

Torso Of Apollo

Roman

1st - 2nd Century A.D.

Marble

H: 87cm

This torso of Apollo would have once stood in a unique but classical pose emphasising a sense of realism and movement, hips slightly tilted with right knee bent forward and supported by a tree stump; the arms would have been raised, the right elbow lowered and hand pointing with the index finger as if it had just released a bow string. The left arm is bent, elbow raised with hand holding possibly a lyre or bow. We know so much not only from contemporary comparables such as the Belvedere Apollo, but also from a pencil drawing made at some point between 1710 and 1730 by Giovanni Campiglia for the inventory catalogue of the Villa Aldobrandini near Rome, where the piece was first noted to be kept. Apollo is one of the most complex and important gods in the canon of Roman deities, and is he god of many things, including music, archery, poetry, art, oracles, plague, medicine, sun, light and knowledge. He is the ideal of the kouros (nude male noble youth), which means he has a beardless, athletic and youthful appearance. This is represented by the torso's lithe and soft muscular rendering. A quiver strap is slung across his body and on the back of the torso there is a drill hole next to the knot of the strap, indicating that a quiver of arrows was once attached. The bow and arrow are just one of the many attributes associated with Apollo. This idea is corroborated by the early 18th-century drawing by Giovanni Campiglia, and in turn further supports the idea that he was once holding a bow in his left

hand.

Literature:

Documenti inediti per servire alla storia dei musei d'Italia, vol. 3, 1880, p. 148: "Una statua di marmo di un Apollo nudo in atto di tirare l'arco, con il carcasso dietro, alta palmi otto incirca").

C. Benocci, Villa Aldobrandini a Roma, 1992, p. 235, no. 104: "Un Appollo nudo in atto di tirar l'arco, con il carcasso dietro, alto palmi otto et mezzo, segnato n. 4" The number 4 mentioned in the 1626-inventory refers to a number incised on the formerly restored plinth.

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