Early Printing

The First Important Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages

1. BARTHOLOMAEUS, Anglicus. *Liber de Proprietatibus Rerum*. Gothic type, 52 lines & headline to the page, double columns. Rubricated initials. 258 leaves, including the final blank. Small thick folio (277 x 200 mm.), cont. goatskin over wooden boards (minor wear & defects to binding which is a little wormed, single wormhole through text of first 25 leaves), panelled in blind, cont. paper label with author & title on upper cover, orig. clasps & catches (clasps repaired). Strasbourg: [Printer of the 1483 Jordanus de Quedlinburg (Georg Husner), 11 August] 1491.

   $55,000.00

Eleventh edition of the first important encyclopedia of the Middle Ages; “still important

This encyclopedia was immensely popular for more than three centuries. Divided into nineteen books, the contents are as follows: “(1) God; (2) angels and demons; (3) psychology; (4-5) physiology; (6) family life, domestic economy; (7) medicine; (8) cosmology, astrology; (9) time divisions; (10) form and matter, elements; (11) air, meteorology; (12) flying creatures; (13) waters and fishes, dolphins, whales; (14) physical geography; (15) political geography, (in 175 chapters; this contains a number of interesting remarks, notes on economic geography, etc.); (16) gems, minerals, metals; (17) trees and herbs; (18) animals; (19) color, odor, savor; food and drink, eggs; weights and measures; musical instruments.”–Sarton, II, p. 586.

“Book 16 contains 104 short chapters on as many mineral substances as earths, stone, ores, metals, salts, etc., as well as gemstones, the latter often given names that now defy identification of the materials concerned. Gemstones are alabaster, adamante, amethyst, agate, alabandina, beryl, carbunde, chrysoprase, chalcedony, chrysolite, rock crystal, coral carnelian, hematite, heliotrope, jet, jasper, hyacinth, pearl, marble, onyx, opal, prase, sapphire, emerald, sard, sardonyx, topaz, turquoise; very brief descriptions with comments on curious or medicinal lore associated with each.”–Sinkankas, Gemology, p. 70.

Bartholomew (fl. 13th cent.), studied at Oxford, Paris, and Magdeburg.

Very good copy, preserved in a box. This copy has extensive marginalia in a calligraphic hand in Books III–V and occasionally elsewhere by the writer who recorded his ownership on the inside front cover at Beyharting in 1551.

The First Printed Book on the Pulse

2. GILLES DE CORBEIL (or AEGIDIUS CORBOLIENSIS). De Pulsibus. [48] leaves, Gothic type, ca. 32 lines. Small 4to (210 x 150 mm.), 19th-cent. cloth-backed marbled boards, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Padua: M. Cerdonis, January 1484. $55,000.00

First edition of the first printed book on the pulse. The art of feeling the pulse dates back to legendary antiquity in both Greek and Chinese medicine and is still used as a scientific method of investigating the functioning of the heart.

De Pulsibus is a textbook composed in verse by the French physician and humanist Gilles de Corbeil (fl. 1200), the celebrated French physician who was a pupil of the school of Salerno and Montpellier and later went to Paris, where he was archiater to Philip Augustus and probably taught in the university. Called by Neuburger “the transalpine herald of the glory of the school of Salerno,” Gilles composed three important medical poems that amplified and paraphrased the entire Salernitan doctrine in Latin hexameters.

The first poem, on urine, appeared in print in 1483; it was considered the classical text on uroscopy until the end of the 16th century. The present work, on the pulse, appeared in 1484 and Gilles’ third work was on the virtues of compounded drugs. “The description of the
different kinds of pulse, methods of examining the patient, of studying the urine, advice about the behaviour of the physician, and invectives against the pharmacists are presented in facile and elegant form.”—Castiglioni, p. 316.

Gilles de Corbeil’s texts were “of great influence in transmitting the teachings of the school of Salerno.”—Stillwell 648.

