

BLUMKA



Lion-Aquamanile

Germany, Hildesheim

circa 1250

Two recent ink-inscriptions "1909 E R" and "J. v S. G."

Copper alloy

27 x 27 cm

Provenance:

According to Dr. Joanna Olchawa the provenance is hard to conclude. In her view, the two ink-inscriptions shall clearly refer to the art gallery Julius and Selig Goldschmidt, active in the 19th century in Frankfurt / Main, who sold medieval aquamaniles from the collection Friedrich Hahn, Hannover, around 1868.

Expertise:

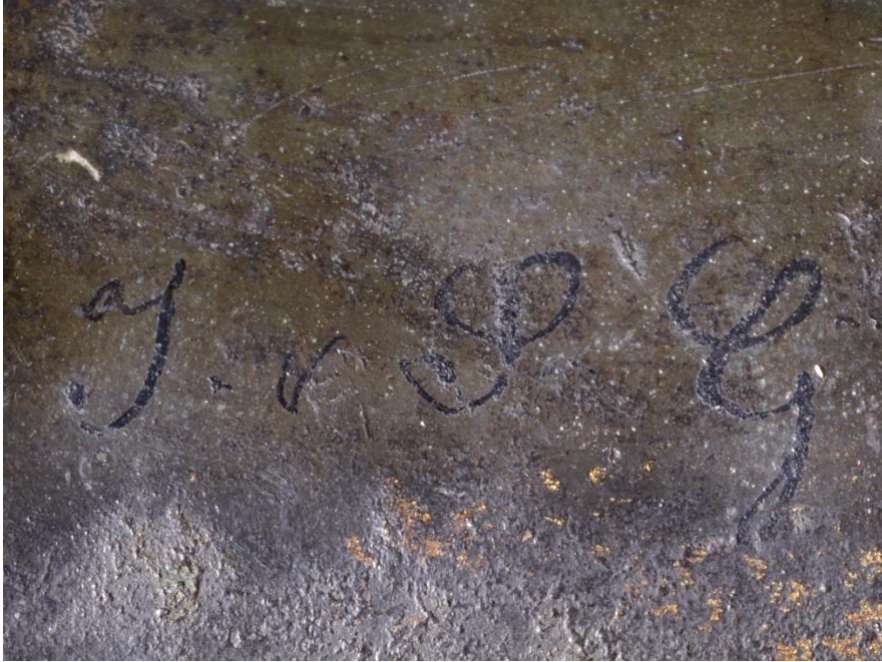
Dr. des. Joanna Olchawa, Frankfurt / Main, Germany

Two recent ink-inscriptions "1909 E R" and "J. v S. G"

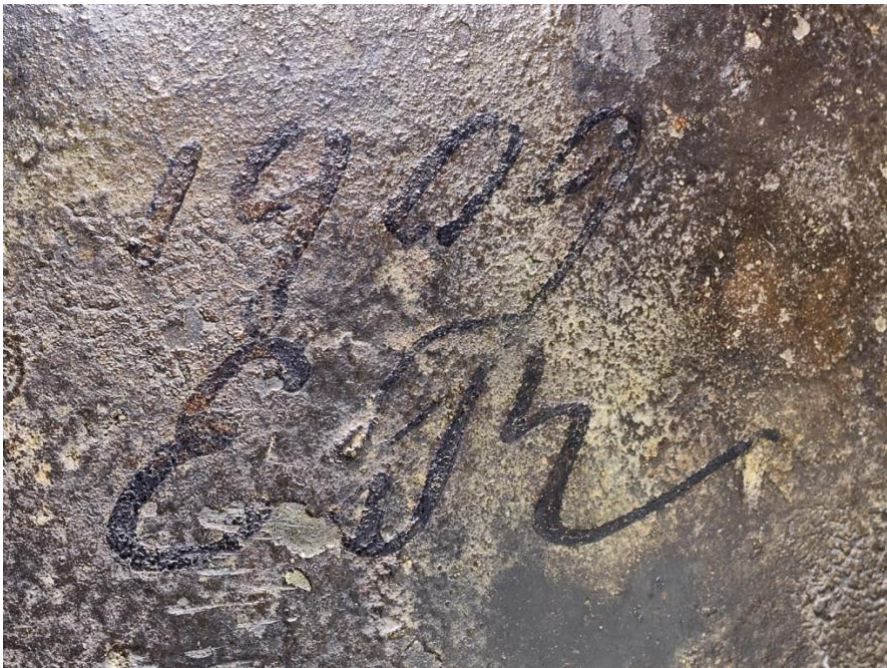
Flap of the inlet not original.







