INTRODUCTION: WHY PORTRAITS?

This book examines the role of portraits in early Greek culture, defined as the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries BC – more or less what we term the Archaic (ca. 600–480 BC) and Classical (ca. 480–323 BC) periods in Greek history.[1] If we apply the broadest functional definition of portraiture – in which any representation of an historical personage, living or dead, qualifies as a portrait, regardless of its style or appearance – then the origins of the Western tradition of portraiture in ancient Greece clearly go back to the Archaic period. The use of the human individual as the focal point for commemoration leaves behind a potent cultural legacy. Some of the most familiar Greek portraits – their appearance known to us from Roman marble copies – date to the Classical period: the Athenian Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, made by Kritios and Nesiotes [Figure 7]; Themistokles, the Athenian general and architect of the Greek victory over the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC [Figure 2]; and the sculptor Kresilas' Perikles from the Athenian Acropolis [Figure 42]. Historical hindsight shows where Classical portraiture was headed. Over the course of the Hellenistic period (ca. 323–30 BC), Greek statue practice evolved into a thoroughgoing *portrait* practice, and in most public settings in the Greek world – including sanctuaries of the gods – portraits came to outnumber divine images. Greek cities awarded portrait statues as high-level honors to their benefactors; these honorific portraits, and the portraits of Alexander the Great and his royal successors, have been well served by recent scholarship.[2] So has the artistic afterlife of Greek portraits of generals, poets, and philosophers in the

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Roman world, where images of these subjects were reproduced in marble and collected.[3]

What remains less clear is how the Greeks arrived at this point. The origins and early history of Greek portraiture have proven to be more resistant to reconstruction and interpretation than its later development.[4] Modern definitions of "portrait" and "portraiture" that narrow the inquiry to include only examples that were in some sense likenesses of their subjects have always lacked explanatory force in the Archaic and Classical periods, when portraits prove difficult to distinguish in the material record from images representing gods and heroes.[5] In addition to reaffirming the fundamentally religious character of most Archaic and Classical Greek portraits, this study of the early history of portraiture in the Greek world offers two different answers to the question, why portraits?[6] The origins of honorific portraiture have been attributed either to a decline in religious feeling (in older scholarship), or to the Greek city-states' growing recognition of the importance of individual leaders over the course of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), and the need to develop new forms of civic honor to keep their ambitions in check. I view the key transitional moment at the end of the fifth century, and the development of Greek portraiture leading up to and following it, in a different light. I explain the emergence of honorific portrait statues as a genre distinct from images of the gods as one facet of a larger phenomenon: the rise of the "epigraphical habit" and a broader documentary culture in Greece.[7] In the last decades of the fifth century, new value began to be assigned to monuments as *tekmeria* (proofs) supporting historical narratives. Portraits were viewed as historical documents in a way that a statue of Artemis with an inscription naming the person who dedicated it, for example, was not. Documenting, commemorating, and remembering the individual through a portrait intersects with the production of literary documents and documents inscribed on stone in a variety of interesting ways to be explored in this book. The idea that the Greeks viewed portraits as permanent documents of the mortal body is not new; indeed, this idea is explicitly expressed in inscriptions on the bases of portrait statues from the sixth century BC onward. My aim is to explain why documenting the human body with portraits, specifically honorific portraits, became more significant in Greek culture at the moment it did.

The second answer gets at the equivocal nature of the Greek portraits of the Archaic and Classical periods. Gisela Richter's fundamental catalogue (1965) groups Greek portraits according to subject categories: generals, poets, philosophers, and so on.[8] This approach makes sense when we look at Roman marble copies of Greek sculpture, but it a poor fit for the Greek portraits of the Archaic and Classical periods. The emphasis in Richter's work on the origins and development of likeness and physiognomic realism in portraiture also obscures an essential point; so does Nikolaus Himmelmann's more recent suggestion that

it was precisely the *documentary* function of Greek portraiture that encouraged the development of realism.[9] In the Archaic and Classical periods, Greek portraits intentionally blurred the boundaries between human subjects, gods, and heroes. Portraits of contemporary Greek men and women, as well as retrospective portraits of individuals long deceased, documented their subjects' *arete*, their essential excellence, or their choice by the gods. They frequently asserted their subjects' heroic character and their worthiness to be compared with the gods and heroes standing around them in their sanctuary settings. Even in the fourth century, after the introduction of honorific portraits, portraits of human subjects often continued to resemble images of the gods and heroes in their scale, poses, attributes, contexts, and settings. At the same time that early Greek portraits claimed to function as documents of mortal bodies, in practice depicting the individual's body as it appeared in reality was often rejected in favor of mapping the individual onto divine or heroic models.

