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*Statue of a Boy, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.*

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## ROMAN IMPERIAL

### *STATUE OF A BOY*, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.

Marble

62 x 70 x 49 cm; 24 1/2 x 27 1/2 x 19 1/4 in.

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#### **Provenance**

Found in the Il Rosaio de' Padri Missionari vineyard outside Porta Portese in Rome in May 1827;  
Formerly in the collection of the sculptor Leandro Biglioschi, Rome;  
Acquired in 1840 by the Königliche Museen zu Berlin;  
Deaccessioned by the above and sold in 1922 to Philip Lederer and Gümüşdjian, Berlin, and  
Reiling, Mainz;  
German private collection, from 1953;  
Thence by descent in the family.

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#### **Literature**

F. Tieck, *Königliche Museen. Verzeichniss der antiken Bildhauerwerke*, Berlin 1847, p. 19, no. 138.  
Comte de Clarac, *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, Vol. 4, Paris 1850, p. 192, no. 1577, pl. 677.  
A. Conze, *Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der antiken Skulpturen*, Berlin 1885, p. 89, no. 486.  
A. Conze, *Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Beschreibung der antiken Skulpturen*, Berlin 1891, p. 188f., no. 486 (ill.).  
K. Fittschen and J. Bergemann (eds), *Katalog der Skulpturen der Sammlung Wallmoden*, Munich 2015, p. 63, note 3, Beilage 8c.

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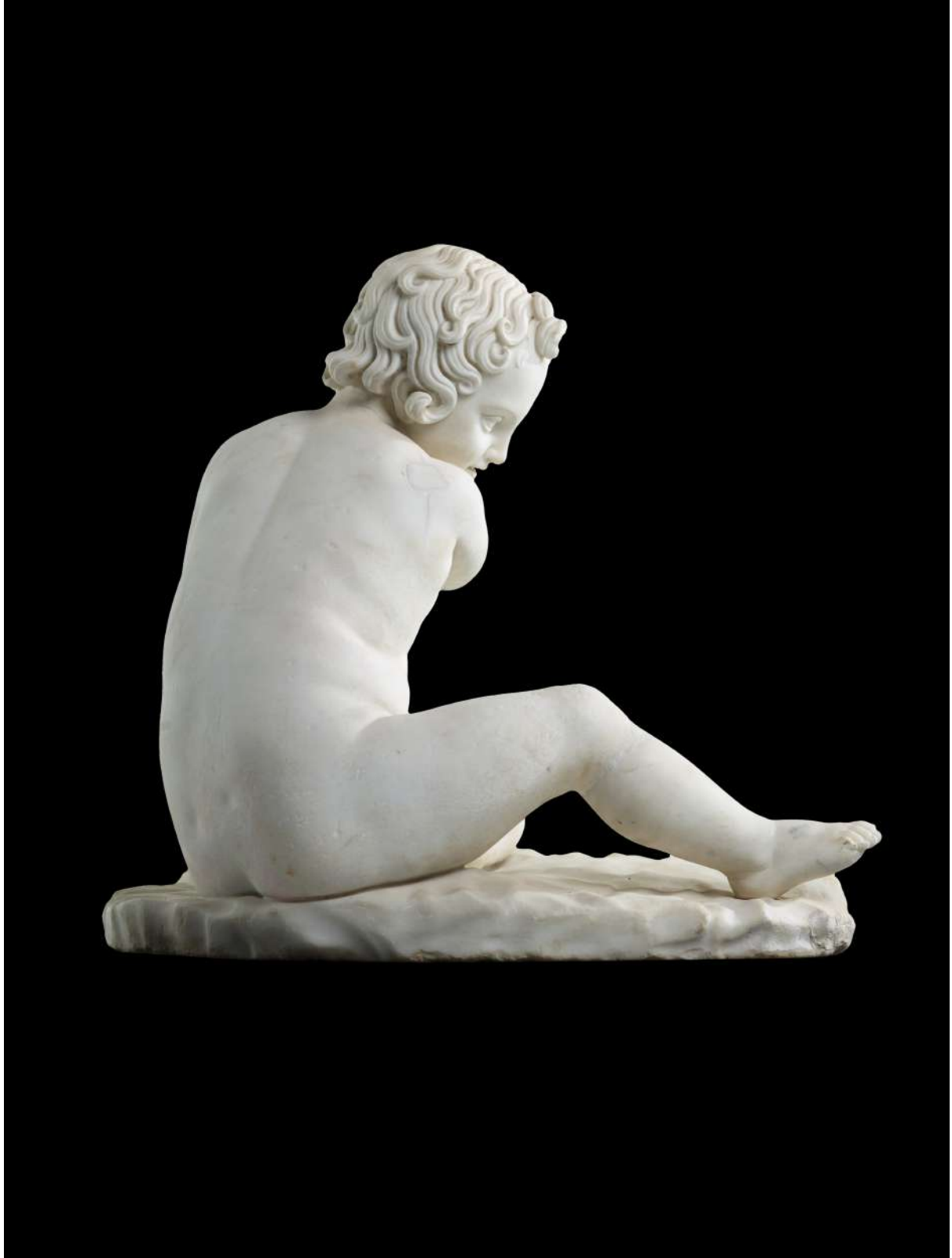
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This Roman sculpture in white marble, dating from the 2nd century AD, represents a young child sitting on a rock in an attitude that radiates gentleness and spontaneity. The sculpture also illustrates a certain naturalism. Particular attention was paid to each anatomical detail, which gives the work a great delicacy. His head, tilted to the left, brushes his shoulder, while his short, wavy hair frames his face. His slightly lowered gaze is directed towards the ground. He is hugging a bunch of grapes to his chest. Grapes are a symbol associated with Dionysus, god of fertility, abundance and earthly pleasures, and this bunch is the central element of the composition.

