

Western (European) Manuscripts

Among the Western manuscripts are over 500 medieval codices, including outstanding examples of calligraphy and illumination in books of hours, psalters and other devotional works. Most are in Latin, but fine illuminations also appear in English, French, Greek and Italian texts. Manuscripts from important monastic and other centres are numerous, among them Bremen, Erfurt, Essen, Luxeuil, Murbach, Trier and Weissenau, and there are also many secular works including cartularies, royal wardrobe books and chronicles. Post-medieval material has a strong emphasis on literary papers, as well as antiquarian collections, socio-historical material, and personal correspondence and papers. There are many original bindings, medieval jewelled book covers, and ivory carvings.

There are major collections of manuscripts in English (p. 35), French (p. 37), German (p. 38), Greek (p. 38), Irish (p. 39), Italian (p. 39), Latin (p. 40) and Spanish (p. 42), with smaller collections or individual items in Bulgarian, Dutch (p. 35), Hungarian, Icelandic (p. 38), Mexican, Portuguese, Romanian, the Slavonic languages and Welsh.

Dutch Manuscripts

Date range: 15th–20th centuries.

Sixteen items, mainly devotional and genealogical texts and armorials. These include two fifteenth-century *Horae* (Dutch MSS 8 and 12); a martyrology of 1472 (Dutch MS 10); and an armorial of c.1600 containing 160 emblazoned coats of arms of knights of the Golden Fleece (Dutch MS 6).

Finding aids: F. Taylor, *Supplementary Handlist of Western Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 31–4; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 394–8.

English Manuscripts

Date range: 14th–20th centuries.

Over 1,300 collections or individual items, comprising historical, biblical, devotional, literary and genealogical texts, and collections

of letters and papers relating to military, political, industrial, social and local history, literature, art, and the history of Dissent.

Among the earliest items are: two fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (English MSS 63, 113); a richly-illuminated copy of John Lydgate's *Seige of Troy*, and a copy of his translation of Boccaccio's *Falle of Pryncys*, from the first half of the fifteenth century (English MSS 1–2); three manuscripts of *The Pricke of Conscience*, traditionally attributed to the mystic Richard Rolle de Hampole, from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (English MSS 50, 51, 90); fifteen manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible, or of parts of the Bible, written in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; six copies of the *Brut* chronicle, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (English MSS 102–105, 206, 207); a *Form of Cury*, or recipe book, compiled by the master cook to Richard II in its original vellum binding, of the early fifteenth century (English MS 7); medieval chronicles and devotional works; and several fine armorials with coats of arms beautifully emblazoned, some by leading members of the College of Heralds.

The most significant collections are described individually elsewhere in this *Guide*. They include: an important Moravian Church collection, eighteenth–twentieth centuries, p. 82; the Thomas Raffles Collection (theological, autograph collection), p. 84; the Tealdi Correspondence (textile trade), p. 138; the Wedgwood Correspondence (ceramic industry and eighteenth-century society), p. 138; the Heald Family Papers (trade, military and physical medicine), p. 152; the Hibbert-Ware Papers (military, medical, antiquarian), p. 153; the Pink Papers (political biographies), p. 155; the Wadsworth Manuscripts (social and economic history), p. 156; the Spring Rice Collection (nineteenth-century court, social, political and diplomatic affairs), p. 119; the Bowring Papers (Hong Kong and China), p. 176; the Melville Papers (East India Company), p. 179; the Mount-Stewart Collection (consular correspondence), p. 179; the Thrale-Piozzi Manuscripts (eighteenth-century literature, Johnson circle), p. 210; the Dorothy Richardson Papers (travel in eighteenth-century England), p. 243; the Elizabeth Gaskell Manuscript Collection and Walter Savage Landor Papers (nineteenth-century literature), pp. 198 and 204; the John Ruskin Papers (nineteenth-century literature and art), p. 208; the Walt Whitman Manuscript Collections (nineteenth-century American literature), p. 214; the Holman Hunt Papers, the Fairfax Murray Papers and the Spielmann Collection (nineteenth-century art, Pre-Raphaelites), pp. 240, 242 and 245; and the Henry Roscoe Papers (nineteenth-century science), p. 263.

There are also several miscellaneous autograph collections containing many hundreds of holograph letters from (primarily

nineteenth-century) statesmen, theologians and churchmen, artists, literary figures, men of letters and members of the nobility.

