



LARGE STATUE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Graeco-Roman

1st century BC - 1st century AD

Bronze with green and red patina

Height 42 cm

The figure stands with his weight on the left leg with the right leg bent; he wears sandals. A himation is draped over his left shoulder and arm, and wound in a thick roll around his waist. The folds fall to his knees along his left side, his muscular chest bared. The head is turned slightly to the left, his thick leonine hair arranged in an anastole falling onto his neck is bound by a fillet.

Alexander the Great was the first Greek ruler to understand and exploit the propagandistic powers of portraiture. Ancient literary sources say that he let only one sculptor carve his portrait: Lysippos (active circa 370-300 BC), who created the standard Alexander portrait style.

Alexander the Great was a legendary figure even during his short lifetime. He was born into a royal Macedonian dynasty that claimed descent from the sun god Helios and the great semi-divine hero Hercules. As king of Macedonia, Alexander spent most of his reign leading unprecedented military campaigns. He was undefeated in battle, and by the age of thirty had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world. His image has reverberated down the generations, and he has become the epitome of greatness.

PROVENANCE

Private collection Argentina, acquired at Christie's Fine Antiquities sale 28th November 1979 lot 85; private collection F.A. Paris, France, acquired in April 2010; private collection Germany, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

D. von Bothmer & J.R. Mertens: *The Search for Alexander: An Exhibition*, New York 1980 : p. 101, no. 6
T. Schreiber: *Studien über das Bildniss Alexanders des Großen*, Leipzig 1903 : p. 145-7, fig. 12

PARALLEL

British Museum London, acc. no. 1868,0520.65