

Visit of the Roxburghe Club to The John Rylands Library, 16 July 2013.
List of Manuscripts and Archives Exhibited

The Rylands Haggadah, Hebrew MS 6



The Rylands Haggadah, from mid 14th-century Spain (probably Catalonia), is one of the finest Haggadot in existence. It is important for its intrinsic beauty and for various textual details, but also for the light it throws on the history of illumination of Hebrew manuscripts in general, and in particular on the tradition of Biblical illustration among the Jews of the Middle Ages and on the cross-fertilisation between Jewish and gentile artists within the medium of manuscript illumination.

The manuscript was purchased by Alexander Lindsay, 25th Earl of Crawford, for £220 from Bernard Quaritch in 1874, and it passed to Enriqueta Rylands in 1901, when she acquired the manuscript portion of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana.

In 2011/12 it underwent extensive conservation treatment at the John Rylands Library to consolidate areas of loose pigment and gold leaf, prior to being loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York as the centrepiece of the exhibition 'The Rylands Haggadah: Medieval Jewish Art in Context', March to September 2012.

Funding for the nine-month conservation project was generously provided by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and Mrs Dorothy Tapper Goldman of New York.

The Colonna Missal, Latin MS 32a



In July 2011 the Library acquired the 'missing' volume of the celebrated Colonna Missal, one of the most significant religious manuscripts of the sixteenth century. It was commissioned by Cardinal Pompeo di Girolamo Colonna for use in the Sistine Chapel; some of its decoration is contemporary with Michelangelo's fresco of the Last Judgment over the High Altar.

The Library had previously held six volumes of the Missal, which Alexander Lindsay, 25th Earl of Crawford, obtained from Thomas Boone in 1868. They passed to the John Rylands Library in 1901, with Enriqueta Rylands's purchase of the Crawford manuscripts.

The 'missing' volume (actually the second in the series) became separated from the others at some date before 1868. The 26th Earl turned down the opportunity of purchasing it from Quaritch in 1895. For much of the

20th century it resided in the United States, most recently belonging to the owner of the so-called ‘Arcana Collection’, who consigned it to Christie’s in July 2011. Previous owners included Alfred Chester Beatty and Estelle Doheny.

The volume is in a binding very similar to Rylands Latin MS 32, bearing the Colonna device (a column); Anthony Hobson has identified it as the work of Maestro Luigi de Gava (or de Gradi), who was binding for the Sistine Chapel and the *capella segreta* between 1542 and at least 1565.

Funding for the acquisition was generously provided by the Art Fund, the V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund, Friends of the John Rylands, the B.H. Breslauer Foundation, and the Friends of the National Libraries.

Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund



Petrarch’s *Rime* and Dante’s *Canzoni*, Italian MS 1



Italian MS 1 is a fine late fourteenth-century manuscript of Petrarch’s *Rime* and Dante’s *Canzoni*. The manuscript is signed by the scribe Paul, who says in the colophon (f. 174) that he penned the manuscript for Lorenzo di Carlo Strozzi, one of the richest and most powerful men in Florence, who died in 1383. The opening page of each of the three sections is richly illuminated, with images of the two poets and their lovers.

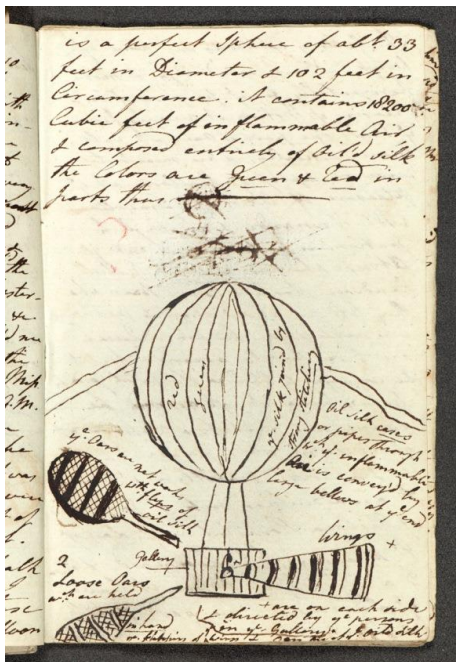
The manuscript was purchased by Lord Lindsay (later the 25th Earl of Crawford) at the Libri sale of March 1859, for £250. Previously it had belonged to Theodor Weigel of Leipzig, whose initials appear on the binding. It was acquired by Henriqueta Rylands when she purchased the Crawford collection of manuscripts in 1901.

