

The Prophetic Moon: Eve, Pandora, and Gunnlod
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Abstract:

The Pandora story from Greek myth contains the essential explanation for the hardships of men. Although the remaining gift, often translated as ‘hope’ could also mean ‘premonition’ and thus could represent an even stronger power of prophecy. The image of Pandora can also be found on the Moon, which is also the Norse giantess Gunnlod from “The Mead of Poetry” myth from the Eddas. The two myths surrounding these figures resemble one another enough to suggest that they derive from a single original. This myth of the woman in the Moon could have then been incorporated into the soma/mead myth found in Indian and Norse myth to produce the Mead myth, yet this is not the only possibility. The Pandora myth is also close to the Biblical Eve myth, enough again so to suggest that they derive from a single original. They both contain similar tales about the violation against a god to attain a heavenly gift, and in both cases there is some form of divine retribution. All variants include such a gift to mankind, usually relating to some form of expansion of mental capacities suggesting a form of drug, the same as that of soma/haoma which is believed to be based upon Ephedrine. In the myths the powers of the Moon are associated with prophetic powers, and the Moon itself played at least a partial role in divinistic practices and magical power. All of these various myths thus appear to have arisen from a very ancient, perhaps Neolithic myth, that associated images on the Moon with an apparently mind-expanding drug found on the earth.

Introduction

The Moon and other heavenly bodies played a major role in the development of the idea of gods and early religious ideas. The giantess of Norse mythology Gunnlod visible upon the face of the Moon is the source for the story of the Mead of Poetry. This same image, known most commonly today as the “lady reading” illusion, was recognized by ancient humans just as was the proverbial “Man in the Moon”. The first woman of Greek mythology, Pandora, also can be equated with this same image, which could also mean that the two myths themselves derive from a common source.

Widespread mythical attributes are usually explained by two causes: the similar idea develops independently in two places, or the idea once originated spreads to different regions. It is difficult to prove which it is unless there are at least a few specific non-unique details that would make the idea of independent invention highly improbable.

The indications are that a single myth existed that led to these two later myths, yet the specific details of its actual migration may be more difficult to track, unless the same myth could be identified elsewhere. In fact, there are two other variants to be found in the Indian myth about the soma and the Biblical Adam and Eve myth. The former is far closer to that of the Norse Mimir myth while the latter is far closer to the Pandora myth itself. The correspondences can be detailed and thus an attempt made to try to identify an incipient form.

Pandora and the Moon

The previous paper on Norse mythology “Odin, the Well, and the Mead” identifies the image of the “Woman on the Moon” to be that of the giantess Gunnlod from “The Mead of Poetry” myth. Pandora is the first woman of Greek mythology and has been suggested to be the same figure in the Moon by John Lilly (Harley 1969: 56). She is shown in a vase depiction in *Figure 1*, likely arising out of an artistic tradition that originated with the Moon image.¹

Figure 1.
Image of Pandora on Greek vase compared to the Full Moon



Here Pandora is shown dressed as a bride and here holding her box. The correspondences are exact: sitting on a mound, in a long flowing dress, a wreath and veil on her head, the box itself, even the necklace hanging down from the box, and the stalks growing behind her correspond to the Moon image. It is not as clear through how closely the myth of Pandora relates to the myth of Gunnlod: the mead certainly does not play exactly the same role as do the evils unleashed in

¹ Thus the artist would not be working directly off of the figure shown on the Moon but from a descent of artistic tradition where he may no longer have been aware that it ultimately derived from the Moon.

the Pandora story. The description of Pandora in myth as recorded by Hesiod thrice in his “Works and Days” and “Theogony”:

He told glorious Hephaistos to make haste, and plaster earth with water, and to infuse it with a human voice and vigor, and make the face like the immortal goddesses, the bewitching features of a young girl; meanwhile Athene was to teach her her skills, and how to do the intricate weaving, while Aphrodite was to mist her head in golden endearment and the cruelty of desire and longings that wear out the body, but to Hermes, the guide, the slayer of Argos, he gave instructions to put in her the mind of a hussy, and a treacherous nature. So Zeus spoke. And all obeyed Lord Zeus, the son of Kronos. (Hesiod 1991:25-27)

