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ARCHÉOLOGIE MUSÉALE
FOSSILES – BIJOUX RARES ET ANCIENS
CABINET DE CURIOSITÉS DES GRANDES CIVILISATIONS

CERTIFICATE

RARE GILDED MASK FROM FAIYUM ANCIENT EGYPT - ROMAN PERIOD (AD 1st Century)

MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE: The mask is made of a linen canvas still visible on the back, with a layer of stucco and some gold leaf over it in the manner of the pharaonic *cartonnage*. The eyes, the mouth and the nose are painted in red and black. Big eyes with a strong strabismus. Some hair belonging to the deceased still visible. The face, with a triangular shape and a prominent chin, is typical of the representations from the Fayoum area. The portrait is treated as a sculpture in the round, and already bears the signs of Roman ritual.

The *imago* was moulded on the face of the deceased and painted by a *polinctor*, before being adorned with real hair as in this example.

ORIGIN: Egyptians used to cover the masks on the mummies and the cartonnage with gold, so that the deceased could be identified with the gods whose flesh is made of gold. This custom continued during the Roman period. While Egyptians celebrated the passage to eternal life, Romans celebrated the remembrance of the earthly life of the deceased. The mask was exhibited beside the departed during a ceremony in his house and accompanied the cortege to the tomb. These *imagines* were not limited to the celebration of the one deceased person; during funerals of other family members they were taken out of the *naos* and reused during ceremonies in the home.

MESUREMENTS: Height: 16 cm and 18 cm (7,09'') - Width: 13 cm (5,12'')

Thickness: 10 cm (3,94'') - Height with the base : 28,5 cm (11,22'')

CULTURAL PASSPORT: supplied with an export licence issued by the French Ministry of Culture, N°101015.

MUSEOGRAPHY: this mask was exhibited in the Musée National de France in Montélimar : "Les Masques entre miniature et démesure" April 11- September 7, 2014. It figures on the cover page of the catalogue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: -Published in the 1975 catalogue of the exhibition under N° 17 page 25

-Published in "*Collecting Masterpieces*" Part One, by Beryl Cavallini, at pages 104/105.

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