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Works of English origin or related to anglo-saxon culture

Permanent exhibition

A display of Giants and Dwarfs



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la science et la culture



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Mémoire du monde

THE HON^{BLE} THE EARL OF ST VINCENT, K.B. &c &c

17th CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE (ELIZABETH I AND THE STUARTS)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Comedies, Histories & Tragedies*, London, 1632, 2nd collective edition

Nine years after the legendary “First Folio”, the complete works of Shakespeare are published for the second time, without new plays but with about **1,700 important amendments** in the text. The preliminary poetical tributes are signed by Ben Jonson or John Milton.

W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, London, 1599, 2nd edition

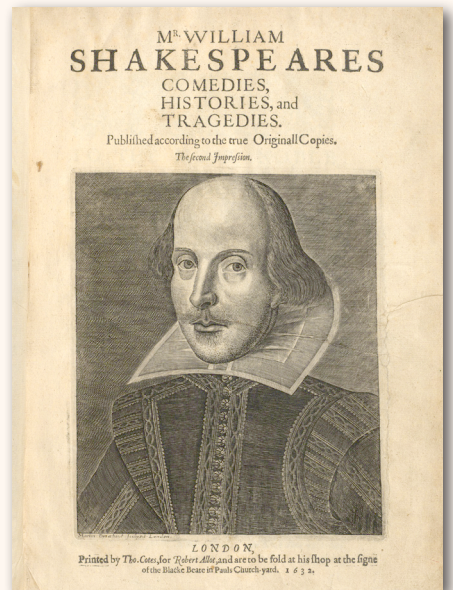
First great tragedy of the author, this iconic play was written between 1591 and 1595. It is about the tragic love of two star-crossed lovers. It was published in 1597, but in a pirated and very defective edition. This first official edition, revised on the basis of the author's text, is **one of twelve remaining copies** worldwide.

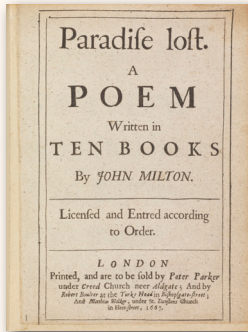
W. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, London, 1600, 2nd edition

This comic fantasy of four lovers who find themselves bewitched by fairies is a sly reckoning with love, jealousy and marriage. Written in 1594-95, it was printed for the first time in 1600. This **antedated rare second edition** bears the arms of Geneva on its title page, a woodcut engraved around 1560 in memory of the reception of the English Protestants exiled under Mary Tudor.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637), *Volpone, or The Foxe*, London, 1607, 1st edition

Since its creation in 1605, this merry comedy has met with a **success that never faded**. Friend and rival of Shakespeare, Jonson stages the cunning ways of Volpone, allegedly sick and real crook, finally fooled by his valet Mosca. The work was adapted by Sephan Zweig in 1925.





John Milton (1608-1674), *Paradise Lost*, London, 1667, 1st edition

In this biblical epic divided into ten books written in blank verse, John Milton, the blind poet, tells the story of the loss of Eden. Tempted by Lucifer, Man loses innocence and experiences the Fall. It is considered as a **major work** of the English literature.

2

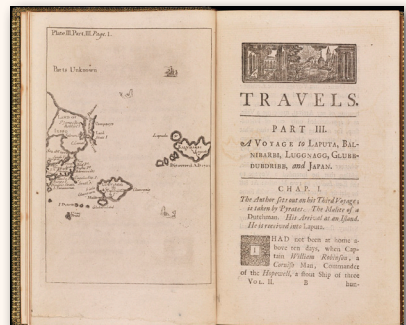
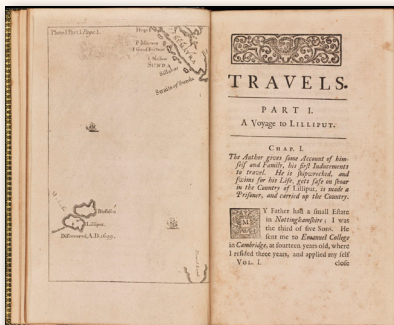
IMMORTAL HEROES OF 18th CENTURY NOVELS

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* of York, London, 1719, 1st edition

