

INSCRIBED WREATHS: THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TEXT AND MONUMENT IN TWO EUERGETISTIC STELAE FROM DELOS

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The visual relationship created by the conjunction of wreaths with inscriptions results in a special demonstration of the text and monument theme in Greek epigraphy. Ubiquitous as the use of wreaths may seem in honorific inscriptions, particularly in the third to first centuries B.C., the variation that is possible in using such a simple device is remarkable. This should not come as a surprise, for the simple concept of the στεφάνη or στέφανος as something that encircles or encompasses the head manifests in a complex plethora of crown types that are made specific in meaning according to the materials out of which they are made¹. Victory wreaths constructed of plant material for the panhellenic competitions are notably site-specific, and frequently the honorary wreath or crown awarded for public services in war or peace would be worked in gold. Thus, simultaneously, the bearer or recipient of such a wreath is marked out individually and with great specificity while being elevated generally. Wreaths occur three-dimensionally as important narrative elements in record reliefs, such as in the famous law against tyranny of 337/36 B.C. from the Athenian agora showing the

crowning of the Demos by Demokratia². By contrast, their other major occurrence is in a flat, two-dimensional format, either as a pure symbolic device or together with relief sculpture, as in a distinguished monument from the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum: the grave stele of Posideos and Herophanta from Smyrna, dated to the second century B.C.³ At first, the honorific aspect may seem secondary in force to the primary function of the stele, which is funerary. Yet the wreaths are remarkably prominent and the inscription concerns only the honor bestowed by the demos on these two individuals, husband and wife: 'Ο δῆμος inscribed within each wreath, with the name of the recipient below each depiction in high relief. In this example, the honor becomes the epitaph.

Two outstanding treatments of the two-dimensional wreath type come from the island of Delos. Major sculpture on Delos during the Hellenistic Roman period has long been recognized as presenting a different amalgam of influences compared with other sites, a product of Delos' powerful position as emporium to the Mediterranean world but influenced by the ongoing complexity of political and artistic relations between the island and Athens. The two stelae I offer for comparison bear out this argument for originality in Delian artworks. The earlier of the two is IG XI.4, 712 (Plate 1), the honorific decree of Scipio Africanus, awarding him a golden crown by the Delian boule and demos during the period of the Delian Independence⁴. I have previously dis-

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1. KÖCHLING, I., *De coronarum apud antiquos vi atque usu caput unum*, Numburgi ad Salam 1913, 4ff. See also HEILMEYER, M., "Kränze für das griechische Symposion in klassischer Zeit," *Die griechische Klassik: Idee oder Wirklichkeit*, Mainz 2002, 296-299. See LSJ, s.v. στεφάνη, στέφανος.

2. SEG 12.87, Agora I 6524. Pictured in LAWTON, C., *Attic Document Reliefs*, Oxford 1995, 99, no. 38, pl. 20.38.

3. CIG II, 3245, Getty Inv. 71.AA.288. Pictured in PFUHL, E. and MÖBIUS, H., *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs I*, Mainz 1977, 161, no. 529, pl. 82.

4. Museum of Delos, Inv. Δ407. The inscription is dated to 193 B.C. with some reservation in DURRACHI, F., *Choix d'inscrip-*

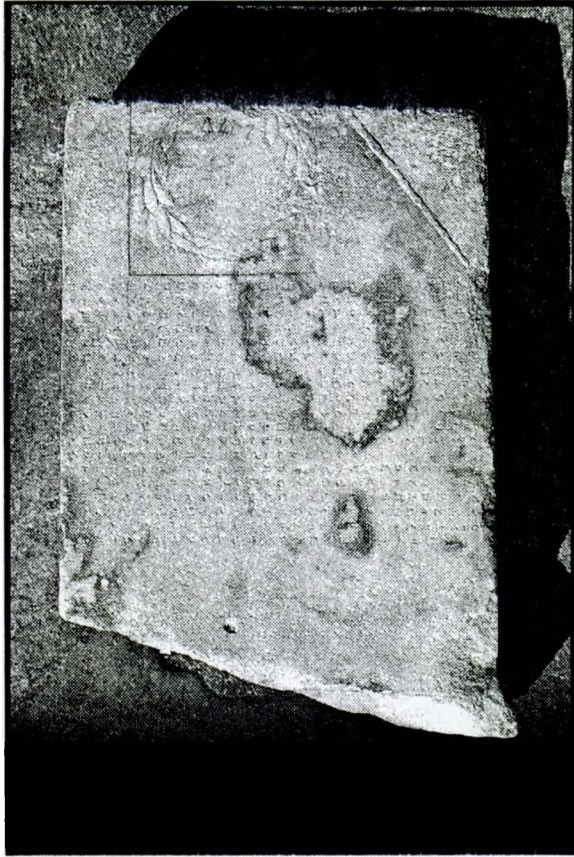


Plate 1: IG XI, 4, 712. Decree honoring Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus at Delos. Author's photo used with permission.

