

NEW LIGHT ON SKOPAS

There is good reason to assume that Skopas of Paros, architect of the Temple of Athena Alea at Tegea and famous sculptor of the fourth century B.C. was the designing architect-sculptor of the Propylon to the Temenos in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods in Samothrace, a building commissioned by Philip II of Macedon *ca.* 340 B.C. (Fig. 1).¹ The entablature of this elegant, Ionic structure was adorned with a frieze of dancing maidens in archaistic style (Figs. 2, 3). Indeed, it is the earliest example of the extensive use of archaistic style in Greek sculpture, that is, the use of this style not simply for an individual statue or relief but for extensive architectural sculpture.² Here, as always in this style, allusion is made to the venerable past,³ in this case, to ancient ritual dances performed in this hallowed quarter of the Sanctuary. Hence these dancing maidens wear the polos,⁴ the headgear reserved for divinity, especially the Great Goddess in

1 For a full discussion of this building, its attribution to Skopas, and the historical circumstances under which it was erected, see *Samothrace*, Vol. 5, *The Temenos*, forthcoming. In the meantime, see Phyllis Williams Lehmann, *Skopas in Samothrace*, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1973.

For Skopas' career and the ancient sources documenting his activity, see Margarete Bieber, *s.v.* *Skopas* in Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker *et al.*, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Vol. 31 (Leipzig 1937) 115–19; Paolo Enrico Arias, *Skopas (Quaderni e guide di archeologia I)* (Rome 1952); *idem*, "Skopas," *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica, classica e orientale*, (Rome 1966) VII 364–369; and the recent volume by Andrew F. Stewart, *Skopas of Paros*, Park Ridge, New Jersey, 1977.

2 The lack of precedent for the use of archaistic style in such an architectural context was pointed out long ago by Eduard Schmidt, *Archaistische Kunst in Griechenland und Rom* (Munich 1922) 40.

3 See the remarks of Evelyn B. Harrison, *Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture (The Athenian Agora XI)* (Princeton 1965) 62, 64.

4 For this ritual headgear, in particular, the low form worn by the Samothracian dancers, a type inherited from the Minoan-Mycenaean past, see Valentin Kurt Müller, *Der*