



NEWS RELEASE

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Contacts: Candice Harrison, Director of Communications
419-255-8000 ext. 7408
charrison@toledomuseum.org

Lynnette Werning, Blue Water Communications
800-975-3212
lynnette@bluewatercommunications.biz

Rare exhibition of Late Roman masterpieces opens at the Toledo Museum of Art next month

TOLEDO, Ohio – For the first time since its founding in 1901, the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) will present a special exhibition of Late Roman artwork, focusing on the period from the second century B.C. to the seventh century. The majority of the approximately 30 masterpieces – glittering gold and silver, spectacular oversize carved garnets and rubies and dazzling rings and necklaces – have never before been displayed in a museum. *Glorious Splendor: Treasures of Early Christian Art* will be on view exclusively at TMA from Nov. 18, 2017, through Feb. 18, 2018.

“*Glorious Splendor* offers TMA audiences an exceptional opportunity to experience up close some of the most exquisite and significant objects from the Early Christian era,” said TMA Director Brian Kennedy.

The exhibition is curated by Adam Levine, TMA’s associate director and associate curator of ancient art.

“Not only will this exhibition be visually captivating, it will also explore important continuities of style, media, iconography and technique between Christian and non-Christian art during this dynamic time period,” said Levine.

In A.D. 330, the Emperor Constantine consecrated Constantinople as the new capital of the Roman Empire. Seven years later, Constantine died, and on his deathbed he was baptized. In part, for this reason, Constantine the Great frequently has been identified as a transitional figure ushering Rome from a pagan empire into a Christian one. As *Glorious Splendor* demonstrates, however, Christianity had grown considerably over the preceding three centuries, and its explosive growth continued for centuries afterwards.

The exhibition is divided into sections focusing on Continuities in Manufacture; Continuities in Iconography; Continuity in Object Types; Social Continuities: Displaying Wealth; Gems and Jewelry: Historical Context; and Illuminating Faith.

Among the items of personal adornment in the exhibition are large gold crosses, decorated and embossed, which were favored by the wealthy and pious of Byzantium in the sixth and seventh centuries; weighty and sumptuous bracelets carefully traced with gold and ornamented with precious gems and pearls from the sixth century and earrings encased in small gold beads, with woven wire, granulation and garnets from Parthia (modern-day Syria) in the first century.

Decorative objects in the exhibition that were originally created for Christian churches include Byzantine silver hanging lamps with openwork decoration and inscriptions, indicating their function as votive offerings to Christ (sixth century). A remarkable large silver paten, or plate, showing the earliest surviving image of the Communion of the Apostles (A.D. 547-550), features gilt figures and architectural motifs in a distinguished vessel of detailed metalworking.

The representation of power, both allegorical and earthly, is depicted in the decadent amethyst intaglio of the mighty Herakles subdued by the diminutive cupid set in a gold pendant from the second century B.C. as well as through the stunning sardonyx cameo busts of Septimius Severus and his wife Julia Domna, embellished with an Augustan wreath and large gem of A.D. 207-211.

Admission to the exhibition is free.

Glorious Splendor: Treasures of Early Christian Art is supported in part by Taylor Cadillac, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the TMA Ambassadors, Mary Lynch Jarrell and Paul A. Jarrell, James and Gregory Demirjian, Sotheby's, Harold Jaffe Jewelers and the OAC, with additional support from the 2017 exhibition program sponsor ProMedica.

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The Toledo Museum of Art is a nonprofit arts institution funded through individual donations, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships and investments. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund programs at the Toledo Museum of Art through a sustainability grant program that encourages economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. Glass Pavilion® and Toledo Museum of Art Glass Pavilion® are registered service marks.

Admission to the Museum is free. The Museum is open Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m.; and is closed Monday and major holidays. Thursday evening hours are sponsored by Huntington Wealth Advisors. Friday evening hours are made possible by Fifth Third Bank.

The Museum is located at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, just west of the downtown business district and one block off I-75 with exit designations posted. For general information, visitors can call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862, or visit toledomuseum.org.