cussed this 19-line inscription as a bold example of the stoichedon style revived some thirty years after the regular use of stoichedon stops in Athenian state decrees⁵. Here I want to concentrate initially on the relief portion of the monument, especially on the inscribed wreath of laurel leaves and the diagonally placed baton. The stele is, first of all, rectangular in configuration but tapered, with a preserved height of 53.0 cm and a width of 38.0 cm at the bottom, including the remains on the right side of a molded foot⁶. At the top the stele narrows to 34.2 cm. The top of the stele is cut off at a slight angle and roughly treated in comparison to the smooth finish of the sides. Because of this unfinished top edge and the fact that the wreath is prevented from making a complete cir-

tions de Délos, Paris 1921. Reprint Hildesheim 1976, 82-84. See IG XI (ed. ROUSSEL), which explains the dating problem without fully committing to a date.

5. Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American Philological Association in Atlanta, 1994; Annual Meeting of the College Art Association in New York 2000. Abstracts published for both.

6. All measurements are taken from my own autopsy of the stone.

cle, it is evident that the entire upper portion of the stele was removed; most likely this part of the monument was a pediment rather than a simple cornice, something substantial enough to warrant the surgery⁷.

When we look at what remains of the head of the stele, there are three distinct spacial divisions that fill the area above the inscription. Furthest to the left is a narrow negative border, 14.0 cm in height, 5.0 cm in width, carrying no relief sculpture or ornamentation whatsoever. In the middle, although certainly not centered, is what is very nearly a square circumscribing the wreath of laurel leaves (Plate 2). The dimensions are 14.0 cm in height, 15.0 cm in width, although the right side of the frame is shorter than the left and veers slightly in and out on the wreath. Durrbach referred to the design as "une couronne de laurier sculptée dans une cavité rectangulaire"⁸. Technically, his statement is accurate because the frame, as preserved, just barely constitutes a rectangle, and the crown within it is cut intaglio. But the intent of the depression is surely for a square, which the eye recognizes immediately, matching the final spacial unit on the right, which is also a squared configuration but not inscribed with a frame. This area on the right measures 13.0 cm in height, 14.0 cm in width, and is bisected by a diagonal line c. 0.4-0.7 cm thick. This diagonal, irregular and bumpy, signifies the baton or stick that was the cognomen for the Scipios⁹. If the stone had not been truncated at the top, the left end of the baton would almost certainly have come to rest directly against the framed wreath. The baton might have extended further down into the damaged area on its right side, but not so far as to intersect the edge of the stone, where it would have interfered with the last letter of the first line of the inscription, also lost. Upon close examination of the baton, this lower end indeed looks nearly finished, being narrower and more deeply cut than on the upper end and coming almost to a point. It terminates some 1.5 cm from the edge of the stone.

Thus the result of the overall design at the head of the stele must be judged asymmetrical but proportional in its parts. There is a definite sense of proportion between the three main spacial divi-

7. IG XI, 4, 712: *Pars inferior stelae marmoris albi cymatio ornate quod mutilum est.*

8. DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 82.

9. The editio princeps, DURRBACH, F.; JARDÉ, A., *BCH* 28, 1904, 271-276, stresses the fact that no other comparable device, used heraldically, is known on an honorific decree (272).



Plate 2: IG XI, 4, 712. Detail of laurel wreath. Author's photo used with permission.

sions, with the blank border on the left acting as a kind of modular unit, multiplied approximately three times for the square of the wreath, also for the square of the baton. The rhythm of the negative spaces created by the diagonal baton together with the blank border on the left enhance the abstract, geometric treatment of the head of the stele. The figural elements, wreath and baton, are truly minimal, but even they relate closely to each other. The function of the baton is more than symbolic of a name. It acts as pointer to the all-important wreath and also down towards the inscription. Even the tapering of the stele seems to favor this quality, pushing the baton in towards the wreath.

