Interpreting Votives, Interpreting Women: 
The Acropolis *Korai* and the Social Implications of Their Dedication 

by 

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For my family.
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Introduction

Why the Korai of the Acropolis?

Viewing the korai for the first time seems to be a similar experience for many archaeologists and scholars. Since these votive statues—depictions of women in what was once brightly-painted marble—were unearthed over 100 years ago on the Athenian Acropolis, those who studied them have commonly spoken of their great feminine beauty and the visual delight which they elicited. People’s first impressions have also often related to the lively and individual nature of the faces and appearances of the korai; the prim, haughty countenance of Acr. 674 (Fig 3); the stoic, round face of Acr. 672 (Fig 4); and the softer bone structure and pleasant, “Archaic smile” of Acr. 675 (Fig 5) as compared to the more prominent cheekbones and quieter, contemplative expression of Acr. 684 (Fig 6). Henri Lechat wrote of Acr. 674 and the other Acropolis korai in 1924:

“C’est une des nombreuses figures féminines où l’art grec s’efforçait d’atteindre à toujours plus de vie et de beauté dans une représentation anonyme et impersonnelle de la femme. A cette conception purement grecque ressortissent toutes les figures de corés...les traits particuliers y soient nombreux.”¹

The korai are for many both stunning in their beauty and feminine form and for some, shockingly human in their diversity of face and body. As images of women on the Acropolis, they represent the half of archaic Athenian society which was kept very much away from public eyes, and denied the rights of full citizens. They cause one to wonder not only who they were, but also how their public representation in

¹ Henri Lechat, *Sculptures Grecques Antiques*, (Paris: Hachette, 1925) 18. In English, this translates roughly as, “[Acr. 674] is one of the numerous female figures in which Greek art attempts to achieve always more life and beauty in an anonymous and impersonal representation of a woman. To this purely Greek conception belong all of the korai...the individual traits there are numerous.”
sanctuaries fit into or pushed the boundaries of the extremely rigid, limited roles of women in Athenian—and Greek—society.

In order to look into those questions, I have chosen to limit my examination of the korai to the statues on the Athenian Acropolis, and have done so for several reasons. Firstly, the Acropolis group is extensive in both its size and the degree of preservation exhibited by many of the statues, which were buried around the time of the Persian sacking of the site in 480 BCE. Secondly, the korai can be found in multiple locations scattered across the ancient Greek world, and while visually they seem to fall under the umbrella of the same statuary type, the differing local traditions and cultural idiosyncrasies inherent in such geographically distant locations provide a number of variables affecting statue interpretation for which we cannot account. Finally, from a practical standpoint, an examination of every single group of korai from all locations at which they have been found would require a much more extensive period of time and body of research than is permitted within the scope of this work. I will include a brief discussion of a limited number of non-Acropolis korai and other non-Acropolis statuary, but only as they pertain to direct examination of the Acropolis korai and provide further insight into the identities and social implications of the Acropolis group.

The specific goals of my research are: 1) to conduct an in-depth study of the previous research on the Acropolis korai which has been published by scholars; 2) to critically discuss those scholars’ evaluations of the identity or identities of the Acropolis korai and; 3) to postulate as to the social implications of their dedication,

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and the nature of their dedication as it relates to the boundaries of women’s roles in archaic Greek society. Thus, Chapter One provides a summary of objective information about the korai—what we know to be true and those facts about which all scholars agree. This mainly pertains to their physical appearance and the small body of evidence available from associated dedicatory inscriptions. Chapter Two contains an explanation of the four main theories of identity for the Acropolis korai which have been previous published and debated by various scholars, for the purpose of acquainting the reader with the present state of discussion and debate in as objective a manner as possible. In Chapter Three, I will present my own critical analysis of the current identity theories for the korai, as well as my own theory for a new method of identification. Finally, in Chapter Four, I will examine the social implications of the dedication of the Acropolis korai, how we can use them to learn more about women in the Archaic Period, and how they do or do not fit within the boundaries that defined women’s roles in archaic Greece.
Map of Sites Where *Korai* Have Been Found
(Fig 1)

Plan of the Athenian Acropolis Showing Building Phases (Fig 2)

Chapter One

The Korai as a Body of Artifacts: What We Know

In the most general sense of the word, the term *kore* translates as ‘young woman,’ or ‘daughter.’ It was also a proper name given to Persephone, daughter of Demeter and wife of Hades, in the context of cult. The *korai* discussed in this thesis are female marble statues, dedicated as votives—offerings left indefinitely at a sacred location or place of worship for a deity—and so-named because they resemble young women of generally marriageable age. Dedicated during the Archaic Period between 660 and 480 BCE, they are found at sites on islands and in regions all over the geographical realm of Archaic Greece, including Samos, Didyma, Miletus, Theangela, Klaros, Erythrai, Klaizomenai, Delos, Naxos, Andros, Thera, Paros, Amorgos, Thasos, Chios, Kyrene, Aigina, Rhodes, Boeotia, and at various locations throughout the Cyclades and the mainland of Attica. The majority of these locations lie along the southern Levantine coast or are themselves islands between mainland Greece and the Levant (see map, Fig 1). The largest and most well-known group of *korai*, however, come from the Acropolis of Archaic Athens, where their dedications did not begin until 570 BCE. Excepting a small number of *korai* and statues from other sites introduced within a comparative framework, the group which this thesis will discuss shall be that from the Acropolis.

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4 Karakasi 5
5 Karakasi 117
Korai on the Athenian Acropolis

On the 24th of January in 1886, under the eye of Greece’s King George I, fourteen korai were unearthed on the Acropolis near the Erechtheion (See map, Fig 2). Since their discovery, the korai have been the subjects of a number of detailed archaeological surveys and publications, many of which pertain to the nature of their dedication and either their individual identities or collective identity as a group. These scholars’ varying theories and interpretations will be discussed at a later time, but I would like to note here two of the major publications on the subject; The first complete catalog of the Acropolis korai was published in 1939 by Ernst Langlotz, and in 1968, Gisela M. A. Richter produced a major survey which included an invaluable array of detailed image plates. This publication in particular greatly increased the number of individuals to whom a visual understanding of the korai was available, and in turn, increased the pool of scholars who were able to study the statues and contribute to the discussion surrounding them.  

Since the excavation of the original fourteen korai, archaeologists have made numerous other finds, though many of them are small somatic fragments. An analysis of both moderately complete statues and smaller fragments found in the Archaic stratigraphic levels of the Athenian Acropolis suggests that the MNI (minimum number of individuals) for the korai is 75, making them the largest category of votive statues found on the site as compared with 69 individual offerings from other categories of statuary. During the Persian sack of the Acropolis in 480 BCE, the

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Karakasi 11

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Greek votive offerings were torn down and many were partially or completely
destroyed; it is generally believed that many of the korai which have since been
recovered were buried by the Athenians upon their return to the city after the Persians
abandoned it a year later.\(^8\) The resulting protection from the elements allowed for the
preservation of some of the original pigments that had been applied to the marble, and
archaeologists and art historians have, in some cases, been able to plausibly recreate
the decorative schemes of certain statues.

**Visual Appearance**

Central to my examination of the identities of the korai—as well as a critical
analysis of previous scholarly work—is a discussion of the various physical traits
exhibited by the statues. I present here a basic overview of the korai’s appearance so
that the reader may understand the visual aspects of the statues which I will discuss in
the context of my own and other scholars’ observations. The following section
contains only irrefutable facts about the korai and their component parts and
attributes; all issues of debate and differences in interpretation of meaning are
purposefully excluded here, and will be addressed in a separate context.

As the korai are often lumped together into a single category of artifacts and
often discussed as generic female offerings, one might expect them to appear
essentially indistinguishable from one another, but this is far from the case. Though
their identities are rigorously debated, it can be stated as fact that they do appear

\(^8\) Keesling 268
different from one another with regard to their height, clothing, facial features, hairstyles, physical structure, and the attributes that many of them held in their hands.

Color and Pigmentation

Plato states in Republic IV that only through the addition of painted decoration did statues, particularly those of the Archaic Period, attain their “full and carefully calculated effect.” 9 Traces of pigment still visible on some of the marble hint at the rich colors which would have contributed so greatly to the overall appearance of the korai. W. Lermann, shortly after the original korai were unearthed, judged the skill of the painters to have been extraordinary, owing to the fact that, “…we can still identify the cross-stitch technique with which the original embroidery patterns were executed.” 10 Exact reconstructions of the original decorative schemata are simply not possible, but reconstructions reflecting probable decorative patterns and plausible original colors have been produced for some of the korai. According to Gisela Richter, the korai are our chief source of understanding for polychromy in Greek sculpture as a whole.

While not completely covered in paint, facial features, hair ornaments and jewelry were often colored solidly, and sections of clothing were normally done in solids with accenting patterns. The main colors used, as reported by Richter, were red, blue, yellow, brown, black, white, and green; the mediums through which they were applied were often gum, glue, or the whites and yolks of eggs. The use of these

9 Karakasi 122
10 Karakasi 122
materials to apply the pigments is what results in the present disintegration of the colors.\textsuperscript{11}

With the assistance of a multitude of collaborators, Vinzenz Brinkmann and Raimund Wünsche have put together a book entitled \textit{Gods in Color} which details the process of analysis of the marble of extant statues, and provides possible color reconstructions for a number of archaic and classical sculptures. The only Acropolis \textit{kore} discussed in this particular work is the \textit{Peplos Kore}, Acr. 679, but the stunning reconstructions which Brinkmann and Wünsche provide are an excellent example of the type of original polychromous decoration on the \textit{korai}, which is often difficult to imagine on the mostly marble-white and faded statues.\textsuperscript{12} These colored reconstructions are based on scientific examination of the extant marble, consisting of a combination of UV-aided observation and photography, as well as microscopy and the use of a raking spotlight, shone at an angle to better illuminate preliminary incisions and other markings on the statues.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Size and Stature}

Debate regarding classifications of size for \textit{korai} on the Acropolis elicits different opinions from scholars. Ernst Langlotz said of the \textit{korai} that,

“…most have the modest height of a scarcely full-grown girl, a few are roughly half life-size, and even fewer are only a fraction of natural size.”\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11} Richter 14
\textsuperscript{13} Brinkmann and Wünsche 25
\textsuperscript{14} Ernst Langlotz, “Die Koren” in (ed.) Ernst Langlotz, Hans Schrader and Walter H. Schuchardt, \textit{Die archaischen Marmorbildwerk der Akropolis} (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1939) 11
Katerina Karakasi has somewhat condensed Langlotz’s categories and divided the *korai* into five size groups which I find quite simple and logical; the case of size is one for which I do not think a complex classification system is necessary or helpful. Of those *korai* for whom we have enough extant material to estimate their size, we know that eight statues were greater than life-size (larger than 165 cm). Eight appear to have been life-size (between 165-140 cm), 27 were smaller than life-size (between 140-100 cm), 17 were the size of ‘statuettes’ (between 100-75 cm), and 13 were ‘smaller statuettes’ (under 75 cm). In the case of 34 of these *korai*, height estimates were made due to lack of an extant head or an incomplete extant head for the statue.\(^\text{15}\) As far as distribution of dedications of *korai* of different sizes, there are two small bubbles of larger-than-life-size statues dedicated between 530-530 BCE, and again between 510-490 BCE, each consisting of four dedications. The numbers of life-size statue dedications appear to be relatively evenly spread out between 560-490 BCE, but in both the smaller-than-life-size and the large statuette categories, the years 510-480 BCE saw an increase in dedications with 63% and 70% of dedications falling between those years respectively.\(^\text{16}\)

The *korai* also differ in their physical proportions. Some display a stockier build, with wider shoulders and muscular bodies, resembling Caryatids—similar statues of women used as pillars in architectural contexts and shaped to bear heavy

\(^\text{15}\) Karakasi 117
\(^\text{16}\) Karakasi 162
loads—whereas others were given flatter, slighter physiques.\textsuperscript{17} Henri Lechat described the visible strength to which their body structures attests:

\begin{quote}
“\ldots puis [une coré] a les épaules larges, les membres muscles et vigoureux; elle semble, quant à la structure du corps, plus homme que femme.”\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

This description is somewhat less flattering than others they have received, but does attest to the highly robust nature of their appearances. As Stieber points out, there is also some variation between the levels of physical development which have been achieved by the various statues. All appear as young women, but some are more physically mature than others with larger hips and breasts, such as Acr. 680 (Fig. 7).

Acr. 670 (Fig 8) provides a good example of a kore which still possesses a somewhat feminine figure, but has smaller breasts and appears to be a younger adolescent.

Variations between some of the korai’s bodies are quite subtle. Having examined them exhaustively in person, Mary Stieber points out the,

\begin{quote}
“Michelangelesque…broad shoulders,” and, “stocky, muscular legs,” (Fig 9) of Acr. 598; the fact that, “Acr. 675 (Fig 5) is full-bosomed although petite in her proportions, a characteristic which is not affected by actual size (small), and in possession of narrow, sloping shoulders and a disproportionately large head,” while, “Acr. 685 (Fig 10) is tall and well proportioned, with fine, feminine-looking shoulders, a medium-sized bosom, narrow waist, with hips swelling in proportion, and long, slender legs.”\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

These are distinctions which may be harder to see in printed images, but should be visible to a careful viewer.

\textsuperscript{17} Mary Stieber, \textit{The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai} (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004) 78

\textsuperscript{18} Lechat (1925) 10. This translates roughly to, “\ldots then a kore has large shoulders, strong and muscular appendages; she seems, as to the structure of her body, more man than woman.”

\textsuperscript{19} Stieber 78
Hair

The hair of the korai is noteworthy for the wide spectrum of styles, textures, and related accessories that adorned them. Mary Stieber observes that no two korai model exactly the same style, and asserts that Acr. 682 wears the most elaborate coif, with six different types of crimps, curls, and plaits (Fig 11). The elaborate nature of the hairstyles runs a long spectrum, from relatively simple, textured hair like that of Acr. 679, also known as the Peplos Kore, who wears a leather or fabric band around the back of her head and displays two distinct hair textures (Fig 12), to the more elaborate styles of myriad others similar to Acr. 682. Whether these hairstyles were meant to be viewed as being composed of the woman’s own natural hair, or whether viewers were supposed to assume the use of wigs is uncertain, and Richter mentions this possibility as well. Some of the korai also wore ornaments in their hair, often made of metal, and metal was also sometimes used to form separate locks of hair that were attached in addition to the hair depicted in marble.

Hair color among the korai is also quite diverse. In many cases some pigment was either present on the marble at the time of excavation and was recorded in detail, or still remains on the statues today, and as previously stated, the analysis of their polychromy has been extensive. Hair colors span a range of reds, browns, and even blondes, differing in hue and intensity to a relatively noticeable degree. Though red is the most common pigment that remains, this is largely due to preservation and exposure to the elements as regards the makeup of the pigment, and scholars have

20 Stieber 63
21 Richter 13
22 Richter 13
been able to deduce original colors based on pigments that may have changed or faded since their original application and display. Some of the red, however, may in fact be representative of the original visual appearance of the korai. According to Mary Stieber, Acr. 640 has “wine-red” hair, Acr. 685 has “blue-red or crimson” hair, and Ernst Langlotz describes Acr. 649 as having “carmine red hair” with a blue “gleam”. The remaining blue pigment suggests the possibility that these korai also originally had shades of brown pigment, but some others can be more positively identified as having had true red hair. Stieber identifies the hair of Acr. 696 as having been characterized as “lively red”, and Dickins once described the hair of Acr. 662 as, “the most brilliant red preserved in the museum.” Acr. 679 may also be a candidate for true red hair, as the pigments on her clothing match those still remaining on her hair. Though it is possible she wore brown clothing to match her hair, the typical colors associated with the korai’s archaic garments make red clothing much more likely than brown.

