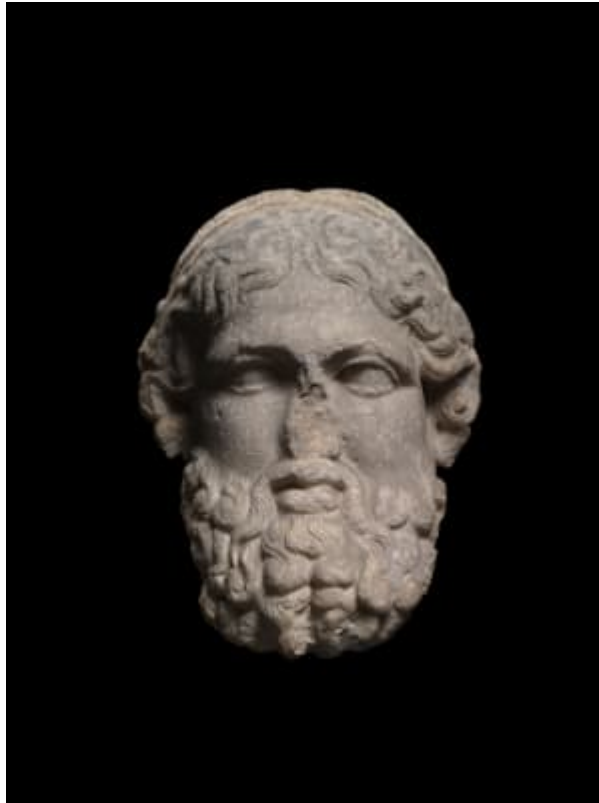


DAVID AARON



Head of Hermes

1st-2nd Century A.D., Roman

Marble

H: 25 cm

Roman head of the god Hermes in an archaizing style, following a Greek model from the fourth century B.C.. Hermes is depicted in manner typically found on herms, with a full beard of long curled locks, thick moustache, and curled hair framing his forehead. He sports a hair band around the crown of his head.

The facial features are finely articulated, highlighting his plump lips, high cheekbones, and deep-set eyes.

The god Hermes, known as Mercury to the Romans, was the messenger of the gods and patron to merchants, travellers, and athletes. He also guided the souls of the deceased to the underworld. As such, he was closely associated with roads and boundaries, and his image was often positioned in doorways and at strategic positions alongside roads. The rectangular stone pillars seen at crossroads and gates, depicting the god's head and, lower down, his genitalia, were known as herms. Romans also used herms to decorate villa gardens and gymnasia. Even the Greek images on which this and other Roman herms are modelled were archaizing for their time: they imitated the style established by the sculptor Alcamenes, who carved the Hermes Propylaios which stood at the entrance to the Athenian Acropolis in 430-420 B.C..