

FOR LIMITED RELEASE
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Strong Showing of Early Printed Books at Swann Galleries March 9

New York— On Thursday, March 9, Swann Galleries offered a morning auction of Early Printed, Medical, Scientific & Travel Books, with examples from each section of the sale represented in the top 20 lots.

A leaf of the Gutenberg Bible, 1455, topped the sale. The remnant of the first book ever printed was hinged in a 1921 folio of *A Noble Fragment; being, A Leaf of the Gutenberg Bible* by A. Edward Newton. The leaf contains the text of Ecclesiasticus 16:14-18-29; it was purchased by a collector for \$52,500*. Tobias Abeloff, the Senior Specialist for Early Printed Books at Swann, noted "While individual leaves from the Gutenberg Bible come to auction with some regularity, they are still sought after, considering the unlikelihood of a complete or even fragmentary copy coming on the market."

Nearly all of the offered bibles sold, including the first edition of the Geneva Bible, the most popular bible in Elizabethan England, which was printed in 1560; it sold for \$22,500. The first English-language edition of Hans Holbein's *The Images of the Old Testament*, 1549, with 94 woodcut illustrations by the artist, sold for \$11,875.

Premier examples of English printing included a run of first editions by David Hume, led by *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, 1748, which brought \$4,500, and the 1751 *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, which was purchased for \$4,000, double its high estimate.

From the Medical and Scientific sections of the sale came an archive of 21 letters from Harvey Cushing to Agnes Willard Bartlett, the great-niece of Elisha Bartlett, which was purchased for \$13,750. *Expositio super Antidotario Mesue*, 1488, by Christophorus Georgius de Honestis, the second edition of a late 14th-century commentary on the Antidotarium ascribed to the Baghdad court physician Mesuë the Younger, tripled its high estimate to sell for \$15,000.

The sale featured a strong selection of travel books, led by Jan Nieuhoff et al's narratives of the Dutch East India Company's missions to China, titled *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China*, 1671, which sold for \$7,500.

Each of the eight offered manuscripts found buyers, with the highlight being a collection of 15 illustrated prayers by Charles V of Spain, titled *Oraciones de los SS. Mystérios Gloriosos y Dolorosos de la Santissima Virgen Maria*, 1676, which was purchased for \$9,375.

The next sale of Early Printed Books at Swann Galleries will be held in Fall 2017. For more information, contact Tobias Abeloff at tabeloff@swann galleries.com.