

THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT MASTERPIECES FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY'S FAMED BODLEIAN LIBRARY

WORKS INCLUDE SUCH TREASURES AS
JANE AUSTEN'S *THE WATSONS*, THE MAGNA CARTA,
SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST FOLIO, MARY SHELLEY'S
FRANKENSTEIN, AND ALBRECHT DÜRER'S APOCALYPSE

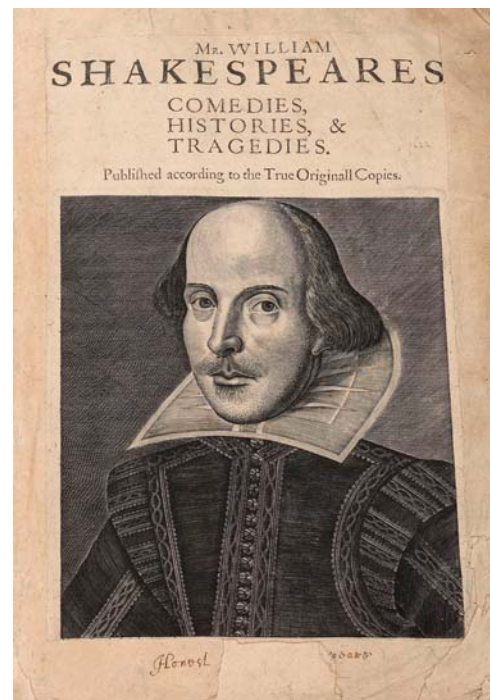
Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian Library

June 6–September 14

Press Preview: Thursday, June 5, 10-11:30 a.m.

New York, NY, April 18, 2014— The Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford holds one of the greatest collections of books and manuscripts in the world. *Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian Library*, on view at the Morgan Library & Museum from June 6 to September 14, celebrates more than two thousand years of the creative genius of authors, composers, artists, scientists, and philosophers preserved in the library's rich holdings. The exhibition includes items from cultures the world over and ranges from a papyrus fragment of a seventh-century B.C. Sappho poem to a copy of Magna Carta dating to 1217 to key works by novelist Jane Austen.

The idea of genius has always been difficult to define and its usefulness has at times been challenged. Nevertheless, the belief in its existence—as a kind of yardstick with which to measure the historical value of human achievement—has informed the building of the collections of the Bodleian and the Morgan Library & Museum. *Marks of Genius* speaks to the many forms the idea can take, highlighting not only the creativity of the conventional “solitary genius,” but also important innovations undertaken as collaborative efforts.



William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies (The First Folio)
London: printed by Isaac Jaggard and Edward
Blount, 1623, Arch. G c.7
The Bodleian Library, Oxford



London: T. Egerton, 1813
Arch. AA e.23
The Bodleian Library, Oxford

At the heart of the exhibition of almost sixty objects is the notion of genius as being broadly infused across all human endeavor.

The Bodleian Library was founded in 1602 by Sir Thomas Bodley, a diplomat under Queen Elizabeth I, to serve the University of Oxford and the international “republic of the learned.” In 1610 Bodley arranged an agreement with the Stationer’s Company which allowed the Library to receive copies “of all new Books”. This marks the beginning of the

legal deposit and today the institution remains entitled to a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Its cornerstone holdings include opulent medieval manuscripts, such as the fourteenth-century Romance of Alexander, a 1623 “copyright copy” of the Shakespeare First Folio, and part of Jane Austen’s unpublished novel, *The Watsons*, one of the author’s few existing manuscripts, of which the Morgan owns the other part.

“The Bodleian and the Morgan have a long history of cooperation and we are delighted to present this exceptional selection of objects from its collection,” said William M. Griswold, Director of the Morgan. “True genius is a rare and extraordinary thing. The works in this show underscore the fact that genius knows no boundaries of time, place, or culture.”

