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Statue of a Seated Poet (Orpheus?)

330–300 BC

Inventory Number	76.AD.11.1
Typology	Statue
Location	Taranto region
Dimensions	
Orpheus with chair, footstool, and slab (overall): H: 104 cm; W: 56.8 cm; D: 100.8 cm	
Footstool rest: H: 6.7 cm; W: 29.7 cm; D: 24 cm	
Footstool rest, flat slab: H: 3 cm; W: 44.9 cm; D: 34.1 cm	

Fabric

Light orange in color, slightly purified with more intense shade (Munsell 7.5 yr 8/3–8/5); the surface is covered by a white slip of calcium carbonate. Preserved pigments.

FOOTSTOOL (76.AD.11.4): Upper surface, sparse orange-gold pigment. The sides of the footstool show a greater preservation of the orange-gold pigment layer as well as some black pigment. The base (76.AD.11.5) has a reddish tone.

CHAIR: Little pigment preservation on the sides; the legs were brightly colored in a gold-yellow pigment; the center panel of the chair back is also a gold color, similar to the legs, while the areas between the upper posts of the chair and the panel were red, indicating Orpheus's garment.

ORPHEUS: The head reveals traces of two colors in two layers: a red color layer partially covered with a layer of brown pigment. The drapery area is covered with a red pigment. The skin is pink.

Condition

The musical instrument and the middle finger of the left hand are missing. The figure was reassembled from a number of fragments prior to its acquisition by the J. Paul Getty Museum. The legs, the head, and several sections of the himation were reattached. Missing sections were filled in, especially on the chair in the area of the backrest and the rear portion of the torso. During this interval, for which no specific documentation exists, it is likely that invasive cleaning also damaged some of the ancient polychromy. Recent investigations have helped clarify that the obscuring encrustations were probably added at this time, especially on the body and the head, in order to conceal break lines and areas of fill and to give the figure a more uniform

appearance overall. The interior of the statue was also widely consolidated and reinforced with an added material, except in several sections where the clay is still visible. As a result, there are only a few places where the original marks of the modeling and the fingerprints of the coroplast can be observed. In 1983 exploratory cleaning on a limited portion of the footstool and chair was performed by the Getty's Antiquities Conservation Department, revealing some of the original polychromy and the presence of footprints on the upper surface of the footstool.

Provenance

– 1976 Bank Leu A. G. (Zurich, Switzerland), sold to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1976.

Bibliography

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