T. P. Kisbali

"A Wonder to See": Headdresses with Relief Decoration in Greek Sculpture

In ancient art, the headdresses of the statues of goddesses and other figures could serve as surfaces for additional reliefs[1]. This enhanced their capacity to display imagery (apotropaic, processional-cultic, mythical) and, therefore, to create meaning. What attracts me to these monuments is their distinctive quality of "images within images", akin to the phenomenon of *mise an abyme*[2]. When a viewer encounters these statues, the ontological status of the supplementary depictions is brought into question.

This point can be illustrated with two statues: The South caryatid of the Siphnian Treasury in Delphi and a crowned male head from Cyprus (Ill. 6; 7). On the one hand, the smaller figures can be understood as components of a ritual crown, as static references to the cultic context and the divine role of the statue. On the other hand, they are "wonderful things, like living beings with voices", in the Hesiodic fashion[3], animated by the perceptual and cognitive effort of the onlooker. Due to this dynamic visual effect, they cease to be mere depicted objects. But what else do they become then? Who are these small figures, and what is their relationship with the larger figure, the wearer of the headdress / crown? This is the primary question my paper addresses.

While headdresses with ornamental patterns are common (in relief or painting), figurative friezes or additions are relatively rare. In this paper, I plan to survey literary and archaeological evidence related to this phenomenon, then focus on two Archaic caryatid heads from Delphi. This will be supplemented with examples from the corpus of Cypro-Archaic and early Cypro-Classical statuary, where the inclusion of extra figures on headdresses is, in fact, quite common. The objects under scrutiny have already been studied by scholars on a case-by-case basis, especially with regards to their style, iconography, and semantics. My main goal is to try and characterize figurative relief-decorated headwear as a holistic artistic phenomenon. Thus, this paper is not about the real, worn headgear, but about their representations. These sometimes veer close to real objects, but, other times, they embellish them in a fantastic manner, using the artistic medium of sculpture in its full expressive range.

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[1]   The terminology for ancient headdresses is a complex question (on *poloi*: [1, pp. 101–102]; other types: [15, pp. 142–145, 154–160; 16]), which, ultimately, lies outside the scope of this paper. In this article, under *"polos"* I understand brimless cylindrical headdresses that encircle the whole head, with straight vertical sides or slightly flaring upwards. To most other types I will refer by using generic modern terms, such as "crown", "wreath", "headband", and so forth.
[2]   There is a growing corpus of scholarship, with authors discussing the *mise en abyme* not just as a literary, but also a visual artistic phenomenon: [23; 6, p. 354, n. 7; 32, pp. 346–348].
[3]   Hes. Theog. 578, transl. by H. G. Evelyn-White; see below for the full quote and extended commentary.

The decoration of headdresses in ancient Greek art and literary sources

It is well-known that various types of ancient headwear were by themselves carriers and creators of meaning, markers of identity, cultic role, societal or divine status [4, pp. 49–52; 1; 15, p. 221; 20]. Their very placement above or around the head and face of the individual, a key focal zone for human perception, emphasized this function. Moreover, in a group setting, the wearer of a tall headdress was highlighted by the headdress itself, similar to how the carrier of a basket or other large votive object stood out in a cultic procession[4].

While the headdress is inherently semantically-charged, when it receives additional ornamentation or decoration, its meaning and connotations are deepened. Material traces of such practices have survived. In the early 1st millennium B. C. ornamented gold sheet funerary diadems were deposited in grave ensembles of Cyprus, the Greek mainland, and its islands [12, pp. 96–97, 105, 108, 112–113, 124–125]. Most are ornamental, with the meander-band being a particularly popular motif[5], while some are figurative (depicting, for example, animal combat scenes and processions)[6].

A later example, the golden headdress from the Bolshaia Bliznitsa barrow[7], bears scenes of "barbarians" hunting gryphons. This is, perhaps, the closest "real-world" analogy to the dynamic multifigure compositions of the Delphi caryatid's *polos*.

The most evocative mythological account of a headdress comes from Hesiod's tale of the creation of Pandora in the Theogony, from which the present paper's title is taken. The adornments of Pandora are described in detail. Hephaistos creates a golden crown (in the text, a *stephanos*): "a wonder to see, for of the many creatures which the land and sea rear up, he put most upon it, wonderful things, like living beings with voices: and great beauty shone out from it" (Hes. Theog. 578–584, transl. by H. G. Evelyn-White). The work of the divine craftsman is miraculous and animate. It reflects the world around Pandora — the world that she is fated to bring to ruin, perhaps. The rich imagery also indicates that she is, indeed, *"Pan-dōra"*, "endowed with all gifts".

