

Selections from the
King's Manuscripts
from the British Library

Various sources. Selections from the King's Manuscripts from the British Library





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INTRODUCTION

Selections from *The King's Manuscripts from the British Library* is a major British Heritage collection. Following the donation of the Old Royal Library to the British Museum by King George II in 1757, George III built up his own collection of printed books and manuscripts. These were in turn transferred to the British Museum after his death by George IV in 1823 and are known as The "King's Collection". Most of the manuscripts in this collection date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Military and historical works are most numerous followed by works of geography and travel, literature, religion and devotion, and "state papers".

AN ARCHIVES UNBOUND COLLECTION

This digital archive offers a selection of distinguished medieval and post-medieval manuscripts from the King's Manuscripts. The collection is important for understanding the cultural and intellectual environment of British monarchs from at least Edward IV to George III. The materials includes "treasures" – high-quality, often illuminated manuscript books dedicated and presented to monarchs, manuscripts of important classical texts, examples of intellectual and literary works of the period, and the working library of ruling monarchs from Edward IV to George II.

EXAMPLES:

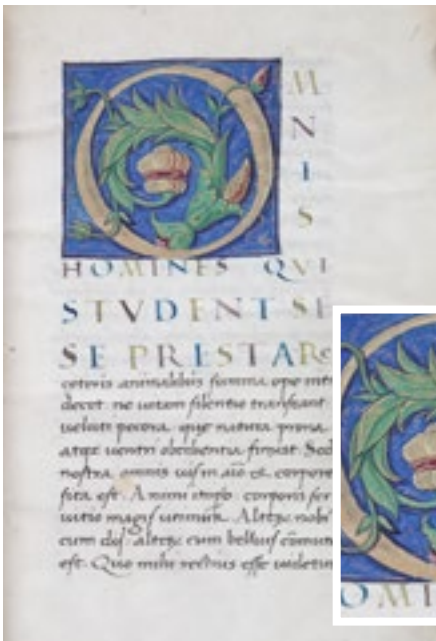
- The "military" works include a *Narrative of the Second Siege of Gibraltar, 1727* (18th C), and *Memoire sur la guerre de Boheme*, written apparently by a French officer of the Allied Army (1741-1742).
- Literary works include plays by Horace Walpole and Samuel Johnson, *The Massacre at Paris with the Death of the Duke of Guise*, by Christopher Marlowe (18th C), Poems by Italian Writers, and verses in honour of Queen Caroline.
- Among the works of travel are a *Description of the Town of Sigtuna*, in Sweden (18th C), and various chronicles of Venetian history.
- The religious and devotional works include some fine illuminated manuscripts such as *Istoria del sacro concilio di Trento scritta da M. Antonio Milledonne, Secretario Venetiano* (17th C).
- Documents include a *Return by the South Sea Company to an order of [James] Stanhope, Secretary of State, 21 [Feb. 1715]*, an *Account of the Institution for Orphans and Foundlings established in Bengal* (1786), three treatises in Spanish relating to Mexico (17th C), and *A letter to Samuel Johnson, LL.D., on the subject of a future state* by John Taylor, LL.D.
- 15th century manuscripts of works of Juvenal, Cicero, and Virgil, as well as an 11th century manuscript of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

WHAT MAKES THESE MANUSCRIPTS SPECIAL?

- **Craftsmanship** – many of the works are presentation copies with fine decoration, illumination, gilding and illustration.
- **Autograph copies** – presentation copies are included dedicated to the monarch by the author him or herself
- **Subject matter** – the collection contains a wide range of subjects – both classic works on that subject and contemporary new works presented to the monarch
- **State Papers** – a percentage of the works are State Papers such as treaties, letters to and from other personages of Europe, as well as royal and state accounts
- **Provenance** – these manuscripts were given to, purchased, or confiscated by British monarchs for the Royal Library, to be instructive in the practical art of government, or in intellectual accomplishment, religious devotion and theological understanding expected of a royal monarch and noble, or as records of the history of Britain and the monarchy itself.

The King's Manuscripts include magnificent examples of fine calligraphy, with each letter painstakingly designed to tell stories of kings and history. The calligraphy's artistic quality embodies the ageless dedication of ancient scribes, as well as the essence of regal elegance, with its beautifully drawn scripts and elaborate flourishes.

KING'S MS 18 WORKS OF SALLUST



This carefully conserved manuscript is said to represent a priceless collection of Sallust's works. This ancient document provides an invaluable window into the literary and historical background of Sallust's works, as well as a deep look at the moral and political climate of ancient Rome.



KING'S MS 21 WORKS OF MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO



Cicero was a well-known Roman philosopher, statesman, and orator. Cicero's sophisticated philosophical treatises, elegant speeches, and political works are preserved in this manuscript, demonstrating his enormous influence on eloquence, politics, and moral philosophy in ancient Rome.

