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The famous caryatids of the Erechtheion on the Acropole in Athens.



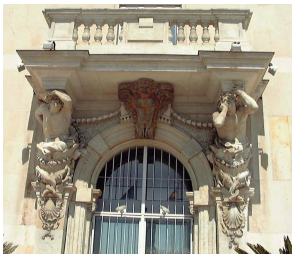
Caryatids in the Hadrian Villa in Tivoli, 2nd century.



Caryatids by Jean Goujon, 1550, Louvre Museum, Paris.



Wallace Fountain with caryatids, 19th century.



Atlantes by Pierre Puget in Toulon, 1657.

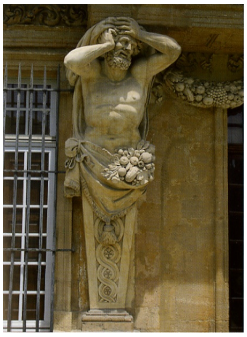
A caryatid is a statue of a woman generally dressed in a long toga used to support an entablature in place of a column, a pilar or a pilaster.
The Greek name “Karyatides” meant inhabitant of Karyae, a town in Laconia. The inhabitants of this town are said to have sided with Persia in the Greco-Persian wars. The Greeks punished the people of Karyae for this treachery by enslaving the women and making them carry heavy loads.
The caryatids have evolved much since Ancient Greek times, from a hieratic stance to the more lascivious and soft poses found on the Wallace fountains. Caryatids with baskets on their heads are called canephora (In ancient Greece, the kanephorus were maidens who carried sacred offerings in baskets upon their heads to the altar on the acropolis). The figure is also often tapered down at its lower part.
The male equivalent of a caryatid is a telamon or atlas. The name derives from the Greek titan Atlas (in Greek meaning “the bearer”), who Zeus condemned to support the heavens on his shoulders until the end of time. Atlas are figures of standing or kneeling men that were used in certain Greek temples. These architectural elements are more often called telamons in Roman temples.

- Picture1: The famous caryatids of the Erechtheion on the Acropole in Athens.
- Picture 2: Wallace fountain in Paris with sensual wet drapped caryatids.
- Picture 3: Marble atlante

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Marble atlante.