In the "Works and Days", this animate crown is not mentioned: "the famous Lame God molded clay in the likeness of a modest maid, as the son of Cronos purposed. And the goddess bright-eyed Athene girded and clothed her, and the divine Graces and queenly Persuasion put necklaces of gold upon her, and the rich-haired Horai crowned her head with spring flowers. And Pallas Athene bedecked her form with all manners of finery…" (Hes. Op. 69–79, transl. H. G. Evelyn-White). Instead, we are presented with a vivid scene of goddesses bringing jewelry, garlands, and flowers, attending to the newly-created Pandora who is as beautiful as she is dangerous. The poem has a dance-like flow to it: the deities rhythmically step up to Pandora,

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[4]   The iconography of the *kanēphoros*, the bearer of the sacrificial basket (*kaneon*), is well-known from Greek vase painting and coroplastic arts [30, pp. 13–24]. For a good example, see the ritual procession led by a basket-carrier woman on a red-figure krater of the Kleophon Painter, 2nd half of the 5th century B. C., National Museum of Spina, Ferrara, inv. T57CVP = BAPD 215141.

[5]   This element is also attested on sculpture. Some examples include the ivory figurine from the Dipylon cemetery (8th century B. C., National Archaeological Museum of Athens, inv. 776) and the "Berlin Goddess" (570–560 B. C., Antikensammlung, Berlin, inv. Sk 1800).

[6]   See, for example, two 8th century B. C. diadems in the Louvre, inv. nos. MNC 1291 = Bj 93; MNC 328 = Bj 92.1.

[7]   Last third of the 4th century B. C. State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, inv. ББ.-29.

encircle her, and adorn her. The scene is full of movement around Pandora, who herself remains a passive receiver of the gifts[8].

In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, the goddess was welcomed joyously by the Horai, who "clothed her with heavenly garments: on her head they put a fine, well-wrought crown of gold, and in her pierced ears they hung ornaments of orichalc and precious gold, and adorned her with golden necklaces over her soft neck and snow-white breasts, jewels which the gold-filleted Horai wear themselves whenever they go to their father's house to join the lovely dances of the gods" (HH 6, 5–14, transl. H. G. Evelyn-White). Again, we see the unity of the adornment, ritual and circle dance; the important connection between the receiving figure and the attendants.

We hear about "miraculous" crowns not only in mythology. Cult statues in temples often sported elaborate headgear. Pheidias took care to embellish "every smallest part" of the Parthenos with additional images, from the three-crested helmet, the inner and outer surfaces of the shield, down to the edges of the sandals (Plin. NH. 36.18–19; Paus. 1.24.5–7). These were both attributes of the goddess and elements of the complex artistic program of the cult statue and the temple. However, there are perceivable differences between these additional images. The figures on the statue's arms, armor and clothes, or the image of Nike, for that matter, we perceive as more active and present, more connected to the image of the goddess, not just because of their volume, but by their nature of being worn or carried. The Birth of Pandora on the statue's base forms a part of the overarching program, but it is is one step removed from the body of the statue, and thus feels less integrated with the primary goddess.

We learn about another multi-part statuary headdress from Pausanias. He describes the statue of Hera at Argos "wearing a crown with Graces and Seasons worked upon it" (Paus. 2.17.4). Quatremère de Quincy's reconstruction is fanciful [24, Pl. XX]; however, in my opinion, he is right to visualize this crown with the Graces (Kharites) and the Seasons (Horai) as smaller individual figures performing a circle dance around the head of the goddess[9]. Once again, there is the motif of cyclical movement around the crown, — and therefore, around the head of the goddess, — and this movement can also be extrapolated visually into the space surrounding the goddess.

We have ample archaeological evidence of sculptures decorated with metallic headgear, likely even with figures. The statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous, according to Pausanias, was crowned with "deer and small images of Victory" (Paus. 1.33.3). The fragment of the colossal head retrieved by the Dilettanti from the site has several attachment points[10]. The best-known examples are the Korai statues from the Athenian Acropolis, which were richly adorned with metallic attributes. As Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway notes, "these details, which to us may seem

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[8] Note her inert statue-like appearance on an Attic red-figure krater by the Niobid Painter: middle of the 5th century B. C. British Museum, inv. 1856,1213.1 = BAPD 206955. In the ancient visual tradition, the headdress of Pandora is, unfortunately, depicted in a more subdued manner, as a crown with meander-frieze on a red-figure vase from the Ashmolean (Attic red-figure krater, middle of the 5th century B. C. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. AN1896-1908.G. 275 = BAPD 275165), not unlike the simple funerary gold bands reviewed above.

[9] One can take issue with the number of attending goddesses, cf. Paus. 9.35. For an interesting modern attempt at the reconstruction of this statue, see [7]. The images of Hera on the coins of Argos, unfortunately, display only small spikes — perhaps the fixtures for figurines or other ornaments, or an abbreviated, compressed image of the statue [26, p. 607, n. 98].

