

For Immediate Release
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WRITING HISTORY

- CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION OF HANDWRITTEN MANUSCRIPTS TO BE SEEN ON THE MARKET IN A GENERATION

The Albin Schram Collection of Autograph Letters
Monday 3 July 2007, King Street

London – Christie's will offer the most comprehensive collection of handwritten letters to be seen on the market for a generation on 3 July 2007. *The Albin Schram Collection of Autograph Letters*, a personal and private collection assembled over a period of 30 years by the late Albin Schram, was kept in the drawers of a filing cabinet in his home, its existence almost unknown even to his family. It includes 570 lots of handwritten manuscripts by many of the most notable figures of European history from the 13th to the 20th centuries including Lord Byron, Winston Churchill, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth I, Sigmund Freud, Gandhi, Napoleon, Sir Isaac Newton, Oliver Cromwell, Claude Monet, Oscar Wilde and Charlotte Brontë. The auction will be offered through 5 sections; *History, Literature, Art, Science and Philosophy* and *Music and Theatre*. The sale is expected to realise in the region of £2 million with individual estimates ranging from £500 to £120,000.

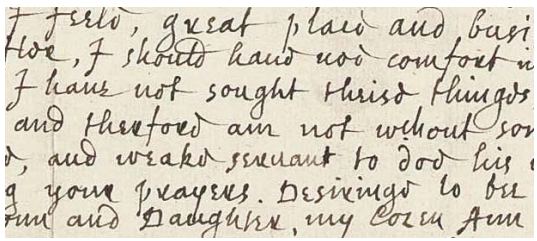


History

This section is highlighted by an exceptionally rare and early love letter written by **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821) to Josephine, Viscomtesse de Beauharnais, his future wife. One of only three known correspondences addressed from Napoleon to Josephine before they were married after a passionate affair of just 3 months, this letter was written following a heated argument the previous evening, traditionally thought to have been a result of his enquiries into Josephine's wealth held in family estates in the West Indies. Josephine accused Napoleon of loving her not for herself, and his touching reply admits his having been angry and declares his love. Napoleon signs off the letter "Je te donne trois baisé – un sur ton coeur, un sur ta bouche un sur tes yeux" (I send you three kisses – one on your heart, one on your mouth and one on your eyes). The letter is expected to realise £30,000-50,000 when it is offered at Christie's on 3 July.



A letter by the hand of **Oliver Cromwell** (1599-1658) dated 17 June 1650 in which he denies any personal ambition is expected to realise £10,000-15,000 *illustrated next page*. Written in Alnwick the year after the



execution of Charles I, as Cromwell headed north to Scotland in order to fight the Scottish supporters of Charles II, he states that *'I have not sought these things. Truly I have been called to them by the Lord and therefore am not without some good assurance that Hee will inable his poore worrne, and weake servant to doe his will, and to fulfill my generation.'* Another highlight of this section is a letter in French

from **Elizabeth I** (1533-1603) to Henry IV of France, in which the Queen acts with great diplomacy towards the King having granted the French ambassador to England permission to extend his stay by 2 months. Thought to have been written in the 1590s, after the defeat of the Spanish Armada and while England, France and the Dutch Republic were collectively fighting the Spanish, the letter is expected to realise £12,000-18,000.

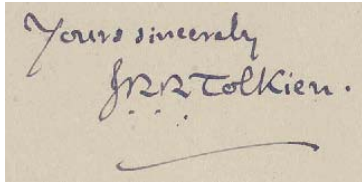
Further highlights of this section include a rare early letter from the 16 year old **Winston Churchill** (1874-1965) to his mother in which he claims *'I am getting on alright and am learning lots every day'* (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and a letter from **Mohandas Gandhi** (1869-1948) written 19 days before his assassination and pleading for toleration of Muslims in the newly-partitioned India (estimate: £9,000-12,000). An unpublished manuscript by **Jean Calvin** (1509-1564) offers a glimpse at the influential Reformer's compassionate side following the attempted suicide of a subject (estimate: £15,000-20,000). In this deposition to the authorities of Geneva written after the event, Calvin avoids condemning Jean Vachat, despite his beliefs, and offers the possibility of divine forgiveness. Other figures represented in this section include **Peter the Great, Ataturk, Henry III of France, Henry IV of France, Louis XIII, Empress Josephine of France, the Duke of Wellington** and **Martin Luther**.

