

STATUES AS GIFTS FOR THE GODS

In Greek religion, the term *anathema* verbally depicts the act of setting something up for the gods. Though it described the prototypical gift from human worshippers to the gods, this term, and the related verb ἀνατίθημι, directly expressed the ideal of display. The inscription on the base for an Archaic marble kore statue (Figs. 1 and 2) from the Acropolis (*Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* no. 56) illustrates the use of this verb to mark gifts to the gods: Εὐθύδικος ὁ Θαλιάρχου ἀνέθηκεν (“Euthydikos the son of Thaliarchos dedicated”). Calling votive dedications *anathemata* emphasized the physical and conceptual elevation of gifts for the gods above the normal spheres of human interaction and commerce.¹ In this chapter, I use the term *anathema* to refer to a specific class of permanent, sculptural dedications that evolved from predecessors dating back to the emergence of the polis and its characteristic religious forms in the eighth century B.C.

Dedications of statues with inscribed bases as *anathemata* enter the scene fairly late in the lives of Greek sanctuaries. The earliest forms of evidence for the creation of sacred space after the Greek Dark Ages are deposits of pottery, terra-cotta figurines, and portable bronze figurines in the form of both humans and animals. At Olympia, deposits of such modest offerings (and, in the case of pottery, the residue of human visitation on a large scale) go back as far as the tenth century B.C., but the explosion in the dedication of small bronze offerings does not occur there and in the other Panhellenic sanctuaries – Delphi, Delos, and Isthmia – until the second half of the eighth century.² At most sanctuary sites, the appearance of permanent but portable votive offerings in the material record predates the construction of archaeologically recognizable temple buildings.³ On the Athenian Acropolis, bronze tripods and bowls were among the earliest votives dedicated in the sanctuary in the Geometric period (the eighth and seventh centuries), but the lack of inscriptions associated with these offerings leaves us with no particulars about the individuals (or groups) who set them up.⁴ The tripod series at Olympia and the Athenian Acropolis predate and clearly prefigure statue *anathemata* in their monumental scale and high cost.⁵

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1. Euthydikos' kore (Acr. no. 686); front. Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, neg. AT 514.

DEDICATORY MECHANISMS

VOWS

Not all *anathemata* dedicated to the gods were inscribed, and not every inscription on an *anathema* mentions a vow; nevertheless, it is possible that the majority of *anathemata* (and maybe even all of them) result from the fulfillment of vows to the gods, even if their inscriptions make no mention of such vows. The English term “votive offering” derives from the Latin *votum* , which in turn was equivalent in meaning to the Greek εὐχή.⁶ An *euche* or *euchole* was a vow, a prayer, or a boast – three items that were certainly not the same thing but that may all derive from



2. Inscribed base (*DAA* no. 56) with lower legs of Euthydikos' kore (Acr. no. 609).
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an original term denoting a “solemn assertion.”⁷ The *euche* as a vow served as the fundamental mechanism for dedicating an *anathema* in a Greek sanctuary. The worshipper typically promised beforehand to make an offering on the condition that some benefit (*charis*) requested of the gods was received; once the terms had been set by the worshipper, the vow had to be fulfilled if the gods delivered.⁸

The dedicatory inscriptions on a total of 19 sixth- and fifth-century Acropolis statue dedications explicitly refer to the fulfillment of a vow through the dedication.⁹ What is most striking about the Acropolis dedications that explicitly refer to a vow is that some fulfill vows made not by the dedicator, but rather by another family member. An otherwise unknown individual named Timarchos set up *DAA*

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no. 236 to fulfill a vow made by his mother; a Lysibios (*DAA* no. 248) fulfilled the vow of both parents or, more generally, of his ancestors; and the dedicator of *DAA* no. 283 named [Di]ophanes or [Pyth]ophanes fulfilled the vow of his child. The implication behind the wording of these particular dedications is that the relative on whose behalf the vow was fulfilled had died, and consequently it became the responsibility of the dedicator to see that the dedication was made.

Whenever a vow was made to the gods, the responsibility to fulfill that vow belonged primarily to the dedicator, but upon his or her death it passed to the next generation. The Athenian obsession with the orderly transfer of property through the male line carries over to unmet obligations, including vows of sacrifices and *anathemata*. Because we never know from the Acropolis statue base inscriptions how long the gap was between the vow and its fulfillment – keeping in mind that the gap in some cases was as long as a generation – dedicators may have saved their money for months, years, even most of a lifetime, to dedicate a single statue. If the dedication of a bronze or marble statue on the Acropolis was too great a financial burden for the dedicator to bear, by making a vow he or she could promise to make the dedication to Athena at some time (specified or unspecified) in the future; if the dedicator was never able to fulfill the vow, the burden passed to his or her nearest relations.

