

For Immediate Release

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**THE FINEST REPOSITORY OF T.E. LAWRENCE IN PRIVATE HANDS
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK**

The Spiro Family Collection Part II

Explorers and Adventurers including T.E. Lawrence and His Circle

February 26, 2004

New York – On February 26, Christie's New York, America's prime auctioneer in the Books and Manuscripts field, will present the second part of The Spiro Family Collection. In December last year, the British manuscripts of the collection were sold with resounding results at Christie's London, establishing a world auction record for a letter by Lord Nelson. This year, Christie's is proud to highlight the second theme of the collection: explorers and adventurers. Besides offering important documents by 19th century explorers such as David Livingstone and writings related to the Palestine issue, the sale will also present an impressive array of T.E. Lawrence material, showcasing what is widely regarded as the most significant selection of Lawrence documents still in private hands.

From an early age, Harry Spiro was passionately interested in the history of the Middle East, especially the history of Palestine and this inevitably made his paths cross with the legendary T.E. Lawrence. Over the years, Harry and his wife raided the auction houses, searching for the most important Lawrence material and slowly building an extraordinary collection. The group of documents related to T.E. Lawrence includes highly important association and presentation copies and correspondence between Lawrence and his contemporaries, many of which were amongst the most influential politicians and men of letters of their time.

*One of those indisputable masterpieces of modern literature, T.E. Lawrence's majestic *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, saw the light of day in different stages. The first draft, written in 1919, was stolen from Lawrence at Reading Station and a second draft finished in 1920 was so unsatisfactory to the author that he in all likelihood burned it. A third version was written in 1921-1922 and this time Lawrence proceeded with the project and the work was ready to go through several phases of revision, both by Lawrence himself and a select hand-picked group of friends. The copy offered is Lawrence's own working proof of the subscriber's edition of *Seven Pillars* (estimate: \$80,000-120,000) and one of a set of only nine. Just before leaving for India in 1926, T.E. Lawrence entrusted this copy with Charlotte Shaw, George Bernard Shaw's wife, asking her to send it to him. On his return in 1929, he gave this copy back to her, writing in a letter "Of course you should have the cut-down *S(even) P(illars)* ... You were one of the architects." In 1926, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was published privately in a limited edition of only 170 copies. Of this rare edition, the Spiro Family Collection boasts 21 copies and 6 of them will be presented in the sale (estimates ranging from \$30,000 to \$120,000).*

*A great example of a correspondence between kindred spirits, is Lawrence's letter written on April 4, 1927 from Karachi where he was in the RAF service, to Apsley Cherry-Gerrard (estimate: \$8,000-12,000). Cherry-Gerrard accompanied Scott on his last expedition to the South Pole and following his return to civilization wrote *The Worst Journey in the World*, his account of the tragic adventure. Lawrence mentions his admiration for Cherry-Gerrard and his book and describes life at the RAF post in Karachi.*

*The admiration of one man for another is also the theme of a further highlight, Churchill's letter to T.E. Lawrence in which he expresses his delight and excitement after having read Lawrence's *Seven Pillars* (estimate: \$10,000-15,000). The great statesman is nearly beside himself with awe and writes: "I think your book will live with '*Gulliver's Travels*' and '*Robinson Crusoe*'."*

Another epoch and another continent characterize David Livingstone's explorations but it is the same adventurous passion that shines through in his dense and highly detailed account of his explorations in Central Africa rendered in an autograph letter to Col. R. Playfair (possibly the Consul-General of Algeria) and his second-in-command John Kirk (then Consul of Zanzibar)(estimate: \$18,000-24,000). In this 1,200-words-long letter, written in November 1870 from Bambare in the cannibal country of Manyema, Livingstone describes the multitude of issues he faced in Central Africa, ranging from torn feet to the plunder of his provisions.

Further highlights include manuscripts relating to Palestine such as an important autograph letter signed from Chaim Weizmann to General Clayton, furnishing an analysis of the state of world Zionism after the Balfour Declaration (estimate: \$8,000-12,000) and a letter signed by Feisal I to General Clayton, administrator of occupied Palestine regarding his meeting with Chaim Weizmann (estimate: \$5,000-7,000). Other explorers' documents include writings by Sir Richard Burton, Sir Samuel Baker and General Charles George Gordon.

Auction: The Spiro Family Collection Part II

*Explorers and Adventurers Including T.E. Lawrence
And His Circle*

February 26 at 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

February 21 - 26

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*Images available on request
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