Literature

This section is led by an exceptional letter by **John Donne** (1572-1631), the renowned Jacobean poet. Considered to be the finest manuscript by his hand in existence, and the first to appear on the market since 1970, it is a touching letter of condolence written to Lady Kingsmill the day after the death of her husband on 26 October 1624. Donne's poignant and sensitive condolences suggest that we should not presume to contest God's actions *'although we could direct him to do them better'*. The letter is expected to realise £80,000-120,000.

An extremely rare letter from **Alexandr Pushkin** (1799-1837) is one of only two letters by the Russian poet and author to appear at auction in over 30 years (estimate: £50,000-80,000). Dated 1831, the letter is written to Baron E. Rosen who was Editor of the almanac *Altsiona*, to which Pushkin was a regular contributor. Pushkin was eager to read Rosen's preface to his great work *Boris Godunov* and states that he cannot offer any short works for publication as he is occupied by the imminent publication of the third edition of his poems. This section of the sale will also offer an entertainingly scathing letter from **Charlotte Bronte** (1816-1855) who acknowledges the receipt of a parcel of newspaper and magazine reviews in lively fashion (estimate: 20,000-30,000). After criticizing Lady Morgan's *Women and her Master*, describing her style as very pompous, Bronte goes on to criticize male critics from *Spectator* and *Athenaeum*, stating that *'when called on to criticize works of imagination – they stand in the position of deaf men required to listen to music – or blind men to judge of painting. The Practical their minds can grasp – of the Ideal they know nothing'*.

Another highlight is a letter from **J.R.R. Tolkien** (1892-1973) to Pauline Baynes, his chosen illustrator, in which he makes reference of having completed work on *The Lord of the Rings*. Writing his annoyance at the restrictions of the illustrations imposed by publishers, and at the shrinking of those in his book *Farmer Giles*, Tolkien says that he hopes Baynes will illustrate his latest work. *'I am hoping soon to get some larger works published, and in a more ample fashion.... One, a long romance in sequel to The Hobbit, is finished after some years of work, and is being typed.'* It is offered with an estimate of £3,000-4,000. The complete draft of *'Historia del Tango'*, the celebrated essay by the Argentine writer **Jorge Luis Borges** (1899-1986), carries an estimate of £20,000-30,000 and *On the Battle of Sherrifmuir between the Duke of Argyle and the Earl of Mar*, a handwritten poem by Scottish poet **Robbie Burns** (1759-1796) which includes a number of scored-out lines and corrections, is expected to realise £15,000-25,000. Other figures represented in this section include **Lord Byron**, **Percy Shelley**, **Fanny Burney**, **Oscar Wilde**, **Baudelaire**, **Rimbaud**, **Frederico Lorca**, **Charles Dickens**, **Ernest Hemingway**, **T.S. Elliott**, **James Joyce**, **Graham Greene**, **William Wordsworth** and **Goethe**.

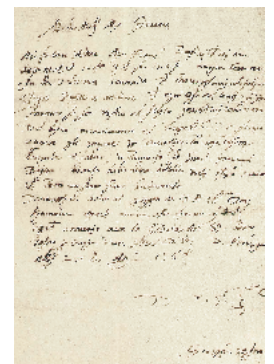


Art

This section is led by an illustrated letter by **Francisco de Goya y Lucientes** (1746-1828). Having returned from visiting his great friend Martin Zapater y Claveria in Zaragoza, Goya returned to Madrid, where he was the official artist to the King, and found that his son had been taken ill. The present letter was written to Zapater immediately after Goya's return, and he writes in Spanish *'the highly praised handsomeness of my little son had disappeared and in its place was a monstrosity completely covered with pox blisters. Can you imagine how I felt?'* The letter includes drawings in pen and ink of a heart at the end of a head and of a tiny figure, representing the artist (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

Three letters written by **Claude Monet** (1840-1926) during the second of his three visits to London between 1899 and 1901 are being offered as one lot with an estimate of £5,000-7,000. Monet was working on his series of *Views of the Thames* from a room at St. Thomas's Hospital on the south bank of the river. The present letters were written to his wife on embossed paper from The Savoy Hotel in February 1901 and recount his frustration at the fog which is delaying his work.

