



Roman Imperial, mid-2nd century AD

Portrait bust of a man

Circa: 2nd century AD

2nd century AD

76.5 cm (30 1/4 inches)

The life-sized sculpture portrays a middle-aged man of high status who has a powerful and vivid appearance. His short beard and moustache are akin to those of the emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138), but the curly hair, prominent facial features, and intense gaze are more characteristic of the expressive style of the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161) and his son and successor, Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180). He wears a deeply folded paludamentum (military cloak) fastened with a circular brooch over his left shoulder.

"This new acquisition is a superb example of early Antonine portraiture, which was previously not well represented in the Museum's collection," said Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Roman portraiture achieved its most individualized and dynamic expression between the mid-second and early third centuries AD, as shown in the artistic quality and vivacity of this exceptional portrayal. It will be one of the highlights of the Roman portrait sculptures on display in the second-floor galleries of the newly installed Villa."

The bust is carved in one piece along with its tabula (name plate) and joins the original, separately worked circular base. As with nearly all surviving Roman sculptures, the artist is unknown, but based on its style it can be assigned to a workshop in Rome that produced portraits for imperial and aristocratic patrons.

Provenance

Provenance:

Rome art market, 1960 or earlier

Adolph Loewi, Inc., Los Angeles, acquired in Rome prior to 1961

acquired from the above by Denver Art Museum in 1965 (inv. no. 1965.22)

Sold Sotheby's, London 12th June 2017, lot 51.

Daniel Katz Gallery, by whom sold to the J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2018 (on display at the Getty Villa).

Exhibitions

Exhibited:

"Roman Portraits: A Loan Exhibition of Roman Sculpture and Coins from the First Century B.C. through the Fourth Century A.D.," Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Mass., April 6th - May 14th, 1961

"I, Claudia. Women in Ancient Rome," Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn., September 6th-December 1st, 1996, San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Tex., January 3rd-March 9th, 1997, and North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, N.C., April 6th-June 15th, 1997

Literature:

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M. Milkovich, Roman Portraits, exhibition catalogue, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1961, pp. 46-47, no. 19, illus. Ancient Mediterranean Art: The Denver Art Museum Collection, Denver, 1968, p. 52, no. 58, illus. Guide to the Denver Art Museum, Denver, 1976, p. 16, illus. C. C. Vermeule, Greek and Roman Sculpture in America: Masterpieces in Public Collections in the United States and Canada, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, 1981, pp. 340-341, no. 293, illus. K. Fittschen, 'The Bronze Bust of the "Young Marcus Aurelius" by Antico and Its Antique Model', The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal, 18, 1990, p. 123, note 47 D. E. E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson (eds), I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome, exhibition catalogue., Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1996, p. 140, no. 72, illus. B. Borg et al., Die antiken Skulpturen in Castle Howard, Wiesbaden, 2005, p. 87, note 8 K. Fittschen et al., Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen, 2, Berlin, 2010, p. 111, note 1a