

A GENUINE DILEMMA: THE PIOMBINO APOLLO AND FRAUD IN THE FIRST
AND SECOND-CENTURY GRECO-ROMAN ART MARKET

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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In 1832, fishermen pulled a full-body bronze sculpture of a youth, now called the Piombino Apollo, from the sea near ancient Populonia. Under life-size, the piece resembles an Archaic kouros, though it has some notable unusual features including an inscription dedicating the supposed image of Apollo to Athena and the signatures of two artists found on a lead tablet hidden within the hollow bronze. These unusual features led scholars to eventually reclassify the piece from an Archaic work of the fifth century to an Archaistic forgery of the second or first century.

Few have challenged this reclassification, but this thesis attempts to complicate the application of the word forgery to the Piombino Apollo. Further, it examines whether a contemporary buyer would have been fooled by the sculpture's "deceptive" traits and offers alternative possibilities to account for the artists' choices of style, pose, and inscriptions.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PIOMBINO APOLLO

In 1832, fishermen from Piombino, Italy pulled from the sea an ancient bronze sculpture, later named the Piombino Apollo (Figures 1-3). Originally dated to the Archaic period, the bronze sculpture displayed some of the familiar attributes of a typical kouros. However, it also had some unusual features that suggested this dating was incorrect, including stylistic inconsistencies, an unusual inscription on the foot, and a fragmentary lead tablet, found inside the statue, inscribed with the names of two artists, Menodotos and an associate from Rhodes whose name was too damaged to decipher (Figures 4-5).¹ These features led Brunilde Ridgway in 1967 to re-date the sculpture from an Archaic work of the late sixth century to a Hellenistic work of the first.² In addition, Ridgway concluded that the Piombino Apollo was a forgery that the sculptors must have attempted to pass it off as an older, Archaic work that would earn them more money in the first-century art market.³ Ridgway's re-classification of the sculpture as an Archaistic work has been widely accepted, and few have argued against her conclusions about the artists' intentions to deceive.

¹ Brunilde Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo from Piombino in the Louvre," *Antike Plastik* 7 (1967): 65. The partial inscription reads "HNOΔO," and was first linked to Menodotos and a family of sculptors, originally from Tyre, who were active during the first and second centuries B.C.E. by S. Dow, "A Family of Sculptors from Tyre," *Hesperia* 10 (1941): 351-60. For more recent information on the family, see R. Vollkommer, *Künstlerlexikon der Antike* vol. 2 (München: K.G. Saur, 2004), 69-71, N. Badoud, "Une famille de bronziers originaire de Tyr," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 172 (2010): 125-143, and S. Kansteiner et al., *Der Neue Overbeck: Die antiken Schriftquellen zu den bildenden Künsten der Griechen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 379-395.

² *Ibid.*, 66.

³ *Ibid.*, 62. See also J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 150. Pollitt notes that it is unnecessary to distinguish Roman from Hellenistic during the first century B.C.E., which resulted in a "fusion of Greek artistic traditions with Roman taste and patronage."

Recently, scholars have revisited the Piombino Apollo in a 2015 exhibition and its accompanying catalogue, *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*.⁴ The catalogue, though it maintains Ridgway's categorization of the Piombino Apollo as an Archaistic piece, also presents a late second-century date for the sculpture. In this text, the nature of the Piombino Apollo is again examined by such authors as Christopher Hallett and Seán Hemingway, who readdress Ridgway's conclusions about the artists' intent to deceive. Hallett in particular cites Ridgway's 1967 article, stating that "her view that the piece is an ancient forgery has received wide (but not universal) acceptance."⁵ Hemingway, for his part, takes for granted Ridgway's conclusions about the artists' intent to deceive and claims that the two signers of the interior lead tablet "may have been the perpetrators of this ancient fake."⁶ Yet the conclusion of forgery addressed by Ridgway's article and echoed in other, more recent scholarship may be more open than previously believed.

Because of the resurging interest in the Piombino Apollo, it is necessary to revisit Ridgway's original arguments about the supposedly deceptive qualities of the statue, and, in particular, her use of the word "forgery" to characterize the sculpture. Though Ridgway was responding to a tradition of scholarship surrounding the Piombino Apollo, her pivotal 1967 article was the first to give legitimacy to any conclusion of forgery. The

⁴ I would like to thank the University of Oregon Department of the History of Art and Architecture for providing me with a research travel grant, which I used to carefully study the Piombino Apollo in person.

⁵ Christopher Hallett, "Looking Back: Archaic and Classical Bronzes of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," in *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin 127-149 (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015), 146n.

⁶ Seán Hemingway, "Contexts of Discovery," in *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin 61-71 (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015), 69. See also Seán Hemingway, "Seafaring, Shipwrecks, and the Art Market of the Hellenistic Age," in *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World* ed. Carlos Picón and Seán Hemingway, 85-91 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 90-91.

Piombino Apollo's very potential for deceit relies on the fact that it originated hundreds of years after the objects that it mimics. If she had not successfully re-dated the sculpture from the sixth century to the first century, there would be no question of authenticity to address.

This thesis focuses on the Piombino Apollo as a tool to understand the role of deceit in the art markets of first and second-century Greece and Rome. Previous scholarship has for the most part concluded that the Piombino Apollo is in some sense a deception, with little discussion beyond this point. If it was a forgery rather than a commissioned piece, its primary function was to be sold on the market in the contemporary art market. If not, then the sculpture must have been made to serve some other function beyond this market. Thus, an evaluation of the statue's potential context beyond the art market sheds light on the artists' motivations, if there were any, for attempting to pass the Piombino Apollo off as an earlier work.

Overall, the modern understanding of the word forgery, which Ridgway and various other authors have applied to the Piombino Apollo, is in my view an incorrect term to describe the sculpture for a number of reasons. I will define the legal terms shortly, but, first, there is no evidence that the piece usurped the role of another, original work, a requirement of forgery.⁷ Furthermore, forgery is a distinct type of fraud and cannot be proven without direct evidence of willful intent to deceive the art market, resulting in, usually, pecuniary gain for the artists. It also requires distinct contextual evidence that the revelation of the sculpture's true origin would result in losses for its

⁷ *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th ed., s.v. "forge," 585.

purchaser. Thus, while forgery may have existed in the ancient art world, the term should not be applied to any specific object without significant proof.

There is evidence of fraud in antiquity but, again, there is little to prove that the Piombino Apollo fits into this category either.⁸ In fact, there is little to prove that the Piombino Apollo is purposely dishonest at all. To claim so suggests deceptive intent on behalf of the artists while ignoring other possibilities for the sculpture's supposedly misleading traits, and applies a possibly irrelevant or anachronistic modern conception of authenticity to an ancient work.

The Piombino Apollo

The Piombino Apollo is a full-body bronze sculpture of a youth that is under life-size at just over one meter tall. Two years after Piombino fisherman found the piece in the waters near ancient Populonia, the Louvre purchased it and brought it to Paris, where its interior was subsequently cleaned and a small lead tablet was discovered among the ocean detritus.⁹ This tablet, which will be discussed in detail later, contained an inscription with two names that were interpreted as the possible signatures of the artists. Though the sculpture is usually dated to the first or second century B.C.E., its artists incorporated Archaic stylistic traits similar to those of the late sixth century.¹⁰ Specifically, the piece essentially follows the standard model of an Archaic kouros, an

⁸ *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th ed., s.v. "fraud," 594-595.

⁹ Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo of Piombino in the Louvre" 43-44.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

ancient Greek statue most frequently produced during the sixth century B.C.E. and commonly found in the central and northern parts of mainland Greece and the islands.¹¹

The ancient Greeks began to create kouroi after being exposed to Egyptian prototypes in the seventh century, though the Greeks adjusted the form offered by the Egyptians and made it their own. Rejecting the naturalism of Egyptian statues, they instead emphasized decorative pattern and ornament.¹² The Greeks also depicted their kouroi in the nude, possibly due to nudity's connection with concept of heroism, to display the ideal physical characteristics Archaic Greeks found to be the most desirable in a man. These characteristics varied to some degree from region to region, but all kouroi embodied a combination of *arete*, manly excellence, and *kalokagathia*, the union of beauty and goodness.

Jeffrey Hurwit defines the kouros as "a naked, frontal, blocklike youth, left leg advanced, arms down by the sides, that seems to generalize and pattern the male form."¹³ Artists carved kouroi in many sizes, ranging from slightly smaller than life-size to monumental. The positioning of the arms and hands could be changed, but typically they were held straight against the sides with the hands clenched into fists. Completely four-square compositions, they are meant to be viewed from the front, back, and sides.¹⁴ They gaze forward with a mask-like expression, smiling an "Archaic smile." This mask-like

¹¹ Richard Neer, *Greek Art and Archaeology: A New History c. 2500- c. 150 BCE* (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 2012), 115.

¹² Jeffrey M. Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100-480 B.C.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 194.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

face stops the viewer from assigning the kouros any emotion or consciousness.¹⁵ The Piombino Apollo shares many characteristics with traditional archaic kouros, though there are several, relevant differences.

The Piombino Apollo, for example, barely draws its full, copper-inlaid lips into an Archaic smile. Like a kouros, its face is beardless and youthful, and its large, almond-shaped eyes, which would have once been filled in with a different material, lend to this youthful appearance. The lids of the eyes are visible, though very thin in comparison with the overall size of the hollows. The sockets are not deeply set and rest on almost the same plane as the high, arched brows above. Also copper-inlaid, the brows follow the curves created by the upper eyelids. They are long and thin, beginning at the temple and almost meeting above the Piombino Apollo's rather dainty nose. The bridge of the sculpture's nose is slender, short, and relatively straight, curving only slightly away from the face at the tip. The nostrils are similarly narrow, their edges lining up with the interior corners of the sculpture's wide eyes. The Piombino Apollo's facial features are set upon wide cheekbones and a heavy, rounded jawline that looks more Severe than Archaic, and the large eyes, lips, and brows surrounding this tiny nose gives the entire face an almost pinched look.¹⁶

The coiffed, stylized hair flows down from the crown of the head in wavy lines chased into the surface of the bronze. In front, a thick layer of hair sits in snail-shell curls across the center of the Piombino Apollo's forehead in two rows, creating a flat surface that lies against the face at an almost ninety-degree angle. Underneath these curls rests a

¹⁵ Ibid., 26.