How does this squared, abstract quality of the relief decoration relate to the text which lies below it? The answer is, in the most integrated of ways possible because the text is inscribed stoichedon. This immediately sets up an underlying, miniaturized grid system to govern the lettering in much the same way that the enlarged, squared frame governs the wreath above. The letterforms themselves are stem-cut¹⁰ and very modular in appearance, consistently 0.067 cm in height. Furthermore, my analysis of the stoichos unit within which each letterform is set indicates, again, a nearly square format: 1.07 cm in height and 1.13 cm in width. Although the right edge of the stone requires restoration in most lines, all of these factors result in an inscription that is very controlled in its geometric presentation.

Wilhelm identified this inscription as archaizing¹¹ for the very reason that it employed "recti-

10. The editio princeps rightly claims, "Absence d'apices" (271).

11. WILHELM, A., *Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde*, Wien 1909, reprint Hildesheim 1989, 18.

fied"¹² stoichedon with almost perfect regularity. The choice of such "classic" elements in the art of Greek epigraphy, namely the attentiveness to proportional relationships and especially the conscious integration of the stoichedon style with the head relief, lead us back to the individual being honored in the decree: Scipio Africanus (236-184 B.C.), whose philhellenic leanings and taste for things Greek politically worked against him in the end. The history of his comings and goings at Delos as they pertain to this decree are complicated and affect its precise dating. It is important that he himself dedicated an inscribed wreath to Apollo in gold with the words, Ποπλίος Ποπλίου Κορνήλιος στρατηγὸς ὑπάτος Ῥωμαίων¹³. Such a dedication, it is thought, must have been made during his first or second consulships, i.e. in 205 or 194 B.C., because of his use of the title, στρατηγὸς ὑπάτος. The former date has generally been ruled out by scholars because of his military activities in that year; 194 B.C. might therefore seem the more likely date, but Scipio Africanus was known not to have left Italy in 194¹⁴. It was Holleaux who first proposed that the crown would logically have been planned for ahead of time, made and inscribed before any journey to Delos, which then could have occurred right after the second consulship in 193 B.C.¹⁵.

The date of the honorific decree IG XI.4, 712 is clearly affected by the attempt to reconcile a secure chronology on the following two counts: the timing of Scipio Africanus' visit to Delos for purpose of receiving the honor; and the order of the titles he held as they occur in the epigraphical record. We have discussed the dating issues related to his consulship. In addition, Scipio Africanus is referred to as proxenos and euergetes at the very beginning of the decree itself. It is uncertain when these titles would have been bestowed, whether earlier than the decree proper or at the same time it proclaimed the conferring of the laurel crown on the Roman, as he is simply referred to, at the Apollonia festival¹⁶. As noted above, the corpus refrains from assigning a date to the decree; but it is also important that 189 B.C. was originally proposed in the editio princeps by Durrbach and

12. For "rectified" vs. "offset" stoichedon, see BUTZ, P., "The Double Publication of a Sacred Prohibition on Delos," *BCH* 118, 1994, 93, n. 64.

13. *ID* 442, B, l. 102, where the wreath is specified as being inscribed: δάφνης ἐπιγραφὴν ἔχοντα.

14. HOLLEAUX, M., "L'entretien de Scipio l'Africain et d'Hannibal," *Hermes* 1913, 93.

15. HOLLEAUX, *o.c.*, 93-94.

16. DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 83; see also DURRBACH; JARDÉ, *o.c.*, 276.

Jardé, corresponding to the visit to Delos made by the brothers Lucius and Publius after the end of Lucius' own consulship in Asia Minor¹⁷.

Thanks to IG XI.4, 712, the evidence for a reciprocal relationship between Scipio Africanus and Delos is secure and unquestionably stronger than that for his brother, despite the fact that the latter gave gifts, in addition to his own golden crown, of a priestly nature: silver philae recorded in the same Delian inventory¹⁸. Indeed, as we have seen, the honorary decree for Scipio Africanus is unique, custom-made, and undoubtedly stood in a preeminent place of honor in the sanctuary of Apollo¹⁹. The choice of stoichedon and the presence of the baton should be interpreted as the ultimate personalization, including the fact that the size of the stem-cut lettering argues for a certain intimacy in the reading of the decree²⁰. It marks honors and titles which need not be forced into strict chronological order, although the laurel wreath at the Apollonia must surely have been triggered by the general's own gift of the golden crown to the Delian Apollo. The inscribed crown on the stele marks the final return on the mutual investment, an investment awarded in perpetuity by the Delian boule.

