

**Important Judaica at Sotheby's**

May 30, 2019

Now on Public View in New York  
In Sotheby's Newly-Reimagined and Expanded Galleries

**AUCTION 5 JUNE**

NEW YORK, 30 May 2019 – Sothebys New York sale of [Important Judaica](#) on 5 June offers a resplendent array of ceremonial silver and metalwork, Hebrew books and manuscripts and fine art. The sale is headlined by over 100 pieces of ritual silver and metalwork from The Serque Collection, which together chronicle more than five centuries of Jewish culture. Carefully assembled over the past four decades, the collection is rich in works with important provenance. The auction, which features works from across the globe, also features an important selection of American Judaica, including a collection of nearly 300 postcards from American Jewish hotels and resorts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the auction will include seven objects of fine silver from Central Synagogue, London, an important painting by renowned Jewish artist Isidor Kaufmann, and a rare miniature Yemenite Bible from medieval times. The exhibitions will be on public view in our York Avenue galleries beginning 30 May.

**THE SERQUE COLLECTION**

Spanning five centuries and many countries of Europe, North Africa and America, this exceptional 114 piece collection of ritual silver and metalwork stands out as one of the most prized collections of Judaica to come to auction in the last decade. The collection is led by The Sassoon Silver-Gilt Hanging Sabbath Lamp (estimate \$600/800,000) which belonged to two of the most important collectors of Judaica: Philip Salomons and Reuben D. Sassoon. Created by the famed Fürth silversmiths guild during the mid 18<sup>th</sup>-century, it is thought to be one of two left in private hands. Additional highlights include a Large German Silver Figural Hanukah Lamp from Frankfurt circa 1770 (estimate \$150/250,000), two pairs of silver Torah finials from the Bateman silversmith family in London (estimates range from \$70/120,000), and a German Parcel-Gilt Silver Torah Shield from Nuremberg in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (estimate \$60/80,000). Among several pairs of Finials, the ones from Hamburg circa 1688-9 are of exceptional rarity as Judaica from the 17th century has hardly survived to today (estimate \$300/400,000).

**IMPORTANT BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS**

A further selection of Judaica and Hebraica includes one of the only known pocket-size medieval Yemenite Bibles (estimate \$200/300,000). Dated to the second half to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and written in a clear, bold hand, the present work stands out both for its miniature format and for its staunch adherence to the Yemenite manuscript tradition.

The sale also features a newly-discovered Monumental Micrographic Biblical Plaque from 1859 (estimate \$50/70,000). Created by Levi David Van Gelder (1815-1878), it is one of only three known manuscripts in his unique artistic style. A Freemason, Van Gelder served as the Captain General of the Siloam Masonic Lodge in Chicago. The

present plaque incorporates several Masonic symbols, including the Anchor, the Flask, and an almond-shaped cartouche at top evoking the Eye of Providence. Also on offer is a magnificently illustrated Ketubah from the Greek island of Corfu (, estimate \$50/70,000). Elaborately decorated marriage contracts from Corfu rarely come to market, thus the present work from 1790, illustrating representations of the four seasons, is a superb witness to the traditions and artistry of an illustrious early modern Jewish community.

#### AMERICAN JUDAICA

Amongst the American Judaica is an important collection of nearly 300 postcards from American Jewish hotels and resorts, which serve as an artefact of Jewish leisure culture in America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (estimate \$7/10,000). The period between 1920 and 1970 constituted the golden age of Catskill Mountain bungalow colonies and hotels, when millions of Jews flocked to what came to be known as the 'Borscht Belt' or 'Jewish Alps' for weeks and even months at a time. The present lot comprises a vast array of picture postcards depicting the grounds and amenities available at the resorts, including The Concord, The Flagler, Kutscher's and Grossinger's.

Additional highlights include a "mansion-size" silver Mezuzah engraved with a complex scene of Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law (estimate \$15/25,000), and an extraordinary Spice Tower with revolving figures of Moses, Elijah, Aaron and King David (estimate \$25/35,000) – both by New York's Ilya Schor during the late 1950's.

#### PAINTINGS

The sensitive Portrait of a Rabbi with a Young Pupil shows celebrated Jewish painter Isidor Kaufmann at the height of his creative powers (estimate \$300/500,000). One of the most important Jewish painters, Kaufmann gained wide recognition in Vienna during his lifetime. Renowned for his ravishing detail, this double portrait reflects the deep spirituality of a centuries-old tradition which the artist witnessed during his summer trips to Galicia and Eastern Poland.

#### SILVER

Further to the Serque collection, the Silver portion of the sale is highlighted by an exceptional collection of English Judaica, being offered by the Central Synagogue, London. This West End Synagogue has played an important part in the life and activities of the Jewish community in London and serves as a proud landmark to Anglo-Jewish history. The seven-piece collection is led by A Pair of Large English Parcel-Gilt Silver Torah Finials from 1764 by Edward Aldridge (estimate \$120/180,000) which were included in the famed collection of Philip Salomons – brother of the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London – who was one of the first collectors of antique Judaica in England.