[10] Fragmentary head of a cult statue. 430–420 B. C. British Museum, inv. 1820,0513.2.

purely ornamental, now appear to have had a special iconographic meaning, as imitation of the *kosmos* appropriate for a venerable image of much earlier times" [26, pp. 606–607].

This evidence shows that the integration of smaller figures into a larger statue's garments and, in particular, headdress, was an important practice in ancient sculpture. It is worth noting that such a practice was also a commonplace in literary imagination. Contemporary and later onlookers were able to put these elements together and even perceive them, or imagine them to be, in motion [29, pp. 19–26]. They could draw a parallel between the depicted figurines and the mentions of, say, Horai attending to Aphrodite. It is this mindset that I would like to evoke now in the case studies of the Delphi caryatids and select pieces of Cypriote sculpture.

The relief-decorated *poloi* of the Delphi caryatids

The main example are the caryatids of the Siphnian Treasury in Delphi[11] (Fig. 1). The remaining pieces belong predominantly to the south (that is, right-side, if facing the portico) support of the Treasury [5, p. 150]. Upon its original discovery, the front part of the headdress had been missing [22, fig. 30]. Luckily, this fragment was found in 1980 and reintegrated with the statue [31, par. 5] (Ill. 6).
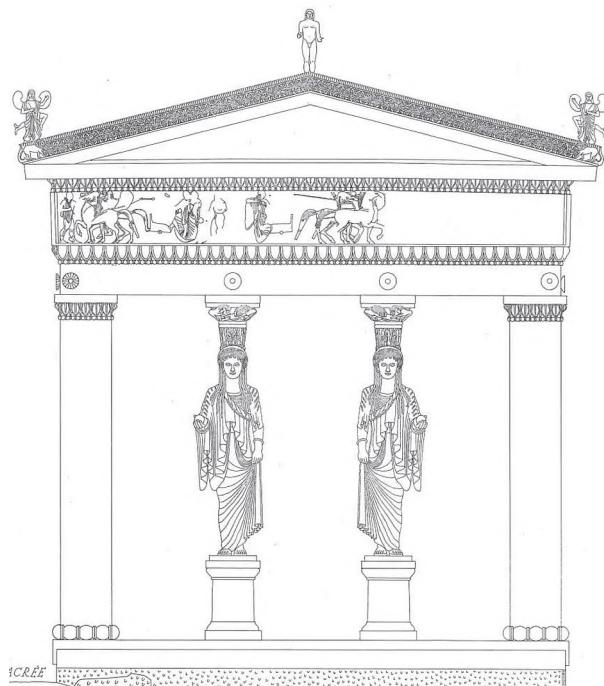

Fig. 1. Reconstruction of the porch of the Siphnian treasury in Delphi. After [5, fig. 136]

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[11]   South caryatid from the portico of the Siphnian Treasury: 530–525 B. C. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, inv. nos. 2335+1155+929+11.875. Primary publications: [22, pp. 57–64; Pl. IV-V; 5, pp. 147–153; Pl. 67–68; 25, no. 104] on the iconography: [31].

The impressive female figure wears a band on her forehead, which reaches down to her ears. Judging by the small holes in the stone, this detail was festooned with metal attachments.

Her *polos* is a tall cylindrical volume. In John Boardman's opinion, "the relief decorated drum on her head is an architectural feature, to make an easy transition to the carved capital, not a formal *polos*-headdress, as sometimes described" [2, p. 158]. On the one hand, it is rare indeed to have two pieces of headwear on at once (both a *stephanos* and a *polos*)[12]. However, in my view, the object, by virtue of its position and shape, plays an ambivalent dual role. From below, it is attached to the woman's head. It is shaped like a particular type of headdress[13]. From above, however, it attaches to the entablature, to the architectural frame of the Treasury. A note of this ambivalence carries over to the echinus as well (see below), which is where the change from *polos* into an architectural member takes place. This transitional headdress-support would have been familiar to ancient observers, not only from architectural sculpture [2, figs. 31, 32], but also from portable objects (handles, mirrors, furniture and so on) and large *perirrhanteria* [2, pp. 25–26, figs. 74–80].

A reverse Lesbian kymation runs along the bottom of the *polos*. The Lesbian kymation, in its regular orientation, appears again as the upper edge of the Ionic frieze of the Treasury. Thus, two Lesbian kymatia "bracket" and unite the *polos* relief, the sculpted echinus and the entablature frieze. The upper rim of the headdress is finished with a simple band. A similar band can be found at the bottom of the echinus (which was carved as a separate piece; see below), thus the transition between the elements is well-masked.

The height of the frieze is 22 cm [22, p. 61]. Up front on the caryatid's *polos*, we behold a static depiction. Petros Themelis recognizes the central scene as a sacrifice to Dionysos Liknites [31]. Around the back and sides of the head, we see fast moving figures, five in total. These are Maenads and Satyrs, members of the Dionysian entourage[14].

