



SIDON 2007
A MARBLE STATUETTE OF
APHRODITE ANADYOMENE

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Height : 34.9 cm,

Width: 9.4 cm.

Diameter of base: 11.3 cm.

Found in the fill of a Roman well with terracotta torsos, radiate heads and hunchbacks, coins and ceramics.

The figure is carved in white marble. It is now preserved from the neck to the unmoulded, oval base, the head and neck broken off. These were separately attached to the torso, with the remains of an iron dowel still visible in the neck, the latter shaped to form a socket. The arms, too, were dowelled to the torso just below the shoulders: an iron dowel may still be seen within the stump of the figure's right arm. The continued presence of the iron dowel within a marble sculpture subjected to changes in temperature has caused cracks to open up from the dowelled surface across the front and back of the figure towards the shoulder. The surrounding marble surface is stained reddish-brown from the iron and bruised brownish-grey from the dowel's expansion. The crack, surrounded by staining and bruising, continues down the right arm, recovered as a separate piece to just above the wrist. Similar damage may be seen across the front of the torso at the top of the thighs, indicating that the naked torso was dowelled into the draped legs, and the iron dowel is still present within the stone. There is also a gap between the torso and the drapery, again indicating that they were separately made and joined. On the figure's left side, a lump of iron at the base and a hole drilled just below knee level suggest that the figure was once accompanied.

The female figure, of immature proportions, is naked to the upper thigh, and bent over towards her left side, with her weight falling on her left leg, the right heel raised slightly off the ground.

The drapery is knotted immediately below the pudenda, with thick folds falling to the feet, of which the unshod toes may just be seen to either side. At the back of the figure, a similar, barely carved set of folds forms a pillar-like support below the exposed buttocks. The relative lack of finish on the back of the statuette suggests that it was intended for display in a niche or against a wall.

Similar forms of drapery with the central knot below the pudenda are widely known, notably in statues of Aphrodite from Egypt and surrounding regions under Ptolemaic control in the last centuries of the first millennium BC. The arrangement recalls the distinctive knot and cascading folds of drapery worn more modestly between

the breasts by the goddess Isis. There is no sign on this figure that the left hand once held the knot in place, as appears in two similar Pudica figures from Homs and Salamiah, now in Damascus Museum (Jentel 1984, n^o 36-7). Indeed, there would be little point in the gesture, as the pudenda is fully exposed. Instead, the stance of the figure suggests that the surviving right arm and missing left 85 were once raised to the level of the head, to wring sea-water from the hair. No trace of hair appears on the shoulders, indicating that the hands held extended locks. The figure may then be identified as a half-draped Aphrodite Anadyomene, a variant on the naked version of this representation of the goddess emerging from the waves. Probably the figure that was once attached to her left side was a dolphin, accompanying her from sea to shore. The original naked statue was based on a later fourth-century BC painting by Apelles, which, until its transport to Rome at the end of the first century BC could be admired at Cos (Neumer-Pfau 1982, 157-162). It is thought that the half-draped goddess was a naturalistic development of the third century BC, associated with the representation of mortal women in the guise of Aphrodite, notably Queen Arsinoe II of Egypt, who was worshipped as Aphrodite long after her death in 270 BC (Brinkerhoff, 1978, 58-62). The association with Arsinoe offers a likely explanation for the popularity of the figure in Egypt and its Ptolemaic dependencies.

The statuette from Sidon shares with many of its counterparts a "sfumato" technique, intended by the sculptor to reproduce the effect of a wet body and clothing. Notably similar is a figure acquired in Egypt, and now in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (Delivorrias 1984, n^o 672; Nielsen 1997, 71 n^o 36). This has been dated to about 100 BC, and the amount of piecing on the Sidon figure might suggest that this too is of late Hellenistic date. However, the extensive use of iron uncased with lead and the undistinguished carving indicate a later, Roman imperial date. A similar figure of Aphrodite Anadyomene, again with a visible gap between torso and drapery, appears on the coinage of Crispina, empress of Commodus, minted between AD 177 and 185 in Karallia, Cilicia (Delivorrias 1984, n^o. 686). It may be the case that both the Cilician coin and the Sidonian statuette represent a contemporary statue.

The amount of piecing in such a small-scale work, if not a deliberate recreation of Hellenistic technique, reflects a relative lack of marble at Sidon. It is likely that small pieces of Parian were used for this statuette, which exhibits none of the mica veins and lamination characteristic of Pentelic. Throughout antiquity, Parian was considered especially suited to the rendering of flesh and the achievement of a "sfumato" surface through abrasion, polishing and waxing (Walker and Hughes 2000, 451).

Parian marble used for the anthropoid sarcophagi of Sidon in the fourth century BC (Karageorghis 2000) was by the late second century AD largely quarried out. The prized marble was then mostly obtainable only in small chunks, its use restricted by the Roman imperial authorities who treated it as if it were a coloured stone (Fant 1989, 12, with n. 58, Pensabene *et al.*, 2000).

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