

{ BnF

*Bibliothèques d'Orient,
heritage shared online*



*<http://heritage.bnf.fr/bibliothequesorient/homepage>
available online as of 12 September 2017*

*Bibliothèques d'Orient (Middle-Eastern Libraries) has been created with the support
of the Total Corporate Foundation and the Plastic Omnium Group*

*Bibliothèques d'Orient,
heritage shared online*

CONTENTS

Press release	3
Iconography	4
Bibliothèques d'Orient, heritage shared online	5
Bibliothèques d'Orient in practice	7
The project's partners	8
The action of the BnF to protect written heritage	9
The Total Foundation and Plastic Omnium, project sponsors	10-11



Cairo, view of the Mosque of Sultan Hassan. Drawing by Nicolas-Jacques Conté (1755-1805). BnF, Print & Photograph Dept.

Bibliothèques d'Orient, heritage shared online

The result of cooperation between the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF – National Library of France) and eight heritage and research libraries based in the Near East, *Bibliothèques d'Orient* will be available on line as of 12 September 2017. From the moment it opens, this collaborative digital library will bring together about 7,000 documents accompanied by almost 100 scientific contextualisation texts in a trilingual interface (French - Arabic - English).

«Bibliothèques d'Orient is not only a way to present an outstanding heritage to the general public, but also to make a tangible contribution to its safeguarding. It is a strong commitment by the BnF, which is taking action to protect endangered documentary heritage.» Laurence Engel, President of the BnF.

By assembling its collections and those of its partners' collections, and mobilising its technological expertise, the BnF has made a vast body of remarkable documents available online, presented under different thematic categories. Previously unpublished manuscripts, maps, drawings and photographic albums, etc. are just some of the documents provided to a large audience. Moreover, these collections also constitute new research sources for the scientific community.

Those collections bear testament to interaction between Eastern Mediterranean countries and France over several centuries, with a particular focus on the period 1798-1945. The digitised items have been selected by a scientific council which brings together, alongside the President of the BnF, 14 academics and internationally renowned researchers.

This action to preserve and promote a cultural heritage dating back thousands of years is fully in line with the BnF's policy of cooperation at international level. Written heritage, a vital medium for the transmission of knowledge and memory, is often targeted and destroyed in situations of conflict and instability. Drawing on its experience in risk management and physical and digital preservation, the BnF carries out actions all over the world for the protection of a universal written heritage, in collaboration with several dozens of international organisations and institutions.

Bibliothèques d'Orient has been created with the support of the Total Corporate Foundation and the Plastic Omnium Group, thanks to whom the documents of partner libraries have been digitised and subsequently put online, their staff have benefited from training as well.

Bibliothèques d'Orient is being presented at the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) in Paris from 26 September 2017 to 14 January 2018 and at the Tourcoing Museum of Fine Arts from 17 February to 5 June 2018 as part of the «Chrétiens d'Orient, 2000 ans d'histoire» (Christians of the East - 2000 years of history) exhibition.

Press contacts:

Claudine Hermabessière, Head of Press and Media Partners

claudine.hermabessiere@bnf.fr - +33 (0)1 53 79 41 18 - +33 (0)6 82 56 66 17

Isabelle Coilly, Communication and Press Officer - isabelle.coilly@bnf.fr - +33 (0)1 53 79 40 11

Iconography

Iconography available as part of promotional activities for Bibliothèques d'Orient



Beniamino Facchinelli, *The Pyramids of Giza*, 1873-1895. BnF, Prints & Photograph Dept.



The Thousand and One Nights: setting sketch. Philippe Chaperon. 1881
BnF, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra (Library/Museum of the Opera)



Hitherto unseen Eastern clothing, drawn from nature. Turkish sailor. 1813. Georges-Jacques Gatine.
BnF, Manuscript Dept



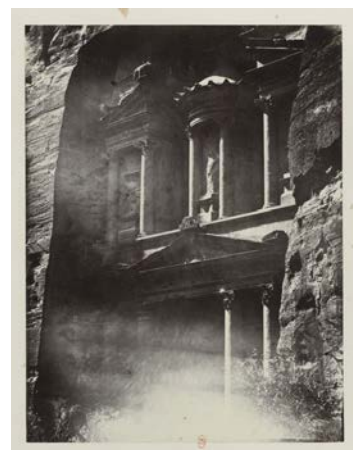
The Thousand and One Nights, manuscript, circa 1300
BnF, Manuscript Dept.



