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**“CARYATIDES PROBANTUR  
INTER PAUCA OPERUM”:  
PLINY, VITRUVIUS, AND THE SEMIOTICS OF  
THE ERECHTHEION MAIDENS AT ROME<sup>1</sup>**

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Augustus’s architectural transformation of Rome reflected the dawning of a new golden age of imperialism, social reform, and religious conservatism, all of which profoundly affected the iconography incorporated into his monuments. By examining the transformation of two of the key public spaces in Augustan Rome, namely the Forum of Augustus and the Pantheon of Agrippa, we have the opportunity to witness how history was continually changing as a reflection of the contemporary interaction with the past. Specifically, the interaction of the Roman audience with the past may be examined by investigating the iconographic role played by the most commonly copied sculptures from the Greek east, namely the maidens from the south porch of the Erechtheion on the Acropolis at Athens. Using a contextualized diachronic approach allows a new perspective on the problematic association of the Erechtheion maidens and Vitruvius’s term “caryatid.” In doing so, this paper serves as a case study for many of the themes examined in this volume; it explores the semiotics of triumph in the context of

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the Augustan monuments by considering the duality of their associations with both the glory of classical Athens as well as Greece's contemporary status as a conquered nation.

The paradox of celebrating a victory in a civil war resulted in cross-fertilized allusions to the east, and to Antony and Cleopatra, as well as complex propagandistic messages in the monuments Augustus erected to commemorate his and his family's military successes. Teresa Ramsby and Beth Severy-Hoven, in this volume, investigate the freshly redefined role of women in Augustan Rome and how, in spite of the new social legislation regarding a woman's place, discussed in this volume by Kristina Milnor, women featured in public art more often than ever before. The tension between the domestic/familial roles of women promoted by idealized depictions of the imperial family and the images of women as personifications of conquered nations is palpable and striking in its contrast. This paper considers these issues as it addresses the question of how the idealized and generalized copies of the maidens from the Erechtheion were perceived by the visitor to the Pantheon of Agrippa and the Forum of Augustus.

The maidens of the Erechtheion's south porch are the temple's most quotable feature and have been copied since their erection in the late fifth century B.C. (figures 1 and 2).<sup>2</sup> These maidens have been the subject of close scrutiny by scholars, particularly concerning the use of "caryatid," a term derived from the opening passage of Vitruvius's *de Architectura* (1.1.5).<sup>3</sup> Despite this attention, confusion about how to reconcile Vitruvius and the maidens of the Erechtheion remains. Using a contextualized diachronic approach, the following question can be addressed: why are the maidens of the Erechtheion almost always called caryatids?

The contemporary building accounts indicate that the Erechtheion maidens were called *korai* or "maidens" in the fifth century B.C.<sup>4</sup> Not once in the ancient sources are the Erechtheion maidens on the Acropolis referred to directly as caryatids. But rather than simply dismissing every post-antique reference to the Erechtheion maidens as caryatids as a mistake, the origins of this conflation of terms can be examined using hermeneutics, that is, the

2 See Sevinç et al. 2001 on the earliest monuments to copy the Erechtheion maidens.

3 The early seminal works on the origins of the caryatids are: Lessing (no date), Kinnard 1825, Blomfeld 1826, and Homolle 1917. Paton et al. 1927.232–38 deals with the origins of the Erechtheion maidens specifically. More recent, and on female architectural supports in general, are Schmidt-Colinet 1977, Plommer 1979, Vickers 1985, and King 1998.

4 Inscr. II, col. 1, line. 86, in Paton et al. 1927 (*IG I<sup>2</sup> 372.86=IG I<sup>3</sup> 474.8*).

study of their interpretation. By following the manifestations of this conflation backwards through time, this paper's hypothesis that its origins lie in the late first century B.C. can be confirmed.

To illustrate his assertion that an architect's knowledge should be well-rounded, Vitruvius wrote in the early 20s B.C.:<sup>5</sup>

A wide knowledge of history is necessary because architects often incorporate many ornamental features in the designs of their works, for which they must be able to give a reasoned account when asked why they added them. For example, if anyone erects marble statues of robed women, which are called Caryatids, instead of columns on his building, and places mutules and crowning members above them, this is how he will explain them to enquirers: Caryae, a city in the Peloponnese, allied herself with the Persian enemy against Greece. Later the Greeks were rid of their war by a glorious victory and made common cause and declared war on the Caryates. And so the town was captured, the males were killed and the Caryan state publicly humiliated. The victors led the matrons away into captivity, but did not allow them to lay aside their robes or matronly ornaments. Their intention was not to lead them on one occasion in a triumph, but to ensure that they exhibited a permanent picture of slavery, and that in the heavy mockery they suffered they should be seen to pay the penalty for their city. So the architects of those times designed images of them for public buildings specially placed to uphold a load, so that a well-known punishment of the Caryates' wrongdoing might be handed down to posterity.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Vitruvius wrote his treatise in the 30s and early 20s B.C. and dedicated it shortly after 27 B.C., as he mentions a temple to Augustus in the context of describing the basilica of his own design at Fano (5.1.7). He based his text on experiences from earlier in his life, in the 50s–40s B.C.: Wilson Jones 2000.34. The actual date of Vitruvius's work is controversial. See also Corso and Romano 1997.

6 Vitruvius (1.1.5), trans M. H. Morgan 1960:

Historias autem plures novisse oportet, quod multa ornamenta saepe in operibus architecti designant, de quibus argumenti rationem, cur fecerint, quaerentibus reddere debent. quem admodum si quis statuas marmoreas muliebres stolas,

Because of this passage and the prominence of the maidens of the Erechtheion, scholars have searched for a way to reconcile the term caryatid with these statues and the origin of female architectural supports. Scholars usually come to one of three main conclusions on this topic:

1. The Erechtheion maidens are indeed caryatids in the Vitruvian, i.e., post-Persian punished, sense;<sup>7</sup>
2. The Erechtheion maidens have nothing whatsoever to do with this medizing etiology and are instead descended from the pre-Persian female architectural supports from Delphi (e.g., the maidens on the Siphnian Treasury; cf. Plommer 1979.102); and

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quae Caryatides dicuntur, pro columnis in opere statuerit et insuper mutulos et coronas conlocaverit, percontantibus ita reddet rationem. Carya, civitas Peloponnensis, cum Persis hostibus contra Graeciam consensit. postea Graeci per victoriam gloriose bello liberati communi consilio Caryatibus bellum indixerunt. Itaque oppido capto, viris interfectis, civitate deflagrata matronas eorum in servitutem abduxerunt, nec sunt passi stolas neque ornatus matronales deponere, non uti una triumpho ducerentur, sed aeterna, servitutis exemplo gravi contumelia pressae poenas pendere viderentur pro civitate. ideo qui tunc architecti fuerunt aedificiis publicis designaverunt earum imagines oneri ferendo conlocatas, ut etiam posteris poena peccati Caryatium memoriae traderetur.