Ink-inscription "J. v S. G"



Ink-inscription "1909 E R"

**Lion Aquamanile
Expertise**



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I Characteristic features

Dimension:	height c. 27 cm, length c. 27 cm
Weight:	2735 g
Material:	Copper alloy
Technique:	Direct lost-wax casting, cast in one piece (except for separate lid over the filling hole)
Inscription:	Two modern inscriptions in ink: '1909 ER' and 'J. v S. G.'
Condition:	Good overall condition. Modern lid for the filling hole; rectangular, closed openings (3–3.7 cm x 1.8 cm) added later (albeit still in the Middle Ages) underneath on the stomach part, on the back and on the dragon handle; nozzle spout in mouth shortened at a later date and with broken edge; small hole on head; traces of wear on the underside of paws; engraved area on mane partially rubbed away and obviously re-chased; outstanding iron rods (reinforcements) recognisable inside; legs slightly bent. The tail appears to have been soldered on – it cannot, however, be ascertained if this was done immediately after casting, as a repair or at a later date.

Special features: the openings on the handle, back and stomach are a unique feature. As, vertically-speaking, they are on the same line, they indicate that a mount once passed through the body and the handle. This would have been added at a later date and, through the use of a long rod, would have enabled the aquamanile to be carried high. A comparable mount can be found on the lion aquamanile in Oslo (Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, inv. no. C 2514, h. 22.5 cm, l. 32 cm, Magdeburg region, 2nd half 12th century, fig. 21). Other aquamaniles were mounted on stands (as in Maastricht, Schatzkammer St. Servatius, no inv. number). For this reason it is certainly conceivable that this mount was already added in the Middle Ages and later, although still at that time, closed once again. The homogenous patina speaks in favour of this supposition.

II Description

The shape of the aquamanile is that of a lion, its feet firmly on the ground. With its filling hole between the ears, the nozzle spout protruding from the mouth and the handle in the form of a dragon arching over the lion's back, it is clearly identifiable as a vessel for pouring. Such jugs were used in the Middle Ages when washing hands both in a liturgical as well as in a secular context. They were, without exception, luxury, prestigious objects.

The large head stretches out forwards and is separated from the neck and body by the mane collar. The big, pointed oval eyes with sunken, roundish pupils stand out clearly below the sculpturally modelled, slightly contracted arcs on the forehead. These arcs, as well as the strip leading from below the eyes to the corners of the mouth, are in addition decorated with delicate, diagonal engraved lines. A flat nasal bridge starts between the arcs on the forehead and descends over a small ridge to the round shaped rhinarium with sunken nostrils. The slightly bulging modelling emphasises these and is rounded off by the nozzle spout. Chased lines decorate the muzzle that tapers to the front. The mouth is open and reveals two rows of teeth. The triangular shape of those immediately next to the spout, that appear to be holding onto it firmly, evoke fangs.

The collar, on the other hand, is divided into five engraved strips that are decorated alternately with either short hatched lines or chased ornamental elements. Behind this is the mane that comprises sculpturally arched tufts of hair that are delicately engraved in waves. The figure's chest arches outwards only slightly, the slim body tapers to the rear and only widens again right at the back. The legs stretch slightly away from the body to the front and back, giving the figure a tense stance. The outer sides are covered with fine contouring and horizontally chased lines as far as the joint half-way down, the lower part of the legs being decorated with vertical bands. The relatively flat, longish paws point directly to the front, subdivided with only roughly differentiated indentations. The animal's tail swings upwards in an arched 'S' and ends with an engraved tassel. It virtually adjoins the handle that is in the shape of a wingless dragon that rests its flat head against the back of the lion's head and arches its body upwards. Its short, thin front legs, propped up against the lion's scruff, are modelled in the round. Its body is decorated with delicate ornamentations and ends with a three-part element that fans out.

III Art historical classification

The lion aquamanile has specific characteristics that enable it to be classified within an art-historical context. These can be seen in relation to ten other aquamaniles and a lion candelabra. What they all have in common is that they **date from the middle of the 13th century and were made in Hildesheim.**

That this aquamanile is an object dating from the Middle Ages and is not a copy or forgery made in the 19th/20th century can be seen – in addition to a comparison with the many similar examples – in the techniques used as well as object-related observations: the weight and dimensions, for example, are in keeping with other aquamaniles from the 12th/13th century, as is the vessel's partially very thin walls, the equally hollow body of the dragon handle and the detailed working of the surface areas with rows of chased ornaments and delicately executed, partly contoured hatched lines. It is the reinforcing iron rods inside the vessel that can be seen with the naked eye which confirm that the object was made in the Middle Ages. These were no longer added in items manufactured at a later date (in the 19th/20th century).

