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## Talos, Pandora, and the Trojan Horse as Products of Technology in Ancient Literature and Art

*Talos, Pandore et le cheval de Troie en tant que produits de la technologie dans la littérature et l'art anciens*

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**Electronic version**

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/ephaistos/10885>

DOI: [10.4000/ephaistos.10885](https://doi.org/10.4000/ephaistos.10885)

ISSN: 2552-0741

**Publisher**

IHMC - Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (UMR 8066)

**Electronic reference**

Adrienne Mayor, "Talos, Pandora, and the Trojan Horse as Products of Technology in Ancient Literature and Art", *e-Phaïstos* [Online], XI-1 | 2023, Online since 25 April 2023, connection on 28 April 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ephaistos/10885> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ephaistos.10885>

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# Talos, Pandora, and the Trojan Horse as Products of Technology in Ancient Literature and Art

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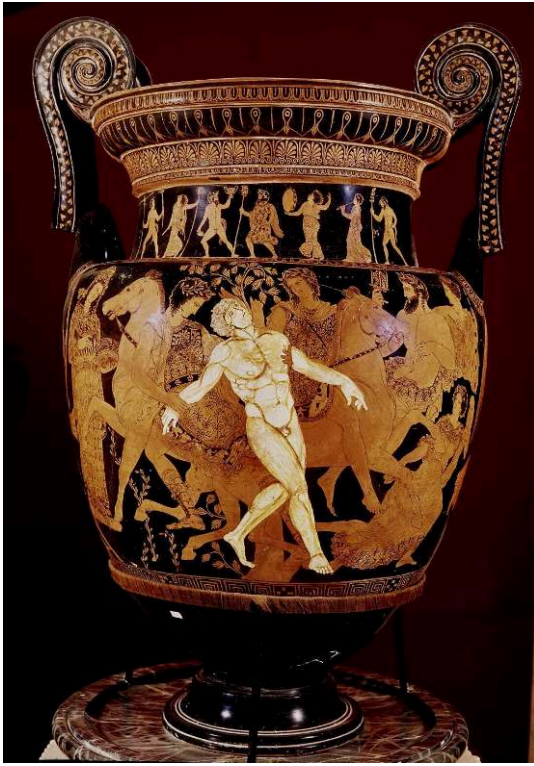
- 1 The Greek word automaton, "acting of one's own will," was first used by Homer (Iliad 5.749, 18.376) to describe ingenious devices built by the blacksmith god of invention and technology, Hephaestus. Hephaestus crafted a fleet of self-moving tripods, a set of automated bellows, a chair that trapped the sitter, automatic gates, automaton guard dogs, and a staff of female android servants made of gold. Hephaestus also fabricated the bronze robot Talos and the artificial woman Pandora, first described by Homer's contemporary, the poet Hesiod, 750-650 BC. Notably, in some ancient descriptions, the Trojan Horse was portrayed as an animated, realistic statue. The oldest artistic representations of Talos and Pandora appear on Greek vase paintings of the fifth century BC. The earliest artistic representation of the Trojan Horse is on an archaic vase of about 670 BC. This paper demonstrates how the technological, crafted nature of these artificial replicas of man, woman, and horse were underscored in ancient writings and in related artworks depicting artisans and tools. The record of this literary and artistic evidence from more than two millennia ago is a milestone in the ancient history of technology.

## Talos

- 2 Talos, the animated giant bronze statue fashioned by Hephaestus, was commissioned by Zeus to defend Crete against pirates. Talos could move on its own and carry out complex actions. Designed to repel invasions, Talos was "programmed" to spot ships and hurl boulders at strangers that approached Crete's shores. In close combat, the

giant bronze android could heat his metallic body and roast victims in his burning embrace (Hesiod *Works and Days* REF, Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.1635-88).

Fig. 1. Death of Talos



The bronze robot Talos collapses into the arms of two Argonauts as Medea looks on. Red-figure volute krater, about 425 BC, by the Talos Painter.