Themelis observes, that "the *thiasos* moves around the area where the ritual takes place" [31, par. 18], meaning that they move within the frames of the pictorial field of the *polos*. However, this observation can be extrapolated and the event projected out into the surroundings of the caryatid. This sacrifice can be thought to take place 'here', in Delphi, and the acts of the *thiasos* too, as the Maenads and Satyrs dance around the vertical axis of the statue[15]. The display of these events on the high cylinder has a very strong effect, despite the relatively diminutive scale of the depictions; it is similar to the raising of the basket or a cultic object above the heads of the ritual procession: for us to note, observe and admire.

The caryatid is in a liminal position, in more than one sense[16]. She is, architecturally, on the threshold of the Treasury. Ontologically, she can be understood as someone who is present in

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[12]   This is also pointed out by Richard T. Neer: "this *kalathos* is not so much a hat — the caryatid already wears a diadem — as a decorated column-shaft" [21, p. 317, n. 195]. But see the monumental female head from Olympia, which wears this particular combination of two pieces of head-gear [2, fig. 73; 25, no. 36, figs. 118–121].

[13]   However, I am ready to admit, that it can also be not a worn piece, but a carried/balanced votive object — see the discussion of votive *poloi* below.

[14]   By the way, another scene of pursuit, quite likely a Satyr chasing a Maenad, is carved under the armrests of Zeus's throne on the east frieze of the Treasury [22, Pl. IX(iv)]. Here, too, these figures occupy an important and symbolically charged supplement position.

[15]   It is fitting that the primary meaning of the Ancient Greek word *polos* is "axis, pivot"!

[16]   On the liminality of the caryatids, see also [21, p. 317].

Fig. 2. Sculpted echinus from the Siphnian treasury in Delphi.
Archaeological Museum of Delphi, no. 1554. Photo by Tamás Péter Kisbali.
Τα δικαιώματα επί του απεικονιζόμενου μνημείου, το οποίο υπάγεται στην
αρμοδιότητα της Εφορείας Αρχαιοτήτων Φωκίδος, ανήκουν στο Υπουργείο
Πολιτισμού (ν. 4858/2021). ©Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού — Οργανισμός
Διαχείρισης και Ανάπτυξης Πολιτιστικών Πόρων (©Hellenic Ministry of
Culture/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development)

our world: she is anthropomorphic, her body is similar to ours. At the same time, she is also part of the events depicted. The wild Dionysiac scene on the *polos*, however, is "otherworldly": we observe it as if looking into this mythical realm — it is part of the overall decorative program of the Treasury.

Moreover, the sacrificial scene of the *polos* faces outwards, while the chase scene is somewhat "hidden", revealed only once the observer enters the porch of the Treasury and looks upwards.

A sculpted echinus has also survived from the Treasury of the Siphnians[17]. Situated above the *polos* of the caryatid, it depicts two lions attacking a deer or calf (Fig. 2). As discussed above, this element is transitional between the headdress and the entablature. However, iconographically, it can be connected to the scenes of the *polos*. Depictions of animal combat are often interpreted as references to sacrifice [17]; thus, the image serves to amplify the Dionysian ritual depicted below. It also feels like a throwback to the Hesiodic images of wild beasts on the crown of Pandora.

It is worth commenting upon the architectural setting of the caryatid (and the aforementioned transitionary character of the *polos*-"impost" element). The formal and structural resemblance between the *polos* of the Delphic caryatids and the *columnae caelatae* of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos had already been pointed out by Charles Picard and Pierre de la Coste-Messelière [22, pp. 4, 13–14]. Their tentative proposal to frame this as a "Lydo-Egypto-Ionian civilization" is still quite intriguing, and later studies accentuate the possibility of an artistic commonwealth in the macro-region, with shared tastes for rich and innovative architectur-

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[17]   Archaeological Museum of Delphi, inv. 1554 [22, pp. 64–65; 5, p. 150 = K8, Pl. 68]. According to Daux & Hansen, this echinus belonged to the almost completely lost north caryatid [5, pp. 150–151]. However, the surviving south caryatid must have had an identically shaped element, likely with an identical or similar depiction.

al and sculptural decoration in the 6th century B. C. [13, pp. 107–108][18].

Returning to Delphi, we must also consider a second caryatid head, which comes from an unknown Treasury of the sanctuary[19] (Fig. 3). An interesting feature differentiates this piece from the Siphnian one: the *polos* is supplied with two vertical rods on opposite sides, above the ears of the woman. These rods connect up with the upper rim of the *polos*. This gives an impression of a (metallic?) supporting frame whose function is to stretch a real *polos* or cylindrical votive object and keep it on top of the head of the votary.

The relief of the headdress is weathered, but it can be established that it only covered the front half. The two vertical rods mentioned above also demarcate the pictorial field: there is no full circular movement around the head. The central figure is Apollo, who is approached by two groups [27, fig. 6]. Four women from the left, three women and Hermes from the right. To Apollo's left, the first female figure holds a wreath (a gift to the god).

