

For Immediate Release

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**RARE ROMAN STATUE IS EXTRAORDINARY HIGHLIGHT OF
CHRISTIE'S ANTIQUITIES SPRING SALE**

Antiquities

June 4, 2008

New York – On June 4, Christie's New York is pleased to offer an exquisite Roman statue of the goddess Tyche (estimate on request). Standing 31 ½ inches high, and executed in the rarest of materials: porphyry. The statue was formerly in the private collection of Dr. Elie Borowski, collector and connoisseur of ancient art, who acquired it in 1967. It was on loan to the sculpture museum Liebighaus in Frankfurt, Germany from 1980-1986, and later exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto from 1986-1991.



“This is the most spectacular and beautiful sculpture that I have ever had the pleasure to work with,” says G. Max Bernheimer, International Head of the Antiquities department. “The fact that it’s still in impeccable condition, makes it all the more exceptional.”

Porphyry

Porphyry was highly regarded for its color, since purple was symbolic of high rank and authority. The stone was quarried in Egypt’s eastern desert, near Mons Porphyrites, known today as Gebel Kokham. The raw material was transported overland to Qena, ancient Kainopolis, on the Nile, and then by boat north to Alexandria and then on to Rome. During the Roman Period, the quarries were traditionally understood to have been under the direct control of the emperor. The stone was

only sporadically used during the 1st Century A.D., reaching its first peak of use during the reigns of the emperors Trajan 98-117 A.D. and Hadrian 117-138 A.D. and again in the 4th Century. It was used for statuary, architectural elements including columns and floor paving, decorative urns and basins, and for imperial sarcophagi. Most porphyry statuary, as with the present example, was finished as a composite work of art, with the head, hands and feet made from a contrasting material, usually white marble.

The Goddess

Tyche was a goddess who presided over the prosperity of the city, bringing its citizens, with hope, good fortune. The most renowned sculpture of Tyche from the ancient world was a colossal bronze statue by the Greek artist Eutychides, a pupil of Lysippos, created for the city of Antioch in the early 3rd century B.C. The Tyche of Antioch was a personification of the city. Although the original does not survive, its existence is known from ancient literary sources and is recognized in copies in various media, including small bronzes, reliefs, coins and gems, and most famously in marble now at the Vatican Museum. All show the goddess seated on a rock, symbolic of Mount Silpius, with her feet resting on the river Orontes, depicted as a swimming youth. As most cities had their own Tyche, the topographical details of Eutychides' original could be appropriated to suit any location. On account of the material from which it is sculpted, this porphyry Tyche must have been an Imperial commission, inspired by the work of Eutychides, and was perhaps a benevolent gift to one of the great cities of the Empire or an important local leader.

Auction: Antiquities

June 4, 2008

Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

May 31- June 3, 2008

About Christie's

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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Images available on request