Ten lion aquamaniles and a candelabra from the Hildesheim workshops from around the mid 13th century were taken for a precise comparison and to confirm that the object dates from the Middle Ages. The size and shape of the standing lion with its slender body, fully extended legs and its head held high, separated by a mane collar, are all characteristics relevant for a general comparison. The elegant tail arching upwards that adjoins the dragon handle, as well as the sculptural quality of the front legs that are worked in the round, despite the enormous technical skill required, also indicate that it was manufactured in Hildesheim. The lion figures are not identical (that would not have been possible anyway due to the technical process); they are, however, closely related to one another right down to the detailing. Certain features recur, such as the round, concave ears rising from the mane collar and the rows of chased patterns as well as the hatched lines. All the eyes have deep, bored pupils that are surrounded by delicately modelled bulges. The lips are drawn far back and, at the sides, reveal two rectangular rows of teeth, including fangs, next to the protruding pouring spout – a common feature in all cases. The mane is sculpturally fully worked. The individual tufts of hair set off from one another are all carefully engraved to create long, converging strands. Even the engraving on the outer sides of the legs, with horizontally and vertically chased rows of marks and the emphasised joints, are to be found in all Hildesheim lion aquamaniles. The figure can

otherwise only be compared indirectly with those made in the Hildesheim workshops as there are no inscriptions nor is it mentioned in any written sources. The provenance of such works seldom extends back beyond the 19th century. The combination of formal and stylistic features, however, and the ornamental decoration in particular, certainly point quite clearly to its manufacture in the bronze centre of the time: Hildesheim. These characteristics are to be found in the case of a surprising number of works made in Hildesheim such as the fonts in Hildesheim Cathedral, Wismar (now: Neue Kirche), Halberstadt (St. Johannis) and Osnabrück (cathedral). Those who commissioned such objects in Hildesheim can, in turn, also be identified, such as Wilbernus, the dean of the cathedral.³

This aquamanile is, accordingly, both of importance and revealing from the point of view of art-historical research.

IV Comparative objects

1. Berlin, Märkisches Museum, inv. no. IV 979, l. 26 cm, h. 27 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:⁴ similar size, surprisingly similar ornamental decoration on head.

2. Formerly in **Bremen** (Roselius Collection, since sold, now in a private collection), h. 25.3 cm, l. 26 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half of 13th century:⁵ similar size, same design of head without an additional bulge towards the ears, as in the objects in Berlin and Frankfurt. The chest is also not arched so far forward as in the present example.

3. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. no. M.15-1917, h. 21.6 cm, l. 22.5 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, mid to 2nd half of 13th century:⁶ the only other lion that has a smooth tail without a knot. Through the object's different shape, different forming of the head and mane, however, it belongs to a later group of lion aquamaniles.

4. Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. no. 1972.167, h. 26.4 cm, l. 29 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:⁷ similar size, similarly roughly worked paws. Here, the collar and the areas around the eyes are also especially carefully modelled and the chest not arched far forward.

5. Frankfurt am Main, Museum Angewandte Kunst, inv. no. 6736, h. 27.2 cm, l. 27 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:⁸ same size, similar modelling of body.

6. Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark, inv. no. D7 1 0, h. 24.2 cm, l. 22.6 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:⁹ comparable modelling of body, especially thin-walled cast, snub nose.

7. Reykjavik, National Museum of Iceland, inv. no. l>jms. 1854, h. 24.8, l. 25.5 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:¹⁰ the head is stretched upwards and softly sculpted. The legs are similarly wide apart from the body.

8. Stockholm, The Swedish History Museum, inv. no. 4409, h. 26 cm, l. 25.5 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:¹¹ here, the head with its snub nose is also clearly separated from the mane collar. The finely engraved tufts of hair and that on the three-part tail of the dragon on the handle are particularly noticeable and may possibly have been added at a later date.

9. Stockholm, The Swedish History Museum, inv. no. 11899, h. 21.5, l. 26.9 cm (damaged), Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half to mid 13th century:¹² the only other aquamanile among this group of works that has a distinct bulge on the nose. The thinness of the vessel's walls is especially visible in this work.

10. Utrecht, Catharinenconvent, inv. no. ABM ml004, dimensions not given, Hildesheim Workshop, mid to 2nd half 13th century:¹³ the only aquamanile that has no beard on the lower side of the head. The tail is attached to the dragon handle much higher up than on the other examples mentioned. Although the head is larger, the expression emphasised by the pronounced, sculptural quality of the contracted arcs on the forehead is closest to that of the present aquamanile. Its comparatively long legs and almost hoof-like paws show that it belongs to a later group of aquamaniles.

11. Candelabra in Hildesheim, Dommuseum, inv. no. OS 89, old holdings in treasury, dimensions of lion (excl. spike): 21.3 x 19.8 cm, Hildesheim Workshop, 1st half of 13th century:¹⁴

The lion is smaller than all other examples and its head more inclined downwards. It is probably one of the earliest examples from this group of works as it was still modelled on the lion aquamanile of around 1220/1230. Nevertheless, it also has features of the later group.



