, too, the victory of Theseus over the Amazons was not only the victory of patriarchy over abnormal matriarchy. It was also the victory of civilization over barbarity and disorder, of West over East, of Athens over Persia. And yet in fifth-century Athens there were perhaps few stronger cultural antitheses than that of male and female.⁵³ It would have been surprising had the imagery of the Classical Acropolis failed, somehow, to address it. And so it is time to return to Pandora, and to see how she fits in with the mythology and ideology of the place.

It is unlikely that the typical Athenian would have found the creation of Pandora immediately disturbing or out of place on the base of the Athena Parthenos, for the scene would have called up too many associations with images already seen on the Parthenon, and with Acropolis cults or myths already familiar. In other words, the iconographic and mythological allusiveness of the scene could have been, on one level, its own justification. The base depicted, of course, the miraculous “birth” of a full-grown, fully formed female figure, just as the east pediment did: anyone entering the temple from the east could not have missed the parallel. The gods attended the creation of Pandora, just as they did Athena’s in the gable above, and just as the gods reacted to Athena’s birth with awe and wonder, so (we are told in Hesiod) they marveled at Pandora’s. The assembly of divinities on the base was just one of a series on the Parthenon itself: the gods fought together against the giants on the east metopes and on the interior of Athena’s shield; they relaxed together on the east frieze; they gathered together in the east pediment; there was an assembly of half a dozen gods in the three westernmost metopes on the north side of the building. And, as the Lenormant statuette seems to show (fig. 3), the entire scene was given the same cosmic frame as the east pediment and, perhaps, the majority of the north metopes of the Parthenon: at one end of the base Helios rose in his chariot and at the other

⁴⁸ See Just 166.

⁴⁹ L.A. May, “Above Her Sex: The Enigma of the Athena Parthenos,” *Visible Religion* 3 (1984) 106–23.

⁵⁰ See D.C. Pozzi and J.M. Wickersham eds., *Myth and the Polis* (Ithaca 1991) 141.

⁵¹ Loraux 64 and n. 142.

⁵² In some accounts Theseus’s Amazon wife (Antiope or Hippolyta) fought at his side against her own people, and a wounded female figure on the shield of the Athena

Parthenos may have been her; see Gantz 284–85 and Boardman (supra n. 3) fig. 110. The story of the friendly Amazon queen and her possible presence on the shield does not, however, in my view, seriously weaken the male/female polarity of the represented myth.

⁵³ It has even been argued that the male/female polarity was so strong that it subsumed all others; see Zeitlin (supra n. 41) 149; May (supra n. 49) 109; and P. DuBois, *Centaurs and Amazons* (Ann Arbor 1982) 4.

Selene descended on her horse. Pandora's birth, like Athena's, occurred at dawn, and was in tune with celestial forces, with the rational processes of the rotating cosmos.⁵⁴

So, too, Pandora is one statue depicted on the base of another. Though animate, she is artifact and artifice, a creation primarily of Hephaistos and Athena, the gods of rational production, artistry, and craft—the gods of τέχνη. She is made of earth (γαῖα) and water, a mixture especially associated with the craftsmen of Athens. Athena is herself a coroplast—she models a horse in a well-known scene on a vase in Berlin (a portrait of the goddess as a young artist)—and she is the protector of pots and potters.⁵⁵ She is, in short, the goddess of terracotta creations like Pandora and her famous pithos.

The base, it should be noted, did not really depict Pandora's "birth"—as far as we can tell, Hephaistos was not shown actually molding her out of clay—but her provisioning. Athena was probably shown dressing her with a robe and allegorically teaching her the art of weaving. The robe given to or draped upon Pandora by Athena could only have reminded our hypothetical spectator of the robe handled in the center of the Parthenon's east frieze: the peplos given to another (unrepresented) artifact—the old olive-wood image of Athena Polias—at the annual Panathenaic festival.⁵⁶