Museo Jatta, Ruvo di Puglia, Art Resource, NY, Fig. 1.3 in Mayor 2018

- 3 Talos fits the modern definition of a robot with interior workings and a power source (Mayor 2018, Silverman 2021). As described in ancient sources, a single vein or tube ran from his head to foot. In this conduit pulsated ichor, the life fluid of the immortal gods. The android's vivisystem was sealed by a bronze bolt on his ankle. In the myth, Jason and the Argonauts were able to destroy Talos with the help of the wizard Medea, who knew the robot's weak point and understood his half-human-half machine cyborg nature. Medea persuaded Talos to allow Jason to remove the bolt on his ankle. Removal of the bolt caused the power source to leak out and Talos was demolished (fig. 1).
- 4 Having been created with technology, Talos was destroyed by technology, since the removal of the bolt required a tool. The antiquity of this remarkable scenario is confirmed by at least two vase paintings of the fifth century BC depicting tools to remove the bolt on Talos' ankle. A late fifth century BC Attic vase fragment shows Medea at Talos's feet with a tool in her hand ready to remove the bolt. On a vase of about 450 BC, from Montesarchio, Italy (fig. 2), Jason kneels and is manipulating a tool to unseal the bolt. Talos collapses, while Medea watches (Mayor 2018: Figs. 1.5 and 1.6, Pl. 2, 15-17, n 14).

Fig.2. Talos' collapse



Talos collapses as Jason uses a tool to unseal the bolt on Talos' ankle, as Medea watches. Krater, 450-400 BC, found at Montesarchio, Museo Archeologico del Sannio Caudino (Italy).

Photo ArchaiOptix, 2020, Wiki Commons.

- 5 The use of an implement to destroy Talos can be compared to a vase of 420 BC attributed to the Polion Painter (fig. 3). The artist illustrates another technological marvel made by Hephaestus that was deactivated by a tool. The scene shows the goddess Hera imprisoned in the cunning throne designed by Hephaestus that automatically entrapped her as soon as she sat in the chair. Hephaestus is about to explain how to free her and the satyr Silenus is bringing a tool to release the locks.

Fig. 3. Unlock the self-locking chair



A satyr brings a tool to unlock the self-locking chair devised by Hephaestus to entrap Hera. Attic volute krater, Polion Painter, about 420 BC, Spina Necropolis, Ferrara Museo Archeologico Nazionale, photo by Egisto Sani, 2012, Creative Commons.

- 6 These three vases illustrating the use of tools to demolish or unlock Hephaestus' specially engineered devices, a robot and a self-locking chair, accentuate their technological origins.

## Pandora

- 7 Like the tale of Talos, the Pandora myth is an example of ancient science fiction, imagining how gods might fabricate marvelous beings by means of what we might call in ancient Greek *biotechné*, or "life through craft." Both Talos and Pandora were described by Hesiod as "made, not born." The phrase distinguishes them from biological beings reproduced naturally and categorizes them as artificial. They were not inert objects brought to life by magic or divine fiat. Instead, the crafted nature of Talos and Pandora stands out in ancient writings and vase paintings. They were imagined as artifacts of technology, constructed by Hephaestus using familiar tools, materials, and methods.
- 8 In *Works and Days* (53-105) Hesiod relates the details of Pandora's fabrication. Zeus decides to take revenge on humans for accepting the technology of fire stolen from the gods. Notably, Hesiod says Zeus "crafts" his plan. He commands Hephaestus to construct "Evil disguised as Beauty" in the form of a desirable young woman. This replicant will be sent down to earth as a *dolos*, a trap, carrying a sealed jar filled with eternal misery and suffering for humanity. Once she arrives among mortals her only mission is to open the jar.

