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Sotheby's To Sell Original Accounts of the Hajj Dating Back to 1904, Together With Rare Early Photographs and Books on Makkah and Madinah



-- Natural History, Travel, Atlases and Maps, 13 November, 2008 --

SOTHEBY'S London is delighted to announce the sale on 13 November, 2008, of four rare, early accounts of the Hajj in its sale of Natural History, Travel, Atlases and Maps. These unique eyewitness accounts in manuscript, diaries, printed books create a detailed understanding from four individual perspectives of both the journey of a pilgrim at the end of the 19th/ early 20th century and of the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah.

The highlight of the sale is a rare and richly detailed account of the Arabian Peninsula and the Hajj by celebrated photographer Muhammad 'Ali Effendi Sa'oudi (lot 117, est. £40,000-60,000*). This well-preserved record, comprised of his handwritten travel diaries and photographs (shown above and overleaf), has never been published or sold at auction, and provides a richly detailed account of a pilgrim's experiences in the early 20th century. Sa'oudi undertook the Hajj twice in the company of the Amir al-Hajj, General Ibrahim



Rifat Pasha; Richard Fattorini, Specialist in Sotheby's Books and Manuscripts department, comments, "From this privileged position he was able to observe the formidable challenges involved in organizing the world's greatest pilgrimage as well as his own experiences of the journey, describing people, places, incidents, and the religious customs of Makkah and Madinah".

Also included in the sale is an earlier and extremely rare book on the Hajj by the first photographer of Makkah and Madinah, Muhammad Sadiq Bey, (right, lot 115, est. £4,000-6,000). An important pioneer in the history of Arabian photography and exploration, Sadiq Bey's first edition contains a wealth of information in Arabic as well as photographs of the Holy Cities from as early as 1880.



Another account in the sale is by Dr Salih Subhi, again containing photographs after Sadiq Bey, in June 1894 (left, lot 122, est. £2,000-3,000) as well as a rare early photograph of Makkah by celebrated Indian photographer Abdul Ghaffar (lot 121, est. £1,500-2,000).

The earliest-known photographs of Muscat, Oman, feature as part of a remarkable collection of very rare photographs (right, lot 101, est. £20,000-30,000). Adding to the group of photograph's uniqueness is the presence of steamships in the composition, since naval images are rarely found from this early date. The photographs date from 1859-60 when the steamship HMS Punjaub, clearly depicted, was in Muscat, during Zanzibar's struggle for independence from Oman.



*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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