

6.11 BUST OF APOLLO BELVEDERE



Cast before conservation



Cast after conservation

6.11.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT

TITLE: Bust of Apollo Belvedere; copy of the section from white marble Roman sculpture of Apollo (ca. 120 – 140) which is thought to be a copy of a lost bronze original between 350 and 325 BC by the Greek sculpture Leochares.

NUMBER(S): 053, 052 (085)

TYPE OF OBJECT: Plaster cast with a metal/wooden structure inside.

MAKER: Brucciani

SIGNATURE/INSCRIPTION: D. Brucciani on back of the socle.

DATE: Unknown

OWNER/LOCATION: Edinburgh College of Art, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9DF.

DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT (APPROX): H: 800mm W: 570mm D: 360mm

Weight (approx):

6.11.2 BRIEF CONDITION REPORT BEFORE CONSERVATION

STRUCTURAL STABILITY: Good.

SURFACE DUST AND DIRT: Light covering of dust.

VISIBLE PAINT LAYERS/UNSIGHTLY MARKINGS: Several layers of over-paint leading to loss of detail; layer of black wax on top of the painted surface, concentrated in the detail; areas of flaking paint in crevasses of the drapery and hair.

CHIPS AND LOSS: Small chips, mostly in the form of losses to the thick paint layers, especially at the head.

ABRASIONS: Not significant.

PREVIOUS REPAIRS: From college archives we know that casts were previously treated many times but unfortunately the documentation is not very detailed, so we don't know what treatment exactly they received.

6.11.3 ORIGINAL MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

The object is a plaster cast with a metal/wooden reinforcing structure inside. There are several layers of over-paint on the surface of the cast. A layer of dark stained wax over the modern cream-beige paint layer, very similar to the upper most modern paint layer found on the Silenus and the Infant Dionysos.

6.11.4 TREATMENT REPORT

- Prior to any conservation treatment, the cast was photographed. This photographic documentation was continued throughout all conservation processes.
- The cast was dry cleaned with soft brushes and a rubber-nozzled vacuum to pick up the loose dust and dirt.
- Following a variety of wet cleaning spot tests, the surface of the cast was cleaned with white spirit, using cotton wool swabs.
- All areas of raw plaster were given an application of 10% Paraloid B72 in acetone to provide an isolating layer between the original plaster and the repairs.
- Areas of flaking paint were consolidated with 2% Primal A60B in de-ionised water.
- Areas of loss, and chips were filled with white micro-balloons mixed with 12% Paraloid B72 in acetone.
- All the fills were toned out with acrylics, mixed with matting agent, to match the surrounding patina.
- Finally, the entire cast was given an application of micro-crystalline wax so as to protect the surface. Before application wax was mixed with pigments: black and raw umber.

6.11.5 MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

CLEANING

The cleaning programme would involve the trained operatives, wearing the appropriate PPE, (nitrile gloves must be worn to protect the plaster as well as the operative) removing the loose dust using soft brushes and a vacuum cleaner with a rubber nozzle that would have muslin attached to its end. The muslin prevents any potential damage to the plaster from being lost in the vacuum cleaner. Any fragments that are dislodged, and their locations on the cast, should be documented and wrapped carefully in acid free tissue prior to being stored in a safe location. A trained conservator should be contacted immediately in order to repair the damage.

NB At no time should cleaning products or any liquid (including water) be used.

HANDLING AND CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Certain measures should be taken prior to and during the moving of these pieces:

1. It is recommended that all technicians and at least one member of the Curatorial/Archives Dept. should complete a course in sculpture handling. Any moving of sculpture should involve the attendance of at least one person who has attended such a course. The National Galleries of Scotland can supply the name of a recommended course.
2. A manual on the handling of sculpture should be made available to staff and students. ('The Care and Handling of Art Objects' by Shelley is recommended.)
3. Before handling an object it should be examined closely and any old repairs and structural weaknesses noted. Do not test or probe areas that appear weak. Never grasp projecting elements (arms, etc.) of the object as they will not support the weight.
4. Gloves should always be worn when handling or touching objects as acids and salts from perspiration can damage many materials especially plaster.
5. Report any damage to the object immediately and collect all fragments before leaving the area.
6. The object should be well protected with padding in the form of foam, Plastazote and bubble-wrap especially any fragile or projecting areas that are likely to catch on doorways etc.

7. Avoid haste and confusion while handling as this can result in injury to the handlers or damage to the object. The route to be taken, door sizes and the space for the object at the receiving end should be assessed before a move begins. Two people, at least, should be present throughout the move, one of them to open doors, steady the object where necessary and watch parts of it that the carrier cannot see.