LOT 34
PROPERTY FROM A EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION
A MARBLE PORTRAIT HEAD OF A GIRL, ROMAN IMPERIAL, AUGUSTAN, 27 B.C.-A.D. 14

the neck carved for insertion into a statue, turned to her left, her face with delicate bow-shaped lips and large wide-set eyes under slightly arched eyebrows, her finely-carved hair parted in the center, bound in an invisible fillet, brushed in wavy locks over the sides, arranged in a nodus with central braid behind, tied in a broad braided chignon in back, and falling in long locks over the sides of the neck, finely engraved curls escaping over the forehead.
Height 11 3/4 in.  29.8 cm.

ESTIMATE 800,000-1,200,000 USD
Lot Sold: 2,225,000 USD
PROVENANCE
Prince Johannes von Schwarzenberg (1903-1978), Vienna, acquired from the above circa 1950
by descent to the present owner

EXHIBITED
Glyptothek, Munich, 1991-2014

LITERATURE

CATALOGUE NOTE
The present head is a study in contrasts. The upper part of the face, in the classical aloofness of its sharp brows and elongated eyes, belies the naturalistic, almost sensual treatment of the mouth, chin, and neck; together, these stylistically disparate elements create a dynamic countenance permeated by a constant tension between human and divine. Similarly, with regard to the coiffure, Paul Zanker (op. cit.) points out the carefully calculated distinction between the rigidly structured arrangement of the hair in plaits, chignons, waves, and topknot, and the two loose curls falling onto the shoulders.

The facial features are reminiscent of those of Livia, the consort of Augustus, in her most youthful portraits (see, for instance, Bardo Museum, Tunis, C934: E. Bartman, Portraits of Livia, Cambridge, 1999, p. 176, cat. no. 68; http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/19213, and Sotheby's, New York, June 6th, 2006, no. 54). Also related to representations of Livia is the elaborate nodus hairstyle with central braid over the crown of the head, the empress's trademark coiffure in her portraits of the Marbury Hall type (e.g. Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Museo delle Terme, inv. no. 572; http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/17254; for the typology see Bartman, op. cit., p. 144). The fine wisps of hair escaping over the forehead are typical of Livia's finest portraits as well. Even the long locks of hair falling loosely over the sides of the neck from the chignon in back can be traced to a recently identified portrait type of Livia best represented by a head in Copenhagen, inv. no. 616 (F. Poulsen, Catalogue of Ancient Sculpture in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1951, p. 428, no. 616; http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/8783).

When the present head was in the collection of D'Arcy Osborne in the late 1940s, it was considered to be a portrait of Octavia. It is now thought to be a private portrait. Paul Zanker (op. cit.) notes that the portrait "shows a quality of workmanship seldom encountered, even in the Augustan period." One has to look to imperial cameos, such as the ones of Livia in Paris and Leiden (E. Bartman, Portraits of Livia, Cambridge, 1999, figs. 17 and 55), to find the equivalent degree of detail and sensitivity.

D'Arcy Godolphin Osborne was British Minister to the Holy See from 1936 to 1947. His wartime papers were a major source for Owen Chadwick’s Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War (Cambridge, 1986). Osborne played a significant role in clandestine intelligence operations and in assisting escaped prisoners of war. After Italy entered the conflict in 1941 he was essentially trapped inside Vatican City, along with other Allied diplomats, but in 1943 he was permitted under the terms of the 1929 Lateran Treaty to return to England for health reasons. Eager to resume his post, he was able to return to the Vatican three months later. It was while on this visit home that he was knighted by the King. A year before his death in 1964 he became the 12th and last Duke of Leeds.

Johannes Schwarzenberg's career in the Austrian diplomatic corps was interrupted in 1938 with the German annexation of Austria. He took residence in Switzerland, where he became a Swiss citizen, and in 1940 was appointed Director and Chairman of the International Committee for the Red Cross. After the war he served as a representative of the Austrian government in Rome from 1947 to 1955, as Ambassador to the Court of St. James from
1955 to 1966, and as Ambassador to the Holy See from 1966 to 1969 (for more biographical information see Johannes E. Schwarzenberg, Erinnerungen und Gedanken eines Diplomaten im Zeitenwandel 1903-1978, C. Meran, M. Miller-Aichholz, and E. Schwarzenberg, eds., Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar, 2013). One of the most important objects in the family collection, a stunning marble portrait head of Alexander the Great, was acquired by the Munich Glyptothek (http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/34989).