- 9 Pandora was not summoned into existence by magic or by Zeus' fiat, but planned, designed, and constructed in the forge of the blacksmith god. Hesiod describes Pandora was a beguiling artifice designed to carry out a specific mission in the human realm. Notably, Homer's description of Hephaestus' golden female servants and Hesiod's description of the female android Pandora are remarkably similar. Hephaestus, following Zeus's orders, creates a "manufactured maiden." Through repetition of the words "likeness" and "representation" in his poem, Hesiod tells us that Pandora is not a natural woman but a "constructed thing."
- 10 Zeus instructs Hephaestus to give this bewitching female facsimile the power to move on its own. Next, he commands the gods and goddesses to bestow unique gifts, capabilities and personality traits on Pandora. Athena dresses her in fabulous garments. The Graces give her charm, Peitho gives her persuasion, and Aphrodite fills her with irresistible sex appeal, so that she will arouse lust in men. Hermes, the trickster-messenger god, gives Pandora a bold, deceitful nature. And it is Hermes who names her Pandora, "all gifts" for the gifts the gods bestowed on her for the ruination of humankind.
- 11 Today we could recast Hesiod's story in modern robotic-Artificial Intelligence terms. Hesiod says Zeus "crafted" the intellectual concept of Pandora. Then Zeus commissions Hephaestus to build the basic hardware. Hephaestus makes the female android so lifelike that she will be accepted as a real woman by humans. The other gods supply the operating system, by giving Pandora various humanoid functions and properties. By Zeus's design specifications, Pandora is "programmed" to open and close the jar of evils, so that she can accomplish her mission on earth (Zarkadakis 2012).
- 12 When Zeus displays the completed figure of Pandora to the other gods, Hesiod says they are seized with amazement. The trap was now complete, says Hesiod, and Zeus orders Hermes to present Pandora as a bride for Epimetheus, who accepted the gift and realized his error too late.
- 13 Hesiod makes it clear that Pandora was fundamentally different from a biological woman. She was "a lovely maiden-shape" made with same materials and processes used to make statues and other objects. After her mission is accomplished, we hear no more about her in Greek myth.
- 14 The "fabricated" character of Pandora that is so prominent in Hesiod's text is also the focus of ancient artistic representations of Pandora. Vase painters often emphasize her rigid, statue-like or doll-like appearance. For example, a black-figure amphora of 525-475 BC, attributed to the Diosphos Painter, is the most ancient representation of Pandora. Zeus is holding a small doll or statue of a woman with raised arms. Zeus is admiring Hephaestus's work, made to his specifications, while Athena holds out a wreath and Hermes prepares to escort Pandora to earth. The artist, by rendering Pandora as an inert mannequin, calls attention to Pandora's manufactured status (Mayor 2018: Fig. 8.4, Pl. 13, 162-63).
- 15 On a colorful bowl by the Tarquinia Painter (470 BC), Pandora stands passively, an inanimate object between Athena and Hephaestus, who are putting the finishing touches on Pandora. Again, Pandora resembles a static statue, her feet together, hands at sides, and head tilted slightly (Mayor 2018: Fig. 8.5, 163-64). Athena adjusts her gown. Hephaestus, holding a tool, places a crown on her head. The scene reflects the way

realistically painted statues were dressed and adorned antiquity. The artist's imagery stresses that Pandora is a product of technology, not nature.

- 16 Pandora pictured as an automaton is even more striking on the stunning calyx-krater by the Niobid Painter (450-460 BC), which illustrates Hesiod's scene of Zeus displaying Pandora to the gods. The dozen or so gods and goddesses are in motion, gesturing in wonder (fig. 4).
- 17 The contrast between Pandora's stiff, *en face* posture and the flurry of activity around her contribute to the idea that she was an artificial entity. Her static pose and strange facial expression confirm her unnatural creation and attraction. Pandora stands like a statue, arms at her sides, looking straight ahead. In vase painting iconography, faces are almost always shown in profile or three-quarter views, while full frontal faces are rare. A face looking out at the viewer was used by artists to suggest a kind of mindlessness; it is usually dead or inanimate figures like masks and statues that have this feature. Frontal face views in vase painting can also convey a mesmerizing gaze, for example in images of Medusa. Notably, the Niobid Painter employs frontal faces for dead figures in his two other famous vases, the Geta Krater showing Greeks killing Amazons and his name vase with the massacre of Niobe's children. On the Pandora vase, both eerie effects—a blank mind and a compelling gaze—seem to be intended (Mayor 2018: Figs. 8.6, 8.7, Pl. 14, 164-70).

