

# STATUETTE OF HERACLES WITH THE APPLES OF THE HESPERIDES

Roman, 1st century A.D.

Bronze

Height: 29 cm

Reference: 21700



The figure represents Heracles, the archetypal Greek hero: he is standing upright, the weight of his body supported by his left leg, while the right leg is a bit behind (only the tip of the right foot touches the ground). The right arm followed his body and certainly held an attribute, like the club or the bow. The left arm is bent and directed towards the viewer: in his hand, Heracles holds three spherical objects, which can be identified as the Apples of the Hesperides. Bringing these fruits back, with the long journey to Mount Atlas, was the last of the twelve Labors of the hero.

Here, the head and face of Heracles refer to the usual models of the hero, depicted as a middle-aged male. His hair is short and styled in small wavy locks, his beard is short but thick and a mustache covers his upper lip. His severe, idealized face conveys a deep sense of self-consciousness and confidence.

Stylistically and artistically, this statuette, which can be dated to the early Imperial period, probably to the 1st century A.D., is of the highest quality: the proportions, as well as the natural position and the meticulously rendered anatomical details of the figure, can be compared to the most beautiful bronze figures of the time.

Typologically, this statuette belongs to the numerous variations created by the Roman artists, who were certainly influenced by the Classical or Hellenistic Greek images of Heracles showing the hero standing upright, but in a moment of repose. Despite small differences (attributes, positions of the legs, of the arms, of the head, etc.), the attitude is similar to that of the Chiaramonti Heracles of Boston/Oxford or New York, which are Roman copies after Greek originals. This type still appears in the 3rd century, for example on the sarcophagi representing the Labors of Heracles.

Perfectly preserved; right arm lost, feet and lower left leg reassembled; eyes inlaid but lost. Statuette mounted on hollow pedestal in the shape of a molded drum, probably the original base. Brown-colored surface with minor traces of green patina in light relief. Perhaps because of the restorations, the statuette leans backwards.

## PROVENANCE

Ex-Londoner collection built before 1982. Ex-European private collection, acquired in 1995.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC), Vol. IV, Zurich-Munich, s.v. Herakles, pp. 751 ff.

ROBERT C., *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, Vol. III, 1, Rome, 1969, pp. 143-146, fig. 126, b (Torlonia Collection, Rome).

*The Gods Delight, The Human Figure in Classical Bronze*, Cleveland, 1989, pp. 168 ff., no. 29; pp. 322 ff., no. 61.

## CONDITION