APARCHE AND DEKATE

Along with references to vow fulfillment, the inscriptions on the sixth- and fifth-century Acropolis statue dedications frequently refer to two other mechanisms governing votive dedications: *aparche*, or “first-fruits,” and *dekate*, or “tithe.” A total of 34 votive statues from this period were called first-fruits dedications, compared with 29 labeled as tithes.¹⁰ Both terms directly link private votive dedications with better understood communal rituals in Athenian religion, although the exact character of these connections merits further study. Both *aparche* and *dekate* dedications could be explicitly labeled as fulfilling a vow.

The absolute numbers of dedications including one of these three dedicatory formulas (vow, *aparche*, and *dekate*) may seem statistically small in comparison with the total number of inscribed statue bases from the sixth and fifth centuries; however, we must keep in mind that a large percentage of the dedicatory texts are fragmentary, and that we have no way of knowing how many of the incomplete texts originally included one of the formulas. A truer sense of how often explicit references to a vow, *aparche*, or *dekate* occur is to compare the total number of complete statue base inscriptions, 37, with the 20 complete statue base inscriptions lacking any one of these three formulas.¹¹ Most of the dedications without any such formula consist of only the dedicator’s name and the verb of dedication, ἀνατίθημι, the simplest type of dedicatory inscription used on the Acropolis. As a preliminary

to discussing the meaning of *aparche* and *dekate*, it is also worth noting that neither term is restricted to metrical dedicatory epigrams and that not all metrical epigrams used them, although both could be easily adapted to the typical metrical schemes used on the Acropolis.¹²

Perhaps the best known *aparche* offering in Athenian religion is the sixtieth of the annual tribute offered by the member cities of the Delian League to Athena on the Acropolis and recorded in the Athenian Tribute Lists.¹³ In contrast, the most common use of the term *dekate* in Archaic and Classical Greece referred to the tithe, or tenth part of the spoils won in battle, that was given to the gods.¹⁴ The *dekate* from war booty took the form of either the captured objects themselves, or a more grandiose offering paid for by the sale of the booty: perhaps the most famous example is the golden tripod supported by a giant bronze serpent column at Delphi, dedicated by the Greek cities from the Persian spoils taken at Plataia in 479 B.C.¹⁵

It is apparent that a *dekate* is always conceived as a ten-percent share, whereas the value of an *aparche* could be determined as a percentage divisible by six, but as it was most commonly practiced in sacrificial and agricultural contexts, it remained simply a small share allotted to the gods. In Greek literature, private votive offerings of both statues and other objects are identified as *dekatai* and *aparchai*. Herodotus (1.92.1–4) calls the series of offerings made by Croesus of Lydia at Delphi and the Amphiareion at Oropos “the first-fruit of his own substance and of his inheritance.”

Though the practice of offering an *aparche* to the gods, either as part of a state festival or in private, was by no means limited to Athens, epigraphically attested examples are scarce outside of the Athenian Acropolis and after the Archaic period.¹⁶ No literary source explains why Athenians used this ritual mechanism for making votive offerings, or how they determined the share of their wealth or profits they wished to dedicate on the Acropolis as an *aparche*. Isaeus 5, an early fourth-century forensic speech, alludes to statues dedicated on the Acropolis as the *aparchai* of the wealthy and aristocratic ancestors of the accused. In contrast, only one of the dedicators (Hermolykos son of Dietrephes, *DAA* no. 132) of the 34 sixth- and fifth-century Acropolis statue bases that include the word *aparche* in their inscriptions certainly belongs the Athenian moneyed aristocracy; none identify themselves as non-Athenians, two are women, and one (Nearchos) seems to identify himself as a potter.¹⁷ Nine of the *aparche* statues are joint dedications made by more than one individual, with or without a family relationship specified.

The 29 private *dekate* dedications clearly result from the individual practice of separating out ten percent of one’s wealth or profits to pay for a votive offering, a private ritual imitating the prominent public division of the spoils of war.¹⁸ What is perplexing is the fact that both *aparche* and *dekate* statues seem to be dedicated

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3. Inscribed base (*DAA* no. 292) for two korai dedicated by Lysias and Eurachis; the “Red Shoes” kore (*Ac.* no. 683) stood in the round plinth cutting on the viewer’s right. Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut-Athen, neg. nr. 95/46.

from the same sorts of profits, making attempts to pin down distinctive meanings for the two terms in the private sphere difficult. Nor do the individuals who gave *dekatai* as opposed to *aparchai* or dedications of unspecified type seem to reflect a link between the use of the two formulas and identifiable sociopolitical or gender divisions in Athens. As we see in a subsequent chapter, the same types of statues (e.g., the marble kore) could be given as an *aparche*, a *dekate*, or neither one, and neither formula seems to have been restricted in its use to the period before the Persian sack of the Acropolis in 480 B.C.

