

Prestigious provenance bolsters Apollo Art Auctions' Oct. 12-13 sale of antiquities, ancient military relics and jewelry

Battle royale for top-lot honors pits superb Tsar Nicholas II shashka – only royal sword ever offered for public sale – against circa-1509 gilded suit of armor

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, October 7, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Apollo Art Auctions' October 12-13 Fine Ancient Art & Antiquities sale offers the company's flourishing audience of bidders a chance to acquire pieces of unrivaled excellence and integrity, each one supported by venerable provenance. The 905-lot auction includes important rarities sourced from the Imperial Russian Romanov Collection, the Prince Collection, the Stephen Joel Albert Collection, the Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton (Second Marquess of Northampton) Collection, the Alison Barker Collection, the Mrs B Ellison (of the Egyptian Exploration Society) Collection, the Duc de Dino Collection, and the Nicholas Wright Collection.

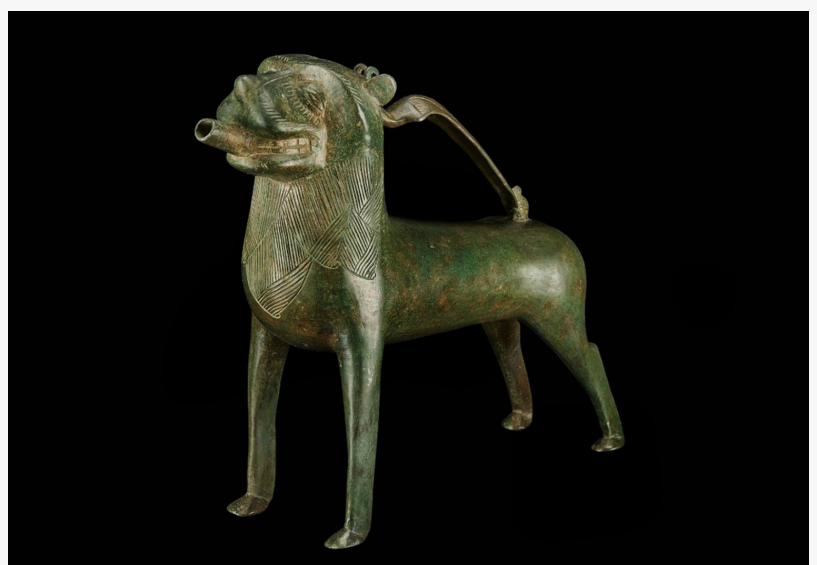
As the fully-illustrated auction catalog attests, the sale comprises a broad range of desirable items, including wearable jewelry vetted by ancient jewelry specialist Sami Fortune, fascinating military relics, and seals studied by renowned archaeology expert Professor Wilfrid George Lambert FBA (1926-2011). Egyptian decorative pieces come with historical reports from Simone Musso, consultant curator for Egyptian antiquities at the Stibbert Museum in Florence and a member of the Nuri Archaeological Expedition. Expertly-vetted Roman, Greek and Asian artifacts come with historical reports from Alessandro Neri, an international cultural heritage expert based in Florence, Italy. Also, bidders have the assurance of knowing all auction items have been cleared through the Art Loss Register database.

Two absolutely unique productions lead the ancient and antique armor category. First, there is an extremely fine-quality Caucasian shashka gifted to Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia, when he was



Superb circa-1590 AD Italian etched and lavishly gilded half-suit of infantry armor by Pompeo Della Cesa, armorer to European royalty. Opening bid: £450,000 (\$602,000)

Tsesarevich (heir apparent). Research suggests the saber was presented to Nicholas during a tour of the Caucasus with his father Tsar Alexander III, in 1888. An Arabic inscription in gold on the blade translates to: (M)ay the dominance of the owner of this sword grow, and his life, and his greatness, and may Allah bless his family, and he will achieve his goal. It is also monogrammed with the letters "N" and "A" (for Nicholas Alexandrovich), surrounded by a golden laurel and surmounted by the Imperial Russian crown. Its wonderfully-decorated scabbard bears a calligraphic Arabic inscription that would be the equivalent of a European maker's mark. Translated, it says "Abdullah worked." Held in consecutive European private collections, including the Eugene Mollo collection (Switzerland), it is the first royal sword ever to be offered for public sale. It requires an opening bid of £900,000 (\$1,203,370).



