

## ISLAMIC BRONZE GILT HELMET SURMOUNTED BY A LION

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Islamic, 12th Century A.D. - 13th Century A.D.

Gilt bronze

Height: 17 cm

Reference: 2897



A majestic lion sits atop this richly embellished helmet, which has been hammered out of bronze and then gilt. The lion's anatomy and fur are distinguished by various cold-worked and punched designs. Beneath the lion a calligraphic inscription, which is bordered by a guilloche pattern above and a rope design below, extends around the helmet. The helmet's small size suggests it was made for a young man, or possibly used in some ritual or religious context.

In Islamic society the lion remains one of their most important symbols. As with Western cultures, the lion evokes qualities of bravery, strength, and valor. The motif has been popular throughout the centuries, having been mentioned in the Koran, the traditions of the Prophet, and in Sufi poetry. In early Islam, the lion is associated with the Caliph Ali, who is said to have been given the title of Lion of God by the Prophet Mohammed.

### PROVENANCE

European art market, 1994