

I've been seeing articles and videos about how the witches' hat was based on the brewer women's tall hats because those in charge (the patriarchy) were angry at the women for owning businesses, making money, and being independent. I am not discrediting this interpretation, because the patriarchy has always demonized strong, independent women, I just can't find any first or even secondary sources from peer-reviewed papers. There are papers now that discuss the topic, but they are mostly looking at contemporary interpretations. Although, of course, most writings that were saved would have been done by monks and other men, so why would they write about the terrible treatment of women?

None of those articles have direct lines of evidence for the artistic changes and how the hats were used in culture, and this article is no different. These are my interpretations based on artwork and papers about specific hats in history. For those who aren't mycologists, *pileus* is another name for the cap of a mushroom, which is apt based on the hat's original shape. However, the *pileus* hat had several forms through time and seems like the umbrella term for old styles of small, generally conical hats. They may be easily recognised as the caps that the Smurfs and Santa Claus wore, though Santa's does have a brim of fur and a puff ball at the end.

### *Origins - Greece and Rome?*

Felting, while said by the Roman Catholic church to have been invented by St. Clement (the patron saint of hatters) had been around for centuries. According to Genin, "There are abundant evidences that the ancient discovered and practiced the art of felting long before that of weaving was invented. ...[K]nown in the times of Homer and Hesiod by the Greeks [around the 8th century BCE], who learned it from the Asiatic tribeca, and taught it to the Romans" (1830: 13). Felt was most likely independently invented in both Asia and Sumer. In Sumer, it is said to have been discovered by Urnamman of Lagash, by pressing and binding wool or animal fur together, with no need to weave cloth (Eiland III, 2007; Howard 2011:69). But without getting too far afield...

Figure 1. Apulian red figure depicting a conical pileus hat, third quarter of the 4th century BC, Louvre (Marie-Lan Nguyen 2009).



The Greek *pileus* is often regarded as the origin of the skull-cap and the conical/pointed hat, even types with a brim (Genin 1830:14). In ancient Greece the *pileus*, *πίλος*, *pílos*; also *pilleum* in Latin, was generally a brimless felt cap worn in Ancient Greece, Etruria, and Illyria (especially Pannonia) (Cleland, Davies, Llewellyn-Jones 2007; Campbell 2012; Rocco 2012; Wagner 2021). The brimless *pilos/pileus* along with the brimmed version, which was specifically called *petasos*, were the most common types of hats in Archaic and Classical era Greece (8th-4th century BCE)



Figure 2. Statuettes of Castor and Pollux in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Marble Roman, first half 3rd century CE - Anonymous loan (Photo by Ad Meskens)

(Sacks 1995; Lee 2015). They were worn by many, including travelers, workers, and sailors. In sculptures, the caps often identify the mythical twins (Dioscuri) Castor and Pollux (the patron gods of sailors). Their caps were supposed to represent the remnants of the egg from which the twins hatched (Kerényi 1978).

The caps were often worn as padding underneath bronze helmets with similar shapes starting in the 5th century BCE (Everson 2004, Ober 2012). The helmet shape would continue to develop over the centuries.

The most important idea for this article, however, is the meaning that the Ancient Romans gave to these caps. They were used in the ceremony for the freeing of slaves (manumission), a rod called a *vindicta* was touched to the person (similar to knighting) and the cap was placed on the shaved head of the now freed person. Both items were themselves the symbols of *Libertas*, the goddess representing liberty (Cobb 1858: 285).



Figure 3. Peasant wearing a pilos (conical hat) and holding a basket. Grotesque terracotta figurine from Myrina, 1st century BC. (Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen 2009).



Figure 4. Ancient Greek pilos type Bronze helmet, 450–425 BC from the Metropolitan Museum of Art

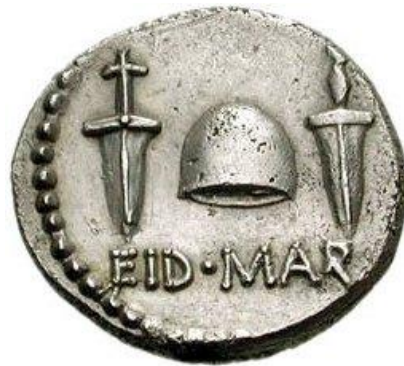


Figure 5. Pileus between two daggers, on the reverse of a denarius issued by Marcus Junius Brutus, with his own portrait on the reverse, to commemorate the assassination of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March [EID MAR (short for *Eidibus Martiis*) – on the Ides of March or March 15] (Source: Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. (CNG)).

The cap appeared on the coin issued by Brutus as a propaganda tool against Julius Caesar, a movement for freedom from tyranny (Figure 5). Over time the Roman associations of the pileus with liberty and republicanism were carried forward through the 18th century after it had been conflated with the Phrygian cap so they were both symbols of these values (Cf. Appian, *Civil Wars* 2:119; Korshak 1987).

### *Changing shapes - Origins and Mysteries*

It is not surprising that the Greeks were not the original developers of the sock-ish-shaped cap. We may not have records from the times when mythological stories came about, but the art does provide hints of the cap's importance, especially in the non-Grecian world. Before the Late Bronze Age collapse, there were a plethora of cultures such as Mycenaean Greece, the Hallstatt, Hittite, and Egyptian Empires, etc. which were growing, changing, and influencing one another.

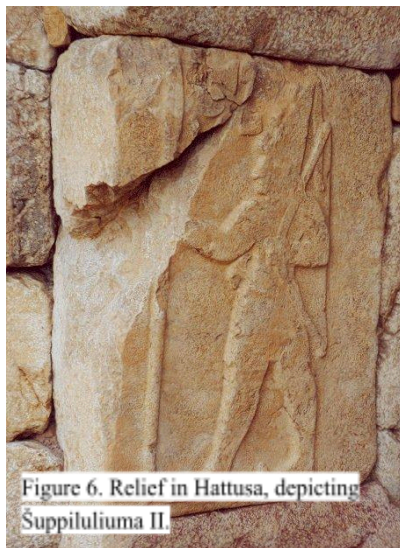


Figure 6. Relief in Hattusa, depicting Suppiluliuma II.