The text contains the valuable commentary of Gentile da Foligno (d. 1348), the prominent professor of medicine at Bologna, Perugia, Siena, and Padua. He was the first European physician to perform a dissection on a human being. The editor was Avenantius de Camerino (15th-16th cent.).

Fine and large copy. Bookplate of Frederic Cheron.


First edition and a fine set of one of the very few surviving “imperial editions” printed with movable type in Japan. This enormous publication, by far the largest of the eight surviving “chokuhan” (imperial printings) and the only surviving “gen’na chokuhan” (imperial printing during the reign of Emperor Gomizunoo) is of very great rarity. The production of this large work was a very complex and difficult project, employing the recently imported technology of movable type from Korea.

The author Sahoyu Jiang (active 1360-68), compiled this collection of the writings of Chinese courtly scholars. Encouraging the preservation of Chinese traditions long valued by aristocrats, Emperor Gomizunoo continued his father’s project of printing volumes of literary classics with the present work, a collection of Confucian texts which were considered both an ethical and a literary legacy of the court. Today, this edition is the earliest record of the this collection as earlier Chinese printed editions are now lost.

“The earliest surviving books printed [in Korea] with movable type date from the late fourteenth century…During the invasion of the Korean peninsula undertaken by Toyotomi
Hideyoshi in the closing years of the sixteenth century...large numbers of printed books were looted, and printing type was removed from the Printing Office and taken to Japan...It appears that Korean type was immediately put to use to printed the text of the...Kobun kokyo (Classic of Filial Piety) in 1593, although no copies of this appear to have survived. In 1597, in the postface to another work printed in Japan with movable type, a monk who was present at Hideyoshi’s headquarters acknowledged that typography in Japan had come from Korea. It was not clear whether any Korean printing artisans came to Japan as well as a result of the invasion, but in any even the impact on Japan of Korean typography, both technologically and intellectually, was far greater than that of the Jesuit Mission Press, principally because the imported Korean typography was much closer to the centres of power in Japan than the increasingly precarious Jesuit missions.” –Kornicki, The Book in Japan, p. 129.

Emperor Go-Yozei, who nominally ruled Japan from 1586 to 1611, “displayed great enthusiasm for the new process, and not content with the original type brought back from Korea, ordered a new set of wooden type to be made. This was engraved between 1597 and 1602, and the books printed from this new type are generically known as choku-han, or ‘imperial printings.’ Indeed ‘imperial’ is a fitting description of these works, for they are among the finest unillustrated books ever produced in Japan. Not only was the typeface larger, but the best-quality paper and the finest ink were used to achieve effect. Very few choku-han works were actually printed between 1597 and 1603 [actually he means 1621], and if we exclude the 1593 edition of Kobun kokyo, almost all the titles were copies of Chinese philosophical classics...One other choku-han is known to have been printed by order of Emperor Go-Mino-o in 1621 [the successor to Emperor Go-Yozei], and that is the Horuien [the present work], although one or two other titles were printed and have been lost. All these works are considerable examples of the printer’s art and show how quickly the Japanese were able to make full and aesthetic use of movable type.” –Chibbett, The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration, p. 69.

At the time of the writing of the Hyde sale catalogue, it was believed that the present work was printed with copper type; the latest research has suggested that wooden type was used but there is no definitive conclusion.

Minor worming, carefully repaired.

