

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Alberghetti foundries, possibly Giulio Alberghetti

Mortar

c. 1550

Bronze

16.7 cm (6⁵/₈ in) high 17.7 cm (7 in.) diam. across rim

This superb mortar, heavily cast in bronze, has been decorated in very delicate relief. It is similar in style and shape to three mortars in the Kress Collection in the National Gallery, Washington, described by John Pope-Hennessy as products of the same workshop and being 'probably Venetian, early 16th century' in his catalogue of the collection. The Kress mortars and the present one are closely related in their decorative repertoire: they all have identical dolphin handles, while the hind which scratches himself, the garlands interspeded with suspended bucranes and the foliage border around the lip of our mortar can be observed on at least two of the Kress mortars.

The definitive attribution of these works to a particular workshop has been made by Anthony Radcliffe who established the connection to a beautiful signed mortar that is now in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (inventory number 715 B ; see Radcliffe, loc. cit. supra,). Decorated with the same scratching hind, cornucopias and suspended bucranes, it is signed 'VLIO / ALBERGETI'.

The Alberghetti were a dynasty of founders who originated from Ferrara and were active in Ferrara, Florence and Venice. They owned a foundry in the Arsenal in Venice from the late 15th to the early 19th centuries and Giulio was director of the foundry at the Arsenal in the mid 16th century (see P. Motture, loc. cit.).

Provenance

Provenance:

- Otto John Beit (1865-1930; created 1st Baronet 1924); inherited by his son
- Sir Alfred Lane Beit (1903-1994); inherited by his widow (married 1939)
- Lady Clementine Mabell Kitty Beit (1915-2005, née Mitford); donated in 2005 to
- Alfred Beit Foundation.

Literature:

Published:

- Wilhelm Bode, Catalogue of the collection of pictures and bronzes in the possession of Mr. Otto Beit, 1913, p. 113, no. 255, as 'workshop of Leopardi'.

Comparative literature:

- Wilhelm Bode & Dr. Knapp, Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Beschreibung der Bildwerke der christlichen Epochen. II. Die italienischen Bronzen, 2nd ed., 1904, p. 137, no. 1420, pl. LXXXI
- J. Pope-Hennessy, Complete Catalogue of the Samuel H. Kress Collection - Renaissance Bronzes, London, 1965, pp. 154-155, nos. 566-568, figs. 592, 594, 597.
- Anthony Radcliffe in The Thyssen-Bornemisza collection. Renaissance and later sculpture ..., Sotheby's 1992, pp. 222-225, under no. 37, illus.
- Peta Motture, Bells and Mortars, Catalogue of Italian Bronzes in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2001, pp. 96-127