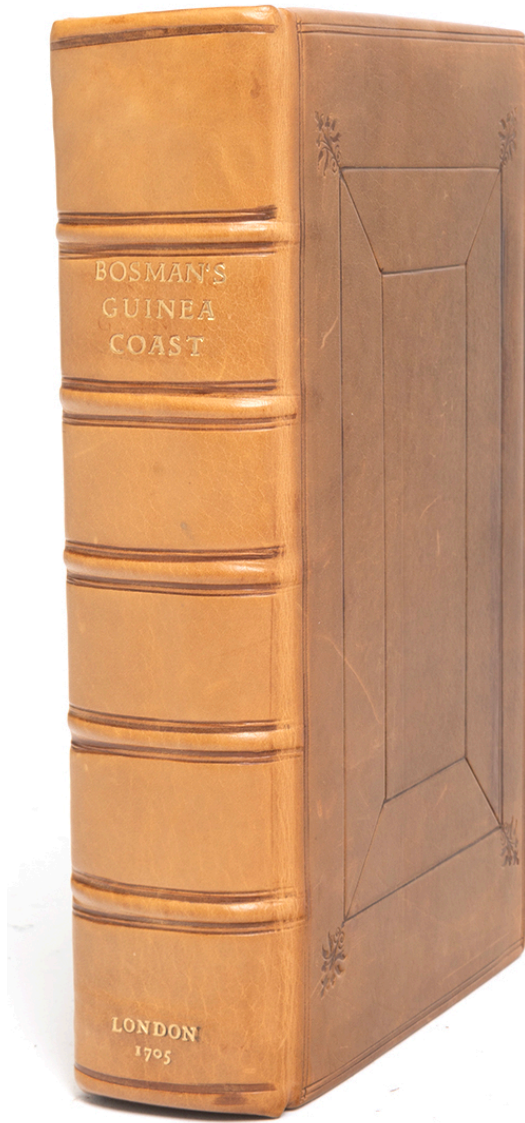


# William Bosman, "Description of the Coast of Guinea."



It is a rare opportunity to read the reflections of a 17th-century merchant whose choices while leading the Dutch

West India Company created a lasting effect on the course of history.

Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer **William Bosman, "Description of the Coast of Guinea"** (\$7/1,000) for sale in our May Gallery Auction, held on Friday, May 17th.

William Bosman was a Dutch sailor and colonial administrator born in Utrecht in 1672, who came to work as a merchant in the Dutch West India Company. First sailing for the company at only sixteen years old, he worked in the Dutch Gold Coast, part of present-day Ghana until returning to the Netherlands at thirty years old. Little is known about his life other than his authorship of the book offered for sale at Michaan's Auctions, titled

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

“Nauwkeurige Beschrijving van de Guinese Goud-Tand-en Slavekust” in its original Dutch, and his participation in the Komenda Wars. His book has served as an important reference for Ghanaian historians since the 20th century and has been available in English since 1705, only a year after its original publication.

The lands of modern-day Ghana had been known to Europeans since at least 1471, and by 1482 the Portuguese had established trading posts in the area to secure valuable items such as gold, ivory, and pepper for the European continent. The Dutch secured access to

the area in 1591, a difficult task as the Portuguese regularly used force to prevent other Europeans from trading in the area. Despite a period of brief difficulties during the Twelve Years’s Truce between Portugal, Spain, and the Dutch Republic, a fort was established in 1612 with the permission of local rulers, and the Dutch West India Company was founded shortly thereafter to compete with Swedish, British, and Danish settlements over contracts with local governments.

William Bosman came to present-day Ghana during a particularly



**Michaan’s Auctions**

2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

turbulent period for the country. While the Dutch had established a trading post in the country, this position was quickly contested. French traders had negotiated with the King of Eguafó to build a factory in the town in exchange for sponsoring his armed forces, which the Dutch prevented by funding a civil war, then murdering the king and installing a former prince named Takyi to the throne. However, a prominent local trader, John Cabess, after escaping a kidnapping by the Dutch, organized local forces and attacked a Dutch fort. After being defeated, he began negotiations with William Bosman, leader of the Dutch contingent, who attempted to shoot him with a pistol on June 26th, 1695, but missed. Fighting continued until 1700 when Takyi was able to solidify his support amongst the Eguafó while maintaining a neutral

position between Dutch and English interests.

The chaos which ruled the area for five years allowed a neighboring state, the Ashanti Empire to expand, eventually eclipsing the power of the Eguafó in the area. This would have a profound effect on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as the Ashanti rulers were the first power in the region to centralize authority in a nation-state, which, once they had established control over the coast, allowed them to conquer peoples further inland. The growing empire attempted to maintain control by removing captured soldiers from their homelands, a new practice in the area which was incentivized by colonial powers willing to spend vast sums of money to purchase newly enslaved peoples. The growing need for workers in the United States, Haiti, and the broader Caribbean led profits from the

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

slave trade to eclipse gold, ultimately making the region a hotbed for the capturing and enslavement of local men, women, and children.

This book is a light-brown leather-bound book with only minor wear despite its advanced age. Published in 1705, this book features fold-out maps, illustrative prints, and hundreds of pages of text detailing the geographical, political, and natural history of the Guinea Coast with particular attention paid to the conduct of Europeans in the area. The full title “A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts,” lays bare the aims of the book, namely, to accurately depict the area, thereby allowing readers to participate in a more efficient extraction of resources through the trading of gold, ivory, and human beings. The cover was expertly rebound

by Sandra Good Book Restoration and Binding in San Anselmo, CA.



**William Bosman,**  
**"Description of the Coast of Guinea"** (\$7/1,000) will be offered in Michaan's Auctions May Gallery Auction on Friday, May 17th features excellent furniture, lighting, and decorative pieces from the Furniture & Decorations Department, in addition to important works from notable artists in the Asian Art Department, and a number of fine pieces from the Jewelry departments. The auction is led by the Furniture & Decorations Department, which will be

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

offering a salon set, chandeliers, and tables in prominent French and Italian styles, while the Asian Art Department offers works of calligraphy and painting by important Chinese artists. Also included in the sale are platinum, diamond, and gold items, including

works by Eric De Kolb, presented by the Jewelry Department.

Michaan's Auctions catalogs can be viewed on our website:

[www.michaans.com](http://www.michaans.com), LiveAuctioneers, and on our Michaan's Live site. Bid live in our gallery or remotely via absentee, phone, or online.

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220