Finding aids: M. Tyson, *Handlist of English Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1929), and additional volumes by M. Tyson (1935), F. Taylor (1951), and G.A. Matheson and F. Taylor (1977); F. Taylor, *Supplementary Handlist of Western Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 21–31; card index of autograph collections.

French Manuscripts

Date range: 13th–19th centuries.

Over 130 items, comprising biblical, devotional, literary, historical, legal and genealogical works. These include a thirteenth-century *Bible Historiée*, or Bible picture book (French MS 5); a fourteenth-century *Passion de Nostre Seigneur de Jésus Christ*, with miniatures executed *en grisaille* (French MS 3); a copy of the Arthurian text *Lancelot del Lac*, from the early fourteenth century (French MS 1); the works of Guillaume de Deguilleville, with many fine illustrations, from the early fifteenth century (French MS 2); a fifteenth-century illustrated copy of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (French MS 62); a fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose* (French MS 66); fifteenth-century *coutumiers* of Brittany (French MSS 58 and 74) and Normandy (French MS 73); a *Mappemonde* (world map) made by Pierre Desceliers in 1546 (French MS 1*); several medieval chronicles (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries); armorials of French, English, Irish and Scottish nobility; and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century correspondence, including letters of Marie le Bailleul, Marquise d'Huxelles, which shed light on the social and political history of France in the reign of Louis XIV, and newsletters, or *gazettes manuscrites*, and other records relating to the French Revolution.

Finding aids: M. Tyson, 'Handlist of the Collections of French and Italian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 14 (1930), pp. 563–628; F. Taylor, *Supplementary Handlist of Western Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 34–7. See also John P. Tuck, 'French Studies: a Guide to Research Resources in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 72, no. 2 (1990), pp. 3–25; Caroline S. Hull, 'Rylands MS French 5: the form and function of a medieval Bible picture book', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 77, no. 2 (1995), pp. 3–24.

German Manuscripts

Date range: 14th–19th centuries.

Twenty-nine items, mainly devotional, historical, alchemical and genealogical works, including an illustrated fifteenth-century *Alchemica* (German MS 1); *Deutsches Stammbuch*, with over 1,800 emblazoned coats of arms of nobilities and dignities of the Empire, 1565 (German MS 2); and a mystic miscellany, *Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes*, written in southern Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century (German MS 11).

Finding aids: F. Taylor, *Supplementary Handlist of Western Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 37–43; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 452–4. See also F.P. Pickering, ‘A German Mystic Miscellany of the late fifteenth century in the John Rylands Library’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 22 (1938), pp. 455–92.

Greek Manuscripts

Date range: 3rd century BC–19th century AD.

These comprise thirty-one ostraca, fifty-four codices and over 700 papyri. The codices, ranging from the tenth to the nineteenth century, are mostly biblical and devotional volumes, including some notable early *Evangelia* (tenth–thirteenth century). The papyri collection (third century BC–seventh century AD) consists of classical, biblical, liturgical and medical texts, and important documentary papyri, including business papers, public records, files of local government offices, taxation documents and financial memoranda. Undoubtedly the most famous papyrus is the fragment of St John’s Gospel, probably the earliest extant piece of the New Testament (from the first half of the second century AD). Papyri from Hermopolis (first–seventh centuries AD) comprise conveyances, receipts, and official and private legal documents.

Finding aids: Arthur S. Hunt [and others], *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester*, 4 vols (Manchester, 1911–52); Alan K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, ‘Some Additional Greek Papyri in the John Rylands University Library’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 61 (1978–79), pp. 290–313.

Icelandic Manuscripts

Date range: 15th and 17th centuries.

There are five Icelandic manuscripts, of which Icelandic MSS 1–4 were acquired with the Crawford collection in 1901, the fifth

being acquired later from another source. They comprise a fifteenth-century pocket-book containing the text of the computational treatise *Rímbepla*, a calendar in Latin and several devotional works (Icelandic MS 1); a set of three seventeenth-century copies of the medieval law text *Þónsbók*, (Icelandic MSS 2–4), one of which (Icelandic MS 2) is beautifully decorated; and another *Þónsbók* from the mid-fifteenth century (Icelandic MS 5).