Gérard de Nerval. *Journal of journey to the East*.
BnF, Manuscript Dept.



Emile Prisse d'Avennes, *Exterior view of El-Moyed Mosque over the El Sukkarieh Bazaar. Cairo*
BnF, Manuscript Dept.



Journey to Egypt, Sinai, Jordan and Palestine. Petra. Albert Goupil. 1868. Photograph on albumin paper from collodion glass negatives
BnF, Print & Photograph Dept.



Mission de Phénicie (Mission of Phoenicia), led by Ernest Renan. Printed place
BnF, Rare Books Reserve



Vue panoramique de l'Isthme de Suez (Panoramic view of the Isthmus of Suez). Map. 1855
Linant de Bellefonds, Louis Maurice Adolphe
BnF, Maps & Plans Dept.



The Bet Gazo or compilation of liturgical Syriac books dated 1691 preserved at the Charfet Monastery of the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate in Lebanon

Bibliothèques d'Orient, heritage shared online

The Bibliothèques d'Orient digital library aims at safeguarding and promoting an exceptional documentary heritage by bringing together unique collections held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and in the collections of seven heritage and research libraries of Cairo, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Beirut and Istanbul.

Thematic content for all audiences



Beniamino Facchinelli, The Pyramids of Giza, 1873-1895. BnF, Prints & Photography Dept.

Bibliothèques d'Orient covers the period 1798-1945 and primarily focuses on countries located on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea.

Using the features of Gallica, the BnF's digital library, *Bibliothèques d'Orient* brings together remarkable documents little known by the public, since they were previously scattered between various countries and many different institutions. Its content has been selected by a scientific council. These items can be accessed through 7 categories: Crossroads, Communities, Religions, Knowledge, Politics, Imagination and Personalities. Contextualisation texts written by top level scientists and available in three languages (French - Arabic - English) allow documents to be put into context.



*The Thousand and One Nights: setting sketch. Philippe Chaperon. 1881
BnF, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra (Library/Museum of the Opera)*

When it is launched in September 2017, *Bibliothèques d'Orient* will contain almost 7,000 digitised documents and will be expanded in the following months with new contributions and other partners, both in France and abroad. Precious Hebrew manuscripts, maps that open up new perspectives for economic and social history of Turkey, the antecedents of the Guides Bleus, the first French language feminist magazine, «L'Égyptienne», founded in 1925, preparatory drawings for the *Description de l'Égypte*, and original and previously unreleased photographic albums – are just some of the documents inviting visitors to embark on a journey of

discovery and imagination. For example, the public will be able to follow in the footsteps of the archaeologist Prisse d'Avennes in Egypt in the second half of the 19th century through his drawings and photographs, immerse themselves in the monumental and picturesque Cairo of the Italian photographer Beniamino Facchinelli (1839-1895), contemplate the «from nature» drawings of clothing from the late 18th century, or browse the many versions of the *Thousand and One Nights* - handwritten, printed, in Arabic, translated or adapted, and an amazing 1884 edition of the «Mille et une nuits racontées à bébé» (*Thousand and One Nights Told to Baby*)!

¹ Full composition of the scientific council on page 6

Safeguarding and promotion



The Bet Gazo or compilation of liturgical Syriac books dated 1691 conserved at the Charfet monastery of the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate in Lebanon

Special attention is paid to preserving endangered heritage. Two Syriac liturgical books from the 11th and 17th centuries, conserved at the Charfet monastery (Lebanon), and two evangelariums from the 14th and 16th centuries, belonging to the Jounieh Melkite Salvatorian convent (Lebanon), were restored before being digitised and put online on Bibliothèques d'Orient.

By thus contributing to the promotion of this cultural heritage dating back thousands of years, the BnF is fully in line with its cooperation, conservation and research missions and contributes to the implementation of the Declaration of the Abu Dhabi International Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage Conference of 3 December 2016:

«A reflection of our humanity, guardian of our collective memory and testament to humanity's extraordinary creative spirit, world cultural heritage contains our common future.»