The original excavators identified the figures as three Kharites and four Nymphs [22, p. 5, n. 3]. Alan Shapiro interprets the seven women as the Pleiades. One of them (the wreath-bearer) is Maia, the mother of Hermes, and the group as a whole is the "welcoming committee" for Apollo's return to Delphi [27, pp. 9–11].

Fig. 3. Head of a caryatid. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, no. 1203. Photo by Ekaterina Mikhailovna. Τα δικαιώματα επί του απεικονιζόμενου μνημείου, το οποίο υπάγεται στην αρμοδιότητα της Εφορείας Αρχαιοτήτων Φωκίδος, ανήκουν στο Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού (ν. 4858/2021). ©Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού — Οργανισμός Διαχείρισης και Ανάπτυξης Πολιτιστικών Πόρων (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture/ Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development)

Erika Simon postulates that the Delphi caryatids themselves depict Nymphs local to the Treasury-builders' homeland. As such, these minor female deities were seen as "advocates" ("Fürsprecherinnen") on behalf of the citizens of the polis [28, p. 219]. If we accept this line of thought, then it is even possible to tentatively identify the unknown caryatid as one of the Pleiades who attend to Apollo. By the same logic, if we accept Themelis's identification of the front scene of the Siphnian caryatid as the rites of Dionysos Liknites, then the woman-support herself can be equated with one of the priestesses completing the sacrifice. This is not necessarily the case, and it is completely satisfactory to understand the caryatid-maiden as a witness to the rites depicted on her *polos* — however, even then a hint of equation or proximity between the exalted mortal attendants of the cult and their mythical counterparts remains.

It is interesting to compare the *poloi* of the Delphi caryatids to a small group of painted Archaic terracotta votives dated to the 6th century B. C. They are cylindrical in shape, repeating

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[18]   And a small aside: Nadezhda Nalimova talks about the affinity between round altars and carved column drums in temple architecture [19]. This comparison can be broadened to include the Delphi caryatids and the *poloi*. These cylindrical relief-decorated objects can become free-standing altars, column drums, or headdresses…

[19]   Formerly identified as belonging to the Knidian Treasury. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, inv. 1203; primary publications: [22, pp. 1–5, Pl. I–II; 5, pp. 151–153, fig. 98; 25, no. 86]; on the iconography: [27].
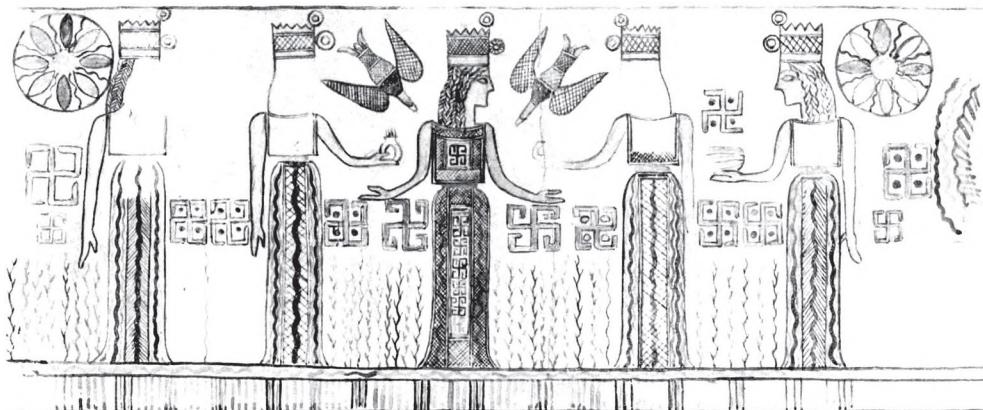
Fig. 4. Drawing of the frieze of the votive polos. After [28, fig. 6]

the form of baskets with a disc- or volute-shaped protrusion on the front. They are Boeotian in origin. Most examples are decorated with painted ornaments only[20]. However, the one in Stockholm has figurative depictions[21]. The condition of the painted frieze is poor; one can make out the outlines of the participants of a religious procession [28] (Fig. 4). Five women in long dresses demonstrate the same type of headwear (albeit proportionally lower) as the votive object itself "in action" — note the circular attachments. A pair of women (Nymphs?) approach the central heroine from each side, bringing offerings (a scheme, comparable to the adornment scenes from literature, as surveyed above). There are also two birds, for the further exaltation of the main woman, perhaps a goddess. The composition is more formalized than the friezes of the Delphic heads. But it also has a similar, if not stronger, self-referential aspect: the shape of the object correlates with what is depicted[22]. The *poloi* are worn by the goddess and her attendants during the ritual — and the votive *polos* "records" this event on itself.