Inspired by the real-life experiences of Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor, Robinson Crusoe describes how he lived during 28 years on an isolated island. Thus the **survivor myth** was created by Daniel Defoe. It was an immediate success both in England and on the continent and it inspired numerous adaptations.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), *Gulliver's Travels*, London, 1726, 1st edition

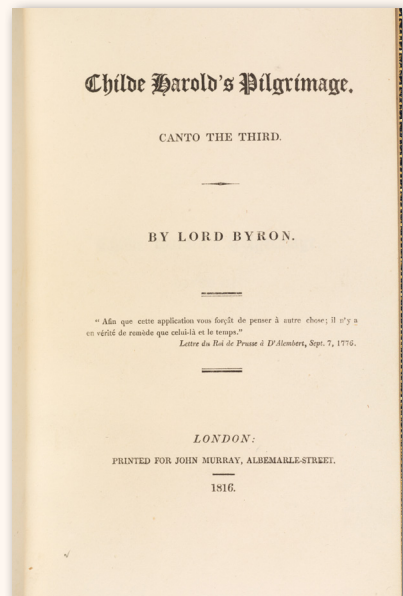
With *Gulliver's Travels*, the Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift, published anonymously a keystone of English literature. It was one of the books at the **root of the novel form**. It combines the parody of a travel narrative to imaginary islands such as Lilliput, Laputa or Brobdingnag and savage satire, mocking English customs and the politics of the day. It was translated into French in 1727.



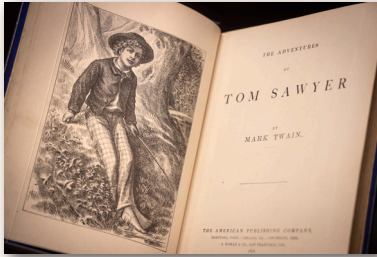
Lord Byron (George Gordon) (1788-1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Cantos I-II*, London, 1812, 1st edition

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, a **partly autobiographical poem** was written by the famous romantic poet George Gordon, Lord Byron, during his first trips on the continent (1809-1811).

The two first cantos follow Childe Harold, archetypal byronic hero, who had definitely left England, in Spain, Greece and Albania. The sad and lonely hero dwells in a constant melancholic state. These first cantos were published together in 1812. The dazzling success of the very autobiographical text propelled Byron to the rank of bestselling author, a living legend for his admirers. Canto III will be **written partly in Cologne** in the rainy summer of 1816. Canto IV concluded the poem in Rome with the death of Harold after visiting various Italian cities.



Mark Twain (1835-1910), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, New York, 1876, 1st illustrated edition



If collective psyche made Tom Sawyer the symbol of “American freedom”, Twain’s real invention was more ambiguous. Often depicted as acerbic, the young boy is actually playing the rebel by amusement rather than really being one. For the author, the novel, a sometimes harsh **satire**

of the rural and conservative Middle West, was “not a book for young boys. It should be read by adults only, it was written for adults only.”

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), *Treasure Island*, London, 1883, 1st edition

It is in the Scottish children’s magazine *Young Folks* that the adventures of Jim Hawkins are issued for the first time at the end of 1881. This novel, **the first of the young author**, was finalised after his return from California, where Stevenson almost met his death. Vast success since its bookstore launch in 1883, the book was adapted many times for the cinema since 1920.



Alan Alexander Milne (1882-1956), *Winnie-The-Pooh*, London, 1926, 1st edition

In the vast and varied work of A.A. Milne, the character of Winnie the Pooh remains the **most famous worldwide**. With his friends Christopher,

Piglet, Owl, Rabbit and Tigger, he immediately won the vote of children and consequently a series of three books was issued in 1927-1928. The illustrations of E.H. Shepard also contributed to the success of this innocent universe inspired by the games and reverie of his own son, Christopher.



SCIENCE AND ART

Medicine

- 5 **William Harvey** (1578-1657), *De motu cordis & sanguinis in animalibus*, 1639

Physician of Kings James I and Charles I, Harvey, one of the fathers of physiology, began from 1616 to evoke the **principle of blood flow** completely challenging the theories inherited from Aristotle and Galien. Both of his books, *De Motu Cordis* and *De Generatione Animalium*, were written in Latin. Promoting critical thinking and experimental testing of ideas was Harvey's greatest contribution to science. The first edition of his revolutionary treatise was published in 1628.

