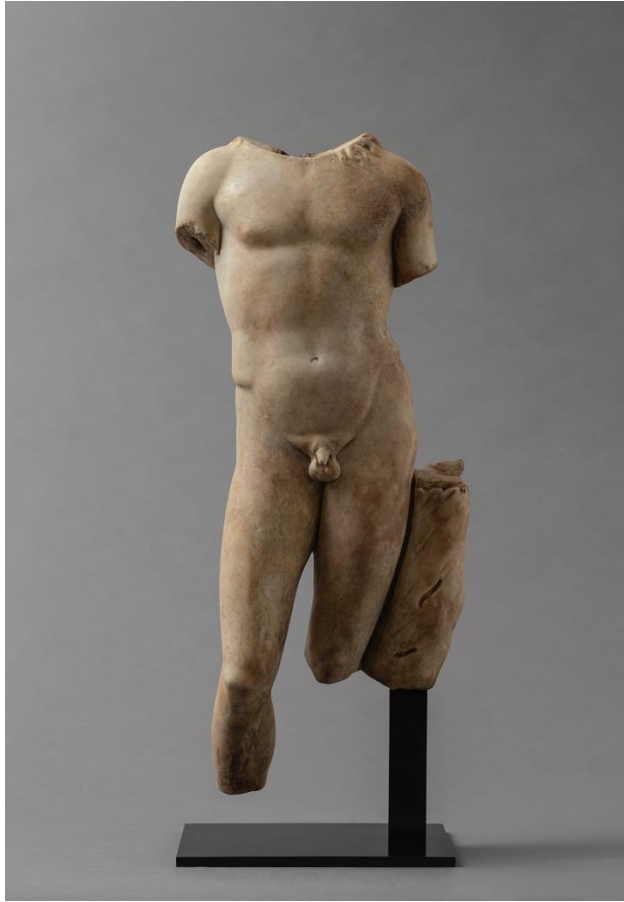


COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Torso of Apollo or Dionysus

Roman, Late Republic or Early Imperial,
ca. 1st century B.C. – 1st century A.D.

Marble

54.6 x 21.6 x 12.7 cm; 21 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 5 in.

Provenance:

*Possibly James Hugh Smith Barry (1748-1801);

*Possibly by descent, Lord Barrymore Collection, Marbury Hall, Cheshire, England.
(according to Jan 22, 1951 invoice from Mathias Komor)

With Mathias Komor, New York, USA;

Esq. Mason F. Lord Collection (Acquired from the above on Jan 22, 1951);

By descent to the previous owner, USA, until 2023.

**According to 1951 Mathias Komor invoice, dated January 22 1951, describing the torso as "White marble male torso, Hellenistic, about 300 B.C." The Lord Barrymore Collection was kept in the family by descent from 1748-1932, when Lord Barrymore's nephew Robert Raymond Smith Barry (1886-1949) sold Marbury Hall. Some of the collection remained with the family, some of it was sold with the house, and a great deal was offered at auction, in 1933 and 1946 (Sotheby & Co., London) and later in 1987 (Christie's London). While the present torso was not included in any of the major sales, the 1882 catalog of the collection was noted as incomplete by its author Adolf Michaelis, saying about ancient sculpture "others are secluded in other*

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rooms, to which I had not access" (p. 501). According to 'Notes on a New Edition of Michaelis, Ancient Marbles in Great Britain, Part Two,' pp. 336-337, "Despite the fairly complete account previously given (of ancient sculpture at Marbury Hall), a number of Smith-Barry sculptures have remained unaccounted for. A rare small auction catalogue gives a partial view. On 15,16 March 1933, Messrs. Arber, Rutter, Waghorn & Brown (Lionel Brown of 1 Mount Street) sold the remaining contents of the Residence."

Published:

"One Man's History of Art," Life Magazine, June 4, 1951, pp. 67-68.

Exhibited:

The Baltimore Museum of Art, June 1951.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA, Oct. 1951-1952.

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The present torso, of exceptional quality and presence, represents a young male divinity, well under life-size, shown resting his weight on his left leg, while the right leg, at ease, seems to step forward. The left leg is lost below the knee, while the right leg preserves a good deal of the calf. The arms, also relaxed, have broken just below the shoulders, preserving their original downward pose. In all likelihood, the youth would have originally held attributes in one or both hands, identifying him as a divinity, in this case either Apollo or Dionysus, though there is a slight chance that this may be a representation of Eros/Cupid. The torso is sensitively and masterfully rendered: the tapering of the waist and the small pectorals clearly indicating a youth rather than an adult. Of exceptional quality are the renderings of the abdominal muscles and the exquisitely rendered iliac furrows—colloquially known, quite fittingly in this case, as an Apollo's belt. At top, the shoulders are touched by locks of hair, implying a long hairstyle, centrally parted, as was common in youthful representations of both Apollo and Dionysus. The statue's left leg abuts a fragmental tree stump, which functions to support the weight of the sculpture. Supports were essential to artists transposing compositions from bronze to marble: hollow metal allows for much more structural integrity than stone. Often, artists working in marble would use the supports to provide further markers identifying the divinity being represented: if that were the case here, those markers are now lost.

