

19th Century FRENCH SCHOOL

A Roman Funerary Altar Decorated with Ram's Head and a Garland

Pen and grey ink and grey wash, over an underdrawing in pencil.

An artist's monogram or a collector's mark *PL*(?) in brown ink at the lower left.

211 x 150 mm. (8 1/4 x 5 7/8 in.)

The marble funerary altar or *cippus* depicted in this drawing, with a heavy floral festoon suspended from ram's heads on the corners, is very similar to Early Roman examples datable to the 1st Century AD, such as one today in the British Museum and another in the Louvre.

Although the monogram at the lower left of the present sheet is likely to be that of the as-yet unidentified artist, or else a collector's mark, it may be noted that it is very similar to the monogram employed by King Louis-Philippe (1773-1850), who ruled as King of the French between 1830 and 1848. Louis-Philippe is known to have been an amateur draughtsman in his youth, and even worked as a drawing master as well as a teacher of maths, history and geography at a school of Reichenau in Switzerland, where, under the assumed name of M. Chabos, he lived in exile in 1793, at the height of the French Revolution. As King, Louis-Philippe was known as a voracious collector, particularly of Spanish paintings for the Louvre and works for the Palace of Versailles.

The present sheet was at one time in the notable collection of over 450 18th and 19th century French drawings assembled by the American collector Muriel Butkin (d.2008), most of which was bequeathed

by her to the Cleveland Museum of Art. As she was apparently fond of stating, "*I collect drawings, not names*", and her collection was characterized by an appreciation of fine draughtsmanship, whether by well-known artists or more obscure or anonymous hands. Muriel Butkin began collecting French drawings in the 1970s, at the same time as her husband Noah was assembling a collection of 19th century French paintings. As the collector herself wrote, '*I had always loved paintings but ignored drawings until one caught my eye…This drawing led to more; drawings proved addictive. When I told my husband I would like to collect drawings, he said, "I like paintings; I do not like drawings." Therefore, I was on my own. My collection has always been very personal.*'