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Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Silver Tetradrachm (14.97 g), 36 BC. Antioch in Syria. ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΚΑ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ ΘΕΑ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΑ, diademed and draped bust of Cleopatra right. Rev. ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟC ΑΥ[ΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ] Τ]ΡΙΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΑΝΔΡΩΝ, bare head of Mark Antony right. McAlee 174; Prieur 27; RPC I 4094. Huge flan on fine metal with complete legends. Toned. An incredible coin! *Possibly the finest known specimen.* Extremely Fine. Estimate Value \$50,000 - UP From the S. Moussaieff Collection, This lot has been officially exported from Israel through the Israel Antiquities Authority. Cleopatra VII, the last queen of the Ptolemaic kingdom, remains to this day a colossal figure of legend as much as history. Her life and tragic end have been immortalized and popularized by poets, playwrights, and screen actors over the centuries since her death. While the average person is not likely to know the various preceding Cleopatras, Arsinoes, and Berenikes of the

Ptolemaic dynasty, almost everyone knows of Cleopatra VII, if only in her latter day guise as Elizabeth Taylor. She remains ever an icon of ancient female power and this remarkable silver tetradrachm features one of her most iconic portraits to survive from antiquity.

The most famous Ptolemaic queen is shown here in rich royal dress and wearing the diadem - a long standing symbol of royal authority in the Hellenistic age, but most commonly worn by kings rather than queens. It serves as a sign that Cleopatra sought to rule entirely in her own right without accepting the second place of power behind a husband, as was customary in the Greek cultural tradition. She had rejected her brother, Ptolemy XIII, as co-ruler (probably also as husband) by the summer of 51 BC, sparking a civil war in Egypt that eventually drew the attention of Julius Caesar who was waging his own civil war (49-45 BC) against Pompey and his senatorial adherents. She initiated a romance

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mistaken belief that the queen had already done so, but Cleopatra ended her life by poison in order to deny Octavian the chance to parade her in his triumph. In life and in her depiction on this coin juxtaposed with Antony, Cleopatra ruled as an equal to her male lovers and rivals. So too did she choose the death of a king when all hope was finally lost.

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