Last year the manuscript was loaned to the Uffizi Gallery for their exhibition ‘Bagliori Dorati 1375–1440’. Prior to being loaned the manuscript underwent pigment-consolidation treatment.

Mary Hamilton Papers: Diary, 3–17 August 1784, HAM/2/13; Notes to the Portraits in Woburn Abbey, c.1791, HAM/3/5

Mary Hamilton (1756–1816), courtier, bluestocking and diarist, was the niece of Sir William Hamilton. In 1777 she was appointed assistant governess to George III’s daughters, and in 1779 she had to fend off the attentions of the adolescent Prince of Wales. Mary remained at court, despite bouts of ill health, until the Queen finally agreed to release her in 1782. She then settled in London as an independent woman, enjoying the company of literary friends such as Hannah More, Fanny Burney, Mary Delany, Mrs Garrick and other members of the Bluestocking circle. She dined frequently at the houses of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Horace Walpole. In 1785 Mary

married a childhood friend, John Dickenson, son of John Dickenson of Birch Hall near Manchester.



Mary Hamilton's archive is a wonderful survival, comprising 3,000 pages of letters from family, friends and associates; sixteen diaries detailing her years as an independent woman between 1782 and 1785; and six manuscript volumes. The archive offers remarkable insights into royal, aristocratic and literary circles during the reign of George III.

The archive was sold to an institution overseas in 2006, but a temporary export stop was imposed, enabling The University of Manchester to match the sale price. Our purchase of the archive was made possible by generous grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Society of Dilettanti Charitable Trust, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and Friends of the John Rylands.

Since then the archive has been fully catalogued, thanks to a grant from the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme for Archives, and large parts of the archive have been digitalised at the request of researchers.

Shown here are one of Mary Hamilton's diaries, describing the first ascent in London of Vincenzo Lunardi's hot-air balloon, in August 1784, and a volume containing 'Notes to the Portraits in Woburn Abbey by Hon. Horace Walpole', although not in his hand.

Thrale-Piozzi Letters, English MS 1329



The Library holds the world's most important collection of letters and papers relating to Hester Thrale-Piozzi and her circle. The collection contains over 150 letters from Hester to Samuel Johnson and approximately 2,800 items of correspondence in total, as well as journals, literary manuscripts, financial papers, legal documents and title deeds relating to the Salusbury and Thrale estates.

Earlier this year we purchased at Bloomsbury Auctions twenty-four unpublished letters from Hester to Jacob Weston, her steward at Streatham Park, and one to Peter Giles.

These are business letters rather than literary correspondence, and as Bloom & Bloom state in *The Piozzi Letters*, in her business correspondence, Thrale-Piozzi 'seems less studied, indeed more genuinely casual, than in the correspondence with

her friends. Never writing down to her stewards, for example, she admitted her sense of dependence upon them (albeit expressed somewhat peremptorily) and therefore her gratitude.’ The letters also allow glimpses into the domestic life of Thrall-Piozzi and her husband, and their finances, as well as including references to politics and current affairs. They touch on individuals represented elsewhere in the Rylands collection, such as the Ladies of Llangollen, and also fill an important gap in the estate and business correspondence already held by the Library.

The purchase (hammer price: £41,000) was generously supported by the B.H. Breslauer Foundation, the Friends of the National Libraries, and Friends of the John Rylands.