Portrait Figure of a Ruler
Unknown Roman

Roman, Severan Period, 200-225 AD
Bronze: 82 x 49 3/4 x 17 1/2 in. (208.3 x 126.4 x 44.5 cm)

Museum purchase funded by D. and J. de Menil in memory of Conrad Schlumberger

This larger-than-life-size bronze depicts a Roman emperor with godlike perfect proportions. The first Roman emperor, Augustus, followed the example of antiquity's most famous conqueror, Alexander the Great, and declared himself divine. Subsequent emperors did the same and their statues and monuments portrayed them as perfect gods with little regard for their actual appearances.

This rare bronze stands proudly, his lifted arm once held a lance in a gesture of victorious authority. It was probably made for an imperial cult temple in Asia Minor, where the emperor was worshipped.

Online Resources:
- Hirsch Library Online Catalog
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Articles: (full-text access available on-site; off-site access available through your school library or Houston Public Library)

Print Resources:
Bibliography

Object Specific Information


General Surveys of Roman Art


Roman History and Culture


Roman Art


Roman Bronzes


Mitten, David G. Classical Bronzes, Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1975. NK 7907.3 .R47 1975


This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own bibliographies. Each of these may lead you to another resource that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional resources, use keywords such as “Roman sculpture” and “Roman portraiture” in the online catalog and in periodical indexes. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. Examples of useful subject headings are:

- Portrait sculpture, Roman
- Sculpture, Classical
- Bronzes, Roman

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at Sylvan Barnet's A Short Guide to Writing about Art, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk. At every stage of your work, please allow the library staff to help you. Contact us at 713-639-7325 or hirsch@mfah.org

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