

## ALEXANDRIA

### **73. Bone plaque with representation of Dionysus**

Alexandria. Kom el-Dikka

3rd-4th century AD

H. 11.3 cm, W. 5 cm, yellowish bone

Kom el-Dikka, storeroom, Inv. No. 1728

Image of Dionysus on a plaque, rendered in high relief thanks to the natural curving of the bone. The surface was polished, the background smooth. The naked figure was depicted in frontal stance. The naked body of the god has been depicted frontally, in slight contrapost, leaning back on the left elbow, the right arm raised high above the head, holding up the edge of a mantle, a fold of which is draped across the left arm as well. The god appears to be looking to his left, his head tilted slightly in this direction. His long tresses, caught in a simple diadem at the top, descend onto the shoulders. The bottom edge of the plaque is broken off above the knees of the figure.

The figure appears to draw upon earlier prototypes, particularly statues of Apollo Lykaios by Praxiteles. It was used frequently to depict Dionysus in full statuary, as much as in small bone representations. Images of Dionysus and members of his cortège (maenads, satyrs, Pan) are among the most widespread figural motifs on products of bone and ivory encountered in Alexandrian art. The popularity of representations from the Dionysian cycle, depicted also in stone statuary, wooden carvings and textiles, continued well beyond the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt.

G.M.

E. Rodziewicz, Reliefs figuré en os à Kom El-Dikka, *EtTrav X* (1978), pp. 317-336

J. Jabłonowska-Taracha, Bone objects from Polish excavations at Kom el-Dikka, Alexandria, Part I, *Archeologia LI* (2000), pp. 51-60

