

CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT | LONDON | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 4 JULY 2022

CLASSIC WEEK

Christie's *Valuable Books and Manuscripts* Auction

- Led by the earliest French printed Bible, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa*, Newton's *Opticks* and Fibonacci's *Liber Abaci*
- The Most Valuable Various Owner Sale for the Category to Date

Live Auction | 13 July 2022



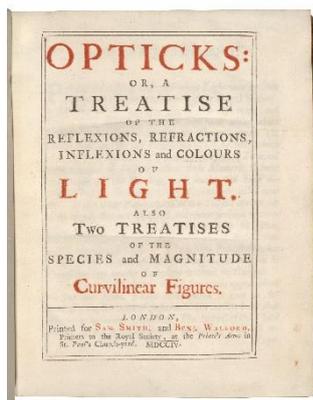
La bible historiée, Edited by Jean de Rély (c.1430-1499). Paris: Antoine Vérard, [between 8 May 1498 and 25 October 1499]. Estimate: £600,000–900,000

LONDON: Christie's [Valuable Books and Manuscripts](#) auction on 13 July is the most valuable various owner sale for the category to date, led by three extraordinary works: the Longleat copy of a 1499 *Bible historiée* on vellum, the first complete printed Bible in French; a deluxe copy of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa*, a foundation work of philosophy, theology and economics; and a presentation copy of Newton's *Opticks*, which revolutionised human understanding of light and colour (£400,000-600,000). The works will be on public display at Christie's London from 9 to 12 July, as part of Christie's Classic Week.

Highlighting the sale is a first edition of a complete French version of the Bible (estimate: £600,000-900,000), dating to 1499, printed on vellum, and extensively decorated and illuminated. The *Bible historiée* began as an adaptation and translation into French by Guyart

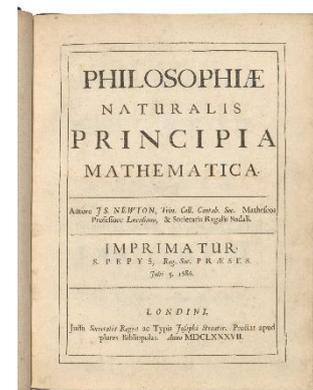
des Moulins in the 13th century of Petrus Comestor's 12th century *Historia scholastica*. This was continued through the 14th and 15th centuries until the *Bible historiée* became a full French version of the Bible. It is here printed for the first time, edited by Jean de Rély, confessor to Charles VIII to whom this first edition is dedicated. The present Longleat copy is the most complete of four known copies on vellum, and is the only one remaining in private ownership. The three institutional copies are the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, Bibliothèque municipale in Lyon and Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.

A further highlight of the sale is a deluxe vellum copy of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa, secunda secundae* (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Not only is the *Summa* considered one of the greatest works of philosophy and theology ever written, but in its exposition on ethics and morality, the *Secunda secundae* is recognised as one of the earliest works of economic thought. In it Aquinas considers the theory of private property, of a just price and usury. Influenced by Aristotle, Aquinas distinguished between just price and market price, condemned usury, and argued that the ownership of private property could and should benefit the most people.



Important science is at the heart of the sale with two first editions of Newton's most revered works. A first edition, first issue, of Newton's revolutionary work *Opticks* (estimate: £400,000-600,000), a treatise on light and colour, the book includes his work on the spectrum of sunlight, refraction of different colours, the colour circle, the rainbow, 'Newton's rings', and his invention of the reflecting telescope. This work is a presentation copy for Newton's close friend and disciple, the Swiss mathematician and natural philosopher Nicolas Fatio de Duiller, with only six presentation copies of the *Opticks* known to exist.

A first edition of Newton's *Principia* (estimate: £350,000-500,000) will also be offered. The *Principia* explains the universal physical laws of gravitation and motion which lie behind phenomena described by Newton's predecessors Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler. For the first time a single mathematical law could explain the motion of objects on earth as well as the phenomena of the heavens. Newton's scientific views were not seriously challenged until Einstein's theory of relativity and Planck's quantum theory, but his principles and methods remain essential for the solution of many scientific questions.

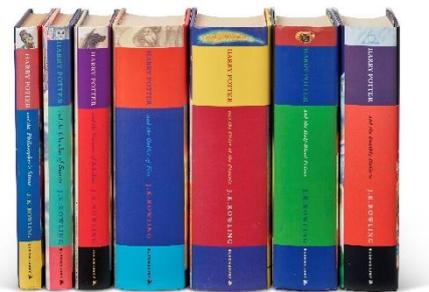


Also presented is a rare and important autograph manuscript in Newton's hand (estimate: £60,000-90,000), which offers a unique glimpse into the ancestry of one of the foremost influences in the field of mathematics and science, and childhood memories of his grandmother at Woolsthorpe Manor.



A 15th century manuscript of Fibonacci's *Liber Abaci*, a rare testament to the foundations of modern mathematics and algebra which introduced the Hindu-Arabic numbering system to the West (£300,000-500,000) will be offered. The manuscript was owned and bound by the one of the most important figures in the history of 19th century mathematics, Prince Baldassare Boncompagni.

A complete set of Harry Potter first editions, each signed or inscribed by J.K. Rowling (estimate: £100,000-150,000) is offered, with a portion of the sale proceeds to benefit the *Lumos Foundation*. The collection includes the very rare hardback first edition, first impression of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, with the 'wand' error on page 53 and the misspelling of 'Philosopher's' on the back cover. No other complete set including the rare first edition, first impression of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* has appeared at auction since 2014 (please find the dedicated press release [here](#)).



Natural history and cartography are represented with Besler's ravishing *Hortus Eystettensis* (estimate: £250,000-350,000) and the earliest pair of table globes on the market (estimate: £300,000-500,000).

The sale also includes 50 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, covering humanist texts, Books of Hours and alchemical treatises, led by a Parisian Bible once owned by John, Lord Lumley and William Cecil, chief advisor of Elizabeth I (estimate: £80,000-120,000). A sketchleaf from Mahler's 9th Symphony, manuscripts and relics from the heroic age of Antarctic Exploration, and a charming group of drawings by Quentin Blake sold to benefit Comic Relief will also be offered (please find the dedicated press release [here](#)).

Notes to Editors

Lot 241 | Livraria Lello has informed us that it intends to donate a portion of its sale proceeds to the Lumos Foundation, a charity that fights for every child's right to a family by transforming care systems around the world; Lumos is a charity registered in England and Wales with registered charity number 1112575. The amount of the donation will depend on the price for which the lot is ultimately sold but, by way of illustrative example, we understand that if the lot is sold at the mid-estimate, Livraria Lello will donate £25,000.

About Christie's

Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).

Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. In recent years, Christie's has achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction ([Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi*](#), 2017), for a 20th century artwork ([Andy Warhol's *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn*](#), 2022) and for a work by a living artist ([Jeff Koons' *Rabbit*](#), 2019). Christie's is also recognised as a reference for prestigious single owner collections, having auctioned 8 of the 10 most important collections in history.

Christie's [Private Sales](#) offers a seamless service for buying and selling art, jewellery and watches outside of the auction calendar, working exclusively with Christie's specialists at a client's individual pace.

Recent innovations at Christie's include groundbreaking sale of the first NFT for a digital work of art ever offered at a major auction house ([Beeple's *Everydays, March 2021*](#)), with the unprecedented acceptance of cryptocurrency as a means of payment. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the use of hologram technology to tour life-size 3D objects around the world, and the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.

Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.

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**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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