



HISTORY

Collection 18

History & Chronicles from the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*

Early European Books Collection 18 extends its coverage of content from the BnF in Paris through a selection drawn entirely from the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, a historic repository first made part of the French national library in 1934. Featuring over 900 individual items and more than 500,000 pages of content dedicated to the theme of **history and chronicles**, Collection 18 provides privileged access to the *Arsenal's* wealth of treasures in this area. Among the items to be discovered are works by leading French historians and scholars from the early modern period, including Claude Fauchet, Jean de Serres and André Duchesne. National, regional and dynastic French history provides the core focus of material, but the collection nevertheless abounds in fascinating and rare items of a much broader scope. These include classical history and early modern editions of medieval and Byzantine authors, works of ecclesiastical and religious history, accounts and memoirs relating to France's European neighbours, as well as texts relating to the Ottoman Empire, Asia and the New World.

Classical sources featured in Collection 18 include incunable Latin editions of Dionysius of Helicarnassus and editions in French of Tacitus, Polybius and Florus. In greater number are early modern French readings of classical history such as René Rapin's (d.1687) comparative study of Thucydides and Livy and the *Histoire du triumvirat* of Citri de la Guette. Byzantine history is represented through translations by Louis Cousin (d.1707) of John Xiphilinus and an eight-volume *Histoire de Constantinople* (Paris, 1685). Among the selection of medieval writings are mid-16th century editions of the great chroniclers Joinville and Froissart, a range of later works on the Crusades, and histories of its fabled military orders.



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Another work reaching back to medieval times is Guillaume Besse's (d.1680?) *Histoire des comtes de Carcassonne* (Beziers, 1645), a chronicle of the city famous as a redoubt of the heretical Cathars. As such, it's also one of Collection 18's many fascinating items documenting France's varied regions and municipalities. Meanwhile, grander narratives laying out the French national story can be found in the multi-volume works of François Eudes de Mézeray (d.1683). Dynastic history is also represented by, for example, Marcel Guillaume's (d.1708) *Histoire de l'origine et des progres de la monarchie Françoise*, as well as in biographies of individual rulers like Péréfixe de Beaumont's (d.1671) *Henry le Grand*.

Looking beyond the borders of France, Collection 18 presents a remarkable array of texts reflecting contemporary interest in foreign affairs and in the sometimes newly encountered realms beyond Europe. The collection features numerous translations of works originally in Spanish, Italian, Dutch and English, and concerning all manner of historical subject. These include Juan González de Mendoza's (d.1618) *Histoire du grand Royaume de la Chine* (1609), multiple accounts of the Ottoman Empire by Michel Baudier, Paul Rycaut and others, and *L'histoire des Yncas*, a translation of the work by the early mestizo chronicler of the Americas, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (d.1616). Also containing curiosities like François de Calvi's history of thieves, *Histoire generale des larrons* (Rouen, 1645), Collection 18 brings together historical content from the *Arsenal* that is fascinating to discover and an indispensable aid to research.



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