# Daniel Katz Gallery

## ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Roman, 1st Century AD

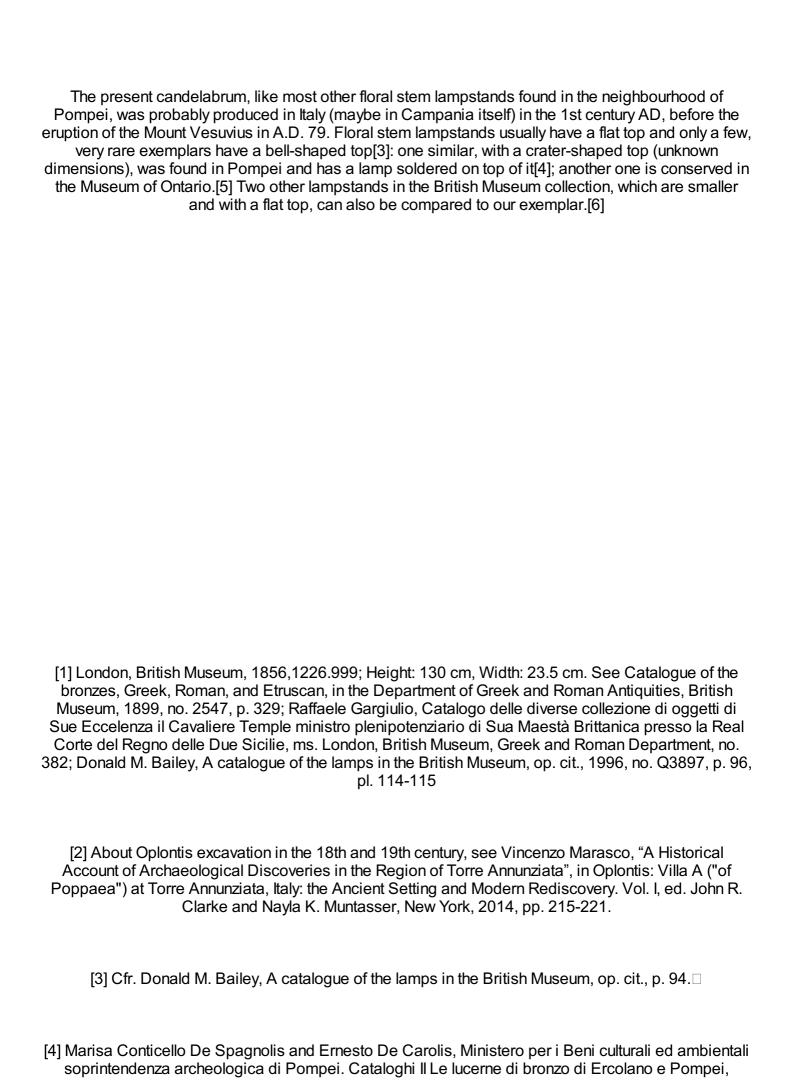
#### Candelabrum

130.5 x 23.5 cm

This bronze candelabrum was a stand for an oil lamp, made of either bronze or terracotta, which would have stood on the bell-shaped top. Such an arrangement exemplifies the elegant customary practice for providing artificial lighting in the main rooms of a Roman villa.

The candelabrum stands on a tripod foot, its shaft is modelled as a branch with lopped shoots and the crater-shaped top is decorated with incised leaves. A tray made for supporting the oil lamp might be missing. An almost identical lampstand is in the collection of the British Museum.[1] While the design differs slightly with regards to the decoration on the crater, the dimensions are an exact match; as such it is conceivable that they formed a pair. Furthermore, on both examples, the tripod foot was certainly cast as one piece with the shaft, while the top was cast separately.

The British Museum candelabrum, bequeathed in 1856 to the ☐museum by Sir William Temple, British ambassador to Naples (1832-☐1856), is well documented. It was discovered in Torre Annunziata, the ☐antique Oplontis near Pompei, buried in A.D. 79 by the eruption of ☐Mount Vesuvius. The first excavation of the site, led by Francesco La ☐Vega, began at the end of the 18th century but this was interrupted because of the mephitic air. A new excavation campaign (sponsored by the restored Bourbon monarchy) was undertaken by Michele Rusca in 1839-40, at a time when Sir Temple was in his post in Naples, but it too was suspended a year later due to a lack of money.[2] It is plausible that our candelabrum was discovered in the region during one of these campaigns.



- [5] John W. Hayes, Greek, Roman, and Related Metalware in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 1984, cat. 231.
- [6] London, British Museum, 1772,0304.44 and 1867,0508.833; Donald M. Bailey, A catalogue of the lamps in the British Museum, op. cit., no. Q3896 and Q3898, p. 96, pl. 114-115.

#### **Provenance**

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Possibly Sotheby's London, 18 June 1991, lot 156

France, private collection.

### Literature:

Comparative literature:

Donald M. Bailey, A catalogue of the lamps in the British Museum. IV Lamps of metal and stone, and lampstands, London, 1996, n. Q3897, p. 96, pl. 114-115