Berlin, Märkisches Museum



Formerly Bremen



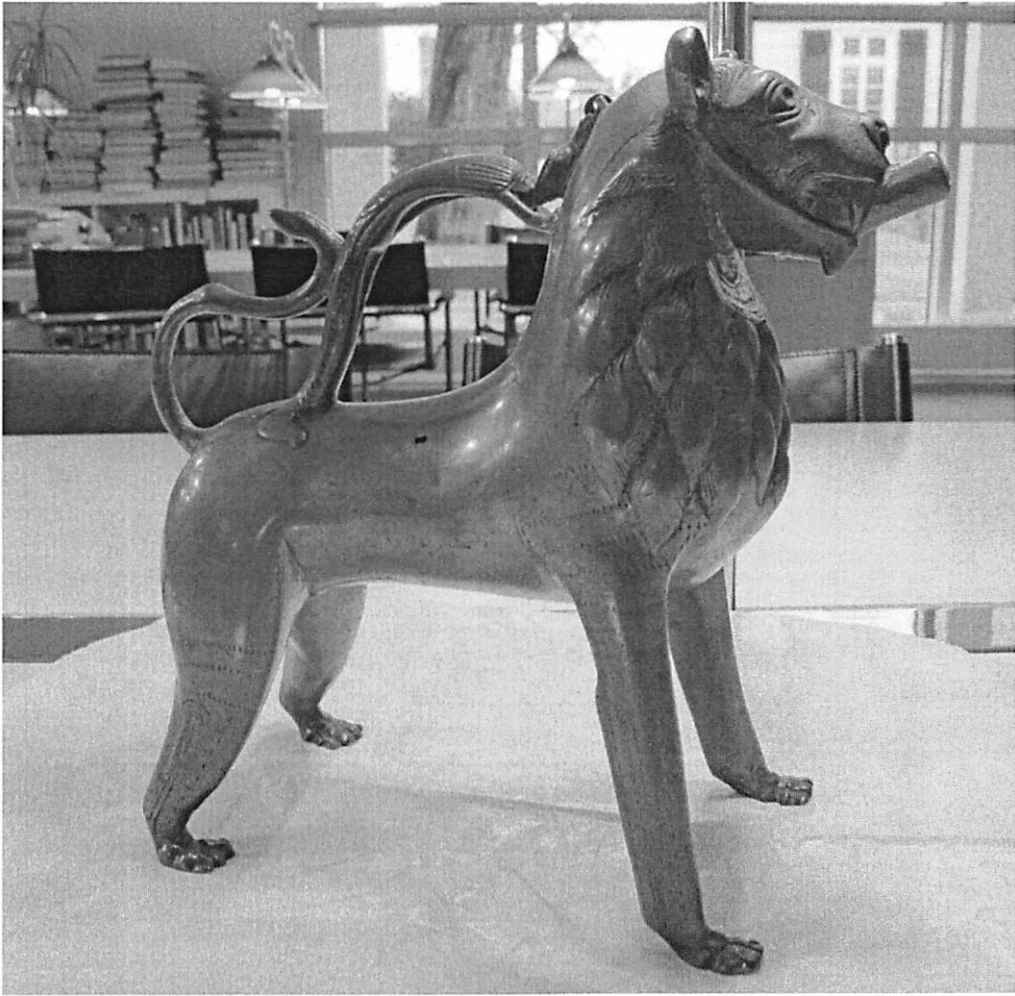
Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum



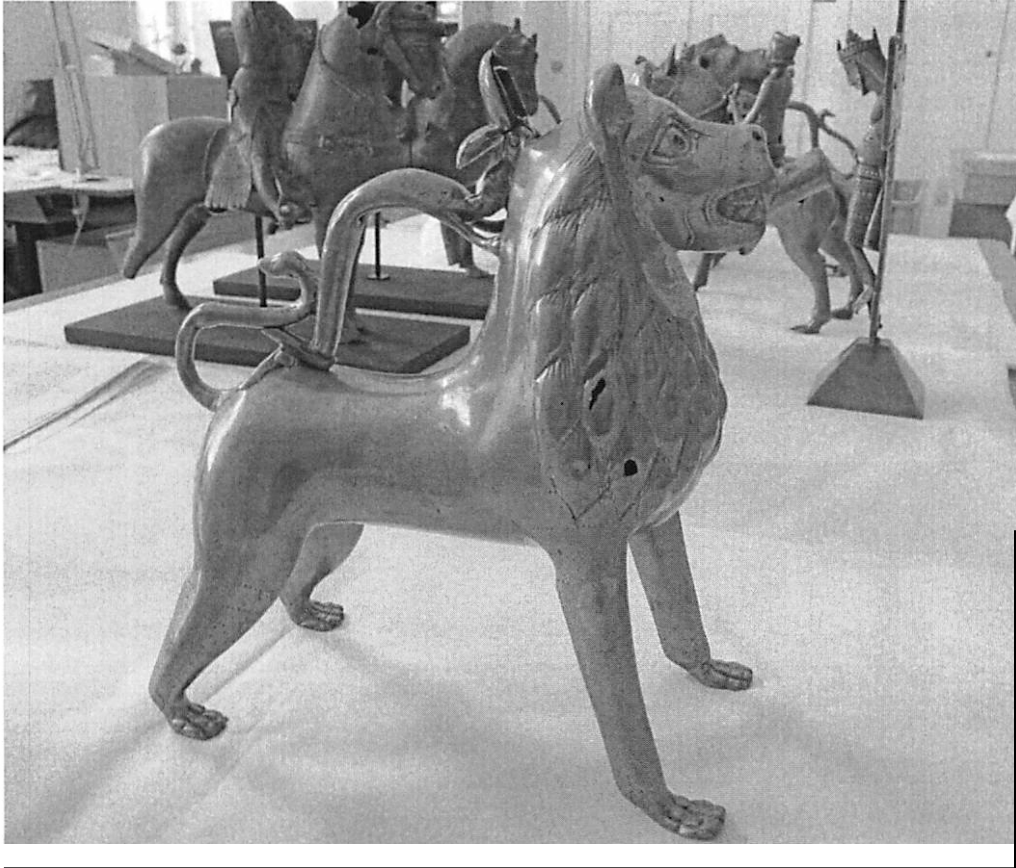
Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art