Of the male divinities represented as youths, the most important were Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo, a central Greek divinity, was always depicted as a youth: descriptions as early as Homer emphasize his youthfulness and beauty, and Greeks considered Apollo to be the ideal *kouros* (beardless, athletic youth). Dionysus, too, though also depicted as an adult (bearded) male, was consistently depicted as a youth from the Archaic Period onward: in statuary, depictions of Dionysus often borrowed forms from depictions of Apollo, so that it became necessary to give both gods identifying attributes to distinguish them from one another. In

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cases where these attributes are lost, such as in the present sculpture, it is often impossible to distinguish between the two gods.

The style of the present torso is eclectic, borrowing elements from both Classical and Hellenistic Greek sculpture, indicating it is an early Roman composition derived from multiple Greek originals. The contrapposto pose and cool naturalism are clearly derived from the Classical style of the late 5th century B.C., where Greek artists reveled in mathematical approaches to proportion and idealism. Meanwhile, the emphatic youth of the figure, the long legs, and the lack of strong muscular accentuation is clearly influenced by the Early Hellenistic tradition of 4th century sculptors such as Lysippos. This combination is reflective of the taste of Romans of the late first century B.C. or first century A.D., who sought to decorate their public and private spaces in a way that evoked the sophistication and culture of the recently conquered Hellenistic kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean. Sculptors in Greece and Rome itself were commissioned to create replicas of the most famous sculptures from the Greek world and were often asked to create novel combinations to suit the taste of the purchaser, as was likely the case here.

The scale of the statue indicates a strong case for private use. Beginning in full force in the 1st century B.C., wealthy Romans commissioned sculptures in various media and scale to decorate their private residences. The Roman villa became the center of intellectual and political life, especially throughout the first century of the Roman Empire, where the Imperial Court became the true seat of power. Roman elites aimed to create an environment in their homes that was reflective of their own taste, political clout, and philosophical leanings. Common subjects included gods and goddesses, mythical creatures such as satyrs and nymphs, Hellenistic rulers, and Greek philosophers and poets.

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There are two visible repairs: one along the upper chest, reconnecting the left shoulder and pectoral to the body, the other along the upper right thigh. Neither of these are additions of later material and fortunately there has been minimal intervention throughout. The surface was cleaned and the piece was remounted in 2024, at which time a full condition assessment was conducted, which is available in a separate document.

This torso is reputed to have belonged to the Marbury Hall Collection, assembled by James Hugh Smith Barry (1748-1801). The Lord Barrymore Collection was kept in the family by descent from 1748-1932, when Lord Barrymore's nephew Robert Raymond Smith Barry (1886-1949) sold Marbury Hall. Some of the collection remained with the family, some of it was sold with the house, and a great deal was offered at auction, in 1933 and 1946 (Sotheby & Co., London) and later in 1987 (Christie's London). While the present torso was not included in any of the major sales, the 1882 catalog of the collection was noted as incomplete by its author Adolf Michaelis, saying about ancient sculpture "others are secluded in other rooms, to which I had not access" (p. 501). According to 'Notes on a New Edition of Michaelis, Ancient Marbles in Great Britain, Part Two,' pp. 336-337, "Despite the fairly complete account previously given (of ancient sculpture at Marbury Hall), a number of Smith-Barry sculptures have remained unaccounted for. A rare small auction catalogue gives a partial view. On 15,16 March 1933, Messrs. Arber, Rutter, Waghorn & Brown (Lionel Brown of 1 Mount Street) sold the remaining contents of the Residence."

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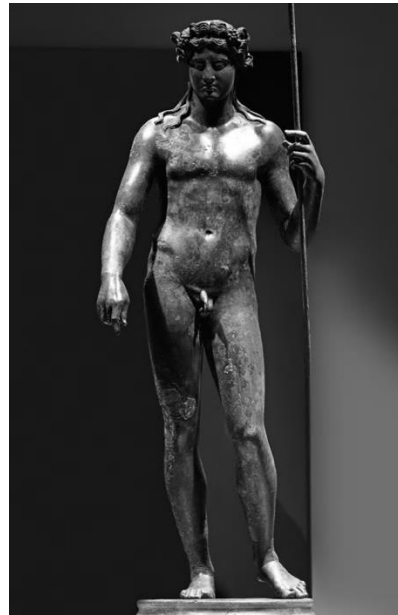
References:

The definitive, and most complete, account of Classicizing Sculptures from the ancient Mediterranean remains P. Zanker, *Klassizistische Statuen: Studien zur Veränderung des Kunstgeschmacks in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (P. von Zabern, 1974).

Comparanda:



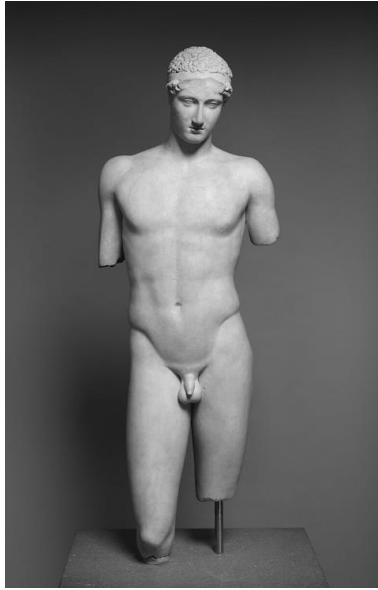
Apollo. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum,
1947.268



Dionysus. Rome, Museo Nazionale
Romano Palazzo Massimo alle Terme,
1060.

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Stephanos Youth. New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, 62.4.



Dionysus. Paris, Louvre Museum Ma87.