Virgil used similar language to describe how he led away the Muses from Helicon in his own, poetic triumph at the beginning of *Georgics* 3 (line 11): “Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas.” I am grateful to Anton Powell for bringing this to my attention.

- 7 Francis and Vickers 1983 attempt to redate the Treasuries of the Athenians and Siphnians to after the Persian War. The *poloi* of the female architectural supports on the Siphnian Treasury, Vickers 1985 argues, adopted a specifically Persian language of victory.

Regardless of their massaging of dates that allows for a Vitruvian reading of the meaning of the Erechtheion maidens as caryatids *and* as descendants of the Delphi maidens, one must also consider the precursors of female architectural supports, namely the women who hold up the even earlier archaic *perirrhantaria* (ritual water basins on stands). The idea that these, as well as the later female architectural supports, are temple servants has gained overall currency, both in interpreting the Erechtheion maidens as *arrephoroi* or *kanephoroi* (that is, as replacements for the archaic *korai* destroyed by the Persians), or as libation bearers for Athena’s ruined temple next door. For example, see Dinsmoor 1950.193. Vickers concludes that there are two kinds of architectural maidens, “caryatids” and “temple servants,” because he is unable to interpret the late republican architectural maidens from Eleusis (50 B.C.) as caryatids with political overtones (as he does for the Delphi maidens) owing to the significance of the *cista mystica* on their heads (*cista mystica* are baskets of mysterious things in this and other cults). The maidens from Eleusis are “republican” because they were paid for by Appius Claudius Pulcher when he was consul of Rome in 54 B.C. He vowed them to Demeter and Kore for unknown reasons. Cicero (*Att.* 6.1.26, 6.2) indicates that the building was begun before February 50 B.C. It was finished after Pulcher’s death in 48 B.C. by his nephews according to the dedicatory inscription; see Palagia 1997.83.

3. The term caryatid refers to the dancers at the shrine of Artemis Caryatis who were commemorated in stone at Delphi.<sup>8</sup>

These approaches focus on whether Vitruvius's account is trustworthy. His veracity is doubted because he offers many other appealing stories to explain, for example, the origins of the Doric and Corinthian orders; stories which are now generally regarded as having been invented by Vitruvius.<sup>9</sup> It was the eighteenth-century German antiquarian G. E. Lessing who first suggested that Vitruvius's account of the origin of the term caryatid was a fabrication.<sup>10</sup> Most scholars now summarily dismiss Vitruvius's story of post-Persian punishment by referring to the female architectural supports from before the Persian War, such as those from the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi that date to ca. 525 B.C. There are also historical problems with Vitruvius's account, namely that Caryae was not destroyed until after the Battle of Leuktra in 371 B.C.; in other words, about a hundred years later than Vitruvius insinuated.

Scholars have also used Vitruvius's coupling of the term caryatid with the Doric entablature (the order implied by his reference to "mutules") as a way to disassociate the term from the Erechtheion maidens; maidens, that is to say, who support a most unusual abbreviated Ionic entablature (Plommer 1979.98). This entablature consists of a dentillated cornice and three fasciae decorated with what were eventually to have become rosettes—though they always remained flat discs because the temple was never finished.

It is unfortunate that, by not using a contextualized diachronic approach, scholars often make unfounded assumptions that lead to conflated interpretations. The following statements are just two recent examples:

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- 8 Pliny *NH* 36.23 mentions a group of sculptures of dancers by Praxiteles. These dancers were called "Caryatids" or "Thyades," the Delphic name for the female followers (maenads) of Dionysos; see Brouskari 1997.185–86. On the "dancers column," see Pouilloux 1960.60–67, Bommelaer 1991.84–90.
  - 9 On the origins of the Doric order, see Wilson Jones 2002, Coulton 1977.128. On the origins of the Corinthian order, see Pedersen 1989. On the origins of the architectural orders in general, see Onians 1988 and Barletta 2001. Scahill (forthcoming) identifies evidence that may restore Vitruvius's reputation regarding the origins of the Corinthian order.
  - 10 Lessing (no date) pp. 385–86. Lessing's suspicions were aroused long before the discovery of the Delphi architectural maidens. His argument for rejecting Vitruvius's story is based on Winckelmann's identification of a male statue with a Corinthian capital on his head in the courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese as one of the caryatids of Agrippa's Pantheon mentioned by Pliny (see below): Winckelmann 1764.387. Lessing bought into Winckelmann's argument: since the caryatid was male, Vitruvius's story must be a fabrication. On the historiography of this problem, see Vickers (forthcoming).

1. “Attempts to de-emphasize the weight carried by the maidens combined with their position which isolates them from the rest of the building and obscures their architectural function would not have been introduced if these figures depicted enslaved women carrying heavy burdens, as Vitruvius would have us understand” (Shear 1999.84).
2. “The Roman architect Vitruvius states that the Erechtheion statues depicted the women of the Lakonian city of Karyes, which sided with the Persians during the Persian Wars . . .” (Brouskari 1997.185–86).

So what is wrong with these statements? First, both interpretations incorrectly assume Vitruvius was talking about the Erechtheion when he gives his definition of caryatid. Nowhere in Vitruvius 1.1.5 does he say he is talking about the south porch of the building known as the Erechtheion. Both scholars also ignore the fact that Vitruvius’s story requires the women to be matrons and not maidens, as they are specifically characterized in the ancient building accounts, and both ignore the fact that Vitruvius places a Doric, and not an Ionic, entablature above them.<sup>11</sup> These citations serve to demonstrate the importance of a contextualized diachronic approach in assessing the relationship between Vitruvius and the Erechtheion maidens.