¹⁶ Neer, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, 234. The Severe style, often characterized by heavy, rounded chins and thick-rimmed eye sockets, was popular in the Early Classical period (480-450 B.C.E.).

fillet that encircles the entire head, anchoring the elaborate hairstyle behind. The hair underneath the fillet falls in gentle waves which are again chased into the bronze. It is gathered at the ends into a thick knot that hangs along the sculpture's upper back and neck, almost as if it was arranged around an object that would keep it in this stiff, semi-circular shape. Other locks of hair are tucked up around the fillet and allowed to drop again in front of the band, cascading in individual sections.

The head sits on top of a thick neck, wider than the jawline, that slopes into broad shoulders and an inconspicuously modeled clavicle. The musculature of the entire sculpture is barely articulated, which gives the Apollo a soft or boyish appearance. The deltoids of the Piombino Apollo's arms, for example, are almost nonexistent, though the biceps below are slightly more defined. The sculpture's arms are both bent at almost ninety-degree angles, with the hands resting just above the waist. Its right hand is open, palm facing up, with its fingers stretched straight out towards the viewer. Unlike a typical kouros, the lines of the palm are visible and rendered with care, suggesting that it was always meant to be visible. However, the thumb curls over and above the palm, and it is possible that it was once holding a libation vessel of some kind such as a separately cast phiale.¹⁷ The left hand, for its part, is curled into a vertical fist and could possibly have once held a bow, an attribute of Apollo.

The pectorals of the sculpture lack definition and, just as with the lips and brows, the nipples are inlaid with copper. The muscles of the abdomen are similarly undefined, and its belly button is a subtle, a small indentation that barely breaks the smooth surface of the stomach. The external obliques follow the same pattern as the other musculature near the natural waist but are curiously well-defined near the pelvis and groin in

¹⁷ Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo from Piombino in the Louvre," 48.

comparison with the rest of the body. The v-shape created by the pelvic muscles meet at the Apollo's genitals, which lack any pubic hair.

The back appears just as softly modeled, though the shoulder blades are clearly visible. The trapezius muscle also appears to be rendered, but this is more through the volume of the area rather than any definition of form. An indented line down the center of the back indicates the spinal column, but does not become well-defined until the lower waist area. The sculpture's back curves gently in profile from the shoulder blades to the waist, then dramatically arcs at the lower back into the full, rounded buttocks that are typical of many Archaic kouroi.

The weight of the Piombino Apollo's body is evenly distributed between its two legs, with the left advanced and the right slightly behind. Neither leg is directly under the torso. With both feet flat on the ground the sculpture looks motionless. The Apollo's hips are narrow, but the musculature of the legs is much more defined than that of the upper-body. The thighs are large but appear slender from the front, and they taper into smooth, narrow knees that lack detail. The calves, however, are bulging, distinct, and as wide as the sculpture's thighs when viewed from the front. Its ankles are sturdy, resting on top of detailed and delicately rendered feet that actually depict each tendon leading towards the toes. These toes are similarly detailed, with the largest physically separate from the other four, which are attached to each other in the bronze. Near the center of the top of the left foot there is a small inscription, reading "ΑΘΑΝΑΙΑ ΔΕΚΑΤΑΝ," thereby dedicating the supposed image of Apollo as a tithe to the goddess Athena.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid., 65. Ridgway uses the Latinized form of the inscription, "ATHANAIA DEKATAN," in her article.

Opinions about the Piombino Apollo vary, though, again, some believe that it could be an example of ancient artistic forgery. Certainly Classical art historians have suggested their own explanations for the Piombino Apollo's unusual features.¹⁹ As previously discussed, Brunilde Ridgway accepted the existence of ancient forgery, and she explicitly states that the Piombino Apollo is an example of this phenomenon.²⁰ Ridgway asserts that it must have been common for Roman artists to deceive their buyers with imitations of older works. Since the Romans often paid handsome sums for Greek antiquities, it does not stretch the imagination that contemporary artists may have tried to deceive their consumers. It would have been a "profitable enterprise for many an artist of that time."²¹ Ridgway claims that the two artists of the Piombino Apollo, Menodotos and a Rhodian artist, would have thus attempted to pass the sculpture off as an original Archaic bronze to fetch a higher profit in the first or second-century art market.

Carol Mattusch also addresses the Piombino Apollo's standing in the Roman world. She mentions the piece only briefly in her book, *The Fire of Hephaistos*, but follows the same line of reasoning as Ridgway, concluding that the artists intended the piece to look older so they could sell it for a higher price in the art market.²² She also raises the question of whether the Romans would have cared about the authenticity of a

¹⁹ For a recent bibliography about the Piombino Apollo, see Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin ed. *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015), 290.

²⁰ Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo from Piombino in the Louvre," 62.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Carol Mattusch, *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 1996), 129.

given work, stating that the notions of “copy” and “authentic” are perhaps modern ones.²³ Yet this question is important to our understanding of the first and second-century art markets, and it raises a contradiction about Roman taste. If the Romans did care about or even conceive of authenticity, then where is the evidence that Greek “originals” fetched a higher price in the art market, as scholars like Ridgway and Mattusch report?²⁴

Christopher Hallett has addressed ancient forgeries in a more recent essay, where he suggests that “a good many of the works that have up to now been termed ‘archaistic’ and ‘classicistic’ were probably always intended to be taken as genuine Archaic or early Classical works...they are, and always were, in our terms, *forgeries*.”²⁵ To Hallett, an object need not have a direct historical antecedent as long as it could fool the viewer into believing it was from a particular period, and he claims that forgeries must have been quite common in the ancient world.²⁶

Yet it is important to be careful when applying these terms to an ancient situation. On the one hand, direct evidence for ancient art forgery is lacking, but that does not mean it never happened. On the other, just because the possibility for ancient forgery existed, does not mean that any art objects which seem potentially deceptive to a modern researcher were actually deceptive to an ancient buyer. The Piombino Apollo falls into the latter category. Contextual evidence for the sculpture is lacking, and thus its case is much more complex.

²³ Ibid., 130

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hallett, “Looking Back,” 133.

²⁶ Ibid., 144.

CHAPTER II

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

What does it really mean to label a work a forgery? Is forgery exclusive to the modern art world, or were there examples of artistic forgery in ancient Greek and Roman markets that align with modern conceptions of the term? Two particularly relevant, modern legal definitions must be examined to contextualize Ridgway's arguments about the Piombino Apollo's deception.

First, the definition of "forgery" in *Black's Law Dictionary* is: "To fabricate, construct, or prepare one thing in imitation of another thing, with the intention of substituting the false for the genuine, or otherwise deceiving and defrauding by the use of the spurious article."²⁷ Carrara and Soavi clarify this definition regarding art specifically, arguing that a forger must attempt to deceive the viewer about the forged object's origin by suggesting that it was created by a certain artist or in a certain time period.²⁸ Taken together, the modern definition of forgery involves deceit, a direct antecedent referenced by the forgery, and the ultimate "usurpation," or replacement, of the original antecedent by that forgery.²⁹

A forgery is created purely for the market. Its primary purpose is to make money for the forgers by fooling the buyer into purchasing it. If it is created to fulfill any other primary purpose that does not result in benefit for the forgers, then it cannot be considered a forgery. Thus, the main requirements of forgery are an intent to deceive by

²⁷ *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th ed., s.v. "forge," 585.

²⁸ Massimiliano Carrara and Marzia Soavi, "Copies, Replicas, and Counterfeits of Artworks and Artefacts," *The Monist* 93.3 (2010): 418.

²⁹ Thierry Lenain, *Art Forgery: The History of a Modern Obsession* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2011), 36.

the artists, a usurpation of an original by the forgery, and the expectation of illicit pecuniary gain by or for the forger.

The second relevant definition is that of fraud. This is a blanket term that includes forgery within its parameters. Black's Law dictionary defines fraud as:

All multifarious means which human ingenuity can devise, and which are resorted to by one individual to get advantage over another by false suggestions or by suppression of truth, and includes all surprises, trick, cunning, dissembling, and any unfair way by which another is cheated.³⁰

Legally, the definition of fraud is purposely left vague and is only precisely defined on a case by case basis depending on whether the trial is a civil or a criminal one. Fraud is relevant to the Piombino Apollo because it is not as specific as forgery, and pertains more to the general idea of deception resulting in benefits for the deceivers. Even if forgery is not the correct term to apply to the Piombino Apollo, fraud could be. Yet, again, the intent to deceive must be present for an object to be considered fraudulent. Furthermore, the act of committing fraud must result in the perpetrator harming someone else's interest.

Forgery and fraud share two important factors, an intent to deceive and an intent to harm someone's (usually a consumer's) interests resulting in gain for the defrauders. These terms are not cut-and-dried, however. A person can intend to deceive others, but if no one is fooled, then that person cannot complete the fraud. Similarly, if someone's interests are harmed but there is no proof of an intent to deceive, the accused has not committed fraud.

These definitions can easily apply to modern works, but they may be less useful in describing an ancient work that may have been created to deceive ancient buyers

³⁰ *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th ed., s.v. "fraud," 594-595.

where intent is more difficult to decipher. While these definitions are useful in contextualizing fakes in the modern art market, they may not necessarily apply to the art markets of the first and second centuries. There were countless copies, or variants, of ancient Greek works in the Hellenistic or Roman art world that were never meant to deceive.³¹ The art market of the first and second centuries may not have admitted the same notions of “forgery” or “fraud” as modern markets.

There are problems with applying a modern definition to an ancient situation. According to Thierry Lenain, who approaches art forgery from a legal perspective, the modern definition of forgery cannot be applied to any work created before the Renaissance.³² Lenain echoes the standard definition of the word, noting that a forger must produce an imitation of another work while intending for the imitation to take the place of the original. His definition, moreover, requires someone’s interests to be harmed because of this deception.³³ Lenain also points out the necessity that the forger anticipate “procedures of authentication” and adjust the fake accordingly to combat these procedures.³⁴ These strategies could include anything from stylistic imitation to forged signatures. The forger desires to add authenticity to the piece without raising alarm among his victims by adhering to expectations associated with the object.