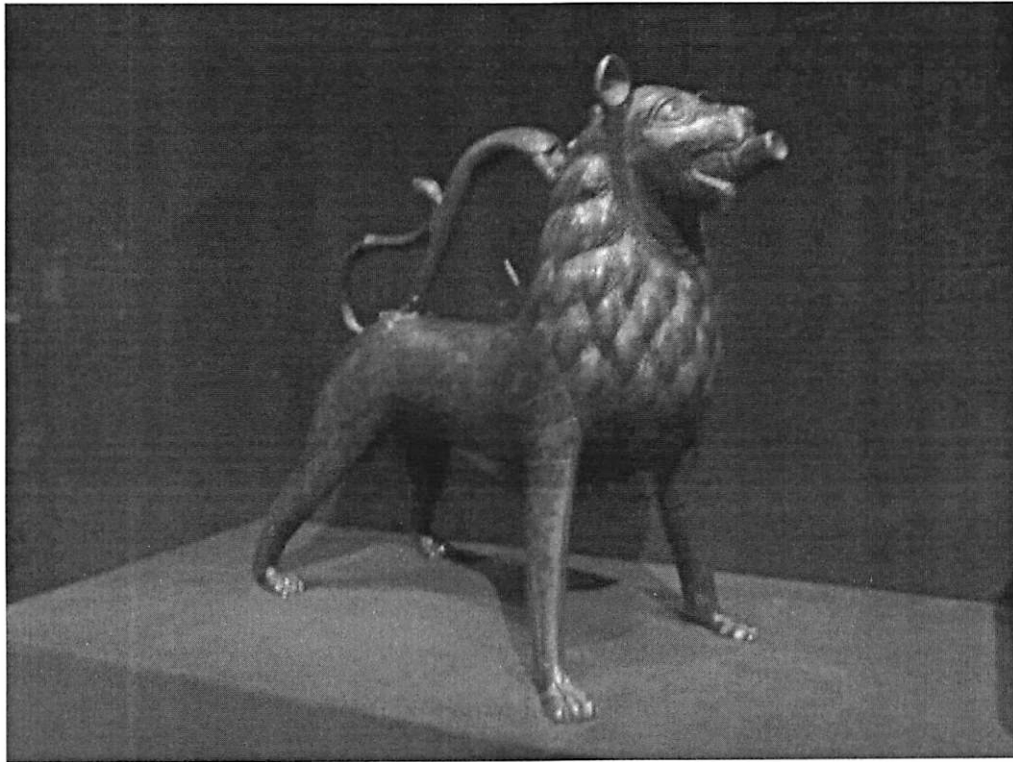
Frankfurt, Museum für Angewandte Kunst



Frankfurt, Museum für Angewandte Kunst



Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark



Reykjavik, National Museum of Iceland,



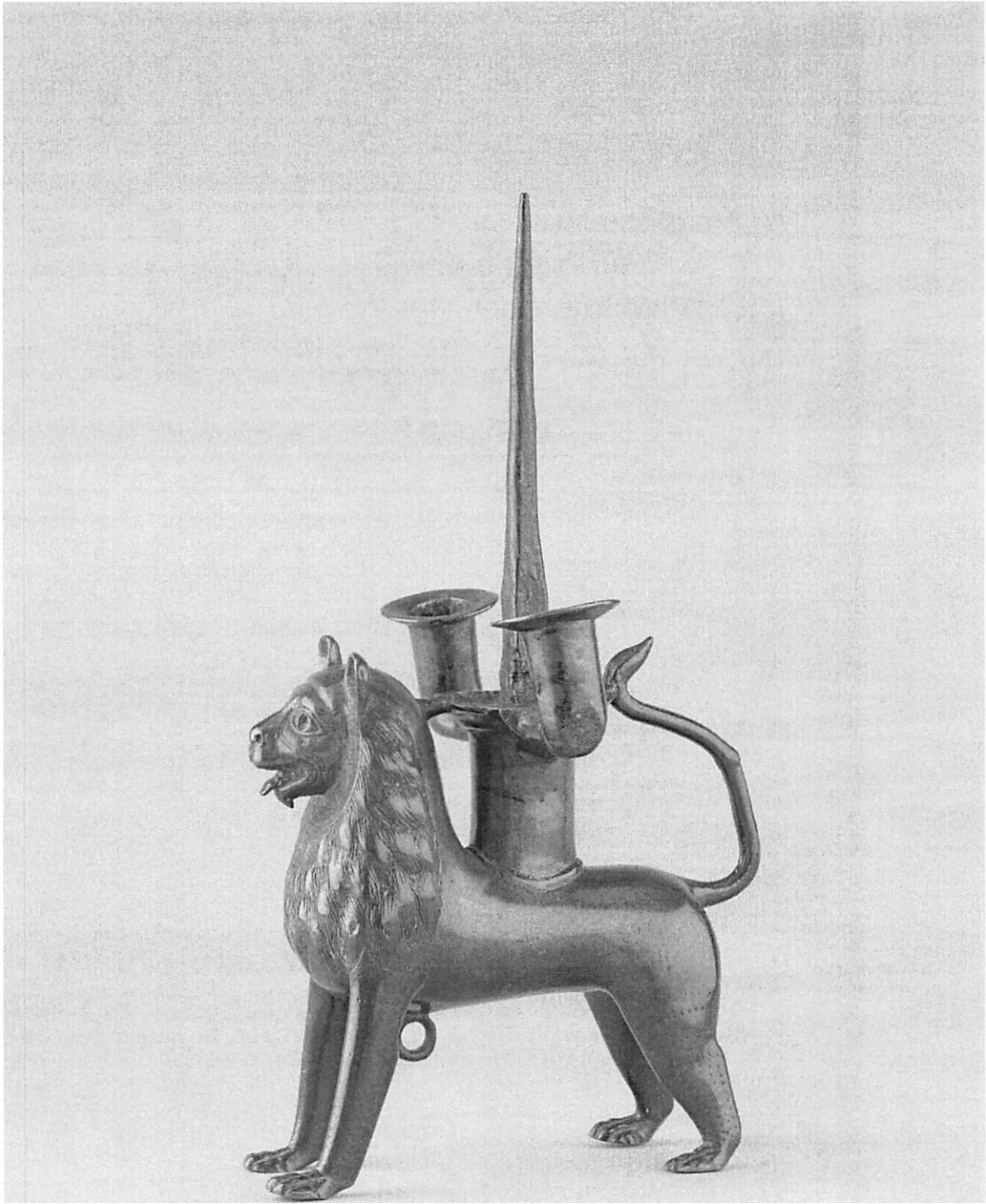
Stockholm, The Swedish History Museum



Stockholm, The Swedish History Museum



Utrecht, Catharinenconvent



Hildesheim, Dommuseum

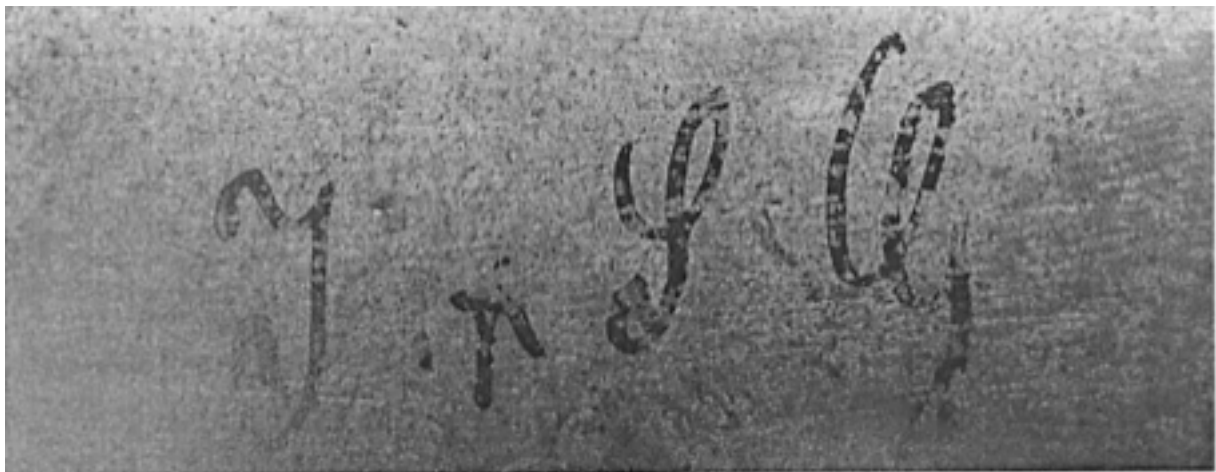


Oslo, Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design

V Provenance

The provenance of the object is difficult to determine despite the two inscriptions in ink on the body of the figure ('1909 ER' and 'J. v S. G'). The latter can be identified beyond doubt as that of the art trading company Julius and Selig Goldschmidt, Frankfurt am Main (later with branches in Berlin, Paris and New York) that was active in the 19th century. Around 1868, the company sold an aquamanile from the Middle Ages from the collection of Friedrich Hahn from Hanover.

A similar monogram in ink is found on two lion aquamaniles in Nuremberg (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. no. KG 580, h. 27 cm, l. 28.5 cm, Magdeburg, late 12th century and inv. no. KG 581, h. 26.2 cm, l. 31 cm, Lübeck, c. 1330), one aquamanile in the form of a hunchback (inv. no. KG 488, h. 26.4 cm, Hildesheim c. 1230, inscription badly worn) and a stag (fig. 22; inv. no. KG 492, h. 36 cm, l. 31.4 cm, Nuremberg, 1st half of 15th century).¹⁵ Apart from on objects in Nuremberg, the ink inscription is also found on two lion aquamaniles in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inv. nos 560- I 872, 561- 1872).¹⁶ All were formerly in the aforementioned collection of Friedrich Hahn but do not bear his monogram.



