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A Roman Torso of Silvanus

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Roman

Imperial Period, 2nd century A.D.

Torso of Silvanus

Marble

68 x 38 x 23 cm

26 3/4 x 14 15/16 x 9 in.

Provenance

Sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 23 February 1983, lot 78;

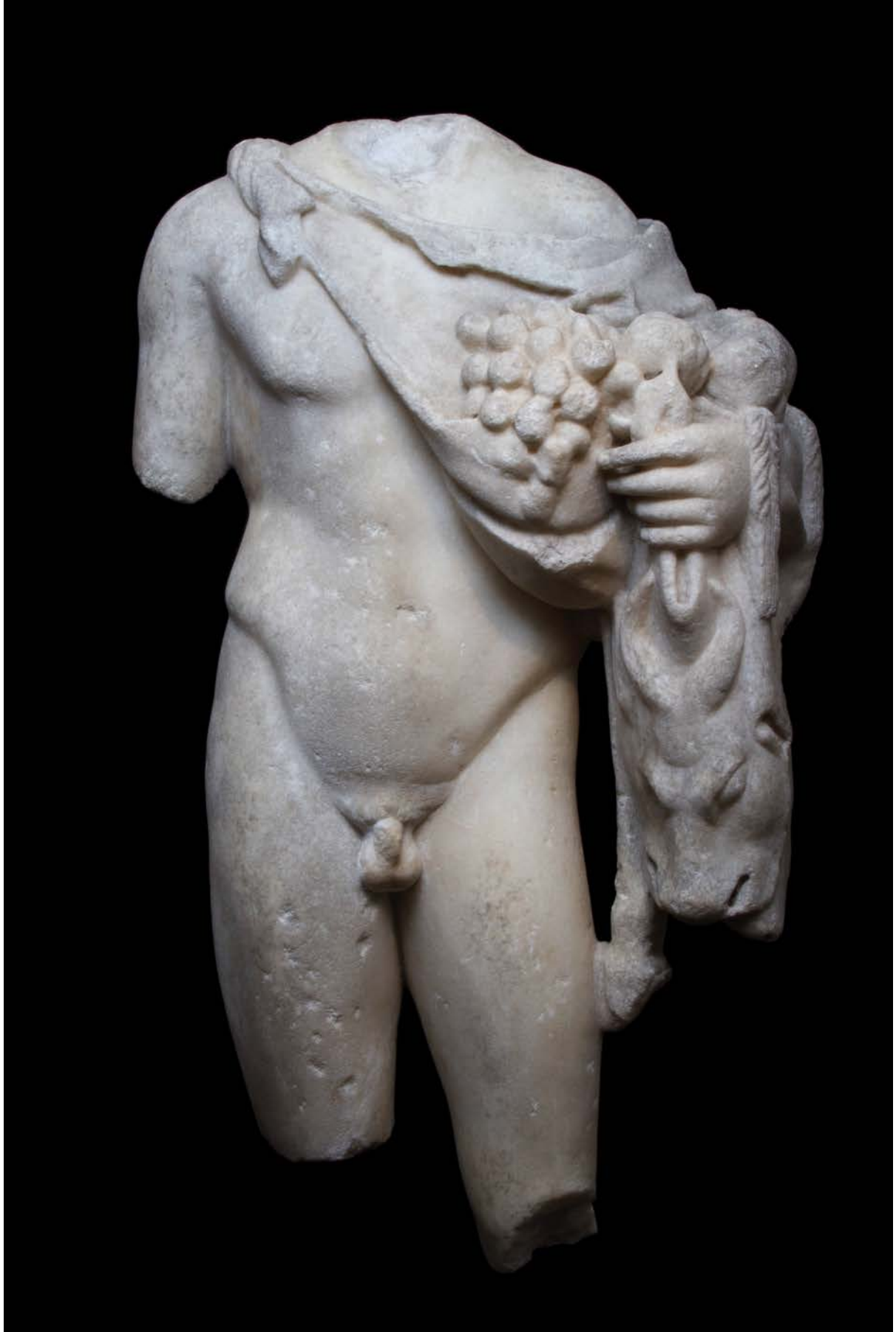
There acquired by Alain Moatti (1939–2023), art dealer, Switzerland;

Thence by descent / or Private collection, Switzerland.