To Lenain, the most important aspect involved in determining whether or not an object could be considered a forgery is context. The object itself may not reveal its

³¹ Variants is perhaps a better word, since later artists did not always copy original works exactly. Rather, they changed the work to fit with their own preferences or contemporary stylistic taste

³² Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 13.

³³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

nature. Rather, it is the context within which it is presented, received, and understood that determines whether it is a forgery, fraud, or variant. He concludes that forgery as understood by modern art markets and law enforcement did not exist for the ancient Romans and Greeks because modern researchers cannot truly know the context of these ancient works. Thus, the modern concept of forgery cannot adhere to ancient artistic deception without more direct evidence.³⁵ Lenain, for his part, mentions the Piombino Apollo specifically in his book. Though he states that it could be considered deceptive, he still rejects the piece as a true forgery based on his requirements for contextual evidence.³⁶

Lenain takes a very modern, narrowly legal perspective when evaluating the potential for ancient forgeries, but he makes some interesting and valid points. This perspective is important to consider, because, ultimately, to characterize the Piombino Apollo as a forgery is to accuse the artists of a crime based on a particular understanding of authenticity. Thus, it is necessary to examine the first and second-century understanding of “authenticity,” and the methods through which sculptures were evaluated to see if there is enough evidence to apply the definition of forgery to the Piombino Apollo.

As previously stated, Brunilde Ridgway used stylistic inconsistencies (such as the proportions of the body in comparison with the limbs, the modeling of the sculpture, the “gracefulness” of the facial expression, the “extreme elaboration” of the hair, the naturalistic left hand, and the wide stride of the sculpture) along with other unusual

³⁵ Ibid., 44.

³⁶ Ibid.

features, such as the two inscriptions associated with the sculpture, to ultimately re-date the Apollo to the first century.³⁷ In addition to that conclusion, she further claimed the piece must be a forgery and that its artists intended to make the work look Archaic in order to make more money in the Roman art market.

Again, there are three major requirements for forgery: (1) an intent to deceive, (2) the usurpation of an original by the forgery, and (3) financial benefits to the forger at the expense of the victim. Based on evidence from the previous section, the potential for fraud and forgery did exist in antiquity. The question now is whether the Piombino Apollo fulfills the requirements of those terms.

The first requirement for forgery, intent to deceive, can never be known for sure without more direct evidence. However, one can investigate the Piombino Apollo for circumstantial evidence of deception by examining the sculpture's supposedly misleading features. The second requirement, the usurpation of an original, is even more difficult to determine. Few ancient bronzes survive, so this requirement must be approached more broadly. The potential for an original antecedent might exist, but, again, this is impossible to prove without direct evidence. The third requirement, financial motivation for the deed and evidence of monetary damages to the victim, can be determined through an examination of the sculpture's first or second-century context. There would be no reason for the deception if the forgers gained nothing from the deed. In the case of a modern forged painting or sculpture, a buyer may lose money because he or she purchased an object that was valued at a particular price based on its supposed authenticity. If authenticity is lost, then so is the value. Regarding the Piombino Apollo, one must

³⁷ Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo from Piombino in the Louvre," 49-50.

establish that a similar result would have occurred for a buyer if he or she ever discovered the sculpture's true origin.

Ultimately, there is not enough evidence about the Piombino Apollo to call it a forgery. Lenain, in my view, is correct in this instance and the term cannot be accurately applied to the sculpture for a number of reasons, to which we will return. Semantics aside, the real question is the nature or degree of the statue's deception. If it cannot be labeled a forgery, can it at least be considered a fraud? The first goal then, is to find out if the Piombino Apollo can be considered deceptive at all, and to suggest what a first or second-century viewer viewing the statue would have thought he was looking at.

Archaism

Archaism is key to understanding both the Piombino Apollo and the tastes of the first and second-century art market. Various authors have defined Archaism, its origins, and how it functioned. Ridgway, for example, distinguishes between the terms "Archaizing" and "Archaistic." On the one hand, the term Archaizing refers to imagery that, for the most part, appears later than the fifth century but retains some Archaic traits.³⁸ Ridgway cites the Caryatids of the Eretheion as an example (Figure 6). Though these sculptures are essentially Classical in style, their long, spiraling hair references the Archaic.³⁹ She defines Archaistic works, on the other hand, as pieces that look entirely Archaic except for a few exaggerated or anachronistic features that can betray their true date.⁴⁰ Ridgway argues that Archaistic works appeared as early as the end of the Archaic

³⁸ Brunilde Ridgway, *The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 303.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 303.

period itself as, “a symptom of stylistic fatigue,” and can be represented by the mannerism in a relief of the sacrifice of a pig (Figure 7).⁴¹ Ridgway also creates a third category: Roman copies of Archaic works, which acts as a sub-category of Archaistic. These pieces appear entirely Archaic, but Roman materials and sometimes technique give them away as copies (Figure 8).⁴² She notes that this category is particularly difficult to deal with, since it can be nearly impossible to tell if the Roman artist was merely practicing the Archaic style or if he was attempting to mimic a direct Archaic Greek antecedent.⁴³ Ridgway places the Piombino Apollo firmly in this third category.

Pollitt focuses less on the differences between Archaizing and Archaistic but still finds three subcategories of the Archaistic. First, in an “emblematic Archaistic” work, the artist utilizes Archaic forms in an attempt to make the object look venerable. It recalls the functions and traditions of actual Archaic pieces.⁴⁴ Second, “representational Archaistic” pieces reference actual Archaic works in another format. For example, a vase painting depicting an Archaic statue could be referencing an existing statue in the Archaic style. The goal was naturalistic representation rather than an aesthetic preference.⁴⁵ Finally, “comprehensive Archaistic” works for Pollitt are similar to Ridgway’s definition of Archaistic. Unlike the other two categories, the Archaic traits in these pieces lacked purpose beyond an aesthetic preference.⁴⁶ Pollitt does not mention the Piombino Apollo

⁴¹ Ibid., 313.

⁴² Ibid., 304.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 182.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

specifically among his definitions. However, it could fit into either the comprehensive or the emblematic category, depending on its ultimate function.

Harrison and Fullerton do not separate Archaistic and Archaizing, nor do they assign Archaistic works to particular subcategories. Harrison, in particular, finds that the differences do not ultimately matter. What matters instead is the range of relationships between Archaistic works and the true Archaic ones.⁴⁷ Fullerton also decides that differentiating between Archaizing and Archaistic is unimportant, “since it involves distinction in degree.”⁴⁸ He explains that Archaistic works are all “retrospective and eclectic by definition...heterogeneous in appearance and function.”⁴⁹ Fullerton concludes that the Piombino Apollo is Archaistic and may have been based on an Archaic prototype, though he explains that “beyond purely academic antiquarianism” there would have been little demand for exact copies of Archaic Greek works.⁵⁰

Archaism developed almost immediately after the Archaic period in Greece, so it was hardly a new phenomenon to the Romans. Yet Christopher Hallett notes that the style was particularly popular for the Romans in the period in which the Piombino Apollo was made.⁵¹ Carol Mattusch also explains that the Romans valued works “perceived as

⁴⁷ Evelyn B. Harrison, *Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture* (Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1965), 50.

⁴⁸ Mark Fullerton, *The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 114, 203. Fullerton later explains that there are few examples of Roman works so similar to the true Archaic style that that could be considered direct copies of Archaic antecedents, though they did exist. He specifically cites a relief from the Agora, S 2079, as an example of a direct copy of an original Archaic work.

⁵¹ Christopher Hallett, “The Archaic Style in Sculpture in the Eyes of Ancient and Modern Viewers,” In *Making Sense of Greek Art*, ed. V. Coltman, 70-100 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 100.

being produced by Greek artisans.”⁵² However, since Archaism had been in existence since the early Classical period, later Greeks and Romans would not necessarily have associated it with a particular time period in the same way that modern scholars do. Touchette clarifies that “its significance was religious, conferring greater venerability on images of the gods and their followers.”⁵³ This was particularly important in first-century Rome where the purpose of the Archaistic works was “to advertise themselves as the latest items in a long and venerable series.”⁵⁴ The desire for Archaistic imagery led to a “highly organized, commercial mass production” in the first century B.C.E.⁵⁵ Many known Greek originals were copied extensively in different sizes and contexts. For example, Romans would order mirror reversals and multiple copies of one sculpture in order to create balance within the contexts of their villas. Hadrian, for example, collected mirror reversals of Classical Polykleitan sculptures, among others, to decorate his villa at Tivoli.

Archaistic Eclecticism

Eclecticism, the combination of various artistic features and styles, is the basis of Archaism. Archaism utilizes forms and decorative patterns of the Archaic style, but does not necessarily shy away from merging those features with other, later styles. Eclecticism

⁵² Carol Mattusch, “Bronzes,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture* ed. Elise A. Friedland, Melanie Grunow Sobocinski, and Elaine K. Gazda, 139-154 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 143.

⁵³ Lori-Ann Touchette, “Archaism and Eclecticism,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture* ed. Elise A. Friedland and Melanie Grunow Sobocinski with Elaine K. Gazda, 292-306 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 294.

⁵⁴ Ridgway, *The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture*, 314.

⁵⁵ Cornelius Vermeule, *Greek Sculpture and Roman Taste: The Purpose and Setting of Graeco-Roman Art in Italy and the Greek Imperial East* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 39.

could also be described as one piece overtly quoting others.⁵⁶ For example, Archaistic sculptures can appear to be much more delicate than their Archaic antecedents, with faces that are “younger and prettier, expressions carefree and serene—animated only by the inevitable Archaic smile.”⁵⁷ There might also be a lack of “quadrifaciality” in Archaistic sculpture that would be present in the truly Archaic.⁵⁸ The decorative functions of the pieces also seem to be more important in Archaistic imagery. In this way, the Archaistic piece may quote the Archaic smile, for example, but introduce elements of later stylistic periods in order to appeal to contemporary tastes.