Fig 4. Pandora admired by the gods and goddesses as she is prepared to be sent to earth



Red-figure calyx krater by the Niobid Painter, 460 BC, inv. 1856,1213.1, Trustees of the British Museum  
Fig. 8.6, 8.7, Pl. 14, Mayor 2018

- 18 Moreover, facial expressions of emotion, such as frowns or smiles, are also rare in vase paintings. Faces are usually impassive, with emotions indicated by gestures or posture. This exceptional Pandora not only faces forward, gazing out at the beholder, but she is

smiling. The statue-like appearance and inappropriate, uncanny grin are powerful ways of portraying Pandora as an automaton and fits Hesiod's depiction of Evil disguised as Beauty.

- 19 Surrounded by the active gods, Pandora stands within a V shape created by spears held by Athena and Ares. It is intriguing that the V shape is replicated in the decorative border around the rim of the vase. The motif of an inverted V and a half circle is repeated in the ornamental band around the top of the krater. As one examines this unusual border, one becomes aware of a subtle impression, an almost subliminal effect that appears deliberately intended by the artist to accentuate the use of technology in the creation of Pandora.

## Meaningful Motifs in Vase Border Decorations ?

- 20 The border pattern selected by the Niobe painter is distinctive and is, like Pandora's head-on smile, unique in classical vase paintings (fig. 5). It does not appear on any other surviving vases by the Niobe Painter or his circle and the motif does not fall into any of the typical border designs on vases, such as egg and dart, lotus, palmette, ivy leaves, meander or Greek key.

Fig 5. Niobid vase, detail



Red-figure calyx krater by the Niobid Painter, 460 BC, inv. 1856,1213.1, Trustees of the British Museum  
Fig. 8.6, 8.7, Pl. 14, Mayor 2018

- 21 According to the British Museum text, it is a "conventionalized dart and lotus pattern." But when I consulted vase scholars about this upright open, pincer shape, they agree that it is unconventional, a peculiar variation of a Lesbian leaf, leaf and dart, or leaf and



heart moulding, an architectural element found on later classical buildings (Dan Diffendale, pers. comm. Jan 24, 2022). Alexandra Villing, curator of the Greek collections in the British Museum, comments that “the history of ornaments in Greek art is massively under-researched.” The idea that motifs in border ornaments might add meaning to vase painting scenes has not been studied (Alexandera Villing, pers. comm. Jan 26, 2022).

- 22 Border designs were chosen from a repertoire of standard patterns and assumed to be purely decorative. The designs are not seen as meaningful or related to the scene on the vase. Clemente Marconi (2017: 117, 151) looks at decorative borders within painted vase scenes, such as doorways and archways, as framing devices and boundaries that contribute to semantic meanings, but he does not address the possibility of meaning in border patterns around the rims of vases. The leading scholar of the Niobid Painter’s oeuvre, M. Prange (1989) only notes that the border over the Pandora frieze is unparalleled. As far as I know, no other art scholars take note of the border.
- 23 Painters, especially of elaborate vases like the large Niobid krater made for mixing wine and water at a banquet, did take great care in choosing decorations, floral wreaths, leaves of laurel, ivy, and myrtle, etc. on the body of the pot (Kunze-Gotte 2006). It seems plausible that the extraordinary creativity and artfully rendered details in the Niobe painter’s work extended to selection of border ornamentation on this spectacular vase.
- 24 The unique design invites speculation. I propose that the motif is meant to allude to Hephaestus and to his use of tools to make Pandora. In artistic representations, Hephaestus is commonly depicted wielding his blacksmith tools. On the Niobid Vase, Hephaestus does not appear among the gods and goddesses who are admiring his creation, Pandora, but his presence is cleverly evoked by the repetition of the shape of the god’s iconic tool in the border of the vase. The pincer shape strongly resembles blacksmith’s tongs. That tool is ubiquitous in vase painting scenes featuring Hephaestus and other blacksmiths in their workshops (fig. 6).

