

For Immediate Release

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**CHRISTIE'S 5TH ANNUAL SALE OF ANCIENT JEWELRY TO OFFER
AN EXCEPTIONAL ARRAY OF WEARABLE WORKS OF ART**

Ancient Jewelry

December 11, 2003

New York – Christie's sale of Ancient Jewelry on December 11 at Rockefeller Center will offer a tremendous array of wearable works of art, with beaded necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and finger rings, all coming from the cultures and periods normally found in a traditional Antiquities sale—including Egypt and the Near East, and Greece and Rome.

The sale opens with a number of lots of ancient Near Eastern beads, including agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli and chalcedony, all modernly strung into exquisite wearable necklaces. Estimates range from \$1,200–1,800 to \$2,000–3,000. Also from the Near East, in this case Carthage, come some unusual glass beads and pendants, each with stylized faces, circa 5th–4th century B.C. (estimate: \$5,000–7,000 each).

There are a number of important Egyptian lots, highlighted by a rare massive gold stirrup-shaped ring from the reign of the Pharaoh Akhenaten, 1353–1335 B.C. Engraved on its oval bezel is a figure of the king himself, seated beneath a protective solar disk and accompanied by an abbreviated hieroglyphic inscription (estimate: \$80,000–120,000). Another rarity is a small pendant of a Ba bird, a human-headed falcon that represents the spirit of its wearer, which dates from the Late Period to Ptolemaic Period, 664–30 B.C. The wings and body are embellished with brightly colored enamel cloisonné (estimate: \$70,000–90,000). There is also a large gold

bracelet crafted in the form of a snake, its details indicated by chasing. This too dates from the Ptolemaic Period, 304–30 B.C. (estimate: \$40,000–60,000).

From the Greek world there is a gold finger ring, circa late 6th–early 5th century B.C., superbly engraved with a seated lion-griffin (estimate: \$30,000–50,000). Later in date, circa 2nd–1st century B.C., is a prasiolite ring stone (an unusual form of pale green crystalline quartz) engraved with Aphrodite and Eros and mounted as a ring in a gold setting of circa 1820 (estimate: \$15,000–20,000). There is also a fine Greek necklace, circa 4th–2nd century B.C., formed of a length of gold chain with lion head terminals (estimate: \$5,000–7,000), as well as a number of earrings of similar style and date.

Engraved gems for use as seals were tremendously popular with the Romans, and the December sale always features a wide selection of them, some in their original settings, some in antique European mounts, and others set in modern gold. One of the finest of the original mounts is a 3rd century A.D. nicolo ring stone engraved with a shepherd milking a goat; the heavy ring has elaborate voluted shoulders (estimate: \$15,000–20,000). Of those in modern settings, there is an interesting red jasper ring stone engraved with a scene from the Roman circus, featuring three groups of racing chariots, circa 1st century A.D. (estimate: \$2,000–3,000). A beautiful unmounted amethyst ring stone bears the portraits of the co-Emperors Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla. The iconography suggests a date of 208–211 A.D. (estimate: \$15,000–20,000). Another unusual ring is a massive silver example, its bezel ornamented with a relief scene of Leda and the Swan, circa 2nd century A.D. (estimate: \$10,000–15,000).

There are a number of rare Byzantine items, including pendant crosses, finger rings, and an unusual belt buckle. A beautiful gold necklace, circa 6th–7th century A.D., with openwork disks at the clasp, supports a pendant with a cross in relief (estimate: \$10,000–15,000).

Closing the sale are twenty-four finger rings from a European Private Collection, ranging from Late Roman to Byzantine to the Migration Period. There are two solid gold rings, both engraved with inscriptions from the reign of Constantine the Great, circa 350 A.D. (\$25,000–35,000 each). There is an unusual Visigothic gold ring, circa 6th–7th century A.D., set with an earlier Roman nicolo ring stone, its beveled edge with a Visigothic inscription naming the owner, Adalmaricus (estimate: \$10,000–15,000); a Merovingian gold ring, circa 5th century A.D., with a circular cloisonné bezel set with foil-backed garnets (estimate: \$8,000–10,000); and an Anglo-Saxon gold ring, circa 6th–8th century A.D., with a wide hoop ornamented with a filigree rope design, supporting a square bezel set with a foil-backed garnet (estimate: \$4,000–6,000).

Auction: Antiquities December 11 at 10 a.m.
Ancient Jewelry December 11 at 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza December 6 - 10

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Images available on request
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