The renowned strong smith modeled her figure of earth, in the likeness of a decorous young girl, as the son of Kronos had wished it. The goddess gray-eyed Athene dressed and arrayed her; the Graces, who are goddesses, and hallowed Persuasion put necklaces of gold upon her body, while the Seasons, with glorious tresses, put upon her head a coronal of spring flowers, [and Pallas Athene put all décor upon her body]. But into her heart Hermes, the guide, the slayer of Argos, put lies, and wheedling words of falsehood, and a treacherous nature, made her as Zeus of the deep thunder wished, and he, the gods’ herald, put a voice in side her, and gave her the name of woman, Pandora, because all the gods who have their homes on Olympos had given her each a gift, to be a sorrow to men who eat bread. (Hesiod 1991:27-29)

For the renowned smith of the strong arms took earth, and molded it, through Zeus’s plans, into the likeness of a modest young girl, and the goddess gray-eyed Athene dressed her and decked her in silverish clothing, and over her head she held, with her hands, an intricately wrought veil in place, a wonder to look at, and over this on her head she placed a wreath of gold, one that the very renowned

smith of the strong arms had fashioned working it out with his hands, as a favor to Zeus the father...For from her originates the breed of female women, and they live with mortal men, and are a great sorrow to them, and hateful poverty they will not share, but only luxury. (Hesiod 1991: 157-158)

It is a possibility that the names Gunnlod and Pandora are both derived from an original name? Considering the form of the names, Pan-dor compared to Gunn-lod; at first glance they do not appear to be very close, but the basic structure of the names is similar, so it is a possibility. However, if they are derived from the same source there must have been a good span of time between them. Their meanings certainly offer no equivalence: Pandora's name means something like "avaricious" (arising from the acquisitive nature ascribed to women) while Gunnlod means "battle-ready". Just as with the names, any other similarities might end up being just as vague.

Mythology

So since Pandora and Gunnlod have both been proven to be the image of the Woman in the Moon, are the myths themselves direct descendants from an initial myth, or are do both independently derive from the same image on the Moon? After the description of her creation, Hesiod continues to tell the story of Pandora in "Works and Days", known most often as that of "Pandora's Box", although it is properly referred to as a jar rather than a box.²

Now when he had done with this sheer, impossible deception, the Father sent the gods' fleet messenger Hermes, to Epimetheus, bringing her, a gift, nor did Epimetheus remember to think how

² Calling it a box arose from an early translation error (Houtzager 2003:195).

Prometheus had told him never to accept a gift from Olympian Zeus, but always to send it back, for fear it might prove to be an evil for mankind. He took the evil, and only perceived it when he possessed her.

Since before this time the races of men had been living on earth free from all evils, free from laborious work, and free from all wearing sickness that bring their fates down on men [for men grow old suddenly in the midst of misfortune]; but the woman, with her hands lifting away the lid from the great jar, scattered its contents, and her design was sad troubles for mankind. Hope was the only spirit that stayed there in the unbreakable closure of the jar, under its rim, and could not fly forth abroad, for the lid of the great jar closed down first and contained her; this was by the will of cloud-gathering Zeus of the aegis; but there are other troubles by thousands that hover about men, for the earth is full of evil things, and the sea is full of them; there are sicknesses that come to men by day, while in the night moving of themselves they haunt us, bringing sorrow to mortals, and silently, for Zeus of the counsels took the voice out of them. (Hesiod 1991:29-31)

The variations of the Mead of Poetry story are discussed in the paper “Odin, the Well, and the Mead”. The Klinte Stone shown in *Figure 2* (described in the paper “Interpreting the Gotland Memorial Stones”) could also be showing an alternate version of the same myth.

Figure 2.
Klinte Stone showing “The Mead of Poetry” myth



The sequence of pictures shows a woman going to a room or perhaps a pit that is filled with snakes, with a bearded figure within (who is sometimes believed to be Gunnar from the Sigurd story, which makes some sense). Snakes are nipping at him while one is being grabbed by the woman. In the next panel the woman carries the snake to be given to a bearded man (Odin?) with a defeated guard nearby. The rest of the tale could be made to reflect the Mead story: Odin sends the snake through a hole in the wall to obtain the Mead, then it escapes through the same hole, and in the artistic representation could be spitting it into Odin’s mouth. The eagle is nearby which may have been used both to transport Odin there and to permit his flight, while the two occupants of the large hall are shooting arrows out the hole at him. There remain two other relevant figures: a cow and another figure standing on the opposite side of the house. Everything equates with the relevant details of the Mead of Poetry myth but for one thing, the absence of the mead itself.

