


44

Statuette of Apollo

200-100 BC

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Object Details

Catalogue Number	44
Inventory Number	96.AD.266 
Typology	Statuette
Location	Canosa
Dimensions	H: 21.8 cm; W: 10.9 cm

Fabric

Hazelnut brown in color (Munsell 5 yr 8/4), with a delicate and porous consistency and small reflective inclusions. The polychromy applied over a white slip is well preserved: purple (hair and base), pink (skin), white (himation, rocky base, and part of the kithara), and light blue (hem of the himation, leaves of the wreath, and lower part of the kithara).

Condition

Worn surface, various scratches, especially on the back of the figure. Several elements are missing, including a number of leaves of the wreath, the upper part of the instrument, and part of the *plektron*. There are small gaps in the back part and white accretions and black stains overall.

Provenance

Antike Kunst Palladion (Basel, Switzerland); by 1986–1987 Galerie Nina Borowski (Paris, France), sold to Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman, 1987; 1987–1996 Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman (New York, New York), donated to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996.

Bibliography

Galerie Nina Borowski, exh. cat. (Paris, 1986), no. 6; PASSION FOR ANTIQUITIES 1994, p. 355, no. 243; ACQUISITIONS 1996–98, p. 67.

Description

The figure stands on an irregularly shaped base. The body's weight rests on the right leg, while the left leg is bent, with the left foot resting on a projection that resembles a low rocky relief. The head is turned toward the left; the belly is plump, with the *linea alba* defined. The facial features are delicate and drawn in a soft *chiaroscuro*, giving the face a vaguely pathetic aspect; the long hair, parted in the center, is arranged in wavy locks, with two long ringlets draped onto the chest; in the back, the hair is gathered in a soft ponytail. A wreath with pointed leaves crowns the head. The ample *himation* is draped over the figure's left shoulder, leaving the torso and right shoulder bare, then rolled up on the hips, falling to the left in ample, thick folds. The feet are shod with high sandals. The *kithara*, held in the left hand, leans against the left shoulder. The right arm is bent and extended forward; the right hand, resting against the belly, holds the *plektron*.

The statuette depicts a crowned god with a *kithara*, probably Apollo or Dionysos, as the crown with triangular leaves seems to suggest. This subject was extensively portrayed in Magna Graecia and in Sicily in both vase-paintings and the *coroplastica* art. The type of Apollo with *kithara*, created in sculpture of the Classical age, was variously interpreted in the Hellenistic age. Particularly in the first half of the fourth century BC, the iconography of Apollo became the subject of new depictions, influenced by the statuary, which tended to emphasize the image of the musician and inspiring god. Apollo shared various iconographic affinities with the Dionysos as well, such as the hairstyle, the crown of ivy leaves, and the *himation* draped around the legs.¹

The iconography of Dionysos holding a lyre or *kithara* occurs rather infrequently and only at the end of the fifth century BC. It is represented, for example, in the Apulian context in a small group of red-figured vases decorated by the White Saccos Painter in the first half of the fourth century BC, probably reflecting a new tendency in Greek religion and an iconographic syncretism between Apollo and Dionysos already evident in the sculpture of Dionysos with *kithara* in the pediment of the Classical temple of Apollo at Delphi (360–320 BC).²

Depictions of Apollo standing nude or partially clothed with a foot resting on a rocky elevation were preferred in the Hellenistic period for the unstable rhythm of the pose, which gave greater dynamism and sharper tension in accordance with the new concept of the figure.

