Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 42-95

The gods control our livelihood, holding it back from us mortals.

You ought to be able to earn enough by a single day’s labor as now you could in a year—and that in a leisurely fashion.

At the end of that day you could hang your rudder to dry in the smoke.

The ox’s toil would be finished, and that of long-suffering mules.

but Zeus in his irritation holds back that sort of existence,

because Prometheus fooled him, devising a treacherous scheme.

Ever since then Zeus has plotted terrible pain for us mortals.

Zeus had deprived us of fire. But the noble sone of Iapetus,

to counter the schemes of Zeus, then stole it back for humankind.

The raging Compeller of Clouds upbraided defiant Prometheus:

“Son of Iapetus, you surely are the slyest schemer of all.

You really delighted in swindling me by stealing the fire,

but soon you will find it a curse to yourself and to men yet to be.

I shall give them a present to compensate for the fire.

May they all be merry at heart, forever embracing this horror!”

With a nasty smile, the father of men and gods

told famous Hephaestus to hurry, to knead the water and clay,

to add human speech and strength, to give it a goddess’s form

and the lovely face of a maiden. Next, he ordered Athena

to teach her womanly skill, to weave on a well-built loom.

Aphrodite the olden he told to crown her head with desire,

but with heartbreak as well, and all the aching sorrow of love. Last of all he

had Hermes the herald, the killer of Argus,

to give her thievish morals, and to add the soul of a bitch.

Thus he decreed. The immortals obeyed Lord Zeus, son of Cronus.

The famous lame craftsman molded a lump of clam to an image,

the form of a modest girl, as the son of Cronus designed it.

The gray-eyed goddess Athena saw to her clothing and hair.

The Graces and Lady Persuasion decked her with golden jewelry,

to accent the bloom of her flesh, and the fair-haired Seasons together

crowned her with flowers of spring.

Then the killer of Argus, the guide, the herald of gods (Hermes),

filled her with lies, with swindles, all sorts of thievish behavior,

and named the woman Pandora, since all who dwell on Olympus

gave her their gifts—a curse to men who must live by bread.

When the father at last had completed this inescapable trap,

he sent the famous killer of Argus, swift messenger of the gods (Hermes),

to bring her to Epimetheus. But he in his folly ignored

Prometheus’ warning, to accept no gift from Zeus of Olympus,

but to send it right back, lest it bring eternal trouble to men.

Epimetheus gladly received her, remembering too late the injunction.

Till then men had lived on the face of the earth

far from all ills, without torment, pain, or dreadful disease,

that bring men down to their graves. But now the hands of the woman lifted the jar’s heavy lid and allowed them all to escape,

planning the bitterest sorrows from men. Hope only remained

in a prison she could not escape, under the lip of the jar.

She could not fly out, for the woman replaced the great heavy lid.

But the other numberless miseries were spread over all humankind.

The earth is crowded with anguish, equally so the sea.

Some pestilence strikes men by day; some comes on as it will

in night’s quiet dark, its voice being silenced by Zeus’ command.

Hesiod, *Theogony,* 591-600, 603-610

From her (Pandora/first woman) descends the ruinous race and tribe of women,

who live as a curse and cause of sorrow to mortal men,

no partners in grim poverty, but only useless excesses.

As bees in their dome-shaped hive faithfully tend to the drones,

who take no part in hard work while the workers toil through the day.

Till sunset they keep on loading their honey in the white comb,

while the drones sit lazily peering out from the arching hive,

sweeping the fruit of this labor into their own slow bellies—

just so Zeus, who thunders on high, saw to it that women,

curse of us mortal men, should invent work utterly useless.

Whoever keeps clear of marriage and the trouble fomented by women,

and is quite content to stay single, must expect a gloomy old age,

with no one at hand to attend him. He may have plenty of money,

but when he dies his relations, often far distant, divide it.

Even if someone is married to a wise and compatible woman,

all through his life he will find that trouble is mixed with his joy. (603-610)

See Powell, *Classical Myth,* 9th ed., pp. 108-115 for text and commentary.