From the Rokuoin Temple in Kyoto and the library of Donald and Mary Hyde (their sale, Christie’s NYC, 7 October 1988, lot 87). Preserved in two boxes.
The “Golden-Mouthed” Preacher

4. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Saint. *Homiliae super Johannem*. Translated by Franciscus Griffolinus (Aretinus). 279 leaves (of 280, without initial blank). 33 lines, Roman letter, 5-line initial “C” on [b]6r in gold with white vine stem decoration on a red, blue, & green ground, [b]7v with a 7-line gold initial “Q” with white vine stem decoration on a red, blue, green, & gold ground extending into upper & outer borders, 2- to 3-line initials supplied in blue. Folio (339 x 225 mm.), early 19th-cent. brown morocco (last leaf a little defective & stained at edges), sides richly decorated in gilt, spine richly gilt, a.e.g. Rome: Georgius Lauer for the Monastery of St. Eusebius, 29 October 1470. $95,000.00

First edition of this most attractive book, one of the first books from the fifth Roman press. It is dedicated to Cosimo de’ Medici. St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), Bishop of Constantinople, studied law and theology at Antioch. After living as a hermit in a cave for several years, he returned to Antioch where he became famous as a preacher, which earned him the name Chrysostom, or “golden-mouthed.” His great powers of oratory were directed especially to the instruction and moral reformation of the nominally Christian city of Antioch. His series of homilies, here printed, established his title as the greatest of the Christian expositors. The homilies combine a great facility for seeing the spiritual meaning of the author with an equal ability for immediate practical application. The translator, Franciscus Griffolinus (14518-83), was also known as Francesco Accolti. He was known as “le prince des jurisconsultes des son temps” and taught at many of the leading academies. He also translated for publication the letters of Phalaris and Diogenes Cynicus.

A fine copy preserved in a box. From the libraries of Sir John Hayford Thorold at Syston Park (sale: Sotheby’s, 16 Dec. 1884, lot 1040; John William Pease, and Lord Wardington, all with bookplates.

5. MAGNI, Jacobus. *Sophologium*. 219 leaves (the last two blank). 35 lines, spaces for initials with guide letters in red & occasionally in blue. Roman type. Small folio (280 x 205 mm.), cont. blindstamped calf over wooden boards (minor wear) by the Fraterherren from Hildesheim, two orig. clasps & catches. [Strasbourg: the “R-printer” (Adolf Rusch), about 1470-74].

First edition, and a fine copy in a contemporary binding, of a book which is now rare on the market. Jacobus Magni (or Jacques Legrand)(ca. 1365-1415), was a French Augustinian who flourished in Paris at the beginning of the 15th century. The *Sophologium* is an anthology of science and philosophy taken from ancient writers. This text enjoyed considerable popularity with thirteen editions in the 15th century.

This handsome book was printed by Adolf Rusch, the “R-printer,” the son-in-law of Strasbourg’s first printer Johann Mentelin. Rusch first introduced Roman types into Germany. For a long time he remained unidentified and was referred to as the “R-printer” from the peculiar form of that majuscule in his roman font.

A handsome and large copy. Occasional minor browning. 18th-century ownership inscription on first leaf.

Early Printing at the Negoro Temple;  
“Negoroban”

6. NEGORO TEMPLE (NEGOROBAN). Sokushin jobutsu gi [Becoming a Buddha in this Life]. 19 leaves, six columns per page. 8vo (250 x 155 mm.), orig. brown paper wrappers, pasted paper leaf book (detchoso). [Negoro Temple]: from the colophon “Koryaku 1” [1379]. $65,000.00

An extremely early and rare example of Japanese woodblock printing, a technology introduced by the Chinese in the 8th century. This is one of the earliest surviving publications of the great Negoro Temple in Kishu, founded in the 11th century. The earliest known printed work from this temple is dated 1378. In all, about twenty titles from Negoro Temple, ranging from 1378 to 1562, are known to survive. WorldCat locates no copy nor can we find another copy of the same edition in the Japanese union catalogues.

In Japan, “printing in the centuries before 1600 was dominated by Buddhist institutions and it was used to print mostly Buddhist texts in Chinese. It was not centralized, however, and one characteristic of this period is the geographical diffusion, for in addition to the temples of Kyoto, Nara, Mt. Koya and Kamakura, some other provincial temples also engaged in printing, such as the Negoroji in the province of Kii, which printed many titles from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.”—Kornicki, The Book in Japan, p. 124. The first book printed at Mt. Koya known to exist is dated 1253.

