

Antiquities / Thursday, 15th May 2025 / Lot 2350



LOT 2350

An important ancient Roman carved marble head and shoulders portrait bust of Septimius Severus, circa late 2nd/early 3rd century AD, Serapis type, the slightly over life-size head with thick trimmed moustache and long slightly forked beard, his wavy hair worked with four flowing locks at the forehead, his almond-shaped eyes with articulated pupils, raised on a later socle, overall height 81.5cm, width 58cm.

Provenance: Lords Kinnaird, Rossie Priory, Perthshire, Scotland; Edward Irvine Halliday CBE and thence by descent.

Note: this impressive portrait bust can be seen situated within the drawing room of Rossie Priory in a mid-19th century glass plate negative stereograph image on the University of St Andrews Collections website. Please note: as this is a negative image, it needs to be inverted to view it correctly; this will therefore place the medallion on the chest of Septimius on the correct side. Please see our website images to see this image reversed. Accompanying this lot, there are also numerous black and white photographs, thought to be taken in the 1950s, showing Edward Halliday and his family with the bust in his garden in St John's Wood, London. Septimius Severus was about forty-eight or forty-nine years old when he became Emperor in 193 AD. This portrait is of the so-called Serapis-Severus type, which was adopted in circa 200 AD to show the Emperor's association with the Egyptian god.

With thanks to Reverend Professor Martin Henig for his assistance in establishing the provenance of this lot.

Estimate: £40,000 - £60,000

Condition Report

2350. The bust has an overall weathered and pitted surface with surface loss in particular to the front edges of his garment, having been in a London garden for the last 70 years. There are also visible surface cracks particularly to these lower areas of the front, but generally all this can be seen from our extensive photographs on our website (67 images).

It can be clearly seen that the head and bust have been made in two separate sections with a joint line at the neck and it is impossible to be sure whether the two pieces are original to one another, but certainly proportionally it seems to work very well.

There are three grey patches of surface material to the rear and overall light green surface build-up in areas, as well as some dots of lichen. As previously stated, the extensive photos show all of this clearly.

Provenance is noted in the catalogue description, with it being photographed in a Victorian stereograph in Rossie Priory and also within the garden of Edward Halliday in the mid-20th century - photos of which can be

seen on our website. It has then been given to the current vendors by the Halliday family and we hold a letter confirming this.

Created: Wed, 14th May 2025 16:48