Richard Ovendon, the Bodleian’s Librarian, said, “The genius of libraries has been the preservation of the records of human civilisation. The Bodleian is proud to partner with the Morgan to bring some of the greatest of these records to New York to share with the public, through our *Marks of Genius* show.”

Magna Carta
Issue of 1217, sent by the royal
chancery to Gloucester
MS. Ch. Glouc. 8
The Bodleian Library, Oxford



The Exhibition

Section I. Spirit of Place

The spirit of a place or group, which is sometimes called “genius loci,” is embodied through maps, travel accounts, and historic documents. The spirit of a nation or people can be seen in the heavily illustrated Codex Mendoza, a first-hand, historical account of Aztec Civilization produced by the Spanish colonizers around 1541, as well as one of the oldest extant copies of *Magna Carta*, the great English charter of freedoms, which represents the

English nation much as the Declaration of Independence does the United States. Also included in this section are a six-foot-long manuscript map of the Holy Land from the late 1300s and the first map of the Virginia Colony by explorer John Smith.

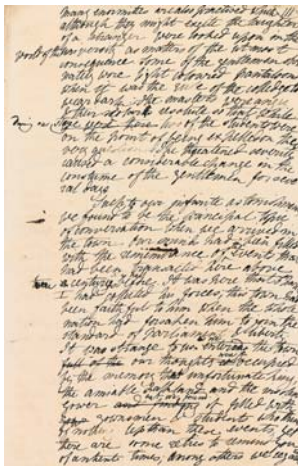


John Smith (bap. 1580, d. 1631)
A Map of Virginia
 Oxford: J. Barnes, 1612
 Arch. G e.41(5*)
 The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Section II: Touch of Genius

Works in this section include Handel’s conductor’s score for *Messiah* used at the first performance, Moses Maimonides’s draft notes for the *Mishneh Torah*, and Mary Shelley’s manuscript for *Frankenstein*, with Percy Bysshe Shelley’s corrections.

Other objects gain authority because of their association with a historically important person. The more exceptional the individual, the more highly we value manuscripts they wrote or things they owned. Included are two books touched by legendary queens: the fourteen-year-old Elizabeth I translated a French text into English and dedicated the document to her step-mother, Katherine Parr; while St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, owned an eleventh-century gospel book that many believe to be a holy relic.



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851)
 Pages from the draft of *Frankenstein*
 December 1816(?)–April 1817
 MS. Abinger c. 56
 The Bodleian Library, Oxford



George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
 Original conducting score of *Messiah*
 September–October 1741
 MS. Tenbury 346
 The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Section III. The Patron of Genius

Books and manuscripts can be objects of great elaboration and unusual beauty. More often than not they are collaborative, and as such offer a corrective to the idea of the “solitary genius.” Many, often anonymous, hands—scribes, artists, printers, binders—produce these magnificent objects. The exquisite Hebrew Kennicott Bible from 1476 and a glorious Qur’an from 1550 speak to the genius of copying religious texts. Artistic and literary genius often needs a patron, and this relationship is fully realized in an ivory plaque from the court of

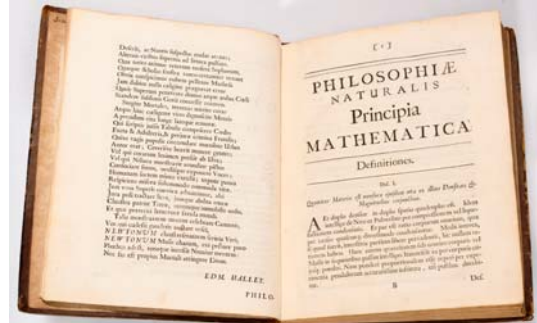


The Kennicott Bible
Corunna, Spain, 1476
MS. Kennicott I
The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Charlemagne around the year 800, the manuscript of Boccaccio’s *Il Filocolo* from the court of Ludovico Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, and the manuscript of *Bahāristān* by the Persian poet Jāmi produced at the court of Emperor Akbar in Mughal India.