Overall, there is general agreement that Archaistic works do not really look all that Archaic. The Archaistic style had developed since the fifth century, with artists creating their own variations to conform to contemporary tastes. By the first and second centuries, Archaism had become a style of its own, though it was ultimately still retrospective.⁵⁹ Classical and Hellenistic artists who used archaizing elements “borrowed Archaic formulae as decorative elements in monuments which were in most ways entirely un-Archaic.”⁶⁰ The sculptors working in the Archaistic style were thus able to use the popular features of the Archaic style and its association with the ancient and the venerable, but also to conform these features to fit contemporary tastes.

⁵⁶ Ellen Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 112. See also Touchette, “Archaism and Eclecticism,” 292.

⁵⁷ Hallett, “The Archaic Style in Sculpture in the Eyes of Ancient and Modern Viewers,” 83-84.

⁵⁸ Fullerton, *The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary*, 192.

⁵⁹ Mark Fullerton, “Style: Applications and Limitations,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture* ed. Elise A. Friedland and Melanie Grunow Sobocinski with Elaine K. Gazda, 209-223 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 217.

⁶⁰ Fullerton, *The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary*, 192.

Ridgway has, again, clearly and successfully argued that the Piombino Apollo is an Archaistic work. It displays the anachronistic features of a sculpture mimicking the Archaic style while still conforming to first and second-century preferences. However, whether the Piombino Apollo can be considered deceptive rests, at least partially, on whether its Archaistic style would have deceived a Roman buyer into thinking it was a genuine Archaic work. In other words, would the average Roman citizen have seen and understood the differences in style between the Archaic and the Archaistic? Would they have been able to pick out a true Archaic work among the Archaistic “pretenders” in the same way a modern art historian might? Mattusch raises a similar question, asking how many forgeries slipped through the cracks, successfully fooling contemporary Romans into thinking they were Archaic.⁶¹ However, Pausanias, an author from the second-century CE, does seem to know a truly Archaic work when he sees one. Pollitt notes that Pausanias uses the word *archaios* to describe the same objects modern scholars now call Archaic.⁶² This suggests, to Pollitt, that the word *archaios* was associated with a particular style and time period that spanned “between the remote, legendary past and the Early Classical period.”⁶³

Hallett, on the other hand, argues that “the ancients did not distinguish the category ‘later works in Archaic style’ from genuine Archaic works (certainly they had no words to differentiate them).”⁶⁴ Yet just because they did not separate them as modern scholars do, does not mean they did not know the difference. Perhaps they considered them to be in a similar category, or they just did not care enough to separate them. Either way, indifference

⁶¹ Mattusch, “Bronzes,” 143.

⁶² Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 156.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Christopher Hallett, “The Archaic Style in Sculpture in the Eyes of Ancient and Modern Viewers,” 71.

is not ignorance. Fullerton, interestingly, notes that “the Roman viewer was certainly as aware as we are of the incongruity of this style and the deliberateness of its choice.”⁶⁵

Touchette also reports that the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a book on rhetoric by an unknown author of the first-century B.C.E., refers to eclecticism, and tells contemporary artists to avoid the practice. Clearly, Archaistic artists did not heed this advice and still combined stylistic features of multiple periods and artists.⁶⁶

The Piombino Apollo is Archaistic: it is a work largely quoting the Archaic style with a few stylistic anachronisms revealing it to be of a later period. Ridgway uses these stylistic inconsistencies as proof of the artists’ desire to fool their first-century victims by mimicking the antique style. This presupposes that the artists tried to copy the style exactly, but were simply unable to completely hide the influence of contemporary techniques, styles, and materials. Yet are the stylistic inconsistencies really the result of the Piombino Apollo’s artists trying and failing to accurately mimic the Archaic or were they the result of the artists working with eclecticism within the long tradition of Archaism? If a modern scholar, thousands of years removed from the context in which Archaism was popular, can tell the difference, perhaps a first or second-century Roman buyer could as well. It is probably underestimating both the Roman buyer and the Piombino Apollo’s artists to suggest that they could not recognize the Archaic style or copy it exactly if they wanted to.

Furthermore, if the Romans truly did not differentiate between Archaizing and Archaic works by choice, then what was the motivation for the deception? The Piombino Apollo was made by Greek artists in an antique style. This does not mean they attempted to deceive the contemporary art market. It is possible that the Archaistic style was chosen to

⁶⁵ Fullerton, *The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary*, 205.

⁶⁶ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.6.9, in Touchette, “Archaism and Eclecticism,” 300.

associate the work with a venerable tradition. Overall, the style alone is not adequate evidence for a verdict declaring it to be fraudulent.

CHAPTER III

FRAUD AND THE FIRST AND SECOND-CENTURY ART MARKETS

To understand whether a contemporary consumer would consider the Piombino Apollo a forgery or a fraud, one must examine the contemporary market in order to find evidence of deceitful practices. Furthermore, one must identify what a Hellenistic or Roman buyer might have desired to purchase and why. Understanding what Roman purchasers desired is key to understanding why the artists, if they were indeed attempting to deceive with the Piombino Apollo, made the choices they did in terms of size, material, pose, and style.

Ancient Literary References to Fraud

The literary evidence contains a number of examples of what could be considered fraud. In his *Historia Naturalis*, Pliny recounts a tale of two artists, Apelles and Protogenes. Though rivals, Apelles, an established artist, sought to aid Protogenes's reputation by suggesting that he could put his name on Protogenes's works and sell them as if they were his own:

Friendly even to his rivals, Apelles was the first to establish in Rhodes the reputation of Protogenes, who, as so many in their own homes, was neglected by his countrymen. When asked by Apelles the prices of his finished works, he mentioned some trifling sum, upon which Apelles offered fifty talents for each, and spread a report that he was buying the pictures to sell as his own. This stirred up the Rhodians to a better appreciation of the artist, but not until they offered a still higher price would Apelles give up the pictures.⁶⁷

Apelles was so impressed with the art of Protogenes that he was willing to purchase his paintings to sell as his own in order to support the reputation of his rival. The artist was not copying the pieces, nor was he attempting to create something that would usurp the

⁶⁷ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 35.87-88, trans. K. Jex-Blake and E. Sellers in *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (Chicago: Argonaut, Inc., 1968), 125.

role of Protogenes's art. He was, rather, preparing to claim authorship of art he did not in fact create. At first glance this seems to fit the broader definition of fraud. However, the story actually lacks some of the necessary requirements discussed in the previous chapter.

The anecdote Pliny recounts is an unusual one, and the deception involved is not necessarily readily apparent. If Apelles had actually hidden the identity of Protogenes, his entire goal of supporting his fellow artist would have collapsed. Apelles gave credibility to Protogenes's art through a clever marketing ploy. He added his own artistically established name to Protogenes's paintings just by cleverly claiming he would commit a kind of fraud without ever actually doing the deed. He spurred the Rhodians into appreciating their local artist, and they were more willing to purchase his art at a higher price. Apelles's plan hinged on the fact that the buyers must have known who the real artist was.⁶⁸ Thus, the plan seems to more closely resemble an endorsement rather than fraud. Yet, deception was still present in the rumors that Apelles spread, and Protogenes and Apelles both benefited from it. Thus, it can still fall under a broad definition of fraud.

Of course, the story would be a more convincing example of fraud if the roles were reversed and Protogenes claimed that his works were actually painted by Apelles to fetch a higher price. This type of falsehood did actually occur in antiquity, as told by the first-century author Phaedrus. He recounts of his own work,

If anywhere I shall have interposed the name of Aesop
To whom I have returned whatever it was that I have long owed him
Know that it is for the sake of having an authority behind me⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 64.

⁶⁹ Phaedrus, *Fabulae* 5.prologue, trans. J.J. Pollitt in *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 312.

Again, there appears to be admission of fraudulent action. Yet Phaedrus uses this passage to reveal his true identity, which undermines the overarching deception. He claims the name of Aesop to lend credibility to his own work, just as Protogenes and Apelles used Apelles's established artistic identity as support for Protogenes's painting.

Phaedrus offers another relevant passage concerning false credentials in the prologue to his fifth book of fables, where he states, "certain artists...obtain a much greater price for their productions if they inscribe the name of Praxiteles on their scraped marbles, Myron on their polished silver and Zeuxis on their panels...Carping envy more readily favours works of false antiquity than those of the present day."⁷⁰ This seems to be a perfect fit for modern researchers looking for evidence of fraud. The phrase even seems to indicate a preference for imitation artifacts of the past over contemporary originals.

Thierry Lenain addresses Phaedrus's passage in his book *Art Forgery*. He claims that Phaedrus, though he acknowledges that other artists use "apocryphal signatures," never proves these artists' intention to deceive.⁷¹ He goes on to explain that perhaps the use of these famous names was meant as a "fictitious finishing touch to the stylistic imitation."⁷² An ancient buyer may not necessarily have believed in the authenticity of the signature, but rather was supposed to read it as if Praxiteles had conferred his own credibility to the piece, much as Apelles gave his name to the works of Protogenes. Yet Lenain's scenario is difficult to accept because of the lack of context and direct proof. This case must be willful deceit, because, unlike the case of Apelles, the signatures used were those of artists long dead who could not give their actual support for the works. The

⁷⁰ Phaedrus, *Fabulae* 5.prologue, in Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 65.

⁷¹ Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 65.

⁷² Ibid.

difficulty lies in Lenain's claim that the ancient buyer was generally aware of this practice. As previously discussed, fraud requires not only an intent to deceive but also proof that the victims were fooled and that their interests were harmed as a result of that deception. Without direct evidence for Lenain's claim, it is impossible to know whether buyers were taken in by one of these false signatures. If even a single person was fooled by this practice, then it would be properly considered fraud. Thus, the potential for ancient fraud remains even though direct evidence is lacking.

