EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Brief Description of item(s)

An autograph manuscript page from *On the Origin of Species* written in the hand of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), 1858-59

1 quarto leaf (224 x 209 mm), ink and graphite on blue wove paper, numbered “324” in top-right corner by Darwin

Condition: Good, very slight smudging (based on assessor’s contact with similar pages of this manuscript and from the Auction description/illustration)

2. Context

Provenance: The Darwin family – Charles Darwin; his daughter Henrietta Litchfield (1843-1927); her niece Margaret Keynes, nee Darwin (1890-1984); thence by descent

Bibliography/Literature

Browne, Janet (2007) *Darwin's Origin of Species: A Biography*. London: Atlantic.

Darwin, Charles (1859) *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. London: John Murray.

*Darwin Manuscripts (Digitised notes on Origin)". Cambridge Digital Library. Retrieved 25 November 2018 (*https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/darwin_mss/1)

van Wyhe, John (2008) *Darwin: The Story of the Man and His Theories of Evolution.* London: Andre Deutsch

3. Waverley criteria 1

The manuscript leaf meets **Waverley criteria 1**. It is a paginated manuscript leaf (p.324) in the hand of Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) the English naturalist, biologist and geologist and arguably one of the most influential and recognisable figures in human history. Darwin’s ground breaking scientific work and theory of evolution was first published in 1859. Titled *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life,* the first printing of 1,250 copies was oversubscribed and sold out on the first day.

On the Origin of Species was the first of three major works by Darwin in which he sought to explain the diversity of life and the modification of evolutionary descent through natural selection. Regarded as the foundation of evolutionary biology, it caused an intellectual revolution and to this day remains one of the

most important books ever published especially when measured in terms of its impact on humanity.

The page forms part of his conclusion for Chapter 8 which focuses on hybridism and was published on pages 277-78 of *On the Origin of Species*. It is the only substantial part of Chapter 8 to survive. This manuscript page was formerly on deposit at Cambridge University Library prior to sale (DAR 185: 142).

Darwin worked on his seminal manuscript at his home in Down, Kent, between 1858 and 1859. Now preserved by English Heritage, Down House is internationally recognised as a significant place in the history of science and evolution and so this page of manuscript not only represents an excellent example of Darwin's working practice - which was to revise continually and refine his prose - but as a physical manifestation holds significant association to a place of outstanding significance.

As a result of his working practice, Darwin often made stylistic changes in the proof stage. This manuscript page includes corrections and two inserted passages and so like other known manuscript pages differs substantially from what was eventually published in the first printing of *On Origin of Species* making it unique.

DETAILED CASE

1. Detailed description of item(s) if more than in Executive summary, and any comments.

The text Darwin wrote on this manuscript page represents a key point in his argument for natural selection whilst further demonstrating his profound insight into the nature of life on earth. It reads:

"*... this general & perfect fertility surprising, when we remember how liable we are to argue in a circle on this point; & when we remember that the greater number of varieties have been produced under domestication by man's selection of mere external differences & not of differences in the reproductive system. In all respects, besides fertility, there is a closer general resemblance between hybrids & mongrels. Finally, then, the facts too briefly given in this chapter, do not seem to me opposed, but rather to support the view that there is no fundamental difference between Species & Varieties*."

There is a pencil note in the hand of Henrietta Darwin giving an incorrect reference to the printed text, erased pencil mathematical notes on the verso, assumed to be in the hand of G. H. Darwin also present.

There are 53 leaves of *On the Origin* manuscript known to survive; 45 manuscript pages of the draft, 7 slips with lettered inserts to various pages (of which this is one) and 1 fair copy page. Of the 45 full sheets, 26 sheets form part of the Charles Darwin Papers in the Cambridge University Library that were presented to the institution in 1942. The majority of the remaining pages

were distributed by Leonard Darwin, one of Charles Darwin's sons, acting in consort with his sister Henrietta either to other members of the family or to various scientists and scientific institutions. Leonard in particular gave sheets to fellow supporters of the eugenics movement in Britain and the United States - 5 pages are held by the Natural History Museum, London. The remaining sheets were sold on the open market to collectors and major libraries.

It is considered to be one of only eleven leaves of the working manuscript of *On the Origin of Species* to remain in private hands (**See**: Sotheby's http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2018/english-literature-sale-l18404/lot.357.html).

(**See** Darwin Manuscripts Online for an account of the history and holdings of Darwin's extant scientific papers https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/darwin_mss/1).

2. Detailed explanation of the outstanding significance of the item(s).

This manuscript page by Darwin from his draft of *On the Origin of Species* in its physical form is far more significant than the information conveyed by the words written on it. The historical/research value of the text may not be as significant as it tells us things that we know or that we could glean from a digital copy such as that available through Cambridge University Library's Darwin Manuscripts portal; but it could be argued that it holds evidential value as we are able to gain a greater understanding about how Darwin considered and re-worked his seminal thesis. Digital copies can save/show textual content but it is the historical importance in the material and physical manifestation of the insertion which gives it its outstanding significance.

This manuscript page also needs to be considered for its visual and communal value which in both cases can be considered as extremely significant. This significance and importance lies in its tangibility, how it makes one feel, and not necessarily just to its intellectual content. It represents a direct and physical connection to Darwin and his pioneering work and in that physical form, for instance being placed on public display, provides a springboard from which the public can reflect on this iconic man - the greatest observer in the history of science and the world-changing impact his book had not only on our understanding of the natural world but also on religion, history and society.

Context is everything. For example, if a member of the public were to look at a handwritten leaf of *On the Origin* at Darwin's house, it creates an incredibly powerful impression, far more than a published edition. As Darwin wrote his original draft at home in Down House, this piece of manuscript represents a tangible link between an historic property and the life of the man who lived and worked there. In such cases, digital or surrogate copies do not suffice.

A further consideration is that this manuscript insertion is one of last known extant manuscript pages of Darwin's working manuscript to exist in a private collection. From a cultural and heritage perspective, to permanently export this manuscript leaf from the UK would be a misfortune as this would, in effect, disperse one of the final pieces of this historical manuscript of outstanding significance that permanently changed the world's way of thinking about the natural world and its inhabitants.

The assessor believes that the opportunity to retain this manuscript leaf which is so closely connected with our history and national life would not only ensure its future preservation for the nation but retain the potential for it to contribute to the continued influence of contemporary thinking and literature of the Darwinian legacy for future generations.