In the Hittite Empire, conical-shaped hats were often to be worn by elites. The image to the left shows the last known king of the New Kingdom (ruling c. 1207–1178 BCE) (Figure 6). The relief is located in the ruins of the Hittite Empire's capital city in the Late Bronze Age, Hattusa (aka Hattuša, Ḫattuša, Hattusas, or Hattusha), which now is located in the Republic of Türkiye. Because this is a single representation of the hat, if the artisans wanted to convey power they put the king in full armor since they depicted him handling his weapons. It seems logical that the cone hat is a helmet and would hopefully have padding inside just like the later examples that I addressed in the previous section. With a metal cone, one has more room before

a potentially fatal hit on the head and any decoration portrays an, 'I'm more important' vibe. This is also reflected in another relief found in Hattusa, which depicts a procession of twelve gods all wearing super tall conical hats or helmets (Figure 7).





Figure 7. Yazilikaya, Hittite sanctuary near Hattusa, Turkey, Chamber B Procession of the 12 Underworld Gods.

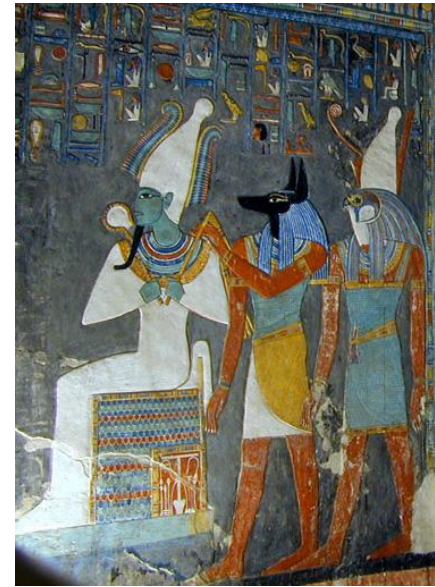


Figure 8. Detail of the frieze of the wells in the tomb of Pharaoh Horemheb, showing the gods Osiris, Anubis, and Horus.

A version of the pileus cap in the Bronze Age was worn in the depiction of the Egyptian god, Osiris (Figure 8). His crown looks like a stiff-standing version of the later-popularized Phrygian cap. This crown is called the *Hedjet*, the white crown of Upper Egypt, the kingdom that encompassed the mountainous region to the South (Hocart 2013). The earliest image of the hedjet was thought to have been in the Qustul in Nubia, but "...New evidence from Abydos, however, particularly the excavation of Cemetery U and the tomb U-j, dating to Naqada IIIA has shown that this iconography appears earlier in Egypt" (Roy 2011). Then, in 2012, Stan Hendrickx, John Coleman Darnell, and Maria Gatto excavated petroglyphic engravings from Nag el-Hamdulab in Aswan, the extreme southern region of Egypt that borders the Sudan. They recorded representations of a boat procession, and solar symbolism, and is one of the earliest depictions of the white crown had an estimated dating range between 3200 BCE and 3100 BCE (Hendrickx et al 2012: 1068-1083). This representation goes back into the Predynastic Period (c. 6200 - c. 3100 BCE), indicating that kingship had been the base of Egyptian society long before Egypt unified.

While the crown could be shown with a fuller shape on the top (Figure 9) the traditional shape (Figure 10) is said to be representative of the reeds that grow alongside the Nile River just like the *deshret* (the crown of Lower Egypt) is like the lilies that grow in the delta, but I haven't seen hard evidence of this. The crowns were combined when Egypt was unified into the *Pschent*, the Double Crown of Lower & Upper Egypt. No physical example of the white crown has been found so we don't know how it was constructed or what materials were used. Felt or leather have been suggested or the deshret and the hedjet may have been woven like a basket from plant fiber



such as; grass, straw, flax, palm leaf, or reeds, but that's all speculation. The *Atef*, the hedjet crown with curled ostrich feathers shown in Figure 8 is specifically identified with Osiris. The overall crown is also supposed to be symbolic of the underworld with the two feathers of Ma'at, the goddess embodying the ideals of truth and justice (Beach & Rines 1911: 990).



Figure 9. Painted relief of Mentuhotep II from his mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri; 11th Dynasty, c. 2060–2009 BCE. With the uraeus on the front.



Figure 10. Close-up of the pharaoh Narmer, from a full-sized facsimile of the original Narmer Palette in Cairo, this version residing in the Ancient Egyptian wing of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Moving back to the Grecian world, before what's called the Greek Dark Ages, the Mycenaean Greeks or Mycenaean civilization was the final phase before the Late Bronze Age collapse from c. 1750 to c. 1050 BCE. Later depicted on coins, bowls, and statues, the Mycenaean Greeks crafted helmets made out of boar and elephant tusks or woven together pieces of rock, metal, shell, etc.



Figure 11. Left: Head of a warrior wearing a boar's tusk helmet. Chamber tomb 27. 14th c. BC. National Archaeological Museum, piece #2468.



Figure 12. Right: Mycenaean panoply, found in Dendra, Argolid, c. 1400 BC.

It's thought that stories such as the Iliad and the Odyssey were based on historic battles and adventures in the era before the Bronze Age collapse. Though the stories were exaggerated to include the gods and their magical powers, archaeologists have found that the Kingdom of Troy was a real place. One of the most famous heroes from these stories is Odysseus, who is traditionally pictured wearing a pileus hat (Burkert 1983). It is not surprising that Odysseus would be depicted with the wool under-helmet cap because he was a soldier fighting the Trojan War for 10 years.



