



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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PHOTO CALL

11.00AM THURSDAY, 26 JULY 2018
MAIN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
GEORGE SQUARE EH8 9LJ

Rare Renaissance book among treasures of astronomy exhibition

A first edition book by leading thinker Nicolaus Copernicus, an ivory sundial made in 1589 and a four-billion-year-old shard of meteorite feature in an exhibition exploring our early understanding of the Universe.

Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus Obrium Caelestium* – published in 1543 – was the first book to claim that Earth is not at the centre of the solar system. The rare illustrated first edition once belonged to leading Scottish Enlightenment figure Adam Smith.

A 16th-century pocket sundial made by the Tucher family of instrument makers from Nuremburg, Germany – who were active between 1490 and 1645 – will also be on display.

The exhibition also features a page-sized fragment of the Gibeon meteorite – named after the Namibian town where it was found – which fell to Earth in prehistoric times. It shows a patterned cross-section caused by its cooling and landing.

Further attractions include a celestial globe from the 1800s, two 19th-century telescopes and an illustrated anthology from 1681 charting the passage of comets from biblical times. A tin camera designed and used by Piazzi Smyth – the second Astronomer Royal of Scotland and a former Professor of Astronomy – will also be on display. It was used to capture an image of the Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt, in 1865.

A book written by Renaissance thinker Galileo Galilei in 1632, entitled *Dialogo dei massimi sistemi* – which was banned by the Catholic Church for more than two centuries – will also feature. The exhibition will showcase objects from the collections of the University of Edinburgh, Royal Observatory Edinburgh and Ingleby Gallery.

Astronomy Victorious: Understanding Our Universe runs from 10am-5pm, Monday-Saturday from 27 July – 27 October, and Sundays throughout August, at the University of Edinburgh Main Library, George Square.

For further information, please contact:
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