Lenain further notes that there is no archaeological evidence to support the claim that Phaedrus makes. He points out that when later artists do sign their variants of Greek originals, they in many cases sign their own name rather than the name of the original artist. Some examples include the Doryphoros Herm signed by Apollonios of Athens and the Farnese Herakles signed by Glykon. These pieces are not meant to deceive; the signatures are meant to show that the artist of the variant is equal, if not superior, to the well-known original. This is echoed in Alexander Nagel's discussion of forgeries, where he notes that this type of copyist was advertising his own skill.⁷³

Yet other examples of potential fraud include the fifth-century metalworker Mys's signature on a cup he supposedly created in collaboration with Parrhasios. The signature reads, "Design [*gramma*] by Parrhasios, work [*tekhnē*] of Mys. I am the image of lofty Ilion, which the songs of Aiakos captured."⁷⁴ Jeffrey Hurwit notes that this signature is probably false, citing Jex-Black and Sellers who claim that this particular grammatical

⁷³ Alexander Nagel, "The Copy and Its Evil Twin: Thirteen Notes on Forgery," *Cabinet* 14 (2004): 104.

⁷⁴ Jeffrey Hurwit, *Artists and Signatures in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 61.

formula did not exist until the Roman Empire.⁷⁵ Hurwit also cites a passage by Martial, which lists sculptors Myron, Praxiteles, Skopas, and Pheidias as metalworkers.⁷⁶ This is highly unlikely, meaning the actual artists used the famous names to lend credibility to their own work and potentially defraud their buyers. Ellen Perry explains that the use of false signatures in metalwork was apparently not uncommon in the Early Roman Empire, when Mys's name was again used to sell a series of silver cups in response to a growing interest in Greek antiques.⁷⁷

Overall, ancient literary sources seem to confirm the existence of fraud—at least by the first century B.C.E. Still, without proof of intent—as any perpetrators are long since dead—it is difficult to verify that these examples comply with the modern definition of the term. On the one hand, scenarios that seem like fraud to the modern researcher may have been understood very differently in the ancient market. On the other, the potential for an ancient equivalent to the modern practice seems to be present in the literature through at least circumstantial evidence. The literary evidence shows that the third requirement for forgery, pecuniary gain for the forgers at the expense of a victim, was at least plausible. The ancient market did allow for deception, though the Piombino Apollo's case is more complex than knowing whether forgery or fraud merely existed in ancient art markets.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 98.

⁷⁶ Martial, *Epigrams* 4.39, in Hurwit, *Artists and Signatures in Ancient Greece*, 183-184 n. 10.

⁷⁷ Ellen Perry, "Artistic Forgery in the Early Roman Empire," *American Journal of Archaeology* 99.2 (1995): 346. Perry notes that evidence of this "scandal" can be found in literary sources from the Early Roman Empire. She explains that antiques were more popular than contemporary works at the time, but offers no specific evidence of first and second-century buyers actually paying more for these false antiques.

What Contemporary Collectors Wanted

An interest in Greek antiquities blossomed in the first and second centuries B.C.E. when many Roman collectors desired sculptures for their private collections. According to J.J. Pollitt, “collecting and connoisseurship in the 1st century B.C. were more devoted to enriching the private world of the collector than the public domain.”⁷⁸ This is echoed by Anna Anguissola, who notes a general transition from dedicatory offerings to deities and public commemorations to a focus on private artistic patronage.⁷⁹ But what did individual Roman or Hellenistic collectors value when choosing the works to purchase, and why might Greek antiquities have been so desirable in the art world of the first and second centuries?⁸⁰

Pollitt explains that by the first century B.C.E., “a spirit of nostalgia for the past splendors of Greek civilization and an urge to idealize and glorify its achievements became increasingly common among Hellenistic intellectuals.”⁸¹ He notes that there was a preference for Classical sculpture in particular, as Classical sculptors were considered to be “inspired seers, visionaries of a sort.”⁸² Artists created copies of famous Greek originals, but they also made new works that utilized or imitated the Classical and Archaic styles.⁸³ Buyers wanted Greek antiques, but were not necessarily concerned with

⁷⁸ J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome c. 753 B.C.-337 A.D.: Sources and Documents* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 81.

⁷⁹ Anna Anguissola, “‘Idealplastik’ and the Relationship between Greek and Roman Sculpture.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture* ed. Elise A. Friedland, Melanie Grunow Sobocinski, and Elaine K. Gazda, 240-259. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 245.

⁸⁰ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 150.

⁸¹ Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 52.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 78.

“authenticity” in the modern sense of the word. For example, Carol Mattusch points to the practice of taking molds of Greek bronzes to produce copies for the Roman art market.⁸⁴ Romans wanted anything and everything Greek, whether it was Archaic, Classical, or even Hellenistic.⁸⁵ Romans were not necessarily concerned with the development of new artistic techniques or styles but “with the cultural and philosophical value of earlier artistic achievements.”⁸⁶ Yet, as with any potential customer, there were many factors that the Romans took into consideration when valuing a work of art.

There is evidence that age itself could have been important to a Roman when judging the value of a work of art. For example, Pliny notes in *Historia Naturalis* that interest in the art of Teucer, an ancient engraver, died out and his works only became valuable “in early examples [or ‘for its age’], and a reputation [or value?] adheres to engravings which are worn with use, even those in which it is not possible to discern the figure.”⁸⁷ In another passage Cicero mentions several statues looted by Verres, stating that they “were of considerable size and distinction, although not very old. And there was another statue, in bronze...and very ancient—by far the most ancient of all those in the shrine.”⁸⁸ Based on these passages, it is clear that age could play a role in the value and evaluation of a work of art.

⁸⁴ Mattusch, “Bronzes,” 139.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁸⁶ Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 85.

⁸⁷ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XXXIII.157, trans. Pollitt in *ibid.*, 313.

⁸⁸ Cicero, *Verres* II, IV.109-110, trans. Pollitt in *The Art of Rome c. 753 B.C.-337 A.D.: Sources and Documents*, 71.

The material of a work could also factor into its value, particularly with sculpture. Corinthian bronze, for example, was prized in the Roman art market, although Pliny notes that few Roman collectors would have been able to identify a true Corinthian bronze, which was supposedly lighter in color due to the addition of gold or silver to the alloy. In his *Historia Naturalis* he notes that

among the ancient glories of that art Corinthian bronze is praised most highly...it seems to me that the great part of these collectors more often merely pretend to have real knowledge about this bronze, so that they may stand out from the common run of men...yet even so these collectors today call all statues Corinthian.⁸⁹

Lenain also explains that Corinthian bronze was possibly known for its smell, as related by Trimalcio in Petronius's *Satyricon*. Trimalcio humorously explains that he prefers glass to Corinthian bronzes because it does not stink.⁹⁰ Lenain calls this concern with the authenticity of material a type of pseudo-connoisseurship, where Roman collectors might be caught "sniffing at their bronzes in an attempt to determine the degree of corinthianity."⁹¹

The Romans valued the material, in this case, for lending the work a type of authenticity. Yet, Pliny goes on to explain that Corinth fell in the middle of the second century B.C.E., an event that ended the production of "genuine" Corinthian bronzes. Most people, however, still equated all bronze sculpture produced in the area with Corinthian bronzes even centuries after the fall of the city.⁹² Thus, even though ancient buyers cared at least partially about the authenticity of materials used for their sculptures,

⁸⁹ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XXXIV.5-7, trans. Pollitt in *ibid.*, 80.

⁹⁰ Petronius, *Satyricon*, vol. II: *The Dinner of Trimalcio*, in Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 61.

⁹¹ Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 62.

⁹² Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XXXIV.6-8, trans. Jex-Blake and Sellers in *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*, 8-9.

there was little attempt to actually verify pieces, and, based on Pliny's statements, it appears that authenticity could be a rather fluid concept for the majority of his contemporary collectors.

Importance of Decorum

The most important reason for purchasing an object at the time the Piombino Apollo was created (even more so than authenticity, material, age, or monetary value) was its appropriateness—that is, whether the piece was simply suitable for the buyer's collection. Decorum was a central ideal in Roman culture and society, including the art world. There were certain expectations Roman citizens were expected to fulfill, even in purchasing art for their own private collections. Context was the key to maintaining proper decorum, and the physical and cultural contexts of a work of art can shed light on its purpose and reception within the Roman art market.

According to Vitruvius, “Decor is the faultless appearance of a work composed from the right parts with a sound basis. [It is based on convention, Greek *thematismos*, or on standard usage, or on natural circumstances.]”⁹³ Perry explains that Vitruvius's concept of decorum is vague, yet it inevitably *must* be vague since it is so multifaceted and involved in all aspects of Roman society. The situation may call for a particular type of speech, for example, but if it is not right for the specific audience, then it cannot be appropriate.⁹⁴

Within Roman society, social norms, rather than personal taste, were the governing forces behind decorum. Perry notes that the elite, educated aristocracy was the

⁹³ Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 1.2.5-7, trans. Pollitt in *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 342.

⁹⁴ Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*, 36.

party that created and maintained these social norms. For an ancient Roman, there were two options for guidance in adhering to proper decorum. If one was a life-long member of this educated aristocracy, then one would naturally be able to judge what was appropriate for any given situation within the Roman world. If one was not a member of the elite, then he was expected to rely on the educated aristocracy to guide his decisions about what was proper.⁹⁵

This idea carried over into the realm of art as well. Perry notes that “*decorum* required Romans to discover and employ formulae that considered both subject and setting simultaneously, and the two phenomena may have been mutually reinforcing.”⁹⁶ Thus, context and meaning worked together in the reception of art. If a buyer wanted to purchase a work, first he must have been sure that the image had an appropriate subject within the correct kind of space. The form of a work of art must follow meaning and context.⁹⁷ Mars, the god of war, placed in a library, a space associated with knowledge and peace, would not satisfy decorum. Another example, reported by Pollitt, is Strabo’s critique of the chryselephantine Zeus at Olympia. It is not appropriate for the space, according to Strabo, because if it stood up it would go through the roof of the temple.⁹⁸ Perry also cites Plutarch, who explains that portraying an ugly subject as beautiful is ultimately unsuccessful because of its “improbability and impropriety.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 52.

⁹⁷ Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art*, 69.

⁹⁸ Strabo, *Geographica* 8.353-54, in *ibid.*, 70.

⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Moralia* 17F-18, in Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*, 42.