Finding aids: B.S. Benedikz, 'Notes on Some Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 60 (1977–78), pp. 289–302; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 454–6; Olai Skulerud, *Catalogue of Norse Manuscripts in Edinburgh, Dublin and Manchester* (Kristiania, 1918), pp. 57–60.

Irish Manuscripts

Date range: 15th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Over 130 items, in English and Irish. The sole fifteenth-century manuscript is a valuable *Materia Medica* (Irish MS 35). The remainder of the collection consists primarily of literary (Fenian and Ossianic tales and poems), historical, genealogical and grammatical works. There are numerous transcripts by well-known nineteenth-century scholars of important manuscripts, which were formerly in the Royal Irish Academy but are now lost.

Finding aids: unpublished list; the *Materia Medica* is described in N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 456–8.

Italian Manuscripts

Date range: 14th–19th centuries.

Seventy-five items, mostly literary, historical, genealogical and musical works. Notable are a rare text of the poems of Dante and Petrarch, written in the second half of the fourteenth century for the son of Carlo degli Strozzi, a member of one of the leading noble families of Florence (Italian MS 1); four manuscripts of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, including one written in 1416 by Bartholomew Landi de Landis (Italian MS 49), and another fine fifteenth-century example (Italian MS 2); a late fourteenth-century copy of the *Fioretti* of St Francis and of the Legend of S. Clare (Italian MS 51); a fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript of the *Scala del Paradiso* of S. John Climacus (Italian MS 4); a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Somma sopra e sette peccati mortali* by S. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (Italian MS 53); and a group of manuscripts relating to the great Florentine reformer Fra

Girolamo Savonarola (Italian MSS 7–11, 13, 30 etc.). There are also documents concerning Florence, Venice, Bologna and other cities, and records relating to the Medici, Strozzi and Orsini families.

See also the Medici Records (p. 114).

Finding aids: M. Tyson, 'Handlist of the Collections of French and Italian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 14 (1930), pp. 563–628; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 458–64.

Latin Manuscripts

Date range: 7th–19th centuries.

Over 500 items, containing a wide range of texts: biblical, liturgical, patristic, theological, historical, legal and philosophical. There are manuscripts of outstanding importance both textually and for their illumination. M.R. James stated that the illuminated codices contain 'examples of first-class quality of the art and calligraphy of all the great schools of Europe'. Among the outstanding items are the Ravenna papyrus of the early seventh century (Latin MS 1); an Exultet Roll of the early 11th century (Latin MS 2); an illuminated Lectionary, Gospel Books and Bibles from Germany, France and Flanders, ninth–twelfth centuries (Latin MSS 4–5, 7, 9–11); the magnificent twelfth-century *Beatus super Apocalypsim* from Spain (Latin MS 8); the beautiful Missal of Henry of Chichester from the mid-thirteenth century (Latin MS 24); the fourteenth-century French Apocalypse (Latin MS 19); numerous *Horae* from the French and Flemish schools, including a fine example of the work of the master illuminator Pierre Remiet (Latin MS 136); and the illuminated missal of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, a superlative example of Italian Renaissance art in six volumes (Latin MSS 32–37).

Secular works include medieval chronicles, cartularies, armorials, royal wardrobe books of the reign of Edward I and from the household of Philippa of Hainault, Queen of Edward III, household accounts and rentals (thirteenth–sixteenth centuries), and manuscripts of Scipio Le Squyer, Vice-Chamberlain of the Treasury of the Exchequer under James I and Charles I.

Finding aids: M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Latin Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library at Manchester* (Manchester, 1921), reprinted with an introduction and additional notes and corrections by F. Taylor (München, 1980); M. Tyson, 'Handlist of Additions to the Collection of Latin Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library, 1908–28', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol.

12 (1928), pp. 581–609; F. Taylor, *Supplementary Handlist of Western Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 7–21; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, III, Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 464–8.

Spanish Manuscripts

Date range: 16th–19th centuries.

Twenty-nine items, comprising historical, genealogical and philological works. They include an important sixteenth-century collection of texts of well-known Spanish chronicles (Spanish MS 1); a collection of the historical writings of Esteban de Garibay, royal historiographer to Philip II (Spanish MSS 9–25); and a richly-decorated early seventeenth-century record of a lawsuit to prove gentlemanly rank (Spanish MS 27).

Finding aids: M. Tyson, *The Spanish Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1932).