COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IT’S INFLUENCE ON THE REMNANT TRUST

The Remnant Trust remains vigilant in our belief that these priceless works of literature should be made available for the public available for viewing and personal interaction. Due to the devastating pandemic sweeping through the world today, some of our exhibits and events have been either postponed or rescheduled.

The Trust’s employees are still happy to help and are displaying diligence as they continue to work remotely. Guests are encouraged to make an appointment to view and engage with the texts here “in house” on Texas Tech University campus. All viewings require an appointment, and we do apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Our workers are sanitizing the office regularly in order to promote the health and wellness of our visitors and our employees.

We are open and eager to accommodate our guests and their interests. While in the office, guests are required to wear facial coverings (masks) in order to protect everyone from potentially spreading COVID-19. We appreciate your cooperation as we continue to work towards bringing these unique texts into the hands of the public.

Appointments for in person office visits can be made by contacting us via email or phone.

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The oldest known printed book is a Chinese work, *The Diamond Sutra*, dated from approximately 868 CE and currently residing at the British Library. It is a translation of a famous Buddhist text that was printed by Wang Jie, who commissioned a block printer to print the 17-and-a-half-foot scroll. Little is known concerning what motivated Jie to recreate the scroll in print, however it provides an early insight into the world of printed text.

Around 1440, Johannes Gutenberg from Germany created the first printing press as we know it by creating the first adjustable type mold. In 1478, Oxford University began printing its own texts which made new scientific discoveries available to the common man. Information soon became readily available to all citizens, no matter their socioeconomic status. Cambridge University would soon follow by creating their University Press in 1584. Books gradually become more available through increased printing and distribution. The printed word becoming readily available to the common man for the first time in history.

“*The Study of philosophy is not that we may know what men have thought, but what the truth of things is. “*

— Thomas Aquinas

Manuscripts, handwritten documents, and hand illuminated scripts were the main structure for important texts for centuries. Prior to the printing press, bound books were a luxury reserved for only the wealthy. The cost of physically writing out a work and binding the pages were rather expensive. The gap in social status and the availability of books meant that much of the masses were unable to read and were not as well acquainted with ancient authors such as Homer, Ovid, or the great mathematician Euclid. While manuscripts still captivate their reader with ornate calligraphy and illuminated sections, the ability for the lower classes to stay informed and educated was nearly impossible until the invention of the printing press around 1440.
Thomas Aquinas was an Italian philosopher, Catholic priest, Dominican friar and the Doctor of the Church. Living from 1225—March 7th, 1274, he was influential in both philosophy and theology among his people. His more famous works consist of Doctor Angelicus and the Doctor Communis wherein he discusses angelic creation. Thomas Aquinas was deemed a saint in the eyes of the Catholic Church and took on the title of the Angelic Doctor.

In his work *Summa Theologicae Pars Secunda Pars*, he discusses three major categories of thought including: Theology, Ethics, and Christ. The second part *Pars Secunda* includes elaborate discussions of the purpose of mankind, mankind’s habits, types of law, and other topics such as prudence and justice. Aquinas addresses happiness and how to attain it in a world among men drenched in sin. The text itself was printed in 1472-1475. To date, there are only three known copies in the world. One resides in the British Museum in London, another rests at Newbury Library in Chicago and the third copy is held by The Remnant Trust, Inc. The text within The Remnant Trust collection is the most perfect in terms of condition and completeness.

**Better to illuminate than merely to shine, to deliver to others contemplated truths than merely to contemplate.**
— Thomas Aquinas

In addition to Pars Secunda, The Trust also houses numerous manuscripts from Sir Thomas Aquinas such as bible leaves handwritten by the scribe Iohannes de Ubera. Notably one of the manuscript leaflets contains a fragment of Aquinas’ *Commentary on the Sententiae of Petrus Lombardus* and is dated to be from 1475. The original text from which the fragment is derived, *Sententiae*, was written in 1150.

The fragment is a remnant of a manuscript and depicts the notable characteristics as such. The handwritten ink blots can be seen on the left hand margin as well as the remarkable penmanship in the classical Latin. Additionally, the manuscript contains the illuminated capital letter at the bottom of the page noting the start of a new section in the work. While Thomas Aquinas is revered as an influential man of the Church, he is also respected as an influence of philosophy and other literary works, such as that of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*. Overall, the movement from handwritten manuscripts to printed texts have allowed these tomes of knowledge and philosophy to withstand the test of time; they enable future generations the ability to read and hear the words of the historical figure, Thomas Aquinas.

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CURRENT EXHIBITION

Harrison Center; Indianapolis, IN  
(October Only)
Trine University; Angola, IN
Texas Tech University; Lubbock, TX
- Museum of Texas Tech University
- University Library
- Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library

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