To look for a possible answer to this question, if it illustrates a different variant of the myth, it might be possible to look for an explanation within the mythology of the Rig Veda. Specifically, the “place of the cow” being a reference to the Moon³, although it is impossible to recreate an oral narrative from the artistic representation beyond what has already been attempted. Another interesting question here is the presence of a guardian at this hall’s front whom Odin presumably killed prior to sending in the snake. He could be a remnant of the giant Mimir: the guardian of the Well becomes the guardian of the hall that houses the Mead. It could be the only direct link between the Mead of Poetry myth and Mimir, for such a figure is absent from the Edda version, however the figure might merely be that of Baugi.

Thus in recreating the story along these lines from the artistic portrayal on the Klinte memorial stone the sequence is: (Odin arrives on an eagle and persuades Gunnlod to help him to obtain the Mead.) Gunnlod goes to a room filled with snakes, chooses one that she then brings to Odin. Odin defeats the guard then drills a hole through the wall and lets the snake enter the hall to swallow the Mead. Then the snake escapes out of the same hole and spits the Mead into Odin’s mouth, as the occupants shoot arrows out the hole at him. On having obtained the mead Odin then escapes on the back of the eagle.

It should be emphasized that there is nothing to verify such an interpretation, apart from the suggestions already made. For instance, there is nothing that proves the figures are Gunnlod or Odin, yet there is at least reason to suppose they could be. Although it is difficult to imagine that any forthcoming evidence could be used to prove such a thing, unless other written versions of

³ “[In India] the moon is generally a male, for its most popular names, *Candras*, *Indus*, and *Somas*, are masculine; but as *Somas* signifies ambrosia, the moon, as giver of ambrosia, soon came to be considered a milk-giving cow; in fact, moon is one among the various meanings given in Sanskrit to the word *Gâus* (cow). (Gubernatis’ *Zoological Mythology*, i. 18.)” (Harley 1969: 133)

the Mead of Poetry myth were uncovered—which is highly unlikely. Why the Mead story itself would appear depicted on a memorial stone itself remains a mystery.

Bringing the Divine Gift

The motive for creating the first woman is designed as a punishment by Zeus for the theft of fire, which Hesiod describes:

He [Zeus] hid fire; but Prometheus, the powerful son of Iapetos, stole it again from Zeus of the counsels, to give to mortals. He hid it out of the sight of Zeus who delights in thunder in the hollow fennel stalk. (Hesiod 1991: 23-25)

Some have suggested that the bringing fire to men by Prometheus is the same as bringing the mead down to mankind by Odin. Prometheus, whose name means 'forethought', certainly resembles Odin or the wise primeval giant of Germanic mythology, and as originator of mankind (though this is believed to be a rather late attribute of Prometheus).

When comparing each of the different lines of descent, knowing how myths get transformed through time, it ends up being the presence of the elements that is noteworthy, rather than the specific way they come to be arranged or explained. In consideration of the way the Mead of Poetry myth relates to the Indian soma myth, the Prometheus story might well be the same carrying down of some divine substance from heaven (in this case fire), while the Mead of Poetry myth and Mimir the Giant story relate to a mead, the Mead of Poetry version differs specifically through the inclusion of the Gunnlod story.

Thus the essential story of the theft combined to the proto-Pandora story is what produced the Mead of Poetry myth as it was recorded in the Eddas. The Indian version as well as the Mimir variant lack the addition of the Pandora story, and likewise the object on the Moon in these cases is a horse's head or Mimir's head rather than a woman. This might indicate that the Mead myth is more closely related to Greek mythology than it is to either the Indian Soma myth or the Norse Mimir myth, but such simple conclusions cannot be so easily made, since there is no idea as to how fragmentary the recorded mythology has become.

