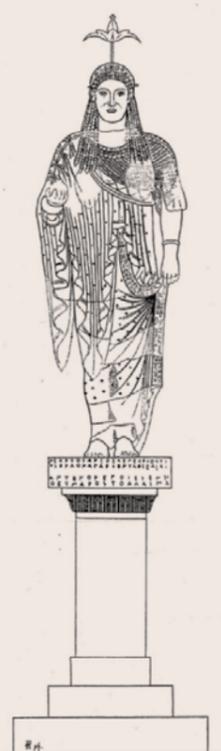


the sculptor antenor

μουσείο ακρόπολης
acropolis museum



the sculptor antenor



Drawing: F. Studniczka, *Jdl* 2, 1887, 141.



Inscribed base of the 'Antenor Kore'.

The marble and bronze sculptor Antenor is one of the few archaic artists known to us both from ancient writers and from surviving inscribed and other works, such as the Kore Acr. 681, known in the bibliography as the 'Antenor Kore'.

Excavation of the 'Persian fill' on the Acropolis recovered – among other artefacts – the capital of a square-shaped base bearing a votive inscription with the following four verses:

*Νέαρχος ἀνέθεκε[ν ἠο κεραμε]-
ὄς ἔργον ἀπαρχὴν τὰθ[εναίαι].*

*Ἀντένορ ἐπ[οίεσεν ἡ]
ο Εὐμάρος τ[ὸ ἄγαλμα].*

This inscription includes the name of the dedicator and his profession, the divinity receiving the offering, the name of the sculptor and the name of the sculptor's father.

The dedicator of the statue was Nearchos. This is possibly the famous potter and vase-painter of the 6th century BC. The monumental size of the figure and its commission to a renowned artist at that time confirms the prosperity and fame of the potter in his homeland. During his prime, he was the owner of a pottery workshop where his sons – also famous potters – worked as well.

The sculptor Antenor was the son of the painter and perhaps sculptor Eumares. He is believed to have been active between 530 and 480 BC.

The base described above has been associated with the Kore Acr. 681. The statue has larger than life proportions, exhibits a robust build and is dressed in a robe and cloak (chiton and himation). It dates to the last quarter of the 6th century BC.

The 'Antenor Kore' belongs to a group of votive statues of young women – more than 200 – which were erected on the Athenian Acropolis. Other than their characteristic posture, lavish clothing and hairstyle, they are also renowned for their particular facial expression, the 'archaic smile'. This has been interpreted in several ways.

The possible addition of the term 'ἄγαλμα' (meaning 'statue' in Greek) at the end of the inscription, is derived from the verb 'ἀγάλλομαι', which describes the pleasure that fills the god when he or she is offered a dedication. This also justifies the 'archaic smile' of the Kore.

This particular Kore is the only surviving work of Antenor that bears an inscription. He was commissioned for private as well as for official public works.

In antiquity, Antenor was known as the creator of the bronze statues of the Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, who in 514 BC murdered Hipparchos, one of the sons of the tyrant Peisistratos. These statues were erected in a prominent location in the Agora, immediately after the exile of Hippias in 510 BC, as a symbol of the liberation of Athens from tyranny. In 480 BC, they were taken by Xerxes to Persia. A few years later, in 477/76 BC, they were replaced with a new statue group that was the work of Kritios and Nesiotes.



Acr. 681, The 'Antenor Kore'. 525-510 BC

The original statues of the Tyrannicides by Antenor were returned by Alexander the Great or Seleukos I and were placed next to the more recent statue group, where they were seen centuries later, in the 2nd century BC, by the traveller Pausanias.

The importance of the Tyrannicides for the Athenians is underlined by the immediate replacement of the looted statues, the annual sacrifice by the Archon Polemarchos and by the fact that the placement of any other honorary statues in close proximity to them was explicitly forbidden.

The form of the earlier statue group by Antenor remains unknown. It is believed that the **Tyrannicides** were represented as Kouroi, situated next to each other in a composed posture.

Surviving copies of the Tyrannicides (statues, relief sculptures, coins, vessels, as well as fragments of Roman plaster casts) refer to the later statue group by Kritios and Nesiotes, which showed the two men in an action pose.

The commission of such a unique political monument from **Antenor** denotes the fame of the artist.

Another of his works – this time from outside Athens – also confirms his fame as a sculptor. It comprises marble sculptures on the east pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, which was constructed following a fire towards the end of the 6th century BC. The similarity in craftsmanship between the Korai of this pediment and the Kore from the Acropolis is such that the former have justly been attributed, from research, to Antenor, or at least to his workshop. Herodotos mentions that the construction and decoration of the temple were funded by the exiled family of the Alcmaionids, who also played an important role in political developments following the collapse of tyranny in Athens. Finally, Antenor has been associated with the Gigantomachy pediment from the 'Old Temple' on the Acropolis.

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