EQUIVOCAL TEXTS, EQUIVOCAL IMAGES

The movement toward representing individuals through portraits in Archaic and Classical Greek culture was far from inevitable. In Archaic Greece, votive offerings dedicated in sanctuaries did important commemorative work, memorializing named individuals through inscriptions. In sanctuaries, images of gods and heroes were deployed to commemorate human achievements; mythological narratives in temple sculpture conveyed topical political messages. The Greeks commemorated and gave thanks for their victories in the Persian Wars of 490 and 480–479 BC with a series of colossal votive images of the gods dedicated in their major sanctuaries: the Salamis Apollo at Delphi (Hdt. 8.121 and Paus. 10.14.5), Zeus at Olympia (5.23.1), Poseidon at the Isthmus (Hdt. 9.81), and Pheidias' colossal bronze Athena on the Athenian Acropolis (Paus. 1.28.2).[10] Why did the Greeks diverge from these practices and adopt portraiture?

Monumental votive dedications in sanctuaries offered through their inscriptions a forum for public self-assertion without portraits: the individual was there from the beginning. As a genre, votive statues were *about* the identity of the dedicator: they served as a vehicle for individual display by the dedicator no matter whom the statue represented. The "X dedicated" formula in votive inscriptions can be explained as an artifact of the predominantly oral and performative literary culture of the Archaic period.[11] One of the earliest examples of both a votive statue and the votive formula in inscriptions is the Archaic marble statue of the *kore* type dedicated by a woman named Nikandre to Artemis on the island of Delos in the second half of the seventh century BC [Figure 1]. The statue closely emulates the contemporary Egyptian canon for male figures in its schematic form and in the proportions of the body parts to one another; it could be the earliest example of an Archaic female *kore*.[12]

1. *Kore* statue dedicated by Nikandre on Delos (NM 1), ca. 650–600 bc.
Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, neg. AT 365

A metrical dedicatory text was inscribed on the left thigh of the statue partially in a *boustrophedon* pattern, reading alternately from right-to-left and from left-to-right. This inscription, whose spelling is indicative of its early date, reads as follows:

Νικάνδρη μ' ἀνέθε̄κεν h(ε)κηβόλο̄ι ἰοχεαίρηι | ϙό̄ρη Δεινο-
δίκη̄ō τō Ναhσίō ἔhσοχος ἀλ(λ)η̄́ōν | Δεινομένεος δὲ κασιγνε̄́τη
Φηράhσō̄ δ' ἄλοχος ν[ῦν?].

> Nikandre dedicated me to the far-darting shooter of arrows [Artemis],
> she the daughter of Deinodikes the Naxian, eminent among women, the
> sister of Deinomenes, and [now?] wife of Phraxos. *CEG* 403; cf. *ID* 2

The tone of the inscription is downright boastful: why exactly did Nikandre consider herself "eminent" among women? The inscription identifies Nikandre and the recipient deity Artemis, but the occasion for the offering and, more significantly, the identity of the statue being offered, are elided completely.[13] Whom Nikandre's *kore* statue was intended to represent has been the subject of intense speculation in modern scholarship. As statue types, the Archaic female *kore* and male *kouros* were both inherently multivalent, capable of embodying gods, heroes, or mortals. Though the temptation has been to interpret the statue as a portrait of Nikandre herself, the holes in both hands for the insertion of two round metal objects of different sizes – a bow in the left hand and an arrow in the right? – suggest that Nikandre commemorated herself with an image of Artemis rather than a portrait.[14]

The possibilities for inserting the individual into the votive transaction in practice went beyond naming oneself as dedicator of a divine image: one could also employ the votive formula to commemorate others, and to "represent" oneself – both without using portraits. The Greeks considered it possible to represent the individual through the medium of a divine image. Though this may seem surprising, some dedications of statues claiming to be equal in size (*isometron* or *isometreton*) to the dedicator in fact *represented* the recipient deity. An example is a fourth-century dedication by a woman named Krino, also offered to Artemis on Delos:

> παῖς [τ]όδ᾽ Ἀλεκτορίδεω Κρινὼ Παρίη μ᾽ ἀνέθηκεν
>
> πατρὸς ὑποσχεσίην, τελέσασ᾽ εὐχήν, ἀπέδωκεν
>
> αὑτῆς ἰσόμετρον Δηλίηι Ἀρτέμιδι [*ID* 53].