The Negoro-ji complex was influential and prosperous as the head seminary for the
Shingi sect of Shingon Buddhism. In 1288 a group of dissident monks moved from Mt. Koya to Negoro; two of them brought along the technology of printing. They were interested in disseminating their religion and started a printing house at the temple, which eventually became known as “Negoroban.” An active publication program was instituted and continued to 1585, when every building except the main pagoda, and a few others, were burnt down during the Siege of Negoro-ji by Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

“These early and unadorned Buddhist texts seems to have been little sought or discovered by collectors outside Japan. Nothing of the sort exists in the Spencer collection of the New York Public Library, or the Chester Beatty collection in Dublin; Philip Hofer, most perceptive of collectors and a hawk for opportunity, seeking treasure in Japan of the 1950s, had his focus only upon manuscript. The Hyde collection formed at the same time, was an interesting exception.”–Franklin, Exploring Japanese Books and Scrolls, p. 20.

The binding is made of rough, thick mulberry paper. This is an early example of detchoso (or butterfly) style of binding, in which each sheet of paper is folded in half and bound together using glue on the folded ends of the sheets. Such detchoso books were the first truly bound books produced in Japan, where the leaves of texts were attached to the spine and cover.

The calligraphy is bold and unsophisticated, reflecting the temple’s distance from both Nara and Kyoto. The reading marks, in black ink, have been added by hand as well as the red ink punctuation and additional reading marks.

This copy is in fine and fresh condition. There is some mostly marginal worming in the gutter and outer margins, occasionally touching some characters. From the library of Donald and Mary Hyde (their sale, Christie’s NYC, 7 October 1988, lot 62). Preserved in a box.

*Kikuya Nagasawa, Kosho no hanashi [Tale of Rare Books] (1976), pp. 111-12–(who states that very little is actually known about the early days of woodblock printing of books in Japan).
One of Four Works from the First Press in Poland

7. PLATEA, Franciscus de. *Opus Restitutionum, Usurarum, Excommunicationum*. Woodcut printer’s device on recto of final printed leaf. 216 unnumbered leaves (two leaves are blank). 38 lines, Gothic type, initial spaces of various sizes. Chancery folio (252 x 183 mm.), cont. Polish blind-tooled calf over bevelled wooden boards (carefully rebacked with a few discrete repairs, light dampstain to inner margins and occasionally to upper & lower margins, careful and discrete repairs to inner margins of first 30 leaves & outer margins of first two leaves), the covers divided by triple fillets forming rectangular panels, creating a Latin cross on upper cover, the compartment edges with a semi-circular arcade tool & filled with impressions of an open leafy stamp & an arrangement of leafy foliage in a lozenge, one chaste brass clasp with strap of white tawed leather. [Cracow: Printer of Turrecremata, Expositio (Kaspar Staubel)], 1475.

[bound with]:

GERSON, Johannes. *De Examinatione Doctrinarum* [and other texts, see below]. Lombard initials supplied in blue flourished with red or red flourished with green, red & blue paragraph signs. 22 unnumbered leaves. 35 lines, Gothic type, initial spaces of various sizes. Chancery folio (252 x 183 mm.) (occasional minor dampstain to margins, one or two leaves
A fine sammelband in a contemporary Polish blind-stamped calf binding over bevelled wooden boards, containing what is very probably the first substantial book printed in Poland.

I. One of only four works printed at the first press in Poland and the only dated book of the press. The other works from this press include a broadside almanac for 1474, which is considered to have been printed in late 1473 or early 1474. The other two books from the press, St. Augustine’s Opuscula and the Expositio Psalmorum of Johannes de Turrecremata are dated ca. 1475 or ca. 1475-1476 based on the printed date of the present edition and a rubrication date of 1476 in one copy of the Turrecremata. Books from this Cracow printing house are of the greatest rarity on the market.