Section IV. On the Shoulders of Giants

Every invention or creation is indebted to what came before. Benedictine monasticism was the cultural backbone of the Middle Ages, represented here by the oldest extant copy of the Rule of St. Benedict written in England in the early 700s. Also on view is the oldest book written in English, a translation of St. Gregory the Great’s manual on pastoral care from around 890. Sir Isaac Newton’s *Principia mathematica* of 1687, which laid the foundations of modern physics, had its basis in Euclid’s *Elementa*, composed around 300 B.C., and shown here in a copy from 1888.



Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727)
Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica (Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy)
London: the Royal Society, 1687
Arch. A d.37
The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Section V. The Genius of Printing

Few inventions have so revolutionized the spread of knowledge, literacy, and communication as Johann Gutenberg’s creation of a system of movable type in Germany around 1450–55. Printing exponentially increased a text’s survival versus its manuscript counterpart.

Important books and ideas could suddenly circulate in hundreds of copies rather than just a handful. William Caxton was the first English printer, and the exhibition includes the first English book advertisement for his *Sarum Ordinale*, which can be gotten “good cheap.” A portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Julia Margaret Cameron’s photograph of Alfred, Lord Tennyson represent authors whose talents were supremely realized through print. Visually stunning works, such as Albrecht Dürer’s *Apocalypse* and J.R.R. Tolkien’s original design for *The Hobbit* dust jacket, illustrate the intimate relationship some authors and artists had with the publication and distribution of their own work.



Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
Apocalypsis (The Apocalypse)
Nuremberg: Hieronymus Hölzel, 1511
Douce D subt. 41
The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Public Programs

Gallery Talk

Friday, July 11, 6:30 pm

John McQuillen, Assistant Curator, Printed Books and Bindings, will lead this tour of *Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian Library*.

All gallery talks and tours are free with museum admission; no tickets or reservations are necessary. They usually last one hour and meet at the Benefactors Wall across from the coat check area.

Tours

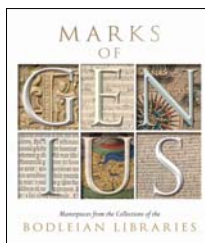
Between the Lines Tours

Saturday, June 14 and September 13, 11 am

Written or drawn, lines are to be read and interpreted. In this interactive gallery talk, a Morgan educator will lead visitors in an hour-long discussion on a selection of works from *Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian Library*.

All gallery talks and tours are free with museum admission; no tickets or reservations are necessary. They usually last one hour and meet at the Benefactors Wall across from the coat check area.

For more information on these and other related public programs visit themorgan.org/programs.



Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a 360-page, lavishly illustrated catalogue with an introductory essay on the nature of genius, as well as detailed entries for individual works by Stephen Hebron

Organization and Sponsorship

Marks of Genius: Treasures from the Bodleian is curated by Stephen Hebron and the staff at the Bodleian Library. Its showing at the Morgan is organized by John McQuillen, assistant curator in the Department of Printed Books and Bindings at the Morgan Library & Museum. The exhibition will inaugurate the new Weston Library at the Bodleian in March 2015.

Lead funding is provided by Karen H. Bechtel, with additional generous support from the Johansson Family Foundation and the Ricciardi Family Exhibition Fund.



The programs of The Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

The Morgan Library & Museum

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

The Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford form the largest university library system in the United Kingdom. They include the principal University library—the Bodleian Library—which has been a library of legal deposit for 400 years; major research libraries; and libraries attached to faculties, departments and other institutions of the University. The combined library collections number more than 11 million printed items, in addition to 50,000 e-journals, and vast quantities of materials in other formats. For additional information see www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405
212.685.0008
www.themorgan.org

Just a short walk from Grand Central and Penn Station

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Admission

\$18 for adults; \$12 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop, Café, or Dining Room.