

RELIEF DEPICTING A DANCER

ROMAN, 1ST-2ND CENTURY AD
MARBLE
RESTORATION BEHIND THE THIGH

HEIGHT: 41 CM.

WIDTH: 17.5 CM.

DEPTH: 9 CM.

PROVENANCE:
FORMER EUROPEAN COLLECTION SINCE
THE 18TH CENTURY BASED ON THE
RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.
FORMER FRENCH COLLECTION SINCE
AT LEAST THE 1990S.



This elegantly sculpted fragment in white marble depicts a draped female figure, whose graceful posture and intricate folds of clothing evoke the movement of a dance or a light stroll. The chiton (tunic) lightly hugs

the contours of the body while falling in deep, undulating folds along the legs, conveying a keen sense of movement and volume. The left leg, slightly bent and forward, accentuates this sensation of strolling or dancing, typical of mythological or allegorical female figures in the Greco-Roman tradition.



The reverse side of the fragment is unworked, indicating that it was not a statue in the round, but rather a bas-relief element



intended to be viewed from the front. This figure, affixed to a smooth background, confirms that it belonged to an architectural or funerary decoration, possibly a frieze adorning a public monument, a sanctuary, or the wealthy residence of a private individual. It is possible that the ensemble had a votive or commemorative function.



The figure's overall posture, the refinement of the workmanship and the suppleness of the forms are reminiscent of depictions of muses or bacchantes in imperial Roman art, often inspired by Hellenistic models. Striking similarities can be found in a bas-relief preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Piraeus in Athens (ill. 1), where similar female figures – draped, in motion, with their heads tilted or turned – occupy the space with grace and rhythm. Other fairly

similar examples can be seen in the Louvre Museum and in Rome (ill. 2-3).



Another fragment of bas-relief, undoubtedly from the same relief as our work, was sold at auction at Sotheby's London in 2017, reaching a final price of £82,000 excluding fees (approximately €120,000 including fees). The stylistic similarity between the two fragments, both in terms of the workmanship and quality of the marble and the posture of the figure, suggests a common origin and confirms the artistic importance of this sculptural ensemble. This type of representation, combining movement, harmony of the body and rich textiles, perfectly illustrates the Roman aesthetic inspired by the classical Greek ideal.

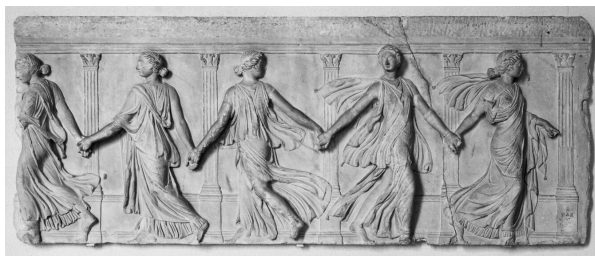
This fragment of relief, with its delicate patina, is a valuable testimony to the mastery of ancient sculptors in conveying movement,

elegance and symbolism through idealised female figures.

Comparatives:



Ill. 1. Relief depicting three nymphs in a procession behind a woman, Greek, Athens, Piraeus Museum.



Ill. 2. Relief representing a dance scene, Roman, 2nd quarter of the 2nd century AD., marble, H. : 73 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. Ma 1612.



Ill. 3. Relief representing meanads, Roman, neo-attic, after Callimachos' models (late 5th century BC), marble. Rome, museo di sculture antica Giovanni Barracco, inv. no. MB124.



Ill. 4. Fragment of a relief representing a dancer, marble, H. : 47 cm. Sotheby's « Ancient Marbles: Classical Sculpture and Antiquities » sale, 12 June 2017, lot 14.