

STATUE OF THE GOD PAN

ROMAN, 1ST-2ND CENTURY
MARBLE
RESTORATIONS 17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT: 54.5 CM.

WIDTH: 25 CM.

DEPTH: 27 CM.

PROVENANCE:
FORMER EUROPEAN COLLECTION FROM
THE 17TH CENTURY BASED ON THE
RESTORATIONS TECHNIQUES.
FORMERLY PART OF THE PRIVATE
COLLECTION OF MR. ALAIN FINARD
PARIS, SINCE THE 1980'S.



Our sculpture depicts the god Pan, hybrid figure of the Dionysian procession, associating human's features to goat characteristics. The figure is represented sit down on a rock, in a relaxed posture that suggests a moment of rest. he head, slightly inclined, is animated by a lively expression: the gaze is alert, the slightly open mouth forms the hint of a smile, while a full beard frames the face. Two small horns rise from the top of the head, and the face is

characterised by pronounced features—furrows across the forehead and around the eyes—which suggest a mature individual. This somewhat heightened expressiveness belongs to an aesthetic that appears to post-date Antiquity. The bare torso displays supple musculature without heroic emphasis. The right arm rests upon the right thigh, and the hand appears to hold an elongated object that may be identified as a *pedum*, the curved staff traditionally associated with pastoral divinities, particularly Pan and shepherds, and used for guiding flocks. The left arm is supported by a rocky outcrop, which structures the composition and stabilises the figure's posture.



From the pelvis downward, the figure gradually assumes its animal nature: the thighs become broader and are covered with stylised hair, while the feet are rendered as cloven hooves. The figure thus appears fully hybrid, half man and half goat. This progressive transition between humanity and animality eloquently conveys the ambivalent nature of the god. Between the legs is a corkscrew-shaped penis, another characteristic feature of representations of Pan and satyrs in ancient sculpture.



On the right side of the rocky support appears a small animal, identifiable as a hare, its forelegs bound together with a cord and suspended from the rock. This motif evokes the Dionysiac sphere and the untamed natural world. It may alternatively represent the skin of an animal not yet flayed, providing a further iconographic clue to the identity of the figure. The composition rests upon an irregular base suggesting rocky ground, reinforcing the setting within a natural landscape. Beside the left leg is a tubular element that may be interpreted either as a cornucopia or as a wind instrument

belonging to the horn family. At the rear, the modelling of the buttocks is treated with a degree of naturalism that convincingly conveys the weight of the seated body. A small, discreetly rendered tail further emphasises the hybrid, half-human, half-animal nature of the figure.

A clearly visible crack running across the pelvis marks the junction between two phases of the sculpture and reveals that the entire upper section—the head, torso, and part of both arms—was restored during the sixteenth century; part of the right thigh was likewise restored. Such interventions reflect the Renaissance practice of completing fragmentary ancient sculptures in order to restore their formal integrity. The present work is therefore the product of a dialogue between Antiquity and the Renaissance. The original ancient surface retains a deep ochre patina, testifying to the antiquity of the surviving portions and providing a subtle contrast with the later additions.



From an iconographical perspective, the figure belongs to the well-established

repertoire of representations of Pan, the god of the wilderness, shepherds, flocks, and pastoral music. The son of Hermes, Pan is a hybrid deity, half man and half goat, whose very appearance embodies the fusion of the human and the animal, symbolising instinctive vitality that can at times appear unsettling. From Antiquity onwards, Pan was the subject of numerous sculptural representations, several of which survive today.

The closest comparison may be drawn with the group of *Pan and Daphnis* in the Louvre Museum (fig. 1), whose Greek original is attributed to Heliodoros of Rhodes and dates to the second century BC. In that composition, Pan already appears as a rustic figure strongly defined by his animal nature and engaged in an interaction with the young shepherd Daphnis. Although the sculpture discussed here survives as an isolated figure, it is possible that it originally formed part of a larger sculptural group. Further comparisons may be made with related versions preserved in the Vatican Museums (fig. 2) and the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (fig. 3). Another useful parallel is provided by a Roman marble group depicting Pan and a nymph seated upon a rock, sold at Sotheby's, New York, on 7 June 2012 (lot 37), which displays a comparable composition as well as similar Renaissance restorations. Together, these comparisons confirm the existence during the Roman period of a series of variants derived from a widely disseminated Hellenistic prototype, in which the figure of Pan was interpreted with considerable artistic freedom.

On the basis of its restoration techniques, the present statue may be traced to an old European collection from at least the seventeenth century onwards. It subsequently entered the collection of the French art dealer Alain Finard during the 1980s.

Comparatives:



Ill. 1. *Pan and Daphnis*. Roman, 2nd century AD, after a Greek original by Heliodoros of Rhodes, late 2nd century BC. Marble, H. 174 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris, inv. no. MR 313.



Ill. 2. *Pan and Daphnis*. Roman, 2nd century AD, after the original by Heliodoros of Rhodes. Marble, H. 160 cm. Vatican Museums, inv. no. 8571.



Ill. 3. *Pan and Daphnis*. Roman, 1st century BC, after the Greek original by Heliodoros of Rhodes. Marble. National Archaeological Museum of Naples.



Ill. 4. Sculptural group depicting *Pan and a Nymph*. Roman, c. 1st century AD. Marble, H. 36.8 cm. Sold at Sotheby's, New York, 7 June 2012, lot 37.