Pandora is repeatedly described in Hesiod as παρθένος, like the goddess of the temple itself, and since she was formed of earth or clay she was, literally, autochthonous—another motherless creature, a child of the earth such as the Athenians fancied themselves. In the sense that she was the creation of Hephaistos and Athena, Pandora would thus have been a parallel to Erechtheus/Erichthonios, the prod-

uct of another (though even more unusual) collaboration who was not only recognizable in the snake rearing inside the shield of the Athena Parthenos directly atop the scene of Pandora on the base, but whose story was also undoubtedly told in some form somewhere on the frieze of the Erechtheion across the way.⁵⁷ The disastrous opening of Pandora's jar (which admittedly was not depicted on the base but which was surely well known) might have recalled the way the two disobedient daughters of Kekrops opened their forbidden basket, with Erechtheus/Erichthonios inside—and with fatal consequences.⁵⁸ On the other hand, Athenians very well versed in mythography might have known a story that one of Erechtheus's own daughters was named Pandora, and that she may have been one of those who nobly sacrificed themselves to save the city from the forces of Eumolpos.⁵⁹ And after walking around and upon the Acropolis most visitors would have been aware that Hermes, the Graces, Peitho, and Aphrodite, as well as Athena—deities who endow Pandora with various gifts in *Works and Days* and who were possibly present on the base—were all represented or worshipped on the Acropolis (Aphrodite, who according to Hesiod bestowed upon Pandora "painful desire" and through her introduced sexual pleasure to men, was, of course, particularly well represented on the slopes of the virgin Athena's citadel).⁶⁰

The myth of Pandora explains why human beings must work to survive: she introduces ἔργα to the world, and Athena, in her capacity as Athena Ergane, was goddess of work. One source even specifically (if problematically) links the two in cult: "if anyone sacrifices an ox [or cow] to Athena, it is necessary also to sacrifice a sheep to Pandora."⁶¹ Finally, the scene of dressing and gift-giving on the base might

⁵⁴ Pollitt, in *Nashville* (supra n. 11) 23, points out that the presence of Helios and Selene (who also framed the birth of Aphrodite on the base of Pheidias's later Zeus at Olympia) may be "a kind of allusion to the cosmology of Anaxagoras (in which the creation of the sun and moon from cosmic mind was seen as a crucial stage in the formation of a rational cosmos)."

Selene is without question present in North metope 29, but while Helios is often thought to be the charioteer of North metope 1, K.A. Schwab has recently argued the figure is Athena herself; see "The Charioteer in Parthenon North Metope I," *AJA* 98 (1994) 322 (abstract).

⁵⁵ Berlin F 2415; ARV² 776.1; *Homeric Epigram* 14.

⁵⁶ The theme of weaving might also have been found in South metope 20, where, whatever the mythological subject, there was apparently some cloth and possibly a loom.

⁵⁷ Paus. 1.24.7. P.N. Boulter, "The Frieze of the Erechtheion," *AntP* 10 (1970) 7–28.

⁵⁸ Apollod. 3.14.6; Gantz 235–37.

⁵⁹ *Suda*, s.v. *parthenoi*, and Gantz 242–43. It was perhaps this Pandora who (again according to *Suda*, s.v. *protonion*) was with her sisters the first to make garments of wool, above all a woollen robe worn by the priestess of Athena Polias; see J.G. Frazer, *Pausanias' Description of Greece* 2 (London 1898) 319–20.

⁶⁰ See E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica* (Madison 1983) 39–46, 48–51.

⁶¹ Philochoros, *FGrHist* 328 F 10. The link between Athena and Pandora has been thought so strange that "Pandora" has been emended (by Bekker) to "Pandrosos," who, of course, had a prominent sanctuary on the Acropolis next to the Erechtheion; see L.R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* 1 (Oxford 1896–1909) 290. E. Simon's influential interpretation of the Parthenon frieze rests upon this emendation; Simon (supra n. 60) 61. But Aristophanes also seems to indicate the existence of a cult of (a) Pandora, to whom was sacrificed a white-fleeced ram (*Au.* 971).