Very rare medieval (circa early 13th century AD) bronze lion-form aquamanile of a type that would have been used for ceremonial hand-washing before religious services or dining, especially at banquets. Opening bid: \$80,000 (\$107,100)

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Research suggests that the magnificent shashka was presented to Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia, in 1888 during a tour of the Caucasus with his father, Tsar Alexander III.”

Dr. Ivan Bonchev, Apollo Art Auctions

The second armor highlight is a breathtaking circa-1590 AD Italian etched and gilded half-suit of armor created by Pompeo Della Cesa, armorer to Philip II of Spain and many European dukes. The central boss on its breastplate features an image of Infant Christ in the arms of the Virgin Mary, under which appears "POMP," the celebrated Milanese armorer's signature. Weighing 14.4kg (31lbs 12oz), this suit would have been made for an infantryman. The illustrious line of provenance most recently includes the Prince Collection and the 2009 Galerie Fischer (Lucerne, Switzerland) auction of the Schulthess family collection. Its prior ownership can be traced back as far as

the Duc de Dino Collection, which was cataloged by the Baron de Cosson in 1901 and acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1904. The opening bid is £450,000 (\$602,000).

Another noteworthy armor lot is a circa 600-575 BC Corinthian helmet of hammered bronze with large almond-shape eyeholes with beveled perimeter, a slender nose guard with raised edges, and gracefully-sloping cheek guards. Similar to an example in the MET Museum, it has been XRF-tested to confirm no modern trace elements. Its well-documented lineage includes a European

collector; the K Deppert collection (Frankfurt, Germany) following a 1973 purchase; and S Tarab (Geneva, Switzerland). The opening bid on this wonderful-looking opalescent-green helmet is set at £40,000 (\$53,560).

Of a later but no-less-captivating era, a circa 900-1100 AD [Viking](#) or Norman conical helmet is ruggedly constructed of a single sheet of hammered iron with a T-shape nasal guard attached by five rivets. Both the brow and nose guard are artfully inlaid with dragon motifs. Its line of provenance includes an English art gallery, with acquisition in the 2010s; a private southern Germany collection formed in 1980s-2000s; and the Kenneth John Hewett collection (London), formed from the 1960s-1980s. Strong competition could ensue on auction day when this helmet opens for bidding at £6,000 (\$8,035).



Extremely fine-quality Caucasian shashka that belonged to Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia, given to him in 1888 when he was Tsesarevich (heir apparent). Opening bid: £900,000 (\$1,203,370)

The array of “precious metals” continues with a very rare medieval (circa early 13th century AD) bronze lion-form aquamanile of a type that would have been used for ceremonial hand-washing before religious services or dining, especially at banquets. Its ingenious design incorporates a movable tail that serves as a pump to send water coursing through the lion’s body and out its mouth via a spout. A handsome artwork displaying a superb natural patina, its line of ownership includes a 1990s European collection and subsequent acquisition on the British art market in the 2010s. It is similar to an example in the Cleveland Museum of Art’s collection. Bidding will start at £80,000 (\$107,100).

An awe-inspiring Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty (reign of Amenhotep IV-Akhenaten, circa 1353-1336 BC) limestone relief [stele](#) fragment features carved images of a queen of the Amarna Kingdom, King Akhenaten, and a child, most likely the young Princess Meritaten. Of vertical form with hieroglyphic inscriptions, this historically significant piece actually appears in A Wiese’s 2001 book about ancient Egyptian holdings in the Basel Museum of Antiquities. Its provenance includes the Prince Collection, 1990s-2014; and before that, the Hans Humbel Collection (Zurich). Opening bid: £20,000 (\$26,740).

Other highlights include a Chinese Tang Dynasty pottery horse, an ornate [Apulian](#) red-figure volute krater, Byzantine enameled gold earrings, and a Roman amethyst cameo ring depicting Constantine the Great.

Apollo Art Auctions’ Oct. 12-13, 2024 auction will be a live gallery event with online bidding also

available through Apollo's bidding platform or LiveAuctioneers. Start time: 7am US Eastern Time/12 noon GMT on Day 1; and 6am US Eastern Time/11am GMT on Day 2. Goods may be previewed at the gallery October 7-11 from 10am-5pm daily. Address: 63-64 Margaret Street, London W1W 8SW. Apollo accepts payments in GBP, USD and EUR; and ships worldwide. Questions: Call +44 7424 994167, email enquiries@apolloauctions.com. Online: www.apolloauctions.com

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