His left hand supports the bunch at its base, while his right hand is splayed firmly over the upper part in a gesture that is both protective and instinctive. The child is represented in the act of recoiling. This detail attests to the sculptor's talent for reproducing such a lively scene. The plump shapes of his body, accentuated by delicate curves, are sublimed by a subtle play of shapes and textures. The slight folds around his chest and stomach, as well as the natural sag of his stomach onto his right leg, translate a particular attention to the representation of baby fat, grounded in a quest for realism. His lightly etched navel and full, voluminous thighs further add to this aesthetic, exalting the softness inherent to youth. Our child is represented naked, with a visible sex; a detail that adds to the figure's authenticity. His carefully executed posture appears both balanced and natural.

His right leg is extended while the left is curled inwards, creating a bodily dynamic that suggests movement while lending the piece a feeling of grace and life. The flat rock making up the child's seat has oval contours and is in slight relief. The child's position upon it is asymmetrical, his buttocks occupying one end of the rock while his right foot reaches towards the other. His left heel is touching the middle of the rock, completing a carefully studied triangular composition. Through this arrangement, the body of the child and his seat are in harmony, emphasising the interaction between the figure and his immediate environment.

The beautifully rendered details and textures of this sculpture, carved from a particularly polished white marble, illustrate the artist's technical mastery. The meticulously carved grapes and round shapes of the youthful body showcase the artist's expertise and attachment to an idealised realism inherited from Hellenistic art. The particularly luminous surface of the marble is sublimed by a delicate patina.

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Our statue displays several visible restorations, attesting to its history and the attention given to its conservation. The head, neck, part of the right forearm, fingers of the right hand, left foot, vine leaves and right leg from the knee down have been restored. These alterations, probably carried out by Leandro Biglioschi in the 19th century, underline the importance given to the conservation of this work.

The iconography of a child holding a bunch of grapes evokes two possible mythological figures: Dionysus (Bacchus), the incarnation of fertility and wine, or Eros (Cupid), deity of love and desire. This figure probably depicts Dionysus. Such works were often used to decorate the gardens of Roman villas and banquet halls. By exalting bucolic and mythological themes, they contributed to glorifying nature and the pleasures of life. Grapes, as a metaphor for abundance and prosperity, reinforced that hedonistic theme.

Our sculpture was probably inspired by a Greek original, as were many similar works, attesting to the dissemination and adaptation of this statuary type in antiquity.

A first comparison can be made with a sculpture preserved at the National Museum of Denmark, dating from between the 1st and 2nd century AD and discovered near Taranto (fig. 1). This work also takes up the motif of a child holding a bunch of grapes, although it is noticeably different from our sculpture due to the inclined position of the child's body, which changes the balance of the composition while preserving the essence of the subject.