Cracow, a cosmopolitan city with a university founded in 1364, was the only Polish town to have printing in the 15th century. While many Polish printers were at work in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere, the first printers in Poland were all foreigners. Discoveries of archival references from 1477 to the presence in Cracow of Kaspar Straube, from Dresden or Leipzig, also called in the documents “Casper Drucker,” have led to the currently accepted designation of Straube as Poland’s first printer. Apart from the works of this press, no other Latin printing survives from 15th-century Cracow.

This work on restitution, usury, and excommunication is one of the earliest texts printed to be concerned with economic problems. The author, Franciscus de Platea (d. 1460), was an Italian Franciscan. The text was quite popular in the 15th century with nine editions. There are apparently three variants of the final printed leaf; our copy corresponds to variant B with the printer’s mark and the date printed below it.

This book is of considerable rarity: ISTC locates only four copies outside of Poland, two in German libraries (Berlin and Munich) and two in the U.S. (Morgan and Huntington).

II. First and only 15th-century edition of this collection of texts by Johannes Gerson (1363-1429), chancellor of the University of Paris, produced by Nuremberg’s first printer, Johann Sensenschmidt in partnership with Andreas Frisner. The other texts include: De duplici statu in Dei ecclesia; Admonitio brevis quo modo caute legendi sunt quorundam libri; De appellatione peccatoris a divina justitia ad divinam misericordiam; De unione ecclesiae; and Dubium de delectatione in servitio Dei.

Binding: Our binding is related to a Cracow binding by Valentinus de Pilzno in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska (on: MS Bullae et Constitutiones Ord. FF Min., 1453-1483). The two bindings share in common a very distinctive decorative scheme of a large Latin crucifix tooled in blind over the entire covers, and adorned with multiple impressions of a double-line semi-circle. This type of decoration is characteristic of the work of Valentinus de Pilzno (Valentine of Pilsen), who has been recently described as “one of the most interesting Polish binders of all times. He had an academic background as did several of his Cracow colleagues. He matriculated in 1474, became a bachelor in the liberal arts in 1477 and master in 1480. He died in March 1486” (van Leeuwen). Whereas Valentine was active in Cracow for only a decade, dozens of bindings by him are preserved in Poland and elsewhere, and more than 100 tools from his shop are known. It is very possible that our binding was executed by him. It is not without interest that the first work in our sammelband was indeed printed in Cracow. See Ewa Zwinogrodzka et al., “Poolse Boekbindkunst 1400-1800 uit de Jagiellonski Bibliotheek, Krakow,” no. 18. Storm van Leeuwen, “The Golden Age of Bookbinding in Cracow 1400-1600,” no. 14, with 2 reproductions.

Provenance: From the library of Helmut N. Friedlaender with booklabel (sale 23 April 2001, lot 98).

Very good copies.

*I. Goff P-756. II. Goff G-229.
8. REGIOMONTANUS, Joannes. *Tabulae Directionum et Profectionum* [& *Tabella Sinus recti*]. [Edited by Johannes Angelus]. White-on-black woodcut initials & a large woodcut printer’s device in red at end. [156] unnumbered leaves (final two signatures bound at front in this copy, first few leaves a little frayed & lightly stained around margins), 40 lines, Gothic letter. 4to (220 x 164 mm.), cont. limp vellum (a little wrinkled). Augsburg: E. Ratdolt, 1490.

[bound with]:

ANGELUS (or ENGEL), Johannes. *Astrolabium planum in Tabulis ascendens*… Numerous woodcuts in the text, 7- & 12-line white-on-black woodcut initials. [176] unnumbered leaves (the final two are blank, four leaves misbound), 40 lines, Gothic letter. 4to (single small puncture hole in gutter in the second half of the book, occasionally touching a letter). Augsburg: E. Ratdolt, 27 November or 6 October 1488. $275,000.00

First editions, and a most wonderful survival in a contemporary limp vellum binding (clearly intended to be temporary), of these two handsome and uncommon astronomical works; many outer and lower edges are uncut. From the library of Otto Schäfer, the great German collector.

