

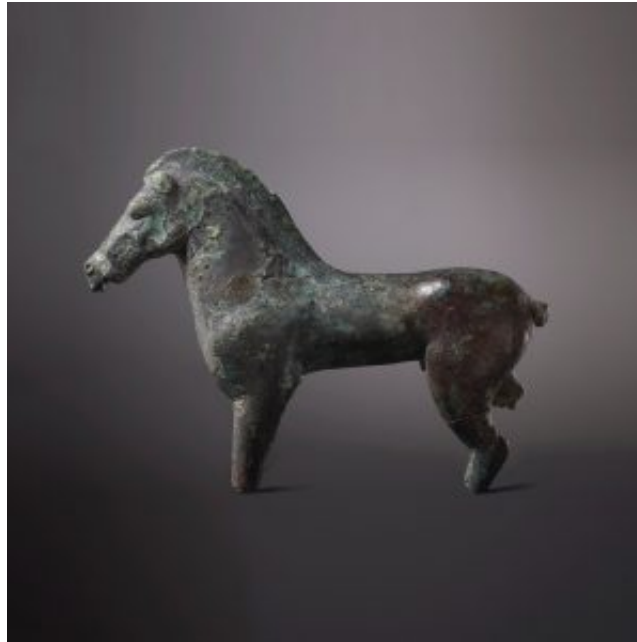
## STATUETTE OF A HORSE

Archaic Greek, Late 6th - early 5th century B.C.

Bronze

H: 7.9 cm - Length: 11.7 cm

Reference: 3917



Solid cast statuette.

The horse, a stallion with a mane of short and stiff hair, is standing upright, walking slowly forward with its neck stretched out straight. This piece is characterized by a remarkable artistic quality; the sculptor admirably alternated the modeled and rounded volumes, and the incised details.

The lack of harnesses, reins, rider or other specific elements does not enable us to determine the original purpose of the statuette: it might have been a simple ex-voto, a sort of follower of the tradition of Geometric horses, a figurine adorning the rim of a krater (like the examples applied on the large kraters of Vix or Capua) or a figurine belonging to a group. The horse would have been part of a team of two or four animals, ready to go into a chariot race or to a prize ceremony for the winner of a competition (who, in the Greek world, was not the charioteer but the owner of the coupling). Among closest parallels, one should mention a slightly larger statuette, now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, whose chronology, first established in the 5th century B.C., was lately reviewed and fixed to the Hellenistic period.

Domesticated much later than the bovinds, horses appear in ancient cultures only from the Bronze Age, especially from the 2nd millennium B.C. They were expensive animals, more delicate and less helpful than steers and sheep: however, in many ancient civilizations, owning a horse quickly became a sign of distinction and social prestige, that only the highest classes of society could afford.

### CONDITION

The tail, lower jaw and legs are lost or incomplete (a thigh is partially reglued). Dark brown surface, with a green patina and superficial corrosion.

### PROVENANCE

Ex-private collection; acquired on the European art market in 1991.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- MITTEN D.G. et al., *Master Bronzes from the Classical World*, 1967, p. 67, no. 58.
- ROLLEY C., *Les bronzes grecs*, Fribourg, 1983, pp. 123-124, fi g. 110 (statuette of the Grumentum rider, in Basilicata); pp. 88, 109, 138-142, fi gs. 128, 129, 133 (Vix krater); pp. 140-142, fi g. 131-132 (large caldron, Capua).
- TZACHOU-ALEXANDRI O. (ed.), *Mind and Body, Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece*, Athens, 1989, pp. 223-224, no. 115.
- For the statuette housed in New York, see:  
<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/251268>  
rpp=20&pg=1&ao=on&ft=greek+bronze+horse&pos=2