Geography

- 5 **James Cook** (1728-1779), *A voyage towards the South Pole and around the world*, 1777, 1st edition

The three journeys of captain Cook throughout the Pacific quickly achieved the status of Enlightenment's epic. For the second expedition the Royal Society and the Admiralty entrusted Cook with the mission to search for the Southern Continent and to test a version of the John Harrison chronometer for longitude determinations. Led between 1772 and 1775, the second journey aboard the ship *Resolution* brought him to **circumnavigate the Antarctic** for the first time.



6

Henry Stanley (1841-1904), *How I found Livingstone, Travels, Adventures, and Discoveries in Central Africa*, 1872

In January 1871, the explorer embarked on a mission to **find the missionary David Livingstone**, declared missing since 1866. The instructions of the *New York Herald's* big boss were clear : “Draw a thousand pounds now, and when you have gone through that, draw another thousand, but find Livingstone!” The aim was achieved eleven months later on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, with these famous words: “Doctor Livingstone, I presume?”

Natural sciences

6

Charles Darwin (1809-1882), *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, 1859

From his participation in the *Beagle's* scientific adventure (1831-1836), Darwin drew his first intuition to explain the **transformation and the adaptability of species**. The publication of his theories met both success (the whole 1,250 printed copies were sold out on the very day they came out) but also mockery and even hatred. The word “evolution” only appeared in the sixth edition in 1872.

7

John Gould (1804-1881), *A Monograph of the Ramphastidae, or Family of Toucans*, London, 1833-1835

Talented ornithologist, artist and taxidermist, Gould worked for the museum of the Zoological Society of London (1827) as first curator and preserver. With his wife Elizabeth Coxen Gould he produced several magnificently illustrated books about birds from Central Asia, from Australia and other regions, a total of 41 books with 3000 plates. The illustration of the *Monograph of the Ramphastidae, or Family of Toucans* is considered his **most beautiful and spectacular piece** with a vibrant range of colours – glossy black, bright red, yellow and orange – imitating life to perfection.



Paintings

8

William Heath (1794-1840), *Portraits of historical personages and battles scenes relative to the campaign against Napoleon*, London, 1817



Prior to becoming a popular caricaturist, the illustrator William Heath had defined himself as a “**portrait and military painter**”. At the end of the Napoleonic wars, he painted a whole series of scenes illustrating the success of the allied armies against the “Ogre” (notably under Wellington’s

command, victorious at the battle of Waterloo), works that are gathered in *The Martial Achievements of Great Britain and her Allies* (1815) and in this volume. The aquatints (hand-watercoloured prints) are signed by William-Thomas Fry and Thomas Sutherland.

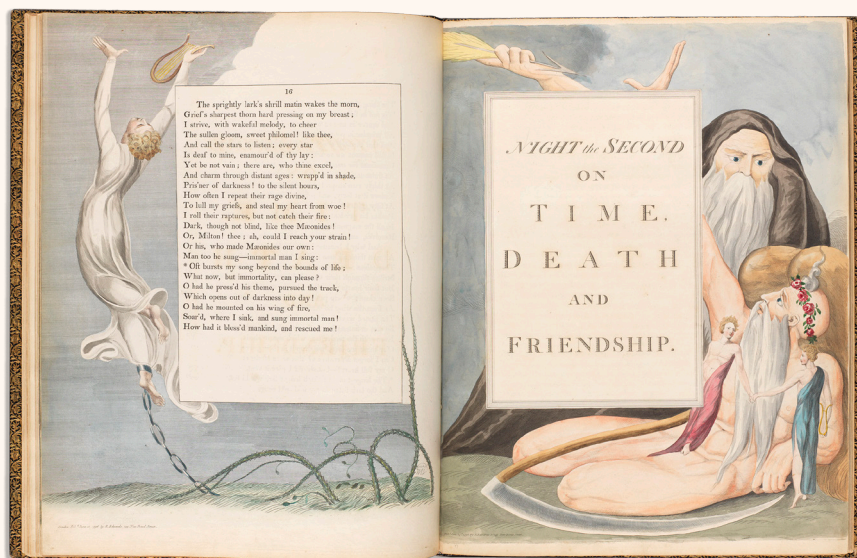
Poetry/watercolour

8

Edward Young (1683-1765), **William Blake** (1757-1827), *The Complaint, and the Consolation, Or Night Thoughts*, London, 1797

Edward Young was an English poet, critic, philosopher and theologian, remembered for *Night-Thoughts*, a long, enormously popular poem on death divided into nine parts, or “Nights.”