Figure 14. Odysseus wearing pileus & thunderbolt within wreath. 3rd-century BCE coin from Ithaca/Ithaka, 300-191 BCE. 18mm (3.48 g).(Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.)



Figure 13. Odysseus offering wine to the Cyclops. Wearing a pilos, an exomis and a chlamys. Ancient statue in the Vatican, Rome (Nordisk familjebok 1914 vol.20: 505).



Figure 15. Hephaestus. Neo-atticist relief from Ostia Antica, now in the "Sala Rotonda" (Round Hall) in the Museo Pio-Clementino (Vatican Museums). Picture by Giovanni Dall'Orto, June 10 2011.

Hephaestus, the god of smithing and metalwork, was also sometimes depicted wearing a pileus cap (Figure 15), but a particular reason is unknown. While individual myths don't explain, maybe it was for some protection or maybe he would try on the metal helmets after molding them.

Other cultures, such as the Late Bronze Age/ Iron Age Hallstatt culture also wore conical hats or helmets, as shown on the Warrior of Hirschlanden (Figure 16). While these and other conical headgear are common in multiple countries (I wanted a few of the oldest varieties), their designs appear less connected to the main topic of this article.

Figure 16. A replica of the Warrior of Hirschlanden, the oldest known life-size anthropomorphic statue north of the Alps. The copy at the Hirschlanden site (now Ditzingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany), where it was found. The preserved height is 1.50 m, but the feet have been broken off. Probably dating to the 6th century BCE.





## *Phrygian Style*

As we've seen, the caps can mean different things based on the cultural context (slaves vs warriors). Looking at ancient Greek helmets, there was a lot of variation (Figure 17). The droop at the top is a defining part of the Phrygian-type helmet and cap. Because of conflation this style is also tied with freedom and is also known as a “liberty cap”. Just like the pileus caps were



Figure 17. Ancient Greek helmets. Top line, from left to right: Illyrian type helmet, Corinthian helmet. Bottom line, from left to right: Phrygian type helmet, Pileus helmet with an olive branch ornament, Chalcidian helmet. Photo from: Munich's Staatliche Antikensammlungen (*State Collections of Antiquities*)

depicted on both heroes and peasants the Phrygian cap is depicted on a wide range of people in art depending on the period and the people creating it.

As part of its earliest history, the Phrygian cap was worn by several Iranian peoples, including the Scythians, the Medes, and the Persians. The most common Iranian variation that was labeled by the ancient Greeks as a Phrygian cap was made of soft material with long flaps over the ears and neck, and the form of the top varies depending on if it was made for the king, a member of the upper class, or an average person (Calmeyer 1993).

In the Bronze and Iron Ages, the specific group referred to as the Pontic Scythians that fell within the overarching name Scythians or Scyths were an ancient Eastern Iranian equestrian nomadic people who had migrated during the 9th to 8th centuries BCE from Central Asia to the Pontic Steppe in modern-day Ukraine and Southern Russia (Jacobson 1995: 32, Cunliffe 2019: 42, Sulimirski 1985:149–153. DiCosmo 1999). Although the ancient Persians and ancient Greeks

used the names "Saka" and "Scythian" respectively to identify all the steppe nomads, the name "Saka" is used specifically for their eastern members who inhabited the northern and eastern Eurasian Steppe and the Tarim Basin (Dandamayev 1994: 37, Cernenko 2012: 3, Lendering 1996, Unterländer 2017). The ancient Persians meanwhile called the Scythians "*Sakā* who live beyond the (Black) Sea" (Dandamayev 1994: 37, Cernenko 2012: 3, Melyukova 1990: 97–98, Ivantchik 2018, Di Cosmo 1999: 924, Bakker et al. 2002: 437–440).

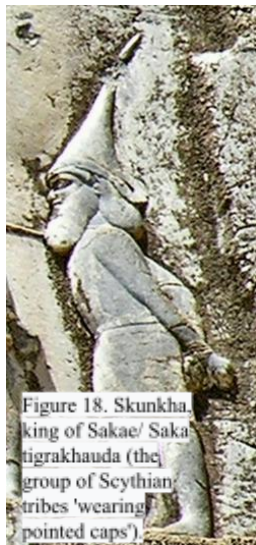


Figure 18. Skunkha, king of Sakae/ Saka tigrakhauda (the group of Scythian tribes 'wearing pointed caps').

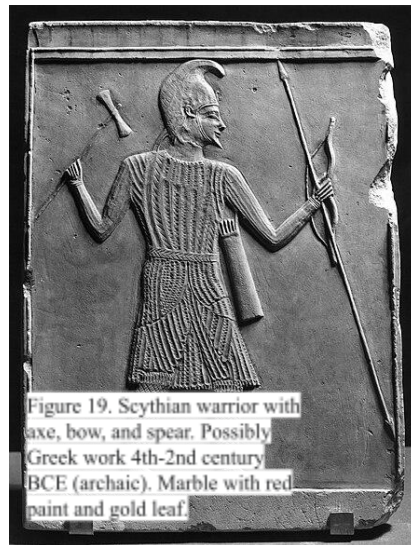


Figure 19. Scythian warrior with axe, bow, and spear. Possibly Greek work 4th-2nd century BCE (archaic). Marble with red paint and gold leaf.

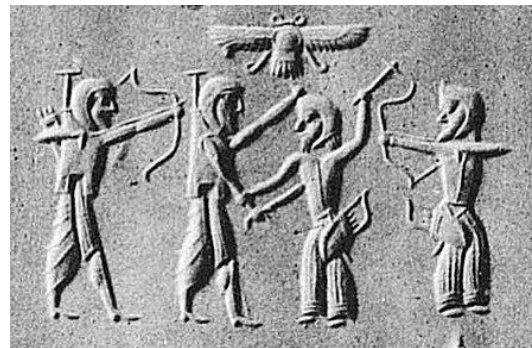


Figure 20. Persian soldiers (left) fighting against Scythians. Cylinder seal impression (Hartley et al. 2012: 83).