It has also been noticed that the Pandora story, its form and consequences, are quite similar to the story of Eve included in the Book of Genesis:

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that

they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Genesis 2:21-3:07, KJV)

The essential aspects of both myths is that the figure of the woman holds possession of a special element: in Eve's case of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, in the case of Norse myth this is the Mead of Poetry, which is also equivalent to the mead of inspiration (soma) from Indian myth. In the case of Eve it is conscience that is granted (knowledge of right and wrong). In the Pandora story the essential element is 'hope', yet the word also means 'premonition' (Houtzager 2003: 195), which could imply prophetic powers.

In other words, one variant on the idea could be that Prometheus went into heaven and stole the divine powers from the gods, Zeus then sent down to them the girl Pandora, knowing that through her charm she could persuade Epimetheus, and by her capricious nature would wish to open the jar. In this case it was all the divine powers that escaped from Pandora's jar back to the gods, except for prophesy, that got caught in the lid. (The gift of prophesy was a far more potent power among the ancients than mere hope.) In addition, it is likely that this was followed, like the Eve myth, with a prohibition of man ever returning again to the heavens, just as Adam and Eve are exiled from Eden.

It is thus possible that the original myth thus equated the Moon with the powers of prophesy, which is a variation on the idea that the Moon is the power of divine inspiration from Norse and Indian mythology. The idea that Prometheus brought fire down might well have been yet another, perhaps more ancient, variant on the same idea but that sometime in the past they become jumbled.

The details are expectedly not shared but the essential correspondences are. With this in mind is it possible to recreate the hypothesized original myth? It is to some extent, but only by filling

in the gaps among the myths, or even reading between the lines. For instance, in the Mead of Poetry myth there is no mention of Gunnlod having married. It is possible that the image on the Moon actually was not only identified as a woman but as a bride: the long flowing gown and the wreath. Although it is not explicitly stated, the implications are that both Epimetheus received the maiden Pandora as his bride, and Odin used courtship as a means to obtain the Mead from Gunnlod.⁴ Thus the parallels between the myths rely upon some reconstruction of missing but implied information.

That there are such close parallels between the Pandora story and the Eve story could imply that they too actually descend from the same source. Thus it is possible that the image in the Moon could also be viewed as Eve, in an early version of the myth, handing a piece of fruit off to Adam. Although at such an early time they perhaps conceived of Eve only as being the progenitor woman, unrelated to the idea of “original sin”. The myth no doubt itself transformed over time or for specific purpose, where the origin of it was hopelessly lost. However, here again there is very little that can actually be used to prove it; it would really be dependent upon proving that the Pandora and Eve stories were actually descended from the same myth.

It is interesting to note, however, the appearance the snake makes in both the Eve and Gunnlod myths. This could be a reference to what appears as a long slithery shape behind the woman on the Moon. Thus the myth was essentially merely acting as a description for what they were seeing. Yet the didactic purpose for each differs: the Gunnlod story has Odin stealing the Mead itself (which is the same in the case of Indra and the soma), in the Pandora story punishment for the sin of stealing fire is eased with either Hope or Prophecy, while in the

⁴ The Norse poem *Havamal* states that Odin betrayed Suttung (Gunnlod’s father) at the feast and caused Gunnlod to weep. Such a mention implies this was a wedding feast after her betrothal to Odin.

Biblical version there is no redemption offered at all (until, of course, the arrival of the New Testament). A partial comparison of the different myths is presented in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3.
Equivalences among of the Moon myths

Myth	Woman	Divine Gift	Man	Retribution
Biblical	Eve (first woman)	Conscience	Adam (first man)	Hardships
Greek	Pandora (first woman)	Prophecy	Prometheus	Hardships
Norse-Mead	Gunnlod	Poetic Inspiration	Odin	-
Norse-Mimir	-	Wisdom (Prophecy)	Odin	-
Indian	-	Expansion/Prophecy	Indra	-

The original myth ('myths' if they arose independently) would have arisen from a recognition of the figure on the Moon, thus seeing a woman on the Moon might well have asked who she was. Clearly they figured that the Moon figure of the woman was the first of all women (rather as the Norse believed that all swans on Earth descended from the two swan illusions visible on the Moon). It is not known whether such people would have noted the long dress and the wreath; it is possible they may actually have come to imitate this, by themselves dressing their brides in long gowns with a wreath of flowers on her head. The purpose of this would be to make the woman a representation of the goddess.⁵