A very different situation presents itself in the second Delian stele to be examined, *ID* 1498 (=CIG II, 2270), today in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Venice²¹ (Plate 3). The decree recorded here honors a Greek: Euboulos of Marathon, son of Demetrios, and is dated by archon²² from the period of the Second Athenian Domination. The stele stands 1.32 m high and is tapered like the previous example: 0.38 m wide below the top molding, and 0.44 m at the base molding; the stele has a thickness of 0.07 m.²³ From the contents of the decree, Euboulos' activi-

ties in Delos were very much in accord with Athenian interests, and he was duly rewarded. Even so, three representatives from Delos were sent to Athens to solicit the reciprocal vote for the honors, apparently a constitutional necessity²⁴. Euboulos' numerous achievements include the giving of a golden wreath to the people of Delos during the Panathenaia, proclaimed in the theatre at Delos; and the holding of a series of priest-hoods. The graphic realization of these honors results in a bank of inscribed wreaths, nine in number and arranged in rows of three each, in the bottom third of the stele. Effectively, the design seems to give a shorthand version of the decree's contents. The chronological ordering of the priest-hoods as given in the text, however, does not match that of the wreaths below. The decree gives the sequence of Euboulos' offices as follows: priest of the Great Gods, then of Asklepios, and finally elected anew by the people and so designated priest of Dionysos. From the wording of the decree, the last would seem to have the weight of a "crowning glory" and thus would be expected to be the last in the inscribed series of wreaths. Reconciling the image with the text has occupied the attention of a number of epigraphists. Even the first row (Plate 4), where the wreaths are inscribed identically, 'Η βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος, there is the complication of the difference in material used for the crowns. The two outer wreaths have smaller leaves than the middle one and no berries. They are olive wreaths, to be associated with Athens and Euboulos' recognition by the Athenian state²⁵. The middle wreath is made of laurel and hence resonates with Apollo and with Delos proper. In the second row, the outside wreaths are both inscribed, 'Ιερεὺς Θεῶν Μεγάλων. These wreaths are simple in type, consisting only of concentric circles with an unusual hatching of short lines at the top, described in *ID* as, "un faisceau de traits incisés forme comme 'une touffe de tiges.'" The central wreath of this line reads, 'Ιερεὺς Διονύσου and is obviously made of ivy leaves. The third and final row consists of three olive wreaths comparable to those in the first line, the outside ones reading, 'Η βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος. The interior of the middle wreath is inscribed with 'Ιερεὺς Ἀσκληπιοῦ.

Clearly there is no way the inscribed wreaths can be made to fit the supposed chronological listing of the priesthoods of Euboulos in the text, neither on the vertical nor on the horizontal axis.

17. DURRBACH; JARDÉ, *o.c.*, 276.

18. *ID* 442, B, l. 90-91.

19. The editio princeps gives the findspot as follows: "Dans le puits au Sud-Est du temple" (271).

20. This is counter to the opinion expressed in the editio princeps: "Par une affectation curieuse et tout à fait insolite d'archaïsme, l'inscription est gravée στοιχηδόν . . ." (271).

21. Inv. 160. Pictured in GUARDUCCI, M., "Le iscrizioni greche di Venezia," *RivStArch* 9, 1942, 11, no. 1.

22. The archon is Aristaichmos. DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 127, cites FERGUSON, W., *The Athenian Archons of the Third and Second Centuries before Christ*, New York 1899, 65, for the 160/59 date. However, other scholars including ROUSSEL, P., *Délos, colonie athénienne*, Paris 1916, 232, give the year of Euboulos' priesthood as 161/60.

23. Measurements are those given in the publication of the stele in *ID*.

24. ROUSSEL, *o.c.*, 43-44, and DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 128.

25. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 10-11.

Instead, the order appears to be the priesthood (or priesthods) of the Great Gods followed by that of Dionysos, then in the last row of wreaths, that of Asklepios. But, as in the Scipio Africanus inscription, the purpose of this examination is to show how the design amplifies rather than undermines the information given in the text: how the design is intended to be read in conjunction with the text and so give the greater meaning.

