



Riches of the Rylands: The Special Collections of The University of Manchester Library

John Hodgson

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Riches of the Rylands explores and celebrates the outstanding Special Collections of The University of Manchester Library.

These collections of rare books, manuscripts, archives, maps and visual materials are extraordinarily rich and diverse. Comprising over one million items and extending over twenty-five kilometres of shelving, they span 5,000 years, from clay tablets to emails; range over six continents; encompass scores of civilisations and belief systems; and include almost every format ever used for written communication.

Many of the items featured here derive from the superlative collections purchased by Enriqueta Rylands for the magnificent library she founded in 1900 as a memorial to her husband John. Some were separately accrued by The University of Manchester prior to its merger with The John Rylands Library in 1972, while others are of very recent acquisition.

Riches of the Rylands features over 150 key items, each one chosen for its intrinsic interest and significance, and to reflect the broad spectrum of the collections. The book is arranged thematically, with thirteen chapters containing short essays on individual items by over sixty contributors - curators and experts in particular fields. Every item is beautifully illustrated in full colour. An extended introduction charts the history and context of the collections, and explores how they 'speak' to one another and to many different audiences.

Riches of the Rylands will appeal to a broad readership - lovers of books and libraries, and anyone interested in literature, art, history, the history of ideas, and collecting - as well as more specialist academic audiences.

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