

MUSE

ROMAN, 1ST – 2ND CENTURY AD

MARBLE

FEET AND BASE RESTORED.

HEIGHT: 62 CM.

WIDTH: 26 CM.

DEPTH: 12 CM.

PROVENANCE:

*FORMER EUROPEAN PRIVATE
COLLECTION SINCE THE LATE
18TH CENTURY, BASED ON THE
RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.
PROBABLY BOUGHT IN ROME IN THE
1950S.
FORMERLY IN THE AMERICAN PRIVATE
COLLECTION OF MR. TREBILCOCK,
NEW YORK, PURCHASED FROM
GALERIE ARCHÉOLOGIE, 40 RUE DU
BAC, 7TH ARRONDISSEMENT, PARIS, ON 2
MAY 1969.*



This Roman statue, sculpted in high quality white marble, reveals a play of drapery and folds and the sensual suggestion of a woman's body.

Our woman is standing, her left leg forward and flexed while the right, which is supporting her, is tensed, bearing the weight of her body. The position creates a slight sway of the hips, hinted at beneath the folds of the drapery. Her flexed left arm rests on a pillar, while the right is brought up to her breast, disappearing into the folds of fabric. The line of her shoulders is also slightly slanted, in the opposite direction to that of the hips. This sway of the body, called *contrapposto*, animates the statue and contrasts the line of the hips with that of the shoulders, allowing the young woman's body to form a subtle 'S' shape, imbuing the sculpture with sensuality and motion. Her drapery is formed by a long himation that covers her shoulders and right arm. Behind her, a fold of her garment is fluttering out, as for the front, over the pillar.

Beneath, it is possible to glimpse a fine chiton composed of two successive layers, visible in the two distinct hems of the lower part. Certain spots have a "wet" effect and seem to stick to the young woman's skin, on



her left leg, for instance. The entire drapery looks silky, a testament to the sculptor's delicacy and dexterity. Finally, hidden under the fabric and the numerous folds are small breasts, which enable us to confirm the sex of our sculpted figure.



No visible attributes reveal the identity of this woman, but we may suppose her to be a Muse. The drapery, the “wet” effect on her leg and the pillar are features that are reproduced in many Greek and Roman sculptures representing the Muses. The nine goddesses were born from the union of Zeus and the Titanide Mnemosyne, who is said to have invented words and language on Earth. The Muses generally each held an attribute such as a book, a flute or a theatrical mask, making it possible to recognize them. Our muse must once have held the attribute that would have enabled

us to identify her in her left hand, now missing.

The “Sarcophagus of the Muses”, conserved at the Louvre museum in Paris (Ill. 1-1), has a frieze with the nine Muses on one side. The first figure from the left, representing Calliope (Ill. 1-2), Muse of epic poetry, and the third, Terpsichore (Ill. 1-3), Muse of dance, are both very similar to our sculpture. On another side, another Muse, this time, capite velato (Ill. 1-4), leaning against a pillar, is also very similar. The representations of Polyhymnia, Muse of rhetoric and eloquence, often portrayed leaning against a pillar, were particularly appreciated by the high dignitaries and aristocrats of ancient Rome. A statue conserved at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (Ill. 2) and a high relief of the Muse on a Roman sarcophagus (Ill. 3) conserved in Marseille may also be likened to our sculpture.



Ill. 1-1. Sarcophagus of the Muses, Roman, 2nd century AD, marble, W.: 206 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. MR 880.

Ill. 1-2. Detail of the Muse Calliope.

Ill. 1-3. Detail of the Muse Terpsichore.

Ill. 1-4. Detail of a Muse and a seated man.





As the Muses were the incarnation of beauty, the arts and the divine, artworks representing them were particularly treasured by Rome's aristocratic elite. Their presence in domus and villas allowed their owners to show and assert not only their knowledge and culture, but also their wealth, through particularly refined and delicate artworks, like our Muse.

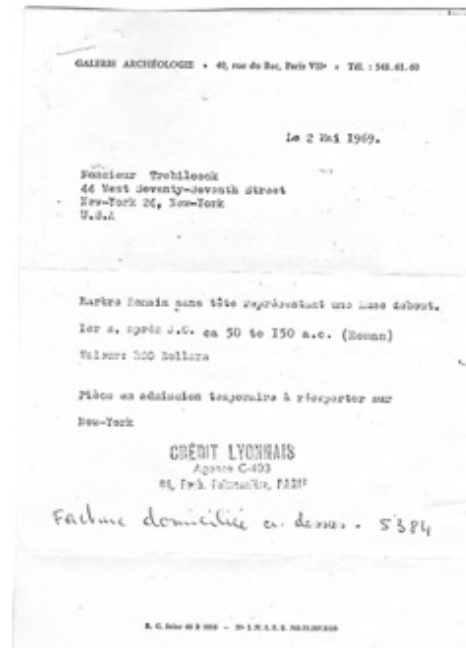


Ill. 2. Statue of Polyhymnia, Roman, 2nd century AD, marble, H.: 179 cm. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. 1547.



Ill. 3. Sarcophagus (detail), Roman, AD 240-250, marble, H.: 72 cm. Château Borély, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, de la Faïence et de la Mode, Marseille, inv. no. 146.

Probably bought in Rome in 1950, this statue was acquired from Galerie Archéologie in the 7th arrondissement of Paris by New York painter Mr Paul Trebilcock (1902-1981) in 1969. It was sent to New York the same year to take its place in his collection.



Ill. 4 : Invoice of Galerie Archéologie to Mr. Trebilcock, dated May 2nd 1969.