Blonde hair seems to have existed among the korai as well, though is evident in fewer instances than we see for hair ranging from various browns to reds; Shades range from reddish, strawberry blonde to bright, nearly white blonde. Acr. 605, Acr. 639, and Acr. 664 all have remnants of yellow and yellow-ochre pigment on their hair, and Acr. 612 is adorned with hair bearing both traces of reddish and yellow components. Acr. 687 also has yellow and ochre-red hair, the coloring from which has run down her cheeks and face, leaving a stain. Acr. 676 has hair that appears

23 Stieber 66
24 Stieber 67
25 Stieber 67
nearly colorless, with only faint traces of yellow visible through various parts of her hair at present, and at the end of the spectrum are Acr. 673, Acr. 680, Acr. 686, and Acr. 684 who have no remaining pigment on their hair whatsoever. They are otherwise quite detailed in sculptural decoration, and it seems likely that they either had hair so fair the pigment is gone and was barely present to begin with, or that their hair was colored with a pigment different from the others which has not survived time.26

Eyes

As with the hair of the korai, the most commonly-visible pigments remaining on the statues’ eyes are various hues of red, which often accompany remnants of red pigments in the hair—presumably the remains of relatively closely-matching hair and eye color, and as previously discussed in the context of hair, most likely the remaining traces of what was once some form of brown.27 Hair and eye color were not required to match, however, and as before, the reds which are preserved are not identical, but rather encompass a spectrum of hues achieved through a combination of pigments. Sometimes criticized for misperceiving color, Guy Dickins characterized many korai with yellow-ochre pigments where other cataloguers have not. This phenomenon, however, supports the idea that yellow-ochre and related colors tend to fade over the years where the red pigments do not, in that Guy Dickins as an earlier viewer likely saw the pigments at a different stage of their deterioration. Some other eye colors are still represented today, however, mostly in the form of inlays or

26Stieber 68
27Stieber 46
absence of pigment. Stieber presents Acr. 681 as an example of a *korai* who was most likely decorated with eyes of inlaid glass and inset eyelashes, separate from her marble face. Acr. 682 probably displayed a similar phenomenon. Acr. 674, again according to Stieber, possesses extraordinarily dark eyes and sockets, while Acr. 688 has gray-blue irises ringed by an incised line, which probably either added visual emphasis or helped control the flow of wet pigment during the decorative process.\textsuperscript{28}

In their overall placement on the face and relation to the viewer, the eyes of the *korai* fall into two general categories; either they slant slightly inward and gaze down to the ground, lids following the gaze downward, or stare out straight ahead toward the viewer (visible on Acr. 672, 681, 684, 686, and 688).\textsuperscript{29}

*Lips*

Preserved lip colors for the *korai* differ visibly, but they fall mostly within a range of reds, which in this case was probably closer to the original color than can be seen on either the hair or eyes of the *korai*. Most of the statues bear the well-known “Archaic smile”,\textsuperscript{30} which is characterized by slightly upturned corners, resulting in the expression of a somewhat dreamy happiness and liveliness. Whether the smile was meant to convey a certain meaning or simply acted as a sculptural technique to improve the visual experience of the viewer—who was often gazing upwards toward a statue—is unknown, but it is so-named because of its strong presence in archaic sculpture. In general, according to Stieber, there is a correlation between the *korai*

\textsuperscript{28} Stieber 47
\textsuperscript{29} Stieber 48
\textsuperscript{30} Stieber 49
whose gazes trend downward, who bear the Archaic smile, and who have strong, high cheekbones. These features together may have been part of a canon of attributes that were used on statues meant to be displayed above eye level and viewed from the ground.31

Clothing

With the exception of Acr. 679 (Fig 12), often referred to as the Peplos Kore in reference to her garment, the majority of the Acropolis korai all wear some combination of Ionic costume, involving a chiton and himation, and occasionally another sweater-like garment,32 but they do not necessarily wear the Ionic costume in a traditional manner, with varying lengths and draping techniques displayed on the statues as they probably would not have been worn by living women.33 As with all of the other features of the korai, the complexity of their garments can vary, but does extend into the extreme end of the spectrum with a plethora of pleats, folds, and decorative polychromy that, on occasion, leads to debate over which garments are actually present on the statues, or may even represent physically-impossible draping. Payne and Young, two of the early scholars working with the korai, have split the statues into two categories with regard to date of production and a correlation to their dress. The korai produced for the Acropolis belong to the latter category, which, among other things, is identified by use of Ionic garments. Evident on these korai, they observed, is a distinction between garment and body, so that the two exist as

31 Stieber 50
33 Stieber 70
individual entities relating to one another, as opposed to previous statues where the
garments may appear to stand in for the body and disguise it entirely. They cite Acr.
669 (Fig 13) and 594 (Fig 14) as superb examples of the phenomenon of independent
body and garments.\textsuperscript{34} Mary Stieber makes the assertion that no two \textit{korai} wear the
same exact styling of garments;\textsuperscript{35} distinctions are made in the methods of draping and
combinations of garments, as well as the color and polychromous decoration of the
fabrics. Richter defines the building blocks of the \textit{korai}’s dress as:

1) The \textit{peplos}—A heavy tunic, typically associated with the Doric style; it
reaches from the neck to the ground, is often fastened at the shoulders and
belted, and sometimes has an overfold at the chest.
2) The \textit{chiton}—A lighter tunic, usually long and made of linen. It may have be
belted, have sleeves fastened along the top of the arms, and is often decorated
with an ornamental band along its top edge.
3) The Ionic \textit{himation}—a short, plated mantle; the version worn by the \textit{korai}
either drapes from the right shoulder to the left armpit, or hangs over both
shoulders.
4) The \textit{epiblema}—a shawl-like wrap which be either long or short\textsuperscript{36}

In accordance with Richter’s previously-discussed color scheme, various versions
of red, blue, and green were common colors for the chiton, which it appears was often
decorated in accordance with the hair color of the \textit{kore} who wore it. Red, for
example, was often chosen to contrast blonde hair, and it is not inconceivable to
believe that other similar color schemes were employed, as they are in present life—

\textsuperscript{34} Humfry Payne and Gerard Mackworth Young, \textit{Archaic Marble Sculpture from the Acropolis} (New
York: William Morrow, 1951) 23
\textsuperscript{35} Stieber 68
\textsuperscript{36} Richter 6-7
and presumably may have been in the past—to aesthetically complement a woman’s coloring and complexion.37

Jewelry and Adornment

Use of jewelry to decorate the korai is relatively straightforward. According to Gisela Richter, the statues are adorned with a mix of necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and headpieces. The necklaces generally consist of a single strand around the neck, from which any number of oblong pendants hang. Bracelets appear spiraled or circular, and were added in paint or metal, or carved themselves in relief on the korai’s wrists. The earrings present an interesting case because their appearance is somewhat different from the real-life earrings that have been found in excavations. On the korai, they only become frequent after the second half of the 6th century, and are often depicted as disks with a painted rosette. The earrings worn by Greek women that have been found by archaeologists generally consist of a disk with a dangling pendant, and never simply a plain disk. Richter suggests that this is because of the difficult nature of rendering a small, freely-dangling pendant in marble.38 Headwear that adorns the korai consists of either a stephane (or diadem) with added paint or metal adornments, or occasionally a wreath, taenia (fillet), or polos—a tall, round crown. The metal decorations on the stephane no longer exist, but holes suggesting their original attachment are visible in the marble.39

37 Stieber 72
38 Richter 11
39 Richter 11-12
Some korai also bear evidence of having once been adorned with meniskoi—metal rods protruding from the top of the head, whose purpose has been speculated as the warding off of birds. In these cases, either remnants of the meniskoi have been found or holes in the top of the heads are still evident.\footnote{Richter 13}

**Dedicators and Inscriptions**

Of approximately 25 inscriptions that have survived and been found on the Acropolis, 17 of them contain the names of the sculptors who carved the votives. Unfortunately, inscriptions and statues are rarely found together, and only a handful of any of the votives on the Acropolis can be associated with their creators.\footnote{Karakasi 125} On the various forms of votives on the Acropolis, inscriptions that give the names, and sometimes occupations, of the dedicators, reveal that many types of people were making offerings there. Fullers, fisherman, potters, and any number of practitioners of trade and business—both male and female—made dedications,\footnote{Holloway 271} though as far as we know, only men dedicated korai on the Acropolis.\footnote{Karakasi 135} One inscription from the so-called Euthydikos Kore (Acr. 686, Fig 15) reads very simply in ancient Greek and in an English translation:

Εὐθύδικος ὁ Θαλιάρχος ἀνέθεκεν.

“Euthydikos, son of Thaliarchos, dedicated me.”
The inscription from so-called Antenor’s Kore gives us slightly more information, listing the origin of the dedication as well:

Νέαρχος ἀνέθεκε[ν ὁ κέραμε]
ὑς ἐργόν ἀπαρχὲν τὰθ[εναίαι]
Ἀντένορ ἐπ[οίεσεν’]
ὁ Εὐμάρος τ[ὸ ἀγαλμα]

“Nearchos [the potter], dedicated me from the first-fruits offering; Antenor the song of Eumares [made the agalma].”

These are the only inscriptions from the Acropolis which can be linked to korai with absolute certainty, but they fall in with the pattern of inscriptions and dedicators for other votive offerings on the Acropolis. Most of these follow a simple ‘X dedicated’ format, and some included the type of dedication—as Nearchos did—the majority of which were related to personal wealth or success. Of the Acropolis inscriptions which may be associated with non-korai votives, 65 stipulated the dedication as an aparche and 54 specified it as a dekate. Respectively, these are the ‘first fruits’ of something like an inheritance or a large gift, and a one tenth share of a quantity of either captured or seized capital or one’s annual profits. Thus we see that the two dedicatory inscriptions which we can confidently ascribe to korai do not deviate in any way from those of other standard votives.

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44 Karakasi 133
45 Keesling 16
46 Holloway 271
Chapter Two

_Scholarly Interpretations of the Identities of the Acropolis Korai_

“κόραι...c’est le nom le plus vague, mais, presque certainement, c’est le plus juste.” – Henri Lechat

Interpreting archaeological artifacts consistently involves a level of speculation and uncertainty. Archaeologists rely on a wealth of knowledge of the period and culture, and any number of previous experiences with similar artifacts or modern objects. The trouble with aesthetic artifacts is that they don’t necessarily have a function in the same sense as a ceramic vessel, writing tablet, or a tool of stone or bone. A function of some sort was certainly intended for each aesthetic artifact, but it is not as inherently obvious to interpreting archaeologists by way of the artifact’s form or appearance. Instead, they must rely on context, primary sources—if they exist—and, where appropriate, analogy across similar cultures, to pinpoint the identification of and purpose for an aesthetic artifact.

In the case of the Acropolis korai, we can rely on both context and primary sources to broadly identify what they were as objects and for what purpose they were created. First and foremost, the korai are easily recognizable to any modern person as statues serving a visual—and possibly religious, ceremonial, or other public—purpose because we utilize the same type of object in our own societies. Beyond that, inscriptions that archaeologists have been able to connect to a various artifacts on the Acropolis, along with the fact that the find spots lie on the Acropolis itself, tell us that the various objects left there were votive offerings to gods represented on the site.
The practice of making votive offerings is consistent not only across Greek cult sites over a vast period of time, but also across many cultures, both ancient and modern. 47

We thus have a basic understanding of what the korai physically are, but we are still left ignorant about what they actually meant to archaic Greeks who viewed or dedicated them. This deeper examination requires an actual interpretation of the korai—it necessitates that we attempt to assign to them a particular value which would have existed in a time and society not our own as a method of discerning their most meaning and importance. The main point of contention in this interpretation of the korai is one of identity. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the inscriptions that can be matched to korai on the Acropolis speak only of the dedicators and occasionally the purpose of dedication, but never of the dedications themselves. Deciding, then, who the young women represent, is a challenge which has been taken up by many but bears no irrefutable results.

Four main interpretive theories for the identity of the Acropolis korai exist. They are: 1) The korai represent generic female offerings to Athena; 2) the korai represent servants of Athena, possibly even the arrephoroi or her priestesses; 3) the korai represent immortals of some form, either deities like Athena, to whom they were dedicated, or other lesser beings; 4) the korai represent an attempt at replicating nature and were based on real women. The first theory is the most widely-accepted, 48 perhaps because it eschews complicated argument in favor of Ockham’s Razor; the lack of evidence for particular identities for the Acropolis korai in inscriptions

48 Keesling 98
suggests that they had none. The second is often mentioned as a plausible alternative by scholars, though in the case of the *arrephoroi*, the apparent age of the statues is often an area of concern. The idea that the *korai* may be lesser deities, or that at least some represent Athena, if not all, are also mentioned by a number of scholars as possibilities for views alternate to their own, or which may not be proven but provide a rational, more specific explanation. In the case of the intended likeness theory, Mary Stieber is the first major proponent of the idea to produce an extensive published work, and in many cases the ideas she outlines in her book are still being discussed and examined. I will provide here the details of the four main theories, followed by my own critical analysis of the arguments in Chapter Three.

**Immortals**

The theory of immortal identity is quite far-reaching. It extends from identification of the *korai* as Athena to lesser nymphs and immortal beings, but the bulk of the argument centers around the patron goddess of Athens.

The idea that the Acropolis *korai* may represent Athena herself is grounded mainly in the issue of physical and temporal context; Catherine Keesling argues that, for archaic viewers on the Acropolis, the statues may simply have been understood as representations of Athena, even without specific inscriptions labeling them as such. Because we are not archaic Athenians, our understanding of the *korai* can never be quite the same, both because we are out of context and because the statues are out of the physical context for which they were intended.49 I think Keesling is thus

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49 Keesling 102
suggesting that our difficulty in determining the identities of the korai must be both expected and acknowledged, and then examined in nature for possible solutions. Her argument is based on both comparative and literary sources, as well as physical characteristics of the statues themselves. Henri Lechat, one of the original scholars working with the korai, also explores this interpretive theory. The supporting evidence he provides focuses mainly on the idea that, if we cannot prove the korai are not Athena, then we should not discount the fact that are likely to be. This concept connects both his and Keesling’s various arguments.

Catherine Keesling’s most revolutionary argument proposes the idea of the “Kore/Athena hybrid”. These are statues appearing as regular examples of the kore schema with the addition of a helmet or spear, of which she believes there are five certain examples on the Athenian acropolis. The examples seem mostly fragmentary, however, and she only specifies three (Acr.136, Acr. 661, and Acr. 646). Of these, one base shows evidence of a spear that once rested next to the foot of the kore, and four are helmeted heads; the related torsos no longer exist, so it is unknown whether the statues wore Athena’s aegis. Ac. 136 (Fig 16), the proposed hybrid which Keesling believes held a spear in her right hand, also pulls at her chiton with her left as many non-hybrid korai do. The statue exists today only as a base with feet and her left leg, but these provide enough evidence for the former observations. Whether or not the hybrid also wore a helmet and aegis must remain unknown.

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50 Keesling 129-130
51 Keesling 140
52 Keesling 129-130. I would have liked to provide a lengthier discussion of Keesling’s Kore/Athena hybrid theory, but the author herself does not go into extreme detail. She simply lists the spear and
Keesling also attempts to provide a comparative framework through which to examine the identity of other non-hybrid korai as Athenas. She uses the example of the archaic kouroi; the male counterparts to the korai, which differ slightly in function and saw much more frequent use as funerary monuments. The kouroi abide by a rigid schema—hands clenched in fists at the sides, one foot advanced, gaze directed forward, and are always presented nude, with the exception of the occasional belt, choker, or arm band., and most often appear nude and empty-handed. The variety of visually different kouroi used in the archaic world mirrors the korai. Though appearing by far most frequently in votive contexts, the korai display a range of added characteristics, from nothing at all, to simple votive offerings held in their hands, to attributes which Keesling believes indicate irrefutable identification as Athena. When kouroi were presented as unadorned, naked youths at sanctuaries, Keesling argues that they were likely automatically recognized by ancient viewers as representations of Apollo. Just as with those kouroi on graves, understood to be representatives of the deceased, these nude Apollos’ identities were derived mostly from the perspective of the viewer. Instead of attributes contributing to their specific identification, however, this task was left entirely up to the human mind, which in all cases imposed an identity upon the kouroi based upon the context in which they were encountered. Drawing functional parallels between the kouroi and korai, Keesling argues that drawing identity parallels may be appropriate as well, and that at least

helmets as iconographic elements which firmly indicate an Athena identity and provides the numbers for the three hybrids listed above.

53 Robin Osborne, Archaic and Classical Greek Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 80-81
54 Keesling 101
55 Osborne (1998) 80-81
some of the korai on the Athenian acropolis were similarly understood to represent Athena in their ancient context.\textsuperscript{56}

In terms of further exploring the argument, substantial evidence exists in the archaeological and written records to suggest that dedicating images of gods to themselves was common practice;\textsuperscript{57} In fact Lechat says that there is nothing more natural than dedicating to Athena images of the goddess herself.\textsuperscript{58} Both before and after 480 BCE, the year in which the Persians sacked the Acropolis and dedication of korai halted, representations of Athena were the most common dedication in bronze on the site.\textsuperscript{59} Different sculptural types (i.e. seated, standing, active individuals, etc) developed in different mediums (i.e. bronze, marble, terracotta, etc),\textsuperscript{60} but this doesn’t necessarily mean that sculptural mediums also varied with the statues’ identities. In fact, it seems likely that patterns in medium and pose were related to the feasibility of sculpting with various materials; marble doesn’t lend itself well to large statues in poses which necessitate less stable weight distribution, which is the reason many Roman marble copies of Greek bronzes include a tree stump or other form of post upon which the statue may rest its weight. Bronze, on the other hand, allows for a much broader range of poses, and thus was the medium of choice for statues of athletes and other individuals represented in more active stances.

