

HEAD OF APOLLO

ROMAN, 2ND CENTURY AD
MARBLE

HEIGHT: 45 CM.

WIDTH: 28 CM.

DEPTH: 34 CM.

PROVENANCE:

*FORMER PRIVATE COLLECTION OF NICOS
DHIKÉOS (1896-1987), CYPRIOT CONSUL IN
LYON, FRANCE.
THEN BY DESCENT IN THE SAME FAMILY
UNTIL NOW.*



This majestic marble head represents the god Apollo. He stands up straight and gazes far away, giving him a haughty and noble attitude. His hairdressing is very sophisticated, made of a massive bow on top of his head, a bun on the back and locks of hair that fall on his shoulders. The hair is

sculpted using a trepan, which creates a play of shadow and light. It contrasts with the smooth skin of his face. This way of sculpting the hair with lots of volume, contrast and depth allows us to date the sculpture from the 2nd century AD. The pupil of the eyes is also incised, another characteristic feature of this period.



This Apollo is recognized at the popular type known as Apollo Lykeious; a statue made by the famous Greek sculptor Praxiteles. The ancient Greek satirist and rhetorician Lucian described this type of sculpture as being in



the Lykeion, a school founded by the renowned philosopher Aristotle, in Athens. This sculpture became admired because of Apollo's depiction as a youthful male, relaxed and simple in representation. Roman sculptors soon copied this type, as is the case for our striking head.



Our head presents an eroded surface and its patina shows that it was buried for centuries, until its discovery. The hair bow is missing on the left part, and a metallic old attachment as well as the polished aspect of the break indicate us that it has been restored at some point in its modern history. His nose and lips are also missing, giving our Apollo an antiquated yet refined aura.

Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto and twin brother of Artemis, was one of the most important divinity in the Greco-Roman world. He was the god of the sun and light,

the truth and prophecy, music and dance, healing and diseases, poetry... Therefore, his image is predominant in ancient art, and sculptures of him were found all around the Mediterranean basin.



Our head, with its magnificent bow, can be compared to the famous Apollo Belvedere, sculpted around 120 - 140 AD (ill. 1). It is also close to the Greywacke Apollo kitharoidos from Naples museum (ill. 2), although our Apollo didn't seem to have its hand laying on top of his head. A head from the British Museum, found in Carthage, presents similar features but without the bow (ill. 3). Lastly, the marble head from a private sale at Sotheby's displays the alike hair and serene expression of our Apollo (ill. 4).

This head belonged to the collection of Mr. Nicos Dhikéos (1896-1987). Born in Cyprus, he settled in France in 1916 and became an art

dealer, owner of the Galerie Saint-François, at 24 rue Auguste-Comte in Lyon and specialised in old masters' paintings. With his wife, Dimitra, they built an important collection of drawings, bought in auctions and directly from collectors. He sold many of his drawings right before his death, in 1987. Our Roman head remained in his family until now.

Comparatives:



Ill. 1. Apollo Belvedere, Roman, marble. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican, inv. no. 1015.



Ill. 2. Apollo kitharoidos, Roman, greywacke. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli, inv. no. 6262.



Ill. 3. Head of Apollo, Roman, marble. British Museum, London, inv. 1857,1218,98.



Ill. 4. Apollo, Roman, 1st century AD, marble, H.: 30.4 cm. Private collection.



Ill. 5. Portrait of Nicos Dhikéos in front of Leonardo da Vinci's Leda and the Swan.