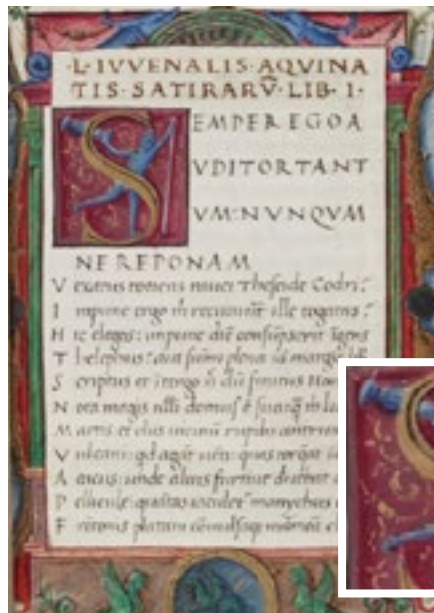


KING'S MS 24 WORKS OF VIRGIL



This manuscript is an important compilation of poetry of the well-known ancient Roman poet Virgil. Copies of Virgil's poetry, including his epic masterpiece "The Aeneid," are contained in this compilation. This manuscript offers an in-depth look into Virgil's creative genius and enlightens readers and historians alike about Roman mythology, culture, and narrative techniques.

KING'S MS 28 WORKS OF JUVENAL, PERSIUS AND MAXIMIANUS ETRUSCUS



This manuscript is a valuable compilation of literature and includes pieces by Juvenal, Persius, and other authors. This collection showcases the scathing observations on politics, society, and human nature of Juvenal and Persius, preserving their sarcastic genius and providing a thought-provoking, vivid picture of life in ancient Rome.

Beyond calligraphy, The King's Manuscripts preserve a variety of aspects of literature, historical accounts, and traditional wisdom. These manuscripts, which range from philosophical treatises to political transcripts and cultural artefacts, provide a wealth of information about the social, intellectual, and artistic climate of the times in which they were written. They are gems that offer a complex perspective on human civilisation, its accomplishments, ideologies, and social structures.

KING'S MS 243 UNIFORMS



'Uniforms' is a compilation of vibrant illustrations painstakingly created by H. B. Merker, an artillery ensign. This artefact, which is beautifully bound with tree-calf and is 7 5/8 inches by 6 inches, was created in the year 1790 and contains 49 pages. It offers a window into the uniforms and fashion of the Royal British and Electoral Brunswick-Lüneburg German troops by providing a thorough visual chronicle of their outfits.

KING'S MS 395 GENEALOGICAL CHRONICLE



Written in English and dating back to Henry VII's reign, this genealogical chronicle follows the genealogies of Adam to Christ and the English monarchs' ancestors from Woden, Japhet, Brutus, Egbert, and Rollo of Normandy, among other lines. This 34-page vellum manuscript, which is roughly 17 1/4 inches by 12 1/2 inches, is illuminated with portraits and historical events such as the creation of Eve, the Ark, and the Temple. Its binding, with its Tudor rose, royal arms, and elaborate patterns, is similar to one found in a book from 1516 at Durham, indicating that it was bound using methods from that era's bookbinding history.

...made in damastere
...the honde off god & put
...ce off delphic called
...se fro the wyche place
...d whan adam was in
...ff a rybe off hys syde a
...oyd. Hur to adam. And
...ame as he had do to al oyr
...hur ene. After both adam
...e. off the frute off byffe p
...d then. Where fore both
...d. then wyth frute loff. But
...s. God put them both owarit
...ud lett them byn wyth atrachyn
...e to kepe yt from. Adam & ene
...the to get there loynng wyth
...yng off the yerth for the synne
...s a anfyd. Adam at xv. yere old as
...ng gate. Cayn and at xxx. yere
...and whā he was c. c. xxx. ye
...gatt Seth. And a c. yere he way
...bell the wyche moyses spak not
...whā he hade. hnyd a c. yere xxx
...m ebron. After y gret
...iii wry

The firste age of y worlde
was fro. Adam un to
noe. Then fro noe un
to Abraham. The iii.
fro Abraham to dd. The iii.
un to the transmigraon off babylon.
The schylder off ysrael were take in to
thraldam for synne fro the loude off
behest that hys Jenufalon & the cunre
a bowte by Nabugoddonso. & browt
un to babylon. And wer ther i cap
tynyte oz thraldam. by yere. And
v. ys callyd the transmigraon. The
off Babylon un to Cryst. The. vi.
fro Cryst un to v. ende off the worl
Chese. vi. bene off them that be l
myng. The vii. ys off them that be l
tyt & bene dede. That be gan fro
the passyō of ower lordz schall
un to the day off dome. The vii.
schall be off them y schall re
and schall be gynn at the day
me & schall laste wyth owarit
yt vs to know thes bene not a
ages for y nūber off yere a n
... But for merrit

For more information or to request a trial
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