Silvanus, whose name translate to "of the woods," was a native Italic woodland deity and a protector of agricultural fertility. While he never entered the official Roman state-sanctioned religion – he had no dedicated temple, festival or holy day – his immense popularity as a rustic god is confirmed by the number of extant inscriptions invoking him; only Jupiter, Hercules, Fortuna and Mercury eclipse Silvanus in epigraphic terms (see p. 1 in P.F. Dorsey, *The Cult of Silvanus: A Study in Roman Folk Religion*). Emperor Hadrian used the image of Silvanus to reinforce his passion for hunting and posthumous depictions of his favorite, Antinous, show him in the guise of the god (op. cit., pp. 100-101).

Here, Silvanus stands wearing an animal-skin tied at his right shoulder and draped over his left shoulder and arm. In the crook of his bent arm he cradles grapes and other fruits – symbols of a bountiful harvest. For similar depictions, see nos. 22-32 in Á Nagy, "Silvanus," *LIMC*, vol. VII.

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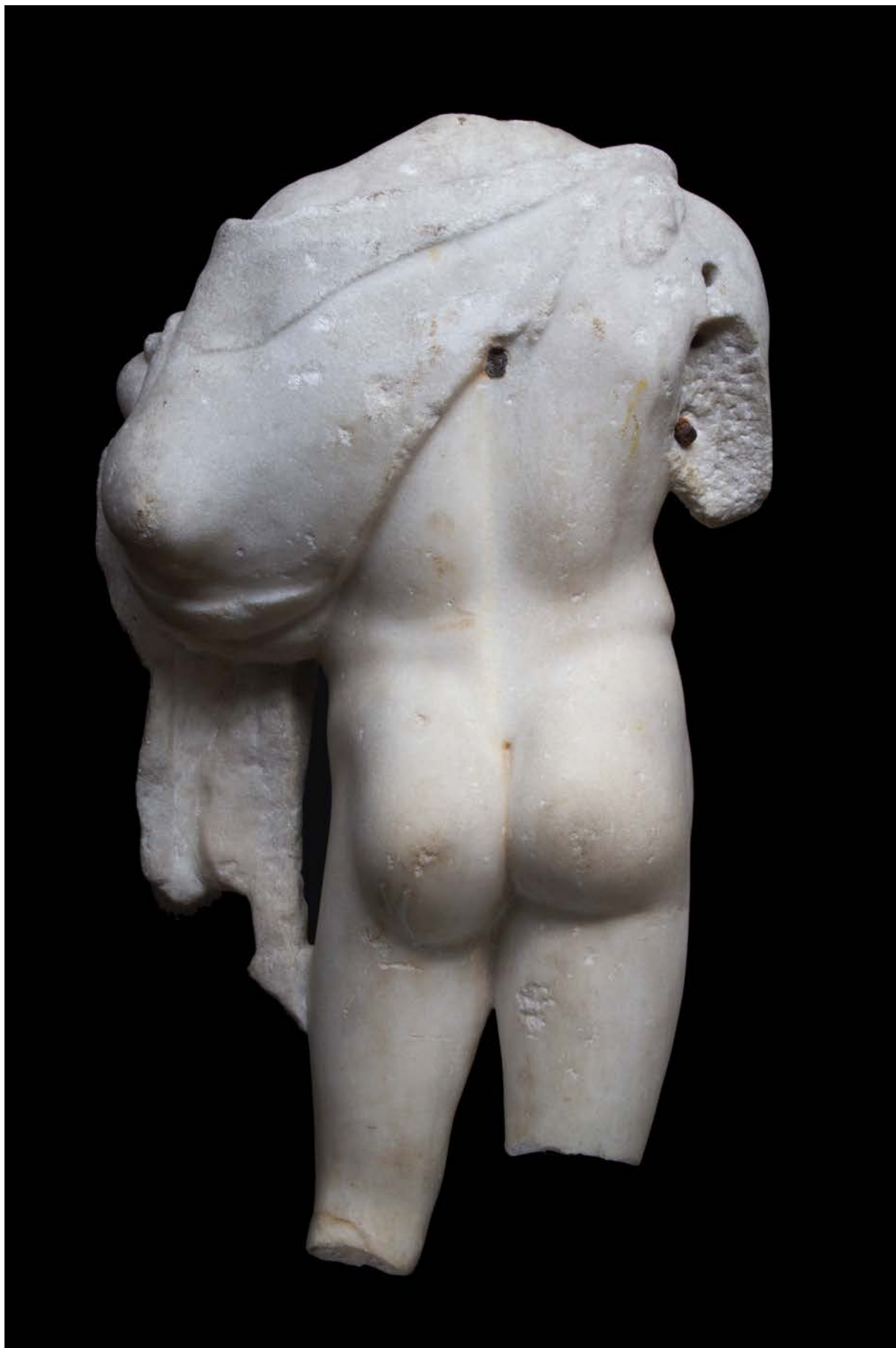
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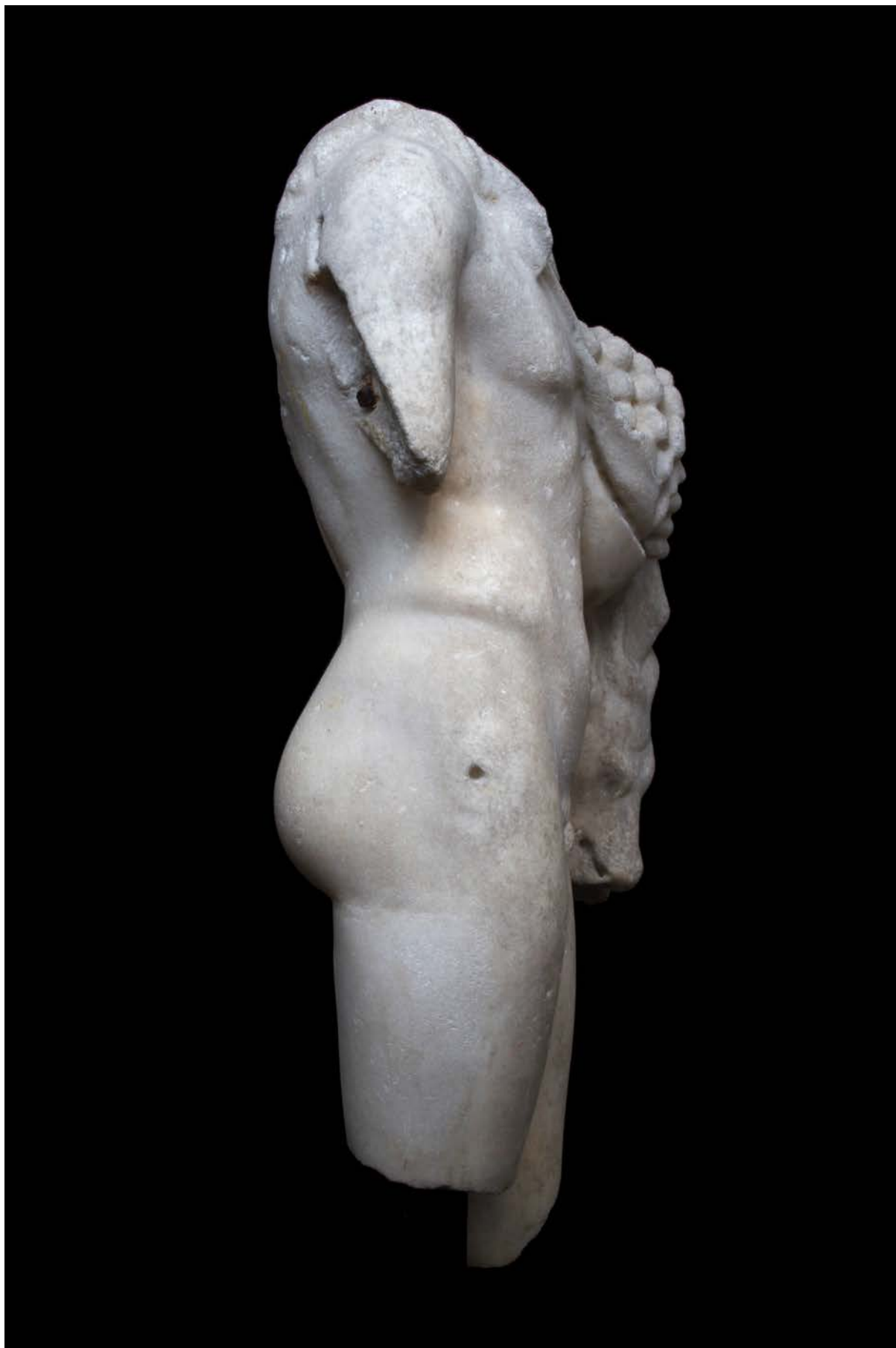
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