I. First edition of these notable tables, completed by Regiomontanus in Hungary in 1467 while serving as professor of mathematics at the newly-founded University of Pressburg (Bratislava) in Hungary. These tables were based upon both computation and the abundant observations made by Regiomontanus in Italy during the preceding years.

“In 1467, with Bylica’s assistance, Regiomontanus computed his *Tables of Directions*, which consisted of the longitudes of the celestial bodies in relation to the apparent daily rotation of the heavens. These *Tables* [were] computed for observers as far north of the equator as 60 degrees…in *Tables of Directions* he included a table of tangents (although he did not use this
term) for angles up to 90 degrees...thereby providing the model for our modern tables.”—D.S.B., XI, p. 350. This is an important contribution to the history of trigonometry.

II. First edition of this richly illustrated astronomical book with over 400 fine woodcuts, including 80 miniatures, depicting the potential occupations or types of persons born under given auspices, large sets of the seven planets in chariots, and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Angelus (ca. 1453-1512), studied under Regiomontanus at the University of Vienna and took a medical degree in Italy. He returned to Augsburg where he established a medical practice. He remained active in the astronomical world by editing a number of texts by Arabic astronomers, earlier and contemporary astronomical writers (including Regiomontanus) as well as writing a treatise on calendar reform and many prognostications. In 1494 he joined the faculty at the University of Vienna where he spent the rest of his life improving Peurbach’s planetary tables.

Fine copies in what can be considered original state. Booklabel (loose) of Otto Schäfer. Preserved in a green morocco-backed slipcase.

9. SAIDAIJI TEMPLE (SAIDAIJI BAN). *Bonmokyo koshakuki* [Commentaries on Brahama’s Net Sutra]. 135 pp. Five columns per page. On the final leaf: “Kan ge matsu” (“end of latter part”). Tall narrow *orihon* (accordion style; 291 x 12,455 mm. long), orig. wrappers (minor worming). [Nara: Saidaiji Temple, 1302-18]. $60,000.00

The Buddhist temple of Saidaiji, one of the “Seven Great Temples” of Nara, was founded in 765 and is the main temple of the Shingon Risshu sect of Buddhism. The founder of this sect was Eison (1201-90), a disciple of Jokei.

“Eison was one of the leading figures in the Kamakura-period revival of the Risshu sect and played a very active role in the development of printing at Saidai-ji. In his capacity as abbot, he seems to have initiated a considerable printing program, from which twelve works have survived, ranging in date from 1256 to 1290...An interesting feature of the Saidai-ji works printed on Eison’s instructions is that at least half of them are bound in *orihon* style. Although *orihon* binding gained wide acceptance by Kyoto monks as the Kamakura period passed, generally the more conservative monks adhered to the tradition *kansu-bon* format, and Eison’s use of *orihon* binding represents a break with Nara tradition. After Eison’s death, the Saidai-ji monks continued to print a number of works which, to judge from those produced in Eison’s lifetime, conformed to the program he had laid down. This was presumably done as a mark of respect, and Kamakura-period printing continued at Saidai-ji until at least 1318.”—Chibbet, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration*, p. 46.

The publications from the temples of Saidaiji, Negoro, and Todaiji are today extremely rare on the market. There were several editions of the *Bonmokyo koshakuki*, including one or more published during Eison’s life.