Julius Goldschmidt (1858–1932) had close ties to the Rothschild family, among others. He owed his professional success not least of all to the collector Mayer Carl Freiherr von Rothschild. He was also involved with the Goldschmidt-Rothschild Foundation.¹⁷ It is possible that he knew the patron to the arts and collector Baron Edmond James de Rothschild (1845–1934),¹⁸ whose initials may be the ink inscription 'ER' on the aquamanile. However, an inspection of the auction catalogues for the sale of works formerly in the possession of the Rothschilds and a revision of the inventory/collection descriptions did not reveal any matches with the present aquamanile. The only lion aquamanile mentioned is from the 19th century.¹⁹ Edmond James de Rothschild was in fact more a collector of coins, works on paper and prints.

Records on the following collections and art businesses in which medieval aquamaniles could be found in the 19th and 20th centuries were inspected:

Basilewsky Collection, Paris
Joseph Brummer, Paris/New York
Kunsthändler Paul Cassirer, Berlin
Collection of Hermann Freiherr von Eelking, Bremen
Collection of Friedrich Hahn, Hanover
Kunsthändler Sigmund Pickert, Nuremberg
Frederic Spitzer Collection, Paris
Charles Stein Collection, Paris
Collection of Ernst and Marthe Kofler-Truniger, Lucerne
Franz Trau Collection, Vienna

