

GARAGE SALES

Roman Bust Found at Goodwill

It's not quite a garage sale, but many garage sale leftovers end up at the local charity shop. A woman shopping in a Texas Goodwill found a Roman bust and snagged it for just \$34.99.

Art collector Laura Young made the find in 2018 when she found the sculpture on the floor under a table. She noticed it looked old and worn, so she started researching where it came from. She consulted with experts in art history at the University of Texas at Austin and at auction houses before finding out it was a piece that was in a German museum decades ago, USA Today reported.

It's a first century sculpture, possibly a son of Pompey the Great, who was defeated by Julius Caesar in the Roman civil war, the San Antonio Museum of Art says. It may also depict Roman commander Drusus Germanicus.

The bust once belonged to King Ludwig I of Bavaria, 1786-1868, and was part of a full-scale model of a home



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from Pompeii in Aschaffenburg. During World War II, the home, called the

Pompejanum, was severely damaged by Allied bombers. After the war, the U.S. estab-

lished bases in the town that were in use until the Cold War. It's possible that a soldier

based in Texas acquired the bust and took it home, where it eventually found its way to the Goodwill.

"It's a great story whose plot includes the World War II era, international diplomacy, the art of the ancient Mediterranean, thrift shop sleuthing, historic Bavarian royalty, and the thoughtful stewardship of those who care for and preserve the arts, whether as individuals or institutions," said Emily Ballew Neff, Kelso director at the San Antonio Museum of Art said.

The bust will be on display at the museum until May 2023.

Young received a finder's fee for returning the bust, but she couldn't keep or sell it because it belonged to someone else.

"Either way, I'm glad I got to be a small part of its long and complicated history, and he looked great in the house while I had him," she said.

The bust was identified by Jorg Deterling, a consultant for arts brokerage Sotheby's, who put Young in touch with German authorities. It is now the property of the Bavarian Administration of State-Owned Palaces, Gardens and Lakes. After the San Antonio exhibit, the bust will return home to Germany.

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The bust once belonged to King Ludwig I of Bavaria, 1786-1868, and was part of a full-scale model of a home from Pompeii in Aschaffenburg. During World War II, the home, called the Pompejanum, was severely damaged by Allied bombers. After the war, the U.S. established bases in the town that were in use until the Cold War. It's possible that a soldier based in Texas acquired the bust and took it home, where it eventually found its way to the Goodwill.

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SELLER'S TIP

Not Sure? Have Potentially Valuable Pieces Appraised

If you are unaware of the provenance of a piece in your collection, it's a good idea to have it examined by experts. While it's unlikely that you have a piece of ancient Rome in your living room, you may have something valuable enough that it needs to be handled by a professional brokerage. You'll have to pay fees for appraisal and for the sale, but in the long run, you'll make more money and it will be more secure than selling it out of your garage. Plus, you may avoid any legal trouble by selling a piece you may not actually own, like the Roman bust in the story above.

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