The initial conflation of the Vitruvian term caryatid and the Erechtheion maidens has generally, although incorrectly, been attributed to Stuart and Revett, the intrepid traveler-architects who visited Greece in the 1750s, and to Winckelmann, who never visited Greece.<sup>12</sup> In fact, it was an Italian named Cornelio Magni who, in 1674, was the first early modern European traveler to call the Erechtheion maidens caryatids.<sup>13</sup> In any case, the mis-

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11 Some scholars argue that the building accounts would not have used the artistic or interpretive name for the figures in the light of the neutral terms used to describe the sculptured frieze (King 1998.278). Nonetheless, that the inscriptions describe them as *korai* and not *gynaikes* (“matrons,” as for the female figures of the frieze, for example, Inscr. XVII, col. I, l. 20; see Paton et al. 1927.388–89) remains a significant distinction.

12 Stuart and Revett 1762–1816, Winckelmann 1760.185. Winckelmann is credited as the source of the conflation by Plommer 1979.101 and by King 1998.276.

13 “Incontrammo più avanti un’altro *Tempio* con un Vestibolo che nella facciata viene in cambio di colonne, appoggiato da Quattro statue femminili dagli Architetti denominati *Cariati* scolpite con perfetto artificio, e vestite con panneggiamenti delicatissimi” (“Farther along [after leaving the Propylaea], I came upon another temple with a porch which, instead of

take these writers make might be perceived as a natural one: missing the significance of that singular term *mutulos* that indicates that a Doric frieze belongs above caryatids.

During the middle ages and Renaissance, and so before these earliest travelers to Greece, it is possible, though difficult, to identify the equation of Erechtheion maiden and caryatid. On the one hand, there exist evocative Renaissance drawings of copies of the Erechtheion maidens in various collections in Italy, such as a drawing in a codex in Berlin, but such examples are not labeled as caryatids.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, we have schematic renditions of caryatids that illustrate early modern editions of the opening passages of Vitruvius, such as the examples from the 1511 edition of Vitruvius by Fra Giocondo and the 1556 edition by Palladio and della Porta in Barbaro, that bear little to no resemblance to the Erechtheion maidens.<sup>15</sup>

There is, however, monumental evidence for the Erechtheion maidens being caryatids in the eyes of Renaissance viewers in the Louvre. Jean Goujon, who studied with Michelangelo, placed four Erechtheion-inspired maidens in his tribune that holds up the musicians' gallery in a room called in the building accounts of 1550 (and periodically thereafter) "la salle des caryatides."<sup>16</sup> Although these are not exact copies, they capture the essence of the Erechtheion maidens fairly well. Despite the fact that there was no direct method of transmission of images from the original source on the Athenian Acropolis to the French and Italian workshops because there was no tourism to Greece to speak of in the sixteenth century, the term caryatid was nonetheless intimately linked to the maidens of the Erechtheion through the ancient copies extant in western Europe at this time. This example demonstrates that the Erechtheion maidens and the Vitruvian term caryatid were linked at least two centuries before the early modern travelers to Greece beheld these Athenian maidens in person and made what seemed at that point in time a sensible and logical connection.

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columns, was supported by four female statues whom the architects call 'Cariati,' carved with perfect effect, and dressed with the most delicate draperies"; my translation): Magni 1688.56–57; Magni 1692.497.

14 See Schmidt 1973 for the basic collection of Renaissance drawings and copies of the Erechtheion maidens. For additional drawings of copies of the Erechtheion maidens in Italy, see Harprath 1983.

15 See D'Evelyn 1988–99 for the Fra Giocondo and Barbaro caryatids, as well as other illustrations of caryatids from other Renaissance editions of Vitruvius.

16 "La salle des caryatides" was called "la salle des antiques" between 1692 and 1793.



But can the explicit association of caryatid and the Erechtheion be pushed back even earlier? It is possible to argue that by the early Augustan period, the significance of the term *mutulos* to designate the associated Doric order had already been overlooked, and the maidens of the Erechtheion were considered the quintessential caryatids.

Before examining the evidence for this argument, it is crucial to discern what Vitruvius was actually referring to when he told his story about the humiliated Caryan women. Recent work on what Vitruvius probably had in mind when he proffered his etiology for the term caryatid has been done by Dorothy King (1998.275–89). She defines a caryatid as a female architectural support with one or both arms raised, wearing a *polos* on her head, and surmounted by an almost invariably Doric architrave. Surviving examples of such true caryatids come almost exclusively from funerary or private contexts of the Hellenistic period, and are perhaps derived from a lost monument at Sparta called the Persian Stoa, described by Vitruvius immediately after his explanation of the term caryatid (1.1.6).<sup>17</sup>

For example, inside both the Sveshtari tomb in Bulgaria and a rock-cut circular tomb at Agia Triada on Rhodes, there are reliefs of women with one or both hands raised, wearing long robes, a *polos* on their heads, and with a Doric frieze above.<sup>18</sup> These Hellenistic Vitruvian caryatids appear to have been adapted to portray mourners, and almost always occur in funerary contexts.<sup>19</sup> The other context in which Vitruvian caryatids appear is on a small scale in the private sphere of the elite. A good example—also found in a tomb—is a late republican cosmetics chest from Cumae into which little ivory “King-defined” Vitruvian caryatids with one or both arms up were inlaid.<sup>20</sup>

17 Picard 1935, Schneider 1986.

18 The Sveshtari tomb dates to soon after 300 B.C.: Valeva 1993.121–23, figs. 8 and 9. The tomb on Rhodes is late Hellenistic: Lauter 1986.221, 251, fig. 73b. See also King 1998.280.

19 King 1998.285. Compare the mid fourth-century B.C. sarcophagus of the Mourning Women from Sidon (Inv. no. 368 in the Istanbul Museum) and the throne from the so-called Tomb of Eurydike (Philip II’s mother) at Vergina whose “spindles” below the armrests and seat-back are also Vitruvian caryatids. A throne similar to that in Eurydike’s tomb can be found on the Persae vase. The funerary association of female architectural supports continues into the Roman period. They are often found at the corners of second- to third-century A.D. sarcophagi, such as on the Amazon sarcophagus from Thessaloniki in the Louvre and the Velletri sarcophagus, A.D. 150. The late second-century A.D. reference in Athenaeus to the parasite Eukrates who remarks: “When one dines here, one has to use one’s left hand, as caryatids do, to hold up the roof” (Athen. 241d; Plommer 1979.99), can be considered just another one of the deliberately erudite and obscure allusions that pepper his works. This is one of the few ancient uses of caryatid in literature.