> Krino the Parian woman, daughter of Alektorides, dedicated me; having brought to fulfillment a vow of her father, she gave this [pleasing gift = *agalma*], equal in size (*isometron*) to herself, to Delian Artemis.

It has often been assumed that the lost statue dedicated by Krino was a portrait of herself. Antoine Hermary has demonstrated, however, that Krino dedicated an archaizing marble Artemis much like another fourth-century one dedicated by another woman (Areïs, daughter of Teisenor) to Delian Artemis on nearby Paros (*IG* XII 5 211), without the *isometron* formula.[15] Krino claimed that her votive statue was equal in size to herself, but it was an image of Artemis.

Krino's dedication notwithstanding, the idea of the statue as a body-replica of the human individual was clearly already present in the Archaic period. In Archaic Greek funerary monuments, *kouroi* and *korai* (along with statues of other types and relief *stelai*) functioned as physical reminders or signs of the

deceased, together with inscribed texts naming them. As has often been noted, the Archaic monuments, in contrast to Classical and Hellenistic grave *stelai*, seem to enact Homeric values: the individuals singled out for commemoration and sculptural representation were predominantly male and more often than not were prematurely deceased, sometimes in battle. The tomb monument served as compensation, the *geras thanonton* owed to the dead in lieu of long life.[16] From at least the beginning of the sixth century BC, there were also votive occasions thought to justify dedicating a body-replica of oneself, or of someone else, in a sanctuary. We simply do not know who first made such a dedication. But the idea of the portrait as body-replica, as a pleasing gift for the gods, and even as compensation for the death of the mortal body, endured through the Classical period, as portraiture became an increasingly popular form of sculptural representation.

In both Archaic and Classical Greek portraiture, replicating the body of the individual portrait subject was seldom synonymous with creating a realistic, individualized portrait likeness. To exemplify the lack of clear-cut boundaries between images of gods, heroes, and human subjects, and to highlight the problems created by analyses based upon concepts of likeness or realism, I cite one of the most familiar Classical portraits. The marble portrait herm of Themistokles, found in Roman Ostia in 1939 [Figure 2], bulks large in studies of early Greek portraiture. This particular example seems to hold out the possibility that Greek portraits began to offer true likenesses of their subjects as early as the second quarter of the fifth century BC.[17] The Ostia Themistokles has also been used to associate the origins of physiognomic likeness in Greek portraiture with the fifth-century Athenian democracy.[18] There is no doubt that the marble herm itself is not contemporary with Themistokles: it is a production of the Roman imperial period, presumed to imitate the appearance of a now-lost, Greek, bronze, full-body portrait statue. The problems inherent in using such Roman copies as evidence for Greek sculpture have been acutely observed in recent scholarship, and I will not rehearse them here.[19] *Kopienkritik*, the process of identifying the truest copy of a lost bronze original among marble versions discovered across a wide variety of Roman contexts, is only possible when there are multiple examples clearly derived from the same prototype. In the case of the Ostia Themistokles, identified by its name label, we lack the controlling effect of multiple copies: this particular Greek subject seems to have been less popular than the poets Homer, Sophocles, and Menander, Socrates, and the orators Demosthenes and Aeschines [Figure 49].[20] The Ostia Themistokles in its Roman setting may have formed part of a collection representing Greek historical figures, generals and statesmen; the abbreviated bust format – which purposely elides differences in pose, clothing, size, and gender – fostered the appearance of a unified portrait gallery.[21]
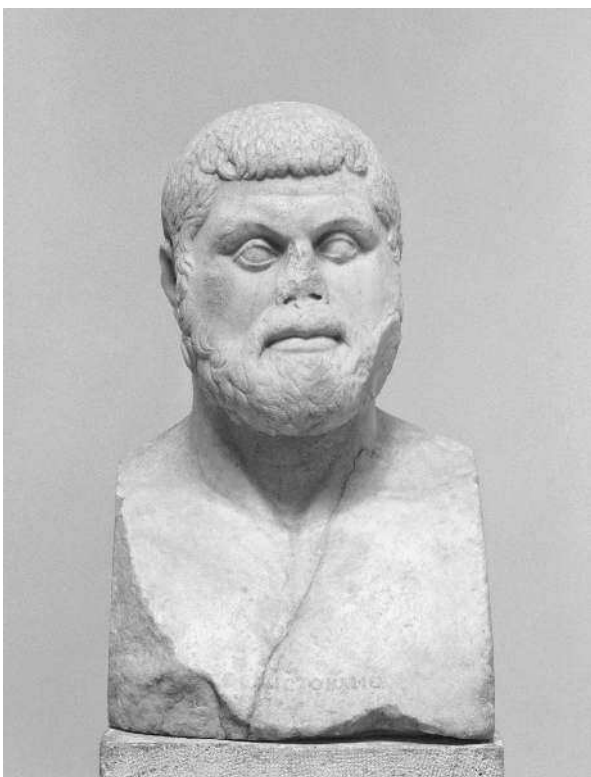
2. Roman marble herm copying an early Classical portrait of Themistokles, from Ostia (Archaeological Museum, Ostia, inv. 85).
Photo: H. Koppermann, neg. DAI Rome 66.2287

