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Manche sculpté au centaure jouant de la lyre

Commune de découverte : Toulouse

Lieu-dit : «Rectorat (extension)»

Où le trouver ?

Toulouse (31) - Musée Saint-Raymond

31000 Toulouse

Domaine : Religious object

Période chronologique Gallo-Roman [- 50 / 476] → Early Imperial [27 / 235]

Dimensions H. 9.5 cm

Description : Ivory Round Bump.

This object, whose utilitarian part has disappeared, is probably a handle for an incense spoon, a pretext for a rich and complex sculpted decoration treated in the round. At the top, a centaur, firmly planted on his left hindquarters and leaning on his front legs, plays the lyre. His bearded head is framed by a long hair. He is sitting on a rock contained in the basin of a large tripod. The distance between the feet of the latter is maintained at mid-height by a hollowed-out crown and, at the base, by an openwork dome topped by a double button. Each foot forms a fluted pilaster finished at the bottom by four claws and crowned at the top by a capital decorated with a figure in low relief. The first, a man, carries an inverted torch in one hand and a vase in the other. The second raises his arms, lifting a small wineskin with his right hand. The third, a woman, is dancing, holding a stick

behind her back that could be a thyrses, raising a tambourine, like the maenads. A frieze of three masks, between a row of beads and pirouettes and a twist, separates the tripod from the lower part of the object. Two of these masks are almost identical: they represent a face in three-quarter view or in profile, turned to the left, bearded and with hair, with pronounced features. The third (which faces them) is a young, beardless face, with a band around the forehead. An inverted cantharus and a thyrses (?) separate him from the other two. The centaur is none other than Chiron, the tutor of Apollo's son, Asclepius-Esculapius. The cantharus, the thyrses, the maenad and the satyrs, which can be recognized in the masks, evoke the procession of Bacchus, the Dionysus of the Greeks. The tripod symbolizes Apollo, whose cult in Delphi was replaced in winter by that of Dionysus.

Bibliographie : <https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/joconde/05630000268>

Cazes (Quitterie) et alii, "Les fouilles du Rectorat à Toulouse", dans Mémoires de la Société Archéologique du Midi de la France, 1989, t. XLIX, p. 6-43. (p. 41-43)

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