The "animated" crowns in ancient Cypriot sculpture

Finally, an interesting and quite large group of statues with decorated headdresses is found on Cyprus. These are generally dated to the 6th–5th centuries B. C. (Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical periods) and are thought to depict votaries and deities[23].

Their depicted headwear looks more "functional" and object-like, closer to possible real-world prototypes than the *poloi* of the Delphi caryatids. As we have established above, the cylindrical headdresses of the Delphi caryatids are ambivalent, due to their context and transformations into an architectural member. Here, however, it is easy to reconstruct a festive crown

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[20]   "Models" of *poloi*: Boston Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 98.892; British Museum, inv. 1898,0711.1;

[21]   National Museum, Stockholm, inv. NM Ant 1697 (on loan to the Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm).

[22]   On such reflexivity and its role in the creation of meaning, see also [6, p. 355].

[23]   The pieces of headwear, just like their Greek counterparts, are designated in a multitude of ways by scholars: wreaths, *kalathoi*, *poloi*, often "vegetal crowns" [10, p. 167–170; 11, p. 398–410; 18, pp. 25–26; 33, pp. 181–184]. For a detailed typology of headdresses and hairstyles, based on coroplastics, see [18, pp. 23–36].

of garlands and figurines, carved into limestone for the representation. The "petrification" also leads to a stricter organization.

The general structure of such crowns includes one, two or three rows of rosettes[24]. Sometimes the bottom of the crown is marked with an egg-and-dart or similar band[25]. In many Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical examples, the stacks of rosettes alternate with figures. These are predominantly Dionysian subjects, Satyrs and Maenads (or their Cypriot analogues), often depicted in an active movement.

On one of the largest heads (height: 50,8 cm), currently in Worcester[26], we see a trifold rhythmic pattern: singular rosettes supported by Egyptianizing Hathoric sistra[27] alternate with male and female figures. The males are nude, fleshy, bearded Satyr-like creatures; the women are dressed in flowing, pleated dresses (probably Maenads). They dance, circling left-to-right. Their raised hands are linked above the rosettes. There is a stark visual contrast between the Hathoric pillars and the wild, dynamic members of the *thiasos*. Despite their anthropomorphic element (the Hathoric "mask"), these elements are clearly static, so the observer can feel which parts of the crown are fixed, and which are in movement. The juxtaposition reinforces the sense of animation. The relatively high-relief execution of the headdress also enhances this impression: the Satyrs and Maenads seem to jump off the wreath, while the Hathoric pillars are structurally integrated elements of the headdress — or the ritual space projected onto it.

A simpler version of this scheme appears on the "Vouni head", a Cypro-Archaic head in the Stockholm collection (height: 28 cm)[28]: stacks of double rosettes alternating with running or dancing nude males (Ill. 7). Several more instances of this twofold pattern are known[29]. The sense of animation is somewhat diminished by the lesser quality of execution, but the dynamism is not completely lost, especially if one takes into account the former use of color (e. g. red paint strengthening contrast and background-figure separation).

What the compositions of these crowns have in common, is that we cannot highlight a distinctive central scene or figure. The creators seemed to favor an unbroken chain of figures, linked together in a loop, like an eternal dance. It is worth adding, that depictions of circle dances (usually around a central figure, tree or pillar) were widespread in Cypriot art, from at least the Bronze Age onwards, being attested particularly well in the Cypro-Archaic period[30]. This must have been a reflection of an important type of ritual on the island at the time. The

[24] This scheme originates in the Bronze Age [12, p. 85], see, e. g., a diadem from Enkomi, British Museum, inv. 1897,0401.659 or any number of similar pieces. Moreover, it seems that figurative plaques could also be attached to ritual or funerary headdresses: [14; 9, pp. 180–185, nos. 14–16].

[25] Here it is not an "architectural" reference, but the use of mouldings as a generic framing device for any object.

[26] Limestone, 510–480 B. C., Worcester Art Museum, inv. 1941.49. Image available at https://worcester.emuseum.com/objects/7421/colossal-female-head-possibly-aphrodite (accessed 21 June 2025).

[27] On Hathoric and other Egyptianizing motifs in Cypriot contexts, see Aurélie Carbillet's dissertation [3]; this head in particular: [3, p. 179, cat. no. 38]. It is possible that on the island a syncretism of Satyrs with Egyptian Bes took place.

[28] Limestone, 520–480 B. C., Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm, inv. V. 017.

[29] E. g. a limestone head of a statue from Arsos, 5th century B. C., Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, inv. 1935/C 133 [9, pp. 236–237, no. 43].

[30] Some examples: Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, inv. B 240.a [9, pp. 202–203, no. 26]; Metropolitan Museum, New York, inv. 74.51.1650; British Museum, inv. 1903,1215.6.

Fig. 5. Head of a limestone statue. District Archaeological Museum, Larnaka, inv. 1935/D 285. Photo by Dmitrii Vasko

knowledge of this practice, no doubt, influenced the perception of the ritual crowns, and, again, helped bringing it to life in the eyes of the beholder.

