

Oil lamp from Naples Archaeological Museum with an image of a tragic theatrical mask.

It is a great success for us to recreating a oil lamp from the early 1st century for the needs of correct historical reconstructions from Naples, Archaeological Museum with an image of a tragic theatrical mask. After several years of creative work and making tools for their production, I have 2 different finished wax models.

The creative wax project of Jordan Kolchev



The sizes I achieved are very attractive! Dimensions: length 16,5 cm. width 5,8 cm. height 10 cm. Weight on brass about 400 or 430 grams. The whole wax project is maximally thinned and hollow to be reduce weight.



Of course, these sizes lead to higher difficulties of metal casting due to the complexity of the manufacturing process. But it was also like that and in antiquity.

About this photoshoot I chose a red background "Rosso pompeiano" In honor of the city of Pompeii, where the bronze lamp itself is from.

Tragic mask a very successful creative project of the artist Jordan Kolchev!





This is my second creative project. Each of our oil lamps is unique! I can't make the same lamp no matter how hard I try !



My replica is fully functional Balance is excellent! No wobbles or flipping! Again I bow to the genius of the ancient masters! Even now with electricity and modern tools I find it hard to come close to their quality!

The variety of this model of lamps with a tragic mask is relatively small and I chose this one because it is exactly from the city of Pompeii, legendary ancient city loved by all of us, which we have all visited, some of us several times.

Visiting the theaters through antiquity was identical to contemporary cinema or the viewing of popular TV series. Tragic characters from Greek tragedies were sort of Hollywood heroes but hidden behind classical tragic masks and for rich Romans ordered bronze oil lamps with tragic masks remind them of these exciting tragic plays.

I had a very hard time with the task of recreating the correct expression of the mouth and eyes, which is between amazement and tragism. If the creator overdoes it ,it will result in horror as the expression of the mask. So the creator have to be careful with the mouth and eyes to achieve the desired effect of tragic expression.

The lamp from Naples, Archaeological Museum is from bronze,(a material proven in its durability over time)which leads to the conclusion that it may have been produced long before the eruption of the Vesuvius volcano in 79 AD. Bronze lamps were a very expensive item, a luxury item in antiquity, (as well as now) unlike their clay analogues which broke often and were cheaper due to the material and their easier way of production. So, certainly the bronze lamps were more durable in time and were stored for a very long time. It is quite possible that this lamp is inherited from the early 1st century Augustan period. 80 years for a bronze object is something normal to keep in a family or in the rich Roman villa. But these are just my thoughts and hypotheses.

At this stage this oil-bronze lamp are with a precise dating from its burial - the eruption of the volcano Veruvius 79 AD. From here it is open to speculation whether it was produced the same year before being buried under the ruins of Pompeii or 80 or 50 years earlier.



These two are red bronze finished.