Roman patrons thus played a significant role in the art markets by shaping taste to fit with the concept of decorum. To Perry, there is no one style that is distinctly “Roman,” and the desire to adhere to decorum is part of the reason for this.¹⁰⁰ The concept relied heavily on context, though no one style was necessarily associated with only one particular context. For example, a Roman might find a Hellenistic style to be better suited for a mythological scene than a civic one, though this might change depending on where the statue would ultimately be placed.¹⁰¹ To Perry, decorum “is a value that generally speaking requires [works] of art to define and be defined by the nature of the space in which they appear.”¹⁰² Thus an object’s appropriateness for a particular environment or subject matter was a principal consideration of Roman collectors when choosing to purchase a work of art.

Cicero’s writings and personal letters are a prime example of this preoccupation with decorum. Over the course of ten years he wrote many letters to his friend Atticus, which describe not what type of sculpture Cicero wanted, but rather where it would be eventually placed in his villa. He assumes that by these descriptions his friend Atticus, whose taste Cicero trusts implicitly, will know what to buy. In one letter he says,

As for my statues and the Hermerakles, I implore you in accordance with what you have written, to ship them at the first opportune moment which appears, and also anything else which seems to you suitable for this place, with which you are not unacquainted, and especially for a wrestling court and gymnasium¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*, 38.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰³ Cicero, *ad Atticum* I, 6, 2, trans. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome c. 753 B.C.-337 A.D.: Sources and Documents*, 76-77. Pollitt explains that a Hermerakles was probably a herm with the sculpted head of Herakles atop it.

Again it is the context that is apparently more important than material, composition, age, or style. Cicero wants sculptures that will be appropriate for the individual spaces in his villa. A passage from another letter hints at some of the traditional types of statues that were associated with certain contexts, namely his academy. Cicero writes: “this is the sort of decoration which is appropriate for my Academy, since Hermes is characteristic of all gymnasia and Minerva in particular is a distinguishing mark of mine.”¹⁰⁴ He praises Atticus for his good judgment in determining what types of statues fit the standards of decorum for this particular context.

Not all purchases made for Cicero earned his praise, however. He chastises another buyer, Gallus, who was charged with bringing back objects for a particular context, “but what good is a statue of Mars to me, the author of peace?...My preference would have been for some sort of statue of Mercury.”¹⁰⁵ Here it is not only the architectural context which is important, but also the identity of the patron himself. Again there is no mention of age, material, author, composition, or even authenticity as a deciding factor in Cicero’s judgment of a piece. The appropriateness of the work is the key factor in collecting.

As for authenticity, Elaine Gazda notes that Lucian’s “Teller of Lies” suggests that it was probably not as important a criterion for the ancient collector as it is for the modern scholar. There was not necessarily any effort to distinguish between an ancient original and a copy in a Roman’s collection.¹⁰⁶ In his writings, Cicero never requests an

¹⁰⁴ Cicero, *ad Atticum* I, 10, 3, in *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁰⁵ Cicero, *ad Familiares* VII, 23.1-3, in *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Lucian, “Teller of Lies,” in Elaine K. Gazda, “Domestic Displays,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture* ed. Elise A. Friedland, Melanie Grunow Sobocinski, and Elaine K. Gazda, 374-389 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 379.

original work by a particular artist or authentic antiques. Again, appropriateness was more of a concern than authenticity, meaning that the age and authorship of an object would not necessarily have contributed to its value for a Roman buyer. Closely tied with tradition, decorum also required justification for deviating from the set standards, even in art. Thus, copies could be understood as adhering to a set tradition, and as “the product of a formulaic visual culture.”¹⁰⁷

Overall, the potential for fraud, as it is understood today, certainly existed in the ancient world and in the art market specifically. However, the question remains as to what ancient Romans considered to be authentic, or whether authenticity was even a primary concern when purchasing art. Context and appropriateness were clearly top priorities for a Roman buyer if he wished to adhere to tradition and decorum. Yet if the Piombino Apollo was in some sense a forgery, or an attempt to deceive, then its artists would in any case have made it to appeal to the contemporary market, a contemporary market obsessed with decorum. Unfortunately, because it was found in the ocean, its original purpose—its context within Roman society—will remain unknown. Yet it is curious that the inscription on the foot dedicates the image of Apollo to Athena. Would this satisfy the Roman concept of decorum? That is, how appropriate was the dedication of the image of one god to another, different god? Would not Athena have expected an image of herself?

It is difficult to call the Piombino Apollo a forgery or even a fraud without a better understanding of its context within the Roman art world. If it was created with the sole purpose of tricking the art market for the artists' benefit, then it can be considered fraudulent. If, however, it was created with a specific purpose in mind, then this clouds

¹⁰⁷ Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*, 49.

the definition of fraud. Certainly, the artists could have created it to look old based on the Romans' desire for all things Greek to claim a higher price. Yet was playing to contemporary Roman taste inherently deceitful? If there was a specific purpose—if, for example, it was meant as a garden statue, a lamp-bearer, or a votive offering within a particular context—then there is the possibility that a Roman buyer would have recognized that purpose in relation to decorum without considering authenticity at all. In this case, fraud as modern researchers understand it is not applicable, because the artists would have had no pecuniary motive in making the piece look older or creating it to fulfill a particular idea of decorum. The purpose, without proper context, is lost. However, the piece itself can shed light on how it might have been received by the Roman market of the first or second century.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPPOSEDLY DECEPTIVE NATURE OF THE PIOMBINO APOLLO

Pose

Ridgway does not mention the pose of the Piombino Apollo as a specific clue to its identification as a forgery. Yet the pose could be important within the context of the first century, since the piece has been characterized as an *ephebe*, or a beautiful young boy.¹⁰⁸ It has also been called a lamp-bearer or tray-bearer type.¹⁰⁹ Also known as *lychnouchoi* and *trapezophoroi*, respectively, these sculptures had a utilitarian purpose in addition to an aesthetic one with connotations that went beyond decorum. Noel Lenski, for example, argues that these types were meant to be stand-ins for slaves carrying lamps or trays for their Roman masters.¹¹⁰

Lamp-bearers depict youths, close to puberty but not past it, with beautifully coiffed hair and sometimes with effeminate features. They were meant to be erotic figures, performing the role of a specific type of slave. Various styles were used for these sculptures, including the Archaistic.¹¹¹ Lenski discusses the Idolino as a prime example of the lamp-bearer type (Figure 9). It was once fitted with bronze hooks to hold two vine-covered racks on which the lamps would have been placed. These fittings were initially ignored by archaeologists, and it was only discovered much later that they were meant to

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Bartman, "Eros's Flame: Images of Sexy Boys in Roman Ideal Sculpture," In *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity*, ed. Elaine K. Gazda, 249-271 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 249.

¹⁰⁹ Dorothy Kent Hill, "Some Sculpture from Roman Domestic Gardens," In *Ancient Roman Gardens* ed. Elisabeth B. MacDougall and Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, 81-94 (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1981), 89.

¹¹⁰ Noel Lenski, "Working Models: Functional Art and Roman Conceptions of Slavery," In *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture* 129-157 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 136.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

be attached to the Idolino to support the weight of the lamp racks.¹¹² Interestingly, most extant lamp-bearer sculptures all stand at a height of about a meter, which, to Lenski, indicates “that they conformed to a uniform standard designed to fill a certain market niche for a familiar product.”¹¹³

At first glance it appears that the Piombino Apollo could indeed fit the description of the lamp-bearer sculptural type offered by Lenski. Its size (117 centimeters tall), effeminate features, soft musculature, youthful appearance, and elegant hair all conform to the features Lenski discusses in his essay. Furthermore, the shape of the Piombino Apollo’s hands could indicate that it once carried a lamp in its left hand. The pinkie and ring fingers curl tightly toward the palm, but the middle and pointer fingers extend slightly further out, with the pointer finger not entirely wrapped around to face the palm. This could mean that the sculpture once gripped a conically-shaped object in his closed fist. Whatever the Piombino Apollo once held, it would have been set at an angle rather than perfectly vertical, and a lamp-rack or individual torch would not be out of the question.

Another clue to the Piombino Apollo’s function comes in the form of that very similar sculpture found at Pompeii (Figure 10). This piece was undoubtedly a lamp-bearer and has clear physical evidence for attachments including a large hole in its outstretched right hand. It was also discovered with “bronze tendrils” attached to its hands that fit to a table top.¹¹⁴ Kenneth Lapatin explains that the piece underwent repairs in antiquity, and the ankles were reinforced with dowels. To some, this would suggest the piece was converted

¹¹² Ibid., 133.

¹¹³ Ibid., 138.

¹¹⁴ Kenneth Lapatin, “Statue of Apollo (Kouros),” In *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 292 (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015), 292.

to the lamp-bearer type rather than created with that purpose in mind.¹¹⁵ Though the Piombino Apollo lacks the same physical evidence of bronze attachments and reinforcing supports, it has been argued that the piece may have had the same function as the Pompeii sculpture due to their visual similarity.¹¹⁶

The Pompeii sculpture is a few inches taller than the Piombino Apollo, though it shares an almost identical pose with a similarly complicated hairstyle. However, there are notable differences between the sculptures as well. First, the body-type of the Pompeii sculpture is much leaner and the musculature is much more pronounced. The entire piece lacks the softness of the Piombino Apollo. The hairstyle, though it appears similar at first glance, is more finely detailed and complex. Long strands fall behind the Pompeii sculpture's ears and over his shoulders. It wears a bronze headband that circles around his head over his hair rather than partially under it as with the Piombino Apollo. A bronze diadem was fitted to rest atop his head just behind this headband. If the Piombino Apollo was meant to have any similar attachments, they are now lost.

The shapes of their hands, though in roughly the same pose, are also slightly different. The fingers on Pompeii sculpture's left fist appear just slightly more relaxed than those of the Piombino Apollo. Its wrist seems less taut and its hand rests at a slightly more downwards angle. Both sculptures' right hands extend forward open with the palms facing up. However, the Piombino Apollo's right thumb curls up and over the palm, whereas the Pompeii statue extends straight and away from the palm.

The feet and legs are also slightly different. There is a slight curve to the Pompeii Apollo's hips that is not echoed in the more rigid Piombino Apollo. Further, the Pompeii

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Apollo's step is slightly shorter and its feet are much closer together than those of the Piombino Apollo. Its feet also have much higher arches than the sculpture from Piombino, and the concave curve between the top of the foot and the toes is much more pronounced. As Lapatin concludes in his catalogue entry about the Pompeii sculpture, the pieces may be based on the same prototype, but it is unlikely that they came from the same mold or even the same workshop.¹¹⁷ Thus, the purpose of the Pompeii sculpture and the purpose of the Piombino Apollo are not necessarily the same.