A different compositional scheme is utilized on an oversized female head in the Cyprus Museum (Ill. 8)[31]. The base of the crown is clearly marked by the depiction of a metallic band with small projecting consoles. The usual rosettes are replaced by multi-tiered palmettes, sprouting from triangular consoles. They alternate with winged sphinx figurines, each standing on a separate trapezohedral console. The inclusion of these small supports, on the one hand, stresses the clear, functional structure of the crown as an object, but also visually highlights the palmettes and mythical creatures. Moreover, it adds momentum, a forward thrust, to the otherwise static depictions of the sphinxes.

The ensemble of the crown terminates with evenly spaced images of birds with uplifted wings. The zig-zag pattern formed by the wings is comparable to the upheld arms of the male and female figures on the head from the Worcester collection, described above. On this tier, our eyes move from solid, densely-packed relief to an open-work structure, where light shines through the spaces under the extended wings. This change in the sculptural technique enlivens and animates the composition of the crown[32].

Two similar, albeit smaller, limestone heads come from the sanctuary at Arsos[33] (Fig. 5). The one in a better condition shows winged sphinxes on consoles alternating with three stacked rosettes. It is crowned (almost "crenellated"!) with blooming lotus flowers[34]. Their outlines, once again, create a zig-zag pattern along the top edge of the crown.

The motif of apotropaic sphinxes "inhabiting" a large floral crown is particularly popular in 4th century B. C. terracotta votives [18, p. 31]. Due to technological constraints of the medium, there are no protruding parts, so the dynamism is somewhat diminished, but the vital lushness of the vegetal crown is highly pronounced. Jennifer Trimble writes about the imagery of the intertwined ornament and figures on the Tomb of the Haterii, with its "dizzying abundance of human bodies" and "equally dizzying encrustation of ornament": "the more closely someone looked, the more there was to see and the more powerful the viewing experience" [32, p. 329, 348].

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[31]   Limestone head of a statue, second half of the 5th century B. C., Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, inv. 1939. IX-7.1.

[32]   The triple-crest of the Athena Parthenos's helmet and other attachments to statues spring to mind again.

[33]   Limestone, 5th century B. C., inv. nos. 1935/D 285 and unknown, as of 2025 on display in the District Archaeological Museum, Larnaka. For publications, see [8, p. 590, Pls. CXCII, 3–4, CXCIII, 1–2; 10, 169, type B, pl. XXXVII:1, 2;].

[34]   It is interesting, that sphinxes and lotus blossoms appear on the coinage of the Cypriot kingdom of Idalion in the 5th century B. C., e. g. silver tetrobol, Staatliche Museen / Münzkabinett, Berlin, inv. 18217647.

Conclusion

As I have argued above, the additional figures included in statues' headdresses are more than static references to a selection of divine attributes. Their formal treatment and prominent structural position make them "come alive", transporting the wearer and the observer to a different level of interaction. This visual effect is facilitated by the observer's potential knowledge of literary compositions, where the ritual movement of attendants around a central figure is a common motive.

Often, real-world cultic practices such as processions and sacrificial rituals are projected onto the decorated headdresses. These events are thus monumentalized, and fixed in eternity together with the divine or votive image. The reliefs of the headdress, however, also open up the possibility for the onlookers to peek into the mythical world, otherwise inaccessible.

Both are true for the elaborate composition of the Siphnian caryatid. The front half is dedicated to the depiction of a ritual of Dionysos, that could have also been celebrated at the sanctuary. The back half expands the context from the "matter-of-fact" documentation of a practice by introducing the revelry of Satyrs and Maenads. The question about the identity of the caryatid-maiden remains open; however, the possibility remains that she can be equated with one of the figures on the *polos*-relief.

Among the Cypriot headdresses examined here, there are two different compositional approaches. In the first case, a ritual revelry or cultic dance is projected onto the wreath of the deity or high-standing votary. The circular movement corresponding with the crown's perimeter is the key aspect. In the second case, the plants and beasts seem to grow or project outwards. At the same time, the sphinxes in particular, due to their frontal positioning, form an apotropaic boundary. In both cases, the figures belong to the mythical or divine realms, alluding to the power and exaltation of the main depicted person.

