

## Abstract

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### **The marble of the Penelope from Persepolis and its historical implications**

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The marble torso of a woman seated with crossed legs, carved by a Greek sculptor ca. 460-450 BC, was found in the Treasury of the palace at Persepolis just before World War II (Tehran Museum 4111). Because the Achaemenids did not produce monumental statues of women, this figure was surely an import. Persepolis was burnt down by Alexander the Great in 331 BC but, despite her obvious Greek origin, she was not salvaged like other Greek statues (e.g. the Tyrannicides from Athens) that had been taken by the Persians as war booty. This suggests that she had been offered to the great king as tribute by a Greek city. The existence of a second original is attested by a number of same-scale Roman copies now in Rome. The origin of this statue has been debated ever since its discovery: Samos, Ionia, Sparta, even Boeotia have been suggested. Visual inspection of the marble, however, suggests that it comes from Thasos. Considering that the diffusion of Thasian marble in the fifth century BC was limited to Thasos and the coastal Greek cities of Macedonia and Thrace, a new course of investigation will attempt to determine the provenance and purpose of the Persepolis statue.