

287-year-old Hebrew manuscript goes on sale

November 22 2013

A 287-year-old manuscript handwritten in Hebrew and found in a cardboard box in a North Manchester garage, is to be auctioned this morning. The 18th Century richly illuminated Haggadah, used by Jews during the first two nights of Passover, is expected to fetch a six-figure sum at Adam Partridge Auctioneers in Macclesfield when it goes under the hammer in a major sale of antique Jewish books and silver.

Historian Dr Yaakov Wise, from the University of Manchester's Centre for Jewish Studies, is an expert in Haggadot and other ancient Jewish [manuscripts](#). Dr Wise helped identify and describe many of the ritual objects going under the hammer tomorrow. These include a solid silver etrog (citron) box, a rare kabbalistic signet ring, an early 19th century Scroll of Esther written on goatskin in the Yemen and sacred books, some dating back to the 16th century.

The handwritten text painted on goatskin vellum, was spotted at the home of a Jewish family who were clearing out unwanted goods from their Bury garage. The Haggadah tells the story of the Israelite exodus from Egypt and has been recited in Jewish homes annually for over 3,000 years. It dates back to 1726, and was created by the leading Jewish scribe of the time Aaron Wolf Herlingon, who later became the curator of Hebrew manuscripts at the Imperial Library in Vienna.

He said: "This amazing manuscript apparently arrived in Britain with refugees after it was smuggled out of Belgium at the beginning of World War II. It is a very rare example of a heavily ornate and superbly illustrated manuscript, made for the Oppenheimers who were private

bankers to the Emperors of Austria. A later member of the family married a Rothschild and the Haggadah moved across Europe to France and then to Belgium.

"A similar Haggadah by the same scribe achieved \$408,000 (£255,000) at auction in New York. This is the most important Haggadah to be found in the UK after the 'Rylands Haggadah' which is oldest Haggadah in Europe, from 13th century Spain, and is held within the special collections of the University's John Rylands Library. Last year the Rylands Haggadah went on a tour of the USA where it attracted large crowds at several museums."

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: 287-year-old Hebrew manuscript goes on sale (2013, November 22) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-11-year-old-hebrew-manuscript-sale.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.