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Title. "A Wonder to See": Headdresses with Relief Decoration in Greek Sculpture

Author. Kisbali, Tamás Péter — Ph. D., associate professor. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Leninskie Gory, 1, 119991 Moscow, Russian Federation; kisbalim@gmail.com; SPIN-code: 7001-8019; ORCID: 0000-0002-6871-2616; Scopus ID: 57204179703

Abstract. This paper focuses on the phenomenon of decorating the headdresses of ancient Greek and Cypriot statues with additional figures or friezes. The practice is examined both through archaeological remains and textual sources (including the mentions of adorned cult statues and the description of mythical crowns, such as the important Hesiodic passage on Pandora's wreath and mentions of the adornment rituals of goddesses in hymns). It is argued, that such "miraculous" crowns from literature influenced the creation and, most importantly, the perception of richly adorned sculpted headdresses, allowing them to "come alive" in the eyes of the observers. The relief-decorated *poloi* of two Archaic caryatids from Delphi provide the main case study. The author discusses the dual role of the cylindrical headdresses as iconographical attributes and architectural members and the relation between the main figure of the caryatid-maiden and the supplementary images. Two modes of representation are highlighted: real-world cultic practices are projected onto the decorated headdress; at the same time the reliefs open up the possibility for the onlookers to peek into the mythical world, otherwise inaccessible. In the last section of the paper, the author examines a group of statues from Cyprus: deities and votaries, whose crowns or wreaths include numerous additional figures. In one type, a ritual dance is projected onto the headdress. In the second, extra images project outwards, forming an apotropaic boundary and exalting the main depicted figure.

Keywords: ancient Greek sculpture, Archaic period, ancient Cypriot sculpture, iconography, headdresses, *mise en abyme*, perception of sculpture

Название статьи. «Диво для взоров»: головные уборы с рельефными изображениями в греческом искусстве

Сведения об авторе. Кишбали, Тамаш Петер — кандидат искусствоведения, доцент. Московский государственный университет имени М. В. Ломоносова, Ленинские горы, 1, Москва, Российская Федерация, 119991; kisbalim@gmail.com com; SPIN-код: 7001-8019; ORCID: 0000-0002-6871-2616; Scopus ID: 57204179703

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается феномен украшения головных уборов античных статуй дополнительными фигурами и рельефными фризами. Привлечены как археологические, так и письменные источники (включая описаний реальных культовых статуй и «воображаемых» мифических головных уборов, например, венца Пандоры у Гесиода, а также сцены украшения богинь). По мнению автора, мифологические и литературные представления о «чудесных» венцах оказали влияние на создание статуй, а также на их последующее восприятие: дополнительные фигуры «оживали» в глазах современников. Во втором разделе анализируются рельефы на высоких головных уборах (полосах) двух архаических кариатид из Дельф. Автор рассматривает амбивалентную роль цилиндрического полоса как иконографического атрибута и архитектурного элемента, а также рассуждает о соотношении фигуры самой кариатиды-девы и дополнительных изображений. Выделено два типа репрезентации. С одной стороны, реальные культовые действа проецируются на головной убор. С другой стороны, эти изображения позволяют зрителям «заглянуть» в мир мифический. В завершающем разделе статьи автор рассматривает скульптуры, изображающие божеств и «адорантов» с древнего Кипра, чьи головные уборы часто включают дополнительные фигуративные изображения. В одном типе представлена проекция обряда (скорее всего, ритуального танца) на венок. В другом типе, наоборот, изображения проецируются «вовне», образуя апотропейный пояс и возвеличивая основного персонажа.

Ключевые слова: скульптура Древней Греции, архаический период, скульптура Древнего Кипра, иконография, головные уборы, картина в картине, восприятие скульптуры
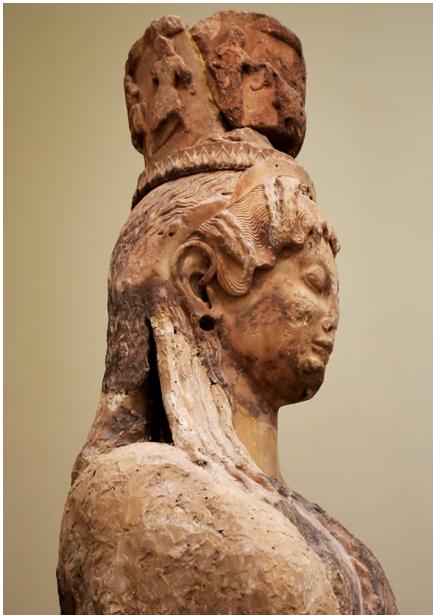
Ill. 6. South caryatid from the portico of the Siphnian Treasury. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, nos. 2335+1155+929+11.875. Photo by Ekaterina Mikhailovna. Τα δικαιώματα επί του απεικονιζόμενου μνημείου, το οποίο υπάγεται στην αρμοδιότητα της Εφορείας Αρχαιοτήτων Φωκίδος, ανήκουν στο Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού (ν. 4858/2021). ©Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού — Οργανισμός Διαχείρισης και Ανάπτυξης Πολιτιστικών Πόρων (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development)

Ill. 7. The "Vouni Head". Source: Medelhavsmuseet, Sweden, Available at: https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-mhm/web/object/3204835. License: CC BY 4.0

Ill. 8. Head of a limestone statue. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, inv. 1939.IX-7.1. Photo by Tamás Péter Kisbali