There are punctuation marks and the occasional reading mark in red and black brush. In fine condition and a remarkable survival.
10. STATIUS, Publius Papinius. [Opera] with commentaries. 208 leaves (of 210, lacking the first & final blanks), 44 lines plus headline, 62 lines of commentary, Roman letter, 3- to 4- line initial spaces. Small folio, 17th-cent. red morocco (small marginal repairs to 2nd & 3rd leaves), sides panelled in gilt, spine nicely gilt, green morocco lettering piece on spine, a.e.g. Venice: Jacobus de Paganinis, 24 December 1490. $15,000.00

Second edition (1st ed.: 1483) of the collected verse of Statius (ca. A.D. 45-96), the great Latin poet. Present here are the Thebaid, a mythological epic with commentary by Placidus Lactantius; the Achilleid, a fragment of an uncompleted epic with commentary by Franciscus Mataratius; and the Silvae, a collection of mostly occasional poems, of which the shortest, nineteen lines addressed by the insomniac poet to the god of sleep, is deservedly well-known. Domitius Calderinus has provided the commentary for Silvae.

A fine copy from the Macclesfield library. Rather scarce. Some marginalia washed when rebound in the 17th century.

★ Goff S-692.
11. TODAII TEMPLE (TODAIJIBAN). Daijo kishinron giki [Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana]. By Fazang. 43; 57 leaves, eight columns per page. Part I (“kan jo”) in two vols. 8vo (267 x 143 mm.) in orihon (accordion) format, pale brown paper wrappers, [Nara]: 1297. $125,000.00

Extremely rare; this is one of the earliest substantial wood-block printed books created in Japan to survive. Todaiji Temple in Nara, founded in 728, was the chief temple of the Kegon sect of Buddhism and served as a center for the training of scholar monks. Part of the monks’ activities was to print educational texts and to disseminate their religion using the new technology of woodblock printing. Two monks, Shoshu (1215-91) and Gyonen (1240-1321), were the first to establish an active printing program at the temple’s printing house (the todaijiban). Collectively, the printing activities at the six main temples of Nara are today called naraban (nara editions). Any publication from the 13th century issued by any of the naraban is of the greatest rarity and almost never appears in the market.

The text of this work is the classic exposition of Mahayana Buddhism. There is some
controversy whether the text has an Indian Sanskrit origin or is a Chinese composition. Fazang (643-712), a Chinese scholar, wrote the present commentary which is generally recognized as one of the most authoritative works for the correct understanding of the text. Mahayana Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 7th century.

“Todai-ji, though not exclusively devoted to one sect of Buddhism, had a strong interest in the doctrines and practices of the Kegon sect and acted as the center of Kegon Buddhism in Japan. Thus it was natural that when Todai-ji monks began to undertake printing, they should concentrate on Kegon doctrinal works...

“The earliest known work printed at Todai-ji was a one-maki edition of a Kegon sect work, the Daijo-kishin-ron, produced in 1243. Later, emphasis was placed on the works of the Chinese monk Fa-tasang [Fazang], third patriarch of the Kegon sect, and copies of his works were printed in 1283 (the Kegon-gokyo-sho), 1297 (the Daijo-kishin-ron-giki) [the present book], 1328-31 (the Kegon-gyo tangen-ki), and 1332 (the Kegon-gyo zuisho-engi-sho). The first two were printed under the supervision of a monk with strong Zen affiliations named Zen-ni (1253-1325), and the last two were under a monk named Rikaku. It is unlikely, however, that either of these monks actually participated in the carving of the blocks. Zen-ni in particular was a comparatively important Buddhist scholar, and his role in the two works that mention his names was probably more in connection with the production of an authoritative text than with the actual printing.” –Chibbet, The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration, p. 45.

“These early and unadorned Buddhist texts seem to have been little sought or discovered by collectors outside Japan. Nothing of the sort exists in the Spencer collection of the New York Public Library, or the Chester Beatty collection in Dublin; Philip Hofer, most perceptive of collectors and a hawk for opportunity, seeking treasure in Japan of the 1950s, had his focus only upon manuscript. The Hyde collection formed at the same time, was an interesting exception.” –Franklin, Exploring Japanese Books and Scrolls, p. 20.

In very good condition, some worming restored. Manuscript reading marks have been supplied in black ink and punctuation marks and additional reading marks supplied in red ink.