As for the reason, it is not unusual for people who ask questions as to why some things are immortal but human life is short, determine that the gods in the heavens possess powers beyond human reach. The four substances: prophesy, mead of poetry, mead of inspiration, fruit of the tree of knowledge are similar but clearly vary enough that it is difficult to know which would resemble the initial form most closely. It is something that was considered to be a gift of the gods, something that was brought down to mankind from heaven. Such a gift might have in its

⁵ The word 'bride' ostensibly derives from the goddess Briede.

earliest form been fire, yet this is not a common myth; it only exists in the Greek Prometheus story; thus the easiest to accept is some form of plant concoction used as a drug. Through time the myth might have been retained but the actual substance changed depending on the place and time.

Prophecy and the Moon

What then is the characteristic of the Moon that makes it the source of inspiration? It becomes more difficult to answer this because although the myths themselves convey basic information there is little detail about the origins of divination and prophesy. There is no question that early humans would have believed a picture on the Moon would have been there for them to see, but it is more difficult to evaluate what they believed it was communicating to them. Some of this has to do with the perception that the Moon, because of its phases, was thought to be a bowl or a well, but this doesn't provide enough information about how it became associated with things on earth that were then presumed to have come from the gods. The essential question is: which came first? Yet this is not necessarily the relevant question.

Looking at each of the instances, the Indian soma is described as if it were a real substance, although the identity of the specific plant was not retained. Thus this fits the idea that the Moon was associated with a drug. The Mead of Poetry was essentially the gift of poetic inspiration, rather like the Muses of the Aegean world, who filled the poets head with the appropriate words and phrases, yet the mead in this case is used merely as a metaphor. In the case of the Eve story the idea that a fruit expands consciousness may have originally been associated with a drug,

similar to or identical to soma. Soma is not necessarily different from the Persian drink *haoma*⁶, thus it might have been believed that this “consciousness expanding” drug was acquired by humans prior to their expulsion from Eden, and like the soma was the only divine gift that found its way to humanity, before the garden was closed to further human trespassing. The notion that the myth contains is that woman was both to blame for the fall of man (lack of access to other divine gifts, in Eve’s case the Tree of Life) but also responsible for attaining the source and perhaps was to become the primary practitioner of the arts of divination.

The question then is whether or not the Pandora story, which speaks of the jar, was originally more similar to the pot that contained the mead; that is, the original idea was that the jar actually contained a juice of prophesy. This itself would make it more like the Norse version, which was itself perhaps the same very drug prior to its association specifically with poetry.⁷ Thus it is possible to imagine that the initial use of psycho-active drugs, that the drink itself was thought to be a gift of the gods, and that it somehow came from the Moon according to the typical method of associating like-kinds, common enough in mythology and other pre-scientific conceptions.

If such a thing is to be believed, it is not a far stretch to presume that drugs were viewed as being the door-opening to higher consciousness, and the phases of the Moon are sometimes viewed in myths to be an opening and closing door. Thus the Moon was associated with but not clearly essential to the ritualistic practice of divination through the means of communing with spirits who had knowledge of the future.⁸

The Moon was the object that was considered the source of the drug but appears not to have played any direct role in the actual practice itself, although in many other instances the Moon is

⁶ The likely identity of the soma/haoma drug is ephedrine, a stimulant rather than a hallucinogen.

⁷ The ephedra plant that produces ephedrine does not grow in northern Europe.

⁸ In Sweden great influence is ascribed to the moon, not only in regulating the weather, but as affecting all the affairs of man’s daily life. (Harley 1969: 193) It thus might be directly appealed to.

held to hold magical properties, such as prescriptions proclaiming the additional benefits of harvesting medicinal herbs or drawing water in moonlight (Grimm 2004: 720). This uses the idea of like-kinds as a means to intensify potency: the Moon thus being associated with both magic herbs and water.

Conclusion

The Norse Gunnlod myth and the Greek Pandora myth are surely similar, and while differing on significant points are at least both derived from the Moon image of the seated woman. There are also close enough relations between the Pandora myth and the Biblical Eve myth, as well as the Gunnlod myth to the Indian Soma myth, to suggest all four have a common origin. The Indian version, however, lacks the presence of a woman, which like the Norse Mimir myth, and would appear to be an alternate older version. Both of these identify on the Moon a head, that is specifically beheaded in the myth, where the Moon itself is viewed to be male. What is not known is whether the male Moon myth was later combined with the female Moon myth, or whether one or the other was left out in later retellings.