\textsuperscript{56} Keesling 98  
\textsuperscript{57} Keesling 98  
\textsuperscript{58} Henri Lechat, \textit{Au Musée de l’Acropole d’Athènes: Études Sur la Sculpture En Attique Avant la Ruine de l’Acropole Lors de l’Invasion de Xerxès} (Lyon: A. Rey, 1903) 265  
\textsuperscript{59} Keesling 110  
\textsuperscript{60} Keesling 126-127
It is not inconceivable to suggest, then, that dedication formats in one material mirrored, or were at least connected to, dedication formats in another material, especially when both produced statues and statuettes of varying sizes. Brunilde Ridgway at one point made the assertion that at least some of the korai were probably representations of Athena, with one reason being that other representations of the goddess given as dedications were common in both bronze and terracotta.61

Henri Lechat believes that the other name used to describe the korai, ‘agalma’, which refers to an object which elicits some sort of wonderful delight, testifies to the preeminence of this kind of offering over others votive offerings, which would make their identification as anyone other than Athena extremely odd.62 In addition, he acknowledges the lively and individual nature of their physiognomies that has often been discussed, but argues that it may have nothing to do with artistic intention. He suggests that, when placed into smaller groupings based on style, the differences among the physiognomies of the korai are much less pronounced, and that instead of attempting to create individual expressions, the sculptors were simply not placing emphasis on creating an ideal type. While some might argue that the varying physiognomies suggest different identities, Lechat asserts that the lack of unity does not present a complication. “If one examines, on the Athenian money of the 6th century, the cast head of the goddess,” he asks, “does one not find there a variety of types equal to those one notes on the marbles?”63

61 Keesling 109---find a Ridgway citation? She discusses lesser deities...what is her latest thought on this?
62 Lechat (1903) 265
63 Lechat (1903) 266
The other substantial side to this interpretive position is based on physical characteristics of the statues that relate to the addition of attributes. Images of gods in Greek vase painting and architectural sculpture are often denoted and identifiable by way of their iconography. One of Athena’s most recognizable attributes is her aegis which bears the head of a Gorgon, and in the first half of the 6th century artists began to illustrate her wearing it, along with full armor, a helmet, and spear.\(^6^4\) Lechat puts forward for contemplation the idea that, regardless of their accompanying attributes, the korai may still represent the goddess. Though we can see no such armaments on any of the statues, he cites both the metope depicting Perseus, Medusa, and Athena at Temple C at Selinus, and various unspecified Archaic pots as bearing representations of Athena in which no evidence remains for her wearing (or bearing) any of her identifying armaments or the aegis.\(^6^5\) In addition, according to Lechat, the other votive offerings carried by the korai do not preclude them from representing the goddess, and the deprivation of the statues on the Acropolis from any sort of weaponry may mean that they were simply dedications to Athena Ergane, the patron of workers and their industries,\(^6^6\) as opposed to Athenas Parthenos or Polias.

According to Keesling, the fact that the bronze statuettes of Athena Promachos, dedicated contemporaneously with the korai, are fully-armored versions of the goddess is suggestive of the idea that not all korai may be identified as Athena is. She asserts that,

\(^{6^4}\) Keesling 122
\(^{6^5}\) Lechat (1903) 265
\(^{6^6}\) Lechat (1903) 265
“...if we adopt a primarily formal approach to the iconography of the Acropolis korai, we are forced to conclude that the clear iconographic distinction between armed Athena Promachos statuettes and formally generic korai means that the two types of votive statues represented entirely different subjects.”67

The formal approach she mentions places an emphasis on meaning associated with the physical characteristics of the korai, and has similarly been applied to the kouroi. In that case, the suggestion is that the kouroi are significant for the sparse characteristics they possess and the nude, youthful ideal they represent.68 The korai represent a similar youthful ideal. Regardless of their specific identities, the depicted women appear to be of young, ideal marriageable age, and the Ionic chiton and himation worn by later statues often reveal curvaceous feminine physiques which sometimes appear nearly naked under extremely thin cloth. As with the kouroi representing Apollo, the generic, formal characteristics of the korai are appropriate both for young women on the verge of marriage and for goddesses as well,69 and we must necessarily look further in hopes of finding more tangible evidence for an identity.

A third aspect which Keesling discusses is the issue of the extended forearm exhibited by many korai. Those korai dating to the peak of the popularity of the statue type are characterized by an extended forearm, which in some cases holds a votive offering, in some cases shows traces of evidence of an original object in the hand which is no longer present, and sometimes their hands appear merely empty. There are numerous interpretations for the gesture, but the generally-accepted

67 Keesling 122
68 Keesling 102
69 Keesling 123
explanation is that it represents a greeting or gratitude and the giving of an object. In agreement with Lechat, Keesling is of the opinion that the extended forearm gesture does not actively discount the *korai* from being representations of Athena. She cites evidence of cult statues, contemporaneous with the *korai*, which may have displayed the same gesture. We know that the Athena *Promachos* and Zeus *Olympios* statues, carved by Pheidias, both held hands outstretched to support small Athena Nike statuettes. It is possible that other cult statues of which we have lost most evidence displayed a similar gesture, and that people associated the *korai* with outstretched hands with the immortals rendered as large, glorious cult statues. If they associated the gesture with deities, then perhaps this is another reason why the *korai* were considered representations of Athena for contextual reasons; on the Acropolis, the connection to cult statues present there, or at similar sites, might have immediately formed in the mind of the viewers, but because we lack those experiences today, we are unable to make the same mental leap.

For the sake of argument, Henri Lechat presents multiple interpretive arguments in his book dedicated in large part to the *korai*. He looks at the Athena theory from both critical angles, and attempts to refute his previous claims in a second examination of some of the features previously discussed. Critiquing his own arguments (and, indirectly, some of those made much later by Keesling), Lechat says that the primary basis for a negative stance on the Athena identification theory is the fact that she was born fully-armed as the goddess of war, and must be represented as

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70 Richter 3-4
71 Keesling 124
72 Keesling 124
such to be recognizable.\textsuperscript{73} On the previously mentioned metope at Selinus, it is possible that an aegis was originally represented in paint and has since faded away, or even that the figure which has been presumed to be Athena is, in fact, not her at all.\textsuperscript{74}

In the case of the archaic vases to which he also referred as examples of unarmed Athenas, he argues that alternate identification is there provided through labeling, which does not exist in association with any of the Acropolis korai.\textsuperscript{75} With regard to the distinction between Athena Ergane and other, armed Athenas, Lechat states that the multiple incarnations of Athena are essentially still the same goddess, and thus should likely not necessitate or elicit separate representations. He also asserts that, “… neither temple nor temenos,” for Athena Ergane existed on the Acropolis.\textsuperscript{76}

As a separate comparison entirely, Lechat utilizes the Athena represented on the Parthenon Gigantomachy. He describes that Athena as having a face suggesting, “serenity and gentle majesty, revealing her superiority to humanity,”—qualities which he says he believes the korai do not possess—and yet another reason to separate their identities from other representations of Athena.\textsuperscript{77}

In contrast to the Athena identification theory, there has been some specific work done on one kore, Acr.679, also known as the Peplos Kore, which has resulted in discussion of the idea that she is a representation of the goddess Artemis.

The Peplos Kore is so known because she appears to be wearing a peplos instead of a chiton and himation, and scholars consider her to be one of the last

\textsuperscript{73} Lechat (1903) 266
\textsuperscript{74} Lechat (1903) 268
\textsuperscript{75} Lechat (1903) 266
\textsuperscript{76} Lechat (1903) 269
\textsuperscript{77} Lechat (1903) 270
representations of this older style of dress before the heavy Ionic influence came over Athens and brought with it the latter two garments. There is some debate as to whether she is actually wearing a thin *chiton* under her *peplos* which is only visible at her neckline. Of this phenomenon, Brunilde Ridgway says the following:

“In an actual peplos the overfold, or apoptygma, was formed by doubling the rectangular piece of cloth at the top, thus adjusting the total length to fit the size of the individual wearer. The folded material was then draped under the arms, with enough slack to allow the cloth to be gathered over the shoulders where front and back were pinned together by means of metal pins or fibulae…For an apoptygma to cover the right arm, as it does in the PK, a hole would have had to be pierced at the point of bend in order to allow the arm to slip between the main fall of cloth and its overfold; but to pierce such a hole would have permanently fixed the length of the apoptygma, and no such arrangement is attested to in antiquity.”

One possible suggestion considers the idea that the *peplos* as it is generally considered today was a classical garment, and that the archaic *peplos* was actually draped in a different manner than its classical iteration. Ridgway also suggests that the *Peplos Kore* wears three garments—her *chiton*, *peplos*, and a cape which covers her shoulders. There has, however, been no resolution to the argument and likely never will be, as the only solid evidence is the appearance of the garments on statue, which is quite ambiguous.

Continuing with her own theory of the presence of a cape, Ridgway suggests that such a garment is reminiscent of earlier, Daedalic sculpture, where it’s use by normal mortal women is ambiguous, but its use by deities such as Hera and Artemis has been firmly documented. The few instances of capes in 6th century BCE sculpture all occur on immortal women (nymphs, lesser divine beings, etc), “as a symbol of

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79 Ridgway (1977) 55
their venerability,” and Ridgway believes it was used to dress the *Peplos Kore* to identify her as a representation of a goddess, or more specifically, an idol of a goddess; that is, a representation of another statue.\(^8^0\) Because she does not bear any iconographic elements—such as an *aegis* on her garments—to identify her as Athena, Ridgway suggests it is more likely that she represents Artemis, who also had a sanctuary on the Acropolis, and that attributes now missing from her hands (likely arrows and a bow) may have further identified her as such.\(^8^1\)

Lastly, some scholars make brief mention of the possibility that *korai* may represent lesser deities or nymphs, placing them somewhere between anonymous mortal women and a powerful goddess like Athena. In most of the references I have found, this idea is presented mainly in passing as a reference to others’ work and not that of the author. In *Greek Sculptural Studies Revisited*, Brunilde Ridgway looks back to the identity of the *korai*, saying,

“It seems plausible to suggest that most…*korai* represented divine beings, whose distinctive headdresses served as identifiers for the ancient viewers.”\(^8^2\)

She also examines the garments worn by the *korai*, concluding that there is a possibility, however slight, that the *korai* represent nymphs or lesser deities in costumes originally worn by goddess, but, “whose meaning has been diluted by copying and dispersion form Ionia.” Her argument is based chiefly on the question of 6\(^\text{th}\) century style, and whether the diagonal *himation*, exhibited on some *korai*, was an

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\(^8^0\) Ridgway (1977) 56  
\(^8^1\) Ridgway (1977) 58-59  
accurate representation of popular styles for normal women. The earliest korai on which it is visible are Acr. 619 (Fig 17) and Acr. 677, which she postulates may both be Cycladic imports, and the statues wearing the diagonal himation which followed chronologically are believed to have been carved by Chian, Lakonian, and possibly Ionian sculptors. The diagonal himation was a piece which we know was certainly popular in Asia Minor during the early 6th century, and by 540 BCE it had spread—surprisingly, says Ridgway—throughout Western Greece and its colonies, possibly by way of terracotta statuettes wearing the garment that probably represented Nymphs or some form of non-human cult image. Ridgway also suggests that the draping of the diagonal himation on korai is often peculiar in its use (or lack thereof) of fastenings or the style in which it lays across the body, and notes that funerary korai—which we know represented deceased mortal women—do not wear the diagonal himation, nor do mortal women in Attic black-figure vase painting; when the garment appears on Attic red-figure, it is largely seen in scenes which may be of a mythological nature. Ridgway stresses the circumstantial and tentative nature of the evidence from which she draws this possible conclusion, but she presents it as a possibility nonetheless.

**Priestesses and Arrephoroi**

Continuing to emphasize the cult context of the Acropolis, some scholars have discussed the possibility that the korai are representatives of individuals, either generic or specific, who were somehow related to the cult of Athena. Most proposals of such an identity suggest that the korai represent either the arrephoroi—young,
prepubescent girls who played a key role in preparations for the Panathenaic Festival—or priestesses of the cults themselves. Quite interestingly, this is an identity theory that is often listed in general discussion and overviews of the *korai*, but for which I have found few specific arguments. Joan Breton Connelly provides the most extensive and detailed argument for this theory as part of her book, *Portrait of a Priestess*, but most other scholars provide only passing mention of the potential for cult-related identity.

The evidence for named statues of priestesses and *arrephoroi* appears in the archaeological record in the early 4th century in the form of dedications inscribed with honorific formulae. The earliest certain example of a labeled, portrait dedication of a priestess on the Athenian Acropolis is that of Lysimache, who served as a priestess in the cult of Athena Polias for 64 years; another labeled dedication was also made in honor of Syeris, who apparently served as a handmaid to Lysimache. In later classical and Hellenistic periods, inscribed bases clearly identify the subjects of draped, female votive statuary as priestesses and other individuals who held sacred religious offices. The women represented by these images are presented much like the *korai*; they wear the common *chiton/himation* combination of garments and display no characteristics to identify them as priestesses or important cult affiliates, nor do they carry attributes that might perform the same function; the only identifying features of the offerings are their inscriptions. Based on the existence of these later statues, Connelly advocates framing the *korai* with a diachronic examination of

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86 Keesling 101
draped, female votive statuary. It is her belief that we should not assume that the use of such statues as representations of priestesses and other important cult participants began abruptly in the early 4th century, but rather that the korai may be evidence of the early beginnings of the practice of their dedication. The dedications of the korai, which began to occur ca. 570 BCE, only briefly preceded the establishment of the Panathenaic Festival in 556 BCE, and this correlation—which may not be arbitrary—provides further support to the priestess/arrephoroi identification theory. It is one which Katerina Karakasi discusses as well. She mentions the korai/Panathenaic Festival correlation as well as voices support for the priestess/arrephoroi theory, but does so separately rather than in conjunction with one another.

Though often mentioned with regard to the theory of cult-related identity, the idea that korai may represent arrephoroi is also often dismissed in favor of identification as priestesses. Though it has been argued that fathers of arrephoroi may have had statues dedicated to commemorate the great honor garnered by such a service to the goddess, the idea that most korai appear to represent women too old to serve as arrephoroi is discussed in multiple publications. Young girls were chosen to act as arrephoroi before reaching the onset of puberty, and the figures alluded to beneath the tightly-clinging garments of the korai undeniably belong to young women who have at least reached, and in many cases passed, that developmental stage. For this reason, the argument for identification as priestesses and related cult personnel has been entertained to a much greater extent.

88 Connelly 128
89 Karakasi 117
90 Lechat (1903) 272
91 See Keesling 101. Langlotz (1939) 7-9
Generic Women

Due to the frustrating lack of concrete material evidence for the identities of the Acropolis korai, the theory that they represent generic women has been adopted by a number of scholars. Gisela Richter, R. Ross Holloway, Henri Lechat, and at times Brunilde Ridgway have all ventured to discuss the potential validity of other theories of identity, only to return back to this less radical and tenuous territory of a generic and anonymous identification. In his discussion of the statues, Robin Osborne presumes this as the accepted identity for the korai and concentrates instead on broader issues of significance and meaning. In most cases, the argument is the same; the korai are dressed as well-bred Athenian women, they lack any specific attributes to identify them as anything other than images of generic mortals, and other suggestions of identity are too far-reaching in their evidence to make a stronger case. A large part of this argument, then, involves gathering support by judging other theories of identity unlikely.

Henri Lechat was the first to suggest that the korai represent generic female votaries, and he coined the term for the statues in 1903 (though it is possible the Greeks used the term ‘kore’ for this type of statue as well). Having provided both evidence for the divinity/Athena theory and the generic votary theory, Lechat argues that as representations, the korai are lacking any special divine qualities that one

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92 Keesling 107.
93 The way Lechat discusses this aspect of the korai—or rather lack of this aspect—leads the reader to believe that the ‘divine quality’ which he would expect to see is not necessarily a specific, physical
might expect to see, and that the façades they present suggest they represent mortal women. In his opinion, both the attire they wear and the small votive offerings they hold in outstretched hands are those of ordinary and commonplace individuals, and do not suggest either special or specific identities for the women whom the statues represent.

Ernst Langlotz judges the korai on their age, identifying them as both too old to be arrephoroi, the young girls who participated in preparations for the Panathenaic Festival, and too young to be priestesses of Athena Polias. Gisela Richter posits that their, “general appearance of youthful graciousness,” may have been an inappropriate method of representation for the, “staid individuals,” who acted as priestesses of Athena. In her estimation, due to our lack of evidence, it may be best to assume that archaic viewers of the korai would have simply recognized them as the appropriate votive offerings for a goddess such as Athena, though we can only speculate about the specific reasons for this. Henri Lechat ultimately supports this position as well, and emphasizes the point that none of the inscriptions which we can even tentatively associate with the korai suggest in any way that they are statues of women or girls who took part in the goings on of the cult or temple.

trait, but rather a certain something that is not seen and instead a feeling that is invoked upon sight of the statue.

