

Earliest Hebrew Bible Sells for \$38M at Sotheby's, Now Headed Home to Israel

The auction house Sotheby's recently sold a 1,100-year-old Hebrew Bible for \$38 million in New York. It is one of the world's oldest surviving biblical manuscripts and brought the second-most highest price at auction for a historical document.

The 26-pound book, whose five-inch stack of parchment contains 396 pages, sold following a five-minute battle between two bidders vying mainly over the telephone. The final price, with Sotheby's fees, fell short of breaking the record currently held by a \$43.2 million copy of the U.S. Constitution bought by billionaire Ken Griffin two years ago, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Leicester sold for \$31 million in 1994 or around \$60 million in today's dollars.

Known as The Codex Sassoon, the leather-bound, handwritten volume containing a nearly complete Hebrew Bible, was purchased by former U.S. Ambassador to Romania Alfred H. Moses on behalf of the American Friends of ANU and donated to ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, where it will join the museum's collection, Sotheby's said in a statement.

This ancient copy of the Bible is believed to have been put together sometime between 880 and 960 AD. The auction house's completed auction page lists it as "Circa 900" and as "The earliest most complete Hebrew Bible."

Jaqui Safra, the Bible's seller, paid to have carbon dating done to try to definitively date the manuscript's origin. Testing confirmed the book's dates to the late ninth century

or early 10th century, Sotheby's said.

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