

**The Acropolis Anacreon and Athenian Claims to Ionia**

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The fifth-century statue of the poet Anacreon, dedicated on the Athenian Acropolis and often attributed to the sculptor Kresilas, has rarely been treated as a product of its cultural context. Interpretations of the statue neglect the scission between its appearance, that of a fifth-century Athenian citizen, and its subject, a sixth-century Ionian. Anacreon's eastern origin lends his statue a significance absent in statues depicting native Athenians, and render their superficial similarity all the more puzzling. Because numerous pictorial stereotypes of easterners were readily available, the statue's rejection of these in favor of an image exhibiting the mores of Athenian citizenship underscores the deliberateness of the portrayal. Further complicating the statue's Athenian mien is the poet's well-known connection to sixth-century aristocracy: imported to Athens at Pisistratid behest, Anacreon was associated with the aristocratic patronage anathema to democratic Periclean politics. The poet's background, then, conflicts with his statue's conformist appearance, and encourages closer examination of the piece and its reception among Athenians.

Athenians certainly would have recognized the Anacreon's incongruities, as contemporary Athenians framed their superiority through contrasting themselves with other Greeks. While the Anacreon has been claimed to reflect Periclean anti-Spartan rhetoric, I argue that it demands a second reading in view of its Ionian ties. By portraying Anacreon the Ionian in Athenian guise, the statue attempts to legitimize Athens's claims to dominance over Ionia. I find the same legitimation echoed in Athenian dramatic texts, which I use to recreate popular reception of the Anacreon. I conclude by deriving from these cultural and political concerns a commission context and purpose for the piece.