94 Lechat (1903) 270
95 Lechat (1903) 272
96 Langlotz (1939) 7-9
97 Richter 3
98 Richter 4
99 Lechat (1903) 272
On the approximately 25 inscriptions found which may be associated with korai, no identifying references are made, which Keesling believes means they were intended to remain anonymous. In fact the Athenian social environment highly discouraged women’s names from being publicly displayed in inscriptions, and the wives of respectable and/or wealthy men were generally not to be seen in public themselves; their interactions with the outside world were largely conducted through slaves. This absence of specific names on the Acropolis korai is therefore not necessarily indicative of intended generic identities, but it is at least indicative of intended anonymity.

As I discussed in Chapter One, the inscriptions that accompanied the korai followed standard formulas. Occasionally a dedicator would go so far as to express the reasons for their dedication, or they otherwise just had the base inscribed with the simple, “X dedicated…” formula. This form of disjunctive representation—an inscription describing a male dedicator attached to a female dedication—emphasizes the identity of the dedicator and deemphasizes the identity of the statue in favor of its greater importance in a functional role.

Continuing then, with the idea that the korai are generic female votaries, how do we interpret their significance in that capacity? R. Ross Holloway believes that the korai represented figures of general good omen for banausoi, or craftsmen, who

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100 Karakasi 125
101 Keesling 109
103 Keesling 97
104 Holloway 268
were known to be dedicators of other votives on the Acropolis.\textsuperscript{105} We know, too, that the inscription on Antenor’s Kore identified the dedicator, Nearchos, as a potter.\textsuperscript{106}

Henri Lechat compares the apparent role of the korai to that of the Moscophoros, a statue of a man bearing a calf on his shoulders, presumably carrying it to the altar for sacrifice. This offering is twice a votive; first because the statue itself is a gift to the gods, and second because it represents constant and everlasting devotion both by remaining ever present at the sanctuary and also by perpetually representing the act of gift-giving by way of the calf slung over the man’s shoulders. All of these ideas culminate in the statue as an image which is provided to the gods so that they will always be aware of that devotion on the part of the dedicator. Lechat suggests that korai may represent a similar form of votive. They are offerings which themselves bear offerings in their outstretched hands; a gesture, the purpose of which, according to Payne and Young, is to emphasize the act of dedication.\textsuperscript{107} Under this argument, the individualizing characteristics which Lechat acknowledges amongst the figures are said to simply be representative of the diversity of various donors on the Acropolis (though the donors in this case are men), and the banal nature of the offerings they hold in their hands\textsuperscript{108} suggest that the act and idea of constant piety and devotion are more important than the physical objects being presented.

Robin Osborne sees the korai primarily as representations of exchange and capital. He denotes women as the, “prime source of symbolic capital,” for the prestige

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\textsuperscript{105} See Chapter One, \textit{Dedicators and Inscriptions}
\textsuperscript{106} Karakasi 133
\textsuperscript{107} Payne and Young 18
\textsuperscript{108} Lechat (1903) 273
\end{flushleft}
they brought to their Athenian citizen husbands, and also credits them with holding important and irreplaceable roles in public religious life, particularly in cults such as that of Athena, in which important offices and positions could not be held by men. In his mind it is therefore appropriate that korai are used to represent and facilitate the relationship between men and the gods. As korai, they act as gifts to Athena in the form of symbolic capital in exchange for the economic capital she granted to the dedicators. Contrasting their socio-religious role to those of the kouroi, he says:

“Kouroi reflect a man’s gaze back on a man, and demand and provoke introspection; korai draw a man’s attention to the necessary exchange outside themselves, and to the world where dressing up in finery, offering gifts and offering them in a particular manner, where women, matter.”

Henri Lechat once again agrees, pointing to Antenor’s Kore, dedicated by Nearchos, as an example. Dedicated to pay a debt, perhaps she was meant to be no one, but rather, she was offered simply as a symbol to mark the relationship between man and goddess. Her presence as a woman is dictated by the fact that Athena accepted only women into her service, and her secondary function is merely a decorative one; she serves as an embellishment to the sanctuary.

Two scholars, Marion Meyer and Lambert Schneider, have discussed modified versions of the generic identity theory which identify the korai specifically as physical representations of conceptual ideas.

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110 Osborne (1994) 91
111 Lechat (1903) 275-276
Marion Meyer, denying all other theories, mostly due to a lack of specificity in the iconography of the korai, suggests that the statues represent the parthenos as a social idea; that is, they are the physical embodiment of the idea of the unmarried virgin woman, and provide an example of how she should have appeared in public—namely at religious festivals. The flowers held by some of the statues could have been held by either women or men in archaic times to signify traits such as beauty and elegance. Lambert Schneider discusses the nature of the individual characteristics of the korai and how, when combined, they may signify similar qualities which were associated with the ideal version of the parthenos. Always produced in the same context, he says, and often linked in such combinations as smiles and makeup; smiles, youth, beautiful clothing and fragrances; youth, beautiful clothing, fragrances and flowers; etc, they can stand in for one another when not all are present. This does not occur in a literal sense—a smile is not equivalent to a flower—but in terms of what they represent, they can be equated with one another and signify the presence of the same values. This, Schneider says, is only possible under certain conditions, namely those in which they all signify specific aspects of social standing or social roles. In essence, he sees the korai not as realistic images, but as idealized models that play important social roles for the men who dedicated them, presumably by associating them with women who possessed such socially desirable characteristics. This argument, at least with regard to interpretation of

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112 Marion Meyer and Nora Brüggemann, Kore und Kouros; Weihegaben für die Götter, (Vienna: Phoibos, 2007) 27
113 Meyer and Brüggemann 25
114 Lambert Schneider, Zur Sozialen Bedeutung der Archaischen Korenstatuen (Hamburg: Buske, 1975) 32-33
115 Schneider 37
individual characteristics of the statues and the ideals they reflect, falls in line with
Meyer’s theory of social representation of the concept of the *parthenos*.

**Portraits and Likenesses**

Though the idea of portraiture in Greek sculpture during the Archaic Period is
generally dismissed, the *korai* are often praised for their highly individual and
intensely human characteristics. Henri Lechat described the *korai* as, “…very lively
and individual, a type both somewhat generalized but also idealized.”

Brunilde Ridgway once asserted that, “All *korai* are alike only in the way that all Doric
temples are alike.”

Humfry Payne wrote of the Euthydikos *Kore*, that it is a portrait of, “unimpaired individuality.”

Most of the early works on the *korai* were written by men, and nearly all speak of their stunning and individualizing characteristics in a manner that celebrates the greatness of their feminine beauty. Why, then, the portrait identity theory has not been more popular is not entirely clear, but I believe it has something to do with the fact that most people believe that true portraiture, of women in particular, did not exist in Greek art until a later time. Pliny, on the other hand, believed that the original monument for the Tyrannicides (ca. 510 BCE),

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116 Lechat (1903) 270
118 Spivey 119
119 Statues, particularly funerary monuments, were often accessorized with attributes to indicate their representation of the deceased individuals, and names were associated with these statues as well, but it was never intended for viewers to assume that the visage of the statues were accurate portraits of the deceased.
sculpted by Antenor, was the first instance of portraiture in Greek sculpture.\textsuperscript{121} As Antenor was also the sculptor for the \textit{kore} who bears his name (ca. 530-520 BCE\textsuperscript{122}), it is possible that he preceded those portraits with another in the form of a \textit{kore}, and that the trend was not confined to his work.

Mary Stieber is the first scholar to seriously address the portrait identity theory, at least insofar as I have been able to find academic research on the subject, and she does so quite thoroughly. Her book, \textit{The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai}, provides both a physical analysis of their various traits and a literary analysis of evidence in support of the portrait identity theory, with an in-depth discussion of a number of individual statues. Before embarking on a discussion of these theories, I think it is important to address the issue of the use of the term ‘portrait’ versus the use of the term ‘likeness’. Stieber tends to use ‘portrait’ in discussing her personal theory of identity for the \textit{korai}, but does, toward the end of her book, conduct a discussion of her belief in the need to redefine the word. I have attempted to use the term ‘likeness’ whenever possible, as I believe avoids confusion between the modern idea of a portrait and the form of mimicry of nature discussed in this theory of identity for the \textit{korai}. While it was Pliny’s belief that Antenor’s original sculpture of the Tyrannicides represents the first instance of portraiture in Greek art,\textsuperscript{123} the beginning of the real development and expansion of portraiture in Greek sculpture is attributed to the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century, when diverse styles began to appear.\textsuperscript{124} The likeness theory

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Spivey 120
  \item \textsuperscript{122} “Antenor” 1
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Spivey 120
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Sheila Dillon, \textit{Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture: Contexts, Subjects, and Styles}, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 99
\end{itemize}
goes generally un-discussed as a whole by scholars writing on the *korai*, and I believe this has to do with a seemingly widespread belief that, aside from their unlabeled presentation and the fact that they represent women, the *korai* are simply too early to be true ‘portraits’ in the modern sense.125

The root of Stieber’s argument based on physical traits is the broad spectrum of physiognomies, including features, hair and eye color, and even skin tone exhibited by the *korai*, which I detailed in Chapter One. Perhaps one of the most striking qualities of physiognomies is the varying objective comeliness of some of the statues. In the words of Mary Stieber, “Simply put, some *korai* are pretty of face, others are not.”126 For example, Henri Lechat describes Acr. 674 as, “one of the most remarkable and seductive [*korai*] in the Acropolis museum,” whose strikingly individual facial characteristics raise questions as to whether she were an intended portrait.127 Acr. 682, on the other hand, according to Stieber, has been described as either, “beautiful in its ostentatiousness or grossly unattractive, by modern standards.” Thus, we can conclude that Acr. 682 either represents a form of Archaic beauty which does not correspond to that of today, or that her appearance is based upon that of a real woman. Her visage differs noticeably from those of the other *korai*, which is not necessarily indicative of, but at least suggests, that she does not represent certain ideals of Archaic standards of beauty.128

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125 I would here define a modern conception of portraiture as the creation of an image or representation modeled after a specific individual with the intent to recreate that individual’s physiognomy for the purpose of standing as a representation in their stead.
126 Stieber 59
127 Lechat (1903) 279
128 Stieber 60
In examining the *korai* individually, Stieber sees a number of facial features which stand out. Acr. 687 has, “puffy, full cheeks which appear to be fleshy and malleable,” (Fig 18). Acr. 683 has a prominent chin (Fig 19). Whereas Acr. 674’s face, “seems boneless,” (Fig 3), Acr. 696 has strong, prominent cheekbones (Fig 20). Similarities exist too, in that Acr. 671 (Fig 21) and Acr. 680 (Fig 7) appear genetically related, much as sisters would, in their physiognomies, as do Acr. 670 (Fig 8) and Acr. 673 (Fig 22). She sees personality traits depicted in their features as well. Acr. 670 (Fig 8), for example, looks to be, “a shy, introverted creature, with pale, fine, ethereal, and understated looks, exhibiting an expression full of graciousness and gentleness,” Acr. 683 (Fig 19), whose features Stieber criticizes extensively (her nose is apparently too short and stubby, her eyes and ears too large, her forehead unattractive, etc), still displays and expression which is, “optimistic and forthright.”¹²⁹

The diversity of hair type and style contributes to Stieber’s argument as well. The variety of textures and qualities previously described contribute to a diversity of characteristics among the *korai* which she says mirror the diversity of physical qualities found in real women.¹³⁰ There is evidence that those artists who applied the decoration to the *korai* went to great lengths to depict varying hair colors. Brinkmann suggests that color was applied to the hair of Acr. 674 in two separate layers to achieve the desired, “chestnut brown,” and this is just one of numerous instances suggesting a meticulous attention to detail and customization of color in the painting of the *korai*. The fact that blonde hair, believed to be a rarity among the Greeks, also

¹²⁹ Stieber 60-61
¹³⁰ Stieber 63
seldom occurs in the korai, further supports Stieber’s argument for customization of decoration based on living women.\textsuperscript{131} Similar variation of color is demonstrated in decoration of the eyes,\textsuperscript{132} some of which show evidence for the inlaid addition of precious and semiprecious stone (see Acr. 681 and 682). While some might interpret this as evidence of patrons simply paying for a more elaborately decorated statue, Stieber reminds us that other korai, as beautifully and intricately carved as the previous examples have only painted eyes without additional inlays. She thus believes that the inlays may have been used to create a more realistic imitation of specific human eye colors than pigments were able to achieve.\textsuperscript{133} In addition, the lip color of the korai is much less varied than either eye or hair color, which Stieber believes is a reflection of the spectrum of lip color among living women.

This is yet more support for the idea that the painstaking variation of hair color of the korai was intentional, and serves as evidence for an effort to create images of women which remain as faithful as possible to their natural, living appearances.\textsuperscript{134} Stieber believes that an absence of a name does not necessarily equate with an absence of identity, and that the level of diversity among the physiognomies of the korai suggests a concerted attempt at mimicking nature.\textsuperscript{135}

The other half of her argument is based on other archaeological finds and textual evidence for the existence of an, “idea of likeness,” in archaic Greek art.

According to Stieber, we cannot consider the korai as, “full-fledged portraits in the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{131} Stieber 67
\textsuperscript{132} Stieber 45
\textsuperscript{133} Stieber 47
\textsuperscript{134} Stieber 67-68
\textsuperscript{135} Stieber 61
\end{footnotes}
traditional sense,” because we cannot identify them with specific, named individuals, but they may be examples of early forays into portraiture and attempts to examine the representation of the idea of personal likeness.

“A likeness of a person,” she says, “concentrates almost exclusively on the outer, visible, and therefore verifiable evidence of his or her appearance, as well as wealth, status, or position within the community, the public persona rather than the private self—in short the very things which are on display in the korai.”136

Much general scholarship seems to brush the idea of likeness and portraiture in archaic art aside; Stieber presents a recently-published find as evidence to the contrary. The artifact is the marble head of a man with both a beard and mustache, wearing a Persian cap from the region of Herakleia Pontica. The publisher, Ekrem Akurgal, has dated the head to the 530’s BCE and has identified the head as an early portrait of an Anatolian Greek done by a Greek sculptor. Though according to Stieber, the process of dating the head is complex, she is confident in labeling him, “High Archaic,” and makes note of his specific headgear and naturalistically depicted facial hair. Akurgal has compared him to the Sabouroff Head, currently in Berlin, which Martin Robertson describes as, “…nearer to a portrait than any other work [with exception of the Boxer Relief in Athens] surviving from archaic Greece.” Stieber argues that the similarity between the two sculpted heads may be evidence for a new category of image making, beginning in the archaic period, and having much in common with, but not falling within the modern guidelines for, portraiture.137 I will discuss the distinctions in much greater detail in Chapter Three.

136 Stieber 83
137 Stieber 97
In an effort to examine the origins of portraiture and representations of likeness in Greek art, Stieber turns to Pliny. In his estimation, “All [men]…agree that painting began with the outlining of a man’s shadow,” (NH 34.35), and the beginnings of painting and modeling grew out of the desire to make images of specific living people which would be recognizable enough to stand in their places. Stieber sees in this the connection between a desire to create figural images and a desire to make portraits, in that for archaic Greeks, they were one and the same.138 She provides a plethora of examples to illustrate her point; that the idea of likeness was not foreign in art, and that it had progressed to a point at which it was not uncommon to see adequate, recognizable likenesses of well-known individuals. The earliest self-likeness which she discusses is that of Daidalos, the creator of the propylon of the temple of Hephaistos at Memphis, who was so admired that he was granted the privilege of erecting a wooden statue of himself at the temple; his name became synonymous with the creation of accurate likenesses—presumably because his own sculpted self-portrait was so identifiable as such.139 Stieber provides other similar examples from Pliny’s writing, several of which allude to the fact that archaic likenesses and attempts at realism were often so convincing and successful that, in some cases, offense was taken on the part of the subjects upon viewing their sculptures (or upon hearing the jeering reactions of others who saw them),140 people not only recognized themselves, but others recognized them for who or what they were as well. Herodotus makes note of a likeness dedicated by King Croesus of Lydia, not of himself, but of his, “baker woman,” to influence the oracle at Delphi. It is not just that he speaks of

138 Stieber 84-85
139 Stieber 85
140 Stieber 88
the statue as a recognizable likeness, but more so that he speaks of the idea in such a matter-of-fact way, which matters to Stieber. She sees this as further evidence for the familiarity of archaic Greeks with relatively sophisticated likenesses.  

Finally, whereas other examples detailed the prevalence of male likenesses in Greek culture, Stieber discusses an instance of circulation of a female likeness on a minted coin. The woman in question, Damarete of Syracuse, was the wife of Gelon—general to Hippocrates during the Persian Wars—and played a prominent role in the resolution of the conflicts. She not only collected her own jewelry and the jewelry of other women of Syracuse to replenish the dwindling funds for the war, but also took an active role in the peace negotiations between her husband’s army and the Carthaginians. The grateful Carthaginians gifted her with one hundred gold talents, which she converted to silver and coined. To honor Damarete, her brother in law from her second marriage minted a *decadrachm*, a coin of large denomination, graced by her image. Though we have no way of knowing the details of Damarete’s true visage, Stieber says the following of the coin:

“…the visual evidence strongly suggests that the woman’s physical traits, restricted, by the exigencies of the coin, to her head and neck, are sufficiently particularized to reflect reality observed and translated by the coin artist, who we might call the Damareteion Master.”