The sculptural group at Łańcut Castle (fig. 2) also merits a mention, as it includes the body of a youthful Dionysus holding a bunch of grapes from the Roman period. The composition is quite different and features ancient elements and later additions. The group was assembled in the 18th century and acquired by Izabela Lubomirska upon her visit to Rome from 1785 to 1786. Prior to that, it was located at the famous Villa Negroni, an important landmark for the ancient art market in Rome. The work attests to the enduring fascination of the European elites for ancient themes and models, altered to cater to the tastes of their time.

A sculpture from the Wallmoden collection in Germany, dating from the Julio-Claudian period (27 BC–AD 68) and considered to be a Roman copy of a Hellenistic original (fig. 3), also serves as a reference. It, too, features the motif of a child holding a bunch of grapes, with the right hand placed in a similar way. However, in this case, the child is represented on a higher rock, which significantly changes the visual impact and perception of the scene.

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Finally, the example conserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 4) is the most similar to our sculpture. The child's general posture, the arrangement of his legs and the exact gesture of hugging the bunch of grapes to his chest resonate almost perfectly with our work. This striking similarity suggests that a common ancient model existed, most likely created in the Hellenistic period.

Our sculpture, discovered in the Il Rosaio de' Padri Missionari vineyard outside Porta Portese (in Rome in 1827, attests to that period's fascination for antiquity. Archaeological digs, which were in full swing in the 19th century, generously supplied private and public collections. The sculpture was added to the collection of the sculptor and restorer Leandro Biglioschi, a major figure in the conservation of antique sculptures and one of Antonio Canova's assistants. Named Regent of the Virtuosi al Pantheon (the Pope's honour society for artists) in 1821, Biglioschi played a major role in the conservation of ancient works. Before that distinction, Canova himself had commissioned Biglioschi to sculpt four marble busts for the Pantheon, currently preserved at the Capitoline Museums. It is likely that Biglioschi restored our statue.

In his work *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, published in 1850, the Comte de Clarac referred to our sculpture as belonging to Leandro Biglioschi and as representing a young Dionysus (fig. 5). In 1840, the sculpture was acquired by the Königliche Museen in Berlin (fig. 6), joining a collection of major works. In 1922, however, in the context of extensive sales made by museums in Berlin, it was sold to art traders (Philipp Lederer, Gümüschdjian and Reiling). It was then acquired in 1953 by a German private collector, who passed it down by descent.

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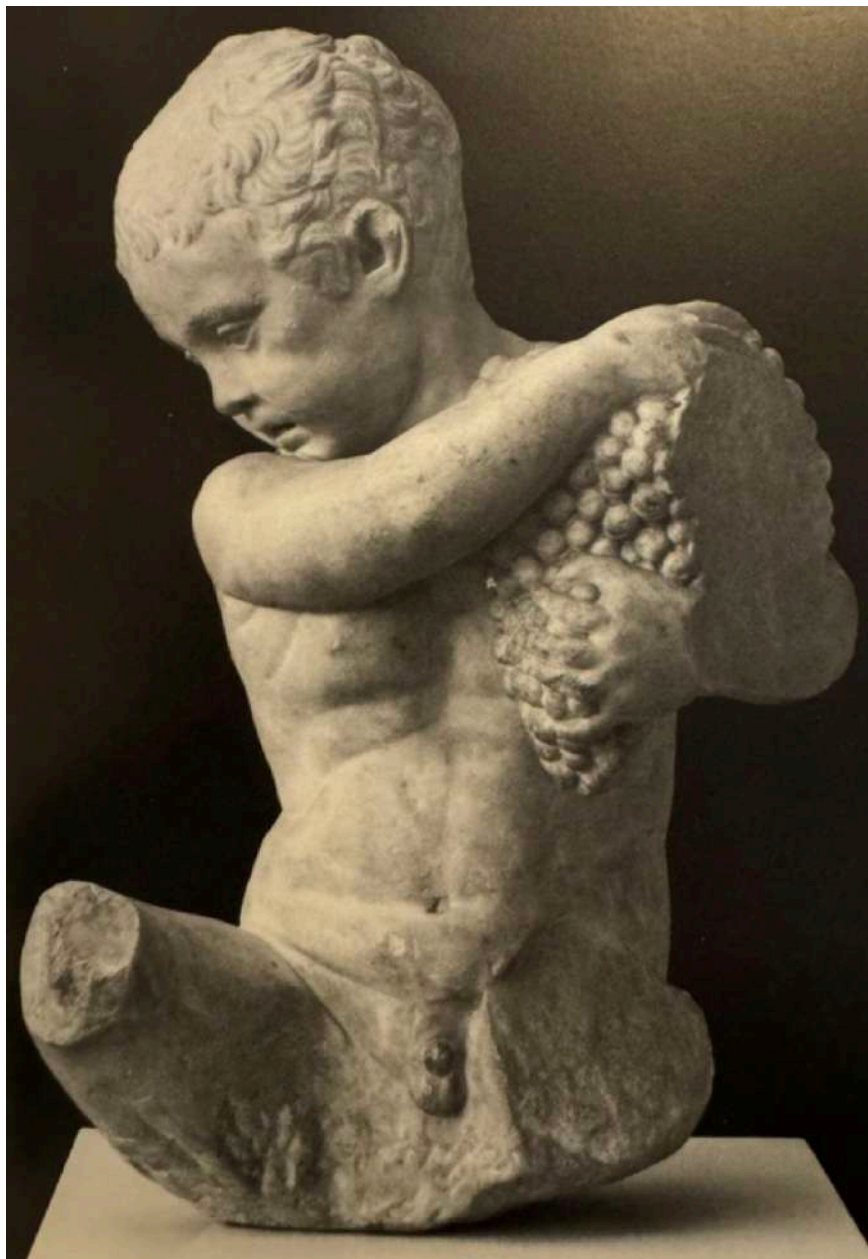