The essential form of the common myth is derived from the woman image on the Moon and the conception of a gift of the gods that has come down to earth. Yet myths tend to become retold through time, especially with the addition of new details or the transformation of its meaning. Thus although the myths recorded in historical times differ greatly, this does not mean they didn't all derive from a single form. The depth of these differences indicates that the initial

version would have probably arisen at some time in the Stone Age, perhaps the Neolithic timeframe, even though no direct evidence of its existence comes from that time.

Tracking it requires specific knowledge of when the Odinic tradition split from the Indian tradition, both of which contain the Moon story: one as the Mimir myth and the other as the soma myth. Yet both of these lack the inclusion of the woman figure. It is likely that the woman image was recognized by humans long before they developed a mythology about her. Her initial role might have been that of a goddess, perhaps one of the early reasons why the Moon was viewed by some cultures to be female. (Those who saw the Man in the Moon might then have likely viewed it to be male.) Indeed, the female variant appears to have arisen in the south where the Moon was viewed as female (Selene, Luna), while in northern Europe it was viewed as male (Mimir, Heimdall).⁹ Elements from both of these are combined in the Mead of Poetry myth.

If it arose in Mesopotamia and spread from there, then it would have been in Europe after the time when the Indian and Odinic traditions split, which occurred circa when the Aryans arrived in the Indian subcontinent, which is most recently believed to have occurred around 6000 BC. Thus subsequently the woman version could have arrived and become mixed into Greek and Germanic mythologies.¹⁰ There is nothing that aids in proving that a Mesopotamian original was the source of it, but would be possible if it could be shown to have also become the Biblical Eve myth.¹¹ It is also interesting that the known drug soma/haoma existed in Persia and India¹², yet the Eve and soma myths are, among the five, the most unlike one another.

⁹ “[In Chaldea] the moon was named Sin and Hur. Hurki, Hur, and Ur was the chief place of worship, for the satellite was then considered as being masculine. The name for the moon in Armenian was *Khaldi*, which has been considered by some to be the origin of the word Chaldee, signifying moon worshippers.” (*Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, by Thomas Inman. London, 1872, i. 93.)” (Harley 1969: 90-91)

¹⁰ Indeed it is true that the Mimir myth was ancient enough that it has not even survived in any coherent form, while “The Mead of Poetry” is the essential Odinic myth contained in the Eddas.

¹¹ The Mesopotamian “Epic of Gilgamesh” has the hero Gilgamesh seeking a plant at the bottom of the sea that will restore his youth, but it is instead consumed by the snake. An etiological explanation for why the snake is “reborn” every time it sheds its skin.

In these cases the incipient form of the myth appears to tell the story of a woman who acquired the gift of prophecy by taking a fruit or juice from the realm of the gods. The Indian and Norse Mimir variants do not include a woman in the myth, while it is essential in the Pandora, Gunnlod, and Eve variants. The conception held by the Eve and Pandora stories is that the first man and woman acquired the drug, yet due to the result of some deterministic violation they were excluded from the attainment of any further divine gifts. This one gift alone did they retain on earth; others that would satisfy human wishes, whether it be eternal life or youth or plenty or ease in childbirth, were not acquired by mankind. In the case of the Biblical myth, it is specifically a punishment, arising from their disobedience of Yahweh, against the woman that she experience such pain in childbirth, the man to toil and experience endless hardships, while similarly neither could escape old age and mortality in the end. The northern European variants of the myth are not so pessimistic, but are also some 2,000 years further removed from the earlier tellings.

While the Moon itself appears as the source for the drug, it is not clear whether the powers of the Moon played any active role in divinistic practices, such as through direct entreaties and appeals.¹³ Specific inclusion of lunar imagery, which could be anything from a crescent Moon symbol to a floating face or head, in relation to depictions of divination, would suggest the success of the practice arose from the power of the Moon itself.

¹² The true representation of Persian myth may have been retained somewhere in the Zoroastrian *Avesta*, which shows similarities with both the Rig Veda and certain traditions of Norse mythology.

¹³ An image of the moon was carved on boundary stones. (Grimm 2004: 708)

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