To rule out the object's possible 'movement' between 1930 and 1945, standard databases were examined (Art Sale Catalogues Online, Lost Art database at the German Lost Art Foundation, 'German Sales 1930–1945. Art Works, Art Markets, and Cultural Policy', Heidelberger historische Bestände, Getty Provenance Index Database, Dealer Stock Books, Getty Sales Catalogs Files, Archival Inventories) in addition to the following auction catalogues from that period:

Kunsthändler Julius Böhrer, Munich (works of art in the holdings of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1937)
Sammlung Albert Figdor (auction, Berlin 1930)²⁰
Sammlung Margarete Oppenheim (auction Munich 1936)²¹
Sammlung Bourgeois Freres (through the Kunsthändler Heberle Lempertz, Cologne)

The object was not found.

The following collections and art businesses with the initials 'ER' that could refer to a collection of medieval objects were checked:

Sammlung E. Reiners (auction Berlin 1930)
Sammlung Emil Rosenberger (auction Vienna 1935)
Kunsthändler Erwin Joseph Rosenthal, Lucerne
Sammlung Emma Rosenthal (auction Adolf Weinmüller, Munich 1939)
Sammlung Ernst Rump (auction Galerie Commeter 1931)
Sammlung E. Rumpel (more a collector of books; auction Berlin 1935)
Sammlung Ernst zu Rantzau, Berlin (auction Berlin 1931)
Sammlung Carl Ernst Raitz von Frenzt (auction 1932)
Erich Randt, Stettin (director of the Deutsche Staatliche Archive in Krakau)
Sammlung Rosenberg (auction Berlin 1936)

The object was not found.

VI Conclusion

The aquamanile is without doubt a medieval object created in the Hildesheim workshops around the middle of the 13th century. The date and place of production can be definitively established through the comparison with ten other lion aquamaniles and a lion candelabra.