Fig. 1. *Child holding a bunch of grapes*, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 59 cm. National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, inv. no. VIII 302 (found near Taranto).

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Fig. 2. *Dionysus astride a panther*, Roman, 2nd century AD, marble. Łańcut Castle, Poland. Group assembled in the 18th century.



**#44**  
**Nymphs and Satyrs**  
Peter Paul Rubens (Enthwurf) (1677-1680)  
Oil on oak - 80.7 x 77 cm  
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille  
Inv. No. EA 10416/87

The Bacchantes - the celebrators in honor of the god Dionysus / Bacchus - are the unbridled opposite pole to great measured cultivation. Dancing, feasting and strong beliefs of nature are here giving the youths a very unworldly freedom. With Hansmann's *Allegory, Sleep and Drunken Landscapes* in the Centre-Bourgeois Collection in Frankfurt, the motif was already represented in the Malibucaan "Bacchus", where otherwise Christian motifs predominated (J. Cat. No. H48, 110).

U.K. Landingsham 1991, p. 101, No. 101.



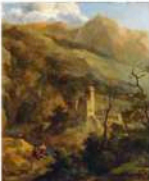
**#43**  
**Boy with Grapes**  
Julio-Claudian Copy of a lost Late Hellenistic original (27 BC-AD 58)  
Marble - 82.5 x 78 x 42 cm  
Found on the Palatine Hill in Rome in 1766, attributed by Giovanni Angelini  
1856 Ernst August, Hereditary Prince of Hannover Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg

The boy repeats the addition of an important animal, a costume perhaps, from where the child is trying to protect the grapes - though of course it could have been the artist's intention to leave the animal to the imagination. Checked as a general of his features and touches of his torso (the typical features of the young Dionysus), the boy shows the features and the hairstyle of Julio-Claudian child portraits (J. Cat. No. 1442), smaller specimens are accordingly common in Roman art. 110

U.K. Sculpture 1971, pp. 40-41, No. 13 (British Museum).

**#42**  
**Mountain Landscape with Shepherd, Shepherdess and a Goat**  
Nicolaus Bachmann (1720-1802)  
Oil on canvas - 85 x 68 cm  
Signed at bottom right: "Bachmann"  
Private collection

A young couple lean some together against the background of a forest meadow and its lush vegetation. The little goat (J. Cat. No. 1442) implies that the encounter has a sexual connotation. Bachmann himself painted over the tree on the right of the picture, which was originally left, so as to give it a better aspect. Later in the previous generation that some other hand had been involved, the overpainting was removed again. The most recent restoration was



Work the tree with the harmonies that the artist intended. In this way the painting synthesizes the regenerative interchange of the work itself - not only in the subject matter but also in the history of its creation and restoration (J. Cat. No. 1442) 110

