

# Opening Pandora's Box:

## Identification and Attribution of the Greek Myth Series

by Adrienne Trunk Boggs

For many years three Aesthetic patterns depicting figures from Ancient Greek mythology have existed in the TCC database with no details as to their possible connection. These patterns are Epimetheus and Prometheus, produced by Pratt & Simpson (registered on 10 November 1882) and "Pandora," produced by Wallis Gimson & Co. with the same registration date (Figs. 1-3). The identical registration date and similarity in style and content mark these patterns as part of a single series, known in the database as the Greek Myth Series, but the connection between the two firms was not clear.

Through my collecting I later came across the Pratt & Simpson



**Figure 1: Epimetheus plate by Pratt & Simpson, Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #11477**

Epimetheus pattern produced by Wallis Gimson & Co. with the "Pandora" pattern title (Figure 4). I then discovered two additional "Pandora" patterns produced by Baker & Co. (Figs. 5 & 6). Both feature the round portrait of Epimetheus, one possesses an additional portrait of Pandora, and both have all the same stylistic elements and bear the same registry diamond. It seems that although Pratt & Simpson did not assign a name to this collection of connected patterns, subsequent firms who produced them assigned to them the name "Pandora." While the mystery of the pattern series name was seemingly solved, the connection between the three different



**Figure 2: Prometheus platter by Pratt & Simpson, Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #11485 (Credit: Adrienne T. Boggs)**



**Figure 3: "Pandora" plate by Wallis Gimson & Co., Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #9727 (Credit: Adrienne T. Boggs)**



Figure 4: "Pandora" platter by Wallis Gimson & Co., Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #20020 (Credit: Adrienne T. Boggs)



Figure 5: "Pandora" plate by Baker & Co., Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #20014 (Credit: Adrienne T. Boggs)



Figure 6: "Pandora" teapot by Baker & Co., Rd. 10 November 1882. TCC Pattern #21182

The Companies Act, 1862.  
 John Pratt and Company Limited.  
**N**OTICE is hereby given, that at a Special General Meeting of Members of John Pratt and Company Limited, duly convened and held at the offices of the said Company, at Lane Delph, Fenton, Staffordshire, on the 20th day of May, 1873; and at a subsequent Special General Meeting of Members, also duly convened and held at the offices of the said Company, at Lane Delph aforesaid, on the 10th day of June, 1873, the following resolution was duly passed and confirmed:—  
 "That the Company be wound up voluntarily, and that Mr. Joseph Jones, of Shelton, Hanley, Law Clerk, be appointed Liquidator of the Company."  
 J. Gimson, Chairman.

Figure 07: The London Gazette, 17 June 1873, Pg. 2901.

Staffordshire firms was not discernible.

Pratt & Simpson, the firm who registered the "Pandora" patterns, was a partnership between John Pratt and Joseph Simpson. They operated at the Lane Delph Pottery in Fenton between 1878 and 1882. At some point John Pratt retired and Joseph Gimson joined the business, which continued on as Pratt & Simpson. Perhaps not coincidentally, Joseph Gimson had been listed as the Chairman of the Members of John Pratt & Co. Ltd. in 1873, which had operated in the Lane Delph Pottery prior to the Pratt & Simpson partnership (Fig. 7).

On 9 March 1882 the partnership between Joseph Simpson and Joseph Gimson, operating as Pratt & Simpson, was dissolved, and the business was carried on by Joseph Gimson (Fig. 8). It would seem Joseph Gimson took Thomas Wallis Gimson on as a partner sometime after 1882, and they operated as Wallis Gimson & Co. at the Lane Delph Pottery. At some point between 1882 and 1888, Joseph Gimson Jr. took

over his father's role in Wallis Gimson & Co. In early 1888 their partnership was dissolved (Fig. 9), and two years later Wallis Gimson & Co. declared bankruptcy (Fig. 10).

The "Pandora" series did not end with the dissolution of Wallis Gimson & Co., as evidenced by the two post-1890 "Pandora" patterns discovered with the Baker & Co. maker's mark. The connection between Pratt & Simpson and Wallis Gimson & Co. via Joseph Gimson Sr. and his son Joseph Gimson Jr. has been identified, but what now was the connection between the former two firms and Baker & Co.? The firm of William Baker & Co. had its roots as far back as 1790, but it did not operate under the name "William Baker & Co." until 1839, when William Baker began running the business alone. After 1868, it seems that "William" was dropped from the name, and the pottery continued on as Baker & Co. with a variety of partners. At some point between 1890 and 1893, after the dissolution of Wallis Gimson & Co., Joseph Gimson Jr. joined Baker & Co. as a partner and continued in that role until late 1893, when the partnership between Joseph Gimson, William Edward Challinor, and Thomas Jones, operating as Baker & Co., was dissolved and the firm continued on as Baker & Co. Ltd. (Fig. 11).