Herodotus described the Saka tribe name *Tigrakhauda* (*Orthocorybantians*) as a *bahuvrihi*, a referential compound word translating to "people with pointed hats" (Lendering 2013, Ivantchik & Lič'eli 2007). The English name Scythians or Scyths is derived from the Ancient Greek name *Skuthēs* (Σκυθης) and *Skuthoi* (Σκυθοι), derived from the Scythian endonym *Skudatā*, meaning "archers." (Vitchak 1999: 50–59, Bukharin 2013: 25–26, Novák 2013: 10., Ivantchik 2018, Askold 2018).

Greek and Persian artwork portrays Scythian archers wearing Phrygian hats (Figures 20 & 21). The headgear is different from "Phrygian helmets" because of the lengthy ear flaps which make them recognizable as "barbarians" or from outside of Rome. The headpiece also appears in 2nd-century BCE Boeotian Tanagra figures of an effeminate Eros, as well as multiple 1st-century BCE Commagene statuary in eastern Anatolia. The bronze Grecian Phrygian military helmets were used in Hellenistic countries from the 5th century BCE through the Roman period. They could be difficult to recognize in Greek art unless the headgear appears as a soft, flexible hat with large earflaps or a long neck flap which are known as part of the bashlyk.



Figure 21. Lycian dynasty Xherei (4th century BCE), wearing an Achaemenid bashlyk.



As the cultural areas of Turkic, Caucasian, Iranian, and Cossack peoples evolved, the bashlyk or bashlik, became more commonly seen. Same as the previously discussed incarnations, the cap/hood is usually made of leather, felt, or wool. As shown in the image above, the caps are bonnets with drooping round tops with lappets for wrapping around the neck (Figure 21). A type of bashlyks is a Kalpak (Qalpaq), a cone-shaped headdress without lappets, and is also an umbrella term for a variety of hats and headdresses (Figures 22-23) (Keen 1998, “Kalpak.” Merriam-Webster). Other localized versions determine the trim, which may consist of decorative cords, embroidery, jewelry, metallized strings, fur balls or tassels (Figure 24), which can also be a distinguisher of class, family, and/or rank. [The fur-brimmed version would be the same type as the hat worn by Santa Claus].



Figure 22. *Dervishes*, by Vereshchagin (Created 1869-1870) Vasily Vereshchagin The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei



Figure 23. Traditional headgear of unmarried woman in Kazakhstan, Karakalpakstan and Kyrgyzstan (The original uploader was Karduelis at Turkish Wikipedia 2007).



Figure 24. Four 18th century Cossack bashlyks: 2 with fur trim, 1 officer's, 1 with fur coat. "Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks". (By Ilya Repin in The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei)

As the cap was integrated into the Greek world in the early Hellenistic period, by the 4th century BCE it was already showing up in art and mythology (as seen in Figures 13-15). Grecian ideals of internal and external peoples passed to the Romans and so the following artworks include identifying Phrygians, Trojans, and other Greek neighbors. These non-Greek-speaking peoples (also called "barbarians" in the traditional sense) came to be associated with the Phrygian cap. The Trojans and other western Anatolian peoples were the most noteworthy of these broadened senses of "Phrygian". The heroes Paris (Prince of Troy) and Ganymede (the Gods' cupbearer) were also often depicted donning a Phrygian cap (Figures 25-29). After the 2nd-century wars which ended in Roman victories, the Romans depicted Dacian warriors, prisoners in ancient cities, and the Parthians in Trajan's Column, Laodicea statue, and Arch of Septimius Severus (respectively) in the cap.



Top to Bottom, Left to Right:

Figure 25. Terracotta panels painted with ceramic clay colors. Description: 3 central panels of 5 Judgement of Paris: Paris receives Hermes who leads Athena, Hera and Aphrodite, 4 women (attendants?) facing to the right; 2 outer panels [not pictured]: confronted sphinxes. (High archaic, 560-550 BCE) [height: 98-102 cm / width of each of the middle panels: 56-57 cm].

Figure 26. Seduction of Helen by Paris, antique fresco in Pompeii, 1st century.

Figure 27. *Paris*, in "Phrygian dress", a second-century CE Roman marble (The King's Library, British Museum)





Figure 28. Roman marble bust depicting Ganymede, 2nd century CE. Louvre, Paris



Figure 29. Roman-era relief depicting the eagle of Zeus abducting Ganymede, his Phrygian cap denoting an eastern origin, and a river god 1st century AD, preserved in Florence.

The Phrygian cap is also commonly found in figures from the first to fourth-century Mithraism religion, a Roman mystery cult centered on astrology. The cult's artwork often features figures of Mithras and his helpers, Cautes and Cautopates, to distinguish itself from the traditional Roman religion and other mystery cults. But since we do not know what mystery cults do or why we can only wonder what the symbolic nature of the cap was. The Mystery Cult of Phrygian Attis, the consort of Cybele, had become graecified around the same period (4th century BCE), so the cap appeared in Greek vase paintings, mosaics, and sculptures representing the mythical monarch Midas and other Phrygians (Roller 1983).

But here are examples of those celebrated in mystery cults:



Figure 30. Orpheus playing his lyre. A St. Francis of another age he has enthralled the animals and even a tree. From Tarsus, made sometime in the last 25 years of the 3rd c. CE. Inv. 10568.