have recalled activities before the traditional Greek wedding, and some Athenians, remembering that Athena was the goddess of good housekeeping in marriage, might also have recalled that it was King Kekrops, seen in the west pediment, who supposedly instituted marriage as a means of controlling the promiscuity of women.⁶²

While some of these associations and cross-references are admittedly arcane, others would have come easily even to the average spectator (whomever we envision the "average spectator" to be). Perhaps, after making a few of these connections, the typical viewer would not have bothered inquiring further why Pandora was there. After all, the scene depicted the gods giving gifts, just as they had showered gifts upon Periclean Athens. The image might have been construed, as many scholars have construed it, simply as "a demonstration of pure [divine] beneficence,"⁶³ and Pandora as a glamorous icon of delight.

But there were more levels to the scene than this, and there were more kinds of spectator in Pericles' Athens than the "average" one. The "ideal spectator"—the one who not only understood the more recherché associations but who also remembered what happened after Pandora's creation in the Hesiodic account—must have realized that if Woman brought the craft of weaving to humankind and (if a man was lucky) the comfort of a dutiful companion and heirs in old age, the other "gifts" she gave were no gifts at all. Now there is even in the misogynistic Archaic literary tradition the acknowledgment that women have the potential to be good—Penelope, after all, looms large—and there was undoubtedly the grudging admission that women are necessary for the continuation of the human species and the reproduction of its social realities.⁶⁴ But it would be going too far to suggest that Pandora simply represented the blessings of τέχνη alone or that her creation rep-

resented a celebration of art for its own sake, just as it is not going far enough to say that the myth simply conveyed the indifference or even the hostility of the gods toward mortals.⁶⁵ In the context of the other patriarchal myths of the Acropolis, the representation of Pandora should rather be seen as yet another argument for the necessity of male dominance, as a justification for patriarchy. Woman is the explanation for the fall from the Golden Age, when blessed men did not toil and knew no grief, pain, or evil.⁶⁶ She is the embodiment of extremes that "waste a man's substance and dry him up before his time."⁶⁷ Pandora (the first of her promiscuous, parasitic, deceitful breed) is the reason why Athena (virgin, male-oriented goddess of moderation, production, and rationality) is so great, and why men must construct and control society. One of the apothegms inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, along with "know thyself" and "nothing in excess," was "keep woman under rule" (γυναικὸς ἄρχε).⁶⁸ The base of the Athena Parthenos—which, like Classical tragedy and Classical statuary generally, was part of a male civic discourse—said much the same thing another way.

Pandora, then, is a beautiful figure of dread—ἀμήχανον, Hesiod says, something for which men can find no device or remedy. She is quite literally a *femme fatale*. Though given "all gifts" by the gods, this female prototype, this mother of all mortal women, is in fact created to beguile men with her beauty and uncontrollable sexuality, to introduce falsehood and treachery and disobedience to their lives, to let loose all evils upon the world from her famous jar (and the pessimism is crushing, since Ἐλπίς remains trapped, unavailable to mortal men).⁶⁹ Her very name (whatever "All-Gifts" means, exactly) is, therefore, an enormous irony and deceit—a ruse, a fraud, given her, it is necessary to stress,

⁶² Parker (supra n. 45) 198; Castriota (supra n. 43) 146.

⁶³ J. Boardman and D. Finn, *The Parthenon and Its Sculptures* (London 1985) 250; also Boardman (supra n. 3) 174; Leipen 58 (the scene "may have symbolized the generosity of the gods towards Athens itself"); and Herington (supra n. 26) 65.

⁶⁴ At *Theog.* 590–91, however, Pandora is specifically said to be the progenitor only of the race of women, not of humanity as a whole, and the story in fact presumes that men had already come into existence, though Hesiod does not say how.

⁶⁵ A suggestion of P. von Blanckenhagen in unpublished lectures, cited in Ridgway 164, 168, 188.

⁶⁶ *Op.* 109–20.

