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MUSEUM PAPER

Title: *Standing Male Deity*

Artist: Public Domain

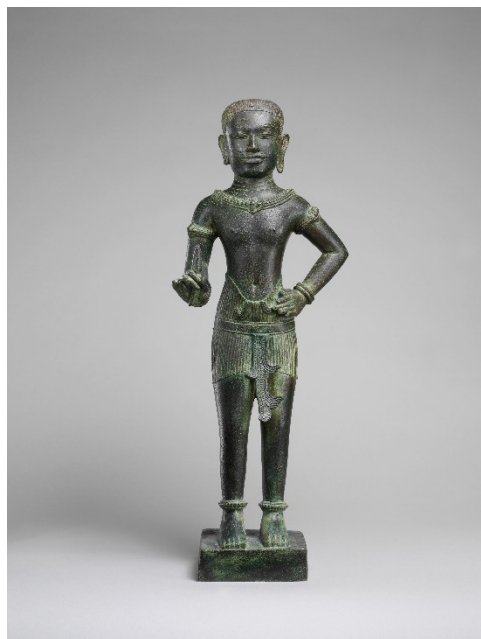
Date: 2nd half of the 11th century

Culture: Cambodia

Medium: Bronze

Classification: Sculpture

Accession Number: 2015.500.4.28



Title: *Adam*

Artist: Tullio Lombardo (1455-1532)

Date: ca. 1490–95

Culture: Italian, Venice

Medium: Marble

Classification: Sculpture

Accession Number: 36.163



The Human Male Figure

The *Standing Male Deity* on the Public Domain and *Adam* by Tullio Lombardo, at the Met Museum in New York, draw attention to the postures that male figures assume based on their perceived status in society. Both statues are full-body sculptures that confront the observer directly. Their size appears to be comparable to that of a human male figure, and their placement appears to appeal to the powerful or well-built qualities of human male figures.

The *Standing Male Deity* sculpture depicts a middle-aged man standing guard before what would be assumed to be an entry into a superior's presence or residence. Its posture is stern and authoritative, with his left arm on his waist and the right slightly raised, indicating resistance. The straight posture also denotes that the *Standing Male Deity* is not relaxed or is in a state of high alert. In addition, his right hand appears to be holding a knife which can be presumed to be weaponry for defense against antagonists. The expression of the *Standing Male Deity*'s face also appears to be calm and composed as a bodyguard would while keeping their asset safe from imminent danger from the surrounding, further indicating fearlessness in the line of danger. The details on the sculpture indicate that the figure was made in a versatile manner to achieve the finest detail. The *Standing Male Deity* sculpture is made of metal, it is black with a shiny finish and a metallic luster and rich hue. The metallic finish is made from bronze material as it was favored for public monuments compared to fine art due to its ductility and durability. In addition, the bronze material has a rich coloring that overtime has developed a distinctive burnish that gives the dark and goldish intensity well associated with the material. The decorations also appear to have specific symbols that have a specific meaning, such as the additions on the gold necklace and silver belt stretching down to his crotch. He also appears to be wearing a gold wig on his head and

anklets down to his feet. Thus, the gold-plated ornaments on the artwork show soldiers were among the high-ranking officers close to the queen's guard. Also, the gold-plated ornaments and decorations from head to toe further depict the sculpture to be symbolic of a divine being. Various gods from different cultures are usually well decorated to show preciousness to their divine being in exchange for answered prayers. The soldier-like aspect includes the upright posture with both legs firm at the attention position and the neck with a straight gait. The posture symbolizes someone with respect, such as soldiers, royalty, or divine beings.

The statue of *Adam* depicts a younger man, presumably in his mid-twenties. His posture appears to be relaxed, with his left leg slightly twisted while using the right to support the weight of his body. Hence, with the help of his posture, it is easily provable that the man is not on high alert and maybe strolling around enjoying the scenery. The left hand appears to hold an object in the shape of a fruit, and the right hand appears to be leaning on a tree branch. Thus, the man is likely to be in the forest picking fruits. The fruit-like object on his hand also depicts the man's food source.

Furthermore, according to the creation story, *Adam* is entirely naked, only covering his crotch depicting the ancient times during Adam's reign as depicted in the Bible. The well-toned male physique of *Adam* shows that the body is associated with muscle as intended by the creator. The expression on the man's face is a delight with a slightly turned neck, further indicating the extent of an individual's appreciation of the beautiful and safe surroundings. The statue of *Adam* is made of marble, and it is in a light beige color. The light falling on the piece also creates a conspicuous contrast appearing like an angel descending from heaven. Moreover, this concept is emphasized by the raised position of the artist, creating an impression of a divine being. The divinity of the statue

can be based on the fact that Adam was the first man; thus, we are all from his lineage presents a compelling case to consider him divine.

Compared to the *Standing Male Deity*, the *Adam* sculpture has more minor details, colors, and touches. It depicts a much simpler time when man did not care for wealth or ranking in society. It starts with the uniform and precise color painted throughout the entire statue. However, the *Standing Male Deity* is more colorful with decorations that signify a specific social class recognized by the community with a combination of shiny black, gold and silver. In the second figure, *Adam*, the man, is not afraid or cautious of his environment but enjoys his piece of fruit while leaning on a tree branch. But the *Standing Male Deity* appears to be at high alert, hence, the upright posture and straight gait with an object that appears to be a weapon.

On the other hand, *Adam* is more relaxed with a slightly slanted posture because of leaning on the branch with a delightful look on his face. Also, the posture of the *Standing Male Deity* and the elevated position of *Adam* both draw attention to their association with divine beings.

Nevertheless, the two works of art share the common ideology about the human male physique and its beauty as intended. It is clear a good work of art describing the male physique should be observant of specific features such as the upright and authoritative gait as well as the muscles. Interestingly, the art pieces depicted two different times in history, which is before and after civilization. The artworks also demonstrate how times have changed culturally through dressing and socially depicting the need for the soldier-like posture. All in all, the two sculptures do a great job presenting the male physique.