Whether or not one believes the coin represents a full likeness of Damarete, if perhaps one believes that it is intended as an image of her public persona, as some amalgamation of her face and that of the goddess Arethusa, or a likeness of Arethusa

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141 Stieber 90
142 Stieber 100
punctuated by iconography—such as jewelry—to signify Damarete, Stieber believes her point stands. In any of these situations, the idea of likeness is still present, and not just likeness, but a likeness of a woman.¹⁴³ She concludes that, contrary to what may be popular belief, the intentional creation of likenesses was extremely prevalent in the Archaic Period, regardless of whether full naturalism was achieved.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Stieber 101-102
¹⁴⁴ Stieber 113
Chapter Three

* A Critical Discussion of the Identity Theories *

Examining and pulling apart the four major theories for identity is no easy task, primarily because one theory cannot be discussed without at least referencing another. For example, as I have detailed, the bulk of the evidence provided in favor of the Generic Identity theory alone is based almost exclusively on refutations of the other three theories. The major difficulty in attempting to discover the original intended identities of the *korai* is the extent of the ambiguity surrounding attributes they may have held or worn, such as votive objects, helmets, weapons, etc. These are aspects of the statues which would have held a certain meaning for their archaic viewership—possibly one which provided identification in the absence of labeled names—and that meaning is one we, as individuals far removed from the Archaic Period, can neither replicate for ourselves, nor recover from written sources, since explicit accounts of the *korai* do not exist. Unfortunately, without such a detailed understanding, we can never be entirely sure of our interpretations and, as with most archaeological questions, a settling of certain truths is impossible. Thus, we must do what we can to gather all possible evidence and venture informed theories about that which we cannot know for certain. In the case of the *korai*, the area of speculation is unfortunately massive, and as I have demonstrated, it is clear that scholars’ views on how to navigate an interpretation vary greatly.

The theory of generic identity is certainly the safest approach from a general perspective. If one were to apply Ockham’s Razor to this situation of uncertainty, it would seem that statues of women without any label displaying their name or other
personally identifying attribute (as one might have in the case of a celebrated public figure, ruler, etc) should, in fact, be just that: nameless statues of women. One could question the reason for their individuated features under such an interpretation, but as there does not seem to be any evidence which indefatigably excludes the possibility, one could theoretically overlook the issue of individuation in favor of reaching the simplest conclusion. Gisela Richter’s suggestion that we should refrain from wilder speculation, and accept that the korai were simply seen by archaic viewers as appropriate dedications to Athena,\textsuperscript{145} is admirable for its emphasis on avoiding becoming carried away. What we often do not emphasize to the general public when presenting archaeological information is that there is always an element of uncertainty in interpretation, and that sometimes that level of uncertainty is excessively great. To my understanding, Richter is suggesting that if we can reduce the level of uncertainty inherent in an explanation of the identity of the korai, we should do so, and in the context of any archaeological interpretation, this is sage advice. There are many questions which we can ask of the korai, however, and if we fully acknowledge the risk of uncertainty, I think there is much to be gained from exploring the paths down which those questions lead us. As an intellectual exercise, then, and for the purpose of pushing the boundaries of previous assumptions and theories of the identity of the korai which I have presented, I will provide a critical discussion and exploration of the body of previous theories and potential for new ideas.

\textsuperscript{145} Richter 4.
A Discussion of Theories as They Currently Stand

Although the theory of generic identity is less controversial than others because of its ease and simplicity, it does have areas of weakness which could be considered grounds for questioning its validity. One issue with this theory is that we do have evidence for two korai, though not from the Athenian Acropolis, who were accompanied by inscriptions stating the names of those women for whom they were dedicated. The first kore falling into this category is Nikandre (Fig 22).

The statue dedicated by Nikandre, and often referred to by the same name, is the oldest freestanding marble sculpture in Greece.146 Dated to ca. 650 BCE and found on Delos in the sanctuary of Artemis in 1878, the statue is quite large, standing 1.75m high without her base. She is carved from marble, but her form is quite flat and plank-like, suggesting a sculptural lineage that leads back to the carving of statues from trees and wooden planks. She wears a tight peplos with a belt at her waist and her hair falls straight down in a vertically-textured mass. Her arms fall straight at her sides and her feet stand together.147 She is quite worn, and it is difficult to make out many details of her face, but an inscription along the side of her peplos reads the following in Ancient Greek, and two standard English translations:

146 Connelly 125
147 Richter 26
148 Karakasi 76
“Nikandre dedicated me to the far-shooting maiden, the daughter of Deinodikos of Naxos, prominent among women, sister of Deinomenos, wife of Praxos”149

“Nikandre dedicated me to the goddess, far-shooter of arrows, Nikandre, the daughter of Deinodikos of Naxos, distinguished among women, sister of Deinomenos and wife of Phraxos”150

By the date, we can see that her dedication came earlier than those of the Acropolis korai by about 90 years, and her form is suggestive of this as well. Found in the sanctuary of Artemis, the epithet, “far-shooter/ far-shooting” used in the inscription fully supports the idea that she was indeed dedicated to the goddess.

Regardless of the intended recipient of the dedication, the important fact is that a woman dedicated this kore, and that her name is inscribed on the base of the statue in full public view. Katerina Karakasi believes it is likely that Nikandre’s family played an important role in the function of the cult of Artemis on Delos.151 Brunilde Ridgway states that the statue was almost certainly intended to represent Artemis, based on the epithet referencing the goddess and the fact that holes drilled into her clenched fists may have held attributes such as a bow and arrows;152 Joan Connelly, however, disagrees. Her translation of the inscription on Nikandre’s base substitutes, “far above others,” for “prominent/distinguished among women,” and she believes this epithet is typical of the way priestesses were characterized. The listing of male relatives on statue bases of priestesses also became common at a later date when their dedication of statues became more frequent. Finally, the holes drilled in Nikandre’s fist, says Connelly, may just as likely have held attributes that would have been

149 Karakasi 76
150 Richter 26
151 Karakasi 76
152 Ridgway (2004) 430
signifiers of priesthood. Accordingly, then, she believes it likely that Nikandre herself held at least a position of prominence in the goings on in the sanctuary, or was possibly even a priestess.153

Phrasikleia (Fig 23), another famous kore for whom we have a firmly established identity, was discovered in the necropolis at Merenda, in Attica. She is a funerary kore—one of only two preserved, extant korai which can be connected to tombs154—which functioned as a grave monument for a deceased young woman from whom she takes her name. The statue was discovered buried in a pit alongside a male kouros. Mary Stieber suggests that their burial was intentional, and perhaps coincided with the exile of the Alcmaeonid family from Athens, of which both may have been a part.155 Dating between 550 and 520 BCE,156 the statue has a naturalistic face and body which is fully visible beneath her garments,157 she stands at or just over life size, depending on one’s interpretation, at 1.76m tall.158 The cloth of her peplos is decorated with a meander pattern down the front, as well as along the sleeve seams, and edges, and it also bears the marks of rosettes and other geometric figures,159 including a lotus flower.160 Her hair is braided into a series of plaits and fastened at the back with a band which also bears the meander. She wears a necklace, as well as a stephane, or crown—comprised of alternating lotus buds and flowers161—and earrings. Phrasikleia’s feet stand together, with her right arm at her side, tugging ever

153 Connelly 125
154 Stieber 142
155 Stieber 141
156 Stieber 142
157 Karakasi 126
158 Stieber 144
159 Karakasi plate 235
160 Stieber 145
161 Stieber 149
so slightly at her skirt, and her left arm up at the center of her chest,\textsuperscript{162} holding a lotus blossom—a symbol for both life and death in various stages of its lifecycle.\textsuperscript{163} Her inscription reads as follows in Ancient Greek and the English translation:

\begin{center}
Σήμα Φρασικλείας
χόρη κεκλήσομαι
αἰεὶ ἀντὶ γάμου
παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο
λακοῦσ’ ὄνομα.
\end{center}

“Grave marker of Phrasikleia. I shall ever be called maiden (\textit{kore}), the gods allotting me this name in place of marriage. Aristion of Paros made me.”\textsuperscript{164}

In this inscription, the term \textit{kore} may signify Phrasikleia’s double function as both a funerary statue and a votive, or it may simply refer to her status as an unmarried woman.\textsuperscript{165} This interpretation depends largely on whether or not one believes that the archaic Greeks also used the term \textit{kore} to refer to the sculptural type. What we can take away from this inscription with certainty, however, is that the young woman Phrasikleia died before marriage, and her representation in marble is the physical manifestation of the idea that in the stasis of death, she will forever remain a \textit{kore}, that is, a virginal young woman and daughter.

We know that the second \textit{kore}—acting as a funerary monument to Phrasikleia—actually represented her. We can be less sure of Nikandre, but as Connelly has suggested, the possibility exists for interpreting her as a representation

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{162}] Karakasi plate 235
\item[\textsuperscript{163}] Stieber 144
\item[\textsuperscript{164}] Nikolaos Kaltzas and David Hardy (trans.). \textit{Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.} (Athens, Greece: Kapon Editions, 2002) 48
\item[\textsuperscript{165}] Karakasi 134
\end{itemize}
of the woman herself. Neither of these korai come from the Acropolis in Athens, but they still provide evidence for labeled likenesses—or at least images of women labeled as representations of individuals—within the kore sculptural type, and I believe this is cause to at least question the generic identity theory.

The second issue I take with the theory of generic identity is the extent of the diversity we see among the statues. I mentioned above that this phenomenon could be overlooked, but realistically I think it should be discussed as an area of contention. Regardless of one’s opinion of Mary Stieber’s theory of intentional likeness, I do not think the diversity of color and character of the statues’ physiognomies is disputable. I wonder if someone were to dedicate a votive statue, or commission any sort of statue at all for that matter, and the intention were to have it be a representation of a generic human, linked to no particular individual at all, even privately, what would be the purpose of such intense individualization as we see in the korai? Why pay for inlaid eyes on a statue to achieve a certain naturalistic color when another, similar eye color could be achieved in pigment? It is certainly possible that in the case of eyes, inlays were added to increase the value and prestige of the offering, but I also think Stieber makes a valid point which should be discussed; why, of the most ornately-carved korai, do only some have inlaid eyes?166 If someone were already dedicating an expensive statue, why stop with pigment when the inlay would most likely have also been an affordable expense? If the purpose of the inlay were only to increase the value of the statue, then we could expect to see a correlation between inlaid eyes, and the quality of carving and level of ornate decoration in marble on the korai. This is

166 Stieber 47
not the case. While some korai which represent expensive dedications have inlaid eyes, many do not, and this trend is visible in the addition, or lack thereof, of other high quality decorative pieces. Acr. 682, for example, arguably the most ornate of all of the acropolis korai, has buttons on the sleeves of her chiton which are carved into the marble, while Acr. 684, a beautiful but less-ornately attired kore, has buttons on her sleeves which were added in precious materials.167

There is also the matter of the differing hair and skin pigments. What would have been the purpose of going to the trouble of creating such a variety of pigments to decorate these physical attributes, particularly when, based on the observations of many original viewers, the colors were of such nuanced variation so as to replicate the variation of hair color among living individuals?168 If one wanted to dedicate a more expensive, appreciable offering, then it seems likely that they would increase the statue’s value by adding more valuable materials, not by choosing a process of decoration which requires more time and effort but appears almost the same as an easier decorative procedure, save the visible tint of the pigment.

This level of individualization between the korai seems too great to be accounted for by unintentional variation, occurring when different sculptors and painters each produce their own version of a representation of a generic woman. The main issue which discounts this idea is the fact that the statues do not just possess different physiognomies and types of hair, but that the evidence suggests some of the procedures used to achieve the above differences required time-consuming work of a

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167 Stieber 47
168 Stieber 66
nature unnecessary to achieve general realistic results. This is most obviously evidenced by the hair of Acr. 674, the original color of which was a ‘chestnut brown.’ As previously discussed, Brinkmann has suggested that various pigments were applied in two separate layers to achieve this specific shade of brown, complicating a process which, had the desire simply been to create realistically brown hair, would have been entirely excessive and unnecessary, both in terms of time and use of materials. Additionally, it has been suggested that the extremely high quality of most of the korai represents a small pool of sculptors who were creating them, and thus the differences in the physical characteristics of the statues, which are myriad, cannot be accounted for simply by the presence of different artistic hands creating generic women.

Nigel Spivey makes the point, however, that it seems unlikely the daughters or wives of wealthy citizens would have been permitted to pose in sculptors’ workshops. I agree with this statement, and the realism—particularly the objective comeliness and the specific facial features of the korai—visible in the statues seems such that sculptors would probably have had to at least met or seen briefly a subject selected by the commissioner, or worked from their knowledge of a subject based on descriptions by a male family member.

One suggestion has been that perhaps the individuation of the korai was intentional on the part of the sculptors, and the goal was not to create an image of a generic woman, but rather an individualized face and body for each kore which represents the unique appearance of each woman as they exist in the living, physical

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169 Stieber 48  
170 Spivey 120
world—in nature. This may have been due to an artist’s desire to consistently improve his work and to outdo himself and his competitors, or it may have stemmed from his attempts to recreate nature for its own sake.171 Regardless of the sculptors’ motives, this theory would fit with the idea that only a small number of sculptors were working on the Acropolis, and lends greater sophistication to the theory of generic identity. The korai in this case would not represent generic women in the sense that they are simply an image of the same female idea, but rather they would represent the idea of individual and unique women (something very far from ‘generic’ indeed). I will return to this idea and its implications in Chapter 4, but for now will keep it separate from the generic identity theory as scholars have traditionally discussed it.

If we entertain the idea that the korai do not represent generic women in the traditional sense of the theory, I think the next step in the process of consideration is to look at the suggestion that they represent young women associated with the cult of Athena. This idea accords due importance to a relationship between the statues and the goddess to whom they were dedicated. Because these young women were accorded great prestige for their service to the cult,172 this theory also explains a possible incentive for portraying their diversity of physiognomy without directly portraying individuals (which on principle may prove to be a problematic theory for

171 I did not find this argument discussed in any of my readings, but rather it was suggested by my advisor, Jorge Bravo, during one of our discussions of the research and writing of this work.

172 Being chosen to serve as an arrephoros was a great honor for a young girl, and according to Meyer, an arrephoros represented ‘prestigious property’ for her father. Only four girls, between the ages of 7 and 11, were chosen to fulfill the duties of the arrephoroi each year. Meyer and Brüggemann 30, 25
some). The point that the korai appear too old to be the pre-pubescent arrephoroi is a strong one, but does not completely discount the theory that the korai may be related to that specific group of young girls; perhaps the husbands or fathers of the young women who acted in such a role dedicated the statues after their marriage at a later date. The point which does render this theory questionable, however, is that the arrephoroi were girls of aristocratic birth,\textsuperscript{173} and the dedicators of the korai span a wide range of social classes.\textsuperscript{174} It makes little sense to suggest that someone unrelated to a girl who had served as an arrephoros would dedicate a statue representing her, and so while the physical context of the Acropolis fits with this theory, I believe little else does.

We can move then, to the priestess identification theory, but I believe that we run into equally serious and similar problems. Looking at the sheer number of korai found on the Acropolis (approximately 75\textsuperscript{175}), dedicated over 110 years, it would be far-reaching to say that so many women had held prominent roles within the cult of Athena in Athens and been well-respected enough to merit statues in the sanctuary within that span of time. Lysimache, after all, was a priestess for 64 years,\textsuperscript{176} and the post of priestess was a position held for life.\textsuperscript{177} The possibility certainly exists that a man may have dedicated a kore and also happened to be closely related to a woman who was serving or had served as a priestess in Athens, but the numbers make it impossible that this could be the case with every single Acropolis kore, and thus this

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[173] Judy Ann Turner. Hiereiai: Acquisition of Feminine Priesthoods in Ancient Greece (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Information Services, 1983) 21
\item[174] See Chapter 1, Dedicators and Inscriptions
\item[175] Holloway 267-268
\item[176] Connelly 130
\item[177] Karakasi 135
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
theory of identity as a blanket explanation for all korai is highly implausible; why
would a large number of individuals dedicate likenesses of highly respected
priestesses who were not related or otherwise affiliated with them? Logically they
would not.

