

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S TO AUCTION RARE COCKEREL WORTH OVER £1 MILLION



A gilt bronze fountainhead in the form of a cockerel, probably Spain, circa 10th-11th century, 17 in/43cm high (estimate: in the region of £1million)

Islamic Art and Manuscripts

Christie's London

29 April 2003

London – A very rare gilt-bronze cockerel estimated in the region of £1 million highlights the **Islamic Art and Manuscripts** sale to be held at Christie's London on Tuesday, 29 April. The sale of over 190 lots will offer a selection of Islamic pottery, metalwork, manuscripts and other decorative arts.

The undoubted highlight of this strong sale, the gilt bronze fountainhead in the form of a cockerel, is dated *circa* 10th-11th century and originated in Spain during the time of the Caliphate.

Animal figures of this size are very rare and unusual and this particular example is highly stylised yet incredibly animated. Never before seen in public, the figure has been in a noble European family's collection for over 200 years.

A remarkable medieval door from Seljuk Anatolia has recently been discovered by Christie's (estimate: £150,000-250,000). It was completely unrecognised and about to be made into a coffee-table before William Robinson, Christie's Islamic Art specialist, saw the item during a valuation and realised its significance. Inscribed with an Arabic proverb and engraved with intricate and finely carved arabesques over the entire surface, it is the exact pair to a door which currently resides in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin.

Other notable items in the sale include an unusually large Iznik pottery water bottle (estimate: £60,000-100,000), from Ottoman Turkey. A popular art form in the West, partly due to the brilliance of its colouring, the Iznik bottle can be dated to around 1570. Bottles of this period are extremely rare and with its brilliant colours and wonderful shape, it is a stunning example.

A beautifully illustrated and rare Arabic manuscript *Kalila wa Dimna* (estimate: £40,000-60,000), will also be offered. Made in Syria and dated to 1671, the manuscript is decorated with 55 miniature paintings in gouache, which accompany a set of animal stories similar in manner to Aesop's fables. Also featured is a rare Qur'an (estimate: £100,000-150,000) copied by Sheikh Hamdullah, one of the most famous Ottoman Turkish calligraphers, which dates from the late 15th century and was formerly in the possession of the mother of the 19th century Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz.

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's website at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors:

Viewing

The sale lots will be on view at Christie's King Street from 24 April to 28 April 2003.