Some distinctive features, such as the cloak wrapping around the legs, the free left leg, the kithara held on the left side with the arm raised to the head—as in the Apollo Lykaïos by Praxiteles—and the long hair drawn back also characterize the Apollo Kitharoidos sculpted by Timarchides in 180 BC. It is known in various copies, the most complete of which is the so-called Apollo of Cyrene.³ However, this type was extensively modified in its many variants with the introduction of other elements, some of which appear in this statuette, such as the position of the right arm, bent forward with the *plektron* in hand.⁴ In stylistic terms, this figure emphasizes Praxitelean influences, as evident for example in the Apollo Lykaïos, upon which this statuette seems vaguely to be modeled, especially in the flexing position of the body, the soft, full nude figure, and the feminine hairstyle.⁵

The Getty statuette can be assigned to the production of Canosa in the second century BC; there is a very close parallel in another statuette, probably made from the same molds, now in a Swiss private collection, and also likely originating in Canosa.⁶ The type of the Apollo Kitharoidos is well documented in coroplastic art, with numerous eclectic variants, from other centers in Magna Graecia and Sicily—in Taranto, Egnazia, Caulonia, Paestum, and Centuripe.⁷ The popularity of the Apollo Kitharoidos iconography in Magna Graecia is also documented as early as the Classical period on a stater from Metaponto dating from 430 BC. It shows Apollo seated, looking right, and intently playing a large kithara.⁸

A number of statuettes of Apollo standing with kithara and *plektron* were also found among the deposits in the Campetti sanctuary at Veii, which are dated to the fourth century BC.⁹ At Myrina in Asia Minor, the type is well attested and fits into the more common production of Hellenistic coroplastic art, documenting an intense circulation of typologies and iconographies between eastern and western workshops.¹⁰ This Apollo is shown with the so-called Italiote kithara, which is well documented in the decorative repertory of South Italian vase-painting as early as 360 BC.¹¹ Characterized by a long rectangular shape, this instrument has narrow, straight vertical arms, a rectangular soundbox, and small disks at the ends of the arms. The number of strings can vary from five to nine. This instrument is also often associated with objects that symbolize matrimonial rites, and it appears in a symposium scene painted in a Macedonian chamber tomb.¹²

Appendix

The work was manufactured in three principal parts, each pushed into an open piece mold consisting of the body and head, three-quarters of the right arm, and the base. The body was formed by joining the front and back of the figure, indicated by the seams up both sides that join at the crown of the head. The right arm was manufactured separately, and seams are visible at the bicep and the hand. The figure is hollow but does not have a hollow underside; rather it has a separately made base. In clay and handling, the base is consistent with the body and right arm and continues the details and profile of the figure on its exterior. On the underside, there is a preserved swirl, which appears to have been rendered with the tip of a finger while the clay was still wet.

Normally the bottom would have been left open as a ventilation hole to prevent potential expansion or explosion during firing. However, because of the clay used, the continuous figural profile, and the lack of fracturing or any signs of later addition, it is apparent that the base with preserved swirl is original to the piece.

Structurally, the piece is sound but shows evidence that the head had been broken off and the figure broken in two at the waist. Both areas show plaster fills with overpaint, apparent in visible and ultraviolet light. After examination under a microscope and sample analysis with PLM and XRF, the extent of overpainting was found to be confined to the plaster fills, and none of the coloration of the figure had been refreshed or renewed.

