

T O M A S S O



The Ciechanowiecki Master (Augsburg, first half of 17th century)

7. Captured Warrior

Augsburg first half of 17th century
Gilt Bronze
17 x 0 cm (6 ³/₄ x 0 inches)

This fine gilt bronze statuette is a new discovery and should be considered as one of the best works by the Ciechanowiecki Master.

This anonymous artist takes his name from the legendary art dealer and connoisseur Andrew Ciechanowiecki (1924-2015). The artist is also known as The Fitzwilliam Master, because some of his works have been on a temporary loan to the museum in Cambridge.

The real identity of the Ciechanowiecki Master remains to be discovered. The present writer is preparing the first accurate study of the artist, to be published in the catalogue of an exhibition dedicated to Andrew Ciechanowiecki. Some of the bronzes in the group have been attributed to Adriaen de Vries, others to Vittore Camello, Charles Avery has suggested the name of the Florentine goldsmith Manno di Sebastiano Sbarri, while Manfred Leithe-Jasper has pointed at the world of Roman goldsmiths of the first half of the 17th century as the environment where the Master could have worked.

Looking at the oeuvre of the artist, it seems clear that he was well-acquainted with the sculpture of Giambologna and with Venetian early 16th century bronze sculpture. His taste for detailed anatomy and highly finished surfaces points to Southern Germany, and especially Augsburg as the seat of his activity, and one possible name is that of the silversmith and bronze founder David Schwestermüller (1596–1678).

The small size of this bronze is another typical feature of the works by the Ciechanowiecki Master. The young and athletic soldier is represented in his armour, his hands chained behind the back to a tree stump. The pose has a clear inspiration from the antique, with some details recalling celebrated Roman statues: for example, the sword of the warrior echoes that of the Ludovisi Ares.

This is the only cast known so far of this model. The links with other bronzes by the Master are many and all immediately identifiable.

Within the catalogue of the Ciechanowiecki Master, there is a group of crouching or seated gilt bronze statuettes. These show not just a composition similar to that of the Captured Warrior, but a very similar cast and finishing.

A figure of Paris, known in two exemplars (one in Royal Castle of Warsaw, to which Andrew Ciechanowiecki was a very generous donor, the other formerly on the Parisian art market) is a perfect example of this. The two exemplars are very similar (the main differences being the position of the head and the shape of the base), and there is no doubt that they have been cast together by the same artist.