

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Queen Tomyris with the Head of Cyrus

Severo da Ravenna (Severo Calzetta) (Italian, ca. 1465/75–ca. 1538)

Date 1500–35

Medium Bronze

Dimensions H.: 12 1/8 in. (30.8 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1916.2.25

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 14, Enamels Room

Commentary Severo made several statuettes of saints and the crucified Christ but also many figures from ancient legend and history, including such women as Cleopatra and nude female subjects who have not been identified. Queen Tomyris shares with these bronzes of women a number of characteristics, and although none are signed, the group relates stylistically to other works that are. Like the figure of the The Frick Collection's Neptune, Queen Tomyris reveals that Severo had an insecure grasp of anatomy. Her torso and especially her hips are awkwardly articulated, her stance is uneasily poised, and her hands are enormous. Compared with The Frick Collection's Mantuan Naked Female Figure possibly representing Diana, her body, gestures, and open-mouthed stare are singularly ambiguous. The widowed Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae, a Scythian nation, led her troops to battle against the Persian king Cyrus, who had invaded her land and captured her son. She conquered his army, killed Cyrus, and cut off his head. Severo's portrayal of the vengeful warrior-queen is so stylized in movement and expression it seems stage-like, resembling a balletic performance more than the climax of a bloodthirsty melodrama. Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Chigi-Saraceni, Siena. Alphonse Kann, Paris. Sold through Durlacher Bros., February 22, 1910, to J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York. Duveen. Frick, 1916. Source: *Sculpture in The Frick Collection: Italian. Volume III*. New York: The Frick Collection, 1970.