20 This box is in the Museo Nazionale in Naples.

Therefore, with the question of what Vitruvius was referring to by the term caryatid no longer dismissed as fantasy, it is now possible to examine the legacy of Vitruvius's opening statements and see if the conflation of the term caryatid and the Erechtheion maidens can be pushed back to the Augustan period. To do this, it is crucial to remember that Vitruvius, in his definition of a caryatid, was describing a phenomenon of the Hellenistic period that was limited almost entirely to the private and sepulchral spheres of the elite, and so was not familiar to the general public. As with Stuart and Revett, the very specific definition of caryatid with a mutule molding above was lost by the succeeding generations of architects who used *de Architectura* as a guide. Therefore, when a post-Vitruvian architect wanted to include female architectural supports in his design, what came to mind were not the reliefs in tombs and on cosmetic boxes, but the maidens of the south porch of the Erechtheion. The following monuments in Rome illustrate this phenomenon: the Agrippan Pantheon, the Forum of Augustus, the Forum of Trajan, and the Arch of Constantine.

Not long after Vitruvius wrote his treatise and dedicated it to Augustus as *Imperator Caesar*, major building projects in Rome were inaugurated by Agrippa and Augustus, namely, the Pantheon and the Forum of Augustus respectively. Both monuments incorporated female architectural supports on the Erechtheion model. It is important to remember that Augustus had recently won the Battle of Actium with Agrippa's assistance, and afterward both men had spent some time in Athens.

Agrippa dedicated the Pantheon in the Campus Martius in 27 B.C., perhaps as the main victory monument in Rome that commemorated the Battle of Actium.<sup>21</sup> The pre-Hadrianic phases of the Pantheon were also circular and, according to Pliny (*HN* 36.11), decorated with caryatids:<sup>22</sup>

The Pantheon of Agrippa was embellished by Diogenes  
of Athens; and among the supporting members of this

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21 See below note 32 on the date of the first phase of the Pantheon. According to Cassius Dio (53.27), the Agrippan Pantheon was once a part of a large complex that included the Basilica of Neptune. On the problems with the evidence for an Agrippan Basilica of Neptune and the Stoa of Poseidon in the Saepta Julia, see Haselberger 2002. The land and sea imagery that is commemorative of his victory at Actium and so pervasive in Augustan monuments is in evidence here as well. Statues of Augustus and Agrippa stood in niches on the exterior because Augustus duly refused to have what could have been perceived as a cult statue of himself indoors; see Wilson Jones 2000.179–80.

22 Wilson Jones 2000.180–82.

temple there are Caryatids that are almost in a class of their own and the same is true of the figures on the angles of the pediment, which are, however, not so well known because of their lofty position.<sup>23</sup>

Pieter Broucke believes the Caryatids in the Agrippan Pantheon were quotations of the Erechtheion maidens and demonstrates convincingly that the four copies of Erechtheion maidens discovered in the Canopus at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli in 1952 (figure 3) were probably rescued from the remains of the Agrippan and Domitianic Pantheons, most likely when the Pantheon was rebuilt on the same spot by Hadrian.<sup>24</sup>

Broucke's argument is as follows: the four Tivoli maidens can be divided into two types, Type A (figures 4 and 5) and Type B (figures 6 and 7).<sup>25</sup> Types A and B differ in significant ways: their height, the number of coiled tresses over their shoulders, the treatment of their footwear and drapery, the attachment of their capitals, and the profiles of their egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel moldings. Together, these features point to their production at different times by different workshops. Table 1 summarizes the features of the two types of Tivoli maidens, including Broucke's conclusions regarding the dates of the copies, as well as a comparison of the features of the original maidens from the Erechtheion and the copies in the Forum of Augustus (see Table 1).

As is clear in Table 1, Type A is very similar to the copies of the Erechtheion maidens in the Forum of Augustus, especially with respect to the arrangement of the drapery in the vicinity of their stomachs. The match with the torso found in the Forum of Augustus is truly remarkable (figure 8). It appears, therefore, that Type A dates to the Augustan period. If Broucke's theory is correct, and the Tivoli Type A maidens belong to the Pantheon, then they date to a few years *before* the Forum of Augustus and so served as the model for the Erechtheion maidens that appear repeatedly in the Forum's attic storey.

Type A may have been inspired by the Erechtheion maidens, but as the information summarized in Table 1 indicates, it is by no means an

23 The Loeb translation of "Agrippae Pantheon decoravit Diogenes Atheniensis; in columnis templi eius Caryatides probantur inter pauca operum, sicut in fastigio posita signa, sed propter altitudinem loci minus celebrata."

24 Broucke 1998. The Pantheon burned down in A.D. 80 and was rebuilt by Domitian in A.D. 81. On the discovery of the maidens at Tivoli, see Aurigemma 1996.

25 For detailed photographs of the Tivoli maidens, consult Schmidt 1973, pls. 6–32.

Table 1. Summary of Features of the Maidens from Tivoli and the Forum of Augustus, Compared to the Erechtheion Maidens

Maiden	Tivoli 1: Fig. 6	Tivoli 2: Fig. 7	Erechtheion	Tivoli 3: Fig. 4	Tivoli 4: Fig. 5	Augustan Forum Fig. 8
<b>Type</b>	B	B	Original	A	A	(A)
<b>Date</b>	Flavian	Flavian	Classical	Augustan	Augustan	Augustan
<b>Accuracy of drapery at front</b>	Accurate	Same as Tivoli 1	Flat drapery at front	Not accurate: twisted drapery at front	Same as Tivoli 3	Same as Tivoli 3 & 4
<b>Number of tresses</b>	2	2	2	3	3	3
<b>Back</b>	Similar to Erechtheion maidens M3 & M4 with original treatment pre-served <sup>26</sup>	Same as Tivoli 1	M3 and M4 have original drapery, M1, M2, M5 have recarved drapery <sup>27</sup>	Flattened, but protruding segments of drapery <sup>28</sup>	Same as Tivoli 3	Same as Tivoli 3 & 4
<b>Shoe style</b>	Plain sole, no straps	Same as Tivoli 1	Plain sole, top of all feet very damaged	Triple-layered sole, sculpted straps	Same as Tivoli 3	Notched sole at big toe <sup>29</sup>
<b>Tivoli Museum No.</b>	2236	2239		2233	2238	

26 The alphanumeric designation for the maidens in the south porch of the Erechtheion begins with M1 at the northwest (rear); M2 is the southwest maiden; M3 is the maiden Lord Elgin removed that is now in the British Museum; M4 and M5 are the eastern front two maidens; and M6 is the northeast, rear maiden.