What makes this lion aquamanile from private ownership so unique in comparison to the other objects are its formal and stylistic features, such as the carefully executed and richly detailed engraving on the collar mane (possibly reworked at a later date), the individual waves of the tufts of hair on the mane, the sculptural separation of the face from the mane and in the upper section of the head between the ears, the lack of a knot on the tail (only otherwise found in the work in Cambridge) and the large, diagonally positioned eyes (as otherwise only on the Utrecht object). Through the combination of older, more ‘traditional’ elements the work can be seen as a bridge between the group of older and more recent aquamaniles (especially that in Utrecht). For these reasons, the object holds an important position in art-historical research with regard to understanding the development of shapes and models.

As regards the object’s provenance, the only reference is to the art company Julius and Selig Goldschmidt, Frankfurt am Main, that was active primarily in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The person or collection for whom the possible initials ‘ER’ stand, cannot be determined.

notes07.engl.Gutachten.doc

¹ The term copper alloy is a general term for the material of the work and embraces both bronze (copper/tin alloy) as well as brass (copper/zinc alloy); cf. MENDE 2013.

² FALKE/ MEYER 1935, p. 110, no. 377, fig. 355, KASIN 2008, p. 123, no. 12.

³ Cf. the BMBF project ‘Innovation und Tradition. Objekte in Hildesheim, 1130–1250’ with the partial project on Hildesheim bronzes in which 172 objects from the workshops, up until around 1250, could be grouped. The author was responsible for the research on the bronzes. A publication incl. a catalogue is in preparation; publication is planned for 2020.

⁴ KAT. BERLIN 2011, pp. 350–351, no. 14.

⁵ FALKE/ MEYER 1935, no. 443, p. 113, fig. 416.

⁶ AVERY /DILLON 2002, p. 324, no. 86, PANAYOTOVA 2008, p. 96, fig. 2.38.

⁷ GERTSAM /ROSENWEIN 2018, pp. 126–129, 210, no. 31.

⁸ AUSST.-KAT. FRANKFURT 1966, p. 5, no. 60.

⁹ FALKE/MEYER 1935, p. 113, no. 447, no fig.

¹⁰ ARNADÖTTIR / KIRAN 1997, p. 118, no. 34.

¹¹ FALKE/MEYER 1935, p. 113, no. 446, fig. 421.

¹² Ibid., no. 450, fig. 423.

¹³ VERDULT 2016, p. 33; ÜLCHAWA 2017, pp. 28–29, fig. 5.

¹⁴ AUSST.-KAT. HILDESHEIM 2008, pp. 264-267, no. 12.

¹⁵ MENDE 2013, pp. 175–177, no. 54; pp. 195–197, no. 62; pp. 185–188, no. 58, pp. 216–218, no. 69.

¹⁶ FALKE / MEYER 1935, no. 438, fig. 111, no. 398, fig. 371.

¹⁷ ARNSBERG 1983.

¹⁸ AUKT.-KAT. LONDON 1912.

¹⁹ AUKT.-KAT. WIEN 1941, vol. 1, p. 13, no. 144. Cf., also: AUKT.-KAT. BERLIN 1931; AUKT.-KAT. FRANKFURT AM MAIN 1932; AUKT.-KAT. BERLIN 1933; AUKT.-KAT. WIEN 1930.

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VIII Picture credits

fig. 1: Böhler; figs 2, 3, 6–17, 19, 21: archive of author; fig. 4: Falke/Meyer 1935; fig. 5: Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum; fig. 18: Utrecht, Catharinenconvent; fig. 20: Hildesheim, Dommuseum; fig. 22: Mende 2013, p. 218.

IX Brief biography of author

2001–2009 Study of art history, religious studies, classical literature and classical archaeology at Cologne University and the Freie Universität Berlin. 2014 doctorate entitled: ‘Toreutische Aquamanilien. Ihre Genese, Verbreitung und Bedeutung im 12. und 13. century’ (to be published end of 2019 with Schnell und Steiner: ‘Aquamanilien. Genese, Verbreitung und Bedeutung in islamischen und christlichen Zeremonien’). Awarded the ‘Forschungspreis Angewandte Kunst 2014’ by the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich and the ‘Ernst Reuter Preis 2015’ from the Freie Universität Berlin. 2013–2014 Research assistant at the Zentrum für Mittelalterausstellungen at the Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg. 2015–2018 Post-doctoral work on the project ‘Innovation und Tradition. Objekte und Eliten in Hildesheim, 1130–1250’, sponsored by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung. 2018 Post-doctoral work in the research group ‘Vormoderne Objekte. Eine Archäologie der Erfahrung’, sponsored by the Elitenetzwerk Bayern. Since August 2018: research assistant in dept. of medieval art at the Kunstgeschichtliches Institut der Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main. Since 2008: focus on medieval bronzes. Numerous publications, lectures on the subject and several expertises/appraisals for museums, private collections and auction houses.