There is also the issue of naming. The statues representing Lysimache and
Syeris, though dedicated somewhat later than the korai, were accompanied by labeled
inscriptions. What if this is not a function of chronological time and changing social
standards, but rather a function of their status? As prominent figures in the cult, they
presumably would have been publicly known. Perhaps this resulted in the
consideration of the public display of their names as less taboo than the public display
of the names of normal women, who were expected to be generally invisible in
society, with the exception of important public events and religious ceremonies.178
Regardless of this potential factor, the number of korai itself is entirely incongruous
with the number of priestesses who would have served Athena on the Acropolis in
Athens during the time period of the statues’ dedication. The issue of other women
who may have played important roles in rituals or festivals on the Acropolis in honor
of Athena is less clear, and in published work on the korai goes generally un-
discussed. The only scholar to discuss it with any depth is Marion Meyer, who
mentions the possibility that the korai may represent other women who took place in
cult festivities, such as kanephoroi or members of the Panathenaic procession. She
says however, that she believes the ages and iconography of the korai make this

178 Ellen D. Reeder, “Women and Men in Classical Greece,” in Pandora: Women in Classical Greece,
(Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery in association with Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,
1995) 21
interpretation unlikely,\textsuperscript{179} and due to its general exclusion from other scholarly publication I will not discuss it further here.

The theory of immortal identities doesn’t rely at all on the diversity among the korai, or even discuss it for that matter, the result of which is that the variety of physiognomies adds a puzzling element to the proposal. The rest of Keesling’s discussion aside, she makes a solidly convincing and materially-supported argument for the five kore/Athena hybrids which she proposes. Unlike most statues of Athena on the Acropolis, they appear like other korai in stance and dress, but are then augmented by the addition of attributes in the form of helmets or spears. She lists Acr. 136, Acr. 661, Acr. 646, but strangely not the other two which she believes to be certain examples of this hybridization.\textsuperscript{180} These iconographic links to Athena seem indisputable, though the rendering of the statues in every other way like the korai—as far as we can tell—is quite interesting. Based on the descriptions provided by Keesling, much of the evidence for her hybrids is provided by fragmentary sections of statues, and none which she describes remain whole (or mostly whole) today. With the incomplete nature of the archaeological evidence for the overall visual appearance of these statues, I think we can do very little to speculate over the relationship between these hybrids and other Athena statues not meeting the criteria for the kore schema. All we can see of Acr. 136 (Fig 16), for example, are her right leg and left foot. We can see from the depiction of the drapery that she is drawing her garments against her left leg, but have no other knowledge of her appearance beyond the hole at her foot which Keesling postulates held a spear. Thus, I suggest we accept the

\textsuperscript{179} Meyer and Brüggemann 25-27
\textsuperscript{180} Keesling 129-130
iconographic evidence for the identification of these korai as kore/Athena hybrids, and leave the issue of the relationship between Keesling’s hybrids and the non-korai Athena statues for an entirely different body of research and discussion.

With regard to Keesling’s argument of broad identification of korai as Athena, I find the assertion to be somewhat troublesome. Firstly, the Athena Promachos statuettes dedicated on the Acropolis are clear representations of the goddess, as evidenced by her fully-armed and armored appearance. In conjunction, Keesling states that the hybrids which she identified, such as Acr. 661, are clearly demarcated by helmets and neck guards.¹⁸¹ I believe that her identification of the hybrids as representations of the goddess is an accurate assessment, but I do not think it supports the identification of all Acropolis korai as such. The main question we must ask is, can we just assume that any dedication on the Acropolis of a votive depicting a woman—identified by neither inscription nor specific iconography—was intended to represent Athena, and was automatically recognized as such by viewers? I would argue that the answer is no, we absolutely cannot. Were these representations of unidentified women the only representations of women dedicated on the Acropolis, the situation would be quite different. Because, however, the existence of votives specifically denoted as representations of Athena through explicit iconography—and here I speak mainly of the Athena Promachos statuettes and Keesling’s Athena hybrids—we should not assume that female votives without this explicit iconography also represent the goddess. On the contrary, I think this is evidence to assume that they do not represent Athena. If someone wished to dedicate to Athena an image of

¹⁸¹ Keesling 130
herself, and were already paying a great enough sum to commission an elaborate \textit{kore} with lavish, polychrome decoration, precious inlays, etc, why would they not just dedicate a \textit{kore} in the style of Keesling’s hybrids, wearing the armor or carrying the weapons with which Athena is consistently associated?

Henri Lechat discusses the point of Athena’s various identities—particularly the distinction between \textit{Parthenos} and \textit{Ergane}—and comes to the ultimate conclusion that in terms of representations of the goddess, there really is no distinction, and need not be a distinction, because they are both part of the same overall entity that is Athena.\footnote{Lechat (1903) 269} We can see this in the images of the cult statue of Athena \textit{Parthenos} which has been recreated from literary accounts of its glory and copies and imitations made by other ancient artists. The chryselephantine statue is reported to have been enormous; the statue of Athena \textit{Nike} it held in its outstretched hand was itself four cubits high. The goddess wore a helmet decorated with griffins and the image of a sphinx, her signature \textit{aegis}, and held a spear in her left hand with a shield resting at her feet;\footnote{Pausanias, \textit{Description of Greece}, translated by W.H.S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918) 24.5-7} this statue represented the iteration of Athena who was the virgin patron of Athens. The ideas of virginity and docility were just some of the values desired in mortal Greek women—the rest of which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four—but the cult statue of Athena \textit{Parthenos} clearly shows that even in her virginal incarnation, this immortal woman was a warrior. Keesling compares the \textit{korai} and \textit{kouroi}—who are strongly associated with representations of Apollo—as supporting evidence for association of the \textit{korai} with Athena. Apollo, however—young, strong,
capable—is a perfect model for the ideal, male Greek youth. Athena—strong, very much present and visible, participating in wars, disputes, and generally displaying a gender identity which is quite liminal in the context of Greek society—is clearly not a perfect model for the ideal Greek woman. She is certainly an important and respected deity, but hardly one whom a man would choose to represent an ideal—and thoroughly mortal—young woman in archaic Greece.

**A New Theory on the Identity of the Acropolis Korai**

While I believe some of the arguments discussed above are stronger than others, none of them are without critical weaknesses in terms of providing a comprehensive explanation for the identities of the Acropolis korai. I propose that the key to success in coming up with a logical agreement as to an interpretation is the acceptance of multiple identities for the various statues among the group. Payne and Young briefly entertained this idea, though they are some of the only scholars to do so (and did not pursue it in great depth). They wrote, in 1951,

“One must reckon with the possibility that the series of large korai on the Acropolis is not a continuous series in the same sense as the series of bronzes, vases, and terra-cottas.”

They suggest here that while the tendency to group stylistically similar artifacts and pieces of art together is strong—and often provides informative results—it may not be the appropriate solution for gleaning information from the korai.

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184 Payne and Young 27
Archaeology as a discipline, in many cases, tends toward the assignation of one explanation for any given phenomenon or group of phenomena or artifacts. Of course, sometimes this is appropriate—when the development of a particular site is in question, for example—but sometimes it extends to issues which may be too broad to fit into a single category. This tendency is especially visible in the ongoing development of and debate over archaeological theory. Practitioners in the field tend to acknowledge that a processual or post-processual approach is appropriate for investigating certain types of sites or questions, but within the post-processual sphere, approaches seem to be much more confined to a particular secondary theory (i.e. Marxist, structuralist, feminist, etc) and archaeologists often utilize one approach to answer a broad range of questions for a particular site or area when multiple approaches might better fit the archaeological record.

I believe this same sort of situation has occurred with the Acropolis korai. For decades, scholars have attempted to explain the identities intended by the dedicators of the statues by assuming that they all fall into one category, be it generic women, priestesses and servants of the goddess, representations of Athena herself, or likenesses of specific individuals. All of these theories make arguments which sound conditionally appropriate, or which fit the physical evidence provided by some korai, but none of them provide a theory which suits all korai without some form of clear question or complication. I propose that this search for an overarching theory of singular identity is born out of habit, and with the application of a bottom-up approach—taking the individual components of the korai at face value, placing them in cultural and historical context, and finally piecing them together to form a theory
of identity—we can come to the most fitting and logical conclusion with regard to the identities intended for the *korai* by their craftsmen and dedicators. The three ideas which I believe should be combined to create a more comprehensive analysis of the identities of the *korai* are the *kore*/Athena hybrid theory, the intentional likeness theory, and the idea of intentional variation by the artists—falling only technically under the generic identity theory. Although these last two do pose competition for one another, I think neither the intentional likeness theory nor the intentional variation by artists theory can necessarily be proven correct. Rather I simply propose that it is likely to be one of them which explains the bulk of the identities of the *korai*. The relationship between, and implications of, these two competing theories will be discussed at great length in Chapter Four, and we should recognize both as equally plausible.

Concerning Catherine Keesling’s arguments for identification as Athena, I previously stated that I think she provides strong evidence for the five certain ‘hybrids’ which she believes exist among the *korai* on the Acropolis. The attributes associated with these *korai*—namely spears and helmets—are unmistakably iconographic references to Athena, and could be attributed to neither mortal females nor another goddess. As the dedication to deities of their own images was quite frequent, and the context of the finds is the Athenian Acropolis, the added factor of clear iconography associated with the hybrids creates a sound base of indisputable support for the identification of the five hybrids as the goddess Athena.  

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185 The originator of the Hybrid Theory, Keesling unfortunately does not provide all of the numbers for these *korai*, but the images which she does provided are included among the other figures at the end of this work.
The first option for the explanation of a high level of individuation amongst the korai is the theory of intentional likeness. I would argue that if the korai are meant to represent likenesses of mortal Athenian women, and were consistently dedicated by men, then the conventions of Greek society would necessitate that those men were either their husbands, fathers, or other close male relatives.186 The broad range of dedicators evidenced by the inscriptions accompanying other Acropolis votives—as well as the dedication of Antenor’s Kore by Nearchos the potter,187 suggest that all of the korai do not represent aristocratic women, because we know that at least some dedicators were almost certainly businessmen or craftsmen, like fullers, fishermen, and potters.188 We can posit, however, that the women represented are all women of propriety and character, for they are richly and appropriately dressed for the time, are permitted the privilege of being represented on the Acropolis as dedications to Athena, and maintain a downward gaze, symbolizing perhaps a gesture of modesty, or an attention to the appropriate placement of their garments.189

As the interactions of Athenian women with the outside world—at least those Athenian women with any sort of means—were conducted mostly by slaves, I suggest that the dedication of a kore representing a woman in one’s household not only acted as a votive offering to Athena, but also brought added prestige to the dedicator and his household in two ways; ideal Athenian women were expected to be

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186 As previously discussed, the status of women was such that they were essentially not to be seen in public and would not have interactions with men who were not members of their family. Thus, dedications by unrelated men would not have occurred under proper circumstances.
187 Karakasi 133
188 Holloway 271
189 Stieber 48
any number of things, but comely, tall, fertile, and demure were high on the list.\textsuperscript{190} In this way, the dedication of a kore (most of whom appear quite beautiful, physically strong, and modest in their downward gaze); 1) Presented an image given by the dedicator which represented these ideal characteristics of Athenian women, and 2) Announced to the viewers on the Acropolis that the dedicator’s household was graced by a woman possessing such qualities and embodying the ideals associated with well-bred women of propriety. She could afford to remain within the protection of the home and out of contact with other men, and she was required by such qualities to appear nameless in public settings. In this way, men could boast about their wives, daughters, or other female relatives in their homes without doing them the indignity of actually introducing them to others and promoting inappropriate social relations, particularly between the women of their households and other, unrelated men.

Because the age range of the group seems quite narrow, I would argue that the korai either represent daughters or sisters of marriageable age, or wives, either just after their marriages or as they had previously looked at their idealized age of marriage. In funerary statuary, we may see deceased individuals represented as youthful kouroi and korai, full of the potential for life\textsuperscript{191} at an age of prime beauty and physical ability—be it for battle, athletics, or child-bearing—and in this way they are idealized. It seems logical, then, that the practice may have carried over to this representation of unnamed, living individuals.

This theory of likeness embraces the arrephoroi theory to some extent as well. It is possible that some of the statues may have been dedicated by the fathers or

\textsuperscript{190} Reeder 20
\textsuperscript{191} Osborne (2008) 81-84
husbands of women who had served as arrephoroi at some point, and who saw it as socially appropriate to depict them as slightly older, idealized, marriageable women. In Chapter Four I will discuss the supporting evidence for this idea, which comes mainly from later classical and Hellenistic instances of this type of dedication and lends more credibility to the suggestion. If the desire to honor past arrephoroi were in fact one motive for some men to dedicate statues, their dedication of these young women as korai served as their re-dedication to Athena as immortal votives, whereas their first dedication was comprised of their service to the goddess on the Acropolis.

As I briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, one critical aspect of the theory of portraits or likenesses is the distinction between the words, and this issue begs further exploration. Consistent in her re-examination of generally-accepted ideas, Mary Stieber presents a lengthy and noteworthy discussion of portraiture, likenesses, and their presence—or lack thereof—in archaic Greece. Her definition of a ‘portrait’ hinges on the ability to identify the image with a named individual via an accompanying inscription; something we cannot do with the Acropolis korai. She says however,

“...it remains to consider whether these statues might nonetheless exemplify tentative, incompletely articulated incursions into the genre of portraiture, early efforts to address the idea of personal likeness in a representation of a human being, in acknowledgment of the deep, long-standing ideological connection between likeness and representation,”

and she defines a ‘likeness’ as,

\[^{192}\text{This is the main method of identification which Stieber suggests. I would argue that it might also be possible to identify an individual who was a well-known public figure, leader, etc, by way of an extremely unique physical feature (a prominent nose, an injury to the face, etc) or an object of iconographic significance to the individual. In the case of korai and images of most women, however, the method of identification would have to be an inscription.}\]
“Any successful attempt at mimicking the physical characteristics of a particular thing, whether a person, an animal, a place, or an object, to such a degree as to make it recognizable as that particular thing...”\textsuperscript{193}

Franz Winter provides an interesting perspective on the original concept of the portrait which I find bridges the gap between the ideas of ‘portrait’ and ‘likeness’. He quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds, saying,

“Portraiture is not the exact reckoning of all of the minute details of the portrayed individual, but rather, the highest goal can be a capturing of the general characteristics,”

His own theories fall very much in line with this idea. He emphasizes the, “presentation of the general characteristics of the whole,” for creating the general character of an image, and suggests that the similarity of a portrait to its subject is achieved largely in the overall impression of the face\textsuperscript{194}—the aspect of the korai which most distinguishes them from one another. Relating the korai and kouroi to one another, he asserts that among the statues of men, we see only mortals unless otherwise marked, and that the same is true of the statues of women. “In this way,” he says, “we meet the daughters of Athens’ nobility.”\textsuperscript{195}

For the purpose of this discussion of the concepts and their relation to the acropolis korai, I will continue to use Stieber’s working definitions, the only distinction between which is effectively the ability to link a portrait image with a specific, named individual and occurs mainly through the addition of inscriptions. In my original presentation of the intended likeness theory, I discussed some of the evidence Stieber presents in favor of the familiarity of the archaic Greeks with

\textsuperscript{193} Stieber 83
\textsuperscript{194} Franz Winter, \textit{Über die Griechische Porträtkunst}, (Berlin: W. Speeman, 1894) 5
\textsuperscript{195} Winter (1894) 7
relatively sophisticated artistic likenesses, as well as so-called ‘verbal portraiture’ in many forms of writing. She also presents, however, further extant archaeological evidence for the presence of likenesses in archaic Greek art, citing both archaic funerary masks, as well as the 6th century group dedication at the Samian Heraion, known as the Geneleos group. The former, she suggests, were part of a trend which originated in Egypt where their purpose was to help preserve the physiognomy of the deceased after their physical bodies had begun to disintegrate. If the reasons for creating and employing funerary masks were transferred across the Mediterranean with the practice itself, then the idea of preserving likeness seems undeniable.\textsuperscript{196} The Geneleos group is a set of statues, dedicated and labeled as family which is presumed to include the father, “—arches”, his wife “Phileia”, and their four children of which two daughters’ names are preserved in their inscription as “Philippe” and “Ornithe”. The lack of preservation of the full statues means it is impossible to know the extent of individuation between the physiognomies of the statues, but we do know that the son was most likely the youngest child through his small-statured depiction, and we also know that the statues of the three daughters vary in their appearance of height, weight, and hairstyle, probably also indicative of varying ages.\textsuperscript{197} Because of their association with named individuals, the statues comprising the Geneleos group could technically bear the moniker “portrait” under Stieber’s particular definition, but the concept of individual representation and intention of likeness is the same even when a name is not present. Though the group was discovered at a different location, I think we can safely assume that an artistic trend rooted in an intellectual conception—in

\textsuperscript{196} Stieber 93
\textsuperscript{197} Stieber 95
this case the idea of representation of intentional likeness—would have quickly and completely disseminated throughout the Greek world, and the contemporary date the group has relative to the acropolis korai allow for effective use of analogy in this instance. The association of individual statues in the Geneleos group certainly does not automatically classify the korai as similarly-intended votive statues, but it does allow at least for the possibility, and provides support against ruling out the idea of likeness among the statues on the Athenian Acropolis.