27 On the recarving of the backs of M1, M2, and M5, see Lesk 2004.227–30. M6 is an ancient replacement, probably Hellenistic.

28 The treatment of the backs of these maidens suggests that their backs would not be seen in their original contexts in the Pantheon and Forum of Augustus.

29 Francis 2001 suggests this sole type dates to the second century B.C., based on the typology laid out by Morrow 1985.

accurate quotation. We must remember that Pliny attributes the Pantheon caryatids to Diogenes of Athens. Diogenes, as a sculptor and native of Athens, would have been very familiar with the Erechtheion maidens and thus able to recreate them within an acceptable degree of accuracy from memory.<sup>30</sup> These Tivoli Type A maidens are the very sculptures Pliny must have seen when he says that they are in “a class of their own” in the mid first century A.D.

Type B, on the other hand, is a much more faithful quotation of the Erechtheion maidens. The arrangement of the drapery is almost identical, but the carving in general is not as well executed. The closest parallels for the drapery style are Flavian.<sup>31</sup> Broucke 1998 characterizes the drapery as having “deep linear cuts” that “terminate abruptly,” having been drilled for accentuation.

Furthermore, the chronology of the Tivoli maidens corresponds well to the known phases of the pre-Hadrianic Pantheon, namely the Augustan and Domitianic periods.<sup>32</sup> So, if Broucke is correct in his identification of

30 Diogenes’ purpose may not have been to copy the maidens exactly for the versions in the Pantheon. Diogenes was undoubtedly familiar with the form and function of the Erechtheion maidens. When commissioned to create copies, he did not return to Athens to make a mold. He carved them from memory or perhaps from a sketch in the contemporary classicising style (including Roman-style footwear; see Francis 2001). He created his own version for the Pantheon, which was sufficiently reminiscent of the Erechtheion maidens to identify them with the home of Athena Polias in Athens.

31 Compare the statue of Titus from Herculaneum. That the Tivoli Type B maidens date to the Domitianic period and replicate more faithfully the form of the originals in Athens begs the question of how the sculptors became so closely acquainted with the original form since there were already so many inaccurate Augustan copies visible in Rome. Because of the accuracy of the Type B copies, coupled with the well-known fact that Domitian was obsessed with Athena (Suetonius *Dom.* 15), as observed in the Forum Transitorium dedicated to her, it is conceivable that casts (or at least detailed studies) were made from the original maidens on the Athenian Acropolis during Domitian’s reign. As discussed by Lesk 2004.243–51, however, there was little imperial activity on the Athenian Acropolis during the Flavian period.

32 The frieze inscription still on the building attests to the initiation of building in 27 B.C. Cassius Dio (53.27.2) reports that the Pantheon and Basilica of Neptune were completed by 25 B.C., and Pliny reports that caryatids were incorporated by Diogenes of Athens. Dio (66.24.2) is also the source for the fire in the Campus Martius that damaged the Pantheon under Titus. The *MHG* (9.146) and Hieronymos *ab Abr.* 2105 attest to the restoration of the Pantheon under Domitian (and there are Domitianic brick-stamps). Lightning struck under Trajan according to Oros (7.12.5) and Hieronymos *ab Abr.* 2127; and Hadrian rebuilt the Pantheon wholesale after 126, at which time he “carted off” (Broucke 1998) the four remaining maidens to Tivoli where his villa was under construction but already in use (*SHA, Hadrian* 19.10). See also Ziolkowski 1999.

the caryatids of the first-century B.C. and A.D. phases of the Pantheon as the copies of the Erechtheion maidens found at Tivoli, and Pliny used the term caryatid in the second half of the first century A.D. to refer to these very sculptures, then the implication for the interpretation of Vitruvius's legacy is very clear: Pliny, one of the best educated and lettered men of his time, called, by way of copies in the Pantheon, the maidens of the Erechtheion caryatids. This connection supports the argument that when writers or architects after Vitruvius envisioned caryatids—at least after the 70s A.D.—they made the mental connection with the famous maidens from the classical Erechtheion and not with the rather obscure funerary phenomenon of the Hellenistic period.

Having established the impact of Vitruvius on the interpretation of the Erechtheion maidens in the first century, we can now turn to the contexts in which these human architectural supports are found. His vow on the eve of the Battle of Philippi in 42 B.C. no doubt burning in his conscience after defeating Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium, Augustus ensured that progress was being made on the Temple of Mars Ultor and his Forum by the mid 20s B.C.<sup>33</sup> The design of the Forum included an attic storey above the colonnades with Erechtheion maidens alternating with *clipei*, or shields, adorned with heads (figure 8). Only two types of these heads survive, those of Zeus Amon and a Gaul. These heads represent the proud nations conquered by Augustus and the emperor's hegemony in both east and west. This interpretation is underscored by the inscribed lists of conquered people that were on display in the Forum.<sup>34</sup> The Forum of Augustus

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33 Rich 2002 and Spannagel 1999.79–85 argue that the actual inception (i.e., the start of construction) of the Forum of Augustus was 17 B.C. This was the year of Augustus's adoption of Gaius and Lucius as his sons and heirs. The design and impetus for the Forum not only represent Augustus's desire to set an example of building civic and religious structures *ex manubiis*, but also projects the emperor's high hopes for Gaius and Lucius' futures. This inception date of 17 B.C. is about a decade after the dedication of the Pantheon of Agrippa. C. Vibius Rufus, who signed his name on one of the copies of the maidens in the Forum of Augustus, must have got his model for the Erechtheion maidens from the Pantheon.