U.K. Sculpture in Great Britain, p. 348, No. 720

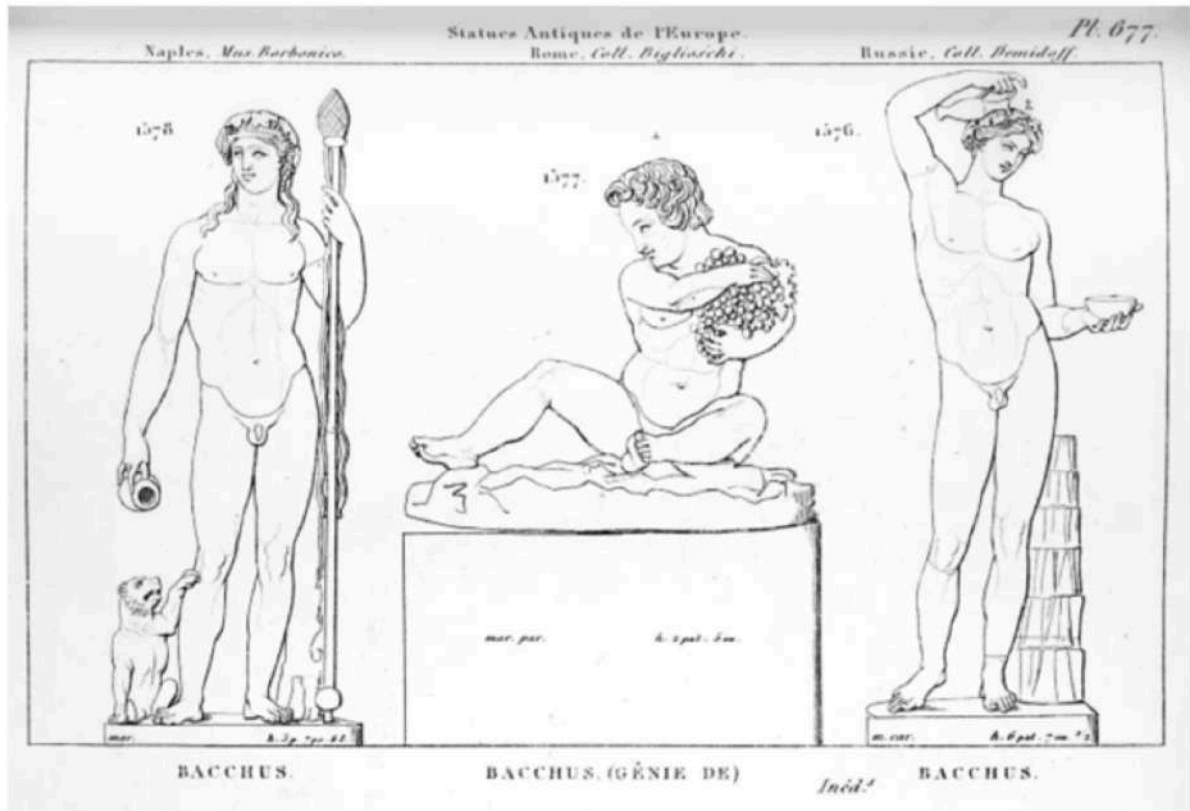
Fig. 3. *Child holding a bunch of grapes*, Roman, Julio-Claudian period, copy made in the 2nd century AD after a Hellenistic original (27 BC-AD 58), marble, H.: 82.5 cm. Wallmoden collection.

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Fig. 4. *Statue of a boy with grapes*, first half of the 2nd century AD, marble, H.: 61 cm.  
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa collection, Malibu, California.

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COMTE DE CLARAC, *MUSÉE DE SCULPTURE ANTIQUE ET MODERNE*, VOL. 4, PARIS, 1850, P. 192, NO. 1577, PL. 677

Fig. 5. Comte de Clarac, *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, Vol. 4, Paris, 1850, p. 192, no. 1577, pl. 677.

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№	DATUM	BEZUGS-NR.	GEGENSTAND	ORIGINELE BESITZ
M 483			Athlet, Büste h. 0,494 (Lysipp)	
	46			Aus Rom
M 484			Athletenkopf h. 0,44	
	265			S. Polignac
M 485			Jornauspicher, Statue h. 0,825	
	157. 530			Villa Aldobrandini
486			Knabe m. c. Weintraube, Statue h. 0,625	
			abgeb. Clarac IV, 677, 1577. Gips (nach Clarac) Mai 1847 von	
			Paola Coste in der Villa Romio de' Patri Minimari,	
	458		C. Bigliocchi.	L. Este?

Fig. 6. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, acquisition logs for the antiquities collection, Division of ancient sculptures and plaster casts. Sculpture inventory. N. 1-1000, 1766- 1884, p. 140f.

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