In an unpublished letter by **Giorgio Vasari** (1511-1574) to his friend Giovanni Caccini, the artist and biographer says that the following day he is to visit to Duke Cosimo I de Medici, the great patron of 16th century Florence (estimate: £7,000-10,000). Vasari is to be accompanied by Don Vincenzo Borghini, prior of the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence and a noted artistic advisor. The purpose of the visit was most probably to discuss the decoration of the *Salone del Cinquecento* in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, which was originally to have been decorated with frescoes by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo but was instead completed by Vasari some years later. Further highlights in this section include a rare letter by the hand of **Gian Lorenzo Bernini** (1598-1680), the greatest sculptor of the 17th century, in which the artist pleads for a Cardinal to approach Domenico Albani, a patron who has not paid him for two years (estimate: £7,000-10,000), and an autograph letter by **Paul Gauguin** (1848-1903) who is writing to fellow artist Emile Bernard to say that he has just received a letter from Vincent Van Gogh (estimate: £5,000-8,000). Other figures represented in this section include



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Egon Schiele, Angelica Kauffman, Henri Matisse, Edvard Munch, Toulouse-Lautrec, René Magritte, Paul Klee and Piet Mondrian.

Science and Philosophy

This section of the sale is led by a handwritten manuscript by **Sir Isaac Newton** (1643-1727), often referred to as the greatest of all scientists, in which he discusses his thoughts regarding the theory of gravity and the structure of the universe, comparing the classical views of Plutarch, Aristotle and Pluto and illustrating the breadth of his learning (estimate: £30,000-50,000). The only surviving letter from the English philosopher **Thomas Hobbes** (1588-1679) to the poet Edmund Waller is expected to realise £14,000-18,000. Written in France in 1645, while Waller was in exile following his Royalist plot against the Government, Hobbes expresses his delight at Waller's wish to translate his seminal work *De Cive* and ponders how his friend is passing the time, suggesting that *'I beleeeve you passe much of yours (time) in meditating how you may to your Contentment and without blame passe the seas'*.

Further highlights of this section include a letter in German from **Albert Einstein** (1879-1955) to his friend Paul Habicht dated 1935 in which he talks of the good aspects of living in the United States, including that people are given more space and that he can settle by a quiet bay and sail his little boat (estimate: £7,000-10,000), and a letter written in German by **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900) in which he states his confidence that his writing will endure (estimate: £5,000-8,000). Other figures represented in this section include **Sigmund Freud, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, Alexandr von Humboldt and Karl Jung.**

Music and Theatre

This section is led by a rare handwritten manuscript by **Georg Philipp Telemann** (1681-1767). In his lifetime, Telemann became the most famous of composers, even more so than his contemporary Johann Sebastian Bach, and he is still regarded today as the most prolific having written over 3,000 works. However, his autograph manuscripts are rare and this example, which includes the text for the cantata *Meinen Jesum will ich lieben*, is expected to realise £17,000-20,000. Further highlights include a letter from **Claude Debussy** (1862-1918) to his friend Pierre Louys (estimate: £1,500-2,000) and a letter from **David Garrick** (1717-1779), the renowned actor and playwright of the 18th century, to Henri-Louis Cain, the French actor, in which he invites his friend to visit him in England in order to avoid a dispute which was engulfing the court and leading actors of France (estimate: £2,000-3,000). Other figures represented in this section include Charles Burney, **Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert, Richard Wagner, Igor Stravinsky, Glenn Gould and Franz Liszt.**

Albin Schram (1926-2005)



Albin Schram was born in Prague in 1926 to Austrian parents, both of whom were from established Austrian industrial families. Having been to school in Prague and then Bavaria, he was conscripted into the German *Wehrmacht* in 1943. After being wounded and captured in service towards the end of the Second World War, he was taken to a prisoner of war camp in Kaliningrad, Russia. In the summer of 1945, Schram escaped and made the incredible journey to Austria via Berlin and West Germany. He studied Law at the University of Vienna, progressing to a Doctorate of Law, and was active in the Ministry of

Justice in Vienna and in banks in Germany and Switzerland. In later life, he devoted himself to private studies in legal history. He began collecting autograph letters in 1973, assembling an exceptional and comprehensive private collection which was almost unknown to his family and housed in the drawers of a filing cabinet at his home in Switzerland. Albin Schram died in Lausanne, Switzerland in 2005.

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

- *The Albin Schram Collection of Autograph Letters* will be on view at Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London from 29 June to 2 July 2007.

- Since 1766, Christie's has established a rich history of selling books and manuscripts at auction; indeed, James Christie himself oversaw the sale of Dr. Johnson's library in 1785. Christie's now holds the world record for any manuscript (Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Hammer* which sold in New York on 11 November 1994 for \$30.8 million) as well as the top 5 prices for any printed book. Christie's international team of specialists based in London, New York, Paris and Milan offer books and manuscripts of universal interest, from first editions of Harry Potter to the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, and with estimates starting from £150. Christie's also stage a number of highly successful and specialized theme sales including Rare Photobooks, Cartography, Natural History and Modern First Editions.