Two *aparche* statue dedications (*DAA* nos. 197 and 210) reflected income derived from the dedicators’ “works” or “products,” and two others were called the first-fruits of the dedicators’ possessions (*DAA* nos. 290 and 28). Similarly, one *dekate* was made from “works” (*DAA* no. 234) and another from “produce and property” (*DAA* no. 184). Three of the *dekatai* were made from “land” or from “money” (*DAA* nos. 191, 246, and 283). The profits from a windfall profit such as a fish catch could

apparently be dedicated either as an *aparche* or a *dekate*.¹⁹ Consequently, neither formula should be exclusively connected with profits from farming, craftsmanship, commerce, or fishing.

Nevertheless, one Archaic statue dedication on the Acropolis demonstrates that *aparche* and *dekate* were recognized as mechanisms for making dedications different enough from one another to be worth distinguishing.²⁰ This is *DAA* no. 292, an inscribed rectangular pillar dedicated jointly by Lysias and Euarchis (Fig. 3). The inscription consists of two independent dedicatory texts written one after the other by the same hand in three inscribed lines: “Lysias dedicated to Athena an *aparche*; Euarchis dedicated a *dekate* to Athena.” The top of the base shows cuttings for two separate marble statues: an extant under-life-size marble kore (Acr. no. 683; Fig. 4) stood in the larger, round cutting on the right-hand side; the cutting on the left is also round, and its diameter is just over half that of the cutting for kore Acr. no. 683. If the cutting on the left held another marble kore much smaller than Acr. no. 683,



4. “Red Shoes” kore (Acr. no. 683). Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, neg. AT 471.

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as I believe it did, then Lysias and Euarchis offered statues of the same type but of different sizes on the same inscribed statue base. The two offerings must have been planned together and made at the same time: the capital of the pillar base was purposely made wide enough to support the two korai standing next to each other.

If we read both the inscriptions and the statues from left to right, Lysias dedicated the smaller kore as an *aparche* and Euarchis dedicated the larger one (Acr. no. 683) as a *dekate*. By offering statues of the same sculptural type on the same base, Lysias and Euarchis presented their separate offerings in a way that encouraged the viewer to compare the sizes of the statues. I wonder whether the format of this dedication was intended to convey that Lysias and Euarchis paid for their offerings with money derived from the same source, but in different amounts, with Lysias' *aparche* constituting a smaller percentage than Euarchis' tithe. In the case of Lysias and Euarchis, two dedicators pooled their efforts to produce a more complex and physically imposing offering than either could have dedicated on his own. The same motivation can be postulated for the eight other *aparche* statue dedications (consisting of either a single statue or more than one statue on the same base) made jointly by more than one individual.

AGALMA

Whereas *aparche* and *dekate* defined how worshippers placed their gifts within the context of communal religious practices, the term *agalma* returns to the question of why the gods were perceived to want statues and other offerings. An *agalma* is an object endowed with the quality of being pleasing or capable of eliciting pleasure; conceptually, all votive offerings were presented to the gods in the hope that they would become *agalmata*. From the Homeric poems through Euripides, *agalma* occupied distinct but related semantic zones in Greek: it could designate any pleasing ornament, or a pleasing ornament dedicated to the gods. In the fifth century, Herodotus used *agalma* to refer specifically to statues, the *agalmata* par excellence displayed in the sanctuaries of his time.²¹ Statues functioned both as *agalmata* and as *kosmos*, the ornaments decorating temple and temenos.²²

The term *agalma* was inscribed on a wide variety of votive objects beginning in the Archaic period, ranging in scale from small vases to expensive, large-scale bronze statue groups.²³ On the Acropolis, the use of the term *agalma* in votive inscriptions was almost entirely confined to metrical texts written in hexameters or in elegiac couplets; most of the examples are Archaic, but one dates to the Early Classical period and two come from the fourth century.²⁴ In these votive inscriptions, *agalma* continued to be used to convey the nature of the offering as a pleasing gift, even after its primary meaning in Greek literature had become "statue."