Notes

1. For the iconography of Apollo in the early Hellenistic period in Magna Graecia and Sicily, see W. Lambrinoudakis, s.v. "Apollon," *LIMC* 2 (1984), esp. pp. 208–9 and n. 198 for a terracotta from Taranto. On the type of the Apollo Kitharoidos in sculpture, see FLASHAR 1992, pp. 124–25. On iconographic affinities between Dionysos and Apollo, see C. Gasparri, s.v. "Dionysos," *LIMC* 3 (1986), pp. 511–12; and A. Bottini, "Dioniso e Apollo nei grandi crateri di Celia," in *Studi in onore di Michele D'Elia: Archeologia, arte, restauro e tutela, archivistica* (Spoleto, 1996), pp. 46–56.
2. A. Cera, "Il dioniso citaredo del Pittore del Sakkos Bianco," *ACME* (Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Milano) 65, no. 2 (2012), pp. 31–57.
3. For the Apollo of Cyrene, see FLASHAR 1992, pp. 124–27; and P. Moreno, *Scultura ellenistica* (Rome, 1994), pp. 522–23. MARCHIONNO 1998; and M. Mertens-Horn, "La statua di Apollo citaredo della galleria delle statue nel Vaticano," in CASTOLDI 1999, p. 336, no. 744.
4. See, for example, the type of Apollo playing a kithara with a *plektron* in a statue in Venice: G. Traversari, *La statuaria ellenistica del Museo archeologico di Venezia* (Venice, 1986), no. 42, pp. 129–32; for other types, see MARCHIONNO 1998, pp. 364–65, n. 9.
5. On the hairstyles of Apollo in the Hellenistic period, see MARCHIONNO 1998, pp. 366–68; and Lambrinoudakis, "Apollon" (see n. 1 above), pp. 314–16, nos. 83–85.
6. See ART GREC INSOLITE 1988, no. 21 (generically identified as a kitharoidos of the entourage of Dionysos).

7. For the presence of the type in Magna Graecia and Sicily, see M. Bell, "Hellenistic Terracottas of Southern Italy and Sicily," in UHLENBROCK 1990, pp. 65–70; for the statuettes of Apollo Kitharoidos in Paestum dated between the fourth and third centuries BC, see M. Torelli, *Tota Italia: Essays in the Cultural Formation of Roman Italy* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 57–65, pl. II; at Caulonia, a statuette of Apollo with kithara comes from the area around the altar of the Punta Stilo Sanctuary, and another piece comes from the Temple of Apollo Alaios at Cirò: M. C. Parra, "Riflessioni e novità intorno al santuario Punta Stilo (Kaulonia)" in NAVA AND OSANNA 2005, pp. 27–42. For Taranto, see G. Fiorelli, "Scoperte di antichità nell'area dell'antica città greca e nell'acropoli," *NSc* 9 (1880–81), pp. 513–14 (seven statuettes of Apollo, partially draped, with kithara); *LA MUSIQUE ET LA DANSE* 1996, pp. 52–54 (findspot assumed); LEVI 1926, no. 139, fig. 37; and WINTER 1903, p. 352, nos. 1, 4, 6–7 (Apollo with ivy wreath and kithara from Egnazia and Taranto). From Sicily, see *LA MUSIQUE ET LA DANSE* 1996, no. 47, pl. 10; LIBERTINI 1926, pl. XXXIV, no. 1 (statuette of Apollo Kitharoidos sitting on a rock from the necropolis in Contrada Cannatelli in Centuripe, datable from the second to first century BC).
8. See S. P. Noe, *The Coinage of Metapontum*, part 2 (New York, 1984), p. 96, no. 431.
9. See A. M. Comella, *Materiali votivi del santuario di Campetti a Veio* (Milan, 1990), pp. 43–44.
10. For Myrina, see BESQUES 1963, pl. 101c–d, dating to the first century BC; also BREITENSTEIN 1941, no. 508, from Syria.
11. On the identification of the musical instrument carried by Apollo and the distinction between the lyre and the kithara, see MAAS AND SNYDER 1989, pp. 175–78; S. Sarti, "Gli strumenti musicali di Apollo," *AION* 14 (1992), pp. 95–104. For this type of kithara, see also several scenes painted on Apulian and Sicilian vases in D. Paquette, *L'instrument de musique dans la céramique de la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1984), p. 104, C4, C22, C23. For Apollo with the Italiote kithara, see the scene depicted on the lid of a Sicilian *lekane* (low handled bowl) dating to 340–30 BC, in Maas and Snyder 1989, p. 176.
12. For Macedonian wall-painting, see the seated female figure playing an Italiote kithara during a symposium in M. Tsimbidou-Avloniti, "Revealing a Painted Macedonian Tomb near Thessaloniki," in PONTRANDOLFO 2002, pp. 37–42.