

MILDENBERG ROMAN BRONZE RECLINING LION

Roman, 2nd century A.D.

Bronze

L: 19.5 cm

Reference: 17654



Big and impressive animal is reclining sprawling the forepaws in front of him. The profile view gives the best idea of the composition. Although the hind legs are bent behind, the lion does not have a completely relaxing attitude as the tail is energetically curving above the croup, the head which is slightly turned to its right is raised, and the opened mouth expresses the roar. The anatomical shape of the animal is well modeled; the incision marks several individual details. Especially impressive are the engraved eyes with pupils under the bulging eye brows. Separate locks of the thick mane spread in different directions are carefully arranged; there is even a decorative approach in the treatment of the hair, especially appreciated when one sees the neck and the chest from the front.

It is quite possible that the piece served as a fountain attachment. Two large apertures on the bottom that appeared in the initial cast were used to fix the object on a support and to accommodate the pipe leading the pressurized water that was gushing from a small hole pierced in open mouth. Considering the size of the water jet, the piece probably belonged to the type of a miniature fountain, kind of a table centerpiece known for the luxurious feast arrangements of the wealthy Romans. Perhaps the entire item included additional two or three figures facing different sides.

The piece is in a good state of conservation although there are fractures, a hole and a fixed area at the back; a small hole on the left side below the mane and a loss of rather big rectangular patch which substituted the imperfection of the cast during the following step of the execution of the piece. Two small rectangular patches are still visible on their sites on the right side of the croup.

PROVENANCE

Ex- Leo Mildenberg (1913-2001) collection, Zurich, Switzerland, 1960s

- 1980s.

PUBLISHED

KOZLOFF A. P., MITTEN D. G. and SGUAITAMATTI M., *More Animals in Ancient Art from the Leo Mildenberg Collection, Part II*, Mainz am Rhein, 1986, no.104.

MOTTAHEDEH P. E. (ed.), *Out of Noah's Ark, Animals in Ancient Art from the Leo Mildenberg Collection*, Jerusalem, 1997, no. 90.