

Catherine M. Keesling, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xviii + 272 pp., 5 tables, 64 plates. ISBN 0-521-81523-1.

This is an important book. Clearly written, concisely argued and cogently organized, it belongs in the library of any serious student of early Greek cult, culture and art. Catherine Keesling (hereafter K.) treats the votive sculpture of the Athenian Acropolis — its contexts, functions, and meanings as well as its position in the history of sixth and fifth century Attic art. It is a genuinely groundbreaking study that goes a long way towards redefining the nature of the questions surrounding this important body of ancient Athenian sculpture.

Even so, the reader must be warned at the outset: this is *not* a traditional, art historical treatment of the famous Archaic and Classical period votives of Athena's *temenos*. And those coming to this volume in search of clear-cut answers and trendy arguments will be brutally disappointed. Why? Because this is a truly intellectual, truly serious book. The ideas presented are complex, imaginative and intricate. As such, they perfectly reflect the often overlooked nuances of the subject matter that they encompass. Indeed, only when one completes this volume is the full scope of its purpose made clear, namely that the book is designed as a holistic, synthetic and creative examination of the fundamental principles and contexts that allow the votive sculpture of the Athenian Acropolis to signify. In other words, K.'s arguments represent a series of critical steps towards understanding the underlying epistemological and methodological bases for reading early votive sculpture. The book is therefore fundamental reading. It is a starting point for all further enquiries into Athenian votive studies and the study of Greek votive art generally.

The text is divided into three parts. Part I (Anathemata) is based, in part, on K.'s 1995 dissertation 'Monumental Private Votive Dedications on the Athenian Acropolis, ca. 600-400 B.C.' (a volume that also deserves to be widely and independently read) and treats the dedicatory mechanisms, sacred spaces, epigraphical problems and religio-historical realities — in short, the deep contexts — of Acropolis votive sculpture. In Part II (Divine Identities), the most famous and problematic images of the late sixth and early fifth century Acropolis, the Acropolis *korai*, are subjected to a detailed and refreshing reading. Part III (Human Identities) discusses the beginnings of portraiture on the Acropolis and the non-canonical portrait types that can be discerned using non-traditional methodological tools. There are three Appendices. The first gives a useful list of votives as recorded by Pausanias, the second lists sculptors' 'signatures' as found in the Acropolis dedications, while the third provides a list of Acropolis statues matched with inscribed bases. (Pp. 210-12, in Appendix 3, provide a wonderful example of K.'s careful and polite discussion of a potentially volatile subject — the problematic join between the famous dedication of Alkimachos son of Chairion and Acr. No. 629 — and perfectly exemplifies the care and attention to detail witnessed throughout the rest of the text.)

It should be admitted here that any attempt to summarize the intricacies of K.'s arguments in the space allotted does injustice both to their thoughtful construction and to their subtlety. Instead, three significant conclusions are summarized below — one from each of K.'s sections — that here serve to whet the appetites of those who relish truly cerebral cuisine. These are not the only conclusions of significance in this volume nor are they even the most provocative. Instead they represent a cross-section of the type of questions asked and the manner in which the answers are given.

In Chapter Three ('Nothing to Do with Democracy? Votive Statues and Athenian History' — pp. 36-62), K. challenges the prevailing notion that the late Archaic/early Classical history of Athens — whether it be tyranny or democracy — can be read through or within the archaeology of Acropolis votives. Underpinning the chapter is a long-overdue (and very cleverly designed) critique of the relative/stylistic/so-called 'fixed point' dating game as practised by art historians and epigraphers for the last two centuries. The entire chapter is pure bliss. And no small part of the pleasure comes from realizing that historians of style and non-critical epigraphers will squirm with each passing page since the argument civilly exposes the yawning cavern of subjectivity lying

deep below common practice. For serious scholars interested in the epistemological realities of the field, on the other hand, it does not get any better.

What makes this move truly significant is that K. herself does not play the dating game nor does she allow this fact to transform her into a gutless positivist. This becomes clear in her final discussion of the date of Antenor's famous *kore* and the base of Nearchos that supported it. The supposed problem with the piece is well known. Style has traditionally dated the piece ca. 525-510 B.C., a date that has been supported by the letter forms. The issue, of course, is that the Athenian potter Nearchos (almost universally identified as the dedicator) signs pots dated to ca. 560-535 B.C., a fact that creates an apparent chronological gap between the prosopography and the stylistically 'fixed' points. To solve the problem, some scholars have posited a different Nearchos (even though the name is very rare in Athens) while others have concocted an otherwise untested homonymous grandson. K. cuts to the chase and follows Raubitschek's early solution, namely that Nearchos lived long and dedicated the piece late in life. Since there is ample evidence for craftsmen with long careers — think, for example, of Eukadmos (working ca. 425-365), Androsthenes (working ca. 370-320 B.C.), Praxiteles (working ca. 370-325 B.C.) or Kephisodotos the Younger (working ca. 340-290 B.C.) — this solution works and neatly balances the stylistic, epigraphical and prosopographical evidence. Why rehearse this well known solution here? Because even though K.'s date for the dedication is traditional, the rhetorical move by which it is presented is absolutely new and of deep methodological significance. The traditional date for this key piece *is* retained, but *not* as some sort of universal stylistic truth. Instead the date of Antenor's *kore* is seen as a flexible and intricate negotiating point open for further discussion and honest, creative debate. The shift is fundamental and its importance cannot be overstated.

