

For Immediate Release

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**ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF ALAN M. MAY
HIGHLIGHTS CHRISTIE'S SALES OF ANTIQUITIES**

Antiquities

December 11, 2003

New York – Christie's sale of Antiquities on December 11 at Rockefeller Center will offer an exceptional array of ancient art, ranging from Egypt and the Near East to Greece and Rome. Leading the sales is a monumental Roman bronze figure of an emperor (estimate on request), the first of its kind ever to appear at auction. Dating from the late Antonine or Severan period, circa late 2nd–early 3rd century A.D., this is one of only very few over-lifesized bronzes surviving from antiquity. (see separate press release)

Featured in the sale are ancient Egyptian works of art from the Collection of Alan M. May, a selection of 27 exquisite objects that span the entire range of ancient Egyptian history. Many of the works have been the subject of scholarly exploration, such as the Early Dynastic jar bearing the name of Narmer, circa 3000 B.C., Egypt's first pharaoh (estimate \$70,000–90,000), and the quartzite offering table, from the Roman Period, circa 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D., which has an inscription identifying its maker (estimate \$20,000–30,000). Important objects with royal associations dominate the ensemble, such as a rare limestone relief with a portrait of Amenhotep I, who ruled from 1525–1504 B.C. (estimate \$70,000–90,000); the fantastic hematite scarab incised with the cartouche of Psamtik I, who was pharaoh from 664–610 B.C. (estimate \$30,000–50,000); and a small bronze figure of a kneeling king of Dynasty XXX (380–343 B.C.), likely Nectanebo I or II (estimate \$12,000–18,000).

The sale includes a number of other important Egyptian antiquities all with important provenance. There is a large and impressive limestone relief for an official who served as a royal scribe and treasurer for a late Dynasty XVIII king, circa 1335-1307 B.C., formerly in the Kofler Collection (estimate: \$40,000-60,000); a beautiful quartzite bust of a queen from the late New Kingdom, circa 1307-1070 B.C., from the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Leo S. Bing (estimate \$25,000-35,000); and a fine green stone head of Osiris, circa 664-525 B.C., from the Kelekian Collection (estimate \$20,000-30,000). The sale also includes a selection of nearly 30 Egyptian shabti figures, ranging from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period, with estimates of \$1,500-2,000 to \$5,000-7,000.

From the Near East there is unusual material from ancient Bactria, including a white stone idol, circa 3rd millennium B.C. (estimate \$12,000-18,000) and a selection of columnar and circular ritual objects of similar date, each estimated at \$3,000-5,000. From further to the west in Mesopotamia comes a delicately-sculpted ivory figure of a nude goddess, circa 2400-2250 B.C. (estimate \$50,000-80,000); and a North Syrian silver figure of a deity, circa 2nd millennium B.C. (estimate \$30,000-50,000). An Achaemenid silver alabastron, circa 5th century B.C., is superbly engraved with rows of rosettes, and is adorned with ram-head handles (estimate \$100,000-150,000).

There are wonderful objects from the Classical world, including a fabulous Greek bronze helmet, circa late 6th century B.C. (estimate \$40,000-60,000); an Athenian red-figured lekythos by the Berlin Painter, circa 490 B.C., depicting a standing figure of the goddess Athena (estimate: \$30,000-50,000); and a Hellenistic gilt-silver rhyton or drinking vessel with a protome in the form of a goat, circa 1st century B.C. (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

Portraiture was an important art-form during the Roman Period. The sale has several interesting examples, ranging in size from a miniature chalcedony bust of Trajan, who ruled from 98-117 A.D. (estimate: \$40,000-60,000) to a colossal marble head of the same emperor (estimate \$250,000-350,000). There are also a fine marble portrait of the Emperor Septimius Severus, dating to circa 194 A.D. (estimate: \$150,000-250,000), and a marble bust of Julia Aquilia Severa, wife of the Emperor Elagabalus, circa 220-222 A.D. (estimate: \$50,000-70,000).

Rounding out the sale is a rare gold cup from one of the Germanic Kingdoms of the 6th-early 7th century A.D., that has a runiform inscription on its base (estimate \$150,000-200,000). The sale includes wonderful examples of ancient glass, many beautiful bronzes, and a number of marble sculptures. There is also an assortment of Roman and Byzantine mosaics, highlighted by a panel with five birds arrayed around a water-filled krater, circa 2nd century A.D. (estimate: \$40,000-60,000).

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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