From Enc. Britt.: Orpheus was the son of a Muse (probably Calliope, the patron of epic poetry) and Oeagrus, a king of Thrace (other versions give Apollo). According to some legends, Apollo gave Orpheus his first lyre. Orpheus' singing and playing were so beautiful that animals and even trees and rocks moved about him in dance.

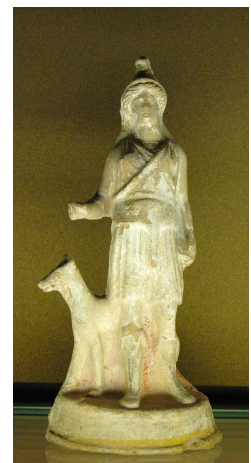


Figure 31. Bendis, the Thracian goddess of the moon and the hunt [often conflated with the Greek goddess Artemis who has the same domains], wearing a Phrygian cap. Tanagra-style terracotta figurine, c. 350 BCE.





Figure 32. A Gnathia-style ceramic vessel with lion-head spouts from ancient Magna Graecia (Apulia, Italy), depicting a blond winged youth with a Phrygian cap, by the "Toledo" painter, c. 300 BCE.

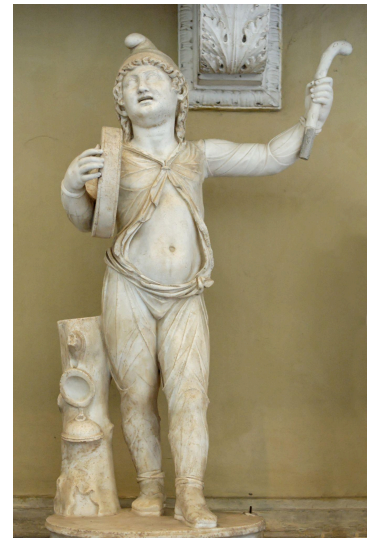


Figure 33. Roman Imperial Attis, the consort of Phrygian goddess Cybele wearing a Phrygian cap and performing a cult dance.

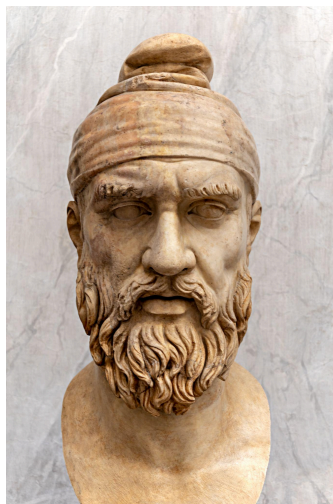


Figure 34. The bust of a Daker (person from Dacia) with a Phrygian cap dates back to the early C.E. 2nd century. & it was originally set up in the Trajansforum, & today, the bust is exhibited in the Vatican Museums.

Figure 35. The god Mithras being born from the rock (*petra genetrix*), naked but for the Phrygian cap on his head (Marble, 180-192 AD [age of Commodus]. From the area of S. Stefano Rotondo, Rome). Statue dedicated by Aurelius Bassinus, *aedituus* (curator of the cult installations) of the *principia* of the *castra peregrina* of the Imperial horseguards (*equites singulares*).



Figure 36. In the Byzantine Empire, Phrygia lay in Anatolia to the east of Constantinople, however, in this late 6th-century mosaic from the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy, which was erected by the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great as his palace chapel, during the first quarter of the 6th century (as attested to in the Liber Pontificalis). This Arian church was originally dedicated in 504 CE to "Christ the Redeemer"(which was part of the Eastern Empire at that time), the Three Magi wear Phrygian caps as their Getic forefathers did, in order to identify them as generic "Zoroastrians".



## Flash Forward: Liberty Hat in the Revolutionary Period

The pileus' Roman connotations with liberty and republicanism persisted until the 18th century when it was conflated with the Phrygian cap and thus also became a symbol of those values (Korshak 1987:52–69).

### America

Columbia, the goddess-like female personification of the United States (by the US) and Liberty wore the cap as a sign of her republicanism and anti-monarchical stance. Columbia was brought forward during the early years of the republic, as seen on the back of the 1785 Immune Columbia design coin (Figure 37). In 1793, United States currency regularly depicted Columbia two ways, with flowing hair or wearing the cap which is much more rare (McClung 1968: 15–16). The cap's last public monetary use was on the Walking Liberty Half Dollar in 1947.

Since 1778, the US Army has used a "War Office Seal" with the slogan "This We'll Defend" emblazoned over a Phrygian cap on an inverted sword. It also appears on state flags and/or as part of official seals including (West Virginia, Idaho, New Jersey, New York, Iowa, North Carolina (and the arms of its Senate), the official seal of the United States Senate, and on the back side of both the Seal of Pennsylvania and the Seal of Virginia (*State Symbols USA* 2014), and is worn by the goddess Liberty on the right side of the Seal of Hawai'i (Figure 37).

In 1854, when sculptor Thomas Crawford was preparing models for sculpture for the United States Capitol, then-Secretary of War Jefferson Davis insisted that a Phrygian cap not be included on a Statue of Freedom, because "American liberty is original and not the liberty of the freed slave". Which we know is completely ridiculous. Then less than 8 years later when Davis fought to

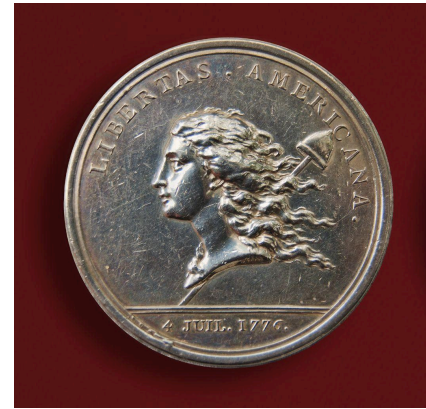


Figure 37. "LIBERTAS AMERICANA" Silver Medallion, 1783. Designed by Benjamin Franklin and Esprit-Antoine Gibelin; sculpted/engraved by Augustin Dupré. Struck at the "Mint for Medals at the Louvre", Paris, France. Silver, 47.5mm, 45.7 gm (1.612 oz) **Obverse:** LIBERTAS AMERICANA (American Liberty) across the top over a bust of Liberty with flowing hair and Phrygian cap on a pole behind her. The Date 4 JUL. 1776 (4 July 1776) is spelled from the shortened French form 4 JUILLET 1776, in the exergue, Signature DUPRE appears at the truncation of the bust.