34 For similar lists of conquered tribes, see Augustus's victory monument at La Turbie. Personifications of conquered nations were carved in the round and labelled at Aphrodisias. For the inscriptions, see Velleius Paterculus 2.39.2, Nicolet 1991.42–45. Rose 2005 reports that only two types of *clipeus* mask have been recovered in the Forum of Augustus and suggests these were the only types used in this context. At Augusta Emerita (see below), the Jupiter Amon/Egypt type is found with a Medusa type: Trillmich 1990. This subtle modification of iconography is paralleled in the alteration to the copies of the Erechtheion maidens that flanked the *clipei*.

Fragments of two *clipei* bearing the heads of Jupiter Amon and one with a

as a whole sent a message of the new emperor's wide-ranging control over the growing empire by means of its sculptural program and use of multi-colored marbles from Egypt to Asia Minor.<sup>35</sup>

The copies of the Erechtheion maidens are usually interpreted as references to the glory of classical Athens—as a parallel to the golden age of Rome inaugurated by Augustus—because many modern scholars wish to repudiate Vitruvius's story.<sup>36</sup> Lily Ross Taylor (1949) more subtly interprets the inclusion of the maidens in Augustan monuments as distinctly anti-Antony and indicating Rome's superiority over Greece. For Taylor, the Erechtheion maidens were something beautiful that could be imported from an otherwise debased culture. While the equation with Periclean Athens may have been intended on one level, the maidens must be considered in their symbolic juxtaposition to the alternating shields of conquered nations. Alongside the fact that Athens had sided yet again with the losing party in the Battle of Actium—and had to grovel for forgiveness in the aftermath of the civil war—these maidens of classical Athens had become symbols of submission, true caryatids in the eyes of the visitor to the Augustan Forum. It is also worth remembering that Augustus had never been well-disposed towards Athens.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the Erechtheion maidens would have been an appropriate signifier of Athens' (and Greece's) subjection to Roman rule.

Further evidence for interpreting the copies of the Erechtheion maidens in the Forum of Augustus with Vitruvian overtones derives from

Medusa were discovered in the Provincial Forum at Tarraco, modern Tarragona, in Spain: Aquilué et al. 1991.63–66. The *clipei* at Tarragona have the same motifs as the *clipei* from the Forum at Mérida. Since we only have the Jupiter Amon and the Gaul from the Augustan Forum, perhaps we can add Medusa, possibly representing Achaea, to the suite of *clipei* at Rome. We might therefore expect further excavation to reveal Erechtheion-inspired maidens to accompany these *clipei* at Tarragona. I am indebted to Professor E. M. Steinby for bringing the Tarragona *clipei* to my attention.

35 Agrippa and Augustus were inundated with design decisions as monuments under their patronage were being erected in Rome and abroad. The aesthetic appeal of the Erechtheion maidens made them a natural symbolic substitute for the glory of Greece, but the allegory behind them must not be overlooked: while, on the one hand, the designers of the Forum of Augustus might have thought: "Athens has six of these lovely maidens, we'll use sixty"; on the other, the developing iconography of victory was carefully contrived and always served a propagandistic agenda. On Augustan iconography and propaganda, see Zanker 1988.

36 Kleiner 1992.100–01, Kellum 1997.167. Galinsky 1996.203 (as do Ramsby and Severy-Hoven, this volume) recognizes the shameful overtones of the maidens in the Forum of Augustus, but does so out of a straightforward reading of Vitruvius.

37 See the discussion in Lesk 2004.245–49.

two later and related monuments: the Forum of Trajan and the Arch of Constantine. Statues of bound Dacian prisoners carved in purple-veined marble occupied the identical position in the Forum of Trajan as the copies of the Erechtheion maidens did in the Forum of Augustus. This highly visible architectural parallel between the two monuments leaves no doubt that the two sets of statues in the attic storeys were equated as symbols of victory over conquered peoples.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, that icon of *spolia*, the Arch of Constantine, recycles eight Dacian prisoners very similar to those found in the Forum of Trajan.<sup>39</sup> Again, they are set up in the attic storey and frame recycled and recarved relief panels with scenes of successful army activities from the lost arch of Marcus Aurelius, thus serving as constant reminders of the fate and circumstances of a conquered people. In fact, beginning in the Renaissance, these Dacian captives were actually considered to be quotations from the Persian Stoa at Sparta described by Vitruvius (1.1.6) and illustrated as the masculine counterpart to the caryatids of the Palladian edition.<sup>40</sup>

In sum, using a contextualized diachronic approach to analyze the problem of Vitruvius's definition of the term caryatid and how this relates to the Erechtheion maidens, we have observed that upon the publication of *de Architectura*, the Erechtheion maidens became a part of the Roman iconographic vocabulary of triumph. Therefore, from the early Augustan period through the fourth century A.D., the maidens from the Erechtheion at Athens represented for the viewer caryatids in the Vitruvian sense: symbols of submission and humiliation.

Examples of copies of the Erechtheion maidens in contexts of submission can also be found in Roman Greece. For example, the Captives Façade embellished the north side of the Roman Forum at Corinth, while another monument on its south side incorporated copies of the Erechtheion maidens.<sup>41</sup> Although the original context of the maidens at Corinth is not

38 On the history of the portrayal of females as personifications of conquered nations, see Ramsby and Severy-Hoven, this volume.

39 The Forum of Trajan was still standing when the Arch of Constantine was erected. The Dacians (and other *spolia* employed in the monument) may have come from marble yards or another (dismantled) Trajanic monument; see Alchermes 1994.

40 Palladio and della Porta's illustration of D. Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius, *I dieci libri*, 1556; Schneider 1986. See above p. 31.

41 On the copy of the Erechtheion maiden at Corinth, see Williams and Fisher 1975.22–23. The excavators date the maidens to the Julio-Claudian period. Their original context is unknown, but the treatment of their backs indicates that they were not freestanding.



known—and so their significance and meaning when they were originally erected in the Julio-Claudian period cannot be discerned—their meaning in the second century A.D. when the Captives Façade was built would have been clear: their contraposition to the Captive's Façade in the Roman Forum at Corinth makes the maidens symbols of subjection in line with Vitruvius's etiology even more directly than the aforementioned architectural parallels between the Augustan and Trajanic fora at Rome.