Fig 6. Top, Niobid vase border; bottom left and right, typical scenes of blacksmiths using tongs, red-figure vase paintings, fifth century BC



Fig. 8.6, 8.7, Pl. 14, Mayor 2018

- 25 I suggest that the Niobid painter created this unusual border pattern in the shape of a blacksmith's tool to reinforce the idea that Pandora was a crafted object made by Hephaestus. The familiar tongs shape would be recognized consciously or registered unconsciously by observers.
- 26 Notably, a design with some similarity to the Niobe border appears on two other vase paintings illustrating marvelous devices constructed by Hephaestus. Compare the pattern around the top of the Talos Painter's vase (fig. 1) depicting the destruction of the bronze automaton Talos, which was accomplished with a tool that released the bolt on his ankle. The border motif on the Talos vase resembles a closed pincer or wrench-like implement circling a nail head or bolt. The same motif appears in the border on the volute krater by Polion (fig. 3), illustrating yet another of Hephaestus's marvelous devices about to be unlocked with a special tool.
- 27 The "special effects" on the magnificent Niobe vase are powerful indicators of the idea Pandora forged by Hephaestus's technology, from her statue-like stance, *en face* pose and bold smile, to the eye-catching motif of blacksmith tongs in the atypical border.

## The Trojan Horse

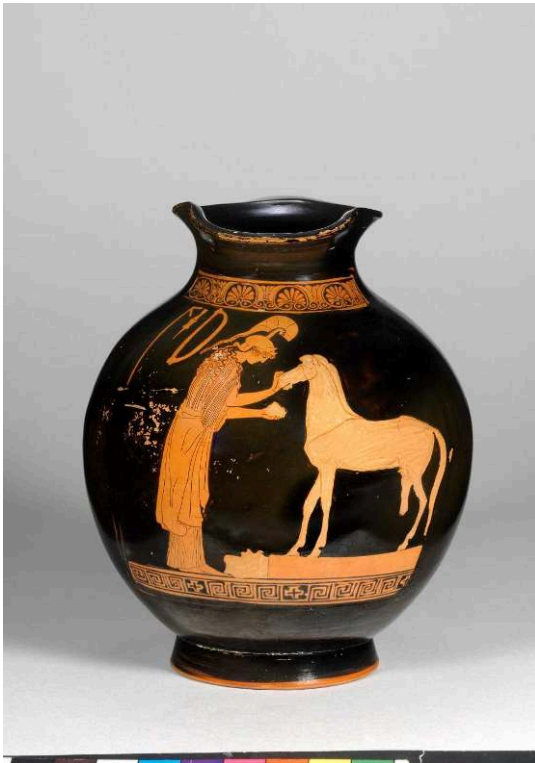
- 28 There were two versions of the nature of the Trojan Horse in antiquity (Gantz 1993, 2: 641-50). In the accounts most familiar today, it was envisioned as an enormous model of a horse mounted on wheels. In this version, the hollow body was capacious enough to conceal Odysseus and a number of Greek warriors inside. Some early artistic images illustrate a giant horse on wheels with men peeking out of square windows, for