From the moment of its discovery, commentators have noticed stylistic features in the Ostia Themistokles that speak to a date for the lost original in the early Classical period, somewhere between the battle of Salamis in 480 BC and the aftermath of Themistokles' death in exile in Asia Minor in 459 BC. The heavy eyelids recall the metopes [Figure 3] and pedimental sculptures of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, completed soon before 457 BC; the surface treatment of the cropped hair and beard shows a close resemblance to the head of the Athenian Tyrannicide Aristogeiton made by Kritios and Nesiotes in 477 BC, itself known through Roman marble copies [Figure 7]. Yet at the same time that it appears early Classical in style, the face of this Themistokles seems strikingly realistic, individualized, and unlike Classical physical ideals of beauty: the cubic head with its lantern jaw, the massive neck, the swollen cauliflower ears, the worry line on the forehead, and the crow's feet forming at the outer corners of the eyes. Analogous deviations from the ideal also occur in the Olympia temple sculptures, in the figure of the aged seer of the east pediment and the centaurs of the west. On a second look, characteristics that at first appear to depict an individual physiognomy begin to look more like the

3. Temple of Zeus at Olympia: detail of the head of Herakles on a metope showing the combat between Herakles and Geryon, ninth in the sequence of Herakles' twelve labors, ca. 470–457 BC. Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, neg. PE 217

marks of a stereotypical physical type developed by the sculptors of the early Classical period: either the "heavy" athletic victor (a wrestler, boxer, or pancratiast), or Herakles himself, the hero whose twelve labors were depicted on the Olympia metopes [Figure 3].[22] These two different visual models, both of which have been offered as explanations for the appearance of the Ostia herm, are not mutually exclusive – in fact, they are mutually reinforcing. Herakles was depicted on the temple of Zeus at Olympia because he was viewed as a heroic model for the athletes who competed there; and being like Herakles justified dedicating portraits of athletic victors at Olympia.[23]

Once we accept the premise of a lost, early Classical bronze portrait of Themistokles somewhere in the Greek world, the next step is to look for evidence for where such a portrait may have stood and who commissioned it. In the case of Themistokles, we have no inscribed statue bases to use as evidence; we can contrast Perikles later in the fifth century, with four Roman herm portraits [Figure 42] derived from the same prototype, a statue base on the Acropolis, and a description by Pausanias in the second century AD. Literary sources of the Roman imperial period mention various portraits of Themistokles that *could* date to Themistokles' lifetime or soon after. As earlier scholars have already noted, however, none seems a good match with the Ostia bust. The larger point I draw from these possible contexts for a fifth-century portrait of Themistokles is somewhat different. In this book, I will be

concerned to show how both the scant visual and more abundant textual and contextual evidence for Archaic and Classical portraiture lead us toward the same conclusion: in its early history, Greek portraiture was fundamentally not *about* likeness or individuality.