Figure 38. Seal of the US Senate, Phrygian hat on top of flag-shield.

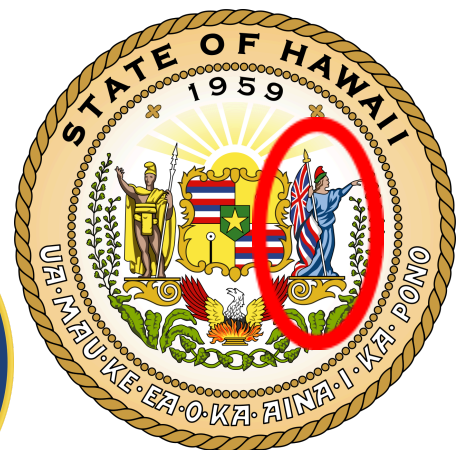


Figure 39. The Great Seal of the State of Hawaii, in use from 1959 to the present day. Original design approved by Sanford B. Dole, the President of the Republic of Hawaii. Altered in 1901 to represent the change in status from republic to territory. Altered again in 1959 when the Legislature passed Act 272 (Regular Session of 1959) and Hawai'i was made a state.



keep slaves in the Civil War we know how that ended. But, that's the unfortunate reason why the cap was not included in the final bronze version that is now in the Capitol Building (Gale 1964: 124).

Generally, when appearing in American artworks the cap can be worn, but it's often sitting on top of a pole as the pole itself can also be a symbol of Columbia. Also, since this is America we are talking about, it wasn't too long until the freedom cap was being used for capitalism (Figure 37).

Figure 40. Columbia wearing and holding up a Phrygian cap on a pole in an advertisement for the clipper ship *Young America* (created 1855 by G.F. Nesbitt & Co., printer) *Westward by Sea: A Maritime Perspective on American Expansion, 1820-1890*

## France



Figure 41. French revolutionaries wearing *bonnets rouges* and tricolor cockades

The Stamp-Paper insurrection in Brittany and northwestern France in 1675, also known as the *Bonnets Rouges* (red bonnet/caps) uprising, was a symbol of rebellion against the nobles and establishment. The earliest reported use of a Phrygian-style cap as a symbol of revolutionary France occurred in May 1790. At the 1790 festival in Troyes, the cap adorned a statue representing the nation, in Lyon a cap was placed on a lance carried by the goddess *Libertas*, and in art to this day the national allegorical of France, *Marianne*, wears a red Phrygian cap (Mathiez 1904, Wrigley 1997: 131–169).

The *bonnet rouge* was worn initially by the Parisian working class to demonstrate their revolutionary dedication and plebeian solidarity. The Marquis de Villette referred to the *bonnet rouge* as "the civic crown of the free man and French regeneration," and by mid-1791 it

had become the go-to haircut in Paris. In 1792, the *bonnet rouge* was established as a religious sign only for deserving individuals with merit by François Christophe Kellermann, 1st Duc de Valmy. The symbolic hairstyle became a rallying point and a way to mock the elaborate wigs of the aristocrats and the large red hats of the bishops.

The *bonnet rouge* on a spear was proposed as a national seal in 1792, but convicts were not allowed to wear it due to its consecration as a badge of citizenship and freedom. Louis XVI was induced to sign a constitution in 1792, and the bust of Voltaire was crowned with the red cap of



liberty after a performance of his play *Brutus* at the Comédie-Française (Harris 1981: 283-312). During the Reign of Terror (Sep 1793 - July 1794), the cap was adopted defensively by moderates and aristocrats, with women known as *tricoteuses* who might have knit the caps between public executions. The spire of Strasbourg Cathedral was crowned with a bonnet rouge to prevent it from being torn down in 1794 (Harden 1995: 66–102).

The *Acte de déchéance de l'Empereur* decree of 1814 gave back ruling powers to the Bourbons from Napoleon and may have outlawed the wearing of the bonnet rouge. 1815 saw a brief reappearance of these emblems during The Hundred Days, aka the War of the Seventh Coalition the period between Napoleon's return from eleven months of exile on the island of Elba to Paris on 20 March 1815 and the second restoration of King Louis XVIII on 8 July 1815, before they were once more outlawed (Britannica 2023). They also reappeared in 1830 during the July Revolution, and Louis Philippe I restored them as “constituent parts of a national heritage consecrated by the state and embraced by the public.” (Nord 1995).

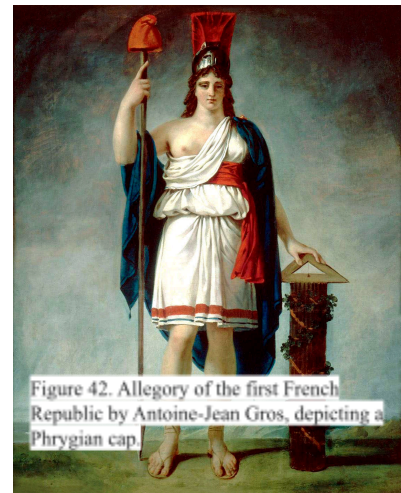


Figure 42. Allegory of the first French Republic by Antoine-Jean Gros, depicting a Phrygian cap.

