

Votives and Votaries on Ancient Cyprus

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The votive tradition on Cyprus is one of the richest in the ancient world, and the Diniacopolous collection features a fine example of a limestone head from a votive statue dating the middle of the fifth century B.C.. This bearded male wears a vegetal wreath, and originally would have been part of a large-size draped figure. The complete statue, with hands at his side or holding a votive offering, would have been dedicated at one of the many religious sanctuaries on the island. This head exhibits details that are executed with precision, yet they lack specificity, suggesting this is not a portrait of an individual, but rather a generic representation of a denizen of the sanctuary. It is possible that the head depicts the god himself, but it is more likely a votary intended to serve as a permanent presence in the sanctuary and an emblem of the piety of the dedicant. Examining the stylistic and iconographic qualities of this head provide clues to his identity and the cultural milieu in which he was made and dedicated.