New research opportunities: Testimonials from contributors

«In comparing four successive editions of the translation of the Koran by Albert Kazimirski, a 19th century lexicographer and translator whose works are still widely used today, I discovered that verse 19 of sura 87 of the 1840 edition that can't have been proofread before being published by the translator, curiously translates «the Abraham» of the Arabic text by «Jesus», which the revised 1841 translation corrects.» Jacqueline Chabbi, historian, specialist in Arabic Studies, honorary university professor, and author of texts on Islam and Kazimirski.



Gérard de Nerval. Carnet de voyage en Orient.
BnF, *dép. des Manuscrits*

«I had the opportunity to discover authentic handwritten notes by Gérard de Nerval. This romantic poet, who travelled to Egypt in 1843, spent much of his trip in the shade of a library taking notes in a little journal. I used this document to search for the publications read by Gérard de Nerval in Egypt - they are still today held in Cairo, at the library of the IFAO (Institut français d'archéologie orientale - French Institute of Oriental Archaeology), and some are heavily annotated.»

These are exceptional documents through which we can analyse this author's relationship to his sources and better understand how his experience of the journey was influenced by what he read.» Rémy Arcemisbéhère, Postdoctoral researcher in French literature (Paris IV – La Sorbonne University) and author of the text on Gérard de Nerval.

«The treaty signed in September 1936 between Leon Blum and Hachem al-Atassi could - had it been ratified - have opened a new page in relations between France and Syria, at last allies on an equal footing.» Jean-Pierre Filiu, university professor at Sciences Po (Paris) in contemporary history of the Middle East and author of a text on the Franco-Syrian treaty of 1936.

Bibliothèques d'Orient in practice

<http://heritage.bnf.fr/bibliothequesorient/homepage>

Available online as of 12 September 2017

9 partner institutions: Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France) (Paris), Institut français d'archéologie orientale (French Institute of Eastern Archaeology) and Institut dominicain d'études orientales (Dominican Institute of Eastern Studies) (Cairo), Centre d'Etudes Alexandrines (Centre of Alexandrian Studies) (Alexandria), Institut Français du Proche-Orient (French Institute of the Near East) and the Bibliothèque Orientale (Eastern Library) of Saint-Joseph University (Beirut), Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française (French Bible and Archaeology School) (Jerusalem), Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (French Institute of Anatolian Studies) (Istanbul), SALT (Istanbul / Ankara)

New national and international partners as of January 2018.

Nearly 7,000 exceptional documents online, and many more to come.

7 categories and almost 100 themes.

100 texts written by academics, scientists and curators to further explain the themes and contextualise the documents.

A scientific council comprising 15 members:

Michel Abitbol (Professor Emiratus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem); Sylvie Aubenas (Head of the Print and Photograph Department, BnF); Rémi Brague (Professor Emiratus of philosophy at Paris I University and at the University of Munich); Sophie Basch (Professor of French literature at Paris-Sorbonne University); Jacqueline Chabbi (Arab historian and honorary university professor); Jean-Marie Compte (Head of the Literature and Art Department, BnF); Laurent Coulon (Director of Studies, École Pratique des Hautes Etudes); Frédérique Duyrat (Head of the Coins, Medals and Antiques Department, BnF); Laurence Engel (Chair of the BnF); Laurent Héricher (Head of the Oriental Manuscripts Service, BnF); Françoise Hours (Head of the World Literature Service and Scientific Manager, BnF); Frédéric Hitzel (Doctor of history, CNRS Research Fellow, Centre d'Études Turques, Ottomanes, Balkaniques et Centrasiatiques (Centre of Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan and Central Asian Studies - CNRS-EHESS-PSL); Henry Laurens (Professor at the Collège de France, Chair in Contemporary History of the Arab World); Isabelle Nyffenegger (Deputy Director of International Relations, BnF); Mercedes Volait (Director of Research at the CNRS, Director of the InVisu Laboratory).

Trilingual content : French, Arabic and English.

Bibliothèques d'Orient benefited from the support of the Total Corporate Foundation and the Plastic Omnium Group.