Because the final two examples of Paris (the Trojain man) in art are not ancient they show the way Paris, and by extension the Phrygian cap, continued to be seen by ‘popular culture’. Because the majority of the Western European world can be traced directly, or at least majorly, back to the Roman Empire and Paris of Troy (the ancestral home of the future founders of Rome) he was seen as a cultural hero. In *The Love of Helen and Paris*, painted in 1788 by Jacques-Louis David (Figure 43) they appear relaxed, following the ‘they fell in love narrative’ [that’s another long story]. Both of the artworks to the right were done within the era of the French Revolution and the Restoration, showing that the Latin roots were still strong, even a millennia later.

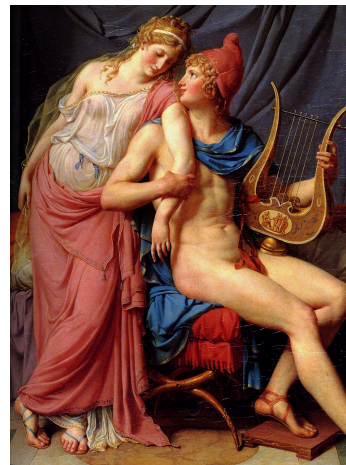


Figure 43. *The Love of Helen and Paris* by Jacques-Louis David (oil on canvas, 1788, Louvre, Paris).



Figure 44. *Paris with the Apple* by Herman Wilhelm Bissen (1830-1840, Glyptoteket).

## Changing Shape - Adding a Brim and Becoming Witch Hats

As seen in the previous sections a brim was often added, though not all the time, for people who worked outside. Other types of hats were also used as a symbolic representation of a “liberty cap” showing that the idea can fit into whatever the average person needs it to be, as long as they believe in freedom, liberty, and justice (Figure 45).



Figure 45. The Dutch Maiden carries her cap of liberty on a pole, and it is not of the Phrygian form (Philipp von Zesen 1660 - Title page of Leo Belgicus [Belgick Lion] History book).



Figure 46. A conical hennin with black velvet lappets (brim) and a sheer veil, (c. 1485–90) Hans Memling - From the Metropolitan Museum of Art).



Figure 47. John Michael Wright, *Mrs Salisbury with her Grandchildren Edward and Elizabeth Bagot*, c. 1676, Tate Britain.

While the witch’s hat is sometimes pointed straight up, the reality of the weight of the cloth will generally cause the point to droop towards the brim. This differentiation also illustrates an inherent goodness in a character. Straight-up and pointy generally work for Halloween costumes of the “good/cute witches” and are reminiscent of medieval ladies and maidens (Figure 46). The aristocratic class were the ones wearing pointed hats, both with and without the brim (Figure 45). They were the only people who could afford the cleaning and effort (on the servants' part) to keep the material stable. Hats may fall and get dirty with age, which doesn’t tie to being good or evil. For examples see the Sorting Hat from the Harry Potter series or Gandalf’s hat from Lord of the Rings. They are both old and disheveled, but both of those characters are in the “good” or at least neutral squares of characterization (Figures 48 & 49) versus the witch and demon who would be “evil” in the woodcut (Figure 50). [After Gandalf becomes Gandalf the White he loses his hat... but that’s neither here nor there.]





Figure 48. Gandalf the Grey from Lord of the Rings.



Figure 49. Sorting Hat from Harry Potter.



Figure 50. Woodcut of witch cavorting with demon and goat "Midnight Believer" from "The Devil in Britain & America" 1896.

This slumped point is what connects more directly with the Phrygian cap and the ideas of freedom.

### Caught Demonizing the Pointed Hat

Even with the basic form being used as a strong positive value symbol, the altered variations were being used for identifying and persecuting "others".

But, who wore them? In the "Western world", there were so many varieties of hats that were worn by people of all stations that the meaning of the Pileus/Phrygian caps doesn't apply. Priests and bishops and Popes (miters - not really cones, most fancy versions) have relatively pointed hats, though the perfectly straight hats and the elaborate designs would have largely been important symbols of status. I'll also be ignoring the extreme cone-shaped height of the caps worn by the priests in Granada and then later by the humanoid-shaped feces known as the KKK.



Figure 51. The Jewish poet Süßkind von Trimberg wearing a "Jewish hat" (Codex Manesse, 14th century).

Those that the early Christian church demonized were often shown to wear the cap or the specifically distinctive headgear, called the "*Judenhut*" or Jewish hat worn by Jewish men was required by the European Christian authorities (Roth 2003).

By the mid-13th century, Jewish men were wearing hats, often a soft cap with a peak with a stiff, circular brim curving round to a tapering top that ends in a point with the distinctive point on top (Figure 45), according to manuscript illuminations (Lipton 1999). The "harder" hat version may have resulted from special legislation in multiple countries that required Jewish men to wear them. The pointed caps were worn by Babylonian (Persian) Jewish men, and it is not unlikely

that this custom survived among Jews in northern Europe. In German law texts, Jewish men were depicted wearing bearded caps and required to wear them when leaving synagogue or taking vows.

### Points and Straps

In 1267, the regional council of Breslau issued a provision mandating Jews to wear the “Jewish hat” or “Judenhut”, a *pileus cornutus* ("horned skullcap") that had been worn by anyone prior to sometime in the 11th century (Silverman 2013: 55–57, Lipton 2014: 15). Some manuscript images depict unpointed caps wrapped around the chin with fabric or a strap. According to Rabbi Meir B. Barukh of Rothenburg, tall hats might be worn on the Sabbath, but those that were not secure needed to be attached with a strap. Jews occasionally included a "Jewish hat" prominently in their seals, which were made of metal or cloth. Some French illuminators show a wide variety of Jewish hats, including one in a sky blue color with a small brim and soft pointed peak (in colors such as pink and bright red-orange), and a black hat with a wide brim and no peak at all.

