

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Lamp

Riccio (Andrea Briosco) (Italian, 1470–1532)

Date ca. 1516–24

Medium Bronze

Dimensions H.: 6 5/8 in. (16.8 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1916.2.18

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 14, Enamels Room

Collections Works in Virtual Tour: Enamels Room, Highlights, Henry

Frick Clay Frick Bequest, Sculpture, Audio Available

Commentary Padua was the seat of a great university and a center for humanist studies. Riccio is known to have been versed in classical art and literature and to have found friends and patrons among the learned scholars of Paduan society. The form of this extraordinary bronze Lamp, the most elaborate of several he produced, is based on Roman prototypes, and its surface is encrusted with motifs drawn largely from antique sources. While the other lamps by Riccio are shaped like ships, this one, inspired by the Roman half-boot, is designed as a bizarre shoe balanced on a pyramidal base. The lid is missing and certain elements have been broken, such as the uppermost scrolled handle, but one can readily visualize the fantastic effect of the Lamp when lighted. With its sprightly silhouette and glittering surface illumined by flames darting from the spout, it would have provided its possessor with much pleasure and entertainment. The Lamp is known to have belonged early in its history to a series of distinguished Paduan collectors. The intricate reliefs covering the surface of the bronze are modeled with a goldsmith's refinement and crisp detail. The subjects evoke the populace of classical art and poetry, including a Nereid and Triton, Pan, harpies, and innumerable putti, along with goats, musical instruments, shells, masks, and garlands. The variety seems inexhaustible. The artist's imagination, both copious and controlled, is occasionally playful but more often touchingly melancholic. Although not even an inch high, the face of a satyr on the Lamp's handle expresses fathomless grief. On a minuscule scale, the Lamp includes many ornamental motifs that are found on the Paschal Candlestick, which Riccio began in 1507 and, after years of interruption, finally finished and installed in S. Antonio in 1516. The Lamp is presumed to date from that same period. Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.