⁶⁷ F.I. Zeitlin, "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama," in J.J. Winkler and

F.I. Zeitlin eds., *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (Princeton 1990) 85; cf. Zeitlin, "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*," in H.P. Foley ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York 1981) 169–217.

⁶⁸ See W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston 1955) 183–84.

⁶⁹ For the hopelessness of the human condition, see, e.g., B. Knox, *Essays Ancient and Modern* (Baltimore 1989) 10–11. Gantz 157, however, suggests that *elpis* should mean not "hope" but "expectation" or "awareness," so that men would be denied the full knowledge of their sorry condition: trapping *elpis* in the jar, then, would be a kind of gift after all. One might compare the "blind hopes" that Prometheus claims to have given men in the *Prometheus Bound* (250–51)—a great benefit, in the eyes of the Chorus.

not by Zeus or Athena but by Hermes, the god of tricksters, thieves, and liars.⁷⁰ She is no gift and no gift-giver, but a punishment, a trap, the price of the good of Promethean fire, the product but also the price of τέχνη, the province of the goddess whose armed gold-and-ivory image loomed majestically above her. And there is the hint in Hesiod that, in opening her jar, she somehow violates her bond of marriage with Epimetheus—the bond over which Athena, as civic goddess, presides. In short, she is the other side of Athena. If Pandora is παρθένος, it is in the sense that she is a maiden ready for marriage—“sexually available,” one who has not *yet* lost her virginity⁷¹—which, of course, Athena Parthenos is not. As the representative Woman, she is (potentially) promiscuous whereas Athena is virtually asexual. She causes helplessness whereas Athena is resourceful and invents for human beings technologies of all sorts. She is unknowing whereas Athena is wise. She is artifice whereas Athena is artificer. She is passive whereas Athena is active.⁷² Pandora is, in effect, the Anti-Athena.

It is therefore difficult to believe, given the broader construction of gender in the myths portrayed on the Acropolis, that Pheidias intended the birth of Pandora to be a one-dimensional, unambiguous expression of the gifts the gods have showered upon humanity in general or Athens in particular, or that the scene was Pheidias's way of asserting the “divine” nature of the Acropolis building project and his Athena Parthenos (to which all Athenians contributed just as all the gods assisted in Pandora's creation),⁷³ much less that it is a sudden recognition of the importance of women to mid-fifth-century society or an attempt to elevate them to (or near) true citizen status. While few Athenians, male or female, would have consciously viewed the Acropolis—that is, the entire complex of its myths, cults, shrines, and images—as an overt instrument of oppression, as primarily a means of restricting women,⁷⁴ it was, like any cultural enterprise, a social construction, and the realities of fifth-century Athenian society

must therefore have informed it and its component parts. It is clear that on one level the birth could be read as simple praise of Athena Ergane. It seems undeniable, too, that on another level the Athena Parthenos acknowledged the existence, even the necessity, of women in the community, accommodating them through the image of Pandora, the mother of all mortal women, on its base. But it is just as clear that the Parthenon and the entire Acropolis—the male-authored center and centerpiece of a male-dominated state—resolved the *problem* of the female (at least to the satisfaction of the male citizenry) by justifying the political exclusion of women through the very same figure of Pandora, and through the implicit juxtaposition of her daughters, the women of Athens, set at the margins of society, with the men of Athens, the legitimate sons of the autochthonous Erechtheus/Erichthonios, the “son” of Athena. The depiction of Pandora beneath Athena visually established the proper terms of the male-female antithesis: there, below, was the purely feminine and dangerous woman, and there, above, was the armed goddess who discounts her own gender and sexuality, who nobly aspires to the masculine, and who thus stands as an ideal icon of Athens. In a sense, the antithesis is not merely between Pandora and the Parthenos, but also between Woman and the City.