These are more closely related to the kalpaks (Figure 51) that I discussed earlier (but with a wider brim) and fewer examples also appear even slightly close to what we could call a witch hat (Figures 52 & maybe 53). Which, if you want a much shorter and more historical story, that’s likely where more direct identification came from so they could be the best at “othering”. Especially because these two similar hats were the marks of the demonizing that became much more literal and even today leads to the worst of humanity.

Since the middle ages and the early colonial period and witch trials there have been so many incarnations in which any variety of the cap/hat aren’t admonished, and could instead be admired.

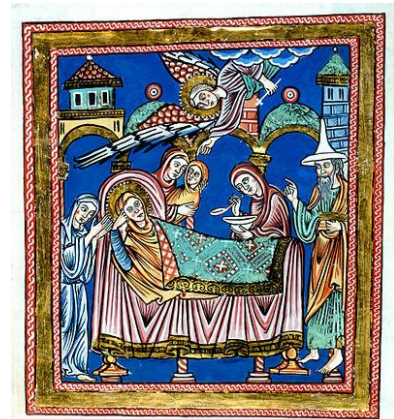


Figure 52. Twelfth-century German Nativity of Mary with Mary's father Joachim wearing the hat.



Figure 53. Jewish Germans from the 13th c. CE. From Herrad von Landsberg, *Lufgarten*. Published in the 1901-1906 Jewish Encyclopedia.



Figure 54. Mickey Mouse in the Sorcerer's Apprentice in Disney's Fantasia (1940).

### Modern Classics

Of course there are also the ‘classic’ wizard hats, think Mickey Mouse in the Fantasia short (Figure 48) versus Gandalf (Figure 44). The straight up pointiness of the Sorcerers’ hat, as shown in most of the art, ignores when it does slump forward a couple times during the short. But this



pattern is often seen in costuming. Although pointy magic hats for wizards (throwback the henin caps?) are good, witch hats, both the straight pointy styles (Figure 49) and the crooked versions (Figure 50) are seen as evil. Both characters have green skin too, though that connection is because the character of Witch Hazel in *Looney Tunes* was in part inspired by the Wicked Witch of the West (the good witch has uncovered blond hair... whole other story). The evil power probably has more to do with men versus women, to be honest.



Figure 55. The Wicked Witch of the West and Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM 1939).

Figure 56. Witch Hazel from shorts 'Bewitched Bunny' and 'Broom-stick Bunny' (Chuck Jones, Debut 1954).



Robin Hood is another example of a free spirit, while also both looked down upon as an outlaw and the hero of basically any story in which he plays a part. His cap is a further variation, but whenever you see it, you know what it means, or at least who it belongs to. Though you'd be forgiven in this case for also thinking of Peter Pan, another tricky free spirit, because it is the same style. Robin Hood's style is called the bycocket and while it was originally worn by nobles and royalty, the rising merchant class took it up later (Potter & Calhoun 2008: 60, Amphlett 2003: 26, 29, 39–40, 71, Planché 1876:1, Johnston 2011: 330). It was often decorated with feathers, jewels, or other ornaments (Potter & Calhoun 2008: 60, Johnston 2011: 330).



Figure 57. Robin Hood and Maid Marian in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) starring Errol Flynn.

Figure 58. Peter Pan (1953) from Disney. Either shown as a Phrygian cap or a bycocket (when live action).



And I mentioned the similarity or rather matching styles between the bashlyks in Figure 22 and Santa Claus's fur cap so yeah...

It's a costume callback, much like a literary allegory.

## Discussions & Conclusions

### **Do they mean the same thing?**

The Pileus and Phrygian caps were worn by people of cultures that were outside the Iron-Age Roman world. They saw them as different, even though their art depicting their gods and heroes were seen sporting those caps too.

There are so many more varieties of conical or pointed hats that I didn't discuss here, especially in the Far Eastern part of the world and in the Americas. I attempted to have a more direct route for the hat and its variations, but the past is a tapestry of tangled knots of fraying and cut threads. I probably went too afield and I am in no way saying that Indian and Far East Asian cultures didn't influence the cultural groups I did discuss. In biology we'd say that similar appearance is convergent evolution. But then how do we know all of this isn't? It could be, but as the European and Middle Eastern world was so much of a melting pot that continued to expand, having a couple versions of the same hat mean two widely different things depending on who is telling the story, while continuing to follow that same pattern for over 2000 years. Seems too much of a coincidence to completely discount.

While the brewers' cap may have been one possible origin of the witch's iconic pointed hat and the Jewish hat is a logical and shorter leap, I wanted to find the origins of that hat shape. The reason why it was used to other Jewish people in the first place. Sure, it's a hat and hats come in a bunch of different shapes and sizes, but I'm not really discussing fashion. Clearly the Pilos/Pileus and Phrygian hats' meanings got conflated early in history, but that idea has stuck around for over 2000 years. Even if we don't know where it came from or why. [A beanie on a stick...cool?] But the othering nature of wearing a certain garment has been there. For the freed slaves, you get a free hat, but it shows the citizens of Rome 'this guy is different from you, they were slaves' and won't be able to hide that fact.

However, the more symbolically reminiscent interpretation of the feeling that the community that witchcraft can give someone can be seen through the pileus hat. That freedom, feeling pride in oneself, even if others look down on you. They, and subsequent generations of "others", as looked on by the people outside their cultures, get the reclaim and rework the meaning behind this part of their identities. They can support each other.



The wearers of the hat have gone through phases of being looked down upon. The former slaves, the barbarians, Jewish people, witches, outlaws. But because they stood and those who continue to stand outside the cultural norms, they and those who stand with them are free to be who we want with our supportive communities. After all, freedom, liberty, and kindness belong to everyone and in all forms.



[Above] Sorry to say, I don't know who the original designer is.

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