So many names and dates can be confusing! See the Timeline (Fig. 12) for clarification.

From its registration in 1882 by Pratt & Simpson to its production in subsequent years by Wallis Gimson & Co. and Baker & Co., the one common thread tying all the "Pandora" patterns together is Joseph Gimson Sr. and his son Joseph Gimson Jr. While there is no evidence to prove this theory, it cannot be coincidence that these patterns were produced by three firms in which Gimson had a partnership and went into production with new maker's marks after the previous firm had dissolved. It is not

**NOTICE** is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, Joseph Gimson and Joseph Simpson, carrying on business as Earthenware Manufacturers, at the Lane Delph Pottery, in Park-street, in Fenton, in the county of Stafford, under the style of Pratt and Simpson, has this day been dissolved by mutual consent. All debts owing to and by the said firm will be received and paid by the said Joseph Gimson, who will in future carry on the said business on his own account.—Dated this 9th day of March, 1882.  
*J. Gimson.*  
*J. Simpson.*

Figure 08: The London Gazette, 14 March 1882, Pg. 1146.

**NOTICE** is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, Joseph Gimson the younger and Thomas Wallis Gimson, carrying on business as Earthenware Manufacturers, under the style of Wallis, Gimson, and Company, at the Lane Delph Pottery, Fenton, in the county of Stafford, has this day been dissolved by mutual consent.—Dated this 15th day of February, 1888.  
*Joseph Gimson, jr.*  
*Thos. W. Gimson.*

Figure 09: The London Gazette, 21 February 1888, Pg. 1171.

entirely uncommon to find two or more unconnected potteries producing the same pattern, simultaneously or not, and fairly common to find patterns produced by multiple firms connected by shared partners, which is most likely the case here. ❖

**In the Matter of a Deed of Assignment for the Benefit of Creditors, executed on the 6th day of November, 1889, by Thomas Wallis Gimson, trading under the style of Wallis Gimson and Co., as an Earthenware Manufacturer, at Fenton, in the county of Stafford.**  
**T**HE creditors of the abovenamed Thomas Wallis Gimson who have not already sent in claims and signified their assent are required, on or before the 17th day of March, 1890, to send their names and addresses, and particulars of their claims, addressed to the Trustees of Wallis Gimson and Co., Lane Delph Pottery, Fenton, Staffordshire, or in default they will be excluded from the benefit of the Dividend intended to be declared.—Dated the 3rd day of March, 1890.  
**LLEWELLYN and ACKRILL, Tunstall, Staffordshire, Solicitors for the Trustees.**

Figure 10: The London Gazette, 7 March 1890, Pg. 1293

**NOTICE** is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, Joseph Gimson, William Edward Challinor, and Thomas Jones, carrying on business as Earthenware Manufacturers, at the Fenton Potteries, Fenton, in the county of Stafford, under the style or firm of Baker and Co., has been dissolved, by mutual consent, as from the 29th day of September, 1893. All debts due to and owing by the said late firm will be received and paid by Baker and Co. Limited, Fenton Potteries, Stoke-upon-Trent, by whom the said business will be continued.—Dated this 4th day of October, 1893.  
**JOSEPH GIMSON.**  
**WM. E. CHALLINOR.**  
**THOS. JONES.**

Figure 11: The London Gazette, 20 October 1893, Pg. 5910.

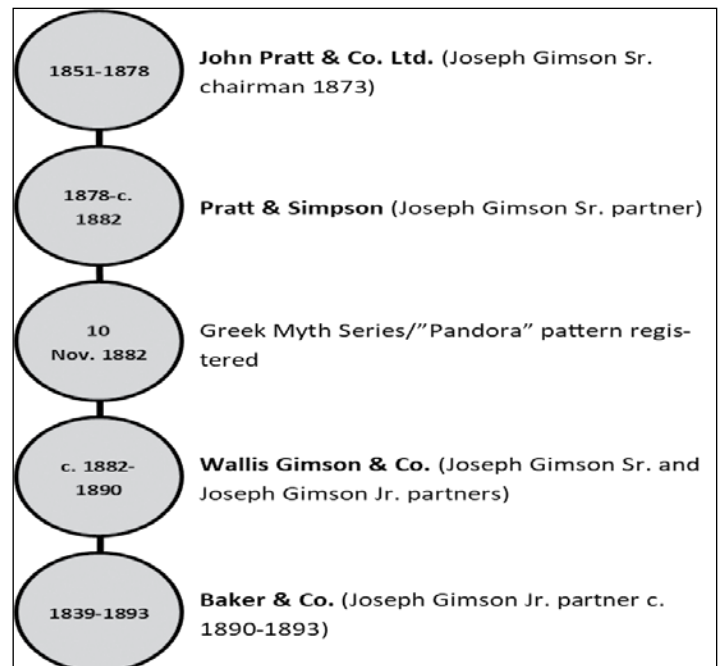


Figure 12: Timeline