In the first row the prominence given to the laurel wreath braced by olive wreaths should not be overlooked. This row provides, in fact, the point of entry into the manner of interpreting the design vis-à-vis the text. Euboulos himself gave a golden wreath in the theatre at Delos honoring the Athenian Panathenaia, and the combination of olive and laurel wreaths in the first line unites his civic prominence at the two sites, explicated in the inscription.

The two wreaths specifically designated for the priesthood of the Great Gods in the second row present the first major problem²⁶. Yet the repetition of two wreaths need not be taken as an indication that Euboulos served twice in a given capacity, although the need to project a second term for this very reason, whether consecutive or not, has driven a number of scholars²⁷. Durrbach even speculates on whether all of the wreaths ultimately refer to priesthods, with the two in the third row flanking the Asklepios wreath indicating a similar repetition of office; but there, since all three are of the same type, he concludes, "il paraît plus probable que la couronne a été ici répétée simplement par une raison de symétrie"²⁸.

But there is a powerful reason for inscribing two crowns for the priesthood of the Great Gods at Delos that has nothing to do with Euboulos' personal chronology or even symmetry. Bruneau attests that in the second century B.C., the cult of the Great Gods at Delos (sometimes referred to as simply *Θεοί* in the inscriptions) had become an amalgamation of the Kabiroi, the Dioscourai, and the Great Gods of Samothrace; the latter, in fact, taking precedence over the Kabiroi and Dioscourai, which seem the more fundamental dual conflation²⁹. He states, ". . . dans l'état actuel de notre documentation, Délos est le seul endroit du

monde grec où l'assimilation des quatre groupes de divinités soit attestées [i.e., the Kabiroi, the Dioscourai, the Great Gods, and the Great Gods of Samothrace]; elle correspond à cette 'diaspora samothracienne' qui a lieu entre 260 et 100 av. J.-C."³⁰ Guarducci also recognizes the dual force of the Kabiroi and the Dioscourai behind this presentation of double wreaths³¹. I would add that the doubles actually build upon each other in a kind of geometric progression, the core dual being the Dioscourai themselves, twin brothers long-valued at Delos for their maritime protection. The Dioscourai combine with the Kabiroi, probably venerated during the time of the Independence, move to accommodate the *Μεγάλοι Θεοί*, and finally culminate with the addition of the Great Gods of Samothrace in the period of our inscription³². For there to be two wreaths symbolic of what would be a progressive amalgamation in the duties of the priesthood, as well, seems not only appropriate but necessary. The material out of which these wreaths are made has likewise proved of great interest to scholars. Guarducci, considering all of the possibilities from a metal circle to a stylized tainia, in the end proposes that they represent the rings attested to in both Lucretius and Pliny as associated directly with the cult of the Kabiroi in Samothrace³³. She emphasizes the uniqueness of these objects as depicted on the Euboulos stele for the archaeological record³⁴.

This still leaves the problem of the arrangement of the wreaths for the priesthods of Dionysos and Asklepios. I indicated above that the wording of the decree implies that the priesthood of Dionysos should be considered as a "crowning glory," the highest of Euboulos' achievements as they are listed on the stone. The ornate ivy crown associated with Dionysos, placed in the center of the group of nine wreaths, makes it the focal point of the relief portion of the stele if not the stele proper. As fine as the lettering is in this inscription, the text stands as a kind of textured field above the wreaths. There is no overt stoichedon arrangement to reciprocate with the relief decoration, as in the "classic" example of Scipio Africanus. But the stoichedon aesthetic is far from absent in the Euboulos decree. I suggest that the nine wreaths and their individual inscriptions function as an enlarged stoichedon matrix, liter-

26. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 12 ff.

27. DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 127.

28. DURRBACH, *o.c.*, 127, n. 1.

29. BRUNEAU, P., *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, Paris 1970, 395.

30. BRUNEAU, *o.c.*, 395.

31. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 14.

32. BRUNEAU, *o.c.*, 395.

33. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 13.

34. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 13.

ally a three-by-three grid. I have referred to this phenomenon in my studies of the "Hekatompedon Inscription" and the development of the stichedon style.³⁵ The choice of the nine-point interpunct in the "Hekatompedon Inscription"³⁶ is one of the best examples of the phenomenon. The group of nine wreaths on the Euboulos stele is another. It should be evident that the placement of the Dionysiac wreath in the prime position of the matrix is the visual equivalent of the chronological requirements of the written text. The priesthood of Dionysos is deliberately represented above that of Asklepios, the latter depicted in the center of the bottom row of wreaths, all of which repeat the straightforward olive crown. The cult of Asklepios enjoyed a strong history at Athens, perhaps implying a foundation for Euboulos' rise to greatness. But gaining the priesthood of Dionysos at Delos is his supreme achievement. Furthermore, the fact that this priesthood generates a triad of its own (Dionysos, Hermes, and Pan), according to a Delian list of priesthoods comparable in date to the decree³⁷, certainly accords with the energy of the matrix theory.

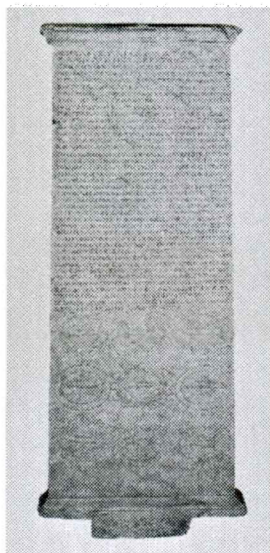


Plate 3: ID 1498. Decree honoring Euboulos of Marathon. By permission of Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

35. See, for example, the author's forthcoming publication, "H.G. Lolling and the editio princeps of the 'Hekatompedon Inscription'" in *Historische Landeskunde und Epigraphik in Griechenland. Akten des Symposiums veranstaltet aus Anlass des 100. Todestages von H.G. Lolling (1848-1894) in Athen von 28. bis 30.9.1994*.

36. IG I³ 4, B, l. 8.

37. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.*, 14, cites ID 2605, which lists the three gods together at l. 20, followed by the name of the priest for all three. She gives the year of the decree as 158-7 B.C., very close to the archonship of Aristaichmos.

The use of the wreath is a powerful device for expressing euergetism in the two Delian inscriptions examined, but in very different ways. The decree of Scipio Africanus memorializes the euergetic segment of the Roman's life as it intersected with that of Delos, symbolized by the giving and taking of crowns. One large laurel wreath makes the honorific message clear from the very head of the stele. On the Euboulos stele, the matrix of nine inscribed wreaths following the inscription is far more subtle in placement and meaning. The most significant of these wreaths is the deeply embedded, centrally inscribed one representing the priesthood of Dionysos, simultaneously the culmination and the terminus of what Guarducci rightly recognizes to be the *cursus honorum* of Euboulos' life³⁸. The visual concept conflating euergetism, personal victory, and the *cursus honorum* has been well-prepared for in the Hellenistic Roman world by means of stelae such as these. Such is the potential of combining wreaths with inscriptions.

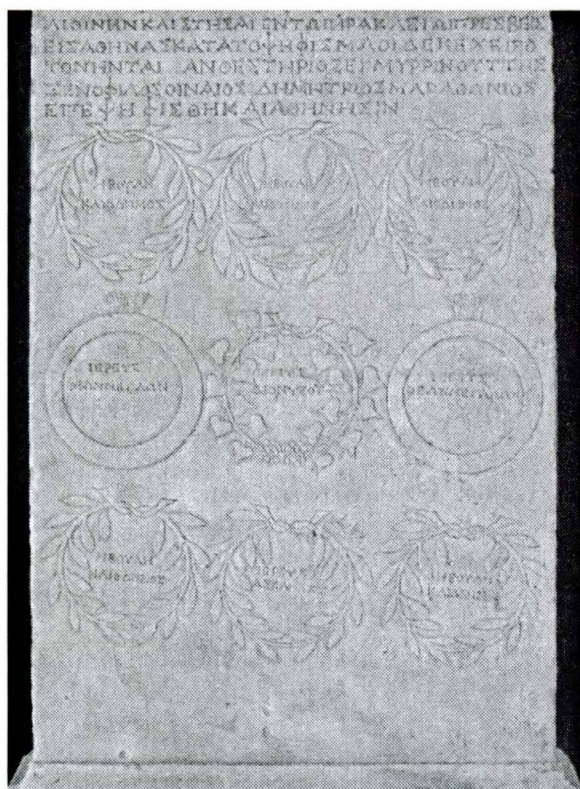


Plate 4: ID 1498. Detail of nine wreaths. By permission of Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

38. GUARDUCCI, *o.c.* 14.