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Research paper

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Peplos Kore

The “Rampin Master” piece titled “Peplos Kore” represents either a goddess or a regular girl dressed in what scholars think is a peplos. Peplos was a type of dress from the Greek period defined as “a simple, long, woolen belted garment” (Gardner112). This statue was made of stone in 530 BCE standing around 47 inches tall. Most statues of this kind are not found easily, and Peplos Kore was no exception. It was discovered in “1886, near a temple known as the Erenchtheion. It was found in three parts over the course of several days” (Turner). This statue still has a lot of mystery behind who it is representing, Brinkman says “the attire of mere mortal women but of goddesses...understood as Athena or Artemis”. This piece is now located at the Archaic Acropolis Gallery in Athens, Greece and can still be seen there today.

Ancient Greek art; specifically statue design, has changed in many ways from early to Hellenistic period. Greece looked for “inspiration from Egyptian and Near Eastern Monumental Art” (Cartwright). Like the Egyptians, the Greeks at first were perfectionists when it came to proportions with their sculptures. The biggest different between the two is the Greek’s began to separate the arms from body, so it wasn’t a solid one piece. In earlier times the statues were focused on idealized images and figures, and as you move toward the Hellenistic period the statues become much more realistic and showed real emotion. The Peplos Kore resembles the style of early Greek art with a simple face and archaic smile and while looking at the Peplos it’s easy to see the Egyptian influence. An example would be how close her arm is and how it is still

attached as well as her very even proportions. Ancient Greek art statues have taught us so much about their culture and their techniques that are still used today.

There is a lot of meaning behind the name of the statue Peplos Kore. A peplos is a type of dress worn by women in Greece; “there is no tailoring in ancient Greece- so this particular type of dress was made of a big sheet of fabric, folded over at the top and wrapped around the body. It was pinned at the shoulders to keep it from falling down and often belted at the waist” (Turner). While looking at the statue you can see the draped fabric and belt, and at first glance scholars would know what it is. The meaning behind kore is “a statue of a young women used to mark graves or more often as a votive offering to the gods in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.” (Turner). The Peplos Kore is clearly a woman with the detailed hair and feminine features on her face and body. Peplos Kore was a good name for its time, as many artifacts are named after what the archeologist can recognize right away.

There have been many questions about this particular piece and who ‘she’ is. Due to her missing arm, it makes it hard to identify her as a goddess or a regular person. After careful examination by scholars “the statue has revealed, however, that she wears four different garments, one of which only goddesses wore” (Gardner 112). Due to the corrosion over the years, being outside and weathered the tiny details were hard to see until we had better technology. Dr. Beth Harris said, “because of what she is wearing is so unusually and is so similar to sculptures of goddess, there is some conjecture recently...that this may in fact not be an offering... but this is a goddess herself perhaps Artemis or Athena”. If the last piece of the Peplos was found there would be an answer to who she is. In traditional Greek God and Goddess statues, within one of the hands they normally hold their object of power. When looking at the ancient Greek Goddess Artemis she is normally seen holding a bow and arrow in many

variations. Dr. Steve Zucker said, “But in this case we think she might have been holding a bow with her left hand and we can see in her right hand a fist which is drilled in such a way that it could easily have held an arrow and so she may well be Artemis”. While looking at the Peplos there are also holes on the head where a crown could have sat “which would certainly suggest her divinity” (Dr. Steve Zucker). Another thing that could have identified the Peplos to be a goddess would be her archaic smile, standing for not happiness, but emotionless in a sense of Ancient Greek culture. While looking at the Peplos Kore with naked eye there is not much you will see but brown stone and a little bit of red coloring, but under the digital microscope there was still color in nooks of the statue. After this discovery there was a plaster recreation made in full color of what the peplos could have looked like originally. This recreation is located with the original in Athens, Akropolis Museum. Dr. Steve Zucker stated that “we found traces of paint in the band at the bottom of the cloth that hangs down over her abdomen and then in the front of her garment it seems to part just in the middle of her torso. We see the representation of embroidery depicting decorative patterns and animals...all of which are visible only under special lighting and is no longer visible to the naked eye”. This is a huge advantage to new technology from different lighting techniques to 3D MRIS. The information that is obtainable has become endless. Having a completely remade original offers a whole different perspective and appreciation for ancient Greek artwork. Even with a missing arm, scholars are slowly solving the mystery of who Peplos Kore really is.

Even though we don't exactly know who the Peplos Kore is representing, there is a lot of evidence from new age technology that has been used to help find that answer. Archeologists that have found ancient Greek art reveal pieces that display cultural marks, highlighting how descriptive art helps to reveal more information on these pieces found every day. The Peplos

Kore is one of these incredible finds that has found a new meaning, as this piece has a name that doesn't exactly fit who it really could be anymore. With everything that has been discovered it is clear that this statue is very possible a goddess and not a common woman. There is still plenty of debate between scholars of proposed name change, but she is known for Peplos Kore, and it will stay that way as the mystery of her will continue on.



Peplos Kore
530 BCE
Greek Sculpture
Stone
Archaic period
Artist: Rampin Master



Peplos Kore Restored
530 BCE
Greek Sculpture
marble
Archaic Period
Artist: Rampin Master



Artemis-Diana with Lunar-crescent
325 BCE
Marble
Greco-Roman Period
Artist: Leochares



Lady of Auxerre
625 BCE
Greek Sculpture
Stone
Archaic Period



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