The portrait most often associated with the Ostia Themistokles herm is the one mentioned by Plutarch in his life of Themistokles (22.2–3) inside the small temple of Artemis Aristoboule in Athens, a temple first dedicated by Themistokles himself after Salamis. Plutarch's description introduces two key details:

> He [Themistokles] also offended the majority by building the sanctuary of Artemis whom he addressed as Aristoboule ("of best counsel"), as if it were he who had advised both the city and the Greeks the best; and he established the sanctuary near his own house in [the deme] Melite, where now the public servants cast out the bodies of those put to death, and they also carry out the clothes and the ropes of those who have hanged themselves. A small portrait [*eikonion*] of Themistokles was located inside the temple of [Artemis] Aristoboule even in our own time: he appears to be an individual not only of spirit, but also heroic [*heroikos*] in his appearance.
>
> <div align="right">Plut. Them. 22.1–2</div>

By calling Artemis Aristoboule, Themistokles alluded indirectly to his own *arete* at the battle of Salamis as the chosen recipient of Artemis' best counsel. As we will see, the assertion of the divine choice of the individual was one of the primary motives behind Archaic and Classical portraiture, whether or not the portrait Plutarch describes really was dedicated by Themistokles himself. Second, to say that Themistokles' portrait looked "heroic" was more than just an empty cliché for the Greeks. To be a hero was to receive hero cult, in most cases at the tomb after death.[24] Unlike divinization, heroization brought with it some negative connotations since in practice it was often used as a way of dealing with individuals perceived to have the power to harm the living unless appeased with sacrifices.[25] All the same, living rulers sought to emphasize their own heroic nature, demonstrable through descent from heroes or accomplishments worthy of a hero; athletes either made the case for themselves, or their relatives and home cities did so after their deaths. For one class of individuals in Archaic and Classical Greek society, cult heroization after death seems to have been automatic: colonial city founders (oikists).[26] A strong case can also be made that the Greek dead of the Persian Wars were also heroized immediately and *en masse*. Though some scholars see the heroization of poets as a Hellenistic phenomenon, others are willing to take heroization back to the late Archaic period in the case of Archilochos, for example.[27] Debates about the significance and frequency of Greek hero *cult* before the Hellenistic period are relevant, but should not be allowed to circumscribe discussion about the

dynamics of being *like* a hero or a god in Archaic and Classical Greece. As Lynette Mitchell argues, in early Greek culture asserting that one should be considered *like* a hero while still alive was in many ways more important than actual heroization after death.[28] Portraits could be used to bolster claims to extraordinary status and heroic *arete*. For a portrait, such as the one of Themistokles described by Plutarch, to look heroic could mean resembling a particular hero (such as Herakles or Theseus), or simply being depicted in the way that heroes were, as a nude warrior armed with weapons.

A combination of ancient literary sources and a series of very late (Antonine) coin representations gives us another Greek portrait of Themistokles: Themistokles reimagined soon after his death as the heroized founder of Magnesia on the Maeander, the city awarded to him by the Persian king. This Themistokles really was a cultic hero, and the image dimly glimpsed through worn coins [Figure 4] portrayed him in a way that evoked athletic portraits, images of heroes, and images of the gods all at once: nude, long-haired, holding a sheathed sword in his left hand and a libation bowl in his right, pouring a libation beside a flaming altar with a sacrificial bull lying at his feet.[29] It is simply illogical to insist upon physiognomic likeness, or even individuality, in the Magnesia portrait: its function was to represent the deceased Themistokles not merely as heroic, but as a cultic hero. In the final analysis, though the Ostia Themistokles remains a cipher – a Roman version of a lost early Classical portrait without any identifiable context in the Greek world – its blurring of the visual and conceptual boundaries between man and hero tells us something valuable about the character of early Greek portraiture.

To drive home this point, let us consider briefly another early Classical portrait, this one representing an Olympic victor. The lost portrait of Euthymos of Lokroi (Locri) in southern Italy (*IvO* 144 = Ebert 16 = *CEG* 399), a three-time

4. Posthumous statue of Themistokles as founding hero of Magnesia on the Maeander, identified by a name label. Reverse of a coin of Magnesia from the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61). Drawing reproduced from Gardner 1906, p. 109, figure 1. Public domain