Also a poet himself, William Blake remains known nowadays for his **graphic distraught and visionary work** (some even considered him insane). Besides his own very mystical poems, he illustrated some great classics (Milton, Dante), his most remarkable work being this edition of Young’s *Night Thoughts*, a poem that became a European bestseller. Starting in 1794, Blake produced hundreds of preparatory drawings, however he only finished illustrating the first four parts of the poem. This copy is one of few enhanced with watercolour by the artist himself.



History

8

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), *Two Speeches*, London, around 1930

The importance of a text should not always be considered in connection to the size of the book which contains it! This tiny unique copy contains two fundamental texts by President Lincoln: his *Inauguration Speech* and the famous *Gettysburg Address* delivered in 1863 on the Gettysburg battlefield, where 50,000 men died. It consists of only ten sentences, but represents one of the **most well-known speeches** in history. The binding is decorated with the American presidency's arms and includes a miniature portrait of Lincoln. It is the work of the the English workshop of Sangorski & Sutcliffe, specialists of jeweled fine bindings.



9

Magna Charta, England, 1323-1324, Latin manuscript on parchment



The *Magna Carta Libertatum*, commonly called *Magna Carta* (also *Magna Charta*) is a **royal charter of rights** agreed to by King John Lackland of England at Runnymede, near Windsor, on 15 June 1215. Refusing the heavy taxes and the military requirement,

the rebelled English barons imposed him in 1215 a great charter which guaranteed the rights of the nobility, tax exemption for townspeople and a control over the kingdom's taxation. Several times amended, the text was enriched in 1354 with a revolutionary notion: equality before the law. Rediscovered in the 17th century by the opponents to the absolute monarchy, it inspired in 1679 the Great Writ of *Habeas Corpus*, a fundamental right in the Constitution that protects against unlawful and indefinite imprisonment.

10

Charles Hamilton Smith (1776-1859), *Selections of the Ancient Costume of Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1814

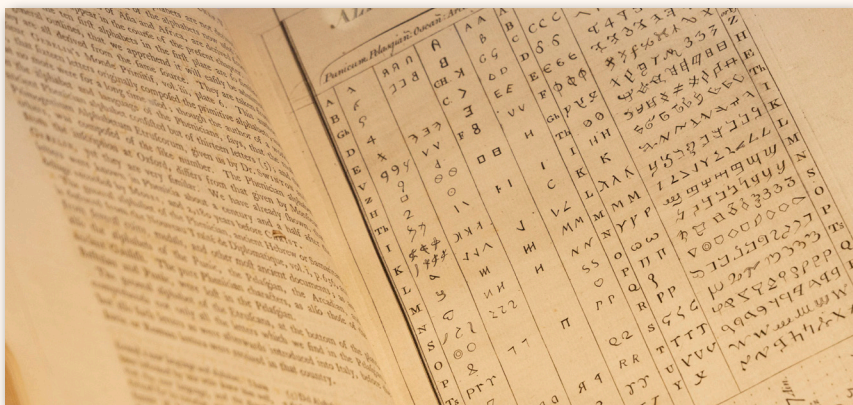
During the romantic era, historians took a strong interest in the Middle Ages, especially in fashion, subject to beautiful books with engraved and coloured plates. Charles Hamilton Smith, famous for his studies on the best colour for military uniforms, is also known for his **talent as an illustrator** of army uniforms mainly but also of historical costumes in Great Britain.



Linguistics

- 11 **Thomas Astle** (1735-1803), *The Origin and Progress of Writing*, London, 1784

As one of the main British palaeographer of the 17th century, fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Society, Thomas Astle also assumed the responsibility of Keeper of the Records. His major work, *The Origin and Progress of Writing*, was illustrated with 31 plates, which reproduced many of ancient or medieval writings. The first plate represents a comparative table of **ancient alphabets**. It especially mentions the Phoenician – direct or indirect precursor of the Greek, Latin, Aramaean and Arabic alphabets – that Father Jean-Jacques Barthélémy decrypted in 1758 thanks to his method based on the study of bilingual inscriptions.

