

A MARBLE STATUETTE FROM CANNON STREET, LONDON

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The Catalogue of Antiquities in the Nicholson Museum, Sydney includes an item described as "a very fine Torso (probably that of Diana) found in Cannon Street, London".¹ Professor Alexander Cambitoglou has very kindly supplied a photograph of the piece, which is part of a marble statuette of high quality.² Like the well known sculptures from the London mithraeum, it is presumably an import.

Although only the body, upper arms and base of the neck remain, they are sufficient to identify the figure as a young woman wearing a chiton. The garment is hitched over her left shoulder, leaving the right breast and arm exposed. The quiver-strap suspended from her right shoulder confirms that she is a huntress or a warrior; while the tight binding of the top of the himation or mantle, around her waist (just above the point where the lower part of the statuette is broken away) further suggests some active pursuit.

The right arm would seem to be inclined downwards and the left arm rests against a vertical object, almost certainly a spear. It was evidently beyond the skill of the sculptor to remove the surplus stone between body and spear on this side.

It is tempting to see in the figure a reflection of Phidias's Amazon which stood with similar statues by Polykleitos and others in the temple of Artemis at Ephesos.³ Of course, such a statue could well have been adapted in Graeco-Roman times to serve as a type of Artemis-Diana herself,⁴ and in this connexion it may be noted that Diana is attested in London by an altar from Goldsmiths' Hall and by a red jasper intaglio from Moorgate Street.⁵ A third, and admittedly less likely possibility is that the marble represents the Arcadian heroine Atalanta who slew the Calydonian Boar.⁶

Despite the rather vague description of the findspot and lack of indication of when the piece was found, it is very likely that it came from the vast Governor's Palace which is now known to lie in the Cannon Street area. Such a building, it may be supposed, would have been furnished with a choice collection of sculpture and other works of art.⁷

NOTES

¹ E. Reeve, *Catalogue of the Museum of Antiquities of the Sydney University*, (Sydney 1870) 96 No. 1209.

² Present height 106 mm; Width 129 mm. The crisp and careful cutting suggest to me a date no later than the middle of the second century A.D.

³ D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art* (Oxford 1957) 216-222 pl. lxxxix. He cites Pliny, *N. H.* XXXIV, 53 and Lucian, *Imagines* 4 and 6.

⁴ For marble statuary showing Diana, found in the North-Western provinces of the Empire, none of it iconographically identical with this statuette, cf E. Espérandieu, *Recueil Général des Bas-Reliefs de la Gaule Romaine*, (Paris 1907) Nos. 929 (Chiragan); 1324 (Saintes); 7739 (Trier, Altbachtal); 5107 (Bertrich near Trier). *B. M. Guide to Roman Britain* (1958 edn.) 55 and pl. xx No. 11 (Woodchester).

⁵ R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London* (London 1965) 200 and pl. lxxxvi. M. Henig, *A Corpus of Roman Engraved Gemstones from British Sites*, BAR 8 (ii) (Oxford 1974) 38 and pl. viii No. 252.

⁶ M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, revised edn. (New York 1961) 24 Fig. 58. Also cf M. L. Krüger, *Die Rundskulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Carnuntum* (Vienna 1967) 19 No. 36 which also appears to show Atalanta.

⁷ There are of course other possibilities. Mr. Hugh Chapman points out to me that a temple of the imperial cult (attested by *R.I.B.* 5 from Nicholas Lane) as well as the Walbrook Mithraeum, lie in the vicinity of Cannon Street.