

RELIEF REPRESENTING A DANCER

ROMAN, 1ST-2ND CENTURY AD
MARBLE
RESTORATION WORK ON THE RIGHT THIGH

HEIGHT: 39.5 CM

WIDTH: 17.5 CM

DEPTH: 9 CM.

PROVENANCE:
INA EUROPEAN COLLECTION FROM THE
18TH CENTURY, JUDGING BY THE
RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.
INA FRENCH COLLECTION, BURGUNDY
BOUGHT IN THE 1990'S.



This elegantly sculpted white marble fragment represents a draped female figure. Her graceful posture and the carefully wrought folds of her garment evoke the movement of a dance or a gentle stroll. Her *chiton* (tunic) delicately clings to the shapes

of her body while falling along her legs in deep, undulating folds, conveying a strong impression of movement and texture. Her slightly bent and advanced left leg heightens the impression that she is strolling or dancing, a typical way of representing mythological or allegorical female figures in Graeco-Roman culture.



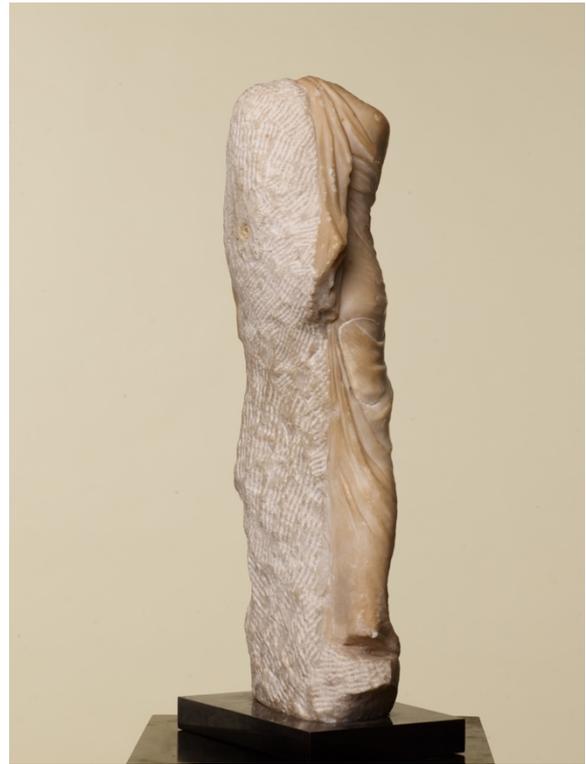
The back of the fragment is unworked, which indicates that the statue was not sculpted in the round, but was part of a bas-relief, intended to be viewed from the front. The fact the figure is set on a smooth



base confirms that it once decorated an architectural or funerary monument. It was possibly part of a frieze adorning a public monument, sanctuary or some rich dwelling. The whole relief could have had a votive or commemorative function.



The general attitude of the figure, the refinement of the sculptural work and the suppleness of the shapes are reminiscent of the representations of muses and bacchantes in imperial Roman art, often inspired by Hellenistic models. There is thus a striking analogy with a bas-relief preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Piraeus in Athens (Ill. 1), in which similar female figures – draped, in motion, heads tilted or turned – occupy the space with grace and rhythm. There are other quite similar examples at the Louvre and in Rome (Ill. 2-3).



Another bas-relief fragment that is probably from the same relief as our work was sold at auction at Sotheby's London in 2017, finally selling for £82,000 before charges (or about €120,000 charges included). The stylistic similarity between both fragments, in the craftsmanship, the quality of the marble and the postures of the figures, suggests a common origin and confirms the artistic importance of this sculptural ensemble. This type of representation, which combines movement, bodily harmony and textile richness, perfectly illustrates the Roman aesthetic inspired by the classical Greek ideal.

This fragment of a relief, with its delicate patina, is a precious testament to ancient sculptors' skill in conveying movement, elegance and symbolism through idealised female figures.

Comparative works:



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



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



Ill. 3. Relief representing maenads, Roman, neo-Attic, after models by Callimachus (end of the 5th century BC), marble. Museo di scultura antica Giovanni Barracco, Rome, inv. no. MB124.



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