The second option for the explanation of such a high level of individuation among the korai is the theory of intentional variation by the sculptors. A personal choice by the artists, this phenomenon may have grown out of a desire to better one’s work, to outdo one’s competitors, or it may have resulted from more artistic reasons; perhaps it came from a desire to recreate nature as faithfully as possible and to produce, so to speak, a likeness of women as a whole, or the idea of individual women. If the diversity of the korai is a result of intentional variation, then it represents a clear attempt to create a group of sculptures which as a body of work acts as a likeness of nature’s body of work—living women who are all visually unique. Regardless of the primary motives, this latter effect is achieved, and the issue of a statue simultaneously representing an idealized image and a likeness can be transferred to the idea of a statue simultaneously representing an idealized image and a likeness of women as a whole. The motives for dedication of a likeness are, I think, also true of the korai should they be identified in this second manner. Should they represent intentional variation, I think the choice to dedicate a kore instead of another votive speaks to the same idea which I discussed in the context of intended
likenesses—the desire to associate oneself and one’s household with a woman like those represented by the *korai*. Perhaps the individualized female statue was chosen to represent such a woman in concept instead of in exact physical appearance, and the creation of a group of such visually unique statues served both the interest of the artist who desired to showcase his abilities and the dedicator who desired to showcase the individual female attribute(s) of his household.

I believe both of these possibilities for identification employ complex concepts, and to avoid confusion I will as often as possible refer to them as the theories for ‘a likeness of an individual’ and ‘intentional variation. Being so complex, I think that there is room in both to incorporate the theories proposed by Marion Meyer and Lambert Schneider and discussed in Chapter Two. I see no reason why the *korai* cannot simultaneously represent either real, individual young women or the idea of individual women as a whole, as well as an idealized image of the *parthenos* as a social being. On the one hand, some of the *korai* appear as extremely beautiful young women and others appear as plainer individuals, based on both modern and historical standards of beauty. I believe this is a function of an attempt at the production of an image of a real young woman, or of a more mature woman as she may have looked at the age at which she married; whether or not the statue represents a likeness or a naturalistic image is in this case unimportant. If we also consider the theory of intentional variation by the artist, the variation in comeliness of the *korai* may represent an extensive effort on the part of sculptors to vary the physiognomies of their creations in a manner as close to that of nature as possible. On the other hand, according to Schneider, the idealization in the *korai* is provided to the greatest extent
by their apparent age and the individual objects and features with which they are associated—birds, flowers, fruit, downcast eyes, and beautiful clothing with rich decoration. These objects and features, as Schneider suggested, come together in this setting which heavily emphasizes social standing and prestige\textsuperscript{198} to represent and allude to the qualities which were expected of the ideal \textit{parthenos}. The birds represent the playthings of young girls and their youth,\textsuperscript{199} the flowers beauty and grace, and rich clothing and lavish decoration emphasize those qualities, with the garments of the \textit{korai} likely having been based on the appearances of real \textit{parthenoi} in public setting at religious festivals.\textsuperscript{200}

In this manner, the \textit{korai} can be both either intentional likenesses of individuals or the product of intentional variation, as well as idealized images. The overall physiognomy represents either a specific young woman or the infinitely diverse appearances of real women as a group, and the statue acts as the manifestation of a concept and a complete image extolling the virtues of the proper \textit{parthenos} as she would have looked and presented herself on the rare occasions in which she was able to appear and display herself in public.

Based upon this analysis, it is clear that acknowledging both possible explanations for the level of individuation among the \textit{korai} does not hinder our examination of the meaning or social implications of their dedication. It may not be certain whether they are meant to be likenesses of specific women or likenesses of the

\begin{itemize}
\item[198] A lavish dedication on the Acropolis would have not been an option for all, and certainly would have held social value for the dedicator whose name was inscribed on a statue’s base.
\item[199] Meyer and Brüggemann 24
\item[200] Meyer and Brüggemann 28
\end{itemize}
idea of women as they exist as a whole in nature, but in either situation it is possible—and I think likely—that they were dedicated as some form of representation of an individual woman, whether explicitly in her physiognomy or more vaguely in her natural and social essence.
Chapter Four

*The Meaning and Potential Social Implications of the Acropolis Korai*

The social conventions governing women and their roles in archaic Greek society were extremely rigid and confining by many modern and historical standards, and if the *korai* on the Athenian Acropolis were, as I have concluded, either intended likenesses of specific young women or the products of intentional variation, then their dedication and public display deftly pushes the boundaries of those conventions. In either situation the *korai* are representative of some form of likeness, be it of a specific, physiognomic nature or of a conceptual nature (that is to say, a likeness of the idea of the unique appearance of women as a whole in nature), and that display of an ‘individual’ on the Acropolis goes directly against the conventions of archaic Greek society which made women’s active participation in much of public life a taboo.

Their likely dedication at the hands of close male relatives also calls into question the motives for dedication, and whether they extended beyond a simple desire to either honor Athena or repay her for a service. Accounts of women’s roles in archaic Greece paint their status as an unrecognized and highly subordinate one, but the dedication of the *korai* and their public display begs the question, did the personal relationships between women and the men in their families mirror the relationships between women and the general public, or did they take on their own separate boundaries? How do the *korai* and their dedication relate to these questions? In order to look into these issues, we must first identify what exactly women’s roles were and characterize their relationship with the general public.
The differences between men and women in archaic Greek society were starkly visible from birth. Daughters were considered to be more expensive and somewhat less useful than sons, in part because they required an expensive dowry at the time of their marriage and would not carry on their family’s name. Thus, it was not unheard of for an unwanted female infant to be taken to an exposed, remote location and left there to die instead of being accepted into her family. If a father elected to raise his daughter, the stark contrast between her life and those of her brothers would only increase. According to Ellen Reeder, ancient writers have described the ideal Greek woman as beautiful, with a similarly beautiful voice and sexual appeal. She was tall, industrious, born of a good family, fertile, virtuous and modest, as well as passive, submissive, generally silent and nearly invisible; the proper achievement of all of these attributes seems to require a balancing act of impossible precision. Women were believed to be the insatiable sex, with an uncontrollable sexual appetite and appeal which could lure men dangerously away from their own wives or their important obligations. A woman, then, was also expected to be, “spirited and alluring without being sexually promiscuous.”

Outside of the home, women have been documented as attendants at dramatic performances and public speeches, as well as religious festivals. They may have left their homes to visit the fountain house for water and the tombs of family members, but otherwise any woman who could afford to keep slaves—particularly those still of child-bearing age—would have remained mostly in the areas of the house specifically designated as female space. Debate on the status of women within the household
(i.e. as partners in marriages or as members of the family) has arrived at various conclusions. Christine Sourvineau Inwood argues that women were unequal and subordinated within the household, or oikos, even with regard to religious matters, but that women and men were equals of complementary status in the public religious sphere.203 Reeder, on the other hand, cites some textual allusions—from Euripides, Homer, and Pindar—to the presence of semi-equality in an ideal marriage, and the desire to achieve, “homophrosyne, a union of hearts and minds,” in which both spouses communicated well with one another and were capable of compromise and harmony.204 The issue of equality within the oikos and individual marriages, and the relationship between a husband and his wife, is an interesting one when considered in the context of the nature of the dedication of the korai. If husband dedicated a kore, was it just a votive for Athena and representation of his wife intended to bring prestige and to flaunt the female attributes of his household, or was it also a dedication meant to honor her? Unfortunately, due to the simple and sparse nature of the dedications associated with the korai, we have no way of knowing the answer to this question, but we may speculate with an appropriate acknowledgement of the uncertainty inherent in doing so.

Because all of our information on the dedication of the Acropolis korai comes from the inscriptions which accompany them, and those inscriptions do not provide a large quantity of specific information, it is necessary to look elsewhere to answer questions regarding the act of dedicating itself. In her book, Portrait of a Priestess,

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Joan Breton Connelly briefly discusses a diachronic view of the *korai*, in which one might compare them to later classical and Hellenistic, draped, female statues.\(^{205}\) Sheila Dillon also makes this suggestion in her discussion of portraiture based on the assertion that these later, draped portraits, just like the Acropolis *korai*, were nearly always dedicated as votive statues at sanctuaries, and are thus at least partially analogous to the *korai* in their context.\(^{206}\) These classical and Hellenistic votive dedications of female portrait statues are visually similar enough to the *korai* to warrant a stylistic association, and they may be associated with numerous dedicatory inscriptions which provide a great deal more information than those few inscriptions that we may even tentatively associate with *korai*.

A diachronic examination of the *korai* then, utilizing the information gleaned from the inscriptions on the later votive portrait statues, should provide ample insight into possible motives of dedication and allow for speculation regarding similar motives for the dedication of the *korai*. Many of the portrait statues with preserved inscriptions have been found at locations all over Greece, and are not confined to the Acropolis. I will however, include those non-Acropolis inscriptions, because I would argue that if dedicatory motivations and practices were analogous between a multitude of geographically diverse sites, *including the Acropolis*, then we can assume a general cohesion between them which would likely indicate other similarities. Though we are employing a diachronic comparison, I will show that

\(^{205}\) Connelly 127  
\(^{206}\) Sheila Dillon, *The Female Portrait Statue in the Greek World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 3
stylistic similarities between the statues are such that they promise to provide an interesting background for further examination of the korai.

On the subject of the classical and Hellenistic draped portraits of women, there is little to be found in the way of substantial and accessible sources of information beyond the writings of Sheila Dillon. Even the catalogues of dedications upon which she has relied for some her evidence have proven impossible to obtain, and this discussion therefore relies greatly on her presentation of the various votive portrait statues and their known inscriptions. Her information, however, is presented in a manner that seems quite thorough and objective, and it is a most valuable source of information on the extent of portrait dedications made by, and on behalf of, women in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods.

Not unexpectedly, there can be found a considerable amount of information on male portraits of both votive and strictly honorific natures; it is often true that a great deal more time and energy has been devoted to archaeological evidence related to the lives of men than the corresponding evidence which exists for women (at least up until the very end of the 20th century). Why is this also true of portrait statues, for which, based on Dillon’s writing, there is no dearth of female examples? In Evelyn B. Harrison’s article on portrait statues found in the Athenian Agora, she explains that female portrait statues were excluded from her study on the basis that, “Statues of women cannot be distinguished from goddesses so long as the heads are missing, and it is easier to study all draped female statues together.”\textsuperscript{207} One might question whether

\textsuperscript{207} Evelyn B. Harrison, \textit{The Athenian Agora}, Vol. 1: Portrait Sculpture (Princeton, NJ: The American Classical School of Athens, 1953) v
she refers here to statues with accompanying inscriptions, but we can only assume
not, as the bulk of the statues discussed by Dillon bear inscriptions which at least
name the dedicator and subject of the portrait. It is possible that Harrison does not
share the idea that the name listed as the individual on whose behalf the dedicator has
given the statue is the subject of a portrait, but she does indeed specify that the
portraits and goddesses are indistinguishable *when headless*. I would conclude, then,
that a portion of the female votive statues to which Harrison refers are without heads
or inscriptions, and since it is her preference to study all draped figures together, she
has chosen to reserve them for a study not specific to portraiture.

This does not necessarily answer my initial concern though, as to why female
portrait statues have received so much less attention than their male counterparts. It is
possible this is a question of prevalence, and also possible that it is simply a result of
the male-dominated research (both in subject and in the gender of the scholars
conducting it) which constituted the study of Greek archaeology (among other
disciplines) for such a long time. I would attribute the lack of research to both issues,
as well as the fact that women’s perceived insignificance in ancient Greek society has
translated to their perceived insignificance in Greek archaeology. More recently,
attempts to rectify this situation have been quite successful, but the scholarship on
female portraiture, particularly votive portraiture, seems still in its infancy. Dillon, as
I have stated, provides the most comprehensive collection of information on the
subject, and I will present a summary of the physical characteristics of the statues,
insofar as they pertain to a diachronic comparison with the *korai*, before moving on to
the implications of this comparison.
In visual appearance, the draped female portrait statues are both stylistically advanced and to a certain degree schematically similar as compared to the korai. They wear the same standard chiton and himation which is depicted on many of the Acropolis korai, and some also wear a peplos over their chiton. Their physical poses are varied in the placement of the arms, which are used to maintain the draping of the garments\textsuperscript{208} and replace the tugging gesture displayed in the korai as a method for shaping the fabric of their garments. The effect is often the same though, creating a pulling of the garment fabric across the lower body. Even in the more heavily draped portrait styles, at least a portion of one of the legs is often defined, though in a more modest manner. Orientation of the statues’ bodies and heads vary much more widely than among the Acropolis korai (Figs 24-25),\textsuperscript{209} but I believe this may be attributed simply to the stylistic progression from the Archaic Period to the Classical and Hellenistic Periods.

The inscriptions accompanying the portrait statues suggest that most dedications were made on behalf of women by their close male relatives—fathers on behalf of their daughters, husbands on behalf of their wives, or in some cases brothers and sons on behalf of their sisters or mothers. Dedications were also made jointly by both parents on the occasion of a daughter’s marriage.\textsuperscript{210} Evidence from the Hellenistic Acropolis in Athens suggests that a great number of the portrait statues from that period also represented young women who had serves as arrephoroi or

\textsuperscript{208} Dillon (2010) 64-65
\textsuperscript{209} Dillon (2010) See figs. 24-36, pp. 66-84, for extensively documented visual evidence of these phenomena.
\textsuperscript{210} Dillon (2010) 42-45
other important agents of the cult of Athena.\textsuperscript{211} Based on presently extant evidence, the dedication of votive portraits of women (at least those labeled as such) seems to have begun in the first half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century,\textsuperscript{212} and as time passed, the Acropolis became a major location for the dedication of all forms of portrait dedications.\textsuperscript{213} Two of the earliest and most well-known examples of this are dedications which I have already discussed—statues of Lysimache and her handmaid, Syeris. The statue of Lysimache was dedicated by her father and carved by the sons of Praxiteles.\textsuperscript{214} Its inscription has been badly damaged, but the reconstructed version reads in both Ancient Greek and a modern translation:

\begin{verbatim}
[πατρὸς Λυσιμάχη] Δρακο[ντιδ]ο ἦν [τὸ γέν]ος μέν,
[ὀγδώκοντ' ὀκτὼ δ' ἔξπέρα[σ]εν ἔτη
[ㄛιμπανε' ἔ]ξηκον]τε δ' ἔτη [κ]αι τέσσαρ[α]'] Ἀθηναὶ
[λιτρεύσασα γένη τ]έσσαρ' ἐπεὶδὲ τέκνων.
[Λ θιμάχη--)έος Φλυέως μήτηρ.
[Δημήτριος ἐπο]ησεν.
\end{verbatim}

“[Lysimache] daughter of Drakontides and lived for [eighty-eight] years. [In all for sixty-four years] [she served] Athena and saw four generations of children. [Lysimache,] mother of [---]es of Phlya. [Demetrios] made the sculpture.

According to Pausanias, the statue of Syeris was inscribed with the following:

“Syeris, \textit{diakonos} of Lysimache in the sanctuary This portrait image is a clear likeness; My deeds, too, and my soul now live Clearly before all. For holy fate led me to this most beautiful temple of Pallas the revered. Where I served the goddess in toil and not unrenowned…

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{211} Dillon (2010) 44
  \item \textsuperscript{212} Dillon (2010) 51
  \item \textsuperscript{213} Dillon (2006) 102
  \item \textsuperscript{214} Dillon (2010) 40
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Nikomachos made it.\textsuperscript{215}

Of dedications of female portraits, 16 survive from 4\textsuperscript{th}-century Athens and of those, 9 come from the Acropolis or the slopes leading to its summit.\textsuperscript{216} Among the Acropolis statues, many bear the names of their subjects but not those of their dedicator(s). Some portrait statues from the Agora, however, do list the names and familial relationships of the dedicators to the subjects. One statue, for example, a portrait of a young woman named Archippe was dedicated by her mother and commissioned from Praxiteles himself in the third quarter of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE. Another woman, Peisikrateia, was depicted with her husband as a dedication by their son in the second half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE. A statue of a woman named Philylla is labeled as a dedication by her mother (second half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BCE), and a statue of a woman named Chairippe was dedicated by her brothers in the 340’s BCE.\textsuperscript{217} Later statues from Athens also bear inscriptions which provide further insight into the purpose for their dedication. The uncle and mother of a young woman, Anthemia, dedicated a statue to honor her service as an \textit{arrephoros} in the cult of Athena Polias ca. 250-230 BCE. The parents of Apollonia dedicated a statue to honor her similar service as a \textit{kanephoros} (a basket bearer), also during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BCE. A number of similar dedications exist, all from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BCE including a dedication for Chrysis—priestess of Athena Polias, by her cousins, for Phila—an \textit{arrephoros}—by her father, and for Polykrateia—a \textit{kanephoros}—by her parents.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{215} Connelly 130-132
\textsuperscript{216} Dillon (2010) 51
\textsuperscript{217} Dillon (2010) 169-170
\textsuperscript{218} Dillon (2010) 176-177
It was also possible for the demos to publicly honor a woman, generally a priestess, for her service to a religious cult, though this was less common in Athens than in other locations. One such Acropolis statue which survives bears a dedication which indicates it was set up by the demos to honor a woman named Philistion, daughter of Democharos and priestess of Pandrosos ca. 150 BCE. Though occurring with less frequency, some women actually dedicated their own votive portrait statues. One of the first women to document the action of her own dedication was called Simo, and she set up a bronze portrait statue—an extremely expensive one, valued at over 3,000 drachmas—at some point during the 4th or 3rd centuries BCE at the site of Erythrae. The inscription reads:

“[S]imo, wife of Zoilos, priestess of the city, daughter of Pankratides, set up this image of beauty and example of virtue and wealth, for Dionysos as an eternal memorial for my children and ancestors.”