***Bibliothèques d'Orient* can be found at the «*Chrétiens d'Orient, 2000 ans d'histoire*» (Christians of the East - 2,000 years of History) exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) (Paris) from 26 September to 14 January 2018 and at the Tourcoing Museum of Fine Arts from 17 February to 5 June 2018.**

Press contacts:

Claudine Hermabessière, Head of Press and Media Partners

+33 (0)1 53 79 41 18, claudine.hermabessiere@bnf.fr

Isabelle Coilly, Communication and Press Officer

+33 (0)1 53 79 40 11, isabelle.coilly@bnf.fr

The project's partners



The Institut dominicain d'études orientales (Cairo) runs one of the largest special libraries in the field of Islamology, with over 125,000 volumes and 1,800 periodical titles. It contains more than 20,000 texts regarding Arab-Muslim heritage, as well as secondary literature in Arabic and in Western languages.



The Institut français d'archéologie orientale (Cairo) has a library with around 53,600 publications and 1,060 periodical titles. Its collections contain publications related to the study of Egypt from prehistoric times up to the modern age. The primary disciplines are Egyptology, Greco-Roman antiquity, papyrology, and Byzantine, Coptic, Arabic and Islamic studies. The library also has a very rich collection of travellers' accounts.



The Centre d'Etudes Alexandrines (Alexandria) specialises in all research into Alexandria from ancient times up to the modern day. Its library contains over 15,000 titles and 3,200 periodical volumes. The map library and the archives service also have a large number of resources (1,800 engravings, maps and plans, 100,000 photographs of excavations, museums and monuments in Alexandria, private family archives and archives belonging to Alexandrian institutions).



The Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem holds over 150,000 volumes and 1,000 titles of specialist reviews on the archaeology and literature of the ancient and recent Near East and ancient languages, and a large collection of topographic maps and plans. Its photograph collection dates back to the late 19th century and early 20th century and contains around 15,000 glass negatives and several thousand photos of the region.



The Saint-Joseph University Bibliothèque Orientale (Beirut) is home to more than 200,000 works, 1,800 journal and review titles, 3,500 manuscripts, over 2,000 geographical maps and plans, in addition to a photo library of more than 70,000 photographic archives. It contains one of the largest collections of Christian Arabic manuscripts held in one place. The importance of its collections lies in the extent that they contribute to knowledge of scientific practices in the Medieval Arab world, and that of the history and role of Eastern Christians, who passed on Greek science to classical Arab-Muslim civilisation.



The Institut Français du Proche-Orient (Beirut, Damascus) holds 125,000 works, 10,000 maps, 800 periodicals and 50,000 photographs connected to Classical archaeology and science and medieval, modern and contemporary Arabic studies on the Near East.



The Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (Istanbul) has around 40,000 works including 700 periodicals devoted to archaeology in Asia Minor, and also the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern day Turkey. The library has a large collection of works on Byzantine and Balkan studies, and Turkish architecture and art. It is also home to an exceptional collection of travel literature, some of which dates back to the 18th century, in addition to a large number of plans and maps of Istanbul.

SALT

SALT. SALT's ambition is, through research programmes, to highlight all that remains at the margin of the national narrative, and to expose its failings. Its archive collections, which focus on visual practices, urban planning and the economic and social history of Turkey and its immediate vicinity, play an important role in the institution's activities. In an approach that puts the user in the foreground, SALT relies on users and stakeholders and provides free access to all its information resources for those who contribute to the production of knowledge.

The action of the BnF to protect written heritage

An essential medium for building, transmitting and disseminating knowledge and memories, written heritage is often the first target of destructive action in situations of conflict. Committed to the universality of heritage, and with the primary mission of safeguarding this heritage, the BnF carries out actions all over the world for the protection of a heritage equally as endangered as museum heritage. Its experience in risk management and physical and digital preservation, and its dissemination capacities mean that the BnF is able to carry out actions all over the world alongside several dozens of international organisations and institutions. The BnF's measures are grounded on three principles:

Solidarity - a necessity in times of crisis

During times of conflict, this involves ensuring adequate preservation conditions for the collections, by means of packaging and safe storage. Post-crisis, curative actions are priority (restoration, digital reconstruction). As such, in Mali, the BnF has been working alongside UNESCO since 2013 to safeguard the Timbuktu manuscripts, particularly those preserved by the Institut national Ahmed Baba (Ahmed Baba National Institute) for Islamic studies. In Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, the BnF has been working alongside the charity l'œuvre d'Orient to safeguard an endangered religious heritage. Lastly, it has stepped forward to join the network of safe havens that is set to be created following the Abu Dhabi Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage Conference.