At Emerita Augusta (Roman capital of Lusitania and modern Mérida, Spain), a forum whose design was based on that of Augustus's at Rome was erected in the middle of the first century A.D. The design included loose copies of the Erechtheion maidens and *clipei* with heads, this time of Medusa and Jupiter Amon.<sup>42</sup> The maidens from Mérida were not carved in the round as at Rome, and they hold jugs in either their right or left upraised hands rather than the *phialai/paterae* of the Tivoli examples. Despite the major differences between the maidens from Athens and Mérida, they are nonetheless directly related because of the general architectural parallels between the fora at Rome and Mérida. This raises the question of what this sculptural decoration would have meant to the inhabitants of a colony composed of veterans of the V and X Legions from Augustus's wars and their descendants.<sup>43</sup> Would these veterans have understood the maidens as quotations direct from Athens and/or as symbols of subjugation?

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42 Emerita Augusta was founded as a colony between 25 and 19 B.C.: Alvarez Martínez et al. 2000.4. On the "municipal" forum, see Alvarez Martínez et al. 2000.49–50, Trillmich 1990, Alvarez Martínez 1982, Alvarez Martínez 1989. For an annotated bibliography of scholarship on Mérida up to 1992, see Jiménez 1992. Scholl 1998.64–65 considers the copies from Mérida in his analysis of the Maiden Porch of the Erechtheion. See note 34 for a discussion of the *clipei* from the fora at Rome, Mérida, and Tarragona.

43 It is very difficult to prove that a certain soldier who fought in Legion V or X necessarily both visited Athens with Augustus and Agrippa and was a colonist of Emerita Augusta. The history of Legions V and X is complex, and it is difficult to follow any individual's membership in them. Sometimes legions were reorganized for logistical reasons, such as to increase numbers in legions where many soldiers had died, and sometimes for political reasons: Pompey and Caesar each had legions numbered I–X, and the triumvirs also had their own legions. Legions V and X were originally created by Julius Caesar: Legion V Alaudae (a.k.a. the Larks) was created illegally and Legion X Equestris (a.k.a. Gemina) won fame in the Gallic and Civil Wars. Caesar's Legion V ceased to exist after their ships sank in the Adriatic on their way to Greece to join Caesar's efforts against Pompey in 49 B.C. After Pharsalus in 48 B.C. when Caesar defeated Pompey, Caesar took over Pompey's forces including his Legion V. Caesar then had multiples of the same Legions I–X. Caesar retired many of the veterans, who remained loyal to their legion "number." After Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C., Mark Antony took over most of his legions, including Caesar's V Alaudae and X Equestris. Octavian raised legions among the veterans Caesar had recently

Unfortunately, there is no literary evidence for which legions accompanied Augustus and Agrippa on their visits to Athens where these future colonists may have come into direct contact with the Erechtheion. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the veterans from these campaigns understood the language of triumph and subjugation, since they themselves were the subjugators, and would have seen the iconography of imperial triumph not only at Rome, but all over the empire by the middle of the first century A.D.<sup>44</sup> In the light of the loose interpretation of the Erechtheion maidens at Mérida, it is only safe to say that their inclusion appears to be simply a part of the quotation of the Forum of Augustus as a whole, rather than harkening all the way back to the original source at Athens. The impetus to copy the Forum of Augustus probably springs from the colony's desire to recreate a little piece of Rome in far-flung western Hispania. The colonists probably chose to quote the Forum of Augustus, in particular, because the original veteran-soldier-colonists were all Augustus's clients. Augustus was their *imperator*, patron, and commander-in-chief, and they showed their enthusiasm and loyalty by imitating the emperor's architectural program and thereby espousing imperial ideals.

And finally, why did Vitruvius choose the story of the Caryan women as the prime example of how to explain an architect's design choices to his patron for the opening passages of his treatise? At the time of writing, the war with Persia was still playing itself out for the Romans.

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settled, and they marched under their old legionary numbers and fought in the Battle of Mutina. After the second triumvirate fell apart, there were triple repetitions of legionary numbers. In 35–34 B.C., Octavian took over the legions of the deposed Lepidus. By the time of the Battle of Actium, these legions had been combined to even out the numbers, and Octavian met Antony and Cleopatra with about sixty-five legions. After Actium, Octavian went overland to Egypt, and visited Athens on the way with several legions, but it is unclear which ones. The other legions were dismissed to other quarters. Octavian left three legions in Egypt to control the new province. Octavian retired over half of his legions, leaving twenty-eight renumbered legions. When he retired some of the soldiers of the V and X to the colony of Emerita Augusta six or so years later, it is not clear which V and X. The only way to tell where an individual fought is if this information was recorded on his tombstone. The habit of recording such information did not begin at Emerita Augusta until the second century A.D. Therefore, it is impossible to say for certain that the soldiers who retired to Emerita Augusta had seen the Erechtheion. On the history of the legions, see Keppie 1998. I am grateful to Fred Drogula for his assistance on this issue.

44 There is one small piece of evidence, however, which links the Forum at Mérida to the Athena of Athens, namely a first-century A.D. relief (perhaps from a balustrade?) that depicts an olive tree, a snake, and birds (doves?). These are the trademarks of Athena's cult in Athens; see Lesk 2004.

Sulla and Pompey's victories in the east were overshadowed by the loss of the military standards by Crassus in 53 B.C. to Parthia. Perhaps Vitruvius's inclusion of the anti-Persian story is his reaction (as a military engineer under Julius Caesar) to the smarting memory of this humiliation, a story that would have pleased Augustus to whom the treatise was addressed. Its subtext also served as a warning to those cities, mostly in Greece and Asia Minor, whose monuments Vitruvius held up as key examples of the architectural phenomena he was describing: do not consider medizing like the Caryans did during the Persian War or else Rome will punish you! As an extension of Vitruvius's political intention, because the Erechtheion maidens in the Forum of Augustus were interpreted as caryatids by the Roman audience, perhaps their inclusion in the iconographic program can be seen as a morality tale, reflective of the new social and military order of Augustan Rome.