- example, the Mykonos Vase, made in about 670 BC. A fragment of a bronze fibula of about 700 BC also has a similar image of the Trojan Horse on wheels (Gantz 1993: 2:654).
- 29 In alternative ancient tradition of the myth, however, the Trojan Horse was not a massive model horse on wheels but a realistic, animated statue of a horse with articulated limbs, a swishing tail, and moving eyes. Like the details in the textual and artistic descriptions of the automatons Talos and Pandora, certain artistic scenes of the making of the Trojan Horse are of interest for their emphasis on the horse as an animated, realistic horse statue rather than a giant wheeled model of a horse. As discussed below, some early vase paintings and an Etruscan mirror depict the making of the Trojan Horse by a legendary craftsman or by the goddess of craft and war strategy, Athena.
- 30 The appearance, size, and nature of the horse were garbled in antiquity, with one thread picturing a huge hollow horse on wheels and another thread envisioning a moving simulacrum of a normal size horse. In both variants, however, the horse is a product of craftsmanship and technology.
- 31 According to Homer (*Odyssey* 8.492-95, 11.523-27), the Trojan Horse was constructed by a Greek craftsman named Epeius with the guidance of Athena. Athena came up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, to be constructed a ruse of war by the Greeks as a means of gaining entrance to the besieged fortified city. The horse was left outside the gates of Troy as the Greeks pretended to retreat in defeat. When the Trojans brought the deceptive horse into the city to celebrate, the Greeks successfully attacked and overran Troy.
- 32 Arctinus of Miletus (*Iliou Persis*, fragment 2 PEG), writing around the time of Homer, portrays the Trojan Horse as a clever contraption similar to the self-moving entities created by Hephaestus, described in the *Iliad*, mentioned above. In Arctinus' version, the horse automaton could move its tail and legs and roll its eyes (Faraone 1992: 97, 104-6 and nn 20, 60-61, Timpanaro 1957: 156-71, Gantz 1993: 2:641-50). Later variants, by the Roman poet Virgil (*Aeneid* 2.237, 6.515-16), Quintus Smyrnaeus (12.148-50), and Tryphiodorus (84-86), elaborated on the verisimilitude of the horse, so lifelike that it seemed to neigh and move in such a way that it seemed alive. Writing in the first century BC, Virgil appears to rely on the ancient Greek traditions about the horse as an animated figure. His details include eye-witnesses who describe the horse as self-propelled and able to leap. The horse also makes sounds and it even "stumbles" as it crosses the threshold into the citadel (*Aeneid* 2.237, 6.515-16, 2.52-53, 2.242-44).
- 33 Virgil would have been familiar with the *Tabula Iliaca*, a series of small marble relief panels for popular consumption made during the reign of his patron Augustus (Capitoline Museum, Rome). One of the panels is believed to illustrate Stesichorus's poem about the Trojan War (600-550 BC, lost but known by fragments). It shows the Trojans bringing a horse of ordinary size into Troy. A similar scene appears in a fresco from Pompeii/Herculanium (Naples Museum).
- 34 A small, naturalistic horse appears in two vase paintings of the fifth century BC illustrating the making of the Trojan Horse with tools in a workshop. An Athenian red-figure cup by the Foundry Painter, 480 BC, shows Athena, the patroness of craftsmen, in the workshop of a sculptor—Epeius—who is using a large mallet and a chisel to make a naturalistic Trojan Horse. Athena speaks to one of the two bearded Greeks (Agamemnon and Odysseus) who are also observing the sculptor. The stallion is shown

with a rolling eye, which attests to the lifelike quality of the presumably animated statue (Mayor 2018: Fig. 5.4).

- 35 A painting by the Sabouroff Painter on a kylix vase (460 BC, National Archaeological Museum, Florence) shows Athena adding finishing touches, adding red ribbons to the head and neck to a life-sized, very realistic Trojan Horse. But an Athenian red-figure painting of 470-460 BC, attributed to the Group of Berlin, is even more interesting for our purposes. It shows Athena herself in the process of making the Trojan Horse out of clay, in preparation for casting it in bronze (fig. 7). Athena holds a handful of clay and is molding the horse's nose. The horse's body is rough and one hind leg is unfinished. Hanging on the wall behind Athena are typical artisan's tools--chisel, saw, and drill. The tools and the depiction of the materials and the method of making the figure drive home the ancient concept of the Trojan Horse as a product of technology.

Fig 7. Athena, goddess of craft and wisdom, making a clay model of the realistic Trojan Horse to be cast in bronze



The horse's hind leg is unfinished. On the wall behind Athena are three craftsman's tools. Attic red-figure wine jug, about 460 BC, Antikensammlung Staatliche Museen, F2415.

Photo by Johannes Laurentius, Art Resource, Fig. 7.8, Pl. 9, Mayor 2018

- 36 Further artistic evidence for the Trojan Horse as a constructed automaton is engraved on a unique Etruscan mirror made in Italy in the fourth century BC. The Etruscans had their own oral versions of Greek mythology. This scene depicts a realistic metal horse statue being created by Sethlans, the Etruscan name for Hephaestus, and an assistant named *Etule* (fig. 8).

