

CHRISTIE'S

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THE COBHAM HALL HADRIAN OFFERED AS TOP LOT AT CHRISTIE'S EXCEPTIONAL SALE OCTOBER 29, NEW YORK



THE COBHAM HALL HADRIAN
REIGN 117-138 A.D.
81 7/8 in. (208 cm.) high
Estimate on request

New York – Christie's announces that **The Cobham Hall Hadrian** is the top lot of [The Exceptional Sale](#) on October 29, during Christie's *Classic Week*. The Roman Marble Statue of the Emperor Hadrian will be sold in order to benefit the Mougins Museum of Classical Art in the South of France. It is one of the finest ancient statues from the Grand Tour era of collecting and the only full-length statue of a famous emperor to appear at auction in decades.

The over-life-sized marble statue depicts the Emperor Hadrian standing in a chiastic pose with his weight on his right leg, his left leg bent at the knee and drawn back and his right arm raised. Hadrian's body is robust and powerfully built. He dons a voluminous mantle around the lower part of his frame and draped over the left arm, while his muscular torso and chest are exposed. The head is turned slightly to his right with a cropped beard and mustache and his characteristic wavy hair ending in corkscrew curls along his forehead. The marble statue is an impressive and heroizing depiction of the Emperor, whose chiastic stance and athletic physicality recalls the work of 5th century B.C. sculptor Polykleitos.

G. Max Bernheimer, International Department Head of Antiquities, remarked: *“This masterpiece has incomparable provenance and represents an opportunity to not only own an important work of art but also to help fund the future of a truly remarkable institution.”*



In addition to the superb quality and rarity of the statue, the work holds a distinguished provenance as it was formerly in the Villa Montalto-Negrone-Massimi in Rome. In the 18th century the statue was acquired by John Bligh, 4th Earl of Darnley (1767–1833), for his home Cobham Hall in Kent, England. Today, the statue is known as ‘The Cobham Hall Hadrian’ and it remained in the estate until the 8th Earl of Darnley (1859 – 1927), later sold by the Darnley estate in London in 1957. In 2008, the marble Hadrian was consigned to Christie’s New York and acquired by the current owner, British investment manager and philanthropist, Christian Levett. In 2009, Levett established the Mougins Museum of Classical Art to house his private collection of antiquities and classical art, including The Cobham Hall Hadrian.

Hadrian was born in Rome in 76 A.D., to Domitia Paulina from Gades (Cadiz, Spain), and Aelius Hadrianus, a Roman Senator and native of the Roman settlement of Italica in Spain. At the age of nine, Hadrian lost his father and was appointed guardians, one of whom was another native of Italica, the general Marcus Ulpius Traianus, who would soon to become the Emperor Trajan. Trajan later officially adopted Hadrian as his son and heir.

Emperor Hadrian reigned over the Roman Empire from 117–138 and distinguished himself as a military strategist who attempted to solidify the Empire’s borders. His military accolades include the construction of walls in Britain to defend Roman Britain from the Scottish Picts in the North and in Algeria. He completed the Temple of Zeus in Athens and created the Panhellenic League in an attempt to secure the loyalty of Greek aristocracy.

During his succession, Hadrian initiated an unparalleled building program throughout the Empire. In Rome, he built the Pantheon in the Campus Martius, the Temple of Venus in the Forum, and his own Mausoleum, now known as the Castel Sant’ Angelo.



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Alongside regular sales online, Christie’s has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer’s premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer’s premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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