



LIGUE DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES EUROPÉENNES DE RECHERCHE
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Manuscript Librarians Group

France – Backgrounds

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Introduction

In France, manuscripts are mainly conserved in the National Library (BnF: [Bibliothèque nationale de France](#), Paris), in many important municipal libraries, and in a limited number of university libraries (such as [Sorbonne](#), [Medicine Faculty of Montpellier](#)) and other institutions (e.g. [Bibliothèque Mazarine](#)).

Archives often hold manuscripts in their collections. Locally, there are many cooperative projects between libraries and archives, and some of them concern manuscripts. The [Institut Mémoire de l'Édition contemporaine](#) (IMEC), in Caen (Normandy), is a deposit institution for publication companies and sometimes authors.

In the last years many projects have developed in the field of digitisation and online catalogues.

Online catalogues

- [BnF archives et manuscrits](#) – All the catalogues of BnF's Manuscript department are being converted and updated. The program will be finished around 2012. For PDF's of the printed catalogues see the webpage [Accès aux catalogues numérisés](#).
- [Catalogue collectif de France](#) (CCfr) – Union catalogue with access to more than 15 million printed books, manuscripts and other documents kept in the BnF and the major libraries of France (municipal libraries, university libraries, special libraries).
 - In a separate section of CCfr the 'Répertoire national des bibliothèques et fonds documentaires' provide concise information about 4800 libraries and 1700 special fonds, with links to library websites and online catalogues
 - CCfr enables searches limited to manuscripts and papers, in CGM (-1900)and/or PALME (1900-).
 - CGM is a database derived from the *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques françaises*, a series of 116 volumes published in 1849-1993. Its 182,000 entries describe the manuscript collections of about 450 institutions (bibliothèques municipales, universités, services d'archives, grands établissements etc.). Almost all the manuscripts in CGM date from before 1900. The manuscripts of

the university libraries and so-called 'grands établissements' are also accessible through Calames (see below).

— PALME is a database derived from the 'Répertoire des manuscrits littéraires français du XX^{ème} siècle' (formerly accessible through Bn-Opaline). Its 122,000 entries describe drafts, proofs, manuscripts, correspondence and personal papers of literary authors from the 20th century kept in 440 institutions (bibliothèques municipales, associations d'Amis d'auteurs, services d'archives, musées etc.).

- [Calames](#) — Union catalogue for manuscripts and papers held by university libraries (and some other institutions) in: Aix-Marseille, Angers, Besançon, Bordeaux, Brest, Caen, Chaalis, Chantilly, Clermont Ferrand, Dijon, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Maisons-Alfort, Metz, Montpellier, Nancy, Nanterre, Nice, Paris, Perpignan, Poitiers, Rennes, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Valenciennes. The database also provides concise information about the libraries.

Digitisation of manuscripts

- Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (BnF) — BnF's digital database, [Gallica](#), now contains more than 5,000 manuscripts. BnF's Manuscripts department has also developed its own database for illuminations, [Mandragore](#) (67,000 images), and manages several special digitisation projects.
- The *Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes* (IRHT) has developed two databases with images from illuminated manuscripts: [Liber Floridus](#) (for university libraries) and [Enluminures](#) (for municipal libraries).