

For Immediate Release
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ACHAEMINID RELIEF LEADS CHRISTIE'S LONDON AUCTION OF ANTIQUITIES IN OCTOBER 2007



An Achaemenid stone relief, first half of 5th Century BC, Persepolis
9.3/8 x 12.1/4 in (23.8 x 31.1 cm)
Estimate: £500,000-800,000

King Street – Christie's announce the auction of *Antiquities* on 25 October at King Street, which will offer a strong selection of ancient art, jewellery and sculpture, particularly in the Near Eastern and Classical sections. The highlight of the sale is *The Berend Achaemenid Relief* which depicts the profile head of a Persian guard in profile and dates to the first half of the 5th Century BC (£500,000-£800,000). The relief is similar in style to other sculptures from Persepolis, the city founded by Darius I, 'King of Kings', in 515 BC. The city flourished at the heart of the Achaemenid Empire until 333 BC when Alexander the Great and his Macedonian troops defeated the Persians at the Battle of Issus. The relief comes from the Berend private collection, having formerly been in the possession of the philanthropist Hagop Kevorkian (1872-1962). It was sold as property from the Hagop Kevorkian Fund at an auction in New York on 4 May 1974, and was acquired by the present owner at a subsequent auction in New York on 10 October 1974.

From a similar period and complementing the relief is an Achaemenid silver-gilt bowl decorated with palmettes (£30,000-£35,000) and a powerful pre-Achaemenid silver and gold upper part of a bearded male figure (£30,000-£35,000). There is a large private collection of mainly Luristan bronzes, including elaborate 2nd-early 1st millennium BC axeheads, ranging in estimate from £1000 upwards.

In the Classical section is the Swiss *van Berchem Collection of Greek Antiquities* which was formed in the 1960s, with highlights included in an exhibition of *Art in Swiss Private Collections* at the Musee Rath, Geneva, in 1975. The antiquities include a fine *circa* 560 BC Attic black figure amphora decorated with a lively scene on each side of a Greek hoplite or warrior riding with his groom-attendant (estimate

£30,000-£40,000). The warrior's shield is emblazoned with a leaping hare, and on the other side of the amphora, an ox-head. The warrior wears a Corinthian style helmet and greaves, while his spear-bearing attendant wears a peaked hat, with a bird following in flight behind. The amphora is in exceptionally good condition and was acquired at auction in Basel in 1963. The other antiquities from the Collection include a selection of Greek and South Italian vases.

In the Egyptian section are two small but interesting private collections, one of bronzes and shabtis belonging to Dr J. J. Acworth (1853-1927), who travelled to Egypt in the late 19th Century and was a benefactor of The British Museum. The other collection of Egyptian and Classical antiquities comes from Dr Rudolf Schmidt (1900-1970), a Swiss benefactor of the Rietberg Museum, Zurich, and the University of Fribourg. A number of 5th-7th Century AD Coptic textiles complete this section, including an exceptionally large, 76 x 55 in. (193 x 140 cm) hanging decorated with urns of fruit and flowers which was originally with the French dealer, Altounian, in the first half of the 20th Century, and now comes from a Princely collection (£50,000-£80,000). Other Coptic antiquities include a rare pair of trousers and leather shoes.

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Images available on request
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Notes to editors:

Auction

Antiquities, 25 October, 11 am and 2pm

Viewing

Tuesday 23 October 6pm to 8pm
Wednesday 24 October 9am to 4.30pm
Thursday 25 October 9am to 10.30am

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totalled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. Worldwide sales for the first half of 2007 totalled £1.63 billion / \$3.25 billion, an increase of 32% by £ and 45% by \$ from the same period last year and highest half year sales ever in art market history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales through Christie's LIVE™, its unique, real-time online bidding service.