We can see here that even in the early stages of the trend of dedication of the labeled votive portraits, a woman—at least one holding an important religious office, such as Simo’s ‘priestess of the city’—could have the power to dedicate a votive in her own image in a sanctuary.

While most of the inscriptions denote simply the name of the subject of the portrait and the relation between that subject and the dedicator, one inscription, which does not come from the Acropolis but instead from the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Argos, denotes very specifically the purpose for its dedication. It reads in both Ancient Greek and in the English translation:

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219 Dillon (2010) 38-39
220 Dillon (2010) 177
221 Dillon (2010) 9
[Κ]ύπρι μάκαιρα, μέλου Τιμανθίδος, ἄς ύπερ εὐχῇ.
eἰκόνα Τιμάνθης τάνδε καθιδρύεται,
ἦς τις καὶ μετέπειτα, θεά, τέμενος τόδε πρόνοις.
νισόμενος μνάμαν τᾶσδ' ἔχηι ἄμφιπόλου.
Λαιετίων ἐποίησε.

“Blessed Kypris, look after Timanthis; on account of a prayer for her sake, Timanthes set up this image so that later too, oh goddess, when this sanctuary on the promontory is visited, a thought be given to this servant of yours. Laietion made it.”

Dillon asserts—and I would agree—that the purpose of dedication presented on this monument should, and likely does, represent the purpose of the dedication of other votive portraits; the desire was for the receiving deity to perpetually bless the individual in the portrait, as well as their family, in exchange for a dedication of immortal piety and devotion, as represented by the statue. It is not hard to see why each individual would want to maintain such a relationship with a god—or multiple gods—for themselves, and indeed some form of this reciprocal relationship was presumably the purpose of all votive dedications. Rather the two points of contention are 1) What is the purpose of a portrait as a votive in this situation versus a non-portrait offering?, and 2) What is the impetus for dedicating to establish such a reciprocal relationship between a deity and another person, thus altering the form of reciprocity? From Simo’s dedication, we know that an individual could, and did, dedicate their own portrait as a votive for a deity, so we can conclude that the portrait was not simply used to help establish a difference between the inscribed name of the dedicator from the name of the individual on whose behalf it was given. It seems to

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222 Dillon (2010) 44-45
me more likely that the usage of (labeled\textsuperscript{223}) portraits as votive offerings accompanied the increased production of portraits in general, and was thus mostly a function of artistic and social trends.

Whether we choose to see the non-hybrid korai as intended likenesses or as the product of intentional variation by the artist, the examination of these later inscriptions provides tremendous insight into their dedication. They make it quite clear that the impetus behind dedicating a portrait—or labeled likeness—on behalf of someone—in this case a woman—was the fact that they were either an extremely important individual or a dearly-held family member. The fact that those female portrait statues which were not dedicated by the demos on behalf of a priestess were all dedicated on behalf of women by close family members strongly supports this argument.

This demonstrated purpose for the later portrait dedications provides interesting insight into the dedication of the korai. Their dedication at the hands of close male relatives falls easily in line with both identification theories which I have proposed, in that either option seems likely in conjunction with honorific familial dedications. In the case of intended likeness, it is logical to assume that social mores would have rendered the dedication of a likeness of specific women to whom one was not related highly inappropriate and nearly impossible; in the case of intentional variation, the same is true, and I think the korai merely stand on the Acropolis to represent specific women in their essences as opposed to their physiognomies.

\textsuperscript{223} If we use the previously-discussed definition of a ‘portrait’ as given my Mary Stieber, this labeling is indeed what distinguishes the statues as ‘portraits’ instead of ‘likenesses’.
The information available in the inscriptions and my theorized impetus for the dedication of the korai address two of the main areas of inquiry in this work, namely, the need for a better-suited explanation for whom the korai may represent, and the question of the similarities and differences between a woman’s public social experiences and private social experiences, or her relationship with the public versus her relationship with her family (and specifically the men in her family). The issue of finding a better-suited theory of identity is clearly addressed by the harmonious fit of my dual theories of likeness and the inscribed evidence, and the question of social experiences requires only brief further examination to find resolution.

As I have discussed, most women—at least well-bred women of virtue—were almost entirely non-existent in public with the exception of attendance at religious activities, public addresses, and dramatic performances. Not only were they segregated out of quotidian public life, but their domestic space was also segregated within the oikos. If their public and private social experiences had been the same—if their interactions with men inside of their households had mirrored those interactions with men outside of their households—women’s roles within the family and the daily operations of the oikos would have been considered largely unimportant, and they would have been given very little accord, I think, in their relationships with adult male relatives, including their husbands. The dedicatory inscriptions on the draped portraits, however, suggest otherwise. The willingness of a husband to dedicate an expensive votive on behalf of his wife, or for a brother, son, or cousin to do the same for their female relatives, renders the idea of women playing

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unappreciated and unnoticed roles in the *oikos* unlikely. We know that a woman did a great deal to keep the households running smoothly—she was in charge of both day to day domestic operations as well as overall economic management\textsuperscript{225}—but these inscriptions provide evidence for the fact that her male relatives considered her role important as well, and did not simply reap the benefits without a conscious idea of whence they had come. The dedications made by parents on behalf of their daughters also attest to the changing importance of female offspring as they grew older. Though sometimes immediately abandoned at birth, a girl who was accepted into and raised by her family clearly held increasing value within—and for—the *oikos* as she grew older and attained marriageable, child-bearing status. It seems that although most women were accorded little importance in general society, those social mores did not fully permeate into private family life. With the biological and evolutionary basis for families being what they are, it seems only likely that familial love and bonds, the strength of which often outweighs social customs, were just as affecting in ancient Greece as we experience them to be in the present.

In theory, these ideas on the motivation for dedication of the *korai* may be true, but it must be demonstrated that these social implications may be tied to the *korai* in practice as well. While should do so in the comparative context which I discussed at the beginning of the chapter, theory does not always equate to practice. From a practical perspective, then, we can also look to the two *korai* which have been definitively associated with names—though they do not come from the archaic

\textsuperscript{225} Reeder 20
Acropolis—to provide further insight into dedicatory practices which were more contemporary with the korai.

In ultimately investigating the relationship between the dedication of the archaic Acropolis korai and the social experiences—both public and private—of women in ancient Greece, I think including Nikandre and Phrasikleia can help to put the entire discussion in a larger context. While a multitude of archaic korai have been discovered all over the ancient Greek world, the majority of them remain as anonymous as those found on the Acropolis, and their inclusion in this comparative exercise would only further muddle the question of identities. Nikandre and Phrasikleia, however, are distinctly labeled, and although they are quite different from another, they still maintain a shared visual and schematic connection to the Acropolis korai, and provide an important comparison for the group from Athens.\textsuperscript{226}

Whether we choose to identify Nikandre as a priestess, or simply as an important woman in personal status or status related to the cult of Artemis, her dedication is a valuable one. To our knowledge, she is the sole archaic kore outside of a funerary context to have been dedicated by a woman.\textsuperscript{227} Not only that, but her name is displayed in an inscription down the left side of her peplos and fully visible to all viewers. While we saw this in the draped, votive portrait statues from the classical and Hellenistic periods, it is a phenomenon that was not seen outside of funerary

\textsuperscript{226} See Chapter Three for the detailed discussion of the appearance and context of Nikandre and Phrasikleia
\textsuperscript{227} It is important here to make a clear distinction between the korai and the classical and Hellenistic portrait statues which I have also discussed in the context of a diachronic comparison. Some of the portrait statues were, as I described, dedicated by women either for themselves or their daughters, but Nikandre is the sole non-funerary kore from the archaic period (at least the sole kore which remains today) to have been documented as a dedication by a woman.
contexts in the time between Nikandre’s dedication and those of the later votive portraits. The korai on the Acropolis help to bridge the chronological gap between the two; is it possible that, though their names are missing, the same intention was present in the acts of their dedication? In a similar manner, Phrasikleia acts as evidence of statues which bridged the conceptual gap between those used as grave markers and the korai presented to Athena on the Acropolis. She demonstrates the versatility of the kore statue type, and its ability to represent a likeness—albeit idealized—of an individual, at least in a funerary context.

If we have evidence then, of votives on display which were labeled with the names of women from a later period, and also of the association of korai with idealized likenesses in a context other than on the Acropolis during the Archaic Period, we can conclude that the idea of the non-hybrid Acropolis korai as intended likenesses or as the products of intentional variation fits the material and social evidence in both theory and practice. Following the conclusions about women’s public and private social experiences made with regard to the draped portraits, we can bring these two ideas together to consider the ways in which the dedicatory practices associated with the korai are a reflection of those social experiences in the Archaic Period.

The impetus for the dedication of the draped portrait statues was a desire to gain favor and prosperity for a close female relative of the dedicator. If we choose to recognize the Acropolis korai as either intended likenesses of young women or as representations of natural feminine diversity dedicated on behalf of specific individuals, which I have done, and place them in the interpretive context of those
later, draped portrait figures, it is easy to see how similar familial relationships can explain the dedication of the korai. It would seem from the inscriptions denoting many of the Acropolis korai as aparche or dekate\textsuperscript{228} that they functioned primarily as direct exchange between men and Athena. The private social experiences of women, however, and their relationships with their close male relatives, can be expressed through the choosing of a kore as the mode of dedication. In choosing to either dedicate a likeness of a female member of his immediate family or a uniquely individual image of a woman, a man would not only be touting the female wealth, so to speak, of his oikos, and the associated virtues and beauty, but he would also be honoring his female family member by placing a kore—in her image at least in some manner—in a place which was both so public and so sacred. Carrying over the implied status of the familial relationships between men and women from the classical and Hellenistic statues to the korai places the archaic statues starkly outside of the lines drawn for women’s roles in public Greek society of the time. Not only do those relationships show that a woman’s private social experience was very different from her public one, but the existence of the korai in public as representations of individual women—whether physically or as an idea—breaks through the defined boundaries of their societal roles in and of itself. In a culture and a period that essentially forbade women from taking part in quotidian public life, their constant presence in such a well-visited and visible location was a powerful exception to those restrictions.

\textsuperscript{228} See Chapter One, \textit{Dedicators and Inscriptions}
In some ways, the leap from the Classical and Hellenistic Periods may seem lengthy, but I would argue that it is justified. Familial relationships are just that—private and conducted within the confines of family space—and within a continuous culture it seems unlikely to me that they would change so greatly as to truly alter the status of interactions within a family. They have continued to remain the same throughout our own changing society, and in most cases are translatable across many geographically and culturally diverse groups. I also think it unlikely that the idea of dedicating an image representing an individual—in any form—would have suddenly appeared in the Classical Period after the idea of likeness, to which I earlier attested, had existed in Greek art for such a long period of time. The idea of labeling such likenesses and turning them into Mary Stieber’s definition of a portrait may have dramatically increased in popularity in the 4th century BCE, but I think it is safe to consider the fact that the idea of such a dedication has much earlier beginnings in the Archaic Period.
Conclusion

“I believe that many new answers can be obtained, if we ask new questions, and some of these novel queries are just being formulated at present, while others may occur in the future.” — Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, “The Study of Ancient Sculpture”

It is often surprising what conclusions we may draw from the extant material remains—both textual and archaeological—of preceding cultures. In those areas in which we are fortunate enough to have access to written documents, the archaeological materials supplement and enhance them, and allow us to formulate even more complete images of the lives and experiences of the people by whom both were created. Often, women are largely left out of these written materials, or at least accorded much less attention than their male counterparts, and the archaeological study of the past directly mirrored these omissions for many years. More recently, archaeologists and scholars have taken a greater interest in uncovering those aspects of past lives which were missing from ancient (and more recent) records, and have begun to explore in particular the lives and experiences, both material and social, of women as far back as the archaeological record permits.

Women in ancient Greece have been no exception to this sort of neglect. The korai of the Athenian Acropolis are one example of women represented in art that affords us the chance to remedy this situation, to reexamine women’s experiences in ancient Greek society, and to reevaluate the conclusions which had until very recently been drawn by the majority of scholars.

In my study of the Acropolis *korai*, my original inquiry related to whether the circumstances of their dedication, and their dedications themselves, fit neatly into the highly confining boundaries of women’s roles in archaic Greek society, or whether they defied them. To do this, it was necessary to collect as much objective information on the *korai* as possible and then to examine the previous research and discussions of the statues published by various archaeologists. Only after doing so was it possible to attempt to establish a new and viable identity theory for the statues. Efforts by scholars to settle on one identity for the Acropolis *korai* had provided as many disputes as viable answers. Priestesses or ritual cult participants, immortals, generic women, and likenesses of individuals; all of these theories had been put forth and discussed and yet they all also bore the weight of significant factors hindering their general acceptance. The ‘previous conclusion’ which needed to be reconsidered in this instance was the basic idea that by the archaic Greeks who dedicated and viewed them, the group we define as the Acropolis *korai* was considered homogeneous.

The reconsideration I have provided and the ultimate conclusions I have drawn provide a much more solid set of identities with which to work: The handful of Acropolis *korai* which possess distinguishable, divine attributes such as helmets and weapons represent Athena, but do not impose this identity on the rest of the *korai*; those statues which do not possess such attributes represent some form of likeness. I have divided this likeness theory into two possible and competing types; the first is a likeness of a specific individual, which would have resulted from a commission by the dedicator. The second type of likeness stems from intentional variation of the
korai by the sculptor(s), and it identifies the korai in such way that as a group, they represent the idea of visually unique women. The group as a whole is a likeness of women as they appear in nature, and representative of the idea of the individual. Each kore was thus an individual representation of something akin to a likeness of the essence of a woman; it did not represent her physiognomy, but through its individuating characteristics it did represent the idea of her as a single woman; not a generic woman as the face of one homogeneous idea, but rather a unique human being.

In either of these cases, the issue of the apparent age of the korai is an important factor. Because of the idyllic nature associated with women of marriageable age, it is not unlikely that women were represented by a youthful-looking kore even if their true age was much older. As all older women had passed through this stage of their youth, these younger images were simply representations as they had been ‘at their peak’ or ‘at their best,’ so to speak, and they were also appropriate as representations of younger wives, siblings, and daughters.

Though the dedicatory inscriptions which accompany the korai betray no information about the relationships between the dedicators of the statues and the women in whose likenesses they were made, the established likeness identity theories and shared stylistic traits allow us to implement a diachronic investigation of the Acropolis korai in the context of the classical and Hellenistic draped votive portrait statues which were dedicated on behalf of women by their close male relatives. Through this examination, and the inclusion of two rare, labeled, archaic korai—Nikandre and Phrasikleia—we can make tentative conclusions about the dedicatory
circumstances of the korai on the Acropolis. Namely, that they were dedicated first and foremost as part of a reciprocal exchange between men and Athena, but that they also acted as prestigious displays of an idealized archaic woman who graced the oikos of the dedicator. However, by choosing a kore to carry out his exchange with Athena, a man was not just displaying this woman in her image or in her essence as an individual, but he was also personally honoring her. In this manner, regardless of which form of likeness was responsible for the appearance of the korai, each statue represented an individual woman. The lack of a naming label on the statue may have prevented viewers from identifying those women, but I do not think this made the act of honoring any less valuable; it still represents a desire to recognize the woman’s importance to the dedicator. This form of semi-public recognition—made in an oft-visited location but done in a nonspecific (that is, unlabeled) manner—places the korai decidedly outside of the boundaries imposed upon archaic Greek women. Appearing in their stead, they allowed women to have a representation of themselves, whether of their physiognomy or their essence, perpetually present in a very public and sacred location. This kind of permanent public presence which men enjoyed was something denied to women. Although she could never share the public social experiences of men, a woman on whose behalf a kore had been dedicated could at least know that she was represented on the Acropolis, and those acquaintances of the dedicator would know of her existence, her virtues, and her honor.

Though we cannot know precisely why this was done—why men dedicated statues which pushed back the boundaries set for women by society—I do not think analysis is hindered by this fact. Whether it was an intentional push against societal
conventions or simply the product of a man honoring a woman, the result is the same, and the relationship which prompted it is unchanged.

By asking questions of a more anthropological, interdisciplinary nature I have opened up an area of inquiry which is heavily laced with uncertainty. This is not a factor which should deter others from asking similar questions, however. If we are willing to ask more complex questions, and set aside our aversions to uncertainty in favor of seeing where ideas and analyses may lead, these efforts will hopefully be met with new and interesting conclusions.
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