THE STATUE AS *ANATHEMA*

ORIGINS

Statues with inscribed bases fit only with difficulty into some modern scholarly constructs of votive religion. The complexities that make them interesting to the student of sculpture or of epigraphy also make them difficult to classify or to subject to a quantitative statistical analysis. Robert Parker has called the Archaic statue bases from the Acropolis “perhaps the most impressive monument in Greece to the ‘votive religion’ of the wealthier classes.”²⁵ Ironically, the most physically imposing products of Greek votive practice more often than not get left out of votive studies based upon small finds, such as bronze and terra-cotta figurines, ceramic vessels, ivories, and even “found objects” such as fossils.²⁶ A worshipper’s choice to dedicate a statue on a base rather than a smaller, more portable offering was not determined entirely on the basis of economic resources. Anthony Snodgrass has documented a clear and quantifiable transition in Greek sanctuaries from the predominance of “raw” offerings or objects of everyday life (including dress pins and weapons) to more expensive “converted” offerings, primarily statues, which were manufactured specifically for dedication.²⁷ After coexisting first with tripods and later with statue dedications in the Greek sanctuaries of the Archaic period, raw offerings disappear almost entirely from archaeological sites in the period after 480 B.C. Although the shift from raw to converted offerings in the Classical period seems important for understanding how Greek votive religion worked, Snodgrass is the first to admit that such a shift is almost impossible to explain in any single, historically meaningful way.

It can be argued that the introduction of stone bases for Greek sculpture was a direct result of the desire to display votive statues more effectively in the open air of sanctuaries.²⁸ Although the first inscribed *anathemata* of any type appeared in Greek sanctuaries only ca. 700 B.C., in other words, 100 years or so after the first attested use of the Greek alphabet, large-scale marble sculptures were inscribed as soon as they began to be used as *anathemata*.²⁹ By the mid-sixth century, one major regional difference between statue *anathemata* on the Acropolis and those of the Cycladic and East Greek sanctuaries had emerged. On the Acropolis, statue bases functioned as the carriers of votive inscriptions. Elsewhere – particularly in East Greek sanctuaries – the practice of inscribing on the body of votive statues themselves continued to be preferred or used in conjunction with statue base inscriptions.³⁰ Despite the presence of statues made by Cycladic and East Greek sculptors on the Archaic Acropolis, body inscription of both large-scale marble sculptures and small bronze statuettes was avoided there.³¹ Thus, although the origins of inscribed statue *anathema* can be traced to the Ionian milieu in the seventh century B.C., differences in how statue *anathemata* were treated on the Athenian Acropolis from their beginnings in the

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sixth century could point to more significant divergences between East Greek and Athenian votive practices.

STATUES AND SACRED SPACE

Not one of the sixth- and fifth-century votive statue *anathemata* that constitute the subject of this study was found *in situ* on the Acropolis, and for obvious reasons: the history of the Acropolis' occupation is long and complex, involving a series of destructions and reorganizations beginning with the Persian sack of 480 B.C. Cuttings in the Acropolis bedrock in the area north and west of the Parthenon show where most of the Archaic statues probably stood (Fig. 5). After 480, statues were clustered around Pheidias' colossal bronze Athena facing the Propylaia, lined up along the north flank of the Parthenon, and grouped between the entrance to the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia and the Mnesiklean Propylaia.³² With a few notable exceptions, the extant monuments cannot be matched with any certainty to particular settings. The sheer numbers of statue bases found on the Acropolis and in other sanctuaries such as Delphi, Olympia, and the Samian Heraion indicate that, already in the sixth century, aesthetic principles of presentation were forced to give way to considerations of space and expediency.³³ Sacred laws of the Hellenistic period from a variety of sanctuaries give the responsibility for finding a place for new statue *anathemata* to either a priest or an architect (*architekton*). Overcrowding seems to have been a major problem; new dedications could not be allowed to prevent visitors from walking through the sanctuary or to impede access to buildings.³⁴

The Acropolis dedications of the sixth and fifth centuries provide some internal clues as to how and where they were originally meant to be displayed. Column and pillar bases varied in height, and it is easy to imagine dedicators vying to attract attention to their own offerings by attaching them to taller and taller bases, or alternatively choosing small bases that could be placed in front of earlier dedications without completely blocking their view.³⁵ Archaic column bases with Ionic capitals stood with their statues facing the narrow end of the capital, and the long, rectangular bases for equestrian monuments (including four-horse chariots in bronze) were usually inscribed on one of the narrow ends of the base: this indicates that these monuments were intended for display in tightly packed rows where space was at a premium, despite the fact that a view from the side would seem to be more aesthetically satisfying.³⁶ Only a very small number of statues and bases from the Acropolis were left unworked or minimally worked at the back for placement up against the wall of a building: these are *DAA* no. 184 (the base for a small bronze Athena statuette), no. 294 (the base for a marble kore), korai Acr. nos. 593, 675, and 696, and the torso of a small marble rider found on the Acropolis North Slope.³⁷ Vertical inscriptions consisting of multiple lines on column and pillar bases read in both directions, either from left to right (*DAA* nos. 9, 191, 233, and 257) or from right to left (*DAA*