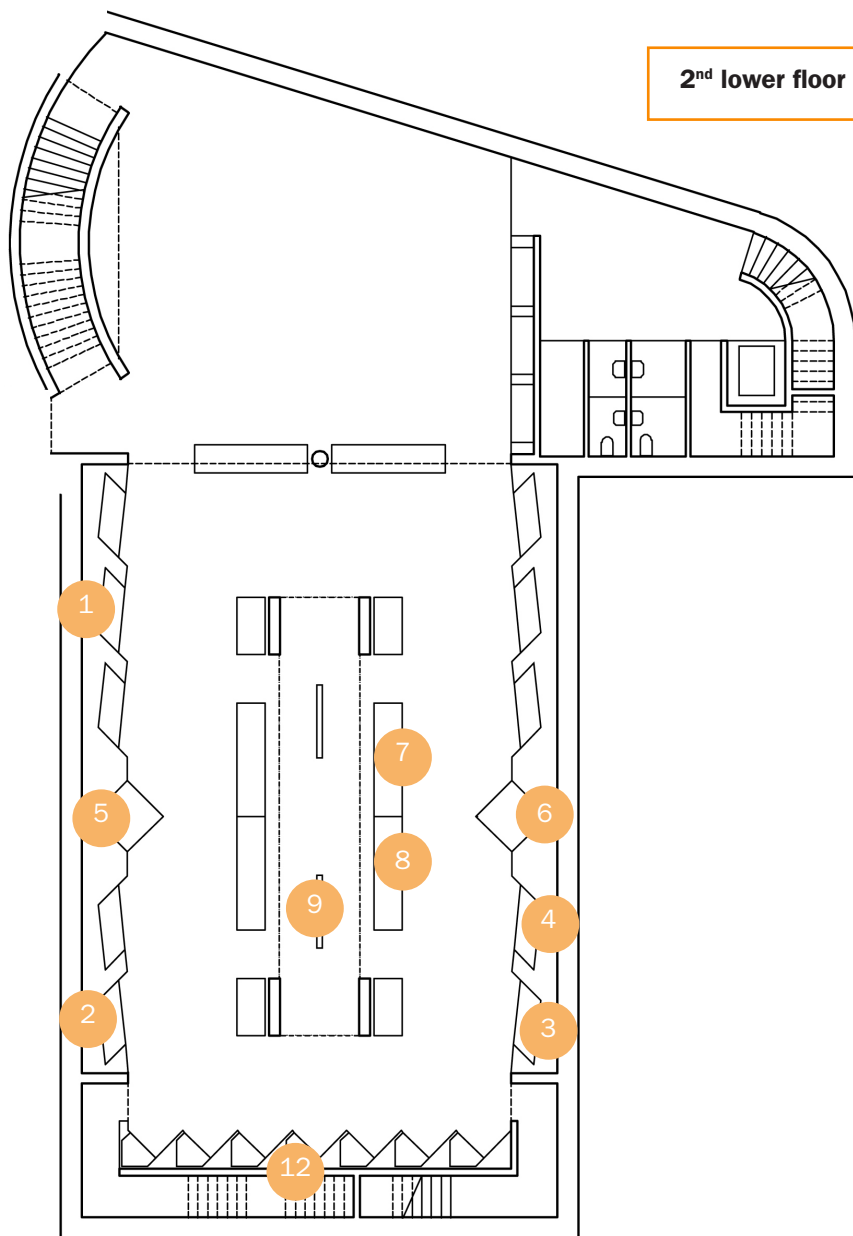


Music

- 12 **Georg Friedrich Haendel** (1685-1759), *Air en langue allemande*, London, 1738, autograph

Amongs the **greatest baroque music composers**, Haendel left Germany and his position of Chapel Master in Hanover for England in the autumn of 1712. He became the musical director of the Royal Academy of Music in 1720 and composed operas, outdoor music or oratorios to the delight of King George I and King George II. This collection of music scores contains four songs in Haendel's handwriting. This "German tune" is a variation of princess Bellante's aria, a character in the composer's first opera *Almira* performed in Hamburg in 1705.

2nd lower floor



Not on the map :

10

1st lower floor, next to Gutenberg's Bible

11

1st lower floor, the Origins of Civilization