From the library of Donald and Mary Hyde (their sale, Christie’s NYC, 7 October 1988, lot 57). Preserved in a box.
Valturio’s Famous Illustrated Military Treatise

12. VALTURIUS, Robertus. De Re Militari. Opera de Facti e Praecepti Militari. Trans. by Paolo Ramusio. 313 leaves (of 314), lacking final blank, otherwise complete, including blank leaves *1 and a1. 37 lines & headline, Roman type. Numerous initials in various sizes supplied in red and blue. 96 fine woodcut illustrations. Folio (310 x 208 mm.), cont. Italian blind-tooled brown calf over wooden boards (upper cover a little defective, crack in the wood of one board repaired), compartments of spine decorated with floral stamps, covers with floral and geometrical borders, metal bosses with engraved flowers in the corners, paper label on spine “L’Arte Militare del Ramusio.” Verona: Boninus de Boninis, 17 February 1483. $330,000.00

First edition in Italian and a fine and large copy of this handsomely illustrated book on the art of war which contains the earliest technical illustrations in a printed book. The first edition, issued in 1472 in Latin, contained only 95 woodcuts.

“Roberto Valturio, a native of Rimini, after having been Apostolic Secretary in Rome, became technical adviser and engineer to Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini. He composed his book ‘On Military Matters’ about 1460. After wide circulation in manuscript, it was printed in 1472…

“The historical importance of the De Re Militari lies in the fact that it is the first book printed with illustrations of a technical or scientific character depicting the progressive engineering ideas of the author’s own time. The woodcuts illustrate the equipment necessary for the military and naval engineer; they include revolving gun turrets, platforms and ladders for sieges, paddle-wheels, a diver’s suit, a lifebelt, something resembling a tank, pontoon and other bridges, a completely closed boat that could be half submerged, etc.…The Verona
Valturius and its reprints were the handbooks of the military leaders of the Renaissance, and Leonardo da Vinci, when acting as chief engineer to Cesare Borgia, possessed a copy and borrowed some of its designs.”–Printing & the Mind of Man 10–(1st ed. of 1472).

This is one of the rare copies which contains the additional six unsigned leaves at the beginning (the first is a blank) with a dedicatory letter from Ramusio to Roberto de Aragonia.

The printer Bonino de Boninis (1454-1528), a cleric from Ragusa (today Croatia), had worked at Venice in 1479 with Andreas de Paltasichis, from whom he acquired his typographic knowledge. During his stay in Verona, from 1481 to 1483, Bonino printed not less than seven editions, the Italian Valturius being the last. Afterwards, he moved to Brescia, where he produced another ca. 35 editions, mainly of humanist and legal texts, before he finished his career as a bookseller and publisher in Lyon.

PROVENANCE:

1. The first two end leaves contain notes and ownership inscriptions in ink by a 16th-century Italian hand, verse of Ariosto (Orl. fur., 1516-1532, XXXIII, 44), and a table of contents (in another hand); on the last flyleaf and pastedown are several pen trials and two grotesque drawings of the same time, in dark ink. The excerpted verse from Ariosto are the following: “Ecco, mal grado de la lega, prende / Milano, e accorda il giovene Sforzesco. / Ecco Borbon che la città difende / pel re di Francia dal furor tedesco. / Eccovi poi, che mentre altrove attende / ad altre magne imprese il re Francesco, / né sa quanta superbia e crudeltade / usino i suoi, gli è tolta la cittade.”

2. The copy belonged to Ladislao Reti, with his bookplate on pastedown. Reti (1901-73), was an Italian chemist, industrialist, scholar, and a great expert on Leonardo da Vinci.

A fine and large copy with wide margins. An additional quire of five leaves bound in at the front, first leaf with manuscript index up to fol. 173. Some slight staining, marginal tears at leaves e1 and r3, some worming to covers and first and last few leaves.