The duality in the use of the Erechtheion maidens—to emulate classical Athens while at the same time commemorate its defeat—is paralleled in the complexity of Augustus's commemoration of the Battle of Actium and the problem posed by celebrating victory in civil war within Rome itself. Furthermore, Augustus's employment of idealized Greek females, a style he also applied to the portrayal of his own female family members in monuments such as the Ara Pacis, and the new legislation regarding the position of women discussed by Milnor in this volume demonstrate another dimension of this duality: the copies of the Erechtheion maidens in Rome were idealized, generalized, and placed in contexts of subservience.

In conclusion, this examination of the Roman reception of the Erechtheion illustrates how the temple and its sculpture played an important role in the psyche of the people of the Roman empire, particularly at Rome. The new way of looking at Vitruvius presented here serves to clarify some of the previous misconceptions about his text's relationship with the Erechtheion. It demonstrates how, almost from the moment his definition of caryatid was written down, every generation until now has interpreted the term in almost exactly the same way, namely, as referring to the constantly visible maidens of the south porch of the Erechtheion and as eternal symbols of submission and humiliation.

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Figure 1. The Erechtheion from the south. Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Greek Ephoreia for the Akropolis.



Figure 2. The South Porch of the Erechtheion. Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Greek Ephoreia for the Acropolis.





Figure 3. Casts of the copies of the Erechtheion maidens found in the Canopus at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, S1-S4 left to right. Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma in the Tivoli Museum.



Figure 4. Type A  
Tivoli Maiden (S2).  
Photograph by  
Alexandra L. Lesk  
used courtesy of  
the Soprintendenza  
Archeologica di Roma  
in the Tivoli Museum.



Figure 5. Type A Tivoli Maiden (S3). Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma in the Tivoli Museum.





Figure 6. Type B Tivoli Maiden (S1). Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma in the Tivoli Museum.



Figure 7. Type B Tivoli Maiden (S4). Photograph by Alexandra L. Lesk used courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma in the Tivoli Museum.

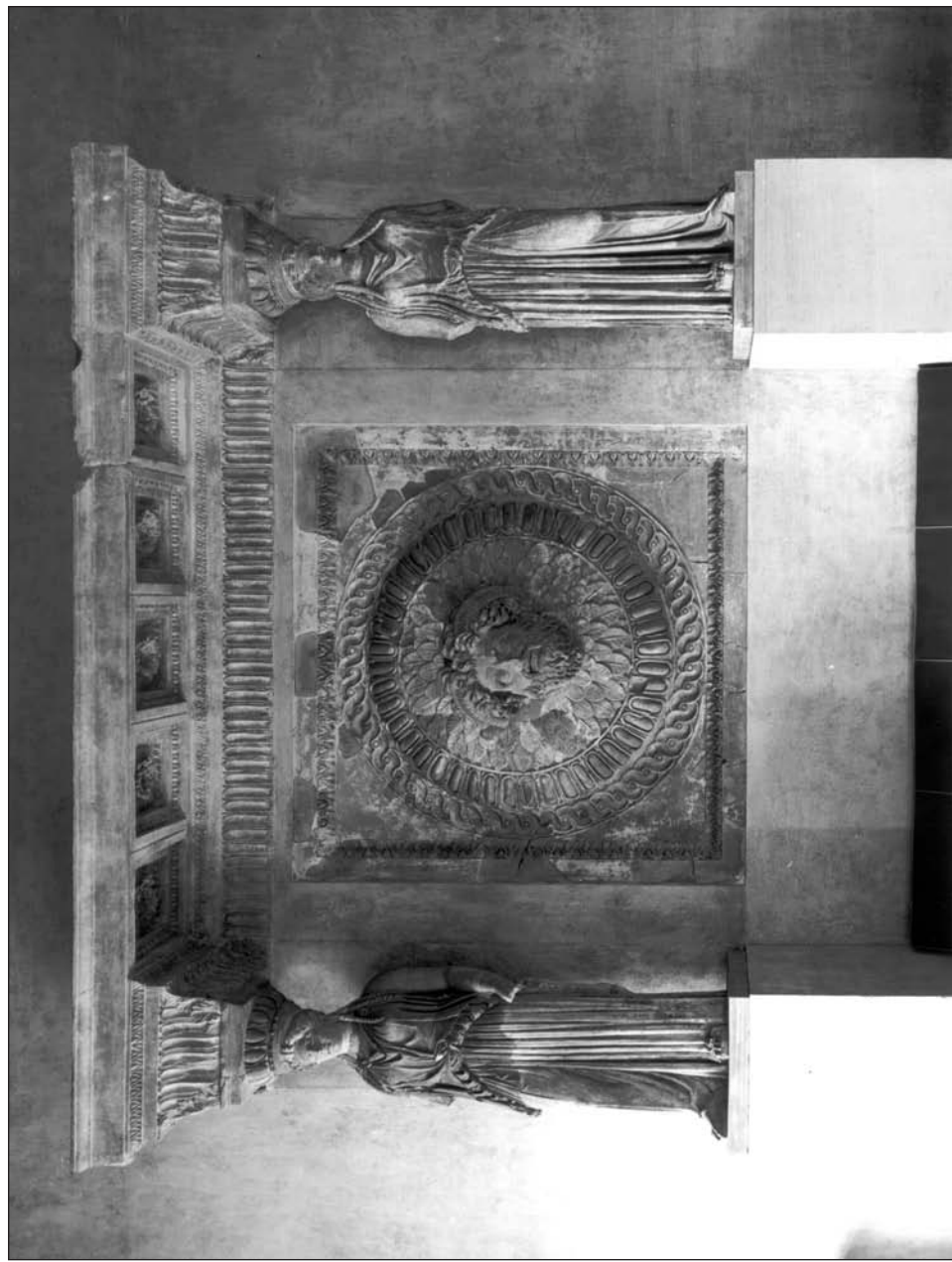


Figure 8.  
Reconstruction of  
attic story, Forum of  
Augustus. Copies of  
Erechtheion maidens  
and shield with head.  
Casa dei Cavalieri  
di Rodi. Photograph  
by Koppermann  
used courtesy of  
the Deutsches  
Archäologisches  
Institut, Rome,  
negative 61.1059.