Particularly significant is the Piombino Apollo's lack of bronze fittings or brackets that would be expected if it functioned as a lamp or tray-bearer. Though it could have held a lamp-rack or torch in its closed left fist, the weight of any such attachment would have to be light enough for the hollow bronze to support on its own. In this way, the Pompeii piece can negatively inform the Piombino piece. Without evidence for the same kind of bronze attachments found in the Pompeii statue, there is little reason to posit the same function for the Piombino Apollo.

There are two possible conclusions about the Piombino Apollo's potential to deceive that can be drawn from its form and pose. First, if one accepts that it is similar enough to the Pompeii sculpture to warrant being grouped within the lamp-bearer type, then the piece cannot be deceptive, since, as Lenski argued, this was an established and common sculptural type in the first century that followed uniform standards. He notes that "the type is definitely Roman: all datable exemplars trace to the Roman period (first century BCE—second century CE)... Though they borrowed from Greek ideals and

¹¹⁷ Lapatin, "Statue of Apollo (Kouros)," 292. Mattusch does not necessarily agree with this. See Carol Mattusch with Henry Lie, *The Villa Dei Papiri at Herculaneum: Life and Afterlife of a Sculpture Collection* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 241.

standards, the original types were reassembled by contemporary bronze casters in order to suit Roman tastes.”¹¹⁸ Though the lamp-bearer was an established type with uniform size and function, the style of the sculptures could vary greatly. These objects were meant to appeal to a first-century audience, meaning that the eclectic Archaistic style of Piombino Apollo would have been appropriate for the lamp-bearer type.¹¹⁹ Finally, if the Piombino Apollo was originally created to be a lamp-bearer, it presumably would have been sold with bronze lamps or lamp-racks that would not have been included in an Archaic work. This obvious functionality would have been yet another clue to a Roman buyer that the object was from the first century. We can be confident that a contemporary Roman, familiar with these kinds of objects, would recognize the sculptural type and know at once that it could not be an antiquity.¹²⁰

The second potential conclusion is that the Piombino Apollo is not a lamp-bearer, and this is more likely given the lack of physical evidence. Further, if it was actually created in the second century, it would be outside the date range Lenski presents for the type. This leaves the potential for deception in its kouros-like pose. Yet does the pose really actively add to the sculpture’s supposedly deceptive nature? The fact that the piece so closely resembles the Pompeii sculpture actually works against this. If bronze sculptures with this pose were being mass produced in any way, even if they referenced an older prototype, then, as with the lamp-bearer, that would suggest that a Roman could potentially easily recognize it as a contemporaneous piece rather than an antique one.

¹¹⁸ Lenski, “Working Models,” 140.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Beyond the physical evidence there is also the question of appropriateness. If the lamp-bearer type was associated with slavery, it is puzzling that either statue could depict Apollo, a god, performing the duties of a Roman slave. The sculpture from Pompeii, if it was indeed meant to hold a table, could have represented an anonymous *ephebe*. The Piombino Apollo, however, may have had an entirely different purpose.

Inscriptions

The inscriptions associated with the Piombino Apollo were used as evidence by Ridgway not only to re-date the sculpture, but also as further proof of intended deceit. Yet while her arguments for re-dating the Apollo are convincing, her conclusions about the motives of the artists are less so. Again, the intent of those long dead can never be known without direct evidence. While the inscriptions might seem to support the conclusion that the Piombino Apollo is a forgery, in reality, alternate explanations for their unusual features are available.

Signatures

As in ancient Greek art, few artists signed their work in the Roman world.¹²¹ Those that did offer no explicit reasons for doing so. Nor is there any ancient literature with specific explanations for why artists signed a work or why they did not. The question becomes even more complex when regarding the Piombino Apollo, whose artists chose to sign the work not on the outside, but on a lead tablet they then inserted into the hollow bronze sculpture. To some authors, like Ridgway and Hemingway, this proves an intent to deceive. Why hide their names unless they were attempting to pass the sculpture off as something it was not? Yet this is not entirely sufficient. Why sign the

¹²¹ Michael Squire, "Roman Art and the Artist," In *A Companion to Roman Art* ed. Barbara E. Borg (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 182.

sculpture at all if they wanted to truly hide their identities? Was the desire for recognition so intense that they had to include their names even at the risk of being eventually discovered? To Jonathan Hay, “as long as the forgery takes people in, the forger does not exist.”¹²² It could be that the artists were attempting to navigate an identity between author and forger, between existence and nonexistence.

Understanding signatures in first and second-century Rome begins with the traditions of the ancient Greek art world. Jeffrey Hurwit discusses some of the motives a Greek artist would have had for signing his work. He addresses the desire for recognition in particular, noting that this desire has always been “deeply seated in the human psyche.”¹²³ Yet Hurwit states that this is ultimately insufficient. If it were enough on its own, it would be expected that everything would have been signed.¹²⁴ Thus there must be other reasons, or a combination of reasons, why an artist would have signed a work or not signed.

Hurwit begins with economic value, explaining that a signature could have acted as a kind of advertisement or trademark for the artist.¹²⁵ Again, though, one would expect to find more signatures on works from antiquity if it was an effective form of advertisement that resulted in direct monetary gain for an artist.¹²⁶ This clearly was not the motivation for the Piombino Apollo’s sculptors. The basis of this argument relies on a

¹²² Jonathan Hay, “Editorial: The value of forgery,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53/54 (2008): 6.

¹²³ Hurwit, *Artists and Signatures in Ancient Greece*, 147.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

potential customer seeing a signature and associating that signature with a specific person or workshop.

Another possible reason was the concept of *agōn*, or competition. Hurwit states that, “the signature identifies an author or maker and distinguishes him from other authors and makers, at the same time that it establishes him as a competitor with others in contests both formal and informal.”¹²⁷ This is the very heart of the signature: to differentiate oneself from the pack and to demand recognition for one’s work. It allows the artist to claim authorship and existence. The signature can also be read as a marker of accomplishment or even a challenge to future artists. Of course, the ultimate motivation behind signatures may be any or all of these for the Greeks, and the same reasons must have applied to the Roman art world (where, incidentally, so many artists were Greek).

Michael Squire reiterates the idea that signatures were likely meant to be a form of advertisement.¹²⁸ Lori-Ann Touchette shares a similar notion in her chapter on Archaism, noting especially that those sculptures with Greek signatures on the body rather than the base were probably meant for the export market, with the signature acting as a sort of authenticator for “Greekness.”¹²⁹ In regard to copies of famous Greek sculptures, they offer explanations similar to Hurwit’s suggested motive of *agōn*. Squire in particular explains why a copyist would sign with his own name rather than the name of the original artist. The signature fulfilled a dual purpose. It advertised that the copyist had the skill to recreate or surpass the original and it was a way for the artist to answer

¹²⁷ Ibid., 153.

¹²⁸ Squire, “Roman Art and the Artist,” 182.

¹²⁹ Lori-Ann Touchette, “Archaism and Eclecticism,” 297

the challenge of the masterpiece. He cites the signature of one Miletus, which reads, “as a sculptor, I blossomed no less than Praxiteles.”¹³⁰

Both Squire and Touchette also identify the importance of ethnicity in regards to the Roman art market. It was not the ethnicity of the artist that mattered, but rather ethnicity in relation to the type of artifact. Touchette explains that:

In general, art forms that were viewed as Roman, such as terracotta architectural reliefs and lamps, are signed in Latin, even by Greek artists; art forms that were viewed as Greek are signed in Greek. The language of the signature is determined by Roman perception of the work, not the nationality, ethnicity, or native language of the artist.¹³¹

Squire reiterates this point, noting that artists, even those with Latin names, could sign in Greek, because that is what Roman buyers expected. This goes back to the discussion of decorum. The reason for the language of the signatures and part of the reason for the signatures themselves seems linked to this concept.

It was appropriate for Roman art to be made by a Roman artist and it was appropriate for Greek art to be made by a Greek artist. Thus, an artist active within the Roman market may have had slightly different motives for signing a piece, and signing it in a particular way, than an artist operating in a Greek market in previous centuries. With this in mind, was it really important to a Roman that they had a genuine Myron or a genuine Praxiteles? Or was it more important that the ethnicity of the artist matched the expected type of artifact? If this was the case, then the Greek sculptors of the Piombino Apollo would have had no reason to hide their signatures.

Relatively few Greek or Roman signatures remain, but the ones that do exist seem to fall into the category of the *agōn*. Whether it is to take credit for one’s own work in

¹³⁰ Squire, “Roman Art and the Artist,” 189.

¹³¹ Lori-Ann Touchette, “Archaism and Eclecticism,” 298.

order to compete with another rival artist down the street or to assert one's own skill in order to differentiate oneself from those who have come before, the concept of *agōn* was central to the ancient signature. Yet the signatures found within the Piombino Apollo do not really fit into this category. The point of a signature is to be seen. Why hide it within? And was this really an act of deception? It is possible the artists placed the signatures within the sculpture because they wanted acknowledgement for their work, not from mortals, but from the gods. After all, a divine being would have no trouble peering into the interior of the Piombino Apollo to see the signatures within. However, this type of motivation for placing the signatures inside the hollow sculpture is not inherently deceptive.

As previously discussed, there is no real evidence for Romans paying more money for "authenticity." That is to say, there is no evidence for the Romans paying more money for an antique simply because it is from a particular era. Certainly, they considered Greek antiquities venerable, but their tastes and preferences in sculpture were tied more closely to appropriateness, and the authenticity of statues seems to have been tied, at least partially, to the ethnicity of their sculptors. To my knowledge there are no other signatures like those of the Piombino Apollo in existence. Yet it is safe to say the interiors of bronze statuary are rarely examined or cleaned in the way the Piombino Apollo was. It is entirely possible that this was not a unique way of signing a bronze and that modern scholars simply have not yet found other examples. Ultimately, there is not enough evidence to call the placement of the signature deceptive, because there is no apparent motivation or benefit for hiding it in the first place.