Skills transfer and prevention - pillars of effective and sustainable action

Feedback has shown the importance of preventive action, by means of capacity building and supporting the creation of preservation, restoration and digitisation units. In 2015, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, the BnF set up an international training programme on physical and digital preservation of written heritage. Since 2017, in collaboration with the Library of Alexandria and the ENSSIB, the BnF has contributed to the development of a diploma for Francophone library staff in Africa and the Middle East.

Dissemination through digitisation and research - the best guarantee

Without a doubt, digital preservation is the best guarantee for collections in areas of instability. Moreover, since 2015, the BnF has made its digital infrastructure available to its partners and has created with them «digital havens» for collections preserved in areas where their safety is not guaranteed, whether for political, economic or climatic reasons. The digital Francophone library, which provides access to remarkable heritage collections of 26 documentary institutions in the French-speaking world, and Bibliothèques d'Orient, attest to this desire to make a heritage that some would like to get rid of available to both citizens and researchers.



"Bibliothèques d'Orient" has been created with the sponsorship of the Total Foundation

With a presence in the Near and Middle East since its creation, the Total Group has always paid careful attention to the cultural life and heritage of this region where it has historically carried out its activity.

It is therefore only natural that the Total Foundation and the BnF work faithfully together to protect and promote written works originating from the Near East.

As such, having supported the complete digitisation programme of over three hundred Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, the finest of which were displayed at the *Enluminures en terre d'Islam, entre abstraction et figuration (Illuminations in the land of Islam - between abstraction and figuration)*, the Total Foundation continued its partnership with the *L'âge d'or des cartes marines (The golden age of nautical charts)* exhibition, and more recently, by supporting the digitisation of 95 globes.

Through the *Bibliothèques d'Orient* programme, whose aim is to safeguard and digitise endangered manuscripts from the countries of the Near East, the Total Foundation is renewing its commitment to protecting heritage and giving as large an audience as possible access to centuries of knowledge and beauty. By fostering dialogue between past and present and between different cultures, this project contributes to forging links of respect and friendship between different populations.

Some of these manuscripts will be displayed as part of the *Chrétiens d'Orient (Eastern Christians)* exhibition due to be held at the Institut du monde arabe (Arab World Institute) this Autumn, which the Total Foundation is also proud to support.

The Total Corporate Foundation

Set up in 1992, the Total Foundation contributes to the influence of cultures and the preservation of the heritage of the regions in which it operates through its cultural sponsorship. It supports access to culture for as many people as possible, and young people in particular.

The diverse and complementary nature of the actions supported by the Total Foundation make it one of the main French stakeholders in cultural sponsorship.



Plastic Omnium, Bibliothèque Nationale de France sponsor

"Bibliothèques d'Orient"

Compagnie Plastic Omnium, a French, independent and international industrial company, has been providing financial assistance for a number of years to programmes for the preservation and dissemination of French and international heritage.

A loyal sponsor of the Bibliothèque nationale de France since 2012, the group is now proud to be involved in the innovative *Bibliothèques d'Orient* programme, which aims to safeguard, bring together, digitise and promote the historical heritage of seven heritage and research libraries of the Near East. Owing to this important safeguarding and promotion project, a large audience will have access to exceptional documents retelling the history of countries mainly located on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea between 1800 and 1945, via the *Bibliothèques d'Orient* collaborative digital library.

Plastic Omnium is a French automotive equipment manufacturer, the global leader in bodywork parts and modules and fuel systems for the automotive industry, and a global market leader in waste containers for local authorities and companies.

Since its creation in 1946, the Group has woven innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation into its history and values. Plastic Omnium operates in 31 countries, employs 33,000 people, and has 128 factories and 23 R&D centres worldwide.

Plastic Omnium:

Adeline Mickeler, Director of Communication – amickeler@plasticomnium.com

Tel: +33 (0)1 40 87 77 50

Press: Tarick Dali, DGM Conseil - t.dali@dgm-conseil.fr

Tel: +33 (0)1 40 70 11 89