Chapters Five and Six ('The Identities of the Acropolis Korai' and 'The Iconography of the Acropolis Korai'— pp. 97-161) also present an important and well conceptualized idea within an honest rhetorical frame. Here, K. powerfully resuscitates the old idea that the Acropolis *korai* represent the goddess Athena herself. The argument is dense and deliciously complex but can be briefly (if inadequately) summarized in its steps.

First, the context of the Acropolis *korai* is utterly fundamental and provides the basis for the sculptures' significance. Second, since context is the ultimate source of meaning, the Acropolis *korai* *must* be distinguished from the *korai* excavated at Samos and Didyma (not to mention funerary *korai*); the specific site — the Acropolis itself — must be allowed to confer meaning on the images that it contained. Third, while many important and respected scholars have suggested that the *korai* represent generic images of young women and have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the sculptural type, they have missed the fact that bronze images of *Athena* were, in fact, the most common type of female figure dedicated on the Acropolis both before and after 480 and that some statue bases that actually name female Athenians (in particular DAA no. 79) almost certainly did *not* show anonymous women (who could thus be read as the named females) but rather the goddess herself. Fourth, Athenian men had little reason to dedicate generic images of women to Athena and the corpus of votive reliefs makes it quite clear that anonymous females (as opposed to specific female family members) had little place within the votive processes of fifth century Athens; that the *korai* represent the honored goddess is thus likely. Fifth, the lack of traditional attributes (spear, helmet, etc.) seen in the corpus of *korai* is not sufficient evidence to dismiss the notion that the *korai* can be understood as images of Athena because 1) some *korai* (K.'s hybrids) *do* display Athena's attributes, 2) because the *kosmos* of the *korai* can be understood equally well as the attire of a goddess, and 3) because the dominant formal characteristic of the *korai*'s pose — the extended forearm — can be best understood as a gesture that communicates the *reception* of votive offerings as opposed to the giving of these same objects. This final idea is of great importance and is convincing especially since it is confirmed by the countless number of votive reliefs that show deities 'pouring' liquid offerings from phiales. The consistent question regarding these images has been 'To whom are these "divine libations" poured?' The

answer provided by K.'s hypothesis, when extended into this field, is that they do not pour libations at all, but rather that they accept them, the extended phiale held out in a gesture of symbolic reception.

In Chapter 7 ('Fifth-Century Portrait Statues on the Acropolis' — pp. 165-98), K. tackles the origins of Athenian portraiture with spectacular results. In 1986, Frank Brommer suggested that most Archaic free-standing statues represent human subjects while most Classical free-standing statues represented the gods. K. argues forcefully for the modification of this developmental scheme and shows quite convincingly that votive portraits were dedicated as early as the sixth century and that this tradition continued unchecked well into the Hellenistic age. Of particular importance here is K.'s dismantling of the connection between 'physiognomic likeness' and 'portraiture' as a genre. For K., the focus for identifying portraits lies not in *Kopienkritik* or in the testimony of Pausanias, but rather within the inscribed statue bases. This class of evidence, K. shows, creates quite a different picture of the genre, a picture that is firmly embedded in the deep contexts of the Acropolis itself.

This is a very important book. Keesling has produced a wonderful volume that will remain relevant for many years to come.

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B. Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. xiv + 364 pp., 5 maps. ISBN 0 19 925408 7.

The thesis of this accomplished book on the position of temples in Asia Minor in the Hellenistic and Roman periods stands in opposition to the widespread assumption that the respective cults were completely integrated within the *poleis* on whose territory they were situated. Instead, Dignas proposes to analyse the relationship among cities, sanctuaries and central rulers in terms of a so-called 'triangle', with emphasis on the independent economic and political significance of the sanctuaries and their representatives. From her examination of the epigraphic documentation of religious centres in Asia Minor (with one notable excursion into the Near East, based on a dossier from Baetocaece, present-day Hosn Suleiman in the Jebel Ansariyeh, cf. J. Seibert in *Antike Welt* 34, 2003, 365ff.) she concludes that, cultic particularities and developments over time notwithstanding, the triangular model continued to characterize the way in which Greek *poleis*, sanctuaries and Hellenistic kings or Roman emperors behaved towards each other.

The starting point is Dignas' observation that the blur of religious and secular elements in Classical civilization, traditionally contrasted with the uncoupling of church and state in the modern world, may not have been such a blur after all. Naturally, 'Greek religion' and 'Greek politics' cannot be considered separately, but 'it is possible to establish qualities of a "sacred sphere"' (vi). And the area where these qualities can be established most clearly, 'without having to rely on vague terms of "sacredness"' (4), is that of the financial affairs of temple complexes. Dignas discusses in detail three factors of this economy of the sacred (ch. 1): the balance between a cult's income and spending, land owned and exploited by a temple, and the management of sacred finances. As she acknowledges, a coherent and detailed body of economic evidence is lacking, and what we do have 'does not allow us to estimate the overall value of sacred land or temple treasuries' (13). The focus is therefore on the qualitative position of sacred wealth, and the evidence goes to show that 'the sanctuaries were run and their activities shaped by individuals who identified themselves with this task and saw themselves *interacting* with the secular world of the *polis*' (33).

The central rulers over Asia Minor often acted as arbitrators in the event of a clash between city and sanctuary. In the case studies of the particular cult sites, which are diachronically split up