Foot Inscription

There are two unusual aspects to the small inscription on the foot of the Piombino Apollo. The first is that the inscription on reads “ΑΘΑΝΑΙΑ ΔΕΚΑΤΑΝ,” denoting that the image was meant to be a tithe to the goddess Athena.¹³² One would not expect an image of one deity to be given as a tithe to another.¹³³ However, the practice was not unheard of in the Roman world at the time the Piombino Apollo was made, though Ridgway claims that the artists would have been unaware that it did not exist in Archaic Greek tradition.¹³⁴ This assumes yet again that the ultimate goal of the artists was to deceive a buyer and ignores the possibility that it could have been made for a contemporary audience within a specific and established context. Nathan Badoud’s recent work on the sanctuary of Athena Lindia at Rhodes establishes that the image of gods other than Athena could in fact be dedicated to Athena at this particular sanctuary.¹³⁵ This argument has led Sophie Descamps-Lequine to suggest that the Piombino Apollo was probably placed in this very sanctuary in the late second century.¹³⁶ Of course, if the sculpture is not an Apollo but an anonymous Apolline youth, then there would have been no problem with the dedicatory inscription, and the sculpture could have been placed in any sanctuary to Athena.

¹³² Ridgway, “The Bronze Apollo of Piombino in the Louvre,” 65.

¹³³ Ibid., 63. Ridgway claims that the Piombino Apollo must be an Apollo due to its long hair, since most images mortals of the late Archaic period had short hairstyles.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Nathan Badoud, *Le Temps de Rhodes: Une Chronologie des Inscriptions de la Cité Fondée sur L’étude de ses Institutions* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2015), 37-49.

¹³⁶ Sophie Descamps Lequine, “Statue of Apollo (Piombino Apollo),” In *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015), 290.

Although Badoud's and Descamps-Lequine's research raises an interesting point about the Piombino Apollo's possible original context, since second-century buyer would know that the Piombino Apollo was not truly Archaic if they commissioned it from a contemporary artist. Yet there is no way to know if it was ever in that particular sanctuary since the sculpture was found in the ocean off the coast of Italy. However, the fact that it was found in the ocean does reveal certain things about the sculpture. First, it was likely in a shipwreck, meaning it was traveling to or from Italy. Second, the Piombino Apollo likely existed in more than one market. If Badoud is correct, for example, it existed within the art market of Rhodes and later was sent to Italy, where, depending on the time period, its owners could have attempted to sell it as an Archaic original. Again, the lack of contextual evidence makes the Piombino Apollo's case particularly complex. While the potential for deception existed, there is no way to know if it was ever sold fraudulently.

The second unusual feature of the inscription is the style of the letters, which appear to be Archaic but are ultimately anachronistic. Ridgway bases much of her argument for re-dating the Piombino Apollo on these letter forms and the dialect.¹³⁷ Ridgway ultimately concludes,

it would seem that that there was a revival of the old letter-forms at the time of Augustus; it is therefore not improbable to assume that also the dedication on the Apollo's foot might have been written by one of these 'masters/antiquarians' of the first century B.C., who was however not 'archaeological' enough to realize the distinction between early and late fifth century forms, and the various usages of different geographical areas.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ridgway, "The Bronze Apollo of Piombino in the Louvre," 67.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

As with the Archaistic style, this again assumes that the artists cared about authenticity enough to try to imitate the lettering of an ancient inscription, but were somehow neither skilled nor informed enough to pull it off perfectly. Yet if there was really a revival in the popularity of the old forms of lettering, why is this particular inscription deceptive? Should all attempts to mimic Archaic lettering be considered fraudulent? Certainly deceit is not out of the question, but there are other possible explanations. As such, the inscription cannot determine whether the Piombino Apollo's artists intended to deceive but simply lacked the knowledge and skill to make a perfect facsimile.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Without more direct evidence, some questions about the Piombino Apollo may never be answered. Yet it is important to consider that there are other possible reasons for the sculpture's many seemingly deceptive traits besides forgery or fraud. Forgery and fraud both require that the perpetrator benefit in some way from their deception. Therefore, it is probably more fruitful to examine not only each possibly deceptive element of the Piombino Apollo but also the potential motivations of the artists for including those elements. If no clear motives or benefits are present, then it is unlikely that the Piombino Apollo was intended to deceive.

First, the application of the word "forgery" to the Piombino Apollo suggests the presence of positive evidence for fraudulent intent that does not exist. It requires that the sculpture usurp an original antecedent while providing pecuniary gain for the sculptors at the expense of a victim. There is no evidence for this. Just because certain traits had potential to be deceptive does not mean that they were.

Second, though the potential for fraud existed in antiquity, the types of fraud committed typically involved one artist claiming the name of another. The Piombino Apollo's sculptors merely hid their names from view. Furthermore, it is apparent that the type of authenticity the Romans were concerned with was aligned closely with the concept of decorum. The appropriateness of subject matter and placement was more important than age or "authenticity" in a modern sense. There is no evidence that the value of the Piombino Apollo would have decreased had its true age have been revealed.

Finally, the supposedly dishonest features of the Piombino Apollo, which Ridgway assumes are deceptive (the hidden signatures, the dedicatory inscription, and the Archaistic Style) actually have other possible explanations. For example, the Archaistic style could have been used to link the Piombino Apollo to a venerable tradition, and there may have been enough visual cues for a Roman buyer to have known it was a contemporary work. The pose, if the sculpture was a lamp-bearer, would have immediately informed a Roman buyer that it was a contemporary piece. Or its similarities to other contemporary bronze sculpture would have led a Roman to recognize it as a mass-produced object rather than an original from the late sixth century.

The inscriptions also have other possible explanations. Badoud's research on the sanctuary of Athena Lindia on Rhodes indicates that there was at least one appropriate place for the image of one god to be dedicated to another. If the Piombino Apollo was created for this specific sanctuary, it could hardly have fooled the art market. If it was a commissioned piece, the buyer would know that the object had to be contemporary. Ridgway herself states that the foot inscription must have been inscribed when the sculpture was made, and not after. This would suggest that the Piombino Apollo was made for this particular sanctuary rather than a forgery meant to deceive a victim in the contemporary art market.

The signatures, of course, are unusual, because they were found within the sculpture. Yet, again, the Roman concept of authenticity was different from the modern understanding of the word. It would have been perfectly appropriate for the Piombino Apollo's Greek artists to sign their work. Their signatures, if they had been visible, would have actually lent a type of authenticity, again closely linked to appropriateness, that

required Greek artists for Greek types of art. Though the interior signatures are unusual, it is entirely possible that other bronze sculptures were signed in this way. Ultimately, there is nothing to prove they are not deceptive, but there is no positive evidence for their deceit, either.

In the end, declaring the Piombino Apollo to be a forgery is not merited by the evidence. Without direct evidence of an intent to deceive, or of an original antecedent it was meant to usurp, or that the artists benefitted from its sale at the expense of a victim, the verdict of “forgery or “fraud” cannot be reached.

Such a verdict wrongly assumes that the Romans did not know enough about Greek sculpture to be able to tell the difference between a contemporary sculpture and an actual Archaic piece. Second, it also assumes that they would have made this distinction and that they had similar standards for authenticity that modern buyers have today. Third, it assumes that the artists of the Piombino Apollo willfully intended to deceive the Roman art market, a fact that cannot be proven without direct evidence. Finally, labeling the Piombino Apollo a forgery suggests that the piece is inherently deceptive. As previously stated, there are other possibilities for the Piombino Apollo’s supposedly deceptive traits. While there is evidence that fraud did exist in antiquity, there is no convincing evidence that the Piombino Apollo should be included in this category.

APPENDIX

FIGURES

Figure 1: *Piombino Apollo*. c. 120-100 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and silver sculpture, 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. no. Br 2. From *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*. Ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 290. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015.



Figure 2: Hervé Lewandowski. Photograph of the *Piombino Apollo* (Profile). c. 120-100 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and silver sculpture, 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. no. Br 2. From The Louvre Museum Official Website. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/apollo-piombino>



Figure 3: Hervé Lewandowski. Photograph of the *Piombino Apollo* (Rear). c. 120-100 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and silver sculpture, 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. no. Br 2. From The Louvre Museum Official Website. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/apollo-piombino>



Figure 4: *Piombino Apollo* detail. c. 120-100 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and silver sculpture, 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. no. Br 2. From *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*. Ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 290. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015.



Figure 5: Three fragments of an inscribed tablet. Lead, Top H 1.78 cm, W 7.34 cm; Middle H 2.11 cm, W 7 cm; Bottom H 1.9 cm, W 7.67 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. nos. BR 2a-c. From *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*. Ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 290. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015.



Figure 6: Caryatid. C. 415 B.C.E. Marble sculpture, 228 centimeters. The British Museum 1816,0610.128. From The British Museum Online. Accessed May 8, 2016. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=459389&partId=1



Figure 7: Relief of the Sacrifice of a Pig. c. 490-480 B.C.E. Marble relief. The Acropolis Museum Acr. 581. From The Acropolis Museum Online. Accessed May 8, 2016. <http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/other-dedications>



Figure 8: Bronze Figure of Apollo (Possibly a copy of the Apollo Philesios by Kanachos of Sikyon c. 6th Century B.C.E.). c. first century B.C.E. Bronze sculpture, 19.05 centimeters. The British Museum Bronze 209. From the British Museum Online. Accessed May 8, 2016. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=399733&partId=1



Figure 9: Youth (“Idolino”). c. 30 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and lead sculpture. Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Firenze). From the National Gallery of Art Online. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/introduction-to-greek-bronzes/the-idolino.html>



Figure 10: Statue of Apollo (Kouros). C. 1st century B.C.E.- 1st century CE. Bronze, copper, bone, darke stone, and glass sculpture, 128 cm. Pompeii, Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni archeologici di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia, inv. No. 22924. From *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*. Ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 292. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015. Next to *Piombino Apollo*. c. 120-100 B.C.E. Bronze, copper, and silver sculpture, 117 cm. Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv. no. Br 2. From *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*. Ed. Jens M. Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, 290. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015.



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