Arts of the Islamic World
INCLUDING FINE CARPETS AND TEXTILES

AUCTION IN LONDON WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2010 10 AM & 2.30 PM

PLEASE NOTE
THIS AUCTION WILL START AT 10 AM

EXHIBITION
Friday 9 April 9 am - 4.30 pm
Sunday 11 April 12 noon - 5 pm
Monday 12 April 9 am - 4.30 pm
Tuesday 13 April 9 am - 4.30 pm

EMBARGO ON IMPORTATION OF PERSIAN/IRANIAN WORKS OF ART TO THE U.S.A.

These clients considering purchasing Persian/iranian works of art with the intention of exporting them to the U.S.A. should ensure of the relevant U.S. Government Department regarding the proper importation of such items. The Islamic Department does however remain available to assist buyers with such queries, so far as is practicable. Buyers should be aware that Sotheby's does not represent that this approval will be granted.

34-35 NEW BOND STREET LONDON W1A 2AA
A QURAN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT ON VELLUM FROM THE MUSHAF AL-HADINAH, THE ‘NURSE’S QUR’AN’, COPIED BY ‘ALI AL-WARRAQI, QAIFAWAN, NORTH AFRICA, 410 AH/1020 AD

TEXT: SURAH AL-NUMAR (68) PARTS OF VERSES 123-35

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 7 lines to the page in bold kufic script, written with black ink, brown ink, red ink, black ink, blue ink, and green ink. The leaves are 22 by 34 cm.

Known as the Mushaf al-Hadina (the Nurse’s Qur’an), it was commissioned by a former nurse of the Zaidi prince al-Mu’izz bin Badis, this is the largest and most magnificent example of a Zaidi Qur’an.

The kufic script style in which the Nurse’s Qur’an was written, is predominant with the eastern Islamic lands. A number of signed manuscripts in this style, dating from the late sixth to the tenth centuries, place the script in Mesopotamia, Persia (as evidenced by the calligraphic style of the Mu’izz bin Badis composition) and by the incomplete,.ht text area 24 by 16.5cm, approx., leaf: 12 by 25cm.

This leaf, together with the other leaves illustrated, was exhibited at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin during the Inlaid and Gold Exhibition (see Frasch and Kretzschmar, 2006, pp. 20-46, cat. 6). The manuscript is of high quality made in North Africa when Quraish production was at its apogee.

Other leaves from this Qur’an displaying the same strong aesthetic features have come to auction, including a leaf sold in these rooms 1 April 2009, lot 2; another bearing the illuminated heading of Surah al-Hage, sold in these rooms 1 April 2008, lot 11 and a leaf of the Sura Nahr sold in these rooms 24 October 2005, lot 3.

£16,000-20,000 €18,000-23,800

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3. A MONUMENTAL QUR'AN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT, NEAR EAST OR NORTH AFRICA, CIRCA 850-950 AD

TEXT: SURAH IBRAHIM (XXI), PART OF VERSE 10 TO PART OF VERSE 40

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 18 lines to the page written in kufic script in brown ink, tenth verse marked with a red circle, both sides with a line of text written vertically

Leaf: 55 by 40.5cm.

Parts of Verses 12 and 32 were accidentally omitted in the original text and have not been added at a later stage.

Not only is this Qur'an manuscript remarkable for its unusually large size, but also its sublime, unadorned simplicity. Only the tenth verses are marked with a red circle, while other marks such as the initial marks are only sporadic. Although the script of this folio is close to styles DJ and DXa in Darmstadt's classification (Darmstadt 1992, pp.44-45), although the all

terminal (y) are close to style C1, see pp.39-40, there are certain distinguishing marks which separate it from other examples of kufic script such as the thin tail of the terminal letter that drop below the line (see the letter r, for example, v.34: line 9, final word). The right spacing of words on the line and artistic resolution is reminiscent of several other Qur'an manuscripts in kufic script at the National Library in Tunisia (see De Carli in d'Albany, Paris, 1982, nos.354) and a folio published by Bernard Quaritch Ltd in 1988 (see The Qura Ş and Calligraphy: A Selection of Fine Manuscripts, London, 1988, nos.2).

Two other folios from the same manuscript were exhibited in the exhibition Art and Gold, Museum für Identische Kunst, Berlin, 2006, and published in the accompanying catalogue of the same name (see M. Fisch & U. Kalszewski, 2006, pp.39-57). A further leaf can be seen in Bernard Quaritch, pp.79 nos.62. It has been sold in the works of art on gold bindings, 1 September 2009, lot 38, 24 October 2008, lot 7-9, 19 April 2008, lot 14 and 24 October 2007, lot 36.

£35,000-35,000 £45,000-45,000

4. A QUR'AN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT ON VELLUM FROM THE MUSNAF AL-MADINAH, THE "NURSE'S QUR'AN", COPIED BY 'ALI AL-WARRAQ, QAIRAWAN, NORTH AFRICA, 410 AH/1020 AD

TEXT: SURAH AN-Â'AM (VII) PARTS OF VS. 122-35

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 5 lines to the page written in bold and angular kufic script, verses and dialetics in red, blue and green.

See catalogues entry for lot 2.

£30,000-30,000 £35,000-35,000

13 | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CONDITION REPORTS AT SOTHEBYS.COM
A QUR'AN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT, NEAR EAST OR NORTH AFRICA, CIRCA MID-9TH CENTURY AD

TEXT: SURAH AL-BURJU (XXXV), VERSES 10-12

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 3 lines to the page in bold kufic script in brown ink, vocalization marked by red dots, verses marked by a triangular cluster made up of 6 gold dots, with both verse markers in gold comprising a rose with red dots, wide outer margins text area 23.8 by 16.5cm.

Leaf: 321 by 23cm.

Three Qur'an folios (another of which is included in this sale as lot 4) are recognizable for their strong and distinctive hand, as well as the exaggerated minarets that are present here. They are also distinguishable by the numbering of the folios at the top and bottom.