

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

Arm of a Ruler

Roman, ca. 1st – 2nd century A.D.

Bronze

h: 19.3 cm; 7 5/8 in.



Provenance:

Private Collection, Europe, since 1980s;
Hixenbaugh Ancient Art Limited, New York;
Karsten Schubert, London, UK; inventory number AN 102;
Charles Ede Ltd, London, UK;
Private Collection, Belgium, 2023.

Exhibited:

TEFAF Maastricht 2022.

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The present artwork is a graceful left arm, cast in bronze, a fragment that would have originally been part of a statuette representing a Hellenistic Ruler. The graceful limb is raised in a divine gesture and was perhaps once holding a scepter. The pose of the arm should be compared to the Terme Ruler (now in the Museo Nazionale Romano, inv. no. 1049), itself a derivation from the statue of Alexander with the Lance created by Lysippos in the 320s B.C. Though the original is now lost, its image survives in fragmentary marble and bronze statuettes—this arm could be counted among them. The surface displays an attractive dark green, red, and black patina, and the piece is broken from the top of the bicep. The index finger has been reattached.

Judging by the under life-size scale of this piece, it was most likely intended for private use rather than public religious or dedicatory display. The habit wealthy Romans had of decorating their private residences with images of past rulers from the Greek world is well documented, one of the most famous examples of such statues found *in situ* being the Villa dei Papyri outside of Herculaneum. The collection and display of artworks representing famed historical figures served to display the education and erudition of the owner, and the personal taste of the purchaser decided the specific kings, generals, and philosophers with which he would surround himself and those who visited his home.

References:

For a similar example, see Mary Comstock and Cornelius Vermeule, *Greek, Etruscan and Roman Bronzes in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* (Boston, 1971), no. 147.