In all this (and for all the different levels of meaning, allusions, and nuances of the scene) Pheidias may have been conventionally fifth-century. But there may have been a darker message still, one aimed at a more restricted audience. At a time when Athens was exposed to the philosophies of Anaxagoras and Protagoras and the odes of Sophocles, when Athenians were apparently presented ideas of progress based upon the rational application of skill and knowledge—in a word, τέχνη—Pheidias, himself a member of Pericles' inner circle of intellectuals, inserted into the glorifying sculptural program of the Parthenon the image of a living statue that called the very efficacy of τέχνη—the skills of Hephaistos and Athena, the creators of Pandora, the “parents”

⁷⁰ Faraone 102.

⁷¹ See A. Bergren, “The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite: Tradition and Rhetoric, Praise and Blame,” *ClAnt* 8 (1989) 13–20.

⁷² The nature of Pandora's passivity is pointed out by S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York 1953) 90. Though she is given the gift of weaving, Pandora nowhere weaves, and her only real action is the unfortunate opening of the pithos.

⁷³ For the view that Pheidias intended the scene as a celebratory metaphor for his own activity on the citadel,

see S. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton 1992) 33 and 330.

⁷⁴ It is interesting, however, that part of the humorous absurdity of *Lysistrata* is that its heroine “converts the Akropolis into a household for all the city's female citizens. Its exclusivity turns the tables on the men. . . .” See J. Henderson ed., *Aristophanes: Lysistrata* (Oxford 1987) xxxiv–xxxv. As Henderson points out (xxxviii), Lysistrata herself is Athena-like—intelligent, skillful, apparently unmarried, and immune to sexual temptation.

of Erechtheus/Erichthonios—into question.⁷⁵ For the presence of Pandora on the base of the Athena Parthenos represents the existence of evil and the possibility of catastrophe even in a patriotic, ever-victorious, and patriarchic paradise such as the one the Acropolis and Parthenon otherwise present.⁷⁶ Between the image of Woman below and the statue of Goddess above, between creation and creator, there was, inevitably, friction and dissonance. And the scene was, perhaps, Pheidias's challenge to the intelligentsia, a warning that despite the patronage of Athena, goddess of technology, cunning, and resourcefulness, certain things would be beyond devising, beyond resource, impossible to overcome

(ἀμύχανον, like Pandora herself), that despite all the τέχνη it had at its disposal Periclean Athens would know irremediable evil, even disaster. And, of course, it would: just a couple of years after the Parthenon was completed, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, Athens was struck by a devastating plague, one of the evils that beautiful, unthinking Pandora had let loose upon the world.

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⁷⁵ The nature of human progress had also been a theme of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, where the crucified Titan takes credit for giving men fire, from which they will learn "many *tekhnai*" (254), and for teaching men the arts of construction, astronomy, arithmetic, and writing, the means of yoking animals and harnessing horses, the art of shipbuilding (441–71), the use of drugs to cure diseases, the arts of divination and sacrificing, and the trade of mining. "All of men's *tekhnai*," he concludes, "come from Prometheus" (476–506).

I.S. Mark, "The Gods on the East Frieze of the Parthenon," *Hesperia* 53 (1984) 289–342, has argued that the arrangement of gods on the east frieze reflects Protagoras's notions of "limited" and "political" *tekhnai* (cf. *Pl. Prt.* 320–22), with individual gods embodying different ones (Athena and Hephaistos, for example, embody limited *tekhne*, while Zeus and Hera and Apollo embody political

tekhne); cf. Stewart (supra n. 2) 159.

It is, of course, dangerous to assume the teachings of Plato's Protagoras—a literary character—coincide exactly with the teachings of the fifth-century philosopher; see E.A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven 1957) 87–94. But it may still be significant that in the myth of Man's creation told by "Protagoras" in Plato's dialogue, Prometheus and Epimetheus are there, but Pandora (or Woman) is not. Did Pheidias's insertion of Pandora into the sculptural program of the Parthenon serve as a correction to Protagoras's anthropology?

⁷⁶ Robertson (supra n. 21) 239. Cf. Pollitt, in *Nashville* (supra n. 11) 23, who, though he interprets Pandora more positively than I do (she is in his view the bringer of "the blessings of knowledge, power, and independence to mankind"), recognizes that she also brings "burdens and dangers."