Fig 8. The Trojan Horse being made by Hephaestus/Sethlans, adding clay to the neck, and Epeius/Etule, using a mallet



The life-sized horse is depicted as lively and animated : note chain on right front leg. Etruscan bronze mirror, fourth century BC, from Orvieto, BnF Cabinet des Médailles, Paris,

Drawing by Michele Angel, for Mayor 2018, Fig. 7.7

- 37 The horse is labeled *Pecse*, the Etruscan name for the Trojan Horse. The assistant, Etule, represents Epeius, the maker of the Trojan Horse in Homer (Bonfante and Bonfante 2002 : 198, 202). In this Etruscan version, he is inspired or guided by Hephaestus, instead of Athena. It is interesting that a set of tools, claimed to be those with which Epeius constructed the Trojan Horse, was displayed in the Temple of Athena near Metapontum, southern Italy (Pseudo-Aristotle, *On Marvelous Things Heard* 840A.108, Justin 20.2).
- 38 On the Etruscan mirror, Etule/Epeius is using a hammer and Sethlans/Hephaestus is applying clay to the horse's neck. They are constructing a life-sized mold to be cast in bronze. The materials and the method are the same as those shown in the vase painting of Athena making the Trojan Horse, above (fig. 7).
- 39 Looking closely at the Etruscan mirror, one notices that the lively artificial horse is chained by its front foot to a rock hobble. This is an intriguing detail for a lifeless statue, since it indicates expected movement by the horse. The detail apparently alludes to well-known ancient jokes about needing to tether or bind "living statues" to prevent them from running away. The Etruscan artist places a chain on the horse's leg to emphasize how realistic the artificial horse is, and it indicates that Sethlans/Hephaestus and his assistant are making an animated statue of a horse (Mayor 2018, Fig. 7.7, Pl. 8, 138- 41).

## Conclusion

40 The earliest artificial entities in Greek mythology, the bronze android Talos and the fabricated woman Pandora, are the earliest automatons in Greek mythology, important evidence that extends the history of technology into classical antiquity. These were just two of the many self-moving machines and other technological devices constructed by Hephaestus, the blacksmith god of invention in his divine forge. One ancient thread of the Trojan Horse literary tradition describes the ruse as an animated statue, constructed by a craftsman or by Athena, the goddess of craft and wisdom. In the ancient literary sources, all three marvels were described as products of awesome technology, but made with familiar implements, materials, and methods. These mythic entities demonstrate that people could imagine self-moving inventions long before the actual technology existed. The three artificial creations from myth were also illustrated in ancient vase paintings and other artworks. The examples discussed here show how different artists accentuated the technological nature of Talos, Pandora, and the Trojan Horse by depicting Hephaestus, Epeius, or Athena with a variety of tools and materials. In the case of the Niobid Painter, the artificial character of Pandora is called out several innovative ways, including a unique border decoration of Hephaestus's iconic tongs.

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## ABSTRACTS

The bronze robot Talos and the artificial woman Pandora are the earliest automatons in Greek mythology, first described by Hesiod in about 700 BC. In some ancient sources, the Trojan Horse was depicted as an animated statue. All three artificial creations were illustrated in vase paintings and other art. Significantly, writers and artists visualized these self-moving entities, not as results of magic, but as marvelous artifacts fabricated with familiar materials and implements. This paper shows how the crafted natures of Talos, Pandora, and the Trojan Horse, emphasized in literary descriptions, were confirmed in artistic representations alluding to the use of technology and tools, in unexpected ways.

Le robot de bronze Talos et la femme artificielle Pandora sont les premiers automates de la mythologie grecque, décrits pour la première fois par Hésiode vers 700 av. Dans certaines sources antiques, le cheval de Troie était représenté sous la forme d'une statue animée. Ces trois créations artificielles ont été illustrées dans des vases et d'autres œuvres d'art. Il est important de noter que les écrivains et les artistes ont représenté ces entités autonomes non pas comme des résultats de la magie, mais comme de merveilleux artefacts fabriqués à l'aide de matériaux et d'outils familiers. Cet article montre comment la nature artisanale de Talos, de Pandore et du cheval de Troie, soulignée dans les descriptions littéraires, a été confirmée par des représentations artistiques faisant allusion à l'utilisation de la technologie et d'outils, de manière inattendue.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** histoire des techniques, automate, robot, art ancien, mythologie

**Keywords:** history of technology, automaton, robot, ancient art, mythology

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Adrienne Mayor, a research scholar in the Classics Department and History and Philosophy of Science Program, Stanford University, investigates scientific and historical knowledge embedded in mythology. She is the author of numerous articles and books, most recently *Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology* (Princeton University 2018)